

CRACCUM

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT MAGAZINE SINCE 1927

STUDENT POLITICS



CRACCUM UNSOLVED:
STUDENT COUNCIL

Irene Parsaei

BABY BACK BENCHES
REVIEW

Bunquin, Bhardwaj &
Snelgrove-Douch

FACULTY MERGER
ROMANCES

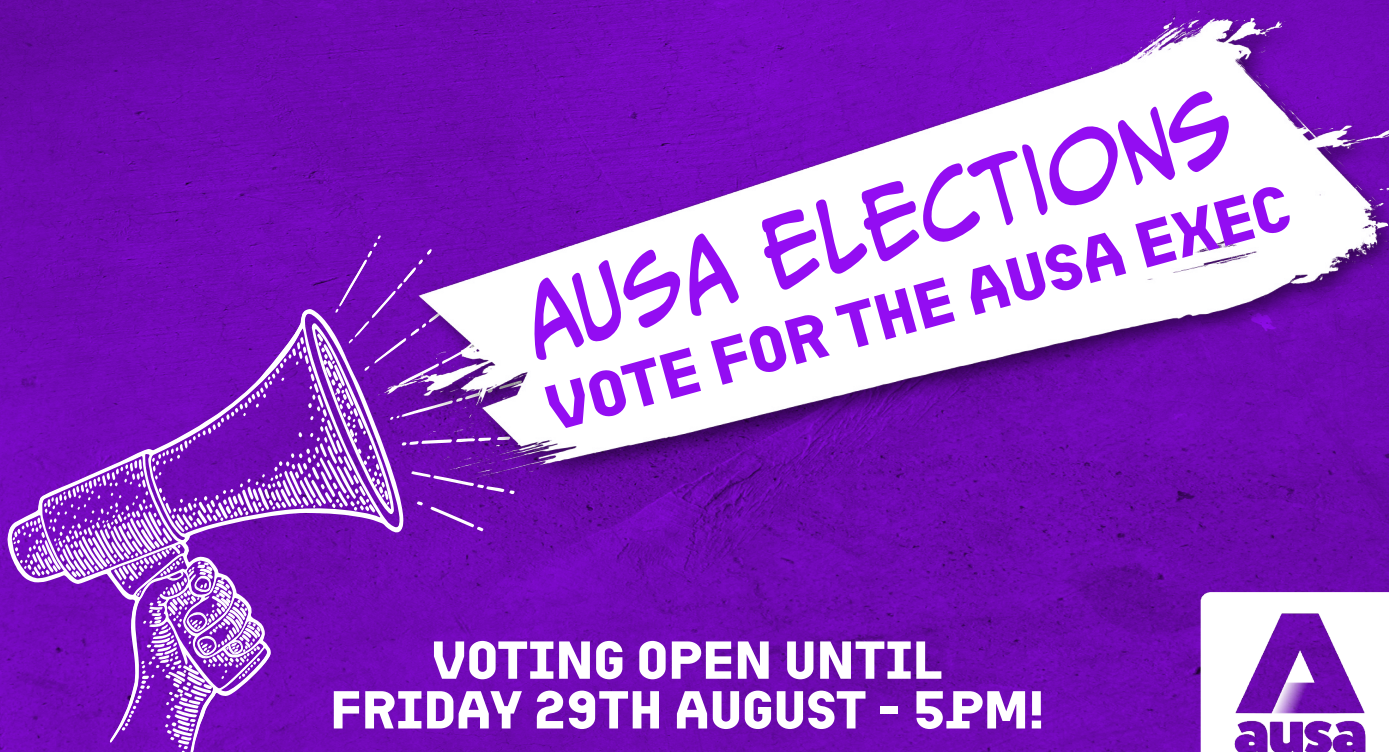
Taylor-Meade &
Tallulah

VOTE & WIN AN XBOX



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VOTE & GO IN THE DRAW FOR EPIC PRIZES



**VOTING OPEN UNTIL
FRIDAY 29TH AUGUST - 5PM!**





CONTENTS

Editorial	4	Law Suits and Business Casual-Ties	16
News	4	Review	17
Whakarongo Mai	5	Symphony No. 19: An East Asian Girl's Political Ballad	18
Harry's Sports Recap!	6	We Carry Them Differently Now	21
Craccum Unsolved: Student Council	7	An Anything Pattie Recipe(ish)	22
Baby Back Benches	8	Puzzles	23
Poetry	12	Horoscopes	24
Let Me Speak	14	AUSA Elections Candidate Statements	25
Shakespeare & Lesson Plans	15		

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82%

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OUR STAFF



Harry Sutton
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
editorinchief@craccum.co.nz



Lewis Matheson Creed (HE/HIM)
MANAGING EDITOR
managingeditor@craccum.co.nz



Lee Li (SHE/HER)
DIGITAL MANAGER
@leeiloveeeeu
digitalmanager@craccum.co.nz



Cindy Limanto
VISUAL ARTS CO-EDITOR



Inara Ray
VISUAL ARTS CO-EDITOR
@inararay_art
visualarts@craccum.co.nz



Irene Parsaei
NEWS EDITOR
news@craccum.co.nz

Nick Withers (HE/THEY)
DESIGNER
design@ausa.org.nz

ADVERTISING
advertising@ausa.org.nz

CONTRIBUTORS

Anonymous, Vivienne Bunquin, Arshita Bhardwaj, Azzurra Snelgrove-Douch, Chaz Cho, @oli.fauna_art, Bryn Kliskey, flaxandesesame, Aayush Sharma, YU-AN HUANG, Day Park, Seoyoung Kim, Rose Taylor-Meade, Danaka Tallulah, Jeffree, Alicja Nowacka, @ESTA_EATS, Angelina Prem, Ramon Carbonell, Mayoora Nanthakumaran, Trevor Pronoso, Louise Matheson, Madeline Smith, Daniel C., Heather Hills, Hannah Judd, Taylor Lee, Maaz Kazi, Harry Bradshaw, Veronica Zuo, Miyuni Dinara Karnasuriya, Pia Sutherland, Lana Victoria Elegarle & The Craccum Discord

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EDITORIAL

HARRY SUTTON

Well, fellow students, it's now the time of the year when random university students you've mostly never heard of run for the glorious AUSA roles! From massive speeches about the changes that they are proposing to social media stunts, this is one of the most fun times of the year. It's student elections! Some people will live and die for this sort of event; however, some couldn't care less. There really doesn't seem to be an in-between.

Eleven roles in total are being voted on, from the prestigious AUSA president to the women's rights officer to the postgraduate officer, and by the time you have read this article, the official voting for the roles will be open.

For the next two weeks, the nominees and candidates running for said roles will be under the strict guidelines of the AUSA election process. All are trying in the most creative ways possible to get votes to be in power, to possibly change? Probably not a whole lot I will say, and maybe one or two of the candidates' promises will be done if they do indeed win; however, like any politics around the world, it takes a hell of a lot of effort, time and luck for any political figure to make real change.

In saying that, there have been a few instances of governments making change, making massive and world-changing moves that did end up changing the course of history, such as when our very own government spent twenty-six million dollars on not changing our flag.

Yes, that's right, the New Zealand government spent twenty-six million dollars on making a referendum go through a whole process to conclude that the majority of Kiwis didn't even want to change the flag in the first place.

We could have better-paid teachers, six million more school lunches (although after seeing photos of these lunches, I'm not sure if that would be money well spent), and bought several more MRI scanners. After all that, we still would have had some money left over to get some more electric buses or even an electric train. Instead, we wasted it on choosing between a laser Kiwi and our original Union Jacked up flag.

Imagine if we had had a referendum for changing our university logo, I don't want to even try to think about what monstrous logos some of you guys would have come up with. Chaos, but so entertaining. I guess we will have to just wait and hope that we get that chance shortly.

To end off, the time to vote for your fellow friend or a random candidate who promises to design the general library in a way that you can find a seat to study at (probably will never happen) is not that long, only 11 days to choose, so find the time to sit down and vote for your favourite and maybe, just maybe they might end up winning.

Til next time guys

Harry

NEWS

DEAR BELOVED, WE'RE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO MOURN... 95BFM?

IS 95BFM NEXT ON THE KILL LIST?



IRENE PARSAEI

It's no secret that this university doesn't like the arts. They don't even attempt to hide it. Every year there's more news of budget cuts for courses, libraries, and recently our beloved bookshop, UBIQ, went into liquidation. If you're still not over the loss of UBIQ, here's something else to add to your mourning roster. Word on the street is that UoA's radio station, 95bFM, is going to get sold.

This is obviously quite a concerning update given that, as mentioned, the news of UBIQ's liquidation is still fresh in our minds. Different forms of media seem to be getting attacked one at a time. First the bookstore, now the radio station... it begs the question, what's next?

95bFM is the largest independent radio station in New Zealand, airing for the first time in 1969. In the 56 years that it's been airing, the station has hosted people such as Greens MP Chlöe Swarbrick who worked there as a newsreader during her time at UoA. (Author's note: I feel like the 50s are cursed at this university because UBIQ was also on our campus for 59 years and now it's getting liquidated, 95bFM is 56 and might be getting sold. If there's any other stores or parts of the university that are in their 50s, watch out!)

While AUSA couldn't confirm or deny the rumours, they did let us know that the lease on the office space that 95bFM currently occupies is indeed ending this year. What will happen to that office space along with all of the equipment inside? Well it's apparently not in AUSA's control. 95bFM is run by the AUSA Media Trust, which until March of 2023 was registered as a charity. The last mention of this trust found in an AUSA executive meeting report stated that the trust was a shareholder of 95bFM but those on it had not met in a long time.

It's true that post-COVID many media outlets have taken quite hard hits. Physical bookstores are competing with online stores, newspapers are becoming increasingly digitised, and even radio stations such as RNZ have reported falling numbers. When put into that context, it's easy to say "well it's inevitable." But it's not. Instead of letting precious historical parts of the university fade away, UoA and those with positions of power here should be planning ways to preserve outlets like 95bFM and save the hard work done by decades of students.



WHAKARONGO MAI

WHAT TOPICS ARE IMPORTANT FOR AUSA ELECTION CANDIDATES TO ADDRESS?

WHAT DO UOA STUDENTS THINK? (APPARENTLY THEY JUST DON'T!)

IRENE PARSAEI AND FOUR AMAZING CONTRIBUTORS

"CAMPAIGNING TO PROTECT HUMANITIES COURSES AND LECTURERS FROM CUTS."

"BUS FARES! LITERALLY THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ON THE FOREFRONT OF MY MIND."

"DO THEY WANNA FUND STUDENT JOURNALISM?"

"ACTUALLY BEING A STUDENT UNION..."

To the four students that participated, I hope that both sides of your pillow are cold every night. I hope you win the lottery, and achieve all of your dreams. I'm writing you guys into my will.

This Whakarongo Mai had the lowest number of responses ever received, and I'm taking that as a sign that UoA students just don't care about the elections. And that's completely fine! People can choose what to care about and not care about. But if you're one of the people that doesn't care, then do me a favor and never complain about the university's lack of student life ever again. Or actually, just don't complain about anything related to your uni experience as a student, because a large majority of those things are directly related to AUSA and the decisions and plans that the executive team makes.

If you actually want to make the most of your time at this institution, if you want to see people with power that represent the values that matter to you and the issues that are closest to your heart, take a look at the candidates running this year.

Whether you vote or not, somebody is going to get elected. Probably better that it's in your best interests, right? People at this university (and in general) are all bark and no bite when it comes to complaining about the state of things. **If you want things to change, do something about it. VOTE.**

Finally we're in Semester 2 and nearing the final months of the year, which means that everybody's favourite time has once again rolled around. If you're thinking I mean Christmas, don't be stupid, I'm obviously talking about the AUSA elections!

Now that the nominations are officially closed and with the debates beginning this week, students will soon be heading to the polls (on their laptops) and voting in next year's executive team for the student association. To fit the political vibe, Craccum asked students what issues/topics would make them vote for a particular candidate if they included it in their campaign?

Four students gave their thoughts.

HARRY'S SPORTS RECAP!

FROM CRACCUM'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



It was semi calm over the last wee while, sport-wise. However, there is always sport to write about, so here we go!

LIONESSES COME FROM BEHIND TO WIN EUROS.

After a thrilling 120 minutes of football and a penalty shootout, the women from England were the victors of this tournament, winning 3-1 in the shootout, with superstar player Chloe Kelly scoring the final penalty, completing their comeback against Spain. A rare back-to-back win in this tournament, and how, once again, just how dominant English football is.

It wasn't easy for the Lionesses as they had to come back from 1-0 down, and even Chloe Kelly herself admitted the day before during their practice she had missed multiple penalties. "I missed three penalties in practice yesterday. But it's the belief in the squad, all 23 players and the unseen staff members, that gets you through the tournament." Kelly stated post-match.

The Lionesses tournament itself was a roller coaster to say the least, having to dig deep to pull out wins, whether in penalties, such as this or having to defend their goal for 90-plus minutes,

they earned this tournament win and will be celebrating for a while.

UFC ABANDONS PAY-PER-VIEW IN MASSIVE BROADCASTING DEAL

Goodbye to having to spend 50 bucks just to watch one fight, the TKO fighting group and Dana White have agreed a brand new seven-year streaming deal with streaming powerhouse Paramount, which is worth a massive 7.7 billion dollars.

The reason? Simple. To become a more mainstream and global sport to watch, now, instead of having to fork out 50 bucks a pop for every single major fighting event that happens, it will all be on Paramount Plus. This will no doubt bring in more fans and grow the sport to new heights. However, some fighters, such as Jake Paul, have mixed opinions, worrying about what will happen to pay-per-view boxing events.

We will just have to wait and see.....

HE'S BACK, RICHIE MO'UNGA REJOINS NEW ZEALAND RUGBY STARTING NEXT YEAR.

Well, finally, the best fly-half in the world is returning to our shores.

Superstar Richie Mo'unga has signed back to New Zealand on an 18-month deal, starting in July 2026 till the end of 2027. A massive win for not just the All Blacks, but NZ rugby as a whole.

He will start back in the Crusaders and Canterbury sides for both Super Rugby and NPC seasons before being able to play for the All Blacks in October that year. This deal guarantees his play for the next Rugby World Cup in 2027, and boy, do we need him.

Although the All Blacks have managed to find some young gems in the fly-half jersey since his departure in 2023, the team hasn't looked the same, the attack looks slow and predictable, and our kicking game has slowly gotten less and less accurate. We needed him back, and now Scott Robertson has his dream starting ten for what's looking like a cracking Rugby World Cup in two

years, the teams have never looked more even, and I cannot wait.

THE BLACK CAPS THRASH ZIMBABWE BY A RECORD-BREAKING 359 RUNS!

Wow, that is a lot of runs. The Black Caps destroyed Zimbabwe by 359 runs, giving New Zealand its biggest ever test win while also giving Zimbabwe its worst ever defeat in a test match.

Fast bowler Zakary Foulkes dominated in his debut, taking four wickets in the first innings and then taking five more in the second innings. Showing that he is ready for the big games.

It was complete dominance; the Black Caps couldn't stop taking wickets, and the Zimbabwe team couldn't find any momentum. Sadly, this wasn't the first time that the Black Caps had run rampant against Zibaewe because their previous biggest test win was against? Zimbabwe. They beat them by 301 runs in Napier in 2012.

A game to remember for the men in black and a game to forget forever for the men from Africa.



Craccum UNSOLVED - STUDENT COUNCIL

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS AT THOSE MEETINGS?



IRENE PARSAEI

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE STUDENT COUNCIL?

The student council is a group of students that meet on a regular basis to discuss matters regarding the university and the students of UoA. The council consists of the AUSA executive team and also representatives for all of the different faculties within the university such as engineering, arts, and science. Due to its diverse list of members, the council can claim to be the best representation for the entire student body. Through the presence of faculty members, the student council can theoretically also be used as a tool to keep AUSA itself in check.

The role that the council is most recognised for, however, is that of holding the university accountable. An example of this would be the indefinite hold put on the unpopular law/business faculty merger that was in talks at the beginning of the year. While there were, of course, other factors involved in the halting of this merger, AUSA President Gabriel explained that many efforts were made by those in the student council both to make sense of the merger and make sure that students understood it, and also to challenge the university on whether it would be the best decision for students.

Another visible change brought about by the student council has been the introduction of 'Budgie Eats', the new initiative adopted by many food retailers on campus to provide cheaper meals under \$10. At one meeting, the council even brought in the director of campus life to come and talk about 'Budgie Eats' where they discussed how to incentivize retailers to join the initiative, and also how to ensure that the foods being offered were suitable for all students.

Amongst these, issues about the crappy wifi on campus have also been discussed by student council and the university, as well as a new campaign for cheaper bus fares, which coincidentally launched right as the election season is starting.

So, what do you do if you're really pissed about something and think the council needs to discuss it?

