

PSA forces MP to his feet on Housing sell-off

Pressure from the PSA has forced National Party MP Andrew Fraser to raise concerns about the outsourcing of Housing NSW in State Parliament.

Previously, the Member for Coffs Harbour had been silent about the mid north coast being hit with a quarter of the job cuts in Housing NSW across the state.

But in responding to PSA Assistant General Secretary, Troy Wright's interview in Lismore on Prime 7 television, Fraser told the station that the efficiency of Housing NSW in his area made it attractive for privatisation.

Troy Wright seized on the remarks and wrote to the MP on 16 February:

Dear Mr Fraser,

Following your recent public remarks about the excellent work of Housing NSW in your region, the Public Service Association requests you call on the Premier to stop the sell off of this vital public service.

Your view on Prime 7 television that Housing NSW on the mid north coast was being disproportionately targeted in the privatisation process due to the service being "the most efficient area in the state", was shocking but most refreshing.

In short, Housing NSW in your area is a victim of its success.

I am sure you agree that, given Housing NSW is obviously providing a quality service and sound value for the community, it should remain in public hands.

I request you convey this view to the Premier and take a strong stand for the people in your electorate who depend on the expert public services of Housing NSW.

Yours faithfully,

Troy Wright

Assistant General Secretary

Later that day, the MP told Parliament he is concerned "a huge number of jobs will be transferred or will disappear from the Coffs Harbour electorate under this arrangement".

"Those who will remain and will apply for jobs in the community housing sector will be financially disadvantaged because the salaries within the community housing sector are far lower than they are in the government housing sector," said Fraser to Parliament, echoing concerns from the PSA.

"Department of Housing staff, who have served me and my office faithfully for the past 26 years—a large number of them have been there for 20 years or more—are being unfairly treated by my own government. I cannot accept that. I have always stood up for my community, I have always stood up for the people who work for government departments up there, and I believe the service that we have received from the Department of Housing

over the 26 years I have been a member of Parliament has been second to none."

In a letter to Minister for Social Housing, Pru Goward, Troy Wright said "the PSA welcomes the support of the Member for Coffs Harbour".

Troy Wright went on to demand in the letter that staff in regional areas be given priority in local public sector positions and that "staff in the metropolitan area be given priority within Housing NSW".

The mid north coast will bear the brunt of plans to slash almost 200 jobs and close offices of Housing NSW.

The effects is one of the few regions to be felt from Woolgoolga to Port Macquarie, with the region hit by 25 per cent of the total state-wide cuts.

"The question is why is the mid north coast being singled out and hit with a quarter of the job cuts in Housing across the state?" said Troy Wright.

The only winners will be investors and developers, not the people of NSW with some familiar names emerging.

"Serco, best known for the operation of private prisons, have, somewhat ironically already expressed an interest in a stake in the outsourced public housing market," said Troy Wright.

The fight over social housing dates back to October 2016, when Minister for Social Housing, Brad Hazzard announced the state will open to tender the transfer on a leasehold basis of 18,000 public housing properties. This would place management of those social housing services in non-government hands.

The decision follows through on the 2009 COAG agreement to transfer up to 35 per cent of social housing in NSW from state hands to other housing providers.

The three-year 'transfer' process enables private providers, if successful at tender, to manage social housing services on a long-term leasehold basis. The Government refers to "community housing" providers but it is unclear which private players will be eligible to tender.

The PSA and other organisations are worried the plan will not spread public housing evenly over NSW, instead concentrating it in areas where property is cheapest – on the outskirts of Sydney and in regional locations. This will create enclaves of public housing and restrict opportunities for work and services to the most disadvantaged.

The PSA opposes the privatisation of Public Housing.

However, if the transfer goes ahead, which it looks set to do, we will work to protect PSA members' interests, in particular to guard against the loss of employment and/or entitlements.

The PSA is seeking genuine consultation throughout the transfer process and has sought further information in relation to the location and grading of roles to be deleted.

The union has also sought consultation about the "change-management" processes and pushed for 'paid time' meetings.

The PSA has written to then Minister for Social Housing, Brad Hazzard, and received a response on 15 November

2016, which makes it clear the union should demand more detail in relation to what it meant by:

- "some of our valued staff members in FACS Housing will be required to transition to other roles within the Department or to the community Housing sector"
- the "appropriate notice and support along the way" (promised to staff by the department)
- the "organisations capable of being registered" to engage in the tender process and what are the safeguards around it.

The PSA has commenced site visits, focusing on impacted sites and is in the process of compiling member feedback.

Premier, have a heart for Disability Services



PSA General Secretary Stewart Little, President Kylie McKelvie, Disability Services DC Secretary Shane Elliott and Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright stand with members after a march on Parliament House to protest the Government's plans to hand care of people with disability to the private sector. Full coverage on pages eight and nine.



Stewart Little

From the General Secretary

Out with the Baird, in with the....?

Let's not mince words; Mike Baird turned NSW into the "For Sale State" and his decision to step down as Premier was akin to an auctioneer walking out during a failing auction.

While mass public service privatisation was a hallmark of his reign, Baird stepped down in the middle of the deeply flawed process leaving the lives of millions across the state hanging in the balance. The sell off of Disability Services has already thrown countless workers and clients into free fall. What will the future now hold for these people and their families?

Going one out with a lone voice will achieve minimal results

Similarly, our members in Housing, Prisons, Community Services and many others who are also currently engaged in what can only be called "thin ice employment", just waiting to fall through.

The privatisation of the Land Titles Registry has been universally condemned by former staff, academics and even property developers and will impact dramatically upon the entire economy yet Mr Baird curiously prided himself on his Government's alleged fiscal credentials. In essence, Mike Baird will go down in history as the "Out of Touch Premier"

who thought lock out laws were more important that quality public services for the people of NSW.

Now, out with the old and in with the new. The PSA congratulates Gladys Berejiklian on her elevation to the position of Premier.

The manner in which she was hammered by the media about her personal life within hours of being appointed was an absolute disgrace.

In stark contrast to her predecessor, the new Premier has stated that "people want to be heard" and that it was "time to make sure everyone got their slice of the pie".

She is quite right and the PSA is part of the community to which Ms Berejiklian will hopefully be listening.

In addition, the public needs the new Premier – unlike Mike Baird – to show she has a heart.

On both fronts, a strong start for Ms Berejiklian would be to rethink the sale and total dismantling of public disability services and the sell-off of the Land Titles Registry. Surely, given the Premier's experience in Treasury, the implications of the Land Titles sale should set off alarm bells.

And as it happened, division bells seemingly went off within 24 hours of Mike Baird announcing he would step down.

Firstly, Malcolm Turnbull announced a review of the NDIS and a few days later, the revamped NSW Government changed its language and eased back on some of

its rhetoric in relation to the sale of the Land Titles Registry.

For a moment it seemed there was a glimmer of hope, a shard of a light that maybe, just maybe the new Premier really would recalibrate the Government.

That she would do the smart thing – morally and politically – and perform an about face on the future of these key areas. It was just wishful thinking of course.

I believe that the new Premier will be even more hard nosed economically, more eager to wring the short term cash from the sale of public assets.

Further, the coming year will be a clearing house for the Government, desperate to rid itself of the tough decisions then allowing 12 months of clean clear air before the next state election.

We need to be in the best possible position to combat this attack.

To do so effectively, the PSA needs to grow both in capacity and most importantly, membership numbers.

It sounds trite, but if we don't grow, we die.

The hard fact is the PSA has not been delivering for some members in recent years and there were those who, not unreasonably, could no longer see the point of being involved and paying their hard earned.

That's a tragedy for any service organisation but frankly, an embarrassment for any union, particularly yours and mine.

I'm pleased to say that there have already been some slight but promising improvements in that area.

