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

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Held on Tuesday 24 October 2023 at PSA House and by Zoom**

The meeting was chaired by Robert Asbury, Senior Vice-President of the PSA CPSU NSW Retired Associates and commenced at 10.10am.

1. **Acknowledgement of Country** – Robert Asbury
2. **Attendance**

**At PSA House** Robert Asbury (chair of meeting), Barry Blanchard, Carmel McKeough, Wayne O’Mara, Stan Beal, Paul Turner, Robert Ryan

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

**By Zoom** Isabella Ramirra, Kim McClynmont

**3. Apologies**

Nicole Jess, Dave McKeough, Ysbrand Oosten, Bret Leech, Nicola Christie, John Walz, Mara Tudorin

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

MOVED: Barry Blanchard SECONDED: Robert Ryan

CARRIED Unanimously

**4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 22 August 2023**

**MOTION:** **That the minutes be accepted with the correct spelling of Robert Asbury’s surname.**

MOVED: Barry Blanchard SECONDED: Robert Asbury

CARRIED: Unanimously

**5. Business Arising**

*5.1 Motion re SSS Superannuation*

Refer Item 6 Reports – Executive Update

*5.2 Promotional materials*

*5.3 Red Tape Articles*

*5.4 Unfinancial members*

Carmel McKeough advised that these matters continue to be a work in progress. Carmel McKeough and Dave McKeough are intending to spend a block of time at PSA House to address these matters.

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

*5.6 Future guest speakers*

Carmel McKeough advised that Professor Tim Stephens has confirmed his availability for our 5 December meeting. No response has been received from Hugh McKay.

**Action: Robert Ryan to follow up Hugh McKay’s contact details**

*5.7 Motion re email servers*

Robert Asbury will prepare a motion for consideration at the next meeting.

**6. Reports**

*6.1 PSA Executive Update*

Dylan Smith, Manager, Industrial Support, joined the meeting. Issues discussed included:

* AED Defibrillators – advised that there is no formal policy for the public sector, instead it is left to each agency;
* PSA will follow up AED Defibrillators matter in the interests of members and in accordance with the duty of care there is to the public in high volume areas;
* SSS motion – PSA has written to the Trustees seeking advice.
* In relation to the SSS motion there was a greater likelihood of making changes in relation to spouses;
* Improved relationship with State Government/senior public servants;
* Current challenges-
* public sector policies – new ones needed and existing ones need updating;
* draft staff mobility policy – priority is that people are redeployed rather than driven out of the service;
* return to work;
* workers compensation
* Changes at SafeWork – greater focus on prevention of injuries, being proactive, addressing psychological injuries
* Public sector salaries;
* Flaws in current senior executive contracts – can be dismissed for any or no stated reason
* Conversion to permanent roles, less reliance on contractors
* Sponsorship of Stewart House
* Successful Women’s Conference and Mental Health Conference

Kym McClynmont raised the importance of agencies supporting their staff belonging to relevant professional organisations. Dylan advised that there are pockets where this occurs such as public sector legal officers, but it is by no means consistent. The PSA will pursue this matter.

Members thanked Dylan for his executive update.

**Action: Dylan Smith to provide update on SSS motion and PSA’s action in relation to membership of professional organisations at next meeting**

*6.2 Women’s Conference and Mental Health Conference*

Carmel McKeough spoke to the attached reports – refer attachment A. Members discussed the Waterloo redevelopment, proposed developments at Burwood, metro rail development and the failure of maintenance contracts.

Carmel McKeough circulated resources provided by Aware Superannuation at the Mental Health Conference.

**7. Correspondence**

Nil.

**8. Motions on Notice**

There were no motions on notice. However, Carmel McKeough proposed the following motion from the floor:

PSA CPSU NSW Retired Associates wholeheartedly support the General Secretary’s proposal to develop a mental health strategy for the NSW public sector.

It is important to recognise that the lead up to retirement can impact on a public servant’s mental health. Retired Associates recommend that the mental health strategy includes reference to combatting age discrimination in the workplace, preparing for retirement and supporting transition to retirement plans.