DO YOU HAVE A COUNCIL-WORTHY DISCUSSION TOPIC?

There are multiple ways to go about raising an issue to be taken to the student council. You could email a member of the AUSA executive team, especially if their position relates to the concern that you have. However, it was pointed out to me that often-times, executives' email inboxes are constantly blowing up, and therefore it may be difficult to respond to each and every concern.

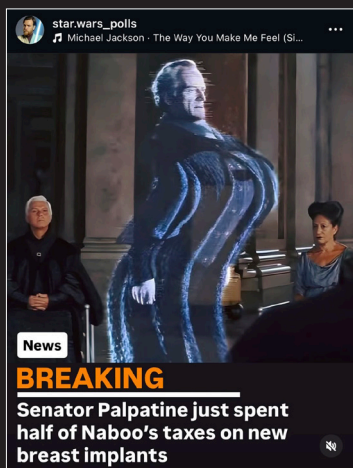
A better way that was suggested was to go directly to the faculty association representatives with any concerns so that they themselves could raise the issue at the next council meeting, or relay the message to an AUSA executive member to do so.

THE FUTURE OF STUDENT COUNCIL

The student council, while having had quite a few accomplishments this year, is obviously not without its faults. While they insist that the contents of their meetings are always transparent, Craccum was barred from attending the previous one under the excuse of sensitive topics being discussed. It was later discovered that these 'sensitive topics' were actually just the catching up of months worth of agenda items that hadn't been given attention at their proper time.

There will always be room for improvement, and if you want to ensure that your voice is being represented during these council meetings, make sure to vote in the upcoming AUSA elections. You can pick who will be sitting at the non-hologram making table next year.

Admittedly, on the day that I attended my first student council meeting I was slightly annoyed because it was two hours long and I wanted to go home and take a nap, so perhaps I went into it with a sour mood and unsure expectations. The only thing that came to mind when I thought of a council was the dark council from Star Wars. This was only exacerbated by a meme I'd seen that wouldn't get out of my head, which I've added to this article because sharing is caring.



The reality was slightly different. The members were sitting in a circular-ish formation, although none of them were wearing cloaks, and fortunately AUSA president Gabriel wasn't an evil hologram. Oh, and there was an entire table of Subway sandwiches.

Throughout this meeting, I watched as the council discussed matters to do with Canvas, gen-ed papers, and food retailers on campus, which is how I know that the space that Needo is in now could've been Sensational Chicken instead but it didn't work out logistically. At the end, each member had a chance to share their achievements and any new projects they were working on.

As obviously I am now an expert on the happenings of the student council, I decided that once and for all we need to put this mystery to rest.



BABY BACK BENCHES:

A STUDENT DEBATE ROUND-UP

SIX YOUTH WINGS. ONE SHADOWS BAR. MORE THAN A HUNDRED OF YOU!



**VIVIENE BUNQUIN,
ARSHITA BHARDWAJ,
AND AZZURRA
SNELGROVE-DOUCH**

Baby Back Benches has become a flagship event for youth political engagement at the University of Auckland. In its 10th year held at the iconic student bar Shadows, the event brought together representatives from youth wings of political parties for a live debate in front of a crowd of students, young professionals, and politically curious minds. Though the youth wings may have held the microphones, the crowd certainly didn't stay silent, and that's exactly what made the night so electric. We thank the Public Policy Club team for their meticulous organisation and ongoing commitment to platforming student political engagement on campus.

Young TOP (The Opportunities Party)

Representing Young TOP, Evan French stayed true to the party's ethos of evidence-based, future-focused policy-making. He argued for bold structural reforms, particularly around tax and wealth inequality, rather than fragmented solutions. French presented a vision that prioritised long-term wellbeing over short-term political wins, challenging the audience to think about how we can fix broken systems rather than just patch them.

On the TOP side, French spoke to the rising cost of living, advocating for systemic solutions like a wealth tax and smarter use of public funds. Backing TOP's Teal Card-- and for those who don't know-- it's a policy offering free mental healthcare, dental care, and public transport for under-30s.

On climate policy, Young TOP pushed back against New Zealand's over-

reliance on pine forestry for carbon offsets, calling for a more comprehensive, transparent approach to reaching Net Zero. He stressed that funds from the Emissions Trading Scheme should be reinvested into helping businesses and communities reach Net Zero, not simply funneled into private profit.

Crime was another key point of his address. While acknowledging the rise in crime, French emphasised the need for a shift away from New Zealand's punitive justice system. He argued for a balanced approach: one that strengthens policing when necessary, but also invests in rehabilitation, prevention, and community wellbeing. His stance highlighted the broader theme of the night, that long-term, systemic thinking is what youth politics needs more of.

Young NZ First

On the other side, Keegan Langeveld, speaker from Young New Zealand First, brought both experience and authenticity. While NZ First isn't a party typically associated with youth activism, Langeveld offered a refreshing, grounded take that showed how political engagement doesn't have to be boxed into generational stereotypes. Flying up from Wellington for his third appearance at Baby Back Benches, he wasn't afraid to push back.

He questioned the practicality of the Green Party's budget, arguing that a wealth tax would unfairly hit middle-income earners like nurses and teachers, rather than easing financial pressure. The wealth tax doesn't account for secondary effects, like the shifting of personal and business assets to avoid tax and warned that taxing the country more heavily would backfire economically. Young NZ First promoted their approach of investing in regional industries as a more sus-

tainable and growth-focused solution.

On foreign investment, Young NZ First is calling for smarter, more accountable rules to ensure that overseas investors contribute meaningfully to New Zealand's economy rather than simply buying up land; an issue they say is making it increasingly difficult for young Kiwis to get on the housing ladder. They propose implementing a cap or threshold that would require genuine, long-term economic investment before foreign investors are granted access to assets. They also emphasised the importance of maintaining New Zealand ownership of key assets, arguing that the country should not be in a position where it loses control over essential infrastructure and industries.

Young Greens

The environmental and social justice-focused youth wing was represented by Caitlin Wilson, who immediately rallied for student voters to enroll for the upcoming local board elections this October. She recalled her experience working for the Auckland City Mission and announced her campaign to run for the Waitematā Local Board. Young Greens opened with a clear and definitive call to action— a theme which persisted throughout the night.

AUSA President turned amateur political moderator, Gabriel Boyd launched the debate with a topic (unfortunately) dear to many students' hearts: the cost-of-living crisis. Wilson platformed the Green Party's proposed alternative budget earlier this year, which sought to make our tax system more equitable for all New Zealanders, not just the wealthiest 2% of the population.

When questioned about how NZ should strike a balance between energy security, economic development

and environmental protection, Wilson confidently asserted that "We can do all three." She focused on harnessing the potential of clean energy to produce green jobs, citing at least 40,000 potential new jobs in the energy sector. Economic growth does not need to be sacrificed for the well-being of our planet, and more crucially, economic growth can no longer justify the large-scale exploitation of our natural environment.

On the topic of housing, Young Greens leveraged their role as the opposition and scrutinised the current government's priority stakeholders: property investors, landlords, and wealthy capital owners. Rather than investing in housing policies which address the socioeconomic pressures faced by renters— many of whom are also students— the current government was more interested in granting landlords greater tax cuts. Wilson earned strong approval from the crowd when she called out Young ACT's insistent recount of previous government housing policies, daring her opponent to instead offer their alternative solution.

A fiery discussion of the defeated Treaty Principles Bill prompted a genuine appeal to the beautiful sanctity of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

In earnest, Wilson reminded the panel to recognise "our founding document for the taonga it is" and respect it as the fundamental "source of all our rights to be on this whenua".

Wilson did not entertain any arguments in favour of a tough-on-crime approach. She argued for an alternative restorative justice model which decentered punishment and punitive sentencing. When accused of allowing hardened criminals to “roam the streets”, Wilson retorted with another question about the social drivers of criminal offending: trauma and poverty. She addressed her political opponents in turn, “Can we *actually* address those drivers?”

The progressive youth wing did not miss another opportunity to call for a capital gains tax. Wilson urged attendees to consider why the wealthiest individuals paid 50% less tax than the average New Zealander. Her claim was imminent: Capital gains tax has been successfully implemented in other countries, and New Zealand would fare better by following suit.

Some of Young Green’s responses warranted no further explanation. Free public transport was non-negotiable for a climate-adaptive future. The audience appreciated the undivided commitment couched in this concise

answer, breaking into thundering applause and celebratory cheers. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, the progressive youth wing won strong approval from many student attendees that night.

Young Labour

Young Labour representative, Fania Kapao, is no stranger to student politics. Not only is she the current Postgraduate Vice President for AUSA, but she is also the Chair of UOA’s Princes Street Labour, president of New Zealand Young Labour and running for the Whau Local Board in the upcoming elections. From the beginning of the debate, she affirmed her roots in grassroots activism and expressed a deep commitment to investing in people over profits.

Kapao’s responses overwhelmingly criticised the incumbent government’s approach, rather than delving into greater detail about Labour’s alternative policies. While necessary to keep the incumbent government party in check, perhaps Kapao was too quick to interrupt, and too brief in rebuttal,

to comprehensively advocate for the left’s policy agenda. Nonetheless, the Young Labour representative ritually kept her co-panelists in line, chiming in with frequently incisive quips favourably received by the audience.

On the topic of housing, the for-the-people youth wing immediately highlighted rising homelessness in Aotearoa. Kapao responded with disdain towards Young ACT’s positive appraisal of commercial property development, arguing that provisions over Kainga Ora (state public housing) should be strengthened instead. Simultaneously, rental prices have steadily increased in New Zealand. It was rife time for a change in government priorities— and everyday New Zealanders dealing with dehumanising homelessness and unsustainable rental costs must come first.

A poignant example of political conviction was Young Labour’s refusal to compromise on the issue of the Treaty Principles Bill, introduced by the ACT Party in 2024. Kapao stressed a lack of political consensus around tabling the

Bill on the floor, let alone any realistic prospect of the legislation passing, after a nationwide hiko ensued and called for its immediate defeat.

In firm solidarity with the Young Greens, Kapao denounced her political opponent’s endorsement of punitive bootcamps, sarcastically dubbing the move as “interesting.” She emphasised that while punishment must always fit the crime, there is something equal to be said for how punitive approaches only make it likely for people to reoffend. She states plainly, punishment must also be handed down “equitably.”

Kapao stood her ground when the debate turned to the controversial reinstatement of the Three Strikes regime, only recently repealed by the previous Labour-led government. She pointed to the evident failure of the policy in the United States, its initial birthplace. The Three Strikes regime will only cause greater harm for overrepresented Māori and Pasifika communities in the criminal justice system. She reiterates her youth wing’s commitment to uplifting peo-



ple from all social backgrounds,

“It’s how we look after people... moving forward in a way that looks after people.”

When the floor was opened to debate the state of NZ’s healthcare system, particularly in reference to acute medical professional shortages, Young Labour diligently reminded the crowd about the nurses’ strike which occurred just a day prior. Kapao spoke to the necessity of paid placements for aspiring doctors and nurses, attesting that the government has an obligation to invest in the education of future healthcare workers, as well as fairly compensate them when they enter the workforce. The panel shared a rare moment of consensus in collectively advocating for paid clinical placements, undoubtedly echoing popular concerns about NZ training future healthcare professionals, only for them to migrate overseas for more competitive living wages.

Young National

A noticeable absence on the bench was that of National’s Youth Wing representative, who, following the deflection of numerous questions posed to her, left quietly during the halftime break. It was less than ideal for the National Youth Wing, as representatives for the current party in Government, to be noticeably silent on the many issues raised by the bench that night. Craccum requested further comment from the Youth Wing but has unfortunately yet to receive any response. The silence raises the question: does this set a pattern for National, of choosing unfit representatives? This case was a missed opportunity for the Youth Wing party to defend their policy stances, particularly against unrelenting vocal opposition.

As other parties expressed their commitment to educating students on political issues, National’s silence reflected a noticeable disinterest in student politics and engagement. The audience themselves did the talking, reflecting our potential collective disdain for the party, as one audience member yelled “she’s not here” on the rare occasion in which National was asked to comment on policy issues. This pressure from spectators, when combined with the evident disdain for

the party she represents, perhaps justifies her reasoning for providing little comment on behalf of her party.

What minimal comments were made were unfortunately lukewarm and non-committal, reflecting typical National slogans rather than any comprehensive rebuttal on her part. When asked how the government could best support first time home buyers, she praised National’s growth policies, claiming they will “prove something for this current government”. However, beyond praise, she offered little in terms of solutions, leaving the specifics of these policies unclear. Similarly, when asked about her support for the ‘tough on crime approach’ over rehabilitation, she expressed support for the ‘Three Strikes Bill’, stating

“I think it’s about making sure that victims feel safer in society after being victimised, especially when violent offenders are re-offending.”

Unfortunately, National’s chosen representative left many questions unanswered, and encouraged perhaps a further disconnect between young voters and the party. Their silence seems to draw uncanny parallels between the overtly vocal coalition partners, and at times, disappointingly restrained majority National Party. Regardless,

we hope that next year proves to be a more present and engaging debate for Young National.

Young ACT

Alternatively, a stand-out amongst the board, and perhaps its designated ‘devil’s advocate’, was Young ACT’s Leo Grachev. ACT’s emphasis on the ‘solutions-based approach’ and positioning as ‘for the working class/general public’ was clear in Grachev’s responses to various issues posed by the board. Emphasis was also placed on faulting Labour and their previous term in government, to further highlight the efforts of ACT.

This emphasis on individualism is best reflected in ACT’s commitment to representing the student voice, and in maintaining a close relationship with students. As Grachev states, youth engagement and student outreach are important not only in supporting future careers in politics, but also in maintaining a relationship between students and the party. Despite this, he acknowledges the disparity between Young ACT and their ‘father party’, particularly on issues such as drug and alcohol laws. Their differing stances highlight the importance of student-based politics in reflecting the unique priorities of our generation, and the potential power of these views in changing future politics.

He asserts that the cost-of-living crisis is a direct result of “irresponsible, wasteful spending” on the behalf of the previous Labour government, stating,

“We have to remember when the cost-of-living crisis started, that was under the previous government that still refuses to take blame.”

His solution? An evidence-based approach, which he claims has “seen rent coming down for the first time since 2009”. He focuses on criticism of his neighbouring parties, stating that the “hot air” surrounding the topic prevents the public from ‘living the way they want to’, with little to no government involvement in their personal lives. He advocates for a deregulatory stance, emphasising individualism and the plight of the average citizen, asserting that “we shouldn’t be punished for our success”.

He dismisses criticism from the left regarding current housing developments, stating, “People want to talk about a housing crisis but then complain about the houses being built.” He argues that such critiques overlook the situation’s urgency, claiming that “for somebody that doesn’t have a roof over their head, all that matters is getting them a warm, dry place”.

Criticism of the previous government is echoed in his responses to other issues, such as education. He claims that teachers have been ‘neglected’ and are expected to perform tasks outside of their job description, such as the wellbeing of students, and pushes for reform. He also criticizes the ‘open learning model’ which has been scrapped by the current government, citing the pressure it has placed on educators, instead promoting charter schools. These responses are echoed in the recent move to reconsider the current NCEA school system, which National proposed to replace on Monday.

Other comments were thoroughly more divisive, particularly surrounding the issue of the Treaty Principles Bill. The bill, which seeks a redefinition of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi under a court of law, was ultimately ‘put to the floor and killed’ - but continues to spark debate. He addresses the controversy, expressing our need for an ‘open and honest conversation’ on behalf of all Kiwis. He acknowledges



this backlash yet claims it derives primarily from a supposed 'lack of understanding' of the bill's intent. The bill, he asserts, wasn't about undermining past settlements, but rather about questioning whether undefined principles should be working their way into our legislation without our consent. He cites the Resource Management Act (RMA) and the Waitangi Tribunal as evidence of the influence of these undefined principles and defends our 'right' to question them. "The Treaty", he states "was not created as a permanent entity and has in our opinion passed its best before date".

He further emphasises ACT's individualistic stance and focuses on the plight of the 'common man', arguing that these concerns are being raised by the public, not ACT themselves. Yet his successive comment to the Labour representative, in which he, on behalf of Young ACT, (sarcastically) thanked her for her "public service" in studying indigenous studies, caused the audience to question ulterior motives and values behind ACT's support for the bill.

Media bias

To the credit of the Public Policy Club, the debate also prompted discerning

conversations about the role of media in NZ politics. One question remarked on whether any of the youth wings perceived some form of media bias against their representative party. Their answers ranged from cautiously critical to outwardly disillusioned, citing cross-party concerns such as misrepresentation of political stances, minor parties lacking coverage, and perverse incentives underscoring polarising news reporting.

