

JULY-
SEPTEMBER
2021

RED TAPE

DELEGATES

The backbone of
our union

ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

A guide for members

NEXT STOP TOWN HALL

A PSA member aims for
mayoral office





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2021

RED TAPE

YOUR UNION

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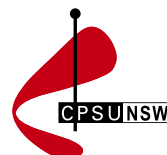
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All members of CPSU NSW are also members of the Public Service Association. The PSA is the associated body that manages and resources CPSU NSW.





OUR GOALS: UNITY, STRENGTH, RESPECT

I have always believed in unions.

From my early days as a Librarian through to my time as a Union Delegate and Organiser, I have always known my fellow union members had my back.

I also believe there are certain qualities that make a union effective. And an effective union is one people want to join because they can see the positive impact it has in their workplace.

These qualities are Unity, Strength and Respect.

My goal as General Secretary has been to promote these qualities in our union and in our workplaces. These qualities guide what we fight for and what we deliver for our members.

UNITY

Without unity our union would not be as effective as it is today. As the slogan says: united we bargain, divided we beg. When our employers meet with representatives of the PSA, they know they are dealing with a united force, speaking with one voice, standing up for each other.

When one member is treated badly, the full weight of the union comes to their aid. We do this because we know any one of us could be the next target.

You only have to look at the way some private companies operate to see why unity is so important. Thousands of workers are being forced into the precarious gig economy because it is far easier – and cheaper – to control myriad underpaid “contractors” than an organised group of employees united in a common cause.

STRENGTH

With unity comes strength. When one employee speaks up, they can easily be dismissed. But when tens of thousands speak up, they cannot be ignored.

After a period of stagnation, our union is growing again. We have attracted new members and regained old ones – we are now close to having 40,000 in our ranks.

And as we continue to grow, we will only get stronger, so I encourage you to have a conversation with colleagues who are not yet in the union; it is in our common best interests that they join.

RESPECT

Strength deserves and demands respect. Every public servant deserves to be treated with respect, especially by members of the NSW Government. Yet many are quick to fall back on discredited stereotypes and labels when they talk about government employees. But when they do, it is the union that pulls them up and demands an apology.

When the COVID-19 crisis forced most of us home, many NSW Government employers thought they could throw out our hard-earned rights, such as Flex leave and overtime. It implied the work was somehow less meritorious because it was being done at home. That is why the union took action to ensure all your rights were respected, regardless of where the work was done.

With a strong union behind you, your employer needs to take your concerns seriously and respectfully. This is why workplaces are always better where the employees are united in their union.

A WORD OF THANKS

As I start my second term as your General Secretary, I want to thank all our Delegates and the union’s exceptional staff for all their efforts in making our union strong again.

It is their hard work that delivered so much for our members in the past five years.

For example, we established the PSA Aboriginal Council and strengthened the Women’s Council in recognition of the specific challenges that our female membership faces.

Together, we introduced new initiatives and services, including Emergency Ambulance Cover, a Bushfire Relief Fund, Domestic Violence Support, Foundation House for addiction problems, and Perinatal Support through the Gidget Foundation. We also established an in-house Legal Services team to better fight on our members’ behalf.

Importantly, the past five years have seen our union grow in numbers.

I am looking forward to working together with all our members and staff as we continue to promote Unity, Strength and Respect in our union and our workplaces. ■





A MODEST COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT: THE STATE BUDGET

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet has simply given a modest cost of living adjustment to the Public Servants who saved his state from a succession of disasters.

In his Budget speech in June, Mr Perrottet (pictured above) gave public sector workers a 2.5 per cent pay increase – 0.5 per cent of which will go to this year's promised superannuation rise.

"The 2.5 per cent increase is obviously welcome, but it is in the context of rising prices and against a backdrop of a minuscule 0.3 per cent pay rise the year before," said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. "In addition, the NSW public sector still labours under unfair workplace laws that restrict our ability to bargain and a three per cent "efficiency dividend" that will cost jobs.

"Your union will continue to campaign for fair pay and conditions and we will fight job cuts, particularly in the regions and for women.

"Mr Perrottet's announcement also proves that last year's miserly 0.3 pay rise was not only bad for our members, it was bad for the state's economy, pulling much-needed spending dollars out of communities during an economic downturn."

The PSA/CPSU NSW welcomes the Treasurer's announcement for paid leave for premature births, still births and miscarriages. Your union was successful in introducing similar benefits into national employment standards and has long been campaigning for this at a state level.

On the morning of the Budget, the PSA/CPSU NSW joined other unions at the rear of Parliament House to let arriving MPs know how important pay increases were; not just to workers but also to all people in the state. ■

SALARIES DECISION VINDICATES UNION COURT CASE

The PSA was the first public sector union to challenge the Government's decision for a 1.5 per cent pay rise in the Industrial Relations Commission.

In the months leading up to the State Budget, the State Government mooted a 1.5 per cent salaries increase for Public Servants. Coming on the back of a 0.3 per cent increase the year before, this would have resulted in a cut in real wages for the NSW Government workforce.

"Not only would this have been a slap in the face for our members who worked hard to save the state, it would also have been an act of economic vandalism," said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. "The last thing the NSW economy needs right now is less spending money circulating."

After consulting with members, who overwhelmingly backed the union's plan to oppose the 1.5 per cent offer, the PSA lodged its case for a 2.5 per cent increase (2.04 per cent plus a superannuation boost) in the Industrial Relations Commission.

The PSA's stance was vindicated, when Treasurer Dominic Perrottet handed down the State Budget, pledging to scrap the 1.5 per cent wages policy.

"This agreement is a vindication of our members' hard work and dedication, and the fact that 1.5 per cent represented a cut to real wages. The PSA will continue to hold the NSW Government to account," said Ms McRobert. ■



A UNITED VOICE MAKES OUR UNION STRONG

Speaking as one makes our union more united, stronger and respected.

It is with a sense of pride and responsibility that I write my first column for *Red Tape*. Being elected PSA President is a great honour for me. I thank everyone who took part in the election, every candidate, and every member who voted. And I congratulate all the successful candidates.

Running for an elected position in any organisation is humbling. You invite the judgement of your peers, which may or may not be favourable. If you are successful, you cannot help but feel a deep sense of responsibility to serve the people who elected you.

In return for the trust shown in me, I commit to making our union stronger and more united. I know I speak for all the 2021 office holders by saying we will work tirelessly to fulfil the commitments we made.

MY STORY

I joined the PSA about 30 years ago when I started work as a Corrections Officer.

Since then, the union has been there, working on behalf of myself and other Officers in what can be a dangerous workplace.

A workplace as potentially hazardous as a prison needs staff to work together, backing each other up.

And the best way workers can back each other up is to join their union.

The union's power is that its voice represents thousands of members. It is tough for an employer to dismiss the demands of nearly 40,000 people.

Employers know that. Look at the resistance Serco, the operator of the private prison in the state's north, has put up to our union's attempts to organise workers. Serco knows how to lock inmates up. It also knows the best way it can keep wages down and workplace conditions at a bare minimum is to lock the union out – something the company tried very hard to

do. Luckily for their workers, and tens of thousands of other employees throughout NSW, we won't be locked out. Instead we are here to fight on their behalf.

We have pressured the Government to ditch its economically disastrous plan to limit our pay rise to 1.5 per cent this year and instead award a 2.5 per cent increase.

We have won better provisions for stillbirth, miscarriages and premature births.

KEEPING US SAFE

Unions are there not just to protect wages and conditions, but to help workers' mental health. I am committed as President of our union to ensuring our members' mental health is prioritised.

In the past few years, the Public Service has been at its best, fighting fires, floods and a pandemic. We need to make sure the workers who protected the state are also protected at work. And the best way we can protect them is to fight together as one, as members of a united, strong and respected union.

TO THE RESCUE AGAIN

As we went to press, NSW was once again gripped by lockdowns to varying degrees of severity. I'd like to express my thanks to our members who kept on serving the state, whether from home or continuing to turn up to their workplaces while COVID-19 blights NSW.

You are all Champions of the State. ■



RESULTS OF THE 2021 PSA ELECTION

GENERAL SECRETARY

CANDIDATE	DIVISION	TOTAL VOTES
Stewart Little	Public Service Association of NSW	2698
Kylie McKelvie	CSNSW-Non Custodial-Department Communities and Justice	1334

Formal 4032 Informal 64 Total Votes 4096

Stewart Little was elected to the position

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY

CANDIDATE	DIVISION	TOTAL VOTES
Troy Wright	Public Service Association of NSW	2693
Anabel Morales Nogues	Transport for NSW	1285

Formal 3978 Informal 118 Total Votes 4096

Troy Wright was elected to the position

PRESIDENT

CANDIDATE	DIVISION	TOTAL VOTES
Nicole Jess	Corrective Services NSW-POVB	2648
Martin Robinson	Department of Communities and Justice-Youth Justice NSW	1326

Formal 3974 Informal 122 Total Votes 4096

Nicole Jess was elected to the position

The following Vice Presidents were elected:

Juliette Sizer (Department of Education), Shelley Odewahn (Southern Cross University), Frank Kovic (Department of Communities and Justice)

The following Delegates were elected to Central Council:

Breelan Bell (NSW Police), Sean Bremer (Department of Education), Jason Charlton (Corrective Services), Cassandra Coleman (Revenue NSW), Allison Corrigan (Community Services), Jeanette Crawford (Department of Education), Brook Down (TAFE), Glenn Elliott-Rudder (Sheriff's Office), Suzanne Evans (Youth Justice), Donna Glover (NSW Police), Julie Griffiths (Trustee and Guardian), Nicole Harding (State Emergency Service), Janice Hartmann (Service NSW), Natalie Howes (Corrective Services), Mark Hutchinson (Corrective Services), Geoff Kelty (Corrective Services), Julie King (Corrective Services), Tracey King (Department of Education), Kylie McKelvie (Corrective Services), Bernadette McMahon (Housing NSW), Brendan McMenamin (Community Services), Anabel Morales Nogues (Transport for NSW), Joanne Nieass (Department of Education), Steve O'Brien (TAFE), Ben Owers (National Parks and Wildlife), Tanya Pople (Department of Education), Martin Robinson (Youth Justice), Karen Rogers (Department of Education), Carol Rose (Department of Primary Industries), Heather Shields (Resilience NSW), Tim Smith (Transport for NSW), Rachel Smoothy (ConnectAbility), Vanessa Spitznagel (DPIE), Lee-Anne Stanford (Transport for NSW), Kim Villanti (Corrective Services), Julieanne Westacott (Ministry of Health), Darren Wells (Corrective Services), John Williams (Northcott), Penelope Worthington (DPIE)

RESULTS OF THE 2021 CPSU GROUP SPSF NSW BRANCH ELECTION

Branch Secretary

Stewart Little elected unopposed.

Assistant Branch Secretary

Troy Wright elected unopposed.

President

Nicole Jess elected unopposed.

The following Vice Presidents were elected:

Steve O'Brien (TAFE), Shelley Odewahn (Southern Cross University), Rachel Smoothy (ConnectAbility)

The following Delegates were elected to Branch Council:

Jason Charlton (CSNSW), Brook Down (TAFE), Judy Greenwood (EPA), Ed Kirby (Department of Education), Kylie McKelvie (CSNSW), Joanne Nieass (Department of Education), Anabel Nogues (TfNSW), Scott Pendlebury (Western Sydney University), Leanne Smith (Ausgrid), Julieanne Westacott (NSW Health)

OPEN FOR MEMBERS

The pandemic didn't stop union coverage.

Due to its city location, PSA House was forced to close its doors in late June. However, with many members working essential roles, the PSA/CPSU NSW kept operating.

"Our vital role doesn't stop just because the front doors are closed," said General Secretary Stewart Little. "Our staff could still be contacted."

"The PSA/CPSU NSW expresses its thanks to all members who continued to attend their workplaces providing vital services to the people of NSW. You are Champions of the State." ■



MAINTAIN THE SWAMP

The swamp remains undrained; for now

Donald Trump's incompetent, poisonous, divisive term left the world with salutary lessons, including here in Australia.

Tump was probably most famous for introducing the phrase “fake news” to our common lexicon. The irony is his target wasn't the fake news that has promulgated unchecked and without editorial controls through social media for the past five years. Rather it was the traditional objective media networks that dared to practise journalism and correct his often wild statements. When you obtain power through peddling lies and conspiracy theories then your natural enemy is the purveyor of facts.

But it was another catch cry of his when electioneering that was equally misleading in its focus that should be of greater interest to our members.

Trump's rallies often descended into a crowd chant of “drain the swamp” at his urging, like a football crowd cheering home their team.

Who made up this “swamp” in Washington DC that apparently required some sort of purge the scale of Cersei Lannister's rule in *Game of Thrones*? I had assumed Trump was talking about getting rid of the legions of sycophantic and self-interested lobbyists who descend on the capital (and ours in Canberra) to influence government policy and make backdoor deals on behalf of their business interests.

But no.

The swamp that Trump was referring to was the Public Service. When your business model relies on the exploitation of labour, then your enemies include those who protect employment standards.

When your business model is contingent on environmental harm, then your enemies include those who regulate activities.

And when you need to maintain power

through corruption and graft then your natural enemies are those who investigate and prosecute.

This is why what our numerous members in many agencies domestically charged with these functions are what we refer to as Champions of the State: SafeWork NSW, Environment Protection Agency, NSW Ombudsman, Independent Commission Against Corruption, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Local Land Services, Gaming and Racing, Fair Trading and the Department of Primary Industries among others.