Similarly, the operation of the Member Support Centre which is being carefully recalibrated thanks to the efforts of Manager Member Services, Kym Ward.

The Centre's business hours have been extended from 9-5 Monday to Friday, a far more sensible arrangement and better service for members.

We have also begun rebuilding bridges with other unions that share our concerns and interests.

For example, on 14 February with the strike for public disability services, the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association pledged their members would not do the work of PSA members who participate in the action.

Further, the nurses encouraged their members, particularly those at Stockton which is their primary focus, along with the union's office staff to attend our rally and issued a media release in support of the strike.

It's alliances such as these that are vital in forging a result in the larger scheme of things going forward.

Going one out with a lone voice will achieve minimal results.

Stewart Little
General Secretary

PSA adds its voice to national work-life debate

The PSA is part of a push to improve flexible working conditions for the state's public sector workers – and in turn employees throughout the country.

In September last year, the PSA submitted *Flexible work in the NSW government sector*, which demanded Macquarie Street enshrine flexible working conditions "unless clear, documented and compelling reasons" are supplied by management.

Even with its slash-and-burn privatisation mantra, the NSW Government remains the country's biggest employer

The new regime, according to the union, would stand "as a model employer to help drive improvements to work-life balance for all workers in NSW".

Recognising that "unions play an important role in this discussion towards more choice and flexibility around how, when and where to work for employees", the Public Service Commission has called for more input from employee groups to help draft its policies.

In a letter to Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey, the Public Service Commissioner Graeme Head wrote that "on an issue as

important as flexible work, I would like to consult and seek further views before I provide formal advice to the Government".

Even with its slash-and-burn privatisation mantra, the NSW Government remains the country's biggest employer. The PSA's success in getting a modern, flexible working system in place will benefit not only its own members, but those across the country, in both public and private sectors.

The PSA has again surveyed its members on flexible working policies, with submissions due in February.

The survey found:

- five per cent of respondents job shared
- 12 per cent worked from home
- almost six per cent worked compressed hours
- 1.4 per cent chose part-year employment
- 34 per cent of respondents were unaware of their entitlements to request and access flexible work.



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Injuries highlight Juvenile Justice's dangerous mix

It is not only the prison system where our members' safety is on the line.

Three Juvenile Justice staff were injured at the Frank Baxter Centre, highlighting the need for a facility for violent detainees.

One staff member was hospitalised with a broken leg after a response unit was called in early January to break up a fight between two detainees. Another member injured their shoulder, while a third sustained soft tissue damage to their wrist.

Other recent incidents include an offender at Cobham spitting at staff. The youth then went on to injure staff over the next couple of days, with one staff member requiring six stitches. The same offender, made headlines around the world when he threatened to behead a police officer.

In the same week, a staff member in Orana was injured breaking up a fight, while a number of detainees in Riverina escaped onto the facility's roof.

Interviewed on the ABC, PSA General Secretary Stewart Little said the incidents highlighted the need for separate facilities for high-risk detainees.

"We're calling on the Government to provide a purpose-built facility and specific training to deal with violent juvenile offenders," he said.

"It's just simply not good enough to have violent offenders and offenders that have been charged with very serious crimes such as terrorist-related activity and to have them housed with the general juvenile facility."

Offenders nominated as A10 – those who have committed serious offences – and

A1B – those who have behaved violently while incarcerated – were traditionally kept in a separate facility.

However, since the closure of the Kariung Juvenile Justice centre, detainees in these categories have been mixed with other less-violent offenders in Frank Baxter and Cobham.

The Kariung facility, which was close to the Frank Baxter centre, was closed in 2015.

With incarceration rates currently low, the PSA believes there is adequate room at Frank Baxter and Cobham for A10 and A1B detainees to be housed in separate facilities.

The Department of Justice has been advocating staff in centres wear vests with cameras to help monitor incidents.

Originally the plan was for response teams to wear the cameras, with a trial at the Frank Baxter and Orana facilities. The PSA supported this trial.

However, the department now wants camera on all staff between 6am and 10pm, with audio attached.

The PSA opposes this plan, as placing cameras on staff for 16 hours a day will discourage detainees from cooperating with staff, for fear of video evidence later emerging of them informing on other offenders.

The PSA is opposed to any audio capture on the cameras.



PSA member Penutt Paea, whose leg was broken in the Frank Baxter incident, talks to PSA General Secretary Stewart Little and Organiser Gino Di Candilo.

Jail staff need protection

Last year's coverage of juvenile detention issues in the Northern Territory was understandably distressing to many Australians, who with good reason felt the footage they'd seen revealed an excessive use of force by detention authorities.

"The staff are crying out for help. They are getting desperate now," former Grafton prison governor John Heffernan said yesterday, in the wake of injuries to three officers following violence at the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre on the Central Coast at the weekend.



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Kylie McKelvie

From the President

New year, new challenges

I hope all members had a great break over the festive season catching up with friends, family and loved ones.

With a new year comes new challenges. Last year was a big one for the PSA and its incoming leadership, ending with a nationwide push from unions for a consistent approach to domestic violence leave across Australia.

On the Domestic Violence Leave Day of Action (see story opposite), the PSA logo was transformed to purple on social media and members throughout the state held morning teas highlighting the need for domestic violence leave throughout Australia. I thank the Women's Councillors

for making the day such a success and reinforcing the idea that domestic violence is a union issue. Personally, addressing my first rally within my own region within days of taking office, as part of the pivotal Orange by-election, was a proud moment.

For the PSA generally, not only did our involvement in the by-election restore our confidence, it reaffirmed our position as one of the state's most influential unions. I believe the relationships rebuilt within the wider union movement and a firm commitment by the PSA Executive to Unions NSW will reap benefits for all our members.

Within the PSA, 2017 will see restructures, realignments and organisational changes. A new premier and the accompanying cabinet reshuffle bring with them another level of uncertainty for our membership.

But we will be ready. The PSA has been working feverishly, restoring a team-based structure that will capitalise on the skills and expertise of staff and better represent, advocate and support members. I am confident the changes within the PSA will better support you all.

The PSA is reviewing its communication strategy to better engage with the members and delegates. Likewise, a significant

review of how its Member Support Centre and call centre operate is underway.

As President, I am reviewing how we engage members and support delegates within our delegate structure to improve support. The review will see a consistency across agencies, model charters for workplace groups, Departmental Committees, Advisory Groups and Vocational Branches, whilst making our structures more robust to government changes.

I want better communication among agency groups under the wider departmental umbrella, ensuring a more proactive approach to member issues

and potential changes. I also seek to conduct a number of departmental committee elections this year.

I am also taking part in the Review of Women's Council and looking forward to the recommendations on how its committee should be formed, to better advocate for issues important to our female members. This will be a big year for the PSA, and your union is determined to be up to the challenges.

