


<p><b>University of Melbourne Student Union</b>  <b>Meeting of the Students' Council</b>  <b>Minutes</b>  <b>Thursday 19 March, 1pm</b>  <b>Meeting 4(26)</b>  <b>Location: North Lecture Theatre Theatre, Old Arts; Zoom (on request)</b></p>	
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**Meeting opened at 1:11 pm**

**1. Procedural Matters**

**1.1. Election of Chair**

Motion: That Daniel Motika be elected as Chair

Moved: Daniel Motika Seconded: Marc Khor

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**1.2. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Custodians**

So acknowledged.

**1.3. Attendance**

*Councillors*

Representatives on Students' Council	Full name	Attended?
Students of Colour Representative on Students' Council	Marc Khor	Yes
Students' Council Indigenous Representative	<i>Vacant</i>	
Students with Disabilities Representative on Students' Council	Catherine Duong	Yes
Queer Representative on Students' Council	Binderiya Batzorig	<i>No (Leave)</i>
International Student Representative on Students' Council	Prayag Sethia	Yes
Graduate Student Representative on Students' Council	Chengmin Shi	Yes
Southbank Student Representative on Students' Council	Matteo Bonson	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Dominic Lam Xan Jun	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Bhavin Garg	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Amaya Castro Williams	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Riley Shepherd	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Hannah Roseman-Gannon	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Siddhanth Subbaiah Belliappa	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	James Duncan	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Toby Putland	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Khush Shah	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Yasmeen Atieh	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Holly Kalns	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Somaya Qasimi	<i>No (Leave)</i>
Students' Council (General Representative)	Devashree Kathale	<i>No (Leave)</i>

<b>Students' Council (General Representative)</b>	Felicity Bayne	<i>No (Late)</i>
<b>Students' Council (General Representative)</b>	Mathilda Stewart	<i>Yes</i>

*Office Bearers*

<b>Department</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Attended?</b>
<b>President</b>	Lushomo Chinganya	<i>Yes</i>
<b>General Secretary</b>	Daniel Motika	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Activities Officer</b>	Saasha Vohra	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Activities Officer</b>	Chuanqing (Louis) Huang	<i>Resigned</i>
<b>Burnley Campus Coordinator</b>	Ian Adams	<i>No</i>
<b>Creative Arts Officer</b>	Ethan McNeil	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Creative Arts Officer</b>	Yashesvi Verma	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Clubs &amp; Societies Officer</b>	Seamus Donnellan	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Clubs &amp; Societies Officer</b>	Alex Gwynn	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Disabilities Officer</b>	Maehula Datta	<i>No</i>
<b>Education (Academic Affairs) Officer</b>	Corbin Afanasyev	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Education (Academic Affairs) Officer</b>	Hesheya T Anandan	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Education (Public Affairs) Officer</b>	Hridey Kapoor	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Education (Public Affairs) Officer</b>	Rutvi Tolani	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Environment Officer</b>	Bella Beiraghi	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Environment Officer</b>	Kay Pritchard	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Indigenous Officer</b>	<i>Vacant</i>	
<b>Media Officer</b>	Maria Carolina Lourenco Quartel	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Media Officer</b>	Ruby Weir-Alarcon	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Media Officer</b>	Sabine Pentecost	<i>No</i>
<b>Media Officer</b>	Chiaki Chng	<i>Yes</i>
<b>People of Colour Officer</b>	Anyang Wal	<i>No</i>
<b>People of Colour Officer</b>	Chengyang (Eason) Gu	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Queer Officer</b>	Lytton Namawanda	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Welfare Officer</b>	Tsun Ying (Cynthia) Wong	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Welfare Officer</b>	Alexander Hams	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Women's Officer</b>	Manika Birmiwai	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Women's Officer</b>	Eya Takrouni	<i>No</i>
<b>Southbank Campus Co-ordinator</b>	Caleb Jarcevic	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Southbank Campus Co-ordinator</b>	Charlotte Dickinson	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Southbank Activities Officer</b>	Tirion Luff-White	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Southbank Education Officer</b>	Elizabeth Victoria Pardallis	<i>Yes</i>
<b>UMSU International President</b>	Momoka Honda	<i>Yes</i>
<b>UMSU International Secretary</b>	Redd Danielle Sy	<i>Yes</i>

Others: Sara Pheasant, Fiona Sanders, Alyssa Shaw, Lachie James, Mary Kin Chan, Hana Arai, Lachlan McCallum, Pryce Starkey, Charlotte Rankin, Nathan Ben-David, Chris Vassiliadis, Avishi Bhasin, Maya Schildkraut, Rhea Sankar, Kenway Sheridan, Mishka, Zuhair Mobasshar, Anuki, Sophie

**1.4. Apologies**

*Office Bearers:*

- Ian Adams

- Kay Pritchard
- Ruby Weir-Alarcon
- Anyang Wal
- Sabine Pentecost

The Chair clarified that Kay and Ruby are present in the room.

### 1.5. Proxies

- 1.5.1. Binderiya Batzorig to Kenway Sheridan
- 1.5.2. Prayag Sethia to Zuhair Mobasshar
- 1.5.3. Somaya Qasimi to Avisi Bhasin
- 1.5.4. Devashree Kathale to Mishka
- 1.5.5. Siddhant Subbaiah Belliappa to Rhea Sankar
- 1.5.6. Felicity Bayne to Charlotte Rankin

The Chair clarified that Prayag is present in the room and therefore does not require a proxy.

### 1.6. Leave of Absence Requests

#### 1.6.1. For this Council:

- 1.6.1.1. Prayag Sethia
- 1.6.1.2. Binderiya Batzorig
- 1.6.1.3. Somaya Qasimi
- 1.6.1.4. Devashree Kathale
- 1.6.1.5. Anyang Wal
- 1.6.1.6. Siddhant Subbaiah Belliappa

The Chair clarified that Prayag is present in the room and therefore does not require taking a leave of absence for this Council.

Motion: To accept the leave of absence request for Siddhant this Council.

Moved: Rhea Sankar

Seconded: Khush Shah

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

### 1.7. Membership

- 1.7.1. Noah Kellett has resigned from the position of Indigenous Officer
- 1.7.2. Shreyas Saluja has been terminated from Students' Council
- 1.7.3. Yasmeen Atieh has been ticket appointed to Students' Council
- 1.7.4. Riley Shepherd has been ticket appointed to Students' Council

Ruby Weir-Alarcon, Media Officer, asked for everyone to announce their name when speaking for the purposes of accuracy in writing Twitter posts.

