

\$700 million superannuation claim a flashpoint for universities



The 17 per cent superannuation claim for casual staff will cost \$700 million over four years, universities say.

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by **Tim Dodd**

A claim for 17 per cent superannuation for casual university staff is looming as a flashpoint in the current round of wage negotiations between universities and the National Tertiary Education Union.

The claim, which the universities' employer group says would cost universities \$700 million over four years if granted, comes as the federal government is preparing to take money out of higher education in next month's budget.

With wage claims shaping up in the 1-1.5 per cent a year range for the next four-year university wage deal, the 17 per cent super push – which has long been on the table – is set to take a more central role.

Full-time university staff have long enjoyed 17 per cent superannuation but those who are casually employed get the statutory 9.5 per cent.

"This isn't the right time for the NTEU to be advancing costly claims that would add significantly to the current budget pressures being faced by universities," said Stewart Andrews, executive director of the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association which is the universities' registered employer association.

Higher education consultant Andrew Dempster said in a briefing note that it was a "big ask" for universities to offer substantially more in superannuation benefits at a time when budget cuts were expected.

He said that even if the NTEU was willing to settle for a portion of the super claim, say at 12 per cent in this wage round, universities which accepted it could expect another higher super claim in the following wage round.

Online article: <http://www.afr.com/news/policy/education/700-million-superannuation-claim-a-flashpoint-for-universities-20170421-gvpg5v>