

25 September 2017

## Be bold for change – Women’s Conference 2017

The PSA’s 2017 Women’s Conference was held in September at PSA House Sydney.

The conference was a major success with delegates from across all departments, agencies and organisations. More than 150 women activists attended, making it the biggest Women’s Conference in the past few years. Seventy women who had never attended conference before came along, bringing fresh ideas, experiences and energy to the union. Women across the PSA/CPSU NSW felt invigorated and inspired by speakers and, importantly, other members. Ultimately the conference was about connecting women across NSW to fight for better working conditions and to stop the attacks on public services.

The Conference had three keynote speakers. Sally McManus, the first female Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions spoke about why we need to change the rules. Every time unions achieve a win, the rules are changed. Legislation and policy is stacked against working people and we now have a system which heavily favours the employer. This has led to an unfair and inequitable system where income inequality continues to accelerate.

Emma Maiden, Assistant General Secretary of Unions NSW led a panel discussion on flexible working conditions. She outlined the reasons flexible working practices create more effective workplaces, where employees feel more satisfied with their work and work more productively. Workers should work to live not live to work.

Jim Stanford, economist with the Centre for Future Work, outlined the vital role public services play in the NSW economy and gender equity. He challenged the myth that the private sector is more effective at delivering services. When it comes to growing the economy, dollar-for-dollar, investing in public services far outstrips any kind of private sector investment.

These speakers helped to present the bigger picture of what we as unionists want to see changed. Better working conditions and secure employment for members will lead to a more equitable society, with services that are accessible to all.

Receiving member responses was the most valuable part of the conference. Your input will drive the PSA’s upcoming Flexible Work and Change the Rules campaigns.

The PSA’s magazine, *Red Tape*, will feature a full report on Women’s Conference. If you are interested in becoming more involved with women-specific industrial issues, a call for nominations for the new Women’s Council will also be in the next *Red Tape*.

Not everyone who attended conference has yet filled out our feedback form. We would love to hear from you. You can send your responses through [HERE](#).

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/wconf2017eval>

Thank you for your support and participation. With you, the PSA will be BOLD FOR CHANGE.

**Kylie McKelvie, PSA President**

