

University of Melbourne Student Union
Meeting of the Students' Council
Minutes
Thursday 21 August 2025, 10am
Special Meeting 5(25)
Location: Room 202, Building 168; Zoom



Meeting opened at 10:17 am

1. Procedural Matters

1.1. Election of Chair

Motion 1: That Luv Golecha be elected as Chair.
 Moved: Luv Golecha
 CWD

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	Bingchan Zhou	Yes
Students' Council Indigenous Representative	Oskar Martin	Yes
Students with Disabilities Representative on Students' Council	Cornellius Salim	Yes
Queer Representative on Students' Council	Semin (Sam) Park	No
International Student Representative on Students' Council	Junaid Mohd Qamar	Yes
Graduate Student Representative on Students' Council	Om Deshpande	Yes
Southbank Student Representative on Students' Council	Zoriana Stephanie Krupa	No
Students' Council (General Representative)	Wasif Rahman	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Bella Beiraghi	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Joseph Z Y Li-Sculli	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Kerry Sun	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Stefan Gavrilov	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Enzhe (Kevin) Li	No
Students' Council (General Representative)	Yasmeen Atieh	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Rachael Hynds	No
Students' Council (General Representative)	Daniel Motika	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Amaya Castro Williams	No
Students' Council (General Representative)	Lottie Jenkins	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Anndrya Chua	Yes
Students' Council (General Representative)	Niya Chopra	No
Students' Council (General Representative)	Yashesvi Verma	No

Commented [MC1]: Also terminated

Commented [MC2]: Form was not loading for her but she did turn up and stayed throughout entire council meeting.

Students' Council (General Representative)	Zeinab Jishi	Yes
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Office Bearers

Department	Full name	Attended?
President	Joshua Stagg	Yes
General Secretary	Luv Golecha	Yes
Activities Officer	Amy Peters	Yes
Creative Arts Officer	Tianyi Yu	Yes
Creative Arts Officer	Riya Gupta	No
Clubs & Societies Officer	Esther Luk	No
Clubs & Societies Officer	Ewan Bezzobs	No
Disabilities Officer	Nabia Rauf	No
Education (Academic Affairs) Officer	Harrishman Shobanan	Yes
Education (Academic Affairs) Officer	Rhea Sankar	Yes
Education (Public Affairs) Officer	Viraj Patel	Yes
Education (Public Affairs) Officer	Sonika Agarwal	Yes
Environment Officer	Jayde East	No
Environment Officer	Helena Muecke	No
Indigenous Officer	Noah Kellett	No
Media Officer	Mathilda Stewart	Yes
Media Officer	Sophie He	No
Media Officer	Ibrahim Muan Abdulla	Yes
Media Officer	Marcie Di Bartolomeo	No
People of Colour Officer	Wenhao (Clement) Wu	No
People of Colour Officer	Divyanshi Sati	No
Queer Officer	Ivy Pierlot	No
Welfare Officer	Filia Cahyadi	No
Welfare Officer	Kunal Dewani	Yes
Women's Officer	Eya Takrouni	Yes
Women's Officer	Khwaish Jadeja	Yes
Burnley Campus Coordinator	Ian Adams	No
Southbank Campus Co-ordinator	Caleb William Jarcevic	Yes
Southbank Campus Co-ordinator	Tirion Luff-White	No
Southbank Activities Officer	Justine Light De Guzman	No
Southbank Education Officer	Joobon Kim	No

Other: Sara Pheasant (CEO), Mary Kin Chan (minute taker), Lachlan McCallum (CFO & Director of Operations)

1.4. Apologies

1.5. Proxies

1.5.1. Amaya Castro Williams to Emma Dynes

1.6. Leave of Absence Requests

1.7. Membership

The Chair explained that there has been a membership audit over the last week. As a result, there is a list of people who have been terminated from Students' Council.

However, the review for each case is still ongoing, the Chair assured that the situation is not a blanket termination.

