



Annual Report 2008-2009

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Acknowledgement of Country

SUPRA acknowledges the traditional owners of this land, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation and we pay our respects to them and their elders, past, present and future.

If you are reading this publication you are standing on Aboriginal Land.



Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association

SUPRA is the postgraduate student organisation at The University of Sydney and is run by postgrads for postgrads. SUPRA represents all postgraduates at Sydney University, and all postgraduates can look to SUPRA for assistance with any issues that may confront them - both academically and personally - during the course of their candidature.



The University of Sydney

Our operational costs, space and administrative support are financed by the University of Sydney.

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Presidents' Report

Rashmi Kumar (from October 2008)

This Council term has been marked by a spirit of consolidating and reviewing major changes of the past few years. We have caught the end of some major review processes initiated by the Rudd government, and been particularly active around reviews of research and higher education issues. Reviews and changes at the federal level have been mirrored in our own University, with the incumbent Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Michael Spence, initiating a number of reviews and new projects within the University which also have major implications for students.

Personally, I have scaled a steep learning curve, taking over the presidency from Sam Greenland and Lulu Stewart in October 2008. Many of the new functions that SUPRA took on in previous years had to be managed or reworked to improve the efficiency with which we execute our operations, so in many ways SUPRA was also mirroring the review processes going on at the national level.

The most significant review is obviously the report of the Bradley Review of Higher Education, which recommended a number of very significant changes to higher education. SUPRA followed up our submission with in-person consultation for Bradley, and the House of Representatives Research and Innovation inquiry, in August 2008. We were very happy to note that some key recommendations regarding postgraduate students were taken up in the report, particularly for increasing the rate of the APA and for extending Austudy and Youth Allowance eligibility for postgraduate coursework students. These recommendations were ultimately adopted by the government in its 2009 Budget with some significant modifications: the APA was increased by half the recommended amount (by less than \$50 per week), and masters students' eligibility for income support doesn't come into effect until 2012.



Yet the recognition of the unmet needs that students have been pressuring the government over for years was clear in this budget measure, and a real win for SUPRA.

The other major review of significance to SUPRA was that of Voluntary Student Unionism, which Minister for Youth and Sport Kate Ellis began in 2008. The draft guidelines and measures have been announced, and the parliament will shortly make a decision on the form which the new student amenities support measures will take.

SUPRA made significant input into this review process, although many of the recommendations we made were not taken up. We must thank the Chancellor, Dr. Marie Bashir, Vice-Chancellor Dr. Michael Spence, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Professor Derrick Armstrong, Dr. Margaret Edmond, and Simon Malcolm for their ongoing support throughout the year and their agreement to begin discussing and consulting with us regarding the future of student amenities and organisations at Sydney University even before a decision has been taken in the Federal parliament regarding the proposed Services and Amenities Fee.

Students at many other universities are not so lucky, which is something that was noted strongly at the 2008 Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) Annual Council Meeting, at which SUPRA was strongly represented. SUPRA has been involved in discussion with CAPA about

how SUPRA can support students at universities where student organisations have been dismantled or decimated, as many postgraduate organisations look to SUPRA as a model for successful resourcing and organisation in a post-VSU context. We will be working with CAPA to put together resources for other student organisations to improve and set up their own representative and advocacy facilities.

SUPRA has been reviewing its own structure and attempting to secure resources to set up student representative networks according to the best practice in student organisations nationally. Unfortunately we have not received the funding we requested to begin this initiative. This has prompted more reflection on our internal structure and requirements as we attempt to improve efficiency of both our staff and Council.

The internal review process was also made necessary by losing half our Student Advice and Advocacy Officer (SAAO) team in the first half of the year. Two resignations co-incided, and required an inward focus as we reorganised the distribution of work amongst ourselves. We have hired two new SAAOs who we are very excited to be working with.

As a result of the Strategic Planning Days we had over the summer - initiated by this year's Council - SUPRA has also reviewed the structure of its staffing, and I am proud to report that we have made some significant changes to both our SAAO team and our Admin team. Proudly, as the only student organisation who has expanded our services under VSU, we will begin the next semester with a new staff member to co-ordinate the additional publications we have taken on, and extra administrative support for our fantastic admin team.

SUPRA has also been grappling with the change in leadership at the University, particularly with the restructure to the Senior Executive Group (SEG) that the new Vice-Chancellor has initiated. SUPRA is grateful to have been included in many of the consultations regarding the changes, particularly in significant subcommittees of the SEG - the Education and Research Training Committees -

and in projects on the Work Slate which would have significant implications for students. The next few years promise to be interesting as these initiatives show results.

We understand that this process has been hard work for many within the University, and would like to express our appreciation to Professor Armstrong, Dr. Edmond, and Mr. Malcolm for their assistance to us this year, as well as to Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (External Relations) Professor Andrew Coats, and Ms. Marian Theobald, and Ms. Deborah Lambourne from the External Relations portfolio who were previously dealing with student organisations.

SUPRA is also keen to make its views known through the Academic Board, and amongst the Council we actively participate in a number of the standing committees of the Board including the Research and Research Training Committee, the Graduate Studies Committee, the Learning and Teaching Committee, and the Assessment Working Party. We have also made significant contributions to the Review of the PhD and the Academic Board.

We have had significant input into the revision of assessment policy in 2008-09, including into Special Consideration policy, the marking of group work, and the principles for re-marking. SUPRA is also very interested in the upcoming review of the Identifying and Supporting Students At Risk policy.

Not all our focus has been inward, however. With the encouragement of student organisations in Melbourne, SUPRA has begun to re-invigorate the campaign for international students' transport concessions. We have re-formed the Cross-Campus Concessions Coalition along with students from the University of Newcastle and UNSW, and will shortly launch a petition campaign.

This is on top of our regular events, such as the CONNECT conference in September 2008, and Postgrad Week in April 2009.

Here is a list of the major decisions taken and achievements of SUPRA in 2008-09:

Management

- Hired 2 new SAAOs to replace outgoing SAAOs
- Reviewed staffing structure through the Workplace Consultative Committee
- Approved changes to the SAAO team and Administration team which will improve co-ordination and new areas of activity
- Approved creation of a Publications Officer position to co-ordinate and produce publications
- Piloted an external campus SAAO outreach services to provide advocacy to the Cumberland, SCA, Conservatorium and Nursing campuses
- Have begun to redesign the SUPRA website
- Produced a new publication – the *Child Care Handbook* – with information regarding childcare facilities on and off campus
- Organised the CONNECT 2008 conference for postgrads
- O-week and Postgrad Week 2009, which brought together significant numbers of postgrads at our social events

Committee Attendance

- Academic Board
- Learning and Teaching
- Research and Research Training
- Graduate Studies
- Assessment Working Party
- Working Party to Review the Policy 'Identifying and Supporting Students at Risk'
- Working Party to Review online learning and distance course delivery
- Equity Advisory Committee
- Child Care Co-ordinating Committee
- Indigenous Education Advisory Committee
- Disability Consultative Committee
- Rural Focus Group
- Consultative Group on the Student Experience
- Senate/Student Associations Liaison Committee
- Management/Student Associations Liaison Committee
- SEG Education Committee
- SEG Research Training Committee

- International Task Force
- Academic Staffing Working Group 4 – Strategies to encourage the employment of PhD Students
- Emissions Reduction Working Party
- Pre-Senate with Vice-Chancellor

Campaigns

- Childcare
- International students transport concessions
- Student income support

Reviews – Federal Government

- Bradley Review of Higher Education
- Student Services and Amenities Fee consultation process
- Senate review of Child Care Services

Reviews – University of Sydney

- Future Student Administration Program
- Academic Board
- Definition of a Student
- Identifying and Supporting 'Students At Risk' policy
- Review of PhD
- NSW Ministerial Task Force on International Education

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 2008-09 Council for all your hard work and dedication. SUPRA would not be here without you. We hope to have a robust induction process in place by the time the 2009-10 Council begins its Term of Office, so I would also like to wish the next Council the best of luck in all your efforts.

I would also like to thank all our wonderful staff, without whom SUPRA would not be able to provide the high quality of functions and services we do. The dedication, hard work, and quality of our staff is unparalleled, and we are very proud to have our staff supporting us as postgrads at Sydney University.

I would also like to thank all the students who have supported SUPRA throughout the year. Without you we wouldn't exist!

Vice-President's Report

Nicholas Wilson



On the surface 2008/2009 has been a quiet year for SUPRA, however under the surface a lot has changed. It has been my privilege to serve, along with Nelson Yin, as SUPRA's Vice-President during this period of change.

At the beginning of the year Nelson and I took over from Lulu Stewart as Vice-President. A daunting task given the superlative job Ms Stewart had done as Vice-President. Indeed, she did such a good job that she became Co-President! Thank you Lulu, for setting us such an example to aspire too.

Over the year a number of changes have occurred in the role of Vice-President. The change of presidency from Sam and Lulu to Rashmi Kumar inevitably meant that there were fewer people to cope with an ever increasing work load. This has lead to an increase of the amount of administrative duties that the Vice-President had to fulfill. As such, most of my time as Vice-President has been filled with meetings, meetings and more meetings, at the expense of the more social tasks such as barbeque's, hopefully something my successor can rectify!

While meetings have taken up most of my time, they were not without their benefits. Notable successes are the email working party, where SUPRA has worked very closely with the University to deliver a new and improved Email system for all students. This system will be rolling out over the next couple of months so by the time you read this you should be using your new email account! The other notable and ongoing project that I have been working on are changes to the University's Special Consideration policy. While this is an ongoing process, the overall result should be a fairer, easier and universal system for special consideration. Overall I like to think that

the finitely countable meetings that I attended on SUPRA's behalf, have at least prepared the ground for future Councils to continue building students rights.

Once again SUPRA organised another CONNECT conference for postgraduate students in September 2008. Thanks to the valiant work of Amanda, Anne and Claire in organising the conference it was a great success, with a record number of people attending, presenting and consuming the wonderful food.

I would like to thank all the SAAO's for the incredible effort that they put into making sure that I attended every meeting informed and prepared. Lastly, to all the councillors and students that make SUPRA what it is, thank you.

Treasurer's Report

Lulu Stewart (since March 2009)

The Treasurer's position has been held during the past Council term mainly by Richard Keep and Tahrir Chowdhury and a very special thank you to them both for doing such a great job. The past year has seen the continuation of VSU, which has meant that SUPRA has had to remain dependent on University funding to survive. The revenue during 2008 was \$823,017, up 25% from 2007. This was mainly attributable to an increase in University funding from \$636,000 to \$794,000. Expenses for the year totalled \$669,794. The University has agreed that we can continue to maintain a reserve and in 2008 this was \$121,521. Full details of the audited accounts can be found in Part Two of the Annual Report. SUPRA would like to maintain financial strength and encourage more SUPRA supporters throughout 2009.

Secretary's Report

Lian Jenvey

Although the Secretary's job largely comprises minute taking and filing of one sort or another I'm happy to say that I have been involved in a number of SUPRA sponsored campaigns over the last year.

SUPRA has been at the forefront in taking up important political issues over the last year. This reflects SUPRA's ongoing commitment to social justice a vital prerequisite of any dynamic student organisation.

For example: the start of 2009 was punctuated by Israel's vicious assault on Gaza. SUPRA played an important role, politically supporting the campaign and helping to distribute thousands of leaflets and posters.

SUPRA's support for Palestine continued with its support of the new activist group "Students for Palestine".



A big thank you to all of the staff, office-bearers and Councillors who contribute to SUPRA. Thank you in particular to John Fell, our Finance Manager, who has been with SUPRA for many years and ensures that we have correct accounts and financial management. Let's hope that we have many years ahead in which we have strong financial support to enable us to continue to grow and provide our services to increasing numbers of postgraduate students.



SUPRA's support of this campaign has been vital as many student organisations under the leadership of the Labor students have refused to support pro-Palestine events and initiatives.

SUPRA will continue to play a vital role standing up for student rights and resisting the right wing agenda of the federal ALP government. Thanks to the staff and 2008-09 councillors who have helped SUPRA organise this vital resistance.

Thanks also to my comrades in Socialist Alternative for their ongoing enthusiasm to change the world.

Women's Officer Report

Rashmi Kumar

So far this year a number of projects and plans have been set in motion that will deeply affect the lives of women in Australia, and at the University of Sydney. SUPRA has been involved in many of the fields that these projects cover, and has come up with an array of women-focused initiatives.

Firstly, the report of Universities Australia, *Gender Differences in Early post-PhD Employment in Australian Universities: The Influence of the PhD Experience on Women's Academic Careers*, was released in mid-2008, revealing stark gender differences in the experience of PhD students. It revealed that female PhD students felt a lack of encouragement to publish and present papers, had a number of difficulties with supervision, as well as being less likely than men to be undertaking research or to be employed full-time. SUPRA responded to this report by lobbying the University to take more action in support of female research students. The University set up its Women in Science program, and SUPRA has been monitoring the efforts of the University on this matter since.

SUPRA has also been very active around issues of childcare. Participating in the Child Care Co-ordinating Committee, SUPRA has consistently advocated for the University to provide child care according to the needs of students, as our 2006 Child Care Survey indicated.

I also finalised and produced the *Child Care Handbook*, and organised a launch, which was attended by a number of student parents. This handbook contains a wealth of information about the provision of childcare on campus, government benefits, off-campus childcare providers, tips for parents, and specific resources for international students. We are very proud of this long-term project finally coming to fruition.

I have also taken a keen interest in working against

gendered violence. I have actively promoted Thursdays In Black, an international awareness-raising campaign opposing violence against women, by supporting the SRC Women's Collective in producing T-shirts and other material relating to Thursdays In Black.

I also took part in the organising of Reclaim the Night, an annual rally and march that takes place all over the world, to oppose gendered violence, particularly sexual violence. This year's Reclaim the Night rally was particularly successful, with some 250 attendees, wonderful speakers and performers. SUPRA assisted with producing posters and leaflets, and with travel costs for speakers.

SUPRA was also active around reproductive rights. Last September Federal Senator Guy Barnett was set to move a bill to strike Medicare item 16525 from the Medicare register, which would cover medical practitioners providing services in the second and third trimester of pregnancy, which would include intra-uterine foetal death and life-threatening maternal disease. Many women's groups, including Reproductive Choice Australia and Women's Health Victoria were opposed to this motion. SUPRA assisted with producing materials for the campaign against the motion, before it was essentially deferred indefinitely to a Senate committee.

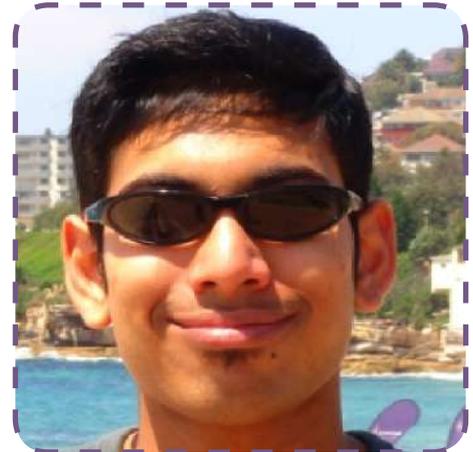
It may be the case that, like in Victoria, women's groups will begin to push for abortion to be decriminalised in NSW, and SUPRA is committed to supporting this campaign.

SUPRA also assisted with International Women's Day, by supporting the Sydney International Women's Day Collective in producing materials, and donating funds towards a banner. We had our own International Women's Day film screening, of a film about women around the work and their actions combating climate change.

SUPRA has been quite active around women's issues this year, thanks to many of the staff and Councillors. Here's hoping for another strongly feminist year!

International Officer's Report

Tahrid Chowdhury (until March 2009)



1) On campus involvement - This included encouraging postgraduates to join SUPRA. This involved publicising events such as the migration seminars by poster and leafletting in various areas and faculties of Sydney Uni and encouraging them in my lectures to attend them. I organised 2 migration seminars during 2nd Semester 2008. The 1st seminar was held on the 3rd week of lectures and was attended by 60 people. The second seminar held towards the end of the semester was attended by 32 people which was a success given the busy schedule of students.

2) My role involved liaising with representatives from other universities to work together in various areas. I felt getting strong support from CAPA would raise more awareness of postgraduate issues. Inviting the CAPA international student officer (ISO), Marion Baillat during my term to the SUPRA Connect conference helped to raise issues faced by international students such as accommodation, harassment by landlords and welfare of students' spouses/partners. Working with the CAPA ISO helped me establish strong ties with CAPA.

3) I attended several meeting and conferences outside campus. One of them was the the Anti Racism conference 'Culture Jam' where we discussed how do avoid discrimination on campuses between genders, different ethnicities and religious groups. But most importantly I attended the CAPA conference at Melbourne University where student representatives from various universities over Australia met. A discussion was raised regarding the transport concession issues with representatives from Melbourne and how to develop a model to show international students contribution in NSW and Victoria. I met Eric Pang, the president of

National Liaison Conference (NLC) were he raised the idea of introducing a social security card for international students.

