



August 2007

The NEW three RS in Universities

Whether they are called restructures, reviews, or reorganisations they almost inevitably mean job losses.

University staff are constantly faced with the uncertainty that these exercises bring to their lives.

For the staff it can mean forced or voluntary redundancy, redeployment or at least a change in their lines of reporting and the actual duties that they perform; for many, it means learning new duties and acquiring new skills.

Staff may be forced unexpectedly to apply for positions and competing for them at a time in their lives when they had not contemplated career moves.

We have found there has been almost no flexibility in the packages offered.

Even requests for slight variations in the date of termination have been refused.

The driving force for most restructures is budgetary, and the pressure is on Faculties and Divisions to make savings.

Central Queensland University came under scrutiny by the



media when it decided to axe the positions of 200 General Staff members.

One report in the Courier Mail dated 17 May 2007, showed that at that time the Vice Chancellor, John Rickard, had received a whopping pay rise of \$195,000 per year just days before the announcement of the sackings.

That took his annual salary to \$689,999. However, the University said Professor Rickard's pay only increased by 10 per cent from January 2007; this still pushed his annual income to the \$645,000 - \$659,000 bracket (between approx. \$12,400 and \$13,000 per week).

To put these figures into perspective, it is worth noting that in the newly certified Collective Agreement, general staff working at HEW level 4 received a pay increase in February of just \$800 per annum representing 2 per cent.

With the salary paid to the Vice Chancellor, the University could employ between 15 - 17 staff at this new rate of \$40,800 each.

The Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Vice Chancellor, Peter Coaldrake, is reported in the same article as receiving

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15 NOVEMBER 07**

Continued from Page 1

\$550,000 per annum (approx \$10,500 per week).

The QUT HEW4 employee rate is \$40,608 meaning they could employ 13 staff at that level for the VC's salary.

However, **The University of Queensland's** Vice Chancellor, John Hay, receives \$959,999 (almost \$18,500 per week) compared to a HEW4 employee's \$42,730.

In this case the VC's salary is equivalent to 22 staff members!

In other words to earn what their respective Vice Chancellors receive in just **ONE** year, a QUT HEW4 would have to work for about **13** years, a CQU HEW4 for about **17** years, and a UQ HEW4 would have to work for about **22** years.

In a time of budget cuts and finance pressures it seems it would be better for universities to be more creative in finding a solution that would benefit all university employees than to cut general staff and increase boss's salaries.

Protect your conditions
ASU members support Collective Agreements. If you or your work mates are offered an AWA (individual contract) contact the Union Office for advice immediately.

Market Days



The ASU regularly holds Market Days at members' workplaces and one was recently held at the University of Southern Queensland.

The aim of the Market Day at Toowoomba was to give members the opportunity to talk to Delegates and Organisers about issues at the University including the Collective Agreement which is due to expire in the middle of next year.

As well as representatives from the Union being present staff were also on hand to provide information about other benefits of union membership including Members Equity bank and Union Shopper.

Staff were also able to access their superannuation representative.

Similar market days are planned for other universities in the near future and members will be able to get information about many of the other value-added benefits of ASU membership including buying privileges and discounts, free-will making service and legal advice, low cost banking services and more.

Anyone who wants to organise a Market Day for their own campus should contact their Delegate, Organiser or the union office on 3252 8666.



Is your workplace killing you?

The ABC's Toowong facility was closed down recently when researchers established that the incidence of breast-cancer there was out of proportion to the rest of the population. With 15 women now diagnosed with the disease, ComCare have accepted the claims of some of the women for workers' compensation. The reason that phenomena such as this go undetected for so long is employers don't always take note of workers complaints. Ignoring illness and injury at work can have dire consequences as shown by the experience at the ABC.

Following the tragic story of the ABC employees, it has never been more important for workers to report incidents and check their workplace for health and safety risks.

General Staff in the Higher Education Sector are exposed to many risks on a daily basis.

The most common are those of an ergonomic nature, including eye strain, neck injury and back pain.

Also, inappropriately stored equipment, badly positioned files, poor lighting and ventilation and climate control can all cause a range of health problems.

Workers who frequently use the telephone and computer are also prone to neck injury, pinched nerves, acoustic shock, and eye strain.

Another more hazardous yet hidden risk is in the photocopier room.

Most photocopier rooms contain a variety of copiers, printers, faxes and

other equipment and often the rooms are notoriously small, cramped, and badly ventilated.

In a recent study conducted by QUT's Professor Lidia Morawska, it has been discovered that there are potential risks having laser copiers/printers in areas with little ventilation or at a worker's desk.

The research has found that 17 of 62 laser printers tested were high emitters of potentially dangerous levels of particles into the air.

