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JUNE
2022

RED TAPE



12 Stars and bars
Behind the scenes in our goals



Resist the pressure
Don't sign away your conditions **19**



34 Aboriginal Council
How Jermaine changes men's lives

CONTENTS

04 From the General Secretary
Wages must keep up with inflation

05 News
Events in our workplaces

06 From the President
Together we can navigate change

**08 From the Assistant
General Secretary**
More to be done to save the Powerhouse

24 Membership
The benefits of being union

26 Rising waters
Union members save the day – again

30 The precarious state
No-one wins from insecure work

36 Women at Work
Our male-dominated upper house

38 WHS
What COVID-19 taught us

48 Training
Training for safer workplaces

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The Public Service Association of New South Wales and Community and Public Sector Union (SPSF Group) NSW Branch acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and the places in which we live. We pay respect to Ancestors and Elders, past, present and future. We recognise the unique cultural and spiritual relationship and celebrate the contributions of First Nations peoples to Australia.



All members of CPSU NSW are also members of the Public Service Association. The PSA is the associated body that manages and resources CPSU NSW.





WAGES MUST KEEP UP WITH THE COST OF LIVING

A 2.5 per cent pay rise is actually a pay cut.

In February the Association submitted a letter to the Premier demanding an end to the wages cap that has artificially depressed many of our members' wages for more than a decade.

In addition, we will be seeking payment of superannuation on the unpaid portion of the first 12 months of parental leave for our members.

The wages cap must go. It was a bad idea in 2011, when it was introduced by the O'Farrell Government. As inflation re-emerges as an issue, artificially suppressing wages is an even worse idea.

Inflation is currently running, we are told, at 3.5 per cent. Factor in fuel price rises thanks to the invasion of Ukraine and eye-watering house prices all over the state and you soon realise a 2.5 per cent annual boost to pay is actually a decrease to our members' purchasing power, particularly when you take into account the miserly 0.3 per cent increase grudgingly handed to members in 2020-21.

The Public Sector workers who carried NSW through two years of consecutive disasters deserve better. As you can read in the page opposite, they have once again been front-page news as floods swamp NSW. Our members are still on the frontline facing COVID-19 in our health, justice and education systems.

They do not deserve to go backwards.

Not only are our members let down by sluggish wage growth, but the economies they participate in are also hit hard. When our wages go down, so does our purchasing power. Suddenly local businesses will feel the pinch as workers' wallets stay shut.

For years the State Government has forged its brand on restraint, particularly regarding Public Sector wages. However, if it can adapt to the unusual times we live in and open the purse strings for disaster relief and health expenditure, it can do the same with wages. ■



SECURE WORK VITAL

As you can read in our feature on page 30, insecure work is a major problem faced by too many PSA/CPSU NSW members.

Insecure work leaves these members in a state of limbo: not sure whether they will be employed the following year and often unable to secure loans without a full-time job behind them.

Insecure work does not just affect our members. An increasingly casualised workforce, along with the precarious "gig" economy, is undoing decades of progress made by the union movement. Many younger workers have never worked in a position in which they are eligible for Sick Leave or paid holidays.

The PSA has made inroads in some areas, such as pressuring Corrective Services to reduce its over-reliance on casual labour. Now it is time for the rest of our employers to follow suit and convert as many workers as possible to ongoing positions. ■

PSA DEMANDS END OF WAGE CAP AS MEMBERS HIT THE FRONT LINE AGAIN

As rains deluged a state, rivers broke their banks and homes were submerged, once again it was PSA/CPSU NSW members saving the day. Elsewhere, members in schools dealt with another deluge, COVID-19 cases among staff and students.

Union members coming to the fore in the latest of the revolving door of catastrophes highlight the importance of the demand from the PSA to end the wages cap that has become a tool to reduce the wages of the state's vital Public Sector.

"I have written to the Premier demanding an end to the wages cap, which, at 2.5 per cent, won't even come close to catching up with the inflation rate of about 3.5 per cent," said PSA/CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. "We will be demanding increases of at least 3.6 per cent. A survey of

members found they are overwhelmingly in agreement with our plans and are willing to take action to back this up."

In addition, the PSA wants superannuation increases to be added on top of the pay rise, and super paid on parental leave.

"We had thousands of members putting their lives on the line in the bushfires, then we went straight into COVID," said Mr Little. "The Government needs to take a long, hard look at itself.

"We expect Public Sector workers to have fair and reasonable pay, and conditions that obviously keep up with inflation and reward them for the work to do."

"To condemn them to an annual decrease in their purchasing power would be an insult to their work.

"Never a good idea, the wages cap is particularly insidious when inflation, which has been controlled in recent years, is re-emerging as an economic factor."

Economist with the Australia Institute, Greg Jericho, said skyrocketing property prices are making wage restraint even tougher on workers.

MEMBERS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY IN AGREEMENT WITH OUR PLANS

"A decade ago an average-priced house in Sydney was equivalent to 5.8 times the annual income of a median household; now it is 10.8 times that income," he said. "Wages are not keeping up not only with inflation, but also with increases in productivity. Since the last federal election, your wages have effectively been flat. In essence, your standard of living hasn't improved." ■



CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

As workplaces once again experience considerable upheaval, your union is there for you.

Changes are once again afoot. Managers are calling staff back into their offices, new hygiene rules are here to stay and workplaces are adjusting to a post-lockdown world where we live “alongside” COVID-19 and the ensuing social and economic recovery.

In times of change, your PSA/CPSU NSW membership is even more vital.

As you can read on page 38, the pandemic has focussed our attentions on the importance of a safe workplace. And a unionised workplace is a safe workplace.

It is the union movement that championed the role of Health and Safety

Representatives (HSRs), often are the first line of defence against unsafe workplaces. And it is union action that keeps our workplaces clean and safe.

As we saw with the response to COVID-19 from Corrective Services NSW, union involvement is vital if management is serious about safe workplaces.

As commercial property and hospitality industry lobbyists urge the State Government to return staff to offices, more employees will be turning to our union to preserve the hard-won working-from-home arrangements that have served so many so well. Our union believes people should not have to sacrifice workplace flexibility simply so CBD cafes can sell more sandwiches at lunchtime.

Likewise, PSA/CPSU NSW members, particularly women who still shoulder a disproportionate amount of caring responsibilities, should not be forced to sacrifice flexible hours as workplaces

IT IS UNION ACTION THAT KEEPS OUR WORKPLACES CLEAN AND SAFE

return to the rigidity of the past.

Change in the workplace is not necessarily a bad thing. Done properly, it can make our working lives safer, more efficient and less intrusive.

However, our employers need to keep us in the loop. Unions are there to stand up for workers who believe their workplaces are changing without management properly consulting members.

There has always been power in a union. As our workplaces undergo massive change, this power has never been so vital to us all. ■



UNION MOURNS A LOYAL FIGURE

Remembering Life Member George Dennett.

The PSA/CPSU NSW is saddened to hear of the death of former Senior Vice-President George Dennett.

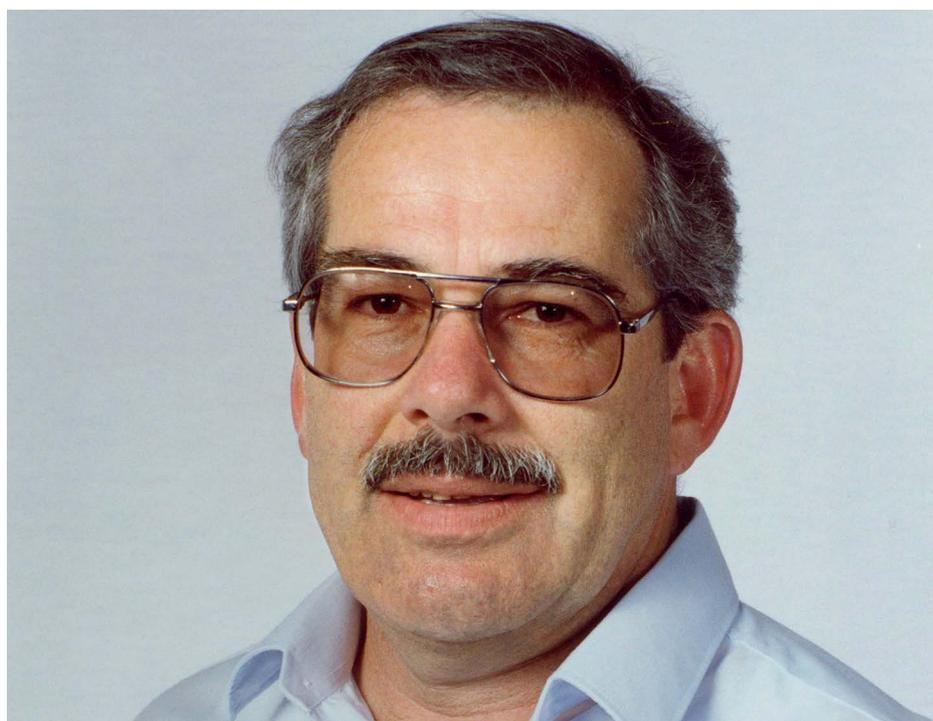
Employed by the Department of Main Roads, Mr Dennett (pictured right) joined the PSA in 1966. He rose to the position of Senior Vice-President and was eventually honoured as a Life Member.

“He helped a lot of people by sitting as a PSA representative at the Government and Related Employees Appeals Tribunal, which no longer exists,” said former General Secretary John Cahill. “He was very good in this role. He helped a lot of PSA members who had been sacked get their positions back.

“He was very loyal to the union, he would always take on tasks happily.”

The current General Secretary, Stewart Little, said Mr Dennett, who migrated from England at a young age, was typical of the union leaders who helped build prosperity throughout post-war Australia.

“The trade union movement would be nothing without committed workplace delegates like George,” said Mr Little.



“He joined the PSA in 1966 from Main Roads when that section had 3000 members. He greatly understood the role regional employment had on NSW.

“Even a car accident failed to halt Mr Dennett’s passion for the union, and he

continued to work hard for members.”

Away from the workplace, Mr Dennett enjoyed the greyhounds and at one stage had a stake in a racing dog.

He is survived by his daughter Megan and his twin sons Scott and Nathan. ■

RETIRED ASSOCIATES URGED TO KEEP ON RIDING

Member urges colleagues to keep active.

Adrian Boss, a Retired Associates Group Member, has been awarded an Order of Australia Medal for his outstanding service to the community in taking older Australians on cycling excursions.

Mr Boss (on the right of the photo) is part of the Cycling Without Age Australia group and used a recent meeting of the Retired Associates to talk about the group’s work taking elderly people on trips out on electric-powered trishaws.

“The current restrictions have tied up

so many older people in homes,” said Mr Boss. “Now Omicron has started to wane we need to get people out and about.”

“Presentations like Adrian’s are a great reason for retired members to come join us at our regular meetings,” said President Nicole Jess.

“Our most recent meeting also heard from Alison Minet from Service NSW on the discounts available to seniors as the costs of living rise.

“The next meeting of the Retired Associates Group will be held on Tuesday, 26 April. The AGM will be held on 28 June, then further meetings on 23 August, 25 October and 6 December.”

Meetings are held at PSA House, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney. ■





THE CULTURE CLUB

The members who make our state a smarter, better place to live deserve better.

Among our union's thousands of members, there are more than 1000 people employed at our cultural institutions – the Powerhouse Museum, the Australian Museum, the Art Gallery of NSW, the State Library and Sydney Living Museums. They are the Curators, Historians, Librarians, Scientists, Researchers and Technicians who are responsible for not just recording the history and culture of our state, but also providing access to and educating our next generation about it.

The PSA/CPSU NSW has gone into bat not just for its members in these institutions, but the venues themselves and their contribution to NSW's rich cultural life.

In May 2020, we first provided written submissions to a Parliamentary Committee on the planned closure of the Powerhouse Museum's Ultimo site. After a tough fight, our recommendations were adopted by the State Government, namely that the Powerhouse Museum be spread across sites at Parramatta and Ultimo, not Parramatta in place of Ultimo.

However, there is work to be done. Our other recommendations to the Committee, namely funding for conversion to permanency for the largely casualised workforce, emergency rescue funding to cover the loss of income during the pandemic, and the creation of a NSW Country Roving Museum, were either ignored or have had their opportunity lapse.

The experience and observations of our membership at the Powerhouse Museum since the announcement of the retention of the Ultimo site in July 2020 has been somewhat chaotic due to a number of factors.

There is a clear and contradictory



approach to workforce management – while many of our members' roles remain in limbo or not filled, we have witnessed exponential and unprecedented growth in the managerial classes at the museum.

With the closure of the Ultimo site for renovations scheduled for December 2023, our members currently employed there are still very much in the dark as to who will be doing what at which site and when. And finally, as with all members of the public, and we suspect the Committee included, they have witnessed with grave concern the proposed site disappear beneath murky floodwaters on an annual basis, in February 2020, March 2021 and most recently in March 2022.

The expansion of the Powerhouse Museum across two and possibly three sites is perhaps the largest and most expensive cultural project our state has embarked upon for many a decade, if ever. After seemingly every announcement being shrouded in secrecy before being released without notice, that

the implementation is being managed in this manner gives no confidence to our members that it is being done competently or with the necessary levels of expertise.

A similar and equally concerning situation is unfolding at the Art Gallery of NSW and its addition of the Sydney Modern Project. The new extension is scheduled for completion in June 2022 and to open in December 2022.

Even a few months out from opening, the PSA/CPSU NSW is yet to receive any confirmation as to the proposed staffing numbers or structures that will operate it. In light of the magnitude of this project, one that we recognise as beneficial to the economy of this state, it is astounding that there is such a delay in determining what the size of this agency will be so close to the start date.