The Chair added that affected Councillors have been deemed terminated for the purposes of this Council, they do not have voting rights. This brings the number of Councillors down to 17 total, with 9 Councillors required to be present to reach quorum.

1.8. Adoption of Agenda

Motion 2: To adopt the Agenda as presented.

Moved: Chair

Seconded: Kunal Dewani

CWD

2. Conflicts of Interest Declaration

3. Correspondence

4. Motions on Notice

4.1. UMSU stands in solidarity with the civilian populations suffering at the hands of Hamas and the Netanyahu Government

Preamble:

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is one of the most violent and long-running conflicts in the world, with origins going back centuries. The situation escalated following the Hamas attack on October 7th that killed innocent Israelis. In the time between October 7th and the present day, the suffering imposed upon the civilians of Gaza at the hands of the Netanyahu Government has been nothing short of horrific. In August 2025, the Netanyahu Government announced its plan to occupy Gaza City completely, an action that will cause the current situation to further deteriorate.

Over the last few weeks, hundreds of thousands of people across Australia have joined to demonstrate their opposition to the suffering in Gaza. Whilst this most recent series of demonstrations have demonstrated the extent of public opposition in Australia to the actions of the Israeli Government, we also acknowledge the many activist groups that have been advocating for peace and the end of violence between Israel and Palestine for decades.

In 2024, the University of Melbourne hosted one of the largest encampments seen across Australia's tertiary education industry. The sheer size and effectiveness of this protest demonstrate the commitment of our student community to oppose all forms of militarism and needless suffering, such as is being seen in Gaza right now.

However, the protest rules implemented in 2025 by the Vice Chancellor have now imposed broad and ambiguous restrictions upon potentially any and all forms of peaceful assembly within the university campus. We particularly note the targeted

use of these rules given these restrictions were imposed in the year following extensive protest activity regarding Palestine. Students should not be punished for engaging in peaceful protest; voices in opposition to the status quo should not be silenced; dialogue and communication on these issues is vital. Whilst we are free to demonstrate our opposition in the streets on weekends, we are restricted from doing so on our university campus.

If we are to repair the fractures in our community, blunt and draconian restrictions are not the solution. Silencing marginalised voices is in direct conflict with UMSU's paramount consideration of solidarity and community. The fundamental principle informing UMSU's stance is our opposition to discrimination in all its forms - regardless of whether it is islamophobia or antisemitism, it has no place in our community. While the power of UMSU is limited, we stand staunchly in solidarity with all innocent victims of the ongoing violence.

Platform:

- UMSU draws distinctions between both the Netanyahu Government and the civilian population in Israel and between Hamas and the civilian population of Palestine.
- UMSU joins a range of international organisations and UN bodies which recognise that the Netanyahu Government's actions amount to an act of genocide against the civilians of Palestine, as per the definition in Article 2 of the UN's Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.
- UMSU condemns the October 7th attack by Hamas that killed Israeli civilians.
- UMSU calls for all hostages and/or political prisoners held in relation to the violence between Israel and Palestine to be returned to their families.
- UMSU calls for the resumption of democracy in Palestine.
- UMSU strongly supports Australia's decision to join other countries calling for the recognition of a Palestinian State to further efforts for peace. However, UMSU acknowledges that this is the start, not the end, of our obligations to support the civilians of Palestine.
- UMSU condemns the actions of the Netanyahu Government that resulted in a lack of aid being delivered to Palestinian civilians.
- UMSU calls for the Netanyahu Government to allow for the free flow of aid and allow humanitarian NGOs to provide support to those in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- UMSU supports further efforts to demonstrate our community's solidarity with what is occurring in the Middle East.
- UMSU recognises that simplistic narratives of the situation between Israel and Palestine conflict are damaging.
- UMSU opposes all forms of restriction and punishment imposed upon students exercising their right to peaceful protest, as recognised in Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

- UMSU calls for the University of Melbourne’s restrictions on peaceful assembly to be repealed so as to allow University of Melbourne students to demonstrate their opposition to what is occurring in Gaza.
- UMSU affirms and commits itself to the defence of free speech at the University of Melbourne.
- UMSU supports initiatives such as the People's Inquiry into Campus Free Speech on Palestine that is investigating freedom of speech restrictions related to Palestine across Australian university campuses.

