



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

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NAME	Rory Lenihan-Ikin
POSITION	Welfare Vice President
REPORT PERIOD	1 st January – 30 June, 2015
HOURS WORKED	839.75
HOURS REQUIRED	508.5

Priority Goals

Goal 2 – Student Support: To advocate for adequate financial support, income and welfare for students in order to remove barriers to education.

a) Sexual assault prevention, policy and process

I have carried on the work by the previous Welfare Vice-President, Madeleine Ashton-Martyn, to call for improvements to the University's sexual assault prevention and response strategies and policies. Alongside others I continue to work toward the goal of ensuring the University has an embedded, long-term sexual assault prevention and response strategy. There has been progress this year, with the University publishing on their website their 'Commitment' to a University that is free from sexual violence, and information about consent. This is a new area for me, and I have benefited from being able to work alongside our experienced Equity Officer, Chrissy Brown.

Complementary to this work has been the re-launch of the Thursday's in Black Campaign by Tertiary Women NZ, which VUWSA has been a part of, alongside other student associations throughout the country. This is a campaign with huge entirety, effectiveness and promise. Following our joint launch on campus at the start of the year, our goal is to build a solid foundation ensuring TIB becomes a core part of VUWSA's campaigning focus over the next few years.



b) Stress Free Study Week

Once again we have taken Stress Free Study Week (SFSW) to another level in 2016. In part, this was as a result of securing a three-year funding agreement with the University, which meant receiving more funding than we ever consistently had before. It also comes down to the support of VUWSA staff who have taken on the responsibility of specific areas, adding value to each. This has made the event run considerably smoother than in previous years, and freed me up to consider how we can improve and expand.

In SFSW, we were able to serve approximately 3,000 breakfasts and 4,500 across three campuses. In addition, we served 500 curries for dinner at Kelburn thanks to partnership with external company, MTR. We built a more meaningful relationship with People's Coffee this year, which will mean an increased commitment from them moving forward.

These successful partnerships demonstrate that sponsorship from externals is a direction worth pursuing where funding from the University is limited.

Once again we had puppies on each campus, and the Lego event thanks to CanDo. In addition, the Kitten Inn visited us for the first time with kittens.



SFSW 2016 was the first year we implemented a method for waste minimization at any VUWSA event. We hired event bins from WCC and managed to divert 118kgs of waste from landfill – thanks to the hard work of Wellbeing & Sustainability Officer, Anya Maule. Although seemingly a minor addition, the

collection of student feedback on the event this year was also significant. It will allow us to

review and improve, and put us in a stronger position to build the case for increased contributions from both the University and external partners.

Delegation of responsibility will continue to be critical as the event grows, in order to avoid overloading the Welfare Vice President and other members of the executive.

c) Fairer Fares

After a quiet year in 2015, the Fairer Fares campaign came to light again sparked by our build up to the local body elections, and a student initiated petition that attracted 3,500 petitions in support of a student discount on public transport.

I have worked alongside the VUWSA President, Jonathan Gee, writing and presenting submissions to the Greater Wellington Regional Council, build student support, and commented in the media on this issue.

We have successfully put the issue of a tertiary discount back on the radar of Regional Councilor's. However, making it one of the key election issues, getting watertight commitments from candidates, and mobilising students to vote will be necessary to make real progress in 2016.

d) Housing

A surprisingly early reading of the Governments Minimum Standards for Rental Properties Bill focused our attention on housing almost immediately at the start of the year. Together with Wellbeing & Sustainability Officer, Anya Maule, President, Jonathan Gee, and Student Advocate, Kate Nickelchok, I led the research and writing of our written submission, and jointly presented our oral submission to the Select Committee.



We were well received by the Committee, who were particularly interested in a key point we made that University Halls of Residence fall outside the Residential Tenancies Act.

Being a Government Bill we were not expecting our suggestions to be taken up, but it was a worthwhile exercise and contributed to what will hopefully be a decent education campaign by the Ministry on the new standards. It also deepened our own understanding of the challenges and opportunities around student housing.

e) Know Your Rights – Flatting 101

In addition to the advocacy side of housing issues, I have been leading a project with the help of the Wellbeing & Sustainability Officer, Anya Maule, and the Student Advocate, Kate Nickelchok. This project involves producing a resource for students that provides guidance on the essential legal and practical information students need when flatting. The booklet will be the next in the line of our Know Your Rights series, to complement the Academic resource produced by the education team in 2015.

