

**University of Melbourne Student Union
Meeting of the Environment Committee**

Minutes

28/05/2020 12pm

Meeting 10(20)

Location: Zoom meeting

1. Procedural Matters

Meeting opened at 12:06pm

- 1.1 Election of Chair
Motion to elect Sophie as chair
M: Sophie
S: Natale
CWD
- 1.2 Acknowledgement of Indigenous Custodians
- 1.3 Attendance: Dana, Natale, Raiane, Emma, Briana
- 1.4 Apologies
N/A
- 1.5 Proxies
N/A
- 1.6 Membership
Raiane has joined the committee
- 1.7 Adoption of Agenda
Motion to adopt agenda as circulated
Moved from chair
CWD

2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

- 2.1. Motion to confirm minutes of previous meeting as distributed
Moved from chair
CWD

3. Conflicts of Interest Declaration

N/A

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

N/A

5. Correspondence

N/A

6. Office Bearer Reports

Sophie gave a report outlining the following activities

Online Climate Strike

We held an online climate strike with EdPub on Friday May 15th. It wasn't our best attended climate strike but everyone who attended participated in emailing university staff and government representatives and we had some really great chats about the importance of climate justice both on campus and in the wider world. Hopefully next time we'll be able to hold an action in person but if not this is a great substitute.

Meeting with University Sustainability Team

We met with Clare Walker and Sue Hopkins who work in the universities sustainability strategy on Tuesday May 12th. This meeting was in lieu of an actual Sustainability Executive meeting which is disappointing but we did get some good progress from it. We spoke about working with the Sustainability Learnings Experience Database as part of our volunteering program and are looking into ways we can promote these opportunities to students more widely if it doesn't fit into our program. We also spoke about incorporating sustainability and First Nations education into the curriculum of undergraduate degrees and are looking into how these could be done by working with the sustainability fellows that exist in different schools and faculties. We also talked about the possibility of power sharing between the Dookie campus and town of Shepparton but unfortunately this seems like it may be off the table for the foreseeable future due to the costs associated with it and the universities financial situation in light of COVID-19. We weren't given any more information about divestment (sad) but will continue to push on this issue. We've also been told that we may potentially be having a Sustainability Executive meeting soon but without Alan Taite (finance guy and executive chair), this is encouraging but it's disappointing we won't be able to ask Alan about divestment at that meeting.

Online Workshops

We have had a two part series on Radical Technology and have a workshop on gendered activism hosted by Ed Pubs Noni this week. We're hoping to have another Play With Your Food and possibly a Bike Collective workshop for stress less week.

Motion to accept OB reports

M: Natale

S: Dana

CWD

7. Other Reports

N/A

8. Operational Business

N/A

9. Motions on Notice

N/A

10. Motions Without Notice

10.1 The Environment Committee opposes Duncan Maskell's cuts to staff and students

On May 25, Vice-Chancellor Duncan Maskell wrote to staff calling on them to sacrifice their 2.2% pay rise that began on May 1. He argued that the university is facing an economic crisis, and that pay cuts are necessary to save jobs. Further, he outlined that a ballot of all staff would take place on June 9, and that if passed, pay cuts would begin on July 1.

Staff and students should not pay for the crisis. Melbourne University is an incredibly rich institution, and the wealthiest university in Australia. According to the latest government report, the university has \$7.6 billion in assets. Maskell's letter stated that the maximum revenue shortfall expected in 2020 is \$320 million. This is less than a tenth of the university's \$3.9 billion held as reserves. The university can easily afford to pay for this crisis, but has chosen to force the cost onto staff.

Further, it is clear this pay cut won't save jobs. Maskell admits that, even if the pay cut is implemented, "it is inevitable that jobs will be lost". This is a cynical attempt by the administration to coerce staff into voting to lower their pay in exchange for non-existent job security.

The people calling for these cuts are hardly feeling the crisis themselves. Even with a 20% pay cut, Maskell is earning well over a million dollars. Just 26 executives are collectively paid \$13 million a year. It is clear that, contrary to Maskell's statement, Melbourne University is not "first and foremost a community" with shared interests. It is an increasingly for-profit institution, run to fill the pockets of executives at the expense of students and staff.

One area that has already been hit hard is the Sustainable Campus program. As a result of budget cuts and casual job losses, many staff who work on sustainability have been stood down or had their hours reduced. Meanwhile the university continues to invest in fossil fuels, after having repeatedly ignored divestment campaigns from students and staff. The crisis in the higher education sector is no excuse to ignore the importance of reducing the devastating impact to the environment from fossil fuels. The university should reverse all cuts to sustainability and end all investments in the fossil fuel industry as part of making up its revenue shortfall.

Platform:

- The Environment committee opposes the proposed pay cuts and rejects the notion that pay cuts save jobs.
- The Environment committee opposes all cuts to the Sustainable Campus program and supports staff in voting no to the EBA ballot.
- The Environment Committee calls on the university to sell off its investments in fossil fuel companies and reinstate all cut staff and their hours in the sustainable campus program.

Action:

- The Environment office will investigate how much funding and how many staff members have been cut from the Sustainable Campus Program and publish their findings.
- The Environment Committee will publicly endorse the vote no campaign for the unimelb ballot.
- The Environment Committee will call on the university to reinstate all cut staff including those cut from the sustainable campus program through its social media.

M: Briana
S: Emma
CWD

11. Other Business

N/A

12. Next Meeting

13. Close
Meeting closed at 12:23pm