



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong

SENATE INQUIRY - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Senator FARUQI: What is the range of salaries for the executives?

Dr Lu: To be accurate, I'd probably need to take that on notice.

Senator FARUQI: That's fine.

Dr Lu: I think all the executive salaries, including my own, are set by the Performance and Remuneration Committee of the council. I'm not a member of that committee. The performance review would normally be conducted annually by that committee, and the remuneration at the point of appointment is also determined by the Performance and Remuneration Committee. It's benchmarked through I think Mercer's benchmarking. Our HR department—we call it the People and Culture Division—have the current data that would inform the decision of that committee to determine the—

Senator FARUQI: Maybe you could take it on notice, the current salaries.

Answer:

The range of our current senior executive salaries is from \$360,000 to \$1,000,000 total fixed remuneration. UOW has had some leadership transition in recent years and will continue to do so this year as we fill the senior executive roles in our new operating model structure. Details of senior executive remuneration is available in our Annual Report.

Senator FARUQI: Of the 100 redundancies, how many are voluntary?

Dr Lu: I can take that on notice, because the transformation implementation phase just started last week. I would say it would be the majority of those redundancies, if not 100 per cent. I can't guarantee it's 100 per cent. Maybe there will be some role changes. Some will be displaced.

Senator FARUQI: If you could take that on notice—

Dr Lu: I will take that on notice for when we finish the implementation. If I take this on notice, we'll give you a number in progress, but, when we finish the implementation, we'll know exactly how many are subject to voluntary redundancy.

Senator FARUQI: Yes, and then how many are involuntary and where.

Answer:

On 25 August 2025, UOW released its Final Change Plan following an extensive consultation process with staff in line with our enterprise agreements. The restructure will result in a reduction of 99.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

As mentioned during the hearing, we won't know exactly how many people will be affected until we go through the redeployment process internally. There are positions that are disestablished, but there are also jobs that are created. These will be open for redeployment opportunities for staff.

We use full time equivalent (FTE) positions as the most accurate calculation of overall impact. Based on 99.8 FTE, we can assume that will be around 100-110 people. We expect that the overwhelming majority of people who will exit the university will do so through

voluntary redundancy. But we won't know the exact numbers until we go through the process, which we expect to be complete by the end of the year.

Senator FARUQI: Could you please confirm if KordaMentha consulting is still being engaged by the university.

Dr Lu: Yes, they are still advising us, I think, on, the implementation leadership and how we now transition from the design and planning phase to implementation. It's going from being coordinated by the central transformation office to being business leader led, which means the directors and head of departments and heads of schools are going to lead the expressions of interest for filling the roles and then really reorganise the structure. That is what this looks like. I think KordaMentha is still involved in it in a small way because we don't have the capacity or the capability to do so.

Senator FARUQI: Is this a new contract, in addition to the previous work, or is it a continuation of that?

Dr Lu: This is a continuation of the same contract.

Senator FARUQI: Sorry, I must have missed it, but what was the total value of that contract, or what is the total value of that contract?

Answer:

KordaMentha was engaged to review the University's operations and help shape the design of a new operating model. Their report has helped inform the subsequent workplace change process that was undertaken, which culminated in the release of a Final Change Plan on Monday 25 August 2025. KordaMentha has subsequently been involved in some short-term project work supporting the implementation of the change plan, which has provided necessary capacity and capability to support the transformation program. This investment will generate an anticipated \$41-57M in recurrent savings for the University and help put us on a path to financial sustainability. As publicly reported on UOW's GIPA Contracts Register, the estimated cost of KordaMentha's engagement is \$2.94M. This has involved several pieces of work as outlined above and spanned just over 12 months. Final costs of engagement will be reported as part of our 2025 Annual Report.

Dr Lu: I have to take that on notice because, although there was a number initially a long time ago, before my time, I don't know whether it was the contracted number or the bill according to the work they actually did. That would be reported in our annual financial reports. According to the UOW Act, we have to report, and the breakdowns of all expenditure, particularly in the category of consultants, will be reported next year.

Senator FARUQI: Okay. If you could take that on notice, and also how much money the university has spent on private consultants over the last four years, I'd really appreciate that.

Dr Lu: The last four years?

Senator FARUQI: The last four years, yes.

Answer:

Information regarding expenditure on consulting and professional fees is made publicly available in our Annual Report in accordance with government reporting requirements. In 2024, UOW reported just over \$16.5M in consulting and professional fees. Examples of this include the University's investment in one-off technical support to implement its human

resource capital system, which will result in more efficient and effective HR and finance operations (\$6.4M). Other examples include the cyber security uplift program (\$500K), and IT architecture and integration capability (\$1M), which includes cloud services, integration between applications, and other critical business as usual solutions to support university activity. Consultants are also used for research related activities, and for infrastructure projects including building condition assessments, design and certification, sustainability planning, and property planning and development activities.

Importantly, this expenditure covers a broad range of services and reflects the need for specialist advice on complex matters that support the University's strategic priorities. Like many large institutions, UOW engages consultants from time to time to access expert advice and independent perspectives, particularly in areas requiring specialist knowledge.

In previous years, UOW's consulting and professional services spend reported in the Annual Report was:

- 2023: \$14.0M
- 2022: \$9.3M
- 2021: \$9.4M

Questions submitted by Senator David Pocock following the hearing:

Does anyone within your organisation currently hold a sponsored pass to Parliament House?

Yes.

If so, who, and which Member of Parliament sponsors that pass?

The Vice-Chancellor and Director of Government and Community Relations both currently hold a sponsored pass to Australian Parliament House. The sponsor is Alison Byrnes MP – Member for Cunningham.