

# MEMBER REFERENCE GROUP (MRG) REPORT

26 August 2025

## Membership Participants

Kazia Lombardo, Manager Insurance & Risk, La Trobe University  
Chi Him Kong, Insurance Coordinator, University of Wollongong  
Helen Machin, Finance Partner, Federation University  
Lucy Kenny, Insurance Manager, University of Queensland  
Stephen Peake, Principal/CEO, Emmanuel College  
Kerrie James, Flinders University  
Kristina Huntley, La Trobe University

## Unimutual Participants

Geoff Henderson, Chief Executive Officer (Chair)  
Tobias Pfau, Chief Underwriting Officer  
Simon Iliffe, Manager Risk Services  
Greg Burton, Senior Risk Engineer  
Christine Cummings, Manager Member Services  
Diana Lawrie, Account Manager, Member Services

## Issues Discussed

### 1. Discussion Items raised by the MRG.

#### **Consistency of approach to valuations to include inflation and removal of debris across Valuers/Members – Lucy Kenny, University of Queensland**

*There are items such as Removal of Debris and Research Material which are sub-limited per event. Significant values can be declared for these items. How does the value declared vs the sub-limit get factored into the contribution calculation?*

*Also, reinstatement values are declared including and inflationary values that assume that the entire portfolio is lost on day 365 of the Protection Period and requires the full cost of professional's fees and demolition and removal of debris.*

*It would be useful to provide education for the Members on the underwriting approach and be assured that they are paying a reasonable amount of contribution.*

Removal of Debris is calculated on a per-building basis. Unimutual's sub-limit for Removal of Debris is considered generous and comparatively high within the market. It is not anticipated that the current sub-limit would result in a restriction of cover for an individual event.

The industry standard approach is to assess each building based on the cost to reinstate it at the end of the Protection/Policy period. This reinstatement cost includes Removal of Debris, Professional Fees, and Escalation Costs.

It is important to distinguish between ratable value and limit, as they represent different concepts. Ratable value is simply the figure to which a rate is applied to generate a contribution. While some less common methods charge based solely on the sub-limit, the rate would need to be adjusted accordingly to ensure the contribution adequately reflects the risk exposure. Regardless of the methodology used, the contribution is based on the underlying risk.

The Property rate is therefore a rate applied to the total asset value to generate a contribution, with its determination grounded in the assessed risk exposure.

Additionally, valuations provided by Members are reviewed and assessed by Unimutual to ensure consistency in valuation methodologies.

To enhance transparency and understanding of these concepts, Unimutual will develop an educational piece for Members due to be completed early next year.

## 2. Feedback Member Forum/Special Interest Groups

The Member Forum, moderated by Chi Him Kong from the University of Wollongong, was held on 26 August. No specific issues were raised during the session that require action from Unimutual.

Following the Member Forum, inaugural meetings of the newly established Special Interest Groups (SIGs) were held. Three groups have been formed:

- Universities SIG
- Residential Colleges SIG
- Research Institutes SIG

The Residential Colleges SIG was the most well-attended, followed by the Universities SIG. Attendance at the Research Institutes SIG was lower, potentially due to the existence of an external collaboration group already in use by this sector.

To support ongoing collaboration within each SIG, dedicated MS Teams Channels will be established. Members will be invited to join their relevant Channel, enabling the sharing of ideas and information between formal SIG meetings.

### 3. Paid student placements and potential gap in cover

The Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) is a new initiative introduced by the Australian Government to support students undertaking mandatory placements in teaching, nursing, midwifery, and social work programs. Commencing 1 July 2025, eligible students will receive a weekly payment during their placement period. This initiative stems from a key recommendation of the 2024 Universities Accord.

Following legal advice received by a Member, concerns have been raised regarding a potential gap in insurance coverage. Specifically, although students are receiving payment, they are not considered employees and therefore may not be covered under workers compensation if injured during placement. Students remain covered under the Liability Protections and may have limited coverage under the Member's Student Personal Accident Policy, where applicable.

Additionally, another Member has highlighted that the Student Personal Accident Policy may not be sufficient to cover the costs associated with significant injuries.

Unimutual has offered to review and assess these concerns to determine whether any gaps in coverage exist and how they might be addressed to ensure adequate protection for students during placements. Review to be completed early next year and shared with Members.

### 4. Requests for Removal of Debris only Protection

Over the past few years, Unimutual has received requests from Members seeking Removal of Debris-only cover for buildings they do not intend to repair or replace in the event of damage.

Where such requests are made, Unimutual can issue an endorsement specifying the buildings in question and the associated Removal of Debris cost. This cost becomes the maximum amount payable in the event of damage.

### 5. Current Risk Management Matters.

The risk engineering program for 2024/25 is near completion and reports are being completed.

Upcoming work includes:

- Update on Lithium-Ion Battery Management
- Emerging Risk Report - Water damage (including flexi hoses)
- Mould Management Guidance

Note: Unimutual is comfortable with Members sharing the Lithium-Ion Battery Management Guide on their own internal websites.

The Risk Management team can provide high value equipment reviews the priority being those areas considered less fit for purpose.

### **New Construction Reviews**

Members are reminded to engage with the Risk Management team at the earliest stage of any anticipated new construction projects. Early consultation enables the team to provide tailored advice throughout the planning and development phases. Furthermore, involving Unimutual from the outset facilitates a seamless transition from practical completion to the protection of the asset, ensuring continuity of risk mitigation and coverage.

## **6. Other Matters**

**If you have any issues that you would like raised at the next Member Reference Group meeting of if you are interested in joining the Member Reference Group, please email [service@unimutual.com.au](mailto:service@unimutual.com.au)**