

AUTUMN
2026

RED TAPE

GIVING HOPE
The members taking on
domestic violence in NSW

UNDER ATTACK
When evil struck Bondi

PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NSW CPSU NSW

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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.



This issue of *Red Tape* contains information some readers may find confronting. If you feel you need help, organisations that can provide assistance include:

- Respect National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling 1800 737 732
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
- Lifeline Australia 13 11 14
- MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78

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

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





ON CALL IN A CRISIS

Our members are always ready to protect NSW.

Whether a crisis lasts for mere minutes, or is a long-term social problem, there are PSA CPSU NSW members on hand to fix it.

This issue of *Red Tape* features two crises. One took place last year in just under 10 terrifying minutes. The other is an issue that has plagued our society for centuries.

In December 2025, two men shot into a Jewish gathering in Bondi, killing 15 people and injuring scores more. The event shocked our state and made headlines around the world. The event left 16 people dead, many more with lifelong injuries and will have effects on our society for decades.

The other crisis we cover this issue is Australia's spiralling rate of domestic violence. Last year, NSW had the highest

number of women killed by a partner in any state in the country. Around one in four women in Australia experience violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime. About one in eight men are subjected to violence from partners.

Both these crises diminish our state. However, there are PSA CPSU NSW members doing their utmost to make our society safer for everyone.

As outlined in our feature this issue, our members in Police were mobilised as soon as shots rang out in Bondi. They were the ones answering phones, making radio calls and, once the incident was over, investigating the hideous crime.

Our members in Police are the Strength Behind the Force. Most people associate officers on the beat with the police force. But the state's fight against crime and, in the case of Bondi, terrorism, would be less effective without our members.

Added to these members are the essential workers in the corrections system, Youth Justice, schools and Community Services, all working to steer people away from crime and rehabilitate those who have

fallen foul of the justice system.

The other crisis we tackle this issue is domestic violence.

As outlined in recent issues of *Red Tape*, our union was at the forefront of the fight to keep open Mount Druitt's Family Violence Service, the state's only government-run facility for people experiencing violence in the home.

In addition to these valuable members working for the Department of Communities and Justice, we have members in Police, correctives and Women NSW working to reduce the rate of violence in our homes.

These are not the only crises facing the people of NSW. Since European settlement, our environment has been degraded. Recent reports about the Murray River, for example, make particularly bleak reading. I am proud of the army of PSA CPSU NSW members in agencies such as National Parks, the Environmental Protection Authority and Water NSW who are fighting to improve our state's natural settings.

Our members do so much for NSW. The events in Bondi, and those happening behind doors in too many of our homes, are just some of the crises where you will find PSA CPSU NSW members doing so much for everyone in the state.



PSA WINS SERVICE NSW OVERTIME DISPUTE

Back pay now owed to workers forced to stay after hours.

Following years of campaigning by the PSA, Service NSW has formally acknowledged that it owes staff for unpaid hours working overtime, a move that will result in extra money in members' pockets.

The agency admitted it has contravened the *Service NSW (Salaries and Conditions) Employees Award* and confirmed that from 13 February 2026 all staff will be paid for all time worked.

The PSA had for years been demanding Service NSW rescind its 'rounding rules' whereby staff in service centres and the middle office who worked past the end of their rostered shift were not being paid overtime if time was less than 15 minutes.

Staff in contact centres who worked fewer than eight minutes extra were also not being paid for that time.

Under the award, Service NSW staff must be paid for "all time worked".

The PSA has been consulting with Minister Jihad Dib to resolve the dispute. "It was the previous Liberal Government that refused to comply with the Award,"



said PSA Senior Organiser Anne Kennelly. "The high-ranking Service NSW officials who have been refusing to comply with the Award up until 13 February would have been Liberal appointees."

New instructions outlining how overtime is to be approved, recorded and paid have now been issued by Service NSW.

Service NSW has confirmed there will be back pay for staff who are owed unpaid overtime. Delegates believe this could run into the thousands for some members.

"A member said to me, 'I've had this discussion and fight with a manager over this: it is about time he was told he was wrong,'" said PSA Delegate Rae Steel.

Ms Kennelly said such disputes between staff and managers "would contribute to the high levels of workplace bullying our members have reported to us".

Negotiations between the PSA and Service NSW regarding the process and timing of back payments are ongoing.

"This shows the power of union membership," said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. "Our work on behalf of members will see them receive wages they should rightfully have received if their employer had followed the Award.

"Without a union, however, this win would not have been possible."

NOWRA MEMBERS HEAR ABOUT NEW PAY DEAL

PSA CPSU NSW Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright visited members at Service NSW's Nowra office.

The visit came soon after the announcement that members would no longer be expected to perform unpaid additional work after hours (see story above).

"The visit gave me a chance to thank members for their help in campaigning to overturn this unjust situation where workers were performing work, yet not being reimbursed for their time," said Mr Wright.

"A win like this shows the importance of being in the union."





PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS UNION BUSINESS

The PSA CPSU NSW is campaigning to make people safe in their homes.

Our union prides itself on the work it does getting members the best possible wages and conditions in the safest possible workplaces.

But an organisation as powerful as ours can also do its utmost to take on social scourges such as the plague that is domestic violence.

According to data gathered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, it is estimated that about one in four women (27 per cent), and one in eight men (12 per cent) in Australia have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15 years.

In 2024, a staggering 80 Australian women were killed by their partners.

Domestic violence is a nationwide crisis and it is up to the union movement, the largest social movement in the country, to take a stand.

The PSA CPSU NSW has launched a campaign against domestic violence. The campaign aims to bring awareness to the issue and look at solutions to end the carnage. Last year we were part of the 16 Days of Activism, which publicised the issue throughout the country, and in the coming months the PSA CPSU NSW will again be using its influence to work for a safer state.

Our union's membership includes many whose work is affected by violence in the home. Our prison populations are overrepresented by those who have been subjected to domestic violence, and those who are the perpetrators. Child Protection and Youth Justice also deal with many

children who have experienced violence in their upbringings, while our members in schools too often work with those who have suffered.

The PSA members working for NSW Police are also on the frontline in the fight against this unwelcome aspect of Australian society.

The PSA CPSU NSW was at the vanguard of the campaign to prevent the closure of the Family Violence Service run by the Department of Communities and Justice out of a

discreet premises in Mount Druitt. The only government-run facility of its kind in the state, it should be replicated throughout the state, so anyone experiencing violence in the home has access to government-run help.

Union members look out for each other, and look out for vulnerable people in our society. Your union not only wants what's best for its members, it wants what's best for all Australians. And a country free of domestic violence is a goal worth fighting for.



Late in 2025, staff at the PSA CPSU held a gift drive for the Sydney Children's Hospital. I was overwhelmed by everyone's kindness and the toys went to such brave and courageous children.

FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICE CELEBRATES

Staff join families at DV service centre.

PSA Delegate Julie Grigoriadis joined dedicated Family Violence Service members in celebrating Christmas with the families they work hard to support.

“This service is often the first point of contact for victim-survivors seeking help,” said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess. “It provides immediate crisis support, safety planning, and advocacy, ensuring that people escaping violence are not left to navigate the system alone.”

“Beyond emergency assistance, the service offers ongoing case management, connecting individuals to housing, legal aid, counselling, and health services.

“The importance of this work cannot



be overstated. In communities where domestic violence rates are among the highest in the state, the Mount Druitt Family Violence Service saves lives every day. It empowers individuals to break free from cycles of abuse and rebuild their futures in safety and dignity.

“As demand for support continues




to rise, sustaining and strengthening services like Mount Druitt Family Violence Service is critical. They are a lifeline for families across NSW.”

Ms Grigoriadis is the recipient of PSA CPSU NSW Women’s Conference 2025 Outstanding Delegate Recognition Award.

Award-winning member service

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MIND OVER MACHINE

Your union is vigilant about the use of artificial intelligence.

I was recently at the University of Technology Sydney's Digital Investigations Technical Training course, discussing the way artificial intelligence (AI) will affect our workforce.

Mentioning AI is to invite no end of front-bar futurism, from a carefree society released from the burden of work to the apocalyptic end of all mankind in a robotic hellscape.

Used properly, AI can increase our productivity. It can release us from dull tasks and give us a scaffold upon which to create work.

We have also seen what AI can do when used improperly. Lawyers under the pump have resorted to AI for work, only to discover during the trial that their programs have made up cases, to the fury of judges presiding over the trials.

Like a lapdog rescued from a shelter, AI

is determined to please its master. And if that cyber pat on the head involves pulling falsehoods from the air, then AI will do just that.

Job losses are unlikely to be widespread in the NSW public sector and our other employers. Instead, roles will evolve, with more emphasis on AI-enabled service delivery and oversight. Workers will need stronger data analysis, digital operations, and AI-assisted decision-making skills.

AI is already used in bushfire intelligence, environmental health sensing, and education support tools such as EduChat. Frontline and operational staff are likely to work alongside AI systems that expand capacity, improve situational awareness, automate monitoring, and result in better decision-making.

What is certain is it will change the way our members work. Another certainty is employers will be thinking of ways it can stop our members working, with employees replaced by AI.

The PSA CPSU NSW knows this and knows there is nothing to stop the use of AI in our workplaces. But, as the union that represents you, we will demand to be consulted for all changes brought about by AI, particularly if its introduction is used to justify cuts to jobs.

We will be looking also at the way our employers recruit and retain staff, and will demand that if AI, which has proven to hold inbuilt biases towards white males, is used in these areas, that it is done so with sufficient oversight.

Your union will demand that all decisions made by AI be made under sufficient scrutiny. When decision-making is made without oversight, there is an increase in the potential for errors, corruption and injustice.

We are also, as a union, looking at our own use of AI to ensure we continue to deliver high-quality representation to you, the workers who do so much for the people of NSW.



NATURAL DISASTERS PROVE VALUE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Members protect our state.

Another year marked by a spate of natural disasters has meant a busy 2025 for members in agencies such as the State Emergency Service (SES), the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and Fire and Rescue.

For the SES, 2025 was the second-busiest year on record, with the agency responding to an average of 1100 incidents a week and completing more than 60,000 jobs across the state.

The SES's busy year included tackling the effects of Tropical Cyclone Alfred and record flood levels on the Mid North Coast and in Western NSW. Severe storms also took place in Sydney, the Hunter, Riverina and Northern Tablelands.

The RFS attended more than 32,700

incidents in the 2024/2025 financial year, including more than 5500 bush and grass fires.

Disasters have continued to blight the state and keep members busy in 2026. In January 2026, rainfall reached 242mm over 24 hours at Woy Woy and 264mm at Pittwater, and 74mm over just two hours at Wisemans Ferry.

There were evacuations, rescues from cars caught in flash-flooding, landslides, fallen trees, downed powerlines, damaged roofs, blocked drains and household inundations. The SES responded to 2300 incidents across the state with a thousand volunteers assisting, especially in the Hunter, Sydney, the Illawarra and South Coast.

PSA General Secretary Stewart Little said the work done by these agencies cannot be replicated by the private sector, and the State Government needs to

ensure the public bodies responding to such disasters remain well-funded.

"We aren't going to see corporate Australia undertaking complicated and essential works when our bushland, farms and homes are under threat," said Mr Little.

"In addition to the organisations tasked with responding directly to natural disasters, the PSA also represents members in bodies such as Service NSW and the Reconstruction Authority, which work with households and businesses once the floodwaters recede or the fires are put out."

Mr Little said in light of changes in the NSW climate, it is vital the State Government continue to adequately fund its emergency operations.

"These agencies have been largely spared the job cuts that have blighted the Public Sector in the past year," he said. "Long may that continue."

MEMBERS PROVIDE BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Many PSA CPSU NSW members volunteer their time and labour to organisations such as the State Emergency Service (SES), the Rural Fire Service.

PSA Central Councillor and Delegate Lachlan Mercer works for Transport for NSW and is a volunteer with the Kogarah SES Unit.

On Sunday 18 January, Mr Mercer and three other members, attended six jobs in the Georges River Local Authority. They were out most of the day and returned to the unit after 3:00pm.

"It was a good day, spent with colleagues who support each other and share knowledge. It was also great to engage with the community who are always very appreciative of our work," said Mercer.





PAY UP TIME: UNIONS LOOK AT TAX BASE

States need to address declining revenue.

The unions representing state employees throughout Australia are working together to develop a tax policy better suited to the modern era.

“The Australian Government and state governments have a revenue problem after decades of tax cuts for both income tax and company taxes,” said Shay Deguara, National Industrial and Research Officer with the CPSU SPSE. “States and territories are now reliant upon Commonwealth funding for between 40 per cent to 80 per cent of their spending.

“Unless there are measures to broaden the taxation system, to reduce leaks such as loopholes and carve outs for particular industries, governments will continue to maintain austerity budgets cutting our members jobs, the services they deliver and also putting downward pressure on members’ wages and conditions.”

The CPSU had reviewed a number of policy documents from progressive think tanks and produced a Taxation Discussion Paper.

“The taxation system is broken,” said Mr Deguara. “We are not raising enough revenue to pay for our basic public services and public infrastructure. Loopholes, vested interest groups and corporate breaks are seeing the taxation burden increase on working people, whilst the owners of capital and wealth are able to use clever accounting methods to avoid contributing their fair-share of their increasing profits to contribute to the public services and public infrastructure that maintain our community.