"The only thing the media is interested in is itself. It wants clickbait... an eye-catching headline."
-Grachev, Young ACT

"Media exists to create division, and it's arresting any sort of productivity in Parliament." -Evan French, Young TOP

Given that this is Craccum's first time covering Baby Back Benches, we also reflected on our role as student journalists in covering politics news on campus. Not only can we help raise greater political awareness among students, but we also recognised the potential of student media to amplify grassroots campaigns which center student voices at heart. In the same way we pride ourselves on re-inventing political spaces to prioritise youth voices at the decision-making table, we play an equally vital role in setting a robust precedent for student media platforms.

Conclusion

In amongst all the debate, there's something to be said about what happens when young people are given the mic, not as a token gesture, but as a genuine platform to challenge, question, and co-create the political narrative. In an age where youth disengagement from formal politics appears to be rising, with 25–30% of eligible voters aged 18–30 not voting in the 2023 election, Baby Back Benches proves that young people are still watching, thinking, and speaking up. Whether on stage or in the audience, they are demanding a politics that speaks to them and with them. It was striking to see the crowd pitch in at

every opportunity, with sharp questions, strong reactions, and no hesitation in holding the speakers to account.

In a political climate increasingly dominated by short-term fixes and reactive policymaking, events like Baby Back Benches serve as a much-needed injection of long-term, intergenerational thinking. And perhaps the real question isn't whether youth are engaged but whether our political systems are ready to keep up with the level of clarity, urgency, and vision that young people are already bringing to the table.

Disclaimer: The views expressed above do not necessarily reflect the views of the Craccum or AUSA.

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Just One Of Those Things

BRYN KLISKEY (HE/HIM)

It was just one of those things
The layers on top of each other
Cuts stuck into joy
Street art by hostile spikes
Fees for education
Charity with inequities
All stuck together on top of each other
Problems with solutions
Solutions with problems
Aid with conditions
Good times with carbon emissions
The good with the bad and everything in between
Toleration with ignorance
Recognition with backlash
The past, our history still with us today
The peace with the fear
Mutually assured destruction
It's just one of those things

The void in the interval (On spaces between words)

FLAXANDSESAME

Seconds free fall into the space between us
Sand through the neck of an hourglass
Slipping through our fingers
(we don't care to try and catch it)

Eventually it's been long enough that
Our last remarks, replaying through my brain
Sink into the static, lost
Down the funnel of the hippocampus

(Is this amicable? I can't tell.)

After a certain point stillness itself becomes dynamic
Noiseless cacophony ricocheting
Rising as it simmers in the harsh whine of feedback
Coiling and churning/ we're enveloped

This silence is too heavy
We don't have the words to carry it away
as the minutes tiptoe by

LET ME SPEAK

WHY OUR VOICES ARE NOT OPTIONAL



AAYUSH SHARMA
(HE/HIM, @
CERTIFIEDAAYUSH)
| FOUNDER OF
LET ME SPEAK (@
LETMESPEAKNZ)

It was sixteen the first time I realised that youth were only invited into decision-making rooms to *listen*. Not to speak. Not to challenge. Certainly not to change anything.

It happened at a well-meaning "youth engagement" workshop. A roundtable stacked with middle-aged policymakers, one youth rep; and a long list of rules. "No political commentary." "No criticism of policy." "Stick to personal stories." They wanted our voices, but only the sanitised, symbolic kind. Not the type that asks real questions. Not the type that disrupts.

That's when *Let Me Speak* was born.

We're a national youth-led movement fighting to make sure young people aren't just being "consulted", we're

being heard. We're done with being used as decoration. *Let Me Speak* demands that youth are recognised as legitimate agents of political and civic change.

We've written three policy demands: bold, but practical.

The **Youth Inclusion Act** would mandate one under-21 representative on every local board and policy body in Aotearoa. Tokenism isn't representation. We want legal seats at the table.

The **Ethnic Voice Fund** would provide public funding to grassroots youth projects, especially in underserved areas like Ōtara, Flat Bush and Ormiston. Because those who live the issues should lead the solutions.

And finally, **Real Civics in Schools**. Not just voter enrolment pamphlets or debates about voting age. We mean a real curriculum: power, protest, public systems, the Treaty. How decisions are made. And how to challenge them.

We're not another school club. We're not asking for likes. We're building power.

Recently, we filmed interviews with students across Auckland. We didn't hand them a script. We asked them what *they* care about, and the answers were real. Cost of living. Climate change. The Treaty. Mental health. Education equity. Racism. Then we asked: do you feel heard? Do you trust the people in charge to fix it?

They refused. That told us enough.

This is a generation that's already politically aware, but institutionally locked out. We don't need more "youth engagement strategies." We need structural change.

You want us to vote. To volunteer. To lead. Then *let us speak*.

We're calling on universities, councils, MPs, media, and you, the reader to back us. Join the movement. Push the

policies. Because youth representation shouldn't be revolutionary.

It should be reality.

LET ME



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CRACCUM

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT MAGAZINE SINCE 1927

SCAN ME



SHAKESPEARE & LESSON PLANS

AN ARTS & EDUCATION “MERGER”



ROSE TAYLOR-MEADE

Emma didn't usually go to many big club events but she figured one couldn't hurt every now and then. AESA was running a social night designing tote bags. The club exec team asked everyone to introduce themselves and what they were studying to the people sitting near them at the table. People eventually started talking amongst themselves.

"So is this university trying to merge everything into a single faculty or something?" she mused, not really expecting an answer.

"It sure seems that way. I'm going to assume we all know it's all cost cutting," Andrew, the guy next to her, replied.

"Of course it is. Sure, Arts, Education, it's all the humanities."

"They're still not the same thing."

"I know, right, I was beginning to think I was the only one seeing that."

"At least it makes more sense than Law and Business."

She debated what colour scheme to use for the tote bag.

"I would go with red/green because Arts and Education, but Christmas really isn't what I'm going for."

"And it's July," Andrew added. "What would happen if you mixed red and green?"

"A muddy brown."

"That's very specific."

"I just spent 8 weeks in a year 2 class. They were learning about mixing colours. A six year old asked what would happen. I tried telling him it wouldn't look good but he had to find out for himself, didn't he."

"So what age are you planning to teach?" Andrew asked.

"Well, I'm training in primary teaching, but I want to teach year 5 and 6, maybe intermediate." Some of the other students in her cohort thought she was insane.

"Little kids are scary though."

"I know, that's what I keep saying.

I like the older kids. It's still a bit of everything but they're starting to become their own people at that age. What are you studying again?" Emma asked. Her working memory wasn't always great.

"English and History."

"That sounds fun. Arts, obviously, but I won't hold that against you."

"Oh, really?" he asked, raising an eyebrow.

"No, not unless you want me to, of course," she joked. Was that weird? Yeah, that was probably weird. She seemed to lack any sort of filter sometimes, or at least the ability to use one. She was pretty sure no one quite knew how to take her. Hopefully she hadn't scared him off. Andrew grinned.

"I'm good. If you did, could I do the same to you?"

"Well, I can hardly stop you now, can I? What are you gonna do with that once

you graduate?"

"I'm not really sure," he admitted. He hadn't put too much thought into it yet.

"Does that not make you anxious as hell? Not knowing where that's gonna lead?" she asked, before wondering if that came off as just a little judgemental.

"I'm sure I'll work it out eventually. I thought about teaching high school, I don't know how long it takes to get qualified though." "It's a year after undergrad, a Grad Diploma," Emma said. He looked at her for a moment. "My brother was looking into it. He's doing a BSc. Sorry, it just seemed like you might be wondering." She was getting the feeling she might've been rambling and that he might've just been making small talk and didn't actually care about anything she was saying.

"No, that's actually really helpful. I

might look into it."

"If you ever wanted to compare notes on teaching, let me know. I know it's not quite the same, being primary versus secondary, but it could be fun to hang out."

"Yeah, sure."

"Do you have instagram?"

"No, but I could get your number instead," he said hopefully.

"Go on then," she said. Andrew handed her his phone after opening a new contact, the name reading 'cute teaching student'. She put in her number and hit save, handing it back to him, after fixing the lack of capitalisation.

"Are you free this weekend?" he asked. Emma was surprised. People weren't usually this forward, it was a pleasant change.

"I think I am, yeah. After work, that is. What did you have in mind?" she asked. He paused for a moment while doing something on his phone. He looked back at Emma.

"Do you like Shakespeare? Or, theatre, more generally?"

"Yes. To all of that. I'll admit I'm not hugely familiar with Shakespeare as you might be, English major and all. Have you studied Shakespeare? At uni I mean?" she asked, hoping she wasn't asking too many questions.

"Yeah, I did a course on his tragedies last semester and there's a comedies course next year. Have you?"

"Oh cool, that sounds so fun. Only a little bit, it's a lot to get your head around."

"The Auckland Theatre Company is doing Romeo & Juliet at the moment."

"Oh, really? That could be fun. We read that one at high school. You've obviously done his plays at a higher level though. I did read Macbeth in a first year Gen Ed. Sorry, I'm rambling."

"It just opened this week. Would you like to go together?" he asked. *Um, fuck yes.*

"I'd love to. What time is that?"

"I think it's around 8pm Saturday."

"Ok, that should work. Can you text me with the details? Sorry, I have to head home soon, I've got a lesson plan to finish for next week."



LAW SUITS AND BUSINESS CASUAL-TIES

AN ATTEMPTED LAW & BUSINESS “MERGER”



DANAKA TALLULAH
(WRITTEN FOR THE
BERNARD BROWN
LITERARY AWARD)

She was a hotshot lawyer and academic. He was a suave businessman with a penchant for rent seeking.

They met at a networking event jointly hosted by the Law and Business schools. What happened there was largely indicative of their future, and indeed the future of the University.

He spotted her immediately, with just a quick scan. His night-black eyes swept across the room and settled on the only woman wearing a suit.

Perfect, he thought. My next opportunity to make a connection.

He stole towards her like a large language model does with art.

When she spotted him, she looked away and flipped her perfect curtain of platinum-blond hair.

Once he was close enough, he took a sip of his drink, put his hand up against the wall and leaned towards her. “You look like a motivated young woman,” he remarked.

“And who are you to get up all in my business?” she replied, training her eyes on him as if he were a witness called to the stand. The visible yet tasteful eyeliner accentuated her light blue irises.

“Business is my business,” he said without hesitation, raising his lush and thick eyebrows at her. “Is that a tailored suit?”

“Indeed,” she said, bending one knee and raising her leg in mock pose. The heel on her stiletto looked sharp enough to stab someone. “When I’m serving the law, I may as well serve.”

“You certainly do,” he chuckled, taking a moment to gaze upon her form. The grey wool suit complete with a white blouse highlighted her features bodaciously, and the rose-red tie brought the entire outfit together. “What aspect of law?”

“Corporate, mainly. There’s nothing that warms my heart more than secur-

ing shareholder value.”

He smouldered. “Is that so? In that case I may have to make an *investment*. Do you have stock options?”

“I’m not on the stock exchange.” She bit her lip tantalisingly. “But I could be open to a merger.”

He smirked, which only did more to emphasise his perfect jawline and chiselled nose. “I’ll have my people talk to yours.”

She pouted, showing off her full lips, painted a very expensive shade of red. “Let’s not get tied up in *bureaucracy*.”

He shuddered at the word.

“I think we should fast-track this collaboration. Why bring higher powers into a contract between two consenting individuals?” she finished.

“Ooh, naughty! I like it.” He sidled

closer to her. “Nothing a little lobbying can’t mitigate.”

Then the presentation started, so they sat down together and the first presenter began to speak.

“Kia ora, nau mai, haere mai, tēnā koutou katoa. Ko Danaka Tallulah ahau,” the presenter said in the whitest accent conceivable. “Thank you all for coming to our Law and Business social event - hopefully to be the first of many!”

She crossed her fingers and put them behind her back.

“As you have probably heard, the merging of the Law and Business schools has not been without its roadblocks. But rest assured, we encountered similar obstacles with Arts and Education, and that has been completed to our satisfaction.”

A hand shot up near the front. “What

about the Senate’s ruling, Doctor Tallulah?”

There was a murmur from the crowd.

“Not to worry,” Danaka said. “Their decision is non-binding, and we are looking to restructure the senate and redirect their purpose into more... effective channels.”

“So you seek to overrule the Senate’s authority?” a different voice cried. “Just like how you seek to bust the union because they want a living wage?”

Danaka’s eyes widened. She quickly glanced at a security officer standing next to the stage. He nodded subtly and started to move towards the crowd.

“Looks like we have a spy in our midst!” someone jeered. The audience laughed.

“Get out of here, leftist! You’re just standing in the way of progress; let the adults talk,” the businessman added, standing up.

“Typical unionist! Always blaming others for your lack of gumption,” the hotshot lawyer supplemented, also standing up.

The security officer reached the union supporter and grabbed them under the arms, dragging them towards the exit, amid cries of “Blue hair!”, “Gender studies professor!” and “Critical theorist!”

The lawyer turned to the businessman. “You look so hot when you’re yelling at commies,” she whispered.

“I thought you were irresistible before, but your proud espousal of your political beliefs really turns me on,” he whispered back, and then grabbed her around the waist and pulled her in close.

She held his head in her hands and pashed him on the lips, her long fake nails slightly digging into his neck. He squeezed her tighter with his powerful arms.

The lawyer came up for air. “My, my, you’re a strong fellow!” she grinned.

“Every time I commit wage theft, I do



one push up," he bragged.

"I think it's time for me to come home with you and discuss trade secrets," she suggested seductively.

"Granted," he accepted. "There's some minutes of mine that I need you to redact."

They left the convention together, her on his arm, and stepped into his self-driving Tesla. Once they got on the motorway, he switched on the car's revolutionary automated cruise control features, and took his eyes off the road, thereby forfeiting his rights in court.

"Welcome to my metaverse," he said smoothly.

"Very nice - may I see your NFT collection?" she asked.

"They're for my eyes only, unfortu-

nately. I can't risk having them be screenshotted."

She did the most dramatic eye roll ever to exist. "You men and your toys."

"It's less upkeep than investing in a house, darling. Besides, how else will I tip my landlord?"

"Fair point," she said.

"I've never heard a lawyer say that before! You must really be into me."

"Oh, don't sell yourself so tall."

"Why not? I'm a 6'5 feminist."

"Cause I'm a 5'12 man-eater."

"I think you'll find me quite indigestible."

"Wanna bet?"

"I'll bet all of the money that hasn't been paid to staff because of Hono."

At that point his "self-driving" Tesla misread a glass barrier as their turn-off and swerved abruptly, smashing through the guard rail and plunging into the harbour.

As they sank, water slowly filled up the car, short-circuiting the futuristic touch-screen controls and eliminating their last chance for survival by disabling all the electronic door locks.

The businessman got out his phone and used the last few seconds of his existence to buy life insurance.

The lawyer opened ChatGPT and asked it to file a lawsuit against Auckland Transport for their flimsy infrastructure.

With those important tasks out of the way, and the water rising up to their

waists, they turned to each other.

"I would've liked to verbally abuse socialists with you more," the lawyer sighed, unbuttoning her suit, exposing her golden shoulders and toned abdomen.

"Don't worry, there'll be plenty of them in hell," the businessman chuckled, unbelting his pants and pulling them off. His thigh muscles were bulky enough to let him jump to any conclusions he needed to.

"Let's synergise before we get there," she whispered, and then jumped on his lap as the water reached their necks.

Thankfully, the car's battery chose that moment to spontaneously combust.

REVIEW

FREYA'S 'OF WATER' ALBUM RELEASE LIVE AT PONSONBY SOCIAL CLUB



JEFFREE

"You don't realise the tide is rising until you're already underwater."

This line Freya spoke during her set perfectly captures the essence of *Of Water*, her debut album.

That night, the stage at Ponsonby Social Club felt quiet and poetic. Acoustic guitars rested against the brick wall, the drum kit sat silently waiting, and the audience had already sunk into a calm kind of anticipation.

As a student at the University of Auckland and an independent singer-songwriter, Freya delivered an astonishing debut. There were no strobes or dramatic flourishes—just her, her band, and the breath-holding softness of her sound.

She describes her music as "folktronica," a gentle fusion of folk guitar and ambient electronic textures. Muzic.net.nz called the album "poetic and

intoxicating," while 13th Floor praised it as "patient, finely drawn, emotionally grounded."

From the opening notes of *Pearl*, she wrapped the audience in a whispery hush. When she sang, "My cupped hands are pearl-less," the entire room fell into something almost sacred.

Before *Body of Water*, she softly told us, "This one's about tides and distance." Then, a quiet bassline swelled underneath her voice. Eyes closed, she seemed to breathe the music with her whole body.

Waiting II (Voice Memo) featured real rain sounds recorded from her life. In the live version, these drops merged with her ethereal voice, creating a slow-sinking monologue that soaked the room in stillness.

The crowd was unusually still—no murmurs, no phones, just subtle swaying and synced breathing. When the final song faded, a warm and grounded applause rose, like a tide gently receding.

