



RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION: FOURTH QUARTER REPORT

 REPORTING PERIOD: 1 OCTOBER – 31 DECEMBER 2015



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Ariel
ZOHAR

What an exciting end to 2015. With the student union elections in September we have a new cohort of representatives ready and committed to furthering the rights and wellbeing of RMIT's students. I have been given the honour of leading these exceptional young people and I look forward to the coming year with a sense of hope and pride, because I know we will continue to deliver on our promises and make RMIT a better place for all its students.

The new reps began their year as representatives in November, and so the last two months of the year were a time of planning, discussion, and energy as budgets were prepared, ideas thrown around, and new proposals considered.

On a personal level, I have been hard at work with general secretary Abena Dove, office bearers, and various staff members, developing RUSU's 2016 strategic priorities. This is an important step in ensuring the student union has firm, attainable goals and objectives that give our efforts focus and motivation.

In December I had the honour of attending the 2015 RMIT graduation ceremony at Etihad Stadium, and what a night it was! It was fantastic to see so many students and their families celebrating the wonderful achievements of RMIT's (now) alumni.

RUSU also had the chance to visit our fellow students in Vietnam, and meetings with the RMIT Vietnam Student Council strengthened ties and allowed us to share knowledge, experiences, and ideas.

As we head into a new academic year, RUSU is well placed to build on the incredible efforts of our 2015 representatives.

Ariel Zohar
President
RMIT University Student Union

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

STANDOUT EVENTS

Footy Colours Pub Crawl

RUSU invited students to celebrate the extra special AFL Grand Final public holiday with a Football Colours Pub Crawl through the northern end of the CBD. Students received an official Pub Crawl t-shirt with their ticket purchase as well as free food, drinks, karaoke and entry into Lucky Thursdays. More than 25 students attended this event.

End of Exams Party – The 90s Edit

The Activities Department final event for 2015 was the end of exams party held on November 12. This event was held at Platform One in the CBD, and saw around 700 students celebrating the end of another academic year.

MEMBERSHIP

The final tally for 2015 was 5301 financial members. RUSU has set itself a goal of 7,500 financial members for 2016.



EOX: The 90s Edit



RUSU Volunteers take over Luna Park



VOLUNTEERS

The final quarter saw continued growth for the RUSU Volunteer Program. The extension of operating hours at Realfoods enjoyed further support from existing and newly recruited volunteers, making 2015 a record year for hours worked. This is a very satisfying outcome for RUSU and we continue to be available to act as referees for volunteers seeking part-time and casual work, particularly within the hospitality sector.

The annual report to LEAD was submitted with 160 RUSU volunteers having completed the criteria of fifteen hours minimum volunteering and five hours minimum training. This figure represents a significant percentage (approx 18%) of volunteering across all RMIT.

The end of year appreciation event was held at Luna Park this year. It was very well attended and a great opportunity to gain feedback from volunteers about their experience over the last year. It was fantastic to learn that 100% of those surveyed said they put their volunteering experience on their resume. They also told us that there are two main reasons why they volunteered with us, mainly to meet nice people and gain work experience. They all said they are very likely to tell others about our program and the only recommended improvement was more volunteer recognition events.

The recruitment and placement strategy plan for 2016 Bundoora volunteers was developed over this quarter. Preparations for recruiting volunteers for the Bundoora Realfoods cafe and the BBQ/breakfasts will be put into place early February.

This quarter also saw the continuation of a wonderful partnership with Certificate 1 Work Education Students at Brunswick campus.

VOLUNTEER HOURS WORKED IN 2015

During the final quarter, RUSU volunteers contributed more than 1645 working hours to RUSU services, bring the total hours for the year to date to 5175 hours.

RUSU VOLUNTEERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Final Quarter 2015

Recruitment	Oct-Dec	Year to date
Number of students registering their interest to volunteer during third quarter	0	527
Training	Completions	
Volunteers inducted	0	326
Volunteers trained in Safe Food Handling Level 1	0	167
Volunteers trained in RSA	0	164
Volunteers trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid	0	22
Volunteers trained in Community First Aid	0	52

ACROSS THE CAMPUSES

CITY

Both RUSU information counters at building 5 and 57 functioned as important information and contact points for RMIT students this quarter. October, November and December proved to be very busy months, with hundreds of students seeking student rights advice and advocacy, and accessing RUSU services. The admin volunteer program continued to be successful, with 10 volunteers staffing the building 5 office during the peak periods of the day. This program provides RUSU volunteers with experience in administration and student-focused customer service. We look forward to offering this program in Building 57 in 2016.

City Chill 'n' Grill

RUSU celebrated the last two city Chill 'n' Grills for the year by switching up the menu and collaborating with both internal and external departments. As outlined in more detail below, the week 11 event was themed as 1000 Paper Cranes and partnered with the Welfare Department's Stress Less Week, the RMIT Japan Club and Global Mobility.

The last Chill 'n' Grill for the year was celebrated in style with a food truck providing the students with a free lunch rather than our usual BBQ. This gave RUSU's hardworking volunteers an opportunity to partake in the weekly fun, particularly as we provided both volunteers and students with water guns to cool down in the 30-degree heat.

1000 Paper Cranes Event

1000 Paper Cranes descended upon Alumni Courtyard on the on the October 8 to celebrate a very special Chill 'n' Grill. Collaborating with the Welfare Department's Stress Less Week, the RMIT Japan Club and RMIT Global Mobility, this event promoted Japanese culture, exchange opportunities in Japan and the Asian region well as overall student well-being.

To theme the free weekly lunch, RUSU provided *okonomiyaki* (Japanese pancake) instead of our normal snags in bread. The hardworking students from the Japan Club handmade each of the paper cranes and the Global Mobility team provided information booklets regarding exchange opportunities and oversized sumo wrestling suits for students to enjoy. As this event was held during Stress Less Week, the Welfare Department also provided a very popular petting zoo as well as other fantastic de-stressing giveaways.

Not only did students enjoy the change in food but they were also provided with a number of ways to de-stress, have fun and enjoy student life in the last week of semester before SWOTVAC.

BRUNSWICK

As Brunswick tends to get quiet during this period the front counter is closed from 25th November and reopening inline with Brunswick O'Week and the return of students. The semester wrapped up with the return of the locker keys that Brunswick students used throughout semester. This program continues with its success, with many students already placed on the waiting list for next year/semester. The Brunswick 'quiet period' is used to effectively plan out the coming semesters events and allows time for staff to sit down with student representatives to map out said events and programs.

