



# RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION INCORPORATED

2022 Annual Report (A0114140A)

**RUSU**  
RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

# A MESSAGE FROM THE 2023 RUSU PRESIDENT



**Beth Shegog**  
RUSU President



**Mark Morante**  
RUSU General Secretary

It has been an incredible beginning to 2023, seeing how our student community is flourishing and thriving as we head back towards a fully in-person campus.

I am proud to report that RUSU achieved some significant milestones in 2022. Our primary goal was to return student life to campus, and I'm delighted to say that we very much succeeded in that area. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, RUSU came back in 2022 bigger and better than ever, providing students with a wide range of events and support, engaging students in campaigns, elevating RUSU clubs and doing what needed to be done to build a sense of community and connectedness in a post pandemic world.

Introducing new events was a significant achievement in 2022, such as Eid Festival and Band Night. These events were a huge success, bringing together students from different backgrounds and providing a platform for them to showcase their talents and cultural heritage.

Coming out of the pandemic, we saw how important it was to bring life back to the outer campuses. We endeavoured and achieved in creating an increase of student life in Bundoora campuses through expanding events and activating student spaces, such as building 204 which became a hive of activity.

We recognised that students have been doing it tough financially and emotionally after lock-down, and that's why our welfare service Compass has been crucial. We are proud to report that we reached over 10,000 students through Compass and Compass outreach, providing them with essential support, advice, and resources to help them through these challenging times.

Our 'Let's Get Consensual' campaign weeks were also a significant highlight of the year-engaging thousands of students in the importance of

consent, respectful relationships, health, and wellbeing, through a range of fun and thought-provoking activities. These activities have had a significant impact in affecting change in RMIT reporting procedures.

Keeping the RUSU machine running is very much dependent on the RUSU volunteer program. It was fantastic to have volunteers back in person in 2022, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and dedication. Without our volunteers, we wouldn't have been able to achieve the success we have this year.

RUSU Departments played a pivotal role in supporting students from diverse backgrounds back to campus in 2022. Providing valuable support and resources, and delivering various events, workshops, and spaces for students to connect and empower one another. All of which could not be achieved without the hard work of your RUSU Representatives.

Finally, I'm proud to say that RUSU successfully returned all our services and events to campus during 2022. This was no small feat, and I want to thank everyone who played a part in making this happen. Overall, it's been an incredibly enormous year, but I'm thrilled with the progress we've made, and I'm excited to see what the future holds for RUSU and RMIT students.

Our 2022 accomplishments would not have been possible without our elected student representatives, RUSU staff, student volunteers and RUSU club leaders. On behalf of RUSU I would like to thank them for all of their dedication, support and hard work in 2021.

**Beth Shegog**

President,  
RMIT University Student Union

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

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

# RUSU HIGHLIGHTS 2022

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

## RUSU Events

**40,000+** at all RUSU Events –  
**ATTENDANCE** including free lunches & social events



**105**

RUSU ticketed social & departmental events



**7,367**

ticketed attendees

### EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome Bash, Band Night, Boat Cruise, End of Exams Parties, Fashion Industry Night, Women's & Queer Department Nightclub Events.

### SPECIAL RUSU EVENTS

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



### SPECIAL EVENT

**Eid Street Festival:**  
a collaboration with RMIT Islamic Society

## ORIENTATION

**2,000**

students attended RUSU Orientation events



**700**

students attended Welcome Bash (returning post-COVID) feat. headliner DJ Benson



**400+**

students attended Band Night at Storey Hall feat. Slowly Slowly, Stellie, Lipstero & Terra Rouge

**12** RUSU Flagship Orientation Events across all campuses

## DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

**100+** departmental events/activities delivered



### International Students

1,063 student attendances at 41 Food with Friends events (lunches and dinners).



### Women's / Welfare

**Let's Get Consensual Week** promoting safe sex & consent.  
**International Women's Day** social event & rally.



### Queer Pride Week

celebrations on all campuses. 2 large queer mixer events + 2 women's mixer collaborations.



