

13 December 2016 – EA Bargaining Meeting

There was no negotiation meeting held on 6 December. The key issues discussed at the 13 December meeting are summarised below.

Curtin issued a summary document to the NTEU providing an overview of where Curtin understood the current negotiations to be at and an understanding of the respective union views on various matters. Many items appear headed for an impasse, however the NTEU undertook to provide a view on that summary document. We are awaiting that response.

Superannuation

The NTEU would like Curtin to lock UniSuper in as the default fund for the life of the new agreement. Curtin is a proud shareholder of UniSuper and has no intention in the current circumstances to change UniSuper as our default fund. But why make it impossible to change in the future if circumstances change? While Curtin is an advocate for the UniSuper business, our primary driver is to provide staff with the very best default fund we can.

Given the changing superannuation landscape, many things could happen over the next four years and we don't want to preclude a better arrangement for staff in this event. In much the same way that staff should have a choice about where they want to invest their own retirement savings and at what rate, it should be a staff member's right to choose as they see fit in relation to their superannuation fund. At the moment only 5% of our staff are allowed to exercise this choice before we hit a 'cap' that prevents anyone else being able to choose their own destiny. If more than 5% of our staff want to be in a fund other than UniSuper this isn't possible – this seems unfair to the other 95% of our staff.

We remain apart on this issue.

NTEU salary claim

Council recently approved the Curtin budget and a plan to phase in the return of Curtin's financial outcomes to within Council's sustainable levels (underlying surplus of 5%) by 2021. This information has been provided to the NTEU. Returning to sustainable financial outcomes is an important link to future prospects for Curtin, job security and workload levels for staff.

The wage and superannuation claims of the combined unions grow to approximately \$40 million per year over and above that provided for in the Council's return to financial sustainability plan.

We maintain our position that it is financially irresponsible to pay for the NTEU pay claim of 10% over the next four years without adversely impacting the viability of the University's operating model.

We also provided information about the capital investment required to keep our ageing buildings at an appropriate standard; for example, only a quarter of our existing lab space is expected to be viable by 2030 if we don't invest in a program of upgrades now. Generating a surplus is critical to being able to fund these facilities which are required to teach students and undertake the research that generates the University's revenue.

We remain apart on this issue.

Coverage of agreement: Curtin Sport and Recreation Services

Both Curtin and the NTEU are continuing to consult with Curtin Stadium staff. This will be further discussed next year.

Disputes

As previously reported, Curtin wants to remove the 'standstill' provisions that effectively halt the University's operations until a dispute is resolved. We have also withdrawn support for the NTEU to be able to raise a dispute in its own right. These are key issues for both parties on which we remain far apart.

Drafting matters: Curtin FM clause

There has been agreement to simplify the clause concerning the operations of Curtin FM, given that this a not-for-profit operation that sits outside core University business arrangements and relies heavily on volunteers to operate. The current clause is overly prescriptive. The NTEU have supported, in principle, the proposed changes to this clause.

Next meeting

Due to the unavailability of the NTEU, the next bargaining meeting is now not scheduled until 24 January 2017.