



President's Office Bearer report for Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 30 May 2017

Dear Monash postgraduates,

The purpose of this report is to provide an update of activities over the past twelve months. I would also like to use this opportunity to comment on the state of the Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA). The 2016 to 2017 year was marked by continuing growth and strengthening of the MPA. The postgraduate population at Monash grows and so does the role and functions of the MPA.

Caulfield Postgraduate Lounge

In 2016/2017 the MPA moved into its new space in Caulfield C2 building. Caulfield is a very important campus for the MPA. Almost 50% of students are based at the campus. The MPA has worked closely with the University to create a space that is postgraduate friendly and where we can mix closely with postgraduate students. The space has been a great success and we would like to replicate the model at other campuses.

Monash Doctoral Program

Over the past year, the MPA has lobbied the University to change some of its rules, policies and procedures regarding the Monash Doctoral program. The major concern has been with the mandatory professional development. The issues can be surmised as relating to access and relevance. I feel the University has been extremely resistant to hearing our valid concerns. The MPA has written a submission and is currently continuing to lobby for improvements.

Staffing at MPA

The MPA has grown over the past eighteen months. A marketing officer has been hired and the advocacy service has been expanded. We also have extra staff responsible for activities. As always, the staff at MPA deserve congratulations. They are absolutely dedicated and hard working. The postgraduate student population at Monash should feel assured that the quality of the staff who provide all the services of the MPA is very high.

Fares Fair Campaign

Did you know that Victorian full time postgraduate students are the only ones in Australia who do not receive public transport concessions? This ridiculous state of affairs has been the subject of a campaign that stretches over decades. Over the past twelve months, the University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association (GSA) has led a revitalised effort to introduce postgraduate student public transport concessions. The MPA has been closely involved in this campaign. It is starting to gain traction – meetings have been held with all sides of government, and different stakeholders have been mobilised. Hopefully there is enough momentum to finally introduce travel concessions for postgraduate students.

Funding agreements

To deliver its services, the MPA is reliant on a funding agreement it holds with the University. A three-year funding agreement is currently being negotiated. Funding agreements can seem remote from the day to day functions of postgraduate life, but they are very important for the MPA. Without funding we are unable to provide our services. The staff at the MPA are very experienced and adept at negotiating on behalf of postgraduates and the MPA. Oversight of the new funding agreement will be the responsibility of the incoming 2017/2018 MPAEC Committee.

This will be my last report as MPA President. I have been in this role for almost two years. It has been, by far, the most enjoyable part of my PhD experience. I will be part of the MPAEC in 2017/2018 and look forward to supporting the MPA and continuing to work with Monash postgraduates.

Thanks

Peter Hurley