



Phone 04 463 6719

Fax 04 463 6990

Email kelburn@vuwsa.org.nz

## EXECUTIVE WORK REPORT

<b>NAME</b>	Tamatha Paul
<b>POSITION</b>	Engagement Vice President
<b>REPORT PERIOD</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> January – 31 <sup>st</sup> May, 2018
<b>HOURS WORKED</b>	443.5
<b>HOURS REQUIRED</b>	440

### Introduction

The first half of this year has been absolutely insane. Stepping up from an officer role on VUWSA into a Vice President role meant that the transition was super easy. I started off the year confident in my existing knowledge of the organization but eager to learn more and to take more responsibility. Right from the start of January, I was working on O Week. Through O Week I was arranging Hall Visits which were carried out in week 2 and 3 of the first trimester. Following the hall visits, I successfully started up the Halls Committee, which was really easy because I established the Student Equity & Diversity committee the year before and felt confident in organizing and chairing meetings because of that. Shortly after this I went to Europe for 3 weeks which was really dope and explains why my hours aren't as high as the other VP's because I definitely get the mahi done. Once I got back, I was chucked straight into Arts Week which was super fun even though I was jetlagged. Following this we had Stress Free Study Week and then the mid-year break.

Lots of stuff happened in between each of these massive events which I go into detail about throughout this report but I have to acknowledge the wonderful, amazing, talented and super smart Beth Parker. Beth is our Events Manager at VUWSA and has done such an amazing job and often goes unacknowledged and underappreciated for her work. None of the events this year could have been a success without her hard mahi, ngā mihi mahana ki a koe taku hoa x

## Goal 2: Student Support

To advocate for adequate financial support, income, and welfare for students in order to remove barriers to education.

## Goal 4: Services

To provide quality, cost effective services for the benefit of members and, where necessary, students.

### Halls Committee

VUWSA recognises the need for student representation specifically within Student Halls' of Residence of Victoria University of Wellington. In 2017, VUWSA trialled a Halls Committee. The intention of the committee was to co-ordinate the collective student voice of those living in halls and studying at VUW. This is necessary as, at the time, there were no channels for the representation of students living in halls. We feel this representation is important as living in student accommodation offers a range of different aspects to consider; pastoral care, accommodation standards, the social culture of respective halls, interaction between VUW halls and the standard of service delivery provided. Not only this, but data from the Thursday's in Black *In Our Own Words* 2017 report suggests that a large number of incidences of sexual violence is happening within the halls. This tells us that we need to make sure there is an established platform for us to try and influence change on this.

In 2018, we decided to establish the Halls Committee as a permanent VUWSA Committee, chaired by the Engagement Vice President. At the beginning of the year, Charlotte (VUWSA Student Representation Coordinator), Marlon and I met numerous times to discuss the purpose and scope of the committee. This was ratified by a Terms of Reference and will be included in the VUWSA Constitution this year. The Halls' Committee meetings are funded by Victoria Student Accommodation, however they are not able to attend the meetings and hall representatives' details and any sensitive information that they bring to the committee is kept confidential – unless it is a matter of urgent student safety.

In the Terms of Reference for the VUWSA Halls' Committee, it states that there needs to be four Hall Committee meetings throughout the year. So far we have had two meetings which have been really productive in understanding the culture within halls. Following the first halls committee meeting, I followed up some of the issues brought up in the meeting with Cath Green, Associate Director of Student Accommodation, which ended up being solved which was satisfying.

The Halls Committee fits under Goal 2 as it is a platform for supporting students who live within halls in any capacity from pastoral care to academic support.



## Hall Visits

At the beginning of the year I organised hall visits in the second and third weeks of university. The hall visits served two purposes. First, to make sure that students were aware of VUWSA and the services that we provide (Goal 2) and also to recruit students to represent their halls on the VUWSA Halls' Committee. Communications were put out around looking for Hall Representatives, and the Hall Visits acted as a time and place for students to ask us questions about the committee and to get more information.



## Residential Tenancy Act Campaign / WTF Are Letting Fees?

This year one of VUWSA's main campaigns that we decided we wanted to spend a lot of time and resources on was campaigning on the Residential Tenancy Act. We identified some of the key policy points that we feel would be beneficial to students to have changed within the RTA; prohibiting letting fees, licensing property managers and having a rental warrant of fitness. We see letting fees, unlicensed property managers and unfit standards of housing as massive barriers to students succeeding and thriving within their studies, as well as detrimental to students' health – physically and mentally. Through our RTA campaign, we will target these issues as they come up for review via parliamentary select committee process.

Before I went to Europe, the letting fee aspect of the RTA came up for submission so Geo and I brainstormed ways to collect student written submissions. We called this What the F\*\*k are Letting Fees when we realized that most people aren't actually aware of what Letting Fees are for, and upon researching – we still couldn't find an explanation that justified the ridiculous prices of letting fees. While I was in Europe, Geo ran a very successful submission drive which received over 150 submissions. Geo, Marlon and student Finn Carroll (who spoke about letting fees with Marlon on morning television) made an oral submission on behalf of VUW students. When I got back, we drew out three random names of participants of this submission drive to win flat-warming packs.

