National Executive Meeting

**National Union of Students Inc.**

Wednesday, 31st July 2024



# Meeting Details:

Venue: Zoom

Time: 7:30 pm AEDT

Chair: Ngaire Bogemann (National President)

Minute Taker: Jonathan De La Pena (National Secretary)



# Acknowledgement of Country

1. **Attendance**

National Office Bearers/Non-voting members

| Ngaire Bogemann | National President |
| --- | --- |
| Jonathan De La Pena | National Secretary |
| Sabrine Yassine | National Welfare Officer |
| Grace Franco | National Education Officer |
| Ela Akyol (Apology) | National Women’s Officer |
| Ella Gutteridge | National Queer/LGBTQIA+ Officer |
| Eddie Stephenson | National Queer/LGBTQIA+ Officer |
| Chandra Altoff (Apology) | National First Nations Officer |
| Mairead Foley | National Disabilities Officer |
| Reynal Adrien (Apology) | National International Officer |
| Jacinto Hedus | National Ethnocultural Officer |
| Caitlin Marlor (Apology) | National Small & Regional Officer |
| Beth Shegog (Apology) | National TAFE Officer |

State Branch Presidents/Voting Members

| Oliver Shephard-Bayly (Proxied to Nathaniel Lewis) | SA State Branch President |
| --- | --- |
| Disha Zutshi (Proxied to Jonathan De La Pena) | Vic State Branch President |
| Hamish Covell | NSW State Branch President |
| Liam Bessell-Koprek | ACT State Branch President |
| Jeremy Wong | Qld State Branch President |
| Heidee Austic (Proxied to Alexander Knowles) | WA State Branch President |
| Liam McLaren | TAS State Branch President |

General Executive Members/Voting Members

| Xavier Dupe | General Executive Member |
| --- | --- |
| Veronika Gobba | General Executive Member |
| Tess Robb | General Executive Member |
| Finbar Bray | General Executive Member |
| Nicholas Goodyer | General Executive Member |
| Lucy Fawcett | General Executive Member |
| Brandon Lee | General Executive Member |
| Kevin Li (Proxied to Jonathan De La Pena) | General Executive Member |
| Alexander Knowles | General Executive Member |
| Daniel O’Shea | General Executive Member |
| Molly Quinnell | General Executive Member |
| Asadullah Jan | General Executive Member |

* 1. **Absent**
  2. **Observers**
* Abbey Wheeler (Pelican Magazine)
  1. **Election of Deputy Chair**

**Action**

The National Executive appoints Jonathan De La Pena as the Deputy Chair of the Committee.

**Moved:** Liam McLaren (TAS State Branch President)

**Seconded:** Liam Bessell-Koprek (ACT State Branch President)

**Carried Without Dissent (CWD)**

# Acceptance of Apologies

**Action**

The National Executive accepts the apologies of the following:

* + - Caitlin Marlor (S&R Officer)
    - Chandra Altoff (First Nations Officer)
    - Ela Akyol (Womens Officer)
    - Reynal Adrien (International Officer)
    - Beth Shegog (TAFE Officer)

**Moved:** Ngaire Bogemann (President)

**Seconded:** Lucy Fawcett (National Executive)

**CWD**

# List of Accepted Proxies

The following proxies have been accepted by the National Secretary:

* + - Oliver Shephard-Bayly proxies to Nathaniel Winter
    - Disha Zutshi proxies to Jonathan De La Pena
    - Kevin Li proxies to Jonathan De La Pena
    - Heidee Austic proxies to Alexander Knowles

# Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

None received.

# 1.6 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

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**Action**

That National Executive acknowledges the circulated minutes of the previous meeting and the discussed amendments are a true and accurate reflection of that meeting.

NX 3 - 01/05/2024

**Moved:** Ngaire Bogemann (President)

**Seconded:** Sabrine Yassine (Welfare Officer)



* 1. Chance for OBs to speak further on their reports.

Ngaire took report as read; was questioned on the robustness of her wording on EdCon and the inaccessibility of the environment. Mairead emphasised that the inaccessibility of EdCon was an everyone responsibility and a cultural issue, not just a conference organiser issue, and that it required everyone working collaboratively to promote an accessible environment.

