

5 September 2017

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY VOTE NO IN THE STAFF PLEBISCITE

Dear University of Sydney staff colleagues,

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU NSW) has tried very hard to co-operate with the University throughout the current Enterprise Bargaining negotiations. You will be aware our members have not elected to take industrial action, and we have continued to attempt to conduct our negotiations in the very best faith at all times throughout the process so far. Our members have trusted the university will reciprocate our efforts.

Yet despite this, the university is now attempting to unilaterally shut down negotiations while many clauses from the Enterprise Agreement are still being discussed and formulated and the CPSU NSW still has outstanding claims which the university is obliged to consider.

Before staff consider the university's position, we believe that, in the interests of balance, it is useful to consider the following information:

- » While CPSU NSW members rejected the wage offer (which is below the current Sydney CPI figure of 2.2 per cent, a point avoided in the VC's all-staff email), the CPSU NSW requested the university consider modelling that wage offer with the inclusion of a limited flat-rate component. This would not cost the university a cent more than its current offer, but would have the effect of enhancing the wage offer at the lowest HEO levels, thus providing some advantages to the staff members (and their families) who most need it in this extremely expensive city.
- » Not only has the university flatly rejected this approach, it has not provided details of our request, or its likely effect on staff if accepted, to the university community. In effect it will be asking the university community to make a crucial decision without exposing them to the full extent of the issues in play at the bargaining table at the moment.
- » The university has made no attempt to negotiate regarding its wage offer. A close reading of the VC's all-staff email sent today shows the university is not even trying to claim it has negotiated around their wage claim. The sad fact is that since the university first brought its wage offer to the table it has not altered its position on this by a single cent, despite the CPSU NSW's attempts to present an innovative and mutually beneficial solution. The CPSU NSW understood enterprise bargaining to be a negotiation process, however the university has refused to negotiate regarding its wage offer.
- » The Vice-Chancellor's email makes several references to "the university's proposal", claiming this "proposal" has been rejected by the unions. However, there has been no 'proposal', a fact confirmed by a member of the university's bargaining team this afternoon. As the bargaining process is far from complete, the Vice-Chancellor's statement must be regarded as either misleading or incomprehensible.





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Finally, why is the university in such a hurry to conduct its very own plebiscite?

The CPSU NSW was not informed of this development – we learned about it from the all staff email sent this afternoon. The plebiscite opened today and concludes tomorrow. We believe this is to stop us from being able to adequately inform our members and other staff of the potential effect this will have on the in-principle agreements we have in place.

We also understand the university is in a hurry to conclude the bargaining process so it can once again resume its faculty-consolidation processes, which it put on hold across the Enterprise Bargaining period. These are processes that have already demonstrated outcomes, including redundancies and reduction of HEO levels for current staff (effectively demotions). In shutting down the negotiation process and going to all staff regarding the Enterprise Agreement, the university knows it can achieve a rapid resumption of these change processes if it gets the right results.

This will leave enterprise agreement negotiations incomplete and compromise staff working conditions.

The CPSU NSW has responded to the university's bargaining efforts in good faith at every step.

All our members want is for the university to reciprocate this respect.

Please respond to the university's plebiscite with a NO VOTE.

Please note, CPSU NSW members are also members of the Public Service Association of NSW. The PSA is the Associated Body for, and resources and manages, the CPSU NSW, the Professional Staff Union.

Contact

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