

REPORT FOR GUILD COUNCIL

Guild President Dylan Storer (he/him)

Period: 15/8/2025 – 25/9/2025

Travel

- Mon Sep 8 – Thurs Sep 11 – Sydney – Australian Centre for Student Equity & Success Symposium. Travel paid for by the centre.

Leave

- Mon Sep 15 – Thurs Sep 18 (except for 1hr in morning of Thurs 18 due to Academic Board Executive). This leave was all TOIL.

Summary	1
Meetings	2
University Meetings	2
Guild Meetings	3
Other Meetings/Activities	3
Matters of Representation	4
Education Placements	4
Special General Meeting & Palestine Activism	4
Psychology Exam Changes	5
11:59pm Universal Submission Time	5
Student Housing Concerns	6
Guild Operations	7
Guild Student Pantry	7
Clubs Hub Stage Two	7
Spaces Proposal	7

Summary

This has been an incredibly busy period for the Guild. Every day we've been working hard for students and with students to be the student union they deserve. We've got students back when it matters, push for a more ethical uni, a fairer society and fuller bellies. Firstly, I am very proud of two important cost of living and support measures being rolled out this week by the Guild. First is \$5 Student Saver Meals every day at Guild Café Central and the second is the launch of the Guild's Student Pantry. These initiatives are discussed further below but they come thanks to so much hard work from Guild staff, the heartbeat of our organisation.

On the advocacy front, I have been heavily involved in pushing back against unfair changes to Psychology exams that have turned take-home open-book exams to invigilated and closed book midway through semester! I've also been heavily involved in leading the Student Guild pushback against risky university mergers in WA. Finally the Guild is holding an SGM next Wednesday in support of two resolutions relating to Palestine and our uni's ties to weapons companies and I'd encourage you all to attend and support the resolutions.

Every day I come onto campus I'm blown away by how much we've achieved together so far this year and I'm thankful for the support of this Council, our Reps, our Exec and our hardworking Guild staff for making the impossible possible and for making life better for students today and into the future.

In solidarity,
Dylan

Meetings

University Meetings

Date	Meeting	Comments
15/8/25	Academic Board	
20/8/25	Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic	Meeting regarding psychology exam fixes. This has now been resolved with a positive outcome.
20/8/25	University Council	
25/8/25	Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic	Phone Call to discuss club matters pertaining to the registration of AUJS.
1/9/25	Parking Insights Forum	New forum to discuss parking on campus
4/9/25	Manager, Engagement - Stadium	Discussion on reducing hire fees for clubs and breaking down barriers between the Guild and the stadium
5/9/25	Vice Chancellor	Discussed student housing, exam and assessment changes, the upcoming Guild election, uni merger discussions, Guild food security programs and the Guild's commercial leases
18/9/25	Academic Board Executive	
19/9/25	Deputy Vice Chancellor Global	Discussion on collaborating with student representative bodies of global campuses and the importance of independence of these bodies and for the independence of the Curtin Colombo Guild from the university.
22/9/25	Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic & President of AUJS Curtin	The DVCA called this meeting to discuss AUJS's desire to re-affiliate with the Guild. AUJS was advised that, if they met the requirements that all clubs have to abide by that the Clubs team would work with them to facilitate this.
24/9/25	Students as Partners Coordinator with VPE	Monthly catch up

Guild Meetings

Date	Meeting	Comments
18/8/25	Managing Director	Weekly Meeting
18/8/25	Executive Committee	
19/8/25	Manager – Student Engagement	Weekly Meeting
21/8/25	Ella Marchionda	Meeting to discuss the SGM
22/8/25	President – Curtin WA Pharmacy Students Association	Discussion on joint projects and support
25/8/25	Managing Director	Weekly Meeting
25/8/25	Manager – Student Engagement	Weekly Meeting
25/8/25	Operations Committee	
26/8/25	Management Accountant	
26/8/25	Western Independent Interview	Interview regarding SGM
29/8/25	Liam O'Neil	Catch up with former Guild President
1/9/25	Managing Director	Weekly Meeting
1/9/25	Manager – Student Engagement	Weekly Meeting
2/9/25	Manager – Student Assist	Discussion regarding the potential hiring of a new Student Assist Officer.
4/9/25	Managing Director	
5/9/25	Western Independent Interview	Interview about student housing
5/9/25	ISC President	Onboarding with Tahsin
11/9/25	Zaneta Mascarenhas MP	Discussion on Job Ready Graduates package, paid placements, lowering the age of independence, rate of Youth Allowance & Aus Study, university merger and Palestine.
11/9/25	Ashlyn Horton – NUS President	General discussion on the NUS and WA
12/9/25	Curtin Musicians, EMAS Curtin & Curtin Singers	Discussion on the Guild supporting an Auditory Arts Collaborative Space project
19/9/25	Managing Director, Guild Secretary & HR Officer	Discussion on the Guild's ECA negotiations
22/9/25	Managing Director	Weekly Meeting
22/9/25	Manager – Student Engagement	Weekly Meeting
24/9/25	Legal Committee	Meeting to approve changes to regulations and bylaws pertaining to the new Ethnocultural Officer.
24/9/25	PSC President	General meeting to discuss the Guild's budget and other matters.
25/9/25	Managing Director, Manager – Student Engagement and Manager – Student Assist	Discussion on National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence.
25/9/25	Manager – Student Engagement	Discussion on the Guild diary design.
25/9/25	Representation Board	

Other Meetings/Activities

Date	Meeting	Comments
18/8/25	NTEU Strike Fund BBQ Fundraiser	Raising money for the NTEU's strike fund. The Guild has contributed toward this campaign.

22/8/25	Pathway Migration Session	Great program connecting students with migration information. Was also the first day of our new ISC President, Tahsin, who did a stellar job opening proceedings.
26/8/25	Student Housing Survey & Dinner	In support of the Student Housing Survey with Make Renting Fair WA
29/8/25	Student Housing Survey & Dinner	In support of the Student Housing Survey with Make Renting Fair WA
1/9/25	Student Housing Survey & Dinner	In support of the Student Housing Survey with Make Renting Fair WA
2/9/25	Guild Staff Awards	
5/9/25	Student Housing Survey & Dinner	In support of the Student Housing Survey with Make Renting Fair WA
8/9/25	Leadership Matters Breakfast	
9/9/25	Australian Centre for Student Equity & Success Symposium	Presented on a panel to speak about how we can improve student equity in higher education.
10/9/25		

Matters of Representation

Education Placements

The Guild has been contacted by several Education students raising serious concerns about their practicum placements. These are not isolated incidents but appear to reflect systemic problems in the way placements are currently managed. The result has been widespread stress and disruption for students undertaking one of the most critical components of their degree.

Students have reported receiving their placement details at the very last minute, in some cases only a day or two before starting. This leaves no opportunity for pre visits or relationship building with mentor teachers and creates unnecessary anxiety. Others have been asked to delay or reschedule their placements by weeks or even complete them outside the official practicum period. Such practices are unfair and disruptive to both study and personal responsibilities.

The uncertainty around placements has forced many students to cancel work shifts, juggle assignments and assessments, and in some cases consider organising their own placements despite being instructed not to. Communication from the Professional Experience team has too often been inconsistent and unclear, compounding the frustration and leaving students without confidence in the process.

The Guild's Humanities Faculty Representative has been actively engaging with both the faculty and affected students and is working on next steps to address these issues. The Guild will continue to advocate for a placement system that is transparent, consistent, and supportive, ensuring that students are set up for success in their teaching careers rather than held back by avoidable administrative failings.

Special General Meeting & Palestine Activism

I am pleased that the Guild's Special General Meeting was very well attended and that the following motions were carried with overwhelming support:

GM #04/2025

Motion: That the Curtin Student Guild:

1. Censures the Australian government for its complicity in the genocide in Gaza.
2. Demands an end to all weapons sales to Israel by Australia and Australian companies.
3. Calls for sanctions on Israel.

GM #05/2025

Motion: That the Curtin Student Guild calls on all Australian universities to end their complicity with Israel's genocide by ceasing partnerships with weapons companies.

As the most pro-Palestine student union in Australia and the student union with the most results in this fight, the Curtin Student Guild continues to support activism for Palestine and the self-determination of the Palestinian people.

The Guild's support for Palestine stretches back decades and continues strongly to this day. In 2023, the Guild passed motions adopting BDS as formal policy, in 2024 we ran the most successful Gaza Solidarity Encampment in Australia that led to the strongest agreement for Curtin to disclose ties and provided a formalised structure for the Guild to peruse divestment and ethical investment, leading to Curtin agreeing to cut ties with Ben Gurion University, a major partner of the IDF, earlier this year. Our work in this space is not done and we will keep pushing.

Psychology Exam Changes

A key role of the Guild is to stand up for students in university decision-making and ensure that policy is always applied in their best interests. University should be challenging in the classroom, not through unnecessary barriers or poorly applied rules. Making study fairer and more accessible is not about lowering standards – it is about improving equity in higher education. The Guild's position is clear: we are not here to make life harder for students, we are here to be reasonable.

Too often, policy is applied inconsistently or in ways that undermine student wellbeing, either for individuals or entire cohorts. This is where the Guild and our Student Assist team step in as an independent watchdog, providing advice, advocacy, and representation. The Guild is immensely grateful to our representatives and staff who undertake this work tirelessly on behalf of students.

At the last Guild Council, I raised the case of the mid-semester Psychology exam changes. We believed this decision breached Curtin's Assessment and Student Progression Manual, and students agreed, with over 1,000 signing our open letter in just two days. Thanks to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic's office, this decision was overturned, restoring fairness to students in that unit. Similar issues in other areas have also been successfully resolved through Guild advocacy.

The Guild greatly appreciates the willingness of the DVCA's office to engage and fix these problems. However, we remain concerned by the frequency with which policies are misapplied across the University. Faculties and schools must remember their obligation to act under Curtin's governance frameworks, and we invite staff to consult the Guild before making decisions that directly affect students' futures. When we work together from the start, we can avoid unnecessary harm and ensure Curtin remains a place of opportunity, fairness, and success for every student.

11:59pm Universal Submission Time

The Guild has consistently advocated throughout the ASPM reviews this year for the introduction of an 11:59pm universal submission time for all online assessments. Students have been clear and united in their support for this simple but impactful change, recognising the benefits it would bring to their outcomes, experiences, and overall success at Curtin.

A Guild survey reinforced this strong student sentiment. 80.2% of respondents reported that an 11:59pm submission time would reduce their stress, while nearly half indicated they had previously missed a deadline due to confusion around submission times. A further 70.2% agreed that this change would ease their anxiety as The Guild has consistently advocated throughout the ASPM reviews this year for the introduction of an 11:59pm universal submission time for all online assessments. Students have been clear and united in their support for this simple but impactful change, recognising the benefits it would bring to their outcomes, experiences, and overall success at Curtin.

A Guild survey reinforced this strong student sentiment. 80.2% of respondents reported that an 11:59pm submission time would reduce their stress, while nearly half indicated they had previously missed a deadline due to confusion around submission times. A further 70.2% agreed that this change would ease their anxiety about the risk of late submissions. These findings highlight the urgent need for Curtin to act to address unnecessary stressors faced by students.