Jonathan took report as read; spoke on the NUS Communications Officer and urged NX to contact the General Secretary if they had any comments to make on the Communications Officer in the positive or negative.

Sabrine spoke on the Global Students Forum and on the statement already released in support of students in Bangladesh. She also spoke on the ongoing NUS Reform Working Group established, all members of NX should already be invited.

Grace spoke on upcoming campaign updates including a campaign against the Job Ready Graduates scheme. Eddie had questioned Grace on her attendance to the USyd CAP protest on the 31st July; Grace had noted that she had reached out to Harrison to gather details on the event in order to attend, and that had agreed to come to USyd at EdCon if USyd would have been willing to contribute towards her flights/accomodation in Sydney. She had not received communications back in either regard.

Ella Gutteridge spoke to the organised protest against Anthony Albanese when he had come to speak at a dinner event in Brisbane. Ella spoke on their ongoing campaign in support of Palestine and the intrinsic involvement of university management the US military industrial complex and why it’s important that we continue to fight against that.

Eddie spoke on the protest held outside of the NSW Labor State Conference. They emphasised the importance of moving student protests into places where traditionally protests are not held in order to effectively show mobilisation. Curtin and ANU have, following the new USyd protest rules, cracked down on enforcing anti-protest rules on campus. Eddie spoke on promoting stickers which marked bathrooms as general use regardless of gender to promote trans rights. Eddie also spoke on ongoing support for trans rights, particularly in the face of the rise of the “Far-right”.

Mairead gave a verbal report, in particular the disappointing response by the current government in its lack of support of disabled students in tertiary education. Working both cross campus and with the government to point out how disabled students were left out from the Accords, in particular with only 13 of the 117 recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission to be accepted. There is ongoing work to push the government to properly address disability issues in the tertiary education space, including their non-committal to a Disability Education Roadmap. NUS will also be involved with the Disability Leadership Collective meeting. DisCon tickest have been released.

Jacinto spoke to his report, particularly his motion regarding a collaboration with BDS Youth to be considered by NX later this meeting.

# Motion to Accept National Officer Reports

**Action**

That National Executive accepts the submitted reports of the National Officers.

**Moved:** Liam McLaren (TAS State Branch President)

**Seconded:** Liam Bessell-Koprek (ACT State Branch President)



* 1. Chance for SBPs to speak further on their reports

Hamish took report as read

Liam M took report as read

Liam B took report as read

Jeremy took report as read

The Chair noted that any further questions regarding reports should be directed to the relevant OB/SBP through chat or email if any came up after the meeting.

# Motion to Accept State Officer Reports

**Action**

That National Executive accepts the submitted reports of the State Officers.

**Moved:** Liam McLaren (TAS State Branch President)

**Seconded:** Liam Bessell-Koprek (ACT State Branch President)



# May/June/July Financial Statements

**Speaker:** Jonathan De La Pena

Spoke on main expenses being EdCon and if there were any questions or issues to reach out to the General Secretary, and that he would be happy to explain.

# Education Conference Review and Reflection

**Speaker:** Jonathan De La Pena & Grace Franco

Grace spoke on accessibility issues, campus accessibility officer was spoken to not national one; that there should be more workshops and less plenaries; that EdCon is not place to move motions and that this was an important milestone for NUS to hold a conference in Perth and for many of our affiliated members in Western Australia to experience.

Jonathan spoke that one of the main outcomes from EdCon was the push of the NUS Reform Working Group and that ways to continue improving the NUS and NUS Conferences should continue to be worked on.

Xavier spoke on the important issues that were discussed at EdCon including issues on Palestine. Pointed out the sharp differences in attitudes between groups on the views on the Labor party. This came to a crux with Fatima Payman being forced out of the Labor party.

Ella spoke that it was important that topics on Palestine were discussed and that it was a good thing that it was brought up to be discussed. Ella noted that the outcome of the conference was worth the issues caused to people.

