

RMIT University Student Union
Incorporated (A0114140A)



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

RUSU
RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

A MESSAGE FROM THE 2025 RUSU PRESIDENT



Finbar Bray
RUSU President

2024 was a massive year for RUSU. We turned 80 and the party in Storey Hall was one to remember! We broke our record for RUSU membership hitting 6,044 members. Thank you to every one of you who signed up!

Our elected student representatives brought a lot of passion, creativity and dedication to their roles, which was reflected in the diverse activities throughout the year. I am incredibly proud of what the RUSU team accomplished in 2024.

As in recent years, the cost of living and food insecurity was a massive issue for students. RUSU was there to help through our; free lunches, free breakfasts, free fruit pop-ups, \$6 curry days at Realfoods, Compass Cupboard and more. As the 2024 elected Welfare Officer, being involved in the weekly Compass Cupboard Pop Up and Welfare on Wheels were personal highlights of the year for me.

We provided over 87,000+ free meals through all RUSU departments and events and we delivered 115 free breakfast events and 116 free lunch events.

At RUSU, we know assessment time can be tough on student finances, mental health and well-being. That's where we really stepped in to be there with our 'by students, for students' initiatives. 7,200+ students were reached through our Welfare on Wheels program which provided free snacks, positive vibes, encouragement and support to students who were studying in the library. RUSU provided over 7,000 serves of fresh fruit in 2024 – most of this during the assessment periods. And in week 12, RUSU Compass was out and about across the campuses during Stress Less Week.

And of course, RUSU knows how to party! 5000+ students attended RUSU events in 2024. 2000+ students attended the RUSU Welcome Bash. This event was awarded a 'Distinction Award' at the 2024 Student Experience Awards.

As a former club leader, I know that student run clubs are at the heart of what we do at RUSU. Over 12,590 members joined the 89 RUSU affiliated clubs and societies. RUSU grants enabled these clubs to provide over 800 events, building a bigger and stronger community on campus.

Our 222 RUSU volunteers were a sea of purple across the campuses, contributing just under 3,000 volunteer hours. Our ever growing team of volunteers, student casuals, elected student reps and staff were absolute superstars. Thank you all for an incredible 2024.

Finbar Bray

President,
RMIT University Student Union



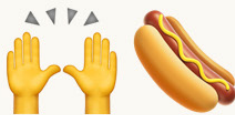
Dulan Ariyathilaka
RUSU General Secretary

RMIT University Student Union acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

RMIT University Student Union also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where it conducts its business.

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2024

Free Food



87,000+
FREE MEALS

across all RUSU
departments &
events

FREE LUNCHES PROGRAM

52,800+
SERVES



115

Events

6

Campuses

FREE BREAKFAST

34,140+
SERVES



116

Events

7

Locations

WELFARE ON WHEELS



7,200+
students reached
across 24 events

FRESH FRUIT PROGRAM

7,040+
 serves of
fresh fruit

COMPASS MATERIAL SUPPORT

2,295

students accessed
grocery packs



1,170

students provided a free
bags of fresh produce,
groceries and a recipe
card across **3 Compass
Marketplace** events

RUSU REALFOODS



Affordable, healthy and
sustainable meals

All meals under

\$10

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2024

RUSU Events

59,200+ at all RUSU Events –
ATTENDANCE including free lunches
& social events



75

RUSU ticketed social & departmental events



6,400+

ticketed attendees



550+

students celebrated RUSU's 80th Birthday in a huge Storey Hall event



SPECIAL RUSU EVENTS

Multicultural Week, Indian Independence Day (collaboration with RMIT Indian Club), Pride Week, Let's Get Consensual, Save Your GPA, Compass Market Place and Oktoberfest.



CAMPUS HIGH-LIGHTS



Brunswick (Welfare)

New Brunswick Buddies Table initiative - make friends and connect with fellow students through a tablecloth sewing project



Bundoora

Involvement in the Activate Bundoora project and redesign of 204 as a student activity space 'The Pulse'.

