

RMIT University Student Union
Incorporated (A0114140A)



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

RUSU
RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

A MESSAGE FROM THE 2026 RUSU PRESIDENT



Samuel Coombs
RUSU President



Bunny Wadhwa
RUSU General Secretary

2025 was a year of growth for RUSU. Our impact on supporting student welfare, wellbeing and food security was massive, and I am extremely proud of what the team of student reps, staff and volunteers achieved for students.

With the cost of living crisis hitting students hard – RUSU was there to help. Tackling food insecurity was our focus. 175,000+ free meals were made possible by RUSU – through direct free meals or through our grocery and veggie packs. We delivered 141 free lunch events (70,000+ free lunch serves) and 179 free breakfast events (51,000+ free breakfast serves) and numerous other meals through RUSU events and pop ups. We provided more free food events in more locations than ever before – adding RMIT Up to our free lunch program and running Bundoora East events weekly.

Fresh is best! RUSU gave away 12.41 tonnes of sustainably sourced fresh fruit and vegies to students. While fresh fruit has always been part of our free breakfasts, we added it to our weekly lunches and delivered more Pop Up events, including Compass Market Place and Cost of Living Week markets.

With our main RUSU offices located in Carlton, we were keen to boost our support for VE students. We opened a new Compass Drop In Centre at Carlton campus and employed a new Compass Coordinator with a focus on supporting VE students. We ran 7 Pop Up VE Vegies Markets and our breakfast and lunch programs were expanded to align with the VE semester calendar.

RUSU knows how to party. We held 32 ticketed parties/major RUSU social events, which were attended by 6,125 students. The student rep run departments (e.g. Women's, Queer, Indigenous, Disabilities & Carers, VE, Sustainability, Postgrad & International) benefitted from more SSAF funding and dedicated staff support in 2025. 84 specific departmental events were delivered, with 2,234 students attending.

The other big winner from the increase in SSAF funding that RUSU received in 2025 was RUSU Clubs. Student run clubs are at the heart of what we do at RUSU. Over 23,348 members joined the 95 RUSU affiliated clubs and societies and the RUSU clubs ran more than 1,100 events. We awarded 491 Club grants totalling \$190,800 including three new types of grants.

As the 2025 elected Disabilities & Carers Officer, a particularly special 2025 achievement for me personally was RMIT University & RUSU winning the Student Experience Network (SEN) award for the Best Diversity & Inclusion Initiative for the We Belong 'Metropolis' creative inclusion art project.

Thank you to the 6003 RUSU members who joined RUSU in 2025 and thank you all for an incredible 2025.

Samuel Coombs

President 2026,
RMIT University Student Union

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.

Free Food / Food Security



175,000+

FREE MEALS

or meals made possible through grocery or vegie packs

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

70,000+

SERVES



141

Events



7

Locations

1,500

students fed through the **NEW** RMIT UP lunch



Bundoora East Lunches now weekly + more lunches for VE Students

FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM

51,000+

SERVES



179

Events



8

Locations



25

 weeks of free breakfasts

220

 First Nations students

accessed a free breakfast through the expansion of our program in semester 2

FREE FRESH PRODUCE



12.41

TONNES

of sustainably sourced fresh produce free to students

NEW VE POP-UP VEGIE MARKETS



7

pop-up events

1,590

bags of fresh vegies

3,565

kilos of fresh vegies

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

Free Food / Food Security

COMPASS CUPBOARD & MARKETPLACE

46

Compass Cupboard events across City, Bundoora & Brunswick Campuses

3,885+

free Compass Cupboard grocery packs distributed to students



NEW

Groceries and fresh produce provided by Food Bank for City Cupboard

NEW

Bundoora Compass moves to the former Realfoods site - adds fresh produce



1,988

student recipes and grocery/fresh produce bags distributed at Compass Marketplace

COST OF LIVING WEEK

7

Events

4

Locations



1,950

students reached & provided vegie bags/boxes

1,000

"Top Tips for Budget Living" Booklets distributed

NEW

RUSU Free Food Resources Webpage

WELFARE ON WHEELS

6,500+

students reached

9,600+

snacks provided

RUSU Student Representative run



32

Pop-up stalls

4

Library Locations

REALFOODS

Providing healthy, ethical, sustainable and affordable meals for students.