Daniel Motika, General Secretary, clarified that as of yesterday (18 March), Louis Huang has resigned from the position of Activities Officer. This was not reflected in the agenda, as the resignation came after the agenda was distributed.

Momoka Honda, UMSU International President, noted that both her and Redd (UMSU International Secretary), will not be present between 3-4pm. She asked how the motion regarding UMSU International Regulations will proceed.

Daniel Motika, General Secretary, clarified that someone else in the meeting can move and second the motion.

### 1.8. Adoption of Agenda

Motion: To adopt the Agenda as presented.

Moved: Chair

Seconded: Marc Khor

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

## 2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

### 2.1. Minutes 3(26)

Sara Pheasant, CEO, and Mary Kin Chan, minute taker, raised a point of clarification regarding the Preamble of Motion 10.1 - UMSU has in fact kept records of conflicts of interest in previous years. A conflict of interest declaration is also a standing agenda item in Council meetings. This was going to be raised last Council before the meeting became inquorate.

Motion: To accept the minutes as a true and accurate record as amended.

Moved: Chair

Seconded: Catherine Duong

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

## 3. Conflicts of Interest Declaration

## 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

## 5. Correspondence

### 5.1. Proposed Changes to the UMSU Electoral Regulations

The Chair proposed that the meeting move in camera. Some attendees in the room questioned why.

Sara Pheasant, CEO, clarified that Council has a choice whether to move in camera or not. The purpose of moving in camera is to enable voting Councillors to have a full and frank conversations about matters that might have confidentiality concerns. Council can then move out of camera at the decision making stage.

**Procedural Motion:** To move in camera, with UMSU management, A&L staff and SRD staff, and minute taker remaining in the room.

Moved: Chair

Seconded: Marc Khor

CARRIED WITH DISSENT

Khush Shah, Bhavin Garg, Mathilda Stewart, Toby Putland, and Rhea Sankar requested to have their dissent noted per R19.10 of the Standing Orders.

**Council moved in camera at 1:25 pm**

*13 observers departed from the meeting room.*

**Procedural Motion:** That no phones are permitted to be used in camera.

Moved: Ruby Weir-Alarcon

Seconded: Khush Shah

FAILED

**Motion: To endorse the proposed changes to the Electoral Regulations**

Preamble:

The proposed changes to the Electoral Regulations have been constructed over the last three months in response to the Returning Officer's report, as directed by the Electoral Tribunal. The proposed regulations also include a number of extra changes proposed by the General Secretary and reviewed by Moores.

It is important that many of these recommendations are meaningfully implemented. Although, Recommendation One of the 2025 Returning Officer's Report cannot be implemented as it contradicts the constitution and undermines the independence of the Electoral Tribunal. Under the constitution, the Electoral Tribunal has complete discretion over the form of polling and any attempt to make any form of polling the 'default' contradicts this. Hence, regulations such as R30.1, and arguably others, serve to undermine the independence of the Electoral Tribunal.

A number of the changes could not be implemented as they would require a change to the constitution, particularly the definition of a disability or disabled students and the size of certain committees.

It is also important to note that decisions around how the recommendations in the report are implemented occur without bias for the appointment of the Returning Officer. It is vital the decision around these regulations is made in the best interest of UMSU, as an organisation, and not to appease any prospective Returning Officers.

Action:

- That Students' Council endorse all proposed amendments to the UMSU Electoral Regulations in the version circulated, except R30.1 and R26.3(c).
- That the CEO send a copy of this motion, including the preamble, to the Electoral Tribunal.

Moved: Daniel Motika

Seconded: Yashesvi Verma

*Mathilda was named once by the Chair for taking a selfie in the room.*

**Procedural Motion:** To let Felicity Bayne back in the room to replace Charlotte Rankin in camera.

Moved: Ruby Weir-Alarcon

CARRIED

**Procedural Motion:** That speaking time be limited to 1.5 minutes.

Moved: Chair

This procedural motion was imposed by the Chair per R14.8 of the Standing Orders.

**Procedural Motion:** To allow Zuhair Mobasshar to enter the meeting.

Moved: Daniel Motika

CARRIED

*Zuhair Mobasshar entered the meeting room at 2:45 pm.*

**Procedural Motion:** To accept Zuhair as Prayag's proxy.

Moved: Daniel Motika

CARRIED

**Procedural Motion:** That Students' Council defers this discussion until Councillors receive the required documents including the original amendments proposed by Moores', and a summary of the determination held by the Electoral Tribunal hearing in October 2025.

Moved: Rhea Sankar

FAILED

**Procedural Motion:** To go on a 15 minute break.

Moved: Chair

This procedural motion was imposed by the Chair per R14.8 of the Standing Orders.

*Council adjourned at 3:16 pm.*

*Council resumed at 3:33 pm.*

Foreshadowed Motion: That Council endorses the changes to RR 28.3 30 and 28.3 proposed and drafted by the Advocacy & Legal Divisional Manager.

Moved: Rhea Sankar

**Procedural Motion:** To move out of camera.

Moved: Rhea Sankar

FAILED

Motion: That the motion be adopted as presented.

Moved: Daniel Motika

Seconded: Yashesvi Verma

CARRIED WITH DISSENT

Mathilda Stewart, Bhavin Garg, Khush Shah, Rhea Sankar, Toby Putland, Felicity Bayne, Amaya Castro Williams, Hannah Roseman-Gannon, and Yasmeen Atieh requested to have their dissent noted per R19.10 of the Standing Orders.

**Procedural Motion:** To move out of camera.

Moved: Chair

CARRIED

**Council moved out of camera at 3:43 pm**

*4 observers returned to the meeting room*

**Procedural Motion:** To cede the Chair to Daniel.

Moved: Lushy Chinganya

This procedural motion was imposed by the Chair per R14.8 of the Standing Orders.

Daniel Motika, General Secretary, resumed chairing the meeting.

