



**src** activism  
advocacy  
representation

**Julia Robins**, Secretary to Council  
secretary.council@src.usyd.edu.au

**Students' Representative Council,  
University of Sydney**

Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01)  
University of Sydney NSW 2006  
PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007  
t: (02) 9660 5222 f: (02) 9660 4260  
int: 12871 www.src.usyd.edu.au  
ABN: 597 391 306 68

---

## MINUTES:

of the 4<sup>th</sup> regular meeting of the 92<sup>nd</sup> SRC held on **the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020**. Meeting held via zoom.

---

***Quorum count was done at 6:10***

### **A. Meeting open at 6:18pm**

#### **A1. Election of Deputy Chairperson**

The Chair moved that Felix Faber be elected Deputy Chairperson.

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

### **B. Acknowledgement of Country**

The University of Sydney Students' Representative Council acknowledges the traditional owners of this land (Sydney), the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. We stand on this land today as beneficiaries of an uncompensated and unreconciled dispossession that occurred over 200 years ago. Many of the descendants of those dispossessed live just down the road in abject poverty, and as young people it is important to recognise how this history of dislocation and disenfranchisement has contributed to the inequality we observe in modern society. We acknowledge both our privilege and our obligation to redress the situation as best we can: to remember the mistakes of the past, act on the problems of today, and build a future for everyone who now calls this place home, striving always for genuinely practical and meaningful reconciliation.

Liam Donohoe added that this is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary since Cook's landing, and it is important to remember the pain and hurt caused since the invasion and occupation of the first Nations in what we now call Australia.

### **C. Apologies, Proxies and Leaves of Absence**

#### **Apologies were received from:**

Alev Saracoglu

Jiayu Chen (Global Solidarity Officer)

### **D. Changes to Membership**

### **E. Electoral Report**

#### **E1. Consideration of any resignations**

Yilin Ma resigns from his positions as Welfare Officer

Motion: That the Council accept the resignations.

Moved: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Liam Thomas

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

**F. Minutes of the previous Council meeting.**

Minutes of the meeting of 91<sup>st</sup> SRC Council held till the next council meeting.

**G. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business for this item.

**H. Question Time of 15 minutes, which may be extended by resolution for a further 15 minutes.**

**I. Visitor's Business**

There was no business for this item.

**J. Report of the Undergraduate Fellow of Senate**

**K. Elections**

**K1. Election of 1 Mature Age Students' Officer**

There were no nominations

**K2. Election of 1 Welfare Officer**

There was a joint nomination received from Yilin Ma and Amelia Mertha

There being no further nominations Yilin Ma and Amelia Mertha were declared elected as the Welfare officers of the 92<sup>nd</sup> SRC.

**L. Report of the President and Executive**

**L1. Executive Minutes**

Minutes of the Executive meetings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020.

Motion: that the minutes of the executive meetings from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 be accepted.

Moved: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Felix Faber

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

*The President deferred the Chair to the Deputy Chairperson.*

**L3. President's Report**

Liam Donohoe tabled a written report:

Another Council meeting, another 3 weeks of unconventional SRC activity. Though the days and weeks have, to some degree, blurred together, the SRC has still been active, whether inside the SRC offices, around the USyd campus, or across Sydney city. All the various campaigns and initiatives discussed in my last report to Council remain a lightning rod for student enthusiasm and outrage, with some promising developments on all fronts. This report will mainly update the Council on each of those initiatives, following the same structure as my previous report—if there's anything altogether new that should be clear enough. But first, some updates on the functioning and organisation of the SRC itself.

### **The SRC's operations**

The SRC continues to be as busy as ever, particularly our professional service arms, with our Caseworker and Legal Services constantly emailing and calling students with all kinds of problems. Casework is receiving significant inquiries about tenancy, CentreLink, and enrollment, which is hardly surprising given current conditions. Our new solicitor, Cade Badway, is settling in nicely, and the Legal Service is gearing up to hire a Paralegal in the next few weeks, which should give our Principal, An Li, more time to assist students with Visa questions and applications. Work From Home measures are generally working very well—in many ways it's almost as good as the real thing—though many of us are growing restless at home and would love nothing more than to return to the offices and the community embedded within them.

Unfortunately I regret to disclose that the University will be reducing the amount of Student Support and Amenity Fee revenue we will be receiving this year in light of dropouts and COVID-19-related financial issues. While this is quite disappointing, we will still be getting enough to cover our base funding (or thereabouts) and have enough in reserves to weather any serious issues. The exact way the funding will be halted is a bit technical and, without vigilance, might leave us somewhat shortchanged. However, aside from losing out on some of our awesome contestable projects, this is not the end of the world: we have more than enough to cover all of our expenses, particularly wages and stipends. Moreover, our 4<sup>th</sup> SSAF payment has not been cancelled, but delayed, with more clarity after the semester 2 census date. We hope that further funds will be freed up after that point, perhaps even enough to cram some of our contestable projects in before the end of the year. All in all, however, this is a disappointing outcome, particularly because it may seriously delay the introduction of computerised voting and the food bank program, two flagship initiatives of the 92<sup>nd</sup> SRC. As outlined at the end of this report, however, many of the projects can still be salvaged.

### **Mutual Aid initiatives**

I am very pleased to report that the SRC's Mutual Aid initiatives have progressed significantly, with the launch of its most useful project: the provision of essentials packs to students. After a bit of delay in sourcing goods to distribute, the SRC eventually managed to source hundreds of Barilla pasta packs, countless cereal boxes, and a steady supply of pre-made hampers from the Exodus Foundation. We have since launched and disseminated our request for help form, which over 140 students had filled out last I checked, and we intend to arrange an essentials pack for all of them. We are about to begin delivering and supplying the packs, which contain enough food to nutritiously (and enjoyably) last a person for a decent amount of time.

Many thanks are owed to Vice-President Felix Faber, who helped arrange a partnership with the Exodus Foundation in Ashfield, Secretary to Council Julia Robins, who helped coordinate our

efforts, and countless other volunteers in the Mutual Aid working group, who are too numerous to list. We have divided volunteers into a bunch of different groups, and assigned group captains to expedite the process. If anyone is interested in getting involved please don't hesitate to reach out—we are always looking for more volunteers!

### **Addressing the concerns of USyd Students**

Despite some promising changes, students are understandably still concerned with the quality and nature of their education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SRC has received too many reports of legitimate Special Considerations appeals being rejected by coal face staff who are not abreast of recent policy changes. Many students fear that displaying both a WAM and a CWAM on a transcript might indicate a lack of resilience or underperformance where there is a discrepancy between them. And with end-of-semester exams looming, countless students are realising they may be forced to undertake a ProctorU exam and are rightly worried about the privacy issues and pedagogical limitations therein.

I have been raising these concerns, and many others, through the usual channels. Since the last Council meeting, I've attended three Academic Board subcommittee meetings, an Academic Board meeting, and a University Executive Education Committee, where, in all cases, I mentioned these concerns and offered alternatives that might better serve students. I have also sent plenty of emails, attended weekly Zoom calls with senior University administrators, and used the SRC's social media presence to create public awareness and pressure around these issues.

But undoubtedly the most important development on this front was last Wednesday's open meeting of the student body, which saw over 50 different students tune in to raise their concerns around the transition to online learning and their education quality. Important links were made between staff conditions and student learning processes and outcomes, with students agreeing that big picture changes, like governmental negligence in funding and USyd austerity, would have the most devastating impact at the coalface of education further downstream. Towards the end of the meeting I proposed that we address these concerns through an umbrella campaign run by the Education Action Group, and the proposal enjoyed considerable support.

After some great discussion and a few polls, it's looking like it'll be called "Defend Our Education", and it'll tie in with the "No Uni Cuts" and "No Students Left Behind" campaigns. In addition to the demands of those campaigns, Defend Our Education will advocate for the changes I listed in my previous report—at the meeting I cohered them into a general set of demands which, while only a draft, give a sense of the direction and nature of the campaign:

#### **No Uni Cuts!**

The government should fund us through this crisis and management shouldn't pass on any losses: Immediately fund all Universities so they can cover all expenses, guarantee accommodation for all students, and cease University fees.

#### **No ProctorU!**

We shouldn't have to submit to invasive software to study: Offer special considerations to students who object to ProctorU, totally suspend the use of ProctorU, and pursue alternatives (like different assessment procedures or an in-house online invigilation service).

#### **No Disadvantage**

Our futures shouldn't be jeopardised by a crisis outside our control: Only display our superior WAM on our transcripts, give us end-to-end in-person case management for all student issues, and simplify special considerations.

### **Defend Staff!**

The Uni should maximise staff numbers for smaller class sizes, more efficient administration, and faster marking: Offer full contracts to all casuals, maintain their usual wages, and allocate staff on the basis of need and best-practice.

### **Defend Learning!**

The Uni should ensure our learning and academic pursuits aren't undermined: Maintain all 2020 courses, give staff the resources to implement best-practice online learning, let us defer assessment and labs until we can do them in-person.

### **Defend Our Education!**

The Education Action Group will have a meeting tomorrow where these demands will be workshopped and the actual operations and activities of the campaign finalised. I invite all to come along for what will be an important meeting, and to get involved in a campaign which may well prove to be a defining one.

### **Student Welfare**

Student Welfare also remains an incredibly important concern, particularly for International Students. On this particular front there have been a few important updates—please forgive crude enumeration:

- 1) Last Thursday, the 30<sup>th</sup> of April, I attended a meeting between University management and tenants of various student accommodation buildings, which I organised following the last SRC meeting. While it wasn't the most eventful meeting, it was good for both sides to offer their perspective, and it may have made some of the tenants more aware of certain services available for them.
- 2) I have been assisting broader housing justice initiatives as best I can, including by printing significant quantities of posters and leaflets for awareness raising and promoting actions on our social media. I am also involved in the Housing Defence Coalition, and thanks to our organising efforts The work undertaken by the HDC is incredibly important, and will prove even more so as time makes clear the traps embedded in recent "housing assistance" announcements / legislation.
- 3) I have continued to advocate for increased support for International Students in University committees, highlighting their deteriorating conditions and the shameful negligence of various levels of government.
- 4) The SRC has been joining and supporting the NUS' Save Our Students campaign, and continues to join them in calling for: A. A significant increase in the Disability Support Pension, B. The inclusion of non-citizens / non-residents in the JobKeeper and JobSeeker programs, as well as other social security mechanisms for them, and C. Reformed welfare eligibility requirements, particularly by reducing the age of independence from 22 to 18, ending mutual obligations, and granting eligibility to all part-time or deferred students.
  - a) We intend to kickstart a campaign pressuring the NSW government to announce an International Student support package.

- b) We are also joining calls for the creation of a “national hardship fund” accessible to International Students and other non-citizens / residents.

### **Fighting for a better University, and world**

In addition to the Defend Our Education campaign, which addresses immediate academic issues, the SRC has been heavily involved in campaigns and initiatives which seek to address broader injustices. Through the Education Action Group and Office Bearers we are mobilising around the “No Uni Cuts!” campaign, and on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April the SRC joined the national campaign launch / National Day of Action, posting from our page in support and tuning into a few different panels / live streams that occurred over the day. We will, of course, be totally supporting the upcoming No Uni Cuts! National Day of Action.

Relatedly, we are also supporting the National Tertiary Education Union’s activities over the coming months, standing in full solidarity with the University of Sydney branch as they confront Uni management and demand full support through this crisis. This campaign not only ties in with the “No Uni Cuts!” one, but also with the broader “No Worker Left Behind” campaign in which the SRC is also engaged. As a member of the USyd branch of the NTEU myself I have attended recent branch meetings and voted in support of radical motions moved by rank and file, which in some cases have censured the National Executive for their weak and non-representative strategy for engaging with University management and government.