The Guild welcomes the constructive dialogue with the Deans of Teaching and Learning and the Academic Registrar, and we acknowledge the Registrar's commitment to consulting on this reform. We look forward to seeing Curtin move swiftly to adopt this adjustment in time for the commencement of the 2026 Academic Year.

This is a simple change Curtin should have made long ago. It comes with little downside, yet carries the potential to drastically improve the daily lives of students. The Guild remains committed to pursuing this outcome until it is delivered.

Student Housing Concerns

The Guild is collaborating with Make Renting Fair WA on a Student Housing Survey to gather evidence about student living conditions. This survey is an important opportunity for students to share their experiences, and more information is available at <https://makerentingfairwa.org.au/take-action/student-survey/>.

At the same time, the Guild continues to demand urgent improvements to safety in student accommodation. We have called on Curtin to install proper fencing, gates, lighting and cameras, along with better training for staff and stronger communication with residents. Our petition for air-conditioning in all student housing received more than 1,000 signatures, yet both UniLodge and the University have failed to act. Students are still enduring extreme indoor temperatures that exceed WHO safety guidelines.

It is unacceptable that solutions are being withheld on the pretext that they would require rent rises, particularly when tens of millions of dollars in revenue is already being generated from student accommodation. Students cannot be asked to pay more simply to access safe and habitable housing. The Guild has warned that without immediate action, the risks to student wellbeing and safety will only grow.

These concerns have been reinforced by steep and unjustified rent hikes announced for 2026. As reported in WA Today, accommodation fees are set to rise by up to 23 per cent at Guild House, Erica Underwood and Vickery House. This comes during the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation and at a time when many residences still lack basic amenities. Rooms marketed as "refreshed" were revealed to be often little more than repainted walls, with no improvements to air conditioning, bathrooms, kitchens or security.

The Guild has made clear that these rent hikes are indefensible. Students are being priced out of their education, forced into unsafe housing and treated as a source of profit rather than members of the university community. We have urged the Vice Chancellor to intervene directly, as has happened in

the past, and to stop Curtin's accommodation providers from bleeding students dry. Curtin cannot simply stand by while conditions decline, and costs continue to spiral.

The Guild will continue to campaign publicly and pursue every available channel to hold the University and UniLodge accountable until safe, affordable and fair housing is delivered for every student.

Guild Operations

Guild Student Pantry

There have been over 100 visits to the Guild Student Pantry since opening. It's great to see the facility being used by the student community as we look to learn from it and enhance the program over time.

Clubs Hub Stage Two

Clubs Hub Stage Two is now complete! I'm so happy to see this project delivered with the lease up for approval at tonight's meeting. This is a wonderful facility that will improve outcomes for clubs, the Guild and the broader Curtin community.

Spaces Proposal

I have been working with the Managing Director on a plan to see the spaces proposal endorsed at the last meeting come to fruition. We intend on meeting with a designer to discuss options soon.



Vice President – Education

Guild Council Report – September

(14/08/2024 – 25/09/2025)

Ben Burgess (He/Him)

University / External Meetings:

Date	Meeting	Comments
15/08/25	Academic Board	F2F
21/08/25	Scheduling Governance Group	F2F
27/08/25	Assessment 2030 Talks w/ Mollie Dollinger	F2F
02/09/25	Courses Committee	F2F
08/09/25	Learning and Student Experience Committee	F2F
24/09/25	Students as Partners Catch-Up w/ Libby	F2F

Guild Meetings/Events (Or Guild-Related Meetings):

Date	Meeting	Comments
15/07/25	Psych Students Guild Response Meeting	F2F
25/09/25	Representation Board	F2F

Faculty Rep Meetings

Rep	Dates	Informal Chats?	Comments
Nicole		YES	Running Multiple Stalls
Tom		YES	Mainly dealing with the communication between Guild and Curtin for Placement Issues
Rabab		YES	On Leave for 2 Weeks due to Placements
Cooper		YES	Focused on Student Well-Being Campaign

New Consistent Dates (Verbal Update)

Courses Committee

At the September 2025 meeting, the Committee considered several key items for discussion. Most notably the upcoming report on the *OUA One Code pilot* for the MBA program, which is due later this month, the Dean of LT FBL spoke to this stating that both the MBA and Graduate Certificate programs have been an operation success and the One Code project will be able to reduce the duplication of work at the unit level. However, curriculum changes at the course and component level are still currently being implemented via the dual-code system except for these two programs.

The Committee also commenced work on a Delegations Framework to clarify decision-making responsibilities. Several longer-term items, such as reviews of inherent requirements in Health Sciences remain scheduled for future years.

The Committee received and noted the verified list of professional accreditations and industry associations covering Curtin courses. Improvements to reporting and mapping were highlighted, including new functionality in Akari to link professional competencies to teaching and assessment, as well as the development of a professional accreditation dashboard. Members also discussed risks arising when faculties make course or administrative changes without consulting accrediting bodies, with potential impacts on CRICOS registration and student recognition. Clearer guidance and communication protocols were identified as a priority to mitigate these risks.

In addition, the Committee considered new courses and units within the Faculty of Health Sciences. These developments reflect Curtin's ongoing commitment to expanding opportunities for students while ensuring alignment with accreditation requirements and industry needs. The discussions underscored the Committee's role in safeguarding quality, compliance and transparency across course governance.

The next Courses Committee is on the 7th of October.

Learning and Student Experience Committee

At this meeting, the Committee engaged in strategic discussions led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic. A verbal update was provided on the student experience and teaching quality, with a focus on the progress being made under Curtin's Learning and Teaching Strategy. This was followed by further consideration of strategy implementation, including how faculties and central teams are embedding key initiatives across the University to support student success and maintain high teaching standards.

The Committee also considered an update on support for student policy initiatives, which stemmed from the 2023 government requirement for all universities to enact a formal policy to identify and assist students at risk. Members discussed Curtin's ongoing work to move beyond compliance towards a more strategic and evidence-informed approach, including the roll-out of the Mental Health Framework, the establishment of the Student Support Issues Resolution Group, and initiatives aimed at enhancing academic and non-academic support. These developments will feed into a broader Student Success Strategy, to be co-designed with staff and students.

The DVCA also directly questioned Mitch, Tahsin (his first LSEC) and me about how we feel about the amount of feedback we are asked to fill out. Both Tahsin and I gave contradicting answers, due to a simple faculty difference, where Sci-Eng gets asked for too much feedback while I felt that the amount FBL gets is over overwhelming and at times can come across as too little when looking to be a further engaged student.

The next planned date for LSEC is on the 6th of October.

Academic Board

Last week's Academic Board and the points throughout have been touched in my report however, I will also note them here.

During Celebrating Success I took the time to congratulate the Vietnamese Students Club for their successful Odyssey event and how it highlights Curtin's core values.

The Guild was often a point of scrutiny for many in the room where any time we spoke about an issue there was an attempt to bring it around to the Guild, for example Dylan speaking about the Psychology changes, the Vice-Chancellor had said that the approach we took was unnecessary and a simple conversation would have sufficed, this is ridiculous as the topic was brought to the Academic Board last month and Dylan's pleas for the change fell on deaf ears, so it had seemed.

We approved the ASPM changes (Hurray) and spoke about further reviews which should hopefully include the Universal Submission Time, however the Academic Registrar is looking to have consultation with the Global Campuses on this topic, I will be emailing him next week (before GC) to firmly state the Guild's positioning on how it should work for all campuses as it was discussed at the Deans L/T monthly many months ago.

Singapore's Contract Cheating was a topic once again, where I asked a question more focused directly around student well-being during this, with the Academic Registrar saying that steps have been taken to ensure that all those surrounded and effected by this issue are all properly being looked after and have supported provided if need be/

The next planned date for Academic Board is on the 24th of October

Faculty Representatives

I have sent out an email to all faculty reps to organise the best times for meetings with all of them for this upcoming semester, as well as continued to have consistent verbal updates for 75%.

Cooper has been working on getting a list of all academic club spaces and common areas for his faculty with plans to ensure that they have ample utilities and appliances for the spaces.

On the Academic side Cooper has also had multiple meetings with the Assessment 2030 team as well as the Dean of Learning/Teaching and other Academics in the faculty, while also poking the bear that is the Engineering student workload and how sustainable it is, currently the aim is to have 10 hours total study time per unit, this is an unrealistic expectation as currently students are often doing 50% to 100% of that time. This issue directly ties into issues that have been a point of speaking for the Scheduling Governance Group as well.

Cooper has also been working with the Dean to investigate Comp1005 as the next course of action as it is one of the worst performing units for years within the faculty.

Tom has been serving as the main communication piece between the Guild and the School of Education in relation to the ongoing placement issues. The last month Tom has also met with the Dean of Learning and Teaching about the issues that plague the faculty.

Nicole has been in constant communication with the Dean of Learning and Teaching in FBL with regards to feedback assessment within the faculty and looking to improve how students receive feedback, while also working on the essential textbook campaign further as currently there are only 3 copies of a textbook available.

Assessment and Student Policy Review

In my last report I spoke about the Part 2 of the ASPM reviews, happy to say that most changes suggested by the Guild including the short notice change being reworded to better fit the intention of the clause.

At Academic Board last Friday, I directly asked Jon Yorke (AR) about another round of consultations for the year, and that is still very much on the cards.

More updates to be provided in verbal report or next Guild Council as they come up.

Scheduling Governance Group

In late August I was included in the first Scheduling Governance Group, which is directly is focused on Student Scheduling where I was often called upon as the mouthpiece of why data may look a certain way from a student's perspective.

The Committee received a presentation on student timetable optimisation research led by Damon Wasserman. Findings confirmed that minimising trips to campus and consolidating class days are the most important factors influencing student preferences, followed by class times and lecture format. While overall satisfaction with timetables remains high, members noted that frustrations persist with limited class options, system difficulties, and the stress of changes. Almost one in five students adjusted their timetable multiple times after initial registration, highlighting the need for greater flexibility.

The meeting also considered the draft Timetable Balanced Scorecard, which provides measures across four domains: operating hours, student experience, staff experience, and resource efficiency. Discussion highlighted the challenges faced by Health Science students with placement requirements, the difficulties students face when required on campus more than three days per week, and current space utilisation at approximately 60% (below the industry benchmark of 65–75%). Members also noted that new facilities, such as the Science Building opening in 2028, will increase capacity, but attention is needed to improve current scheduling practices and ensure technology reliability for hybrid learning.

In setting its priorities for 2025–26, the Group agreed to focus on reducing class cancellations and post-census changes, identifying opportunities to reduce the number of student days on campus, and improving space utilisation. Additional considerations included better communication with staff about blended learning delivery, addressing oversubscription and quota issues, and integrating short form learning into the scheduling framework. Further data analysis was requested into cancellation reasons, contact hours by course type, room usage patterns, and the effects of reducing student days on staff allocation.