Action:

1. That UMSU campaigns for the end of repression of Palestine activists and to defend free speech and protest on campus. This includes campaigning to overturn the Vice Chancellor regulations concerning protest implemented in March.
2. That the UMSU President release a President’s News statement demanding that the University reverse sanctions to the Palestine activists who have been subject to disciplinary proceedings due to peaceful protests, and issue formal apologies to these students.
3. That UMSU endorses and circulates the findings of the forthcoming People’s Inquiry into Palestine report to the student body via email to all UMSU members.

Joshua spoke to the motion. There has been a number of changes to the motion since it was submitted for the Agenda. Below are a few of the changes mentioned on the spot:

- Motion title amended, replacing references to the Netanyahu government to Israeli government.
- Added back the fundraiser
- Remove all mentions of “conflict”

Proposed Amendment: That the entire motion be amended as follows:

Motion: UMSU demands that restrictions on peaceful protest for Palestine be lifted

Preamble:

In the time between October 7th and the present day, the suffering imposed upon the civilians of Gaza at the hands of the Israeli Government has been nothing short of horrific. In August 2025, the Israeli Government announced its plan to occupy Gaza City completely, an action that will cause the current situation to further deteriorate.

Over the last few weeks, hundreds of thousands of people across Australia have joined to demonstrate their opposition to the suffering in Gaza. Whilst this most recent series of demonstrations have demonstrated the extent of public opposition in Australia to the actions of the Israeli Government, we also

acknowledge the many activist groups that have been advocating for peace and the end of violence between Israel and Palestine for decades.

In 2024, the University of Melbourne hosted one of the largest encampments seen across Australia's tertiary education industry. The sheer size and effectiveness of this protest demonstrate the commitment of our student community to oppose all forms of militarism and needless suffering.

However, the protest rules implemented in 2025 by the Vice Chancellor have now imposed broad and ambiguous restrictions upon potentially any and all forms of peaceful assembly within the university campus. We particularly note the targeted use of these rules given these restrictions were imposed in the year following extensive protest activity regarding Palestine. Students should not be punished for engaging in peaceful protest; voices in opposition to the status quo should not be silenced; dialogue and communication on these issues is vital. Whilst we are free to demonstrate our opposition in the streets on weekends, we are restricted from doing so on our university campus.

If we are to repair the fractures in our community, blunt and draconian restrictions are not the solution. Silencing marginalised voices is in direct conflict with UMSU's paramount consideration of solidarity and community. The fundamental principle informing UMSU's stance is our opposition to discrimination in all its forms - regardless of whether it is islamophobia or antisemitism, it has no place in our community. While the power of UMSU is limited, we stand staunchly in solidarity with all innocent victims of the ongoing violence.

Platform

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- UMSU joins a range of international organisations and UN bodies which recognise that the Israeli Government's actions amount to an act of genocide against the civilians of Palestine, as per the definition in Article 2 of the UN's Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.
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- UMSU calls for all hostages and/or political prisoners held in relation to the violence between Israel and Palestine to be returned to their families.
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- UMSU strongly supports Australia's decision to join other countries calling for the recognition of a Palestinian State to further efforts for peace. However, UMSU acknowledges that this is the start, not the end, of our obligations to support the civilians of Palestine.
- UMSU condemns the actions of the Israeli Government that resulted in a lack of aid being delivered to Palestinian civilians.
- UMSU calls for the Israeli Government to allow for the free flow of aid and allow humanitarian NGOs to provide support to those in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

