

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SCC)

Notes of a meeting of the **Staff Consultative Committee** held at 10.00am
on Wednesday 13 November 2024 via Zoom & CH-205

PRESENT:

University – Martin Sainsbury, Chief People & Culture Officer; Mark Wylie, Associate Director, HR Operations, and Ruth Hartmann, Senior Employment Relations Specialist.

NTEU – Annika Westrenius; Roy Murcutt; Decheng Sun (NTEU Industrial Officer); and Sinead Francis-Coan (NTEU Newcastle Branch Organiser).

CPSU – Mark Smith; and Lisa Nelson (CPSU Senior Industrial Officer).

Chair – Mark Wylie.

Guests - Megan Clark, Associate Director, Wellbeing Health and Safety (item 6); Naomi Fibbens (HRBP); Krystal Rees (HRBP); Jess Fitzpatrick (HRBP), and Kate Havrilka (HRPB).

APOLOGIES – Mark Hoffman, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Terry Summers; Shell Dillon; Zain Hamid and Ian Braithwaite.

Notetaker: Ruth Hartmann.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- a) *University: circulate Future Students Proposal Paper to unions – completed.*
- b) *University: schedule update on Business Improvement Program – completed. See item in Other Business.*
- c) *University: schedule update on tax implications for University childcare – completed. See item in Other Business.*

1. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT – STANDING ITEM

Simone Jordan, Indigenous Employment Partner, Office of Indigenous Strategy and Leadership provided a written report for this item that was circulated to SCC members prior to the meeting. Ms Jordan was not available to attend the SCC meeting on this occasion. Martin Sainsbury, Chief People and Culture Officer presented an overview of the items included in Ms Jordan's report including:

- the number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander now sits at 106 representing 3.17% of staff across the University in continuing / fixed term positions;
- six participants now completed the Thirru Wirri Leadership Program in last six months;
- seven cadets now completed traineeship;
- new and continuing Community Partnerships;
- Maligagu Strategy to be reviewed;
- challenges and work to do to not only continue to attract but retain staff.

2. POLICIES AFFECTING WORKING CONDITIONS OF STAFF – POLICIES UNDER REVIEW

2.1 Information Technology Conditions of Use Policy

The draft policy was circulated to SCC for feedback on 29 October 2024. Feedback provided by the NTEU and CPSU has been forwarded to the Policy team.

3. CASUAL AND FIXED TERM EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

Chief People and Culture Officer, Martin Sainsbury provided an update on the University's response to addressing legislative changes that has specific impact on the higher education sector. While the sector currently has a deferral for the new fixed term legislation until November 2025, the casual changes applied from 26 August 2024. Casual

contracts in place before that date will not be impacted, however, new documentation is required to be issued to new casual staff or where there is a change in work activities required of existing casual staff from 26 August 2024.

Staffing arrangements for 2025 have been reviewed as part of the budget cycle and Mr Sainsbury advised that while some contracts have been approved out of cycle, casuals will be advised by their supervisor whether work will be required of them for 2025 in the next few weeks. Staff should follow up with their supervisor for further information.

In relation to fixed term employment, Mr Sainsbury advised that contracts had been approved for research staff and operating funded contracts are expected to be offered in the next few weeks. Staff should follow up with their supervisor for further information on fixed term employment arrangements for 2025.

Discussion followed on support for casual staff including access to EAP for those who may not be offered work in 2025. In addition to EAP, Mr Sainsbury advised that the University is exploring other support options such as career development opportunities relative to circumstance and distribution of impact.

NTEU representatives reported feedback from a casual staff member that their supervisor had told other staff in the work unit not to talk to the staff member about casual arrangements for 2025 and this had distressed the staff member. NTEU and University representative agreed to follow up on these concerns out of the meeting session.

Acknowledging the EA commitment to decasualisation (14 FTE Academic positions), Mr Sainsbury advised that these roles are being considered as part of the casual/fixed term review process with recruitment likely to commence after the University end of year closedown.

4. MAJOR WORKPLACE CHANGE – STANDING ITEM

4.1 Pre - major workplace change reviews

Nil.

4.2 Current major workplace change processes

a) Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE) staff relocation

University representatives advised that the proposed CEEHE staff relocation to NUSpace Level 4, continues to be on hold pending further discussion with the Space Optimisation team and impacted staff.

4.3 Post-Implementation Reviews

Nil.

5. EA IMPLEMENTATION – STANDING ITEM

5.1 SCC membership

NTEU to confirm 1 Teacher nomination for SCC membership.

Action: NTEU - confirm 1 Teacher nomination for SCC membership.

5.2 Establishment of agreed pool of inquiry officers / independent chairs

University representatives noted the withdrawal of John Stanton as one of their nominees for the pool.

NTEU to confirm nominations for pool of inquiry officers / independent chairs for decisions regarding misconduct and underperformance, in writing.

Action: NTEU – provide written confirmation regarding nominations for pool of inquiry officers / independent chairs.

5.3 Long Service Leave (LSL)

NTEU representatives flagged potential issues with LSL for staff that have worked varied fractions across their employment with the University. University representative advised that the circumstances are currently under review by the University for confirmation in due course.

NTEU representatives also sought information on the LSL entitlements for casual staff that may not be offered casual work in 2025 specifically those that have over 5 years but less than 10 years' service with the University. NTEU and University agreed to follow up on individual staff circumstances and advice out of this meeting session.

6. WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Health and Safety report for the quarter was circulated to SCC members prior to the meeting. Associate Director, Wellbeing Health and Safety, Megan Clark attended the meeting for this item and provided a summary of Health and Safety event reporting for Q3 including: 225 events reported in AIMS, and five events notified to SafeWork NSW. Ms Clarke also provided an overview of Wellbeing Health and Safety risk focus areas specifically psychosocial and, physical environment risks. In addition, Ms Clarke reported that EAP utilisation was less than the previous quarter but is significant for the whole year. Work is continuing on directing staff to appropriate additional support beyond EAP.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Business Improvement Program: - Mr Sainsbury provided an update on the Business Improvement Program including the schedule for 'ask me anything' sessions and resources available in SharePoint.

University childcare: - Mr Sainsbury provided an update on tax implications and the impact on salary sacrifice arrangements for staff with children in University based child care centres including advice to staff on alternative care arrangements. Confirmation of the outcome has not yet been received from the ATO.

Ourimbah Campus: Responding to a query from CPSU representatives, Mr Sainsbury noted that consultation on the location for programs was occurring, but the outcome had not yet been finalised. University representatives committed to schedule an update in a session for early next year.

SCC meetings for 2025: - University representatives noted that this meeting was the last for 2024. Meeting dates will be scheduled in a similar pattern to 2024 meetings. Unions will need to confirm nominations for SCC membership for 2025.

Action: University – schedule SCC meetings for 2025 and report dates to members.

Action: Unions – confirm nominations for SCC membership for 2025.

8. ACADEMIC SPECIFIC ITEMS

8.1 University Workload allocation system

Mr Sainsbury reported that WAMS will continue as the University's IT platform for recording academic work allocations in 2025.

Meeting concluded approx. 11.07am