



Guild President 2023 July Report

Dylan Botica

President's Representation Board Report

Covering Dates: 23/05/2023 – 13/07/2023

Submitted to: July Representation Board

Leave: 3 July 2023 (TOIL)

1. University / External Meetings

Date	Meeting	Comments
24/05/2023	Acknowledgement Writing Workshop	Organised in collaboration with Cultural Capabilities.
24/05/2023	Evaluate Committee	Voting on software
26/05/2023	Student Partnership Agreement Discussion	With Paulene and Alan from DVCA Portfolio
26/05/2023	Academic Board	
29/05/2023	Digital Literacies and Visualisation	Meeting with Humanities PVC and staff on new initiative and SSAF funding
01/06/2023	Student Experience Hub Meeting	
02/06/2023	Walk for Reconiliation	
07/06/2023	Meeting University Sector Review Panel	
07/06/2023	Yes23 Meeting	
09/06/2023	NUS Welfare Officer Meeting	Grace from the NUS came to Perth!
12/06/2023	Gender Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group	
13/06/2023	DVCA Monthly Meeting	
13/06/2023	Student Experience Program Steering Committee	

14/06/2023	Make Renting Fair Catch Up	
15/06/2023	Library Catch Up	Library hours are extending in Semester breaks to accom for Trimester students. 24 hour swipe access resuming sem 2.
16/06/2023	Make Renting Fair Digital Catch Up	
19/06/2023	DVCG Monthly Catch Up	
21/06/2023	Vice Chancellor Meeting	
21/06/2023	Guild Presidents Meeting	
22/06/2023	Global Student Leaders Network	
22/06/2023	Academic Registrar	Meeting discussion regarding calendar issues and the proposed changes to self-certification.
4/07/2023	Global Student Leaders Network	
5/07/2023	Guild & SLC - Strategy and Collaboration	Student life and community updates.
5/07/2023	Curtin Community Safety & Security Action Group Meeting (2 of 3)	
10/07/2023	NTEU Meeting	Meeting NTEU National President and Secretary with Branch Committee to discuss successful EBA process.
11/07/2023	Global Positioning Committee	
12/07/2023	Advance HE Visit	Presenting Students as Partners at Curtin to aspiring UK VCs
12/07/2023	Yes23	Meeting with Dennis from Yes23

2. Guild Meetings

Date	Meeting	Comments
25/05/2023	Executive Committee	
25/05/2023	Legal Committee	
25/05/2023	Higher Education	
25/05/2023	Guild Council	

26/05/2023	End of Sem Bash – Rave Cave	Congratulations to the staff and VP-A for a successful event
29/05/2023	President x Student Engagement	
29/05/2023	President x MD	
29/05/2023	FBL Rep Catch Up	
30/05/2023	Operations Committee	
01/06/2023	Higher Education	
02/06/2023	QO Catch Up	
05/06/2023	President x MD	
05/06/2023	President x Student Engagement	
07/06/2023	Health and Safety Constitution	
08/06/2023`	Clubs Governance Discussion	
08/06/2023	Executive Committee	
08/06/2023	Higher Education	
12/06/2023	President x MD	
12/06/2023	President x Student Engagement	
13/06/2023	Commercial Strategy	
13/06/2023	Remuneration Tribunal	
15/06/2023	Legal Committee	
15/06/2023	Executive Committee	
15/06/2023	Higher Education	
15/06/2023	Representation Board	
19/06/2023	President x MD	
19/06/2023	Voice Campaign Brainstorming	
22/06/2023	Executive Committee	

22/06/2023	Guild Council	
5/07/2023	Curtin Colombo Student Guild MOU Discussion	
6/07/2023	Commercial Strategy Meeting	
6/07/2023	Higher Education	
10/07/2023	President x MD	
10/07/2023	President x Student Engagement	
10/07/2023	Executive Committee	
13/07/2023	Higher Education	

3. Items of Significance

3.1. Self-Certification

Following the Representation Board's special meeting, I have communicated the Board's views against further restriction to the use of self-certification on assessment extensions to the Academic Registrar and the DVC-A.

The University has now paused its planned change rollout pending a meeting between the Guild and AR in the coming weeks.

A general representation communication will be sent out via email in the coming weeks, including this proposal, unless urgency brings it forward.

3.2. Academic Calendar

The University has finally commissioned its review into the calendar. We have successfully narrowed the scope down to the changes from the previous calendar with a focus on the loss of tuition-free weeks. This restricts the University's capacity to re-introduce the concept of trimesters in this process.

I have recommended Guild representatives to sit on the panel. This work is ongoing.

3.3. Voice to Parliament

Materials will be included in orientation packs and at Guild O-Day. We are working on a stall for O-Day and a raft of events to be held during the Semester to promote engagement with the Voice to Parliament campaign.

3.4. WA Government Universities Review

The Guild's submission to the WA Universities Review Discussion Paper has now been submitted.

The meeting with the Universities review panel was effective insofar as putting forward the Curtin Student Guild's perspective on the sector. The student experience was focused on as well as the importance of student choice.

The panel's report will not be made public or shared with stakeholders, which is something all WA Guilds have concerns with.

3.5. Liquor License Objection

The Application is now with the Director for a decision. The Guild as an objector and the Applicant (IGA Group) have now make four submissions each.

Our submissions focus on these key points.

- **Inadequate Safety Consideration & Locale Definition:** We argue that the applicant's safety measures and definition of the locality are insufficient. The proposed liquor store might lead to harm for the susceptible group of people under 25 years old living nearby.
- **Need and Accessibility of Existing Stores:** The applicant's evidence doesn't convincingly demonstrate a need for an additional liquor store, given the existing options and their convenient accessibility.
- **Questionable Arguments and Relevance:** The applicant's arguments about extended opening hours, one-stop shopping, and alignment with state strategy are seen as immaterial or irrelevant in the context of a liquor license application.
- **Misinterpretation and Misquotation:** We highlight inconsistencies and misquotations in the applicant's submission, undermining their credibility. Accusations against us for policy breach and stifling competition are firmly refuted.

3.3 Tenancy Reform

I am committed to improving student life and is actively voicing concerns for tenancy reform to protect student renters. We recently addressed a letter to the Minister for Housing, expressing our support for the "Make Renting Fair WA" campaign and its goal of secure, affordable housing including protecting student residents under the residential tenancy act. The alliance's focus remains on eliminating no-grounds evictions and advocating for fair rental practices, protecting students, lodgers boarders and to push for crucial tenancy reforms.

We have been invited to join the alliance which I have accepted. We will be having our Upcycle Market / Thrift Shop contribute to the Shelter WA advocacy.

We will also need to campaign for students to complete the survey and share their rental stories.

3.4 Parking Campaign

The Parking Campaign at Curtin University is gaining momentum with a petition featuring nearly 8,000 signatures. This petition, accompanied by personal stories, has been

delivered directly to the university's senior executives to underscore the necessity for fixing the problematic parking system.

Throughout the campaign, the team has taken several actions:

- Public events and demonstrations were held to gather opinions about parking issues.
- On-vehicle advertising was executed across the campus.
- A petition was launched and key demands were promoted.
- The team presented their views directly to University executives.

Noteworthy accomplishments of the campaign include:

- A freeze on parking fee increases in recent years.
- Implementation of a permit system, aimed at student housing residents at Twin Dolphin and St Cats.
- Better enforcement of warnings instead of fines.
- More options for donations in place of fines.
- A decrease in cases referred for debt collection.
- The petition is now waiting for a response from the University's administration. The decision to address the issues in the current parking system lies with the University management.

The campaign has leveraged multiple social media platforms for sharing updates and engaging the community.