Freya didn't try to impress with vocal fireworks. She simply seeped into everyone's hearts with sincerity. She invited us underwater, asked us to pause, and listen inward.

In an age of noise, *Of Water* felt like a quiet current flowing the other way—slow, still, and lasting. Freya's voice may be as light as a drop of water, but that night, it left the deepest echo.



PHOTO BY JEFFREE



SYMPHONY NO. 19: AN EAST ASIAN GIRL'S POLITICAL BALLAD

MOVEMENTS IN STUDENT POLITICS, MEMORY, AND THE QUIET POWER OF EAST ASIAN GIRLS



YU-AN HUANG

If mainstream student politics are about student rights and autonomy—such as whether students have the right to participate in school governance, or the fairness of student council elections—if you've only briefly heard of these topics, then I want to write a very long song about student politics from my truest self.

That day, I was sitting in the library of the University of Auckland, looking at a poster on the bulletin board that said “anti-imperialism.” It made me think of the 1945 production of *The Phantom of the Opera*.

To die valiantly is easy; to face death with composure is hard. They all carried missions, yet they always knew clearly that, like bouquets, there would be a day when they would wither. And so, at the moment the shutter clicked, they always bore the biggest smile, gazing down at the steam from the hot spring on the hill taking their final breath away from the world, and also gazing toward the devouring black rose waterfall.

The shutter sounds, Jean Sibelius plays, and Death descends. Even Death had already anticipated that this land would make him so burdened with work.

Take off the glasses! That is what I most want to say to those impeccably suited men of 90 years ago. They always wore glasses, held great power, and the national treasury behind the mountain was their only authoritarian confidence—their so-called national treasures were their only contribution. Glasses were used to feign erudition about the world, and also what they used to scorn the writers and swords of this island. So they planted greedy banyan trees, and the shadows under those banyan trees became shackles covering this land. The shadows under the banyan trees made hearts ache and sigh, covering not only the original

mother tongue memories of this land, but also covering the will to once again ride the crest of the wave and fight for freedom.

The second act of the opera continues to this day. Those who truly understand love constantly try to wipe away the pressure outside the opera, but no matter how hard they try, they cannot scrub away the blood stains. So we deeply understand that the coming of snow must be the only weapon—because it will merge with the bloodstains and become that pink undertone. What appears to be a transformation toward democracy hides the sad songs of the past.

The white of 1945 was worn on people's bodies to allow themselves to settle the pressure of the past and present. White brings calm, feeling, and purity, but never carries any sense of power. Yet people never realized that the white after 1945 became the colour that tore our hearts apart. The relationship between white and us after 1945 drifted away, farther and farther, far away. Not a flirtatious tease, but the most violent mutual slaughter.

In 2023, a female student I met—on her, I could not find the era's resonance toward beauty. To be honest, I think the literary world simply cannot smooth out humanity's mutual hatred. If it could, the world wouldn't be facing wave after wave of war right now. The rise and fall of battles not only bring Death's invitation card, but also strip away the body of freedom.

People shake hands with Death, one after another, like apricot tree leaves blooming on the autumn night of our land. People always move politically in swarms like bees, yet, like sea monsters under the deep sea of politics, they devour one another. We always fall into a most shocking, stormy romance with that sincerity in our hearts, and yet we also know one day we must say farewell to that stormy love that could never break. Those under the glasses are arrogant elitists. I never detest this kind of collectivism, but once it merg-

es with the humanity of those fleeing from refugee classes, it will cause our country to be doomed to forever sing that most sorrowful “grief” in the late winter wind.

The old yellow letter paper is the exit to peace—it lacks the dense political catharsis, yet it is my only outlet for that political catharsis. So I stare at it, and it stares back; we've long grown used to each other. We deeply understand one another, and at the same time jointly write, for humanity, things as delicate and ephemeral as flower petals.

So, we begin to listen to this eternal symphony that can never be unraveled. Listening to the trumpet that sometimes sounds, brewing liberation's cresting waves; and sometimes hearing the violin pulling out a sorrowful counterattack. But I cannot hear the heartbeat beneath my own harmonium. From then on, I could no longer hear the young secrets of first love beneath the flame tree. The secrets faded like mist, and so did Taiwanese. Torn from mother tongue, stripped of Japanese, replaced by Mandarin—there was no choice.

The elegant alumna who graduated from Tainan First High School for Girls in 1945 thus walked into the abyss full of claws. Her pleated skirt was pulled into the magma by the ripples of the symphony. Clearly, the peaceful years and the sparkling fairy tower were the flute of resilience that her elite girl's school bestowed upon her in facing the times. But when the palace of ideals merged with the fortress of reality, the sediment beneath would accumulate with time. The flute, broke.

That symphony took away the Taiwanese I never spoke, and with the nobility of Mandarin, judged our white pearls. Those who wore glasses never understood the names of the mountains and rivers of the island—let alone its people. And so, the elegant senior was doused to death in 1956 by the learned elites of “glasses-ism” with the dirty label of “communist bandit.” Just like that, she was erased from the

world. The peaceful years she lived, her bright future, all vanished.

Now under the bright moonlight, the most tragic symphony is always playing—Symphony No.6 Pathétique—and that faint moonlight gently sprinkles over the golden turtle tree in front of Tainan First Girls' High School. Beneath that tree lie many treasures: her jet-black hair left behind at age 28, the tears left behind by a lover, the trauma of the White Terror, the soul of a three-year-old who once cried out in prison: “My mother is not a bad person.”

And most of all, it guards the girls who once again step into the school, ensuring that the girls, like camellias, yearn for freedom while also keeping dignity, so that they no longer have their proudest pleated skirts torn away by unexpected claws.

In 2025, I wear long black hair, like the senior. We have both become reflections of East Asia. Our black pupils gaze upon different tempos of time and space, yet we both face the same sea—the soaring of seagulls, the hide-and-seek of squirrels, the chirping of cicadas.

But this time, we have the chance to reclaim the wailing of the skirt hem pulled away by glasses-ism. The girls once again rise on tiptoes, lift their skirts, and charge into a utopia woven by both the West and the East. We sprinkle the fragrance of freedom's powder, laying over the war-torn scars of the past, a new scent of camellia.

Looking down, the Taiwan Strait still beats against the briny crest of waves—like an old Shōwa-era toner, stable enough to make people nostalgic. The other shore—I cannot read it. We seem destined to be cut apart by the Strait, never as one. Resignation is the talisman that four hundred years of history handed to me. So, you are you. I am me.

You must admit your own endlessly compromising fate, silently swallowing it. But we will be the oars that brave the waves—broken countless times, yet

finally ending the symphony wrapped in spider silk, performed by the spider.

Perhaps only after enduring the harshest punishments will we learn the deepest lessons. But we never romanticize those lessons into poetic blood.

So Hegel said: People never learn from the lessons of history. From repeated mistakes, from courting decline, you hand over your soul to it, and it devours your soul in return.

That winter, I kept asking myself— Will you miss it? Will you regret giving up the right to vote in your hands at that time, giving up the chance to defend the continuation of future democracy?

I think what you miss is that bright red, like blood left behind by a revolution of millions. You admire books in that color, books that break the human heart— for you, they are the only sun ever written by history.

And so, desperately yearning, you pour your soul into that hollow slogan. Flying the flag of nationalism, yet aiming to erase the only bloodline of East Asia.

You stepped over students, spraying

them with hoses in front of their eyes. You extinguished those wild lilies— flowers of a new era of democratic freedom.

But those students still held the microphone of life, stood on the streets, and stayed up for democracy.

That night, there were songs, tears, laughter, fighting, and the breeze of freedom quietly arrived, gently brushing away the old clouds of authoritarianism.

Flowers bloomed everywhere, symbols of one generation after another of student autonomy. So wild lilies, sunflowers, bloomed all over the ground. And now, those flowers have attracted bluebirds to land. One by one, the birds kissed the withered petals of the past, letting them bloom again— blossoming the fragrance of freedom and democracy.

What I miss is the pre-1945 Shōwara dress— when all troubles circled beneath the hem of a free girl's skirt.

With a fan embroidered with a thousand cranes in hand, in the hot summer, girls would waltz with lavender perfume, stepping playfully, speaking

the trendiest English and French.

We interwove Taiwanese, Mandarin, English, French— while Chinese, to us, was just the brief stop of another imperial age, a neon-colored lip print— leaving behind the charm of womanhood, taking away the youth of girlhood.

All of it— was the ornament of girls breaking through their era.

I do not want to be a flower that blooms from the start to dazzle people. But it must bring a soothing balm that freezes the blood-soaked sea in the cold.

This is the most delicate contradiction of being a woman— We love women, but we also hate women because of how the world treats them.

That's why I'm always grateful for Wollstonecraft's teachings. She said reason is what women must learn. But I've pondered it for a long time— and I want to say to her:

Reason is the thing women need the least, because the sensibility beneath reason is the longest film we should project to the world.

Like Joan of Arc— her sensibility made

her a sacrifice remembered forever. Like Princess Diana— her sensibility became the dictionary of royal tragedy. And like Wollstonecraft herself— her sensibility made her a defender of women.

Then what about me?

My sensibility is the quietness of the camellia— restraint, distance from the world.

My reason is the world I saw— the knowledge it taught me.

My camellia bears the pain of white scars from the past, but also carries blue pearls— shed by those who, like me, once fought for freedom.

But we never let that sensibility make us give up the deep red in our hearts— the obsession to replant memory and dignity on this land.

Because we are too used to “forgetting” and “settling.” Too many traumas were packaged as fun facts in history textbooks. Too many past screams were washed away in blood. Too many who truly loved this land were mocked as naïve political mistakes.

The seeds of colonialism were sown long ago. But we nurtured them one by one into democratic flowers. We bypassed obedience. Though we still sleep with silence, we have grown proudly into the return of that pink arrival.

Next time, we will no longer be the hypocritical glasses-ism. We will no longer carry identities handed to us by others. We will no longer bleed for the hollow bravado of glasses-ism.

We will be a ferris wheel of blood and tears, spinning the tears of the era, sowing the souls of freedom, and spreading the fragrance of gentleness.

She still has a bit of road left to reach her destination. But that's okay.

We all know— the flower bouquet that the girl from the summer of 2023 seeks is just ahead, before the other shore.

And Gustav Mahler's Fifth Symphony will kiss our vine-like wounds, healing them, blooming into a purple morning glory.

You ask— will we live to see the flowers bloom?

I think— only the flowers know the answer.

Only the students know. Only the alumna knows. In the end, only that elegant tree remains— to continue guarding the senior's purity for us.

NZIFF 2025 Film Reviews

50+



CRACCUM
The University of Auckland's Student Magazine

WE CARRY THEM DIFFERENTLY NOW

ON GRIEF, PLACE, AND THE PRESENCE THAT STAYS



ALICJA NOWACKA

The world feels heavy these days. We are surrounded by constant change. Climate crisis, war, displacement, and loss ripple through both the news and our personal lives. In this shifting landscape, grief no longer feels like something that happens to "other people." It slips into the spaces we move through: classrooms, cafés, study rooms, and sometimes, you feel it before you can explain why.

I'm a PhD student in the School of Psychology at the University of Auckland, where my research explores something many people experience but rarely talk about: the sense of presence (SOP) of someone who has died. SOP refers to a perceptual experience in which a person may feel, hear, see, smell, or in some cases, physically feel touched by someone who is no longer alive. These moments can be subtle or vivid: a voice when no one is speaking, a familiar scent in an empty room, or a strong sense that someone is nearby. They are often comforting, sometimes unsettling, and almost always hard to put into words.

These experiences are more common than many people realise. In studies of widowed spouses, between 39%¹ and 75%² reported having had an SOP at some point. Yet despite their prevalence, research into the phenomenon has lagged behind. For decades, SOP has been misunderstood or dismissed. It has often been labelled pseudoscience, written off as hallucination, or viewed as a peculiar effect of grief. As a result, we still know very little

about how or why these experiences occur.

We're exploring how people experience SOP: what it feels like, what's happening in their lives at the time, and how they make sense of it. We're also interested in how these visitations continue to shape people's lives over time. Alongside these questions, we're exploring how the brain might help us stay connected after loss.

Grief doesn't exist in isolation from

the world around us. It settles into places as much as it settles into us. On a campus like this, you might feel it in a quiet corner, in the empty seat someone once filled, or in the silence that lingers between lectures. These spaces don't just hold memory, they shape it. SOP is not only a personal experience, but one that can be influenced by the environment. The places we move through carry traces of those who are no longer here, quietly holding their presence in the textures of everyday life.

We are nearly at the end of the interview stage of the study, but if you've had a grief-related sense of presence experience and would like to share it, there is still time. We would love to hear from you.

We are also beginning the final part of the research, which explores how the brain supports connection using tools like electroencephalography (EEG), a non-invasive method of measuring brain activity. Whether you've had an SOP experience or are simply curious about how the brain holds on to connections, we would love to include you in the final stage of our research.

If you are interested, feel free to get in touch: alicja.nowacka@auckland.ac.nz



Grief doesn't exist in isolation from the world around us. It settles into places as much as it settles into us

ARTWORK BY INARA RAY @INARARAY_ART

1 Carlsson, M. E., & Nilsson, I. M. (2007). Bereaved spouses' adjustment after the patients' death in palliative care. *Palliative & supportive care*, 5(4), 397-404. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478951507000594>

2 Rees, W. D. (1971). The hallucinations of widowhood. *BMJ*, 4(5778), 37-41. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.4.5778.37>

AN ANYTHING PATTIE RECIPE(ISH)

WITH ESTA EATS.

The truth is making good food as a student doesn't have to be hard.
We just need to let what we do have be our guide.

So here's a recipe(ish), throw in this week's quick sales, what's at the back of your fridge or what's in season.

We have a lot to thank patties for. They make a stale bun a great meal, satifyingly sliced over rice they fill you up, or even on their own as a quick snack. Their circle shape, crispy edges and filling ingredients make for a versatile food you need to know how to make.

But what if I said you can make a pattie out of anything.

Use this guide to make low waste, cheap, tasty and rewarding patties!

① PREPARE YOUR VEGGIES.

The first goal is to get some veggies to a mashable texture, you can roast or boil, just pick what works for you!



Once you've got soft veggies mash in a larger bowl.

If you are running low on veggies you could also add in beans, chickpeas or lentils.

② GATHER YOUR BINDER.

Something to bind it all together is what turns your sticky mash into a workable mixture.

There's lots of things you can use to bind, the goal is simply something with a flour like texture.



③ COMBINE & FLAVOUR.

Mix in your binder to your veggie mash.

Add in your favourite spices, salt, pepper, herbs or even corn.

If the mixture is looking extremely sticky add in a little more flour, but less is more.

Place in the fridge for about half an hour to firm up.

④ SHAPE & CRUMB.

This is where it gets exciting!

Once you have a cold and not sticky mixture roll into balls & flatten to patties.

You could crumb the patties, with breadcrumbs or sesame seeds.

Heat a pan with oil and fry, or you can place on a baking tray drizzle oil & cook in the oven.

Make sure the pan is hot before frying & move the patties around frequently to avoid sticking.



⑤ EAT! ... & FREEZE.

How very good, you've got patties!

Serve between a few bits of bread, on rice, in a salad, the possibilities are endless.



My favourite thing to do is to store them in a freezer bag, ready to enjoy anytime!

Making good food is all just an experiment.

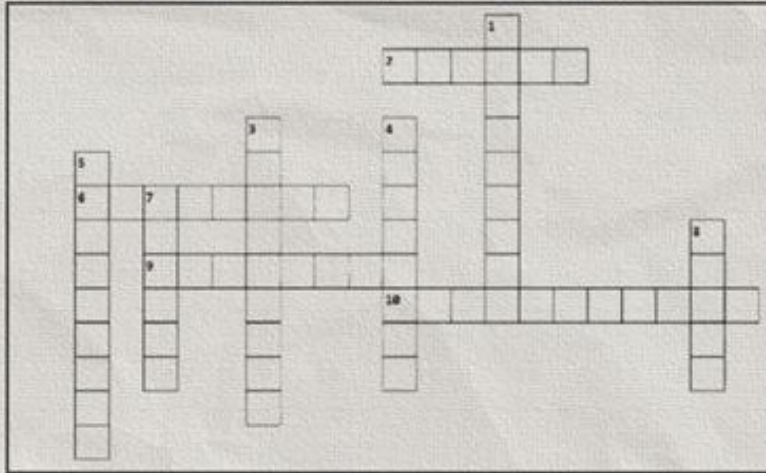
Have fun, make this Recipe(ish) yours.



@ESTA_EATS

BREAKING NEWS

It's Time for
CROSSWORD

**Across**

2. AUSA word war scheduled at B201 foyer on August 20th?
6. Political race that's not at a track?
9. The principle that all citizens have equal rights
10. Political removal from office

Down

1. Huge Electoral victory that's also a natural disaster
3. Government by a few elites
4. A political organization that seeks to influence government policy
5. Government by the people, for the people
7. How many position nominations are open for AUSA 2026?
8. What broke uni students and politicians both need?



