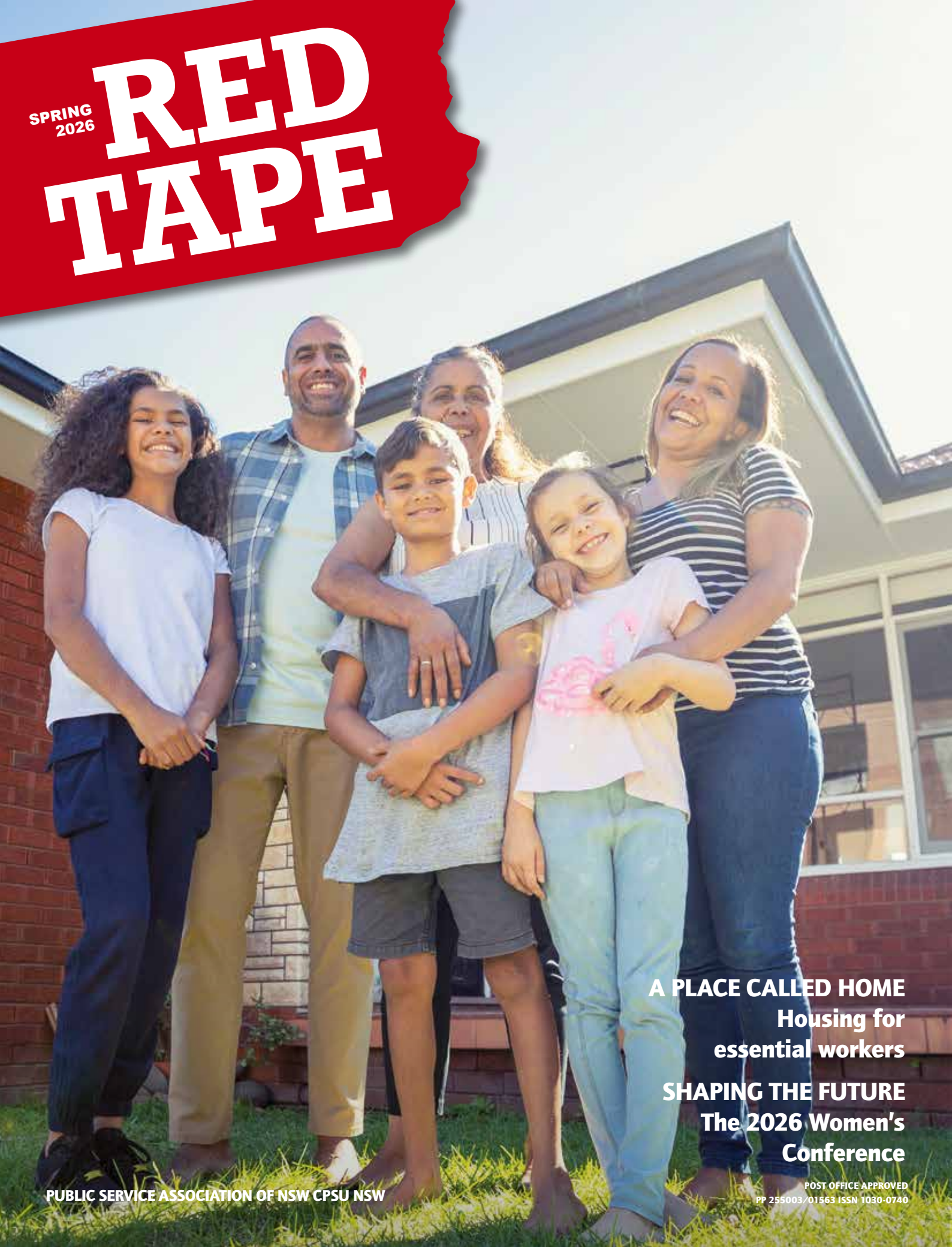
SPRING 2026

RED TAPE



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The 2026 Women's Conference

PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NSW CPSU NSW

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SPRING 2026
RED TAPE

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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.

PSA UNITY – STRENGTH – RESPECT

CPSU NSW

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

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GENERAL SECRETARY



Stewart Little

IT IS TIME TO ACT ON HOUSING

Public Service Matters: we need homes for essential workers.

A housing crisis is gripping our state.

Under the National Housing Accord, NSW has committed to delivering 377,000 new homes by 2029.

This means the state needs to average roughly 75,000 new homes per year to meet this target.

However, recent completion rates have been much lower, with around 45,000 homes completed annually in recent years.

NSW government data shows approximately 78,000 homes were completed statewide since July 2024, but the state remains behind the pace needed to meet long-term targets.

