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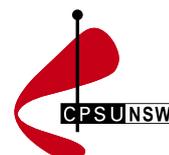
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From the General Secretary **Stewart Little**

ATTACKS ON EDUCATION HURT US ALL

The post-COVID world needs a better education system, not more outsourcing and budget cuts.

OF ALL the cuts to public services the people of our state endure, pulling money and jobs out of education is possibly the most callous.

Long seen as an investment in a better society, education has been transformed into yet another business by a government that knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

The recent moves to sell the Scone TAFE campus (see story right) shows the Government sees the campus as a real estate opportunity rather than a place that has launched countless careers in a rewarding, well-paid industry.

The debacle in universities has proven the folly of turning halls of learning into an export market akin to the trade in coal or iron ore.

Even in our schools it was only the initiative of the PSA that meant support and administrative staff were able to earn a wage commensurate with the vital role they play in an inclusive education system.

This is about more than just our members; it is about society in general. A better-educated society is one with fewer convicted felons in prisons and fewer people shut out of the job market. It is one that cherishes ideas rather than just business outcomes. It is one that sits at the top of good tables and at the bottom of bad ones.

Australia's comparatively strong position in the wake of COVID-19 should not lull us into a false sense of security. We face huge challenges rebuilding an economy devastated by the disease and the resulting shutdowns. China's position at the centre of our export markets is in peril and Australia is at risk of becoming a global climate pariah as other countries show a firmer commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

All these challenges can be faced with a brighter, better-educated society – one that values the people involved in learning at all stages, from a support person helping someone with a learning disorder keep up with their peers, through to TAFE and university staff enabling students to learn in a well-supported, properly maintained environment.

LIKE OUR SCHOOLS AND TAFE COLLEGES, THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM WAS DESIGNED FOR EDUCATION, NOT AS A SOURCE OF EXPORT REVENUE

Our schools staff have a much-deserved pay rise, now they need permanent positions and a safer place to work.

CPSU NSW members in TAFE need protection from job cuts and campus closures. NSW has long boasted it has the world's best vocational training system, yet nearly every decision from Macquarie Street seems to favour cut-price

commercial providers. Would you entrust your house to a tradesperson who trained in a course designed to run as fast as possible for the biggest profit, or one who went through the tried-and-tested TAFE system?

Universities face possibly the biggest challenge of all. COVID-19 and Canberra's acrimonious spat with Beijing has changed their business model for years to come. The export dollars from overseas students may never return to the heady days of recent years. Instead, these places can be taken by local students if the commitment and the funding are there.

Governments, both state and federal, simply have to look at investing more money in higher education. Rebuilding an economy devastated by a pandemic will be hard enough. Rebuilding it in a sustainable, low-carbon manner will be even tougher. But with a well-funded university system open to a larger number of Australian school graduates, anything is possible.

As with our schools and TAFE colleges, the university system was designed for education, not as a source of export revenue. It may have taken a global pandemic for our ruling class to wake up to that. ■



CPSU NSW SLAMS SCONE TAFE SELL-OFF

Students can't learn equestrian skills on a computer.

THE ADVERTISEMENT from the real estate spruiker says it all: "An excellent opportunity exists to acquire a 17.9-hectare site in the Horse Capital of Australia, Scone."

You couldn't ask for a better location. The property is lush, bucolic, surrounded by rural estates and equine establishments, opposite Scone Airport and adjacent to the Hunter Valley Equine Research Centre. The current owners have spent millions improving the property, including expansive stables, an animal enclosure, hay shed and an arena. There is even a tenant willing to pay \$50,000 a year in rent!

So what's the catch?

Look past the cheesy real estate copy and you will see the sale is part of a grubby plan to gut and privatise NSW's great vocational education system.

The ad is for the sale of Scone's state-of-the-art TAFE campus for less than the Government paid for it. TAFE will lease the property for up to two years before a new private owner takes over.

Stewart Little, State Branch Secretary of the CPSU NSW, condemned the decision and the impact it will have on the job prospects of local residents.

"The NSW Government should be investing in the Scone TAFE and the amazing rural and equine courses it offers, not selling the campus to a private operator," he said. "This sale is a massive blow to the people of Scone and the Upper Hunter as they desperately try to recover from an economic downturn."

The advert reveals the sale is caused by the 2019 opening of a digital-style education facility, known as a Connected Learning Centre (CLC). The CLC is housed in a small building in Scone's main street and offers mainly online courses with limited access to face-to-face teaching. There are currently 14 CLCs operating in NSW and the Government has provided no guarantees other TAFEs won't be closed now the CLCs are operational.



Mr Little dismissed the idea the CLC could replace the quality of education offered at the Scone campus. "The CLC is designed to teach skills like real estate services and barista coffee preparation," he said. "It can't provide the practical experience in horse breeding and animal handling needed to prepare students for jobs in the multi-billion-dollar equine industry. Watching a video of a horse is no replacement for hands-on experience with a live animal.

"Youth unemployment in the Upper Hunter is nearly 18 per cent, so selling off this TAFE campus is only going to make the situation worse."

The equine-focused TAFE is a key reason why Scone is known as the "Horse Capital of Australia". TAFE graduates support the largest equine veterinary practice in the southern hemisphere, an Equine Research Centre, more than 70

stud farms and a world-class thoroughbred breeding and racing industry.

The sale comes despite a 2016 promise by the Upper Hunter MP Michael Johnsen that the Scone TAFE campus would not close. Mr Johnsen now publicly supports the sale and endorses a private operator taking over the site once TAFE has been displaced.

"I have no objection to this and I strongly believe the facility should remain as a local educational place for equine and agricultural courses, delivered by a registered training organisation," said Mr Johnsen on a statement published on his website.

The TAFE system has been battered by NSW Government cuts with 6000 teachers and support staff sacked since the Coalition won office in 2011, with the public system forced to compete against cut-price private operators. ■



From the President **Kylie McKelvie**

WHAT PUBLIC SERVICES MEAN TO OUR STATE

Public service jobs are not only important to our members, but to the communities in which they live.

WORKING in the NSW public service, I know how important wages and conditions are to our members. However, when these conditions are attacked – as we have seen with the recent paltry pay rise handed grudgingly to most of our members – it is not just the wage

earners and their immediate families who suffer.

The people of NSW, regardless of where they work, suffer when the public service is attacked. For local businesses, a pay cut, or even just a drop in consumer confidence, can see sales slump. Suddenly incidental spending, anything from a morning coffee to a wardrobe upgrade, drops and local businesses are forced to cut staff.

In addition to the economic impact of attacks on wages and conditions, cuts to the services provided by PSA/CPSU NSW members can affect the state's social fabric. The efforts of many departments in wake of the March floods can never be done by the private sector.

Public services will help the state recover, COVID-19 and its resulting havoc have hit NSW hard. It is the public service rolling our vaccines, devising health policy and adjusting to a reset in the working and commuting lives of the people in our state.

Again, these are roles that the private sector, running off the profit motive, will never be able to replicate.

Neoliberalism won't work in the post-COVID world. A boost in public spending will not only keep us safer, it will help revitalise local communities, filling shops, restaurants and pubs, boosting cultural life and retaining the vibrancy we had 18 months ago. ■



THE REVOLVING DOOR OF EVOLVING TRANSPORT

As if living through a pandemic and a recession wasn't uncertain enough, PSA members at Transport for NSW (TfNSW) have had their jobs under threat for more than 15 months.

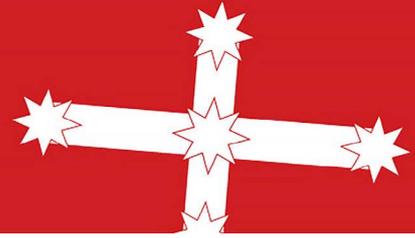
NEARLY 9000 employees have seen positions reviewed, reworded and in many cases re-advertised at lower pay. Members in some branches are still waiting to find out if they have a job.

"This has been an incredibly stressful time for our members, made worse because management wouldn't explain what was going on. It wasn't 'Evolving' but 'Revolving' Transport as management kept going around in circles," said Nathan Bradshaw, the PSA's Industrial Manager for the transport cluster. "The PSA won a commitment from TfNSW to retain jobs and halt forced redundancies until the pandemic improved. So TfNSW spent last year sending out emails, making presentations, conducting video conferences and issuing information packs with no information in them. But now they have ramped up their plans."

The PSA worked with its members during the consultation period to ensure their views on their individual role and the overall restructure were taken into account in the final restructure.

At the time of publication, 23 of the 28 branches have finalised new structures. In response to the work of the union and its members, many roles have been removed from the restructure. However, there are still more than 1000 employees being forced to reapply for a job. If a role has changed by just 20 per cent, it is deemed a new position and the incumbent must compete against colleagues in the same branch. Members whose roles have changed by less than 20 per cent may also need to reapply if there are more employees than roles. The PSA has launched a dispute over recruitment practices. ■

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From the Assistant General Secretary **Troy Wright**

HALLS OF LEARNING, NOT CASH COWS

The Morrison Government is showing contempt for tertiary education in Australia.

IN 19th-century NSW, William Wentworth had a huge influence on the colony.

He crossed the Blue Mountains in 1813; authored the first book by a colonial-born Australian; published Australia's first independent newspaper; created its first political party; and helped draft NSW's first constitution.

There were atrocities also. His efforts led the colony to forcibly dispossess Aboriginal Australians of their lands.

Arguably his most enduring act was establishing the University of Sydney in 1850 as a place designed "to enlighten the mind, to refine the understanding, to elevate the soul" and to provide "the opportunity for the child of every class to become great and useful in the destinies of this country".

Wentworth's vision was of a university governed by egalitarianism and free of religious dogma. He put his own money behind the university and was a member of its first senate.

The University of Melbourne opened three years later, followed by the universities

of Adelaide, Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia. The founders of these all embraced the 19th-century principle that knowledge should be pursued for its own sake and that academics should be free to teach according to their own convictions.

This principle is captured by academic and religious leader John Henry Newman who in 1852 described a university as a place "in which the intellect may safely range and speculate. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, discoveries verified and perfected, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge".

Looking at the way the Morrison Government approaches universities today, it is heartbreaking how far we have moved away from the idealism of the 19th century.

This Government abandoned our greatest educational institutions at their time of greatest peril. It denied access to the JobKeeper wage subsidy, even creating rules to make it impossible for public universities to qualify for the scheme.

