



## 2016-17 PRC Meeting #3

Monday 21<sup>th</sup> November 2016 5.30PM

PARSA Boardroom

**Attendance:** Novie Leman, James Shin, Jasmine (Juemin) Shi, Hansika Chopra, Phoebe (Jie) Pan, Wellington Barchue, Tanuj Parakh, Akeel Feroz, Nathalie Blakely, Ellen Riley, Reeba Nasim, Kim-Marie Spence, Sahar Latheef, Xavier Fitzgerald, Dane Lyons, Zhang Guangfong, Tanbeen Hasan; Ceridwen Suiter

**Administrator (Minute taker):** Mike Heffron (General Manager)

**Chair:** Alyssa Shaw (President)

### 1. Meeting open

- **Welcome & Acknowledgement of Indigenous Australians**
- **Declaration of Interests and Confirmation of Minutes**
- **Conflict of interest**
  - President thanks those that completed the conflict of interest register last meeting, some members are yet to do so – please see the Chair/President in order to complete this paperwork.
  - No conflicts declared
- **Minutes**
  - **Motion:** That the minutes of Meeting #2 be amended to reflect that James Shin seconded the motions regarding Toad Hall in Section 5: Other Business
    - Passed without objection
  - **Motion:** That the minutes of Meeting #2 be accepted.
    - Moved: Alyssa, Seconded: Hansika
    - Motion passes (1 abstention)

### 2. Reports

- **Presidents Report (see Appendix 1)**
  - **Union Court Redevelopment update**
    - Alyssa: PARSA will be moving its office into a refurbished Melville Hall this winter. Redevelopment project is projected to be (completed Jan 2019). A further update will be provided at the next PRC meeting, pending ANU providing information to PARSA.
    - Question for President – Where are they going to relocate lectures currently held at MCC. Are they looking for student feedback on potential changes?
      - Alyssa: Replacement venues could include Palace Electric Cinema, Llewellyn Hall, and the National Film Archive.
      - Speak to Alyssa if you have specific feedback on this.
    - Comment for PRC member: We should be pushing for more student forums and feedback on affect changes will have on students, and how they can feed into process.
    - Question from PRC member: How are we going to communicate plans?

- President – Plans need to be circulated to members as well by ANU. Alyssa is going to keep pushing Vice Chancellor on communicating plans to students.
    - Question from PRC member: What are they doing about parking during construction period.
      - Alyssa: Nothing temporary, final plan includes underground parking facility beneath new accommodation
    - Question from PRC member: What are they doing about the Book Co-op?
      - Alyssa: Moving but only will have 20% of space they have now.
  - **School reviews**
    - These are ongoing
  - **CAPA Delegation**
    - Alyssa: Notes that she sits on the Executive. Has not been happy with the value that CAPA provides for the \$16,000 in affiliation fees that we pay annually. We need to look into evaluating our expenditure on PARSAs next year, including sending smaller delegation.
  - **O-Week**
    - Alyssa- planning has commenced. If you want to take part let Alyssa know, particularly if you are around during the break.
- **Treasurer’s Report (see Appendix 2)**
- **General Manager’s Report (see Appendix 3)**
- **Motion: Approve Reports**
  - Alyssa moves, Ellen seconds
  - Reports pass unanimously

### 3. Key Business

- **Implementation of the Walker Review (Report from President)**
  - PARSAs Ordinary General Meeting was called for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, slightly later than intended, due to notice requirements and delays with publishing the meeting in the necessary areas, namely the Canberra Times.
  - The meeting, whilst overwhelmingly attend by members of the PRC, voted to approve the proposed changes to the constitution that would see PARSAs constitution align with the changes required by the ANU Council, set out in the Walker Review and the *Council (Elections) Statute 2016*.
  - The changes to the constitution have now been passed to the Governance Office of ANU, for inclusion in the ANU Council agenda for December. The Council must approve the changes in order for the PARSAs Constitution to then be changed. The revised Constitution will then be lodged with the Office of Regulatory Services, ACT Government, in order for the changes to come into effect. The intended timeframe for this is by the end of December, which will allow the changes to be in effect before the 1 January 2017 timeframe specified by the *Council (Elections) Statute 2016*.
  - See Attachment for revised constitution
- **Electoral Regulations (Report from President)**
  - In addition to the constitutional changes, under the *Council (Elections) Statute 2016* PARSAs must also provide amended Electoral Regulations to

Council to demonstrate the change to our constitution has been reflected in our Electoral Regulations.

