



## President's June Memo

It is with great sadness that I write my last ever President's Memo as Semester 1 wraps up and students sit their final exams. I am incredibly grateful to have served as the President of Australia's oldest student union over the past year and am excited for the future of this organisation in the next few years.

### **1. Executive Elections**

I want to congratulate Connor who was elected this month as the next USU President. I am very confident he will continue to steer this organisation towards greater things. I have so much faith in the whole executive team consisting of Lachlan, Maya and Decheng who have all worked hard throughout the year and I wish them good luck in this exciting new chapter for the USU.

### **2. CEO Contract Non-Renewal**

At the June Board meeting, the Board decided not to renew the contract of Andrew Woodward as the CEO of the University of Sydney Union. The Board and Andrew have agreed he will finish on the 12th of July. I want to thank Andrew for close to 10 years of service to the USU and acknowledge his service as the CEO during a period of incredible change and growth.

The Board's decision not to renew Andrew's contract was made in order to capitalise on the Board's changing priorities; the Board felt it was appropriate for the organisation to seek new leadership. Given the changing nature of the USU's membership and increased University support for the student experience, the Board felt it was the right time to seek fresh perspectives that would ensure the future of the USU continues the incredible legacy of enriching the University community.

The USU Board is incredibly grateful for the contribution that Andrew has made during his time with the organisation. Below are just some highlights of his achievements as the CEO:

- Maintaining USU control of outlets during an attempted University takeover in 2011
- Overseeing the opening of multiple outlets including Courtyard and Abercrombie Terrace Cafe
- Help build the organisation to a healthy and stable financial position, including reaching over \$30 million dollars in revenue in the past financial year
- Built and maintained strong and enduring relationships with key University stakeholders
- Create a strong staff culture free from discrimination, reflected in both the 2017 and 2019 Staff Culture results

### **3. Personal Thank Yous**

There are a lot of people I want to thank publicly but I will keep this short. Firstly, to the staff. Thanks in particular to Andrew, and the heads of department team for allowing the organisation to thrive to its fullest potential. The last year has been full of exciting, historic changes and this would not have been possible without a strong and cohesive leadership team.

To my incredible executive team, Adam, Claudia and Zhixian, thank you all so much for being there to carry me on my weakest (thesis) days and for supporting me and this organisation without fail. In particular, this year would not have been possible without the undying support of Adam as this organisation's Vice President who has stepped up to fill my role when I have been otherwise unable to.

To the outgoing non-executive directors, Jacob and Hengjie, it has been a pleasure serving with you both over the last two years. To the Senate-appointed directors, Jane and Marie, you have both taught me so much, professionally and personally, that has allowed me to take on this role with more rigour.

To the first year directors, it has been a pleasure leading this Board and I am inspired by your curiosity and critical ability - I look forward to serving as your IPP and wish you all the best of luck as your journey continues. I wish the new Executive the best of luck and am confident in passing over the role to Connor.

Over the past year I also received a large amount of support from USU alumni. Firstly to Courtney, thanks for being an incredibly supportive IPP - your words of encouragement and wisdom often came at the darkest of times. To other past presidents who came out of USU retirement to assist me in times of need, I am forever appreciative of the help and advice you provided me. In particular I want to thank Michael, Sibella, David, Amit, Toby and Sam. Thanks also to Damian, the outgoing USUAF president, who has been a pleasure to liaise with over the past year.

The USU is a truly special organisation. Our historic move to universal free membership this year has seen our membership grow to its highest level since voluntary student unionism was introduced, and it is only the end of semester 1. We also saw the largest turnout in our annual Board elections this year, with nearly 6500 votes submitted. With over 21,000 registered members and growing, the USU continues its legacy not only as Australia's oldest student union but also as Australia's best student union.