



src activism
advocacy
representation

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**Students' Representative Council,
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MINUTES:

of the 8th regular meeting of the 92nd SRC held on Wednesday the 2nd September 2020. Meeting held via Zoom.

A. Meeting open at 6:28 pm

A1. Election of Deputy Chairperson

The Chair moved that Charlotte Bullock 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.

C. Apologies, Proxies and Leaves of Absence

Apologies were received from:

Holly McDonald to Maia Edge
Angelina Gu to Charlotte Bullock
Zhenxu (Joseph) Yang to Zijie (Tom) Zhao
Julia Kovic to Matthew Harte
Vivienne Guo to Lauren Lancaster
Charlotte Ainsworth to Joel Jenkins

D. Changes to Membership

E. Electoral Report

E1. Report of the Electoral Officer

I cannot emphasise enough about in-person polling and my efforts to achieve this. I have correspondence from the Ministers for Health (NSW) office and from this, two electoral agencies have provided information for me to be able to prepare a possible in person polling plan for submission to the university. I am even attempting to speak to someone overseas around 2am following up on my email which has not been replied to yet. I don't need to reinvent the wheel just borrow someone else's (well copy and paste)

I am still working flat out to get ahead.

This election due to the last minute changes has caused considerable issues.

Regards

Geoff

Discussion:

Liam Donohoe spoke to the report and clarified what was meant by online election and spoke about the challenges to on campus campaigning due to the ongoing covid19 pandemic and restrictions placed on being on campus by the University.

Jack Mansell spoke to the report expressing concern that the regulations as voted on and adopted in July were not being followed by the Electoral Officer.

Charlotte Bullock assumed the chair

Motion to move the meeting in camera

Moved: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Lauren Lancaster

The meeting moved in camera at 6:51pm

The meeting moved ex camera at 7:15pm

Motion to accept the report of the Electoral Officer

Moved: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Swapnik Sanagavarapu

Liam Donohoe resumed the chair.

Motion to set the speaking time to 2 minutes.

Moved: Jack Mansell

Seconded: Roisin Murphy

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

F. Minutes of the previous Council meeting.

Minutes of the meeting of 91st SRC Council held on 2019 were circulated.

Motion: that the minutes of the 19th August 2020 be accepted.

Moved: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Swapnik Sanagavarapu

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

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

L. Report of the President and Executive

L1. Executive Minutes

Minutes of the Executive meetings from the 19th August 2020.

Motion: that the minutes of the executive meetings from 19th August 2020 be accepted.

Moved: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Swapnik Sanagavarapu

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

M. Report of the Vice-Presidents

Charlotte Bullock and Felix Faber tabled a written report:

The past few weeks have seen the fight over the future of higher education reach a fever pitch. To start with, we would like to condemn the actions of NSW Police at last Friday's rally against the Liberal government's proposed changes to university fees. It is beyond appalling that police should attend in greater numbers than those protesting, especially given that in the surrounding classrooms student sit in tutorial groups of 20+ and just down the road, shopping goes on at Broadway in unknown numbers without the intervention of police. Such an intervention only makes clearer than ever the priorities of the University and the government

Felix has been continuing his work with Clubs Against the Cuts, working to expand the reach and involve more clubs. He also held a forum aimed at STEM students which provided a good platform for discussion about the specific impact of fee hikes on STEM students. He is also working to organise a forum for Education and Social Work students to discuss staff cuts to the School. He is also working with other SRC representatives to revive the mutual aid program, and re-work it for on-campus use.

Charlotte has continued to attend committee meetings, having most recently attended the UE: Student Life Committee. She has also returned to one of the most projects that was originally one of her aims for the year. At the beginning of the year, she began working on a review, to take the form of a survey, of the new curriculum introduced in 2018. Given that it has been nearly three years since the curriculum was implemented, this year seems the perfect time to analyse its faults and successes given the first students in the curriculum will be coming towards the end of their studies. Such a review seemed less pressing compared to the move to online, CWAM and extreme shift in student welfare both financially, emotionally and in terms of study, that occurred with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the situation with the pandemic remains uncertain, it is likely to be uncertain well beyond this SRC's term, and so now seems the right time to begin work on this project once again. The review will aim to focus on whether the university has met its own aims in implementing the new curriculum, whether students have found their degree progression or study in general restricted or improved by the new curriculum, as well as other concerns. If anyone has any ideas, feel free to message Charlotte at the Vice President's email address.

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

Moved: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Swapnik Sanagavarapu

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

N. Report of the General Secretaries

Abbey Shi and Liam Thomas did not submit a report

O. Report of Committees and Officers

O1. Report of the Education Officers

Jazzlyn Breen and Jack Mansell tabled a written report

Education Officers' Report - September Council

Despite it only being two weeks since the last council meeting, we've still managed to be totally flat out.

August 28 national day of action

Across the country students gathered (in socially-distanced groups) to fight against the latest round of cuts and restructures being pushed through on higher education. In Sydney, serious building work was done for the August 28 national day of action. The turnout on the day was impressive considering the difficult conditions in which we organise. Around 150-200 students turned out, and many more showed their support by passing motions in their classes throughout the week. The response of students on campus stalls during week 1 demonstrates a significant degree of popular consciousness around the issue, that can definitely be mobilised going forwards.