The meeting concluded with agreement on action items, including sharing the Balanced Scorecard, providing further space utilisation data, and piloting quota management solutions. The next meeting will be held on 17 November 2025.

Universal Submission Time

I am currently planning a second day of focused “consultation and feedback” w/ students and will be sharing the old data and the Guild's stance on Universal Submission Time and how it should be implemented in a way that keeps Global Campuses in the loop and included in a fair manner to those studying.

To re-iterate: During O-Day we had received over 250 student responses on the topic, with a lot being passionate when explained what “Universal Submission Time” meant and could look like. The data is as follows

Faculty Representation

- Business and Law: 97 respondents
- Science and Engineering: 68 respondents
- Health Sciences: 53 respondents
- Humanities: 33 respondents

Would universal submission times reduce student stress?

- Yes: 194
- Sometimes: 35
- No: 13

Students that have missed deadlines due to confusion over times?

- No: 124
- Yes: 119

Would Universal Submission Times reduce anxiety about accidentally submitting late?

- Strongly agree: 118
- Somewhat agree: 51
- Neither agree nor disagree: 38
- Somewhat disagree: 16
- Strongly disagree: 18

In total, **80.2%** of respondents said a universal submission time would reduce stress, with a further **14.5%** saying it would sometimes help; **49%** had previously missed a deadline due to confusion over submission times, and **70.2%** either strongly or somewhat agreed it would reduce their anxiety about submitting late.

Further Notes:

University / External Meetings:

Date	Meeting	Comments
15/08	Roundtable with AHRC on anti-Palestinian racism	Roundtable with university students, staff and community members with APAN and the AHRC on their experiences of anti-Palestinian racism for Racism@Uni
20/08	Curtin Multifaith rapport	Establishment of a rapport with new multifaith officer
21/08	Online briefing AHRC	Briefing with AHRC regarding Racism@Uni communications
25/08	University Health and Safety Committee	See University meeting minutes
29/08	Circle 8	Assessing area for launch of smart bins, and site placements
04/09	Graduation attendance	Attendance of graduation as Guild representative
11/09	City of Canning meeting	Regarding bettering involvement in the city of canning, especially for curtin students
24/10	Racism definition meeting	Meeting with University RE creation of racism definition

Guild Meetings (Or Guild-Related Meetings):

Date	Meeting	Comments
14/08	Representation Board #8	See meeting minutes
15/08	Recycling Hub Launch	Launch of recycling hub in library level 3
18/08	Executive Meeting	See meeting minutes
21/08	Women x Ethno pop-up picnic	Inaugural Ethno event, pop-up picnic in creative quarter within barefoot lunch
21/08	Guild council meeting #8	See meeting minutes
25/08	Executive Meeting	See meeting minutes
08/09	Executive Meeting	See meeting minutes
10/09	Accessibility Officer catch-up	Catch-up RE initiatives and enquiries
15/09	Executive Meeting	See meeting minutes
08/09	ISC President catch-up	Catch-up RE initiatives and enquiries
24/09	Health and Safety Committee	See meeting minutes
25/09	Representation Board meeting	See meeting minutes

Leave Taken:

16-19th: Sick leave

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Leave Taken:

16-19th: Sick leave



Business and Law Officer

October Representation Board (04/09/2025 - 02/10/2025)

Anniesey Nicole Alconaba (she/her)

University/External Meetings and Events

Date	Meeting	Comments
05/09/25	Meeting with Student (Lachlan Boylen)	Met with Lachlan on his request to help guide him towards opportunities that are relevant to his wanted career.
08/09/25	Monthly Catchup with FBL Student Engagement	Discussed the upcoming collaborated Law School Stall and change in Student Voice Session due to response from Anna Bunn on pushing the changes for assessment feedback to 2026.
09/09/25	September FBL FCC	Discussed updates with units and campaigns.
24/09/25	Grill the Guild	Successful event, we ran out in 15 minutes, but I was able to speak with many students before, during and after we began serving. Feedback mirrored results from the survey.
25/09/25	Law School Stall	More information in Notes.
25/09/25	Reps Board	Discussed our reports and current motions.
01/10/25	Monthly FBL Clubs Meeting	Met up with the clubs and received an update from each one. Discussed upcoming events and any issues. Found out that Orientation would be different as it would be separated by degrees rather than a whole FBL orientation.

01/10/25	Student Voice Session	Discussed wellbeing and how FBL can provide it to students. Discussed an anonymous feedback forum.
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Notes

Survey Update

The Survey report is almost complete, and the consensus is that majority of students are ranging between somewhat satisfied and extremely satisfied with the Business and Law faculty. There were certain responses that were very insightful into what students wanted and issues they had. I was able to bring up some of these issues during my meetings.

Essential Textbook Campaign

Claire has yet to respond but I will reach out to a different member. After the law school stall, I have also learnt about overdue library books only sending a notice via emails and thus want to ask about it since the fee can be \$4 per day or even \$2 per hour which adds up. Other than that, the feedback received was rather good as there have been less issues with textbooks, but law students still take note that there are only 2 online copies of certain textbooks which I will discuss with LITEQ.

Law School Stall

The law school stall was successful, and I was able to speak with many law students and staff regarding issues they've come across and any relevant feedback. There was a resounding appreciation for the activities we brought like bracelet and notebook decorating as most activities for them were related with further developing their career rather than having a break. I received a lot of feedback related to the essential textbook campaign and issues regarding double degree students which FBL Student Engagement has investigated further. Overall, it was a very successful stall and the KPI can now be marked as completed.

Science and Engineering Faculty Report

Cooper Henrickson (He/Him)

Representation Board – 23th October 2025

Date	Meeting/Event	Comments
24/09/25	Meeting with VP-E	Discussed my campaign
02/10/25	Faculty Graduate Studies Committee	Presentation by Richard Norman about Research Excellence Priorities in 2026 Information about Viva and AI Guidelines
02/10/25	Student Housing Town Hall	
07/10/25	Engineering Interclub Meeting	
09/10/25	Faculty Research Committee	3 Presentations; Challenges and Opportunities – Director of Research for MLS, Challenges and Opportunities – Director of Research for EPS, Decommissioning Research Opportunities – Director Curtin Institute for Energy Transition. 3 Discussions; US Department of Defense Renaming and Implications for Curtin, Clarification on 2026 ARC LIEF Support, AI and Research Integrity.
10/10/25	Review Session of Student Misconduct Rules	Session with Student Assist, Dylan, Ben, Mitch, and myself reviewing the new draft Student Misconduct Rules
13/10/25	Faculty Executive Team Meeting	Presentation
13/10/25	Faculty DoLT and Director Student Engagement Meeting	50% of all assessment extensions in the School of Civil and Mechanical Engineering (Comprised of Civil, Mechanical, Mechatronic, and Industrial and Systems Engineering) come from Mechanical Engineering, which made up 12.5% of all faculty extensions. I have asked some follow up questions to help clarify the severity, as without more data it is hard to determine. The faculty is looking to implement more short form learning over the break (summer units and other useful learning)

		Faculty is also looking into how courses are mapped as current mapping is poor and not clearly laid out or visible to students. There is still a lack of student access to software and due to the current licensing agreements, it is difficult to change access. It is supposedly not possible to allow open online access during off-peak hours, which would alleviate some students issues.
15/10/25	Faculty Courses Committee	New UniReady Courses for Domestic students: English competency and Engineering entry pathway, aimed more at students from rural/regional and low SES backgrounds.

The following meetings and events will occur between the submission of this report and representation board. I will cover them in next month's report, or verbally if anything time sensitive is brought up:

- DIB Committee Meeting – 23/10/25

September 2025 Representation Board Report – Student Assist

AUGUST OVERVIEW

Guild Food Pantry

The Food Pantry commenced operations on 20 August. Since opening, a total of **22 students** have accessed the service. Referral pathways have been extended to Curtin support services, including Student Wellbeing Advisory Officers and Curtin's Social Workers, for students in crisis who may require access outside the scheduled time slots. We will continue monitoring demand and gathering student feedback, with the aim of refining the program and expanding the range of pantry items.

As part of the Guild's broader initiative to address student food insecurity, updates have been made to the Student Assist section of the Guild website. These updates include information on additional on-campus supports, such as Student Saver meals, as well as the creation of a new "Getting a Job" section to provide students with guidance on applying for part-time employment. We will be reviewing our financial content to better support discussions with students requiring longer-term financial assistance.

HDR Engagement and Support

Kalgoorlie HDR cohort: Student Assist is planning a drop-in session for HDR students on the Kalgoorlie campus on 16 September 2025. The session will provide students with the opportunity to raise concerns in a confidential setting and is expected to increase awareness of Student Assist's services within the HDR cohort. Engagement will also extend to campus staff, including the Wellbeing Advisor and the WASM MECE Director of Graduate Research, to strengthen referral pathways for HDR students.

Curtin Library HDR support: It has been noted that Curtin Library staff occasionally provide informal advice to HDR students on matters such as supervision and progression. Student Assist has reached out to the library to organise a meeting to ensure alignment in areas such as referral pathways and approaches to problem-solving.

In addition, we would like to explore the possibility of trialling an in-person drop-in presence at the library. Given its central location and as well as the extensive spaces for study, the library may serve as an accessible and trusted space for HDR students to seek support.

SMART EAR book: When HDR students are put on Conditional status, they required to achieve research goals before they can be returned to Good Standing. The current Guidelines for HDR Conditional Status encourage use of a SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to assist in goal-setting, but in the experience of Student Assist, this is often not adequate to cover the complexities of HDR studies.

Student Assist is developing a booklet for HDR students and supervisor staff which outlines a best practice model for creating conditions for students who have been accorded Conditional status. In addition to the SMART framework, it introduces the acronym EAR—Equitable, Accountable, Robust—to highlight areas where SMART has fallen short.

Key Focus Areas

- Academic Support

The focus for August was appeals relating to Terminated Status, as well as guidance provided to students responding to Academic Misconduct allegations.

- Non Academic Support

Demand for financial assistance continued to rise, with students seeking support for fee payments and general financial relief. During this period, Student Assist provided emergency relief to **14 students** through various grant programs.

	June	July	August
Academic sessions	259	414	289
Non – academic sessions	35	73	90
Total	293	483	373

Total may not tally as case management system calculates sessions with both case areas as a single session.

Additional Programs:

- **Loan Laptop Program**

A total of 7 laptops were loaned out to students during the reporting period.

- **First Aid/CPR Program**

158 students participated in First Aid and CPR training sessions.

TL;DR

Guild Food Pantry: Opened 20 August, supporting 22 students to date. Referral pathways extended to Curtin support services. Website updated with info on Student Saver meals and a new “Getting a Job” section. Financial content under review to improve long-term support resources.

HDR Engagement and Support:

Kalgoorlie: 16 Sept 2025 drop-in session planned for HDR students; outreach to staff to strengthen referral pathways.

Curtin Library: Meeting planned with Library staff to align referral processes; exploring Library-based HDR drop-in presence.

SMART–EAR Booklet: Resource in development to strengthen support for HDR students on Conditional Status, introducing EAR (Equitable, Accountable, Robust) alongside SMART.

