

THE ANU OBSERVER

Student Services and
Amenities Fee
2019 Bid



NEWS | ANALYSIS | VIDEO | LIVESTREAMS



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ABOUT OBSERVER

2018

2018 was a year of enormous change and progress for *Observer*. We have cemented our value as a provider of timely, accurate, and detailed news relevant to ANU students.

This year saw us cover many important stories and events. We were among the first to cover the Ramsay Centre, with a quote obtained for our article ultimately being read out on the floor of Parliament. We've covered the campus flooding, the Kambri redevelopment, student politics, and issues faced by individuals with the University or their residence – just to name a few.

Our digital team has also been working hard. They have livestreamed and/or filmed a number of events on campus, performing a service both for students and for student groups. We have brought on a number of photographers, who have proven invaluable in improving our graphics – both in terms of providing photographs, and through providing advice on design. You will notice that our graphics generally appear more professional, informative, and appealing; gone are the days of splashing dollar signs over the ANUSA logo.

Observer has this year strengthened its online presence. Our website underwent a number of improvements over the summer break, helping people to find the articles they want to read. We have seen increased engagement with our Facebook page, having hit 3200 followers, and we are taking steps towards a WeChat presence.

This year has also been significant from an organisational standpoint. Receiving SSAF has secured our place as a campus institution. We have seen the first wave of students come in who have not known a campus without *Observer*. We have also become democratic – more on that below.

Now that we have shown ourselves to be a responsible and lasting campus institution, we look forward to continuing to expand *Observer* to provide more information to more students. Our current budget is the bare minimum we needed to continue operating; this year's bid will allow us to work harder and deliver new and interesting media to the ANU community.



Our Governance

Observer is an incorporated association under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* (ACT). All ANU students are automatically members of *Observer*.

Our basic structure consists of a news team (reporters, researchers, etc) and a digital team (photographers, video editors, etc). These teams report to the News Editors and Digital Editors, respectively. We then have the governing body, the Council, which controls the organisation's budget, policies, and so on. This consist of a Secretary, a Treasurer, one Digital Editor, and two News Editors. One News Editor holds the position of Council Chair. We have an independent Arbitration Panel which deals with disputes and decides honoraria.

Editors, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and Arbitration Panel members are elected at a General Meeting. All ANU students may vote at this meeting. Only people who have been involved in the *Observer* team may run for an Editor role, to ensure they have sufficient experience to run the team. Any student may run for any of the other positions.

All elected roles (save the Arbitration Panel) receive a small allowance, paid in five instalments, to recognise their work. Other team members can receive honoraria for exceptional work or dedication, with anyone being able to make a submission to the Arbitration Panel that anyone should receive honoraria.

A Note on Editors

As our organisation is still relatively new, we benefit from some flexibility in our structure. To this end, at our upcoming General Meeting, only three News Editors and one Digital Editor will be elected. This is to allow for streamlining, as we found that our total of seven Editors at the start of this year was too large. If these Editors are struggling with the workload, the Council may decide to increase the number of Editors. A General Meeting must then be called so the position(s) can be filled. Any member of *Observer* (ANU student) may submit to the Arbitration Panel that this increase should not occur, and if the Arbitration Panel agrees with this, then the number of Editors shall remain four.

To allow for this, we also have some flexibility in our payment regulations. We mandate a nexus between the amount paid in allowances and the amount paid in honoraria, to ensure that the hard work of all team members is recognised. However, in the event of an increase in the number of Editors, this cost will be borne equally through a reduction in allowances and a reduction in honoraria. This serves to recognise a change in workloads, and also minimises and distorting effect that could happen if Editors have to worry their allowance will be significantly cut to bring on a new person. For this reason, we have combined allowances and honoraria into one line item.