On the day, however, we were met with serious repression. In a clearly premeditated operation, around 80 police including riot squad and mounted, descended on campus to break up the protest, issuing move-on orders before it even began. This was despite a significant COVID-safe

marshalling plan being devised and implemented to keep participants in strictly defined groups of less than 20. In fact, police behaviour made the event less COVID-safe, pushing protesters into bunched groups, and in some cases resulting in the loss of masks for attendees. 10 people including staff and students were arrested and fined, amounting to over \$10,000 cumulatively.

We were able to tap into significant public sympathy and raise over \$13,000 in 72 hours to cover the legal costs for protesters, if they so need. We demand that Sydney University management immediately stop their collaboration with local police, and release a statement rejecting police presence on campus. While there are serious difficulties posed to organising in this new period of repression, we refuse to capitulate to these egregious encroachments on basic democratic rights.

Police repression on campus

Since July, NSW police have made it clear that they intend to break up every and all attempts to organise protests, regardless of whether they are physically distanced. This precedent is extremely worrying and must be pushed against if we are to continually organise against the swathe of injustices and inequalities that have been accelerated by the COVID-19 social crisis. We condemn the appalling behaviour of NSW police and commit to fighting for the right to organise.

Many exemptions have already been made from the public health orders, including for university campuses which do not have to abide by the 4 square metre social distancing guidelines, and can have indoor classes of up to 35 people. Whilst parties of up to 500 are held on Cockatoo Island, 10,000 are allowed to football matches, and business reopens in the interests of profit-making, 21 protesters gathering together are met with hefty fines and arrests. All the while, ordinary people; students, the oppressed and exploited, are faced with an immense social crisis that threatens to plunge our lives into misery.

Protest and other mass collective action is the only power we have to resist this descent into misery. It is cynical and hypocritical that at this juncture, the government wants to strip us of our only power to resist their onslaught, despite their willingness to sacrifice our lives for their own gains. Responsibly organised protests are also far safer than most activity being reopened. Public health officials have still not found a single COVID-19 transmission linked to a protest. Protests are essential to defending the interests of ordinary people, and must be exempted from the public health order.

Open forum to discuss staff cuts

On Tuesday evening, the Education Action Group held an open forum to inform about and discuss the significant attacks on higher education being pursued by management at Sydney Uni, and to promote upcoming events to resist them. We extend our thanks to staff activist Joel Griggs for speaking!

Upcoming plans

There are a series of upcoming plans in the education campaign that we encourage all students and SRC members to attend, including the upcoming September 16 actions against cuts, and any future stunts, actions or protests against the cuts to higher education. All of these events can be found on the Sydney University Education Action Group page!

Supporting mob in Armidale for the coronial inquest into Tane Chatfield's death in custody

WoCo and EAG are requesting \$350 each to cover the cost of a bus hired for student activists and First Nations community members to travel up to Armidale for the outcome of the coronial inquest in Tane Chatfield's death.

Speaking list:

Jack Mansell spoke to his report recapping its main points and noting it's been a very busy time since the last meeting.

Jazzlyn Breen spoke to the funding request included in the

Motion: that the report of the Education Officers be accepted including the \$350 expenditure.

Moved: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Mikaela Pappou

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

Liam Donohoe resigned the Chair to Charlotte Bullock.

L2. President's Report

Liam Donohoe tabled a written report:

Amid the backdrop of the government's attacks on students and the slow strangulation of the higher education sector, the return to semester has proven both historic and eventful. Beyond the remarkable, and potentially risky, return to in-person classes, much has happened in the two weeks since our last Council meeting, including elections, protests, and even arrests. I'll start this report by talking about the activist initiatives in which I've been involved, before discussing less political operational matters.

Activism

Education Activism

National Higher Education Action Network

My primary focus over the past few weeks has been fighting the Morrison government's attacks on the University sector and USyd management's devastating cuts to staff, course options, and education quality. As part of that fight, I attended—and spoke at—the first General Assembly of the National Higher Education Action Network (NHEAN). I am incredibly excited by this new non-sectarian, grassroots campaign of staff and academic education activists, and encouraged by their commitment to organising strike action. Any serious attempt at defending or improving our Universities requires industrial action, and NHEAN's activities are the most promising step towards that so far. I look forward to participating in more of their organising efforts, and to build student solidarity actions around NHEAN's events.

Friday the 28th National Day of Action

The most dramatic day of the past two weeks—and perhaps of the education campaign so far—was the repression of our attempted National Day of Action by the NSW Police last Friday. Despite receiving no prior communication or warning from them beforehand, organisers and attendees were greeted by at least a half dozen riot squad 4WDs, more than a dozen patrol cars, and even a substantial mounted patrol, a display of size and strength the campus hasn't seen in many years. Though they held off from repressing a smaller prior action outside the F23 building, at 1pm a cavalry of police descended on Fisher library to issue a public move-on order to the hundred plus students and staff gathered near the Coffee cart. From there, all hell broke loose, with the police arresting students at random while the crowd confronted them with “cops off campus” chants. At one stage I was briefly arrested, only to be let off—arbitrarily—with a warning and a move-on request.