Mairead spoke that the inaccessibility of the conference was not worth the political outcome/discussion with multiple reports of people unable to engage due to disability issues caused by attendees. Mairead highlighted the USyd Palestinian Deaf Workshop as an example of important activism that remained accessible. She noted that members of Socialist Alternative did not attend this workshop.

Eddie spoke that the importance of EdCon is to facilitate political debate and that it led to NUS making a statement regarding Senator Fatima Payman being ejected from the Labor Party. Eddie noted that the week of action and that these statements were caused by Socialist Alternative pushing forward so much discussion on Palestine.

# Disability Awareness Training

**Speakers:** Mairead Foley & Jonathan De La Pena

A follow up session will be held for those unable to attend today’s session; National Executive was reminded that attendance of Disability Awareness Training is mandatory in accordance with the motion passed at NX 3.



# NUS NX stands with students in Bangladesh

**Preamble**

Youth unemployment in Bangladesh is on the order of 40%. Many students there feel they have no decent future. The problem is exacerbated by discrimination in the public sector. Until recently, 30% of civil service jobs were reserved for family members of “freedom fighters” from the 1971 war of independence. In practice, this means relatives of the ruling Awami League party, and has been used by the party to maintain their grip on the state and curtail Bangladeshi democracy.

This month, Bangladeshi students revolted against this system to demand an end to this pro-regime patronage system and a decent future (other quotas in the civil service, such as guaranteed jobs for ethnic minorities, were not the target of the protests).

For many in Bangladesh, the students’ struggle against the Awami League has become a symbol for their own struggle against poverty and for democratic rights. Students’ mass protests, their call for a “national shutdown” and militant tactics including burning down police stations resulted in the High Court partially conceding to their demands, reducing the quota from 30% to 5%. This is a partial victory and evidence that confrontational protest by masses of students can win.

Shamefully however, the government has also responded with extreme violence, killing over 150 students and implementing patrols by the army. Students aligned with the government-controlled student union have actually aided in this crackdown, attacking their colleagues. However, students have refused to back down and demanded the release of all political prisoners, punishment of government leaders responsible for the crackdown, and the resignation of Prime Minister Sheik Hassina.

The courage of the students in Bangladesh should be an inspiration to us all.

**Platform:**

* NUS NX supports the student revolt in Bangladesh and its demands for equal work rights and the release of political prisoners

**Action:**

* NUS NX will take a solidarity photo in support of the students which the President will post on social media with this post

Ella and Xavier spoke on the motion, noting that students have “won” in the protest with 150 students having died. Eddie spoke that despite the barriers of entry into protest that they are still important to be held and that it’s important to fight past the barriers of entry. Eddie spoke to highlight that there were greater barriers to protest by Bangladeshi students and hoped that NUS would have a fraction of that courage.

Sabrine and Grace noted that we should show respect to those that died in the protests and that we shouldn’t get to the point that they have where deaths were needed to call a protest a “victory”

Hamish and Nathaniel asked if minimising barriers to protest is a priority for the NUS, in particular when the disability officer spoke on the accessibility issues of protests.

Xavier chose to not reply.

**Mover:** Xavier Dupe (National Executive)

**Seconder:** Ella Gutteridge (Queer Officer)

**CWD**

# NUS NX condemns the Sydney University Campus Access Policy

**Preamble**

On Friday June 28, the Sydney University Senate adopted a new draconian Campus Access Policy which attacks the right to free speech on campus. The Campus Access Policy 2024 mandates that all students and staff must now seek 72-hour approval from the university to do any of the following:

* Organise activities that use megaphones or amplifiers
* Set up “temporary structures” including information stalls
* Attach materials, banners, or structures to University buildings or other structures.

You must also send 72-hour notice for any demonstrations organised on University lands.

By mandating that holding information stalls and putting up materials such as posters on campus requires prior approval, the University gives itself the right to prevent students from organising campaigns and activism, and to prevent staff unionists from campaigning against management. The NSW Council for Civil Liberties has condemned the CAP as “a direct attack on the role protest plays in protecting and maintaining our democracy”.

