



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Rick Zwaan
POSITION	Welfare Vice President
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 30 June 2014
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	26
HOURS WORKED	758.75

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) **Fairer Fares** – I have continued to lead this campaign this year, alongside President Sonya Clark and Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer (WSO) Stephanie Gregor, with the aim to introduce tertiary concessions on public transport in Wellington. Introducing concessions will make a significant difference in students' financial position and their ability to access campus and thus a tertiary education. This has involved a significant amount of work on submissions, liaising with media, engaging with students and meeting with councillors and university staff. The campaign has progressed a lot this year with the introduction of a conditional 25% concession in the regional transport plan. We also have the public support of the Vice Chancellor, local and regional councillors.
- (b) **Stress Free Study Week** – I lead and oversaw one of the more successful Stress Free Study Weeks in the lead up to trimester one exams. This involved sorting the logistics and funding that resulted in students receiving thousands of servings of free breakfasts and lunches across the three main campuses every day of study week. This year we also had free Peoples' Coffee, SPCA puppies and a large number of Student Support Services staff and VUWSA Volunteers contributing to the success of the week. The whole Executive put a large amount of time and effort into the week, with special mention to WSO, Stephanie Gregor, for organising the puppies and Engagement Vice President (EVP), Declan Doherty-Ramsey for sorting the roosters.
- (c) **Rental WoFs** – I have continued to lead the Healthy Homes campaign this year by working closely with Wellington City Council (WCC) on the

implementation plans for Rental WoFs to improve the standards of students' flats. With the support of WSO, Stephanie Gregor, we have prepared and presented submissions to WCC, meet with councillors, council staff and Members of Parliament (MPs) on the continued development and implementation strategies for Rental Warrant of Fitness standards.

- (d) **Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy (ACSSL)** - As a VUWSA representative on this committee I have continued to ensure that the \$690 student services levy is spent as effectively as possible. This involves attending regular meetings, helping to develop the budget simulator consultation and providing input onto student services reviews and the budget setting processes.
- (e) **Hardship Committee** – I've attended weekly meetings of the Hardship Committee which administers hardship grants and loans to students. This is funded by the \$24 Student Assistance Levy which all students pay. An emphasis of this committee is to ensure we are supporting students in need while also making sure we are distributing funds in an equitable and effective way. I often refer to the Wednesday 8am committee meetings are the best and worst part of my job as we hear tragic stories but are in a position to assist in a meaningful way.
- (f) **Living Wage Campaign** – I have lead VUWSA's continued support for the living wage campaign on the basis that students earning a living wage will be in a better financial position and have more time to focus on academic studies with less stress. This has involved supporting WCC's commitment to the campaign and being involved in seeing how VUW can be the first living wage university. I'm also a member of the Living Wage Wellington Board as a community representative. Equity Officer (EqO), Madeline Ashton-Martyn and WSO, Stephanie Gregor have also helped with this campaign.
- (g) **Student Wellbeing** – I have worked closely with Student Counselling Staff to provide input and help run student wellbeing initiatives. I've also been a member of the Student Wellbeing Reference Group, which is a group of students from VUWSA and the wider student population who work together to promote student wellbeing throughout the university. I've also been a peer support leader as part of the pilot project of the 'Sweet As' programme aimed to help first year students adjust to university life with useful wellbeing strategies.
- (h) **Flu Shots** – I helped coordinate the free flu shot drive alongside Student Health Staff. This involved sorting promotion, volunteers, and locations to enable the administration of thousands of immunisations.
- (i) **Save the 18** – Alongside President Sonya Clark and WSO Stephanie Gregor, we ran a micro campaign to save the 18 bus route. As the Wellington Regional Draft Public Transport Plan, proposed to get rid of the key route for many students because it connects four Wellington campuses as well as the heavily student populated suburbs of Newtown and Mt Cook. This campaign involved meeting with councillors and council officers, liaising with media, as well as writing and presenting the submission opposing the proposal and setting up a website for students to partake in the submission process.
- (j) **Campaigns Committee** – I have been sitting on the VUWSA Campaigns Committee which plans the campaign VUWSA will run for

this year's general election. A major focus of this committee is ensuring adequate student support.