### Sustainability

RUSU workshops and bike servicing. **Free organic fruit and vegies** pop up market.

### Disabilities & Carers

**Shut Up and Study Sessions** - tailored neurodiverse students. RUSU Retreat Room ran for total 5 weeks.

### VE

19 free lunch events delivered 200+ students. 3 VE focused social events. Collaboration with the RMIT **Gender Justice Project**.

### Postgrads

3 Postgrad social events. **Sit and Study** events: 100+ students attended 7 events (postgrad & undergrad).

### Indigenous

Worked with RMIT Creative, Ngarara Willim to support the delivery of the **Solidarity Art Project**.

# RUSU HIGHLIGHTS 2022

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

## Free Food



**80,000+**  
**FREE MEALS** across all RUSU  
departments & events

### FREE LUNCHES PROGRAM

**30,000+**  
SERVES

**100**

Events



### RUSU HEALTHY BREAKFAST

**47,000+**  
SERVES



**23**  
weeks



**4**  
campuses

### RUSU WELFARE ON WHEELS



**1,850** students  
reached

**18**

Events

**3**

Campuses

### COMPASS MATERIAL SUPPORT

**229**

Compass Vouchers  
provided

**953**

Compass Cupboard  
accessed

**600+**

Compass Bundoora Free  
Veggie program accessed



### REGULAR FREE FOOD POP UPS

**Free organic fruit and vegies**  
pop up market during  
sustainability week.

**Free fresh fruit** distributed at  
Chill & Grill during semester 2.

RUSU Bundoora partnered with  
Unicare to distribute **free groceries**  
at the free weekly lunches.

# RUSU HIGHLIGHTS 2022

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

## Advocacy, Representation & Welfare

**28** Elected RUSU Student Representatives

**13** RUSU SUC's (Board Meetings)

**42** Weekly Secretariate Executive Meetings

**RMIT Board/committee, executive level meetings** sat on by RUSU representatives.

**Students voted** in the RUSU annual election. Highest voter turn-out on record.

**34**

**5,000**



RUSU was a strong student voice in **3 RMIT policy suite reviews**

1st AGM as an incorporated association. **158 students attended**

## CAMPAIGN WINS



RUSU successfully advocated for changes to the way the University case **manages and investigates formal reports of sexual assault** and sexual harm.



RUSU & NUS Queer Department nationwide **Anti-Deadnaming campaign** attracted the support of over 2,000 university students.



New city campus **Women's Room** and upgraded **Queer Room**.

**519** **NEW** student rights cases supported

RUSU Student Rights volunteers attended

RUSU Student Liaison Officers triaged / supported

**39** hearings

**956** students

## RUSU INFO COUNTERS

In-person advice / info



**3,459** students triaged and supported

**1,840** student email queries addressed (non-student rights)

**10,000+** **STUDENTS REACHED**

via **Compass Welfare Drop in Centre**, Compass Cupboard and welfare outreach events

