**PSA/CPSU NSW RETIRED ASSOCIATES ADVISORY GROUP**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Held on Tuesday 5 December 2023 at PSA House and by Zoom**

The meeting was chaired by Dave McKeough, President of the PSA CPSU NSW Retired Associates and commenced at 10.35am.

1. **Acknowledgement of Country** – Dave McKeough
2. **Attendance**

**At PSA House** Dave McKeough, Robert Asbury, Carmel McKeough, Robert Ryan, Kim McClymont, Mara Tudorin, Ysbrand Oosten, Samson Raman, John Walz, David Clyant, Robert Pike, Nicola Christie, Isabella Ramirra, Janette Beer

**PSA Representative** Dylan Smith, Manager, Industrial Support

**By Zoom** Patricia Nethery

**3. Apologies**

Nicole Jess, Bret Leech, Paul Turner, Wayne O’Mara, Stan Beal, Barry Blanchard

**MOTION: That the apologies be accepted.**

MOVED: Robert Asbury SECONDED: Robert Ryan

CARRIED Unanimously

**4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 24 October 2023**

MOTION: That the minutes be accepted with spelling mistakes corrected and apologies from Nicola Christie, John Walz and Mara Tudorin added.

MOVED: Robert Ryan SECONDED: Robert Asbury

CARRIED: Unanimously

**5. Business Arising**

*5.1 Motion re SSS Superannuation*

Refer Item 6 Reports – Executive Update

*5.2 Promotional materials*

Dave and Carmel advised that draft brochures have been prepared and photographs taken. Isabella Ramirra suggested that Retired Associates could volunteer at the PSA to expedite this work. This was considered an excellent suggestion by the group. Isabella and Carmel both indicated their willingness to volunteer.

**Action: Carmel McKeough to follow up with the Communications team.**

*5.3 Red Tape Articles*

Carmel McKeough recently submitted a draft article for a future edition.

*5.4 Unfinancial members*

Continues to be a work in progress.

**Action: Dave McKeough and Carmel McKeough to provide update at next meeting**

*5.6 Mental Health Strategy*

Carmel advised that the motion in relation to the proposed mental health strategy, including transition to retirement was submitted to the General Secretary following the last meeting.

Carmel and Dave advised that a group called the Supporting Ageing Government Employees Network (SAGE) has approached the PSA about a range of issues affecting older workers including transition to retirement. Dave, Carmel and Simone Scalmer from the PSA will be meeting with representatives from SAGE on 19 January 2024.

Isabella Ramirra advised that TAFE has a transition to retirement policy (refer Attachment 1). We all agreed that having a strong and effective public sector wide transition to retirement policy was of fundamental importance given the age profile of the public sector.

We also noted that volunteering is good for one’s mental health and well-being and is a way of staying connected and involved in the community. We further noted that some organisations are finding it difficult to recruit volunteers. Carmel advised that applying to do voluntary work is much like applying for a paid job which can be challenging for people when they only want to spend a half-day a week volunteering. We agreed that there was work that needed to be done on a policy framework and guiding principles for volunteers.

Carmel McKeough MOVED the following motion from the floor:

That through the General Secretary the PSA CPSU NSW Retired Associates write to The Hon Jodie Harrison, MP, Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in relation to the development of a strong and effective sector wide transition to retirement policy and a policy framework and guiding principles for volunteers.

SECONDED: Robert Asbury CARRIED: Unanimously

**Action: Carmel McKeough to prepare correspondence for General Secretary’s signature**

**6. Reports**

*6.1 PSA Executive Update*

Dylan Smith, Manager, Industrial Support, joined the meeting. In relation to the SSS motion Dylan advised that support for twice yearly indexation is unlikely. However, there may be potential for movement in terms of better transference to partners. To achieve any change SSS needs to provide data. This has been requested by the PSA.