This proves the present system, which is overly reliant on the private sector banging up tens of thousands of affordable homes all across NSW, has failed.

And with population growth figures pointing to a total of 9 million people by 2029, this will become a more acute issue.

Already, homelessness services are reporting significant increases in people seeking assistance.

In the Inner West, a relatively affluent area, people receiving homelessness support rose from 1251 to 1496 in one year. In Canterbury-Bankstown, the number rose from 1877 to 2063.

As someone raised in public housing, I am determined that our State Government play a greater role in getting roofs over more people's heads.

Our members in Homes NSW know that public housing has been neglected by successive state governments.

The Minns Labor Government has a chance to reverse this decline and start constructing safe, affordable homes for those who need them.

NSW had about 110,800 public housing homes in 2014, but that fell to about 95,800 by 2023, a decline of roughly 15,000 dwellings or about 14 per cent.

In this time, the NSW Government has sold or removed more public housing than was built. This needs to be reversed.

The private sector and community housing providers are simply falling short of the goals required to address this pressing issue.

In addition, the Government can be more stringent when issuing planning permission, demanding a greater, and loophole-proof, percentage of affordable housing in large developments.

Our members in agencies such as Homes NSW and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure have the knowhow and skills to make homes more affordable and cut the number of people sleeping rough, couch-surfing or, even worse, staying in violent relationships.

Our members are there, ready and waiting to help. They just need more support from our state's leaders.



IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

ICAC inquiry shows importance of whistle-blowers.



When CPSU NSW Delegate Lisa Simmons noticed something was wrong, she spoke out. Today, her bravery has seen her employer's operations scrutinised by a government anti-corruption body.

The NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) is currently investigating allegations of corrupt conduct at the University of Wollongong (UOW) through Operation Scandi. The inquiry focuses on whether senior university officials manipulated recruitment processes, improperly awarded consulting work, and failed to manage conflicts of interest.

According to ICAC, the investigation is examining allegations that:

- Governance recruitment processes were deliberately subverted to benefit associates of senior staff.
- Consulting contracts, including work awarded to Aspirall Consulting International, may have been improperly influenced or awarded.
- Conflicts of interest relating to the appointment of interim Vice-Chancellor John Dewar and the engagement of consulting firm KordaMentha were not properly managed.

The investigation originated from concerns raised by Ms Simmons, a long-serving UOW employee. Since then, she has been granted whistle-blower protection after reporting suspected corrupt conduct.

Those allegations were also scrutinised in the NSW parliamentary inquiry into university governance. The final report with findings and recommendations has been handed down.

The whistle-blower's significance lies not in proving the allegations herself, but in bringing information to regulators that led to formal investigations. ICAC subsequently conducted its own inquiries, gathered evidence, seized materials, examined witnesses, and launched a public hearing.

The ABC reported that concerns surrounding a proposed senior executive position paying about $400,000 a year became one of the issues that exposed wider governance and conflict-of-interest questions within the university.

The case has become one of the most significant governance investigations involving an Australian university in recent years because it goes beyond isolated allegations and examines whether senior leadership structures were used to favour particular individuals or firms. The inquiry has already led to major repercussions, including Chancellor Michael Still standing aside while the investigation proceeds.

In September, a major delegation of Illawarra unions, including the CPSU NSW, met with the UOW's top leadership and told them the university's governing body, the council, needs to resign in the wake of the ICAC hearings.

The message was directed towards UOW's acting Chancellor Greg West and Vice-Chancellor Professor Max Lu.

It is important to note that ICAC's inquiry is ongoing. The allegations remain allegations until ICAC issues its findings, and the Commission has not yet made final corruption findings against the individuals involved.

BARGAINING UPDATE FOR UNIVERSITIES

Enterprise bargaining has finished at a number of universities represented by the CPSU NSW.

Agreements have been approved at Western Sydney University, the University of Newcastle and the University of Technology Sydney.

An agreement covering staff at the Australian Catholic University has been lodged with the Fair Work Commission for approval.

Negotiations are continuing at the University of Sydney, the University of NSW, the University of New England, Charles Sturt University, Macquarie University and the University of Wollongong. Enterprise bargaining will commence next year at Southern Cross University.



PRESIDENT



Nicole Jess

HORROR WEEKEND MAKES THE CASE FOR DV CAMPAIGN

Four instances of violence. Four families facing unimaginable grief.

In late September, in the space of just 24 hours, three women aged 23, 70 and 90 were killed in separate domestic and family violence-related incidents across NSW. Two were allegedly stabbed in their homes, while the third was found dead at a property in the state's north. Police have charged men over all three deaths. In the Blue Mountains, a woman was charged with killing two of her children.

