



## EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Rick Zwaan
POSITION	Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 1 June 2013
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	26
HOURS WORKED	611.4

### 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 Campaign** - I've worked extensively on this campaign to get tertiary concessions on public transport in Wellington to help remove barriers to education. Through developing a campaign website, developing resources such as postcards posters and fliers, building a network of community group supporters and meeting with regional councilors we have ensured that this issue has been at the forefront of our decision maker's minds. In coordinating the campaign, I helped to get regional and national media coverage, facilitated thousands of students in making their voice heard and helped organise the first ever public forum in the new Hub which actively engaged over 200 students.
- (b) **Stress Free Study Week** – I helped our Welfare Vice President, Simon Tapp, plan and prepare for Trimester One Stress Free Study Week. Alongside the rest of the executive and many volunteers, we provided thousands of free breakfasts and lunches simultaneously across Kelburn, Pipitea and Te Aro campuses. By providing a healthy and cheap soup for lunch we were able to keep costs down while ensuring we had wide coverage of the service.
- (c) **Student Services Levy** – Alongside the President and Welfare Vice-President I've helped to ensure that the long term review of student services goes ahead in a timely fashion. Through our seats on the

Advisory Committee for the Students Services Levy, we've advocated for ensuring that service provision is quality and cost effective.

- (d) **Living Wage Campaign** – I've supported VUWSA's involvement in this campaign which helps remove barriers to education by ensuring workers are paid enough to live on thus reducing the financial stress on students. I've attended meetings and helped our President and Welfare Vice-President in developing our role in the campaign.

## 2. **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) My work in coordinating the Fairer Fares campaign is the most significant way I've contributed towards this goal. But, I've also worked on inputting into the Wellington City Council's Alcohol Policy review, encouraging civic engagement and supporting the living wage campaign. I've promoted action on climate change as an important issue that needs addressing for and by our members.

## 3. **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) **Environment Week** – Alongside a number campus and community environmental groups, I planned a series of events for VUWSA's Environment Week. The week engaged hundreds of students through a wide range of events from workshops to weeding. I also helped *Salient* through the provision of material for the Environment issue.
- (b) **Fairer Fares** – This campaign aims to ensure that public transport, a more sustainable mode of travel, is accessible to students. If implemented, it would significantly reduce the university's transport carbon footprint.
- (c) **Environmental Committee** - By sitting on the University's Environmental Committee I've been able to input into the strategic direction in terms of sustainability. This committee has also enabled me to strengthen links with a variety of staff across the university.
- (d) **Carbon Neutral Campus** – I helped establish the oversight committee for this campaign. This saw the formalisation of VUWSA's relationship with Gecko in order to help reduce the University's carbon footprint.
- (e) **Maara Kai Project** – I've been involved in the development of this project which is creating a traditional vegetable garden by the Marae. This will enable students to be able to grow food on campus while learning traditional Maori methods of food cultivation.

## **Reporting on Other Goals:**

1. **Goal 1**  
**Education Quality: To ensure that the University provides the best teaching and learning, research opportunities, assessment and training to students**
  - (a) **Representation Review** – Since VUWSA's withdrawal from the Student Forum, I've supported our President and Academic Vice-President with developing alternative representation structures. I've also attended meetings with University staff and other student bodies involved in the Student Representation Working Party. Through this I've helped develop the representation review survey. Hopefully the outcome of this review will mean that a strong, democratic and effective representation structure is adopted to ensure that the University is accountable to students in the provision of quality education.

### **General Tasks and Initiatives**

1. **Engagement Review** - While our Engagement Vice President was away, I led the initial stages of a comprehensive review of how VUWSA engages with our members
2. **Orientation Week** - I spent numerous hours behind barbeques, signing up members and at events during O'Week.
3. **Fair Trade my Vic** – I've worked with our Engagement Vice President and VicIDS to support the campaign to make Victoria University Fair Trade.
4. **Budget Development** – I've helped our President and Treasurer- Secretary develop VUWSA's 2013 budget by critically analysing cost centres and year to date spend to ensure that we have a cost effective budget.
5. **Payment Scrutinisation** - As I am a signatory to the account, I scrutinise payments, on a regular basis, to ensure transparency and honesty.

### **Representation**

1. **VUWSA Executive** - I've attended and actively contributed to all of the VUWSA Executive Meetings so far this year.
2. **Executive Reporting Committee** – I've sat on this committee on a rotational basis and helped to maintain accountability by ensuring that Executive members' work reports are accurate before approving remuneration.
3. **Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy** - I've been to a number of committee meetings this year to ensure that our Student Services Levy is spent in a cost effective manner.
4. **Welfare Team Meetings** – I've regularly attended these weekly meetings to help inform and support our welfare team.
5. **Environmental Committee** – I've represented students' interests on this committee to help inform the university's strategic direction in terms of sustainability.

6. **NZUSA Conference** – I attended the conference at the start of the year.

### **Strengths**

1. **Dedication** – I've spent far longer than constitutionally required working on campaigns that I'm passionate about and that will make a difference for students.
2. **Long Term Vision** – A key part of my role is ensuring sustainability and thus longevity of our organisation. This has meant I've made decisions with a strategic frame.
3. **Communication** – I've ensured the effective communication of campaigns I've worked on. I've also assisted with visual communication in other areas by utilising my design skills and networks.
4. **Time management** – I've tried to focus my efforts on a few key areas and I think that's been successful. I've also tried to honor deadlines and I think this is reflected in my timely, yet comprehensive work reports.

### **Weaknesses**

1. **Organisation** – At times my VUWSA/Uni/Work/Life balance has been less than ideal and this is largely due to a desire to achieve outcomes but is also somewhat due to a lack of organisation at times.
2. **Delegation** – The Fairer Fares campaign is a good example of where there is lots of crossover between executive roles but at times I've failed to recognise or effectively delegate tasks to relevant people.

### **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 new position of Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer 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.