

BOARD REPORT

PRESIDENT

USU Board meeting date: 25/8/2025

Agenda item: 8.4

Report Period: September 2025

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	Page No.	Res. No.
Recommendation 1 That the Board notes this report.	2-5	1

SUMMARY

After a month of outpouring, the sun's finally out! September has been a period of significant internal planning and service delivery. With 2026 SSAF funding applications approaching, the organisation is reflecting on past activities, strengths, and areas for improvement. This focus on reflection and continuous learning underpins our efforts to enhance organisational performance and maximise our impact for members.

On organisational health, we saw an overall surplus of \$382k, having \$183k higher than the Q2RFC. This improved performance is contributed by higher outlet, sponsorship, and program revenues (totalling \$152k) as well as some savings in the expenses. With rising operational costs, uncertainties surrounding the SSAF pool availabilities, and increased demand for services due to higher costs of living, the Board is pleased to see the organisation working towards necessary operational adjustments such as cost control measures and enhanced stakeholder engagement and operational increased financial buffer. This is important for charity such as ours to be able to strengthen our resilience in the cost-of-living crisis and consistency in service delivery.

A clear example of this focus on efficiency was the successful delivery of the inaugural Creative Month. For the first time, USU delivered a full month of programming compared with a single week in 2024 within the same budget, maximising student impact while maintaining prudent financial management.

GOVERNANCE

Committee Meetings

Five committee meetings were held this month: Clubs & Societies, Debates, Electoral, Governance, and People & Culture. Further detail is captured in the Vice President's report, but key highlights include:

- Clubs & Societies: A total of 68 new club applications were received in Semester 2. Of these, 45 applications have been processed, with the remainder to be reviewed at the next committee meeting. The Board is excited by the incredible level of engagement, which stands as a testament to the hard work behind the scenes by the SXP team in creating a trusted environment where members feel empowered to express their interests on campus.
- Electoral: Discussions continue ways to streamline the complaints and appeals process, while upholding election democracy and the regulation of preference deals to ensure directors' fiduciary duties are maintained.
- Governance: The Committee reviewed revisions to the Sponsorship and Advertising Policy to strengthen alignment with community expectations by explicitly incorporating human rights and reputational safeguards, while retaining a principles-based framework that ensures flexibility and commercial viability.

Incorporation

Following the June Special General Meeting to vote on the establishment of a shell company for incorporation, I, with the assistance from Bryson and Ben, have exchanged extensively with the University's OGC to finalise the draft constitution for the incorporated entity. We will have another meeting at the end of September where we turn our attention towards the transferring of asset to USU Ltd once the current USU is dissolved.

Our lawyers at G+T have supported us in USU Ltd's application for charity registration with the ACNC, providing a comprehensive submission outlining USU's history, purpose, and relationship to the existing organisation. Due diligence processes are underway to identify affected contracts,

compliance obligations, and related matters in preparation for the transfer process, subject to the final vote on incorporation.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

University

I met with Professor Mark Scott AO (Vice-Chancellor & President, USyd) for the first time to share my vision for USU over the next 12 months. The University shared the viewpoint that USU plays an irreplaceable role on campus and discussed opportunities to strengthen partnerships and collaboration in delivering the best possible student experience.

Student Organisations

The Board has issued a [public statement](#) in support of the **2025 Fair Fares Campaign**. We commended SUPRA for its leadership in advocating for Opal Concession cards for all students in NSW, including international and part-time students. The petition has gathered approximately 7,000 of the 20,000 signatures required. With the collective efforts of USU, SUPRA, and SRC, we remain optimistic about achieving this goal in the coming months.

Canteen Working Group

\$5 meals offerings

The Laneway Canteen continues to perform strongly, offering 530 meals on average per day. Feedback has informed adjustments such as larger portion sizes, and operational efficiencies have reduced queuing times during peak periods. Student satisfaction ratings are consistently above 4/5 for quality, cost, and overall experience. In addition, the former CBA outlet was made compliant for dining use and reopened as extra seating space on 11 September.

Permanent Canteen

Despite the concerns I raised, which were supported by student survey feedback, regarding the site's distance from prime foot traffic areas compared to the Wentworth vicinity, the University has decided to locate the permanent canteen in the Engineering Building (J03) starting Semester 2, 2026. Several operational constraints associated with the J03 site have been identified by USU, and discussions are ongoing regarding whether USU will submit a bid to manage the permanent canteen.

