

JULY-
SEPTEMBER
2020

RED TAPE



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All members of CPSU NSW are also members of the Public Service Association.
The PSA is the associated body that manages and resources CPSU NSW.





From the General Secretary Stewart Little

CHANGES AHEAD — AND WE ARE READY FOR THEM

This year marks the beginning of the PSA's Champions of the State campaign, where we look at how much NSW depends on our amazing members.

And in a year opening with bushfires, then morphing into a global pandemic, the role of public employees has never been so prominently in the spotlight.

Worldwide, the reaction to the virus from government employees such as nurses, doctors, teachers and school

staff, as well as those working in prisons, has lifted the public's view of the public sector. Society saw that it could function just fine when hedge fund managers, corporate consultants and the like stayed home, but public services, including many PSA/CPSU NSW Champions of the State, were required to roll on throughout lockdowns.

However, there will always be opponents of a well-funded public sector, and the pandemic may give them a smokescreen for vicious changes to the working lives of PSA/CPSU NSW members.

The virus may see improvements in Workplace Health and Safety and working-from-home flexibility, but in its determination to “snap back” the economy, the Federal Government may use COVID-19 to justify an attack on workers' rights.

Federal Industrial Relations Minister Christian Porter has already looked into renegotiating enterprise bargaining agreements; and with a bigger pool of unemployed labour, the workers' position may be weaker.

The State Treasurer is determined to deny our members the already-capped 2.5 per cent pay rise this year. So much for thanking the essential workers of NSW for labouring on during the pandemic.

The State and Federal Governments want to sacrifice the work our members do in planning and the environment at the altar of infrastructure.

Universities, having had their dependence on overseas student income exposed, want Professional Staff to take the hit with lower wages and job cuts.

For your union, these coming attacks mean we can't relax and bask in the glory of praise for our work fighting pandemics, fires and floods. The speed at which neoliberals became fans of the public sector can reverse just as quickly once the virus is defeated.

For our members, this means talking to your workmates who have not yet joined the PSA/CPSU NSW. The more members we have, the stronger our voice. And, as has been proven this year, the stronger our public sector, the stronger our society. ■

ROB AND DOM — THE FLOWERPOT MEN

Government is all about priorities. When the NSW Government announced it wanted to freeze public sector wages, it became clear the welfare of its employees is not its priority. Apparently there are better things to spend money on.

So I was stunned to learn the NSW Government planned to spend \$1.2 million on indoor plants at a time when public servants are being told to tighten their belts and cop a pay cut.

The hypocrisy was breathtaking. Here we have Treasurer Dominic Perrottet and Planning Minister Rob Stokes saying there is no money for public servants while signing contracts for million dollar vertical gardens.

Fortunately, the decision didn't last very long once it became public. The ABC ran the story and I spoke on air to 2GB's Ray Hadley. He was shocked, too. Before the day was out, Minister Stokes had done a backflip.

To have just one building prepared to drop more than a million on fiddle leaf figs and peace lilies is extraordinary. But this is typical of a government that seems ideologically opposed to the very idea of a public service. They would rather freeze wages than find other savings.

The phenomenal work by public sector workers in NSW Health is the reason restrictions can be eased and the economy started up again.

The most powerful stimulus the NSW Government has is its own workforce.

Instead of cutting wages and wasting money on office aesthetics, the NSW Government should offer certainty to its workforce by guaranteeing existing jobs and adding new ones.



THE SALARIES CASE: PSA THERE TO FIGHT

The NSW Government thanks essential workers by denying them a pay rise.

The Government's predictable response to COVID-19 – to cut wages – was met with resistance from the PSA and other public sector unions.

After weeks of platitudes about the essential work done by public servants throughout NSW, the State Government announced planned 2.5 per cent pay rises would not go ahead unless they had already been agreed.

The PSA had already negotiated a pay increase for 2020-21 for staff in Transport. Members in schools received an increase thanks to the PSA's 2019 Pay Equity case. The CPSU NSW also won several rises for members covered by the Fair Work Commission.

However, despite the case for a 2.5 per cent pay rise for most PSA members under the *Crown Employees Award* being lodged in December last year, Treasurer Dominic Perrottet announced in May that wages would be frozen. This would also affect other non-PSA employees, including police, nurses and teachers. All these workers, and many PSA/CPSU NSW members, had continued to work during the shutdown created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not happy with that, the Treasurer also mandated that public servants receiving pay increases this year would have their pay frozen in subsequent years.

The freeze came hot on the heels of substantial pay rises for senior executives, including Police Commissioner Mick Fuller, whose annual salary increased by \$87,000.

Rather than put the pay freeze to a vote in parliament, the Liberal/National Government instead introduced a regulation outlining its plans to leave wages at the same level as the year before. A media backlash appeared to catch the Government by surprise, with the Treasurer then talking about one-off payments of \$1000 and a no-redundancies policy.

It is important to note there was no formal announcement about the \$1000 one-off payment or the no-redundancies policy, just sound bites in the media.

The NSW Legislative Council, the state's upper house, used its authority to reject the changed regulation. Joining Labor and the Greens in



supporting the bill was a broad mix of supporters; One Nation; the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers; the Animal Justice Party; and former Green Justin Field. Only Christian Democrat veteran Fred Nile voted with the Government to freeze pay.

This win on behalf of public servants and their hard work throughout NSW at this important time saw the case for a 2.5 per cent pay rise return to the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC). It remains a tough fight with the Government continuing to try and enforce their discredited policy through arbitration in the IRC.

There the Government combined the pay cases of a number of public servants, including nurses, to try and stymie increases in the one go.

"The MPs saw that our members were there in schools, there in gaols, there at the Service NSW desk, there in National Parks, keeping NSW running," said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. "Other members were working just as hard for the people of NSW from home as those in the office."

Media support for public-sector pay rises came from a variety of sources, including normally conservative voices such as Ray Hadley.

The case was continuing as *Red Tape* went to press. For more on the perils of austerity, see page 38. ■

“

**THE FREEZE
CAME HOT ON
THE HEELS OF
SUBSTANTIAL
PAY RISES
FOR SENIOR
EXECUTIVES**

”



From the President **Kylie McKelvie**

THE COUNTRY NEEDS A PICK-UP – AND WE CAN DO IT

Drought, fires, then COVID-19: for NSW, the succession of disasters to hit the state has had catastrophic effects on local economies. Now is the time for the public sector to come to the rescue.

For years, drought has cut the state's agricultural output as major rivers have dried up. In tourist regions such as the South Coast, visitors left in droves as fires gripped the state, failing to return as rules on isolation to prevent Coronavirus spreading kept people home.

Much of the farming sector has been buoyed by rains and is on the way back, and tourists will return. But regional NSW needs consistency. It needs jobs and dependable incomes that are not subject to the vagaries of the weather or the number of tourists rocking up in a given season.

For many people in regional NSW, even a part-time public sector job gives their family a measure of financial stability. That stability can flow on to

local businesses, which can plan better knowing not all local incomes are subject to conditions beyond their control. And as NSW recovers from the pandemic's damage to the economy, those public sector incomes will become even more important in regional NSW.

The instability brought on by COVID-19 has shown people worldwide just how important our public services are. The PSA/CPSU NSW will ensure that our members' time in the limelight is not dimmed by the passing of time and the re-emergence of the political powers that want to strip away public services in the name of sell-offs, privatisations and job cuts. We will continue to fight for our members in the bush and the role they play in not only providing excellent public services, but also in keeping regional economies thriving. ■

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NEW DELEGATES TO THE ABORIGINAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE

ELECTORATE 1a – Communities & Justice – Justice

Jack Mahoney
Yvonne Weldon
Kevin Jones

ELECTORATE 1b – Education

Patricia Morris
Darrell Brown
Sean Bremer

ELECTORATE 1c – Communities & Justice – old FACS

Lynette Lawrie
Cathy Bennett
Matthew Cutmore



Yvonne Weldon is among the new Delegates.

ELECTORATE 2 – Disabilities, Transport, Planning, Industry & Environment, Customer Service, Premier & Cabinet, TAFE, Universities, Other National Systems, SOCs

Robin Heath
Belinda Burns
Trudy Healey

ELECTORATE 3 – Regional

Raymond Wilson
Tony Amatto
Stephen Cochrane

VIRUS HITS CONFERENCE

The PSA/CPSU NSW Annual Conference will move to September.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the PSA/CPSU NSW Central Council resolved that the 2020 Annual Conference now be held in September, along with the Country Conference. Aboriginal Conference is now planned for October 2020, and Women's Conference in November.

“This decision was made in the best interests of our delegates, members, staff and the general public, as Annual Conference involves up to 200 people from throughout NSW gathering in close quarters at PSA House,” said General Secretary Stewart Little.

Central Council also acknowledged the rescheduled conferences will have to comply with any public health orders in place in the scheduled months. ■

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From the Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright

MINIMISE YOUR TAX: WIN PLAUDITS

Lendlease Chair Michael Ullmer this year nabbed himself an Order of Australia for distinguished service to the performing and visual arts and to the finance and banking industry. His service to Australia's tax coffers? Not so illustrious.

Headlines about the Order of Australia this year were dominated by the worthiness of Tony Abbott and noted air transport aficionado Bronwyn Bishop, with the political Right throwing in complaints about Mike Carlton swearing on Twitter.

However, it took a speech by South Australian Senator Rex Patrick to highlight the award to Michael Ullmer, who chairs the Lendlease board.

Outside the business pages, you are most likely to see the Lendlease name on the side of building projects. It builds everything from ports to blocks of flats, business hubs to dams.

Many of these projects are government or quasi-government jobs paid for by the taxpayer. This is where Mr Ullman's award becomes controversial, because one place you won't see the Lendlease name is in a list of corporate taxpayers.

Despite accepting a slew of Australian government projects – think prisons in Queensland, convention centres and sporting grounds in Adelaide, port facilities, university buildings and even parts of the National Broadband Network – Lendlease pays no corporate tax.

As Senator Patrick pointed out: “Over the last five years from 2013-14 to 2018-19 the company generated \$43 billion in revenue and in that period they didn't pay a brass razoo in tax.”

Senator Patrick said one of Mr Ullmer's ‘philanthropy’ projects, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, stood down all its musicians and put them on the taxpayer-funded JobKeeper program. This was despite the fact that they'd been negotiating to take a 50 per cent pay cut.

As we enter an economic downturn and look at paying for bail-outs such as the JobKeeper payment, it is particularly painful to think of the revenue forever denied to the country thanks to clever accounting.

Earlier this year we saw Richard Branson holding out his hands for a government bailout after years of stashing profits in places such as the Virgin Islands. In fact, according to journalist Michael West, whose website michealwest.com.au tracks tax minimisation throughout Australia, Virgin Australia Holdings Limited was the second most efficient company in the country at reducing its tax liabilities. According to Mr West's site, the company paid exactly zero dollars in corporate tax on an eye-watering income of \$23,431,281,904 over five years.

THE COMPANY GENERATED \$43 BILLION IN REVENUE AND ... DIDN'T PAY A BRASS RAZOO IN TAX

A part-time cleaner would have contributed more to the nation's coffers.

It is important to draw a distinction between tax minimisation and tax avoidance. Most of the big companies gleefully paying little or no tax are not breaking any laws. They are taking advantage of lax laws that allow access to legal – if not exactly moral – accounting

methods to minimise tax. These laws could be changed with the right political will, but we live in a bizarre world where governments and certain parts of the media demonise public servants, and laud those companies not paying their way. Even handing them Order of Australia medals.



Having a lend: Michael Ullmer

No-one likes paying tax. But the jobs of most of our members rely on well-funded treasuries. The university sector, long overly dependent on overseas students, needs to return to the days where governments invested money in education, knowing the returns from a well-educated workforce would exceed inputs.

Australia has done well over the past 30 years, spared recessions and economic downturns. But COVID-19 has accelerated a likely recession. An increase in unemployment equals a decrease in income tax. Less spending equals lower GST revenues. All at a time when the country will need a solid tax base to pay for outlays such as the NSW Treasurer's planned infrastructure splurge, shortfalls in education funding and the general cost of running a society.

In the past year, the public sector has done its bit. Our Champions of the State have taken on bushfires, healed the sick and showed up to staff essential services. Now it is time for the business community to do its bit by scaling back the accounting trickery and pay what's due. ■

JIHAD TALKS TAFE

Shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, Jihad Dib, met with delegates via Zoom and in person at PSA House in June to praise members for their work during COVID-19 and to talk about the future of the vocational training system in NSW.

He covered how the 110 free online courses provided during the pandemic were a welcome move, but expressed fears they are a Trojan horse for the Government to hollow out TAFE and depart from quality face-to-face teaching.

He also spoke about how Connected Learning Centres cannot be a substitute for longstanding teaching methods.



CPSU NSW WORKS FOR A SAFER TAFE

The CPSU NSW has been proactive in keeping pressure on TAFE NSW to maintain safety at campuses across the state during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After a well-attended Skype meeting, CPSU NSW TAFE Delegates advocated strongly to ensure safety measures were in place if TAFE NSW campuses were to remain open. Staff in high-contact areas, such as libraries and administration, were particularly concerned. CPSU NSW Branch Secretary Stewart Little wrote to TAFE General Manager Steffen Faurby outlining members' concerns.

After a risk assessment, work began on creating a COVID-ready workplace. Safety measures included signs and tape to guide people on campus safety, quality cleaning and hygiene gear and additional cleaning of facilities.

A meeting is held every morning to address any concerns from CPSU NSW members.

There have been seven positive COVID-19 cases among TAFE staff.

TAFE members have also been integral in running free courses for the NSW public during the COVID-19 lockdown. These courses are still available. ■

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As members of the PSA you are entitled to the first consultation free of charge. To make an appointment call (02) 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.



CHAMPIONS OF THE STATE KEEP ON DURING SPORTING BREAK

PSA members at the Office of Sport Sydney Academy were grateful for a visit to their workplace from PSA Organiser Simone Scalmer to see how they had been adjusting their working days during COVID-19.

PSA RESCUES CASUAL STAFF AT RISK

After pressure from the PSA, the NSW Government committed up to \$95.7 million to help keep casual and temporary school staff engaged in active work during the pandemic.

This came after weeks of the union raising the issue of extending contracts and employee protections with the Department of Education.

The PSA pushed for an extension of contracts so that temporary employees can still support students, teaching staff and their school communities, as well as earn a living and support themselves during the crisis.

“The announcement gives 3000 support staff in schools, who were living with employment uncertainty, peace of mind,” said Industrial Manager Kris Cruden. “Their contracts were rolled over into term two.