Kylie McKelvie
President

It's official: membership pays

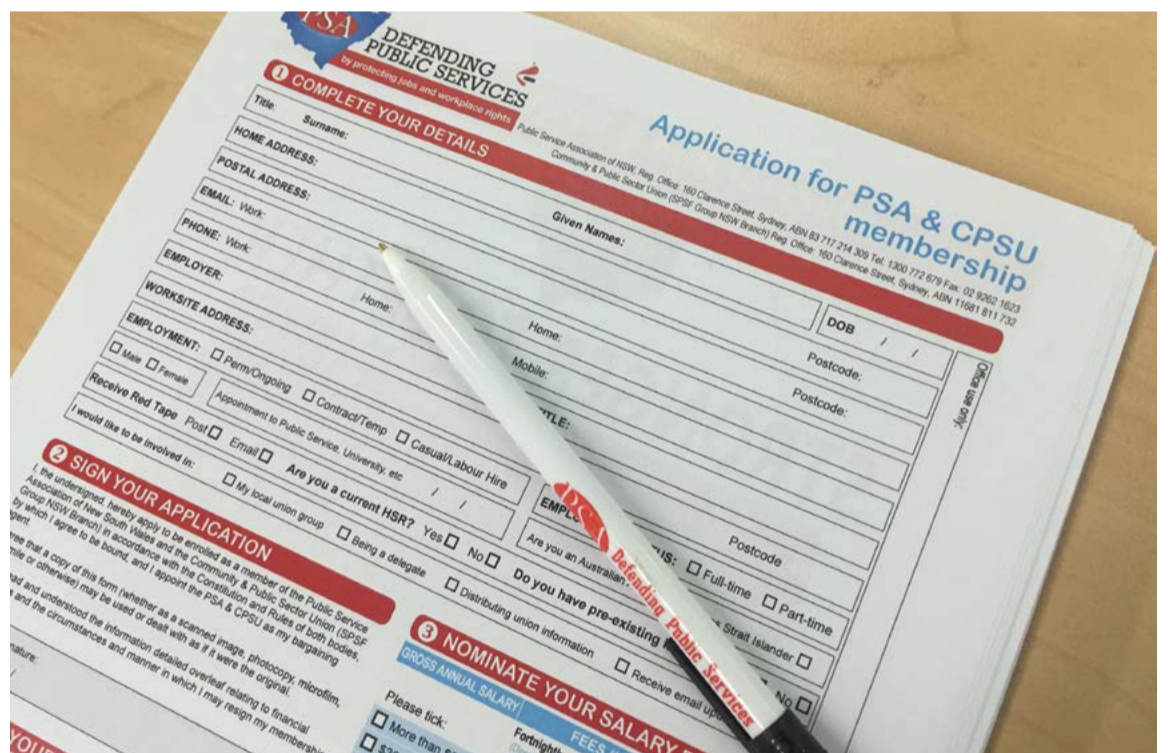
Roy Morgan Research has found people who joined a union earn more than non-members.

The mean income of Australia's union members, regardless of profession, was \$73,000 compared with the \$54,000 average for non-union members.

Unions such as the PSA are more successful than most others in signing up numbers, with the public sector among the front runners in membership.

"As our data shows, some industries and occupations maintain a strong union culture: teachers of all levels, professionals involved in healthcare, protective services employees and public servants," said chief executive of Roy Morgan Research, Michele Levine.

Despite the high profile of the CFMEU in the press, only about 11.5 per cent of construction trades workers and 13.8 per cent of construction and mining labourers are members of a union.



PSA in push for 2.5 per cent deal

For the first time since a 2.5 per cent cap was put on public sector pay increases, the PSA is pushing for an agreement for two years.

Rather than renegotiate the increase every 12 months, the PSA is pushing to get a 2.5 per cent raise for the next two years.

The PSA has put aside its opposition to capped bargaining to push for the two pay increases. The union is pushing for the rise for those covered by the main PSA awards and related awards.

"We are opposed to capped bargaining," says PSA Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright. "We believe our members should have the right to bargain like all workers in Australia.

"However, on this occasion, negotiations seeking two annual 2.5 per cent rises have commenced. to provide greater certainty for members beyond a 12-month cycle".

PSA Annual Conference 2017

Thursday 25 May & Friday 26 May

Level 10, PSA House, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000

Country Conference

Wednesday 24 May @ 2.30pm

Annual Conference is the largest gathering of PSA delegates and an advisory body to Central Council.

Conference places for PSA delegates are based on workplace group constituencies or combined workplace constituencies. See our website for the list of constituencies.

Further information, along with nomination forms, will be posted on the PSA website in due course.



Domestic violence is a workplace issue – and union business

The PSA has joined unions across Australia to campaign for all workers to have access to 10 days' paid domestic violence leave.

In addition to any other paid leave entitlements, the leave could be used to attend medical appointments and court hearings, or to find somewhere safe to live or a new school for children. Unions NSW estimates two-thirds of women suffering from domestic violence are in the workforce.

On average, one woman is killed via domestic violence every week in Australia

Unions NSW also found workers living with domestic violence change their job more often, miss out on promotions, are more likely to resign, be terminated or be bullied at work.

Domestic violence is therefore a workplace safety issue.

PSA members on state awards have five days' domestic violence leave.

However, this leave can only be taken when other entitlements,

such as holiday and sick leave, are exhausted.

The PSA, and other unions, pressed the meeting of the Council of Australian Government (COAG) last year to pass a resolution for 10 days' paid domestic and family violence leave to become a universal right for all workers in Australia.

However, it was deferred until the next meeting of heads of state, territory and federal governments.

- On average, one woman is killed via domestic violence every week in Australia
- One in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of someone they know
- In Australia, one in four children are exposed to domestic violence
- One in five women experience harassment within the workplace

Source: White Ribbon Australia



PSA President Kylie McKelvie is joined by members from Corrective Services to promote the We Won't Wait campaign for universal domestic violence leave.



PSA members held morning teas throughout NSW, sending in photographs to highlight the need for domestic violence leave to pass at last December's COAG meeting.

The images were posted on the PSA's Facebook page.

"The tremendous number of photographs sent to us from throughout the state proves our members are keen to keep domestic violence leave on the table as an issue," says the PSA's Acting Women's Industrial Officer, Anne Kennelly. "The effects of domestic violence often spill into the workplace, so it will always be a union issue."



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Life imitates art in 2017 NSW

One of my favourite films as a teenager was the sci-fi *Robocop*. Not the rubbish 2014 Michael Keaton remake, but the 1987 original, set in a crumbling Detroit where a corporation called Omni Consumer Products has contracts to run everything on behalf of the Government from the military to the health system, even the police.

OCP's ominous slogan was "good business is where you find it".

Part of the appeal of the movie to me at the time was the sense of the ridiculous, that such a concept could ever take hold.

After all, how could a company be trusted to provide the public services we all rely upon each day whilst being continually compromised by a profit motive?

Fast forward to 2017 in NSW and the world of *Robocop* is an uncomfortable hard reality just as George Orwell's *1984* came disturbingly to fruition.

Privatisation has taken a number of insidious turns in the past 30 years.

First, governments looked to sell profit making assets or companies such as Qantas, the Commonwealth Bank and more recently locally, our power generation companies.

The never-proven base argument was that the private sector could do it more efficiently and cost-effectively.

We all know how that worked out.

We are now at a new stage, where governments are looking to hive off core responsibilities to companies that are only looking to make a quick buck

Then governments looked to contract out its services to non-government organisations or even for-purpose private sector companies, effectively to wash their hands of all responsibility for the delivery of those services.

Centrelink became the Job Network, large slabs of Out-Of-Home Care were stripped

from Community Services, and vocational education was ravaged and deregulated.

Each of these areas has been plagued with their own scandals in recent times, with the unscrupulous behaviour by private training providers even ending in the courts and on newspaper front pages.

We are now at a new stage, where governments are looking to hive off core responsibilities to companies that are only looking to make a quick buck.

The Home Care Service of NSW, with 50,000 aged and people with disability, was sold last year to Australian Unity for \$180 million.

The same is proposed for the provision of services and accommodation for people with disability currently performed by the former Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC), a large swathe of public housing tenants across the state, and our state's correctional centres.

These are nothing more than vile commercial transactions, trading the welfare and provision of services to some of our community's most vulnerable as if they are nothing more than units or commodities to exploit and profit from, usually by paying a smaller, lower-skilled workforce less money.

The history of the corporations eager to push their way into this space is hardly reassuring.

GEO (Global Expertise in Outsourcing) already operates two gaols in NSW and another two others interstate.

In 2014 alone, it operated some 81,000 prison beds, with a total revenue of \$1.69 billion and a profit of \$US143 million.

Listed on the London stock exchange, Serco was famously described as "the biggest company you've never heard of".

