

BOARD REPORT

PRESIDENT

USU Board meeting date: 28/05/2026**Agenda item:** 15.4**Report Period:** May 2026**Author:** Phan Vu**Title:** President**Phone/mobile:** +61 493 322 268

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Recommendation 1 That the Board notes this report.	2-6	

SUMMARY

May has been a month of consolidation and continued delivery for the USU. Following the formal completion of incorporation in April, the organisation has continued to operationalise new systems, processes and transitional arrangements while progressing outstanding Holme Annexe matters ahead of the proposed wind-up by 30 June 2026.

This month also saw significant work across governance, elections, stakeholder engagement and student-facing initiatives. The 2026 USU Elections concluded with increased voter turnout, preparations continued for the USU Incorporation Gala, and the outgoing Board commenced transition and handover planning for the new Board term.

Following the Semester 1 census, sufficient funds are now available to support additional SSAF initiatives that were previously approved as runner-up contestable projects. In this regard, the USU successfully secured \$400,000 in SSAF contestable funding, further strengthening the organisation's capacity to deliver programs and services that benefit students.

With the coming Stuvac and exam period, Exam Ready food truck service is also ready to support students, with an increased daily allocation of meals and additional wellbeing initiatives delivered in partnership with Student Life.

GOVERNANCE

Incorporation

Operational work to support incorporation continues to progress, including the implementation of new systems and processes, the management of transitional arrangements, and the finalisation of outstanding matters ahead of the proposed winding-up of the unincorporated Holme Annexe by 30 June 2026. The University has now novated all relevant agreements, including the Affiliation Agreement.

Committee Updates

Debates Committee

The committee considered measures aimed at improving accessibility, equity and developmental support within debating. Matters discussed included proposed affirmative action requirements for WGM and POC adjudicators at Easters, clarification of eligibility rules for specified “pros” to debate at Easters, and a proposed mentoring program for debaters and adjudicators across major tournaments. The discussion reflected an ongoing focus on supporting junior and less experienced debaters and judges, while also ensuring the Debates Regulations remain clear and accessible.

Clubs and Societies Committee

The Committee endorsed the draft revised USU Club and Society Agreement to be sent to lawyers and University representatives for feedback, with a final version expected next month. The revisions reflect incorporation-related changes, University requirements relating to gender-based violence and the definition of responsibilities, and recommendations from the Continuous Improvement Review. The Committee also continued refining the C&S Application Guideline, including clarifying the weighting of assessment criteria. Life Membership nominations were also considered, with the Committee endorsing Mary Adewole and Ariana Haghighi for USU Life Membership, alongside Life Memberships to be conferred on the 2023–25 Board Directors. The Committee also reviewed proposed constitutional amendments from clubs and approved them as appropriate.

2026 Elections

The 2026 USU Elections have now concluded. I extend my sincere congratulations to the provisionally elected candidates, William McCarthy, James Green, Zayed Tabish, Nabilah Chowdhury, and Serina Guo, on their successful election to the Board. Voter turnout increased by 16% compared to last year, with a total of 6,369 votes cast.

The volume of complaints was high this election cycle. It was also observed that campaigns have become increasingly sophisticated, particularly through the use of social media, with many serious complaints relating to alleged breaches of the Election Regulations, candidate misconduct, voter harassment and candidate harassment. These matters were handled with care and treated with the utmost importance.

A post-election debrief will be held to review the conduct of the election and identify any necessary recommendations for Board approval ahead of the next election cycle.

USU Incorporation Gala

Preparation is ongoing for the upcoming USU Incorporation Gala on 2 June. The event will welcome more than 50 guests from across the University and USU ecosystem. It will be an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the milestone of the USU's incorporation, and to thank those who contributed to this significant achievement. Life Memberships will also be conferred on former Board Directors and nominated members.

Board Transition and Induction

Looking ahead, the Executive Elections are scheduled for 2 June to elect office bearers for the new Board term alongside committee roles and portfolio holder positions. The outgoing Board will also prepare handover documents over the coming month to support a smooth transition and ensure continuity. Board induction for the new Board will be held at the end of this month and attendance is compulsory for all Directors.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Student Executives x Student Life

Student Life ran a workshop to further understand the perspective of student leaders from USU, SRC and SUPRA to inform the work on building the governance structure for the new student partnership framework, segmenting the work different organisations to support better governance and accountability as well as reduce bureaucracy and support efficient consultation pipeline and decision making

Safe Spaces Consultation

As mentioned in the last meeting, I organised a consultation with representatives from the SRC, SUPRA and the collectives that regularly use USU-managed safe spaces. The purpose of the consultation was to better understand the needs of users and clarify communication pathways between users and USU Portfolio Holders, who act as liaisons between the USU and students in relation to those spaces and their amenities.

