



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT



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NAME	Beth Paterson
POSITION	Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 30 June, 2017
HOURS WORKED	320
HOURS REQUIRED	250

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.

Electric bike share scheme

I have been working on turning the idea of having an electric bike share scheme at Victoria into a reality. After thinking about how this might work, I contacted Ryan from Switched On Bikes to discuss. Anya and I met with him early in the year. Straight away, it became apparent that there were issues to solve. For example, how can you make sure that the bikes don't all end up in one place, how will they be charged, how will you make sure they aren't stolen? etc etc.

Since then, I have been facilitating conversations between Ryan, VUWSA, Andrew (the Sustainability Manager at VUW) and the Wellington City Council. The work has involved fleshing out how the scheme would function in practice and scoping out funding avenues. We are looking to conduct a formal feasibility study and act on the result of that. The end goal is to have an electric bike share scheme with around 20 bikes (to begin with) that students can use to get between campuses at low to negligible cost, and for longer trips at higher cost.

Strategic goal: **a student friendly Wellington, Grow our engagement with students**

VUWSA Sustainability Policy

I re-drafted VUWSA's Sustainability Policy, which was written in 2012 and remained un-edited since. The point of re-drafting this was to include the Sustainable Development Goals, as the University is looking to use them more actively and we encourage this. Another purpose was to include a clause stating that we will prefer purchasing Fair Trade products for use in our meetings. This is to support Victoria International Development Society's campaign to make VUW a Fair Trade University. I also altered the policy for clarity and to reflect changes in our understanding of what best sustainable practice is.

Strategic goal: **Build collective strength with student groups, a strong Association**

Waste

I organised VUWSA volunteers to be at Newtown Festival on the waste station. With help from Anya, I organised for recycling bins to be at O-Week events and for compost bins to be at Stress Free Study Week. This diverted a lot of waste from landfill. I also arranged for the pausing and resuming of compost collection from the compost bins at Kelburn at Pipitea near the Krishna kiosks.

Strategic goal: **Grow our engagement with students**



Victoria Energy

I analysed data from the inter-hall energy competition that took place in 2016. I worked with Jacob, a student at Massey, to design a new website and logo for Victoria Energy (which runs the energy competitions). I met with an interested student, Sally, to discuss how she might be able to help with the competition this year and have had discussions with Andrew from the Sustainability Office about how the competition might work in 2017.

Strategic goal: **Grow our engagement with students**

Housing

I worked with Cassia from the Sustainability Trust to develop a template letter for students to send to their landlords informing them of the half-price subsidy for insulation installation if their tenant has a community services card. This letter was uploaded to the VUWSA website and shared on Facebook. It received a positive response. We are continuing work on promoting this insulation subsidy, as it is only available until 2019.

Additionally, I have been involved in conversations and work in how to progress the VUWSA x Wellington Community Justice Project flatting guide and online flatting helpdesk.

Strategic goal: **a student friendly Wellington, Grow our engagement with students, Build collective strength with student groups**

GOAL 6 – PUBLIC ISSUES: TO BE THE CRITIC AND CONSCIENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY, BY PROMOTING DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON ISSUES CONCERNING STUDENTS.

Suicide submission

This year, the Ministry of Health's *Strategy to Prevent Suicide in New Zealand* is up for renewal. The draft document was released and the public were invited to submit their thoughts. I brought this to the VUWSA executive and suggested that we prepare a submission because the draft strategy had no mention of tertiary students. This was worrying because people aged 16-25 are overrepresented in suicide statistics and need help.

VUWSA's advocate, Erica, and I consulted with Mauri Ora counselling services and academics involved in suicide research at Victoria. I also consulted with SWAT, the Student Wellbeing Awareness Team and read on the issue. I then prepared VUWSA's submission.

I also contacted other student associations across New Zealand and encouraged them to read the draft strategy and prepare a submission if they liked. Several student associations expressed interest in writing their own submissions. I met with NZUSA to discuss what a submission on behalf of all New Zealand students would look like. I liaised with MAWSA to assist with their submission, as well as SWAT.

On a personal note, most of my friends and I have been affected by suicide in some way. Directly or indirectly, suicide has wide-reaching effects and I felt really strongly about the need to prepare this submission. It can be difficult to separate yourself emotionally from this type of work, particularly when having one-on-one conversations about suicide prevention. This is not necessarily a weakness, but something that I need to keep in mind.

Strategic goal: **Establish a powerful student voice, Build collective strength with student groups, a student friendly Wellington**

GOAL 4 – SERVICES: TO PROVIDE QUALITY, COST EFFECTIVE SERVICES FOR THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERS, AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, STUDENTS.

VUWSA Food Network

One of my key focuses is improving the food services on Victoria campuses. There is a lack of clear communication about what food services are available. Briefly, there's the Community Pantry, Kaibosh free bread/other food delivery, organic food co-op, fruit and vegetable co-op, fruit and vegetable market and community gardens.

I developed a proposal to streamline the food services with the aim of making sure that any student who needs food, knows how to access it. The proposal was to create a “VUWSA Food Network” where information about all the food services would be centralised and re-branded under the umbrella directory service of the Network, with an advertising plan to go alongside it. I then worked with our Communications Manager, Hannah, to plan executing the proposal, and got buy-in from the clubs and university groups involved in other food services to be a part of the Network.

