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 **University of Melbourne Student Union**

**Meeting of the Students’ Council**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday 20 January 1:00PM**

**Meeting 2(21)**

**Location: Zoom**

https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/81033906197?pwd=clNmS2orRkExdnExSjU1K0t6L1o4UT09

 **Password**: 765907

 Meeting opened at: 1:10pm

1. **Procedural Matters**
	1. Election of Chair

Motion 1: That Ciara O’Sullivan be elected as Chair
Mover: Ciara O’Sullivan Seconder: Raymond Wu
CARRIED

* 1. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Custodians

So Acknowledged.

* 1. Attendance

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Representatives on Students’ Council** | **Full name** | **Attended?** | **Number of councils attended** |
| **Students of Colour Representative on Students’ Council** | Kevin Mao |  Y | 2 |
| **Students with Disabilities Representative on Students’ Council** | Clea Porteus Borthwick |  Y | 2 |
| **Queer Representative on Students’ Council** | Georgia McCourt |  Y | 2 |
| **International Student Representative on Students’ Council** | Janise Sam Qian Yee |  N | 0  |
| **Graduate Student Representative on Students’ Council** | Shreya Bhutani |  Y | 1 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Raymond Wu |  Y | 2 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Andoni Fischer |  Y | 2 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Devindee Nugawela |  N | 1 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Jennifer Lui |  Y | 2 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Xinling Lu |  N | 0 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Rubina Smith |  Y | 2 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Joanna Guelas |  Y | 2 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Catriona Smith |  Y | 2 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Xavier Dupe |  Y | 2 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Alex Wood |  Y | 2 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Charlotte Macpherson |  N | 1 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Lachlan Hinds |  N | 0  |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Sian Tjia Hennessy |  Y | 2 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Ethan Alex Georgeou |  N | 1 |
| **Students’ Council (General Representative)** | Zill-e Rahim |  N | 0 |
| **Students’ Council (Indigenous Representative** | Brittney Henderson |  Y | 2 |

Office Bearers

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  **Department** | **Full name** | **Attended?** | **Number of councils attended** |
| **President**  | Jack Buksh | N | 1 |
| **General Secretary**  | Ciara O’Sullivan | Y | 2 |
| **Activities Officer** | Christos Preovolos | Y | 2 |
| **Activities Officer** | Phoebe Chen | Y | 2 |
| **Clubs & Societies Officer** | Muskaan Hakhu |  Y | 2 |
| **Clubs & Societies Officer** | Kalyana Vania | Y | 2 |
| **Disabilities Officer** | Brigit Doyle |  Y | 1 |
| **Disabilities Officer** | Lindsay Tupper-Creed |  Y | 2 |
| **Education (Public Affairs) Officer** | Tejas Gandhi |  Y | 2 |
| **Education (Public Affairs) Officer** | Hannah Krasovec |  Y | 2 |
| **Environment Officer** | James Park |  Y | 2 |
| **Environment Officer** | Ann Nguyen |  Y | 2 |
| **Media Officer** | Lauren Berry |  Y | 2 |
| **Media Officer** | Pavani Ambagahawattha |  Y | 2 |
| **Media Officer** | Ailish Hallinan |  Y | 2 |
| **People of Colour Officer** | Emily AlRamadhan |  Y | 2 |
| **People of Colour Officer** | Mohamed Hadi |  Y | 2 |
| **Queer Officer** | Amy Bright |  N | 1 |
| **Queer Officer** | Laura Ehrensperger |  Y | 2 |
| **Welfare Officer** | Allen Xiao |  Y | 2 |
| **Welfare Officer** | Hue Man Dang |  Y | 2 |
| **Women’s Officer** | Srishti Chatterjee |  Y | 1 |
| **Women’s Officer** | Mickhaella Ermita |  Y | 2 |
| **Education (Academic Affairs) Officer** | Planning Jay Vyn Saw |  Y | 2 |
| **Education (Academic Affairs) Officer** | Jennisha Arnanta |  Y | 2 |
| **Creative Arts Officer** | Vaishnavi Ravikrishna | Y | 2 |
| **Creative Arts Officer** | Merryn Hughes | N | 1 |
| **Burnley Campus Coordinator** | Kaitlyn Hammond | N | 1 |
| **Southbank Campus Co-ordinator** | William Hall | N | 0 |
| **Indigenous Officer** | Shanysa Jayde McConville | Y | 1 |
| **Indigenous Officer** | Hope Kuchel | Y | 1 |

