



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Rory Lenihan-Ikin
POSITION	Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 30 June 2014
HOURS WORKED	335 hours (235.7 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) Living Wage Campaign

My involvement in Living Wage Aotearoa this year has been split between the campaign at Victoria, and the wider Wellington campaign. If students are on a living wage, they will be in a better position to focus on study. The group at Victoria consist of students, academic staff, general staff, cleaners and organisers from various Unions, and is focused on getting the University to become a Living Wage employer. Contributions to this group have consisted of:

- Attending regular group meetings.
- Helping the Welfare VP Madeleine Ashton-Martyn organise a Living Wage Forum at the VUWSA IGM where people spoke to students about why we need the Living Wage, and people signed on as supporters as part of the 'Postcard' campaign.
- Attending the launch of the campaign at Te Aro campus.

In regard to the wider Wellington campaign, time has predominantly been spent establishing local 'Living Wage Hubs' (I am a member of the Newtown branch), and putting pressure on the Wellington City Council to continue their commitment to becoming a Living Wage employer. My contributions have consisted of:

- Attending regular Newtown Hub meetings.
- Attending and speaking at the Living Wage Wellington IGM.
- Designing and building a blackboard sign for people to express their support for the Living Wage.

- Doing photography and managing social media for a number of Living Wage events including a stall at Newtown Festival, Newton Whanau Day, Wellington City Council Long Term Plan oral submission and the Mop March.



(b) Student Wellbeing Group

The student wellbeing group is run through Rachel Reidel at Student Health and focuses on areas where student wellbeing can be improved. I have attended regular meetings and been involved in organising and running events. In April we ran ‘Sleep Week’, which provided information and ideas to students about how to get better quality sleep. We gave students fruit, tea, a white noise machine, sleep drops, and other things that help people get a better night’s sleep. The next event we have planned is Food Week which will give students ideas about how to improve diets while dealing with the realities of being a student- i.e. how to make healthy food for less money, how to organise shared cooking in flats etc.

(c) Campus Produce Market

I have been leading a proposal start a weekly produce market on campus. Stall holders would be growers who have come from within the Wellington region, and would set up much like they do for similar markets around the city (Newtown, Willis St). Having the market would mean fresh fruits and vegetables would be much more accessible at cheaper prices for students. It would be held on an afternoon/evening around the middle of the week so that students can do their shopping before they leave University for the day. There is interest from stall holders to join the market as soon as it can happen. The main things I am working on are the logistics of holding the market- access for stall holder’s trucks etc. A proposal for a location is currently being written and will be presented to Facilities Management in the next few weeks.

(d) Stress Free Study Week

This popular VUWSA event provides a range of welfare focused services to help students get through the exam period. I contributed by organising four puppies events – the first time there has been one on each campus. I also assisted Welfare VP Madeleine Ashton Martyn with the provision of free breakfasts and lunches, and cleaning at the end of each day, and the end of the week.

(e) Renters United

Renters United is a new organisation which advocates for the rights of renters. After attending the launch in April with a number of other executive members, I have had meetings with Robert Whittaker who is running the organisation, helped with promotion of their events, and started the process of planning the first major Renters United event which will be hosted by VUWSA in August.

(f) Food Co-op

I have been working closely with environmental club Gecko to conceive and grow an organic food co-operative on campus. A co-operative model of food distribution brings the focus to the supply chain, and considers the questions: *Where has this food come from? How was it grown/produced? Has it been produced and distributed fairly, to people and the planet?* With these questions in mind, it focuses on local and organic goods. The co-op makes organic food cheaper for students, reduces packaging, and reduces food miles by skipping out the retailer.

The co-op distributes food roughly every 2 months. Approximately 60 people have ordered so far, and it continues to grow.



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) Living Wage Campaign– As described above

(b) NZ Government Climate Change Consultation

In May the Government released a discussion document and held public meetings regarding its climate change targets in the lead up to the UN climate negotiations in Paris. Their intended targets were well below what is required, and did not reflect the 'fair and ambitious' contribution that was claimed. I went to the Wellington public meeting together with four other VUWSA executive members and wrote an extensive submission to the document on behalf of VUWSA. I co-organised a workshop that was run by Generation Zero to inform students about the government's intentions and encourage submissions, here students also gave their input on what they wanted to see in VUWSA submission, as their student body.

