

## Meeting 09/2022

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee** was held from 10am – 12pm Friday 30 September 2022, in-person in Room H801, Building H, Caulfield Campus and by zoom.

## MINUTES

### 1. Formal matters

#### 1.1 Acknowledgement of country

The MGAEC 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

Present: Radhik Rammohan (Chair), Saham Hettiarachchi, Sarah May, Rose Huang, Anumanth Senthilkumar, Ken Chiu, Annie Roys, Serra D'mello, Sonia Daga, Michael Lin, Maggie Gendy,  
Apologies: Phil Kairns, Maria Lammerding, Lily Wen, Jenny Reeder  
In attendance: Jessica Fimmel, Janice Boey, Zuzana Quinn, James Breheny

#### 1.3 Consideration of the agenda

“MGA Career Fair/Faculty Career Expo” was added as item 4.2.7.

“MHFA (Mental Health First Aid)” was added as item 4.2.8.

“Request for call to action from Iranian students” was added as item 4.2.9.

### 2. Minutes and Action sheet

#### 2.1 Minutes of meetings 08/2022 for confirmation

It was moved:

*That the minutes of MGAEC meeting 08/2022 be confirmed.*

Moved: Anumanth Senthilkumar

Seconded: Saham Hettiarachchi

Carried.

#### 2.2 Action sheet

Noted.

### 3. Reports

#### 3.1 President's report

Noted.

#### 3.2 Members' reports

Noted.

#### 3.3 Staff report

Noted.

### **3.4 August 2022 profit and loss report**

The profit and loss report was noted and it was highlighted that the MGA planned to roll out a limited Childcare Grant in December for which there was a line item. This was a repeat of the program offered to HDR students in December 2021, but would now be extended to GPG students. Applicants would have 4 weeks in which to apply, and further details and eligibility criteria would be provided with the online application.

### **3.5 MGAEC meeting attendance records**

Noted.

## **4. Business**

### **4.1 Business arising**

#### **4.1.1 PTV Concession campaign update**

Since the last EC meeting, the following PTV campaign events had been delivered:

- the MGA free lunches had been a good opportunity to talk to graduate students about the issues and get more signatures on the petition.
- a campaign booth and a Myki draw had been run at 3 free lunch events.
- the HDR social at the start of the month had been used to do more campaigning.
- The “Find the Giant Myki” competition was up and running at Caulfield and had been extended so it would now run for three weeks, closing on Monday October 3. The competition would move to Clayton and run from Monday October 10th until Monday October 31st.
- It was noted that MGAEC members were ineligible to participate in any MGA competitions but could still snap a picture and tag Ben Carroll to raise awareness.
- Maria had been conducting interviews and producing video testimonials which would be released on social media and the MGA website in October.
- “Be the Change” week was running in the first week of October and a PTV campaign booth would be situated on the Lemon Scented Lawns as part of the festival hub, with competitions and Myki card prizes. The date was Thursday October 6th from 12-2. Members were reminded that this event would attract a large crowd and this would be another great opportunity to campaign.
- Presidents from other graduate student associations in Victoria had been emailed seeking their support and offering collaboration with campaigns. Various ministers, G08 Chief Executive and Transport staff had received letters.

#### **4.1.2 HDR stipend increase campaign**

A formal campaign to lobby for an increase to the HDR stipend was being planned for immediate roll-out so that any request for additional funding could be considered in the university’s budgetary process for 2023, which was currently underway. Letters had been sent to Deans, GRC Chair and DVC (Research). Over 1000 students had signed the [MGA online petition](#). The [MGA report on HDR Stipends](#) had been distributed to senior managers and was now online. Members were encouraged to raise awareness of this campaign in their departments and faculties. A potential on-the-ground campaign was being planned.

#### **4.1.3 Retreat for HDR Indigenous students**

The writing retreat run jointly by the MGA and the MNHS Faculty for Indigenous HDR and honours students held at Healesville was very popular with participants who appreciated the opportunity to meet each other and be guided through some productive writing sessions. The

MGA was particularly grateful to ex-committee member Dr Cammi Murrup-Stewart who attended and ran the week-end program.

#### **4.1.4 Parking for graduate students**

Saham explained that a letter had been sent to BPD to request that the 28 day Cellopark plan offered to staff be made accessible to HDR students. BPD had agreed to speak with Cellopark to ascertain if their app had the capacity to separate out the HDR cohort. To date there had been no response from BPD. Saham agreed to follow up on the matter.

