

## **President's Annual Report for the 2017 year on behalf of the Executive by Hugh John Baird**

Dear members,

I would like to begin by firstly acknowledging all those within the association for their hard work and utmost dedication to improving the lives of students at the University of Otago, in Dunedin and in the other main centres. This report looks to highlight the work and contributions made by those both within the organisation and the student community who have worked tirelessly to make OUSA the vibrant success that it is.

2017 was once again a year for the organisation to be proud of, with large scale events of national significance, successful media publications and broadcasts, student support, recreation services and advocacy to name but a few of the services provided over the year. Staff and volunteers alike have worked well beyond the call of duty to ensure these successes, and it is a testament to the people within the association.

It has also been my absolute privilege and pleasure to lead the executive for 2017. The passion that the group shows for student affairs is something that its members should be proud of. As is the case with all years, this executive has been tasked with many confronting issues and decisions that have had to be made. I'm confident with the decisions that we have made as a group and the way that we have handled those decisions. I'd also like to congratulate all members of the executive with the work that have put into projects pertaining to their own portfolio. They have worked hard to improve student lives, and I believe that life at the University of Otago is better for that.

The year was also a landmark year for students in terms of a change of government that will look to focus more on the student voice. I would like to congratulate NZUSA for their work in leading the advocacy on behalf of our association, in putting student concerns at the forefront of the discussions leading into the election and on holding those in power to account on their election promises.

I would also like to thank and congratulate on behalf of the organisation, Assoc. Prof Selene Mize, and Mike Wright (Post-humously), for their life memberships for services to students. It is because of individuals such as Selene and Mike, and their selflessness to serve others, that Otago is the place that it is.

As the organisation looks towards the future, I am pleased with the creation and implementation of a new strategic plan to ensure the safe guarding of the association. Whilst OUSA has a strong relationship with the University, and one that I'm sure will last long into the future, it is important for the organisation to be weary of the relationship and look to become more self-sufficient.

I'd like to thank everyone for the opportunity over the past year to lead this organisation. I've had the absolute time of my life which has been made only through the people that I have meet. I look forward to seeing the direction that OUSA will take in the coming years, and I very much look forward to a beer or seven at the 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations with everyone.

## EXECUTIVE

### 2017 Executive Members

Hugh Baird (President)

William Guy (Administrative Vice-President)

Cody Kirby (Finance Officer)

Bryn Jenkins (Education Officer)

Danielle Pope (Welfare Officer)

Lucy Northwood Sutton (Post-graduate Officer)

Max Chan (International Officer)

Caitlin Barlow-Groome (Recreation Officer)

Eden Iati (Campaigns Officer)

James Heath (Colleges Officer)

Eli Toeke (Te Roopu Māori - Tumuaki)

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to lead the executive over the past year. The group have worked tirelessly to improve lives for students at the University of Otago, and for that I believe members should be proud. Throughout the year, the executive has had to grapple with issues that have not only divided the group, but the student body as a whole. Low student engagement has been an issue in aiding the executive in making decisions. This is something that we believe needs to be worked on in the future and it is heartening to see this being done through a new student engagement co-ordinator, Rachel Currie. The role is only a new one, and I believe moving forward that it will be a pivotal one for helping guide transparency and engagement with major decisions being made on campus. I'd like to thank Rachel for her commitment to engagement and to the students throughout the year.

### CCTV

At the beginning of the year, the University proposed introducing CCTV cameras in the surrounding residential areas of the University. The issue was polarising for students with the campus split both for and against. As an executive, we decided that the best course of action was to take the issue to a student referendum. Upon the results of that referendum, which only slightly opposed the introduction of CCTV, the executive worked with the University to take submissions and remedy any major issues. Upon doing this, the executive lobbied for less cameras in more strategic areas. This was successful with the University decreasing the number of cameras.

## **PE School Restructure**

With changes being made to the PE school, including a reduction in staff and restructuring of the papers being provided, OUSA worked with the PE students for resolutions. Whilst students understood the need for change, given the declining roll over a period of time, they were unhappy with the lack of consultation. Through discussions with the PE Students Association and key stakeholders at the University, the PE Students are now working with the University in a collaborative manner to outline the key areas of the course for students. Mainly involving first year dance, and outdoor education as being key for developing a collegiate environment within the school. These discussions are ongoing, and I hope in time a new course can be agreed on with all parties looking forward to the future.

## **Sexual Violence on Campus**

During the year, students against sexual violence on campus wrote a report criticising the University, and OUSA for their apparent lack of response to sexual violence on campus. This was an incredibly disappointing report, and one I believe lacked a lot of truth. Sexual violence prevention and support is something that OUSA and the University have been working together on over a number of years, and in the coming period I am confident we will see large scale changes, including better lines of reporting, and better education for students around sexual violence.

## **Mental Health Issues**

One of the major issues reported by students at the University has been around mental health issues. Over the year, the executive submitted on the mental health prevention strategy. Our submission centred around better education on mental health issues and techniques to help build resilience and better wellbeing. This was also complimented by the Silverline festival which was run by Unicrew, in an attempt to highlight techniques used for better wellbeing in students' lives. Throughout the year, discussions have been ongoing with the University for new programmes to be implemented through residential colleges, I hope moving forward that these discussions are kept alive and the programmes implemented.

## **New Student Bar**

Both OUSA and the University have reiterated the need for a new student bar in North Dunedin. Throughout the year, work has been done for this to become a possibility. Many sites had been looked at, with the most attention being paid to the Pay and Display building on ANZAC Ave. Reports were compiled on the feasibility of this space. However, after which it became apparent that the space was not suitable for a new student bar, given the compliance and capital costs that would be needed to renovate the building. Moving forward, it was agreed that the best option was to look at the ability to revamp the bar on campus, looking at how best to also utilise the student common room and the Union hall. I believe this is an exciting opportunity and I hope that this will come to fruition.

## **Student Engagement**

One of the major issues that the executive struggled with was student engagement. I believe that the creation of the student engagement co-ordinator at the University will play a vital role in encouraging better lines of communication and transparency for major initiatives and projects.

## **General Election**

In 2017, the executive decided that it would take a leading role in driving enrolments on campus. This was also a strategic imperative of the national student association and one in which we worked collaboratively on. This was done through a series of campaigns highlighting not only the need to enrol, but in better education on civics through a series of presentations in collaboration with politics students on campus. The executive, and many other volunteers worked on getting around every residential college, addressing the college on the need to enrol and in handing out enrolment forms. I would like to thank those volunteers for their help in organising and enacting the campaign.

## **ANZAC Day Event**

This event held on campus continues to grow and is very impressive. The new location opposite the Staff Club appears to be a good area. The Events team have taken the running of this event over from the Executive and it has been good. I wish to commend the Events team and the Executive on an excellent event. The feedback is always positive especially from the University staff who attend.

It was an honour to lay a wreath on behalf of OUSA at the cenotaph at the Dawn Parade with thousands of people in attendance.

## **Te Roopu Māori**

Another pleasure throughout the year has been the ability to work alongside Te Roopu Māori. The organisations enjoyed a positive relationship, although constraints to budget due to a cut in the SLA caused some tension. I'd like to thank Porourangi Templeton-Reddy and Eli Toeke for their dedication to the executive this year, and in bringing TRM issues and opinions to the group.

## **NZUSA**

One of the major outcomes of the year for the student population has been the change in government. The incoming government has declared a student focus for their time in power with an increase in financial support the major policy for students. I'd like to congratulate NZUSA for the hard work that they have put in to making this a reality. The advocacy work that NZUSA does in terms of direct lobbying of government and other major political parties is invaluable and that alone is reason for OUSA to stay a member of the organisation. However, concerns lie in the equity OUSA has in that organisation in terms of funding to votes. I think this needs to be looked at more carefully, as well as some of the campaigns that NZUSA has been running and the tangible benefits that may come from those.

## **Satellite Campuses**

OUSA has an MOU with the three campuses, Wellington, Christchurch and Southland. More work needs to be done in organising payments to these organisations. Each year, lack of information from previous executive leads to late payments, or no payments. It is not clearly stated who the money is marked for either, which last year led to confusion on which association in Christchurch the money was to go to. It has also become clear that both the PSoC and the CMSA need to work together on joint projects for their members, and that an increase in student services fees for Post Graduates in Christchurch is something that needs to be looked at.

## **OPERATIONS**

I would like to once again thank the staff and volunteers at the OUSA for their tireless dedication to the organisation, and student life at Otago. Throughout the year the organisation has brought together a number of large scale student events, support and advocacy to those students most in need, clubs and societies which add more bows to Otago students strings and the country's greatest student newspaper, and radio station.

### **Staffing**

Throughout the year, the association said goodbye to one of its long standing event managers, Dan Hendra. Dan will be sorely missed, however I'm sure his legacy will be long lasting, in particular as leader of the team that created the Dunedin Craft Beer and Food Fest. However, as one door closes, another opens, as was the case with the introduction of the new Events Manager Jason Schroeder.

### **Pay Evaluation Project**

The organisation last year undertook a pay evaluation project which would see proper pay scales being put in place. This was done with the help of Strategic Pay. As it stood, salaries and wages had been at the managers' discretion. The new Strategic Pay system would make it easier for managers to evaluate market data and make more accurate decisions on pay. This would make it easier for managers to be able to accurately understand and allocate pay to staff, meaning less staff being underpaid compared to the rest of the market and fairness.

### **Strategic Plan**

Throughout the year, work has been done on a new strategic plan to take the organisation forward. This has been done in collaboration with the executive, managers and Deloitte as an external consultant. There has not been a strategic plan at OUSA since 2012, making it difficult for any meaningful planning to be made looking forward. I hope that the completion of this strategic plan will make it easier for all members within the organisation to better understand the goals and vision for the association.

### **University Book Shop (Otago) Limited**

The University Book Shop is currently a successful subsidiary providing returns to the OUSA. However, concerns lie in the future of the building, given the substantial capital that is needed for redevelopments for both earthquake strengthening and also to better utilise the space. Throughout the year, all possibilities had been looked at with reports compiled for each alternative; to begin works to redevelop and strengthen, or to strengthen the building. These discussions are currently ongoing. I would like to pay special thanks and congratulations to Stuart Heal, Chairman of the UBS board who will leave the position this year.

### **OUSA Crest**

Life member and former President Paul MacDonald Gourlie frequented my office regularly to enforce his desire to have the OUSA Coat of Arms (we dare) put back on the OUSA letterhead as it was removed when OUSA re-branded. The OUSA coat of arms was granted on 22 February 1991.

A successful vote was held at an SGM this year and it once again appears on the letterhead. Also a banner adorns the office corridor with the crest thanks to Paul Gourlie.