This is an edited version of Troy Wright's address to the 100th hearing of the Powerhouse Committee. ■



SCHOOLS GET BUSY

COVID-19 is still here.

The state's schools are readjusting to a working life without COVID lockdowns. But the pandemic is still spreading, putting enormous pressure on administrative and support staff.

"Our members' workload has escalated because of COVID-19 measures," said Industrial Manager Siobhan Callinan. "This is compounded by lack of additional staffing, backfilling of those who have left employment. Staff also have to do the work of those isolating."

The PSA recently surveyed staff in schools about their workloads, with nearly 90 per cent of those replying saying COVID-19 had "resulted in an increase to [their] workload".

Tasks added to workloads ranged from the relatively simple, such as washing pens, to more time-consuming jobs such as explaining COVID-19 rules to parents, maintaining personal protection equipment and distributing rapid-antigen tests to children isolating at home.

The average amount of extra time worked by those who responded was nine paid hours per week and more than four hours unpaid. ■

PREPARATIONS PAY

Members get missing pay.

Having the paperwork at hand to prove they were underpaid has meant two PSA members in schools have received a "life-changing" amount of back pay.

"These union members had been trying for years to be paid correctly and, eventually, they came to the PSA," said PSA Industrial Officer Anthony Wright. "They had pay slips, emails and everything else at hand."

The back pay calculations were complex as the underpayments went back many years. After investigating their pay claim and calculating whether they were owed any money, the Department was cooperative.

"This emphasises the importance of filing everything that relates to your pay," said Mr Wright. ■



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PSA REELS IN NEW MEMBERS

Fisheries recruits climb aboard.

New Fisheries Officers attending their induction at Port Stephens have become PSA members. PSA Fisheries Officers Vocational Branch (FOVB) Chair Matt Cartwright provided these new recruits with an overview of some of the issues facing all Fisheries Officers in NSW,

driving home the message that strength and progress comes from unity and that unity comes with joining their colleagues in the FOVB and the PSA.

“These officers work in a very challenging environment ensuring our fish stocks are protected for future generations,” said PSA Industrial Manager Julie-Anne Bond. “Fisheries Officers deserve better wages and conditions for their work, and the PSA will fight on their behalf.” ■

RFS PAYS CAMP ALLOWANCE

Members in the Rural Fire Service will soon receive outstanding camping allowances.

In 2019, the PSA commenced proceedings in the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) to demand Rural Fire Service (RFS) employees receive the allowance when camping in RFS base camps. The RFS strongly opposed these proceedings, claiming that RFS employees were not “required to camp” when staying in a Base Camp and therefore not entitled to the allowance.

The IRC found in the PSA’s favour late last year. ■

PSA WINS CASE

Workplace found to be unsafe.

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) has been ordered to amend its policies on workplace safety by the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC).

The decision, handed down in March, stems from a complaint three years earlier that staff were being bullied by a manager.

SafeWork, which has the power to issue Improvement Notices, was brought in by the PSA to examine how the complaint was handled. The PSA sought SafeWork's involvement, as the investigation took more than a year during which the complainants continued to report to their manager.

SafeWork issued the RFS an Improvement Notice in April 2019. The notice was in response to RFS policies in dealing with bullying. SafeWork found the policies were deficient at dealing with workplace misconduct in a timely manner.

But the RFS did not accept the Notice and sought a review of the decision via SafeWork's internal review process.

SafeWork agreed with the RFS and revoked the Improvement Notice.

The PSA then appealed the decision to the IRC under sec 229 of the *WHS Act 2011 (NSW)* and sought the original notice be reissued. The RFS opposed the PSA in these proceedings, arguing that despite the extensive delay in this specific matter, the RFS nevertheless had sufficient policies for managing workplace bullying.

In March, the PSA won the case. The IRC found that the RFS's policies are deficient as there is no process to resolve bullying complaints in a timely fashion, exposing staff to a psychological hazard.

RFS was ordered to amend its policies within two months to avoid the same risks.

This win has come after a three-year battle.

"The RFS refused to accept the findings of the SafeWork investigator, an employee of the independent WHS regulator, and chose to ignore staff and the PSA," said PSA Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright "We were forced to pursue three years of legal proceedings in order to protect the health and safety of RFS employees." ■

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STARS AND BARS

A television series gives the public an insight into the vital, and often dangerous, work of Correctional Officers and other prison staff.

Nine's series, *Australia Behind Bars*, gave prime time viewers a look into the prison system and the staff who run our gaols. The series, set in Wellington, Dillwynia and Silverwater gaols, is narrated by reporter Melissa Doyle. It is based on a similar British series, which has run since 2019.

"The TV series gives viewers a chance to see how tough our jobs can be," said PSA President Nicole Jess, herself a Senior Corrections Officer. "Too often Officers aren't portrayed in the most positive light in popular culture, so any chance we get to show what our jobs really involve is to be welcomed."

Ms Jess said while it is obvious the worst parts of the Officers' roles have been cut from the series to make it more palatable to TV audiences, it is still an accurate portrayal of a day at work behind bars.

"In the past few years, our members have been demonised and even had their wages frozen by the State Government," said Ms Jess. "Programs like this show viewers just how difficult our jobs can be and will give them a better understanding about our working lives away from the headlines."

"Viewers see us react to save inmates from overdosing, restraining violent prisoners, finding weapons and working in riot situations," said Ms Jess.

Australia Behind Bars doesn't confine itself to Prison Officers, talking to Non-Custodial staff such as Medicine Dispensers.

The series also interviews inmates, who talk about the violence, boredom and emotional toll of life inside and separation from family. ■

Claire Croucheaux, above, from Dillwynia Correctional Centre and Aaron Locke, below, who works at Wellington, are among the Officers featured in *Australia Behind Bars*. The series is on Nine and 9Now.

“THE TELEVISION SERIES GIVES VIEWERS A CHANCE TO SEE HOW TOUGH OUR JOBS CAN BE”



COURT OUT: SHERIFF'S OFFICE STAFFING LEVELS PLUMMET

As nearly a quarter of Sheriff's Officers report they are upset at the low pay given for an often dangerous role, it is little wonder staff numbers are falling.

The PSA has found that Sheriff's Officer staffing at Wagga Wagga is at 50 per cent of what it should be. Staffing at the Downing Centre is also at 50 per cent.

At the Downing Centre, the largest courthouse in NSW, with more than 30 courts and 300 staff, there are currently about 30 operational staff out of a roster of 60.

"A key cause of attrition is the severe lack of pay, which is not commensurate with the risks, tasks, and skills that officers employ to keep the court system safe and secure," said PSA Organiser Marko Petrovic, who worked at the Downing Centre for three years. "Our members are assaulted, spat at, verbally abused, can be exposed to COVID-19, and work in an environment that has been reported as a potential terrorism target."

Mr Petrovic said the wages for Sheriff's Officers, which are subject to the State Government's 2.5 per cent wages cap, compare poorly to the "\$20 million upgrade to the King Street and Darlinghurst courts, among other lavish projects".

In a recent survey of Officers by the Department of Communities and Justice, 23 per cent of respondents expressed disappointment at their pay levels.

"The safe, efficient operation of the courts is a vital part of the justice system," said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. "The Officers are vital frontline workers who need to be paid more." ■

OFFICERS WALK OFF

Assaults in prisons prompt industrial action.

Prison Officers throughout NSW walked off the job in February over the increasing number of assaults in the state's gaols, and what members believe to be lenient sentencing of assailants.

Prison Officers were later ordered back to work by the Industrial Relations Commission.

"In recent years the rate of assaults on our members has skyrocketed," said PSA President Nicole Jess. "The legislation

covering these events does not support our members and this needs to change. And it needs to change as soon as possible.

"The current state government, and any future state government, needs to alter legislation so that the judicial system can hand out penalties appropriate for the severity of attacks on our members. We need the protections afforded workers such as Police.

"Governments need to respect the risks we take at work every day."

The PSA and the Prison Officers Vocational Branch will launch a political campaign to force governments to do more to keep staff safe in the state's gaols. ■

REMEMBERING ALAN KEARNS

A Youth Justice worker will be missed.

The PSA is saddened to hear of the loss of long-time member Alan Kearns.

Mr Kearns commenced his employment and career in the NSW Public Service as a Youth Officer at Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre in 2001 in what was the Department of Juvenile Justice (now Youth Justice NSW).

"I was fortunate enough to have worked with Alan in Cobham before my secondment to the PSA in 2004," said PSA Organiser Latu Sailosi. "He was very well liked by his peers and colleagues and greatly respected for his core values, strong principles and integrity and dogged passionate advocacy for young people in his care."

At the time of his passing, Mr Kearns had reached the level of Shift Supervisor and had acted on a number of occasions as Unit Manager at Cobham Youth Justice Centre.

"Family and compassion are two words at the core of everything about Alan," said Mr Sailosi. "He shared many stories with his close work colleagues about his concerns, hopes and aspirations with whatever was happening to him and his



family, just as he would share with his family the difficulties of his job and the challenges facing the many young people in his care."

Many past and present work colleagues from Youth Justice NSW, from Cobham and further afield, attended his family service at Castlebrook Memorial Park, Rouse Hill on Thursday 27 January 2022.

Mr Sailosi and fellow Organiser Gino Di Candilo attended his service with an arrangement of flowers and card from the General Secretary and Manager of Justice on behalf of the PSA and its members. ■



SAW POINTS

Bargaining kicks off at Forestry Corporation.

As Forestry Corporation rebuilds from the ashes, the CPSU NSW is there to help its members. “The bushfires of 2019-20 devastated much of the corporation’s property, which in turn stopped the State Government’s plans to sell off parts of Forestry Corp,” said Industrial Officer Lisa Nelson. “Now the organisation is restocking areas that were burnt out back then.”

In February, Delegates and CPSU NSW industrial staff participated in the first two-day interest-based bargaining session at Forestry Corporation.

“At that meeting we discussed our interests and grouped them into what we would like to bargain on,” said Ms Nelson.

Interest-based bargaining is a negotiation strategy in which parties collaborate to find a “win-win” solution to their negotiations. It focuses on developing mutually beneficial agreements based on the interests of the parties, rather than the traditionally adversarial approach to bargaining.

Like with members in TAFE, workers in State Owned Corporations not under direct state control, such as WaterNSW and Forestry Corporation are subject to the wage restraint of the State Government’s salary cap. As such, members are closely watching their union’s plans for a pay increase for Public Sector workers that keeps up with rising inflation.

“Our members worked hard during the fires and are now rebuilding Forestry Corporation,” said Ms Nelson. “They do not deserve a cut to their real take-home pay, which will be the case if the wages cap remains in place.” ■



COMING BACK FROM THE ASHES

Bushfires may have devastated much of Forestry Corp’s stock, but some salvaged timber has been used to renovate heritage vessels.

Timber from largely burnt-out plantations in Tumut was shipped to Bathurst, where it was used to renovate the Sydney Heritage Fleet. ■

MATTER OF TRUST: T&G HIKE PRICES

The PSA has used the NSW Upper House Budget Estimates Committee to question the motivation behind substantial increases in the costs of Trustee and Guardian services.

The Attorney General was asked to explain the recent amendments to the NSW Trustee and Guardian Regulations 2017, which brought huge price hikes. Drafting a new will rose from \$300 to a maximum of \$6000. Revising an existing will also cost up to \$6000, up from \$200.

“ IS THE GOVERNMENT HIKING UP PRICES IN OTHER AREAS AS WELL, SUCH AS COURTS AND TRIBUNALS? ”

Preparing, revising or revoking a power of attorney is now \$500, up from \$300.

“How can the Attorney General justify a price hike of over 2000 per cent on some of these items?” said Industrial Manager Nathan Bradshaw. “How will pensioners, people with disability and other at-risk community members afford the services of NSW Trustee and Guardian?”

“How is this affordable and a service to the public?”

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little said he was worried the changes were a “cold and calculated tactic of the government to disincentivise people attending Trustee and Guardian Network Branches so that they can be dismantled and the staff made redundant”.

“Is the Government hiking up prices in other areas as well, such as Courts and Tribunals?” he said. ■

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UNSW BEGINS BARGAINING PROCESS

Fortnightly meetings kick off negotiations.

The CPSU NSW has commenced Enterprise Bargaining at the University of NSW (UNSW). “CPSU UNSW members have overwhelmingly identified job security, organisational stability and workloads as key issues in this round of bargaining, and we plan to frame our claims accordingly,” said Industrial Manager Thane Pearce.

Enterprise Bargaining is taking place

in a number of universities, including the University of Newcastle, a process CPSU NSW Assistant Secretary Troy Wright said is taking too long.

“Unions, including the CPSU NSW, have tabled numerous proposed reforms and clauses,” he said. “In turn the university has also foreshadowed proposed changes to the entire leave structure. None of these negotiations has landed on an agreed position.

“Instead, much of the discussion has been had about how we should have discussions.

“The slow progress now has our bargaining representatives harbouring concerns about the bona fides of the university wanting to reach an agreement at all this year.”

At the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), fortnightly meetings have recommenced since the Christmas break and the Vice-Chancellor has voiced hopes that the process will be over by mid-year.

Bargaining has also recommenced at Southern Cross University. However, it has been stalled due to the floods. Fittingly, one of the last items spoken about was a proposed cut to Emergency Services Leave provisions.

“I’d like to see them try and get that passed now,” said Higher Education Representative Council Chair Shelley Odewahn.

Bargaining is also continuing at Western Sydney University and the University of Sydney. ■



SCU SHINES AS LISMORE WATERS RISE

Campus opens to flood-stricken locals.

