



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Madeleine Ashton-Martyn
POSITION	Welfare Vice President
REPORT PERIOD	1st January – 30th June 2015
HOURS WORKED	597.5 hours (471.4 required)

Reporting on Priority Goals:

1. Goal 2

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

(a) Sexual assault prevention, policy, and process – I have lead calls to the university to improve its sexual assault prevention strategies, policies, and response strategies alongside Student Advocate Kate Nickelchok and Equity Officer Chennoah Walford. The overarching goal of this campaign has been to ensure that Victoria has a definitive, long term, sexual assault prevention and response strategy. This strategy would include education initiatives that contribute to a cultural shift away from rape culture, definitive pathways students can choose after disclosure, and anonymous online reporting procedures. This has involved regular input into working groups, research into international best practice, and engagement with Wellington based specialist services such as Wellington Rape Crisis and the Sexual Abuse Prevention Network. It has been a really long and difficult task attempting to see this through, often met at resistance though I am confident that VUWSA's consistent push for action over the past year have had a significant impact.

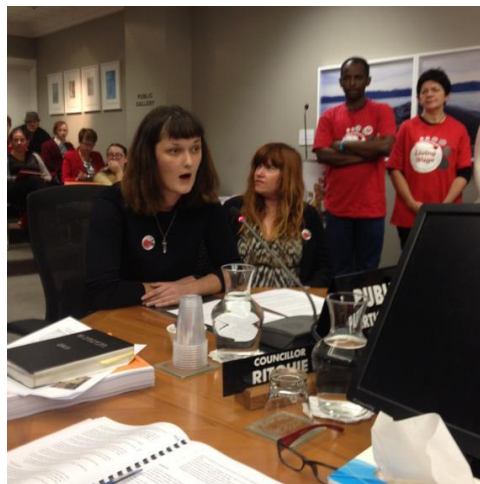
(b) StudyLink – I have done some work this year in assessing how changes to the Jobseeker Support Student Hardship application process has changed the level of support students in need are likely to receive. I have also worked with Financial Support and Advice Services to map where the most commonly encountered issues students have with StudyLink are.

(c) Stress Free Study Week – Alongside our staff, I have lead the most successful run of Stress Free Study Week thus far, organizing the serving over 9000 meals to students over the week leading up to trimester 1 exams. This involves organizing and sorting logistics for the week, buying supplies to last throughout, and doing more administrative tasks as well as coordingating the week its self. We also had People’s Coffee, a lego session with CanDo, 4 visits from puppies and kittens with the SPCA thanks to WSO Rory Lenihan-Ikin, and support from a number of VUW support services. SFSW is always a huge task to tackle and falls in a really difficult time in the semester, I was really grateful to get support and help from the full executive in pulling off the week.



(d) Living Wage Campaign – I have lead VUWSA’s support for the Living Wage campaign alongside Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer Rory Lenihan-Ikin and Equity Officer Chenoah Walford.

This year the progress in different staff university. points of VUWSA notable 000 in the Plan to be a living wage. Wellington which further a crucial part



campaign has had made significant building community support across and student segments within the There have been several notable progress including a forum held by alongside our IGM, as well as success in the provision for \$750, Wellington City Council’s Long Term I have a seat on the Living Wage Board as a community member entrenches VUWSA and students as of this campaign.

(e) Housing – alongside Presidentnt Rick Zwaan and WSO Rory Lenihan-Ikin I have helped to prepare submissions to the Wellington City Council calling for local council leadership on the issue of Rental Warrants of Fitness. I have also assisted in getting local media on this issue and the impact of low availability of affordable housing.

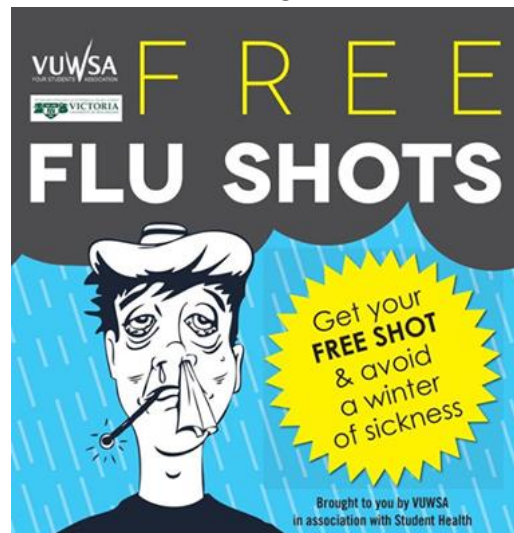
(f) HIV Rapid Testing Clinics – I have been working with the New Zealand AIDS Foundation and Student Health to introduce monthly free and anonymouse HIV rapid testing clinics available to students at Victoria. These clinics will also offer a full sexual health screening and follow up support to students who test positive. This has involved assisting in the setting up of clinics to ensure they are fully accessible.

