

COVID-19: Transition back to the workplace

As more Professional Staff are transitioning from working from home back to the workplace, the CPSU NSW has been made aware of members' concerns about COVID safety. In particular, relating to cleaning of shared and frequently shared work spaces and the operation of the Conservatorium Library.

Enhanced Cleaning of shared work areas

It is the union's understanding that library staff have been told to undertake disinfecting of frequently used areas within the libraries at the commencement of their shifts. Library staff raised concerns about risks associated with untrained staff dealing with high-usage areas and requested that appropriately trained cleaners be responsible. We were advised the university required staff to undertake this cleaning to contain costs. Rather than untrained library staff being required to clean their work areas, the university must ensure enhanced cleaning occurs, not just in the university libraries but in all shared and frequently used work spaces. At the very minimum the [Department of Health Guidelines](#) should be followed

Conservatorium Library

The CPSU NSW has been advised the Conservatorium Library is operating under two sets of rules regarding COVID-19 physical distancing. That is, there is an agreement between the university and Conservatorium High School that high school students (who have access to that library) are not required to physically distance when on Level 1 of the library, whereas, university students and library staff are required to comply with physical distancing.

The CPSU NSW is of the view that staff and students are being exposed to a heightened risk, and that all users of the library are to social distance. The CPSU NSW believes risk mitigation standards applied across the university should not be watered down in any particular unit, including the university library, in favour of a commercial arrangement.

Consultation

Under Section 49 of the *Work Health and Safety Act* the university is required to consult with workers around matters that may impact their health and safety at work. Transitioning back to the workplace after COVID-19 is an important Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) issue. The CPSU NSW is concerned that there has been a history of delayed or inadequate consultation with workers. This includes the following:

- Consultation not taking place until after a decision has been made, rather than when the University is proposing a change/s.
- Workers feeling they are being informed of changes/decisions rather than offered a genuine opportunity to give feedback and have that feedback duly considered prior to any decision being made.



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- Patchy involvement of the workers' elected Health and Safety Representatives in consultation, particularly prior to making decisions with substantive WHS implications.

What is the CPSU NSW doing?

The CPSU NSW is seeking the assistance of SafeWork NSW to intervene to ensure that best practice takes place at the University.

Your union will continue to consult with members and advise of the outcomes of SafeWork's intervention.

Join the Professional Staff union: the CPSU NSW [HERE](#).

Stand with us today! Professional Staff: Worth Every Cent!

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