International Student Committee Report

Tahsin Ibn Anowar (He / Him)

Representation Board – 23rd October, 2025

University / External Meetings:

Date	Meeting	Comments
25/09/2025	Meeting with a postgraduate student regarding switching to another degree	
30/09/2025	Attending Café connect	Gave a short speech about how Guild can support international students
3/10/2025	Meeting with PHD student regarding publishing a survey	

Guild Meetings / Events (Guild – Related Meetings):

Date	Meeting	Comments
26/09/2025	Academic Board Meetings	
02/10/2025	Town Hall Meetings	
6/10/2025	LSEC Meetings	
13/10/2025	Meeting of the Guild Council	
21/10/2025	Unions WA Students at Work Info Sessions	

Leave Taken:

None

Further Notes:

Postgraduate Students Committee (PSC) Report

Guild Meetings/Events

Date	Meeting/ Event	Comments
24/09/2025	Legal Committee	Ethnocultural Officer regs and By-Laws
24/09/25	Meeting w/President	Budget, postgraduate issues
02/10/2025	Housing Town Hall	
10/10/2025	Misconduct Rules Review w/Student Assist	Met with Ben, Dylan, Student Assist, Cooper about the academic misconduct rules changes.
13/10/2025	Special Guild Council	Contributed to feedback by Council on the rules changes.
14-18 October	Visiting the Kalgoorlie Campus	I went to Kalgoorlie with Dylan to run the Kalgoorlie Branch election, meet with students and staff at the campus. I attended various meetings with staff and students.
15/10/2025	TEQSA Forum	Attended the Student forum on strengthening TEQSA's powers and gave input on what TEQSA should look at for universities to do better.

University Meetings

Date	Meeting/ Event	Comments
26/09/2025	Academic Board Pre-Meeting	Prep for Academic Board
26/09/2025	Academic Board	ASPM, HDR Policy and Procedure, Academic Calendar policy, Misconduct Rules update

01/10/2025	Research Committee	Discussed HDR stipends, supporting and empowering Curtin researchers
06/10/2025	Learning and Student Experience Committee	Gave feedback on Academic Calendar, Academic Integrity report

Projects/General

POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

GradCon

I attended GradCon, the Annual CAPA Conference. It was a great experience and an opportunity to connect with my postgraduate representation peers. For further detail please see the GradCon Report

IP Factsheet

The PSC has been developing a factsheet in collaboration with GRS and ROC so that students may better understand their rights and ownership when it comes to any IP created from their research. It is now finalised and ready to be disseminated. This is a direct outcome from the Encampment MoU.

Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA)

The PSC has been working with CAPA on a number of campaigns. After a period of turmoil CAPA has returned strong and is actively campaigning on issues affecting postgrads on a national level.

Laptops for all HDR Students

The PSC is proud to announce that at a minimum every HDR Student will be provided a Curtin Laptop for the duration of their studies. Previously the provision of a laptop or PC varied by school or research group/centre. This will be rolled out this year.

Assessment and Student Progression Manual

The Guild has worked hard to ensure that assessment and progression procedures in the ASPM are fairer to students. Securing some great wins.

2027 and 2028 Academic Calendar

The Guild has successfully lobbied for an earlier than week 8/9 tuition free week in both 2027 and 2028. This involved splitting the mid semester break into 2 single tuition free weeks instead of a 2 week long break. One of the weeks in each semester in each of those years also aligns with school holidays which is beneficial for students with children and families. Much of this has been incorporated in a new academic calendar policy.

4. POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

Teaching Opportunity for HDR Students

Teaching experience is very important for HDR students because many HDR students want to work as academics or lecturers in the future. Therefore, teaching opportunities at the university during their study will be very valuable and important to give them experiences and knowledge on how to deal with students in the classroom and to deliver materials to the class. The PSC wants the faculty

or school leaders to allow their HDR students to get one or two classes during their studies to get teaching experiences. This will give our students space to bring and deliver their research experience and information to the students in the class.

Supporting Clubs for Postgraduate/ HDR Students

Student clubs play significant roles at Curtin University where our students can explore and develop their potential, networks, and skills through club activities. Most student clubs are dominated by undergraduate students and there are very few postgraduate or HDR clubs at our campus. The PSC wants to promote and campaign more on postgraduate/ HDR student clubs at Curtin University. The expectation is to increase the number of postgraduate/ HDR clubs as well as to develop more HDR student interaction through club activities. This priority will be useful to develop and support our Postgraduate/ HDR students at Curtin and also to promote Curtin University student activities.

Career Counselling for HDRs

PSC believes some level of career advice/planning should be embedded within higher degrees to provide clarity and guidance for HDRs and their futures beyond the end of their degrees. The PSC will explore ways to make this workable.

Space for HDRs / Research Hub Space

The number of HDR students from overseas is increasing and this makes the number of HDR students that need the space for their study also increases. The PSC has identified that the provision of appropriate space for HDRs to work on their research is an issue that is important to many candidates and will continue to engage on this. Some schools can provide permanent space or desks for their HDR students, however, most schools use graduate research hub spaces for their HDR students to study their research, and whoever first comes gets the first desk and those who come late sometimes cannot get a desk in the research hub. This condition is not happening every day, but it happens when many students are coming to the campus at the same time. It will be very useful and significant if the university can provide additional spaces for some schools that have a higher number of HDR students.

Supervisor Feedback

The opportunity to give feedback on the quality of supervision HDRs receive is important and since the discontinuation of the APR process this has stopped occurring. The PSC supports a feedback mechanism returning.

Supervisor Training

HDR Supervisors will now receive increased training and refreshers on how to supervise. We hope that this will increase the quality and consistency of supervision across Curtin.

Stipend Rates

The PSC supports CAPA's campaign to increase HDR stipend rates and extend the tax free status of stipends to part time students. Curtin continues to provide a stipend that is higher than the federal minimum.

Paid Placements

The Guild and CAPA both have ongoing campaigns around expanding student placement payments to more fields and increasing the value of the payments. The currently proposed payments are also taxable which reduces their value to students and whilst some money is better than none we believe it can and should be better.

A National Body for International Students

The Guild has endorsed a CAPA campaign to restart a national body for International students. Roundtables will be occurring at the state level in the next two months. International students have been blamed for the housing crisis and are faced with increasing visa restrictions with no unified voice to speak up for them on a national level.

tl;dr

It has been getting busier. Lots of good things being achieved.



Queer Officer

September/October Representation Board (12/09/2025 – 23/10/2025)

Morgan Mills (they/them)

University/External Meetings

Date	Meeting	Comments
09/10/2025	Deadnaming working group	Last minute apologies
21/10/2025	Monthly DVCA	
	Ally Training Discussion	With Imari Morris – went over potential future direction of delivering Ally training for students
	Union WA Students at Work Info Session	

Updates

- **Deadnaming on Campus**

The working group for the deadnaming campaign met for a second time to discuss the action items from the previous meeting. The action items and minutes from this meeting are yet to be circulated. I am working to improve updates to systems, which currently need to be manually requested for each case.

Events

- **Pride**

The annual campus Pride event was held on October 1st. This event involved a mini market of sorts, which allowed participants to decorate themselves in festive gems, glitter and tattoos. There was also an Accessibility stall run by Lorien which had pronoun badges and colouring sheets. This was then followed by a mini parade around campus, which was led by a float. The event was rounded out with free pizza and drinks for participants.

While the turn out for this event was small, there was still an impact on campus as we drove around displaying the importance of the queer community on campus. The turnout and overall success of this event is helpful when planning for future Pride events.

Accessibility officer
October Representation Board Report
Lorien Watts (they/he)

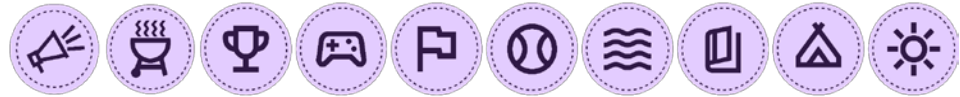
University and Committee Meetings		
Date	Meeting	Comments
17/9/2025	Student life	Discussed the Hidden Disability Sunflower Program and a potential pilot program on campus at the start of 2026
22/9/2025	PUDL project	Currently they are researching to find the main UDL issues around campus, working to create resources to support staff to increase UDL. I shared relevant findings from the Accessibility Survey
25/9/2025	AccessAbility	Check-in with Debbie Teh AccessAbility is hiring a new advisor, as well as an assistive technology specialist
30/9/2025	UDSC	Discussed: • PUDL project • Curtin University joining the Hidden Disability Sunflower Program • Progress in creating the Universal Design framework working group • the plan for creating the new DAIP next year • the new disability awareness training and how to maximise uptake by staff • CAP action plan • Proposed undergraduate certificate for disability studies
2/10/2025	CAP student advisory group	First meeting of the CAP student advisory group: • Discussed the terms of reference for the group • Reviewed the CAP review plan guiding principles • Discussed how to improve awareness of how to access CAP plans among students • Discussed ways to collect information/complaints around accessibility from students

Guild Meetings		
Date	Meeting	Comments
24/9/2025	VPSW	Check-in and general progress update

Events		
Date	Event	Comments
17/10/2025, 1/10/2025	Peer support sessions	Had a new student attend one of the sessions
1/10/2025	Pride	Had a stall at Curtin Pride. Shared resources for LGBTQ+ disabled people

Projects		
Date	Project	Comments
NA	Experiences of Accessibility survey	Results shared on social media

Other	
Topic	Comments
Disability Discrimination Act review	Working on a Guild submission



2025 National Union of Students Education Conference

Report from Dylan Storer

The 2025 NUS National Education Conference was held in Canberra at the Australian National University. The theme of EdCon was “Crisis”. Important conversations were had about improving the NUS, the genocide in Palestine, the housing crisis, environmentalism, free speech and student unionism.

The Housing Crisis in Australia

The plenary on Australia’s housing crisis provided an insightful overview of the worsening rental market and the systemic failures leaving students and low-income renters behind. It was interesting to hear from Jordan Van Den Lamb about tenant activism and the “Shit Rentals” campaign. I was disappointed that Mr Pingers did not attend the housing session that Noor and I ran immediately after, maybe next time. Overall, the plenary reinforced the importance of coordinated national action on housing policy and rent justice, something the NUS should continue to prioritise.

From Inaction to Collective Action: The Practice of Leadership and Organising

Stephen Donnelly’s plenary was one of the standout sessions of the conference. It explored the fundamentals of community organising and how students can move from passive involvement to purposeful collective action. The session highlighted the importance of strong leadership within student unions and offered practical tools for building long-term power through relationships, storytelling, and structured mobilisation. There was a lot to take away from this discussion that will be directly relevant to how Guild leaders can better structure campaigns on campus.

Shelf Life Expired

Rama Sugiarta and I delivered Shelf Life Expired, which examined how universities in Western Australia are complicit in fossil fuel expansion through partnerships with major gas producers such as Woodside. The workshop sparked significant debate, particularly when members of Student Unity defended Woodside by citing anecdotal claims from a friend employed there. Despite some pushback, the discussion successfully exposed how deeply corporate influence has embedded itself in our universities and reinforced the need for students to campaign for climate accountability in higher education.