While public universities were being abandoned, the Morrison Government granted exemptions to four private universities – Notre Dame, Bond, Torrens and the University of Divinity – allowing them to access JobKeeper.

They have allowed the financial hole left by the prohibition on international students to swallow our universities. With no plan in sight to bring back these students, the Morrison Government is simply letting other countries steal market share and our jobs as students choose to study in countries with open borders, even if they are not as safe as Australia.

Another blow to Australia's universities is the new funding model passed by the Morrison Government last year which reduces the fees for courses it thinks are more desirable to employers. For other courses, student contributions will increase. Humanities, for example, will have their student fees more than doubled.

THE NEW FUNDING MODEL WILL CUT BETWEEN \$700 MILLION AND \$1 BILLION

Some people may ask, why wouldn't taxpayers want their money spent on courses that help graduates get employment? But the approach has two flaws. It abandons the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake in favour of the needs of private corporations and it reduces the universities' independence.

The new funding model will cut between \$700 million and \$1 billion from the university sector at a time when Australia should be investing in skills and knowledge to rebuild its post-COVID-19 economy.

There is still time to save our universities. It will require urgent action by state and federal governments to protect, reposition and grow all our public universities, including an injection of funding.

Without this, critical Australian research, innovation and training will suffer and thousands of direct and indirect jobs will be lost. And if our universities can't sustain research, innovation and employment for Australians, then we really do have to ask what are our universities for? ■





PERMANENT JOBS A GREAT START TO THE YEAR

Help from the PSA ended years of uncertainty for long-term temporary staff at one Central Coast school.

There was a spring in the step of some employees at Northlakes High School as they walked through the gates to start the new school year. Eight School and Administrative Support (SAS) staff were about to begin their first day in their new permanent roles.

Thanks to the PSA's campaign to convert long-term temporary employees to permanent positions, these eight public school employees now enjoy greater job security and a confidence about the future that only comes from ongoing employment.

All had worked continuously in temporary roles for at least two years. Several had been on temporary contracts for more than a decade, living with the constant stress of never knowing if they had a job to go to next year.

The school's Business Manager and PSA representative, Ms Petronella Schofield, said the permanent jobs have made the SAS staff feel valued.

"Many were close to tears when they found out their applications were successful," she said. "Having a permanent job is huge for them. They feel validated in the work they do. They now feel they are important members of the team. The teachers are all saying it should have happened years ago!"

"These permanent positions provide much needed stability in difficult and uncertain times. Some have partners who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19, so having a permanent job means they know they can afford things like Christmas and birthday presents for the kids.

"Our SAS staff love their jobs. Most work with children who have learning or behavioural issues or a disability. We need them every year, so it made sense for them to be in permanent roles."

"WE NEED THESE PEOPLE EVERY YEAR. THEY NEED PERMANENT ROLES"

The journey from temporary to permanent started when PSA members read a bulletin about the conversion process and approached the principal, Warren Welham. Mr Welham asked Ms Schofield to organise a meeting with the PSA to verify the procedure and guidelines. After checking which staff were eligible, they were invited to apply for conversion.

"Principal Welham was grateful for the PSA's help and he was supportive right from the start. Within a few weeks the applications were submitted and the staff were told the process was in place," Ms Schofield said.

Ms Siobhan Callinan, the PSA's Acting Industrial Manager Communities Health and Education, said winning permanent employment for SAS staff is part of the union's 100% Paid, Permanent, Protected Campaign.

"After the PSA's big pay equity win for SAS staff, the focus has been on getting more of our members into permanent roles," Ms Callinan said. "We want all our members to have access to secure work.

"SAS staff in schools need to feel confident in their jobs so that they can continue to support the students and school communities in which they work." ■

CPSU NSW STOPS \$25,000 PAY CUT FOR DISABILITY WORKERS

The Federal Court throws out Northcott's plan to slash the pay of Team Leaders.

NORTHCOTT has failed in its attempt to force Team Leaders to accept lower-paying Service Coordinator positions thanks to union action.

In a major win for the CPSU NSW, the Federal Court found the work of a Team Leader was substantially the same as a Service Coordinator, so the former Team Leaders are still entitled to their previous rate of pay, so they should be paid up to \$25,000 more than Northcott pays them as Service Coordinators.

The CPSU NSW's State Branch Assistant Secretary, Troy Wright, said the decision sends a warning to disability services companies not to attack employee working conditions.

"This was an attempt to cut employee wages by changing job titles and switching their employment from one Northcott company to another," he said. "The jobs were the same but the pay was significantly less."

"The CPSU NSW immediately saw what Northcott was up to. We tried consultation but their management pushed ahead with these unfair changes. We were determined to fight, so we took them to Court. And now we have a decision in our favour."

THE DISPUTE

Carlos Alvarado was one CPSU NSW member whose evidence swayed the court. For six years he has done the same job, managing and leading a team of Disability Service Workers and providing support and care in a group home for people with high medical needs.

In November 2017, Mr Alvarado and 1200 of his fellow workers had their NSW

public service jobs transferred to Northcott. Mr Alvarado's permanent Team Leader job was guaranteed for two years, so he couldn't be made redundant. His NSW public service pay and conditions were copied into a Federal Award and protected for five years.

It didn't take long for the company to move against Mr Alvarado's employment protections. First, Northcott announced plans to abolish his job, and that of more than 100 Team Leaders. Then, in September 2019, Mr Alvarado received an offer of employment as a Service Coordinator on \$25,000 less than he was receiving. Northcott gave Mr Alvarado a choice – take the pay cut, or take a redundancy when the two-year job guarantee ran out.

Fortunately, Mr Alvarado had a third option. A member of the CPSU NSW, he called his union.

The CPSU NSW warned Northcott not to implement the restructure until the dispute was resolved. In October 2019, the union took the case to the Fair Work Commission. Northcott tried to settle the dispute with an offer to cut salaries by \$20,000, a proposal that was overwhelmingly rejected by the CPSU NSW's membership.

The union's legal team worked over the holidays preparing to take the matter to the Federal Court in the New Year.

BEFORE THE COURT

The Court's decision turned on a single question – was the work of the Service Coordinators the same, or substantially the same, as the work performed by Team Leaders? If the answer was "yes", then the employees were still covered by their Copied State Awards and entitled to their former salaries.

Leading industrial and employment barrister, Mark Gibbons SC, represented the union, which relied on evidence from former Team Leaders now employed as Service Coordinators: Mr Alvarado along with Tony Buhajjar, Eilise Kennedy and Margretha Stronkhorst.

These four CPSU NSW members



testified that the work they did now was not markedly different from what they did before. Their description of their work was not challenged by Northcott's legal team and the cross examination of their evidence was brief.

In her judgement, Justice Anna Katzman agreed with the union, stating, "The Service Coordinator work is substantially the same as the Team Leader work.

"Team Leaders were, and Service Coordinators are, the senior employees working in group homes. Team Leaders were, and Service Coordinators are, the sole supervisors of support workers with immediate responsibility for the delivery of care to the employer's clients or customers.

"Although the Team Leaders have additional responsibilities as Service Coordinators, most of their administrative and management responsibilities are the same as those they had previously."

Troy Wright said the union welcomed the decision and called for the employees to have their entitlements restored.

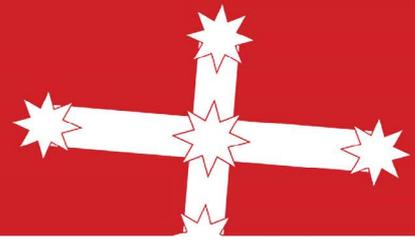
"The decision means the copied State Awards continue to cover the Team Leaders who transferred to Northcott from the NSW public service, and who have taken up Service Coordinator jobs," he said. "Northcott should immediately begin paying the higher salaries and entitlements as well as back pay." ■

UNION APPEALS AGAINST YES VOTE

The CPSU NSW is appealing against the result of a vote that went in favour of an Enterprise Agreement (EA) that included a wages and salaries cut.

The proposed EA will see a Disability Support Worker's hourly rate reduced by up to 10 per cent, a reduction in shift allowances, the working week extended from 35 to 38 hours, fewer meal allowances, less overtime and cuts to leave entitlements.

The CPSU NSW alleges some casual staff were unable to vote.



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PRISON OFFICERS WAIT 34 YEARS FOR BRAVERY AWARD

A riot in 1986 prompted a bold response from Prison Officers.

IN OCTOBER 1986 violence erupts in the Metropolitan Remand Centre at Long Bay Gaol as 70 inmates riot. Armed with makeshift weapons, the inmates turn on three Prison Officers, taking them hostage in a cell.

The Malabar Emergency Unit mobilises for a dangerous mission, risking their own lives to save their colleagues. They confront the rioters with tear gas, shields and batons while being subjected to vicious attacks and doused with boiling water. But the team keeps going, freeing the Officers and regaining control of the prison.

Thirty-four years later and the heroes of that day have finally been awarded the Australian Group Bravery Citation by Governor-General David Hurley.

“Australian Bravery Awards recognise courage and sacrifice,” Hurley said. “Perhaps most importantly, they recognise people who, in a moment of danger or threat, think of others ahead of their own safety. We celebrate their bravery

and the example that they set: putting others before self and a willingness to help strangers, the vulnerable and those in danger in the most difficult of times.”

“WE CELEBRATE THEIR BRAVERY AND THE EXAMPLE THAT THEY SET: PUTTING OTHERS BEFORE SELF”

The recipients were: Wayne Francis Carmady, Alan Gary Clarke, William Dodson, Anthony Stefan D’Silva, David Shane Farrell, David John Golledge, Garry William Lockhart, Kenneth Michael Newberry, Domenic Pezzano, the late Mark Anthony Russo, and the late Stephen John Wright. ■

Left to right: David Golledge, Stephen Wright (son of the late Stephen John Wright), Bill Dodson, Gary Clarke, NSW Governor Margaret Beazley, Wayne Carmady, Dorothea Russo (wife of the late Mark Russo), David Farrell, Domenic Pezzano.

FOUR OF THE POVB’S FINEST

A quartet of Prison Officers receive special honours.

THE POVB Awards, introduced in 2020, recognise individual members for their dedicated service to their colleagues and their union.