Since it opened in 1973, Southern Cross University’s Lismore campus has provided education to the Northern NSW region. It has also offered shelter to people left homeless by the floods that hit the regional city.

PSA members from the Department of Housing were among the people staffing a makeshift centre.

The campus also served as a temporary venue for local schools that were flooded.

SCU staff were given an additional five days’ leave to engage in community service and clean-up activities. Counselling was also available for staff traumatised by the events.

The university is running an appeal for students affected by the flooding. Donations to help can be lodged at www.scu.edu.au/flood-appeal. ■



BACK ON CAMPUS

Can we go back straight away to business as usual?

This year was supposed to be the year airport arrivals halls would be full of returned international students and campuses back to the buzz of the pre-COVID era.

However, Professional Staff are returning to onsite work at different speeds as campuses implement different rules.

At the University of Wollongong, the return-to-campus plan has been circulated for staff and union consultation. The university has told staff it is keen to maintain flexible work options for staff, and will be providing appropriate guidelines for managers.

Management at the University of Newcastle has announced it is keen to get staff back on campus. The CPSU NSW is following up on members' ventilation concerns.

At Western Sydney University, fully vaccinated staff have been on campus for some months, with unvaccinated staff recently returning so long as they regularly test. However, many lectures are still being presented via zoom.

Non-student-facing staff at Charles Sturt University still, at the time of press, have the option to work remotely. The university's vaccination mandate will be in place until a review in June.

At the University of NSW, staff are being encouraged to return, even as lectures are delivered online. However, a large amount of teaching will be face-to-face. There is a wide disparity between vaccination

requirements of students and staff.

Consultation continues at the University of Sydney, which is keen to get as many people back on campus as possible. When a member produced a medical certificate to say he could not work on campus, the university's reaction was to launch an investigation. The CPSU NSW took action over this move.

The University of Technology Sydney advised unions of changes to work-from-home plans, but without consultation about the uni's plans. Most classes will be onsite and vaccination is not required.

Macquarie University has announced it "continues to refine its policies and guidance in accordance with the latest public health advice in response to the evolving COVID-19 situation".

At the Australian Catholic University, flexible work arrangements such as working from home are to be managed team by team.

Southern Cross University management has established a return to campus

“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT STAFF AND UNIONS ARE CONSULTED ON CHANGES”

working party with representation from the CPSU NSW.

“The most important thing is that staff and unions are consulted on any changes to working arrangements,” said Higher Education Representative Council Chair Shelley Odewahn. “Different campuses face different issues.

“For example, parking at work is an issue for city campuses as staff are often unsure about being able to safely use public transport. Too often parking is not available or is too costly.” ■



BANGING THE DRUM

How COVID hit one member's work and play.

The day of the funeral for former Prime Minister and union leader Bob Hawke was a pivotal moment for Disability Support Team Leader and musician John Fenton.

Mr Fenton, who may be familiar to some readers as drummer for long-standing Sydney band Crow, works in an Aruma group home for five men in their fifties with disabilities in Strathfield.

He said when Mr Hawke passed away, he made a decision to “get more involved and more active” and is now a Delegate representing workers in Aruma.

“My personal experience is that we have been in a holding pattern,” he said, citing the Copied State Award his fellow members work under.

As members come closer to the day where they come off the Copied State Award, he said there is “a lot of anxiety”.

Adding to the anxiety is working in close proximity to clients as the pandemic rips through Sydney.

“THE MUSIC INDUSTRY IS ALREADY ON THE BOUNCE BACK AFTER SO LONG”

Mr Fenton said his employer is well geared up for the pandemic, with a “pandemic-response group”, adding his workplace’s layout means cases can be isolated if required.

However, across the sector, he said things are “tough”.

“It is tough having residents at home, all day, every day, it is tough getting hold of rapid antigen tests; a little tough getting hold of personal protection equipment (PPE); and when you have COVID-positive cases in the house, it’s tough wearing full PPE and changing it over and over,” he said.



COVID-19 has also dealt a blow to the music industry Mr Fenton has been a part of since moving to inner-city Newtown in the 1980s and joining Crow with his brother Peter.

“It was a wonderful, vibrant scene centred around the Sandringham Hotel,” he said. “We went to the United States and recorded an album with Steve Albini and were lucky enough to get a support slot with Nirvana.

“I continue to play music to this day.”

He said COVID shut the industry down in 2020, but he is optimistic the industry “is already on the bounce back after so long”.

Mr Fenton said at one of the first post-COVID music gigs he attended in an inner-city pub, “the audience was very nervous, and sort of saying ‘should we be here doing this? Should we even shake hands?’” ■

CPA MEMBERS RECEIVE BACK PAY BOOST

There is power in a union. Disability Team Leaders get a February windfall.

Team Leaders at Cerebral Palsy Alliance (CPA) have healthier bank balances thanks to work by the CPSU NSW.

In February, members received thousands of dollars in back pay after CPA confirmed it had concluded calculating what it owed workers.

In May 2019, CPA advised the CPSU NSW it planned to delete the position of Team Leader. People with the role were to be made redundant or employed as lower-paid House Managers.

The Team Leader role existed under the Copied State Award, which applied to staff who had transferred from the state-run disability care system.

The CPSU NSW vowed to fight to keep the Team Leader role, filing a dispute notification in the Fair Work Commission.

The dispute argued that the Team Leader and House Manager positions were substantially similar if not the same and therefore the transferred staff should continue to be covered by the Copied State Award. The union argued both roles involve managing the day-to-day operations of disability group homes both in terms of work on the floor and administratively.

On 13 May 2021, Commissioner Boyce issued a decision in the CPSU NSW's favour stating that the copied State Award continued to apply to Team Leaders.

The transfer back to the copied state award occurred on 11 October 2021 but the members had to wait for back pay due to continued delays, receiving their money in February 2022. ■



Sony Narayan and Nadhifa Mshinhdo from Life Without Barriers are among the Disability Support Workers still covered by the Copied State Award.

AWARD STAYS PUT

Disabilities staff should not be pressured into new agreements.

As new Enterprise Agreements are negotiated, CPSU NSW members at most disability providers are still covered by the Copied State Awards.

When Disability Workers transferred from Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC) their conditions of employment transferred across. This is known as the Copied State Award.

“Depending on the member’s employer, the nominated date for expiry of the

Copied State Award is due this year or next,” said CPSU NSW Industrial Manager Thane Pearce. “This also depends on when staff transferred from ADHC.

“It is important for members to know that your provider can not unilaterally change your conditions of employment. However, if an attempt is made to do so, there are a number of avenues the CPSU NSW can pursue.

“Should you receive any formal advice that your employer is changing your conditions, you should contact the union.

“As far as the CPSU NSW is concerned, the conditions for transferred staff remain the same and continue as they have for the last five years.” ■

OVERLOAD HITS SERVICE NSW

A constantly expanding role for the agency is taking its toll on staff.

Service NSW has been the linchpin of the state's battle with COVID-19.

It was at its most visible on smartphones state-wide, used to check in and out of venues throughout NSW.

"The COVID Check In functions are only part of the huge role Service NSW plays," said PSA Delegate and Central Councillor Janice Hartmann, who has been canvassing members to see how they are coping with a huge surge in their workloads.

"Keeping up with the daily changes to public health orders and information on Service NSW and NSW Health websites was a challenge," said one member, who said there was a big increase in the call volume as members of the public sought help with technology.

"This put additional stress on our staff not just in the contact centres, but in service centres," said the member. "We saw mental health decline and sick

days increase and overall motivation and morale diminish."

Another member said the technology focus of the many apps and vouchers resulted in confused, upset older clients.

"The older generations are quite angry about the technology requirement as they don't have computers and in many cases they don't have family close to be able to help them," said the member. "We can send them to a service centre, only there are COVID requirements for people in an at-risk age group."

Adding to members' woes is the massive increase of functions Service NSW is providing to the public.

"Service NSW is continually adding more things to the Service NSW App and Service NSW accounts which puts more pressure on the MyService Team," said another member. "Staff are receiving minimal training and just get told there is a knowledge article and pretty much have to figure this out ourselves. This also gives clients a negative experience."

Yet another member said "projects are thick and fast and just keep tumbling down the line", but "training is not keeping up with demand".

The member said the solutions to the

avalanche of work hitting members aren't complicated: "stop cutting positions and stop breaking down grade levels."

Service NSW, the member said, needs to invest in its valuable staff.

"People are people, we are willing to learn, discover and contribute. Government just has a mantra to keep dumping more and more without the correct funding, staffing levels, training and commitment to work-life balance.

"Oh, and don't forget pay rises. Is the Government aware of what a pay rise looks like?" ■



**FREE
AMBULANCE
COVER**

Did you know as a member of the PSA/CPSU NSW, you and your family receive free ambulance cover?

For details, as well as other member benefits, go to www.psa.asn.au www.cpsunsw.org.au



PSA AND CPSU NSW MEMBERS ARE CHAMPIONS OF THE STATE

As the state emerges from lockdown, it is time for our union's members to step forward and get NSW back up and running. Every day our members are working hard for a better state for everyone. PSA and CPSU NSW members truly are Champions of the State.



KEIRON works for Service NSW as a Customer Service Representative at the inbound call centre in Newcastle.

He says, "We have fast become the face of the NSW State Government, which means we have direct contact with the public for the majority of transactions and services offered by NSW Government departments, including Transport, Birth Deaths & Marriages, Fair Trading, Revenue NSW and more."



ALICIA is a School Psychologist, supporting the health and wellbeing of students through psychological assessment and intervention.

"Supporting the wellbeing of students is a key public health issue and builds stronger communities, particularly in regional and remote areas," she says.

The school counselling service is able to support children who otherwise would not have access to psychological services.



ELIZABETH works at DCJ Housing Services.

Elizabeth is part of a team of essential workers at DCJ Housing Services who work tirelessly to achieve this goal. Elizabeth is a Business Support Assistant, an essential worker, a NSW Public Servant and a Champion of the State.



NATHAN works for Victims Services, a part of the Department of Communities and Justice. He is currently Acting Team Leader, Client Service Team.

Victims Services operates the Victims Support Scheme for victims of violence in NSW. Nathan's team takes more than 55,000 calls a year.



As a Senior Child Protection Caseworker, **BELINDA** builds strong relationships and partnerships with the children and families she works with to ensure safety and meaningful outcomes.

DCJ Community Services is important to ensure our most vulnerable children and families are heard.

SHAUN SNAPS A WINNING PIC

The CPSU NSW WaterNSW Photo Competition has a winner.

Thanks to his photography skills Shaun Gleeson, who works in the Albury branch of WaterNSW, has a \$500 Union Shopper voucher to spend on camera equipment.

Mr Gleeson's photo was the winning entry in the CPSU NSW Photo Competition, which asked members in WaterNSW to submit a snap that "captures the aspects of the recent and current flood events while representing the essential work of WaterNSW employees".

"The photo is at a gauging station near Canberra," said Mr Gleeson, who has worked for WaterNSW for 12 years. "In the photo, we are deploying a remote-control boat to monitor the flow of the river."

Mr Gleeson is normally employed in an office-based role, but the floods gave him



a chance "to do what I used to do" and get out in the field. Once outside, he took the opportunity to photograph the work WaterNSW does when the rivers rise.

"The photo neatly captures the role of our members and the environment in which they work," said CPSU NSW Senior Organiser Anne Kennelly. ■

“ IT NEATLY CAPTURES THE ROLE OF OUR MEMBERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY WORK ”

NATIONAL PARKS MEMBERS SURVIVE HELICOPTER CRASH



PSA members and the pilot escape injury.

A helicopter crash in the Snowy Mountains nearly cost the lives of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) staff and that of the aircraft's pilot. The helicopter crashed near a dam near Guthega in Kosciuszko National Park. All five occupants were hospitalised.

NPWS Ranger Andrew Miller, Project Officer Ken Moon and Field Officer Mick Kuhn, were recovering in Canberra Hospital along with the pilot and another worker.

"The PSA takes safety extremely seriously," said Organiser Kim de Govrik, who visited the men. "The Department is

paying for accommodation for hospitalised members' families. We appreciate its cooperation in this matter."

NSW Police, NSW Ambulance, the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service crews all helped perform the rescue mission.

Fire and Rescue NSW crews also worked to prevent 150 litres of fuel polluting a nearby waterway in the pristine alpine environment.

"Our members work in potentially dangerous conditions such as these to preserve the natural splendour of NSW," said Mr de Govrik. "The state owes them thanks rather than criticism some have received in the alpine region in recent years."

An air-safety investigation into the crash has been launched. ■

REACHING OUT TO LGBTI+ MEMBERS

Union fights all forms of discrimination.

PSA/CPSU NSW members in the LGBTI+ community will soon have a support group within the union structure.

“The Religious Discrimination Bill may not have passed, but it has shown our community that we should not be complacent,” said Organiser Glenn Duncan. “By formally representing our LGBTI+ members, the PSA/CPSU NSW can ensure they receive protections from discrimination and bullying in the workplace.

“The group can also ensure union policy accurately represents all members.”

Members interested in being involved should contact the Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679. ■



FAIR DAY PRESENCE FOR UNION PRIDE

PSA/CPSU NSW staff member Rubi Tabuteau and one-time staff member Melissa Shelford were at the Mardi Gras Fair Day to talk about the importance of union membership. The two were among others staffing the Union Pride stall at Victoria Park, in Sydney’s inner west. ■



Gidget Foundation Australia
– here to help expectant and new parents
How can we help you?

Start Talking – Telehealth

The **Start Talking** program provides individual psychological counselling services for parents delivered via a video call service, similar to Zoom.

Gidget House – Face to Face

Gidget Houses are located in NSW, QLD and VIC, are easily accessible and offer a safe haven for parents to access individual psychological counselling services in person. Partners are able to access our specialised services as well.