Other: Emma Dynes, Lucas Brunnings-Halsall, James Gallagher

* 1. Apologies

*Office Bearers: Ailish Hallinan, Kaitlyn Hammond, Merryn Hughes (leave), Jack Buksh, Amy Bright*

*Councillors: Xinling Lu, Zill-e Rahim, Ethan Georgeou, Devindee Nugawela*

***Leave Requests:*** *Jack Buksh, Council 2(21), Xinling Lu 1st February- 28th February, Lachlan Hinds, Council 2(21)*

Motion 2: To accept the leave requests en bloc

Mover: Ciara O’Sullivan (Chair)

CARRIED

* 1. Proxies

*Janise Sam Qian Yee to Evon Tan when not in the zoom call, Xinling Lu to Tejasvi Madan, Ethan Georgeou to Emily Kaji, Zill-e Rahim to Andoni Fischer, Devindee Nugawela to Tejasvi Madan*

* 1. Membership

No changes

* 1. Adoption of Agenda

Motion 3: To adopt the Agenda as presented

Mover: Ciara O’Sullivan (Chair)

CARRIED

1. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

 **2.1** Minutes 1(21)

Motion 4: To accept the previous minutes as a true and accurate record of meeting 1(21).

Mover: Ciara O’Sullivan (Chair)

CARRIED

1. **Conflicts of Interest Declaration**

None declared.

1. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None.

1. **Correspondence**

None.

1. **Office Bearer Reports**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| President | Jack Buksh | *Submitted* |
| General Secretary | Ciara O’Sullivan | *Submitted* |
| Activities | Christos Preovolos | *Submitted* |
| Phoebe Chen | *Not Submitted* |
| Clubs and Societies | Kalyana Vania | *Submitted* |
| Muskaan Hakhu | *Submitted* |
| Creative Arts | Vaishnavi Ravikrishna | *Submitted* |
| Merryn Hughes | *Submitted* |
| Disabilities | Lindsay Tupper-Creed | *Submitted* |
| Brigit Doyle | *Submitted* |
| Education (Academic Affairs) | Jennisha Arnanta | *Submitted* |
| Planning Jay Vynn Saw | *Submitted* |
| Education (Public Affairs) | Hannah Krasovec | *Submitted* |
| Tejas Gandhi | *Submitted* |
| Environment | Ann Nguyen | *Submitted* |
| James Park | *Submitted*  |
| Indigenous | Hope Kuchel | *Submitted* |
| Shanysa McConville | *Submitted* |
| Media  | Lauren Berry | *Submitted* |
| Ailish Hallinan | *Submitted* |
| Pavani Ambagahawattha | *Submitted* |
| People of Colour | Mohamed Hadi | *Submitted* |
| Emily AlRamadhan | *Submitted* |
| Queer | Amy Bright | *Not Submitted* |
| Laura Ehrensperger |  *Submitted* |
| Welfare | Hue Man Dang | *Submitted* |
| Allen Xiao | *Submitted* |
| Women’s | Srishti Chatterjee | *Submitted* |
| Mickhaella Ermita | *Submitted* |
| Southbank | William Hall | *Submitted* |
| Burnley | Kaitlyn Hammond | *Not Submitted* |

Emily asks the Disabilities Officers what the ‘financial difficulties’ cited in the OB Report were.

Lindsay clarifies that an issue with the UMSU credit card meant that certain purchases could not be completed on time.

Sian: what was the issue with Disabilities and their multiple handovers?

