

# Correctional Officers lead workers comp challenge

**A sustained campaign by members in Corrections has forced the Baird Government to acknowledge workers compensation concerns associated with prison overcrowding and to announce the reopening of Kirkconnell gaol.**

Correctional Officers have suffered heavily under the workers compensation changes rammed through by the O'Farrell Government in 2012.

In late 2014, a letter from the PSA to Premier Baird highlighted prison overcrowding in the wake of the Baird Government's closure of a number of correctional facilities.

The PSA also called for the immediate upgrading of Grafton prison and the reopening of Kirkconnell.

The letter described the increased safety risks to staff resulting from this Government's abject failure to plan for increasing inmate numbers.

It highlighted the dreadful impact slashed workers compensation coverage was having on those who were injured "facing what we fear."

Early in 2015, the media picked up on the letter to the Premier which had been placed on the PSA website.

Significant media coverage resulted with the Prison Officers Vocational Branch (POVB) Chair Steve McMahon and members highlighting the negative impact the workers compensation changes had on their lives.

As inmate numbers swelled, the Government became increasingly desperate to have POVB members lift bans on taking new prisoners above capacity until workers comp concerns were addressed.

With the situation at crisis point, and following media coverage of the issue, the Department provided the opportunity for representatives of the POVB, NCDC and COVB together with staff from the PSA and the Department to meet on 5 February.

The purpose of this meeting was to identify any administrative matters related to workers compensation which could be addressed by the Department.

The meeting enabled PSA delegates present to raise the key workers comp issues for their members.

It also allowed delegates to discuss the complexities of the workers comp system.

For example, some shiftworkers with less than 13 weeks off work appear to be better off under the new system.

The discussion with the Department paved the way for a meeting on 6 February with Attorney General Brad Hazzard, Minister for Finance Dominic Perrottet, Commissioner Severin and staff, chairs of the POVB, NCDC, COVB, PSA General Secretary, Anne Gardiner and PSA staff.

**The announcement of the reopening of Kirkconnell is welcome but it is a stop-gap measure.**

Again, each delegate was able to put forward concerns on behalf of members.

Many of these concerns would, if addressed, require legislative changes.

However, the PSA identified other issues such as top-up pay and the calculation of pre-injury average weekly earnings (PIAWE) which we believe could be changed through Government policy.

The spirit of the meeting was co-operative.

Both Ministers requested further information about the matters raised and also offered the PSA the opportunity to provide a more detailed submission on workers comp issues impacting on all PSA members.

All the while, bans that were originally introduced in 2014 as part of the campaign to secure improved workers compensation for Correctional Officers remained in place.

On 13 February, Corrective Services NSW took the PSA to the NSW Industrial Relations Commission in a bid to have the ban on exceeding inmate capacity lifted.

The Commission did not make orders that the bans be lifted.

On 16 February, the Attorney General Brad Hazzard wrote to the PSA confirming that administrative matters raised by the PSA had been dealt with by Corrective Services and confirming his support for Correctional Officers.

On 26 February, the PSA sent letters to the relevant Ministers on the issues of top-up pay and PIAWE.

Currently, consultation is taking place with Unions NSW to identify matters to be included in the PSA's broader workers comp submission.

The PSA, through the Prison Officers Vocational Branch, has been pushing for Grafton to be restored to full capacity and will continue to argue it is the fastest, most viable option to address the immediate overcrowding situation.

The Liberal state government has closed several prisons in the past three years despite an increased gaol population, an ice epidemic and strict new bail laws.

With more prisoners than beds, many inmates are still being housed in court cells throughout the state, creating a new set of problems.

The announcement of the reopening of Kirkconnell is welcome but it is a stop-gap measure.

On 17 February, members of the Prison Officers Vocational Branch voted to lift the sanctions on prisoner intake.

"The Government needs to acknowledge their mistakes and release the funding to reopen and upgrade the state's prisons and to properly compensate our members when they are injured protecting the people of NSW," said PSA General Secretary, Anne Gardiner.

Reopening Grafton remains essential as even with the bans lifted, there is still insufficient capacity in the prison system for any extra numbers.



PSA Assistant General Secretary Steve Turner, POVB Vice Chair Jenny Singleton and POVB Chair Steve McMahon launch the workers comp campaign outside Silverwater Correctional Complex.



Anne Gardiner

From the General Secretary

# For the best defence of the public sector

## Members in workplaces throughout the state would be aware that everyone is copping it from the Baird Government.

There has never been a time in the history of the PSA when so many of our members have been under attack at the same time.

Whether it is forced amalgamations, contestability, privatisation, forced transfers, reduced workers compensation, downsizing or the impacts on temporaries and senior staff from the GSE Act, no-one has been spared.

When I was elected to the position of General Secretary two years ago, the new Central Council and I knew that with all these external changes taking place it could no longer be business as usual for the PSA.

In the last two years, significant changes have occurred to the way we work inside the PSA and I think most people would agree that this was overdue.

However, it is difficult to be forward-thinking about change when you are under attack.

The easy option in those circumstances is to simply accept the status quo.

Central Council and I have not chosen that option in our efforts to build a sustainable Public Service Association for the future.

We know the importance of having a respected voice to speak in support of public services and the people who provide them.

But creating this public service focus and highlighting the important work of public sector workers is not easy, particularly when you have a government and tabloid media determined to undermine this message and instead promote privatisation.

Fighting this Government's focus on privatisation and promoting a positive image of the public service requires a great deal of dedicated resources.

The dramatic increase in the number of members needing the union's help has made it difficult to divert resources to focus on proactively championing the role of public servants.

That is one of the reasons why, in March 2014, the PSA's Member Support Centre (MSC) was introduced.

As with anything new there have been teething problems but we are now able to answer the ever-increasing number of calls and properly record and manage the emerging issues affecting members.

It is also why, despite reduced income from membership due to massive redundancies, I have chosen to increase qualified staffing numbers in critical areas.

These areas were identified in the PSA's first ever strategic plan which was developed last year.

Some of the areas flagged for improved staffing and support were the Communications Directorate, Strategy and Policy Directorate as well as the recruitment of industrial staff with a contemporary understanding of the issues being faced by PSA members.

It was also identified that there was a need for the PSA to provide greater recognition and support to delegates and a strategy to achieve this is currently being put in place.

However, the changes we have made so far are not sufficient to deal with the challenges that will come in 2015.

Despite some significant wins for the PSA over the past two years, we still need to be more innovative.

Accordingly, I encourage members with a wide range of views to become active in the union to help us meet these challenges and move forward as one.

If you have ever considered becoming active, now is the time to do so.

Once again, I think that the words of Mr Beaver, Clerk of the Peace, who chaired a meeting of public servants in 1899 to consider the PSA's first draft constitution, are well worth remembering.

"Though we have a loyal and faithful service, we must have a fearless service. I mean a service which will not be spineless, or a cringing, craving service, which is always indicative of that which is wrong.

"Because ultimately they would find that a service which dare not express its views in a reasonable and proper manner and dare not ask for what was legitimately its rights, was bound, more or less to be a menace to the State."

Anne Gardiner  
General Secretary

## Our jobs are not for sale

### Just like members in home care and disability services, TAFE colleges and electricity, ServiceFirst members have spoken out against the privatisation of their jobs.

At meetings in both McKell and Parramatta, members voiced their dismay at being sold out by a government that is forging ahead with plans to outsource and offshore ServiceFirst jobs.

On 6 March, *The Sydney Morning Herald* revealed that every outsourced model under consideration involves the offshoring of local jobs.

What's worse, the Government prefers the plan with the maximum pain for NSW workers.

In response to these new details, PSA General Secretary Anne Gardiner reiterated what members have been saying: The 300 jobs to be lost in ServiceFirst are just the tip of the iceberg in the privatisation plans of this Government.

### What's next?

Members are already standing together in opposition to these plans. At meetings held in the first week of March, the following motion was moved and unanimously supported by all members in attendance:

"The Members of ServiceFirst – Office of Finance & Services do not support or assist the vendors in any other due diligence or workplace information or any assessment process until the Department and Government commit to ceasing the offshore outsourcing program, and keeping all jobs within NSW".

Further meetings will determine the PSA's course of action and ServiceFirst members will be kept updated on developments.

The PSA is open to continuing discussions directly with the Department about their management of this process.

The PSA has presented the Opposition with a community-run petition against the plan and the Opposition has announced that they will stop the privatisation of ServiceFirst if elected.

Members, delegates and staff have also been doorknocking in key seats to alert NSW voters to this Government's relentless outsourcing agenda.

## You are invited to...

**PSA Annual Conference 2015**  
Thursday 28 May & Friday 29 May

**Country Conference**  
Wednesday 27 May  
Level 10, PSA House

Any PSA member can nominate to attend Annual Conference. Preference will be given to those who have not attended Conference before.

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

Places for PSA members are based on workplace groups or combined workplace groups. A list of constituencies and number of delegates for each along with nomination forms are on the PSA website: [www.psa.asn.au](http://www.psa.asn.au).

Workplaces may call meetings to elect delegates.

