



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

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POSITION	Welfare Vice President
REPORT PERIOD	1 st January – 30 th June 2017
HOURS WORKED	678
HOURS REQUIRED	520

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1) Executive Summary

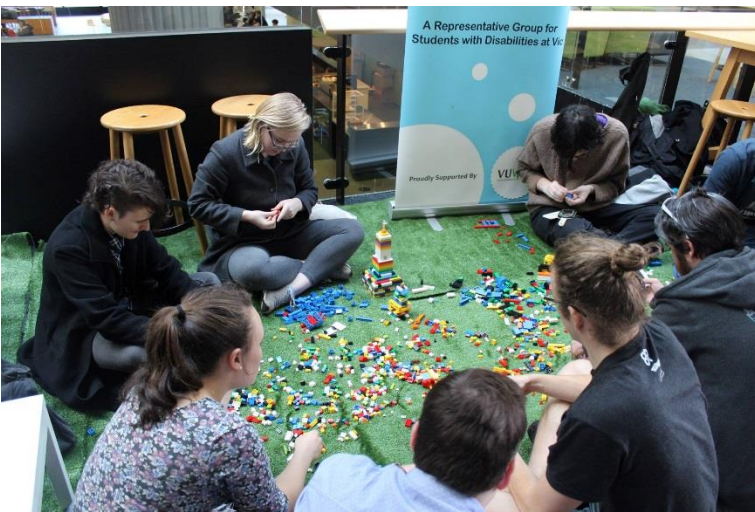
VUWSA exists to get the best deal for students. This is outlined in VUWSA's Strategic Plan 2017-2021, which was drafted last year and came into effect at the beginning of this year. With the key Strategic Goals in mind, the first half of 2017 has been strong, and it will be important to continue with that momentum for the second half. As the Welfare Vice President, it is my role to 1) work on initiatives that make the life of a tertiary student outside of the classroom easier, 2) advocate on behalf of students on issues facing them in the context of the wider student community, and 3) implement new, and grow current, VUWSA welfare services. This report outlines the projects, initiatives, and events I have worked on that relate to the most relevant Constitutional Goals. I refer to the three most relevant Strategic Goals which relate to the work undertaken in the first half of the year: building collective strength; growing engagement with students; and strengthening the Association.

Priority Goals

2) **Constitutional Goal 2 - Student support:** To advocate for adequate financial support, income and welfare for students in order to remove barriers to education.

a) **Stress Free Study Week (SFSW)**

SFSW is one of VUWSA's biggest events (second to OWeek), providing week-long free breakfasts, lunches, SPCA puppy and kitten visits, VUWSA collaborates with other student groups to promote faculty study sessions at all three campuses during study week and with CanDo (the Representative Group for students with disabilities) to host a Lego Day, where students can come along and play with Lego. This year, we had some prizes to give away to the best creations! Continuing to build on the hard work of previous years is key, as while maintaining the current level of service that we provide. The funding for the majority of SFSW goods (food and donations to the SPCA) comes from an agreement with the University. We supplement this with external donations where possible. This year, we partnered with Coffee Supreme (VicBooks' new coffee supplier), who provided us with coffee beans for the week, and professional-grade espresso machines for each campus, so students could enjoy delicious cafe quality coffee to help them through exam study. These were a hit – but



we may have to ask for more coffee beans for next time!

Continuing on the tradition started last year in my capacity as Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer (WSO), I assisted the current WSO Bethany Paterson in loaning compost bins from the WCC and setting up waste stations at all three campuses in order to create a Zero Waste event.

To continue providing and expanding on the things offered during SFSW, the Revenue and Venture Committee has been looking at alternative revenue streams for SFSW, such as external promoters. It is important to ensure that SFSW retains the good reputation that it currently has with students, and we don't commodify it. However, SFSW requires a lot of time and effort on behalf of the whole Executive and staff, especially the WVP. It will be something that needs to be assessed, whether it is viable for the WVP to continue to run this week-long event, or whether this is something that should fall under the Events staff portfolio.



b) Flu Shot campaign

One of the key welfare-related events that the Welfare Vice President runs is the Flu Shot campaign, where VUWSA partners with Student Health to host flu shot clinics at all three campuses and Halls of Residence leading up to the 'flu season'. Student Health nurses administer the shots, and VUWSA provides volunteers to help register students, and hot drinks and nibbles for students to have while they wait. VUWSA is also responsible for creating promotional material and advertising to students. This year we also partnered with Te Waka Herenga Marae and Te Putahi Atawhai to host their clinics. The final figure of doses given to students was 1394.



