

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE**  
**DRAFT**  
**STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SCC)**

Notes of a meeting of the **Staff Consultative Committee** held at 3.30 pm on Tuesday 19 February 2019 in the Committee Meeting Room, The Chancellery.

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**PRESENT:**

University – Darrell Evans, Tina Crawford, Mark Kelly, Mark Wylie, Ruth Badham, Lesley Phillips, and Dan Cummings

NTEU – Terry Summers, Emma Joel, Ros Larkin, Amanda Wilson, Alistair Rolls, Paul Chojenta, and Lance Dale

CPSU – Graydon Welsh

Guests: Rachel Fowell, Dylan Mitchell, Lindsay Hardy, and Sharlene Leroy-Dyer

**APOLOGIES:**

NTEU – Louise Noell

CPSU – Sue Freeman and Ian Braithwaite

University – Diane Bunch and Lisa Fairlie

Chair – Amanda Wilson

Note-taker – Ruth Hartmann and Lesley Phillips for item 7.

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**1. OPERATION OF UON ENTERPRISE AGREEMENTS**

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly advised the Committee that the University's proposed new Enterprise Agreements were lodged by hand in the Sydney Fair Work Commission Registry on 7 December 2019 but had not yet been approved by the Fair Work Commission. Despite several calls to the Member Assist team there is no indication of where the Enterprise Agreements are up to in the approval process. The University also requested that the files be allocated to Deputy President Saunders of the Fair Work Commission located in Newcastle, but that does not appear to have occurred either. Mr Kelly also advised that he had contacted DP Saunders chambers to seek their assistance in progressing the Agreements.

Mr Kelly undertook to keep the Committee informed of the approval process, however, until the new Enterprise Agreements are approved, the 2014 Agreements remain in operation.

Committee members noted Item 4 on the meeting agenda - 2018 EA Implementation and agreed to defer discussion of this item to a separate meeting.

<p><b>Action 1:</b> University – schedule meeting with Union representatives to discuss implementation of proposed 2018 EAs.</p>
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**2. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT**

Ms. Rachel Fowell, Manager, Equity and Diversity attended the meeting for this item with Mr. Dylan Mitchell, Equity and Diversity Project Manager and Mr. Lindsay Hardy, newly appointed as Indigenous

Employment Partner. Ms Fowell acknowledged that the recent focus for Equity and Diversity at the University had been on gender, however, the University is committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment evidenced by the establishment of an Assistant Dean, Equity and Inclusion and the additional team resources to support increased indigenous employment. Key activities of the team for 2019 include:

- reconvening and reviewing the terms of reference of the Indigenous Employment Committee;
- updating and seeking Executive Committee endorsement of the Indigenous Employment Strategy/Action Plan;
- engaging/re-connecting with UON and the external indigenous community;
- developing a pool of Indigenous candidates and improving support mechanisms to optimise employment and retention;
- launching an 'embrace your identity' campaign inviting Indigenous staff to update their EO Online details and register for networking opportunities.

Discussion followed regarding the 3.9% employment target; desire for more secure forms of employment; KPIs for senior managers, and community engagement and perceptions of Wollotuka.

NTEU representative, Lance Dale acknowledged that the University and the Unions had a shared commitment to increasing indigenous employment at UON, however, he expressed concern that the employment targets had not been achieved during the life of the current Enterprise Agreements.

Mr Dale requested that the NTEU have input into the terms of reference and structure of the employment committee and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment remain as a standing agenda item for future Consultative Committee meetings. This was supported by the CPSU.

<b>Action 2:</b> University – schedule Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment as standing agenda item for future meetings.
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### 3. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE – STANDING ITEM

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly reported that organisational change processes that were commenced in 2018 had progressed to implementation. With respect to the Wollotuka Institute:

- Professional Staff – 8 staff members elected VSP, 1 staff member declared detached; and 5 positions in recruitment;
- Academic Staff – 4 staff members elected VSP, 3 staff members declared detached; and 3 vacancies are outstanding.