## 6. Office Bearer Reports

Department	Full name	Submission Status?
<b>President</b>	Lushomo Chinganya	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>General Secretary</b>	Daniel Motika	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Activities Officer</b>	Saisha Vohra	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Activities Officer</b>	Chuanqing (Louis) Huang	<i>Not Submitted</i>
<b>Burnley Campus Coordinator</b>	Ian Adams	<i>Not Submitted</i>
<b>Creative Arts Officer</b>	Ethan McNeil	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Creative Arts Officer</b>	Yashesvi Verma	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Clubs &amp; Societies Officer</b>	Seamus Donnellan	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Clubs &amp; Societies Officer</b>	Alex Gwynn	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Disabilities Officer</b>	Maehula Datta	<i>Not Submitted</i>
<b>Education (Academic Affairs) Officer</b>	Corbin Afanasyev	<i>Submitted</i>

<b>Education (Academic Affairs) Officer</b>	Hesheya T Anandan	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Education (Public Affairs) Officer</b>	Hridey Kapoor	<i>Submitted Late</i>
<b>Education (Public Affairs) Officer</b>	Rutvi Tolani	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Environment Officer</b>	Bella Beiraghi	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Environment Officer</b>	Kay Pritchard	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Indigenous Officer</b>	<i>Vacant</i>	
<b>Media Officer</b>	Maria Carolina Lourenco Quartel	<i>Submitted Late</i>
<b>Media Officer</b>	Ruby Weir-Alarcon	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Media Officer</b>	Sabine Pentecost	<i>Submitted Late</i>
<b>Media Officer</b>	Chiaki Chng	<i>Not Submitted</i>
<b>People of Colour Officer</b>	Anyang Wal	<i>Not Submitted</i>
<b>People of Colour Officer</b>	Chengyang (Eason) Gu	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Queer Officer</b>	Lyton Namawanda	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Welfare Officer</b>	Tsun Ying (Cynthia) Wong	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Welfare Officer</b>	Alexander Hams	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Women's Officer</b>	Manika Birmiwal	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Women's Officer</b>	Eya Takrouni	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Southbank Campus Co-ordinator</b>	Caleb Jarcevic	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Southbank Campus Co-ordinator</b>	Charlotte Dickinson	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Southbank Activities Officer</b>	Tirion Luff-White	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>Southbank Education Officer</b>	Elizabeth Victoria Pardallis	<i>Submitted</i>
<b>UMSU International President</b>	Momoka Honda	<i>Submitted Late</i>

A few Office Bearers spoke to their report:

- Maria Quartel, Media Officer, encouraged fellow Officers to write to Farrago.
- Momoka Honda, UMSU International President, noted that if other departments or tickets would like to raise an issue that concerns UMSU International or international students, she recommends that they speak with the UMSU International President first.

Motion: To accept the OB Reports en bloc.

Moved: Chair

Seconded: Marc Khor

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** That Students' Council suspend the Standing Orders such that any amendment to Motions on Notice 10.2, .3, .4, .5, .7, where not amenable to the movers of said motions, are discussed and voted on prior to the vote on the substantive motion.

Moved: Aidan Wujanto-Hawe

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** That Students' Council hear Motion 10.3 "UMSU opposes the far right One Nation Party" after Motion 10.4.

Moved: Aidan Wujanto-Hawe

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** That Students' Council hear and vote upon Motions 10.2 and 10.6 en bloc.

Moved: Aidan Wujanto-Hawe

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** To move in camera, with Mary remaining in the room.

Moved: Chair

CARRIED WITH DISSENT

Mathilda Stewart, Bhavin Garg, Khush Shah, Rhea Sankar (proxy for Siddanth Belliappa), and Toby Putland requested to have their dissent noted per R19.10 of the Standing Orders.

**Council moved in camera at 3:55 pm**

*Staff members (except Sara and Mary), and some observers left the meeting room*

## 7. CEO Report

### 7.1. CEO Report 4(26)

Motion: To note the CEO's report.

Moved: Chair

Seconded: Marc Khor

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** To move out of camera.

Moved: Chair

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Council moved out of camera at 4:12 pm**

*Staff returned to the meeting*

## 8. Other Reports

### 8.1. Operations Sub-Committee 1(26)

Daniel briefly spoke to this item, for Council's noting.

## 9. Operational Business

### 9.1. Media motion

Motion: To move \$1,500 from Operation Sub-Committee to the Media Department budget code ending in 3840.

Moved: Chiaki Chng

Seconded: Maria Quartel

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

## 9.2. Media motion

Motion: To approve \$1,500 from Events (account code: 03-60-3840) to cover a bar tab for the Farrago Edition One Launch Party.

Moved: Chiaki Chng

Seconded: Maria Quartel

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

The Chair clarified that there is no limit on speaking time (ie previous limit of 1.5 minutes does not apply).

## 10. Motions on Notice

### 10.1. Clubs & Societies Regulations

Motion: To approve the amendment to regulation R5.4.

Moved: Alex Gwynn

Seconded: Seamus Donnellan

MOTION WITHDRAWN

Alex Gwynn, Clubs & Societies Officer, spoke to the motion, which was discussed in 3(26) Council but not put to a vote before quorum was lost during the meeting. She noted that the regulation number in the motion is not actually the provision the Department was hoping to change. She subsequently proposed an amendment.

**Proposed Amendment:** To approve the amendment to regulation R4.4 and R5.3, and appendix 3.

Moved: Alex Gwynn

Alex clarified that she would like to withdraw the motion to prevent an inconsistency in the Clubs & Societies Regulations.

Motion: To withdraw Motion 10.1

Moved: Alex Gwynn

### 10.2. UMSU opposes the *Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism* bill

Preamble:

On January 20, the federal Labor government, with the support of the Liberal opposition, rushed the Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism Bill into law. UMSU must oppose the legislation as a fundamental threat to freedom of speech and political expression, particularly criticism of Israel. At the core of the bill is a huge expansion of the power both to ban organisations and criminalise individuals, on an expansive and subjective definition of hate speech. The bill likewise introduces harsh penalties, including up to 15 years imprisonment for “intentionally” directing the actions of a designated hate group.

Under these laws, groups can be designated hate organisations at the discretion of the Home Affairs Minister and director-general of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). Organisations designated as hate groups are not

required to have been proved in court as having engaged in hate crimes. Judgments are based on vague and subjective criteria left to the interpretation of only three senior ministers and security officials. The bill outlines explicitly that the minister is not required to observe procedural fairness.

Concerningly, the definitions of hate speech in the bill provide broad grounds for the legislation to be weaponised against pro-Palestine speech. Inclusion of "national origin" as a protected category poses a particular risk, especially when combined with guidelines such as the IHRA definition of antisemitism which claims that criticism of Israel is itself antisemitism. When questioned on the 7.30 Report, attorney-general Clare Rowland could not confirm that criticism of Israel would not fall foul of the legislation.

