



## EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT



Phone 04 463 6719  
Fax 04 463 6990  
Email [kelburn@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:kelburn@vuwsa.org.nz)

NAME	Raven Maeder
POSITION	Campaigns Officer
REPORT PERIOD	1 <sup>st</sup> January – 30 June, 2015
HOURS WORKED	197.5
HOURS REQUIRED	160

### Priority Goals:

This year my priority goals have been:

1. Establishing a powerful student voice
2. Growing our engagement with students
3. Advocating for a student friendly Wellington

### Other Goals:

My other key focusses in terms of VUWSA's goals, have been:

**Goal 2 – Student Support:** To advocate for adequate financial support, income and welfare for students in order to remove barriers to education.

**Goal 6 – Public Issues:** To be the critic and conscience of the University and society, by promoting discussion and action on issues concerning students.

#### 1. Establishing a powerful student voice

As campaigns officer, this has been a significant focus for me throughout the year, particularly in my work on our general election campaign which focusses entirely on student voice and strengthening it nationally to ensure that we have power as a voting bloc. This also ties into VUWSA's **Goal 6** – public issues, as our general

election campaign, We Have Power, will promote discussion and action on issues concerning students.

## **2. Growing our engagement with students**

As a part of the engagement team, this strategic goal has been a particular priority for me and something that I have tried to incorporate into all of my work at VUWSA. This has taken form in particular in my focus on volunteering opportunities at VUWSA (specifically in the Fairer Fares and General Election campaigns) and helping out at O'Week, Stress Free Study Week and other events throughout the year.

## **3. Advocating for a student friendly wellington**

Again, in my capacity as campaigns officer, this has been a key focus for me throughout this first half of the year, as I have spent a lot of my hours working on the fairer fares campaign. The fairer fares campaign is perhaps one of the most tangible ways that we can make student's lives easier in the Wellington region by ensuring that the cost of getting to class does not take away from students' money for essential living costs. Further, at the start of the year I worked with the rest of the exec on our response to the renting crisis, another key issue that is reducing Wellington's livability for our students. This also ties into VUWSA's **Goal 2** – student support, because both fairer fares and our work on the renting crisis have the key aim of increasing students' support and welfare and removing barriers to education.

These projects will be outlined further below:

### **Key projects:**

#### **1. Fairer Fares Campaign**

Working on the fairer fares campaign was my main focus during the first quarter of the year, and I can definitely say we are closer than ever before to finally getting this campaign over the line. My involvement was largely behind the scenes organizing, liaising with students and other supporters and putting together campaign material.

##### **a. Submission to GWRC, with students and Chris Bishop**

VUWSA's first submission to the GWRC on Fairer Fares this year was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March. I was responsible for behind the scenes organizing, helping to write the presentation and working with Saleima and Ali, the two student/ex students who presented in this submission. The submission was very well received by the council.



Some of the Fairer Fares team at submissions to GWRC in March

**b. Getting submissions on GWRC Annual Plan Draft**

The GWRC opened their draft 2017/18 annual plan for submissions from the 16<sup>th</sup> March – 12<sup>th</sup> April. Throughout this time, we campaigned hard for students and other community members, particularly rate-payers, to make submissions in support of Fairer Fares. To make this easier we built a campaign website (<https://www.fairerfares.org>) and worked with Salient to make a video, then distributed these far and wide on social media – our video was viewed 85K times and shared 340 times. We also got really good media coverage on the issue and our campaign during this time. I was mostly in charge of building the website, which was a great learning experience. Along with a group of dedicated volunteers we also collected paper-submissions at markets throughout the region. All in all, on the 12<sup>th</sup> April we delivered over 1700 submissions in support of Fairer Fares to the GWRC. Around 300-400 of these were from rate-payers. This was a huge feat and sent a very clear message to the council that Fairer Fares must be a top priority for them. I continue to be amazed by the energy behind this campaign, and I love playing my part in ensuring we win this for all Wellington students. On 23 May the GWRC hearing took place and VUWSA was invited to make an oral submission to support the written submissions we had delivered. I was in charge of organizing our slot for this session and liaising with the groups/individuals that were to present alongside us. On the day, our submission was supported by submissions from Ngāi Taurira representatives, VUW representatives and Mayor Justin Lester.