In 2011, it was valued at £6 billion (approximately AU\$10 billion) with contracts across the world in everything

from correctional centres, military (including nuclear) security, transport and health.

Domestically, it managed the failed Fiona Stanley Hospital in Western Australia, the Acacia Prison and until last year, the Great Southern Rail.

Serco is a specialist in tendering for almost any government service, but as its record of scandals is increasingly demonstrating, its outcomes are poor.

A new player domestically is Sudexo, a French catering and facilities management company which has enormous contracts feeding the military, hospitals and higher education campuses around the world.

Somehow, in the rush to privatise, governments have considered this clientele to be reason enough to award Sudexo contracts to also run correctional centres, with predictable results.

All these corporations share one operational model – casualise, deskill and de-unionise the workforce so the service can be delivered cheaper, more easily industrially and for maximum return.

The challenge for our union in combating these corporations is huge.

We are staring down a Herculean battle with organisations with enormous muscle, both politically and financially.

It is a game that is constantly changing, but I believe, in partnership with an increasingly concerned community and strengthened by the improvement we are making to our union we are up for the fight.

We intend to make it clear that there is nothing virtuous or proper about a profit if it comes at the expense of quality public services and the working entitlements of our members.

**Troy Wright
Assistant General Secretary**

Lesson in pay equity – case on its way

Late in February, the PSA will lodge a case demanding the SASS Award be updated to ensure the female-dominated field is adequately remunerated.

Lawyers for the PSA have given notice that the union intends to make an application for a variation of the Award in line with the Equal Remuneration Principle.

The hearing is expected to last two weeks.

This will affect approximately 15,000 employees across the SASS Classifications which are the School Administrative Managers, School Administrative Officers, School Learning Support Officers (including SLSO – Braille Transcribers, Sign Interpreters, Ethnic and Pre-School staff) and the Aboriginal Education Officers.



Member profile

Suzanne Evans

Riverina Juvenile Justice



What does your job involve?

I work with young people to assist them with making positive changes in their lives. I also ensure the safety and security of the centre by providing quality supervision and engaging with the young people in an empathetic manner.

What do you like and dislike about your job?

There's a lot to like about working at Riverina Juvenile Justice: fantastic staff, with strong, supportive working relationships. I enjoy seeing positive changes in the young people. And there is knowing that no two days will ever be the same – a bad day today could be fantastic tomorrow.

My major dislike would be working afternoon shifts. They truly are the bane of my existence.

Take us through a typical day

There is really no such thing as a typical day, as each day brings new challenges and triumphs. Each day consists of supervising and assisting young people with centre routines, school, programs and case management tasks; working with specialist staff to ensure a holistic approach in assisting the young people with positive change through making positive choices; and engaging with everyone around you, both young people and staff to make the most from each shift.

There is always a little bit of good in each shift.

Overcrowded prisons a powderkeg disaster-in-waiting

Reports that new mattresses have been purchased for the maximum-security Lithgow Correctional Centre show the state's prison system remains dangerously overcrowded.

The mattresses will be either placed temporary demountable cells or on cell floors.

Corrective Services NSW has requested to add an extra 105 prisoners to the Lithgow population, with an extra 25 officer positions. However, the PSA believes the prison can accept no more than another 50 inmates – with 15 new jobs created.

If the mattresses are to be placed in demountable buildings rather than more secure prison facilities, there will be a security compromise.

Extra beds in demountables do not address the fact prison facilities, such as power, sewerage and kitchens, are already stretched serving greater inmate populations than they were originally designed for.

If mattresses are placed on cell floors, this will result in three inmates per cell, which increases the possibility of violence if two prisoners gang up on a third.

This will also put prison officers, who have poor workers compensation coverage, at risk of serious injury.

A story in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in January reported the number of assaults in the state's prisons had increased by 30 per cent.

A Corrective Services NSW document released last year into overcrowding recommended mattresses should be placed on floors to accommodate extra inmates.

The plan proposed placing 70 mattresses in common areas in Cessnock Correctional Centre for maximum-security prisoners,

while other prisons would have three inmates per cell.

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little says the overcrowding results from years of under-investment in the correctives system, starting with widespread prison closures under the O'Farrell Government.

Since O'Farrell's closures, facilities in Kirkconnell and Berrima have been re-opened and capacity boosted in Grafton to reduce the pressure on overcrowded facilities, particularly as ice use has seen a surge in the number of inmates. However, as the mattress purchase proves, the State Government needs to spend more on prisons.

The only remaining facility still closed is Parramatta Gaol. However, it is not likely to re-open. Its current owner, the Deerubbin Aboriginal Land Council, is reluctant to give up the facility.

About 3000 new flats are also being built around the prison, attracted by a proposed light rail service. The new residents are unlikely to be pleased about a prison being re-opened in their midst.

The Government's plans to build an additional four 'rapid build' facilities have hit a number of hurdles, with only two of the planned prisons currently under construction.

The number of female inmates is rising at a greater rate than the male prison population, so similar overcrowding issues are about to strike that section of the correctives system.

PSA skewers needle proposal

The PSA has opposed a suggestion that the NSW Government supply inmates with syringes for intravenous drug use.

Citing the high rates of hepatitis C in prisons and the prevalence of needle-sharing, the Australian Medical Association has advocated distributing free needles to prisoners.

Speaking to *The Daily Telegraph*, General Secretary Stewart Little said the move "would make [prisons] a far more dangerous environment".

"From our point of view the main problem we have is safety."

In 1990, a Corrective Services officer, Geoffrey Pearce, was stabbed with a needle containing HIV-positive blood. He died of an HIV-related illness seven years later.

Special Constables in line of fire

Despite being charged with protecting some of the state's primary targets for crime and terrorism, Special Constables are denied many of the conditions enjoyed by colleagues in similar roles.

The PSA is currently negotiating a better award for these members.

Recognition for training in firearms skills is one area the PSA believes needs to be improved. The importance of this training was highlighted last year when special constables fired on Farhad Khalil Mohammad Jabar, who had earlier shot and killed police employee Curtis Cheng outside NSW Police Headquarters in Parramatta.

Recognition for training in firearms skills is one area the PSA believes needs to be improved

Incidents such as the one in Parramatta show that the role of Special Constables in defending obvious targets for crime and terrorism has evolved, requiring more skills and placing them in greater danger. There have been some moves, such as active armed defender training, put in place to better prepare Special Constables for their jobs.

However, as the PSA has pointed out, compared to sheriffs and police officers, Special Constables are underpaid and undervalued, leading to low morale among staff.



Police stations are among the government buildings throughout the state protected by Special Constables

Summer heats up for PSA members

While much of NSW sweltered this summer, PSA members from National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS), Forestry Corporation and Rural Fire Service were even warmer, battling bushfires.

More than 30 Forestry Corporation of NSW firefighters from Walcha, Bathurst, Grafton, Casino and Coffs Harbour spent Christmas on the fire front tackling two fires in State forests near Whiporie, north of Grafton.

The Rural Fire Service aided the Forestry Corporation in the fight against the Whiporie fires.

Rural Fire Service members also battled blazes throughout the state, including some in the lower Hunter that are believed to have been deliberately lit. PSA members in the NPWS were also in action for much of the warm summer as temperatures soared above 40 in regions such as Mudgee.

A duty officer told *Red Tape*, "it has been hot, hot, hot", with National Parks rangers and field officers on call as the state's country areas baked in above-average temperatures with little rainfall.

"There are very challenging conditions," the officer says. "In remote areas, all it takes is lightning strikes in national parks to set things off."

"On hot days, we have crews waiting by helicopters for word of smoke being spotted from towers."

The bushfire season runs until the end of March, with dry conditions tipped for the remainder of the current season.

And with about 300 years' experience being released from the NPWS thanks to job cuts late last year, the fire season has become even more deadly.