(g) Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy (ACSSL) – As a member of this committee I have helped to provide financial oversight to ensure that the \$704 Student Services Levy has been spent efficiently, effectively, and in a way that benefits students directly. I sit on this committee alongside President Rick Zwaan and have actively contributed to the strategic review that the committee began in 2014 and has continued to push forward in 2015.

(h) Hardship Committee – I attend weekly meetings as a member of the Hardship Fund Committee that administers grants and loans to students in hardship. Membership of this committee involves ensuring that grants and loans are given in a supportive and equitable manner. It also provides a sobering insight into the types of situations a number of Victoria students are in during their time at university. This can be really tragic to hear about, but the Hardship Fund is one of the most directly useful and well functioning services Vic has to offer. Weekly meetings also mean it is relatively easy to track the peaks and troughs of issues the student body faces throughout the semester.

(i) Student Wellbeing – I have worked closely with Mauri Ora and particularly Student Counselling Services on a number of projects to help improve student wellbeing at Victoria and to embed this as a known issue within university leadership. This has included being involved in the student wellbeing project working group which has provided direction to the Curative wellbeing campaign and Bubble project. The wellbeing campaign has largely had a positive response from students who have indicated to us that they genuinely think the campaign is beginning to make a difference, and at the very least are appreciative of the campaign as a symbol that the university cares. The Bubble project is leading up to a launch on the 27/07 though I expect it will also require some ongoing work after its opening.

(j) Flu Shots – I helped to coordinate the free flu shot service alongside Student Health staff. This involved organizing the lunch time flu clinics at all campuses and coordinating VUWSA's involvement with the National Flu Shot Campaign Launch that was hosted at Victoria alongside the Ministry of Health. Our lunch time clinics were highly successful and it was noted by the Student Health nurses that numbers were higher than they had been before and that they were organized very well.



(k) Save the 18 – President Rick Zwaan and I ran a small campaign at the beginning of the year to try to save the 18 bus route. This led on from some work beginning in 2014 in opposition to the proposed scrapping of the route in the Greater Wellington Regional Council's Draft Public Transport Plan. The route is relied on by a number of students travelling between campuses or universities, and by those living in densely populated student suburbs Newtown and Mt. Cook. This campaign involved meeting with council officers, communication with regional councillors, coordinating a public meeting on the 18, responding to media, and presenting at a GWRC meeting.



(l) Budget Day – I helped President Rick Zwaan and Campaigns Officer Nathaniel Manning to formulate a response to the central government’s 2015 budget. This involved assisting analysing changes to tertiary funding and assisting in writing a press release that outlined the Minister’s failure to increase student support where it is needed.

(m) Assisting students ad hoc with welfare issues – I regularly get students contacting me by email, phone, or approach me at events or around campus inquiring about available support for welfare related issues. I consider this to be a really important part of what VUWSA does and see it as a really valuable thing that students feel comfortable approaching us directly for help.

2. Goal 3

Equity and Access: To promote equity for disadvantaged students in access to and within the University.

(a) Student Equity and Diversity Committee – Alongside EqO Chenoah Walford I helped to set up and convene this committee for 2015. The purpose of this committee is to discuss pertinent issues and gain a fuller understanding of perspectives from students of differing backgrounds. This means the committee deals with issues of equity as well as broader issues that impact the entire student body though that impact may be in different ways for different groups.

(b) Tertiary Women New Zealand – I worked with National Women’s Rights Officer Izzy O’Neil on various different projects. This has involved giving input and guidance on the Thursdays In Black campaign, as well as assistance with dealing with issues of mysogyny and transmysogyny in student media outside of Victoria. I also attended and actively participated in the Tertiary Women New Zealand conference in February. The relationship VUWSA has with TWNZ is really productive and symbiotic.

(c) Issues of equity within VUWSA – Alongside EqO Chenoah Walford I have helped to ensure that VUWSA is an organization actively committed to equitable practices. This has included giving guidance to the Engagement team on issues of intersectional feminism in events that VUWSA runs and more generally helping the executive and staff understand and promote equitable practice.

(d) Relationships with university services – I have built and strengthened the relationship that VUWSA has with VUW services relevant to this goal. Through regular meetings, email contact, and reciprocal advice giving and sharing, I believe our relationship with Mauri Ora, Disability Services, and Financial Support and Advice have been strengthened significantly this year. I was invited to assist Mauri Ora on their hiring panel for the new Mental Health Coordinator as a mechanism of bringing the student perspective further into their service due to this. I attended the Australia New Zealand Student Services Association central hui as a VUWSA delegate.