These agencies hold power to account and our members enforce the laws to protect the vulnerable.

Plenty of good guys in fiction came from the swamp. Shrek for one. Yoda is another. And if the vital jobs you do are going to be characterised that way by our political enemies then long may the swamp thrive for the benefit of us all. ■

LACK OF UNITY: LACK OF AWARE-NESS

A fund's behaviour has been less than super.

In July 2020 the industry superannuation fund most PSA members pay into, First State Super, merged with VicSuper to become Aware, one of the largest funds in the country. It manages some \$120 billion in savings.

Through a quirk of history, the PSA, via its Federal counterpart the CPSU NSW, is also the union for its employees. And this is where our concerns have arisen.

In late 2020 Aware initiated enterprise bargaining for its workforce. Correction, part of its workforce. It now has some 1100 employees across two states and a complicated industrial landscape. All employees of VicSuper were under an expired Enterprise Agreement. Some former-First State employees, being those in a call centre ironically located in

Melbourne, were also on an Enterprise Agreement. The remainder in NSW were without a collective instrument and largely employed on individual contracts.

The first item of business in enterprise bargaining is determining the scope – who the agreement covers.

Aware has produced the most convoluted proposal this union has ever witnessed, with some employees on the agreement, some with sunset arrangements and others seemingly randomly excluded.

A position in one state would be in whilst their equivalent in another was excluded. Nor was there any equity, as some positions were higher paid than those excluded.

It was grossly unfair, arbitrary and it undermined a core principle of the union movement – equal pay for equal work. Worst of all it left the door open for Aware to maintain its current practice of maintaining a vast number of individual contracts, which we must always oppose.

Industry super funds exist because the union movement recognised very early on that having won compulsory employer contributions in the 1980s, these funds should not just become the investment playthings of the financial sector. The best institutions to manage superannuation funds had to be created by the union movement.

And as creations of the workers, industry super funds should reflect their values – equality, collectivism and a fair go.

The PSA/CPSU NSW has been locked in proceedings with Aware at the Fair Work Commission about the scope of the agreement. It is negotiating which block we are to launch from before the race has even started. At a time when the entire sector is under attack from a Coalition Government hellbent on reducing their market power, our industry fund has waged war on its own workforce. If funds want to continue be our voice, it is time they started listening. ■

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PSA PUSHES FOR A STRONGER CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM



Vulnerable children need help from well-funded government bodies.

The PSA lodged a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Child Protection and Social Services System containing recommendations on how the child protection system can function.

The core PSA recommendations include:

- a substantial increase in case worker staff
- an increase in funding for Community Services
- a guaranteed exemption from budget efficiency dividends
- a guarantee that the statutory responsibility for the care and

protection of children and young people in NSW should remain a core function of the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

The submission was compiled after the PSA surveyed members about the system's health.

Ninety-five per cent of members believe the NSW Government does not employ enough Case Workers to protect vulnerable children and families, while 84 per cent believe current departmental funding is inadequate.

"Child Protection workers provide invaluable expert care to the vulnerable children and families of NSW," said Industrial Manager Dylan Smith, "but they are seriously overworked and under-resourced, which is diminishing the quality and quantity of care they can provide.

"The erosion of quality working conditions in the child protection

workforce is consequently eroding the quality of care for vulnerable children and families.

"The PSA strongly believes the quantity of Case Workers needs to reflect the number of vulnerable children needing protection. Too many children are falling through the cracks. As highlighted in our submission, the PSA continues to fight for more DCJ Child Protection Workers. It is critical that they are adequately resourced to protect children and not suffer the consequences of chronic under-funding through excessive workloads and the constant threat of performance management."

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little wrote in the submission, "Child protection is core government work and it is time to make Community Services as strong and well-equipped as it can possibly be." ■

DISRESPECTFUL DECISION OVERTURNED

PSA members united to fight and overturn an attempt by the State Government to plunge the wages and conditions of Interpreters and Translators down to the level of cut-price private operators.

In 2019, the Acting Minister, Geoff Lee approached the PSA about changing the *Interpreters and Translators Award* to be more “competitive” with private providers. The planned changes included lower pay rates and extended ordinary hours to 7:00am-7:00pm. The planned changes would have removed the 34.5 per cent loading, set a flat rate of loading on work outside non-standard hours, removed standard crown clauses, redefined the ordinary work area from County Cumberland to Parramatta and taken staff off the *Crown Salaries and Conditions of Employment* awards.

**“IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S
RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE
LANGUAGE SERVICES”**

“The PSA agreed to talk, but no sureties were given,” said Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright. “Renegotiating hard-earned Award conditions is not a task approached lightly by us or any union. Despite a year of negotiations with the union reiterating that the Award must maintain Crown standards and conditions, the employer filed an Award Application in the Industrial Relations Commission in October 2020 that had no semblance of the *Crown Award*.”

The PSA reminded the Minister it was the Government's responsibility to provide language services to a diverse NSW community and these should stay in public hands.

“The services offered by Multicultural NSW's (MNSW's) Interpreters and Translators are vital, particularly in the criminal justice system, where they ensure everyone in the state has equal access to justice,” said Mr Wright.

However, NSW Courts had threatened to outsource language services to a private provider if changes were not made to the Award. When the threat of outsourcing became real, the PSA fought even harder to ensure this vital court work remained in public hands.

STRENGTH IN UNION

After the State Government backed down from its planned changes, the PSA came away with a slew of wins for Interpreters and Translators, including:

- A written undertaking from the Secretary that NSW Courts will use MNSW Language Services for at least another three years
- If court work is outsourced or privatised, Interpreter and Translator pay and conditions will revert to the previous Award
- A written undertaking from MNSW CEO to commence formulating a procedure for converting long-term casuals to permanency.
- Pay for the duration of the booking
- A new three-year Award.

“The input of our Interpreter and Translator members and delegates was vital throughout this process and supported the work of the PSA,” said Industrial Officer Katy Ambler. “Many of our Delegates and members provided statements for the Commission. Their communication, information and engagement enabled the PSA to properly represent the interests and concerns of our members.” ■



STRENGTH IN UNITY: MULTICULTURAL NSW DELEGATE REWARDED FOR TIRELESS WORK

Amid very tough competition, Dr Ninh Nguyen was named PSA/CPSU NSW Delegate of the Year for his tireless work for fellow members.

Often working in his own time, Dr Nguyen worked with the union to build up a case for retaining Multicultural NSW's (MNSW's) services in the face of cut-price alternatives. An honourable mention went to fellow Delegates Steve Karakira and Zeina Issa for their combined efforts to support and represent MNSW member interests.

“As ever, it was our Delegates who proved the difference and made the wins achievable,” said PSA Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright, presenting the award.

“It was our Delegates who researched the impact of the employer's proposals and canvassed the opinions of their colleagues.

“It was our Delegates who were able to provide succinct advice to the PSA and identify viable alternatives and compromises.

“It was our Delegates who kept their comrades informed and educated of the negotiations.

“And it was our Delegates who sacrificed their time to attend the Commission throughout the appearances and provide key instruction to our industrial and legal team.” ■

DECK THE HALLS: MORE VENUE STAFF NEEDED



As the Government opens more cultural spaces, will there be enough staff on board to operate them?

THE PSA and its Keep Our Icons Alive campaign have staved off the NSW Government's plan to slash more than \$37 million in funding from the state's cultural institutions.

The 2021-22 State Budget did not include the feared cuts, exposed during Parliamentary Budget Estimates, that would have crippled the ability of the institutions to deliver world-class exhibitions, events and performances.

Instead the Art Gallery of NSW, Australian Museum, Sydney Opera House, State Library of NSW, Sydney Living Museums, State Archives and Records Authority and Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences were all given boosts to capital expenditure.

However, increases to operating costs

were not so generous, so there is a risk the staffing levels won't match the grand new edifices to culture.

"The NSW Government is at risk of turning these galleries and museums into empty and expensive mausoleums," said Stewart Little, General Secretary of the PSA. "NSW taxpayers have invested a huge amount of money in upgrading our cultural institutions but, once the building works are over, the Government risks being unable to deliver fully on the potential of these new spaces."

"This will hurt attempts to revive tourism in the Sydney CBD at a time when hotel and hospitality venues are struggling with the loss of international visitors."

These iconic institutions are inextricably part of NSW's cultural economy, which had a vast contribution to the state's coffers before the pandemic.

The Sydney International Art Series alone generated more than \$167 million in overnight visitor expenditure, attracting more than 2.5 million attendees with 229,000-plus overnight

“ONCE THE BUILDING WORKS ARE OVER, THE GOVERNMENT RISKS BEING UNABLE TO DELIVER FULLY ON THE POTENTIAL OF THESE SPACES”

visitors coming specifically to Sydney to view the exhibition. This year, the series features an exclusive exhibition of works by French master Henri Matisse at the Art Gallery of NSW, as well as the immersive installations of American artist Doug Aitken at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

"We have members struggling with workloads," said PSA Organiser Davis Murphy, who covers the institutions. "Bigger venues without extra staff will make a bad situation even worse." ■

TERRY CELEBRATES 60 YEARS ON THE ROAD

We may never see another career like his again.

In December 1960 14-year-old Terry Kearns, fresh out of high school, showed up at the Traffic Control Centre for his first day of work at the Department of Motor Transport (DMT). No-one – least of all young Terry – imagined that 60 years later he would still be working in traffic management at the ultra-modern Traffic Management Centre (TMC) in Eveleigh, Sydney.

As a Senior Traffic Control Officer and long-time PSA member, Mr Kearns (pictured below) is as keen on his job now as he was six decades ago.

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little congratulated Mr Kearns for a lifetime of service to the people of NSW and his dedication to his union.

“We may never see another career like Terry Kearns’s,” said Mr Little. “Very few people start work at 14 anymore and few work into their seventies like Terry has.

And he isn’t finished yet! Mr Kearns’s whole career has been about keeping others safe. It is one of the most noble roles anyone in public service can play. We can’t imagine how many lives he has saved and how many people he has kept from tragedy on our roads. On behalf of his fellow unionists, I want to thank him for his service.”

Mr Kearns recalls what the job was like when he started. “There were three police officers and myself as a go-between with the DMT. There were no video screens or cameras, just phones and a radio control room,” he said.

Traffic management in 1960s Sydney was limited. All Mr Kearns and his colleagues could do was record incidents, alter traffic signal timing and radio the police and ask them to go and check the location. They started calling local radio stations and asking them to tell their listeners where the traffic problems were in the hope more people could avoid trouble spots.

Mr Kearns has seen some big changes.

The TMC now operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The road network has evolved with more freeways, tollways, tunnels, bridges, cycleways and entirely new suburbs. The number of traffic lights has increased from 365 to more than 4500 and the current TMC has walls of video screens fed by more than 1700 traffic management cameras.

The one thing that hasn’t changed has been Mr Kearns’s commitment to his union and his fellow unionists in the PSA. He recalls joining the union soon after he started work.

**IT IS A NICE FEELING
KNOWING THE UNION IS
ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU**

“I always get asked ‘Why should I join a union?’ And I always answer that it is a nice feeling knowing the union is there for you if you need it. I didn’t need the union’s help for a long time, but when I did they were there for me.

“And the union does a lot behind the scenes, constantly fighting for us. It’s the union that gets increases in our pay and if they didn’t, I’d still be getting paid five dollars an hour! Over your working life, all those pay rises add up.”

So does Mr Kearns have a highlight from his long career?

“It was the night Sydney won the Olympics in 1993. A few weeks before I was sitting next to International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch in the TMC and showing him how we effectively manage traffic flow in Sydney. I told him if Sydney won the Games, I’d make sure he never stopped at another red light in Sydney ever again,” he said.

We will never know whether this offer swung the final votes towards Sydney’s bid. But we do know that without Public Servants like Mr Kearns, Sydney would not have won or been able to deliver the best Olympic games ever. ■





STOP THE CUTS

Rallies demand an end to the Government's war on TAFE.

To resist the Government's disastrous assault on vocational education continuing, the CPSU NSW organised rallies outside TAFE campuses throughout the state.

Recently, CPSU NSW members and the public were at the Granville campus, joined by then Opposition Skills Spokesperson Jihad Dib.

Earlier Branch Secretary Stewart Little was among the list of speakers at Ultimo, the largest campus in NSW. He was joined by CPSU NSW Delegates, Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey and Mr Dib.

Mr Little talked about a Change Management Plan that looked to cut 678 positions, including 80 jobs from Ultimo.

"This is in circumstances where we've seen apprenticeships plummet, when it has never been more important that we provide vocational and quality education," he told the rally. "And that is only done through an iconic institution like TAFE."

CPSU NSW Delegate Simon Gray said too many decisions were based on profit rather than teaching skills.

"TAFE is not a lesser option than university," said Labor frontbencher Mr Dib. "TAFE is a different pathway. The problem is the Government does not believe in it."

"THE PROBLEM IS THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE IN TAFE"

Mr Little said, "Premier Gladys Berejiklian has recently said she believes the private sector has a bigger role to play in vocational education. That means more cut-priced colleges and a smaller role for the world-regarded NSW TAFE system. The state will pay the price with future skills shortages."

The union was also at Scone to protest the sell-off of the campus there. See story opposite about the deal between the State Government and Racing NSW that has sold students and staff short. ■

MORE PERMANENT JOBS FOR TAFE STAFF

Temporary staff continue to have their positions converted to permanent roles as a result of the CPSU NSW's efforts.

Temporary staff have been converted to permanent positions, with TAFE agreeing to convert eligible Adult Migrant Education Program employees from temporary to permanent.