Indeed, on the topic of the “No Worker Left Behind” campaign, a number of SRC Office Bearers were involved in the successful (and, frankly, awesome) May Day car convoy. May the 1<sup>st</sup> is International Workers’ Day, and though COVID-19 may have disrupted scintillating plans for a general strike, countless rank and file unionists, socialists, environmentalists, students, and other Lefties made sure to keep the spirit of proletarian rage alive through an ingenious, safe, and socially distant act of protest. But this protest was no mere act of symbolic commemoration: it aimed to broadcast the No Worker Left Behind demands as widely and confrontationally as possible, drawing attention to the plight of International Students and non-citizen workers, inconsistent and arbitrary exclusions in the government’s COVID-19 economic assistance, and the countless job losses on the horizon, particularly for workers in Australia’s third-largest sector, Education. The SRC did our best to support the initiative, including by sharing live streams from the SRC’s Facebook page and moving motions in support.

Finally, the SRC remains attuned to struggles and stakeholders sidelined during the COVID-19 crisis. On Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> of April we joined a National Day of Action demanding that all refugees be granted citizenship and that all activists arrested for organising a car convoy in Melbourne have their charges dropped. As part of that I recorded and published a video from the SRC’s main page.

### **What else have I been up to?**

While campaigns and mutual aid have been the main thing on my mind, I have also been busy with a few other important projects.

- 1) I have been working hard on our Constitutional and Regulatory Reform projects, with a lot of great progress on both fronts, including:
  - a) Members of the working group have agreed that we will move the reforms in two waves. The first round will deal only with electoral regulation reform—we will be moving

substantial changes to the regulation of elections at next month's Council meeting, so that they precede the appointment of the Returning Officer and apply to this year's election. The second round will be later in the year, and will involve the most significant changes to our Constitution and Regulations since at least 2006 (and probably even longer).

- b) We are receiving pro-bono legal advice from Minter Ellison, via legal advice charity Justice Connect, which should ensure our Constitution and Regulations are fully compliant with ACNC regulations.
  - c) I have been busily preparing a schematic of the new Constitution and Regulations, which I am happy to send to anyone interested (though it's still only in draft stages).
- 2) Attended a meeting as part of a Focus Group for determining the next Vice-Chancellor. I don't think this was particularly effective or useful, but I expressed my opinions on what the next Vice-Chancellor should do / look like.
  - 3) Met and developed a relationship with Tim Payne, a senior policy advisor to the Vice-Chancellor and an expert on governmental and internal University policy.

While things have been busy, they have also settled into a bit more of a routine, with the chaos and uncertainty of the early COVID-19 period giving way to more concrete strategies and the infrastructure needed to affect more organised change. I am very keen to continue to play an active role in all these fights, and am very open to any feedback on or criticism of how I've been going about things!

Discussion:

Liam Donohoe Spoke to his report and gave an overview of his report and highlighting the parts he felt the council would find most interesting, particularly SSAF, Covid19 care packs, and EAG actions.

Motion to accept the report of the President.

Moved: Felix Faber

Seconded: Charlotte Bullock

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

*Liam Donohoe resumed the Chair.*

## **M. Report of the Vice-Presidents**

Charlotte Bullock and Felix Faber tabled a written:

In the weeks since our last council meeting we have continued to attend regular meetings with university management and other office bearers. At these meetings we discuss issues affecting students as a result of our broader social situation and also from the university's move to online. Most recently, issues regarding the university's implementation of a new way of displaying the WAM on students' transcripts has been at the forefront of discussions. These meetings have also provided us with a chance to raise more niche issues. In our most recent meeting, we raised the prospect of alternatives to overseas OLEs being offered, as those OLEs had been cancelled and will likely be cancelled for Semester 2 and there are concerns about remaining 6-credit point OLEs being in particularly high demand, although unfortunately no information could be offered to address these concerns.

Recently Charlotte attended a meeting regarding one of the SRC's projects for the year – constitutional and regulatory reform. In this meeting we discussed how the regulations could be adjusted given the current restrictions on meeting in-person, as well as considering long term amendments to the regulations and constitution.

Charlotte also recently attended a focus group with the Chancellor along with the President, the President of SUPRA and the President of the USU to discuss the criteria and attributes student representatives would like to see in the new Vice Chancellor. There was a shared agreement between student representatives that a VC who is consultative, passionate about education, learning and critical thinking and focused on the student experience would be the ideal candidate.

Felix has been busy working on the SRC's mutual aid programme, helping to establish links between the SRC and existing community organisations. Working with the Exodus Foundation, an Ashfield based community organisation, he helped to secure the food parcels that the SRC will be distributing to students in need soon. He has also been working to build relationships between the SRC and community organisations in the Redfern/Eveleigh/Darlington area to ensure that ongoing mutual aid activities are carried out in solidarity with the local community.

Furthermore, Felix has been working with the SRC's interfaculty committee to gather information about faculty-specific issues that the SRC should be responding to, and help distribute information about the SRC's work during the pandemic to members of faculty societies.

Motion: that the report of the Vice Presidents be accepted.

Moved from the Chair

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

#### **N. Report of the General Secretaries**

Abbey Shi and Liam Thomas tabled a written report

Despite it only being a couple of weeks it feels like it's been ages since our last council meeting, and a great deal has happened in the relatively short time frame.

Abbey and I have been continuing to perform various student advocacy tasks, responding to the COVID-19 situation. We've been continuing our regular weekly meetings with Susanna Scarparo, Peter McCallum, and Adam Bridgeman from the University, alongside Liam, Charlotte and Felix. These meetings continue to be productive and a great channel for us to convey student feedback on the academic arrangements, as well as address broad issues relating to the shift to online learning. We have also advised the university officials to consider Melbourne University's WAM model as part of the COVID-19 readjustment plan. The University, in response, is considering adopting the model. Further notice will be given in future scheduled meetings. It has been positive to hear from them the University has taken into account our concerns around a lack of support for students suffering from financial hardship, with the Uni extending their hardship support to include up to \$200 worth of food vouchers per week for students unable to afford groceries.

In the past weeks, it has been incredibly encouraging to see the smooth rollout of the SRC mutual aid program. I think we speak for everyone in saying that a project like this encapsulates the important role that strong student organisations play in supporting the student community.

On the international student front, it is also encouraging to see financial aid being granted as a result of the previous petition work being done by the SRC. We have received lots of gratitude from students who received the grants. Abbey has been doing a lot of work with responding to students in need of advice regarding the application process, redirecting their inquiries to those who can provide valid advice. During this special period of time, we have also been working on advocacy for international students JobKeeper and JobSeeker scheme. We have conducted surveys in conjunction with Unions NSW on various social media platforms.

Finally, some great progress has been made with the Constitutional and Regulatory Reform group. We have had a number of productive meetings with representatives from almost all factions present. Notes and information about proposed changes and ideas being discussed are available in the group and I highly encourage everyone to read them. To give a quick summary, we've effectively decided that the best course of action is to break down the project into two projects, one short-term and one long-term. The short-term project includes all the essential reforms that we need to get passed ASAP, which are directly related to election regulations. Everyone seems to have been in agreement that we need to do everything we possibly can to try and hold physical elections, however, given the uncertainty surrounding the current situation we need to make provisions for the possibility of an online election in the worst-case scenario. We are currently in the process of trying to identify the best way to create provisions for online elections such as in the circumstances we are facing now, whilst also ensuring there are significant checks and balances to ensure that it is only used in the worst-case scenarios. We have also had extensive discussions about shifting voting to a computerised system going forward (similar to how the USU elections operate traditionally) which will significantly cut down on costs and reduce the excessive amount of paper we waste printing tens of thousands of ballot papers. The long-term project centres around constitutional reform, specifically ideas about how we can restructure the SRC to be more effective, with clearer roles for elected representatives.

Motion: that the report of the General Secretaries be accepted.

Moved from the Chair

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

## **O. Report of Committees and Officers**

### **O1. Report of the Education Officers**

Jazzlyn Breen and Jack Mansell tabled a written report

#### **Education Officers' report - May council**

Our work this month has largely been a continuation of last month's efforts. We have had far more frequent EAG meetings, and attended a NSW-wide EAG, as well as nation and NSW-wide organising meetings for Students Organising Resistance and the May 1 Movement.

### **No Uni Cuts campaign**

Students Organising Resistance in the Pandemic held a National Day of Online Action and campaign launch on Friday April 24. This event was a success nationally, drawing over 150 students to a mass Zoom call, before state-based organising meetings. The NSW state break-off meeting had 51 participants at its peak and facilitated interaction with activists from UNSW, Macquarie, UWS and UOW. Subsequent state-based meetings have established another National Day of Online Action for May 22, challenging Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan to debate. This NDA will be a major focus of education campaigning over the next couple of weeks. Jack submitted a video question to Tehan during his appearance on Q&A, and organised Twitter-bombing of the Q&A feed to promote the No Uni Cuts campaign.

### **Academic issues - ProctorU, WAM, etc.**

At our EAG we resolved to reach out to the organisers of the existing USyd - Say No To ProctorU group in order to establish an open organising meeting, happening on the afternoon of April 29. We have decided that the SRC and EAG in particular can add substantial organisational weight and experience to the existing campaign, and hope to massively escalate them. The existing campaigns have had some partial successes, with big concessions on mark calculations, and some unit of study coordinators and departments pledging not to use ProctorU, but this is far from the blanket ban we want. We have also prepared a press release to launch the escalated campaign. try to create media pressure, and engaged activists at other campuses where organising has occurred against proctoring software.

### **No Concessions campaign solidarity**

Nationally, the rank-and-file campaign in the NTEU against concessions on wages and conditions is escalating. Jack, as a union branch member as well as student rep, has attended a series of union branch and campaign meetings in order to argue for a strategy of no concessions, and instead to wage a fighting campaign against management and the government. Action has included organising phone trees to reach wide sections of the union membership in order to mobilise support for a 'No' vote against any compromise deal, which may be pushed to a vote within 24 hours of members seeing it as per new Fair Work legislation. Subsequent to submitting our last report, Jack published an article in Honi Soit about the importance of students taking a similar position of no cuts, and about why students should support the rank-and-file campaign.

### **May Day**

A student meeting of the May 1 Movement happened on April 24, drawing dozens of activists. The May 1 actions are including solidarity with the No Uni Cuts campaign. With many attacks on workers happening, we encourage participation in May 1 actions next week.

### **May 15 digital climate strike**

Though physical rallies are difficult to hold, Uni Students for Climate Justice has organised a 'digital climate strike' for May 15. The event aims to carry over some momentum from the growing climate movement, and we encourage everyone to skip class and attend.

### **National outreach**

The nature of the cuts to universities means that similar experiences are happening everywhere. We have a lot to learn from organising going on at other campuses, and have spent time reaching

out to campaign activists across the country to share experience and strengthen our work. Recently we've also made a push to reach out to Education Officers from various student unions across the country, including the National Union of Students, in order to generate broader strength and information sharing.

Discussion:

Jack Mansell spoke to the report highlighting the not cuts campaign that's building in response to the University's attempts to cut courses and staff, and lack of government support for the sector. Jack Mansell also spoke to the 40% cut to USU staff's wages and fewer hours, and that the line the USU ran as though it was being done for members was appalling and the workers at the USU should not have to pay for this crisis. Jack added that he will be assisting USU workers to fight back against these cuts.

Jazzlyn Breen spoke to the report emphasising the defend our education campaign, and encouraged everyone to attend the EAG meeting tomorrow.

Jack Mansell added that the NDA organising meeting was a huge success and it's building a strong campaign.

Liam Donohoe asked if there were any questions

Maia Edge asked "Do you have any advice on what to do when final exams are scheduled to be done through ProctorU?"

Liam Donohoe offered to answer that, the Education Officers agreed.

Liam Donohoe stated that there are a few things to be done, the first is to talk to the SRC caseworkers and apply for special consideration if you do not wish to sit the exam via ProctorU, the university has said that they will accept special considerations requests on this. You should also be able to contact everyone in your classes on canvas, put together a draft email explaining why you don't want to sit the exam via ProctorU and get as many of your cohort to send that email to your unit of study coordinator as well as your faculty heads, again if you are unsure of who to contact, contact the SRC and ask there. Liam added that everyone should also join the Defend our Education campaign.

Jazzlyn Breen asked which faculties were using ProctorU? As many have dropped it.

Liam Donohoe noted that Chemistry and maths had been raised as those using it still and that much of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences was still using it. Many departments are still happy with using the program. The University's data about ProctorU is skewed as they are taking it from those who have sat an exam using ProctorU and those who would have had the biggest issue with the program most likely would have applied for special consideration and never used it at all.

Motion: that the report of the Education Officers be accepted.

Motion: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Vivienne Guo

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

## **O2. Report of the Wom\*n's Officers**

Ellie Wilson and Vivienne Guo tabled a written report

### **EVENTS**

Since COVID-19 isolation measures began, we have moved all of WoCo's events completely online. WoCo meetings are conducted on Zoom. In May, WoCo is currently planning online events such as a WoCo x QUaC reading group, a feminist prison abolition discussion in Week 11, and a film screening collab that we are working on organising with FilmSoc.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Over the course of the last month, WoCo has raised over \$3000 to support Indigenous elders in the community. Online fundraising has been greatly effective, especially now when physical means of solidarity, organising and community are largely unavailable to us, and we will continue to pursue online means of fundraising.

### **WOMEN'S HONI**

Women's Honi, an autonomous edition that is organised every year by WoCo, was published in Week 8! It included topics such as white fragility, decolonising beauty, queer ecofeminism, COVID-19 and domestic violence, the Kafala system in the Middle-East, and more. Naturally, this could not have been accomplished without the help of our editorial collective who we are extremely grateful for. Their dedication and passion were integral to the publication of Women's Honi. You can find Women's Honi online on Issuu.

### **SUPPORTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS**

We have recently been looking into supporting domestic violence survivors and women's shelters during this time of crisis. Social distancing measures are seeing rates of domestic violence spike, and now is a particularly crucial time for us to engage with supporting survivors in any way that we can. We have reached out to the Redfern Foundation, offering support with online fundraisers, mutual aid, creating informational resources etc. They have directed us towards Mudgin Gal, an Aboriginal organisation based in inner-city Sydney who are run by Aboriginal women for Aboriginal women. We look forward to working with them further.

Motion: that the report of the Wom\*n's Officers be accepted.

Motion: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Mikaela Pappou

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

## **O3. Report of the Welfare Officers**

Since last meeting, I have been involved with organising against the impending cuts and restructure of uni. I've been apart of SOR (Students Organising Resistance) and helped build their first online protest last Friday. This was well attended considering it was on zoom - over a hundred people tuned in to the demo itself. We then split into state groups to discuss next steps. Our next protest will be in a couple of weeks and will be more confrontational. We'll be daring Dan Tehan

to debate students over the cuts. To build this event I was part of a Twitter - storm, tweeting over Q&A to build the profile of the protest. I've also been involved in building the upcoming online climate strike on May 15. It's encouraging to see so much activism despite not being able to meet in real life. Students are obviously feeling more alienated than ever, so it's really pivotal that we try and reach out to as many as possible. Activism is the only way we can fight these attacks.

Discussion:

Maddie Powell spoke to her report emphasising that while the government has done nothing to assist the university sector the universities themselves want to keep students disorganised and isolated while they push through attacks on student's education and staff. The Student campaign for this great and needs to be supported as it's important not to forget that we need to be pushing against the idea that university is for profit, it should be fully funded and free.

Motion: that the report of the Welfare Officers be accepted.

Motion: Jack Mansell

Seconded: Jazzlyn Breen

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

#### **O4. Report of the Social Justice Officers**

##### **Students Organising Resistance National Day of Online Action**

SOR had a brilliant first National Day of Online Action to launch our No Uni Cuts campaign. A livestream of speeches given by Mehreen Farqui, NUS Ethnocultural Officer Vinil Kae and , international student activist Rishabh Bajoria, had over 5,000 views and over 150 people joined the national zoom to listen to the speeches and then break off into state-based workshops. We followed that up with video questions for Q&A, of which Dan Tehan, the federal education minister was a guest. The No Uni Cuts campaign, standing in solidarity with staff and against the gross attacks from Vice Chancellors and the government. All OBs and activists should get involved with it as it's the necessary foundation for a real campaign involving mass, radical actions when lockdown conditions are eased.

##### **The Biggest Crisis in Decades**

Globally, there are over 3 million cases of COVID-19, with over 200,000 deaths. Advanced capitalist countries such as the USA, France, the UK, Italy and Spain, all have horrendously high death tolls. Combined with this, is an economic crisis whose roots are in the inherent instability of the capitalist system. Australia's economy is predicted to contract by 10% this quarter and by June, unemployment could reach 10%. 25 million Americans are out of a job. While mile-long queues form for food banks and the homeless social distance in parking lots, billionaires such as Jeff Bezos see their empires expand. Lockdown measures have been conducted in many countries in an authoritarian way, over policing poor communities and communities of colour. Although neither Australia or the USA is a fascist state, the far right has mobilised its hard base for anti-lockdown protests. The danger, however, lies not only that governments see this as an opportunity to ratchet up surveillance powers, but that businesses are pushing that less is done, that restrictions eased and that their ability to make profit is ensured. We should reject both strategies, both of which see the lives of workers as disposable and which aim to prop up global capitalism. They are two sides of the same coin.

We need to be advancing militantly anti-capitalist demands, which call on the vast wealth of the state and the bosses to be used towards socially just ends. State-provision of food necessities, cancellation of all rent and small mortgages, expropriation without compensation of the airlines, free and funded healthcare and tertiary education. Judging by the bailouts that governments have enacted, there is more than enough money in the system. Make the rich pay for their crisis.

We need militant, rank and file led student and trade unions. They must seek not to evade the question of the state and of the bosses but confront them head on. The crisis has opened up an opportunity for the left but without organisation, we will fall at the first hurdle. The ruling class will not let this crisis go to waste. We must not either.

Discussion:

Deaglan Godwin spoke to his report highlighting its main points, noting the importance of keeping up activism digitally and taking digital action when the state of the world is so dire. Owen also covered and looked at the far right protests in America over the right to have haircuts and the amazing work of front line workers such as nurses who stood up to them, adding that this is where students can be involved and stand in solidarity with workers in these trying times.

Motion: that the report of the Social Justice Officers be accepted.

Motion: Jack Mansell

Seconded: Grace Bowskill

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

## **05. Report of the Global Solidarity Officers**

By far the most important campaign I've been part of organising and building is the Students Organising Resistance (SOR) "No Uni Cuts" campaign. We are currently witnessing the biggest attack on the higher education sector since free education was abolished. Around the country, university administrations are going on the offensive against staff and students in an effort to cut costs and boost revenue in the wake of the COVID-19 lockdown and travel ban. The user-pays funding model is in a state of crisis, and as usual staff and students are being forced to pay the price.

Outrageously, the NTEU leadership has gone behind the back of the rank and file in an effort to cut a deal with the bosses that sacrifices staff pay in an effort to save jobs. In both the long and short term, compromises of this nature have proven ineffective at saving jobs time and time again. All such compromises achieve is demobilisation and demoralisation of the rank and file while letting the bosses off the hook. This is unacceptable and illustrates the importance of a militant rank and file that is able to fight its own battles and hold the union leadership to account. An excellent NTEU Fightback campaign has been launched in order to help wage a coordinated national struggle against these cuts.

As a student and Office Bearer I have been part of organising students to join with staff to resist these historic attacks. I helped organise and participated in the official national "No Uni Cuts"

campaign launch last week, which succeeded in engaging with a number of students, as well as securing future campaign plans which were formed via the NSW state breakout. The next major event for the campaign will be the National Day of Action on May 22 where we will put Education Minister Dan Tehan under fire for trashing our education! As the COVID-19 crisis continues and the economic situation worsens, we can expect more attacks across every sector as bosses and businesses turn on workers to save themselves and their profits.

Discussion:

Holly Hayne spoke to the report covering its main points highlighting the SOR campaign and echoing Deaglan Godwin on the impact of the global socio-political climate, focusing on the United States. Holly spoke about the dire health consequences they are about to face as the government forces things to reopen to protect the economy and this is going to see a spike in cases in a country where the healthcare system is already inadequate. Holly added that while to a lesser extent we are going to see many of the same impacts on health and the economy here, with job keeper and job seeker being inadequate in its roll out, and with more job losses expected.

Motion: that the report of the Global Solidarity Officers be accepted.

Motion: Deaglan Godwin

Seconded: Jack Mansell

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

## **O6. Report of the Environment Officers**

The Environment Collective has been working extremely hard since the transition to online activism following Covid-19. This crisis has increased our focus on workers rights, tenancy rights and skills sharing. However, we have still managed to find ways to engage in climate activism.

Our meetings have great participation and we've welcomed a lot of new faces, amongst returning ones. In meetings we're currently planning a series of events to prepare us for the next month and the winter break. The first is a social media workshop to teach members how to create content on photoshop for upcoming campaigns; this will occur in upcoming weeks. The first half will be design focused, the second half will involve practical content creation for the Month of Mayhem climate strike. The next is an internal strategy day in collaboration with the Australian Student Environmental Network where members bring proposals for a new campaign we should run; examples being, an online campaign for the Djab Wurrung Embassy, against new mining extensions or even around workers rights amidst Covid-19! Following from this event, we have a team who will then organise a 'radical education' seminar where activists and experts will be invited to speak on the topic relevant to the campaign chosen at strategy day. If you would like to be involved in planning these events, let Shani or I know! Otherwise, we look forward to seeing you there!

One early event we held as a collective in reaction to the new constraints on our activism was an 'Online Activism Workshop' primarily organised by our member James Sherriff. We had a fantastic speaker list of SRC President Liam Donohoe, who spoke on the technicalities of argumentation; James Sherriff who spoke on practical skills of building an online campaign; and ASEN convenor

Holly Brooke who spoke about the importance of wellbeing and community whilst in Covid-19. Attendees also went into break out rooms for skill sharing activities like 'what to write an email to a minister of parliament' and made content specifically relevant to contemporary campaigns such as Jobseeker and Rent Suspension. We had impressive numbers at this event, surpassing 40 individuals (many who were new faces). This is a testament to the hard work of those in the organising committee!

Despite online activities, the Enviro Collective is also engaged in physical campaigns too. Members of our collective attended an MUA car convoy which led a convoy across the harbor bridge to then do laps of NSW parliament. We called out for workers rights, protection of migrant workers and better government responses to Covid-19. It was extremely empowering. The collective, following the MUA, was in deep discussions about legalities of doing this protest but we were cleared by police and there were no problems. We had some members in cars, others on bikes. By the time we read these minutes at council - we will also have attended the May 1 car convoy under #noworkerleftbehind and many of our members are excited for this too.

We have also engaged in online campaigns such as the Suspend Rent Campaign. This directly affects students on-campus. Though the Vice-Chancellor agreed to no evictions during Covid-19, students are still expected to pay rent, which puts many students in a compromised financial position especially since many students cannot work. We joined members in student accommodation in a photo campaign. This is ongoing and we encourage anyone to join by taking a photo for rent suspension - submit to the USYD enviro collective page.