“As a member of the PSA you can be confident your workplace rights and protections will always be fought for. Your union will always be behind you.” ■

ELECTION POSTPONEMENT NOTICE

Public Service Association and Professional Officers Association Amalgamated Union of NSW

The election for the Public Service Association and Professional Officers Association Amalgamated Union of NSW (PSA) Central Council and Executive positions was due to commence in July 2020. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the NSW Electoral Commissioner’s official Returning Officer is unable to conduct

the PSA election at this time. The NSW Parliament has passed legislation that temporarily amends the *Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW)* to allow for the making of a regulation to allow the elections of industrial organisations to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PSA is working with the Industrial Relations Commission to ensure that this election will commence as soon as permitted. It is anticipated that the delay

of this election will not lead to a delay of the 2024 election with a curtailed four-year term.

The PSA Executive is committed to maintaining a democratic union and adhering to the rules. It will keep members informed of the progress of the election.

**Yours faithfully,
Stewart Little
General Secretary**



Science staff think on their feet to keep COVID-19 at bay

When students returned to Bankstown Senior College, Science School Administrative Officer (SAO) Goran Terzic looked at how to keep surfaces clean at a time sanitising products were both rare and expensive.

As the students returned to classes, Mr Terzic was asked to organise spray bottles for the school. “That got me interested in what you need to disinfect a desk,” he said. “So I started looking at what was the most effective thing to clean the desks with, and I came up with alcohol.”

Mr Terzic knew buying in bulk would keep stocks high and costs down.

“I found a place in Penrith that sold 70 per cent ethanol and 30 per cent water in 20-litre drums,” he said.

Mr Terzic said his school did not run out of hand sanitiser but he was ready in case supplies ran low during the worst of the pandemic and its associated hoarding.

“I haven’t made any sanitiser. But you could if you had to,” he said.

Having a large amount of flammable liquid around creates new problems. Another SAO, Robert Hughes of Doonside Technology High School had a solution. He said empty bottles have to “be rendered non-flammable before disposal”.

**THAT GOT ME INTERESTED
IN WHAT YOU NEED TO
DISINFECT A DESK**

“They go off to the bin, via the water tap,” he added.

“The work our Science SAOs do nurturing the innovators of tomorrow has always been vital,” said PSA Industrial Manager Kris Cruden. “Now these Champions of the State are also keeping our staff and students safe.” ■

TIME TO SAY THANK YOU TO OUR SAS STAFF

August 24 to 28 is SAS Staff Recognition Week, when schools across NSW celebrate the contribution of their administrative and support staff and thank them for everything they do to keep our schools running.

The past 12 months have been difficult for every community in NSW, with droughts, floods, fires followed by a pandemic. Throughout all these challenges, SAS Staff kept our schools and classrooms open and available to students and parents who needed them.

That’s why this year’s PSA SAS Staff Recognition Week is special.

SAS Staff are Champions of the State. These are members that children, teachers and entire communities rely on when things get tough.

When? August 24-28, 2020

What can I do? Talk to your Principal and P&C to let them know Recognition Week is coming so they can plan an event for you. A morning tea, lunch or a dinner is a great way to show appreciation and bring people together. And if you get the chance, please ask your Principal and teachers to support the campaign to have more long-term temporary employees offered a permanent position

What should I do after the event? We would love you to share your Recognition Week photos with us. Email them to schools@psa.asn.au and remember to tell us who is in the photo and the school you work in. You can also send a photo together with a press release to your local newspaper or community website. ■



'We can have it all': PSA talks up culture

Cultural expansion should not come at the expense of other institutions.

In a submission to an inquiry into the crisis-hit arts and culture sector, the PSA has maintained the expansion of the NSW museum system should not come at the expense of existing institutions.

"There are currently five state-run cultural institutions in Sydney, being the Sydney Living Museums, State Library of NSW, Australian Museum, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [Powerhouse Museum] and the Art Gallery of NSW, that maintain, develop and exhibit their own collection or content, which we will call the five pillars," reads the submission.

In the submission, the PSA recommends against the Powerhouse being moved in its entirety to a new site in Parramatta. It wants the museum to be one of five contributors to a new venue in the western CBD. The union also warned that the proposed site, by the Parramatta River, is susceptible to increased incidence of flooding as climate change bites.

The submission recommends "an alternate site should be considered for a Western Sydney Cultural Facility

supported by the existing five pillars of collection institutions".

The report points out the absurdity of moving a museum dedicated to industrial heritage from a site characterised by its industrial heritage. It also warns that moving the entire collection to a new site runs the risks of massive cost overruns and damage to exhibits. It adds plans to recoup costs through selling vacant land from the old Ultimo site will have been scuppered by the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on inner-city property values.

The PSA submission also calls for the creation of "a new NSW Country Roving Museum, supported by the NSW Government, whereby multidisciplinary mobile exhibitions garner interest in the Sydney museums and in the cultural, historical or heritage aspects that the five pillars deliver".

The Carriageworks cultural site in inner Sydney, which recently went into voluntary administration, is also recommended as a site for existing institutions to use.

The PSA submission also "recommends the NSW Government provide funding to convert casual and temporary roles to ongoing roles" and that the efficiency dividend be removed from all cultural funding. ■

NO WIGGLE ROOM: PSA SECURES JOBS AMID CLOSURES

Action by the PSA saved the employment of 50 casual staff working at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum. The Museum planned to axe the jobs, effectively sending the employees to Centrelink and on to the JobSeeker payment.

The PSA argued long-term casuals in regular and systematic employment should be placed on other duties. If no other duties were available, they should be placed on special leave and paid as normal.

With the prospect of the PSA taking action in the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC), the Museum analysed its workforce and identified the 50 staff qualified as long-term casuals.

Troy Wright, Assistant General Secretary of the PSA, said this was a good result for members. "These 50 employees will continue to be employed and paid an average of their hours worked over the preceding six months. Our discussions with the Museum were productive and we welcome this outcome."

However, the win comes as the Museum shut down a number of blockbuster exhibits, including the Space, Transport Hall, Steam Revolution and the ever-popular Wiggles displays.

"We have heard from members that staff morale, particularly among Visitor Services Officers, is very low," said PSA Industrial Manager Nathan Bradshaw. "The PSA is in the IRC over the decision to shut the exhibits before a sod has even been turned at the new Parramatta site." ■



PSA and Government team up to keep it clean

The PSA is working with the State Government to ensure the re-opening of its cultural institutions does not put employees at excessive risk.

In June, the Government re-opened cultural venues to the public, with social distancing in place. The Australian Museum remains closed for renovations.

“While the re-opening of cultural institutions will assist in easing the significant pressure on their budgets, the Government needs to address the massive drop in revenue the pandemic has caused, and will continue to cause for some time,” said Industrial Manager Nathan Bradshaw.

KEEP OUR ICONS ALIVE

The PSA and the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance launched a joint campaign demanding support for employees of the state’s cultural institutions.

Taronga Zoo, the Art Gallery of NSW, the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Observatory, Sydney Living Museums, the Sydney Opera House: NSW is blessed with many acclaimed institutions showcasing our natural, artistic and scientific heritage. Staging exhibits that inspire the next generation of scientific leaders, through to performances that uplift and entertain, our cultural institutions are the envy of other states and the world.

Each year millions of Australians and international guests visit these institutions, generating the revenue that keeps them running. As the nation went into COVID-19 lockdown, the doors to these institutions were closed. Without their usual revenue, they are under threat. Jobs have been lost and employees stood down.

The dedicated and talented staff who work at these cultural facilities know jobs are at risk. As employees of the NSW Government they are not eligible for the JobKeeper Allowance.

That’s why the PSA and the Alliance (MEAA) have launched a joint campaign highlighting the plight of their members.

They have called on Premier Gladys Berejiklian to save the jobs of people working in the state’s cultural institutions and to “Keep Our Icons Alive”.

“These institutions are too important to lose,” said Sharna Galvin of the MEAA Federal Council. “Our state’s cultural institutions are not just buildings – they are made possible by the staff that work in them, care for them, and deliver them.”

Troy Wright, Assistant Secretary of the PSA, said, “Some of Sydney’s and Australia’s greatest cultural icons are at risk of falling through the cracks. They need guaranteed funding from the NSW Government to retain staff, just like Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews delivered in his state.

“If we want these cultural icons to be there for us when the crisis is over we have to fight to keep them alive now.” ■



“

THE PSA HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN TALKS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING TO ENSURE MEMBERS' SAFETY

”

HELPING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Yet more PSA members show the value of public services during a pandemic.

PSA members in the Department of Housing were out in force on the streets during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping some of the most vulnerable people in the state.

“There was an increasingly assertive outreach during the pandemic to care for people experiencing homelessness,” said PSA Industrial Manager Kris Cruden.

“Our members have been getting people into temporary housing and making sure they have access to hygiene supplies such as hand sanitiser.”

The PSA has been involved with talks with the Department of Housing to ensure its members’

safety is taken into account during these operations.

The outreach teams were required to adhere to advice from NSW Health, including maintaining social distancing, in order to minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19 to people sleeping rough and to minimise risks for workers.

A General Practitioner joined the patrols in the City of Sydney and extra Housing staff have also been involved in the operation.

“We are so proud of the work our members are doing to reduce homelessness in NSW,” said Ms Cruden.

“Our members in Housing truly are Champions of the State.” ■

PROVIDER FLAGS CUTS

As employment guarantees for Disability Support Workers begin to expire, the CPSU NSW is gearing up for a succession of battles for members' pay and conditions.

ConnectAbility, a small provider based on the Central Coast, has advised the CPSU NSW of plans to restructure the Hunter Valley Disability Services

(HVDS) portion of supported independent living to resemble its pre-existing business.

The company gave members and the CPSU NSW one week to consult.

Under the proposal the Coordinator of Accommodation Respite (CAR), Practice Support Coordinator and Rostering Manager roles have been deleted, with the position of Supported Independent Living (SIL), Support Leader essentially replacing the CAR role.

With the removal of the Rostering Manager role, ConnectAbility stated Team Leaders were required to commence submitting their rosters via Zoom from 12 May. It is unclear what level of responsibility Team Leaders will have for the rosters or the additional workload under the new operating arrangement.

Additionally, ConnectAbility did not provide any information on how staff training and support was to be managed once the Practice Support Coordinator role is deleted.

The CPSU NSW wrote to ConnectAbility to express concern that on the basis of the company's proposed implementation timeframes, genuine and meaningful consultation will be unable to occur.

"As pay and conditions come under threat, there has never been a more important time to be a member of the CPSU NSW," said Industrial Manager Thane Pearce. "We will be campaigning to keep members' existing work conditions, not only for their sakes but for the clients, too." ■



NORTHCOTT EBA TO SHOW THE WAY

All members in the disability sector will be closely watching the negotiation for an Enterprise Agreement between the CPSU NSW and Northcott.

Northcott members are the first CPSU NSW workers in the disability sector to negotiate an Enterprise Agreement that will replace the Copied State Awards; the conditions which the members worked under when they were public servants.

The Copied State Awards remain in force until a new Enterprise Agreement comes into being. For this to happen, all Northcott employees covered by the agreement need to be given the opportunity to vote, with a majority needed to approve the Enterprise Agreement. It then needs to be approved by

the Fair Work Commission. This means it will need to pass the Better Off Overall Test (BOOT), meaning it provides better conditions than the *Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award*.

"The CPSU NSW will be asking Northcott members to contribute throughout this process, including in the development of our log of claims," said CPSU NSW Industrial Manager Thane Pearce. "It is important for all Northcott members to contribute as this will inform what we negotiate for on their behalf."

The CPSU NSW held a number of online meetings to keep members in the loop throughout the negotiation process. ■

MNCDS retreats from disability sector

Yet another disability services provider is leaving the sector.

Mid North Coast Disability Services (MNCDS) wrote to staff advising of its plans to transfer its disability services business to individual consortium partners. Ability Options is the only remaining entity.

Hunter Valley Disability Services (HVDS) recently underwent a similar transfer of disability services to its individual

consortium partners, one of which was Ability Options. The CPSU NSW was involved in that process. Ability Options has confirmed that it intends to replicate, where possible, those documents and processes which they have consulted on previously with the CPSU NSW.

The CPSU NSW and MNCDS continued to meet during the transition process. The CPSU NSW encourages all members to carefully review the information and provide written feedback to both MNCDS and to the CPSU NSW. ■

PSA PUSHES FOR FIREFIGHTERS

PSA calls for reforms in the Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Corporation.

The NSW Government has listened to the PSA and employed additional professional firefighting staff so the state has the capacity to fight fires all year round, not just in the peak season.

Extra hiring was one of the key recommendations made by the PSA to the Independent Inquiry into the devastating bushfires that swept across Australia during the summer of 2020.

The Government promised to hire an additional 100 firefighters.

“While not enough, this is a start,” said Stewart Little, General Secretary of the PSA.

The union has members in all four direct fire combat agencies in NSW: the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) and Fire and Rescue. The PSA’s submission was based on extensive research and feedback provided by members who served on the frontline during the bushfire crisis.

The PSA recommended significant reforms to the RFS, NPWS, Fire and Rescue and the Forestry Corporation in preparation for future fire seasons, including how they are staffed and resourced as well as the need to avoid further budget cuts.

In submissions to both the NSW Inquiry as well as the Commonwealth’s Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, the PSA recommends a new Central Coordination Agency be created to provide co-ordination between the Australian and state governments and to set national standards for all Australian firefighting agencies.

“These additional staff, together with the existing teams, need to be adequately equipped and resourced to fight and prepare for future fires. Failure to do this



will have catastrophic consequences,” said Mr Little. “There were not enough fully trained and experienced firefighting and incident staff on the ground during the last bushfire season. The ones that were left were expected to do too much with too few resources, leading to fatigue and exhaustion.

CUTBACKS WERE A MAJOR REASON THE GOVERNMENT WAS INADEQUATELY PREPARED

“There was also an over-reliance on volunteers and casuals or lower paid staff without adequate training, expertise, equipment or experience.”

The submission praised the courageous efforts of the thousands of volunteers who put their lives on the line during the summer, including many members of the PSA. However, the submission warns against relying too heavily on volunteers as it is impossible to guarantee their availability. Volunteers have other commitments and their own lives to manage, with little new blood joining to take the places of veterans.

That’s why the best way to ensure NSW is ready for future fire seasons is to

increase the number of paid professional firefighters and fire management staff.

Budget cuts left NSW unprepared

In the years leading up to the bushfires, major restructures of the RFS, NPWS, Fire and Rescue and the Forestry Corporation (FCNSW) led to significantly reduced firefighting and preparedness capacity.

Mr Little said these cutbacks were a major reason why the NSW Government was inadequately prepared for the 2019-20 fire season.

