



NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS (WA BRANCH)  
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NUS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE # 2 2009 – LUKE VILLIERS

**NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS (WA BRANCH) PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

***1. The 2009 WA State Branch***

***- NUS West Office-bearers***

The 2008 NUS West State Conference was held in December of 2008 at Murdoch University. The conference was hugely productive and set the agenda for the State Branch for 2009. The following students were elected office-bearers for 2009:

State President	Luke Villiers (UWA)
State General Secretary	Arun Ramdin (Curtin)
State Education & Welfare Officer	Emma Kingdon (Murdoch)
State Women's Officer	Approved Candidate: Nikki Graham (UWA)
State Queer Officers	Keegan Martens (UWA)
	Frankie Hipkins (UWA)
State Environment Officer	Joseph Magee (Murdoch)
State International Students Officer	TBA
State Small and Regional Officer	TBA
State Indigenous Students Officer	Braden Lee

The CCQN (Cross Campus Queer Network) met in late December and endorsed two students to fill the roles of State Queer Officers. The State Women's Committee was called, and nominations were opened. Only one candidate applied for the position, the aforementioned candidate was Nikki Graham. Accordingly, with nominations having been exhausted, we will simply need to convene a State Executive Meeting to confirm the decision. Similarly, at last State Executive, we were able to elect a State Indigenous Students Officer we is a really positive move for the WA State Branch as the position has been unfilled for the past two years. I am very excited about the State Branch for 2009 as we have a group of really passionate and enthusiastic activists who are committed to making 2009 a strong and active year for the State Branch of the Union. We have already had some positive results and I look forward to it continuing throughout 2009.

For those who are not aware, the WA campus presidents for 2009 are:

Murdoch University Guild President      Basha Stasak

Curtin Student Guild President  
UWA Student Guild President  
ECU Student Guild President

Chee Lai  
Dominic Rose  
Shane Cucow

### ***- The role of NUS West***

Traditionally, the WA State Branch has been hugely important for WA students and student guilds and has proven a really effective way of collectively organizing campaigns and projects. Both due to our relative isolation from National Office and other national student representative structures, and the damage to the WA student movement caused by the last bout of VSU, the State Branch has taken on much of the responsibility of promoting activism and cross-campus communication, as well as initiating specific projects to better the student condition in WA. The Cross Campus Education Network has always been a strong activist network, meeting regularly and running high profile campaigns, particularly during the HECS increases and anti-VSU campaigns. The autonomous departments of the State Branch, such as Queer and Environment, have always been strong and active. Overall, the State Branch has managed to operate in a consensual and cooperative manner, avoiding the factional gridlocks that some State Branches experience. I'm sure 2009 will be no exception to this and will be a hugely productive year for NUS West.

### ***- NUS West Contact Details***

For everyone's info, the new contact address for NUS West is:

NUS WA Branch  
Office 152 (second floor)  
UWA Student Guild (M300)  
35 Stirling Highway  
Crawley WA 6009

## ***2. Campus relations and engagement***

I have already been in contact with all the WA campus presidents and will make it a priority for 2007 to engage fully with all NUS affiliates, with regular campus visits and collective meetings.

As usual, the NUS West is planning to have a presence at all university Orientation Days and enrolment activities. As usual, we will endeavour to get a free stall space from the relevant Guild, but may require a small amount of funding for those Guilds which can not afford to give a fully subsidised stall space to NUS West. As some of the Guild Activities Officers are still on break, I have not been able to inquire as to whether NUS West is able to have a free space at all campuses. Recruitment at orientation and enrolment activities always proves absolutely critical to building a solid and committed group of activists for the year, and therefore I think it is really important that NUS West receive some funding in order to carry out successful recruitment drive.

We would also like to produce a small amount of badges and create a screen print for activists to screen print their own NUS West T-shirts to promote the State Branch and the 2007 campaign.