The circumstances of each case are different. It would be wrong to pretend three tragedies can be reduced to a single explanation. But together, they should force a difficult question for the NSW government: what more can the state do to protect people from domestic violence?

The answer cannot simply be another statement of shock after someone dies.

NSW has already introduced significant reforms. Following the murder of Molly Ticehurst, for example, bail laws were strengthened and electronic monitoring introduced for certain serious domestic violence offences. Yet her death continues to raise questions about whether the systems designed to protect women are working as they should.

Those questions matter because domestic violence rarely begins with murder. There are warning signs: threats, coercive control, stalking, intimidation, breaches of orders, escalating violence and repeated contact with police or support services.

The State Government needs to be at the centre of the solution, as demanded by our DV Needs Public Services campaign.

That means properly funding frontline domestic violence services, ensuring women can access safe accommodation quickly, strengthening risk assessment and information-sharing between police and support agencies, and ensuring breaches of protection orders are treated with the seriousness they deserve.

The same weekend as the four events, a non-government domestic violence service in Wollongong closed a waitlist due to funding issues, proving once again that a government-run service needs to be available in all parts of NSW.

The NSW Government cannot prevent every act of violence. Nor can legislation alone change the attitudes and behaviours that underpin domestic and family violence.

But the State Government does have enormous power to determine whether a woman fleeing violence can find somewhere safe, whether police have the resources and information to recognise escalating danger, whether perpetrators face meaningful consequences for breaching orders, and whether agencies learn from cases in which the system fails.

Five murders in one weekend should not become another grim statistic that dominates the news for a few days before attention moves elsewhere.

It should be a catalyst for action.

The families of these women and children cannot bring them back. But the NSW Government can decide that their deaths demand more than condolences.

They demand scrutiny, investment, accountability and prevention.

Five people dead in one weekend is a tragedy. The question now is what our state does with it.



General Secretary Stewart Little and I recently had the opportunity to meet Tony Ticehurst and his local MP, Phil Donato, in Orange.

Tony's daughter, Molly Ticehurst, was murdered by her former partner in April 2024. This month, he was sentenced to 28 years in prison.

Before her murder, Molly had been promised security upgrades to make her home safer. The work was to be carried out by a non-government organisation delivering a NSW Government-funded domestic violence program.

But the work was never completed.

As Tony said: "She's still waiting for them to show up."

DFSVC REPORT BACKS PSA STANCE

Commission demands government action on violence.



Echoing a campaign by the PSA, the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's (DFSVC's) 2026 Yearly Report demands all levels of government take a central role in tackling domestic and family violence (DFV).

Tabled by Federal Social Services Minister Tanya Plibersek in September 2026, the Yearly Report's first recommendation is that the issue of domestic and family violence requires a "whole-of-government" response.

"The PSA wholeheartedly agrees with this recommendation, and urges the Minns Labor Government to follow the report's recommendation," said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little.

"As outlined in the union's DV Needs Public Services campaign, too often people fleeing violence in the home are required to negotiate a confusing mix of non-profit organisations, with the quality and availability of services dependent on a perverse postcode lottery.

"Only those in the Western Sydney, Nepean and Blue Mountains region have access to a comprehensive government-run support service.

The PSA demands the public sector should be at the forefront of service delivery for those affected by domestic and family violence.

The DFSVC says family and domestic violence "cannot be addressed by a single portfolio, agency or jurisdiction" and that governments need to "coordinate services".

It says the issue needs a coordinated response through health, education, justice, housing, child protection, immigration, social security, childcare, aged care, disability support and many other areas of government.

Mr Little welcomed the report, saying it justified the hard work the PSA CPSU NSW had put into bringing this issue to the attention of governments.

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ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY



Troy Wright

THE KNOWN UNKNOWNS

It is too early for employers and unions to truly understand what AI will do to workplaces.

Industrial relations conferences can be a grind because of the polarisation of the sector. Attend a union-dominated one and the collective groupthink can leave you feeling unchallenged. Alternatively one with too many speakers representing employers will have me muttering dissent into my hand like an NFL coach.

But sometimes if the conference gets the speaker balance right you get to lift the curtain and learn what employers are really thinking. Recently I was at one with a panel on the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the workplace. A very confident employer's lawyer declared that there was no reason to be concerned as AI was just another wave of technological change, and can be dealt with industrially like many technological changes that have occurred in the past. But is it and can it?

Traditionally the defence for employees in the face of proposed technological change in their workplaces that may change or delete their jobs has been consultation. Done well, it provides a genuine opportunity for employees and their unions to influence and reverse potential detrimental decisions. At the PSA CPSU NSW this has been a bread and butter strategy to protect our members' jobs and preserve public services.