I prepared a survey on food services at Victoria. The survey asked about participant’s knowledge of various food services, their interest in using each service, barriers to accessing (healthy) food, and the impact of those barriers to (healthy) food on wellbeing. I drafted this survey after consulting with Te Putahi Atawhai and the wellbeing team at Mauri Ora. Once drafted and approved, Hannah organised distribution. We received over 1000 responses.

I then analysed the results to find out what the best strategy going forward would be. I have been collecting the information needed to put on the Food Network tab of the VUWSA website, and drafting the content. I put together a design brief on what the promotional material for the Food Network should look like. This has gone to the designer and we are waiting for the initial design (due in September) to review.

Another outcome of the survey was learning that students do not think there are enough healthy food options in the vending machines on campus. So, a project emerged to advocate for healthier choices in vending machines. I began researching healthy vending machine options to prepare for this.

Strategic goal: A strong Association, Grow our engagement with students



CONSTITUTIONAL GOAL 8 – ACCOUNTABILITY: TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY TO, AND REPRESENTATION OF, MEMBERS.

Internal VUWSA Meetings

I have attended and actively contributed to the executive and welfare team meetings. I also sit on the VUWSA policy and revenue committees.

Strategic goal: **A strong Association**

Sustainability Committee

I sit on the Sustainability Committee alongside the Welfare VP, Anya. We have contributed to discussions on creating the University's Sustainability Policy. In particular, to advocate for stronger language on Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in executing and developing the policy, and for aligning the policy with VUWSAs.

Strategic goal: **Establish a powerful student voice**

SWAT and Wellbeing Network

I have attended meetings of the Student Wellbeing Awareness Team (SWAT), and assisted where I can. I am also a member of the Wellbeing Network which connects staff and student-leaders in the wellbeing space at VUW. I am part of the Wellbeing Symposium committee, and engage in the organisation of the symposium online through Trello, as the meeting time conflicts with my work schedule.

Strategic goal: **Build collective strength with student groups, Grow our engagement with students**

GENERAL TASKS AND INITIATIVES

Orientation

I volunteered during O-week. At the evening gigs, I assisted in a variety of tasks, including coat/ticket check, doing rounds of the floor to make sure everyone is okay, preparing toastie sandwiches, manning a Thursdays in Black stall, and checking in at the safe room.



Stress Free Study Week / Flu shot volunteer

Stress free study week was a busy time. In addition to organising the compost for the week, I helped with picking up and setting up the stock and volunteered on breakfast, lunch and SPCA kitten/puppy/rabbit sessions. Earlier in the year, I also volunteered at one of the flu-shot sessions organised by Welfare VP, Anya.

Thursdays in Black hui

I was lucky to attend a hui where we learnt about the kaupapa of Thursdays in Black. This was transformative for me as it shed light on my own experiences, and has been invaluable to understanding the TiB movement.



Pride parade

I was also privileged to be a part of the Wellington Pride Parade as part of VUWSA/ MAWSA and UniQ's joint carrying of the pride flag – a 50 foot banner that has a moving history. This was a great day.



Salient

I have written two columns for Salient.

Make a Meal in May

Marlon, Raven and I organised a fundraising event for Kaibosh as part of their Make a Meal in May campaign. This was a pleasant afternoon tea/lunch hosted in the Bubble. We did this because Kaibosh delivers free food each week to Kelburn campus and we wanted to give back to them even in a small way.

Free menstrual products on campus

I have been involved in various meetings and contributed to documents about getting free tampons, pads and menstrual cups available at VUWSA. Credit to Anya/Tamatha/Erica/Matt for this initiative!

Tree planting

As is tradition for the Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer, I took part in the Growing Graduates tree planting event. It was a beautiful day up on Te Ahumairangi reserve for planting hundreds of seedlings.



Fair Trade

I have a good relationship with the Victoria International Development Society and have been helping them promote their Fair Trade events, and providing support where I can.

WEAKNESSES

Time-limited and perfectionist combo: Frankly, I have overcommitted myself this year. I am studying full-time, working part-time as a law clerk, and doing VUWSA work. This all built up during exam time, when I was working 12 hour days every day and still did not have time to do VUWSA work to the best of my abilities. I am aware that this is made worse because I can be quite the perfectionist. To account for this, I have tried to be mindful of my limitations and accept that I can only do so much.

Ups and downs: Largely because of the above, and because of external events of the year, I have had highs and lows of stress and burn-out. This means that sometimes I cannot complete tasks when I would like to. I used to blame myself for this, become more stressed and feel guilty for taking time out. So I have tried to become more resilient and have some balance in my life.

STRENGTHS

Interest and enthusiasm: I genuinely really enjoy this role. I like having conversations with passionate, intelligent people about wellbeing and sustainability topics. In such a short time, I feel like I have learned

so much from the members of the Executive, from others working in this space and from research. I look forward to doing my VUWSA work, more so than most other things.

Ambitious: I like coming up with new schemes that I think will improve student life. Turning these ideas into concrete plans is a skill of mine, and I do my best to see the ideas through to execution. Some examples would be the electric bike share scheme and the inter-hall energy competition.

SUMMARY

It is a pleasure to be part of the VUWSA team. I am lucky to work with smart people who are passionate about what they do. I care deeply about the work and can say that being a VUWSA Exec member has made my life more rich and fulfilling. Engaging with students at volunteer events, like Stress Free Study Week and O-Week, or in meetings about WSO related initiatives reminds me that we serve a really great student population.