

16 May 2017 – EA Bargaining Update

The last bargaining meeting was held on Friday 28 April 2017. The NTEU have been unavailable for any meetings since then and have advised that bargaining is not possible this week. Curtin has requested to meet on Tuesday 23 May and are awaiting the NTEU's response.

Curtin provided a [settlement offer](#) to bargaining representatives in early April. This was not accepted by the NTEU. No comments have been received from any other bargaining representatives.

At the last bargaining meeting, Curtin indicated that there may be an opportunity to modify the approach to managing allegations of research misconduct from that outlined in the settlement offer.

The NTEU tabled an [alternative settlement proposal](#) and advised that it could not support an agreement without: an increase in Curtin's salary offer; increased superannuation paid to all staff not currently receiving 17% (i.e., 17% for all fixed-term staff and 14% for casual and sessional staff); and the inclusion of an Indigenous employment target.

The last bargaining update included a table showing an estimate of the cumulative cost impact of the difference between the NTEU claims and the Curtin Settlement Offer. Unfortunately, the table contained an error: the estimated cumulative difference should have been \$28.4m over the four years (not the \$35 million estimate in the table). Regardless, this is a significant additional cost. If incorporated into school and area budgets, the \$28.4 million would present considerable difficulties and would be likely to have a significant impact on job security and workloads.

This \$28.4 million cost difference must now be considered alongside the reduction in university funding proposed in the Federal Government budget last week. Preliminary analysis suggests that the combined impact of implementing the NTEU claims plus the outcomes of the Federal Budget would have a significant adverse effect on the University, school and area budgets.

Considerable time and resources are being applied to the enterprise bargaining process. This effort is taking away focus from the development of new opportunities and growing revenue. These are vital components of our strategic plan and critical to returning Curtin University to a financially sustainable underlying surplus by 2021.

Several of the changes to the agreement being sought by Curtin are key to the development of new revenue and job opportunities for our Bentley staff. Success in developing and implementing such changes should have a positive impact on job security and workload.

Finalising Curtin's employment conditions is a critically important task. In the lead into bargaining (a year ago) Curtin's Vice-Chancellor (in a [joint statement](#) with the other Vice-Chancellors in WA) stated that many of the outdated provisions in our current enterprise agreement are not appropriate for a university trying to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive higher education environment. Economic circumstances in WA have not improved during bargaining and the new State Government is now implementing significant change to the public sector and traditional operations of government in recognition of these circumstances. Our University, along with all others, is not immune from the changing economic circumstances. Excessive union wage and superannuation claims that continue to be pursued against this backdrop are not conducive to reaching settlement on the enterprise agreement.

Curtin remains committed to achieving a negotiated agreement with all bargaining representatives and to settling on a date with the NTEU for another bargaining meeting. However, it is apparent that we are reaching an impasse on several matters and should be prepared for the possibility that bargaining in its current form is not able to reach agreement.