



National Tertiary  
Education Union  
Let's aim higher

# PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES WAGE THEFT REPORT

**THIRD EDITION**

**JUNE 2024**

## THE FIGURES:

**The total amount of money so far in identified wage theft across the higher education sector:**

**\$382,048,628**

### THIS FIGURE INCLUDES:

**\$203 MILLION**

in confirmed underpayments of staff that have occurred at 30 Australian public universities

**\$168 MILLION**

in provisions for underpayments that have been recorded by 9 universities in their recently released annual reports

**\$10 MILLION**

in estimated underpayments occurring at one institutions that has confirmed systemic underpayments, but has concealed the dollar amount

**\$???**

unknown amounts at two institutions that have confirmed systemic underpayments have occurred, but have withheld details so no reasonable estimate can be produced

Types of verified underpayment commonly found in Australian universities include failure to pay penalty rates, failure to pay appropriate rates (by work classification), failure to pay for minimum shift durations, not correctly paying for marking, and withholding payment of full superannuation amounts.

The vast majority of these underpayments have occurred since 2014, with the earliest starting in 2009. The NTEU analysed 62 separate incidents of wage theft across 30 public universities in which a dollar amount has been confirmed, and three additional institutions that have confirmed underpayments were made but have not revealed the extent of these incidents.

Shamefully, at least **131,471** individual higher education staff have been underpaid by their employers. A further four wage theft cases are not included in the total because they are yet to be finalised.

These claims are worth millions of additional dollars, meaning the true higher education wage theft tally could reach \$400m this year. On top of this many universities have not had external third parties undertake full forensic audits of their historical payrolls – meaning that significant underpayments are likely yet to be uncovered.

In this third edition of NTEU's periodic wage theft report series we have for the first time included annual report provisions. Provisions are amounts that universities have set aside on their balance sheets to cover future projected payments required to rectify historical underpayments. These amounts are generally estimates and may be revised as audits continue.

# BY INSTITUTION:

## PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES CONFIRMED WAGE THEFT

YEARS ACTIVE	STATE	UNIVERSITY	NO. OF STAFF AFFECTED	TOTAL UNDERPAID
2016-2017	ACT	Australian National University	100	\$100,000
2016-2023	National	Australian Catholic University	1,100	\$ 3,600,000
2015-2024	NSW	Charles Sturt University	4,141	\$6,912,000 <span>↑</span>
2016-2022	NSW	Macquarie University	1,033	\$674,000
2014-2020	NSW	The University of Newcastle	7,595	\$6,269,241
2016-2022	NSW	Southern Cross University	718	\$950,000
	NSW	The University of New England	1,691	\$1,085,000
2014 onwards	NSW	The University of Sydney	13,040	\$14,827,457 <span>↑</span>
2009 onwards	NSW	University of Wollongong	12,420	\$18,000,000
2014-2023	NSW	The University of New South Wales	1,500	\$11,000,000
2014-2021	NSW	University of Technology, Sydney	2,778	\$8,222,581
	NT	Charles Darwin University	3,083	\$3,004,680 <span>↑</span>
2016-2023	QLD	Griffith University	940	\$3,394,655
2009-2020	QLD	James Cook University	9,500	\$1,000,000 <sup>1</sup> <span>↑</span>
	QLD	Queensland University of Technology	368	\$25,757
2017-2023	QLD	The University of Queensland	9,749	\$8,775,590 <span>↑</span>
	QLD	University of the Sunshine Coast		\$11,777
2015-2023	QLD	University of Southern Queensland	Not disclosed	\$7,925,000 <span>↑</span>
	SA	The University of Adelaide	2	\$52,000
	SA	Flinders University		\$67,578
	SA	University of South Australia	16	\$182,709
2014-2022	TAS	University of Tasmania	3,701	\$15,206,000 <span>↑</span>
	VIC	Federation University Australia	10	\$66,874
2015-2021	VIC	La Trobe University	4,401	\$5,445,000
2014 onwards	VIC	The University of Melbourne	30,428	\$49,000,000 <span>↑</span>
	VIC	Monash University	2,251	\$10,825,000
2009-2016	VIC	RMIT University	3,700	\$10,000,000 <sup>2</sup>
from 2009	VIC	Swinburne University of Technology	8,101	\$6,547,729 <span>↑</span>
	VIC	Deakin University	Not disclosed	\$10,000,000 <span>↑</span>
2013-2024	WA	The University of Western Australia	8,205	\$10,626,000 <span>↑</span>
	WA	Murdoch University	900	Not disclosed <span>↑</span>

<sup>1</sup> \$1m refers to 2500 victims only. Dollar amount affecting further 7500 victims not disclosed

<sup>2</sup> Estimate only, amount not disclosed

↑ Institutions that have announced new wage theft amounts since Edition 2 of this report (November 2023)

RECORDED  
VICTIMS

131,471

TOTAL UNCOVERED

\$213,796,628

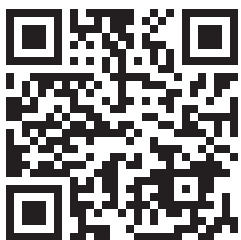
## BY INSTITUTION:

### ADDITIONAL WAGE THEFT PROVISIONS, AS PUBLISHED IN 2023 ANNUAL REPORTS

UNIVERSITY	CROSSOVER REMOVED	2023 PROVISION
The University of Sydney	\$2,000,000	\$70,145,000
The University of Melbourne		\$9,500,000
The University of New South Wales		\$70,847,000
Macquarie University		\$11,600,000
University of Wollongong	\$8,000,000	\$10,400,000
Australian Catholic University	\$3,600,000	\$3,600,000
University of Southern Queensland	\$1,810,000	\$1,810,000
Charles Sturt University		\$3,145,000
The University of New England	\$1,085,000	\$3,700,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$16,495,000</b>	<b>\$184,747,000</b>
	<b>Additional amounts yet to be backpaid</b>	<b>\$168,252,000</b>
	<b>Table 1 Total</b>	<b>\$213,796,628</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$382,048,628</b>

This table ensures that amounts listed in table one are not double counted by removing crossover amounts.

Thanks to brave union members speaking out about stolen wages, our union has been able to win millions of dollars in backpay. We need real change in our universities and that starts with an end to bad governance.



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