### **3. The Campaign for 2009**

I am genuinely excited about the campaign for 2009. Frankly, I think it is an amazing year to be involved in NUS as there are so many opportunities to affect social change and build our movement. We need to make sure that we use these opportunities wisely and ensure that at the end of the year, regardless of any election result, the student movement is strong and resilient.

#### **- Other priorities for the State Branch**

- *Strong engagement and communication with affiliate campuses*
  - Regular editions of the *NUS West Loud & Clear Newsletter*
  - Regular campus visits from all State office-bearers
  - Regular State Executive meetings
  - Re-engagement with the ECU Student Guild, after years of disengagement from NUS
  
- *Thorough and open discussion of Affiliations Fees with affiliates*
  - Regular dialogue with campus presidents throughout the year about the affiliation fee process
  - Thorough consultation with WA Guild Councils / Secretariats about the role of NUS and the importance of supporting the Union through affiliations fees
  
- *Prioritisation of building strong activist networks and collectives*
  - Increased participation of activists in the Cross-Campus Education Network (CCEN)
  - Assisting campus office-bearers to build strong activist campus-level collectives (eg. EAGs) at campuses who have struggled to mobilise students in the past
  - Better coordination between departmental activist collectives for the 2009 campaign, particularly the Cross-Campus Queer Network and the Cross-Campus Environment Collective
  
- *Engagement with the State Education and Shadow Education Minister*
  - Regular Engagement with the State Education Minister, Liz Constable
  - Regular engagement and communication with the Labour Shadow Education Minister, including discussion about the ALP's education policies
  
- *Focus on media attention and publicity of local issues*

- Building strong relationships with media outlets
- Better use of local / community papers to achieve positive media for NUS West campaigns
- Better use of stunt / creative actions to get media attention to campaign issues
  - o *Facilitation of knowledge and skill sharing during VSU*
- Facilitating ongoing cross-campus communication, with the ongoing initiative of the '4 Guilds Meetings'
- A comprehensive training day for campus office-bearers and activists on the importance of using union organising skills and recruitment strategies during voluntary membership (run through the CPSU/CSA)

#### **4. Campus, NUS, Government and NGO relations**

##### **- O'Days**

NUS West was represented at every campus O-Day, which I feel was an overwhelmingly positive experience. We attended the Murdoch South Street O-Day, ECU Joondalup, ECU Mt Lawley, Curtin, and UWA O-Days. Whilst at all O-Days, we not only promoted NUS and the National Campaign, but we also used this time to try and collect signatures for the Student Poverty and VSU petitions. We were very successful in our endeavors on all fronts, collecting almost 1000 signatures for the petition. We will now be returning these to the Federal Education Minister.

##### **- Campus Relations**

Outside of O-Day's, I have been in close contact with all the WA campus presidents and education reps continuously and have managed to meet with virtually all of the campus office-bearers at the O'Days and Guild Council / Secretariat meetings. I have also managed to visit all WA campuses a number of times and spend time with the office-bearers on each campus. Orientation activities were very successful with NUS West managing to recruit more new students to the *Demand a Better Future* campaign. I would like to thank all four WA Guilds for providing NUS West with free space and facilities for the O'Days, as well as the UnionsWA group. I also completed the first edition of the *NUS West Loud & Clear Newsletter* and managed to have this distributed across all campuses. We were also successful in having this article published in some of the Campus Student Newspaper Publications.

There have been a number of *Four Guilds Meetings* (with all four Guild Presidents and the NUS West President and Education & Welfare Officer) which have been quite productive and useful for all involved. The Four Guilds network is utilized for more official communications that we have with members of parliament outside of the CCEN meetings and more generalized planning for the year.