NTEU representatives flagged concerns from Professional staff that the number of positions yet to be filled may lead to issues associated with workload intensification, particularly in the Student Advancement and Student Recruitment areas. Staff appointments in lower level Academic positions had also raised access to senior Academic staff as an issue.

University representatives responded that recruitment is in progress for Student Advancement positions at Ourimbah and NeW Space as well as a new administrative position at Wollotuka. Additional fixed term and casual resources are also being utilised to support staff. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Darrell Evans noted the senior appointments of Head of Institute and Deputy

Head of Institute of which staff could request assistance. Identifying staff across UON to further facilitate support would be considered.

Union representatives sought an update on the Turning To Our Students project, specifically the expected timeframe and level of impact of a change process.

Professor Evans explained that the goal of Turning To Our Students is to reimagine the student experience using the Student Journey Map and New Education Framework as the guide, under the Education Redesign project. Two domains have been developed, which are currently titled Learning Futures and Students First. Learning Futures will focus on educator enablement and the transformation of teaching and learning. Students First will focus on supporting the student journey and enriching the student experience. Feedback is being sought from Academic Division staff and other services and faculties via a variety of channels (face to face workshops and email) on how staff see their work aligning with the 2 domains, and with the Student Journey Map and NeW Education Framework. This feedback will then help inform the next steps. The leadership of these 2 domains will be considered in the first stage of implementation that is planned for the end of the first half of 2019. The second stage will involve a co-design approach looking at how to align the functions to support students through their journey and learning framework. CPSU representative, Graydon Welsh questioned whether the 'reimagining' process would result in job losses and less secure employment for staff.

Professor Evans confirmed that at this stage it is not known when a change process under the Enterprise Agreement would be applied and what level of impact it would involve. The 'reimagining' process is designed to give staff the opportunity to participate and contribute. Consequently, fixed term contracts had been extended until September 2019.

Union representatives requested clear communications using plain language be sent to staff regarding the next steps and throughout any ensuing organisational change process.

Discussion followed regarding the University Library. Professor Evans responded that he sees the Library as the 'glue' between the two domains. Noting Ms. Coral Black's new appointment as University Librarian, Professor Evans advised that the library were going through their own reimagining process connected to Turning to our Students but that there were no plans to move the portfolio home of the library.

University representatives reported that a change process for IT Services is likely to be launched in mid-2019. Pre-change discussions are continuing with feedback being sought from staff.

Union representatives enquired as to whether there would be opportunity for staff across the University to provide feedback after the IT change is implemented. Mr Kelly noted the proposed clause in the new Enterprise Agreements included a post-change feedback provision.

#### **4. 2018 EA IMPLEMENTATION**

Discussion of this item referred to separate meeting – see agenda item 1.

#### **5. ACADEMIC SPECIFIC**

##### **5.1 ACADEMIC PROMOTION PROCEDURE - REVIEW**

NTEU representative, Lance Dale enquired as to whether feedback on Academic Promotions was limited to the Procedure document that is currently under review as he would like to comment on the broader promotions process. Specifically, Mr Dale is interested in looking at options to facilitate promotion of non-research focussed academics.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Darrell Evans responded that the current review is about the mechanics or procedure for academic promotion. However, performance standards may be looked at in a separate project of which the NTEU could contribute comments.

NTEU representatives flagged that members would be submitting individual feedback as well as a collective response to the current procedure review. Comments in relation to specific areas flagged at the meeting included:

- Head of School report visibility;
- Discipline representation on the panel;
- Reliance on PEF and data checking;
- Feedback processes for unsuccessful promotion applications;
- A&TSI representation on promotion committees
- orientation of Service towards citizenship behaviours and formal leadership roles;
- Requirement for level E to make a case of excellence for Service;
- Head of School being an Independent Assessor for levels D and E. The candidate has no choice of the assessors.
- Disciplines and Professional Areas to be “understood” rather than “represented” on promotion panels and, Difficulties in understanding an academic discipline.

