

University of Sydney Union Board Statement in Response to Misogynistic Conduct at SRC RepsElect

Content Warning: Discussion of sexual violence, rape, and misogyny

During the Special Meeting of the Representatives-Elect (**RepsElect**) for the 97th University of Sydney Students' Representative Council (**SRC**), multiple incoming councillors from the Save the SRC, Gymbros for SRC, and Colleges for SRC campaigns—tickets formally associated with the NSW Young Liberals and purporting to represent residential colleges at the University of Sydney—were [reported](#) to have torn up copies of [the Red Zone report](#). These copies were distributed by the incoming SRC Women's Officers during their nomination speeches. Published in 2018 by End Rape on Campus (**EROC**), the Red Zone report documents a pervasive culture of sexual violence and hazing within the residential college system at the University of Sydney and other Australian tertiary education institutions. This report includes the stories of victim-survivors and their families, including those of several women who tragically lost their lives to gendered and sexual violence.

The University of Sydney Union (**USU**) Board unequivocally condemns the conduct of these representatives-elect in the strongest possible terms.

There is no excuse for the kind of behaviour that these students, supposedly those seeking to represent the student body, exhibited at RepsElect. The statements they made and the behaviour they displayed were deeply misogynistic and dismissive of the lived experiences and suffering of victim-survivors. Their claims that the report was “outdated” and that “no-one cares” reflect rape apologist sentiments that have no place at the University or in the USU community. **We do care.** We unequivocally stand in solidarity with all victim-survivors and affirm our unwavering support for all those affected by this unacceptable behaviour.

Reports have linked individuals involved in this incident to the USU-affiliated Conservative Club, raising concerns which the Board takes extremely seriously. We affirm that eradicating misogyny and all other forms of discrimination is critical to the USU's responsibility to foster an inclusive, safe community for all students, especially when involved in our Clubs and Societies program. As a Board, we commit to a thorough review of our codes of conduct, including the Clubs and Societies Agreement, to reinforce our expectations for appropriate behaviour and accountability and to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to prevent the kind of unacceptable conduct seen at RepsElect. This review is essential to foster a respectful and safe community within our Clubs and Societies program and throughout our broader campus environment. We also commit to ensuring that this kind of behaviour is not tolerated from members of our organisation.

The impact of these events has been compounded by the recent expulsion of six students and the suspension of 21 others from St Paul's College, following reports of severe bullying and hazing.

This underscores a deeply-rooted culture of misogyny and chauvinism that persists on our campus, and is enabled by attitudes and behaviours such as those demonstrated at RepsElect.

The USU recognises the need for action to challenge and dismantle this culture, and we commend the SRC Women's Officers and Women's Collective for their resolute response and ongoing campaigns against sexual violence. We are committed to supporting and collaborating with all relevant groups on campus, and in particular the Women's Collective, on this critical work and encourage all members of our community to join us in pursuing meaningful cultural change.

To lead a truly effective response, we call upon the University to take decisive action, including by fully implementing all recommendations from the Red Zone report and the Australian Government's Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education.

The USU Board has called a Special Board Meeting this coming Friday 8 November to address these incidents and to develop a comprehensive response. This meeting is open to all members of the USU who wish to attend. To ensure transparency and accountability, we are committed to continuously updating our members on the Board's actions and progress as we strive for lasting, meaningful change in our campus culture.

In Solidarity



Ethan Floyd



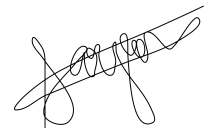
Georgia Zhang



Grace Porter



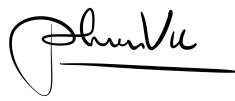
Grace Wallman



Sargun Saluja



Julia Lim



Phan Vu



Shirley Zhang



Bryson Constable



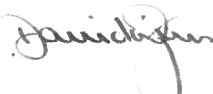
Ben Hines



James Dwyer



Tiffany Donnelly



David Wright



Michael Bromley

Bryson Constable was not involved in the drafting of this statement due to relevant conflicts of interest.

Resources for victim-survivors and others impacted by these events:

1800 RESPECT; Available 24/7; Phone: 1800 737 732

USyd Safer Communities; Phone: (02) 8627 6808; After-hours: 1800 793 457

[Mudgin-Gal Women's Centre Redfern](#); Aboriginal-specific support services; Phone: (02) 9698 1173

If you are concerned about your behaviour or use of violence, you can contact the Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491 or visit www.ntv.org.au

Free counselling via [RPA Sexual Assault Clinic](#); Phone: 9515 9040 (Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm)