

# Urgency Motions

## 4.1 NUS Stands against apathy and complacency in its own office.

**Preamble:**

For far too long the NUS has seen officers continue to not be active in their roles and actively avoid involvement in national campaigns, this should not be tolerated.

**Platform:**

The NUS condemns its own National Officers for being inactive in the student union movement, their apathy towards student issues and reluctance to be involved in national campaigns.

**Mover:** Chris Hall

**Seconder:** Bridge Truell

## 4.2A

Add a dot point 3 to platform:

"NUS acknowledges that the onus is on campus to raise these points with the NUS at roundtables or via requesting a meeting, as is the norm in union/member engagement"

**Mover:** Zoe Ranganathan

**Seconder:** Georgie Beatty

## 4.2 The National Union of Students

**Preamble:**

NUS does amazing work in activism. However the reach of this can be limited. In order to reach the goal of affiliating as many student unions as possible there must be benefits for those unions in places that aren't central to most of the activism and protest. All student unions that are a part of NUS should receive benefits from affiliating with the university. A good example of how this benefit can be shared is regional distance student unions still being involved throughout the year and NUS supporting the unions in their endeavours with their own universities. For example NUS could hold significant weight by signing onto prevalent motions a student union may present to their universities in hopes of improving students rights.

**Platform:**

1. NUS will endeavour to ensure all unions that are affiliated with the NUS receive benefit from being involved. This includes doing a variety of online events and inviting the unions that aren't regionally close to worthwhile events throughout the year.
2. NUS will actively engage and support the unions that are affiliated in their individual endeavours to improve students rights as long as it aligns with the values and policies of NUS.

**Mover:** Natalie Tew

**Seconder:** Zoe Davidson

#### 4.3A

Amendment: remove "recognises all Vice Chancellors as public enemies to higher education and"

**Mover:** Emily Sagolj

**Seconder:** Param Mahal

#### 4.3 Vice Chancellors and University Management are an Enemy of Higher Education.

##### **Preamble:**

Leaders of universities continue to be hellbent on cutting staff, courses and resources to students. We need the divide of staff and students to end, and begin to point the fingers at neo-liberal university management, who continue to develop universities as businesses and degree factories, at the immediate sake of academic freedom and the quality of education.

##### **Platform:**

The NUS recognises all Vice Chancellors as public enemies to higher education and acknowledges that cuts to universities stem from top down power structures that are perpetuated by university management.

**Mover:** Chris Hall

**Seconder:** Bridge Truell

#### 4.4 TRANS Workers Rights

##### **Preamble:**

1. While many trans workers may not choose to undertake medical transition, those who do face incredible costs that can easily reach the tens of thousands of dollars due to the lack of Medicare.
2. These surgeries also have an extensive recovery time often takes a minimum of six weeks. No leave provision in the country is sufficient to cover this recovery time, and as a result many trans people who choose surgeries need to make a choice between workforce participation and affirming their gender.
3. These minimal leave and healthcare provisions further entrench poverty within an already marginalised minority.

##### **Action:**

1. The NUS believes that trans rights are worker rights, and workers should not carry the costs for transition. Workers have the right to transition and should be entitled to universal health care and comprehensive leave.
2. The NUS believes that transition is not a one-off experience, is not confined to the gender binary, nor is it simply about surgery. It is often a social and ongoing process.
3. The NUS supports the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) claim across the higher education sector for 6 weeks transition leave per annum and believes this should be standard across all industries.

4. The NUS supports the inclusion of affirmation surgeries and processes as processes covered in full by Medicare.

**Mover:** Chris Hall

**Seconder:** Bridge Truell

#### 4.5 Stop the Religious Discrimination Bill

##### **Preamble**

After Attorney General Michaelia Cash initially presented the Liberal Party's Religious Discrimination Bill three years ago, it underwent debate and revision after facing significant backlash from a wide variety of religious groups (including LGBTQIA+ people of faith), health providers, educators, and LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups. However, the most recent version of the Religious Discrimination Bill (2021) and associated legislation (Religious Discrimination (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2021 and the Human Rights Legislation Amendment Bill 2021) were brought back to Parliament in November 2021 after being prioritised by Prime Minister Scott Morrison and pushed through in the last parliamentary sitting of the year. In its current state, would seek to (among other things):

- override existing discrimination protections for marginalised groups (including women, disabled people, LGBTQIA+ people and people with different or no religious beliefs).
- allow health professionals to refuse access to services such as gender affirming care or contraceptive & reproductive care (including abortion) on the basis of their religious beliefs.
- make it harder for employers, educators, and organisations to foster inclusive practices and protect their employees, students, customers and clients from discrimination.
- increase protections for religious organisations and schools to dismiss and discriminate against LGBTQIA+ staff, students, and clients.

##### **Platform**

The NUS rejects the weaponisation of religious freedoms as a thinly veiled attempt to further protect the right to discriminate against the LGBTQIA+ community.

The NUS condemns the Morrison Government's prioritisation of the right to discriminate against the LGBTQIA+ community over the myriad other issues that could've been pushed through to the final parliamentary sitting of 2021.

The NUS calls upon the Labor party to oppose this blatantly queerphobic Liberal-backed Bill and stand with the LGBTQIA+ community rather than throwing us under the bus in favour of election clout.

The NUS supports the fight for greater protections from religious discrimination for people of faith (particularly those who do still face genuine discrimination within Australia) but do not believe that religious freedom should include a legislated right to discriminate against other marginalised groups.

**Mover:** Chris Hall

**Seconder:** Bridge Truell

#### 4.6A

Remove 'and ALP' from point 3

**Mover:** Emily Sagolj

**Seconded:** Param Mahal

#### 4.6 Stop One Nation's Transphobic Education Bill

##### **Preamble**

In September 2021, the Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020 (initially presented to the New South Wales Legislative Council by One Nation's Mark Latham in August 2020) was referred for a farcical inquiry to be conducted by Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education, chaired by Latham himself. The inquiry that followed was (perhaps unsurprisingly) ineffective in driving any meaningful changes to the Bill's content and only served to reignite hate against LGBTQIA+ (particularly trans & gender diverse [TGD]) young people and inspire a series of further recommendations from the Committee that somehow only made the initial areas of concern more concerning. The report produced by the Committee as a result of the review still asserted: a blatant attack on the authority and expertise of our educators to do their jobs and educate, a harmful misunderstanding of 'gender fluidity' as a concept and disrespected both genderfluid individuals and the rest of the TGD community by misrepresenting their terminology, a writing off of movements such as Black Lives Matter and discussions of LGBTQIA+ acceptance as "political ideology" that allegedly has no place in the classroom, and a desire to remove the already minimal opportunities schools have to affirm TGD students who aren't being affirmed in their home environments. At this stage, it doesn't appear that the results of this inquiry have gone anywhere and it's difficult to find further information about the Bill's progress, but it's vital that the NUS and other representative organisations working within the LGBTQIA+ space stay vigilant and act on further information as required.

##### **Platform**

1. The NUS opposes the Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020 and asserts that all students deserve an inclusive, unbiased, and comprehensive education without interference from conservative political groups and lobbyists.
2. The NUS will continue to monitor the situation in NSW and around the country as anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric appears to be at an all-time high and legislative changes such as this are likely to continue resurfacing.
3. The NUS condemns Mark Latham, One Nation and the National, Liberal, and ALP members of Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education who oversaw this blatantly flawed inquiry and signed off on a report that would continue to push a dangerous queerphobic agenda.

**Mover:** Chris Hall

**Seconded:** Bridge Truell

#### 4.7 Accessibility of NUS Events

**Preamble:**

The current NUS practice and policy does not allow for the facilitation of accessibility to the event of all delegates elected. The proposed subsection will ensure that all elected delegates will have the ability to access the National Conference. A review of a collection of universities' elections indicates that either the national conference commitment or the probable timing of the event is not outlined until officially elected. Due to this elected delegates must be notified of the conference within a reasonable time frame in order to attend. The first consideration is for delegates that may have part time jobs during their degree. Time off requests must be put in early for a lengthy time commitment such as the conference. The second consideration is the conference is commonly held in Melbourne (exceptions for COVID-19). Delegates may need early notice in order to financially be able to attend the event with considerations of air flights, missing a week of work and the implications of rent, bills ect. It is paramount that those elected to represent their university and its students at the national stage are given the due notice to fulfil this role.

**Platform:**

NUS Delegates will be given one month's notice minimum of the National Conference dates to facilitate the accessibility of the event with consideration to delegates of varying circumstances.

**Mover:** Natalie Tew

**Seconder:** Zoe Davidson

**4.8 Implement a third gender option for all forms of student identification.****Preamble:**

Universities in Australia have for years paid lip service to gender-diverse students across the country. Many universities have implemented language policy regarding transgender people but have failed to implement realistic changes to the system of bureaucracy that governs our institutions. Some universities have been successful in implementing third gender options for their student identification cards such as the University of Wollongong but this system is inaccessible and involves medical gatekeeping.

**Platform:**

Australian universities must respect students of all genders and commit to reforming identification systems to either not display gender or to give the option of an X marker.

**Action:**

The 2022 National Queer Officers will work towards lobbying universities and tertiary institutions across Australia to implement an X marker for their identification system or to instead remove gender as marker entirely.

**Moved:** Jye Langley

**Seconded:** Emily Boyce (National Queer/ LGBTI Officer)

#### 4.9 Reconnect with campus queer officers

**Preamble:**

Queer students across the country are in an especially rough position, even in the major cities we are experiencing a new threat with the rise of the right and the current religious exemptions bill before parliament. The ground level grassroots interactions that queer students have on their campuses with their own leadership structures is the essential part of how queer activism stays alive in this country. This is where the NUS' LGBTI Officers become essential, ideally they should act as intermediaries between the activism happening on the ground and the activism happening nationally. Where there is no true student representation for queer students the National LGBTI Officers should occupy this space and not only provide a point of contact but strive to establish something sustainable and autonomous on these campuses. National LGBTI Officers should assist campus Queer Officers by collaborating on national and campus queer policy/activism.

**Action:**

The NUS LGBTI Officers will contact campus Queer Officers across the nation to open dialogues on how the NUS can strengthen Queer Collectives.

The NUS LGBTI Officers will collaborate with campus Queer Officers on national LGBTI policy.

**Moved:** Jye Langley

**Seconded:** Emily Boyce (National Queer/ LGBTI Officer)

#### 4.10 Affirm the Darlington Statement

**Preamble:**

The Darlington Statement is a joint consensus made by a multitude of Australian and Aotearoan intersex rights advocates and organisations. It sets out the priorities of the global intersex human rights movement. Intersex people are under informed about their own bodies, told to keep their identities a secret and receive limited recognition in a range of social, cultural and medical contexts. For the longest time Australia has regularly demeaned and destroyed the bodies of intersex people from the moment they were born, only a small number of countries in the world have taken steps against the unnecessary mutilation of intersex children at birth to try and force them to conform with western views of sex. The NUS commits to supporting Intersex people at all hurdles faced by them in the fight for respect for their human rights. Specifically the NUS will work towards ending unnecessary surgeries on intersex infants.

**Action:**

The NUS will officially affirm the Darlington Statement.

The NUS National LGBTI Officers will work on assisting Intersex Human Rights Australia in the fight to prevent unnecessary operations on intersex infants.

**Moved:** Jye Langley

**Seconded:** Emily Boyce (National Queer/ LGBTI Officer)

#### 4.11A

Amend to remove first action point

**Mover:** Emily Sagolj

**Seconded:** Param Mahal

#### 4.11 **Condemning Vic Police Community Town Hall with LGBTQIA+ Community**

##### **Preamble:**

The Victoria Police have announced that they will be hosting a community town hall with LGBTQIA+ people in Victoria after the Victorian Pride Lobby found that a majority of LGBTQIA+ people do not trust police. This event seeks to provide the Victorian Police with education about how they can support Queer people. However the Victorian Police and other police forces around the country have never taken actions that protect the Queer community and as such this event is designed to make the police feel good about themselves rather than actually protect Queer people in the community.

[Report by the AAP to see more Context:

<https://www.westernmagazine.com.au/story/7513454/lgbt-survey-reveals-high-police-distrust/>]

##### **Actions:**

The NUS Condemns the Vic Policies Town Hall and the lack of transparency about the event and the lack of media coverage being allowed.

The NUS reaffirms that the police have had a harmful impact on the LGBTQIA+ community and that they present a threat to many in the community especially LGBTQIA+ People of Colour and First Nations people.

**Moved:** Emily Boyce (National Queer/LGBTI Officer)

**Seconded:** Jye Langley

#### 4.12 **Committing to ending discriminatory Affirmative Action**

##### **Preamble:**

The NUS has never endorsed a policy of affirmative action that respects trans and gender-diverse identities. For so long the complexities of queer identity have been simplified and forced to conform into a cisgendered understanding of gender, affirmative action should ensure that people who may miss out on an opportunity based on their gender instead don't. Under our current system only someone identifying strictly as a woman fulfills the requirements set out under affirmative action, this contradicts the NUS National Platform.

##### **Actions:**

The 2022 NUS LGBTI Officers commit to create and propose a new affirmative action system that respects and empowers trans and gender-diverse identities for the NUS to be discussed at the 2022 NUS National Conference.

**Moved:** Jye Langley

**Seconded:** Emily Boyce (National Queer/ LGBTI Officer)

#### 4.13 No genders for all who choose!

**Preamble:**

Compulsory gender markers on documentation of a pernicious form of oppression that primarily affects queer people. It should be enormously easier for trans and gender-diverse people to change their gender marker and there should be an option to remove it entirely. Gender as a marker on identification is outdated and outmoded. Needing to know an individual's gender or sex only occurs in specific settings such as between a patient and their doctor.

**Actions:**

The 2022 NUS National LGBTI Officers will coordinate a national campaign to demand that gender markers become optional on all documents and that the process of changing one's gender marker be made easier and not medically gate kept.

**Moved:** Jye Langley

**Seconded:** Emily Boyce (National Queer/ LGBTI Officer)

#### 4.14 Looking after Regional Students

**Preamble**

A Report from Reach Out Australia has found that From 2017–2021 the report found an increase in probable serious mental illness amongst rural young people from 20.9 per cent to 27 per cent. The data from 2021, in particular, showed that of all age groups included in the research, 18–19 year olds were the group most likely impacted by mental ill health.

**Platform**

NUS acknowledges the challenges that regional students face in terms of mental health difficulties and stands in solidarity with regional and rural students from all across Australia.

The NUS to focus on promoting mental health awareness in country areas this could be by working with headspace, black dog institute, beyond blue or royal far west. The NUS will also survey young people about mental health and present these ideas to institutions which promote mental health awareness.

**Action**

NUS will engage with mental agencies agencies such as headspace, black dog institute, royal far west or beyond blue, To formulate a survey and build a framework to assist rural students in regards to mental health

**Mover:** Jye Langley

**Secunder:** Jemima Tilly

#### 4.15 COVID Safe Return to campuses.

**Preamble:**

Disabled people are at greater risk of COVID-19 and the NUS must ensure that their experiences are centred when COVID-19 policies are being developed by Universities. The National Union must work to ensure disabled students are at the forefront of the thinking around returning to campus.

Online learning arrangements and flexible learning arrangements tend to work better for disabled students and ensuring that universities continue these services in an ongoing capacity is key to allowing disabled students to access universities in a way that best suits them. Online options can also be beneficial for the entire student body as many students must attend university around work and sometimes care arrangements.

**Action:**

NUS will work collaboratively with democratically elected student unions to ensure a safe return to campus post-COVID for all students with a disability.

NUS will actively campaign to ensure flexible learning arrangements will continue in University settings, including online learning spaces as well as ample on-campus opportunities.

**Moved:** Georgie McDaid

**Seconded:** Jemima Tilly

#### **4.16 Accepting the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability**

**Preamble:**

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability is due to be completed in 2023 however the NUS should work to ensure that it is implementing the progress reports when they are released. The NUS should also be campaigning to ensure that universities are enacting the commissions reports and ensuring that the policies and functioning of the NUS is responding to the commissions reports to ensure that no functioning of the Union is contributing to the violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability.

**Action:**

NUS will use the recommendations listed by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability to formulate a report on what this means for universities and young people.

NUS will work with elected Student Unions to implement these recommendations.

**Moved:** Georgie McDaid

**Seconded:** Jemima Tilly

#### **4.17 A Structural and Performance Audit**

**Preamble:**

The National Union has undergone a massive overhaul of its internal processes this year, and has experienced improved efficiency as a result of doing so. However, there are still ways that we can be better. In committing to improving as a union, the NUS should commit to undertaking a structural and performance audit, similar to the

one undertaken in 2014, to work towards a strategic plan that is developed in consultation with 2017-2021 NOBs to deliver to the National Conference in 2022. One of the biggest structural issues with the NUS, and one that was highlighted in the 2014 audit, was the lack of cohesion given the yearly turnover of NOBs. This strategic plan is essential for the performance of the union, and will build on the policy platform in order to help the union achieve better results (financial and otherwise) over what will be a very important next 5 years for the NUS.

**Moved:** Zoe

**Seconded:** GB

#### **4.18 It's been 17 years since a new EBA.**

**Preamble:**

The NUS EBA is severely outdated. It makes reference to bodies that no longer exist, and workplace entitlements that are sorely inadequate. In order to function as a legitimate workplace for our staff, and moreover, uphold our values as a union, we need a new EBA - especially considering our pursuit of hiring new staff at the end of 2021/start of 2022.

**Moved:** Georgie McDaid

**Seconded:** Jemima Tilly

#### **4.19 Barriers to international Student Representation**

**Action:**

NUS condemns discrimination against International students in regards to payment of honorarium for services rendered in elected positions.

Moved: Emily Sagolj (Deakin University) on behalf of Akshay Jose (RMIT University)

Seconded: Nidzam Shah Hussain (Swinburne University)

#### **4.20 Typos & Grammar Mistakes**

**Action**

The NUS empowers the General Secretary to make changes to the NUS Platform, in order to fix typos and grammar mistakes, if requested by delegates during the National Conference.

**Moved:** Param Mahal

**Seconded:** Emily Sagolj

#### **4.21 National Peak International Student Representation**

### **Preamble**

The National representation of International students is currently abysmal, the NUS has a single unaid International Officer who is quite short handed to deal with the entirety of international student issues. International students in Australia come from a wide range of countries and have a very diverse range of issues which cannot be accurately represented by a single individual who has to work part-time and study full-time, according to their visa requirements.

Other than the NUS, there are no other peak organisations for Internationals that are transparent and genuinely representative of their members. The Council of International Students Australia works more in tandem with the Federal Government than their own members.

International students need:

- an independent national organisation that works in conjunction with the NUS to fight for international student issues.
- a diverse team of international student leaders who are well resourced to provide representation.
- Campus international student organisations and international officers to be allowed to steer the direction of a national peak representative body for international students.

### **Action**

The NUS will:

- Withdraw itself from the current MOU signed with Council of International Students Australia; and
- Recognise that the new national peak organisation for international students being auspiced by the NUS, is the only genuine member organisation based international student peak body; and
- Form a collaborative MOU with the new organisation; and
- Encourage its current members to affiliate to the new organisation.

**Moved:** Param Mahal

**Seconded:** Varun Kale

#### **4.22A**

Change point 2 so it reads: "NUS Condemns the shameful backing of gas projects by successive state and federal governments."

Change point 3 so it reads: "NUS Condemns all expansion of natural gas"

**Mover:** Emily Sagolj

**Secunder:** Param Mahal

#### **4.22 Gas isn't renewable - no fracking the Beetaloo Basin:**

##### **Preamble:**

In lieu of their commitment to the Gas-led Recovery Strategy, the Scott Morrison government is giving \$50 million in taxpayer dollars to mining corporations for exploratory drilling, including \$21 million towards the Beetaloo Basin gas project.

Gas is not a renewable energy source. Production of carbon dioxide through gas projects is polluting the environment. While the federal government has attempted to frame gas as more sustainable or less-polluting than coal, the carbon emissions from gas continue to be the main driver of Australia's shameful world-leading status for emissions per capita. The International Energy Agency Executive Director said there must be no new investments in oil, gas and coal from now on if we are to have any chance to address the climate crisis. This was backed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report released in August this year.

Despite decades of climate science proving these facts, both Labor and Liberal have backed gas projects and taken every chance to reaffirm that they will continue to do so in years to come. In August this year Federal Labor had the chance to vote down the \$50 million spending plan and chose not to. Once again, Labor consciously chose to vote in favour of expanding gas projects. Under the guise of jobs, Labor has ignored the concerns of Traditional Owners of the region that includes the Beetaloo Basin.

An inquiry into the proposed \$21 million for Imperial Oil and Gas to drill the Beetaloo Basin was undertaken earlier this year. Traditional Owners expressed their concerns for the land, stating that they had not consented to the planned drilling and fracking on their Country. Gas production from the Beetaloo Basin is predicted to increase Australia's emissions by up to 13 per cent.

**Platform:**

- NUS acknowledges there is nothing sustainable, renewable or progressive about gas - a 'gas-led recovery' is a nosedive towards an unlivable planet
- NUS condemns the shameful backing of gas projects by both Labor and Liberal parties and their confirmations that they will continue to back gas far into our future
- NUS condemns natural gas expansion in the Beetaloo Basin

**Action:**

- NUS will stand and campaign against the development of gas projects

**Moved: Declan Kerr**

**Seconded: Veronica Palk**

**4.23A**

Remove prescribed dates (but keep the months) and add "will consult with enviro collectives and other enviro groups to set a date"

**Mover:** Chris Hall

**Secunder:** Bridge Truell

**4.23AA**

Amend to remove point 2

**Mover:** Emily Sagolj

**Secunder:** Param Mahal

#### 4.23 **NUS will throw itself into Climate Activism in 2021**

##### **Preamble**

- For several years the effects of climate change have been felt across the globe. This year alone has seen severe weather events across the globe. In February Texas faced unprecedented snowstorms resulting in power outages and many people froze to death. Across many parts of the world there has been an increase in devastating flooding. Record temperatures are regularly broken and seasonal wildfires have become more regular and difficult to contain, again resulting in many lost homes and deaths.
- While the effects of climate change can very clearly be seen across the globe, many world leaders are refusing to take the necessary action required to prevent warming above 1.5C, the figure which many scientists have identified as a critical tipping point for the climate. Currently the globe is on track to hit 1.5C warming by 2030, so urgent action is needed. Instead leaders have committed to goals such as net-zero by 2050, which is too little too late. Current projections estimate that greenhouse gas emissions will still continue at 30 billion tons/year by 2050, and it is estimated that we could hit warming of 2-3C by 2050.
- At the recent COP26 conference it has been showcased that major polluting countries are unwilling to commit to climate action beyond greenwashing, and Australia is one of the worst countries for this. Australia refused to sign on to a commitment to phase out coal as well as a commitment to reduce methane emissions. This is reflective of the Australian government's commitment to fossil fuels and natural gas extraction. Currently both the Labor and Liberal Parties are fueling the continuation of fossil fuel extraction across the country.
- This environmental destruction needs to be opposed. Across the world there has been a movement against climate destruction. COP26 faced massive backlash from protesters demanding real action on the climate. In Australia there has been a recent history of mass climate activism, such as the Stop Adani campaign and the 2020 Bushfire protests.
- NUS should contribute to the environment movement as it develops. When surveyed by NUS, students have said that climate change is the biggest issue that they are concerned with. For NUS to ignore the demand for climate action would make NUS irrelevant.

##### **Platform**

- NUS should organise and promote protests for the environment and contribute resources to various environmental campaigns throughout 2022.
- NUS will call a national climate protest on March 18, and will work to mobilise students around the country for this protest. This will include producing leaflets and posters for student unions to distribute at O'weeks.

**Mover: Declan Kerr**

**Secunder: Cherish Kuehlmann UNSW**

#### 4.24 **NUS demands health before profits on campus during the pandemic**

**Preamble:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised issues of workers' rights, and what conditions students should expect on university campuses. University managements have through 2020 and 2021 been lobbying for removal of public health measures including those limiting international travel, as they desperately attempt to remain competitive with rival universities in Canada and the UK.

This has created a pressure on staff and students to return to unsafe workplaces and classrooms. NUS must stand for the right of students and staff to campuses where they are not at risk of disease. This means NUS must join the fight for proper PPE, minimum standards for air quality/ventilation, and improvements in staff and student conditions. Student and staff health must come before university managements' bottom line.

**Platform:**

- As a union, NUS stands for the right of workers to have workplaces, and students to have classrooms, which meet basic health and safety standards, and which do not put them at risk of transmissible disease.
- NUS calls for audits of all indoor spaces on all campuses to ensure that minimum standards of air quality and ventilation are met. This means CO<sub>2</sub> levels of less than 600 ppm, as recommended by OzSAGE. The results of these audits must be provided to the relevant NTEU branches, and campus student unions.
- NUS calls for any classroom or accommodation space which fails to meet this standard be immediately upgraded to ensure student and worker safety. This could include, but is not limited to, HEPA filtration, PPE provision for staff and students, portable CO<sub>2</sub> readers for staff, and infrastructure upgrades to allow more windows to open.
- NUS will oppose a return of students or staff to any indoor space which has inadequate ventilation.
- NUS demands the free provision of masks and rapid antigen testing kits on campus to students and staff.
- NUS supports increased staffing resources to facilitate campus COVID-safety, including more cleaning staff, and increases in staffing/pay to ensure that

additional work due to health requirements does not result in overwork and underpayment.

**Mover: Jack Mansell UOW**

**Secunder: Yasmine Johnson USYD**

#### 4.25 **NUS supports a health before profits approach to covid.**

**Preamble:**

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, support for public health measures has been high. Bosses, including those in the university sector, have been pushing for an end to many health measures, as these measures have cut into their profits, and disadvantaged them relative to international competitors not hampered by public health constraints. For the university bosses, the travel restrictions which kept COVID at bay in Australia gave a boost to their rivals in the UK and Canada, where government inaction on COVID allowed universities to continue enrolling international students. These uni bosses had no genuine concern for the wellbeing of students stuck abroad (they continued to charge international students high fees for online content, for instance). They pursued a rollback of public health measures in order to restore their competitive position in the market.

The combination of supporting business' "right" to define what is essential and force workers to work, and the failure to provide a reasonable rate of welfare ie to pay people enough to genuinely lock down, contributed to a disastrous spread of the Delta variant across the country.

The public support for COVID health and safety has been a thorn in the side of business, for many months a rollback of public health measures was politically untenable. However, the NSW Liberal Government's response to the 2021 outbreak resulted in a drastic shift in the health situation, with a "live with the virus" reality forced onto NSW and other states as the state government refused to implement a proper lockdown on businesses, and were slow to implement other measures like mask mandates. The national reopening plan represented a similar effort from the federal LNP to force us to live with the virus, and was disgracefully signed on to by all the State Premiers. The Andrews government in Victoria held the elimination line for longer, but eventually caved in to business.

The Omicron variant raises the same questions of profit vs health. Healthcare measures relating to borders and quarantine facilities are objected to by business, including the university sector, on the basis of their finances coming before life, health, and the rights of workers to safe conditions. In the face of this new variant, and future potential variants, NUS must be prepared to back health over profit, and reject the interests of corporations being put before workers and students. This will mean demanding proper quarantine centres, adequate ventilation in public and business indoor spaces, and maintaining measures such as indoor mask mandates.

**Platform:**

- NUS supports an approach of prioritising health over profits in the COVID-19 pandemic
- NUS opposes attempts by university managers to prioritise their finances and competitive standing over public health
- NUS rejects the political turn toward letting COVID-19 run through the community as being detrimental to public health and causing preventable loss of life
- NUS affirms that a range of public health measures including but certainly not limited to vaccination are crucial for
- NUS demands investment into purpose-built quarantine facilities for containing the spread of new variants of COVID-19 and the spread of any future epidemics
- NUS demands auditing of public indoor spaces and essential workplaces for adequate ventilation
- NUS supports a continuing indoor mask mandate for public transport, indoor retail and other workplaces while COVID-19 is present in the community
- NUS supports the right to special leave entitlements for workers for testing and isolating for COVID-19
- NUS supports continuing government funding for COVID-19 testing, and rejects any moves towards making individuals pay for their own tests
- NUS supports further public awareness campaigns in support of vaccination.

**Moved:** Anneke Demanuele (National Executive)

**Seconded:** Rory Gee LTU

**4.26A**

Remove section “The campaign in 2022 will include”

**Mover:** Zoe Ranganathan

**Secunder:** Georgie Beatty

**4.26 NUS will organise a national campaign against the corporate university**

**Preamble**

Our education is in a crisis that has gotten worse, not better, in 2021. University executives continue to use the COVID-19 crisis as the pretext for major restructures, firings, and other measures that degrade quality of education and academic freedom in order to increase profits. A decades-long process of privatisation by stealth has been accelerated by the pandemic. This despite every university in Australia ending 2020 in a surplus, and the ten most profitable institutions generating revenues above \$1 billion each. Our education is under attack because it is seen as a commodity rather than a social good.

At UWA, all departments face cuts to fill management's spurious projected \$40 million structural deficit. The Sociology department is set to be entirely abolished. At La Trobe University over 3000 jobs were lost, and cuts to resourcing forced almost half of all courses at regional Albury-Wodonga campus online. At the University of Adelaide a major restructure will merge its five faculties into three. 130 job losses have been confirmed, with 70 more proposed by the Vice Chancellor "as a start". Writing and disability services and the library also face casualisation and cuts. USyd plan to cut over 400 FASS (and other faculty) undergraduate and honours courses. At Flinders University, job losses and restructures are confirmed in areas ranging Mathematics, Geography, Creative writing and Drama, and their Southgate Institute for Health, Society and Equity will be closed, despite a cost-cutting restructure in 2018. Face-to-face lectures have been abolished for 2022 at UniSA. Curtin is moving to what management call "blended learning", ignoring negative student feedback.

40,000 jobs in the sector overall have been lost this year. Most of these were permanent, full-time positions. This signals a shift towards permanent downsizing of already-inadequate university staffing and resources.

Decades of funding cuts by Labor and Liberal governments have turned ostensibly "public" education institutions into businesses. Revenue depends on the hyper exploitation of international students, as well as ever-increasing cash and investment portfolios, worth about \$25 billion in 2020. Undemocratic university councils, filled with hand-picked appointees from business, mining and defence industries, operate on the basis of what will make universities more profitable. Intervention onto campus is sold by-way-of private partnerships that curtail academic freedom and shape campuses to reflect the interests of the wealthy, a recent example being the Menzies Institute at UniMelb.

Our Vice Chancellors are not victims of the Liberal government's Job Ready Graduate Package, or allies in the fight against the corporate university. They are paid like CEOs to think like CEOs, and agree with the Liberal's vision of a corporate university. One example is their complicity in presenting inflated interpretations of financial ill health to justify the neoliberal cuts they hope to implement. Last year, Universities Australia created a sense of crisis by projecting a revenue decline of \$4.8 billion in international student fees for 2020. The actual decrease was \$1.9 billion.

Student fightback on campuses has managed to push back some of management's agenda. At UWA, a determined student protest campaign and occupation managed to save the Anthropology department. At Adelaide University, cuts to the Maths Learning Centre were reversed by urgent student agitation. At La Trobe, the VC's scab union (set up to cripple student ability to fight cuts) was wound up after student general meetings voted overwhelmingly for its dissolution.

These and other successes are partial wins, with other major cuts still going ahead. Students need a nationally-coordinated campaign to cohere and organise our capacity to resist. Cuts that do, or do not, pass on one campus set a precedent for all campuses. NUS must commit itself to organising resistance to the corporate university on a national level.

For years, NUS has been invisible and irrelevant to students. Actively involving students in a protest movement against cuts also stands the best chance of making NUS relevant and visible to students.

### **Platform**

- NUS commits to organising a nationally coordinated campaign against campus based attacks on higher education.
- NUS condemns Vice Chancellors across the country who have introduced cuts to staff and courses, and who have played a disgraceful role as key backers of the Liberal party in their attempts to further the neoliberal restructuring of universities.
- NUS stands unequivocally for free, public education as the only funding model that ensures higher education remains accessible to students from all financial backgrounds.
- NUS acknowledges the critical importance of protest politics in past victories and commits to a protest-based campaign in response to future attacks.
- NUS commits to working with student activists on campuses across the country in opposing and reversing cuts.
- NUS unequivocally opposes all measures that seek to force the cost of the COVID-19 crisis onto university staff - including pay cuts, redundancies and attacks on work standards.

### **Action**

- The National Education Officer will renew and lead a protest-based campaign against University managements and their unprecedented cuts and restructures.
- The National Education Officer will produce and make available a fact sheet outlining the scale and detail of cuts across the country.
- While the campaign should be led by the National Education Officer it should also be a priority of all other national and state office bearers, and they should endeavour to produce material specific to their departments (e.g. how cuts to student welfare will disproportionately impact women, LGBTI students).
- The campaign in 2022 will include:
  - A focus on cross-campus street marches and demonstrations.
  - Promotional material including but not limited to posters, leaflets, t-shirts, stickers and online graphics to be ready and distributed to campuses in time for enrolment weeks and orientation activities.
  - Publicity for the campaign on the NUS website, on all NUS social media and at all forums and events

- Paid advertising on social media and in relevant print media.
- Media releases to announce any actions, and in response to any further cuts announced by University Vice Chancellors.
- Opportunities for activists across the country to discuss the campaign, such as phone link ups and social media organising, but primarily at the 2022 Education Conference.
- The National Education Officer will communicate with campus EAGs and state networks to discuss how the education officer can assist the campaign.
- Working with other organisations such as the NTEU and other union initiatives such as NTEU fightback.
- Drawing connections between campus-specific campaigns and federal policy.
- Targeting Vice Chancellors, which will include:
  - Organising protests on a campus level against local cuts and the Vice Chancellors introducing them.
  - Publishing material outlining Vice Chancellors positions on federal policy, their salaries and bonuses, and any proposed campus cuts.
- The National Education Officer and the National President will ensure that the Education Conference which takes place in July is used as a forum to seriously workshop and build upon the work of activists fighting against campus cuts across the country.

**Moved: Kelly Cvetkova Monash**

**Seconded: Yasmine Jenkins Gunn LTU**

#### 4.27A

Remove dot point 1 under platform- “NUS does not support Net Zero as a viable strategy for solving the climate crisis”

Action dot point 2 Remove “and the false promise of net zero”

**Mover:** Zoe Ranganathan

**Secunder:** Georgie Beatty

#### 4.27 **Net Zero by 2050 targets are the new climate denialism**

##### **Preamble**

Scott Morrison and the Liberal National Party (LNP) have recently committed to a Net Zero by 2050 climate target. The commitment has been backed by the Australian Business Council, mining magnates such as Twiggy Forrest and various groups that make up the Right in society.

The LNP’s new plan is not simply lacking in detail or too far away, rather the whole framework of Net Zero by 2050 should be understood as a total farce. Net Zero

targets are just the newest form of capitalist greenwashing. A commitment to Net Zero is now the key way for a business or country to prove they will do something to address climate change. However Net zero does not mean zero carbon emissions. It means “offsetting” emissions, so that the amount of carbon dioxide being released and the amount being offset are roughly the same. The caveat is that the offsetting technologies do not work—at least, not anywhere near the level needed to offset the billions of tons of CO<sub>2</sub> that are emitted every year. The IPCC report (2021) suggests that in order to adequately combat this crisis and keep temperatures below 1.5 degrees of warming, “immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions” are required. Net Zero and the technology used to justify this framework by all political parties, including Labor, has led to nothing more than inaction.

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is the offsetting fad of the moment. It is a process of capturing carbon dioxide before it enters the atmosphere, transferring it somewhere to be planted in the ground and then storing it for centuries. However, the current CCS technology is not working. CCS has been able to bury, on average, 39 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year, according to the Global CCS Institute 2020 report. That is a drop in the ocean when compared to the 43 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> that were emitted in 2019.

Unfortunately, this is the trend with all offsetting schemes. They are expensive, often costing billions of dollars, yet do not come close to the drastic level of action needed to reach net zero by 2050.

### **Platform**

- NUS does not support Net Zero as a viable strategy for solving the climate crisis
- NUS condemns the Liberal Party for committing to an ineffective climate plan that will not ensure global temperatures lower before the tipping points
- NUS condemns the creation of new ‘green’ industries that are creating more profits for the rich rather than addressing the climate crisis.
- NUS does not think any political party can solve the climate crisis

### **Action**

- NUS will release a statement condemning the global greenwashing fad that is Net Zero and raise the demand of ‘Real Zero’, stopping the production of all emissions now
- NUS will condemn the ties universities have to fossil fuel companies and the false promise of Net Zero

- NUS will help to promote all future actions for climate justice by endorsing them, committing to help with building work and aid for resources such as posters and paid advertisements.

**Moved: Veronica Palk QUT**

**Seconded: Declan Kerr QUT**

#### 4.28 **NUS Commitment to the Stop the Menzies Institute Campaign in 2022**

##### **Preamble:**

On November 18, the Robert Menzies Institute (RMI) opened in the historic Old Quad at the University of Melbourne. This institute is a front for the Liberal Party, bankrolled by the Federal Liberal Government to the tune of \$7 million, embraced by University Chancellery without the consent of staff and students, and led by conservative culture warriors like Peta Credlin.

The origins of the RMI trace back to a deal brokered several years ago between former Vice Chancellor Glyn Davis and the Menzies Research Centre, an explicitly conservative think tank financially and ideologically backed by the right wing of the Liberal Party. Their role is to publicly promote an anti-union, neoliberal and socially conservative political agenda. This agenda is consonant with that of corporate university managers like Davis and his successor, Duncan Maskell, who have a track record of axing staff, entrenching casualisation, and publicly aligning themselves with social conservatives.

From June 2021, the Graduate Student Association (GSA), the University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU) and the National Union of Students (NUS) have led an activist campaign against the RMI as a part of a fight both for publicly funded higher education under the democratic control of students and staff, and against the broader set of reactionary, anti-union and environmentally destructive politics embodied in this Liberal Party project.

This campaign has gained considerable support. Over 1,000 people - mostly staff and students at the University of Melbourne - signed the open letter against the RMI. Cumulatively, hundreds of people attended campaign organising meetings and public forums, and, in spite of campus life remaining subdued throughout the ongoing pandemic, over 100 students protested against the RMI's opening on 18 November. In addition, the campaign has solicited widespread media coverage and drawn attention to the crisis of university corporatisation and the hypocrisy of the Liberal Party regarding higher education funding.

With the RMI already organising further conferences and exhibitions designed to whitewash Australian history and attract high profile Liberal Party politicians, university managers, and business moguls, the campaign against the RMI should be a priority for all student unions and left-wing student unionists moving into 2022. As the federal election nears, the COVID pandemic continues to expose the barbaric privileging of business profits over the lives of workers and oppressed people, and industrial action becomes a concrete possibility at the University of Melbourne, the political stakes of opposing the RMI will only intensify. For this reason, it is incumbent on NUS to support this campaign in 2022 and thus demonstrate its ongoing commitment to fighting back against the rich and powerful.

In testing circumstances, the campaign against the RMI has provided a glimpse of the kind of radical politics needed to build a student movement capable of fighting back, not only against the ongoing, savage cuts to higher education funding and staff, but against the very system of entrenched oppression and exploitation that made the RMI possible in the first place.

**Platform:**

- NUS pledges to support the campaign against the Robert Menzies Institute in 2022, as an expression of its commitment to building mass, student activist movements.
- NUS recognises that the fight against the Robert Menzies Institute is inextricably connected to all others resisting the imperatives of the rich and powerful, on university campuses and beyond.

**Action:**

- NUS commits to working with GSA and UMSU to build the campaign against the Robert Menzies Institute to be as big and engaging as possible into 2022.
- NUS commits to endorsing all future protests and events called by the Stop the Menzies Institute campaign.
- NUS commits to promoting the campaign and campaign events by doing the following:
  - Regularly posting about and sharing from NUS social media accounts information about campaign events and news.
  - Including information about the campaign, the open letter, and campaign activities in newsletters and other correspondence to NUS members
  - Encouraging NUS representatives to sign the campaign's open letter and participate in campaign activities

- Leveraging its links to other student associations to build the campaign and its profile

**Moved: Shirley Killen UniMelb**

**Seconded: Alicia Griffiths LaTrobe**

#### 4.29A

Include Platform 4:

NUS Does not believe that free speech should extend to Hate speech or purposeful mis-information

Amend Action:

NUS will support campaigns for the democratic right to free speech excluding where that speech is hate speech or misinformation.

NUS will campaign against authoritarian administrations when they attempt to target and intimidate individual activists in line with the principals above

**Mover:** Emily Sagolj

**Seconder:** Param Mahal

#### 4.29 Fighting for free speech on campus

##### **Preamble**

Free speech is an important democratic right. Student and staff unions fought for and won the right to political debate, demonstration, activity and discussion on campuses. This right continues to be crucial in building a necessary fight back in the face of attacks to higher education.

Both the government and campus management undermine freedom of speech and the right to political organising. Politicians and administrations are increasingly adopting policy that erodes students' ability to organize and protest, often cynically citing free speech as justification for these crack downs. As students and staff don't have access to positions of power or control over the media, it is vital to defend the only way students can resist which is via our student unions and protesting.

Importantly this means we cannot see the Vice Chancellors as our friends or allies. They are the key enemy, alongside the government, sacking staff, restructuring faculties and cutting courses. It suits them very well to also go after our organisations to stop any resistance. Any strategy that includes working with the VCs just helps them undercut us more.

##### **Platform**

- NUS recognises the importance of defending the right to freedom of speech for all students, staff and political groups.

- NUS condemns the ways the government and uni admins crack down on free speech and understands they are not students' ally.
- NUS believes that freedom of speech is integral to student unionism and condemns any attempts to undermine free speech inside our student unions.

#### **Action**

- NUS will support all campaigns for the democratic right to free speech against authoritarian administrations including when they attempt to target and intimidate individual activists

**Moved: Kelly Cvetkova Monash**

**Seconded: Jack Mansell UOW**

#### **4.30A**

Amend to remove first action point

**Mover:** Emily Sagolj

**Seconder:** Param Mahal

#### **4.30 NUS must oppose the growing far right**

##### **Preamble**

The far right has been mobilising and growing around anti-public health demands both nationally and internationally since the beginning of the pandemic. In Australia this movement has escalated in recent months and involves far-right political forces like Pauline Hanson's One Nation, Clive Palmer's United Australia Party & Reignite Democracy Australia, and the hard-right of the liberals. It includes known neo-nazis in it's ranks, and brings together Proud Boys, anti-semites, QAnon conspiracy theorists, christian evangelicals, Trump supporters and 'sovereign citizens'.

The movement is politically characterised by a violent opposition to the left and social democracy. Their demands are reactionary and anti-social to the core, placing individual and economic freedom over public health and the collective good. They want to see a world in which no public health measures could ever be introduced again to stop the spread of a deadly disease. In Italy, the main trade union headquarters in Rome was attacked by the fascist group Forza Nuova as part of an anti-vax protest, and here the far-right has attacked the CFMEU, vaccination centers & frontline workers, and has made threats to politicians' families. The growth of this far-right movement poses a direct threat to workers, unions & society in general.

The majority of Australians support public health measures and mandatory vaccinations, but currently the far right is allowing politics in Australia to shift to the right. Progressive institutions like NUS must take a public stand against the growth of the far-right, and promote protests politically opposing them. The Campaign Against Racism & Fascism (CARF) has organised counter-protests around Australia against this movement to send a clear message of social solidarity and anti-fascism on the streets, and is continuing to build a movement of progressive people opposing the far right.

### **Platform**

- NUS recognises that the anti-vax/anti-public health movement is far-right in nature
- NUS opposes the far-right, anti-public health movement
- NUS supports public health measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 like mandatory vaccinations, mask-wearing and lockdowns
- NUS stands in solidarity with frontline workers who continue to face abuse from members of the far-right, anti-vax movement

### **Action**

The NUS will promote and endorse rallies like those called by the Campaign Against Racism & Fascism politically opposing the far right on the streets.

The NUS will put out a statement opposing this movement in line with the arguments set out in the preamble and platform.

**Mover: Anneke Demanuele (National Executive)**

**Seconder: Ella Marichonda (RMIT)**

#### **4.31A**

Remove prescribed dates (but keep the months) and add "will consult with enviro collectives and other enviro groups to set a date"

**Mover:** Chris Hall

**Seconder:** Bridge Truell

#### **4.31AA**

Remove point 2 under platform

Remove point 3 from action point

**Mover:** Zoe Ranganathan

**Secunder:** Georgie Beatty

#### 4.31 The case for a radical NUS

##### **Preamble**

NUS has failed in this crisis in higher education.

For the last 18 months, higher education has faced an unprecedented crisis. First, the federal government's Job Ready Graduates Bill gutting funding to all courses across the board. Then, Vice-Chancellors have followed suit, sacking hundreds of staff, implementing faculty restructures, cutting courses and undermining students' conditions. Both the government and the VCs have used this pandemic as a way to cry poor and reshape the university sector to be more profitable. The shift towards a user-pays, two-tier university system locks out thousands of students. Education should not be a commodity for only those who can afford it but a right for all.

These restructures have been the most significant, unprecedented attacks in decades. Yet, in the face of this NUS has been missing in action. No national campaigns were organised to defend students against these massive attacks. NUS never attempted to seriously mobilise students to fight the campus cuts. In some cases, there were press releases. Yet in most cases, there were totally absentee office bearers.

NUS exists to defend students' rights and conditions and campaign for education and other social justice issues. However NUS currently has not mounted any challenge to the attacks on higher education or fought around other issues students care about like social justice or climate action.

The failure of NUS in the crisis is a result of years of NUS pursuing right wing strategy. In recent years the majority strategy in NUS has been to

- Work alongside the key enemy Vice Chancellors who did not hesitate to fire staff and cut courses
- To lobby rightwing crossbench politicians. These politicians supported the Liberal government's attacks and NUS wasted resources on these predictably unsuccessful lobbying sessions
- To campaign for the Labor Party even after it cut funding in government last time and does not support free education and has a track record of egregious policies for refugees, climate and many more

Yet again in 2021, the Grassroots-Independents have wasted the Education Office, failing to provide a lead for students to campaign against these attacks. Posting once or twice about protests on Facebook is not building an activist campaign. NUS Education office bearers should be using their budgets to print posters and leaflets advertising the next rally or action, they should be getting these distributed to students on campus, calling open activist organising meetings to discuss the attacks and how to stop them with other student activists. They should prioritise building and attending any campus. To be successful campaigns have to be promoted in every way possible to the student body including emails, Facebook and other social media, press releases and importantly on campus announcements in lectures and where students congregate. NUS office bearers should be coordinating the national campaign against any and all attacks by government or university bosses.

