

BOARD REPORT

PRESIDENT

USU Board meeting date: 24/06/2026

Agenda item: 12.3

Report Period: June 2026

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REFLECTIONS

As I present my final President's Report, I want to briefly reflect on the journey that brought me here.

Twelve months ago, I chaired my first Board meeting as President. Despite having read every Standing Order and prepared for each item of business, I remember shaking and stumbling over my words. As I grew into the role, I came to better understand the responsibility of leadership, the value of contribution, and the privilege of having a seat at the table. The past year has been a constant exercise in raising the bar: for myself, for the Board, and for how we represent and deliver for students.

Serving as President has been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my university life. This role has tested me, stretched me, and taught me lessons I will carry well beyond my time on the Board. It has equipped me with a deeper appreciation of governance, leadership, responsibility and service.

Of all that we have achieved this year, the formal completion of incorporation stands as a momentous milestone. After more than 50 years, USU has delivered one of the most significant governance reforms in its history. I am immensely proud that this was brought home during this Board term, and grateful to all those involved in turning this long-held aspiration into reality, navigating the legal, institutional and governance complexities required to get us here.

Most importantly, this role has taught me the value of leading with humility, integrity and confidence. I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to serve USU, to work alongside committed Directors, staff and student leaders, and to contribute to an organisation that has shaped campus life for generations.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Executive, Georgia, James and Shirley, for their support, diligence and leadership throughout the year. I am also grateful to my fellow Board Directors for their contributions, challenge and commitment to USU.

My thanks also go to Janina, our CEO, and to the Senior Leadership Team, Jane, Steve, Charlotte, Pieta and Tania, for their guidance, expertise and continued work in supporting the Board and delivering for students.

I also express my sincere gratitude to the University's senior leaders and stakeholders for their continued engagement with and support for USU.

Finally, I thank all USU members for their engagement, participation and care for this organisation. Thank you for challenging us, questioning us, and keeping the Board accountable to the students we serve. It has been a privilege to serve an organisation that exists for students, is shaped by students, and continues to play such an important role in campus life.

GOVERNANCE

Incorporation

The Board is in the final stages of winding up Holme Annexe and is considering the remaining residual matters required to give effect to the member mandate approved at the March Special General Meeting, following the transfer of assets in April.

With incorporation now formally completed, USU's continuing priority is to grow membership sign-ups and strengthen engagement with the incorporated entity.

The Incorporation Gala was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate this historic governance reform and recognise the people who made it possible. Board members who served in the previous year and two nominated students, were awarded Life Memberships in recognition of their contributions to USU. We were honoured to be joined by University stakeholders, strategic partners, and distinguished guests. I extend my sincere thanks to Ben Hines, Bryson Constable, USU staff and University stakeholders for their leadership, support and sustained work in bringing incorporation home for USU after 50 years.

Committee Updates

Governance Committee

New Terms of Reference have been tabled at each committee for endorsement, with the People and Culture Committee and Clubs and Societies Committee Terms of Reference endorsed at committee level. These will progress through the Governance Committee before being recommended to the Board for approval as part of a new suite of committee Terms of Reference.

Following the conclusion of the 2026 Elections cycle, future Governance Committee meetings will consider election debriefs and any recommendations to the Board where relevant to improving future election processes.

People and Culture Committee

The Committee considered key workforce matters, including the Staff Engagement Survey and remuneration review.

Clubs and Societies Committee

Following extensive discussion and review of the Clubs Application Matrix introduced last year, the Committee has finalised a revised matrix for Board approval. The updated matrix refines the weighting of assessment criteria and provides clearer guidance to prospective applicants on how new club applications are assessed. I extend my sincere thanks to the Honorary Secretary, Shirley, for her diligence on this work.

Following a temporary pause due to the migration to the new clubs portal, MyUSU, applications for new clubs will reopen in Semester 2.

Board Transition and Induction

At the Special Meeting of the Incoming Board on 23 June, Executive Elections were held. I extend my congratulations to all incoming executives, committee members and portfolio holders, and wish them every success in their roles.

I thank the Senior Leadership Team for organising a comprehensive two-day induction program for new and returning Directors.

The coming days will focus on handover and ensuring a smooth transition to the incoming Board.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Welcome Implementation Group

Preparations are underway for Welcome Fest in Semester 2, with a continued focus on delivering an engaging and memorable festival experience for students.

Student Consultative Committee

The Student Consultative Committee covered key wellbeing and student impact updates. I also provided updates on incorporation and the 2026 Election results.

Student Executives x Student Life

At the fortnightly meeting, student organisation leaders participated in a consultation workshop to inform the development of the Students as Partners framework. I also met Andrea Strachan, the University's new Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students), and discussed opportunities to improve the SSAF review process.

Student Safety Advisory Group

The Student Safety Advisory Group provided student safety updates, the University's partnership with Crime Stoppers Australia on anti-money laundering education, and updates on the National Code.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE & IMPACT

Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Reporting

USU has continued to progress work on gender-based violence prevention and response. The new Advocate reporting system is now operational, and the complaints process has been improved. The USU complaints webpage has also been updated to clarify that reports can be made about GBV occurring in any USU program or space, with links now available through USU venue websites and QR code posters displayed across venues. A revised Clubs and Affiliations Agreement, incorporating new GBV-related provisions, has been prepared and is currently with the University for consideration.

In Semester 2, USU will continue its prevention-focused work through a Welcome Fest activation developed with the Safer Communities Office and in co-design with students. USU will also partner with Consent Labs during Wellbeing Week to deliver student safety workshops, alongside an alcohol-free beer garden, with targeted engagement for students in colleges and residential accommodation.

Pride Portfolio

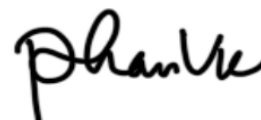
The Pride Portfolio successfully delivered Drag the House Down: Bingo Bash, engaging more than 150 students ahead of Pride Month. The event created an inclusive space for LGBTQIA+ students to connect through drag bingo, speed friending, interactive activities and performances by queer student artists.

Student Wellbeing

USU continued its Exam Wellness Program, distributing 160 wellness kits to students at Camden Campus during the first week of examinations, with further distribution planned across Camperdown/Darlington examination waiting areas. Looking ahead, Semester 2 wellbeing initiatives will include a Member Step Challenge with SUS, Goat Yoga on Botany Lawn, and further student safety and connection-focused programming.

Bar Program

The Bar Program continued to support student engagement through club-led Bingo and Trivia nights, as well as live student performances through Manning Unplugged and Courtyard Sessions.



Phan Vu
PRESIDENT