

RedTape



Public Service Association of NSW
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Enough is enough Barry



PSA General Secretary, John Cahill; PSA President, Sue Walsh and PSA Assistant General Secretary Steve Turner – PSA members have had enough Mr O'Farrell.

On 8 October, PSA members drew a line in the sand.



The message from the lower Town Hall in Sydney and stop work meetings across the state to the O'Farrell Government after 18 months of squeezing the life and soul out of the public sector was clear: enough is enough.

Enough of cutting wages and conditions.

Enough of treating public sector workers as though they had committed some crime against the state simply by doing their job.

Enough of slashing services with no regard for the impact on the community or the long term social consequences.

Enough intimidation.

Enough.

"When the O'Farrell Government came to power the PSA was quite prepared to meet and discuss the changes that it wished to implement," said General Secretary, John Cahill.

"However, the Government quickly made it quite clear that they preferred a bulldozing approach to public sector reform rather than any sort of negotiated outcome.

Enough of treating public sector workers as though they had committed some crime against the state simply by doing their job.

"The PSA has fought the destructive elements of the Government's agenda at every turn on a considered and measured basis based on legal advice as is the case with our present High Court challenge.

"Others meanwhile found it easier to just go along with what was proposed.

"I do not believe that members of this union pay their fees expecting matters of major importance to their working lives to go unchallenged.

"But it is now time to take that fight to another level.

"It is time to speak in a much louder collective voice and in a language that the Government can really understand.

"For too long the O'Farrell Government have been using the public sector as some sort of socio-economic lab experiment as if to try and determine just how long services can continue without proper resources before they collapse entirely.

"Tens of thousands of PSA members make a significant difference each day to millions of others across the state.

"For that you deserve the Government's thanks and congratulations rather than open contempt and the back of their hand.

"The statement that was made on 8 October and the action that will stem from it marks a fresh beginning of our fight for dignity and respect."

"The attacks by the O'Farrell Government have been felt by us all.

"So it is now time to stand up as one.

"We have had enough Mr O'Farrell."



O'Farrell Government gets worse



Prior to the NSW election held on 26 March 2011 Barry O'Farrell made two crucial promises affecting the PSA. Firstly, he said that under his Government there would be more public sector workers, not less.

Secondly, he stated that he would retain the NSW Industrial Relations Commission, the independent industrial umpire for public sector workers in NSW. Eighteen months on and not only have Barry O'Farrell and his Government broken both those promises, they have committed a series of other industrial atrocities that will affect not only public sector workers but every citizen of NSW.

Some of those atrocities include:

- Slashing 15000 jobs out of the public sector with the promise of more to come.
- Restricting the power of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission to award pay rises of more than 2.5% regardless of the merits of any case that may be run.

- Announcing the closure of the Cronulla Fisheries Centre of Excellence.
- Allowing amateur hunters to shoot in National Parks, putting at risk the lives of Association members and parks visitors.
- Announcing the privatisation of Government owned power stations.
- Imposing a further squeeze on jobs by the imposition of a 1.2% labour expenses cap.
- Announcing a \$1.7 billion cut to NSW education, a move that affects both PSA members' jobs and the quality of education in NSW.
- Slashing workers compensation benefits paid to injured NSW workers.

To add insult to injury O'Farrell has now lodged a comprehensive new conditions award in the

NSW Industrial Commission, that same Commission whose powers he has already curtailed by legislation, to diminish or abolish dozens of existing conditions that have applied across the public sector for generations.

These attacks on conditions include:

- The abolition of the 10% loading for shifts between 7.30am and 6.00pm.
- The reduction of recreation leave entitlement for shift workers.
- The abolition of the remote areas allowance and additional recreation leave for staff working in a remote area of the State.
- The abolition of annual leave loading of 17½%.
- The exclusion of foster carers, kinship arrangements and

surrogacy arrangements from parental leave entitlements.

- The abolition of FACS Leave
- The abolition of workers compensation top up payments
- The abolition of many Special Leave entitlements such as:
 - Assisting as volunteers of safety organisations including in declared emergencies.
 - Competing in Commonwealth or Olympic Games.
 - Participating in Aboriginal rural education programs.
 - Special leave for transferred officers who were former armed services personnel.
 - Training and retraining for First Aid Officers.
 - Blood and Bone marrow donors.
 - Attendance at Professional Conferences.

As we saw at the stop work rallies on 8 October, members will not tolerate this.

Enough is enough.

The rallies have endorsed a comprehensive program of action by the PSA to fight against all of the attacks on public sector wages and working conditions.

This campaign will have four major aspects – industrial, political, legal and media.

Industrially, work bans and rolling stoppages will be authorised across Agencies, and further state wide stoppages will take place.

Politically, the PSA in conjunction with other unions will continue to

hold community events and local demonstrations and vigorously lobby local MPs, particularly those in marginal seats to convince them that O'Farrell's attacks on the public sector will be vigorously resisted – there is nothing like a nervous MP in a marginal seat.

Legally, the PSA will oppose every single attack on our conditions in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission; we have already launched and run a case in the High Court of Australia with the aim of overturning O'Farrell's restrictions on the Industrial Relations Commission.

In the media, we will continue to work with our professional media advisors to make sure that all these matters get the widest possible media coverage, so that everyone in NSW can show their anger at public services being slashed.

Our aims won't be achieved overnight but the PSA is in for the long haul. We will campaign right up until the next State Election in two and a half years time, and if necessary, for the four years after that.

But to be successful the PSA must remain united. Members, delegates and officials must all stand together in full support of the union and our campaign.

The PSA has been around since 1899 (a lot longer than the Liberal Party) and we have never shied away from a fight.

We don't intend to start now.

John Cahill
General Secretary

High Court challenge decision awaited

On 5 September, a Full Bench of the High Court of Australia heard the PSA's legal challenge of the O'Farrell Government's laws which restrict the power of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission and cap public sector wage rises at 2.5%.

To give some idea of the gravity of the case and its potential impact, the governments of South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia all intervened to support Barry O'Farrell. We now await the Court's decision.

O'Farrell dismantles public education, tells staff to hit the road

The \$1.7 billion education cut announced by the O'Farrell Government on 11 September rips funds from public education to bankroll transport infrastructure.

"Public education will never recover from the cuts announced by Barry O'Farrell," said PSA General Secretary, John Cahill.

"Every school, every parent, every student in NSW will be worse off under the Government's proposals."

The job cuts include:

- 400 school administrative and support staff; and
- 600 staff from Department of Education state and regional offices.

"The loss of every one of these jobs will impact on students, teachers and school communities," said John Cahill.

"School support staff are involved in a variety of vital roles in schools, such as student enrolments, overseeing

student attendance, financial management and support for teachers in specialist areas.

"Their role forms the backbone of our school system, with every job lost placing greater burdens on principals and teachers and a drain on face-to-face teaching.

"These staff are also an essential line of communication for parents and community members.

"The loss of jobs from the Department of Education head office will hit learning support, effective administration, policy development and enrichment programs.

"This will include the loss of professionals involved in setting and supervising the school curriculum, innovative technology-based learning programs and



From left: PSA Vice President, Wendy Hurry; General Secretary, John Cahill and President, Sue Walsh with former PSA Vice President, Linda Hudson (formerly Linda Murray) at a meeting of the Schools Departmental Committee.

other teacher and program support.

"Like any organisation, schools require efficient administration and support to ensure they can deliver good education outcomes for all students.

"The staff that are being ripped out of the system expertly provide exactly that."

Look at this!

The PSA has set up a new campaign website to fight for public education.

It's called Our Jobs Support Education and can be found at www.supporteducation.com.au

Whether you are a parent, grandparent or work in the education system, you can share your story, sign up for news and generally add your voice to the campaign.

Encourage your family and friends to be involved also.

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PSA



Savage education cuts – Government adds untruth to injury

On 11 September, the O’Farrell Government stepped so far over the line it was breathtaking.

And they did so on two separate fronts.

Firstly, they announced cuts of \$1.7 billion over four years to the Department of Education and Communities.

That’s 1800 job cuts – 400 full time equivalent jobs across School Administrative and Support Staff, 800 from TAFE and 600 corporate staff from state and regional offices.

In short, funding for student education in NSW is being slashed to finance transport infrastructure.

What a disgrace.

Secondly, the Department issued inaccurate information when making this announcement.

It was stated that the job cuts were the result of an agreement between the previous Labor Government and the PSA to fund salary increases.