Criticism of a government's policies or actions, including criticism of Israel's genocide in Gaza, is legitimate political speech. Opposing Israel's genocide in Gaza is not hate speech or racism. In the same way, criticising Trump's government or the Iranian regime would not be hate speech towards all Americans or Muslims. Further, many Jewish people are critical of the Israeli government's genocide in Gaza, not because of racist hatred, but due to the policies and actions taken by Israel.

The official death toll in Gaza is over 70,000 (though Lancet Medical Journal claims it is more accurately around 600,000). Voicing opposition to what many human rights organisations have deemed a genocide (see Amnesty International or United Nations) is valid political expression within our democratic rights.

As the application of these powers is heavily influenced by the interpretation of the minister, rather than courts of law, any change in government could bring new interpretations which weaponise the laws further.

Proposed grounds for designation as being "reasonably necessary to prevent social, economic, psychological and physical harm" echoes many of the arguments which have been used to suppress free speech. For example, the controversial Segal report into antisemitism, which has been subsequently endorsed by the Albanese government and is referenced in the bill, categorises even basic acts of Palestinian national expression such as wearing a keffiyeh, as psychologically distressing.

In the context of growing restrictions on free speech, and a public campaign of slander against Palestine solidarity movement, it is imperative for UMSU to stand up and fight for the right to political expression.

#### Platform:

- UMSU opposes the Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism bill on the basis that it will give the Home Affairs minister, the Australian Federal Police minister and the ASIO head sweeping powers to ban organisations, jail individuals and prevent migrants from entering the country based on broad and vague criteria.
- UMSU recognises that this bill has been passed in a context of repression against the anti-racist Pro-Palestine movement

- UMSU reaffirms the right to free speech and defends the right of political expression
- UMSU reaffirms its opposition to all forms of racism including antisemitism and islamophobia

Action:

- The UMSU president will release a statement based on this motions preamble in condemnation of the Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism bill
- UMSU will collaborate with any free speech campaigns organised by the National Union of Students

Amaya Castro Williams, voting councillor, exercised speaking rights as the mover to Motion 10.2. Queensland's new legislation is creating a new legal framework restricting the freedom of speech.

Aidan Wujanto-Hawe, student observer, exercised speaking rights as the seconder (to Motion 10.6). The legislations confers sweeping powers to officials such as the ASIO General, Director-General, and AFP Chief. It matters a lot that UMSU makes a public stance.

Bella Beiraghi, Environment Officer and mover of Motion 10.6 ceded speaking rights to Yasmeen Atieh.

Lushy Chinganya, UMSU President, exercised speaking rights as the mover to Motion 10.6. What is happening in Queensland is an infringement of speech and constitutes oppression to supporters of Palestinian causes.

Nathan Ben-David exercised speaking rights as a student observer. He commented on the following:

- The motion has serious claim on what the bill is, and provides many hypotheticals on how the bill may work. There should be greater sensitivity around and consideration given to people who have been subject to antisemitic hate.
- There is a reason why organisations are being banned by the legislation, it is because they promote violence and hate.
- Council needs to be sensitive to the reality that this moving this motion is not an act in isolation, but is happening in the context of heightened verbal and physical attack on the Jewish community

Bella Beiraghi, Environment Officer, replied that people are being slandered as being antisemitic in practice. Hate speech provisions are being used against pro Palestine speech, including phrases and acts of solidarity towards Palestinian people.

Corbin Afanasyev, Education (Academic) Officer, noted that freedom of speech is important, but is also important to consider impact of said speech, particularly on

marginalised communities and cultural groups. It is possible to criticise a country without criticising its people

Lushy Chinganya, UMSU President, proposed an amendment to the motion.

Summarised as follows:

- Preamble: Attorney-General's name corrected to 'Michelle Rowland'; second sentence of paragraph four removed
- Platform: adding three points, and removing one
- Action: removing one action point

**Proposed Amendment:**

Preamble:

On January 20, the federal Labor government, with the support of the Liberal opposition, rushed the Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism Bill into law. UMSU must oppose the legislation as a fundamental threat to freedom of speech and political expression, particularly criticism of Israel. At the core of the bill is a huge expansion of the power both to ban organisations and criminalise individuals, on an expansive and subjective definition of hate speech. The bill likewise introduces harsh penalties, including up to 15 years imprisonment for "intentionally" directing the actions of a designated hate group.

Under these laws, groups can be designated hate organisations at the discretion of the Home Affairs Minister and director-general of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). Organisations designated as hate groups are not required to have been proved in court as having engaged in hate crimes. Judgments are based on vague and subjective criteria left to the interpretation of only three senior ministers and security officials. The bill outlines explicitly that the minister is not required to observe procedural fairness.

Concerningly, the definitions of hate speech in the bill provide broad grounds for the legislation to be weaponised against pro-Palestine speech. Inclusion of "national origin" as a protected category poses a particular risk, especially when combined with guidelines such as the IHRA definition of antisemitism which claims that criticism of Israel is itself antisemitism. When questioned on the 7.30 Report, attorney-general Michelle Rowland could not confirm that criticism of Israel would not fall foul of the legislation.

Criticism of a government's policies or actions, including criticism of Israel's genocide in Gaza, is legitimate political speech. Opposing Israel's genocide in Gaza is not hate speech or racism.

The official death toll in Gaza is over 70,000 (though Lancet Medical Journal claims it is more accurately around 600,000). Voicing opposition to what many human rights organisations have deemed a genocide (see Amnesty International or United Nations) is valid political expression within our democratic rights.

As the application of these powers is heavily influenced by the interpretation of the minister, rather than courts of law, any change in government could bring new interpretations which weaponise the laws further.

Proposed grounds for designation as being “reasonably necessary to prevent social, economic, psychological and physical harm” echoes many of the arguments which have been used to suppress free speech. For example, the controversial Segal report into antisemitism, which has been subsequently endorsed by the Albanese government and is referenced in the bill, categorises even basic acts of Palestinian national expression such as wearing a keffiyeh, as psychologically distressing.

In the context of growing restrictions on free speech, and a public campaign of slander against Palestine solidarity movement, it is imperative for UMSU to stand up and fight for the right to political expression.

