

Thank you Margaret. As Margaret said we do have colleagues here that are bound to clearly stand on what I want to talk about today. First of all I have to say the University of South Australia has faced all the issues that have been raised here this morning and what we have tried to do is tackle these in a systematic way through a central or I guess university approach across a very large and diverse organisation.

I'll just start by way of a bit of context. I think what we talked about this morning: the huge variety in the cohort of casual academics from those that come in from professions through to true casual people who are with us for a good proportion of their working time. The University of South Australia's data in terms of casual staff is about 22 per cent of our academic staff and that's been fairly stable over the last three years. I report on the data for our casual academic staff annually to the senior management group across the University and also break it down to each academic division and each school. It forms a critical part of the Annual Workforce Profile Report so that there is regular discussion about that. The data is always there.

Just in terms of the main issues that have come our way at the University of South Australia and we get these main issues from, in particular casual staff, sessional staff through a staff survey. We're very fortunate that every time we've run our staff attitude survey a high proportion of our sessional staff in particular respond. They tell us and they give us a lot of valuable information. But the other people that generate very valuable information are the deans of teaching and learning across our four academic divisions and the HR managers across the four academic divisions. Both of those roles play a very pivotal part in the things that I'm about to talk about.

Just very quickly some of the main areas that have come forward and these are no surprise, that are raised by sessional staff in particular, are their payment rates and understanding that; clarity about what is expected in terms of them in contractual sense; their tools of trade, how they get access to an office, a phone, a photocopier, stationery, very, very basic information; and thirdly involvement in decision making within a school, how they get to contribute to designing or reshaping the courses that some people have been teaching as a sessional staff for a number of years. Then we also often get the question about career development, how they move on to becoming a continuing academic. The University has also developed a document called the Protocols for the Management of Casual Academic Staff and the document is designed to assist managers cover a range of the areas I'm going to talk about.

So just in terms of the framework, what I have here is six dot points and these are the areas I briefly want to talk about but I would suggest if depending on where your University is at with looking at practices in relation to the management of sessional academics, this is a good HR framework. If you can answer the questions in relation to these six dot points, what you're doing and how you're doing it or even the fact you're doing anything or even use those dot points when you interview or discuss with your sessional staff. I think it's a really good starting point obviously depending on where you're at. Of course you'll see from some of these areas if you do them really well there are significant implications in terms of finances within schools in particular and the workload on particular roles as was raised earlier, like course coordinators, programme directors and so on. But in managing that framework there's also significant workload, as I said, in our institution on the deans and also on the HR managers within divisions.

So firstly if we look at recruitment, selection and appointment. One of the things that the University of South Australia has done is implement a sessional staff employment register online so that respective staff can register on that site with the details of their experience, their

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qualifications, availability, contact details and what in fact they might be interested in. Then of course people within schools; course coordinators, programme directors, heads of schools can search that website for perspective people. They can also put on there, vacancies and the sessional staff who register can also have an option of being notified about vacancies across different schools. I think that particular website where people can now register has served as a very valuable resource, certainly for heads of schools and of course coordinators but also for sessional staff as well.

One of the things that we've worked very hard at is improved contract documentation and this was in main to give a lot of clarity to sessional staff about what their rates of pay are, when they are expected to be involved in teaching and what are the sorts of duties that are covered in their contract. We've then further gone on to develop what I think is a very comprehensive role statement so that sessional staff can understand very clearly the expectations. For example if the contract says that you're employed to present tutorials there's a drop down underneath that that gives a whole range of dot points that go with what presenting tutorials mean. It's very common sense and very basic but for sessional staff they have found this very important. So for example under present tutorials it will say liaise with the course coordinator to obtain the programme, lead and facilitate small classes then it describes what that means, advise students of required preparation including the readings, provide the handouts for students, advise students in assessment tasks, conduct evaluation of teaching on a regular basis, student evaluation. So it lists at least 14 dot points under what it says about present tutorials. This has received a lot of good feedback from sessional staff, in particular about the clarity that it provides. It also assists in facilitating discussions between casual academics and the course coordinators about furthering any of those points.

Then finally in relation to the recruitment and appointment side of it there is in the contractual arrangements, which are obviously also online, there is the ability for flexible remuneration. You cannot pay anybody less than what's in the collective agreement but you can certainly pay them more. Casual staff have the right to negotiate their rates of pay through this facility. We're also implementing the option of salary sacrifice for all casuals if they want to do that.

Induction, this obviously has been raised a number of times. The sessional staff at the University are paid to attend the induction sessions and in the main that's at two levels. There is a divisional induction session which is held basically twice yearly across the four academic divisions but then there is also local school induction sessions. As I said staff are paid to attend both of those.

We've developed a quick guide for sessional staff and this is on our website. It's in the shape of questions and answers. It's a very user friendly document and answers questions for casuals like when do I get paid and how do I get paid right through to what is plagiarism and where do I find out about that through to what do I do if I suspect a student of misconduct. It's got many questions that have been brought forward by the people across the divisions that are regularly asked by sessional staff. We also have an induction website for all new staff that gives a very comprehensive introduction to the whole University.

In our largest division, the division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences, they provide a gift for all new sessional staff at the division induction. It's a brand new memory stick, University of South Australia memory stick. On that memory stick we put relevant documents that sessional staff may need. Of course they are allowed to also use the memory stick for their own purposes but when they get it, it has relevant documentation on there so they don't have to go out and find it. We've had good feedback on that from casual staff.

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Moving on to the subject of performance management and again this is one that most of you will sit there and go well it sounds good but that moves the workload for a course coordinator and programme director and so on. But I think it's a sound investment in time and energy. There is an expectation that there will be meaningful discussions with our sessional staff, performance management discussions where there is an opportunity for sessional staff to get recognition about what they're doing. That there is a process of formative feedback when on a regular basis the sessional staff can get feedback about what they're doing and also providing course coordinator, programme director with feedback. It's a two way process and of course there's issues of concern that have come up so it provides the course coordinator with an avenue to address those hopefully in an early timely fashion.

Then at the end of the contract which is a final review which includes a self assessment by the casual academic. That final review talks about where the intentions of the sessional staff member are. Are they looking for a future career in academics like what do they want to do, what other suggestions might they give in terms of professional development to sessional staff. Again satisfactory performance is obviously required particularly in that first contract for further contracts to be offered. In relation to the student feedback due in the second contract and from then onwards student evaluation is expected as an ongoing component after the first contract. We've had some great student feedback on casual staff so all those myths out there on who gets the poor feedback on teaching, we've done a very sound analysis I think on the University of South Australia and some of the best feedback is in relation to our sessional staff.

In terms of professional development, like many universities the University of South Australia has a programme aimed at improving the teaching skills of academic staff and the first component of that is the Teaching at Uni SA Programme. If we continue on with the sessional staff after the first contract then this becomes mandatory. So we pay for people to attend this. The good thing about it is that it also articulates into the Graduate Certificate of Higher Education which of course is then required for all new academic continuing appointments A to C. So if you are a sessional staff and you're aiming that way then this certainly gives you part of that qualification.

Sessional staff also have the opportunity to participate in online training, the same as all other staff do. So that training could be in IT areas, it can be an OH&S module and a range of other areas. The four academic divisions have developed targeted professional development programmes and again in our largest division, the division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences, the professional development sessions are compulsory part of the induction process for sessional staff. So they're paid to attend those and those sessions can cover a range of different topics from assessment practices and policies through to plagiarism and so on.

Then the networking opportunities, again the divisions and in particular the division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences have built into the professional development activities that sessional staff must attend, opportunities to network, socialise, get to know sessional staff across the whole division, in the school that you work in and outside of that. This has certainly helped I think in the issue of isolation for some sessional staff.

The involvement in decision making, I think this is a really challenging one for universities. We invite all sessional staff to school board meetings and there's a variety of responses to that. They're also invited onto a range of other working parties across the University and usually if they're on a working party they will be paid for that time. As you can imagine they would have some very valuable contributions in relation to teaching and learning programmes. The University of South Australia has a sessional staff working party that is chaired by one of our deans, Teaching and Learning Associate Professor Ingrid Day, and that group has been responsible for looking at a range of the topics that I've talked about but also

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many others in relation to sessional staff. As I've said that group is trying to systematically tackle all of those things as they've come up and moved I think significant distances with all of those things. I stress that because I think the University sessional staff working group has put in place many of these initiatives and has received a sound recognition of their work by the senior management group, that's helped with our implementation.

Then finally the area of reward and recognition, we already talked about a number of strategies this morning and again the University of South Australia does give sessional staff Excellence in Teaching Awards. Those awards get a financial prize to them and that money can be used for conferences and in gaining resources and so on. They are seen as very valuable recognition and I think as Ingrid Day will tell us that the awards have also assisted as a public recognition that can be used when we have sessional staff that are wanting to apply for continuing roles in the University.

I popped down there the development activities because I think sessional staff actually view their involvement in professional development activities and working parties as a mechanism of reward and recognition for their part in the university.