

monash graduate association

Your Vote, Your Voice:

The MGA's State Election Candidate Scorecard 2026

The MGA does not endorse any political party or candidate. This scorecard is intended to provide information about candidates' positions on issues affecting graduate students.

Your Vote, Your Voice:

The MGA's State Election Candidate Scorecard 2026

Introduction

On Saturday 28 November, Victorians will vote in a state election that will shape how graduate students live in Victoria for the next four years.

Higher education funding is largely a federal responsibility, but state governments are responsible for public transport fares, housing and renters' rights, the conditions of placements in public hospitals and schools, mental health services, and support for international students.

That is why the MGA wrote to candidates in electorates where our students live and study, to ask them where they stand on the issues that matter to graduate students. **The questions cover policy commitments and value statements.** Every candidate received the same questions, and every response is published here exactly as given.

The MGA is non-partisan and does not endorse any party or candidate. **Our aim is simple: to give graduate students clear, comparable information to use when they vote.**

Engagement Score – Victorian Political Parties

Graduate students face many challenges that are specific to them, and one of the aims of the scorecard was to encourage candidates and sitting MPs to engage with these issues. Overall, the level of engagement was encouraging, with 43% of candidates participating in the scorecard. However, the level of engagement was not spread equally among the parties, with some engaging far more than others.

PARTY ENGAGEMENT SCORE	
Victorian Socialists	92%
Greens	85%
Labor	42%
Animal Justice	33%
Family First	0%
Liberal	0%
Libertarian	0%

Scorecard Structure

The Candidate Scorecard is broken down by electorate. If you don't know which electorate you live in, you can check by entering your address into the Victorian Electoral Commission website: vec.vic.gov.au/electoral-boundaries/which-boundaries-cover-where-i-live

Candidates can continue to nominate to run in the election until 9 November, however in order to leave time to collate and present the results, MGA set a deadline of 16 October for candidates to participate in the scorecard. This means that on election day, there may be more candidates in your electorate than we have covered in this scorecard.

The results have been presented using the following legend:

Agree/ Support	✓
Disagree/ Do Not Support	✗
No Response	—

We hope that this scorecard is informative and useful in planning how you vote in November.

Electorates

Click on your electorate to see where your candidates stand.

Albert Park 6
Ashwood 8
Brighton 10
Caulfield 12
Clarinda 14
Dandenong 16
Frankston 18
Glen Waverley 20
Malvern 22
Melbourne 24
Mulgrave 26
Oakleigh 28
Prahran 30

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Albert Park*

	Andrew Cook (Liberal)	Colleen Bolger (Victorian Socialists)	Daniel O'Neill (Animal Justice)	Georgie Dragwidge (Independent)	Nina Taylor (Labour)	Sonya Semmens (Greens)	Tammy Lindrum (One Nation)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Albert Park*

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

I strongly agree that Masters by Research and PhD students and graduate students undertaking mandatory placements should receive a liveable wage to end the current situation of exploiting their labor and putting them in a position of being unable to support themselves or their families while performing free labor. It is a practice that makes higher study or these degrees prohibitive for people from working class backgrounds. We are also for cancelling student debt and making higher education free again by taxing the billionaires and corporations. This is also part of reducing the debt that people are saddled with when they then go to take out a 2mortgage while still paying off their HELP loans.

Colleen Bolger
(Victorian Socialists)

You and your ingenuity and skills are essential to the future we're going to build together - an Australia where everyone has opportunity for success and a hopeful future. That's what I'm working towards too.

Sonya Semmens
(Greens)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Ashwood*

	Hitendra Joshi (Independent)	Jacob van der Eynen (Victorian Socialists)	Matt Fregon (Labor)	Theo Zographos (Liberal)	Tim Randall (Greens)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	✓	✓	—	—	✓
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	✓	✓	—	—	✓
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	✓	✓	—	—	✓
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	✓	✓	—	—	✓
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	✓	✓	—	—	✓
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	✓	✓	—	—	✓
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	✓	✓	—	—	✓

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Ashwood*

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

Your research is part of what makes Victoria a place worth living and working in, and you shouldn't have to choose between finishing your degree and paying the rent. As a community independent, I'm not tied to a party line. I'll listen to what you need and push for fair support, real mental health help, and a voice at the table. Please enrol, check your details, and vote on 28 November.