Gidget Virtual Village – Online

Gidget Foundation Australia coordinates and moderates three private, **Facebook peer support groups**, connecting expectant and new parents with the Foundation and each other, in a safe, judgement free space. **Gidget Virtual Village** for new parents, **Gidget Virtual Village Dads** and **Gidget Virtual Village for Expectant Mums**.

Gidget Foundation Australia is proud to offer FREE individual psychological counselling services for expectant and new parents nationwide.

We are honoured to partner with PSA to offer support to members and their families.



@GidgetFoundation
 @gidgetfoundation
 @GidgetFndation
 @Gidget Foundation Australia

contact@gidgetfoundation.org.au | gidgetfoundation.org.au | 1300 851 758



HELP FOR FLOOD-HIT MEMBERS

Help is at hand for those affected by recent catastrophes.

As it did during the 2019/2020 bushfires, the PSA/CPSU NSW has established a \$100,000 relief fund for members badly affected by flooding that has inundated large areas of NSW.

Towards the end of February, the PSA/CPSU NSW Executive endorsed a permanent Emergency Relief Fund which will give up to \$1000 to eligible members whose primary residence was totally or partially destroyed by an extreme weather event, or a declared natural disaster, such as recent floods.

Applicants need to have been financial

members when their home was damaged. Applications will also be considered for other reimbursements for those affected by the disaster.

Applications for funds will be reviewed by a committee consisting of the President, Assistant General Secretary, Senior Vice President and Vice President.

“Whether it is job cuts or natural disasters, your union will always be there for our members who so admirably work for the people of NSW,” said General Secretary Stewart Little.

Members needing help are encouraged to contact the PSA/CPSU NSW Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679 or at membersupport@psa.asn.au. Full terms and conditions are on the PSA and CPSU NSW websites. ■

LIVING BETTER A CALL AWAY

Member's phone call brings results.

A call to the PSA/CPSU NSW Member Support Centre (MSC) yielded good results for a member in disability services.

A member with Livebetter was made to sign a contract for a permanent position on the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award, and warned he didn't sign it then he wouldn't get any shifts.

“Livebetter are obviously not allowed to do this,” said Member Services Manager Kym Ward. “The Community Living Award is in place for five years or until a new Enterprise Agreement has been negotiated.”

Once the member made a telephone call to the MSC, they received the correct advice. They have since received substantial back pay. ■



FOUNDATION HOUSE

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY
DRUG & ALCOHOL FOUNDATION

FOUND BLUE 
MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

#supportourown

SUPPORTING PSA MEMBERS



**IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE
CONTACT US ON 9555 8361**

foundationhouse.net.au (02) 9555 8361 or 1300 403 403

GET PERINATAL HELP WITH GIDGET FOUNDATION

Reaching out to new parents.

All financial PSA/CPSU NSW members and their immediate family have access to Gidget Foundation Australia's programs to support expectant and new parents experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety – at no cost.

“Members can get at least 10 free individual psychological counselling sessions per year,” said PSA/CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess. “Depending on your location, these sessions can be delivered face-to-face at

Gidget House or telehealth via a video call service, similar to FaceTime or Skype. There are Gidget Houses in both metro and regional areas of NSW.”

Gidget Foundation Australia also provides support to those who have experienced the loss of a pregnancy or a baby, or infertility.

“All members who contact the union with a parental issue will be sent a Gidget Bunny Book, which has special stories written for babies, with psychological strategies to help parents,” said Ms Jess. ■



FOUNDATION HOUSE ALWAYS AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS

Members with addiction issues can seek assistance with a union partner.

PSA/CPSU NSW members have access to Foundation House, a service available for people with dependency issues with alcohol, drugs and gambling.

“Foundation House is located in a tranquil waterfront setting within the grounds of Callan Park in Sydney’s inner west and is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days per week,” said PSA/CPSU NSW Member Services Manager Kym Ward.

The facility was established 20 years ago as an initiative supported by the construction industry.

It holds 28-day residential rehabilitation programs, using a 12-step treatment approach to addiction. The residential program supports clients with drug, alcohol and gambling addictions, and is an abstinence-based program for men and women.

There are also day programs available to PSA/CPSU NSW members.

Foundation House’s services are also available to members’ immediate families.

“Your union is always on hand to guide you through life’s challenges,” said General Secretary Stewart Little. ■

RISING TO THE FLOOD CHALLENGE





The Public Sector is called to action again.

It was another blow to a state already battered by disaster and pandemic: weeks of unending rain sending river levels up and forcing people from their homes.

Up and down the east coast of NSW, flooding occurred and damage was done. But it was the regional city of Lismore that caught the nation's attention, as the Wilson River rose 14 metres, engulfing the city centre and destroying homes and businesses.

In its wake, the city was left battered, with buildings wrecked and air filled with the stench of mud.

As *Red Tape* went to press, the region again was hit by catastrophic floods.

Union Vice-President Shelley Odewahn (pictured right), who lives in Lismore, said her hometown "has just been decimated".

"Lismore has not seen anything like this in recorded history," she said. "No-

one anticipated it was going to be a flood worse than anyone has ever seen.

"Basically, flood warnings came out on Saturday evening and the whole town kicked into gear. We thought it was going to be nine-to-10 metres high. But come the wee hours, the prediction went up to 11, 12, 13 then 14 metres.

"By then it was too late. That's when you started seeing messages on social media. It was incredibly distressing."

She said in the floods' wake, the community came to the fore, with friends helping friends. She is pictured above hosing out a gymnasium her children used.

"I know what a great job all the SES and Police Radio do, but I also know they are under-resourced."

Juliette Sizer, Vice-President of the PSA/CPSU NSW, said "there is not a single person in the region who has not been impacted by this flood event", with much of the area's infrastructure and businesses destroyed.

"It's been such a mammoth event that



it has affected everything,” said Ms Sizer. “Schools are closed and I have not been able to get petrol until recently.

“I’m dealing with a lot of members in schools, trying to provide support where I can in about they are going to work.”

Once again, PSA/CPSU NSW members were called into action, doing the work of the public sector.

“Our members in and around the area were called into action yet again,” said General Secretary Stewart Little. “We had everyone from the State Emergency Service (SES), Police and Fire and Rescue pitching in. But you also had members from other workplaces volunteering their time and efforts to assist others.

“The work our members do can’t be replicated by the private sector. It is vital we have a well-resourced public sector ready and waiting for such calamities.”

Not all members working to help were in the Lismore region. Calls to emergency services such as Police, the SES and Fire and Rescue go to call centres in different parts of NSW. Despite being far from the floods, staff in these areas were under pressure as calls came through.

Bree Bell, who works with Police Radio, said her section had “hundreds of calls” in backlog, as calls to the 000 service kept coming in.

“We were walking into a backlog of jobs and you hit the ground running,” she said.

Nicole Harding, who works at the SES said her workplace was “absolute chaos” as her section fielded more than 10,000 calls for help.

“We were running at capacity,” said Ms

Harding. “But it was still not enough. We couldn’t get to everyone straight away. It affects our members and volunteers mentally.”

PSA schools Delegate Carol Erskine was among the army of SES volunteers called to action as floods deluged northern NSW.

Ms Erskine (pictured above among fellow volunteers) has been a volunteer with the Lismore City Unit of the SES for two years. A Delegate for the PSA, she is a School Administrative Manager at Lennox Head Public School.

As the waters rose around the Northern Rivers region, Ms Erskine was part of the coordination efforts, getting the large team of volunteers to where they were needed.

“I’ve been involved with the SES for about two years,” she said. “It is wonderful to be supporting our community alongside like-minded people.”

Tony Luck (pictured at his desk on page opposite), who is a Senior Technology Officer with NSW Police Radio Communications, was part of the team that made sure operations did not cease when Lismore Police Station was under water.

“We deployed our Mobile Command Centre to Lismore, because the ground floor of the Lismore Police station was completely destroyed by the flood waters,” he said. “The mobile unit is completely self-contained and has police radio data and the police internal phone network, as well as video download capability and satellite TV capability.

“It is essentially a police station on wheels.”

His unit also sent a trailer generator to keep the mobile unit powered for a long period.

Mr Luck said Radio Communications set up 4G modem, computer and phone operations that “goes straight into the police network”, as the area had no 5G connections.

As well as coordinating the police operations, the convoy sent to Lismore included a fuel trailer, which supplied fuel to emergency services, as petrol shortages had hit the region.

Mr Luck said his team’s work was an example of how the public sector can respond quickly to an area in need.

The floods were the first test for a new government agency, Resilience NSW, which was set up in the wake of the bushfires of 2019-20 and is part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

“Here at Resilience NSW, we are establishing and coordinating the 24/7 operation of evacuation centres,” said PSA Delegate Adam Tran. “Family and Community Services (FACS) staff are also involved in doing this.

“We are arranging temporary accommodation for evacuees who do not have friends or family with whom they can stay, assessing and processing applications for Disaster Relief Grants, and coordinating other disaster response, relief and recovery activities, short, medium and long term, both at state and regional levels.”

“I’VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE SES FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS. IT IS WONDERFUL TO BE SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY ALONGSIDE LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE”

In the aftermath of the flooding, thousands of people need help with housing. Client Services Officer with Housing and Homelessness, Mark McFadden, said his section faced an enormous challenge with more than 3000 homes in Lismore destroyed, and all but one motel gone, reducing the capacity for short-term accommodation.



HARRY DIVES IN

A PSA member makes a dramatic rescue.

As the city prepared to flood, Harry Gregg, who works as an Electoral Officer for Lismore MP Janelle Saffin, didn't get much sleep.

"It was a pretty harrowing day," said Mr Gregg. "I evacuated my house before the river started rising and thought I was well and truly in the clear at my mum's house on higher ground.

"Janelle had also evacuated to a friend's house near my mum's place.

"Then we heard the levee that prevents flooding was predicted to break at 6am. But then we heard it would break at 5am, then 4am then 3am.

"It topped at 2am."

What followed was a flood bigger and faster than anyone had predicted, and the waters started flooding areas Mr Gregg had never seen inundated since his childhood in the area.

"At about 4am I saw my elderly neighbour with two kids trawling through the flood water with their medication their only possession," he said. "Dawn was starting to break and I saw how high it was at Janelle's place. She was texting us saying the water was coming up quickly.

"I was calling 000 and SES for over an hour, but they were swamped and

we know there are not enough staff and resources.

"I took matters into my own hands. I got up my neighbour's blow-up kayak – the type you take to the beach – pumped it up with a KMart pump and got pushed out into the water.

"Then I moved to the end of the street, where it was about two metres deep. Janelle had already swum out and was with her friends all clinging to a tyre. They were swimming to safety and to shore. Janelle said she was fine and asked me to go and help an elderly woman stuck in another house. I canoed in and found her with the water up to her neck, crying with just a plastic bag of possessions she could salvage.

"I put her in the kayak and we headed out, but the lady, who was about 90, panicked and we capsized.

"I swam sidestroke carrying her for about 50 metres to shore, where we both went into shock.

"About an hour later, a friend got me and helped me and I went back to work to help other people by coordinating the rescue effort.

"Since that night, Electoral Office staff have been working hard to help the community." ■

People seeking shelter now join an already massive 83,000-person waiting list state-wide.

He said the Northern Rivers region had already been suffering with rising rents before the waters too began to rise.

Housing and Community Services staff set up evacuation centres, such as the one at Southern Cross University. Some Housing staff were left homeless, and were therefore working and living in the same centre.

"I have colleagues who have been flooded and are now overworked dealing with clients," said Mr McFadden, who himself worked seven nights straight helping people left homeless by the flooding.

Siobhan Callinan, Industrial Manager with the PSA/CPSU NSW, said there "are not enough workers to support vulnerable people and get them into long-term accommodation and support". She added there are also issues with the amount of housing stock available for vulnerable people in NSW.

The PSA/CPSU NSW, acknowledging many members were affected by the flooding, set up an Emergency Relief Fund for members (see page 24). General Secretary Stewart Little said he aims to incorporate the fund into the union's rules so help is available for members affected by any future natural disasters.

"Our members do their utmost for the state, and it is up to us to do our best to support them." ■



THE PRECARIOUS STATE



Too many NSW workers are in insecure roles.

Call it what you want – “the gig economy”, “an agile workplace”, “be your own boss” – insecure work is reversing the labour market trends that built Australia’s middle class prosperity. And not only are workers suffering; our country is the worse for it.

“Many of our members have been in temporary school positions for more than 15 years,” said Juliette Sizer, Senior Vice President of the PSA and Chair of the Schools Departmental Committee (pictured opposite). “Unfortunately, this predominantly affects our School Learning Support Officers, due to the nature of the funding for these positions.

“Although we can clearly see that the

number of students with additional and special needs is increasing, the Department of Education does not provide a permanent staffing allocation to support those students. Instead, schools receive annual funding based on student need with no guarantee of continuity, hence the never-ending cycle of temporary engagements.”

For too many members, there are too many barriers to converting to a full-time role.

“There are mechanisms for schools to convert temporary staff to permanency in some cases, but this is a complex process and seldom occurs due to the risk-averse nature of schools when it comes to lack of ongoing funding commitments,” said Ms Sizer.

As the Australian economy emerged from the ravages of the widespread COVID-19 lockdowns last year, the

amount of hours worked increased. However, the pandemic failed to stop the creep to insecure work that had characterised the Australian economy before 2020.

The number of hours worked rose 4.3 per cent, but the number of jobs increased only 3.4 per cent and the number of people employed increased only 3.3 per cent. Jobs are being created, yet full-time jobs with security and decent conditions are not growing at the same rate as demand for workers.