Delegate of the Year Vicki Liehr

As the POVB Chairperson at Emu Plains Correctional Centre, Vicki was outstanding in her representation of POVB members during the consultation on the centre’s repurposing.

Special Achievement Geoff Kelty

Last year Geoff and fellow Prison Officer Wayne Cole rowed from Walgett to Bourke to raise \$12,000 for the Black Dog Institute.

Life Member Matt Bindley

Matt was first elected as a POVB Delegate in 1998 at Parklea. More than two decades later, Matt is still working for his fellow union members as Chairperson of the Metro Courts POVB sub-branch.

Life Member Tony Howen

Tony paved the way for casuals to be represented by the PSA and was at the forefront of the fight against privatisation.

CUTTING INTO PROMISES

Job losses at Premier and Cabinet prove the Government's COVID employment campaigns were just hot air.

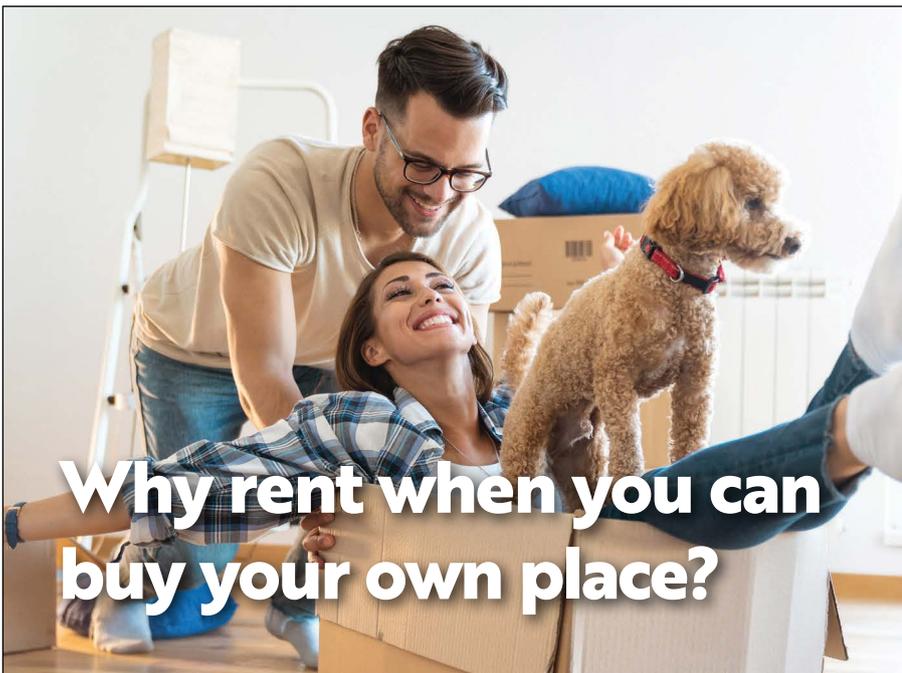
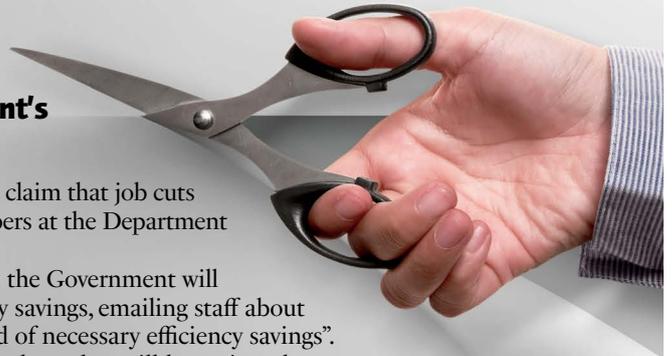
In 2020 the State Government tried to sell its wage freeze with a claim that job cuts were off the cards in the era of COVID-19. However, PSA members at the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) have received sobering news.

Premier and Cabinet Secretary Tim Reardon has confirmed the Government will continue its cuts to public sector jobs in the name of efficiency savings, emailing staff about voluntary redundancies in order to “implement the next round of necessary efficiency savings”. Following expressions of interest in voluntary redundancies, branches will be reviewed to determine whether further “operational efficiencies” – read job cuts – can be identified. If so, formal restructures supported by change management plans will occur. One thing is for sure, this process will result in fewer jobs.

Despite the Government maintaining that saving and creating jobs is its No.1 priority, and that freezing public sector salaries would allow this, DPC has confirmed that these are just hollow words lacking any substance.

DPC failed to consult with the PSA before announcing this major workforce transition, something the union brought up in the Industrial Relations Commission.

“The PSA calls on the NSW Government to stop these mean and tricky job cuts,” said General Secretary Stewart Little. ■



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LESSONS FROM MR HOBBS

How PSA members are raising awareness about the illegal wildlife trade.

PSA MEMBER Lesley Small recently suffered a heartbreaking loss at work. Ms Small is part of the team caring for Taronga Zoo’s sun bear exhibit, which lost its most famous resident, Mr Hobbs, who was euthanised due to a number of health complaints. Mr Hobbs arrived at Taronga Zoo in

1997 after being rescued from the illegal wildlife trade in Cambodia. The bear’s mother had been killed, robbing him of the vital three years’ learning these animals need to acquire life skills to survive in the wild.

Ms Small said that while Mr Hobbs ideally should have been raised by his mother in the wild, she was happy the zoo and its staff provided the bear with “a really beautiful life”.

“We were lucky to have him,” she said.

Sun bears are the smallest bear species and are found throughout southeast Asia

and southern China. The world’s wild sun bear population is under threat due to habitat loss and the illegal trade in the animals for their meat and bile.

Ms Small said the Taronga sun bear exhibit helps teach people about the animals’ plight and to avoid the illegal wildlife trade while overseas.

She will continue to work with other animals, including the zoo’s remaining sun bear, Mary. In her spare time she runs a charity for sun bears called the Sumatran Sun Bear Team, which can be accessed at sumatransunbearteam.org. ■

NPWS CAN’T SEE THE JOBS FOR THE TREES

ADDITIONAL funding for public services is always welcome, especially when it’s spent on the essential work PSA members do at the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

That’s why the PSA welcomed a \$400 million stimulus package to help the parks agency aid the recovery in bushfire-affected areas. The three-year funding boost is for 750km of new and upgraded walking tracks, upgrades to 38 campgrounds and 61 new and improved picnic areas. The additional spending will be appreciated by fire-affected communities across the state.

However, there is one problem. How does NPWS expect to deliver the new services and improvements without enough staff on the ground? NPWS is suffering from chronic staff shortages and an unacceptably high number of unfilled vacancies. Staff are managing unacceptable workloads now – a situation that will only get worse with additional projects.

PSA Organiser Mr Kim de Govrik said the NSW Government knows additional staff are required but has only committed to an increase in “temporary roles”.

“The stimulus package does not address the current vacant roles within NPWS,” he said. “They need to fill the vacant positions to ensure the announced maintenance program can be delivered.

“NPWS cannot expect to deliver these projects when it proposes to recruit only one additional Ranger and no new Project Officers. It is only planning to recruit 12 Administration and Project Support Staff. More than half of the temporary positions are for lower-remunerated roles.”

NPWS FIREFIGHTER RECEIVES AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

As fire threatened the ancient Wollemi Pines, PSA members took action.

Numbering less than 100 mature trees, the Wollemi Pines are the last remnants of a species that has lived on the Australian continent for 200 million years. They are so rare, their location is kept secret. And their fate now rested with a team of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) firefighters working with the Rural Fire Service.

The plan was a complex one. Helicopters flew a specialist team into the deep gorge where they set up an irrigation system while large air tankers released fire retardant in the path of the oncoming fire and helicopters water bombed the fire in surrounding areas.

NPWS officer Stephen Cathcart was the team's Air Attack Supervisor, coordinating the aerial response. As the fires reached the ancient trees, parts of the irrigation system were burnt. Attached to a winch on a helicopter, Mr Cathcart was lowered to the forest floor and his repairs to the irrigation system were enough to extinguish the fire in the gorge and save the trees.

For his outstanding public service, particularly to the protection of the Wollemi Pines during the 2019-20 bushfires, Mr Cathcart received the Public Service Medal in this year's Australia Day Honours.

"I was privileged to be part of a great team of people who worked to protect the pines, and I am honoured to receive this award as recognition for the hard work and dedication shown by all NPWS firefighters in protecting lives, property and our incredible natural assets," said Mr Cathcart. ■

VICTOR NOT A WINNER WITH APOLOGY

A Government Minister has been forced to apologise for ridiculing public servants.

CUSTOMER SERVICE Minister Victor Dominello gets very excited when talking to the media. Speaking to the *Australian Financial Review*, the Minister described his plan to take 28 NSW agencies and collapse them into one.

"Crunch, crunch, crunch! Bring them all together. Get rid of SafeWork. Get rid of Fair Trading. Get rid of the Food Authority," he said.

But this "big vision", he realised, was "too big" so he changed his mind. Instead of crunching public servants "we will corral them," he said, by putting them all on one digital platform.

"They can all keep their little hats and fancy uniforms..." he said belittlingly before calling NSW public servants "mongrels".

Red Tape has been informed that the day after the article appeared, the Minister met with Better Regulation staff (none of whom were wearing little hats or fancy uniforms) to apologise for his comments, which he claimed were taken out of context.

The PSA would like to remind Minister Dominello just how much NSW public servants did on behalf of the people of NSW during the 2019/20 financial year:

SAFework NSW

- 22,629 proactive and 11,821 reactive workplace visits
- 837 proactive workshops, presentations, seminars
- Increased worker protection against the deadly lung disease silicosis
- Finalised 230,901 licences, certificates and registrations
- Exceeded national targets to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

FAIR TRADING

- Helped with 377,987 enquiries for assistance
- Managed 42,824 customer and trader complaints
- Answered 513,094 calls in the Fair Trading's Contact Centre
- Inspected 67,660 products from 10,072 traders
- Undertook 2355 disciplinary actions.

FOOD AUTHORITY OF NSW

- Inspected/audited 45,987 food retailers
- Completed 2812 meat industry inspections
- Achieved a 30 per cent reduction target in food-borne salmonellosis
- Investigated 2490 complaints
- Issued 202 improvement and 61 penalty notices. ■



Victor Dominello, one of the more than 8 million people in NSW kept safe by PSA members in regulatory positions.



UNION HOPS IN TO HELP

New parents get help from the Member Support Centre.

