



CAPA SECOND QUARTER REPORTS 2019

QUARTERLY REPORTS FROM CAPA OFFICE BEARERS

National President, Natasha Abrahams



Overview

The result of the Federal Election, midway through the second quarter, has been the most influential factor shaping the activities and strategies of CAPA for the rest of 2019 and into the future until such a time as there is a change in the education ministry.

The election result was not one that many people anticipated, so it has been a time of developing new plans and conferring with other groups in the higher education sector. As we have retained a Coalition Government and Dan Tehan as Minister for Education, this means that CAPA (and indeed many other organisations) are continuing as we were prior to the election.

This year there has been a lot of high-level policy activity, with a multitude of federal reviews to which CAPA has had input. These reviews have provided the opportunity for CAPA to continue to be an authority on postgraduate issues.

Campaigns

In April, we released our pre-election campaign, 'Support Postgrads. Australia's Future'. This comprised of a detailed report assessing the higher education policies of each party currently represented in parliament, a scorecard summarising key learnings from the report, a press release, and social media assets. Our Policy and Research Advisor, Owen Myles, did the majority of the work on this campaign.

We are continuing to work on our other planned campaigns for the year (student poverty and mental health) for release later on. State-level campaigning is continuing in NSW and Victoria on the transport concession issues. In Victoria, the cross-campus advisory group has had its first meeting, with draft document from this group outlining that it will report up to CAPA to

provide some accountability. In New South Wales, with the Coalition recently winning their state election, we will need to re-group on strategy. I am working on a position paper outlining the issue, co-authored by International Officer Devendra Singh, which is almost fully drafted.

Leading up to the new financial year on the 1st of July, we also have continued some of our activity from last year's *Bury the Bill* campaign regarding changes to student loans. This has provided an opportunity for media attention to this issue, though, it is too late to campaign for change on this so it is more an example of why we need to continue to be vigilant on federal policy changes that impact students and graduates.

I have also been working with our colleagues at the National Union of Students to develop a discussion paper on microcredentialling, which will be circulated to both NUS and CAPA affiliates for comment, to enable our organisations to develop an informed position on this emerging trend in the sector. I contributed substantially to the content of the position paper, which is almost fully drafted.

Research and submissions

The first quarter of the year required a record number of submissions; while this has slowed slightly in the second quarter, there continues to be more activity than usual. From April to May, we have lodged the following submissions:

- Response to the Future Humanities Workforce consultation paper
- Joint NATSIPA and CAPA submission to Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) Review
- Submission to Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Amendment (Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services) Bill 2019

Additionally, I have participated in several meetings and provided supplementary written material relating to submissions we wrote earlier in the year. The most crucial of these was a meeting with the Australian Qualifications Framework review panel chair, in which I presented the argument that the volume of learning of the PhD is incorrect under the current Framework. As review processes are typically quite lengthy, for most of these submissions we will not know until next year if CAPA's requests have been successful.

I am currently working on several more submissions which are due in the next quarter.

Media

I have worked with Policy and Research Officer, Owen Myles, and Media Officer, Zoe Tulip on ten media releases this quarter:

- Government forgets skills in their skills and infrastructure agenda (2 April)
- Women in STEM initiative cannot coexist with the war on science (3 April)
- Peak student bodies unite to slam budget for failing on education policy (joint with NUS, UATSIS, NATSIPA) (3 April)
- CAPA report welcomes Greens and Labor commitments to postgrads (18 April)
- Peak student bodies call on universities to do better for international students (joint with CISA, NUS, NATSIPA, UATSIS) (8 May)
- NATSIPA and CAPA call for research classification system to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research (joint with NATSIPA) (7 June)
- CAPA concerned about Australian universities' staff-to-student ratios decline in global rankings (20 June)
- CAPA congratulates Australian universities on global rankings success and calls for postgraduate researchers' contributions to be paid (20 June)
- Pain for postgrads in new financial year (29 June)
- Students welcome contract cheating legislation, but advise law should only target commercial cheating companies (joint with NUS, NATSIPA, UATSIS) (30 June)

A highlight has been collaborating with the other peak student bodies on media releases, allowing us to present a united front on certain issues. This level of partnership is novel in the history of the peak student bodies, and I am proud to have taken a lead role in these collaborations.

The above media releases netted substantial media coverage, which is shared on the CAPA Facebook page for those wishing to keep up.

I also wrote an opinion article appearing in *The Australian*, in which I argued that the stellar university rankings were made possible with the exploited labour of research students. Earlier in the quarter, I contributed an opinion article on contract cheating which appeared in *Campus Review*. Pitching opinion articles is an effective way of ensuring that CAPA's view is expressed in full by key media outlets with a wide higher education readership.

I attended and MCed the rally against violence against women, organised by CISA Women's Officer Belle Lim. The rally was extensively covered by TV news outlets. While I did not do any interviews, leaving this aspect to Belle, I did appear (in my CAPA branded tee shirt) in the 9 News coverage. Our General Secretary, Rachel Brisbane, can also be spotted in her CAPA tee shirt in some of the TV news coverage.

Conferences

This quarter, I have attended and participated in sectoral conferences including Student Voice, the Australian Council of Graduate Research Conference, EduTech, and Progress Australia Leadership.

I was fortunate to attend the invitation-only Progress Australia Leadership conference, which was a group of 200 influential non-profit leaders. It is my firm recommendation that CAPA presidents attend this conference in future years, as it was hugely beneficial in terms of networking, re-grouping following the federal election result, understanding what other non-profits are campaigning on, and potentially getting involved in some large planned campaigns. I spoke at, and chaired the higher education session of, the EduTech conference. My attendance was sponsored by the organisers, and I was also able to secure some free tickets for affiliates to attend (though due to the timing of the conference during exam season, this was not taken up).

Internal matters

Large swathes of my time as president are spent on administrative, governance, staffing, and other matters internal to CAPA. While time consuming, these tasks are not very interesting, so I will not go into detail here (but can provide copies of my monthly reports, which catalogue most of my activities, to affiliates upon request). The most substantial matters this quarter have been organising and delivering the Special Council Meeting, assisting the board in establishing and lodging many years' worth of our overdue annual reports to Consumer Affairs Victoria. I am also pleased to report that our fortnightly CAPA bulletin seems to be an effective way of communicating with affiliates, with consistently high rates of the bulletin being opened by recipients.

I also wrote a letter on behalf of CAPA to Senator Kim Carr, and collected past CAPA presidents' signatures which were added to the letter. Most living presidents from the past 20 years signed the letter, which communicated appreciation for Carr's allyship towards CAPA during his career in the science ministry and shadow ministry. While Senator Carr remains in the Senate, he has resigned from his long-held shadow ministry position.

General Secretary / Vice President, Rachel Brisbane



Meetings and events attended

This quarter I attended all monthly executive meetings as well as the SCM in Canberra in May.

As General Secretary, I have worked on achievements in the following areas:

Financial

- Reporting for SCM - all documents provided are available in the google drive
- Board - with the interim board in place, I have prepared a briefing document for the incoming members on the financial fundamentals of CAPA and answered their queries.
- Expenses and Payroll - I have coded and processed expenses for the book keepers regularly. This is usually done 2- 3 times each week and is the foundation for the accurate reporting in the P&L.
- 2018 Audit - This is now complete and was accepted at the SCM.
- Outsourced Bookkeeping - We now have good reporting established and I am now refining some handling of data.
- Affiliate Income Received - We have receipted \$172K of the budgeted \$200K (this is a great outcome at mid-year).
- Fee Remissions - No further fee remissions have been received since the SCM.
- Investment - a third \$50K 6-month term deposit has been set up.

As Vice President, I have worked on achievements in the following areas

Strategy

- Hosted an activity at the SCM
- Worked consistently on developing the framing statements and supporting documentation for the Board in conjunction with the President

Handover Documents

- Continued adding to this document

ACM Bid

- I have led the ACM bid work with MPA and potentially GSA to host the ACM this year which includes \$13K of sponsorship, potentially more if GSA is able to contribute.

Policy and Research Advisor, Owen Myles



Formal Meetings and Events Attended

Note: This list does not include informal meetings or phone calls.

- April CAPA Executive Meeting
- May CAPA Executive Meeting
- CAPA Special Council Meeting
- June CAPA Student Representative Committee Meeting

Key Project/Event Updates

Election

Obviously, the election has now wrapped up, and the results finalised. The LNP Coalition has received 77 seats and Labor 68, with the final 6 seats belonging to the crossbench. Once the speaker is accounted for this will give the Government a 1 seat majority in the House. In the Senate, the balance of power is jointly held by both the Centre Alliance and Jackie Lambie. Only one of the two will be needed to pass legislation, however if both groups block the passage of legislation, it would be unable to pass (assuming ALP and Greens opposition).

Throughout this campaign I produced an election report based on the survey circulated by Natasha to the parties currently holding at least 1 seat in the parliament. To supplement this report, I produced several infographics which were progressively released on our Facebook Page (with help from Natasha and Zoe). These infographics showed each party's statements on key issues as well as party specific scorecards showing how they scored in each category. The key infographic was an overall scorecard which demonstrates each party's score compared to the others. These infographics were shared multiple times, including by the Greens Higher Education Spokesperson. We tried to be neutral but informative in our campaign so that we can work with any incoming government.

Explainers

Federal Contacts - I have developed a post-election explainer to help affiliates to know who to contact about their issues within the new parliament. This is based on the newly announced

LNP and Labor front benches, and the continuing Greens spokespeople. The explainer also includes information about how to contact each person and should be released to affiliates shortly.

ABS Data - Over this period, the ABS released a datafile containing information about government expenditure on higher education. Based on this I developed a short explainer for affiliates, so that this can be passed on in a simpler format. As part of this, I completed some analysis of the data looking at the most recent higher education expenditure compared to that of the final year of the Labor government, taking into account inflation and population growth. This was release to affiliates via a CAPA bulletin.

CAPA Policy Book

Since the constitutional change made at the SCM, a decision needs to be made regarding the role and future of the CAPA Policy Book. I have written a short options paper for CAPA to consider outlining the six possible options, highlighting the 3 most preferable options. This paper is presented for discussion at the July NRC meeting.

SCM

At the SCM I was asked to run a workshop on post-election priorities. This session covered our election campaign, the state or play of the new parliament (particularly the senate) and the risks that may be on the horizon. It also involved discussion of what areas we should be protecting, where we can make progress and a discussion on resourcing. Feedback received was positive and I have shared my slides with one affiliate who wanted to take them back to their organisation. I also ran the Women's pro-caucus, which has some robust discussions on how male student leaders could support women in the push for gender equity and to reduced sexual assault and harassment on campus.

Future Projects

Moving forward I will be working on CAPA's submission to the Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health which is due in early July. Beyond that the expectation is that there will be fewer Government submissions as the Federal Government settles in to their new term. We will be looking to actively build relationships with the important players in the new parliament, both in terms of Ministers, shadow Ministers and crossbenchers. Internally, I will be looking to move

forward on the CAPA Policy Book, with the aim to have a finalised book finished before the ACM.

Media Officer, Zoë Tulip



As has doubtless been mentioned in other reports before this one, there were two key events for CAPA in this past quarter: the federal election, and the CAPA ACM in Canberra, hosted by PARSA.

Because the Budget Night lockup excluded student bodies this year, there were hints that there would not be very many positive outcomes for students delivered in the budget. Our suspicions were justified: there were in fact no major announcements for the sector during the budget delivery. This made campaigning during the election campaign difficult, however discussions during the SCM gathered momentum and we have been able to continue campaigning strongly around student welfare ever since.

On a related note that supported both the student welfare campaign of CAPA and the Centrelink campaign of PARSA, in the lead up to the election I joined the PARSA president on the road, visiting various MPs, senators and candidates to talk about the impact of postgraduate students not gaining the access they need to Austudy or Newstart. This included chatting to the Chief of Staff of Tanya Plibersek, and many others from all sides of politics.

The SCM was spent mostly taking photos and hearing feedback about campaigns directly from affiliates, liaising with other office bearers, supporting the PARSA president who chaired the CAPA governance working group, and some social media activity. My role at SCMs tends to involve wearing multiple hats, as I am now a member of exec so I am also usually part of a PARSA delegation and typically attend in that capacity, too.

We had quite a number of press releases again this quarter, all of which myself, Natasha and Owen (PRA) worked on before distribution to affiliates and media. This included a few appearances in The Australian, as well as The Campus Review. The most recent pressers to be picked up centred around student finances, in particular the effects of penalty rate cuts to

low income earners, and the lowering of the HECS debt repayment threshold. On the latter, PARSA helped to arrange an interview with a journalist from The Canberra Times, part of which was run in an article published on July 1st (see: <https://www.facebook.com/CAPA.Au/photos/a.675321515811359/2549882488355243/?type=3&theater>).



 ANU postgraduate students, Zoë Tullip and Tess Boylen are worried about HECS debt now the threshold has been lowered. Picture: Elesä Kurtz

With the support of my affiliate, I also joined a delegation to attend the Progress 2019 conference in Melbourne recently, where I attended sessions on advocacy for minorities, digital marketing, and video production on a budget.

Topics around the welfare of postgraduate students is currently getting significant media coverage, so it is important to take advantage of this momentum. In the third quarter I will continue to work with office bearers, affiliates and other national-level bodies to spread awareness of the increasing struggles and hardship currently faced by postgraduate students by continuing to inform press releases and readying folks for interviews with media if and when they happen.

NATSIPA Liaison Officer, Victoria Van Schie

Not received as of 29/7/19 - note that Victoria resigned as of 10/7/19 and is replaced by Jahmillah Johnson (NATSIPA President) as acting NLO

Disabilities Officer, Marguerite Biasatti



Submitted 5/7/19 - to be distributed to affiliates at a later date pending approval

Women's Officer, Romana-Rea Begicevic



April kicked off with the Women's Action Committee (4-5th) where I presented about issues faced by women in academia that present challenges in pursuing success in their careers. The NTEU members were supportive of the establishment of a national taskforce against sexual assault and sexual harassment and furthermore, getting a

postgraduate student representative on it. I spoke of the importance of universities around Australia formally adopting the Principles of Respectful Supervision and the members agreed it is necessary and will lobby their universities as much as they can because unfortunately adaptation has been slow. In addition, we spoke about the opportunity to collaborate with the NTEU on Blue Stockings Week to further women in academia in secure and successful jobs. They are planning on running stalls to discuss local issues and to attract more members to get engaged and would welcome CAPA's engagement.

Late May we had the CAPA SCM where we discussed various issues and established the interim board. I organised and ran the Women's Caucus and pro-caucuses Queer and Disabilities and the feedback will be used for future strategies post-election. PARSA were

wonderful hosts and it was lovely to meet the affiliates and delegates from around Australia. I have been in touch with some of them regarding future strategic planning since the SCM.

In June, Belle Lim (from CISA) approached CAPA with her idea, about running a rally in recognition of sexual violence victims. CAPA and the NUS endorsed it and have since had the rally (Melbourne) and been involved in creating the petition calling for the federal government to tighten responses to violence against women. Since this petition will be up by the time Orientation season approaches, we have also discussed running a campaign around it, for our affiliates. Here is the petition for reference <https://www.change.org/p/australian-federal-government-and-state-government-justice-for-sexual-violence-victims-courtney-herron-aiaa-maasarwe-and-more>

The NTEU has kindly invited me to speak on a panel at the Women's Conference in July. The theme is focusing on building for the future. This is a session that will look at the upcoming generation of women activists and how activism is likely to change and also the priorities for the future of feminism and activism. I am really looking forward to that!

International Officer, Devendra Singh



Overview:

I started the month of April with a lecture on 'Transformational Leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and its relevance in the Contemporary World' delivered at the Consulate General of India. After the lecture, I got myself indulged in the discussion about the

current trends around universities with the attendees which included students and staff of universities with the likes of RMIT, Swinburne and La Trobe. This helped me gaining a wider perspective about how people are thinking about postgraduates. Later in the month, I attended VicWISE meeting which is going through a total transformation from a funded project to a self

reliant organisation. The discussion was around its organisational structure to maintain an independent sustainability.

In May, I attended Melbourne International Student Conference organised by City of Melbourne. It was an amazing platform to connect with the student representatives across Victoria and to know more about the ongoing issues on their respective campuses. I spoke to a few of them individually. I conveyed them about the work CAPA has been doing so far and solved their queries related to misconceptions around students like them. Towards the end of May, I went to the CAPA SCM held in Canberra. During the conference, I gave my report on the work done till date and also touched the importance of advocating for international postgraduates, likes of those have increased drastically in the last few years. During the two days of conference, I also got some time out to visit Honourable Ambassador of Brazil and Consul General of India in their respective Embassies. These are two countries out of top 5 countries having highest number of postgraduate students in Australia. We exchanged views with each other about international students' policies and issues. Brazilian government is running a program called 'prInt' in order to promote research based higher education in their country and Australia is a major partner for this program. The increased number of students coming from India is just the peak of the iceberg and the whole iceberg is yet to be seen majorly in the form of postgraduate students. I strongly believe that it is of utmost importance to establish connection with the bureaucrats who have an important role in the Australian Higher education sector.

The month of June seemed to be less engaging for me due to my examinations. I managed to support NTEU in the NTEU Monash Protest. I facilitated the production of video about the student experience for an event to celebrate the 100th birthday of Sir Zelman Cowen. I also recorded a podcast for Monash University as a part of their aMigo program for the future international students.

Meetings and events attended:

1. CAPA's 40th Anniversary
2. Lecture at Indian Consulate
3. VicWISE Meeting - 18th April
4. Cross Campus Fares Fair Steering Committee
5. Future Work Future Leaders Week at Monash University
6. CAPA SCM in Canberra
7. Melbourne International Student Conference

8. Meeting with Officers from Indian Consulate
9. Meeting with the Honourable Ambassador of Brazil in Canberra
10. NTEU Monash Protest on Caulfield Campus of Monash University.

Tasks Completed:

1. Phonetic conversation with the High Commission of Malaysia in order to convey them about the concession issues in Victoria and New South Wales.
2. Emailed the list of issues along with connected resources to Consulate of India in Canberra.
3. Emailed the list of issues along with the ways to support the students, to Ambassador of Brazil in Canberra.
4. Facilitated in the production of a video about the student experience for an event to celebrate the 100th Birthday of Sir Zelman Cowen.
5. Facilitated a podcast recording dedicated to international students as a part of aMigo platform - Monash owned Social Media platform for future international students at Monash University.

Tasks in Progress:

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

Plans for next quarter:

1. I will be attending CISA Conference in Perth.
2. I also plan to meet our affiliates during CISA conference individually.
3. I will be providing more presence of CAPA at local and state level events.
4. I will be attending VicWISE meeting.
5. I will be attending Cross Campus Fares Fair Steering Committee meeting.

Queer Officer, Lauren Taylor



Not received as of 29/7/19

REPORT FROM THE CAPA BOARD

Board chair, Peter Watson



Introduction

Following the adoption of the new Constitution by Council at the May 2019 CAPA Special Council Meeting an interim Board has been elected under the new governance structure to help shepherd the organisational during the transitional period between their election and the 2019 Annual Council Meeting. Five of the six available Board members positions have been elected at the SCM along with the NATSIPA appointee Sharlene Leroy-Dyer and ex officio member,

National President Natasha joining. The elected Chair of the Board Peter Watson has filed this report in order to update affiliates on the Board's activities so far.

Meetings

Since the formation and election of the Interim Board during the SCM in May the Board has met twice during which some key preliminary business has been conducted. The Chair and Secretary have been elected from the elected Board members, several subcommittees in addition to the Appointments Committee have been formed (detailed below) and the manner for which the Board shall meet has been determined. Going forward the Board is scheduled to meet every 4 weeks or as deemed necessary, with standing agenda items being reports from both the President and General Secretary. In alternate fortnights the work to be conducted through subcommittees or by members will be undertaken. All communications and documents pertaining to the activities of the Board and its subcommittees will be managed through the email address and associated online storage of board@capa.edu.au.

Projects

Early work undertaken by the Board through the Appointments Subcommittee is the opening of an EOI process for the final internally elected position unfilled at the SCM. Currently members are updating the skills matrix for the Board with plans to finalise the application window in the coming weeks.

Given the large structural changes to the organisation two key tasks face the Board prior to the ACM. Those are:

- 1) Beginnings of a full review of Regulations
- 2) Driving forward the early formulation of a Strategic Plan provided to the Board by the Executive

To this, the Board has formed two additional subcommittees; the Governance Subcommittee and the Strategy Subcommittee with these due to meet on alternate fortnights to the Board or as deemed necessary between now and the ACM. Both of the projects outlined above represent large pieces of work and I suspect that the Strategic Plan would be best served for delivery at the 2020 SCM with the hope of providing strong direction to 2025. However the need for extensive consultation with stakeholders and stages of review by the Board highlight the need for a one-year timeline for this project. The more pressing issue in my mind is building an appropriate regulatory framework by which the organisation can operate internally. This includes the development of Election Regulations, a Board Charter and policy surrounding the processing of remissions to give but a few examples.

The final pillar of the governance yet to be undertaken and a potential subcommittee of the organisation that future Boards will likely pursue is that of Audit & Risk. It is my opinion that while the current Board members have an intrinsic understanding of the risks facing CAPA, the documenting, monitoring and maintaining via a Risk Register of these will only serve to benefit and safeguard the organisation's future. The Board will, through the A&R subcommittee, be able to work with the Executive in annual auditing of the organisation and allow the Executive to focus their efforts on research, submissions and representation of the affiliates and postgraduates.

As well as the major pieces of work above some smaller additional projects are currently being explored primarily by myself with input from the President and General Secretary. Those being a discussion around remuneration of directors and some expectations and KPIs beyond those stated in the Constitution that will associate any potential stipend. CAPA currently has a budget line allocated for the Board however greater accountability of members receiving a stipend to the Board is prudent. The Board is also exploring training for directors and while we are fortunate to have Sharlene as a member able to provide governance training the President is exploring whether several online modules may be offered from the AICD either free of charge or at a discounted rate given our objectives.

Finally, an issue that became apparent during the review of the Constitution was that CAPA as it stood was incorporated in multiple states of Australia. While this incorporation is currently being withdrawn from the ACT and updated in Victoria (for operational purposes as most activities of the organisation are carried out through Melbourne) there remains the potential to register the organisation as a not-for-profit or charitable organisation. Although doing so may provide CAPA with taxation benefits, it is unclear from readily available information as to whether CAPA qualifies and should status be granted would include necessary clauses be included in the Constitution and incur additional reporting obligations. Ultimately charitable or not-for-profit status and Deductable Gift Recipient (DGR) status are determined by the ACNC (Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission) and the ATO respectively.