Writing in *The Guardian*, economist with the Australia Institute Greg Jericho said “this tells us that there was not just a return to more work being done by people in their existing jobs, but there was also an increase in the number of people working a second job”.

According to the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), the number of

people working two or more jobs is at an all-time high.

“This unfortunately is not a pandemic-led one-off but part of a now six-to-seven-year trend that finds workers who are facing fewer hours, more insecure work, and getting pay rises that barely keep up with the cost of living are being forced to seek another job to pay the bills,” wrote Mr Jericho.

FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT MEANS JOB SECURITY FOR OUR MEMBERS. THEY KNOW THEY WILL GET A CERTAIN BASE PAY, RATHER THAN THE FLUCTUATING PAY THAT CASUALS EXPERIENCE.

Ms Sizer agrees. “There are plenty of problems with this employment model – there is less of an incentive for schools to invest in staff who are temporary in terms of training and development; uncertainty around the continuation of staff affects the individual staff member, the students they support and the school’s ability to plan effectively for the long-term,” she said.

“But the biggest problem I see is the psychological impact on our members and reduced safety at work. With no guarantee of employment from year-to-year or in many cases, term-to-term or week-to-week, our members can experience a host of issues stemming from financial anxiety and lack of career certainty that impacts on many aspects of their life.”

Ms Sizer is not the only one to claim that insecure work is bad for employees’ health. In Western Australia, precarious employment has been identified as a health issue. According to that state’s *Code of Practice on Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace*, insecure work can be classed as a psychosocial hazard or risk factor for workers. The report recommends employers assess psychosocial hazards and risk factors as part of any risk-management processes they undertake.

According to *Health Impact of Psychosocial Hazards at Work*, a report by the World Health Organisation,

“[insecure] work arrangements can be as dangerous as traditional unemployment for workers’ health. There are early indicators of increased fatigue, depression and headaches among the precariously employed.”

“Insecure work doesn’t just have massive social and economic consequences” said ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O’Brien. “It creates a dangerous work environment, when people don’t feel they have the adequate support to report a hazard or take time off when they’re sick or injured.”

Insecure work also leads to difficulties accessing credit.

“More than 60 per cent of school staff in some classifications are temporary employees,” said Siobhan Callinan, Industrial Manager with the PSA/CPSU NSW. “This has impacted their ability to apply for home loans or have security around their income so they can plan for the future.”

“The PSA believes that long-term temporary school staff should be converted to permanency so that they have a secure job for the future. It is continuing to fight for a genuine pathway to permanency for all school staff as well as other improvements to your conditions.”

Juliette Sizer said the over-reliance on part-time roles in schools stems in part because of its image as “women’s work”. About 96 per cent of School Administrative and Support Staff are women.

“I think this perception is a stale

hangover from 60 years ago, when ancillary work was considered appropriate for ‘mothers wanting to help out’ at the school,” said Ms Sizer. “Over the years, our roles, responsibilities and the work we perform have become exponentially complex, and we have adapted our skill set to keep pace.

“It’s high time the Department recognised the value of its professional workforce, regardless of gender, by addressing the lack of job security.”

Other areas that have an excessive reliance on insecure roles include TAFE, universities and Housing.

“While much of Family and Community Services ditched the model that relied on casual labour, the Government relies a lot on agency staff and temporary employees in Housing,” said Ms Callinan.

“The longer-term permanent employees are constantly training new staff because they are on short-term contracts.”

So what can be done?

“We need to give people meaningful, full-time positions with good working conditions,” said PSA/CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. “Australia’s post-war prosperity was built on secure employment and jobs people could take a mortgage out against. They had conditions that let them plan trips away with paid leave, so they could work around school holidays and be sure that if they fell ill they did not have to worry about bills.

“People on short-term contracts for years, sham contractors and bogus self-employed people delivering take-away food on bikes are not the recipe for a country



FEATURE

where the wealth is shared. They are a path to a divergent economy of haves and have-nots.”

Luckily, the State Government has a template to work with.

Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) has shown other government agencies how to navigate a path away from excessive reliance on part-time, insecure work. The move came after the PSA constantly raised the issue with CSNSW, pointing out the agency was critically short staffed and it was counterproductive using casuals to fill those positions.

“CSNSW has now committed to primarily recruiting full-time employees rather than their previous approach of employing casuals and making them apply for a casual to ongoing pool and hoping a position comes up,” said PSA/CPSU NSW Industrial Officer David Bartle. “In the future, Correctives will primarily recruit ongoing roles but from time to time will advertise for a small pool of casuals, with the aim that those people will genuinely want a casual position as opposed to being forced to apply for a casual position and hoping to become ongoing later.

“Full-time employment means job security for our members. They know they will get a certain base pay, rather than the fluctuating pay that casuals experience. They will also have a roster, which at the moment is projected three months in advance but should be 12 months in advance when CSNSW gets it right.

“This means they can plan their life, rather than be sitting by their phone at 5:00am, waiting for a phone call. They

can also get home loans and they would have sick, recreational and parental leave available to them.”

Mr Bartle said the move is not only good for workers, it has helped CSNSW run more efficiently.

“Overall, the casual issue was a terrible move,” he said. “There was high attrition when disillusioned casuals got sick of waiting for an ongoing position and would find other employment.

“Once CSNSW employs the correct number of ongoing staff members to fill the huge number of vacancies, they will find their centres run more smoothly. Officer and inmate safety will improve.

“In reality, the costs of running a centre, some of which run their evening shifts on overtime, will go down. The ongoing roles will also require a commitment to case management and reducing recidivism, indicating their belief that the ongoing employees will be of a higher standard.

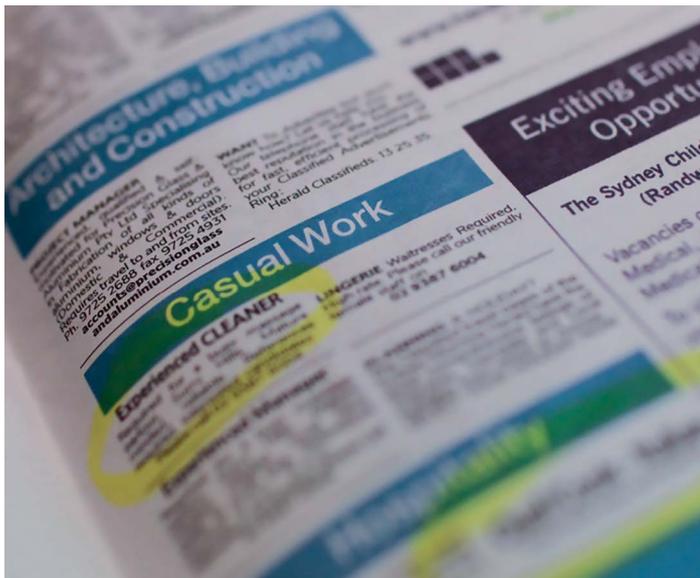
“There is also the related fact that a casual employee anywhere is attending a job whereas an ongoing employee is pursuing a career. There is a slightly different way of thinking.”

PSA/CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little said the case in the state’s gaols proves that unions and government can work together and cut costs and improve efficiencies by improving employee security.

“With more workers in full-time positions, our workplaces will be safer, happier, more efficient, more focused and more productive,” he said.

“The time for change is now.” ■

“ WITH MORE WORKERS IN FULL-TIME POSITIONS, OUR WORKPLACES WILL BE SAFER, HAPPIER, MORE EFFICIENT, MORE FOCUSED AND MORE PRODUCTIVE. ”



SECURE JOBS.



WORTH

FIGHTING FOR



WELDON WINS

Yvonne is NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year.

PSA member Yvonne Weldon is the 2022 NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year.

Ms Weldon, who works for the Department of Communities and Justice, made history when she was the first Aboriginal woman to run for the role of Lord Mayor of Sydney in 2021.

Anna Barwick, a PhD student with a focus on rural and women's health, was named NSW Woman of the Year. ■



BALANCING ACTS

Getting serious about First Nations super.

Australia's superannuation system has transformed the nation's economy and set up generations for better retirements. However, it has not achieved its true potential with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

The Federal Government's 2020 *Review into Superannuation* found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers faced challenges with the superannuation system, including the shameful disparity in life expectancies and lower earnings through their working lives.

There have been some improvements in the way superannuation is managed, such as lowering the age at which First Nations people can access their savings and the recent scrapping of the \$450-per-month minimum that workers need to earn before super is paid.

The PSA/CPSU NSW has been lobbying superannuation companies to improve

services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander account holders. However, progress has been slow.

"For members keen to know more about superannuation, there is a handy web page that explains how the system works and answers questions specific to Aboriginal employees," said Chair of the PSA/CPSU NSW Aboriginal Council, Sean Bremer. "The resources, which include a tool to locate lost superannuation accounts, are at www.indigenoussuper.com.au." ■



COUTTS-TROTTER TAKES CHARGE OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Secretary makes 'empowerment' a priority.

Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Michael Coutts-Trotter, has announced Aboriginal Affairs will report directly to him.

The change is one of a number of announced reforms to DPC by the Secretary, who was appointed to the role when Dominic Perrotet became Premier.

Chair of the PSA/CPSU NSW Aboriginal Council, Sean Bremer, said the union will wait and see what Mr Coutts-Trotter's plans will mean to Aboriginal Affairs and the plight of First Nations Public Servants.

"Too often we have had people announce grand plans, only for similar issues to persevere," said Mr Bremer. "We hope to see more Aboriginal people in Public Sector roles, particularly senior roles. Hopefully that is on Mr Coutts-Trotter's radar, too." ■

‘MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR MOB’

PSA member Jermaine Haymond is turning lives around.

Q uandamooka man Jermaine Haymond is optimistic about his job, setting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates on the road to a better life once they leave the correctional system.

“I am currently an Acting Senior Project Officer with the Aboriginal Strategy and Policy Unit, and I have been a part of that team since joining Corrective Services NSW [CSNSW] in 2016,” he said. “I oversee several projects that focus on better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates through the implementation of employment pathways, education, and cultural programs. I also look after our Corrections Aboriginal Mentor Programs, which provide our Aboriginal staff with the opportunity to develop career pathways and mentor others.”

Mr Haymond has a varied role, sometimes working in an office and sometimes in the field, where he prefers to be.

“Many of my projects involve Aboriginal community organisations and working with our inmates, which is probably the best part of the work I do,” he said. “I also enjoy being involved with projects and initiatives that increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders employed within CSNSW, and development programs for those already working with us.”

Mr Haymond said he needs to approach his job with an optimistic frame of mind, as sometimes inmates “simply aren’t ready” for the type of changes needed to turn their lives around.

“It is important to focus on the small wins, keep steady, even when things don’t work out the way we hoped they would,” he said. “I think you need to have a passion for working with people and making real positive change for the broader community.”

In common with many PSA/CPSU NSW members, My Haymond is passionate about his work making a positive change.



“I wanted to make my community a better and safer place and be a part of making a difference for our mob in custody,” he said.

“I think it’s important to remember that CSNSW is a receiving organisation and we don’t dictate who comes into custody,” he said. “However, for those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that do come through, we need to focus on identified factors that work. A holistic approach that includes employment, education,

culture, and special programs. We also need to work closely with community organisations that can continue to provide throughcare and support upon an inmate’s release.”

Mr Haymond encourages anyone working at CSNSW to join the PSA.

“The range of information, resources and training opportunities can really help,” he said. “Having the support services there, even if you never need them, is a great comfort as well.” ■



TRUE COLOURS SHINE IN ART COMPETITION

Indigenous inmates show off their artistic talents.

The PSA/CPSU NSW has run an art competition for Indigenous women inmates. “The International Women’s Day Committee wanted Aboriginal art for the banner for this year’s march,” said PSA/CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess. “I recommended that the PSA sponsor an Art Competition for female Aboriginal Inmates to do the Artwork.”

The theme for International Women’s Day this year was Respect, Safe, Equal.

“Approximately 70 inmates competed from Silverwater Women’s, Dillwynia Emu Plains and Mid North Coast correctional centres,” said Ms Jess, who works as a Senior Correctional Officer. ■

PSA DEMANDS MORE FOR WORKING WOMEN

Submission identifies state obstacles to female workforce participation.

A PSA submission to the State Government has urged more be done to reduce obstacles working women face in the NSW Public Sector.

In its report to NSW Treasury’s Women’s Economic Opportunity Review, the PSA outlined a series of recommendations to “adopt and deliver greater opportunities for its own female workforce participation”.

The report made a number of recommendations.

Citing the fact that, on average, women generally retire with superannuation balances 47 per cent lower than men, the PSA demanded super be paid on all paid and unpaid parental leave. It pushed for a Benchmark for Retirement Adequacy

that considers women, a faster timetable to increase superannuation to 12 per cent and that increases to superannuation be added to pay rises rather than incorporated into them.

Having achieved successful pay equity cases for Librarians and School Staff, the PSA recommended workplace flexibility be maintained for senior positions and the wages cap be scrapped.

The PSA recommended better support, such as short-term accommodation and travel expenses for people who have suffered domestic violence. The union also pushed for five days’ supporter leave for employees who support a family or friend experiencing domestic and family violence.

The PSA recommended improved scholarships for training and more flexibility for those juggling training and caring responsibilities. It also put forward the idea of a Women’s Professional Development Program.

The submission recommended an independent body be given the power to mediate and enforce disputes over workplace flexibility.

With childcare places at a premium, the PSA recommended expanding places, improving pay and training for workers in the sector and subsidies to make up the gap between the Commonwealth Government Cap and the cost of care.

The submission recommended the Government do more to reduce insecure work and that it adopt the PSA sexual harassment charter and implement better strategies to counter bullying.

