



CAPA FIRST QUARTER REPORTS 2019

QUARTERLY REPORTS FROM CAPA OFFICE BEARERS

National President, Natasha Abrahams



Overview

This year is an exciting one for CAPA for two reasons: firstly, it is the 40th anniversary of our formation, and secondly, there will soon be a federal election which presents the possibility of a change in government and therefore new opportunities for us to advocate for postgraduate students.

The first quarter of the year has been characterised by a large volume of federal policy submissions, as the current Federal Government prepares for the conclusion of their term by initiating reviews that they had earlier committed to. These submissions have presented an opportunity CAPA to reify its status as a respected and policy-driven national voice on postgraduate issues.

These first few months have also been a time of orienting the new team and developing strategy for the year ahead. We have been fortunate to retain several of last year's committee on the current CAPA Executive, as well as obtain some new talent. We began the year with a planning summit at which we charted how we are going to work on the priority areas set by Council at last year's Annual Council Meeting. We are now operating on the new CAPA Executive Committee structure, as decided by Council last year, which I am pleased to report is working well, with improved communication and efficiency within the team.

Campaigns

We are currently preparing our campaigns for this year, beginning with the federal election campaign. Next will be our campaign on student poverty, for which we are seeking case studies of students willing to be featured in the report and in media. I have been working with our research staff member Lara, and policy and research advisor Owen, to get these campaigns

ready for launch in the coming quarter. Later in the year we will be focusing on other priority areas identified by Council, including mental health and international student exploitation.

On a state level, we have been continuing to work on the Fares Fair PTV campaign, with an attempt to set up a cross-campus working group (though we have had little interest from affiliates so far) and a pre-budget submission to the state government. We are also organising the NSW international students concession fares campaign. I coordinated the NSW student associations to write letters to the NSW transport minister and shadow transport minister prior to the state election, and we had our first campaign meeting, facilitated by Owen, last month.

Research and submissions

We have written a large volume of policy submissions this year, all of which can be downloaded from the CAPA website. These are:

- Submission to Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education
 - Also, additional submission of feedback on model freedom of speech code
- 2019/20 Federal Pre-Budget Submission
- Response to National Regional, Rural, and Remote Education Strategy Framing Paper
 - Also, participation in face-to-face consultation
- Response to the Discussion Paper on Performance-Based Funding for the Commonwealth Grant Scheme
- Response to the Discussion Paper on the Consultation Paper on the reallocation of Commonwealth supported places for enabling, sub-bachelor and postgraduate courses
- Feedback on “Tackling Contract Cheating”
- Submission to AHRC National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces
- Submission to Review of the Australian Qualifications Framework
 - Also attended consultation meeting
- Victorian pre-budget submission 2019/20

As president, I took the lead role in writing these submissions, which were quite technical and policy-heavy.

Some of these submissions have been noted by others in the sector, and we have also received some media coverage on this work.

Media

We have been active in being a voice for postgraduate students in both higher education media and mainstream news. I have worked closely with Zoe and Owen on our media releases this year:

- International students need services and support to build their English language proficiency, says CAPA (24 January)
- CAPA calls for Austudy and mental health support for postgrads in pre-budget submission (30 January)
- CAPA welcomes scientists' call to protect research students from supervisor sexual harassment (1 March)
- Alliance of NSW student associations advocate for concession fares for international students (6 March)
- Low reporting rates of harassment must be addressed, says CAPA (7 March)
- CAPA calls for PhD duration to match actual minimum completion times (14 March)
- CAPA calls for student consultation in tackling contract cheating (19 March)
- CAPA calls for student concession fares in Victorian pre-budget submission (29 March)

These press releases have been largely proactive, rather than reactive to current events. In other words, we are setting the agenda for postgraduate student policy issues in higher education media.

Conferences

CAPA office bearers have continued to represent postgraduate students at sectoral conferences, within the constraints of our limited resources. I spoke on a panel at the Universities Australia conference, highlighting postgraduate student poverty. I delivered a presentation at the NUS Presidents' Summit on postgraduate student issues and what student associations can do to help. I also attended and briefly spoke at the Student Voice meeting earlier this year, and am involved in the Student Voice summit which will occur later this year. I spoke at the Australian Council of Graduate Research launch of their respectful supervision training resources, for which I was a member of the advisory group.