Outside of our campaigns, we have also been involved in educational activities: this includes the Acar x Enviro reading group. Spearheaded by ACAR officer Kowther Qashou and Enviro member Lucy Taylor, we spoke about Environmental racism through various case studies. We read a 19 page reading on the topic which was super informative, then watched a video on the Djab Wurrung Embassy and discussed it. It was very rewarding as an experience. We also co-hosted Capitalism & Covid-19 with the Young Workers Collective!

However, amongst all this work, we've also been relaxing with a Cross- Collective house party. We met a lot of members and played some pictionary and talked about all things (political and non-political). Super fun and casual event and we're hoping to hold some internal chill events like this again soon.

One of our biggest projects at the moment is the Honi Soit Enviro pull-out - the first of its kind. Organised primarily by Enviro Officer Shani Patel and 2019 Honi Editor Amelia Mertha, it's shaping to be a massive success. We have a fantastic list of editors and contributors; following on from Combust, we're extremely excited to showcase new writers and artists. We recommend everyone get a copy when its released. We also wish to congratulate all those from Woco who made Women's Honi as spectacular as it is.

An upcoming campaign that should be released soon is a series of short Covid-19 specific videos asking members of the collective - what has the government done that has disappointed during Covid-19 and what do you want to see from the government? If you'd like to submit a response video, message Lauren Lancaster - a member of the Collective who is organising it!

We encourage everyone to get involved with the Enviro Collective and we look forward to seeing you at future meetings!

Motion: that the report of the Environment Officers be accepted.

Motion: Julia Kokic

Seconded: Jazzlyn Breen

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

**P. Special Business**

There were no items of special business.

**Q. Motions of Notice**

Procedural motion to limit the speaking time to two minutes

Moved: Swapnik Sanagavarapu

Seconded: Charlotte Bullock

The procedural was put and **CARRIED**.

**Q1. No concessions - Support the NTEU fightback**

Since the last SRC meeting the situation for university staff has evolved and the NTEU fight back has grown.

The government has yet to announce any further bailout for the sector that has lost billions in revenue. Universities are quickly moving to slash the pay and conditions of staff. At Sydney University, the administration has announced \$270m of cuts, including the loss of casual lecturers. Meanwhile, Spence will be maintaining his own \$1.5m salary.

Particularly at risk of redundancy are Sydney University casuals. Spence has notified staff that the administration are seeking to make up \$93 million by "reviewing casual staffing budgets". This will of course mean mass sackings of the most vulnerable workers at the university.

In national negotiations, a ten percent cut on wage rates above \$40,000 has been proposed. For the average full time university worker this would mean a \$245 weekly cut. At Swinburne University, VC Linda Kristjanson has announced that staff will automatically lose 10% of their pay as unpaid leave.

The NTEU fightback campaign has successfully passed several motions in members meetings, casuals networks and leadership bodies across the country to demand the NTEU National Executive grant no concessions in established pay or conditions to University bosses. NTEU Fightback are gearing up for a Vote No campaign in anticipation of attempts to amend enterprise bargaining agreements.

Student solidarity has long been an important auxiliary of University staff union campaigns. The SRC must continue to stand in this proud tradition and organise students to oppose any and all attempts to undermine the pay and conditions of staff. This fight is part of a much greater one, against the neoliberal university in current disarray, and for a free, public higher education system.

### **Platform**

1. The University of Sydney SRC supports the NTEU Fightback - No concessions campaign.
2. The University of Sydney SRC opposes any and all cuts to staff pay and conditions.
3. The University of Sydney SRC supports full public funding for higher education, and abolition of fees for all students.

### **Action**

The University of Sydney SRC will publicly share and endorse the motion passed by the members meeting of the Sydney University NTEU Branch from April 22 - adopting a position of no concessions - from its Facebook page.

### **Discussion:**

Lily Campbell spoke to the motion saying that there has been a national campaign launched by the members of the NTEU to advocate for a no vote to the concessions the national office was proposing. Adding that the sector is in a dire circumstance, and the response from universities is attack staff and students while management like Vice Chancellor Michael Spence collections is 1.5 million in salary and bonuses until he leaves the University for London. Adding that the importance of this campaign and the challenges faced by it is that at every meeting you're not just going there to talk about the situation but are also actively being undermined by the union officials, who push the union line which is one that abandons staff.

Jack Mansell spoke to the motion saying it was important to have perspective on what this means for staff, and that this is going to be the biggest restructure of the tertiary sector since fees were reintroduced by the Hawke government. There are 1000s of jobs at risk, there have been attempts to negotiate away the rights of staff, and take away up to 20% of staffs pay, and while all these things are being advocated for and push by university management they are affectively being endorsed by the national branch of the NTEU. This campaign is effectively about mobilising the national membership of the NTEU to rise up against the union management. It's more difficult and complicated as this is an organisation that's supposed to represent its members and take their directions. The 'no' vote campaign is to ensure we don't lose at the first hurdle and have a stronger position as the negotiations and the situation continues.

Nicholas Comino spoke to the motion agreeing with the comments that the union should be working for and representing its members. Adding that while the unions are important and should exist the union leadership aren't doing enough and only come out during elections periods to endorse the ALP. Nicolas continued saying it was shameful that the Vice Chancellors are not taking a pay cut when you consider that Spence with all his bonuses, effectively makes \$30 000 a week and is asking his staff to take a 20% pay cut when you earn their wages in a week.

Yasmine Johnson spoke to the motion saying she thought it was really important as staff

conditions are student learning conditions. This is a really important that the SRC support this campaign and that rank and file members push for a no vote, adding that there was already pressure on member to accept negotiations with management, which effately mean accepting a bunch of concessions. There have already been seriously cut across the country in the university sector so it's important that we fight against all cuts.

Moved: Lily Campbell

Seconded: Jack Mansell

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

## **Q2. Condemn the USU's treatment of staff**

### **Preamble**

The University of Sydney Union (USU), a not-for-profit organisation which purportedly works to improve campus life, is attempting to make staff pay for the financial crisis in which it currently finds itself. The SRC should stand up for workers rights across our campus, particularly as many students work at the USU and it purports to be a student run organisation. Early this year, it was announced that casual staff would be paid until the end of the roster and then left without work, and multiple full-time staff would be laid off. Further, remaining staff have been forced to take leave, despite public statements that all staff "who can feasibly work from home are now doing so and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future".

On April 3, the USU issued a media release stating that they would be applying for the Federal Government's JobKeeper subsidy and, "if eligible, we will make that payment to all eligible USU employees, including those now being stood down and the relevant casual employees who could no longer be rostered". However, it has since become apparent that a number of the employees who were stood down at the beginning of the year will not receive the subsidy and have instead been left with no support whatsoever. This disgraceful treatment of staff has been coupled with a complete lack of transparency on the part of the USU.

### **Platform**

1. The SRC opposes all attempts by the university and campus organisations to shift the financial burden of the present crisis onto staff members;
2. The SRC calls on the USU to immediately reinstate laid off and stood down workers and access jobseeker payments for all staff who are eligible.
3. *That the SRC call on the university to financially support student organisations to prevent them from cutting their staff*

### **Action**

1. The SRC calls on the USU to pay the full JobKeeper Allowance to all eligible staff, including those previously stood down;
2. The SRC calls on student members of the USU board to move a motion on the USU board to extend JobKeeper to all eligible staff, including those previously stood down, and keeping those not eligible for JobKeeper employed.

Discussion:

*Liam Donohoe resigned the Chair to Felix Faber*

Jack Mansell spoke to the motion saying this highlights that the USU is treating their staff the same way as the university. It's disappointing how much of this has been done in secret in camera so that people can't discuss or see the decision-making process, and that student organisations should have better transparency and should be fighting back against the capitalist mentality of making worker's pay for the crisis. The members of the USU deserve to know which of their board directors voted for a 40% cut to their staffs' wages.

Prudence Wilkins-Wheat spoke to the motion and echoed Jack's comments. Adding that as a staff member of the USU for over a year she has seen both longstanding and key event organisers stood down, and the lack of clarity to staff about what is going on has left many unclear where they stand with regards to employment and Job Keeper. Continuing Prudence noted the members of the USU elect a board and pay a CEO to negotiate and ensure the integrity of the union is upheld, instead we have seen staff wages cut, outrageously expensive food boxes offered, unwillingness to engage with or support the SRC mutual aid project, or strikes or support the end student evictions campaign. The USU has some seriously structural issues which make accountability to the members impossible. Prudence concluded by condemning the USU for their actions and the board directors who let this occur.

Liam Donohoe spoke to the motion saying that student life is important but that it has been degrading year after year, and while the USU is responsible for part of the student life experience it is a perennially disappointing institution. Adding that everyone understands that the USU isn't in a financial crisis, but it seems absurd that they have not called on the university to support them in these times, they've not reached out to the SRC to join in the Defend Our Education or asked to include some of their demands in that as well which we would be happy to do, instead they have relied on private lobbying to the university which is not and will not work. Liam concluded by saying the USU needs to fix its transparency issues and that it is not a union, it's merely one by name taking it from Oxford and Cambridge 'union debating societies', the SRC is the student union.

Amelia Byrne spoke to the motion saying as a member of staff at the USU's incubate project she wanted to raise the stupidity of the board's decisions as she has not had her contract renewed despite being eligible for job keeper, and now Amelia's boss will not only be doing her job but will also be covering the roles of two other student employees in 40% of the time she's normally given to do just her role.

Deaglan Godwin spoke to the motion calling those who ran for the USU Board as simply running to work as management for a corporation with little regard for students. In times of crisis, they are exploiting workers but they nor management will feel the brunt but put it on the workers. The Board directors should make it clear how and why they decided what they did and how they voted, and this is something they would do if they were left wing.

Mikaela Pappou spoke to the motion saying the USU's aims should be to support students and so many of their staff are students, and that it's really important that the USU becomes more transparent. Mikaela Pappou proposed an amendment to the platform:  
"The SRC calls on the University to provide funding to the USU to protect staff jobs"

Liam Donohoe asked if that could be altered to “provide funding and support for all student organisations” as we never know what might happen to the SRC too.

Mikaela Pappou agreed.

*It was amendable to the movers*

Jiale (Wayne) Wang spoke to the motion adding that transparency was a big issue and that finding and accessing USU financial reports was very difficult and he had found them impossible to find on the USU website. Jiale also wanted to know where the 40% came from as it seemed a random number, and the decision-making process and the numbers seem really unclear, and the USU should make these things accessible and clear.

Swapnik Sanagavarapu spoke to the motion noting that most of what he wanted to contribute has been said. Adding though that the level of the USU’s Opacity is unacceptable for a student organisation, to the point where while we know they are in a financially difficult position we don’t really know anything about their finances. But the USU does not deserve the main focus of our anger but the government and the University itself have a lot to answer for in this matter too.

Liam Thomas spoke to the motion echoing the concerns about the transparency and the staff cuts, but a lot of anger also needs to go towards the university who has an obligation to help the USU. Liam concluded thanking Mikaela for her amendment.

James Ardouin requested to ask Liam Donohoe if he or anyone else knew why these decisions were being made, why job keeper wasn’t being utilised? As it seems illogical.

Liam Donohoe responded saying he really had no idea why the USU has made these decisions and he was not keen to weigh in on what the USU’s motivations could be. But called on anyone else who might know more to speak up.

James Ardouin added that it was his understanding that a lot of management and the directors have also taken a cut. Concluding what while he felt the motion was important but getting clarification on the whys would be more helpful.

