

20 October 2017

University of Newcastle – Enterprise bargaining update

Your CPSU NSW Bargaining Team met with University and other bargaining representatives on 11 October to continue negotiation towards a new enterprise agreement for Professional Staff. In a rotational arrangement, the meeting was chaired by Sue Hodgson.

Chief Operations Officer Nat McGregor gave an update on the University's financial position and explained that the Executive considered it prudent to impose a "pause" on expenditure during the past week in order to ensure that outgoings remain within the budget forecast. This has extended to a pause on recruitment. The Finance Committee were to meet this week to review the situation.

Costings

In response to our requests for a detailed costing of our major claims, Nat McGregor provided the following:

- » **Salary**
\$15 million
- » **Superannuation (17.5% extended to Fixed Term employees)**
\$3 million
- » **Annual Leave (additional week)**
\$12.5 million
- » **Staff Development (a range of opportunities identified in our Log)**
\$5.5 million
- » **Redundancy (26 weeks plus 4 weeks per year of service with no cap)**
\$1.25 million

- » **Total per annum increase for the costed items**

\$47 million p.a.

(All figures are additional per annum on current operating costs and of course the salary costs compound each rise on the previous rise.)

A further breakdown of the Superannuation costing was needed to identify the cost for fixed term staff with less than 12 months service.

With respect for the workloads of Finance staff producing the information, the unions undertook to provide a comprehensive request addressing these issues by Friday 13 October.

CPSU NSW has no interest in seeing the University fail financially and we will be responsible in pursuit of our claims. The livelihood of our members depends on the success of the institution. All of the costed issues need to be balanced against a range of other improvements with low or no cost and we believe that we can find a reasonable path to an agreed outcome. This may require us to reassess the priority of our claims while still ensuring the agreement delivers sustainable improvements for our members, and that is the task you have entrusted to your Bargaining Team. We will continually check with you to ensure we are moving in the right direction.

LGBTI

Heading the agenda at this meeting was a claim to specify rights and responsibilities in respect of LGBTI staff, in addition to related changes to the existing Clause 33 Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation.



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The current clause covers **all** forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment, and it was the CPSU NSW view that a list of various potentially affected groups as proposed by the new draft clause would limit the scope rather than extend it. There was discussion about workplace difficulties in gender transition and the need for education and adjustment, as well as inclusive language and processes.

CPSU NSW suggested the addition of a simple clause to recognise the uniqueness of the issues for this group, whilst details may be better placed in policy. We also strongly supported a proposal to establish a working party of management and union representatives to monitor and update diversity and inclusion policy and practices. The University will consider its position and respond on 8 November.

Domestic Violence leave

Your union CPSU NSW has been in the forefront of the state-wide campaign to provide and extend leave for staff involved in situations of domestic violence. The meeting considered a proposal to extend that leave to casual staff and overall to increase the quantum to 20 days paid leave as an additional entitlement over the current entitlement of personal leave.

The grant would depend on evidence from a relevant authority or practitioner that domestic violence has occurred.

An aspect of the proposal was for the creation of a group of trained DV Liaison Officers (similar to the current Ally program) to provide a first point of contact, support and referral.

The University representatives suggested that an increase in the allowance of EAP sessions might be another way to address the problem.

The cost of such an entitlement would be negligible as the university report that this provision is yet to be utilised. The matter returns for discussion on 25 October.

Coming discussions

Following brief consideration and parking of the Flexibility clause, the meeting touched quickly on Performance Review and Development (the University to clarify the role of “supervisor” and explain the operation of the new SAP system). We began to explore the University’s request for an ability to cash out Annual Leave. CPSU NSW affirmed its principled opposition to wholesale ability to cash out leave, since leave was originally negotiated to provide respite and recreation and not intended as a cash injection. We acknowledged however that there might be arguments of hardship that could be accommodated and asked the University to draft for our consideration a clause to address those concerns. This could sit within the clause on individual Flexibility mentioned above.

As to the Incapacity clause, the University explained there are some technical difficulties in its operation with regard to the role of the AMA. A clause will be prepared to address the concern. Other matters were referred to the subsequent meetings, as follows:

25 October: the major item will be Organisational Change, followed (time permitting) by Domestic Violence/Annual Leave and





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Flexibility/Performance Review and Development/Job Redesign/Incapacity/Long Service Leave. This meeting will be chaired by Lisa Bellamy.

8 November: ATSI Employment/LGBTI supports/matters referred from the previous meeting.

22 November and 6 December: matters referred from the previous meeting.

At the end of each meeting we will set the agenda for the next and we will continue to report to you on progress.

Get involved

We will also be calling general meetings or conducting further surveys as necessary when the issues under discussion require further direction from you, and you are reminded to contact your bargaining representatives at any time if you have any concerns affecting the substantive matters or the process. Please take the time to read through your current agreement and let us know where you see opportunities for improvement.

This is your agreement being negotiated by your CPSU NSW representatives. Stay involved in the process to ensure we can take your voice to the table. At the end of the negotiation you will be asked to vote on the package and we want that to be an informed and deliberate vote. Ask your colleagues to stand with you by joining the CPSU NSW today.

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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.

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