University representatives encouraged staff to submit feedback and to attend scheduled information sessions on the promotions process.

## **5.2 ACADEMIC ANNUAL LEAVE**

Responding to an enquiry from NTEU representatives regarding delays in re-crediting annual leave not taken by academic staff during the University’s annual closedown period, Mark Kelly, Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, confirmed that all academic annual leave applications had been completed. Mr Kelly noted that under the Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement staff have until 31 January to apply for a credit of the unused portion of accrued annual leave. In previous years approved applications had been processed by the HR Leave Specialist on an individual basis at the time they were submitted to HR Services. This year the applications were processed in bulk and staff leave balances were not adjusted until after the 31 January deadline. Subject to resourcing, it is intended that future processing of academic annual leave will be on an individual basis at the time of being submitted.

NTEU representatives flagged feedback from academic staff in regards to the broader approval process required for applying for a credit of annual leave and requested further discussion on this at the next consultative committee meeting.

<b>Action 5:</b> University – schedule discussion on academic annual leave approval process at next meeting.
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## **6. TEACHERS SPECIFIC**

### **6.1 CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYMENT**

#### **6.1.1 TEACHERS EMPLOYMENT RATIOS**

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly advised that a report on the number of casual, fixed-term, contingent and continuing teaching staff had been prepared by HR and was considered by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Darrell Evans as required by clause 39.31 of the Teachers Enterprise Agreement. Mark Kelly noted that Professor Evans had determined that based on the data and using the 1/3 principle, no changes to the categories of employment were required at this time. The report was tabled at the meeting.

NTEU representatives noted that continuing Teachers positions were currently being recruited via external and internal channels and expressed the view that the funding for these positions should have been used to convert existing staff employed in contingent funded positions. The rationale for this being that the staff appointed to the continuing positions would have less service but greater job security than staff in contingent positions. In addition, the new continuing staff would be reporting to senior staff in less secure employment.

University representatives explained that the positions being recruited are to replace vacancies in specific discipline areas. These positions were and remain continuing positions in the staffing profile. Contingent employment is applied to specific Teacher positions as the funding for those positions is derived from student enrolments that are subject to change.

NTEU representatives requested that the University review circumstances of individual Teaching staff on contingent employment and consider converting these staff members to continuing employment.

<b>Action 6:</b> University – Consider request to review and convert Teachers from contingent to continuing employment.
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## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **7.1 SUPERANNUATION REMEDIATION**

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly reported that the Superannuation remediation project has progressed well, with all funds now transferred to the relevant Superannuation accounts for current staff. The remaining challenge is to locate former employees and deceased estates, however, most funds have been allocated for ex-staff members. There have been minimal calls to the dedicated Hotline and feedback on process is largely positive.

### **7.2 CALLAGHAN POST OFFICE**

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly reported that the post office will be retained and continue under the existing operator until May 2019. Australia Post is working with the University to identify a new operator. One option being considered is that the University may self-manage the Post Office on campus.

### **7.3 EAP TENDER**

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly reported that the tender for the Employee Assistant Program (EAP) service provider has gone to market in accordance with

University procurement processes. Transitional arrangements would be implemented in the event of a change in the service provider as had been the case in the past.

NTEU representatives requested a report be provided to Committee members showing usage of EAP and noted comments received from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff regarding a dedicated ATSI counsellor or provider.

#### **7.4 YOUR VOICE SURVEY**

NTEU representatives noted the launch of Your Voice and enquired whether the level of survey information provided to leaders would enable individual respondents to be identified. Mr. Kelly responded that all responses are confidential, and are processed and analysed by an external consultancy. Results are not analysed for groups where there are fewer than 10 respondents. The demographic questions at the end of the survey are also not compulsory.

#### **7.5 CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Union representatives requested dates for Consultative Committee meetings be provided to members for the year in advance as well as specific meetings for categories of staff covered by each of the Enterprise Agreements.

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***Meeting closed at approx. 5.00pm***