4.5 Other Matters

- A competition to rename the newly to be launched student evaluation system has been sent out to students!
- The Executive Committee are reviewing the Guild's commercial strategy in coordination with the MD and Student Engagement Manager.

4 Travel

Education Conference
26 – 30 June

In attendance of Education Conference wearing my National Union of Students WA State Branch President hat.

As the Guild partially contributed to the expenses I have attached a brief report.

Vice President – Education

Representation Board Report – 13/05/2023 – 9/06/2023

Veronika Gobba – She/Her

Date	Meetings	Comments
12/6/23	VPE x PSC President Check-in	
	University LSEC	Delivered a presentation about the services the Guild provides and how we have improved the student experience- As well as some figures from our annual report and some issues we have identified.
13/6/23	Guild Exec & MD Meeting	
15/6/23	Legal Committee	Attended as minute secretary
	Guild Exec Committee	
	SAP Check-in	
	Higher Ed	
16/6/23	VPE x QO Check-in	
	Curtin College Guild Stall	
17/6/23	Curtin Voice Yarning Session with Simon Forrest	
20/6/23	SaP Check-in	
21/6/23	Oral Health Town Hall	
22/6/23	First Year Reps Team Meeting	
	SaP Leadership Group Meeting	
	Exec Committee	
	Guild Council	
23/6/23 – 29/6/23	Out of state – NUS Education Conference	
30/6/23 – 5/7/23	Leave taken.	
6/7/23	ISC Meeting	
	Guild Exec	

	SaP Check-in	
	VPE x Health Sci Rep Check-in	
	Higher Ed	
7/7/23	VPE x QO Check-in	
10/7/23	Exec Committee	
12/7/23	Advance HE visit	Showcased a presentation with President on Students as partners- how it works, what works well, what doesn't, etc.
	Yes23 WA	Meeting with coordinator
13/7/23	VPE x Health Sci Rep Check-in	

Other

Much more progress has been made towards a proposed student partnership agreement, Guild bi-annual uni outline review has commenced, A submission to the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training into the use of generative artificial intelligence in the Australian education system has been made by the Curtin Student Guild; A rental inquiry submission is also underway. I have been appointed to a panel for selecting Curtin's new Manager Student Conduct (Academic), shortlisting and interviews will commence in August.

Science and Engineering faculty Report

Zhongzheng (Max) Zhang (He/Him)

Representation Board – July 2023

Date	Event type	Event to note	Comments
09/06/2023	SDP	SDP Meeting	3 cases, all regarding plagiarism
16/06/2023	SDP	SDP Meeting	3 cases, some regarding AI
19/06/2023	Faculty	FET Meeting	Discussed massive increase in student intake for Sem 2 and the projected increase that will go into 2024, further discussions regarding teaching load on staff to be scheduled.
19/06/2023	Faculty	Meeting with Director of Student Engagement	Discussed student feedback from basic surveys and planning for new initiative rolling out to EFY (Engineering Foundation Year) students for Sem 2 2023 and beyond of a “Feedback Week”, more details below.
21/06/2023	Faculty	Research and Development Meeting	Nothing to note.
25/06/2023	SDP	SDP Meeting	1 case
03/07/2023	Faculty	FET Meeting	Nothing to note.
05/07/2023	Faculty	SAE Excellence Awards	Many notable teaching and research awards, including Christina from SAE student engagement who has been very helpful to students and clubs.
07/07/2023	SDP	SDP Meeting	9 cases
10/07/2023	Faculty	Health and Safety Meeting	Many risks are being acknowledged and addressed at the first official meeting of this committee. There are currently no gaps in Health, Safety and Emergency management roles within the faculty.
14/07/2023	SDP	SDP Meeting	Expecting 17 cases.

Dir. Student Engagement Marc Stoitis expressed interest in collecting more information from students regarding their learning environment and experiences, and to bolster the feedback collection with a Feedback Week initiative pencilled in for teaching week 4 of semester 2, 2023. This first wave will be targeted directly at the EFY cohort with plans of expanding in the future. Marc is currently on leave but there will be more heavy planning once he returns (meeting booked in for 21/07, aka tomorrow as of this Reps Board). This initiative will be stressed to students starting from Orientation, nailing in the concept of “Feedback Week is week 4”, specifically targeting tutorial and workshop type classes, as those have a much higher attendance rate than lectures. The aim is to obtain enough data to provide meaningful change during the semester for that wave of students.

Plans are underway for O-Day stall as well as university orientation week appearances, with a table booked in at EFY Orientation Expo, and slides prepped for the Science, Postgraduate and Engineering orientations.

Faculty of Health Sciences Report

Hiba Alsoeady (she/her)

Representation Board – July 2022

Guild and University meetings, progress and planning

June		
	Event	Description
15/06	Representation Board	Spoke about NUS affiliation
20/06	Update from the Dean, Gender Equity, Inclusion & Diversity	Missed the meeting but watched the recording
21/06	Oral Health Town Hall	Problems relating to year two students and changes to their units and course delivery
22/06	SDP Cases	Quite a few cases - mostly Gen-AI
22/06	Nursing Early Orientation	Spoke to semester two new nursing students about the Guild and the resources available to them.
26/06	Special Meeting - Representation Board	Regarding self-certification
29/06	Meeting: Inquiry into Gen AI in Australian education	Attended on behalf of Mitchell Craig. Essentially, the purpose of the meeting was to assist the university in preparing submissions to the Committee as part of the inquiry into Gen-AI
29/06	SDP Cases	Ten cases
July		
04/07	DIB Working Party	Continuous discussions on religious holidays and assessment extensions
05/07	SDP Cases	Eight cases
07/07	SDP Cases	Five Cases
11/07	Faculty Courses Committee	I unfortunately missed this meeting.
11/07	Health Sciences SDP	Seven cases

HUMANITIES FACULTY REPORT – JULY

JUDE SOUSSAN

DATE	WHAT	NOTES
14/06/2023	DBE Student Leaders Briefing Session	Introduced myself to the DBE Head of School and spoke about some of the reoccurring issues within the DBE department. I will be attending some future sessions to be kept in the loop.
15/06/2023	Courses Committee	
15/06/2023	Student Disciplinary Panel	
16/06/2023	Adobe Challenge Meeting	Athina and I personally reached out to clubs to get more responses and we finalised the poster to be published.
19/06/2023	Drama Narratives Social Screening	Attended the screening to introduce myself to the Screen Arts tutor for major productions and spoke about how screen students can reach out to theatre students for casting.
20/06/2023	Meeting with Humira and Athina	Spoke about introductory activities to be made during O-Week and how to better accommodate international students.
20/06/2023	Student Disciplinary Panel	
23/06/2023	Student Disciplinary Panel	
26/06/2023	Special Reps Board Meeting	To discuss keeping self-certifications available for all types of assessments and keeping it at 5 days.

Student Assist Representation Board Report – July 2023

Case statistics for Student Assist is as follows:

	Apr	May	June
Academic sessions	220	259	289
Financial Counselling sessions	21	21	21
LifeHacks	140	142	75

Academic sessions in the month of June were mainly in relation to complaints, various appeals, and academic misconducts.

Yes there were, yet again, another 21 Financial Counselling sessions for the month of June. Financial sessions were mainly focused on supporting students with various hardship payments as stated below.

Welfare

Student Assist provided emergency relief to 13 students through Hardship grants. 9 of these to international students and the remaining 4 to domestic students.