3,000+

subsidised student meals served

2,000

free curry meals served

8,800+

hot, healthy curries/dahl and rice meals served

JFC FOOD SECURITY COLLABORATION

RUSU provided support for Just Food Collective's **WELL FED FRIDAY** - fighting food waste

2,299

free meals

2,032

grocery bags



RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

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RUSU Events

78,300+ at all RUSU Events –
ATTENDANCE including free lunches
& social events

 **116** RUSU ticketed
social &
departmental
events



441 students partied at
Storey Hall 'Disco
Disco Disco' party

6,125
ticketed attendees at **32**
parties/major events 



Special Theme Weeks

Multicultural Week, Indian
Cultural Festival, Chinese Cultural
Festival, Pride Week, Let's Get
Consensual, Save Your GPA,
Compass Market Place.

CAMPUS HIGH- LIGHTS



Brunswick
Brunswick Welcome Drinks and
Fabric Draping Competition



Bundoora

Building 204 "The Pulse" launched alongside
Bundoora events including Carnival Day, an
Iftar gathering, and an "Encanto" movie night

ORIENTATION

2,500
students attended RUSU's
'Welcome Bash' event

3,400+
students attended 11 ticketed
RUSU Orientation Parties

STUDENT LIFE AWARDS



14 **7**
students awarded clubs awarded

\$10,650
granted in prize money

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

2,234 students attended departmental events,
organised by students for students



45 Departmental
Events delivered
including:

- **International Department:** international cooking classes, Chinese Cultural Celebration
- **VE Department:** Weekly coffee hangs, VE welcome drinks, meet your VE rep
- **Women's Department:** IWD Speed Networking, weekly Crafternoons, all day women's study session
- **Queer Department:** Weekly coffee catch ups, welcome picnic, Queer x Women's Department Mixer, Pride Week Mixer
- **Indigenous Department:** Welcome meals, free breakfast and fruit and veg pack initiatives, pre-assessment self-care kits
- **Postgraduate Department:** postgraduate coffee catch ups including HDR editions, Postgraduate Mixer
- **Sustainability Department:** edible garden workshops, seed paper making workshop
- **Disability and Carers Department:** weekly disability and neurodiversity coffee catch ups, continued support and resourcing of Neurodiverse Study Sessions
- **Education Department:** Pre-assessment period study sessions, Save Your GPA Week including Save Your GPA party

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

Clubs & Societies

95
AFFILIATED CLUBS

CLUBS

- 53** Academic
- 22** Cultural
- 10** Social
- 4** Political
- 6** Spiritual



LAUNCHED
Rubric Clubs online platform

UPDATED
Club Leader Resources Website

CLUB GRANTS

491
specific grants awarded totalling

\$190,800+

52
welcome grants totalling

\$26,281



23,348
club members



1,100+
club events approved

NEW CLUB GRANTS



Activation Grant launched to support club activity in Building 78 'RUSU After Dark' or Building 204 'The Pulse'



Club Orientation Grants enabling clubs to boost orientation stalls and activities



Club Executive Reconnect Grant to support handover activities between incoming/outgoing executive

