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Mark Kelly
Manager, Employee Relations
The University of Newcastle
CALLAGHAN NSW 2308

By email: mark.kelly@newcastle.edu.au

Dear Mr Kelly,

Re: PSA (CPSU) Submission re UoN Consultation Paper – Infrastructure and Facilities Services

We thank you for the opportunity to provide a formal response to the organisational change proposed for Infrastructure and Facilities Services.

The PSA (CPSU) condemns the university's intention to outsource roles in what appears to be an effort to avoid payment of the proper salaries negotiated and agreed in the enterprise agreement. This proposal undermines the future job security, salary and working conditions of university staff. That the basis of this model is financial only, requiring the deletion of 33 positions plus 20 casual staff whilst the university achieved a 50 million dollar profit is disgraceful and contradicts the stated aim to be an exemplar employer under the Healthy UoN banner.

In particular we condemn not only the ongoing use of, but the extension of, the services provided by Broadspectrum. Concerns have been broadly voiced regarding the lack of social conscience demonstrated by this company. It is disappointing to see that the university has simply dismissed such widely and deeply held feelings of its staff and stakeholders.

We note that the trend for a top heavy structure is continued in the IFS restructure where manager positions appear to have been created to manage managers. The PSA (CPSU) believe that this proposal will pose a significant business risk for the university and advocate a serious reconsideration of this proposal.

Consultation process

The PSA (CPSU) is dismayed that there had been no consultation or information provided on this change process until we raised the issue directly with Alan Tracey at the CSCC held on 3 March 2016. By this stage there was already anxiety amongst some of our members. Our concerns are heightened by the fact that it was apparent

that the Human Resources staff knew nothing of the pending change given the responses received in the PSCC earlier on the same day.

The fact that the change proposal was released so that the consultation period coincided with the semester break and leave period for many staff and impacted people, gives rise to concerns about the genuineness of the consultation process. As you would be aware the consultation period was only extended at the express request of the unions.

Our concerns regarding the genuineness of the consultation process are compounded by the fact that a number of members have reported being advised by the Director, Infrastructure and Facilities Services that “nothing will stop this restructure”. As a result many people have felt too afraid to provide feedback on the proposal. It is therefore unlikely that the university will receive the full range of feedback which should be expected.

Rationale for Change

The PSA (CPSU) is concerned that scant attention has been given in the proposal to the need for quality service provision. Instead the proposal seems to display a determination to sacrifice quality for reduced expenditure despite the misleading information provided in the change paper. On pg 9 of the paper the statement is made that *“Long standing experience at Ourimbah and in Newcastle City has shown that the external service providers at those locations are able to provide a high quality service that is effective in meeting the needs of our staff, students and visitors.”*

Such a statement is a nice aspiration but is contrary to the evidence that the service being provided is far from high in quality and does not meet needs. At the briefing of the security staff on 4 April 2016 concerns were raised that the security service currently being provided was far from adequate. The Director Infrastructure and Facilities Services admitted that the current service is not satisfactory.

At the PSCC held on 3 March 2016, in response to concerns raised by the PSA (CPSU) the Director Infrastructure and Facilities Services stated that payment had been withheld from the contractors every month that the contract has been in place due to under-performance. It beggars belief that in such circumstances the university would expand the range and extent of services being provided by those same inadequate contractors.

Security

The proposed new structure involves the deletion of 12 security officers plus a further 13 (apx) in the current casual pool who have not been noted as affected nor do they even appear on the documentation. It is clear from this proposal that the university has no commitment to its staff and is prepared to disregard the commitment and excellent service provided by its security team. The university obviously still requires this function and the rationale for this change cannot be supported.

It is noted that the proposed structure for the security function retains 2 supervisors and 1 manager position even though there are no staff to supervise or manage. The justification for retaining 3 managers to supervise a function which has been

outsourced is spurious at best. Members have been told that it is intended that the managers will continue in the same way they have been, but supervising the contractors instead of staff. It cannot be expected that internal managers will be free to direct, supervise and manage contractors in the same way as they manage the current employees. However, if it is indeed the proposal to continue to directly manage the individual contractors performing the function, then there can be no argument for outsourcing. This is then clearly a blatant attempt to avoid the university's responsibilities under the enterprise agreement.

This conclusion is confirmed through the false reassurances being given to staff that it is expected that they will continue working as they always have at the university, just with a different employer. The PSA (CPSU) seeks details of the agreement reached with a security company or other contractor to employ current university staff.

The PSA (CPSU) is aware that there are already problems experienced with security at the Newcastle City campus. Communication problems are evident, for instance we have been advised that the security contractors were not informed of the university's plan to refurbish the site by removal of asbestos. Such oversights can pose significant safety risks. Our members have advised that you never know who will turn up on any given day to provide the security service. Such lack of consistency has inevitably resulted in a decrease in the quality of service.

The PSA (CPSU) also has significant concerns over the potential for serious incidents with the loss of control over biosecurity. Given the extensive research conducted by the university this must be considered a significant risk to outsource the security function.

