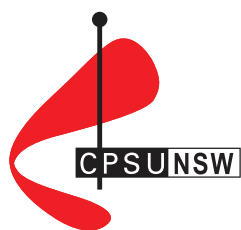


A DISCUSSION PAPER



CPSU NSW Enterprise Bargaining Round 9



THE
PROFESSIONAL
STAFF UNION

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INTRODUCTION

This Discussion Paper has been developed to provide a framework for engaging CPSU NSW members in a constructive discussion about collective bargaining and your rights at work. It aims to obtain feedback from members to assist us better understand your priorities in the lead up to the next round of university enterprise bargaining (EB9).

There is no doubt 2020 was a uniquely challenging year. The COVID-19 pandemic saw Australian borders shut and international students largely prevented from domestic study in Australian universities. Almost overnight many universities lost a critical revenue stream, despite the CPSU NSW and university heads imploring the Commonwealth Government to provide emergency support. However, this did not occur. In fact, the Government instead excluded public universities from its JobKeeper program. This decision resulted in unprecedented job losses and the variation of Enterprise Agreements as unions and universities tried to mitigate the crisis. This round of bargaining will be the most challenging yet.

With your involvement, your union will develop a comprehensive bargaining claim for your university. This will then be endorsed by members before being presented to your employer to commence negotiations. All claims made by the CPSU NSW will be well researched, winnable and, with your input, well supported.

Depending on when your collective agreement expires, you will be approached by the CPSU NSW to participate in a discussion about bargaining. This could include filling in a survey, being asked your opinions over the phone, participating in a focus group or attending general meetings. We may also ask you to perform one small task, such as talking to your friends and co-workers about their rights at work, or about being union, while encouraging them to join the Professional Staff Union.

If you want to be involved, please contact your local Delegate or Organiser.

PRINCIPLES

The CPSU NSW will campaign for:

- A strong and independent publicly funded higher education sector;
- Better recognition for Professional Staff;
- Strengthening the collective voice of Professional Staff by building union membership;
- Workplaces that respect, value and support a diverse workforce that are underpinned by equity in employment and non-discriminatory work practices;
- The right for Professional Staff to bargain, through the CPSU NSW, for decent pay and conditions in Professional Staff collective agreements;
- Professional Staff collective agreements that improve pay and conditions for members;
- The right to join the union, participate in union activities and be represented by the union;
- Recognition of the leadership role of workplace union representatives, which acknowledges the work they do for their colleagues and the community, and provides them with the capacity to continue that role; and
- Strong dispute resolution and consultation clauses.

Your university is expected to:

- Agree to negotiate with the CPSU NSW, in good faith and in a timely fashion;
- Work cooperatively with the CPSU NSW to pursue a positive agenda for Professional Staff and the sector;
- Enable CPSU NSW representatives to meet employees to discuss the agreement making process and negotiate with employers on paid time;
- Recognise and respect the CPSU NSW as the legitimate representative of Professional Staff;
- Agree to fully inform employees about the contents of agreements; and
- Honour agreements once made and refrain from undermining Professional Staff conditions of employment.

1. PROTECTING OUR PAY AND CONDITIONS

The CPSU NSW has fought hard for many years to secure competitive pay increases well above the cost of living. Despite the impact of COVID-19 and the consequent financial crisis, pay and conditions won collectively by Professional Staff in previous agreements, must be preserved.

Professional Staff deserve a fully funded pay increase above the nominal rate of inflation to ensure we are recognised, and our skills are not lost.

2. RESTRUCTURING AND JOB SECURITY

The crisis caused by COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of job security. The CPSU NSW is of the view that there must be limits on fixed-term employment and limitations on outsourcing, and casual conversation clauses in all Enterprise Agreements.

Managing Change processes must be as strong as possible to ensure as much job security as possible for Professional Staff.

3.COVID-19 TRANSITIONING BACK TO THE WORKPLACE

Enterprise Agreements must recognise that COVID-19 has permanently changed the way work we work. The pandemic has shown that occupations can be done well remotely, if not better, than the physical workplace. Enterprise Agreements must recognise this new reality, and ensure that where Professional Staff agree, they can continue to work remotely, while ensuring that their physical and mental health is maintained. In response to the pandemic, the ACTU has developed a Working From Home Charter that provides a good framework for this discussion: you can read it at <https://www.actu.org.au/media/1449328/d59-working-from-home-charter.pdf>

We live in a world where it is accepted that there will be future waves or other pandemics, accordingly Enterprise Agreements must reflect this by having pandemic leave clauses and contingency plans for future lockdowns.