CARLTON

The Carlton Building 57 office experiences it's 'peak' busy period with regards to student rights enquires. Many students who have received their final/exam marks come to the front counter seeking a group session for appealing a mark or present with a case of show cause. This is an extremely busy time for the front counter service (and the student rights service) as a whole. The phone, email and face to face drop in service are all accessible for students and are managed by the liaison officers.

BUNDOORA (EAST & WEST)

The fourth quarter has seen a number of new and exciting developments on the Bundoora campus. The weekly welfare breakfasts and Chill 'n' Grill events at Bundoora East and West have continued to grow in popularity, with long lines of students waiting their turn for food every week. We have received lots of positive feedback from students about their enjoyment of these weekly events, including the themed Chill 'n' Grill events (with Japanese pancakes and nachos among other international foods), and Stress Less Week, which featured a petting zoo, and free ice cream on a beautiful Spring day. These events are great for student experience and engagement at Bundoora and increase student awareness of the services, support and advocacy that RUSU offers students. We look forward to continuing and growing these events on campus in 2016.

Another exciting event this quarter was the Eid celebration held by the Bundoora Islamic Society at Bundoora West. The event featured henna, a hijab stall, calligraphy, sweets and pizza and was a great success. In further developments, the Bundoora queer students got a computer for the queer lounge, providing a safe place to study and surf the net.

2016 is set to be an exciting year at Bundoora, with the new on-site student accommodation as well as the Realfoods café opening at Bundoora West. We are excited to offer students a second café option on campus, with vegan and vegetarian options. There has only been one café in operation at Bundoora West since Café 251 closed at the end of Semester 1, 2015. To raise awareness of this exciting event, we ran a free lunch event at Bundoora West so that students could sample the vegan wraps and salads that will be on offer at Realfoods in 2016. Student feedback about the food was all positive, with many vegetarian, vegan and health-conscious students delighted that they will have a new option on campus.



RUSU DEPARTMENTS

QUEER DEPARTMENT

Our daily events have continued to draw attention from both our regular students and those who are new and starting life at RMIT. Our Wednesday workshops have been drawing specially good crowds!

Since our last report we have run workshops on:

- » Masculinity and Femininity - A workshop with Transgender Victoria and guest host Sally Goldner
- » Asexuality Workshop with guest speaker Kyle
- » Bisexuality workshop with Bisexual Alliance Victoria

The Department's Friday Crafternoon/Afternoon Tea has been fantastic, with regular and new students turning up to create some very beautiful pieces of art - some of which we have been putting up around the room.

Our students are still finding us at the new Queer Space in Building 57. This hasn't been the most comfortable of moves. While the room is beautiful and there are many new wonderful features, we have been experiencing some unacceptable queer-phobic comments from people outside the room.

POSTGRADUATE

As of this quarter, the Post-graduate Department is now supported by a dedicated HDR student rights officer, Ollie Fabinyi. Ollie's job is to assist with postgrad outreach programs and events as coordinated with the postgraduate officer, Paul Hoac.

The Annual Postgraduate Ball, organised with Monash and Melbourne University, was held on September 25. The night was well promoted, and more than 300 students enjoyed the event.

Postgraduate master-classes also took place on the first and fifteenth of October. A solid turn-out of students from a variety of Schools attended to hear RMIT alumni speakers and mingle with other postgraduate colleagues.

The Student Rights team provided valuable feedback to the School of Graduate Research on a suite of postgraduate policies and procedures, which were put to Academic Board at the end of the year.

The Postgraduate department spent the remainder of the quarter planning a broad range of events for 2016, including Speed Friending, a cocktail party, newly designed workshops and other freebies and activities for Postgraduate students.



Realfoods Promo Lunch at Bundoora

REALFOODS CAFE

Realfoods closed for the holiday period this semester as a complete success. With the new, revamped menu and coffee offerings, students have been flocking to the cafe since it opened on 26 August 2015. Mid semester, the cafe opened from 8.00am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday, following exams trading hours were reduced to 9.00am - 3.30pm to accommodate the reduced traffic on campus.

Realfoods new no-cook facility proved to be very successful and has made the most of its new location next to RMIT Connect. A number of groups approached the café for coffee cards, vouchers and catering of sorts and were thrilled with the service provided to them.

Daily retail operations have continued to be overseen by the Realfoods Café Administrator & Volunteer Support Officer, supported by the Barista, a team of over 50 trained volunteers and seven Student Casuals. Casuals are a valuable and highly necessary addition to the running of Realfoods, as their presence makes it possible for the Café Administrator & Volunteer Support Officer to have some dedicated time set aside to work on administration, rosters, future planning etc. As well as providing employment opportunity for RMIT students in a convenient on-campus location.

All food freshly prepared off-site at Invita Living Food who share our ethos in providing organic, vegan, sustainable food.

Realfoods continued to provide hands-on hospitality and customer service experience to RMIT students and assisted them in increasing their employment prospects, with most students requesting references for their resumes, and many reporting back that they have found employment. By participating in this program, they not only gain experience, but solid employability skills through certification in Responsible Serving of Alcohol and Food Handling funded by RUSU. Both certificates can often prove too costly for students to afford.

All volunteer time is LEAD accredited.

Example of Realfoods volunteer feedback:

Being a RUSU volunteer opens so many doors to know people from all around the world and make so many friends, being a volunteer allows me to have experience in Australia and deal with many different people – Juan Salinas

Realfoods coming to Bundoora

The new 'Grab'n Go' Realfoods success has well exceeded what we were hoping for and the focus now is on working towards replicating and combining both Realfoods business models from Semester 1 and Semester 2 at the Bundoora Campus. This is scheduled to open in February 2016.

SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT

In this quarter the Sustainability Department supported the Sustainability Ball, an initiative of Engineers Without Borders RMIT and Greening RMIT.

The ball took place on October 9 in the Alumni Courtyard, and was a great success.

CLUBS & SOCIETIES

RUSU CLUB GRANTS

RUSU Clubs & Societies distributed \$99,990 of club grants in 2015. This is a 35% increase on grant delivery in 2014 and reflects both an increase in the number and membership size of affiliated clubs and clubs' adaption to the new funding formula introduced mid-2014.