2 Loan Laptops were loaned out in June.

ISC president Report

Representation board

July 2023 Submission date July 13th, 2023

COMMITTEE AND INTERNAL MEETINGS

- Meeting with VPA and VPE to get the updates and also to discuss the events happening in the future.
- Had meeting with VPE Guild on the issue with unilodge regarding first preference to Curtin students
- Meeting with ISC committee members to discuss the possibilities of events
- Conducted official ISC meeting to discuss on a week and strategy path to take for the next semester and was discussing possible ideas for official communication with all International students via Discord
- Met with some new possible candidates to fill in the roles of Reps
- Had discussion with my vice-president and Humanities rep regarding Discord servers and social media activities.
-

Events

- event: pathway migration agency combined with ISC conducted a seminar on 28 of April to provide visa related knowledge to students and it was attended by approx. 100 students and the feedback we got were very positive.
- Have scheduled Migration events for the next sem and yet to confirm with the dates
- ISC worked closely with Curtin Connect to deliver a program called Café Connect which was very informative session to International students.
- International showcase BBQ coming up for new international students during orientation week

Bhaarith Kathiravan

ISC PRESIDENT
PRONOUNCE HE/HIM

ISC.PRESIDENT@GUILD.CURTIN.EDU.AU



PSC President's Report

SUBMISSION DATE: 13/07/2023

FOR MEETING DATE: 20/07/2023

NAME: Mitch Craig

POSITION: PSC President

GUILD MEETINGS/EVENTS

Date	Meeting	Comments
08/06/2023	Exec	
08/06/2023	Higher Ed	
12/06/2023	PSC President x VPE catchup	Updated Veronika on PSC happenings
13/06/2023	Commercial strategy	
15/06/2023	Legal Committee	
15/06/2023	Exec	
15/06/2023	Higher Ed	
15/06/2023	Reps Board	
21/06/2023	PSC President x Student Assist	Catchup w/ Andrew
22/06/2023	Exec	
26/06/2023	Special Reps Board	
06/07/2023	Commercial Strategy	
06/07/2023	Higher Ed	

UNIVERSITY MEETINGS

Date	Meeting	Comments
12/06/2023	LSEC	Discussion on AI. This was covered in more detail at the special reps board.
19/06/2023	Research Committee	Chris Moran's final RC meeting. 😞
29/06/2023	Selection Panel for HoS	As acting President
04/07/2023	Selection Panel for HoS	As acting President
04/07/2023	HREC	Ethics Committee

PROJECTS/General

- Working on orientation activities and having someone to present to the HDR and general Faculty PG orientations.
- Working on oday stall.
- Working on AI strategy.
- Was away for a research conference last week but have been staying up to date since returning
- Was acting President for a bit when the whole exec was out of the state.

KPIs

- Have been answering emails on time
- Working on PG events
- Have attended all my meetings

tl;dr

Plenty of meetings, plenty of projects, almost time for sem2 so lots of orientation stuff to do. Was acting Prez for a bit, went away for 4 days.

QUEER OFFICER'S Report
Representation Board Meeting 8/2023 – 20.07.23



13.07.2023

GUILD MEETINGS

Date	Meeting	Notes
Weekly	VPE x QO	
13.06	VPE x QO Catch up	
16.06	VPA x QO Catch up	Planning for O-Day
26.06	Special Reps Board	
29.06	We All Need to Pee Brainstorm – Collective	Online Meeting: brief outline of issues In-Person: walk around campus to find all gender bathrooms accessible to students
04.07	Meeting w/ Student	Good Chat

UNIVERSITY MEETINGS

Date	Meeting	Notes
09.06	Catch Up Sheldon Smith	A good chance for us to discuss where the deadnaming work is at, for me to get an update on the Curtin Ally Program, planning and brainstorming for both we all need to pee and the transitioning at Curtin guide
16.06	Catch Up with Sheldon Smith	Discussed transitioning guide and planning for the best time for upcoming meetings
23.06	Morning Tea – Nurul, Samantha, WO	An introductory morning tea to discuss the Gender Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group (GEIAG) that Aleena and I have been included on. Discussing the overall aim and intention behind it and our thoughts and beliefs for what it should work to achieve.
23.06	Catch up w/ Sheldon	Catch up on where projects currently are and make plans for Collective Ally Training and ideas for upcoming meetings
30.06	We All Need to Pee Brainstorm	Productive brainstorm outlining the issues and creating a template for a ten-year plan and highlighting the need for immediate actions also

30.06	Catch up with Sheldon	Planning for Collectives Ally Training
04.07	Deadnaming meeting	Re-assessing systems fixes (frustrating progress), invited to be included in review of UC handbook to be more inclusive/addressing deadnaming, checking in where other fixes are at
13.07	Staff Training on Equity and Inclusion	Discussions over how to include more information and training on deadnaming/misgendering for staff

OTHER MEETINGS

Date	Meeting	Notes
16.06	Interview - @curtinlifeaustrlia	
04.07	Equity Collectives Ally Training	Small turn out but to be expected during the break. Good discussions and lots of engagement from everyone. Overall very productive session.
07.07	VPA x QO x Sheldon Smith	Planning session for potential Pride Parade/Event on campus

PROJECTS

Deadnaming: Majority of those who are in the working group are onboard with the current plans regarding the systems, however there are already roadblocks coming up regarding having the resources in order to get started. Outside of the systems fixes, Sheldon and I have organised to hopefully give the Curtin Connect staff a baselevel introduction to deadnaming and how to react to students correcting them on their pronouns.

We All Need to Pee: Further looking into the all-gender bathrooms on campus revealed that one of the ones marked on the campus map as all gender was actually a female bathroom. The committee got back together to discuss a potential for a 10-year plan to address this issue as well as highlighting the things that can be done more immediately, which is currently being worked into a draft summary/proposal that will be discussed at our next meeting.

OTHER

Curtin Ally: We attempted to do a level one ally session with the collectives. The only people who could make it were members of the Queer collective which meant that we had some very in depth conversations around how the sessions normally go and what people's thoughts were. I have sent a survey out to them to get their feedback and thoughts to potentially take back to the Ally team to help make the training

IMARI MORRIS (They/She/He)
QUEER OFFICER

Women's Officer Report - Representation Board

20/07/2023

Date	Meeting	Comments
22/06/2023	Humanities SDP Panel	
23/06/2023	Gender Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group Morning Tea.	Imari and I had an initial meet up with Nurul and Samantha. It was really good, we discussed what we wanted to occur in the group and had informal chats.
29/06/2023	FBL SDP Panel	
30/06/2023	We all Need to Pee	Conclusive meeting; Follow up with Imari and I with David and Maryanne on the 21 st July.
13/07/2023	WO * VPA	Meeting about Events Semester 2; Women's Brunch, Equity Festival; was very comprehensive.

Leave

I have been on leave from the 3rd to the 12th, so not as many things to report this month.

Women's Room

In terms of the Women's Room, my plans include trying to vamp up the room and have more input from the users of the room. To increase more communication between the members and create a strong sense of community and camaraderie, I want to implement ways where communication and words of support can be exchanged easily. I plan to kickstart these plans across the next few weeks.

O – day

Preparations for O – day is underway. A huge thanks to Athina for all the help, she organised everything from the hamper to donuts to stickers while I was away, so I really appreciate it. On the day, we'll be having a raffle with the hamper as the prize, Krispy Kreme donuts as well as stickers prepared. I'm hoping with all of this, we'll have more people at the stall, and overall, I'm very excited for O – day.

TLDR;

SDP Panels, Gender Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group Morning Tea, We all Need to Pee Committee Meeting, Women's Room Plans, O – day Preparations underway.

Aleena Shaji

Women's Officer 2023

Submitted 13/07/2023.

Accessibility Department

Representation Board Report: June & July 2023



University/External Meetings

Date	Meeting	Notes
13/06	UDWG Meeting 2	Apologies due to exam leave
23/06	AD x AAS Meeting	Notes below

Guild/Student Meetings

Date	Meeting	Notes
24/05	VPE Check-in	
25/05	Unit Petition Meeting with Student Assist	Notes below
22/06	VP-A x AO O-Day meeting	
26/06	Student Tour	
27/06	Check-in with Student Assist	
29/06	AC Meeting 2	

Additional Information

Pharmacy Unit Review Petition Meeting with Student Assist

In semester 1 there was a petition developed and circulated by a small group of 2nd year pharmacy students dissatisfied with a particular unit. Our concerns included allegations of bullying by unit staff, inadequate teaching, insufficient resources, unfair assessment, and other issues that have been consistent over multiple years of this unit being run. The efforts of these students resulted in a review of the final exam by staff running future units that significantly increased the pass rate of the exam over previous years. I am still waiting for the eVALUate reports to be released before making a call, but I believe that this is significant positive progress.

AD x AAS Meeting

I met with Debbie Teh to discuss issues and developments in AccessAbility Services. I am proud to report that the backlog of appointments for CAPs has been cleared thanks to the tireless efforts of the whole AAS team. Other items we discussed are as follows:

- There are still issues with CAPs being reviewed by staff. There was apparently some back-and-forth with teaching staff being annoyed by email reminders to review student CAPs followed by email reminders being disabled on the condition that CAPs be reviewed, but then CAPs weren't being reviewed so reminders were turned back on leading to annoyance so it's a whole thing.
- The automated CAP distribution system is now essentially complete. There were originally plans for stages 3 and 4 (I don't know what these would have involved) that have now been scrapped

[Document title]

due to funding.

- Vaping of medicinal cannabis products on-campus is an issue being pursued by AAS due to increasing numbers of students and staff being prescribed such products for a variety of conditions. Debbie and I both share the view that it is not acceptable for students that require medical cannabis to be forced to leave campus to take their medicine, particularly when considering exam restrictions and the likely use-cases for medicinal cannabis. To limit the use of any legally-prescribed medication on-campus is discriminatory, regardless of the method of administration. I have been told that Curtins Legal team is working on reviewing the bylaws and finding acceptable work-arounds that prioritise equitable access while adhering to the spirit of campus anti-smoking bylaws.
- The Accessibility Audit of all general teaching spaces has been completed and we expect a report from the auditors on or around the 10th of July.

Other Stuff Happening

- I was on leave from May 29th to June 16th for the exam period, hence this report covering both June and July.
- ADHD Senate Inquiry submissions have been published and give consistent and comprehensive feedback on the shortfalls of ADHD diagnosis, treatment, and care in Australia. I am hopeful that these submissions will be used appropriately to improve the lives and experiences of people with ADHD.

Ongoing Projects

- ~~Students/Staff with Disability Procedures Review~~
 - ~~CAP De-Medicalisation~~
- ACROD Parking Review
- ~~Accessibility Audit~~
- Chemistry Laboratory Accessibility
 - ~~B316 Consultation~~
- CSMP/CSG Stability
- DIBC
- ~~NUS HyFlex Campaign~~
- ~~ADHD Senate Inquiry Submissions~~

Events

Guild O-Day – July 26th @ 10am to 2:30pm

AD x QD PowerPoint Party – 4th August @ 5pm to 8pm

Equity Festival - TBC

TL;DR – I enjoyed my leave and can now get started on semester 2 prep. Some good meetings with student assist and AccessAbility Services.

Glossary:

- **AAS:** AccessAbility Services – the university body that organises and coordinates CAPs
- **AC@C:** Accessibility Collective @ Curtin. This is the University body for staff with disabilities to find social and advocacy support.
- **CAP:** Curtin Access Plan. A personalised document entitling students to reasonable adjustments to their studies enabling equitable access to education for those with specific access requirements.
- **CMS DIB:** Curtin Medical School Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Working Party.
- **CoP:** Community of Practice
- **COMPAS-S:** Checking On Mental health and Providing Alternatives to Suicide - for Students
- **CSG:** Curtin Social Group – A social group run during common free time on Wednesdays for Autistic and ADHD students who are involved in the CSMP.
- **CSMP:** Curtin Specialist Mentoring Program. This program allows Autistic students to engage in a weekly social group (CSG), as well as access to an Honours or Postgraduate Psychology student as a mentor. The mentor is there to help their Autistic mentee to navigate University and develop skills in self-advocacy, confidence, and other areas.
- **DIBC:** Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Committee
- **DVCA:** Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic.
- **DTS:** Curtin University Digital and Technology Solutions.
- **GPG:** Gender Pay Gap
- **LAWG:** Laboratory Accessibility Working Group
- **NUS:** National Union of Students
- **UDWG:** Universal Design Working Group. The University committee tasked with improving disability access across Curtin.
- **VP-E:** Vice President – Education

Higher Education Report Representation Board Meeting #8

Poll backs cap on university chiefs' pay at PM level

Four out of five people back a salary cap for university vice-chancellors to limit their remuneration to the \$560,000 earned annually by the prime minister, according to a new public opinion survey by the Australia Institute.

The survey, published a week before the Albanese government releases a major review of universities, also finds that five in six Australians are “concerned” that universities “prioritise profit over education”, with half “very concerned” by this issue.

In a briefing paper based on the survey, the Australia Institute's Centre for Future Work blames governments for a steady reduction in public funding of universities that drove them to rely more on international student fees and investment revenue.

Universities' public funding is down from 0.9 per cent of GDP in 1995 to 0.6 per cent in 2021, the paper said, which amounts to \$6.5n in funding foregone in 2021.

Since 1995, private sources of funding tapped by universities nearly doubled from 22 per cent of revenue to a high of 43 per cent in 2019, driven by the explosion in international student numbers.

Tuition fees – of international and domestic students – make up 51 per cent of total funding for universities in Australia, compared with the OECD average of 22 per cent, the paper says, citing an OECD report.

It said universities were now acting like businesses instead of public institutions and their governing councils “which now consist largely of members appointed from corporate backgrounds” had set vice-chancellors' remuneration by corporate norms.

In most universities, the vice-chancellor's salary package is close to, or exceeds \$1m a year, which “constitutes a fundamental departure from the way other public institutions approach remuneration,” the paper said. “The average vice-chancellor salary is almost twice that of the prime minister of Australia – arguably the most important job in the country.”

The survey of 1002 people in March this year found 79 per cent of them supported capping vice-chancellors' salaries at what the prime minister was paid.

The survey found 79 per cent of Labor voters and 70 per cent of Liberals were “concerned” or “very concerned” by a 20 per cent fall in government funding per student (after inflation) in the past decade.

It also found 77 per cent of Labor voters and 68 per cent of Liberals were “concerned” or “very concerned” about fee levels for Australian students.

The paper – titled Public Attitudes on Issues in Higher Education and written by Eliza Littleton from the Centre for Future Work – said the business-based approach to managing universities had affected students and university staff by “turning degrees into commodities, students into customers, and workers into a target for cost-cutting”.

It called on the Albanese government to use the University Accord review, whose interim report is due next Wednesday, to restore “adequate funding”, improve university governance and “ensure education is treated again as a public service and a human right rather than a traded commodity”.

National Tertiary Education Union national president Alison Barnes said there was “clearly palpable concern for universities across the community ... whether it's funding cuts, insecure work, student debt or increasing class sizes, it's patently clear ... there are high levels of concern,” she said.

Similar article

[Australian universities report finds quality of education eroded by 'long-term underfunding'](#)

QS says it sees no conflict of interest within its business

Leading university rankings company QS says there is no conflict of interest between its business as an international student recruiter and its rankings, which are closely followed by international students.

QS senior vice-president (institutional performance) Ben Sowter said the company's recent major changes to its global rankings methodology, which led to Australian universities soaring up the list and overtaking many prestigious world universities, were made independently from its international student recruitment business, which provides services to most Australian universities.

"The way in which we construct the rankings and govern the decisions that are made is all kept very separate from commercial considerations," Mr Sowter said.

[Australian universities' success](#) in the [2024 QS World University Rankings](#) is certain to boost demand from international students for Australian degrees, particularly in China where rankings are followed closely.

When the QS rankings were released two weeks ago, [Chinese social media exploded](#) with the news, particularly focusing on the three Australian universities that rose to the world's top 20 – the University of Melbourne, the University of Sydney and the University of NSW. A record nine Australian universities are now in the QS global top 100.

The rankings boost, and excitement it generated about Australia among international students, is a boon to the QS student recruitment arm, which is contracted by most Australian universities to help them develop leads in student source countries and convert them into enrolments.

QS boosted its presence in Australian international student recruitment when it bought Hobsons Solutions, a company with deep relationships with many universities, in 2017.

UK universities draw up guiding principles on generative AI

UK universities have drawn up a set of guiding principles to ensure that students and staff are AI literate, as the sector struggles to adapt teaching and assessment methods to deal with the growing use of generative artificial intelligence.

Vice-chancellors at the 24 Russell Group research-intensive universities have signed up to the code. They say this will help universities to capitalise on the opportunities of AI while simultaneously protecting academic rigour and integrity in higher education.

The new guidance says: "These policies make it clear to students and staff where the use of generative AI is inappropriate, and are intended to support them in making informed decisions and to empower them to use these tools appropriately and acknowledge their use where necessary."

Developed in partnership with experts in AI and education, the principles represent a first step in what promises to be a challenging period of change in higher education as the world is increasingly transformed by AI.

[The Guidelines have 5 principles:](#)

1. Universities will support students and staff to become AI-literate.
2. Staff should be equipped to support students to use generative AI tools effectively and appropriately in their learning experience.
3. Universities will adapt teaching and assessment to incorporate the ethical use of generative AI and support equal access.
4. Universities will ensure academic rigour and integrity is upheld.

Universities will work collaboratively to share best practice as the technology and its application in education evolves.

End Rape on Campus, Fair Agenda call for independent body to help prevent university sexual violence

An open letter is calling on the federal government to urgently intervene and address "university failures" to prevent and respond to sexual violence at campuses across the country.

Key points:

- End Rape on Campus said fewer than a third of Australia's 39 universities were clearly reporting sexual violence on campus
- Advocates and support services are calling on the Albanese government to intervene and establish an independent body to hold universities accountable
- Education Minister Jason Clare said "sustained effort" was needed to improve student safety on campus

End Rape on Campus, Fair Agenda and the National Union of Students — along with more than 40 groups and individuals — have called for an independent oversight body, led by experts in sexual violence, to provide universities with best practice guidance.

It also calls for a mechanism to hold universities accountable to encourage transparency and to implement sanctions when they fail to comply.

Universities given two years to overhaul teaching degrees after education ministers' meeting. **ABC**

Key points:

- Universities have been given two years to overhaul their education degrees
- Changes they must adopt include teaching classroom management, and effective ways to teach reading and writing
- Education ministers have agreed "in principle" with the changes in a bid to fix Australia's teacher shortage

A major review of teaching courses led by Education Department Secretary and Sydney University vice-chancellor Mark Scott has recommended sweeping changes to the way future teachers are trained.

A key change will be making universities teach "core content" such as classroom management and how to effectively teach reading and writing.

The four areas of 'core content' universities will have to teach:

- **The brain and learning:** content that provides teachers with an understanding of how the brain processes, stores and retrieves information
- **Effective pedagogical practices:** literacy and numeracy teaching strategies, as well as teaching in a way that supports how students' brains work
- **Classroom management:** ways to manage foster positive learning environments, such as establishing rules and routines and modelling desired behaviour
- **Responsive teaching:** content that ensures teachers teach in ways that are culturally and contextually appropriate and responsive to student needs

An historic deal between the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia is set to see the two merge to become one of the largest educators of tertiary students in the country. ABC

Key points:

- The institution will be named Adelaide University and is planned to start operating in January 2026
- It requires approval from SA's parliament, with no guarantees yet that the state's upper house will support the plan
- The SA government has agreed to spend nearly half a billion dollars to support the merger

The new institution will be named Adelaide University and is planned to start operating in January 2026, ending years of talks between the two groups.

But the agreement still requires approval from South Australia's parliament, with no guarantees yet that the state's upper house will support the plan.

Both universities have promised staff there will be no job losses as a result of the merger, until at least mid 2027.

The new Adelaide University will be the largest educator of domestic students in Australia.

Details are still being finalised, but the government and universities have announced the new institution would be named Adelaide University and be operational from January 2026.

It would initially be governed by a transition council of up to 14 members, with each university to nominate half the members.

The University of South Australia would be responsible for appointing the chancellor and, in the early stages, the leadership would be shared between two co-vice-chancellors.

University of South Australia and University of Adelaide reach agreement to merge

Mega South Australian university merger faces political probe. The Australian

The South Australian university merger is almost certain to come under scrutiny from a parliamentary inquiry that will demand more details on the business case for creating a mega-higher education institution in the state.

Opposition education spokesman John Gardner said there were a "large number of questions and concerns" about the merger of the University of Adelaide and the University of SA, to which the two institutions have agreed with strong backing from the state Labor government.

The merger can only go ahead if the SA parliament passes an act to establish the new Adelaide University, so it must win support in the upper house.

The government, and the universities want the legislation passed by the end of the year to allow them to open the merged university for business at the start of 2026.

The new Adelaide University will also need federal parliament to approve its ongoing funding, and it requires accreditation from the higher education regulator, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

Federal Education Minister Jason Clare has said he welcomes the South Australian university merger but has not promised any specific financial support for uniting the two establishments.

Boost to medical training places in rural areas

The federal government will boost medical training in rural areas by training more doctors on regional university campuses and improving the training facilities.

In an [announcement](#) on Tuesday the government said it would fund a permanent increase of 80 medical students being trained in regional centres. Education Minister Jason Clare said he looked forward to “the nation’s rural medical schools applying for these additional commonwealth-supported places”.

The government will provide \$114m for the new rural medical student places and up to \$82m to improve rural medical school infrastructure.

Student Experience Survey 2022

[https://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/student-experience-survey-\(ses\)](https://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/student-experience-survey-(ses))

Curtin University

Skills Development		Learner Engagement		Teaching Quality		Student Support		Learning Resources		Quality of entire educational experience	
'21	'22	'21	'22	'21	'22	'21	'22	'21	'22	'21	'22
78.9 (78.1, 79.7)	78.4 (77.6, 79.2)	50.9 (49.9, 51.8)	49.3 (48.4, 50.3)	77.9 (77.0, 78.6)	79.0 (78.2, 79.8)	69.5 (68.5, 70.5)	69.9 (68.8, 70.9)	74.6 (73.6, 75.5)	79.7 (78.7, 80.6)	73.3 (72.4, 74.1)	75.1 (74.2, 75.9)

Edith Cowan

87.1 (86.2, 87.9)	86.6 (85.9, 87.3)	58.2 (57.0, 59.3)	58.9 (57.9, 60.0)	86.0 (85.1, 86.8)	84.5 (83.7, 85.2)	80.2 (79.0, 81.3)	80.3 (79.2, 81.2)	89.0 (88.2, 89.9)	88.4 (87.5, 89.1)	83.9 (83.0, 84.7)	81.8 (81.0, 82.6)
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UWA

75.9 (74.6, 77.0)	76.4 (75.5, 77.3)	56.4 (55.0, 57.8)	55.2 (54.2, 56.2)	80.1 (78.9, 81.1)	83.1 (82.3, 83.9)	73.2 (71.8, 74.6)	74.4 (73.3, 75.5)	83.6 (82.5, 84.6)	87.0 (86.2, 87.7)	72.9 (71.7, 74.1)	77.8 (76.9, 78.6)
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Murdoch

78.9 (77.6, 80.1)	80.5 (79.1, 81.8)	47.4 (45.9, 48.9)	49.4 (47.7, 51.0)	77.7 (76.4, 78.9)	80.6 (79.3, 81.9)	71.8 (70.2, 73.2)	73.7 (72.0, 75.3)	82.0 (80.7, 83.2)	84.5 (83.2, 85.7)	70.5 (69.2, 71.9)	75.1 (73.7, 76.5)
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There was a sharp reduction in students’ ratings of their educational experience in 2020. Ratings improved somewhat in 2021 and again in 2022, as institutions and students have adapted to changing teaching and learning environments. However, it is not a full recovery to the 78 per cent to 80 per cent range observed prior to 2020.

While Learner Engagement had the largest increase in ratings in 2022, it is still around 5 percentage points below the levels seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, Student Support is the only focus area to have seen ratings fall for the past two years. Student Support was the one focus area where ratings amongst all study levels and stages - with the exception of undergraduate later years which has retained the same percentage positive rating between 2020-2022 - were lower than 2020. Whilst scores only fluctuated by one or two percentage points, this suggests that perceptions of support are an important issue for students across all levels and stages of study.

When comparing overall undergraduate and postgraduate coursework ratings in 2022, there was generally little variation. The main area of differentiation was in ratings of Learner Engagement, with undergraduate students rating this more than 6 percentage points higher than postgraduate coursework students.

International student ratings improved markedly when compared to ratings prior to 2020 in the areas of Skills Development, Learner Engagement, Teaching Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources

Australian grads abroad owe \$1b in HECS-HELP debt and indexation will add \$70m, ATO data shows. ABC. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-07-03/qld-hecs-help-ex-pats-indexation-university-debt/102427526>

Australian graduates overseas owe just over \$1 billion in HECS-HELP loans, according to analysis of Australian Tax Office (ATO) data.

They make up about 1.3 per cent of all HECS debtors, and about the same proportion of the country's [\\$74 billion total HECS debt](#).

[A historically high 7.1 per cent indexation](#) will add another \$70 million to what's owed by grads overseas, according to Andrew Norton, professor of higher education at the Australian National University, who analysed the figures.

[In 2021-22, there were 40,200 overseas grads.](#)

On average, they owed \$25,776 — about \$1,000 more than the overall average.

Going overseas used to be a reprieve from compulsory repayments, but that loophole closed in 2016-17 when the overseas debt recovery bill came into effect.

Two years earlier, when the legislation was passed, then-education minister Simon Birmingham [estimated \\$30 million was lost each year](#) to graduates leaving Australia.

Since 2017, about \$300 million was recovered from graduates' overseas income.

Mr Norton said the figures show the policy is "having some positive effects" with better results than similar systems in the UK, and in New Zealand — [where students have been detained at the airport for returning home after defaulting on their loan](#).

But the number of HECS debtors who left Australia before the law change is unclear.

Three Australian universities rank in the world's top 20. The Australian

For the first time, Australian universities are ranked alongside the very best in the world, with three – Melbourne, Sydney and UNSW – in the top 20 of the new list from global rankings group QS.

The [QS 2024 World University Rankings](#) also name nine Australian universities in the global top 100 (up from seven last year).

The two newcomers – the University of Adelaide (89) and UTS (90) – joined Melbourne (14), UNSW (equal 19), Sydney (equal 19), ANU (equal 34), Monash (42), Queensland (43) and Western Australia (72) in the top 100.

Nearly all Australian universities rose in the 2024 QS rankings following a methodology change which the company said was the most significant since its rankings began 20 years ago.

Notable improvers included the University of Melbourne (which moved up 19 places to 14th and is now ranked ahead of Caltech, Yale and Princeton), and UTS (which jumped 47 places).

Curtin Uni student union objects to proposal to sell alcohol on campus despite running tavern

[Bethany Hiatt](#)The West Australian

The [student](#) union at Curtin University is objecting to a proposal to sell takeaway booze on campus because of the "huge risk" it poses to students' health and safety — despite running its own pub.

An IGA store based near student housing in the university's Exchange precinct has applied for a liquor licence to open a bottle shop — with Curtin's backing — prompting the Student Guild to lodge a formal objection.

Guild president Dylan Botica said students had questioned why a university would want a commercial liquor store to open on campus.

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Guild president Dylan Botica said students had questioned why a university would want a commercial liquor store to open on campus.

"Curtin University would have to be one of the only campuses that is interested in selling large quantity takeaway alcohol to students, especially when it's located directly adjoining student residences," he said.

"This obviously is a huge risk to the safety of students and alcohol abuse or misuse is a key problem in the student cohort."

Even though the Guild runs a tavern on campus, Mr Botica argued it was lower risk because the tavern's opening hours were restricted and service of alcohol was controlled.

He denied there were any concerns about competition as the tavern was not a "for-profit venture".

Mr Botica said the bottle shop would be at the base of high-rise student apartments.

"It would be no walk, you'd just go down the lift and you'd be in a liquor store," he said.

"When we went out and spoke to the students that live in student housing, they absolutely didn't want a liquor store on campus, especially because where it's proposed to be built is actually in the same building as most student housing rooms."

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"When we went out and spoke to the students that live in student housing, they absolutely didn't want a liquor store on campus, especially because where it's proposed to be built is actually in the same building as most student housing rooms."

Mr Botica said many residents — particularly women — were concerned the easy access to alcohol could fuel an increase in sexual harassment and assaults.

International students who came from non-drinking cultures were also worried about the impact it would have.

A Curtin spokesperson said the university supported the application by Tucker Fresh IGA to provide a small, customised liquor store without street frontage at Curtin's Exchange precinct.

"The university's Bentley campus already has venues which sell liquor, including the Guild-run tavern," the spokesperson said.

"The inclusion of a responsibly-managed, modest liquor outlet would complement our varied restaurants and cafes at Exchange and enhance our vision to create a new and vibrant destination for Curtin University and the broader community."

Cancer Council WA Alcohol Program Manager Julia Stafford said allowing a bottle shop on campus appeared to contradict Curtin's important roles in training health professionals and producing research on reducing alcohol-related harm.

Cancer Council, along with two other public health associations, has also lodged a formal objection to the liquor outlet.

They argued the increase in availability of cheap, packaged alcohol would put young university students — already exposed to hazardous drinking — at increased risk of harm.

"Research shows that students 18 to 24 years of age are more likely than the general population to experience a range of alcohol related harms ... like aggressive behaviour, health and emotional impacts and even sexual harm," Ms Stafford said.

Report from the National Union of Students' Education Convention 2023

Dylan Botica

I am pleased to report back from the National Union of Students' (NUS) Education Convention (EdCon) 2023 that recently took place in Brisbane. The conference was themed 'Welfare not Warfare', reflecting the majority view that funds should be reallocated from the controversial AUKUS nuclear submarine deal to tackle pressing issues like cost-of-living crises and tertiary education costs.

