

REPORT INTO THE 2018 SWINBURNE STUDENT UNION ELECTIONS

PREPARED BY THE RETURNING OFFICER JAMES WANGMANN OF ARGENT ELECTION

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ABOUT

This report details the Swinburne Student Union Elections of 2018.

This election was conducted in strict accordance with the SSU constitution and election regulations, which includes compliance with the election regulations for NUS roles with the NUS election regulations.

This report is to be read in conjunction with attached documents, the SSU Constitution and the SSU Election Regulations.

APPOINTMENT

James Wangmann of Argent Elections was appointed Returning Officer for the Swinburne Student Union Annual Election on August 2, 2018.

Argent Elections is a boutique firm established in 2015.

In addition to the Swinburne Student Union, we have conducted elections for the La Trobe University Student Union and the Victoria University Student Union, and have done similar work for the National Union of Students and the Celtic Club of Victoria in the past.

Additionally, we have extensive experience acting as election poll staff, scrutineers and quota administrators in proportional representation ballots.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

The notice of election was posted in accordance with the SSU Election Regulations on Monday 6 August 2018.

This notice was posted outside the SSU offices at the Hawthorn, Croydon and Wantirna campuses as well as online at sss.org.au.

In addition, this notice was posted across other locations at relevant campuses, was pushed out through the Union's social media channels and was included in the e-Newsletter.

ELIGIBILITY

Any student member may nominate for the Swinburne Student Union Council, campus committees, education board, National Union of Students delegate, Swine positions, Postgraduate and International committees subject to various eligibility criteria outline below. Voting entitlement for certain positions is also limited, also detailed below.

Candidates for all positions, except for NUS Delegate, must be current financial members of the SSU.

The positions of President, General Secretary, Education Officer, Welfare Officer, Activities Officer, Communications Officer, Health and Disability Officer, General Representative, NUS Delegate are elected by all students and from all students.

PAVE Representative is elected by and from PAVE students.

Women's Representative is elected from female identifying students.

Queer Representative is elected from LGBTIQA identifying students.

Indigenous Representative is elected from ATSI students.

Hawthorn Campus Chair and committee members are elected by and from those students studying at the Hawthorn Campus.

Croydon Campus Chair and committee members are elected by and from those students studying at the Croydon Campus.

Wantirna Campus Chair and committee members are elected by and from those students studying at the Wantirna Campus.

Postgraduate Representative and SUPA committee members are elected by and from postgraduate students.

International Representative and SISA committee members are elected by and from international students.

The Education Board comprises one representative elected by and from each faculty and school at Swinburne, as well as representatives for each of Higher Degree by Research, Swinburne Online and Open Universities Australia

At the close of the election no appeals or complaints surrounding the eligibility of candidate's or voters against eligibility criteria had been received.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations were opened at 10am on Wednesday 15 August 2018 for the following positions outline in the above table.

Nominations closed at 5:00pm on Wednesday 29 August 2018.

The complete list of nominees appears as attachment 2.

The ballot draw took place on September 7 2017 at the SSU office and was witnessed by representatives from the SSU and the Together ticket. All candidates were invited to attend.

TICKET REGISTRATION

From the regulations:

45) An application to be set out as a ticket must include a minimum number of candidates for positions being elected that is:

a) At least 10 candidates for positions on the Council; except

b) Where a ticket only includes candidates for standing committees as set out in Part 11 of the Constitution – in which case the number of candidates for each committee must be equal to or greater than half of the total positions to be elected for that committee.

Applications to register new tickets closed on 5:00pm on Wednesday 5 September 2018.

A total of 2 tickets were registered, namely Together and Activate. No applications were rejected.

POLLING

A copy of the electoral roll was sourced from Zahirabbas Nagori, Reporting Analyst from Business Analytics at Swinburne University.

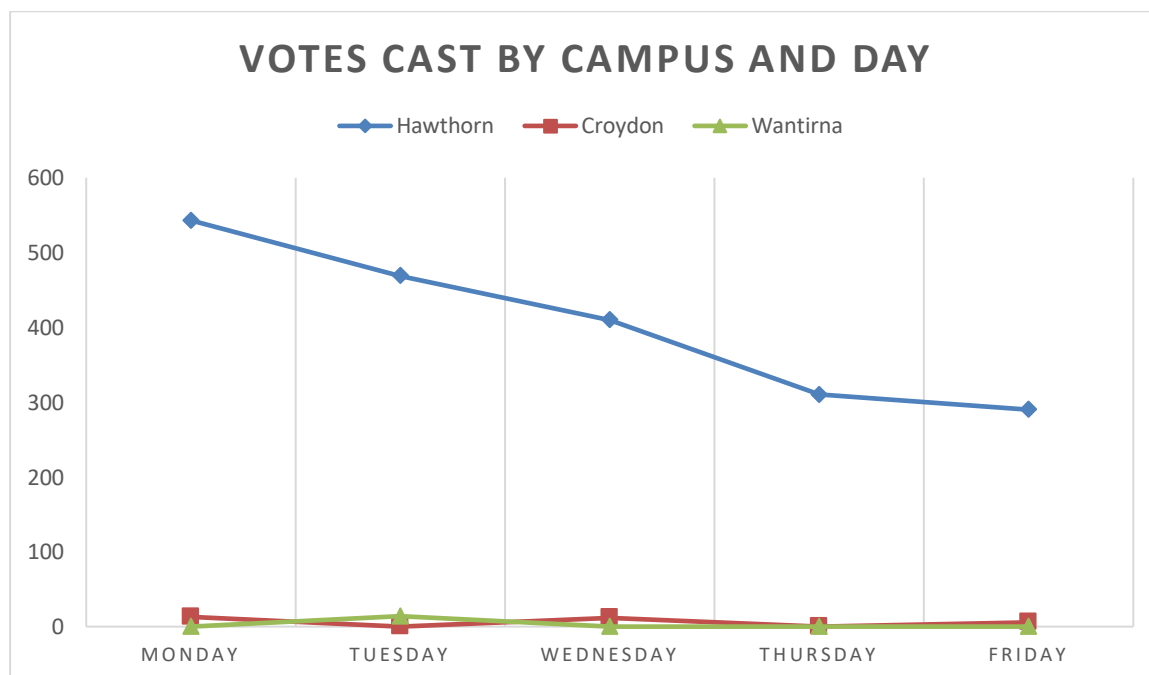
Polling took place at the following times and places:

Polling – Hawthorn	10am – 4pm, Monday 17 September
Polling – Croydon	10am – 4pm, Monday 17 September
Polling – Hawthorn	10am – 4pm, Tuesday 18 September
Polling - Wantirna	10am – 4pm, Tuesday 18 September
Polling – Hawthorn	12pm – 8pm, Wednesday 19 September
Polling – Croydon	10am – 4pm, Wednesday 19 September
Polling – Hawthorn	10am – 4pm, Thursday 20 September
Polling – Wantirna	10am – 4pm Thursday 20 September
Polling - Hawthorn	10am – 4pm, Friday 21 September
Polling – Croydon	10am – 4pm, Friday 21 September

Ballot papers and ballot boxes were stored in a secure room at the SSU office. The Returning Officer was satisfied that this location and that the materials stored therein were not compromised in any way.

Throughout the polling week there was no complaints that gave rise to serious action by the returning officer.

There was a total of 2135 formal votes cast, representing a 62% increase on 2017. There were no applications for postal votes.



COUNT

The count began at 19:00 on Friday 21 September in the Union Building at Swinburne University, Bundoora.

The count suspended at midnight resumed the following day at 11am, suspended again at 5pm and resumed at 2pm on Sunday and was completed at approximately 11pm on Sunday. All aspects of the count were witnessed by scrutineers for various tickets.

There were no complaints or appeals arising from the count.

DECLARATION

The results of the election were declared on Tuesday 2 October 2018.

Deceleration of the election results was distributed by hard copy posters, e-newsletter, social media and upon the SSU webpage.

There were two categories of elected candidates:

- those candidates elected unopposed and
- those candidates elected through contested ballot

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

POSITIONS ELECTED UNOPPOSED

Mitchell Reynolds	Queer Representative
Zoe Abletez	Swine Designer
Pakinam El Ashram	Education Board - Arts
James Atkins	Education Board - Business
Vahini Goyal	Education Board - Design
Michael Zanati	Education Board - Engineering
Maizad Zaizakkarani	Education Board - FBL
Kavan M Jani	Education Board - FHAD
Samantha Baker	Education Board - FSET
Kainat Ghafari	Education Board - Health
Lachlan Dawes	Education Board - Law
Jacinta Sinel	Education Board - Science
Liam Sierakowski	Education Board – SEE
Akila Kumarage	Hawthorn Committee Member
Alecia Frizzero	Hawthorn Committee Member
Harshal Dhabarde	Hawthorn Committee Member
Kalana Bamunusinghe	Hawthorn Committee Member
Kimia Madani	Hawthorn Committee Member
Maria Bogtor	Hawthorn Committee Member
Tara Anastasia	Hawthorn Committee Member
Harshvardhansinh Parmar	SISA Committee Member
Jay Kathiria	SISA Committee Member
MD Tanjim Ahmed	SISA Committee Member
Monil Patel	SISA Committee Member

Prachi Patel	SISA Committee Member
T. Sivagnanasuntharam	SISA Committee Member
Ujwal Savani	SISA Committee Member
Butti Ashok	SUPA Committee Member
Deep Parmar	SUPA Committee Member
Hakeem Faizan	SUPA Committee Member
Harsh Modi	SUPA Committee Member
Sandhya Prabhakar	SUPA Committee Member
Syed Zaker	SUPA Committee Member
Vamshi Tommalapally	SUPA Committee Member

CONTESTED POSITIONS

What follows is a summary of candidates elected to contested positions at the Swinburne Student Union election held between 17 and 21 September.

All positions were declared based on front page votes. Whilst the margin for PAVE Representative was less than balance of valid ballot packs that did not indicate a front-page preference, upon inspection it was discovered that there were no additional valid votes for either candidate.

PRESIDENT

Samuel Roberts	Together	1410
Steven Blacker	Activate	657

GENERAL SECRETARY

Param Mahal	Together	1410
Nikki Nievaart	Activate	657

EDUCATION

Artemis Capa	Together	1410
Viktoria Ivanova	Activate	657
Suhas Shetty Shridhar		0

WEFARE

Fergus Clancy	Together	1410
Darcy Cleeland	Activate	657

ACTIVITIES

James Atkins	Together	1410
Jessabelle Awanda Breen	Activate	657

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE

Ananya Shah	Together	1410
Kelsey Rose Bock	Activate	657

HEALTH & DISABILITIES REPRESENTATIVE

Malaika Ghafari	Together	1410
Reece Druiven	Activate	657

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Andrew White	Together	1410
Sarah Ewing	Activate	657

POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE

Keerthana Ramesh	Together	639
Sandhya Nair	Activate	132

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Sridharshini Dhinakaran	Together	977
Raksha Yadalam	Activate	255

PAVE REPRESENTATIVE

Syeda Zehra	Together	58
Takara Musgrove	Activate	43

SWINE EDITOR

Ananya Shah	Together	1410
Abbey Thorpe	Activate	657

HAWTHORN CAMPUS CHAIR

Budveen Hewabaddage	Together	1368
Xzavier Kelly	Activate	654

GENERAL MEMBER (3)

Summary of votes:

Together	1410
Activate	657
BtL	69
Quota	535

In order of election

1. Shrujal Sukhadia Together
2. Noah Holden Activate
3. Shalaka Jaiswal Together

NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS DELEGATE (7)

Together	1410
Activate	657
BTL	69
Quota	268

1. Samuel Roberts Together
2. Param Mahal Together
3. Artemis Capa Together
4. Steven Blacker Activate
5. Fergus Clancy Together
6. Darcy Cleeland Activate
7. James Atkins Together

CONCLUSION

This was the first year that Argent Elections has conducted work on behalf of the Swinburne Student Union, these conclusions should be understood in this context.

FRONT PAGE VOTING

This was the first year of a 'front page' voting system, whereby a single vote on the front page flows through candidates on a range of different ballot papers. This results in a simplified system for voters, particularly helpful in driving down the informal vote, particularly considering many voters at a University student union election may be from overseas and have less experience in election participation.

The major argument against 'front page voting' is that it can present additional hurdles to independent candidates and makes the process of nominating more complicated. The returning officer did not receive any negative feedback on this change from potential candidates or electors. There were a handful of independent candidates however to the best of the returning officers' knowledge they did not mount well organised campaigns and were not sighted by election staff throughout the polling period.

TURNOUT

According to the report of the previous returning officer, turnout was up around 62% on 2017, a pleasing figure that speaks to the increasing relevance of the SSU to students of Swinburne.

The simplified nature of the ballot packs no doubt assisted the efficiency of the polling staff.

CONDUCT

Overall the returning officer dealt with no major problems with regard to conduct of campaigners, requiring no punitive sanctions and no referrals to the tribunal.

There were some changes to access to the Atrium where the Hawthorn polling occurred and changes from the polling staff in terms of areas where campaigning was allowed, however complaints associated with this were minor and largely ended by Tuesday.

It was reported to the returning officer that the presence of the National Union of Students President was, at times, disruptive.

In previous years the presence of students from other universities appears to have been a problem, pleasingly this was not an issue in 2018.

CROYDON AND WANTIRNA

To return to a common motif, voter numbers at both these campuses was very low, with Thursday at Wantirna holding the dubious honour of being the first ever booth run by Argent that failed to register a single vote all day (Thursday) despite the presence of campaigners from each of the tickets.

OTHER

There was a slight issue where polling staff were required to share the atrium space with another event, however staff reported no major issues with this arrangement.

Overall, the returning officer was very pleased with the conduct of this election, and would like to thank the staff of the Swinburne Student Union, as well as Benjamin Golby of Argent Elections for his assistance during this period.

The election for NUS delegates at La Trobe was conducted in accordance with R.18 and B.3-6 of the NUS rules with the General Secretary receiving the correct notice.