ADHC staff take a Valentine's date to the street

PSA members working with people with disability in NSW spent Valentine's Day on the street, to protest the State Government's plans to privatise their service.

The 24-hour strike, accompanied by rallies throughout NSW, is the latest move in a struggle that dates back to the O'Farrell Government announcing in 2012 that Disability Services was to be sold off. In driving rain, members from Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong gathered at PSA House, then marched to NSW Parliament House on Macquarie Street to protest the Coalition Government's moves to hand all care of people with a disability to the private sector.

“The end of the state-run option means there is no safety net for people with profound disabilities”

Using *The Wizard of Oz* as a metaphor, the PSA en masse asked the Premier to 'have a heart'. The action highlighted that this disastrous plan will leave no state-run

safety net for some of the most vulnerable people in the state.

Smaller marches and rallies were also held in Dubbo, Port Macquarie, Forster, Tamworth, Lismore, Goulburn, Albury and Bathurst.

“This rally and strike is about the Government absolving itself of responsibility to care for some of the state's most vulnerable people,” says Assistant General Secretary of the PSA, Troy Wright.

“The end of the state-run option means there is no safety net for people with profound disability that may not receive the care they require.

“The strike has been brought on by members' extreme frustration at the Government's willingness to treat its own staff with contempt. Far from providing certainty and clarity, meetings specifically scheduled to consult over the privatisation have tied your delegates up in meaningless discussions on low-level, low-impact decisions of the Department.”

The PSA is demanding:

- no forced transfer of staff
- an improvement on the employment guarantee period
- a vastly improved transfer payment
- the protection of excess employee entitlements
- salary maintenance for non-transferring employees
- protection of public sector salary increases
- genuine priority assessment for non-transferring staff
- conversion of all long-term temporary employees
- protection of the FACS rostering principles and penalty rates
- government protection of liability for employee entitlements
- legally binding enforcement of the above and all other transfer arrangements.

All PSA members are being urged to contact their state MPs to demand the privatisation ceases.

Thanks to changes to the Government Sector Employment Act (GSE), passed last June, state-employed workers not willing to move to the private sector will be denied redundancy or severance payments if the privatisations affecting their sectors result in “comparable employment” being offered.

Support for the strike came from the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, which instructed members not to fill in for striking workers. Some of its members, as well as those from the Health Services Union and the NSW Teachers Federation, also attended the rallies.





Why we walked out

The Department of Family and Community Services has floated a reorganisation of the agency which includes savage cuts to public service jobs.

Under the Cluster Operating Model the Department has outlined plans to shed at least 700 front line support jobs across Sydney and regional NSW. More jobs are expected to go as further cuts are announced to corporate and state wide services.

The PSA met with the Department in December to discuss the agency's change management planning.

During earlier discussions with FACS, the PSA had proposed an approach which would allow affected staff to indicate a preference for continuing employment or redundancy, and where possible match employees to their preference.

FACS has so far refused to commit to this, pointing to new government policy preventing general voluntary redundancy programs.

"The Baird Government likes to talk up its record on jobs in NSW, but the reality doesn't match the rhetoric," said PSA Assistant Secretary, Troy Wright.

"Good jobs and critical public services are being slashed and privatised at an unprecedented rate."

"Many of these jobs are in regional and remote NSW where comparable employment simply isn't available. The loss of public sector jobs in these areas has a profound impact on the local economy and community."



Site tells human stories behind the strike

A website launched by the PSA features parents of people with disabilities and support workers telling their sometimes harrowing stories about the planned privatisation of Disability Services in NSW. Tellingly, access to the site has been blocked on FACS work computers. Go to pds.org.au.



A letter sent to General Secretary Stewart Little from parents of a teenager requiring disability care.

Dear Mr Little,

We are the parents of our severely disabled daughter who has just turned 18 and is transitioning from school to post-education options.

We are writing to personally thank you for your open letter to Mr Baird regarding Disability Services late last year.

Although we have always voted Liberal and have never been union members, we were so delighted, heartened and encouraged by your letter we felt it necessary to write and thank you.

Government is meant to exist to assist the most vulnerable in our society. There are many good reasons to privatise many services, but disabled are the most vulnerable; often without speech, good carers or the intellect to deal with the changes it is a very difficult road.

The changes occurring via NDIS, based on our experiences to date, have been disastrous. Although it was good in theory and sounded good to the general public as a way of assisting the disabled, we have found it anything but this. During the arduous process we have had little support from the transitioning bodies. In fact, their lack of knowledge about what they are doing and disability in general is appalling.

Your letter to the Premier as appearing in the media was spot on.

We thank you for raising this important issue and bringing it to the NSW Government's attention. As they merge councils and chop down historic trees they have just added one more extremely important reason for us to realise they do not understand the people of NSW, particularly those without a voice.

We thank you sincerely for your considered and accurate comments in your letter and may the fight for better services for the disabled continue

Kind Regards,

Craig and Rachelle Knappick



Corrections Day opens the doors into varied prison work

NSW's first ever Corrections Day on 20 January gave the public an insight into the people working in the state's prison system.

While most people in the state acknowledge Prison Officers perform a difficult and dangerous job in the often brutal world that exists behind the walls and razor wire, they may be less aware of the other aspects to Corrections that are also carried out quietly and effectively behind the scenes.

"I am well aware of the significant challenges many of you face at work, not the least most recently being overcrowding and the threat of privatisation"

The day, which has been welcomed by the PSA, celebrated clerical and administrative workers, Commissioned Officers,

General Managers, truck drivers, Community Corrections, Drug and Alcohol Counsellors, Industries-Overseers, farmers growing the food eaten by prisoners, Psychologists, Security and Intel, Court Escort Security Unit, Services and Programs Officers, Brush Farm Academy and those at the Henry Deane Building and regional offices.

"Having previously served as a Senior Industrial Officer with the PSA with responsibility for prisons, I am well aware of the significant challenges many of you face at work, not the least most recently being overcrowding and the threat of privatisation," wrote PSA General Secretary Stewart Little in a bulletin to members on the day.

"Today, I am particularly proud to lead your union in the promotion of the work you all undertake as well as continuing the fight for your safety and well-being in relation to improved workers compensation."

Corrections Day gave people a greater understanding of what goes on behind the walls of places such as Berrima Gaol.

Correctives staff tee off for charity

Corrective Services staff hit the fairways in Cessnock and raised \$8000 for a number of charities during their annual golf day last year.

Every year a different Correctives centre puts on the golf day. This year about 150 Correctives staff showed up to play in the Hunter Valley.

"You're raising money for charity," says Gary Morris, who was one of

the organisers. "We kept it local. We raised money for Coalfields Cancer Research, the Westpac Rescue Helicopter and Jodie's Place, which is a women's refuge."

The \$2000 given to Jodie's Place was particularly welcome, as the

facility has had its funding cut by the Liberal National Government in Canberra.

Each location chooses the destination for the money raised. This year's golf event will be in Wellington.

Nationals urged to stand up against sell-off

The PSA has called on new Deputy Premier, National Party leader John Barilaro, to intervene over concerns the new FACS Cluster Operating Model will result in substantial job losses and a marked decline in child protection, disability and public housing services in rural and regional communities across the state.

PSA General Secretary, Stewart Little, said "the Association is deeply concerned about the impact of cuts to public services and associated job losses in regional NSW, an issue we believe was a significant factor in the recent Orange by-election."

"If implemented, these cuts will have a deep and lasting impact on services to the vulnerable and the local economies which rely on public sector employment for their viability."

Barilaro is not regarded as a privatisation zealot like many of his colleagues in the Liberal Party, and before his election to party leadership, he voiced opposition to the sell-off of Sports and Recreation centres.

The PSA has finalised its submission in response to FAC's proposed change management plan for affected front-line support staff.