FIND THE 6 WORDS HIDING WITHIN THIS GRID - EVERY LETTER COUNTS!

CRACCUM
Political Arena
SEMESTER 2, 2025

Puzzles and Artwork by Angelina Prem

Contribute to Win 1 of 4

Drawn Every Week!



CRACCUM

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT MAGAZINE SINCE 1927

We are calling for 800+ word articles about **UOA**, **News**, **Te Ao Māori** and **Pasifika Perspectives**

Submit here!



HOROSCOPES

AUSA ELECTIONS EDITION

SPONSORED BY AUSA, PURVEYORS OF FINE ARTICULATED DUMPERS, RIGID DUMPERS, FORKLIFTS AND TELEHANDLERS.



RAMON CARBONELL, CEO OF AUSA



Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19) – AUSA Finance & Operations VP

Budget spreadsheets at dawn and trust-board meetings at dusk. You're on the grind, aren't you? But don't slow down. Not even for a second. I'm not gonna tell you to prioritise your wellbeing; you're too important for that. You are the architect who keeps AUSA and everyone else in your life from collapsing under its own hype. My election advice: slow and steady wins the race, and your mahi will speak for itself in time.



Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18) – AUSA International Students' Officer

To burn bridges or build a bridge and get over it? That is the question. Don't let grudges and one-way drama clog your path to victory this election. If you've borrowed something this sem, like someone's Tupperware, it's time to give it back. It's not awkward; they'll appreciate it. My election advice: make others feel like they belong, even if you're wrestling with the most acute sense of imposter syndrome.



Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20) – AUSA Postgraduate Student Officer

You have a ludicrous amount of latent talent ready and rearing to go this month. Pick up palm reading, or whatever impulse hobby you've been toying with forever. It's your destiny. Trust yourself and your gut; your path will be an unforgettable experience. My election advice is to lean into your empathy and ethics as your selling points. It's not fake, you'll be a great advocate in the feedback loop.



Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19) – AUSA Women's Rights Officer

The stars are aligned for this election, Aries. Crush everyone who opposes you with equity and urgency. At every debate you'll land mic-dropping moments and never let anyone forget that you're here. Mana wahine. My election advice is to define your values and stick to them. Any hypocrisy will undermine your personal brand of justice and be your downfall.



Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20) – AUSA Queer Rights Officer

Authentically and unapologetically yourself, Taurus but still your beating heart. Don't let the blood rush lead you to rash action. Lean into your comfort zones and radical hospitality; your vibe is the campus sanctuary. My election advice is to prioritise one-on-one chats. Every vote you win is important, and it will be a close race if you want to be successful.



Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20) – AUSA Disability Rights Officer

Every action usually has an equal and opposite reaction. But during this election, your every move will ramp up your campaign to the next level. Don't let the attention and your virality overwhelm you. My election advice is to use your platform wisely. Be your own salesperson. Every flyer, every event, every DM you send carves out your path to victory.



Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22) – The University Council Student Rep

Intel will be your strength this election, Cancer. You have all the tea, and you're gonna use that power to secure victory. Dodge pitfalls and make those deals. Ride the tidal inlet of emotion but don't ignore your feelings. You can sense the pragmatic needs of students when everyone else's head is in the clouds of ego and delusion. My election advice is to speak truth to power but only if you've done ALL your homework first. Cross your i's and dot your t's.



Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22) – AUSA President

Your election campaign is about to shine brighter than your ego, Leo, as the Sun blazes through your sign. But once the Sun slips into Virgo on August 23, you'll find yourself drowning in the bureaucracy of uni life. Meeting after meeting with seemingly no progress to show for it, except the shortening of your patience. But remember, Prez: your roar still commands attention, and these collaborations will bear fruit in time. My election advice is to delegate and grow your pride. Strength in numbers.



Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22) – AUSA Undergraduate Education VP

Heads up, Virgos: when the Sun enters your sign on August 23, your strategic brain just gets a megaphone. Whether you're drafting policies, attending senate sessions, or pitching campaigns, you're about to project your visions to the student body, and they're gonna eat it up. Just keep the big picture in mind; don't get lost in the labyrinth of fine print and endless memorandums. Your real power comes from your genuine spirit. My advice is to not lose sight of your purpose in your success. Keep your spreadsheets close, but keep the students you represent closer.



Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22) – AUSA Postgraduate Education VP

Breathe: Mercury in Virgo is stirring a caffeinated hurricane of drama around you. The scores of Masters, PGDip, and PhD students need your balanced presence to center them. Break up fights and broker peace. You might not be President, but your voice will be the tie-breaking vote, so be careful what you choose: fate is in your hands. My election advice is to use your natural diplomatic instinct to secure a coalition to victory.



Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21) – AUSA Engagement VP

Hope your social battery is full, Scorpio, because with Mars energizing your sector you're gonna need all the juice you can get. Everyone will want to be your friend and simultaneously everyone will want to be you. Haters and followers come in equal amounts this election. Who are the wolves in sheep's clothing? Burn their wool and see if they run. My advice: stay open-minded, keep your finger on the pulse. Lend your energy to help others - it will only increase your mana.



Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21) – AUSA Wellbeing & Equity VP

No one asked, but we kinda need to hear your hard truths this election. Don't underestimate yourself: give your ten cents to that brainstorm or check in on friends you haven't heard from in ages. Invite them for tea or coffee. My election advice is to be the quiet revolutionary patient but ambitious. Entertain those big ideas, but wait till they're fully cooked before serving them. If you do that, you can't fail.

VOTE & WIN AN XBOX



SCAN TO VOTE NOW

VOTE & GO IN THE DRAW FOR EPIC PRIZES



**VOTING OPEN UNTIL
FRIDAY 29TH AUGUST - 5PM!**



**CANDIDATE
STATEMENTS**

PRESIDENT



Elson Tan (OPTION 1)

Kia ora! Whether you live next door or one ocean away, we are all here for many reasons: to study, grow, and find a place to truly call home. The name's Elson Tan, and it's a huge honor to be running for AUSA President, with the ultimate goal of bringing UoA into an era that not only helps all students in their academic and social lives, but also takes this year's revitalised campus life and amplifies it- not just building back, but BUILDING BACK BETTER.

To do this, my agenda has six pillars I call the Cube Approach: expanding AUSA events and club collaborations; ensuring total AUSA transparency; launching a full investigation into all religious organisations operating on UoA campuses to ensure student safety; spreading greater awareness about the many diverse UoA services on offer; working with Auckland Transport to secure more affordable transportation to and from campus; and bringing Ubiq, our beloved university bookstore, back to life.

Finally, as a prominent volunteer and activist on and off campus, I have seen much of the stuff that we all agree are unfair. Palestine is still being bombed. Many sexual assaults go unnoticed. The rent's still too high. Having worked and talked with numerous politicians in Auckland, I also believe that AUSA needs to take a bigger, bolder stand regarding issues plaguing all of us as part of a global student community- no organisation is ever too small to make a difference.

For the full agenda, please visit my Instagram- @themanfromosaka



Dr Morteza Sharifi

Hello:

I've been part of this university for 10 years, as a student, researcher, staff member, advocate, and critic. I know how this place really works, who makes the decisions, and how student voices are too often ignored. Having once taken the University to the High Court to defend my rights, I understand better than most how power operates, and how to push back effectively when students are treated unfairly.

If you're happy with another year of empty gestures and quiet executives, don't vote for me. But if you want a President who will expose failures, hold power to account, and push through real wins for students, I'm ready. I'll make AUSA what it should have always been: a fearless advocate, not a passive observer.

This is our university. Let's take it back.



Kalana Piramanage

Ayubowan, Namaste, Ni Hao, Kia ora and Hello!

My name is Kalana, the current Engagement Vice President of AUSA and I am running to be your President of AUSA next year! I want to keep making uni a fun and exciting place to show up to every day, while also tackling the issues that students care about.

Last year, I ran on visibility, and since then, I've worked reallyyyy hard to make AUSA events bigger, better, and more collaborative. From a Wicked-themed Outdoor Movie Night to Culture Fest, where we celebrated the diversity and vibrant cultures on campus, we've brought uni to life like never before! I've also made the club's space more efficient and accessible by introducing the "All Things Clubs" broadcast channel for clearer com-

munication and improving systems like room bookings (goodbye endless email chains!).

We've also worked with the university to make food more affordable on campus by introducing Budgie Eats, where all vendors are required to offer a decent-sized meal for under \$10.

Where to next, Kalana??? 🤔

- Launching a brand new UoA x TRK AUSA app - featuring a daily club events calendar, AUSA student support bookings, campus maps, Craccum, and so much more all in one place!
- Ensuring AUSA speaks up and fights for student-led campaigns e.g. 50% off public transport
- Restarting the TRK AUSA Food Pantry - so students in need have access to free kai and essentials all year round.
- EVEN MORE, BIGGER, AND BETTER EVENTS TO MAKE CAMPUS MORE ALIVE THAN EVER!

👉 Follow @kalanaforausa and vote Kalana!



Nimish Milan Singh

We all deserve the best possible experience at this university. Our campus whānau is diverse, strong, and ready to thrive, and it's time our systems, support, and opportunities reflect that. My name is Nimish Milan Singh, and I'm thrilled to run for Te Rōpū Kahikatea AUSA President for 2026.

As an Outreach Lead for Velocity this year, I've championed our Māori and Pasifika entrepreneurship events alongside Te Mana Pakihi and AUPISA, inspiring students to create their own pathways in business while fostering a sense of community. With the Study Abroad Students' Society, I've helped support a thriving body of over 500 exchange students, leaving them with long-lasting memories of Aotearoa. As a former Waipārūrū Hall President, I know just how important serving students' voices is.

Here are five core goals I will work to achieve: 1) bringing back access to student lockers on campus, 2) reforming the club approval and funding process, 3) celebrating more underrepresented cultures on campus, 4) creating better employment opportunities for internation-

al students, and 5) increasing the visibility of exchange programmes and providing better funding options to complete them.

Additionally, I would like to streamline the student misconduct process, improve funding allocations for postgraduate students, and create a membership-based system to encourage student entrepreneurship.

I've seen how powerful student-led initiatives can be, and, more importantly, I know how to make them successful. I'm ready to serve your interests.

For more information about my policies and me, visit @nimish4ausa on Instagram.

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION VICE-PRESIDENT



Matthew Lee

Kia ora! My name is Matthew Lee and I'm the current UGEVP for TRK AUSA. I would love to keep fighting for students next year using the all the experiences and skills I've gained throughout my term.

This year, I helped write the University's AI action plan and I'm leading the efforts to rewrite the Class Rep policy. I organised the efforts against the merger proposal and I made sure that the students' voices were heard throughout the WTR course evaluations. Next year, I'll continue to be the student voice on the various academic policies and changes coming through.

Since the start of my term, we've organised submissions for various bills and have released statements against hateful rhetoric against our communities. We helped organise a protest against the pay equity changes, and I constantly meet with politicians to raise issues that students are facing. I'm also leading the work on the Students' Manifesto to raise the profile of the student voice. My focus next year will be on raising the issues of jobs and transport.

However, there is still so much more work to be done. Next year is the General Elections and I believe AUSA has a huge role to play in ensuring that we are a good spokespeople for the student community. We still have a lot of work to do to refocus AUSA as the ultimate body

for student support. Also.. fix the damn wifi.

Check out my page @matthew-leeforausa for more information and thank you for your support!



Josiah Fresnel

Mauri Ora, ko Josiah tōku ingoa. My name is Josiah, I am an activist, organizer and socialist here in Tamaki Makaurau. My political direction, like many young peoples', has been shaped by the genocide in Palestine we have seen unfold live on our phones. The world we live in is in crisis, and us students feel that the most. Many of us live in poor housing, struggle to make ends meet, can't access the student allowance and are forced to sacrifice our wellbeing to engage in study. International students suffer from crushing costs and are always at risk of losing their visas if they advocate for themselves, advocate for others or don't do well enough with their studies.

I am standing for the Undergrad VP position to use the institution of TRK-AUSA to organize an independent, self-acting student movement. Our individual problems can never be addressed if we stand alone. A student union can provide a space where we can solve these problems collectively, but only if change comes from the ground up. As such, we need a student union which is independent from the Uni so we can hold them to account, a union from and for the student base to make policy that matters to us, that is accountable to students. We must also build a working relationship with the Tertiary Education Union to show them our fight is their fight, that our future as students is their future as educators and researchers.

**VOTE & GO IN THE DRAW FOR EPIC PRIZES INCLUDING AN XBOX
(VOTING OPEN UNTIL FRIDAY 29TH AUGUST - 5PM!)**



Yaohua Zuo (Option 2:

Hi! I'm Yaohua Zuo (you can call me Hugh), a first-year Bachelor of Commerce student majoring in Accounting and Finance.

As someone new to both university and life in New Zealand, I've quickly come to understand how overwhelming and confusing the academic environment can be for undergraduates. From course planning and workload pressure to unclear support systems, I believe more can be done to ensure all students — especially those just starting out — feel confident and supported in their education journey.

If elected as Undergraduate Education Vice-President, I will work to:

- Advocate for clearer communication of academic policies and support services.
- Push for more peer mentoring and academic workshops aimed at first- and second-year students.
- Improve accessibility to recorded lectures, language support, and office hours for students whose first language isn't English.
- Partner with faculty and AUSA to gather regular feedback on course quality and student well-being, and act on it.

I bring the fresh perspective of someone actively going through the early undergraduate experience — someone who truly understands what's missing and what needs to be improved. I'm approachable, thoughtful, and passionate about making sure all students have a fair and fulfilling academic experience.

Let's make undergraduate education more supportive, inclusive, and transparent — together!



Amulya Aggarwal (OPTION 1)

Kia ora! I'm Amulya, a 19-year-old non-binary international student from India pursuing a Bachelor of Communication (Communication and Technology). With a background in student representation—including serving as a class rep, AESA Digital Media Officer and the 2024-25 Communications Faculty Rep—I've had the privilege of advocating for students across diverse backgrounds and programmes.

Beyond representation, I've also worked with AUSA as a Social Media Intern and am currently working to establish a Communications and Media Club on campus—initiatives that reflect my dedication to both visibility and community building.

My proposed initiatives centre on equity, accessibility, and better communication across faculties. If elected, I aim to:

- Advocate for more inclusive academic policies, especially for international, LGBTQIA+, neurodiverse, and first-year students.
- Strengthen communication between AUSA, student reps, and the wider student body by creating accessible feedback channels and resources.
- Lead inclusive campaigns addressing real student issues like rising costs, access to transport, and academic wellbeing.
- Push for transparency in university decision-making and meaningful student consultation on curriculum and assessment changes.

With a background in leadership, equity, digital communications, and policy engagement, I bring a well-rounded, thoughtful approach to this role. I deeply care about creating a university experience where every student feels heard, valued, and empowered to succeed—because I've been in their shoes too.

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION VICE-PRESIDENT



Jeffree Qiu (OPTION 1)

As a PhD student in Urban Planning and Graduate Teaching Assistant, I bring a strong understanding of postgraduate realities and a track record of action. Through teaching and peer engagement, I'm attuned to the concerns of diverse PG students. I've led academic departments, co-organized major forums with UN-Habitat and government ministries, and delivered results under pressure through complex planning research. My governance experience includes recording executive meetings, synthesizing policy input, and working across academic and community groups—skills essential for this role.

If elected, I will lead three key initiatives:

- Researcher Resource Navigator — A digital, centralised map of PG support services (writing help, ethics approval, SGS workshops, funding, lab access), co-developed with Libraries and Campus Life.
- Postgraduate Policy Pulse — A quarterly Canvas-integrated survey capturing real-time PG feedback on supervision, wellbeing, and research challenges.
- Supervisor & Student Charter — A co-created guide outlining clear expectations and communication norms in supervisory relationships.

In my first 100 days, I will establish a cross-faculty PG Advisory Group, launch the first Policy Pulse survey, advocate for transparent ethics approval tracking, and publish a PG Handbook with support units. I'll also collaborate closely with the PG Officer to ensure PG voices are heard across university governance.

With policy experience, passion, and a global mindset, I'm ready to serve and deliver real change.



Juanma Poyatos

Kia ora! I'm Juanma Poyatos, a PhD candidate in Philosophy at the University of Auckland. I'm originally from Spain, and as an international student, I bring a fresh and diverse perspective on what postgraduate education can and should be.

After completing my Philosophy degree, I spent nearly ten years working in the private sector before returning to academia. That experience gave me a clear sense of what students need when they finish their studies: not just knowledge, but guidance, financial security, and real opportunities. I understand the professional and personal uncertainties we face—because I've lived them.

