



## Media Release

### Labor Party Involved in Union Fiasco at Monash University

**October 5 2020** - The Labor-aligned Returning Officer of the Monash Student Association elections has banned the only non-ALP ticket running in the student ballot. This took place after Jarrod Allen, member of the Labor Left faction of the ALP, was accused of breaking regulations and conducting an unconstitutional election.

The online election system set up for the election infringes on the democratic rights of students at Monash and the constitutional requirements for the process. While ALP-aligned tickets can be supported with just one click, the system forces supporters of Student Fightback - Climate action - the only non-ALP ticket contesting the election - to vote below the line, despite that ticket meeting requirements for above the line standing.

Front page voting enables a ticket to appear on the front page of the ballot, if it fulfils the clearly advertised criteria of having more than 15 verified candidates. Yet when Student Fightback is chosen, an error message appears. Voters can then choose to vote for another candidate, or scroll through and select from more than 150 individual candidates for around 120 different positions.

The failure to fill in this lengthy form correctly once again brings up an error. In previous years of this system, students were never required to vote for every position and abstentions were accepted, as per the constitution. Nor was it ever communicated to authorising officers that this new requirement for front page voting - running for every position - existed.

The official MSA regulations that pertain to this sorry saga can be found below.

*Regulation 33.6.2 - If no candidate from the ticket has nominated for a particular position and If the ticket has not submitted a statement of preferences under regulation 22.1, their vote will be exhausted"*

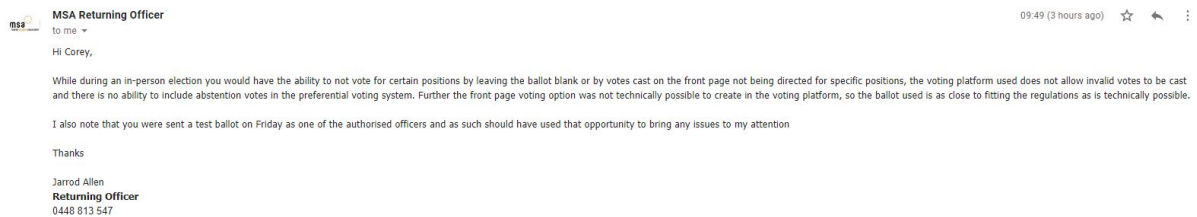
Additionally, regulation states that:

*Regulation 31.2. A ticket qualifies for the front page voting where it has completed a valid registration and has nominated at least 15 unique candidates as part of that ticket"*

When challenged both on these fundamental breaches, and the failure to communicate this new requirement for front page voting prior to nominations closing, the Returning Officer admitted that he understood the ballot violated regulations before the commencement of the

election week. In an email to the authoriser of Student Fightback - Climate Action, Allen responded to student concerns with a statement that:

“While during an in-person election you would have the ability to not vote for certain positions by leaving the ballot blank or by votes cast on the front page not being directed for specific positions ... the ballot used is as close to fitting the regulations as is technically possible.”



After this exchange, the entire ticket was immediately and unprecedentedly banned from all online campaigning for three hours without warning, allegedly over a separate social media post denouncing the sexist culture of an elite campus college.

“The situation now stands that a Returning Officer, aligned with the Labor party, has made it basically impossible to vote for the only non-Labor ticket contesting the election”, said Kelly Cvetkova, presidential candidate for Student Fightback. “And then when confronted, he attempted to silence our campaign to challenge his actions”.

“This ballot is completely unconstitutional,” explained Corey Everitt, the authorising officer of the Student Fightback group. “We will be calling for the entire process to restart, with a new system that allows for equal rights for all tickets, not preferencing those with political affiliations to the Returning Officer.”

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Contact:  
Kelly Cvetkova  
0433081176  
[cvetkelly@gmail.com](mailto:cvetkelly@gmail.com)