

## The Benevolent Society, CPSU NSW and ASU Round Table report

The CPSU NSW met with The Benevolent Society (TBS) along with four employee representatives and the ASU for the first “Round Table” Peak Body Meeting.

The agenda covered items from TBS management’s Advocacy, management’s initiatives, management’s inclusion and diversity, management’s policies and management’s financial position. It was a great meeting for TBS to inform those in attendance of what management are currently doing.

TBS management’s advocacy is in its participation with Alliance 20, EveryAge Counts and Fix Pension Poverty. Alliance 20 is a lobby group for NDIS funding and EveryAge Counts and Fix Pension Poverty advocacy groups for older Australians. TBS initiatives are focused on regional mental health and reconciliation. The CPSU NSW offered to work with TBS within the advocacy areas.

TBS raised inclusion and diversity within TBS. This was the main area where there were matters to consult on. Issues were raised across TBS as a whole with little focused specifically on Disability, Aged Care or Family and Child Care.

TBS have very limited points of contact for Indigenous people as raised by Lillian Fisher, TBS Employee rep. There is no senior person in TBS who Indigenous employees can speak to informally for support. The CPSU NSW advised we have an Aboriginal officer who is very active in her community and offered support and assistance to TBS in these matters.

Allison Sopher, TBS Employee rep, raised concerns from a hearing-impaired employee of not having appropriate adjustments made to the work place to provide workplace safety. The CPSU NSW raised it

had taken more than 12 months for adjustments to be made in this case.

The lack of access to flexible working arrangements was raised by the unions and the need for clear and consistent information throughout TBS. Some offices have good access to flex, while some officers are declined their entitlements for varying reasons. Flex needs to be secure, fair and standard across TBS.

We were given an overview of the financial position TBS is currently in and forecasting for. TBS advised that there were large investments in property and that there had been changes in the way TBS make financial decisions. While not “on track” yet, the Disability stream of TBS is working towards its target.

The first “Round Table” was an interesting insight into TBS and what its overall plans are. To have meaningful and genuine consultation, consultative mechanisms for the separate “streams” of TBS would be of great value. To allow those who work in the Aged Care, Family and Child Care and Disability streams to have a mechanism to consult on issues affecting them, as Joint Consultative Committees can provide, would allow each stream to have more input to the operational aspects of their areas.

### What can I do in the meantime?

- » Discuss your union and what it means to you and your workmates with family friends and colleagues.
- » Attend CPSU NSW meetings and ask questions. Speak to your Delegate or check your local CPSU NSW notice board for dates.
- » Support the work of the CPSU NSW and your local delegates by asking your colleagues to **JOIN** their union.