For this project we have partnered with the Community Justice Project, a student lead, Law School-based charity, supported by Community Law. The Community Justice Project aims to use their legal knowledge to help people in the community. The second partner, to a lesser extent, is the Sustainability Trust who are providing practical advice about making your flat more energy efficient.

We have made good progress on this resource, and aim to launch and distribute it in September, before the flat hunting season starts again. Our goal is for it to be part of a wider, long-term programme focused on providing the best possible flatting assistance to students. We hope this will include, but is not limited to: workshops in halls of residence and on campus, and an annual Flatting Expo on campus that invites stakeholders throughout the sector, such as advocacy groups, power companies, rental agents etc.

f) Student Friendly Wellington – Local Body Election Campaign

I've been working closely with Jonathan, President, and Alice, Campaigns Officer, on developing our campaign for the local body elections. This will bring together the Fairer Fares and Healthy Homes campaigns under the Student Friendly Wellington campaign. It will ask for commitments to these two policies from candidates; and aims to generate a conversation at local government about how Wellington can value students and create a start-up economy hub that enables the City to hold on to talented graduates.

The key to this campaign will be getting out and talking to students, and generating the voter drive needed to elect candidates who support our policies.

g) Advisory Committee to the Student Services Levy

President, Jonathan Gee, and I sit on this Committee as a means of providing financial oversight to ensure the \$704 student services levy is allocated in a way that is of the greatest benefit to students.

h) 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 sometimes loans available to students in financial hardship.

The fund can be applied to by any student, and the job of the Hardship Committee is to help assess applications, to ensure grants and loans are given out to the right people, and are done in a supportive and equitable manner.

The Welfare Vice President is the student representative on the hardship committee, and has the responsibility of providing a student perspective to decision making. The fund is incredibly effective, and on a weekly basis, plays a transformational role in the lives of students who are in extremely difficult financial positions. This means it also serves as a regular, grave reminder of the hardship that many students face every day.

i) Flu Shots

Each year, VUWSA partners with Victoria Student Health providing free flu shots to any student who wants one. This year, I organized logistics and promoted the flu shot clinics with the goal of immunising as many students as possible. There was a great amount of executive and volunteer support. During the five flu shot clinics across three campuses, in addition to six clinics at halls of residence, 1639 student received immunisations.



j) Budget Day

I helped a group of executive members, led by Engagement Vice President, Nathaniel Manning, and Campaigns Officer, Alice Lyall, watch and digest the budget, identify elements that related to our students, and provided feedback for a press release that outlined the small wins (insulation funding for rentals and possible fees maxima reduction) and the general failure of the Government to provide adequate support to students.

k) Assisting students with ad hoc welfare issues

Being able to provide advice and point students in the direction of services is a very important part of our role as student representatives. I regularly have students contact me, either directly or by referral, and prioritise responding to these. They can also often provide insights into an element of student welfare not considered, or provide a new perspective, which can mean having the ability to work on a systems solution to improve things for subsequent students who encounter the same problem. For example this issue raised earlier in the year was around the exuberant cost of some standard women's health procedures for international students, especially because it's categorized as elective treatment by the insurance company. I have been

able to work with Student Health to consider the problem, which has so far led to a reduction in the cost of a number of treatments, and could hopefully lead to a change in stance by the insurance company.

l) Other miscellaneous student welfare projects

- Following its launch in 2015, I have continued to coordinate the VUWSA Fruit and Vegetable Market. The market popularity is growing slowly and steadily. The key challenge that remains is around increasing the number of Kelburn residents who visit the market. Together, the Kelburn residents combined with University population will provide the customer base needed to increase the number of stall holders and have a wider range and cheaper options for students.
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- Using my place on the University Food and Beverage Committee I have pushed for the availability of evening meal options on Kelburn campus. Currently, after 5pm the options are almost limited to vending machine snacks. This has led to a late night opening trial for Louis Kiosk, which will hopefully continue permanently.

Goal 3 – Equity and Access: To promote equity for disadvantaged students in access to and within the university.

a) Student Equity and Diversity Committee

Together with the Equity Officer I have helped establish this Committee in 2016. Set up in 2015, the purpose of this Committee is to provide a space to discuss issues pertinent to equity groups on campus. It helps inform VUWSA about current issues, and allows us to offer our institutional knowledge and connections, working with these groups to help them engage more effectively in advocacy.