**1,925**

students accessed Compass drop-in services

**8,500+**

students reached via outreach events

## OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS STUDENTS REACHED:



Friends IRL



Stress Less Week



Compass Marketplace



RUOK Day

# RUSU HIGHLIGHTS 2022

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

## Clubs & Societies

# 79

**AFFILIATED CLUBS**

**4** Newly affiliated clubs

- AFRICANS AT RMIT
- GREEN BUILDING STUDENT ASSOCIATION
- RMIT DRAWING STUDIOS
- SOCIAL WELLBEING PROJECT ALLIANCE

## CLUBS

**54** Academic

**13** Cultural

**6** Social

**3** Political

**3** Spiritual

## TOTAL CLUB GRANTS

322 totalling

**\$157,690**

## WELCOME GRANTS

39 totalling

**\$17,500**



# 59

## RUSU Clubs

participated in orientation festival events



# 150

## Club Executives

attended club executive mixer events

## Volunteers

# 160

**RUSU STUDENT VOLUNTEERS**  
new and returning

**116 NEW VOLUNTEERS**  
formally inducted

**20 RMIT STUDENTS**  
employed as casuals



## STUDENT LIFE AWARDS

**107** nominations

**14** categories  
(3 new in 2022)

**25** student/student club winners



## TRAINING ATTENDEES

**164**  
**students**  
attended  
accredited  
trainings

**78**  
Food Safety  
Handling

**9**  
YMHFA for  
Compass

**77**  
Responsible  
Service of Alcohol

**8**  
RUSU Student  
Hearing

# RUSU HIGHLIGHTS 2022

RUSU ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

## Communication & Media

**4,269**  
**RUSU 2022**  
FINANCIAL MEMBERS

**4,296** Newsletters Subscribers

**68** RUSU Member Newsletters

**6,233** Instagram Followers

**25,069** Facebook Followers



**5 CATALYST**  
EDITIONS

Bedroom Pop, Cult,  
Future Tense, Everywhere,  
Curtain Call

**7,000**  
COPIES DISTRIBUTED



**3**

elected student  
editors and diverse  
team of contributors



**97**

students attended  
3 Catalyst launch /  
social events



**CATALYST**  
DIGITISATION

RUSU commenced  
uploading current issues  
of Catalyst directly to  
the RMIT Library  
catalogue in 2022

**655** RMITV  
MEMBERS



**12,615** Website Visitors

**917** Instagram Followers

**2,933** Facebook Followers

Volunteers across the year  
on 'in-person' productions

**265**

- Fruit Salad
- The Cutting Room Season 1 & 2
- 1700 Season 1, 2 & 3
- Graveyard Shift
- **Wait... We're Live? Flagship Show**  
*First live studio audience since  
pre-COVID (20,000 viewers)*



**211** Reviews

**60** In-review writers

**70**

People attended  
RMITV training  
across **6 workshops**

# 2022 RUSU GOVERNANCE UPDATE

In 2022 RUSU was focused on returning as many of our events, programs and services back to campus in a safe and sustainable way, while also catering to the needs of students who were still studying from home or abroad or studying in hybrid mode. Returning vibrant student life to campus and maximising the student experience was our goal. We stretched ourselves (and our budgets) to our limits and exceeded our expectations across the board. 2022 was a massive success for RUSU!

2022 saw the highest level of SSAF funding for RUSU since the SSAF legislation was introduced and the highest level of activity and engagement at RUSU in many, many years. This 2022 Annual Report showcases our accomplishments and activities across all areas of RUSU and all campuses. From a governance, compliance and health and safety perspective, returning operations from being primarily delivered remotely or in hybrid mode to being delivered primarily in-person and on-campus was a significant challenge and an intensive process. RUSU management is grateful to our staff, elected student representatives and partners for all of their flexibility and dedication to making the shift, a safe and successful one!

## KEY 2022 GOVERNANCE UPDATES

### RUSU Incorporation Project

Having formally incorporated in late 2021, RUSU had a range of governance, compliance and administrative tasks to undertake in 2022 as part of this transition between the two structures. This included a significant overhaul of the RUSU Regulations [www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/regulations](http://www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/regulations) and updates of internal policies and procedures.

RUSU held our first Annual General Meeting as an incorporated association. This was held in-person and on campus on May 12, 2022. 158 students attended (132 RUSU financial members (with AGM voting rights) and 26 RMIT students (non-voting).

### RUSU Brand Refresh

In 2022 RUSU embarked on a refresh of our logo and branding, including updates to reflect our incorporated status. This was rolled out for the start of 2023.

### RUSU Annual Elections

After two years of online only elections, elections were held in hybrid mode in 2022, with online voting (remotely or on-campus) and on-campus campaigning. Exactly 5000 students voted in the RUSU annual election which is the highest voter turn-out on record.

### New Disabilities & Carers Officer and Department Launched

In 2021 RUSU successfully created an elected Disabilities & Carers Officer Bearer role and new RUSU department. In 2022 this department was launched. Congratulations to the Disabilities & Carers department for a very successful first year.