RUSU CLUBS ACTIVITY

Affiliation

As at the end of 2015, RUSU has 97 fully-affiliated student clubs and societies. The distribution of clubs across our different categories is as follows:

- » Spiritual Clubs - 11
- » Social Clubs - 19
- » Political Clubs - 5
- » Cultural Clubs - 22
- » Academic Clubs - 40

New Clubs

RUSU welcomes the following new fully affiliated clubs:

- » RMIT University Nepali Student Society
- » RMIT Hazara Student Association



Fun at the ISA Social



Dressed to thrill at the Business Ball



China Youth Association Girls Basketball

4TH QUARTER CLUB ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

CLUB ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

RMIT ELECTRIC RACING – 2015 Australasian SAE Best Electric Team

Congratulations to RMIT Electric Racing for an amazing four days of the Formula SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers - Australasia) competition, gaining best electric vehicle (EV) team in the field. In the specific categories, RMIT Electric Racing received the following awards:

- » 1st Overall Efficiency
- » 1st EV Acceleration
- » 1st EV Skidpad
- » 1st EV Autocross
- » 1st EV Endurance
- » 7TH PLACE OVERALL (both electric and petrol vehicles)

RMIT Electric Racing's affiliation to RUSU enables it to expand the scope of the club, offering professional development and social opportunities to students from all RMIT colleges and schools. The RMIT Electric vehicle (developed annually) is totally self-funded with the club achieving an impressive stable of sponsors. RUSU clubs funding focuses on supporting the social and team building aspects of the club and is paying off with an increased membership base, the development of a broader professional expertise base, greater social activity and, as evidenced by this year's achievements, more success on the track. RMIT Electric is one of our clubs which attends every orientation and RMIT special event it can and RUSU acknowledges their efforts. RUSU offers Special congratulations to 2015 Team Leader Josh Gurtler for his hard work and commitment to the Team and to RMIT. Congratulations also to Bundoora-based RMIT Racing, our counterpart in the petrol category. This was RMIT Racing's first participation in this competition and they gained 18th place overall.

RMIT Australia - China Youth Association Girls Basketball Tournament @ A'Beckett Urban Square

The newly elected 2016 president of the RMIT ACYA, Tsz Ching Many Ho (Many) has not wasted any time demonstrating her enthusiasm for the club and her role. Within a couple of weeks of her election, Many coordinated a great day at A'Beckett Urban Square focusing on a girls basketball competition (with the support of a few male ring-ins). The weather was perfect, the competition fierce but fun and everyone had a great time. RUSU looks forward to RMIT ACYA leading the crowd in 2016.



RMIT Electric Racing Team

Club activities this quarter

Over 40 Club Annual General Meetings held (mostly on campus) with the remaining Calendar Year Club AGM's scheduled for March 2016.

- » Aerospace Engineers Students Association (AESA) – end of year Go Karting event @ProcastiKARTING South Morang
- » Aerospace Engineers Students Association (AESA club tour @ Avalon Airfield Museum
- » Environmental Engineering Student Association (EESA) End of 2015 BBQ @ University Lawn RMIT
- » Environmental Engineering Student Association (EESA) Warehouse Party @ Rubix Warehouse Venue, Brunswick
- » Environmental Engineering Student Association (EESA) Industry Night @ RMIT Building 80
- » Environmental Engineering Student Association (EESA) Graduation Drinks @ The Queensberry Hotel, Carlton
- » RMIT Economics, Finance & Marketing Student Association Professional Development Session with FINSIA @ National Australia Bank Heads Office, Bourke St , Melbourne
- » RMIT Business Students Association LinkedIn Professional Development Event @ RMIT Building 13
- » RMIT Electric Racing 2015 Team Entry into Formulae Student Automotive Engineering (SAE) Competition 2015 @ Calder Raceway, Calder
- » RMIT Electric Racing 2015 Launch @ RMIT Design Hub
- » RMIT Geospatial Students Association (RMIT GSSA) end of semester social @ Workshop, Melbourne
- » RMIT International Studies Association End of Year Event @ The Deck, Melbourne
- » RMIT International Studies Association social @ Lounge, Melbourne
- » RMIT International Studies Association “Spring Fling” @ The Pond, Carlton Gardens
- » RMIT Law Students Society End of Year Cocktail Gala @ Ms Collins, Melbourne
- » RMIT Press Club attended intervarsity Journalism students' event “The Melbourne Media” @ The Workers Club, Fitzroy
- » RMIT Racing 2015 Team Entry into Formulae Student Automotive Engineering (SAE) Competition 2015 @Calder Raceway, Calder
- » RMIT Racing Formula SAE After Party @ The Colonial Hotel, Melbourne
- » RMIT Students Association for Sustainable Systems Engineering (SASSE) lawn bowls evening @ Fitzroy Bowling & Sports Club, Fitzroy
- » RMIT Students Association for Sustainable Systems Engineering (SASSE) Industry Night @ RMIT Storey Hall
- » RMIT Student Landscape Architecture Body (RMIT SLAB) – winners of the SLAB “Krump Park” Design Competition, Team Cubic, install their winning design @ Melbourne's Les Erdi Plaza as part of the
- » 2015 Festival of Landscape Architecture: This Public Life
- » RMIT Interior Design & Decoration Graduating Students Exhibition # RMIT Design Hub
- » RMIT Master Fine Arts Graduating Club Graduate Exhibition @ RMIT Building 49
- » RMIT Australia-China Youth (RMIT ACYA) Association Girls Basketball Tournament @ RMIT A'Beckett Urban Square

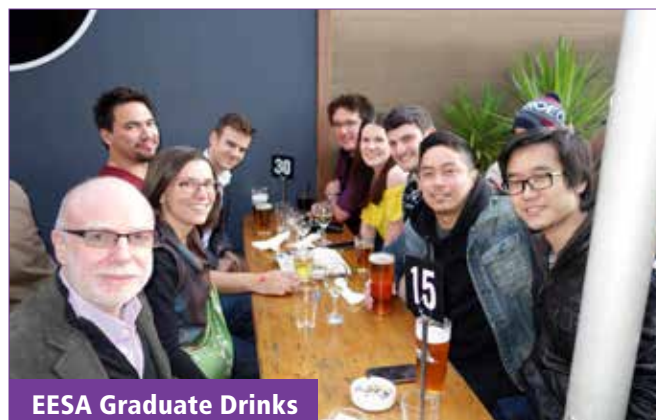
- » RMIT Japan Club “1000 Cranes” Project – held in conjunction with a “Japanese flavoured” RUSU City Campus Chill N Grill @ RMIT Alumni Square
- » RMIT Singapore Student Association End of Semester Dinner @ Garage Café and Bar Carlton
- » RMIT PPIA (Indonesian Society) major community development and charity fundraiser “Project O” @ RMIT Storey Hall
- » RMIT University Somali Student Association (RUSSA) – co presenter of 2015 Somali Week Oceania Festival held at multiple locations across Melbourne
- » RMIT University Somali Student Association (RUSSA) co-presenter of Somali Australia Friendship Association (SOFA) 2015 Graduation Award Ceremony @ Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre Preston
- » RMIT Vietnamese International Students at RMIT (VISAR) – City (scavenger) Hunt – Melbourne City
- » RMIT Islamic Society collaboration with other campus Islamic Societies to present a women's only post-graduation celebration “Sisters Red Carpet” @ Laila Receptions Brunswick

