

14 November 2017

University of Newcastle enterprise bargaining update

The fifth meeting of the Enterprise Bargaining teams was held on 8 November 2017.

CPSU NSW is pleased to announce the participation of two further bargaining representatives on our team, Lyn Keily from Library Cultural Collections and Stephen Hopkins from Environmental and Life Sciences. Both bring valued skills and experience to the negotiation.

Three hours of negotiation produced little in the way of solid progress. Although we had an expectation from the previous meeting that the university would respond in writing to various union proposals, and provide a basis for moving the discussion forward, the responses today were verbal and the ensuing conversation covered the same ground as before. This was disappointing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment

Alterations to this clause were proposed in a joint unions claim that your CPSU ATSI representative Lillian Eastwood spoke to when first presented on 27 September. Today the Pro Vice Chancellor Steven Larkin and Wollotuka Director Leah Armstrong attended to provide their perspectives. As a result, almost all of the union recommendations have been agreed in principle. This was the brightest spot in a slow day.

Equity and diversity – LGBTI issues

The university position is that the specific issues of various interest groups are best addressed in policy, and confirmed it would involve unions in the review currently in progress.

The unions see value in a statement of acknowledgement in the agreement. Sadly, this is the same discussion we had last time. The clause will be redrafted.

Parental leave

Discussion focused on the unnecessary complexity of the current clause. The unions are proposing the close definition of Primary Carer is inhibiting the operation of the benefit as originally envisaged. The clause in its original form was a landmark win closely imitated by other institutions in subsequent years. The university agreed to take industrial advice and respond at the meeting of 6 December.

Organisational change

The joint unions claim for this clause incorporating requests to extend the scope and timing of the consultation was presented at the last meeting. The university at that time rejected the claim as proposed but agreed to consider providing for a separate Q&A session a few days after the initial briefing session to allow staff to ask questions once they had had a proper opportunity to examine the proposal. The CPSU also proposed wording to tighten the circumstances allowable as a one person change process. The university also rejected this claim.

The university had undertaken to respond in writing to the overall claim but the discussion today was again verbal and followed the same track as last time. The unions asked again for specific written responses to the elements of the claim.



14 November 2017

University of Newcastle enterprise bargaining update

The university did seem to give ground in the end towards formally recognising a Q&A session following the initial briefing but we again await their formal response.

Individual flexibility

This clause is required by the Fair Work Act. It is the relic of the IR regime of AWAs and IFAs that a previous Coalition government imposed. The present clause is restricted to variations to working patterns and hours of work.

The university presented a clause to allow the cashing out of annual leave. The CPSU has a philosophical objection to the introduction of any provision which undermines the basic entitlement to take time for rest and recreation away from the workplace. The right to annual leave was a hard-won battle fought by the union movement over a long period of time and is a key social justice issue. We had suggested restricting the provision to staff experiencing financial hardship and expected the university to come back with appropriate words to reflect our concern. Unfortunately, the document presented today did not take on board any of the feedback given at the two previous meetings by the bargaining reps. Again the discussion revolved on the same points as before and no progress was made.

Next meetings

For discussion on 22 November:

- » Indigenous clause – university to return with agreed changes adopted
- » LGBTI – redrafted clause
- » Flexibility (individual)

- » Annual leave
- » Long service leave

For discussion on 28 November:

- » A review of several clauses already agreed by the parties to be uncontroversial, with a view to finalising as many as possible

For discussion on 6 December:

- » Parental leave
- » Matters referred from previous meetings
- » Schedule of meetings for 2018

Become involved

Please take the time to read through your current agreement to identify opportunities for improvement and contact your bargaining representatives to discuss any concerns you have. We will be calling general meetings or conducting further surveys as necessary when the issues under discussion require further direction from you. 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.

<https://membership.psa.asn.au/Register>

UoN Professional Staff representatives

Sue Freeman

Sue.Freeman@newcastle.edu.au

Nick Koster

Nick.Koster@newcastle.edu.au





THE
PROFESSIONAL
STAFF UNION

14 November 2017

University of Newcastle enterprise bargaining update

Lyn Keily

Lyn.Keily@newcastle.edu.au

Stephen Hopkins

Stephen.Hopkins@newcastle.edu.au

CPSU NSW staff

Jann Jeffries

jjeffries@psa.asn.au

Ron Hunter

rhunter@psa.asn.au

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.

www.facebook.com/CPSUnew