During the fracas the police brutalised a student and attempted to embarrass her by weaponising her experience with sexual assault. While a separate article in this edition covers this in more depth, this disgraceful incident bears specific mention in this report. The SRC demands immediate repercussions for the cretins responsible, and will be relaying this story, and others, to USyd management as we demand that they keep the police off our campus to protect student safety and free expression.

In the end, 10 students were each issued \$1,000 fines for breaking a public health order by gathering in a group of over 20 people with an unapproved common intent. While the SRC and Education Action Group have almost raised the funds needed to pay off these fines, their fact they were issued in the first place is seriously disturbing. There were no unique or extraordinary harms posed by the protests—masks and hand sanitiser were mandatory and distributed widely, and the small crowd could easily sprawl throughout the Quad Lawns, Eastern Avenue, and Fisher entrance. Many of the students who were fined had attended in-person classes at the Uni in the preceding week, an activity which involves sitting indoors in groups of more than 20 without mandatory mask wearing and which we—and they—consider less safe, and certainly less essential, than protest. To specifically target this activity, rather than others which are riskier, suggests health is not the primary concern. And even if there was a small risk posed by our gathering, the police seriously exacerbated that risk by provoking anger and causing crowding during their arrests and brutality. Ultimately, safety and hygiene were compromised by the police's aggression, and our legitimate political grievances repressed by their success.

But while they may have succeeded in repressing our protest this time around, the police's aggression will not deter future actions. If anything, Friday's activities have emboldened us: Channel 9's coverage of the fracas is the first mainstream coverage our fightback has received yet. And the chance encounter with Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence outside the Royal on Friday afternoon reminded us of both management's incompetence and the strength of our arguments. We won't stop fighting until education is free, no matter how much they repress us.

I would like to thank everyone who donated to the fundraiser which will pay off those fines. While I encourage those who were fined to challenge them in court, it's comforting to know that—because of your generosity—cash-strapped students won't be out of pocket because they dared to speak out. And, to clarify, the SRC has not yet contributed to any of those fundraising efforts, though we would be happy to if needed.

International student support

Beyond the above, I have also been in contact with Anisha Senaratne from Get Up / Colour Code, about a campaign to increase support for International Students. As all of you should know,

International Students have been totally neglected by Australian governments, getting little in the way of genuine material support. While the SRC has tried to do our bit through our Mutual Aid program, no amount of charity or good will can make up for this disgraceful deprivation.

I met with Anisha and SRC International Student Officer, Kigen Mera, last Monday to help get the campaign off the ground. I look forward to working with them on this further in the future.

Staff solidarity speak out 31st of August

I also attended Monday's speak out against police repression and the attacks on higher education, which was organised by USyd staff and NTEU members. Staff support at this juncture is crucial—many student activists, especially younger ones, are no doubt feeling less confident after Friday's repression. It is comforting to know that we have the support of older, intelligent, respectable people, and it will give us confidence going into future actions. Many thanks to the staff who organised and attended the speak out for your solidarity.

Open Forum on Fighting Campus Cuts

Last night I attended the Education Action Group's Open Forum on Fighting Campus Cuts, at which Political Economy tutor Joel Griggs and SRC Education Officer Jack Mansell spoke. It was a really informative session, which has filled me with more hope and motivation for the coming months, particularly since there were a heap of new faces.

Looking ahead

As mentioned, we won't be deterred by the NSW Police's heavy handedness. On Wednesday the 16th of September there will be a series of actions on campus, and next Tuesday, the 8th, there'll be an assembly to discuss the possibility of a student strike. Alongside other events, like a potential teach / study-in, and a protest against Police brutality on the 18th of September, the upcoming month will no doubt bring as much agitation and activism as the ones before it.

Democracy is Essential — Restore the right to protest

I have also been involved in the launch of a new campaign demanding that the NSW government restore our right to protest. The campaign, which has been spearheaded by USyd's own Vinil Kumar, draws attention to the anti-democratic double standards of the NSW government's health orders. On the one hand, the state is happy to risk our health by permitting 500+ person parties at Cockatoo Island and forcing people to work in unsafe conditions. On the other hand, protest and civil demonstrations about important issues—like the attacks on our education—have been violently suppressed with no regard for how that repression might exacerbate health concerns.

To be clear, the campaign totally condemns the misanthropic rhetoric of anti-lockdown / anti-maskers: we support restrictions informed by research and which genuinely make us safe. Indeed, it is for precisely that reason that we find the restrictions on protests so galling—the state is happy to permit activities which are PROVEN to cause transmissions, like work in confined spaces, while violently suppressing activities which evidence shows HAVE NOT CAUSED transmissions. We demand that the state take our health seriously all the time, not just when it suits them or Murdoch. We demand that they mandate mask wearing, that they compensate workers so they can work from home, that they ban genuinely risky activities which are non-essential, like parties

on Cockatoo Island. But, at the same time, we also demand that they restore our right to protest, and that—even where restrictions on civil liberties are absolutely necessary for health reasons—the right to protest is the first liberty restored, rather than the last. The world we want, where the government addresses actual threats to our health, not ones that suit their political agenda, is certainly a much safer and healthier one than the status quo, and obviously a more democratic one too.