Strategic Goals: both of these events contributes to *Strategic Goal 4: A strong Association*, as well as to the overall 2017 theme of Engagement.

c) Flating Tips

During January and February when students started to look for flats again, the impact of the November 2016 earthquake became evident: there was a housing shortage. Stories came out in the media of students lining up outside flats half an hour before viewings happened, a response rate of 90+ within the first hour of listing, and instances of landlords auctioning off flats above the listed price to the highest bidding group. While this is an ongoing problem, VUWSA wanted to help students get a foot in the door and

make the process of flat-hunting slightly easier. I worked with the Academic Vice President Isabella Lenihan-Ikin on creating a 'Top Five Flatting Tips', with downloadable templates of flatting CV and cover letter, as well as links to useful tenancy pages. We will continue working on ways to make flatting easier for students.



Strategic Goals: Strategic Goal 5: A student friendly Wellington

d) Advisory Committee to the Student Services Levy (ACSSL)

ACSSL is a University board which the VUWSA President and WVP sit on. It provides financial oversight to ensure the compulsory levy that each student pays - which goes towards University services, such as Student Health and Counselling, the Rec Centre, Careers and Employment, Disability Services, and of course, VUWSA - is allocated in a way which best benefits students. Every 3 years, each of the services funded by the levy undertakes a review and creates a report, which VUWSA scrutinises and makes recommendations on. This year I drafted VUWSA's recommendations for the Careers and Employment Review. President Rory Lenihan-Ikin and myself also successfully negotiated the University's proposed 8% levy increase down to 4% in addition to increased service provision.

e) Hardship Committee

The Hardship Fund, which sits independently to the Student Services Levy, is a Fund contributed to by students each year. Its purpose is to make grants and sometimes loans available to students in financial hardship. The WVP sits on this University committee which convenes weekly to approve or deny these applications. All information which could identify the student is redacted before it comes to the Committee of course. I have found this committee to be of particular use because it

gives a picture of the causes of hardship for students, which can then be used to inform VUWSA when making decisions in the welfare space.

Strategic Goals: being the student representative on these committees ties in with *Strategic Goal 1: Establish a powerful student voice.*

f) Menstrual products

The Women's Refuge donated a whole bunch of toiletries and menstrual products to VUWSA to give away to students. There have been multiple stories in the media about some students not being able to come to class as they cannot afford pads and tampons during menstruation, which is awful but also somewhat unsurprising considering the exorbitant cost of pads and tampons, and the current statistics on student hardship. This was a one-off donation, but it prompted further discussion about the inaccessibility of tertiary education for women. The Welfare Team, consisting of myself, the Equity Officer Tamatha Paul, and Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer Bethany Paterson, and the Student Advocate Erica, have been drafting a proposal to take to the University to help us fund a service to provide free menstrual products to students throughout the year. If accepted, we are aiming to launch this in Trimester 2.



Strategic Goals: *Strategic Goal 4: A strong Association*

3) Constitutional Goal 3 - Equity and Access: To promote equity for disadvantaged students in access to and within the University.

a) Student Equity and Diversity Committee

While VUWSA is the primary representative body for students on campus, there are of course other groups and societies that represent specific cohorts of students. VUWSA recognises certain groups as 'Representative Groups', due to their specific equity status: CanDo for students with disabilities; V-ISA for international students; UniQ for LGBTQIA+ students; and VicUFO for women and gender minorities. VUWSA provides additional support, both financially and in other ways. Equity Officer Tamatha Paul and myself got onto setting up and organising the monthly Student Equity and Diversity Committee (SEDC) meetings early on, to ensure this platform was available to discuss issues specific to those groups. The Pasifika Students' Council (PSC) and Ngāi Taura also sit on the SEDC, as representative bodies for Pasifika and Maori students respectively, although they are associations within their own right.