- After considering suggested changes from the Governance Office, and advice from PARSA's lawyer, the attachment (XX) contains the proposed electoral regulation changes.
  - In addition to the Walker Review requirements, further wording has been included regarding the changes to the Apollo voting system, upon advice from the PARSA lawyer. These changes provide the PRC with more power to change the voting system should they be dissatisfied with the decision of the Returning Officer and President.
  - See Attachment for proposed changes
  
  - **Motion** – Approve changes to election regulations, including amendments submitted from PRC Ellen Riley.
    - Alyssa moves, Nathalie seconds
    - Passes with one abstention
- **SSAF update (Report from President)**
- As circulated to the PRC on 3 November 2016, PARSA has received a draft allocation for SSAF.
  - This draft allocations is now out for a month-long student consultation, as is required under the SSAF legislation.
  - The PRC can view all bids and SSAF information:  
<http://www.anu.edu.au/students/program-administration/costs-fees/services-amenities-fee>
  - PARSA's SSAF allocation: <http://parsing.anu.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/PARSA-SSAF-draft-allocation-2017.pdf>
  - While our allocation is significantly below our original bid, our budget has increased by \$161,035 from last year, or 13.6%.
  - All postgraduates are eligible to comment on the SSAF bid by COB 28 November 2016 to Richard Baker, Pro-VC University Experience.
  - Officers should speak to Alyssa if they have any questions.
  - Richard Baker will tell us what comments come back and if renegotiation are needed.
  - See Attachment for Draft Allocation.
- **Membership Solutions Limited (MSL) update (Report from President)**
- **General summary**
    - PARSA and ANUSA currently use a program called OrgSync to process SEEF and GAC (Clubs and Societies) grants, refunds, administration etc. This is an opt-in system, with students registering to use the system in order to access these administrative processes. This, in large part, has been a failing of OrgSync, which was intended to act as a hub of information for students – but which currently, few student engage with.
    - As the OrgSync 3-year contract is due to expire in January 2017, ANUSA and PARSA commenced searching for an alternative product that would deliver some key functions, including:
      - An opt-out system with greater accessibility for students
      - A program that could continue to run SEEF and GAC administrative processes

- A system that could run elections, for ANUSA/PARSA as well as Clubs and Societies
  - A system that can be better integrated into ANUSA/PARSA's work and has the potential for greater functionality, such as case management for Student Assistance Officers
  - This project has been led by ANUSA President, Ben Gill, and resulted in recommending Membership Solutions Limited (MSL) as one of the only viable options for ANUSA/PARSA based on our requirements. As such, negotiations for MSL have been conducted for some time.
  - At this stage, ANUSA and PARSA are currently reviewing and negotiating the contract with MSL, which is complicated by the role of ANU as being the key contract holder with MSL – necessary in order for the University to make available student data for ANUSA/PARSA to effectively use the system.
  - All going well, this contract should be completed before the OrgSync contract expires, allowing for PARSA to have a new system in place for SEEF rounds and O-week next year.
- **Website**
    - As part of the MSL package PARSA will be given a website with a basic template that can be customised (to a degree) that will integrate with MSL systems. In PARSA's case, SEEF.
    - PARSA will work with MSL to design this website and MSL staff will do an initial loading of content to the new site.
    - This means a change to our current website.
    - There is a risk that the new website options offered will not be suitable to PARSA's needs, in which case we could consider a website built for us, however this could cost closer to \$10,000.
    - In order to mitigate this, PARSA is starting discussions with MSL regarding options. A further solution is also proposed for the PRC to consider under 3.7.1 of this agenda.
  - **SEEF – change over systems**
    - There is some risk that should the contract not be signed before the expiration of OrgSync then there will be no system for SEEF.
    - In order to mitigate this risk, the General Manager is planning a manual system that could be used in the intervening period. This would likely use an online form (google forms, for example) that is embedded in the PARSA website, and rely on the new PARSA Administrative Assistant for additional correspondence. Whilst there might be additional administrative burden due to a larger emphasis on emailing etc. and therefore the overall time commitment to SEEF might increase, this is manageable.
  - **Memorandum of Understanding between PARSA/ANUSA (Report from President)**
    - Draft MOU provided in confidence to PRC members
    - ANUSA and PARSA have increased their collaborative work over the last few years, particularly on projects such as branded weeks, or in areas where both postgraduates and undergraduates are affected e.g. equity groups. Part of this collaborative work has come about due to a push from