“This depletion of tax revenue has led to state dependency on a range of poorly designed taxes that have poor socio-economic results. These include taxation on gambling, making states reluctant to take on reform of poker machines, as well as horse and greyhound racing.

“Taxation such as stamp duty remains on property transfers and building levies, increasing housing prices, and payroll tax makes direct employment of

workers less preferable.”

Possible adjustments include increasing the level of Goods and Services Tax, increasing company taxes or introducing taxes on digital transaction and resources such as minerals and petroleum.

“There is global momentum on wealth taxes, which can be an important source of revenue,” said Mr Deguara. “More crucially, wealth taxes could help tackle growing financial and political inequality, concentration of economic power, and restore the integrity of the tax system.”

He said governments also need to look at negative gearing, which simultaneously reduces the tax base and increases property prices. “

“Commonwealth Treasury and at least two states have been discussing a road user charge,” said Mr Deguara. “This is because with the growing electric car fleet, less fuel excise will be paid and therefore theoretically less money will be provided to pay for road improvements and maintenance.

“Ninety-seven per cent of the vehicle fleet is expected to be electric by 2050.”

'START AGAIN': ARUMA STAFF VOTE TO REJECT NEW ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT

CPSU NSW urges Disability Support Workers to push for better wages and conditions.

Members of the CPSU NSW working for disability service provider Aruma voted alongside other colleagues to reject an offer by their employer.

"Aruma circulated its wish list draft agreement to staff without consultation and while there are still significant outstanding issues being worked through," said Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright.

"The outstanding NO vote of 92 per cent comprehensively rejected an

agreement that would drastically reduce take home pays and conditions."

Mr Wright said Aruma issued a 352-page document to members "with limited time to consider the information".

The proposal would have seen cuts to existing penalty rates and some allowances with sleepovers dropping from approximately \$130 per shift for a Level 2.4 support worker to \$60.

Cuts to penalty rates for shift allowances and weekend work were also proposed.

CPSU NSW urged members to vote no to the proposed agreement and to recommend a no vote to non-members.

Once the vote concluded, CPSU NSW asked to recommence bargaining to try and improve the next offer to staff.

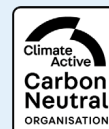
**92 PER CENT
COMPREHENSIVELY
REJECTED THE AGREEMENT**

Aruma proposed to restart bargaining for the week commencing 23 February 2026. Then, Aruma changed its mind and bargaining is again in limbo.

While all unions with members in Aruma are actively promoting having the Fair Work Commission assist in a collaborative approach program to progress bargaining, at the point of writing, Aruma remains uncommitted to this proposal.



AUSTRALIAN
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As the new year begins, now is a great time to check in on your finances. Whether your goal is to save more, spend smarter, or simply feel more in control of your money, a quick financial health check can help set you up for success.

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BACON BUSTERS

Meet one of the Champions of the State keeping feral animal numbers down.

Mal Leeson and his colleagues at Local Land Services are at the frontline of a war against an exploding population of feral animals.

“Feral pigs cause extensive damage to both agriculture and the environment by uprooting crops, degrading pasture, and destabilising soils through their digging and wallowing behaviour, which leads to erosion and reduced water quality,” he said. “They also prey on native wildlife, destroy vegetation, and spread invasive weeds, significantly impacting biodiversity and habitat health.

“In agricultural regions, feral pigs inflict major economic losses. They cost more than \$100 million annually across Australia by destroying crops, fouling waterways, and even preying on livestock. Importantly, they act as reservoirs and vectors for serious diseases, including leptospirosis, brucellosis, African swine fever, and foot-and-mouth disease, posing risks to livestock, wildlife, and biosecurity.”

The NSW Government’s eradication program has dispatched 223,000 feral pigs over the past three years. However, according to the Federal Government’s National Feral Pig Coordinator, Bec Grey, about 100 million feral pigs are running wild throughout the country. Therefore there is plenty of work still to be done.

Local Land Services works with landholders to control feral animals.

“Methods which landholders can undertake to control feral pig numbers

include poisoning, trapping, ground shooting, aerial shooting, and exclusion fencing,” said Mr Leeson. “The critical part of any control program is to reduce the population to a level which places downward pressure on the density and distribution of the pest. Feral pigs are prolific breeders; therefore, any control strategy must reduce the entire population by around 80 per cent to achieve downward pressure on numbers.

“Any less, the population will increase over the next 12 months. Aerial shooting is arguably the only control option with the capacity to reduce the population at scale in the shortest possible time with the least disruption to farming and grazing operations.”

Aerial shooting may cull pig numbers, but it also attracts critics.

“Our aerial shooting programs attract a lot of scrutiny from the general public and the hunting fraternity,” said Mr Leeson. “Social media seems to be the most popular method of venting frustration.

“We get called all sorts of names, but it doesn’t bother me. I have been aerial shooting for 27 years and have

always maintained a focus on humane destruction and safety. Negative commentary comes from a lack of understanding and acceptance of aerial shooting as an efficient control.”

Local Land Services is also responsible for controlling other species, such as foxes, wild dogs and the state’s rapidly increasing deer population.

For Mr Leeson, typically no two workdays are the same.

“I work in the Invasive Species Team supporting the Principal Program Manager – Biosecurity,” he said. “I coordinate many projects related to vertebrate pesticides, firearms, and aviation. This includes training to enable staff to maintain required accreditations and providing assistance to regions during aerial and ground-based control programs.

“I do my fair share travel which I enjoy as it provides an opportunity to network and to put a face to names that you see on the many online meetings. I deliver various training courses in pesticides, firearms and aerial shooting and this has proved to be a great way to meet new staff and share my experiences.”



Mr Leeson has taken a varied career path to reach his present role and his position with the union.

“My first experience in a semi-government role was when I started as a noxious animal inspector with the Rural Lands Protection Board in 1994,” he said. “The role was mostly regulatory and focused on carrying out property inspections to ensure land managers were suppressing pest populations.

“In 1996, I became the secretary of the Rangers and Noxious Animal Inspectors Association, working closely with the PSA to plan and run the Annual Conference. I held this position for about 14 years before taking on the President’s role for a few years.

“Since 2016 I have maintained a position on the Departmental Committee and represented the PSA at Joint Consultative Committees.”



THREATENED SPECIES COUNCIL THANKS PSA FOR CAMPAIGN

PSA Organiser visits Parliament House for function on eradication of pests.

With the Brumby Bill passed to protect native animals in the Kosciuszko National Park, the Threatened Species Council celebrated at State Parliament.

PSA Organiser Kim de Govrik

(pictured on the far right) joined the event, which was also attended by Environment Minister Penny Sharpe. The PSA was thanked for its advocacy in protecting native species such as the endangered corroboree frog.

“Campaigns like ours show that we don’t just look after workers, we look after our environment, too,” said Mr de Govrik.



FISHERIES MEMBERS SAY: GET ON BOARD

PSA members at Fisheries have a message for their colleagues who are yet to sign up: join your union.

The Officers pictured patrol the waters around Byron Bay and Ballina aboard the *Solitary Ranger*, which is moored behind them.

“The position has changed remarkably in recent years and it is

vital that the Award reflects this,” said PSA Industrial Officer Shane Howes.

“Our union is fighting for better wages and better protections for these members, who are often at the frontline of the fight against organised crime in our waterways.”

The PSA is commencing negotiations for a new Award covering Fisheries Officers.

Union membership can literally change your life. Just ask PSA member Shayne McGann, who is a School Learning and Support Officer at Blaxland High School. When the PSA won its historic Pay Equity case in 2019, Ms McGann saw a dramatic improvement in her take-home pay.

She is yet another member from schools who knows it pays to be union.



PRIORITIES FOR SCHOOLS IN 2026

A busy year lies ahead.

Delegates have started Term 1 working with the union's industrial staff to ensure that members will get the most of being a member of the PSA, and to improve working conditions in the state's public schools this year.

To ensure members have regular access to accurate, union information about the support the PSA provides, the union is rolling the PSA Schools Online Information Sessions. The PSA will be running more of these sessions throughout the year.

The PSA is also intensifying the campaign for a fair and improved staffing

formula and pushing hard through award negotiations and other avenues to secure real, meaningful increases across all classifications.

"The union will continue to hold the NSW Government to account to deliver the staffing and salaries our members deserve," said General Secretary Stewart Little. "One of the union's long-standing campaigns will continue this year, and every year until members get the employment security they deserve. We will be demanding a genuine, secure pathway to permanency for long-term temporary employees; one that does not rely on one-off conversion projects.

"Our members work hard for our schools, so they need certainty and stability, and the PSA will continue to

fight for a system that delivers long-term security, not temporary fixes."

The PSA will continue its advocacy for the return of role-specific, face-to-face training and conferences for all classifications.

"High-quality professional learning and development is essential to delivering the world class public education system NSW children deserve, and the PSA will keep pushing until members have access to the comprehensive, in person training they need and are entitled to," said PSA President Nicole Jess. "As always, delegates and industrial staff are keen to hear from members about any issues going on in your workplaces, and what we can do to improve the working conditions in schools across the state."

MEMBERS TOLD TO PUT BUS KEYS AWAY

Schools staff are not paid as a bus drivers. So they should not perform this role.

General Assistants (GAs) and other Schools staff have been advised to stop acting as bus drivers to fill vacancies as regional transport companies go bust.

“The PSA restated our concern regarding the lack of clear responsibility and procedures for driving school buses,” said President Nicole Jess. “We have previously raised concerns that GAs are maintaining and driving school buses while not engaged under the right classification, and we are increasingly hearing of School Learning Support Officers who have obtained valid driver’s licences who are now driving school buses, something that the department maintained they were not aware of.



“The PSA reiterated its concern about the potential risks to students and the community, requesting information about the number of schools with one bus or more, and the number of engaged Driver GAs. We will continue to advocate for the Department to better consider the potential risks and provide clarification

around responsibility for this duty.”

It is not a condition of employment for GAs to hold a current driver’s licence or obtain a driver’s licence. Before GAs can receive the allowance, a principal must sight a current driver’s licence, car registration and comprehensive insurance policy

PSA CONTINUES PERMANENCY FIGHT

Cases taken to the Industrial Relations Commission.

The PSA is continuing to press the Department of Education to get more members working in schools into permanent roles.

Despite the significant achievement of the PSA Campaign in schools fighting for permanency, there is still not an ongoing and genuine pathway to permanency for School Administrative and Support Staff.

“Over the years there have been large scale conversions, the largest being the Temporary Workforce Transfer in 2023 and 2024,” said Industrial Manager Siobhan Callinan. “But the root cause of the issue has still not been dealt with.”

The PSA is pushing for a new clause in the *School Administrative and Support Staff Award* that would provide a pathway to permanency that doesn’t rely on one-off projects but ensures that our

members are not kept in insecure work for years.

“We have an increasing number of members contacting us who have not had their temporary contracts renewed despite being employed for years,” said Ms Callinan. “Without fixing the root cause this number will grow every year. So far in 2026 we are likely going to have to run more than 15 unfair dismissals for temporary members in the Industrial Relations Commission.

“The mass transfer of members in schools to permanent roles was one of our union’s finest achievements in recent years, but we need to remain vigilant and keep the Department on its toes.”

The transfer of thousands of NSW public school staff from temporary to permanent employment was a pre-election promise by the Minns Labor Government.

Pushed by unions such as the PSA, the initiative addresses the unacceptably high levels of long-term casualisation in the school workforce, leaving many

support staff and teachers without job security for sometimes more than a decade.

In its first year in office, the Minns Government committed to converting more than 16,000 temporary support staff and teachers to permanent roles through a phased rollout across the state.

The conversion process focused on staff who had worked at the same school for at least three years, with priority given to schools experiencing the greatest staffing pressures.

By October 2023, more than 16,000 permanent conversions were finalised.

The PSA had campaigned for years against insecure employment in schools and, ahead of the 2023 state election, successfully lobbied both major parties to commit to large-scale permanency conversions. Following Labor’s election, the union continued to pressure the Minns Government to broaden eligibility criteria and ensure that long-term temporary employees were not excluded from the process.

SURVEY EXPOSES A SECTOR IN CRISIS

General Secretary meets with members on the South Coast.

A nationwide survey has revealed what many CPSU NSW members in universities have long known: the Australian tertiary education sector is blighted with toxic workplaces. And one university in NSW was found to be the nation's worst in one criterion.

The Australian Universities Census on Staff Wellbeing, released this month by Adelaide University's ARC-funded Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) Global Observatory, paints an ugly picture: chronic stress, organisational instability and declining staff wellbeing across the country.

The census, drawing responses from more than 11,000 university personnel across 42 institutions, found that more than 80 per cent of staff reported high or very high levels of emotional exhaustion, while 76 per cent reported risky levels of psychosocial safety climate (PSC), which is a measure significantly worse than the general Australian workforce.

The University of Newcastle (pictured) was found to be the country's worst for psychological safety risk. It recorded the highest percentage of respondents in the high to very high psychosocial risk category at 92 per cent.

In an interview with the *Newcastle Herald*, the university said the timing of the survey, during uncertainty over job cuts, skewed the results.

UNSW was ranked among the top three performers nationally on psychosocial safety climate benchmarks, thanks to comparatively stronger organisational systems for managing staff wellbeing.

The report highlights concerning workplace perceptions, with 73 per cent of university staff disagreeing that risks to their psychological health are actively monitored by senior management.

Emotional exhaustion scores were exceptionally high, with more than four in five staff experiencing high or very high burnout.

Lead researcher in the survey, Professor Maureen Dollard, wrote the results reveal a sector "under immense strain".



"For NSW institutions navigating a competitive, resource-constrained environment, the census serves as both a warning and an opportunity," said CPSU NSW Workplace Health and Safety Officer Marko Petrovic. "If universities take action on staff wellbeing, they will be at the forefront of the sector's recovery."

General Secretary Stewart Little said

the results demonstrate the importance of being part of a union you can turn to in times of stress.

"Talk to the CPSU NSW about unsafe systems of work, failure to investigate psychological hazards and risks or a lack of consultation on restructures and organisational change," he said. "All these can contribute to an unsafe workplace."

NEW LEASE ON LIFE LEAVE

Bargaining continues at Newcastle.

Members at Newcastle University facing health challenges have a new provision to fall back on. Life Leave, which was previously introduced to the current Enterprise Agreement (EA), can now be used for Sick Leave purposes where staff have exhausted 120 hours of Carers Leave, providing additional support.

This new provision has been agreed on and is part of the EA that was still

being negotiated at the time of press. A new wage offer has also been made.

The EA covering members at Western Sydney University (WSU) is in the final stages of negotiation, with a wage offer tabled by the employer.

The EAs at both Newcastle and WSU cover Professional Staff only and are separate from Agreements for Academic Staff.

Bargaining is continuing at the Australian Catholic University, Charles Sturt University, and the University of Technology Sydney.

HALFWAY THERE: 8 PER CENT CUT TO TOP LEVEL

Senior executive numbers drop.

The Minns NSW Government has publicly announced a reduction in the overall number of senior executives across the NSW public service, down by more than 350 roles (an 8.3 per cent drop) compared to mid-2023. This is part of a broader fiscal discipline and efficiency program promised at the 2023 state election to reduce senior executive numbers by 15 per cent over the first term.

This promise, discussed by individual Labor ministers with PSA executives in meetings prior to the election, was something the union was determined to hold the ministers to.

However, a move by then-Premier Gladys Berejiklian made it very difficult to move CEOs and senior executives out of their

cushy Liberal-appointed roles. Ms Berejiklian had changed the rules around NSW senior executive tenure, essentially taking them off fixed contracts and making them 'on-going', and subject to golden parachute arrangements should they underperform enough to warrant sacking.

The incoming Labor government could not afford to move executives on and appoint new senior managers to execute Labor promises, leaving many Liberal-commissioned projects, such as the Powerhouse Museum relocation and the infamous Rozelle Interchange, in place.

However, through restructuring, machinery of government changes and natural attrition, the Labor promise to reduce the numbers of NSW public service senior management is starting to happen.

The agencies whose staff should start to notice a reduction include: WaterNSW, slashing 300 jobs; Transport for NSW

sacked 950 staff in back-office purge which includes hundreds of management-level roles; NSW Department of Customer Service is axing up to 40 staff; Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) are cutting at least 165 staff; Service NSW have proposed to remove senior managers in restructuring plans; and the Art Gallery of NSW is executing a budget-driven restructure – although senior managers are barely a blip in this slashing.

“The PSA is across all of these cuts, and delegates and industrial staff have been working tirelessly to reduce the number of rank-and-file roles being cut, and are advocating for more senior management roles to be reduced – as really, that’s where the savings are,” said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little. “However, the generous severance packages available to executives are holding back real progress.”

NEW PRIDE COUNCIL ELECTS POSITIONS



First meeting takes place after election.

The PSA CPSU NSW Pride Council has appointed its new executive. The Council, which will sit for the next two years, was elected in late 2025. It will advise the PSA CPSU NSW Executive and Central Council on issues

relating to members from the LBGTQIA+ community.

The Council in the past has advised on the State Government’s Equality Bill, which was put forward by independent member of the lower house, Alex Greenwich.

The new position holders are:
Chair Michael Wright

Vice-Chair Emma Pearce
Secretary Alecia Nolan

Assistant Secretary Hugo Walton

“We look forward to dealing with the new Pride Council to create safer, more inclusive workplaces for all members,” said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess. “We are proud to be among the first unions to have such a body.”

BRAIN POWER: THE PSYCHOLOGISTS HELPING INMATES WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Meet the members healing minds inside.

The NSW prison system has a huge overrepresentation of people with mental illness. PSA member Amy Sowerby is just one of the Psychologists helping inmates negotiate their sentences and, if possible, be released from prison in a better mental state than when they were admitted.

“A very large proportion of inmates present with very serious mental health issues,” she said. “There is not a lot of places for them left in the community. There are no psych wards, for example. So these days, and this has certainly been a sentiment that’s been shared with me by others, gaols are basically becoming big mental institutions.”

“In our correctional centre, for example, at least 40 per cent of inmates have a referral with psychology services for mental health or risk of harm to themselves, or some kind of cognitive difficulty that requires assistance.”

Working with inmates, Psychologists deal with confronting material.

“We hear a lot of really distressing, upsetting things that happen to people,” she said. “We see people in a safe cell where all they can be with is a modesty gown because they’re actively trying to end their lives. So not only is it things that we’re hearing, it’s the things that we’re seeing, too. And again, this is not something that Psychologists who work in other areas of government or private sector would be experiencing.”

“I read a lot of facts around sex offences, and they’re incredibly detailed. Reading about these horrible sex offences and all the details around them is very, very challenging. It is something that can cause Psychologists a lot of burnout.”

Ms Sowerby has her “own little strategies in place to try to manage that, whether it’s walking my dogs or spending some time with family”.

Ms Sowerby’s journey to her role as a



Senior Psychologist has involved extensive years of study and experience in a number of prisons.

“All up, I have a four-year Bachelor degree that includes an Honours year, a one-year Masters of Professional Psychology, where I did the additional one year to obtain my general registration,” she said. “I then did a one-year clinical psychology degree, and then a two-year registrar program out in the field to be a clinical psychologist.”

With so many inmates facing significant self-harm issues, people such as Ms Sowerby can provide the difference between life and death.

“If we’re not there to help those people, they may not even get through a sentence,” she said.

Psychologists are also there to make sure inmates who leave the prison system are in a better mental state for the outside world.

“Without support, they would be going through custody without the ability to learn some new coping strategies in life, to understand why they may do the things that they do,” she said. “They’re learning strategies and ways to cope and manage with those things.”

“They then wouldn’t also have those skills when they’re released out into the community where they may go out with untreated mental health issues and even just limited skills in how to manage their day-to-day life and their own day-to-day experience.”

PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little said the members “healing minds inside” are good examples of the importance of public services.

“Psychologists such as Amy are Champions of the State, making NSW a better place for all with every shift they do,” he said.



COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS MEMBERS TALK PAY RISE IN WOLLONGONG

General Secretary meets with members on the South Coast.

Stewart Little, PSA General Secretary visited Wollongong Community Corrections in January 2026 meeting with PSA members and new staff and discussing plans around the negotiation for future pay rises after the current agreement ends.

The 3 per cent pay increase members receive in July 2026 will be the last in a three-year deal worked out with the then-new Minns Labor Government. The PSA will commence negotiations this year for the pay rise to be given in July 2027.

Concerns were also raised with the recent announcement of the Executive restructure within Corrective Services NSW with Mr Little reassuring members that the PSA will engage in constructive consultation.

“The strength of our union is due to our large, active membership in Community Corrections and I encourage members to take up these delegate roles, especially as the election for a new Departmental Committee is underway,” he said.

The PSA will continue to resolve issues members statewide have with Community Corrections’ recruitment process, including restricting locations and the establishment of talent pools.

**92 PER CENT
COMPREHENSIVELY
REJECTED THE AGREEMENT**

The union representing Community Corrections members is still waiting on the decision to be handed down by the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) for the test case for Field Officers to be employed as permanent ongoing roles instead of casual.

The PSA will notify members as soon as the IRC hands down its decision.

BRANCH DEMANDS BETTER FIREARMS TRAINING

Call for regular upskilling for Prison Officers.

The Shortland subbranch of the Prison Officers Vocational Branch (POVB) has passed a motion demanding more regular firearms training for Officers.

The motion pointed out that while Officers were required to regularly update their training with firearms, “there has been a failure by local and senior management at Shortland Correctional Centre to implement adequate systems to monitor compliance or to ensure that the prescribed training is delivered within appropriate and defined timeframes”.

“As a consequence, Officers have continued to be deployed to firearm-related duties while not meeting the mandatory training requirements,” read the motion. “This circumstance gives rise to a foreseeable risk to the health and safety of officers and others and exposes both the organisation and



individual officers to regulatory and legal liability.”

The POVB is liaising with the PSA CPSU NSW Workplace Health and Safety Office on the issue.

The subbranch said the poor rate of retraining has been attributed to “operational requirements”, a description it described as “overly broad and lack[ing] sufficient precision to constitute a defensible basis for the ongoing suspension of a mandatory risk control”.

Authors of the motion have pointed out the current framework does not specify a maximum period an Officer can work without updating their training.

“The absence of a defined recertification interval creates an unacceptable gap in assurance, whereby Officers may be considered operationally deployable for indefinite periods without having demonstrated continued firearms proficiency under live fire conditions,” reads the motion.

WORKING AT PARKLEA OR CLARENCE?

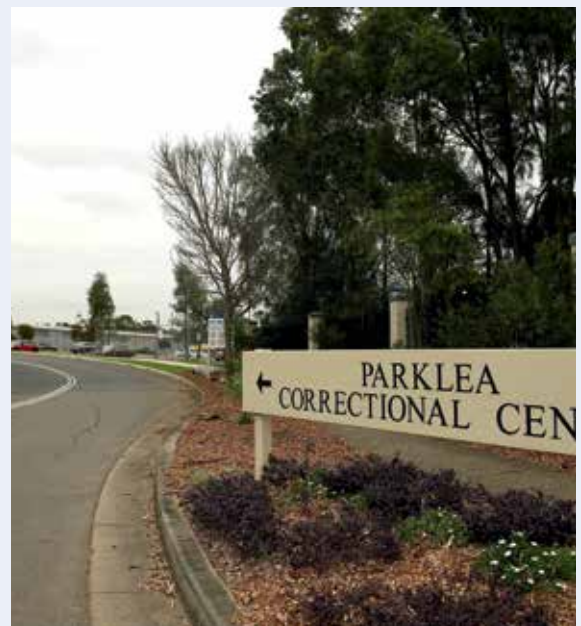
Did you know CPSU NSW members working in private prisons are eligible to join the Justice Legal Fund?

Working in a private-run prison can be dangerous, with staff often placed in positions of direct conflict with inmates, court attendees and other members of the public. This can lead to unfair accusations of criminal behaviour.

As the CPSU NSW does not provide financial assistance to any member who has been charged with a criminal offence, the union executive established the legal fund for your protection.

It costs only \$2.00 a week to join. This is tax-deductible.

Remember, only financial members of the PSA CPSU NSW are entitled to contribute to the fund, so encourage any colleagues who are not in the union to join.



MEMBERS URGED TO USE PLANNER

Union demands better monitoring of Community Services workloads.

The PSA has been running training sessions on the Workload Planner for Child Protection Workers working in Community Services.

The sessions, held throughout the state in both Community Services Centres and online, are designed to show members how the Planner can better measure workload, avoiding overwork and burnout.

“We want members to join us and take control of their workload,” said Senior Organiser Belinda Tsirekas, herself a former Child Protection Worker. “With the new Child Protection Award now in effect, we are urging all members to actively use the current Workload Planner.

“The culture of dedicated staff going above and beyond impacts wellbeing and prevents meaningful change for the wider workforce and, most importantly, for the children, young people and families of NSW.”

The union believes when members use the Planner, they can produce clear evidence to the Manager Casework,



Manager Client Services, Directors, and Executive District Directors that there are not enough workers to meet the workload.

Meetings were held throughout the state, including at Gosford (pictured above) and Leeton (pictured below).

“Members who would like to hold a training session on the Workload Planner in their workplace should email Organiser Andrea Cartwright at acartwright@psa.asn.au or contact their Delegate,” said Ms Tsirekas. “It pays to be union.”



WELCOMING THE MEMBERS WHO CARE

PSA Delegate Andrea Cartwright welcomes new member, Megan from Deniliquin Community Services Centre.

“The PSA is proud to have members such as Megan among our ranks,” said Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright. “The regions were a pivotal part of our fight for better wages and conditions for Community Services workers throughout NSW.

“Welcome aboard, Megan.”



STAY HOME: WORKPLACE PRESENCE DELAYED

Home-based arrangements can stay in place.

In a major win for unions representing transport workers, a workplace presence directive has been delayed.

The PSA, along with other unions representing workers at Transport for NSW (TfNSW) has long campaigned against directives ordering staff back into the office.

The unions were set to attend the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) on 9 and 10 February in dispute with TfNSW about safety concerns in the introduction of the Workplace Presence Policy alongside the Operating Model restructure.

However, before the case went ahead, TfNSW agreed to delay workplace presence.

TfNSW has agreed that workplace presence will now need to be complied with by either 1 July or three months following members' stand-up date, whichever is later.

"This result would not have been possible without PSA members coming forward and sharing their experiences and the wellbeing concerns of introducing workplace presence alongside the Operating Model restructure," said Industrial Manager Julie-Ann Bond.