“The focus of the NSW Government on cutting budgets and saving money had devastating results during the bushfires. Restructures led to a loss of staff in critical positions, leaving fire combat agencies understaffed, undertrained and lacking in resources and experience,” Mr Little said.

Fire combat agencies were subjected to additional cuts as a result of the NSW Government’s annual efficiency dividend. A number of agencies, including the RFS, were also experiencing chronic job vacancy issues.

The PSA’s submission recommends making it mandatory to consider the impact a restructure or a reduction in staff has on an agency’s fire management or firefighting capabilities. The submission also calls for fire combat agencies to be exempted from state efficiency dividends. ■

WHO IS ON THE LINE?

PSA members have advised that the NSW Trustee and Guardian (NSWTG) has recorded phone conversations between employees without notice. The PSA is highly concerned about this, as it may be in breach of the *Workplace Surveillance Act NSW 2005*.

The PSA's understanding was that call recording by NSWTG would be limited to calls between staff and clients. The purpose of the call recording was to ensure quality control.

The PSA has contacted NSWTG and discovered calls are recorded between staff members if they use the Genesys phone system. This is, on its face, a breach of the notice requirements of the Act and the PSA is investigating further. ■

CLOSURES HIT REGIONAL ECONOMIES

The closure of gaols in Ivanhoe and Brewarrina has forced families to move, affected local economies and scuppered programs for Aboriginal inmates.

Seventeen staff in Ivanhoe and 20 in Brewarrina will lose their jobs.

"Most, if not all, staff in both centres will relocate out of the respective towns as there are no other roles or places of work," said Prison Officers Vocational Branch (POVB) Chair Nicole Jess.

Brewarrina's Yetta Dhinnakkal Centre, which opened in 2000 as a prison exclusively for Aboriginal men, will shut.

"Unfortunately, our arguments on the value of both centres and the impact these closures will have on these isolated and drought-affected towns fell on deaf ears," said Ms Jess. ■



MARKO FLIES THE FLAG FOR THE UNION

Marko Petrovic, above, is a Delegate on the Sheriff's Officers Vocational Branch Advisory Group (SOVBAG) representing all Sheriff's Officer PSA members in NSW.

Sheriff's Officers provide primary security and administrative services across most NSW courts and tribunals.

These essential frontline staff worked tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 lockdown to maintain the safety, health and security of the NSW courts and tribunals system.

Many Sheriff's Officers were deployed to assist firefighting efforts across NSW during the state's worst ever bushfire season.

"Sheriff's Officers are a highly unionised and active work group," said Organiser Latu Sailosi. "SOVBAG has successfully fought and advocated on their behalf for improved and safer work conditions, PSA membership has increased significantly over the past 12 months, meaning we have more industrial power and strength.

"The key industrial and WHS issue is a requirement to work alone at courts and tribunals." ■

Bring it back: Parklea stabbing cuts through outsourcing debate

The death of a prisoner in Parklea, one of the state's privately run prisons, has highlighted the need to bring the facility back into state control, said Stewart Little, State Branch Secretary of the CPSU NSW.

The CPSU NSW's reaction to the death was picked up by *The Daily Telegraph* and Channel Ten news.

Mr Little told the *Telegraph* that Parklea was not paying its staff enough to work among violent inmates.

"To run a remand facility in metropolitan Sydney where you have high staff turnover, it's really difficult to maintain and train staff up to a high level," he was quoted. "Why are they going to work guarding rapists and murderers when they can go and drive a bus and earn more money? That's why you've got these problems and you'll continue to have them."

Inmate Michael Black was fatally stabbed at the facility while waiting in an audio-visual link suite to appear in court.

Parklea has been in private hands since 2008. It was recently taken over by MTC-Broadspectrum from its previous operators, GEO Group Australia, after the State Government intervened over increasing problems at the gaol.

There is another private prison still operated by GEO, in Junee. Another gaol outside Grafton, scheduled to accept inmates from July. The operator, Serco, has been at the centre of allegations such as an increase of deaths in custody, self-harm and of staff beating detainees at the Christmas Island immigration detention facility.

In New Zealand, fight clubs were found to be operating in a Serco-run gaol. ■



GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT BLAZES

The bushfires of 2019-20 highlighted the importance of preparation.

PSA members in the Rural Fire Service are preparing the state for the next fire season.

Pictured are PSA members Ben, Josh

and Luke doing this essential work. Their roles also involve helping infirm, disabled and elderly residents, maintaining fire trails, assisting the public in accidents, fighting fires and general hazard reduction around NSW to reduce the severity of bushfires. ■

NO JUSTICE IN FLEX AVOIDANCE

The PSA has received concerns from members in Non-Custodial Correction about a lack of access to their Flex Time entitlements.

Amongst other things, members raised concerns about:

- being directed to work only seven hours per day;
- being required to obtain advance written approval for any instance where they are working more or less than seven hours per day;
- only being allowed to accrue Flex Time when a supervisor is present;
- being required to find colleagues to cover their duties while accessing Flex leave;

- having starting and/or finishing times dictated to them by a supervisor separate to operational requirements; and
- Flex Time entitlements being suspended due to COVID-19 or working from home.

These are all contrary to their Flex Agreement.

In a recent ruling in the Industrial Relations Commission with regards to Flex Time in NSW Police, the Commission took a dim view of attempts to artificially limit access to the entitlement, claiming "it is not open to individual supervisors to impose additional arbitrary limitations on an employee's right to accrue flex leave". ■

UNION MEMBER BUGLES IN THE ANZAC DAY DAWN

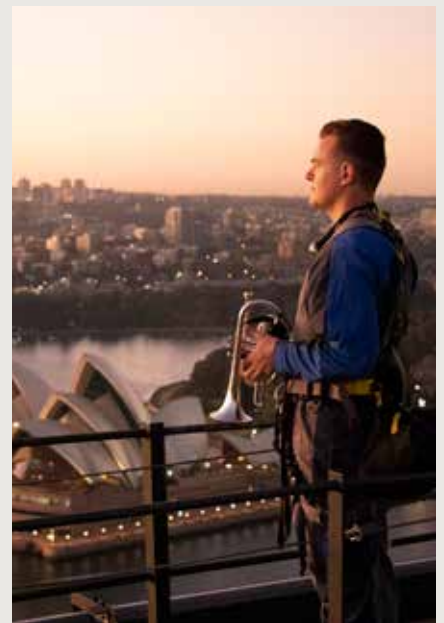
PSA Police Band delegate Matt Collins climbed the Sydney Harbour Bridge on the morning of Anzac Day to pay homage to the country's veterans.

Mr Collins commemorated an Anzac Day defined by social distancing by playing *The Last Post* alone on the bridge as the sun rose over the horizon.

The Police Band was approached by BridgeClimb Sydney, which runs tours up the structure, to bugle in the dawn.

"Normally they have a bit more of a ceremony up there, but this time with the restrictions it was just me," said Mr Collins.

"It was quite surreal to look down and see the city being absolutely still. Normally on Anzac Day you'd see thousands of people gathering. But this year, other than one or two boats on the harbour, there was no sign of people anywhere." ■



INMATES INSIDE, COVID-19 OUT: HOW UNION MEMBERS KEPT A PANDEMIC AT BAY

Working from home was not an option for many Champions of the State working in the state's gaols and Youth Justice facilities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSW Correctives and Youth Justice facilities continued to operate, presenting staff with the challenge of keeping themselves and their detainees free from the disease.

And it worked, with NSW prisons and Youth Justice facilities free from COVID-19 at the time of press.

More than 500 inmates have entered the prison system since the virus began to spread.

Country Vice Chair of the Prison Officers Vocational Branch (POVB), Natalie Howes, is part of a team at the Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) COVID

Command Post near Sydney's Central Station. The team, comprising CSNSW management and the POVB, meets daily to keep the pandemic out of the state's corrective facilities. Commissioned Officers Vocational Branch Secretary Dave Fryer is also at the centre.

"We are there involving the union in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Ms Howes. "I think it has been a really good joint effort. We have a whole heap of different representatives under the CSNSW banner to implement strategies."

Ms Howes said successful strategies include replacing physical visits with electronic ones conducted via tablets and

quarantining new arrivals into the system. A field hospital has also been established in case of an outbreak.

"There is the possibility of many benefits to come from the changes after the pandemic," said Ms Howes. "Things such as tablet visits giving inmates the chance to talk to relatives overseas or see things like relative's babies or the kids' new bikes."

PSA members in the CSNSW digital technology unit have been integral in the roll-out of the tablet-based visiting system.

"If they choose to continue with the field hospital, it will also mean not having to take as many hospital escorts," said Ms Howes.

She added the quarantining of new inmates may be beneficial, as people can access non-custodial services while waiting to enter the prison system proper.

Ms Howes said the cooperative spirit shown by CSNSW has been a welcome side-effect of the process.

PSA Industrial Officer Roland Harris has been dialing into daily briefings with the command centre to ensure the interests of members in Non-custodial and Community Corrections are being taken on board.

"Hopefully in the future CSNSW will be as consultative on ongoing prison reform projects," said Mr Harris. "All members deserve a pat on the back for keeping COVID-19 out of gaols." ■





CPSU NSW DEAL SAVES UNIVERSITY JOBS

Western Sydney University (WSU) has signed a deal with the CPSU NSW that prevents forced redundancies of Professional Staff or stand-downs without pay as a result of COVID-19.

A first of its kind in NSW, the Memorandum of Understanding means Professional Staff now have job security, despite the devastating impact of the pandemic on the tertiary education sector.

In return, the staff at WSU will take leave between 28 September and 2 October and on 18 and 19 December.

Staff will also purchase additional leave which they can use during the next five years. The amount of “banked” additional leave will depend on the salary level of the employee and is capped at eight days for senior staff. Payment for the ‘banked’ leave will be via payroll deductions over a 13-week period, helping to ease the pressure on the university’s finances.

Thane Pearce, CPSU NSW Industrial Manager, said the union’s priority was to avoid mass layoffs.

“Many other universities are pursuing savage savings including job cuts and pay cuts of up to 25 per cent,” he said. “The CPSU NSW and WSU took a different, more constructive approach.

“That way our members keep their jobs and the university is well placed to continue its success when the crisis is over.” ■

WOLLONGONG SURVEY SKEWED

Don’t like the result? Change the method.

The CPSU NSW maintains the University of Wollongong (UOW) tried to skew the university’s options survey towards vicious pay cuts and big job losses.

In a UOW staff poll in June, staff were asked to select one of three options, all involving pay cuts or job losses.

The UOW branches of both the CPSU NSW and the National Tertiary Education Union rejected the university’s proposals and called on staff to vote for Option 3 – the status quo – and push instead for a negotiated outcome.

In response to the position jointly adopted by the campus unions, the university tweaked the online poll and insisted staff indicate a second preference in order to submit a valid vote.

Vicki Dodd, Chair of the CPSU NSW UOW Branch, labelled the decision “deplorable” and “nothing more than an attempt to rot the outcome”.

“This survey has no credibility, none,” she said. “Universities around the country are looking at ways to mitigate the financial pressure brought on by the pandemic and restrictions on international student travel.

“We understand that, and staff and the unions are willing to work constructively with UOW to find solutions. It’s UOW’s staff who earned our university its place in the top universities in the world. Where would we be without their contribution?

“We’re calling on the Vice Chancellor to stop the farce. Stop the chest-beating. Stop the fear-mongering. Sit down with staff and their unions and talk.

“Let’s behave like adults.” ■

“
THE CPSU NSW
AND WSU TOOK A
DIFFERENT, MORE
CONSTRUCTIVE
APPROACH
”

UNIONS STOUSH OVER UNIVERSITY RESPONSE

The CPSU NSW believes its members have been let down by what it considers a timid response to the university funding crisis by the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU).

In the face of a dramatic slump in university funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NTEU and universities' management announced a possible cut to wages of as much as 25 per cent. This was made without consultation with the CPSU NSW or any other union representing university staff.

The CPSU NSW represents non-academic staff in NSW universities. The NTEU draw its membership from both academic and non-academic staff. CPSU NSW Branch Assistant Secretary Troy Wright said the risks of the NTEU's foot-in-both-camps approach have been exposed by the proposal, which will disproportionately affect lower-paid, non-academic staff.

In a podcast to CPSU NSW members, Mr Wright said the NTEU was the "one union in the sector ... that has made a deal with an unincorporated cluster of bosses".

WE ARE OPPOSED TO THIS FRAMEWORK BEING IMPLEMENTED IN UNIVERSITIES THAT WE COVER

"Our view is by negotiating at a local level, you can find other savings that aren't as punitive on staff and aren't as onerous on staff and our members, such as executive salaries, staff travel, capital works, borrowing, looking at the casual workforce, in particular your contractors and your consultants, and even mandatory leave," said Mr Wright. "That is what we have had success with already.

"Yet the NTEU thought it appropriate



to try and impose a process that had a salary cut as its first step."

Mr Wright said a "regressive" flat rate pay cut will obviously hit low wage earners harder.

"It hurts our members, who are Professional Staff and generally paid less than academics," he said.

In the same podcast, CPSU NSW Branch Assistant Secretary Shelley Odewahn said the NTEU's centralised decision was unfair on regional campuses.

"We make our decisions at a local branch level," said Ms Odewahn. "What works for one institution will not work for another. Our regional universities, which I represent, are not in the same position as our city-based universities.

"Having one national framework that they expect to be implemented across the country is just completely unrealistic."

She added the NTEU "put on the table such drastic measures" without first seeing any financial information from universities.

"We are opposed to this framework being implemented in universities that we cover," said Mr Wright. "If it is, we will be opposing any variation to an enterprise agreement that comes out of it.

"We would expect that the things we've tossed up should be considered first and exhausted before anything happens such as salary cuts, stand downs or redundancies." ■



**THIS IS A GOOD
RESULT FOR THE PSA
AND FOR MEMBERS
IN KOSCIUSKO
NATIONAL PARK**



PSA GETS COVERAGE ON AUSTRALIA'S ROOFTOP

Field officers in the Kosciusko National Park will be protected by the PSA after a decision by the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC).

The decision comes about due to a dispute between the PSA and the Australian Workers Union (AWU) over which union represents National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Field Officers in the park, situated in southern NSW. In his ruling, Chief Commissioner Kite found “all employees of NPWS, whatever their classification, are clearly within the coverage of the PSA”.

“This is a good result for the PSA, and for members in Kosciusko National Park, who will continue to receive excellent industrial representation,” said PSA Industrial Officer Michael Sinclair, who gave evidence on behalf of the union at the Industrial Relations Commission. ■

Casuals kept on in National Parks

After a summer protecting the state during horrendous bushfires, casuals employed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) were looking at unemployment from March as parks closed.