Brigit: we had one handover with Hue Man and another with Srishti, this was due to availability clashes, and they discussed different topics.

Thonya: is it legitimate to have an ‘informal meeting’ with the PoC Committee, and would it would set a bad precedent for future Committees?

Mohamed: Notice of this meeting was sent, and minutes were taken just in case.

Motion 5: To accept the Office Bearer Reports en Bloc

Mover: Ciara O’Sullivan (Chair)

CARRIED

1. **CEO Report**

Ciara updated council that the CEO was currently on leave, and will return by the 21st of January, hence there was no report.

1. **Other Reports**

None.

1. **Operational Business**
	1. **Opening of Operations Sub-Committee Nominations**

Ciara gave a brief overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Operations Sub-Committee (OpSub), and stated that she would be closing nominations for OpSub on Friday the 22nd January at 5pm.

Motion 6: That the nominations for Operations Sub-Committee be opened, and the closing time for those be the 22nd January 5pm.

Mover: Ciara O’Sullivan (Chair)

CARRIED

* 1. **Destination Melbourne**

Ciara gave an update on Destination Melbourne: a position description has been drafted, advertising for Volunteering Program Directors has begun, it’s looking like it will mainly be an online program with potential for an in person catch up later on in semester.

Motion 7: That the recommendations from the Destination Melbourne Review be accepted.
Mover: Ciara O’Sullivan (Chair)

CARRIED

* 1. **Constitution Working Group**

Ciara emphasised the importance of this working group, and the need for constitutional change.

Motion 8: That the Constitutional Working Group Terms of Reference be accepted
Mover: Ciara O’Sullivan (Chair)

CARRIED

* 1. **Student Initiative Grant Application- Indonesian Film Festival**

Sian asked if this group was a student group or an external group
Ciara clarified that this was a student club running an event and thus was eligible for a SIG.

Motion 9: That the Student Initiative Grant for the Indonesian Film Festival be accepted

Mover: Ciara O’Sullivan (Chair)

CARRIED

1. **Motions on Notice**
	1. **Support for the campaign to restore the right to protest in Victoria**

Xavier submitted a new motion without notice on this issue, so rescinded the motion.

* 1. **Myriad Editors**

Mohamed noted that this motion had been approved by Justin.
Emily: I don’t think it is appropriate that last year’s expenditure come from our budget this year.

Motion 10: To approve the motion

Mover: Mohamed Hadi Seconder: Emily AlRamadhan

CARRIED

* 1. **Free the Medevac Refugees**

Motion 11: To move 10.3 and 10.5 en bloc
Mover: Raymond Wu
CARRIED

Emma Dynes asks whether there will be discussion on Raymond’s motion, as 10.4 is thematically similar to the others and should be discussed.

Xavier proposed amendments to the motion, suggesting that the motion can be made more specific. It was suggested that half the money be donated to the Campaign to Free Refugees, and the other half to a protest against Daniel Andrews.

Srishti gave a description of their involvement in the protests and criticised members of council for engaging in performative activism.

Emma disagreed with Srishti.

Xavier moved an amendment to Srishti’s motion emphasising the importance of protest, Srishti accepted this amendment as an action.

* 1. **UMSU Supports Freeing the Park Hotel Refugees**

Georgia, Andoni and Raymond raised concerns about the wording of the actions in the motion, indicating that it was not specific enough

Procedural Motion: To defer 10.4 to the next council.
Mover: Andoni
CARRIED

* 1. **Park Hotel Prison Refugees**
	2. **UMSU Sexual Assault and Harassment Working Group**

Motion 12: To approve the motion.

Mover: Georgia McCourt Seconder: Sian Tjia Hennessey

CARRIED

Motion 13: To move 10.3 and 10.5 en bloc.
Mover: Raymond Wu
CARRIED

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1. **Motions without Notice**

**11.1 Right to Protest**

Xavier, Lucas, Georgia, and Hannah all spoke in favour of the motion.

Motion 14: To approve the motion.