The backlog of conversion applications by Educational Administrative Support staff was cleared after union pressure.

Employees performing higher duties in a role they are matched to are now treated as permanent employees during the placement process.

Troy Wright, Assistant Branch Secretary of the CPSU NSW, said TAFE needed strong, stable, well-paid permanent staff to meet the state's educational needs.

"Permanent staff are the key to rebuilding TAFE and once again making the NSW vocational education system the envy of the world," Mr Wright said. ■

SCONE SITE SOLD OFF BEFORE MEETING

So much for consultation. The day before a community meeting, the Government disrespects locals by selling a valuable asset.

One day before a meeting that aimed to show the Scone community had something to say about the State Government's plans to sell off the prized local TAFE campus, the Government went and sold it anyway.

A venue that has launched thousands of equine careers in a region of high youth unemployment, the Scone TAFE campus was sold to Racing NSW. It was later revealed in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that Skills Minister Geoff Lee had agreed to the sale in a single meeting with the wealthy racing body.

"We have employers screaming about a skills shortage, particularly in the regions, and the Government's response is to sell off an avenue to well-paid, interesting work in a region dominated by the horse industry," said CPSU NSW Industrial Manager Thane Pearce.

The sale went through as allegations of impropriety engulfed then local state member, Michael Johnsen, leaving the area with limited representation.

The rally took place regardless, demonstrating that locals were unhappy with a campus giving way to a Connected Learning Centre that will struggle to recreate the practical teaching experience for those enrolled in equestrian courses.

Assistant Branch Secretary of the CPSU NSW, Troy Wright spoke at the event that also drew then Opposition Leader Jodi McKay and representatives from customarily conservative bodies such as the Country Women's Association and NSW Farmers.

"This Government dismisses local community concerns and no amount of spin will cover for it," said then Opposition Skills Spokesperson, Jihad Dib, who slammed the "disgraceful decision to sell Scone TAFE the day before a community Roundtable and Forum".

With other campuses at risk, the CPSU NSW will continue to campaign to stop any closures. ■



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NSW PUBLIC SERVICE CAREER THE TOP CHOICE OF GRADUATES

The NSW Government is Australia's most popular graduate employer, according to an annual ranking published in the Australian Financial Review.

The *Top 100 Graduate Employers Awards for 2021* had the NSW Government displacing accounting giant Deloitte as the organisation most tertiary students and graduate job-seekers are interested in.

A career in the NSW Public Service was more popular than joining a global accounting or technology firm, or taking a job at a big financial institution like ANZ, Commonwealth Bank, NAB, Westpac or “millionaire factory” Macquarie Bank.

The NSW Government ranked well ahead of the Queensland Government (14), Department of Defence (22) and the Victorian Government (33). After failing to make the list in 2015, the NSW Government had risen rapidly through the rankings before taking out the top spot.

The ranking is based on the preferences of 70,000 students and graduates looking for employment opportunities on the GradConnection website.

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little said the result reflects changing attitudes

to public service, especially among younger Australians.

“NSW Public Servants saved NSW from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said. “Public Servants staffed the clinics, protected the borders, delivered online lessons and traced infected persons. Everyone now understands the importance of public institutions to the wellbeing of our society.

“Many young people now realise what PSA members have always known – there is no more noble or rewarding profession than a career in public service, particularly backed by a union that emphasises unity, strength and respect in the workplace.

“Today’s graduates understand there is more to a career than chasing dollars. Big corporations may pay more but graduates also value the chance to do something meaningful with their lives.”

The NSW Minister for the Public Service, Don Harwin, was quick to claim credit for the result, saying it was all the work of his administration and its graduate program. “NSW has a world class public service and the graduate program plays a substantial role in building and maintaining that standard,” he said.

However, Minister Harwin failed to mention the intake for the Graduate program was just 182 people last year, nor did he give credit to the other 400,000 people in NSW’s world-class public service. ■

TRICKLE-DOWN EXPOSED AS A DOWNRIGHT LIE

A report shows the low-tax mantra espoused since the 1980s has never worked.

It was never supposed to be like this. For years, conservative governments had promised voters that cutting taxes for the rich would release funds that would be spent in communities, creating opportunities for all. The bigger the tax cuts, the more money would “trickle down” into the rest of the economy and we’d all be living in the land of milk and honey. Championed initially by 1980s free market darlings Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, trickle-down economics has been a mainstay of the political Right since.

However, a report by David Hope of the London School of Economics and Julian Limberg of King’s College London has proven what many of us have known for years: tax cuts for the rich help the rich. And no-one else.

The report, *The Economic Consequences of Major Tax Cuts for the Rich*, measured data from 18 countries, including Australia, over the previous five decades. It found “major tax cuts for the rich push up income inequality” with little benefit for those on the poorer side of this social divide.

“Turning our attention to economic performance,” the authors wrote, “we find no significant effects of major tax cuts for the rich.

“More specifically, the trajectories of real GDP per capita and the unemployment rate are unaffected by significant reductions in taxes on the rich in both the short and medium term.”

Instead, they say, the policy has resulted in underfunding government infrastructure and services and a divided society. ■



TEAM LEADERS RETAIN ROLES

A Fair Work decision saves wages and conditions.

Using the strength of their union, Team Leaders at the Cerebral Palsy

Alliance (CPA) have avoided massive pay cuts and demotion, preserving their existing roles.

In 2019 the CPA decided to scrap the Team Leader roles, replacing them with a lower-paid position called House Manager. For existing Team Leaders, the new role would reduce their annual salary by about \$20,000.

The CPSU NSW launched action in the Fair Work Commission (FWC), pointing out the new position was no different to the existing Team Leader position. The only difference is the new role came with a massive pay cut.

In May the FWC handed down its decision, finding the position was “no different to the work performed by Team Leaders”.

CPA staff originally transferred from the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS). This followed a “restructure” of Cerebral Palsy Alliance’s supported independent living services which, among other things, targeted the Team Leader positions in group homes.

Group homes are residences for people with disability. In the homes, the residents receive assistance from Disability Support Workers to live and work in the community.

The CPSU NSW maintained the work of House Managers was the

same or substantially similar to Team Leaders and as such, FACS staff transferring in those roles remained covered by copied state instruments, including the *Community Living Award 2015 (CLA)*.

The FWC agreed, declaring the *CLA*, the *Public Service Conditions Award 2019* and the *Public Sector Salaries Award 2017* continued to cover transferring Team Leaders who had taken up House Manager jobs during CPA’s restructure.

The FWC decision means those transferred staff revert to the more beneficial award terms, including an entitlement to back pay.

“We would like to take this opportunity to thank those staff who assisted the CPSU NSW with the case,” said

**THE FWC FOUND
THEIR DUTIES WERE
NO DIFFERENT TO
THE WORK DONE BY
TEAM LEADERS**

CPSU NSW Industrial Officer Sharny Chalmers.

For Disability Support Workers outside CPA, there was a similar case for Northcott workers in the Federal Court. This established an employer cannot simply rebadge a position.

“These decisions have implications not only in our sector, but for workers in general,” said Ms Chalmers. ■



GET TO THE POINT: VACCINATIONS A BIG ISSUE IN GROUP HOMES

Despite low rates of vaccinations, CPSU NSW members have so far kept COVID-19 out of group homes.

Keeping COVID-19 out of group homes for people with disability is a tough ask.

The residents often have a limited understanding of the pandemic and its effects and will find it difficult to comprehend solutions such as social distancing and changes to routine.

Despite this, the CPSU NSW is not aware of a single transmission of COVID-19 in a transferred group home.

Even though they are working in close proximity with residents, as with much of the Australian population, the workforce in group homes is still largely unvaccinated.

In reaction to this, Branch Secretary of the CPSU NSW, Stewart Little, wrote to all disability providers employing members to demand they do more to get workers vaccinated against the pandemic.

“The CPSU NSW represents members in high-risk frontline roles,” he wrote. “I seek your

urgent assistance in facilitating a more cooperative and coordinated approach for the vaccination of all frontline workers by encouraging the employees under your supervision to attend their GP or the Vaccination Hub in Homebush Bay for the purpose of being vaccinated.

“There are award and enterprise agreement provisions pertaining to sick leave and other forms of leave that can be accessed by staff wishing to be vaccinated. Family and Community Services leave and other forms of leave can be utilised to assist family and loved ones to be vaccinated.”

Most providers have replied to Mr Little’s correspondence, agreeing to give employees leave provisions to get jabs.

The CPSU NSW will oppose any moves by employers to dismiss or withdraw shifts from unvaccinated staff, but hopes there are more vaccines available soon.

“Unions are all about looking after each other,” said Industrial Officer Sharny Chalmers. “Getting the vaccine means you are looking out for your colleagues’ wellbeing.”

Industrial Officer Mark Knight said, “Our members are hoping the Federal Government lifts its game and speeds up the rollout.” ■

CUTS TO INTEGRITY AGENCIES WEAKEN OUR DEMOCRACY

Are corruption fighters being punished for being too good at their jobs?

THE NSW Government is starving the state's integrity agencies of funding at the same time some MPs are under investigation for corruption.

Former Liberal Party Whip Daryl McGuire and former Sports Minister John Sidoti went before the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) for allegedly benefitting financially from their elected positions.

As these scandals threaten to overwhelm the NSW Government, the five agencies tasked with weeding out corruption and protecting the public's interests have had their budgets cut by \$15 million over four years.

A \$3.4 million budget cut at the ICAC will force the State's corruption

watchdog to wind back operations and reduce its ability to police potentially corrupt conduct.

The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) will lose \$3.3 million in funding. The LECC oversees the NSW Police Force on a wide range of matters from misconduct and corruption through to complaints about strip searches.

The NSW Audit Office – the State's oldest integrity agency dating back to the 19th century – will lose \$373,000 in funding, curtailing its ability to expose billion-dollar blowouts or the abuse of contract labour in the public sector.

The NSW Electoral Commission upholds the sacred democratic tradition of free and fair elections. It conducts local and state elections as well as ballots for commercial organisations, registered clubs, statutory boards and unions. It maintains registers on lobbyists, donors and election expenditure. It will now have to do all

this with \$4.4 million less funding.

The NSW Ombudsman will lose \$3.4 million in funding, reducing its ability to respond to public enquiries, investigate complaints and monitor compliance with the law.

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little said these budget cuts will inevitably lead to job losses and will undermine the strength of the state's democracy.

"The PSA members working in our integrity agencies hold a very special place in the NSW Public Service," Mr Little said.

"They are corruption fighters, forensic auditors, seasoned investigators and public advocates.

"Together, these agencies protect the public's interest and strengthen the reputation of the NSW Public Service. What these agencies need is independent and consistent funding, allocated at arm's length from the government. That way these agencies will be properly resourced and staffed." ■



STARVING OUR STATE WATCHDOGS

(2020-21 TO 2023-24)

- The Independent Commission Against Corruption – \$3,418,000 cut
- The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission – \$3,316,000 cut
- The Audit Office of NSW – \$373,000 cut
- The NSW Electoral Commission – \$4,425,000 cut
- The NSW Ombudsman – \$3,436,000 cut

VOICE OF THE UNION: JESSIE TALKS PAROLE



A member from Community Corrections helps open up the mystery of the state's prison system.

WHEN her manager was looking for talent for a podcast, PSA member Jessie Slattery-McDonald jokes she was chosen “because she talks more than anyone in the office”.

Ms Slattery-McDonald, 30, is employed in Community Corrections, working to keep people out of the prison system. Along with fellow PSA member Grace Wong, Ms Slattery-McDonald features in *Behind the Walls*, a six-part podcast

about the NSW correctives system. The two members feature in the final episode, which talks about Community Corrections.

Ms Slattery-McDonald says it was good to be part of a project that spoke positively about the “strict and scary” world of Corrections.

The podcast, produced by former *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Michael Duffy, looks into the NSW prison system and was financed by Corrective Services NSW.

For our review of the podcast, see page 47. ■

PRISON OFFICERS WIN MEAL ALLOWANCE DECISION

The PSA had its day in court; – and won.

Last year, Corrective Services NSW instituted a new payroll system that changed the way members’ dinner allowances were paid.

The Award entitles a Correctional Officer to a meal allowance at the dinner rate if they work a rostered shift, then work at least 1.5 hours of overtime that continues beyond 6:00pm.

Under the new system, Corrective Services NSW said this meant that an Officer who ceased their rostered shift at 6:00pm was not entitled to the allowance. The PSA did not agree and lodged a dispute in the Industrial Relations Commission.

The Commissioner agreed with the PSA. Corrective Services now must pay a meal allowance for anyone who ceases a rostered shift at 6:00pm and works overtime for at least 1.5 hours past that time. ■

PSA SECURES LEGAL AID JOBS

More than 90 temporary positions at Legal Aid have been converted to permanent roles thanks to a year-long campaign by the PSA.

The first group of 38 conversions took place in 2020 while another 54 positions

have been converted to permanent roles this year.

PSA Industrial Officer Andrew Wright said the permanent roles were welcomed by PSA members who now had greater job security.

“This will change the lives of many members,” Mr Wright said.

A PSA survey of Legal Aid employees last year found an alarmingly high

percentage was in temporary employment.

More than half the respondents were on contracts of six months or less with temporary staff averaging 12 separate employment contracts each while at Legal Aid.

The survey found 97 per cent wanted an ongoing career with Legal Aid, yet only 30 per cent of staff thought they would ever obtain a permanent position. ■



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UNIVERSITIES

HEALTH AND SAFETY A WINNER IN SYDNEY UNI PARKING OUTCOME

**Thanks to CPSU NSW action,
staff at the University of
Sydney have won exclusive
access to parking facilities in
certain parts of the campus.**

Previously students were given access to parking throughout the campus all day. This led to health and safety issues as staff with mobility issues or those working late hours were unable to find safe places to park.