"The PSA wants to thank members who completed our survey late last year, shared their concerns with their union delegates or raised concerns in feedback during consultation period for their branch

"Unions such as the PSA recognise and appreciate that the IRC listened to the voices of our members and their safety concerns, and this dispute demonstrates that no matter what area of TfNSW our

members work in, you have one another's back when it comes to safety.

"Thanks too, to our legal team."

Ms Bond said workplace adjustments are separate from, and take precedence over, flexible work arrangements. Workplace adjustments specifically relate to TfNSW's legal obligations under the federal Disability Discrimination Act and the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act.

"For those with a workplace adjustment in place, this will continue with no change, and TfNSW has confirmed that you do not need to have a separate hybrid agreement or submit a new workplace adjustment request," she said. "TfNSW cannot unreasonably decline an individual hybrid agreement, which is a key change that the PSA sought out to assist with raising any issues with individual hybrid agreements for our members."

OUR MEMBERS ARE CHAMPIONS OF THE STATE

All our members are essential workers. Every day PSA CPSU NSW members are working hard for our state making it a better place for all to live, learn and work in.

They truly are Champions of the State.



“Homes NSW supports some of the most vulnerable people in the state by providing safe, immediate housing during a crisis” said **Kadrije**, who is a Senior Client Service Officer with the agency. “We ensure individuals and families have access to essential support, dignity, and stability when they need it most, helping strengthen community wellbeing and preventing increased homelessness across the state.”

Her current role is the Counter Manager in the Bankstown Temporary Accommodation Team, where she oversees the frontline operations and ensures people in housing crisis receive support

The current housing crisis is having an impact on an increasing number of Australians. Homes NSW plays a critical role in making sure as many people as possible are housed in safe and secure properties.

PSA members who work for Homes NSW are dedicated professionals who strive to provide the best possible service to the people of NSW. They are true Champions of the State.

Supreet is a Team Leader at Service NSW.

In her role she manages her team in a contact centre, keeping them on track with their performance and motivating them as they take calls on a variety of issues from all over the state.

One day she will be conducting one-on-one sessions, providing side-by-side coaching, and delivering constructive feedback to staff. Others involve management tasks such as daily schedules, breaks, time-off requests and maintaining correct staffing levels.

“I am also supporting them in their career growth,” she said. She is required to monitor development and training, identify skill gaps, create development plans, and facilitate training.

As a “people person”, Supreet enjoys her job “100 per cent”.

Her job requires excellent communication and data-analytical skills, as well as the ability to manage a diverse team.

Supreet is a Champion of the State and her work is vital for the people of NSW.

Schools could not operate without their General Assistants (GAs). **Matthew** is one such Champion of the State, looking after “23 acres of land at Casino High School”.

“There is no typical day,” he said. A day could involve mowing lawns, organising maintenance, dealing with contractors and setting up facilities for the students.

“I’m kept busy every day,” said Matthew. “I love it. I love looking after our public assets and keeping them in the excellent condition they should be kept in.”

He said he likes the diversity of business ideas and experience he comes across.

He brings his skills home after work, looking after his own property out of town.

Matthew worked in a variety of roles before becoming a GA and has worked in a mix of small and large and primary and high schools, keeping the state’s facilities in the best possible condition.



MEMBER BENEFITS THAT CAN SAVE LIVES

The PSA CPSU NSW is not only there for members with any workplace or industrial issues, it is available for when life outside of work takes the wrong turn.

“Significant illness, mental health, and addictions can impact all aspects of our lives when they affect us, our family members or our co-workers,” said Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright. “It is crucial to reach out for help, and your union is one reliable avenue of help.”

Osara Health

If a cancer diagnosis has affected you or someone close to you, Osara Health is an organisation the PSA CPSU NSW has partnered with that can offer cancer care by providing people with access to digital tools, dedicated health coaching and evidence-based educational resources, assisting them to feel supported, informed and in control of health outcomes and their wellbeing.

PSA CPSU NSW members and immediate family members can enrol themselves confidentially, or the union can refer them directly. The Cancer Coach educational tool provides support and a behaviour change program designed by oncologists to help people take back control of their own cancer care and work towards more positive outcomes. Cancer Caregivers is suggested for people looking after loved ones living with cancer, and will help them improve their clinical outcomes, with support and information.

Gidget Foundation Australia

The union is also there for you when the difficulties of pregnancy and a new baby affect more than just work hours. The Gidget Foundation has locations all across Sydney and regional NSW. For financial PSA CPSU NSW members there are 10 free individual psychological counselling services delivered face-to-face or via the Start Talking telehealth program.

It also provides support to those who have experienced the loss of a pregnancy, baby or have difficulty conceiving.

Foundation House

If there is anything that doesn't discriminate along any racial or socio-political grounds it is substance misuse. Unions have long recognised that workplace discipline is not an appropriate response to these types of problems. Treatment is, though. And Foundation House was established by unions, for union members and their families.

Foundation House is an alcohol, drug and gambling treatment centre offering 28-day residential rehabilitation services and ongoing support through continuing outpatient counselling and relapse prevention. Confidentiality is completely assured, and PSA CPSU NSW financial members will get priority placement.

Details on how to access all these benefits are available on the PSA and CPSU NSW websites.

PEACE OF MIND FOR LESS

Discounts available for insurance.

Stella Insurance, a brand the PSA CPSU NSW has partnered with because of its unique focus on being authentically and passionately pro-women, without any disadvantage to men, is offering a 10 per cent discount on comprehensive car insurance and travel insurance to all PSA CPSU NSW members.

“Car ownership and holiday travel have the real potential to financially ruin us if things go bad,” said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess. “Car repairs can easily surpass the value of the vehicle, and needing medical assistance while overseas can bleed finances dry within days.”

PSA CPSU NSW members receive a 10 per cent cut to insurance cost.

“From the PSA and CPSU NSW member benefits webpages, the Stella Insurance link takes members straight to the PSA member offer, where they can get a quote,” said Ms Jess.



GET A PIZZA THE ACTION AT PRIMI

Standing up for the rights of your colleagues can be hungry work. Members attending a meeting or training at PSA House don't have far to go for one of the best Italian restaurants in Sydney.

And all PSA CPSU NSW members who show their membership card will receive 50 per cent off drinks per glass, and a very generous 20 per cent off all food.

Primi is located at 168 Clarence Street Sydney; telephone (02) 8296 6430.



FOUNDATION HOUSE

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY
DRUG & ALCOHOL FOUNDATION

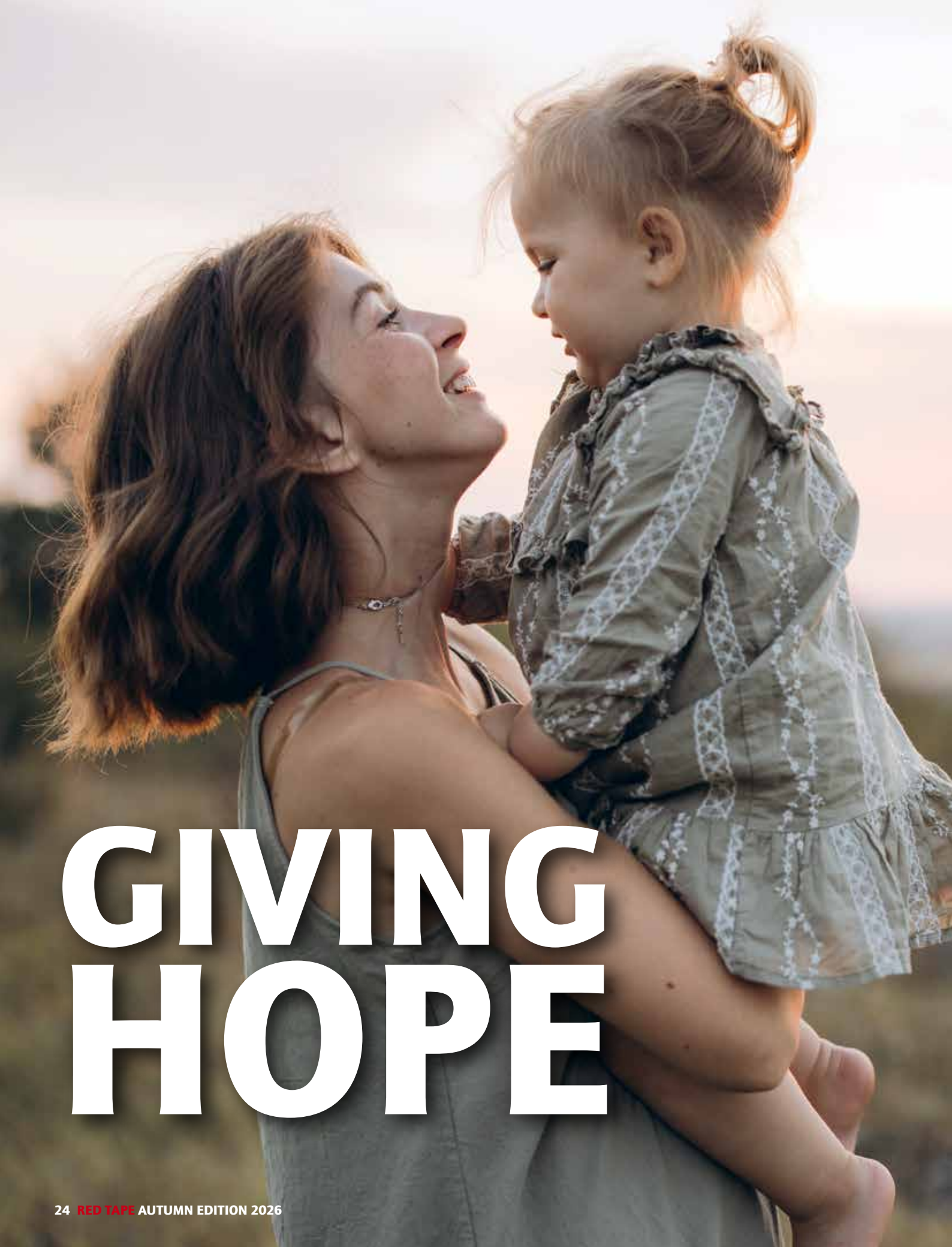
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**IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE
CONTACT US ON (02) 9555 4034**

foundationhouse.net.au (02) 9555 4034

SUPPORTING PSA MEMBERS





GIVING HOPE

PSA members are helping address the state's domestic violence crisis.

Every day, PSA CPSU NSW members confront a rising social problem that leaves thousands of people in NSW, mainly women and children, subjected to violence and even murder.

Domestic violence (DV) is on the rise in NSW. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) numbers show DV-related assault rates have climbed over the past 10 years, with 2024 a particularly grim 12 months. That year, nearly half of murders recorded by NSW Police were DV-related.

NSW Police claims it receives a DV-related phone call every three minutes.

The numbers, sadly, do not reflect the true scale of the problem, given chronic under-reporting and the private nature of coercive control.

The PSA CPSU NSW is campaigning to create awareness of domestic violence, and the role its members play in ridding the state of this scourge.

Already, the lobbying has taken effect. After pressure from unions such as the PSA and multiple community organisations, the State Government is increasing its efforts to combat DV. When the state declares a “whole-of-government” response, the headlines often gravitate to policing blitzes and bail reforms. But in NSW, the fight against DV is the role of multiple public sector agencies. These tasks are performed by Champions of the State whose efforts rarely make the evening news.

The Government is looking beyond handcuffs and courtrooms in a strategy to minimise DV's effect on the state, with an example of what to do right in Sydney's western suburbs.

“We have an excellent example of what the government can do at the Mount Druitt Family Violence Service,” said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. “This service offers a one-stop government-run umbrella service to

women and children escaping violence in the home.”

The centre has twice come under threat.

In 2024, plans emerged to transition the Mount Druitt Family Violence Service from a government-led model to one run by non-government organisations.

Mr Little took immediate action, calling the relevant ministers and within hours this disastrous decision was reversed.

The centre was again threatened with closure in 2025, and it again took pressure from the PSA to keep it operating.

“In regional NSW, which experiences higher rates of domestic violence, the absence of a government-run model in the Mount Druitt mould is particularly acute,” said Mr Little.

Better coordination of approaches to DV, such as the Mount Druitt centre, will make the state safer.

IN 2024, NEARLY HALF OF ALL MURDERS RECORDED BY NSW POLICE WERE DV-RELATED

Dilsat Seyis (pictured next page), who works at the Mount Druitt facility, describes it as an “information referral centre”.

“We get clients calling us looking for options when dealing with DV,” she said. “They will get information on violence orders, housing, income support, options for children and information on law courts.”

“Sometimes clients have health issues and we can help them change providers so perpetrators cannot track them.”

Staff at the centre assist victim-survivors develop case plans based on their needs.

“We look at legal and income issues, as well as eSafety: anything the perpetrator can use to track them,” said Ms Seyis.

One of the biggest issues facing people



leaving violence in the home is getting a roof over their head. The centre works with clients to see if they are eligible for social or public housing, a rented property or emergency accommodation.

The centre works with all genders leaving violent relationships, as well as younger people who may be receiving abuse from a partner, parent or sibling.

“We also deal with elder abuse,” said Julie Grigoriadis, who also works at the Family Violence Centre. “We also work with grandparents who have kids coming into their care.”

As with many government services, funding can be an issue. Ms Seyis said more public housing would give clients better access to housing: “We can’t get our clients into refuge accommodation”.