Hitendra Joshi
(Independent)

I believe that higher education is a human right. But with our universities bring run for profit above all else, we are seeing the quality of courses stripped back as fees continue to go up—exacerbating already dire cost of living pressures. If I'm elected, I'll fight for free university education—and vastly better wages, working conditions and job security for staff.

Jacob van der Eynden
(Victorian Socialists)

I completed both my undergrad and postgrad courses in Architecture at Monash University. Having moved from Tasmania, I spent much of this time living in the district of Ashwood. Being a 'poor uni student' can be something of a right of passage, and I know it taught me a lot. However this reality shouldn't extend to actually living below the poverty line. I believe this is even more true for post graduate students, when you are likely to be older and have more responsibilities beyond the classroom.
The Greens want to see graduate students in Victoria thriving, not just surviving. We understand the pressures that graduate students face with the rising cost of living and that your focus should be on your studies rather than struggling to pay your rent. The Greens want to see supports for Masters & PhD students increased, including by ensuring that placements and stipends are paid at the national minimum wage. You are the future of our state and you should be afforded the supports required to complete your studies without facing significant financial strain.

Tim Randall
(Greens)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Brighton*

	Alexander Fagan (One Nation)	Anthony Hain (Libertarian)	Bridget Mullahy (Labor)	Ebony Bain (Greens)	James Newbury (Liberal)	Jessica Smith (Victorian Socialists)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Brighton*

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

Our Masters and PhD students drive the discoveries, ideas and breakthroughs that keep our state moving forward. They help build a smarter, stronger and more prosperous Victoria, often while managing significant financial and cost of living pressures. As both a lecturer and a two-time postgraduate student, I recognise your dedication. Your contribution is vital to our future, and as your local representative, I will always advocate for the support and respect you deserve.

Bridget Mullahy
(Labor)

There is more than enough wealth in Victoria to ensure that all graduate students, and indeed everyone in the state, can live in dignity, without stress about the cost of living. This includes international students, who all too often are treated as cashcows and denied even the limited financial support available to domestic students. Having once done a Masters of Teaching myself, I remember how stressful it was to be working well above full-time hours to complete my course, while my only income was the paltry Youth Allowance payment. The Victorian Socialists will fight for fair pay, guaranteed housing, free public transport, and renationalising utilities, addressing the skyrocketing costs of modern life. We also stand for the abolition of tuition fees, the democratisation of universities, secure jobs for university workers, capping management salaries and pegging their level to ordinary staff salaries, and a ban on universities behaving like for-profit corporations, instead requiring them to reinvest all surplus into education and research, with university workers and students to democratically decide how the funds are allocated.

Jessica Smith
(Victorian Socialists)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Caulfield*

	Angel Dolejsi (Greens)	David Southwick (Liberal)	Geneviève Gllbert (Family FIrst)	Malak Ababneh (Victorian Socialists)	Michael Abelman (One Nation)	Mikaela Strafrace (Labor)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	—	—	—	✓	—	✓

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Caulfield*

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

Universities are increasingly run like a business. The staff and students deserve to have a say over how resources and funds are used, rather than funnelling money purely into profit-seeking ventures while underpaying tutors and putting graduate students on poverty stipends. Education should be for social good and not for profit.

Malak Ababneh
(Victorian Socialists)

Your work matters because it is a key contributor to our future economic success. Don't give up, its not easy but you are amongst our brightest... well done

Mikaela Stafrace
(Labor)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Clarinda*

	Conor Boyd-Eedle (Greens)	Gavin Bain (One Nation)	John Paganis (Liberal)	Kit Message (Victorian Socialists)	Meng Heang Tak (Labor)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	—	—	—	✓*	—
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	—	—	—	✓*	—
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	—	—	—	✓	—
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	—	—	—	✓	—
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	—	—	—	✓	—
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	—	—	—	✓	—
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	—	—	—	✓	—

*Response is conditional, read further on following page

State Election 2026

Electorate: *Clarinda*

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

*Conditional Support: While I support a transport concession fare eligibility for full time graduates, my policy is to make public transport free for everyone. Transport should be fully publicly funded and not handled by the profit driven private sector.

Kit Message
(Victorian Socialists)

*Conditional Support: I believe that the issues in tertiary education stems from the university sector being run for profit. While I am not against student representation on the council, this representation implies that university bosses treat students poorly because they do not know what students needs are. I reject this, the real problem is that the sector is driven by the logic of profit which is incompatible with a quality education or real support for students. This would not change with student representation on the council. I am interested in not just tinkering around the edges of the university sector, deeper rooted issues need to be addressed. This cannot be done when the sector is driven by the logic of profit and not by the needs of students.

