

Defy the five policies and fight for intellectual freedom on campus

The latest raft of management's repressive communication policies implemented in June, pose a grave threat to workplace organising and intellectual freedom on campus. These policies must be actively defied by university staff and students.

The five policies continue a broader trend of suppressing speech and activism on campus under Mark Scott and Annamarie Jagose in reaction to the pro-Palestine movement on campus, and the student encampment in 2024. The Campus Access Policy (CAP) was of course the first such attempt to do this, prohibiting such things as protests and posters without prior notification to management. Yet for Scott and Jagose, these outrageous attacks didn't go far enough.

Desperate to make weapons manufacturers and genocide apologists feel welcome on campus, the University Executive have now approved a further five policies to suppress intellectual freedom for students and staff on campus. These policies are explicitly derived from the Hodgkinson Report into the pro-Palestine student encampments, and the university's response. While they are directly aimed at the movement to liberate Palestine, they also seriously curtail union organising on campus, as well as what we can say and do at work.

The new policies range from the sinister - such as prohibitions on mass emails and public displays - to the absurd, such as the new 'Flag Policy'. Some of the new restrictions include:

- prohibitions on putting up posters and banners, particularly without authorisation
- prohibitions on any mass emails that might be deemed not 'of interest' to recipients

- a ban on students making announcements at the beginning of lectures
- a ban on unauthorised flag raising
- picket lines obstructing access to campus

While these restrictions may make a tiny minority of genocide apologists feel safe, for the greater majority of staff these only make the workplace more unsettling and restrictive. This climate of fear has only grown worse with Mark Scott's supine obeisance at the Senate hearing on antisemitism, and the recent calls by Jillian Segal to restrict funding to any universities that fail to adequately combat 'antisemitism' on campus, which the envoy conflates with criticism of Israel.

We as union members voted to actively defy the CAP last year. We need to do so again now. Support the RAFA motion to **defy** the new policies at the members' meeting Thursday 31 July from 1-2pm:

"Given the seriousness of the threat posed by management's new speech policies to political and intellectual life on campus, and the strength of the NTEU's commitment to members' political and industrial rights, we endorse the necessity of, and commit to, defiance of the policies, and to supporting members subjected to disciplinary action with the full authority of the NTEU."

Stay in touch and get involved with RAFA!



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DELEGATES AND LOCAL ORGANISING: WHAT'S NEW IN THE NTEU?

David Brophy

Although the NTEU has recognised people as delegates in the past, it has never had a formal delegate structure. That is changing now as a result of Labor's "Closing the Loopholes" Bill of 2023, which enshrines a set of workplace rights and protections for people formally elected as delegates (or "workplace representatives").

The NTEU's response to the new legislation has been slow, but we now have policies on conducting delegate elections. The legislation allows for up to 1 delegate per 50 staff (e.g. a unit of 170 can have up to three). Casuals and fixed-term staff are included in this calculation, and both categories can nominate for the delegate position.

In each work area, nominees will be put to an online poll. If the number of nominees doesn't exceed the number of positions, they will still need to get endorsement from 50%+ of the union members in the area.

This is a positive change. Finally, active local members who are confirmed as delegates will have the right to access membership lists for their workplace—something that has been frustratingly hard in the past.

There is still potential for union officials to play a gate-keeping role by deciding when a workplace is ready to conduct an election. The union also retains the right to dismiss delegates for violating the NTEU's Code of Conduct. But so far, reports from elsewhere indicate that elections are being conducted in a democratic fashion.

It's worth noting, though, that there won't be a huge difference between being a local activist and a formal delegate. At USyd, our EA already gives us all several of the rights this legislation gives to delegates. The university is not like a construction site or a mine. Generally, we don't face obstacles in walking around campus talking to colleagues about the union. Paid time for union training is something that we all already have access to.

Measures that would give local workplace areas genuine autonomy, e.g. the ability for a delegate to independently lodge a dispute with the FairWork Commission, are not provided for in the legislation.

There is a risk, in fact, that the existence of new laws specifying rights for delegates will provide the University with an excuse to undermine rights for everyone else.

The University's new policy on email communications, for example, specifies that delegates can still email colleagues about industrial issues. This isn't good enough: we believe all staff have the right to discuss their working conditions with their peers.

More than anything, the process of building a delegate network represents an opportunity to increase union participation at the local level and identify colleagues willing to play a more active role in the union. While mass meetings are essential, newer members often find it easier to raise their views and ask questions in smaller, local meetings.

Strengthening these local structures of communication and collective action will be key for us as we head into the next round of enterprise bargaining.

Officials follow activist lead on Palestine - cross-union rally on September 10!

Matte Rochford

Community activists and rank and file union members have been protesting against the Israeli genocide in Gaza since October 2023, with massive weekly protests, occupations and encampments on university campuses. In October last year, the NTEU's National Council passed an academic boycott of Israel, and in May this year the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) released a statement calling for sanctions on Israel.

On 4 July this year the NTEU NSW Division passed this motion calling for a union day of action in September:

"The NTEU NSW Division Council welcomes the May 2025 ACTU statement on Gaza calling for sanctions on Israel.

We see an urgent need for the development of a cross-union strategy to use our collective power to make a real impact on the devastating genocide unfolding in Gaza.

As one step towards encouraging this movement, we call for a day of action demanding sanctions on Israel on September 10. NSW Division will support branches taking action on this day by publicising events to members, including a public rally in Sydney.

We encourage other unions, and Unions NSW, to join this day of action and endorse the public rally.

We reiterate our opposition to the attacks on political expression and the right to protest targeted at pro-Palestine activists on our campuses and across NSW.

We condemn the heinous police attack on Hannah Thomas by NSW Police on June 27. We call for the charges on protestors arrested on June 27 to be dropped and reiterate our opposition to the anti-protest laws introduced by the Minns government."

The Victorian Division of the NTEU passed a similar motion and the nurses union, the ETU and ASU have endorsed the Harbour Bridge march for Palestine this weekend. This shows there is increasing trade union support at the official level for Palestine.

The rank and file group 'NTEU for Palestine' has endorsed the day of action on September 10, calling for a national day of action across campuses.

But whilst the statements and motions from union officials are good, we can't rely on them to organise the mobilisation. It will be up to us to convince our co-workers at USyd to join us, to build support across other campuses and unions, and promote the day of action with posters, leafleting sessions, forums and street stalls!

Upcoming events:

**1pm, Sunday 3 August -
MARCH FOR HUMANITY ACROSS
THE SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE:
SAVE GAZA**

**Meet at Lang Park, 1 Lang Street,
Sydney CBD**

This will be big! Join the NTEU contingent - look for the purple flags.

Reposted from official NTEU USyd branch communications:

**12pm Tuesday, 5 August -
NTEU Casuals information session**

Join current casual NTEU members and NTEU staff as we discuss sick leave, rates of pay for different duties, marking rates, sham coordination and most importantly, how to collectively enforce your rights as members of the NTEU.

Note: this session is available to both members and non-members.

During this hour we'll cover some of your key rights under the University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement.

Via Zoom.

Register: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/casuals-info-session-aug-2025/>



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Do you have a report from your workplace area at the University of Sydney? RAFA would love to hear from you. Let us know the challenges you face, the types of conversations you and your colleagues are having, and your ideas to take the struggle forward by writing to: rafausyd@gmail.com, contact us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, or call Ann on 0416 767 844