Holly Hayne spoke to the motion saying that she felt it was wrong that there shouldn’t be anger directed at the board, as financial strain is not an excuse to cut your staffs wages by 40%, which is a massive attack. The USU is acting like corporation but it should not run that way. While the university should assist the USU should not be let off the hook for its actions.

Moved: Jack Mansell

Seconded: Prudence Wilkins-Wheat

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

*Liam Donohoe resumed the Chair.*

### **Q3. May 15 Digital Climate Strike**

## **Preamble**

1. 2019, among a whole wave of protest movements across the world, was the year of climate strikes. March 15 packed out Town Hall square, while September 20 saw 80,000 rally in the domain, 2,000 of which had marched from Fisher library as part of the USYD contingent. Over the summer, we saw rallies of 40,000 to 60,000 protest the government's inaction on the bushfire crisis, its denialism about the links to climate change, and to call for the sacking of Scott Morrison. For the first time in a long time, the environment movement established itself as being about mass protests and to an extent, disruption, when previously it had been myopically concerned with lifestyle changes and lobbying various corporations and political parties. The importance of the climate movement to the renewal of a culture of activism, especially amongst young people, cannot be exaggerated.
2. As well as creating a host of unnatural natural disasters, such as the horrific Australian summer bushfires, climate change will pose several ecological, social and health problems for workers and the oppressed worldwide. One particular, relevant threat is the potential for pathogens in permafrost soil within the Arctic circle, being released as that permafrost melts due to rising temperatures. This ranges from diseases from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, such as smallpox and the Spanish flu, reemerging, to potentially prehistoric viruses and bacteria. The extreme degradation and disruption of normal ecological processes, caused by the capitalist profit motive, risks killing hundreds of thousands, if not millions of workers globally.
3. Meanwhile, the lockdown has raised several arguments within the environment movement. The mainstream liberal media has cheered on the clearing of air and water pollution, the result of a significant reduction in traffic, as being evidence of how reductions in individual consumption are the way forward. Global emissions are forecasted to fall by 5% this year (although this is well short of the necessary targets to prevent runaway climate change). The claims that the earth is "healing itself" is horrendously anti-human and posits that the death of thousands of workers is somehow a good thing. The profit-driven capitalist system is still the cause of climate change and ecological destruction.
4. Putting these arguments now, along with organising the forms of activism that we can during this situation, is essential in laying the groundwork for the climate movement after the lockdown and health crisis ends. Online activism is not a substitute for mass protests and strikes, but a tool to use in order to be able to return to mass struggle once the health issues no longer exist.
5. In order to maintain environmental activism in the age of coronavirus, Uni Students for Climate Justice is organising a national Digital Climate Strike on May 15. This will involve an open national zoom protest. Participants are encouraged to design and showcase placards and will be able to listen to speeches.

## **Platform**

The USyD SRC;

1. Publicly endorses the Digital Climate Strike on May 15.
2. Recognises the necessity of continued activism, albeit in different forms, during this period of crisis and that a fighting, militant union, comprised of serious activists, is essential for the realisation of this.
3. Supports Uni Students for Climate Justice in its organising of environmental activism.

## **Action**

1. The USYD SRC will share the event page for the May 15 Digital Climate Strike before the May 9.
2. All councillors and OB's will attend the nationwide zoom protest on May 15 and encourage others to join in too.
3. The SRC and its collectives will commit to building the May 15 Digital Climate Strike in the period leading up to it, including but not limited to using paid boosts to posts sharing the event.

Discussion:

Deaglan Godwin spoke to the motion highlighting how the climate strikes of 2019 were a huge movement, and it pushed against the idea of individualism as being the way to climate action and putting back on the big companies driving this disaster. Deaglan encouraged everyone to attend the and promote the digital climate strike and hope it would be a reinvigorating moment for the movement and while the lockdown shouldn't be lifted earlier than safe, it will be good to be able to organise again.

Grace Bowskill spoke to the motion saying that we need to be ready to take up both the fights of old and new after lockdown has ended. Adding that there was a close relationship between environmental destruction and advent of corona virus. Continuing that noting that capitalism destroys the two means of its wealth, humans and the environment, we are seeing this right now with the destruction of environments and people being effectively killed by their governments inactions or proper providing of healthcare and refusing to move away from fossil fuels.

Madeleine Clark spoke to the motion and wanted to focus on one of the main points of the motion, there has been claims that the virus has been good for the environment, this is anti-human and it doesn't symbolise a move away from the destructive policies rather that due to profit loss governments are using this excuse to slash environmental protections and allowing more harmful practices and projects. Showing support for this movement right now is even more important.

Prudence Wilkins-Wheat spoke to the motion saying that much of the fervour around the environmental movement has sadly died down in what was expected to be a great year for the movement and that the eco fascist movement where the idea is to just get rid of people, does nothing for real climate actions. it is the corporations and governments are pushing forward climate change and they are the ones responsible, and the ones trying to use the confusion and distraction caused by Corona virus to push through more harmful projects when they think no one is paying attention.

Mikaela Pappou spoke to the motion saying it was disgusting how the government was using the coronavirus crisis to distract from its slashing of environmental protections and making it easier for corporations to destroy our planet. This is just more evidence of how we hold economic outcomes over human and environmental outcomes.

Kedar Maddali spoke to the motion wanted to echo Prudence Wilkins-Wheat's comments and add that in Canada even through this health crisis they are working to illegally build the pipeline through Wet'suwet'en land through the lockdown, taking advantage of the fact that groups of people are not able to gather but are still apparently allowed to work on a pipeline. This highlights

how much the government will take advantage of any gap to get what they want no matter the cost.

Moved: Deaglan Godwin

Seconded: Grace Bowskill

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

#### **Q4. #NoUniCuts May 22 National Day of Action**

##### **Preamble:**

1. Australia's higher education sector is in freefall due to the impacts of the health crisis. Sydney Uni has reported that it has lost \$470million from the pandemic, due to a drop in international students, and the move to online learning. Instead of selling off their extensive investment portfolios and drastically reducing the salaries of Vice-Chancellors and upper management, they are seeking to push costs onto staff and students. This is directly the result of a user-pays model where international students are treated as cash cows, and universities constantly seek to expand their revenue. Nationalised universities with free tertiary education would not encounter this sort of crisis.
2. The university has already undergone many restructures and cuts in previous years. In 2016, they moved to cut the amount of faculties from 16 to six and shut down the Sydney College of the Arts. Now, they are moving to implement drastic cuts. It's been reported that Arts courses will be cut by 30% in the upcoming semester, with a linked 1/3 of casual staff losing their jobs. A hire freeze has been implemented, and it is estimated that 21 0000 university jobs will be lost by the end of the year. While crying poor, the Vice Chancellor Michael Spence has kept his pay packet of \$1.5million.
3. To fight against these impending cuts, a national student group, Students Organising Resistance (SOR) have organised a fightback. On April 24 they organised a zoom protest that over 100 students joined. This demonstration included speakers Mehreen Faruqi, and others, who spoke about the need for an education system that is not run for profit. The protest then split into state specific groups to discuss further details.
4. The next day of action will be on May 22nd. This action will be a protest designed as a debate against the Education Minister Dan Tehan with other online actions to spread awareness. The main demand of this action is #nouncuts. Students and staff deserve an education sector that is not for profit, fully funded and free.

##### **Platform:**

The USYD SRC:

1. Supports Students Organising Resistance and the May 22nd National Day of Action.

2. Supports #nouncuts with the principle that staff working conditions are students learning conditions.
3. Condemns university management for shouldering the costs of the crisis onto staff and students.
4. Condemns the for-profit model of education, and demands fully funded and free education.

**Action:**

1. The SRC will share the event for May 22nd NDA on Facebook and encourage others to take part on other social media platforms.
2. The SRC will work alongside Students Organising Resistance to oppose course cuts, job losses and wage concessions.
3. The SRC will take part in May 22nd NDA by participating in the national zoom protest, sharing the livestream and posting solidarity photos and encouraging others to do the same.

**Discussion:**

Willow Lont spoke to the motion outlining its main components. Adding that Students Organising resistance had a great launch and was really great for engaging students in organising and preparing for the next NDA. Willow concluded by saying that it's really important to support this as well as the no cuts campaign during the pandemic crisis as they try to use it to scape goat their decisions.

Maddie Clark spoke to the motion saying that it is a really exciting campaign and pushing that it's not staff and students that should bear the brunt of the cost of this crisis. Also to push the Education minister to answer up and debate student on why the university sector is getting no support from the government and to stand up and explain himself.

Moved: Willow Lont

Seconded: Maddie Clark

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

Procedural motion to discuss and vote en bloc Q5 and R1

Moved: Mikaela Pappou

Seconded: Liam Donohoe

The procedural was put and **CARRIED.**

**Q5. USYD Says No to ProctorU**

**Preamble:**

1. ProctorU is the latest step in the neo-liberalisation of university education. Decades of the user-pay model has emboldened university management to attack the student experience as students themselves become customers in the eyes of the university- learning has taken a back seat to profit.
2. This is clear in how ProctorU breaches student privacy so its parent company Meazure Learning can profiteer. Whilst 'supervising' a student exam, students are forced to submit themselves to being watched via webcam by a program that tracks and records keystrokes, noise and eye movement. The software also gains full control of your computer. Many students have reported being forced to show their entire room to an unseen 'proctor' as well as verify themselves with photo ID. The company admits in its privacy policy that any information collected by this spyware can be sold or transferred to any third parties in the event of a 'bankruptcy, merger, acquisition, reorganization, or sale of assets.' ProctorU can collect not only the recordings of the examination and student's room but also IP address and phone number amongst other personal information. This a transparent and appalling breach of student privacy.
3. It must be noted, however, that the implementation of ProctorU is not a one-off misstep by university administration. The gross abuses of student privacy are part of the systematic undermining of student experience for profit. The punitive and invasive nature of ProctorU is designed to save the university from implementing a better student experience and properly paying staff for the overtime being forced on them by management. Any fightback against ProctorU must not solely focus on the invasive nature of the spyware, but must be situated in a broader fightback against the cuts to staff conditions and student experience that are currently underway. This requires unflinching opposition to university management, those implementing ProctorU. University management are the ones imposing austerity conditions on staff, the history of campaigning for better student and staff conditions is one of action and opposition- such as the defeat of \$100,000 uni degrees in 2014. Similarly, governments of both parties have overseen the implementation of the user-pays university model. Politicians who see education as a commodity, and students as customers, should not be lobbied or looked towards. Instead, students need to be mobilised to fight back using their collective strength, such as in campaigns like Students Organising Resistance. To defeat ProctorU, the SRC must fight against university management.

**Platform:**

The USYD SRC:

1. Commits to opposing ProctorU and any software which infringes on student privacy.
2. Opposes the implementation of ProctorU and other potential software and measures which seek to treat students as data points which can be bought and sold.

3. Acknowledges that ProctorU is not an isolated attack on student conditions, but part of decades of attacks on staff and students under the user-pays model of education.

**Action points;**

1. The SRC will support and build campaigns against ProctorU and any cuts to tertiary education and student conditions.

Moved: Owen Marsden-Readford

Seconded: Holly Hayne

**R1. The SRC supports actions ensuring the right to privacy for university students**

**Preamble**

The COVID-19 crisis has proven that we as ordinary people must keep our right to privacy at the forefront of our everyday lives. Reliance on social media and other online communication platforms for work, education, and leisure has accelerated during this pandemic. Technology has significantly benefited us in this way, such as in enabling us to continue to access mental and physical health services. However, it means that students must be informed and vigilant about protecting their personal information from private corporations and governments.