INFORMATION TO RUSU CLUBS

- » 2016 Orientation events booking form and instructions
- » Updating of day-to-day documentation available in the Club Executive Resources Google folder

NEW DEVELOPMENTS & SUPPORT TO RUSU CLUBS

- » RUSU C&S Department participation in the 2016 Orientation Events Working Party (University-wide group)
- » Drafting of new policies around clubs' behaviour management and club sponsorship
- » Participation in RUSU internal processes to develop front office support to clubs as a result of movement of main office away from Swanston Street campus, to ensure equity of support across all campuses and to better support the capacity of front counter volunteers
- » Participation in internal efforts to develop a new smaller campus/site specific category of RUSU clubs as a means for RUSU to more effectively provide equitable student experience opportunities for students at these campuses/sites (i.e. Point Cook, Brunswick, Bundoora East and Hamilton)
- » Provision of advice and pro-forma documentation to Clubs and Societies Staff at RMIT Vietnam Campuses



EESA Graduate Drinks

STUDENT MEDIA

CATALYST

The 2015 editorial team released their final issue of the year in October. The new editors, Kate, Claudia, and Joseph would like to thank them for the efforts and leaving the publication in such a strong position. Most of November and December was spent settling into the new offices in building 57 and on planning for the year ahead.

We were able to attend the National Union of Students conference in December, and it was a great experience to report and tweet live from the venue.

We are very close to having 2000 followers on Twitter, and our Facebook engagement remains strong. In 2016 we will continue production of *Cataclysm*, our podcast, and look to increase video content. The magazine will undergo a full redesign, will focus more on issues related to students, and will be better distributed around RMIT campuses. We are super excited to get issue one into students' hands.

RMITV

The final quarter at RMITV has been just as big and busy as any throughout the year! We have had a boom in productions and in student engagement across the non-teaching period. New flagship shows have seen great successes with training students and with audience engagement.

RMITV continues to grow with connections broadening across the industry, more multi-platform broadcasts and bigger student involvement. Some of the recent RMITV members gaining exceptional industry employment are:

- » Billie Egan - PPost & Deliver (Post Production Coordinator)
- » Elena Szymanski - CHE Proximity (Promotion: Junior Producer)
- » Joseph Potter - ABC (News Broadcast Operations)
- » Felicia Jong - Channel 31 (Traffic Manager)
- » Kris Vanston - Austereo (Digital Content Producer)
- » Mar Borboa - WFTN (Junior Producer)

Many of our alumni and members have also been busy working on their own projects. Alumni and recent RMIT University graduates Mar Borboa, Simon Gilberg, Robert Fantozzi and Alex Zemtsov produced a web series, *The Happiness Curve*, set to be released in December.

We are also extremely pleased to see RMITV alumni make up two-thirds of the key panel on *The Project*. Waleed Ali and Peter Helliard both made their television debuts with RMITV on Channel 31!

On the home front we are pleased to see our relationship with other community media organisations continue to grow and be recognised. Our combined effort in the live radio television simulcast of SYN's Budget Analysis has seen *Represent*, *Federal Budget Night 2015* take out the CBAA award for Excellence in Digital Media in 2015!

TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT

The Archival Grant is going well, with a successful approval of stage two of the NLA's process: Preservation Needs Assessment, (funding to hire an AV specialist to conduct a thorough assessment of the physical media in our possession, and make recommendations as to how we should proceed towards proper archival and digitization. This will take place in 2016.

PROGRAMMING & BROADCAST CONTENT

RMITV's Programming and Content Department continues to grow at a phenomenal rate with a multitude of productions being broadcast on Channel 31, on Foxtel's Aurora and online! Program numbers have continued to grow and the be broadcast across more and more platforms. We look forward to moving into 2016 - growing students capabilities through training programs such as *Offbeat* and the implementation of the training program.

The Leak

The Leak is RMITV's newest SSAF funded flagship. A news-satire show, *The Leak* is broadcast live-to-air on Friday nights from 8pm. This quarter the show completed a four episode pilot season with great success. Hosted by Michael Shafar, Elizabeth Davie and Anthony McCormack, *The Leak* takes a look into stories that the media spins us and breaks them down in an entertaining and informative way that students can digest. Producers Andrew Fenaughty and Seonaid Drummond have established a skilled crew and continue to push technological boundaries with live Skype interviews, creative pre-records and use of graphics in studio. Highlights of the pilot season include, discussion with Shane Dunlop about the future of community television, an in-depth look at gun control laws in the United States, and a Skype interview with Senator Larissa Waters, live from the Paris Climate Change Summit.

Offbeat

RMITV Management have worked hard to secure the space and resources to produce a daily live-to-air program, *Offbeat*. A Melbourne youth-culture television show, *Offbeat* is designed to give more students exposure to live television. Operating five days a week, *Offbeat* is managed by two co-line producers (Abbey Casey and Felicia Jong) and the content producer (Jenni Rowbottom). The show comprises over 60 crew members working in small teams to produce each weekday broadcast. *Offbeat* is RMITV's newest training program, giving large numbers of students access and opportunity to learn live-broadcasting and studio based skills.

In Pit Lane

Having just filmed its nineteenth year on air, *In Pit Lane* is Australia's longest running prime-time motorsport journalism series and RMITV's longest running production.

This quarter *In Pit Lane* was lucky enough to partner with Telstra in producing a live event out at Calder Park for the Formula SAE in early December. Telstra provided a great deal of support in aiding the broadcast of a large and reputable event, with university students competing from all around Australia.

Round Squares

Round Squares is a satirical news program that analyses politics and popular culture. In each show, our news anchor will conduct exclusive interviews with fake guests to give an insight into the ridiculousness of modern Australia. *Round Squares* is a webseries that is currently being released online.

SOCIAL MEDIA & PUBLICATIONS

Facebook - 14,097 Facebook Likes

Facebook still serves as our number one social media engagement tool, and our presence on the platform continues to grow stronger. Facebook serves as a platform for event advertising for both RUSU events and for Clubs & Societies, and allows students to interact with RUSU via wall posts and photo tagging and to RSVP to events (giving RUSU an idea of numbers beforehand). Post-event photo galleries also continue to be a major drawcard for students on the Facebook platform. Popular events on Facebook this quarter included the End of Exams '90s Party and the RAA Golden Monkey Masquerade.

Website

RUSU's site continues to be a great platform for delivering news, updates and information about RUSU events and activities. Our ever-changing front page advertises all the latest events. Looking forward to 2016, we are hoping to upgrade our website with a whole new look and improved functionality.

Newsletter

RUSU's newsletter continues to be popular, with more than 6000 subscribers to date, and a readership engagement rate of around 45%, which is far higher than the industry average. To date, there have been 10 main issues so far in 2015, and many more smaller updates, providing students with the latest news and information on upcoming events and activities.

Other social media

RUSU's presence on other social media, including both Twitter (1830 followers) and Instagram (growing steadily, with 105 followers), remains strong. Towards 2016, we are looking to extend our social media reach significantly, and to concentrate on building our brand in these sectors.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

The RUSU Media Department produces a wide variety of publicity materials for RUSU departments, events and clubs. To ensure their suitability over a broad range of printed and digital media, publicity materials are always made in a range of formats. Some of the highlights from this quarter include:

RUSU End of Exams Party - The 90s Edit

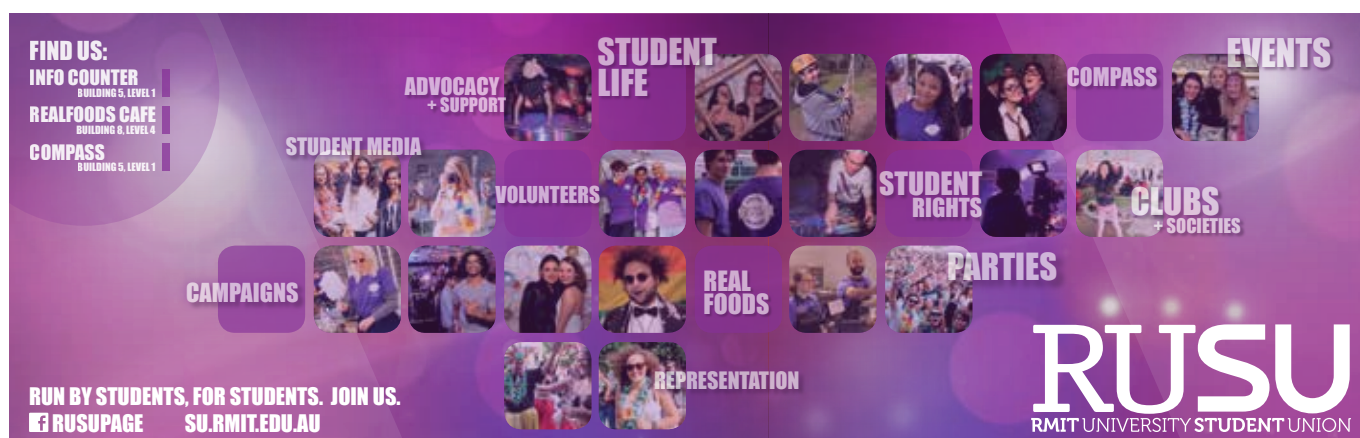
The RUSU EoX Party was a fantastic event to celebrate the end of exams. The '90s theme proved to be a popular one with students, and a lot of fun was had with the design, which channelled rave culture, hip-hop, and more!

RAA Golden Monkey Masquerade

The RMIT Asian Association held their pre-exams, dancing and cocktails event, the Golden Monkey Masquerade on October 11 at the Golden Monkey Bar. Marketing materials had a strong Asian style theme, which helped to get students in the mood to party for this event, especially for the final party before total exams lockdown!

RUSU NAS Signage

RUSU was given a fantastic opportunity to create some very prominent wall signage near our old office site in building 8. The signage - an impressive eight-metre stretch - showcased everything that RUSU offers to students, and will be displayed at the Swanston Street entrance to building 8 for around 12 months, starting from early 2016.



REPRESENTATION & ADVOCACY

COMPASS DROP-IN

- » There were 42 student drop-ins at Compass throughout this third quarter which is roughly the same as the fourth quarter in 2014, indicating that Compass's new location is becoming known to students.
- » Stress Less Week was held in October and saw thousands of students accessing information about dealing with stress and study - all while patting some fluffy animals at the very popular petting zoo and getting free massage! Stress Less Week was held over all campuses including Bundoora East.
- » In collaboration with the RMIT Counseling service Compass ran a huge and very successful Mental Health Week program over all campuses. This involved many activities which were very well received by students and aimed to draw attention to the prevalence of mental health issues and where to find support. It was wonderful to see how many students actively engaged with this event and I hope we will be able to run it again in the future
- » Compass Project Officer attended a training course in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy which is a very popular therapeutic intervention that is suited to the short term interactions that are common with students. This was a fully accredited course and the staff member is now able to practice this technique.
- » Compass Volunteers finished up for the year and were all celebrated with a wonderful end of year party... we hope to see many of them back next year!
- » RUSU Free Yoga finished up for the year and we have already had inquiries as to when it will start up again. This is a very popular and long running program which helps students with both fitness and relaxation.

REPRESENTATION

2016 Student Council Induction

The 2016 Council attended five days of intensive induction sessions on campus and in Queenscliff. The training covered such topics as:

- » Meeting the legal requirements of RUSU as board (SUC) members
- » Finance Made Easy - reading a department budget, P&L reports, RUSU funding, SSAF requirements, quarterly reports
- » Student Unions and RUSU in Context: the departments, functions, services and activities of RUSU past and present.
- » Planning and organising events at RMIT
- » Identifying Roles and Responsibilities - being a good rep
- » Essential office and organisational skills
- » Strategic planning and goal setting for 2016
- » Calendar and Event Planning for 2016.