The report urged the Government to consult and implement a mental health strategy for every Department and do more to improve access for women with disability.

The report recommended more support be given to foster carers.

The submission can be found at the PSA and CPSU NSW websites. ■

UPPER HOUSE AT THE BOTTOM OF PILE ON GENDER SPLITS

NSW must do better.

Female representation in NSW's two parliamentary chambers is among the lowest in the country. *Gender composition of Australian parliaments by party: a quick guide* is produced by the Australian Parliamentary Library. The most recent edition found that 28.6 per cent of members sitting in the NSW Legislative Council are women. The only chamber with a more lopsided gender split was the South Australian lower house, where a paltry 25.5 per cent of members were women. Since the South Australian election, though, the NSW upper house has moved to bottom place.

The NSW lower house, the Legislative Assembly, is 34.4 per cent women.

"This is sad when looking at the

underrepresentation of women," said PSA/CPSU NSW Women's Industrial Officer Jodie Haydon. "More women in power can only help get better outcomes.

"The Workforce Profile Report of 2021 put out by the NSW Public Service Commission shows the gender gap is the worst it has been in a decade, actually widening. The Premier's target of 50 per cent women in senior leadership by 2025 is set to fail, too."

More positively, the Australian Senate, the ACT's assembly chamber and both houses in Tasmania all had more women than men. The Northern Territory belies its blokey image and has 13 men to 12 women in its only chamber, while the West Australian lower house has only three more men than women.

We'd like to praise the West Australian Liberal Party for its 50:50 split in that chamber, if only to remind readers they have a total of two MPs. ■

SUPER CHANGES TO CUT IMBALANCE

Superannuation should be paid for Parental Leave.

The PSA/CPSU NSW's push to end the wage cap includes a demand that superannuation be paid on Parental Leave.

"Women take a disproportionate amount of time off work in caring roles," said PSA/CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess. "This, teamed with the gender pay gap, is a major reason women generally retire with lower superannuation balances.

"This is why we are seeking payment of superannuation on the unpaid portion of the first 12 months of Parental Leave for our members."

According to union research, women retire with an average of about 47 per cent less superannuation than men. ■

WOMEN'S COUNCIL COMMITTEE ELECTION 2022-2024

Nominations are called for positions of delegate on the Women's Council Committee. The call for nominations is as listed below:

ELECTORATE	NO. OF DELEGATES
Electorate 1 - Higher Education	
- Universities	1
- TAFE	1
Electorate 2 – Disability Services	1
Electorate 3 – Other National System Employers	1
Electorate 4 – Stronger Communities (FACS and Health)	2
Electorate 5 – Stronger Communities (Justice)	4
Electorate 6 – Education and Schools	4
Electorate 7 – Customer Service	2
Electorate 8 – Planning & Environment and Enterprise, Investment & Trade	2
Electorate 9 – Premier Cabinet and Treasury, External to Government Sector	1
Electorate 10 - Transport and Infrastructure	1

NOMINATIONS AND CLOSING DATE:

Each nomination must be seconded by two other women members in the same group electorate as the nominee. Nominees, nominators and seconders must be financial members of the Association as at **13 April 2022**.

Nominations must be submitted via Survey Monkey. www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCC_2022

The Survey Monkey link for nominations will be emailed to all eligible members on 19 April 2022. This email will include a breakdown of the above Electorates.

Nominations will close on 11 May 2022. Forms must be completed via Survey Monkey by 5pm on 11 May 2022.

If there is a ballot, candidates who wish to have a profile available for voters to read should provide a brief statement of 300 words or less stating how they will best represent members' interests.

Space is provided for this purpose on the form available through Survey Monkey.

J Campbell
for **GR Bensley**
Deputy Returning Officer



LESSONS: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM A PANDEMIC

Applying the pandemic's lessons to the workplace.

Our workplaces will never be the same again. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we perceive Workplace Health and Safety (WHS).

"COVID-19 has been an awful experience, but it has given us a chance to take a closer look at our relationship with the workplace," said PSA/CPSU NSW WHS Officer Suzanne Mathers.

"Here are just some of the things a worldwide pandemic and jolt to our working patterns have taught us."

If you are sick, stay home

"The old Codral advertisements telling us to drop a tablet, mask our symptoms and 'soldier on' in a workplace would produce howls of protest nowadays," said Ms Mathers. "And so they should. Your Sick Leave entitlements aren't just there for you, they are there to protect your colleagues.

"If you have cold or flu symptoms, call your boss and climb back under the doona. No job is worth the risk of making your co-workers sick.

Remember that COVID-19 is not the only way you can get sick. See your doctor about a flu vaccination that will help protect you and your colleagues. Some workplaces also arrange flu shots for staff.

Wash your hands

"Good handwashing is vital to avoid the spread of illness in the workplace," said Ms Mathers.

Hand Hygiene Australia (HHA), based in Melbourne's Austin Hospital, recommends applying an alcohol-based handrub to the surface of hands or washing them with water and soap, or a soap solution. HHA said this will reduce the amount of microorganisms on hands, reducing the spread of COVID-19 and colds and flu.

Get the air moving

A well-ventilated workplace is a safer workplace.

"Avoiding a stuffy workplace can be as easy as opening windows or keeping air-conditioning well maintained," said Ms Mathers.

Know your HSR

A Workplace Health and Safety Representative (HSR) is trained to ensure a workplace is safe. If you suspect there

are safety hazards at work, the HSR is backed by legislation to take action on your behalf.

Read more about HSRs on page 40.

Flexibility is here to stay

The workforce globally has proved workplace flexibility is possible.

"If you feel working from home is better for your mental health, or reduces your risk of catching COVID or the flu on public transport, talk to your manager," said Ms Mathers.

"If anything, COVID-19 has taught us that while our jobs are vital, it is also important to keep healthy and your loved ones safe," said PSA/CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. "No job is worth getting sick for." ■

IF YOU HAVE COLD AND FLU SYMPTOMS, CALL YOUR BOSS AND CLIMB BACK UNDER THE DOONA



UNION FIGHTS COVID CLAWBACK

The fight over Section 19B moves to the halls of power.

A submission to the NSW Parliament has demanded protections remain in place for the workers afflicted by COVID-19. In its submission to the Inquiry Into the Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2021, the PSA/CPSU NSW demanded Section 19B, which determines that essential workers afflicted by COVID-19 do not have to prove they contracted the condition at work, be repealed.

The report used examples of Medical Escorts, Disability Support Workers and Prison Officers to show the COVID-19 risks PSA/CPSU NSW members faced at work.

The report called for the Parliamentary Committee to “maintain 19B and the

prescribed occupations”. Furthermore, the PSA/CPSU NSW recommended the Government extend the list of prescribed occupations covered by the section to include Child Protection Workers, Service NSW employees and Government Registry Officers.

The union outlined that many essential employees worked “in close confines with infected people” and “worked during lockdown attending workplaces”. Mention was also made of PSA/CPSU NSW members in the cleaning industry and those whose work takes them to restaurants, clubs and hotels.

Despite the report still being examined by the upper house, the State Government rushed its legislation through the Legislative Assembly before incoming members from the February byelections took their seats. However, the legislation has stalled in the Legislative Council at the time *Red Tape* went to press.

“Our members saved the state,” said Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright (pictured right), who spoke last year at a rally opposing the proposed changes. “Yet as soon as it can, the State Government turns its back on essential workers.” ■



SPORE POINTS

Workplace changes will have you breathing easier.

A report published by the World Health Organisation in 2009 found that up to half of all Australian workplaces are affected by indoor dampness, which can lead to excessive levels of mould.

“Mould can cause allergic reactions, skin infections or toxic reactions leading to serious illness,” said PSA/CPSU NSW WHS Officer Suzanne Mathers. “A well-ventilated workplace is less likely to be affected by

excessive mould, so employers should limit the amount of water or moisture entering a workplace.

“This is particularly important as the weather cools.”

SafeWork NSW has a number of recommendations for employers looking to minimise mould in the workplace, including regular maintenance of buildings and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

According to SafeWork, employers should ensure good ventilation throughout the workplace and be alert for areas where there is no air movement and excessive humidity. ■



ALL ABOUT HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

A guide to the co-worker looking out for your safety.

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) are workers elected by their colleagues to represent that work group on health and safety matters.

HSRs are elected for a three-year term.

Under workplace law, what are an HSR's powers?

HSRs have certain powers and functions under the *WHS Act*.

In summary, an HSR can:

- Represent workers in their work group on health and safety matters
- Monitor compliance with safety laws
- Investigate and inquire into complaints and WHS risks
- Conduct inspections and accompany inspectors during workplace inspections
- Be present at interviews with workers
- Receive information on the health and

safety of worker/s in their work group

- Call on any person, such as a SafeWork representative, your union Organiser or a SafeWork inspector for assistance.

You can find these in detail in section 68 of the Act.

If an HSR has completed the SafeWork NSW-approved five-day training, they have the power to direct work to cease, and can issue Provisional Improvement Notices.

When should I ask an HSR to intervene in a workplace issue?

Your elected HSR is your go-to person on any health and safety issue for you or your work group. You can approach them at any time if you have a question or an issue you need assistance with.

What can an HSR do if their recommendations are ignored by management?

Management must engage with HSRs. If they are refusing to do this, or dismissing genuine concerns, please seek assistance from your union or SafeWork NSW.

Is an HSR protected at work?

HSRs are protected under section 66 of

the WHS Act and are not personally liable for anything done or omitted to be done in good faith.

HSRs are protected against exposure to discriminatory conduct for example, for raising or assisting with health and safety issues in a workplace.

How do I know who my workplace HSR is?

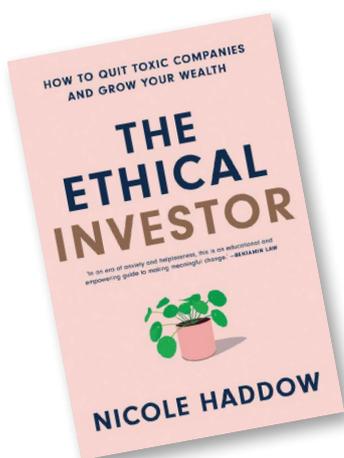
Your employer must display an up-to-date list of HSRs in the workplace and ensure the list is readily accessible to workers. They must also provide the list to SafeWork NSW. ■

UPSKILL WITH US

Go to page 48 to learn more about training to be a Health and Safety Representative with the PSA/CPSU NSW.



THE ETHICAL INVESTOR



How to quit toxic companies and grow your wealth

Nicole Haddow
\$29.99
Nero

In the coming years, Baby Boomers' inheritances will flow to Millennials disgruntled with capitalism and how it leads to unethical outcomes such as climate

change and habitat destruction and profits from human misery in socially bereft industries like gambling and tobacco.

Nicole Haddow's easy-to-read investment book follows the author's personal journey as she investigates how to get rich and live with a clear conscience.

She points out ethical investing can be as varied as choosing not to invest in companies that make money from tobacco, gambling or pornography. Or in businesses such as mining and development that contribute to climate change or wildlife habitat loss. The author runs through how to check for ethical investments and to look out for "greenwashing".

She reveals individuals' own ethical beliefs are very much a personal choice and there is no one-size-fits-all investment solution.

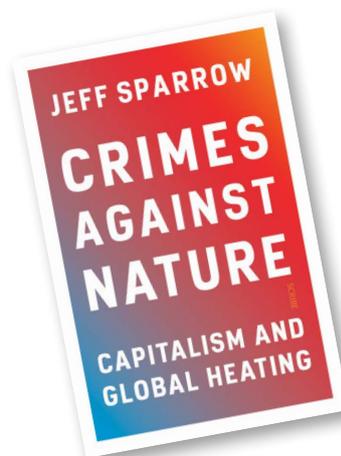
Ms Haddow instructs us on the main players in Australia's ethical investment space, such

as Australian Ethical, Future Super, and what screening they do on companies they invest in. Also, we get a run through smaller disruptors like the neobanks and learn about "micro investing" business such as Raiz and how their ethical offers stack up.

The book also touches on Australians' favourite investment – property – and how to invest in that in a virtuous way via efficient material choices, solar panels, batteries, and the use of salvaged building materials.

By talking to CEOs and founders of investment companies, the author gives us an insider view into the varied criteria used to screen "ethical" investments.

Ms Haddow concludes that caring about your money and the effect it has on the world and society can improve your financial habits and turbocharge your savings. The author is educating her generation that personal investing can be empowering. ■



CRIMES AGAINST NATURE

Capitalism and global heating

Jeff Sparrow
\$29.99
Scribe

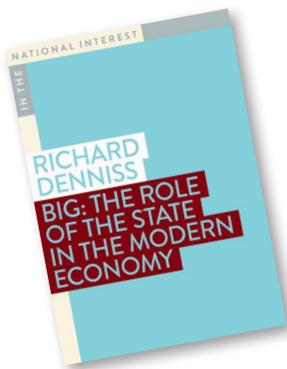
Capitalism has given humanity an amazing array of products and services and a life of convenience.

It may also send us to extinction, with all consumers complicit in its rapacious destruction of the planet.

However, campaigning journalist Jeff Sparrow believes throughout history people have not supported the destruction of the environment, with the worst excesses of pollution imposed by more powerful forces such as corporations and complicit governments.

The result is a far more optimistic read than the title indicates, assuring us "the future won't be like the past" and people can unite to demand better from their leaders. ■

BIG



The role of the state in the modern economy

Richard Denniss
\$19.95
Monash University Publishing

Everyone is a Keynesian now, regardless of their politics. Government is the solution to all woes, whether it is a conservative in his RSL club demanding a stronger military, a Liberal-voting Baby Boomer wanting top-notch health care and the prospect of a comfortable aged-care home, a business tycoon looking for well-trained graduates, or a Millennial aspiring to home ownership and a planet that won't be three degrees hotter in their lifetime.