This is untrue.

No such agreement was ever made.

Many people – myself included – have worked extremely hard for decades to protect and where possible enhance working conditions for those in our public education system.

The PSA is **not** in the business of selling out public education or those who work in that very important workplace environment.

Redundancy fight for SAS Staff continues

As I mentioned in the August/September edition of *Red Tape*, the PSA has filed an application in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission for an award clause to protect SAS Staff in the event of positions being abolished.

The matter has now been escalated to arbitration with hearing dates set for 29, 30 and 31 October.

Initially it appeared as though the parties were in agreement on all but two matters, these being:

1. The question of whether the protections should also apply to long term temporary staff; and
2. Whether the protections were contained in a policy or an award clause.

The PSA strongly asserts that:

- a. those long term temporary staff that are eligible to apply for permanency should also be eligible for the redundancy protections and
- b. the protections should be contained within an award clause to protect our members against the Department making unilateral changes to the provisions.

Since *Local Schools, Local Decisions* was announced in March this year, the PSA has been voicing concerns about the impact that this change will have on the job security and workloads of SAS Staff.

This is because *Local Schools Local Decisions* does two critical things.

Firstly, it decentralises decision making on matters of budget and staffing to a school principal.

Secondly, it dismantles the centralised support provided to schools from the corporate offices.

Principals can now determine how and whether a vacancy is filled.

For example, where a full time permanent school administrative officer retires or resigns, a principal may choose to change that position to a part time and/or temporary position or not fill it – abolish the position.

This undermines the existing transfer system upon which SAS Staff currently rely for job security as there will potentially be fewer positions into which to transfer.

The PSA has repeatedly stated that while our members support policies which lead to better outcomes for students and the school community overall, the introduction of the *Local Schools, Local Decisions* initiative must not come at the expense of the quality services currently delivered.

Our list of demands to the Department include that:

1. ethical, transparent and accountable recruitment and selection processes be maintained
2. any new classifications be introduced in close consultation with the PSA
3. SAS Staff be given the first opportunity to take on any new roles, eg business manager, with appropriate training support
4. appropriate safeguards be in place to protect against an

increased use of temporary staff at the expense of permanent staff

5. the workload of PSA members not be increased as a result of the decentralised decision making
6. the current staffing formula be maintained to ensure practical workloads for SAS Staff which in turn help deliver quality services to local school communities
7. the current SAS Staff transfer system which was developed to protect job security for PSA members remains in place
8. training be put in place to assist all SAS Staff with the changes being introduced including those changes arising from *Local Schools, Local Decisions* and LMBR
9. the PSA be consulted on every aspect of the changes that impact on our members.

Whilst the Department has stated it will retain the transfer system for the time being, it has also said that it will not maintain the staffing formula and will not step back from the key change that it wants to introduce.

That is, the right of principals to abolish positions or reduce their status to part time or temporary employment as they see fit.

In late August, the PSA’s concerns were highlighted when negotiations between the Teachers’ Federation and the Department over the new staffing arrangements arising from the *Local Schools, Local Decisions* reforms were ended by the Department.

The Department is now unilaterally implementing its own arrangement and has refused to provide the protections sought by the Teachers’ Federation on issues such as an enforceable staffing agreement on the class size policy – without which the policy can be changed at any time from Term 4 2012 onwards.

The Federation’s concerns are almost identical to those that the PSA has raised many times.

The Department’s insistence on having important matters as a policy only, which can be unilaterally changed at any time rather than having it contained in an enforceable agreement, is precisely why the PSA is determined to fight for redundancy protections for SAS Staff to be enshrined and protected in your award.

For more information please contact the PSA Schools Team on (02) 9220 0929 or email schools@psa.asn.au

SAS Staff Recognition Week

SAS Staff Recognition Week was held from 3 to 7 September under the banner of ‘Our jobs support education’ and, as is the case every year, it was a huge success.

I’ve said it many times before but I believe it is well worth saying again; SAS Staff are the life blood of the public education system in this state.

With all the upheaval in schools thanks to the O’Farrell Government, it was refreshing to take some time out and celebrate all that’s good and important about public education in NSW: SAS Staff.

John Cahill and I attended Bonnyrigg Public School on 4 September to join with 85 SAS Staff in celebrating Recognition Week at an incredibly well catered morning tea.

Thanks go to Principal, Peter Ward who welcomed us all to the school and gave an excellent speech on behalf of himself and neighbouring school principals that recognised the important role SAS Staff perform in supporting public education.

Thanks also to all the wonderful SAS Staff who attended the morning tea and gave John and I such a warm and friendly welcome.

It was great to meet you all.

Sue Walsh
President



Bonnyrigg Public School Principal, Peter Ward with Lindy Trevena, Admin Manager, PSA General Secretary, John Cahill and Sue Walsh.



Sue Walsh with Diana Dickson, SLSO at Bonnyrigg.

Service NSW – the new one stop shop

In 2013, a new agency, Service NSW will come into being as a 'one stop shop' for a variety of transactions with numerous NSW Government agencies.

It is proposed that the service will operate via shop fronts which will be open between 7am–7pm on weekdays and 9am–3pm on Saturdays.

The service will also have a 24-hour a day, 7-day a week telephone line and single web portal.

18 shop fronts will be operational by the middle of next year, with approximately 100 in place by 2017.

A number of Government agencies are likely to be affected by the creation of Service NSW including Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), NSW Fair Trading, Births, Deaths and Marriages, the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing and National Parks.

As usual, the O'Farrell Government did not consult with the PSA about implications of the new agency prior to it being announced.

However, following the announcement, a meeting was held with the Department of Premier & Cabinet on 14 August, which was attended by PSA Assistant General Secretary, Steve Turner, PSA delegates and industrial staff.

A briefing on Service NSW was presented, and based on input from members, the PSA raised a number of questions to which the Government provided the following responses:

- Staff will have to apply for jobs in the new agency. This will be done in three stages:
 1. EOI and priority assessment for directly affected staff
 2. EOI and advertising amongst other public sector staff
 3. External advertising.
- There will be more positions offered than currently exist, due to the extended hours.
- The telephone service will be provided by three call centres in Newcastle, Parramatta and The Rocks. Of these, the first two will use the existing call centres of RMS and Fair Trading.
- More complex services and advice will continue to be provided by existing agencies. Service NSW will seek advice or refer the customer to the relevant agency.
- More complex services that have to be provided at a physical location (e.g. driver testing) will be retained by the current agency and co-located with Service NSW centres.
- Staff should be able to maintain their full-time or part-time status if they move to the new agency.

- In most but not all cases Service NSW centres will use the existing premises of RMS motor registries.
- A roadshow by Premier and Cabinet for the first 18 locations and call centres was held from late August.
- A new award will be needed to set the pay and working conditions of Service NSW staff. This will be negotiated with the PSA.

Consultative committees including PSA delegates will be established to get more answers to your questions, negotiate the transition of staff and the new award.

The PSA will also establish a committee of members from affected areas to guide our negotiations.

As you are the PSA, your involvement and input is crucial to ensure your views are heard and concerns addressed.

Staying strong and active in PSA matters is the best way to influence this process, and guard against detrimental changes to your employment.

To provide feedback, ask questions and get involved, please contact the PSA industrial staff for your agency or email servicensw@psa.asn.au.



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Big Society

(Or congratulations, providing services is now *your* problem)

**Big Society. It's a completely misleading title.
On the face of it, it sounds like a larger, more diverse community.**

But the new political speak for allegedly empowering communities is really about the delegation of social responsibility by government while withholding the tools necessary to properly deal with the tasks involved. It's government passing the buck and attempting to absolve itself of all responsibility in relation to the provision of services.

And the memo from the Government to the general community has the subject line: "Providing public services is now your problem. Good luck with that".

The concept of the Big Society – which is very much a part of the O'Farrell Government's plans – was the brainchild of Phillip Blond and was (in)famously introduced as part of the policy platform of the Conservatives in the lead up to the UK elections in 2010.

It is now the major driver in public sector reform in Britain with the country's riots last summer the most troubling and tangible evidence of its massive short comings.

The catchphrase that 'Bush declared war on terror, Blair declared war on crime and it's like [UK Prime Minister, David] Cameron has declared war on the public sector' pretty much sums it up.

It's a process whereby the role of the state is redefined by the state based on what suits the state.

Absolutely nothing more.