- (k) **Budget Day** – I helped to digest and formulate a response to central government's 2014 budget. This involved analysing the changes to student support and tertiary funding and preparing a press release showing how the Minister continues to not increase student support.

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, Madeliene Ashton-Martyn, I helped to set up and convene this committee which has representatives from all the student representative groups with equity and diversity aims.
- (b) **Student Wellbeing** – *As described above*
- (c) **Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy (ACSSL)** - *As described above*
- (d) **Living Wage Campaign** - *As described above*
- (e) **Fairer Fares** - *As described above*
- (f) **Save the 18** - *As described above*
- (g) **Campaigns Committee** - *As described above*
- (h) **Budget Day** - *As described above*
- (i) **Rental WoFs** – *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) **Fairer Fares** - *As described above*
- (b) **Living Wage Campaign** - *As described above*
- (c) **Save the 18** - *As described above*
- (d) **Campaigns Committee** - *As described above*
- (e) **Budget Day** - *As described above*
- (f) **Rental WoFs** – *As described above*
- (g) **Let Me Go Home March** – I helped sort out the logistics, design, media and invited speakers to this event which was largely led by EqO, Madeleine Ashton-Martyn, President Sonya Clark and Women's Group and Youth for UN Women. The event was held in response to two sexually motivated assaults on the Boyd Wilson pathway and has spurred on a campaign to have a community wide response to address rape culture and make sure that everyone can feel safe as they walk around the city. The event consisted of a march with over 300 students a speaker event and workshop with MPs, Councilors, University, the Police, and WCC staff in attendance. It also received positive media attention and helped to inform identifying priority areas around the city where infrastructure like lighting needs to be improved.
- (h) **Campus Safety** – I have worked extensively with WCC, University staff and the Police on addressing issues raised by the Let Me Go Home March and wider concerns about students' safety on and around campus. President Sonya Clark and EqO, Madeleine Ashton-Martyn have also been heavily involved in this.
- (i) **Earthquake preparedness and response planning** - Since the earthquakes mid last year I have been heavily involved in working with university staff on

planning student preparedness and responses to natural disasters'. This has involved reviewing and inputting into plans; identifying student specific needs (i.e. the fact that students are unlikely to have extensive emergency food stocks at their flats), and evaluating how VUWSA and students can be an active part of emergency responses. This has also overlapped with other work on Rental WoFs so there are improved tenancy rights in place to address students' concerns about living in earthquake risk buildings.

4. 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 members.

- (a) **Divestment Campaign** – I have continued to work on this campaign and have been involved in setting up a student group which aims to see how Victoria could change its investment portfolio to ensure that fossil fuels are not being invested in. This is also trying to promote discussion on climate change and the sustainable operation of the university more widely. WSO, Stephanie Gregor, has also been involved in developing this campaign.
- (b) **Fairer Fares** – *As described above.* Introducing fairer fares will decrease the number of people driving to university and encourages sustainable transport choices.
- (c) **Environmental Committee** – Along with WSO Stephanie Gregor, I sit on the University Environmental Committee. This group has inputted into the Universities strategic planning and has a cross section of academics looking at how we can promote sustainability initiatives and teaching across the university. It has also helped in developing a good relationship with Environmental Manager, Andrew Wilks, to work on sustainability initiatives such as the universities waste minimisation strategy.
- (d) **Rental WoFs** - *As described above.* Improving the quality of housing in the rental market will have significant implications on the sustainable use of resources.
- (e) **VUWSA Annual planning** – I have been involved on developing our annual plan, budget and strategic planning to ensure the sustainable operation of our organisation into the future. I also sit on the Audit and Finance Committee which has oversight of the Associations finances and have worked to ensure we stay within our budgets and identify revenue streams.