After meetings between the university Vice-Chancellor and the CPSU NSW, students were prohibited from using the Western Avenue car park between 6:00am and 3:00pm on weekdays, giving staff priority.

"This is a great win for us, as our members' health and safety at work is a priority for us," said CPSU NSW Senior Organiser Anne Kennelly. "We would like to thank everyone who supported the CPSU NSW in this campaign. It shows that if we are organised and support each other we can win."

"We will continue to work with the university to resolve all parking concerns, including re-instating all parking on Camperdown campus back to staff-only until 3:00pm." ■





HOLD THE HORSES IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS

How to spare the bullet and protect our native species.

On 30 January 1788, seven horses became the first of their species to reach the Australian continent. The stallion, three mares and three colts came from Cape

Town on the *Lady Penrhyn*, a former slave ship fitted out to transport 101 female convicts from Britain to the penal colony in Sydney.

According to one tale, a soldier and pastoralist called James Brumby released his horses into the wild when he was transferred to Tasmania in 1801, so the brumbies have carried his name ever since. A more plausible explanation is that the name comes from *baroomby* which means “wild” in the language of the Pitjara people.

Within 30 years, wild horses were established in the Snowy Mountains. Two centuries later the descendants of the first brumbies are at the centre of a fierce community debate over their future in the NSW high country.

One side argues brumbies are part of Australia’s cultural and social heritage and should be allowed to remain in sustainable and manageable numbers inside national parks. Others view the horses as an infestation destroying a fragile alpine ecosystem, calling for their

eradication along with other feral pests.

Caught between these two highly charged groups are the PSA members working for the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). PSA members have been tasked with managing the wild horse population and finding a balance between protecting biodiversity and the need to treat the animals humanely.

In 2018, the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee warned the feral horses were pushing dozens of at-risk species closer to extinction by damaging streams, wetlands and adjacent countryside. The independent committee said 23 plant and 11 animal species were threatened by the horses.

Alpine and sub-alpine regions, it said, were particularly at risk because of the large number of slow-growing species together with a short growing season. In contrast, the large-bodied horses are mobile grazers with few natural predators or diseases and attributes that have enabled them to thrive under a wide range of ecological conditions.

A 2020 NSW Government survey revealed there are more than 14,000 wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park. The survey shows the population had declined from around a population of 19,000 horses the previous year. This drop was primarily due to the management techniques used by NPWS and the impact of drought and fires.

With a third of the Kosciuszko National Park devastated by the 2019-20 bushfires, wild horses are inhibiting an emergency recovery plan to restore wildlife populations. The scientific advice is that horses and other pests hinder the post-fire recovery of vegetation and the survival of native animals.

In response, NPWS is undertaking the largest pest management program in NSW’s history, targeting pigs, goats, deer, cats and foxes.

A special horse population reduction program is underway around the Nungar, Cooleman and Kiandra Plains in the north of the park where threatened species and sensitive ecological communities are most vulnerable to trampling by horses.

The program uses passive trapping, which allows NPWS to rehome as many horses as possible. Between July 2020 and April 2021, more than 500 horses have been removed with 96 per cent rehomed. Rehoming groups and individuals can apply to NPWS to take a horse but must first demonstrate experience and expertise in handling and training wild horses as well as their commitment to animal welfare standards.

The current program does not involve shooting wild horses or other forms of euthanasia within traps or within the park, except where it is the humane course of action, for example, where an animal is injured or ill. ■

LOYALTY OF GENERAL ASSISTANTS TAKEN FOR GRANTED

No two schools are the same, and the same is true for their General Assistants (GAs). If there is one quality they all share it is loyalty to their school community and students.

Sadly, this loyalty is often unreciprocated and unappreciated. Many GAs are asked to do things well outside the scope of their duties with management knowing they will comply rather than let the students down.

“GAs are incredibly dedicated to their schools,” said Dylan Smith, Acting Industrial Manager of the PSA’s Schools team. “But their dedication is often taken advantage of.”

“The job of the GA has evolved enormously in the last decade. It used to be mainly about mowing lawns and taking care of the grounds. Now there are a whole lot of additional requirements placed on them. The work load is increasing every year. The schools expect extra work but they aren’t giving them extra money.”

A common example cited by many GAs is the requirement they look after contractors on the school grounds. GAs are asked to book them in, escort them to and from the job and check their work is up to standard.

According to the NSW Department of Education, GAs are not required to supervise contractors. They are employed to support student learning by:

- preparing and maintaining equipment
- preparing materials and constructing teaching aids
- undertaking minor maintenance of building, plant and equipment
- receiving and distributing stores and goods delivered to the school
- maintaining and caring for school grounds.

Sam Sale is the GA at Wadalba Community School and a member of the PSA’s GA Advisory Group. With more than 1650 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 12, Mr Sale arrives before 6:00am each day to get a jump on his daily to-do list.

“GAs spend a huge amount of time dealing with contractors, organising

“ LIKE ALL GENERAL ASSISTANTS, WE KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOL THAN ANYONE ELSE ”

where they are going, booking their appointments, know who is coming and when,” Mr Sale said. “It is the GAs that have to organise the repairs.”

“In a big school you need every class functioning all the time because there is nowhere else for the students to go. So GAs have to work out a plan and a timetable for the repairs to happen. Like all GAs, we know more about the school than anyone else.”

GA at Hinchinbrook Primary and GA Advisory Group Member Michael Jedniuk, said “contractors who come in, do the job and walk out” are not committed to schools and their future wellbeing the way full-time staff are. ■



PSA AND CPSU NSW MEMBERS ARE CHAMPIONS OF THE STATE



Our Champions of the State Campaign is celebrating its first anniversary. Congratulations to the many PSA/CPSU NSW members featured in our social media posts during the past 12 months. Your union colleagues thank you for the incredible work you do on behalf of the people of NSW.



Vi is the Business Manager at Bonnyrigg Public School. She is responsible for the efficient management of the school's business functions. Vi manages administrative functions relating to compliance with legislation and departmental policies and procedure. With senior executives, she coordinates the school's financial affairs.



Karla has worked for the Supreme Court of NSW for 26 years and is a Senior Client Services Officer in the Court of Criminal Appeal. She plays an essential role in administering justice in NSW, ensuring court matters are dealt with in a timely manner and providing assistance to clients attending court proceedings.



As a Caseworker with Community Services, **Oliver** works to support vulnerable young people and their families. His employer, the Department of Communities and Justice, Out of Home Care, helps to ensure children and young people are kept safe. This is vital work protecting some of the most vulnerable people in the state.



Sue works in the contact-tracing team at the NSW Ministry of Health. Her role is critical to containing the spread of COVID-19 in our state. As the pandemic once again rears its ugly head and cases go up, the state turns to the dedicated team of Contact Tracers to keep track of where those with the virus have visited while potentially infectious.

NOT SO SUPER: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TINKERS WITH YOUR SAVINGS

In June, the Morrison Government partnered with One Nation and Centre Alliance to pass a significantly flawed piece of legislation, the Your Future, Your Super Act. This Act is a concerted attempt at ensuring that for-profit superannuation funds have systemic advantage over the better-performing, all-profit-to-members industry super funds.

The legislation will change the operation of default funds, introduce performance benchmarking for some funds, and significantly change the regulations that not-for-profit, industry superannuation funds have to comply with.

Under the Act, from 1 November, every worker who currently has a superannuation fund account will be 'stapled' to that fund. Currently as you change jobs or careers, if you don't elect otherwise, you will join the workplace default fund. For most workers, this means joining your industry-appropriate default fund. The advantage of this is that you have a fund which understands your workplace, your preferences and can tailor products and services which suit you. Because most workers are joining their industry fund, they are going to be in a high-performing fund.

The law as passed will upend that. Rather than you getting a new super account, you will be tied to your first fund unless you decide to change. The intention of this measure is to prevent the creation of multiple superannuation accounts, but the effect could be devastating for millions of Australians. Inevitably, this will lead to a race to create the first Dollarmites for superannuation – catching young people setting up bank accounts to also set up super for life.

From 1 November, three million Australians will be stapled to funds

that would fail coming performance benchmarks. Among those, there are workers who will never be told they are in an underperforming fund because the Government has excluded them from performance benchmarking. These workers could be left hundreds of thousands of dollars worse off in retirement.

For workers in high-risk industries, insurance is often unaffordable or unavailable outside of super. Workers in such industries will be left without insurance cover they would receive through their default fund.

The introduction of performance benchmarks for superannuation funds is welcome. However, the Government has arbitrarily excluded \$500 billion of assets under management from performance benchmarking. These are some of the worst performing funds which were criticised by a Royal Commission for excessive fees. The Government excluded these funds from benchmarking because they are largely for-profit, bank-owned funds. Workers could be stapled to such a fund for life and never know it was underperforming.

Finally, the Government has made changes to the regulations governing superannuation funds – in a way which makes your industry super fund less efficient without affecting for-profit funds. It has introduced a reverse-onus-of-proof on all expenses made by a fund. This means the fund has to generate a business case for any purchase – even a stapler – to ensure they are complying with the law. They're calling this the best financial interests duty and funds are assumed in law to be breaking the law unless they can prove otherwise.

Yet for-profit funds are essentially exempt from this duty. The Government has written the law in a way such that profits paid

by funds owned by the banks are deemed in members' financial interests. So banks can reap profits from members and run ads and marketing campaigns that would otherwise fail the best-financial-interests duty. This gives for-profit funds a systemic advantage over industry super funds when competing for new members, something the Government has been trying to achieve since John Howard's days.

These laws can hurt members. For those in industry funds, administration fees may increase to compensate for all the new regulations and laws that have been lumped on them. Those in underperforming funds may never get out. The big winners out of this law change are the banks and we will need to work harder to ensure they don't consolidate their victory.

Joining your union and having a conversation with your delegate are among the most effective and important ways to ensuring your retirement savings are in good hands. Many PSA members may have multiple accounts, while non-members may have been duped by the Government into staying in an underperforming fund.

Meanwhile, get to know your super and read your statements, comparing them to other funds. ■





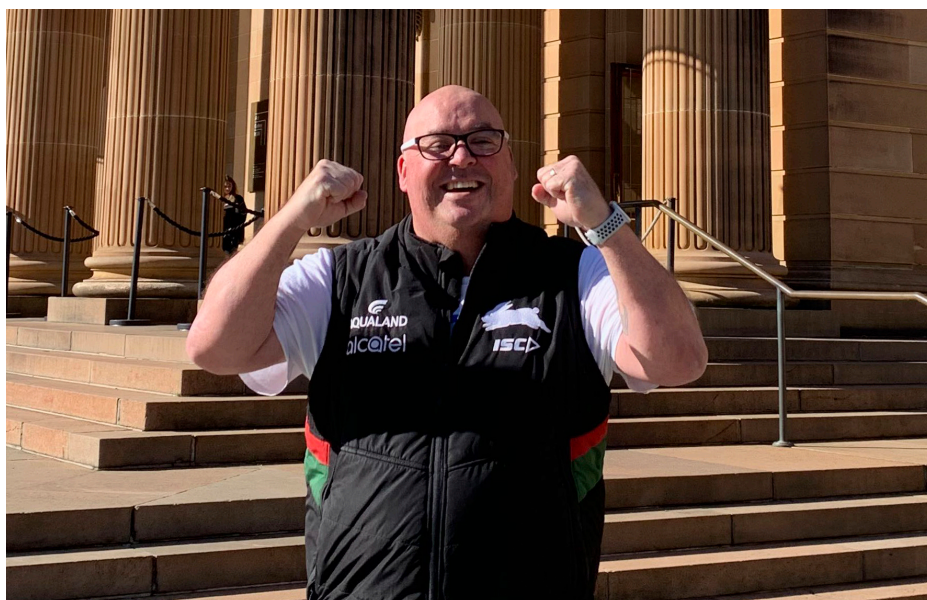
PSA SUPPORTS GIDGET FOUNDATION LAUNCH FOR DADS

Your union supports a Gidget Foundation launch.

The Foundation, which helps parents cope with perinatal depression, launched a video resource, Understanding Perinatal Depression and Anxiety for Dads aimed at getting men to overcome their reluctance to ask for assistance.

Mal Cochrane (above), Manager Relationships and Strategy with the PSA/CPSU NSW, represented the union.

Financial PSA/CPSU NSW members and their immediate families have free access to the foundation's programs for perinatal depression and anxiety. ■



STRENGTH IN A PHONE CALL

After a call to the PSA, members in the Art Gallery of NSW received an unpaid clothing allowance.

Security Officer Dane McIntosh contacted his union's Member Support Centre (MSC). There he spoke to an Officer, Jessica Jobberns, who looked into the *Crown Award* and drafted communications to Art Gallery Human Resources. This move was successful in securing one year's back payment and the clothing allowance being added into the pay packet of members.

However, Ms Jobberns correctly identified this was not the full amount owed to the Security Staff and the issue was triaged up to PSA Organiser Davis Murphy to organise collective pressure so PSA members received the full amount owed.

Mr Murphy followed up with formal correspondence seeking the full amount owed to PSA Security Staff, successfully winning the members five years' back pay.

"One year's back pay is approximately \$200 to \$250," said Mr Murphy "Because of the PSA, they will now be receiving at least \$1000 back pay."

"These members work midnight shifts, early morning, late afternoon, all hours of the day – this will make a real difference."

