

Flex win at University of Newcastle

On the 2 September 2019, after the Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement had come into force, the University of Newcastle, Library Management decided to take attack the Flex provisions that were fought for, and won, in the EA.

A Committee had been formed to outline guidelines. However, many library staff were completely in the dark about what was going on. In fact, some managers decided to represent their staff without even letting us know, let alone allowing for other staff members of the team to become a member of the committee. There was a complete lack of transparency, and even awareness, which is outrageous.

Due to the lack of true consultation, there were managers of that committee that believed that the EA was an “optional document”. Not knowing our rights in this situation, we reached out to our union – the CPSU NSW, who confirmed our thoughts that the EA was in fact law, and definitely NOT optional.

In our agreement, clause 54.5 stated that the “maximum amount of absence on flextime to be taken during any one settlement period is 14 hours’ subject to pre-approval.” That’s 2 flex days a month. However, library management decided to cut it to only one-day flex per month! Even after one of our members contacted HR, who confirmed that we were right, Library Management pushed on, and persisted with their case.

Not only was library management in complete breach of the EA, and going against the advice of their own HR department, their decision meant that part-timers were ineligible for flextime. This

has never been the case in the library before, as part-timers have always had pro-rata leave entitlements for annual, long service, and personal leave.

When this all came out, we reached out the CPSU NSW immediately. They organised meetings with us, listened to our feedback and empowered us to work together to solve this issue. We grew our membership, and because this was something that everyone cared about, we all stood together and the CPSU NSW gave feedback to Library Management that this was unacceptable.

Because we worked with the union, we grew our membership, and we were able to show our union strength to management, they took us seriously, and we were successful in having the 14-hour flex over the period, and pro-rata flextime restored for our staff.

It was a bit of a fight, but because we all stood together, and worked as union, we won. I have been a union member for the past 26 years. I’ve always been proud to be union, and now I can say, without a doubt, being in the union is having strength. It’s having comradery with your colleagues, and standing together.

If you are a member of your union, I’m proud to stand beside you. Become more active, and work with the CPSU NSW to grow the union and build strength. If you’re not in the union, it’s not too late. Join today and become a part of the team, become part of the reason why we were able to win our fight: and why you might be able to win yours.

Lyn Keily, University of Newcastle



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Join the CPSU NSW

If you're not a member, join up today at [HERE](#).

Share this with your colleagues and encourage them to join too – the stronger the union, the more we win!

Contact the CPSU NSW

If you have any questions or concerns about your flex-time rights, please reach out to your CPSU NSW delegate, or the CPSU NSW Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679.

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