

SUMMER  
2025

# RED TAPE



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The Public Service Association of New South Wales and Community and Public Sector Union (SPSF Group) NSW Branch acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and the places in which we live. We pay respect to Ancestors and Elders, past, present and future. We recognise the unique cultural and spiritual relationship and celebrate the contributions of First Nations peoples to Australia.



This issue of *Red Tape* contains information some readers may find confronting. If you feel you need help, organisations that can provide assistance include:

- Respect National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling 1800 737 732
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
- Lifeline Australia 13 11 14
- MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78

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.

Authorised by Stewart Little, General Secretary, Public Service Association of NSW and Community and Public Sector Union (SPSF Group) NSW Branch, 160 Clarence Street Sydney NSW 2000







# STRONGER TOGETHER: WINNING A LOT TOUGHER WITHOUT A UNION BY YOUR SIDE

**Victory comes to those who work together.**

Since taking on the role of General Secretary, I've been proud to be part of a union that wins for its diverse membership. It's by the central tenet of unionism, working together, that we can continue to have these wins.

One of the primary functions of a union is to negotiate for better pay for its members. And we have done just that. We have emerged from months of negotiations to sign a memorandum (pictured) giving most members a three-year pay deal. Thanks in no small part to our campaigning in the recent state election, we are no longer bound by a wage cap that unfairly suppressed our salaries every year.

**WINNING MEANS GETTING ON THE FRONT FOOT, KEEPING OUR EMPLOYERS HONEST**

Winning unions like the PSA CPSU NSW push for safer work environments, better equipment, and reasonable work hours to ensure the physical and mental well-being of their members. They protect against layoffs, unfair dismissal, and other employment insecurity.

Unions like ours win to protect members from workplace blight such as discrimination and harassment. They often help enforce workplace policies and standards.

We have won stronger safety regulations and enforce compliance with safety standards. We win better protection against workplace hazards, ensuring our members go home safely at the end of the day.

Winning means getting on the front foot, keeping our employers honest by filing grievances for violations of awards and agreements, workplace rules and labour laws.

If necessary, the PSA CPSU NSW will go to the Industrial Relations Commission, the Fair Work Commission or other courts to win for members and hold employers accountable.

In addition to negotiations, we, as a union, can deploy more direct strategies, such as work bans and walk-offs.

Winning hearts and minds is part of the battle to win better wages and conditions.

Our union also runs extensive campaigns to keep the public, media and politicians informed of what our members deserve.

We know our members respond to victories. They respond to a union that puts its members first, and on the winner's dais.

We are proud of our successes, and we know that an increasing number of workers in areas we cover are bucking a national trend and signing up to the PSA CPSU NSW because they know it is a union that campaigns and wins on behalf of its members.





# FUTURE-PROOFED: THREE-YEAR WAGE DEAL INCLUDES INFLATION SAFEGUARDS

## A long-term deal on pay rises deal is reached.

**P**SA members voted to accept the State Government's three-year Salaries offer. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents to the union's Salaries Survey accepted the Government's offer. Following that, the PSA notified the Government that it accepted the offer and moved to have the new rates formalised so members received the increase as soon as possible.

The State Government's offer gave Public Sector workers a compounded increase of 11.4 per cent over the three years to 2026-27.

The offer was a 4 per cent 2024-2025 increase in salaries, plus a 0.5 per cent superannuation boost. Then there will be a 3 per cent 2025-2026 increase in salaries plus 0.5 per cent superannuation. In the last year of the deal, there will be a 3 per cent 2026-2027 increase in salaries.

This offer will be backdated to the first full pay period on or after 1 July 2024.

The offer includes a safeguard mechanism to protect wage-earners if the Sydney Consumer Price Index exceeds 3.5 per cent in the March quarter in the second or third year of the deal. If this is the case, there will be negotiations for a one-off, non-cumulative, cost-of-living allowance.

In addition, if the Sydney Consumer Price Index exceeds 4 per cent in the

March quarter in the second or third year, members will receive a \$1000 taxable, one-off, non-cumulative cost-of-living adjustment payment, plus superannuation.

As part of the offer, the PSA will negotiate changes to the Managing Excess Employees policy to bring it into line with the new Workforce Mobility Placement policy implemented late last year. This has seen great improvements in the retention of public servants affected by workplace change.

"This is a great win for our members," said the union's General Secretary Stewart Little. "For too long we languished under an unfair wage cap. We campaigned to vote the party that supported retaining the cap out and now have a deal that means members can keep up with the cost of living."



## Helping PSA members find their rhythm of retirement

As Chant West's Super and Pension Fund of the Year 2024,\* we'll help you prepare for your retirement rhythm.

Check out our digital Retirement Guide which offers plenty of tips, advice and real member stories, plus a helpful checklist to guide you every step of the way.

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# WE ALL WIN WHEN WE ALL JOIN

## Too many people get their money for nothing.

**T**he 2024 pay increase was due to your union. It was your union negotiating with the Government to secure the deal. So why do non-unionists get a pay rise without taking part in the win in any way?

Non-members may get the pay rise, something that rankles those who are part of the union. However, they don't have a say in the pay rise. They do not get a vote on whether to accept any pay offer.

In addition, there is no-one there for them if they need any other form of help at work. From reporting harassment to negotiating workplace flexibility, members have access to their union's expert industrial staff every day of the week.

Members also have access to benefits as diverse as cheaper groceries and legal assistance.

But why do non-union members get to enjoy all the pay rises negotiated by a union they refuse to join?

### UNIONS ARE ESSENTIAL TO INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The answer is the Liberal National Coalition. The Howard Government passed laws in the late 1990s and 2000s prohibiting union preferences in hiring, bargaining fees or other support for union membership. This essentially handed the cost of workplace negotiations to union members and gives non-members a free ride.

Members and delegates report some colleagues boast about not having to pay for union membership, while they enjoy pay rises, and of course weekends, annual leave, and overtime pay.

But what has been proven again and again – most recently by the pay rises gained by the PSA and other unions – is that unions are essential to industrial relations. Workers will always need unions to have any hope of workplace wins. You only need to read a couple of pages of any industrial relations document before you realise that dedicated and professional industrial staff are required to interpret and understand what is actually meant by all the jargon.

The recent pay rise for our members, and the uplifts won for many officers will be enjoyed by those of us who do pay for union membership, and those who ride for free. We live in a society that values freedom of choice. And the PSA certainly agrees with and fights for people having freedom of choice. But the choice to not pay to belong to a union yet benefit from the hard work that unions do doesn't add up.

Last year, the Australian Council of Trade Unions put forward the suggestion that unions charge a fee for workplace

negotiations – as is done in the United States – to be paid by non-union members who are advantaged by union wins. Industrial relations expert Professor Anthony Forsyth added that it is only fair that employees could choose to either to join their union or pay a fee for services they obtain from having a union-negotiated agreement. Further, that it's up to the Albanese Government address this issue in the next round of industrial relations legislative reforms.

Until then, we are still largely stuck with John Howard's anti-union industrial relations laws.

The PSA will always fight for its members, no matter the adversities. It has for 125 years, many of them in tough political environments. Strong membership is essential to the success of any union, and despite almost universal union membership decline nationwide, the PSA is successful.

The bigger we are, the more big wins – like the recent pay rise – we will have.



Alongside General Secretary Stewart Little and members of the Prison Officers Vocational Branch, I was proud to represent the PSA at the annual Corrective Services Remembrance Day ceremony at Brush Farm Academy. This day remembers all those Prison Officers killed while protecting the people of NSW.



# UNION WINS PROTECTION FOR MEMBERS

## Meeting with Minister results in safer workplaces.

**A**fter meeting with the PSA, NSW Industrial Relations Minister Sophie Cotsis has agreed to measures that strengthen members' safety on the job.

A group of Delegates and industrial staff representing the PSA met with Minister Cotsis to discuss the hazards these Public Sector workers face on the job.

The delegation told the Minister about the types of bullying and intimidation directed at SafeWork Inspectors on NSW building sites.

The PSA proposed that body-worn cameras, similar to those used by Prison and Police Officers, be issued to the



Inspectors to offer protection against these forms of intimidation.

The Minister agreed and legislation will be introduced giving Inspectors the right to wear cameras on their person while at work under a two-year trial.

The SafeWork NSW Inspector Vocational Advisory Group was established in 2024. Its Chair, Maree Davidson, said this section of the PSA membership has grown by 25 per cent since the group was formed.



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## FEE-FREE TAFE: GOOD FOR THE COUNTRY

### Peter Dutton's opposition is bad for our future.

**T**he Federal Opposition vows to scrap Labor's promise to add 100,000 more fee-free TAFE positions to those it has been delivering without cost since 2023.

Peter Dutton has opposed free TAFE positions, citing the expense of helping lower-income students.

The PSA CPSU NSW supports free TAFE places for Australian students. Not only will full TAFE campuses ensure there will be jobs for our members, our union passionately believes providing access to education for all people, not just those with the means to pay full fees, is a common good.

Since Labor's initial fee-free program was rolled out in 2023, it has achieved positive social outcomes. It has increased enrolments in TAFE, particularly in the demographic areas which often have lower vocational education uptake. Since January 2023 there have been 317,404 enrolments by women, 170,470 by people aged 24 and under, 124,312 by people on the Job Seeker allowance, 110,969 by people who speak a language other than English at home, and 30,041 by First Nations people. Moreover, the vocational areas enrolled in represent jobs that are critically needed, particularly the care industry – including disability and aged care, early childhood education and care, and other areas such as digital, tech, and construction.

But Peter Dutton doesn't like what he sees.

Private colleges, the opposition believes, are the key to successful education outcomes. Indeed, Shadow Minister for Education and coalition frontbencher Sarah Henderson headlined an event in November for private colleges and launched a new brand for a Liberal Party member and CEO of the private college group Apply 4 Study Australia.

There is also history behind the Liberal

National Coalition's disdain of TAFE. In the 1970s, under Labor's Kim Beazley (Senior) as Education Minister, TAFE was given not only a financial boost, but it was also promoted as a respectable mode of education; regarded as an alternative, neither inferior nor superior, to the other streams of education. There was also a strong emphasis placed on unrestricted access to recurrent education, and TAFE extended to preparatory courses, transfer courses and other help that allowed adults to attempt the level of vocational education they desired. Groups that were identified as being particularly disadvantaged and requiring specific assistance were women, First Nations people, those who resided outside metropolitan areas and the disabled.

The conservative opposition objected to this, citing that education is the responsibility of the states, and this was greatly overstepping on behalf of the federal government. Thus, begun an enduring resentment of TAFE by the Liberal Party. And sense of pride in TAFE from Labor. However, that pride does not always translate into support and our

members in TAFE are in a constant fight for job retention and decent funding.

So, when a government of any stripe is offering support – particularly the generous support that the Albanese government is currently offering and promising to extend – to oppose this defies logic.

The Libs say you don't appreciate something unless you pay for it. Well, we say, if you take your kids to hospital and they get treated for a broken bone, you certainly appreciate it. If you call the police and your emergency gets dispatched to an officer within seconds, you appreciate that. If your disabled family member gets the care they need, you appreciate that. Our community appreciates the work TAFE does for the wider community. Everyone is better off when as many people as possible have access to fee-free TAFE places.

As a union, we applaud the Federal Government for helping young Australians when the cost of living is so exceptionally high. Saying those students getting a fee-free course don't appreciate it is disingenuous; if not arrogant.





# NEW GRADINGS KICK IN FOR VITAL WORKERS

## Child Protection Workers campaign pays off.

A statewide campaign by the PSA has paid off, with starting salaries for Child Protection Caseworkers updated to better reflect the role they play in protecting vulnerable children in NSW.

All new Caseworkers will be uplifted from Grade 3 to Grade 4, and those already working will also receive the increase.

The uplifts, announced at the same time as the pay increases given to Public Sector workers, come after the PSA campaigned long and hard to address a shortage in staffing, poor wages, burnout and an outsourcing system that saw the State Government paying large amounts for what the union believes are poor outcomes. In some cases, children were left in the care of poorly trained agency staff for long stints in accommodation such as motels and caravan parks.

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little said at a press conference highlighting the crisis: “One in 10 Child Protection Caseworker positions in NSW are unfilled. On top of this 210 NSW child protection caseworkers – or 9 per cent of the total workforce – are currently absent due to workers compensation claims, mostly due to psychological injury. This represents 19 per cent of the Child Protection workforce.”

The PSA has also issued a call via the media for “businesses profiting from the care of children removed from their parents need to be banished and the system returned to the Public Sector”.