4. SUPERANNUATION

The CPSU NSW has fought hard for a strong superannuation provision that reaches the recommended minimum required for a comfortable retirement, including a 17 per cent employer contribution. Conditions in the workplace not only play a role during your current working life, but also ensure that you enjoy the future benefits from your hard work. This means superannuation that ensures the employer contributes 17 per cent of annual income.



In addition, parents who have been on periods of unpaid parental leave do not receive superannuation contributions. We know that this is a contributing factor as to why many women, who still continue to take longer periods of unpaid parental leave, have inadequate superannuation in retirement. Therefore, the CPSU NSW will be campaigning for payment of superannuation during periods of unpaid parental leave



5. ENSURING PROFESSIONAL STAFF ARE TREATED WITH RESPECT

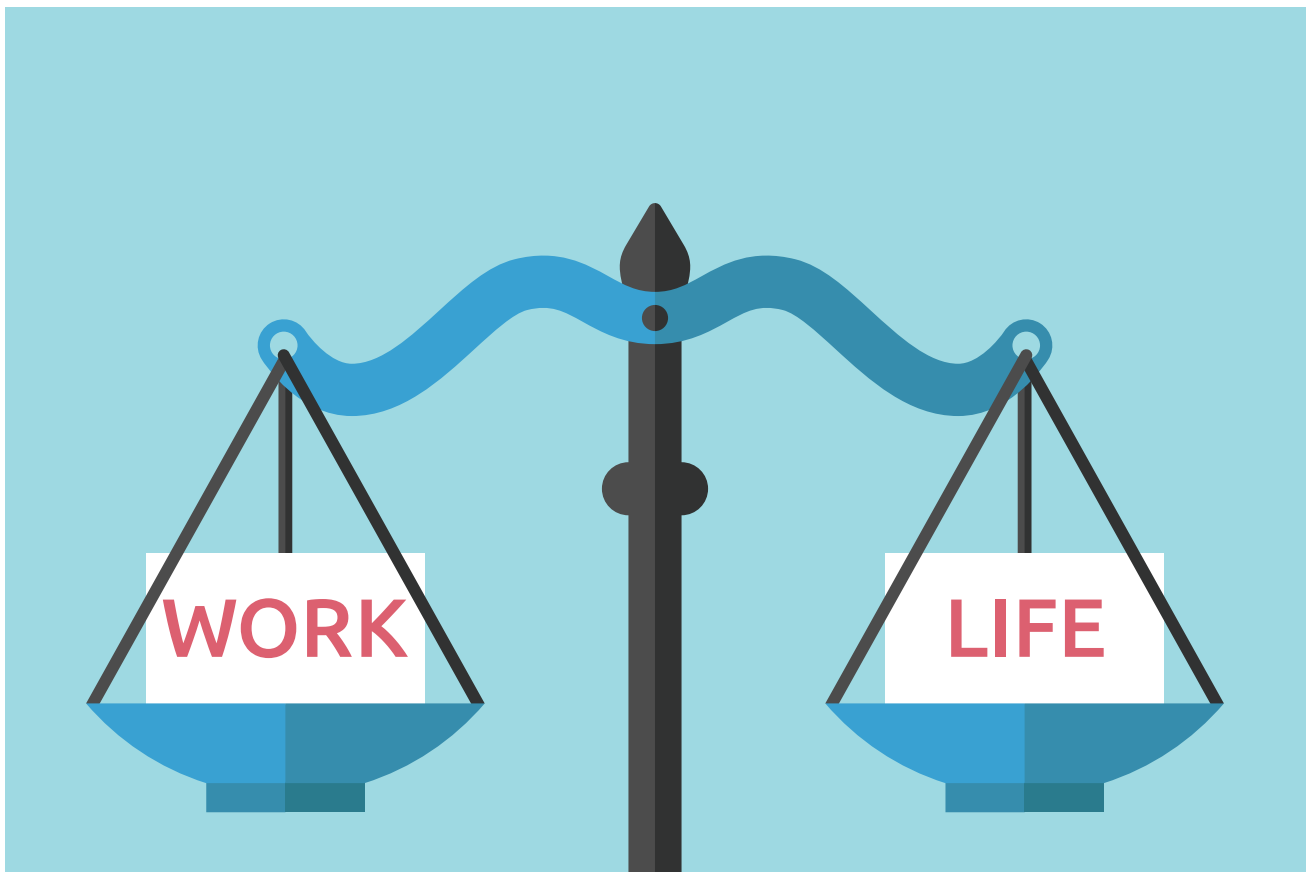
Universities provide an essential service to the community. However, they have relied on the goodwill of Professional Staff carrying heavy workloads and working unpaid overtime to improve the quality of service provided.

Many Professional Staff have experienced frustration over unclear, inconsistent and often unfair job evaluation and classification processes. This has meant that some Professional Staff have not been rewarded for their effort or experience, and have not been provided with appropriate career prospects. Too many Professional Staff have also reported a culture of bullying and harassment in the workplace, and inadequate or unclear occupational health and safety consultation or processes to deal with this problem.

Professional Staff need a fair, objective and transparent system for career development and progression that rejects performance-based criteria for salary progression. The process must reduce management discretion and inspire our trust and confidence. Job-evaluation systems must be demonstrably fair and equitable, use the classification descriptors and involve the CPSU NSW. This is to ensure work is being fully valued and that chances for promotion or career advancement are available.

It is a basic human right and a sign of a workplace that values and respects its employees, for an employee to be able to be represented by the union.

Professional Staff should be respected by giving them a say in maintaining a safe workplace. This extends to Work Health and Safety Committees, training, reporting and dealing with bullying and harassment in the workplace.



6. WORK/LIFE BALANCE

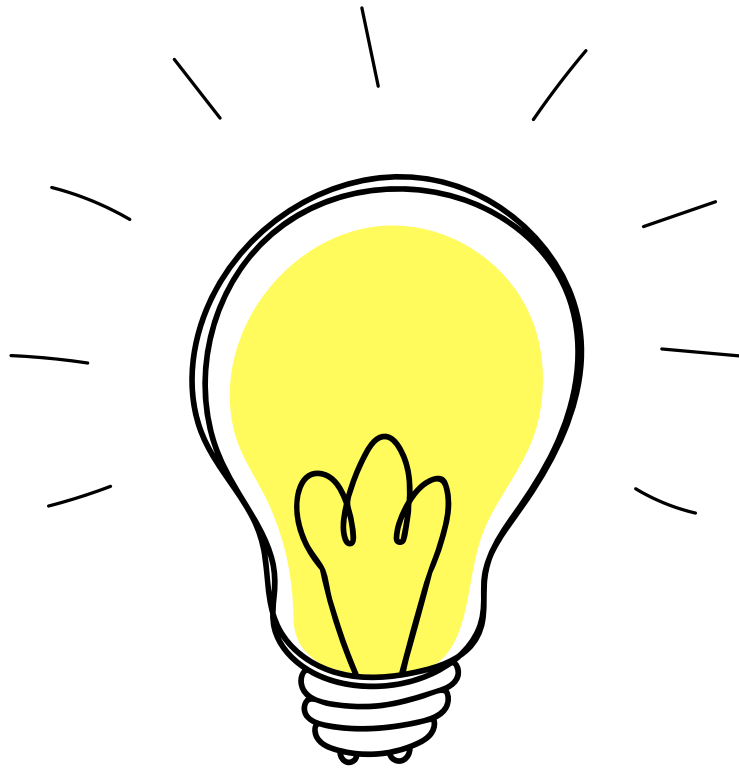
Work/life balance provides Professional Staff with flexible work arrangements to enable them to both participate in the workforce and fulfil their family and lifestyle commitments and desires. Work/life balance is also about ensuring that working hours and workloads are not excessive.

Universities employ an increasing number of parents with children; and our ageing population means many workers have elder care responsibilities. All workers need flexible work arrangements and employers who recognise their family responsibilities.

Paid parental leave provisions should be improved, as well as having better employer support for childcare for employees. The CPSU NSW acknowledges that not all parental leave clauses recognise the diversity in families, and will be campaigning to ensure that all family structures are recognised.

There is never a justification for increasing ordinary working hours. Overtime, shift loadings and flexi-time provisions must be maintained. All workloads are to be consistent with the classification descriptors and position description.

Work/life Balance has to be real for Professional Staff. Work/life balance provisions should be expressed as an entitlement in the Enterprise Agreement.



YOUR THOUGHTS

How important is it to regulate the use of fixed term and casual employment?

How much more secure would your job be with limits on outsourcing?

How can your collective agreement be improved to ensure you can be fully supported and represented by the CPSU NSW?

How important is it to be able to have the CPSU NSW enforce the terms of the agreement?

What do you think are the three most important conditions in your Enterprise Agreement?

What do think is a fair and competitive per annum pay increase for Professional Staff?

How much will you rely on your Superannuation for a comfortable retirement?

What processes should be in the Enterprise Agreement for the fair and transparent classification and evaluation of positions?

What training and development options could be in the Agreement?

Is bullying a problem in your workplace?

What protections would you like to see to ensure you have a measure of job security and maintenance of the integrity of your professional skills and career development?

Are you entitled to any allowances, and if so, do they properly recognise your duty or skill?

Do you feel like you are working longer hours in order to complete your tasks?

What barriers do you face in taking time off for family or personal responsibilities?

How important are carer's responsibilities for you in the foreseeable future?