Chancellery, through the SSAF process, to save money through collaborating on projects.

- Working collaboratively with ANUSA has led to both positive and negative experiences for PARSA, with discussions ongoing as to what extent we will collaborate next year.
- In light of this need to work collaborative, and the mixed experiences this creates, ANUSA and PARSA have begun a process to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two organisations, which will assist in future collaborative work, and insuring agreement on future activities. The MOU will also set out a process for dispute resolution should disputes arise.
- The MOU is still being developed and will be brought back to the PRC in 2017 to be endorsed.

○ **By-elections (Report from President)**

- Alyssa: Some PRC members are graduating at the end of year, if you have not declared this to the President, please do so immediately.
- Alyssa: Several vacancies arise that will need to be filled (Treasurer, Environmental Officer, Communication Officer, one College Rep), along with the existing vacancy from the unfilled CPMS Representative position.
  - In order to fill these vacancies the President is recommending a by-election to be held at the start of Semester 1, 2017 – ideally to take place in late February/early March.
  - Under the constitution, PRC members can be appointed from the existing PRC. Alyssa will take expressions of interest and the PARSA Executive will conduct an interview process. Anyone appointed will still need to stand in the by-election
  - Alyssa explains motion to take on the role if no one is found to fill the Treasurer position. States this is not ideal for a number of reasons, including the heavy workload, but may be necessary as a temporary measure to maintain PARSA's operations ahead during the break and ahead of O-Week
- **Motion:** President can appoint a Treasurer until the conclusion of the by-election taking place.
  - Alyssa moved, Ceridwen seconded
  - Motion passes unanimously

○ **PRC term and handover period (report by President)**

- The 2015/2016 PRC's term was extended an additional 3 months, to be a total of 15 months – which is provided for under the PARSA Electoral Regulations 6 (b).
- The decision to extend the term occupied the PRC for several months, with the PRC establishing a sub-committee to produce a paper which would explore its pros and cons. Given the complexity of the decision, many options for and against were presented.
- The original intention behind this change was to align PARSA with ANUSA's term, which was seen to offer benefits over the May – to May PARSA term. The PRC ultimately agreed with this premise and as such a shift from the May – May term, to an August – August term (what we current have) was made, with the intention to change this to a December – December term (or similar) to align with ANUSA.

- Aside from the question of the PRC term timing, the President wishes the PRC consider the need to provide for a handover period, such as that provided for by ANUSA. Currently PARSA's election changes are instantaneous and therefore the new team has limited opportunity to learn from the outgoing team about their duties and there is a huge loss of organisational knowledge, as well as a large disruption to the operations of PARSA.
  - One suggestion to remedy this would be to adopt a handover period, similar to that of ANUSA's.
  - The new handover period would see that the elected team assume their roles 2 – 3 months after they are elected. In order to make this feasible, the PRC would need to consider:
    - Changing the time of the election, to allow for an election followed by a handover period
    - Consider the appropriate length of time for a handover period
    - Consider when a handover period would best be completed, and what a good starting time for the new team would be
  - In response to this, the President asks to PRC to consider the following:
    - A 2 – 3 month handover period, similar to ANUSA
    - That an appropriate handover period would be over the mid-semester break, or commence before the SSAF period.
  - Given the above, two possible options could be considered:
    - That elections would take place in May, with a handover period over the mid-semester break, and the new team commencing O-week Semester 2, or
    - that elections take place in July/August, allowing for a handover period over the SSAF negotiation period, and the new team commencing Nov/Dec (this is ANUSA's current timeline).
  - This PRC needs to make a decision as to the length of its current term, and the future terms of the PRC. Options are as follows:
    - No change, or limited change, to current August – August term. Therefore no or very minimal handover period
    - Change to a May election, with a Semester 2 start
    - Change to a July/August election with a Nov/Dec start
    - Another option
  - Given the complexity of the decision, the PRC are asked to consider this over the summer break and, if possible, indicate what options they think might be suitable. This item will come back for the PRC's decision at the next PRC meeting, in February 2017.
- **PRC term and handover period – discussion**
- Alyssa: If we changed the constitution to not have an immediate handover following announcement of election results, the newly elected person would work together with representative they replaced for a specified time in the constitution, when there would a full transferral of power.
  - PRC member: Elections sometimes get personal, how do you mitigate conflict between incoming and outgoing officers?
    - Alyssa: Tried to put together handover document this year to help this. Right now there is an instantaneous transfer of power - personal relationship issues not necessary better now than potential delay of transfer of power