(c) Climathon

The Climathon was an event run in June by Climate Kic, the EU's climate change arm. It was a global 24hr hackathon for local climate solutions, taking place in simultaneously in 21 cities around the world. Wellington represented Oceania in the event. It was delivered by the Enspirial Academy, and hosted by VUWSA- I was the leading the VUWSA side of organisation. The event brought together a wide range of people; engineers, architects, scientists, planners, entrepreneurs, councillors and students

worked alongside each other to develop new ideas for climate solutions in Wellington. The winning team, which has yet to be decided, will receive 3 months of mentoring to develop their idea with the goal of implementation, and will present it as a part of the EU's display at the climate negotiations in Paris.

(d) Submissions

I have worked on the writing and presenting of a number of submissions to external bodies:

- Lead the writing of a submission to the Greater Wellington Regional Council on their draft Climate Change Strategy.
- Lead the writing of a submission to the Wellington City Council on their draft Cycle Framework.
- Together with Welfare VP Madeleine Ashton Martyn and President Rick Zwaan, wrote and presented a submission to the Wellington City Council on their draft Long Term Plan.

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) Climathon** – As described above.
- (b) Campus Produce Market** – As described above.
- (c) NZ Government Climate Change Consultation** – As described above
- (d) Food Co-op** – As described above.
- (e) Inter-hall Energy Saving Campaign**

The Inter-hall Energy Saving Campaign is a project I have been working on with a second year student along with the Environmental Manager and the Halls of Residence Manager. It is an energy saving competition between Weir House and Te Puni Village which will run for the duration of the second trimester. After leaving home where they likely had little awareness of energy use and paying bills, and before they go into flats where they will take full responsibility for energy use, this is a good time to educate students about using power efficiently. Halls will be rewarded by reducing energy use, and individuals will be rewarded by engaging particularly well with the competition. The view is that if the project is a success, it will be extended to all halls of residence in 2016.

The competition is funded by the University, by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, and is sponsored by Meridian and a number of Wellington Businesses.

(f) Composting on Campus

The University lacks a comprehensive waste system to match the image they are projecting of themselves as a world leader on sustainability. In 2014 parts of Kelburn campus had two additional streams (paper and glass/plastic) added to the existing landfill bin. In early 2015 this was extended to the Te Aro campus. The introduction of new waste streams lacked the simultaneous messaging required to ensure staff and student used them correctly. The addition of a fourth organic waste stream across the University is not a possibility until the three stream system is rolled out in its entirety.

In light of this, I worked on getting a single compost bin on campus to make up for the lack of places to put compostable packaging and food scraps. This resulted in a compost bin in the Kirk Courtyard which is paid for by Facilities Management and serviced regularly by Kai to Compost, a Wellington City Council Service. I am now working on getting another compost bin for Pipitea Campus, which will hopefully be in place in early Trimester 2.

Although a far cry from a comprehensive waste system, the rollout of three streams to Te Aro and the addition of a compost bin at Kelburn represent progress so far in 2015. I hope to carry on the constructive relationship I have with Facilities Management staff in order to continue these improvements, with the goal of every bin at Victoria having glass, paper, plastic, food waste, and landfill separations.

(g) Separated Waste Stations at VUWSA Offices

As part of the University waste issue as described above, I worked with Facilities Management to introduce a separated waste stations to the VUWSA offices, reception and student kitchen- the first office in the University to separate its waste. If VUWSA is going to be an advocate for better waste systems on campus, it must lead by example.

(h) Encouraging active transport – Bike repair station

A few months of working with the University's Environmental manager Andrew Wilks have resulted in the instillation of a bike repair station in the Tim Beaglehole Courtyard. In order to encourage cycling, it is important to integrate facilities into the design of spaces, this includes secure bike racks, safe space for cyclists to ride into the campus, rain shelters, and facilities to do basic repairs including tire changes general adjustments. This repair station represents a step in the process towards the increased accessibility of bike travel to campus.