There were, however, several disagreements and intense debates, primarily over the AUKUS deal and the University Accords. Socialist Alternative and National Labor Students were vehemently opposed to the AUKUS deal, asserting that it could lead to unprecedented nuclear war. Conversely, Student Unity stressed the importance of the NUS focusing more on tertiary students' concerns rather than international security pacts. The discord resulted in an informal vote and a walkout by Student Unity members.

The conference also saw discussions on important topics such as the Voice to Parliament, housing crisis, and disability rights within the student union movement. It was acknowledged that there is underrepresentation of "smaller states" in NUS discussions, an issue that needs addressing. In addition, the damaging effects of unregulated short-term rentals on young people and the need for more support for disability causes within student unions were highlighted.

One common point of agreement was support for the Yes vote on the Voice to Parliament. Despite SAlt's argument that this was merely symbolic and did not address the substantial challenges faced by Indigenous people, the consensus was that supporting this vote is a step in the right direction.

The final days of EdCon 2023 comprised plenary sessions, workshops, and heated debates that returned to the 'Welfare not Warfare' theme. Prominent sessions included 'Change the Age', which strategized implementation of the campaign on university campuses, and 'Merger Madness! Guilds gone wild', focusing on student guild reactions to potential university mergers. Notably, SAlt received repeated criticism for disrupting discussions.

The 'Get a Room' campaign plenary on affordable student housing incited a lively discussion, with Greens' member for Griffith, Max Chandler-Mather, criticizing Labor's inaction on the housing crisis. Meanwhile, the workshop 'A Dash of Hope: Cooking Up Strategies to Combat Student Hunger' addressed the pressing issue of increased student hunger, despite factional shouting.

The last day included an anti-AUKUS protest, a discussion on the future of NUS, and a final plenary on LGBTI+ issues, particularly concerning the rise of far-right groups and violence towards LGBTI+ individuals. A motion to condemn an amendment to the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act was proposed, with Unity abstaining from the vote. While these motions aren't real and purely symbolic, it was interesting to see where people stood.

Finally, there were several instances of misbehaviour by attendees, leading to a formal complaint to the University of Queensland. This behaviour is regrettable and emphasizes the need for respectful discourse in future conventions. These poor behaviours are from the usual suspects.

In summary, EdCon 2023 was a critical platform for debate and discussion on key issues affecting students. Despite the contentious debates and disruptions, the conference succeeded in addressing numerous issues and laying the groundwork for future action.

Regards,

Dylan Botica

2023 NUS Education Conference

Veronika Gobba

The Plenaries and Workshops covered topics from simple ideas such as getting free and accessible period products on campuses to the role of students and student unions in movements against war. It is fantastic to see that the NUS and student unions across Australia are addressing issues on all different levels and are actively getting involved in advocacy on multiple fronts.

NUS attendees were largely made up of individuals from factions. It was disappointing to see the two factions with the most attendees at this conference, Socialist Alternative and Student Unity, fail to try to have members spread out and attend all the workshops at the conference. It also seemed members of Student Unity intentionally did not attend the times allocated for states to break out and organise.

Hearing from representatives from smaller states, regional areas, and vocational education was a highlight. A workshop on representation in the regions highlighted inequitable challenges many students face, such as international students face more discrimination and less community connection in regional universities, as well; mechanisms such as self-certification are vital for regional students where access to GPs is so limited. When self-certification is under review at Curtin, takeaways from other universities, especially regional universities about self-certification wins and losses seem very valuable as we go forward with the debate around self-certifications at Curtin. It is clear that self-certification is a great and necessary system that should stay, but it will be a struggle for many student unions across Australia to preserve it.

I presented a workshop with the Murdoch Guild President Heidee Austic about what happened around the WA Gov Universities review. Our presentation covered how we learned about the review, how we spread information and organised with multiple Guilds, what approaches we took and the outcomes so far.

Some of the notable topics that were explored at the conference were:

Attacks on the Arts

Another highlight at this conference was the workshop simply titled 'Why the Liberals Hate the Arts'; there was a great analysis of the link between the LNP and the monopolistic media conglomerates such as Murdoch-owned media, and how they have worked to reduce the diversity of Australian media while making things harder and more expensive for Arts students. Student representatives from other universities have made progress in keeping Murdoch-owned media off their campus monitors. Discussions around the NUS' involvement with the Universities Accords has indicated that the awful Job-Ready Graduates package will likely be discontinued, a win for those, especially Arts students who have been forced to pay more for their degrees. There was also brief discussion on the role of student unions in campaigning against major media conglomerates and the problematic journalism that is often produced by this media. It was a healthy reminder of the importance of keeping our student publications well-resourced and functioning.

Safe Spaces

Similar to the flavour of the arguments about autonomous organising, there were a majority of students who supported safe spaces and autonomous rooms on campuses (such as our equity rooms in the Guild equity space), however, there are voices that argue against these spaces, saying that these spaces can be degrading- and are not interested in discussions about how to make these spaces as nurturing and effective as possible. It is disheartening to know that not only do we have to protect the concept of safe spaces from largely ultra-conservatives but also from some of the radical left.

Disability & Education

Jordy Duffey from UQ held a great workshop about what the NUS Disabilities office has been doing this year, their campaign for hybrid, Hyflex learning options, why disabled pride is so important for the movement and a dive into the inequity married disabled people face when it comes to financial disability support.

Voice to Parliament

The Proposal of a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian constitution and the calls from the Uluru Statement from the Heart has support of the NUS since National Conference. However, there is contention within the NUS around how that 'Yes' vote should be campaigned for. To boil it down, there are those who believe in more mainstream, positive messaging when it comes to the Voice to parliament campaign, and those who believe that the campaigning should focus more on calling out the conservative/racist sides of the 'No' movement. In discussions with other representatives from different student unions, there is complexity in balancing a terrain of discourse which is safe, respectful, and especially not stressful for First Nations peoples whose futures are being debated all over Australia, and also cutting through misinformation and presenting simple information that combats the confusion caused by the disinformation being spread about the Voice referendum.

AUKUS

Despite the NUS agreeing on a stance against the AUKUS agreement in December's National Conference, there are still a portion of voices in the NUS who sadly support AUKUS. The Curtin Student Guild has a proud history of being a part of anti-war movements, hiding and supporting student draft dodgers during the time of the Vietnam war, and it was brilliant to have one of the AUKUS plenaries feature a speaker who was a Vietnam War draft dodger, and anti-war advocate talk about the risk Australia's increasing militarism, offensive submarine deal and AUKUS agreement has on driving us closer to war. At a time when a government that committed to signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is in power- this is the time for student movements to start building education campaigns against militarism, war and nuclear proliferation. This plenary was a important in highlighting the complexity of this issue and the work that will need to be done to create education campaigns in our communities and to the public, as well as building coalitions against foreign policy decisions that are in the interests of the elite.

On the last day of conference, the Education officer had organised for conference attendees to attend a 'Welfare not Warfare' protest in light of discussions. I thought this was a great way to utilise having lots of students already all in one place. It was a shortfall, however, that

the protest was not advertised to wider networks and the public, so the attendance could have been larger.

International Student welfare

International student representatives delivered workshops about the issues faced by international students on their campuses and ways their student unions helped mitigate those issues, including expanding student-led welfare and support services for them. It is clear that Universities and the Government are not interested in supporting International Students once they have secured their money, and so it is so important that student unions provide and advocate for that support, as well, more work needs to be done to highlight the value of international students beyond the revenue they bring in for Universities.