(e) Representative group support – EqO Chenoah Walford has done a fantastic job at supporting representative groups on behalf of VUWSA this year. Where needed, I have supported these groups by attending IGMs, events, and giving ad hoc advice and support to their presidents.

(f) Student Wellbeing – *As described above*

(g) Sexual assault prevention, policy, and process – *As described above*

(h) Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy (ACSSL) – *As described above*

(i) Living Wage Campaign – *As described above*

- (j) **Save the 18** – *As described above*
- (k) **Budget Day** – *As described above*

3. Goal 6

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

(a) **Vanuatu Relief Appeal** – Alongside President Rick Zwaan, the Pasifika Students’ Council, Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika) Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, and Pala Molisa I helped to coordinate the response to Cyclone Pam which cause large scale destruction in Vanuatu. This was in recognition of New Zealand’s position in the Pacific and in support of the Vanuatu community within Victoria and in Wellington. I coordinated the bucket collection drive which involved over 70 volunteers across three campuses. The drive as a whole was highly successful and raised over \$10, 000 towards long term education based projects in Vanuatu. Working on this project was a really humbling part of the past 6 months, incredibly inspiring to work with some amazing leaders to bring Victoria together in a really tragic time. I feel really fortunate to have been able to contribute.



(b) **Changes to University Council** – I have worked alongside the full executive to contribute and respond to the process of University Council changing. This has involved assisting in the development and promotion of a survey on what students wanted from the changes, assisting at the ‘Who Should Rule the University?’ Forum, and assisting in translating the issue to communicate to the student body. I also assisted in writing VUWSA’s submission in the first round of consultation. This has largely culminated in advocating for the retention of student seats and democratic elections as an appointments process.

(c) **Disaster Response** – After the flooding in May I worked alongside President Rick Zwaan to formulate a response. This involved organizing emergency student accommodation and transport, as well as longer term aid. We also put together a student volunteer group that travelled out to areas in need to help move mud from people’s properties. This also led refined the methods and within that this in the



to some work which university’s response the place of VUWSA for instances such as future.

(d) **Campus Safety** - I have continued work begun last year as a part of the Let Me Go Home campaign against sexual violence in identifying risks on campus and promoting thorough responses from the university.

(e) **Participation in external campaigns** – I have participated in several externally based campaigns this year such as Pink Shirt Day and the Love Parade as a part of Out in the Park. I have also regularly participated in Thursdays in Black and supported the campaign in attended core group meetings where I have been able to.



(f) **Submissions** – Alongside WSO Rory Lenihan-Ikin we wrote a substantive submission to the Wellington City Council Long Term Plan outlining commendations and recommendations that would impact students in various parts of the plan. I have also given oral presentations to WCC and GWRC on behalf of VUWSA and as a part of the Living Wage movement on student relevant issues.

(g) **Sexual Abuse Prevention Training** – I organized for the VUWSA staff and executive to get sexual abuse prevention training from the Sexual Abuse Prevention Network (SAPN).

(h) **Sexual assault prevention, policy, and process** – *As described above*

(i) **Living Wage Campaign** – *As described above*

(j) **Save the 18** – *As described above*

(k) **Budget Day** – *As described above*

4. Goal 9

Sustainability: To recognize 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 members.

(a) **Staff restructure** - I have assisted in seeing through the organizational restructure that was begun in 2014 through helping to interview candidates for several positions and helping to fill the work load through transitional phases. This restructure has strengthened VUWSA's operational structure and will contribute to the longevity of the organization. We have been really lucky to find some exceptional people to fill these positions.

(b) **Active transport** – worked with GWRC to find ways to promote active transport to and from campus as well as around the city to students who were new to Wellington at the beginning of the year.

Reporting on Other Goals:

1. Goal 4

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

(a) **VUWSA Van** – I assisted our General Manager Indigo Freya in finding a van fit for VUWSA's purposes and in developing the relevant policies that go alongside it.

(b) Microwaves – I have worked on getting more microwaves around campus available for student use though this is surprisingly difficult. I have been able to get a few installed in the Kirk Cybercommons for all hours access and use and am working on getting the final ones installed.

(c) Car Parks – At the beginning of the year I worked on developing a new process for organizing student car park passes for use under the new pay and display system on Wai-te-ata Road. This new process is more efficient and functional than the last.

(d) Community Pantry – I have helped to increase the use of the Foodbank this year by almost double through assisting in its rebranding and introducing a new choice system where students may choose what they would like to include in their parcel. Sanitary and hygiene products are now available through this service too.