At the Table, Not on the Menu: Students as Partners

This discussion focused on the Students as Partners model and the different ways it is implemented across institutions. It was revealing to see how underdeveloped the framework remains at many universities. I believe Curtin’s approach is relatively strong, but only insofar as it directly involves and empowers the Guild to act as the collective voice of students. Without the Guild at the centre of consultation, the Students as Partners model risks becoming tokenistic rather than meaningful.

Cash Before Care

Noor Fella and I co-delivered Cash Before Care, where we discussed Curtin Guild’s housing campaign in the broader context of the national housing crisis. We argued that the NUS should coordinate a national campaign targeting the for-profit student housing industry, which continues to exploit students

through unaffordable rents and coercive contracts. The discussion was well-received and highlighted the growing need for collective national advocacy to hold universities and housing providers accountable.

Finishing Your Degree on Time Whilst Surviving Politics

This workshop, led by Beau Hesse, was both entertaining and practical. It offered advice on balancing activism with academic commitments and managing the competing pressures of student leadership. It was reassuring to see that many student leaders face similar challenges in managing study loads alongside Guild work. I'll take this session under advisement, but I fear I am too far gone.

Graphic Design in Political Communication

This workshop was both insightful and unexpectedly practical, even if it turned into a Canva tutorial. The discussion emphasised how crucial good design and consistent branding are in political communication. Effective visual identity can make or break a campaign, and this session reinforced that the Guild should continue investing in creative and engaging communication strategies to better reach students.

NUS Education Conference Report 2025

Noor Fellah

Overview

The 2025 NUS Education Conference brought together student representatives from universities across Australia to discuss the key issues shaping higher education — including housing, cost of living, climate justice, accessibility, and the future of student organising.

The event created useful opportunities for networking and discussion between student unions, but at times struggled with accessibility, inclusivity, and logistical organisation. While there were strong and meaningful moments — particularly in workshops that centred grassroots experience and practical strategy — there were also points where the structure and delivery of the conference felt disconnected from the realities facing students on the ground.

Day 1 – Opening and National Context

The first day opened with a plenary framing the current state of the higher education sector — rising student poverty, declining university funding, and a government increasingly detached from student needs. The overview was informative but quite broad, often repeating talking points already well known to delegates working in student unions.

Workshops throughout the day covered topics like:

The State of the Student Movement, which provided historical context but lacked focus on what's needed to rebuild national strength now.

Education as a Public Good, reiterating important values but without much practical insight into how to campaign for them.

Campaign Strategy Building, which stood out as one of the more constructive sessions, offering real tools for mobilisation and cross-campus collaboration.

While the discussions were engaging, several attendees noted that the first day could have been more dynamic — with less emphasis on speeches and more time for collaborative planning.

Day 2 – Climate Justice and University Accountability

Day two centred on environmental responsibility and institutional hypocrisy. The plenary discussed universities' partnerships with fossil fuel companies and their complicity in climate inaction — an important theme, though the conversation occasionally felt abstract and lacked clear pathways to national coordination.

One of the most effective sessions of the entire conference was the workshop facilitated by Rama and Dylan, titled “The North West Shelf: Resource Extraction and Responsibility.”

This session offered a critical, well-researched look at how projects like the North West Shelf gas operation entrench environmental harm while universities benefit from industry funding. Rama and Dylan led a sharp, student-driven discussion about divestment, transparency, and accountability, helping attendees connect the dots between climate justice, corporate influence, and student organising.

Unlike some other sessions, this workshop moved beyond rhetoric — empowering delegates to take real action back to their campuses. It was a strong example of how student-led facilitation can make national spaces more relevant and grounded.

Day 3 – Housing, Cost of Living, and Student Wellbeing

The third day focused on the housing crisis and student poverty, and was among the most relevant and energising parts of the program.

I co-facilitated a workshop with Dylan Storer titled

“Cash Before Care: Why We Need a National Fight Against For-Profit Student Housing.”

This session examined how corporate accommodation providers have taken over the student housing market, pushing unaffordable rents and exploitative contracts while universities profit through partnerships. We unpacked how these arrangements prioritise revenue over student welfare, leaving many locked into overpriced, poorly maintained, and often unsafe accommodation.

Delegates shared their lived experiences — from overcrowded apartments to predatory tenancy conditions — exposing how widespread and severe the crisis has become. Discussion turned quickly toward action: we explored mapping university-provider relationships, gathering testimonies, and building an NUS-led national campaign to push for publicly funded, student-run, and affordable housing.

This workshop generated some of the most fruitful and concrete discussions of the conference. Attendees left with a clear sense of direction and collective purpose, reaffirming that housing justice must be at the centre of the student movement.

Other workshops that day focused on mental health, food insecurity, and welfare programs — though many felt these sessions were too short to produce practical outcomes.

Day 4 – Equity, Accessibility, and Solidarity

The final day was dedicated to equity and inclusion, but ironically, many of the conference's own accessibility shortcomings became most apparent by this point. The "access room" — intended as a quiet space for rest and sensory breaks — was a 10-minute walk off campus, making it functionally inaccessible for many. There was no designated prayer room available, which made the conference difficult for Muslim attendees.

Food options throughout the week were also limited and poorly planned. Halal food was not properly catered for, and the only consistent option available was a basic vegetarian sandwich, which was neither sufficient nor inclusive for participants with dietary or religious requirements.

These oversights reflected a broader issue: while inclusion was a major theme in discussion, it wasn't always translated into practice. Future conferences should ensure that accessibility and religious accommodation are treated as essential, not optional, components of planning.

Despite these challenges, the final plenary did close on a hopeful note — with student leaders reflecting on their shared struggles and the need to sustain solidarity beyond the event. Workshops on equity in higher education, workers' rights, and cross-movement collaboration were well received, though many attendees voiced the need for less talk and more structural follow-up from NUS itself.

Conclusion

The NUS Education Conference was a valuable space for connection and learning, but it also exposed ongoing gaps between national rhetoric and student realities. There was strong content and facilitation in sessions led by students themselves — particularly the workshops on the North West Shelf and for-profit housing, which were grounded in lived experience and clear strategy.

However, the conference overall struggled with inclusivity, practical accessibility, and a tendency to prioritise discussion over delivery. While it succeeded in highlighting key national issues, future iterations would benefit from:

- Greater logistical care and cultural sensitivity in event planning,
- A stronger commitment to accessibility and religious accommodation, and
- More tangible outcomes or national action plans from each stream of discussion.

In short, the conference was a reminder that the student movement's strength lies in action, not rhetoric, and that for NUS to remain relevant, it must not only convene discussion but also model the values it advocates for.

I'd like to thank the Curtin Student Guild for this opportunity to go to the NUS EdCon 2025, held at the Australian National University in Canberra from June 23 to 26, which brought together student leaders, activists, and unionists from across Australia to address the most pressing issues in tertiary education. Organized by the National Union of Students (NUS) and ANUSA, the conference focused on themes such as educational equity, housing and cost-of-living crises, climate justice, Palestine solidarity, gender and queer rights, unionism, and regional inclusion.

Each day featured plenaries and workshops designed to inspire collective action and deepen understanding of systemic challenges. Monday's sessions included an introduction to the conference by James McVicar and a plenary on improving NUS campaigns led by Lucy Fawcett. Tuesday featured Rod Lyall's critique of university structures and a powerful discussion by Eddie Stephenson and Jasmine Alrawi on Western complicity in the Gaza genocide. Wednesday focused on diversity in education, housing justice, and the cost-of-living crisis, with contributions from Ellie Venning and Jordan Van Den Lamb. Thursday concluded with Stephen Donnelly's leadership and organizing workshop and a session on defending trans rights.

Workshops throughout the week covered a wide range of topics. These included academic accessibility, Indigenous representation, fossil fuel divestment, student housing reform, Palestine activism, queer inclusion in period poverty campaigns, and critiques of the NDIS. Other sessions explored union education, free speech, feminist introspection, graphic design in political communication, and the global rise of anti-migration politics.

I would like to note the inaccessible nature of this conference as it was a 10–15-minute walk from ANUSA, where check-in and lunch was and the rest of the conference, where you had to walk down flights of stairs and to the other side of the university.

I would also like to note the appalling behaviour shown from Socialist Alternative during the Queer Plenary, where they hijacked the plenary and everyone but Unity and Socialist Alternative left for an impromptu plenary hosted by Clarity, the Queer Officer at Deakin University.

Diversity Conference by Hadiya Naeemi

Diversity conference held from the 29th of September until the 2nd of October. It involved four days of conference from (mostly) nine to four pm and each day involved a new topic such as day 1: womens, day 2 : accessibility, day 3 : International/Ethnocultural and day 4 : indigenous/Queer. Each day included at least three workshops and mostly two planeries. I am assuming the aim of this conference was for the participants and attendees of this conference to educate themselves, educate others and communicate to NUS representatives what it is that they want the NUS to do in terms of diversity.

In theory this conference seems like it would be informative, productive and overall incredibly crucial. However in practice it was uninformative and quite disorganised. The conference page said that it was being held NUS queer, womens, ethnocultural and disabilities officers however the disability officer and one of the queer officers didn't even attend the conference. I understand that during the semester it isn't easy to pack up and leave for Adelaide for a week halfway during the semester these officers could've at least zoomed or called in for a plenary (which wouldn't have been as strange as the other planeries included zoom calls). The conference was supposed to have a prayer space which was never officially established and there was no halal food at the everyday lunch provided. Hosting a diversity conference and then ignoring the needs of almost half of the attendees is highly insensitive and is further proof of how performative this conference was.

The first day of womens included a womens plenary on discussing period products, a welcome to country, another plenary on womens health inside politics, How to be a Good Feminist and building inclusive networks. Although these workshops and planeries were informative and gave good insight to what other universities were doing in terms of period product access and issues they had with dispensers at their university most conversation on this day surrounded solely by white women and held mostly by white women and ignored the intersectionality that most women that attended the conference experience. Although it was addressing womens issues in our universities most conversations were framed from a one dimensional lens ignoring the intersectionality of being ethno, queer or a disabled women.

The second day was accessibility where I felt sick towards the end and left early. It was during the planeries that people asked how to make the NUS more accessible which by default and how it is structured. After speaking to different people at the conference who came on behalf of accessibility it was evident that many people were frustrated. There was discussion on how other parties can be loud and inconsiderate at other NUS conferences however they are a part of NUS therefore to address this issue it would be better to have this conversation with them or have stricter guidelines instead of talking badly about other parties. Overall this came across as unproductive and inconsistent especially when the conference's stated purpose of inclusivity and collaboration.

The third day was ethno/international and I felt sick so I got there at 11. This day included workshops and planeries of Intersectional Voices, Talanoa: Grounded in Culture and Implicit Bias Workshop. This day included workshops and planeries that were insightful however it is quite oxymoronic to have a day centred around ethnocultural and international while ignoring the needs of people in the room that are muslim.

