



## Welcome to 2021

Welcome to 2021. It's already nearing the end of February, students have returned to campus and I hope your start to 2021 has been less turbulent than 2020 was for us all.

Firstly, please accept my apologies for not providing more frequent updates. The intention for 2021 is to get updates and news out to you at least every couple of months.

While we in NSW have thankfully seen a significant reduction in the impact of COVID-19 on our lives, please continue to take precautions to keep you, your families and colleagues safe.

Early this month, I spent the day at PSA House in Sydney, joining our allies from universities across NSW. Training in preparation for Enterprise Bargaining that is happening later this year. The training has given us some excellent tools with which to work. However, my biggest takeaway was that we need help from our members to achieve the best results. To that end, you will soon receive an invitation for a members' meeting to be held in early March. I will be asking people to put their hands up as Delegates and for volunteers to form a bargaining committee.

### Update on what's happening across the University of Newcastle

This year so far has seen the university begin transitioning from faculties to colleges, which affects many of our colleagues. By now, you will have had a chance to read through the university's response to the change paper, which, while not ideal, did see some amendments to the original proposal. Additional positions in the Professional Experience Unit and the relocation of the Senior Technical Officer - Services role to Biomedical Sciences are some adjustments. The university is also looking at adopting some of the suggestions put forward during the consultation; a couple of examples improve Professional Staff development and embedding Indigenous employment research and education staff within the colleges.

Our focus now moves to the proposed merger of the Schools of Creative Industries (SOCl) and Humanities and Social Science and the Resources Division discussion paper's upcoming official release and its effect on our members and colleagues.

The Aboriginal Employment Committee met for the second time since being re-established in August last year. The university reported positive indigenous employment growth with 13 staff employed and a good number of identified positions vacant across the schools and divisions. Indigenous employment stands at 2.5 per cent, so we still have some progress to make to reach the 3.0 per cent. target

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or issues; if I cannot help our Branch Organiser, Ian Braithwaite or Industrial Officer Lisa Nelson, will.

Cheers,  
Mark Smith (CPSU/PSA University of Newcastle Branch Delegate)