Mr McIntosh emailed the PSA to say "how grateful I am to know that I have had Jessica Jobberns on my side in relation to the issues I have raised."

"Jessica has gone over and above in her support of me. Her diligence and compassion and understanding of what the issues are and what we face daily has so helped me feel I have the support of the union 110 per cent."

"Without people like Jessica we members would be lost."

"The PSA Membership in the Security Staff took ownership of this matter. They picked up the Award, realised there was a discrepancy in their pay packet and (with PSA assistance) contacted Human Resources."

"The security staff take great pride in protecting the Art Gallery of NSW's priceless collection. At our meeting, they didn't ask for anything more than what they were entitled to as a condition of their employment. They noticed they were being underpaid, and they knew the PSA had the industrial knowledge to assist in securing the clothing allowance."

"The PSA MSC was instrumental in pushing for the clothing allowance. The staff there are industrial professionals who are here to help PSA members."

"It just goes to show – a PSA membership is dollars in your pocket. The PSA ensures your pay and conditions are defended, extended and upheld." ■

TAX TIME

By mid- July, you should have received a tax statement for payments in the 2020-21 tax year. With staff working from home in July, members are urged to be patient.

If you pay 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 income statement (the old group certificates), accessed via the MyGov portal.

Invoice You will have received a receipt at time of payment.

Direct debit and credit card payers can log into the Members' Area and download their tax statement. ■



Kerry-Ann Tape



Delegates embody our work and keep our union growing.

Realising other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff wanted to feel “heard, seen, and represented in a culturally safe manner”, State Library Assistant Librarian Kerry-Ann Tape took the plunge and became a Delegate, taking her role in the fight for Unity, Strength and Respect in her workplace.

After receiving help from the union, she realised she wanted to make sure workers in her wake receive similar support.

“I was supported by the PSA in 2019,” she said. “I want to support PSA members through bullying and discrimination, so that no-one feels alone and unsupported.”

OUR FOUNDATION

Delegates are the foundation of a strong, growing union. They are often the first to learn of a workplace issue and are usually the first point of union contact a new colleague will meet.

“My role is made so much easier thanks to Delegates like Ms Tape,” said Organiser

**I ENCOURAGE OTHER
DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS TO
HELP PROTECT WORKERS’
RIGHTS AND ADVOCATE
FOR THOSE UNABLE TO
ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES**

Davis Murphy, who covers the State Library. “I can’t be at the library every day. She is my eyes and ears at the site, encouraging non-members to join.

“If she hears about a workplace issue, she alerts us straight away. Delegates like her help grow our union.”

“The past five years have seen excellent growth in membership,” said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. “This is thanks to our valuable Delegates, backed up by Organisers, Industrial Officers and the rest of our union’s support structure.

“We talk about building Unity, Strength and Respect but these are just pipe dreams without boots on the ground,

BUILDING UNITY

“Delegates need to create safe workplaces, where we are valued.”

Kerry-Ann Tape, State Library

“It is about joining the union together as a collective.”

John Williams, Northcott

“We have open-door meetings when anyone can come in and see what the union is and what we do.”

**Scott Pendlebury,
Western Sydney University**

“Listening and hearing what is affecting members.”

**Belinda Tsirekas,
Community Services**

“Just work together.”

**Jaemi Templeton,
Community Corrections**

“We need to get together and mingle with our colleagues.”

Janaka Biyanwila, TAFE



Janaka Biyanwila

pointing out why their colleagues need to sign up and telling us directly what issues are affecting our members.

“They build Unity by working as a point of contact for all members in a workplace; they build Strength with every new member they sign up; and they build Respect through being a relatable face to the union.”

PAYING IT FORWARD

John Williams, a long-time member who works as a Disability Support Worker at Northcott, saw the union supporting members in what can be a challenging workplace. So he decided to become a Delegate to bring more people into the union.

“I realised the more people we had signed up the louder our voice will be,” he said. “I am never hesitant about telling potential members what the union means;

better conditions, better wages and safer workplaces.”

Mr Williams has furthered his interest in workplace health and safety and chairs the Northcott WHS Committee to ensure all Disability Support Workers are employed in a safe environment.

Scott Pendlebury, at Western Sydney University, became a Delegate after acting as a support person for another member facing a disciplinary issue. He found the experience to be a positive one, and so moved to become the face of the union in his workplace, even though, at the time, he had only been a member for about two years.

“I decided to be a Delegate, be active and get involved,” he said. “I found the union helpful and I wanted other potential members to realise that, too.”

For many Delegates, the chance to “pay it forward” and make sure future

members don’t encounter the same difficulties they themselves endured earlier in their careers is a strong motivator to take on the role.

After navigating a number of workplace issues with her employer, Community Services Child Protection Worker Belinda Tsirekas realised the “union was a great source of support and knowledge and had my back”. She knew the more members there were, the better the workplace, so

BUILDING STRENGTH

“We are stronger together, working towards safer workplaces, and secure employment for all.”

Kerry-Ann Tape, State Library

“Strength comes by joining the union and uniting to a common idea.”

John Williams, Northcott

“Be brave. We have rights at work, so don’t be afraid to stand up for them. We are trusted, and valued and get personally involved with the issues that show up.”

**Scott Pendlebury,
Western Sydney University**

“Whenever there are issues, people have seen Jose our Organiser come here and be front and centre, having meetings and listening to people and supporting people, and that presence builds strength. When I came to this office, there were very few members. Now it is standing room only in our union meetings. People can see the value in being a union member.”

**Belinda Tsirekas,
Community Services**

“We need to demonstrate to non-members the strength of the collective.”

**Jaemi Templeton,
Community Corrections**

“We need to talk to non-members about the role of unions as a part of civil society. Building a movement is important. We need to be active in our local communities.”

Janaka Biyanwila, TAFE

IT TAKES COURAGE TO REPRESENT YOURSELF AND OTHERS, SO BEING COURAGEOUS IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY IS DEFINITELY A CHALLENGE

she put her hand up to become a Delegate in her office. She is now a member of the Workplace Group Committee and the Community Services Departmental Committee.

"I could see similar things going on in the workplace that I had to deal with, so I wanted to be an advocate for people and strongly advocate for them to join," she said. "People now feel secure I am there being quite forthright and not afraid to speak up about issues or be there as a support if they get called in to speak to a manager."

Jaemi Templeton, a Unit Leader at Wollongong Community Corrections, had joined the union after seeing it in action during a 2012 dispute over the renewal of temporary Case Managers.

"The union came in and saved everyone and I thought, 'Yes, I'm in,'" she said.

In common with many PSA/CPSU NSW Delegates, Ms Templeton didn't chase the role. She was put up to the job by workmates who thought she had the necessary qualities to overcome what she says was a toxic work environment at the time.

"Being a Delegate requires a strong sense of integrity and justice," she said. "It is about having the courage to call out bad behaviour. It is putting your name to motions that don't look good higher up."

"Delegates should not worry about calling out bad behaviour," said General Secretary Stewart Little. "The PSA/CPSU NSW will always back up its Delegates."

SKILL SETS

No two Delegates are the same. Each brings a particular skill set to the role.

With a PhD in Labour Studies, TAFE Policy Officer Janaka Biyanwila was an obvious choice when his colleagues were looking for a Delegate to represent them in a time when the vocational system is under attack from the State Government.

"A Delegate and our Organiser Shane encouraged me," he said. "And I very much enjoy the role."

In addition to his academic qualifications, Dr Biyanwila says he brings experience from working in TAFE and previous roles, as well as "a multicultural perspective" to the role, which helps the union reach out to a wider pool of non-members.

Not all qualities are academic qualifications. Mr Pendlebury of Western Sydney University said different people specialise in particular Delegate roles.

"I think I am a good negotiator," he said. "If people see what we can negotiate on their behalf, I think they are more likely to join."

Mr Pendlebury said he is available "24 hours" for members with workplace issues.

The State Library's Ms Tape said, "It takes courage to represent yourself and



Belinda Tsirekas



Scott Pendlebury



John Williams



Jaemi Templeton

**RESPECT IS EARNED BY
WHO WE ARE, A SWORD
OF JUSTICE**

others, so being courageous in times of uncertainty is definitely a challenge.

“But if not us, then who? If not now, then when?”

Ms Tsirekas from Community Services said being a Delegate requires “confidence and lots of information sharing and being very frank about the difficulties working in the public service”.

A DIVERSE FUTURE

Ms Tape believes members who reflect the PSA/CPSU NSW’s diverse membership need to put up their hands and nominate themselves as Delegates.

“We need more diversity in PSA Delegates,” she said. “I am a temporary staff member, Indigenous and a person with disabilities. I encourage other diverse individuals to help protect workers’ rights and advocate for those unable to advocate for themselves.”

TAFE’s Janaka Biyanwila agrees. He wants to see more women from non-English-speaking backgrounds put themselves forward to be Delegates and work to build well-unionised workplaces that fit the mantra of Unity, Strength and Respect. ■

RAISE YOUR HAND

Interested in becoming a Delegate?

If you feel you have what it takes to be the face of the union in your workplace, contact your **Organiser, Industrial Officer or the Member Support Centre** on 1300 772 679. Delegates receive training, with most members eligible for special trade union leave so they won’t have to dip into their holiday entitlements.

State and Federal laws protect Delegates from employer vicimisation or harassment.

BUILDING RESPECT

“Being a good unionist means building respectful relationships built on mutual trust and understanding. PSA Delegates have a capacity to raise workplace issues to HR, and have issues heard and appropriately responded to. The PSA has earned members’ respect by taking their issues seriously and responding to them in a timely manner.”

Kerry-Ann Tape, State Library

“Listening is important. It is about letting others voice their concerns.”

John Williams, Northcott

“We are in this together.”

**Scott Pendlebury,
Western Sydney University**

“Make sure when people share information with you, it stays with you.”

**Belinda Tsirekas,
Community Services**

“You have got to walk the talk. You have to lead by example.”

**Jaemi Templeton,
Community Corrections**

“Respect is earned by who we are, a sword of justice. We are not just workers. We are citizens. What we do cascades into all aspects of work.”

Janaka Biyanwila, TAFE

KEEP YOUR PRIVATE LIFE... PRIVATE

Don't let social media result in anti-social outcomes.

PSA and CPSU NSW members often work in sensitive and highly volatile environments. Whether it's dealing with violent criminals in a corrections facility or rescuing a child from a dangerous family situation, our members put their own safety on the line to protect others.

Your job can attract unwanted attention, from vexatious complaints through to physical assaults, so keeping your professional life separated from your personal life is so important. Here are some steps to take to protect your privacy and keep your private life private.

SOCIAL MEDIA

An innocent set of posts or comments online can leave a trail of crumbs that leads to revelations you would prefer not to publicise. Photos of special moments can show the suburb where you live, the appearance of your house, whether you have a partner or a dog, how old your children are and which schools they attend.

Set your social media settings to private and even think about using an alias. This won't affect your access to social media content such as the PSA and CPSU NSW Facebook pages.

SEARCH YOURSELF

Open a search engine and enter your name. You will see what others can find. Now start hiding it by changing the privacy settings on apps you use. Review passwords to ensure they aren't easy to guess.

TALK TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Talk with family and friends about the need to protect your privacy. Ask them not to post or share photos or comments about you on social media without your permission. Most importantly, never provide answers to unknown people asking about you, particularly if they claim to be "old friends looking to get in touch".

DON'T LEAVE IT LYING AROUND

Destroy documents with personal information. Shred papers, physically destroy expired banking and government-



issued cards and dispose of old ID cards and badges. It may be possible for someone to learn a lot of private information from things you throw into your garbage. You should also wipe the drives and do a complete reset on any mobile phone, tablet or computer you no longer use.

NAME TAGS

Many government agencies issue name tags to staff including given

and surnames. However, this may be a problem if someone remembers your name and tries to contact you outside of work. This is particularly an issue for people with less-common names. Members in Corrective Services NSW have been advised not to wear name tags for this reason. If you have any concerns about the impact on your privacy of wearing a name tag, contact the Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679. ■

ANNUAL CONFERENCE



2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Unity, Strength and Respect were on centre stage at our 2021 Annual Conference.

Back after a two-year, COVID-enforced break, the PSA/CPSU NSW Conference covered topics as diverse as tax avoidance, climate change, growth strategies and superannuation. The three-day event started with Country Conference, giving non-metropolitan Delegates a chance to discuss issues that affect the regions. Country Conference attendees were welcomed by Aboriginal Liaison Officer Ann Weldon, who told a heartbreaking story of a young brother taken by authorities, never to be seen by his family again.

The centrepiece of Country Conference was a forum convened by South Coast Labour Council Secretary Arthur Rorris, talking about strategies to boost government services and the union movement in non-metropolitan NSW.

Your union's Regional Organisers talked about the wins and cases in their parts of the state, as well as issues familiar to the metropolitan members, such as COVID's effect on universities, cuts to TAFE staff and the ongoing assault on public services. In addition, there are unique problems in the regions, such as the mouse plague and skills shortages in smaller centres.

Paul James from the Newcastle office talked about challenges in the Upper Hunter, an area that recently returned the National Party in a byelection.

Regional Organisers shared strategies on how to recruit members in the country.

Annual Conference kicked off the following day, with President Nicole Jess opening with a commitment to grow the union in her first term and to continue the PSA/CPSU NSW's focus on mental health and fighting bullying and sexual harassment at work.

General Secretary Stewart Little expressed his joy at being able to talk to a full room after 2020's COVID-19 restrictions before singling out the members who had been thrust into the frontline in the previous two years, including those in agencies with fire-fighting arms.

"Thank you for putting my safety, my family's safety and my community's safety before your own," he said.

He also acknowledged the role of

sections such as Community Services and Housing, which stepped into assist those affected after the blazes had passed.

Mr Little talked about the work done by NSW Health and its role in fighting the pandemic, stating "we owe you a great deal of gratitude".

Mr Little contrasted the vital roles members play with "the slap in the face from the Berejiklian Government to frontline workers with cuts to pay rises" and talked of the need to try and "avoid getting locked into a cycle of reduced pay rises".

MARK MOREY VOWED TO FIGHT FOR "THE RIGHT TO DISCONNECT FROM WORK"

He also expressed his bewilderment at media praise for Gladys Berejiklian, pointing out "it's our members who fought the bushfires, it's our members in the Ministry of Health running the contact-tracing". Instead, the Premier had conducted a "continued assault on TAFE and regional jobs and working women".

"It is critical we hang onto TAFE," said

Mr Little. "Now, more than ever, we need TAFE and we need strong support for our universities."

Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey echoed Mr Little's praise for members, adding "there is not a single Public Servant who has not delivered for the people of NSW".

He spoke of the unusual dichotomy of low unemployment but low wage growth currently gripping the country's workers.

"Usually when we see a tightening of the labour market, you see an increase in wages," he said. "But this is not happening.

"It is unlikely we will see any private sector employer stepping up to the plate to increase wages. The public sector drives wage rises. [NSW Treasurer Dominic] Perrottet needs to raise wages."

Sluggish wage growth doesn't just affect workers, he said – its effects "will be felt by every business in NSW".

Mr Morey spoke of the "business models of exploitation" such as horticulture, where workers were paid as little as \$1.25 an hour in an environment rife with sexual abuse and bullying.

As COVID-19 blurred the lines between work and home, he vowed to fight for "the right to disconnect from work".

"We are not working from home, we are living at work," Mr Morey added.

PSA/CPSU NSW member and the first ever Aboriginal candidate for Lord Mayor of Sydney, Yvonne Weldon, took the stage





to talk about the inspiration she had derived from famed First Nations figures such as Mum Shirl and Paul Coe in her quest to win Town Hall.

"I stand as an independent woman, as a Wiradjuri woman, I stand for all of you," she said. "I want to be the first Aboriginal Lord Mayor in this country."

Independent journalist Michael West used Conference to continue his crusade against tax-minimising companies such as Exxon Mobile and Google. A former writer with *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian*, Mr West said while a Federal Government Inquiry into Tax Avoidance: resulted in some improvements, corporations "still aren't paying their fair share". This affected the Treasury balances required to pay for the services provided by PSA/CPSU NSW members.

Mr West estimates that corporate giants have avoided paying between \$20 billion and \$30 billion a year. Not only were companies avoiding paying tax, but they were also putting their hands out for benefits such as JobKeeper.

"They are whingeing, complaining, playing behind the scenes and pretending to be poor," he said.

He singled out companies such as Lendlease, Transurban and IKEA as being particularly adept at avoiding paying their way. He offered some praise to the country's banking sector which generally pays tax, and mining companies, which have improved their performance.

Sadly, Mr West added, the media were beholden to big companies for advertising revenue, so were reluctant to cover tax avoidance in any depth, while the Australian Taxation Office had limited resources to pursue cases.

"There is hope to be had," he said. "There won't be a civil society if they don't address these issues. Eventually there will be a reckoning, and they will have to tax these large institutions."

Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Sally McManus spoke via Zoom about "the perils of insecure work", praising the PSA for ensuring members such as Contact Tracers were given permanent positions.

Ms McManus also talked about how the country's union movement will target younger members and those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

"People think unions are good and important," she said. "But that isn't enough for them to join."

Then Opposition Spokesperson on Skills, Jihad Dib, echoed Stewart Little's earlier statements on TAFE, talking about its appeal to a wide cross-section of society and not just school leavers. If it was to continue its role creating the professionals of the future, he said it needed to shed its image as the poor cousin of tertiary education.

"TAFE is not a lesser option," he said. "You're not just a tradie, you're not just a childcare worker."

For TAFE to continue its work, he said, the State Government needs to support it properly and not continue its campaign of campus closures and sell-offs.

"There is an education responsibility in government," he said. "Yet Scone TAFE was sold because the Government doesn't want anything to do with it."

A panel on COVID-19 included representatives from Service NSW, Community Services, Correctives, Western

Sydney University (WSU) and Schools.

From Community Services, Allison Corrigan talked about the trauma of bringing often confronting work issues home, expressing hope the Department of Communities and Justice "could do a lot more" for workers.

Janice Hartmann of Service NSW pointed out working from home affected union recruitment, yet she still "made sure people knew I was still available" using technology such as Teams. She added training sessions for new staff still helped recruit new members.

Scott Pendlebury of WSU praised members for their reaction to a new working environment, pointing out they managed to send out 1000 laptops

PEOPLE THINK UNIONS ARE GOOD, BUT THAT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR THEM TO JOIN

to students. He also talked about the cooperation between management and members in using staff leave to save jobs cuts, even earning employees a \$500 bonus.

Natalie Howes from Correctives talked about members' quick response to COVID-19 and the way they managed effects such as riots that broke out as a ban on visits cut off drug-smuggling avenues.

Kathryn Ralton discussed working with special-needs children who needed the familiarity of routine, giving them no option to home school.

In a later panel on climate change, Ben



Owers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) talked about dry rivers, trees in heat stress and bushfires – with job cuts affecting the number of people able to deal with the issues. Another NPWS panelist, Janet Cavanaugh, said staff did not get to normal business in the six months between fires and floods, as natural disasters are happening much more frequently.

“We’re starting to have to make hard choices about what we want to preserve,” she said.

Nicole Harding from the State Emergency Service (SES) said recent floods “were the worst we’ve seen”. Again, staff numbers hampered the SES, which she pointed out recently coordinated 200 rescues with only six communications staff.

Steve Lewer talked about biodiversity credits and the work PSA members perform making up for the Federal Government’s abandonment of environmental and climate change policies.

On the final day, Conference heard from Joseph Mitchell, the ACTU’s superannuation campaigner.

He pointed out “most underperforming funds are the retail, for-profit funds” that are favoured by the Federal Government. Yet the better-performing not-for-profit funds were put under more scrutiny than for-profit funds.

Alison Pennington of the Australia Institute’s Centre for Future Work talked about how governments need to heed the disasters of austerity programs in the 1930s and more recently in 2007-08, claiming “wage freezes are a knee-jerk response by optics-driven politicians” that carry over to the private sector.

“Public sector wages are an investment, not a cost,” she said. “A unionised public sector can lead national economic reconstruction.”

Women’s Industrial Officer Claire Pullen chaired a panel on sexual harassment, featuring Peta Waller-Bryant from State Parliament, Shelley Odewahn from Southern Cross University and Service NSW’s Janice Hartmann.

Ms Pullen talked about the “big, ambitious and long” model clause devised by the PSA/CPSU NSW Women’s Unit and Women’s Council. Ms Odewahn added she was pushing hard to get the model clause into university Enterprise Agreements.

Ms Waller-Bryant discussed how ending sexual harassment was not just an issue of health and safety, but of workers’ rights.

Ms Hartmann talked about the failure of Service NSW to allow members to simply hang up or walk away from abusive situations.

“I should be entitled to walk away,” she said. ■





YOU ARE BETTER OFF IN A UNION

Bargaining power: union members have it, individual employees don't. And that power translates into better pay and conditions.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), NSW trade union members on average earn \$334 more each week than non-union members. That's 30 per cent more money in the pocket of the unionists. As Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Secretary Sally McManus says, joining your union is the fastest way to increase your pay.

Union members are better off – the question is why? Why do union members effectively earn a day or more in extra pay each week?

HISTORY OF SUCCESS

Getting a better deal for members is what unions do. And historically the unions have been very effective at it.

Nearly every benefit in the lives of working Australians came from union action. The eight-hour day, equal pay for women, annual leave, maternity leave, sick leave, penalty rates, health and safety rules, workers' compensation insurance, redundancy payments and superannuation are just some of the examples of rights won by unions.

THE ACCORD

Unions have always been prepared to adapt to changing economic and political fortunes in order to get the best deal for their members.

In 1983 the ACTU signed the historic Prices and Income Accord with the soon-to-be-elected Australian Labor Party led by Bob Hawke. The union movement agreed to moderate wage demands in return for half-yearly wage increases linked to inflation, improved pensions and unemployment benefits, more spending on education, tax cuts for lower income workers, Medicare and superannuation.

THE LIVING WAGE

The Accord ended in 1996 with the election of the Howard Government,

which was ideologically opposed to a centralised income policy.

Unions knew working people, especially those on lower incomes, would go backwards under a free-market approach to setting wages. So in 1996, the ACTU applied for a "Living Wage" – an increase in the award rate to a level that would allow a worker to belong to and participate in the Australian community.

The Living Wage had few friends outside the union movement. It was opposed by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, The Business Council of Australia, Australian Chamber of Manufacturers, the Metal Trades Industry Association and The National Farmers Federation.

In 1998, the unions won an increase in award rates and the minimum wage. It wasn't as large an increase as they had asked for but it was well in excess of what the Howard Government and business lobby wanted.

WORKCHOICES

In 2005 Prime Minister Howard announced WorkChoices, a new

industrial relations system that encouraged individual work contracts. It also reduced the protection provided by unions, the now-defunct Industrial Relations Commission and unfair dismissal laws.

Under WorkChoices an employer could sack a worker if they refused to sign a contract that included a pay cut and reduced conditions. The PSA/CPSU NSW joined the campaign against WorkChoices. In its submission to a 2006 NSW Parliamentary Inquiry, then General Secretary John Cahill slammed WorkChoices as “an ideological attack on the rights of workers to organise and bargain collectively with their employer”.

Australian unions went to war against the new laws that stripped away basic employee rights and at the 2007 Federal election, WorkChoices was rejected, the Government defeated and John Howard lost his seat.

FAIR WORK

WorkChoices was replaced by the Fair Work system in 2009 and is based on national industry awards, a national minimum wage and protection from unfair dismissal. The *Fair Work Act* does not apply to NSW public sector and local government employees. However, it covers employees in TAFE, universities and disabilities, as well as employees whose jobs have been privatised.

The key to the Fair Work system is enterprise bargaining where employers, employees and unions negotiate to make an Enterprise Agreement (EA). The Fair Work legislation requires a worker to be “better off overall” under any new proposed enterprise agreement when compared to the applicable award.

With this protection in place, unions have been able to consistently deliver better results for their members when negotiating new or updated EAs. Commonwealth Government figures show union-negotiated EAs deliver a 2.7 per cent annual wage increase compared to 2.5 per cent for non-union agreements.

Centre for Future Work senior economist Alison Pennington says union members earn more because they are more likely to be covered by a union-bargained EA.

“Wage increases under non-union EAs are consistently and significantly lower than in union EAs – on average one percentage-point lower than for union-covered EAs

since 2010,” Ms Pennington said.

“Alarming, the majority of non-union EAs approved between 2006 and 2019 did not specify any wage increases at all, instead linking wage increases to non-legislated measures like CPI, minimum wage decisions, or employer discretion.

“In addition to lower or no wage increases, the average duration of non-union EAs is longer than for union EAs, locking in their inferior wage outcomes for longer periods of time.”

**JOINING YOUR UNION
IS THE FASTEST WAY TO
INCREASE YOUR PAY**

TIME TO PUSH WAGES UP

Even allowing for the better wage increases negotiated by unions, Australia’s wage growth has been consistently weak for a decade and is currently growing at the slowest rate since the end of the Second World War.


When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, wage growth all but ended. Then in March, Reserve Bank Governor Philip Lowe put a return to strong wage growth at the centre of Australia’s response to the economic challenge of COVID-19. He said interest rates won’t rise until we see wage growth of about three per cent – a rate of increase not seen for a decade.

Many economists argued that the Australian and NSW Governments could get wages moving by ending the freeze on public sector wages, something we saw in the most recent State Budget. They say wage caps act as a benchmark for wages in other industries.

Ms Pennington said achieving wage increases will require changes to the industrial relations system and a strengthening of the power of unions in the bargaining process.

“Australia’s uniquely harsh restrictions on industrial action should also be relaxed to enable workers to take collective action to support their economic and social interests. These changes would restore the ability of the collective bargaining system to lift wages at a time when Australia’s economy sorely needs it,” Ms Pennington said. ■





ENTERPRISE BARGAINING YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

It's a big year for the CPSU NSW and its bargaining team with 18 new Enterprise Agreements (EAs) to be negotiated. For many members, this will be their first experience making an EA. The process can appear complex at first, but fortunately they are not alone. They have the experience and expertise of their union helping them every step of the way.

Employees in a union have more bargaining power when negotiating their pay and conditions. So it is important you encourage your colleagues to join the union so you can all benefit from the enterprise bargaining process. Here is what you need to know about enterprise bargaining and the role of your union.

WHAT IS AN ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT?

An EA is a negotiated agreement between you and your employer that has been approved by the Fair Work Commission (FWC). An EA sets out the terms and conditions of your employment. An

EA can cover your wages, allowances, hours of work, shifts and rosters, leave arrangements, staffing levels, and penalty rates as well as your rights to be in a union. It is an agreement between you and your employer that has been approved by the FWC.

AM I COVERED BY AN EA?

Not every employee is eligible to be covered by an EA. EAs are part of Australia's national workplace relations system created by the Commonwealth Government in the *Fair Work Act 2009* (FWA). The national system covers members working in:

- Disability and homecare services
- TAFE NSW

- NSW power companies
- NSW universities
- Privately run correctional centres
- State-owned corporations
- Other specialist statutory organisations.

WHAT ELSE DOES AN EA COVER?

- The expiry date, which can be no more than four years away
- How disputes are resolved
- How terms of the agreement can be varied
- A requirement to consult employees about major workplace changes
- Union rights such as training leave and paid time off to attend union meetings.

WHAT IS ENTERPRISE BARGAINING?

Enterprise bargaining is the way you negotiate the terms of your EA with your employer. The process involves collective bargaining, which means all employees bargain for their terms and conditions together as a group and not as individuals. Collective bargaining makes the process fairer by strengthening the position of employees, especially union members.

ARE THERE RULES FOR BARGAINING?

The rules of the bargaining process are in the FWA, which sets out what can and cannot be in an EA, as well as how each side should behave during the bargaining process. These rules ensure your interests are taken into account as well as the needs of your employer. The rules state that any new EA must improve your working conditions or it won't be approved.

WHAT IS A BARGAINING REPRESENTATIVE?

Your bargaining representative looks after your interests and negotiates on your behalf. The CPSU NSW automatically becomes the bargaining representative for all our members. You should encourage your colleagues to join the CPSU NSW so we can help them, too.

WHAT IS THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION?

The FWC is Australia's national workplace relations tribunal – the 'umpire' on all matters to do with EAs. The Commission needs to approve an EA before it can take effect. The Commissioners have powers to resolve disputes and to ensure the bargaining process is both fair and efficient.

WHAT IS A 'COPIED STATE AWARD'?

Copied State Awards apply to former NSW public sector employees whose jobs were transferred to a private business when they were privatised. The Copied State Award protects the employee's public sector pay and working conditions, which are usually better than those the private business gives its other employees. The Copied State Award remains in force for five years or until a new EA is made.

WHAT IS THE 'BOOT'?

BOOT stands for the "better off overall test". The Commission compares the terms of the proposed EA to those in an employee's applicable modern award. Before approving the EA the Commissioners must be satisfied that each employee is better off overall under

the proposed EA than if they were on the Modern Award before approving it. Every employee needs to be better off to pass the test – it is not sufficient that a majority of the employees are better off.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN MAKING AN EA?

Your union will automatically represent you when the bargaining starts.

We will constitute a bargaining team which will comprise CPSU NSW employees and members.

To inform our negotiations we will send you a survey to help us prioritise the things that matter most to you.

You will be invited to meetings where you can share your views and ask questions about the process.

The survey results are used to develop a log of claims detailing what benefits the union wants for you. This forms the basis of negotiations with the employer.

The employer responds to the log of claims and meets with the employee representatives to negotiate the EA's terms in good faith. This means both sides should genuinely consider offers and proposals, taking into account the reasons for the proposals.

The employer may put a proposed agreement to the employees to vote on. This may occur even if there isn't agreement with the union on all the terms.

The CPSU NSW will recommend how to vote on any proposed EA. A majority 'yes' vote is required or the agreement cannot be made.

If a majority of employees vote 'yes' to approve the EA, it is submitted to the Commission. The Commission applies the "better off overall test" and checks the vote was conducted fairly.

Once an EA is approved by the Commission, it can commence operation.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE VOTE IS 'NO'?

If a proposed enterprise agreement has been rejected by a vote of employees, the bargaining process can continue and another vote can be held. There is no limit on the number of times a proposed enterprise agreement can be put to a vote. In some circumstances, the Commission will make a workplace determination to set the terms and conditions of an EA. ■



Delegates such as those in universities (left) will be involved in enterprise bargaining.

NEW LEAVE RULES HELP PARENTS SHARE THE LOAD

The PSA has worked with the NSW Government for better parental leave provisions.

In a big win for PSA members, paid parental leave has been updated so all new parents will potentially have access to up to 14 weeks' paid leave.

In the 2020-21 Budget, the NSW Government pledged it would offer the state's public servants "14 weeks' leave to a new child's primary carer, regardless of gender".

Following this announcement, a Parental Leave Working Group was established, convened by the Public Service Commission and in consultation with the PSA.

Previously, all public sector employees in the state system were entitled to up to 14 weeks' paid parental leave if the maternal parent, or up to one week paid leave if the "other" parent.

It is proposed that there will now be two categories of Paid Parental Leave. Paid Parental Leave for birth or primary parent at time of birth, adoption or surrogacy will

involve 14 weeks' paid leave or 28 weeks on half pay.

The parent with primary responsibility for the care of the child not at the time of the birth, adoption or surrogacy will be eligible for two weeks' paid leave at time of birth, and 12 weeks' additional paid leave if the primary carer. An additional 12 weeks can be taken at 24 weeks on half pay.

Both can potentially be used flexibly and must be taken in the first 12 months from birth.

Arrangements were due to take effect on and from 1 July.

"A big thank you to all PSA members and delegates – men and women, former and current – who have campaigned on this issue," said Women's Council Chair Trish O'Brien. "It is your passion, dedication and advocacy that have gotten us here.

"Whilst the PSA welcomes and celebrates this proposal, we also note that it is not without imperfections, nor has it been delivered yet. The next step in the advancement of parental leave entitlements will be to enshrine it into all Awards." ■

HERC ADOPTS SEXUAL HARASSMENT MODEL CLAUSE

The CPSU NSW's Higher Education Representative Council is the first part of the union to adopt the Women's Council's Model Clause on sexual harassment.

The comprehensive clause outlines how workplaces need to deal with sexual harassment. It was designed with input from Women's Council and the union's Women's Industrial Unit.

STRENGTH IN CAMPAIGNING: STILLBIRTH, MISCARRIAGE AND PREMATURE BIRTH LEAVE A UNION WIN

The State Budget's provisions for stillbirth, miscarriage and premature birth are the result of years of campaigning from unions.

NSW public sector workers experiencing stillbirth or miscarriage are eligible for five days' paid leave.

In addition, mothers experiencing premature birth will be entitled to paid leave until the original due date, when parental leave will take effect.

These issues have long been in the sights of the PSA/CPSU NSW, which has succeeded in placing unpaid stillbirth leave entitlements into the National Employment Standards. After much lobbying, the NSW Government has adopted the provisions.

"This is a pleasant surprise," said CPSU NSW member Leanne Smith, who gave evidence on stillbirth leave entitlements to the Senate Select Committee on Stillbirth Education and Research. "It proves that campaigning for the rights of workers will get positive outcomes." ■



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



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



NEXT STOP TOWN HALL

The Secretary of our union's Aboriginal Council is campaigning to be Lord Mayor of Sydney.

Yvonne Weldon has never shirked from a challenge. Now the long-time PSA member wants to be the next Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney. No easy task, this involves replacing the popular Clover Moore who has held the job for 17 years, surviving challenges from both the major political parties.

A crack at the top job was not always the plan. Ms Weldon was originally running for a councillor's position on the ticket of former federal independent member for Wentworth and President of the Australian Medical Association, Kerry Phelp. However, when Dr Phelp

was forced to pull out of the mayoral race due to a family issue, Ms Weldon, a Wiradjuri woman, was put forward as the candidate to be the centre of the team's campaign.

"Initially I was very shocked but I sat on it for a few days and sought counsel with people I love and trust and thought, 'Yeah, it's time,'" she said.

Ms Weldon grew up and went to school in and around Redfern and surrounds in the City of Sydney's inner south, and "has always been actively involved in the community".

"I have also spent most of my working life in Redfern or in the city in various roles," she said.

If she wakes up on Sunday 5 September as the new Lord Mayor of Sydney, Ms Weldon said she hopes to "make sure people have a voice".

"I want to make sure engagement is true engagement," she said. "It is not about individuals, it is about who we are as a collective."

Ms Weldon works in Youth Justice, hence her PSA membership, and is also the Chair of the Metropolitan Land Council. She has worked in all three tiers of government, as well as community roles, which she thinks will give her a more "inclusive, consultative" approach to governance.

Since taking on the candidacy, Ms Weldon admits balancing work, her existing voluntary roles and running for office means her life has become "madness".

**"IT IS POSSIBLE TO GET
LOTS ACHIEVED IF YOU ARE
COMMITTED"**

"My days prior to going to work and after I get home from work are taken up with campaigning," she said. "I probably should document the hours I am doing so I fully understand why I am so buggered half the time but it keeps me motivated. It is possible to get lots achieved if you are committed.

"And that is what I am."

Ms Weldon says 233 years after white settlement – and 54 years after a referendum brought First Nations people closer to the political process – it is "disappointing" she is, to her knowledge, the first Aboriginal candidate not just for the City of Sydney but for a lord mayoral position in the country.

"It is an honour but a disappointing fact as well," she said. "This is where we are at in 2021."

She adds this omission is just part of the exclusion of First Nations voices from all three levels of government in Australia.

"Every one of us needs to reflect about what sort of society we are creating that doesn't include my people," she said. ■

PSA CALLS FOR EXPANSION OF 'CIRCLE SENTENCING'

A young Aboriginal man enters a room and sits at a large oval table. An Aboriginal flag stands in a corner and indigenous artworks hang on the walls.

Around the table he recognises four Elders from his community. He recognises one other person at the table – a man he hurt during a fight a several months earlier. His father sits with him for support.

A woman at the end of the table introduces herself as a Magistrate. She explains the young man has pleaded guilty to an offence and the members of his community must now work together to determine an appropriate penalty.

This is Circle Sentencing, an alternative approach to justice for adult First Nations offenders run by the Aboriginal Services Unit of the Department of Communities and Justice. The program helps offenders take ownership of their actions, develop pride in their culture and confidence in themselves long after they leave the Circle.

Ann Weldon, the PSA's Aboriginal Liaison Officer, has seen firsthand the benefits of the program. "It's unbelievable how First Nations people respond when they have to answer to the Elders. For many, it is like a light switches on in their head and they take responsibility for what they have done," she said.

The origins of Circle Sentencing can be found in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which recommended greater involvement of indigenous leaders in sentencing decisions to divert offenders away from prison.

The first trials of Circle Sentencing took place in 2002 in Nowra and resulted in reduced recidivism by breaking down the barriers between the offender and the courts. The less formal procedures meant the offender was more likely to "sit up and take notice" and appreciate the harm their actions caused. They were more likely to accept responsibility and apologise for their offending behaviour.

Victims also received more support from their community after telling their stories in the Circle, helping with their healing and reconciliation.

The Nowra trial dispelled many of the

myths about this innovative approach. The imposed sentences were just as severe as those imposed for similar offences in conventional courts. Indictable offences such as serious robberies, sexual assault or major drug offences were excluded as they require a jury trial.

Two decades later, Circle Sentencing is available in 12 NSW local courts and is a well-accepted and understood part of the justice system in NSW.

In 2020, a study by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) found Circle Sentencing reduced the rate of incarceration by 52 per cent compared to court sentencing. The rate of re-offending within 12 months was 10 per cent lower, while those who re-offended took 55 days longer to do so.

The Executive Director of BOSCAR, Jackie Fitzgerald, said Circle Sentencing has beneficial outcomes for participants. "Past research has shown that Circle Sentencing reduces barriers between Aboriginal communities and the courts and improves confidence in the sentencing process. This is the first study, however, to find an association between Circle Sentencing and re-offending and imprisonment," she said.

The success of Circle Sentencing has prompted the PSA to call for its expansion. In a submission to the NSW Parliament the union said the Department of Communities and Justice should work with Aboriginal communities to increase the number of local government areas where Circle Sentencing is available. Similar calls have been made by the Aboriginal Legal Service, the NSW Bar Association, the NSW Law Society and Legal Aid NSW.

The PSA's submission also calls for making Circle Sentencing available for youth offenders. Ms Weldon explains the process could have a profound and positive impact on a young person's life.

"The key is having the right group of respected Elders in the Circle," said Ms Weldon. "The young people all know who the Elders are in their families and communities. Having to go before respected Elders can change the direction of a young person's life."

"In the long run, funding programs like Circle Sentencing that reduce re-offending is far more cost-effective than building more gaols." ■



YOUR UNION'S STAFF SALARY SCALES (excluding superannuation)

Below are the pay rates of the PSA/CPSU NSW staff.

CATEGORY	NUMBER	SCALE (ANNUALISED) (min - max in category)	COMMON SALARY POINT
Support Staff (Industrial Clerks/Membership Officers/Clerical Officers/Cleaners)	28	\$43,000-\$74,827	9-61
Senior Support Staff (Accounts/Campaigns and Communications Staff/ Legal Officers/Library/Member Support Officers/ Research Officers/Stenographers/ Secretariat/Senior Membership Officers/ MSC Supervisor/IT/OBM)	30	\$68,749-\$122,404	52-111
Organisers/Senior Organisers/Regional Organisers (Training Officer/Legal)	39	\$74,827-\$128,473	61-116
Industrial Officers/Senior Industrial Officers (Aboriginal Liaison Officers/WHS Officers)	27	\$91,916-\$122,404	82-111
Managers	9	\$133,919-\$148,578	116-130
CFO/Manager Legal/Assistant General Secretary/General Secretary	4	\$174,500-\$268,409	SES Bands 1 & 2

Scales effective 30 June 2021



PODCAST

LISTEN UP!

**Did you know the PSA/CPSU
NSW releases a new podcast
every week?**

**Tune in to hear the latest about your union,
your workplace conditions and the events
that affect you.**

You can listen to the PSA/CPSU NSW podcast on Spotify,
Google Podcasts and iTunes.



Book Review

ECONOBABBLE

How to Decode Political Spin and Economic Nonsense

Richard Denniss
\$27.99
Black Inc

If people read more Richard Denniss books and fewer News Corp papers, we've have a more clued-up electorate. And we'd probably have a different Prime Minister.

Econobabble is an updated version of Mr Denniss's

2016 book that gave readers an insight into how economic terminology can be used to blindside people into accepting unpalatable political outcomes, such as inaction on climate-change, low wages or taxpayer-funded largesse to corporate mates.



The 2021 version has been updated for the Morrison era, when business taxes need to be kept low during times of hardship, and kept low in times of plenty. When low wage growth is marketed as a policy triumph, and stellar profits are also a policy triumph.

Describing economics as “being like a tyre lever: it can be used to solve a problem, or to beat someone over the head”, Mr Denniss shows the reader how to decipher spin and realise when they are being taken for a ride by governments, big business and enablers in the media.



The subject matter may sound heavy-going but the author writes in a brisk, witty style and the book could easily be read over a few evenings, leaving the reader better able to see through political spin and what Mr Denniss calls “econobabble”. ■

IN UNITY WITH AUSTRALIA'S NEAR NEIGHBOURS

The union movement's bonds cross national boundaries, thanks to organisations such as Union Aid Abroad.

Affiliated with Australia's labour movement, Union Aid Abroad carries out its projects in neighbouring countries with less-advanced economies and regulatory schemes.

Below are some of the examples of recent projects

WATER CONSERVATION AND AGRO-ECOLOGY PROJECT IN EAST TIMOR

Long dry seasons severely

hit farmers in the former Portuguese colony. The small country's Agriculture Union of the District of Ermera is piloting water conservation projects in the community's farming bases with the support of Union Aid Abroad.

In addition, community bases, working with students from its youth farming school, continue to implement new agro-forestry projects to protect from soil degradation and improve land conservation.

SAFE HAVENS IN MYANMAR

Union Aid Abroad is working with women's groups in Myanmar (pictured) to provide COVID-safe community services for people, particularly women, displaced by the government's oppression of the Karen minority group.

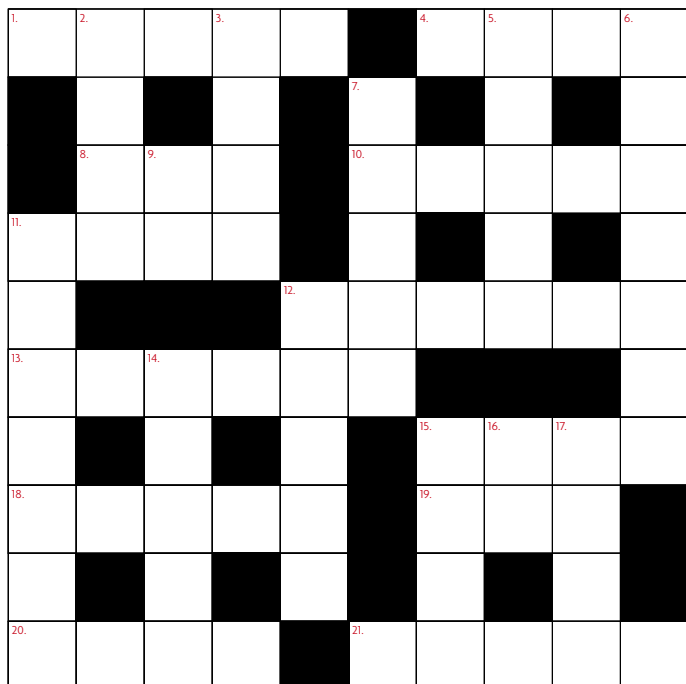
LAO ASBESTOS WORKSHOPS

Union Aid Abroad worked with the Lao Government on a National Workshop in February 2021 to eliminate the

deadly building material from the country.

To support Union Aid Abroad, go to www.apheda.org.au. ■



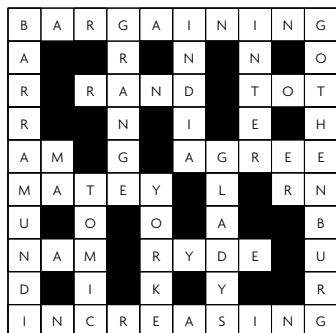
**ACROSS**

1. (and 6 down) Current Secretary of Australia's national union body. (5, 7)
4. Measure of whisky. (4)
8. Natural order of the universe in East Asian religions. (3)
10. Fill-in surgeon. (5)
11. Short golf hit. (4)
12. Australian comedic TV presenter Andrew _____. (6)
13. Come back. (6)
15. Sounds of audience disapproval. (4)
18. Princess's headwear. (5)
19. A donkey in Australia sounds somewhat ruder in the USA. (3)
20. Average. (2, 2)
21. Union-based Australian political party. (5)

DOWN

2. Organisation led by 1 across and 6 down. (1, 1, 1, 1)
3. Eleven down will do this to other vessels. (4)
5. Edit a new version of a film or musical piece. (5)
6. See 1 across.
7. Surname of famed Tenterfield-born singer. (5)
9. @ (2)
11. Robbers of the sea. (7)
12. Brain activity while you sleep. (5)
14. Slow-moving Sydney people carriers. (5)
15. Forty Thieves' boss Ali _____. (4)
16. Abbreviation for abroad. (1, 1)
17. Jo Nesbo books take place in this Scandinavian capital city. (4)

Last issue's solution

**FIRST CONTACT**

For many members, the PSA/CPSU NSW Member Support Centre (MSC) is their first contact with union staff outside their workplace. MSC staff members answer incoming phone calls and emails, directing enquiries to the appropriate teams if they can't answer the question themselves.

Supervisor of the MSC, Tracey Petrekska, said the work in the unit involves "empathy, patience, tenacity, and being able to manage expectations balancing empathy with a certain level of pragmatism".

"We become the jack of all trades of the PSA and become knowledgeable in all areas," she said.

Podcast Review

BEHIND THE WALLS

A new podcast series dispels the myths about prisons by talking to NSW Corrections staff.

THE prison movie is a cinematic staple. It may be the likeable masculinity of Paul Newman

in *Cool Hand Luke*, the idealism of Robert Redford's *Brubaker* or the feel-good fraternalism of Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman in *The Shawshank Redemption*.

A local favourite is the gritty Australian TV drama *Prisoner*, which chronicles the fictitious Wentworth Detention Centre in nearly 700 episodes that were hugely popular in Australia, Britain and the US.

The public's love of prison dramas runs so deep criminologists believe it impacts public policy. Where the portrayal of prisoners is antipathetic, the public will demand evil be contained, resulting in higher imprisonment rates and longer sentences. A sympathetic representation of criminals as victims of injustice sees the pendulum swing towards liberalism and lower incarceration rates. It is a case of the fiction changing reality until reality resembles the fiction.

Against this backdrop of misperceptions about prison, crime author and former journalist Michael Duffy has



produced a new podcast on NSW Corrections Centres. *Behind the Walls* is a six-part podcast where life on the inside is revealed by those who know it best – the Prison Officers who work there.

"I was a court reporter for years but I had no idea what happened to convicted offenders when they were taken off to prison – like many people, I was just glad it was someone else's job to look after them," Mr Duffy said. "Also, like many people, I thought prison was just about locks and security. For this podcast, I've gone to talk with real Prison Officers and discovered that their jobs – and they themselves – are about much more than that."

Mr Duffy spent six months recording the interviews at 11 Correctional Centres and four Community Corrections offices. Thirty Prison Officers from prisons, including Bathurst, Lithgow, Cessnock, Cooma and Long Bay, are featured in the series.

Episode 1: The Job focuses on the work of NSW Prison Officers, what brought them to the profession and the qualities they need in the role.

Mr Duffy describes these public servants as "professional risk takers". Officers talk about the risks of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or if they don't pay attention, or turn their back in the wrong spot.

Emotional dangers are also an inescapable part of a Prison Officer's professional life. You hear them explain how and why the job changes them and makes them resilient to the violence and self-harm among inmates that would horrify members of the public.

Behind the Walls also addresses the incorrect portrayal of corrections on screens big and small. We hear Officers talk about turning off TV shows in frustration at the unprofessional way they are characterised and how inmates are presented as either innocent or evil.

Other episodes look at how Prison Officers keep inmates from fighting or rioting, rehabilitation strategies as well as life after prison on parole.

The final episode talks about Community Corrections, including interviews with PSA members Grace Wong and Jessie Slattery-McDonald (see page 19).

Behind the Walls provides a much-needed dose of reality about prisons, prisoners and staff. It forces listeners to abandon their fantasies and see the state's corrections system as it really is. The podcast shows life behind the walls is complex, unpredictable and dangerous. But it can also be humane, offering hope to those who want to turn their lives around.

And once you have listened to *Behind the Walls*, don't be surprised if you too switch off the TV in frustration the next time you try to watch a prison drama. ■

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 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Revenue	24,666,567	23,444,880
Other income	-	14,545
Employee benefits expense	(16,242,539)	(14,991,068)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(775,364)	(770,047)
Other expenses	(7,084,580)	(8,589,191)
Finance costs	(267,506)	(368,345)
(Loss) before income tax	(1,805)	(1,259,226)
Income tax expense	294,773-	-
(Loss) from continuing operations	294,773-	(1,259,225)

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	3,496,268-	-
Actuarial (loss)/gain on defined benefit pension plans	1,067,861	(2,016,768)
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	4,564,129	(2,016,768)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	4,858,902	(3,275,994)

PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NSW

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 December 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,278,352	1,032,949
Trade and other receivables	905,744	448,127
Other financial assets	29,390,686	29,958,250
Other assets	313,140	298,220
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	31,887,922	31,737,546
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Trade and other receivables	113,080	114,069
Property, plant and equipment	50,113,430	45,692,946
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	50,226,510	45,807,015
TOTAL ASSETS	82,114,432	77,544,561
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	1,322,911	1,604,112
Short-term provisions	4,565,700	4,410,600
Other financial liabilities	256,017	323,588
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	6,144,628	6,338,300
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Lease liabilities	347,538	-
Long term provisions	18,311,638	18,754,535
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	18,659,176	18,754,535
TOTAL LIABILITIES	24,803,804	25,092,835
NET ASSETS	57,310,628	52,451,726
EQUITY		
Reserves	45,227,767	41,731,499
Retained earnings	12,082,861	10,720,227
TOTAL EQUITY	57,310,628	52,451,726

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2021

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 2020, 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 2020.

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 4 June 2021.

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, 4 June 2021

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W distinctive-assurance.com.au

ABN 17 964 103 746

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WHEN TRAINING COMES TO YOU

Members can learn at lunchtime.

A recent Lunch N Learn at the Art Gallery of NSW delivered training to nearly 60 PSA members – all during their meal break.

The session, on workplace health and safety, had 43 attendees, with a further 15 dialling in remotely.

“It was a marvelous session,” said PSA/CPSU NSW Trainer Suzanne Mann. “It shows you don’t have to come to PSA House to take advantage of our programs – we can always come to you.

“Lunch N Learn sessions are often advertised through bulletins, so it is vital your union has your up-to-date details, particularly your employer, workplace and email address.”

The course was planned when Delegate Paula Dredge returned from a PSA course determined to improve health and safety at the Art Gallery.

She and Organiser Davis Murphy worked together, with input from the



PSA members at the Art Gallery of NSW attend a recent Lunch N Learn.

PSA/CPSU NSW Workplace Health and Safety team, to clarify safety processes at the Gallery and get a review of the Art Gallery Health and Safety Committee Charter.

“At the conclusion of the session, the

Delegates had more than 40 signatures on their letter requesting Health and Safety Representatives,” said Ms Mann. “These have now been submitted to management and we await their response.” ■

BE WORLD-BEATING AT EVERY MEETING

Your union can help you become a master negotiator.

The workplace face of the union, Delegates often find themselves sitting more often around a meeting table – or a Zoom screen – and perhaps feeling intimidated dealing with management and members.

Luckily their union is at hand to help brush up skills with the one-day Meeting and Negotiation Skills course.

“The first part of this course will help you run meetings smoothly and efficiently,” said PSA/CPSU NSW Trainer Mary Jo Costache. “The second part of the course looks at sharpening your

negotiating skills. We can help you tip the balance of power by learning how to be an effective negotiator and get better results for the members you represent.”

The Meeting and Negotiation Skills course is aimed at Delegates and activists but any member who thinks they would benefit from the experience is welcome to enrol.

“It is important to remember most PSA/CPSU NSW members are entitled to up to 12 days’ paid leave every two years to attend union training,” said Ms Costache. “You won’t be sacrificing holiday time to help your fellow members. However, we encourage you to check your Award or Enterprise Agreement for details.” ■

DID YOU KNOW?

- Training is free to all PSA/CPSU NSW members
- Nearly all PSA/CPSU NSW members can access Union Training Leave, so no need to dip into your holiday time
- Courses are delivered online, at PSA House in Sydney or in regional centres
- You can read more at psa.asn.au/training-you

A NEW HEALTH FUND THAT'S BACKED BY ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST TRUSTED FUNDS.

WE'RE ALL FOR IT.

If you're a union member, you deserve a health fund that strives for fair. One that looks after its members. One you can trust to protect your health long into the future.

One like Union Health.

Union Health is here to serve all union members. And it's brought to you by TUH Health Fund, which was ranked first by members for trustworthiness, satisfaction, loyalty and likelihood to recommend in the latest nationwide Ipsos survey of health funds.

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