Platform:

- UMSU opposes the Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism bill on the basis that it will give the Home Affairs minister, the Australian Federal Police minister and the ASIO head sweeping powers to ban organisations, jail individuals and prevent migrants from entering the country based on broad and vague criteria.
- UMSU recognises that this bill has been passed in a context of repression against the anti-racist Pro-Palestine movement
- UMSU reaffirms the right to free speech and defends the right of political expression
- UMSU recognises the rise of antisemitism and the hurt it has caused Jewish people nation-wide, and affirms that restricting political expression does not prevent antisemitism.
- UMSU holds this truth in the same space as its affirmation of the right of all people to nonviolent, political expression.
- UMSU reaffirms its unequivocal condemnation of antisemitism and all forms of discrimination.

Action:

- UMSU will collaborate with any free speech campaigns organised by the National Union of Students

*Amendments to the Preamble and Platform are amenable to the mover.*

*Amendment to remove Action point 1 is not amenable to the mover.*

There was discussion in the room about Council making its stances and positions open to the public.

Lushy Chinganya, UMSU President, reminded Council that the minutes will be published publicly. President's statements are time-consuming to write. It is Council's responsibility to review and amend motions in a way to ensure harmful debate won't be drawn out of Council's stance.

Nathan Ben-David disagreed with a sentence in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph of the Preamble:  
*“Inclusion of “national origin” as a protected category poses a particular risk, especially when combined with guidelines such as the IHRA definition of antisemitism which claims that criticism of Israel is itself antisemitism”*

Motion: To vote on the amendment.

Moved: Lushy Chinganya

Seconded: Dominic Lam Xuan Jun

CARRIED WITH DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** To limit speaking time to one minute.

Moved: Chair

This procedural motion was imposed by the Chair per R14.8 of the Standing Orders.

Further discussion points touched on the following:

- UMSU opposes all forms of racism and discrimination, or hate against a person's identity
- Council should condemn the lack of proper consultation process in passing such a bill. History of colonisation is something we should not be silent on.
- The legislation dangerously lowers threshold for hate speech

Motion: To adopt the motion as amended.

Moved: Amaya Castro Williams

Seconded: Aidan Wujanto-Hawe

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** To discuss Motion 10.9 first.

Moved: Alex Gwynn

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** To approve the following proxies en bloc:

- Martin as James' proxy
- Evelyn as Somaya's proxy
- Ohana as Devashree's proxy

### 10.3. UMSU opposes the far right One Nation Party

Preamble:

Racist far right Senator Pauline Hanson has risen in the polls to become the most favourable politician in Australia. Polling by Redbridge puts her favourability at 38%, while Prime Minister Anthony Albanese trails behind at 34%. In a number of polls, One Nation have trounced the Liberals becoming the main right opposition party.

In the White House, Trump is waging war on the working class, sending ICE terror into working class neighbourhoods and rolling back every progressive gain made since the civil rights movement. Donald Trump's fascistic second term has inspired the international far right. Across Europe, far right and neo-Nazi outfits like the Alternative for Germany party, Brothers of Italy party, National Rally in France and Reform in the UK, are either winning elections or very close to winning. The international far right wins election campaigns based on anti-immigration and racist policies, particularly Islamophobia.

For ages, the far right have been confined to the margins of Australian politics. This is no longer the case. Australia is not the exception. The far right threat is here and it is real, and looking towards their hero in Trump to copy his political playbook.

One Nation is supported by Australia's homegrown MAGA Billionaires, including mining boss Gina Reinhart and NewsCorp's Rupert Murdoch. They are receiving huge amounts of funding from Australia's richest so they can promote their bigoted, racist, anti-left/anti-woke platform.

Fighting the far right in Australia is a serious question for students unionists and UMSU. We oppose the racism and bigotry that the far right wants to increase in all corners of society.

Voting for the Labor government will not challenge One Nation. Labor has stoked racism and anti-migrant, anti-refugee sentiments for decades. They uphold the demonisation of refugees in offshore detention centres, left to rot indefinitely. This is the same refugee system that "inspired" Donald Trump in 2017. Like many centre parties globally, Labor has legitimated racist politics. This shows the necessity for a principled anti-racist, pro-migrant, pro-working class political alternative.

We need to build a political alternative to One Nation. That can start on the streets: for example when the NSN-led March for Australia rallies happened in Melbourne they were met with thousands-strong anti-racist counterprotests.

We should take a lead from the working class of Minneapolis who went out on strike on Jan 23 in a huge blow against Trump's ICE terror campaign. High school and university student walk outs have spread across the country against ICE and Trump's fascist agenda. Last week unionists at Melbourne's Crown Casino walked off the job in protest of a screening of A Super Progressive Movie (Hanson's new bigoted movie).

This is the orientation UMSU and student unionists should adopt.

Platform:

- UMSU recognises the growing far right threat One Nation represents
- UMSU condemns One Nation's white nationalist and anti-migrant racism
- UMSU recognises voting Labor won't stop One Nation
- UMSU commits to supporting anti-fascist activism organised by the Campaign against Racism and Fascism and other progressive groups in against One Nation events

Action:

- UMSU will make a statement on Instagram confirming a commitment to anti-racism and opposition to One Nation

Aidan Wujanto-Hawe, student observer, exercised speaking rights as the mover.

Anuki, student observer, exercised speaking rights as the seconder.

Discussion broadly concurred that it is important for Council to make a stand against racism, discrimination, and right wing ideologies.

Lushy Chinganya, UMSU President, proposed an amendment to the motion.

Summarised as follows:

- To remove references to Gina Reinhart and Rupert Murdoch, replacing with a reference to One Nation;
- To remove the action point

**Proposed Amendment:**

Preamble:

Racist far right Senator Pauline Hanson has risen in the polls to become the most favourable politician in Australia. Polling by Redbridge puts her favourability at 38%, while Prime Minister Anthony Albanese trails behind at 34%. In a number of polls, One Nation have trounced the Liberals becoming the main right opposition party.

In the White House, Trump is waging war on the working class, sending ICE terror into working class neighbourhoods and rolling back every progressive gain made since the civil rights movement. Donald Trump's fascistic second term has inspired the international far right. Across Europe, far right and neo-Nazi outfits like the Alternative for Germany party, Brothers of Italy party, National Rally in France and Reform in the UK, are either winning elections or very close to winning. The international far right wins election campaigns based on anti-immigration and racist policies, particularly Islamophobia.

For ages, the far right have been confined to the margins of Australian politics. This is no longer the case. Australia is not the exception. The far right threat is here and it is real, and looking towards their hero in Trump to copy his political playbook.

