



## EXECUTIVE HALF-YEAR REPORT



<b>NAME</b>	Tara O'Connor
<b>POSITION</b>	Clubs and Activities Officer
<b>REPORT PERIOD</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2020 – July 12 <sup>th</sup> 2020
<b>HOURS WORKED</b>	275
<b>HOURS REQUIRED</b>	280

### Introduction

This has not been the year I expected and definitely not the year I planned for, but I am so thankful to have been in the role of Clubs and Activities Officer for every moment of it.

Uni can be freaking hard and clubs can make a really huge place feel a lot less scary. Clubs give the university so much heart and make it so much more of an enjoyable place to be so supporting them as much as possible was why I wanted to be in this role in the first place.



### Constitutional goal

**Goal 5** Activities: To support sporting, social and cultural activities for and by members and students, particularly through Clubs.

### Priority goal

My priority goal at the beginning of the year was all about increasing club engagement within the university. Due to COVID that goal shifted to retention of club engagement while most events couldn't go ahead due to lockdown.

# CLUBS

## Clubs Expo



Clubs Expo was the first club centric event of the year. I helped the Uni Rec team set up early in the mornings for a huge three days with over 145 clubs represented. I spent as much time as possible heading around the stalls and introducing myself to the different club execs. I just let them know who I was, what I was doing, how to contact me, and then just generally chatted about what they were doing for the year and any upcoming events they had. This was a really awesome opportunity to meet a bunch of new people and a bunch of people that I would essentially be working with for the rest of the year. It was an absolutely awesome event and created a really positive buzz around the work everyone would be doing for the rest of the year.

## Clubs 101 Night

Uni Rec ran their annual Clubs 101 night with heaps of engagement from different execs where they went through the role of Uni Rec and what resources etc they could provide. I spoke about the role VUWSA plays within the Clubs Sphere, talking about the partnership with Uni Rec, resources we could offer and also plugging that the club's council elections would be coming up soon. Again, it was a really great opportunity to engage with clubs a bit more and put my name out there with contact details and everything.

## Clubs Forum

Originally the Clubs Forum was set to be in person the week that the country went into lockdown so obviously things changed. We had the Forum via Zoom at the start of May which came after the 5-week Uni break as we transitioned to operating online. This meant that it was held much later in the year than desirable, but you got to work with what you can. After some issues with me trying to work out how to present a PowerPoint over zoom we had Lara and Pete from Uni Rec explain the support they offered to clubs in their position. Geo and I ran through the support that VUWSA offers to clubs. I explained the partnership that existed between Uni Rec and VUWSA as outlined in the doc developed by Millie and Lara last year. We had a discussion with the clubs there about the challenges they had faced as a result of Covid-19 and what they wanted to see fixed and finally we had the Clubs Council Election which was super exciting. I was really nervous about two things 1) that we wouldn't get quorum (we just snuck in) and 2) that no one would want to be on the council. Prior to the IGM we had 7 nominees and the 3 further spots were filled. I am so thankful to the multiple VUWSA members who came along and gave support as well as to Pete and Lara who were fantastic with answering question from Clubs.



## **Clubs Council**

Clubs Council has been described as a beast to wrangle by most previous Clubs and Activities officers. I now see why. I had talked to Pete and Lara about how the Council had operated in the past and what came from those discussions was that it was largely ineffective as a unit. I wanted to change this. I developed a Clubs Council Terms of Reference to try and solidify the role and scope of the Clubs Council. While I think that this document was useful in streamlining the information from the constitution, it still wasn't super clear in my head what I was doing with the Council.

After being elected in May it didn't give us much time to work with and due to everyone's limited capacities as heavily involved club members it was tough to find times that worked for everyone. However, I would like to thank all of those members who sat on the Council and gave up their very valuable time to help discuss club issues and work to creating a more effective Council for the incoming years. We had representation from a range of clubs both sporting, cultural and social.

Initially I wanted to find an issue that we wanted to solve and collectively work towards solving said issue in a kind of working group buzz. My initial vision didn't work, and I think this stemmed from me not really knowing what the Clubs Council's purpose was. But it's not all bad, in realising this it was apparent one of the issues we needed to tackle was Clubs Council itself and through discussions and collaborations we now have a takeover document for the next Clubs and Activities Officer with learnings and recommendations all developed from our discussions as a Council about what it can look like in the future years to come.

The new election for Council will be held at the end of this year rather than the start of next year as per the Clubs Constitution hopefully giving the next Council more time to work with and achieve heaps next year!! YAY!!