Kit Message
(Victorian Socialists)

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

Education should accessible, free and fully public. As a current undergraduate and renter I experience the cost of living pressures of being a student first hand. Profit drives universities to squeeze undergraduates and graduates alike, to extract the maximum amount of money from our fees. We need to properly address this cost of living crisis by expanding government payments and by introducing grocery/rent price reductions and caps. We must demand business pays placement positions at least minimum wage and we need to make university free and public again. If elected I would fight for all of this, I would fight for the dignity of students everywhere.

Kit Message
(Victorian Socialists)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Dandenong*

	Catherine D'Arcy (Greens)	Gabrielle Williams (Labor)	Glenda Wright (One Nation)	Jack McMahon (Victorian Socialists)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	✓	—	—	—
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	✓	—	—	—
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	✓	—	—	—
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	✓	—	—	—
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	✓	—	—	—
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	✓	—	—	—
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	✓	—	—	—

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Dandenong*

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

The Greens want to see graduate students in Victoria thriving. We understand the pressures that graduate students face with the rising cost of living and a different set of rules and support for Masters and PhD students. The Greens want to see these supports increased, including by ensuring that placements and stipends are paid at the national minimum wage. Your contribution to our state is significant and you should be afforded the supports required to complete your studies without facing significant financial strain.

Catherine D'Arcy
(Greens)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Frankston*

	Andrew Cheeseman (Victorian Socialists)	Bree Ambry (Liberal)	Chrysten Abraham (Independent)	Julie Harmon (Animal Justice)	Katie Goulas (Greens)	Paul Ebrooke (Labor)	Paul Stafford (One Nation)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓*	—
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓*	—
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—

*Response is conditional, read further on following page

State Election 2026

Electorate: *Frankston*

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

*Conditional Support: I think this is a case of the system being made fair and I support this in principal.

Paul Ebrooke
(Labor)

*Conditional Support: Support this in principal but need to know the details of how elected graduates are chosen, etc.

Paul Ebrooke
(Labor)

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

Life's been getting harder over the last twenty years. You should be angry about this, but there's a lot of political grifters that want to use our migrant sisters and brothers as political human shields for your anger.
I urge you to reject those politics of division, unite with other students and workers whatever their heritage, and direct your anger at the real enemies, the multi-millionaires who hold us all down and try to make us blame each other so we can't fight back in a united manner.

Andrew Cheeseman
(Victorian Socialists)

As a Monash Alumni, I have a fair understanding of the issues facing Master& PhD students. A vote for a Liberal/One Nation coalition is inviting cuts for students. I would look forward to a meeting to discuss these potential changes after the election.

Paul Ebrooke
(Labor)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Glen Waverley*

	Brad Cox (One Nation)	Jacky Sun (Liberal)	John Mullahy (Labor)	Nicholas Siow (Victorian Socialists)	Toyo White (Greens)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	—	—	—	✓*	✓
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	—	—	—	✓	✓
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	—	—	—	✓	✓
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	—	—	—	✓	✓
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	—	—	—	✓	✓
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	—	—	—	✓	✓
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	—	—	—	✓	✓

*Response is conditional, read further on following page

State Election 2026

Electorate: *Glen Waverley*

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

***Conditional Support: I support an entirely free public transport system for all, in this I support closing the gap between undergraduates and graduate students.**

Nicholas Siow
(Victorian Socialists)

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

Victorian Socialists are for building a better and more equitable society, we recognise the hard work of students and workers because of our understanding that we make the world, but capitalism treats us as if we don't matter. Vote for real change that puts people before profit.

Nicholas Siow
(Victorian Socialists)

I spent years completing my undergraduate degree at Monash and was often deeply distressed by the conditions that my mates engaging in graduate study shared with me. As a candidate for Glen Waverley, a seat where many students live, I deeply understand that we are often a cohort overlooked by those in power. The Victorian Greens want to see graduate students in Victoria thriving. We understand the pressures that graduate students face with the rising cost of living and a different set of rules and support for Masters and PhD students. The Greens want to see these supports increased, including by ensuring that placements and stipends are paid at the national minimum wage. Your contribution to our state is significant and you should be afforded the supports required to complete your studies without facing significant financial strain.