The success of the \$5 meal program reflects USU's ongoing commitment to providing affordable food options on campus. While the location of the planned permanent canteen presents challenges, it will not compromise our commitment to affordability. We continue to explore additional avenues to strengthen food security for students (see *2026 Food Strategy* below).

SSAF Applications

SSAF applications are currently being finalised ahead of the end-of-month deadline. While there is enthusiasm for new initiatives in 2026, planning remains deliberate to ensure student priorities are addressed and SSAF funding is used effectively. Board directors have been consulted for input, and I thank those who contributed ideas shaping USU's strategic delivery for 2026.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE & IMPACT

Club Administration

The coming months see influx of AGM notices as October/November are the peak season for this with more than half of the program hosting AGMs during this period. Therefore, it would be a remiss for me to not express my gratitude to the entire Clubs team, under Kelsey's lead for pulling through with the numerous AGM documentations, constitutional amendments and additional governance enquiries. We understand the frustration that club executives face when submitting documents and

awaiting responses, and as the team continues tirelessly to improve the system, we also ask that all remain patient as the team tends to each matter.

2026 Food Security Strategy

For several years we have delivered a variety of initiatives to support food security on campus as part of our [Student Savers](#) initiative, including Food Hub, Bonus Meals, Exam Ready, USU on Tour, Cheap Eats, \$6 melas after 6, and more. It is vital that we have a clear vision to keep our narrative and operations efficient. Through the establishment of the 2026 Food Security Strategy, we seek to maintain focus on what we do and demonstrate USU's agility in responding to students' needs. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that every student can access nutritious and affordable food on campus. As part of the delivery component, we are looking at offering options priced at \$5 for the Camperdown side of campus, in addition to the permanent canteen located on the Darlington side.

2026 Colleges and Residential Accommodation Strategy

USU is formulating a strategy to deepen partnerships with the residential Colleges and nearby accommodation providers, with the aim of enriching student life through its programs and services. The strategy's priorities encompass a customised membership rewards offering, enhanced digital engagement, support for Clubs & Societies, Palladian Cup initiatives, and early onboarding of College leaders and residents. Additional opportunities include College-specific events, student employment pathways, and tailored service delivery. Following consultation, the draft strategy will be presented to College Heads in November to guide the co-design of bespoke engagement packages for 2026.

Creative Month

Creative Month commenced in early September alongside the debut of the inaugural *Museum of Togetherness* (MoT), a pop-up exhibition designed to help international students at USyd connect through shared experiences of living abroad. The exhibition was complemented by a successful mental health and wellbeing program. The *Battle of the Bands* heats also drew strong engagement, attracting around 400 attendees across two nights, with the finals set for 24 September where four bands will compete for the title. These initiatives would not have come to life without the dedication of the SXP and Marketing teams.

Naming of Facilities

Following the Board's approval in August of the naming of the USU People & Culture Office, Disabilities Communities Room, and Wentworth Building in honour of Dr Robin Fitzsimons, Nguyen Khanh Tran, and Judith Whelan respectively, I have, on behalf of the Board, sent formal letters seeking written approval from the nominee and/or family members in order to progress USU's applications with the University.

PULP

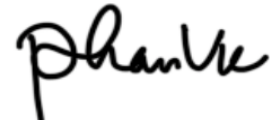
PULP Issue 23 is currently on stand, and huge congratulations to Sasha, Portia, Ege, Jayden, Rosy, Jess, and Sophie, our new editorial team, on yet another great edition. This is the first issue to include a general M15+ content warning (per Australian Classification Board guidance) and will be included in all future issues.

Upcoming Student Programs

In October, we will deliver a diverse calendar of programs designed to foster community, celebrate student achievement, and enhance campus life. Key highlights include:

- Twice Loved Market
- Manning Night Market
- Glitter Gala
- Clubs Awards

As we look ahead to October, we are excited for the diverse range of programs and initiatives that will continue to engage, support, and celebrate our student community. None of this would be possible without the tireless dedication, creativity, and commitment of our staff across all departments. On behalf of the Board, I want to express our sincere gratitude for your hard work and looks forward to another month of impactful student experiences and continued organisational success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Phan Vu", is positioned to the right of the main text block. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phan Vu
PRESIDENT