### RUSU Student Union Council – By Students –For Students

RUSU is governed by a team of 28 annually elected student representatives, who form the RUSU Student Union Council (SUC). Induction and training was provided to the members of the SUC to ensure adequate financial literacy and an understanding of the legal responsibilities as members of the governing council.

The list of student representatives is included in the Financial Audit Report. Monthly Student Union Council Meetings were held in person and online. Records of attendance at SUC meetings is available on the RUSU website at: [www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/suc2022](http://www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/suc2022)

### Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC)

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

### RUSU and RMIT Deed Agreement

The bulk of RUSU funding is SSAF fees which are provided to RUSU through an Annual Funding Deed Agreement with RMIT. This Deed outlines governance and reporting requirements attached to the funding and RUSU's operations. RUSU complied with all of the requirement of the funding Deed in 2022.

### External Affiliations

RUSU continued to be affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS) and the Council of Postgraduate Associations (CAPA). These peak student groups played an important role lobbying and advocating for students interests during 2022.

# RUSU FINANCIAL UPDATE

## Your student fees at work @ RUSU

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

In 2022 RUSU received a total of **\$4,158,570** in SSAF fees through RMIT. This is the largest amount of SSAF Income RUSU has received since SSAF was introduced. In 2021 RUSU had an SSAF funding underspend of **\$144,925**, due to some events and programs not being able to be delivered due to Covid lock-downs and campus closures. It was mutually agreed with RMIT that RUSU would roll these funds into 2022, to spend on free food, events and RUSU club development. The total SSAF budgeted and spent by RUSU in 2022, including the funds rolled over from 2021, was **\$4,303,495**.

The 2022 grant from RMIT was received as a lump sum payment in late December 2021 for the 2022 year ahead. This upfront payment enabled RUSU to maximise opportunities to generate additional income through strategic investments. RUSU continued to engage Advisersure as investment advisors to assist with the management of our investments in accordance with the approved RUSU Financial Investment Strategy.

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

## RUSU Funding & Income 2022

RUSU funding from RMIT (SSAF funds) for 2022 is made up of the following:

Base grant	\$3,231,570
SSAF Student Priority Grants	\$927,000
<b>2022 TOTAL SSAF GRANT</b>	<b>\$4,158,570</b>

### Base Grant (SSAF Funded)

The RUSU base grant covers all of our core operations and most RUSU staffing, student representative and administrative costs. Our base grant in 2022 was **\$3,231,570**. All of these base grant funds were spent in 2022 on SSAF allowable items.

### Student Priority Grants (SSAF Funded)

In 2022 RUSU received, **\$927,000** in SSAF Committee 'Student Priority' grants, to provide a wide range of services and events run by students, for students. This included: free food and grocery vouchers, student events, Compass Welfare Services (outer campuses), Club grants, RUSU volunteer program, and specialist support for vocational education and postgraduate/ HDR students. A further **\$144,925** in SSAF was retained from unspent 2021 SSAF grants and used to fund RUSU Clubs development and campus events and free food.

In summary, in 2022 we received the following Student Priority Grants:

\$927,000 (Student Priority Grants) plus
\$144,925 (2021 carry over, Student Priority grants).
<b>Total: \$1,071,925</b>

In 2022 RUSU spent the full \$1,071,925 SSAF student priority grants.

## RUSU Other Income

Additional sources of RUSU income include: investment income, 2022 RUSU financial memberships, Realfoods Cafe income and event ticket sales. Interest from investments in 2022 was **\$229,551**.

## Finance Summary 2022

Total Revenue in 2022	\$4,729,488
Total Expenses in 2022	(\$4,633,810)
Surplus	\$95,678
*Other comprehensive income for the year:	(\$275,765)
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss):</b>	<b>(\$180,087)</b>

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

The financial audit for financial year 1 January to 31 December 2022 was conducted by independent auditors BDO and will be presented at the Annual General Meeting on 11 May 2023.

## 2022 Financial Position

In 2022 RUSU ran at an operating surplus (before income tax expenses) of **\$95,678**. However, after taking into account losses or investments, the total comprehensive income for RUSU for the financial year was a deficit of **\$180,087**.