b) Inaugural Rep Group training hui



With the high turnover of VUWSA Executive members, as well as the equity Rep Groups Executives, there can often be an informational vacuum. In order to strengthen this relationship, Tamatha and myself organised and hosted the first ever training hui with the groups. This took place over an afternoon during the Trimester 1 mid-trimester break, and covered discussion of the Memorandum of Understanding between VUWSA and the Rep Groups, the constitutional obligations owed by VUWSA to the Rep Groups and vice-versa, introductions by key VUWSA staff as to how they can best assist the Rep Groups. There were also keynote speakers – former presidents (Zamir Muhammed, 2016 V-ISA President, and Alex Mark, 2016 President and current UniQ Co-president) gave an insight into the role of a Rep Group and shared tips from their experience.

The training went really well and fostered some good discussions, and was being a great chance for the Rep Group executives to get to know one another. Unfortunately neither of the VicUFO Co-Presidents could make it, but there was still representation from their group in attendance. As a next step, Tamatha Paul and I will create a comprehensive guide document for this event to ensure that it becomes an annual occurrence. The main feedback from the event was that it should be earlier in the year, so we will ensure that we make a point of this in our guide.

c) Thursdays in Black hui

I worked with the Equity Officer to host and facilitate the Thursdays in Black (TIB) hui, attended by students and VUWSA Executive members. The next step for TIB at Vic is the TIB survey launch, hosted by Victoria University, where the results and ensuing report from the climate survey at the end of 2016 will be discussed.



Strategic Goals: *Strategic Goal 2: Build collective strength with student groups*

4) **Constitutional 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 Aotearoa Movement New Zealand

VUWSA is a Living Wage Movement Aotearoa (LWMANZ) member, which is a movement that campaigns for a wage for workers which they are able to live off. I have been sitting on the Wellington Local Board for LWMANZ since 2015, and am also involved in the Living Wage at Vic group, which meets monthly to discuss current living wage-related news and to plan events. At Victoria University, our aim is to encourage VUW to become the first Living Wage University in New Zealand. In May this year, we hosted an event in the Hub, where staff and students shared their stories of working for minimum wage, to raise awareness of the struggles that those on minimum wage face.



b) Pride Parade

VUWSA prides itself on being an inclusive environment, and it has been an active supporter of LGBTQIA+ rights. This year, VUWSA partnered with Massey Wellington Students' Association (MAWSA) to help carry the 50 meter long rainbow flag, which was stitched by a group in London who had family members die from HIV. This flag had traveled the world, from Paris to Singapore to Sydney, and then Wellington. The organisers wanted us as young people to carry it as a sign that as the leaders of tomorrow, we will be leaders in changing societal attitudes around LGBTQIA+ people and foster a more inclusive community and culture in the future. It was an honour to carry the flag and be a part of the parade, which was the first pride parade I have walked in.



c) Submissions

Executive members often write submissions on various issues, and to different organisations within the community, on issues affecting students.

The WCC Annual Plan draft is an annual chance for the public and interested parties to give their feedback on the Council's plan for the year. I drafted VUWSA's submission to this, putting emphasis on issues that adversely affect students.

I provided feedback on the Wellington City Council's inner city bicycle upgrade proposals. VUWSA made recommendations to the Careers and Employment review report. See ACSSL above.

Strategic Goals: *Strategic Goal 5: A student friendly Wellington.*

5) Constitutional Goal 8 – Accountability: To ensure accountability to, and representation of, members.

a) VUWSA Executive retreat

We had a strong start to 2017. As is custom, we had our start of year retreat, where the newly-elected Executive drives away for a weekend to get to know one another and do some team-bonding, as well as initiate the new members into what VUWSA is all about. Having been on the Executive last year in an officer capacity, it was interesting to be on the other side and sharing some of my experiences and lessons about VUWSA. I also organised a very successful cook-off which served as a great team-building exercise, despite some tense moments.