Toyo White
(Greens)

State Election 2026

Electorate: *Malvern*

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

	Amelia Hamer (Liberal)	Christina Zigouras (Independent)	Edward Bode (One Nation)	Gavin Leonard (Victorian Socialists)	Georgia Katsikis (Greens)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	—	—	—	✓	✓
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	—	—	—	✓	✓
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	—	—	—	✓	✓
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	—	—	—	✓	✓
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	—	—	—	✓	✓
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	—	—	—	✓	✓
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	—	—	—	✓	✓

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Malvern*

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

Study shouldn't depend on being able to afford it. Right now too much of the work that keeps universities and hospitals and schools running - placements, research, teaching - is done by students for nothing or close to it, while rents and fares keep climbing. None of what you've asked about here is radical. Being paid at least minimum wage for work you're required to do and paying the same fare as the person sitting next to you, is the floor, not the ceiling. If you're deciding how to vote, look at which candidates treat that as obvious.

Gavin Leonard
(Victorian Socialists)

Having been involved in numerous research projects and having worked with many students, I know how valuable their work is and how profound their contributions are to research. Acknowledgement of this should not only be shown through citations but also through the support and equitable treatment of students by our universities and government.

Georgia Katsikis
(Greens)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Melbourne*

	Davydd Griffiths (Labor)	Ellen Sandell (Grens)	Jordan van den Lamb (Victorian Socialists)	Matthew Collins (One Nation)	Naomi Jones (Animal Justice)	Rafael Camillo (Liberal)	Rowan Tuckfield (Independent)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Melbourne*

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

Four decades of marketisation and profit seeking has all but ruined our universities. We think universities should be run by their students and workers, not by Vice-chancellors earning millions whilst they preside over the wage theft of their employees. We also know that migrants are not to blame for any of the social ills caused by capitalism, but instead we should be pointing our fingers squarely at the rich. If you want to fight for a world in which education is valued and treated as a basic right, as well as fight back against the Labor party, Liberal/National Party and One Nation who are all currently blaming international students for all of the problems they themselves created, join the Victorian Socialists and get involved.

Jordan van den Lamb
(Victorian Socialists)

Based on the track record of all 88 members of the Legislative assembly over the past four years and the probable Greens/ALP or One Nation/Coalition government there is a clear and urgent need for an Independent voice in the next Parliament.

Rowan Tuckfield
(Independent)

Highlight the Research Value: Use the election period to demonstrate how graduate research solves state-wide challenges, from healthcare technology to environmental sustainability.
Question Local Candidates: Ask candidates from all political parties about their specific commitments to stipends, affordable housing, and university governance reforms.
Engage with Peak Bodies: Work through established organisations such as your own Monash Graduate Association (MGA) or the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) to amplify student voices.

Naomi Jones
(Animal Justice)

State Election 2026

Electorate: *Mulgrave*

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

	Charles Tran (Liberal)	Cody Rebbechi (One Nation)	Connor Buchanan (Victorian Socialists)	Eden Foster (Labor)	Ian Cook (Independent)	Paul Schofield (Greens)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Mulgrave*

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

You are some of the best and brightest workers. You're more aware than most that times have never been tougher and how education has been one of the hardest hit. Join us in the fight for a better world, free from the injustices of the Capitalist system.

Connor Buchanan
(Victorian Socialists)

Elections come and go. So do state governments. Dedicate yourself to your studies, think independently and aim for excellence. Carry that same commitment into everything you do throughout your life. Your knowledge and research can make a real difference to Victoria. As you build your career and your future, keep learning, act with integrity and use your talents to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Ian Cook
(Independent)

Postgraduate coursework and thesis students are vital to not only the future of our nation but specifically the future of our higher education sector as future researchers, lecturers, tutors and administrators. We need to encourage suitable candidates both domestically and internationally to pursue postgraduate studies. Australia also needs to fund higher education adequately (by taxing big corporations, especially mining and tech companies currently very adept at minimising tax through cost transfers) so universities can provide better resourced courses. At present Vice Chancellor and provost salaries in Australia are astronomical in comparison with similar institutions in the US and UK. We need more effective university governance and State and federal governments need to be more active in monitoring expenditures unrelated to the missions of our institutions. Furthermore federally we need to stop viewing international students as demand inelastic cash cows for cross subsiding university operations. We're destroying Australia's reputation by doing this as well as not maintaining course quality.