At the conclusion of induction the Council members developed a calendar of events for 2016 and identified RUSU's campaign priorities.

Election of RUSU President

In accordance with the RUSU Constitution the Student Union Council elects the President and Communications Officer from its elected members. The SUC elections were held on 15 October.

- » Ariel Zohar was elected as SUC President.
- » Alan Padgham was elected as Communications Officer.

This meeting also elected SUC members to a range of RUSU internal committees such as Staffing Committee, Classification Committee, Finance Committee and the Occupational Health & Safety Committee. Participation in these committees enables student representatives to build their skills and experience in organising and managing an organisation, and reflects RUSU's commitment to being a student controlled organisation.

Appeal Committees Reps

RUSU has supported students on the following RMIT hearings;

- » 6 student representatives sat on 24 University Appeals Committee hearings.
- » 5 student representatives sat on 11 Student Conduct Board hearings.
- » 1 student representative sat on 1 College Appeals Committee hearing.
- » 6 student representatives sat on 10 GUSS show cause hearing panels.

NUS Conference

RUSU supported seven delegates to represent RMIT at the National Union of Students Conference in December 2015. This conference provided the opportunity to work intensively with students from around the country; to share ideas and experiences and to coordinate activities and campaigns benefitting students for the year ahead.

The conferences celebrated the defeat of fee deregulation following a sustained campaign throughout 2014 and 2015.

The cheaper textbooks campaign was endorsed as an important campaign for 2016.

RMIT Vietnam Visit

The outgoing RUSU President; Himasha Fonseka, incoming President; Ariel Zohar, and incoming General Secretary; Abena Dove participated in a visit to RMIT University Vietnam campuses. The visit was held from November 10 to 17 and provided many opportunities to meet with fellow students in Vietnam. Our meetings with the RMIT Vietnam Student Council strengthened ties and allowed us to share knowledge, experiences, and ideas.

RUSU was really impressed with the facilities in Vietnam and will be running a campaign for 'Snooze Lounges' for the Melbourne campuses in 2016.

RUSU would like to thank RMIT for supporting and funding the visit.

Graduation

Former RUSU presidents Himasha Fonseka (2015), James Michelmore (2014, 2013) and Hovig Melkonian (2012) all graduated during the December graduation ceremony. Current President Ariel Zohar joined the ceremony as a guest on the main stage.

2016 Campaign Priorities & VC Meeting

Following the RUSU Induction Camp Ariel met with the Vice Chancellor to discuss RUSU's priorities for 2016:

Meaningful & Fair Assessment which Supports & Develops Student Experience

- » Improved Feedback – Timeliness and Quality
- » Improved Tutor Standards
- » Group Work Policy
- » Recorded Lectures

Ongoing projects from 2015:

- » No Assessment over 50%
- » Special Consideration
- » Uni Communication

RMIT Strategic Plan Linkages:

- » Direction 1 - Life-changing Experiences
- » Goal 2 - Connected pathways
- » Direction 3 - Shaping the World
- » Goal 5 - Research and innovation: creating impact through collaboration

Accessible & Inclusive Learning Platforms

- » Blackboard Improvements
- » Fairer Timetabling
- » Recorded Lectures
- » Extended Tram Zone & Improved Travel Concession for International Students
- » RUSU Access to Student Email Addresses
- » HDR desks

RMIT Strategic Plan Linkages:

- » Direction 2 - Passion with Purpose
- » Goal 3 - Supporting and empowering our people with clearer, smarter, simpler systems
- » Goal 4 - Managing resources for long term value

A Campus Experience/ Environment which Supports Diversity, Building Skills and Connections for Life

- » 'Mental Health' Friendly Campus – incorporation of Guidelines as provided
- » Healthier Food in Bld 57 & Brunswick
- » Life Competencies
- » Bar on Campus
- » Sleeping Lounge/Pods
- » Extended Tram Zone & Improved Travel Concession for International Students
- » RUSU Access to Student Email Addresses
- » RUSU skill-sharing opportunities with Vietnam campuses

Ongoing projects from 2015:

- » Special Consideration
- » Uni Communication

RMIT Strategic Plan Linkages:

- » Direction 1 - Life-changing Experiences
- » Goal 1 - Life-Changing Experiences
- » Direction 3 - Shaping the World
- » Goal 7 - Global reach and outlook

Point Cook

The RUSU President, Ariel Zohar visited the RMIT Point Cook site in December as part of an RMIT University visit to explore improvements that could be made to the student experience. Ariel was pleased to report back to RUSU a list of key objectives and priority actions that RMIT would be undertaking at Point Cook. RUSU will also be looking at how we can contribute to campus life, and club activity at Point Cook.

Student Voice

RUSU elected student representatives provided a student voice on a range of RMIT Committees during this quarter:

- » Academic Board
- » Action on student satisfaction project
- » Student Engagement Bundoora Campus Committee
- » Monthly Catch Up Meetings with the Dean of Students
- » Orientation and Transition Steering Group
- » Student Experience Advisory Committee

RUSU/RMIT Meetings

The RUSU President and General Secretary have met with the Vice Chancellor, Martin Bean, several times this quarter. A focus of these meetings has been on improving the student experience at RMIT. We have continued our monthly catch-up meetings with the Dean of Students.

The RUSU President has also had meetings with key people at RMIT to provide student and input and feedback on a range of projects and initiatives. These include:

- » Chris Hewison - Executive Director Property Services
- » Paul Oppenheimer - Executive director for ITS
- » Zosh Pawlaczek - D/Dean - Associate Professor Learning Future - the focus of these meetings has been to discuss improvement to Blackboard
- » Kelly Bosman - Project Manager Student Experience NAS
- » Paul Noonan Deputy Director - Marketing & Communications

RUSU Internal Meetings

Elected student representatives have been supported and resourced to manage RUSU as a student-controlled organisation, including:

- » 3 Student Union Council Meetings
- » 7 Secretariat meetings
- » Student representatives gaining governance experience on internal Student Union Committees, such as Staffing Committee, Finance Standing Committee and OH&S Committee.
- » Elected student councillors supported to act work as governors and managers.



STUDENT RIGHTS

STUDENT RIGHTS CASEWORK AND ADVOCACY

The last quarter of 2015 has been a busy one for RUSU's student rights team, with students requiring assistance on a wide range of issues, with allegations of academic and general misconduct, special consideration, academic progress, appeals against assessment, late cancellation of enrolment and requests for fee waivers making up a large proportion of cases.