ORIENTATION

5,000+
students attended
RUSU Orientation Events
(all campuses)

2,000+

students attended
Welcome Bash



26

RUSU Club Orientation
'Welcome Grants' awarded

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS



Indigenous:

Welcome dinner.
Care Packs - 35 welcome packs and 50 stress less care packs

Sustainability:

Sustainability Week, eco painting workshop, reusable metal straw sets and seed pack giveaways



Disability & Carers:

Neurodiverse Study Sessions and Disability & Carers coffee catch ups

International:

International welcome mixer and Exchange student mixers, Cheese social



Women's:

International Women's Day Celebrations including Smoke, Sauna, Sisterhood movie screening. Regular women's room lunches



Queer:

Regular coffee catch ups, Women's & Queer Mixer, Pride Week – celebrated with Pride Chill & Grill on each campus, bracelet making, movie night, board game night, a pride week mixer and attending the RMIT Pride March

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2024

Advocacy, Representation & Welfare



RUSU student reps provided student voice on:

- Our Watch – Development of Best Practice Guidelines for Consulting with Students
- Tertiary Education Quality Standard Agency Conference
- Walking, Talking and Working Together – Gender Prevention Workshop
- Progressing Disability Inclusion at RMIT

Successfully advocated for:



Expansion of RMIT Hardship Grant Program



Permanent sensory friendly study space



Free menstrual products in select all genders and accessible bathrooms

RUSU INFO COUNTERS

In person advice and information provided to students across all campuses.



STUDENT RIGHTS

5 RUSU Student Rights Officers provided free and confidential advice, independent of RMIT

Consultation appointments **1,411** 

Outcomes achieved for students

719

SROs supported student hearings

89

COMPASS



3,300+
STUDENTS
REACHED
via Compass outreach events



Launched **Cost of Living Week**

1,744

Compass Drop-In student contacts

23

Compass volunteers attended 158 shifts

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2024

Clubs & Societies

89

**AFFILIATED
CLUBS**



9

**NEW
CLUBS**

- RMIT Australian Union of Jewish Students
- Cambodian Student Association
- Microsoft Enthusiasts Club
- Women In Built Environments
- Matcha Club

CLUBS

50 Academic
19 Cultural
10 Social
4 Political
6 Spiritual

CLUB GRANTS

304

specific grants
awarded totalling

\$112,127

26

orientation
grants totalling

\$11,000



12,590

club members



800+

club events

Volunteers



222

**RUSU STUDENT
VOLUNTEERS**
new and returning



2,983

hours
completed by volunteers

VOLUNTEER AREAS

Compass, Realfoods Café,
Events, Info Counters,
Free Breakfast, Student
Rights Hearings

STUDENT CASUALS

12

trained and
employed RUSU
/ Realfoods
student casuals

TRAINING ATTENDEES

176

students

attended
accredited
trainings



63

Food Safety
Handling

13

YMHFA for
Compass



45

Responsible
Service of Alcohol

55

Internal
Trainings

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2024

Communication & Media

6,044
RUSU 2024
FINANCIAL MEMBERS
56% International / 44% Local



53 Member only newsletters sent



11.7K Instagram followers



6 RUSU merch items launched in store

13 MEMBER-ONLY COMPETITIONS



69

Prizes given away



126

Movie tickets given away

CATALYST MAGAZINE

4 CATALYST EDITIONS 

2 printed **2** online

Editions: Off to A Street,
The Improv Issues, Nest,
Minor Mess



3

elected student editors



77

volunteer designers, sub-editors, content officers and contributors

RMITV

692 RMITV MEMBERS



12

productions



245+

volunteers on 'in-person' productions

106 reviews

22 in-review writers



5

RMITV Events

6

Training Workshops

9

Producer Roles

6

Management Team Roles

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2024

Collaborations

700

students attended

BUNDOORA MINI CLUBS DAY (WITH STEM)

Bringing together all 9 Health Science clubs, integrating with RUSU's free lunch program to boost club visibility and engagement.

91



students participated BUNDY BASH LEAGUE 2024 (WITH RMIT ACTIVE)

A day of social sports fun (including; Badminton, Volleyball, Basketball, Futsal, and Pickleball), free food, and community fun, followed by an awards ceremony with drinks, music and participation from sponsors.



WOMEN'S STRENGTH TRAINING CLASSES (WOMEN'S DEPT. WITH RMIT ACTIVE)

This collaboration (City & Bundoora) provided strength training sessions in a social setting, followed by an optional coffee catch up.



METROPOLIS ARTWORK (WITH RMIT CREATIVE)

Artist *Rachel Shugg* and the RMIT student community artist created a participatory work that amplifies Deaf and Disabled perspectives at RMIT.



RMIT PRIDE MARCH

RUSU joined with RMIT staff and students for the RMIT Pride March during Pride Week which went through Bowen Street and ended at the Pride Chill N Grill event.



NEURODIVERS E STUDY SESSIONS (WITH RMIT LIBRARY & ELS)

These sessions are designed to create a safe and neuroaffirming study space for neurodivergent students.



BRUNSWICK STRESS LESS WEEK PANEL (WITH SCHOOL OF FASHION AND TEXTILES)

The RUSU Brunswick Rep, hosted a joint panel discussion regarding student wellbeing in creative studies. The panel included the Dene of the School of Fashion and Textile, a Bachelor of Fashion student and Compass Coordinator.

