

MINUTES

MEETING: COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMITTEE

HELD ON: Tuesday 29 September 2020

TIME: 2:04pm to 3:39pm

LOCATION: Online via Zoom

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Nick Forbutt, Vice President, Chair (via audio-visual link)

Jess Reed, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chair (via audio-visual link)

Caitlin Brown, Honorary Treasurer (via audio-visual link to 2:44pm and from 2:52pm)

Yinfeng Shen, Honorary Secretary (via audio-visual link to 3:13pm)

Ruby Lotz, Director (via audio-visual link)

Kailin Qin, Director (via audio-visual link)

Nicholas Rigby, Director (via audio-visual link to 3:13pm)

Rebecca Sahni, Director of Finance (via audio-visual link to 2:11pm)

Nicole Saadeh, People and Culture Business Partner (via audio-visual link)

Robyn Matthews, Staff Representative (via audio-visual link to 2:32pm and from 3:03pm)

OTHER

Benjamin Hines, Director (via audio-visual link)

Belinda Thomas, Director (via audio-visual link)

Dane Luo, Board Secretary (via audio-visual link)

MINUTES

OPEN OF MEETING
<p>The Chair opened the meeting at 2:04pm.</p> <p>The Chair made an Acknowledgement of Country.</p>
1. Apologies and Leaves of Absence
<p>Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was conducted online via audio-visual link.</p> <p>Ruolin Ma and Connor Wherrett were absent.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to conduct this meeting online via audio-visual link.</p>
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
<p>The Minutes of the meeting of the COVID-19 Response Committee held on 15 September 2020 was circulated. The Redacted Minutes of the meetings of the COVID-19 Response Committee held on 15 September 2020 was circulated.</p> <p>The Committee amended both the Minutes and Redacted Minutes.</p> <p>Resolved CRC010/20 That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Minutes of the meeting of the COVID-19 Response Committee held on 15 September 2020, as amended, be approved as a true and accurate record; and2. The Redacted Minutes of the meetings of the COVID-19 Response Committee held on 15 September 2020, as amended, be approved for release. <p>Mover: Kailin Qin Seconder: Nicholas Rigby 10 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain</p>
3. Business Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting
<p>No business arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting.</p>
4. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest
<p>The Committee discussed whether staff members of this Committee should be able to vote on special consideration applications and variations in staff capacity. Some members of the Committee noted that the staff are very close to each other and there is a potential for matters to be leaked. Caitlin Brown and Kailin Qin said that it is a shame that this issue was not rectified in previous meetings of the Committee, and staff members voting on the Committee is unconstitutional.¹ Other members of the Committee noted that it is</p>

¹ Whilst not providing a final and conclusive opinion, the Board Secretary is not aware of any constitutional issues arising from staff members voting on a committee on these matters, nor have these issues been raised at an appropriate forum.

important to value the opinion of staff and that the BOARD OF DIRECTORS had given this Committee the power to determine special consideration applications and make recommendations about staff capacity knowing that the Committee was composed of staff. Jess Reed and Nicole Saadeh said that staff care deeply about the USU and they would not do anything detrimental to the USU.

The Chair ruled that all staff members on the Committee should abstain from special consideration applications.

Rebecca Sahni left the meeting at 2:11pm due to a technical issue.

5. General Business

5.1 Update on COVID-19 in New South Wales

The Committee noted that the number of COVID-19 cases in NSW have been decreasing over the past week.

5.2 Update on Financial State of the USU

The paper 'Financial State of the USU' was tabled and taken as read.

The paper had been presented to the BOARD OF DIRECTORS in their meeting on 22 September 2020 but was updated with outlet revenue for September.

It was clarified that bonuses and incentives for staff were not in the cash flow forecast. No one would be awarded a bonus this year given the significant reduction in revenue. The Key Performance Indicators for a selected number of staff are not part of their employment contract and are included in a letter of agreement.

The Committee noted the paper.

5.3 Review of staff capacity reductions

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5.4 Claims for financial special consideration

Letters requesting special consideration for financial hardship from [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

were circulated and taken as read.

A cost breakdown of the extra weekly and monthly cost of approving the special consideration applications were circulated to the Board Directors on the Committee and taken as read by the Board Directors only.

The Committee decided to consider each application individually. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. It was clarified that there was an option of placing employees on leave instead of working, which helps reduce leave liability.

It was further clarified that the Executive Committee decided against asking employees for financial documents. Nicholas Rigby said that he believed employees should submit asset and liability declarations and budget plans so that the Committee can determine financial hardship.

To resolve a conflict of interest, Robyn Matthews left the meeting at 2:32pm.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

Caitlin Brown left the meeting at 2:44pm.

Resolved

CRC011/20

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

Resolved

CRC012/20

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Caitlin Brown returned to the meeting at 2:52pm.

[Redacted]

Caitlin Brown suggested to set a benchmark as to whether the employee receives government assistance. It was clarified that recipients of the JobKeeper payment cannot receive the JobSeeker payment. As this was not informed to the staff at the last two Staff Forums or in the email to staff on 22 September 2020, the Committee determined that it was unreasonable to reject an application on the basis that there are no details about whether the employee receives government assistance.

Resolved

CRC013/20

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Resolved
CRC014/20

[Redacted]

Robyn Matthews returned to the meeting at 3:03pm.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Resolved
CRC015/20

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

It was clarified that there is no legal requirement that a tenant must offer rent reductions.

Resolved
CRC016/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Resolved

CRC017/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Yinfeng Shen and Nicholas Rigby left the meeting at 3:13pm.

[Redacted text block]

Resolved

CRC018/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Resolved
CRC019/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Resolved
CRC020/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Resolved
CRC021/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Resolved

CRC022/20

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Resolved

CRC023/20

[Redacted]

1. [Redacted]; and
2. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Resolved

CRC024/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Resolved

CRC025/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

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[Redacted text block]

Resolved

CRC026/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Resolved
CRC027/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Resolved
CRC028/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

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[Redacted text block]

Resolved
CRC029/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Resolved
CRC030/20

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Resolved
CRC031/20

[Redacted text block]

5.5 Communication with staff

The Chair deferred consideration of this agenda item.

5.6 Staff Retention Plan

The Committee discussed that a staff retention plan needs to be individualised. It was agreed that it should focus on staff that are critical to holding their teams together. This matter will be discussed at a later meeting.

6. Other Business

Robyn Matthews raised concerns about employees being required to be physically present on campus, noting that some staff need to be taking two or more modes of public transport. **Jess Reed** agreed to discuss the matter with the Heads of Department and consider any changes to the *Working From Home Policy*.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee determined that the next meeting of the Committee shall be on Tuesday 6 October 2020.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting at 3:39pm.