Newcastle University has experienced significant security issues in the recent past with assaults on campus and at least one rape. The current system has been working well with the consistency and dedication of staff in place. It defies understanding that with such a history the university would even consider giving up control of the security function. The University has a duty of care to staff, students and visitors to the campus under the Work Health Safety Act 2011. Should an incident occur on campus following the proposed downgrading of the security service, the argument will inevitably arise that this was a foreseeable risk which should have been guarded against.

It would also appear that no consideration has been given to the duties performed by the security staff above and beyond the role of simple security. For example, the security staff are also the first responders to emergency situations of any type. It is not conceivable that any contractor will be able to provide that kind of service, especially as they could not have a permanent presence on campus. The PSA (CPSU) is concerned about the potential impact on our members and others by the university no longer having emergency response personnel.

Maintenance Officers

The PSA (CPSU) strongly objects to the deletion of the Maintenance Officers HEW 3. We believe this position has been misunderstood and grossly under-estimated. At the consultation meeting on 31 March 2016 this role was described by the Director IFS as

a handyman who does odd jobs. The role is much more than this to the students who live in the accommodation blocks and therefore also to the university. A review of the current duties statement shows that only about 10% of the role is to perform maintenance and also as is usual with out-dated duty statements the position holders have been performing duties well above and beyond their role. This situation is understood and respected by the students who interact and liaise with these staff on a daily basis. As such it is disappointing to hear that the university is not prepared to consider feedback from affected students on the proposed changes.

The PSA (CPSU) received at least 20 submissions from affected students who confirm that the maintenance officers are critical to the environment of the student accommodation, contributing to the overall sense of safety and security. These staff also at times act as informal counsellors, mentors and father-figures to the students who are generally isolated from their families. Such relationships are built up over time because of the constant presence of the staff on site. We have been made aware of instances where these staff have averted students from self-harming as they have been on site and able to act, having developed a close enough relationship for students to see them as a confidante.

These positions also act as a chaperone for any contractor who enters the building to perform work. Remembering that this is the students' home, they have reported this as a serious concern, that unknown contractors will be entering their bedrooms and living spaces unescorted.

It is clear that no external contractor will be able to perform this escort function. The additional loss of on-site student well-being observers and informal security function will be a blow to the student experience. There will be an inevitable degradation of the building due to the loss of constant oversight on the many little things that require maintenance.

Students have reported that they are currently able to get small jobs done as they can speak to the responsible staff as they pass in the halls. If they are required to submit formal maintenance requests for everything then inevitably most problems will go unreported until they become major problems. This will have an obvious impact on the health and safety of students and others accessing the accommodation spaces and will pose a liability for the university.

As many of the students living in the accommodation are under 18 years of age, the PSA (CPSU) requires advice as to how the university will ensure that all contractors accessing the site have an up to date Working with Children check performed. We anticipate that this will be additionally problematic based on the current trend for organisations to pass on this cost to the individual worker.

It is disappointing to note that the student submissions were not directly passed on to Employee Relations by the manager of the area and that the university seemed generally unwilling to consider feedback from this very large stakeholder group.

The staffing process

The PSA (CPSU) has significant concerns regarding the transparency of the staff placement process. Members have reported that many staff have been advised that a

particular position is theirs and not to worry about the release of the change proposal as it is “*just a process*”. Such comments infer that decisions have already been made about who will be successful in the placement process. In fact some staff have reported being “*guaranteed*” a particular position. Whilst the PSA (CPSU) knows that such guarantees cannot truthfully be given, it is most concerning to hear that such conversations are occurring. This is having the inevitable impact of demoralizing and disenfranchising some staff. Members have reported that they are concerned at the lack of transparency of the process and that they fear reprisal should they provide constructive feedback, believing they will become “*out of favour*”, and face a negative outcome.

I refer to pg 2 of the change proposal in which it is stated “*A number of reporting line and staffing changes were implemented in April 2015 to enhance business management and customer service support across all areas of IFS service delivery*”. . The question arises as to whether some people may have been unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by such changes occurring outside of a formal process. Certainly it would seem that the organisational change process in the enterprise agreement was not applied to these extensive changes.

Members have advised that there were numerous changes made to positions leading up to this restructure without being subject to any change proposal or consultation process and in some cases no transparent placement process. Some such reported changes are:

1. Role of Deputy Director IFS (HEW 10+) was recruited with no application process but simply by appointment (mechanism unknown).
2. Role of Head of Student Living was recruited with no proper recruitment process – the advertisement was removed from HR Online within 2 days and someone was placed into the role through a process unknown to the staff. The role was also changed with additional competitive market forces on top of the HEW 10+ role. The current proposal seeks to rebadge this as Manager, Student Living Services.
3. Manager Property and Commercial Services was moved from Campus Services to Campus Asset Planning. In tandem with this move customer services, front desk, parking, operational property, venues, commercial services and finance were removed from this role and 2 other new roles created (Business Development Manager and Manager Business and Commercial Services). This role went from numerous staff to 1 part time staff.
4. Manager Business and Commercial Services was a new role at HEW 9. Members report there was no recruitment process and the person was placed by an unknown process. It is understood that finance and customer services functions were moved to this role from Manager Property and Commercial Services which appears to have been a significant change that occurred without consultation.
5. Business Development Manager - Manager Property and Venues was placed into this role and also had Business Development, and Communication as part of this role – the person was placed into this role by an unknown process.
6. In the 2015 restructure the Associate Director Campus Services had Security Services added to the position portfolio. This current 2016 change process has also placed Facility Services into this portfolio. As this role was recruited in August 2014 with no Security or facilities services as part of the role, the

current 2016 position proposal represents significant change which should therefore indicate an affected position.