Then the PSA stepped in. The union held talks with Public Sector Industrial Relations in order to secure employment for casuals right across the public sector. Department of Planning Industry and Environment Secretary Jim Betts later confirmed that long-term casuals will continue to be employed until at least 25 September. Long-term casuals are classed as those with greater than six months' regular employment.

“The PSA will continue fighting for employment with meaningful work beyond this point,” said Industrial Manager Nathan Bradshaw. “To ensure casuals are protected from any job losses we encourage those that are not members to join the PSA.” ■



**CONNECT
WITH
YOUR
UNION**

Got an issue at work? Contact the Member Support Centre

Whatever questions you have the PSA/CPSU NSW is there for you. Whether it is a problem in your workplace, or a question about your membership, we have staff on hand to answer your questions.

Here is how to connect with your union.

- * For workplace issues, email membersupport@psa.asn.au
- * For queries relating to payment of your fees, email membership@psa.asn.au
- * Telephone 1300 772 679

To see a full range of member benefits, see our websites.



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Authorised by Stewart Little, General Secretary, Public Service Association of NSW and State Branch Secretary, Community and Public Sector Union (SPSF Group) NSW Branch, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney

TAXING TIMES

Your union fees are a tax-deductible, work-related expense. By mid-July the PSA/CPSU NSW will send you a tax statement with all your payments up to June 30, 2020.

If you paid your union fees by:

- **Direct debit or monthly credit card** We will email a statement to you;
 - **Payroll deduction** Your union fees will appear on your group certificate supplied by your employer;
 - **Invoice** You will have received a receipt at time of payment.
- Direct debit and credit card payers can also log into the Members' Area of the PSA or CPSU NSW websites and download their tax statement after July 1, 2020.

Now is a good time to view and update all your details in our Members' Area.



HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR PROVIDENT FUND COVERAGE?

The PSA/CPSU NSW Provident Fund pays out \$4000 to a nominated beneficiary in the case of your untimely death.

Members are encouraged to log onto the PSA or CPSU NSW site to update their beneficiaries, particularly if they have had a change of family circumstance.

"This is part of your membership," said Manager Member Services Kym Ward. "Please ensure your records are up to date; it only takes five minutes to update your beneficiary."

Extend the coverage: how to insure your family

The membership fees paid by PSA/CPSU NSW members include Personal Injury Insurance.

For just \$11 a year, this coverage can be extended to cover your immediate family.

The coverage includes domestic home help to assist in the care of anyone injured.

It also provides professional tutorial services by a suitably qualified teacher during the continuous ongoing restriction from attendance of school by anyone injured.

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN



As part of the PSA/CPSU NSW Bushfire Relief Fund, we are giving away 10 \$1000 BIG4 Holiday Parks accommodation vouchers that can be used at any BIG4 location including at 18 venues on the South Coast of NSW to help bring back business to areas affected by the 2019/2020 bushfires.

No need to fill out an entry form! If you are a financial member of the PSA or CPSU NSW, you are automatically in the draw.

Entry to the PSA's Bushfire Relief Fund Holiday Giveaway is automatic for PSA and CPSU NSW financial members only. One winner will be drawn every Thursday between 23/07/2020 and 24/09/2020. Authorised under NSW permit number: LTPS/20/43890.

For further terms and conditions, please visit www.psa.asn.au/bushfire-relief-fund-holiday-giveaway-terms-and-conditions/.



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PSA RELIEF FUND HELPS MEMBERS RECOVER FROM BUSHFIRES

Putting your life back together after bushfires have gutted your property is a long and difficult task. Damage needs to be surveyed and documented, reports made and claims filed. And when the job appears insurmountable, it is important to know someone is ready to support you in your time of need.

That's why the PSA/CPSU NSW launched its NSW Bushfire Relief Fund to give \$1,000 to eligible members whose properties were totally or partially destroyed in last summer's fires. The Fund helps members begin to put their lives back together and shows that their fellow members care and support them.

Susan Odgers, Technology Officer at Moorland Public School, almost lost everything in the fires. While her house remained standing, it was badly damaged by a burning tree that fell through her roof. Her sheds, water tanks and other vital equipment were destroyed.

As secretary of the Tinonee Rural Fire Brigade, Ms Odgers was helping organise an evacuation of more than 100 members

of her community while her home burned.

Since that night, the recovery has been slower than she hoped. Months later, she was still unsure when her life would finally get back to normal.

"You can get very down and you need the support of people around you. I was lucky to have an understanding Principal at my school who gave me the time I needed," said Ms Odgers.

"Receiving the money from the PSA was wonderful at such a difficult time. It enabled us to get things we didn't even realise we had lost. It is really encouraging to know your union is there to help you. And it was a boost not just in terms of money. It gave me the motivation to fight on."

An image that defined a crisis

It is one of the defining images of the bushfires – a majestic horse running towards the camera as the flames engulf the land behind it. It was used by multiple media in Australia and internationally to show the terror of the Australian fire season.

For Jane Mills, Team Leader at the Berry Street Group Home in Nowra, the photo meant something different. It was her horse, Elmo. And her property burning in the background. The media's constant use of the image just reminded her of the devastation the fires had on her property in the Shoalhaven.

It was New Year's Eve when the fires finally came to Ms Mills's property, the

home of six horses. For weeks she had been evacuating her horses when the fires threatened and returning them when the threat abated.

"We expected the fire to come from the same direction it had once before. Then we saw it coming over the hill in a direction we didn't expect, flanking the side of a hill and moving down towards us," said Ms Mills, recalling the night she and her daughter were forced to flee their home. She acted to save her family and her horses, barely managing to stuff three bales of feed into a car before they left.

Firetrucks smashed through her farm gates in a desperate rush to meet the flames. The crews battled and saved her home. Everything else on her property was lost, her truck burnt out, her boat melted, her horse tack destroyed.

While nothing can replace the equipment and the memories accumulated over a lifetime of owning horses, Ms Mills is grateful for the support the PSA provided through the money from the relief fund.

"We plan to use the PSA money to install a new automatic gate to replace the one knocked down by the fire trucks. The new gate will help my co-owner who struggles with many other gates due to his disability. And a few new rugs for the horses for winter are also on the list." ■

PSA

CHAMPIONS

OF THE STATE

“
EVERY ONE OF THESE
ROLES IS ESSENTIAL,
EVERY WORKER A
CHAMPION
”

OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS ARE ESSENTIAL WORKERS

When Craig Wheeler goes to work in the morning, he knows he is performing an essential role, keeping safe one of the most valuable things in Australia: democracy.

A Champion of the State for 40 years, Craig is Manager of Human Resource Operations at the Department of Parliamentary Services, “working to directly support the Members of the NSW Parliament, creating the best environment for them to operate and generate legislation, benefiting and serving the people of NSW”.

Just one of the hundreds of thousands of such champions, Craig has worked in Parliament House for 20 years, having held a number of public sector roles in the preceding two decades.

“I commenced duty in the Western Lands Commission on 28 April 1980,” he said. His career incorporated a number of agencies: the Personnel Branch of the Lands Department, the Premier’s Department, the then-newly created State Drug Crime Commission, the Land Titles Office, the Police Department and the Department of Juvenile Justice, before moving to Parliament House after narrowly missing out on a position with the Olympic Games Authority.

Craig’s story is one among many within Australia’s biggest employer, the NSW Public Service. This leviathan ranges from desk-bound clerical staff to people working under the skies in national parks and on the right side of prison bars. Daily, the Champions of the State educate, incarcerate, license, maintain, heal, prevent, fight, appease, adjudicate, legislate, convict, defend, plant, chop down, hunt, protect and a raft of other tasks on behalf of the people of the state.

Every one of these roles is essential, every worker a champion for the people they serve.

“The Public Service has been a cornerstone throughout the history of NSW,” said Craig. “It

provides so many vital frontline services, an example of which is the great job our health workers are doing during the current COVID pandemic.”

In recent months, the public has developed a new-found admiration for the public sector, as state-employed workers were at the frontline in battles with bushfires, then COVID-19. Away from the headlines, though, NSW’s essential workers have always been fighting on behalf of the state.

Bushfires and pandemics win headlines. Yet unsung Child Protection Workers are helping at-risk children, Housing staff are working to alleviate homelessness and Legal Aid staff are defending the penniless. There are School Learning Support Officers helping kids to keep up, Park Rangers looking out for species on the edge of extinction and TAFE staff forging career paths for students once thought unemployable.

Champions of the State are there for the everyday, too. Issuing licences, registering “hatches, matches and dispatches”, supporting students, maintaining schools, locking prison cells, judging disputes and growing forests.



WE HAVE A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PSA, OUR UNION, OUR STATE

Stewart, PSA

With a career in the public service behind him, PSA General Secretary Stewart Little knows how important the Champions of the State are to the people of NSW.

Stewart worked in the library at State Parliament during the minority government years of John Fahey. His work and that of his colleagues kept crossbenchers informed during this time of political turmoil.

“It is a great feeling knowing you are keeping the parliamentary system honest,” he said.

In the last days of government-run disability services, Stewart also worked in a group home.

“I have worked alongside amazing public sector workers, who make NSW a great place to live and work,” he said. “Now, as the General Secretary of the union representing public servants throughout NSW, I feel privileged to be the one pushing forward their interests.

“Recent disasters have made people sit up and notice how vital a well-resourced public sector is. All our members are Champions of the State.”



WE KEEP YOU INFORMED

Damian, Powerhouse Museum

“We keep the cultural heritage of NSW for posterity,” said Damian McDonald, who has worked at the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo since 2000. “We keep artifacts, archives and objects of state, national and international significance for the people of NSW. We keep them, we interpret them, we preserve them, we conserve them, and we provide access to all those collections.”

The Powerhouse is just one of the many cultural institutions in NSW staffed by PSA members. These essential workers are also found in the halls of the Art Gallery of NSW, the Australian Museum, the Opera House, Sydney Living Museums and the State Library. These Champions of the State keep alive the collective memory of NSW.

Despite being a permanent hub for school groups, tourists and families, the Powerhouse is under threat thanks to the constant thirst developers have for inner city land. The NSW Government wants to move the museum to a site in Parramatta. Not only will this involve a colossal amount of taxpayers’ money, it will also put the collection at risk of flooding and place it in a location fewer tourists visit.



WE KEEP YOU SAFE

Kylie, Corrections NSW

“I like my job, no day is ever the same,” said Kylie McKelvie, who works in a non-custodial role at the Bathurst Correctional Centre. “You are reducing recidivism and helping inmates become individuals who can go out and integrate into and contribute to society.”

Kylie, the President of the PSA, works to provide services and behaviour change programs for inmates in the prison. She works on issues such as preventing self-harm, as well as social and education programs to ease the often-daunting transition from inmate to civilian.

“We deal with welfare needs, education, housing issues, even issuing them Medicare cards,” said Kylie.



SAS STAFF ARE THE COGS IN THE WHEELHOUSE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION



WE RISK OUR LIVES

Jim, Rural Fire Service

It takes adversity for many people to truly appreciate the essential role played by the NSW

public sector. The brutality of the 2019-2020 bushfires that engulfed much of Australia alerted the nation to the vital work done by firefighters. In addition to its much-lauded volunteers, the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) is staffed by Champions of the State like Jim Killen.

Jim, who has been with the RFS since 2011, works as a Community Protection Planning Officer.

Outside the bushfire season, Jim inspects communities and advises them of plans of action when confronted by blazes. During the season, he looks at the damage done to communities by fire and the risk to unburnt structures.

“We are generally the first non-firefighting personnel at the site following the passage of the fire front,” he said. “We do need to have the ability and qualifications to carry out tasks on an active fire ground, so we are experienced and trained fire fighters in our own right.”

The RFS is just one of the PSA’s membership areas affected by the fires. The union also covers members in Fire and Rescue, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the State Emergency Service, NSW Police and Forestry Corp. Members in the Department of Community Services, Service NSW and Housing have also been on the ground and by the phone, helping communities devastated by fire.



WE LOOK AFTER THE FUTURE AND THE PRESENT

Brett, Royal Botanic Gardens

“It hardly seems like a chore to go to work,” says Dr Brett Summerell, who has worked at the Royal Botanic Gardens since January 1989. “I am very lucky in that context as I have the opportunity to do what I love for a career.

“There are always new challenges and new

opportunities in the science and conservation space – and the Gardens themselves are always changing. And I love the opportunity of working with a group of colleagues who are equally passionate about the things I care about.”

At first glance, the three Royal Botanic Gardens sites, in Sydney, Mt Tomah and Mt Annan, offer tranquility to those lucky enough to visit. But, thanks to the work of essential workers like Dr Summerell, the gardens are more than just an ideal spot to spread out a picnic rug. As Australia’s oldest scientific institution, their research and education facilities are helping NSW understand its past, both pre- and post-European arrival, and prepare for an uncertain future.

“NSW would absolutely be worse off if the Gardens did not exist,” said Brett. “They are a really valued public green space for the community to use and enjoy. Education programs for school kids inspire them in science and sustainability and science programs document our plants and provide leadership in the conservation of plants.

“They are extremely important for understanding the impacts of a changing climate on the natural environment, ensuring that plants do not become extinct because of climate change and providing advice about how to plan for sustainable ecosystems and to restore ecosystems that are climate-change ready.”



WE KEEP SCHOOLS RUNNING

Wendy, Schools

“School Administrative and Support staff are the cogs in the wheelhouse of public education,” said Wendy Hurry, who started work at Sawtell Public School in June 1989 and is now a Vice President at the PSA. In this role with the PSA she contributed to the union’s Pay Equity case,

where the State Government acknowledged it was underpaying its essential workers in schools and awarded them a substantial pay increase.

“Public education caters for every child in a community, whatever their ability, wherever they live, and whatever their background,” she said. “Those who can’t afford private education have nothing to be concerned about from an academic perspective. Public schools exceed the performance of private schools with highly professional teaching staff stretching students to their full learning potential. Furthermore, public schools play a significant role in the general improvement of their respective communities.

“I am proud to be a public servant and committed to providing excellent service to the community and our students in public schools.”



WE KEEP THE STATE MOVING

Tim, Transport for NSW

Motorists drive past Tim Smith’s workplace not realising it may have already saved their lives.

A Champion of the State, Mr Smith works in heavy-vehicle compliance on the M1, the major route joining Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane. There he and his colleagues check large trucks for proper weight ratios and roadworthiness, and make sure drivers aren’t fatigued. Without workers like him on the roads, “I wouldn’t be putting a family in a car and driving to Brisbane for a holiday, that’s for sure”.

“We say our job is to prevent something that hasn’t happened yet,” he said. “I like to think I have saved a family’s life by keeping dangerous vehicles off the road. If a truck is involved in an accident it is much more likely you will get a fatality.”

Mr Smith’s essential role gets him up close with drivers, so it is vital they retain good relations with the men and women transporting freight on the

state's roads. To him and his colleagues, this job is about cooperation, not a fight between truckies and testers.

"We are here to keep freight moving," he said. "You always have the element of vehicles that are going to be dangerous, but the vast majority of the drivers are normal guys going about their business."

Mr Smith says one of the strengths of the state monitoring vehicles is that everyone tested at the centres, whether owner-drivers or employees of large trucking firms, is treated the same.

"We take every case on merit," he said. "If it was privatised, you could be influenced by other factors. But the public service treats everyone equally."

"It's a good job with good conditions our union has won for us."

For Brendan and other Champions of the State in the Department, this is mentally tough work. He said staff have different strategies to deal with the confronting information they come across.

"It can be a struggle to maintain a professional distance from the harrowing material you read without being completely disconnected from the case," he said.

"We fill so many roles. We are not just faceless grey bureaucrats, we do things like help children and people across the state."



AND OUR COMMITMENT HAS NEVER WAVERED

John, Fisheries

For the past 10 years, John Staines's "office" has stretched from the headwaters of the Clarence River out into the Pacific.

A Compliance Officer at the Maclean office of Fisheries, Mr Staines is part of a state-wide team entrusted to ensure NSW fishing stocks are not depleted by people taking more than their fair share.

"Fish resources are a common property resource; something people can extract from," he said. "They are not a farm, where an owner profits from a private plot. If there is not someone there to protect and regulate fish stocks and make sure the take is sustainable, the state's fisheries will be gone."

Enforcing legislation is something Mr Staines, who has worked for Fisheries throughout NSW for 21 years, believes is an essential role for the state.

"It's been attempted in places overseas, with police in the US and that sort of thing, but enforcement is difficult to privatise," he said. "You have to remain independent. You have to make decisions without prejudice. You have to be neutral."



WE LOOK AFTER THE MOST VULNERABLE

Brendan, Department of Community Services

The essential work by PSA members like Brendan McMenamin helps protect children from abuse.

"I'm based in the Community Services state-wide service," said Brendan. "Other organisations seek information we have to help them make decisions around a child."

The groups contacting Brendan's area include foster parenting organisations and other departments. He said that without this team of essential workers, "other people outside my department working with children would be forced to make decisions on how to keep children safe without all the information they need".

"Ultimately children would be placed at risk and be abused," he said. "People who should not be able to work with children would be able to work with them."



WE ARE NOT JUST
FACELESS GREY
BUREAUCRATS, WE
HELP CHILDREN
ACROSS THE STATE



As with so many Champions of the State, Mr Staines gets up and goes to more than just a job.

“I like being able to make a difference to fish resources and serving the public,” he said. “I get a kick out of helping people and teaching about the fishing law. I get enjoyment protecting the fish resources. That is what motivates me.”



WE'RE OVER 120 YEARS OLD BUT WE'RE NOT JUST THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Nicole, Corrections NSW

“I am not just an essential worker, I am a frontline worker and should be recognised as such,” said Senior Correctional Officer Nicole Jess, who is also Chair of the PSA’s Prison Officers Vocational Branch.

“Corrective Service Officers are Champions of the State, but we do not get recognised as much as Police, Ambulance and the Fire Brigade. We do all their jobs within the confines of gaol walls and fences.

“We are first responders and we deal with what society does not want to know about or deal with. Most of society just want to hear about how people are arrested and taken off the street. They do not care what happens after that.

“But each day we go to work with some of the worst of the worst. We put our lives on the line and we do it with less recognition than that of other frontline essential workers and with fewer conditions in our workers’ compensation. We are the forgotten brothers and sisters.

“The risks we face have never before been more evident than in the COVID-19 crisis and the amount of riots, assaults we endure.”



WE ARE YOUR CHAMPIONS

Nicole, State Emergency Service

Working in the State Emergency Service (SES) Operations Centre in Wollongong, Nicole Harding is ready for Mother Nature’s worst.

“We monitor the weather and activate units to sites like road crash rescues and cliff rescues,” said Nicole, who has been a Communications Officer with the SES for 14 years. “We are the combat centre for floods, storms and tsunamis.”

The SES relies on nearly 10,000 volunteers throughout NSW and the Champions of the State like Nicole who are there to support them.



WE STAND BY ONE ANOTHER.

Suzanne, Youth Justice

For 12 years, Suzanne Evans has been changing young people’s lives.

“Working in Youth Justice, there is more hope than despair,” said Suzanne, who works at the Riverina Youth Justice Centre, a 30-bed venue for young offenders. “I don’t think you could

work here if you did not have hope. You look for the positives.

“I just love working with young people and having the opportunity to help them reach their full potential. Sometimes these potentials can seem quite small to some people but they are still achievements.”

Suzanne says the thanks for her work often comes years later, when young people are no longer under her care but are living their lives outside the Youth Justice System.

“You often get thanked when you run into kids on the outside,” she said. “They’ll say thanks and ask about other staff members. You know you’ve had an impact on their lives. It is the best when you hear about kids who have gone on to full-time jobs and had families. That is fulfilling.”

Youth Justice is just one essential cog in the public-run machinery that keeps NSW operating.

“The state is lost without public servants,” said this Champion of the State. “We keep the state running and we keep it safe.”



GOVERNMENTS COME AND GO, BUT CHAMPIONS STAY FOREVER

Troy, PSA

“State employees offer objective, professional service to the people of NSW,” said PSA Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright, who began his career in the public service in 1997 with the then Probation and Parole Department, which is now Community Corrections.

For Troy, the public service is the only body that can properly operate a service such as parole and probation.

“It has to be a neutral organisation,” he said. “We have no agenda, compared to the faith-based organisations that are clamouring to take our place.”



WE ARE CHAMPIONS OF THE STATE

Janice, Service NSW

Even when a pandemic sends much of an economy into a tailspin, there is essential face-to-face work to be done. Driver’s licences don’t renew themselves, cars and boats need to be registered, youngsters need to be protected with working-with-children checks and so on.

Janice Hartmann started working for the then-Roads and Traffic Authority in 2000. Twenty years on, this Champion of the State is an integral part of its successor, Service NSW.

Service NSW is the frontline of government in NSW. It is the office, the call centre or the web page that delivers so many of the services provided to people by the State Government. When initiatives, such as sporting and cultural education assistant grants for school students are rolled out, usually it is Service NSW that delivers the goods.

“Without us here at Service NSW, the state would grind to a halt,” said Janice. “Service NSW does everything. If we closed even for one day, it would be pandemonium.”

During the bushfire recovery, Service NSW staff were on hand to help communities recover and obtain the different types of government assistance available.

Janice says thanks to the PSA’s work, “management is more flexible than it used to be”.

“I like the ability to work from home if

required,” she said. “I like the flexibility. And if I want to learn a new skill, I can, due to the diverse range of work we do.”



WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS OF THE STATE
Angela, Housing

“This is more than a job,” said Angela Denham, who has worked with the Housing for 27 years. “I am a Client Service Officer working in Letting, where we select people off the waiting list for vacant properties.”

In the notoriously expensive Sydney housing market, Ms Denham says her work is essential for the state. Without her and her fellow Champions of the State, countless people would be facing life without a roof over their heads.

“We are getting homeless people off the streets and out of things like couch surfing,” she said. “We are getting them into affordable housing.”

She said people become homeless for a variety of reasons, not just a lack of finance.

“We are helping people with mental health and domestic violence issues,” Angela said.

She says the public sector always needs to have a role in housing the vulnerable, adding that many community housing organisations in the same field have their own agendas, often limiting their intake according to criteria such as age or gender.

“They don’t look after all the people who fall through the cracks,” she said. “For many there is nowhere else for them to go but us. We have no agenda.”

In common with many essential public servants, Ms Denham thinks of her career as more than a means to a fortnightly pay packet.

“This is more than a job to me,” she said.

“Housing is so essential. A roof over your head is so important. Everything else can follow that.

“I have always loved going out and checking people are OK. I can get them into better accommodation and away from things like domestic violence.

“I am happy I get paid to get up in the morning do this type of work.”



WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS OF THE STATE
Brook, TAFE

“If it wasn’t for us, TAFE students would suffer, and ultimately the community suffers,” said Brook Down, who works as an Operations Manager for the government vocational education provider. “If students don’t get the quality time they need at TAFE, they don’t become the quality tradespeople the community needs.”

Mr Down, who has been at the Coffs Harbour TAFE campus for 19 years, reckons the good part of his job is “working side-by-side” with the commercial cookery, baking and hospitality students at the campus.

“They start their course clueless and they finish tradesmen and women – all qualified,” he said. “Long after they graduate, they still come up to me when they see me out and talk about their course.”

Without TAFE, he said many young people would have no hope of rewarding careers, particularly in areas such as the Mid North Coast, which have traditionally had high youth unemployment.

“Not everyone is a uni student – not everyone is even a high school student,” he said. “But there is a place for everyone at TAFE.” ■



**WITHOUT US HERE AT
SERVICE NSW, THE
STATE WOULD GRIND
TO A HALT**



Matters of life and death



How the Champions of the State at the Ministry of Health took on a pandemic.

On Saturday, January 25, as the nation eased into its Australia Day weekend, a team of NSW health workers confirmed the first COVID-19 cases in NSW.

The three patients had arrived from China earlier in the month and were being treated in hospital. The search began for other potentially infected travellers.

Within a week, restrictions were placed on travellers from China. Within six weeks, the travel ban extended to all foreign nationals. By the end of March, restaurants, pubs, clubs, cinemas and places of worship were closed. Australia was in lockdown.

Champions of the state move to the bunker

From day one, the staff of the NSW Ministry of Health were there for the people of the state. They led the NSW response to the COVID-19 crisis. These Champions of the State were found analysing data, developing responses, adjusting and readjusting advice as circumstances required it. The large team of committed public sector health professionals worked around the clock to prevent COVID-19 from spreading throughout the community and overwhelming the public health system.

The Ministry's work was led by two teams with complementary but distinct tasks. The first was the State Health Emergency Operations Centre (SHEOC), responsible for managing public health resources; from

the loads in emergency rooms through to the capacity of hospitals to deliver critical care to COVID-19 patients.

Alongside the SHEOC was the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC), which had the vital role of identifying cases, tracing people who had come in contact with COVID-19, and managing outbreaks in the community. If COVID-19 was going to be contained, both teams needed to be successful.

In the early stages of the fight, SHEOC and PHEOC were relocated to the NSW Rural Fire Service's State Operations Centre facilities at Homebush in Sydney, to better co-ordinate their responses. The health teams were joined by experts from other government agencies, NSW Police and external experts. This command centre became known as "The Bunker". And it is an example of public service at its most efficient, where dedicated people work together with a simple goal – stop the virus and save lives.

This was a perfect example of Champions of the State performing vital work to keep NSW healthy.

Incredible commitment

Working on the same floor as The Bunker allowed Julie Westacott from the Centre for Aboriginal Health to witness its operations up close.

"The working conditions in The Bunker were anything but normal. These Ministry staff were rostered on to shifts so the work

of The Bunker could be ongoing, 24 hours a day," she said.

"With the health of the entire community at stake, people were working to well after midnight. The commitment was incredible. And weekends offered no respite. These were people working under incredible levels of stress. The pressure must have had an impact, not only on them but also their families."

Data drives decisions

The infectious diseases team were the key players in The Bunker. They had prepared

IF YOU WANT A STRONG AND HEALTHY PUBLIC, YOU NEED A STRONG AND HEALTHY PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

for a pandemic like this, honing their skills on previous threats such as influenza, measles and the SARS coronavirus. Data became The Bunker's essential tool, as containing the pandemic depended on knowing how sick people become and how quickly it was spreading.

Each morning, test results and infection data came in from across the state. This information was used to drive

strategies and to provide advice to other agencies.

When COVID-19 threatened prisons, it was Ministry staff who provided advice. After social distancing forced most students to move to at-home learning, NSW Health advised on when it was safe for teaching to return to the classroom.

Protecting vulnerable communities

Data on the number and location of new infections guided the state-wide response, but Ministry staff knew they needed to adapt strategies to meet the needs of different parts of the community. Some sectors were more vulnerable than others, such as indigenous communities living in remote locations who had limited or no access to critical care facilities if they fell ill with the virus.

Julie Westacott said helping remote indigenous communities through the COVID-19 crisis was vital work.

“Remote communities offer a unique challenge,” she said. “An important aspect of Aboriginal culture is the community gathering, which posed a higher risk of COVID-19 infection.

“Our team focused on communicating with remote communities, explaining the risks of infection and the importance of social distancing, as well as supplying packages of personal protective equipment. We had amazing co-operation from the communities, which ensured the rate of infection stayed low.”

Teams pulling together

As individuals were taken out of their regular jobs and moved into The Bunker, their colleagues needed to take on additional responsibilities and duties.

Olivia Simes of the Ministry of Health’s Policy and Funding Reform team said the increased workload was coupled with a move to have anyone who could work from home do so.

“The move to working from home happened quickly and there were some challenges,” said Ms Simes. “There was the usual work that needed to be done, but you also had to deal with priorities resulting from the health crisis. As people were moved to COVID-19 roles there was more work across the entire state.”

Technology became essential –

teleconferences and chat groups became digital conversations, replacing face-to-face discussions. As Olivia explained, her team and others in the Ministry knew the responsibility they had to the public required them to adapt to a new way of working.

“A remote work environment requires you to be very intentional in your approach, particularly when you have to pull together a group of colleagues on a project. You need to co-ordinate when people are available.

“The initial phase of the crisis was understandably pressured as everyone faced massive changes. But we adapted quickly and found new ways to work effectively as a team,” Ms Simes said.

Fix the problem

Throughout the crisis, teams and individuals had risen to meet any



**EACH WEEK THE TEAM GOT
BIGGER AND BETTER AT
DOING THEIR NEW JOBS**

challenge thrown at them. People were performing a range of tasks, regardless of whether these were part of their job description or not.

John Ward from the Population Health Services usually deals with such complex societal issues as obesity and drug abuse. But he was thrust into a new role at the start of the crisis in January when the Ministry’s phone system was overwhelmed. He was told to “fix it”.

“Within two hours we had pulled together a team of six and we had a call centre set up,” he said. “People were looking for information and the first place they searched was ‘NSW Health’ which gave them the Ministry’s number. We just had to start taking calls and finding out how we can help people.”

