



COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC  
SECTOR UNION

SPSF GROUP NSW BRANCH  
ABN 11 681 811 732

In Reply Please Quote SE: ndef CN 142877

13 November 2020

Dr Stephen Weller  
Chief Operating Officer & Vice-Chancellor  
Australian Catholic University  
40 Edward St  
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

By email: [Stephen.weller@acu.edu.au](mailto:Stephen.weller@acu.edu.au)

Dear Dr Weller

**RE: Recovery Budget**

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU NSW) writes to you in relation to the ACU Recovery Budget. The CPSU NSW thanks ACU for the information provided to date and seeks ongoing consultation in relation to any proposal that may affect our members.

The information provided by ACU during the consultation process indicates that ACU is in a relatively healthy financial situation with a significant surplus. The CPSU NSW submits ACU does not need to make the employee related savings suggested in the Recovery Budget and should explore alternative options such as reducing the budgetary surplus. The CPSU NSW is extremely concerned that the employee related measures suggested will have an extremely detrimental impact upon our members at a time when many people are experiencing hardship arising from the COVID crisis.

The CPSU NSW notes that ACU is a member AHEIA and is bound by the COVID 19 Job Protection Framework (the Framework) established by that organisation.

The CPSU NSW understands that a requirement of the Framework is that ACU must submit a financial report to the Expert Assessment Panel (EAP) before the University can access any proposed costs savings measures.

The CPSU NSW also understands that the ACU financial report must demonstrate how the costs savings measures selected by the University are proportional to the financial impact and are necessary to avoid or minimise loss of job opportunities.

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The CPSU NSW is the Federal Counterpart of the Public Service Association of NSW. CPSU NSW members are also members of the PSA.

In view of the proposed employee related savings suggested in the Recovery Budget, the CPSU NSW seeks that ACU submit the Recovery Budget to EAP prior to submitting it to the Senate. The CPSU NSW also seeks a copy of any recommendations made by the EAP.

In the interests of ensuring ongoing consultation the CPSU NSW would like to provide feedback in relation to the 11 specific employee related savings measures proposed in the Recovery Budget –

The CPSU NSW opposes Points 2, 3 and 7 – These options appear to be disproportionate to the circumstances and will cause financial hardship to CPSU NSW members at a time when most people are already experiencing financial pressure due to the COVID crisis.

The CPSU NSW opposes Point 8 – Leave Loading is an extremely important and valued entitlement which assists members in meeting their financial obligations.

The CPSU NSW is prepared to discuss some of the options proposed in the Recovery Budget, especially options that are flexible workplace arrangements and are already included in the Enterprise Agreement.

The CPSU NSW regularly receives feedback that flexible work options are underutilised in the workplace and that there can be better education and management support about such options. The CPSU NSW submits that utilisation of available flexible work options will support better work life balance for staff and is likely to generate long term cost savings for the University.

The CPSU NSW submits in relation to the following items -

- Items 1(a) and (b) Purchasing Extra Leave – If these measures are voluntarily utilised by staff the CPSU NSW supports this as an option. This is a mechanism available in Clause 1.8.4 of the Enterprise Agreement and may suit some staff who are not currently aware of this option.
- The CPSU NSW submits that ACU educate staff to ensure that all staff are aware of and understand this option and other flexibility measures contained in the Enterprise Agreement.
- Item 4 – Pre – Retirement Contract – This is an option that is currently being undertaken by some other Universities to prevent job losses and is likely to generate savings. There may be many staff who would consider this is an option if they understood the benefits. The CPSU NSW supports the ACU educating staff about Pre-Retirement contracts and providing supplementary education such as Superannuation sessions.
- Items 5 and 6 - The CPSU NSW supports these options as alternatives to implementing at other employee related savings. Senior executive staff are in a better position to accept a reduction in salary than other staff, especially Professional staff.

Other Options that could be explored by ACU include the following –

Greater encouragement of other flexibility options including part time work or job share arrangements for interested staff.

Natural attrition – If properly planned and accompanied by workload assessments, this may be an option in some areas and could generate substantial employee related savings.

Secondment and Career Breaks - These may be suitable options for some staff and may generate savings in 2021 and 2022.

The CPSU NSW submits that many options for flexibility have not been thoroughly explored and may produce short term and long term savings for ACU. A more flexible workforce will suit many staff and will provide better work satisfaction and work life balance.

The CPSU NSW suggests that ACU conduct a comprehensive staff survey examining all flexibility options and accompany this with education sessions about the impacts and benefits of a flexible workplace. The CPSU NSW notes that this process should be explored before submitting the Recovery Budget to Senate and EAP and will result in a more well considered approach in relation to employee savings.

The CPSU NSW looks forward to discussions with ACU in relation to the Recovery Budget.

Please contact CPSU NSW Industrial Officer Susan Emery at [semery@psa.asn.au](mailto:semery@psa.asn.au) or 0408 249277 in relation to this matter.

Yours faithfully,



**Susan Emery**  
**For Stewart Little**  
**State Branch Secretary**