We also discussed ideas for 2017, and what the new Executive hoped to accomplish. We have a great team, and it has been exciting seeing some of the projects ticked off the list!



b) Work Reports

I have submitted fortnightly work reports outlining the meetings I have attended, events I have taken part in, and other projects I have been working on in my capacity on VUWSA.

c) VUWSA Executive meetings

The fortnightly VUWSA Executive meetings exist as a chance for the Executive to discuss issues, needs, and upcoming events, etc. that need our attention. These are also open to the wider student body. I have attended the regular fortnightly meetings and contributed actively to debate and decision-making.

d) Welfare team meetings

I have organised and run team meetings with the Equity Officer and WSO, which allows the team to touch base and catch up on projects we are working on, and to get support and advice from the rest of the team. For the first half of the year these meetings have been on an ad-hoc basis due to our varied schedules, but we have locked in a regular fortnightly meeting time for Trimester 2.

e) Sustainability Committee

I sit on this University Committee with the WSO, Beth. The Committee exists to find ways to make the University more sustainable. It is currently working on drafting a Sustainability Policy, with the aim to align the University's Policy with VUWSA's Sustainability Policy.

f) Wellbeing Network

This is a monthly meeting consisting of all wellbeing-related staff around campus, as well as some other interested staff members, and student leaders from the Student Wellbeing Awareness Team (SWAT), and the Bubble, as well as myself and Erica. We discuss wellbeing-related initiatives and ways different wellbeing groups and activities on campus can collaborate.

I also sit on the Wellbeing Symposium subcommittee, which is a working group that meets fortnightly with the purpose of organising the annual end-of-year Wellbeing Symposium.

g) NZUSA conference

Several Executive members went to the inaugural New Zealand Union of Students' Association (NZUSA) conference in Auckland, where students' associations from around the country got together. We had several panel discussions about issues affecting tertiary students today, and what we can do about it. We also discussed ideas on how all the associations from across the country can work together during election year in a way to best benefit students. A highlight was meeting the exec members of the other associations and making connections.

I also attended the Tertiary Women New Zealand (TWNZ) IGM and the initial meeting of recently-formed Student Renters Steering Group. TWNZ is the women's caucus of NZUSA, where we discussed the group's direction for 2017, and acknowledged the hard work of the outgoing National Women's Rights Officer, Izzy O'Neill. The Student Renters Steering Group is a group consisting of Tenancy Services representatives, and



student representatives from students' associations around the country, who meet to discuss tenancy-related issues facing students, and how we can mitigate these.

Strategic Goals: Strategic Goal 1: Establish a powerful student voice.

6) **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) VUW Organic Food Co-operative

In 2016 I played a key role as one of the coordinators for the VUW Organic Food Cooperative, a bulk-food initiative on campus that sells organic dried foods at wholesale price to members. In 2016, we expanded the Co-op to monthly packouts, and increased membership significantly. It is run through Gecko, which is the Environmental Club on campus, but is supported immensely by VUWSA.

The VUW Food Co-op was started at the end of 2014 by the incumbent WSO and WSO-elect, Rory Lenihan-Ikin. Since then, it has largely fallen onto the WSO to coordinate the Co-op, but this is not sustainable, as there is quite a large time-commitment involved. Sam Clarke, the 2016 Gecko President and I, started advertising for new student coordinators and now have two fantastic new students involved. In the meantime, we continued to hold monthly 'packouts' during January, February, and March, April, and May. We anticipate a several month handover period while we induct the new coordinators into the roles. The Organic Food Co-op is seen as a valuable service for the students and community members who access it, and we hope to see this continued and increase uptake further. We

were also proud to be able to donate food to a refugee family who were making a new home in New Zealand, with the aid of a VUW student Irenë McGlone.