Stay tuned for more information about this campaign, which will be of central importance to other interrelated fights, like the fight for our education, the fight to guarantee that Black Lives Matter, and the fight for climate justice.

The SRC's operations

Away from the streets life has been just as busy, with the SRC offering its fair share of changes. There are a few key things to announce / detail.

Elections

Congratulations

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Swapnik Sanagavarapu on his election as the 93rd President of the USyd SRC, and Bloom on their election as the Honi Soit editors for 2020. In what was a historic, if anti-climatic, series of events, both Bloom and Swapnik were the only nominees for their positions. As such, they were declared automatically provisionally elected by the Returning Officer last week. Both should have plenty of time for handover and orientation in the coming months!

While I'm sure people know precisely how much I support and endorse Swapnik, for the sake of this report I will simply say that I'm reassured that this organisation will be in competent and principled hands during what will be a very difficult year. But don't get too excited, Swapnik—this cowboy's got a few more rodeos in him, and I'm not leaving my office until we hit Midnight on November 30-December 1.

Logistics

I have spent a considerable amount of time preparing for the upcoming election, including by assisting staff with logistical questions or requests and writing a lengthy 8-page appeal to the Electoral Legal Arbiter (ELA) regarding the Affiliations Nominations fee. While the appeal was ultimately rejected, the ELA recognised that the Returning Officer could not set or enforce an Affiliation fee (as opposed to a Nomination fee) and that the SRC can probably refund any students who had paid the Affiliation fee. I will follow that up with our Administration Manager, Chitra, in a few weeks.

The COVID period has certainly presented its fair share of challenges for staff and students involved in the elections, but I am confident we will be able to successfully facilitate this essential aspect of our organisational structure. To that end, at Wednesday's meeting the Executive voted to recommend that the Council move to an online election, in accordance with the new regulations passed by the 92nd Council on July 31. It is unclear whether this is within the remit of the regulations, but we thought it would at least stimulate a discussion about online elections which are otherwise worthwhile. I am presently working with SRC staff and the Returning Officer

on an approach to elections which strikes the right balance between regulatory requirements, health protocols, democratic and legitimate outcomes, the University's restrictions, and everything in-between.

SRC Informs

The inaugural SRC Informs session took place yesterday, with SRC Caseworker delivering an eye opening presentation on tenancy. Despite some minor technical difficulties—which resulted in the presentation being recorded and uploaded, rather than taking place live—it happened rather smoothly. Emphasising ways of getting money back (especially bonds) and dealing with bullshit claims from landlords, the presentation is undoubtedly of benefit to all students, even those who haven't yet moved out of home. It can be found on our Facebook page in perpetua, and we should embed it on our website soon.

The next SRC Informs session will be THIS TUESDAY, and I encourage all students to attend.

Return to Campus

I have been working with Mel de Silva, the SRC's Workplace Health and Safety Officer, and Jessica Morris, from USyd management, on our return to campus plans. As a result of those discussions we will be making a number of changes to the layout of the SRC to encourage / enforce social distancing, and will also be putting more hygiene infrastructure / reminders around common spaces. The Returning Officer has also been working with Jessica Morris to determine how our elections can take place in a COVID-safe way. I will update the Council if / when I receive more information to that end.

Mutual Aid program

I will be hosting a meeting about the SRC's Mutual Aid program at 12pm tomorrow. The Mutual Aid program started well, but lost a lot of momentum towards the end of semester and throughout the holidays. Tomorrow's meeting will lay the foundations of our long-term approach to this essential service, and will also schedule a working bee so that we can relocate bags from the Gosper and OB rooms while removing any expired / used items. I encourage all students to attend tomorrow's meeting and the working bee we schedule.

Legal service personnel update

As a result of illness our Principal Solicitor, An Li, is going to take extended leave for a few months. As this will leave our practice unsupervised, the SRC must urgently appoint a Locum solicitor to ensure the legal service can keep running. I will update the Council on this appointment as soon as it is finalised.

Committees / meeting

This report would not be complete without mentioning the smorgasbord of committees and meetings I've attended. In addition to my weekly meetings with key University personnel most Fridays, I also attended:

- The Academic Board Academic Quality Committee on the 25th of August, at which we approved removing limits on how long students can defer / suspend their studies.
- The Academic Board Academic Standards and Policy Committee on the 25th of August
- The SRC Executive meeting on the 26th of August.
- The SRC staff committee meeting on the 27th of August.
- The Semester Advisory Group meeting on the 27th of August, at which I re-asserted the SRC's dissent to the 12-week semester.
- The Safer Communities Advisory Group meeting on the 1st of September, at which I raised the SRC's serious concerns with the presence and brutality of the Police at last Friday's rally and foreshadowed further action to reduce harm to students.

All in all, it was a historic and eventful few weeks, but historical significance is, paradoxically, becoming pretty common for these strange times. While I'm sure that future weeks will bring many more novelties, one thing will remain unwavering: the SRC's willingness to fight for students no matter what, even in the face of malevolence and violence.

Speaking list:

Liam Donohoe spoke to his report covering it's major points.

Motion to accept the report of the President.

Moved: Charlotte Bullock

Seconded: Swapnik Sanagavarapu

The motion was put and **CARRIED**.