We desperately need to reorient NUS to a radical, activist strategy. When student unions are radical and activist they can win victories for students and resist attacks by government and uni admins.

Next year NUS must reorient towards organising activism on the campuses and in the cities and take on a political perspective that understands the VCs and government are our enemies who need to be fought. To rebuild NUS into a fighting organisation, NUS should prioritise campaigning around education and climate action by calling two NDAs in Semester 1, 2022. These are the most popular issues students want to fight around.

The environment is an issue of increasing concern with university students and NUS should relate to the growing urgency for climate action by calling a **NDA for climate action on March 18** next year.

Similarly, with the current state of education, NUS should dedicate resources to building for an **NDA on the 4 May against the corporate university** and campus cuts.

Student unions are best when they have activist strategy, when they organise students to push back against administration and government attacks. NUS should reject the failed strategies that have led the union to fail in the face of the pandemic. We need a radical and activist NUS instead.

### **Platform**

- NUS recognises that mobilising students in activist campaigns to defend our rights and conditions is its first priority
- NUS rejects strategies like lobbying, campaigning for the ALP and working with VCs which have led to the sorry state of student unionism today

### **Action**

- In 2022, NUS will reorient to using its resources and time to organise activist campaigns focusing in particular on resisting national and campus cuts and fighting for climate action
- This will include organising two National Days of Action in Semester 1, 2022. NUS will organise a climate NDA on 18 March and an NDA against the corporate university and campus cuts on 4 May. These actions will set up NUS to begin to rebuild an activist orientation able to resist current and emerging attacks on the student body.
- NUS will provide resources to publicise these NDAs such as funding for posters and online advertising

**Moved: Kelly Cvetkova Monash**

**Seconded: Cherish Kuehlmann UNSW**

#### 4.32 **NUS opposes the escalating Australia-China conflict**

**Preamble:**

NUS must stand against the escalating conflict between Australia and China and join opposition to the coming military conflict. A dangerous process of rearmament is taking place as the US and China build up towards military confrontation. War in the Asia-Pacific region would see catastrophic loss of life that all student unions have a responsibility to oppose and fight against.

Far from being neutral, Australia is the most hawkish of American allies. The AUKUS pact and the purchase of a new fleet of nuclear-powered submarines demonstrates their intense commitment to militarism. Contrary to the hawkish narrative of Defence Minister Peter Dutton and the Shadow Minister Richard Marles, China's rise does not pose a direct military threat to the Australian nation. The reason for escalating tensions is that China threatens US dominance and the profits of Australian capital in the Asia-Pacific: concerns of the establishment rather than the mass of people in Australia.

A coming war with China will not be one fought for democracy against authoritarianism. US and Australian governments hypocritically condemn human right abuses of the Chinese regime like oppression of the Uighurs, while being responsible for atrocities such as war crimes in Afghanistan, the indefinite detention of refugees and police murders of black and Aboriginal people.

Belligerence towards China is consensus in the foreign policy and political establishment, which will not sidestep conflict to continue with trade relations with China. As Dutton told the *Australian*, with regard to Taiwan, "it would be inconceivable that we wouldn't support the US in an action if the US chose to take that action". Disgracefully, the Labor Party shares this aggressive stance towards China and supports the AUKUS alliance despite the consequences of military conflict for the working class and oppressed.

Ordinary people belonging to Australia, the US and China have nothing to gain by taking sides in this imperialist rivalry. NUS should take up the historic mantle of anti-war opposition and activism championed by student unions in Australia's past, and refuse to side with the warmongers on either side of the new Cold War divide.

**Platform:**

- The NUS opposes the coming conflict between the US-Australia alliance and China
- The NUS recognises that Australian involvement in conflict with China would not be defensive action, but underpinned by economic and geopolitical competition
- The NUS condemns the hypocrisy of US and Australian governments attempting to cast conflict with China in the mould of democracy against authoritarianism and points to the role of the US and Australia in committing war crimes in Afghanistan
- The NUS maintains that war between the rival imperialist powers Australia and China is at odds with the interests of the working class, unions and ordinary people in either country
- The NUS therefore opposes any intensification of aggression from Australia towards China and refuses to support either side in diplomatic, economic or military conflict
- The NUS recognises the urgency of building political opposition to war and commits to continuing the historic anti-war role of student unionism in Australia

**Moved: Shirley Killen UniMelb**

**Seconded: Holly Hayne UTS**

**4.33 NUS supports the Don't Deport to Danger campaign by the Tamil Refugee Council**

**Preamble:**

Prior to the pandemic, almost 50,000 people who had arrived in Australia by plane and whose asylum claims had been rejected were awaiting deportation. Currently, almost 12,000 additional refugees who arrived by boat and hold bridging visas are at risk of deportation. There are several tens of thousands more on other temporary protection visas who cannot settle because the threat of future deportation hangs over them.

Many have fled countries and situations that are unsafe, such as Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Iran. The dangers are particularly acute for ethnic minorities and political dissidents and activists. In many places, the situation has been made more perilous by the pandemic. Vaccines are in dangerously short supply and civil strife in some countries has increased.

Australia is a signatory to the refugee convention, the foundation of which is the principle that people should not be returned to countries in which their “life or freedom would be threatened”. Yet, over the last two decades, Australian governments repeatedly have breached this principle, taking all kinds of measures to deny people’s claims and deporting refugees to death, torture, arrest and/or harassment in a host of countries.

This practice must stop. Australia should no longer deport people who have well-founded fears for their safety and well-being.

**Platform:**

- The NUS supports the following urgent call on the federal government to ease the uncertainty and suffering of refugees in Australia:
  - Urgently cease deportations of asylum seekers, both scheduled and underway.
  - Abolish temporary protection visas and grant permanent protection to all TPV holders to remove the threat of future deportation.
  - Release asylum seekers from detention and transit accommodation centres.
  - Enact an amnesty for asylum seekers currently deemed “unlawful non-citizens”.

**Action:**

- The NUS will add its name to the open letter initiated by the Tamil Refugee Council at <https://dontdeporttoday.org/>
- The NUS will publicise the campaign from its Facebook and other relevant social media platforms

**Moved:** Yasmine Johnson USYD

**Seconded:** Kaia Cox UOW

**4.34 Why NUS shouldn’t campaign for the ALP at the federal election:**

**PREAMBLE:**

The primary purpose of the NUS is twofold: to advocate for social justice issues and defend student interests. Any campaign that encourages students to vote Labor at the next federal election would be an abdication of both of these roles.

Historically, Labor has demonstrated its commitment to protecting the profitability of higher education at the expense of student interests. It was the Hawke government that introduced the Higher Education Contribution Scheme, a regressive measure that began shifting the financial burden of tertiary education from government to students. It was the Gillard government that cut \$2.3 billion from universities in 2013. And it is Labor today that refuses to stand resolutely against the attacks on students

and staff from the Liberals or support free education.

On climate change, Labor is hard to distinguish from the Coalition. Most recently among its litany of environmental crimes, Labor voted down a motion in the Senate to block a \$21 million federal grant to Empire Energy to frack the Beetaloo Basin. Most significantly, Labor remains wedded to the coal industry. Albanese, ever the expert in utilising clever accounting tricks to protect Australia's fossil fuel industry, stated that coal will likely still be mined after 2050 for domestic metallurgy and exports because "you don't measure the emissions where the original product comes from." Since approximately 80% of Australian coal is exported, Labor plans to preserve an industry that, according to the Australian Financial Review, makes Australia the third largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world.

On sexual oppression, Labor is tailing the Liberals. Albanese has stated that Labor intends to back the religious freedoms bill. The bill is a thinly veiled attempt to offer legal protections for bigots. Religious institutions already have exemptions from the Sexual Discrimination Act, which has, for instance, empowered schools to sack LGBTI staff in the past. Previous iterations of the bill demonstrate that its purpose is to further enshrine these exemptions. The fact that shadow attorney general Mark Dreyfus said Labor are "ready to work with the government on a religious discrimination bill" is precisely why NUS should not be ready to work with Labor at the next election.