While age discrimination is illegal under the Anti-Discrimination Act older workers are nevertheless often vulnerable in restructures and their wisdom and experience is not valued.

When foreshadowing retirement, it is all too often the case that management wants the person to exit the workplace as quickly as possible and are not supportive of transition to retirement plans. The last year of work can impact on an individual’s mental health particularly when they have requested a transition to retirement plan and it has been declined on the grounds that it is not convenient to management due to perceived costs and concerns about efficiency/productivity.

Retired Associates further recommend that the mental health strategy should include the development of policies that actively support transition to retirement plans by enshrining the right for public servants to request transition to retirement plans and putting the onus on agencies to prioritise supporting such requests.

Retired Associates seek a commitment that there will be an opportunity to have input into the development of the strategy.

MOVED: Carmel McKeough SECONDED: Robert Asbury

CARRIED: Unanimously

**Actions:**

**Carmel McKeough to forward this motion to the General Secretary**

**Dave McKeough and Carmel McKeough to request a meeting with the General Secretary to discuss this motion**

**9. General Business**

*9.1 Vale Patrick Norton*

Stan Beal spoke about his long association with Patrick who he had known since 1998. He was a very valuable member of the PSA’s staff and always friendly and helpful. Patrick also gave great support to the Retired Associates over the years.

We mourn his passing.

*9.2 Women’s Council*

Carmel McKeough discussed developing a connection with Women’s Council on matters of mutual interest including housing and homelessness. Carmel referred to the address given by Leanne Smith, Chair of Women’s Council at Women’s Conference and their conversation afterwards. Leanne indicated her willingness to have further discussions with the Retired Associates but advised that she is not available on Tuesdays. Members suggested we could meet on another day in order to connect with Leanne.

**Action: Carmel McKeough to follow up with Leanne Smith**

**10. Date of Next Meeting and change of starting time**

The next meeting of the Retired Associates will be held on Tuesday, 5 December 2023 at PSA House or via Zoom, commencing at 10.30am. The meeting will be followed by a light Christmas luncheon.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.

Attachment 1

**Women’s Conference 5-6 September 2023**

**Embrace Equity**

Leanne Smith, President of Women’s Council

* Very powerful welcoming address

Troy Wright, Assistant Secretary PSA CPSU NSW

* Theme of the conference “Embrace Equity” – equity is at the core of our union.
* Challenge of precarious employment – conversion to permanency of 6000 school administrative and support staff
* Pride Council being established by PSA – a union first in NSW.
* Troy referred to concerns about the attack on transgender rights.
* To fully embrace equity, need to be doing more
* Address systematic inequity – referred to indigenous Australians and the work of the Aboriginal Council.
* PSA will fight to give power to those who don’t have it.
* Work of Women’s Council, Aboriginal Council and Pride Council is invaluable.

Nicole Jess, President PSA CPSU NSW

* Embrace equity
* Gaps in pay – referred to inequity in pay for male and female soccer players
* The Voice Referendum
* Inclusivity, flexibility and support for diversity
* Collaboration, empathy and respect
* Equal pay for equal work
* Work/life balance
* Mentorship and professional development
* Pay equity for SASS staff
* Kris Cruden scholarship expanded for women aged 35 and over

Jodie Harrison, Minister for Women, Seniors, the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