- Comment by PRC Member: time interval of 2-3 months is too long. Maybe 1 or 2 months?
      - Alyssa: Suggestion for 2-3 months is that is what ANUSA provides for (transfer happens Dec 1 despite August elections).
    - Comment by PRC members
      - *Having elections later in the year gives you time to find people. Solves the problem of people graduating half-way through their term.*
      - *Good having an overlap with ANUSA, good for everyone not being new.*
      - *College reps don't need 3 month handover period, officers one or two. But you don't need to have meetings between old/new officers each week*
      - *Makes sense to have it earlier in year because later in year less people are here.*
      - *We need to take timing of SSAF bid into account – important they can get their head round it.*
      - *We shouldn't do what ANUSA does just because they do it.*
      - *In ANUSA system, outgoing president gives info about SSAF to incoming, but up to incoming president on what they bid for.*
    - Alyssa: appreciates feedback from PRC, will discuss this issue again at a future meeting
- **Strategy and Planning (report by President)**
  - The PRC is asked to consider the financial surplus for 2016, and the reserve funds that PARSA currently has
  - As per the SSAF Agreement for 2016, PARSA is required to return any unspent money from 2016 to the University. This is different from previous years where PARSA would be able to roll over money that was unspent, to the following year, or this unspent money would be deducted from the SSAF amount for the following year.
  - Given the expected surplus for 2016 of \$63,414, after accounting for our forecasted spend, the President asks the PRC to consider utilising the surplus for distinct projects.
  - Of this \$63,414, the suggestion is that PARSA spend up to \$38,414, for the following reasons:
    - PARSA is expecting late invoices to come through for close to \$15,000 that have not been captured in the forecast,
    - In order to manage potential risk of other late payments, a buffer of \$10,000 seems appropriate. Keeping in mind, any unspent funds are returned to the University.
  - If the PRC are agreeable to this, I would ask that the following large cost projects are considered to be spent from the \$38,414:
    - **Strategic Planning facilitation (see Appendix)**
      - Under the previous PRC, there was discussion as to a strategic plan being undertaken by PARSA. This plan would be led by the General Manager, which was part of the initial reasons that a General Manager was seen to be a worthwhile addition i.e. to lead strategic projects.
      - In addition to this, given the organisational challenges that PARSA experiences – such as the time limits of postgraduates and international students, as well as the political nature of the

organisation - conducting a strategic plan would be an opportunity to survey and understand the needs of the postgraduate community which would inform the work of PARSA into the future.