Labor has not reversed its long-standing commitment to mandatory detention of refugees; a policy it pioneered under the Keating government in 1992 and expanded under the Gillard government. The NUS should not campaign for a party that has not apologised for Kevin Rudd's despicable statement that "from now on, any asylum seeker who arrives in Australia by boat will have no chance of being settled in Australia as refugees." While those who seek protection in Australia still languish in hotel prisons in Melbourne and Brisbane, NUS must oppose the parties that keep them there.

Student unions have a proud history of defending both student interests as well as standing up for the oppressed in society. As an active and complicit organisation in the oppression of refugees and LGBTI people, the current policies of Labor make its project incompatible with that of NUS. Campaigning for Labor is no strategy for winning left-wing reforms, because it puts Labor under no pressure to change its policies. Instead, NUS should commit its resources to campaigns that mobilise students and workers against any political party that opposes left-wing policies like free education. To be effective in campaigning for student interests, NUS should not subordinate its resources to the election of a Labor government.

**PLATFORM:**

- NUS condemns the Australian Labor Party for its historic attacks on higher education and for its refusal to defend university students against attacks from the Morrison government.
- NUS condemns the Australian Labor Party for supporting the mandatory detention of refugees.
- NUS condemns the Australian Labor Party for supporting natural gas expansion in the Beetaloo Basin.
- NUS condemns the Australian Labor Party for refusing to call for the coal industry to be fully phased out.
- NUS opposes any party that does not support free education, immediate action on the climate crisis or support for refugees.

### **ACTION**

- NUS will not run campaigns in 2022 that encourage students to vote for the Labor Party in the next federal election.

**Moved: Shirley Killen UniMelb**

**Seconded: Kelly Cvetkova Monash**

#### **4.35 University management aren't our friends**

##### **Preamble**

With the scale of the attacks on higher education, at both a national and a university level, it is imperative that the National Union of Students changes its approach to university management.

University management will not be convinced out of cuts to education and jobs, and nor are they a potential ally for the student movement against cuts from the government. There is no way to calmly consult and provide them “buy-in”. University management have a direct interest in attacking the working conditions of staff and the learning conditions of students. Much like any other corporation, management are tasked with making their university as profitable as possible. They strive to compete with other universities both nationally and internationally, and cutting costs means they can direct more money into whatever will secure them more students and more research funding. This is what motivates all levels of management, from the Vice-Chancellors to the faculty Deans.

Any strategy which seeks to consult or ally with management is doomed to fail. Most of the times that university managers are willing to consult or meet with activists is when it helps to give cover to their attacks by providing a veneer of student consultation. No matter how well-crafted our arguments are, they will not make the slightest difference to the policies of the university if we are asking for something that goes against their economic interests. Moreover, even if on paper they utter timid

words of opposition to this or that government policy, university management have no interest in seriously challenging the government.

Management are not our friends, nor should we desire them to be. They are the architects of the corporate university, in charge of extracting profit from the labour of university staff. Our strategy should be to strengthen the collective fight of students and staff, whose interests are counterposed to those of university management. This means we cannot afford to sow illusions in management by lobbying them or emailing them politely - their inevitable disregard for us only demoralises and demobilises campaigns.

### **Platform**

1. NUS identifies university management as the key enemy on university campuses and condemns their role in placing profit before the working conditions of staff and learning conditions of students.
2. NUS rejects the strategy of looking towards consulting or allying with management, either in regard to campus cuts or attacks from the government.
3. NUS commits to building protest-based campaigns and looks to the collective power of students and staff.

### **Action**

1. The National Education Officer will not meet with any representative of the management of any university for the purposes of consulting with them about cuts at a campus or federal level.
2. The National Education Officer and NUS will commit to building and organising protests and activism. This means coordinating rallies, producing propaganda material and aiding campus activists.

**Moved:** Jack Mansell UOW

**Seconded:** Declan Kerr QUT

#### **4.36 NUS urgency motion: Oppose the bigoted 'Religious Discrimination' Bill.**

##### **Preamble:**

The Liberals are set to move the bigoted 'Religious Discrimination' bill in parliament in the coming days. This is the Morrison government's third attempt to move the bill. The 'Religious Discrimination' bill was from its outset a project of the hard religious right embittered by their loss to the marriage equality campaign. Like the 'Vote no' campaign, the bill is deeply unpopular.

It also has nothing to do with protecting religious freedoms. Such rhetoric is cover for a right-wing attack on the rights of LGBTI+ people, workers and other oppressed groups.

The bill is all about strengthening the legal cover for bigotry despite overwhelming opposition to it and the religious exemptions that already exist. It contains a number of broad provisions which aim to further entrench the power of religious institutions to discriminate and for religious ideas to have greater influence in non-religious organisations like hospitals and schools.

For example, the bill would allow for religious schools to refuse to hire or sack staff if they do not [align with the 'religious beliefs' of the school](#). This would give licence for religious schools to hire and fire on the basis of gender and sexual identity with the cover of 'religious belief'.

[Existing state protections for LGBTI+ teachers in Victoria and LGBTI+ workers in Tasmania will be overridden](#) if the bill passes.

Discriminatory statements would be protected through appeals to religious belief. For instance, a doctor would be able to say to a patient that their disability is a trial given to them by God, or HIV a punishment for sin.

It's not just about what the bill explicitly allows, but the message it sends. The conservative right wants to normalise Trumpian bigotry in daily life through passing the bill. If it passes, they will be back for more attacks on LGBTI+ people - with an apparent mandate to do so.

Shamefully, the Labor party has [said it will support the 'Religious Discrimination' bill](#). But there is no acceptable form of this bill. It has to be opposed unequivocally. Protests from below are needed to stop the bill.

**Platform:**

1. NUS unequivocally opposes the 'Religious Discrimination' bill and any future bills of its ilk, whether state or federal.
2. NUS affirms its opposition to homophobia and transphobia and supports the rights of LGBTI+ people to access education, medical services and employment free from discrimination.
3. NUS condemns the Liberal party for its moving of the bill and the Labor party for its support of the bill.

**Action points:**

1. NUS commits to materially supporting future protests against the 'Religious Discrimination' bill. NUS will use its resources and social media pages to build the protests and oppose the bill.
2. NUS will release a press statement in complete opposition to the bill and endorsing the Community Action for Rainbow Rights, Rainbow Rebellion and Equal Love Brisbane rallies. It will publish this to its social media accounts.

**Mover: Cherish Kuehlmann UNSW**

**Seconder: Yasmine Johnson USYD**

**4.37 Solidarity with Palestine**

**Platform:**

1. NUS opposes the historic and on-going genocide, apartheid, land-theft and oppression of the Palestinian people by the state of Israel.
2. NUS supports the struggle for freedom, justice and self-determination of the Palestinian people.
3. NUS recognises that support for Palestine is not anti-Semitic. NUS acknowledges that any effective fightback against anti-Semitism requires understanding that Zionism and Judaism are not the same. Jewish people cannot be automatically identified with the Israeli state.
4. The NUS continues to liaise with Palestinian individuals when making decisions on the Palestinian issues.

**Mover:** Param Mahal

**Seconder:** Nour Al Hammouri

**4.38 Armenian Genocide Recognition**

**Platform:**

1. NUS recognises that the twenty fourth (24) April marks the anniversary of the commemoration of the genocide of the Armenians by the then Ottoman Government between 1915-1922
2. NUS condemns the genocide of the Armenians and all other acts of genocide committed during our century as the ultimate act of racial, religious, and cultural intolerance
3. NUS recognises the importance of remembering and learning from such dark chapters in human history to ensure that such crimes against humanity are not allowed to be repeated
4. NUS condemns and prevents all attempts to use the passage of time to deny or distort the historical truth of the genocide of the Armenians and other acts of genocide committed

**Mover:** Param Mahal

**Seconder:** Emily Sagolj