Each member who contacts the PSA/CPSU NSW Member Support Centre for advice or assistance with pregnancy or parental leave-related enquires will have a Bunny Book posted to their home address.

Bunny Books, put out by the Gidget Foundation, are bedtime books that not only help parents and children bond through reading, but also help new mothers and fathers to keep on top of their mental health.

The Gidget Foundation provides support for new parents suffering perinatal depression and anxiety. PSA/CPSU NSW members are eligible for 10 psychological support sessions every year from the foundation. ■

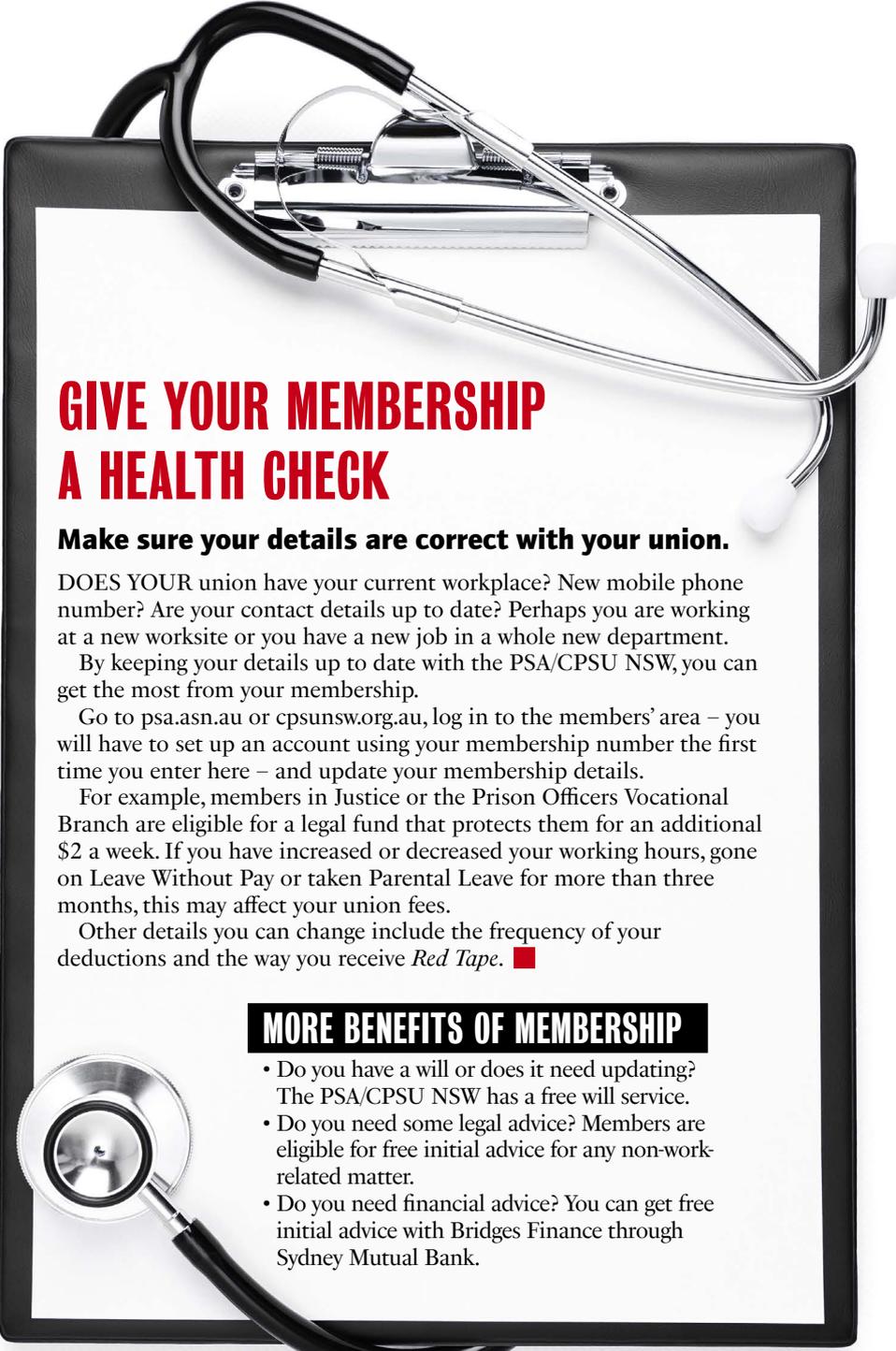
PSA MEMBER WINS HIS JOB BACK

**NEED HELP?
CALL THE
UNION**

1300 772 679

A PSA member has won his legal battle against his sacking by Taronga Zoo. In a case brought on his behalf by the PSA, the NSW Industrial Relations Commission restored the member to his previous position on the same pay and conditions, with back pay.

PSA Manager Nathan Bradshaw said the case shows the benefits of being in the union. "Our member needed help, so he picked up the phone and called his union. We were able to support him by taking legal action to protect his rights at work," he said.



GIVE YOUR MEMBERSHIP A HEALTH CHECK

Make sure your details are correct with your union.

DOES YOUR union have your current workplace? New mobile phone number? Are your contact details up to date? Perhaps you are working at a new worksite or you have a new job in a whole new department.

By keeping your details up to date with the PSA/CPSU NSW, you can get the most from your membership.

Go to psa.asn.au or cpsunsw.org.au, log in to the members' area – you will have to set up an account using your membership number the first time you enter here – and update your membership details.

For example, members in Justice or the Prison Officers Vocational Branch are eligible for a legal fund that protects them for an additional \$2 a week. If you have increased or decreased your working hours, gone on Leave Without Pay or taken Parental Leave for more than three months, this may affect your union fees.

Other details you can change include the frequency of your deductions and the way you receive *Red Tape*. ■

MORE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Do you have a will or does it need updating? The PSA/CPSU NSW has a free will service.
- Do you need some legal advice? Members are eligible for free initial advice for any non-work-related matter.
- Do you need financial advice? You can get free initial advice with Bridges Finance through Sydney Mutual Bank.

KEEP THE FAITH

Leaving work doesn't mean leaving your union.

THE PSA/CPSU NSW Retired Associates Group keeps members involved in their union, even after their retirement. "We're always looking for new members to join us and push for issues important to both

unionists and senior Australians," said David McKeough, who coordinates the group. "It is also a good way to keep in touch with old friends and colleagues."

The PSA/CPSU NSW Retired Associates meet six times a year at PSA House. Go to psa.asn.au/member-services/retired-associates to join.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

A quick call to the MSC keeps a member in the picture.

WHEN PSA member Ben was unsure about his leave entitlements, he made a quick call to the union's Member Support Centre (MSC). He is glad he did.

Ben, a long term employee of NSW Police, had suffered a non-work related injury requiring surgery and post-surgery treatment. This would put him out of action for at least three months.

He called the MSC to see what entitlements he could use while recovering, as he had exhausted most of his sick leave.

The MSC informed him about special sick leave, which did not involve him having to first exhaust his own recreational or long service leave.

He made a written application with the assistance of Member Support Officers Jessica and Amira and was granted this leave.

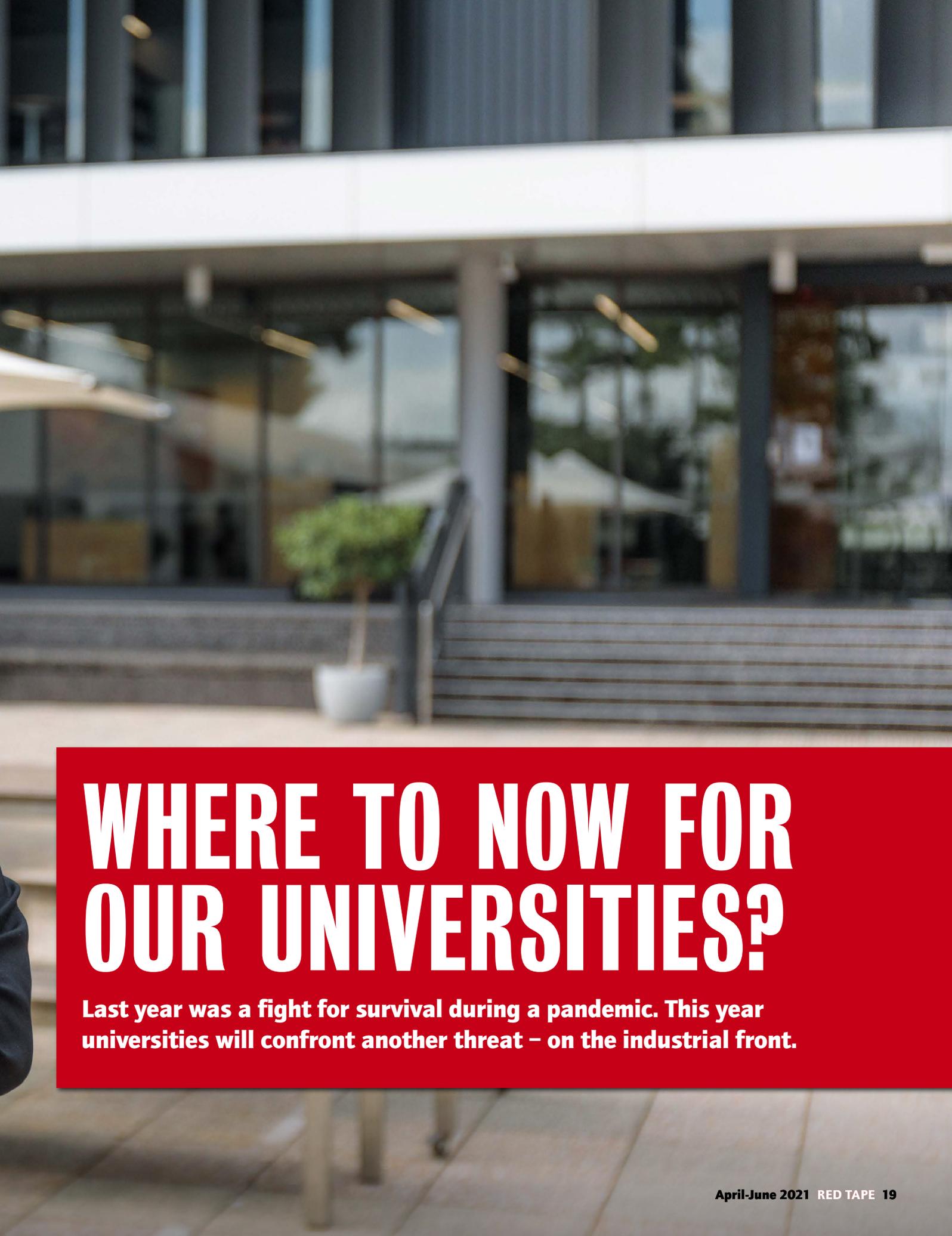
The MSC followed up with Ben to see how this application was going.