According to Professor Morawska most of the particles detected were ultrafine particles of toner like material that can penetrate deep into the lungs posing a significant health threat.

Outcomes can range from respiratory irritation to cardiovascular problems and cancer.

Professor Morawska said the study highlighted a need for governments to regulate particle emissions.

The ASU recommends the inclusion of laser printer placement and ventilation in Workplace Health and Safety audits.

Employers will need to restrict printer placement to well ventilated areas where

the particles and other emissions can be vented to the outside.

In the meantime staff members should be aware that laser printers situated on their desks could pose a health threat.

Help the ASU monitor your work well-being

Over the next few weeks ASU delegates will distribute Body-Mapping charts that will give staff members the opportunity to indicate where their bodies hurt when they finish work.

This initiative has been used in other workplaces and has uncovered clusters of injuries with groups of workers suffering similar problems in silence.

Uncovering the cluster has helped to identify poor work practices and equipment that the employer has then been obliged to rectify.

Want to see this in your workplace? Contact the ASU on 3252 8666.

your rights at work
worth voting **1** for

QUT SUSPENDS SELF INSURANCE APPLICATION

Queensland University of Technology has put its application for a self insurance licence on hold.

The ASU recently revealed to staff that the University wanted to ditch WorkCover as the provider of workers compensation insurance and go it alone as a self insurer.

The union expressed concern at the lack of consultation with staff and elected representatives regarding the need for proper safeguards to be implemented to ensure that the proposal actually provided staff with a better arrangement.

QUT based its decision to self insure on a business

case following a report by consultants KPMG.

The University is rethinking the proposal since a study known as the Kennedy Report cast doubts on the assumptions made in the original business case.

QUT now believes that service delivery by WorkCover has improved significantly and that a revised insurance premium will make self insurance less attractive. The University has until the end of September to complete its self assessment otherwise the application will lapse.

The ASU will continue to monitor this issue to ensure staff entitlements are not compromised.

New Charter to protect workers' health and safety

The Union Charter of Workplace Rights was released by ACTU President, Sharan Burrow at the ACTU's Annual Health and Safety seminar in June this year.

A new charter of workplace rights for occupational health and safety and workers compensation sets out the minimum health and safety standards for workplaces.

The Charter includes the right of workers to be represented by trade unions on health and safety matters, the right to receive 100 per cent income replacement for an injury and an absolute duty of care on the employer's behalf to provide a healthy and safe workplace environment.

ASU Assistant Branch Secretary, Mary-Anne O'Neill said the Union Charter will ensure healthier and safer work

environments for all workers, "with many organisations looking at self insurance and the incident at the ABC, it has never been more important for our members to know their workplace health and safety rights."

"Sign the petition supporting the Union Charter of Workplace Rights, to protect members' rights and preserve entitlements."

Look out for the new Workplace Health and Safety presentation coming to your workplace soon.

The Union Charter of Workplace Rights and Petition is available from www.qld.asu.net.au under Upcoming Events.

Find a copy of the Union Charter of Workplace Rights on our website www.qld.asu.net.au.

Excerpt from the Union Charter of Workplace Rights

This Charter of Rights sets out the rights and responsibilities of all workplace parties in the provision of decent and fair health, safety, compensation and rehabilitation systems and practices within Australian workplaces.

Regardless of jurisdiction, changes to occupational health and safety, compensation and rehabilitation law must not result in a diminution of the rights and entitlements of any worker.

Workers must not be adversely affected by any employer moving between jurisdictions in relation to their OHS and workers compensation entitlements. Any proposed move between jurisdictions will only occur following genuine consultation and agreement with workers and their representatives and a process of public review, including public tribunal hearings.

Consistent with ACTU OHS and Workers' Compensation Policy and international standards, Australian law must ensure healthy and safe workplaces and a compensation and

rehabilitation system which ensures that no worker is disadvantaged should they be injured at work.

All workers have the right to join a genuine trade union. Union organised workplaces are safer workplaces.

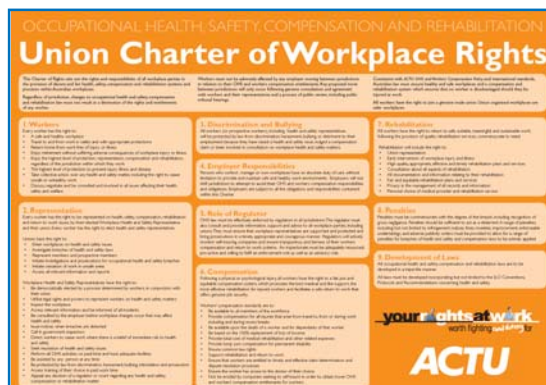


Image: Union Charter of Workplace Rights