

### Higher education union demands 17 per cent superannuation for casuals



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A claim by the higher education staff union for 17 per cent superannuation for all casual staff is “unrealistic” would cost more than \$700 million over the next four years, according to the association representing employers.

The Australian Higher Education Industrial Association says a system-wide adoption of 17 per cent superannuation for all casuals employed in universities would cost \$166 million in 2018 and rises to \$189 million by 2021.

“At a time when universities are facing increasing budget pressure, the NTEU’s claim for all university staff to receive 17% super is simply out of touch,” said Stuart Andrews, executive director of the AHEIA.

“This week we’ve seen renewed speculation that universities will suffer a two to three per cent budget cut in the upcoming federal budget and are also facing the potential abolition of the HEPPP program, which provides universities with around \$140 million in funding each year to support low-income Australians to access university.”

The NTEU retaliated describing the estimates as grossly over-inflated.

“We think that estimate is at least double, if not triple, what the actual cost will be. It is conceivable that it could be even less than that. Over a four year period, wage growth will not be as high as it has been previously,” said Grahame McCulloch, national general secretary for the NTEU.

He said wage growth, which had averaged around 3 per cent for the the past 10-15 years, would slow down over the next four years.

However, Mr Andrews, whose modelling placed wage growth at just 1.3 per cent, said the cost of paying 17 per cent superannuation to all staff would rise to above \$200 million annually in just a few years and would continue to rise.

“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,” Mr Andrews said.

He said the AHEIA’s modelling looked at salaries, including casual rates, increasing by 1.3 per cent a year over the next four years.

“The true cost to universities of the NTEU’s “17% for all” super claim is in fact significantly higher than \$700 million, as the modelling does not include the cost of the NTEU’s claim for all fixed-term university staff to also receive 17 per cent super” Mr Andrews said..

Online article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/super-claim-would-cost-dearly-aheia/news-story/9ebbca703cae0bdf8be4b50d401cc733>