Strategic Plan 2018—2021
Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and celebrate the First Australians on whose traditional lands we meet, and pay our respects to the elders of the Ngunnawal people past, present, and emerging.

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Message from the President & Vice President

Since the formation of the ANU in 1946 postgraduate students have been a crucial part of the ANU community – contributing to the research, knowledge sharing, social, and cultural fabric that makes up Australia’s national university. Since PARSA’s establishment in 1960 as the representative body for all postgraduate and research students, PARSA has played a central role in our community by working to protect and promote the rights and welfare of students.

PARSA has grown tremendously over the years thanks to the tireless efforts of the many dedicated and passionate student representatives and staff who have worked for the Association. PARSA is a strong advocate for students and delivers a range of support and services to our community through our welfare grants, student assistance and legal advice units, academic support, events, programs, and campaigns. For some time the postgraduate cohort at the ANU has been growing and in 2018 postgraduate students now represent over half of the student population at the ANU. Considering our tremendous growth as an organisation, and our growing student population, we have created this Strategic Plan – the first in our history – to guide the Association now, and into the future, to ensure that we continue to be the best advocate for postgraduate students at the ANU.

As a student-led organisation we are part of this community and see first-hand the struggles and triumphs, challenges and opportunities that we all face in our personal, professional, and academic lives. It is imperative that as an organisation we support individuals and advocate for systemic change to ensure that all postgraduates at ANU not only survive their student experience, but thrive as a result of it. The postgraduate experience is dynamic, and we have a diverse, intelligent, and engaged community full of people who will be the future leaders and influencers in our world – whether in government, private enterprise, not-for-profit, politics, academia, or beyond. Our vision for “a vibrant postgraduate community shaping the future” reflects that view and PARSA’s role in wanting to support the experience of all postgraduates who come to the ANU.

To achieve this vision PARSA’s Strategic Plan articulates the mandate of our organisation: support, advocacy, community building, and transparency and sustainability. The Strategic Plan clarifies our focus for the next four years, guiding us in meeting the needs of our members and ensuring the continuing success of PARSA as an organisation. Our Strategic Plan is a collaborative project created through member feedback with student representative and staff input. It is honest about the key challenges we face as an organisation, and is clear about how we must act to meet these challenges to ensure we are supporting all of our members.

In 2018, for the first time in our history, we are proud to create a living document to guide the Association into the future and ensure that postgraduate students receive the support they deserve in order to excel over their time at ANU, and into the future.

We look forward to seeing PARSA go from strength to strength.

Alyssa Shaw
President

Zyl Hovenga-Wauchope
Vice President
Vision
A vibrant postgraduate community shaping the future.

Values
Our values as an organisation guide our decision-making and actions. As an organisation we commit to, and value:

- Student focus
- Student leadership
- Supporting our community
- Celebrating diversity
- Integrity

Strategic Themes

01. Support
PARSA recognises postgraduate students as needing holistic support in their personal, professional, and academic lives. PARSA provides support to students to empower them with health and wellbeing, assistance with financial difficulties, legal and academic support, dispute resolution, and leadership and career development.

02. Advocacy
PARSA is the representative body for postgraduate students, providing a strong voice within University decision-making and to Government. We always aim to be representative of postgraduate needs and consider the needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups in our community. We pride ourselves on being constructive and evidence-based in our advocacy.

03. Community building
PARSA connects postgraduate students through meaningful collaboration and engagement across the University and within the broader community. We aim to connect students and provide opportunities for engagement with every PARSA member.

04. Transparency and Sustainability
As a member organisation we are responsible to our community and must ensure our operations and governance are transparent, accountable, and reflective of our members’ values. We are committed to ensuring an independent voice and to achieve this we require a sustainable financial future for the organisation. We are focused on continuous improvement and on seeking opportunities to support our ongoing financial security in an ethical manner.
01. Support

PARSA recognises postgraduate students as needing holistic support in their personal, professional, and academic lives. PARSA provides support to students to empower them with health and wellbeing, assistance with financial difficulties, legal and academic support, dispute resolution, and leadership and career development.

OBJECTIVE 1
Support students in times of need.

**Actions**
- Provide PARSA Emergency Grants and Grocery Vouchers for students experiencing financial stress.
- Provide PARSA Accommodation Grants for students who are recently arrived in Canberra and are seeking accommodation.
- Provide legal and advocacy support for students.

**Success measures**
- Supporting at least 500 students with legal and assistance support issues each year.
- Increase awareness of grants, aiming for an increase of applications for emergency grants of 20% by 2021.
- Review our grants and student support services every year to ensure we are meeting the needs of students.

OBJECTIVE 2
Empower students to navigate academic processes and overcome disputes.

**Actions**
- Provide legal and advocacy support to students experiencing academic difficulties and disputes.
- Work with the ANU to identify areas of concern and mitigate these issues in order to reduce rates of academic issues.