Across Australia, universities have been implementing measures that compromise the personal information of students even before the COVID-19 pandemic. While this may not be done to deliberately harm students, it is something we must take action against. For example, at the University of Newcastle, an app has been developed to track student attendance by monitoring their location records. There are other examples where universities have tracked students through their wi-fi usage, such as at the University of Melbourne.

USyd students are taking action against university measures that compromise our personal information, particularly the decision to use ProctorU to run online examinations. The SRC has been at the frontline of this pushback against privacy infringements. The SRC executive has been repping the privacy and anti-ProctorU concerns of students at university committees. Office-bearers have also been supporting students who may not previously have been involved in activism, such as by engaging in Facebook groups like 'USyd - Say No to ProctorU!.' We have been facilitating organising on a unit of study level for students who want to fight back against privacy infringements. The Education Action Group has been organising petitions including against ProctorU privacy abuses.

However, we can do more. This needs to be incorporated into a long-term project for the SRC and we must push for student privacy to be a crucial element of the restructuring at USyd in the aftermath of COVID-19. Given the myriad of privacy issues arising at other universities, the SRC should organise Right to Information requests into USyd's treatment of student privacy, potentially including issues such as attendance recording and access to sensitive information such as special consideration applications.

**Platform**

1. The SRC supports the actions of current SRC office-bearers in fighting for privacy rights at USyd.
2. The SRC recognises the need to develop a long-term project for protecting student privacy at USyd.
3. The SRC condemns the USyd administration's full support for ProctorU.
4. The SRC condemns the attacks and negligence regarding the privacy of students from successive federal governments.

#### **Action**

1. The SRC will continue to support and lead actions that promote the protection of student privacy at USyd.
2. The SRC will continue to organise against the use of ProctorU at USyd and fight for alternative examination methods to be used.
3. The SRC will develop student privacy workshops as part of the SRC Informs initiative.
4. The SRC will organise Right to Information requests into USyd's treatment of student privacy.

Moved: Vivienne Goodes

Seconded: Roisin Murphy

Discussion:

Owen Marsden-Readford spoke to Q5 and highlighted that ProctorU is affectively spyware who have to use, it is a terrible program but also there has been a big push back against the program from the university and while many have rejected it, it should be rejected in its entirety, at best because it treats students like they are cheaters, at worst because it call sell data and information to third party groups. It's important that we fight to get rid of ProctorU completely, this is not a once off misstep, this is part of a trend of the university to attack student conditions to preserve profits. This is also part of the wider campaign to protect education and this means we need to fight completely against those who would commodify out education.

Holly Hayne waved her speaking rights to Yasmine Johnson

Yasmine Johnson spoke to Q5 saying that ProctorU and online programs like it should be completely done away with as they aren't just brought in place for the pandemic, the pandemic is a test so management can bring them in as cost saving measure at the expense of student education and staff conditions. Students have faced continued attacks on their education and conditions because education is seen as a commodity, and this is just an extension of fighting for student rights.

Vivienne Goodes spoke to R1 saying that much of the sentiments of Q5 are also reflected in R1, but wanted to emphasise that this is one of many anti privacy measure in the university sector that has been occurring before and during the pandemic, and it is important that the SRC extends its defence of students right to privacy rights as well as this is a long term fight.

Roisin Murphy spoke to R1 adding that as well as this being important on a university level, ProctorU is part of a wider societal movement removing privacy and something that is done but

governments often in Australia. Universities are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to privacy issues.

Jiale (Wayne) Wang spoke to the motions expressing concerns about the privacy issues for students as the information may be sold and asked Owen Marsden-Readford what he believed could be done to ensure academic integrity if ProctorU is not used.

Owen Marsden-Readford responded to Jiale's question saying that he did not believe that this was the role of place of the student union with regards to ProctorU and that if you want to talk about protecting quality of education then there needs to be a fight for staff conditions and protections and better funding. It's not the role of student unions to treat student like possible cheaters but to fight for students right to access quality education.

Jiale Wang said he would like to talk more on this later and suggested that since there were supervisors at even smaller exams that perhaps student should agree to allow them to still proctor as long as their privacy was not breached, or information sold.

*Liam Donohoe resigned the Chair to Felix Faber*

Nicholas Comino spoke to the motions the ProctorU privacy policy says that the information and data will be stored with them and in the advent of bankruptcy, acquisitions or merger that that information may be sold or transferred. While people may think it was fine, it's not ok and this is a very shady practice, even ticket sales companies have gotten into trouble for doing this, and they only have names and emails. Universities have not been upfront about the use of these programs to students, at the University of Queensland, students weren't informed about what programs would be used for their exams until after the census date. Adding that it's not students responsibilities to come up with alternatives, the universities need to think about thing and not be lazy, there are many online universities that do not use these programs so we know it can be done.

Jason Howe spoke to the motions noting that the right to privacy should not be controversial and responded to Jiale's questions saying that while academic integrity is important but in these difficult times the university focus should not be on if exams are being proctored to the same level. We need to be standing up for student's privacy.

Liam Donohoe spoke to the motion and responded to the questions from Jiale's question, saying that while it is not the role of student organisations to think of these thing's options could be, having fewer exams, assignments and take-home exams have been in use for a long time. Adding that it was baffling that the Arts faculty was so focused on using proctor U when it is the easiest to use different assessments for. At Monash when they agreed to not use ProctorU they developed their own in house version, and seeing as most of the information that would otherwise be handed to ProctorU is handed over to the university already it seems much less invasive or concerning, there must be ways this can be done. On the issue of ProctorU I agree what while we have made some good progress it needs to be done away with completely, and on R1 he agreed there needs to be a better understanding and a stronger push to protect out data and to take it more seriously.

Both motions were put and **CARRIED.**

*Liam Donohoe resumed the Chair*

**R. General Business**

Procedural motion to discuss R2 and R7 simultaneously

Moved from the Chair

The procedural was put and **CARRIED.**

*Liam Donohoe resigned the Chair to Charlotte Bullock*

**R2. Solidarity With Migrant Workers Preamble:**

1. Migrant workers have been left out of increased government support for many sections of society during the COVID-19 economic shutdown. Many international students are migrant workers and
2. Labor Senator Kristina Kenneally published a racist attack on migration, dressing up visa concerns held by some in the union movement with One Nation-style racist dogwhistling. Rather than affirming the principle that workers are stronger united in solidarity, Kenneally's article divides workers by race and borders. The article has attracted the approval of Pauline Hanson among other notorious racists, and fits into a wider, historic, pattern of failure from the union movement to stand in solidarity with migrant workers.
3. Migrant workers don't set wages, bosses do. The most effective means to stop the underpayment of migrant workers is to end the unjust visa system that makes their residency contingent on their ongoing employment, allowing bosses to hold migrants' residencies over their heads.
4. Students and workers must stand in solidarity with migrant workers to fight for their collective rights and demand an end to all wage exploitation.

Platform:

1. The SRC unreservedly condemns Keneally's comments as dogwhistling intended to exclude migrant workers from the solidarity of the union movement.
2. The SRC further condemns the utter failure of the Morrison and Berejiklian governments to include support for migrant workers in their response to the COVID-19 crisis.
3. The SRC stands in solidarity with all workers, and recognises that unity between unions and migrant workers is key to economic and social justice.

Action:

1. The SRC will publish the preamble of this motion on its Facebook page, along with a link to the 'No Worker Left Behind: Online Town Hall' event hosted by Visa Assist IARC and Unions NSW.

Moved: Felix Faber

## **R7. NSW and Australia Support International Students**

### **Preamble**

This Council is already well-aware of the significant economic and material hardships facing students right now. But that economic and material hardship is all the worse for International Students and other non-citizens / permanent residents, who, as of 06.06.2020, have not been provided an iota of support from any level of government (in NSW).

Whereas the ACT, Victoria, and other states have announced support packages for International Students, the NSW government has offered International Students nothing but lip service. We should all be shocked and appalled to hear that many of our peers—many of our friends—have no more than \$100 in their bank account and no ability to make any money for months. On top of travel restrictions, which effectively imprison them in Australia, this is a truly dire situation, one which threatens to leave countless students and workers homeless, hungry, and barely surviving.

The SRC cannot stand for this. We represent all students, and our International Student friends need urgent support. We must pressure the Federal and State governments to provide support to International Students and non-citizens / non-residents, starting with the actions listed below.

### **Platform**

1. The Students' Representative Council demands that the NSW government immediately announces a support package for International Students and all non-citizens / non-residents which is sufficient to cover any housing and living expenses.
2. The Students' Representative Council demands that the Australian government immediately announce a National Hardship Fund International Students and all non-citizens / non-residents to assist with any housing and living expenses.

### **Actions**

The Students' Representative Council will:

1. Incorporate demands for further supporting International Students into our No Student Left Behind campaign.
2. Post these demands from our social media before the end of the week.
3. Undertake more concerted efforts to pressure the government into announcing a package, including by social media bombing and contacting MPs offices.
4. Raise these demands and concerns with the National Union of Students to ensure they are working towards them, particularly by using parliamentary and media connections the USyd SRC does not have.

Mover: Liam Donohoe

Secunder: Prudence Wilkins-Wheat

Discussion:

Felix Faber spoke to the motion R2 condemning the comments of Kristina Keneally for calling for fewer migrant workers after the pandemic lockdown. Adding that this mentality reflected the stance held by the unions long ago who once opposed women in the workforce for fear it would drive down men's wages till they realised that the way to solve the problem was to fight for equal pay not against women, this should be the same for migrant workers we should be fighting for them to have equal wages, the bosses set the wages not the workers and they need protections, not having their residency or visas used against them.

Roisin Murph spoke to the motion R2 adding that it is extremely important to note that governments have continuously left migrant workers behind and allowed their gross exploitation and that it is really not acceptable and so often the discourse is deeply racist and that in the past when there has been attacks on migrant workers the economy has suffered as they take the jobs many Australians are unwilling to do.

Liam Donohoe spoke to the motion R7 saying that it is incredibly distressing to hear from international students hwo sometimes have only \$10 left in their accounts and are being told they need to find \$700 for the rent when they've lost their jobs. There has been a big back and forth on who is responsible for economic relief and this is just not good enough and we need to see people get the support they need here, as there are people stuck here unable to get home, work or survive with no support available to them.

Prudence Wilkins-Wheat spoke to R7 highlighting the lack of communication with many student from the university and the sense of isolation that has resulted from this situation and there has been next to no support from the university or the government, and both need to step up.

Grace Bowskill spoke to both motions echoing the statements of the previous speakers, and that this has fuelled racism in the debates around migrant workers and we need to support migrant workers and remember what they contribute to the economy and they they're work should be recognised.

Holly Hayne spoke to both motions highlighting that international students are one of the most exploited groups, they are forced to pay ridiculous amounts of money and then are left abandoned by the government and the university and are now facing evictions and job losses after being convinced by the university to come here for their studies.

The motions were put and **CARRIED.**

### **R3. Defend Our Education**

#### **Preamble**

In the past weeks and months USyd has announced many unsavoury changes to our education, from invasive exam software, to forcing staff to push content online with little support. Even when we 'return to normal' your teachers might lose their jobs, you will have less unit options to choose from, may no longer have tutorials to attend, and will lose face to face teaching time. Universities are attacking the quality of our education to recoup the losses of COVID-19, and this is unacceptable.

As a student union we need to stand against these measures, and fight for a maintained quality of education for students, and good working conditions for staff. In order to do this the EAG has decided to launch a Usyd Specific Campaign; “Defend our Education Usyd”. This campaign was developed in a large open organising meeting held by the EAG and the SRC, which drew in a broad range of activists and students. Going forward this style of open public meeting will continue, and hopefully will continue to draw in a large array of interested students.