Governments don't fight tooth and nail to get into power only to then hand off part of what they fought so hard

to control simply because they have a sudden crisis of conscience and feel it's 'the right thing to do'.

There has to be a massive upside for them in doing so.

And of course there is; profits for their business mates while at the same time reducing government costs and dodging the bullet of responsibility when everything comes crashing down.

And all under the guise, no make that ruse, of empowering local communities.

It's of course unlikely that those same communities will be charged with redrawing electoral boundaries or legislation regarding the superannuation entitlements of politicians.

In a nutshell, the Big Society agenda is this:

1. devolving power to local communities, like a neighbourhood watch scheme for community services, and
2. encouraging the members of those communities to take a more hands on, active role in local affairs and welfare.

But it fails to back up that shift in responsibility with the necessary funds.

Or to put it another way, let charities be the community's saviour – at least for as long as they are allowed oxygen.

Here are some disturbing statistics in relation to the UK experience:

- An £81 billion (\$120 billion) cut in public spending over four years including an average 19 percent budget cut to government agencies, 60 percent cut to the budget for new public housing and £7 billion (\$10.5 billion) cut to welfare.

- The UK's public service is expected to shrink by up to 710,000 public servants over six years. (The entire NSW public sector is around 400,000 people.)

- Corporations and the largest charities have dominated the commissioning process: 35 of 40 Work Programme (employment agency) contracts were awarded to corporations.

- UK Prime Minister David Cameron's budgets have dealt a £5 billion (\$7.5 billion) funding cut to the UK's community sector and slashed £110 million (\$165 million) from 2,000 UK charities.

- During 2010–11, public sector employment fell by 4.3 percent. Private sector employment increased by 1.5 percent.

Capacity and costs are being reduced and responsibility shifted to 'any willing provider'.

The Big Society agenda is very much a part of the O'Farrell Government's vision for NSW.

It's the very reason why they are unconcerned about slashing jobs and services – because if the Big Society agenda plays out, the loss of services to the community won't be the Government's problem but something that the communities themselves will have to deal with.

For this Team O'Farrell will of course expect your vote at the next state election, just as John Howard somehow expected his 'battlers' to shower him with thanks at

the ballot box after introducing his union and worker crushing WorkChoices laws.

The O'Farrell Government have demanded the right to dictate the level of pay increases for public sector workers – and legislated to ensure that they are able to do so – and sell off public sector assets. Yet on the other hand they want to step away from their responsibilities by attempting to virtually argue that public services should be none of their business.

Please.

It's happening on a federal level also with an Abbott government planning to embrace the concept and reduce involvement in such areas as family services, child care and aged care, all core issues in which the government should have a firm regulating hand and ongoing responsibility.

Families spokesman, Kevin Andrews told the *Sydney Morning Herald* in August that federally funded community organisations "are not instruments or agencies of Government" and that "it is not for the Government to control them or tell them what they should be doing."

So next time someone mentions "Big Society" and speaks of it as some type of bright new social solution...

The Centre for Policy Development's recent report, *Big Society: How the UK Government is Dismantling the State and What it Means for Australia* can be viewed at:

www.cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/cpd_big_society-FINAL-WEB-VERSION.pdf



Community Services bizarro world: Minister dismisses staffing & funding concerns



The Minister for Family and Community Services, Pru Goward, has dismissed suggestions that current staffing levels and funding are insufficient and instead flagged deeper cuts to the department's budget in coming years.

Since coming to office in March 2011, the Government has cut more than 200 jobs from Community Services and leaked treasury documents suggest a further 968 jobs are slated to go. The Government has not denied this figure.

In a bizarre effort to spin the Community Services' cuts, Minister Goward told the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 10 August that "I have instructed the Director General of FACS that budget savings... should not reduce the amount or quality of services for vulnerable children and young people."

PSA members at Coniston CSC, St Marys CSC, Penrith CSC, Penrith JIRT, Lismore CSC, Fairfield CSC, Edgeworth CSC, Cessnock CSC, Parramatta CSC, Parramatta JIRT and Metro West Regional Office have all walked off the job in protest over chronic understaffing, job cuts and ever-increasing red tape.

"What we're seeing across NSW is an outpouring of frustration from Community Services workers

at having one hand tied behind their backs when dealing with children at risk and their families," said PSA General Secretary, John Cahill.

"Protracted understaffing and ongoing job cuts are leaving vulnerable children in serious danger of abuse and harm."

In a letter to the Ombudsman dated 22 August 2011, the department undertook to "recruit and train staff for funded vacant positions, aiming to achieve a full compliment of staff by January 2012."

Despite this commitment FACS instead implemented a seven-month "moratorium on the filling of all casework vacancies" and failed to renew the contracts of at least 50 temporary caseworkers across the state, exacerbating staff shortages in an already stretched system.

At a recent Community Cabinet meeting, the Minister sought to distance herself from the issue, saying "...that commitment [to fill vacancies] was given by the Director

General" and went on to claim there was "no recruitment freeze" or cuts to caseworker numbers, adding "that's a union lie."

The PSA estimates that the average vacancy rate – that is, the percentage of unfilled funded establishment positions – in CSCs is around 25% and in some offices more than 40%.

We have pointed out that opportunities exist to offer permanent employment to trained temporary staff and have received only encouraging nods and intangible promises in response.

"Put simply, the resources are not there to follow up on children at risk," said John Cahill.

"Since becoming Minister, Pru Goward has implemented a freeze on the filling of vacancies, cut nearly 200 jobs and failed to reduce the administrative burden on caseworkers."

"The Government has also abandoned an attempt to improve the KiDS computer system – as recommended by the Honourable James Wood – and there is no plan B."

"The PSA calls on Minister Goward to urgently fill all vacancies across the state, put an immediate end to job cuts and work with us to slash unnecessary red tape."

PSA members rally in support of the Kings Cross Street Team

PSA members at the Kings Cross and Central Sydney Adolescent Unit (KXCSAU) recently walked off the job in protest at the Department's inability to guarantee future funding for the highly regarded program.

KXCSAU staff joined a large contingent of PSA members at a rally outside the unit's Kings Cross headquarters.

"The Kings Cross Adolescent Unit is on the frontline of locating and removing children and young people from some of the most dangerous streets in Sydney," said PSA General Secretary, John Cahill, "These dedicated, hard-working professionals divert at risk youth away from living on the streets, help them access support services and get their lives back on track.

"For more than 25 years, the team has reached out to tens of thousands of street kids and built a strong presence and invaluable relationships in the community.

"The closure of the Kings Cross Adolescent Unit would be a sign that the Government has given up on the serious issue of youth at risk – many of who may be involved in drugs or prostitution at the Cross.

"Since becoming Minister, Pru Goward has implemented a freeze on the filling of vacancies, cut nearly 200 jobs and failed to reduce the administrative burden on caseworkers."

"I'm deeply concerned that removing a stand-alone adolescent unit at Kings Cross will leave a generation of vulnerable young people exposed to the perils of street life – their future sacrificed for budget cuts," said John Cahill.

Speaking in *The Australian* following the PSA rally, Minister Goward sought to assure staff and the community that "there are currently no plans to cut funding to the Kings Cross Adolescent team."

While we welcome the commitment, we remain concerned that services may still be cut and have sought clarification from FACS that the Minister's assurances are genuine.

Race to the bot with conditions

As mentioned in the last issue of Red Tape, the O'Farrell Government have indicated that it intends to slash a wide range of hard won workplace conditions.

The Government's application is being strenuously opposed in its entirety by the PSA.

The Government intensified their attack at a directions hearing in the Industrial Relations Commission on 27 August when it indicated that it wishes to strip back the conditions in 100 awards to bring them into line with the proposed cuts to the Conditions of Employment Award.

The next directions hearing will take place on 10 October.

The trade off of conditions for a wage increase in excess of 2.5%, which the O'Farrell Government introduced in 2011, was nothing more than a ground clearing exercise for what they are now proposing.

The object of the exercise is to rip out conditions and grind workplace flexibility down to a stump to save money.

It's that simple.

"While the O'Farrell Government have been attempting to hose down concerns about these reforms," said PSA General Secretary, John Cahill, "their intentions are brutally clear and impossible to disguise.

"Coupled with the 2.5% wage cap and ongoing job cuts, the Government continues to make a clear and quite unambiguous statement in relation to how it values public sector workers.

"How can modern quality public services possibly be delivered by a workforce that is operating under conditions from a past era?"

