

# RUSU

RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

**HAVE YOUR SAY**

**ANNUAL ELECTIONS**

# 2020

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**Candidate Speeches**

# Annual Elections 2020

The RMIT University Student Union (RUSU) provides all RMIT students with events, representation and support. RUSU is the only 100% independent body at RMIT and is governed by 25 elected student representatives that comprise the Student Union Council – RUSU is run FOR students BY students. We are here to ensure every student's university experience extends beyond lectures and assignments. Every week RUSU's purple colours are out and about with free food and fun. RUSU has over 80 clubs and societies that students can join – clubs may be political, spiritual, academic, cultural and social. While RUSU is the heart of student life, RUSU is also here for students when they need help – we have an extensive student advocacy service, information counters, offer a welfare drop-in centre and keep safe spaces on campuses.

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## About the Elections

Voting at these elections will be via an online method by the optional preferential and optional proportional representation methods. Optional proportional representation will be the method of counting for those positions where more than one candidate is to be elected.

**Voting will open at 9am Monday 21 September and close at 2pm Friday 25 September.**

# How to vote

Eligible voters will receive an email from the RUSU Returning Officer with the subject line **"RMIT University Student Union (RUSU) 2020 Annual Election - Voting Link"** on Monday 21 September. An individual voting link will be provided in this email. Open this link to access a page with all of the positions being contested.



**2020 RMIT University Student Union Annual Elections**

**Student Union Council**

- [Voting Instructions](#)
- [Election for General Secretary](#)
- [Election for Education Officer](#)
- [Election for Welfare Officer](#)
- [Election for Activities Officer](#)
- [Election for Sustainability Officer](#)
- [Election for Clubs and Societies Officer](#)
- [Election for Queer Officer](#)

**Student Union Council - Election for General Representatives**

- [Election for General Representatives](#)

**Campus Representatives**

- [Voting Instructions](#)
- [Election for City Coordinator](#)
- [Election for City Representative](#)

**National Union of Students delegates**

- [National Union of Students delegates](#)

'Start by clicking 'Voting Instructions' at the top of the page which will give you information on how to vote. Once you have read this click 'Proceed.'

You may cast your vote on the **Student Union Council** page in two ways.

**Voting for a team:** If you wish to vote for all candidates from a team you can do so by selecting the team of your preference at the top of the page. Simply click the box next to the team of your preference.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Above the line
<input type="checkbox"/>	Together
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!

**Voting for individual candidates:** If you wish to vote for candidates from different tickets for different positions, leave the 'Vote for a team' section blank and click the box next to your preferred candidate for each position listed on the page. If you make a mistake you undo the number by clicking the box again.

Once you have completed your votes go to the bottom of the page and click the 'Proceed to vote confirm page' button and then select 'Submit Vote'. You will then be taken to the General Representative Ballot.

For **General Representative** you may either vote for a team or for candidates individually.

**Voting for a team:** To vote for a team click the box next to the team of your preference.

**Voting for individual candidates:** If you wish to vote for candidates individually firstly click the box next to the candidate, you wish to vote for with your first preference. You may then continue numbering as many of the remaining candidates as you wish in ascending order by clicking the box next to each candidate's name.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chris Giddings (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Cormac Mills Ritchard (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Hannah Robbins (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Josh Zawa (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Danny Loats (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Together	<input type="checkbox"/>	Akshay Jose (Together)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Liam Thompson (Together)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Huiting Chen (Together)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Meghana Balasaheb Karande (Together)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Morante (Together)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Zhichen Tang (Together)
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Chamath Samarakoon (Together)

Once you have completed your votes go to the bottom of the page and click the 'Proceed to vote confirm page' button and then select 'Submit Vote'.

If you are enrolled in a course at the City campus you will then be taken to the election for **Campus Representatives**. Brunswick and Bundoora students will not see this ballot. To vote for these positions follow the instructions given for Voting for individual candidates on the first ballot.

The final ballot you will be shown is for **NUS Delegates**. To vote for these positions follow the instructions given for voting in the General Representative ballot.

**The Returning Officer is Gavin Ryan can be contacted at [rusureturningofficer@gmail.com](mailto:rusureturningofficer@gmail.com) should you have any questions about the voting process.**

# Policies



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## Together

**This year, we're back, and we've put together a team of new and old, fresh and experienced students. Many of our team have been program representatives, RUSU volunteers, or leaders in your clubs and societies with a diverse mix of local and international students. These students are now ready to take it to the next level and be your voice at RUSU.**

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone, especially for students. With the university sector being hard hit by the ongoing pandemic, and a shadow of doubt cast over the future of student service funding, never has the importance of an experienced RUSU leadership been more evident.

Together has been a strong advocate for issues affecting students, securing victories with census date extensions, removing fails from GPAs and transcripts, and getting the university to implement \$15m worth of financial hardship grants for struggling students.

Our candidates have also led the way in helping students more directly, delivering \$100,000 in free grocery vouchers to students and over 8000 free meals to those in student accommodation.

In 2021, Together is ready to continue delivering for students. With a fantastic team lined up, full of ideas and passionate about improving university life, you can't go wrong with Together.

Together offers the accountable, active representation that the students of RMIT deserve.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!



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## Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!

**We need a fighting student union to defend against the massive attacks on our education. The Liberals want to cut \$770 million from higher education, implement massive fee hikes (up to \$43,500 for an arts degree!) and cut government support from failing students. At the same time RMIT have cut hundreds of staff, are gutting student services and cutting courses.**

Every candidate running with Student Fightback is an activist who has led fights to defend students' rights, resist attacks on our education and fight for social justice. We won't be cowed by the people in power or bow under pressure from management. We demand higher education be fully-funded and free for everyone (the \$270 billion the Liberals have put into the military could do this for 33 years!) and that international students be granted full rights and access to welfare. We will stand in solidarity with staff to resist course cuts and sackings, which will make our classes more overcrowded and our tutors more overworked – tax the rich and cut our Vice Chancellor's \$1.2 million salary instead! We will organise climate activism like the bushfire protests many of us helped organise at the beginning of the year, which mobilised 100,000 people across Australia, and we will actively support Black Lives Matter and social justice campaigns.

Vote Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes! for a union that will fight for students on campus and in the world at-large.

## General Secretary

### Jarred Armitage (Together)



I have worked for a number of trade unions, representing and advocating for workers in hospitality, finance and retail, and in that time, I've learnt that only a well-managed union can effectively represent their members.

A key requirement for a well-managed union is effectively managing the finances and I firmly believe that student money should be handled responsibly, spent efficiently, and reported transparently. I will deliver an accountable, honest, and efficient RUSU in 2021.

It's not all about money though. The role of General Secretary is responsible for convening meetings, developing processes, and ensuring the smooth execution of RUSU's day to day operations.

If elected, I will work hard to ensure your student union is operating as efficiently and effectively as possible, so that you can continue to enjoy great programs like the student rights advocacy, RUSU parties and well-funded Clubs & Societies. Together we can make sure that the post Covid-19 recovery does not mean leaving students behind!

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

### Ella Marchionda (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



I think the student union should be an activist body that fights for the rights of students in every instance. It is important that there are dedicated

left-wing activists in the union who can run campaigns against every attack on students, and to mobilise students as a fighting force in society against attacks on education and for social justice.

Currently students are facing some of the biggest attacks in years from both the government and RMIT University. The Morrison government's proposed fee hikes will see some degrees increased to up to

\$14,500 a year, whilst cutting funding to a number of degrees. Students will be made to pay more for their education than ever before. This is a fundamental attack on the right to education. I will fight against the neoliberal, for-profit model of universities, and fight for free education for all. If the government can spend up to \$29 billion each year on fossil fuel subsidies and \$38 billion on the military, it can easily fully fund education.

Alongside this I will ensure the union fights for fee relief for all students, and that the union runs campaigns to maintain the rate of JobSeeker and JobKeeper – students should not have to worry about being able to pay rent or whether they can afford to eat their next meal or not. To do all this, the union must run serious activist campaigns.

Students and staff are also facing serious attacks from RMIT and our vice chancellor. The university is crying poor - sacking hundreds of staff, cutting courses, putting our tutors under stress with massive class sizes. forcing them to take on hours of unpaid labour to mark our papers. Meanwhile, our Vice Chancellor Martin Bean earns around \$1 million a year. I will ensure RUSU stands in full solidarity with staff under attack and stands up to RMIT management and the Vice Chancellor.

I will also make sure the union is actively anti-racist, stands against sexism and homophobia, and fights for climate justice. I am currently actively involved in anti-racist campaigns, and have been heavily involved in many campaigns fighting for climate justice. I will ensure the union leads campaigns around these issues.

If you want to resist the mass attacks students are facing at the moment, vote Student Fightback – Stop Uni Cuts! to put left-wing activists in the union who will mobilise students and reignite radical student unionism.

## Education Officer

### Cormac Mills Ritchard (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



Take the \$270 billion the federal government are spending on the military and you could make higher education free and fully-funded for 33

years. Instead, the Liberals are cutting \$770 million from universities, launching massive fee hikes and making it so failing students will lose government support. At the same time, RMIT management is trying to cut \$200 million so they can keep their projected profits. Our vice chancellor, Martin Bean, takes home \$1.2 million a year while students live off poverty wages, paying greater and greater fees, and tutors are sacked, underpaid and given only 10 minutes to mark our papers. You'd be hard pressed to find a student who isn't in perpetual torment struggling from one deadline to the next for a future where we're unemployed, crushed by debt and faced with the climate crisis bearing down on us.

Our society, from university to the workplace, is run for profit. That means the only way we're going to get anything is by taking a stand and fighting for it. Over the past few years at RMIT, this is what I've done. I've organised in solidarity with staff to fight the job cuts that make our classes more overcrowded and our tutors more overworked. I set up RMIT Students Against Uni Cuts and RMIT Students for Climate Justice, through which I was one of the organisers for the Sack Scomo bushfire rallies at the beginning of the year that turned out 30,000 in Melbourne. And I put pressure on those running the student union (when all they were doing is putting out surveys) to call a mass meeting of over a hundred students to call out the Vice Chancellor and organise a campaign against his attacks on our education.

We are living through an unprecedented crisis, of catastrophic bushfires, pandemic and recession, but we are also living in times of unprecedented rebellion, as millions around the world stand up to fight against austerity and police racism. The sums being poured into welfare right now prove that the wealth exists to meet our needs. We need to raise a fight not only to

# Statements

defend students' rights and resist all of the attacks underway, but also to demand the future we deserve. That means we need a fighting student union, and Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes are the only ones who can provide that.

## Karan Mehta (Together)



Hello Everyone, I am Karan Mehta studying Master of Analytics.

I believe Education is the core reason we are all at university, so it's really important you have a strong representative who will fight and advocate for the quality and accessibility of your education.

I'm incredibly involved into RMIT student life right from volunteering for Indian Club and working consistently to ensure you get the university experience you deserve. I'm a RUSU volunteer, I've volunteered and worked at the RUSU chill and grills. I am the RMIT SEN club president, helping students facilitate their start up dreams.

The education sector is changing and adapting to the new challenges brought by the pandemic. It is absolutely crucial that student voices are heard now more than ever. Being involved in SSCC I have first hand experience on how student feedback can shape better course outcomes.

Together candidates have actively been involved to work with ELS, ARG, the heads of each College and the Education Portfolio to make a suite of achievements including - no fails on transcript, fee extensions for international students, extension of census date and so many more. I am proud to stand together with them and deliver for students in the coming year.

It is in this tradition of advocacy that I will continue in 2021. Students deserve a union that knows how to implement change at RMIT so that your experience at university is a fairer and more enjoyable one. I will continue to work on fee payment plans for international students. I want to Build a good Network of opportunities for local and international students. I believe that you should Never dream for success, work for it! And I think I am in the right direction for it.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

## Welfare Officer

### Jingyi Yin (Together)



The welfare and wellbeing of RMIT students is one of RUSU's top priorities. Students can find themselves to be highly vulnerable during their

education, and I'm here to give everyone a voice for both local and international students.

Together candidates were pioneers in running successful welfare campaigns like stress less week, RUOK day ,calm zone, compass marketplace and many more. These initiatives were continued virtually in the midst of remote learning ensuring that wellbeing of students are our biggest priority . I want to continue supporting students by providing emergency relief and food assistance when students need it most. I want to continue running successful together initiatives. I want to continue togethers passion for honest and interactive student mental health outreach.

Looking after your health is essential for your success at university. As Welfare Officer, I will work collaboratively with the university to advocate for more accessible counselling and online mental health support. I also want to continue to bring you great activities and workshops, and continue to make sure RMIT students have the much needed welfare services available and accessible.

I look forward to taking care of your welfare in 2021, but in order to do that, I need you to...

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

### Matthew Camilleri (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



Student loans, attacks on HECS, the climate crisis, job insecurity and rental stress – these issues have a massive effect on the mental health of students. Student

welfare services are constantly victim to fee cuts in pursuit of profit, while staff at RMIT are overworked and made unable to provide the support students need.

Meanwhile, RMIT continues to demand exorbitant fees from international students, who aren't provided with full rights and access to welfare. This is an intolerable situation, and we have to change it.

As Welfare Officer I will fight for student rights and services and organise students so we can use our collective power to defend these services and fight for an education system that's not run for profit and a future that isn't in doubt.

Along with the rest of Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes! I will fight to address the underlying causes of poor student welfare, not just the symptoms. As a student activist, I have the skills, experience and passion required to fight against RMIT's fee hikes and cuts to essential services. That means working in solidarity with staff to resist attacks from RMIT management and it means struggling for the demand that education be made free and fully-funded by the federal government. Vote for a student who will fight back with you.

## Activities Officer

### Siheng Luo (Together)



We all know that nothing compares to a RUSU party. 2020 has been a year that kept us away from interacting with our peers through parties and other fun

activities. In 2021, I will work to ensure that RUSU continues to run fantastic events such as themed club nights, pub crawls and booze cruises, to ensure that you get to go out for a night out with friends at an affordable price.

I am incredibly passionate about activities - I know that these opportunities to socialise and make friendships create the university experience. I want to run more culturally inclusive events, creating an even bigger Multicultural Festival with our clubs and societies when we are all on campus next year.

Next year I want to make up for the year we lost with even bigger and better parties. I hope to turn the RMIT after-dark space into a fortnightly pop up pub, so students can relax and socialise at a reasonable price. We also hope to

run even more fun on-campus daytime events across not just the city but all RMIT campuses!

If you want an exciting year packed full of volunteer opportunities, incredible parties and a ridiculous amount of fun, then make sure you...

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

**Casey Cook (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)**



The duty of a student union is to fight for every student's rights. We should be running student-led campaigns fighting to stop the current fee hikes as well as demanding free, quality education, standing up against racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, and standing in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movements happening around the world. Myself and the rest of the Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes team will be involved in reaching out regularly to students and be on the forefront of every battle fighting for better lives and a better world for students.

**Sustainability Officer**

**Xiaoyue Gui (Together)**



As students, we spend a lot of time envisioning our future, if anything, COVID has shown us that our future might not be as predictable as it seems.

As a leading institution, RMIT should be at the forefront of sustainable management and waste minimisation. A natural step after this would be to divest from fossil fuel companies and become carbon neutral. If elected, I will ensure that RMIT is acting as sustainably as it can be.

In 2017 RUSU re-opened Realfoods, our vegan, organic and fair-trade cafe. We have also created edible gardens at the City's Alumni courtyard and at Bundoora

West, and we aim to expand these to all other campuses in 2021. Together candidates have introduced RUSU Swap Shop clothing bins, edible gardens and have run multiple sustainability campaigns educating students about the importance of leading a sustainable lifestyle.

I envision 2021 to be the year that we advocate for a fossil free RMIT. The year that environmental clubs on campus are supported by their sustainability officer, and where we finally revive an RMIT Environmental Collective. I want to make sure RMIT has sustainable policies in place when students return to campus post -COVID.

Collectively, I want to see RMIT students making a real change in society. If elected as sustainability officer, I would aim to inspire my peers about what they could do in their own everyday lives to be more sustainable.

But to do all this I need you to...  
VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

**Eva Stogiannou (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)**



Hey Everyone! My name's Eva and I'm running for the Sustainability Officer in 2021. I believe a student union should advocate and fight for the

future of its students, not sit in the pocket of the university. RMIT is a corporation that prioritises profit over the planet. The facts are simple, we have 11 and a half years to alter the trajectory of the planet's extinction. The Australian fire season has already begun in NSW, California is burning, all while RMIT invests in the destructive fossil fuel industry.

The fight for climate justice and social justice go hand in hand. I want to see a union that leads the fight against climate change, advocates for the abolishment of offshore detention and the settlement of climate refugees, fights in solidarity with indigenous struggle and the rampant racism within Australia. Universities should be a space of change making, activism and direct action. Yet when the RMIT leadership is more invested in accumulating profit than the future of their own students, it's the student union that needs to take action.

As Sustainability Officer and candidate with Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes! I demand that RMIT divest from its investments in the fossil fuel and weapons manufacturing industries. I demand that we actively support and participate in campaigns fighting to end the destruction of our planet and people. I want RMIT to declare a Climate Emergency, to take legitimate steps in divesting from destructive industries and redirecting that money into sustainable opportunities and investments. We need to harness the potential power of the student union, we need to use it to stand up to those who would rather hike up our fees, cut our units and fire their staff than jeopardize their annual profit. Vote for Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes! for radical change in your student union.

**Clubs & Societies Officer**

**Chris Giddings (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)**



Student clubs and societies are an integral part of university life. RUSU has many vibrant and engaging student clubs that appeal to and involve hundreds

of students. As Clubs and Societies Officer, I will ensure the autonomy and success of these organisations.

Student clubs should be fully independent of the university and not reliant on boards of management for funding.

Vote for Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes for an independent student union that will stand up for the rights of clubs and societies.

**Vineet Prabhakar (Together)**



Hi, I am Vineet Prabhakar, studying Master of Account with CPA Australia.

I think that University life is all about an experience where we make friends, develop skills, and create

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memories that will stay with us long after graduation.

I believe clubs and societies play a large part in making university such a great experience as they provide opportunities to have fun, get together and gain valuable leadership experience to complement your studies. I have been an active RUSU volunteer for almost everything right from chill and grill to healthy breakfast. I am a volunteer council representative for chill and grill. I have been an executive member of the RMIT Indian Club and been actively involved in all activities. As a current club executive, I understand how important it is for clubs to be able to engage with each other, needing to properly understand their funding, and how huge events are possible for all clubs.

Over the past year I have seen Together deliver on more and easier access to club funding and grants. If elected as Clubs and Societies Officer I would endeavour to continue this.

I will ensure that clubs are easier to engage with and that they have the funding they need to run events that benefit not just club members, but all RMIT students.

I want to see more students involved in clubs so that they can be involved in campus life, enhance their time at RMIT and make new friends.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

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## Queer Officer

**Edoardo Brunetti and Roz Ward  
(Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)**



EDOARDO: The world is in crisis at the moment, and students and young people are feeling the brunt of it. Many of us are in insecure work or have been laid

off because of the pandemic, forced onto JobKeeper or JobSeeker. It's even worse for international students who have been completely left behind by the government. Our quality of education has diminished by the transition to online learning, and the university is intent on cutting costs while we're still paying full fees.

I want a student union that fights for the real issues that affect us. A activist student union that campaigns around things like free education, increased student welfare and more rights for international students. A student union that's prepared to stand up to the university administration and fight against cuts. A union that will stand 100% in solidarity with staff and oppose any job cuts at RMIT.

The RUSU Queer Department should also be publicly campaigning on issues that affect LGBTIQ students. We need to fight the federal government's proposed religious discrimination legislation, which would allow discrimination against LGBTIQ people in a plethora of settings under the guise of 'religious freedom'. We should stand in solidarity with activists in places like Poland and Hungary, resisting the far right – a threat to our rights both overseas and here. The Queer Department should be an activist space that fights for our rights. Vote 1 Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!

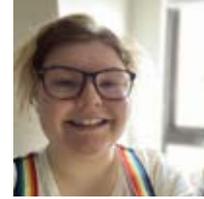


ROZ: The RMIT Queer Department should be a hub of student activism. Tackling homophobia and transphobia on and off campus is

more important than ever as the far right grow in confidence around the world. In Australia we are faced with a Liberal government who want to push back our rights. The struggles of LGBTI people for recognition, equality and liberation are also bound together with the urgent task we face to tackle climate change and stop environmental destruction.

I have been a queer activist since the 1990s, and as the co-founder of Safe Schools Coalition I know what it is like to organise and challenge those who think that LGBTI young people do not deserve a safe and inclusive education. The Murdoch Press and conservative politicians campaigned against me and Safe Schools, and the far right continue to attack me. I have never conceded anything under this pressure. If I am elected I will use the position to continue to stand up against all forms of inequality and work together with others to win a better world. Vote 1 Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!

**Matte Howard and Angelique Maloney  
(Together)**



The Queer Department is one of the most active RUSU departments, representing, advocating, and celebrating queer-identifying students.



Our names are Angelique Maloney (She/her pronouns) and Matte Howard (He/they pronouns), and we are running for the Queer Officer position.

Matte has worked very closely with the Together and the Queer community to deliver events such as Queer Pizza Mixers, Chocolate and Chat, Movies Nights, and continued to deliver these events online when COVID kept us inside. Angelique has been a very active member of this community and helped build-up those events, she is particularly passionate about community engagement and ensuring that structures are supportive for people of the Queer Community.

At the beginning of Matte's current Queer Officer role, they worked hard to ensure that the Queer Lounge Code of Conduct was updated to reflect the vision of a safe culture of community in spaces in RMIT.

One of our main priorities as the QOs will be to ensure that the queer rooms at the city, Brunswick and Bundoora are a safe place to relax, study, or hang out for queer students; and with recent circumstances, ensuring that online spaces are the same. We will fight for a larger queer lounge in the city, to aim for a space that can accommodate for the ever-growing queer community at RMIT.

Our goal as the Queer Officer for the next term is to ensure that the voice and concerns of the Queer Collective can be heard and addressed in the long run. Together we will ensure that the department continues to be active and inclusive, providing inclusivity for the queer students in RMIT and to expand and nurture the amazing queer community that we already have.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

## General Representatives (Five Positions Available)

### Chris Giddings (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



Student unions should be activist bodies. Right now, universities are facing restructuring that will raise fees enormously. Massive funding cuts for

every degree are being introduced by the government. Overworked lecturers and tutors are facing job losses and wage cuts.

We cannot fight this if the student union is only a service-providing body. We need activists, which is why I'm running with Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!

Back in 2014 when Tony Abbott wanted to introduce the deregulated, American-style university fees, it was activists who organised protests to fight back that made it political suicide for any politician to support the attack on tertiary education and the plan was defeated.

At RMIT, I've been involved in campaigns like Uni Students for Climate Justice and RMIT Students Against Uni Cuts. I was a founding member of RMIT Students Say Yes to Marriage Equality in 2017. I'm an experienced activist who takes issues seriously.

The student union should address social justice questions. We don't live in a bubble. Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, inequality and every other political issue have an impact on students and we need left-wing people in student unions who can be a voice to build activism on campus.

### Cormac Mills Ritchard (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



Our university is run for profit, and RMIT management want to make us pay so they can keep their billion-dollar property portfolio and \$500,000+

salaries. We need activists in the student union who can turn it into a fighting body

to defend students' rights and say that it's the rich executives, not students, who should pay for this crisis. RUSU should be spending some of its \$4.5 million budget to support activism, fight in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and take a serious fight against management to resist the \$200 million cuts, hundreds of sackings, course cuts and attacks on staff that leave our classes overcrowded and our tutors overworked. Vote for me and the rest of the Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes team to elect student unionists who aren't afraid to stand up to management.

### Hannah Robbins (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



I am running for student union because I believe that education should be accessible for everyone. The proposed plan to cut HECS for low

performing students will greatly impede many students' ability to access higher education. We should be providing more funding for students, wider support and fee relief, instead of cutting it back.

Alongside this, welfare is being cut for the unemployed student which will put their education at risk. No employment or welfare benefits makes study next to impossible.

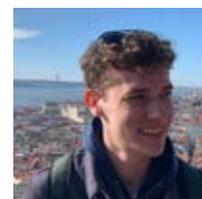
International students are treated like commodities, there has been no support for these students, displaced from work and stuck in Australia without any full access to welfare.

Government support should not be based on academic merit or employment status, and I believe the union should mobilise students against these cuts.

I aim for the university to be free from racism, sexism, homophobia and any other type of discrimination. The union should be doing everything in its power to end discrimination and provide a safe space for people of all identities. In order to achieve these goals and many more, it is important that campaigns are run by progressives. Progressive politics paves the way for a new landscape in which no one is left behind, no one is disadvantaged due to their socioeconomic status, and that everyone has access to **[Word limit**

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### Josh Zawa (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



I have chosen to run as a general representative in the hopes of being able to contribute as well as have a positive effect on the RMIT community. I would

like to be a person on campus who is actively working towards improving the student experience and someone who other students feel they can approach with concerns, questions, and/or just general guidance. I also intend to be someone who can act as a voice for RMIT students with more left-leaning views and currently feel their opinions aren't being adequately or fairly represented. Vote for me and the rest of my team Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!

### Danny Loats (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



There are few times more important than now to elect passionate, left-wing activists to the student union. Historic attacks are being waged

by RMIT executives and the Australian government against students. The quality and accessibility of our education is under threat. RMIT has already fired hundreds of staff, resulting in increased tutorial sizes and leaving students with less time with their tutors. We don't want a US-style university system that locks students into decades of debt. I'm prepared to organise and fight against these fee hikes on students' behalf.

Education should be a right for all students, irrespective of wealth. Students should be able to freely choose what they want to study without financial penalty. RMIT has billions of dollars in assets and should not be increasing our fees. I stand against the university's

exploitation of international students and believe that the welfare offered by the university should be increased.

We need activists committed to fighting

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for real change for students. This starts by electing progressives to the student counsel who are committed to holding university bosses to account. Vote for Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!

## Akshay Jose (Together)



I'm excited to announce that I am running for the position of General Representative/ President for the RMIT University Student Union

(RUSU).

In my time at RMIT, I have been involved with RUSU in different capacities. I've volunteered at Chill n' Grills, been involved in RUSU campaigns surrounding consent and well-being, represented students on the Academic Board, and most recently served as your RUSU Education Officer.