**Table 1: RUSU SSAF Grant expenditure on Allowable Items - 1 Jan –31 Dec 2022  
(Base and Competitive Grants – for Government Acquittal)**

RUSU complied with the terms of our funding deed with RMIT and the SSAF legislation in 2022.

Allowable Item	Item Description	Expenditure YTD
Providing food or drink to students on a campus of the higher education provider;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RUSU Realfoods</li> <li>RUSU Free Healthy Breakfast initiative</li> <li>RUSU Welfare on Wheels</li> <li>Free food programs</li> </ul>	\$90,794
Supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RUSU events (on campus and online) and recreational activities and competitions (includes free lunch program)</li> <li>Activities &amp; Events department including administration, student honorariums, marketing and staff support</li> </ul>	\$667,079
Supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administration, support and grants for RUSU student clubs.</li> </ul>	\$476,897
Promoting the health or welfare of students;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities and events from advocacy and welfare departments: Queer, Women's, Welfare, Indigenous, Disabilities &amp; Carers.</li> <li>Campaigns, events, honorariums, programs, marketing</li> <li>All campuses Compass programs and staff</li> <li>International Student Support Grant</li> </ul>	\$487,691
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"> <li>Induction programs/student representative professional development</li> <li>RUSU Volunteer program</li> <li>Student Life Awards RUSU</li> <li>RUSU elected representative support and engagement</li> </ul>	\$451,732
Supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RMITV operations, production and training</li> <li>Catalyst magazine (online and print)</li> <li>RUSU Communication student engagement</li> </ul>	\$360,020
Advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RUSU risk and financial governance, administration, and operations</li> <li>RUSU operations including information counters at all major campuses</li> </ul>	\$822,462
Advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RUSU Student information and general enquiries service (in-person and online)</li> <li>Student rights advocacy and case management support</li> <li>Student advocacy campaigns</li> <li>Contribution to University decision-making and student policy development and review</li> <li>Bundoora East RUSU Program</li> <li>Postgraduate Support Grant</li> <li>RUSU Department activities and campaigns for Education, Vocational Education, Sustainability &amp; Postgraduate</li> </ul>	\$871,673
Giving students information to help them in their orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RUSU Orientation activities and events</li> </ul>	\$75,147
	<b>YTD SSAF Expenditure</b>	<b>\$4,303,495</b> (inclusive 2021 roll over)
	<b>2022 SSAF Funds Received (including 2021 roll over)**</b>	<b>\$4,303,495</b> (inclusive 2021 roll over)

\*\*In 2021 RUSU had an SSAF funding underspend of \$144,925 due to COVID closures impacting some program delivery. It was mutually agreed with RMIT that RUSU would roll these funds into 2022 and allocate \$117,527 of these funds to RUSU Club expenditure and \$27,398 to Campus events boost.

**Note:** RUSU received \$4,158,570 in new SSAF grants in 2022. With the \$144,925 carried over, our 2022 SSAF total funding was \$4,303,495

**Table 2 - SSAF Student Priority Grants Expenditure Report -  
1 January to 31 December 2022**

Project	Exp (31/12/22)
RUSU Bundoora East	\$24,212
RUSU Club Grants (including Orientation Club Grants)	\$192,288
RUSU Compass - Outer Campuses & programs (not staff)	\$71,516
RUSU Free Food, Events, Campus Life (All campuses & including orientation activities)	\$360,871
RUSU Free Healthy Breakfasts	\$90,794
RUSU International Support	\$25,389
RUSU Postgrad Support	\$50,938
RUSU RMITV Flagship	\$45,497
RUSU SSCC Support	\$10,716
RUSU Student Life Awards	\$18,157
RUSU Volunteers	\$181,547
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,071,925</b>

**Note:** Grant total includes roll over funds from 2021 for Clubs and events.

# RUSU

RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

For students, by students.

[www.rusu.rmit.edu.au](http://www.rusu.rmit.edu.au)