

# BOARD REPORT

President

**USU Board meeting date:** 28/03/2025

**Report Period:** March 2025

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<b>Recommendation 1</b> That the Board notes the President's report.	1-9	1

## HEADLINE SUMMARY

Count	Key Issue	Key Areas
1	Organisational Health and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial health               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ February results</li> <li>○ DGR status pursuit</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Operational health               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New roles</li> <li>○ Staff forum</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation</li> <li>• Committee updates               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ P&amp;C</li> <li>○ Debates</li> <li>○ C&amp;S</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Working parties               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ TEC</li> <li>○ SSC</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3	Stakeholder Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University</li> <li>• External</li> <li>• Student groups</li> </ul>
4	Interaction and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USU Gala/Ball</li> <li>• International Fest</li> <li>• C&amp;S Meeting</li> </ul>

## ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Financial Health

The realised profit and loss (P&L) for the period has remained in line with our forecasts, reflecting prudent financial management and effective cost control across the organisation. Despite a modest downturn in outlet revenue—largely attributable to adjustments in the university calendar—this was offset by an encouraging increase in membership revenue. This growth speaks to the ongoing value our services and programs provide to students and reaffirms the importance of our engagement efforts.

I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to Michelle and her team for their continued diligence and professionalism in managing the organisation's finances. Their efforts have ensured stability during a dynamic period and have positioned us well for the months ahead.

Progress continues on our journey toward Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. Julia, James, and I have submitted the initial DGR documentation to Laura Albanese for review and approval. If successful, we will become a grantee of the University, enabling us to receive tax-deductible donations and significantly enhancing our ability to engage alumni and external supporters. I will provide a more comprehensive update on this process, including next steps and implications, at the next Board meeting.

### Operational Health

We're looking forward to welcoming several new faces into key leadership roles this April. Sam Robinson will commence as DPS on 28 April 2025, and Steve Moore will begin as DOSS on 7 April 2025. Both bring a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives, and I'm confident they will contribute meaningfully to our ongoing work in service delivery and student engagement.

This will fully complete our organisational restructure and align with the key goal of my Presidency, which was to deliver the framework for organisational stability by the time I left.

We're also thrilled that Janet will be joining us as Governance Officer and Board Secretary. She will be onboarded by Geraldine, whose knowledge and commitment have been indispensable in shaping our governance practices. While I'll speak more about Geraldine at the next Board meeting, I want to take a moment now to acknowledge how remarkable her contribution to the Union has been—her legacy will be felt for years to come.

Earlier this month, we held an all-staff forum focused on incorporation and key internal matters. This forum marked the beginning of what I intend to be a regular practice—one I will be recommending the incoming President continue as part of our broader commitment to transparency and communication. At the forum, the Executive and I addressed staff questions regarding the incorporation process, the Enterprise Agreement, and other organisational developments. These conversations are a crucial part of building trust and ensuring our staff remain informed and engaged as we move forward with major structural changes.

## GOVERNANCE

Incorporation remains a major focus, as outlined in the Vice President's Report, and we've made steady progress on several fronts. We've briefed *Honi Soit* on the structure and rationale behind incorporation to help inform broader public discussion.

Incorporation remains a major focus, and we've made steady progress on several fronts. We've briefed a number of partners, including *Honi Soit*, on the structure and rationale behind incorporation to help inform broader public discussion.

The results of the survey were incredibly supportive of our approach. **Appendix 1** contains a full outline, however, it should be noted here that 84.7% of students support incorporation as we have proposed it, with not a single change sitting below the 77.6% bar.

Behind the scenes, we've held numerous meetings with both our legal advisors and the University to ensure alignment and clarify our respective roles and obligations. This collaboration has been essential in smoothing the path forward. Ben's report includes a detailed timeline outlining the next stages in the process, and I encourage all Board members to review it closely ahead of our next major milestone, which will hopefully be an SGM.

### Committee Updates

The People & Culture Committee has continued its work in supporting a strong, values-led organisational culture. Our recent focus has been on reviewing staff development opportunities and ensuring that the team's capability is fit for purpose after the restructure occurred. I would like to particularly recognise the P&C team this month, who have conducted an ungodly amount of phone screens for positions at the USU since the start of the year.