**Success measures**
- All students who approach PARSA with concerns are provided support to navigate academic disputes.
- At least 50% of cases are successfully pursued.
- A decrease in cases in areas of key academic concern.
OBJECTIVE 3
Create opportunities for students to develop skills in their academic, leadership, and extracurricular activities.

Actions
- Deliver and fund meaningful academic support programs.
- Promote leadership and networking events for all students.
- Provide programs and grants which promote community initiatives.

Success measures
- Engage with at least 40% of HDR students through Shut Up and Write (or other programs).
- Expend at least 90% of all grants funding each year.
- Deliver leadership programs, including the Vice Chancellor’s Leadership Program, at least once per year.
- Establish new grants and programs which support local initiatives.

OBJECTIVE 4
Equip students with skills and training for work.

Actions
- Work with the ANU to ensure a focus on student employment and graduate employability.
- Help postgraduates to find employment to support their studies.
- Deliver information and provide opportunities for students to gain understanding and skills that will support their careers.

Success measures
- Engage with at least 200 students through training programs each year.
- Work with the ANU to create a mentoring program open to all postgraduates by 2021.
- Advocate for ANU to establish a scholarship or grants program to support students taking up internship opportunities.
- Hold two events annually to support networking and careers discussions.

OBJECTIVE 5
Promote the health and wellbeing of students.

Actions
- Ensure that students have access to services that support their physical and mental health.
- Act as a trusted, confidential, and professional body that supports and refers students with their needs.
- Expend at least 90% of all grants funding each year.
- Deliver leadership programs, including the Vice Chancellor’s Leadership Program, at least once per year.
- Establish new grants and programs which support local initiatives.

Success measures
- Continue to deliver free fitness classes that meet the demand of students.
- Reduced wait times for ANU counselling.
- The creation of a central support service to support survivors of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment.
- Meet service delivery goals for student assistance as defined by professional standards.
02. Advocacy

PARSA is the representative body for postgraduate students, providing a strong voice within University decision-making and to Government. We always aim to be representative of postgraduate needs and consider the needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups in our community. We pride ourselves on being constructive and evidence-based in our advocacy.

OBJECTIVE 1
Increase awareness of and participation in PARSA’s work across the postgraduate community.

Actions
- Make PARSA’s elections accessible, transparent, and informative, with clear information on role descriptions and how elected representatives are held to account.
- Utilise opportunities to engage students and raise awareness of PARSA’s work.
- Build relationships with communications networks to promote PARSA’s activities.
- Segment information being shared with postgraduate students to ensure that students receive information most relevant to them.

Success measures
- Increase voter turnout to elections to 15% by 2021.
- PARSA activities regularly promoted in ANU channels, including ANU central, colleges, and schools.
- Release monthly newsletters which include information relevant to students.
- 20% increase in traffic to PARSA website by 2021.
- 10% annual increase in students responding to PARSA surveys.

OBJECTIVE 2
Ensure that there is a postgraduate voice represented in all University decisions that impact on students.

Actions
- Advocate for students on ANU committees and decision-making bodies.
- Ensure that information gained through surveys and other consultation mechanisms informs PARSA’s advocacy and that this information is communicated to PARSA members.
- Engage students in decision-making processes with surveys and other consultation methods.

Success measures
- PARSA representatives will achieve at least a 70% participation rate for any committee we sit on.
- PARSA will survey members every two years. The survey results should show that at least 85% of participants know they are members of PARSA in each survey.
- Ensure at least two opportunities (survey, focus groups etc.) are undertaken each year for members to provide input into important advocacy topics.
OBJECTIVE 3
Advocate for systemic change on student priority issues, including social and academic issues.

Actions
- Actively pursue two major campaigns each year to progress priority issues identified by students.
- Engage in direct advocacy with senior leadership to ensure awareness of postgraduate issues.
- Ensure commitment to student support and improvement of the student experience from the ANU.
- Actively monitor University and Government announcements or reviews that will impact on postgraduate students, be responsive to these issues and communicate our responses or proposals to membership.
- Engage in collective action with CAPA, CISA and other national student peak bodies in response to proposals made by government as necessary.

Success measures
- Meet directly with senior leadership of the ANU (vice Chancellor or Provost) quarterly to ensure student concerns are heard.
- Campaign success will be measured by: media attention on the issue, meeting with senior leadership at the ANU to specifically discuss the issue, and ANU adopting at least one campaign recommendation.
- Run course representative training twice a year.
- Ensure key issues or concern to students are included in monthly newsletters. Use social media to share urgent information to students.
- Maintain a clear database of organisational policy positions PARSA on the website, including historic and new decisions.
- Send delegates to relevant peak body meetings. Advocacy decisions made by those bodies should reflect the position of PARSA.
- Ensure a Student Partnerships Agreement is always in place with the ANU.

OBJECTIVE 4
Support PARSA student representatives to be effective advocates.

