

**University of Melbourne Student Union
Meeting of the Student Theatre Council
Agenda**

19th May 2026, 3PM

Meeting 1 (26)

Location: PAR-168-L2-202

University of Melbourne

Meeting opened at 3:16PM

1. Procedural Matters

1.1. Election of Chair

Motion 1: That Ethan McNeil be elected chair.

Mover: Ethan McNeil

Seconded: Yashesvi Verma

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

1.2. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Custodians

UMSU and the University of Melbourne acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our campuses are situated. We pay our respects to Elders both past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians – Sovereignty of this land was never ceded.

1.3. Attendance

Ethan McNeil (Creative Arts Officer), Yashesvi Verma (Creative Arts Officer), Lushy Chinganya (UMSU President), Janice Wijaya and Eliza Lim (Flare), Felicity Bayne (Moving Pieces Theatre Company)

Staff: Susan Hewitt, Tiarney Miekus, Xanthe Beesley, Hana Arai

1.4. Apologies

1.4.1. Jack Weir (University College)

1.5. Adoption of Agenda

Motion 2: To adopt the agenda as presented.

Mover: Ethan McNeil

Seconded: Yashesvi Verma

CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT

2. Reports and Updates

2.1. Creative Arts Officers' Report

Ethan noted that STC is a body for discussion between theatre groups, without the ability to make binding decisions. The last meeting was held late in the year in 2025, so, regrettably, there wasn't suitable time to implement the action items.

Creative Arts have been focusing on making life easier for theatre groups at University of Melbourne. Looking into the purchasing of a mirror, as well as additional spaces for rehearsals. They are in discussion with the Student Rep Dept about a new campaign to open up new rehearsal spaces on campus. This STC meeting is to discuss, from your perspectives, how they can tackle the issue best and acknowledge the expertise of the representatives in the room.

This forum is for Student Theatre Groups to connect with staff as well.

2.2. Student Theatre Groups Reports

Flare

Events & Performances

- O-Week Performances
- Club night Performance
- Night Market

Currently, Flare is preparing for two major performances: A Production in Week 2, and a Showcase soon after O-Week Semester 2.

They are experiencing trouble with choreographers. Flare has been working with pro bono choreographers so far, but there has been less interest recently. They are working on encouraging people to step up to develop choreography skills.

Susan mentioned that Xanthe might be able to support in brainstorming ways to encourage students to step up. Xanthe emphasised the support she can provide in light of changes to the Flare constitution which increases flexibility.

Ethan mentioned that there's potential for Creative Arts to assist in sourcing creative professionals from the industry.

Moving Parts Theatre Company

MPTC is a new group, so the focus so far has been on sorting out logistics. The Sem 1 show went well. They currently have a venue planned for a Sem 2 show. They are experiencing challenges finding rehearsal spaces, as they're mainly doing mid-week rehearsals.

Little Hall Arts Society

Sought clarification around requirements of the Child Safety Policy.

3. Discussion Items: Ideas, Opportunities, and Concerns regarding UHT

3.1. Student Membership in leadership of Student Theatre Groups (Jack Weir UC)

Keen to understand why it's necessary for Student Theatre Group leadership and membership to be majority students and whether there's a possibility for this rule to be more flexible.

Susan mentioned that we are a SSAF funded organisation that is established to service students and that our funding agreement is tied to servicing UniMelb students. It would be irresponsible for UMSU to open up opportunities for non-students to participate as majority in any UMSU affiliated group. Historically, there have been concerns raised when external professionals come in to work with students. Our STGs are to create a way for students to come together.

Xanthe added that this is specified in the constitution. If mentorship or professional development is needed, there are case-by-case conversations that can be had. There is flexibility where these arrangements might benefit the broader student body. She expressed willingness to chat with Jack further if useful.

Hana mentioned that the SSAF funding agreement dictates that our services are delivered primarily for UniMelb students.

3.2. Transparency with room bookings in UniMelb (Flare)

From 7th May to today, there have been 9 bookings that have been taken by another club or event last minute. It causes stress and inconvenience in organising rehearsals. Specifically, the rehearsal room in Stop 1 is where this is happening. This has been an ongoing issue for Flare.

Currently, with the UoM booking system, teaching staff can override bookings for classes and other teaching activities.

Felicity mentioned that when two people have double booked a room, the unsuccessful booker isn't notified.

Flare reps mentioned that this sometimes happens in the A&C rehearsal room as well as Market Hall.

Ethan enquired about who the person would be to discuss the booking process with. Xanthe suggested University of Melbourne Arts and Culture, T-Reserve, or Dibs. Xanthe also noted that currently there is only one person who is responsible for approving room bookings across the entire university.

Action: Xanthe, Susan, Creative Arts OBs to discuss and reach out to relevant university staff.

3.3. Purchasing mirrors for STGs (Flare)

Reps from Flare expressed the need for mirrors in rehearsal spaces. Suggested purchasing portable mirrors for things like dance practices. This would also help alleviate the lack of rehearsal spaces for STGs who need mirrors, as additional spaces could be turned into usable rehearsal spaces.

Ethan mentioned that Flare has offered to purchase them, with labels to make ownership clear. They could be stored in the UMSU storage room. It's a good way to open up additional spaces for rehearsals. He enquired about whether there is space to store these.

Susan suggested the Creative Arts storage room. Susan raised OHS concerns in moving the mirrors around campus. She raised that reflective film might be a safer option.

Janice asked if the Creative Arts grant could be used to purchase the mirrors. Yashesvi provided advice that it's possible to apply twice for the grant, and they could apply for purchase of the mirrors. Ethan mentioned that grant funding is limited, so it could depend on how many applicants there are.

Action: Creative Arts will investigate storage for the mirrors.

3.4. Increasing training spaces in UniMelb (Flare)

Groups are currently limited to three bookable rehearsal spaces on campus. Nona Lee is quite expensive to book. Flare reps enquired about whether there's a way that these can be discounted for students.

Ethan mentioned that he has reached out to meet with the Melbourne Uni Sports staff to discuss this. Emphasised the importance of this, given that groups are currently going off campus for rehearsals, which is a safety risk.

One additional space for consideration might be Room 113 of the A&C building (the microwave room). Part of the campaign Creative Arts will be doing will be to try to convert this into a rehearsal space.

Susan explored after-hours use of the room. One roadblock is the moving of tables and chairs and figuring out who is responsible for replacing them afterwards. Another was accessibility and the inability to remove two significant pillars.

Lushy mentioned that the space in the A&C Building where Cosmos by St Ali used to be could also be a potential option. Someone is currently leasing this space, but it's

not being activated. Lushy is in conversation with the university around what's happening with that space.

Ethan reiterated the campaign that the Creative Arts OBs plan to run to secure additional rehearsal spaces for STGs.

3.5. Increased contact between Arts Council and STGs (Flare)

Currently, the Student Theatre Groups are acting largely autonomously, and Flare Reps suggested increased contact with UMSU and the Creative Arts office might help reduce siloing and create a culture where things can be raised more casually and frequently.

Ethan mentioned that this space (STC) only delivers when every group attends, and while the scheduling might make it difficult, it's important for all groups to make an effort or to either attend themselves or to send thoughts via email. Flare is an exemplary example of engagement with the Creative Arts office.

Ethan expressed that the Creative Arts office is always open and the hope that Student Theatre Groups feel comfortable coming by or getting in touch. There is a gap in understanding between Creative Arts and the Student Theatre Groups, which we will work on.

Side-stage socials have been organised on Thursdays before STG plays as an opportunity to engage and network.

Devin suggested organising STC's earlier in the Semester, joining the discord channel, or being creative with figuring out how to communicate with the STGs.

Ethan asked the council when a better time might be to organise STC meetings. STC can be held earlier in Semester, however, because the Creative Arts office is a yearly role, he can't provide guarantees on behalf of future OBs. Ethan expressed intention to host the next STC within the first 4 weeks of Sem 2.

4. Other Business

Ethan encouraged all Student Theatre Groups to attend future meetings to maximise the impact of this forum.

Felicity raised concerns about the cap of 40% of the Student Theatre Grant funding being allowed to be spent on venue hire. Xanthe suggesting being in touch with student theatre grants staff to discuss.

Lushy raised the idea of incentivising Student Theatre Groups to support one another's shows and encouraging groups to connect with one another more. Devin mentioned that

the discord somewhat facilitates this but also raised that show tickets can be expensive and can add up. He suggested reserving a handful of tickets for other STGs.

Ethan encouraged anyone who has ideas on how to build a culture of this, to please reach out to the Creative Arts office.

5. Close

Meeting closed at 4:29PM