The proposed changes

Shift Workers

- A new definition of shift worker:

A shift worker is a person regularly rostered to perform ordinary duty outside the period 7.30am to 6.00pm (or as negotiated, including under a Clause 10 Local Arrangement), Monday to Friday, and/or on Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays for an ongoing or fixed period.

- Staff who work shifts between 7.30am and 6.00pm will no longer be defined as a shift worker and will no longer receive a 10% loading.

- Shift loadings for Monday to Friday shift workers to change:

Day – at or after 6.00am and before 12 noon – Nil

Afternoon – at or after 12 noon and before 6.00pm – 12.5%

Night – at or after 6.00pm and before 6.00am – 15%

- Reducing the recreation leave entitlement from six and seven weeks for some to a maximum of five weeks for all shift workers.

Recreation Leave

- Abolish additional recreation leave, of 5 days per year, for staff stationed indefinitely in a remote area of the state.
- Abolish annual leave loading of 17½% on the monetary value of up to 4 weeks recreation leave accrued in a leave year (up to 5 weeks for some shift workers).

Parental Leave

- New wording defining entitlement to parental leave to:
the birth of a child of the employee or a child of the employee's spouse or partner (being a child born as a result of the pregnancy of that spouse or partner).
- New definition of adoption leave to:
the adoption by the employee of a child under the age of 18 years (other than a child who has previously lived continuously with the employee for a period of at least six months or who is a child or step-child of the employee or of the employee's spouse or partner).
- The new definition would exclude long term foster carers, kinship arrangements, surrogacy arrangements.

FACS Leave

FACS Leave to be abolished.

- FACS leave family care requirements to be combined with sick leave in a new clause titled Personal/Carer's leave.
- Leave for compassionate grounds – death of a family member, leave for emergency or weather conditions are to be contained in a new clause titled Miscellaneous Leave.

Other leave, ie Recreation or LWOP, will have to be used to cover the following situations which are currently covered by FACS leave:

- unplanned or unforeseen family responsibilities including attending a child's school for an emergency reason or emergency cancellations by childcare providers
- additional FACS leave to care for a sick family member (NB: Govt proposal will mean only Personal/Carers Leave may be taken to care for a sick family member)
- emergency accommodation matters
- attendance at court to answer a charge for a criminal offence
- for local government councillors to attend meetings, conferences etc

- Attendance as a competitor in a major amateur sport (other than Olympic or Commonwealth Games) for staff members who are selected to represent Australia or the State.

Note: Olympic and Commonwealth Games competitors are currently entitled to Special Leave.

Sick Leave

- Family care requirements are to be combined with sick leave in a new clause titled Personal/Carer's Leave.

Personal/Carer's Leave entitlement:

because of a personal physical or psychological illness or injury, medical treatment and the period of recovery or rehabilitation from an illness or injury suffered by the employee (personal leave), or

to provide care and support to a member of the employee's immediate family or household who requires such care and support because of:

a personal illness or injury of the member, or

an unexpected emergency affecting the member (carer's leave).

- The entitlement amount and requirements for evidence of illness to remain the same as applies to current Sick Leave provisions.
- To be abolished is the current ability for staff on workers compensation to use any accrued and untaken Sick Leave to make up the difference between the amount of compensation payable under that Act and the staff member's ordinary rate of pay.

Miscellaneous Leave

Special leave is deleted and replaced with a new clause titled Miscellaneous Leave

Additional new subclauses below:

Miscellaneous Leave may be granted with or without pay for a purpose not provided for elsewhere in this Award, or as determined by the Director-General, from time to time.

There is no automatic entitlement to Miscellaneous Leave. Applications are considered subject to the operational requirements of the department on a case by case basis. Appropriate supporting evidence, relevant to the request, is to be provided with the application if requested.

Miscellaneous Leave will not be granted where another form of leave is more appropriate. Miscellaneous Leave without pay will not be granted until all forms of paid leave are exhausted i.e. Extended Leave and Annual Leave. All Annual Leave and Extended Leave must be taken at full pay prior to any Miscellaneous Leave without pay.

Unless otherwise specified, leave with pay under this clause will count as service for all purposes, and leave without pay under this clause will not count as service.

The Department Head may approve paid or unpaid leave for the following purposes, and with the following time limits.

"How can modern quality public services possibly be delivered by a workforce that is operating under conditions from a past era?"

Leave loading cut rips as much as \$1,000 from your pay

The O'Farrell Government has targeted annual leave loading in its attack on your working conditions.

Based on a leave entitlement of 20 days:

- If you earn \$35,000, you will lose approximately \$469.
- If you earn \$50,000 – \$670.
- If you earn \$75,000 – \$1,000.

tom cuts

The 'purposes' provided for in the proposed new Award are:

- *Jury service*
- *Witness at court – official capacity*
- *Witness at court – other than in official capacity*
- *Witness in a private capacity*
- *NAIDOC*
- *Emergency or weather conditions (from deleted FACS leave clause).*
- *Compassionate Leave – for death of family member only.*

Current Special Leave entitlements not covered by Miscellaneous Leave and not provided for elsewhere in the award:

- Return Home When Transferred to New Location.
- Return Home when Temporarily Living Away from Home.
- **Special Leave – Other Purposes** which provided that 'special leave on full pay may be granted to staff members by the Department Head for such other purposes, subject to the conditions specified in the Personnel Handbook at the time the leave is taken.'

These currently include:

- assisting as volunteers of safety organisations including in declared emergencies
- competing in Commonwealth or Olympic Games
- participating in Aboriginal rural education programs
- special leave for transferred officers who were former armed services personnel
- training and retraining for First Aid Officers
- blood and bone marrow donors
- attendance at professional conferences.

Leave for Matters Arising from Domestic Violence

Currently, Family and Community Service Leave, Sick Leave and Sick Leave to Care for a Family Member, may be used by staff members experiencing domestic violence.

Where these leave entitlements are exhausted, the Award provides for Special Leave to be granted. (Special Leave is paid leave).

The proposed new clause is:

Personal/Carers Leave entitlements may be used by staff members experiencing domestic violence however, where the leave entitlements are exhausted, The Department Head shall grant Miscellaneous Leave.

Miscellaneous Leave, as defined in the proposed Award 'may be granted with or without pay'.

Remote Areas Assistance

The following assistance for staff working in remote areas to be abolished:

- Allowance for the increased cost of living and the climatic conditions in a remote area.

- Additional recreation leave, of 5 days per year, to staff stationed indefinitely in a remote area of the state.
- Assistance to staff stationed in a remote area when travelling on Recreation Leave for the additional costs of travel.

Travelling Compensation

- Abolish the allowance for incidental expenses.
- Abolish the ability to claim for expenses incurred for part day travel.
- Abolish meal expenses for one-day journeys.
- Put the discretion for payment of allowance or actuals to the department (currently with staff member).

Allowances abolished

• **Composite Allowance**

The current Award provision applies to Rangelands Management Officers, Field Supervisors or Field Service Managers and states:

A staff member employed in one of the classifications of Rangelands Management Officers, Field Supervisors or Field Service Managers, and who is required to perform official duty in the field; and on some occasions, is required to camp and on other occasions resides in accommodation for which an allowance is payable under clause 26, Travelling Compensation of this award, may elect to be paid an all-inclusive allowance for accommodation, meals and incidental expenses incurred as a result of being required to work in the field.

• **Allowance for Living in a Remote Area**

The current Award provides for a staff member to be paid an allowance for the increased cost of living and the climatic conditions in a remote area.

• **Assistance to Staff Members Stationed in a Remote Area When Travelling on Recreation Leave**

The current Award provides for a staff member who is indefinitely stationed in a remote area of the state and proceeds on recreation leave to any place which is at least 480 kilometres by the nearest practicable route from the staff member's work location in that area, to be paid an allowance once in any period of 12 months for the additional costs of travel.

• **Room at Home Used for Office**

The current Award provides that where no Departmental office is provided in a particular location – Where it is impractical to provide an office in a particular location, staff members stationed in such a location may be required to use a spare room at their home as an office. In such cases, the Department will be responsible for providing furniture, telephone and other equipment, as required. In addition, an allowance is payable for the use of a room at home as an office.



• **Semi Official Telephones**

The current Award provides for reimbursement of expenses associated with a private telephone service installed at the residence of a staff member if the staff member is required to be contacted or is required to contact others in connection with the duties of his/her position in the Department, as and when required.

