I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Warden of Convocation, Convocation Council, and the graduate community for the support they have offered me this year throughout my term as President of the UWA Student Guild. I am grateful for not only the support and feedback offered, but the sense of community that has been present and the interest that Convocation continue to take in student issues and activities on campus.

This year has seen a large level of transformation and reorganisation in the Guild. As an organisation with more than 102 years of history, the Guild faces the constant need to evolve to meet stakeholder expectations, while remaining true to our core purposes – representing students through advocacy, providing valuable student services and quality catering, and helping to enrich the student experience at UWA.

The Guild has been focusing on six key platforms to meet our objectives and transform our operations to continue to excel in both advocacy and service provision, and continue to exceed expectations as one of the best student organisations in this country.

TRANSFORMATION OF OPERATIONS

Key Platforms for Strategic Transformation

1. Digitalising Process, Practices and Services
2. Creating Quality and Value
3. Student-Centric Focus
4. Brand Management
5. Utilising Data and Maximising Resources
6. Effective Engagement with Students

New Management Structure

At the beginning of 2015 the Guild introduced a new management structure, allowing for greater management of the organisation across its key divisions: Student Services, Corporate Services, Human Resources and Catering. This has involved introducing Associate Director positions, between manager and Director levels. This has allowed for better succession planning and creating a greater culture of accountability and management oversight. The new structure is working well across the organisations’ departments and with the student representative team.

Operating Practice

In transforming our operations, the Guild has installed a variety of new systems, processes and updated operating practices across all Guild Departments, including student loan applications, trialling online club banking,
new accounting software and processes (introduction of NetSuite), and new online event management and approvals systems. We have assessed the way we used to operate, highlighted areas for improvement, and acted on these areas to ensure that we are transparent, accountable and efficient in our operations.

One of the pillars of our transformational plan is digitising processes and procedures, and this has drawn a focus onto the Guild’s online presence and offerings. The launch of several new website and a new Guild Weekly e-newsletter has also transformed the organisation’s external communication channels, building an even better interface with the organisation and students, and further supporting the student experience on campus. New web platforms include a new TexChange (online book swap, sell and buy network) website, a new Guild homepage, updated Clubs and Societies sections, a constantly updated Pelican website allowing the publication to expand into more current issues and beyond the print medium, and much more.

In trying together all aspects our transformational strategy, we have recently launched MyGuild. MyGuild provides students will a personalised interface with all of the club and society memberships information, committee activities, events calendars and approvals, Guild loans details, TexChange and more. Students can now obtain a ‘Student Experience Transcript’ of all of their Guild related activities and training undertaken in representative roles at UWA, which can be added to their CV. This platform represents a huge potential for full integration of all Guild services and campus activities into the same place, and truly shows the Guild’s value in this space. We are able to link students with clubs that may interest them based on information provided, make it even easier for existing clubs to recruit members and advertise their events, and ensure that student volunteering and activity is recognised for the value that it holds, with recognition of their efforts on their Student Experience Transcript.

The next phases of MyGuild will include Guild Volunteering and Eat & Drink services, and the Guild’s strategy is to move as much of its backend operation into a digital environment.

**Construction Projects and Refurbishments**

In 2015 the Guild has continued to invest in physical infrastructure projects to enhance the student experience on campus. These include:

- **Student Collaborative Zone** – a brand new areas on the first floor of the Guild Central Wing (old administration area) for student clubs and societies, including bookable meeting rooms, hot-desks, work areas and storage. Target opening is beginning of 2016.

- **Subway and Boost Juice Outlets** – construction has started on these Guild managed outlets, scheduled for completion in second semester 2015.
• **Solar Panel project** - As part of the Guild’s Sustainability Plan, the Solar Panel project has been given the green light and will be put in place on the roof of the UWA Business School in 2015. This project has been a priority for the past two years and we are pleased to have been given final approval and to be continuing to show leadership in the sustainability area.

• **Hackett Café** – this year saw a refurbishment of the café’s kitchen and servery areas, new furniture and a new menu, with a focus on venue experience. The focus for this café is shifting further towards a dine-in, made-to-order experience, where various sustainability initiatives will be trialled over the coming months and into 2016.

• **Nedlands Café** – upgrade to kitchen and service area as well as a new garden in collaboration with the Guild’s Environment Department.

