

# BOARD REPORT

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**USU BOARD MEETING DATE:** 27 September 2024

**AGENDA ITEM:** 13.4

**REPORT PERIOD:** September 2024

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<b>Recommendation 1</b> That the Board note the President's report.	<b>1-5</b>	<b>1</b>

**HEADLINE SUMMARY**

Count	Key Issue	Key Areas
1	Organisational Health and Sustainability	Financial health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September/August results</li> <li>• SSAF changes and forward guidance</li> </ul> Operational health
2	Governance	Working Party updates Committee updates
3	Stakeholder Management	University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGC</li> <li>• ISEIP and UI</li> <li>• Investment working group</li> <li>• DGR status</li> </ul> Student Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions with external unions</li> <li>• SRC</li> <li>• SUPRA</li> </ul> Members and Staff
4	Interaction and Experience	International Fest 2024 Revue season Verge Gallery PULP #17

## ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Financial Health

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Michelle and her team for all that they do for the USU in terms of financial assessment and maintenance. This month was another strong month for the USU with students on campus. Although there were some quelled results at a few of our outlets, differences in year-on-year reporting periods can explain most of this change.

Overall, however, the surplus was \$254,000 more than expected, and I am pleased with the Board's in principle commitment to increase the financial buffer we have as an organisation to put us in line with other major charities. This will help to ensure increased organisational sustainability in the long run and means that we can provide more certainty to our clubs and societies with regards to program funding.

One area of concern for the Board going forward is evidently the changes to SSAF that will occur over the next five years under the Federal Government's plans to cap international student numbers. The University have now completed student load planning with the faculties for the 2025 budget, factoring in the impact of the caps. In the coming months, the University Executive (UE) will endorse the University-wide budget before it goes to the Senate Finance and Audit Committee and then ultimately to the full Senate for approval in early December. At the conclusion of this period, we should have a better indication of what our SSAF budget looks like for next year, however, I am pleased to report that, at this stage, it looks as if our SSAF Contestable and SSAF Base amounts will remain unchanged, allowing us to provide a full suite of services to students.

### Operational Health

I would again like to thank Jess, Jane, and their respective teams for their work in conducting marketing, sponsorship, and contractual reviews over the past few months. These are critical pieces of work that have already started to pay dividends for the USU.

## GOVERNANCE

### Working Party Updates

The Student Safety Conference working party had its second and third meetings this month. I would like to thank Grace for her excellent leadership of this group. The team are in the planning phase for the conference and are currently involved in reaching out to stakeholders both for attendance and to speak at the conference. We are also looking at ways in which we can use the findings of last year to push the university on some areas of student welfare and safety. I am looking forward to having Grace at the SCAG meetings going forward to ensure that we keep the pressure up.

### Committee Updates

The P&C Committee held its first meeting of the new semester. Michelle and her team are working tirelessly to ensure our policies are up to date and that, from both a WHS lens and a regulatory lens, we are actively ensuring that our staff are placed at the centre of all that we do. This includes developing a new Right to Disconnect policy to align with new legislation requirements and the result of our EA with staff.

The C&S Committee had perhaps their most involved sessions this year with almost forty new club applications, many of which were incredibly exciting additions to the C&S landscape. Thank you to Sam and her team for their attention to detail with our club executives as well, noted through the survey results that demonstrated a high level of engagement with areas for improvement. Please see the Hon. Secretary's report for a more detailed overview!

Governance Committee held an extraordinary meeting to discuss matters arising from the OGC's proposed amendments to the USU's Constitution approved in the term of the previous Board. Furthermore, the

committee approved Gilbert + Tobin as our lawyers for the incorporation process and will wait in anticipation for their advice once the Board can be adequately consulted on the nature of this advice.

Thank you as well to Grace for her leadership of the Debates Committee, which met this month, though unfortunately I was an apology due to a dislocated shoulder! Interviews are ongoing for the new Director of Debates and committee for 2024-25, and I would like to thank Will Price for his contributions to USU Debating over the last year, and indeed his whole University career.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### University

Ben and I met with the University's OGC this month. We will continue to engage the Board productively on matters pertaining to Constitution amendments from the University when we receive any tangible amendments from them, which I look forward to in due course. I would also like to thank Ethan and Georgia for their help in this matter.

The Immersive Student Experience Infrastructure Program (ISEIP, now Placemaking PWG) group will meet again this month to discuss changes to campus infrastructure. I am continually concerned by the lack of forewarning that the USU is given regarding changes to placemaking and have notified the university and UI of these concerns. I will continue to push for greater transparency in their decision making and for any damages to be rendered to the USU that have arisen from the last decade of negotiations around critical projects. Whilst UI have admitted the need for the working groups, which will begin in late October, I am not satisfied by the current level of discussion and will be pushing for more engagement.