CLUB LEADERSHIP

300

New Club Leader Welcome Bags produced with resources

Club Executive Reconnect Grant (CERG) introduced to support handover activities

AGM Resource web page launched to support club transition and governance

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

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Volunteer Program



208

new and returning
RUSU VOLUNTEERS



2,822 hours

completed by
RUSU VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER AREAS

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

STUDENT CASUALS

17

Event, Info
Counter and
Realfoods student
casuals employed

TRAINING ATTENDEES

139
students

attended
accredited
trainings

110

attended external
accredited trainings
– Food Handling,
RSA, MHFA

29

attended internal
trainings - Student
Rights

197

volunteers
completed the
online 'Do Food
Safely' module



83

will receive recognition
of their volunteering on
their RMIT Transcript



61

new merit
badges
awarded

Welfare

COMPASS



3

Compass
Coordinators



4

Drop in
Centres



1,408

student
contacts

NEW

Carlton Compass Drop in Centre opened
- more support for VE students

7,300+ STUDENTS
REACHED

through Compass Outreach events

21

MAJOR OUTREACH EVENTS

Including Stress Less Week, Compass
Marketplace and Cost of Living Week



186

Compass volunteer shifts
(Drop in centre and
Compass Cupboard)

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

Communication & Media

6,003

RUSU 2025 FINANCIAL MEMBERS

62% International / 38% Local



14.7K

 Instagram followers

24

 online membership discount advertisers

191

 prizes given away across 23 comps.

NEW RUSU website and membership platform launched January 2025

\$80,000

in sponsorship including \$40,000 in free products for students

CATALYST MAGAZINE

4 CATALYST EDITIONS



Editions: Adrenaline, Ambiguity, Rooted, Hereafter

2

printed

2

online



3

elected student editors



23

designers, photographers and writers

RMITV

599 RMITV MEMBERS



11

productions

Short films, webseries, training shows, flagship shows and workshops



15

RMITV producers



150

active volunteers

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2025

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Advocacy & Representation

REPRESENTATION

29 elected student reps on the Student Union Council

13 Student Union Council meetings held

324 students attended the RUSU AGM

7,513 students voted in the 2025 RUSU annual election

RUSU student reps advocated for students at RMIT across:

9 boards / committees

5 advisory / working groups



RUSU PRIORITIES

- Interim Equitable Learning Plans introduced
- Process to opt-in to Adobe Access
- Food Access for students
- Expansion of Free Period Product Vending Machine Access
- Preferred names on student cards
- Universal Submission Deadline for VE students
- Student kitchenette installed at Brunswick

STUDENT VOICE POLICY & SUBMISSIONS



- Continued feedback into the ongoing review of the Assessment and Assessment Flexibility Policy Suite
- Submission to the consultation on the Disability Standards for Education (2005)
- Submission in response to the TEQSA Act consultation paper
- Bundoora Parking Report

RUSU INFO COUNTERS

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



8,229

In person info counter queries

7,008

emails through the RUSU service and student rights accounts

1,821

students triaged through the Student Rights email service

486

student phone call queries received

500

RUSU Room Bookings - student & club events

STUDENT RIGHTS

1,282 Consultation appointments

6 RUSU Student Rights Officers providing free and confidential advice

1,095

new student cases

719

outcomes achieved for students

105

hearings supported by SROs



1,282 Consultation appointments

19

student volunteers sat on 28 RMIT Hearings (including 21 Student Conduct Hearings)

Collaborations



FOODBANK

In 2025 RUSU was accepted as Foodbank partner, enabling us to place weekly orders for groceries and fresh produce for Compass Cupboard through Food Bank.



JUST FOOD COLLECTIVE (JFC)

RUSU was lucky to work with the superstars at JFC again in 2025 to support student food security. This included cross promotion and resource sharing between Compass Cupboard and Well-Fed Friday and Edible Gardening Workshops (City and Bundoora).



ACTIVATE BUNDOORA

RUSU appreciates the enthusiasm and practical support from Activate Bundoora folks with Bundoora West campus events. Including funding for extra treats and activities at the Bundoora Carnival Day, free fresh fruit alongside Chill & Grill and healthy side salads at RUSU BBQ events.