Reporting on Other Goals

1. Goal 5

Activities: To support sporting, social and cultural activities for and by students; primarily through Clubs and Representative Groups.

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

(b) Orientation - Supported the Engagement Team on running the weeks of events. Volunteered at a number of O'week events by taking photos and looking out for the safety of attendees.

2. Goal 8

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

(a) Audit and Finance Committee – *As described above.*

(b) Annual Report and Initial General Meeting – I helped to write and designed the 2013 Annual Report, which was presented at our IGM which I helped organise the logistics of.

(c) Executive Reporting Committee – I often sit on the Executive Reporting Committee which approves the work reports of Executive members.

(d) ACSSL – *as described above*

(e) Joint Student Union Board - I sit on this alongside President Sonya Clark, and help to provide oversight of the usage of the Student Union buildings and associated facilities (such as Recreation Centre). An emphasis of this board is maintaining the historical accountability to our members who initially paid to build the facilities and to ensure they are run effectively today.

General Tasks and Initiatives

- 1. Budget development** – I've helped develop VUWSA's 2014 budget by working through the process and looking at actual costs.
- 2. Annual Plan Development** – I put lots of work at the start of the year in formulating and helping to consolidate our annual plan and identifying priority initiatives.
- 3. Fair Trade My Vic** – Along with WSO Stephanie Gregor, I have continued to assist VicIDS with this campaign where needed.
- 4. Office Move (relocation to Level Four SUB)** – I have worked extensively on this project in my capacity as project manager and client liaison for VUWSA's interaction with VUW staff, architects and builders. This significant capital investment came in on budget and only slightly behind schedule. Since moving we have seen a large increase in the number of students in our offices and accessing our services.

Representation

- 1. VUWSA Executive** – I am an active participant at VUWSA Executive meetings
- 2. ACSSL** – *as described above*
- 3. JSUB** - *as described above*
- 4. Student Equity and Diversity Committee** - *as described above*
- 5. Environmental Committee** - *as described above*
- 6. Hardship Committee** - *as described above*

7. **New Zealand Union of Students Associations (NZUSA)** – I have attended and contributed to the conference at the start of the year, and sat on the National Executive as President Sonya’s delegate on occasion.
8. **Student Job Search (SJS)** – I have regularly provided input into SJS’s plans and strategic direction by attending formal meetings and responding to proposals.
9. **Liaising with Local Government** – I am a primary engagement point for working with Wellington City Council and Regional Council were we often bring student issues to the table (such as fairer fares and rental WoFs).

Strengths

1. **Leadership** – I think I have effectively led the Welfare Team (Equity Officer, and Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer). I have also led a number of campaigns and projects and initiatives across the association.
2. **Dedication** – I tend to stick around until the job is done. This ranges from fliering lecture theatres first thing in the morning to staying up late writing submissions or packing food for Stress Free Study Week. This is also shown in my recorded surplus.
3. **Long Term Vision** – A key part of my role is working on campaigns that will take a number of years to achieve however will have significant long term benefit for students. I’ve also tried to focus on ensuring that VUWSA has a sustainable outlook.

Weaknesses

1. **Balance** – At times I haven’t balanced my VUWSA University, Social Life commitments that well. However this is largely due to a desire to achieve outcomes, although at times it is due to a lack of prioritisation or organisation.
2. **Delegation** – In some areas I haven’t effectively delegated tasks to relevant people, however this is something I’m actively working on improving.

Overall Rating

I’m proud of the things I’ve helped VUWSA achieve over the last six months. I’ve enjoyed the broad portfolio that the Welfare Vice President has and I think I’ve effectively utilised my skills to improve the wellbeing of students and help create a more sustainable campus and region. I’ve relished the opportunity to work alongside a passionate and dedicated executive that is setting a positive direction for VUWSA.