The call centre became a key element of the Ministry’s response, dealing with hundreds of calls a day on issues ranging from wearing face masks through to offering to volunteer. And each week the team got bigger and better at doing their

new jobs. Ad hoc responses became full information scripts. The centre developed an efficient structure with team leaders and training.

“Many people view Ministry staff as policy people – bureaucrats pushing paper – but it is very operational,” said Mr Ward. “Everyone in the Ministry was asking ‘how can I help?’ No-one was saying. ‘This isn’t my job.’”

Public health before private profit

“The COVID-19 crisis should end any debate on the importance of a strong, well-resourced public health system in NSW,” said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little.

Many other countries learned this lesson the hard way. After years of budget cuts and privatisations, Italy’s National Healthcare Service teetered on collapse before the recruitment of 20,000 additional public healthcare workers. Spain needed to nationalise its private hospitals as the nation went into lockdown. Without a national healthcare system and with its decentralised approach to healthcare, US health institutions found themselves in a bidding war for health supplies and ventilators, with hospitals, cities and states competing with each other.

“The doctors, nurses and hospital workers have received many plaudits throughout the crisis – and rightly so,” said Mr Little. “They have been remarkable. But the quiet heroes of the NSW Health Ministry, whose decisions have helped support and direct those on the frontlines, also deserve recognition.

“The COVID-19 crisis forced many inside and out of government to reevaluate the importance of the public health system. Without the professionalism and dedication of the Ministry’s employees, the number of cases in NSW would be higher, and the lasting impact on individuals and businesses much greater. The performance of the Ministry shows that if you want a strong and healthy public, you need a strong and healthy public health system.

“These members proudly stand among the ranks of NSW’s Champions of the State.” ■



VIRUS HIGHLIGHTS A FUNDING SHORTFALL

It has taken a pandemic to expose a fatal flaw in the country's tertiary education sector.

The sudden drop in student numbers, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has exposed a weak system that is overly reliant on overseas students, allowing public funding of universities to flounder.

Enrolments plummeted as COVID-19 left students in their home countries and campuses closed. As a result, Australian universities are looking at an estimated income shortfall of nearly \$5 billion.

Looking for cost savings, university administrations have employees in their sights. The University of NSW began talking about pay cuts and reductions to work hours, with other institutions soon to follow. The National Tertiary Education Union, without consulting the CPSU NSW, agreed with this approach.

More ominously for staff, universities do not qualify for JobKeeper wage subsidy payments.

How did we get here?

Last year Australia was, per capita, the world leader in educating foreign students; more than twice as reliant as Britain, the second-placed country. In 2019, more than a quarter of enrolments were international students. Ten

per cent of all Australian university students were from mainland China. This meant governments could get away with neglecting funding for education, treating it more like an exportable commodity than an education service.

Not only were there complaints about slips in academic standards to bring in more students – and more money – but this also left the sector vulnerable to any sudden drop in numbers. Enter the COVID-19 pandemic.

Incoming visitors from China, where COVID-19 first broke out, were the first prevented from entering the country. Soon after, restrictions were placed on all non-residents entering Australia, cutting off other big sources such as Brazil, Malaysia and South Korea. Soon enough, teaching moved online to avoid lecture theatres becoming petri dishes, providing further disincentives to study.

More pain may be to come, with Chinese officials making noises about discouraging the country's citizens from studying in Australia after a diplomatic spat between Canberra and Beijing.

The Australian university sector has been affected by heavy reliance on one market for students in the past. A decade ago, following a series of violent assaults on Indian students, the number of enrolments from that country dropped to less than half its previous level.



GOVERNMENTS USED TO CONSIDER EDUCATION SPENDING TO BE AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE. WE NEED TO GET BACK TO THAT WAY OF THINKING



Worth every cent

CPSU NSW Industrial Manager Thane Pearce says it is vital the Federal Government takes a multilateral approach, dig into its pockets and bridge the income gap left by the widespread departure of overseas students.

“We need to take a look at how each university has been affected by cuts to overseas student numbers,” he said. “Different universities have been affected at different levels.”

Mr Pearce said immediate action is required to keep members in work, and well-resourced universities bringing students back.

“Higher education is now Australia’s third-largest export earner and we need to ensure the sector remains well positioned to succeed in a post-pandemic globalised market,” he said.

“Professional Staff are worth every cent.”

Until the universities have fixed their funding, the CPSU NSW is warning against cuts to pay and conditions. Branch Assistant Secretary, Troy Wright, has written to vice chancellors advising them the union will oppose cuts to staff pay rates.

“We’re obviously going to work constructively with our public universities, as they reposition themselves in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Mr Wright. “I think, frankly, we’re all appalled by the inadequacy of the Federal Government’s response, given the importance of the tertiary education sector to the economy.

“We’ve said that before universities go down the route of changing enterprise agreements and mass redundancies, they must look for savings in non-essential expenditure like capital projects, travel costs, executive bonuses and contingent labour.

“We have said we’re unlikely to support any proposal that allows universities to force employees into part-time employment. We’ll actively oppose any attempt to reduce existing professional staff rates of pay.”

Mr Wright said more money needs to be invested in tertiary education.

“Education is not just an export like coal, it is an investment in the country’s future.”

Investing in staff, including Professional Staff, pays off. Universities Australia has worked out that for every \$1 invested in higher education research, \$5 is returned to GDP.

The highly regarded Australian university sector is a vital cog in the research machine looking into developing a vaccine for COVID-19.

Fortunately, signs are emerging of more domestic enrolments in institutions to make up the shortfall.

At Southern Cross University, for example, people are enrolling to upskill for a tougher job market.

However, the Universities Admissions Centre has warned of a shortfall of places.

It is not just the union movement that is demanding more be done to reduce the risk of overseas fluctuations in student numbers. The right-of-centre libertarian think tank the Centre for Independent Studies last year condemned Australia’s tertiary education sector’s over-reliance on overseas fee-paying students, particularly those from China. Its report, *The China Student Boom and the Risks it Poses to Australian Universities*, described depending on students from one country to be a “multimillion-dollar gamble” and that “many leading Australian universities ... must begin to wean themselves off their addiction to international students”.

“Australian universities are world class,” said the CPSU NSW’s Mr Wright. “The Grattan Institute think tank found ‘Australia’s research performance is strong. Australian academics are over-represented as authors of the world’s most cited research



publications [and] Australian universities do well in international rankings of research universities’.

“These universities need unshackling from fluctuating incomes that make it hard to plan and put our members under pressure.”

Universities in regional centres play a vital role in creating local jobs, supporting local businesses and boosting local cultural life.

“You say goodbye to the university, you say goodbye to local shops, restaurants and pubs,” said Mr Wright. “Governments used to consider education spending to be an investment in the future and not an impediment to the holy grail of a budget surplus. We need to return to that way of thinking.

“Local businesses would agree that CPSU NSW Professional Staff are worth every cent.” ■



Images courtesy of
National Library of Australia

No time for wage cuts

We've been here before. And we know the route not to take. But does the Government?

**NOT ONLY WILL
WAGE GROWTH BE
HAMPERED, BUT OUR
SAVINGS WILL TAKE
A CUT**

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world economy is in trouble once again. Governments will have reduced tax revenues, unemployment queues will be long and welfare bills high. Numerous businesses, large and small, will have closed, while continuing travel and fraternisation restrictions will severely curtail the rebound of industries such as hospitality, tourism, education and professional sport.

For many in power, the response to these circumstances will be to cut spending and wait for better times ahead. And for PSA and CPSU NSW members, this would mean no pay rises, cuts to services and job losses. At the time of press, State Treasurer Dominic Perrottet has refused to agree to this year's 2.5 per cent pay rise for NSW public servants.

But research from the Centre for Future Work, a think tank based in Sydney, has found this

extremist supply-side approach is the last thing NSW needs as it restarts its economy from the shutdown.

Describing moves to cut public wages as "a knee-jerk temptation", the Centre for Future Work's report *The Same Mistake Twice: The Self-Defeating Consequences of Public Sector Pay Freezes* outlines how slashing state salaries hurts not only public servants but also the wider economy.

"There is a consensus among analysts from many different perspectives that Australia's economic performance in recent years has been held back by unprecedented weakness in wage growth," reads the report.

As the report points out, the less people earn, the less they spend: "The many consequences of that wages slowdown include stressed household finances, weak consumer spending (with negative implications for GDP growth and job-creation), wider inequality, and a chronic failure of monetary policy to hit inflation targets."

A big risk is deflation, where prices actually go backwards. This is a disaster for an economy as consumers hold off making purchases in the hope that the prices of goods and services drop further, in turn plummeting the country deeper into recession.

Not only will wage growth be hampered, but also our savings will take a cut. Australia's unique superannuation system relies on incremental contributions to people's accounts. A cut in the next few years will be felt later on, when people retire with less to spend and will have a greater need to access public-funded pensions.

Australian policymakers looking at excessive belt-tightening cannot say they were not warned.

In 2007 and 2008, the world entered the Global Financial Crisis, triggered by a depreciation in the subprime mortgage market in the United States. All over the world, with a few notable exceptions, unemployment rose, economic outlooks slumped and recessions bit. Australia was spared the worst of the effects with its export-led economy and what turned out to be great advice from Australia's then Treasury Secretary Ken Henry: "go hard, go early, go households", triggering increases in spending that staved off a recession that hit everywhere else.

However, while Canberra spent, governments at various levels still used the downturn as an excuse to impose cuts to public sector wages, a move that still has negative repercussions on the entire Australian economy.

Cuts to public sector wages led to a drop in the amount the private sector needed to pay its workers, resulting in sluggish wages growth that had Australia heading to a recession well before the double whammy of bushfire and COVID-19.

In Britain, the Conservative Party introduced its infamous "austerity" program, limiting public wage growth to the extent that nurses and other essential workers in some regions were forced to supplement household budgets with visits to food banks and other charity sources. The result was not just a poorly performing economy for more than a decade, but also a sense of social exclusion that was exploited by parties such as the UK Independence Party and the Conservatives' hard right rump, resulting in the disastrous exit from the European Union. That decision by a desperate populace will result in years of economic pain for Britain.

The Global Financial Crisis was not the first time austerity in the face of a downturn backfired. Further back, governments worldwide responded to the 1929 stock market crash with widespread



cuts to public spending. The NSW Government imposed cuts of up to one third to public sector wages. The result was a decade-long depression as consumer spending plummeted. Without the Second World War, the downturn could have lasted even longer.

The results of cutting public sector wage growth will be felt for decades. Now is not the time for governments to tighten the purse strings. Not only will continued pay growth help our members, it will also boost the economy they work in. ■





GREAT EXPECTATIONS: COVID-19 AND PREGNANCY

The PSA/CPSU NSW has had a raft of enquiries from members regarding the pandemic and pregnancy.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) has warned “pregnant women should be considered a vulnerable group” during COVID-19 due to the changes in their body that occur at this time. RANZCOG refers to reduced lung capacity and immunity, as well as other changes, and the need for regular monitoring in consultation with their doctor.

There are a number of conditions, such as diabetes, that can occur during pregnancy which may put women more at risk at work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are provisions for special leave for members suffering from, or caring for someone with, COVID-19. The PSA/CPSU NSW has ensured all employment awards and enterprise agreements provide for access to safe working environments for pregnant workers. These precautions are enshrined into your employment arrangements such as those endorsed by SafeWork, to ensure your ability to access safe work through adjustments whilst pregnant and enable rapid dispute resolution to gain these adjustments.

You should see your doctor for specific medical advice regarding your ability to work safely.

**PREGNANT WOMEN
SHOULD BE CONSIDERED
A VULNERABLE GROUP
DURING COVID-19**

“Every pregnancy and every job is different,” said PSA/CPSU NSW Women’s Industrial Officer Claire Pullen. “Some employers have supported employees during COVID-19 working from home, or in the back office. Some have enabled workers being taken out of environments where they have higher physical demands or restricting visits to outside clients.

“We would advise members to consult with their medical advisors and their manager and contact the PSA to discuss any roadblocks you experience in gaining the adjustments you need.” ■

Domestic violence: get help

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in calls to domestic violence services. At present, just over one woman per week is murdered in Australia by a current or former partner. Conservative governments have consistently underfunded the much-needed services in this area, including those staffed and run by PSA members.

Members are at the frontline of this national scourge and more funding is needed not only for their work, but also for all domestic violence services. A recent announcement from the NSW Attorney-General of new funding does not go far enough and we must see the staffing cap removed and a whole-of-government approach taken. In the meantime, the PSA will assist members who need it and work for changes in our workplaces.

The PSA/CPSU NSW have updated our resources for members available on our website. Members who are worried their internet use is being monitored can use our guide on safe browsing.

Members working in the NSW Public Service are entitled to domestic violence leave. Five days of this leave is in our Awards, and another five days in a Premier’s Memorandum from 2018. Members should be able to access a total of 10 days’ leave per annum. If you have trouble accessing this entitlement, please call the PSA’s Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679.

Members in other workplaces may have entitlements to domestic violence leave.

24-hour DV Helpline 1800 656 463 or www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/helpline

Domestic Violence NSW
www.dvnsw.org.au

Women’s Health Centres whnsw.asn.au
Women’s Legal Centres
www.wlsnsw.org.au

Legal Aid www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Women and Girls’ Emergency Centre
www.wagec.org.au

Commonwealth Rent Assistance
www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/rent-assistance ■



WAGE CUTS HIT WOMEN HARDEST

Male-dominated sectors win government favour – again.

The NSW Government announced plans to freeze public service wages, knowing the impact would fall hardest on women.

Two-thirds of public sector employees are women and a \$3 billion wage freeze would significantly reduce their disposable income, most of which goes to family budgets and is spent in local businesses. But the decision to redirect \$3 billion worth of wages into infrastructure projects in male-dominated industries completely ignored the impact of COVID-19 on women working in both the private and public sectors.

“It seemed that NSW was to have a female-led recession followed by male-led recovery,” Claire Pullen, Women’s Industrial Officer at the PSA said. “Cutting public sector wages and shifting it to construction reduces the spending power of women in a misguided attempt to bolster employment levels in male dominated industries.

“While male and female industries have been impacted differently by COVID-19, we

are all in this crisis together. It should never be a case of one group in a society losing out to benefit another.”

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the industries with the highest proportion of women are healthcare and social assistance (78.2 per cent) and education and training (71.9 per cent). Much of the employment in these sectors is driven by public expenditure, from hospitals and schools through to disability support and childcare. The industries dominated by male employees are construction (87.9 per cent) and mining (84.1 per cent). These percentages have remained stable for the last decade.