One Nation is supported by Australia's homegrown MAGA Billionaires. One Nation are receiving huge amounts of funding from Australia's richest so they can promote their bigoted, racist, anti-left/anti-woke platform.

Fighting the far right in Australia is a serious question for students unionists and UMSU. We oppose the racism and bigotry that the far right wants to increase in all corners of society.

Voting for the Labor government will not challenge One Nation. Labor has stoked racism and anti-migrant, anti-refugee sentiments for decades. They uphold the

demonisation of refugees in offshore detention centres, left to rot indefinitely. This is the same refugee system that “inspired” Donald Trump in 2017. Like many centre parties globally, Labor has legitimated racist politics. This shows the necessity for a principled anti-racist, pro-migrant, pro-working class political alternative.

We need to build a political alternative to One Nation. That can start on the streets: for example when the NSN-led March for Australia rallies happened in Melbourne they were met with thousands-strong anti-racist counterprotests.

We should take a lead from the working class of Minneapolis who went out on strike on Jan 23 in a huge blow against Trump’s ICE terror campaign. High school and university student walk outs have spread across the country against ICE and Trump’s fascist agenda. Last week unionists at Melbourne’s Crown Casino walked off the job in protest of a screening of A Super Progressive Movie (Hanson’s new bigoted movie).

This is the orientation UMSU and student unionists should adopt.

Platform:

- UMSU recognises the growing far right threat One Nation represents
- UMSU condemns One Nation’s white nationalist and anti-migrant racism
- UMSU recognises voting Labor won’t stop One Nation
- UMSU commits to supporting anti-fascist activism organised by the Campaign against Racism and Fascism and other progressive groups in against One Nation events

Moved: Lushy Chinganya

*This was amenable to the mover.*

Motion: To adopt the motion as amended.

Moved: Aidan Wujanto-Hawe

Seconded: Anuki

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

#### **10.4. UMSU opposes the Antisemitism Report Card for Universities**

Preamble:

UMSU is deeply alarmed by new documents that reveal how Jillian Segal’s Antisemitism Report Card for Universities will grade universities on how well they crack down on campus anti-war protests, including those calling for an end to Israel’s genocide in Gaza.

When this measure was first recommended in Segal’s report from July 2025, it involved threats to defund universities if they did not sufficiently comply with the criteria it laid out. The Jewish Council of Australia’s Max Kaiser commented that the

report “echoes the authoritarian playbook used by figures like Donald Trump – using funding as a weapon to enforce ideological conformity”.

The report card system explicitly aims at restricting pro-Palestine speech, such as “protests, encampments and display of flags, imagery and promotional materials”, by assessing universities' willingness to restrict these legitimate political activities. The report card system, and the broader Segal report, dangerously conflates legitimate criticism of Israeli state policy, as well as basic expressions of Palestinian national identity such as wearing keffiyehs, with racial vilification.

Former ACU Vice-Chancellor Greg Craven has been appointed to lead the report card initiative. Craven is a right wing political figure who provided George Pell with a character reference, suggested that Jewish Council of Australia advisory committee member Louise Adler be given “a couple of decades' house arrest”, and referred to the mass anti-war movement for peace and justice in Palestine as “an armed insurrection against the Australian state.” He has explicitly attacked student unions around the country.

At the University of Melbourne students have already had their rights to demonstrate severely restricted by the “Protest Direction” in the Vice Chancellor's Regulation introduced in March 2025. These restrictions were widely condemned, including by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Human Rights Legal Centre, and by UMSU itself. The implementation of the report card system, which explicitly mentions “student and non-student bodies” as subject to its investigation, will only serve to encourage further restrictions on the rights of students and the independence of student unions.

UMSU has a responsibility to oppose this attack on both the rights of student unions and individual students to take political positions and organise political action on campus. This means taking a proactive approach in rejecting the report card system's implementation on our campus and its dangerous conflation of pro-Palestine sentiment with antisemitism.

#### Platform:

- UMSU opposes the Antisemitism Report Card for Universities process as a dangerous attack on the rights of students to freedom of speech, expression, and assembly.
- UMSU opposes the conflation of pro-Palestine speech and protest with antisemitism.
- UMSU commits itself to stay updated on the first round of assessment in May, and oppose any reports made that falsely conflate pro-Palestine speech with antisemitism.
- UMSU calls on the University of Melbourne to reject and refuse to implement the Antisemitism Report Card for Universities.
- UMSU commits to defending the rights of students to freedom of speech, expression, and assembly on campus, including against the report card system.

- UMSU reaffirms its unequivocal condemnation of antisemitism and all forms of racism.

Action:

- The UMSU President will release a press statement to this effect to be circulated to the media.
  - This statement should explicitly reject the notion that examples of pro-Palestine protest and speech has contributed to a rise in antisemitism on campuses.

Aidan Wujanto-Hawe, student councillor, spoke to the following as the mover of the motion:

- Concerns about using funding as a weapon, and need for universities to manage activities such as encampments, which is an action against Palestinian advocacy, in order to meet compliance.
- Leader of this report card initiative has made comments against the Palestinian movement and advocates.
- Need to take a strong stand against this and therefore asked to release a press statement in order to support the independence of the student union.

Yasmeen Atieh, voting councillor, exercised speaking rights as the seconder. She concurred with the observation of restricted student activity at the University of Melbourne.

Nathan Ben-David, student observer, moved a procedural to extend the speaking time. The reason being that this motion around antisemitism was not consulted with Jewish students.

**Procedural Motion:** To extend the speaking time.

Moved: Nathan Ben-David

CARRIED WITH DISSENT

Nathan spoke to issues broadly encompassing the following:

- Raised concerns around experience of Jewish students which includes harassment and racism.
- Antisemitism is not abstract – it is directly threatening students.
- The intent is not to attribute the blame for antisemitism to any one specific individual, but we must take responsibility for this issue.
- Called for civil discourse on this issue.
- Motion rests on the idea that the report card is there to suppress Palestinian advocacy. But the motion does not establish this premise, although creates logic around this.
- The report card aims to have accountability – it will carry consequences, but this isn't inherently authoritarian.

- It is important for the University of Melbourne to uphold their duty of care for all students.
- Student unions should not be able to define discrimination on behalf of minority groups.
- The Jewish Students Society rejects this motion and encourages a vote against it.

