

## Opening Session: The Changing Role of the Resso

### SPEAKER 1: Kate Davidson, RMIT

- Staff Student delineation
- Staff taking on more political work within SU's
- How student Unions Changed
  - general shift towards right wing control
  - don't actively organise
  - unconcerned about future of student unions
  - traditionally right has argued for VSU but now...

### *Role of Resso: Take up support role for students*

- In 80's student reps would do a lot of research themselves and produce papers, have deeper understanding
- As student unions were established as more permanent organizations, they employed staff
- In 90's being a rep was more about organising: poster, stickers, leaflets
- Now: reps fulfil little function except rubber stamp work of employees
  - Reps not trained to organise
  - Reps arrive at positions without history of activism or issue
  - Leads to demoralisation of staff due to lack of recognition – IR disputes
- Diff between Guild and SRC Structure (Guild has buffer in Manager, SRC –direct supervision of staff)

### *Case Studies*

#### **VUT**

- *In late 90's SU annexed by Uni and became a wing of student services*
- *before staff expected to do things like poster runs and distribution*
- *after: political work became regulated by new employer (that was criticising)*

#### **La Trobe**

- *Research staff attend and report to SRC meetings*
- *not clear that staff member has industrial rights*
- *is researcher the primary coordinator of campaigns or there to support work of student collectives?*

#### **RMIT**

- *Council decided that there would be no defence case for two reps who were up on discipline charges*
- *student rights officers now having to carry political arguments with university about rights of reps and misconduct*

**Policy** Universities now seek advice from student rights staff rather than student reps on policy  
Are staff taking control of student affairs accidentally?

***Political?***

Our jobs are political- but in a grey area- which pushes staff to take on roles of student reps  
Are student organizations redundant? Becoming a students rights market driven service – ie “ I  
pay to have my rights upheld and won’t pay if I am not getting this ‘service’.”

***Services?***

Our role should not be the same as a student service like learning skills unit.