

"a new NTEU"

A New NTEU

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A New NTEU rejects transphobia within our union and in our workplaces, and commits to standing by trans and gender diverse people for trans liberation.

It is more important than ever for trade unions to stand in solidarity with trans and gender diverse people and take a clear stance against transphobia. Strong, fighting unions are essential in the struggle for trans liberation and robustly contesting transphobia is crucial to vibrant and effective unionism.

Why do we need a policy on transphobia in the NTEU?

Sadly, this is a very relevant question to be asking in the context of the NTEU. Increasingly, the higher education sector and our workplaces have become hotly contested sites for public debates about trans people and trans lives.

Unfortunately, the NTEU has a history of failing to challenge and enabling transphobic staff and officers, both through inaction and active interference. Problems regarding transphobia have often originated with the actions of senior staff and officials, not from the rank and file union members. When given the chance to vote on questions of trans inclusion and affirmation, members have enthusiastically done so.

We need to restore the democratic determination of members over our own union in order to deal with the pressing issue of transphobia.

Address the Queer Unionists in Tertiary Education (QUTE) motion

Queer Unionists in Tertiary Education (QUTE) is the NTEU's network of members who identify as, and are engaged in addressing issues facing workers of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics in the higher education sector and within the union.

A New NTEU adopts the principles of the [QUTE Emergency Motion](#), passed on 10 December, 2021, and if elected, is committed to urgently addressing each aspect of the motion.

The QUTE Emergency Motion was passed unanimously by 100 QUTE members at a special meeting after a motion, written, debated and refined by the QUTE Network, was subjected to anti-democratic obstruction and amendment by senior officials at the August 2021 NTEU National Council, the decision-making body of the NTEU.

A New NTEU stands by QUTE and its Emergency Motion, and believe it is absolutely pressing that our union acknowledge that 'gender critical ideology' is fundamentally transphobic and tolerance for such ideas have no place within our union.

Approach to academic freedom

We do not believe that a notion of academic freedom should or can be used to defend transphobic speech or ideas, and we believe it is a travesty that trans people have been made to feel unsafe and unwelcome in the NTEU.

When transphobic speech or ideas have been expressed in a public forum by higher education workers, this has often been in the form of personal opinion and not in legitimate connection with academic research work, meaning that academic freedom defences do not and should not apply to this conduct. While academic freedom is important, it is not and should not be conflated with an unrestricted right to express bigoted, villifying, and un scholarly personal opinion.

There are many real and pressing issues that we face as higher education workers that limit academic freedom: mass casualisation, a lack of government funding for universities, corporatised research schemes which place inappropriate financial controls in private hands, limitations on free and independent research, and conservative responses from university management in response to civil society activism. However, condemning transphobia is not of the same category as these.

Our union should unequivocally oppose all forms of hate speech, including so-called 'gender critical ideology' which is fundamentally transphobic, and designed to legitimise and intellectualise every-day transphobia.

Fighting for trans rights in the NTEU context

Trans and gender diverse workers require the same things as all workers - fair pay, secure jobs, safe workplaces.

However, the decision to transition in the workplace context can be daunting and is often a time of a lot of uncertainty. As a result, trans people face specific workplace issues because of transphobia. Workers face potential loss of work, harassment, discrimination and bullying. Trans and gender diverse people are also more likely to be unemployed, or employed in insecure, casual or informal work. However, we know that gender-affirming practices lead to better outcomes for trans workers.

A New NTEU has a vision for improving the working conditions of all higher education workers by focusing on working towards secure jobs and an end to casualisation, self-identification of gender on university systems, training and education on inclusive practices, supporting campaigns for adequate bathroom access for all workers and extending gender affirmation leave to cover all workers, including fixed-term and casual workers.



Anastasia Kanjere, candidate for National General Secretary



Fahad Ali, candidate for National President



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To find out more about A New NTEU visit www.anewnteu.com, call 0451 614 751, or email anewnteu@gmail.com