Chief Economist with the Australia Institute, Richard Denniss, uses his book to dispel the anti-government mantra that gripped the Anglosphere from the 1980s onward.

The result is a quick 88-page read extolling the virtues of the state, pointing out that

even the supposedly anti-government conservative parties have presided over a gradual increase in the size and scope of the public sector.

He points out that public spending has gone up. Many of the recipients of state largesse now organisations such as private schools, fossil-fuel producers and consultants costing far more than the public servants they replaced.

Pointing out that COVID-19 has simply amplified the importance of a well-funded, proficient public sector, Mr

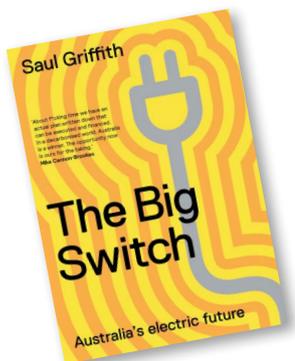
Denniss points to the Nordic world, where the high-tax, high-cost economy we have been told to fear for the past four decades has actually resulted in societies characterised by happier, wealthier people, improved productivity, less inequality and more self-sufficient manufacturing capacities.

Since the time of Thatcher, Reagan, Keating and Douglas, people in English-speaking nations have been told to spurn government. This book is a cry to put a brake on this theory and embrace the state. ■

MEMBER DISCOUNT

Monash University Publishing is giving PSA/CPSU NSW members a discount if they purchase Richard Denniss's *Big* online. You can find a link to their site at www.psa.asn.au/big. The discount code is AUSINSTITUTE20 upon checkout.

THE BIG SWITCH



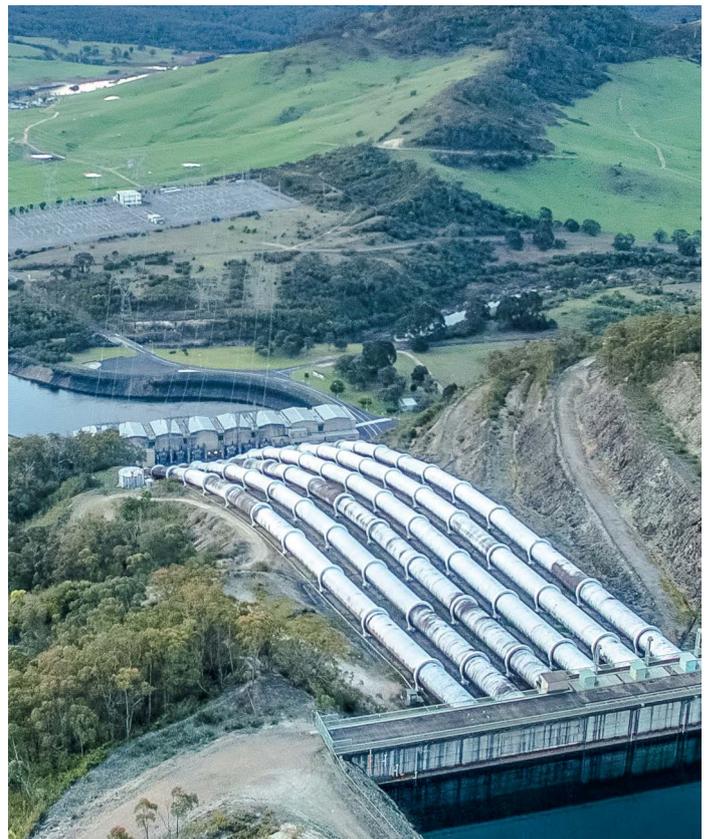
Australia's electric future

Saul Griffith
\$24.99
Black Inc

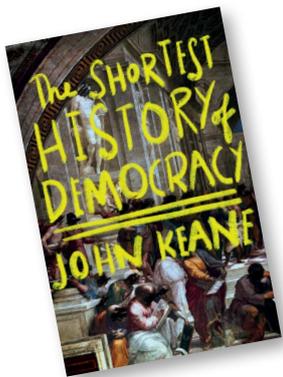
Unlike many of the media figures doing their best to demonise renewable energy, author Saul Griffith is an engineer who actually knows his subject.

Mr Griffith is confident Australia can not just adapt and be powered by renewable electricity, he thinks the country will be the world leader in this technological revolution, with cheaper energy and an economy turbocharged by green energy exports. Of course, this requires political will.

Failure, he warns, will see global temperatures rise beyond the 1.5-degree tipping point putting the planet at peril. ■



THE SHORTEST HISTORY OF DEMOCRACY



John Keane
\$24.99 (\$11.99 as an ebook)
Black Inc

Professor of Politics at the University of Sydney, John Keane, takes readers from the earliest examples of consultative government in ancient Mesopotamia, through to the 21st century and the rise of

anti-democratic despots in Russia and Hungary and the enraged lunacy of Trumpian America.

All in 200 pages.

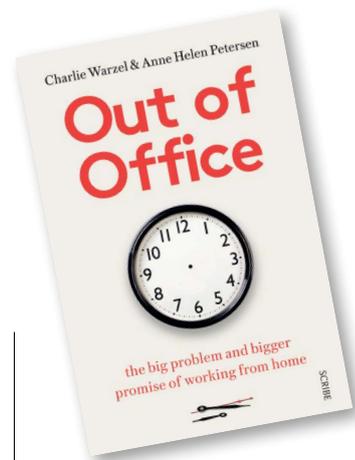
The result is a relentless barrage of information as the idea of participatory government ebbs and flows, countering the power of absolute monarchs, colonial empires and power-hungry despots.

Professor Keane discusses the fragility of democracy, quoting Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels's observation that it is a system of government that gives its opponents the very means to destroy it. The professor contends that as recently as the 1940s, there were only 12 or 13 (depending on your view of the Finnish government at the time) fully democratic countries in the world, and that countries can easily slip

back into oppressive forms of government, as occurred last century in central Europe and is occurring right now in places such as India.

The book dispels plenty of myths about democracy: it didn't start in Athens, it does not require a wealthy populace to thrive, and it is not the sole domain of white, Christian counties.

Professor Keane is happy to point out the limitations of the many forms of democracy, from the assemblies of all free citizens of ancient Greek states through to the ballot boxes Australians visit every year or so. However, he is staunch in his defence of a system of government that has freed people from the whims of mad kings, totalitarian thugs and colonial overlords and has reinvented itself countless times to adjust to different nations. ■



OUT OF OFFICE

The big problem and bigger promise of working from home

Charlie Warzel & Anne Helen Petersen
\$29.99
Scribe

Authors Charlie Warzel and Anne Helen Petersen swapped life in Brooklyn for a small city in Montana. Little did they know their life working remotely would be replicated on a global scale as COVID-19 emptied the world's workplaces.

Out of Office examines positives or remote work, such as the end of excessive meetings, time saved not commuting and the chance for people to achieve real flexibility.

However, working from home has also resulted in people being unable to "switch off" and new employees working in teams of people they have never met.

The book ends with "letters" to bosses and workers urging them to embrace change in a positive manner. This is a must read for managers with teams working remotely. ■





THE BETOOTA ADVOCATE/DECODE

When serious news becomes indistinguishable from satire, it makes sense for satirists to become serious news analysts.

The *Betoota Advocate* team is better known for the website parodying Australian politics and culture, and popularising the nickname Scotty From Marketing. However, the two men producing the material, Archer Hamilton and Charles Single, are experienced journalists and have long deployed their skills in producing a podcast that combines the light-hearted approach of the site with serious political analysis, as well as interviews with cultural figures such as street artist Scott Marsh. The results are slick enough that there is a queue of political figures keen to

be grilled by the journalists' satirical alter egos, outback Queenslanders Clancy Overell and Errol Parker.

Recently NSW Labor Leader Chris Minns appeared on the podcast to discuss his political awakening and his plans should his party win next year's election.

More recently, the duo have launched *Decode*, a podcast which aims to give people, particularly Millennials, a better understanding of the political process. It goes back to basics, for example using former MP Wyatt Roy to go behind the scenes of the Liberal Party.

Casual visitors to the parody site may be surprised at the political acumen shown by the hosts, but will emerge from each episode arguably better informed than if they had read a News Corp newspaper.

A word of warning, though; the plethora of Queensland in-jokes may confuse anyone who has never lived north of Tweed Heads. ■

FOLLOW THE MONEY

The Australia Institute goes behind the news stories of the day.

Recognising much of our news is presented in glib, short bursts with too little backgrounding, the think tank the Australia Institute examines issues in greater depth.

Its podcasts can go into detail on issues largely ignored by the media, such as the attack on charity advocacy by

the Morrison Government. It also holds webinars with high-profile figures such as Chanel Contos, who has campaigned on consent laws.

Highlights include a podcast summing up the Glasgow conference on climate change, and the Federal Government's business-as-usual approach to gas projects, as well as an episode on the Coalition's excessive fealty to consultancy firms.

The podcasts are a great way to get into an issue long after media attention has moved elsewhere. ■

THE GRATTAN PODCAST

An independent think tank looks at issues facing Australia today.

Set up by the Victorian Government and backed with a mix of private and public funding, the Grattan Institute is a think tank examining six key policy areas: governance and budgets, cities and transport, climate change and energy, health and aged care, education, and economics.

The organisation produces a podcast that regularly examines the issues dominating our increasingly partisan news pages.

Topics covered include the hours teachers require to do their jobs, how inflation will affect everyday consumption, and how to fix the fiasco that is the Australian aged care system.

The Grattan Institute has access to experts in its six fields who can explain issues to listeners without talking down to them. Its podcast on inflation, for example, uses the example of buying an expensive bicycle in an uncertain economic environment beset by supply chain issues.

A regular visit to this podcast, which is updated every week or two, will make listeners better, more-informed voters. ■



POLL POSITIONS

As elections loom, the PSA CPSU NSW gives its members regular updates on the issues that will affect the ballots.

PSA/CPSU NSW members will be among the best informed voters at the coming federal and state elections thanks to a series of podcasts on the issues facing the electorates.

Recent podcasts have included a look at the low rates of vaccination in the disability services and home care sector and the Prime Minister's disconnect from the cost of living.

The podcasts also covered the decision of the Aged Care Minister to attend a cricket Test rather than face an inquiry during a huge surge of

deaths in facilities under his portfolio
 "Our members will head to two elections in the next year or so, electing governments in Canberra and Macquarie Street," said Communications Officer Jim Minns (pictured below in headphones talking to Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright). "The podcasts

go into detail on member-specific issues that may not get as much attention from the mainstream media.
 "Obviously the NSW election will have a profound impact on our members employed by the State Government. However, the federal election is looming large as one of the most

important to face the Australian public in years."
 Two new PSA/CPSU NSW podcasts are released every week. They can be downloaded on popular broadcasting hosts such as Apple and Spotify or accessed through the PSA and CPSU NSW websites. ■



PANDEMIC CHAMPIONS

Meet the team working on behalf of PSA members in education, health and communities.

PSA members working in NSW Health, the education system and Community Services have been at the forefront of the state's response to COVID-19.

And they are backed up by a large team of professional union staff.

"It became obvious as the pandemic gripped NSW that public services were at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19," said Industrial Manager Siobhan Callinan (seated front row, second from right).

"And it was members in health, education and communities who were



doing some of the most high-profile work.

"NSW Health set up and ran an elaborate contract-tracing system that monitored the pandemic's spread, as well as running our hospital system's response to surging patient numbers.

"Our members in schools adapted

quickly to home-learning and community services such as child protection and Housing helped work with our most vulnerable people.

"I am proud to work in a section of our union that fights on behalf of such a vital part of the NSW workforce." ■



APHEDA CAMPAIGNS FOR DEMOCRACY IN MYANMAR

The country's slide into dictatorship has plunged the country into abject poverty.

Australia's international union aid body, APHEDA/ Union Aid Abroad, is campaigning to restore democracy in Myanmar, the country once known as Burma.

