

# PRESS RELEASE

*For immediate release*

University of Queensland Union  
15 December 2023

## **Notice of Successful Referendum: Proposal to Incorporate University of Queensland Union**

On 13 September 2023, University of Queensland Union Council passed a special resolution to call a Referendum to consider one (1) question. UQ Students were asked to vote yes or no to the following proposal:

“That the unincorporated association, the University of Queensland Union, incorporate using its current structures”.

In the referendum, the proposal was approved by the following:

1. a simple majority of voters;
2. a simple majority of voters in a simple majority of faculties; and
3. at least five per cent of students voting formally.

As of the 30 October 2023, upon the Declaration of Poll by the Returning Officer, the question has been officially adopted. With the success of this Referendum, the University of Queensland Union will now be able to:

- become a continuing legal entity which does not alter as its office bearers alter;
- benefit from greater, more transparent, oversight;
- benefit from easier access to insurance for both it and its affiliated organisations (clubs and societies);
- own property in its own name; and
- greater protect its officers and student members from liability.

This is a historic achievement for the Union, with the organization being a not-for-profit unincorporated association since its founding in 1912. Under this arrangement, such activities including owning property and assets, holding bank accounts, arranging insurance, and entering contracts were done by elected student officers in their personal name who act on behalf of the UQ Union.

Having grown into the largest student union in Australia, it has long been recognised that UQ Union had to incorporate. Dating back to 1967, countless attempts have been made. For the last thirty years, John Payne, and his firm Hall Payne Lawyers, has been particularly instrumental to this process. He first advised the Union on the matter in the late eighties, again in 2015, and finally this year, with a successful outcome.

“The decision for the Union to incorporate was both necessary and long overdue. As one of the only unincorporated associations left in Australia of our scale, the new company limited by guarantee model will serve the Union and its student members far better into the future.” stated Joshua Marsh, Treasurer of UQ Union.

“As one of the largest student organisations in Australia, having served and advocated [hundreds of thousands of UQ students](#) for more than 100 years, the Union looks forward to optimising its operations and meeting the standard set by other similar large not-for-profit organisations for an overall improved experience for both Union staff and stakeholders.”