Other issues discussed by Dylan included:

* our mental health motion – update to be given in the new year;
* changes to the Industrial Relations Act – wages cap repealed, mutual gains bargaining introduced, reintroduction of the Industrial Court and re-introduction of regional allocations of Industrial Relations Commissioners;
* the changes also require the Industrial Relations Commission to take into account the NSW Government’s fiscal position and outlook in the exercise of the Commission’s function about public sector employees;
* these changes are very welcome;
* a draft Government Workforce Mobility Placement Policy has been developed – PSA has had input;
* Government Sector Employment Act is to be reviewed and the terms of reference are being developed;
* Premier’s memorandum related to improved processes around return to work being developed;
* Look to continue discussions about the 2014 changes to the Workers Compensation Act next year.

Dave and Carmel indicated that the Retired Associates would like the opportunity to contribute to the PSA’s submission in relation to the Government Sector Employment Act when the review formally commences.

We thanked Dylan for his report.

*6.2 Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association Conference and AGM*

Dave and Carmel reported on their attendance at the conference. Motions addressed a wide range of issues including concessions for public transport, funerals, health, housing, aged care – community and residential, income security, tax, utilities, planning for later life and loss of ability to use cash and cheques.

Dave and Carmel had a discussion with Ash Fowler, the CPSA’s senior policy officer about the Opal contract and the impact of possible changes when the contract is up for renewal in terms of concessions for older people. We felt there would be benefit in asking Ash to be a guest speaker next year.

**7. Correspondence -** Nil

**8. Motions on Notice**

Robert Asbury moved the following motion

Preamble: -

The premise for the motion outlined below, for consideration by this meeting is based on numerous TV, Radio, print and on-line news articles which could/likely and most certainly affect many segments of Australian society.

Over the last 18 months the following actions have been either instituted by various organisations – federal, state, private companies and others. Amongst these changes are: -

1. the Federal Government’s/Treasury Departments announcement of the discontinuation of the use of the cheque system for carrying out of financial transactions including use of Bank Cheques for various property transactions, discontinuation of cheques for commercial transaction of any type,
2. The banking association suggestions of the discontinuation of the use “Cash” for commercial transactions of any type and replacing those transactions by way of electronic devices, debit/credit cards or on-line transactions,
3. The closing of the 3G mobile phone system for the current 4G & 5G systems,
4. Telecommunication companies transferring customers (without notification) from one e-mail service to another and not, once having done so, checking that all e-mail contact details have been properly transferred i.e. Bigpond e-mail customers transferred to Telstra e-mail services (Oct 2023),
5. Conversion of travel cards i.e. Opal to newer mobile phone applications, without another alternative
6. The movement of newspapers, magazines other information services, to on-line services, without proper notice being given, refund of funds paid in advance to any of the former services and subsequent request renewal of subscription funds for future periodicals, magazines or newspapers some of which were free in the first place and,
7. The closing of bank branches and other financial service providers branches and in some cases their associated ATMs and/or moving those services to Australia Post Offices, which then as an economic decision decide to no longer provide those services. In the last financial year alone over 150 bank branches have been closed reducing the number of branches to less than 1450, throughout NSW and approximately 10 percent of all ATMs have also closed in the state reducing the number of these to approximately 4,500.

There have been/are several major problems with these actions: -

For people who are dependent on these services, which are not secure from being “hacked”, suffer electronic collapse, environmental disruption, etc. this has resulted in loss of personal data, corruption or worse, complete loss of personal devices, let alone, severe damage to the institutions that are/were affected.

Recently, there have been major data breaches of several major institutions: - Optus, Medibank Private, NAB and Telstra during 2022. Additionally, other institutions have suffered computer systems breakdowns due to computer upgrades or lack of oversight of systems i.e. Sydney Metropolitan Rail Network signalling system collapse in May 2023 (insufficient staffing, incorrect system reboot and incorrect device replacement) and Optus in early November 2023 (System upgrade carried out from Singapore Head Office) which affected 10.3 million customers and the state’s “000” emergency contact system at the same time.

