

Meeting 2/2025

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee** will be held from 3:00 - 5:00, Wednesday 19 March 2025 in the MGA Meeting Room, Clayton 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 (arrived 3:05pm, departed at 4.45), Mohammed Salehan (Zeehan) (arrived 3.05pm), Dhanya Menoth Mohan, Yidi Luan, Beauty Nalwendo (arrive 3.20pm), Jeremy Salcedo (departed at 4.40pm), Calvin Chow (arrived 3:08pm, departed at 3.54pm,) Tuhar Yeasmin , Karan Raman , Ummatul Siddique, Neharika Shah (departed at 4.40), Aaskah Saraf, Kritika Arora (departed at 4:00pm)

Apologies: Vu Hiep Dang (Oliver)

In attendance: Janice Boey, Executive Officer
Charlie Li, HR & Finance Manager
Ying Xu, Advocacy Manager
Shinyi Chin, Marketing & Communications Manager
Leilani Hatfield, Events Manager (departed at 4:00pm)
Ryan Edwards, Research Manager

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

No new items were added to the agenda. Calvin requested for item 4.2.7 Honoraria payment Q3 be moved up earlier as he will need to depart the meeting early.

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of meeting February 2025 for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of MGAEC meeting February 2/2025 be confirmed.

Moved: Ummatul Siddique

Seconded: Aaskah Saraf

Carried with no objections.

2.2 Action sheet

The action sheet was noted.

The Committee discussed two outstanding items from last year's action sheet: (1) the MGA Mission Statement and (2) the Associateship Program. Umma suggested reaching out to past President Jonathan Robberts, who had previously offered support to assist the Committee with these items following his resignation. The Committee proposed removing the Associateship Program from the action sheet due to a lack of resources to support it. It was agreed that the program should be removed. However, the Committee expressed continued interest in developing a Mission Statement for the MGA and requested the Executive Officer to explore a proposal for this.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

The President's report was noted.

Yiwen spoke about recently receiving an email from a student regarding the cancellation of the PPA award and the low HDR stipend. She also noted that the HDR Stipend subcommittee has met to discuss ways in which the MGA can lobby for an increase in the HDR stipend, especially with the upcoming federal elections on the horizon.

3.2 Members' reports

Members' reports were noted.

Calvin provided an update on the recent Monash Food Strategy Meeting he attended. He reported that the University is exploring options to expand the Monash Merchant to off-campus locations, allowing students in those areas access to diverse and affordable food options. Additionally, he noted that the University is interested in developing a similar on-campus canteen offering affordable food, comparable to the offerings at the University of Melbourne.

Aaskah noted that the Chair of the Coursework Admission Standards Sub-Committee has recently changed.

Jeremy reported a 50% increase in the number of students in the Masters of Pharmacy program at the Parkville campus compared to last year. As a result, the first event saw a significantly higher engagement of Masters students than PhD students. The PPA is interested in investigating the reasons for the lower engagement from PhD students.

Jeremy also mentioned that the PPA is not requesting an increase in budget but is eager to explore how the MGA can assist with additional resourcing. Furthermore, he highlighted the lack of feminine hygiene products on the Parkville campus. The Executive Officer offered to raise the issue of feminine hygiene products with Monash and suggested scheduling a meeting with the PPA to discuss the other concerns raised by Jeremy.

3.3 Staff report

The staff report was noted.

3.4 February 2025 profit and loss report

The February 2025 profit and loss report was noted. Charli explained that there has been a slight change to the OB funding dashboard on the P&L report. He mentioned that his team is currently reviewing all other dashboards to ensure the information is presented in a clearer and more understandable way.

3.5 February 2025 MGA Newsletters & Social Media Report

The Newsletters and Social Media Report was noted. Shinyi noted that because of O-Week, there was a huge jump in followers on MGA socials, RED etc.

3.6 February 2025 Advocacy Report

The Advocacy Report was noted. Ying reported that student case numbers have remained steady. The main update is that the migration service has launched. Zeehan shared feedback on his experience with the service, noting that the agent was very knowledgeable and professional. Aaskah also agreed with Zeehan's feedback.

Aaskah inquired if the service could be offered as an end-to-end solution. Ying explained that the service is currently in a trial period, and there are significant resourcing considerations for providing a full-service model.

3.7 MGAEC meeting attendance records

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

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 AGM Motions

The AGM motion was noted. Yiwen advised the Committee to email the Executive Officer if there was any considerations for the Constitution

4.1.2 MGAEC 2025/26 Election timeline

The MGAEC 2025/26 Election timeline was noted. Jan reminded Committee members interested in renominating for a position on the next Committee to review the election regulations, particularly those related to promotion and publicity, as there are strict guidelines to follow.

4.1.3 SSAF 2025 estimates

Charli addressed this item, noting that the SSAF estimates were promising from a funding perspective, though fluctuations could occur as students may still withdraw from courses. The MGA will receive further confirmation after the Census date.

Umma pointed out that Peninsula collects more SSAF funding compared to Parkville but receives a smaller budget allocation. She expressed interest in discussing this matter further.

4.1.4 Indigenous Writing Retreat Funding

Despite changes to the scope of the writing retreat, the Committee expressed interest in providing funding for the event, as it offers an opportunity for the MGA to support Indigenous graduate students. The Committee suggested allocating funding on a per-person basis, rather than as a lump sum as originally agreed.

