

WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE



PSA CPSU NSW WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2026



CONTENTS

	PAGE
From the General Secretary	3
President's welcome	4
Message from the Chair	5
Agenda	6
Women Shaping the Future	8
Speakers	12
Sponsors and Partners	15

HOUSEKEEPING

Signing on

Delegates will be required to sign an attendance sheet at each session of Conference. If Delegates do not sign to verify their attendance, Departments will not pay for leave. The PSA CPSU NSW is required to confirm with Departments that Delegates have attended each Conference session.

Hearing impaired

Please sit in the front rows.

Luggage

Luggage is to be stored on Level 9.

Toilets

There are toilets on each level of PSA House, through the fire exits. There is an all-gender toilet on level 8. Even-numbered floors have women's toilets.

The toilet on the ground floor is accessible to people with disability.

Name tags

Please wear your tag at all times during Conference.

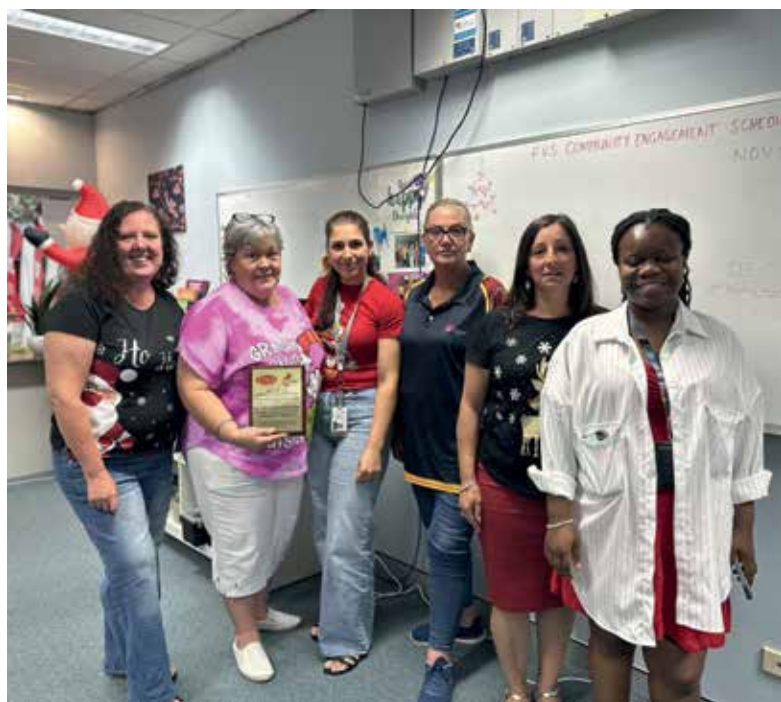
Payment of expenses

Regional delegates who have requested in writing to be paid their sustenance payments will be paid Thursday lunchtime.

EFT payments will be processed on Thursday after Accounts has received the attendance sheets.

Mobile phones

Please put your phones on silent or turn them off. If you have to make a call, please go to Level 11.





Stewart Little General Secretary

OUR PRIDE IN THE WOMEN SHAPING A STRONG FUTURE FOR NSW

The PSA CPSU NSW's fight for equality is making our state stronger.

It is vital that women play a major role in shaping the future of our workplaces.

Diversity brings new ideas, a variety of perspectives, and strong leadership to organisations.

Thanks to the fighting done by unions such as ours, women are increasingly taking on senior positions across industries and government.

One of the most important ways women will shape future workplaces is through leadership. Women leaders can encourage collaborative decision-making,

empathy, communication, and inclusive management styles. Their presence in senior positions can also inspire younger generations to believe that leadership opportunities are open to everyone, regardless of gender.

But we still need to fight. More than 65 per cent of our members are women. Yet we are still fighting to get more women into senior roles, knowing that this will not only make our workplaces fairer, but also make them better at delivering services that truly reflect the needs of the people of our state.

We will still fight to create more flexible and supportive workplaces. As employees seek a better balance between their

professional and personal lives, employers will need to offer flexible working hours, parental leave, remote-work opportunities, and supportive policies. Women's experiences can help employers understand the importance of these changes, benefiting all employees.