**Nominations close with the PSA Secretariat L Twigger at COB 24 April.**

Members may apply to their Department for two days Special Trade Union Leave to attend Conference.

Notices of motion or suggestions for discussion should be submitted to the PSA Secretariat by Friday 24 April.

Expense forms are sent to successful country delegates along with their confirmation of nomination.

If you have any queries please email Lesley Twigger at [ltwigger@psa.asn.au](mailto:ltwigger@psa.asn.au).



# Overwhelming YES vote for pay deal

**Members employed under the Public Sector Salaries and related awards have voted overwhelmingly to accept a pay increase of 2.5%, the maximum amount allowed under the NSW Government's restrictive wages policy.**

More than 95% of those who voted in the PSA's online survey indicated they wanted to accept the Government's salary offer as part of a new one-year award.

The PSA then wrote to NSW Industrial Relations (NSW IR) on 5 March formally accepting the Government's offer.

Once the Government agrees, a new award will be made by the Industrial Relations Commission.

The current PSA salaries award applying to most members expires on 30 June 2015.

The PSA wrote to NSW IR on 12 December 2014 requesting that the Government commence negotiations for a new award to apply from 1 July 2015.

The PSA sought discussions so that the new award could be in place

from 1 July as the Government's industrial relations laws now make it very difficult to secure backpay should an agreement not be reached by 1 July 2015.

The Government replied on 14 January and agreed to meet to discuss the matter on 5 February.

Following the meeting, the PSA wrote to NSW IR on 10 February 2015 requesting that the Government consider a proposal for a one-year award for a 2.5% increase.

Members will recall that the PSA challenged the Government's wages policy, taking the fight all the way to the High Court.

Unfortunately, the High Court ruled that 2.5% is the absolute maximum available without the trade-off of conditions.

On 27 February, the Government responded to the PSA offering a 2.5% wage increase for one year from 1 July 2015.

The Abbott Government has suspended further increases to the Superannuation Guarantee Levy, which means that this year the 2.5% on offer will not be discounted by super increases as it was in the previous award.

For the future, the PSA has developed a wages strategy that includes the establishment of a

Bargaining Council which will be made up of PSA members from across the state.

This will assist with member engagement and input into ongoing negotiations with the Government for future awards.

Accepting this offer now, for one year, allows that bargaining strategy to be put in place during the life of the new award.

## PSA secures conditions

NSW Industrial Relations requested that the Government's pay offer to the PSA be made into a new award. The Government's wages policy dictates that such an award must contain a 'no extra claims' clause. Following discussions, the PSA and Government agreed on a clause that will protect members' current entitlements.

The most important provision agreed to by the Government was that the 'no extra claims' clause be applied to both parties; while the union can't claim any extra wages or conditions for the lifetime of the award, nor can the Government reduce them.

## MEMBER PROFILE

**Vicki Sidoti**

**Senior Special Constable, Police**

## What do Special Constables do?

Special Constables specialise in security functions, working for the Security Management Unit that falls under Counter Terrorism and Special Tactics. We work in NSW Police buildings, Parliament House, The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and many other government buildings to provide a security service for staff and visitors. Special Constables make sure that people and properties are safe by continually monitoring authorised security access, screening everyone who comes and goes from the building and monitoring the parcels and mail. I'm a bit unusual in that I'm the only female Senior Special Constable in the Police Force.

We are all required to wear the same appointments as police (firearms, capsicum spray, etc.) and we have the same powers as regular police. In addition to staff on the ground, we have a control room where we monitor what's going on around the building.

## What's a typical day for you?

My job is to supervise the Special Constables, deal with reports, conduct staff appraisals, ensure



staffing levels are adequate, assist with training and development, assist with evacuation in the event of an emergency, implement the branch's corruption prevention plan and look out for the staff's welfare. In a typical day, I'd do the White Level Inspection [check for unusual or suspicious items], check that all the firearms are accounted for, do a police radio check and make sure that all the staff rotations happen on time.

## What do you like best about the job?

Because I've been in the Police for 17 years, I have a good rapport with people. I enjoy the fact that every day is different and knowing that I'm helping to keep my colleagues and the public safe.

## A More Generous Credit Card for PSA members

Variable Interest Rate

**8.49% pa\***

- For both Purchases & Cash Advances
- Up to 55 days Interest Free



**SCU** More Generous Banking

Apply Today

**13 61 91**  
scu.net.au

Sydney Credit Union Ltd ABN 93 087 650 726 Australian Credit Licence Number 236476 AFSL 236476. \*The 8.49% pa Variable Interest Rate Credit Card offer is only available to PSA members. All applications are subject to SCU normal lending criteria. Terms, conditions, fees and charges apply. Full details available on application. All information is correct as at 25/08/14 and subject to change.



# Vote to keep public services in public hands on 28 March

**I have no intention of telling you how to vote on 28 March.**

The PSA rules expressly forbid that. How you vote is entirely up to you. However, what I am recommending is that you vote for the party or person which represents the best interests of you as a public sector worker and the services you provide to the community.

The O'Farrell Government quite seamlessly became the Baird Administration and can hardly claim to be a supporter of public services.

Quite the contrary.

Since 2011, this Government has waged a war against the public sector, attacking workers and punishing them for no other reason than an ideological dislike of the public service.

Of course, due to staff shortages created by mass job cuts, politicians themselves now have to wait longer in line to access public services when they want to obtain a provisional driving licence for their kids or require a birth certificate.

I wonder if, as they stand there frustrated, they're struck by the irony? I doubt it.

Our cause has received an unwitting and surprising boost over recent months because of Tony Abbott's unwillingness to listen to the Australian people.

Not only is the Prime Minister unpopular right across the country (not that he had much standing in the first place) but he also has ordered a wide-ranging review of workplace laws.

This, despite stating in emphatic terms that WorkChoices was dead and buried.

With conservative governments across the globe always eager to cut wages and conditions, it's hardly a huge leap to link what Abbott is planning with what Baird has in mind for workers in NSW.

After all, it's the NSW Government that is enforcing the 2.5% wage cap policy and attempting to slash a wide range of conditions that we, as unionists, fought for and won.

NSW will follow Abbott's lead and launch a wider attack on workplace rights.

While I'm happy to let Abbott drag down the State Government's polling in the election, we can't just rely upon that.

We have to make a strong, positive statement at the voting booth ourselves and vote to defend public services.

Make sure your family and friends know what is at stake.

Have the conversation with them in support of public sector workers and the services we provide.

We do a terrific job.

If we can't at least hamper the Government's efforts, NSW will soon be unrecognisable.

The basic, vital services the entire community relies upon each day will be a relic from another age.

No one can afford for that to happen.

**Sue Walsh  
President**

# Assignment to Role update

**The PSA's advocacy has resulted in a number of improvements to the Assignment to Role Guidelines that were issued by the Public Service Commission.**

As members will be well aware, changes introduced by the Government Sector Employment Act mean employees no longer hold positions on a permanent basis but are assigned an 'ongoing role'. The Assignment to Role Guidelines set out how employees are assigned and reassigned to different roles within an agency.

The improvements won by the PSA include strengthened consultation requirements prior to assignment decisions being made. Managers will need to take into account flexible working arrangements, caring responsibilities, an employee's preferred career path and any financial impacts in the course of reassigning employees to subsequent roles.

The Guidelines also include a commitment that the Assignment to Role process will not be used as an alternative means of cutting jobs or restructuring.

Both of these issues were identified as important priorities by members in the survey undertaken by the PSA in October 2014. More than 800 members participated in this survey in the two-week period it was open following the issuing of the draft Guidelines.

One significant area of concern identified by PSA members in our survey has not been amended in the final Guidelines – under the Assignment to Role process there is no guarantee that employees can return to their existing role when they come back from extended leave, secondment or other absence.

The PSA reasserted its opposition to this clause in a meeting with the Public Service Commission on 18 February 2015 and made it clear that we would closely monitor how the Guidelines are implemented throughout 2015. The union will be actively involved in further consultations

prior to the Guidelines being issued as GSE Rules in early 2016.

Members can access the Guidelines on the PSA website, along with the PSA submission and recommendations.

Please contact the MSC if you have any questions about the Assignment to Role process.



# Home Care – the thin edge of the privatisation wedge

**Negotiations have stalled with the Government in relation to a transfer package for Home Care employees being forced into the private sector.**

The PSA is fighting the Government's handling of this issue as it may set a template for all other future privatisations.

On 16 January 2015, the PSA received another letter from NSW Industrial Relations in relation to the Home Care transfer package. This was in reply to the PSA's letter of 5 December 2014, in which the union re-stated the issues preventing the PSA and the Government from reaching an agreement on a Home Care transfer package.

These include:

1. The fact that there is no provision for PSA members to choose whether they wish to transfer to the new private employer once that employer is known.
2. The Government's failure to guarantee that any agreement reached will be included in a legally enforceable deed.
3. The transfer payment offered to staff being limited to a maximum of eight weeks

and the eight weeks being on a sliding scale. Staff who have two years or less service receive nothing. The PSA believes this is discriminatory as ferry employees received a 30-week transfer package when their industry was privatised. This was similar to those received by employees in the power industry, lotteries and other areas that have been privatised.