Liam Donohoe resumed the chair.

02. Report of the Wom*n's Officers

Ellie Wilson and Vivienne Guo tabled a written report

When our education is under attack, stand up, fight back

WoCo has consistently supported actions fighting against attacks on tertiary education. Over the last couple of months, we have seen units for Semester 2 cut by university management as staff face insecure employment and are made to work an untold number of unpaid hours. This is shameful - staff are the lifeblood of tertiary education. Meanwhile, Vice Chancellor Michael Spence has taken no pay cuts and remains one of the highest paid Vice Chancellors in the country.

WoCo attended the recent August 28 student No Cuts rally, which was shut down by a heavy police presence. Police outnumbered protesters, activists were targeted, arrested and fined, and police used one protester's previous police report about their experience of sexual assault to humiliate them. This behaviour is horrifying; police have continued to use COVID-19 as an excuse to shut down protests while they push protesters into confined spaces, and use brute force to intimidate activists and organisers. Victim-survivors of sexual assault are also more likely to struggle with university and therefore are disproportionately affected by recently announced changes to the HECS system that students have been fighting back against. This behaviour also

shows us yet again that cops are not to be trusted when it comes to fighting for justice in the face of sexual violence. Cops cannot even be trusted to respect our confidentiality as victim-survivors. People who report their stories of sexual violence to the police should never have to worry that the police will weaponise this trauma against them. This is why feminism has no room for cops: there is no feminist liberation without police and prison abolition.

WoCo unequivocally stands with staff and students against the cuts and fee hikes. We condemn the brutal policing of student rallies and we continue to support the right of students to attend protests and fight for their futures.

Supporting mob in Armidale for the coronial inquest into Tane Chatfield's death in custody

WoCo and EAG are requesting \$350 each to cover the cost of a bus hired for student activists and First Nations community members to travel up to Armidale for the outcome of the coronial inquest in Tane Chatfield's death.

Meetings

WoCo will be resuming weekly meetings for Semester 2 on Wednesdays at 3:00pm. Meetings will be in person with an option to call in via Zoom. Stay tuned via our Facebook group!

Motion: that the report of the Wom*n's Officers and included expenditure be accepted.

Motion: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Vivienne Goodes

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

03. Report of the Global Solidarity Officers

The education campaign has come up against serious police repression that under non-pandemic conditions would be considered fascistic. Despite decent numbers (roughly 200 attendees) under the circumstances, we were met by over 70 police officers, some on horseback, as well as many in riot gear. Unfortunately the circumstances are working against us, but it was right to attempt to push the boundaries with a rally because the only way we can push back against these attacks is by mobilising students in as large numbers as possible. If there was any time that a rally had the best chance at not being broken up it was during week 1 of semester when classes are going ahead.

Vice Chancellor Michael Spence has no qualms about calling in these thugs to shut down resistance to the university's massive attacks on staff, with up to 30% of full-time FASS jobs under imminent threat and the first round of redundancies on the table. This recent announcement is just the tip of the iceberg at Sydney Uni, which has already gutted casual staff, leaving a skeleton workforce while enrolment numbers remain steady.

Going forwards tackling the question of repression will be important if the education campaign is to continue moving forwards. Building alliances with other political forces and making the argument that democracy is an essential service is important.

Meanwhile the government has pushed the new university legislation including fee hikes and HECS attacks through the lower house while stifling democratic debate. It's clearer than ever that lobbying specific politicians is a useless strategy as the Liberals cook up a back room deal with the cross-benchers to get them on firmly on side. While we have objective limitations in the context of a pandemic the vast majority of students (and people) oppose the education attacks. Only protest and mass mobilisations can push back against the government's and VC's agenda.

Speaking list:

Holly Hayne spoke to the report, recapping its main points.

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

Moved from the chair.

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

O4. Report of the Environment Officers

WELCOME WEEK

Since last council, the collective has gotten up and running for Semester 2, with a stall on Eastern Avenue in Week 1 which aimed to spread our message & sign up new members. We held a reading/film group last week that delved into the NSW Water Crisis through a screening of 'Water Is Life', as well as live readings of relevant anti-colonial and anti-capitalist articles from our Semester 1 publications of 'Embers' and 'Combust'. Other events this week included contingents to the Education Action Group's NDA Protest and an upcoming brainstorming & social event.

Weekly meetings will occur on a rotating basis: Wednesday noon on even weeks & Monday 4pm on odd weeks.

UPCOMING ACTIONS AND PLANNING

Currently in the works includes:

- A cross-collective police liaison workshop. Given the current state of police violence at protests, whether these be large or small-scale, we feel it important to upskill activists on how to handle the police. This will involve information sessions on things like how to fill out a FOIA 1, your legal rights when protesting, etc. under the context of the pandemic.
- A 'Why Nuclear Won't Save Us' educational panel. Given the almost-lifting of the NSW uranium ban last week, it is all the more important to educate our members and the wider public on why nuclear power is an unsafe coal-alternative for energy use, and why Uranium mining would be a catastrophe to the environment and public health on multiple scales.
- Organising for a USyd contingent to the SS4C NDA on September 25th, which will involve reaching out to other climate activists groups to put together a university-wide walk out on this day, staying true to the original idea behind the school strike for climate.
- Contingents to ASEN anti-CSG and BLM organising meetings.
- Attendance to question the 'Bringing Sustainability to Life at Sydney' event, as this strategy is woefully inadequate at generating true sustainability on campus — the University still

has at least \$22.4m invested in fossil fuels, and the strategy includes no plans or recommendations for divestment.

