

CAMPUS MORNING MAIL

Hard facts and insider analysis

From Stephen Matchett



How much for how many?

Friday's CMM report that an **extra 7.5 per cent** employment contribution for **casual and contract staff superannuation** would cost universities \$700m over four years sent higher education observers scrambling to check the figures. As part of **enterprise bargaining negotiations** the **National Tertiary Education Union** is calling on universities to contribute **17 per cent** to **casual** and **contract** staff superannuation. This would bring them into line with **permanent uni staff**, and way ahead of the millions of mere mortals who get a government specified 9.5 per cent from employers.

But at least some actuarially inclined observers concluded that the **Australian Higher Education Industrial Association's** \$700m warning was less a worse than a not possible case. For a start, while there are **tens of thousands of casuals** the **extra 7.5 per cent** would not be that big a burden for universities because most don't work a full week or make much money from teaching – around \$40 000 a year on average. And while AHEIA did not include contract staff in its calculations one observer suggests it would not matter if it had because universities structure contracts so that workers do not make the **cut to qualify for superannuation**, which often requires two consecutive years of employment. Perhaps indicating how few people would actually be involved, Curtin U has offered to **extend 17 per cent super coverage to part-time staff**, who now receive just the 9.5 per cent government mandated payment.

On one calculation suggested to CMM saw the **overall cost** is **\$50-\$60m a year** across the system, on a \$15bn system salary cost. "We have been here before," one long-time observer of wage negotiations says. "When **maternity leave** was being negotiated **university managements** warned it would push **salary bills up** by 15 per cent."

However **Curtin U's** calculation of the cost of **extending extra super** to all staff now excluded, which means **casuals** as well as **fixed term** is \$35m over four years ([CMM](#) April 5) , which makes **\$60m a year** for the whole system look a **touch optimistic**.

Taken from the 24 April 2017 edition: <http://campusmorningmail.com.au/unis-aus-warns-campuses-cant-cope-with-yet-another-budget-cut/>