The timing of the policy makes it clear that this is a retaliatory move against the Palestine campaign in the wake of USyd’s Gaza Solidarity Encampment, which kicked off a wave of Palestine solidarity activism at universities across Australia. Students and staff have the right to protest against our university’s complicity with genocide; the CAP is an attack on that activism, in line with similar crackdowns on Palestine campaigning by universities around the world.

But make no mistake - the CAP is an attack on all students. The erosion of basic rights to organise activism and promote events on campus will affect every student unionist and activist, and indeed any student who wants to organise a club or society event at USyd. Staff and students have a long and proud tradition of progressive protest and activism; Sydney University students were some of the key activists who led the freedom rides for Indigenous rights in 1965, campaigned against South African apartheid, and fought against the Vietnam War. Under these new regulations however, all of these activists could have had their demonstrations banned at the whims of their university administration, been dragged through university disciplinary proceedings for promoting their activism, and even been detained by security.

There is no doubt that Universities across Australia are looking to Sydney University’s example to plan their own repressive policies against student organising. The NUS stands in the union tradition of “touch one, touch all” and opposes the USyd CAP as an attack on every student unionist in the country. We demand that the CAP be scrapped and the right to freedom of speech and protest restored to staff and students at Sydney University. We encourage students to join the Education Action Group’s “Scrap the CAP” campaign, and NUS will support this campaign in its fight against university administration.

**Platform:**

* NUS NX condemns the Sydney University Campus Access Policy as a shameful attack on freedom of speech and the right to protest.
* The NUS supports the “Scrap the CAP” campaign organised by the USyd Education Action Group.

**Action:**

* This motion will be published as a statement will from the NUS President social media pages
* NUS NX will take a solidarity photo in support of the Scrap the CAP campaign which will be published on social media alongside this statement
* NUS will lend its support to the Scrap the CAP campaign, including through NUS stalls at unauthorised stall events organised through the campaign and social media promotion of Scrap the CAP events

**Amendment by the mover:**

**Action:**

* The NUS President will email Mark Scott, the USyd VC, to express NUS’ implacable opposition to the CAP, and will contact the presidents to sign on to the open letter against the CAP and email the VC to express their opposition.

**Mover:** Eddie Stephenson (Queer Officer)

**Seconder:** Ela Akyol (Womens Officer)

**CWD**

**Email from BDS Youth re NUS Collab**

*Subject: National Week of Action for Palestine: No Universities Left in Gaza*

Late August: 19-23 August 2024

Co-organised by BDS Youth and NUS

Purpose: educate students about Palestine and Gaza, mobilise new students, show NUS as an activist force, oppose Universities ties with Israel, shed light on the flaws of the IHRA definition as per 2022 position.

| **Monday 19th** | Film Screening |
| --- | --- |
| **Tuesday 20th** | Banner Paint & building Something to mobilise Muslim Student Associations: bake sale fundraiser, teach-in, etc. |
| **Wednesday 21st** | Speakout / strike |
| **Thursday 22nd** | Parliament protest: convoys to Canberra, Payman to speak |
| **Friday 23rd** | Webinar on IHRA definition of anti-semitism, student repression & freedom of speech |
|  |  |
| **Monday 26th** | Webinar on investments and institutional links to weapons manufacturers |
| **Monday 2nd Sept** | Webinar on the importance of boycotts |

**Amendment by the mover:**

**Preamble**

Several weeks ago, a previous Ethnocultural Officer at the University of Sydney proposed a national week of action titled 'No Universities Left in Gaza'. Given the need for the NUS to further organise in this area of great importance to progressive politics as a whole, it is prudent to push forward with supporting and potentially organising this week.

**Platform:**

The NUS NX supports the national week of action 'No Universities Left in Gaza' in line with the NUS' support of the BDS within the current policy platform voted for in the 2023 NUS National Conference.

**Action:**

The NUS will support and advertise the national week of action 'No Universities Left in Gaza', coordinated through the NUS Ethnocultural Officer and their equivalents on affiliated and accredited campuses.

NUS OBs will support this national week of action to whatever degree they desire within their respective campuses/states of residence, coordinating through the Ethnocultural Officer.

**Mover:** Sa’Jacinto Hedus

**Seconder:** Grace Franco

**CWD**

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