Stay tuned for developments and details on how to get involved!

Speaking list:

Sofie Nicholson spoke to the report mentioned the strike planned for September 25th.

Liam Donohoe asked if there would be in person protest/gathering somewhere for that event.

Sofie Nicholson said it was more decentralised than in the past – up to individuals if they want to do something in person due to the current pandemic situation.

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

Motion: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Jack Mansell

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

O5. Report of the International Students' Officers

The issues that international students face every day are still persistent. A recent study done by Union NSW indicates that 3% of surveyed international students have lost their homes, and an astounding 46% has decided to reduce their meal intake to 2 meals a day to combat the financial difficulties. The fact that international students contributed so much to the Australian economy and are now struggling to feed themselves is quite heartbreaking to see. To somewhat improve the situation, we have recently been contacting Food Not Bombs, an all-volunteer movement that recovers food that would otherwise be discarded and provides them to people in need. The event takes place every Thursday at Marrickville. We think that this is an excellent opportunity for international students who are currently struggling to get food to seek support from this organization.

Kigen Mera spoke to the report recapping its main point and encouraged everyone to spread the word about supports for those experiences food insecurity.

Motion: that the report of the International Students' Officers be accepted.

Motion: Liam Donohoe

Seconded: Vivienne Goodes

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

P. Special Business

There were no items of special business.

Q. Motions of Notice

Q1. Financial support for activists fined at education protests

Preamble:

Over the last month and a half, activists in NSW have been confronted by a serious escalation in police tactics to try and repress protests under the cynical guise of COVID-19 public health orders. This is despite exemptions being made to the public health orders for non-essential activities, such as community sports, and to the university itself so that it can hold in-person classes.

At two protests, one on July 31 and another on August 28, police issued 12 fines to a total of 11 activists. Crowd-funding organised by the Education Officers has raised more than \$16,000 cumulatively for the purpose of covering any fines that need to be paid. These funds will be transferred into an SRC bank account for distribution, and any remaining funds are to be used to cover any future legal costs for activists, as stipulated in the fundraisers' descriptions.

We are currently operating in difficult organising circumstances, which means that fines may be a common feature in the foreseeable future. What is certain is that we cannot give up on trying to organise the palpable discontent on campus, and that we must try to push back against police repression rather than capitulating to it.

Platform:

1. The SRC condemns NSW police and Sydney University management for their joint role in the repression of student demonstrations;
2. The SRC supports attempts to resist crackdowns on the right to protest;
3. The SRC commits to financially supporting activists who are forced to pay fines for exercising their right to protest.

Action:

1. The SRC ensures that the funds raised by the Education Officers are distributed to the 11 activists fined at the July 31 and August 28 actions. The details of these 11 activists have been collected by the Education Officers;
2. The SRC ensures that any remaining funds raised by the Education Officers for the purpose of paying fines from July 31 and August 28 will be held for the purpose of contributing to the payment of any future fines for student activists that need to be paid;
3. The SRC commits to financially supporting activists fined for exercising their democratic rights to protest in the future.

Speaking list:

Jack Mansell spoke to the motion Highlighting the importance of offering activists financial support to support student in speaking out without great risk to themselves financially.

Eddie Stephenson spoke to the motion noting the great importance of fighting back against these suppression of freedom of speak on the grounds of health, while they are well and clearly socially distanced.

Moved: Jack Mansell

Seconded: Jazzlyn Breen

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

Q2. Solidarity against fascist terror in the United States

Preamble

1. On the 25th of August, fascist vigilante and aspiring police officer Kyle Rittenhouse opened fire on Black Lives Matter protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin, killing two and severely injuring another. He was one of a far-right militia who arrived, armed, to “defend property” from protesters responding to the police shooting of Jacob Blake.
2. These murders are part of an increasingly frequent pattern of far-right individuals feeling emboldened to carry out acts of violence, from Christchurch, to Pittsburgh, to Hanau. Rittenhouse’s confidence was no doubt bolstered by the dogwhistle-packed Republican National Convention, still ongoing on the night of the shooting. In one barely-veiled call for right wingers to take up arms against protesters, Patricia McCloskey (made famous this year for aiming a firearm at a demonstration passing her St. Louis mansion) warned that the protests were a threat to “quiet neighbourhoods around our country” and praised America for being a place where “you ... have the right to own a gun and use it to defend yourself.”
3. The increasing legitimacy and confidence felt by far-right terrorists is not sourced solely from their own ranks or even a fringe of gun-toting Republicans. It is fed by the rightward lurch of mainstream politics. While Donald Trump has come out defending Rittenhouse by asserting that he would have been killed had he not fired at protesters, Joe “shoot them in the legs” Biden has denounced violence “by anyone, whether on the left or right,” and made sure to reassert that “rioting is not protesting.”
4. Just as the rise of the far right is global, so too is their emboldenment from the political mainstream. We need only to observe the hypocrisy of the Australian Liberal Party, who sought to condemn and distance themselves from Fraser Anning’s statement blaming the murder of 51 Muslims in Christchurch by an Australian gunman on increased immigration. Not a year prior, many in the party had lined up to shake Anning’s hand after his maiden speech in parliament, which made conscious homage to Nazism by calling for a “final solution” to immigration.
5. Centre right and left politicians in Australia may condemn far-right racists and their extremist supporters, but it has been decades of Liberal and Labor rule upholding the brutally racist Labor brainchild of mandatory detention and normalising the idea that refugees are dangerous criminals who pose a threat to Australian society. Similarly, both Republicans and Democrats distance themselves from the violence of figures like Rittenhouse, but both parties support the violent law and order campaign suppressing protests, reminiscent of Obama’s mobilisation of the National Guard to put down the first

