



# HUNTER WORKERS

## Join Unions

Inquiry into Vocational Education and  
Training, General Purpose Standing  
Committee No. 6

Prepared for: NSW Upper House Committees  
Prepared by: Daniel Wallace,  
Date: 9th October 2015  
Proposal number: GPSC 6

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Objective

To respond to post- hearing questions on notice from Newcastle Hearing conducted on Friday 18th September 2015

### Questions on Notice

Dr John Kaye to ask Mr Daniel Wallace, Secretary of Newcastle Trades Hall Council

1. When did the Hunter Business Chamber access facilities at Hamilton TAFE Campus?
  - a) Are you aware of any market testing of alternative uses for the site?
  - b) Was your organisation consulted in respect to the facility?
  - c) Are you aware of any other uses of the facility
2. Has your organisation been consulted by Hunter Institute management on matters relating to TAFE delivery in the Hunter
  - a) if so, please provide details?

### Newcastle Trades Hall Council Response

1. When did the Hunter Business Chamber access facilities at Hamilton TAFE Campus?

*Answer: The Hunter Business Chamber moved 13 staff to the facility in April 2014. The article containing the details was reported in the Newcastle Herald on March 13th 2014. The article is attached as Appendix 1*

- a) Are you aware of any market testing of alternative uses for the site?

*Answer: No, the Newcastle Trades Hall Council is not aware of any market testing or alternative uses for the site. A TAFE spokesperson indicated publicly to the Newcastle Herald on 25th February 2015 (Appendix 2) that the lease was a commercial in confidence arrangement. As such Newcastle Trades Hall Council are not in a position to determine if the commercial in confidence lease arrangements provided for the appropriate market rates for leased space and whether the lease contained any favourable alternate uses for the site. Newcastle Trades Hall Council is also unclear on whether each party paid the legal costs in establishing a commercial in confidence lease or whether the legal cost were directly born by the Hunter Institute.*

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b) Was your organisation consulted in respect to the facility?

*Answer: No, the Newcastle Trades Hall Council was not consulted in respect to the facility. The Newcastle Trades Hall Council is unaware of the policy or practice that was used by the Hunter Institute of Management to hold consultation with stakeholders that led to commercial in confidence lease arrangements.*

c) Are you aware of any other uses of the facility

*Answer: The Australian Business Apprenticeship Centre is a wholly owned division of NSW Business Chamber and is located at the Hamilton Campus. Newcastle Trades Hall Council is not aware on the lease arrangements or market testing carried out that led to this arrangement. NTHC is unaware if other recognised training organisations were consulted or given the opportunity to explore via an expression of interest or any other means.*

2. Has your organisation been consulted by Hunter Institute management on matters relating to TAFE delivery in the Hunter

*Answer: No.*

a) If so, please provide details?

*Answer: Not available.*

## **Appendix 1 - Business chamber on the move to TAFE Campus**

(Newcastle Herald, March 13th 2014)

## **Appendix 2 - Missing TAFE sign sparks anger from protesters**

(Newcastle Herald, February 25th 2015)

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APPENDIX 1

**NEWCASTLE**  
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# Business chamber on the move to TAFE campus

By PENELOPE GREEN, Business March 13, 2014, 10:30 p.m.

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NEW DIGS: TAFE boss Phil Cox and chamber chief executive Kristen Keegan. The chamber is moving to TAFE's Hamilton campus. Picture: Ryan Osland

AFTER a decade based in the cavernous and antiquated main administration building at BHP's Mayfield East site, the Hunter Business Chamber is moving.

Next month, its 13 staff will shift to the historic Great Northern Brewery building at Hunter TAFE's Parry Street campus in Hamilton, occupying a 400-square-metre space that was most recently used for teaching hair and beauty courses.

Chief executive Kristen Keegan said the move by the chamber, the largest regional business chamber in Australia, would accommodate her growing staff and consolidate the strong relationship the chamber had with TAFE.

"The chamber remains focused on ensuring Hunter businesses are able to access a highly skilled workforce and our partnership with Hunter TAFE continues to deliver positive, tangible outcomes across a number of areas," she said.

Ms Keegan said the chamber's move also represented a significant vote of confidence in the city and its ongoing growth and renewal.

Hunter TAFE chief executive Phil Cox said the organisation worked closely with the chamber to develop programs that added to the region's development.

"We have strong relations with business generally but we want to be able to demonstrate that even more. It's really important for us to be aligned with industry," he said.

The Hunter Development Corporation (HDC) manages the chamber's former offices at the BHP site, with the building part of the potential port lease transaction.

Last month, the Newcastle Herald reported that three historic buildings on the steelworks site would be demolished in order to remediate the land.

HDC general manager Bob Hawes said there were no plans for the main administration building to be demolished.

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APPENDIX 2

**NEWCASTLE**  
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## Missing TAFE sign sparks anger from protesters

By IAN KIRKWOOD Feb. 25, 2015, 10.30 p.m.

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On a small hillock next to the Parry Street footpath, the old TAFE sign had been replaced by one advertising Hunter Business Chamber and an Australian Business apprenticeship centre.

To protesters angry at government TAFE policies, it was a red rag to a bull, and one wag crossed out "Business" to make it the Hunter Privatisation Centre.

The situation changed again on Wednesday, when a new Hunter TAFE sign was put on top of the Hunter Business Chamber sign.

But Newcastle Trades Hall Council secretary Daniel Wallace is still unhappy.

"The Hamilton TAFE sign has been re-erected but only after the issue received significant attention on social media," Mr Wallace said.

"While we understand the chamber leases part of the site from the government, the arrangement is unclear."

Business chamber chief executive Kristen Keegan said the organisation had a "commercial lease" with the TAFE and "claims of special provision for priority use of classrooms are untrue".

A TAFE spokesperson said the old sign had been pulled down to make way for a re-branded sign. The spokesperson said the TAFE had worked informally with the chamber for decades.

"Hunter TAFE entered into a commercial-in-confidence agreement with the business chamber 12 months ago," a TAFE spokesperson said. "This agreement included the sub-leasing of offices in an unoccupied building at Hunter TAFE's Hamilton campus."



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