The Optus, Medibank and Telstra and other service providers not listed in this report, have had problems also, which affected personal data and communications disruptions had secondary effects on several Federal, State and Financial organisations processes. Further the Sydney Rail signal collapse incident affected over 0,5 million commuters for the evening peak hour in Sydney and took more than 12 hours to fix. Also the Optus and Mediank data breaches led to several months of problems for many hundreds of thousands of customers and un-necessary disruptions of people’s lives, including in significant customers having to get many of their personal identity documents replaced.

Now according to the “Free to Air” broadcast services (i.e. 7, 9, 10), their spokesperson (announced on Friday, 1st Dec. 2023) has suggested the “all” TV broadcast services will move from radio wave (TV frequency) broadcast to entirely “On Line” delivery systems within the next 5 to 10 years. Whenever this situation has arisen services within a short time are no longer “Free to Air” but revert to paid subscription.

It is not just people in the “Bush” being disadvantaged by withdrawal of services (which is where many of these things have occurred or will occur in the near future), but everyone is affected by these arbitrary decisions. Also, slowly, everyone is losing their autonomy to the digital world and those who control it, (and that’s not you and me).

So now to the motion to be considered by this meeting: -

That this meeting approves a motion that

* all general service providers, government organisations, financial services providers and any institution/organisation providing services to anyone, consider the total effect (whatever those maybe) of their actions on the persons they provide services to;
* where necessary puts in place regulations requiring that effects of any changes made to these services not adversely affect their customers/clients. Further, where a decision is made that does adversely affect customers/clients, processes be put in place; provide support (free of charge) to help these customers/clients adjust so as to be able to live normal lives!! and
* that this meeting brings our concerns to the attention of the General Secretary and requests him to write to relevant Federal and State ministers about legislative, regulatory and policy changes needed to the problems outline in the motion.

MOVED: Robert Asbury SECONDED: Mara Tudorin

The motion was unanimously supported and Retired Associates commended Robert on the work he had done to prepare this motion.

**Action: Carmel McKeough to forward this motion to the General Secretary and prepare draft letters for his signature.**

**9. General Business**

*9.1 Meeting Dates for 2024*

Carmel McKeough discussed the proposed schedule of meetings for next year as follows:

Tuesday, 27 February

Tuesday, 23 April

Tuesday, 25 June

Tuesday, 27 August

Tuesday, 22 October

Tuesday, 3 December

This schedule was agreed to and members were requested to put dates into their calendars/ diaries for next year.

**10. Guest Speaker – Professor Tim Stephens**

We welcomed Professor Tim Stephens as our guest speaker. Tim is a Professor of International Law at the University of Sydney Law School. He teaches and researches in public international law, with his published work focussing on the international law of the sea, international environmental law and international dispute settlement.   Tim has honours degrees in law and arts, a PhD in law from the University of Sydney, and an M. Phil in geography from the University of Cambridge.

Tim is a long-term member of the NTEU and actively involved in his local community. He is presently a councillor on Inner West Council representing Leichhardt Ward.

Tim is a climate change expert and gave a very high-quality presentation titled, “Climate Change, the Just Transition and the Union Movement”. He advised that we are experiencing a climate emergency which is clearly evident from rising temperatures, rising sea levels and extreme weather patterns. We are at a critical moment but there is also cause for optimism if the international community acts with urgency. He discussed what is happening internationally, in Australia and within NSW.

Tim also highlighted the importance of acting collectively to address climate change and referred to the important role of unions and groups such as LEAN.

There was a lot of discussion and questions afterwards. We thanked Tim for his presentation and indicated that we might be asking him to provide an update next year.

The presentation will be distributed with the bulletin issued to members along with the minutes of this meeting

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Retired Associates will be held on Tuesday, 27 February 2024 at PSA House or via Zoom, commencing at 10.30am. The meeting will be followed by a light lunch.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm.