Creating a future where women can reach their full potential requires work from us, their union. We need to kick down barriers such as unequal pay, discrimination, unconscious bias, and limited access to leadership opportunities.

Ultimately, women will not simply participate in the workplaces of the future: they will help redefine them. And we will be by their side.





Nicole Jess President



MORE THAN WAGES: WOMEN SHAPING A BETTER FUTURE

The PSA CPSU NSW's campaign on domestic violence will help people all over our state.

I am proud to be part of a union that has fought so hard for its members. We have won regular pay increases, better conditions, safer workplaces and flexibility.

We work together to shape a better future for the communities we serve.

I am also very proud of a campaign we have launched that is not about pay, conditions, workplaces or the hours we are in the office. It is about saving people's lives.

The DV Needs Public Services Campaign, launched this year by the PSA CPSU NSW, is about getting a statewide, government-run service for people affected by domestic violence. At present, domestic violence victim-survivors are subject to a perverse lottery, where the availability of services depends on where they live.

The PSA CPSU NSW holds up the government-run Western Sydney Nepean Blue Mountains Family Violence Service as a template for the rest of the state. The centre coordinates services from other

government agencies, such as police and the courts, as well as non-government services available to people experiencing violence in the home.

DV Needs Public Services is part of our movement's proud tradition of helping people all over the state. Whether it is standing up against racism, for our environment, or supporting the work done overseas by our partner APHEDA-Union Aid Abroad, the union movement always supports issues that make our world a better place.

As unionists, we should all be proud.



Leanne Smith Women's Council Chair

UNIONS PLAY A VITAL ROLE FOR WOMEN AT WORK

Unions such as ours are vital if women can participate fully, safely and equally in the workforces we so ably represent.

When we go into bat for our members, we give women a stronger voice at work. And this is a loud voice, winning the wages and conditions no individual employee could achieve alone.

Better wages, secure employment, flexible working arrangements and stronger protections against discrimination and harassment can make a significant difference to women's ability to build sustainable careers.

As more women enter traditionally male-dominated

industries and occupations, unions can also help ensure workplaces are inclusive and that women have equal opportunities to progress.

One of the most important challenges unions can help address is the continuing gender pay gap and the undervaluation of work traditionally performed by women. Too many female-dominated occupations are still undervalued.

We have made progress in winding back this gap. And we will continue to campaign for wages that properly recognise the skills, responsibilities and social value of our work. In addition, ensuring women are fairly paid throughout their careers will also improve their financial security in retirement.

Future workplaces need to

recognise that caring for children, ageing parents and other family members is a shared social responsibility.

We can also campaign for affordable childcare, housing and other public services that make workforce participation possible. Just as importantly, unions can ensure women have a meaningful voice in workplace decision-making and leadership.

The future strength of the union movement itself will depend on empowering younger women to become organisers, delegates and leaders. Hopefully among our attendees are the women who will go on and continue our fight.

I hope all attendees enjoy Women's Conference 2026.



PSA CPSU NSW WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2026 TIMETABLE

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2026

8:30am	Conference Registration	1:00pm-2:00pm	Lunch Level 11 PSA House Sponsored by Union Shopper and Maxxia
9:00am-9:15am	<i>Welcome to Country</i> Binowee Bayles		
9:15am-9:20am	<i>Conference Opening and Housekeeping</i> Leanne Smith , Women's Council Chair	2:15pm-3:00pm	<i>PSA CPSU NSW Women Shaping Our Communities</i> Panel facilitated by Anne Kennelly Sabina Carr-Drennan , Mount Druitt Community Corrections Amy Riddle , Coffs Harbour Community Corrections Christina Nicholas , Taronga Conservation Society Dubbo
9:20am-9:25am	Stewart Little , PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary		
9:25am-9:30am	Nicole Jess , PSA CPSU NSW President		
9:30am-10:00am	Michele O'Neil , Australian Council of Trade Unions President	3:00pm-4:00pm	O'Bray Smith , NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association
10:00am-10:45am	<i>NSW Young Woman of the Year 2026</i> Milli Weaver , Founder of the Australian Endometriosis Foundation	4:00pm	Close
		6:00pm	Annual Conference Dinner The Auditorium Club York 95-99 York Street Sydney Sponsored by WageCover, Aware Super and McNally Jones Staff
10:45am-11:30am	Morning Tea Level 11, PSA House Sponsored by Aged Care Personal Advice		
11:30am-12:00pm	Jacinta Harford , International Organiser APHEDA Union Aid Abroad		
12:00pm-1:00pm	<i>Interactive Session: What to Achieve in the Coming Year</i> Interactive session chaired by Nicole Jess and Marianne Ledic , PSA CPSU NSW		

WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2026

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|------------------------|---|------------------------|--|
| 9:00am-9:05am | Welcome back | 11:00am-12:00pm | <i>Organising Women in the Workplace</i>
Hosted by Marianne Ledic and Glenn Duncan , PSA CPSU NSW |
| 9:05am-9:15am | Video summary of Day 1 | 12:00pm-12:30pm | <i>Housing and Women: Launch of the Education Campaign</i>
Panel facilitated by Nicole Jess , Anna Patty and Belinda Tsirekas , PSA CPSU NSW |
| 9:15am-9:30am | <i>Women-specific Award Conditions and Entitlements</i>
Simone Scalmer , PSA CPSU NSW
Women's Industrial Officer | 12:30pm | Close |
| 9:30am-10:30am | <i>Industrial Wins for Women in Our Workplaces</i>
Panel facilitated by Simone Scalmer , Zeina Issa , Multicultural NSW
Trudy Penni , Office of the Sheriff
Nicole Harding , State Emergency Service | 1:00pm | Women's Council meeting to follow Conference. Attendance is restricted to Women's Councillors and Women Central Councillors |
| 10:30am-11:00am | Morning Tea Level 11, PSA House
Sponsored by State Super | | |

Information correct at time of printing.





IT BELONGS TO US

WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE

Women in the public sector are vital to our state's future.

Already at the heart of the agencies we represent, women in the workforce are fundamental to the future of NSW. Women make up the clear

majority of the NSW public sector workforce. The NSW Government reported that women represented 66.5 per cent of the 453,310 public sector employees. In other areas, such as universities, TAFE and disability services, the numbers are similar.

Women are particularly prominent in occupations that are essential to the everyday functioning of the state. This means that the future of NSW depends heavily on whether governments and other employers can attract, retain and, most importantly, support and advance

the women represented so capably by the PSA CPSU NSW.

This is not just a numbers game, box-ticking exercise or simply a question of workplace representation or fairness. It is directly connected to the quality, reliability and resilience of the services on which millions of people depend.

The PSA CPSU NSW will always be vigilant, ensuring women can build secure and rewarding careers in the public sector and play a vital role in the future prosperity and wellbeing of the entire state.

Women will be on the front foot as artificial intelligence marches into workplaces. They dominate areas such as school support staff, disability support and child protection: roles that cannot simply be automated or outsourced without consequences for communities.

Retaining experienced women in these, and all our professions, is critical. When women leave because of burnout, insecure employment, inadequate pay, inflexible working arrangements or the difficulty of balancing work and caring responsibilities, the consequences extend beyond the individual worker. Governments lose experience and expertise, services become harder to staff, remaining workers face greater pressure and communities lose access to essential services.

Our women members have an enormous influence on gender equality across the wider economy. As the state's largest employer of women, the NSW Government has the ability to demonstrate what good employment can look like. Its decisions about wages, flexible work, parental leave, career

progression, workplace safety and leadership can establish standards that influence other employers.

Significant challenges remain. The NSW Government's latest Women's Strategy Report Card shows that women held 45 per cent of senior executive roles or equivalent grades in the NSW public sector in 2025, while the public-sector gender pay gap was still 7.3 per cent, equivalent to an average difference of \$8,069 a year. These figures demonstrate there is unfinished work to do.

A genuinely future-focused public sector must ensure that women are not concentrated in lower-paid occupations. Closing the gender pay gap and creating pathways into leadership are not merely matters of equity. They help NSW retain

talented workers, make better use of its investment in education and training, and ensure that leadership reflects the workforce and communities government serves.

Factors outside the workplace also affect women's participation in the labour market. Women continue to carry a disproportionate share of unpaid caring responsibilities, which can affect their ability to enter, remain in or progress through paid employment. In 2025, 29.3 per cent of NSW women who wanted to work were not actively looking for work because of childcare, compared with 3.9 per cent of men.