Despite requiring a completed or near-complete Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in Social Work, Social Science and Welfare along with practical experience, the entry level grade for a Child Protection Officer was Clerk Grade 3.

The PSA has argued this is too low to attract graduates into important, and very demanding work. Indeed many Caseworkers would do one year with Community Services, then go elsewhere for a position with a non-government



operator for more pay and a smaller number of cases.

But the Government has now listened.

The Minister for Community Services, Kate Washington has admitted there are many improvements to be made, including recruitment and retention.

In addition to the pay and grading increases, the State Government has established ‘care cottages’ where children in need will be looked after by Child Protection staff.

“These wins prove the strength of union power,” said PSA Assistant

General Secretary Troy Wright. “The campaign covered vast swathes of the state, involved thousands of column inches in NSW newspapers and plenty of time on the airwaves in radio stations all over.

“The simple message – Child Protection in Crisis – resonated with a state tired of the rundown of public services due to inefficient outsourcing.

“I urge our members to check in with new Caseworkers to talk to them about the benefits of joining the PSA, and that they are receiving the correct rate.”





## WESTERN SYDNEY TO KICK OFF BARGAINING

**University members get ready to win at the negotiating table.**

**T**he CPSU NSW will commence Enterprise Bargaining at Western Sydney University early in the new year.

This will be the first of several rounds of Enterprise Bargaining as the Agreements covering Professional Staff at the state's public-run universities expire.

“We expect this round to see even better improvements in the wages and conditions our members in universities,” said union Vice-President Shelley Odewahn.

Enterprise Bargaining in the NSW university sector will be held against the backdrop of cuts to foreign student numbers, which were announced by the Federal Government this year.

At the time of press, the cuts were opposed by the Liberal National Coalition and the Greens.

Bargaining will also take place in 2025 at the University of Technology Sydney, Charles Sturt, Newcastle and the Australian Catholic University.

SUMMER 2025  
**RED TAPE**

### DID YOU KNOW RED TAPE HAS A WEBSITE?

Go to the [www.redtapemagazine.com.au](http://www.redtapemagazine.com.au) to keep up with PSA CPSU NSW news.





# SCHOOL MEMBERS WIN PLAUDITS AT AWARDS NIGHT



## Recognition dinner praises support staff.

**T**he Deputy Premier and the Education Department Secretary praised School Support Staff and their union, the PSA, at an awards dinner in November.

Deputy Premier Prue Car, who holds the NSW Education portfolio and

Secretary Murat Dizdar, singled out the Administration staff, Learning and Support Officers and General Assistants for the important work they perform in the NSW public education system.

They also mentioned the PSA and its role in negotiating on behalf of members. The 2024 Service Recognition Dinner was also attended by the Premier, Chris Minns.

Mr Minns, Ms Car and Mr Dizdar worked with the PSA to implement the widespread conversion of non-permanent staff into

permanent roles in the school system.

Among the award recipients was Suzanne Ranger, School Administration Manager at Parkes East Public School, who has been a PSA member since 1992.

“After more than a decade of antagonism between the State Government and the PSA, it is heartening that the Minister and Secretary are willing to acknowledge the important work our members do and the role their union plays,” said PSA Senior Vice-President Juliette Sizer.

## SPECTACULAR PUBLICITY

### Union ad seen by more than a million viewers.

**A**n advertisement broadcast during the annual School Spectacular talent event has highlighted the importance of PSA members in schools.

The advertisement, featuring PSA General Secretary Stewart Little and Schools Departmental Committee Chair Juliette Sizer, publicises the work done by non-teaching staff and the pride the union takes in representing these Champions of the State.

The advertisement, produced on site at Bangalow Public School in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, was broadcast on Channel Seven and seen by more than a million viewers. It highlighted the work of PSA members, including the behind-the-scenes efforts of school staff when events such as school plays and dance performances are put on.

“The NSW Schools Spectacular is a highlight of the year for many students, parents and guardians,” said Ms Sizer.



“Events as big as this, and as small as school plays, are often impossible without the excellent efforts of our members.

“Students know it, teachers know it, parents know it. Now, thanks to our advertisement, the rest of the state knows it, too.”





## RFS COMMITTEE HITS NEW HEIGHTS

**T**he newly elected Rural Fire Service (RFS) Departmental Committee recently met at PSA House. The group will address issues such as bullying in the organisation. “The Departmental Committee is the biggest we have had representing our RFS members,” said Industrial Manager Julie-Ann Bond. “RFS plays a vital role in NSW, particularly in summer.

“We’re proud to have active members representing these Champions of the State.”

The RFS was recently involved in the roll-out of emergency power supplies in the state’s far west after electricity was cut to the area.

“Gearing up for the fire season, the RFS will be in the spotlight,” said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. “A strong committee will fight for workers employed by the organisation and the people of NSW who depend on them.”



## PSA CPSU NSW SCHOLARSHIP FOR 2025

Applications are open for the 2025 PSA CPSU NSW Scholarship.

The scholarship is available at any Australian university in any course and is restricted to students entering the first year of a full-time course. It is restricted to children of members of the PSA CPSU NSW at the time of application, who have been continuous financial members for the previous five years.

The scholarship will have a value of \$2000 per annum and will be awarded in the first instance for one year and re-awarded annually for a maximum period of three years.

A scholar’s tenure shall be subject to a satisfactory report as to their progress and conduct.

The Scholarship will be awarded on results obtained in the 2024 Higher School Certificate Examination and Assessment or equivalent and will take into account whether or not the applicant is the holder of a scholarship, traineeship, etc.

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

Applications close at 5:00pm on Friday, 28 February 2025. You can download an application form at [psa.asn.au/scholarship](https://psa.asn.au/scholarship)

If you have any queries please email [secretariat@psa.asn.au](mailto:secretariat@psa.asn.au)

# ALL ABOARD: PSA WINS TRANSPORT PAY INCREASE

## PSA overcomes opposition to pay rise for members.

In a significant win for its members, the PSA secured agreement with all unions and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) for a pay rise.

Negotiating a pay increase for members employed by TfNSW is more complicated than other parts of the Public Sector. All unions with members in that cluster need to agree on any deal.

Unions involved include the PSA, the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU), the Australian Services Union and Professionals Australia. The PSA has, by far, the largest coverage of TfNSW unions.

Even though PSA members voted to accept the pay offer, they had to wait until other unions agreed. Unions such as the RTBU initially said they did not want to agree to the deal while negotiating in the Fair Work Commission on behalf of train drivers employed under the federal industrial relations system.

However, just before the scheduled hearing in the Industrial Relations Commission in late November, all unions



and TfNSW agreed via a Memorandum of Understanding to vary the Award to give effect to the same pay rises offered to most Public Sector workers.

This agreement came after negotiations between PSA General Secretary Stewart Little and other union leaders.

“Today’s agreement from all unions

comes after PSA members overwhelmingly voted to accept the pay offer in October;” he said. “We thank the thousands of members who supported the campaign through signing our digital petition demanding the pay rise, and all those that have expressed their support for urgent cost-of-living relief.”



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# PRIVATE ELECTORAL COMPANY LOSES

## Should democracy be for sale?

**T**he PSA CPSU NSW has highlighted two recent outsourcing failures. “This is what happens when you sell off monopoly utilities previously owned by the people of NSW,” Mr Minns told Parliament in October in relation to the massive power outages being experienced in and around Broken Hill after storms knocked out power lines. And although storms are not the fault of privatisation, the neglect of backup generators by Transgrid, the private operator, certainly is.

PSA members and volunteers with the Rural Fire Service (RFS) were called on to help set up temporary power supplies.

“Unfortunately, this is just one of many examples of the negative impacts of privatising government assets and services,” said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little.

One of NSW Labor’s platforms leading up to the 2023 state election was putting a stop to the privatisation of state-owned

assets. This policy no doubt helped Chris Minns become Premier. However, there are vestiges of the coalition’s privatisation policies that remain. In the recent local government elections, one of these NSW Liberal National Coalition policies has come under scrutiny.

In 2012 the O’Farrell Liberal National Party let private contractors bid for work against the state-run NSW Electoral Commission. During the 2012 local government elections, 14 councils engaged a private electoral services provider. However, only one council – Fairfield in Sydney’s Southwest – has utilised a private provider consistently since 2012. The vast majority of local councils have returned to using the State Government’s highly experienced department, the NSW Electoral Commission.

In 2024 though, another council gave the work to a private operator: Liverpool Council. As it turned out, this was not a great decision. Even prior to the election, Labor Leppington MP Nathan Hagarty started a petition to have Liverpool’s Mayor, Ned Mannoun reverse the decision to use a private company to run the

election. Hagarty’s objection stemmed from how the decision was made.

On 1 March 2023 in a closed, confidential session of the council meeting the mayor of Liverpool and five of the 10 councillors voted to dump using the NSW Electoral Commission and engage a private company to run the council elections without any prior community consultation. Mr Hagarty’s petition, despite making it to the NSW parliament on time, was not successful. But post-election, the poor performance of the private company in running the Liverpool election has prompted the NSW Premier to take a serious look at the issue of private concerns running government elections.

“One of the persistent arguments for privatisation is that apparently the private sector can provide a better level of service,” said Mr Little. “This is an insulting fallacy, and on local government election day 2024, what the people of Liverpool got was not good service from the private operator.”

Voters reported turning up at venues to cast their vote only to be met by confusion, and told they were at the wrong



# OUR VOTE

polling station. And people who did find their allocated polling venue had to wait up to three hours to vote – throwing their weekend plans into disarray.

Along with the long wait times, and confusing information regarding the location of polling venues, it has been reported that some constituents were provided with methods of completing ballots for the election which were contrary to the *Local Government Act*. The breach is in relation to voters obtaining ballots prior to the election informally rather than through the post – as is specified in the Act.

NSW Premier Chris Minns told the media he was inclined to introduce an amendment to outlaw private election providers in NSW after being briefed on the Liverpool council fiasco. NSW Greens MP Kobi Shetty said her party would support the Government if an amendment to outlaw private election providers were brought to parliament. However, she urged greater funding of the state's electoral agency is also required.

**PEOPLE HAD TO WAIT UP TO  
THREE HOURS TO VOTE**

“The NSW Electoral Commission is a highly specialised NSW government department that provides electoral services for a range of government, public and commercial organisations, including registered clubs, statutory boards, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and State registered industrial organisations, each with their own legal and regulatory requirements,” said Mr Little. “The public servants who work at the Commission perform very particular work, and are dedicated to probity, and operating within the Acts and legislation which govern elections in NSW.

“Government elections – both state and local – need to be run and overseen by a NSW government agency. Not private enterprise. Electricity distribution is essential; voting is compulsory. These things, among many others, should be the responsibility of government. Not for-profit businesses.”

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# HELLS ANGELFISH

## NSW Fisheries Officers are at the wrong end of the filleting knife.

**T**he Department of Primary Industries, which employs NSW Fisheries Officers, has just lost its fight to force these Champions of the State back into risky situations at work. On 4 November, the Industrial Relations Commission's (IRC) Commissioner McDonald refused to rule that Fisheries Officers cease their work bans, and instead agreed with the PSA that the Department needs to act on the recommendations made by the union to ensure the safety of their members.

In September this year the PSA directed Fisheries Officers who are PSA members to cease night inspections of estuary and offshore trawlers, estuary and ocean hauling, and inland commercial fishing operations, unless police are directly assisting them. The reason for this action is the increasingly dangerous situations

Fisheries members have been facing for some time now.

Where their counterparts in Queensland and Victoria have had their powers and protections increase in line with the risks inherit in the job, NSW Department of Primary Industries has stymied its Fisheries Officers' ability to carry out their duties in a safe manner.



“Over the past decade, more than a dozen officers have been threatened with being shot, stabbed, or faced significant threats of violence,” said PSA Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright. “Earlier this year an officer was threatened with a wooden club, and then chased through a town on the NSW South Coast in his car. The accused person is currently before the courts charged with 13 offences.

“This is the stuff of gangster movies.”

This is because gangsters have moved into the seafood trade. Organised crime has come to the shores and wetlands of

NSW, driven by the high prices of abalone, rock lobster, and other species.

Abalone Association NSW co-chair, Stephen Bunney has stated: “Last year, it was over 50 tonnes of illegal catch in NSW, so that's serious organised crime. You're looking at over \$15 million of product.”

“What our members in Fisheries need is serious personal protection, and serious powers of surveillance and data access to cope with the seriousness of illegal activity,” said Mr Wright.