The last day was queer/Indigenous where Noor and I held our presentation about tokenism, this was shifted to the last day because of my illness. This presentation went well and was followed by a

productive discussion on everyone's experience of tokenism and how to better face and combat this issue. However, it would be better in the future for the days not to be "themed" because many of these issues overlap and are intersectional and because of the structure of the conference it was made to seem as if these issues didn't exist together.

It is interesting that the Curtin Student Guild is part of the NUS and continues to fund the NUS as they hold conferences like diversity conference. I understand the aim that I stated earlier however I don't believe that this was followed through with throughout the conference. The performativeness of the conference was highlighted by the simple things that the NUS failed to do so. At times it was a safe space for different university representatives to rant or discuss different issues they are facing. However, the amount of money that this conference was costing the NUS and different delegates is shameful and it would be better for our university's guild to spend this money elsewhere making tangible change for students. In theory, the conference is something that is absolutely crucial and can be incredibly beneficial for all student union representatives however in practice it was poorly organised and not inclusive. Which is concerning as the whole conference was held in the name of inclusivity and if the NUS couldn't deliver on that I fear for how they are with their other conferences and policies. Overall I thank the guild for this experience.

Introduction

I want to express my gratitude to the Curtin Guild for providing me with the opportunity to participate in my first conference, the NUS Diversity Conference. The conference was hosted at Flinders University in Adelaide. As this is my first conference, this was a chance for me to see what student politics is like outside of Curtin. The brief I had gotten is that NUS conferences can be hectic, and that Unity and SAlt would likely cause a scene and heckle.

Issues with the conference

There were a few things I noticed about the conference. Being named "Diversity Conference", you would expect it to be very inclusive and accessible for everyone, but that was not the case.

Firstly, the food options were limited and failed to meet people's dietary needs. For example, the halal food was grouped with the vegetarian options, as that was the only thing that was halal. People who claimed to be anaphylactic to certain foods would often have their food cross-contaminated with allergens from other dishes being stored in the same box. The quiet room was highly stimulating with fluorescent lights, hardback plastic chairs, and only 2 charging outlets in the room. They also lacked a prayer room, forcing people to pray in an out-of-the-way hallway, which led to people staring at those praying, causing discomfort and making them feel self-conscious. Thirdly, the conference location was highly inaccessible. The campus had poor signage and numerous stairs. The only way to get into the conference building without taking the stairs was by going through 2 other buildings. To atone for this, the conference organisers opened the event and stated "We are working to make this more accessible for everyone."

In the actual conference room, which was honestly a sad excuse for a lecture theatre, it was thankfully more accessible. There was a ramp in the lecture theatre that led to the front of the room and two designated areas with a desk for people in wheelchairs to use.

On the topic of accessibility, no one could access the internet. Despite having the omnipresent "Eduroam" Wi-Fi network, nobody could log in with their non-Flinders University accounts, forcing people to use a mobile data hotspot if they had enough. This led to people's phones running out of battery faster, meaning that they would have to leave the conference room, as there were no outlets for charging phones or laptops, except for two in the quiet room and those in the hallways.

Timeline

Day 1 (Monday, 29 September)

The first day started late because they were not organised with sign-in and housekeeping.

The plenary, hosted by the NUS women's officer Ellie, started 45 minutes late. Ellie began her presentation by showing numerous photos of herself with various MPs, which I don't see the point of or understand how this was relevant to the topic. I got the feeling she really wants to be an MP one day. The plenary talked about period products, creating safe spaces, and how expensive period products are. Ellie also showed a survey about different universities and their plans for creating spaces for women, including whether they have a dedicated women's room.

The workshop on safe spaces discussed the poor state of campus security. The near-universal experience among attendees was that campus security does not take cases of women feeling unsafe on campus seriously, they ignore a lot of calls for help, and they are a reactive service and do not proactively improve safety or respond to potential threats.

The other workshop was about endometriosis. It mainly discussed the need for better training for health professionals and being more accommodating for people who need to take leave due to a flare-up. Once questions began, interestingly, they were all asked by white men (this will be important for later), and were basic questions that any woman in the room (or a quick Google search) could have answered. One person asked something along the lines of, "My friend has endometriosis, what can I do to help ease her pain?" I found it interesting that the men were asking questions like these, but at least they are willing to learn.

Day 2 (Tuesday, 30 September)

The day started late again because no one was at sign-in, causing a mess. We didn't even get our wristbands, but no one cared that we didn't have them, so it didn't really matter.

The plenary of the day focused on how to better support students with disabilities on campus and advised incoming disability officers to remain calm, as everything will be fine. The panel consisted of disability officers from a few different universities. They all shared personal experiences about learning to set boundaries and communicating effectively with people of different learning styles. They were all nice, and the take-home message from them was don't let student politics consume you.

The first workshop was "Academic Progress Policy: Designing for Inclusion in Exclusion" run by April from Deakin University. From the title of the workshop, you could reasonably assume that it would discuss fighting for policy changes for disabled students to better accommodate their needs. If you made that assumption, you would unfortunately be mistaken. April spent the whole workshop sharing her story and trauma dumping on everyone in the room. She brought tissues, knowing she would cry, but got enough and offered them to the people in the room as she expected them to cry too.

She discussed topics, such as mental health struggles and domestic violence, without stating them out loud. Instead opting for a trigger warning slide flashed on screen for 5-

10 seconds while she was saying something else. I understand that sharing a personal story takes incredible courage, as it requires vulnerability to the people in the room; however, I did not see the relevance of her whole life story to the workshop. The only part of her personal story that made sense to be shared in the workshop was a section of her impact statement sent to the university to better accommodate her needs, as it demonstrates how much of an effect the university policies can have on a student's emotional and material outcomes. She also shared a lot of data from Deakin, which, according to her, is confidential and could not be photographed.

She was unable to answer any of the questions asked by people in the room, with responses such as "I don't know" and "I don't want to answer that" being frequently used. I believe she was completely unprepared for this workshop, and the fact that she couldn't answer any of the questions at the end only reinforced the notion that the workshop was a waste of time. Perhaps it would have been better for someone else to run the workshop, but in April's own words, she was there "to hold space for the ones that need it."

I don't know how appropriate any of her behaviour was in this workshop. She was very unprofessional and basically treated the workshop as a therapy session, and wanted people to validate her, which we did because she was crying and sharing personal stories that no one could call her out on. I believe it was a waste of time, and I didn't sign up to listen to someone's sob story for 45 minutes straight.

The second workshop of the day was on decolonising queerness. It talked about the Indian Government's usage culture to promote homophobia and transphobia, despite the existence of gender diverse gods and general acceptance of homosexuality in that culture and that it was only after the British colonised India that beliefs on gender diversity changed. The presenter was 10 to 15 minutes in, providing context and an introduction to the stories behind some of the gender-diverse gods that were heavily worshipped. Then, mid-way through a slide, someone from Unity started disrupting the workshop by saying stuff like, "I don't want to disturb your flow of the presentation, but I just wanted to point out that you are being really negative right now, and the government has changed. For example, the [insert law the guy found on Google on his phone], and I don't know if you were planning to get into explaining that later, but I just wanted to point that out." This continued for at least 5 minutes until people in the room started calling the heckler out and defending the presenter, prompting him to move on and continue presenting.

I felt deeply uncomfortable with this whole situation because the presenter was obviously going to get into what is happening now. He was providing context, allowing people not from India or affiliated with that culture to see the bigger picture. During the Q&A section, the heckler repeatedly asked questions about why the presenter was speaking negatively about India, with the person next to him on FaceTime displaying the questions he was asking to some third party. This whole thing just felt very targeted

towards the presenter for no apparent reason. He delivered a great workshop, prompting everyone to reflect on how colonisation influenced society's perception of gender diversity. He also acknowledged that it would take many years before the effects of colonisation can be reversed.

Day 3 (Wednesday, 1 October)

To no one's surprise, we once again started the conference late. At this point, they had given up signing people in (likely an attempt to make up for the seeming inability of the event to follow its own schedule).

The first workshop, Grounded in Culture, was hosted by the NUS Ethnocultural Officer. He started by doing a lovely acknowledgement of country and an extended diversity welcome. He emphasised the significance of a person's name and the power it holds due to its meaning. After the workshop, he admitted that he hadn't done much as Ethnocultural Officer this year and asked what everyone would like to see happen next year. The suggestions and opinions offered all came from white men, a common theme throughout the conference. I don't remember most of the suggestions given but do remember they were all things that can be found through a Google search. One person asked how he should approach talking to someone who is culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). The answer he should have received is "with your mouth," since they're people too, and you can just talk to them. It felt like the people asking questions were othering CALD individuals, and it was unclear how they could stop doing so and instead see them as normal people.

The second workshop was about intersectionality. The panel consisted of 5 individuals holding various positions of power from different universities. They discussed how marginalisation is intertwined, highlighting the need for more people to represent different marginalised groups. One of the people on the panel mentioned how proud she is that the whole panel is made up of POC women (ironically homogenous for a panel on intersectionality). She also went on a 10-minute ramble about how grateful she is to be here and see representation, which has little to no correlation to the workshop and is just a personal power trip. After that was said, multiple white men cheered about the diverse panel.

During the Q&A, April discussed the challenges she faces in representing different groups, which lasted for around 5 minutes. White men then once again asked how to properly talk to CALD people, again othering them. One of the girls on the panel then started echo-chambering the whole POC women panel thing again.

The plenary was hosted by Ellie and had MP Nat Cook as a special guest. She talked about how she got into politics because her son died. One person asked her how she prioritises what legislation to care about, because they "don't really care about gay people that much." No prizes for guessing this question was, as always, asked by a white man. Ellie

Astor Luk (they/them)
Incoming Queer Officer 2026

finished the panel by giving Nat Cook a bottle of wine and taking a selfie, furthering my suspicion that she wants to be an MP.

The last workshop of the day was about implicit biases. It discussed how they can reinforce stereotypes and promote biases in real life. During the Q&A section of the workshop, multiple white men felt compelled to justify themselves as progressive and accepting when asking questions, which leads me to think they might not be.

Day 4 (Thursday, 2 October)

By this point, they should have re-written the start time of the conference as 10:30 instead of 9:00, as they had failed to start on time for three days straight. To up the ante, the conference started at around 11 that day because most of the expected attendees (mainly people from Deakin and Monash) were absent due to Paul Ting breakfast. They straight-up cancelled a plenary because of this.

The first two workshops I attended were both run by Clarity from Deakin. The first workshop was called the invisible crisis and talked about systemic issues transgender people face and used the example of "the trans broken arm syndrome," which is essentially that transgender people often do not get treatment for their injuries or needs as doctors have a tendency to blame their injuries or symptoms on being transgender even when the condition in question has identical treatment for trans and cis individuals. I had the opportunity to discuss some policies I'd like to propose for Curtin with her afterwards, and she provided her business card for any advice or to check in on my progress.

The second workshop was on moderating queer spaces. We discussed the needs in queer spaces and the importance of being mindful of intersectionality, particularly the significant intersectionality between queer and disabled people. I then spoke with Ember, the incoming queer officer, and Ren, the incoming accessibility officer, both at Deakin. We built on each other's ideas about improving policies at the university.