### c. Fairer Fares Celebration Party

Celebrating successes is really important. So, after of our very successful submission to the council, it was great to be able to organise a party to celebrate the work of everyone involved. This was held on the Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> April and attended by supportive regional councillors, university staff and students and exec involved in driving the campaign.



Pics from throughout our submission campaign, which saw us delivering 1700 submissions in support of Fairer Fares!

## 2. General Election Campaign

### a. Planning a campaign

For the first quarter of the year the general election working group, which I sit on, has been working on our plan for the general election and more specifically how we are going to engage VUW students.

### b. Working with the National Union of Students' Association (NZUSA)

We have decided to partner with students' associations around NZ and NZUSA, to run a national get out the vote election campaign – this is super exciting! Along with other members of our exec, I attended two big meetings on this in the first quarter of the year and we have

been working closely with members of students' associations around NZ and the NZUSA team to shape this campaign. Our collective vision is to get 100% of students voting in this general election. A truly national, student-led campaign hasn't been done on this scale for some time so, we will require immense volunteer power locally in order for it to be successful. At VUWSA, we have been working on building our volunteer capacity and strengthen our internal systems so that we can engage the maximum amount of students in our campaign.



At the NZUSA conference in February, with members of Students Association execs from all over NZ!

### **c. Rolling out the campaign**

We had our first political debate on the 26<sup>th</sup> May which was a great success. Nathaniel was the main organizer of this event, my role was mostly helping with set up and running of the day. Further, it has been decided that I will sit on the National Campaign Team, which is the group that oversees the running of the campaign at a national level. I will be working in the role of volunteer coordinator. This means that my capacity to contribute to the local campaign will be somewhat reduced, but sitting on this national team is an important opportunity to really strengthen student voice nationally. This also means that I have the role of communicating between NZUSA and VUWSA exec, volunteers and staff so that everyone is in the loop, which takes some time. I have also been working on behind the scenes stuff, such as creating resources, for our local campaign.

## **3. Living Wage at Vic**

### **a. Volunteering and support**

I've had some involvement with the Living Wage at Vic campaign this year. So far this has been limited to attending a couple of meetings and helping collect signatures on campus a few times throughout the year, but I've really enjoyed this work and am looking forward to further involvement. A particular stand out for me was Living Wage day, where I was responsible for general help (and a bit of

photography). This was an extremely moving event that brought together a large cross section of the VUW community and celebrated the great success of the campaign at Vic so far. Later this year, I will be attending the Living Wage Movement Community Campaign Training in Auckland, to strengthen my campaigning skills and VUWSA's connection with the Living Wage Movement.



### **Other involvement:**

#### **1. Kaibosh Make a Meal in May**

Marlon, Bethany and I organized VUWSA's Make a Meal in May fundraiser for Kaibosh, which took place on Monday 29<sup>nd</sup> May. Kaibosh is a great organisation that rescues food and provides it to people in our community that need it, including our students through the weekly bread donations and more. Make a Meal in May was a part of their annual fundraising appeal and an opportunity for us to give back to this organisation that gives so much to us and our community. We had a good turn out of rep group and clubs' representatives from throughout the university, and raised over \$100 for Kaibosh.

#### **2. VUWSA events & Student engagement**

A large chunk of my time has been spent helping out at VUWSA events. During O'Week I was based in the 'Safe Room' every night, and at our stall (handing out wall-planners, diaries and tacos) during the days. Though this was a lot of hard work, it was really fun and rewarding to be a part of ensuring new (and returning) student had an awesome experience at O'Week. Engaging with students at the Newtown festival was another awesome experience – especially in my capacity as a recycling warden at the VUWSA stage and stall. Stress Free Study Week was another awesome experience – I spent over 12 hours serving breakfasts and delicious Krishna curry lunches to students across our campuses and working with our amazing volunteers! Another very rewarding VUWSA initiative that I have really enjoyed being a part of, and which helps make students' lives around exams just a little bit easier.



