



## **SUPRA Council Nominee Information**

*Please read the following information before completing a SUPRA Council Nomination Form.*

### ***What is SUPRA?***

SUPRA is an independent representative association providing advice, advocacy and support services for the postgraduate student community. SUPRA gives postgraduates a voice within the University and beyond.

SUPRA representatives sit on University governance bodies such as the Graduate Studies Committee and Academic Board. SUPRA also has regular meetings with the Vice-Chancellor and other senior staff to raise matters of concern to postgraduate students. We use these opportunities to monitor University policy and promote postgraduate interests in decision-making.

SUPRA provides a voice for postgraduates in education policy at a federal and state level. We make submissions to government inquiries, regularly write to the Education Ministers and speak to the media about education issues.

SUPRA has recently been campaigning on issues such as travel concessions for international students and a Postgraduate Entitlements Policy.

We hold forums and campaign around social, cultural and political issues. We believe that part of providing a voice for postgraduates includes facilitating engagement with broader social issues. In 2006, for example, we held forums on same sex marriage, women in education and the impact of Google on research and learning. We also hold information sessions on a wide range of topics, thesis discussion groups and organise an annual postgraduate conference to help build a sense of community across disciplines

SUPRA has networks for Indigenous, International, Queer and Women students to help build a sense of community and work against barriers to education faced by minority groups..

Most students go through their degree with few, if any, serious problems. But if students get a mark they think is unfair, have a problem with their supervisor or landlord or get charged higher fees than they should, then SUPRA can provide them with invaluable help. SUPRA employs Student Advice and Advocacy Officers (SAAOs) who advocate for and advise students with appeals, supervision, fee-related matters, tenancy and other academic and welfare issues. This service is free, independent, professional and confidential, and provides individually tailored assistance.

You can find out more about SUPRA from our website: [www.supra.usyd.edu.au](http://www.supra.usyd.edu.au).

## *What does it mean to be a SUPRA councillor?*

The relevant sections of the SUPRA Constitution read:

5.1 There shall be a Council which shall have power, subject to the powers of a General Meeting, to determine and interpret policy and to take action in accordance with the aims of the Association.

5.2 The Council shall:

- (a) oversee the Association's performance;
- (b) approve and monitor the policy, aims and other aspects of its strategic direction;
- (c) establish and monitor the Association's annual budget and annual business plan;
- (d) oversee risk management and risk assessment across the Association;
- (e) establish and monitor the Association's systems of control and accountability; and
- (f) regularly review its own performance (in light of powers and obligation under this Constitution)

This may sound rather daunting, but these objectives are dealt with by consensus of councillors at Council Meetings. Council meetings are usually about 2 hours long and are held once a month, with occasional extra ones when there is a lot to be decided. They are usually in the evenings from 6pm.

Each councillor is also expected to serve on a committee, either our Policy Committee (which among other things looks at SUPRA's responses to University and Government policy), the Publications Committee (which works on publications like eXpress), the Activities Committee (which runs events and campaigns and things like our participation in O-week), or the Management Committee (which deals with the day to day running of the organisation). The Management Committee generally meets at least once a fortnight - usually in the daytime - and the other committees about once a month at present. Councillors can be on more than one committee if they choose to be.

Of course we know people have other commitments, and so missing occasional meetings is fine provided apologies are given by email or phone, but there are requirements in the Constitution (available from the SUPRA website, Sections 5.16 and 6.9) about attendance at meetings. The main thing is that you come to the meetings you can make armed with ideas and a willingness to engage. Ideally, councillors also attend and help organise SUPRA events wherever possible.

If people wish to become a SUPRA Councillor, they need to be nominated by two current SUPRA subscribers on the attached nomination form. The completed nomination form can be faxed to 02 9351 6400 or scanned and e-mailed to [secretary@supra.usyd.edu.au](mailto:secretary@supra.usyd.edu.au) or mailed to The Secretary, SUPRA, Level 2, Holme Building (A09), The University of Sydney, NSW 2006).

Because of the VSU legislation, University of Sydney postgraduates are not automatically members of SUPRA. In order to nominate for Council, it is necessary to be a SUPRA Subscriber. Details of how to become a SUPRA Subscriber are also in the e-grad or on the website at [www.supra.usyd.edu.au](http://www.supra.usyd.edu.au).