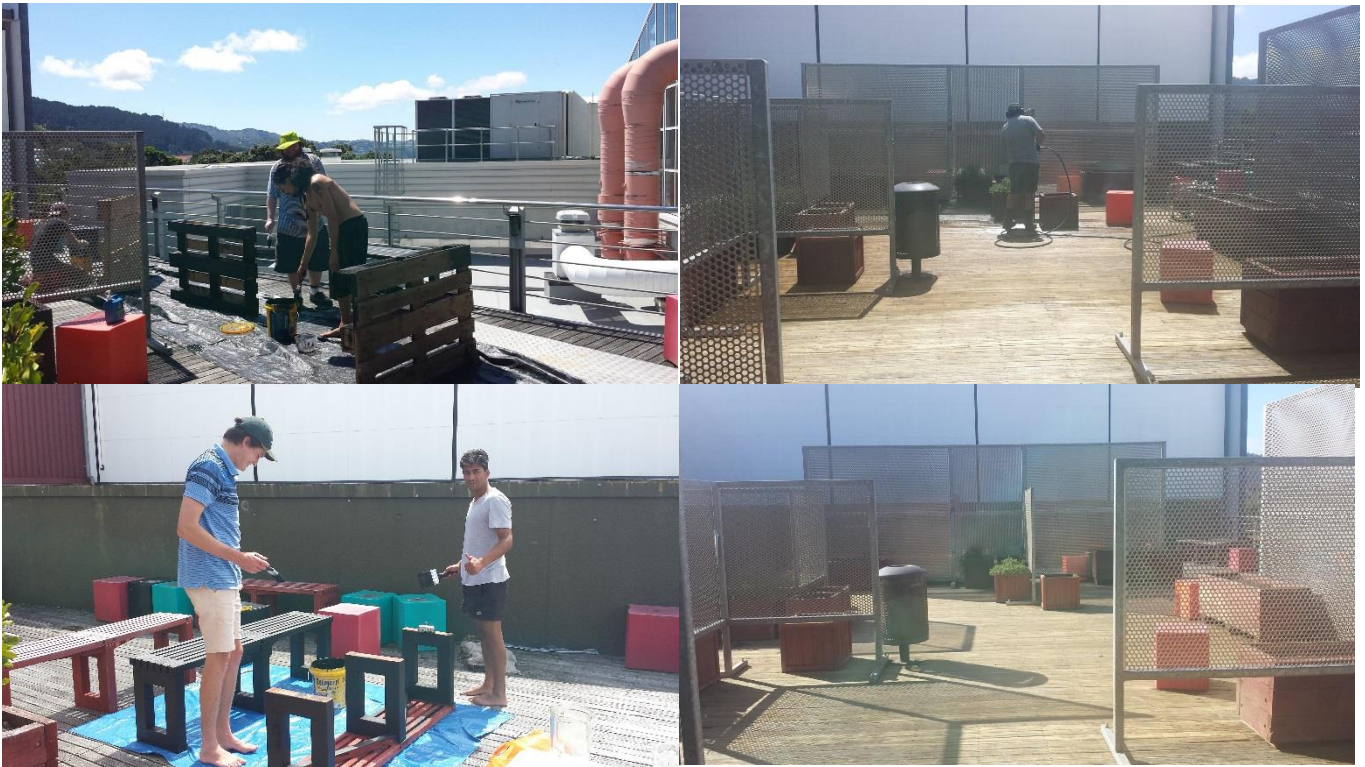




b) Student Community Garden at Kelburn

One of the projects that I initiated as Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer in 2016 was a student community garden. 2016 consisted of planning, proposals to the University, gathering funding, and talking to various student groups about potentially collaborating. In February this year, things finally got underway. We held several workshops where student volunteers came along and helped to paint the furniture. STUDiO, the Architecture and Design Students' Association, got on board and designed the space – the deck at the top of the Student Union Building – to incorporate the existing infrastructure and create additional features. I couldn't have done it without Austin D'Souza and Hamish Parbhu (STUDiO co-presidents) – their contribution has been fantastic and I am so appreciative! The University's Facilities Management team have also been key in helping with this project – they had the existing plants from the boxes removed, and had the entire deck water-blasted clean, and the next step which is currently in progress is having the deck stained and the metal screens moved into position.