• **The Tavern** – in a two stage project, an update to the outdoor furniture, menu and drinks options has been implemented (beginning Semester Two 2015) and has been well received. Stage 2 of the project involves a new planter fence perimeter as designed by ALVA students, which is in the approval stages for implementation by 2016.

The total investment dedicated to these projects will be circa $2.3 million. This is a mix of Student Service Amenities Fee (SSAF) CAPEX budget as well as the Guild’s funds.

The Guild’s Masterplan (the construction projects plan for Guild Village precinct) is consistently being reviewed to meet the needs of students. Future areas for project consideration include; development of top level of the Guild Central Wing, Cameron Hall, Reid Café furniture, and the internal section of the Tavern including heating, cooling and new décor.

**Audit and Risk**

In April 2015 the Guild submitted its annual Financial Audit and Student Service and Amenity Fees (SSAF) Report to UWA Risk and Audit Committee. This forms part of the Guild’s compliance obligations under SSAF legislation. The Guild is pleased to report that the committee fully commended the report and that the Guild met all of its obligations. The Committee also commended the operational and process reform that the Guild had implemented over the past year.

**Human Resources**

The Guild launched its first Human resources strategy in May 2015. This links in with the Guild’s Transformation Strategy and places its staff management, talent and recruitment as a central part of the organisation. Succession
planning, increased training opportunities, health and wellbeing are key parts of the new strategy, which is aiming to bring all divisions and staff closer together, to deliver better support and services to students. In May 2015 the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement with Guild staff was agreed, which will be operational for four years.

The Guild has launched a series of UWA compliance training for health and safety for staff and successfully engaged in reporting and measurement of health and safety compliance. In the next twelve months the Guild will be focusing on greater staff training and redesigning an effective transition plan for incoming councillors and office bearers, with the assistance of student representatives.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION AND DEPARTMENTS

2015 has seen a high level of activity from the 102nd Guild Council. As President I wanted to focus on building the image and reputation of the Guild and our presence within the community, collaboration across student portfolios, representation and the diversity of the student body, and a consistent focus on value-add and differentiation, ensuring that everything that the Guild does has value to students, UWA and the community, is effective in meeting its aims, and highlights the unique structure and function of our organisation in delivering its objectives. The following outlines some of the key priorities of the Guild for this year, with some example initiatives that have been implemented. More detailed information about the different student-run Departments of the Guild and the initiatives and activities they have implemented in 2015, will be available in the UWA Student Guild Annual Report, to be released over the coming weeks.

Brand, Reputation and Community Engagement

This year we have had a strong focus on the UWA Student Guild brand, ensuring that we have a clearer messaging strategy in place in order to better communicate our services, value and aims to both the student body and the community more broadly. After rebranding in 2014, we have seen a very positive community engagement with the Guild this year and an increasing awareness of the Guild’s role and place on campus in the student body. This involves finding better ways to communicate our initiatives to students and better branding the Guild’s activities and achievements, so that students are more aware of what they receive in services and advocacy in exchange for their membership and a portion of their SSAF.

The Guild has increased its presence in local media, being featured in local newspapers a number of times throughout the year, including for our catering initiatives, Guild Volunteering, carbon offsetting of O’Day, and various campus based campaigns. I have been proactive in seeking positive media engagements surrounding student activities and the student experience on
campus, including club and Department activities, and these are aspects of the UWA experience that attract students to UWA.

Through proactive media engagement, strong brand management and genuine engagement with the student body and community, I believe that the Guild has become more than just a voice for students, but a genuine voice for youth on key issues in the public forum.

Increasing engagement with UWA staff, the broader community and UWA Student Guild alumni have been key achievements for this year:

- **Associate Membership**

2015 has seen the Guild’s Associate Membership double after increased communication and engagement with UWA staff, including the UWA Staff Association and the NTEU. Staff are able to not only support the Guild financially in exchange for Associate Member level benefits, but an increased level of communication and understanding surrounding Guild services, which can then be recommended to students. We have also increased our engagement with CELT and Study Smarter students, who are eligible for Guild Associate Membership throughout their courses.

