

[[Previous](#)] [[Other Industrial News - Major Workplace News](#)] [[Next](#)]

Wednesday 08 February 2006



AWA revolt goes global

Author: Lisa Macnamara
Publication: The Australian (025, Wed 08 Feb 2006)
Edition: 1 - All-round Country
Keywords: **AWA (3)**

BALLARAT University's workplace tussle has gone global.

Academic unions in the US, Britain, Canada and New Zealand have attacked Ballarat, which last month became Australia's first public university to insist new staff sign individual contracts.

"Your actions signal to us in Canada and to the international academic community as a whole that Ballarat is an institution that does not respect the basic employment and academic rights of its staff," Loretta Czernis, president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, said in a letter to Ballarat. "This [contract policy] will have a serious impact on your ability to recruit and retain qualified staff at a moment when the international competition for staff is intensifying."

Continued -- Page 26

From Page 25

Dr Czernis and other overseas unionists have sent letters of protest to Ballarat's vice-chancellor Kerry Cox and chancellor Robert Smith.

Asked about these letters, Professor Cox released a statement yesterday describing Ballarat as a progressive university that could provide sustainable pay rises and improved conditions via Australian Workplace Agreements. "Our AWAs offer staff unprecedented choice and flexibility in their employment arrangements. The up-take of AWAs by existing staff shows this to be the case," Professor Cox said.

In a letter to Professor Cox, the University and College Lecturers' Union, representing 69,000 British academics, said: "We will publicise this action among our members and advise them to check very carefully with the NTEU [National Tertiary Education Union] before considering applying for any post at the University of Ballarat."

Ballarat was urged to reconsider by the American Association of University Professors, which highlighted its concerns on its website. "The pressure to sign AWAs is a part, I fear, of the worst feature of labour relations in Australia today," AAUP president Jane Buck said.

The Association of University Staff of New Zealand described the industrial

debate at Ballarat as ``sometimes acrimonious".

``The existence of such a debate will have an inevitable effect on the willingness of staff to apply for positions in the university. The insistence that new appointments be covered by the **AWA** will ... simply exacerbate that negative effect," national president Nigel Haworth wrote.

The NTEU and Ballarat University failed to reach a compromise over the federal Government's higher education workplace relations requirements last year. NTEU Victorian division secretary Matthew McGowan said Ballarat had offered backdated pay increases to staff who signed an **AWA** by the end of next month. ``They've got a council motion that says they won't allow back pay in any enterprise agreement that follows -- so this is a clear bribe for staff to give up on the collective bargaining process," he said.

A Ballarat statement said it was ``unlikely that governments will meet the cost of open-ended back pay".

Former Melbourne University boss Kwong Lee Dow is an interim replacement for Professor Cox, who moves to Edith Cowan University next month.

Headline: **AWA** revolt goes global
Author: Lisa Macnamara
Edition: 1 - All-round Country
Section: Features

[[Previous](#)] [[Other Industrial News - Major Workplace News](#)] [[Next](#)]

Copyright © News Ltd