With the system so reliant on emergency accommodation in facilities such as motels, those leaving violent relationships often bounce from venue to venue, having to pack clothing and food every few days to move. In many motels, kitchen facilities are inadequate and often parking can be difficult to access.

She adds more funding for Communities and Justice staff at the centre would mean greater attention to individual cases.

Bernadette McMahon is a Senior

Child Service Officer Specialist at Homes NSW, dealing with some of the agency’s most complicated cases.

“Usually the first thing people will get is temporary accommodation,” she said. “This is often in local motels, but there is only a certain amount of capacity there.”

Ms McMahon said other tenants in these facilities may have mental health issues.

“We will try to find a vacancy in a refuge, but 99 per of the time there are no vacancies,” she said. “So, they will remain in temporary accommodation.”

“We then give them case plans, which give them instructions on how to get further temporary accommodation. It is here we sometimes lose the DV client, as it is all too hard for people who are not used to dealing with government.”

“It often at this stage children complain that they want to go home to their own rooms and friends, so the client goes back to the partner.”

“More funding would mean we would be less likely to get to the stage where people escaping violent homes return.”

Ms McMahon said Homes NSW coordinates with NSW Health, Communities and Justice and the Police for “high-end cases”.

“Absurdly, the worse your case, the

luckier you are,” she said. “That is because agencies are worried about the perpetrator, but can’t press charges, or they have been bailed, putting the client at risk.”

“Clients cannot disengage, or the Department will remove the children.”

Ms McMahon said state-run services are vital in the fight against domestic violence, but more money is needed.

“We need more money for shelters, supporting services and homes to be built,” she said. “Public homes are vital because many of our clients will struggle to find rental accommodation. If they are leaving a private home, they won’t have a rental history, for example.”

“We need public housing, even if people are transitioning.”

Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) is a program that aims to remove from the home the person committing violence, rather than leaving the victim-survivor and children on the street. Victim-survivors will also receive intensive case management, security upgrades and legal support.

“This is a backstop that keeps a crisis from becoming chronic,” said Mr Little.

Public sector workers also deal with offenders, breaking habits and addressing the issues that result in people abusing their partners.

**ABSURDLY, THE WORSE
YOUR CASE, THE LUCKIER
YOU ARE**

“Our Psychologists in the corrective system deal with harrowing cases every shift they work,” said PSA President Nicole Jess. “Often this is dealing with the perpetrators of violence towards partners and children.”

“This is vital work, as eventually offenders will be released back into the community. We need them to be better people when they emerge from a custodial sentence.”

Inmates on remand for DV sentences, however, are unlikely to be offered counselling or psychological support while they wait for trial – a period that can often stretch out for many months.

Once cases get to trial, the NSW

Government has established safe rooms so victim-survivors do not have to wait in the same area as the people charged with violence towards them. In courthouses, Legal Aid operates the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services (WDVCAS), which assist with safety planning, information, referrals, case coordination, and hand-in-hand court support. There are 27 WDVCAS across NSW.

The Government has also listened to lobbyists such as the PSA and acknowledged that not all DV is physical. February 2026 saw the state's first conviction for coercive control, with a controlling partner sentenced

to two years' prison. The conviction came after the State Government criminalised intentionally coercive or controlling conduct in intimate partner relationships.

PSA members in NSW Health have devised systems to prevent future harm. In the state's hospitals and clinics, routine domestic-violence screening is now mandated for women and girls accessing maternity and child and family services, and for women aged 16 and up in mental health and alcohol and other drug services.

NSW public schools are rolling out Respectful Relationships Education, which equips young people with skills

for empathy, consent, and conflict resolution.

The PSA has also lobbied to protect the workers who do so much for all the people of the state. With nearly 430,000 employees, the NSW Government is one of the biggest employers in the southern hemisphere. Since January 1, 2023, all NSW government sector employees, including casuals, have access to 20 days' paid domestic and family violence leave per year.

That standard exceeds the national minimum of 10 days paid Domestic and Family Violence Leave under the *Fair Work Act*. The leave gives victim-survivors time to attend court, secure housing,



change schools, and heal, without losing their job.

The PSA CPSU NSW was the vanguard in this initiative, getting the country's first paid domestic violence leave provisions into an Enterprise Agreement negotiated for members in the University of NSW.

"This proved that our organisation was a national leader in DV Leave," said the union's Women's Industrial Officer Simone Scalmer. "And with the provision picked up by the International Labour Organisation, we are now a world leader."

Similar provisions exist in Enterprise Agreements covering the union's non-government membership.

Agencies have since been directed to implement a whole-of-government Domestic and Family Violence Workplace Support Policy, which includes safety planning at work, flexible arrangements, discrete payroll and HR practices, and supervisor guidance.

"Our members are there, on the front lines, taking on the scourge of domestic violence that has seen women killed by partners nearly every week," said Mr Little. "Calling this a crisis is not hyperbole, it is stating a fact.

"Whether it is protecting family members, working with perpetrators or putting in place systems to avoid future violence, you will see our members there, doing the work required.

"Community organisations have their place, but preventing violence in NSW homes is ultimately a role the State Government needs to fill.

"People need to feel safe at home."

Mr Little said the State Government also needs to improve communication between agencies.

"One of the challenges is getting the information in a timely way," said a Child Protection Worker operating in Southwest Sydney, Nadia Graham (pictured right).

Ms Graham said the need for the Department of Communities and Justice to formally request enough information to take action, such as removing a child from a violent home, can slow down the process of protecting family members affected by DV.

"I worked in local courts, then worked as a Case Worker in the DV sphere, and now I work in Child Protection," she said. "Having worked in all those places, I know the information is there.

But the flow of information needs to be streamlined, not only for the children's safety but for ours."

Ms Graham said public sector agencies need to work together to address behaviour.

"We can tell a perpetrator to get out of the home, but if we don't have all the information at hand, it can be hard to keep children safe," she said. "Some of the limitations we have on services is difficult."

She gives the example of Homes NSW, which can be called upon to supply emergency accommodation to families leaving a violent home, but "the supply is limited".

"As Ms Graham points out, it is a raft of public sector agencies that are best equipped to address the DV crisis gripping our state," said Mr Little.

"From the calls answered by our members in Police, through to the agencies protecting and rehousing those fleeing violent, to those prosecuting and rehabilitating offenders, it is NSW government employees who are best suited to deal with the issues."

Mr Little shared these sentiments in a letter to Premier Chris Minns, stating, "If NSW is serious about preventing harm, supporting victim-survivors, and holding perpetrators to account, then public sector agencies such as Community Services Child Protection, NSW Police, Homes NSW,

Community Corrections, and others, must share responsibility for service delivery. A government-run model provides continuity, accountability, and the systemic coordination required to protect those at risk."

The PSA is not opposed to community organisations being involved.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS HAVE THEIR PLACE, BUT PREVENING VIOLENCE IN NSW HOMES IS ULTIMATELY A ROLE THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO FILL

"We saw the Federal Government recently allocate funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups to address DV," said Mr Little. "This is welcome news, but the State Governments need funding to ensure assistance offered by community groups is best coordinated and backed up by government-run services.

"Without our members working in well-resourced, more efficiently run State Government agencies throughout the entire state, more people will live in violent, abusive homes."



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UNDER FIRE



When shots rang out in Bondi, PSA members were called into action.

It was the perfect Bondi scene, swimmers enjoying the sea under the watchful eye of Lifesavers, picnickers in the park and, in a reminder of Sydney's diverse ethnic and religious mosaic, about 1000 people celebrating the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah in a setting that is uniquely Australian.

Nearby, though, were Sajid Akram and his son Naveed Akram, who are alleged to have embarked on a murderous frenzy, shooting indiscriminately into the crowd of worshippers.

Within minutes, 16 people were dead, including Sajid Akram. Forty people were taken to hospital, with amputations the result in some cases.

As soon as the shots rang out, the calls came through to Police. More than 100 calls were received within minutes. All seven of the state's Police Link and Radio Operations Group centres were activated during the incident, with resources shifted to manage the surge in calls.

Police Link is the contact command of the NSW Police Force, overseeing triple-zero, the Police Assistance Line, CrimeStoppers and other methods of public contact.

Senior Communications Officer Aimie Seage (pictured next page) was on duty that night, as Dispatcher Assistant in the Radio Operations Group. This meant she was the second pair of ears and eyes for the Dispatcher on duty that night.

"It was a team effort with multiple people jumping in to help out," said Ms Seage. "While the Dispatcher typed and talked, I was in the background doing everything else. This included liaising with other staff and how they could assist us on channel, communicating with the State Coordinator, Supervisors and a Rescue Coordinators in getting important information back and forth between crews on scene and crews behind the scenes.

"We also ensured all the triple-zero calls were given attention and addressed however we could."

Ms Seage was part of a team working in overdrive that night.

"The mood within the workplace was

Warning: story contains graphic content.

very mixed,” she said. “A lot of people were in shock, devastated and fearful. For myself being on the channel I was so focused and locked into the job I didn’t have any time to process my emotions until days later.

“But as Communications Officers we are trained so well that we have a job to do and that’s to help people so everyone got onto the phones and took triple-zero calls knowing what they may hear and deal with, it was an amazing team effort, despite the shock and devastation.”

A Police Officer on duty at the Tuggerah Police Link centre that night was impressed at the commitment of staff on the floor.

“The Team Leader Group that was present at the time and the staff taking calls did an unbelievable job in such trying times,” said the Police Officer.

After the calls died down and the scene was cleared by the Police, aided by bystanders, other PSA members moved into action.

Crime Scene Officer and Forensic Firearm Examiner with the NSW Police Force Ballistics Investigation Section, Thomas Egan (pictured opposite), was on site soon after the tragedy.

“I arrived at the crime scene around 11:45pm on the Sunday night,” he said. “The scene featured a heavy police and forensic presence. I can only describe the

scene as confronting and eerily calm and solemn. It is hard to fully describe the scene in detail, however it was clear that people had fled for safety leaving anything and everything behind.

“The victims each lay covered by tarps and it was confronting seeing the sheer volume of bodies that needed to be documented and photographed. It will be a sight that will stay with me.”

Surrounded by bodies, Mr Egan started working on tasks no-one would want to face in their working day.

“My role in the ballistics response to the events at Bondi involved photographing and documenting the victims of the shooting,” he said. “I assisted in documenting the ballistics evidence for each victim and further assisted in the Disaster Victim Identification process conducted by Sydney Crime Scene.

“I further placed the bodies we processed into body bags and respectfully conveyed them to the temporary morgue set up at the scene.”

After the shooting, another Crime Scene Officer within the Forensic Evidence and Technical Services Command, Ron Jones (not his real name), was on the site of the tragedy.

“In relation to the mass shooting event at Bondi, I was involved in the scene examinations over the following days,” he

said. “This included recording the scene, including the park, surrounding streets, and vehicles.

“We recovered the deceased bodies and parts scattered throughout the park, using Disaster Victim Identification procedures and recovered ballistic evidence.

“A mobile command post was established adjacent to the park, which was the hub for all tasks for the day. The weather was hot and we were working in direct sun for the majority of the day, which was quite gruelling.”

Sally Miles (not her real name) is a Civilian Crime Scene Officer within the Crime Scene Services Branch was also on the ground.

“I attended the scene and worked with a number of other staff from Crime Scene and Ballistics recording and recovering the deceased persons at the scene,” she said. “This involved photographs, contemporaneous notes, and examining each person for injuries sustained. Part of this duty included ensuring that we facilitated the repatriation of all tissue and bones to the deceased persons.

“Once all deceased persons had been recorded and recovered, our staff had to document, record, and collect the ballistics evidence at the scene. This included analysing bullet trajectories, searching for projectiles, and collecting shotgun shells and fired cartridge cases. These were all photographed, sketched and measured, and recorded in contemporaneous notes.

“In the weeks afterwards, a large volume of exhibits required examination, which was an additional responsibility of Crime Scene employees. Many of these examinations were undertaken by full-time lab employees, but due to the volume, additional shifts from field-based employees was also required.”

Michael Whyte is a Senior Crime Scene Officer and civilian Fingerprint Expert with NSW Police. He is also one of the Team Leaders within the Volume Crime Analysis Unit, working alongside both civilian and sworn examiners.

“My role involves the examination and comparison of fingerprint evidence submitted from crime scenes and investigations across the state, providing identification outcomes that directly support investigators and court proceedings,” he said. “In addition to casework, I have responsibility for supervising staff, mentoring and developing examiners, managing workflow





and quality assurance, and contributing to training and continuous improvement initiatives within Fingerprint Operations.

“The role sits at the intersection of frontline policing and forensic science, requiring both technical expertise and leadership to ensure forensic outcomes are accurate, timely, and defensible.”

On the day the terrorists attacked, Mr Whyte’s colleagues swung into action.

“On the day, many civilian forensic staff were heavily involved in supporting the response,” he said. “Colleagues within the Tenprint unit played a critical role in assisting with the identification of the victims who were tragically killed, working under significant time pressure and emotional strain. At the same time, civilian fingerprint experts within the Major Crime Unit were urgently processing fingerprint evidence submitted from the crime scene and exhibits seized as part of the broader investigation.

“While my unit was not directly tasked with the analytical work for this matter, the incident highlighted the indispensable role civilian forensic staff play during major critical incidents.

“These teams work quietly and professionally behind the scenes, ensuring identifications and forensic outcomes are delivered accurately and quickly at a time when the community, investigators, and

families are relying on them most.”