Actions
- Ensure a strong handover for incoming student representatives to support their advocacy on behalf of postgraduate students.
- Establish training programs for empowerment of representatives, to be held throughout terms of office.
- Develop, and continuously update, a comprehensive Handbook to support new student representatives with knowledge of the Association and representative positions.

Success measures
- All new PARSA representatives are provided with a comprehensive handover document.
- Provide governance training to the PARSA board each year.
- Have a PARSA training retreat (or similar) each year for new representatives.
03. Community Building

PARSA connects postgraduate students through meaningful collaboration and engagement across the University and within the broader community. We aim to connect students and provide opportunities for engagement with every PARSA member.

OBJECTIVE 1
Develop and coordinate events to instil a sense of community among students.

**Actions**
- Develop and run a diverse program of community events.
- Continue to develop new events and expand current community events based on student feedback.
- Develop and implement ways of measuring participation and engagement in activities.

**Success measures**
- Hold successful flagship events with a 20% increase in membership participation by 2021.
- Achieve at least 60% capacity attendance at smaller events that PARSA hosts.
- Implement an event monitoring and evaluation system which actively influences event decision-making and demonstrates ongoing improvement in attendance and per person budget.

OBJECTIVE 2
Create opportunities for marginalised or otherwise under-represented students to participate in the community.

**Actions**
- Partner with colleges, schools, residences, clubs, and societies to hold events relevant to their student population to engage marginalised or otherwise ‘hard-to-reach’ students in PARSA activities.
- Identify distinct sectors of currently marginalised students.
- Empower marginalised students to take ownership of reaching their community.

**Success measures**
- Hold at least one college specific event each year.
- Hold at least two Global Cafes each year to highlight and celebrate different cultural groups.
- Partner with postgraduate residences to deliver two events each year.
- Marginalised members of the community report feeling more engaged and attend events more often year on year.
OBJECTIVE 3
Support residential and off-campus students to feel connected with the ANU community.

**Actions**
- Increase events and engagement of students who are not located at the ANU Canberra campus.
- Create an equity (or other) portfolio duty which has as a focus off-campus students.
- Promote residential or off-campus community organisations for postgraduate students.
- Increase PARSA’s engagement with postgraduate residential communities, and facilitate engagement between the residential communities.

**Success measures**
- Host at least two events per year that take place outside the ANU campus.
- Support the expansion of Walter Wing, or creation of future non-residential virtual halls that are postgraduate focused.
- Ensure off-campus students have dedicated spaces or ongoing programs which support their sense of community.
- Establish a postgraduate residential advisory body to support engagement with PARSA and between postgraduate residential halls.

OBJECTIVE 4
Support the wellbeing of students through community initiatives.

**Actions**
- Develop events and programs that support the wellbeing of students.
- Embed support initiatives in PARSA events where possible.
- Work with areas of ANU, such as Counselling and Batyr to develop programs that support postgraduates.

**Success measures**
- 25% fewer PARSA members will report that they are socially isolated in surveys by 2021.
- PARSA will run events or activities over exam time each year that have the intention of supporting postgraduate wellbeing.
- At least two major events each year will include a focus on wellbeing.
TRANSPARENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

As a member organisation we are responsible to our community and must ensure our operations and governance are transparent, accountable and reflective of our members’ values. We are committed to ensuring an independent voice and to achieve this we require a sustainable financial future for the organisation. We are focused on continuous improvement and on seeking opportunities to support our ongoing financial security in an ethical manner.

OBJECTIVE 1
Demonstrate transparent and professional operations and governance.

**Actions**
- Meet our regulatory requirements each year.
- Respond to students quickly and empathetically.
- Ensure information regarding PARSA’s governance is easily accessible.

**Success measures**
- Hold an AGM before the end of May each year.
- Submitting SSAF acquittal reports in a timely manner each quarter.
- Define, and meet, our service delivery goals for student assistance.
- Minutes, regulations, and policies are published online within a month of being duly passed.

OBJECTIVE 2
Ensure secure and diverse funding sources for PARSA.

**Actions**
- Seek to negotiate an agreement with ANU for baseline funding guarantee which will be provided to PARSA if SSAF is abolished.
- Diversify our revenue through exploring alternative and ethical revenue streams.
- Actively create and pursue sponsorship opportunities.
- Develop investment policy for the sustainable use of PARSA funds.

**Success measures**
- Deliver an agreement with the ANU for baseline funding by the end of 2019.
- Establish at least three alternative funding sources for PARSA by 2021.
- Generate external revenue that amounts to at least 20% of the SSAF budget provided to PARSA by 2021.
OBJECTIVE 3
Demonstrate transparent and accountable financial management.

Actions
- Complete an unqualified annual independent financial audit.
- Provide financial audit and information on PARSA’s budget to the membership.
- Review PARSA’s procurement and other financial policies every two years.

Success measures
- Receive an unqualified annual financial audit.
- Spend our entire SSAF allocation each year, with a surplus no greater than 5%.
- Ensure the PARSA budget is available to members at all times.