Finally, preparations are underway for our own conference: the CAPA Special Council Meeting (SCM), which will be held next month at ANU PARSA. I look forward to seeing all affiliates at the SCM and adjusting our yearly plan in the wake of changes that may happen at the upcoming federal election.

General Secretary / Vice President, Rachel Brisbane



Meetings and events attended

This quarter I attended the internal CAPA executive Planning Day (Jan); the UA conference in Canberra (late Feb) and have been an active participant in the Strategy Development Working Group (Mar) as it commences its work.

I have commenced writing a handover document for the incoming Vice-President, dividing attention between the financial aspects of the role and the internal operations management aspects of the role.

On the financial side of the role, to summarise, the main activities progressed in this period were

- Financial
 - 2018 Audit - this has been submitted to the auditors on schedule and I am working through queries as they come in
 - Outsourced Bookkeeping - I have been working closely with BasNMore to setup the systems; prepare the last quarter of 2018 when we did not have the role filled due to the resignation of the employee bookkeeper; and setup the reporting to align with the 2019 approved budget. Once up and running, this aspect of the role will reduce
 - Affiliate Income Received - 6 affiliates have made their payments.
 - Fee Remissions -
 - three have been received and decided in the March executive meeting
 - one has been rejected
 - two have been recommended for approval and the total value of these two remissions is approx. \$11,500
 - one has been received for decision at the April executive meeting
 - I am anticipating receiving applications from four more affiliates taking the total of fee remissions requested from 8 affiliates.

- Investment - a third \$50K 6-month term deposit has been set up. These funds were sitting in a low interest savings account and they have been transferred to a term deposit, effectively doubling the interest received. This has been actioned after ensuring that CAPA has ready access to approx. 8 months funding including costs for the SCM.

Policy and Research Advisor, Owen Myles



Federal Submissions Completed

Note: This list includes only those that I directly wrote significant parts of, or otherwise had significant input on. A number of further submission where my input was minor (or that were completed entirely by Natasha or others) have been omitted.

- Freedom of Speech review
- Rural, Regional and Remote Education Strategy
- Pre-Budget Submission
- Performance based funding review

Formal Meetings and Events Attended

Note: This list does not include informal meetings or phone calls. February CAPA Executive Meeting was not attended with apologies due to difficulties associated with overseas travel.

CAPA Planning Summit & January Meeting

March CAPA Executive Meeting

NSW Public Transport Campaign

STA Networking Event

STA President's and CEO's Summit

Key Project/Event Updates

Election Campaign

The major focus of this first quarter has been the Election Campaign. CAPA's campaign, "Support Postgrads. Australia's Future" has been designed to focus our requests on the most

absolutely key areas for postgrads as a whole, and equity groups in particular. From a much longer list, we selected 8 policy positions to take to the election (other items will not be covered in our campaign, but that doesn't mean we won't push the future government to adopt them).

This a campaign policy document has been developed and outlines each of our 4 foundational policies and 4 supporting pillars that will form the central component of our election campaign, and articulates why such policies are needed. An early draft of this was sent to each of the parties with seats in the parliament (either house) and we have received responses from some of the contacted parties, but not all. A scorecard template is ready to go, and will just need to analyse the party responses before they can be filled in. It looks like a significant number of parties may either not response, or not respond in time. For those parties I will have a look at their website to confirm whether they mention our policy points at all, and grade them accordingly.

The current plan for the remainder of the campaign is to use these details as resources for affiliates. We will be releasing our full policy brief (along with associated press release) shortly after the election is officially called. Shortly after that we will release our scorecard infographic and a full policy breakdown for each party (again with associated press release). We will combine this with a number of issue-based infographics (who supports this issue) and party-related infographics (this is X party's position on our 8 key issues). All of these will be released officially through CAPA's channels and be provided to affiliates to use as they see fit. If I get time I will also try to produce some neutral graphics with campaign slogans or reminders to enrol to vote.

Science and Technology Australia Presidents and CEO's Summit

As Natasha couldn't make this, I flew over to Sydney to represent CAPA at the Science and Technology Australia President's and CEO's Summit. Speakers at the Summit included the Minister for Science Karen Andrews, Shadow Minister Kim Carr, and Greens spokesperson Adam Bandt. Also in attendance were leaders of different science and technology related organisations. In particular, the President of the Australian Psychological Society was good enough to ask Kim Carr about increasing support for postgraduate students.

New South Wales International Student Public Transport Concession Meeting

While in Sydney, I met with a number of student representatives regarding the lack of public transport concessions for international postgraduate students in NSW. While only a few representatives were able to make the meeting, it was a good constructive start to the campaign. I have provided notes about this meeting to Natasha, who will be helping to spearhead the campaign.

Media Officer, Zoë Tulip



This was the beginning of my second (and last!) term as media officer for CAPA, so handover wasn't necessary. This freed me up to assist Natasha and Rachel with supporting some of the newer members elected to the exec, and also in adjusting to the structural change that was passed at the ACM in 2018 and implemented.

Following the ACM in Newcastle, I collated and published photos from the gathering on social media. Affiliates were made aware of these photos, and are still able to request higher resolution images should they request them. The response to these was very positive.

At the CAPA Planning Summit in January at Vic Uni, I took photos and collected blurbs for the website. I also took some in-kind photos of VUPA staff as a gesture of good will, and forwarded those to the current president (Rachel).

Due to busyness in the lead up to the federal election, sitting on the exec of two organisations has kept me very occupied. So I am constantly finding ways for CAPA and PARSA to use each others resources. An example of this was when I connected Tess, PARSA's advocacy and engagement coordinator with Natasha to share resources relating to campaigns both organisations are currently running relating to student welfare. During PARSA's Centrelink campaign I will be going to visit various MPs and senators (including one media advisor) in the ACT and NSW with a small delegation of postgraduate students affected by issues, so it is hoped through these meetings connections might be fostered that could assist both CAPA and PARSA's campaigns.

CAPA is also always looking for new ways to make some savings on expenditure with regards to meetings and travel. An example of this is as I often travel to Melbourne to be with my partner, so CAPA has appointed me to a working group on developing a long-term strategic plan for CAPA (all the other exec members of this panel that volunteered their time are Melbourne-based), and making sure they hold in-person meetings when I am down. The affiliate I belong to (PARSA) created a four-year strategic plan last year, and so it has been great to see the strategic plans of many other affiliates and to compare notes with regard to the development process. I look forward to seeing how this project takes shape over the course of the year.

Natasha, Owen (PRA) and myself have also been regularly working on and publishing press releases, which is expected to increase in the lead up to the federal elections. CAPA was not invited (nor was any other student body) to the federal budget “lockup” this year, so at the time of writing this report I can say that the three of us will be working hard to get a number of press releases out as quickly as possible once the budget has been delivered.

I also attended the annual Universities Australia education conference in Canberra as part of a PARSA delegation supporting the CAPA delegation. I captured imagery of Natasha whilst she spoke on the student panel, and attended many other sessions over the course of three days including a dinner at Parliament House (PARSA funded).

CAPA also had its anniversary celebrations on April 1st. I was unable to attend as I was needed back in Canberra, so if any attending affiliates have photos from this event, please forward them to me at media@capa.edu.au.

Please also forward any material your student organisation may have that you would like to submit for inclusion in our fortnightly newsletter to Natasha at president@capa.edu.au.

NATSIPA Liaison Officers, Victoria Van Schie and Sharlene Leroy-Dyer



1. Overview of your main achievements of the quarter

- Attended NATSIPA planning days
- Contacted A&TSI centres around the country

2. Meetings and events attended

- NATSIPA Executive meetings
- NATSIPA Planning meetings

3. Tasks completed

- I have been actively liaising with the NATSIPA directors to assist in building the membership of NATSIPA.
- I have contacted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander centres to discuss issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait postgraduate students
- I assisted in the NATSIPA submission to the review of the Australian Quality Framework
- I have been liaising with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from universities right throughout Australia.
- I have been working with the NATSIPA executive on the AGM, planning day and conference
- Contributed to CAPA FB posts around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues
- Posted relevant information to NATSIPA FB page

4. Tasks in progress

- Planning for the NATSIPA 20th Anniversary Conference

5. Plans for the next quarter

- Continue the work I have been doing.

Disabilities Officer, Marguerite Biasatti



Overview of your main achievements of the quarter

The position of Disabilities Officer is a complex role in the 'Equity Portfolio'. A key tenant of my portfolio, is to review what support services are provided for postgraduate students' at an Australian national level.

From my review of CAPA, AGM minutes and experience in student based postgraduate organizations, we have yet to have a research or information based 'snapshot' of what support services are provided for postgraduate students in Australia.

On my work in the role of Disabilities Officer in 2018 this is a very challenging aim due to primarily lack of response from CAPA affiliates.

In 2019, how is this information going to be obtained?

There are a number of strategies to implement this plan.

Firstly, I will liaise with each Disabilities Officer at universities within each state to what support services are being provided for postgraduate students who identify with a disability both within the postgraduate organization and the formalized support services.

Secondly, at the pending Special Council Meeting (SCM) this year, I will further attempt to communicate with postgraduate student organizations.

Thirdly, once this data is obtained, I will provide a report on what services are being provided at a national level. It is hoped that this on the surface simply query, will provide information about what services are seen as useful and assist in the exploration of how disability is defined at a national level.

I have now been in the role for three months, I will report on what has been achieved thus far and what some of the unexpected challenges have been in this project which aims to support postgraduate students with a disability.

Meetings and events attended

- CAPA Planning Day (Jan 2019)
- Equity Meetings (Monthly)

Tasks completed

- Liaison with CAPA admin, President, Vice President of Equity about the availability of past minutes and accompanying projects of past Disabilities Officers from CAPA to assist in the refinement of the position.
- Review from CAPA on what information is available to initiate project (lists of affiliated universities to contact Disabilities Officers' and associated support services)
- Practical setting up of the role, for example, assistance with updating information on CAPA correspondence, reading and understanding the requirements of the position and processes for meeting attendance.
- Received with thanks updates CAPA affiliates list.

Plans for the next quarter

- Both email and telephone contact to explore research with each CAPA affiliate on the updated list.
- To explore with each affiliate what questions may aid their capacity to respond to the information required.
- By July of this year, to have initial information from each CAPA affiliated university in Australia.

Women's Officer, Romana-Rea Begicevic



The year started off with a comprehensive handover from Sharlene, the former Women's Officer and I attended the last exec meeting, from the previous term - as an observer. Shortly after that we had our CAPA planning days from 16-17th January in Melbourne, where we set out CAPA's goals and strategies for 2019. While I was in

Melbourne, I met with NTEU's Policy and Research Officer (women) Terri MacDonald with whom I also discussed priorities for 2019.

Some of those include hopes of re-establishing the SA/SH taskforce and presenting a case for a postgraduate student voice on it, and more collaboration on Blue Stockings week.

Not surprisingly, I left Melbourne really inspired and all the meetings and discussions provided me with a sound foundation to begin working on my project. Which is, focusing on the safety and success of women in academia.

March picked up pace with International Women's Day events and a submission to the AHRC workplace harassment inquiry. I worked with Natasha to prepare a submission in which we called for better reporting policies and follow up procedures for sexual assault and sexual harassment. Like the NUS we are outraged that individuals feel more comfortable reporting to NTEU, EROC and student representatives than their universities. In our submission we also called for all Australian universities and research institutes formally adopt the Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships, which we jointly co-created with Universities Australia, the National Tertiary Education Union, and the Australian Council of Graduate Research in 2017. Peak science body, Science & Technology Australia (STA) has also endorsed the principles recently. Together, we are calling for zero tolerance on student-research supervisor relationships, due to their innate power imbalance. We see this as an essential first step in fostering respectful student-supervisor relationships. To date the uptake of these principles by universities has been disappointing. I released a statement for IWD and attended the NTEU rally here in Perth as well as other related events.

I am currently preparing to attend the Women's Action Committee 4-5th April. The NTEU has kindly invited me to give a presentation and the goal is, to gain their support in pushing for a national taskforce against sexual assault and sexual harassment and furthermore, getting a postgraduate student representative on it. In addition, I am looking forward to the opportunity to collaborate with the NTEU on Blue Stockings Week to further women in academia in secure and successful jobs!

International Officer, Devendra Singh



Overview:

In January, I started my year with CAPA Planning Summit where we also discussed the prevailing issues of international postgraduate students. I received some information about the work done by a few previous international officers. But, due

to the unavailability of any handover document from the previous international officer, the decision to successfully lead the position was left on me which was articulated in the form of my goals for the current year. Towards, the end of the month, I met the Honourable Consul General of India Mr. Rakesh Malhotra to discuss the common issues among the students coming from India. I also exchanged views on how they can help in improving the student experience in the state of Victoria. Moreover, I provided him information about the ongoing Fares Fair Campaign which is one of the priority points of CAPA. He seemed to be unaware of the concession issue and conveyed me to support the students wherever possible. The full article about the meeting is available at <https://www.devendra.com.au/2019/02/meeting-with-consul-general-of-india.html>

I also attended the orientation workshop of Study Melbourne LIVE Projects as one of the participants which is a good initiative for the employability of international students by allowing them an opportunity to work with a local business or organization.

In February, I received the handover documents of one of the previous International Officer which provided me with the required base to plan my duties ahead. I participated in a number of events directly hosted for the international students of Monash University. This also includes my presence in some events as a part of the speaker panel. I also helped the Monash Postgraduate Association as their executive member to finalize the decision of hosting CAPA 40th Anniversary in Monash University Caulfield Campus.

In March, I represented CAPA in the Australian Federation of International Students Information Day. I had a conversation with the president of AFIS and the president of the ASEAN Youth Organization regarding the Fares Fare Campaign. They were happy to support the campaign in all the possible ways. I also represented international students in the VicWISE (Victorian working group on International Students' Employability) meeting attended by various stakeholders of international education such as universities, colleges, internship information providers, resume support service providers, etc. Provided with the fact that I was the only student representative there, I exchanged views with most of them regarding the current situation of international students and what can be done to improve the same. I also attended a meeting with the On-boarding and Engagement Manager and Regional Manager (Victoria and Tasmania) of Sonder regarding a possible collaboration with CAPA for our future events. Sonder Australia is a safety and wellbeing service provider with 24/7 local support and assistance for all its users. I had another meeting with the organizer of Future Work Future Leaders Conference at Monash University, where they are in the planning stage of the conference. I will be providing them international students' perspective during the ongoing planning. I attended the Rang Barse (Shower of Colours) festival hosted by Monash University, City of Monash and Sankat Mochan Samiti. It was a vibrant and colorful festival attracting people from Monash as well as other universities such as RMIT University and La Trobe University. I also confirmed my attendance for CAPA SCM to be hosted in Canberra. Along with that, I also got a few meetings confirmed with various stakeholders based in Canberra in order to fully utilize my time in Canberra.

Meetings and events attended:

1. CAPA Induction Day
2. Meeting with Consul General of India
3. Pride March

4. AFIS Info Day
5. VicWISE Meeting
6. Rang Barse (Shower of Colours)
7. Sonder Australia Meeting

Tasks Completed:

1. Received the handover from Natasha. I'm really thankful to her for explaining everything so well.
2. Acted as a resource person and provided help with finding an international student from India who's yet to commence his/her education in Australia, for the purpose of a story on sexual assault/harassment.
3. Provided input for a news article regarding New South Wales travel concession. The link for the same is: https://thepienews.com/news/travel-concession-row-reignites-australia/?fbclid=IwAR3IGndseEnu-OrtEkkTiA29hYbtSaUfR4RmIRE_Cs92Ng6abMVNpb5kFj0

Tasks in Progress:

1. Co-writing a position paper for the NSW Concession Fares Campaign

Plans for next quarter:

1. I will be attending 40th Anniversary of CAPA .
2. I will be attending CAPA SCM in Canberra.
3. I'll be meeting various stakeholders of international education in Canberra.
4. I will be providing more presence of CAPA at local and state level events.
5. I will be attending VicWISE meeting and will be looking for a chance to get more involved.
6. I will also be looking for collaborators and sponsors for CAPA related events.

Attachments:

Meeting with Consul General of India: <https://www.devendra.com.au/2019/02/meeting-with-consul-general-of-india.html>

NSW Travel Concession Article: https://thepienews.com/news/travel-concession-row-reignites-australia/?fbclid=IwAR3IGndseEnu-OrtEkkTiA29hYbtSaUfR4RmIRE_Cs92Ng6abMVNpb5kFj0

Queer Officer, Lauren Taylor



Not received as of 15/4/19