My main goal is simple: to represent postgraduate students—both local and international—with honesty, clarity, and action. I believe that real representation starts with listening, so I'm open to all proposals that reflect what you need.

Too often, postgrad students—especially international ones—face precarious conditions and uncertainty about their academic futures. Many are not fully informed about what lies ahead in academia or the barriers they may face. That gap creates stress, isolation, and missed opportunities.

If elected, I'll work to gather and share essential information about postgraduate life: academic pathways, funding, and job prospects. I want to make these resources visible and help shape AUSA's actions based on real needs.

Let's turn our shared concerns into clear demands, and make sure postgraduate voices are truly heard. Ngā mihi nui!



Eugene Lee (OPTION 1)

Currently pursuing a Masters in Engineering in Computer Systems, and as the acting SSCC Master's student Representative for the ECSE department, I've come to realize how underrepresented Master's students are within the university. The short, intense nature of most Master's programs leaves students little time or opportunity to voice their concerns or build meaningful connections. Many are busy adjusting to life at university, often lacking both engagement opportunities and targeted support. I want to change that.

My goal is to create a stronger, more connected Master's student community across all departments. My proposed initiative includes three recurring department-level engagement events per semester:

1. A welcome event during or immediately after orientation for new Master's students.
2. A Week 0/1 mixer between new and returning students to build peer support.
3. A post semester networking event with alumni and current students to help students explore engage with each other to connect and share academic and career pathways.

I also intend to push for mandatory separate representation for Master's and PhD students in all major university committees (like SSCC, TLQC, and AUSA), as I've seen firsthand that their challenges and needs are fundamentally different. Grouping them under a single representative leads to many voices being ignored, especially those of Master's students.

I've already begun laying the foundation in my current role, and I'm committed to scaling it university-wide. Master's students deserve stronger representation, better support, and a true sense of belonging. I'll work to make that happen.

The ultimate goal for me is to create a sustainable community of masters students and master alumni.

AUSA.NZ/2VOTE



Sneha Singh (OPTION 1)

Kia ora koutou, I'm Sneha (she/her), a PhD candidate in Sociology at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland. As a postgraduate student and educator, I've spent the last four years navigating both sides of the academic experience — and I'm passionate about making our university more equitable, transparent, and student-centred.

If elected PG Education VP, I'll focus on three key areas:

1. **Advocacy and Accountability** — Championing fair workloads, access to supervision, and academic integrity in decision-making processes.
2. **Community Building** — Strengthening connections across faculties through shared postgraduate spaces, mixers, and interdisciplinary forums.
3. **Access and Equity** — Working to eliminate barriers for Māori, Pacific, international, and part-time students by pushing for better resources, visibility, and support.

I've previously served as a student representative at both Central European University and the University of Delhi, and I currently serve on the National Council for Women NZ, where I advocate for inclusive education policies. I bring experience in governance, communication, and grassroots organising — but more importantly, I bring a genuine commitment to listening, showing up, and doing the work.

Let's build a PG experience that reflects the excellence, diversity, and voice of its students. I'd love your support. Ngā mihi nui, Sneha



DN Joshi (OPTION 1)

Kia ora koutou.

My name is DN Joshi, and I am an international PhD candidate in Education. For the past one and a half years, I have served as the PhD representative for the School of Cultures, Languages and Linguistics. This experience has given me valuable insight into the realities of doctoral study, including supervision challenges, unclear policies, and the emotional demands of long-term research.

If elected as your PG Education Vice President, I will work to make the postgraduate experience more transparent, supportive, and empowering. I will advocate for clearer policies around supervision responsibilities, funding extensions, and academic milestones, with a focus on fairness and accessibility.

I propose regular, confidential check-in surveys to identify supervision issues early. I also aim to set up peer support groups that connect students at similar research stages to share experiences and practical advice. In addition, I will organise focused writing sessions and informal retreats to promote productivity and reduce isolation.

To improve clarity, I will help develop a student-led FAQ that explains key university processes in simple, accessible language. I will also support the creation of a voluntary PhD research directory to foster collaboration across disciplines.

Representation is not just about raising concerns. It is about listening, building trust, and delivering meaningful outcomes. With your support, I will bring care, commitment, and action to this role. Ngā mihi nui.

DN Joshi



ENGAGEMENT VICE-PRESIDENT

Jeffrey Qiu (OPTION 2)

As a PhD student in Urban Planning, and former student union department head at undergraduate and postgraduate uni, I bring deep experience in advocacy, campaign coordination, and student-centred policy work. I've led major public-facing initiatives with UN-Habitat, organised civic engagement events with government ministries, and developed grassroots campaigns supporting ethnic communities across Auckland. I understand how to amplify student voices—locally and nationally.

My experience chairing meetings, writing policy submissions, and coordinating cross-sector projects has prepared me to lead AUSA campaigns, manage Themed Weeks, and represent student concerns beyond the university. As a multilingual communicator and active volunteer, I connect easily across diverse student groups and know how to turn ideas into inclusive action.

If elected, I will champion three key initiatives:

- **"Your Voice, Your Vote"** campaign — Mobilise student participation in 2026 local elections through candidate forums, enrolment drives, and issue-based town halls.
- **Climate Justice Action Week** — Launch a themed week focusing on transport equity, food sustainability, and climate advocacy with student-led events.
- **"Issue to Action"** digital hub — Create an online platform where students can propose, follow, and co-lead grassroots campaigns.

First 100 Days: I will build a cross-club Campaigns Committee, audit Themed Weeks for inclusion and impact, and collaborate with Cracum and AUSA Officers to amplify marginalised voices. My goal is simple: empower students to be heard—and to create change.



Saebyl (OPTION 1)

I'm Saebyl, I'm doing a BA in Criminology and Korean, and a BGS in Politics and Human Rights. I'm running for Engagement VP and Well-being & Equity VP. Engagement is my focus, but well-being and equity are also important to me; they're not separate issues, they're part of what makes student life actually work! I'm here because I want the campus to feel alive without students being pushed aside. That means events you actually want to go to, clubs that thrive (even the weird little ones), and support that meets people where they're at.

My goals

- ~ **Safety on campus:** creating a policy to stop shady groups targeting students.
- ~ **Voting outreach:** provide political education in preparation for the 2026 elections.
- ~ **Volunteering opportunities:** connecting students with passions and real-world skills.
- ~ **Club support:** especially for small/new clubs finding their feet and maintaining traction.
- ~ **Bringing energy back to campus spaces** through music, public art, creativity, and inter-faculty connections.
- ~ **Transparency:** AUSA, the uni and staff should have clear and honest communication, especially where funds are going.

As a disabled, neurospicy student, I know how much it means to feel seen and supported. I'm not here to play politics - this isn't the beehive - I'm here to listen, collaborate, and make things actually happen.

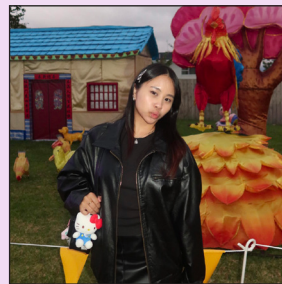
So if you want someone real, someone who will speak up, and someone who'll show up - 🗳️ Vote Saebyl for Engagement VP + Well-being & Equity VP 🗳️

Real action. Real protection. Real connection.



Rachana Rajeev

Kia ora! My name is Rachana and I'm very excited to be running for engagement VP for 2026!! I'm someone who loves to keep busy and ENGAGED— from running club events to accepting any and every side quest, I make sure every day I spend at uni is a day I try something new! And so- I, of all people KNOW how important student engagement is... To make campus life more vibrant and welcoming I would endeavor to; improve club visibility and processes, introduce more sustainable practices, work further with community organisations to make bigger impacts, and overall create a more welcoming, alive campus life. I believe there are so many parts of university students are not aware of, such as the benefits or the opportunities available. I want to create an environment where students feel comfortable stepping away from the sidelines and involving themselves in every aspect of uni life!!



Sanya Bun

Chum Reap Sour (Hellooo)!! I'm Sanya, a Law and Global Studies student, matcha enthusiast, and passionate community builder!

Whether it's your first or final year, I believe student life should feel fun, connected, and something you want to be part of. As an exec for two student clubs and one of the Event Coordinators on the AUSA Engagement Committee, I've seen that good engagement goes beyond events. It's about creating spaces and moments where students feel seen, supported, and inspired. This is what inspired me to run.

If elected as your Engagement Vice-President for 2026, I'll strengthen how AUSA connects

VOTE & GO IN THE DRAW FOR EPIC PRIZES INCLUDING AN XBOX (VOTING OPEN UNTIL FRIDAY 29TH AUGUST - 5PM!)

with all types of students and give you a voice. My focus? Stronger visibility, uplifting student voice, improving communication, and making AUSA more active in the issues that students care about the most.

From civic education to sustainability and representation, I'll make AUSA more responsive and student-powered so all students feel more connected with causes, campaigns, and communities that make student life more meaningful, on campus and beyond. Whether that's celebrating the work of clubs or leading conversations about low-waste living, I'll work to create inclusive platforms not only to inform, but also to empower you.

After the last year behind the scenes listening, learning, and engaging, I'm ready to take that energy further and lead with fresh, realistic ideas rooted in student engagement. Let's make uni life something you remember for the right reasons!



Chenfei Tan (OPTION 1)

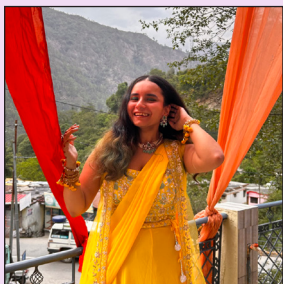
I'm Fay. "Creating extraordinary in ordinary days" – this belief defines my journey. From founding a Greater Bay Area youth exchange program across four cities, to promoting Chinese culture through dance diplomacy in Tokyo, I've proven that true leadership means turning vision into action.

As your AU Students' Association candidate, I present the "Bridge to Extraordinary" initiative with three pillars:

- **Global Synergy:** Having led a 40+ member transnational team (national award-winning), I built mentor networks connecting international and local students. Vote Fay to access your global resource web.
- **Amplifying Voices:** I directed documentary films across 10 rural villages, with my works broadcast on provincial television networks. Vote Fay to make your voice resonate campus-wide.
- **Academic Innovation:** My 90.5% GPA across dual degrees, two provincial papers, three scholarships, and national award-winning media experience, empowered me to build an MOE-honored studio with

cross-disciplinary peers. Vote Fay for learning that works and inspires.

So why not choose Fay who leads with heart, humor, and horsepower? This isn't just an election – it's your invitation to craft something extraordinary together.



Amulya Aggarwal (OPTION 2)

Kia ora! I'm Amulya (she/they), a 19-year-old Communications student from India who thrives at the intersection of creativity, strategy, and activism. With prior experience as AUSA's Social Media Intern, a Faculty Rep, and current AESA Digital Media Officer, I've consistently used communications as a tool for building community and amplifying student voices.

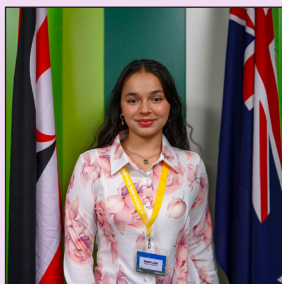
As a queer, international student, I understand the importance of inclusive, intersectional engagement. My background in Māori and Pacific communications, social media strategy, and visual storytelling through my diplomas in Digital Marketing and Commercial Photography equips me to lead campaigns that are both aesthetically compelling and socially impactful.

If elected, my key goals as Engagement VP would be:

- **Revitalising AUSA's Themed Weeks** to be more collaborative, accessible, and representative of student-led interests.
- **Supporting the creation of more platforms** for marginalised voices—particularly through creative University initiatives such as Craccum and 95bFM, workshops, and panel events that bring visibility to underrepresented perspectives.
- **Leading creative, values-based campaigns** on issues such as climate justice, housing, transport, and voter engagement—grounded in co-design with the student body.
- **Making AUSA events more vibrant, well-publicised, and culturally relevant** by integrating visual storytelling, better promotion, and a stronger online presence.

I believe engagement is more than just events—it's about building a movement of students who care,

act, and feel seen. I'm excited to bring vision, empathy, and drive to the role to make that happen.



Rashi Jain

Kia Ora, I'm Rashi Jain, and I'm standing for the role of Engagement Officer because I believe student engagement is about more than visibility; it's about our values, our voice, and belonging. Engagement is about inclusivity, listening to every single voice and not just the loudest ones. In a university as diverse and dynamic as ours, engagement must reflect the depth of who we are; our cultures, our languages, our struggles, and our collective hope for a better, more connected future.

As someone who deeply values equity, cultural respect, and ethical leadership, I want to shift the narrative from "marketing" to meaningful connection. Too often, student associations speak to us, not with us. If elected, I'll center my work on creating spaces where students feel heard, safe, and represented, not just entertained. Engagement, to me, means empowering students to see themselves in AUSA's Kaupapa, through campaigns that celebrate our identities and events that honor our roots.

I will advocate for partnerships with Māori and Pacific student groups, cultural clubs, and marginalized voices to ensure engagement reflects our collective stories. I'll push for transparent, ethical communication, and build a culture where AUSA is truly a home for student voice, grounded in aroha, manaakitanga, and integrity.

WELLBEING & EQUITY VICE-PRESIDENT



Saebyul (OPTION 2)

I'm Saebyul, I'm doing a BA in Criminology and Korean, and a BGS in Politics and Human Rights. I'm running for Engagement VP and Wellbeing & Equity VP. Engagement is my focus, but well-being and equity are also important to me; they're not separate issues, they're part of what makes student life actually work! I'm here because I want the campus to feel alive without students being pushed aside. That means events you actually want to go to, clubs that thrive (even the weird little ones), and support that meets people where they're at.

My goals~

- **Safety on campus:** creating a policy to stop shady groups targeting students. Volunteering opportunities: connecting students with passions and real-world skills.
- **Disability equity:** streamlining communication between undiagnosed student support because everyone deserves to have accommodations to make their uni experience smoother.
- **Bringing in/maintaining clubs'** diversity inclusions, especially for sports, eg using my connections to bring in wheelchair fencing.

As a queer, disabled, neurodivergent student, I know how much it means to feel seen and supported. I'm not here to play politics - this isn't the beehive - I'm here to listen, collaborate, and make things actually happen.

So if you want someone real, someone who will speak up, and someone who'll show up - 🗳️ Vote Saebyul for Engagement VP + Wellbeing & Equity VP 🗳️

Real action. Real protection. Real connection.



Nadia Malik

Kia ora, I'm Nadia Malik (she/her), a second-year psychology student, President of the UoA Wellbeing Club, Equity & Welfare Officer for SciSA, and your candidate for AUSA Wellbeing and Equity VP 2026. I believe in action, not fluff. Everything in my campaign is grounded in real student feedback, research, and conversations with Campus Life, AUSA, Student Clubs, and university staff.

I am not here to say what sounds nice. I am here to get things done. Some of the initiatives I will deliver include a permanent well-being hub on campus, a campus night safety audit, protection from aggressive recruiting tactics, visibility and expansion of chaplaincy support, and the completion of the Wellbeing Portal project. I will also launch the Loneliness Project, which brings small, inclusive events to students who do not feel at home in traditional club spaces, especially given the anti-social culture at UoA.

If elected, I will work hard to improve systems that support mental health, equity, connection, and safety. You will also see exactly what I am doing, with fortnightly Instagram updates tracking what I said and what I delivered. You deserve a representative who does not disappear after elections. And you deserve someone who listens, follows through, and fights for the student experience you actually want.



Lexi Li

Hello everyone! My name is Lexi Li, I am international student with a rigorous approach to everything I do. I want to run for the Wellbeing & Equity Vice-President. I love this equity, and I am glad to

AUSA.NZ/2VOTE

invest the time to make a system more equitable, bringing happiness to more people.

I always believe fairness is the most important. I have a wealth of experience, including managing teams and clubs, handling club promotions, and promoting underdeveloped economic regions—where I also provided improvement suggestions to boost local people's happiness and income levels. These diverse experiences have taught me a wide range of ways to plan activities that ensure greater equity for more people—and ultimately, to bring happiness to more lives.

If I'm elected, I'll apply my knowledge and experience to my university, ensuring I bring greater equity and happiness to all of you.



Leo Mamedov

HELLO, my name is Leo Mamedov, a mental health advocate, and a massive believer that student life should feel supported, inclusive, and something we can all enjoy together with positive memories to remember. So, I'm putting my name forward to run for the role of Wellbeing & Equity Vice-President for 2026 - with the hopes of serving you, the students, and the wider university community.

I believe our university experience should not be defined by stress and burnout, but by support, connection, and belonging. As a current member of the AUSA Engagement Committee, an office holder and welfare officer at national & regional UN Youth events, I've seen firsthand how crucial constant support is for all students, including international students and those from vulnerable communities.

