

NTEU/CQU Branch Strategic Planning Retreat

23-24 October 2000, Rockhampton

The Branch Strategic Planning Retreat, 23-24 October 2000 in Rockhampton, provided an opportunity for more than 20 Branch executive, delegates and members, plus four individuals from the National and Division offices, to discuss issues affecting the Branch and to determine priorities for responding.

Howard Guille, NTEU/QLD State Secretary, was the opening speaker on *Developing a Local Context for the Issues*. He provided an overview of the State of the Branch and outlined issues likely to affect the Branch under three headings:

- Branch organisation (and continued recruitment) for a dispersed membership;
- Implementing EBA3 (cooperating with management without being coopted); and
- University strategic directions, particularly the public versus private debate.

Summary statements on current and projected issues were then developed in small groups for presentation in a plenary session. These issue statements subsequently provided the framework for small group and plenary discussions.

Making Students Come First

CQU Branch must reverse 'insurance mindset' and encourage active membership of the union.
Create networks between NTEU counterparts at other universities, Student Associations, community.
Reduce Rockhampton-centric.

Financing and Managing THIS University

Workloads and new products mean staff isolated and overloaded with inadequate consultation in decisions (including appointments).
Failure to harness the existing skills of staff through appropriate reward systems.
Seeming obsession with control and secrecy.

Research and CQU's Regional Priorities

Public versus private universities.
Regional choice (and relationship to international campuses).
Isolation!
Consulting policy discourages consulting and collaboration.

The first of those discussions, *Making Students Come First*, concentrated on Branch organisation and the need to strengthen relationships with other unions, students and community to further Branch and member's priorities. The day ended with a Family BBQ at the new Riverbank Park.

National President, Carolyn Allport, opened the second day of the retreat by briefing participants on the *National Perspective: University Finance and Management Trends*. This led into the second discussion session, 'Financing and Managing THIS University', which concentrated on defining and managing workloads.

The third discussion session, *Research and CQU's Regional Priorities*, emphasised the regional nature of CQU and its mission while reinforcing the view that every staff member had a right to be able to conduct appropriate research.

Technology provided by CQU's Group Solutions' consulting unit was used to assist the final discussion session, *Developing a Realistic Action Plan*, and provided a practical demonstration on supporting group decision-making. While closure was not possible on many of the issues raised in the retreat because of time constraints, the group did direct the Branch Executive to continue the process over the next several months, starting with a survey of members to determine their priorities for the issues raised.

The Branch web site contains full documentation on the retreat, its outcomes and how you can participate.

- <http://www.cqu.edu.au/unions/nteu/retreat>