

## Not So Hot On Hot-Desking

Late last year four CPSU NSW branch delegates investigated the new shared-desk environment intended for the University of Sydney's Susan Wakil Building. This building will co-locate the faculties of Nursing and Midwifery and Health Sciences, with components of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry.

A working model of the proposed work spaces in the Susan Wakil Building has been set up at Lidcombe campus. The four delegates visited this trial workspace and were very concerned by what they saw. Our branch is also very concerned about the potential for the university to use this hot-desking model as a template for all new buildings or refitted workspaces.

We are contacting you as we are keen to receive and collate any feedback our members have, positive or negative, about the proposed changes, especially if you are in a new or refitted building, such as the Administration Building (F23), the Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences Building (F22), the Social Sciences Building (A02), or the refurbished RD Watt Building. If any of this feedback is shared with management, it would be entirely anonymous and any references removed that might identify who the feedback was from.

These new hot-desking/shared activity workspaces have some of the following features seen [HERE](#).

1. As we understand it all staff from a work area will be using the same workspace – academic and professional staff at all levels.
2. Nobody has their own desk. This means that you have to keep your belongings in a locker. When you arrive at work in the morning you have to find any vacant desk. When you take a prolonged break or attend a meeting, you must remove your items and put them back in the locker. When you return from the break you must start from scratch. This means you cannot personalise any workspace in any way. This also means that your supervisor and colleagues you regularly work with will be scattered about at no fixed desk-space.

3. The desk spaces are shallow which doesn't leave a lot of work space.
4. There are different 'activity-based spaces': a kitchen area with seating for conversational interaction, a space for group discussion, the main body of hot-desked computers, a small number of cubicle-like spaces and a couple of small, enclosed rooms for work requiring greater concentration. These more 'private' or quiet spaces had to be booked in advance and only accommodated a small number of people; most would be in the more open staffing areas.
5. In the model set-up, the group discussion space was quite close to the other working spaces so we have concerns about noise bleeding through into areas where people want to concentrate.
6. While feedback was being sought prior to the roll-out of this model across the University, this is a general concept designed for all that can only be moderated at the margins, not substantively altered or tailored for individuals.

This left us concerned that, among other things, the arrangements make no allowance for staff with desk set-ups that have been specifically tailored to ease physical ailments/disabilities or for staff who wish to always stand.

Some articles by academics and journalists for further reading:

- [Article 1](#)
- [Article 2](#)
- [Article 3](#)

We look forward to hearing your feedback so that we can assess the level of concern of our members about hot-desking. Please send feedback to your CPSU NSW Industrial Officer, Jen Mitchell at [jmitchell@psa.asn.au](mailto:jmitchell@psa.asn.au).