Attachment 1

**TAFE NSW Transition to Retirement**

**Written Direction No. WDPSB20305**

Approved by: Chief People and Culture Officer

Approval Date: 31 July 2020

Effective From:3 August 2020

# 1. Introduction

TAFE NSW is an inclusive employer who values the contribution its mature workers provide. This procedure provides the option for employees who are considering retirement to adopt a phased approach rather than an abrupt departure.

# 2. Purpose

This procedure details who is eligible to apply for the transition to retirement program and the process for applying and implementing an agreement.

# 3. Scope

This procedure applies to permanent TAFE NSW employees with a minimum of 12 months continuous service and who are participating in the Teacher Annual Review or the PDRP process.

# 4. Procedure

This section details the process for applying for the “Transition to Retirement” program.

## 4.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for Transition to Retirement an employee must:

1. Be employed on a permanent basis by TAFE NSW
2. Have at least 12 months continuous service, and
3. Be planning on retiring within 3 years of starting the plan.

## 4.2 The “Transition to Retirement Program”

Transition to Retirement is a program that enables employees to explore options, other than to abruptly retire from TAFE NSW. Options can include, for example:

1. Reduction in hours
2. Compressed week or 9 day fortnight
3. Purchase of leave or utilisation of leave without pay or paid leave entitlements
4. Changing their position for one with less responsibility
5. Providing training / coaching or knowledge transfer.

Managers should try to be creative in order to approve a Transition to Retirement request as the benefits to TAFE NSW include, for example, retaining talent and transferring skills and knowledge.

Employees should seek independent financial advice on taxation and superannuation implications prior to considering a Transition to Retirement Program.

## 4.3 The application process

1. The employee must complete the Transition to Retirement Application form detailing their proposed arrangement
2. The employee’s manager is to review the request and discuss it with the employee and the relevant People and Culture Business Partner. A decision should be made by considering:
   1. both the employee and TAFE NSW’s needs, and
   2. that performance standards are met (Teacher Annual Review or a PDRP must be in place)
3. For Teaching employees the arrangement should be approved by the HOST/ Head of Digital

Delivery

1. For all other employees the arrangement should be approved by the Manager and the One-Up

Manager

1. If an employee believes their transition to retirement application has been unreasonably refused, the employee is able to request a review of the decision to the manager above the original approver(s).
2. The decision is to be communicated to the employee within 21 calendar days. A reason should be provided if TAFE NSW declines the request
3. Changes are made in SAP (as appropriate) and the arrangement is to be implemented within an agreed timeframe.

## 4.4 Ongoing monitoring

The arrangement should be reviewed and refined until the employee exits the workforce. Further changes can be made through consultation between both parties throughout the duration of the arrangement.

**5. Responsibilities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Position | Responsibility |
| Chief People and Culture Officer | The Chief People and Culture Officer is the approver of this Procedure |
| Managers/Head Teachers | Endorsing a transition to retirement plan (subject to separate approvals (where required) for specific options within the plan). |
| All Employees of TAFE NSW | Employees of TAFE NSW are required to read and understand the procedure and their responsibilities |

# 6. Definitions

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| --- | --- |
| Term | Meaning |
| Transition to Retirement | A phased retirement program that offers options for employees who do not want to abruptly exit the workforce |
| Term | Meaning |
| PDRP | Performance Development Review Plan is TAFE NSW’s performance management program |
| Annual Teacher Review | Review and development tool for Teaching employees that is completed once per year |

# 7. Related documents

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the following related documents:

1. Working Flexibly Procedure
2. Working from Home Procedure
3. Transition to Retirement Application Form
4. TAFE NSW Delegation Manual

# 8. Contacts

Accountable Officer Chief People and Culture Officer

Written Direction Officer Diversity Manager

# 9. Document information and review

This procedure document will be reviewed at least every three years.

Record No. DOC20/82266

Review Due: 31 JULY 2022

**Approval History**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Effective | Approved by | Amendment |
| 1 | 31 JULY 2020 | Chief People and Culture Officer | Initial publication |