



RUSU **2019**
ANNUAL
REPORT

RUSU
RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

A Message from the 2020 RUSU President



Daniel Hoogstra
RUSU President

Welcome to the 2020 RUSU Annual General Meeting and RUSU 2019 Annual Report. 2020 has been a challenging year for everyone, and students have really been hit hard by the impacts of Covid-19. We have had to change to remote learning and modified assessments almost overnight. This has been especially difficult and stressful for students whose coursework or research is 'hands-on' and usually relies on access to equipment and facilities on campus. Many of us have lost work hours or employment as shops, cafés and campuses closed. Throughout all of this RUSU has been an active voice for students, both at RMIT and in lobbying the government for a better deal for students and universities. We've been there to support students through our welfare and advocacy services (Compass and Student Rights) and to help us stay connected and engaged through our remote events, RUSU student clubs, volunteer support, training and workshops.



Beatrice Co
RUSU General Secretary

Usually the RUSU AGM involves free food, yummy cupcakes and speeches across the City, Brunswick and Bundoora campuses. In 2020, we have no other option but to hold our AGM online. Despite Covid-19, we felt it was important to go ahead with our annual AGM. Firstly, as an organisation run by students for students, we need to be accountable and transparent about what we spent and achieved in 2019. Beyond that, we wanted to look back on the incredible campus life and student life that RUSU facilitated and supported in 2019, to remind us of the good times and inspire us to look forward to what future student life at RMIT may involve.

2019 was an extremely productive year for RUSU. RUSU undertook some major projects to improve our operations, including a restructure of RUSU's staffing and organisational structure. While all of that was going on behind the scenes RUSU was very active on the ground delivering events, and activities across all campuses. A snapshot of key RUSU achievements and campaigns in 2019 is included in this Annual Report. These activities, events, and services would not have been possible without our student volunteers, elected student representatives and club leaders. On behalf of RUSU I would like to thank them for all of their dedication, support and hard work and for making 2019 such a success.

Daniel Hoogstra

President
RMIT University Student Union

RUSU Highlights 2019

65,000+
free breakfasts
across the campuses

60,000+
free lunches
across the campuses



4000+
students
attended the
**RUSU
Multicultural
Festival**



560
international
students
participated in
workshops, lunches,
excursions, social
and cultural events

Student Rights Officers
casework provided for

1198

new student cases - 1000's of students
provided with student rights information
and advice through RUSU info counters
and email advice service



450
RUSU volunteers
contributed
8,500 volunteer
hours to RUSU
events and
services

500
students
attend
postgrad
specific
events and
workshops



27 elected student
representatives
managed RUSU

104 affiliated
clubs

RUSU awarded
\$152,716
in club grants



5587

RUSU Financial Members in 2019

602 students
were supported by the RUSU
Compass Drop In Centres



10,000+
copies
of Catalyst
student
magazine
distributed



RUSU trained student reps
provided a student voice on
**62 student appeals
and hearings**

30
English
Conversation
Workshops

RMITV
delivered
10 training
events for
161
participants



RMITV key
productions included:
14 episodes of Offbeat &
18 episodes the The Leak

RUSU
Realfoods
Café provided
yummy,
healthy, vegan
food options
at Bundoora &
City campuses



21 RMIT Students
received a RUSU
Student Life Award



3500+ student attendees at RUSU major outreach
events such as information stalls at Chill 'n Grill,
Compass Marketplace and Stress Less Week

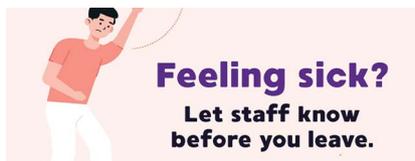
RUSU Campaigns 2019

In 2019 RUSU was a loud and proud voice for students at RMIT, achieving real and meaningful changes in policies, procedures and campus facilities across the University. One key campaign was the **'You Asked, We Listened'** Campaign which highlighted how RUSU took your concerns to RMIT and achieved real change.

