

8 September 2013

Mr Michael McNally
Industrial Officer
National Tertiary Education Union

Townsville Campus
Townsville Qld 4811 Australia
Telephone (07) 4781 4111
International +61 7 4781 4111
www.jcu.edu.au

Prof Robyn McGuiggan
PhD, MCom, BSc(Hons)
Pro Vice Chancellor

Telephone (07) 4748 6809
International +61 7 4748 6809
Facsimile (07) 4781 6299
Email robyn.mcguiggan@jcu.edu.au

Dear Michael,

I refer to your emails of 28 August 2013 and 3 May 2013 regarding the provision of information relating to JCU's budget and financial situation.

JCU Staff

The Union has, and continues to suggest that JCU has its priorities wrong, and that we don't value our staff. We totally reject both suggestions.

On 9 August the NTEU criticised JCU for its lack of urgency to find a solution claiming this was an insult to staff. However in your email of 3 September, you suggested that you found the "sudden urgency" of JCU to attempt to finalise the agreement, after 12 months of negotiations, was now somehow belligerent and disrespectful.

Such mixed messages are not helpful and must be confusing for your members.

After 12 months of negotiations we have worked hard to attempt to finalise the Enterprise Agreement to allow it to be put to a vote by employees. It should be employees who decide whether the Enterprise Agreement is acceptable.

JCU values its staff. Throughout this negotiation JCU has not sought to diminish the generous entitlements and protections in the Enterprise Agreement, despite the difficult and changing economic times. JCU is not immune from the Federal funding cuts or the increased competition for students that affects the entire sector. In addition we have other challenges that arise from being a North Queensland university.

These are issues that we have to consider when we approach how to respond to many of the questions the NTEU has asked us.

JCU has continued to value, and show commitment to its staff in a range of ways, including:

- Giving staff a 2.6% administrative increase, without staff or the unions having to request it. We did it because we believe in our staff and want to provide stability to them.
- The administrative increase was one of the highest administrative increases offered by Australian Universities in 2013.
- JCU has maintained the benefits, terms and conditions from the current enterprise agreement. JCU staff are entitled to a range of benefits on terms that are more generous than what is offered either by some other universities or other employers in North Queensland including generous leave entitlements such as 5 weeks annual leave and the ability to cash out up to 4 weeks annual leave.

- JCU has also agreed to the inclusion in the proposed enterprise agreement of the following additional benefits:
 - Payment of an indigenous language allowance;
 - Additional Cultural Leave of up to five (5) paid days for participation in obligatory cultural events;
 - Additional leave of up to five (5) paid days for participation in state, national or international sporting events or competitions;
 - Introduction of two (2) paid days Volunteering leave;
 - The ability to take annual leave at half pay;
 - The ability to cash out up to four (4) weeks' annual leave;
 - Allowances for Health and Safety representatives; and
 - Professional Loading for Professional and Technical Staff who undertake Academic duties.

While wage increases are individual to each university, the current 3% wage offer made by JCU is comparable to the announced offers made by the following universities:

- Deakin University - 3% each year for 3 years;
- Murdoch University - 4%, 2% and 2%;
- University of Sydney - 2.9% each year for 3 years;
- University of Ballarat- 3% each year for 4 years; and
- Charles Sturt University - 2.9% in 2013 and 3% each year for further 3 years.

Further, JCU's wage increase also exceeds the proposed offers at:

- Australian National University - 2% each year for 3 years;
- Griffith University - 2%, 2% and 3%; and
- RMIT - 2.5%, 2%, 2.5 and 2.5% in 2016;

We cannot change the economic circumstances in which we find ourselves.

JCU is committed to putting the best offer possible on the table for its staff and it is JCU's high priority to finalise the replacement enterprise agreement as soon as possible and put it to staff for a vote. We see a successful vote as important not only to our staff, but also to JCU, to provide timely wage increases, and to maintain business continuity and stability moving forward.

In light of the above, it is inaccurate and offensive to suggest that JCU does not value and respect its staff.

Financial information

JCU also has concerns with the NTEU stating that JCU has failed to honour commitments given to review the JCU budget to determine whether a higher offer could be sustained and to provide financial information. JCU takes these claims seriously.

JCU has continually provided the Unions with relevant information about its budgets, cuts to its capital expenditure and its financial position.

Our staff are well aware of JCU's current financial situation and the current challenges it faces. JCU has been forthcoming about these issues. In particular I refer you to the following correspondence:

- Email from Tricia Brand dated 10 May 2013;
- Email from Tricia Brand dated 13 May 2013;
- Email from Heather Gordon dated 4 July 2013;
- Letter from JCU to NTEU dated 9 August 2013; and
- Letter from JCU to Unions dated 23 August 2012

Further, as a statutory body the financial records of JCU and its annual reports are all available publicly and online.

As considerable material has already been provided, the repeated requests and challenges to JCU's commitments are unhelpful to the matters in issue in the negotiations. JCU will not continue to engage on requests for further financial information in light of the breadth of information provided to date and also publicly available on these issues.

We remain committed to negotiating in good faith to finalise the agreement and to getting the agreement to employees for a vote. We invite the Unions to do the same.

We look forward to working together to finalise the proposed enterprise agreement.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn McGuiggan', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Professor Robyn McGuiggan