

10 October 2013

EB BULLETIN # 10

This bulletin covers issues from the bargaining session on 8 October 2013. Dr Roslyn Larkin took the chair, and the University's team was led by Professor Andrew Parfitt. The meeting discussed Performance and Conduct with focus on Probation, a broad survey of Employment Arrangements, plus Organisational Change, and Voluntary Separation, Redeployment and Retrenchment.

It is reasonable to note at this point that the meeting was largely taken up with Academic and Teachers issues and that there is not a lot to report on Professional Staff bargaining. This is bound to happen in an environment where the University is negotiating for a single Agreement to cover all staff. CPSU representatives reaffirmed to the meeting that our members have instructed us to negotiate a separate Agreement for Professional Staff which will acknowledge and value their distinct role in the University. The University noted our position on this and agreed to consider its response when the trend of bargaining becomes clearer.

Performance and Conduct - Probation

Discussion initially took place around Academic Probation, which serves a different purpose from Professional Staff Probation. Academics are currently required to serve 3 years on probation, with a possibility of extension for another 2 years. NTEU tabled a claim to reduce those periods and this will be discussed further at a later meeting. The University tabled separate clauses on Probation for Academics, Teachers, and Professional Staff. The arrangements proposed for Professional Staff are not much different from what currently applies, 6 months probation with a possibility of a further 6 months, the significant difference being that a review would occur 6 weeks prior to the end of the probation period (rather than 4 weeks as is current). This is probably a benefit, in fact, as it gives a longer period in which to address any concerns. The matter remains on the table pending discussion of the NTEU claims for Academics and Teachers.

Employment Arrangements

Teachers' concerns, around Class Sizes, and Qualifications and Recognition of Service, began the discussion under this head, but were eventually set aside without resolution. A quick survey of other Employment issues touched on:

Categories (Ongoing, Contingent, Fixed Term, Casual) (currently §46) – deferred to a later meeting.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment (currently §47) – deferred to a later meeting.



Our input on this clause is being coordinated by Mark Smith from IT Support. Interested staff should contact Mark on ext 54222 or email M.Smith@newcastle.edu.au.

Hours of Work (Professional Staff) (currently §48) – deferred pending University's clarification of current shift arrangements in Security, also affecting Meal Breaks, Rosters and Shift Penalties.



We received useful feedback from many of you to our general question about this Hours clause §48.

It looks like a thorough review is in order. The bargaining team will draft some changes and consult with you further by email and/or in a General Meeting, probably in early November.

Managing Organisational Change

The University is still reviewing the CPSU draft clause tabled at the previous meeting. Meanwhile the University has drafted a clause on Voluntary Separation, Redeployment and Retrenchment initially targeted to Academics, but intended to apply to all staff. The NTEU found this to be highly controversial, since it proposes to reduce the entitlements for detachment period and VSP loading currently held by Academics. They anticipate a strong reaction from their membership.

If applied to Professional Staff the change would not affect detachment period and loading, but rather redeployment processes and the role of the Director of People and Workforce Strategy (formerly HR). The proposal would probably be less confronting for Professional Staff. Nevertheless, it is bound to become a strongly contested area of the negotiation.

NTEU tabled a clause setting out processes for Ph.D transition, in response to the NeW Directions requirement for Academics to hold this qualification. The University will respond at a later meeting.

Superannuation

At the previous meeting the University tabled costings for increasing the employer contribution to 17% for all staff regardless of employment category. There was further discussion about the figures, and a request for separation of the Fixed Term costs into two further categories of (i) staff paid from recurrent funding, and (ii) staff paid from grant income.

Next Meetings

21 October (Mon) 9.30am to 12.00pm :

- Performance Development Framework (University roll out of NeW Directions PRD)
- Managing Organisational Change (CPSU clause already tabled)
- Voluntary Separation, Redeployment and Retrenchment (University clause already tabled)
- Intellectual Freedom (NTEU clause already tabled)

5 November (Tues) 10.00am to 1.00pm :

General stock-take of progress to date. Review of how far from agreement the parties are on the range of clauses already discussed and parked, with a view to concluding as many as possible and identifying the obstacles in the others.

If you need more on any of these issues, or have some information or a point of view to communicate, please send an email to:

Sue.Freeman@newcastle.edu.au and/or rhunter@psa.asn.au.

Ring Sue Freeman on (492)15929 or Ron Hunter on 92483370.



Yours in Union

Sue Freeman

CPSU Branch President
and EB Lead Negotiator