### **4.2 General Business**

#### **4.2.1 “Be the Change” sustainability week**

In order to promote the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (17 goals that ranged from ending poverty to reducing consumption to taking climate action) the MGA would host “Be the Change” week from 3-7 October 2022. Each day during this week, the MGA would take a different sustainability challenge that helped them work towards these 17 goals. Activities proposed included reducing trash creation, buying only local food, taking part in a lunchtime bike ride, PTV campaign stand and clothes swap session.

This was a big event on the MGA calendar and all members were encouraged to get involved in helping and ensuring there was a strong MGAEC presence on the ground. Radhik thanked all members and staff involved in developing this program.

#### **4.2.2 SOTY judging panel**

HDR members were invited to be part of the judging panel for the MGA Supervisor of the Year (SOTY) competition entries. Panellists were expected to read through the nominations, rank them and attend a one-off meeting with all panellists to determine the winner. To date 80 applications had been received. Members who had nominated their own supervisors or were connected with any nominee were ineligible to be part of the judging panel. The competition would close on 30 September and judging would take place in early October. Three panel members were required, and the expected time commitment was 1 to 2 days. The following members volunteered: Saham, Rose, Sarah, and Maggie.

#### **4.2.3 Health grant**

The Committee agreed that an additional category of financial assistance be added to the MGA’s welfare program which commenced operating formally in February this year and had been very successful. The new category would be a Health grant and would allow students in dire financial circumstances to apply for financial support for scans, x-rays, ultrasounds and dental services. It was agreed that Zuzana would develop the eligibility criteria and bring this back to the next MGAEC.

#### **4.2.4 NSSS working group**

An invitation had been issued to the MGA for any interested members to join the NSSS working group. The NSSS survey (National Student Safety Survey) was a national survey that was run in 2021 with a particular interest in identifying sexual harassment and sexual assault within Australian Universities, see <https://www.nsss.edu.au>

Sonia, Serra and Sarah registered their interest to take part in this working group. Radhik attended a meeting last Tuesday where it was requested that the MGA provide feedback on the university’s draft response. The next meeting would be held in November.

#### **4.2.5 New OB positions**

Rose discussed the creation of a new office-bearer position to be known as Carer Officer and noted that she had been advised that there needed to be a document submitted to the MGAEC describing the position and the eligibility criteria. As Lily was an apology, her proposal for a Sustainability Officer position on the MGAEC would be carried over to the next meeting.

#### **4.2.6 MGAEC office space proposal**

Anumant explained that the objective of creating a public-fronting space for MGAEC members was to increase MGAEC visibility and encourage casual drop ins by graduate students. Some members were of the view that the MGAEC didn't have good visibility across the campuses. It was thought that face-to-face meetings with students may be beneficial and that members would need an office space in which to conduct such meetings. It was suggested there was some scope for members to use meeting rooms on Clayton and Caulfield campuses. It was agreed that a pilot program at Clayton would help to establish demand. Once a roster to accommodate member interest and timing had been finalised and office space secured, the sessions would be advertised.

#### **4.2.7 Careers Fair**

Saham circulated a google document setting out the logistics of his planned Careers Fair. While it was acknowledged that there was some overlap between coursework and research student needs, this Careers Fair would target research students. There was some concern that MGA should not be duplicating what was already on offer by the University, specifically by Careers Connect and individual Faculty programs.

#### **4.2.8 MFHA camp**

Anumant attended a graduate student coffee catch up to discuss Mental Health First Aid. He met representatives from different parts of Monash and reported the most pressing concern was a high burnout rate among HDR students due to suffering anxiety, depression and stress. He asked for member views about having an MGA session run by MFHA. It was explained that this program was a training program for attendees to learn how to identify signs of mental health illnesses in other people, rather than a program for people suffering from mental health illnesses. It was noted that Monash University already offered this program on a regular basis for free.

#### **4.2.9 Call for action by Iranian students**

The members discussed the very sad death of a 22 year old Iranian woman while in police custody in Iran. The MGAEC had been asked by a Monash University group of Iranian students to support their protests. The MGAEC agreed that practical support could be provided to the Iranian students to help them to organise their own event. It was also agreed that a formal statement from the MGA would be developed by Zuzana and Radhik.

### **5. Membership matters**

No business.

### **6. Next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in October at a date and time to be confirmed by committee members.

The meeting closed at 12.01pm.