

Empowering student voices in international education: a collective effort

Wednesday 5 March 2025

Law Lounge Room 113, Level 1, New Law Building (F10)
University of Sydney

About the symposium

Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) is hosting a free, one-day symposium dedicated to strengthening student voices in the development and implementation of tertiary education policies in Australia. The event is supported by the University of Sydney, the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), and the NSW International Student Representative Committee (NSW ISRC).

In recent years, policy debates and changes in the international education sector have significantly impacted students. However, the absence of student voices in these discussions has led to misunderstandings, resource misallocation, and ineffective policies. This symposium aims to bridge that gap by amplifying student perspectives and fostering collaboration among key stakeholders committed to improving the student experience and the quality of tertiary education in Australia. The event will bring together student leaders from across Australia – both international and domestic – along with representatives from student unions, peak bodies, government offices, industry, and academia.

Program

08:45	Registration and pre-event networking
09:10	Acknowledgment of Country
09:15	Welcome and opening remarks Professor Mark Scott AO, Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Sydney
09:25	Keynote address Phil Honeywood, Chief Executive, International Education Association of Australia
09:55	Launch of the National International Student Voice Campaign Weihong Liang, International Student Officer, Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations
10:00	Morning tea



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Program continued

<p>10:30</p>	<p>Student leader roundtable: Enhancing student representation and supporting international students</p> <p>This session will provide a platform for student leaders to share experiences, success stories, and challenges. The discussion will explore concrete proposals for establishing a national international student institution.</p> <p>Student leaders:</p> <p>Merlin Wang: President and council member, YouX, University of Adelaide Jin Zhao: former President, WUPA, University of Wollongong Sunil Rai: NSW Student Representative, Central Queensland University Anuvinda Sreenivas: Vice President, PGC, UNSW Shirley Zhang: Board Director, USU, University of Sydney Vivian Bai: President, SUPRA, University of Sydney Angus Fisher: President, SRC, University of Sydney Bryson Constable: President, USU, University of Sydney Bhargav Choudhari: Council member, UTS Council, University of Technology Sydney Anumanth Ram: Board Director, CAPA, former International Student Officer, MGA, Monash University.</p>
<p>Midday</p>	<p>Lunch</p> <p>Light lunch and beverages will be provided for participants and guest speakers.</p>
<p>13:00</p>	<p>Panel discussion: From representation to impact – strengthening student voices in international education</p> <p>This session will focus on practical solutions to strengthen student representation and influence in international education policy. It will explore strategies to establish sustainable student representation mechanisms that: ensure continuity and impact; ensure meaningful consultation where student voices drive tangible change in decision-making; integrate student feedback into education quality assessment to enhance learning outcomes; and foster collaboration between student organisations and key stakeholders to advance structural and policy reforms that benefit students.</p> <p>Staff and student panelists:</p> <p>Ada Choi (moderator): PGC President, PhD Candidate, UNSW Sarah Bendall: First Assistant Ombudsman, National Student Ombudsman (NSO) Cate Gilpin: Coordinator, Welcoming Universities Professor Gaby Ramia: Professor of Policy and Society, University of Sydney Vanessa Lapthorne: Assistant Secretary, Engagement Branch, International Division, Department of Education Jesse Gardner Russell: CAPA President, PhD candidate, University of Melbourne Richard Lee: APS Board Chair, Global Change Scholar, PhD candidate, University of Queensland Weihong Liang: Chair, NSW ISRC, PhD candidate, University of Sydney.</p>
<p>15:00</p>	<p>Networking</p> <p>Venue: Courtyard Café, Holme Building, University of Sydney</p> <p>This session provides an opportunity for participants to engage in meaningful discussions, build connections, and explore collaborative opportunities with fellow attendees.</p>

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