* Committed to women and girls living and working in a fair society that treats them with respect
* 50% of ministries in Minns Government are held by women, the first time the leader of the Government in the Upper House is a woman.
* Women hold ministries for Police, Energy, Finance, Regional NSW.
* Economic opportunities are a key part to embracing equity – need greater economic participation.
* Establishing a Women’s Jobs Academy – jobs for 1000 women.
* Working with the Federal Government to establish a Working Women’s Centre
* There is a strong role for unions in the workplace
* Gender pay gap in the public sector
* 2022 4.5%
* 2021 4.1%
* 2020 2.2%
* Gender pay gap is the highest it has been in 10 years.
* Will develop gender equity plans for all government departments
* Sexual harassment is totally unacceptable in the public sector
* People Matter Survey – 5% of respondents reported experiencing sexual harassment
* Want to shift from grievance handling to prevention
* Equity and Respect Framework to be developed which will improve the way complaints will be handled.
* Wants a safe and respectful workplace and a positive culture in the public service
* Looking to expand paid parental leave entitlements
* Inclusivity – Menopause awareness workshop
* People are at the heart of the Government’s decision making
* Has established a Women’s Advisory Council – 400 applications received for 12 positions.
* Wants to work more with the PSA.

Jean Kitson, Keynote Speaker

* Challenges of caring for ageing parents and children still living at home.
* Impact of menopause

Gidget Foundation, Jamie Walk

* Help for expectant and new parents
* Reconciliation Action Plan

Aboriginal Council members, Shanice Leadbetter and Erica Smits

* Closing the Gap
* Stolen Generation
* Over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in juvenile justice and adult jails.
* Intergenerational trauma
* Cycle of disadvantage
* Development of Uluru Statement
* Upcoming referendum

Annabelle Daniel, Women’s Community Shelters

* 56,000 homeless across Australia
* 75% of women’s homelessness caused by domestic and family violence
* 1 in 6 women experience domestic and family violence
* 1 in 2 people are turned away from services due to lack of space
* Service provides 10 shelters with around 3 months accommodation and professional support.
* Organisation is supported by government, philanthropy and community funding
* Run an outreach program
* Understanding coercive control
* Women need economic freedom and independence

Sophie Cotsis, Minister for Industrial Relations and Work, Health and Safety

* Review underway into SafeWork by auditor-general
* Discussed Government’s IR agenda
* IR Taskforce established chaired by Anna Booth and Roger Boland
* IRC needs to be independent and properly resourced.
* Public sector should be a leader in the equitable treatment of women
* Wage cap repealed on 1 September – 4.5% wage increase
* Greater permanency for teachers and SASS staff
* Nurses – safe staffing levels
* Parental leave – look at ways of providing more support
* Support women experiencing domestic and family violence – support in the
* workplace
* Discussed portable leave entitlements in the disability and NGO sector
* Gig workers – extend Chapter 6 of the IR Act to ride share and food delivery drivers
* State Budget -reinvesting in the public service

Lua Pellegrini, Office of Children’s Guardian

* Is a young carer
* Higher incidence of younger women in caring roles compared with men
* Impact of her talent as an artist and opportunities this has provided

Jenny Leong, Greens spokesperson on housing and homelessness, women and industrial relations

* There is a housing and homelessness crisis in NSW
* Over 50,000 on the public housing waiting list
* Frontline workers are struggling to find accommodation
* Big banks, big investors make huge profits out of current situation
* Private market continues to have a critical role but there needs to be a massive increase in public housing.
* Reliance on market driven solutions is not acceptable
* Should be outraged about any selling off of public housing and land
* Increased density not the only answer to the housing crisis.
* Critical of Waterloo development – should be more public housing, under current proposal 50% of the site is for private development.
* Very concerned about privatisation of public housing maintenance contracts – should bring back to the public sector.

Leisl Tesch, Member for Gosford

* Disability Inclusion
* Told her story and talked about competing in the Paralympics
* It is everyone’ responsibility
* Need to change built environment – it is a slow process and she is still taking part in meetings to make Parliament House more accessible
* Need to lift employment rate for people with disabilities

Anne Keneally, PSA CPSU NSW

* Union activism makes a difference – used example of getting Domestic Violence leave into Crown Employees Award
* Unions taking up issues in bargaining

Karen Willis, Gender Equity Officer, Unions NSW

* Paid Family, Domestic and Family Violence Leave
* Part of NES – 10 days
* Looking to develop Workplace Support Plans
* Enhance training for first responders

Rose Jackson, Minister for Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Water, Youth and the North Coast