The consultation was well attended, with three USU representatives and nine representatives from the SRC, SUPRA and the relevant collectives. The discussion was productive and identified gaps in communication between Portfolio Holders and users of the spaces. Participants noted that the consultation was useful and supported regular monthly consultations going forward.

Key matters discussed included waste disposal, storage and the need to maintain clear space for mobility access in the Disability Community Room; cleaning responsibilities, use of space during events, security and access control for autonomous spaces in Manning House; and the upcoming Manning House lift works, including temporary access arrangements, wayfinding and stakeholder communication.

Future consultations will focus on swipe card access and the policy governance of safe spaces.

Further detail is set out in the attached consultation notes.

Welcome Implementation Group

The Welcome Implementation Group has commenced fortnightly meetings in the lead-up to Semester 2. The meeting discussed key Welcome timelines, venue booking processes, and lessons learnt from Semester 1. The Group will continue to support coordination around Welcome Fest, student engagement, venue use and communications to ensure a smooth Semester 2 Welcome program.

Safer Communities Advisory Group

I attended the University's Safer Communities Advisory Group meeting, which considered ongoing work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and improve campus safety. Key matters discussed included proposed updates to the Group's Terms of Reference to better align with the National Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence, including a broader whole-of-University focus and greater consideration of vulnerable cohorts.

The meeting also included updates on the University's implementation and promotion of the National Code, referral trends through the Safer Communities Office, the rollout of the SafeZone app, and Respect@Sydney workshops. The USU also provided an update on the 2026 USU Safety Conference, including its focus on legislative developments and ethical bystander intervention, strong attendance and positive participant feedback.

Further work will continue on communications, student engagement, SafeZone access, and opportunities for collaboration between the University, USU, SRC and SUPRA on safety-related initiatives.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE & IMPACT

PULP

The outgoing PULP 4 editorial team completed its final issue, Issue 28, this month with the launch held at Verge Gallery on 22 May. Across their term, the team released seven issues of PULP and created opportunities for approximately 150 students to contribute to student media, creative programming and artistic development. I thank the editorial team for their significant contribution to student voice and creative expression within the USU community.

We are also pleased to welcome the PULP 5 editorial team, whose term will continue PULP's role as a platform for student voices, creative expression and engagement across the USU community.

Autonomous spaces

Work is continuing to improve the management of autonomous spaces, with a focus on integrating requests and issues into the central Service Desk model. This will allow matters to be logged as trackable service tickets, with the Student Experience and Programs team coordinating triage across Facilities and relevant Portfolio Holders where required. A more sustainable funding model is also being developed so that ongoing maintenance and operational costs for autonomous spaces are supported through the base SSAF Student Experience and Programs budget. No material changes have been observed in QR code usage or access issues beyond previously reported trends.

National Reconciliation Week

For National Reconciliation Week, Verge is partnering with the Vice-Chancellor's Office for Indigenous Strategy to present a screening of *The Redfern Story* on 27 May. This is Verge's first collaboration with the department and supports continued cross-institutional engagement around Indigenous storytelling and cultural awareness.

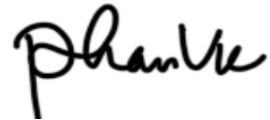
Exam Ready Food Truck

Across three weeks of Stuvac and exams this year, the food truck service will focus on lunch period, with daily allocation increased to 650 meals. During Stuvac, the USU will also partner with Student Life to provide additional free afternoon hot chocolate and community dinners from Monday to Thursday.

Digital Accessibility

Implementation of the Recite Me accessibility platform is also underway, supporting the USU's commitment to improving digital accessibility and creating a more inclusive online experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all staff involved in the delivery of the 2026 USU Elections and the broader program of events and initiatives this month. In particular, I thank Simone Whetton, our Returning Officer, for her work in administering the election and managing election complaints; Dr Fady Aoun, our Electoral Arbiter, for his role in considering election appeals; and our scrutineers Thomas Clement and Scott Brownless for their role in supporting the integrity and transparency of the election process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Phan Vu", is positioned to the right of the main text block.

Phan Vu
PRESIDENT