### **Platform**

1. The Students’ Representative Council totally supports the “Defend Our Education” campaign, and supports the following demands / focus (in principle):

#### **No Uni Cuts!**

The government should fund us through this crisis and management shouldn’t pass on any losses: Immediately fund all Universities so they can cover all expenses, guarantee accommodation for all students, and cease University fees.

#### **No ProctorU!**

We shouldn’t have to submit to invasive software to study: Offer special considerations to students who object to ProctorU, totally suspend the use of ProctorU, and pursue alternatives (like different assessment procedures or an in-house online invigilation service).

#### **No Disadvantage**

Our futures shouldn’t be jeopardised by a crisis outside our control: Only display our superior WAM on our transcripts, give us end-to-end in-person case management for all student issues, and simplify special considerations.

#### **Defend Staff!**

The Uni should maximise staff numbers for smaller class sizes, more efficient administration, and faster marking: Offer full contracts to all casuals, maintain their usual wages, and allocate staff on the basis of need and best-practice.

#### **Defend Learning!**

The Uni should ensure our learning and academic pursuits aren’t undermined: Maintain all 2020 courses, give staff the resources to implement best-practice online learning, let us defer assessment and labs until we can do them in-person.

#### **Defend Our Education!**

### **Actions**

The Students’ Representative Council will:

1. Support the Defend Our Education campaign by whatever means necessary.
2. Raise the concerns and demands of the campaign at all relevant University committee meetings and to all relevant University personnel.

3. Organise the broader student body around these demands, including through regular and widely-advertised organising meetings.
4. Alert media to the existence of the campaign and attempt to have articles published about it.
5. Use social media to promote the campaign, including by posting regularly about it from our Facebook and WeChat accounts.
6. Print any materials and provide resources as necessary for any in-person activities.
7. Investigate the possibility of a socially distant / safe protest.

Discussion:

Liam Donohoe spoke to the motion highlighting it's importance and that the prime campaigns are not cute and not student left behind, this campaign is focused on the academic issue students are being faced, this is combines closely with these other two campaigns. With issues like staff cuts and privacy being important parts of that. This is about making the university look at us like people not data points or potential ranking improvements.

Jack Mansell spoke to the motion noting that while we often look at larger political and systemic issues, these smaller ones are really important as much of what has changes has lead to a less valuable learning experience. Before the pandemic the university was churning people through and with minimum care and these changes since the pandemic has meant that often even though uniformities have been through-out devaluing out education further. This is a really important issue as students are even in a really precarious position and education is about learning not churning out degrees.

Willow Lont spoke to the motion saying that student's and teachers should not be the ones paying for this crisis, in the form or course, staff or wage cuts. Adding that the SRC should be fighting for not cuts to the sector and a fully funded sector.

Mover: Jazzlyn Breen

Secunder: Liam Donohoe

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

#### **R4. Endorse NTEU 21<sup>st</sup> May NDA**

##### **Preamble**

Guided by the rank and file, The National Tertiary Education Union has called for a National Day of Action for the 21st of May, demanding action be taken to save the higher education sector. The NTEU is calling for a rescue package to be granted to the higher ed sector by the government in order to keep staff, degrees and education quality from being destroyed. Currently, the highly casualised workforce of universities is excluded from the JobKeeper payments - putting 30,000 jobs at risk.

It is essential that as a student union we stand in solidarity with university staff, as staff working conditions really are student learning conditions. The SRC should support the need for no job cuts, pay cuts or education cuts of any kind as necessary for the upholding of quality education.

### **Platform**

1. The Students' Representative Council endorses the National Tertiary Education Union's National Day of Action, which they have called for the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May.

### **Actions**

The Students' Representative Council will:

1. Promote the National Day of Action via social media and other means, including by posting about the NDA on Facebook and WeChat before the 10<sup>th</sup> of May.
2. Participate in any NDA events, including, but not limited to, online posts, panels / live streams, and socially distant / safe protests,
3. Reach out to the USyd branch of the NTEU to see how we can best support them, offering printing, banner painting, and other facilities if necessary.

Discussion:

Liam Donohoe spoke to the motion adding that we should all be proud that the staff at this university have taken a radical position, and many other branches won't take this position and we should get around this national day of action for the NTEU members.

Jack Mansell spoke to the motion saying he thought this was an important action and an important demand to make of the government, but that regardless there should be no cuts to staff or their conditions.

Mover: Jazzlyn Breen

Seconder: Liam Donohoe

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

*Liam Donohoe resumed the Chair*

## **R5. Endorse the Housing Defence Coalition and Fight for Housing Justice**

### **Preamble**

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are, by now, well-known. All across the country millions have lost their job, and government protections assist only a select few. International Students, countless casuals, people between the age of 18 and 22, and all non-citizens and non-residents are among those who have been given next to no financial support, and landlords have been incredibly unforgiving. Flimsy moratoriums on evictions, which really saddle renters with mountainous debts and empower landlords to act in bad faith, are of little comfort, and many thousands of students and workers are on the cusp of homelessness.

But despite the chaos and horror of this period some positives have emerged. The Sydney Housing Defence Coalition (HDC) has been organising tenants and activists behind radical demands, working towards a national rent strike in the long-run. For now, however, they have been undertaking direct action in support of tenants, showing up at evictions to prevent them from taking place. There has already been one successful action in St. Peter's and another one, planned for this Friday (the 8<sup>th</sup> of May) has already resulted in the landlord, Iglu Chatswood, cancelling the eviction. Further, student activists involved with the HDC, along with the SRC, have helped mobilise tenants in University of Sydney accommodation, forcing the University to quickly announce a moratorium on evictions and ad hoc rent suspension / reduction initiatives.

It is clear that militant grassroots struggle is the only way to counteract the significant power of landlords. We need more anti-eviction actions, more protests, and more solidarity. The SRC should be instrumental in this fight, not least because many of those most affected by evictions and homelessness are the people we were elected to represent. The Housing Defence Coalition is not the only body that does useful work in this area, but it is certainly a model worthy of note and praise. Through its example, and our own work, we have a hope at achieving housing justice in this period and beyond.

### **Platform**

1. The Students' Representative Council endorses the Housing Defence Coalition, and supports their actions on behalf of tenants. We express our full solidarity with organisers.
2. The Students' Representative Council expresses its full solidarity towards tenants in distress, particularly International Students left without an income.
3. The Students' Representative Council supports efforts to organise rent strikes and other strategies which empower tenants.

### **Actions**

The Students' Representative Council will:

4. Promote any Housing Defence Coalition actions or activities via its social media.
5. Assist the Housing Defence Coalition with printing, banner painting, and potentially other expenses through our Student Housing Office.
6. Fight for increased affordable University accommodation, more cheap social housing, and the nationalisation of private student accommodation firms, like Iglu, Urbanest, and UniLodge.

Further, the Students' Representative Council:

1. Calls on the University of Sydney to suspend rent for all students, or at least offer a transparent way for students to apply for suspension and rent reductions.
2. Calls on the NSW government to significantly increase public housing stock.

Discussion:

Swapnik Sanagavarapu supported the motion and said there was no homelessness in Cuba.

Madeleine Clark spoke to the motion saying that while she doesn't know the stats here, in the USA 40% of people are one pay check away from financial ruin and unable to pay their rent. In Australia there has been a growing push for rent strikes, the rental assistance package is giving relief to landlords and giving nothing to tenant and simply making tenant accumulate debt.

Prudence Wilkins-Wheat spoke to the motion endorsing what had been said by others and adding that she had heard there was a meeting of some from the University executive and accusing students of not taking enough initiative to find out these things, even though they are making it specifically hard for students to find out their rights. Adding that we need to be supportive of this campaign.

Mover: Liam Donohoe

Seconder: Swapnik Sanagavarapu

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

*Liam Donohoe resigned the chair to Charlotte Bullock*

## **R6. SRC Mutual Aid**

### Preamble

With students and other vulnerable people facing significant losses in income and employment, money has never been tighter. Countless students are being forced to make difficult decisions, like choosing whether to pay rent or eat for the next week. Aside from an arbitrarily lucky few, like those over the age of 22 or who were employed casually by the same firm for 12 months, most students are being forced to endure this period with no help from the government.

The SRC can't stand by and watch students suffer. We were elected to represent students' interests, and questions of basic material subsistence are surely uncontroversial—if there is anything we were all elected to do, it's, at the very least, to make sure students don't die because of hunger, malnutrition, or homelessness. With that obligation in mind the SRC has been working tirelessly to develop a comprehensive mutual aid program. This has so far included:

1. The development of an SRC COVID-19 response group on WeChat and Facebook, and a Mutual Aid specific one on WeChat.
2. The development of an SRC Mutual Aid volunteer group.
3. Working with the Inner West Mutual Aid Facebook group, helping promote their work and advertising our support initiatives to them.
4. Most significantly, sourcing goods to be put in an "essentials pack", which we are now distributing to students.

Thanks to the work of countless staff, students, and Office Bearers, the SRC has been able to acquire enough goods to start delivering and distributing our essentials packs. Having received donations from suppliers and partnered with the Exodus Foundation, we can now send students enough nutritious (and tasty) food to last them a week. While it's hardly perfect or entirely what students need, it is certainly helpful, and may make the difference for some.

We have already received over 140 requests for help / packs. We can't wait to distribute these to students, and get the word out further so that students, workers, and other members of the

community can benefit from our hard work and surplus. Any and all people are welcome to volunteer to help!

### **Platform**

1. The Students' Representative Council notes the launch and existence of our Mutual Aid program.
2. The Students' Representative Council notes the hard work of countless students and staff members in getting the project off the ground, and thanks them for their efforts.

### **Actions**

The Students' Representative Council will:

1. Financially and morally support the Mutual Aid project and the volunteers forming its working group.

Discussion:

Liam Donohoe spoke to the motion thanking the volunteers for their efforts rolling this program out. Adding that many of the volunteers have had no prior engagement with the SRC. Concluding that this was one of the best things the SRC had done in the last couple of years.

Paola Ayre waved her speaking rights

Felix Faber spoke to the motion agreeing with the comments of Liam Donohoe and adding that he felt there were a lot of students who were not just in financial troubles but also worried for their health in this crisis. Adding that this is much of the work that a student union needs to be doing, they shouldn't just be passive bodies lobbying the universities they should be playing an active role in students' lives.

*Liam Donohoe resumed the Chair*

Mover: Liam Donohoe

Seconder: Paola Ayre

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

## **R8. SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS DURING COVID-19**

### **Preamble**

Today is National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day, with May being Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Right now, we face a situation where domestic and family violence are, even more so than usual, especially pressing and relevant issues. We have seen reports of significant increases in domestic and family violence during the current COVID-19 health crisis, with social

distancing measures and domestic violence risk factors like widespread job losses and economic insecurity contributing to a situation where many people not only face aggravated situations of domestic violence, but also have much less privacy and ability to access external support systems. On top of the health risks posed by COVID-19 and threats to economic stability, many people also additionally face being stuck at home with their abusers for an unprecedented amount of time. In China, reports from family domestic violence advocates showed that domestic and family violence rates in February this year tripled compared to February last year. In the UK, deaths from domestic violence have more than doubled during COVID-19 restrictions, with calls to helplines surging sevenfold. With Australia before COVID-19 already facing a rate of one woman killed as a result of domestic violence per week, and domestic violence shelters in the country facing increased demand for support which many do not have the capacity to provide for, it is evident that far more needs to be done.

