

### **Meeting 3/2025**

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee** will be held from 3:00 - 5:00, Tuesday, 29 April 2025 in the MGA Meeting Room, Caulfield Campus and by Zoom.

### **MINUTES**

The meeting commenced at 3:00pm.

#### **1. Formal matters**

##### **1.1 Acknowledgement of country**

The MGAEC President acknowledged and paid respect to the people of the Kulin nations as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this unceded land.

##### **1.2 Attendance & Apologies**

Present: Yiwen Yuan (Chair) Saham Hettiarachchi, Mohammed Salehan (Zeehan) (Departed at 3.30 and returned at 4.15pm), Dhanya Menoth Mohan, Yidi Luan, Beauty Nalwendo, Jeremy Salcedo, Tuhar Yeasmin, Ummatul Siddique, Aaskah Saraf (arrived at 4pm), Vi Hiep Dang (Oliver) (arrived at 4:16pm)

Apologies: Calvin Chow, Kritika Arora

In attendance: Janice Boey, Executive Officer  
Charlie Li, HR & Finance Manager  
Shinyi Chin, Marketing & Communications Manager  
Leilani Hatfield, Events Manager  
Ryan Edwards, Research Manager  
Hollie Jaggard, GRC student rep for Nursing/Midwifery  
Flynn Linton, GRC student rep for Physics and Astronomy  
Rainer, student rep for Monash OH&S Committee and GRC student rep for BUSECO

As there were new students attending the MGAEC meeting for the first time, Yiwen invited all attendees to briefly introduce themselves

##### **1.3 Consideration of the agenda**

Saham requested for the following item to be added to the agenda after the topic of CAPA reaffiliation - Involvement in the International Student Representation movement at a national level.

#### **2. Minutes and Action sheet**

##### **2.1 Minutes of meeting March 2025 for confirmation**

It was moved:

*That the minutes of MGAEC meeting March 2025 be confirmed.*

Moved: Saham Hettiarachchi

Seconded: Jeremy Salcedo

Carried with no objections.

## **2.2 Action sheet**

The action sheet was noted.

Yiwen requested for Jan to reach out to Jonathan (the previous MGA President) regarding progressing the development of a mission statement for MGA.

## **3. Reports**

### **3.1 President's report**

The President's report was noted.

Yiwen spoke about her recent meeting with Felix Gedye about the University's ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance ) statement, noting that Monash is unique in including labour rights, gender equality in their statement. The uni is currently in the process of renewing the ESG statement. Yiwen also noted that she will be reaching out to the President of CAPA and the President of SUPRA to discuss graduate student issues and potential collaboration.

### **3.2 Members' reports**

Members' reports were noted.

Saham attended Vice Chancellor Student President Advisory Forum representing international students, discussing negative dialogue around international students

Jeremy reported on student experience network meetings at Parkville, highlighting MGA services for graduate students at Parkville campus and ongoing issues with feminine products availability at that campus. In addition, he spoke about his current efforts to host a queer event for all queer students at Monash University.

### **3.3 Staff report**

The staff report was noted.

### **3.4 March 2025 profit and loss report**

The profit and loss report was noted.

### **3.5 March 2025 MGA Newsletters & Social Media Report**

The Newsletters and Social Media Report was noted. Shinyi reported that student engagement has recently dropped which could be attributed to the busy period in the semester. However, sharing of content on social media increased. Especially content with images of actual students have been very popular.

### **3.6 March 2025 Advocacy Report**

Yiwen noted that the Migration Support Hub service is performing well in terms of case numbers. Jan reminded the committee that, as the migration agent works

part-time, the current level of utilisation is appropriate and in line with expectations.

### **3.7 MGAEC meeting attendance records**

The MGAEC meeting attendance records were noted as true and accurate.

## **4. University committee graduate representatives discussion (MGA Council)**

Yiwen invited the graduate student representatives that were present at this meeting to speak.

Rainier reported that PhD students in the Business School currently lack designated work spaces and are instead dispersed across various areas and levels of the School. This arrangement is not conducive to fostering a supportive and connected environment for research students. The faculty, together with MGRO, is exploring ways to improve this situation. He also noted that some student spaces lack basic amenities, such as a coffee machine. In response, Jan suggested that the students reps could consider applying for funding to purchase these amenities when the SSAF Facilities and Amenities Fund next opens.

Hollie raised concerns about PhD students at the Clayton campus losing access to their dedicated tea room due to recent building renovations. She also expressed uncertainty about the future of the assets purchased through the SSAF Facilities and Amenities Fund that are currently located in the student-specific space.

Flynn mentioned working on a calendar of events for Physics and Astronomy PhD students to connect cohorts split between two buildings.

Saham (GRC student rep) reported that MGRO is developing a new PhD program for 2026. One of the key changes in the new PhD program is that professional development hours will be replaced with digital badges that will reflect an individual competency. He also noted that the postgraduate publication award (PPA) has been abolished due to the high cost associated with this award. Saham also raised the issue of the HDR stipend and noted that there will be no further increase from the University but the MGA is working with the University to identify ways to lobby the federal government to raise the RTP base level stipend.

Yiwen (Mental Health Standing Committee student rep) noted that there were still concerns about access to the counselling service. Additionally, she noted that as many HDR students considered leaving their degree due to mental health issues, this is prompting the university to create a mandatory wellbeing module for HDR students.

## **5. Business**

### **5.1 Business arising**

#### **5.1.1 AGM Reports**

Yiwen reminded all MGAEC members to submit their reports for the upcoming AGM. Jan to provide a template for the report for consistent formatting. Jan also explained that the AMG will be held online only to ensure transparency in vote counting and accessibility for all students.

### **5.1.2 CAPA Reaffiliation**

The MGAEC confirmed affiliation with CAPA for **\$10,000** after receiving acceptance from CAPA President. Yiwen advised that she will organise a meeting with CAPA President to discuss further collaborations including HDR stipend campaign. Ryan advised the committee to proceed with cautious optimism given CAPA's tumultuous history.

### **5.1.3 MGA involvement in the International Student Representation movement at a national level**

Saham reported CAPA members are trying to establish a national body for international student representation. CAPA has contacted Monash leadership and other student organisations but not MGA despite MGA representing many international graduate students. The Committee agreed on the principle of having involvement in an international student movement and suggested Saham request a formal proposal from CAPA outlining their goals. Umma emphasised the need to ask CAPA about why MGA wasn't initially consulted.

### **5.1.3 MGA Audit Report 2025**

Charlie presented a comprehensive overview of MGA's financial statements including profit and loss statement, balance sheet, and statement of cash flow.

**It is moved:**

*That the MGA Audit Report for 2024 is confirmed.*

Moved: Ummatul Siddique

Seconded: Oliver, Vi Hiep Dang

Carried with no objections.

### **5.1.4 HDR Stipend Campaigns**

The HDR Stipend sub-committee has submitted a proposal to the University collaborate to lobby the federal government to increase the base rate of the RTP stipend. No response received from the University yet.

Yiwen to raise this matter in her meeting with CAPA.

## **5. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held in May 2025 at a time and place to be confirmed by members' availability.

The meeting closed at 4:45 pm.