The challenge for this Committee is having regular meetings. It is a big committee, and all member groups juggle several additional priorities. For this reason, we have only had one meeting in 2016.

b) Student Wellbeing

Continuing the input we had last year, I have worked with Maori Ora on their efforts to improve student wellbeing within the University. The 2015 wellbeing campaign, which focused on eight key themes affecting student wellbeing (time management, sleep, money, connectedness and more), is in the process of a thorough evaluation. I am now working with a small team of



Student Counselling and Communications staff to develop the next phase of the campaign which focuses on academic spaces – trying to foster a more caring approach from academics, and break down the psychological barriers existing between students and their lecturers.

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) Submissions

In addition to the Minimum Standards for Rental Properties and Fairer Fares submissions discussed above, I have been involved in a few others during the first half of the year:

- Led the submission writing to the City Council on their annual plan, and presented the oral submission alongside President, Jonathan Gee. We focused on the need for a Rental Warrant of Fitness, more constructive work by Council to educate students about the roadside waste collection system, and the need for more ambitious targets in their Low Carbon Capital Plan.

- Supported Wellbeing & Sustainability Officer, Anya Maule, and Campaigns Officer, Alice Lyall, in the writing of a submission on the Emissions Trading Scheme Review.



b) External campaigns and events

I have attended and a variety of events on campus and around the city to raise and discuss issues affecting students, including the Wellington City Council's consultation forum for young people on the long term plan, a Kelburn Residents meeting.

c) Living Wage

I sit on the Governance Committee of the Living Wage Movement Aotearoa and through this have helped create broad-based power in communities, including the student community. Advocating for a Living Wage is important for student welfare during study, decent wages for after leaving university, and to ensure all staff at Victoria live a decent life off their current wage.

Important in this, is that, as an Association, we build up strong relationships with low-paid staff at the university to build our strength as a collective voice.

The Living Wage at Victoria has been limited to ad-hoc petition collections on campus while the paid campaign organizer was overseas for the start of the year. However, there are extensive plans for events and campaigning in the second half of the year.

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) Bike Fixup

I supported Wellbeing & Sustainability Officer, Anya Maule, organizing and hosting a bike repair workshop in partnership with Wellington City Council. Students brought their bikes and had them fixed by professional mechanics for free. The event complimented the bike repair station that I worked with the University to install.



b) Student Gardening Workshop

In partnership with WorkerBee Oasis, an urban farm in Newtown, I co-facilitated a student food growing workshop, which gave people the basic skills needed to begin growing their own vegetables.

c) VUW Organic Food Co-op

I have supported Wellbeing & Sustainability Officer, Anya Maule, and Environmental Club, Gecko, running the VUW Organic Food Co-op, which provides organic food and eco-friendly cleaning products to students at low prices, while reducing waste by avoiding retail packaging.

d) Welfare Strategy

I have started the process of establishing a comprehensive VUWSA Welfare Strategy for building a medium and long-term vision for the Association's welfare work. It will also enable better succession, providing guidance to successive Welfare Teams on the areas that previous teams have focused their energy.

At the moment, we rely on handover notes and the knowledge of staff and executive members. Drafting a strategy will mean there will be a better chance to work toward common goals, and prevent progress on any particular issue being lost when executive members turn over.

The strategy was co-created by the other two members of the Welfare team with the input of VUWSA's Student Advocate, Kate Nickelchok, and was presented at an Executive meeting in May. The Strategy is a working document and will be refined as we evolve our approaches to a changing environment this year.

Other Goals:

Goal 4 – Services: To provide quality, cost effective services for the benefit of members, and, where appropriate, students.

a) Microwaves

I have continued the work started by previous Welfare Vice Presidents to get microwaves into common areas around the University where they can be useful for students. We have replaced a microwave in the Law School Common Room, and the challenge remains getting them in The Hub.

We received a fridge for the VUWSA student kitchen earlier in the year, and I organized picking it up and installing it etc. This is available for student use during the hours the VUWSA offices are open.

b) Community Pantry

The Community Pantry continues to be a valuable service for many students, providing pantry top-ups of the essential items when needed. Together with the General Manager, Indigo Freya, I prepared a proposal for the Hardship Committee, which was accepted, and will see VUWSA receive dollar-for-dollar funding for the Community Pantry up to \$10k over the next three years.