READ MORE about each RUSU Win at: rusu.rmit.edu.au/campaigns19



Changes to Inherent Requirements



Student-Friendly Exam Advice



Mentoring and Support



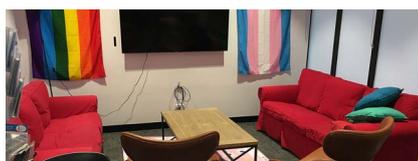
Bundoora West New Student Space



New City Campus Prayer Facility



Refresh of Building 57 Cafeteria



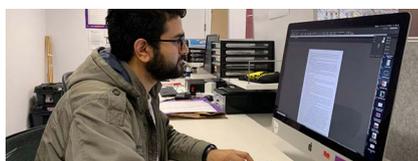
Refurbished Queer Lounges



Refurbished Women's Lounges



Extended library hours



50 extra PCs available during exams



New Bundoora Games Room



Game Pods on campus



Bundoora West Prayer Room Upgrade



Library Lock-in



Better access to SAI Global standards



Medical Centre @ RMIT Opening



Have Your Say Summit



450 extra student lockers on campus



Work Integrated Learning Improvements



RUSU Little Libraries & Food Banks



Be a Better Human Campaign

2019 RUSU Governance Update

The 2019 RUSU leadership team undertook some important high-level governance and organisational projects to support the improved functioning and governance of RUSU into the future. These included:

- A RUSU staffing and organisational restructure. This changed the organisational structure from a flat staffing structure to a hierarchical staffing structure with teams, team leaders and a Governance & Operations Manager. A Human Resources staff position was also created. With over 50 staff (including 20+ student casuals) employed at RUSU, a human resources role was an important addition to our team.
- RUSU successfully registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC). This provides another layer of external accountability for RUSU's operations.
- Reviewing and updating RUSU regulations, in particular improving the rules and requirements around the governance and operations of RUSU student clubs and RUSU annual elections.
- Negotiating the RUSU Enterprise Agreement (to be finalised in 2020)
- Reviewing and updating the RUSU Financial investment Strategy.

Undertaking a major project of organisational change and engaging in Enterprise Agreement negotiations are time consuming and costly exercises. These required external expertise and the engagement of consultants and legal advice. This contributed to the deficit financial position of RUSU in 2019. This was however a necessary and important investment in RUSU's future.

RUSU is governed by a team of 27 annually elected student representatives, who form the RUSU Student Union Council (SUC). Comprehensive formal induction and training was provided to the members of the SUC to ensure adequate financial literacy and an understanding of the legal responsibilities as members of the governing council.

The list of student representatives is included in the Financial Audit Report. Records of attendance at SUC meetings is available on the RUSU website at www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/sucattendance2020

RUSU celebrated our 75th anniversary as an organisation in 2019, enabling us to reflect back on our archives and history. We celebrated our history through a social media campaign, reunion event for past student representatives and staff and a festival for current students and staff in Bowen Street.

Right: RUSU 75th Anniversary Street Party
Below: Stress Less Week



RUSU Financial Update

Your student fees at work @ RUSU

RMIT University charges students an annual Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF). This fee is collected by RMIT University to fund student services and amenities of a non-academic nature. Funding is distributed between a range of service areas and providers at the University, including RUSU.

In 2019 RUSU received a total of **\$3,781,846** in SSAF fees through RMIT.

\$911,500 of the 2019 funding was in special SSAF Committee grants to provide a wide range of services and events run by students, for students (e.g. free breakfasts, campus events, English language workshops, RMITV programs and training, orientation events and specialist support for vocational education and postgraduate students.)

All RUSU SSAF funds were spent on the 19 areas permitted by the SSAF legislation (Allowable Items).

RUSU Funding & Income 2019

RUSU funding from RMIT for 2019 is made up of the following:

Base grant	\$2,870,346
SSAF Committee Grants	\$911,500
2019 TOTAL GRANT	\$3,781,846

In addition to the above \$3,781,846 grant, RMIT allowed RUSU to retain \$5,493 remaining from 2018 SSAF Competitive grants to enable us to allocate it to the RUSU Indigenous department activities in 2019.

2019 REVISED TOTAL SSAF FUNDING 2019 - \$3,787,339

Additional sources of RUSU income include: investment income, 2019 financial memberships, Realfoods Cafe income, event ticket sales and student media advertising.

The 2019 grant from RMIT was received as a lump sum payment in late January. This upfront payment enabled RUSU to maximise opportunities to generate additional income through strategic investments. RUSU continued to engage Advisersure as investment advisors to assist with the management of our investments in accordance with the approved RUSU Financial Investment Strategy.