outbreak of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2014.

6. Capitalism is a violently oppressive system that relies on racist oppression and a police force that can enforce it. Far right terrorism is not an aberration of this status quo but rather its most vile byproduct. It cannot be countered by political forces who, despite their variations in politics, all seek to uphold and manage capitalism and therefore the oppression and violence that it entails.
7. The increasing presence of far-right politics on our own campus, including the interruption of a left wing meeting about Black deaths in custody by a far right activist just last week, reveals the immediacy of the question for our SRC. In the face of far right violence, what is needed is solidarity and anti-capitalist politics that can challenge the very roots of the system that allows people like Kyle Rittenhouse to exist, let alone feel confident to kill in the name of their beliefs. Mass, multi-racial mobilisations are what can truly present a challenge to the increasing normalcy of far right politics. To truly eradicate far-right violence, the capitalist system that creates it must also go.

Platform

1. The Sydney University SRC stands in unequivocal solidarity with the Black Lives Matter protests against the threat of fascist terror seen developing in the past few weeks.
2. The SRC recognises the role of mainstream political forces in legitimising racism and violence and how this contributes to the growth and confidence of far-right extremists.

Action

1. The SRC will publish this motion publicly.
2. The SRC will support, mobilise for and give resources to campaigns in solidarity with Black Lives Matter taking place in Sydney, as well as campaigns against racism and the far-right in Australia.

Speaking list:

Maddie Powell spoke to the motion speaking about how the violence and murders purported against BLM protestors is embedded in capitalism and that there has been a normalisation of violence against refugees and police brutality. Noting that no progressive government that intends to uphold the capitalist state will ever be able to dismantle capitalist violence.

Holly Hayne spoke to the motion echoing the comments of Maddie Powell, adding the mainstream, and particularly the media, is what has created these aggressive and violent events by emboldening the far right while demonising oppressed groups such as migrants and refugees.

Moved: Maddie Powell

Seconded: Holly Hayne

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

Q3. Democracy is essential: Fight for the right to protest in NSW

Preamble:

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, public health orders have been used routinely to prevent protests. Since repression of Black Lives Matter rallies began in earnest on July 28, protests have effectively been banned in NSW. Any public gathering of more than 20 people, for the “common purpose” of protesting, no matter how distanced the participants or large the area, is deemed illegal. Last week at Sydney University, following a pattern of police repression in the six weeks prior, a protest organised by the Education Action Group was broken up, and 10 activists fined.

This is extreme hypocrisy, and has absolutely nothing to do with protecting public health. Indeed, the same governments which are cracking down on protest are accelerating the reopening of businesses, and granting exemptions to the public health orders for art exhibitions, netball, and other extremely non-essential activity. This is despite zero recorded COVID-19 transmissions occurring at a protest, and up to 80% of transmission being recorded in workplaces.

Restrictions on economic activity are an important part of preventing the spread of COVID-19 and should be supported. But, so long as capitalism exists, workers, students, and the oppressed will be subject to its ills. Protest is our only hope if we are to fight against the ongoing injustices of the world. We cannot afford to allow NSW Police to continue breaking up our demonstrations. There is no amount of boxing clever that can stop them from continuing to break up protests and fine activists. Only by confronting their cynical application of health orders, both politically and in the streets, can we win back the right to organise that is so desperately needed in the midst of an historic social and economic crisis.

Platform:

1. The SRC considers protest to be essential, and commits to organising them in a socially responsible way as long as the pandemic continues;
2. The SRC condemns the actions of NSW Police and Sydney University management in repressing the demonstration on campus on August 28;
3. The SRC endorses the “Democracy is Essential” campaign which seeks to bring together student union, trade union and civil society institutions, to demand:
 - a. Protests be exempted from the NSW Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order;
 - b. An end to the over-policing of demonstrations by NSW Police;
 - c. An end to the use of move on orders to break up public assemblies.

Action:

1. The SRC signs on to the Democracy is Essential statement;
2. The SRC Facebook page shares content from the Democracy is Essential campaign;
3. The SRC commits to publicising and participating in events organised as part of the Democracy is Essential campaign;
4. The SRC releases a public statement calling on Sydney University to cease all collaboration with NSW Police.

Speaking list:

Jack Mansell spoke to the motion spoke about how the police were using covid19 health orders and inconsistently applying them simply to shut down protests. Adding the fighting back against this was essential to ensuring the fundamental right of protest is protected and exempt from the covid19 health orders.

