Production and Technical Services Review
Discussion Paper

Background

In 2012 the University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU) Students’ Council passed a series of recommendations relating to the transfer of student-facing services from MU Student Union Ltd to UMSU. These services included the Rowden White Library, Union House Theatre, Arts Programs, the George Paton Gallery, Summer School and the Information Centre.

These recommendations also allowed for the possibility of incorporating the Universities’ Volunteering and Orientation programs into UMSU at a later stage, pending the outcome of the Universities VOLT report. The recommendations and report also took into account the need for changed governance and staffing structures within UMSU as well as the ongoing viability of UMSU’s funding and possible outcomes of a return to VSU levels of funding.

One of the recommendations accepted by the Students’ Council endorsed a review of all Production and Technical Services now sitting within UMSU, which will include all production and technical staff roles including provision via AV@Melbourne and Union House Theatre.
AV@Melbourne

AV@Melbourne has historically been associated with the UMSU Entertainment Department, and provides technical, production and hire services to the Union, University and wider community. They are used heavily by UMSU Entertainment for their weekly Beer Band and BBQ’s, and other events such as Comedy Nights, Movie nights and larger scale events. Internal clients such as the various UMSU departments and Office Bearers also use AV@Melbourne for items such as BBQ’s, Projectors and Movie Nights. Affiliated UMSU Clubs are also heavy users of AV@Melbourne, as is the University. They also attract external clients and generate commercial revenue.

AV@Melbourne is expected to be entirely self-funding and to generate surpluses to support the operations of UMSU.

UHT

UHT Production and Technical services provide technical and production support and advice to Student Theatre Groups, assist with the UHT Productions and have a significant role in managing venues and venue hire.

There is a significant workload undertaken in support of student initiated theatre productions and there is a reliance on a range of specialised equipment. A significant proportion is ageing and requires, or will require, replacement.

Venue hire represents a significant source of income that assists in offsetting the total cost of the operation of Union House Theatre.

Terms of Reference of Review

Students’ Council adopted a recommendation that indicated that the review should take into account current and future uses of production and technical services under UMSU. The following items should be addressed during the review:

- To identify the main purpose and need for technical and production requirements and the best way to achieve this for UMSU
- To identify sustainable staffing structure(s), that can support UHT requirements and the requirements of an ongoing AV hire operation
- To identify a financially sustainable business model for technical and production services that caters to the needs of both internal and external hirers and relevant stakeholders
- To identify possible efficiencies between the two production and technical groups
- To create an ongoing business plan for AV@Melbourne
- To reduce requirements for staff to perform additional hours
- To identify priorities for capital expenditure to support organisational objectives
The Review has the key task of identifying the best mechanism and model for the provision of production and technical services to support a broad variety of requirements.

**Reference Group**

The review is to be conducted by an independent consultant and will be supported by a reference group that includes:

- Manager, Arts and Entertainment
- 1 member staff from AV@Melbourne
- 1 member of Theatre production/technical staff

**Role of Reference Group**

The reference group exists to support and provide information as requested and to act as a primary point of discussion and feedback for the consultant. It is expected that the consultant will develop recommendations in conjunction with the Reference Group.

The role of the Reference Group is advisory. Final decisions will rest with Students’ Council. The Reference Group will work with the consultant to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in the review process.

The Reference Group will have the opportunity to review the consultant’s report and recommendations before they are finalised for submission to the General Manager and President of UMSU.