

# AUT International Travel Policy: Submission of TEU Branch Executive

## Letter sent to the Vice Chancellor on 3rd March reads

Overall, the policy appears to make permanent what was positioned initially as a temporary measure widely understood to be a response to the University's financial situation. The implications and consequences of quasi-permanently subjecting staff research/conference travel to such severe restrictions do not appear to have been properly thought through.

The policy's framing and terminology do not seem to recognise that travel, including international travel, for research and conference presentation are normal parts of University life nationally and internationally, and instead seeks to make them rare exceptions with metrics that are near impossible to meet.

Under these criteria very few AUT academic staff will be able to travel to international conferences, putting AUT academics in second class academic status as against other New Zealand Universities and disabling many, if not most, from participating in such events on the global stage. The problem is particularly acute given the distance of New Zealand from many centres of disciplinary practice and prohibitive cost for academics of financing such travel privately.

The criteria for outputs from such events are highly instrumentalised metrics and do not recognise the



common and well established academic understanding that the networking opportunities around the scheduled sessions of conferences, for instance, often result in outcomes, such as research and publication collaborations, that cannot always be predicted and quantified in advance.

If part of the rationale is climate action, i.e. emissions reduction, then is unfair to target academic staff travel for research and conference purposes when AUT actively targets international students whose numbers and frequency of air travel, and thus carbon output, dwarves that of faculty.

While purporting through points weighting to support emerging researchers and multipliers to target support to Māori and Pacific academic staff, these groups were in fact always entitled to apply for use of the \$5,000 per year for such travel purposes and under this model face additional hurdles, as do all staff. Pools of additional dedicated conference/research travel funding would

better serve these groups.

If academic staff, presuming any will be able to travel under the proposed metrics, are able to stay before and/or after a conference and this falls within a reasonable leave period, the former policy was that they would only need to cover the difference in fares if the date/s of such travel make it more expensive. Otherwise, staff staying on in a location imposes no additional cost to AUT. Many staff consider the proposed 50% clawback mean-spirited and exploitative. It is commonly accepted within academia that staff may "piggyback" leave on top of conference/research travel and this is in fact a responsible way to leverage a journey in terms of carbon emissions (i.e., reducing the frequency of need for independent private travel)

Under the proposed measures, many if not most academic staff will never have AUT funded travel again; this makes AUT a less attractive workplace for academic staff comparative to other New Zealand universities and will be a huge barrier to international

recruitment. With such restrictive travel policies in place, AUT risks becoming a career dead end for senior academic researchers.

Overall, many members feel that these measures express an implicit hostility to common and well-established academic work practices, and even constitute an attack on academic culture and conventions, undermining the identity of AUT as a university of international calibre and standing. The exclusion of senior managers from some of the strictures adds insult to injury and risks entrenching an "us and them" culture.

In terms of reception, senior academic researchers, in particular, who have done so much to help raise AUT's global rankings have expressed disappointment at the punitive nature of the policy and its naïve, instrumentalised metrics. AUT needs to consider the extent to which it risks fundamentally alienating many of those who have contributed most to its establishment as a credible academic institution.



## AUT shuttle bus should be free to students and staff

Michael Wood recently said: “Transport is one of our largest sources of emissions and accounts for 17 per cent or one sixth of total greenhouse gas emissions. Equally, it is an area where Kiwis can make a difference immediately.....every positive change in habit, helps us as a nation move a step closer to achieving our required carbon reductions.”

In a recent letter sent to VC Damon Salesa it states.

*Would AUT consider making its shuttlebuses free to both students and staff?*



*Although a small step, it would help reduce AUT's carbon footprint as students and staff would reduce the use of private vehicles and make greater use of the buses, which, we understand, are not used to full capacity. It would demonstrate AUT's commitment to taking action in the climate crisis and be helpful to people, particularly*

*students, facing financial hardship due to the cost-of-living crisis.*

*We would welcome your thoughts on making the shuttlebus free so that we can share them with our members. ,*

We will update you on the response we receive.

## Are you a member of the TEU union? If not it's time to join

Scan the QR code below to join.



# Holding the line

Congratulations TEU members at AUT. You stood strong, you fought, you won. As National President and one of those looking at redundancy at AUT, I thank you all for the battle you fought. It was not easy and many stayed the distance demanding not to be treated in such an appalling and unfair manner. Your President, David Sinfield, and organiser, Jill Jones did an amazing job, over and above what we would see them do.

This win is so much more than a win for those of you directly affected too. This win which reinforced the sanctity of our collective agreement, as declared by the Employment Court, is also a win for every member of the TEU across our sector. If one branch is undermined we are all next. So thank you for your commitment to collective rights and values.

Please also remember that our comrades over the road at the

University of Auckland are also under attack at the moment. The employer wants members to trade, conditions for future workers and decent pay processes for general staff, for a pay rise. These are not negotiable! Again we see members holding a line which is holding a line for all of us. They have continued taking strike action, and it is hard. If you see further strike action advertised and pickets it would be great of can get across the road and join them I the struggle. We are a union of nearly 12,000. We stand together, together we win and protect our rights.

I roto i te kotahitanga

*Julie Douglas  
Te Tumu Whakarae National  
Presidentby*

## 100 AUT academic staff take voluntary redundancy

Out of the 100 academic staff that took redundancy, 71 of them were our members. We are very sad to see them go but we need to maintain our branch numbers and so everyone has a duty to recruit new members. The bigger we are the stronger we are.





# Introducing the Executive Team 2023



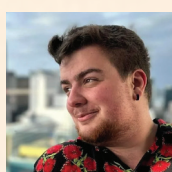
**Jill Jones**  
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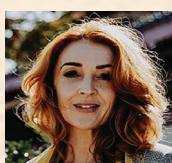
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## Farewell to John Prince

It is with great sadness that the branch says goodbye to John Prince, who has now left AUT. John had been a member of the AUT branch for more than thirty years. For ten of those years, he was a very efficient and effective branch president. John also held several national roles in the union, including being a member of the industrial and professional committee and as a member of

the TEU council for several years.

John played a key role in working on the Industrial and Professional Committee in developing TEU's industrial strategy. His knowledge of redundancy processes, salary movements, assisting with defending core conditions and developing national and local claims was invaluable.

Over the years John helped many members deal with workplace issues. John could always be relied on for sound practical advice across a range of issues. He was also brilliant at leading marches and rallies, which he did with aplomb, and always with his great sense of humour. In 2019, John received a TEU Award of Excellence in the category professional integrity. He was nominated for this award by the TEU National Council with the support of our Branch.



people over the years both as the Branch President and indeed when he wasn't in that role. John was the Branch President for over 10 years so he was truly a seasoned act and knew AUT processes and policies inside out and would always tell AUT the way it is. When John decided to take the redundancy it was a blow, but I know he is enjoying his next venture in life and sailing the seas and taking it easy. Thanks for everything and being there for us all.

John's contribution to our branch will greatly be missed. Current Branch President, David Sinfield says John was a great mentor, colleague, a good friend and a true working class hero. He stood for workers' rights and the marginalised and would never back down to management. He would support members to the bitter end. He helped many, many





# Who saved your job?

## TEU did

### Are you a member of the TEU union? If not it's time to join

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