

# SOUND

THE OFFICIAL BROADSHEET OF MONASH UNIVERSITY

Number 70  
17.3.72.

## THE UNIVERSITY UNION AND THE UNION BOARD

A Union General Meeting has been called for 1.15 p.m. today, Thursday, March 16, to discuss the proposed recomposition of the Union Board. At Monash, all members of the University, both staff and students, are members of the Union, so this is a matter which affects everyone here.

The management of the Union is in the hands of a Union Board, which has authority delegated by Council under Statute 2.7. The union will have a turnover of approximately \$1,670,000 in 1972. This sum includes income of \$573,000 from student fees, and many of its responsibilities, including financial management, care and maintenance of buildings and grounds, and the encouragement of new projects, are long term responsibilities.

At present the Union Board has 15 members of whom 9 are students, 1 is a graduate, 1 is a lay member of Council and 4 are members of staff. The detailed composition is: Chairman of M.A.S.; Previous member of the Union Board nominated by M.A.S.; Two students nominated by M.A.S. (these nominees are determined by an election from all students); Two members of non-sporting clubs nominated by Clubs & Societies Council; Two members of sporting clubs nominated by executive committee of the Sports & Recreation Association; Research student elected by M.R.S.A.; Member of the Graduates Association; Representative of University Council; Member of Professorial Board; Member of University staff nominated by executive committee of the Staff Association, Comptroller or nominee; Vice-Chancellor or nominee (Chairman).

During 1971, the Union Board carried out an extensive review of its composition, and the composition of its sub-committees. Many different proposals were put forward, and after considerable debate the following Union Board composition was recommended by the required two-thirds majority: Chairman of M.A.S.; Three members of M.A.S. elected by M.A.S.; One member of non-sporting clubs nominated by C. & S. Council; One member of sporting clubs nominated by executive committee of S. & R. Association; Research student elected by M.R.S.A.; Member of Graduates Association; Representative of University Council; Member of academic staff nominated by Staff Association; Member of non-academic staff nominated by General Staff Association, Comptroller or nominee; Vice-Chancellor or nominee (no longer to be *ex-officio* chairman); and in a new electoral category, Two members elected by and from the total Union membership. Total, 15 members.

Because this new proposal had implications for many groups within the University, comments on it were widely sought. The final proposals, including details of all subcommittees, were submitted to the Professorial Board at its meeting in February in the hope that the document could then go to the first meeting of Council on Monday, March 20, accompanied by a statement of the Professorial Board's views.

The Steering Committee of the Professorial Board drew the attention of the Board to three items: The V.C. or his nominee would no longer be *ex-officio* Chairman, the Professorial Board member had been removed, and two new positions were proposed for a new electorate consisting of 'all Union members', i.e. all students, academic staff and non-academic staff. The Steering Committee also recommended that no employee of the Union should be entitled to be elected or appointed to the Union Board, which would be possible under several categories of the new proposal.

The Professorial Board referred this matter back to the Steering Committee for more detailed consideration. It was suggested, for example, that a better recommendation might be that 'no officer of the Union shall serve as a member of the Union Board'. Other suggestions along these lines were made, and there was widespread agreement that the Warden of the Union, but not other Union officers, should be a member of the Union Board. Members of the Professorial Board were unanimous that the Vice-Chancellor or his nominee should remain *ex-officio* Chairman of the Union Board; they were not particularly concerned that the Professorial Board member had been removed, but felt strongly that the academic staff representation should remain at two. Concern was also expressed at the reduction of Clubs & Societies representation from two to one, and Sports & Recreation representation from two to one. The Professorial Board was overwhelmingly opposed to the creation of a new class of electorate 'all Union members'.

This matter will come back to the Professorial Board at its March 29 meeting, and a recommendation could then go to Council on April 10.

In the meantime, members of the University have an opportunity to debate the subject further at today's Union General Meeting. Recommendations from this meeting will go to the Union Board which is meeting at 5.30 p.m. today.



## THE UNIVERSITY ACT AND M.A.S. FUNDS

This University is completely dependent upon public funds and its whole operation is governed by the Monash University Act. It is the responsibility of the Council, and therefore of the Council's executive officers, to ensure that the University is in fact run in accordance with the Act and our performance in this regard is watched rather carefully by the Auditor General and his staff.

It is a matter for great satisfaction that the financial policies and behaviour of this University are very well regarded in government circles and it is of the first importance that this situation should not be disturbed.

For this reason remarks like Herington's "We pay \$58.50 per year for the Union to function. We hand our \$58.50 to sustain *our* Union . . ." and so on cannot go unchallenged. The Union was built very largely with public funds (about \$1,628,000 has been expended so far) and the running expenses are met from the annual Union fees most of which are provided by scholarships and grantgiving agencies. It is widely known that in England the use of Union funds has become a matter of acute controversy which may even, in the end, result in the refusal of public authorities to continue to provide funds. It would be tragic if this were to happen here and, for this reason, my colleagues and I have been trying to steer developments along a more constructive route.

The University Act declares that "All fees and *all other moneys* received by or on behalf of the University . . . shall be applied . . . solely for the purposes of the University" (Section 32(i)). The purposes of the University are defined in Section 5 of the Act and they do not include sending money to La Trobe S.R.C. and similar worthy purposes.

The Comptroller and his staff have the duty of administering this section of the Act and they have had some difficulty in doing so in a reasonable manner; they have in the end, worked out to their own satisfaction, at least, some guide lines on what they can accept and what they cannot.

But there is an area of disagreement with M.A.S. officials, naturally, and for this reason our proposals to the Minister about desirable changes to the Act include the provision that five per cent of the money made available to M.A.S. be freed from the restriction of Section 32 mentioned above, provided that these funds are not used for purposes that are actually antagonistic to the objects of the University.

When I discussed this matter with the Minister he indicated that the Government's agreement to this would be affected by the way in which expenditure is actually authorised by M.A.S. If satisfactory procedures are adopted and incorporated in the constitution of M.A.S. then the desired clause is quite likely to be recommended to Parliament.

If not, not.

J.A.L. Matheson,  
Vice-Chancellor.

### LOCATION OF SECTIONS — STAFF BRANCH

From March 20, the Academic Section of Staff Branch will be located on the ground floor of the Annexe to the University Offices, and the Staff Transit Housing Office will be located on the first floor of the Annexe.

The Non-Academic Section and Superannuation Section will remain on the first floor of the Annexe and the Salaries Office in its current location on the ground floor.

These moves will take place on the afternoon of Friday, March 17 and the Academic and Non-Academic Sections and Staff Transit Housing Office will not be available for normal enquiries during that afternoon.

Authorised by K.W. Bennetts, Information Officer.