- UMSU supports further efforts to demonstrate our community's solidarity with Palestine
- UMSU opposes all forms of restriction and punishment imposed upon students exercising their right to peaceful protest, as recognised in Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
- UMSU calls for the University of Melbourne's restrictions on peaceful assembly to be repealed so as to allow University of Melbourne students to demonstrate their opposition to what is occurring in Gaza.
- UMSU affirms and commits itself to the defence of free speech at the University of Melbourne
- UMSU supports initiatives such as the People's Inquiry into Campus Free Speech on Palestine that is investigating freedom of speech restrictions related to Palestine across Australian university campuses

Action

1. That UMSU campaigns for the end of repression of Palestine activists and to defend free speech and protest on campus. This includes campaigning to overturn the protest regulations imposed in March.
2. That the UMSU President release a President's News statement demanding that the University reverse sanctions to the Palestine activists who have been subject to disciplinary proceedings due to peaceful protests, and issue formal apologies to these students.
3. That UMSU endorses and circulates the findings of the forthcoming People's Inquiry into Palestine report to the student body via email to all UMSU members.
4. That the UMSU President work with relevant UMSU Departments and cultural clubs and societies to organise a fundraiser with all funds directly going to charities supporting victims of the ongoing violence.

Moved: Joshua Stagg

Seconded: Sonika Agarwal

Joshua acknowledged that Councillors in the room were willing to condemn Netanyahu for his role in the genocide, added that Council should also condemn Hamas, a recognised terrorist organisation.

Joshua acknowledged that UMSU is in a weird situation on campus that impacts our ability to speak on the issue.

Sonika spoke to the amended motion. The amended motion also differentiates between Palestinian and Israeli civilians; it was written in consultation with Eunice, the MUJS representative.

Yasmeen spoke against the motion.

Lola spoke against the motion. Need to pick a side, rather than saying that every side is responsible for the conflict, alluding to consulting both black South Africans and white South Africans then coming to the conclusion that everyone is responsible during apartheid.

Joshua acknowledged that there is an oppressor and oppressed in this situation, but there is still a need to recognise the actions of Hamas. Also need to acknowledge that there is a genocide going on, which is a stance that UMSU has not taken.

Lottie noted that she is very glad about that the change to referencing the Netanyahu government. What is happening between Israel and Palestine is not a centuries-old conflict, but history of colonialism. It is not a conflict, but a genocide, and we should make this clear in the motion.

Aidan broadly spoke against the motion.

Stefan said that Council is undermining the right of Israel to exist; he stood firmly against this motion.

Tom spoke against the motion.

Emma ceded speaking rights to David. David commented that the motion is weaker than Council's motion in Aug 2024, actions are in no way tied to the preamble as well.

Aidan exercised speaking rights.

Zeinab left the meeting room at 10:44 am.

Motion 3: To accept Chiaki as Zeinab's proxy for this council.

Moved: Viraj Patel

Seconded: Mathilda Stewart

CARRIED

Emma exercised speaking rights. Ethnic cleansing has gone on for a very long time not just in Gaza, but in West Bank, where there is no Hamas. UMSU should continue to take a stance in opposition to genocide and military support for Israel. 12pm SGM called next Thurs re how to take fight for Palestine on this campus.

Chair gave last call for speakers.

Winnie exercised speaking rights.

Hugh exercised speaking rights. Resumption of democracy is colourful speech, US interventions in countries have historically been in the name of democracy.

Camden exercised speaking rights.

Chair closed the speaking list.

Procedural Motion: That the amended motion to be a named vote.

Moved: Emma Dynes

CARRIED WITH DISSENT

Chair explained what a named vote is.

Motion 4: That the motion be adopted as amended.

FOR: Wasif, Anndrya, Bingchan, Om

AGAINST: Joseph, Oskar, Stefan, Dan, Lottie, Bella, Emma, Yasmeen, Daniel

ABSTAIN: Kerry, Junaid, Chiaki

Moved: Joshua Stagg

Seconded: Sonika Agarwal

FAILED

5. Close

Meeting closed at 11:06 am