* Importance of Government’s relationship with the union movement
* Value of female leaders in the public sector
* Establishment of Homes NSW
* Government seeks to re-establish quality and essential public services

Christina Hey-Nguyen and Michael van Dyk, SafeWork

* Employer’s primary duty of care under WHS legislation
* Recognition of psycho-social hazards in the workplace
* SafeWork now focussing on sexual harassment in the workplace
* Psychological Health and Safety Strategy 2023-2026
* Improved risk management, building awareness and capacity
* Resources being developed by SafeWork
* Right to a respectful workplace

Sydney Colussi, University of Sydney

* Exploring and researching paid leave or flexibility for menstruation, menopause, fertility treatment, IVF, pregnancy loss
* Workplace adjustments for menstruation and menopause policies
* Governments are wanting to increase female labour participation in age ranges when women are dealing with fertility issues, menopause
* Unfair dismissal cases have run in the UK related to menopause forcing early retirement
* Menopause could be costing women significantly in terms of superannuation – further research needed
* Spain has a formal menstrual leave policy
* Challenge to unions – reform Fair Work Act to offer greater support on these issues
* NSW Government is funding specialist menopause health initiatives
* What is best practice – flexible workplace practices or leave or both?
* Need to improve policy design

**Mental Health Conference 11 October 2023**

**We All Have A Role to Play**

Stewart Little, General Secretary PSA CPSU NSW

* Conference dedicated to the memory of Patrick Norton
* Importance of addressing mental health in the workplace
* First conference since the pandemic
* PSA wants to see the development of a Mental Health Strategy for the NSW Public Sector

Emma McBride, Assistant Minister for Mental Health & Suicide Prevention and Rural & Regional Health

* Mental health likely to be worse when unemployed or in insecure work
* Suicide rates in Aboriginal communities
* Union led workplace initiatives/solutions more likely to be successful – key role of delegates
* Increasing mental health issues experienced by young people
* Government is expanding the Headspace Network and increasing digital/virtual care
* Head to health – up to 61 centres nationally
* National Mental Health Workforce Strategy
* National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement
* Need to upskill health and social services workforce
* Committed to greater equity
* Importance of prioritising mental health in the bargaining process
* Strategies implemented to improve mental health at Parliament House
* Consultation re Set the Standard – Jenkins Report
* 28 recommendations will be implemented by Albanese Government

Emma Boucher, Psychologist

* Discussed beating burnout and increasing mental fitness
* Burnout – overwhelming exhaustion, reduced effectiveness, cynicism and detachment
* Changing workplace culture – a slow moving beast
* CBT and mindfulness
* Leadership – build capability to avoid burnout
* Model – Promote, Prevent, Intervene, Support
* Develop KPIs around mental health and well-being
* Positive strategy – transition to retirement
* Importance of setting boundaries and saying NO.

Lachlan O’Neill, SafeWork

* Discussed psychosocial hazards at work
* Legislative changes, code of practice
* Over a 5-year period there was a 65% increase in psychological injury claims
* $3.9 billion per year cost of mental ill-health at work
* 8,200 claims for workers compensation for work related psychological injuries in 2021-22
* Nearly 1 in 4 workers believe they have a mental health condition that the workplace caused or made worse
* Main causes – workplace bullying, work pressure
* Role overload or role underload
* Greater focus on mentally healthy workplaces
* Prevent harm, intervene early and support recovery
* Prevent harm – currently the big gap in workplaces
* WHS rights – can say no to unsafe work
* Fear of reporting psychological injuries

Jane Hogan, Aware Superannuation

* Resources developed by Aware Superannuation
* Can get access to clinicians in 10 days with their service

Dr Ali Walker, The Change Room

* Power of human connection
* Problem of absent leadership
* Model developed to help understand different personalities in the workplace and improve working relationships

Magic Mike

* Magician who appeared on Australia’s Got Talent
* Did tricks and discussed mental health challenges, including his own
* Showed both humour and courage.