“Officers are demanding protective equipment like stab-proof vests, capsicum spray; and the same powers as Fisheries Officers in other states to check boat and car registrations, conduct surveillance, undertake investigations, and real time GPS tracking of the commercial fishing fleet.”

The PSA is demanding the introduction of a ‘fit and proper person’ test for commercial fishing licence holders and their crews. In Victorian and Queensland if people have a prior history of crimes against the environment, or violent crimes they won't get a licence.

“It may sound like a long list; however, without these demands being met, not



**GANGSTERS HAVE MOVED INTO THE SEAFOOD TRADE. ORGANISED CRIME HAS COME TO THE SHORES AND WETLANDS OF NSW, DRIVEN BY THE HIGH PRICES OF ABALONE, ROCK LOBSTER, AND OTHER SPECIES**

only are endangered species going to go extinct in a short period, but Fisheries Officers are going to get severely injured or even killed. We are just lucky these things haven't occurred yet," said Mr Wright.

"Fisheries Officers have no powers of investigation, they can't even use binoculars or a camera, in other states they can apply to a magistrate to put a tracking device on a boat, here we can't do that. Why? We know drug traffickers have infiltrated the commercial industry.

"Miles off the coast, in the dead of night, we need to board boats. But, unlike other states, we don't have a Global Positioning System vessel monitoring system for our commercial fishing fleet. One day Fisheries Officers will board a boat and they'll get killed. This is why the NSW fishing fleet is so appealing to drug traffickers for collecting cocaine shipments.

"In 2020 a fishing trawler called *Coralynne* was caught carrying 1.8 tonnes or \$850 million worth of cocaine it had picked up from a larger ship in international waters, if Fisheries Officers had boarded this boat they might have been killed."

Commissioner McDonald has recommended that the Department of Primary Industries implement the safety measures.

*Main picture is a stock image. Vessels depicted are not involved in the criminal activities mentioned in the story.*



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# SHERIFF'S OFFICERS WIN UPGRADE



## Government recognises valuable work in NSW courthouses.

After a long PSA campaign, members in the NSW Office of the Sheriff voted overwhelmingly to accept the union-won pay rise and regrading offer from the NSW Government.

The PSA's *Undervalued, Understaffed, Underpaid* campaign began to force the NSW Government to acknowledge and respond to the fact that members in the Sheriff's Office are undervalued by the State Government. The union pointed out its members were often left with a skeleton staff on a daily basis, and not paid an appropriate level for the work they perform.

"Officers working for the Office of the

Sheriff perform valuable work for NSW which does not always get the kudos or publicity of other uniformed public servants," said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. "But it is work that is essential to the safe running of the state's crucial institutions.

"Sheriff's Officers serve legal documents such as summonses and warrants, maintain security within court buildings, and manage the jury system by preparing jury rolls and summoning jurors to serve. They are the law enforcement presence within the court system to ensure its safe operation.

"Despite this, they are one of the lowest paid officers in the NSW public service."

In August this year, members voted to implement a full day of industrial action across the state. On 15 August PSA members in the Sydney Metro area gathered at the Downing Centre in central

Sydney, and members in Parramatta and Liverpool hubs reported to Parramatta District Court. Members in the Penrith turned up to Penrith Courthouse; and regional members attended online industrial meetings.

The action garnered widespread media attention and was featured on prime-time news across the state.

Motions were voted on at meetings which extended industrial action until the government engaged with the PSA on bringing members in NSW Office of the Sheriff up to an appropriate wage. Members displayed PSA signage and information on the campaign at NSW courts, and refused to perform duties unless two Sheriff's Officers were working. They also declined to issue any new Certificates of Authority to security contractors.

The action brought the employer to the table, and in October, the NSW Government made an offer which the union could take to members to vote on.

## THE OFFER

*On top of the public service pay rise, members agreed on the offer and the following uplifts in grade scale:*

- Sheriff's Officer Grade 1/2 to 3/4
- Sergeant Grade 3/4 to 5/6
- Inspector Grade 5 to 7
- Chief Inspector Grade 6 to 8
- Superintendent Grade 7/8 to 9

*Other senior officers will also receive an uplift of a full grade.*

# KENNY CALLS IT A DAY

## A PSA stalwart retires, leaving a strong union presence in his wake.

Long-time Non-Custodial Delegate Kenny Carver has retired

"Kenny was an active voice for members here at Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre and for Case Managers across the state," said fellow member Viola Sheppard

"We will really miss him and wish him a wonderful retirement. Kenny showed us the value in having active unionists to be able to listen to the concerns of

members and act as needed either locally or through PSA structures.

"Kenny has only just left and already we are getting organised to set up a new Non-Custodial local work group here at Silverwater so that his legacy of union activism is not lost.

"We are looking forward to remaining active and ensuring that all non-custodial members here at Silverwater Women's are able to have their voices heard."



# MAKING THE GRADE: PAY BOOST FOR SPECIAL CONSTABLES



## Members overwhelmingly support deal.

**A** whopping 99 per cent of PSA members who are working as Special Constables voted to accept the union-won pay rise and grading uplift. “This raise and upgrade were a long-time-coming,” said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. “Our members in this area perform an important, high-profile and at times risky job.”

Special Constables are a part of the NSW Police and, like Police Officers, perform many law-enforcement duties. They provide armed security for NSW Police and NSW government buildings and officials. They are uniformed, carry a sidearm, and have powers of arrest. Despite this, Special Constables’ grading and pay has not kept up with the growing demands of the job, or with their comrades’ salaries in the NSW Police.

For years, the PSA has been campaigning to get members a fair grading and pay deal. In October this year, the State Government finally made an offer the PSA could take to members. The offer followed a decision on the Award handed down in June by the Full Bench of the Industrial Relations Commission.

Following the decision, the PSA lodged a Judicial Review in the NSW Supreme Court, which prompted the government to ultimately make the offer in October.

Once members voted on the offer, the PSA withdrew its Supreme Court judicial review.

“Special Constables, on top of the public service pay rise won by the PSA for all public servants, will have their salaries brought up to a much more acceptable and appropriate level,” said Mr Little.

The offer included an 11 per cent (3 per cent for wages and 8 per cent for work value) 2024-2025 increase in salaries plus 0.5 per cent superannuation. This will be backdated to the first pay run of 2024-2025.

“This was one of the many successful campaigns the PSA ran in 2024,” said Mr Little. “The NSW Public Sector is a giant employer, with responsibilities across the state that are so varied it’s difficult to comprehend. From protecting the environment and conserving priceless art, to providing security for government buildings and officials. Our members do it all, and the PSA supports them all. And with such a varied workforce, salaries and awards are just as varied, yet the PSA ensures that every award and salary grade is appropriate for the work that our members do.”

## DEDICATION WINS AWARD FOR PSA MEMBER

### Anne wins prize for dedication to her role.

**S**enior Community Corrections Officer Anne Wiseman has won the Director’s Commendation Award for her “unwavering dedication to a client-centred approach” to rehabilitation.

Ms Wiseman was praised for her “dedication to upholding the ethos of the Drug Court program, ensuring that clients receive ample support and guidance throughout their recovery journey”.

Ms Wiseman commenced her employment as a Community Corrections Officer in 2001 at Windsor Office, where she has since navigated various community and custodial settings.

Drawing from her background as a Teacher, she acknowledges how her training has sharpened her insight into the diverse learning styles and needs of clients.

Ms Wiseman said she has consistently championed a client-centred approach to case management, “prioritising understanding the individual needs and aspirations of each client”.

Recently, she made a significant contribution to a staff engagement initiative by orchestrating the recording of interviews with Drug Court participants.





## STEWARDS WIN OVER LACK OF CONSULTATION

**Greyhound body criticised after imposing changes.**

**T**he Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC) recently announced a proposal to alter staffing arrangements, specifically by reducing the number of Stewards attending race meetings outside of Wentworth Park, in inner Sydney, and Goulburn.

Unfortunately for the GWIC, it didn't consult the union representing its Stewards, the PSA.

"PSA Delegates swiftly raised concerns with the union regarding the potential impacts of these changes," said PSA President Nicole Jess.

"They cited possible workplace health and safety risks, the absence



of meaningful consultation, and the significant shift in responsibilities that appear more aligned with the duties of GWIC's Inspectors rather than Stewards."

Thanks to the quick work of the PSA, GWIC has now committed to

the PSA that no changes will be made to Stewards' staffing levels, roles or operational practices until the consultation process has been concluded. In addition, the proposed trial will not proceed without further discussion and agreement with the PSA.



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and new parents  
**How can we help you?**

### Start Talking – Telehealth

The **Start Talking** program provides individual psychological counselling services for parents delivered via a video call service, similar to Zoom.

### Gidget House – Face to Face

**Gidget Houses** are located in NSW, QLD and VIC, are easily accessible and offer a safe haven for parents to access individual psychological counselling services in person. Partners are able to access our specialised services as well.

### Gidget Virtual Village – Online

Gidget Foundation Australia coordinates and moderates three private, **Facebook peer support groups**, connecting expectant and new parents with the Foundation and each other, in a safe, judgement free space. **Gidget Virtual Village** for new parents, **Gidget Virtual Village Dads** and **Gidget Virtual Village for Expectant Mums**.

Gidget Foundation Australia is proud to offer FREE individual psychological counselling services for expectant and new parents nationwide.

We are honoured to partner with PSA to offer support to members and their families.





# TRAINING TO FOCUS ON HEALTHIER WORKPLACES

**Union members have the chance to upskill.**

**T**he PSA CPSU NSW training calendar for 2025 will have an increased focus on healthier, safer workplaces for members.

“As a union, we are committed to workplace health and safety,” said Senior Organiser with the union, Glenn Duncan. “We will also be doing more training for Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs).”

HSRs are elected to represent workers on health and safety issues in the workplace. They investigate to health and safety complaints, monitor the measures taken to comply with relevant work health and safety laws and have the power to cease work if they believe employees are at risk.

The PSA is a registered training organisation for HSRs.

Mr Duncan said the union’s training unit is keen to roll out more Lunch n Learns, which are shorter courses workers can attend in their lunch break, either online or onsite.

“We have Lunch-n-Learns designed for any issue in the workplace,” said Mr Duncan. “For example, we will be putting together some to cover bullying and on the role of a support person in the workplace.”

“In addition, we will maintain popular courses, such as the Role of the Delegate.”

Courses are run at PSA House in Sydney and in regional areas.

“Check your entitlements,” said Mr Duncan. “Some members have access to union training leave in Awards and Enterprise Agreements.”

Members with enquiries and suggestions about courses run by the union can email [training@psa.asn.au](mailto:training@psa.asn.au)



## PSA RETURNING OFFICER

Nominations are called for the position of Deputy Returning Officer with the PSA.

To be eligible for the role, a candidate must not hold any office in or be employed by the Association.

The position will be decided by Central Council and will have their duties set by the same body. Primarily, these duties will be to oversee the election process to offices within the Association that are not required by the Industrial Relations Act to be performed by the NSW Electoral Commission. They will work with Association staff to ensure that elections are held in a secure, fair and timely manner.

An Honourarium may be paid to the successful applicant by negotiation.

Nominations for the position should be in the form of an Expression of Interest addressed to the General Secretary, stipulating their experience and suitability for the role, and declaring they are eligible to fill it.

**Your Expression of Interest should not be more that one page long and should also contain a CV. Please submit all applications to [elections@psa.asn.au](mailto:elections@psa.asn.au)**



# WINNING AT THE CHECKOUT: HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM PSA CPSU NSW MEMBERSHIP

## Help fight the cost of living.

**T**here is so much more to PSA membership than just help with workplace issues and pay rises. There are advantages to membership that can save you and your family a lot of money and hassle on things from health insurance to family holiday fun.

PSA members automatically have 24/7 personal and accident injury cover included in their membership fee. The union recently included lump sum benefits for fractured bones, dental and workplace assaults requiring hospitalisation for 48 hours or more. For an extra \$11 a year, coverage is extended to immediate family.

Another significant membership benefit that members should be aware of is Foundation House. The residential facility was set up by the union movement in 2000, and has helped NSW union members get the professional, compassionate, and completely discreet care they need for issues with alcohol, drugs and gambling.

“Asking for help is the first step in getting well,” said PSA CPSU NSW Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright. “Once help from Foundation House has been sought, members – and their immediate family – can start a literally life-changing program.”

Foundation House is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It runs 28-day, in-house rehabilitation programs.

