

**Professor Susan Elliott AM**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Education)

28 June 2019

Henry Fox

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**RE: Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funding dispute**

Dear Robyn and Henry,

I am writing in regard to the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funding dispute that the Monash Student Association (MSA) and Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA) have been unable to resolve. Thank you for your time in putting together your respective proposals. It is clear that you both want to do what is best for the Monash student community and, as such, I hope that you can find a way to move forward from this and work cohesively to provide the best activities and services possible for our students.

I strongly believe that a shared services model across student organisation groups would best meet the needs of our student cohorts, and I appreciate your efforts to date on this front. As we work towards this vision, our immediate goal should be to allocate funding in a way that maximises efficiencies in terms of the provision of services.

I have reviewed both proposals in great detail and have found in favour of the ongoing annual transfer of a 15% portion of MPA SSAF collected from Clayton enrolled postgraduates to the MSA effective immediately.

The MSA already has in place established services that are offered to all students at the Clayton campus, irrespective of their level of study, and have demonstrated the use of a reasonable number of these services by postgraduate students. Duplication of these services for a subset of the Clayton student community would represent an inefficient use of resources. As stated in the independent 2012 KPMG Funding Review report, "MPA should provide services that are supplementary to the MSOs, not duplicating." By transferring a portion of MPA SSAF to MSA, MSA can continue to provide services to all students on campus, thereby ensuring an efficient use of student funds and minimising the provision of overlapping services.

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While the MPA have expressed concern around postgraduate interest in and uptake of the services offered by the MSA, I believe MPA and MSA can work together to refine these services in a way that better caters to our entire Clayton student community. I would therefore encourage the two groups to come together to brainstorm some changes to improve desirability and increase usage of existing services by all students, including postgraduates.

The decision to transfer a portion of MPA SSAF to the MSA does not come lightly and without conditions. A key recommendation of the aforementioned KPMG report was that the “MSOs and MPA should agree to the services to be provided to PG students and monitor and report their usage by PG students.” In order to implement this, there will be an ongoing expectation that the MSA and MPA will meet at the beginning of each year, prior to setting budgets, to negotiate in good faith an agreement on the services and activities that should be funded by the transferred MPA SSAF and made available to postgraduate students. The MSA should be open to reasonable changes to their services and activities to better cater for postgraduate students, in the spirit of this arbitration, and the MPA should capitalise on the many benefits of having economics of scale on the shared services that the MSA provides for all Clayton students.

However, if the need arises for MSA and MPA to obtain the input of a mediator, the University can assist in this regard.

In addition to this, the MSA will be held accountable in the use of MPA SSAF via annual reporting of the final allocation of these funds, which are to be reviewed by the MPA and the Education Portfolio. I hope that this eases any of the MPA’s concerns regarding the effective channelling and accountability for these funds.

I firmly believe that if the MSA and MPA work together, we will see improved outcomes for every Clayton student. I look forward to continue to working with you to achieve this goal.

Yours sincerely



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