The PSA submission is based on the following five key principles:

- A freeze on the external advertisement of all non-executive, non-front line roles across the Department until completion of an internal placement process.
- A general voluntary redundancy program in which all affected non-executive staff are invited to express an interest.
- Prioritising, wherever possible, the assignment of ongoing staff to suitable ongoing roles with the Department.
- A closed (internal) recruitment process for promotional/residual vacant roles including eligible long term temporary staff prior to any external advertisement.
- Job/voluntary redundancy swaps between employees with equivalent roles/classifications.

COMMUNITY NEWS

cessnockadvertiser.com.au/community

Helping local charities

BY KRISTAL SELLARS

THREE local charities have benefited from the Corrective Services NSW Golf Championships, which were held in Cessnock in November.

More than 140 golfers competed in the two-day tournament at Cessnock Golf Club in November.

A total of \$8000 was raised through a big raffle with prizes donated by local sponsors.

Donations were presented to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, Coalfields Cancer Support Group and Jodie's Place women's and children's refuge last week.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service community liaison officer Adam Tyrrell said the organisation relies heavily on community support.

"About 60 per cent of our funding comes from the community, and because of that, no-one ever pays when they have to be airlifted," he said.

"Every dollar that comes through our doors is greatly



GENEROUS: Representatives of the Corrective Services NSW Golf Day and major sponsor G&C Mutual Bank presented donations to Jodie's Place, Coalfields Cancer Support Group and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

appreciated." Jodie's Place coordinator Paula Mudd said the refuge was thrilled to receive the donation.

"It helps us keep our doors open," she said.

A Cessnock-based organisation, Coalfields Cancer Support Group's donations go directly to the cancer research department at Calva-

ry Mater Newcastle.

"Lots of our money goes towards equipment, which can be quite expensive," the group's chairperson Marie Main said.

The Corrective Services NSW Golf Championships have been running for more than 30 years. The event is held in a different town every year, generally in a region

with a correctional centre and organised by staff from that centre.

The 2016 golf day was organised by Cessnock Correctional Centre staff Alan Provenzano, Rob Daniels, Gary Morris and Jeff Kellehear.

"It's great to be part of a team that has been able to contribute to some local

community organisations," Mr Provenzano said.

The organising committee thanked the sponsors for contributing to the event's success.

"Strong support from local businesses has put us in a good position to give to the three organisations, plus we had great support from the venue itself," Mr Daniels said.

A report on the golf day in the Cessnock Advertiser

PSA lands knock-out blow in Sport and Rec privatisation fight

In a huge victory for the PSA, on Friday 16 December, the NSW Government announced Sport and Recreation Centres would remain in public hands.

The PSA played a major role in the campaign to keep the centres public with a petition that was strongly supported by the community. The union also highlighted the issue in the media and tackled the matter on a political level.

Late last year the then-Baird Government announced it was examining plans to privatise the operation of the state's 11 Sport and Recreation centres.

Inland centres, such as Lake Keepit, Lake Burrendong and Borambola, were seen to be particularly vulnerable to takeover by cost-cutting private operators.

The issue was a big reason many voters abandoned the National Party in the Orange by-election.

"I hope this change of heart will be the beginning of the end of the Government's privatise-everything-at-all-costs agenda"

During the campaign against the proposed sell off, the PSA had support

from the Teacher's Federation and the P&C Federation.

"The Sport and Recreation Centre decision is not just a victory for the tens of thousands of families and students who have used the camps and the outstanding staff who operate the centres, but an important act of preservation," says PSA General Secretary Stewart Little.

"Historically and culturally, the camps have played a vital part in education programs for students across the state for as long as I can remember.

"Children all over NSW benefit from their programs which assist the development

of life-skills and the obtaining of learning experiences that they may not otherwise be able to acquire and access.

"I hope this change of heart will be the beginning of the end of the Government's privatise-everything-at-all-costs agenda."

Sport and Recreation employees rally at Parliament House last year.



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www.psa.asn.au



The Public Service Association is an active, member driven union that successfully asserts members' interests and advances the value of public services for the people of NSW.



Land Title sale still at risk from new Macquarie Street tenants

Incoming Treasurer Dominic Perotet has flagged a possible halt to the sale of Land and Property Information's Land Titles division.

Talking to *The Australian Financial Review*, the Treasurer said he would not rule out the possibility of keeping the service in public hands.

The PSA, along with the Law Society of NSW, Real Estate Institute of NSW, Property Council of Australia NSW, History Council of NSW, the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance, and much of the media, has waged a campaign to keep the registry, which provides a steady source of income to the government, in public hands.

In February the PSA ran a sausage sizzle for several days outside LPI headquarters in Queen's Square, publicising the possible effects of the sell-off.



Herald exposes murky world behind LPI deal

The *Sydney Morning Herald* late last year uncovered a document showing the private sector has long been pushing state governments to hand over its land titles scheme.

The paper gained access to a document prepared by Macquarie

Bank that was pushing the then Labor-run State Government to hand over not only the profitable land titles scheme, but the entire Land and Property Information service.

The Fairfax paper has been running a series of articles

critical of the planned privatisation of the 150-year-old registry, including a piece in January pointing out landholders' personal details may fall into the wrong hands due to the sell-off.



General Secretary Stewart Little addresses people outside LPI.

PSA accuses zoo of monkey business over development

A proposal to build a luxury resort development in Taronga Zoo's Sydney facility has drawn opposition from the PSA.

Interviewed on Channel Seven News, PSA General Secretary Stewart Little said it was "hard to find a link between nature conservation and five-star accommodation".

The planned \$45 million resort is expected to have about 60 beds and to be built on land originally slated for animal enclosures.

"A lot of that land was bequeathed to the Government for wildlife conservation," said Stewart Little in a separate interview with Channel Nine.



The proposed development is on land set aside for animal displays

Christmas used as camo for Ranger cuts

Christmas cheer was light on the ground when the Office of Environment and Heritage used the holiday hiatus to try and force a cut to members' conditions.

Two days before Christmas, the PSA received an undated without prejudice letter, seeking agreement for hard barriers and pay scales for Rangers, with demands for an agreement by close of business 12 January 2017.

While it was conceded there would be a Christmas shutdown period, this meant the PSA could not sufficiently consult with members.

The OEH would have been well aware the PSA would not have time to talk to the membership and vote on any proposed Award variations, especially when this involves the cutting of conditions.

The PSA replied to the letter criticising the timing of the original correspondence.

"The PSA found the timing of this correspondence with a deadline

to respond by 12th January 2017 completely unacceptable knowing the PSA would be closed until 9th January 2016. In addition, this is also an extremely difficult period with Rangers who respond to fires in NSW National Parks during the summer months."

The PSA and OEH have been trying to negotiate a reasonable savings outcome since February 2016. The PSA has continually tried to engage OEH to form regional committees as per the 2010 Savings Implementation Plan to identify areas where savings could be made.

The OEH has repeatedly refused this request. Once again, the OEH is threatening the conditions of the PSA membership without proper consideration of the savings that could be found when the parties work together.

The PSA does not support a pyramid structure as proposed by the OEH that reduces the knowledge and experience from the Ranger structure.

Demand for permanent end to TAFE temps

The PSA (CPSU) is pushing to put most Temporary Part Year (TPY) employees permanently on the books in the TAFE system.

The union has long believed the majority of the 480 TPY employees in TAFE should be given permanent roles – with the certainty this brings. The PSA (CPSU) concedes there are some exceptional positions which may remain temporary.

However, TAFE has largely sidelined the union's attempts to work in good faith to review each TPY employee, the nature of their work and the length of time they have been temporary.

As a result, the PSA (CPSU) is gathering material for a joint case for more than 400 members to be taken to the Fair Work Commission.

TAFE insisting members pick up the Check

TAFE is demanding its employees pay for their own Working With Children Checks.