“No-one did well out of this global pandemic. But women fared particularly badly in a number of ways,” Ms Pullen explained. “Social distancing closed many female-dominated businesses in retail, hospitality, food and beverage, arts and recreation.

“Younger women did it particularly tough as casual jobs were the first to go. More than half of Australia’s casual workforce are women and 40 per cent of casuals are under the age of 25,” said Ms Pullen. ■

FRONTLINE STORIES

Women members talk about their work during times of crisis.

In December I was seconded to the Disaster Welfare Assistance Line as many customers needed assistance during and after the horrendous bushfire season. We were, and still are, assisting with the clean-up of their properties, accommodation, food, clothing, financial assistance and mental health issues.

Then areas of NSW were hit with flooding so we were asked to assist customers with organising clean-up and financial assistance. Then we were hit with COVID-19.

Amanda, Service NSW

During COVID-19, I’ve created online content for our students. This includes me learning to use online training packages.

This has meant an increase in hours worked to deliver quality training to our students.

Carol, Dept of Primary Industries

I have been travelling on public transport to my office every day during the pandemic to support a core team of committed people working around the clock.

Our team has become like a family and has pulled together to call on our strengths and working relationships.

Julie, Dept of Health

Not only were we worried about our families, we were concerned for the customers we were trying to assist.

But we turned up each day, assisting and helping the best we could. And now what do we get? A thank you, not a much-deserved pay rise. What a joke; absolutely disgusting.

Catherine, Service NSW

CONDITIONS VOID A PERFECT HOST FOR A PANDEMIC

Many of the workplaces worst hit by the COVID-19 outbreak were characterised by low-paid, casual workers without conditions such as sick leave.

Casual workers in the likes of nursing homes, fast-food venues and meatworks are often forced to ‘soldier on’ and turn up even if they are displaying symptoms associated with COVID-19, flu or other communicable illnesses.

“Sick leave is not just to protect you, it is there to protect workmates and customers,” said PSA/CPSU NSW WHS Officer Ian Tuit.

The ACTU has demanded that workers be better

protected as the Australian economy reopens.

The union body has issued three demands:

- Paid pandemic leave for all workers who have reason to believe that they might have contracted COVID-19. This would allow all workers who believe they may have the illness to get tested and if necessary, take additional time to recover.
- A legal obligation on employers to protect their workers and their customers by implementing the highest practical standards and controls for their work, such as physical distancing, to prevent workers from being infected and stop the virus from spreading.
- Compulsory notification to local health authorities and work health and safety regulators in all states and territories of any cases of COVID-19 infection that may have been the result of workplaces.

“This is essential to protect workers’ health and to avoid a second wave of infections,” said ACTU Secretary Sally McManus. “One in three workers has no access to paid sick leave. Health authorities, including the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee have regularly cited the lack of paid sick leave as an unacceptable risk that will see more people

infected with COVID-19. “Creating an obligation for employers to implement the best possible methods of prevention, protection and cleaning, and also to report cases in their workplaces to state health and safety regulators are common-sense reforms which will keep working people safe and help prevent the spread of the virus.” ■

HAZARDS AT HOME

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced workers to adjust to working from home.

The PSA has been working with employers to help members with this transition. And with good effect. The union surveyed members in Revenue NSW regarding their experiences with working from home (WFH) during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

All but one member reported that WFH is being made available and 91 per cent of members were happy to work from home. Eighty-eight per cent of members felt they were receiving enough communication from management.

“Overall it appears the Department is stepping up to the challenge of quickly moving staff to a ‘WFH mode’; though challenges remain with regards to communicating with those staff and enabling technology and optimum WFH conditions,” said PSA Industrial Manager Nathan Bradshaw.

However, some WHS issues arise at home. The ACTU Coronavirus Workers’ Resource Centre has listed a number of hazards for those at home, including:

- Increased workload and work demands
- Fatigue
- Poor communication and management of change
- Low job control, isolated work
- Increased stress
- Increased exposure to violence and harassment
- Role ambiguity
- Increased emotional effort in responding to stressful situations
- Long working hours
- Lack of resources.

The centre produced material on steps employers need to take in this new working system, covering:

- Protecting psychological health and
- Awareness of potential hazards, including family and domestic violence
- Managing psychological health and safety
- How WHS reps can monitor arrangements. ■





ZOOM FATIGUE BITES

A number of PSA members have identified 'Zoom fatigue', where an overreliance on electronic meetings has left them feeling drained or intruded on.

An article in the *Harvard Business Review* found fatigue is a response to a day packed with video meetings.

The article finds that participants in video meetings, denied other stimuli, are forced to concentrate harder.

PSA members have also noted working from home has left them with a feeling that work has intruded into their lives.

One member said; "I don't want my home brought into my work", feeling the line between

work and home life had been blurred when colleagues saw their living arrangements for hours on end as meetings became an everyday part of work.

"With an increase in domestic violence occurring over the lockdown, there is also a risk jealous partners could mistake workplace banter over Zoom with something more intimate," said PSA Organiser Sharon Richards, who has fielded a number of queries from members about the intrusiveness of wall-to-wall meetings.

"Working from home is not going away," said PSA Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright. "The Government needs to consult with unions and formulate rules on how much we allow electronic meetings to dominate our working days.

"Thanks to email and work mobile phones, work is intruding on leisure time. We don't need managers arranging face-to-face video meetings whenever an issue pops up." ■

HITTING PAUSE

The Harvard Business Review suggests five strategies to avoid 'Zoom fatigue'.

- **Avoid multitasking** Close tabs or other applications that might distract you
- **Build in breaks** Look away from the screen, schedule breaks between calls and, during longer meetings, get up and walk around the room.
- **Reduce onscreen stimuli** Hide yourself from view and encourage people to

use plain backgrounds.

- **Make virtual social events opt-in** Do you really need to go to virtual drinks after a day of Zoom meetings?
- **Switch to phone calls or email** Check your calendar for the next few days to see whether there are any conversations you could have over Slack or email instead. Avoid defaulting to video, especially if you don't know each other well. ■

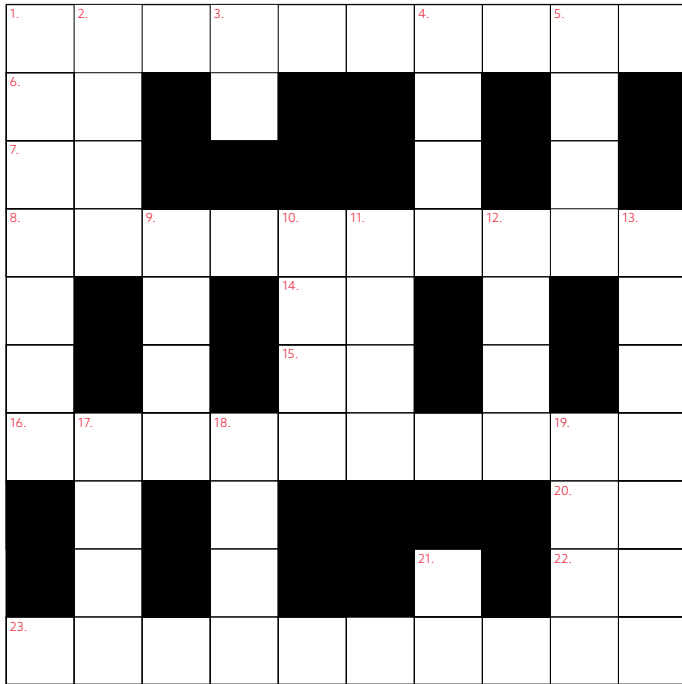
APP CAN KEEP WORKPLACE SAFE

SafeWork NSW has turned its Speak up, Save Lives program into a phone app.

The app, which can be downloaded to smart phones via Apple or Android stores, can be used to report unsafe workplaces to SafeWork.

Since its launch last October, the web application has already been used to report more than 1600 unsafe worksites. ■

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1. Life-saving machines used to fight COVID-19. (10)
- 6. Wide printers' measure. (2)
- 7. Initials of bootmaker Williams. (1,1)
- 8. How a Tasmanian may refer to an out-of-stater. (10)
- 14. Rudyard Kipling poem. (2)
- 15. Abbreviation for a doctor. (2)
- 16. Skin inkers. (10)
- 20. Artificial intelligence. (1,1)
- 22. Symbol for calcium. (2)
- 23. See 13-down.

DOWN

- 3. Initials of a commode commodity recently in short supply. (1,1)
- 4. Very long time. (4)
- 5. Look at amorously. (4)
- 9. Woven Indonesian cloth. (4)
- 10. Outdoor public swimming area. (4)
- 11. Curly hairstyle popular in the 1970s. (4)
- 12. Lions' homes. (4)
- 13. (and 23 across) Event that overthrew the Tsar. (7, 10)
- 17. Dull pain. (4)
- 18. Starchy food popular in South Pacific. (4)
- 19. Hand-held food popular in Mexico. (4)
- 21. Scan used to construct a 3D image of your innards. (1,1)

DOWN

- 1. Bernie Sanders represents this small state in the US Senate. (7)
- 2. Ms Alberici: well-regarded ABC economics journalist. (4)

BOOK REVIEWS:



THE ROAD

John Martinkus
\$24.99
Black Inc Books

The plight of the Indonesian territories in Papua is partially the result of a massive corporation getting access to a compliant government and its armed forces.

The American-run Grasberg mine, the largest gold mine and the second largest copper mine in the world, benefits from the

Last issue's solution

G	I	L	L	A	R	D		D	O	
O		O		I	L	O		E		
U		N	O	D		S	P	A	S	
L		E		E			A	N	A	
B	U	R	N	S		G			N	
U			D			M	O	V	E	D
R	F	S				I		I		W
N	U	D	E			N	E	D		I
	N			L	A	E			E	C
I	D			M	U	R	D	O	C	H

occupation of the Melanesian territory by Indonesia. *The Road* describes the cosy relationship between the company and the Indonesian Government, at the expense of the locals, many of whom have fled the occupation to neighbouring Papua New Guinea.

Author John Martinkus defied close surveillance by Indonesian agents to tell the Papuans' story. ■



MAINTAINING A SAFE WORKPLACE

Just as the essential workers in its membership have continued to work through the pandemic, the PSA/CPSU NSW has been open for business.

This has put PSA House's Building Maintenance staff under the spotlight.

"We've upped the cleaning around the entire building," said Building Services Manager Greg Adnum

(above far left).

"We have also put in specific rules, such as limits on the number of people riding in each lift at the one time. The carpets have also been sanitised."

Mr Adnum is backed up by the building maintenance team: (from second left) Patrick Norton, who runs the motor pool and front desk; qualified carpenter Keith Twigger; and cleaner Luba Nestorovska.

APHEDA campaign gets results in Java

APHEDA/Union Aid Abroad's long-running campaign against the continued use of asbestos in Asian countries has had a win, with the Indonesian city of Bandung banning the use of the deadly building material.

The Javanese city has announced it won't approve planning applications with asbestos products. Bandung is the country's fourth-largest city, so the ban will have

wide-reaching effects on the country's asbestos.

APHEDA/Union Aid Abroad estimates Indonesia imports more than 100,000 tonnes of raw asbestos each year and operates 26 asbestos product factories. The majority of the imported raw asbestos goes to manufacturing roof sheets, with estimates that up to half the roofs in the capital Jakarta are made of asbestos sheeting.

The union-led campaign to end the trade has government support. ■



VALE JEFFREY WALTERS

The PSA is saddened to hear of the loss of long-time active member and former Central Councillor, Jeff Walters.

Mr Walters, who passed away in June aged 52, had been a PSA member since July 1988. He was a respected and experienced unionist, a highly regarded work colleague and a person with a deep commitment to his family.

From the 1990s onward, Mr Walters was active in the PSA's Attorney General's Departmental Committee and the Petty Sessions Officers Association, holding a number of positions including Chairperson, Secretary and delegate.

At the time of his passing, Mr Walters was a Member of the CPSU's State Branch Council. He served on the PSA's chief governing body, the Central Council, between 2004 and 2008 and again between 2012 and 2016.

His colleagues and fellow unionists describe him as keen-eyed, intelligent and diligent with exceptional interpersonal skills. He was known within the Department as someone who would champion the needs of others and campaign for improved conditions for all employees.

During most of his public service career, Mr Walters worked in the Courts in the Newcastle and Hunter Valley region, and, more recently, in Wyong.

"Jeffrey had only recently celebrated his 52nd birthday and in his truly selfless



style, for his birthday he asked that friends pledge a donation to Cystic Fibrosis NSW in lieu of any gifts," said colleague Steve Mannall. "He did this as he has a niece that he would often very fondly speak of whom unfortunately suffers from this debilitating condition.

"He will be remembered fondly by everyone fortunate enough to have known or interacted with him. If the mark of a man is the legacy he leaves, then Jeff certainly left a mark on this world." ■

LETTERS

The PSA received this letter from a member, whose name has been redacted as part of their positive settlement.

Please accept this sincere letter of appreciation regarding an alleged overpayment of monies.

The matter was listed in the Industrial Relations Commission and I was represented by the PSA's Industrial Officer Ms Carmel McKeough, whom I believe has now retired. Thereafter I was represented by Industrial Officer Mr Graydon Welsh.

I'd like to take this opportunity to express my utmost, sincere gratitude to these officers. Both officers displayed common courtesy and empathy towards my case and on-going health issues. They both kept me up to date with proceedings and were in constant contact with me throughout the whole 18 months it took to resolve.

Their professionalism and dedication to my situation was outstanding. Ms McKeough and Mr Welsh are a credit to the PSA and members alike. ■

Public Service Association and Professional Officers' Association Amalgamated Union of NSW

PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NSW

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the Year Ended 31 December 2019

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Revenue	23,444,880	22,282,456
Other income	14,545	3,408
Employee benefits expense	(14,991,068)	(14,370,706)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(770,047)	(690,768)
Other expenses	(8,589,190)	(7,771,624)
Finance costs	(368,345)	(336,292)
(Loss) before income tax	(1,259,225)	(883,526)
Income tax expense	-	-
(Loss) from continuing operations	(1,259,225)	(883,526)

OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME, NET OF INCOME TAX

Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss

Gain on revaluation of land and buildings	-	16,529,218
Actuarial (loss)/gain on defined benefit pension plans	(2,016,768)	(2,419,297)
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	(2,016,768)	14,109,921
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	(3,275,993)	13,226,395

PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NSW

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 December 2019

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,032,949	1,377,679
Trade and other receivables	448,127	789,165
Other financial assets	29,958,250	29,555,067
Other assets	298,220	681,529
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	31,737,546	32,403,440
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Trade and other receivables	114,069	65,642
Property, plant and equipment	45,692,946	45,962,846
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	45,807,015	46,028,488
TOTAL ASSETS	77,544,561	78,431,928
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	1,604,112	2,144,173
Short-term provisions	4,410,600	4,118,500
Other financial liabilities	323,588	332,243
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	6,338,300	6,594,916
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Long term provisions	18,754,535	16,109,293
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	18,754,535	16,109,293
TOTAL LIABILITIES	25,092,835	22,704,209
NET ASSETS	52,451,726	55,727,719
EQUITY		
Reserves	41,731,499	41,731,499
Retained earnings	10,720,227	13,996,220
TOTAL EQUITY	52,451,726	55,727,719

Summary of financial accounts for 2019

The Financial Accounts of the Union have been audited in accordance with the provisions of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act, 1996 ("the Act"), and the following summary is provided for members in accordance with Section 517(2) of the Industrial Relations Act 1991, preserved as regulations under section 282(2) Industrial Relations Act 1996.

A copy of the Auditor's Report, Accounts

and Statements will be supplied free of charge to members on request. Certificates required to be given under the Act by the Accounting Officer and the Committee of Management have been completed in accordance with the provisions of the Act and contain no qualifications.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act, the attention of members is drawn to the provision of the Sub Sections (1) and (2) of Section 512 of the Industrial Relations Act 1991, preserved as regulations under section 282(2) Industrial Relations Act 1996,

which read as follows:

1. A member of an organisation, or the Industrial Registrar, may apply to the organisation for specified information prescribed by the regulations in relation to the organisation.
2. An organisation must, on the making of such an application, make the specified information available to the member or the Industrial Registrar in the manner, and within the time, prescribed by the regulations. ■



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NSW

Report on the Concise Financial Report

Opinion

The concise financial report, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2019, and the comprehensive income statement, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial statements of Public Service Association of NSW ('the Association') for the year ended 31 December 2019.

In our opinion, the accompanying concise financial report is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report, in accordance with AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*.

Concise Financial Report

The concise financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards applied in the preparation of the audited financial report of the Association. Reading the concise financial report and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 20 April 2020.

Central Council's responsibility for the concise financial report

The Central Council of the Association are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the concise financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039: *Concise Financial Reports*.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the concise financial report is consistent, in all material aspects, with the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

Distinctive Assurance

Michael Payne

Director

Sydney, 20 April 2020

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Wahroonga NSW 2076

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E michael@distinctiveassurance.com.au
W distinctiveassurance.com.au

ABN 17 964 303 746

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation





Live and learn: new training format

COVID-19 has forced the PSA/CPSU NSW to move training to an online format.

The PSA/CPSU NSW is continuing with amended training delivery in July but slowly transitioning to face-to-face training by the end of the month. Current issues still exist with reliable regional transportation as airlines are not offering all services with the same level of regularity, and the

availability of regional venues is limited until venues re-open.

Metropolitan face-to-face training is re-commencing with use of larger rooms. Social distancing and hygiene measures are being applied as health order restrictions are lifted.

It is anticipated that by August a reversion to most of the regional course calendar will be able to become available.

Online attendance has been strong in most courses, however, there are some members who do have difficulties with this format due to technology restrictions in their location. Regardless, the new normal for training delivery is anticipated to have a hybrid of face to face metropolitan and regional training courses available as well as online.

Find an up-to-date list at psa.asn.au/training-you or cpsunsw.org.au/training-you.



THE WAY WE WERE

Pictured is a PSA/CPSU NSW training session on Dealing with Bullying in the Workplace. The training was held in Albury on 4 and 5 March before the COVID-19 shutdown sent all the union's courses online. "Members from across multiple agencies had a very intense two days of training which they all found very beneficial," said Regional Organiser Michelle Mackintosh.

Training schedule:

Tuesday 14 July

Dealing with Member Issues Workshop

Wednesday 15 July

Mental Health, Care and Resilience Online Workshop

Thursday 16 July

Negotiation Skills (one-hour webinar)

Tuesday 21 July

Introduction to the Union Workshop - REGIONAL MEMBERS' SPECIAL

Wednesday 22 July

Role of the Delegate Workshop - REGIONAL MEMBERS' SPECIAL

Course descriptions

Dealing With Member Issues

This course will look at handling individual issues using the problem-solving framework and building on your advocacy skills.

Mental Health, Care and Resilience

Stigma around talking mental health at work? Not sure how to help someone who is struggling? How can we change that and build a positive, inclusive workplace culture? We look at information, strategies and resources that can help support people with mental health issues and encourage them to seek professional help if concerned. We also

look at some useful strategies to manage stress and build personal resilience.

***Content warning: Please be aware that we do discuss suicide and suicide prevention.*

Negotiation Skills

Tip the balance of power by learning how to be an effective negotiator. This course is aimed at delegates and activists, but anyone would benefit from the experience.

Introduction to the union

New to being active in the union? This is where your journey starts. We will spend the day looking at how the union works and union history.

We'll also talk about power dynamics and values. This is a prerequisite for anyone that wants to do the next level of training, unless you have proven experience in the delegate role for 2+ years.

Role of the Delegate We'll break down organising in your workplace until you're a pro. Great for new delegates and activists but also for experienced delegates wanting a refresher.

Most members are eligible for 12 days' paid trade union training leave every two years. You can check with the Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679 if you are unsure about your eligibility for leave.



JOINING FORM

Public Service Association of NSW
Community and Public Sector Union

JOINED BY:

Membership fees subject to change.

ABOUT ME:

Title: M F Other

First name:

Surname:

Preferred name:

D.O.B:

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage? Yes No

Address (home):

STREET STATE
SUBURB POSTCODE

Address (postal):

POSTCODE

Phone:

MOBILE
HOME WORK

Email:

PERSONAL PLEASE NOMINATE YOUR PREFERRED EMAIL
PREFERRED
WORK PREFERRED

Red Tape magazine via: Post Email

ABOUT MY WORK:

Employer name:

Job title:

Pay ID serial no:

Commencement date: Agency/Work Unit:

Worksite address:
STREET STATE
SUBURB POSTCODE

Employment status: FULL-TIME PART-TIME

Employment type: PERMANENT / ONGING TEMP/ CONTRACT CASUAL LABOUR HIRE

Are you a current Health & Safety Rep (HSR)? YES NO

ABOUT MY MEMBERSHIP:

Weekly membership fees are based on your gross annual income. Please tick which applies to you:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gross annual salary | Weekly fees from July 2019 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,718 | \$3.75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,718 – \$42,870 | \$7.30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$42,871 – \$60,896 | \$11.70 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$60,896 | \$15.25 |



Fees can also be paid quarterly or yearly by cheque/credit card/cash. Payment must accompany form and then an invoice will be sent when account is due.

I would like more information about:

Training Becoming a delegate/contact

ABOUT MY PAYMENT:

OPTION 1: Direct Debit Fortnightly 4 weekly

NAME ON ACCOUNT

FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

BSB ACCOUNT NUMBER

SIGNATURE

I hereby request the deduction from my account of my subscription to the PSA (User ID 040 172). I authorise the following:

1. The PSA may verify the details of the above mentioned account with my financial institution if required. 2. My financial institution may release information allowing the PSA to verify the above mentioned account details. 3. My employer may release my bank account details to the PSA for the purpose of enabling me to establish a direct debit facility for the payment of my subscription. 4. I have read the Automatic Payment Service Agreement overleaf and agree with its terms and conditions.

OPTION 2: Credit Card (monthly only) Visa Mastercard

CARD NUMBER

NAME ON CARD

SIGNATURE EXPIRY DATE

I hereby authorise the PSA to debit my card account with the amount and at the intervals specified in the Salary and Fees Table detailed on this form, and in the event of any change in the charges for these subscriptions, to alter the amount from the appropriate date in accordance with such change. This authority will stand, in respect of the above specified card and in respect of any card issued to me in renewal or replacement thereof, until I notify the PSA in writing of its cancellation. Union dues processed on 7th of each month.

DECLARATION:

SIGNATURE

DATE



AFTER COMPLETING YOUR FORM, YOU CAN:

Hand it to your organiser

SCAN AND EMAIL TO:

membership@psa.asn.au or fax to 02 9262 1623

YOU CAN POST IT TO:

Membership Section, PSA of NSW
GPO Box 3365, SYDNEY NSW 2001

I, the undersigned, hereby apply to be enrolled as a member of the Public Service Association and Professional Officers' Association Amalgamated Union of New South Wales (PSA) and the Community & Public Sector Union (CPSU) Group NSW Branch (CPSU NSW) in accordance with the Rules of both bodies, by which I agree to be bound, and I appoint the PSA and CPSU NSW as my bargaining agent. I agree that a copy of this form (whether as a scanned image, photocopy, facsimile or otherwise) may be used or dealt with as if it were the original. I have read and understood the information detailed overleaf relating to financial obligations and the circumstances and manner in which I may resign my membership.



JOINING FORM

Public Service Association of NSW
Community and Public Sector Union

JOINED BY:

JOIN YOUR UNION

#JoinYourUnion

psa.asn.au/join  [psansw](https://www.facebook.com/psansw)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Automatic Payment Service Agreement

We, the PSA, make the following commitment to you:

- »The PSA will debit/charge your membership fees as they fall due. However, if this day falls on a non-business day, they will be debited/ charged on the next business day.
- »The PSA will only use this authority to debit/charge regular fees. If you miss a payment, it will be picked up in the following period i.e. two instalments will be taken out.
- »Resignation from the PSA must be notified according to the section "How to resign from the PSA and CPSU NSW". Should you resign your membership, the PSA undertakes to cease debiting your account upon the termination of the written notice period.
- »The PSA will notify any changes to your union fees in "Red Tape".
- »The PSA will act in accordance with our Privacy Statement, while noting that your financial institution may require such information to be provided in connection with a claim made on it relating to an alleged incorrect or wrongful debit.
- »The PSA will investigate and deal promptly with any queries, claims or complaints regarding debits/charges and provide a response within 21 days of receipt.

Your commitment to the PSA:

- »You will ensure that the account details provided to the PSA are identical to the account details held by your bank or financial institution.
- »You will ensure that you have sufficient funds or credit available in the nominated account on the due date for payment of your fees. You will let us know in writing within 14 days if the nominated account is altered, transferred or closed.
- »You will be responsible to ensure that the amounts debited/charged to your nominated account for your PSA fees are correct.

»If the charging arrangements are stopped by you or your nominated bank or financial institution, you will arrange a suitable alternative payment method with the PSA.

»Resignation from the PSA/CPSU NSW will be notified by you as per the conditions in the section "How to resign from the PSA and CPSU NSW". Repayments will not be made for late notifications.

How to resign from the PSA and CPSU NSW

You may resign from membership when either you cease to work in an area covered by the Association or by giving 14 days notice in writing of your intention to resign to the PSA General Secretary.

Resignation from the PSA will also be taken as resignation from the CPSU NSW, subject to confirmation.

Resignation from the CPSU NSW can be by notice in writing of two weeks or more, such notice being delivered to the Secretary of the CPSU SPSF Group NSW Branch.

Please note that you are obliged to pay any dues owing to the PSA up to the date of effect of the resignation and that fees are not refundable on resignation from the PSA/CPSU NSW.

Privacy Statement

Information collected in these applications is used for the purposes of the PSA and the CPSU NSW only.

When we use third parties to carry out union functions (eg mail-houses, electoral offices, candidates to union office, union delegates, etc.) only necessary information is released, and subject to the condition that it not be used for any other purpose.

Information requested for payment of membership fees is provided only to the relevant financial institution or employer.

Any member may at any time arrange to see and correct their membership record by contacting membership@psa.asn.au

WHO SOCIETY THINKS WORKS AT UNIVERSITIES

✓ Academics

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

WORTH EVERY CENT ✓

CPSUNSW

www.cpsunsw.org.au/join

WHO REALLY WORKS AT UNIVERSITIES

- ✓ Administrative Assistant
- ✓ Architect
- ✓ Auditor
- ✓ Business Analyst
- ✓ Campus Manager
- ✓ Campus Sports Assistant
- ✓ Cashier
- ✓ Clerical Assistant
- ✓ Client Services Officer
- ✓ Communication & Events Co-ordinator
- ✓ Compliance & Policy Officer
- ✓ Course Administration Officer
- ✓ Data Analyst
- ✓ Data Technician
- ✓ Digital Technologist
- ✓ Disability Liaison Officer
- ✓ Educational Designer
- ✓ Educational Technology Designer
- ✓ eLearning Designer
- ✓ Equity and Diversity Officer
- ✓ Events Manager
- ✓ Facilities Administration Officer
- ✓ Field Education Manager
- ✓ Finance Officer
- ✓ Fleet Officer
- ✓ Food & Beverage Attendant
- ✓ Functions Supervisor
- ✓ Gardener
- ✓ Graduation and Events Coordinator
- ✓ Health Clinic Manager
- ✓ Human Resources Officer
- ✓ Infrastructure Administrator
- ✓ International Admissions and Support Officer
- ✓ International Student Advisor
- ✓ IT Manager
- ✓ Laboratory Technician
- ✓ Legal Officer
- ✓ Librarian
- ✓ Library Technician
- ✓ Workplace Health & Safety Officer
- ✓ Marketing Officer
- ✓ Media Officer
- ✓ Media Technologist
- ✓ Pastoral Care Coordinator
- ✓ Production Manager
- ✓ Quality and Compliance Officer
- ✓ Records Assistant
- ✓ Research Officer
- ✓ Statistician
- ✓ Student Advisor
- ✓ Student Ambassador
- ✓ Student Counsellor
- ✓ Student Management Officer
- ✓ Student Management Officer-Indigenous Student Services
- ✓ Student Placement and Support Officer
- ✓ Student Recruitment and Events Officer
- ✓ Subject Administration Officer
- ✓ Technology Specialist
- ✓ Venue Manager
- ✓ Veterinary Nurse

EVERY JOB COUNTS



160 Clarence Street, Sydney NSW 2000 GPO Box 3365, Sydney NSW 2001
☎ 1300 772 679 ✉ cpsu.nsw@psa.asn.au 🌐 www.cpsunsw.org.au 📘 @cpsunsw

Authorised by Stewart Little, State Branch Secretary, Community and Public Sector Union (SPSF Group) NSW Branch, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

WORTH

EVERY

CENT



CPSU NSW

www.cpsunsw.org.au/join

These are testing times for universities

Revenue cuts are putting job, pay and conditions at risk

You have never needed your union more

The CPSU NSW is the ONLY union dedicated to Professional Staff in our universities


Join the CPSU NSW today

www.cpsunsw.org.au/join

EVERY JOB COUNTS



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