His reply says it all. "Can I just say that without the assistance of the PSA I would never have known about this entitlement," he said. "This is something my HR department should have known about and through their lack of knowledge, made life difficult for me. This difficulty has now been alleviated thanks to you." ■





Quiet times: CPSU NSW
Delegate Shelley Odewahn at
Southern Cross University's
Lismore campus.



WHERE TO NOW FOR OUR UNIVERSITIES?

Last year was a fight for survival during a pandemic. This year universities will confront another threat – on the industrial front.

JOY AND LOSS AS A NEW SEMESTER BEGINS

For many staff there was joy in returning to the university campuses for the first time in a year. There was the familiarity of an office or a well-loved desk. Or finding a favourite book you missed while working from home.

For others, the overriding emotion was a sense of loss. The sight of empty chairs where respected colleagues once worked. Desks and workplaces rearranged to cater for 1.5 metres of physical distancing.

Smaller staff meetings a poignant reminder of how many friends had left the industry.

Everyone knew returning to the campus at the start of the new academic year would be different this time. Different, as well as difficult.

“It was a shock to see so few colleagues at the university after all the restructures and the redundancies,” said Shelley Odewahn, a member of the CPSU NSW’s Higher Education Representative Council (HERC) and a Disability Advisor at Southern Cross University. “Regional campuses like mine at Lismore are large sprawling places anyway but you notice just how little activity there is. With nearly 12 per cent of staff gone, and many still transitioning back from working at home, it can feel quite deserted.”

As a CPSU NSW Delegate, Ms Odewahn has been helping universities get staff back to campus safely. She and her colleagues

came back on 1 February, a month before students arrived. Her employer wanted them back a month earlier but the union knew the university wasn’t ready.

“Without any notice or consultation the university sent an email in the week before Christmas stating the return date would be 2 January. No-one had childcare booked. They hadn’t prepared for social distancing spaces shared by staff and students. There wasn’t sufficient PPE,” she said.

The CPSU NSW met with the university and the start date was put back to February.

This gave the Professional Staff one month to prepare for the arrival of students. Many things had changed. Live lectures were out and everything was going to be delivered online. Collaborative teaching would be in small groups, the size dependent on the level of social distancing available in each room.

“It is the Professional Staff who provide support for the students,” Ms Odewahn said. “We had to get the campus ready for them. This is when the challenge of having fewer staff became an issue. The story is similar across many universities. The redundancies have been so significant, that some work units have just one or two employees left.”

The Professional Staff in NSW universities did what they have always done — they put the needs of students first. Despite the increased workloads, the universities were ready to welcome students at the beginning of March. Every effort was made to make campus life as rewarding and enjoyable as it had been, but too much had changed for it to ever be the way it was.

“We are all feeling excited to be around each other but universities are now a really difficult place to work. Everybody fears more job cuts. Everybody understands the financial position of universities is dire,” said Ms Odewahn.

Without a return of international students, and with the Commonwealth Government refusing to fund and support them properly, Australian universities remain close to financial collapse.

2020 – HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Exactly a year earlier to the day Ms Odewahn returned to her Lismore campus, Prime Minister Scott Morrison banned

the entry of any foreign nationals who had been in mainland China. Iran, South Korea and Italy followed before Australia closed its borders to all non-residents and non-Australian citizens on March 20, 2020.

The sector had relied heavily on international students for a decade but numbers exploded after the Commonwealth Government capped funding for universities at 2017 levels. No new funding meant no new university places unless money could be found elsewhere.

So universities wishing to grow looked to foreign students. Australian universities found a welcoming market for their services overseas and the sale of university places became a big business.

In the year before the COVID-19 pandemic, international education grew by

GOVERNMENT PUNTS UNIVERSITIES WITH JOBKEEPER SNUB

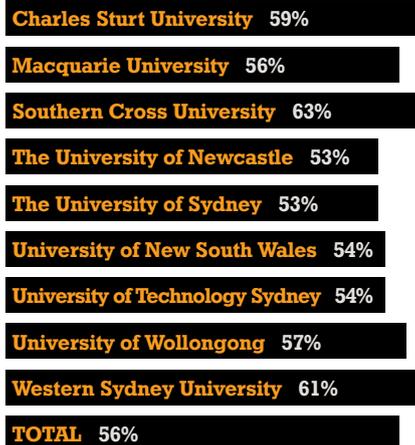
A new book by noted Economist Ross Garnaut points out the absurdity of denying JobKeeper to university staff.

In his book *Reset: Restoring Australia after the Pandemic Recession*, Mr Garnaut said universities, which will perform a vital role in the country’s reconstruction, were denied JobKeeper for staff. This is compared with casinos, which can be characterised as socially destructive, that were able to apply for the benefit.

The book points out that not only is the decision destructive for universities, it also hits the industries dependent on their graduates and research.

“We can only imagine that JobKeeper, available for everything from casino workers to dog walkers, would have saved some of the up to 6000 jobs at risk in our universities,” said Troy Wright, State Branch Assistant Secretary of the CPSU NSW.

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES ARE PROFESSIONAL STAFF?





15 per cent and contributed \$37.6 billion to the Australian economy, employing 240,000 people.

Australia's international education sector was more diversified than many realised. China contributed about a third of students, the rest coming from numerous countries including India, Nepal, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brazil and Indonesia.

Education became Australia's third-largest export earner, behind iron ore and coal. Education out-earned Australia's other major services industry – travel and tourism – by more than 50 per cent.

There seemed like nothing could derail the international education money train. Then something did.

With national borders shut, nearly 165,000 international students were stranded overseas, unable to return to Australia. They were added to more than 40,000 Australian citizens attempting to return to Australia

while the Commonwealth Government imposed strict limits on the number of international arrivals each week. As the new academic year started, there was still no timeline for bringing these student visa holders back to Australia.

Adding to the financial pressure on universities was the Morrison Government's decision to deny universities access to JobKeeper. The Government changed the eligibility rules to ensure universities could not get access to Australia's largest wage subsidy scheme.

"There was clearly an over-reliance on international students," said Troy Wright, State Branch Assistant Secretary of the CPSU NSW. "But the heart of the problem was a lack of public funding from the Commonwealth Government.

"The university sector is in crisis now but the problem started long before COVID-19. A lack of proper investment made the sector fragmented and reliant on international students."

Australian universities are bracing for an extended period of reduced international student numbers, especially enrolments of Chinese students. There are growing reports that tertiary education is the next battleground in the ongoing trade tensions between Canberra and Beijing.

Chinese student enrolments have collapsed by 23 per cent compared to a year ago following statements by Chinese authorities questioning the safety of Australia as an education destination. After trade restrictions on barley, lamb, beef, coal, lobster, timber and coal, Chinese authorities now appear to be intervening in the education sector by discouraging their students from choosing Australian universities.

Universities Australia, which represents the nation's 39 universities, believes the loss of international students will impact its members for years. It calculates Australian universities shed at least 17,300 jobs in 2020. NSW job losses could be as high as 6000.



Revenues were also down \$1.8 billion compared to 2019, with a further \$2 billion predicted to be lost this year.

“When compared with universities’ pre-pandemic budgeted revenue for 2020, this loss is more than \$3 billion, which is in line with the sector’s estimates made in April last year. The brutal reality of COVID-19 has made 2021 even more challenging,” said Universities Australia Chief Executive Catriona Jackson.

“Continuing border closures mean universities face the double whammy of fewer returning students in 2020 and reduced numbers in 2021. The cumulative impact won’t be felt just in 2020 and 2021, but for years to come. No sector can absorb revenue declines this large without staff losses.”

Most people understand the role of academics and researchers in universities,

but few understand the important roles of Professional Staff in these institutions. They include architects, auditors, data and digital experts, human resource managers, gardeners, disability advisors, media technologists and any number of other occupations.

Professional Staff are the majority of employees in universities – about 55 per cent in NSW (see box on previous page). So any proposal for more job cuts and redundancies will have a disproportionate impact on these employees.

Ms Odewahn says the prospect of further job losses is not only a concern to her but also to her whole community. “Regional universities are different. We are usually the biggest employers in town. So if there are jobs cuts in the university’s staff, it has a ripple effect right through the entire local economy,” she said. ■

CPSU NSW READY TO BARGAIN

With the financial uncertainty and potentially more job losses down the track, the next 12 months offer little in the way of relief to Professional Staff.

ADDING to the complexity of the current year, nine of the 11 universities in NSW (see box right) will have their Enterprise Agreements expire in the second half of the year.

“Professional Staff deserve a fully funded pay increase above the nominal rate of inflation and we aim to achieve this through collective bargaining,” the CPSU NSW’s Troy Wright said. “We have fought hard for many years to secure competitive pay increases well above the cost of living. And we intend to preserve these pay and conditions despite COVID-19 and the university funding crisis.”

Mr Wright pointed to job security as another major issue the CPSU NSW would tackle during the bargaining negotiations. “The crisis caused by COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of job security. There must be limits on fixed-term employment and limitations on outsourcing. We also want casual conversion clauses in all the university Enterprise Agreements. This is to ensure as much job security as possible for Professional Staff.”

Southern Cross University’s Shelley Odewahn said the CPSU NSW’s Higher Education Representative Council wanted Enterprise Agreements to recognise that COVID-19 has permanently changed the way Professional Staff work.