If elected as your Wellbeing & Equity Vice-President, my role would focus on:

- ✔ Stronger mental health services/support
- ✔ Equity and inclusion in action, with new proposed initiatives for all student communities
- ✔ Establishment of an Equity Committee
- ✔ Partnerships with extended wellbeing and community services
- ✔ Student voice representation on all levels

Uni is so much more than just lec-

tures & deadlines. Wellbeing and inclusivity are not a luxury - it's a right. Every student, regardless of background, deserves accessible, judgment-free support in a safe and inclusive campus.

You can cast your vote electronically starting from 18th August. Your support would be greatly appreciated.



Mele Ngauamo

Kia ora, Mālō e lelei and G'day! 💖

We all share two things in common: 1) we're students, and 2) we're human. But neither of those experiences looks the same for everyone. We carry different cultures, creeds, responsibilities, and challenges, all of which shape how we move through university life.

My name is Mele Ngauamo. I'm an Australian-born Tongan and have called New Zealand home for the past nine years. That already sets me apart from many of you, and that's the point. Our experiences are not monolithic, and our systems of equity and wellbeing shouldn't be either.

This is why I'm running for Te Rōpū Kahikatea AUSA Wellbeing & Equity Vice-President. ✔

I've navigated university while juggling cultural expectations, financial pressure, and mental health. I understand how important it is to have support systems that actually work for ALL students. Every student deserves to feel safe, supported, and seen.

My focus includes advocating for safe women-only gym spaces or classes at our recreational facilities, expanding food security through student pantries, supporting diverse cultural and religious celebrations on campus with seasonal events, addressing aggressive recruitment safety concerns, making AUSA House a more welcoming space, improving student awareness of campus events and clarity around student clubs, and enhancing cross-campus engagement.

Let's create a campus that meets us where we are: as humans first, and students second. 🙏 Vote Mele Ngauamo to be your voice for wellbeing and equity. I'm committed to making sure your voice is heard!

FINANCE & OPERATION VICE-PRESIDENT



Praneel Gupta

My name is Praneel Gupta, and I'm running to be your Finance & Operations Vice President for 2026. Over the past year, I've proudly served in this role advocating for transparency, sustainability, and better financial outcomes for students.

As FOVP, I've led major internal reforms, and taken decisive steps toward long-term financial security for AUSA. I've been actively working on strategic projects including the revitalisation of the AUSA Investment Trust and reducing reliance on the Property Trust which aim to place AUSA in a stronger financial position for years to come. My work is rooted in careful planning, consistency, and action. I believe in doing the work not just promising it. I have maintained clear documentation, built strong relationships with students and stakeholders, and collaborated across teams to improve operational efficiency and financial governance. If elected, I'll continue driving these long-term projects while focusing on Increasing revenue through ethical commercial partnerships that would benefit AUSA in the long term. I am also right now working on building a food pantry with the staff and updating AUSA financial policies. My approach is grounded, strategic, and focused on delivering tangible outcomes. I care deeply about ensuring AUSA remains financially resilient so it can keep fighting for students now and in the future.

Let's keep building something better.



Michael Yncino

Whether you're a first-year student feeling uncertain of the future or if you're finishing up your final year of what has seemed like a lifetime of new experiences and growth, we all came here with a common interest to grow academically, professionally, and personally. My name is Michael Yncino, and it is a privilege to run for AUSA Finance/Operations Vice President. My goal is to empower students by advocating for their needs and concerns, ensuring equal opportunities, and fostering a stronger sense of community among our diverse student population.

I hope to achieve this through three key initiatives: Firstly, I will enhance the system where all students can voice and vote on their ideas for any future AUSA events, ensuring every voice and opinion is valued and considered. This also ensures the budget is optimized for what students really want. Secondly, I will reach out to local businesses such as restaurants and retail shops to secure deals and sponsorships to address the rise in the cost of living limiting student spending. Thirdly, I will create a system to help student clubs match with potential sponsors, making it easier to acquire the funding needed that allows them to run more events, which enriches campus life for everyone.

My studies in finance and management, as well as my leadership and roles in various clubs and committees during college, have equipped me with the necessary skills and experience to take on this professional role and make a positive difference for our students.

DISABILITIES RIGHTS OFFICER



Riley James Hovell-Allomes

Kia Ora

Ko Riley James taku Ingoa. I am running for the Disability Rights Officer Position.

I use He / They pronouns and I am takatāpui.

I whakapapa to Ngāti Porou and Ngāpuhi.

I live with multiple disabilities including Low Vision, ADHD and Autism.

I am in my second year at UOA studying a Bachelor of Arts in Education, Māori studies and community services in youth development.

If I am elected as the Disability rights officer I will work closely with AUSA to promote the Disabled Students Association and advocate for increased funding to support more inclusive events.

I will also advocate for clearer, more accessible walkways across campus. YES I recognise that Auckland Transport/Council manages these areas, I plan to contact them and propose low cost solutions for these challenges.

Alternatively, I will propose initiatives to AUSA and UOA to encourage student and staff contribution to making our walkways safer. One initiative will be a 'keep left' campaign.

I aim to make events more inclusive, by proposing solutions to AUSA for students who find loud, crowded environments, like O week, overwhelming. Everyone deserves access to these events.

Additionally, I will liaise with AUSA and clubs to ensure their social media content meets accessibility standards. Currently, the lack of alt text excludes students who rely on screen readers, causing them to miss out on important opportunities and social events. My goal is to help create a more inclusive campus culture where all students can enjoy the campus experience.

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Ayolabi Martins

Kia Ora! I'm Ayo, a third year law and arts student here at the University of Auckland, and I'm also the current disability rights officer. It's been a heck of a journey thus far, but there is still heaps to do! Some of the work I've led so far includes: getting UoA senior leadership on board with developing a better hybrid learning strategy (yes, recorded tutorials are coming), I've led a team of twelve strong-willed students who regularly discuss and advocate for campus-wide accessibility issues and have set out plans to conduct formal research pertaining to disabled students and campus responses to their accessibility needs, amended and refined UoA policy to better serve disabled students, and spoken one-on-one with countless individuals who've faced unfair disadvantage due to their disability. If elected as your DRO for 2026, I intend to continue in the strides I've already made and build on current plans to improve UoA's hybrid learning.

I also want to see disabled voices and perspectives cemented in UoA decision-making, and that disabled students are always consulted when drastic changes to the university are being made, especially when it comes to things such as infrastructure redesign and pedagogical redevelopment. Finally, I want to be there for more of the disabled community and intend to have a more outward-facing approach that allows students to engage with me one-on-one so I can help them, and by extension, help other students as well.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICER



Elson Tan (OPTION 2)

Kia ora! My name's Elson Tan, and like the rest of my fellow ISO candidates, I am not from NZ. As an international student, I have felt what it is like to endure culture shock in a new country—especially one where the culture, politics, and way of life are vastly different. And that's why I'm running for International Students Officer—because I want to help new international students come into our wonderful country and not just study well, but also to dive into the Kiwi way of life and our vibrant culture on campus. After all, who better to represent the international student community than someone who found his place in NZ?

As a current AUSA Buddy Volunteer, I've seen many students go from being unfamiliar with the country to finding personal success within the first semester alone. But before that, I was an international student in NZ, trying to figure out where I belonged within the university. I not only figured it out, but also expanded my reach beyond the university as well. And now, I want to help international students do the exact same thing while also balancing the sacred combination of work and play in the melting pot that is our vibrant city.

Within campus, I also intend to host many more cultural workshops with AUSA for students to experience each other's cultures and traditions, which will involve working with many cultural clubs on campus. Finally, I promise to tackle all emerging international student issues head-on.



Faheem (OPTION 2)

1. Orientation & Onboarding that Truly Supports

Many international students feel overwhelmed during their first weeks. I will:

- Advocate for faculty-specific, extended orientation sessions focused on practical tips, academic expectations, and local services.
- Propose the creation of a peer-to-peer international buddy system to help new students feel connected from day one.
- Work with AUSA and the International Office to produce multilingual onboarding guides tailored to coursework, research, and student life needs.

2. Cultural Inclusion & Belonging

A diverse student community is a strength. I will:

- Promote multicultural celebration events that spotlight the traditions, food, and stories of international students—from language nights to cultural performance showcases.
- Collaborate with cultural clubs and international student associations to co-host events that foster understanding and friendships across communities.
- Advocate for the inclusion of international perspectives in academic discussions, student panels, and university-wide activities.

3. Wellbeing & Mental Health Support

Being far from home can take a toll on students' mental health. I will:

- Work with AUSA Welfare and University Health & Counselling to ensure culturally sensitive, accessible mental health support tailored to international students.
- Promote wellbeing workshops on topics like stress management, homesickness, adjusting to new cultures, and navigating academic pressure.
- Push for more visible outreach efforts so international students know where and how to seek help when they need it.

4. Employment & Practical Support

Many international students struggle to find part-time jobs or prepare for post-study work.



Yaotian Lu

Kia ora! My name is Yaotian Lu (Lu-is), and I'm an international student studying Bcom at the University of Auckland. As someone who has navigated the unique challenges of studying abroad, I understand how crucial it is to feel supported, heard, and connected. That's why I'm running to be this position.

If elected, I will prioritise advocacy, inclusion, and engagement. My key initiatives include:

1. Improving representation by actively voicing international student concerns at the International Committee and through AUSA governance channels.
2. Improving practical support, such as running info sessions on visas, employment and another rights, in collaboration with relevant university services.

I believe international students bring vital perspectives and energy to our campus. I am committed to ensuring our needs and aspirations are not only recognised but actively championed. With your support, I hope to create a more inclusive, empowered, and connected international student community. Ngā mihi nui – thank you for your consideration.



Pengfei Rui

Hi, I'm Pengfei Rui (Ryan) and I'm running to be your next International Student Officer. As an international student myself, I know how exciting it is to study in a new country—but also how challenging it can be. From adjusting to a new culture, navigating visa conditions, managing academic pressure, and sometimes feeling isolated, these are real experiences that deserve real support. If elected, I will work to make the University of Auckland a more in-

clusive and supportive place for all international students. I aim to advocate for better access to information around visas, work rights, and student wellbeing services, so no student feels lost or alone. I also plan to build a stronger sense of community through regular cultural and social events, helping us connect across backgrounds and share our diverse experiences. Another key priority for me is improving academic and career support tailored specifically to international students, including job-readiness workshops and clearer communication around university resources.

More than anything, I want to be a voice that listens and acts. I believe international students deserve to be heard, supported, and celebrated. I'm committed to standing up for our rights, building community, and helping every international student feel like they truly belong here at UoA.

Vote Pengfei Rui (Ryan) for International Student Officer—your voice, your advocate, your community.



Chen Lu

Hi, I'm Chen — a postgraduate IT student from China. I'm running for International Students Officer not because I've figured everything out, but because I haven't — and I know I'm not the only one.

From trying to understand rental contracts to navigating GP registration, ACC claims, and academic pressure, I've faced the same questions and confusion as many other international students. That's why I want to turn real experiences into practical help — by making clear guides, building peer support spaces, and bringing our voices into the room where decisions happen.

I believe support doesn't need to be fancy — it just needs to be human, simple, and honest. If elected, I'll focus on making information more accessible, encouraging real connection between students, and giving international voices more power in how this university works.

You don't need to be perfect to belong here. You just need people who care. I hope to be one of them.



Ehansa De Silva

I am studying a Bachelor of Commerce/ Bachelor of Arts conjoint majoring in Accounting, Business Analytics and Education. First of all, I am from a beautiful island called Sri Lanka and I moved to New Zealand an year ago for my higher studies. Eversince I moved here I have been loving this country so much and I am really excited to visit all the beautiful places in New Zealand. A little bit about myself is that I am an ENFP (personality type) and I love academics and swimming. I was a top ranker in the island at the University entrance exam in my country back in 2023. Back in school days I was a junior and a senior prefect and held many positions in school clubs and societies where I developed skills such as leadership, hardwork, effective communication, patience, empathy etc.

If I am to be elected as the new international students officer, I would like to take initiatives to reduce the tuition fee cost for international students since it lies at a very higher range and request the university scholarship team to introduce more scholarship opportunities for international students which will also be beneficial for the university in return. Further, I would like to introduce a programme where international students could gain a hands on experience about Kiwi and Maori cultures which I think would be an interesting way to learn about the New Zealand culture.

I am fully committed to bring the best in myself in order to make a real impact for all the international students during my time at UoA. And I am really grateful for this opportunity.



Matthew Wong

Have you seen the new Recreation Centre at UoA? It's impressive—but let's not forget, international students pay for it. That's why we matter. That's why we deserve to be heard, supported, and protected.

Jokes aside, I'm Matthew. After five years as an international student in NZ, I know the challenges—new systems, language barriers, and finding belonging. I'm running for International Students' Officer to support our community and drive real change.

My focus is 1. Flating and accommodation support 2. Connection and community building

Right now, support for international students seeking safe, affordable flats is minimal. Many are forced to pay premium rates for university accommodation or UniLodge.

I will work to establish a dedicated support platform to that include:

- Provide international students with tenancy rights education and access to legal support when facing rental issues.
- Transport and location guidance to help students choose safe, accessible flats
- A peer support team to assist with landlord communication, helping overcome language barriers

In terms of student accommodation, I will advocate for greater transparency and fairness in university accommodation pricing. Especially around maintenance standards and rent increases. That needs to change!

Connection & Community Building

Loneliness is one of the biggest challenges I face over the years. I will work with different clubs promote events that can help student form strong bonds. I also want to create an international student dedicated canvas page, include ed discussion such feature, providing student to communicate and share upcoming events.



Gauri Jeejesh

Leaving your home country to chase your dreams is definitely a big step that every international student at UoA has taken.

Kia ora, Namaskaram, and As-salamualaikum!

My name is Gauri, and I'm running to be your next ISO for 2026. Originally from India and Oman, I've had the privilege of calling Aotearoa my home for the past two years. As an international student, I truly understand the rollercoaster of emotions and challenges we go through, and I'm passionate about making that journey smoother for all of us.

Here's what I'd love to work on if elected:

- Better promotion and easier access to clubs, workshops, and information sources - so we all know exactly what's happening around campus and how to get involved.
- Stronger collaboration with the International Committee and cultural clubs—making sure everyone feels seen, valued, and part of a community that feels like home. It's about moving beyond being labelled as "the other."
- A bigger and more personal mentoring programme—every international student should have someone to guide them through their first semester, not just with academics but with the emotional ups and downs too.

I'm a Psychology student who has volunteered as an AUSA Buddy, UniGuide, and a mentor for Science clubs. Being part of cultural club exec teams also gave me insight into how the uni works behind the scenes—something I'd love to bring to this role.

Thank you for your time, and for more on my policies, check out my Instagram: @gauri4ausa



Zainah Merani

Kia ora, nihao, hola, bonjour, hi!

I'm Zainah, a millennial urban planning student from Canada, lover of sushi, board games, Netflix, and long walks on the—oops, wrong form.

I'm running for International Students Officer because every student deserves an unfiltered, genuine voice in the room where decisions are made. (Also, TBH, Reddit was my inspo.)

With a background in project management, I know how to listen, cut through the sh*t, and get things done. I'm new to Auckland, meaning I come with luggage, not baggage, and a fresh, impartial perspective. I'm not afraid to ask the "stupid" questions, like why there's a shortage of power outlets on campus when we're paying thousands in fees.

If elected, my priorities will reflect your needs, ideas, and voices. That could mean

- Value for money – clear answers on where our fees go
- Student wellbeing – better mental health support and connection
- Country-specific events – creating spaces to celebrate what matters to you, from the hockey game to the Spring Festival Gala (with snacks, of course!)

These might seem vague, but let me be real: I'm not here to push my own agenda. I'm here to be a vessel for yours. My first step would be to meet you, understand what matters most, and advocate for it.

I was going to use an Oprah reference, but since that's older than most of you, I'll offer you a fist-bump and commitment instead, which is better than a car, given how much it costs to park here.



Chenfei Tan (OPTION 2)

I'm Fay. "Creating extraordinary in ordinary days" – this belief defines my journey. From founding a Greater Bay Area youth exchange program across four cities, to promoting Chinese culture through dance diplomacy in Tokyo, I've proven that true leadership means turning vision into action.

As your AU Students' Association candidate, I present the "Bridge to Extraordinary" initiative with three pillars:

- Global Synergy: Having led a 40+ member transnational team (national award-winning), I built mentor networks connecting international and local students. Vote Fay to access your global resource web.
- Amplifying Voices: I directed documentary films across 10 rural villages, with my works broadcast on provincial television networks. Vote Fay to make your voice resonate campus-wide.
- Academic Innovation: My 90.5% GPA across dual degrees, two provincial papers, three scholarships, and national award-winning media experience, empowered me to build an MOE-honored studio with cross-disciplinary peers. Vote Fay for learning that works and inspires.