- **The UWA Student Guild presents His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet** –

The UWA Student Guild hosted His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet for a discussion titled ‘The Importance of Education’ earlier this year. It was truly a momentous day for our organisation, and I was pleased to be able to organise this experience for UWA students, staff, high-school students from both locally and more broadly, and the community. The event was a truly once in a lifetime experience for all involved, and was streamed online so that as many people as possible could be involved with the experience. The video recording that is hosted online on YouTube has over 9000 views and rising.

Organising an event of this scale was a huge undertaking, but brought incredible value to the community, and many people who experienced the event would never have been able to do so otherwise. His Holiness’ words of wisdom, sense of humour, answers to the questions of students and jokes between questions left all who attended with something to take away into their own life.

- **A Guild Council Morning Tea w The Honourable Kim Beazley AC** –

The Guild Alumni project was successfully launched on August 13th with ‘A Guild Council Morning Tea with The Honourable Kim Beazley AC’ commemorating the completion of the UWA Centenary restoration projects repairing the Guild Council Meeting Room table and chairs. The event was a great success, with Kim Beazley discussing the history of the UWA Student
Guild, its comparative success through various attempts to reduce its power and autonomy throughout political history, and spoke very fondly of his time on campus.

It was a huge honour to host Kim Beazley and to have him say that he was proud to see the Guild as it is now, and that he loved coming back to the place that made him who he is today. The event was attended by a number of past President and Office Bearers, and many who were unable to attend gave their apologies with notes that they would love to be involved in future. This bodes well for the future of the project and I hope we can establish a structure where this can be formalised moving forward.

**Representation**

The Guild is the representative body for all UWA students, and in representing the diverse student body, needs to make active efforts to be inclusive and representative of the diversity of students at UWA. The Guild currently has a number of Office Bearers that represent various groups on campus, including the Women’s Officer and Queer Officers, but there is very limited representation for some other groups. As such, the following initiatives have started this year:

- **Women of Colour Collective and Queer Women Collective** –

  These two collectives have been established as sub-collectives of the Women’s Collective, and are both autonomous. These collectives allow space for women to discuss their experiences as Women of Colour or Queer Women in a safe space. The Women’s Collective is constantly striving to be more intersectional in its campaigns and operations, and this is a positive step in this direction. Having space, time and voice for these collectives highlights the intersectional nature of oppression – where, for example, white heterosexual women are in a comparative position of privilege to a woman of colour or a queer woman.

- **Students with Disabilities and Medical Conditions** –

  There is currently no representative group or student voice for students who identify as having a disability or a medical condition. UWA’s excellent UniAccess group are able to look at how one’s academic life is effected or influenced by a disability or medical condition, but there is no student group that exists to advocate around the effects on the student experience as a whole. As such, the Guild Vice-President and I have been working to engage with students about their experience on campus, with focus groups starting in Semester Two.

- **Ethnocultural Collective** –
There is currently no student voice or representation for students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. A number of campus organisations in Australia have an Ethnocultural Collective or Ethnocultural Officer position on their equivalent student Council, and a number of students have begun to work to start a collective at UWA. This involves autonomous discussions about personal experiences, in the hope to establish a group that can advocate for these students based on lived experience.

**Value-add and Differentiation**

In seeking to establish the Guild’s ‘value-add’ in all operations, and differentiate our services, we have been seeking to establish detailed data on the needs, wants and key motivators of different types of students while they are on campus. Over the past year we have developed a ‘Student Lifecycle Report’ which highlights the changing profiles of students (Domestic/International, Undergraduate/Postgraduate etc) in order to establish whether the Guild is providing adequate services across all operations, how we can appropriately market our services to students at different stages of their time as a student, and whether there are additional services that could be required to fill any gaps in need or interest. This piece of research will be used to inform all operations and we intend to expand upon this in future.

**FUTURE DIRECTION**

The UWA Student Guild has had an active and busy year, with a number of significant capital projects eventuating, and a number of new initiatives and activities being trialled. We are moving more into the online space, focusing on genuine representation and engagement with students, and on building our position in the community.

The Student Lifecycle data is already making changes in the Volunteering and Catering spheres, and when tied in with our Transformational Strategy as previously described, I am confident that the Guild will continue to grow and excel, with increasing value to students and stakeholders, into the future.

With my term as President ending in November, I am confident that this year has been a year of growth that will leave successive Guild’s well placed to continue to exceed expectations in delivering a second century of services, representation and advocacy.

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