“The pandemic has shown many occupations can be performed remotely and in some cases better than they can be on campus,” she said. “This shift needs to be recognised and provisions put into the Enterprise Agreement so that employees can continue to work from home and enjoy the many physical and mental health benefits this provides.” ■

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN: ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT END DATES

ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT	END DATE
University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2018-21	30 June 2021
Western Sydney University Professional Staff Agreement 2017	30 June 2021
Australian Catholic University Enterprise Agreement 2017-21	30 June 2021
University of Technology Sydney Professional Staff Agreement 2018	30 June 2021
Southern Cross University Enterprise Agreement 2018	30 June 2021
Charles Sturt University Enterprise Agreement 2018-21	30 Sept 2021
The University of Newcastle Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2018	30 Sept 2021
Macquarie University Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2018	31 Dec 2021
University of NSW Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2018	31 Dec 2021
University of New England Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2019-20	30 June 2022
University of Wollongong Professional Services Employees Enterprise Agreement 2019	30 June 2022

UNIVERSITIES STACKED WITH CORPORATE HEAVYWEIGHTS

Universities are big business. In 2019, a year unaffected by COVID-19, NSW universities generated \$11.4 billion in revenue.

I NCREASINGLY the focus of universities is on providing a workforce for corporations and their never-ending quest for increased profits. For example, the Jobs-Ready Graduate Package does not aim to promote the sharing of knowledge, but to deliver more graduates in disciplines that “help drive the nation’s economic recovery”.

You would expect Chancellors to rail against this commercialisation of their institutions. After all, they are the champions of the university’s values and defenders of its educational purpose. But these top university jobs have been stacked by big business appointments by the NSW Government.

Eight of 10 NSW university Chancellors have backgrounds in big corporations. Their CVs list giants such as PWC, KPMG,

Qantas, ANZ, Westpac, Thales, Westfield, Suncorp, BHP and Macquarie Bank.

This explains why NSW universities are increasingly run like a business, by business leaders for the benefit of business owners.

Only two Chancellors break the mould – and both are public servants. Professor Peter Shergold, Chancellor of Western

Sydney University, was Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the nation’s most senior public servant for five years.

The other is Dr Martin Parkinson, Chancellor of Macquarie University, who served as Treasury Secretary and the head of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. ■

UNIVERSITY	CHANCELLOR	BACKGROUND
CHARLES STURT	Michele Allan	Amcor, Meat and Livestock Australia
MACQUARIE	Martin Parkinson	Australian Public Service
NEW ENGLAND	James Harris	Grazier, Forster of Abington
NEWCASTLE	Paul Jeans	BHP, Fosters
NSW	David Gonski	ANZ, Westfield
SOUTHERN CROSS	Nicholas Burton Taylor	PWC, Delta Agribusiness
SYDNEY	Belinda Hutchinson	Thales, Qantas
UTS	Catherine Livingstone	PWC, Macquarie
WESTERN SYDNEY	Peter Shergold	Australian Public Service
WOLLONGONG	Christine McLoughlin	Suncorp, Cochlear



NOT ALL WOUNDS BLEED

We need to talk about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

When a friend noticed Police Radio Dispatcher John Hughes was not engaging at social events and would disappear whenever visitors arrived, she thought something was wrong. Worried, she recommended he go see his doctor. It was only then, with his GP's expert advice, that Mr Hughes realised he had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

"I was the Radio Dispatcher involved in a domestic triple homicide which the police came across," said Mr Hughes. "The police came across the incident still occurring. Being a Dispatcher, we are not physically there which requires the Police Officers to explain what was happening over the radio so I could coordinate assistance.

"To understand how graphic this was, the attending Police who were explaining the situation on the radio were still attempting to disarm the offender, which required them to use their firearms."

Mr Hughes said he does not go into details about the event as "it still affects me today".

"EMPLOYERS NEED TO REALISE IT IS A LONG PATH TO RECOVERY, SOMETIMES OVER MANY YEARS"

"At the time, and for some months afterwards, I did not feel 'unwell' or affected by the incident," he said. "I attended the Police debrief conducted by that local command a few weeks after the event and I was able to speak to the Officers involved face-to-face. I still did not feel like a victim but I felt I needed to be there to support the Police who had to attend the incident."

According to mental health lobby group Beyond Blue, "PTSD is a particular set of reactions that can develop in people who have been through a traumatic event which threatened their life or safety, or that of others around them. This could be a car or other serious accident, physical or

sexual assault, war or torture, or disasters such as bushfires or floods. As a result, the person experiences feelings of intense fear, helplessness or horror."

Beyond Blue states symptoms can include:

Reliving the traumatic event The person relives the event through unwanted and recurring memories, often in the form of vivid images and nightmares. There may be intense emotional or physical reactions, such as sweating, heart palpitations or panic when reminded of the event.

Being overly alert or wound up The person experiences sleeping difficulties, irritability and lack of concentration, becoming easily startled and constantly on the lookout for signs of danger.

Avoiding reminders of the event The person deliberately avoids activities, places, people, thoughts or feelings associated with the event because they bring back painful memories.

Feeling emotionally numb The person loses interest in day-to-day activities, feels cut off and detached from friends and family or feels emotionally flat and numb.

It is common for people with PTSD to experience other mental health issues at the same time.

"It is such an emotional state, that can be so depressing," said Mr Hughes. "It is hard to pinpoint it and often victims don't even understand they have PTSD. Even after I was diagnosed, I still think 'what is wrong with me?' and 'why am I so emotional?' and 'this should be over'.

"I was getting emotional on anything that came up in any conversation or it could be something on TV that would relate to any domestic homicide or police shooting. Interesting to note, I could watch a fictional drama on TV and it had no effect on me as it was not real. But if I watch a TV story about a real domestic homicide, I would automatically think of the event I was involved in.

"One of the issues that I have is the feeling of guilt. Did I do enough for the situation? Could I have tried to do my job better to avoid the situation? Did those people have to die? I know no matter if I was there or not, the outcomes would not have changed as being on the other end of the radio I feel like an outsider."

According to Beyond Blue, PTSD symptoms often appear in the first couple of weeks after a traumatic event and some people recover on their own or with the help of family and friends. Therefore, treatment

does not usually start until about two weeks after a traumatic experience.

PTSD treatments usually involve psychological treatment (called talking therapy) but medication can also be prescribed.

Anyone can be affected by PTSD at work, yet there are sections of the PSA/CPSU NSW membership particularly at risk, including Police staff, Prison Officers, Child Protection Workers and Emergency Service workers in areas such as the Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service and those working in frontline roles in National Parks and State Forests.

PSA/CPSU NSW WHS Officer Suzanne Mann said employers have a

WARNING SIGNS

PSA CPSU NSW WHS Officer Suzanne Mann says members can look out for symptoms of PTSD in colleagues.

"This is far from an exhaustive list," she warns.

- Conflict with team members and managers
- Feelings of frustration or irritability
- Emotional outbursts
- Inability to concentrate
- Increased errors or accidents
- A surge in unplanned absences
- Excessive tiredness or even debilitating fatigue
- Reduced reaction times
- Mood swings
- Physical ill health
- Unusually untidy appearance
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Increased impulsive and risk-taking behaviour
- Negative self-talk
- Speaking about suicide
- Getting things in order (either work or home) if planning suicide (not wanting to burden those remaining with additional work)
- Loss of interest in life.

YOUR UNION

role in reducing the risk of PTSD in the workplace.

“Education can be provided, from the top down, on prevention, recognising signs, early intervention, pre-emptive action post-incident and acknowledgment of the cumulative effect of numerous exposures over time to traumatic events,” she said. “Employers also need to make reasonable adjustments for those attempting to return to work.”

“It can be a good idea to rotate workers through roles, if possible, to reduce risk of exposure to more traumatic events.”

Mr Hughes said workplaces need to “keep staffing levels at a decent level to ensure persons are not being exposed to the risk at high levels”.

Getting workers’ compensation for PTSD can be a greater challenge than proving a case with physical injuries.

“As with all psychological cases, proving you have PTSD can be hard,” said PSA/ CPSU NSW Industrial Manager Shay Deguara. “Plus there are added issues regarding proving a particular incident caused the condition.”

“And Section 11A of the *Workers Compensation Act* is often used to decline liability due to the reasonable management actions.”

If a worker has been diagnosed with PTSD, Mr Deguara said their employers should not rush the rehabilitation process.

“The employers need to realise it is a long path to recovery, sometimes over many years, so they need to remain supportive even with relapses,” he said.

“Employers must make reasonable adjustments for those attempting return to work,” added Ms Mann.

Mr Hughes is happy his employer, NSW Police, takes PTSD victims seriously and “they are prepared to help extensively”. ■



Police Radio Dispatcher
John Hughes



SES ANSWERS THE CALL

Help is at hand thanks to a cash injection.

S EARCHING FOR missing children (as pictured above) or dealing with the aftermath of road accidents and natural disasters can take a toll on the staff and volunteers at the State Emergency Service (SES). However, a large injection of funds will help in the fight against mental health issues.

The Government has granted the SES \$36 million over five years to help employees’ and volunteers’ mental health.

The PSA will work alongside management to keep members mentally healthy in the workplace.

With 39 years at NSW Police behind her, SES Commissioner Carlene York knows the toll mental health can take on frontline staff. Add the SES’s formidable army of volunteers and that is a lot of people’s mental health to look out for.

Commissioner York is hoping the SES will ensure mental health strategies are more than “just the response” and will implement more preventative measures.

“We had a desire to ensure not only support services, but prevention strategies for both volunteers and our staff,” says Commissioner York. “We’ve got a substantial amount of money in the first 12 months to identify the strategies and do the plan.”

“There will be ongoing money to support the provision of strategies.”

The strategies will use information

from organisations such as the Black Dog Institute and Beyond Blue, as well as the Government’s Emergency Services First Responders Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

She said the training will give staff the confidence to look out for signs workmates may be suffering and to know when “to step in” and offer assistance.

Commissioner York said while the program will aim to eventually reduce the number of workers’ compensation claims, she would “not be surprised if workers’ compensation claims initially went up, as I want to give people the confidence that they can come forward and seek assistance.”

“But my aim is to step in before we get to a workers’ compensation claim.”

The strategy is not only aimed at addressing workplace mental trauma, but the signs of stress from outside the SES, such as substance abuse or stressful domestic situations.

Commissioner York said she intends to consult extensively with the PSA to ensure the program’s success.

“Your communication to PSA members is vitally important,” she said. “Not all members will listen to the hierarchal structure of an organisation but their peers and your union’s leadership skills can promote being a part of the program.”

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little said programs such as that being rolled out to the SES shows the State Government is listening to its workers and their unions and taking workplace mental health seriously. ■

THE FIGHT FOR FAIRNESS: ABORIGINAL COUNCIL PUSHES FOR POLICY CHANGES

THE PSA's Aboriginal Advisory Council is stepping up its fight for fairness, pushing for improvements to the employment policies that impact indigenous workers in the NSW public sector.