Being a social work student, mental health and wellbeing of individuals is something I am extremely passionate about. It has absolutely been a challenging year for a lot of students, especially studying from home. The impact isolation can have on one's mental health is significant.

Moving forward in a post-covid learning environment I wanna make sure students are feeling supported in their uni life.

As the President, I can ensure all students are receiving the best representation they deserve.

I stand together, I stand with you.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

For a diverse, passionate, and with a complete vision for RMIT – and we're not doing it alone, we're doing it Together with you.

## Liam Thompson (Together)



Communication is a massive concern at RMIT. Too often we get emails bombarding us with inappropriate information and not enough of the

essentials. If elected as your General Representative I will ensure you get the information you need in the format you want.

As a secretary of a RUSU club, I have had a fantastic opportunity to engage with the student body and know that I can ensure all students are receiving the best representation they can get. I believe that the union can do a better job at communicating their wins and new programs with members. If elected I would focus on making sure students are connected to the union, know what events are happening and that their concerns are heard on SUC.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

## Huiting Chen (Together)



I would just like to start by saying that I love RMIT and the community that surrounds it. Being new to Melbourne and starting a degree at the same time was

daunting but the amazing people of this institution especially those involved with RUSU made it far better. Throughout this year I have been immersed in the fantastic work that RUSU does, and nothing would make me prouder than to become a part of this legacy and have the opportunity to give back to RMIT students of all programs and backgrounds.

My personal goals as a student representative include continuing to pursue better and more equitable academic regulations and to remain easily contactable and act as a mouthpiece to relay all student concerns to the Student Union Council.

I would personally bring a great deal of organisation, passion and empathy to the role and would uphold the highest standards for myself and the union if entrusted with this responsibility.

Together, we can achieve great things for all RMIT Students. Together, we can deliver a higher standard of education across all campuses. Together, we will succeed.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

## Meghana Balasaheb (Together)



RUSU has been a big part of my time as a student, from creating fun social events, offering important welfare services, and even helping with academic problems. RUSU has always been there for me and now I would like to give back. If I am elected, I will make sure that RUSU continues to offer top notch services and supports the most vulnerable students at RMIT. Together we can make 2021 a great year for everyone!

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

## Mark Morante (Together)



University should be an enjoyable place for everyone. Students shouldn't have to struggle to get by, financially or with mental health issues. For students to achieve their best, they need to be provided with the best services, resources, and support right from day one.

I want to make sure that we are not ignored and issues affecting us are recognised and addressed. If elected I will work to make sure that issues such as the need for more mental health access are addressed.

I want to assist other elected student representatives within the student union to ensure that university is an enjoyable time for students and that they can get the most out of their education. A vote for me and Together is a vote for a healthier and more enriching university experience.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

## Zhichen Tang (Together)



As a General Representative I will be uniquely placed to represent RMIT's international community on the RMIT University Student Union

Council and the broader committees within RMIT University.

International students are a large and

significant part of the RMIT community and therefore deserve a strong voice within it. I want to make sure that we are not ignored and issues affecting us are recognised and addressed. If elected I will work to make sure that the free English workshops continue to run to ensure that International students are welcomed into university life and taught valuable skills with like-minded people. I want to assist other elected student representatives within the student union to build communities on campus that welcome international students and provide opportunities to meet new people and socialise. A vote for me and Together is a vote for a more welcoming and inclusive RMIT community.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

### Chamath Samarakoon (Together)



Campus life is one of the most important parts of the university. At university, you make friends you will keep for the rest of your life.

As a General Representative, I will support student life on campus by assisting wherever I am needed and doing the little jobs that are so important. I believe in fair and transparent student representation and will work hard to make the biggest possible impact for students.

My focus will be on supporting the Student Union Council in making campus life as exciting and engaging as possible.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

## City Coordinator

### Chetana Singh (Together)



My name is Chetana and I am a student studying Master of Landscape Architecture. I am standing for the position of city coordinator as I am extremely passionate about the wellbeing of students.

I take pride in saying that I take up leadership roles and complete them successfully.

The year 2020 has been very challenging for all of us including students and the University. With never ending lockdown and restrictions we are not sure when will we all be able to enjoy our campus life! RMIT and RUSU are trying their best to provide students a gist of student life through online events and activities. As the City Coordinator, my aim will be to work on re-introducing the University's City Campus- student life experience. Whether it's online or on campus, I will work to develop, organize and coordinate the students and clubs' activities.

With the experience of conducting many successful online events and helping students during the pandemic, my next step will be to encourage more students to engage in clubs and RUSU activities.

Secondly, I would like to engage, inspire, and support students in their academic journey in every possible way I can. I aspire to make the city campus a fun and safe space for students in a post COVID study environment.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

### Addy Arnot-Bradshaw (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)

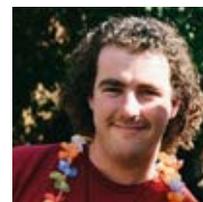


The RMIT city campus, in the heart of the CBD, has a legacy being a space for student protest. We will continue this legacy by persisting in our struggle

against sexism, racism, and climate change. While Covid-19 has stripped so many of us of our ability to spend time in the city, it hasn't stopped the liberal party's attempted attacks on higher to persist – this in the form of cuts to welfare (despite facing the harshest recession Australia has seen in years), cuts to university funding, to name only a few. As an activist I believe it is urgently important that student and staff interests are represented at every level within RMIT. If you agree, and want to join the student fightback campaign, vote for me and the rest of my team, Student Fightback - Stop Fee Hikes!

## City Representative

### Adam Steiner (Together)



It's no secret that I love a beer and a chat but unfortunately this year all of our social lives have suffered, that's why I want to create a vibrant and

welcoming social atmosphere next year. I want to throw more themed chill & grills and even bigger parties.

But this roll isn't all about parties, I also want to give students the chance to develop their skills and have them professionally recognised. I will ensure RUSU offers more training and volunteering opportunities.

As your City Representative, I will work hard to engage students, and will ensure that we have a welcoming social scene. I am excited to bring fresh skills and enthusiasm to the role in 2020, representing City students!

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

### Benjamin Golotta (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



All of us currently studying in Australia are facing a sustained effort to diminish the quality and accessibility of our education. It is vital that we fully use our

collective power to protect our education and the interests of students. If we don't, we will see further increases in university fees and further cuts to the funding for our education – we will pay far more for far less.

RMIT management has already laid a plan to further cut funding and resources for our library on campus. They plan to cut all permanent frontline library staff on the information desks, which means there will be no professionally trained librarians at the Swanston, Carlton, Brunswick or Bundoora libraries and no direct professional librarian advice for students or staff. They also plan to close the Makerspace despite frequent student engagement and have discussed completely removing the Library's physical print collection. This is

# Statements

unacceptable. Already suffering significant cuts, the library and its staff at the RMIT city campus have continued to prove to be an extremely valuable resource for students. Despite this management hopes to turn it into nothing more than another study space. It has never been clearer that RMIT management's interests are in direct conflict with and if allowed, they will continue to cut and restructure our education in the name of profit.

As City Campus Representative, I will help students and staff to resist any attempt to cut the student amenities even when we continue to pay more for our education. RMIT is one of the largest universities in Australia and as the student union we have a real opportunity to direct change on a scale larger than RMIT. As RMIT's most prominent campus we must lead by example and show students around Australia that we will not allow the government or the execs to make us pay far more for far less. The path ahead is clear, it is not in writing appeals to those who have an interest in eroding our education but in the solidarity of students and the willingness to act as a collective to demand a quality education. Only student activism can prevent the further damage to our education and win back what we have lost. Vote Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes! for an activist union.

## NUS Delegate (Seven Positions Available)

### Cormac Mills Ritchard (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)

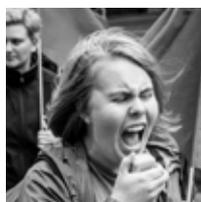


We are facing historic attacks to cut \$770 million from higher education while at the same time \$270 billion is poured into the military, \$29 billion into fossil

fuels subsidies and \$19 billion into racist police. We need activists in the National Union of Students who aren't afraid to challenge the system and can mobilise mass campaigns to fight for a better world. At the beginning of this year I and other activists from Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes organised the national Uni Students for Climate Justice bushfire protests which turned out 100,000 across the country and 30,000 in Melbourne. I've helped build campaigns against the homophobic, transphobic and sexist religious discrimination bill, and I've worked to build solidarity between RMIT staff and students against the massive attacks being launched by management that will cut staff, cut services and leave students paying higher fees for a worse education.

Student unions should be fighting bodies that defend students' rights inside and outside of the classroom, that means we need activists who want to seriously fight to end every injustice in society. Vote 1 Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes! for a fighting student union.

### Chris Giddings (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



Student unions should be activist bodies. Right now, universities are facing restructuring that will make fees more expensive. Massive funding cuts

for every degree are being introduced by the government. Overworked lecturers and tutors are facing job losses and wage cuts. Through the NUS, activist students have been able to make history. Student activists have used national positions to lead campaigns for LGBTI rights, refugee rights, climate activism and defending tertiary education.

When students and staff have been threatened with deportations, activists have been able to lead successful campaigns to let them stay. When Tony Abbott tried to deregulate and privatise universities, activists organised campaigns that made it impossible for this plan to go forward. When the marriage equality plebiscite was announced, activists used the NUS to organise vital rallies.

We don't live in a bubble. Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, inequality and every other political issue have an impact on students. We need left-wing student representatives who can be a voice to promote and build activism.

Electing activists to the National Union of Students is a crucial part of defending students and higher education against funding cuts and fee hikes! Vote 1 Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!

### Ella Marchionda (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)



Right now we're facing massive attacks on higher education at a national level, with the Liberals trying to cut \$770 million from university funding,

introduce fee hikes and pull financial support from failing students. To resist any of these attacks we need activists in the National Union of Students who are serious about mobilising students and making a serious fightback against all the ways our education is under attack right now.

The union should also be a fighting force around social justice issues, and organise campaigns in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, against sexism and homophobia and for refugee rights. The fight for climate justice should also be central to the union to fight around, as we continue to face a climate emergency caused by the global capitalist system destroying the planet. With the world in crisis, it's more important than ever we have radical left-wing activists in the union to make the union a fighting force in society.

Vote for Student Fightback - Stop Fee Hikes! for fighting student unions.

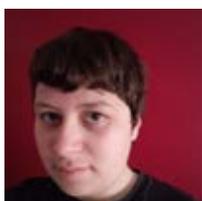
**Siobhan McGlynn (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)**



I am running with Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes! for a NUS Delegate position because I feel that the National Union of Students needs

to be more left wing. I think there are thousands of students at RMIT that do not feel represented in the NUS because it is so rarely radical. I would like to use this position to represent those students.

**Casey Cook (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)**



Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes! are the only radical activists on campus that are committed to fighting for student rights tooth and nail. We want to work with

activists just like us across the country to lead the fight against the Liberals. Help us do that by voting for us as NUS Delegates.

**Edoardo Brunetti (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)**



The National Union of Students is the peak representative body for tertiary education students in Australia. This year I've worked with the NUS to lead their national

campaign against attacks on education. RMIT Students deserve to have committed left-wing activists represent them within the NUS so vote Student Fightback - Stop Fee Hikes! For NUS Delegate.

**Belle Gibson (Student Fightback – Stop Fee Hikes!)**



I want to represent students at a national level, that means not being a left-wing independent voice within the National Union of Students.

Voting for Student Fightback - Stop Fee Hikes! means supporting the best education activists to help lead the fight

against the national government.

**Liam Tall (Together)**



Students in Australia are getting a raw deal and there's no doubt about it. The National Union of Students plays an important role in advocating for student rights

and if elected I would take on the responsibility with a great deal of passion and determination. I will represent the proud and diverse RMIT community and bring the fight for better living conditions for students to NUS and beyond.

Education is the driving force of social mobility in this country. It should be the right of every Australian to access the highest standard of education and the right of every student to be given the greatest chance to succeed in their studies. As an institution founded on striving for excellent outcomes from those of all socio-economic backgrounds RMIT needs strong representation at NUS to ensure our voices are heard and our concerns addressed, not just those of the Group of 8 heavyweights!

Together, we will make our voices heard on a national scale. Together, we will advance the living conditions of students of this country. Together, we will succeed post Covid-19!

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

**Jingyi Yin (Together)**



The relationship between the RMIT University Student Union and the National Union of Students is a vital one. The National Union of Students

has a national reach allowing it to represent students' interests when issues affecting students on a national level arise (such as youth and study allowance). This allows RMIT University Student Union to provide an effective response to issues facing students on a national level whilst still leaving the majority of its resources to campaign for students on RMIT campus-specific issues. If elected I will work to strengthen ties between the RMIT University Student Union and the National Union of Students to ensure that RUSU

continues to be able to provide effective representation for RMIT students affected by national issues. Your vote is crucial!

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

**Jack Spires (Together)**



As a regional student here at RMIT University I understand how hard it can be living, studying, and working in the big smoke, away

from home. The Australian and Victorian governments can do more to help. Living in metropolitan areas is expensive and rural and regional students do not have many of the support networks that local students have. I want to make sure that the issues facing regional students are heard not just at RMIT, but also at a national level. That is why I am running for election to the National Union of Student: to support all rural and regional students. Together we can make sure that regional and rural students aren't left behind in the Covid-19 recovery and that we all have an equal opportunity to succeed.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

**Peiji Zhou (Together)**



The National Union of Students plays a vital role for Australian university students. It represents and lobbies on behalf of more than 1 million

Australian university students, and works to safeguard their rights against a Liberal government intent on stripping them away.

In the face of university cuts, now, more than ever, vocal and effective representation in NUS is vital. I believe that I have the skills necessary to provide this representation. NUS must fight not only against the university cuts but beyond it, and advocate on behalf of students on issues that affect all of us, like the outrageous price of textbooks.

Vote to maintain the strong relationship between RUSU and NUS.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

# Statements

## Joel McDougall (Together)



I believe in supporting the underdog and giving people a fair go. It was to defend the principles of a fair go for students that the National Union

of Students was created. It is this link between my own views and the principles of the National Union of Students that has led me to run for election as one of RMIT University's delegates to the National Union of Students. RMIT University was founded as a Working Man's College. If elected I will campaign for you to ensure that the principles of equity and a fair go, which RMIT University was founded on, are honoured, and maintained at the National Union of Students. Your vote is vital.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

## Beatrice Co (Together)



Now more than ever it is important for Student Unions to come together and advocate on a National Level. The era of COVID has induced cuts,

defunding, and lowering standards for Tertiary Education. Students must fight back against unfair decisions to ensure that students from all backgrounds can access an education that they deserve, one that'll actually prepare them for real life and work. Too often we see universities delivering tokenistic programs, often just ticking boxes for 'compliance'. I've passionately worked in the student representation and advocacy space for a while now; having led projects like 'Be a Better Human', I've built SSCC programs and summits, consulted on various different university structures and most importantly didn't just sit in a corner silently through big meetings. In addition, I am also currently in the role of RUSU General Secretary.

If elected, I will provide a strong voice of advocacy to the National Union of Students. Vote for me and Together to give all students the passionate voice we deserve.

VOTE 1 TOGETHER!

## Daniel Hoogstra (Together)



This year I served as your RUSU President, and now I am running for the position of delegate to the National Union of Students. I'm

doing this because I believe that RMIT students deserve a strong representative voice on the national stage. With the Federal Government intending to reduce university funding and hike up fees, it is more important than ever that both domestic and international students are represented with purpose, passion, and a strong voice at the national level. The National Union of Students is the peak representative body for university students in Australia. If elected to this key representative body I will work to ensure that the voice of RMIT's many student cohorts is heard loud and clear. As one of Australia's largest education providers, RMIT University should have representation proportionate to our size. Vote for me and I will work to ensure that we, the students of RMIT, are heard loud and clear on the national stage.

VOTE [1] TOGETHER!

# RUSU

RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

**HAVE YOUR SAY**

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