

CONDITIONS WORTH FIGHTING FOR!



Union members at Melbourne Uni are organising to win an enterprise agreement which ensures job security, workload relief, and dignity – for example:

- 80% of staff to have secure employment (compared to less than half now)
- Vacant positions to get filled and there are more controls on excessive workload
- No forced redundancies, and a max of one restructure to affect each worker in the next 3 years.
- Wages that stay ahead of inflation instead of falling behind.

Through surveys and consultation with staff, we have collected a list of key demands that we think would seriously improve our working conditions. Here are 6 demands worth fighting for:

An enforceable 80% secure work target

There are around 12,400 staff at Melbourne Uni. More than half of us – 6,462 people – don't have ongoing employment. We want to focus on our work, not worry about our next contract.

That's why we're demanding that a minimum 80% of all staff should be in continuing employment at the University. The remaining 20% casual and fixed-term positions could exist to support permanent staff, for instance by backfilling parental leave or handling unexpectedly large student cohorts.

We also want management to guarantee that after 3 years' service or 2 successive contracts, insecure staff are converted to permanent roles.

Restricting restructures and job cuts

We want an end to the merry-go-round of restructures – we want management to guarantee that no one will be subjected to more than one organisational restructure during the term of our new Enterprise Agreement.

We're demanding no more forced redundancies: there are plenty of unfilled vacancies and overworked areas across the University – management should be able to redeploy anyone who wants ongoing employment if their work area is reorganised, rather than sacking people.

Over 500 people were sacked as part of the "Business Improvement Program" in 2014-15, and only a few years later nearly 400 jobs were cut under the "pandemic reset", while the University reported record surpluses.

Protections against excessive workload

Endless restructures mean more work is being piled on the shoulders of fewer people, and crucial roles are left unfilled. Management states there "are no tangible deficiencies in the current arrangement" with respect to workload issues – we know better.

We are demanding a series of measures to address excessive workload, including:

- Backfill for any position where the regular staff member is on leave for over 2 weeks
- Recruitment for vacant positions within 2 weeks
- No-one expected to work more than 10% over ordinary hours.

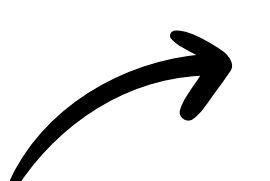
For academic staff,

40% teaching 40% research

There are currently no protections for the research fraction of any academic staff member in Melbourne Uni's EA.

There is something seriously wrong when educators at Australia's "No. 1" university do not even have time to stay on top of research in their field.

We want to reinstate the traditional 40:40:20 split between teaching, research and service as a benchmark. This could be varied by agreement between management and the staff member.



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A pay rise that keeps ahead of inflation

Wages at Melbourne Uni aren't keeping up with the rising cost of rents, mortgages and food prices. Already for every \$20 we're paid, we've lost \$1 to inflation: last May's 2.5% pay rise was far behind the 7.8% increase in the Consumer Price Index last year. The recent 4% pay increase doesn't make up for that lost ground – inflation is still running at 5.6% as of May 2023. When more than half of us are in insecure employment, every dollar counts.

The union is pushing for a wage increase equal to the inflation rate plus 1.5%, or 15% between October 2021 and December 2024 – whichever is greater.

Our demands are modest when you look at management's huge pay packets. In 2022, there were 20 executives at Melbourne Uni earning more than \$1,000 per day. Our Vice Chancellor lives in his university-bought mansion in Parkville, on a salary of over \$1.5 million per year. This is as much as the salary of Joe Biden, Anthony Albanese, and Rishi Sunak – combined!

Increased work from home rights

The choice to be able to work from home gives an important degree of flexibility to many workers, saves on commute times and can help with work/life balance. As we learned during the coronavirus pandemic, many roles can be performed remotely, and we deserve an enforceable right to have a say over how our work is performed. Yet many professional staff are having reasonable flexibility requests turned down.

Our proposed new enterprise agreement says that management can only refuse a work from home request if it's not "reasonably practicable". Any such refusal would have to include detailed reasons which would be subject to a disputes process.

Improved parental leave

We demanded vastly improved parental leave for everyone, including casuals. Management have recently agreed to 26 weeks (including new staff members), but excluding casuals.

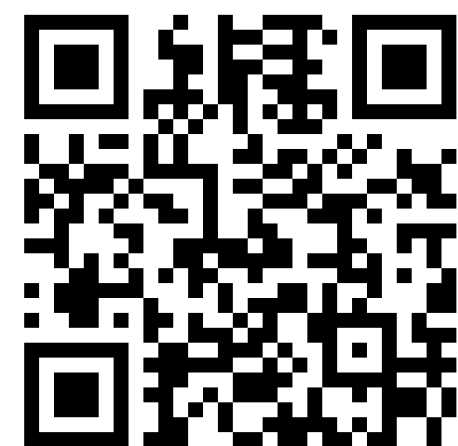
How can we win?

We know what we're asking for is fair and reasonable. The University can afford to meet our claims and could make it all happen – if management wanted to. We need to remind them it's the workers who make this university run, and they can't do anything without us.

To win our claims, we'll need to build as much industrial power as possible – which means signing up to the NTEU, and getting your workmates to do the same. And then we'll need to use that industrial power by striking, to win the agreement that we, our workmates, and our students deserve.

- Get active in talking with your colleagues about our claims, and what it will take to win them.
- Pass this leaflet on for a start.
- Contact the NTEU office to talk about what assistance is available to help you build union strength in your work area.

Find out more about our demands here



Scan to join the NTEU