Moved: Xavier Dupe Seconded: Brittney Henderson

CARRIED

**11.2 Invasion Day Motion**

Brittney spoke to her moving rights and emphasised that it was unacceptable that we continued to celebrate Australia Day.

Motion 15: To approve the motion.

Mover: Brittney Henderson Seconded: Georgia McCourt

CARRIED

1. **Other Business**

None.

1. **Next Meeting**

TBD

1. **Close**

Meeting Closed at 2:06pm

**10.1 Support for the campaign to restore the right to protest in Victoria**

Preamble:

As of 9 December, when this motion was submitted, demonstrations are severely restricted in Victoria. The Andrews government achieved this by inserting a clause into the public health orders banning a gathering of more than 10 people “for a common purpose”. Though this has now been lifted to 50, our ability to safely exercise our right to protest has been unjustly curtailed. It is obvious from how this has been implemented that it has nothing to do with public health. 300 people going to the park or beach in small groups are not considered to be meeting “for a common purpose”, while a physically distanced protest planned by Uni Students for Climate Justice was threatened with fines. Protestors on Djab Wurrung land, trying to defend sacred trees from the Andrews government, were fined and dragged off the site. Bars and cafes can seat 150 people inside or 300 outside (without masks), yet protests of this size with physical distancing and masks are banned.

While stringent public health measures are required to suppress or eliminate the spread of COVID-19, the repressive measures currently directed at protests are anti-democratic and hypocritical. The Black Lives Matter protests earlier in the year did not result in any transmissions, unlike now-permitted activities such as dining in restaurants. While the right-wing anti-lockdown protests were reactionary and unsupportable, the increased repressive powers of the police must be staunchly opposed, as it is primarily the left and the oppressed who suffer from increased policing.

In NSW, similar anti-protest laws were defeated by mass demonstrations in defiance of the laws. This will be necessary in Victoria as well. A campaign to Restore the Right to Protest has been established to fight for this fundamental democratic right.

Platform:

1. UMSU affirms that protest is a fundamental democratic right and opposes laws restricting the right to protest, while supporting health measures such as restrictions on businesses, requirements to wear masks etc.
2. UMSU endorses the campaign “ Restore the right to protest” in Victoria and a strategy of mass defiant protest as the best way to achieve this
3. UMSU calls for the removal of the ban on outdoor gatherings “for a common purpose”
4. UMSU condemns the repressive measures used against protesters on the spurious grounds of controlling COVID-19, while opposing the reactionary anti-lockdown protests held earlier this year
5. UMSU calls for the cancellation of all fines and charges against protestors, including Warriors of Aboriginal Resistance, the Djab Wurrung Embassy, Refugee Action Collective as well as individuals targeted at protests

Action:
6. UMSU Office Bearers will sign the statement supporting the campaign at: <http://restoretherighttoprotest.org/?fbclid=IwAR0llBnCz9UK-qRJ7EwLNkQJfzirqG0PrvJCXMN8_9naYuJaaXMlslxVIfU>
7. UMSU will publicise the campaign through all available channels (emails, Facebook pages, etc.)
8. UMSU will call for NUS to sign the statement

Moved: Xavier Dupe Seconded:

**10.2 Myriad Editors**

**Preamble**

The payment consists of $500 agreed upon by the past officers plus an added 9.5% for superannuation. They haven’t been paid yet, because they didn’t know that a TFN and Superannuation fund is needed to process these payments. They applied for them in December last year, however the 2020 budget lapsed before Finance had a chance to process it, this is an expenditure concerning last year’s activities and that’s why we’re seeking money from Students’ Council.

 **Motion:**

To pass $1095 from whole of union budget to pay the creative and graphics editors of Myriad magazine.

Mover: Mohamed Hadi

Seconder: Emily AlRamadhan

**10.3 Free the Medevac Refugees**

CW: imprisonment of refugees, inhumane conditions.