Discussion in the room touched on the following points supporting the motion:

- Protests and encampments are activities that would be investigated as part of the report card system.
- Concerns that student bodies would be targeted because of discussions on these issues.
- Importance of ensuring advocacy on these issues.

Discussion in the room against the motion concurred that Jewish students have not been engaged in the drafting of this motion.

Lushy Chinganya, UMSU President, proposed an amendment.

**Proposed Amendment:**

To amend the action point such that it reads "The UMSU President will release a statement to this effect."

Moved: Lushy Chinganya

*This was amenable to the mover.*

Amaya Castro Williams, voting councillor, was concerned that people's discomfort should not be a reason to take away the political rights of others.

Nathan Ben-David, student observer, asked who determines whether particular speech makes someone feel unsafe.

Amaya Castro Williams, voting councillor, responded that there should be a distinction and that the report card doesn't make a compelling distinction.

Motion: To adopt the motion as amended.

Moved: Aidan Wujanto-Hawe

Seconded: Amaya Castro Williams

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** To move in camera.

Moved: Chair

CARRIED WITH DISSENT

Mathilda Stewart, Bhavin Garg, Khush Shah, Rhea Sankar (proxy for Siddanth Belliappa), Toby Putland, requested to have their dissent noted per R19.10 of the Standing Orders.

**Council moved in camera at 6:04 pm**

**Procedural Motion:** To accept Marc as Dominic's proxy.

Moved: Chair

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

Daniel Motika, General Secretary, ceded the Chair to Lushy Chinganya, UMSU President.

**10.5. Endorsement of Letter to the Electoral Tribunal**

Action:

- That the CEO forward the letter titled "LETTER TO ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL" to the Electoral Tribunal.
- That the CEO does so immediately.
- That Students' Council endorses the letter.
- That Students' Council urges the Electoral Tribunal to take this into consideration when considering the proposed regulation changes.

Motion: To adopt the motion as presented.

Moved: Daniel Motika

Seconded: Corbin Afanasyev

CARRIED WITH DISSENT

Mathilda Stewart, Bhavin Garg, Khush Shah, Rhea Sankar (proxy for Siddanth Belliappa), Toby Putland, Felicity Bayne, Amaya Castro Williams, Hannah Roseman-Gannon, and Yasmeen Atieh requested to have their dissent noted per R19.10 of the Standing Orders.

**Procedural Motion:** To move out of camera.

Moved: Chair

CARRIED

**Council moved out of camera at 6:09 pm**

**10.6. UMSU condemns arrests at Queensland Student Strike for Palestine**

Preamble:

UMSU condemns the arrest of two activists at the Student Strike for Palestine in Queensland on Wednesday March 11. One person was arrested for saying the phrase "from the river to the sea" in a speech, and the other person was arrested for wearing a t-shirt with the phrase. This comes after the state Liberal government introduced sweeping new hate speech reforms that could see Queenslanders face up to two years' imprisonment for using the phrase.

These laws represent a clear attempt to silence opposition to Israel's genocide in Gaza and the occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Arresting someone for the words written on their clothing raises significant constitutional and civil liberties concerns about freedom of speech and political expression in this country.

Criminalising this slogan is an attempt to intimidate the growing solidarity movement with Palestine and to silence criticism of the Israeli state at a time when its war on Gaza has provoked outrage across the globe.

UMSU calls for these new laws to be repealed immediately. Students must be able to organise, protest and speak out on political issues without fear of arrest.

Platform:

- UMSU condemns the Queensland government's new hate speech laws as a draconian attack on free speech and political expression
- UMSU calls on the Queensland government to repeal the new hate speech laws immediately
- UMSU reaffirms that pro-Palestine speech, including phrases calling for equal rights for Palestinians, is not antisemitic.

Action:

- The UMSU President will sign onto the open letter by Palestine Action Group demanding that the charges against the two activists be dropped.

Bella Beiraghi, Environment Officer, spoke to the motion as mover.

Lushy Chinganya, UMSU President, exercised speaking rights as seconder.

Motion: To adopt the motion as presented.

Moved: Bella Beiraghi

Seconded: Lushy Chinganya

CARRIED

#### **10.7. UMSU condemns Australian government's participation in the war in the Middle East**

Preamble:

UMSU condemns the Australian government's direct involvement in the escalating war in the Middle East. As of March 12th, 1348 civilians in Iran and 687 in Lebanon have been killed by US and Israeli attacks, and an additional 18,000 have been injured. The US has made it clear that it will back Israel to the hilt, and in turn the Albanese government was the first of the Western powers to publicly declare support for the US/Israel alliance's attacks on Iran.

On February 28th, mere hours after an Israeli strike on a girls school in Iran killed 168 children aged 7-12, Foreign Minister Penny Wong issued a statement declaring: "We support the United States acting to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear

weapon and to prevent Iran continuing to threaten international peace and security". On the 10th of March, the Albanese government ordered the deployment of 85 military personnel, stocks of air to air missiles and a military reconnaissance plane to United Arab Emirates. Legal expert Professor Don Rothwell has stated that this contribution has made Australia a "party to the conflict", placing Australia at war with Iran.

Australia's existing ties with the United States have further entrenched Australia's involvement in this imperialist war. 3 Australians were on a US submarine that sank an Iranian warship as part of an AUKUS training program. In response, Albanese lauded this as "one of the big pluses behind the AUKUS arrangement". Wong also explicitly refused to state whether Australian intelligence facilities like Pine Gap, a joint US-Australian facility, were involved in the initial US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

US funding for weapons research in Australian universities has increased from \$1.7 million in 2007 to roughly \$60 million annually since 2022. A significant portion of this funding is allocated to Unimelb, which UMSU should reject as a flagrant misuse of student tuition fees. The Labor government's determination to support US/Israeli imperialist projects in the Middle East directly implicates Australian students in a war they actively oppose.

UMSU condemns the actions of the Labor government in participating in this brutality, and calls for a complete divestment from all weapons companies by The University of Melbourne.

Platform:

- UMSU condemns the Australian government's condoning of and participation in the war in the Middle East
- UMSU calls for an end to Australia's military alliance with the United States, including the AUKUS pact and economic relationships associated with militarism like the rare earth minerals pact on Friday.
- UMSU calls for Pine Gap and any other military bases involving the United States military to be shut down
- UMSU calls for transparency and divestment from all weapons companies at The University of Melbourne
- UMSU affirms the right of the Iranian people to self-determination independent of US/Western interference and aggression

Yasmeen Atieh, voting councillor, exercised speaking rights as mover to the motion.