2. Goal 5

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

(a) Student Equity and Diversity Committee – *As described above.*

(b) Orientation – I supported the Engagement Team in their running of NSO and Orientation weeks through volunteering at various events and looking out for student safety at the night events.

3. Goal 8

Accountability: To ensure accountability to, and representation of, members.

(a) Audit and Finance Committee – I sit on this committee and help to provide financial oversight to the Association and ensure that we are on track with our budget.

(b) Executive Reporting Committee – I have contributed to ERC at various points and assisted in approving the work reports of executive members.

(c) ACSSL – *As described above*

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. National Student Voice - I have assisted in bringing our executive up to speed on decisions made regarding NZUSA last year and in facilitating discussions about where we would like to take this conversation in the future. This has spanned across multiple workshops, letters, and communications with NZUSA as well as other associations nationally. I have had a really strong perspective and voice within this issue.

2. Campus produce market – I began exploring this project at the beginning of the year and did some of the initial ground work. Since then, WSO Rory Lenihan-Ikin has taken leadership on it and I have supported him where needed.

Representation

1. VUWSA Executive – I have attended and actively participated in all Executive meetings this year.

2. **Welfare Team Meetings** – I have organized and led welfare teams meetings regularly throughout the year where our team is able to touch base and offer advice and guidance on respective projects.
3. **ACSSL** – *As described above.*
4. **Student Equity and Diversity Committee** – *As described above.*
5. **Hardship Committee** – *As described above.*
6. **New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA)** – I attended the NZUSA SGM as OUSA's delegate at the beginning of the year and as a VUWSA delegate at a National Executive meeting.
7. **Student Job Search** – I attended the SJS SGM as Rick's delegate.

Strengths

1. **Ambition** – I have found this year that the way I work is really 'all-in'. I completely commit to projects and tunnel vision into them, from making sure that we are being ambitious in our goal setting to looking into the details to make sure we can pull it off. VUWSA has taught me a lot about the value in rejecting half-measures in favour of ensuring something is done completely and in the right way.
2. **Values driven** – A huge motivator for me is my core values which I think reflect the values of the organization. In decision making and in practice I ensure that I am living by what I believe in and spend time reflecting on how I am performing and how to best approach various situations and projects. I am still learning in this. It can be difficult at key decision making moments to maintain pragmatism while bringing what you believe in with you. VUWSA has taught me a lot about this.
3. **Personable** – I have been able to successfully form, strengthen, and retain relationships with various stakeholders relevant to the welfare portfolio including university staff members, key leaders in the city, and those within VUWSA. I find engaging with people on these issues really easy and enjoy being an approachable contact for people. I also value so highly the friendships that I have made while working on VUWSA and the opportunity it has given me to work with some truly incredible young people.

Weaknesses

1. **Efficiency** – I often find it quite difficult to take a step back from some things and work out how to do them more efficiently. I end up not being able to cut corners in the process that I think is right for the sake of completing in a timely manner. This can mean that I am unable to complete some projects as others come up.
2. **Confidence** – I sometimes find it difficult to voice an opinion in certain meetings or to push for what I think is the right thing to do due to a lack of confidence. Occasionally I think this stems from anxiety about the gaps in my institutional knowledge relating both to VUWSA as an organization and to the structures within VUW. Lacking confidence is really frustrating as it can be a barrier to completing projects.
3. **Stress** – This job is really high stress. It's really easy to end up in thought spirals around whether or not you are performing adequately or doing right by the students who you are trying to represent. I have really high expectations of what I want to do and of the level I want to perform at which means I'm often stressed about whether or not I'm doing well enough. I find it difficult to emotionally disassociate from the work because of this, though I think this

just comes from a place of genuinely really deeply caring about all areas of this job and of VUWSA more generally. I think in some ways being committed and thinking about VUWSA related issues all the time has benefitted my work, but in many cases it has led to burnout and stalling things that I need to do.

Overall Rating

Working on VUWSA is a pretty amazing experience. When thinking about what I am going to be able to take away from this, it always comes down to people. The friendships I have made and the connections I have formed with a whole bunch of incredible young people are invaluable to me. I am proud of what I have been able to do for the organization so far this year.

The welfare portfolio is fantastic for the same reasons that it is challenging. The role is extremely fluid in that it largely depends on the people who fill it, their background, and their interests in what you end up spending your time doing. It's important in this role to be reflexive and responsive where possible to ensure we are focussing on the issues that are the most relevant to students, both in the long and short term.

I think looking forward it will be important to set out some definitive goals for the rest of the year, and particularly in looking into where we can be building in welfare related campaigns with a strong, long term vision for where they may lead in the future. I'm interested in seeing how I can ensure that my work and that of my team is better streamlined and targeted in the remaining months.