c) Recycling at OWeek

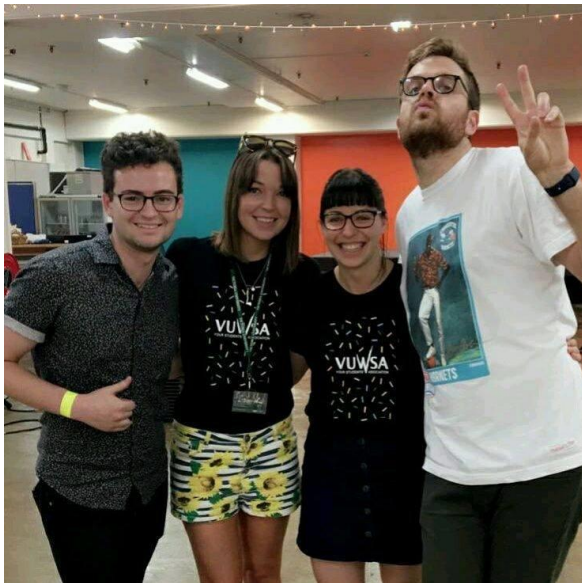
During the Orientation events run by VUWSA, there is always massive amounts of plastic cups and water bottles produced at the evening events in the Hunter Lounge. As a first, WSO Beth and I attempted to make Orientation a Zero Waste event. We loaned plastic recycling bins from the WCC, and worked with Jack from the Hunter Lounge to station them around THL and the Student Union Building atrium.



7) General Tasks and Initiatives

a) Orientation

VUWSA hosted its annual Orientation events, including the popular Toga Party. Headlines included Tinie Tempah, Kid Ink, and Hermitude. There was also a comedy show featuring Guy Williams, which was the only event I managed to actually see. Every other night I spent in the safe room and van; at all the evening music events, we have a safe room away from the main event where students can come if they've had a bit too much to drink, or are feeling anxious or otherwise unwell. This year we hired a Safe Room Coordinator to run the show, and had Student Counselling staff on hand to assist also. This addition made a significant improvement to last year, and is important as we take student safety seriously. I was the designated safety van driver for the week, and it was rewarding seeing so many students get home safe.



a) Hall visits

At the beginning of Trimester 1, VUWSA Executive members visited University Halls to raise awareness about who VUWSA is, and what we do for students. This was to address the issue of first year university students not knowing much about VUWSA.

Strategic Goals: both of these events contributes to *Strategic Goal 3: Grow our engagement with students*, as well as to the overall 2017 theme of Engagement.

b) Salient and Rostra columns

I have written one Executive column for Salient's 'Art' issue, discussing art and how it relates to wellbeing. Clubs and Activities Officer Marlon Drake and myself co-wrote an article for Rostra on the Living Wage, which coincided with the 'Living Wage at Vic Day' on May 10.

8) Reflections

a. Strengths

It's difficult to write about one's strengths (and indeed, write this entire report) without coming across as self-congratulatory.

Passionate: upon reflection, I can confidently say that one of my strengths (in terms of this role), is that I am passionate about student issues. I genuinely care about the study body and I want to make changes that improve the lives of students at Victoria. I would also say that I am dedicated to the projects and initiatives I take on - I put in time and effort into seeing things through.

Approachable: Apart from that, I would say that I am friendly and approachable, and hope students feel comfortable coming to be with any queries and concerns they have and feel comfortable asking me for help.

b. Weaknesses

Time management: Putting time and effort into VUWSA projects and events is sometimes to the detriment of sleep or other things in my life, so I need to put more effort into managing my time better so this doesn't happen (although also acknowledging this is sometimes unavoidable). I think one of the things about being an Executive member is that there is an expectation to do so much (and an unhealthy competition as to who has the most 'surplus hours'), while not really acknowledging that we are also students, and have other commitments such as our other part-time jobs, etc. One of the weaknesses I noticed last year during my time on the Executive was my tendency to overcommit to things – there are endless projects and events and things one can take on and engage with, but there are only so many hours in the day, which meant I ended up doing some things less adequately than I would have liked, or just burnt myself out. I think I have learned from this and been more realistic about what I can take on this year in terms of workload, and know that this is okay and that it's unrealistic to attempt to accomplish everything.

c. Final comment

Despite its ups and downs, I really, really enjoy being an Executive member on VUWSA. I feel like I have learned a lot in the past year and a half being here, and it is a unique experience in terms of the diverse range of people (internally, within the university, and externally in the community) we interact with. Being a Vice President, as a step up from the Officer position I held last year, in charge of a budget and getting to lead projects within the organisation has been a huge learning curve, as well as sitting on key University Committees as the Student Representative.