7. It is understood that a similar significant expansion of responsibilities has occurred to the Contract Manager role which also should be noted as an affected position.

Position Descriptions

The following feedback is provided specifically in relation to the position descriptions circulated

1. Operations Manager (two Positions) – a PD is required. Item 4.2.2 in the change document makes reference to a changing the existing operations planning manager role to Operations Manager to provide dedicated support to the Contract Manager with one additional Operation Manager being achieved by relocating 1 precinct Manager. Obviously both the Precinct manager and Operations Planning Manager Role have been changed substantially to a new role. A position description is required for the proposed new Operations Manager positions and transparent recruiting needs to occur.
2. Pg 24 of the change proposal indicates the Precinct Manager roles are not 'affected' however one is to be changed into the different role of Operations Manager (as above). PDs were also circulated which seem to indicate that the nature of these roles and their focus has shifted raising the question as to whether these positions should also form part of the recruitment process.
3. Deputy Director IFS is a new role which seems to be replacing the Associate Director Infrastructure Projects (NB. this position is not indicated as affected but does not appear in the proposed structure). The new position therefore requires a PD and recruitment. If this position was informally changed in 2015, due to the lack of transparency or competitive recruitment noted above it now needs to be formally recruited as part of this change process.
4. Asset Improvement Program Manager – page 31 New role requires PD and recruitment
5. Planning Quality and Safety Manager – Page 31 New role requires PD and recruitment
6. Asset Engineer – Page 31 New Role requires PD and recruitment
7. Business and Commercial Manager – Page 29 – it is understood that this role was created in 2015 however due to the lack of transparency or competitive recruitment noted above it now needs to be formally recruited as part of this change process.
8. Associate Director Campus Services – Page 29 Requires new PD to incorporate the Security functions added in 2015 and Facilities Services as per the current proposal. This role appears to be much larger and has changed significantly so now needs to be formally recruited as part of this change process.

9. Manager Student Living Services – page 32. This is a new role and requires a PD and formal recruitment. It has been reported that there is an intention to directly place the occupant of the deleted Head UoN Student Living HEW 10 into this new HEW 9 role. The PSA (CPSU) is concerned that this would not be in keeping with the agreed staff placement procedures.
10. Business Development Coordinator – requires a new PD as in the proposed structure Marketing responsibilities have been removed from this position.
11. Property Services and Commercial Manager – (this box is blue in the diagramme but there is no key provided to indicate what the colouring means) but we assume this indicates the position is affected. This role was created, or significantly changed, in 2015 – it requires a new PD and now needs to be formally recruited as part of this change process.
12. Operations Manager (two Positions pg 31) – new position so a PD is required. Item 4.2.2 makes reference to change of existing Operations Planning Manager role to Operations Manager with one additional Operation Manager being achieved by relocating 1 precinct Manager. It is difficult to see how 2 such completely different roles could be considered the same as the new role. As such a PD is required for both proposed Operation Manager roles and transparent recruiting needs to occur.
13. Administrative Officer HEW 4 pg 30 – it is unclear how many of these roles exist as there was some comment during the presentation of a pool being created. The PSA (CPSU) requires confirmation of numbers of positions.
14. Facilities Services Manager HEW 9 (pg 32) – this role looks bigger than a HEW 9 because it manages across all campuses. Alternatively, it is suggested that an additional HEW 8 be added in for the accommodation facilities function to assist the HEW 6 who would have to pick up the maintenance assessment tasks. It would also make the structure consistent with the other HEW 6 roles reporting to HEW 8s.

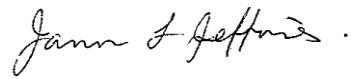
Members have reported unsuccessfully seeking clarification about particular positions. The PSA (CPSU) considers it imperative that the questions raised by staff are answered in an informative and respectful manner.

Implementation

The PSA (CPSU) requests that all positions be advertised internally to IFS staff in the first instance (in keeping with the process recently employed in the Alumni and Philanthropy restructure. Although the PSA (CPSU) supports ongoing employment opportunities for all staff, temporary staff and those on secondment from other positions should not be placed in the structure at the expense of current ongoing staff. We seek clarification that ongoing staff will be placed prior to the positions be opened to temporary staff.

Should you require any further clarification in relation to the above issues please do not to hesitate to contact me on 0400-357-464 or jjeffries@psa.asn.au. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jann Jeffries".

Jann Jeffries
Industrial Advocate