WOMEN'S STRENGTH TRAINING (RUSU WOMEN'S DEPT & RMIT ACTIVE)

This collaboration (City & Bundoora) provided strength training sessions for female/female identifying students in a social setting, followed by an optional coffee catch up (city) or free women's lunch (Bundoora).



NEURODIVERSE STUDY SESSIONS (WITH RMIT LIBRARY & ELS)

Run in collaboration with the Library and the Equitable Learning Service. These sessions are designed to create a safe and neuroaffirming study space for neurodivergent students.



METROPOLIS ARTWORK (WITH RMIT CREATIVE)

A collaborative project with RMIT Creative in which 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.



WALERT HOUSE EVENTS

As in previous years, RUSU joined with Walert House to deliver several student events, including Walert House Welcome events and the annual Halloween Party.

2025 RUSU GOVERNANCE UPDATE

2025 was a year of change and growth for RUSU. Changes in the Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF) legislation provided more funding for RUSU in 2025. This resulted in a growth in our staffing operation and service provisions, especially in the areas of; clubs, food security and Compass welfare programs.

KEY 2025 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 in 2024 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%. Following discussions with RUSU, RMIT submitted a transition plan that involved RUSU receiving 30% of SSAF collected for 2025, 35% in 2026 and then moving towards 40%. Negotiations will continue between RMIT and RUSU regarding the transition to 40%.

In 2025, RUSU reviewed a number of finance, admin and governance processes to enable RUSU to scale up our operations in line with the increased funding, staffing, programs and activities. This included updates to RUSU Finance regulations, delegations and key policies and procedures.

RUSU Annual Elections

RUSU Annual elections were held in hybrid mode in 2025, 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. 71 students nominated for election. 7,513 students voted in the RUSU annual election. This represents 12.09% of eligible voters. This was the highest level of student voter engagement in student elections in Australia.

RUSU Website Project

In 2024 the RUSU SUC approved a project to work with SEN Pro to develop a new RUSU website, including a new membership system. This new website and membership database was successfully launched at the start of 2025.

New Student Rights & Compass Database

RUSU worked with SenPro to develop a new database for our Student Rights and Compass services to improve the way we provide these services for students and how we document case records and service data. The Student Rights database went live in August 2025. The Compass database was implemented ready for 2026.

RUSU Enterprise Agreement Negotiations

Negotiating the RMIT University Student Union Enterprise Agreement (RUSU EA) was a significant focus for RUSU management throughout 2025. This was the first update to the RUSU EA since RUSU was restructured in 2020. The RMIT University Student Union Enterprise Agreement (2025) was approved by Fair Work in February 2026.

Annual General Meeting

The RUSU 2025 Annual General Meeting was held in person on campus. 324 students attended (271 RUSU financial members (with AGM voting rights) and 53 RMIT students (non-voting). Minutes available at: https://rusu.rmit.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/RUSU_AGM_Minutes_2025.pdf

2025 RUSU GOVERNANCE UPDATE

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). The RUSU Representative roles and students currently elected in those positions are available at <https://rusu.rmit.edu.au/rusureps/>

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 for the 1 Jan to 31 December 2025 period 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/>

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 requirements of the funding Deed in 2025.

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 2025. This advocacy was instrumental in achieving a number of pro-students and pro-student union legislative changes. This included the 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 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 the University of Queensland in November 2025. The RUSU President and several staff attended. RMIT University & RUSU won the award for the Best Diversity & Inclusion Initiative for the We Belong 'Metropolis' creative inclusion project.

RUSU 2025 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. Due to changes in legislation, Universities are required to transition to providing a minimum 40% of SSAF income to democratic student organisations. At RMIT, this is RUSU. In 2025, it was agreed that RUSU would receive 30% of the SSAF income received by RMIT.

In 2025 RUSU received a total of **\$5,760,000** in SSAF fees through RMIT. This was a significant increase on 2024 where RUSU received \$4,202,981 in SSAF Fees.

RUSU received the bulk of the 2025 grant (\$5,239,643) from RMIT as a lump sum payment in late December 2024 for the 2025 year ahead. We received a further \$340,357 in June and \$180,000 in December to align with the 30% of SSAF income received by RMIT. The large upfront payment of SSAF enabled RUSU to maximise opportunities to generate additional income through strategic investments. RUSU continued to engage Advisers as investment advisors to assist with the management of our investments in accordance with the SUC 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 2025

RUSU funding from RMIT (SSAF funds) for 2025 is made up of the following:

Total 2025 SSAF Income	\$5,760,000
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2025 SSAF Expenditure	
Base grant	\$4,554,097
SSAF Student Priority Grants	\$1,121,951
2025 TOTAL SSAF EXPENDITURE	\$5,676,048
Total 2025 SSAF underspend	\$83,952

RMIT agreed that RUSU can retain the remaining \$83,952 in 2025 SSAF to spend on SSAF projects in 2026.

Base Grant (SSAF Funded)

The RUSU base grant covers all of our core operations and most RUSU staffing, student representative and administrative and operational costs. It also covers many department events and activities and core RUSU club grants. Expenditure on the base grant in 2025 was \$4,554,097. Increased spending in the base grant in 2025 includes:

- the expansion of the Compass Welfare Service and opening of the new Carlton Drop In Centre,
- service improvements and increased resourcing for the Student Rights Service,
- increased budget, activities and staff support for the RUSU student rep run departments (e.g. Queer, Women's, Indigenous, Sustainability, International, VE),
- operational changes and increased Communications and Finance staffing required due to RUSU's increased funding, operations and activities

Student Priority Grants (SSAF Funded)

In 2025 RUSU spent \$1,121,951 on SSAF Committee 'Student Priority' grant projects to provide some specific services and events run by students, for students. This included: free lunches and breakfasts, food security programs, RUSU volunteer program, inclusion and diversity projects, and targeted club welcome and special initiative grants. There was a large increase in expenditure on free food and food insecurity projects in response to the cost of living crisis and food insecurity among the student body.

RUSU Other Income: Additional sources of RUSU income include investment income, 2025 RUSU financial memberships, sponsorship, Realfoods Cafe income and event ticket sales. Interest from investments in 2025 was \$384,627. This is an increase of \$45,617 on 2024 interest income.

Finance Summary 2025

Total Revenue in 2025	\$6,498,382
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Total Expenses in 2025:	\$6,197,653
Surplus	\$300,729
*Other comprehensive income for the year:	\$47,151
Total comprehensive income/(loss):	\$347,880

* 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 2025 was conducted by independent auditors BDO and will be presented at the Annual General Meeting on 7 May 2026.

2025 Financial Position

In 2025 RUSU ran at an operating surplus of **\$347,880**.

**Table 1: RUSU SSAF Grant expenditure on Allowable Items - 1 Jan –31 Dec 2025
(Base and Student Priority Grants)**

RUSU complied with the terms of our funding deed with RMIT and the SSAF legislation in 2025.

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 Free Breakfast Program • Free Food programs including free lunches • RUSU Food Security Programs (excluding Compass run programs) • RUSU Realfoods 	\$708,486
(b) supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities & Events department • RUSU social and cultural events and recreational activities and festivals • RUSU Campus Coordinators and based activities 	\$562,234
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 	\$676,514
(f) promoting the health or welfare of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUSU Compass Welfare support for students • Welfare on Wheels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – RUSU Department activities: – Disability & Carers – Indigenous – Queer – Welfare – Women’s – International • Inclusion & Diversity Projects & Grants 	\$643,589
(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 	\$186,531
(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 	\$438,001
(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 and email, phone and online support 	\$1,238,903
(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 Campaigns activities & staffing • RUSU Department activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Education – Vocational Education – Sustainability – Postgraduate 	\$1,221,790
TOTAL		\$5,676,048

RUSU

RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS.

www.rusu.rmit.edu.au