• **Flying Allowance**

The current Award provides for an allowance to be paid to staff members, other than those employed to fly aircraft, when required to work from an in-flight situation.

• **Garage and Carport Allowance**

The current Award provides for an allowance to be paid where a staff member garages a Departmental vehicle in their own garage or carport and the use of the garage or carport is considered essential by the Department Head.

• **Forage for Horses**

The current Award provides for out-of-pocket expenses for forage to be reimbursed by the Department where, in connection with the performance of official duties, a staff member is required to hand-feed a horse.

• **Meal expenses on one-day journeys including for union delegates attending meetings called by management**

The current Award provides for:

– meal allowances to be paid to staff member who is authorised by the Department Head to undertake a one-day journey on official business which does not require the staff member to obtain overnight accommodation, and for

– meal expenses for union delegates on one-day journeys to attend meetings called by workplace management.

• **Meal allowance when required to work overtime unless where less than 24 hours notice was provided.**

The current Award provides for a meal allowance to be paid by the department provided the time worked is directed overtime.

Flexible work practices

• **Local Arrangements**

A new provision to be included which allows for flex agreements negotiated in agencies maybe terminated with 3 months notice in the event of machinery of government changes.

• **Flexible Work Practices Policy and Guidelines**

Removal of the requirement for flexible working hours agreements negotiated under the Government's FWPPG to be protected by Award conditions

Underpayment and Overpayment of Salaries

A new clause proposed to be included titled Underpayment and Overpayment of Salaries

It will prescribe the following:

• **Underpayments**

If the amount paid is equal to or greater than one day's gross base pay the underpayment will be rectified within three working days.

If the amount is less than one day's gross base pay it will be rectified by no later than the next normal pay. If the employee can demonstrate that this would cause undue hardship then "every effort will be made by the employer" to rectify the underpayment within three working days.

• **Overpayments**

The employer will advise the employee of the circumstances surrounding the overpayment and the amount involved and the pay period from which the recovery of the overpayment is to commence.

The employer can deduct 10% of the employee's gross fortnightly base pay to recover cumulative overpayments without agreement. The employee can agree to increase the amount but it can only be reduced where the employee can demonstrate that undue hardship would result and the employer agrees.

One-off overpayments will be recovered in the next normal pay, except where the employee can demonstrate that undue hardship would result.

Other Changes

• Work, Health & Safety – proposed change removes requirement to agree on consultative arrangements.

• Removal of protection of existing entitlements in agencies where the provisions are better than the provisions contained in the COE Award.

• Proposal to change the term 'staff member' to 'employee' (conflicts with definitions in PSEMA).

United we will win

The following is an edited version of the opening address by President, Sue Walsh to PSA Women's Conference:



This year's conference theme is Supporting Better Public Services, and comes at a time when the NSW Government is attacking our rights at work and slashing public sector jobs and services.

Barry O'Farrell's record on the treatment of women since coming to office is also appalling.

He has referred to Labor Deputy Leader, Linda Burney as a 'hooker', and compared Carmel Tebbutt to a 'whining puppy'.

The PSA deplores the use of sexist comments in any workplace particularly from a state Premier.

However, Mr O'Farrell's attacks on women are not confined to Parliament.

He has also:

- removed the requirement that 50 percent of all new appointments to Government boards and committees be women
- forced seven senior women out of the NSW public service
- undermined the role of the Office for Women's Policy by moving it from the Department of Premier and Cabinet to the Department of Family and Community Services
- failed to fund equal pay for social and community service workers, the majority of who are women.

Conditions under attack

On 6 June 2012, the NSW Government filed an application with the Industrial Relations Commission for a new Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award.

The application proposes to radically cut many conditions of employment that the PSA has won for its members over the years.

The Government's proposals will only make it more difficult for women, those with children and other carers responsibilities

to pursue a career in the NSW public service.

Other conditions of employment the Government wants to cut include:

- penalty payments for shift workers
- allowances for workers in remote locations
- the ability to work from home
- leave loading; and
- Family and Community Services Leave.

The Government is also proposing that local flexible working arrangements no longer be subject to the award.

The PSA has not and will not agree to this outrageous attack on your rights at work.

I would like to briefly remind you of some of the other attacks by the O'Farrell Government on the NSW public sector:

Public sector salary cap – 2.5%

– On 5 September, a full bench of the High Court of Australia heard the PSA's challenge to the O'Farrell Government's cap on public sector pay rises. The hearing went for a full day.

The Court adjourned and we now await their decision.

Managing excess employees

– The O'Farrell Government abolished the 'No Forced Redundancy' policy.

The PSA successfully ran a case against the policy applying to those officers who were excess prior to 1 August 2011.

However, the Government have changed the legislation to prevent us running a further case.

Job cuts – In 2011 the Government announced 5,000 public sector job cuts. A further 10,000 cuts were announced in the 2012 budget.

Labour expense cap 1.2% – The labour expense cap places a limit on the total of employee related and contractor expenses that can be incurred in any year. This is in addition to the efficiency dividend.

Power privatisation – The Government passed legislation in May 2012 to privatise the power generators. Due to a strong union campaign, power workers' conditions were protected. Strong union opposition also saw the Government back away from privatising the distribution sector.

Workers compensation – The Government could have increased premiums but chose to cut benefits to injured workers instead.

Fines for unions – The Industrial Relations Amendment (Dispute Orders) Bill 2012 will see fines for unions who do not comply with IRC orders increased from \$10,000 a day to over \$100,000 a day.

'Competitive' unionism – The Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Representation) Bill 2012 will introduce competitive unionism and facilitate the introduction of boss' unions.

Transfer of TAFE staff – TAFE staff have been transferred to the federal system without any consultation.

Unions are concerned this move is the first stage of the Government privatising TAFE.

Local Schools Local Decisions

– Jobs are to be cut from state and regional offices and the staffing formula relied upon for equitable distribution of funds across public schools dismantled.

The transfer system which delivers experienced staff to schools and offers job security will be trashed.

Permanent jobs in schools could be replaced by temporary or casual staff at the principal's discretion.

The majority of SAS Staff are women.

Every Student, Every School – has reduced funding to students with disabilities and cut hours/jobs for School Learning Support Officers.

DOCS outsourcing – The Government plans to transfer an additional \$123 million from the Community Services' budget to

fund a private sector take over of out-of-home (foster care) services.

One Stop Shops – 18 shopfronts will be operational by the middle of next year with approximately 100 in place by 2017.

I would like to make it very, very clear that the PSA has not taken any of these attacks lying down.

We have been vigorously opposing the Government's agenda in the Industrial Relations Commission, the High Court, workplaces and the community. We will continue to fight.

But while the Government continues these unfair attacks on public sector workers, the union movement has also been suffering reputational damage due to the scandal-ridden HSU.

I want to take this opportunity to assure you that the PSA is very serious about its corporate governance.

Monthly financial reports are prepared by our professionally qualified CFO and presented to Central Council.

The CFO and his staff also prepare annual statements and budgets for sections operating within the PSA.

I am proud to say that through sound financial management, the Association's assets now stand at over \$53 million dollars.

This is an outstanding position given that in the 1990s delegates agreed to reduce their suso entitlements to help the Association's cash flow.

Staff salaries are set by Central Council. No staff member or official can set their own salary. Apart from Regional Organisers (of which there are six) no PSA official or staff member is given a car or any other fringe benefit.

In addition, the PSA does not issue credit cards. No official or staff member in the PSA is given a PSA credit card.

I am proud to say that through sound financial management, the Association's assets now stand at over \$53 million dollars.

The PSA also has a strict policy on claiming reimbursement for expenses.

We recently changed the method for delegates to claim suso for greater transparency and accountability.

And when building renovations and the like are required, tenders are called and examined so as to provide the best value for the PSA.

The PSA has always striven to meet high standards with members' money.

It is grossly unfair that allegations concerning the HSU have been used in the public arena to cast a shadow over PSA officials, staff and delegates.

While unions have been sidetracked dealing with this smear campaign, Barry O'Farrell has been continuing his attacks. But we are taking a strong stand.

Accordingly I move the following motion:

"PSA Women's Conference condemns the proposed attacks on our working conditions by the O'Farrell Government. Our conditions of employment have been fought and won by the PSA and the union movement over the decades to improve the working lives of all Australians, not just NSW public servants.

Women's Conference supports the PSA in all its efforts to preserve our working conditions. Particularly we call on the NSW Government to immediately withdraw its application for a new Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission."