- ***NUS Relations***

I have continued to work closely and have been in close contact with the State Office-bearers, National Office-bearers and State Presidents. I would like to thank National Office for the amount of time it has invested in WA, with numerous National Office-Bearers having visited WA already in 2009. The following Officer-Bearers have been to WA: National President, National Education Officer, National General Secretary, National Welfare Officer, and National Women's Officer. I would like to thank all Officer-bearers for having also taken extensive time to liaise fully with all WA campuses along with the State Branch. Their help has been much appreciated, and establishes a strong argument for the value and support that NUS provides to campuses when it comes to the payment of Affiliation Fees.

- ***Governmental Relations***

NUS West recently met with the State Education Minister, Liz Constable, which was an interesting and relatively productive meeting. AS WA is currently the only state with a Liberal Government, the meetings that we have with Liz Constable may go some way to informing Liberal Policy at a national level should any other Labour Governments fall in the process of the many upcoming State elections. We attempted to raise as many varied education issues outside those of VSU and Income Support, as both issues are federal and any Liberal Government is almost certain to offer not support in either of these areas. We did, however, have very positive discussions concerning International Students and increasing support for Regional Campuses. We mentioned the 'one-stop shops' currently set up in NSW and Victoria as a way of drawing international students to Western Australia, argument which the Minister responded positively to. Indeed, any argument where you can fuse issues of education and business seems to be received receptively by the Minister.

- ***NGO Relations***

I have been in close contact with the Campaigns Coordinator and Secretary of UnionsWA regarding joint strategies and opportunities for collaboration this year. NUS West has been given the opportunity to participate in the *Civil Society Dialogue* initiative, started by UnionsWA, and comprising of trade unions, community welfare groups, environmental groups and ethnic affairs

and church groups. We have also been given the opportunity to access the UnionsWA collectivity power to try and mobilize more students and mobilize the union movement for the NDA. I spoke at a UnionsWA Council meeting the week before the NDA, which not only gave NUS a strong link and connection to the Unions Movement, but we were also able to mobilize the LHMU and the CPSU/CSA at the NDA. I will also be attending the Unions WA May Day Committee meeting and NUS will be building for a strong Youth and Student contingent at the May Day Festival.

## **5. Demand a Better Future campaign 2009**

### **- Campaign Organising Groups**

NUS West has had a number of well-attended and successful Cross-campus Education Network meetings, with a number of new activists getting involved in the *Demand a Better Future* campaign. We also held Activist Training days in the lead up to the NDA which were incredibly successful. We had about 20 Activists present from all Campuses across WA, which has assisted us in gaining access to new activists and improve relations between NUS and WA Guilds.

### **- Plans for May 2<sup>nd</sup> NDA**

The NDA in Perth was highly successful with an increased public presence and more students mobilised than in previous years. We met at 1pm outside Wesley Church, which is the Perth CBD and strategically located across from one of the main Perth malls, thus gaining us increased access to the Perth Public. We had approximately 100 students mobilised from all Campuses around WA, and a Union presence with the LHMU and CPSU/CSA attending the rally. The Deputy Opposition Leader, Roger Cook, Member for Kwinana, also came down at the start of the rally, which was positive to have some state government support. After the speak out featuring the National Women's Officer, myself, and a NTEU representative we then marched through the two main malls of Perth, stopping outside the main Centrelink offices in Perth for a further speak out.

### **- Media coverage**

I have released a number of press releases in past couple of months and have been regularly contacted by a number of media outlets for comment on various issues surrounding the *Demand a Better Future* campaign, including:

- *Nova FM* for comment on Deregulation and the NDA;
- *Curtin FM, ECU FM, RTR FM, Sunshine FM and Nova FM* for comment on student poverty and VSU related issues,;

- *Sunday Times* for comment on HECS prices; and
- *Triple J, Nova FM, Curtin FM, ECU FM, RTR FM, Sunshine FM, The West Australian, The West Australia News Section, and The Green Left Weekly* for comment on the NUS *Demand a Better Future* campaign and NDA

Looking forward to an awesome 2009,

Yours in solidarity,

**LUKE VILLIERS**

**NUS WEST PRESIDENT 2009**