The now solo plenary of the day was "The NUS's Role in Defending Trans Rights". Interestingly, the sole person on that panel was Clarity, who acknowledged that this was a bit messed up. With only Clarity on the panel, it may have been better titled "Clarity's role in defending herself". The topics she discussed on the panel were largely a rehash of what she said in her workshops, because not a lot of people attended them, while most people are at the plenary. At the end of question time, no one asked any questions because the people who had questions had already asked them during the workshops. Surprisingly, the white male contingent stayed quiet.

The last workshop was on tokenism, done by Noor and Hadiya. We discussed recognising when you are a token in a situation and how to create a space where you are not tokenised. I find it ironic that Clarity was used as the token trans girl on the plenary before this.

Final thoughts

Most of the plenaries and workshops were unstimulating, lacking meaningful conversations that offer different perspectives. This was, among other things, due to SAlt not attending, white men providing unnecessary inputs and asking Google-able questions, and unnecessary echo-chambering and oversharing by presenters. I would also like to note that we were the only people from Western Australia in the room. Honestly, by the middle of the first day of the conference, I began to question why I was there and regretted my decision to go to Adelaide, as my lectures and tutorials would have been more stimulating than this.

Despite all the negatives, I am glad I met people who are currently or will soon be in the same role as me. I've made valuable connections with them that will likely be helpful in the future, and I've also gained some great ideas from them.

Seeing the inner workings of the NUS makes me realise that they are disorganised, a great example being this conference. I don't know much about what happens behind the scenes, but from the surface, they really aren't doing much. Most of the NUS officer bearers who should have been at the conference, such as the disability officer, were not even in attendance. In my opinion, things like this show the NUS cares very little about the diversity conference.

“How can we make the NUS more accessible?”

NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS DIVERSITY CONFERENCE
REPORT

MIA ANTENUCCI

I attended the National Union of Students Diversity Conference at Flinders University in Adelaide from the 29th of September until the 2nd of October. I attended with Noor, Hadiya, Bridget and Astor on behalf of the Curtin Guild who funded our trip. The Diversity Conference focused on women, queer, ethnocultural, First Nations and disabled students and the specific issues they face. It was run by the NUS Welfare officer and the NUS officers for these specific portfolios. The conference was attended by around 50 people on the first day and had representatives from around 10 universities. Most of the attendees were from Victoria, and Curtin was the only university from WA in attendance. As Socialists Alternative did not attend, the conference consisted of Unity, independents and small unions on the left of Labor. This resulted in a lack of diverse views and opinions. However, the lack of presence from the Socialists made the conference more accessible as it was less overstimulating. The conference was overall disorganised as the timetable was changed every single day; however, some of this was due to the attendees. As I have not attended an NUS conference before, I believe that attending DivCon was more helpful for me than others. I was able to meet various disability representatives from different universities and create connections that I can use in my role. This was also helpful as we were able to discuss disability issues that are similar throughout the country.

The conference consisted of both workshops and plenaries, and I found the workshops more valuable overall. During the woman's portion of the conference, we discussed safety on campus and the role of campus security. I also attended a workshop that discussed the history of feminism throughout the world and the importance of intersectionality in feminism. The ethnocultural portion of the conference was the best, as the workshops were run by incredibly passionate people and fostered deep discussions. These particularly focused on challenges that people of colour face in being heard, tokenism, and the support that universities provide to weapons companies. This was incredibly interesting and eye-opening as it revealed the many common themes between universities. The queer portion of the conference mainly focused on trans people, which was very informative and interesting. The queer plenary focused on the NUS and trans rights, yet it included only one trans person, who was the only trans person in attendance at the conference.

The First Nations officer was also the only First Nations person in attendance at the conference. The workshops on First Nation student issues were very helpful as we do not have a First Nations officer at the Guild, which is a problem that many universities have. She offered many suggestions, including connecting with the First Nations Elders in the area, offering relocation grants for First Nations students and other ideas that we could implement at Curtin. She also mentioned the importance of taking university representatives to rural communities and discussing all the different university courses in order to increase the number of First Nations students at universities. As we don't have a First Nations Officer it is important that we make an effort to support First Nations students.

Flinders University is located on a hill and requires multiple flights of stairs to get from the car park to the conference space. There was a ramp inside the main conference room, which I was told by someone that it was the only time that they had seen a ramp at an NUS conference. The other rooms used by the conference were all next to each other on the ground floor. The door to the main conference room was also very heavy. DivCon advertised that they had a quiet space and a prayer room available, yet a prayer room was not provided. The quiet space, although provided, was not ideal as it was an average-sized classroom. This room had multiple round tables, which required manoeuvring around, which would have been difficult for anyone in a wheelchair. It also had hard chairs and only two power points in the entire room, which required you to either move a chair or sit on the floor. Additionally, this space had the bright classroom lights on for the entirety of the conference, which made it inaccessible for people with a variety of conditions.

DivCon provided lunch for everyone in the form of Subway. Many people had different dietary requirements that Subway could not accommodate. They continued to provide this for the entire conference despite being told this was inadequate. As Subway could not ensure there was no contact between the different meat and dairy products, they provided everyone who could not have meat and/or dairy products with a vegetable wrap. As I have a dairy allergy, I was provided a wrap that was full of vegetables like carrots and lettuce, despite being able to eat meat. This is unacceptable and resulted in many people having to organise their own lunch.

The disability plenary and the workshop on chronic illness were good as they were run by disabled people and discussed issues that disabled people face. I believe that the NUS struggled to get disabled students involved in the conference, as there were a number of workshops and plenaries that were categorised under disability, which were not directly relevant. This included learning about the complaints system of the Ombudsman and Academic Discipline at Universities due to failing units. While all these topics do have a link to disability and can impact disabled students more, the people running these workshops did not focus on individuals with disabilities. There was also a lack of variety in the disability representatives who were part of the conference, with many individuals with higher support needs not being represented. There was also a lack of disability representatives overall, and only one person in attendance had a mobility aid. This is partially due to the structure of NUS conferences, which require everyone to travel to a location in a different state. This can require either a very long car ride or getting on a plane which is not viable for many individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the conference did not have the option to view/participate online, which was incredibly disappointing as it would have made it much more accessible.

The lack of disability representation meant that the experiences of many disabled students were not represented at this conference despite being the most accessible out of all the NUS conferences. The issue of the lack of disability representation at DivCon is evidence of a

much wider problem with the NUS and other student unions. Although attending DivCon was incredibly draining for me, I was able to attend. The ability to attend is a privilege that I have in the disability community and makes me an ideal token, as my needs can be minimised to participate similarly to non-disabled people for a short period of time. However, I am unable to attend any other NUS conferences, which is a reality shared by multiple other disabled people that I spoke to. This means that our voices are not represented in the decisions that are made by the wider student union and there is no one to advocate for our needs.

This issue is clearly evident through multiple equity officers in the NUS being unpaid. The NUS ethnocultural officer, First Nations officer, small and regional campuses officer, international students' officer, vocational education officer and the disabilities officer are all unpaid positions. This means that they have limited amount of time to focus on this role as they require another job to pay for their lives. This means it's incredibly difficult for them to achieve anything substantial in these roles. In contrast, the president, general secretary, education officer, welfare officer, women's officer and two queer officers are paid positions. This pay discrepancy is unjustifiable as it continues the disadvantage that these groups already face. While the queer officers are paid positions, they are paid less than all the other roles. This is evidence of the NUS devaluing marginalised groups. This lack of care is deeply frustrating and disregards the value that disabled people, and all marginalised groups can bring to student unions. Currently, because of the inaccessibility of the NUS, the disability community is largely invisible and forgotten. Unless the NUS and students as a whole, are actually willing to change, learn and improve, attending NUS conferences is a pointless exercise.

National Union of Students Diversity Conference Report – Noor Fellah Flinders University, Adelaide (29 September – 2 October 2025)

Introduction

From 29 September to 2 October, I had the opportunity to attend the National Union of Students (NUS) Diversity Conference (DivCon) at Flinders University in Adelaide, alongside my colleagues Hadiya Naeemi, Astor Luk, Mia Antenucci, and Bridget Clifton. The conference brought together student representatives from across Australia to discuss issues affecting women, queer, ethnocultural, First Nations, and disabled students.

While the aim of DivCon is to foster dialogue, collaboration, and intersectional advocacy, the experience highlighted both the potential and the ongoing shortcomings of the NUS in meaningfully supporting diverse student communities.

General Observations

The conference was unfortunately marked by significant disorganisation and accessibility issues. The daily schedule frequently changed, sessions started late, and several Officer Bearers (OBs) responsible for key departments — such as Disability and one of the Queer portfolios - were absent altogether. Accessibility was a recurring concern. The venue required climbing multiple flights of stairs, and the promised quiet room and prayer space were poorly equipped or non-existent. Despite repeated feedback, halal food options were not properly catered for, and the daily lunches provided by Subway excluded many attendees with dietary or religious requirements. For a conference centred on “diversity”, these oversights reinforced a sense of tokenism and performative inclusion.

Workshops and Plenaries

Women’s Day (29 September)

The Women’s plenary, hosted by the NUS Women’s Officer, focused on surveys around women’s rooms and period products on campuses. While it offered insight into differing campus experiences, the discussion was largely surface-level and lacked meaningful engagement with intersectionality. Many of the conversations were dominated by white voices, often overlooking the realities of ethnocultural, queer, and disabled women.

Workshops on women’s safety and leadership brought forward important issues, particularly the failures of campus security to take reports seriously, but again revealed how far many universities have to go to make their campuses safe and inclusive.

Accessibility and Disability (30 September)

The Disability day featured a mix of helpful discussions and less relevant content. Some workshops, like *Academic Progress Policy: Designing for Inclusion in Exclusion*, became overly personal and unfocused, while others such as *Sick Comrades: Cultivating a Covid-Safer Student Union* provided constructive strategies for improving accessibility and wellbeing in student unions.

Mia Antenucci, our incoming Accessibility Officer, contributed strongly to discussions around practical steps to make conferences and campus spaces more accessible — such as hybrid attendance options, clearer complaint systems, and better representation of disabled students.

Ethnocultural and International (1 October)

This day centred on the experiences of people of colour and international students. It included workshops like *Talanoa: Grounded in Culture*, *Intersectional Voices*, and *Shifting Perspectives: Implicit Biases*. While some discussions were insightful, the Ethnocultural Officer’s plenary began with an admission that he had achieved little during his term — emblematic of the NUS’s current lack of accountability and action.

Nevertheless, the sessions sparked important dialogue about institutional racism, implicit bias, and the emotional toll of tokenism in advocacy spaces.

Beyond Tokenism Workshop (1 October)

One of the highlights of the conference was the **“Beyond Tokenism: Building Spaces That Last”** workshop, which I co-facilitated with **Hadiya Naeemi**.

This workshop explored what it means to be “the only one in the room” — whether as an ethnocultural, queer, or disabled student — and unpacked the pressures of symbolic inclusion versus genuine representation.