The Akrams are alleged to have set up bombs in the car they drove to Bondi. Crime Scene Officers were among the staff called in to defuse the explosives.

“My team assisted by examining the improvised explosive devices that were located on scene,” said Crime Scene Officer, Brian Collins (not his real name). “We also chipped in examining the huge number of exhibits that were collected over the course of the investigation.”

A job that involved collecting body parts of people murdered by terrorists can take its toll mentally.

“It is very important to keep on top of mental health, especially in this line of work,” said Mr Jones. “We regularly meet with a psychologist to discuss this. We find that it also really helps to debrief with colleagues, as a lot of us may be feeling the same about certain jobs. We have a ‘wellness space’ within our section, for just taking some time out when needed.

“Taking care of mental health at work is mainly supported by taking care of ourselves on our days off, to just switch off and focus on self-care.”

The PSA was also on hand to help members affected by the event.

“We recognised this was a distressing and emotionally challenging time for the NSW community, the emergency services

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO
KEEP ON TOP OF MENTAL
HEALTH**





agencies, frontline responders and PSA members and staff of NSW Police Force, who are undertaking an incredible job to keep the people of our state safe,” said Industrial Manager David Bartle. “The PSA thanks all NSW Police Force personnel for their dedication, care, professionalism, and compassion during difficult periods such as these.”

PSA Industrial Officer Latu Sailosi visited several sites in the lead-up to Christmas to ensure members knew the union was there to help.

“We knew many of members were doing extended hours,” said Mr Sailosi. “However, we reminded and encouraged everyone to be mindful of their health needs and look after themselves and one another during such a tough time.

“We urged members to take rest breaks

when possible, reach out for support when required, and be mindful that colleagues may be experiencing these things differently.”

Ms Miles admits the job has challenges that people outside the Police Force would find hard to understand.

“One of the toughest elements of what I do is relating to other people outside of the job,” she said. “What we do is such a specific and unique job, and sometimes it’s tough to relate to other people in ‘normal’ jobs when they stress about office drama or end-of-month billing.

“Sometimes I have to take a moment to remember that the work we do is extraordinary, and hard for others to relate to, but that doesn’t make anyone else’s problems any less, or any smaller.”

Ms Miles knows her colleagues are there

for each other when things get tough.

“At work, camaraderie with teammates is definitely the saving grace,” she said. “Due to staffing we are often required to examine scenes on our own, so it’s really important to chat with colleagues back at the office to help decompress about scenes and experiences.

“I am incredibly lucky to have a great team.”

Ms Seage said help was offered quickly to staff at the Radio Operations Group.

“I have never experienced any form of trauma like this before so dealing with what was to come out of it was unexpected,” she said. “Luckily on the night of the incident we had a critical-incident team and Chaplains arrive to our workplace at record speed.

“They pulled me aside for a chat when I had a second to breathe and spoke to me about what to expect in the coming days and weeks post the incident. Without these services I think I would have struggled a lot more in acknowledging my thoughts and feelings.

“I have never been in a workplace that takes your mental health so seriously, and I felt very supported. My team were wonderful in checking in, people from work past and present reached out and just knowing the support I had, made me proud to be a part of my workplace.”



PSA Delegate Michael Shonk (pictured right) recommends members ask for help.

“It is important to reach out for help before you need it,” he said. “The biggest problem with the way we deal with mental health is that it is often up to an individual to work out if they need help with not much in the way of resources to assist with that self-assessment process.”

The PSA represents the staff in a wide variety of roles within NSW Police. In addition to the radio and crime scenes, there are administrative staff, the Police Band and the Special Constables who protect sites such as State Parliament, Government House, the NSW Cabinet Office and even Police Headquarters.

“The maintenance of law and order is a vital part of government and a role that can never be replicated by the private sector,” said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. “We are proud to represent these vital workers.

“In the aftermath of the carnage, it is important to remember that their roles do not stop and their work defending the people of NSW continues.”

Ms Miles said attending other jobs after the events at Bondi was “a surreal experience”.

“You are part of a life-changing and world-shattering event and then you have to get in the car and go and examine a scene where someone’s loved one has passed away in their sleep,” she said.

The variety the job brings, though, is one reason the member enjoys going to work.



I LOVE THE DIVERSITY AND THE CHALLENGING NATURE OF THE WORK

“I love the diversity and challenging nature of the work,” she said. “It’s stimulating and interesting and keeps me engaged every day. Even the worst jobs have something to find interesting, something new to learn, something to take away.

“I also enjoy solving the puzzles set before us at scenes. Sometimes they reveal themselves. Sometimes you have to work a little harder to have the pieces resolve themselves. These puzzles can be the difference between solved or unsolved, and

justice or unanswered questions.

“Getting a resolution for victims or answering questions for bereaved families keeps me motivated and interested in the work.”

Mr Jones said that while dealing with death so often can be confronting, the job has its rewards.

“I really enjoy the day-to-day work that we do,” he said. “There is no telling what the day will bring, and some of the jobs we attend are very interesting.”

Mr Egan said he too enjoys playing a “vital” role in investigations.

“It is a rewarding way to be involved in the justice process in an impartial and scientific manner,” he said. “Whilst rewarding, being a crime scene officer in Ballistics is difficult. Forensics is inherently critical to policing and to the courts, but it is narratively invisible. We

work behind the scenes often for weeks at a time to examine a constant flow of exhibits and for little recognition. We attend traumatic crime scenes, work odd hours, and undergo intense cross-examination at court, all of which have a negative impact on you.”

However, despite the work being tough, Mr Egan is proud of his role and that of his colleagues.

“I feel very proud of the team here at ballistics for answering the call to duty on that Sunday,” he said. “Many of the team were off duty that weekend and came into the lab knowing that they had a critical job to do. Each crime scene officer here ought to be commended for their efforts on the night, and the days and week after.

“It is a tough job, and this scene has had an impact on each one of us.”



WHAT TO DO IF LIFE FORCES YOU INTO EARLY RETIREMENT

Prepare yourself for life after earning.

Retirement often feels like something in the distant future. We're living and working longer than ever before, so it's easy to assume you have plenty of time to prepare. But here's an alarming statistic that might change your perspective: Aware Super's 2005 Retirement Study found that one in six Australians who retired in the previous two years were forced to stop working earlier than they had planned.

Life has a habit of throwing curveballs. The three most common reasons people retire early are health-related issues, with 31 per cent of those who retired in the past two years citing workplace stress

as a key factor. Redundancy is another major cause, affecting 5 per cent of all Australian retirees.

Finally, there's the increasing need to care for a loved one, which is becoming more common with the 'sandwich generation' juggling both children and ageing parents.

So what can you do if you suddenly have to retire earlier than planned?

Start with the basics

The first step is to contact your super fund and explain your situation. Check your current balance and confirm whether you have any insurances that you may be eligible to claim. Most funds provide total and permanent disability (TPD) insurance by default and income protection insurance as an option. Income protection insurance can give you a percentage of

your salary for a period if you can't work due to illness or injury and you might be able to claim a lump sum on your TPD policy if it's so serious you can't go back to work. Sometimes people don't realise they can make a claim, and it can make a significant difference to their financial position.

Understand your retirement needs

A rule of thumb is that most people will need around 70 per cent of their current take-home pay to maintain their lifestyle in retirement. However, there's no single magic number – everyone's retirement looks different depending on their lifestyle goals and financial circumstances.

It's important to remember there are different lifestyle phases in retirement, and you won't necessarily need the same amount of money throughout. Additionally,

most Australians will receive some level of government age pension support, which for a typical retiree makes up about two-thirds of their total retirement income.

Don't leave money on the table

There's approximately \$17 billion dollars in lost and unclaimed superannuation across Australia. Check whether any of that belongs to you by accessing my.gov.au or contacting the Australian Taxation Office. You should also speak to Centrelink to determine if there are any government entitlements you may be eligible to receive.

Consolidate your super accounts

Around four million Australians have more than one superannuation account. While it may seem harmless to have multiple accounts, this could mean you're paying duplicate fees and possibly duplicate insurance premiums. Consolidating your super could increase your retirement balance by approximately \$3000 for each additional account you combine.

But what if you're still in work and worried about the prospect of early retirement? Here are some tips.

Use online planning tools and get advice

Take advantage of online retirement planning tools like Aware Super's My Retirement Planner to test different scenarios. You don't have to be a member of Aware Super to access this tool. Consider what would happen if you retired next year, worked longer than expected, or needed to take time off to care for someone. These tools can provide a step-by-step action plan to help you move forward. Most super funds can

also provide financial advice about your super account at no additional cost.

Consider making additional super contributions

If your financial circumstances allow, additional contributions could be an effective way to boost your superannuation balance in your pre-retirement years and reduce the financial impact of a possible early retirement. This option may be suitable for those who haven't had the cash flow in the past to make voluntary contributions, often because they were paying off a mortgage. When deciding whether to add to your super, keep in mind that contribution eligibility criteria and caps apply.

For example, a typical member could increase their retirement balance by up to \$189,000 if they maximised their concessional contribution cap for their last 10 years before retirement, while also saving up to \$30,000 in taxes over this period. Even making smaller voluntary contributions regularly could make a meaningful difference over time.

Remember, whether your possible retirement looms in six months or six years, it's never too late to improve your position.

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General advice only. Consider your objectives, financial situation or needs, which have not been accounted for in this information and read the relevant PDS and TMD before deciding to acquire, or continue to hold, any financial product.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR UNION

Retirement need not mean saying goodbye to the PSA CPSU NSW.

PSA CPSU NSW members leaving the workforce can remain a part of their union.

"The door is always open at the PSA CPSU NSW," said President of the union's Retired Associates, Dave McKeough. "The Retired Associates of our union is very active and has affiliations to other retirees' organisations.

"Retired associates are entitled to nearly all member benefits, excluding ambulance cover, journey insurance and the scholarships we offer.

"Members remain Provident Fund members so long as they join the Retired Associates immediately after retirement."

Meetings are held every two months at PSA House, 160 Clarence Street Sydney.

"Meetings are a great source of information about retirement, superannuation, lifestyle, health and other issues," said Mr McKeough. Meetings conclude with light refreshments at lunchtime and a warm welcome is assured."

AGED CARE ADVICE DISCOUNT AVAILABLE

Hard decisions made easier for PSA CPSU members.

A new deal arranged by the PSA CPSU NSW means members get access to Aged Care Personal Advice at a reduced rate.

If you or a loved one is considering aged care, then this benefit could be very helpful for you. Aged care regulation changes were introduced in November last year, and

the changes have left many people unsure about the system, the costs, and what affordable care really looks like. Whether you're planning for your own future, caring for an older loved one, or supporting someone in your workplace, Aged Care Personal Advice is there to help.

The link from the PSA member benefits webpage will take you straight to the Aged Care Personal Advice page, where you can set up a booking. PSA members will get 10 per cent off the cost of aged care financial advice.



UNION ON SHOW AT YABUN

Aboriginal members get access to information.

The PSA CPSU NSW had a presence at the Yabun Festival in inner Sydney. Yabun is an annual event marking the anniversary of the beginning of dispossession of Aboriginal lands by European settlers; also known as Australia Day.

“Yabun gives us a chance to join in and celebrate Aboriginal survival,” said Community Engagement Officer Ricky Walford (pictured far right). “Members and potential members also get a chance to meet with us.

“We had membership forms available



for anyone wanting to sign up, as well as information for our Aboriginal members.

“Other attendees at the stall included Chair of the PSA CPSU NSW Aboriginal Council Carlo Svagelli (pictured far left)

and NSW Minister for Aboriginal Affairs David Harris, who will be taking back to Cabinet a message that our members are in need of a pay rise for the work they do for NSW.”

REPORT FINDS ABORIGINAL WORKERS WITH DISABILITY FACE EXTRA DISCRIMINATION

The Centre for Indigenous People and Work at University of Technology Sydney (UTS), found Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with disability are more likely to be subjected to racist behaviour.

About 31 per cent of Indigenous workers with disability said non-Indigenous colleagues often make inappropriate comments or assumptions about them. This compares to 23 per cent of Indigenous workers without disability.

“These findings are disturbing,” said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little.

The report also found Indigenous people were much less likely to be employed when they have disability. Only 40 per cent of Aboriginal adults with disability have employment, compared with 75 per cent of those without.

“There is scope for making more provisions in our workplaces that are both culturally appropriate for Aboriginal workers, as well as equipped for those with disability,” said Mr Little. “NSW can do better for all workers.”

The UTS report recommends the Racial Discrimination Act include a legal obligation on employers to take ‘reasonable and proportionate measures’ to proactively prevent racism.



NEWCASTLE OFFICE OPEN FOR LEARNING

Hunter members offered courses closer to home.

New premises for the PSA CPSU NSW Newcastle office include facilities for training. “We look forward to using these facilities,” said Senior Organiser Glenn Duncan, who conducts the PSA CPSU NSW’s training program. “There will be a comprehensive calendar of training events for members in the area.”

The Newcastle office is now at 24 Maitland Road Islington.

The PSA CPSU NSW plans to open similar facilities in Wollongong.

“Newcastle and the Hunter Valley have long been mainstays of the union movement,” said PSA CPSU NSW Secretary General Stewart Little. “We have a large number of members in the



area performing vital work for the state’s second-biggest city and the economic powerhouse that is the Hunter Valley.