Domestic violence is a student issue. On top of the pre-existing situation where a number of students experience partner violence, the current COVID-19 situation has meant that many students will have no option but to return to unsafe family homes. A number of students who have the capacity to move out of their family home to study will do so during their university years. For students coming from unsafe living situations, this can be a means of escaping to a safer living situation. However, with widespread job cuts and economic insecurity, alongside a shift to fully online learning, many students who otherwise would be able to support themselves independently may have lost access to previous revenue streams, and no longer have a reason to pay exorbitant rates of rent to live closer to educational institutions to study. This means that many students who would otherwise choose to live away from home may have no option but to move back home to an unsafe family home. It is crucial to note that this issue is inseparable from its economic context; economic insecurity is a risk factor for domestic violence, and people who face economic insecurity as a result of COVID-19-related job cuts are more likely to need to return to unsafe living conditions due to the exorbitant cost of student housing.

As a student union, it is imperative that in supporting students through the numerous challenges imposed by COVID-19, we support students facing domestic and family violence, and stand in solidarity with all people experiencing domestic violence. The USyd Women's Collective is currently working with Mudgin-gal and the Women and Girls Emergency Centre to provide support and establish stronger connections going forward. The University of Sydney Student Representative Council should engage in similar efforts to support students experiencing domestic and family violence as part of its broader commitment to mutual aid during COVID-19.

#### **Platform**

1. Domestic and family violence are significant issues that have been made far worse within the current context of the COVID-19 crisis and social distancing restrictions.
2. Domestic and family violence are student issues made worse within the current COVID-19 context.
3. Domestic and family violence are inseparable from their economic context; job cuts and economic insecurity are risk factors for increased rates of domestic violence, and impact people's ability to escape unsafe situations.

#### **Action**

1. The SRC posts a solidarity statement in line with Domestic Violence Awareness Month on its social media platforms.

2. The SRC pledges financial support to domestic violence shelters.
3. The SRC includes the logistics of enacting the Women's Collective's initiatives to support local domestic violence shelters within the mutual aid program. This would include donations of non-perishable food, single fitted sheets and doona covers, and gift cards from Kmart, Target, Coles, and Woolworths to the Women and Girls Emergency Centre.
4. The SRC continues to fight against economic insecurity wherever possible by committing to fighting against COVID-19-related job cuts, standing in solidarity with upcoming strikes and NDAs fighting for worker's rights, and fights for more equitable student housing costs.

Discussion:

Ellie Wilson spoke to the motion covered the main points of the motion, adding that it is a really relevant not just because of the day and month but due to Covid19 and the lockdown making thing more dangerous for people. Many people who may have been able to leave or planning to may have lost their jobs and the financial capacity to and many more will be moving back home to unsafe situations. Ellie Wilson asked that we also platform and support these groups in our work

Vivienne Guo spoke to the motion echoing Ellie Wilson's comments and that this motion deal with something that we cannot sweep to the side just because of Covid19. People can't go home or go out without risking their life right now.

Lily Campbell spoke to the motion noting that she appreciated how it draw attention the how the economic situation and hardship creates dangerous situations where people cannot leave abusive situations, and this is exacerbated in rural and regional areas. The liberals defunded and privatised 1800RESPECT and sold it so there is now someone profiting of that distress.

Kedar Maddali spoke to the motion saying that in disasters often the social consequences are forgotten. This is not limited to this crisis and this has been an ongoing issue for too long.

Moved: Ellie Wilson

Seconded: Vivienne Guo

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

## **R9. Condemn the USU**

**Action:**

1. The SRC publicly condemns the USU for cutting staff incomes by 40% and denying JobKeeper to multiple sacked staff members
2. The SRC calls on USU Board members to publicise the record of votes on staff pay and hours
3. The SRC Facebook page will publish action point 1 and 2 from its Facebook page, publicly and immediately

Discussion:

Jack Mansell spoke to the motion that this motion is being moved separately as there was a bunch of information missing from the first motion condemning the USU that only came out today. And that the decisions of the USU shows contempt for their staff, and that the SRC as a student union should stand up to the USU and call on them to reveal their votes and we should support those who want to come forward, and we should support them to do so.

Liam Donohoe asked if he could post the action points tomorrow rather than immediately should the motion pass.

*Jack Mansell was amenable*

Lily Campbell spoke to the motion saying that what the USU is going to prioritising their financially situation over their staff and students. They are cutting their staff and slashing their wages to protect their bottom line and the USU should have a duty of care to these employees and they deserve to know who vote to treat their workers this way. People have tried to defend the USU and call out the university but the USU hasn't called on the university it chose to attack its staff to protect its solvency.

Liam Thomas spoke against the motion saying it is pretty ridiculous to attack the USU for cutting wages when if they didn't they would go under and no one would have a job at all. We should be calling on the university to assist student organisations. How else would you suggest they keep afloat without extra a float, and how can you claim they've not asked for support when we have no why of knowing.

Elinor Stephenson asked a question of Lily Campbell, and wanting to know her opinion on the USU's decision to trade of staff jobs and solvency, as you've implied their ongoing financial longevity over staff but how can they do that without cutting staff because if the USU goes bankrupt this is also bad for staff.

Lily Campbell responded saying that she believed the USU had enough in reserves to stay solvent and keep staff jobs and that the cuts should be coming from the executives first. They should be calling on the University to take on their operations if there isn't the money to keep going, but they aren't doing that because they are protecting the lining of their own pockets over saving their staff.

Liam Thomas responded that the board directors did take a pay cut.

Swapnik Sanagavarapu spoke to the motion saying that while he is not a huge supporter of the USU, but when you say they are prioritising their solvency but then that they have a secret stash of cash. If we assume they are prioritising solvency, if they don't everyone will be out of a job, further more while we have no way of knowing their financial situation due to the organisation opacity regardless the university needs to step in and assist them at this time.

*Liam Donohoe resigned the chair to Charlotte Bullock*

Prudence Wilkins-Wheat spoke to the motion saying she agreed with comments from both sides and that the situation difficult, but it is the opacity that is the biggest problem as no one know what the circumstances of the USU really is. There are people with investments in the USU and to see it absorbed by the university would be very disappointing. This comes down to transparency, it makes it hard to believe they are in such finical dire situation when they won't come out and publicly ask for support.

Deaglan Godwin spoke to the motion saying that you can be as radical as you want theoretically but when you support a business for keeping itself earning money over workers' rights you can't call yourself left wing anymore, especially at this time. Adding that the USU does not deserve the support of supposed leftists and the idea that staff should take a pay cut to keep things afloat is the old bogymen that is used to strip workers of their rights.

Elinor Stephenson asked questions to the movers, the first questions was if you had to pick between the USU closing down or making staff cuts what would you choose, and the second question was that the board directors make \$4000 a year each and the CEO significantly more, given the revenue loss has been in the 100 and 1000 of dollars in the last few weeks alone how would you recommend they economise without sacrificing workers?

Lily Campbell asked for the speaking list to be reopened to allow Yasmine Johnson on the speaking list.

*The Chair agreed.*

Liam Donohoe spoke to the motion and highlight that the USU is not a union, but it would be sad to see it fail regardless. Liam Donohoe said he would vote in favour of this motion because the USU has not publicly called on the university for help. They may not have the capacity, to keep these staff on but if that is the case they should be calling on the university for support, so I believe they are probably in a better financial situation than they are claiming. There is no reason the USU cannot ask for help from the university.

Mikaela Pappou spoke to the motion saying that all eligible workers are on job keeper but the USU does need to be more transparent. If the USU was to go insolvent all the USU programs and outlets would go to the University and they would do a worse job. What needs to happen it to hold the USU board directors to account and call for transparency.

Yasmine Johnson spoke to the motion and not all eligible workers are getting it because they have stood people down who were eligible for job keeper. They have been making redundancies and it has been really unclear what they are doing but people are losing their jobs. Adding that the board has delayed the release of their financial documents and they continue to make it difficult for people to Even if management take a 40% pay cut they make so much more it has a much smaller effect on them than others.

Moved: Jack Mansell

Seconded: Lily Campbelle

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

The following wanted their voted noted as opposed:

Liam Thomas

Angelina Gu

Nicholas Comino

## **R10. MOTION: No to prisons! Solidarity with incarcerated people during COVID-19**

### **Preamble**

Today, Susan Farrell, a 74 year old woman, was the first person to die of COVID-19 in a Michigan prison. She was incarcerated for over 30 years for allegedly killing her husband, who had sexually and physically abused her. When guards were made aware that she was extremely unwell by her bunkmate, she was placed in an extreme form of solitary, where she later died. Instead of being provided with crucial healthcare services, she was left to die untreated in humiliating circumstances.

Reporting on prisons during COVID-19 has shown that these institutions are frequently extremely overcrowded with little in the way of adequate healthcare facilities or supplies, making them incredibly dangerous zones for the spreading of COVID-19. A recent campaign started by the Queensland-based group Sisters Inside, called #CleanOutPrisons, asked for people to donate soap and cleaning supplies to prisons. This initiative was launched because prisoners were reporting that they did not even have access to soap, let alone the extensive cleaning supplies which would be necessary to adequately sanitise prison facilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

With the world at large grinding to a halt in the face of COVID-19, incarcerated people and their safety have been completely ignored. Prisons continue to be packed over capacity without adequate hygiene strategies in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, making prisons everywhere huge risk zones for COVID-19 transmission. Many incarcerated people have also been cut off from visiting times with family and connections to the outside world. For many people, this is an incredibly stressful and isolating situation, with countless people's lives left in the balance. Riots took place in a Cessnock prison on Thursday last week due to contact visits being halted and people going through drug withdrawal symptoms without being provided with any opioid withdrawal treatment from the prison to aid recovery.

Prisons do not enact justice, they only sweep society's problems under the rug and out of sight without fixing their root causes. They are themselves hotbeds of injustice and violence that too often worsen problems they claim to fix. On top of this, it is pertinent to note that marginalised and oppressed communities are disproportionately represented in incarcerated populations, with Australia having exceedingly high and disproportionate rates of Indigenous incarceration. Many people are incarcerated for crimes like not being able to afford to pay off fines. In America, as in Australia, prisons disproportionately incarcerate Indigenous and Black people who are then forced to do labour for cents on the hour, which has been put forward by many as the modern iteration of slavery. It is crucial that we stand in solidarity with the fight against these unjust institutions and the severe health risks incarcerated people currently face due to COVID-19.

### **Platforms:**

1. Incarcerated people face increased health risks during the COVID-19 health crisis, as overcrowded prison facilities make social distancing impossible, cleaning products are not being provided to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and prisons do not provide adequate healthcare to incarcerated people.

**Actions:**

1. The SRC president takes a photo with a sign saying #CleanOutPrisons and promotes the campaign, including a link to this page: <https://www.facebook.com/cleanoutprisons/>
2. Council takes a solidarity photo for #CleanOutPrisons.
3. The SRC commits to sending soap to a local women's prison.
4. The SRC promotes the #FreeHer fundraiser organised by Sisters Inside by sharing the link on its social media channels. This fundraiser aims to pay off unpaid fines for women who have been incarcerated for not being able to pay off fines. Link here: <https://au.gofundme.com/f/bfvnvt-freethepeople>

**Discussion:**

Ellie Wilson spoke to the motion covering the main points and that the media has highlighted the lack of hygiene or sanitary conditions in these prisons and the safety of these people has been completely overlooked. There have been unrest and there is serious concerns for inmates welfare. Ellie commended the motion to the council.

Owen Marsden-Readford spoke to the motion adding that in New York prisoners are digging mass graves, there have been riots in Colombia where people are trying to not die of a virus and there is no protections. Adding that the SRC should be for the abolition of prisons and that ordinary people in prisons should be let out at this time for their safety, rather than being treated like slaughter animals.

Moved: Ellie Wilson

Seconded: Georgia Mantle

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

*The meeting closed at 9:40pm.*