THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

COMBINED STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (CSCC)

Notes of a meeting of the **Combined Staff Consultative Committee** held at 1:00 pm on Thursday 16 April 2015 in The Canberra Room, The Chancellery.

PRESENT:

University – Sharon Champness, Paul Munro
NTEU – Sue Hodgson, David Rambaldi, Lance Dale
CPSU – Nick Koster, Jann Jeffries

APOLOGIES:

University – Greg Kerr
NTEU – Tom Griffiths, Suzanne Ryan, John Lewer, Fran Munt
CPSU – Jodie Ryan, Michelle Woodhouse

Chair – Sharon Champness, University representative
Note-taker – Ruth Hartmann

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1. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE – STANDING ITEM

Following discussion from the February 2015 meeting, Mr Paul Munro, Associate Director, Employee Relations reported that the review of the International and Advancement Office is available on the University website and is also included in the Consultation Paper launched on 9 April 2015.

General discussion occurred as to the current change process where affected staff do not receive a copy of the Consultation Paper prior to the briefing session. Union representatives commented that with this approach staff are less likely to be prepared to ask informed questions at the meeting. The unions would also like a longer opportunity to consider change papers before the staff forum.

The Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Ms Sharon Champness noted that the University has an established formal process for change that includes staff being formally presented with the Consultation and Proposal Papers in line with the requirements of the Enterprise Agreements. Any change to the established process would need to be considered carefully to ensure that the well-being of affected staff was carefully considered. It is important that support is available to staff and this can often best be achieved by communicating at a group meeting where staff can be supported. Union representatives agreed that the group meetings are important in supporting staff but, suggested that an alternative approach would be to have a short meeting to hand out the Consultation Paper that is followed up a week later with a further meeting to discuss the paper. Ms Champness indicated the University will consider this approach but also needs to be conscious of not adding further steps into the process.

Union representatives commented that the change papers appeared to have information that is repeated and/or copied from other change documents. Mr Munro advised that the papers are unique to each change.

Union representatives enquired whether the rebranding to UON Global in the current change for the International Office was a privatisation arrangement. Ms Champness confirmed that the change does not involve privatisation.

Action 1:	University – Consider will consider how change is communicated as part of the consultation process.

2. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – STANDING ITEM

2.1 PARENTAL LEAVE GUIDELINE

The Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Ms Sharon Champness advised that the Parental Leave Guidelines were published prior to approval of the 2014 Enterprise Agreements and thanked the NTEU for their helpful feedback on the areas where the Guidelines did not reflect the updated Agreements. The Guidelines will be updated to reflect any change to the Parental Leave provisions, however, this review may be in a month or two. Feedback will then be provided to the Committee.

Ms Sue Hodgson, NTEU representative expressed a preference for the Enterprise Agreement to be used as the primary source document and suggested that the Guideline contain the Parental Leave clause with explanatory notes and examples to assist with the interpretation.

Action 2:1	University – Review Parental Leave Guidelines to reflect changes made in 2014 Enterprise Agreements.

3. LONG SERVICE LEAVE (LSL) DOUBLE PAY

Following on from the February meeting regarding discussion on the taking of LSL at double pay. The Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Ms Sharon Champness advised that the University's position on the taking of LSL leave at double pay had been communicated to HR staff and was also discussed at the EA information sessions with University leaders. Communication regarding the legality of LSL at double pay has not been communicated to all staff, however, staff are being informed when they make enquiries and Ms Champness indicated that the University intends to communicate to all staff when there is an appropriate context. Union representatives suggested that it may be effective to communicate this at the time of the next pay increase. Ms Champness will consider publishing the LSL and pay increase information in an article for 'In the Loop'. Union representatives requested to view the LSL draft wording before publication.

Action 3:	University –consider communication about the taking of LSL at double pay with next scheduled pay increase in an article for In the Loop.

4. ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT (EA) IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES – COMMON PROVISIONS

Union representatives wished to discuss the implementation of the Indigenous Employment and Domestic Violence provisions within the Enterprise Agreements.

The Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Ms Sharon Champness reported that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Committee had been established with good representation from faculties and will meet for the first time next week. The Dean ATSI Education and Research, Peter Radoll and Ms Champness will co-chair the committee meetings. Items for discussion at the meeting include Indigenous cadetships and early career researchers.

General discussion followed as to the appropriate employment category for the Indigenous cadetships.

Union representatives asked whether the University is developing policies in relation to Domestic Violence. Ms Champness advised that this is not an item that the University is considering. Discussion followed as to the incidence of staff members taking Personal Leave for Domestic Violence situations. University representative advised that a request for a report had been made but was not yet available. University representatives will follow up and report back at next meeting.

With regards to other EA implementation items, NTEU representative Ms Sue Hodgson requested an update on whether each faculty had professional development plans in place. Ms Champness advised that this requirement had been communicated to University leaders at the EA information sessions and the HR Business Partner were also aware. Ms Champness discussed development programs that are currently running including the academic women in leadership program, sessions for eLAMP and a range of self-paced learning resources in Mind Tools.

Action 4:	University – Follow up on report of incidence of staff taking Personal Leave for situations of Domestic Violence and report back at June 2015 meeting.

5. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PROVIDER

The Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Ms Sharon Champness advised that the University is considering EAP providers and will go out to tender for the arrangement. At the stage of assessing providers the University will consult broadly.

Union representatives expressed concern with the potential change of provider due to some staff having a long term relationship with the current providers. The University indicated that it was conscious of this and would consider this as part of selection and transition.

6. MEAL ROOM FACILITIES AT OURIMBAH

CPSU representative, Ms Jann Jeffries flagged an issue concerning staff in Science at Ourimbah not having a dedicated meal room to have a break. The Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Ms Sharon Champness advised she had not heard of any complaints and enquired whether the issue had been raised locally. Ms Jeffries undertook to make enquiries and will discuss this issue with the University outside of the Committee.

7. HECE COMPLIANCE – Fixed-term employment

NTEU representative, Mr Lance Dale commented that from his observations the categories of fixed-term employment have been questionable in some of the change papers. The fixed-term 'transitional' roles in the Finance paper being one example. It was noted that with the 'other' category now available under the Enterprise Agreements there should be no reason for non-compliance. Mr Dale requested that the University review the use of fixed-term arrangements and compliance with HECE categories. Associate Director, Employee Relations, Mr Paul Munro indicated that such a review had been completed in recent years and will consider whether a further review is possible at this time.

Action 7:	University – Consider review of fixed-term employment arrangements at the University to assess compliance with fixed-term categories in the Enterprise Agreements.

8. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Union representatives requested an update on the University's strategic planning. The Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Ms Sharon Champness advised that NeW Directions has one year to run and in parallel the ten year NeW Futures plan is being developed. The first draft of NeW Futures is due for comment by Council in the middle of this year and there will be further consultation with staff.

9. UNIVERSITY RE-STRUCTURING

Union representatives requested an update on potential changes to the structure of the Faculties that was an item for discussion at the February 2015 meeting. The Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Ms Sharon Champness advised that there are no further updates to report. Ms Champness expressed that there is still an expectation for re-structure and this was communicated to staff by the Vice-Chancellor last month at the all-staff communication forum.

Union representatives requested a copy of the re-structure survey report for Student Services. University representatives will follow this up and report back at the next meeting.

Action 9:	University – follow up on survey for Student Services and report at June 2015 meeting.

10. SCHEDULE OF FUTURE PSCC AND CSCC MEETINGS

The Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Ms Sharon Champness advised that the Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Committee is available to attend the August or October 2015 CSSS meetings. Dr Stephanie Brookman will attend the 11 June 2015 meeting to discuss the University's Mental Health Plan.

Action 10:	University – confirm attendance of the Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Committee for the August 2015 CSCC meeting and Dr Stephanie Brookman for the 11 June 2015 meeting.

Meeting closed approximately 2.30pm