

University of Sydney NTEU elections

Alma Torlakovic is running with a team of NTEU Fightback activists for “Ordinary” positions on the USyd Branch Committee. Here are the first few candidate statements from Alma, **Sophia Davidson Gluyas**, and **Jeremy Heathcote**: watch this space for more in coming days.

Alma and the Fightback team are supporting **Joel Griggs** in the election for casuals rep on the BC.

Fill out the form at tinyurl.com/electfightback to help with the Fightback election campaign

Candidate Statements

Alma Torlakovic

Candidate statement – Ordinary Branch Committee member, University of Sydney



Vote 1 Alma Torlakovic and the NTEU Fightback team

Management are cutting jobs, piling workloads on remaining staff, and stealing wages from casuals. We can expect these attacks to intensify in this year’s enterprise bargaining round. The research fraction for academic jobs is under serious threat, and there will be further attacks on our conditions.

Unfortunately, our union nationally and in NSW will be run by the same team which tried to sell us a 15% wage cut last year. So we'll need a strong team at branch level, dedicated to large-scale organising and building for strikes, if we're going to defeat management's attacks and improve our conditions.

I've been a professional staff member at USyd since 2011, in Student Admin Services and the School of Pharmacy. For all of that time I've been active in organising to stop job cuts, pushing back against excessive workloads, building union membership and winning dignity and decent conditions.

No Concessions

As an activist in NTEU Fightback, I'm proud to have played a role in stopping the wage cutting scheme known as the "jobs protection scheme" from being rolled out nationally by our union last year. Our union should be fighting to maintain jobs, wages and conditions, not giving them up.

The government and vice chancellors say there's no alternative to cuts. They're lying. Australia's 31 billionaires have added \$85 billion to their wealth during the pandemic, according to a recent Oxfam report. Just a fraction of this could support and expand a high quality publicly funded higher education sector. But they won't hand over this money just because we ask nicely.

Bargaining 2021

There are no shortcuts to tackling the chronic job insecurity, the sickening rounds of sackings and cuts, the ever-expanding restructures and outsourcing. We've only won decent conditions in the past by striking, and we'll have to again this year – to defend existing conditions, win legally enforceable clauses that secure our rights, and create a political storm that shakes increased funding out of government and vice chancellors.

To build up to this we need activity including workplace meetings, leafleting, posterage, and wide discussion of exactly what claims we're pushing for. I've been involved in all this and more and want to continue playing a role on branch committee to keep pushing to make every member an activist.

Our vision for the union

The past 12 months have seen not only significant attacks but also record turnouts for union branch meetings across the sector. We can build on that to win major improvements for everyone in higher education: professional staff, academics and students. A serious industrial campaign to achieve this is the best contribution that university workers can make to turning around the decades-long decay in higher education and beyond.

Fightback

Every candidate running with NTEU Fightback is already actively involved in grassroots union organising.

Across the country, NTEU Fightback supporters have spent the entire pandemic organising to resist job cuts, pay cuts, and restructures. We've built the union in the midst of this crisis by organising protests, petitions and outspoken resistance, and we're keen to continue all that work into the bargaining round which is getting underway.

Vote 1 Alma Torlakovic and the NTEU Fightback team

Get involved with the NTEU Fightback election campaign!! Whether you can help a lot or a little, fill in the form at tinyurl.com/electfightback

See the NTEU Fightback [website](#) and [facebook](#) for updates and resources such as Clauses Worth Fighting For, a detailed document about bargaining claims.

Sophia Davidson Gluyas

Candidate statement – Ordinary Branch Committee member, University of Sydney



I'm a collaborative, and dedicated unionist always ready to get busy and fight for our working rights. As a proud member of NTEU Fightback, I work to defend jobs, services, courses and conditions. I believe that a serious industrial campaign is the best contribution that university workers can make to turning around the decades-long decay in higher education and beyond.

I've been a professional staff member at USyd since 2015. I've been active in organising to stop job cuts, resist managerialism, and to build union power. I'm an active member of Campaign Committee and I have been involved with executing campaigns around resisting the Sydney Operating Model ('SOMething Rotten' demonstration 2019), the successful campaign to fight the Ramsay Centre installing racist a degree into our curriculum, campaigns for safer workspaces and the 2020 'Christmas without Presents' demonstration to highlight the hypocrisies around the way management ran the university during the pandemic.

Like everyone in the NTEU Fightback team, I'm serious about organising members for an industrial fight.

No Concessions

We want to build a fighting union, with real power. NTEU Fightback is proud to have played a big role in stopping a wage cutting scheme from being rolled out nationally. We believe our union should be fighting to maintain jobs, and improve wages and conditions.

Across the country, NTEU Fightback supporters have spent the entire pandemic organising to resist job cuts, pay cuts, and restructures. We've played a significant role in defeating wage cuts and contesting attacks on conditions and jobs. We've built the union in the midst of this crisis by organising protests, petitions and outspoken resistance.