- The cost would be for the engagement of a Strategic Planning Facilitator who would help design the process, and carry it out. One such proposal has been attached for the PRC to consider and as a guide to what sort of costs to expect.
- Proposed amount: up to \$10,000
- **Governance review (see appendix – was provided at meeting?)**
  - The current governance arrangements of PARSA have not been reviewed for some time. Based on advice from consultants, namely experts who deliver Governance Training, there is a strong case for PARSA to review its current arrangements, as well as the supporting documentation it has in place, in order to assess gaps. Having completed this governance review the PRC can then assess if its current arrangements are fit for purpose and consider areas that need to be changed or improved.
  - The cost would be for a governance expert from the Australian Institute of Company Directors undertaking an assessment of our current governance structure and supporting structures. Further information can be found in the attachment that will be circulated at or before the PRC meeting.
  - Proposed amount: up to \$15,000
- **Website content**
  - Feedback from postgraduate students often indicate that the PARSA website is not a useful source of information, and is clunky to navigate. In order to prepare for the anticipate change of the PARSA website – moving to MSL – PARSA could benefit from someone reviewing our website and determining how a new website could be structured, as well as create useful content as needed.
  - The cost would be to employ a contractor or potentially student, to undertake this project over the summer with the intention (should all go well with MSL) that the new PRC website be launched for O-week 2017.
  - Proposed amount: up to \$8,000
- **Workstation assessments**
  - There are many new staff that have commenced in the office this year. A vital part of maintaining a safe workplace environment is education and assessment of workstations to ensure staff are able to understand their setup and minimise injury.
  - The cost would be to engage a contractor to undertake workstation assessments for all staff and the President.
  - Proposed amount: up to \$5,000
- **Strategy and Planning - discussion**
  - *PRC comments:*
    - *General consensus that PRC are happy to spend surplus, and with buffer amount*



- **Motion** – PRC endorses expenditure of \$38,000 up until end of 2016 for projects listed above, which will come out of PARSA’s surplus
  - Alyssa moves, Dane seconds
  - Passes with 1 abstention
- **Strategic Investment – (report by President)**
  - As seen in the financial report, PARSA has considerable reserves. These reserves have not been utilised or ear marked for specific projects, but are often re-invested in term deposits.
  - The President wishes that the PRC consider unlocking some of this reserve money in order to allocate it to a strategic project, namely the hiring of an Engagement and Advocacy Officer for a year period. The remaining funding should be considered for reinvestment in a term deposit whilst other investment opportunities are considered for 2017.
    - **Engagement and Advocacy Officer (see Appendix XX – draft job description)**
      - As part of the SSAF bid for 2016 PARSA included a new staffing position for an Engagement and Advocacy Officer. The attachment includes information on the position, as proposed at SSAF.
      - Given the limited SSAF funding, this position was not able to be supported through SSAF for 2017, however, given PARSA’s reserves, there is opportunity to fund such a position.
      - The President would recommend to the PRC that a one-year contract for an Engagement and Advocacy Officer, for the 2017 period.
      - As discussed in the attachment, this position has the potential to add great value to PARSA’s work, and undertake key projects that would be beneficial to PARSA’s advocacy into the future. At present PARSA does not have the internal capacity of staff or representatives to undertake such activities, which makes us a less effective advocacy body.
- **Strategic Investment – (discussion)**
  - Alyssa: ANUSA does advocacy, we haven’t because traditionally we have not had capacity, and owing to postgrad lifecycle, particularly international students, who have visa restrictions and have to maintain full work load.
    - Look into parents issues – family accommodation on campus
    - HDR students
    - School reviews
    - Supporting student representative
    - Would be advocacy- not pastoral care
    - Looking at policy issues
    - Having the role makes a stronger case to get a continuing role
    - Make sure the job doesn’t overlap, conflict with welfare/legal
  - **Motion:** PRC to endorse using \$91,000 from reserves to invest in Engagement Officer for a period of 1 year from when they are hired

- Report to the PRC progress (KPIs) at the six-month mark of highlight
  - President may circulate the job description to the PRC
  - Alyssa moves, Nathalie seconds
  - Passes with three abstentions
- **Term Deposit (report from President)**
    - Put into 3 month term deposit
    - Put some of reserve in term deposit in commonwealth bank.
    - 700k in Dec for three months – 2%
    - Go out to a financial planner, to find out what is possible, come back to PRC in Feb for review. Exec will make a recommendation
    - Investigate the penalty for removing money early
    - Can apply for 20% of SSAF funds in later December

Motion- Alyssa – PRC 700k in Dec for three months with commonwealth bank. Will check on terms about penalty/opt-out clause. At Feb meeting PRC will be presented further options for financial investment.

Seconded – Xavier

Passes (no abstentions)

Meeting closed