### **3. Representing students and their interests**

I have attended a couple of events to represent student interests. One of these was a presentation to new lecturers at VUW on the reality of being a student in Wellington. It was great to be a part of such an important conversation – it’s so important that our lecturers understand that student’s have more going on in their lives than just our studies, and how they can best support us in our academic pursuits. I have also attending events to learn about the tertiary sector and the political landscape and how that affects students; for example, Tertiary Educators Union (TEU) and NZUSA’s Budget Breakfast, which was an opportunity for me to learn more about how National’s budget will affect the tertiary sector and particularly students. Attending events like this enables me to think more critically about VUWSA’s work and how we can work to represent student’s interests locally, and nationally.

### **4. Organizational**

As an exec member, I have two main roles to fulfill – representation of students and governorship of VUWSA as an organization. These are two quite different roles and though my every day work for VUWSA is more focused around representation, duties associated with governorship take up a lot of time as well. This includes work such as attending all possible executive meetings throughout the year, where we make key decisions to do with the running of the organisation. This experience as a board member as been a really new one for me, and one that I have enjoyed a lot. Further, reporting back to our students about our work is important for VUWSA’s transparency and accountability. This takes form in fortnightly work reports, quarterly and half year reports (like this one) on our work, and through other means such as salient columns. These things have take some time to do, especially as it’s something I try to do to a high quality.

### **5. VUWSA internal committees**

I sit on two of VUWSA's internal committees – the Executive Reporting Committee and the Constitutional Review Committee. We have met a few times to examine and pass Exec Work Reports, and to analyze our current constitution in preparation for our constitutional review this year. This has been really interesting work so far and I look forward to continuing this work.

## **6. Upskilling**

As a member of the VUWSA exec, and particularly in my role as Campaigns Officer, I think it's really important to keep working on myself and my skills so that I can do the best job I possibly can. This year I have attended a few campaign workshops to learn more about campaign strategies and organisation. One of these was the Action Station Community Campaign Training, which I found very helpful, and as mentioned earlier, I will be attending a 5 day long community campaign training in Auckland in August too.

## **Summary**

This first half of the year has been very exciting, a lot of hard-work and a huge learning experience. Overall, I am really proud of my work, and how the VUWSA exec has worked together to get the best deal for students. My work in this half-year has also highlighted some strengths and weaknesses that I wasn't as aware of before coming into this role. I see my strengths being:

- my passion for the work that I am doing and my genuine drive to help improve students' lives and experiences at Vic and in Wellington
- my creativity, imagination and willingness to try new things (such as building a website when I have had no prior experience in doing so)
- my determination to seeing things that I have set my mind on through
- my skills as a campaigner and my willingness to improve on these skills and to always keep learning. I love campaigning and I love learning and I think that I bring a good existing skill-set to the exec, but I am also constantly trying to expand this skill-set so I can contribute even more and better.
- my care for the rest of the VUWSA executive and staff and my ability to work with them as an effective team member

However, I have also recognized some weaknesses in my work and attitude that I will work to improve on in the second half of the year:



- my work-life balance. I find it very hard to leave VUWSA work at VUWSA and many times I have prioritized it above me academic studies and important, personal down-time. This has seen me become very burnt out and resulted in negative health consequences. This balance is something that I will definitely strive to improve on so that I can contribute better and more efficiently to VUWSA, whilst maintaining my own well-being and success in my studies
- my reliability. Because I have become quite burnt out a few times this year, this has impaired my ability to see through certain tasks or contribute effectively to the team at times. This is something I will work to improve on by not overloading and over-committing myself.
- My accessibility. Though I strive to be open and accessible and feel like I do this quite well generally, I want to work on being more accessible by engaging with students directly more in the second half of the year by attending more club and rep group events.
- My efficiency. I am a huge perfectionist and I often take a long time working on tasks because of this. This next half of the year I will strive to be more efficient in my work and to increase outcomes rather than perfection.

I am really excited about the second half of the year, especially because of the general election coming up in September. I will be mostly focusing on our We Have Power general election campaign and engaging as many students as possible in that through meaningful volunteering and mobilization of the student body, as well as some further work on Fairer Fares, Living Wage at Vic, and other crucial exec work. I can't wait to work with an amazing Vic volunteer network, and students nationally, to get 100% of students voting in this general election! If you're reading this, make sure you get on board here <http://www.vuwsa.org.nz/volunteer/> 😊