4) I tried to involve TAFE as a part of CAPA. I met TAFE representative Karol Lansang and discussed the possibilities of TAFE being involved in our meetings and introduced her to the CAPA ISO. Karol also created a petition for transport concessions which I then encouraged SUPRA to publish on campus. The petition was then advertised in *Honi Soit*, on the SUPRA website and also emailed to members of SUPRA via *eGrad*.

Queer Officer's Report

Peter Stephens

The year opened with a blast as I travelled to Melbourne with 3 other SUPRA office bearers for the amazing Queer Collaborations Conference. We met up with some of the most amazing queer activists in the country - including activists from the 70s Pink Bans era. Conference sessions covered an amazing variety of issues: from Union solidarity with the 'Gay Rights' movement of the 70s, to VSU, Same Sex Marriage, anti-violence projects, the life of Oscar Wilde, and even a session on working as a pole dancer! At QC, the opportunities to network with queer social and political activists and thinkers from campuses all over the country (and beyond) is simply unmatched.

An important ongoing theme throughout the year has been (and will continue to be) the issue of Same Sex Marriage. SUPRA subscribers and readers of the SUPRA Pages in *Honi Soit* will be aware that SUPRA has long demanded the Rudd government honour its pre-election commitment to end the ongoing 'legal discrimination' against people in same-sex relationships. I wrote a double page article in July 08 calling for the Rudd Government to honour its obligation to recognise Same Sex marriage, and confer the same rights to partners in same-sex relationships as in heterosexual unions. HREOC had identified 98 Federal Statutes that breached Australia's Human Rights obligations - and our own Anti Discrimination laws in this area! In my follow-up 'Winds of Change?' feature in the special September Queer Edition of *Honi*, I was able to report the introduction of the Same-Sex Entitlements Bill (Cth), - which removed discrimination in 68 Commonwealth laws involving 19 Government departments (taxation, social security, Medicare, educational assistance, immigration, veterans affairs and aged care) - not



only against Same Sex partners themselves, but also their families and kids. Nevertheless the key issue for many remains unresolved: for same sex couples across Australia, marriage and civil unions remains unrecognised. And yet 71% of voters agree,¹ it's the right thing to do.

The introduction of regular Queer Film Nights last October has been a great success. In recent weeks we've screened titles such as 'The Life and Times of Harvey Milk' and 'The History of Sydney's Mardi Gras' - to pretty packed rooms! Watch out for our next installment 'The Secret History of Queer Australia' ... just as soon as we can locate a working copy! Film nights are advertised in *Honi Soit* (in the SUPRA Pages) and through The SUPRA 'Queer List'. Why don't you come on down?

It's been a real honour and a pleasure serving as SUPRA Queer Officer throughout 2008-2009. But very little of our work would be possible without our great admin and SAAO staff. I'd especially like to thank Anne Coates for all her support and organisational work.

¹ '71% of Australians agree that same-sex partners should have the same legal rights as de facto heterosexual couples' (Galaxy poll cited in GET UP! Press Release, 21 June 2007).

Report on Indigenous Issues



Due to the position of Indigenous Officer being vacant for 2008-09, this report has been prepared by the president and one of the Student Advice and Advocacy Officers. Despite the absence of an Indigenous Officer, SUPRA has continued to be active on Indigenous issues and has not lost focus on the needs of Indigenous students.

Despite the absence of an Indigenous officer, SUPRA has been active around Indigenous student issues in the past year, taking part in the University's Indigenous Education Review, supporting the campaign to end the Northern Territory Intervention, and lobbying the University to proceed with its plans for Indigenous signage on the Camperdown-Darlington campus.

The Indigenous Education review is being conducted by the University and will shortly (at the time of writing) hand down its final report. This review was initiated in response to a list of recommendations coming out of the National Union of Students' National Indigenous Student Conference in July 2008. SUPRA has been active in attempting to promote the interests of Indigenous postgraduate students through this review. Amongst our contributions to the review, we encouraged the development of equity scholarships, called for improvements to administration of the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme, encouraged embedded training of Aboriginal issues in cultural awareness training, called for the active hiring of Aboriginal people to senior positions, and asked for the establishment of an independent committee to review best practice for increasing postgraduate participation and research opportunities.

SUPRA has also consistently supported the campaign, led by Indigenous people from the Northern Territory, to end the Northern Territory Intervention (Northern Territory Emergency

Response, or NTER). In early 2008, the SUPRA Council passed a policy motion to oppose the Intervention, on the grounds that it involves racial discrimination against Aboriginal people, a punitive welfare 'quarantining' system, and coercive compulsory 'leasing' of Aboriginal lands by the Federal government.

SUPRA invited a speaker from the Aboriginal Rights Coalition to speak at a joint discussion group with the SRC Women's Collective, and is currently supporting a petition put together by the Anti-Racism Collective in opposition to the restrictions on student income support and bilingual education resulting from the NTER. SUPRA, in consultation with the National Indigenous Postgraduate Association Aboriginal Corporation (NIPAAC), was also heavily involved in lobbying the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) to oppose the Intervention. SUPRA was also a strong supporter of the National Convergence on Canberra, where scores of Indigenous people from around the country gathered to share experiences, ideas, and to plan ahead for the campaign to end the Intervention.

In 2000, SUPRA raised the issue of a lack of signage indicating the traditional landowners of the sites on which University campuses are built. Although some acknowledgement of the Indigenous ownership of this land is made on the University's web site, no physical markers exist. At long last, the University Senate has approved a location for the sign, and will be proceeding with installing it on the Camperdown-Darlington campus once a design is finalised and approved by the Koori Centre.

Activities Committee Convenor Report

Nicholas Irving and Jason Judge (from April 2009)

The Activities Committee has had a busy year organising SUPRA events. As the current co-Convenors we look forward to continuing planning and organising events in 2009. The Activities Committee will meet regularly to ensure that events are held continuously in order to connect with SUPRA members, as well as raising the awareness of SUPRA amongst the entire post-graduate student body. It is the Committee's aim to reach out to all post-grads and attract as many new members as possible.

In the lead up to the next Council the Committee aims to organise social events as well as seminars and meetings that will address issues relating to all post-grad students. As the Activities Committee is once again up and running we plan to have at least one more large scale event before the end of semester, laying a foundation for the next Committee for the rest of the year.

A number of successful events were held over the last year, providing opportunities for SUPRA to reach out to the post-grad population. O Week was a great start to the year, with the SUPRA stall in a prime position on the front lawn to attract new subscribers. We had an opening BBQ which attracted some 80 postgrads, and we gave away a number of items we collected in last year's Food

Drive to raise awareness of student poverty. We also had a postgrad cocktail party, which also attracted over 60 students, that was co-organised with USU. We are looking forward to collaborating with them more this year as they look to expand their service provision to postgraduate students.

We opened our series of Immigration Seminars in O-week as well, and we have been supporting international students with these through the semester, with approximately one seminar per month.

On April 3rd, a Queer film night was held in the SUPRA resource room. "The Life and Times of Harvey Milk" was screened and a considerable number of queer and queer-friendly students attended. Quite a few international students came to meet and greet which was wonderful to see. The evening provided a valuable opportunity for students to socialise and network and due to its success a second film night has been scheduled for May 15th. The film night was organised and attended by Peter Stephens, Heidi Claus, Rashmi Kumar.

SUPRA's annual festival of all things Postgraduate – Postgrad Week – was held this year from the 20th to the 24th of April. Considering the relatively



Activities Committee Convenor Report continued

short lead time that the Activities Committee had, it went off quite well. We kicked off the festivities with a Barbeque that was quite well attended, despite the cantankerous weather – wind and a smattering of rain didn't seem to dent people's enthusiasm for sausages.

From Tuesday through to Friday, we put on a series of events aimed at fostering an understanding of rights and resources amongst different sections of the Postgrad population. Tuesday we put on a seminar at which the SAAOs spoke to students about Tenancy and their role and availability. Wednesday we brought a number of speakers together to talk about student rights at work, especially with regards to international students and exploitative work contracts. On Thursday we launched the SUPRA *Child Care Handbook* with an afternoon tea. On Friday we brought Aristotle Paipetis, a solicitor specialising in immigration in to talk about pathways to Permant Residency. This

latter event was the best-attended of the week's information events.

We wrapped up Postgrad Week with a party in the Withdrawing Room, catered by the Union. It was reasonably well-attended, and provided a relaxing end to the week. As relative latecomers to this Council, we have a number of people to thank for Postgrad Week. Firstly, to the planning meeting, which laid down the program for us. We came onto the Activities Committee at a late hour, and having a framework to work towards was incredibly helpful. Thanks also to the staff, especially Anne and Claire, for ordering food, helping with set-up and cleanup, publicity and promotional material.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the people who served as an interim Activities committee – Rashmi Kumar, Rosemary Whitecross, Chihong Choi, Richard Keep, Nelson Yin and Tahrid Chowdhury.

