

BOARD REPORT

President

USU BOARD MEETING DATE: 25/10/2024

REPORT PERIOD: October 2024

AUTHOR: Bryson Constable

TITLE: President

PHONE/MOBILE: +61 488 440 870

	Page No.	Res. No.
Recommendation 1 That the Board note the President's report.	1-5	1
Recommendation 2 That the Board provides in-principle support for the President and Honorary Treasurer, in conjunction with the Honorary Secretary, to produce a report on behalf of the USU to engage the university in creating a DGR account and strategy for the USU.	3	2

HEADLINE SUMMARY

Count	Key Issue	Key Areas
1	Organisational Health and Sustainability	Financial health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSAF results • Budget Operational health
2	Governance	Committees Working groups Incorporation SADs
3	Stakeholder Management	University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OGC • UI Student Groups Members and staff
4	Interaction and Experience	Glitter Gala Debates Dinner Clubs Awards USU Trivia Night Twice Loved Markets Screamfest

October has been another huge month for the USU with major projects progressed and completed. Our strategy deliverables are in development and our framework for success is positive. I want to provide a huge shout-out to Michelle Tonge, James Dwyer, and other members of the finance team and committee for their work this month in producing a draft budget for 2025.

ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Financial Health

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Michelle, once again, for her team's work this month in preparing the draft budget for the USU. A key callout I wish to make is our increased focus on financial stability and sustainability, evident through the increased buffer that the USU has been able to create for itself.

Our SSAF results were incredibly strong this year. Every single one of our projects was approved either to their full extent or to a reduced extent (three projects in this latter category), with two of those projects eligible for increased funding based on census reporting which will be made available in April 2025. Because all of these projects are scalable, the partial funding of these projects will not affect the USU's ability to implement our strategy. Furthermore, I am pleased that, in the SSAF consultative committee meeting on October 8th, the USU was able to negotiate for these future funds to be automatically locked into the USU's two partially funded, listed projects, meaning we don't have to go back to the committee for approval.

As part of our strategy, the USU has engaged in securing new revenue streams for the organisation. This has led to the development of a sponsorship strategy and to a new contract review, both of which are ongoing projects. The Executive Committee has resolved, in consultation with the Board at the last meeting, to pursue DGR status through an arrangement with the University akin to what other faculties and SUSF currently have. This would involve the following steps:

1. The Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary, and President drafting a 2-page outline of our donation priorities, our purpose, currently interested stakeholders, and our alumni solicitation and engagement plan,
2. The University (Joanne Wright) and the USU jointly managing and approving the project, with the bank account managed by the University and the USU managing communications, and
3. An exploration into hiring a part-time role to conduct alumni engagement and list-maintenance.

As such, I am asking for **the Board's in-principle support for the President and Honorary Treasurer, in conjunction with the Honorary Secretary, to produce a report on behalf of the USU to engage the University in creating a DGR account and strategy for the USU.**

If this motion is approved, a formal paper for endorsement will be circulated to the Board at the November Board meeting.

Operational Health

As outlined last month, 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

Committee Updates

The Clubs and Societies committee met again this month to discuss matters of club governance and new club approvals. On the latter, over 50 clubs have been approved in the last three months, which is a fantastic result that speaks to the strength of our C&S program, edging closer to 300 unique clubs.

The Debates committee met this month to discuss governance matters and to hear updates from the departing committee. I would like to thank the outgoing Director of Debates Will Price for all his work this year and extend my congratulations to Charlie Ryan on their appointment! I know he is set to do well.

As noted above, the Finance committee met this month to discuss the draft budget for 2025 and the Q3 reforecast. I was pleased with the deliberations and thank the entire finance team for their continued work.

Working Groups

The Student Safety Committee met and discussed matters a number of times this month. Key on the agenda was setting the timeline, parameters, budget, and speakers for the 2025 iteration of this important work. I am pleased by the progress that has been made so far and thank Grace Porter for all her work in driving this initiative. Invitations will shortly go out and I encourage all in our community to attend. Furthermore, the committee is working on a revised set of recommendations to present to the SCAG working group in November.