So why not choose Fay who leads with heart, humor, and horsepower? This isn't just an election – it's your invitation to craft something extraordinary together.



Tawayne Spence

My name is Tawayne Spence, and I am currently pursuing a Master of Public Policy at the University of Auckland. A registered nurse by profession and an avid traveler to over 27 countries, I have developed a deep appreciation for the rich-

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ness of diverse perspectives and the power of shared experiences.

I am running for the position of International Students Officer because I believe I can make a meaningful difference in our community. As an international student myself, I understand the challenges of adapting to a new academic and cultural environment. Issues include navigating mental wellbeing, fostering inclusivity, and finding ways to contribute meaningfully both here at the university and back home to our countries and families. If elected, my initiatives will focus on:

- Mental Wellbeing – creating accessible support systems and safe spaces for open conversations.
- Engaging Cultural Experiences – celebrating our diverse backgrounds through events that connect and inspire.
- Recognition of Achievements – highlighting and honoring the dedication and contributions of international students in their various fields.

Together, we can create a more supportive, inclusive, and vibrant international student community, one where every voice is valued and every success is celebrated.



Yaohua Zuo (OPTION 1)

Hi everyone! I'm Yaohua Zuo (you can call me Hugh), a first-year international student from China studying a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Finance.

As someone who recently moved to New Zealand, I understand firsthand the challenges international students face — from adapting to a new culture and language, to finding community and support. I know how important it is to feel seen, heard, and included, especially in your first year.

I'm running for International Students Officer because I want to be a strong voice for all international students at our university. If elected, I will advocate for:

- Clearer, more accessible support services
- Practical workshops on topics like visas, work rights, and academic success
- More inclusive social events to help international students con-

nect and thrive

I'm friendly, approachable, and committed to building a stronger, more supportive international student community. I may be in my first year, but I bring fresh energy, real lived experience, and a deep passion for making sure every international student feels at home here.

Let's work together to make our voices heard and our community stronger. Vote for Hugh (Yaohua Zuo) — someone who understands, listens, and will take action!



Anisa Khairina

I'm Anisa Khairina, a Master of Engineering Studies student in Food Engineering at the University of Auckland and a Manaaki New Zealand Scholarship awardee. As a student mom, I bring resilience, empathy, and strong organizational skills, honed by balancing academics, parenting, and community involvement. My deep connection to the international student experience drives my passion to advocate for a supportive and inclusive environment at UoA.

If elected as International Student Officer, I propose initiatives to strengthen community and support: monthly cultural exchange events to celebrate diversity, academic workshops to ease academic transitions for international students, and mental health sessions to address challenges like homesickness. I'll collaborate with AUSA and cultural clubs to enhance access to resources, such as affordable housing, career guidance, and scholarship information, ensuring all students feel valued.

My actions will include hosting regular feedback forums to capture student needs, advocating for tailored university services, and launching mentorship programs to connect new international students with experienced peers. Drawing on my multitasking skills as a student mom, I'll manage event logistics efficiently and maintain clear communication with AUSA's team to drive impactful change. My commitment to community and sustainability will guide me in creating a welcoming, empowering environment for all international students at UoA.

POSTGRADUATE STUDENT OFFICER



Faheem (OPTION 1)

As a Master of Engineering (Research) student and Chartered Professional Engineer (CPEng) with 20 years of global civil infrastructure experience, I am deeply committed to advocating for the needs, wellbeing, and academic success of the postgraduate student community. Having returned to academia after a long professional career, I understand the diverse challenges postgraduate students face—be it research pressure, supervision quality, isolation, lack of career support, or navigating the university as a mature or international student.

If elected as Postgraduate Student Officer, I will focus on the following key initiatives:

1. Postgraduate Advocacy & Research Support

Postgraduate students often feel underrepresented and disconnected from university processes and services. I will:

- Advocate for stronger supervision quality assurance mechanisms, clearer research milestone tracking, and better resolution pathways for grievances.
- Work with the School of Graduate Studies to improve transparency in research funding, extension policies, and thesis-related costs.
- Push for fair and accessible postgraduate-specific orientation programmes—especially for off-cycle and international entrants.
- Promote recognition of the academic, teaching, and research contributions made by postgrad students within faculties and across campus.

2. Innovation, Employability & Industry Engagement

Postgraduates deserve strong career pathways beyond academia. I will:

- Initiate a Postgraduate Industry Connector Series, bringing together researchers, professionals, and employers for networking and collaboration.
- Partner with CDES and faculties to host tailored career-readiness workshops,

focused on research-to-industry transitions, consulting roles, and portfolio building.

- Advocate for micro-internships and capstone-style engagements within research-intensive companies and public sector agencies.
- Support the development of entrepreneurial and start-up ecosystems around postgraduates—by linking them with Unleash Space, UniVentures, and external innovation hubs.



Eugene Lee (OPTION 2)

Currently pursuing a Master's in Computer Systems Engineering in UoA, and the acting SSSC Master's Representative for the ECSE department, I've come to realize how underrepresented Master's students are within the university. The short, intense nature of most Master's programs leaves students little time or opportunity to voice their concerns or build meaningful connections. Many are busy adjusting to life at university, often lacking both engagement opportunities and targeted support. I want to change that.

My goal is to create a stronger, more connected Master's student community across all departments. My proposed initiative includes three recurring department-level engagement events per semester:

1. A welcome event during or immediately after orientation for new Master's students.
2. A Week 0/1 mixer between new and returning students to build peer support.
3. A post semester networking event with alumni and current students to help students explore engage with each other to connect and share academic and career pathways.

I also intend to push for mandatory separate representation for Master's and PhD students in all major university committees (like SSSC, TLQC, and AUSA), as I've seen firsthand that their challenges and needs are fundamentally different. Grouping them under a single representative leads to many voices being ignored, especially those of Master's students.

I've already begun laying the foundation in my current role, and

I'm committed to scaling it university-wide. Master's students deserve stronger representation, better support, and a true sense of belonging. I'll work to make that happen.

The ultimate goal for me is to create a sustainable community of masters students and master alumni. On that can naturally evolve to help master students and alumni of UoA, build meaningful networks, and to never feel like they are left out or alone, in the university and after graduation as well.



Bingyan Jiang

Kia ora! I'm Bingyan Jiang, a Medicinal Chemistry and Chemistry major at the University of Auckland, with a strong passion for healthcare, science, and community service. Through internships at GSK in Medical Affairs and Digital Marketing, I developed sharp communication, organisational, and cross-cultural collaboration skills. My part-time work in logistics at Webb's Wine Auctions sharpened my attention to detail and resilience in high-pressure environments.

As someone who has volunteered for causes like Daffodil Day and represented international students since high school, I deeply value inclusion, well-being, and student support. If elected, I will work to strengthen campus-wide engagement by:

- Advocating for better academic support and mental health resources
- Creating student-led cultural and networking events that celebrate diversity and encourage peer connections
- Pushing for more accessible internship and volunteering opportunities through faculty and industry partnerships

With fluency in Mandarin, English, and basic Japanese, I aim to be a voice for both international and domestic students. I believe in a collaborative, transparent, and student-focused AUSA that uplifts every voice on campus.

Let's make our student experience not just about degrees—but about growth, inclusion, and genuine belonging.

Ngā mihi nui!

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Sneha Singh (OPTION 2)

Kia ora koutou, I'm Sneha (she/her), a PhD candidate in Sociology at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland. I'm nominating myself for the role of Postgraduate Officer because I believe postgrad students deserve more than just a seat at the table — we deserve to be heard, supported, and empowered.

As a researcher, teacher, and community organiser, I bring both experience and energy to this role. I've served as a student representative at two universities, currently sit on the National Council for Women NZ, and have worked closely with PG students through teaching and academic support roles.

If elected, I'll focus on:

1. Strengthening postgraduate representation in university decisions — especially around supervision, funding, and academic integrity
2. Pushing for equitable support for Māori, Pacific, international, parenting, disabled and part-time students
3. Creating a stronger PG community through events, networking, and shared spaces
4. Advocating for clear and enforceable supervision standards and better teaching/research assistant conditions

I'm committed to listening, showing up, and following through. I believe postgraduate life should be less isolating, more supported, and genuinely reflective of the diverse voices that make up our cohort.

Let's build a university culture that values its postgraduate students — not just as researchers or workers, but as whole people.



DN Joshi (OPTION 2)

Kia ora. I am DN Joshi, a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics researching why teacher-researchers choose qualitative research. Originally from Nepal, I bring a global perspective shaped by lived experience as an international student, researcher, and advocate.

For the past one and a half years, I have served as the PhD representative for the School of Cultures, Languages and Linguistics. In this role, I have worked with academic staff and fellow students to raise concerns, improve communication, and advocate for stronger postgraduate support. I am now ready to extend that work across the wider university.

If elected, I will focus on four key areas. First, I will establish regular postgraduate forums, both online and on campus, where students can raise issues, ask questions, and stay informed. Second, I will launch a peer mentoring and buddy system to support new and international students through shared guidance and community. Third, I will advocate for better access to funding, study space, mental health resources, and academic support. Fourth, I will help build a more connected postgraduate community by organising research-sharing events, networking opportunities, and wellbeing workshops.

Postgraduate life can be both rewarding and challenging. I bring experience, empathy, and commitment to this role. I will represent your voice with care and action, and work to ensure our community is inclusive, supported, and empowered.

Vote DN Joshi. Your voice. Your advocate. Ngā mihi nui.



Chelsea Prince

Kia Ora, Goeie Dag, my name is Chelsea! I am humbled by the privilege to run for Postgraduate Student Officer for the 2026 Auckland University Students' Association. As a constant learner, I know that postgraduate study is more than just research and deadlines. It's a journey of self-discovery, resilience, that shouldn't be done in silo's but in a community that is safe, warm and encouraging. During my time in AUSA, I aim to accelerate and empower students' futures, address academic burnout and wellbeing, deepen academic conversations, and advocate for our diverse communities. I believe in leadership that listens, acts, and builds alongside others, and I'm ready to do just that, with you.



Akhil Mathew

Hello, I'm Akhil Mathew, a passionate and dedicated postgraduate student at the University of Auckland. I have a strong background in technology and leadership experience through my involvement in student councils and team projects. In my previous roles as a member of the Student Representative Council and Campaigning Head, I gained valuable experience organizing events, communicating effectively with diverse groups, and representing student interests. These experiences have prepared me well to take on the responsibilities of Postgraduate Student Officer and collaborate closely with the university and AUSA staff.

As a fellow postgraduate student, I've noticed limited facilities and opportunities specifically focused on postgraduate recruitment workshops and events. If elected as Postgraduate Student Officer, my primary goal will be to enhance the

academic, social, and professional experiences of postgraduate students.

One of my key initiatives will be to improve communication by revitalizing the Postgraduate Lounge's noticeboard, email newsletters, and social media channels, ensuring students are well-informed and connected. I also aim to foster a welcoming community through social events that encourage peer support and collaboration across different faculties.

I plan to strengthen communication channels between students and the university, making sure that any complaints or queries are responded to quickly and don't get overlooked.

Once these immediate concerns are addressed, I will focus on initiatives that support the overall wellbeing of postgraduate students and foster a stronger, more connected community. My goal is to make the postgraduate experience at the University of Auckland more accessible, supportive, and engaging for everyone.

QUEER RIGHTS OFFICER



Artie Ho

Kia ora! I'm Artie, your current Queer Rights Officer, and I'm running for re-election.)

I love our UoA queer community. To me, it means solidarity, support, and friendship - that's what I want for every queer student and I've been working towards that. I want to keep giving back, and that's why I'm running again.

From founding the Queer Students Association & running events with the team, to organising Pride Week with more clubs involved than ever, to taking over the UoA Big Gay Out stall with just a few weeks' notice, I've been busy creating community on campus through events. I offer the experience, knowledge, and connections necessary to deliver more engaging events over the next year.

Over the last year, I've revitalised Queerspace - decorating and cleaning it up with the help of volunteers, making it a more wel-

coming place to hang out and hold events, and establishing a community pantry. If I'm re-elected, next up is a mural, improved signage, and more events!

I will also continue to advocate for the University to change - for the gender-affirming fund to be operated and funded by UoA (in line with AUT and VUW), for UHCS to initiate HRT, for our queer students to be treated equitably and with dignity. While UoA has the final say on these, I'm determined to keep the pressure on - our students deserve better.

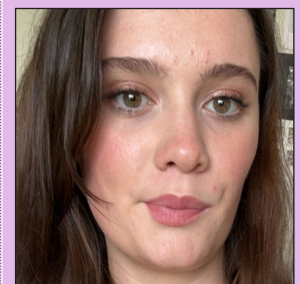
It has been an honour to serve as your QRO for 2025, and I would love to do it all again in 2026!

WOMEN'S RIGHTS OFFICER



Phoebe James

Kia Ora! My name is Phoebe James, I'm a second year sociology student, and I'm running for Women's Rights Officer. Some initiatives I'd like to put forward are strengthening the female presence in STEM subjects by hosting workshops and introductory evenings on campus for students who identify as women. I'd like to work on strengthening the presence of women's spaces on campus to provide women with safe spaces to retreat to, eat some kai, get period products, talk with counsellors etc.



Evelyn Kerse

Kia ora! I'm Evelyn Kerse. I am a third year student studying History and Anthropology under a BA. Women's Rights is something that has been significant to me ever since I can remember. This position aligns with my previous roles

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at the Wellington Community Justice Project, class representative and as a volunteer consultant for charity.

My campaign for WRO centres around the unique set of challenges being a woman entails. Womanhood and connection provides such a space to foster love, care and consideration for one another. I would use the WRO role to prioritise constructing a community where women can engage with each other in both light-hearted and more meaningful ways. Three of my initiatives are:

- 'Close Viewing': Viewing and discussion of TV, Movies, Music and books and how they relate to Womanhood. eg. Toxic Masculinity and 'boys club culture' in Love Island.
- Speaker panels once a semester: A group of specialised individuals providing tools to deal with challenges that face everyday. Example: advocating for yourself at the doctor, toxic social media ecosystems.
- Pushing for compulsory sexual harm reduction education in all halls during O week: O week is a time to have fun and be safe and I would like to ensure this.

I'm empathetic, have leadership experience and have excellent communication skills. I try to be as approachable as possible and to actively listen. It would be an honour to be your Women's Rights Officer for 2026.

Ayesha Mohammed



Kia ora and Bula Vinaka! My name is Ayesha Mohammed and I am running for the Women's Rights Officer for TRK AUSA 2026.

I am a fourth-year Law and Arts student with a background in advocacy, having worked with organisations such as the Equal Justice Project, Auckland Community Law Centre, Greenpeace, TLANZ, and other initiatives. Through these roles, I've proudly represented student voices on a variety of platforms, from submitting oral submissions to Parliament against harmful legislation to supporting individuals navigating everyday injustices.

I bring the same community-building drive to this role, and I'm committed to dedicating my final year at university to representing all

self-identifying women. As a wahine, it would be an immense privilege to continue contributing to a safer, more inclusive campus environment. I've been inspired by the initiatives led by the past WRO, including submissions against the Stalking Bill, promoting and collating sexual harm surveys, organising consent presentations, and using Awareness Week to create safe spaces for conversations around sexual violence. I aim to continue strengthening connections with university halls and residences and talk with residential advisers to raise awareness around sexual safety. Further, encourage more women to use Womenspace by hosting inclusive and welcoming events. Lastly, continue collaborating with student clubs, such as Women in Law, and amplify campaigns like 'Speak Up for Her' that fundraise against misogyny and domestic violence on campus.

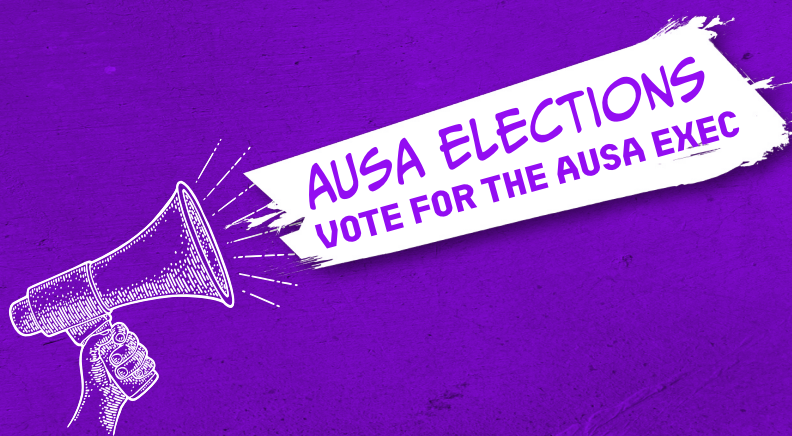
With this role, I would like to speak FOR all self-identifying women and ultimately make our campus safer and welcoming for us! Find out more on @ayesha4ausa!

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