This is a significant loss of skills and productive capacity at a time when NSW needs a strong workforce. Our employers have to do their bit. We need flexible working





arrangements, accessible childcare, job sharing, meaningful part-time career pathways and parental leave arrangements that encourage both women and men to share caring responsibilities. These measures should not be viewed as special treatment for women. They are practical workforce policies that enable people to remain economically active while meeting their responsibilities to children, ageing parents and other family members.



Our women members are also essential because who makes decisions affects how government understands and responds to the community. When our decision-making workplaces reflect the population, they are better positioned to identify different experiences and anticipate the consequences of policy decisions. The NSW Government's Gender Equality Action Plan explicitly



recognises that increasing diversity and gender representation can help the public sector better reflect the NSW community and potentially deliver better government services. Women's participation is particularly important in developing policies affecting healthcare, education, housing, family services, workplace relations, domestic and family violence, transport and community safety because women can bring professional expertise as well as lived experience to these issues.

Government decision-making is simply stronger when people with different experiences, perspectives and expertise have genuine opportunities to influence policy. The importance of diversity becomes even greater when considering Aboriginal women, women with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse women, LGBTQ+ women, older women and women living in regional and remote NSW.

More of our women members need to be in the positions that make decisions. Although women constitute the majority of the NSW public sector workforce, they remain underrepresented at the highest levels. This is a lost opportunity for the public service and for NSW as a whole. Leadership positions provide the authority to shape budgets, organisational cultures, policies and priorities. Increasing women's representation in those positions means drawing on the full pool of talent available to government.

Women are central to the future prosperity of our state. When our women thrive NSW will be better equipped to deliver the services required in the decades ahead.



CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Michele O'Neil

President, Australian Council of Trade Unions

This will likely be the last chance the PSA CPSU NSW gets to hear this formidable trade unionist and determined fighter on behalf of working women speak at our events.

Michele O'Neil began her term as President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) in 2018. Her father was a lifelong public sector worker, while her mother worked in a range of jobs, including in a tannery and as a waitress. These experiences, together with her family's strong commitment to social justice, helped shape her lifelong involvement in the labour movement.

Michele joined a union at the age of 14 when she began working as a waitress. An early experience of workplace sexual harassment had a profound influence on her understanding of the power of collective action in improving the lives of workers.

She subsequently worked with homeless young people in the community sector before moving into the textile, clothing and footwear industry. There she fought on behalf of some of the country's most poorly paid women workers.

In July 2026, Michele announced she would step down from the ACTU presidency as part of a leadership transition, joining outgoing Secretary Sally McManus.



Milli Weaver
Founder, Australian
Endometriosis Foundation

NSW Young Woman of the Year, Milli Weaver is an Australian women's health advocate, solicitor and founder of the Australian Endometriosis Foundation.

Drawing on her own experience living with endometriosis, Milli began what was initially known as Endo Articles in 2023, creating a platform to share information and provide peer support for young people living with the condition.

She established the organisation because she recognised a significant gap in support and advocacy for young Australians navigating endometriosis and the healthcare system.

Under Milli's leadership, the organisation has developed into the Australian Endometriosis Foundation, a volunteer-run charity with a growing community of more than 1600 young people.

Alongside her work as a full-time solicitor, Milli has become a prominent advocate for improved endometriosis care, reproductive health, fertility preservation and better access to healthcare.



O'Bray Smith
President, New South Wales
Nurses and Midwives' Association

O'Bray Smith is an experienced nurse and midwife and the President of the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) NSW Branch.

O'Bray has been a prominent advocate for nurses, midwives and patients in NSW, particularly around safe staffing, nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-mother ratios, wages and working conditions.

As NSWNMA President, she has repeatedly argued that adequate staffing is fundamental to patient safety and the quality of healthcare. During industrial campaigns for mandatory staffing ratios.

O'Bray publicly supported nurses and midwives taking collective action to press the NSW Government for safer staffing arrangements. She has also highlighted the pressures facing midwives and the impact of understaffing on their ability to provide safe and compassionate care to women and babies.



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