4. The Government's failure to recognise and guarantee the conditions that Home Care employees enjoy over and above those contained in the Home Care Award.

The Government's reply simply reiterated that the offer is limited to the eight-week transfer payment.

Further, it said that they could not confirm whether any agreement reached would be contained in a legally enforceable deed.

This means that it cannot be guaranteed that any agreement reached can be protected.

The letter also failed to address the PSA's request that the Government commit to protecting those conditions enjoyed over and above those contained in the current Home Care Award.

Home Care delegates discussed the Government's response and resolved how to move forward. Following this, the PSA sought legal advice.

The union has now written to the Government to pursue a guarantee that any agreement reached will be contained within a deed that can be legally enforced by the PSA on behalf of its members.

We are also continuing to push for the 30-week transfer package paid to employees in all previous privatisations and for members to be given a choice as to whether or not they transfer to any new employer.



Ageing, Disability and Home Care employees rally outside Parliament House.

**A rewarding career  
deserves a rewarding  
retirement**

At First State Super we believe all Australians deserve a comfortable retirement. To join the super fund that puts members first call us or visit our website today.

**Call 1300 650 873 or visit [firststatesuper.com.au](http://firststatesuper.com.au)**

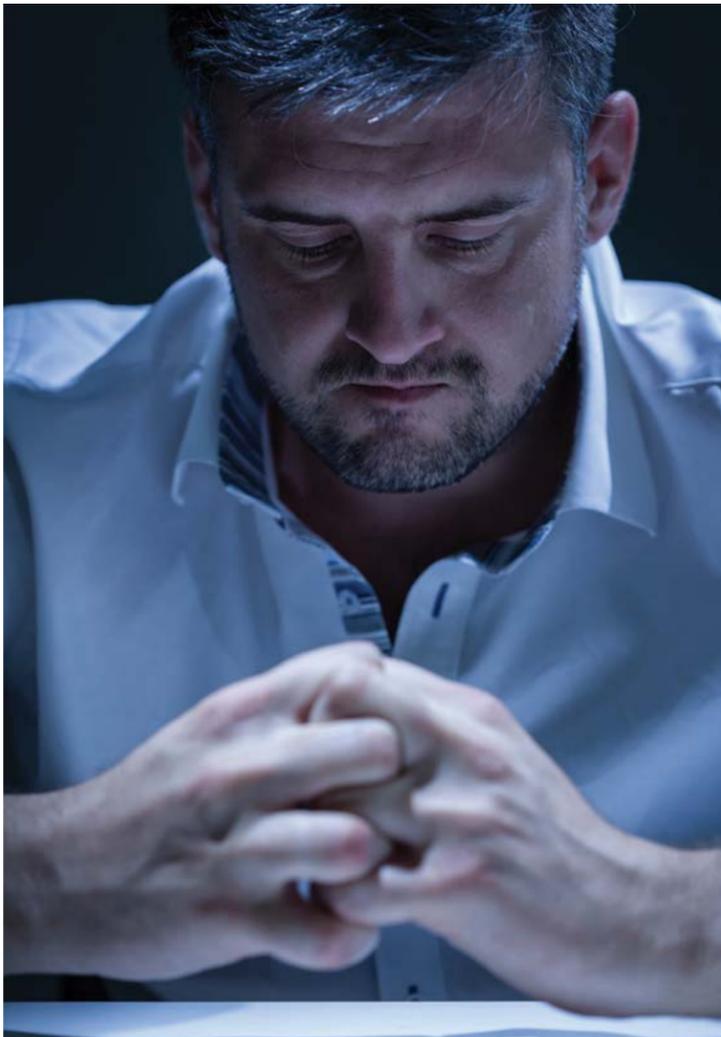
Consider our product disclosure statement before making a decision about First State Super. Call us or visit our website for a copy. FSS Trustee Corporation ABN 11 118 202 672 ASFL 293340 is the trustee of the First State Superannuation Scheme ABN 53 226 460 365.

first & foremost for you  
**first**  
state super

RTP\_RewardingCareerF\_260x200\_1113

# The real cost of sacking public servants

As the state and federal governments champion “labour expense caps” and “efficiency dividends” as fast ways to make savings, a study has revealed the human price of cost-cutting.



According to research by the National Institute of Labour Studies (NILS) at Flinders University, it takes public servants who are made redundant more than three years on average to return to the pay equivalent of peers who didn't leave the public service.

The study looked at 80,000 records for 6,000 Australians between 2003 and 2012 to track the experience of employees leaving the public sector and map what might lie ahead for many others.

Though the study focused on Commonwealth public servants, it serves as a stark reminder to all levels of government that there is a hidden cost to mass sackings.

Public servants who moved to the private sector had 6.4% lower earnings than those who stayed, as well as lower job satisfaction relating to pay. Three years after leaving the public service, a 1.9% salary difference remained.

Writing for news and commentary website *The Conversation*, lead researcher Genevieve Knight explained that the grim results were actually a best case scenario, as those who were made redundant but failed to find work again were not included in the study.

Knight was also sceptical about whether mass sackings even achieved the financial gains used to rationalise them.

“The long-standing Commonwealth ‘efficiency dividend’... works on the premise that increases in productivity make it possible to reduce funding to Commonwealth agencies without compromising outputs,” she wrote. “The word ‘efficiency’ is used as it is assumed that the same services will be achieved with fewer resources.”

“We are all familiar with private service industry instances of this. Banks, for example, using innovations in information and communication technology, have vastly reduced the number of people they need to employ... But public sector savings are sometimes made with the cart before the horse, seemingly in the hope that cuts to resources will achieve the same result regardless of incremental technological change.”

She added that a lack of objective information prevented public debate, and that earlier research showed that the Australian public sector is already lean.

“Our main point is that we would like greater depth of analysis for policy such as this,” Knight told

*The Canberra Times*. “When all the additional costs for the nation of unemployment and those we have considered are counted and accrued over time, they may outweigh the cents saved in the initial budget year.”

## Redundancies don't make cents

The mass sacking of Commonwealth public servants came under fire in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in December after data revealed that the Government would save \$1 billion in employee wages but spend \$1.1 billion in redundancies before 2016–17. This means the Government is losing money to put people out of a job.

“Beyond the underestimation of redundancy expenses, the Government needs to outline whether there are other hidden costs, including productivity decline due to the sacking of experienced staff, expensive outsourcing of functions, and the need to rehire staff down the track,” said Brendan O'Connor, Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.



**1800 810 812**  
**mauriceblackburn.com.au**

## COMPENSATION LAWYERS.

**MAURICE BLACKBURN PROUDLY HELPING PSA MEMBERS FIGHT BACK.**

### PSA MEMBER BENEFITS:

- Free telephone legal advice to members & families
- Free first consultation

### EXPERT COMPENSATION LAWYERS IN:

- Motor Vehicle Compensation Claims
- Workplace Compensation
- Medical Law
- Superannuation & Disability Insurance
- Negligence Claims
- Will Disputes



Advertising restrictions prohibit us from listing our full range of services. Contact your union for further information.



# TAFE cuts could educate Baird

**It's no secret that vocational education and TAFE funding became one of the key battlegrounds in the Victorian election last November. Perhaps what's lesser known is just how unpopular TAFE cuts were – even among Liberal voters.**

The creator of the ABC's Vote Compass, an online tool that allowed users to see how their views compared to different parties' policies, told the ABC that there was overwhelming support for TAFE from voters of all political persuasions. This was one of the most striking findings to come out of the Victorian election data. While most Vote Compass results clearly matched voter intention with party policy, this was not the case when it came to education.

Of those surveyed, 78% said they wanted more money spent on TAFE education. The biggest surprise, however, was that 64% of Coalition voters also wanted more funding for TAFE – putting them wildly at odds with their preferred party.

With the full effects of the Liberal Smart and Skilled reforms now being felt in NSW, Premier Mike Baird has been put on notice.

Course cuts, loss of services (such as those provided by TAFE for students with disability) and massive fee hikes have already hit students and staff hard, with 40% of students facing fee increases of at least \$500 and an estimated 1200 TAFE staff now out of a job.

A December poll by NSW Teachers Federation of 20 marginal seats found that 93% of people thought that keeping a strong TAFE sector was important for NSW.

Of those polled, 75% opposed cuts to public funding of TAFE while 59% opposed increasing Government funding to private training providers.

Labor has promised that if elected, they will abolish the Smart and Skilled privatisation program, reverse the Baird Government's TAFE fee hikes, cap the amount of public funds that can be contestable by private operators at 30% and commission a review of education and training in NSW after Year 10.

After their first bill to save TAFE failed in the Lower House in November, The Greens have said that they would replace Smart and Skilled with Fund TAFE First, restoring positions lost at TAFE and injecting it with more than \$600 million a year in secure budget.

Meanwhile, a 2014 audit found that three quarters of private vocational colleges failed basic quality standards. As a result, the Office of Fair Trading has been forced to develop an education campaign designed to warn consumers about unscrupulous training providers. Following a 23% rise in complaints nation-wide, NSW Fair Trading is investigating a number of groups and has developed a brochure in several languages to raise awareness.