Sponsorships

100,000+

FREE PRODUCTS
GIVEN TO STUDENTS

8

major sponsors
supported
orientation
events



75

sponsors engaged
across the year



28

members exclusive
offers online

\$75,000+

stock contributions and
free items for students

2024 RUSU GOVERNANCE UPDATE

2024 was an extremely busy year for RUSU, responding to high demand from students for support with food insecurity, mental health and well-being. RUSU focused on rebuilding following the budget cuts in 2023 and we went from strength to strength. Changes in legislation provided more funding for RUSU for 2025. We focused on boosting our operations around clubs, food security and compass welfare programs heading into 2025.

This 2024 Annual Report showcases our accomplishments and activities across all areas of RUSU and all campuses.

KEY 2024 GOVERNANCE UPDATES

RUSU SSAF – Minimum 40% SSAF

RUSU is required to negotiate annually for SSAF funding - both for our core operations (base funding) and for specific programs such as the volunteer program (student priority grant funding). After a successful campaign by the National Union of Students, the government introduced legislation to amend the Higher Education Support Act 2003, to require Universities to provide a minimum 40% SSAF to democratic student organisations. At RMIT, this is RUSU. The legislation provides for universities to submit 'transition plans' to the government outlining how they will meet this 40%. For 2025, the result of this change and transition process was just over \$1 million in additional funding for RUSU. Negotiations will continue between RMIT and RUSU regarding meeting the 40% target for 2026.

RUSU Annual Elections

RUSU Annual elections were held in hybrid mode in 2024, with online voting (remotely or on-campus) and on-campus campaigning. The elections were conducted by OGL Group. Big Pulse was engaged to provide the online voting platform. 6,539 students voted in the RUSU annual election. 75 students nominated for election and 3 teams registered. This was a very impressive level of student engagement.

RUSU Website Project

In 2024 RUSU completed the final stages of implementation from the 2023 RUSU Social Media Audit. The RUSU SUC approved a project to work with SEN Pro to develop a new RUSU website, including a new membership system. This was launched at the start of 2025.

RUSU OHS Audit & Policy Updates

In the first quarter of 2024, RUSU continued working with external consultants, Mazars to undertake an audit and improve our OHS systems, policies and procedures. This included a detailed Psychosocial Hazard Risk Assessment report to prepare RUSU ahead of anticipated changes in legislation.

Annual General Meeting

The RUSU 2024 Annual General Meeting was held in person on campus. 217 students attended (176 RUSU financial members (with AGM voting rights) and 41 RMIT students (non-voting). Minutes available at: https://rusu.rmit.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RUSU_AGM2024_Minutes.pdf

Student General Meeting on Palestine

RUSU ran a Student General Meeting on Palestine. The SGM was open to all RMIT students to attend and vote. 849 RMIT student pre-registered to attend. 570 confirmed RMIT students attended. This was a huge engagement by students on an issue they feel passionately about.

RUSU Student Union Council – By Students –For Students

RUSU is governed by a team of 29 annually elected student representatives, who form the RUSU Student Union Council (SUC). 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. Monthly Student Union Council Meetings were held in person and online. 13 Student Union Council meetings were held. Records of attendance at SUC meetings is available on the RUSU website at: <https://rusu.rmit.edu.au/council/>

2024 RUSU GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC)

RUSU is registered as a not-for-profit organisation with the ACNC. RUSU is required to report to the ACNC annually. This provides another layer of external accountability for RUSU's operations.

RUSU and RMIT Deed Agreement

The bulk of RUSU funding is SSAF fees which are provided to RUSU through an Annual Funding Deed Agreement with RMIT. This Deed outlines governance and reporting requirements attached to the funding and RUSU's operations. RUSU complied with all of the requirement of the funding Deed in 2024.

External Affiliations

RUSU continued to be affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS). This peak body for students played a very active role lobbying and advocating for students interests during 2024. This advocacy as instrumental in achieving a number of pro-students and pro-student union legislative changes. This included a change in legislation requiring Universities to provide a minimum 40% SSAF to student organisations.

Student Experience Network (SEN)

RUSU is a member of the Student Experience Network (SEN). SEN is a really valuable network for RUSU staff to tap into to assist with our work for students at RMIT. It provides networks and professional development and facilitates information sharing across organisations in terms of operations and opportunities (e.g. sponsorship). The Annual SEN Conference was held at RMIT in November 2024, with many RUSU staff attending and some also presenting. RUSU was awarded 2 Distinction Awards for our Welcome Bash event and our Realfoods Volunteer program.