In line with recent legislation, TAFE NSW employees who work with children, a category which includes anyone under 18 years of age, must be in possession of a Working with Children Check by 31 March 2017.

The Working with Children Check costs \$80, a big ask if you are only working part-year and having to stretch your salary to cover costs. TAFE NSW has declined to pay for the document on behalf of its employees.

During negotiations for the latest Enterprise Agreement, the PSA (CPSU) demanded TAFE NSW pay this cost. This was rejected due to the NSW Liberal Government's policy.

Members who have paid for the check should keep their receipt. If legal advice suggests the PSA can contest the case, members will need receipts to claim the money back.

If the cost is adversely affecting employees, they are urged to contact the Member Support Centre on 1300 772679.

Injured workers “abandoned”

The new PSA leadership is acutely aware of how poorly this government is treating staff who are injured at work. The PSA participated with the Unions NSW Return to Work Inquiry, and the NSW Parliament Law and Justice Inquiry into the Workers Compensation Act 1987.

The inquiries heard from countless workers, including PSA members, who were abandoned by a State Government that refused to assist injured workers return to work or make reasonable adjustment. The union is formulating an industrial approach to assist members with timely early intervention when they are injured. Many injured workers were reported being left abandoned by their employer who is a self-insurer, and profiting from poor safety decisions.

Top-up pay push continues

The PSA has two cases in the Industrial Relations Commission and the Supreme Court of NSW to restore employees' condition of employment, allowing them to top up workers compensation pay with sick leave.

In a kick in the guts to workers in parts of the public sector, NSW Treasury has ordered selected government agencies to stop paying sick leave to injured workers to make up their pay levels when the workers compensation system reduces their wages.

Under the LNP Government changes implemented in 2012, the first step down in pay occurred on day one with a five per cent wage cut, followed by a 20 per cent wage cut at 13 weeks with further step downs after that.

The 2012 workers compensation changes enabled insurance agents to take on the role of undertaking work capacity decisions which allows the insurance company to “manage” and “decide” what wages you receive, what work and medical restrictions you are able to do.

A small victory

After a combined struggle from unions, the Injured Workers Support Network and Australian Lawyers Alliance, workers who receive a negative work capacity decision can now seek to have the decision reviewed with the assistance of a lawyer. Lawyers were previously prohibited by the legislation from charging a fee for representing injured workers in work capacity decisions.

Transitional injured workers at risk

Up to 40,000 injured workers will be dumped from the workers compensation system in 2017. These workers were injured with a court settlement for whole person impairment of 20 per cent or less prior to 2012. The injured workers had income support and medical support in the Workers Compensation Commission prior to the 2012 cuts that would have taken them to retirement for income and until they no longer need the medical support.

Despite the court settlement, the LNP 2012 changes retrospectively affected these injured workers, many of whom still struggle to work. Members of the PSA affected by these changes are encouraged to ring the PSA to discuss options to maintain their employment through reasonable adjustment or attain maximum assistance from the Social Security System when these Section 39 matters are cut from September.

The quest for safer workplaces

The new PSA leadership promised during its election campaign to restore support for PSA members in the areas of health and safety and workers compensation. Your union has commenced this process with the hiring of Unions NSW Senior Industrial Officer Safety and Workers Compensation to lead a new team focussed on injury prevention and injured worker support.

PIN the notice on the shonky

The PSA has received advice employers in the public sector have had Provisional Improvement Notices (PINs) issued by Health and Safety Representatives on the following issues:

- Failure to consult on office relocation
- Failure to consult on office accommodation for the type of work being conducted
- Failure to adequately meet the requirements of the First Aid Code of Practice for adequate first aid facilities and personnel
- Failure address bullying allegations
- Inadequate emergency facilities and procedures
- Inadequate timeframes for progressing bullying allegations.

The PSA can assist workers address work health and safety issues at work through a range of approaches and also assist Health and Safety Representatives undertaking their role as a representative. To find out more about PSA health and safety training go to psa.asn.au.

Unions NSW Injured Workers and Safety Conference

April 27 and 28
Trades Hall Sydney

Day 1

Injured Workers Support topics

Day 2

Safety Conference and International Workers Memorial Day

This year's conference discusses the five-year review of Work Health and Safety.

PSA delegates can attend the Unions NSW Safety conference on special leave if they register through the PSA education unit – training@psa.asn.au.

This course is free.

Curtain falls on amateur theatre buff



The PSA has lost a valuable staff member in Lisa Claridge, who passed away in early February. Lisa worked as a regional support officer in the union's Wollongong office. She commenced work with the PSA in August 2011. Away from work, she was involved in amateur theatre, performing in a number of shows.

“Lisa leaves behind many friends at the PSA,” said General Secretary Stewart Little. “She was a much valued member of our staff and I would like to offer my condolences to those who were close to her, and to her family.”

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General legal advice

As members of the PSA you are entitled to the first consultation free of charge. To make an appointment, call 9233 4744 and quote your PSA membership number.

Note: Work related matters must be referred to PSA industrial staff in the first instance. They will advise if a lawyer is required.

Make your new year count with a few easy financial moves

With a little up-front effort, you can get your finances sorted for today and your super on track for tomorrow.



By Damian Graham

The first month of a new year is always a good chance to take stock. But I find it's also a great time to invest in my family's future with a few simple financial tasks that can help set us up for success. Here are some of my favourites.

Reduce debt

The problem with debt is that it incurs interest and when lending rates are low it's tempting to borrow further. Also, rates can rise, so cutting debt is usually a sensible idea for long term financial health.

If you have lots of debt, such as a home mortgage, car loans and credit card debts, start by paying down those with the higher interest rates. Interest on credit card purchases, for example, could be more than 20 per cent whereas your garden variety home loan may be around 5.35 per cent per annum.

Make cash work harder

When times are uncertain and financial markets volatile, you may find yourself spending less and deferring purchases. You might also gravitate to more conservative investments. This can result in more money just sitting around in cash accounts.

While this might make you feel better, you'll be losing money if your cash isn't at least keeping pace with inflation over time. A good tip is to check the details of your savings account. Make sure you're getting a competitive deal and look at alternatives, such as a mortgage offset account. If you do move your cash into an account with a higher rate of interest, be sure you understand the impact on your tax.

Create a budget

Budgets aren't as dull as they sound and you needn't sacrifice that daily coffee. They can help track your income and spending, and find savings so you don't spend more than you earn.

A budget is only worthwhile if you're honest with yourself and set realistic savings goals. Some people budget according to their pay cycle – monthly or fortnightly – for the duration of a financial year, so it lines up with their tax records. See the box this page for tips on making you budget work better.

Consolidate super

According to Australian Taxation Office statistics from last August, 43 per cent of Australians have more than one super account. Having more than one super account may mean multiple sets of fees and paperwork, which will eat into your balance and make it harder to monitor

your savings. Also, since 31 December 2016, the ATO can acquire unclaimed or lost super where the account balance is \$6,000 or less. Reclaiming those funds later involves a process, so be proactive if you think you have unclaimed super.

Before consolidating super, consider three things. First, check if any termination fees apply or there are tax consequences. Second, make sure your employer can contribute to the chosen fund. Third, make sure you won't lose any insurance cover.

Check your insurance

Most working Australians have access to death cover through their super, with many also holding total and permanent disability (TPD) insurance and income protection. There are two simple reasons why you should check your cover. First, you need to know whether you and your family are adequately insured should disaster strike. Second, if you have more than one super account, you'll need to know whether you're duplicating your cover.

If you've recently had a big life event, like marriage or children, don't delay things. A few minutes reading your super statements or contacting your fund, could be the difference between supporting your family if you're injured or worse and not being able to provide for them. A call to your super fund's helpline is worth the effort and it will help set you up for the years ahead.

