

Hidden razor gang in the Budget

I am writing to give you a brief summary of the State Budget and how it affects you.

You may have noticed the PSA has been talking to the media on the budget.

Whilst the Association welcomes new paramedics, new teachers, new nurses and police; the Berejiklian Government has not highlighted the real pain behind this budget. These new positions come without additional support staff and at the expense of the staff who support frontline workers.

Most of these increases are nothing compared to what our state needs or the cuts applied by this government in the past. For example the government has announced a 253 increase in TAFE teachers. Welcome news; but it does not make up for the nearly 6000 workers cut from TAFE since the Liberal/National Coalition came to office. The people and businesses of NSW need the Government to restore TAFE.

Similarly, the extra 100 Child Protection workers are welcome, but in no way alleviate the immense workloads experienced by existing employees today and every day. And it does not make up for the large numbers of child protection workers off work due to burnout and bullying.

Likewise, the handful of new schools planned barely touches the sides with the estimated 213 new schools NSW will need in the next eight years, as pointed out by the Grattan Institute, with population pressures causing a demountable explosion across Sydney and the regions.

Apart from the headline cash give-aways and hampers, there is a much darker side to the NSW Budget than its failure to plan.

This is the expected \$6 billion in efficiency dividends applied to government agencies over the next four years, with the efficiency dividend being raised again from two to three per cent. With 390,000 people working for the public service, this efficiency dividend has the potential to cut thousands of jobs from our workplaces. This blunt instrument is highly destructive for public servants and the services we deliver to the community, as the dividend is often higher on the “non-frontline” workforce if the agency has a significant amount of “frontline” workers.

An example is NSW Police, where approximately 4,000 civilian officers support sworn officers with counter work, analysts, forensics, special constables, communications, and a range of other services. Cut these services and so-called “frontline” police will have to do lot of this work themselves.

The same problem occurs in schools, where inadequate support means education quality will decline as teachers are burdened with additional administrative work.

The sad part of this efficiency dividend is that it pits workers against other workers. There is no clear definition of what a ‘frontline worker’ is, and no directive from the Government on how the cuts are to be achieved. The Government cannot be associated then with the cuts they make.



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I am committed as your PSA General Secretary to fight these cuts, and the best way we can do that is to speak to our politicians about what this means in your workplace and what the cuts have meant for services to the public.

It does not need to be all cuts and doom. In April, after significant warnings to the Government that staffing levels were unsafe in our gaols, correctional officers across the state united against the cuts and ceased work.

This has seen a re-examination of the cuts to prisons and significant gains to safety critical staffing.

Looking at the fine detail, this election budget is one of the worst I have witnessed. We need to work together to maintain our public sector and join the union's campaign to fight for our jobs.

Yours faithfully,

Stewart Little
General Secretary