The Debates Committee has continued to deliver high-quality results, with consistent participation and strong internal recruitment. Thank you to Grace for her continued leadership of this committee.

The C&S Committee is working toward streamlining club administration through the introduction of new systems, including updated approval matrices for new clubs and a structured approach to the redemption of inactive clubs. These reforms will make our processes more efficient and transparent. Sincere thanks to Julia, Kelsey, Shirley, and the entire committee for their hard work and collaborative spirit in pushing these improvements forward. I would also like to thank the clubs team for their work in handling a healthy number of clubs.

### Working Groups

The Textbook Exchange Committee has officially commenced its work, with Phan stepping in to lead the project. Terms of Reference (TOR) have already been drafted, laying the foundation for the committee's objectives and operational framework. This initiative has strong potential to ease the financial burden on students and promote sustainable resource sharing, and I'm looking forward to seeing the committee's progress under Phan's leadership.

The SSC Working Party is moving toward its final stages with reference to the 2025 Conference, with a wrap-up meeting currently in the works. This will provide an opportunity to consolidate findings, reflect on the progress made, and outline any final recommendations or actions. The working party's contributions have been valuable in shaping our approach to student spaces and service delivery going forward.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### University

The Union was represented at the recent International Student Advisory Group meeting by Shirley, who brought valuable insights and student-facing experience to the table. Her attendance ensured that our international student community's needs and concerns were well-articulated in a broader university context. We look forward to ongoing engagement with this group as part of our commitment to inclusivity and student voice.

Janina and I recently participated in a tour of the Campus Renewal Program, aimed at addressing the University's significant \$150 million maintenance backlog. Holding COS accountable for timely and thorough maintenance remains a priority, and we'll continue to work collaboratively to ensure our spaces are safe, functional, and reflective of student needs.

### External Stakeholders

Work is underway to establish the Inter-Union Committee, which will provide a formal channel for collaboration between student organisations across campuses in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. James and Shirley have been assisting with the formation of the committee, and we're currently finalising the Terms of Reference and confirming the list of participating groups. This initiative will help foster better coordination on shared issues and strengthen the collective student voice in university decision-making.

### Student Groups

At the most recent Student Consultative Committee meeting, a number of key issues were raised, including concerns around student infrastructure funding. One significant outcome was a collective letter advocating for the ring-fencing of capital expenditure (CAPEX) funding outside of the SSAF pool, to protect core service delivery and ensure better long-term planning. This continues to be an important space for student input into university decision-making, and we'll keep pushing for stronger financial accountability.

I continue to have discussions with Bohao at the SRC on ways we can improve FoodHub.

It was a pleasure to attend and speak on a panel at the SUPRA International Students Symposium, which brought together student leaders from across the country. I had the opportunity to share some of the USU's recent efforts in supporting international students, and to hear from others doing similar work in different contexts. A particular highlight was a conversation about the canteen model used by UMSA, which I've since followed up on—there may be useful insights there for how we approach student food access and sustainability on our own campus.

## INTERACTION AND EXPERIENCE

### **International Fest**

International Fest was a vibrant celebration of our diverse student community, with a wide array of performances and cultural showcases throughout the week. It was exciting to see such strong engagement, and I received a great deal of positive feedback from both staff and students. The energy and spirit of the event were a testament to the hard work of our team and the passion of the student groups involved.

### **Clubs and societies**

I had a chance to address the University/USU C&S meeting this month to discuss issues affecting clubs. I am confident that the Board's digital roadmap will enable us to greatly improve the experience for club execs going forward.

### **USU Gala/Ball**

Julia and I continue to plan for the USU Gala/Ball! I am looking forward to seeing many of our members there in May.

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It's been a dynamic and productive period across all areas of the organisation. Thank you to all staff and members for the continued job you do to make the Union a success.