Nepalese students have continued to struggle finding funds to persevere with their studies in the wake of the earthquake that caused severe disruption to human services in Nepal and demolished so many student's homes and family businesses, these businesses providing vital income that was used to pay student tuition fees and living expenses. With assistance from student rights some students have managed to overcome initial rejections to receive generous partial fee waivers in not just one but two consecutive semesters. This has allowed students to continue the academic careers they and their families have invested so much time, energy and funds into, and keep striving to achieve the work and life opportunities attached to graduating with an RMIT qualification.

To manage demand for student rights assistance with academic progress and assessment appeals the team has again rolled out the highly successful and effective strategy of group sessions whereby large groups of students receive advice about these processes and suggestions to help them complete the first stage of the process at one time, before more detailed, case relevant and in depth one-on-one advice, support and advocacy is provided by a student rights officer.

Following a successful presentation to Academic Board the student rights team was asked to prepare an alternative policy framework and vision for the university's special consideration process that would improve the student experience by strengthening the fundamental principles of support, pastoral care and appropriate flexibility in assessment when required.

The aim was to make the special consideration process as easily accessible as possible for students when they need it the most, particularly those experiencing disadvantage that affects their studies. RUSU was honoured to be given this opportunity and wasted no time getting to work on a comprehensive suite of documents including specific amendments to a range of policies, a rationale for change, risks of the proposed changes and steps that can be taken to mitigate those risks. Initial indications are that the proposal has been well received and at least partial implementation may occur in the coming year.

"I am very impressed with all the help and support (student rights) has given me throughout my course and I don't want it to go unnoticed. (They) promptly and unconditionally (help) students like me and certainly (are) the much needed voice of the students. I am very grateful (for the) Student Union and don't know where I would be without this service." – Dental Hygiene Student

"It has been a long road but I've just received news that I will be eligible to attend the Melbourne ceremony next Wednesday. Words cannot express how thankful I am. Keep up the fantastic work!"
– Legal and Dispute Studies Student

PROBLEMS ARISEN

Problems created during the last quarter	Number
HDR Issues	
Candidate Action and Support Plan	1
HDR Submission/Examination Issue	1
Research Candidate Progress Committee	1
Scholarship Issue	2
Supervisor Issue	2
Discipline (University Level)	
Academic (Plagiarism) Misconduct	1
General Misconduct	1
Discipline (School Level)	
Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism)	32
Complaint	
RMIT Ombudsman	2
School Level	14
University Level	2
Victorian Ombudsman	1
Uncategorised	
Admin Issue	2
Appeal Against Assessment	47
Assessment Issues (other)	12
At Risk	3
Bullying	3
Disability	10
Enrolment Issue	8
Exclusion	7
Fees Issue	11
Leave of Absence (LOA)	4
Mental Health Issue	14
Other issues	16
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	1
Remission of Debt	13
Show Cause	43
Special Consideration	44
TOTAL	298

PROBLEMS RESOLVED

Problems outcomes during the last quarter	Number
Appeal Against Exclusion University Appeals Committee	
Appeal Dismissed	3
Appeal Upheld	11
Exclusion Withdrawn by School Before Hearing	5
Fee Remission	
Fee Remission Approved	4
Fee Remission Not Approved	1
Special Consideration Granted	
Alternative Assessment	1
Deferred Exam	4
Extension Of Time	4
Special Consideration Not Granted	3
Appeal Against Special Consideration University Appeal Committee	
Appeal Dismissed	1
Special Consideration Granted Without a Hearing	1
Complaint Outcome	
Alternative Resolution Reached	1
RMIT Ombudsman Complaint Resolved	1
School Level Complaint Dismissed	1
School Level Complaint Resolved	4
University Level Complaint Dismissed	3
Victorian Ombudsman Complaint Dismissed	2
Contacted School Issue Resolved	
Contacted Academic Administrator	2
Contacted Course Coordinator	4
Contacted Head of School	4
Contacted Program Manager	2
Referral Internal	
Compass	1
Counselling Service	8
Disability Liaison Unit	9
Student Wellbeing	1
Study and Learning Centre	2
Other	
Advice Given – Student Able to Proceed With Case Themselves	95
Attended Group Session	4
Other Outcomes	27
Student Doesn't Want to Pursue the Case	10

Problems outcomes during the last quarter	Number
Discipline/Plagiarism Meeting Case School Level	
Fine Imposed on Student	1
Other Penalty	1
Student Asked to Re-submit the Assessment	5
Student Reprimanded	4
Student Given a Fail For All or Any Part of Any Assessment	9
Leave Of Absence (LOA)	
LOA Granted	1
LOA Not Granted	1
Discipline Board Hearing Academic Misconduct	
Other Penalty	1
Student Reprimanded	2
Fee Issue Outcome	
Issue Resolved	1
Appeal Against Assessment CAC Decision – University Appeals Committee	
Appeal Dismissed	5
Appeal Upheld	1
Appeal Against Assessment (AAA) – College Appeals Committee	
Appeal Dismissed	3
Appeal Upheld	1
Informal Review of Assessment Resolution	1
Discipline/Plagiarism Meeting Case School Level	
Student Found Not Guilty	5
Show Cause Outcome	
Show Cause Approved by SPC	8
Show Cause Rejected by SPC	4
Email/Phone Advice Given	30
Singapore Institute of Management Cases	3
TOTAL	274
Student Cases Opened During Last Quarter	233
Student Cases Closed During Last Quarter	227

RUSU GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATION & SERVICES

RUSU's operations are supported by the Governance, Administration and Finance staff. Some key projects during this period include:

- » Negotiation and finalisation of the 2016 RMIT/RUSU Deed agreement
- » Submission of the 2015 SSAF Activity Reports for RMIT
- » Assisting and resourcing RUSU student representatives in meetings with RMIT University
- » Regular Meetings with RMIT University and Property Services
- » Negotiation and planning regarding RUSU Realfoods Bundoora Café for 2016
- » Planning and development of Finance, Governance & Administration components of the 2016 student representative induction
- » Legal Responsibilities of Board Members training delivered to SUC members by Justice Connect
- » Updating the Finance Made Easy Manual for RUSU student representatives and staff. Finance made Easy Induction training provided to SUC members by RUSU's external financial consultant and RUSU Finance staff
- » Development of the 2016 RUSU budget in accordance with the RUSU funding agreement and SSAF grant requirements
- » Finance Standing Committee meetings held including reporting on the organisation-wide RUSU Compliance checklist
- » Administrative and payroll tasks associated with terminating the 26 outgoing elected student representatives and setting up systems for the 26 incoming elected student representatives
- » Providing advice to the RUSU management on IT related issues.
- » Providing first point of contact Student Rights advice for RMIT students (both on shore and off shore)
- » Conducting Probity checks for incoming SUC members
- » Delivering Student Rights volunteer training
- » Sending student representatives to RMIT Appeals Committees.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