It is moved:

That the MGAEC approve funding of \$300 per head from the OB budgets for the 2025 HDR writing retreat for Indigenous graduate students, organised in collaboration with Dr. Cammi Murrup-Stewart from the Gukwonderuk Indigenous Health Workforce Centre.

Mover: Aaskah Saraf

Seconder: Karan Raman

Carried with no objections.

4.1.5 Bank Account for Migration Support Hub

Charli explained that Westpac Bank has updated its procedures for opening accounts and now requires the Executive Committee to approve the signatories and operating rules for the new account.

It was moved:

That the committee approve the establishment of a new transactional bank account for the Migration Support Hub service, in accordance with the requirements of the Migration Agency Code of Conduct with the following signatories for the account and operating rule.

Signatories and Operating rule for the MSH bank account:

Dual authorisation for payments - All payments from the MSH bank account must be reviewed and authorised by 1 staff member and 1 student member from the list below before the payment can be processed.

Position	Current Incumbent	Type
President	Yiwen Yuan	Student
Vice President	Yuen Leong Chow	Student
Executive Officer	Janice Boey	Staff
Events Manager	Leilani Hatfield	Staff

Mover: Saham Hettiarachchi

Seconder: Ummatul Siddique

Carried with no objections.

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 MGA Debit Card for Advocacy Manager and Events Officer

Charli explained that the following staff members require an MGA debit card due to the nature of their work, which involves frequent payments for goods and services. Using other staff members' debit cards is not only inconvenient but also not considered best practice in financial management.

It is moved:

That two additional MGA staff position be a holder of an MGA Debit card linked to MGA bank account as follows:

Position	Current Incumbent	Type
Advocacy Manager	Ying Xu	Staff
Peninsula & Parkville Events Officer	Carla De La Paz	Staff

Moved: Yidi Luan

Seconded: Dhanya Menoth Mohan

Carried with no objections.

4.2.2 Sem 1 2025 Orientation Report

The Sem 1 2025 Orientation report was noted. Jan explained that the 5-day orientation delivery on both Caulfield and Clayton campus is resource-intensive for a small organisation like the MGA.

Yiwen acknowledged the large number of events delivered by the MGA across the various campuses and recognised that it would require significant effort from the events team.

The Committee congratulated the events and marketing and communications team for their hard work during O-Week.

4.2.3 VC SPAF report

The VC SPAF report was noted. Yiwen explained that she would not be able to attend the meeting. Calvin will attend in her place.

4.2.4 National Student Ombudsman

The Committee noted the document provided about the National Student Ombudsman (NSO). Ying added that the NSO has the authority to investigate systemic issues at any University. This provides the Executive Committee with an avenue to raise ongoing concerns with the NSO, which can investigate them if they meet the required criteria. The NSO is new and still in a trial phase and may undergo changes over time.

4.2.5 MGA Rewards Program

Shinyi spoke to this item.

The MGA Rewards program has been a work in progress for several years. It is a loyalty program for students with a \$50 sign-up fee and a \$25 renewal fee for the following year. Students receive hoodies, merchandise, and special deals with both on- and off-campus retailers. Currently, there are 11 active partnerships, including Boost Juice Monash and Oakleigh, the Monash Bookstore, Monash Sport, etc. Additional partnerships are being pursued. The program's initial launch focused on Caulfield and Clayton campus, with plans to expand to other campuses in the future.

A total of 122 new members have signed. The Committee congratulated Shinyi and her team for the significant work behind this program.

4.2.6 Governance 101 Training for MGAEC Retreat

Yiwen expressed interest in providing training for the incoming Executive Committee to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. The proposed training would cover topics such as governance, financial literacy, and effective meetings, but is costly. The Committee agreed that such training would be valuable for the new committee members.

Karan asked if it would be possible to record the training.

Aaskah suggested holding the training virtually as a way to reduce costs.

Jan agreed to raise these two questions with the facilitator of this course.

4.2.7 Honoraria payment Q3

Calvin delivered a presentation on the MGA Honoraria Regulations, explaining the importance of having this regulation in place and the criteria for Executive Committee members to receive their honorarium. For the upcoming Q3 payments, EC members are required to submit the Honoraria Checklist to Calvin by March 30, 2025.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Calvin will send the MGAEC his PowerPoint presentation and the form for submitting the checklist.

4.2.8 MGAEC ID required for compliance

Charli explained that financial and banking regulations are becoming stricter, and it is now standard practice for financial providers to request photo identification of each member of the governing committee. The Committee will need to provide a copy of a valid photo ID to Charli by COB 4 April 2025.

It is moved:

That the Committee provide approval to the HR Manager, Charlie Li to provide WISE with a copy of a valid photo ID of each current committee member for the purpose of regulatory compliance.

Moved: Karan Raman

Seconded: Jeremy Salcedo

Carried with no objections.

4.2.9 Environmental, Social and Governance priorities (Monash)

Yiwen explained that the University is seeking feedback on the ESG priorities. She encouraged members to read the report and provide any feedback to her or Calvin so they are able to raise it with the University.

4.2.10 MGA Finance Risk Matrix

Charli explained that all organisations face financial risks, and it is not unusual for auditors to speak with the governing body as part of their audit process. The auditors are particularly interested in understanding the Committee/Board's processes for conducting risk assessments in the event of fraud and the measures in place to mitigate such risks. Charli advised the Committee to read the document provided and email him with any questions.

5. Next meeting

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

The meeting closed at 4:48 pm.