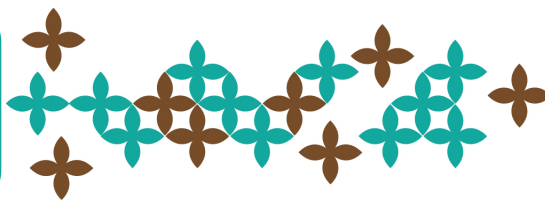




**Australian
Association
for Pacific Studies**



Statement of the Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) Executive on the staff cuts at the University of Wollongong

The Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) expresses serious concern regarding the staffing cuts announced by the University of Wollongong. AAPS understands there is a disproportionate impact on the humanities, with history and geography being particularly impacted as a result of the cuts.

History and geography are two the key disciplines of human understanding and bear particular significance for the communities of Oceania. Our place, how we situate ourselves in the world, and our personal, cultural, and political histories tell us everything about who we are and who we are becoming. These are core elements of Pacific Studies. As Pacific scholars, we recognise the interconnectedness of struggles against colonialism and racism across the Pacific region- this knowledge is deeply grounded in geography and history and our Australian community will be much poorer without Australian universities making a dedicated commitment to these disciplines.

We understand the University of Wollongong has a strong historical relationship with Papua New Guinea and the broader Pacific with a sustained period encouraging learning, teaching and collaboration between Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific in undergraduate programs in politics and government, world literature and other disciplines. We also understand there are strong Pacific-related archives and collections on campus.

Our 2012 Conference was held in the University of Wollongong with the theme of 'Sustenance'. This theme is a fitting reminder of how important it is to sustain our knowledge of place and of the past if our global communities are to thrive amidst the challenges of climate change and capitalism.

We were very grateful in 2012 to be on Dharawal country and to experience the air, lands, and waters of the region. The strength and richness of humanities at the University of Wollongong has certainly contributed to the history of our Association, and to Pacific Studies in Australia more broadly. It is hard to imagine how our community could be hosted in Wollongong without a strong grounding in those disciplines.

More broadly, we stand in opposition to cuts in teaching and research roles across the University of Wollongong and across the University sector generally. Our society is deeply enriched by the cultural strength of centring education and learning. While the economic benefits are clear, we stress that the social and cultural benefits of education are at the heart of what makes our society thrive.

We add our voice in solidarity with the National Tertiary Education Union's work to fight to save the jobs at the University of Wollongong.

A/Prof Victoria Stead,
President, on behalf of the Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) Executive
12 December 2024