RUSU SSAF FUNDING 2015

RUSU Funding from RMIT for 2015 is made up of the following:

- » \$2,270,498 (Base grant) and
- » \$553,500 (SSAF Committee Grants) and
- » \$36,483 (One off special payment for 2015 – non-SSAF)
- » **2015 TOTAL GRANT: \$2,860,481**
- » **2015 GRANT RECEIVED TO DATE: \$2,860,481**
- » **SSAF Component of 2015 Grant: \$2,823,998 (for SSAF reporting purposes)**

The 2016 RMIT/RUSU Deed Agreement has been signed. The 2016 grant was received as a lump sum payment in February. This upfront payment will enable RUSU to generate additional income to supplement the grant.

In order to meet legislative requirements, the RUSU financial reports match expenses with "allowable items". Please note that Table 1 below is based on SSAF Allowable items and expenditure of SSAF funds on these areas. It categorises the SSAF expenditure from the Base grant and SSAF Committee projects into the allowable items. This table does not include activities and services funded by non-SSAF expenditure.

RUSU also receives some funding from other sources. While some of the activities funded through these sources are reported on in the narrative section of this quarterly report, due to the overlap with other representative, advocacy, administrative, governance and publicity functions of RUSU, expenditure on these projects is not included in the expenditure reported below as it is not SSAF funded.

Table 2 reports on the specific grants approved by the SSAF Committee.

RUSU is committed to continuous improvement of our financial systems to ensure we both work within our budget provisions as agreed through our funding agreement and to satisfactorily achieve our annual audit of statutory accounts by a registered company auditor.

Overall Result 2016

As outlined in the table below RUSU spent the entire \$2,270,498 of the base grant and \$542,325 of the SSAF Committee grants on SSAF Allowable items.

RUSU underspent on our 2015 SSAF Committee grants (\$553,500) by \$11,175. RUSU is seeking permission to roll these funds (which are held in RUSU's bank account) over into 2016. These funds would be spent on SSAF allowable items and reported on in 2016 reports.

**TABLE 1: RUSU SSAF GRANT EXPENDITURE ON ALLOWABLE ITEMS:
1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2015**

Allowable Item	Item Description	YTD Expenditure (SSAF Funded)
Giving students information to help them in their orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation specific events • Re-Orientation Events 	\$42,173
Caring for children of students	Nil	\$0
Providing legal services to students	Nil	\$0
Promoting the health or welfare of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All activities and events from advocacy and welfare collectives: Queer, Womyn's, Post-Graduate, Environment, Welfare, Education • Campaigns, events, honorariums, programs, marketing • All Compass Centre, programs and staff • Healthy Eating SSAF Grant 	\$259,655
Helping students secure accommodation	Nil	\$0
Helping students with their financial affairs	Nil	\$0
Helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All activities and events from International student department and International Support SSAF Grant 	\$34,347
Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers	Nil	\$0
Helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents	Nil	\$0
Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction programs/Student Representative Professional Development • Volunteer Program + program staffing • Student Engagement Officer • Student Union Council Elections • Secretariat Honorariums • All of SUC campaigns 	\$361,526
Providing libraries and reading rooms (other than those provided for academic purposes) for students	Nil	\$0
Supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMITV operations, honorariums, special projects, productions, training, website • RMIT Flagship Program • Catalyst magazine operations, student honorariums, publication (online and print) • Communications/Graphic Designer Staff 	\$195,869

**TABLE 1: RUSU SSAF GRANT EXPENDITURE ON ALLOWABLE ITEMS:
1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2015 (CONTINUED)**

Allowable Item	Item Description	YTD Expenditure (SSAF Funded)
Providing food or drink to students on a campus of the higher education provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus specific events and marketing (all campuses) • RUSU Realfoods 	\$154,685
Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major events and intervarsity recreational activities and competitions • Activities and Events Collective including administration, student honorariums, marketing and staff support 	\$169,626
Supporting an artistic activity by students	–	\$0
Supporting debating by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants paid to debating club are included with clubs reporting. 	\$0
Supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration, grants, equipment and support to student run clubs and societies • Clubs and Societies Staff and other support 	\$266,109
Advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration and Support staff members: Administration, Governance and Finance • 5 x Information counter staff and operations (including Bundoora East and SSAF Project) 	\$774,598
Advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Rights Officers • Student Advocacy materials, campaigns, research and training for staff and student representatives on committees 	\$554,235
	YTD SSAF Expenditure	\$2,812,823
	YTD 2015 SSAF Funds Received	\$2,823,998
	Underspend	\$11,175*



**TABLE 2: 2015 SSAF COMMITTEE GRANT FINANCIAL REPORT:
1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2015**

Program Title	Grant Amount	Expenditure Jan–March	Comments
RUSU Volunteer Program	\$155,000	\$165,878	
Compass – funding a welfare information and referral drop-in space	\$115,000	\$120,685	
RUSU Flagship Production (<i>Live On Bowen</i>) and RMITV training program	\$40,000	\$43,422	
RUSU International Student Support – conversation classes and city tours	\$27,000	\$23,646	
Bundoora Common Lunch Hour (including SRO and BE)	\$72,000	\$72,121	
RUSU Orientation Package	\$50,000	\$42,173	Note total expenditure was \$49,287, however the expenditure has been adjusted to account for \$7,114 in income received from Re-O and Mid-year O nite events.
RUSU Healthy Breakfast program (including nutrition and sustainability awareness)	\$60,000	\$51,661	
Postgrad Support Program (including SRO)	\$34,500	\$22,739	Postgrad Ball run at significantly reduced cost. Not all Semester 2 planned events were delivered. Gap in staff costs due to recruitment for SRO HDR role.
TOTAL	\$553,500	\$542,325	
TOTAL UNDERSPEND		\$11,175	

* Note the \$11,175 underspend is specifically from the SSAF Committee grants as outlined below.

RUTSU
RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION