



## QUARTERLY REPORTS FROM CAPA 2020 OFFICE BEARERS

*The reports are covering period from July to September 2020*

## NRC 2020 Quarterly Reports

<b><i>CAPA National President – Romana-Rea Begicevic .....</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>
<b><i>CAPA Vice President – Errol Phuah .....</i></b>	<b><i>5</i></b>
<b><i>CAPA Policy and Research Advisor - Errol Phuah .....</i></b>	<b><i>7</i></b>
<b><i>CAPA Media and Communication Officer – Anushka Kapoor .....</i></b>	<b><i>9</i></b>
<b><i>CAPA International Officer – Devendra Singh.....</i></b>	<b><i>11</i></b>
<b><i>CAPA Women’s Officer – Aishwarya Singh.....</i></b>	<b><i>13</i></b>
<b><i>CAPA Queer Officer – Shae Brown.....</i></b>	<b><i>15</i></b>
<b><i>CAPA NLO – Sharlene Leroy-Dyer.....</i></b>	<b><i>17</i></b>

## CAPA National President – Romana-Rea Begicevic

During the third quarter CAPA picked up pace with campaigning and advocacy. We were able to hold our ground and maintain momentum participating in meetings and providing advocacy through state, territory and federal governments, as well as external and internal stakeholders. Unlike previous years, the budget was announced on the 6th of October this year and while there were no specific announcements for postgraduate students, we helped to secure \$1 billion in funding for research through our COVID-19 and #valuepostgrads campaign. The funding was injected into the Research Support Programme (RSP), allowing universities flexibility to fund researcher students, however—our affiliates will have to fight for it—much like with the 6 month extensions to candidacy. There were other wonderful things in the budget such as extra support for mental health and the Respect@Work initiative which we campaigned and lobbied for, however, as mentioned previously not specific to postgraduate students. Errol and I have prepared two budget-briefing papers.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the drop in international student income, made it very clear that a reform to Higher Education was necessary, especially in relation as to how research is funded. However, when Education Minister Dan Tehan announced the “Job-Ready Graduates Bill”, everyone was blindsighted by the historic fee hikes to Humanities degrees—during a global pandemic! A budget neutral measure, this Bill, which was successful, consequently reduces the cost of STEM degrees by up to half. But while this Bill mostly affects undergraduate students, it did raise some concerns, which is why we wrote a submission to the Senate inquiry. In relation to tuition fees, I wrote to the GO8 CEO Vicki Thompson to raise the issue of the quality (or a lack thereof) of online education, especially as compared to the mammoth tuition fees some (international) students’ pay. I did this after extensive consultation with our Go8 affiliates—who endorsed the letter—and we basically asked for better quality of online delivery or money back. I wait patiently for her response particularly since I also raised the issue with TEQSA who are also looking into it. Advocacy around the lack of secure

SSAF funding for our members has been raised as an issue through both my meetings with TEQSA and federal submissions, although we will probably need to carry the SSAF campaign over into next year. Last but not least on the advocacy front, I was invited to speak to the Senate Select Committee on Temporary Migration, where I argued that more resources are needed to inform international students of their workplace rights and harsher penalties for employers engaging in unlawful employment practices. As well as a lift to the 20 hour per week allowable working limit and better resourcing for our members.

As we prepare for the ACM (5-6th December) we look back on all that we have achieved, but we could not have done it all without the support from our affiliates. From attending extra meetings to actively campaigning alongside us we have remained a force to be reckoned with (40 years!). While COVID-19 has challenged the way in which we live both personally and professionally, our focus remains firmly set on achieving the best outcome for our members, and doing the best we can to get to the other side of this. Even as I write this report Victoria is finally set to exit lockdown after a gruelling 112-day lockdown—truly the best news ever! Our relationships are stronger than ever and our membership base is actually growing. Although the vast majority of our members have sought large fee reductions, I could not be more grateful for all our members' contributions this year. I also cannot possibly conclude without thanking my team for all their hard work, perseverance, imagination and sheer determination. How lucky am I? And so we keep going.

Yours truly Romana Begicevic <3

## CAPA Vice President – Errol Phuah

### Formal Meetings and Events Attended:

- CAPA NRC meeting in July, August, September
- CAPA Board Meeting in July and August.
- Go8 Affiliates meetings in August and September.
- With Romana: Met with JCSU, Adelaide University SRC and WSU SRC representatives to introduce and organize affiliation/re-affiliation to CAPA.
- Introduction to CAPA with Stacy (MGA VP) from MGA.

### Key Project/Event Updates:

#### Relaunch of Valuepostgrads campaign:

##### 1. *Organizing all Go8 affiliates meetings and agendas*

Consultations and discussing the concerns of affiliates regarding unchanged tuition fees of coursework postgraduate students. This is despite unanimous complaints from affiliates that online learning has been delivered at a lower quality than that of on-campus experience.

##### 2. *Designing a campaign strategy for valuepostgrads campaign with Romana*

A plan was put together to engage with Go8, TEQSA to bring to their attention that the concerns education quality of postgraduate students as not been heard. We agreed that the best approach would be to address the Go8 with a letter endorsed by Go8 affiliate presidents. Options we presented included an agreeable increase in quality, fee reduction, increase SSAF budget to student associations (improving student experience) or an agreeable combination of these options.

TEQSA would be made aware of the drop in education quality as perceived by students. Affiliates would be briefed and assist in encouraging students to complete surveys regarding their concerns regarding coursework or HDR during 2020.

Campaigning and awareness will be raised through the relaunch of the valuepostgrads campaign where students would take photos introducing themselves and what they study or research and tagging relevant ministers in the lead up to the budget release.

I also had to update/change the valuepostgrads page on the website and the relevant material to adapt coursework students to participate - the original campaign was only for research students.

Administrative Work:

There were various administrative tasks that are ongoing with many of the bills to be paid and subscriptions to be renewed. This included insurances, auditing fees, subscriptions for services, etc. There were also inquiries to tighten up on the retainer fee with our book-keepers to ensure we are receiving quality service at a competitive price.

There was also a requirement to increase our website security as the website was actively being targeted by 'brute force' attacks. These are malicious attacks by hackers to gain access to the administrative rights to our website by 'trial and error' guessing our passwords. After consultation with various independent individuals with experience in these matters, all website accounts with administrative or editor privileges were reinstated with new passwords. Since these changes, there has been no indication that our website has been breached.

## CAPA Policy and Research Advisor - Errol Phuah

### Formal Meetings and Events Attended:

- CAPA NRC meeting in July, August, September
- Go8 Affiliates meetings in August and September.
- With Romana: Met with JCSU, Adelaide University SRC and WSU SRC representatives to introduce and organize affiliation/re-affiliation to CAPA.
- Introduction to CAPA with Stacy (MGA VP) from MGA.
- Meet up with Peter Derbyshire and other policy people in Canberra in July and August.

### Key Project/Event Updates:

#### Relaunch of Valuepostgrads campaign:

#### *Discussion with Romana regarding the policy options we can put forward to Go8*

The suggestion put forward was based on 2 of our affiliates concerns. This was based on the reduction in education quality and the reduction in SSAF they will receive in the coming year as the result of reduced international student intake going into 2021. It was proposed that an agreeable increase in quality, fee reduction, increase SSAF budget to student associations (improving student experience) or an agreeable combination of these options. This way the university will have more flexibility to provide improvements to reduce their fees or improve their overall service.

#### Submissions:

The submissions for this quarter included the 2020-2021 pre-budget submission to the treasury, the submission on CAPA's official response on the Job-Ready Graduate package and a submission in response to the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Model Code presented in the French Review.

The pre-budget submission incorporates many of CAPA's previous recommendations as continuation from previous years such as SASH related recommendations and Austudy eligibility for all postgraduate students. There was also room for newer and more recent recommendations that included extra funding to cover the extensions

needed for research students. This required using some new and old material from previous submissions last year and this year.

The job-ready graduate submission indicated CAPA's stance that the motivation of the package is sound and CAPA largely agrees to this. However explaining the means of using 'price signalling' to achieve more CSP places in STEM was flawed will not work. New source material was researched to validate these statements. There were also concerns of how this will disproportionately affect student of lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The response to the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Model Code from the French Review involved re-affirming CAPA's stance from CAPA's previous submission from 2019 with an update to more recent events in 2020. The main contribution here was to strengthen the argument consecutive slashes to public research funding has resulted in the reduction in academic freedom. Since many private and philanthropic sources of research funding may have invested or conflicts of interest with undesired research outcomes.

*Policy book:*

This is something I've been working on passively all year. The last time this was updated was in 2015 and from what I've seen does require some updates as the current version mentions old legislation policies that are no longer in effect. There has also been more recent developments since 2015 and will likely need to be included. Since transferring the policy book to a new word document format, it now contains a table of content, which the 2015 version does not have. Moving forward I will be requesting consultation with the various equity officers regarding various sections of the policy book.



## CAPA Media and Communication Officer – Anushka Kapoor

### Meetings and events attended

- Monthly meeting for July, August and September
- Webinar about international student and their working rights
- Webinar of study clusters
- NRC clinic meeting
- CISA conference from 15 th -17 th July 2020

### Tasks completed

- Updated the social media. Instagram.
- Discussed the social media strategies with the members in the monthly meeting.
- Calculated the Instagram Insights.
- Updated all the social media on daily basis

### Tasks in progress

- Follow up with the members about attending any conference or meeting for content.
- Working on Instagram strategies. Updated the social media. Instagram.
- Discussed the social media strategies with the members in the monthly meeting.
- Calculated the Instagram Insights.
- Uploaded videos on Instagram stories.
- Updated platforms to aware people in Victoria about COVID
- Updated all the social media on daily basis

### Plans for the next month

- Fully Update the Website, wiki page.
- Upload content for Instagram.
- Calculate social media matrix
- Update the president on the growth over social media

- Anti-Poverty Day | LIFE campaign | AUWU NSW still in talks

### **Recommendations to Executive Committee**

- Provide me Pictures and videos if you attend any events, meetings or conference for Instagram on my email :media@capa.edu.au
- Word document with sayings /quotes for Instagram from each member.

### **Attachments (e.g. press releases, submissions or campaigns you contributed to)**

- Launch of NRC clinic Campaign
- MEDIA RELEASE to call for government funding
- Launch of the postgrads campaign

## CAPA International Officer – Devendra Singh

### Meetings and events attended:

- Multiple meetings with community leaders regarding the COVID-19 situation.
- Study Melbourne Leadership Labs weekly events.
- NRC Campaign Clinic
- Victorian Multicultural Forum – Public Housing Community Engagement Meeting with Community leaders and ministers of State.
- Engaging with Jodi Mckay, MP & Clayton Barr, Shadow Minister for Education for discussion around the International Student issues in New South Wales.
- Online Community Roundtable Meeting with the Hon. Ros Spence, Minister for
- Multicultural Affairs, Community Sport and Youth, and DHHS Senior Medical Advisor, Claire Harris.
- Set on the panel - Work Rights for International Students with the officers from the Australian Government.
- Exchanged views with the Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, and Mr. Howard in a roundtable meeting.
- 9. Speaker at the Youth Futures Summit – Spoke about universities of the future and how the student outcome can be improved.
- Helped the Department of Health and Human Services in the COVID-19 affected areas by supporting the officials and connecting them to multicultural communities present in these areas, so that, it becomes easier for them to conduct the tests without much hassle.

### Tasks Completed:

- Publicized multiple updates through various channels about the COVID-19, commonly known as Coronavirus, not just in the state but nationwide.
- Contributed to #ValuePostgrads campaign
- Communicated with international student representatives from university-based association to campaign for fee-reduction in their university.

- Contributed to the Coronavirus awareness videos produced by the Department of Premier and Cabinet along with the Department of Health and Human Services.

**Tasks in Progress:**

1. Preparing a list of the COVID-19 related demands of international students, that were met either by the universities or the state governments.

**Plans for next quarter:**

- Attending CAPA ACM.
- Engaging with International students, representatives, and ministers regarding COVID-19.
- Helping the Department of Health and Human Services in the COVID-19 affected areas by supporting the officials and connecting them to multicultural communities present in these areas, so that, it becomes easier for them to conduct the tests without much hassle.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Attachments:**

None

## CAPA Women's Officer – Aishwarya Singh

### **Outline of April- June Quarter: Accomplishments**

The third quarter major emphasis was contribution towards NRC Campaign Clinic, lobbying which included virtual meeting with the State Education Minister Queensland to resolve state related concerns of postgraduate students and attended National Seminar organised by NTEU.

### **Meetings and events attended:**

- CAPA NRC Campaign Clinic- Mon 20 July, (18:30- 20:30)
- CAPA NRC Meeting- August 4, 2020

### **Tasks Completed:**

- Participated in the NRC Campaign Clinic.
- Connecting with Hon Karen Andrews MP Office, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology for collaboration.
- Virtual Meeting with Hon Grace Grace MP, State Education Minister, Queensland to resolve state related concerns of postgraduate students on 11 August 2020. Meeting included appreciation of our advice regarding the issues facing domestic and international research higher degree students because of Covid-19 Pandemic.
- I was also informed that Ministerial Champion for International Education, the Hon Kate Jones MP, Minister for State Development, Tourism and Innovation, wrote to the Hon Dan Tehan MP, requesting the Commonwealth Ombudsman and University, Colleges; extend recently announced COVID-19 unemployment payments to include International students and publicly assure International students their Overseas Student Health Cover will cover them if they fall ill with the virus, like Australian citizens.
- Lastly, as the matters raised by us fell within the portfolio responsibilities of the Honourable Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Education the same was forwarded by the Queensland State Education Minister for Minister Tehan's consideration.
- Received correspondence from Office of The Hon Dan Tehan MP on 25 August 2020.

- Attended Bluestocking Week 2020 National Seminar on Women, Work & COVID organised by NTEU on 4 September 2020.

### **Tasks in Progress**

- The Conference for International Women studying in Australia organised by Study Melbourne, Victoria University and CISA from 28 September- 2 October 2020.

### **Attachments (e.g. press releases, submissions, or campaigns you contributed to):**

- CAPA's Campaign (#Valuepostgrads)

## CAPA Queer Officer – Shae Brown

### Overview

The third quarter of my role with CAPA has deepened my appreciation for the dynamic nature of State and National politics, as well honed my capacity for writing submissions.

### Main achievements of the quarter

- The submission to the State parliament of NSW

### 2. Meetings and events attended

- 6-7-2020 - Protecting Our Rights workshop with Queer Collaborations
- 22-7-2020 Equality Australia meeting. Briefing on One Nation NSW State Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill
- 31-7-2020 QUTE meeting, NTEU

### 3. Tasks completed

- Submission to NSW Parliament re: One Nation Anti-discrimination
- (Religious Freedom and Equality) Bill 2020, NSW. Sent to 45 Ministers individually.
- Assistance with other CAPA submissions.
- Involvement and support for the #valuepostgrads campaign.

### 4. Tasks in progress

- Draft of Press release

### 5. Plans for the next quarter

- Press Release and article re the State and Federal Religious Freedom Bills

### 6. Recommendations (for those holding your role in future years)

- Get really clear on the members of parliament and what they're policies are.
- Keep an eye on the political landscape for LGBTIQ folks and get involved where you can.
- Offer to assist with writing or editing submissions for CAPA, it's a good way to learn.

### 7. Attachments

- PowerPoint with notes, from Queer Collaborations workshop.

- Submission Document



## CAPA NLO – Sharlene Leroy-Dyer

### Meetings and events attended

1. Attended NATSIPA executive meetings
2. Attended CAPA NRC Meetings July, August, September
3. Webinar about BlockTheBill & FundUniFairly
4. CISA conference from 15 th -17 th July 2020
5. TEQSA meeting
6. Meeting with QLD minister
7. Planning meetings for NATSIPA conference
8. Queer collaborations
9. CAPA NRC Campaign Clinic
10. ISGA Meetings
11. Attended and did acknowledgement of country at Bluestocking Week 2020 National Seminar on Women, Work & COVID organised by NTEU on 4 September 2020.

### Overview of your main achievements of the quarter

- Contributed to joint CAPA and NATSIPA submissions
- Liaised with CAPA around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues
- Collaborated with and attended meetings with NUS, CAPA, CISA and UATSIS
- Collaborated with UATSIS re FUSA
- Letter to Jacqui Lambie re voting down education reform
- FB and Twitter to condemn govt education cuts
- NATSIPA conference preparation
- Involvement and support for the #valuepostgrads campaign

### Tasks in progress

- Social media campaign condemning govt over education cuts
- Meeting with QLD education minister
- NATSIPA Conference preparations

### Plans for the next quarter

- NATSIPA Conference preparations
- CAPA ACM Preparations