Hopefully we are successful in our endeavours to get rid of letting fees but we have to keep pushing forward. We have been working with Renters United and are going to keep campaigning hardout for our other policy points for the rest of the year 😊







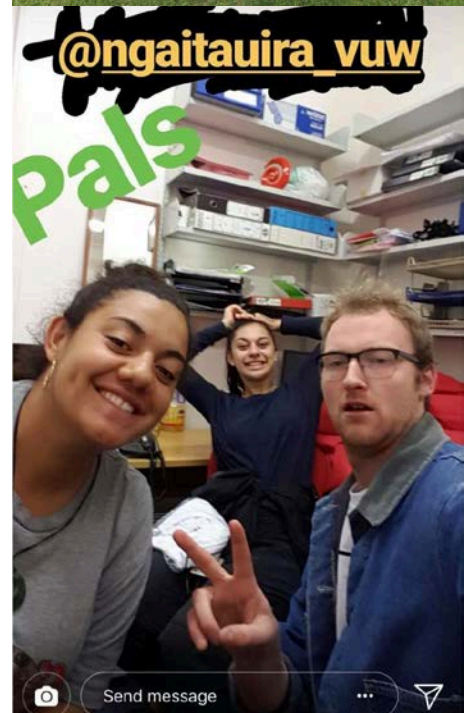
## Promoting VUWSA

Part of being the engagement Vice President is being asked quite often to speak to groups of people about what VUWSA is, usually alongside the President. At the beginning of the year I spoke to heaps of different groups about what we do at VUWSA, some of the services that we provide and some of the campaigns that we work on. I spoke to Residential Assistants, I spoke at the Faculty of Health Whānau Evening, Māori Students Orientation, at the Student Leaders Lunch hosted by Pam, at the COO (Chief Operations Officer) Meeting, at the Vaka Tahī Student Services Evening, and many other events. After speaking at all of these things, I've definitely got the VUWSA spiel on lock. This promotion obviously corresponds with Goal 2 as it is promoting those services that offer support to students. This could equally apply to Constitutional Goal 4 which is about services.

My favourite moment promoting VUWSA was hosting the Welcome to Wellington festival with Daniel from PSC, that was lots of fun 😊

## March on Midland

For the March on Midland I was able to contribute from my former capacity on the Thursdays in Black team and experience as VUWSA Equity Officer, to provide disclosure training to the organisers of the rally and students who were facilitating the rally. I also ran the post-rally sausage sizzle



which was a bit of a fail due to wind blowing out the elements but students hung around for food so it was cool. The March on Midland fits within this specific goal as it advocates for the elimination of sexual violence not only in student communities, but in workplaces too – especially those that hire students.

## **Stress Free Study Week**

As a Vice President it's a given that you do all you can for Stress Free Study Week as it is one of our biggest weeks of the year in terms of student support and engagement. This year for the first time, SFSW was organized by our Events Manager Beth whom I work closely with, which meant that as EVP I had a lot more involvement with SFSW than normal – as SFSW is often perceived to be WVP's job. To support SFSW, I put together the roster, hosted an event (Jump Jam in the Hunter Lounge) and took over the Victoria University Instagram for a day to promote Stress Free Study Week. During the takeover I promoted the free breakfast and lunch at the three campuses, as well as promoting services that VUWSA provides such as the community pantry and free menstrual products. This led to an increase in the utilization of these services.

---

## **Goal 5: Activities**

To support sporting, social and cultural activities for and by members and students, particularly Clubs.

## **Orientation Week**

Orientation Week is the Engagement Vice President's pride and joy. This year was really dope, we had a sick line-up; Monday was Chase & Status a drum & bass duo from London, Tuesday was Toga Night, Thursday was Peking Duk and Friday was Sachi and Kings. During the day we had some cool events too – food trucks, quiz night and outdoor cinema. I co-ordinated the VUWSA exec roster and made sure that all hands were on deck.

In terms of the Safe Room – the room where students can go throughout O Week events if they are feeling unwell or overwhelmed – we had a really good year in my opinion. This was my third orientation week (including re-orientation weeks), and I felt in comparison to previous years, the number of students coming to the safe room and being way too intoxicated, and the number of students reporting sexual harassment or sexual violence was a lot lower than in previous years. I think that this could have been due to VUWSA making stricter regulations around ticketing and also implementing a zero tolerance policy for letting drunk students into our events. We had the van to drop any intoxicated students back home though.

**I have a really mean video reel of the highlights from O Week on my Instagram @tamathapaul**



## Arts Week

Arts Week this year was super cool. Most of the preparation for it was done while I was in Europe. I got back the week before Arts Week and was able to be caught up to speed by the absolutely amazing Bethany Parker (events manager). We were able to put lots of mahi into the week, it was mostly us at all the events but we are a super team together so it was chill.

We had a student art exhibition to open the week which was really successful. The exhibition featured hundreds of pieces of art by students and was arranged by students Violette and Leo. Most pieces were sold and we were really happy to be able to provide a platform for students to make some money. At the opening, Nicola Willis (National MP) opened the exhibition by cutting the ribbon. A lot of students attended and heaps of members of Victoria's senior leadership showed up (shout out Pam Thorburn, always, always, ALWAYS supporting student initiatives). Throughout the week we had different art-oriented events including a collab event with Salient FM on how to curate the perfect playlist. I went to this one, it was really dope mostly just learning cool stuff off Kii and Jazz.

I think next year for Arts Week we should definitely bring back the Arts Exhibition, but maybe have more comms around the events throughout the week and definitely more support from exec members.