



Public Service Association

Community & Public Sector Union
State Public Services Federation (SA Branch)



News Flash



UNIVERSITIES ENTERPRISE BARGAINING UPDATE NO. 18

THE RACE TO BE LAST

The race to see who can reach an Agreement on the latest round of Enterprise Bargaining last, is on for the three South Australian universities. CPSU, along with the other unions, put in our Log of Claims in June 2008. This means that it is almost 2 years and still no agreement has been reached. Little wonder that the union negotiators are becoming very frustrated.

University of South Australia

This frustration has led to NTEU members threatening to walk off the job if adequate responses to the union claims are not met. Paramount for members of CPSU and the unions involved in the negotiations is the length of time that the Enterprise Bargaining negotiations are taking with no end in sight, conditions matters that are claimed to be threshold matters and no agreement as yet likely, and that no quantum amount for a payrise that is comparable to other Australian universities has been made. The meeting held on Thursday 27 May was a crucial meeting in an attempt to bring lagging negotiations to a head. The university management responded and significant progress was made at this meeting though the union negotiators were disheartened to hear management were not prepared to block out significant time blocks to address the outstanding clauses. The management proposed fortnightly meetings are not sufficient to settle the contentious issues in any reasonable or acceptable time frame. Currently we have 31 clauses agreed in principle, 35 clauses that are not too far apart, 22 threshold issues and 6 clauses that need to be re-evaluated. Unions preference is to have weekly and longer meetings with drafting meetings in between. CPSU position is that we continue to pursue agreement at the bargaining table and that, as a lot of the contentious issues, but by no means all, are academic issues, we should seek to reach agreement at the bargaining table. However, if negotiations do not proceed with a reasonable chance of concluding in an acceptable time frame, with acceptable conditions for professional staff and a just and fair wage increase, we will have no alternative but to apply for a ballot of members to take protected industrial action under the Fair Work Act 2009.

Flinders University of South Australia

The pace of bargaining at Flinders University is also frustratingly slow. NTEU put in a Good Faith Bargaining Order under the Fair Work Act but this has now been suspended.

The University has responded to the bargaining order and supplied to all unions involved in the negotiations a document summarising matters that appear to be unresolved, and a proposal for future meetings. The meeting held on 31 May made progress on some of the unresolved matters. The matters unresolved were itemised as matters that could be resolved in drafting and where there were clear differences in positions.

Taking into account the university response it seems reasonable that we try now to put our energy into the negotiations and a focus on how the Agreement could be finalised. A drafting meeting will be held 7/6 and meetings of the Formal Negotiating Group will be held on 28/6 and 19/7.

University of Adelaide

Next meetings for the Enterprise Bargaining at University of Adelaide will be held on 22/6 and 24/6. 39 clauses have been agreed, 1 clause is close to agreement and there are 28 clauses that are not agreed at this point.

Industrial Action

CPSU policy is that we do not pick up any duties that are part of bans by any other union. CPSU recognises the difference for Professional/General staff when taking industrial action with less flexibility of working hours. CPSU has not applied at this stage for a ballot to take industrial action.

Will industrial action achieve a better pay increase and better conditions for University staff? Industrial action at the universities in the past has helped in achieving the conditions you currently have. Without industrial action no worker would have the conditions we currently have. Historically industrial action has achieved better pay and conditions which have been enjoyed by all employees.

The three South Australian universities have put out salary offers that are not remotely competitive against the numerous agreements reached to date around the country. Traditionally the South Australian universities sit back and see where comparable universities finally reach an agreement hence we are now in the race to see who can get an agreement up last.

CPSU, along with the other unions, put in our Log of Claims in June 2008. Despite our best efforts to bring collective bargaining negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion this has not been achieved. University staff have continually delivered quality educational outcomes; we believe they deserve quality pay and conditions. The negotiations have taken far too long and the university management must now deliver agreements that are in line with other Australian universities.

Please do not hesitate to contact CPSU Industrial Officer, Margaret Warner for clarification on any of the issues on mw@cpsu.asn.au or phone 08 8205 3209. Your comments and views would be greatly appreciated as we strive to get an agreement that will deliver on a just and fair pay increase and restoring unions rights and quality conditions in the agreements that set out rights at work. Now is a great time to approach fellow work colleagues and ask them to join with you to make sure that all who benefit join the union.

**CPSU WORKING FOR GENERAL/PROFESSIONAL STAFF IN
UNIVERSITIES**

RIGHTS AT WORK - WORTH WORKING FOR IN UNIVERSITIES

2 June 2010