## Appendix 1

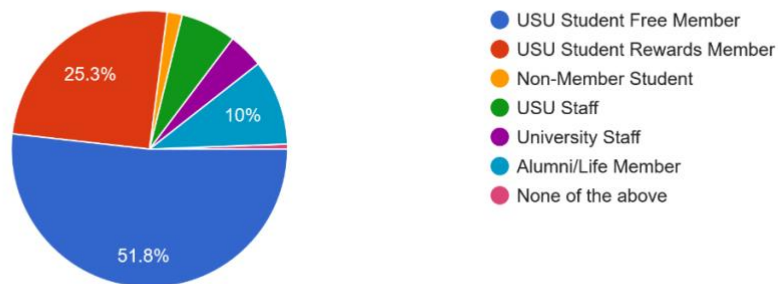
### Notes

- The survey had 170 total responses
- Yes is represented by blue and No is represented by red

The survey was widely circulated and participated in. At 170 responses for a population of 76,000, we have a vastly greater sample:population ratio than, for example, polling organisations use for their political polls, with Newspoll using 1,200 people to represent a population of 26,000,000.

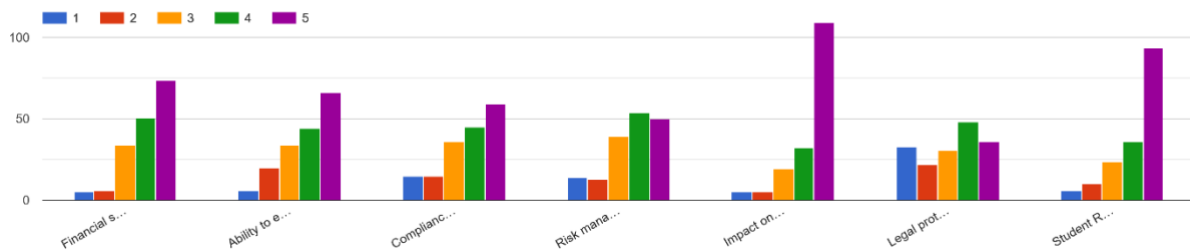
What is your role within the Union or University?

170 responses



### Impact on student services, student representation, and financial stability are the most important factors during incorporation.

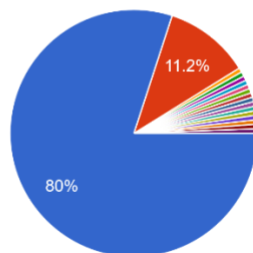
How important are the following factors in your view of incorporation? (Rate on a scale of 1-5: 1 = not important, 5 = extremely important)



### Members are in favour of the concept of incorporation.

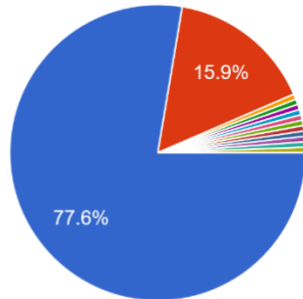
Incorporation refers to the constituting of the USU as a legal entity, allowing us to access greater funding for student services, reduce our legal liabi...adership. Are these goals that you are aligned with?

170 responses



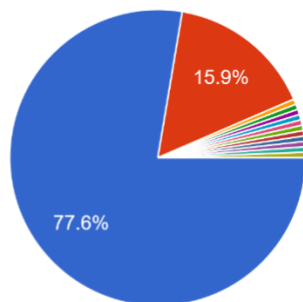
**Members are in favour of our compositional changes.**

The USU Board will rationalise its composition. The old structure contained 11 voting student directors, an Immediate-Past President, and 2 Senators (in External Chairs). Do you support this change?  
170 responses



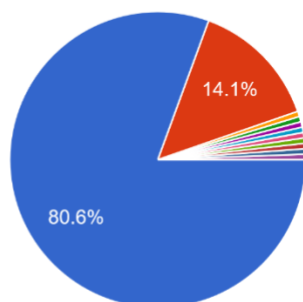
**Members are in favour of our committee rationalisation plan.**

The USU Board will rationalise its composition. The old structure contained 11 voting student directors, an Immediate-Past President, and 2 Senators (in External Chairs). Do you support this change?  
170 responses



**Members are in favour of more clearly defining our portfolios into officers.**

The USU will more clearly define its portfolios, renaming them 'Officers' and targeting their remit to positive outcomes for student life. The USU will re... add a Debates Officer. Do you support this change?  
170 responses





**Members are highly in favour of the incorporation model as a whole, with over 4 in 5 approving, well above the threshold required for a successful vote.**

Considering all the information provided to you, do you support the USU's incorporation?

170 responses

