



Victoria University Student Union Board Meeting Report

Department & Presenter	Accessibility - Tynah Pearson
Date	19 October 2022

ITEM

Since my introduction as Accessibility officer in May of 2022, the following initiatives and activities have run as a focus of the Accessibility Department of VUSU:

May saw the beginning of the Sensory Spaces/Accessible events projects, in which VUSU events were now required to have additional information in advertisement (such as points of contact for Access needs/Carers tickets) as well as the introduction of sensory tubs and spaces at all major events. These projects were designed through student feedback collected throughout the year through Accessible VUSU survey and through students complaints, queries and ideas collected via email/in person. These projects have been developed throughout the VUSU team with many members of the board more aware of Access needs and opting for sensory spaces at events eg. Queernival/Ball, as well as being a contribution that we as a team can provide to events such as Block Party by Student Life. Developing on from this, Accessibility Training was offered to all VUSU staff and a brief training given to all Board Members.

Expanding the program, initiatives such as the VUSU drop-in sessions allowed for our faces to be more commonly known outside of the context of events and an opportunity to build further trust within the community has been noted as a result of this program.

A six week Introduction to Auslan Course was undertaken in Semester 2 of 2022, through Expressions Australia. 25 participants signed up for the free course, with more than 10 completing the full 6 weeks. It was an extremely successful program, that I hope is continued into next year, particularly through offering a level 2 as well as an intro.

Events throughout the year that have run to increase community amongst the Disabled community at VU have included multiple Coffee and Dog events, online trivia, and incorporations of disability focused activities at major festivals such as sensory spaces and tables.

Undertaken alongside the Womens and Queer officers, collaborative projects have included the Sustainable Period Project, where we funded \$5000 worth of sustainable menstrual products, focusing not only on access but also on how menstruation can often induce dysphoria and ensuring access equally to these products for trans and gender diverse folks in our community.

Initiatives being carried into 2022/23 include the Neurodivergent social group, a joint collaboration with Wellbeing and Accessibility Services, targeting students who are Neurodiverse identifying to collaboratively design a social network project that runs online workshops, activities out in the community and across campuses. This program is joint funded between VUSU and Wellbeing and will run on a 12 month trial from November 2022-November 2023. Any neurodiverse identifying people may join and is open to those who are on access plans and particularly those who aren't/would like to be. A great initiative to build community, get to know the staff in Wellbeing/Access Services and help students access services easier between internal VU departments and VUSU.

Another Initiative carried into 2023 will be the development of more accessible online VU spaces. This includes the addition of Support services on VU collaborative spaces, updates to the Victoria University website, and reviewing of online modules for staff and students. This is in conjunction with Advocacy and the Accessibility action plan working group. These have been extremely beneficial to be a part of especially with the introduction of VU's collaboration with Aspect and the introduction of many new Accessibility initiatives. I hope that the student voice remains an integral part of these programs and particularly those voices from communities they will directly affect. "Nothing about us, without us".