“The new facilities are not just an excellent investment for our union, they

also give members the chance to take quality training courses closer to home.”

Some courses will continue to be held offsite, such as Swansea Public School (pictured above), in the region.

NEW TRAINING APPLICATION AVAILABLE

Up your skills while at home.

The PSA CPSU NSW is making it easier for members to up their skills. “DevelopU is an online learning platform that puts you in control,” said National Industrial and Research Officer Shay Deguara. “It gives union members a chance to improve their career skills, life skills and workplace skills.

“It is an e-learning platform you can use at your own pace, without taking time off work for training.

“The courses help you develop your career, your confidence, your people skills, your financial wellbeing and your understanding of Australia’s proud union movement. There are courses on creating safer workplaces and even a catalogue we’ve curated that will link you to free microcredential and microskills courses from TAFE.”

DevelopU will continue to add new courses, webinars, and access to TAFE courses for professional development.

PSA CPSU NSW members will sill



have opportunities to undertake inhouse training through courses such as Role of the Delegate.

Most PSA CPSU NSW members are eligible for paid trade union training days every year.

“With training available in house, or via our new DevelopU platform, the union is here to help our members improve their skills,” said Senior Organiser Glenn Duncan. “We encourage as many people as possible to sign up for union training today.”

TAKING ON COERCIVE CONTROL

Not all domestic abuse is physical.

State and federal legislators have acknowledged coercive control is one of the most dangerous and pervasive forms of domestic and family violence in Australia.

Characterised by repeated patterns of intimidation, isolation, monitoring and control, coercive control often occurs without physical violence yet can cause profound and long-lasting harm. In response to growing evidence that coercive control underpins most domestic violence homicides, NSW and the Australian Government have passed laws to protect people from this form of abuse.

NSW became the first jurisdiction in Australia to criminalise coercive control in the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022*

The law was expanded to include abusive behaviour towards a current or former intimate partner, with the intention of coercing or controlling them. A key feature of the law is its focus on patterns of behaviour over time, rather than isolated incidents.

Conduct may include financial abuse, psychological manipulation, social isolation or technological monitoring. The offence carries a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment.

At the federal level, there is currently no standalone criminal offence of coercive control, as criminal law remains primarily a state responsibility. However, coercive control is recognised and addressed through several important Commonwealth legal frameworks.

Under the *Family Law Act 1975*, coercive and controlling behaviours are expressly included in the definition of family violence and must be considered by federal family courts when making parenting orders, determining a child's best interests, and issuing injunctions to protect parties from harm.

Evidence of coercive control can significantly influence outcomes in parenting disputes, even where no criminal charges have been laid.

The Australian Government has also led national policy coordination through the



National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence.

These principles establish a shared national understanding of coercive control, emphasising prevention, early intervention, culturally safe responses, and survivor-led practice. While the principles are not legally binding, they guide law reform, service delivery and education across jurisdictions.

Coercive control is further recognised in federal strategies such as the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032, which identifies coercive control as a key driver of serious harm and prioritises workforce training, data collection and community awareness.

A Complementary Framework.

“Together, NSW’s criminal offence and Commonwealth civil and policy frameworks form a layered response to coercive control,” said PSA CPSU NSW Women’s Industrial Officer Simone Scalmer. “While NSW law enables police intervention and prosecution, federal legislation ensures coercive control is treated as a critical risk factor in family law proceedings.

“The challenge ahead lies not in further definition, but in consistent understanding, effective implementation and ensuring victim-survivors are supported across every point of the legal system.”



LACTATION DISPUTE PROVES MORE WORK IS TO BE DONE

Member experiences workplace bullying over right to express at work.

A PSA member working for Communities and Justice has outlined the difficulties she had expressing in the workplace.

Following her return to work after parental leave, the employee experienced persistent difficulties expressing breast milk due to the lack of an appropriate, private lactation space.

Staff often reacted negatively when she needed time to express milk, with eye-rolling, dismissive comments and visible frustration. On multiple occasions, staff, contractors and other personnel walked in on her while she was expressing. Adding to this, she was required to store expressed breast milk in a communal fridge, resulting in a colleague unknowingly consuming it.

In 2025, after several incidents of interrupted privacy, she formally requested a designated lactation room. Rather than this being centrally addressed, she was advised that she should locate suitable rooms herself. Although some temporary spaces were discussed and trialled, none

resolved the underlying issue.

Later that year her breast pump was found knocked from a kitchenette bench and placed on a non-sterile surface. When she expressed distress, a staff member repeatedly shouted at her, despite her visible upset, and made a remark suggesting the breast pump should not be visible.

While she later attempted to resolve the matter directly and reported the incident to management, the broader pattern of behaviour continued.

Between July and December 2025, people repeatedly entered spaces while she was expressing milk, including staff and cleaners. On 12 December 2025, a male contractor opened the kitchenette door while she was actively expressing milk, questioned her request for privacy, and attempted to remain in the room.

Only after sustained escalation was a lactation room finally arranged. While management worked with her to equip the room appropriately, she felt that she should not have had to fight so hard for a basic workplace requirement. Even after the room was established, staff hostility continued. She was subjected to derogatory remarks about furniture being moved, assertions that the room was not private, and comments suggesting she was receiving special treatment.

Subsequent complaints by staff about

her expressing milk escalated workplace tension further. She was denied access to correspondence about her conduct, became aware she was being timed while expressing milk, and felt increasingly targeted. Meetings intended to resolve matters instead left her feeling spoken over, unsupported, and deeply distressed. As a result of the ongoing stress, her mental wellbeing deteriorated, and she reported a noticeable impact on her milk supply. She remains deeply affected by how the situation was handled and hopes that future women will not be required to endure similar experiences.

PSA CPSU NSW Women's Industrial Officer Simone Scalmer said employees have the right to express at work in a private, safe area.

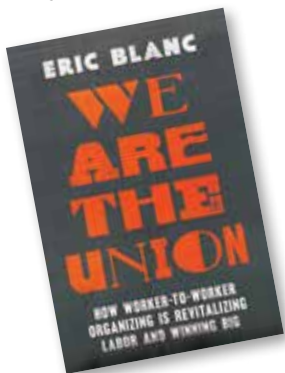
"The Crown Employees Award says you are entitled to up to two paid lactation breaks of up to 30 minutes each per day or per shift for full-time employees or part-time employees working over four hours per day," she said. "Part-time employees working four hours or less on a workday are entitled to one paid lactation break of up to 30 minutes.

"These breaks are not to be bundled in with any other rest or meal breaks members are entitled to, and apply to employees for breastfeeding, expressing milk or storing it."

WE ARE THE UNION

How Worker-to-Worker Organizing Is Revitalizing Labor and Winning Big

Eric Blanc
\$32.75
University of California Press



Professor of labour studies at Rutgers University, Eric Blanc's *We Are the Union* arrives as a timely and practical intervention when the climate for the working class in America is quite inclement. Blanc asks: How can unions in the US rebuild organising capacity and win real power in workplaces today?

At the heart of Blanc's thesis argues for a worker-to-worker organising model in which rank-and-file workers take the lead in organising their co-workers, supported rather than led by union professionals. This approach, he contends, will build scale and deepen internal union democracy, in the US because workers shape strategy, recruit peers, and sustain campaigns from within.

In describing this model he emphasises three key features: workers have a meaningful strategic voice, organising starts before unions fully commit staff and resources, and internal training enables experienced workers to guide and support others.

Blanc provides detailed case studies drawn from recent American labour struggles, showing how grassroots energy has driven dramatic

breakthroughs: the Starbucks Workers United campaign, propelled by small groups of young workers, used "worker-to-worker DNA" from the outset; filing representation petitions almost daily and achieving uncommonly high success rates in union elections.

Internal reform movements within the United Auto Workers and NewsGuild/CWA demonstrate how rank-and-file involvement can reinvigorate union strategy, inject militancy and build organising infrastructure capable of winning contracts and organising new members.

These stories aren't just American anecdotes; they point toward principles and practices that could inspire union renewal everywhere, especially as workplaces become more fragmented, casualised and dispersed.

Blanc also underscores the role of digital tools, not as substitutes for face-to-face organising, but as essential connectors in a highly mobile and geographically distributed workforce.

While digital communication is rightly emphasised, technology cannot replace the deeper bonds formed through sustained, in-person organising work. A point worth considering for unions in

Australia's diverse workplaces.

Australia retains significantly higher union density than the US. Australian unions are largely organised on an industry or occupation basis, which supports broader coverage. In contrast, the US and Canada are dominated by enterprise-level unionism, where unions must win recognition workplace by workplace, often through formal elections. This structure makes organising slower and more resource-intensive in North America. Thankfully, the need for worker-to-worker activism that Blanc writes about is not as dire in Australia. For now, governments, workers, and reluctantly, employer groups accept professionally-organised union representation and intervention.

We Are the Union is a rigorous, readable contribution to debates about union strategy. It moves beyond lamentations about decline to offer a practical blueprint for rebuilding power from within workplaces themselves. For Australian unionists seeking both fresh ideas and tested organising practice, Blanc's work is a clarion call; one that insists union revitalisation happens when workers are not just represented, but empowered, leading campaigns alongside their rank-and-file peers.

SEE WHAT YOU MADE ME DO

Power, control and domestic abuse

Jess Hill
\$36.99
Black Inc



As unions embark on a campaign to reduce the level of domestic violence in Australia, publisher Black Inc has released an updated version of Jess Hill's 2020 book, *See What You Made Me Do*.

Blending investigative journalism with survivor testimony, legal analysis and scientific analysis, Ms Hill (pictured) takes on the myths about domestic abuse and replaces them with a far more complex truth. She contends that domestic violence more than a series of isolated violent incidents, but a pattern of coercive control.

She shows how intimidation, surveillance, financial restriction and psychological manipulation often do far more damage than physical assault alone. By reframing abuse as an ongoing system of domination, Ms Hill exposes why so many legal and policing responses fail.

The author talks to people in courtrooms, police stations, refuges and homes, interviewing victim-survivors, perpetrators, frontline workers and researchers.

She finds how the justice system, child protection, and even well-meaning social services can sometimes put victims at greater risk. Ms Hill takes aim at family law processes that prioritise “parental rights” over women’s and children’s safety.



Ms Hill also looks at what creates perpetrators. She examines the role trauma, gender norms and social conditioning shape abusive behaviour. This nuanced approach broadens the conversation while keeping accountability firmly in view.

See What You Made Me Do is not a

comfortable book, nor is it meant to be. The amount of information and the often harrowing content can be emotionally exhausting for readers.

It challenges readers to rethink deeply held assumptions and to recognise how profoundly systems, not just individuals, enable abuse.

THE SHORTEST HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA

Mark McKenna
\$39.99
Black Inc



Mark McKenna's *The Shortest History of Australia* is a timely and quietly radical look into how Australians understand their past, and by extension, the forces shaping work, rights and democracy today. In an era of insecure employment, weakened public institutions and renewed culture wars over national identity, this book reminds us that history has never been neutral terrain

The book gives us a concise yet expansive and fresh vision of Australia's past that is thoughtful but delivered in refreshingly tight and highly accessible writing. Rather than offer a dry recitation of dates and events, McKenna reframes the nation's story to show how multiple the threads of Indigenous presence, colonial legacies, cultural myths, environmental forces, and contemporary anxieties intertwine to shape who Australia is today.

Despite its brevity, McKenna delivers a sharp account of Australia as a nation formed through dispossession, exclusion and uneven power, rather than the comforting myth of effortless egalitarianism. For union readers, this framing matters. It exposes how working life in Australia, from wages and conditions to who is included or excluded from protection, has always been shaped by political choices, not natural outcomes.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its consistent centring of First Nations history. McKenna treats Indigenous presence,



resistance and survival not as a preface to 'real' history, but as foundational to the Australian story. This is great reading for anyone in the labour movement: the Australian economy was built on stolen land and coerced labour, and those foundations continue to shape inequality today. McKenna doesn't bully us with guilt though, just clearly explains these facts in an unambiguous way.

McKenna also dismantles the long-standing myth that Australia was born fair and classless. Instead, he traces how race, empire and capital structured early society, even as democracy and labour politics emerged here. The result is a familiar contradiction for unionists: hard-won advances for working people repeatedly constrained by entrenched elites and selective national storytelling.

While the book does not dwell extensively on trade unions themselves, it powerfully illustrates how labour history has been marginalised in favour of safer

national myths, particularly militarism. The elevation of ANZAC over industrial struggle is not accidental; it reflects a political preference for unity through sacrifice; without demands from those who are sent to be sacrificed.

By questioning these myths, McKenna creates space for union readers to ask harder questions: whose contributions are celebrated, whose struggles are forgotten, and who benefits from that forgetting?

The Shortest History of Australia is ultimately a book about the present. It shows how unresolved tensions over sovereignty, authority, belonging and fairness continue to resurface in debates about public services, workplace rights, migration and economic security.

For union members, the message is clear: the conditions we face today are the product of history, and history is shaped by collective action. Nothing about work or fairness in Australia has ever been inevitable.

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Listeners should prepare themselves for often-confronting content when downloading this series of podcasts produced by Future Women and financed by the Commonwealth Bank.

The podcasts interview women who have experienced violence at the hands of their partners. Episodes cover a wide variety of issues, including the difficulty many women experience leaving violent men, homelessness, police indifference and legal expenses experienced when partners drag out disputes.