Paul Schofield
(Greens)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Oakleigh*

	Brooke Carter (One Nation)	Hsiang-Han Hsieh (Greens)	Martin Jung (Liberal)	Rowdy Bugter (Victorian Socialists)	Steve Dimopoulos (Labor)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	—	✓	—	✓	✓
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	—	✓	—	✓	✓
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	—	✓	—	✓	✓
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	—	✓	—	✓	✓
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	—	✓	—	✓	✓
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	—	✓	—	✓	✓
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	—	✓	—	✓	✓

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Oakleigh*

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

I believe access to higher education is a social right. Universities should be run for education and research, not profit making. If I'm elected I'll fight to support students with not-for-profit housing, reduced and eliminated student debts and to give students democratic power over their universitie.

Rowdy Bugter
(Victorian Socialists)

Our Victorian Masters and PhD students play a vital role in shaping Victoria's Social, Cultural and Economic standing. The Labor Government is proud to support you, and we will continue to support you. I am proud to have a global institution like Monash University in our community of Oakleigh. Your work matters and the voices of all students deserve to be heard.

Steve Dimopoulos
(Labor)

State Election 2026

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

Electorate: *Prahran*

	Angelica Di Camillo (Greens)	Clayton Doueihi (Victorian Socialists)	Meghan Hopper (Labor)	Rachel Westaway (Liberal)	Shaun Virsu (One Nation)
The government's half-price public transport fares are legislated to expire on 1 January 2027, after which graduate students will return to paying full fares while undergraduates at the same institutions travel at a 50% concession. Do you support permanently closing this gap by extending concession-fare eligibility to all full-time graduate students?	✓	✓	✓*	—	—
The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance recommended that every Victorian university council have at least two elected student representatives across various qualification levels. Do you support amending the university governance acts in Victoria to mandate an elected graduate student representative on all Victorian university councils?	✓	✓	✓*	—	—
Full-time graduate students deserve the same level of government support as undergraduates, as rising living costs make it increasingly difficult for graduate students to complete their studies.	✓	✓	—	—	—
Financial stress, isolation, and intense academic pressure are placing graduate students at elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes. Universities and governments have a shared responsibility to ensure graduate students have access to adequate mental health support throughout their studies.	✓	✓	✓	—	—
International graduate students who choose to study in Victoria make a significant cultural, social, and economic contribution to our state and deserve to be treated equitably.	✓	✓	✓	—	—
Teaching, nursing and allied health students undertake months of mandatory placements across Victoria as a condition of their degree. They should receive no less than the national minimum wage for this work.	✓	✓	—	—	—
Masters by Research and PhD candidates make an enormous contribution to Victoria's research output, working full-time hours in demanding academic environments. Their stipends should be no less than the national minimum wage throughout their candidature.	✓	✓	✓	—	—

*Response is conditional, read further on following page

State Election 2026

Electorate: *Prahran*

Where do candidates stand on issues relating to the graduate student community?

*Conditional Support: This is something I would be prepared to advocate for as a member of the ALP caucus.

Meghan Hopper
(Labor)

*Conditional Support: As a former student member of the Monash University Council, I am personally of the view that graduate students bring a wealth of value and experience to University Councils. It was under the most recent Liberal Government that elected student representation on University Councils was removed. This was reinstated by the Labor Government.

Meghan Hopper
(Labor)

If you had one message for Victorian Masters and PhD students ahead of the state election, what would it be?

Best of luck with your degrees. I think that higher education should be personally rewarding for students and workers and should serve the public good, not the interests of big business. Universities should not be run for profit, students deserve much more social and financial support for such an undertaking. Solidarity.

Clayton Doueihi
(Victorian Socialists)

As a lecturer, former President of the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, PhD graduate and former student member of a University Council, I have a strong understanding of the needs of graduate students, and will always advocate for their interests.

Meghan Hopper
(Labor)

The Greens want to see graduate students in Victoria thriving. We understand the pressures that graduate students face with the rising cost of living and a different set of rules and support for Masters and PhD students. The Greens want to see these supports increased, including by ensuring that placements and stipends are paid at the national minimum wage. Your contribution to our state is significant and you should be afforded the support that is required to complete your studies without facing significant financial strain.

Angelica Di Camillo
(Greens)