Grace Bowskill spoke to the motion, speaking about how police stopped following students once they realised they were going into Broadway shopping mall to buy something, where there are significantly more people than were at the protest. There are a number of issues that are coming up at the moment where we need the right to protest, such as NSW allowing uranium mining again, and a bill proposed by Ark Latham which would see teachers unaccredited if they discuss gender variations with their students.

Lily Campbell spoke to the motion, noting that there is effectively no lockdown, malls are open, beaches are open, pubs, casino, and football games are all open and people are mingling. Adding that protests remain one of the few things banned and heavily policed despite that no cases have been recorded as a result of a protest which have been safely organised and most people, besides the police are wearing masks.

Moved: Jack Mansell

Seconded: Jazzlyn Breen

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

Q4. The fight against job cuts at the University of Sydney

Preamble

1. In mid-August, university management announced plans to cut up to 30% full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. Originally leaked in an email to staff in the School of Education and Social Work, it has since been shown to be the case across the university. Not only does this represent large job cuts, but it further entrenches casualisation in the university sector. When FTE staff are sacked or accept redundancies, the jobs don't go away; they are performed by casuals at lower rates and with worse conditions and rights.
2. The School of Medical Sciences has cut 40-50% of FTE staff in the Physiology and Pathology courses. These cuts aren't limited to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences but are university-wide.
3. Staff have been angry and fast in their response. A union Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences meeting attracted over 200 staff with less than two days' preparation. A second meeting attracted 150 staff. Both meetings involved staff voicing their outrage and planning the fightback. However, a vote of no confidence in FASS Dean Anne-Marie Jagose lost in the first meeting, which shows the continued work necessary to build up the confidence of staff to be able to oppose management.
4. University of Sydney staff are some of the most well-organised and militant in the sector nationally, with a history of strikes and industrial action over the past decade. They are not immune however to the top to bottom restructuring of the sector which is the current

project of university bosses. They do however have the best chance of being able to resist these latest attacks.

5. A case study at USYD itself is evident of this. In 2012, management announced the axing of 360 jobs. In response, mass member meetings called several rallies of hundreds of staff. The number of staff facing forced redundancies was drastically reduced, and all the jobs were not saved only because the NTEU leadership argued that what was already won was sufficient.
6. A strategy which will never work is one which concedes on wages, rights or conditions in exchange for empty promises from management. Even when those conditions seem “small”, any concession is an acceptance of the logic that workers must pay for the financial problems of their boss.

Platform

The University of Sydney SRC

1. Opposes all cuts to FTE positions, even in the guise of voluntary redundancies, as a means by which management entrench casualisation and erode working conditions.
2. Demands the opening of the university’s financial accounts to workers.
3. Demands the reinstatement of all staff, casual, fixed-term and permanent, who have lost their job this year.
4. Supports staff in their fight against university management.
5. Commits to a No Concession strategy.

Action

1. The University of Sydney SRC will take a solidarity photo at the passing of this motion and publish it from their Facebook page by two days from the passing of the motion.

Speaking list:

Deaglan Godwin spoke to the motion noting the attacks on staff across the sector and here and the University of Sydney, and that there is a greater issues of casualisation and how they are targeting more vulnerable staff and we need to fight against these cuts being put forward under the guise of a crisis.

Simon Upitis spoke to the motion noting how many casual tutors are going and how much extra work this is placing onto existing staff and cuts into their research time. Adding that this not only affects staff, but also students as lecturers cannot give the time to marking which allows for thorough feedback.

Swapnik Sanagavarapu spoke to the motion saying that the university has a lot more resources and funds it could draw from other than cutting on staff, and that while not ideal we can play to

the cynical line, that these changes affect not just the staff but really make clear that these changes affect students education experiences and outcomes.

Madeleine Clark spoke to the motion and wanted to highlight that the university has seen very little to no drop-in enrollments during this crisis and they are using the pandemic as an excuse to push through the changes they've been wanting to make for a long time. Concluding that this is going to take a lot of work and probably some staff strikes to fight these but believes it is a winnable battle.

Moved: Deaglan Godwin

Seconded: Simon Upitis

The motion was put and **CARRIED**

R. General Business

R1. Money to support First Nations self-determination for travel

As an organisation the USyd SRC has committed itself to the continual process of decolonisation. This means actively standing with Indigenous communities fighting against continued oppression. We have seen the SRC engage in this through environmental activism, the delivery of water to North West NSW communities, the recently reinvigorated BLM movement and the continued fight against Black deaths in custody.

As an organisation with ample resources and money we should always give back to First Nations communities when they need it. This is why I would like to request that \$1200 be put towards a fundraiser organised by a prominent Indigenous activist, Lizzy Jarrett. Lizzy is raising money to purchase a bus for the use of Indigenous communities, specifically to help transport the families of those affected by deaths in custody to significant events such as coronial inquests, protests and any other important convergence that is important to these families.

Speaking list:

Jazzlyn Breen read the motion out to council.

Moved: Jazzlyn Breen

Seconded: Seth Dias

The motion was put and **CARRIED.**

The meeting closed at 8:15pm