Publications Committee Convenor Report

Cipi Morgan



Over the year we have produced material for campaign around the issues of same-sex marriage rights, anti-war organising, International Women's Day, ending the Northern Territory Intervention and ending the siege on Gaza. SUPRA has been supportive of the cross-campus group Students For Palestine, and we have produced several thousand posters and leaflets for their events. SUPRA has also produced leaflets and booklets for post-graduate students including *The Survival Manual*. SUPRA's post-graduate pages in *Honi Soit* have been filled with articles regarding student life, academic issues and campaign reports.

Campaigns and Policy Officer's Report

Heidi Claus

As a political activist, my emphasis for the committee this year has been unashamedly on the campaigns side of this portfolio, and there have been many campaigns that SUPRA has proudly supported and participated in. These included Queer rights, Aboriginal rights, Student Poverty, VSU and the war on Gaza. SUPRA took part in Sydney's Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras, Sydney University's Pride week, Students4Palestine Palestine Solidarity and Al Nakba Weeks, Orientation Week and more. It's been great to see more and more postgrad students getting involved in these events and campaigns, standing up for their rights and getting involved in their union.

On the policy side, SUPRA made a submission to the Bradley Review into Higher Education, and had many of our recommendations taken up in the final Building Australia's Research capacity report. We also made a submission to Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities, and Other Measures) Bill 2009, and we're all waiting to see what joy the Rudd Government brings down on students with that one.

In all these areas of course, there is still much to be done, and with the growing economic crisis bearing down on students, the need for a strong, independent, fighting student union prepared to stand up to the Rudd Government, and stand on the side of all oppressed people be they students today, tomorrow or yesterday, has never been more dire. So in the final weeks of this term, the policy committee will be planning a serious upgrade of SUPRA's membership and recruitment policy.



We can't finalise a recruitment policy until we know which way the government and then the university will jump on this new compulsory student fee, and whether student organisations will get any autonomous say over its use (which seems unlikely). What we can say is that SUPRA urgently needs to secure independent funding to ensure we can stand up for students in the face of the further de-regulation of universities indicated by Julia Gillard.

De-regulation of universities will see burgeoning class sizes, the cancellation of less "popular" courses like women's studies, classics, gender studies, and rising student poverty and debt as universities get the green light to charge whatever they like for courses. So if you've been thinking you'd like to get involved with your union, now is the time to not just subscribe to SUPRA, now is the time to become a supporter and an active member of your student union, and take up the challenge to maintain student control of student affairs, so we can truly stand up for all students into the future.

Policy and Liaison Officer Report

Katherine Barnsley

This year I have been working in a new role, the Policy and Liaison Officer, which was designed specifically to take maximum advantage of my experience as a former SUPRA president. Primarily this position consisted of my taking responsibility for authoring SUPRA's two major governmental submissions, the Bradley Review and the Review into the amendments to the Higher Education Support Act. I have also attended some committee meetings, the Senate Student Associations Liaison Committee and a working party looking at improving teaching opportunities for postgraduate students within the University. I was fortunate enough to be re-elected as the Vice President (Equity) for the peak body representing Postgraduate students, the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations and in that capacity I have liaised with SUPRA Council and attended both the inaugural Universities Australia Conference and the DEEWR budget briefing this year.

It is with no small amount of sadness that I made the difficult decision not to run for Council again for 2009/2010. I am very proud to have been associated with SUPRA and I am always astonished at how much we achieve. The dedication of the many councillors I have served with over my time at SUPRA is an inspiration. I wish especially to acknowledge the contribution of the current president, Rashmi Kumar, who stepped into the breach and has done a commendable job in a position I know can be difficult and sometimes trying. It has been a pleasure to work with Lian Jenvey and Rosemary Whitecross who have been there from the beginning of the SUPRA renaissance and who never seem to flag in their enthusiasm and commitment. I would also like to thank past president Jenny Leong for the invaluable work she did reinvigorating the organisation in especially difficult circumstances. Lastly my thanks go to my former colleague, Jack Clegg.



A special word of appreciation must go to the staff, who work tirelessly for students and for Council. Anne Coates is the heart of the office, without her our jobs representing students would be so much more difficult, we are very lucky to have her. Claire Pettigrew is a vital support for Anne, and for us, and I am glad we have her as a part of the team. The SAAO team, particularly Adrian Cardinali and Marg Kirkby and past SAAOs David McKenzie, Ann Turner and Patricia Quinn, who unfailingly work for students' empowerment and success in the face of an often baffling and sometimes hostile bureaucracy and who support Council in myriad and untold ways. We have two new SAAOs, Penny Huisman and Caroline Vu, who I know will continue the tradition of staunch and vigorous student advocacy.

SUPRA is an organisation that is crucial to students at the University of Sydney. That it exists and that we continue to do important work and achieve great results for students, albeit never as many nor as often as we would like, is a testament to the students who run this Association and the students who support it. We must never forget that there is strength in numbers, that together we are powerful after all, students united will never be defeated!

SUPRA Council as at 31 May 2009

Rashmi Kumar	President & Womens Officer
Nicholas Wilson	Vice President
Lian Jenvey	Secretary
Lulu Stewart	Acting Treasurer
Peter Stephens	Queer Officer
Heidi Claus	Policy and Campaigns Convenor
Cipi Morgan	Publications Convenor
Nicholas Irving	Co-Activities Convenor
Jason Judge	Co-Activities Convenor
Katherine Barnsley	Policy and Liaison Officer

Chihong Choi
 Sam Greenland
 Xiao Lin
 Paolo Mazzi
 Nichollas Scott
 Dora Son
 Jing Wen
 Rosemary Whitecross
 Jiajia Zhang

Councillors for part of the year

Tahrid Chowdhury
 Thomas Huang
 Sishir Kumar Kamalpuram
 Richard Keep
 Ais Quraisy
 Yunnan Tang
 Thomas van Dantzig
 Nelson Yin

SUPRA Staff

Adrian Cardinali	Student Advice and Advocacy Officer
Margaret Kirkby	Student Advice and Advocacy Officer
Penny Huisman	Student Advice and Advocacy Officer
Caroline Vu	Student Advice and Advocacy Officer
Anne Coates	Administration and Communication Officer
Claire Pettigrew	Administration Assistant
John Fell	Finance Manager
Ingrid van Togeren	Redfern Legal Centre Solicitor
David McKenzie (until March 2009)	Student Advice and Advocacy Officer
Patricia Quinn (until Dec 2008)	Student Advice and Advocacy Officer
Ann Turner (until April 2009)	Student Advice and Advocacy Officer

Student Advice and Advocacy Officer (SAAO) Report

Adrian Cardinali and Margaret Kirkby

In 2008 the Student Advice and Advocacy Officer (SAAO) team provided direct casework to students, support for SUPRA student representatives in their work on committees and in policy and campaign work, and updated and extended SUPRA's range of publications that provide advice to postgraduate students. We also participated in a wide range of activities both on and off main campus in order to extend our independent, professional, free, and confidential casework advice, advocacy and referral services to as many postgraduates as possible.

In terms of individual casework support SAAOs assisted in excess of 400 students in 2008 with many returning for several case issues through the year. At this stage (unfinalised) statistics tell us the primary issue in 60 cases was an academic appeal, 37 research supervision cases, 36 complaints about enrolment issues, 29 show cause and exclusion cases, and 24 Centrelink cases. Current records show over 120 referrals in 2008 to University Student Services including the Counselling Service, Disability Service, International Student Services Unit, and Financial Assistance Office.

We work closely with University Student Services and with Faculty and Administration staff on a wide range of cases. Students will often receive help from within the University at the same time as we assist with issues requiring independent advocacy. Of those advocacy matters that went to complaint only a small minority ended up in higher complaints venues such as the central Student Appeals Body for academic appeals against Faculty decisions. We work hard on de-escalating cases wherever appropriate and possible, and finding the best possible solution to postgraduate student concerns at the lowest possible level.

Appeals and complaints can and do escalate from time to time, and where that occurs we are committed to helping postgraduates to get good outcomes on their individual cases. We then use their experiences to feed back in a de-identified way for SUPRA's policy work. There is a strong nexus between experiences of students who present for casework assistance and the input SUPRA provides through the President and their nominees on a range of issues within University committees.

Examples of work between the SAAOs and the President from 2008 include assistance with written submissions and then verbal evidence in a review of the Students at Risk and Academic Appeal processes. We also assisted the President with reviewing papers and preparing for Assessment Working Party, in reviewing course proposals and amendments through the Graduate Studies Committee, in looking at changes to research candidatures being filtered through from the PhD Working Party, and in the plethora of other committee commitments the President takes on.

Big changes to postgraduate coursework candidature delivery were flagged through committee reviews completed in 2008 that will be implemented in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Similarly large scale recommendations for change may soon emerge from reviews of the PhD and MPhil. Where ever SUPRA has had an opportunity to have input on these matters feedback from casework about real difficulties students have experienced has been used to try and make policy more student friendly. It is unique feedback because it comes from postgraduate students who have often not felt able to tell of their issues until they accessed their own independent and confidential casework service.

The SAAO team strongly supported the drafting of submissions to several Federal Government reviews. We make particular note of the fact that recommendations drafted by the SAAOs and the SUPRA President on the basis of postgraduate student experiences were directly taken up as recommendations of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Innovation in their December 2008 Building Australia's Research Capacity report. The recommendations relate only to research students and they still need to be reflected in changes in legislation, but getting the recommendations through was a huge success.

Recommendations successfully called for by SUPRA were in the area of extending Youth Allowance and Austudy to Higher Degree Research students, extending length of scholarship tenures, creation of minimum standards of supervision and resources, increased funds to support minority and under represented students, including extension options on Research Training Scheme funding, that candidature length extend to award of degree, that there be a 50% increase in stipend rates, the further extension of travel concessions, and greater flexibility to undertake part time candidature. All of these are issues postgraduate students have raised with SAAOs.

On the publications front the SAAOs provided content for a weekly article and a question and answer "SAAO Corner" for the postgraduate pages in each week's *Honi Soit* newspaper. These pages are laid up by SUPRA's administrative and communications staff and reproduced on SUPRA's web

site. It is generally an article on a welfare issue for postgraduates. We also revised content for the 10th Edition of the *Survival Manual*, working with staff and Council for ultimate release in early 2009. Many parts of the text were completely re-written from the ninth edition.

The *Survival Manual* is a 108 page publication written in plain and accessible language with practical summaries of many of the major academic and non academic issues postgraduate students face. It is widely distributed by faculties who find it a practical and useful resource to supplement and make more accessible official University publications. The 11th edition of the SUPRA *Thesis Guide* is also widely distributed by Faculties and was released in early 2008 after a thorough content review by SAAOs in 2007.

We have been holding off on producing content for a new *Thesis Guide* edition until likely changes to candidatures resulting from a PhD Working Party



are finalised. Feedback from University staff and students on the current edition continues to be positive and it is widely distributed. By the time this annual report is presented to SUPRA's Annual General Meeting other work commenced in 2008 on reviewing and updating our entire brochure and guide selection should be completed.

With the support of our administrative staff conversion to tri-fold brochures for most of our short Fact Sheet publications will shortly be complete. We will have either completely updated and re-released or are just about to re-release guides on: Show Cause and Exclusion; PhD Completion Checklist; Employment; Special Consideration; Academic Honesty and Plagiarism; Austudy and Youth Allowance; Tenancy Advice; Students at Risk; Negotiating Supervision; and Intellectual Property. We did significant support work drafting sections in assistance of Council in 2008 on our *Child Care Handbook* which has been released in early 2009.

In terms of what we would like to do more of for the rest of 2009, services to outlying campuses is an area for attention. We ran trials in 2008 of more regular services at Cumberland Campus and Sydney College of the Arts. We also visited on at least one occasion for either a SUPRA event or an induction, Camden Campus, Faculty of Nursing at Mallet Street, Conservatorium of Music, and Westmead Hospital. Unexpected turn over of staff early in 2009 has delayed progressing the extension of outlying campus work as quickly as planned but we still expect it to go ahead later in 2009. We are also experimenting with a short run of weekly seminars, which, if successful, we would intend to offer each semester for approximately five week blocks.

In 2008 when additional leave and part time work were taken into account we had approximately 3.6 full time equivalent SAAOs. It is due to return to 4.0 in 2009 and shortly after the AGM. The full complement of staff will be needed to support postgraduates with the fast changing higher education environment. With postgraduate student

numbers reaching an all time high of 15 349 in 2008 and admissions in 2009 estimated to be up 17%, demand for assistance is strong and growing. In the four months to the end of April and without all data written up into our systems we have already had more than 160 cases registered.

One needs to remember that the figures on students accessing the SAAO team only count those cases where individual assistance is sought and a file is opened. The numbers helped through conversations at events and seminars, via our growing range of publications and web based material, and as a result of policy developments from SUPRA advocacy is much harder to measure. We intend to work in the coming months on getting systems in place to get information on downloads of resources and to help capture at least some of this information.

By the next annual report we expect to be able to report a significant increase in casework numbers, outcomes on the seminar series we have been organising for students, our work extending contact with outlying campuses, and progress on other projects including the introduction of an annual SUPRA SAAO welfare survey and significant policy work on tenancy and housing issues. A proposed change in the structure of the SAAO team to create a coordinator position should also be in place by then and will support these developments.

It has been a privilege for the SAAO team to support University of Sydney postgraduate students in 2008. A member of the SAAO team was present for the Council of Australian Postgraduate Association (CAPA) Annual General Meeting this year and the other associations around Australia were astonished at the range and quality of material we are still producing for University of Sydney postgraduates. For the funding support from the University that has allowed this to happen we are grateful. We look forward to working with the new 2009 – 2010 SUPRA Council.

Legal Service Report

Ingrid van Tongeren

History and Outline of the Service

In February 2008, Redfern Legal Centre opened a new branch office at SUPRA. This service, which is funded by SUPRA, provides legal services to postgraduate students from any of the University's seven campuses including the affiliated campuses of the Sydney College of the Arts, The Conservatorium of Music, Orange Agricultural College and Camden Farms.

Redfern Legal Centre employs one part-time solicitor to operate the SUPRA office. Face to face appointments are available at various times throughout the day on Tuesdays and Thursdays with Thursday afternoons being dedicated to a drop in service. Students at distant campuses and students unable to attend on those days can also make telephone appointments or receive advice by email.

The solicitor primarily provides advice and casework services. Casework services are provided either through representation or through providing assistance and support to enable students to represent themselves in their matters. Deciding who to represent and who to assist is made after consideration has been given to the potential for the client to effectively and successfully manage the matter themselves with assistance from the solicitor, the other legal services available to the client, and their own resources. The aim is to allow the solicitor to spend greater time on clients who have a high degree of need and are unable to access other services for whatever reason whilst at the same time providing the most efficient and useful service to the entire postgraduate student community.

The solicitor also provides regular legal and strategic advice to the four Student Advice and Advocacy Officers (SAAOs) employed by SUPRA who deal with a variety of issues concerning students such as academic or welfare matters. The solicitor also



assists the other staff and office bearers of SUPRA in relation to any other legal matters that may arise, for example by providing advice in the area of Intellectual Property to office bearers or those involved in preparing SUPRA publications.

The solicitor also undertakes community legal education and policy work. Community education aims to increase the ability of clients to avert legal problems or to solve them themselves by providing legal information, for example in the form of fact sheets or information brochures. Policy or law reform work is work that may not be related to any one particular client but aims to achieve some systemic change in the legal system or the University in order to benefit a group of postgraduate students or all postgraduate students.

Advice and Casework

Advice and casework has been provided on the full gamut of legal issues. In terms of matters directly related to University studies, the area of Intellectual Property makes up the bulk of matters for which advice is sought from the solicitor. In terms of matters external to the University, advice and casework has mainly been provided in the areas of consumer and credit/debt (including money owed to or by the student in relation to housing); road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences & fines; criminal matters; motor vehicle accidents; tenancy; and employment.

University matters

As the legal service remains independent of the University it can advise students on University matters and can represent students in conflicts with the University. The overwhelming majority of University matters have concerned the area of Intellectual Property, either through the provision of independent advice on contracts prior to the assignment of rights or in handling disputes with the University. There has also been a number of Trade Practices matters handled by the service where the clients have been coursework masters students, mostly full fee paying international students who have issues with the University over the original marketing, description, accreditation & other claims, and unadvised changes made in relation to their courses.

Consumer and Credit/Debt Matters

The legal service receives a large number of enquiries about consumer and credit/debt matters largely in relation to aggressive sales techniques or onerous credit contracts. The service has been able to negotiate successful outcomes for students in a range of matters in these areas. In addition, a number of students seek advice from the solicitor regarding money owed to or by the student in relation to housing. Many students are living in situations where they are not covered by the Residential Tenancies Act and/or are not able to access the CTTT at this point in time. This is because they are either residents or are in co-tenant disputes. The necessity for the party seeking to recover the money to take these matters to the Local Court creates unnecessary legal complexity and cost issues for the students irrespective of which side of the matter they are on. The legal service has provided advice to, and conducted negotiations on behalf of, a large number of students in relation to such matters. The service has also provided representation to students in these matters at the Local Court.

Road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences
Inexperience or lack of familiarity with the road rules, coupled with having older or less well maintained vehicles due to economic constraints

often means that the clients of the legal service present with penalty notices received for these offences. For the same reasons they are often less able to meet the financial burden imposed in paying a penalty notice. A significant number of clients have chosen to court elect and plead guilty. In these situations, the legal service has either represented or assisted them, either in person or by way of drafting their written pleadings. Overwhelmingly, the involvement of the legal service has resulted in achieving very favourable outcomes for the students. In addition, the service has successfully represented a number of students in defended hearings.

Crime

The solicitor has provided advice and representation in Local Court to a number of students mostly in relation to matters concerning possession of drugs, driving offences (mostly alcohol related offences), assault, carrying prohibited weapons, larceny (by a servant), and fraud. Again, overwhelmingly, the involvement of the legal service has resulted in achieving more favourable outcomes for the students.

Motor vehicle accidents

A significant number of students attend the service to seek advice in relation to recovering damages and/or defending claims for damages following motor vehicle accidents. They are often young and/or inexperienced drivers or holders of international licences who are unfamiliar with the rules and regulations in New South Wales. The financial impact of these matters can be significant for students who rely on their vehicles and earn a small income or have limited financial resources. The service has successfully assisted a number of clients to obtain compensation for the damage done to their vehicles. In addition, the service has successfully represented a number of students and obtained orders in their favour in situations where it was necessary to both defend the matters against them and cross claim against the other parties. It has also assisted a number of students to obtain judgements in their favour and, where necessary, to successfully enforce the judgements obtained

against the other party. Where the clients have admitted liability but disputed the amount claimed, the legal service has also successfully negotiated to reduce the amount to be paid to an acceptable amount and to allow the clients to pay the sum off by instalments.

Tenancy

Due to their poor economic situations, students are often ill placed to afford rent increases and so often fall into arrears. In addition, lack of funds or the need to make the financial resources they have last as long as possible often means that they are residing in accommodation that is of a poor standard which leads to tenancy issues such as the need for repairs, compensation for breaches of the tenancy agreement and the like. The legal service has provided advice, and conducted negotiations on behalf of, a large number of students in relation to such matters. The service has also provided representation to students in difficult tenancy matters at the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT). It should be noted that the recent economic crisis has seen an increase in the number of tenancy queries in relation to notices to vacate the property due to repossession by the lender and that this trend can be expected to continue.

Employment

Many students are working outside the University to supplement their other income (usually parental support, scholarships or part time University employment in their departments). They are often working in positions where their conditions and entitlements are questionable and often in positions where their employment status (ie whether they are in fact an employee or sub-contractor) or the requirements and legal obligations imposed on them by virtue of their status are unknown to the student until a dispute arises, the employment ends or they find themselves being investigated by government departments such as the Tax Office. The legal service has successfully negotiated on behalf of many students to recover wages and entitlements, assisted them to resolve concerns about working conditions, and assisted them in their dealings with

government departments and in complying with their taxation or other legal obligations.

Statistics

<u>Total Number of Advices/Cases</u>	<u>223</u>
Consumer/Credit/Debt	19%
Traffic Offences/Fines	13%
Intellectual Property/Contracts	13%
Crime	11%
Motor Vehicle Accidents	9%
Tenancy	9%
Employment	7%

Administration Report

Anne Coates and Claire Pettigrew

In 2008 - 2009 the Administration team continued to provide support to SUPRA Council and Staff through various roles and activities. 2008 saw the appointment of an Administrative Assistant due to the expanded role of the Administration and Communications Officer in relation to publications and communications support to the Association. With a second admin staff member, administration support to staff, council and all postgraduate students expanded. Beyond the day to day work of attending to the upkeep of the SUPRA office, kitchen and resource room; reception duties; managing the supporter/subscriber database; stationary orders; minute taking; and assistance to SUPRA staff and Council, the admin team have been involved in number of projects:

Publications

With a double page spread in *Honi Soit* each week from 2008, SUPRA's publications portfolio expanded and there was requirement for someone internally to assist in sourcing content and doing desktop design. The Administration and Communications Officer role was created to address this need. In addition, weekly *eGrad*

bulletins have been sent, and major publications worked on have included the *Survival Manual*, *Thesis Guide* and *Child Care Handbook*. The Student Advice and Advocacy Fact Sheets were redesigned and updated, posters were designed, and conference material was published in house. The mail out of the *Thesis Guide* to all PhD supervisors was a significant undertaking, involving stuffing and labeling over 1,500 envelopes, and attending to the massive correspondence of incoming and outgoing mail that it generated. This seemingly simple task consumed more than a month of admin time. The acquisition of a folding machine has already greatly improved work loads.

Conference

The second half of 2008 involved considerable administrative support for the Connect Conference, SUPRA's annual interdisciplinary postgraduate conference. Working in collaboration with Amanda LeRoy, the Conference Coordinator, the admin team designed and printed conference material, organised rooms, catering, speakers, sessions and information. Connect 08 was considered a great success, with significantly higher attendance rates than in 2007.



Events

The admin team also provided assistance and support in organising various SUPRA events, including Postgrad parties, BBQs, outreach events at satellite campuses, film nights, the food drive, and immigration seminars. We have also assisted with the organising of the: two SUPRA Council and staff planning days; End-of-year lunch and closure; farewells and birthdays of staff and Council; and the staff development day.

Induction

Induction periods at the beginning of each semester are highly busy times for admin, as we pack thousands of showbags ready for orientation events at the various faculties around the University. We coordinate SUPRA's attendance at these, giving a representative of the Association a chance to let postgraduates know about the various services we have to offer.

Website

The Administration and Communications Officer has been solidly working on facets of the new SUPRA website over the entire 2008 – 2009 year, liaising with ICT, website designers, and various Council members and staff. The more recent incarnation of the website redevelopment has involved consultation, drafting tender documents, and we are now getting closer to selecting a new website designer.

Office Move

With new occupants moving into Level 1 of the Raglan St Building, SUPRA was offered additional office space upstairs due to our expanding needs. At the time of writing we are half way through this significant office move. This move has involved significant work on the part of the administration team, including completing a furniture audit,

overseeing the renovations and physical move of the four SAAO offices, the RLC and finance office, and the administration/publications office. It has also involved clearing out some unnecessary and outdated equipment, re-arranging the resource room, and ordering new equipment. We are about to commence the next phase, which will see the reception and resource room areas re-painted and carpeted.

Reception

While all this is going on, we must also be the initial point of contact for the majority of inquires to the office, answering and forwarding as necessary dozens of calls and emails a day, not to mention being a smiling face behind the desk. With increasing number of postgrad students at the University and the growing profile of SUPRA's services, we are engaging and assisting an increasing numbers of students.

It was a busy year and we have a busy year ahead of us, particularly due to the recent staffing changes. We would like to thank the SUPRA Council and Staff for all their work in 2008 - 2009 and look forward to welcoming the new Council in July.



Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association

financial statements

for The Year Ended 31 December 2008

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

31 DECEMBER 2008

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C M PITT & CO

Chartered Accountants

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Page 1

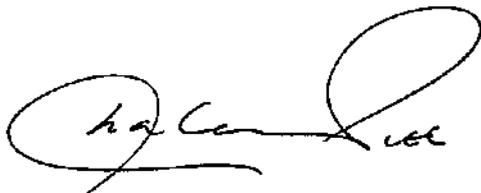
AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION (SUPRA)

As lead auditor for the audit of Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) for the year ended 31 December 2008, I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as required by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

This declaration is in respect of Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) during the period.



Charles M Pitt
C M Pitt & Co
Units 6 & 7, 2 Philip Street
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Dated: 21st May 2009



Chartered Accountants

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

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INCOME STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
Revenue from ordinary activities			
Subscriptions		-	2,160
University Funding		794,000	636,000
Interest received		17,915	9,563
Other revenues		6,605	2,611
Donations		4,497	8,986
Total Revenue		<u>823,017</u>	<u>659,320</u>
Expenditure			
Management Committee		(636,800)	(495,862)
Publications and Activities Committees		(51,689)	(36,300)
Policy and Campaigns Committee		(13,010)	(50,909)
Total Expenditure		<u>(701,499)</u>	<u>(583,071)</u>
Surplus from ordinary activities before tax		121,518	76,249
Surplus from ordinary activities after tax		<u>\$ 121,518</u>	<u>\$ 76,249</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these accounts.

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2008

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
Current Assets			
Cash & cash equivalents	2	642,093	476,997
Trade & other receivables	3	<u>5,317</u>	<u>4,248</u>
Total Current Assets		<u>647,410</u>	<u>481,245</u>
Non-Current Assets			
Plant and Equipment	4	<u>12,852</u>	<u>24,648</u>
Total Non-Current Assets		<u>12,852</u>	<u>24,648</u>
Total Assets		<u>660,262</u>	<u>505,893</u>
Current Liabilities			
Trade & other payables	5	43,455	33,602
Financial Liabilities	6	6,529	8,704
Short Term Provisions	7	<u>251,740</u>	<u>220,038</u>
Total Current Liabilities		<u>301,724</u>	<u>262,344</u>
Non-Current Liabilities			
Financial Liabilities	6	<u>-</u>	<u>6,529</u>
Total Non-Current Liabilities		<u>-</u>	<u>6,529</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>301,724</u>	<u>268,873</u>
Net Assets		<u>\$ 358,538</u>	<u>\$ 237,020</u>
Equity			
Accumulated Funds	8	<u>358,538</u>	<u>237,020</u>
Total Equity		<u>\$ 358,538</u>	<u>\$ 237,020</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these accounts.

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

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STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
RETAINED EARNINGS			
Balance at the beginning of the year		237,020	160,771
Surplus attributed from operations		121,518	76,249
Balance at the end of the financial year		<u>\$ 358,538</u>	<u>\$ 237,020</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these accounts.

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

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STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
<i>Receipts</i>			
Student Subscriptions		-	2,160
University Funding		794,000	636,000
Interest Received		16,329	15,505
Sundries		11,467	24,669
		<u>821,796</u>	<u>678,334</u>
<i>Payments</i>			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(656,700)	(564,417)
		<u>(656,700)</u>	<u>(564,417)</u>
Net Cash provided by / (used in) operating activities	10	<u>165,096</u>	<u>113,917</u>
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment		-	(26,500)
Net Cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>-</u>	<u>(26,500)</u>
Net Increase in cash held		165,096	87,417
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		<u>476,997</u>	<u>389,580</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	2	<u><u>\$ 642,093</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 476,997</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these accounts.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

NOTE 1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements are a general purpose financial report that have been prepared in accordance with Accounting Standards, Urgent Issues Group Interpretations and other authorities pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board. The financial report was authorised for issue by the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) on 21st May 2009.

They satisfy the requirements of SUPRA its constitution and the reporting requirements of SUPRA.

SUPRA is unincorporated and domiciled in Australia. The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by SUPRA in the preparation of the financial report.

The accounting policies have been consistently applied unless otherwise stated. The financial report has been prepared on an accrual basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values, or except where specifically stated current valuations of non current assets. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets.

(a) Going Concern

The financial report is prepared on the basis that SUPRA is a going concern. SUPRA has a Funding Agreement with the Sydney University which will ensure funding to 31 December 2009. Negotiations are continuing for ongoing funding beyond 2009.

(b) Plant and Equipment

Plant and Equipment are measured on the cost basis less depreciation and impairment losses.

The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount from these assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows that will be received from the assets employment and subsequent disposal.

(c) Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated on a straight line basis so as to write off the net cost of each item of property, plant and equipment over its expected useful life. Estimates of remaining useful life are made on a regular basis for all assets, with annual reassessments for major items.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

CONTINUED

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable assets are:

Plant and equipment	10% to 20%
---------------------	------------

(d) Receivables

Uncollected subscription fees and other receivables represent the amount due at balance date.

(e) Amounts Payable

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the consolidated entity prior to the end of the financial year, which are unpaid. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within thirty (30) days of negotiation.

(f) Maintenance and Repairs

Maintenance, repair costs and minor renewals are charged as expenses as incurred.

(g) Employee Entitlements

Provision is made in respect of the liability for annual leave, long service leave and redundancy at balance date. Contributions are made on behalf of employee by SUPRA to the National Entitlement Security Trust (NEST) and are charged as expenses when incurred.

(h) Leases

Operating lease payments are charged to expense in the period in which they occur.

(i) Cash

For purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash includes deposits at call which are readily convertible to cash on hand and which are used in the cash management function on a day-to-day basis.

(j) Revenue

All revenue is stated net of the amount of Goods and Service Tax (GST).

(k) Comparatives

Where necessary, comparative information has been reclassified to achieve consistency in disclosure with current financial year amounts and other disclosures.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

CONTINUED

(l) Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgments.

SUPRA evaluates estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial report based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the group.

(m) Impairment.

SUPRA assess impairment at each reporting date by evaluating conditions specific to the asset group that may lead to impairment of assets. Where an impairment trigger exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is determined. Value-in-use calculations performed in assessing recoverable amounts incorporate a number of key estimates.

No impairment has been recognised for the year ended 31 December 2008.

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	2008 \$	2007 \$
CONTINUED		
NOTE 2 Cash & Cash Equivalents		
Cash at Bank and on Hand	205,750	273,088
Deposit with NEST	231,086	203,909
Deposits on Term	205,257	-
	<u>642,093</u>	<u>476,997</u>
NOTE 3 Trade & Other Receivables		
Sundry Debtors	2,400	2,765
Accrued Interest Receivable	1,586	-
Prepayments	1,331	1,483
	<u>5,317</u>	<u>4,248</u>
NOTE 4 Plant and Equipment		
Plant and Equipment at cost	116,997	116,997
Less, Accumulated Depreciation	(104,145)	(92,349)
	<u>12,852</u>	<u>24,648</u>

Movements in carrying amounts

Movements in carrying amounts for each class of property, plant & equipment between the beginning and the end of the current financial year are:

	Computer Equipment	Furniture and Fittings	Office Equipment	Total
Balance at beginning of year	-	2,363	22,285	24,648
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Add back of depreciation on disposal	-	-	-	-
Depreciation expense	-	(2,363)	(9,433)	(11,796)
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,852</u>	<u>12,852</u>

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
CONTINUED		
NOTE 5 Trade & Other Payables		
<i>Current</i>		
Sundry payables and accrued expenses	<u>43,455</u>	<u>33,602</u>
NOTE 6 Financial Liabilities		
<i>Current</i>		
Equipment Finance	<u>6,529</u>	<u>8,704</u>
<i>Non-Current</i>		
Equipment Finance	<u>-</u>	<u>6,529</u>
	<u>6,529</u>	<u>15,233</u>
NOTE 7 Short Term Provisions		
Provision for Annual Leave	12,415	8,200
Provision for Long Service Leave	6,735	8,142
Provision for Redundancy	<u>232,590</u>	<u>203,696</u>
	<u>251,740</u>	<u>220,038</u>
At 31 December 2008 the total amount payable was \$251,740.		
Funds to this amount are held on behalf of employees in the National Entitlement Security Trust (NEST).		
NOTE 8 Accumulated Funds		
Accumulated Funds at the beginning of the financial year	237,020	160,771
Surplus	121,518	76,249
Accumulated Funds at the end of the financial year	<u>358,538</u>	<u>237,020</u>
NOTE 9 Auditors Remuneration		
Audit of accounts	<u>9,000</u>	<u>9,000</u>
NOTE 10 Reconciliation of Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities to Surplus/(Deficit)		
Net Cash Inflow/(Outflow) from		
Operating Activities	165,096	113,917
Depreciation	(11,796)	(9,116)
Change in Operating Assets and Liabilities		
Increase/(Decrease) in Other Current Assets	1,069	(18,952)
(Increase)/Decrease in Payables and Equipment Finance	(1,149)	(19,682)
(Increase)/Decrease in Provisions	<u>(31,702)</u>	<u>10,082</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	<u>121,518</u>	<u>76,249</u>

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

CONTINUED

NOTE 11 Financial Instruments

(a) Terms, Conditions & Accounting Policies

Accounts Receivable

Student fees, and other small sundry sums are net of any provisions for amounts estimated to be uncollectable. Interest is not charged on outstanding amounts.

Accounts Payable

Liabilities are recognised for amounts to be paid in the future for goods or services received, whether or not billed to the University. Accounts payable are normally settled within thirty (30) days from date of invoice and no interest is incurred on these accounts.

Term Deposits & Cash Management Accounts

Term deposits and cash management accounts are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value. At balance date these accounts had various maturity dates and the effective weighted average interest rates for the year were 3.15% (2007 - 4.00%).

(b) Credit Risk Exposures

The Association's maximum exposures to credit risk at balance date in respect of each class of financial asset is the carrying amount of those assets as indicated in the statement of financial position, net of any provision for doubtful debts.

The Association does not have a significant exposure to any individual counterparty, other than the short term money on deposit with a major commercial bank.

(c) Net Fair Values

The net market values of the Association's short-term deposits, cash management accounts, accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued charges approximate their carrying amounts. The aggregate net fair values of financial assets and financial liabilities at balance date are stated in the accounts.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

CONTINUED

NOTE 12 Operating Lease Commitments	2008	2007
Non-cancellable operating leases contracted for but not capitalised in the financial statements:	\$	\$
Payable		
- no later than 1 year	1,814	1,814
- later than 1 year but not later than 5 years	-	-
	<u>1,814</u>	<u>1,814</u>

NOTE 13 Events Subsequent to Balance Date

No transactions or events of a significant nature have occurred since balance date.

NOTE 14 Related Parties

Stipends are paid to office bearers in accordance with SUPRA's Stipend policy.

NOTE 15 Association Details

The office of University of Sydney Postgraduate Representative Association is situated at Building G10 Raglan Street, Darlington Campus, University of Sydney NSW 2006

Permanent employees at year end were five (5) and one (1) full time contract (2007 - 4 permanent employees).

The Association's Australian Business Number (ABN) is: 17 011 530 375.

**SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE
ASSOCIATION (SUPRA)**

STATEMENT BY THE SUPRA COUNCIL

Page 13

In accordance with a resolution of the Council of the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA).

In our opinion:

- (a) the Income Statement is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the deficit of the Association of the year ended 31 December 2008;
- (b) the Balance Sheet is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association as at 31 December 2008;
- (c) at the date of this Statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due;
- (d) as detailed in note 1 to the financial statements, the financial viability of SUPRA is dependent on the funding agreement from Sydney University, that they continue to provide financial support to SUPRA.
- (e) the extent and scale of services that would be available beyond 31 December 2009 cannot be determined.

The Accounts have been made in accordance with applicable accounting Standards at Sydney on 21st May 2009.

Rashmi Kumar
PRESIDENT

Lulu Stewart
TREASURER

C M PITT & CO

Chartered Accountants

TELEPHONE (02) 9715 1555
FACSIMILE (02) 9715 1566

CHARLES M PITT B.BUS FCA

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PO BOX 580
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INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION (SUPRA)

REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL REPORT

We have audited the financial report of Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) for the financial year ended 31 December 2008, as set out on pages 1 to 12. The Management Committee is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial report. I have conducted an independent audit of this financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of SUPRA.

The Management Committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations). This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluation the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.



Chartered Accountants

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

INDEPENDENCE

In conducting our audit, we have followed applicable independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

AUDIT OPINION

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in accordance with the Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements and the Constitution and Regulations of SUPRA as amended, the financial position of SUPRA as at 31 December 2008, and the result of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended.

INHERENT UNCERTAINTY - REGARDING CONTINUATION AS A GOING CONCERN

Without qualification to the opinion expressed above, attention is drawn to the following matter that is viewed as inherent uncertainty, regarding the continuation of the SUPRA as a going concern. SUPRA has on going negotiations Funding Agreement with the Sydney University which will ensure funding to 31 December 2009. Negotiations are continuing for ongoing funding beyond 2009 and an agreement has not yet been reached.



CHARLES M PITT
C M PITT & CO
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Signed 21st May 2009.

**SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE
REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION (SUPRA)
ABN: 17 011 530 375**

COMPILATION REPORT

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Scope

On the basis of information provided by the Management Committee of Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA), we have compiled in accordance with APS 9: Statement on Compilation of Financial Reports the following special purpose financial report of SUPRA comprising of Detailed Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2008.

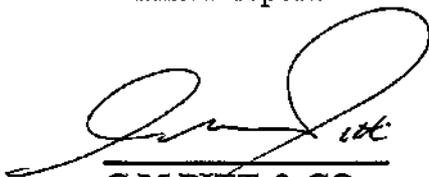
The specific purpose for which the special purpose financial report has been prepared is for the confidential use of the Management Committee. Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements have not been adopted in the preparation of the special purpose financial report.

The Management Committee are solely responsible for the information contained in the special purpose financial report and have determined that the accounting policies used are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of SUPRA's constitution and are appropriate to meet the needs of the Management Committee of SUPRA.

Our procedures use accounting expertise to collect, classify and summarise the financial information, which the Management Committee provided into a financial report. Our procedures do not include verification or validation procedures. No audit or review has been performed and accordingly no assurance is expressed.

To the extent permitted by law, we do not accept liability for any loss or damage which any person, other than SUPRA, may suffer arising from any negligence on our part. No person should rely on the special purpose financial report without having an audit or review conducted.

The special purpose financial report was prepared for the benefit of the Management Committee of SUPRA and the purpose identified above. We do not accept responsibility to any other person for the contents of the special purpose financial report.



C M PITT & CO
Chartered Accountants
Charles M Pitt

Signed at Strathfield on 21st May 2009

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

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SCHEDULE OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	2008 \$	2007 \$
Other Revenue		
Office Sales	1,100	400
Miscellaneous	5,505	2,211
	<u>6,605</u>	<u>2,611</u>
Management Committee		
(A) Corporate Expenses (Administered by Management Committee)		
Councillor Conference Attendance (including airfares)	2,333	2,840
Cabs	517	56
Council Meeting Expenses	838	699
Council Election	-	1,000
Legal Expenses	1,709	2,091
Legal Expenses - Redfern Legal Centre	52,735	-
President's Stipend	46,040	36,574
President's Superannuation	4,143	3,292
Vice President's Stipend	9,472	12,226
Vice President's Superannuation	853	1,156
Treasurer's Stipend	3,067	2,615
Treasurer's Superannuation	276	235
Secretary's Stipend	10,098	12,362
Secretary's Superannuation	909	1,113
Activities Convenor Stipend	148	1,553
Activities Convenor Superannuation	13	140
Women Officer's Stipend	1,645	7,225
Women Officer's Superannuation	148	594
Publications Officer Stipend	3,234	10,182
Publications Officer Superannuation	291	916
Policy Convenor's Stipend	-	207
Policy Convenor's Superannuation	-	19
Queer Officer's Stipend	306	5,804
Queer Officer's Superannuation	13	522
	<u>138,788</u>	<u>103,421</u>

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

SCHEDULE OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	2008 \$	2007 \$
CONTINUED		
Amount brought forward	138,788	103,421
International Student Officer's Stipend	2,636	3,758
International Student Officer's Superannuation	237	338
Campaign Officer's Stipend	15,212	6,780
Campaign Officer's Superannuation	1,369	610
Staff Support	853	525
Staff Recruitment	844	1,271
Staff Travel, Meals & Accomodation	2,485	314
Total Corporate	<u>162,424</u>	<u>117,017</u>
(B) Management Committee (Committee devolved items)		
Audit 9	9,000	9,000
Accountancy	33,945	26,450
Bank Charges	606	501
Courier	-	38
Donations	707	200
Insurance	5,966	6,677
Sundries	148	89
Postage	13	12
Staff Development	-	950
Office Amenities	1,750	1,675
Printing & Stationery	6,479	4,280
Student Advisors' Salaries	250,298	168,131
Student Advisors' Superannuation	22,008	20,039
Administration Salaries	71,423	53,100
Administration Superannuation	6,387	4,735
Conference Co-ordinator's Salaries	6,047	7,201
Conference Co-ordinator's Superannuation	544	648
Employee Entitlements	31,702	49,358
Payroll Management Systems	3,296	3,221
Telephone	469	385
Lease Equipment (Photocopier)	10,109	11,315
Repairs & Maintenance (Non IT)	96	-
	<u>460,993</u>	<u>368,005</u>

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

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SCHEDULE OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
CONTINUED		
Amount brought forward	460,993	368,005
Depreciation	11,796	9,116
Office Equipment (Non IT)	657	1,724
Consumables - Risograph	930	-
Total Management Committee (Committee devolved)	<u>474,376</u>	<u>378,845</u>
Total Management Committee	<u>636,800</u>	<u>495,862</u>
 (C) Publications and Activities Committees		
Activities & Functions	6,225	3,093
Campaigns	2,089	1,025
Committee Expenses		245
Conference	12,943	10,215
Merchandising	8,425	1,550
O Week	-	5,244
Publications - Honi	5,400	-
Publications - Counter Course	4,369	-
Publications - Thesis Guide	7,470	-
Publications - Survival Manual	2,199	6,658
SUPRA Express	-	6,133
Information brochures	-	1,837
Website development & maintenance	2,569	300
Total Publications and Activities Committees	<u>51,689</u>	<u>36,300</u>
 (D) Policy and Campaigns Committee		
Resource & Campaign Materials	1,195	324
Policy Advisor Salary	-	34,975
Policy Advisor Superannuation	-	3,171
CAPA Affiliation fee	11,815	12,439
Total Policy and Campaigns Committee	<u>13,010</u>	<u>50,909</u>