BID SUMMARY

Comparison to 2018

Line Item	2018 Bid	2018 Received	2019 Bid
Allowances and Honoraria	\$39 000	\$22 680	\$32 062.50
Equipment	\$9 000	\$3 000	\$4 150.00
News Subscriptions	\$550	\$0	\$530.00
Software Subscriptions	\$750	\$720	\$800.00
Printing	\$8 000	\$0	\$500.00
Advertising and Merchandise	\$2 000	\$600	\$1 200.00
Events and Meetings	\$1 800	\$900	\$1 400.00
NUS National Conference	\$3 000	\$1 300	\$2 800.00
Office Supplies	\$500	\$200	\$200.00
Administration	\$1 000	\$600	\$500.00
Legal	\$2 000	\$2 000	\$2 000.00
FoI/Investigative Journalism	\$1 000	\$0	\$1 000.00
Office Rent and Fit-out	-	-	\$20 000.00
Memorial Award	-	-	\$1 000.00
Phone	-	-	\$50.00
MHFA Training	-	-	\$400.00
Technological Contingency	-	-	\$500.00
Auditing	-	-	\$5 000.00
Total	\$68 600	\$32 000	\$74 092.50



New Items

Office Rent and Fit-Out

Observer may have the opportunity to have a dedicated office space next year. This is a placeholder bid while we await more information, and we apologise for any inconvenience the current uncertainty may cause.

Observer currently shares the Square One Co-working Space in Copland G032. This has been a valuable space to hold meetings and for the team to come together to work. Our team is largely off-campus students, so having an office space has encouraged those team members to spend more time on campus. This in turn helps our team be more in touch with campus happenings.

However, sharing a space is less than ideal. It means that we cannot discuss confidential matters in the office, as someone could walk in at any time. It also means we cannot control the layout or furnishing of the space, so it is not perfectly adapted to our team's needs.

This office is an absolute necessity for *Observer* to be a lasting campus institution. All other SSAF-receiving groups have a dedicated workspace. The Kambri redevelopment presents a unique opportunity to gain a space which suits our needs.

We have had extensive contact with the University on this matter since finding out about the possibility. We have been told to expect an update on 17 October as to whether we can have a space, and what that might look like and cost. We will therefore be updating this line item in time for the 19 October meeting.

MHFA Training

It is important that *Observer's* leaders feel equipped to provide support to team members. The vital nature of this training has become apparent on a number of occasions this year, related both to internal *Observer* matters and to coverage of distressing topics.

Technological Contingency Fund

Most of us are journalists, not tech people. We do have a web administrator on the team, and plan to recruit more. However, *Observer's* systems are complex and any number of things could cause a significant issue. This small fund will allow *Observer* to bring on someone with specialised knowledge as an independent contractor to fix an issue if one arises.

Auditing

This is needed to fulfil our obligations under the SSAF Agreement, and ensure good financial management. It will cover the current financial year and next financial year.



Significant Changes

Allowances and Honoraria

Observer would like to increase Editors' pay to approximately \$4500 per year, up from approximately \$2500 per year. We would also like to increase the pay for the Secretary and Treasurer, as well as providing a small additional allowance for the News Editor who takes up the role of Chair. The exact amounts of these last allowances are flexible, to be agreed upon at the start of the year depending on exact agreed duties (this flexibility is important since, under our Constitution and policies, it is possible, for example, for a person to be both a News Editor and the Secretary).

As outlined in our Business Case, our elected officials are currently paid nowhere near a fair amount for the work they do. This is the case whether their pay is compared to their hours, or to the work of others in similar roles. \$4500 remains a token amount, but is at least more comparable to other roles. Without this increase, leadership roles in *Observer* will be inaccessible to many students, and relatively unattractive to others.

Printing

Observer has no immediate plans to move to a printed newspaper. However, we would like to put up posters with the week's headlines in prominent places on campus. This will allow those who do not have Facebook, or who are less inclined to seek out campus news, get relevant information and learn where they can read more.

Advertising and Merchandise

Currently our team members contribute \$10 per shirt. Given that most of our team are volunteers, this is not ideal. We would also like lanyards for identification purposes.

NUS National Conference

Last year, *Observer* was only able to send one team member to the NUS National Conference. This was highly detrimental to their wellbeing and meant our coverage was not as good as it could have been. We would like to send two people this year, as we originally bid for last year.

Investigative Journalism Fund

Observer bid for the same amount last year under the line item "Freedom of Information". This is a broader version of that bid, so that *Observer* can cover other costs associated with investigative journalism.