Incorporation

Thank you to Ben for all his work with the incorporation piece over the last month. The meeting with OGC this month was insightful for both parties and a positive step towards relationship building. It seems most of the key stakeholders are aligned with the strategy that the USU has and are impressed with the due diligence we have conducted with regards to legal advice and membership engagement.

The next step will be to engage a consultant to draft a plan for our incorporation for presentation to the university.

Senate-Appointed Directors

Shortly, David Wright's term on the USU Board will conclude. The USU Board will be liaising with David and the University to ensure that whoever fills that SAD spot will complement the existing skill matrix of the Board. Thank you to David and Tiffany for their extensive contribution to the USU over the last four months, and indeed for David's contribution over a significant period. I look forward to the remainder of our time together!

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

University

As explained earlier, a number of stakeholder meetings have taken place over the previous month. I will continue to engage with the university productively to ensure that USU is well-placed for success. Our meetings with Laura Albanese, Darren Goodsir, OGC, and a new monthly meeting with Student Life will continue to occur.

Michael and I met with UI this month on two separate occasions to ask questions about their strategy and seek clarity on Wentworth and Carslaw. It is concerning that UI do not seem to have a coherent plan with regards to their spaces redevelopment, and I will thus be working with our management team to ensure that the USU's vision and placemaking work can take a leading role in setting the tone for what the student experience should look like.

Student Groups

I would like to extend my congratulations to Angus Fisher for his election as SRC President for 2025. Whilst Angus has already been looped into some ongoing conversations between student organisations, particularly those concerning SSAF and opal cards, I will be meeting with Angus 1-on-1 following RepsElect to hear his plans for the next year.

Furthermore, I have been consulting with SUSF to develop a letter to the University seeking a permanent CAPEX budget for student organisations to invest in their spaces, worth approximately \$2.2 million per year. We are waiting to hear back from the University on this proposal, co-signed by every student organisation.

INTERACTION AND EXPERIENCE

The USU held its annual Glitter Gala this month. Thank you to Ethan Floyd for taking on the role of MC for the night, and to Sam and her team for their wonderful work with the event. It was a memorable night for all who attended. In the future, the USU should look to review its gala lineup to ensure that attendance is boosted in years to come.

The Debates Dinner recognised the exceptional talent within the debating community, bringing together students, alumni, and staff to celebrate recent achievements. The evening was marked by speeches, awards, and discussions that highlighted the impact of debating on student life. Of particular note were the 'Port speeches,' which were some of the most heartfelt and meaningful speeches I have ever heard. They spoke to the importance of community in our student experience, and I am thrilled with the quality of relationships that are generated through the debating program. A congratulations to all involved.

The Clubs Awards honoured the efforts and accomplishments of our student clubs, showcasing their commitment to enriching campus life. We received perhaps our greatest number of applicants in recent memory, and attendance on the night was fantastic as a result. A big shout out to USYD Quadball for winning Best Large Club, a truly prestigious award! The fact that no club won two awards speaks to the breadth of excellence fostered by our clubs team, and I would like to particularly thank Kelsey for all the work that she and her team does for our clubs program.

Other important events this month included USU Trivia Night, Twice Loved Markets, and of course all our recurring event such as G'Day Gatherings and our many trips to places all across Sydney. Screamfest will also be held in the coming week, a great opportunity to celebrate the year before we move into exam season.

Thank you as well to PULP for publishing Issue 18! Our DSPs have done a fantastic job in reviewing the articles, and the editorial team once again smashed it out of the park.

This is the last report I will be writing before students exit the campus for Summer break. As such, I wish all members a productive last month and encourage all to continue to engage with the USU as we try to make this stressful time a smooth experience. Thank you again to all our staff, members, and the Board for their work over the past month!



Bryson Constable
President