Women and public sector cuts



Dr Marian Baird
Professor of Employment Relations and Director of the Women and Work Research Group, University of Sydney Business School



Let me begin by saying quite explicitly that the significance of women to the economy and to society is often overlooked.

Women provide nearly 50 percent of the workforce and the majority of the unpaid caring workforce. In NSW, women's workforce participation rates have steadily increased to a rate of 57 percent in February 2012.

Women are increasingly called upon to enter the paid labour market yet at the same time demands for care – elder and child care – are increasing.

For example, according to the Government's own publication, *Women in NSW*, at present women with dependent children and who work full-time undertake an extra 40 hours per week on average in unpaid work.

This is an equation that is unsustainable – unless we provide adequate support and flexibility within the system, so that women, and to an increasing degree men, can do the work and care that is needed to sustain our communities.

With that in mind I would like to reflect on the changes that I understand to be before you.

There are some very significant changes to the NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2009 being proposed by the Government.

I wish to concentrate on those I see as most obviously having a disproportionately negative effect on women.

These are:

- the changes to sick leave and leave to care for family members, to re-frame this as personal carers leave, incorporating the removal of family and community services leave
- the changes to parental leave
- the abolition of the specific domestic violence leave clause
- removing the clause allowing room at home to be used for office, and

- the abolition of annual leave loading and the remote area leave and loading changes.

For many years I have been concerned that rolling sick leave and personal leave into one is not necessarily of benefit to women.

Although regarded as a modern approach, it does mean that women may avoid using personal carers leave to look after themselves, in order to save it to look after their children or other family members.

By the same reasoning, the removal of 2.5 days FACS leave proposed by the Government not only reduces the total amount of paid leave available to female workers, it once again conflates the time we need to care for others with the time we need to care for ourselves.

We all know that women provide the majority of care in our communities, and the research supports this, and further, that as women have contributed more and more time in paid work (and are being asked to do even more) the time spent on themselves has fallen.

Women have almost no 'free' or uncommitted time, at all in their lives.

The idea of the 8-hour day campaign – 8 hours 'work', 8 hours 'play' and 8 hours 'rest' – is so far from our normal lives as to be totally unbelievable. Let's not allow employers to make it any worse!

Australian women fought a very long campaign to receive 18 weeks paid maternity leave and the Federal Government is to be commended for introducing this. But to now see at the state level associated rights to maternity and parental leave being eroded is a terrible shock!

To narrow the coverage and exclude from parental leave entitlements those staff who are long term foster carers or have parental orders through surrogacy arrangements or who have care of children through kinship arrangements is

detrimental not only to women as carers but potentially also to the children in their care.

On another domestic front – it is sad but true to recognise that domestic and family violence remains a distressing aspect of the lives of many women in NSW.

To see then, that the state Government is downgrading the right to domestic violence leave, reducing its status as a separate right and rolling it into miscellaneous leave, to be granted at the discretion of the supervisor and without the guarantee of paid leave, is a very backward step for women, potentially endangering their lives.

Abolishing conditions for employees working from home or in remote areas will also differentially impact women.

Such flexibility to work from home or to access additional leave for family care purposes will more likely negatively impact the lives of women, again, because it is women who tend to do these roles more than men.

Even those conditions that may not be recognized as gender sensitive, will more adversely affect women if they are removed.

For instance, the abolition of annual leave loading and additional week's leave for those in remote areas will, in all likelihood, detrimentally impact on women more than men.

We know from our research that women use their annual leave for many things other than a holiday for themselves! They use it when they have babies to add to their maternity leave, they use it to look after children in school holidays, they use it to take children to hospitals and doctors, and this is especially important if they live in remote areas.

To remove this further increases women's inability to balance work and family. And in addition, removing leave loading reduces their total annual income. We already know there is a difference between men's and women's

average earnings in the public sector – and this will exacerbate the lower level of women's pay overall.

Unfortunately it doesn't stop there. There will be flow on consequences of these changes.

While perhaps contained for the moment to a 'mere 80,000' employees, approximately 60 percent of whom will be women, the message is clear: there is to be a winding back, a removal of conditions of employment, for public sector employees.

There are 240,000 women employed in the NSW public sector out of a total of just over 390,000 employees. Whichever way you look at the information, whether clause by clause, or potential employees affected, it is clear that women will share a disproportionate burden of the

changes being introduced by the state Government.

In the UK the effects of budget changes on women are being closely monitored. We recently had Professor Diane Elson, an eminent economist from the UK, visit the University of Sydney. She and her colleagues undertook a gender analysis of the 'austerity measures' and changes to welfare introduced by the UK conservative government. The results showed that, surprise, surprise, women will be negatively impacted most – with single mothers hardest hit. Further, that in the UK, women are contributing 74 percent and men 26 percent to the budget savings being introduced!

Unless the cuts to employment conditions in NSW are prevented, women will bear more and more of the pain, and share less and less in the gains of the economy.

And on the panel...



Conference panellists for a discussion on insecure jobs in the public sector: Nicole Jess (left) and Anne Attwater (below)



Majority vote to support new TAFE agreement

The ballot for the TAFE Commission of NSW Administrative, Support and Related Employees Enterprise Agreement 2012 closed on 9 September.

3038 out of 6388 staff or 47.6% voted. The result was:

- **2825 out of 3038 staff (or 92.99%) voted yes**
- **213 out of 3038 staff (or 7.01%) voted no.**

Now the agreement has been endorsed by the majority of staff that voted, it needs to be lodged with Fair Work Australia (FWA) for approval within 14 days.

TAFE will make the application to FWA and include a copy of the agreement signed by TAFE and the unions.

At the same time, the CPSU will lodge a declaration supporting the approval of the agreement and will seek to be covered by it.

To approve the agreement FWA must be satisfied that the following requirements have been met:

- the pre-approval process was followed
- the employer and employees genuinely agreed to make the agreement

- each employee covered by the agreement is 'better off overall' under its terms compared to the relevant modern award
- the terms of the agreement do not undercut the NES.

FWA must also be satisfied that approving the agreement would not be inconsistent with good faith bargaining, and that it does not contain any prohibited clauses.

Seven days after the agreement has been approved by FWA, it comes into operation.

The agreement will expire on 30 June 2013.

But it continues in operation after that date until it is either terminated according to the provisions in the Act, or is replaced by a new enterprise agreement.

The CPSU will be covered by the agreement and will be able to enforce its terms on behalf of members of the CPSU.

Thanks to the CPSU Bargaining Team for their good work in representing the interests of staff.

and then...TAFE cuts to hit jobs, skills, regional areas

Drastic cuts announced to NSW's TAFE system on 11 September will see skill levels in the state decline and disproportionately affect students in regional areas.

The O'Farrell Government announced that 800 jobs will be cut while course fees will be increased under a savage attack on the education budget.

The cuts will affect all 10 TAFE Institutes across NSW.

"You can't cut this many jobs and resources out of TAFE without affecting vocational education standards in NSW," said CPSU SPSF Group State Secretary John Cahill.

"TAFE has been the gold standard in NSW vocational education and training for

generations – meeting the needs of students and industry.

"But the drastic staff cuts and the axing of some specialist courses will leave students with less support and fewer options.

"Students in regional areas will be particularly hard hit. They rely on TAFE for accessible, high-quality skills training.

"Regional economies will also be affected as jobs are cut from the local TAFE.

www.ourtafe.org.au

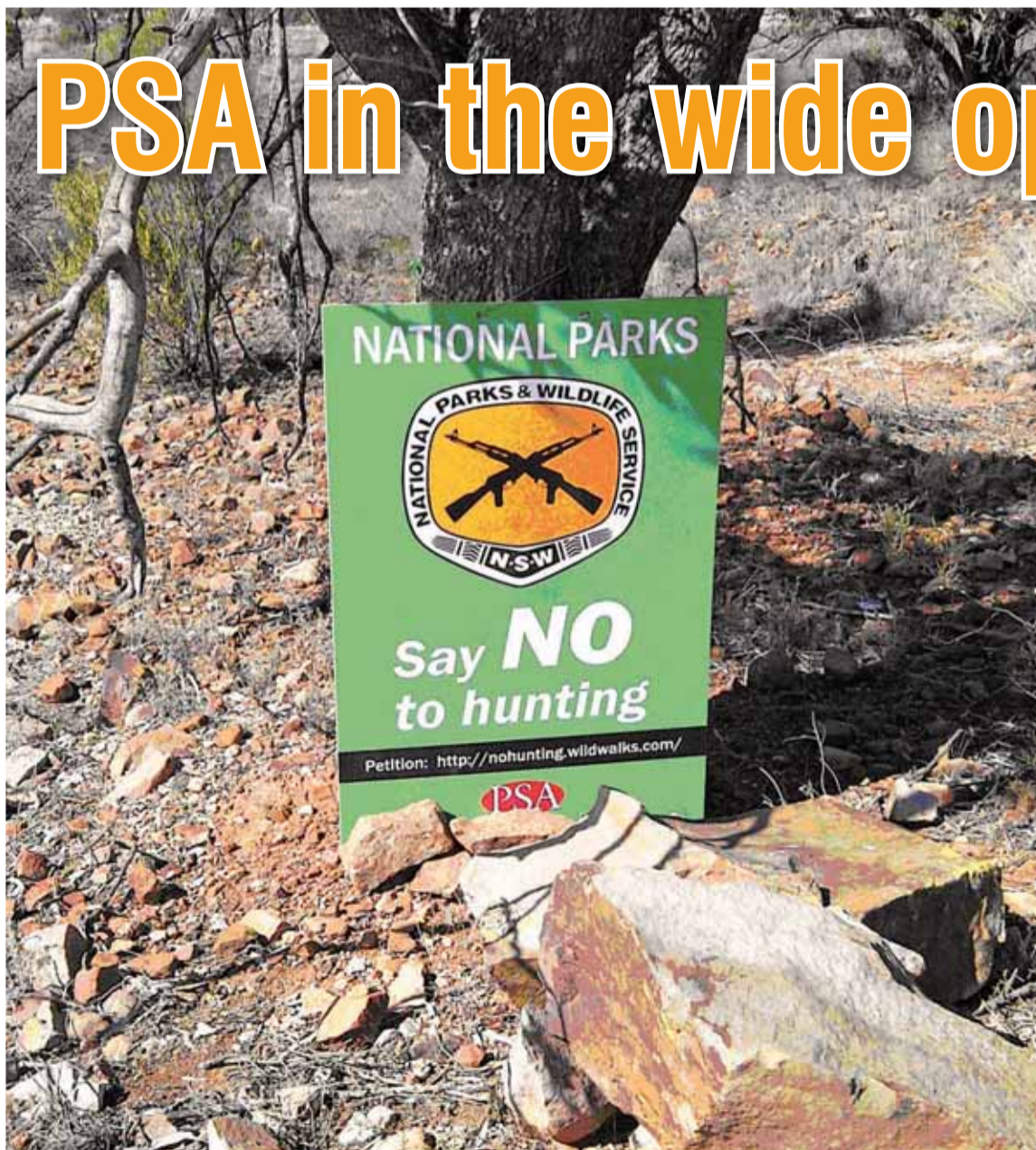
The cuts and the fee increase will:

- **increase workloads and decrease job security**
- **damage the reputation of TAFE NSW**
- **reduce learning support services**
- **undermine education outcomes**
- **limit the ability of TAFE to respond to the skills shortages in NSW**
- **increase barriers to participation for disadvantaged students**

The CPSU/PSA has started a campaign to Save Our TAFE and we would like your support.

Sign the online petition to Save Our TAFE at www.chn.ge/Ogef5

PSA in the wide open spaces



PSA Industrial Officer, Steve Caslick went bush in August for a week-long tour of outback NSW.

The primary purposes of the trip were to meet PSA members in remote areas of the state, push the 'No Shooting in National Parks' campaign and wherever possible hang 'No Hunting' signage throughout the various national parks.

During the week Steve drove over two and a half thousand kilometres and visited a number of parks including Broken Hill, Tibooburra, White Cliffs, Wilcannia, Cobar and Bourke as well as Kinchega, Paroo-Darling, and Gundabooka.

"Whilst I unfortunately didn't meet up with many staff due to the hazard reduction burn off operation that was in progress, the members I did spend some time with were very positive, aware of the importance of their duties and had a clear love of the NSW outback," said Steve.

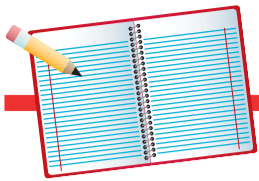
"The impact of the O'Farrell Government's attack on the public sector however could

hardly be more sharply felt than in these regional areas."

"Tibooburra, for example has a school, a police station, national parks and a Livestock, Health and Pest Authority office – all jobs which feed into the local economy and township of 120 people. A loss of even a few positions would have a huge local impact.

"And the O'Farrell Government's decision to allow shooting in national parks simply to ensure that their laws for the sell off of the power industry cleared Parliament have – apart from making a journey into these wonderful retreats a perilous exercise – also placed targets on the kangaroos, emus, wedge tailed eagles, echidnas and shingleback and frilled neck lizards whose paths I crossed during my trip.

"I would like to thank Jodi at Tibooburra, Anne at White Cliffs, Harry at Wilcannia and Carolyn at Broken Hill for the information on the national parks, advice on road conditions, phone calls to make sure I made it to the next town in one piece and the insights into how indigenous communities around Wilcannia preserve the land."



High tea performance for SAS Staff recognition week



Campbelltown Performing Arts High School Administrative and Support Staff were invited to a high tea by the principal, Stacey Quince on 3 September to mark this year's SAS Staff Recognition week.

"SAS staff were waited on by hospitality students who took orders for lattes, cappuccinos and hot chocolates and various varieties of tea, all under the guidance of Rebecca Duryea, TAS Teacher," said School Administration Officer, Helen McGuigan.

"The table was laden with finger sandwiches, mini quiche,

florentines, chocolate dipped strawberries and various cakes and muffins.

"It was lovely to be recognised for the hard work we do and to be spoiled with such a treat.

"Various students and teachers volunteered to work in the front office to allow the staff time away to enjoy the tea.



"Thank you from all the SAS Staff at CPAHS to the hospitality students as well as teachers, Rebecca Duryea and Mark McCluskey and everyone else who was involved in making SAS Recognition Week so special."

Small voice of reason on cuts & gunshots in national parks

Dear Ms Robyn Parker, Environment Minister

I am a 10-year-old girl from Leichhardt Public School and my name is Kathryn Avieson.

I don't pay attention to the news but in the morning my parents discuss it. One morning I heard my dad say something about hunters in national parks and I took a sudden interest. I am not the only one, I am sure, that is concerned about the new law that cuts 350 jobs and lets hunters into national parks unsupervised.

I am not unprepared because this is a topic I feel very strongly about and my friends, neighbours and country share the same opinion.

Firstly, we have been preserving these beautiful, enchanting national parks and now you leave all that hard work to go to waste. We have had law after law to protect these working attractions and now it takes you one go to destroy these brilliant places.

Furthermore, by introducing hunters and getting rid of rangers you are putting so many of our amazing creatures at risk.

I did a project on the Greater Bilby once and I was very, very surprised at how endangered our animals are. Many animals just like the Greater Bilby depend on national parks to stay alive, so with what you've done they don't stand a chance.

Next, what about the public? What happens to the nice, family picnics in the national parks? No-one will go because of the fear of being shot.

One of the things us kids would like to do in our school holidays or on the weekends with our families is go out to the national parks and stroll around freely, the perfect rare change from school. But now we can't because we don't want to get shot.

Lastly, what is the point of national parks if the fauna in them are now going to be shot and the flora are going to be trampled by the heavy boots of hunters? I think that national parks are to protect, preserve and defend fauna and flora, but now that has been forgotten and national parks are hunting grounds.

In conclusion, the community thinks you have made a mistake.

Sincerely yours,

Kathryn Avieson

PSA calls on O'Farrell Government to back asbestos enquiry

A commitment by Federal Minister for Workplace Relations, Bill Shorten on 4 September to support the national asbestos review and establish an agency to progress the issue should be supported by the O'Farrell Government.

Amongst the recommendations in the Asbestos Management Review report was a commitment to establish a community education program, a national website for information on asbestos, improved accessible and affordable waste management processes and a plan to remove asbestos from all government and commercial buildings by 2030.

The ILO estimates that a person dies of asbestos related disease every five seconds somewhere in the world and

that in Australia more than 2000 people die each year from exposure to this fibre.

"This report sets out what needs to be done to tackle the issue of asbestos on behalf of all workers and members of the community," said PSA General Secretary, John Cahill.

"It has been estimated that over 1000 of our schools and TAFE colleges contain asbestos as do a number of police stations, child protection, disability, health and sporting facilities."

"It is not just an issue for government workers but for every student, patient and member of our community who interacts with these services."

"We call on Barry O'Farrell to make the same commitment on this issue as the Federal Government.

"We also call upon the NSW Government to improve the health and safety of every worker and citizen in NSW by establishing a plan to remove all asbestos from NSW Government buildings."

For more information on the report go to www.deewr.gov.au/WorkplaceRelations/Policies/AMR/Pages/AMRReport.aspx

If you have a question regarding asbestos in your workplace contact whs@psa.asn.au.

W.G. McNally Jones Staff LAWYERS



Proud to be the lawyers for the PSA

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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.

Beware changes to concessional super caps from 1 July 2012

A big change that will affect many members is the concessional contribution cap (CCC) which for people over 50 has been halved from \$50,000 to \$25,000 effective from 1 July 2012.

History of CCCs

When CCCs were introduced in 2007, the cap for most people was \$50,000.

A grandfather arrangement was put in place for those over 50 which allowed \$100,000 to be contributed to their superannuation accounts.

Both CCCs were then halved to \$25,000 and \$50,000 respectively.

Now from 1 July 2012, all members have a CCC of \$25,000.

ALL members should be aware that the concessional contribution limit for all is now \$25,000.

What are concessional contributions?

There are caps on the amount you can contribute to superannuation each financial year that are taxed at 15%.

If you contribute more than these caps you may have to pay an extra penalty tax.

Superannuation concessional contributions include:

- employer contributions including Superannuation Guarantee (SG) – currently at 9%

- salary sacrifice
- notional contributions from your employer for SSS and SASS members
- employer paid insurance premiums
- personal contributions for which you claim a tax deduction.

The total of all of these amounts cannot be more than \$25,000. (However, SSS and SASS members have some protection from the caps as detailed in Fact Sheet No. 23 for SSS and 16 for SASS which are available from www.statesuper.nsw.gov.au).

What if you exceed your CCC?

Any CCCs above the annual limit of \$25,000 will be taxed at the highest marginal rate of 46.5% including the Medicare levy which means you will be paying a penalty tax of 31.5 cents in the dollar.

The ATO has introduced a provision for those who breach the cap for the first time since the 2011/2012 financial year.

If the excess contribution is \$10,000 or less, this measure allows that excess to be taken out of the super fund and assessed

at the marginal tax rate rather than incurring the excess contribution rate.

Members can still make after tax contributions to super which are called non-concessional contributions of \$150,000 per year.

By bringing two years contributions forward – this year's \$150,000 plus the next two years (\$300,000) – members can contribute \$450,000 to super if aged under 65.

If you are concerned about the CCC or think you may breach or have breached your CCC limit this year you should seek assistance from State Super Financial Service.

Visit www.ssfs.com.au and click on the 'Contribution Caps are Changing' link or call the Client Services team on **1800 620 305** which is a free service.

Ron Davis
Full-time Board Member
SAS Trustee Corporation

Pre-retirement seminars, October – December 2012

For **SSS & SASS** members we are conducting these seminars:

Sydney	SSS	16 October	9:00am – 1:00pm
Sydney	SASS	30 October	9:00am – 1:00pm
Albury	SSS/SASS	7 November	4:30pm – 8:30pm
Deniliquin	SSS/SASS	8 November	4:30pm – 8:30pm
Perth	SASS	12 November	4:30pm – 8:30pm
Perth	SSS	13 November	4:30pm – 8:30pm
Parramatta	SASS	19 November	4:30pm – 8:30pm
Parramatta	SSS	20 November	4:30pm – 8:30pm
Sydney	SASS	3 December	9:00am – 1:00pm
Sydney	SSS	6 December	9:00am – 1:00pm

We're also conducting **Understanding Your Super** seminars for SASS members:

Perth	SASS	14 November	5:30pm – 7:45pm
Parramatta	SASS	27 November	5:30pm – 7:45pm

If you would like to book for a seminar please ring **(02) 9238 5931** or email stcseminars@statesuper.nsw.gov.au. It's important you advise in your email which scheme you're in when making a booking and which seminar you would like to attend.

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Branch Vice President

People do matter – survey

Between July and August 2012, the Public Service Commission conducted a survey of NSW public sector workers called *People Matter*.

It was a refreshing title after a year and a half of cuts and jobs losses.

Seeking opinions under those same circumstances was also something of a brave move.

It is intended that the data provide "an overall perspective" and be used in the inaugural State of the NSW Public Sector Report 2012.

The PSA sought – and received – assurances from the Public Service Commission that the confidentiality of respondents would be protected.

The correspondence from the Commission to the PSA in relation to this can be viewed at www.psa.labor.net.au/news/files/PSC%20-%20Dep%20Commissioner%20to%20PSA%20.pdf

Participation was not compulsory but if you didn't take part – and yes, some cynicism is perfectly understandable – you actually missed an opportunity to be heard and provide feedback direct to the source on the Government's actions to date.

What will be interesting will be the manner in which the Government chooses to handle the results when they become available.

Will they, for example, publish negative feedback and findings then amend their agenda to remedy any across the board grievances?

Or will they cherry pick any positive material that fits with their overall narrative?

PSA hits Facebook & Twitter

Members can now follow the PSA on Facebook and Twitter.



The Facebook page is Public Service Association of NSW.



On Twitter follow the PSA @psansw and join the conversation #psansw.



Switched on

Power industry delegates attended a training session at PSA House in Sydney on 6 and 7 September.

Letters

Thanks PSA South West Region

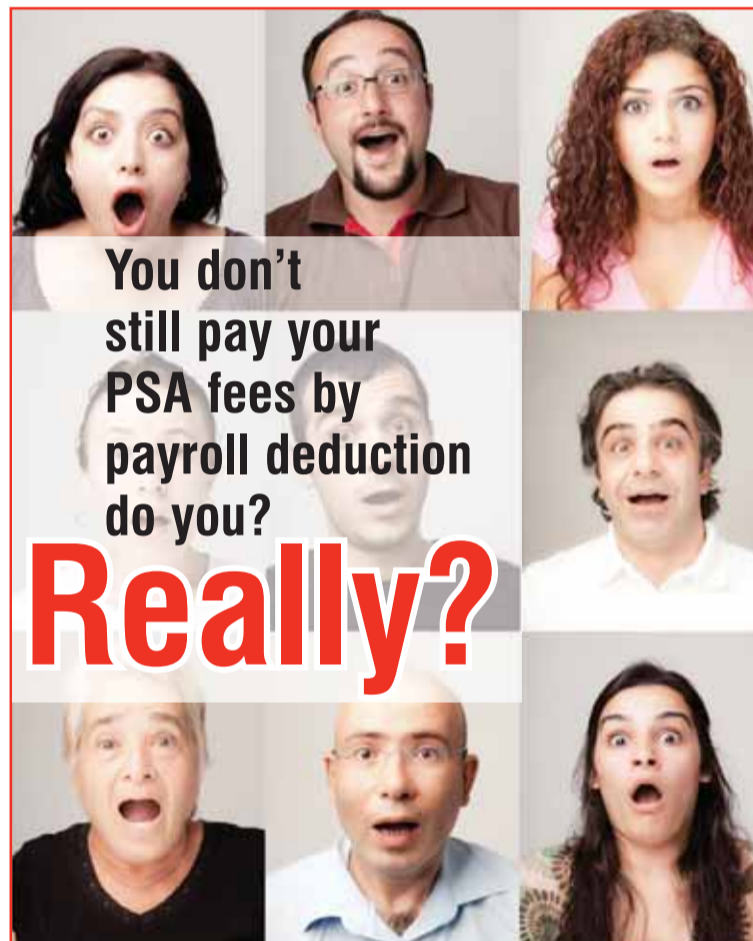
I just wanted to say a huge thank you to the PSA South West Region for all the support since September 2006.

I have been above establishment from Shepherds Park ETU since September 2006 and had little success in finding a suitable position as an Aboriginal Education Officer, which had me move around to different schools in Wagga Wagga.

Earlier this year I decided to apply for a transfer to Mount Austin Public School as I knew there was going to be an AEO position free.

On 6 June 2012, I was contacted to say that I was successful at the interview for the position of AEO at Mount Austin Public School.

Sean Bremer



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 membership@psa.asn.au.

RedTape

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