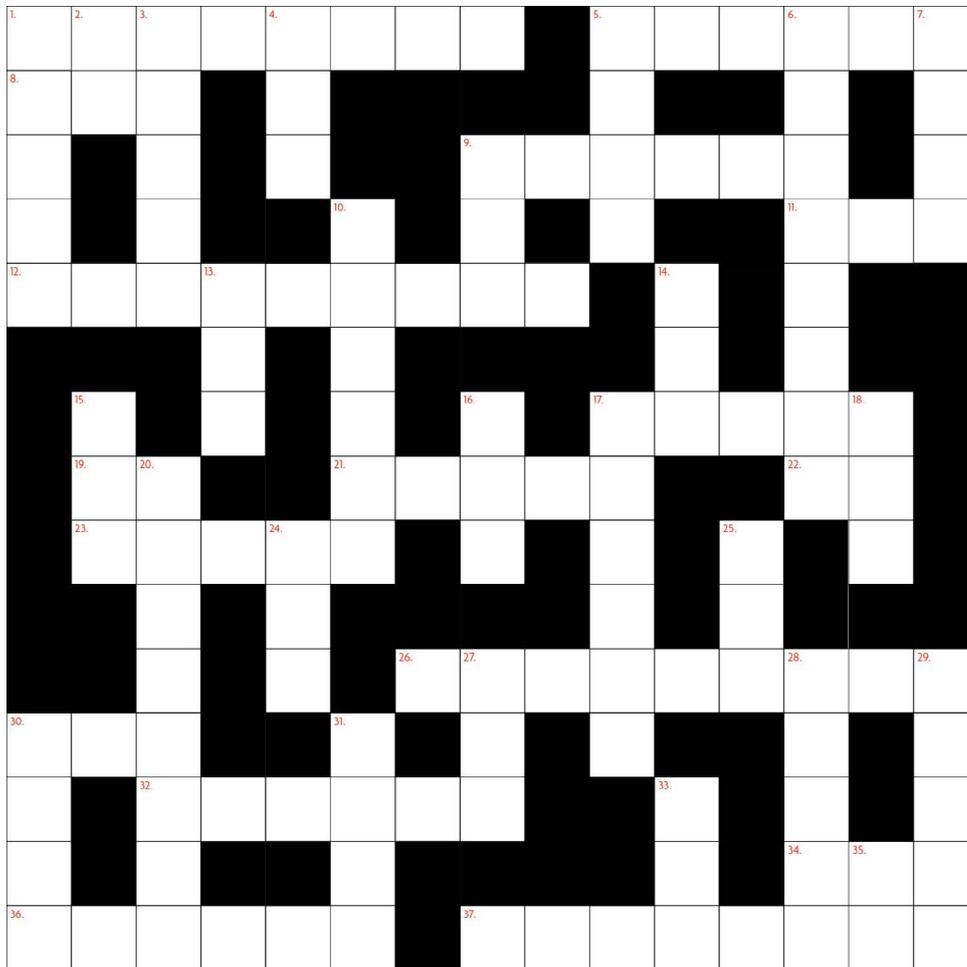
"This is the most serious economic disaster in Australia's immediate region," said APHEDA Executive Officer Kate Lee, who demanded the Australian Government join western allies and impose

targeted sanctions on senior military leaders and their military-owned businesses

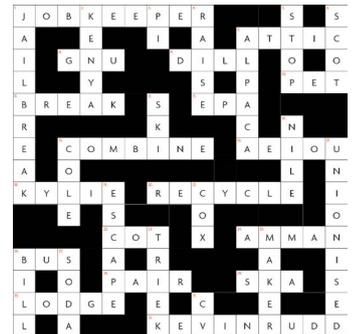
"To date, Australia has shockingly not imposed a single sanction", said Ms Lee.

Since the military took over the already-impooverished South East Asian nation, the economy has contracted by nearly 20 per cent, with 1.6 million jobs lost and nearly half the country now living below the poverty line. ■

CROSSWORD



Last issue's solution



- 7. Surname of 2021's Australian of Year unbowed by Scott Morrison (4)
- 9. Move quickly in the present (3)
- 10. Eliminate thirst (6)
- 13. Malicious automatic Tweeter (3)
- 14. Black stuff on a road (3)
- 15. Police Officer (3)
- 16. First name of actor who played Jon Snow (3)
- 17. More than one Italian carb (6)
- 18. Did this woman have a three-down? (3)
- 20. Gave money back (8)
- 24. Plaything (3)
- 25. Big, forward-marching, Australian bird (3)
- 27. Moved quickly in the past (3)
- 28. Red wine from northern Spanish region of the same name (5)
- 29. Your union will fight to get you one of these (5)
- 30. Canines (4)
- 31. Move side-to-side (4)
- 33. Public transport that uses the road (3)
- 35. Global body's abbreviation (2)

ACROSS

- 1. State or territory capital known for cold winters, politicians and green-shirted league players (8)
- 5. State or territory capital known for cold winters, the end of a yacht race and skinny-dipping near a funky museum (6)
- 8. Old state government office for issuing drivers' licences and registrations (3)
- 9. Cease work permanently (6)
- 11. Second-largest city in PNG (3)
- 12. State or territory capital known for rainy winters, efficient trams and cricket on Boxing Day (9)
- 17. Uptight person (5)
- 19. Oregon's abbreviation (2)
- 21. Fine plates from the Orient? (5)
- 22. Abbreviated car in Elon Musk's garage (2)
- 23. State or territory capital known for mild winters, Gina and Twiggy (5)
- 26. Perrotet's previous gig (9)
- 30. Mafia leader (3)
- 32. State or territory capital known for non-existent winters, barramundi burgers and big beer bottles (6)
- 34. Posh gravy (3)
- 36. State or territory capital

- known for cooler winters, inefficient trams and a building shaped like sails (6)
- 37. State or territory capital known for not really having winters, years of Labor governments and cane toads (8)

DOWN

- 1. Fatty part of milk (5)
- 2. Denotes location (2)
- 3. Belly button (5)
- 4. Large deer (3)
- 5. Frozen planet in Star Wars films (4)
- 6. State or territory capital known for wet winters, wine and more wine (8)

FOR THE BENEFIT OF US ALL

Health and Safety-related training can help everyone in your workplace.

Taking a PSA/CPSU NSW training course helps not only the individual participant, but the union members they will help in the future.

Nowhere is this more evident than with Workplace Health and Safety-related training.

Conducted by the PSA/CPSU NSW, Workplace Health and Safety-related training gives members a chance to upskill, as well as creating safer workplaces for colleagues.

“A workplace with workers well versed in Health and Safety issues is a better workplace,” said PSA/CPSU NSW Educator Suzanne Mathers.

“Our courses not only enrich a member’s skills, they make for a safer place for their colleagues to turn up to work every day.”

Health and Safety Representative (HSR) course is designed for elected HSRs. It is a five-day, SafeWork NSW-approved course.

HSRs are also eligible for an annual, one-day refresher course, which is also offered by the PSA/CPSU NSW.

The union is also planning networking webinars so HSRs can discuss issues with their contemporaries in different workplaces.

“This is a way we can build a network of support for HSRs, who perform such a vital role in our workplaces,” said PSA/CPSU NSW Work Health Safety Officer and Educator, Suzanne Mathers.

Work Health and Safety is a two-day course that examines workers’ rights, entitlements and obligations under the *WHS Act 2011* that underpin a safe and healthy workplace. ■



Mental Health training tackles the stigma around talking about the issue at work. The course covers information, strategies and resources that can help support people with mental health issues and encourage them to seek professional help if concerned.

Dealing with Workplace Bullying is designed to assist members and delegates to understand what constitutes bullying and how to prevent and manage bullying and harassment at work. We look at relevant legislation and guidance materials, incident reporting and practical strategies and processes that can assist. ■

DID YOU KNOW?

- 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.

NEW DELEGATE TRAINING

A new timetable gives members a chance to upskill.

The PSA/CPSU NSW has introduced its updated training program.

“Our two-day course will give Delegates the skills and knowledge to build power at workplaces,” said new PSA/CPSU NSW Training Officer Kayti Murphy. “Participants will explore the importance of unions, history and the values that underpin them.

“By attending our course, you will develop your skills utilising tools such as mapping, recruitment conversations and problem solving frameworks. If you think this is you, come along and learn how to improve and organise your workplace.”

For more information, go to www.psa.asn.au/training-you. ■



JOINING FORM

Public Service Association of NSW
Community and Public Sector Union

JOINED BY:

ABOUT ME:

Title: M F X

First name:

Surname:

Preferred name:

D.O.B:

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander: Yes No

Address (home):
STREET STATE
SUBURB POSTCODE

Address (postal):
 POSTCODE

Phone:
MOBILE
HOME WORK

Email:
PERSONAL
WORK

Receive quarterly union magazine (*Red Tape*) via: Post Email

ABOUT MY WORK:

Employer name:

Job title:

Pay ID serial no:

Commencement date: Agency/Work unit:

Worksite address:
STREET STATE
SUBURB POSTCODE

Employment status: FULL-TIME PART-TIME

Employment type: PERMANENT/
ONGOING TEMP/
CONTRACT CASUAL LABOUR HIRE

Are you a current Health & Safety Rep (HSR)? YES NO

ABOUT MY MEMBERSHIP:

Weekly membership fees are based on your gross annual income. Please tick which applies to you:

Gross annual salary Weekly fees from July 2021

Less than \$10,969 \$3.75

\$10,969 – \$43,876 \$7.28

\$43,877 – \$62,325 \$11.73

More than \$62,325 \$15.25



Fees can also be paid quarterly or yearly by cheque/credit card/cash. Payment must accompany this form. An invoice will be sent when your next payment is due.

I would like more information about:

Training Becoming a delegate/workplace contact

Membership fees subject to change.

ABOUT MY PAYMENT: (SELECT ONE)

OPTION 1: Direct Debit Fortnightly 4 weekly

NAME ON ACCOUNT

FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

BSB ACCOUNT NUMBER

SIGNATURE

I hereby request the deduction from my account of my subscription to the PSA (User ID 040172). I authorise the following:
1. The PSA may verify the details of the above mentioned account with my financial institution if required. 2. My financial institution may release information allowing the PSA to verify the above mentioned account details. 3. My employer may release my bank account details to the PSA for the purpose of enabling me to establish a direct debit facility for the payment of my subscription. 4. I have read the Automatic Payment Service Agreement overleaf and agree with its terms and conditions.

OPTION 2: Credit Card (monthly only) Visa Mastercard

CARD NUMBER

NAME ON CARD

SIGNATURE EXPIRY DATE

I hereby authorise the PSA to debit my card account with the amount and at the intervals specified in the Salary and Fees Table detailed on this form, and in the event of any change in the charges for these subscriptions, to alter the amount from the appropriate date in accordance with such change. This authority will stand, in respect of the above specified card and in respect of any card issued to me in renewal or replacement thereof, until I notify the PSA in writing of its cancellation. Union dues processed on 7th of each month.

DECLARATION: (T&C)

SIGNATURE

DATE

RETURN YOUR FORM

AFTER COMPLETING YOUR FORM, YOU CAN:
 Hand it to your organiser
 SCAN AND EMAIL TO:
 membership@psa.asn.au
 YOU CAN POST IT TO:
 Membership Section, PSA of NSW
 GPO Box 3365, SYDNEY NSW 2001

I, the undersigned, hereby apply to be enrolled as a member of the Public Service Association and Professional Officers' Association Amalgamated Union of New South Wales (PSA) and the Community & Public Sector Union SPSP Group NSW Branch (CPSU NSW) in accordance with the Rules of both bodies, by which I agree to be bound, and I appoint the PSA and CPSU NSW as my bargaining agent. I agree that a copy of this form (whether as a scanned image, photocopy, facsimile or otherwise) may be used or dealt with as if it were the original. I have read and understood the information detailed overleaf relating to financial obligations and the circumstances and manner in which I may resign my membership.

Revised 1/2022

NEED HELP? CALL THE UNION

 **1300 772 679**



TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Automatic Payment Service Agreement

We, the PSA, make the following commitment to you:

- » The PSA will debit/charge your membership fees as they fall due. However, if this day falls on a non-business day, they will be debited/charged on the next business day.
- » The PSA will only use this authority to debit/charge regular fees. If you miss a payment, it will be picked up in the following period i.e. two instalments will be taken out.
- » Resignation from the PSA must be notified according to the section "How to resign from the PSA and CPSU NSW". Should you resign your membership, the PSA undertakes to cease debiting your account upon the termination of the written notice period.
- » The PSA will notify any changes to your union fees in its magazine, *Red Tape*.
- » The PSA will act in accordance with our Privacy Statement, while noting that your financial institution may require such information to be provided in connection with a claim made on it relating to an alleged incorrect or wrongful debit.
- » The PSA will investigate and deal promptly with any queries, claims or complaints regarding debits/charges and provide a response within 21 days of receipt.

Your commitment to the PSA:

- » You will ensure that the account details provided to the PSA are identical to the account details held by your bank or financial institution.
- » You will ensure that you have sufficient funds or credit available in the nominated account on the due date for payment of your fees. You will let us know in writing within 14 days if the nominated account is altered, transferred or closed.
- » You will be responsible to ensure that the amounts debited/charged to your nominated account for your PSA fees are correct.
- » If the charging arrangements are stopped by you or your nominated bank or financial institution, you will arrange a suitable alternative payment method with the PSA.

- » Resignation from the PSA/CPSU NSW will be notified by you as per the conditions in the section "How to resign from the PSA and CPSU NSW". Repayments will not be made for late notifications.

How to resign from the PSA and CPSU NSW

You may resign from membership when either you cease to work in an area covered by the Association or by giving 14 days' notice in writing of your intention to resign to the PSA General Secretary.

Resignation from the PSA will also be taken as resignation from the CPSU NSW, subject to confirmation.

Resignation from the CPSU NSW can be by notice in writing of two weeks or more, such notice being delivered to the Secretary of the CPSU (SPSF Group) NSW Branch.

Please note that you are obliged to pay any dues owing to the PSA/CPSU NSW up to the date of effect of the resignation and that fees are not refundable on resignation from the PSA/CPSU NSW.

Privacy Statement

Information collected in these applications is used for the purposes of the PSA and the CPSU NSW only.

Any information collected is handled and used in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles, the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

When we use third parties to carry out union functions (e.g. mail-houses, electoral offices, candidates to union office, union delegates, etc) only necessary information is released, and subject to the condition that it not be used for any other purpose.

Information requested for payment of membership fees is provided only to the relevant financial institution or employer.

Any member may at any time arrange to see and correct their membership record by contacting membership@psa.asn.au



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 1300 772 679

 (02) 9262 1623

 psa@psa.asn.au

 cpsu.nsw@psa.asn.au

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union health

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SATISFACTION, LOYALTY AND
LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND

*Terms and conditions apply



COST OF LIVING
UP

WAGES
DOWN

the
PUBLIC SECTOR
NEEDS A
PAY RISE



☎ 1300 772 679

🌐 www.psa.asn.au 🌐 www.cpsunsw.org.au



Authorised by Stewart Little, General Secretary, Public Service Association of NSW
and Community and Public Sector Union (SPSF Group) NSW Branch, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney NSW 2000