

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SECTOR UNION

STATE PUBLIC SERVICES FEDERATION (SPSF) GROUP - NEW SOUTH WALES STATE BRANCH

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

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THE
**PROFESSIONAL
STAFF UNION**

30 August 2013

EB BULLETIN # 7

This bulletin covers matters that concern professional staff from two sessions of bargaining, on 13th and 26th of August. The CPSU is the only union representing solely the professional staff and speaking for you at the negotiating table.

The parties agreed that Dr Michael Netherton, while he continues to have no conflict of interest with issues on the agenda, should continue to chair.

13 August 2013 Bargaining Session

Budget Presentation – Craig Wallace – CFO

Craig painted a not too rosy picture of the University's budget forecast up to 2016.

2012 finished with a \$15 million operational surplus which he explained took the University 10 years to achieve from the negative. Over the next 4 years the surplus will diminish from \$22 million to \$6 million with 2015 being \$4 million. All these figures have been based on current student and expenditure models with no staff increases and current student intake.

He displayed a table of the EBA Salary impact over the next 3 years which showed a percentage row with yearly columns up to 2016:

- ⊕ 1% salary increase p.a. over the next 3 years would have a total cost of \$16.7 million
- ⊕ 4% salary increase p.a. over the next 3 years would have a total cost of \$68.3 million

These figures do not include Senior Management bonuses. Craig confirmed that previous Operational Costs included Salaries.

CPSU negotiators recalled that all bargaining sessions in the past started with depressing financial expectations but ended with reasonable pay outcomes. CPSU will continue to campaign for the best package of wages and conditions we can achieve. You have a vital role to play in that campaign.

Indigenous Employment (ATSI)

The meeting acknowledged the superior performance of the University in this regard and discussed various proposals to maintain and improve levels of participation, such as creating a high level position to coordinate indigenous employment, requiring all staff at Wollotuka to be of ATSI descent, and providing increased leave for bereavement, ceremonial and cultural events.

CPSU representative Mark Smith will discuss these issues with our members who identify as ATSI. Please contact Mark (M.Smith@newcastle.edu.au) to be included in this consultation.

Leanne Holt, Wollotuka Director, explained she would rather see most of the issues covered in the University ATSI Employment Strategy, rather than the Enterprise Agreement, and welcomed the Unions' input. In her view the appointment of senior staff was not a matter for the Agreement.

Leanne confirmed that there are strategies in place for employment retention and progression from contract to ongoing employment, and offered to supply figures after a University Council meeting in September 2013.

The Unions expressed concern about not having in the Agreement an ATSI Employment clause with target figures, as incentive to maintain the current high rates achieved by the University.

Classification Structure and Review.

Dorothy Molyneux outlined the CPSU draft clause explaining the purpose was to ensure equitable application of the classification structure and review process University wide. Ron Hunter spoke on the work of the HEW Review Working Party set up under Clause 70 of the 2010 Agreement, some of the discussion in which has been about broad-banding low HEW level positions, removing the bottom HEW increment step from each level, and regularising of the rate of incremental progression to remove entrenched structural inequities. The costs involved in all of this are substantial, and the possibility of implementation phased over a number of years was discussed as a measure to defray the impact. The University will consider the report of the HEW Review Working Party before responding.

Further elements of the CPSU claim are: a process to ensure objective evaluation of work; separation of the review of Position Description from the review of HEW level; and an independent appeal process.

The University suggested the use of an external agency for evaluation of all new or changing jobs. There are several companies that provide this kind of service and many universities already use them. The University also agreed that the Appeal and Review processes require further discussion.

Domestic Violence

In response to drafts previously provided by CPSU and NTEU, the University tabled a clause which broadly adopts the recommendations, but creates a further category in Personal Leave rather than providing an additional entitlement. CPSU noted also the need for a definition of "domestic violence" and greater clarity for staff members acting as support persons. The University undertook to bring a redrafted clause to the next meeting.

26 August 2013 Bargaining Session

Performance and Conduct.

A number of documents were prepared by the University and made available prior to the meeting:

- ⊕ Probation,
- ⊕ Promotion,
- ⊕ Staff Supervision,
- ⊕ Managing Workload,
- ⊕ Performance of Duties,
- ⊕ Classification Structure and Review,
- ⊕ Incremental Progression,
- ⊕ Staff Reports.

Although little particular change was being sought in any of these clauses, none was discussed, as the NTEU instead advised the University that they have overarching concerns with the summative focus of the proposed Performance Development Framework, they see no reason to change any of the current provisions and they wish the current clauses to remain. Discussion from that point revolved around the University's proposed framework and the perception that it was punitive and focused on under-performance. The University assured the meeting it remains committed to the developmental aspects of the process but also needs to ensure that expectations are understood and met.

CPSU and NTEU alike indicated poor resourcing of the current PDF system as a major factor in its failure to achieve all that was set out in the current Agreement. It was also noted that NeW Directions seems to be focused on individual performance, whereas most professional staff work in collaborative mode in teams and accordingly more emphasis is required on the performance of work units in departments, divisions, schools and faculties.

All agreed that if any further improvement in Performance and Conduct is to be realised, a cultural change is needed that includes clarification of expectations, outcomes and targets and how these are set and by whom. The complexity of the matter is acknowledged and it will return to the agenda at future meetings.

Staff Development

Dorothy Molyneux provided an overview of the CPSU draft clause and outlined the links to NeW Directions. A major element is the creation of a central fund. Asked if this was a new fund or a combination of the existing decentralised resources, Dorothy responded that whatever the base of the fund it needed transparency, equity of access and required the organisational framework to be in place.

A further element of the CPSU proposal is a Professional Staff Voluntary Rotation Scheme. The University observed that costing would be required and suggested that compromise on general availability to staff may be required.

NTEU provided an overview of their clause noting it was trying to achieve the same goals as the CPSU.

Domestic Violence

Although in most respects satisfactory, the University's redrafted clause still lacks a specific leave entitlement and as such does not meet the expectations of the unions. It was proposed the clause be left on the table until final EB discussions and that the leave component be bargained then. CPSU also pointed out that close work colleagues of the affected person are still not referenced in the clause.

Next Meetings

10 September : Part D Managing Change
(including Organisational Change, Redeployment and Redundancy)
and Part H Employment Arrangements
(including Categories of Employment and Hours of Work).

23 September : Continuation of Part H Employment Arrangements;
and Defence Force Leave; and Superannuation.

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