TAFE is too valuable an asset to lose – and NSW voters know it.



Community support for TAFE on display during a PSA election doorknock.

## 'Smart and Skilled' – but not for those with disability

In Kiama, deaf residents have come out swinging over cuts to local TAFE services and courses. Students who had previously been provided with note-takers were denied access to the service this year as a direct result of cuts to funding.

"Deaf people need to be able to watch a speaker to lip read them or watch an interpreter, so they cannot make

their own notes at the same time," South Coast Outreach support worker Sara Willyan-Payne told the *Kiama Independent*.

Under Smart and Skilled, students with disability will instead be entitled to 10% loading – a figure that Willyan-Payne says is nowhere near adequate, adding, "These cuts look like they will affect many people with various disabilities."

# PSA turns world spotlight on Government treatment of NSW workers

**On 4 March, the PSA lodged a formal complaint with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) over the attack by the NSW Government on fundamental workers' rights.**

The PSA, the ACTU and the CPSU joined forces calling on the ILO to investigate the conduct of the NSW Government in relation to its workforce.

PSA General Secretary Anne Gardiner said that laws introduced by the Government between 2011 and 2014 breached international standards affecting the state's nearly 400,000 public servants.

"Governments are in the unique position of being both an employer and a legislator. The NSW Government has abused this power in order to deny NSW public servants the basic rights other workers in Australia take for granted," Ms Gardiner said.

"Public sector employees don't have the right to collectively bargain for wage increases above a limit determined by their employer, or to secure entitlements like redundancy pay in their Award.

"You can judge the character of a government by how it treats its own workforce. Instead of being the gold



ACTU President Ged Kearney and PSA General Secretary Anne Gardiner address the media at the launch of the unions' complaint to the ILO.

standard this Government has shown contempt for its employees."

ACTU President Ged Kearney said Australia was a member of the ILO and had ratified collective bargaining conventions.

"We have been forced to make this complaint because the actions of the NSW Government do not comply with Australia's international obligations," Ms Kearney said.

These laws not only hurt public sector workers, but the entire job market.

"When the biggest employer in the state passes laws that suppress wages, it's no surprise salaries across the state stagnate as well," Ms Gardiner said.

"It is bad faith in the extreme for the NSW Government to use its role as legislator to strip away its obligations to its workforce as an employer".

## Key facts

Complaint lodged jointly by the Public Service Association of NSW, the CPSU and the ACTU calling on the International Labour Organisation to investigate the conduct of the NSW Government.

Under the Industrial Relations Amendment (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Act 2011, NSW public sector workers are denied the right to collectively bargain for a wage increase above a limit determined by their employer and to secure basic entitlements like redundancy pay in their award.

The regime put in place by the NSW Government is in breach of Australia's legally binding commitment under Convention 87 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, and Convention 98 – Right to Organise and Collectively Bargain. These conventions are ratified by 153 and 164 Countries.

Alongside conventions on forced and child labour, discrimination and equal pay, these conventions form the fundamental rights at work that the international community is committed to upholding.

# A brief history of what the NSW Government has done ~~for~~ to you...

In the lead up the March 2011 election, all candidates were asked to sign a Better State Declaration of Support as part of Unions NSW's Better Services campaign.

The 5-Point Pledge asked candidates to support public services, public assets, public sector workers, to plan long term and govern for the common good.

A no brainer, right? You'd think.

Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell, wrote to Unions NSW indicating that he did not support the pledge.

Clearly, he did not want to sign something that he had no intention of honouring.

Coalition MPs later confirmed that they had been instructed not to place their monikers on the document.

It was a pretty fair indication of what Team O'Farrell had in mind but getting the detail, any detail, was difficult.

What we did know of O'Farrell's agenda – thanks only to snippets of information in the media over the previous year or so – was that he believed that the private sector should have a greater role in the delivery of public services if that involvement was deemed to be "in the public interest".

Exactly how the public interest was to be determined was unknown.

Areas such as Sydney Ferries, ports, electricity and aspects of Community Services would be outsourced or privatised under an O'Farrell Government.

The RTA would also be dissected – Hello, Roads and Maritime Services.

The Liberals' overall strategy for the state's future would be determined by an audit of NSW's finances and services.

In an intriguing coincidence, a Commission of Audit was also proposed in a document

by the NSW Business Chamber called '10 Big Ideas to Grow NSW' that began circulating in mid-2010.

The brief for that Commission of Audit was to include "but not be confined to" reporting on such issues as work practices in the public sector, service delivery costs, income from state assets and greater private sector involvement in the public sector.

Clearly, the NSW public sector, which at the time provided vital services to 6,000,000 people across the state, was about to be wheeled off for major surgery that involved some significant amputations.

An analysis by the PSA titled 'Our Services at Risk', based on various public comments by politicians and the business lobby, found that over 25,000 public sector jobs could be in jeopardy from Government service cuts, outsourcing and privatisation after the 2011 election.

The PSA identified potential cuts in ageing and disability services (10,000 jobs), community services (1,050), corporate services (10,000), corrective services (1,000), education and training (1,600) roads and transport (1,850) and national parks and wildlife (100).

A total of 25,600 jobs.

The PSA warned that if the projected losses became a reality, the impact on the provision of public services to a growing and ageing NSW population would be devastating.

So, how did our maths stack up?

Disturbingly well.

In the space of just two subsequent state budgets, the O'Farrell Government signalled

the slashing of 15,000 public sector jobs – 5,000 in 2011 and 10,000 in 2012.

Add to that the total privatisation of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, a move which will establish a template for future privatisations, and we're talking more than the horror that was projected in just a few moves.

It was just the beginning.

In June 2011, the Government gave itself powers that no other employer in the country possessed.

A law was passed that forced the independent umpire, the Industrial Relations Commission, to only make awards that complied with the Government's harsh wages policy.

That policy restricted public sector pay rises to just 2.5% per annum unless conditions were traded off, barely enough to keep pace with increases in the cost of living.

It was a move that in the long term will blunt the state's ability to attract quality people to the public service, thereby further hampering delivery capacity on the back of job cuts.

The long-standing policy of no forced redundancies was also ominously dumped.

Then, in February 2012, came the big guns with the release of the NSW Commission of Audit or 'Schott Report' into public sector management.

The Government somehow read and digested the 175-page interim report and circulated their response within 24 hours.

Pre-determined outcomes? Surely not.

The Government called it a "road map for reform."

There were other names, of course, but it has been the Government's operating manual ever since.

From there, the O'Farrell Government methodically went about ticking the boxes on a long, wide-ranging checklist of measures to downsize, privatise and generally erode the NSW public sector.

Workers compensation was dramatically slashed.

Grafton gaol was downgraded with no foresight or planning for an increase in the state's prison population.

The PSA stood shoulder to shoulder with the local community fighting against the effective closure right to the end.

Then came a broad attack on working conditions across the public sector, with basic entitlements such as leave loading, shift penalties and health and safety all earmarked to be scrapped in the Government's 2012 award applications.

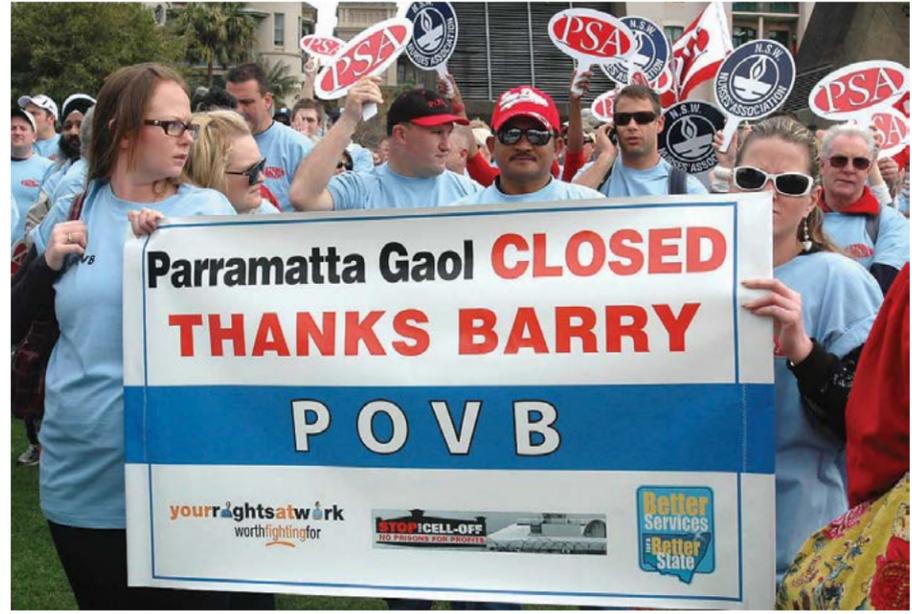
Coupled with the 2.5% wage cap policy, it made for a devastating one-two punch.

But in October 2012, state-wide stop work meetings of PSA members firmly rebuffed the conditions assault and later saw the Government officially back down in February 2013.

But it pressed on.

The misleadingly named Smart and Skilled reforms were introduced, which will see the quality vocational training provided by TAFE go down the drain and the cost of courses skyrocket.





An agreed policy on consultation between unions and the former Labor Government was shredded and replaced with a document which paid mere lip service to the rights of workers and their unions to have a voice in what takes place at work. It was a move that, more than any other, spelt out in clear, unambiguous terms that this Government wasn't about engaging with others, just rolling over the top of them.

The PSA challenged the change and in May 2014, won.

In a classic case of the old political line "whatever it takes", hunting in National Parks was opened up in exchange for the support of the Shooters and Fishers Party in the sale of the power industry.

Thankfully, the leading efforts of the PSA along with a number of other groups forced a rethink of this madness.

All the while, there was a massive brain drain of scientific knowledge, particularly in the area of environmental science, with the Government cutting jobs almost gleefully unaware of the fact that the workers in these areas are the last line of defence for both the environment and the community.

The blind, business case-free decision to close the globally respected Cronulla Fisheries was a case in point.

WorkCover, the state's health and safety regulator, underwent a massive restructure that impacted on the welfare of every worker in NSW.

The Government stepped up its attack on pay and conditions in May 2013, when it suddenly announced that the PSA's application for a 2.5% increase was to be cut by the Federal Government's 0.25% rise in superannuation.

The PSA took the matter to the Industrial Relations Commission and successfully argued on two separate occasions that the full 2.5% pay increase be paid in addition to the rise in super.

Twice the Government moved unsuccessfully to circumvent the Commission's decision and change the law to ensure it got the desired result.

At the eleventh hour, it won in the Court of Appeal in May 2014.

The irony was that the expense of trying *not* to pay public servants an extra 0.25% would have been staggeringly expensive in terms of legal costs.

In any event, the situation highlighted the manner in which the Government would deal with all matters that did not fall in its favour – appeal everything, all the time.

The total privatisation of the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC) was announced, the biggest sell off and sell out in the history of NSW via the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NSW Enabling) Bill, which will have far-reaching implications for the future of all public services.

More than 25,000 people signed our petition calling on the State Government to give people with disability a real choice by maintaining the public provision of disability care.

In November 2014, we shut down Macquarie Street outside Parliament House and demanded that the Government stand by the most vulnerable in our society.

The doors to specialist services in Fair Trading, Roads and Maritime Services and Births Deaths and Marriages continued to slowly shut as one-stop Service NSW shops opened across NSW.

Suddenly it took weeks rather than a few minutes to get a copy of a marriage certificate.

Schools and TAFE had already been targeted with a \$1.7 billion cut to the state's education budget. Schools had also been subjected to the Local Schools, Local Decisions and Every Student, Every School "initiatives" which were basically a formula by which to cut jobs and casualise staff.

The introduction of LMBR (Learning Management Business Reform) compounded the situation.

The Government Sector Employment Act dramatically altered the manner in which many public servants were employed.

No longer could employees hold permanent positions but instead be assigned to roles.

Thousands were forced from secure awards and onto individual Senior Executive contracts which allowed them to be more easily dismissed.

The PSA fought for and won improved consultation rights for workers in the Assignment to Role process and ensured that all permanent employees who were offered an individual contract retained their right to redundancy should they not wish to accept.

The so-called "decade of decentralisation" also reared its head, forcing many into considerably longer and more complex travel arrangements to get to and from work, playing havoc with those with carer responsibilities.

Mike Baird took over as Premier in April 2014 and the Government didn't miss a beat.

If anything, it fine-tuned its position rather than pulling back on the accelerator.

In fact, Mike Baird is proudly taking the sale of the power network's poles and wires to the state election.

Information has always been a scarcity with this Government so the PSA has often been forced to seek what we wanted to know through applications under the Government Information (Public Access) Act.

The Baird Government slammed the door in our faces with our request for

information about plans to cut \$14 billion from the public sector.

A \$14 billion cut and it wasn't considered necessary for the PSA to be privy to any information about the detail?

Overall, the Government has expected – no, make that demanded – that public sector employees be loyal, dedicated and hardworking above and beyond the call. Yet it fails to see the need to operate by the same set of standards.

Little wonder workplace bullying has been on the rise.

In 2010, WorkCover made the headlines for its culture of bullying.

A successful case by the PSA on behalf of a member in the agency brought about a Parliamentary inquiry and resulted in a call for legislative reform in relation to the issue.

But late in July 2014, the attitude toward public sector workers, dim as it already was, darkened further.

There was the appalling political posturing and shrugging overtones of "this was inevitable" in the wake of the shooting of Office of Environment and Heritage worker, Glen Turner.

There was the Shooters and Fishers Party's Native Vegetation Amendment Bill 2014 which proposed – in the wake of Glen Turner's death – a reduction in penalties for "obstructing an authorised officer in the exercise of the officer's investigative functions" from \$11,000 to just \$1,100.

And the remark by Robert Brown of the Shooters Party likening National Parks rangers to "toilet cleaners".

It all fed into the ongoing narrative of disrespect for public servants and the services they provide to the people of NSW.

You deserve so much more and so does the community you serve.

On 28 March, make sure you inform the Government of that.

## If the price is right!

On 10 February, the ABC reported that in just the last two years, the NSW Government had sold off \$1 billion worth of public assets.

The Government's overarching agenda from day one has been one of privatisation, seemingly at any cost.

Out of Home Care, Brighter Futures, Power, TAFE, Land and Property Information, Court Reporters in the Supreme Court, State Library security, Ageing Disability and Home Care, Art Gallery security, roads maintenance in Roads and Maritime Services, ServiceFirst, security at the Powerhouse Museum and the historic site of the Museum itself, Housing NSW, State Fleet and much more has gone, or is going, under the hammer.

## Make the most of your vote

This is particularly important in the Upper House as the Upper House determines whether legislation can go through.

You may be aware that the Greens, Labor and the Shooters and Fishers have tried to block certain pieces of Coalition legislation which have been the most damaging for our members. Unfortunately they did not have sufficient numbers to block this legislation. Keep this in mind when you go to the polling booth on 28 March to ensure no one party has control of the Upper House.

The ABC's election analyst Antony Green explains on his election blog:

"Since reforms introduced in 2003, 'above the line' voting has worked differently in NSW compared to the Senate. A single '1' above the line by the voter will only imply preferences for the candidates of the chosen party. There are [now] no between party preference tickets in NSW, so a single '1' vote cannot be re-directed to another party as preferences. Parties cannot engage in 'preference harvesting' to get elected in NSW.

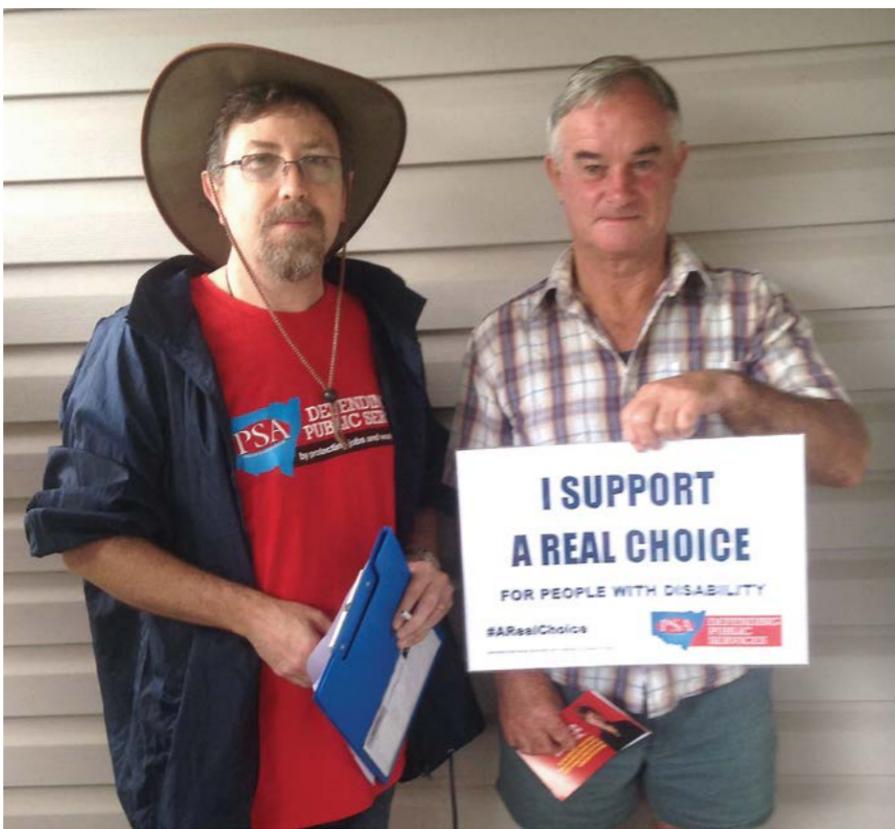
"The extra option voters have in NSW is 'above the line' preference voting. A voter can vote above the line 1 for Party A, and 2 for Party B, and preferences will [then go to] the candidates of each party as listed, first for Party A's candidates and then Party B's candidates. Alternatively, voters can vote 'below the line' for candidates, but a minimum of 15 preferences must be shown.

"The only preferences that count in NSW are those filled in by voters themselves. There is no Senate-style party control of preferences."



# Knocking in defence of public services

The PSA is taking the fight to defend public services to the doorsteps of voters in the lead up to the NSW election on 28 March.



PSA members, delegates and staff have been doorknocking in a number of key seats to alert voters to Premier Baird's aggressive privatisation agenda.

Speaking to residents in the seats of Port Stephens, Strathfield and Kiama throughout February and March allowed members to share their real life stories to explain to the community the exact impact the Government's policies have had on their jobs and the vital services they provide.

Most importantly it was an opportunity to explain what the local community stands to lose if this Government is re-elected.

PSA members didn't ask residents to vote for one party over another, but to sign a pledge to vote in favour of protecting public services and assets at the polling booth on 28 March.

Many residents also posed with a sign to show their support for public services and these were uploaded to the PSA's social media accounts.

"It was fantastic to raise awareness in the community on our issues," said one member involved in the campaign. "People we doorknocked were overwhelmingly supportive. It's important that we get our message out when people are thinking how to vote."

As *Red Tape* was going to print, almost 1,500 doors had been knocked on, with a further three doorknocks to take place in mid to late March.

According to Unions NSW, as of 2 March unions had collectively visited 27,032 houses.

## PORT STEPHENS

Saturday 7 February

200  conversations with voters

167  pledges signed

## STRATHFIELD

Saturday 14 February

380  doors knocked

200  conversations with voters

## KIAMA

Saturday 21 February

198  conversations with voters

110  pledges signed

To view more photos please

- go to [www.psa.asn.au/streets-campaign-photos](http://www.psa.asn.au/streets-campaign-photos),
- 'like' the PSA on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/PublicServiceAssociationOfNsw](http://www.facebook.com/PublicServiceAssociationOfNsw)
- or follow @psansw on Twitter.



# Member-driven organising



**The PSA has developed a new way of organising designed to give members ownership over their local campaigns while still receiving support from PSA Head Office.**

Local Campaign Action Groups (LCAGs) have been fundamental to the PSA's campaign against the privatisation of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) services.

Members, grouped according to ADHC districts, lead and implement the campaign against the Government's privatisation of their department in their own community, allowing them to make decisions as well as develop campaign planning skills.

The LCAGs provide a great way for campaign actions to be local and effective.

After the PSA's Organising Directorate staff had met with the Departmental Committee (DC) to establish campaign goals, PSA Organisers held meetings across the state to allow interested members to volunteer to lead the campaign in their communities and workplaces. So far, nine out of 15 ADHC districts have PSA LCAGs in operation.



"For a campaign to succeed, active involvement and input from members is essential," says Maria Cirillo, PSA Director of Organising and Campaigns. "The Local Campaign Action Group concept provides those opportunities and now the campaign is working. It's incredible what these groups have accomplished in such a short space of time."

2014 and 2015 saw a number of actions and achievements, including:

- well attended demonstrations in Dapto, Newcastle, North Wollongong, Mt Hutton, Fennell Bay, Adamstown, Albion Park, Penrith and Cessnock. Each of these actions attracted strong local media coverage and put ADHC privatisation on the election agenda
- the 'A Real Choice' rally on 13 November, which received extensive media coverage both on the day and in the lead up to the action
- wide coverage in local and Sydney media, including on TV
- strong relationships forged with clients and parent/carer groups who are equally opposed to the privatisation
- a billboard against the privatisation of ADHC set up in Newcastle
- more than 25,000 signatures on the PSA's petition against the privatisation
- 53 Members of Parliament signing a pledge to defend public disability services
- Government backdown on the closure of the Dapto Respite Centre (for now)
- strong member turnout from ADHC for the Port Stephens and Kiama doorknocking campaign
- establishment by PSA members of campaign Facebook pages including "Hands off public disability services in NSW" and "Save NSW Govt Disability Services Hunter" to share the message with local communities.

All of the above are a result of LCAG members taking ownership over their campaign, with the PSA providing support in the form of industrial and organising staff, campaign material, public relations experts, our website and funding for LCAG initiatives, such as the ADHC billboard in Hexham, Newcastle.

The PSA will strive to improve the support given to members using this model and hopes to utilise Local Action Campaign Groups in future campaigns.

To find out more, please visit [psa.asn.au/defending-disability-services](http://psa.asn.au/defending-disability-services).

**The PSA is now extending this model to TAFE. If you're from ADHC or TAFE and are interested in setting up a Local Action Campaign Group in your area, please contact the PSA.**



# Big society a big mess

**Five years after David Cameron was elected Prime Minister of the UK, his 'Big Society' reforms have been deemed an utter failure. So why do Baird and Abbott have us following in Britain's footsteps?**

In 2010, 'Big Society' became the flagship election policy of the UK Conservative Party. The stated aim was to empower local communities and volunteers to deliver services in the place of government – to take power from the politicians and return it to the people. On the face of it, it sounded like a larger, more diverse community. Funds would be redirected from bureaucracies to charities and local volunteer groups, members of communities would be encouraged to take a more proactive role in local affairs and welfare.

But five years later, the words 'Big Society' are rarely mentioned by the Cameron Government – and with good reason. The reforms have been a monumental failure.

A recent report by a UK think tank has confirmed what critics had always suspected: Big Society was little more than an excuse for the Government to pass the buck and absolve itself of responsibility for the provision of services.

The report by Civil Exchange concluded that the results of

the reforms have been "largely negative".

People feel less able to influence local decisions. Efforts to encourage wider involvement in delivering public services have turned into a "race to the bottom" on contract price. Indeed, many of the charities that had supported the reforms have been left reeling as the contracts for services previously delivered by government are snapped up by large corporations (35 of 40 employment agency contracts went to corporations).

Not only that, but transparency and accountability have been reduced.

"A market-based model for reforming public services is concentrating power in the hands of new 'quasi-monopoly' private sector providers rather than in those of local people and is reducing, not increasing, transparency and accountability," said the report.

Food poverty and homelessness have also increased since the reforms – hardly surprising when you cut 60% of the budget for new public housing along with billions of pounds in welfare. Not to mention the loss of 710,000 experienced public servants.

"Ultimately the Big Society might have been expected to result in a more united and better society – but so far the signs are of a more divided one," the report concluded.

This should be of major concern to Australians given the striking resemblance between Big Society and the policies of our state and federal governments.

"Several characteristic Big Society policies featured in Mr Abbott's 'Stronger Communities' plan," wrote James Whelan, a lecturer at the University of Technology, Sydney, on *The Conversation* in 2012.

They include "restricting welfare entitlement, mandatory 'work for the dole', mutual obligation and a contestable market for services".

"The small government alignment was claimed with pride by [then NSW Treasurer] Michael Baird when he declared that the state's budget would retrench 10,000 public servants, additional to the 5,000 announced late 2011."

The UK has shown us that competitive markets can't be relied upon to provide public services, in part because these services operate mostly in areas where competitive markets do not work.

"Public services are generally thought best to follow need rather than willingness or capacity to pay (like justice or disability services), and minimum service levels are often desired even if they are high cost (like services to rural and remote communities)," wrote Christopher Stone on *The Conversation*.

So why are we pushing ahead with reforms that have failed elsewhere?

Aside from the fact that outsourcing allows governments to spend less while also washing

their hands of responsibility when things go wrong, Stone believes such reforms are underpinned by a widespread misconception that that markets will always drive efficiency and that the public service is bloated and ineffective.

In reality, the World Bank's measurement of government effectiveness placed Australia as ninth most effective amongst OECD nations in 2010. Furthermore, international research shows that under similar conditions, public sector organisations generally perform similarly to private sector ones.

"Allowing mistaken notions of efficiency to drive policy will result in 'efficiency reforms' that actually increase waste," says Stone. "When it comes to outsourcing, too many of our politicians have tunnel vision... Our public services do a lot for us; they need to be efficient. But we won't achieve that by blind faith in market solutions."

## Baird this in mind: Abbott clears ground for WorkChoices 2.0

**Despite stating in dramatic, almost theatrical fashion that WorkChoices was dead, buried and cremated, Tony Abbott quietly wheeled out its spectre just before Christmas.**

The Productivity Commission was strategically requested to undertake a wide-ranging inquiry into Australia's workplace relations system by Treasurer Joe Hockey on Friday 19 December 2014, the last working day for many people before the Christmas closedown.

The stated scope of the inquiry is enormous and was expressed in language that had a clear, disturbing subtext.

It will look into "the performance of the workplace relations framework, including the Fair Work Act 2009, focusing on key social and economic indicators important to the wellbeing,

productivity and competitiveness of Australia and its people. A key consideration will be the capacity for the workplace relations framework to adapt over the longer term to issues arising due to structural adjustments and changes in the global economy."

"The review will make recommendations about how the laws can be improved to maximise outcomes for Australian employers...bearing in mind...the need for business to be able to grow, prosper and employ, and the need to reduce unnecessary and excessive regulation."

In other words, everything is up for grabs.

The Commission didn't muck around.

On 22 January 2015, five issues papers under the heading of 'Workplace Relations Framework' were released: 'The Inquiry in Context', 'Safety Nets', 'The Bargaining Framework', 'Employee Protections' (which interestingly, was by far the smallest of the five) and 'Other Workplace Relations Issues'.

With the NSW state election then just over two months away, the Premier, Mike Baird, must have been gobsmacked by the timing.

The last thing he would have wanted dumped on the election trail was the son of WorkChoices courtesy of his hugely unpopular federal counterpart.

Or worse, to have Abbott remind NSW voters just what it is that the Liberals really stand for.

Clause 1.4 of 'The Inquiry in Context' paper spells things out.

Under the title of 'What might need to change? Some identify multiple severe flaws', the very first dot point is that the system "lacks flexibility", (a term that has long applied to employers but not employees) and doesn't allow managers to manage.

Further down, another point states there is still "a highly regulated set of base wages across many occupations and industries, which threatens flexibility at the enterprise level and may price some workers out of jobs."

The deadline for submissions to the Inquiry was 13 March 2015 with the release of a draft report in June/July, public hearings in August/September and the final report to the Federal Government by 30 November 2015.

It could be a very dark Christmas.

## PSA women unite

The union celebrated International Women's Day 2015 by hosting a one-day Women in the Union course and luncheon at PSA House.

On 10 March, women members attending the course gathered to discuss the history of women's participation in the workforce, rights and entitlements at work, union structure, assertiveness, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws and practices.

A lunch, kindly sponsored by First State Super, provided an opportunity for participants to

meet their fellow members and chat with PSA staff.

Unions have been at the forefront of the fight for women's rights, including the fight for equal pay, flexible work hours, equal employment opportunity, paid maternity leave and domestic violence leave. International Women's Day provides an opportunity to reflect on how far we've come as well as what we hope to achieve in the future.



# PSA delegate awarded Scroll of Honour



Mary Court accepts the Scroll of Honour for services to the union movement at Unions NSW on 19 February

On 19 February, hard-working PSA Schools delegate Mary Court was honoured with the Unions NSW 2015 Scroll of Honour for her services to the PSA and the union movement.

Mary is a School Admin Manager from Blaxland High School and has been a highly valued district leader for PSA members in Western Sydney public schools since 1994.

She became a powerful force in the union movement's Your Rights At Work campaign in 2005–2007.

Mary is also a founding member and Secretary of the highly organised Penrith Valley Community Unions where her skills, knowledge and passion are helping to make Unions NSW's Jobs, Rights & Services campaign a great success.

Her commitment and dedication to helping others is evident to everyone who has worked with her and the PSA is thrilled to see her efforts formally acknowledged.

"I receive this Scroll of Honour on behalf of the team at Penrith Valley Community Unions, because it's a team effort... to champion the cause of secure jobs, workplace rights and quality public services for all," said Mary.

# High flying medal winner

The PSA would like to congratulate Superintendent Jayson McKellar on being awarded an Australian Fire Service Medal for his exceptional work in the Rural Fire Service. Now the manager of the NSW Rural Fire Service – Lower Hunter District, Jayson joined the RFS as a junior member in 1986 when he was just 14 years old, eager to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Two years later, at the age of 16, he became an active member and began attending incidents. By 1994, he had risen to the rank of Senior

Deputy Captain in the Blue Mountains Headquarters Brigade and went on to positions at RFS HQ, Singleton, Port Stephens, Cessnock and now, East Maitland. He has worked with aircraft at many major fires as an Air Attack Supervisor and become one of the most experienced bushfire aviation officers in the country. After almost 30 years with the RFS, Jayson says that the 2003 Canberra bushfires still stand out as one of the most challenging and rewarding times in his career. "Looking down at fires of that scale from the helicopter, it was a

terrible sight. But the exceptional hard work and bravery of all the firefighters and emergency staff – the pilots, the ground crews and even the community – as something like that impacts on a big city is quite amazing," he says. Though he enjoys the dynamic nature of the work, it's the people who have kept him coming back. "I get to get up every day and go to a job that I love doing. The volunteers and the paid staff are very dedicated, very giving people who are genuinely out there trying to do the best for their community. I'm very lucky."



# Vale Dana Eirosius

Sharon Vassar



I first met Dana Eirosius, a client of Home Care, when she contacted the PSA last year asking to assist with the Real Choice campaign to save Ageing, Disability and Home Care services.

Legally blind and in a wheelchair, she said she had been mistreated and discriminated against by NGOs and was eager to stop the same thing happening to others. She wanted to do everything she could to ensure that government-run disability services continued.

We met one afternoon at her home in Western Sydney and from then on she became one of the best activists I've had the pleasure of working with.

Dana worked tirelessly to support the campaign. She made

calls to radio station talkback programs, gave interviews to newspapers and wrote to the Minister for Ageing and Disability Services to relay her concerns, but her greatest triumph was the speech she gave at the PSA rally outside Parliament House in November. She was so excited to be a part of that action and when we presented Dana with an award to thank her for her support, she had it framed.

Sadly, Dana passed away on Christmas Eve. At her funeral, the coffin was surrounded by her most treasured possessions. That award was amongst them.

RIP, Dana. We will miss you.

## W.G. McNally Jones Staff LAWYERS



**Proud to be lawyers for the PSA**

Tattersalls Building,  
Level 10, 179 Elizabeth Street  
Sydney NSW 2000



Phone: **02 9233 4744** Fax: **02 9223 7859**

Parramatta: By Appointment Only  
**02 9233 4744**

We have accredited specialists in Personal Injury, Employment and Industrial Law. We can also provide legal advice and representation to all PSA members on:

- Litigation | Wills**
- Family law including De Facto Relationships**
- Police matters | Discrimination | Conveyancing**
- Deceased estates**
- Superannuation & disability claims**
- General legal advice**

As members of the PSA you are entitled to the first consultation free of charge upon presentation of a letter of referral from the PSA.

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

# March 4 our work rights!

PSA members and staff were among the tens of thousands of workers around the nation who took to the streets to stand up for their rights at work on 4 March.

Rallies in Melbourne, Mildura, Sydney, Newcastle, Broken Hill, Lismore, Adelaide, Canberra, Perth, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville, Mackay, Hobart, Launceston, Darwin and Tennant Creek sent a clear message to the state and federal governments.



# Putting the defence of public services on the wide screen for all



The PSA's ad, 'Which direction are we headed?' has again been playing in cinemas around NSW in the lead up to the state election. The advertising campaign has helped start a conversation with the community about the importance of public services.

The advertisement didn't just resonate with the voting public,

it also prompted other unions to focus on the importance of public services and the need to fight against Premier Baird's relentless privatisation agenda.

The 'Defending Public Services' slogan arose out of the PSA delegates' summit in September 2013 and has since badged all we do, including the sides of our fleet

of vehicles in a travelling banner for our cause.

The notion also helped inform the tone of the advertisement that was screened on TV and in cinemas last year.



# Happy 1st birthday, MSC!

3 March marked one year since the Member Support Centre opened, providing an immediate point of contact between the union and PSA members. General Secretary Anne Gardiner and Assistant General Secretary Steve Turner joined staff to celebrate the MSC's first anniversary with a cake.

# Temporary employee security

The PSA has continued the campaign to win greater security of employment for temporary employees.

In November 2014, the PSA's advocacy led to the Public Service Commission making important amendments to the GSE Act that allowed agencies to more easily convert long-term temporary employees into ongoing employment. Under the amendments, agencies were also able to seek an extension to the timeframe by which they were required to be fully compliant with the GSE Act temporary employment provisions. Prior to this amendment, thousands of temporary employees may have been forced out of their jobs on 24 February 2015.

On 18 February the PSA met with the Public Service Commission and requested that all determinations made by the Public Service Commissioner in accordance with the GSE amendments to extend or convert groups of employees, be provided to the union.

The PSA has also written to all agencies requesting copies of their workforce management plan for temporary employees from now through to February 2017.

This information will allow the PSA to understand how agencies are implementing the amendments and will help our Advocates and Delegates make sure as many temporary employees as possible are converted to secure jobs.

All existing temporary employees should have received advice from their agency as to whether they will be extended or converted under the new provisions. If you have not been advised by your agency, or if you believe that your agency's intended actions are an abuse of temporary employment arrangements, please contact the Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679.

You don't still pay your PSA fees by payroll deduction do you?

**Really?**



Switching from the payroll deduction of your union fees to direct debit from a bank account means peace of mind.

It locks in your membership of the PSA.

It also ensures the strength of your union into the future, making it financially independent of any government – state or federal, Labor or Liberal – at any time.

If payroll deductions were cut not only would our service to you be reduced but our membership would shrink with a corresponding loss in all important bargaining power.

So switch to direct debit at <https://membership.psa.asn.au>

or talk to your PSA organiser, delegate or email [memberpayment@psa.asn.au](mailto:memberpayment@psa.asn.au).

## PSA/CPSU DIRECTORY

### PSA EXECUTIVE

Sue Walsh, President  
Anne Gardiner, General Secretary  
Steve Turner,  
Assistant General Secretary  
Cassandra Coleman,  
Senior Vice President  
Wendy Hurry, Vice President  
Nicole Jess, Vice President

### SYDNEY

GPO Box 3365  
160 Clarence Street  
SYDNEY 2001  
Phone: 1300 772 679  
Facsimile: (02) 9262 1623  
Membership changes:  
1300 772 679  
Red Tape: 1300 772 679  
Email: redtape@psa.asn.au  
Distribution of publications:  
1300 772 679  
Website: www.psa.asn.au

### CENTRAL WEST REGION

2/107 Bentinck Street,  
BATHURST 2795  
Phone: 1300 772 679  
Facsimile: (02) 6332 1535  
Email: bathurst@psa.asn.au

### CENTRAL COAST-HUNTER REGION

Suite 2, Level 3 Devonshire House,  
406-408 King Street  
NEWCASTLE WEST 2302  
Phone: 1300 772 679  
Facsimile: (02) 4929 4798  
Email: newcastle@psa.asn.au

### NORTHERN REGION

2/133 Keen Street, LISMORE 2480  
PO Box 818  
Phone: 1300 772 679  
Facsimile: (02) 6621 4690  
Email: lismore@psa.asn.au

### NORTH WESTERN REGION

Shop 14 The Atrium Shopping Centre  
345 Peel Street, TAMWORTH  
PO Box 682, TAMWORTH 2340  
Phone: 1300 772 679  
Facsimile: (02) 6766 3352  
Email: tamworth@psa.asn.au

### SOUTH EASTERN REGION

Suite 13, 104 Crown Street  
PO Box 986  
WOLLONGONG 2520  
Phone: 1300 772 679  
Facsimile: (02) 4226 4667  
Email: wollongong@psa.asn.au

### SOUTH WESTERN REGION

Suite 2, 27 Forsyth Street  
PO Box 649  
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650  
Phone: 1300 772 679  
Facsimile: (02) 6921 9663  
Email: wagga@psa.asn.au

### COMMUNITY & PUBLIC SECTOR UNION (SPSF GROUP)

Karen Batt  
National Secretary  
Level 1, PSA House  
160 Clarence Street  
SYDNEY, NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 9299 5655  
Fax: (02) 9299 7181  
website: www.cpsu-spsf.asn.au

### COMMUNITY & PUBLIC SECTOR UNION (SPSF GROUP NSW BRANCH)

Sue Walsh, Branch President  
John Cahill, Branch Secretary  
Steve Turner,  
Branch Assistant Secretary  
Kirsten Cameron,  
Branch Assistant Secretary  
Ron Davis, Branch Assistant  
Secretary for 'POA' Sub-Branch  
Wendy Hurry, Branch Vice President  
Boyd Kellner, Branch Vice President  
Nicole Jess, Branch Vice President

## DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS 2015

# Department of Corrective Services (Non Custodial)

Nominations are hereby called from financial PSA members in the Department of Corrective Services (Non Custodial) for the positions of delegate from the following areas:

Head Office.....2 delegates  
Metropolitan Area.....6 delegates  
Central West Area.....2 delegate  
Central Coast & Hunter Area.....2 delegates  
North Coast Area.....1 delegate  
North West Area.....1 delegate  
South East Area.....2 delegates  
South West Area.....1 delegate

The Call for Nomination is being sent electronically to each member eligible to vote. Should any eligible member not have received the electronic voting invitation please notify elections@psa.asn.au.

Paper Nomination Forms will also be accepted and are available on our website (www.psa.asn.au/election-nomination-forms) or from the 5th floor Inquiry counter at PSA House 160 Clarence Street Sydney or from Regional Offices.

Nominations must be returned to:

The Deputy Returning Officer  
Public Service Association of NSW

Nominations may be submitted:

- by post to GPO Box 3365, Sydney NSW 2001
- by email to elections@psa.asn.au
- hand delivered to the PSA Inquiry counter on Level 5, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney
- by fax to (02) 9262 1623

**Nominations must reach the PSA Head Office no later than 5pm Friday, 1 May 2015.**

If there is a ballot, candidates who wish to have a profile sent with the ballot material should provide a brief statement of 300 words or less stating how they will best represent members' interests. Space is provided for this purpose on the nomination form.

**G R BENSLEY**  
Deputy Returning Officer

## Prison Officers (Vocational Branch) Advisory Group Election of State Executive 2015-2017

Nominations are hereby called from financial members of the above branch for the following positions on the State Executive:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Country Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Assistant Secretary

Nominations must be on the prescribed form (or facsimile of it).

**Nomination Forms are available at:**

- PSA website: www.psa.asn.au/election-nomination-forms
- 5th floor Inquiry counter PSA House 160 Clarence Street Sydney or from Regional Offices.

Persons nominated must be financial members of the PSA.

Candidate information should be completed and supplied with the nomination form.

The nomination must be seconded by six financial members of the Branch and forwarded to:

The Deputy Returning Officer  
Public Service Association of NSW

Nominations may be submitted:

- by post to GPO Box 3365, Sydney NSW 2001
- by email to elections@psa.asn.au
- hand delivered to the PSA Inquiry counter on Level 5, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney
- by fax to (02) 9262 1623

**Nominations must reach the PSA Head Office no later than 5pm Friday, 1 May 2015.**

If there is a ballot, candidates who wish to have a profile sent with the ballot material should provide a brief statement of 300 words or less stating how they will best represent members' interests. Space is provided for this purpose on the nomination form.

**G R BENSLEY**  
Deputy Returning Officer

## PSA TRAINING

# Metropolitan program: April – June 2015

### Advanced delegates workshop April 28

### Dealing with workplace bullying May 22

### Role of the delegate June 16-17

### Dealing with member issues June 23

*Regional training to be arranged separately.*

### The courses

#### Advanced delegates workshop

This one-day course is for delegates who have completed the Role of the Delegate course and wish to further develop their skills. It looks at advanced recruitment techniques, analysing issues, campaign skills and dealing with member issues.

#### Dealing with workplace bullying

This one-day course is designed to assist members and delegates in dealing with bullying and harassment at work.

#### Role of the delegate

This two-day course discusses the role of the delegate and active members: what delegates do, delegate protections, organising skills, recruitment, working with issues, union values and

involvement. All members can learn from this course and are welcome to apply.

#### Dealing with member issues

This one-day course is for delegates who want to develop their ability to assist members with individual workplace issues. The course looks at how to deal with individual issues by using the problem-solving framework and developing advocacy skills.

#### Information

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

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

Participants are responsible for their own travel and other costs incurred in attending training.

### Venues

All training courses are held at PSA House, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney unless otherwise stated.

*NB: Lunch is not provided. Tearoom facilities available (tea, coffee, fridge, microwave).*

### Special needs

People with disability and/or special needs, please contact the PSA training staff at the time of your enrolment.

### Special leave for trade union training

Most members are entitled to paid trade union training leave. Your delegate/organiser will be able to provide details.

For further information email training@psa.asn.au.

# Red Tape

**Editorial Production:**.....PSA Communications Unit

**Design:**.....Go Media Design, phone (02) 9319 6066

**Printer:**.....Rotary Offset Press, phone (02) 9764 0222

**Enquiries:**.....PSA Communication Unit, 1300 772 679

**Managing Editor:**.....Anne Gardiner, General Secretary

**Issue Editors:**.....Murray Engleheart & Anne Fullerton

**Writers:**.....Murray Engleheart & Anne Fullerton

– with significant input from members

## Contact the PSA

Phone 1300 772 679 | Fax (02) 9262 1623

Email redtape@psa.asn.au | Visit www.psa.asn.au

Electoral comment authorised by Anne Gardiner, General Secretary



# A PSA membership means you're eligible for exclusive banking benefits

13 61 91  
scu.net.au



**SCU** More Generous Banking

## Discounts

- **Discounted Home Loan Interest Rates<sup>1</sup>**
- Discounted Rates on Credit Cards<sup>1</sup>
- **Discounted Rates on Personal Loans<sup>1</sup>**
- Discounted Rates on Overdrafts<sup>1</sup>

## Full Banking Services

- **Savings, terms deposits and daily accounts**
- Home, Car & Personal Loans
- **Overdrafts**
- Business Banking
- **Debit & Credit Cards**
- Insurance- Home, Contents, Motor, Life & Travel
- **Financial Planning Services**

## Convenience

- 18 Branches located throughout Sydney, The Blue Mountains and Central West NSW.
- **A dedicated Member Contact Centre with extended hours- Call 13 61 91 8am-7pm, Mon-Fri and 9am-11:30am Saturday**
- Phone, Mobile and Internet Banking available 24/7
- **Access to rediATM's - one of Australia's largest ATM networks**

Sydney Credit Union Ltd ABN 93 087 650 726 Australian Credit Licence Number 236476 AFSL 236476.  
<sup>1</sup> Offer applies on standard rates only and does not apply to other special offers. All applications are subject to SCU normal lending criteria. Terms, conditions, fees and charges apply. Full details available on application. All information is correct as at 25/08/14 and subject to change.