(i) Environmental Committee

Alongside President Rick Zwaan, I sit on the Environmental Committee. The committee has been chaired by Assistant Vice Chancellor Sustainability Charles Dougherty until his recent resignation. A number of the meetings have been cancelled this year, however I have attended one where I raised the issue of the University establishing their own carbon offsetting program.

(j) Projected Fields

Helped with the running of events for a project run by Letting Space which explore the intersection between public art and the environment. *Projected Fields* consisted of a giant paintings on Macalister



Park which represented elements of the social and natural environmental, and invited the community to interact with the installation.

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) Food Co-op – As described above.

(b) Support for other groups

I have also provided support for other groups providing value to students. As stated above I facilitated a workshop run by Generation Zero regarding the Governments Climate Change Targets. I am currently working with 350 Aotearoa to help them deliver a film and discussion evening focused on Wellington level climate solutions which will be hosted by VUWSA.

(c) Orientation

I supported the Engagement team in their delivery of Orientation week. This consisted of helping at the VUWSA stall doing membership signups, working at music events, and doing a myriad of other small tasks throughout the week.

2. Goal 8

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

(a) Audit and Finance Committee

I sit on the audit and finance committee which oversees the budget and ensures that student money is being spent wisely.

(b) Executive Reporting Committee (ERC)

I frequently sit on the ERC which scrutinises the work of the executive to ensure student representatives are delivering as much value to students as possible.

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. Executive meetings

I have regularly attended VUWSA executive meetings and have provided input on input on matters where useful.

Representation

1. Fortnightly Executive Meetings

I have attended most executive meetings and contributed actively to matters concerning the executive.

2. Welfare Team Meetings

I have attended regular Welfare Team meetings, in which I share projects I am working on and take feedback from the rest of the team, and provide input on their respective projects where useful.

3. Environmental Committee – As described above.

Strengths

1. Commitment

Each of the projects I have been working on I have committed to and they have been pursued until being completed to a high standard. Infrastructure projects like compost bins and bike repair stations on campus were started and completed this year, along with events such as the Wellington Climathon and the Living Wage Forum. One project that hasn't been completed which I hope to achieve before the end of the year is the Campus Produce market, as this will dramatically increase the availability of low-cost fruit and vegetables to students.

2. Delivering on constitutional obligations

I have been able to select and develop projects that fit well within my constitutional requirements, and where possible straddle the wide range of issues pertaining to my role, from student wellbeing and the wellbeing of society, to the sustainability of VUWSA, VUW, and the wider community. For example, a bike repair stand on campus both promotes sustainable lifestyles by encouraging cycling, and improves wellbeing by providing a facility for a student to repair their bike so they can get home.

3. Ongoing vision

Although many of the projects I am working on are small steps, I have been able to ensure that I have a vision for where they are going, and that they are contributing to a broader picture. For example, the first compost bin on campus and the introduction of separated waste stations to the VUWSA offices are just early steps in the process of working with the university to develop a comprehensive, campus wide waste system that separates recycling and food waste, and minimises what gets sent to landfill.

Weaknesses

1. Efficiency

I have found that because I am learning to do so many things in this role that I have not done before, I am sometimes working less efficiently than I could be. To improve this, I can learn to focus on the things that I do well, and allow others to work on things that they are skilled at. For example, I have spent time designing promotional material when it is needed, despite having little experience doing so, meaning it takes longer than necessary. This is the sort of thing that could be delegated to someone else with design skills in order to improve efficiency.

2. Confidence

At times I have been hesitant to state my opinion or take a lead on things with a preference to wait for others to lead. Going forward, particularly when working on issues that I am knowledgeable about or have a strong opinion on, I want to be more vocal about them. Often my lack of confidence stems from being unsure whether my ideas or methods are the right ones, however even when they are not, adding them to the discussion can assist the process of finding the best approach or solution to an issue.

Overall Rating

I have loved my first six months at VUWSA. Having practical projects to work on alongside studying has been extremely beneficial for my general outlook and enjoyment of life. The team at VUWSA, both executive and staff, are a big part of what makes the work such a pleasure and so rewarding. I am proud of the achievements so far this year, both that we have made as an Association, and that I have made as an individual. I feel that my effort has resulted in an improvement to the lives of students at Victoria, and that VUWSA is in a better place than it was at the beginning of 2015.