We had a super cute wrap up with the council, had some cheese and cake and carrots and again I would like to thank each person that sat on the Council and brought passion and experience to their role. While I may have just seemed confused, I really do think we have and will have a tangible impact on those taking over the Council next year.

## **Sponsorship Panel**

The Sponsorship Panel is made up of me as the chair, Lara from Uni Rec, Josie from Uni Rec, usually a VUWSA member and a Clubs Council Member, I would like to thank all those who sat on the panel it was so beneficial to have a breadth of experience to make some tricky discussions. As clubs apply for financial aid we go through and assess the applications and make grants. Lara and I would meet to discuss the applications prior to panel meetings and make recommendations regarding amounts to help streamline the process once we were in the panel meetings.

Millie and Lara had developed guidelines last year to help with limits/estimations for each event, i.e. how much would be the max amount we would give to an AGM, this created greater parity between grant I think and made our lives a lot easier.

Due to COVID it made funding grants a bit difficult because a lot of the events that had been planned were not able to go ahead and seasons were cut short etc so we had to account for this and make decisions with the knowledge that there may not be as much money in the funding budget in years to come potentially due to the financial implications of COVID.

### **Generally - CLUBS!!**

One of my favourite parts of this role has been engaging with Clubs over a random assortment of things. Going to AGMs, helping with questions, providing support and consultation if needed, it makes things super interesting because there is such a huge array of clubs and hence, they all have different needs and things going on VERY FUN and COOL. I message a lot of people and follow a lot of clubs on Instagram to keep up with everything that is going on.

## COVID and Clubs

When COVID hit I got pretty down about how I was even going to be able to do anything this year if everything was cancelled, especially for clubs when so much of what we do is in person engagement and in all honesty it took be a while to get over, especially when everything you have planned for get thwarted BUT there was still so much to do.

When everything first got announced I worked with Lara to develop a document outlining what it meant for clubs. I didn't see it as a big deal but had a range of clubs get in touch just to say thank you for providing some clear information about what was going on and that made my heart fuzzy.

I answered a lot of emails, phone calls and messages about what clubs should do given the circumstances, whether they should go on their trip, hold this event etc. and while I was no more knowledgeable about what was going on than anyone else was I think there was comfort in being able to confirm decisions with someone else.

I worked with Student Health to make sure that we have a stack of wipes and hand sanitiser for clubs to use initially and then worked with them further to ensure we got even more once we were able to return to campus, despite Uni Rec being left with thousands of bottles by campus care.

I advocated for Clubs funding not to be cut despite the financial pressures of Covid-19 and as I said in my priority goal, COVID also changed what my priority goal was from increasing engagement to retaining it.

## VUWSA

## **NZUSA Conference**

This was very cool, and I learnt a lot in this space about mainly NZUSA which I didn't know existed and the work they do. It was a great opportunity to meet other student association execs and also bond with our VUWSA one.

## **Retreat and Re-Retreat**



I loved retreat and I wish I could have been there for more of re-retreat. Lots of swims and fun and planning and bonding and working out how we work was so valuable in ensuring that we became a “notably cohesive unit.” These people are some of the best in the world.

## **O Week**



O week meant I stayed up way past my bedtime every night but it was also awesome being involved in the events. I was in the safe room for a lot of the night or handing out water and fairy bread. During the day we had club expo events which was a great opportunity to meet people. We also packed a lot of O-Week bags.

## **Stress Free Study Week**



This is my favourite week as a student because without it I would probably cry a lot so it was really awesome to be on the giving end of the cereal and hot drinks and also listen to a lot of Hamilton with Parminder and Joanna.

## **Elections**

I love this team, I love the work Grace and Jo do to make the VUWSA elections campaign thrive despite everything that gets thrown at them. I was able to help with the End of Life Choice Panel which was a really awesome initiative in educating people about this year's referenda.

## **Sweat with Pride**



Sweat with Pride was organised between Sophie, Uni Rec and I and was so much fun. We had relatively good engagement for a Sunday Morning and had an awesome Zumba session. Pic of Michael and I boogieing.

## Summary

So far, this year has been easily the hardest and still somehow the best of my life. I appreciate everyone who has been a part of it and everything that we have been able to achieve despite it being pretty rough and tough. Big huge love to the people because I would not have been able to get through it without you (also extra hugs to Joanna who helped me understand what the heck to do when things were tricky.)