The Council advises the union on how to advance Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander members' interests. As the NSW Government is the largest employer of indigenous Australians in Australia, there are many issues on the Council's agenda this year.

Indigenous employment in the NSW public sector is estimated at 3.3 per cent of the workforce, or more than 13,000 employers. However, most are employed in lower-grade positions. The NSW Government is falling well short of its target of three per cent Aboriginal employment in Grades 5 through to 12 and its pledge to double the number of senior Aboriginal leaders by 2025.

Mr Sean Bremer, Chair of the 15-member Council (pictured below), says changes to employment policies are needed to remove the discrimination preventing more indigenous employees from reaching higher-graded positions.

"The Council is developing an Aboriginal Employment Policy to take to the NSW Government. This will show the way forward on issues such as recognising Aboriginality, and how to improve the quality of employment of indigenous people," Mr Bremer said.

While the NSW Government has targets

and strategies for indigenous employment, the reality experienced by PSA members falls far short of the Government's rhetoric.

"We need a consistent approach to recognising Aboriginality," Mr Bremer said. "Currently you need to present documents, references from your local Aboriginal Land Council with its seal as well as a statutory declaration to be accepted as an Aboriginal person. But if you move to another role you can be asked to prove your Aboriginality all over again," he said.

Another issue on the Council's agenda is the need for more identified positions rather than just targeted positions if the NSW Government is to achieve its indigenous employment goals.

Identified Aboriginal positions are when Aboriginal cultural knowledge or connections are an essential aspect of the role. These roles work directly with Aboriginal peoples or are involved in developing and delivering services to Aboriginal communities.

In contrast, you don't have to be Aboriginal to be offered a targeted Aboriginal position if you can show you have worked closely with, and have knowledge of, a particular local Aboriginal community. Priority is usually given to a suitable candidate if they can prove their Aboriginality. ■



VALE



AUNTY BETTY

The PSA is saddened to hear of the loss of Betty Cragg, who held much pride in her working career in the Child Protection sector.

Aunty Betty was a strong, proud Wiradjuri woman, who will always be remembered for her wealth of knowledge, commitment, straight talking and humour.

Aunty's career in Child Protection began in 1984 when she commenced at the Wagga Riverina Youth Centre. She was one of the first Aboriginal employees in the Murrumbidgee area.

In 1986-87, Aunty Betty commenced her journey as a District Officer in the Child Protection Sector where she remained for a further 34 years.

Aunty was one of the founding members of the State Aboriginal Reference Group, where she advocated to employ more Aboriginal staff.

In 2015, Aunty settled in her final role in the Cultural Connections Team where she continued to be a strong advocate for her people, promoting culturally safe practices across the Western Region. ■

WHAT WOMEN WANT: REAL WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

A rigid workplace is in no-one's interests.

LAST YEAR'S *What Women Want* survey of the workplace found overwhelming support for a truly flexible workplace. More than 80 per cent of respondents wanted the ability to access leave when needed and access flexible work hours. The ability to work from home or off site during normal work hours is also a significant issue, with 52.79 per cent of survey respondents marking this as important.

MORE THAN 80 PER CENT OF RESPONDENTS WANTED THE ABILITY TO ACCESS LEAVE WHEN NEEDED AND ACCESS FLEXIBLE WORK HOURS

Of those surveyed, 56.39 per cent had requested access to flexible working arrangements of some kind. Of these, 87.44 per cent had their request agreed to. However, this means 12.56 per cent of women's requests for flexible work are being refused. The PSA/CPSU NSW plans to identify hotspots.

Women we surveyed also told the union that male colleagues have their requests refused frequently.

This is an area where PSA/CPSU NSW will benefit from the Department and workplace data being broken down. The union is commencing the data work on that. ■

CANBERRA RAPE CASE HIGHLIGHTS PARLIAMENTARY DANGERS

Every worker deserves a safe workplace, regardless of where they are employed.

REVELATIONS a parliamentary staffer was raped in the Federal Parliament House, with the incident hushed up, has highlighted the dangers faced by parliamentary and electoral staff.

"The PSA condemns all forms of sexual violence as unacceptable and is deeply concerned at reports emerging from our Federal Parliament," said General Secretary Stewart Little.

The PSA represents staff employed in State Parliament and those working in state electorate offices. In the past, the union has had to support members experiencing bullying and harassment issues whilst working for MPs from all political parties.

"Sexual assault and harassment are

criminal offences and we encourage anyone subjected to this behaviour to call the police," said Mr Little. "All employees should be able to feel safe at work and all legislators, state and federal, must ensure the parliaments that establish our laws set the highest possible workplace standards. This must begin with enforcing existing laws for all parliamentary staff and Members of Parliament."

In the PSA/CPSU NSW's *What Women Want* survey last year, sexual harassment, when combined with workplace bullying, remains one of the top-six issues women want focussed on at work.

The role of a political staffer is made more vulnerable because of the limitation of the enforced temporary nature of staffer employment and the limited appeal jurisdiction available to them. Political staffers have less employment protection than other workers. ■





Yvonne Weldon, Chairperson of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, addresses the rally.

DAY OF PROTEST AND CELEBRATION UNBOWED BY A PANDEMIC

There was no march through the city but the PSA CPSU NSW still celebrated International Women's Day with a variety of COVID-safe activities.

THE UNION pieced together online presentations featuring Women's Council Chair Irish O'Brien and the launch of the *What Women Want* survey results, letting members mark the day in their own workplaces or homes, away from the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Several workplaces and PSA House had morning teas to celebrate.

"In a time when sexual harassment and violence in the workforce is front and centre in the news, it is vital that we still mark this important day," said Ms O'Brien. "International Women's Day gives us a

"INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY GIVES US A CHANCE TO CELEBRATE OUR WINS AND PROTEST EXISTING INJUSTICES"

chance to celebrate our wins and protest existing injustices."

Unions NSW also organised a rally in The Domain, in the Sydney CBD, which was limited to 500 people due to the pandemic.

Dating back to 1909, International Women's Day is marked worldwide. ■

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SAFE WORK'S SIGHTS

New resources help prevent workplace sexual harassment, violence, aggression and domestic violence.

SAFFE WORK Australia has developed new national work health and safety guidance to help employers prevent workplace sexual harassment, violence, aggression and domestic violence.

Under Australia's Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws, employers must proactively manage risks to health and safety arising from work. This includes physical and mental health alike. The new information provides guidance to anyone who has a WHS duty to protect the health and safety of workers.

The Australian Human Rights Commission's report on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces highlighted how prevalent sexual harassment is and the harm it is causing.

But there is a lot that employers can do beyond responding to complaints.

WHS duties require employers do everything they reasonably can to prevent sexual harassment from occurring at work, just like other risks to health and safety.

The new guide, *Preventing workplace sexual harassment*, is the first comprehensive WHS guidance in Australia to focus on preventing sexual harassment. The guidance supports businesses and organisations to meet their WHS duties with practical steps to identify risks and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. ■



WHO NEEDS BALI?



With borders closed, our members get out and about in NSW.

LAST ISSUE we invited members to submit their pics of their holidays in the NSW National Parks and State Forests so professionally cared for by PSA/CPSU NSW members.

And the results are in. We'd like to congratulate Molly Zarb, who works at the Environment Protection Authority, for her Christmas Day snap at Mount Kaputar National Park (picture above top). Ms Zarb wins a Fujifilm Instax Mini 11 instant camera, with some films thrown in.

Thanks to all our members (and one PSA Manager) for submitting photos that prove our state has some wonderful National Parks and State Forests. And thanks to the PSA/CPSU NSW members who work hard to make them places worth visiting. ■

Top: The winning photo from Mount Kaputar National Park, east of Narrabri was taken by the Environment Protection Authority's Molly Zarb. Above left: Our second-placed photo, taken in Myall Lakes National Park, was taken by Robert Oxford. Above: Our third-placegetter, Michael Petersen from Correctives, photographed these horses strolling near Barrington Tops National Park.

CPSU, the Community and Public Sector Union
SPSF Group, New South Wales Branch
ELECTION NOTICE - E2020/30 - Stage 1

Scheduled Election

Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009

Nominations are called for:

CPSU - SPSF Group - New South Wales Branch

- Branch President (1)
- Branch Vice Presidents (3)
- Branch Secretary (1)
- Branch Assistant Secretary (1)
- Delegates to Branch Council (10)

Nominations, which must be in writing and comply with the registered rules of the Organisation, may be made at any time from 29/03/2021.

A nomination form is available for electronic completion on the AEC Portal, www.aec.gov.au/ieb. However, the nomination form must then be lodged in accordance with the Organisation's rules (see below).

Additional forms are available from the Returning Officer.

Prospective candidates and nominators should verify their financial status and any other qualifications required by the Organisation's rules prior to lodging nominations.

Nominations must reach the Returning Officer via the lodgement method(s) stipulated below **not later than 12:00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 14/04/2021**.

How to lodge nominations, nominations must be lodged via the following method(s):

By Portal: Australian Electoral Commission Portal, www.aec.gov.au/ieb/

By Email: A properly completed nomination form including all necessary signatures and attachments may be scanned and submitted as a pdf file to IEBnominations@aec.gov.au

PLEASE NOTE:

1. Emails to the AEC inbox that appear to be spam may be blocked. It is the responsibility of senders to ensure that their email reaches the AEC before the deadline for nominations.
2. In order to be able to be received by the AEC, emails (including attachments) should be no greater than 6 MB in size.
3. You may call 02 9375 6375 to enquire about the status of your nomination.

Withdrawing Nominations

Nominations cannot be withdrawn after 2:00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 26/04/2021.

Candidate Statements

Rule 28.1(a) states "Up to seven days after the close of nominations, a candidate for a Group or Branch office may submit to the returning officer a biography and/or a statement in support of their candidature only, for distribution by the returning officer with ballot material. The statement shall not exceed 200 words."

Only statements which comply with the Rules and are received by the Returning Officer **no later than 12:00pm** (Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST)) on 21/04/2021 can be accepted.

Voting Period

The ballot, if required, will open on 20/05/2021 and close at 10:00am Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 22/06/2021.

Scrutineers

Each candidate may appoint, in writing, one person as scrutineer. A form is available from the Returning Officer for the purposes of appointing Scrutineers.