We discussed how tokenism often manifests in student unions, where marginalised voices are invited to “tick a box” rather than influence outcomes. The workshop encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences, identify when they’re being tokenised, and consider how to reclaim space on their own terms. What made this session particularly meaningful was the level of engagement and vulnerability from participants. Many shared personal stories of being appointed to committees or campaigns purely for “diversity optics.” Together, we discussed strategies for shifting from symbolic presence to structural change — creating sustainable, community-led spaces where people can thrive rather than merely “represent.”

The discussion that followed was rich and intersectional, touching on how tokenism impacts not only ethnocultural students but also queer, disabled, and First Nations activists. It was rewarding to see attendees reflect on their own organisations’ shortcomings and commit to fostering more inclusive environments.



Queer and First Nations (2 October)

The final day combined leftover workshops from previous themes, such as *Moderating Queer Spaces* and *An Invisible Crisis* on transgender discrimination. The plenary on *The NUS’s Role in Defending Trans Rights* featured only one speaker, which ironically exemplified the very tokenism our own workshop had addressed the day prior.

It was noted that the conference structure, dividing each day by identity group, often fragmented discussions that should have been intersectional by nature. Future conferences would benefit from integrated programming that acknowledges how race, gender, disability, and sexuality intersect in real life.

Reflections

DivCon 2025 demonstrated the NUS’s potential to unite student advocates from across Australia, but also revealed its entrenched structural flaws. The conference repeatedly failed to meet even its own accessibility and inclusion standards, and many sessions lacked the depth and diversity of voices that could have made the experience transformative.

Despite this, there were valuable moments of connection, particularly among delegates who sought to learn from one another rather than perform activism. Running the *Beyond Tokenism* workshop was an empowering experience, reinforcing the importance of creating spaces that move beyond symbolic diversity toward systemic equity.

I am deeply grateful to the Curtin Student Guild for the opportunity to attend and contribute to DivCon. The insights gained will inform my ongoing work within the Guild — particularly around strengthening equity collectives, addressing tokenism within leadership structures, and ensuring that Curtin continues to model genuine, inclusive representation.

Bridget Clifton (she/they)

Women's Officer, Vice President – Activities (ACTING)

National Union of Students Diversity Convention 2025 (29/09/2025 – 2/10/2025) – Report

Foreword:

I would like to deeply thank the Curtin Student Guild for giving me the privilege and opportunity to attend National Union of Students (NUS) Diversity Convention (DivCon) hosted by Flinders University in Adelaide, in Kaurna Country.

Introduction:

NUS DivCon was hosted this year in Flinders University in Adelaide and was an amalgamation of the Women's, Ethnocultural, Queer, Accessibility and First Nations Conventions, where equity officers from various affiliated universities can host workshops and see what NUS equity officers have been doing for the past year. I attended this conference with Astor Luk (incoming Queer Officer), Noor Fellah (Secretary), Hadiya Naeemi (incoming Vice President – Education) and Mia Antenucci (incoming Accessibility Officer).

I am deeply disappointed at the state of the NUS and its office bearers (OBs), with many NUS OBs saying that they haven't done anything for the whole year or OBs just not showing up for DivCon. The minority of OBs that did have something to present at their plenaries used it as an opportunity to glaze the Labor government, themselves for being part of Labor and the minimal work they've done throughout the year which is often sending out a survey to universities. Plenaries that weren't presented by OBs would otherwise be presented by Labor MPs gloating about themselves and telling the crowd to change the system.

The convention was deeply inaccessible for many people, as to access the building it was in, you would have to climb various flights of stairs. What was deeply appalling was that at no point in time the NUS provided halal food outside of vegetarian, nor did they organise a prayer room for people and complaints were ignored throughout the duration of the conference. The quiet space provided was stuffy at best, and had a perpetual stench throughout the whole conference, where we would have to sit outside or in the corridor if we needed a quieter space.

29th September 2025 – Women's Department

The Women's Plenary hosted by Ellie Venning was lacked stimulation and disorganised at best. She talked about her work as NUS Women's Officer and her survey on autonomous spaces and period products across Australia. I personally don't believe that Venning needs a year to send out a survey where only a handful of Women's

Departments responded, however it was interesting to see the differences in services that various student unions provide ranging from sources of funding for period products to resources provided in autonomous women's spaces on campus.

The women's safety on campus workshop gave an enlightening view on the different experiences at different universities where for some reason more men had a say about women's safety than any woman or non-binary person in the room.

The second plenary, hosted by Venning, ran 45 minutes late as the guest speaker wasn't ready yet. In the meantime, Unity spent that time discussing on how to make the NUS and National Conference (NatCon) more accessible, however this was framed to stifle conversation and debate, focusing on how to silence Socialist Alternative.

Unfortunately for Socialist Alternative, no representatives from the party were at the convention which made the whole conference lack in stimulating debate and conversation even though often the only criticisms they only have is that people are part of the Labour party.

30th September 2025 – Disability + Queer Departments

Unfortunately Olivia Stronarch, the NUS Disability Officer, was not available to come to the conference as she was on holiday somewhere else. During that day, most conversations were about how to make the NUS more accessible and talking about how to make universities more accessible. Fortunately for this day, as many Accessibility/Disability Officers didn't concern themselves with politics, they made the most of DivCon to talk to others about how to make universities more accessible and bounce ideas off each other – the intended purpose of these various NUS conferences. For one of the workshops, we discussed on how to make handovers more accessible and how to prevent burnout as OBs in student unions.

I would also like to take the time to note that many people in this conference, especially during disability workshops, to use these workshops to platform their trauma without appropriate notice or trigger warnings. One person, who has done this in previous conferences, talked about domestic violence that she's endured and reported that this (her workshop) was the first time she's ever talked about it. She also mentioned at the start of the workshop that she anticipates that she'll start crying or anticipate for others to start crying in her workshop and brought tissues. I don't think that this an appropriate use of people's time and money as I don't think it's the suitable place and stifles any meaningful discussion and debate.

I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop on decolonising queerness, using India as a case study. This educated me on gender through other cultural lenses and the struggles that queer people in India go through which may impact them in Australia. This workshop also helped facilitate debate as some people claimed that India has passed legislation decriminalising same sex marriage, however many queer Indians still face oppression

culturally despite the legislative changes. This workshop also discussed on how Queer Departments can cater more to international students as they have unique barriers that may prevent them from engaging with the queer community in Australia and touched on how to broadcast safe online dating for international students.

1st October - Ethnocultural Department

It's disappointing to hear the NUS Ethnocultural Officer, Tapenaga Reupena, to start his plenary to say that he's done nothing the entire year. He also reported on how he regrets not promoting the Racism @ Uni survey, however made a special shoutout to Curtin and the work of Razanne and the Ethnocultural Collective. We then spent the remainder of the plenary playing a rendition of 'Simon Says' and Lalaga, a Samoan story telling game where questions progressively more personal as you go on.

For the Intersectionality workshop/panel it was enlightening to hear about the struggles of being a POC woman in politics and the barriers that they must face compared to people with more privilege. There was also discussion about the reporting process for facing racism at university and how it seems that racism is the last thing on university officials' lists to handle. The process is reported to be uncomfortable at the best of times, putting the onus on the victim, and information on how or where to report racism isn't easily accessible. As for the workshop about implicit biases was deeply interesting as it talked about the difference between white/liberal feminism and intersectional feminism, and how to mitigate implicit biases and expanded this to an intersectional network.

The plenary hosted by Nat Cook, a MP for South Australia was deeply disappointing and an echo chamber of pro-Labor rhetoric. Cook came to the plenary talking about how it was international coffee day and old peoples' week before saying that she was open to questions. She went into detail about her son's death and her work founding the Sammy D Foundation, aimed to mitigate violence in young people. When asked about what she has done to improve the justice system for young people and the challenges faced she instead turned the question into telling people to volunteer and change the legal system themselves.

2nd October – Queer + First Nations + Ethnocultural



I feel that this day was just an amalgamation of whatever workshops were leftover or bled into other days as there wasn't enough workshops to warrant a single day – I feel that for the next DivCon, there shouldn't be 'themes' per say, but amalgamate everything so that there isn't a single theme for each day and may make people be more inclined to stay for the whole duration of the convention – especially when some people tended to be more interested in only one certain topic.

This day started an hour late as most people were having brunch with Paul Ting and the plenary was pushed back until the afternoon. This day Noor and

Hadiya hosted their workshop on tokenism. Of course, this was an amazing workshop that was humorous and informational which helped facilitate discussion and talked about how tokenism impacts other equity groups and not just ethnocultural people.

The Queer panel about trans rights was enlightening, however the whole panel consisted of the only trans person at DivCon. As usual, Clarity was amazing and provided clarity to make trans issues that she faces on campus.

Additional Comments

I would like to highlight the initially small things that happened that made the conference deeply tokenistic. It seemed that DivCon was used as a glaze fest for Unity members, where they constantly glazed each other and the Labor MPs that were invited in, which made most of the conference mind-numbing at the best of times. Additionally, there was no Wi-Fi throughout the whole of the conference where many of us had to hotspot our own devices, however still had to endure a lot of dead zones or incredible slow signal. I'd also like to reiterate on that there was no halal option or prayer room organised, and complaints fell on deaf ears when approaching the NUS Welfare Officer. Additionally, the only food provided was Subway, which although isn't BDS, is wider boycott and in my opinion, shouldn't be supported if you're a pro-Palestine union, however many students were seen buying their own lunches at other places on campus. I would like to also note the lack of diversity at DivCon, with there being only one black person, one openly trans person in the whole conference which doesn't seem that diverse.

With saying this, DivCon came with its benefits as Astor and Mia seemed to benefit from hearing what other (and older) Queer and Accessibility Officers have gone through and what to expect in the role. For incoming reps, it could be beneficial as they gained the

most out of the conference compared to outgoing reps, and the older reps seemed to adopt a 'mentor-like' relationship with them and exchanged social media handles so that they can contact them next year. It was also great meeting other people from different universities and hearing about peoples' experiences that I would otherwise not have the opportunity to have heard.

CAPA GradCon Report – Mitch Craig

Conference Dates: 21st-22nd August 2025

Location: University of Queensland

I attended the annual CAPA Conference at the University of Queensland in August, the conference theme was “Changemakers”.

The conference included a special council meeting of CAPA in which budget amendments and reports were noted by the members. Many topics were discussed in dedicated sessions, many of them with guest speakers. Some of these topics were dedicated to:

- Higher Degree by Research issues;
- the future of higher education;
- International Students;
- Enterprise Bargaining; and
- University Governance.

It was a wonderful opportunity to hear from experts and other postgraduate leaders on the various topics. I was also able to share my experiences from Curtin and some of our successes and initiatives including:

- Higher stipend rates;
- Guaranteed IT equipment;
- Food for Fines; and
- The Food Pantry.

I was also able to learn about the services and initiatives offered to postgraduates around the country. We all shared our successes and failures and learnt from each other about strategies employed and how we can better serve the students we represent.



