

EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

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NAME	Sophie Turner
POSITION	Environmental Officer
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 1 June 2012
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	11
HOURS WORKED	192.5
BONUS APPLICATION	N/A

Reporting on Priority Goals:

[Every position has priority goals listed in the VUWSA Constitution. Identify and explain how you have worked to fulfil them over the past six months]

1. Goal 4: Services

Control the Student Union complex and provide quality cost effective (consumer) services for members.

(a) Briefly outline how you worked towards achieving this goal

Most of the projects I have been working on aim to provide cost-effective solutions for VUWSA members. The two Warm up my Flat workshops, hosted by the Sustainability Trust in the Student Union Building on World Environment Day, successfully provided solutions (such as directing students to Wellington's Curtain Bank initiative), and giveaways (such as light bulbs for students living in cold flats).

I also advertised the light bulb giveaways in Salient, when I provided 13 sustainability tips for the Environmental Issue. Other tips I provided which work to provide cost-effective solutions for energy usage include assigning flatmates to check that appliances are switched off at the wall, and regulating shower time usage by putting a clock in the bathroom.

My carpooling database, which kicked off on Facebook on May 30, provides a way to ease the cost of transportation. So far it has received positive reviews. We will be moving this database on to the VUWSA page in Trimester Two

A recent focus for me is creating a new on-campus environmental group called “Carbon Neutral Campus.” This fits under the “control of the Student Union complex” aspect as we will be focusing attention on how to increase efficiency here.

2. Goal 6: Public Issues

Promote discussion and action as appropriate, on issues concerning students as citizens.

A significant amount of energy this year has gone towards promoting discussion of issues. I was voted into VUWSA on the back of my aims to increase collaboration and discussion between environmental groups, VUWSA, and the outside environmental community, as these groups are already discussing issues and working on projects. I held a meeting with Gecko, the Greens@Vic, the Veg*ns@Vic, Generation Zero, and the Sustainability Trust in January. One outcome of this was creating a successful “Flash mob” on Cuba Street. This helped to promote action among people who were not involved in any of the environmental groups on campus. I also organised a well-attended after party at the Hunter Lounge, which further increased discussion. Another outcome was the creation of an internal Facebook page. When the Society of Conservation Biologists announced their interest in liaising with VUWSA, I added them to the Facebook group as well.

I also created a survey about sustainability on campus on 1 June, and advertised it on the VUWSA Facebook page. So far 40 people have completed it. This will be discussed at the next Environmental Committee meeting.

We discussed hosting public lectures on sustainability in the last Environment Committee, and this looks to be a significant project for Trimester Two.

As part of the Welfare Team I was involved in organising VUWSA’s survey and submission on the Wellington City Council Long Term Plan

I was also involved in the protest on funding cuts for Student Allowances.

I have written one column in Salient, and directed a Salient feature writer towards the environmental groups on campus for a feature in the Environment Issue.

Finally, much of my time in the first half of the year has been used to organise Environment Week. The confirmed events are a “Crafternoon” on Monday, a tree planting on Tuesday, a clothes swap on Wednesday, transport giveaways on Thursday, and a project “ecofying” the campus on Friday.

Reporting on Other Goals:

[Identify and explain any other Constitutional Goals you have worked towards in the past six months in addition to your priority goals]

1. Goal 9: Sustainability

To recognise the needs of current and future generations by promoting sustainable lifestyles and actions to members while ensuring the sustainable operation of the Association and University

I raised a proposal for the establishment of an Ombudsman for Future Generations at the Rio Conference at a VUWSA executive meeting. This motion was passed.

General Tasks and initiatives

Trimester One Stress-Free Study Week Breakfasts

Assisting with environmental stalls during Clubs Week and working at the VUWSA stall

VUWSA flu shots

Representation

1. Name of meeting/committee/body

VUWSA Executive meetings

Welfare meetings

Meetings with environmental groups on campus

Environmental Committee meetings

Numerous other meetings with environmental groups on campus

Strengths

I am a passionate, enthusiastic, and, I feel, approachable member of the VUWSA executive.

I have been able to successfully fulfil the executive job description, "liaison with environmental groups on campus and at a national level." I feel that I have been responsive to peoples' concerns, and have taken initiative to better unite environmental groups. Largely, this is due to my own aim of increasing communication between groups, and the number of successful and involved students working towards sustainability across the country. I feel that my work this year has been visible among the student body. This is important, especially in light of our strategic goal of representation.

In turn, these strengths have helped to fulfill VUWSA's aims of being a representational body for students.

Weaknesses

I have found it more difficult to communicate with other VUWSA exec members than it has been to liaise with environmental groups on campus. As we are all working on different goals I think it can make one feel quite isolated within the team. I think a database to "check in" and see what other executive members are doing would be useful.

I need to keep on top of the goals I set out in my Work Report, as I find it easy to be distracted and leap into the next project, event or challenge.

I am struggling with time management. Effective time management needs to be a priority for me during Trimester Two, especially with an increase in VUWSA commitments, fulltime study, part-time volunteering and holding a part-time job as an Environment Studies tutor. I think a quick discussion about time management with Bridie or another capable Executive member would be very useful

Overall Rating

I'm proud of my dedication to VUWSA and my overall commitment towards sustainability this year. I am a newcomer to the world of student politics, having been more acquainted with working as a grassroots "do it yourself" environmentalist over the past nine years. However, I feel that I have successfully overcome challenges intrinsic to working under VUWSA regulations and constraints this year. I am disappointed that my carpooling database wasn't launched sooner; yet, I am pleased with its overall reception thus far, and I am currently working with Caroline to make it effective and sustainable. The next half of the year, which will include Environment Week and the establishment of the Carbon-Neutral Campus organisation, will help to ensure how important having an Environmental Officer in VUWSA is.