



12 December 2016

# University of Newcastle member bulletin

## CPSU (PSA) elections

The CPSU (PSA) has elected a new leadership with a focus on a more direct relationship between regional staff and local workplaces.

General Secretary Stewart Little, Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright and President Kylie McKelvie have all committed to engage closely with the membership and be available to attend meetings in the regions as well as Sydney metro. See [HERE](#).

(<http://psa.asn.au/from-new-psa-general-secretary-stewart-little/>)

There have also been some movements of staff, one result of which is that Ron Hunter will resume the role of CPSU (PSA) organiser for University of Newcastle to assist in the structural growth of the union in the workplace. Ron will be visiting the various sites over the coming months to renew old acquaintances and meet new ones. Jann Jeffries is continuing as your Industrial Advocate, leading the negotiation of a new Enterprise Agreement in 2017.

## Professional staff: Review of Organisational Design

UoN has announced a review of professional staff that will involve a contracted company "Partners in Performance" in consultations with staff over coming months, with a report in March or April 2017. Your union has requested the Terms of Reference – we want to know what the specific brief is, beyond the broad request to help the University "respond nimbly" to change in the Higher Education Sector.

One significant change is a fall in student enrolments, but it seems that instead of strategies to increase enrolments the University may once again choose to cut staff. A multitude of restructures of various units over the past 12 months has not produced the overall result the University wants, so this time it intends to review the entire operation. Staff with a memory of 2005-6 may well say, "Here we go again". The lessons of that massive and hurtful restructure are with us still.

The University has committed to maintain regular communication with staff via bulletins on the UoN intranet. Staff are also able to register to attend Organisational Design project sessions [uonorgdesign@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:uonorgdesign@newcastle.edu.au). The CPSU (PSA) will be receiving briefings from the University, the next is scheduled 14 December, and we will report back to our members after that. In early 2017, in conjunction with your delegates Nick Koster, Sue Freeman, Mark Smith and Dale Crowther, Ron Hunter will organise a series of general meetings at the various main campuses to ensure CPSU (PSA) members are actively engaged in the process and not swept along in a tide of events they do not control. Please get involved by attending these meetings and help to shape your union's agenda.

## Job security

Over the last year many staff members have become very familiar with the interpretation and operation of PART D: MANAGING CHANGE in the Enterprise Agreement, as unit restructures have rolled out one after another. The CPSU (PSA) was

careful to negotiate safeguards into the Agreement to give you strong protections for your ongoing employment and ensure you are treated fairly. Read clauses 20 to 24 closely and reflect on how they might operate as this University-wide review takes place. Know your rights and learn how to apply them. Read more [HERE](#).

[http://www.newcastle.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/162285/Professional-Staff-Enterprise-Agreement-2014.pdf](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/162285/Professional-Staff-Enterprise-Agreement-2014.pdf)

## Workloads

Restructures usually result in the remaining staff being expected to bear a heavier load. Clause 8 of the Agreement sets out a process to protect staff from excessive workloads. If you have a problem you should discuss it with your supervisors in the first instance and ask for assistance in prioritising the work. If the problem remains after following the steps in the process, speak to your delegates or contact the union at [membersupport@psa.asn.au](mailto:membersupport@psa.asn.au) or 1300 772 679.

## Direction to take leave

With the Christmas closure upon us this issue is once again creating some anxiety, particularly for staff with low Annual Leave balances or who wish to take leave at a more suitable time of the year. Note that after counting public and university holidays, staff still need to cover four normal days in the closure period. If you have an accrual exceeding 40 days, the University may direct you to take leave. All staff in this situation should discuss and agree on a Leave Plan with their supervisor. If you have accrued overtime you can take Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) at penalty rates (clause 42.11). You can also use flex time. The University maintains some operations during the closure and it may be possible to be allocated alternative work – ask your supervisor.

It is important to note you cannot be directed to take Leave Without Pay (LWOP); clause 66 is quite clear that LWOP is subject to agreement between the University and the staff member.

Enterprise Agreement clauses relating to the closure include 68.0 UNIVERSITY HOLIDAYS, and 57.9 & 10 DIRECTION TO TAKE LEAVE.

## Flexible hours

This is covered in the Enterprise Agreement PART I: FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS, read clauses 54 to 56. Flexible hours allow staff members to deal with emerging domestic and other issues and still meet the requirements of the job. Apart from the formal Flextime scheme (clause 54.3) it is also possible to set up alternative arrangements under Approved Schemes (clause 54.10). Clause 56 sets out some special circumstances where requests for flexible working arrangements are covered by the National Employment Standards (NES) in the Fair Work Act 2009 – the University is obliged to consider and respond to any request under this section and may refuse only on the grounds set out in the NES.

If you need help with this contact your delegates or the union at [membersupport@psa.asn.au](mailto:membersupport@psa.asn.au) or 1300 772 679.

## Are your details up to date?

With so many restructures taking place our members frequently change roles and locations and many also have changes in their domestic arrangements and contact information. We need to be sure our communications are reaching you. Use our online member portal to make sure that your details are up to date. Update your details [HERE](#).

[\(https://membership.psa.asn.au/\)](https://membership.psa.asn.au/)

