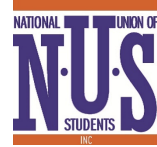


## **Report from the National Disabilities Officer:**

**Alison Taylor NX3**



**Alison Taylor**

**NUS National Disabilities Officer**

### **Report to the National Executive – 16 March 2015**

#### **SECTOR ENGAGEMENT**

I have started to organise meetings for the rest of the year with key people and organisations within the Disability sector. So far I have organised meetings with Headspace and am working out times and suitable places with NDS and Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) Inc.

I am also in discussions to meet with Shadow Minister for Families and Payments and Disability Reform, the Hon Jenny Macklin MP and the Shadow Minister for Mental Health, the Hon Jan McLucas before or just after the budget is released to discuss the opposition's position on funding for the disability and mental health sector to ensure students that funding to these sectors remain fair and adequate, and that no drastic and radical measures are passed through the Senate that will disadvantage students living with a Disability. The plan is to meet when I am in Canberra as to minimise any travel expenses for my department.

#### **CAMPAIGNS**

##### **Invisible Illness campaign:**

The posters that were run during O week had a lot of great feedback. It gave a lot of students the opportunity to talk freely about mental illness to disability office bearers, when there can sometimes be a bit of a stigma around mental illness at university.

Unfortunately, students and office bearers were not surprised at the rate of mental illness within the student body. With welfare payments being so low or at risk of being cut, the stress of assignments and pending exams, as well as the fear of the proposed Higher Education 'reforms', students are at a high risk of mental illness.

I will be working to produce more posters for this campaign as soon as possible.

#### **PROJECTS**

##### **Handbook:**

Handbook for office bearers is on track, and after speaking to office bearers when I visited them for O week and also on the phone they are looking forward to have some form of material to work out of, or at least to form ideas from.

The deadline for this project is by the end of Semester Two to ensure that the office bearers for 2016 are able to use it for the year ahead.

##### **Mental Health Survey**

I will be putting an email out this week to ask campus office bearers what they would like seen in this survey. I will also be asking students about mental health provisions on their campuses, such as counselling services and what their student union provides for students living with a disability.

The survey will be promoted widely, as the data collected will be released in the handbook and will also be useful for campaigns for the 2016 National Disabilities Officer.

### **O WEEK**

During the course of O weeks I was fortunate enough to visit Flinders, Adelaide, Swinburne, Monash Clayton and Melbourne.

All of these campuses were promoting the 'Demand a better future' campaign and were finding that students were more wary of fee deregulation than last year. The campuses were also using the posters from the disability department and were finding that the number of students signing up to their collectives was far more than they expected.

### **NATIONAL DISABILITIES LINK UP**

The National Disabilities Link Up went extremely well. Disability, Equity and Welfare officers were all invited to join the link up, and we ended up with 8 office bearers on Skype at the time.

The minutes will be released soon, but the group has given me a few tasks and questions to answer by the next meeting which will be in May as they are by-monthly.

We also discussed accessibility with the upcoming National Day of Action. Most States have been working with their main organiser and have said that they protest, besides the noise, will be accessible to students. There were some problems raised, and I am currently working with the office bearers who raised the issues to see what we can work out for March 25.