Finance Summary 2019

Total Revenue in 2019:	\$4,429,118
Total Expenses in 2019:	\$4,648,443
Loss:	(\$219,325)
Other comprehensive income for the year:	\$30,504
Total comprehensive income/(loss):	(\$188,821)

The financial audit for financial year 1 January to 31 December 2019 was conducted by independent auditors BDO and will be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

2019 Financial Position

In 2019 RUSU ran at a deficit of \$188,821. There were several key contributing factors:

- **RUSU Restructure:** Costs associated with the RUSU organisational restructure, including consultant and legal fees and implementation costs.
- **Realfoods Cafes:** While the 2 RUSU Realfoods cafes met their objectives of providing healthy affordable food to students on campus, catering to diverse dietary requirements and providing training and employment experience for student volunteers, both Café's experienced financial losses in 2019.
- **Financial Markets:** Low interest rates available in the market impacted on RUSU's income from investments, in particular term deposits.

As an organisation RUSU has sufficient financial reserves to enable it to absorb the 2019 deficit.

Explanation of 2018/ 2019 Financial Year Audit Restatement

A significant change in the procedure around the accounting practices that recognises the staff entitlements that RUSU is required to provide for occurred in the 2019 annual audit. This was undertaken at the recommendation of the auditors and RMIT University. Simply put, in previous years RUSU staff entitlements were recognised as a liability until utilised. In 2019 this was changed to being recorded as a reserve. Due to this the 2018 financial position has been restated in the 2019 financial report. Note 16 of the financial audit outlines this change and the restated audit figures for 2018. This restatement of accounts means that RUSU had a surplus of \$3,223 in 2018.

**Table 1:
RUSU SSAF Grant expenditure on Allowable Items - 1 Jan -31 Dec 2019**

Allowable Item	Item Description	Expenditure YTD
Giving students information to help them in their orientation;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation specific events 	\$91,766
Promoting the health or welfare of students;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities and events from advocacy and welfare departments: Queer, Women's, Postgraduate, Environment, Welfare, Education, Indigenous • Campaigns, events, honorariums, programs, marketing • All City Compass programs and staff 	\$458,298
Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities and events from International Department & International Support SSAF grant 	\$35,458
Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction programs/student representative professional development • Volunteer program • Student Engagement Officer • Student Union Council elections • Secretariat honorariums • SSCC Grant • Student Life Awards 	\$473,426
Supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMITV operations, honorariums, special projects, productions, training, website • RMIT Flagship Program (SSAF grant) • Catalyst magazine operations, student honorariums, publication • Communications/graphic design staff 	\$338,506
Providing food or drink to students on a campus of the higher education provider;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus-specific events and marketing (all campuses) • Healthy Breakfast SSAF grant 	\$365,123
Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major events and intervarsity recreational activities and competitions • Activities & Events collective including administration, student honorariums, marketing and staff support 	\$318,937
Supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration, grants, equipment and support to student run clubs and societies • Clubs & Societies staff and other support 	\$350,768
Advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration and support staff members: Administration, Governance and Finance • 5 x information counter staff and operations (including Bundoora East info counter) 	\$615,719
Advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Rights Officers • Student advocacy materials, campaigns, research and training for staff and student representatives on committees 	\$739,338
	YTD SSAF Expenditure	\$3,787,339
	YTD 2019 SSAF Funds Received	\$3,787,339
	Amount of grant remaining	\$0
	% of 2019 Grant spent	100%

**Table 2:
2019 SSAF Committee Grant Financial Report 1 Jan – 31 December 2019**

Program Title	Grant Amount	Expenditure 1 Jan – 31 Dec
RUSU Volunteer Program (includes training)	\$188,000	\$183,334
RMITV flagship production and RMITV training	\$55,000	\$50,369
RUSU International Student Support - conversation classes and mixer events	\$25,000	\$24,626
Bundoora East Student Rights, Info Counter & Campus Boost	\$56,500	\$53,526
RUSU Orientation Package	\$100,000	\$91,766
RUSU Free Healthy Breakfasts	\$65,000	\$71,196
Postgrad Support Program (inc SRO)	\$40,000	\$42,295
RUSU Campus Life (City, Point Cook, Brunswick & Bundoora West)	\$150,000	\$162,980
RUSU VE Awareness & Support	\$40,000	\$40,229
Compass Bundoora & Brunswick	\$121,000	\$118,415
RUSU Clubs Grants	\$30,000	\$38,952
RUSU Student Voices (SSCC Support & Student Life Awards)	\$30,000	\$25,669
RUSU Indigenous Grant	\$16,493	\$13,636
TOTAL	\$916,993	\$916,993

RUSU

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