Start a long-term savings plan

The new year could be a good time to start a long-term savings plan, especially if you've achieved a surplus after using

a budget. One option is to make regular, extra contributions to your super before tax, which is called salary sacrifice. Check if your employer offers this option. You could also make after-tax or personal contributions yourself, directly to your super.

Your super fund will be able to provide information and a licensed financial planner can provide contributions advice. Alternatively, jump online and crunch some numbers with a super projection calculator. If you're still a few decades off retirement age, putting in just a few hundred extra dollars each year could add up to thousands down the track with the right strategy.

Damian Graham is Chief Investment Officer at First State Super
www.firststatesuper.com.au

FSS Trustee Corporation ABN 11 118 202 672, AFSL 293340, the trustee of the First State Superannuation Scheme ABN 53 226 460 365. *This is general information only. It does not consider your personal objectives or financial situation. Financial planning advice is provided by First State Super Financial Services Pty Ltd ABN 37 096 452 318, AFSL 240019.*



Tips for effective budgets

- Choose a time period for the budget
- Check your statements, bills and receipts to work out expenses
- Remember benefits, pensions and investments when working out your income
- Consider downloading ASIC's MoneySmart online budget planner to give you a head start
- Decide what is a basic necessity and what is an optional extra
- Look at your available budget before spending and stick to that amount
- Try ASIC's MoneySmart 'TrackMySPEND' mobile app to help you budget on the go
- Review your progress regularly
- Update your budget when major changes to income or expenses occur
- Use surpluses wisely, revisit your expenses if you record a deficit
- Talk to a free government or community financial counsellor if you need help to reduce debt.

For information and links to ASIC's budget planner, app and list of financial counselling services visit: www.moneysmart.gov.au/managing-your-money/budgeting/how-to-do-a-budget

Source: ASIC MoneySmart

PSA veteran up for a gong

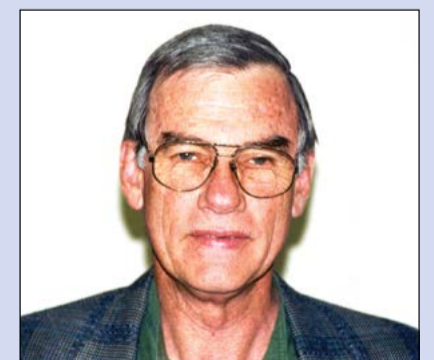
Acting Chair and Secretary of the Retired Associates, Bill Hall has been nominated for an Order of Australia award.

Bill, who joined as a member in 1980, has been nominated in recognition of his 10 years of service to the Retired Associates Group, as well as 30 years with the PSA representing members in the Energy Authority, Public Works, and TAFE. He was also an Executive Member of the PSA and in 2000 was awarded a life membership of the union.

He was nominated for the award by Paul Turner, who is currently Junior Vice Chair of the Retired Associates Group.

In the nomination, Paul cited Bill's commitment to members with asbestos-related health problems as one reason he should be awarded an Order of Australia. "Bill was often the first point of contact and he would sometimes have to make many enquiries on their behalf," Paul wrote in the application.

The Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat in Government House has advised the acceptance process for an award can take up to two years.



The PSA is hoping Bill Hall is recognised for his long service to the union movement

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WAGGA WAGGA
Phone: 1300 772 679

PSA University Undergraduate Scholarship

The scholarship is available at any Australian university in any course and is restricted to students entering the first year of a full-time course.

It is restricted to children of members of the Association at the time of application, who have been continuous financial members for the previous five years.

The scholarship will have a value of \$850 per annum and will be awarded in the first instance for one year and re-awarded annually for a maximum period of three years.

A scholar's tenure shall be subject to a satisfactory report as to his/her progress and conduct.

The Scholarship will be awarded on results obtained in Higher School Certificate Examination and Assessment or equivalent and will take into account whether or not the applicant is the holder of a scholarship, traineeship, etc.

Subject to the provisions above, the highest marks and assessment and/or aggregate will be the deciding factor in the award.

Applications close at 5pm on 31 March.

Application forms are available from Sandra Lockey, Executive Assistant at the PSA on telephone (02) 9220 0982.



JOURNEY CLAIMS - the PSA has you covered

The PSA has taken out a journey insurance policy for its financial members in the wake of the State Government's slashing of workers' compensation benefits in 2012. Among the benefits cut were journey provisions (except in extreme circumstances) leaving workers and their families vulnerable.

The PSA's journey insurance policy can provide:

- ✓ **salary compensation with weekly injury benefits - 85% of salary up to \$1,500 for up to 104 weeks (up to 26 weeks for members 66 to 70 years of age) if a financial member is injured whilst actually engaged in direct travel to or from their normal place of residence to or from their place of employment (not including travel deviation for non-work purposes).**

Whilst the PSA's actions lessen the blow of the Government's attack on injured workers, we remain committed to fighting for the reinstatement of all work injury compensation.

For full details of the PSA's journey insurance policy and other insurance for PSA members go to www.psa.asn.au/resources

To join the PSA, go to <http://membership.psa.asn.au/join>

*Policy coverage subject to the respective insurance policy schedules and the terms/conditions of the policy wordings - Employee Journey Personal Accident Insurance AH 670.3 PDS JM 09/01176.2.



You are covered ONLY if you are a financial member of the PSA
Non-members just have to watch their step



Authorised by Stewart Little, Public Service Association of NSW, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000

General Training Courses

SYDNEY METRO

Dealing with workplace bullying – Friday 24 February
Women in the union – Wednesday 8 March
Dealing with member issues – Tuesday 28 March
Achieving workplace flexibility – Tuesday 4 April
Dealing with restructures – Friday 5 May
Public speaking – Tuesday 16 May
Role of the delegate – Tuesday 6 June & Wednesday 7 June
Dealing with member issues – Tuesday 20 June

COURSE OUTLINES:

Role of the delegate

Discusses the role of the delegate and active members: what delegates do, delegate protections, organising skills, recruitment, working with issues, union values and involvement. Any member can learn from this course and is welcome to apply.

Dealing with member issues

For delegates who want to develop their ability to assist members with individual workplace issues. The course will look at how to deal with individual issues by using the problem solving framework, and by developing advocacy skills.

Dealing with workplace bullying

Designed to assist members and delegates in dealing with bullying and harassment at work.

Achieving workplace flexibility

Looks at the benefits of workplace flexibility and what flexible work practices exist in the NSW public sector. It will examine what you can do to access and implement these flexible work practices, by providing negotiation and organising strategies.

Dealing with restructures

This one-day workshop outlines the PSA's whole-of-union approach to supporting members through restructures, and provides resources and strategies for members undergoing workplace change. It utilises case studies, discusses the role of members, delegates and staff, and can be targeted to specific agency situations.

Women in the union

Celebrate International Women's Day in 2017 by learning about the important role women have and can play

in building strong unions. Topics include history of women's participation in the workforce, your rights and entitlements, union structures, assertiveness, EEO and anti-discrimination.

Public speaking

Speaking in public is something that all union activists will have to do at some stage. This course is designed to assist PSA delegates and activists to be more confident public speakers.

INFORMATION

These courses are available at no charge to PSA/CPSU members.

Non-members wishing to attend our training will need to submit a membership application first.

Venues

All courses are held at PSA House, 160 Clarence St, Sydney – unless otherwise stated.

Lunch is not provided. Tearoom facilities available with tea, coffee, fridge and microwave.

Special needs

If you have a disability and/or special needs, please contact the PSA training staff when you enrol.

Special leave for trade union training

Most state public sector members are entitled to paid Trade Union Training Leave. Your delegate/organiser will be able to provide the details.

Travel

It is proposed travel will be paid for members who attend training in Sydney and regional centres.

CONTACT BY EMAIL: training@psa.asn.au

Red Tape

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