For more information on how to participate in this program for you or your family member call 02 9555 4034 or email [intake@foundationhouse.net.au](mailto:intake@foundationhouse.net.au)

The Gidget Foundation is another foundation the PSA CPSU NSW has partnered with. The organisation provides members and their family with support for expectant and new parents experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety – at no cost. Because people are feeling very vulnerable and anxious at this point in their lives, the 10 free counselling sessions can be delivered face-to-face at one of its 10 sites, or telehealth via a video call. A doctor's referral is required. For help, email [contact@gidgethouse.org.au](mailto:contact@gidgethouse.org.au), or call 1300 851 758.



“The PSA offers many serious and highly important benefits for our members, but we also want you to have fun,” said Member Services Manager Kym Ward. “With the school holidays about to descend upon us, the PSA can help you go to Raging Waters Sydney in Prospect.

“For \$15 off the online price for tickets, members should visit [www.ragingwaterssydney.com.au/promo](http://www.ragingwaterssydney.com.au/promo), and enter ‘PSA.’”

General Secretary Stewart Little urged members to take up the union's benefits.

“Our union wins for members,” he said. “Every dollar a member saves or assistance they receive is a victory of sorts for us. It pays to be union and it pays to be part of the PSA CPSU NSW.”

## FEES UPDATE

### No rise until mid-year.

**M**embership fees for the PSA CPSU NSW have not risen and will remain at the same level until the new financial year.

There will be an adjustment in the salary bands applied to fees that will reflect the pay increase recently won by the union.

The new salary bands are on the PSA website.

## NEW PORTAL IMPROVES SERVICE FOR MEMBERS

**T**he PSA CPSU NSW has updated its online membership system as part of a project which will provide the best system for members before the old system reached the end of its operational life.

With the new system, bulletins will only be sent bulletins to one email address. Members should go the to portal now and ensure their preferred email address

is noted. Members can update any details through the portal at [www.psa.asn.au/member-area](http://www.psa.asn.au/member-area)

*The PSA CPSU NSW will have skeleton staff available to assist members on 23 and 24 December and 2 and 3 January.*

*The union will open again for full operational hours on Monday 6 January 2025. The Member Support Centre can be reached on 1800 772 679.*

## DEALING WITH CANCER AT CHRISTMAS

**How to cope with the festive season when cancer rears its head.**

**P**SA CPSU NSW members have access to cancer support services via their union's relationship with Osara Health. Help is available to those directly impacted by cancer and those caring for someone with the disease.

Information is available at [www.osarahealth.com/en-au/psacpsunsw](http://www.osarahealth.com/en-au/psacpsunsw)

In addition, Osara has supplied tips for cancer patients and their families to help cope with the ups and downs of the festive season.

### **Help set manageable goals**

Cancer patients may struggle with feeling out of control due to their diagnosis and treatment. One way to empower them is by helping them set small, manageable goals that cater to their current physical and emotional state. The holiday season may bring a desire to participate in festivities, but it's essential to prioritise their well-being.

Encourage your loved one to set realistic physical goals, such as a daily 10-minute walk to improve both fitness and mental well-being.

Small dietary improvements can also promote energy and strength. With fatigue being a common side effect of treatment, offering to help prepare nutritious meals or snacks can be a wonderful gesture.

### **Lend an ear**

Cancer treatment can be lonely and isolating, especially during the holidays when everyone else seems to be celebrating. Sometimes the best support comes from simply listening to loved one wants to vent their frustrations, share their fears, or reminisce about happier times.

Offer to spend time together without forcing the holiday cheer. An afternoon in watching a movie or enjoying a cup of tea might be all they need.

### **Encourage laughter and lightness**

The emotional toll of cancer treatment is heavy, but moments of lightness and humour can help alleviate some



of the burden. Laughter is a natural stress reliever, releasing endorphins and providing a welcome distraction from the daily challenges of treatment.

Even small, humorous moments can make a big difference in helping cancer patients feel more connected.

### **Assist with appointments**

Navigating appointments, treatments, and medications can be overwhelming, especially during the holiday season when schedules are often disrupted. Offer to help by organising their appointments in a calendar or setting reminders for medications. You could even volunteer to drive them to appointments or sit with them during treatments.

### **Create opportunities for connection**

While some cancer patients may feel like withdrawing during the holidays, maintaining a strong support system is crucial. Help them stay connected to family and friends by organising low-key, intimate

gatherings over the holiday season. Instead of large parties, opt for small get-togethers with a few loved ones, which can be less tiring and easier to manage.

### **Give thoughtful, practical gifts**

While holiday gifts are a lovely tradition, consider giving thoughtful, practical gifts that can provide comfort and ease.

The holiday season is a time to come together and support one another, and cancer patients need that support more than ever. Through small acts of kindness, compassion, and presence, you can help them feel seen, valued, and loved, even during one of the most challenging seasons of their life.

### **Osara Health support**

By focusing on practical, emotional, and meaningful support, you can make a lasting impact on your loved one's holiday season, helping them feel connected and empowered during their cancer journey.





OSARA  
HEALTH



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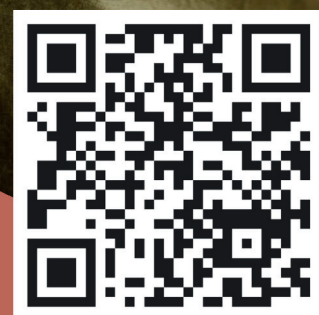
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# WINNING FOR





# MEMBERS





## The PSA CPSU NSW continues a great tradition of workplace victories.

**U**nion members rarely see what goes into the wins that fundamentally transform their working lives.

They don't see the meetings, strategising how to get the message across to members, government and the broader public. They aren't party to phone calls, often on the weekend, between union executives and government ministers, or industrial officers and political staffers and senior public servants.

They don't hear the vigorous debate, furious disagreements or the relief at reaching a decision amenable to all.

But the union members do see the wins. They see the better wages, the long-overdue offer of permanency, flexible conditions and safer workplaces.

They see what happens when their union fights for them.

In October 2024, a three-year pay deal was finally agreed on between the PSA and the State Government. The pay offer, the second handed down since the end of the previous government's hated wage cap, delivered a series of pay rises that are expected to keep ahead of inflation.

"We ensured, when dealing with the Government over the pay increase, that there be safeguards if inflation once again starts eating into our spending power," said

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. "If the Sydney Consumer Price Index exceeds 3.5 per cent in the March quarter in the second or third year of the deal. If this is the case, there will be negotiations for a one-off, non-cumulative, cost-of-living allowance.

"If the Sydney Consumer Price Index exceeds 4 per cent in the March quarter in the second or third year, members will receive a \$1000 taxable, one-off, non-cumulative cost-of-living adjustment payment, plus superannuation."

The recent pay deal was not simply the result of high-level chats and phone calls.

After years of protests, including a statewide strike and a protest march that filled Sydney's Macquarie Street, the PSA took action. The union knew the Liberal National State Government would never repeal the wage cap, so it surveyed other parties and candidates for their opinions on members' pay. They discovered Labor, the Greens and a plethora of independents and minor parties agreed with the union that the wage cap had unfairly reduced the spending power of the state's vital frontline workers and that it had to go.

The politicians agreed Public Sector workers were the ones at the forefront of efforts to combat the appalling triumvirate of pandemic, fire and flood that had blighted the state in recent years.

The PSA went into action, campaigning for voters to choose candidates who were not happy with the status quo, where Public Sector workers were reminded their real pay was slipping further behind every time inflation figures hit the news.

With the wage cap gone, the union could truly begin to negotiate on salaries and win better wages and conditions for its members. The reason they could negotiate is that the PSA campaign to reinstate the Industrial Relations Commission was successful. Wages were no longer solely decided by the State Government.

For many in the union, the pay increases were more substantial. These areas had seen duties increase in complexity, yet their wages did not keep up.

In areas such as Community Services, the Office of the Sheriff, Fisheries, Special Constables and NSW Police Horses, wage increases were accompanied by uplifts that saw workers progress regrading scales that better reflect the work they do.

Wages are not the only benefit unions fight and win over. Last year saw thousands of workers in NSW public schools receive permanent positions. Until this win, the pupil population-based hiring system meant the school system was heavily reliant on non-permanent staff whose roles were renewed every year once student numbers were confirmed. Great for government bean counters, this system was awful for workers. Many languished in this employment limbo for years, always fearful the Christmas break would signal an end to their working life.

"I've worked in the school system for decades, so I know how distressing it was for members not knowing if they were employed the following year," said PSA Senior Vice-President and Chair of the Schools Departmental Committee Juliette Sizer. "This problem was particularly acute





in the regions, where small population sizes meant members' jobs were vulnerable.

"Our union has been campaigning on this issue for years. And we didn't let up, so much so that before the most recent state election, both sides of politics were promising to fix this issue.

"You want to know what a winning union looks like? Ask our members in schools. They know."

The victory of excessively precarious employment was the second big win in this area as the PSA pursues its goals of Paid, Protected, Permanent. In 2019, members in schools received a big pay increase after the Industrial Relations Commission found the low pay in the sector was due to sexual discrimination.

"We are now looking to reduce the violence meted out to our members in schools," said Ms Sizer. "Then we truly will be Paid, Protected, Permanent."

Another long-running issue the PSA is taking on is the commercial operation of gaols, with the government takeover of Junee Correctional Centre a recent development in the public-private arm wrestle over control of NSW prisons.

"As a Prison Officer, I know incarceration for profit will never work," said PSA President Nicole Jess. "Cutting costs to boost profits benefits no-one but bosses and the overseas shareholders of these outsourcing behemoths.

"It's bad for the staff, bad for the inmates and bad for the public that expects our prisons to properly rehabilitate people found guilty of crimes.

"The handover of Junee to Correctional Services NSW means staff will be safer and better paid. They will be part of the wider correctional system, so will have better access to promotion and career advancement.

"Our union is excited about this change of ownership and will be keen to see this occur again when contracts to run and operate private gaols in Parklea and the Clarence region are up for renewal."

The PSA has long opposed the private operation of what are usually public assets, including Junee, that characterised NSW politics for much of the past decades. The union also knows the NSW public shares its distaste for the sell-off of state assets and services.

"We campaigned heavily during the 2023 state election on this issue," said Mr Little. "We got great traction on this. Voters, including conservative party supporters, have never been on board with privatisation. Our Privatisation Hurts Everyone campaign was a winner with voters, articulating how they felt seeing profiteering from assets they, as taxpayers, once owned.

"It was a major reason many people abandoned the Liberal National Government in favour of parties that had promised to stop the sell-offs."

Campaigning was also a big part of publicising the plight of the state's child protection system.

"The NSW system for children requiring state intervention in their care was perhaps the most insidious example of outsourcing," said Mr Little. "Private

operators were charging obscene amounts, yet an underfunded state-run service was struggling to see even half the children requiring help.

**'PRIVATE OPERATORS WERE CHARGING OBSCENE AMOUNTS, YET AN UNDERFUNDED STATE SERVICE WAS STRUGGLING'**

"Our Child Protection in Crisis campaign showed NSW what was going on. And the state did not like what it saw.

"PSA staff travelled the state, doing media appearances and demanding more be done to protect some of our most vulnerable children. There is still much to be done. But we have a Minister who regularly visits the PSA to hear what our members have to say. The Government has hired more Caseworkers, and the recent uplift that accompanied the pay rise will hopefully see a slowdown in the number of them leaving the job.

"The PSA is not only winning for these members, it is winning for the children whose lives depend on our services."

Allison Corrigan, PSA Vice-President, said the union's actions have also helped the Child Protection Helpline service which is also under crisis.





“Delegates have been able to provide grassroots support 24/7, which is important at what has been an unprecedentedly challenging time,” she said. “When we have a 24-hour service, it is vital members can reach out at any time, no matter the hour.”

“Some members feel the PSA is all they have in the workplace.”

Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright said, due to the nature of members’ roles,

**‘IN THESE WORKPLACES WE HAD BEEN FIGHTING FOR YEARS, WALKING OFF THE JOB AND GETTING MAXIMUM MEDIA COVERAGE’**

the PSA’s wins have a much wider impact that simply better-paid and happier workers.

“We run things like child protection services, prisons, schools, TAFE campuses and national parks,” he said. “When our workers get better pay and more respect, this flows on to the very functions that make our state a superior place to live, learn and work. If employers treat Disability Support Workers well, for example, then some of the state’s most vulnerable residents will get the best care. Not only are these people happier, but their family members can rest easier, too.”

“In the justice system, the PSA has campaigned hard, and won, on behalf of some of the state’s most undervalued workers.

“We saw significant uplifts for Sheriffs, Special Constables and the Grooms who care for Police horses.

“In these workplaces we had been

fighting for years, walking off the job and getting maximum media coverage for these workers’ plights.”

Sheriffs have walked off the job all over the state to draw plight to their issue. Several years ago, Special Constables did the same, including walking away from duties at State Parliament, drawing attention to their working conditions to the decision-makers they protect.

“The uplifts will improve these workers’ wages and conditions,” said Mr Wright. “This will improve services for the people of NSW.”

PSA CPSU NSW Vice-President Shelley Odewahn has worked in the university sector for more than 20 years.

“The CPSU NSW is constantly involved in Enterprise Bargaining for our members in universities,” she said. “Every win we get improves the service delivered from the Professional Staff we represent in the state’s 11 universities.





“Education is not only the foundation for a better-trained future workforce; it is also one of the country’s biggest export earners. Wins for members equate to wins for the Australian economy. It’s that important.”

“We have won conditions in Enterprise Agreements that you would struggle to find elsewhere in the country’s industrial landscape, including gender-reassignment leave and cultural leave.”

“Don’t forget, it was in the universities sphere that our union first won domestic and family violence leave 20 years ago. This is now a global employment condition that has saved countless lives.”

Wins for the union can equate to wins in the state’s social fabric. The domestic and family violence leave mentioned above means those suffering domestic and family violence are not forced to remain in what can be potentially fatal living conditions. The leave has been adopted

in Awards and Enterprise Agreements throughout Australia and is now an international labour standard.

Additionally in this area, the PSA launched a campaign to keep open the Mount Druitt Domestic Violence Support Unit, the only government-run facility of its kind in the state. Slated for closure, the centre was kept operational, with more staff and a more realistic budget thanks to a campaign by the union. The PSA is now campaigning for similar centres to be opened throughout NSW.

“Everyone in the state should have access to government-funded domestic and family violence support,” said Ms Jess.

Wins are often the result of the union better responding to changes in members’ work life.

“Our Fisheries Officers recently received an uplift from the State Government after years of campaigning from their union,

the PSA,” said Mr Wright. “This better reflects their role in NSW.”

“The days where an Officer’s job was checking someone didn’t have too many undersized whiting in their bucket have gone. Organised crime has moved into seafood poaching, while drug smugglers are using fishing vessels.”

“This means previous wages and conditions were no longer suitable for what is now a totally different role for these Champions of the State.”

The PSA CPSU NSW has once again grown to more than 40,000 members. This has occurred at a time many other unions in Australia have contracted in size.

“We grow because we campaign, fight and win,” said Mr Little. “There can be no greater advertisement for joining your union than seeing wages, conditions and workplace protections improve.”

“Winning unions are growing unions. It’s that simple.”



# OFFICER A OVER IN 10 SECONDS

*Warning: This article may distress some readers. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware it mentions a deceased person.*

## How a botched prison escape left one man dead and another in a legal nightmare.

**O**n a dark, rainy day in Lismore, it took just a few seconds for one man to lose his life and another man to have his world changed forever.

On 15 March 2019, circumstances brought two men to together. One was Dwayne Johnstone, a 43-year-old Aboriginal man who had appeared to suffer convulsions in the cells of Lismore Courthouse, where he was facing charges of assault. The other was a man whose identity was later suppressed by a court order and would henceforth become known to the media as Officer A.

On that day, Officer A's job was to escort Mr Johnstone to Lismore Base Hospital.

Unknown to Officer A, while in hospital Mr Johnstone is alleged to have offered a nurse \$10,000 if he helped him escape. Others in the ward described "demanding, threatening and intimidating" behaviour from Mr Johnstone towards other hospital staff members.

It was after the hospital visit, however,

that Mr Johnstone broke free and made a bid for freedom.

"The entire incident went on for just over 10 seconds," said Officer A, recalling the moment his life took a dramatic turn.

As the inmate raced off, away from his escort, the training NSW Prison Officers go through kicked in.

Officer A gave chase.

"I had to cross a four-lane road which included parking lanes at an ambulance entry and there were moving vehicles at the time," said Officer A. "I had to ensure I knew where my fellow Officer was. This was as I was maintaining eyes on the escapee.

"It was quickly evident the inmate was running at speed. I gave the initial verbal warning for him to stop."

As Mr Johnstone continued to run, Officer A drew his revolver, a .38-calibre Smith and Wesson, and yelled at the inmate to stop running.

Prison Officers performing court escort duties are issued with either a Glock or a Smith and Wesson. All Officers are given regular training with weapons, and for the overwhelming majority of them, this mandated time on the practice range is the only time they will fire their pistol in their entire career.

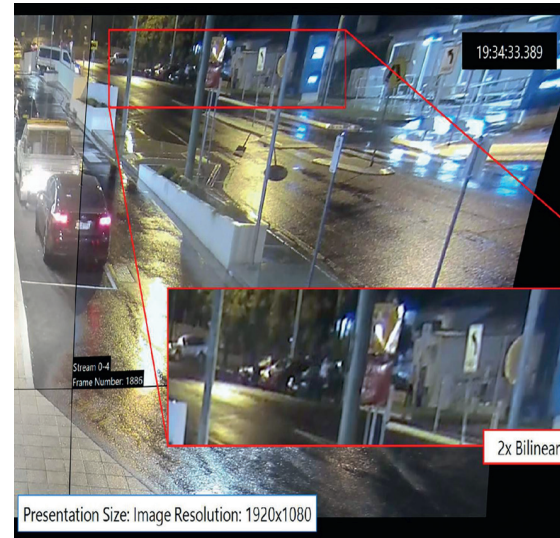
But for Officer A, 15 March 2019 was no ordinary day.

"I gave a verbal warning: 'Correctional Officer; stop, or I will shoot,'" he said. "I









then fired the first warning shot.

“But the escapee continued his intended escape, still running at speed.

“I then gave a second verbal warning: ‘Correctional Officer; stop, or I will shoot.’

“I then fired the second warning shot. But again, the escapee continued.

“It was clear in my assessment the escapee had no intention to stop. It was also clear that his intention was to get to the hospital public car park.

“I yelled, ‘F\_\_\_ing stop!’”

It was now that Officer A knew Mr Johnstone had no intention of giving up his escape and a man accused of assault was about to be running free in the community. Every time Officer A had slowed down to fire a warning shot, the escapee had run further away.

“My focus was on preventing the escape,” he said. “I was unsure if someone was waiting for the escapee. Or a vehicle was parked there waiting for him. Then he would succeed in his escape. Members of the public were in that area and the situation would surely escalate to a much higher level.”

Determined to keep the public safe, Officer A fired a third shot.

“The third shot struck the inmate,” he said. The inmate continued to move forward and then fell. This all happened very quickly.

“I arrived where he was laying, he had rolled around onto his back and said a few words to me.”

Those words proved to be his last, and Mr Johnstone died at the scene.

Standing over the man who died trying to flee, Officer A had to contact

police, although “I was highly elevated and somewhat confused and could not remember street names,” he said. “All I knew was that I had shot the escapee and was standing next to where he lay. Evidence came out that apparently, I placed my hand on my forehead and appeared extremely distressed. I cannot remember that, but I would say it is correct.”

Officer A spent the following days wondering how events had combined for such a tragic outcome.

“Of course, my mind continued to swirl for the next 72 hours as I had to undertake forensic and breath analysis process and go through that procedure,” he said. “I continually questioned myself to ensure all my actions were correct and look at anything else I could have done.

“I always ended up with the same conclusion. I had done as I was trained and there was nothing else I could have done.

“Obviously, discharging your firearm or any force is a last resort. But you would also think most people, after a warning shot was fired at them, would seriously consider stopping, let alone ignoring two warning shots.

“Unless of course he had a strong determination and will to get away and had a strategy or plan that would ensure his escape was successful.”

However, not everyone agreed with Officer A.

As the morning of the coronial inquest into Mr Johnstone’s death, Officer A was advised the matter was being referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) with a recommendation that he be charged with manslaughter.

“This is without any evidence being heard by the coroner,” he said. “Only the coronial brief. This was despite no police charges and no internal disciplinary matters from their investigations. I can assure everyone the police conduct a thorough and complete investigation and are impartial in all aspects of inquiries.”

Suddenly the trauma of having killed a man was compounded with being charged with a criminal offence.

**‘I HAD REACTED AS I WAS TRAINED AND THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE I COULD HAVE DONE’**

“I heard about the charges as my legal representatives travelled with Counsel Assisting on the plane to Ballina,” he said. “At this point in time, I had resumed duties back at the workplace, although on a return-to-work plan, which involved performing all day duties, including hospital escorts.

“I was shocked. The police investigation determined I had complied with legislation and determined I had no charges be laid against me. During the entire process with police I was never cautioned, as at no time did they detect or identify an offence had been committed.

“The internal investigation also indicated I had complied with training practices, policy and procedures, so no





disciplinary action was taken. To this day I am still employed by Corrective Services, although I am on workers' compensation."

Since the referral from the Coroner to the DPP, Officer A has never returned to his workplace to perform the duties he had been performing.

When the first trial commenced, Officer A was thrust into the public spotlight. And with an issue as sensitive as Aboriginal deaths in custody, it wasn't long until he was the target of online abuse.

"Initially social media blew up with, as you can imagine, a lot of threats harassment," he said. "Where I lived, reprisals full of anger hatred came thick and fast against me and my family.

"After a period of time, it dropped off a bit. But due to the nature of the matter, after every court appearance, social media blew up again. This was generated by certain individuals and groups pushing their own agenda, misleading people to create anger.

"Some of these people attended my first mention date, and the Sheriff's Officers overheard them discussing their actions and threats of what they intended to do when I came out of the courtroom."

As a result, the magistrate declared a closed court. In addition, the threats directed at the Officer meant his name and identity were suppressed and remain so today.

"At various points along the way commencing with the coronial inquest groups held up placards and adopted certain positions outside the courthouse in an attempt to get a photo of me," said Officer A.

Approximately six weeks before the first trial the DPP decided to upgrade the charge from manslaughter to murder.

This was three-and-a-half years after the incident occurring. The DPP stated new evidence had been obtained. However, he believes nothing had changed since the incident.

Within a week of the upgrade Officer A was assaulted in the street while going for his morning walk. Police and Paramedics attended, but as the murder trial was due to commence, Officer A did not pursue any charges against his attacker.

"During the first trial, several people were questioned and some were arrested from the gallery for taking photos of me whilst in the courtroom," he said.

"They had the pictures deleted from their phones and the Judge warned the Prosecution to speak with the supporters of the deceased and inform that he required certain dress to be worn in court and to remind them of rules about courtroom behaviour."

The trial was tiring for the accused.

"At the end of each day, you are exhausted mentally," he said. "However, you need to stay on your a-game as there is work to do to prepare for the next day. There are instructions to get and give from your legal team and they set tasks for you to complete so they can provide the best representation possible on your behalf.

"The trial went for around four or five weeks and the pre-trial hearing went for about three or four days. The jury remained out for a week and only asked one question. That week was like standing on the edge of a cliff not knowing if you will fall or stay put. A lot of conversations have to be had each day, because you wonder if a decision will be made that will mean this is the last time I see my family

From left: Lismore Base Hospital, photos of the scene of the event presented during Officer A's case, including the streetscape and bullet damage.

for a while. You wonder if you will be trucked out to a Correctional facility or go home. You live with uncertainty 24/7 until the jury returns."

After the first trial, the jury was discharged after it was unable to reach a verdict on the charge of murder or manslaughter.

"The jury returned as a hung jury after being given what is called a 'black direction' by the presiding Judge," said Officer A. "With that decision I was overwhelmed. We had planned for guilty or not guilty, but we never planned for a hung jury and retrial."

A second trial began, and once again Officer A's days revolved around the courthouse, wondering if he would one day join the inmates he once worked with.

"When the second trial began, I knew the amount of time and effort that my legal team had put in over the previous 12 months," he said. "To this day and forever I am grateful to each and every person within the legal group that worked on my matter, from admin to Queen's Counsel or, by the time the second trial came around, King's Counsel."

As a PSA member, Officer A had his legal bills met by his union and the POVB Legal Fund, saving him millions of dollars.

"The PSA were great all the way along," he said. "I think people have a huge misunderstanding: you think you do your job as required within the rules and legislation, you will be covered.



“This is not correct. All those legal meetings and costs: travel costs, accommodation, meals, court appearances, the list goes on. I was in the Legal Fund so it was all covered. If I wasn’t: well, who can afford those sorts of costs these days?”

The legal fund is the main reason Officer A can tell his story, because it saved his life. Officer A had enough going on in his life without having to also think how he could raise several million dollars.

“The PSA POVB Legal Fund gives Prison Officers protection for events such as these,” said the union President Nicole Jess, herself an Officer. “Officer A would have had to choose between selling all his assets or compromising on his defence during the trial. As a union member, he had our support.

**‘REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES THIS LADY HAS LOST HER SON’**

“It is imperative that you join your union.”

In addition to financial support, he was joined every day by fellow Prison Officers.

“Having fellow officers attend both trials gave myself and my family an immense amount of support and belief,” he said. “I also received many text messages from people far away who could not attend but they let me know their thoughts were with me.

“Fellow officers from Queensland, southern NSW and from various locations around the state attended from both private and public operating facilities and even some retired Officers. Officers I worked with in the mid-1980s were there and they gave me faith.

“Although I said hello for obvious reasons I couldn’t stop and talk too long and that didn’t bother them. They were there to show me that they fully supported me.

“There were some people I thought would or should attend yet failed to attend or communicate in any way. This was disheartening, yet I have learnt you work out who are the real supporters and which ones run and bury their heads.”

There was someone else constantly at the trial: Dwayne Johnstone’s mother.

“Once the jury retired, I asked my legal representatives if I could meet and show

my remorse to the mother of the deceased,” he said. “I would have done this before or during evidence but that was not the appropriate time to do so. Once the jury retired after closing arguments my legal representative approached the mother and asked if she would like to meet with me. She immediately said, ‘Of course.’

“So when the court was adjourned, we both met.”

Officer A told the woman, “I am sorry for the situation that has occurred.”

“She replied with, ‘Come here and give me a hug,’” he said. “With that we embraced each other and talked about different things.

“Regardless of the circumstances this lady has lost her son and like any parent would be distraught. She did say we should not be here. As she heard the evidence during the trial she recognised I was only doing my job. We talked about her son’s childhood and opportunities that were not available back then that she wanted to get him into. There were programs were available but at a cost.

“She has not had an easy life and has endured many struggles and has done the absolute best she could with the circumstances she faced. After a few discussions and coffees, I learnt so much from her. She is such a strong and courageous woman, with the qualities many others would benefit from.

“I respect her in many ways. We both helped to ease each other’s pain and suffering.

“No-one wants a death in custody but there are many things to be learnt from the process that two people at other ends of the road can achieve if the matter is approached humanely and without judgement.”

The day of the second verdict was a nerve-racking event. Before the decision was handed down, his Barrister went through the scenarios, including making decisions on what assets were available to post bond and what prison he would request to be sent to if the verdict was guilty.

Instead the Officer A heard the two words he was desperate to hear for nearly four years: not guilty.

The verdict was delivered, as so often was the case, with Officer A’s partner in the courtroom.

“This type of event undoubtedly affects the family,” said Officer A. “How do you inform your children that you have been charged with murder? What do

your partner’s parents think when they are told? How do any partners or their parents of our children react? Do I feel ashamed embarrassed to inform them about the matter? You bet.

“Family members all underwent psychological treatment. Our personal practices within a small community in Northern Rivers have changed, we do not do what we want or go where we want. Over the time my partner was disciplined at work due to the amount of leave she continually requested.

“She had the leave available but the location where she worked was short-staffed, so you are looking at 12 weeks’ worth of trials and numerous psychological appointments, as she was admitted to hospital on two occasions due to stress and heart concerns.

“I was moved onto workers’ compensation which reduced my income and my partner’s income disappeared.

“Our relationship and that of our children has had an impact and we both have had to really work with professional assistance to maintain it. I have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety depression, alcohol addiction, adjustment disorder and a few other associated mental health conditions.

“And these affect your household and loved ones. I am incredibly lucky as she looks after me, keeps me in check but also is aware when I need space. I have completed three or four PTSD programs that are designed for first responders which are of great benefit.

“I have been admitted to a mental health clinic on several occasions. These events, coupled with the legal matters, cannot do anything but affect a relationship individually and collectively. I feel guilty for putting them in that position, for just doing my job.”

And to this day, Officer A maintains he was let down by the system he was employed to maintain.

“Most people in the world do feel we live in a world of justice and fairness,” he said. “But I have noticed slowly that that mindset is changing and people are sick and tired of the bullshit that goes on within our politics; the avoidance of the big issues and the focus on making things dramatic when there is no need to be. I read a recent survey that indicted, I think, 47 per cent of people are satisfied with the judicial system.

“To me that’s a disgrace, it should be a much higher percentage than that.”



# PROTECT YOURSELF AT WORK



**Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for a Correctional Officer to be charged with Criminal Offences whilst conducting their duties.**

**The POVb Legal Fund was created to provide members legal assistance, representation and information in relation to any alleged criminal offence committed in the course of their employment with Corrective Services NSW. It is there if you are summoned to give evidence in a Coronial Inquest or Inquiry or if you are the subject of adverse comments or findings.**

**Get piece of mind for just \$4 a week (tax-deductible). Join the POVb Legal Fund.**



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✉ [psa@psa.asn.au](mailto:psa@psa.asn.au)

✉ [info@povb.com.au](mailto:info@povb.com.au)



## Public Service Association of NSW

### 2025 Election of Executive Officers and Delegates to Central Council

# ELECTION NOTICE

#### NOMINATIONS

Nominations are hereby invited on and from **Monday 13 January 2025** for the following positions:

- **General Secretary**
- **Assistant General Secretary**
- **President**
- **3 Vice-Presidents**
- **39 Delegates to Central Council**

#### QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates must be financial members of the Association as at 7 clear days prior to the opening of nominations; or be on the Executive of the NSW Branch of the CPSU, the Community and Public Sector Union, SPSF Group; or for the positions of General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary may be employees of the Public Service Association of NSW (PSA) or employees of the CPSU, the Community and Public Sector Union, SPSF Group; and must be nominated by at least two members (other than the candidate) of the PSA and who are financial as at 7 clear days prior to the opening of nominations. No person may nominate more candidates than the number to be elected for each position.

Nomination, Claim to be included in a group, Statutory declaration in support of candidature and Scrutineer appointment forms are available from:

- NSW Electoral Commission's website at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) or
- The Public Service Association of NSW website at [www.psa.asn.au](http://www.psa.asn.au)

#### LODGEMENT OF NOMINATIONS

Lodgement of a completed Nomination form, by the specified time, is the responsibility of the candidate. Completed nomination forms must be received by the Returning Officer, NSW Electoral Commission by no later than **12.00 noon, Monday 10 February 2025**. Any anomaly in the nomination form must be rectified prior to the close of nominations. A candidate may only withdraw their nomination by a written statement received by the Returning Officer prior to the close of nominations.

Completed nomination forms can only be lodged with the Returning Officer by:

- email: [Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au) or
- post: PO Box 693 Grosvenor Place NSW 1220; or
- hand: NSW Electoral Commission, Level 3, 231 Elizabeth Street Sydney

Note: Visitors to the NSW Electoral Commission are by appointment only. Please make an appointment via email to: [Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au) or telephone 1300 135 736 prior to attending the NSW Electoral Commission office.

#### BALLOT PAPER DRAW

If the election is contested a draw to determine the order of candidates' names on the ballot paper will be conducted at the NSW Electoral Commission, Level 3, 231 Elizabeth Street Sydney at **3.00pm, Monday 10 February 2025**. Candidates or their scrutineers or representatives are invited to witness the draw in person or via Teams. Please email [Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au) if you intend to witness the draw and the number of potential attendees

#### STATUTORY DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF CANDIDATURE

A candidate may complete a "Statutory declaration in support of candidature form". Details from which will be displayed on the NSW Electoral Commission's website for the information of voters.

#### GROUPING OF CANDIDATES

Candidates nominated for an election in which more than one person is to be elected, may by notice in writing to the Returning Officer before the close of nominations, request:

- (i) to have their names included in a group on the ballot papers to be used in that election; and



(ii) to have their names included in that group in the order specified in that request.

The number of candidates included in a Group must be equal to the number of candidates to be elected for that position.

Candidates wishing to have their names included in a group must lodge a Claim to be included in a group form with the Returning Officer by no later than **12.00 noon, Monday 10 February 2025**.

A claim to be included in a group may be withdrawn, but it must be in writing and signed by all the candidates who made the claim and delivered or sent so as to reach the Returning Officer before **12 noon, Monday 10 February 2025**.

### **LOGGING OF GROUP VOTING TICKETS**

Candidates included in a group may lodge one or two group voting tickets with the Returning Officer by no later than **12.00 noon, Tuesday 11 February 2025**.

### **RESERVED POSITIONS ON COUNCIL**

Candidates are referred to Rule 35 of the Rules of the Association for information regarding reserved positions for Delegates to Central Council.

### **ROLL OF ELECTORS TO CANDIDATES**

Candidates may request to obtain or inspect the roll of electors to pursue their candidature.

The process of accessing the roll requires two steps:

**Step 1:** A request in writing must be received by the Returning Officer by no later than the close of nominations **12 noon, Monday 10 February 2025**. A request for roll can be lodged with the Returning Officer by one of the following methods:

- email: [Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au)
- post: PO Box 693 Grosvenor Place NSW 1220
- hand deliver: NSW Electoral Commission, level 3, 231 Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

**Step 2:** After the candidate has received advice via email from the Returning Officer that their nomination has been accepted, they must:

- obtain authorisation from the Industrial Registrar to access the roll; and
- complete and lodge with the Returning Officer either a **Candidate's undertaking for the provision of the roll form CE.26** or a **Candidate's undertaking for the inspection of the roll form CE.25**.

Forms are available from the NSW Electoral Commission website [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au)

The Industrial Registrar can be contacted by email to [irc.registry@courts.nsw.gov.au](mailto:irc.registry@courts.nsw.gov.au) or telephone Tel: 02 8688 3516.

The candidate(s) who have met the requirements, will be provided the roll by the Returning Officer after the close of nominations via MIMICAST.

### **SCRUTINEERS**

Candidates may be represented by scrutineers at the mailing out of the ballot papers, daily PO box clearance of returned envelopes, daily mark off against the roll and the counting of the votes after the close of poll. Scrutineers must be nominated by the candidate in writing to the Returning Officer to be received by no later than the close of nominations **12.00 noon, Monday 10 February 2025**. A scrutineer shall not be a candidate in any of the ballots being contested.

### **VOTING**

All financial members of the PSA as at **12.00 noon, Monday 10 February 2025** are entitled to vote and will be sent ballot papers on **Monday 3 March 2025**.

Voting material will be posted to each member's residential address. Members should ensure that the PSA has their current residential address.

The poll will close at **12.00 noon, Wednesday 2 April 2025** and the counting of votes will commence at **2.00pm**.

Any enquiries concerning this election should be directed to Lanny Kok at the NSW Electoral Commission, telephone 1300 135 736 or email at [Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au)

Diana Koseifi  
Returning Officer

**NSW Electoral Commission**



# keep the fire burning

**BLAK  
LOUD AND  
PROUD**

**T**he PSA CPSU NSW Aboriginal Conference 2024 was held in Newcastle on 12 November 2014. Themed *Keep the Fires Burning Blak Loud and Proud*, the conference began with an Acknowledgment of Country by Bilum Henry from the NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC), followed by a Welcome by Darrell Brown, Chair of the PSA CPSU NSW Aboriginal Council, and the union's General Secretary Stewart Little.

Mr Little reminded guests in his opening message that the union movement has long stood alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers throughout the country's modern era. Also, that getting more Aboriginal people into senior Public Sector jobs is a vital priority for the union. He said workplaces are stronger when they have diverse input, and workplaces can better serve Aboriginal clients when they have staff with similar experiences.

Linda Burney, Federal Member for Barton, and former PSA member, spoke

at the conference. Her opening line was a hit with the audience: "I can think of nothing more important than public service."

She acknowledged the PSA was one of the first unions to establish an Aboriginal Council, and to hold an annual conference for Aboriginal workers.

Ms Burney discussed the fact that all social justice issues faced by Aboriginal people have an economic empowerment element to them. And that so many big-ticket fights for social justice have their roots in Aboriginal people organising around injustices from employers, and, with the help of unions, have continued to fight against all injustices that surround those issues – particularly land rights. She lauded the PSA for making land rights, criminal justice, and other campaigns for Aboriginal rights core union business.

Ms Burney thanked the PSA for all the union's work in fighting for secure employment, and all other areas that help Aboriginal communities throughout NSW.

"Ms Burney has announced her retirement from politics, and her

advocacy and passion will be greatly missed by the PSA and its membership," said Mr Little after the event.

'Walkabout Barber' Brian Dowd talked to the conference about health and wellbeing in the community.

Mr Dowd travels the state providing free haircuts to Aboriginal people, which in turn creates a judgement-free space for them to talk and learn about mental and physical health.

Jo Kerr, who has long worked on Aboriginal issues with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) discussed the union movement's long association with First Nation rights.

Andrew Smith, Chief Executive of the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) gave a passionate talk on land rights in NSW.

Worimi LALC was formed just a year after the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (ALRA) was introduced in 1983. It seeks opportunities for Aboriginal people to regain their cultural identity and self-determination in and around Port Stephens.

Mr Smith is a strong advocate of Aboriginal people achieving financial





independence, and to stop relying on what he calls “toxic charity”. He also talked about “woke Aboriginals” – referring to the fact that the Aboriginal population jumped by 28 per cent in the last census.

He also talked about the success of the Worimi LALC being about community, not about individuals. His organisation is a not-for-profit social enterprise, and providing training and employment outcomes, and making the community proud and self-sufficient. A recurring theme in his talk was to stop in-fighting.

He told the audience unity within the Aboriginal communities is extremely important.

“We have to stop fighting, utilise all the skills we have amongst us, and let’s start having each other’s back and move forward,” he said.

Darrell Brown, Chair of the PSA CPSU NSW Aboriginal Council praised Mr Smith’s presentation.

“Andrew intrinsically brought the message of *Keep the Fires Burning Blak Loud and Proud* to every word,” said Mr Brown.







# NEW BILL PROTECTS VICTIMS OF WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**A**ustralian workers are now able to pursue legal action against perpetrators of sexual harassment without the fear of having to pay for the offender's legal costs. Prior to the introduction of Federal Labor's *Costs Protection Bill in September 2024*, victims of sexual harassment could be burdened with paying the harasser's (and/or the harasser's employer's) legal fees, which could quite easily send the victim into bankruptcy.

The danger of having to pay enormous legal costs has been a barrier to pursuing justice for victims of sexual harassment. Shockingly, Australian Council of Trade Unions' (ACTU) research found that only one in 230,000 victim-survivors of workplace sexual harassment bring proceedings to an Australian court. Clearly, any obstacles to bringing justice to sexual harassment need to be eliminated.

Unions NSW and the ACTU are part of an alliance of 85 organisations which make up the Power to Prevent Coalition; a group who have been advocating for this and other changes to be made which will enable the one-in-five Australian workers who experience sexual harassment easier access to the justice system.

ACTU President Michelle O'Neil stated: "No worker should be priced out of justice when they have experienced sexual harassment and discrimination. Every day, in every sector, in every part of the country, unions represent workers experiencing harassment and discrimination at work."

Although the Bill did finally pass in September, it did not sail through as it should have.

"Yet again we see the Dutton Opposition vote against better rights and protections for working Australians," Ms O'Neil said. The Federal Liberal National Party challenged aspects of the Bill for

close to 12 months in parliament before coming to an agreement.

The Bill is especially important for workers on lower salaries, or in precarious employment. Pursuing justice in these circumstances is very often opted against when the financial risk is explained. Now, anyone, in any type of employment, on any salary can seek justice through the Australian court system.

"This is real equity in action," said Stewart Little, General Secretary of the PSA CPSU NSW. "Our members represent all levels of the workforce, from young people in entry-level roles, and through every grade of employment right up to senior NSW public servants. With the introduction of this Bill, not one of our members needs to factor in having to pay the legal fees of the person who harassed them in the workplace.

"It is some extremely rare, good news in an area almost always full of stress and distress."



# PARENTAL LEAVE WIN SHOWS THE POWER OF A UNION

## A member finds it pays to check the advice you are given.

A recent case illustrates how support from your union can help you navigate dealing with your Department to ensure your entitlements are calculated correctly.

A member working for the Department of Communities and Justice contacted their Organiser to check advice they were being given about the rate at which their Parental Leave should be paid.

Confirmation from their union that the advice Payroll had given them was incorrect eventually resulted in a recalculation of their Parental Leave rate of pay that made them \$14,000 better off financially.

“The Department also agreed to provide further training to Payroll staff on the Award conditions so that the award is applied correctly in the future, and no other employees suffer from incorrect decisions by their Department,” said PSA CPSU NSW Women’s Industrial Officer Simone Scalmer. “The member was due to start Parental Leave for their second child,

after working part-time since returning to work after having their first baby.

“The *Crown Employees Award* sets out the rate at which parental leave should be calculated, and states if an employee needs another period of parental leave for another child within 24 months of their first period of parental leave, and they have either not returned to work or are working reduced hours, their leave will be paid at the rate they were paid before their first period of leave began.

“Payroll incorrectly advised our member that the 24 months needed to be calculated from the date of birth of her first child until the estimated due date of the second baby, when the award states it is from when the first parental leave period commences until the second period commences, noting that parental leave can start up to nine weeks before the estimated due date.

“The member received advice from the Women’s Unit and took this back to Human Resources and Payroll who would not change their decision and insisted she should be paid at the part-time rate.”

Ms Scalmer then wrote to the Department on behalf of the member and

Employee Relations eventually agreed that the member should be paid Parental Leave at the full-time rate and undertook to provide further training to ensure Payroll staff understood the award conditions properly.

“If members are unsure that they are being given correct advice they should always contact their union who will stand up and fight for their rights if conditions are not being correctly applied,” said PSA President Nicole Jess.



## 2025 KRIS CRUDEN SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are now open for the Kris Cruden Scholarship.

The PSA CPSU NSW has established the Kris Cruden Scholarship in recognition of the legacy of Kris Cruden, who was an Industrial Manager at the PSA and a mentor to many in the union movement. Kris achieved so much in her career as a trade unionist, in the Labor Party and as Mayor of Leichhardt, after completing her tertiary studies as a mature aged student who continued employment as she completed university.

The Scholarship is for women aged 35 years and over who have been in the workforce and are commencing tertiary study.

The Scholarship is restricted to women members of the PSA CPSU NSW who, at the time of application, have been continuous financial members for the previous five years.

The Scholarship has a value of \$2000 per annum and will be awarded initially for one year and, subject to a satisfactory report on progress and conduct, awarded each year for a maximum of three years.

The Scholarship will be awarded to a female member selected by the Executive based on factors including, socio-economic circumstances, academic potential, personal motivation, commitment to union values and commitment to studies.

Applications close on 28 February 2025.

You can apply at [www.psa.asn.au/kcs](http://www.psa.asn.au/kcs)

If you have any queries please email [secretariat@psa.asn.au](mailto:secretariat@psa.asn.au)







# SUPER FUNDS LOBBIED ON MYANMAR LINKS

**I**n the average month, the Myanmar (formerly Burma) military performs more than 100 air strikes on its opponents, killing countless civilians in the process.

Weak enforcement of international sanctions has allowed the junta to continue sourcing aviation fuel, despite a United Nations Human Rights Council resolution in April urging member States to prevent the export, sale, or transfer of jet fuel to the Myanmar military.

The junta continues to evade restrictions through networks of intermediaries, trading companies, and fuel terminals aided by companies in Vietnam, Singapore, and China.

New investigations by Belgian organisation Justice For Myanmar and Info Birmanie reveal that French aerospace giant Airbus is an investor and partner of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC).

AVIC is a key supplier of military aircraft, arms, and critical aviation maintenance to Myanmar's military.

APHEDA-Union Aid Abroad's Myanmar Campaign Network is campaigning for Australian superannuation funds to review all holdings and divest from AVIC-controlled companies and entities supplying or supporting Myanmar's military junta. Funds holding shares in Airbus must engage with Airbus over AVIC and its arms sales to Myanmar.

APHEDA is also assisting Burmese migrants workers and refugees seeking safety and job opportunities in Thailand.

Many of these people, such as those pictured above crossed a river at Mae Sot,

face exploitation, with employers and government officials.

Readers can go to [www.apheda.org.au](http://www.apheda.org.au) for more information on APHEDA's work in Myanmar.



## APHEDA AIDS SAHARA REFUGEES

**I**n late September 2024, massive rains swamped the refugee camps along the border of the occupied Western Sahara. Hundreds of homes were inundated with families now in temporary shelters. Almost 150 families lost all possessions. Vital water infrastructure is damaged and Saharawi refugees are in danger of contracting water-borne diseases.

APHEDA-Union Aid Abroad is helping an emergency appeal to help

Saharawi refugees recover from the floods.

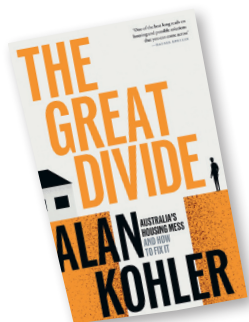
The territory, once governed by Spain, is now under Moroccan control. However, there is a civil war between Moroccan forces and Saharawi rebels.

All the funds raised by the APHEDA campaign will go to Oxfam in Algeria, which is working to help the most vulnerable families rebuild.

The site [www.apheda.org.au](http://www.apheda.org.au) has more information on the appeal.



# THE GREAT DIVIDE



## Australia's housing mess and how to fix it

Alan Kohler  
\$27.99  
Black Ink

Former editor of *The Australian Financial Review*, Alan Kohler, delves into the spiralling cost of housing, looking at how it came about and what can be done to stop almost entire



generations being shut out of home ownership.

Much of the problems, Mr Kohler points out, can be laid at the feet of Prime Minister John Howard, who implemented tax reforms that transformed home ownership into a means of wealth creation for millions of Australians, henceforth cutting others out of the market.

He also blames negative gearing, which was introduced by the Hawke Labor Government in the 1980s, and goes further back to condemn

Robert Menzies, who cut into public housing in the 1950s. The author is particularly scathing about another Menzies plan introduced in 1964; cash grants to home-buyers. Such handouts have been repeated in different guises by different governments since then, with the only effect being inflationary.

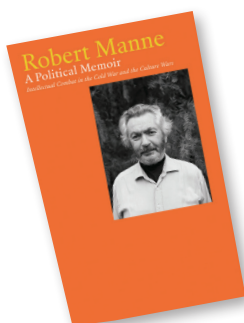
Throw in immigration, strict planning laws and an economy centred on big cities, Mr Kohler points out, and we have housing costs rising much faster than wages.

The last chapter outlines

some of what Mr Kohler recommends be done to make housing more affordable to more people. He believes immigration needs to be linked to housing supply, the tax system moved away from encouraging property accumulation and local government encouraged, or forced if required, to create more opportunities to build.

*The Great Divide* is a great look at a crisis facing Australia and should be on the reading list of every MP in the country.

# ROBERT MANNE



## A Political Memoir

Robert Manne  
\$59.99  
Black Ink

Renowned political commentator Robert Manne drifted from left-wing academia to the editorship of the right-wing *Quadrant* magazine, then back to the left as Australian conservatives adopted a blinkered view of Aboriginal dispossession.

This weighty tome follows Mr Manne's remarkable political and academic career, from Vietnam protests as a student, through the culture wars on Aboriginal rights, to Kevin Rudd's green failures, Julian Assange's role in US politics and the rise of Islamic State.







## LET'S TAX CARBON

And other idea for a better Australia

Ross Garnaut  
\$36.99

La Trobe University Press

# BATTLERS & BILLIONAIRES

In 2007, Ross Garnaut (pictured below) wrote a review into Australia's climate policies.

In his latest book, *Let's Tax Carbon*, Professor Garnaut revisits the idea of a carbon tax, a policy introduced under Prime Minister Julia Gillard and subsequently abandoned by Tony Abbott.

This idea, and the accompanying transition of Australia to renewable-energy superpower status is just one of the book's plans floated to create an economy that encourages full employment teamed with low inflation. He criticises the Reserve Bank of Australia's current obsession with controlling inflation regardless of its effect on employment.



## The updated story of inequality in Australia

Andrew Leigh  
\$29.99  
Black Ink

From Federation to the 1980s, Australia was the world's shining light on equality.

The wage gap between the wealthiest and the poorest was much less pronounced than it was overseas – among white males at least.

Then came a deregulation, a flight from unions by private

sector workers and the opening of Australia's economy to the rest of the world. Suddenly the distance between winners and losers became a vast chasm.

Federal Labor MP Andrew Leigh charts the end of Australia's great experiment in inequality, which has now given way to billionaires such as Gina Rinehart (pictured

below) and battlers such as single parents bouncing between insecure, part-time roles.

Dr Leigh looks at how tax reform, higher union involvement and general will of the people can wind back some of the destructive changes to the country's egalitarian ethos.







## REPEAT

**A warning from history**

Dennis Glover  
\$26.99  
Black Ink

Journalist Dennis Glover pulls no punches in his comparison of the rise of Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini and Francisco Franco with the current resurgence of anger-induced populism worldwide.

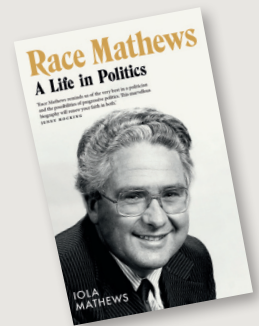
In the first section, titled *Tragedy*, Mr Glover discusses the way advanced democracies stood by and watched as populist dictators took power in Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy and Spain, resulting in conflict and horror resulting in tens millions of deaths.

In many 'what-if' scenarios, the author looks at how stronger action from democracies could have

averted the evils of Hitler and Stalin.

The second section, *Farce*, Mr Glover discusses what happens when we ignore history and allow populist authoritarians to prosper.

He looks at the rise of the lunacy of the now twice-elected Donald Trump, the expansionist evil of Vladimir Putin and the rise of other despots such as India's Hindu-chauvinist Narendra Modi and Hungary's Victor Orban, as well as the battle between Israel's authoritarian leader Benjamin Netanyahu and his anti-Semitic opponents Hamas.



## RACE MATHEWS

**A life in politics**

Iola Mathews  
\$39.99  
Monash University Publishing

Former Labor Party advisor and MP Race Mathews began his autobiography before Alzheimer's disease took its cruel grip and he ceased working on the memoirs in 2018.

His wife, noted feminist journalist and campaigner – and one-time PSA CPSU NSW Women's Conference guest speaker – Iola Mathews completed the project.

The result is a look back at the rise of the groundbreaking Whitlam Government and its subsequent fall.

Race Mathews worked with Gough Whitlam as the future Prime Minister wrested control of the Labor Party, appealing to a wider cross-section of voters.

Mr Mathews was elected the MP for the Victoria seat of Casey when Mr Whitlam won power, remaining an MP until the electoral bloodbath after the Dismissal. He was later a Victorian state MP.





# PRISON CHRONICLES

**T**his NSW-produced podcast is put together by Sid, a former Corrections Officer of 20 years, who interviews PSA members in Corrections, and reveals not only interesting stories about their work, but more importantly, how it affects them as people. What kind of personality is cut out for corrections work; what the job is actually like – as opposed to what popular culture might portray; and what it does to our members as people who have to work in the NSW prison system, but live in free society?

In episode one we learn that NSW Corrections Officers would rather be called a Dog than a Warden or Guard. It's just not what they are. Of course, there are other names they prefer, like Boss or Chief, or even their actual first name. But do not ever call them Guard or Warden. These are titles given by unrealistic, and fictional

portrayals of Corrections Officers. And certainly not Australian ones.

We also learn that Corrections Officers do not carry any weapons when on the floor. None at all. Although staff on Court Escorts and towers are armed (in the prisons that have towers), the Officers who work with the inmates do not have any armed protection. It would be too easy for an inmate to get hold of a weapon. And that could be a far worse situation; removing as many opportunities to access weapons is the best policy in a very imperfect situation. Nevertheless, the ratio of inmates to Corrections Officers is roughly two to 150. In favour of the inmates. And that is an anxious situation to be in for work.

One member describes the weapons he had available to him were his conversation and negotiation skills, respect and quick wits. Another member says doing this job will change your whole outlook and philosophy on life.

The most poignant fact revealed to listeners of the podcast would have to be that of the 1983 Richmond Report into the welfare mental health patients in NSW. The policy of de-institutionalisation of mental health patients has unintentionally filled our state's correction facilities. The policy shut down residential mental health facilities and outsourced mental health care to families and private out-patient mental health organisations. Without the safety-net of a residential mental health institution, many people end up in corrections facilities, as they cannot function as part of 'normal' society.

The series continues with episodes which focus on particular NSW Corrections facilities, and the stories of the PSA members who work within their walls. This series is compelling, darkly humorous, and poignant. And at times shocking. No-one wants to witness a 'bronzing up'!

*Prison Chronicles* is available wherever you get your podcasts.





# ON THE JOB: A WIN PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY UNIONS

**A**lthough this episode of the *On The Job* podcast was originally broadcast in November 2022, it is a great reminder to all about the union movement's fight to win workers something we too often take for granted: the weekend.

The weekend is such a strong cultural monument that if it were removed, the void left would defile innumerable songs, stories, artworks, jokes, elements of language – and good old industrial relations. The weekend is so embedded in our lives, it has an emotional mood we all share. The week seems to get brighter and lighter as it nears the two sacred days. But this phenomenon is a result of the first world, and particularly the unionised first world.

Commentator Francis Leach's guest on the podcast is political historian Dr Liam Byrne. Dr Byrne explains that pre-1940s, workers had to work at least a half-day on Saturday, and were given Sunday off, though there was little to do, as everything was shut.

Yet when unions began agitating for a weekend, employers pushed back hard, calling the concept a “an unnecessary and dangerous experiment” and warning of a complete financial collapse.

The fight for a 40-hour week, which included two days off, had begun in the 1930s, but World War II put many industrial relations issues on hold.

It was a John Curtin Labor Government promise that if elected, he would implement the 40-hour week.

Mr Curtin passed away before he could legislate the weekend; however, the Ben Chifley Government, after substantial pressure from unions, including strikes, eventually relented in 1947.

An interesting element of the case once the fight was taken to arbitration, was that employer groups called the concept of a weekend an emotional and philosophical argument, not an economic or industrial one. And although it was meant as a jibe,

the weekend is emotional and philosophical. It is about workers being human, and not machines. It is about having time to have emotions, and to be philosophical. Things humans essentially need to be.

The fight for the weekend – and winning the weekend – is a great representation what unions do. Unions, with their members, continually fight for greater common good. It would be extremely difficult to argue that the weekend has turned out to be a bad thing for society. Its goodness far outweighs any economical disadvantages, real or imagined. Anti-union pundits pour disparaging remarks about the work unions do – focussing mainly on individual issues which, out of context, can make unions out to be petty and out-of-touch. But it's the big issues, that

tend to be taken for granted, that unions should be credited with in society.

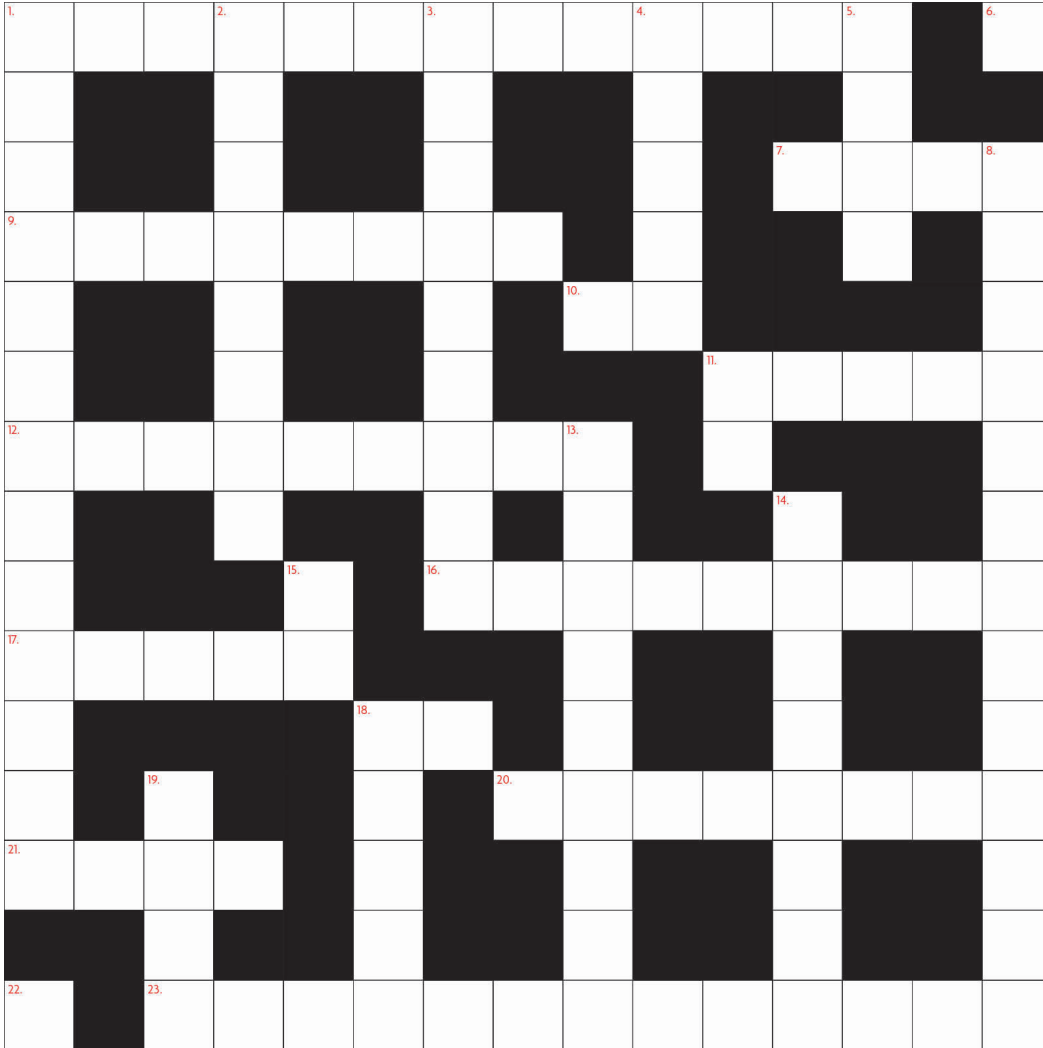
The fight for the weekend is on again as well. The gig economy, casualisation, the 24-hour economy, and labour-hire are all eroding the idea of a weekend. Some areas of employment have lost penalty rates for working weekends. And employer groups are constantly pushing to make a structured working week a thing of the past, and introduce constant cycle of work shifts, without the notion of penalty rates. Unions continue to hold fast on the weekend, though. But it is starting to expand into a wider battle.

This podcast, available wherever you get your podcasts, is a short, but highly informative talk; ideal for giving members a bit of fodder for why people should be part of a union.





# CROSSWORD

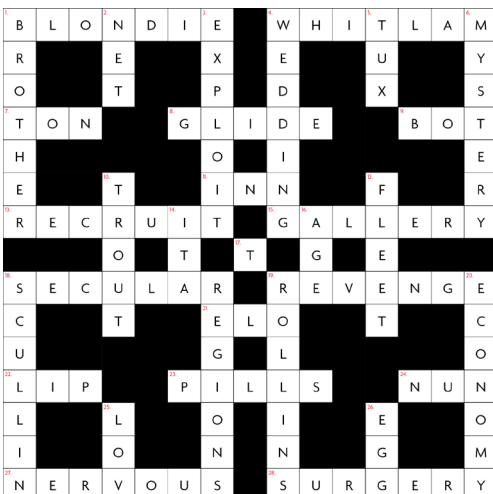


- 16. When in agreement you sing from the same one (4,5)
- 17. Closely spaced shrubs (5)
- 18. Important member of the school staff (1,1)
- 20. Take control of a situation: Get a \_\_\_\_\_ (4,2,2)
- 21. Pleasant sounding French coastal city (4)
- 22. Elon's Nazi hangout (1)
- 23. Bunch of stars (13)

## DOWN

- 1. Battlefield where Custer met his end (6,7)
- 2. Posh beer (5,3)
- 3. Voters participate in these (9)
- 4. Metal band WASP were blind in this US state (5)
- 5. Nationwide support scheme for people with disability (1,1,1,1)
- 8. March or protest (13)
- 11. Mr Diddley (2)
- 13. Track stretching through SA, NT and WA: \_\_\_\_\_ Highway (9)
- 14. Proudly numerate *Sesame Street* character (3,5)
- 15. Plural pronoun (2)
- 18. American all-female punk band The \_\_\_-\_\_\_ (2,3)
- 19. Australian government body that protects consumer rights and business rights and obligations (1,1,1,1)

Last issue's solution



## ACROSS

- 1. Principality that sounds like a pop artist (13)
- 6. Thomas Pynchon's debut novel (1)
- 7. Ron Peno and Brett Myers played in this band: \_\_\_\_\_ Pretty (4)
- 9. Buy or sell illegal goods (8)
- 10. Size below S (1,1)
- 11. More common name for ball game housie (5)
- 12. A Jolly Swagmen once camped by one (9)



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