

University of NSW member update

It is possible you received an email last week from the National Tertiary Education Union concerning strike action to be held by that union on 30 May this week.

The CPSU NSW is not involved in this action, and it does not affect our members. CPSU NSW members should come to work as usual on that day. **CPSU NSW members are advised they should not undertake any of the duties of a staff member participating in the industrial action, and should not perform extra work to make up for absences due to the industrial action.**

CPSU NSW members might recall that in April your union carried out a survey of members concerning interest in our union taking industrial action. It was generally felt by those who responded that industrial action at this time would be unnecessary or at least premature. Accordingly, the CPSU NSW did not hold a formal ballot of members concerning taking industrial actions, and a strike by us is not currently an option.

This round of Professional Staff Bargaining is not yet at a particularly advanced stage. Professional Staff Bargaining began only on 8 February this year. Meetings have occurred every second Thursday since then (except last week). On the other hand, bargaining for the Academic Agreement has been occurring weekly. It is not unusual in the university sector for negotiations to take many months, if not a year or more. All employee conditions and rights stay in place during the negotiation period, and at UNSW administrative pay rises have generally been made during negotiations.

The following are some of the reasons why CPSU NSW members are not currently moving towards industrial action.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONDITIONS ARE NOT (CURRENTLY) UNDER THREAT

The **university has no claims to reduce your employment conditions** and has agreed to improve a range of conditions as well as offer new conditions. These include:

- » Maternity leave to be available to either parent regardless of gender
- » New gender transition leave for people undertaking gender reassignment treatment
- » Paid domestic violence leave increased to 20 days
- » Improvements to disciplinary processes.

KEY ISSUES YET TO BE DISCUSSED

No discussion concerning the working conditions of fixed-term and casual employees has so far been held in Professional Staff Bargaining.

CASUAL AND FIXED-TERM EMPLOYMENT.

Due to the actions of only the CPSU NSW many years ago, all Professional Staff have strong casual conversion rights where a casual employee engaged on a regular and systematic basis has a right to be converted to more secure employment. The academics do not have this right and it is being claimed for the academics' enterprise agreement. There is also a claim to have 17 per cent superannuation made available to all fixed-term employees. It is a sector-wide claim by the NTEU, and has not yet been discussed in Professional Staff Bargaining at UNSW.



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WORKLOAD REGULATION

This remains an academics' issue for a range of reasons, and no claims have yet been discussed in Professional Staff bargaining. Professional Staff workloads are regulated by a number of key conditions that are unique to them. These workload management conditions include:

- » Weekly hours of actual work of 35 or 38 hours a week
- » Overtime payable for additional work where directed
- » Penalty rates paid for work required outside the normal operations, including weekends and public holidays
- » A legal right to be compensated for every hour of work performed, including work through approved flextime
- » Right for employees to have workloads reviewed.

The **academics have none of these rights, except the last**, and so need much more complex workload management systems in place.

For CPSU NSW members, your bargaining team is currently focused on improvements to flextime. We want to help improve access to better flextime, protecting good policies and ensuring it can be another tool used in the matrix to help manage workloads. Your CPSU NSW bargaining team has raised workload issues with management, but we are working through the matrix of tools used for workload management, not just the review clause.

It is open to the CPSU NSW to consider the issue of industrial action again at a later date. This would be if members approved of this strategy informed by your delegates and officials involved in the bargaining if we were to come to believe it would be beneficial or necessary.

WHAT TO DO ON 30 MAY?

All CPSU NSW members are advised that only the NTEU are going on strike with the CPSU NSW, AMWU and United Voice not currently taking industrial action. This means the collective action only relates to the work performed by NTEU members.

- » All other employees, including CPSU NSW members, are required to work as normal under your position description and within your regular hours of work.
- » All staff are requested not to perform the work of those NTEU members taking industrial action.
- » The role of the picket line is to ensure members of the picketing union (NTEU members) do not cross the picket line. All other employees are required to go to work.
- » All staff engaged in the industrial action must act in a peaceful and orderly manner and should not seek to threaten, intimidate or physically prevent individuals from going to work.

If you would like to discuss this further or have other feedback to give, feel free to contact either our CPSU NSW organiser for UNSW Chris Bird cbird@psa.asn.au or the UNSW CPSU NSW Branch President Alister Wareing a.wareing@unsw.edu.au.