## Preamble:

For over a year now, over 200 refugees have been imprisoned in hotels in Australia under the Medevac legislation. Around 60 of these refugees had been locked up in Mantra Bell City in Preston for 18 months, and were moved to the Park Hotel in Carlton last month. Prior to this, these refugees had spent 6 years in offshore detention.

These refugees are being imprisoned in inhumane conditions; they are being locked inside for 24 hours a day and can’t even go outside for a walk, exercise or some fresh air. This is a human rights breach. As a result, these punitive conditions are negatively impacting the physical and mental health of these refugees. Additionally, over the last 7 years, the Federal Government has continued to deny the refugees protection visas. As a result, these refugees continue to be imprisoned by our government, and risk deportation to the country they fled from because of persecution. Protestors who have attended daily rallies calling for the release of the refugees have also faced fines from Victorian police officers in what can only be described as a politically motivated abuse of power.

As students, we must show our solidarity with these refugees and fight for their freedom. The city of Melbourne as well as Daniel Andrews claims that they welcome refugees and asylum seekers, yet their inaction on the continuing torture of the Medevac refugees demonstrates their compliance regarding the mistreatment of refugees. We must not only stand up for the right to refuge and for human rights, but also demand that the Medevac refugees are released with permanent Australian residency and working rights.

## Platform:

* That UMSU stands in solidarity with the refugees being locked up inside the Park Hotel and other facilities across Australia and offshore.
* That UMSU reaffirms its support for refugees and their rights.
* That UMSU officially endorses the United Rally on January 30th at 2pm.

## Action:

Students Council directs:

* The UMSU President to contact the organisers of the United Rally, sending our official endorsement.
* UMSU Comms to share the event link (<https://fb.me/e/4YGblOzC0>) for the United Rally across social media, as well as posts raising awareness.

Mover: Hannah Krasovec

Seconder: Emily Hope Kaji

**10.4 UMSU Supports Freeing the Park Hotel Refugees**

**Preamble**

Last month, more than 60 refugees were moved from the Mantra in Preston to Park Hotel on Swanston street. This prison is just a block away from the Melbourne Uni Parkville campus. The men inside have been held in offshore detention for over seven years and are now locked up in the heart of Melbourne city. They’ve been brought to Australia because they need medical attention but have not received it. Instead they’ve been moved from hotel to hotel where they are unable to leave their tiny rooms except for meals and are treated like criminals. They’ve committed no crime, having come to Australia looking for a better life, often escaping war or persecution. For this, they have been met by cruelty and torture by the Australian Government.

There have been a number of groups organising protests outside of Park Hotel in Solidarity with the men inside who have been resisting their own imprisonment and whatever ways they can. With both the Liberal party and the ALP firmly for the indefinite detention of refugees, it will require mass protests or ordinary people to push towards real change. These protests are essential for building resistance to Australia’s disgusting torture regime for refugees. Daniel Andrews has previously stated his support for refugees. Yet shamefully, Victoria Police assisted in the transfer of refugees from the Mantra to the Park Hotel and has arrested a number of refugee activists, including former Greens Councillor Susan Rennie and members of the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism. Some of these activists are still facing charges for the supposed crime of demanding freedom for innocent people.

Platform

UMSU supports freeing all refugees in indefinite detention and bringing them here to Australia.

UMSU condemns the Australian Government for imprisoning refugees in Park Hotel.

UMSU condemns the Dan Andrews Government and Victorian police for facilitating the imprisonment of the men in Park Hotel.

UMSU supports protesting the Park Hotel Detention Centre.

**Action**

UMSU office bearers and councillors will share the daily protests, the weekly protests outside Dan Andrews office, called by ‘Our Daily Protests Outside the Park Hotel Melbourne’ on their social media pages

UMSU office bearers and councillors will share the united rally on Jan 30 called by ‘Campaign Against Racism and Facism’ on their social media pages.

UMSU office bearers and councillors will attend the protests, when and if they’re able to

UMSU will contribute printing for building the protests.

UMSU will contribute to paying fines imposed on refugee activists

Moved: Briana Symonds-Manne

Seconded: Xavier Dupe

**10.5 Park Hotel Prison Refugees**

**Preamble:**

cw: mentions refugees in detention and police violence

60 refugees have been detained in the Park Hotel Prison on 701 Swanston Street. These men, who fled persecution in their home countries, have been imprisoned for about eight years now, in different detention centres across the country and offshore. They were brought onshore under the Medevac Bill because they needed urgent medical attention.

When the Liberal Government repealed the Medevac Bill in December last year, these men were left stranded in so-called Australia without the help they were promised, in rooms where there is barely any light, ventilation and support. Serco, the company that does security for the detention facility in Park Hotel, regularly tints the windows so that our friends inside cannot see the people who show up for them every day. Keeping them in a “hotel” is a deliberate attempt from the Federal Government to ‘hide them in plain sight’ and give off an illusion to the public that they are happy and cared for because they are in a hotel.

Our detained friends have time and again called on the Labour Opposition to stand up for refugees, to free them and welcome them to our communities with love and trauma-centred support. Mostafa Azimitabar, one of our detained friends, has said in many impassioned speeches that most people who try to fight for them are only interested in the credits, and in taking the microphone away from the people who show up for them every day - sometimes with our meals, and sometimes with all the love in our hearts.

We are students. We are present and future leaders, and we must unequivocally support them. Refugee justice, especially on stolen, unceded land, is a tireless fight, and as the largest students’ union in the country, we must show up for these 60 men, detained only metres away from our campus, who have had eight years snatched away from their lives - and do not know how long they will be here.

It is also important that our solidarity with refugees does not take the tone of saviourism, as so many campaigns have done before. They are our friends who have lived experience and an understanding of conditions that most of us have not experienced, so all we can do is offer them community support and use our positions to pressure governments and local authorities to free them.

We must also recognise that these men are political prisoners, and that their lives are being used to make an example of the power of the Coalition Government and the complicit silence of the Labour Opposition.

A question you must ask yourself as you read or hear this is, “What were you doing eight years ago? What if your life got confined to a single room since then? What would you have missed?”

With that, I request UMSU to take the following actions:

**Actions:**

1. UMSU recognises that the detained refugees at Park Hotel Prison and elsewhere in this country are political prisoners and extends solidarity to them, and acknowledges that this solidarity will be extended to them on a personal note.

2. UMSU condemns the deliberate cruelty of the Coalition Government against the detainees and recognises that the Labour Government’s silence is complicit in the plight of refugees and asylum seekers in detention centres.

3. UMSU condemns the use of excessive force by Victoria Police on peaceful protestors outside the Park Hotel Prison.

Moved by: Srishti Chatterjee Seconded by: Mickhaella Ermita

**10.6 UMSU Sexual Assault and Harassment Working Group**

PREAMBLE: Last Council, the UMSU Women’s Department requested Students Council to direct councillors and office bearers to submit their nominations to sit on the UMSU Sexual Assault and Harassment Working Group (SA/SH).

We’ve now received our nominations and are enclosing a list. Since we received just enough nominations for a full committee, nominations are closed.

Here’s the list:

Chairperson: Srishti Chatterjee

 Activities- Phoebe Chen

Clubs and Societies- Kalyana Vania

Creative Arts- Vaishnavi Ravikrishna

Media- Ailish Hallinan

Welfare- Hue Man Dang

Queer- Laura Ehrensperger

 Indigenous- Shanysa McConville

People of Colour- Emily Al Ramadhan

Women’s- Mickhaella Ermita

Disabilities- Brigit Doyle

Southbank- Leyla Moxham

 Burnley- Kaitlin Hammond

 Councillors: Ethan Georgeou Sian Tjia Hennessy Janise Qian Yee Sam

**Action:** 1. That Students Council confirms this as the new membership of the UMSU Sexual Assault and Harassment Working Group.

**Motions without Notice**

**11.1 Right to Protest**

Preamble:

The right to protest is being curtailed in Victoria. Late last year, demonstrations were severely restricted, at one point effectively banned. The Andrews government achieved this by inserting a clause into the public health orders banning a gathering of more than 10 people “for a common purpose”. It is obvious from how this was implemented that it has nothing to do with public health. 300 people going to the park or beach in small groups were not considered to be meeting “for a common purpose”, while a physically distanced protest planned by Uni Students for Climate Justice was threatened with fines. Protestors on Djab Wurrung land, trying to defend sacred trees from the Andrews government, were fined and dragged off the site. Bars and cafes could seat 150 people inside or 300 outside (without masks), yet protests of this size with physical distancing and masks were banned.

Since then, determined protests such as those supporting the Medevac refugees have gone ahead. But these too have faced repression. Peaceful street demonstrations have been declared illegal by the police and pushed off the road, with activists being arrested and fined. The crimes of the Commonwealth and Victorian governments, such as the torture of refugees, are put on public display by peaceful protest. Victoria Police has attempted to silence this dissent and take away the fundamental democratic right to protest with bullshit charges like “blocking a road” and “amplifying sound” (i.e. using a megaphone).

While stringent public health measures are required to suppress or eliminate the spread of COVID-19, the repressive measures currently directed at protests are anti-democratic and hypocritical. Even while Victoria had community transmission, the Black Lives Matter protests earlier in the year did not result in any transmissions, unlike permitted activities such as dining in restaurants. While the right-wing anti-lockdown protests were reactionary and unsupportable, the increased repressive powers of the police must be staunchly opposed, as it is primarily the left and the oppressed who suffer from increased policing.

The ongoing targeting of protestors shows that the right to protest only exists when we fight for it. Several times the police have attempted to push refugee protests off the road and they have resisted, showing the protestors their own strength and showing the refugees in the hotel they have allies that will fight for them. To fully win back the right to protest, it is essential to maintain the militancy of these protests, and to make the protests as mass as possible so the police are unable to arrest or fine people.

Platform:

* UMSU affirms that protest is a fundamental democratic right and opposes laws restricting the right to protest, while supporting lockdowns when needed to control COVID-19.
* UMSU affirms that a strategy of mass defiant protest as the best way to achieve this
* UMSU condemns all repressive measures used against protesters
* UMSU calls for the cancellation of all fines and charges against protestors, including Warriors of Aboriginal Resistance, the Djab Wurrung Embassy, Refugee Action Collective and Campaign Against Racism and Fascism, as well as other activists

Action:

* UMSU will release a statement declaring its opposition to police repression and anti-protest laws, and its support for strategy of mass defiant protest to defend democratic rights and fight oppression
* UMSU will share this through all available channels (emails, Facebook pages, etc.)
* UMSU will call for NUS to release a statement similar to UMSU’s

**11.2 Invasion Day**

Condemn ‘Australia’ Day

Preamble:

‘Australia’ day represents a mockery of Indigenous lives and custodianship. It further isolates Indigenous peoples through its celebration of invasion, genocide, and massacres as well as perpetuating intergeneration trauma.

With the global support of the Black Lives Matter movement, it is time to acknowledge the truth of January 26th and what it represents to Indigenous people. Regardless of whether you believe in changing the date or abolishment, the current way of commemorating this day is inappropriate and offensive.

Platform:

* UMSU condemns ‘Australia’ day celebrations
* UMSU affirms the right to protest in the Invasion day rally and stands in solidarity with First Nations people experiencing the hardship /trauma of this day
* UMSU condemns the Victorian Government and Victorian police who have stated that protesters will receive fines for infringing upon noise restrictions.
* UMSU supports the COVID safe protest during Invasion Day

Action:

* UMSU will release a statement condemning celebrations of ‘Australia’ day and express its support for First Nations people
* To share Naarm Invasion day rally information on the UMSU Facebook page
* UMSU Office Bearers agree to delete or withhold any content related to ‘Australia’ day celebrations on their pages

Moved: Brittney Henderson

Seconded: Georgia McCourt