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**OUSA - Campaigns Officer 2017**  
**NZ General Election Review 2017**

**ousa**  
otago uni **students'** association

## BACKGROUND

Our Vision: To increase the number of electorally enrolled students at the University of Otago and to increase student voter turnout in the 2017 General Election.

Our Purpose: To empower students to make informed political decisions, to provide them support and the opportunity to enroll, and to encourage and support student voter turnout in the General Election.

Our Values: We are **respectful** and **inclusive**. Our campaign will use **best practice** whenever and wherever possible. Our efforts will be **non-partisan** and aim to **engage** and **empower** students in the democratic process.

## EVENTS

In the lead up to the General Elections, we held several events to promote our vision and fulfill our purpose of empowering students to make informed decisions while providing support and encouragement. There were five main events that took a lot of planning and organizing from the start of the year, and in addition to those five main events we ran several initiatives alongside to continue the push for students to vote.



### Wednesday 2nd of August: Question Session @Main Common Room



On Wednesday the 2nd of August, in collaboration with POLSA Otago we (OUSA) hosted a question session which served the purpose of understanding students views and attitudes towards the general elections and voting. Through this question session we were able to gain great insight into the types of questions students at Otago had, and the amount of relevance and importance the elections had to them. Overall, it was clear that there was a great majority of students that had no idea when and where the elections



were occurring, or who the Prime Minister of New Zealand was at the time, as there were multiple post-it notes that asked “when and where is the election?”, or questions like “how do you vote?”. The amount of questions such as these revealed the lack of understanding, awareness and interest majority of the students had. The questions were also a good indication of the amount of interest most of the students at Otago had for voting.



## College Visits



In August, in the lead up to our Election push week, our Executive went around to the many different residential colleges (which was kindly organized by James the Colleges Officer). Our purpose of visiting the colleges was not only to promote the upcoming events, but to get more student enrolled and pledging to vote. There were many halls with very responsive students, and some not as responsive, but it was great to be able to spread the message at the halls and get people thinking about it too. Overall, we managed to get a lot of students enrolled and interested students.

## Election Push Week -

### Monday: INFORM101: The Politics of Mental Health @ Main Common Room



“INFORM101: The Politics of Mental Health” was an event part of our series of events leading up to the elections. Through the INFORM101 event we had the goal of sparking interest in politics by having a discussion on a prominent, and very important issue facing

youth in New Zealand. This event involved five panelists who spoke on the issue of mental health, and gave students the opportunity to ask questions as well. This event was a great starting event to kick off the election push week.



**Tuesday: VOTING101 @ MCR**



Voting101 was a seminar that was a first in its series; hosted and organized in collaboration with POLSA (Politics Students Association) Otago, and the Voting 101 student group. This event was a seminar that was looking to inform youth about the basics of elections and voting, and give a brief insight into the main policies of each of the registered Political parties in New Zealand. The speaker for this event was Otago Politics student Laura Cairns who took a non-biased approach to sharing

information about the elections, voting and political parties. While the seminar was happening, we held a sausage sizzle on the side which brought a lot of people around the Main Common Room.

**Wednesday: PINTS & POLITICS @ Re:Fuel**



“PINTS&POLITICS” was a youth wing debate held at the student bar Re:Fuel on their popular Wednesday night “Pint Night” which is the night of the week where students can get cheap pints, or drinks there. This was a brilliant idea by Administrative Vice President William Guy that brought politics to a different scene, and appealed to different voters. For this event, each



registered party was invited to bring one of their Youth Wing members to come and debate about important issues, hosted by Radio One hosts Jamie Green and Esme Hall. This event was extremely successful and saw Re:Fuel packed to the brim.

### Thursday: CANDIDATES101 @ MCR

“Candidates101” was an event where Dunedin MP candidates from each political party were invited to be a part of a panel discussion. Based on the information that was gathered at the Question Session, it was clear that many students were unaware and uninformed about what each party stood for and what effects



the different party policies would have on them as students. Therefore, with the aim of making the elections more relevant to students, the panel discussion had questions that looked at student challenges and questioned what the candidates and their parties were doing for tertiary students.

This event had a great turnout of students and had an incredible atmosphere; there were so many questions from students, but not enough time. In addition to this, the forum had a wonderful facilitator, the Dean of Otago’s Law School Professor Mark Hennaghan, and we are very grateful for the incredible effort he put into it, and the time he took out of his busy schedule.

## Advanced Voting Weeks

### We Have Power Stall (NZUSA led initiative)

“We Have Power” was a NZUSA initiative to help get people informed about the different parties and what each of them stand for; as part of this initiative we provided a stall near the voting booths that had pamphlets filled with information, election merchandise (such as drink bottles, balloons, bags, YoYos, jelly beans and stickers); we also had two iPads at our stall with the



"OnTheFence" website open so that students could take the quiz and see what political party their issues of importance were most aligned with. In addition to this we did some lecture bashing as a friendly reminder about the importance of voting, and giving some general information about where the voting booths were around campus. The WeHavePower initiative was successful, especially the stall as so many people who were walking through the link would stop by out of curiosity. Behind the success of this initiative were some very passionate and awesome volunteers who happily dedicated a lot of their time to set up, man the stall, talk to people, lecture bash and so much more.



## Budget

The estimated price for all the expenses for the election events was **\$8,020**, therefore this was the amount of money the Elections Subcommittee had agreed to set aside for the General Elections. This amount that was allocated for the General Elections was not exceeded; a detailed outline of the budget and expenses can be found in the second document (thank you to Raeleene for the awesome spreadsheet).

## General (Overall outcome)

Overall, the events were successful in terms of turnout and based on the feedback received from those who attended them. According to the Elections website, this year's election saw an increase from the 2014 General Election in voters across all age groups, and the most significant increase was the age group of people who were 18-24 years old. When looking at the statistics for voters aged 18-24 in the Dunedin North area, it showed a great increase from the last election also. Unfortunately, it is not specified exactly how many of these North Dunedin voters were student voters, therefore, this increase in North Dunedin could merely be a correlation with our intense push. However, the overall outcome of voters has increased, therefore I would count this as a success.



We thank the many volunteers who dedicated time out of their busy schedules to help with the various events, campaigns and initiatives; a big thank you to POLSA and Voting101 for being a part of the organizing team and putting an epic effort into all our events; and not forgetting our own Executive members and OUSA staff who were the backbone of making the events happen.

For more specific statistics and information on the voter turnout visit: <http://www.elections.org.nz/news-media/election-turnout-all-age-groups>



## Reflections/Recommendations:

If I could rewind time to the start of the year, there is a lot that could have possibly been done differently that could have been beneficial – and these are some recommendations:

### The Overall Vision:

- Have set goals, and a vision of what you want to achieve for the year
- Get to know your territory/environment (ie - what and who you are working with: for example - the University)
- Analyse the behavior of your environment and target audience (the University and the students) so that you know what they like/dislike, so that the plans you have will appeal to them

### Preparation stages:

- Get familiar with everyone under the OUSA umbrella (ie - RadioOne, Marketing and Comms, Planet Media, Critic etc)
- Understand what these different teams do so that you can utilize them and their resources/team a lot more; work alongside each other to get the best outcome possible
- Meet with the necessary team as often as possible so that you and the team progress at the same rate and are all up to date on the preparations.

### The Planning of the Campaigns/Events:

- Be as specific as possible in this stage of the planning of individual events
- Have specific targets/goals written out in detail
- In the individual plans - have step by step action points to take, and have dates to achieve actions by
- Communicate plans with executive as often as possible (when there is progress being made with something, or an update)

### Timing:

- Make sure you book your dates in advance, and check the Events calendar to ensure there is no clash of OUSA events
- Plan your timing of events carefully so that they are at a date where there will be the most buy in and the most benefit to students and to your campaign/event.

### The Big Push:

- As the event draws near you will be wanting to gain traction and interest in your events so this is where your marketing team (that you would have pre-planned things with) will be helping you push your events/campaigns
- Use social media as much as possible, as well as the screens, pillars, sandwich boards, and any other OUSA spaces you can advertise on
- Also get to know the University's marketing team too so that they can push promotion from their side of things (ie - they can speak to the lecturers about promoting before lectures start, or having a slide up on the screen before the lecture starts so that it can become engrained in their subconscious memory)



- Use everyone around you to push promotion as they are all often always willing to help in whatever way they can

Resources:

- Know your resources: see what you have, don't have; what you need/don't need; want/don't want.
- Maximise what you have; and if you don't have much, be smart about how you use things: utilize what you have in the most effective way possible

Change:

- Understand that the likelihood of change is inevitable; so ensure you have a backup plan (or two) in case something happens (ie - in case a speaker doesn't show up, the weather is bad, people don't respond how you anticipate... and so on and so forth)/

General:

- When you have the students' best interest at heart and you know your desire and sole purpose is to make a difference - then don't be discouraged at any setbacks or barriers that come up - persevere.
- Take time to examine and analyse the little things
- Be strong and firm in your stance on issues/events/campaigns, do not doubt your plans - believe in your plans, but also be open to constructive criticism, and other relevant feedback.
- Remember why you do what you do and who you are doing it for!
- Realise that you do not have a small job - so understand that it will be difficult at times, but remember you will get through!
- REMEMBER you are not alone - ask for help when you need it!

Ultimately - ENJOY the process, remember your purpose, stay focussed, believe in yourself - and HAVE FUN with it - love what you do and your job will become a joy, and it will help others enjoy it and want to be a part of the cause too!

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