There are plenty of first-person interviews with survivors, as well as input from people working to reduce the country's unacceptable level of violence in the home. Episodes go to great lengths to explode stereotypes about women who experience



violence, as well as address questions such as “why didn't you just leave?”

The podcasts take a professional approach to the harrowing content, with a diverse range of interview talent from

all over the country, overlaid with a well-produced soundtrack. The testimonies are backed up with statistics and information about services available to people experiencing violence.

WAR ON OUR WATERFRONT



The 1998 waterfront dispute put industrial relations on Australian front pages nationwide.

The dispute was kicked off when Patrick Stevedores, a major waterfront operator, attempted to restructure its workforce by dismissing more than 1400 unionised dock workers and replacing them with non-union labour, including representatives from the Australian armed services, who were

trained in the United Arab Emirates. The company, backed by the government of John Howard, argued productivity on the waterfront was too low and costs were too high.

However, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) saw the move as an attack on workers' rights and union representation and responded with widespread protests and legal challenges, framing the issue as a fight

for job security and fair treatment.

The front pages depicted balaclava-wearing non-union labour, attack dogs, picket lines and legal battles.

Ultimately, the courts ruled in favour of the union, ordering the sacked workers be rehired.

The ABC has produced a six-part podcast revisiting the dispute, interviewing union figures, representatives from Patrick, some of the soldiers trained to work the docks, and even John Howard and his then-Transport Minister Peter Sharp, as well as future Labor government minister Greg Combet.

On the way, there are inside figures leaking details of the campaign to union officials, revelations of federal government support for strikebreakers and clandestine meetings in a theme pub on the Sunshine Coast.

Despite the upbeat delivery from the narrator Jan Fran, the podcast's goes into deep detail and the diverse spread of interview subjects paints a vivid picture of a fight on the wharves that captivated a country.

PSA CPSU NSW CONTINUES SUPPORT FOR MYANMAR CAMPAIGN

Union joins fight for democracy in the Asian nation.

PSA CPSU NSW Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright said the union will continue its support for APHEDA Union Aid Abroad's campaign in support of the people of Myanmar. APHEDA is a body that for 40 years has mobilised Australian union members to support campaigns overseas, particularly nations in the Asia-Pacific region. It campaigns for workers' rights and for improvements in occupational health and safety, including a ban on the use of asbestos in developing countries.

The organisation has been instrumental in opposing the military regime in Myanmar and last year invited Mr Wright to inspect its operations across the border in Thailand.

"I saw first hand the efforts this vital organisation does in support of human rights and, by extension, workers' rights in a country run by people who stubbornly hold out against democratic reform and the rights of minorities within the country's borders," said Mr Wright.

A new report compiled with the assistance of local unions and partner organisations sheds light on the military junta's continued assault on workers, civilians, and democratic institutions.

APHEDA's report highlights how the junta is bypassing sanctions on jet fuel so its air force can continue to bombard opposition forces and civilians.

According to APHEDA, more than 4000 civilians have been killed and more than 20,000 detained, including trade union leaders.

The report documents the continued flow of Jet A-1 fuel from Thilawa Port to key airbases, the transport of air-to-surface rockets, and the dual-use fuels enabling the regime's military logistics. It also maps the role of regional maritime hubs, particularly Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and the involvement of sanctioned military



conglomerates and banks that anchor the junta's financial system.

APHEDA has also condemned what it describes as sham elections, where people are forced to vote in military-run polling booths to legitimise the ruling junta.

Mr Wright joined representative of the Myanmar Campaign Network and the Australian Council of Trade Unions to brief the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to push for continued sanctions against the Government of Myanmar. The delegation also met high-level figures including, Senator Lisa Darmanin, staff from Foreign Minister Penny Wong's office and senior officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. APHEDA has also written an open letter to Ms Wong urging her government to keep up its campaign against the rogue state.

"The junta controls less than a third of Myanmar's territory yet seeks to

manufacture legitimacy to govern the whole country even as they continue airstrikes on areas outside their control," said APHEDA in the letter. "Since the February 2021 coup, Myanmar has been plunged into civil war, with the junta intensifying violence against civilians, trade unionists, and democratic leaders. Over 21.9 million people now require humanitarian assistance, and 3.5 million are internally displaced. The regime has ramped up airstrikes, arbitrary arrests, and the destruction of communities in the lead-up to the elections."

Mr Wright thanked all PSA CPSU NSW members who continue to support APHEDA.

"Union members stand together," he said. "Your efforts, and your money, will help create a better world for those living under oppressive regimes such as Myanmar."

For more information on APHEDA's work, go to www.apheda.org.au

A TURNING POINT FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY AND COMPENSATION IN NSW

Changes will potentially affect all the state's workers.

NSW has passed new rules on workers' compensation, work health and safety (WHS), and psychosocial risk management. Major legislative updates, new guidance material and expanded support programs will roll out through 2025–26.

At the heart of current developments is the NSW Government's announcement that an agreement has been reached on workers' compensation reforms. The State Government claims that these changes will strengthen the sustainability of the system while improving outcomes for injured workers.

However, the union movement, including the PSA CPSU NSW, has voiced concerns that injured workers, particularly those with psychological injuries, will be left without adequate compensation.

The State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) continues to sharpen its focus on recovery and health outcomes. New guidance on the management of low back pain has been released, while further changes to the health provider space is expected in 2026. SIRA has also worked towards enhancing clarity around surveillance standards of practice and published its annual Recovery at Work Insider review.

SafeWork NSW has issued new rules to protect workers, including more stringent testing requirements for workplaces with heavy noise issues. Tighter rules on workplace exposure limits for airborne contaminants are also due to commence later this year.

Significant legislative change is also underway. A new WHS regulation has replaced the previous 2017 regulations, introducing updated terminology, NSW specific requirements, and strengthened psychosocial risk provisions based on the hierarchy of controls. Notably, workplaces storing large quantities



of lithium batteries must now lodge emergency plans with Fire and Rescue NSW. The regulations also introduce new enforcement tools, authorised training frameworks and the silica worker register, which commenced 1 October 2025. Amendments to the WHS Act and Industrial Relations Act will further expand SafeWork NSW's powers and clarify duties from March and July 2026.

Across the broader safety landscape, SafeWork NSW is delivering new guidance on workplace sexual harassment, in-home care risks and falls from heights, alongside an expanded program of seminars and workshops. It is also anticipated that multiple Codes of Practice will be redrafted in the coming months, as they are due to be made mandatory commencing on 1 July 2026.

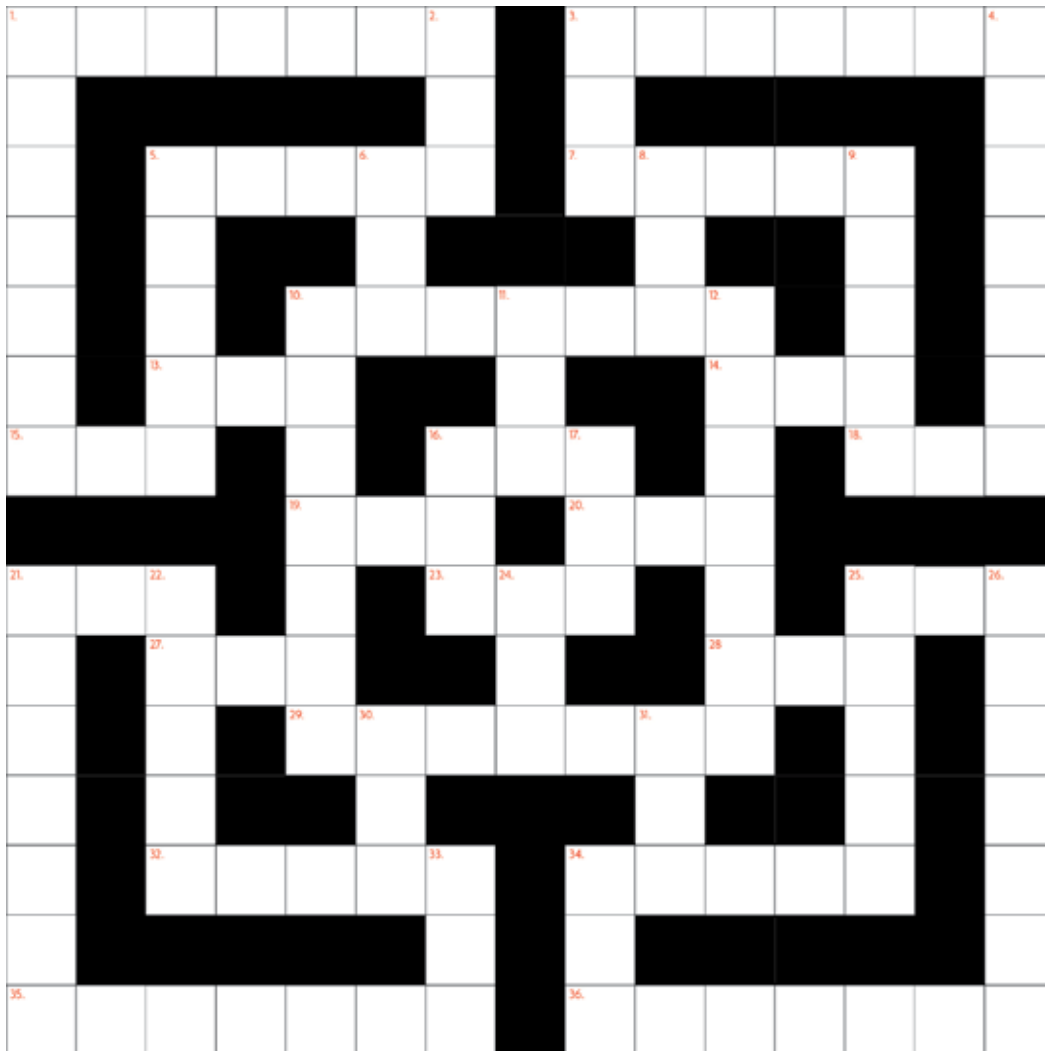
Nationally, Safe Work Australia continues to push for stronger incident notification requirements and evidence-based safety practices, as workplace fatalities in 2025 remain high.

"The changes to the laws governing our workplaces are a mixed bag," said PSA CPSU NSW Health and Safety Officer Marko Petrovic. "While we are obviously disappointed in the changes to the workers' compensation system, we welcome tighter controls and increased focus on WHS in workplaces where our members are employed."

"We are keeping abreast of changes so we can use the right tools to protect our members."

"We have already commenced two WHS dispute proceedings at the Industrial Relations Commission, and anticipate there will be more to follow."

CROSSWORD



- 18. Command for Fido (3)
- 19. Network that interconnects computers within a limited area (1,1,1)
- 20. Half of two (3)
- 21. Deputy Premier sounds like she is on the move (3)
- 23. Fastener used with a bolt that sounds tasty (3)
- 25. Liquid in a tree (3)
- 27. Edible grain used in porridge (3)
- 28. Noah's aquatic ride (3)
- 29. Part of (7)
- 32. Stumpy, yet versatile, finger (5)
- 34. Australia has a Great Dividing one of these (5)
- 35. The moment in time when the Sun appears directly above the equator (7)
- 36. Largest Solar System planet (7)

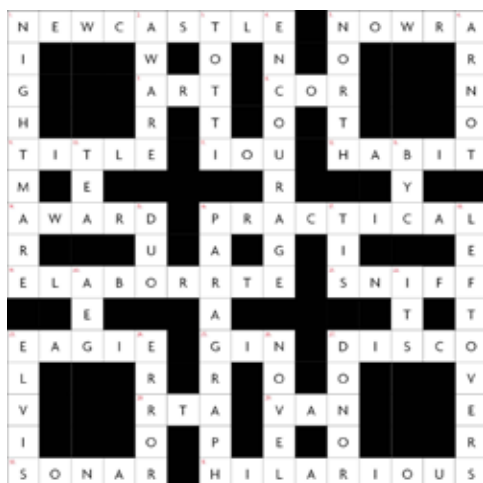
DOWN

- 1. Workplace catch-up (7)
- 2. Not a no (3)
- 3. Organisation waging violent campaign for end to British rule in Ulster (1,1,1)
- 4. Of an animal no longer among us (7)
- 5. Calorific restrictions (5)
- 6. Type of baleen whale or Japanese name (3)
- 8. Graffiti signature (3)
- 9. Disorder (5)
- 10. Vote papers (7)
- 11. Liberian team's Olympic code (3)
- 12. Capital of Armenia (7)
- 16. Tavern (3)
- 17. Baby's bed (3)
- 21. Dress-up material (7)
- 22. Android (5)
- 24. University of Cape Town (1,1,1)
- 25. Move along ice (5)
- 26. Profession of Matisse or Van Gogh (7)
- 30. Northern hemisphere tree variety (3)
- 31. Egg (3)
- 33. Fight in a ring (3)
- 34. British regime in India (3)

ACROSS

- 1. Smallest Solar System planet (7)
- 3. Make better (7)
- 5. Attire (5)
- 7. Room in roof cavity often used as a storage (5)
- 10. Study of living things (7)
- 13. A party of this type in Boston kicked off the American Revolutionary War (3)
- 14. Band formed by Jeff Lynne, Roy Wood and Bev Bevan (1,1,1)
- 15. American term for petrol (3)
- 16. NSW industrial umpire (1,1,1)

Last issue's solution



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