FIGHTBACK for better job security, workloads and pay!

Every candidate running with NTEU Fightback is actively involved in building up the strength we'll need. Every vote for Sophia and the Fightback team is a step away from making pointless concessions and a step towards building industrial strength.

It's time to *stand up Fightback!*

Jeremy Heathcote

Candidate Statement – Ordinary Branch Committee member, University of Sydney



I'm a proud Aboriginal man from the Awabakal Nation who has worked in the Higher Education sector since 2010 in roles focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, retention, student support and community engagement.

I'm currently employed as the Indigenous Health Community Engagement Officer within the Faculty of Medicine and Health and have a track record of success in fast paced environments, at both a

strategic and operational level, driving tangible improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and was previously employed within Human Resources.

Last year I was awarded the Churchill Fellowship and this research work is focused on First Nations mental health and suicide prevention and I have previously been awarded the 2013 Pauline McLeod Award for Reconciliation & 2011 Volunteer of the Year (Northern Sydney Region) for the work I've done on community engagement focused on reconciliation activities.

Outside of the University I am heavily involved in bettering the lives of the Aboriginal community and working on reconciliation activities through my director roles at Babana Aboriginal Men's Group, Inner Sydney Empowered Communities and WayAhead.

NTEU Fightback will bring a united front where we will be a STRONG Union that can fight concessions and make NTEU a union that is powerful and supports our members – we need more Aboriginal and Torres Strait representation and to actively campaign for increased employment and greater Cultural Safety across the University.

I aim to be a strong advocate of supporting real and meaningful change that impact the First Nations staff and students at our University and we need to bring Indigenous Knowing, Being and Doing into the work of NTEU.

As a proud member of **Fightback** I am seeking election as a general board member within the branch committee and I'm keen to work on activities that will focus on not only the First Nations and other Diverse communities within our University, but for everyone!

Testimonials

Mark Spinks (Chairman of Babana) – Jeremy brings the University to the community which allows us to know what's happening and shows our younger ones that education and employment is within the reach of our people. With a strong focus on mental health activities having representatives including many NTEU members at our events has been highly rewarding.

Sophia Davidson Gluyas

Jeremy is one of the most collaborative and compassionate humans I know and have been lucky enough to work with. At a local level, Jeremy dedicates himself to improving the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff here at USyd; I've been proud to fight and work by his side on local initiatives. On a national (and global) level, Jeremy works to improve the lives of First Nations people in Australia and across the world, working tirelessly to connect the conversations and learnings and to bring others along with him and genuinely empower those around him. We need advocates (and fighters) like Jeremy on NTEU Branch Committee.

Cheryl Ah-See

I've known Jeremy for more than 10 years, having worked with him at the University of New South Wales and here at University of Sydney. He is committed to working with staff in the regional areas like Dubbo and Lismore because he is committed to making sure the university is inclusive of its regional centres.

As an Aboriginal man, Jeremy has a strong connection to the local area around Camperdown, but he also has ties which extend across Sydney and into regional areas. He is, and always has been, committed to Cultural Safety and is willing to advocate for staff who need support in this area.

Jennifer Huch-Hoogvliet

Candidate Statement – Ordinary Branch Committee member, University of Sydney



I started at Sydney University in 2002, first as a student, then working for several years as a casual academic. Since 2014 I have been employed as a professional staff member in the School of Medical Sciences, working in education technical support. Over the years I have become an active NTEU member, campaigning to push back against endless organisational change, job cuts, and increases to workloads, as well as enforcing union rights and building union power. In addition to being a regular attendee and contributor to NTEU members' meetings, I'm also on the campaign committee, taking part in the organisation of several branch actions. I've also recently been elected as the Health and Safety Representative for the School of Medical Sciences. I'd like to take the opportunity to extend on my union activism by running for the Sydney University Branch Committee.

It is clear to NTEU members that this university is not managed well, and that there are many, many things to fix in our workplace. As a professional staff member, I have a particular interest in campaigning for professional staff issues surrounding workloads, job security, and pay. I also spent many years working as casual staff and work closely with academic staff – I have seen the issues

affecting these groups and have been an active campaigner on issues that specifically affect these groups also.

I'm eager to continue the valuable work of fighting for jobs and conditions at Sydney University. As a member of NTEU Fightback I successfully campaigned against the 15% wage cut deal known as the 'Jobs Protection Framework' developed by the NTEU national executive. I firmly believe that the way to make our workplace better is to build union power and fight hard to maintain jobs, wages, and conditions, not to make concessions and trade in our hard-won conditions.

A firm 'no concessions' approach is particularly important in 2021, as this year we begin bargaining for our new enterprise agreement – this is a time where improvements in our EA can be made, but also a time when wages or work conditions may be lost or traded. I plan on being there to build the power of our branch, to organise industrial action, and to proudly stand on picket lines to defend our current conditions, and win legally-enforceable clauses that secure our workplace rights. Let's work together to create a political storm that revolutionises higher education in Australia.