Other Information

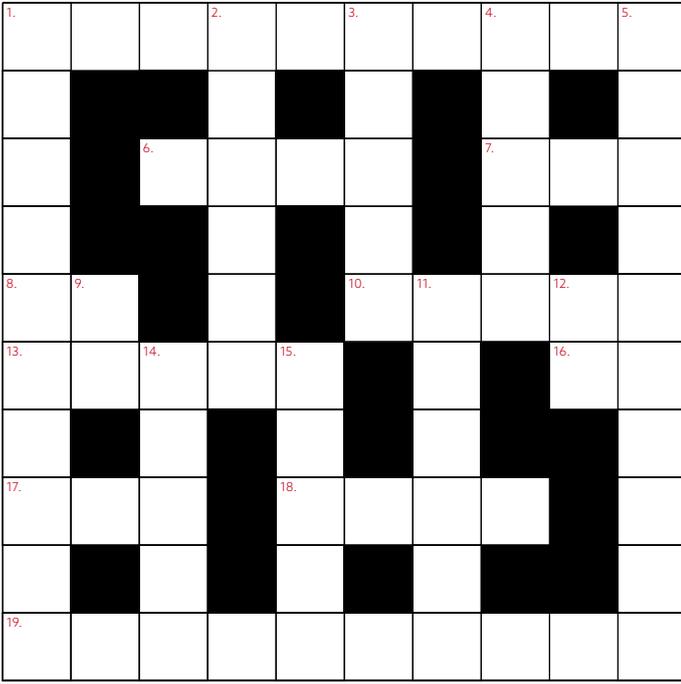
Changed Address? Advise the Organisation now.

Please Note: A copy of the AEC's election report can be obtained from the Organisation or from the Returning Officer after the completion of the election.

Catherine Bernoth
Returning Officer
Telephone: 02 9375 6375
Email: IEBevents@aec.gov.au
29/03/2021



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Enterprise _____ (10)
6. South African currency (4)
7. Small child (3)
8. Before noon (2)
10. Concur (5)
13. In an excessively forced manner of friendliness (5)
16. Abbreviation of who may administer your COVID vaccine (2)
17. Shortened name of Southeast Asian country (3)
18. Local authority in Northwest Sydney (4)
19. Getting bigger (10)

DOWN

1. Fish you may catch in the Top End (10)
2. A bottle of this gave Barry O'Farrell more than a hangover (6)
3. World's second-most populous nation (5)
4. The blue and black football team from Milan (5)
5. Sweden's second city (10)
9. Academic level after your BA (2)
11. Willoughby's not-so-finest (6)
12. Elizabeth's initials (2)
14. Tennis player who may have learned to shampoo and condition during isolation (5)
15. South Australian peninsula (5)

Last issue's solution



DID YOU KNOW?

Last year the PSA CPSU NSW's fleet of vehicles drove more than 270,000km to reach members – or Sydney to Cooktown and back five times.

THE TEAM STRIVING FOR FAIRER WORK

The National team looks out for members covered by Federal industrial laws.

PSA/CPSU NSW members working under the Fair Work system are represented by the union's National team. This team represents members working in universities, the

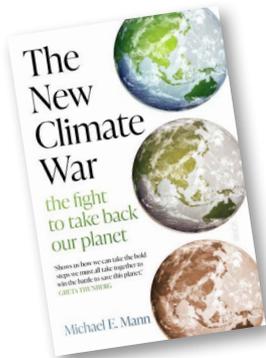
TAFE system, disability support, power generation and a number of smaller, non- or quasi-government fields such as Water NSW, Forestry Corp, Parklea Gaol and the state's Aboriginal Land Council.

Industrial Manager National Thane Pearce says working in a different industrial sphere to most of the membership covered by the NSW Industrial

Relations Commission presents its own challenges.

"The team's Industrial Officers, Organisers and Administrative staff do exemplary work looking after a diverse group of members," said Mr Pearce. "This means we deal with a number of employers, rather than just the State Government." ■

BOOK Reviews



THE NEW CLIMATE WAR: THE FIGHT TO TAKE BACK OUR PLANET

Michael E. Mann
Scribe Publications
\$35

As US President Joseph Biden shifts up his country's fight against climate change, the Australian Government risks being seen as an international outlier. Perhaps the Prime Minister needs to brush up with this book by Climate Scientist Michael E Mann.

The New Climate War looks at the disinformation campaign from the 100 companies responsible for an astonishing 70 per cent of the world's global emissions, and how people can counter this wave of what Professor Mann calls the "powerful Ds: disinformation, deceit, divisiveness, deflection, delay, despair-mongering and doomism".

Of course, all of this is amplified by slick PR firms, sections of the media such as Fox News in the US and Australia's own homegrown coal-pushers such as former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who destroyed one of the best ways to cut pollution, a price on carbon emissions.

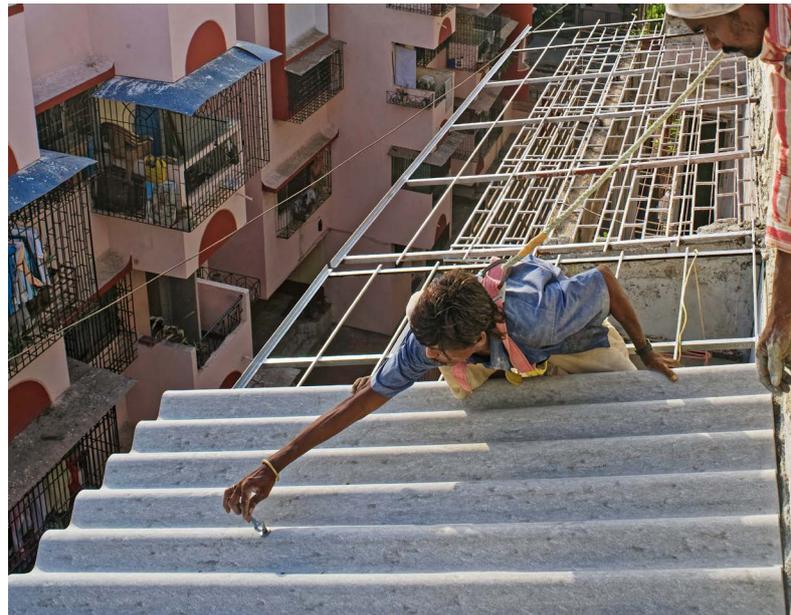
The New Climate War examines ways to fight the carbon lobby and work for a sustainable future. ■

COVID-19 RISKS RESTARTING ASBESTOS TRADE

Hundreds of billions of dollars are flowing into health and infrastructure projects as governments try to stimulate economies badly damaged by the COVID-19 crisis.

IN countries that still permit asbestos, there are hospitals, clinics, schools, houses and transport projects being built with the cancer-causing material, leaving a deadly legacy for future generations.

Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA has launched a campaign to ban the use of asbestos in projects receiving COVID-19 stimulus funding.



The campaign is aimed at the World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank, both of which receive funding from the Australian Government.

Ms Kate Lee, Executive Officer of APHEDA, said the Australian Government has a responsibility to ensure no Australian funds go to projects

that use the deadly material.

The majority of the world's asbestos is now consumed in Asia. Asbestos fibres are easily inhaled, increasing the risk of lung, ovary and larynx cancer as well as mesothelioma, a cancer of the lining of the lung. These cancers can develop decades after exposure to asbestos. ■

HOW TO TALK ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE IN A WAY THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Rebecca Huntley
Murdoch Books
\$32.99

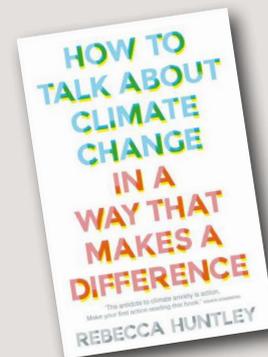
Watching children at a climate change rally on television, social researcher Rebecca Huntley suddenly realised that when the protesters demanded people take action, she was in a place to do so. She then embarked on a two-year project to sell climate change action to a planet in peril.

Taking cues from the Kübler-Ross model of dealing with grief, *How to Talk About Climate Change* discusses how the message about an impending

apocalypse can be better delivered to not only win over deniers, but those who feel overwhelmed by the crisis at hand.

In her research for the book, Ms Huntley talks to a variety of people trying to get the message across, from scientists to evangelical Christians. They talk about offering hope and accept that some people will never be won over (although she notes that with one public argument, one activist did manage to convince a sceptic's two sons to join her at a rally).

Coming after the simply awful 2020, reading 250 pages about the impending collapse



of our environment and society may seem too much to bear. But Ms Huntley's easy-to-digest, conversational tone will give the reader hope – and maybe some ammunition the next time they encounter a climate sceptic at a barbecue. ■

AHEAD OF THE GAME

Your union's training unit can get you ready for members' workplace issues.

Union Delegates are usually the first to hear of workplace difficulties faced by members. The PSA/CPSU NSW Training Unit has devised a course to ensure Delegates have the skills required when a member comes to them.

Dealing With Member Issues is a one-day course, delivered online or in class, devised to give Delegates the tools to be an efficient first port of call for a member having problems in the workplace.

"The course completes a trilogy; coming after Introduction to the Union and the Role of the Delegate," said PSA/CPSU NSW Educator John Sandow (pictured). "The great thing about this course is it focuses on individual issues members bring to the Delegate. This is a high part of their workload.

"We introduce models for Delegates to deal with this work. We have a problem-



solving model, a resolution-planning model and a legislative-understanding model.

"We talk about the Delegate's role as a support person and also discuss dispute resolution and natural justice. And we have a practical component so participants can practice handling common issues.

"We like seeing people gain the confidence to deal with members' problems and be effective Delegates.

"We always keep in mind Delegates are still supported by the union's industrial staff. Delegates don't have to go it alone, no matter how well trained they are." ■

TRAINING TIPS

- Training is free to all PSA/CPSU NSW members
- Nearly all PSA/CPSU NSW members can access Union Training Leave, so no need to dip into your holiday time
- Courses are delivered online, at PSA House in Sydney or in regional centres
- You can read more at psa.asn.au/training-you

APRIL-JUNE 2021

RED TAPE

IN YOUR INBOX

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Authorised by Stewart Little, State Branch Secretary, Community and Public Sector Union (SPSF Group) NSW Branch, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney