



Communication Link

# Listening Report

## CIT Staff Feedback Process

November 2022

# 1. Introduction

## Background

A staff feedback process was conducted by the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) between 20 June 2022 and 12 August 2022. Feedback was collected via physical boxes at CIT campuses. The purpose of the feedback activity was 'to increase the opportunities and avenues for CIT staff to share their questions or comments regarding recent events at CIT<sup>1</sup>.' During the feedback process, CIT heard from staff that they would feel more comfortable if an independent party was brought on board to review their submissions in the first instance. In response, CIT engaged Communication Link to collate and analyse the feedback received, culminating in this report, which summarises the feedback to be provided to the CIT Board and Executive, and published on the staff intranet

This listening report has been drafted by Communication Link as a summary of what we heard in reviewing feedback provided by staff.

## Overview of feedback received

Most of the feedback was provided anonymously. Two staff provided their names when submitting their feedback. Both staff members were contacted and offered follow-up interviews to discuss their feedback in more detail.

124 individual pieces of feedback were received via the feedback boxes. This includes email feedback from one staff member that was provided after the boxes had been removed. While feedback boxes were intended for use by staff, given they were publicly available, it appears that some students also used the boxes to provide feedback. Names were not provided; however, the nature of some responses indicates 29.3% of the feedback could have been provided by students.

From the 124 individual submissions received, Communication Link identified 243 unique data points. They have been categorised under seven themes, based on the nature of the feedback provided.

---

**One data point = one piece of feedback on a particular issue**

*For example, one staff member provided feedback on:*

*a leak in a toilet block  
a concern about high workloads  
praise for a colleague.*

*This represents one feedback submission with three data-points.*

---

## Interpretation of findings

The qualitative research undertaken for the staff feedback process seeks to develop insight and direction rather than provide absolute measures. The analysis contained in this report should therefore not be considered the result of a statistically robust evaluation process.

Feedback was provided in an informal manner by self-selection, rather than a random sample. The sample size was not large at around 90 staff and 30 students. As a result of these factors the report findings should be considered exploratory in nature only, although may highlight trends.

There are no statistical degrees of confidence in these findings and they are not necessarily representative of the broader population. For these reasons, the data provided is a snapshot view of a point in time and indicative in their nature, and cannot be regarded as a fulsome evaluation across the organisation.

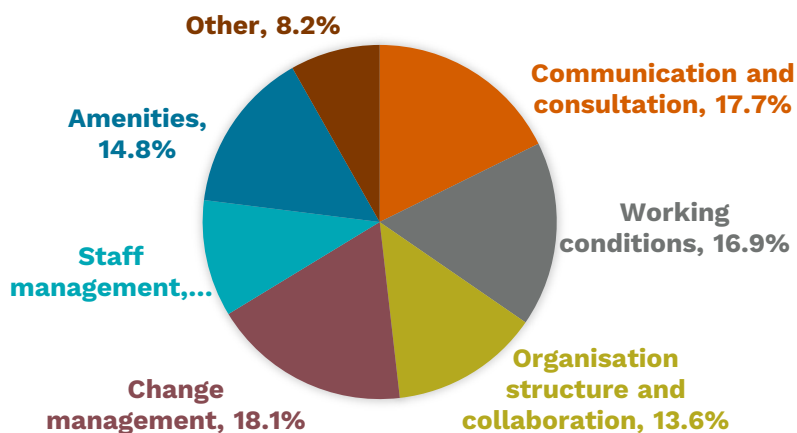
---

<sup>1</sup> CIT staff notice, 29 June 2022



## 2. Summary of feedback themes

Figure 1 below provide a breakdown of the areas of feedback received.



**Figure 1.** Summary of feedback themes

### Communication and consultation

Feedback provided under this theme indicates staff feel communication from the Executive is not regular or clear enough, and that feedback from staff upward is not welcome, acknowledged or responded to. Feedback also suggests the Executive does not consult regularly enough on issues that impact staff.

### Working conditions

Feedback provided under this theme centered around workloads, resourcing, staff development and promotion opportunities.

### Organisation structure and collaboration

Feedback provided under this theme focused on how the organisation allocates funding across different resource requirements, how different parts of the organisation work together and examples of where staff feel their teams should be located within the organisational structure.

### Change management

Many staff provided feedback about the recent change management process run by the Executive. Feedback included perceptions that the process was not effective and dissatisfaction with the amount of money spent.

### Staff management

Feedback provided about staff management including feeling a lack of support by management and some reports of seeing or experiencing what was described as bullying, intimidation or favouritism in the workplace. Some staff also expressed a desire to receive clearer direction from their managers or, expressed concerns that instructions about administrative processes have been changing regularly.

### Amenities

Feedback provided under this theme related to facilities at CIT campuses, including the functionality and hygiene of workspaces, bathrooms and equipment.

### Other

'Other' refers to any feedback that does not fit the above themes. This included drawings or other feedback where the meaning was not discernable.



# 3. Detailed discussion of feedback

## Communication and consultation

17.7% of the feedback provided views about the Executive's approach to communication and consultation with staff.

Feedback indicated that staff feel they are not consulted regularly enough on issues that impact them and, when staff do provide feedback, it is either not responded to or is received poorly. Staff reflected that there have been feedback processes run by CIT in the past, but the results of those processes have not been published, or no visible action has been taken in response to the concerns raised. One response commented, 'don't let our feedback continue to fall upon deaf ears.' Some staff raised they are hesitant or fearful of providing feedback, or contributing ideas, because being seen to disagree with the Executive can impact opportunities for promotion or professional development. One respondent suggested, 'CIT has become an organisation where we have been gagged from speaking with honesty.'

A theme that came out in the feedback was that staff feel they have valid views to share about how CIT operates, as they are on the ground working with students every day, and the organisation could benefit from listening more attentively to concerns and ideas raised by staff. For example, several responses from staff at the Fyshwick campus advised that new outdoor spaces are 'not fit for the purposes they were intended for' and could have been more effective if staff were consulted prior to construction.

Feedback also indicated a perceived lack of Executive visibility around the campuses. Staff are concerned that the Executive cannot be fully informed and up to date with CIT happenings if they are not physically in the environment.

## Working conditions

Almost half (46%) of the feedback under the theme of working conditions related to resourcing. Many staff felt that they have insufficient funding for the resources and support they need to do their job, such as training and development. Much of this feedback was provided in the context of what staff described as CIT's spending on consultancy and executive coaching services, with staff providing examples of where they believe this money could have been better spent.

16.9% of overall feedback was provided about the working conditions at CIT. Feedback suggested that staff have excessive workloads and do not receive sufficient recognition for their work. Some responses suggested that pressures on staff are being exacerbated by a loss of experienced team members. These responses cited dissatisfaction with CIT as the reason for high turnover. Feedback also indicated that remaining staff feel they need to take on additional work to cover when staff leave CIT, which they do not necessarily have the time, experience or qualifications for.

Some responses also expressed dissatisfaction with the opportunities for advancement at CIT, with staff feeling there was a lack of priority placed on training and that they do not see any chance for career progression. Other responses suggested opportunities for advancement seem to be available for staff who 'toe the company line.'

Suggestions were made to improve the culture and working conditions at CIT. These included making jobs attractive through pay, permanency, reasonable workload, work hours and flexibility. Some also suggested there should be increased staff involvement in decisions and more commitment to making professional development opportunities available.



## Organisation structure and collaboration

13.6% of feedback provided by staff related to organisational structure and collaboration between different parts of CIT. Over 70% of the feedback in this theme related broadly to perceived organisational priorities and the associated allocation of funding. Respondents suggested there is a disconnect between the priorities of the Executive and what staff believe should be prioritised. This feedback was provided in the context of staff feeling that funding is not being funneled to the 'right' parts of the organisation. Staff indicated CIT's 'core focus' should be on providing quality vocational education and ensuring students have access to the support they need. Examples included lack of funding for teaching tools and resources, and student counselling services, with students having to wait too long to see a counsellor. Several staff also described CIT as 'top heavy' and indicated that there is too much money being spent on Executive level positions, rather than teaching and administrative staff.

With respect to collaboration across CIT, there was also feedback that departments, teaching staff and support staff are not always working well together. Respondents suggested that departments should be more integrated with each other and more open to sharing information. One example that was cited several times was wider sharing of class timetables.

## Change management

18.1% of feedback was related to the change management program that has been led by the Executive in recent years and supported by consultancy services. Feedback indicates many staff feel the objectives for change were not communicated clearly and/or have not been realised, despite significant funds being spent by CIT on the program. Staff reported that the language used in change management workshops and presentations was confusing and filled with jargon, but that when staff asked questions they were talked down to or treated in a condescending manner.

A common piece of feedback was that organisational change could have been better managed if CIT staff had been more involved in planning and rolling out the program. Feedback indicates staff felt the change management approach and language used showed a lack of understanding of the day-to-day running of CIT. Many staff were disappointed and angry at having to give their time to attend workshops and other change program activities, often at the expense of other more relevant training and development opportunities.

Feedback suggested there were feelings of embarrassment relating to perceived reputational damage from the public scrutiny relating to the change management program. It was also suggested that this resulted in the loss of many long-term staff.

## Staff management

10.7% of staff provided feedback about the management style of their direct manager (or another manager within their direct line of supervision).

The greatest area of feedback in this theme (34%) related to staff feeling a lack of support from their managers, both in terms of being able to speak openly or managers advocating on behalf of staff.

Responses also raised concerns about favouritism being displayed by some managers, with development and promotion opportunities given to staff who use the right change management jargon and openly agree with management decisions.

Responses also cited lack of direction as an issue for CIT both at an organisational level and with respect to day-to-day work and operations. Staff feel this leads to confusion about priorities, and results in policies and processes changing regularly or not being followed consistently across the organisation.



There were several concerns raised about behaviour by managers that was seen as intimidating or bullying. Three responses explicitly referenced bullying, while others referenced inappropriate behaviour from their managers, and felt threatened when voicing ideas or providing feedback about CIT's operations.

## Amenities

14.8% of feedback related to CIT amenities. There was a mix of responses from staff and students with respect to this theme. Feedback related to the following sub-themes:

- Bathrooms – There was feedback that bathrooms require maintenance and more regular cleaning. The following specific bathroom facilities were cited in this feedback, including:
  - the bathroom 'near Yala Café'
  - the bathroom in 'building C'
  - the bathrooms around CIT Reid.

There were also concerns raised about the accessibility of toilets at the Fyshwick campus, suggesting accessible toilets are permanently locked.

- Fyshwick Café – Several responses from the Fyshwick campus noted that café opening hours are inconvenient. Teachers reported having to stagger break times to ensure they (and their students) have adequate time to buy food because the café closes too early.
- Library - There was feedback that the 6:00pm library closing time was too early. Requests were made for nighttime opening hours, particularly during peak assessment periods.
- Fyshwick campus cleanliness and accessibility - Complaints were made about rodents and pests on the Fyshwick campus, citing a lack of cleaning quality. Responses from Fyshwick campus staff also noted broken lifts are impacting accessibility.

## Other

Feedback under this theme appears to have been provided by students. It includes:

- positive feedback such as 'I like CIT' or drawings of smiley faces and hearts
- feedback about timetables, including that they are difficult to understand or not provided early enough; a suggestion was made to provide timetables in calendar formats
- general feedback about amenities, such as requests for cheaper coffee or better access to campus parking.

There were also several pieces of feedback provided, such as drawings, which were not meaningful to Communication Link staff.

## Next steps

This listening report will be provided to the CIT Board and Executive, who will consider the feedback provided and next steps.

