

Students say Monash is best

Students have declared Monash University's Clayton campus the best Victorian university for supporting students.

The National Union of Students rankings aim to distinguish the level of support provided at each University for student representation and advocacy after the commencement of the government's voluntary student unionism legislation.

They take into account independent advocacy services and support, recognition of student representation, a student driven campus culture, student control over governance and the level of consultation with student organisations.

The movement of Monash Clayton upwards into category 1 from last year is the result of restructures and mediations about support concluding early this year, the report says.

"Monash Clayton Students' Association has finalised its support agreement with the university and

is not only retaining its historically strong student representative functions but is increasing its service provision to students with the re-opening of a bar on campus.

"The University of Melbourne who was a trailblazer in providing support for its student organisations has moved down, primarily as a result of increasing disregard for student voices in the university's planning processes.

Ranked lower is La Trobe and Victoria University, with La Trobe's drop down the rankings "a result of the previous vice-chancellor's inability to push negotiations forward towards a productive outcome, forcing independent student advocacy to the brink of insolvency".

In the bottom category was Swinburne. Other Victorian universities were not included in the rankings due to insufficient information or because the campus student organisation was not affiliated with the national union.

National Union of Students,

president, Michael Nguyen said, the rankings were designed to provide students with information to assist them making a decision about which university to apply for.

"This is especially important for students who will be making a substantial sacrifice not only in terms of their time at university, but more importantly in terms of accruing substantial personal debt from HECS or FEE-Help," he said.

"For students who make one of the highest rates of contributions to their tertiary education in the developed world, it is important for students to know what kind of protections they have against poor quality services or courses. From this perspective, effective independent student representation is the only real protection that students can rely on to act in their interests."

More detail available at www.unistudent.com.au.



Drink spiking done to get sex, research finds

An RMIT University study has found a significant number of young people have been victims of drink spiking.

Psychologist Bridget McPherson and RMIT colleagues sampled more than 800 people aged between 18 and 35.

McPherson said one quarter of participants reported being victims of drink spiking.

She said revellers needed to be careful about supervising their drinks.

"Interestingly, the majority of incidents that participants

reported had occurred in licensed venues. Typically, the spiking took place when they left their drink unattended or accepted a drink without seeing how it was prepared.

"Some of the perpetrators expressed the belief that deliberately causing intoxication in others was acceptable," McPherson said.

"Many participants people who spiked someone else's drink were motivated by the belief they'd increase their chance of engaging in sexual activity," she said. □

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*Orest Mikulin was previously awarded the Bachelor of Arts (Languages) with Honours from Monash University and commenced the Melbourne JD in 2007.

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