Aidan Wujanto-Hawe, student observer, exercised speaking rights as seconder.

Lushy Chinganya, UMSU President, said that she spoke to the Iranian Students Society who shared their opinion – they were supportive but would have liked to be consulted earlier, as this is a nuanced issue.

*James Duncan re-entered the meeting room and takes back their vote*

Procedural vote - Proxy Dominic to Marc

**Procedural Motion:** To accept Marc as Dominic's proxy.

Moved: Chair

Discussion points raised in the room:

- The motion raises significant issues of conflict and killing, including the bombing of schools which has led to lives lost.
- Motion is a principled stance that our government shouldn't be involved in this conflict.

**Procedural Motion:** To extend speaking time to 1.5 minutes.

Moved: Chair

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

Further discussion in the room pointed to the following:

- As a student union we need to listen to students as representatives – consultation is important. Important that students are informed
- The political stances should not be predicated upon consultation with any political group, but based on left wing principles

Bella Beiraghi, Environment Officer, proposed an amendment.

**Proposed Amendment:** The amend the first line of the second paragraph in the Preamble such that it says "On February 28th, mere hours after an American strike on a girls school in Iran ..."

Moved: Bella Beiraghi

*This was amenable to the mover.*

Motion X: To adopt the motion as amended.

Moved: Yasmeen Atieh

Seconded: Aidan Wujanto-Hawe

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

## 10.8. UMSU International Regulations

Chair spoke to the motion and noted the following:

- UMSU International Regulations have not been historically endorsed by Students' Council.
- This motion proposes to pass what is currently in operation.

Motion: To accept the UMSU International Regulations, as amended by the UMSU International AGMs 31/8/2020, 3/9/2021, 24/8/2023 and 9/8/2025 and last ratified by the UMSU International AGM 9/8/2025.

Moved: Lushy Chinganya

Seconded: Alex Gwynn

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

### 10.9. Clubs & Societies Regulations

Alex Gwynn, Clubs & Societies Officer, spoke to the motion as mover. Last Council moved a motion that was a mistake. This motion aims to rectify the mistake such that the minimum membership requirement is consistent with rest of the Clubs & Societies Regulations.

Seamus Donnellan, Clubs & Societies Officer, spoke to the motion as seconder.

Motion: To approve the amendment to regulation R6.3.h from forty to thirty members.

Moved: Alex Gwynn

Seconded: Seamus Donnellan

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

**Procedural Motion:** To go on a 17 minute break.

Moved: Chair

This procedural motion was imposed by the Chair per R14.8 of the Standing Orders.

*Council resumed at 5:30pm*

## 11. Other Business (Motions Without Notice)

### 11.1. UMSU's 2026 Budget

Preamble:

Over the last few terms UMSU has spent heavily into its reserves. In 2025 UMSU was hundreds of thousands of dollars in structural deficit, while in previous years UMSU had posted a million-dollar deficit. As a result, UMSU's reserves have significantly reduced to the point that the organisation would hardly cover all of its liabilities, were the organisation shut down. Consequently, UMSU staff and the 2026 President and General Secretary decided that the 2026 budget must break even to ensure the longevity of the Student Union. A break-even budget was presented and approved by Students' Council in meeting 1(26).

Despite retaining 37.5% of Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) fees, UMSU has received a lower amount of SSAF due to decreased enrolments at the University of Melbourne. As a result of this, UMSU's budget was significantly reduced. A number of staff services have been reduced because of this, putting significant pressure on UMSU staff members. Other staff-led initiatives such as the IDA Bar have also been put under significant financial strain. Student Department have also seen a reduction in output, particularly in non-essential services. There still remains a degree of uncertainty around the budget for the 2026 term as enrolments will not be confirmed until census date later in the semester, which means UMSU may receive less funding and face further cuts, as has been the case in previous years.

The budget for Election Administration falls under the Students' Council Budget, which falls under the broader Student Department Budget pool. Hence, any overspend on Election Administration will come at the detriment of Student Department budgets, as most other budget lines which fall under Students' Council are fixed costs such as insurance. Considering the strain on Departments and the inability to incur a deficit, it is vital that the Electoral Tribunal ensures the cost of Election Administration falls within the current budget.

Action:

- That the CEO write a letter to the Electoral Tribunal outlining the following points:
  - That UMSU has currently allocated \$70,000 towards the Election Administration budget and will not reallocate any more funding. This represents roughly a decrease of \$25,000 from last year's tender.
  - That UMSU has massively reduced its budget due to receiving less Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funding.
  - That the budget for Election Administration falls under Student Department budgets.
  - That the total Student Department Budget has decreased by \$311,480 from the 2025 Total Expenditure to the 2026 Allocated Budget. This has put many vital programs and support services for students at risk.
  - That UMSU cannot spend over its currently allocated total budget, due to dwindling reserve funds.
  - That UMSU has achieved a break-even budget for the first time in a number of years.
  - That UMSU may receive less funding than currently budgeted for, following the census date this semester.
  - That Students' Council affirms it will not allocate any more money to the Election Administration budget, nor will it accept any over expenditure.
  - That the letter should be taken into consideration when deciding the form of polling for the 2026 UMSU election cycle.
- That the CEO attach a copy of this motion to the letter.
- That the CEO allows the UMSU President and General Secretary to review the letter before it is sent to the Electoral Tribunal.
- That the CEO draft, review and send the letter within two business days of this motion being passed.
- That Students' Council affirms it will not allocate any more money to the Election Administration budget.
- That Students' Council will endorse this letter, should it be approved by the President and General Secretary.
- That Students' Council urges the Electoral Tribunal to seriously consider the letter.

Catherine Duong, voting councillor, and Marc Khor voting councillor, both waived speaking rights.

Discussion was as follows:

- The 2025 P&L we have received has a total of election costs at \$77k. The election cost for 2024 was \$60k. Budget for 2026 is \$90K.
- Superfluous motion as intention of Council has already been made clear in the budget council and the administration of the tender processes for elections is managed operationally.
- Further clarification to be made regarding election costs for last year based on information that the General Secretary has received.

Motion was subsequently withdrawn.

Motion: To adopt the motion as presented.

Moved: Catherine Duong

Seconded: Marc Khor

MOTION WITHDRAWN

## 12. Next Meeting

## 13. Close

**Meeting closed at 6:37 pm**