Another exciting addition made through this proposal is that \$10 Fruit and Vege Market vouchers are now offered in community pantry parcels.

Goal 5 – Activities: To support supporting, social and cultural activities for any by members and students, particularly through Clubs.

a) Student Equity and Diversity Committee

As described above.

b) Orientation

I supported the Engagement Team running O-Week by driving the safety van and helping to keep students safe, well-fed and hydrated during the events we hosted at The Hunter Lounge.

I also took a lead on organising equipment and coordinating volunteers at the Newtown Festival.

General Tasks and Initiatives

a) Strategic Plan

I have provided input into the development of VUWSA's Strategic Plan as a member of the Strategic Plan Working Group and have attended regular workshops to help advance the plan.

b) NZUSA

I attended the NZUSA Congress (annual conference) in January along with a few of the other Executive members, and have worked with the Wellington City Council developing a strategy to increase student knowledge of roadside waste collection systems. Implementation of the strategy has led to funding from the University to sell rubbish bags from VUWSA's reception at a discount, and providing students with education material.

Representation

VUWSA Executive Meetings

I have attended all executive meetings this year and contributed to debate and decision making.

Welfare Team Meetings

I have coordinated and led these regular meetings, which allow the team to discuss the projects they are working on and get support and advice from the rest of the team.

Environmental Committee

I have attended this Committee with Wellbeing & Sustainability Officer, Anya Maule. This Committee has been relatively inactive in the last few months, but this should change with the recent appointment of a new Assistant Vice Chancellor Sustainability who chairs this Committee.

ACSSL

As described above.

JSUB – Joint Student Union Board

I do not officially sit on this Board; however, I go to the meetings and provide support to the President.

Student Equity and Diversity Committee

As described above.

Hardship Committee

As described above.

Strengths

Committed

I am wholeheartedly committed to ensuring VUWSA is a dynamic student Association, which is in tune with issues and can help advance the interests of the student body, particularly those who face extra challenges being happy and successful while at University. In turn, I have a high work ethic and a drive to serve the students who have elected us..

Personable

I believe I have the ability to connect with a wide range of students who attend Victoria, which helps enable me to represent them appropriately. I also have strong relationships with the rest of the executive and staff at VUWSA, which is crucial for a strong team, and am able to build relationships quickly and effectively with external stakeholders.

Weaknesses

Prioritising

I find myself easily overwhelmed by the range and number of projects that are available, and have trouble saying 'no' to opportunities. At times this can water down the strength of the key priorities I want to focus on, and sometimes means things don't get completed to the standard I would like.

Balance

I often overwork myself, which results in getting sick or burnt out and means I have to take forced breaks at inconvenient times. By achieving more balance, I can avoid these forced breaks as well as have a better overall wellbeing.

Communication

I frequently get so tied up in my projects that I forget to communicate them to the rest of my team and the executive. This means I miss the opportunity to get other peoples' valuable insight that comes from discussing projects, thereby strengthening the work through partnerships with other staff/exec, and receive buy-in and understanding about where I am trying to take VUWSA's welfare projects.

Overall Rating

I think I've had a pretty satisfactory first half of the year as Welfare Vice President. Looking back, all of the projects I have spent time on this year have been positive and worthwhile.

Much of the work that I have spent time on this year will come to fruition in the second trimester, so I am aiming for good project execution on the likes of the Student Friendly Wellington Campaign and the Know Your Rights resource. I would also like to orient my thinking toward the longer-term as I move into the second half of the year, to ensure that subsequent Welfare Vice President's have clear direction of what I was intending with the various projects. I also think that executive could be more critical of how we challenge the status quo across University environments with regards to student welfare, and it is my role to lead this at VUWSA.

I would like to improve my support of the Welfare Team, which at times has been superficial for the first half of the year. The two officers in my team have a huge amount to offer, and I think I can do a better job of fostering their potential.

I wish to maintain relationships with the University Service Managers to a greater degree that I have done so far, as these are critical to keeping up-to-date with the challenges facing the student body. I must also acknowledge that, as mentioned in my weaknesses, trying to do everything is not the best approach, and I must constantly remind myself to focus on the priorities I have set, and accept that some things will not be achieved.

I love working at VUWSA, and mainly want to enjoy the second half of the year as much as I did the first, and learn as much as I can from all the phenomenal, dedicated people that I am surrounded by!