I am continuing my engagement with the investment working group over the next two months. Thank you to Directors who provided insight on this matter. I intend to draw on the USU's past experience with investment changes to ensure that the university is availed of our experience and can make an informed decision.

James and I will be engaging the University's donations team, on recommendation from Darren Goodsir (COS), to discuss the USU obtaining a DGR status arrangement. This will unlock a new source of funding for the USU and allow us to fundraise for important student initiatives and projects.

### Student Organisations

I have begun my discussions with other student organisations on forming a new standing group, to meet each trimester, to discuss matters pertaining specifically to student unions like the USU. So far, my discussions with the UTSRC, UTSActivate student President, Arc@UNSW student President, and UCSRC/hopefully soon to be UCSU President have all been fruitful and has generated significant interest in this new project. I hope to get this group established before the new year.

SRC elections will be occurring next week, and I wish all candidates well. I have greatly enjoyed working with Harrison and wish him well for the rest of his term in handing over to the new President.

It was great to meet with members of SUPRA, along with Shirely, to discuss means of advocating for international students. Shirley's participation in some intervarsity discussion groups to continue to push for greater international student representation is a welcome advancement.

### Members and Staff

Ben and I will be conducting a town hall with members and staff to ensure that the university population is given a chance to ask questions of the USU's incorporation process to ensure transparency and the transfer of important information.

In addition, the executive will be conducting, for the first time, quarterly town hall meetings with USU staff. This will be a great way to ensure that our policy of radical transparency is observed.

**INTERACTION AND EXPERIENCE**

I would like to congratulate the student programs team on their work for International Fest 2024! It was great to see so many clubs showcasing their cultures and their many unique activities to the broader USU population. Whilst there are a number of learnings from this event, I am pleased with the level of engagement Directors had with the project!

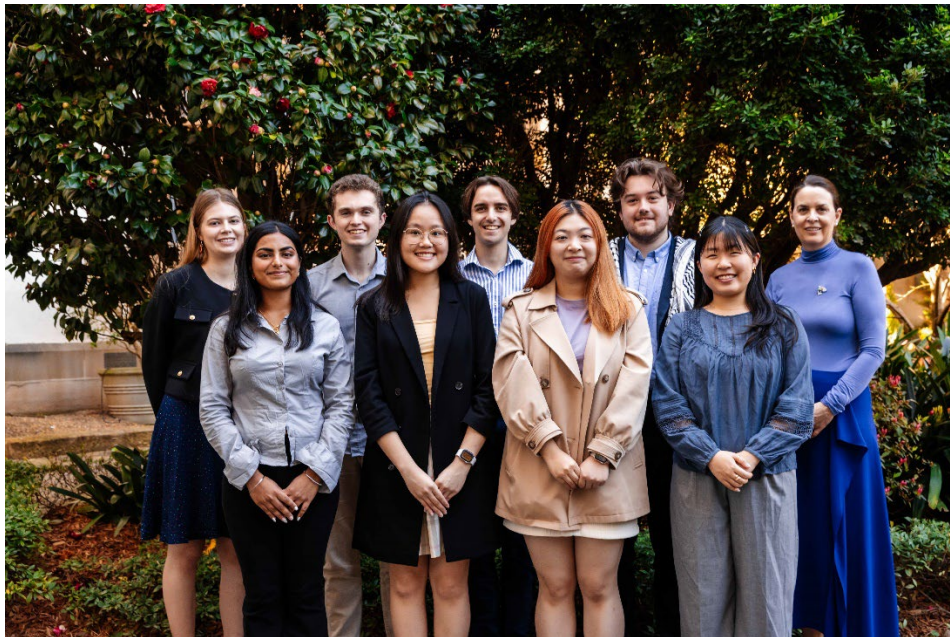
The USU revue season wrapped up with MedRevue this month. Whilst I did not understand most of the jokes, every med student in the Seymour Centre fully enjoyed it on the night I was there! Well done to all three of our revue teams this year, and I am looking forward to Women's revue, POC revue, and Queer revue next semester.

Furthermore, my thanks continue to go out to Tesha for all the work she does at Verge Gallery, including for their impressive exhibition this month. I would encourage all Directors to see it for themselves before this tactile exhibition closes!

Finally, my congratulations to PULP for their impending launch of Issue 17! A big thanks to Hugo and the editorial team for their high-quality output this semester.

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Thank you to staff, members, and the Board for their productivity over the last month. As always, my door is open to questions and feedback. Please remember that we are here as a team, and we only work well together when we work as a charitable, in-good-faith Board.



**Bryson Constable**  
**President**