RUSU 2024 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Your student fees at work @ RUSU

RMIT University charges students an annual Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) in accordance with the government SSAF legislation. 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 2024 RUSU received a total of **\$4,202,981** in SSAF fees through RMIT.

The 2024 grant from RMIT was received as a lump sum payment in late December 2023 for the 2024 year ahead. 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.

All RUSU SSAF funds were spent on the 19 areas permitted by the SSAF legislation (Allowable Items). See Table 1.

RUSU Funding & Income 2024

RUSU funding from RMIT (SSAF funds) for 2024 is made up of the following:

Base grant	\$3,692,981
SSAF Student Priority Grants	\$510,000
2022 TOTAL SSAF GRANT	\$4,202,981

Base Grant (SSAF Funded)

The RUSU base grant covers all of our core operations and most RUSU staffing, student representative and administrative costs. It also covers various department events and core RUSU club grants. Our base grant in 2024 was **\$3,692,981**.

Student Priority Grants (SSAF Funded)

In 2024 RUSU received, **\$510,000** in SSAF Committee 'Student Priority' grants, to provide some specific services and events run by students, for students. This included: free lunches and breakfasts, Compass welfare food support programs, RUSU volunteer program, and RMITV programs (see Table 2).

RUSU Other Income: Additional sources of RUSU income include: investment income, 2024 RUSU financial memberships, sponsorship, Realfoods Cafe income and event ticket sales. Interest from investments in 2024 was **\$339,010**.

Finance Summary 2024

Total Revenue in 2024	\$4,854,266
Total Expenses in 2024	\$4,837,488
Surplus	\$16,778

* Other comprehensive income for the year: (\$7,021)

Total comprehensive income/(loss)	\$9,757
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* This figure represents Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss Gain/(Loss) on the revaluation of financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income

The financial audit for financial year 1 January to 31 December 2024 was conducted by independent auditors BDO and will be presented at the Annual General Meeting on 15 May 2025.

2024 Financial Position

In 2024 RUSU ran at an operating surplus of **\$9,757**.

**Table 1: RUSU SSAF Grant expenditure on Allowable Items - 1 Jan –31 Dec 2024
(Base and Student Priority Grants – for Government Acquittal)**

RUSU complied with the terms of our funding deed with RMIT and the SSAF legislation in 2023.

Allowable items	RUSU services and activities	Total Expenditure
(a) providing food or drink to students on a campus of the higher education provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUSU Realfoods • RUSU Free Breakfast Program • Free food programs including free lunches 	\$317,652
(b) supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUSU Events • RUSU events and recreational activities • Activities & Events department • RUSU Campus Coordinators 	\$557,076
(c) supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration, support and grants for RUSU student clubs • Clubs department including administration, student honorariums, marketing and staff support 	\$438,222
(f) promoting the health or welfare of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUSU Compass Welfare support for students • Welfare on Wheels • RUSU Department activities: Disability & Carers, Indigenous, Queer, Welfare, Women's, International 	\$499,148
(h) helping students obtain employment or advice on careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction programs/student representative professional development • RUSU Volunteer program • RUSU elected representative support and engagement 	\$497,362
(n) supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMITV operations, production and training • Catalyst magazine (online and print) • RUSU Communication student engagement 	\$348,690
(p) advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUSU risk and financial governance, administration, and operations • RUSU operations including information counters at all major campuses 	\$702,220
(q) advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUSU Student information and general enquiries service (in-person and online) • Student rights advocacy and case management support • Student advocacy campaigns • Contribution to University decision-making and student policy development and review • RUSU Department activities: Education, Vocational Education, Sustainability, Postgraduate 	\$842,611
(r) giving students information to help them in their orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUSU Orientation activities and events 	\$0
SUB TOTAL		\$4,202,981
TOTAL		\$4,202,981

**Table 2: 2024 SSAF Student Priority Grants Expenditure Report –
1 January 2024 – 31 December 2024**

Project	SSAF Priority Budget	2024 Expenditure
RUSU Club Grants	\$50,000	\$45,638
RUSU Compass – Food Support Programs	\$30,000	\$30,000
RUSU Free Lunch Program	\$200,000	\$200,045
RUSU Free Breakfasts	\$50,000	\$50,000
RUSU Postgraduate Support Grant	\$3,000	\$1,792
RUSU RMITV Flagship	\$30,000	\$30,330
RUSU Volunteers	\$147,000	\$152,195
GRAND TOTAL	\$510,000	\$510,000

Note: The above amounts do not represent all funding spent in these areas. They are specific to funds spent from SSAF Student Priority Grants in these areas.



FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS.

www.rusu.rmit.edu.au