LGBTQIA+ Rights

Most student unions have kept combatting deadnaming on campuses as a focus in their Queer departments and endearingly, much discourse on LGBTQIA+ issues centred around intersectionality. Religious discrimination bills were a prioritised topic from one of the NUS Queer Officers', the arguments against these bills mainly revolve around the ideas that the bills are largely called for and proposed to appease a minority of religious groups, with very little diversity, who largely feel threatened by the progress made towards LGBTQIA+ freedom.

The Rental/housing crisis

A plenary held by the NUS Education Officer featured insights into the NUS's 'Get a Room' campaign and a presentation by the Greens MP Max Chandler-Mather. Max presented a well-rounded overview of Australia's terrible housing situation and how it became this way. This sparked debate over the misconception of 'supply issues' and the contention of Labor's housing bill. This plenary highlighted the importance of having multiple groups including student unions campaigning for better policies for housing and renting. As such, the Curtin Student Guild has teamed up with Make Renting Fair WA to work on this campaign within WA.

For more insights into NUS EdCon 2023, I recommend reading the content posted by @Grok_con on Twitter during the conference.

Athina Hilman

NUS Education Conference report 2023

I was excited to attend my first NUS Education conference. I've never attended an education conference before, so I was interested to learn. I was particularly excited to see the workshops the West Australian students facilitated, as I knew they had worked hard on it. The first day opened with regular housekeeping duties, followed by the Higher Education Accords plenary.

The Higher Education Accords are about building a long-term plan for Australia's higher education system. It was a great plenary session discussing how to create a better university landscape. Certain students were extremely passionate about rejecting the accords, and they believed engaging in the accords was akin to getting into bed with the enemy. I understand their thought process, and I admire their tenacity. However, cooperation is needed to have our feedback taken seriously by the federal government. This was a chance for students to have a say in how the university landscape should be shaped.

The workshop I attended next was *The University Accords: What's Next*. The workshop mainly consisted of people discussing how involved the NUS was in the accords and what they plan to do once the process is completed. NUS President Bailey Riley hoped the outcome would be positive, but if not, they would take the protest to the streets. This is a good plan of attack because the NUS should be engaging in the accords process. As the peak body for university students, NUS is here for them; therefore, it should recognise the accords process.

In defence of HECS : Democratisation and Egalitarianism in Higher Education was not what it was advertised to be. The conversation quickly became an argument over Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF). Certain student political groups, such as Socialist Alternative, were against the current form of SSAF, but others, such as Student Unity, say it's currently the best they have in funding student unions. A certain student affiliated with National Labor Students (NLS) said they need to engage with SSAF to deliver to students. He said, "We are delivering tangible services to students, we are doing what matters". I agree with the notion of SSAF being a flawed system, and I agree with certain StuPol parties who believe all SSAF funding should go straight to the union/guilds. It was interesting hearing people's perspectives.

The *Chat GPT and AI* workshop discussed how AI will be used for our education. Some students said it's important to understand how AI will be integrated into the university, especially as students say, "We're paying a shit ton of money for university." SAIt student members bring up potential scenarios about AI being used for warfare, which I didn't think about. The next workshop was regarding Disability and Education and how it's a human rights reform. I think disability is a topic that the NUS can improve on, and I noticed the conference was not accessible at all. There was no hybrid option to attend online, and all the venues booked were not wheelchair accessible. There was significant distance to get from different workshops to the plenary sessions. I learnt from the workshop that 3 out of 4 autistic students do not disclose their autism diagnosis to the university, which I think is extremely sad and indicative of how ableist university conferences can be.

Several students from different parties argued at the *Marxist Critique of Autonomous Caucus*. A member of SAIt was arguing against autonomous caucuses, such as only having LGBTQI+ people speak on LGBTQI+ issues. They said recruitment from equity groups doesn't always work and brought Kamala Harris as an example of a POC woman who doesn't do enough for BIPOC rights. A SAIt member said, "Just because they (autonomous

caucuses) have lived in experience, doesn't mean they are equipped to talk about it". This was an absolute hot take, and I think it's such a ludicrous statement. As a Muslim BIPOC woman, I don't appreciate people who know nothing about the challenges in my life to speak on my behalf or for my sisters. I find that absolutely patronising and will continually call out such statements.

The AUKUS plenary was an interesting debate. It was good to hear about potential issues caused by AUKUS, such as the leftover nuclear waste on indigenous land. It's something I hadn't considered. Most students were anti-AUKUS, and the end of the day ended with a non-binding motion for the NUS to support the Anti-AUKUS movement.

The second day started swiftly, a *Voice to Parliament* plenary followed by the *Voice workshop*. A few SAIt members were encroaching on NLS seats to discuss the Voice. NUS President Bailey Riley said mobilising students on the ground is important, especially to educate people on the Voice. Guleid Abdullahi, a student Unity member, said not everyone who votes no on the Voice is a racist, but every racist will vote no. That stayed with me because it's so vital that education regarding the Voice is spread far and wide. It was great to hear what other students were doing to spread the "yes" vote on their campus.

Attending the Action for Housing workshop was eye-opening. I was unaware of HAF (Housing Affordability Fund) and its problems. It's great to hear the campaigns on housing done on the east coast. *Disability Politics* workshop was impressive, as they encouraged student unions to engage with disability movements through events, advocacy and engagement. A student asked how they can be part of campus life without compromising their health, especially when they have difficulty with loud noises or cannot come to campus. I think this was good to hear about how we can be better allies to our students with a disability. A few SAIt people pushed for a lot more activism against disability, which was not well received by disabled students. A few disabled students said some are just trying to survive, and being asked to fight against the NDIS was insulting.

Safe Space workshop was good, as we got to see what other campuses are doing to ensure students had a safe space to access. *Racist Divide and Rule* workshop was essential regarding housing and refugees, but it got too heated for anyone to take anything meaningful from this. The last plenary, *Student Poverty in Crisis*, was eye-opening. As a mature-aged student, I am thankful to have the expendable income to survive while I study. Over 38% of students said they had issues with housing stability, which has affected their studies. Dylan also mentioned that housing reforms are usually done at a state level, which I just learned. I'm glad I attended EdCon, as I learned a lot.

The third day started with an *Anti-War* plenary with Dr Rowan Cahill as a guest speaker. He is a historian and journalist drafted into the Vietnam War. It was good to hear the stories of his time as a student, and it was good to hear him say that student media was an important vehicle to drive the anti-conscription movement. *Why is Labor addicted to Gas!* discussed how fossil fuels destroy the earth and how it's imperative to phase them out immediately. Seeing our very own Jasmyne call our natural Gas as greenwashing was inspiring, particularly saying, "We know its bullshit" regarding Labor's high reliance on fossil fuel companies. *Guild's Gone Wild* was a special workshop the Curtin Uni Guild delivered in collaboration with Murdoch Uni. The workshop discussed how Curtin Guild was able to undermine the WA review release with a press release of their own. I was proud of the work Veronika put into the slides as well as the input from Dylan to make the workshop engaging.

Fight for minimum SSAF had an intense debate, similar to the other SSAF Workshop. *The Vocational Education* workshop was illuminating. I was unaware of the TAFE structure and

the stigma many students faced attending TAFE. I was proud of Salwa for delivering the workshop and how she handled herself when several students from opposing parties heckled her. The day ended with the International Student plenary. It was good to hear about issues plaguing international students. I was unaware that international students use agents' services, who can sometimes take advantage of them. It was a good plenary to end on for the second day.

I attended many other workshops on the last day, but it became clear that many people used the conference to argue and attack people with different ideologies. It was strange to me as most students were fighting for similar causes. What made me infuriated was the arguments about the best course of action. As someone not affiliated with any major or independent parties, it was disheartening to see people unable to put aside their egos to better the student experience. Overall, I enjoyed my learnings at Ed Con, but some fights by students are better left back home.