



Te Rōpū Kahikatea
Auckland University Students' Association

20 March 2026

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Chief Property Officer
University of Auckland
49 Symonds Street
Auckland 1010

Dear s

The University of Auckland Student Centre and Library FTAA Referral Application

The Auckland University Students' Association Incorporated (AUSA), unofficially known in Māori as Te Rōpū Kahikatea, would like to offer its full support to the Student Centre and Library Fast Track Approval Act Referral Application.

AUSA was formed in 1891 and has ever since been advocating for students at the University of Auckland. We represent the voice of the students at the University, deliver student advice and support services, advise on academic and welfare matters, and create events and activations on campus to bring the University community together. Our mission, as stated on our website, is to "help empower every student's journey through the University of Auckland. We support, represent, and build the student community and experience. We help overcome barriers and champion success for every student."

Currently, we oversee many of the spaces and facilities within the Student Union Building. This includes Hineahuone, O Lagi Atea Moana (Cultural Space), Queerspace, Women's Space, Shadows, Craccum, 95bFM, and three storage rooms. We also manage the activities that occur within these spaces.

AUSA firmly believes that these facilities are no longer fit for purpose, are vastly undersized and are poorly designed to provide for the needs of our current and future students. While the Student Union Building was originally built for student amenity, it has unfortunately reached a point where it no longer lives up to its history or meets the needs of a much larger and more diverse student body.

Our support for redevelopment is based on several critical concerns:

Critical Infrastructure

The building has been constructed to standards that no longer meet contemporary expectations. The lack of climate control or the ability to insulate means that spaces are freezing in winter and stifling in summer, creating an environment that is often unusable for long periods. This is exacerbated by the closure of the balconies in O Lagi Atea Moana and Hineahuone restricting natural cooling and airflow. In addition, aging infrastructure has resulted in students and staff frequently dealing with flooding, leaks, power outages, and blocked pipes.

Accessibility & Dignity

Access to the upper levels of the building for disabled students is currently problematic, and particularly poor in the evening when access to the Kate Edger Building is locked. The primary non-stair access relies on a small, single, frequently broken and unreliable lift, which many students rightly feel unsafe using.

There is also specific accessibility problems related to AUSA's office spaces on the 4th level of the Student Union Building (currently housing 95bFM and Craccum). There is no way to access these spaces in a wheelchair without travelling through O Lagi Atea Moana from the other side of the building. If O Lagi Atea Moana is closed or locked (especially during holiday/non-teaching periods), security needs to be called and requested to escort disabled individuals through the building, which is a significant time delay and loss of dignity. If there is a Pasifika festival or event happening in this space, disabled individuals need to walk through the middle of it to reach the other side of the building, which is uncomfortable for many students.

Overall, the state of the building creates unnecessary barriers to participation that are unfair to our student body.

Safety & "Safe Space" Integrity

The building's open design makes it difficult to secure, leading to frequent security issues. AUSA has constantly experienced break-ins, thefts and general nuisance making, particularly by some members of Auckland's rough-sleeping community who seem to see the building as easy to access and hard to be removed from.

More concerning for us, however, is the impact on our community "Safe Spaces". We have had numerous incidents of unauthorised individuals camping in Women's Space (particularly men) or Queerspace, which undermines the very concept of these areas as a refuge for vulnerable student communities.

Inclusion & Basic Amenities

The current facilities are outdated and unequally distributed. Currently, there are only toilets in O Lagi Atea Moana and Women's Space (women only), which constantly leak and need regular repairs.

Notably, there is a lack of general-access and gender-neutral toilets, which is a significant concern for the Rainbow community and those utilising Queerspace. There are also no toilets available in Hineahuone.

The fact that the building is so tired and outdated means that it offers a very poor experience to students. Facilities are very run-down and spaces are drab. The Student Union Building, in our view, is not a desirable space that students particularly want to be in for any length of time.

Activation

The building is difficult to activate for student engagement with no significant foot traffic through the space for most of the year (especially outside summer) and no easy spaces to create compelling events. The space is open and exposed to the elements, making especially winters cold and not a pleasant "hang out" environment for students.

Although AUSA has attempted many times to activate the space for students, especially for Re-Orientation at the start of Semester Two, the reality that the building is a cold, unpleasant space which no one wants to linger in makes it incredibly difficult to use the space for building student community.

Evolution of Student Life

The Quad was once the beating heart of the University - a place for mass rallies and social movements. However, student life in 2026 has evolved. Current students are seeking modern, flexible, and safe spaces. Because the Student Union Building is no longer desirable, student activity has shifted to more modern buildings like B201 and the Sir Owen G. Glenn Building. While those spaces are, in our minds, excellent, they certainly lack the "student-owned" feel of the Quad, leading to a loss of prime space for impromptu community building.


New Student Centre and Library Concept

AUSA strongly supports the need to upgrade student focussed space at the University through the development of a new Student Centre and Library located at the centre of the campus and are very excited by the concept that has been developed.

We believe that this new building will be transformational for student experience at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland.

Naku noa, nā,

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2026 AUSA President