

## Developing a Local Context for the Issues

Howard Guille, the Secretary of the Queensland Division of the NTEU, started the retreat discussions with an examination of the interface between the Branch and the University. This interface, and its implied limits, is particularly important given that university staff are expected to contribute to university governance. He outlined Branch strengths and weaknesses plus issues likely to affect the Branch over the next two plus years.

### Branch Strengths

- Membership is around 320 with good representation and integration of general and academic members.
- CQU management respects the Branch.
- Dedicated executive
- EBA3 workload clause is one of the best nationally. The Branch is at the forefront of workload regulation.

### Branch Challenges

- Members may not know (or care) what the union is doing and may lack sufficient knowledge of union activities to support union decisions and activities.
- There is a competitive and potentially destructive inter-union rivalry which discourages academic-general staff collaboration. This may be compounded by role definitions of instructional designers, technical staff and others which cross the conventional boundaries.
- CQU's management appears erratic and openly factionalised, (eg change of negotiators mid-EBA3).
- Both management and Branch tend to pursue individual issues rather than general principles.

### Branch Issues

#### Branch Organising

- EBA3 will most likely be certified in December 2000. This will present an ideal opportunity for a recruitment campaign targeting non-union staff, staff on fixed term and casual contracts, and indigenous staff, particularly in Nulloo Yumbah.
- EBA3 introduces higher levels of staff and union involvement, predominantly in initiatives to improve student retention and workforce planning. Much work is still required to convert the EBA clauses into a consultative system for planning, budgeting and monitoring. Success will depend on a visible and supported delegate network.

Potential action required for early 2001:

- Recruit new delegates,
- Provide training for new delegates,
- Establish a mentoring system for delegates.
- The growth in CQU 'Private' has placed increased pressure on Rockhampton and other Queensland regional campuses to move away from supporting public education and scholarly activity for the CQ region. Whilst total revenue has reached \$130M, only \$72M has been budgeted for CQ public operations. The Branch will need to build strength through solidarity with its campuses in the CQ region.

Potential Action:

- Executive visit the regional campuses at least once per term,
- Increase number of delegates on regional campuses,
- Develop fridge magnets to attach to PC's with Branch contacts and the Branch home page URL.
- Most of the current executive are serving in their second successive two year term which ends October 2002. There is a gender imbalance on the Branch executive.

Potential Action:

- Develop succession planning from member and/or delegate to executive.
- Create a co-opted position as adviser on women's issues.
- Reconciliation is now permanently on the National agenda. Indigenous employment issues will become a priority for the Branch from EBA3 certification. Our indigenous membership is unacceptably low.

Potential Action:

- Conversion of contracts in Nulloo Yumbah,
- Recruit members and delegate(s) based on our success at contract conversions,
- Create co-opted advisory position on Indigenous issues.
- The Branch has the potential to participate with other unions in CQ region union activities and in the wider CQ community. This has the potential to be a two-way process, resulting in a stronger Branch through strengthening our links with other unions and the CQ community.

Potential Action:

- Nominate Branch representatives on local Queensland Council of Unions (QCU) bodies in Bundaberg, Gladston, Rockhampton and Mackay ,
- Progress Community Forum.
- The Branch membership growth since 1998 has almost doubled. Increased industrial and strategic pressures have correspondingly increased workloads on delegates and executive. Facilitating the day to day Branch operations has significantly impacted on the secretarial position.

Potential Action:

- Incorporate release time into cost centre workforce plans for delegates and representatives on University committees,
- A small executive group to examine the possibility of funding from Branch reserves release time for the secretary position initially on a trial basis for six months. Also, include in the proposal for the University to contribute by providing office space on campus.
- The success of political or industrial action depends on solidarity of members and having an industrially and politically knowledgeable membership.

Potential Action:

- Visit affected members before and after management meetings,
- Report to members on all management meetings.

## **Industrial**

- EBA3 will provide the industrial framework for the next two-three years. We are at the leading edge of workforce planning, an issue which has potential benefits for staff and management. Staff currently suffering stress from work overload should become healthier and more productive. In the long term the quality of university education will improve, hence attracting and retaining more students. In addition, our joint commitment to improve student retention is predicated on a workplace free of harassment and bullying.

Recommendations from Gerry Neale's consultancy included forming a task force to work in this whole area of grievance and present outcomes to the JCC.

- An indigenous employment strategy has been included in EBA3 in embryonic form. We are committed to working with current university initiatives to correct disadvantage for indigenous staff and students.
- Application of HECE will bring job security to many staff on fixed term contracts and has the potential to strengthen our recruitment strategy.
- The success of EBA3 will depend on the level of commitment and involvement of an informed University staff and management.

Potential Action:

- Prepare a BIBLE (**B**ranch **I**nformation **B**ooklet on **L**ocal **E**mployment at CQU) which would contain all employment related information including principles of the major EBA3 clauses.
- Forewarn management of EBA3 implications in terms of delegate release , etc.

## CQU Strategic

- Public vs Private will require an ongoing campaign of awareness raising amongst members/community/Other Unions in an effort to build knowledgeable militancy on this issue and consistently calling on management to remember; to remember:
  - The CQU vision statement and its components including maintaining sustainable regional diversity.
  - 'Building Our Future Together' commitments to support public education and scholarly activity with funds from commercial operations. Scholarship and inquiry in the CQU region will be the base for commercial expansion.
  - CQU has been quarantined from Government funding cuts.
  - Funds allocation - \$130M revenue but only \$72M allocation to Faculties/Divisions.
  - The budget allocation model should include the principle of fairness to all Faculties rather than favouring the wealthier faculties. Develop initiatives to bridge the gap between the rich and poor faculties.
  - CQU has an above normal current assets:current liabilities ratio.
  - What we are and our heritage, ie we were a higher education institution before we became a commercial enterprise.
- A commercial ethos based on quality teaching and scholarship and sustainable regional diversity will bring long term benefits to CQU rather than short term gains. Pride in the institution results in success in many areas, including student retention, but can only be achieved by providing quality education and maintaining standards.

Potential Action:

- Call for internal consultative mechanism on public vs private strategic model.