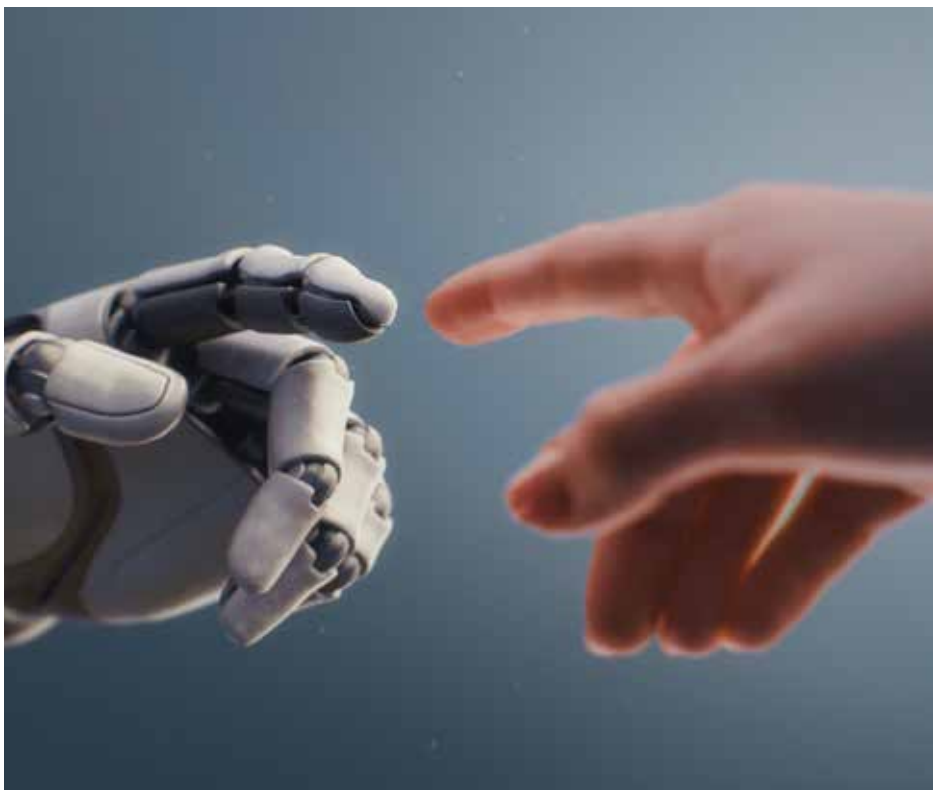
I am concerned however that the rolling tsunami that is AI presents a unique challenge in terms of technological change for which consultation is an inadequate mechanism to address. There are two key differences to previous periods of mechanisation or automation that I can identify which are unique compared to the invention of the automobile or the printing press, and this is leaving aside the sheer pace of development.

Every time now innovations or technologies have appeared in our workplaces and resulted in job losses or changes in roles, our employers have consulted with us.

This is not the current scenario with AI. AI developers are banging the door down on employers, public and private sector alike, with speculative promises about what they could offer and customise. I fear that employers will enter negotiations with AI companies to develop a system and once having invested significant sums doing so before having a clear idea as to what it is and what it will do, consultation would be after the point of no return and meaningless. The beauty of AI for many is its unknown potential. However, in industrial terms this could make it very difficult to identify and mitigate its impact on jobs until it is too late.

Secondly, AI development is linear. The pace of change is accelerating and compounding. Even if best-practice consultation occurs before AI is introduced, when does it end? Any AI system is likely to look remarkably different six, 12 and 24 months after its introduction, to the point that what was consulted upon may bear no resemblance to what it is updated to. Consultation in these circumstances would have to be ongoing and the definition of technological change that triggers it would need to be expansive and generously interpreted.

AI is not like any technological change that has preceded it. Consequently it equally requires a more nuanced industrial tool than anything utilised before. It is why your union is currently working closely with government to map out these potential impacts and prepare a response. Hopefully that is something employers and employees can all agree on.



PSA SAYS NO TO EVOLVE

Union implements an immediate work ban on training program.



The PSA imposed a work ban on members participating in the Department of Communities and Justice's (DCJ's) EVOLVE training package.

DCJ has introduced EVOLVE as a mandatory training package, ostensibly to focus on building leadership and mentorship skills. The Department claims the program was introduced following concerns about leadership capabilities amongst staff.

However, members, whilst partaking in the training, had expressed the clear "disconnect between the program's message and the experience of staff". In response to concerns raised by members, the PSA directed members to no longer participate in EVOLVE whilst the union seeks changes.

The EVOLVE training is "more about the Department's imposition of ideology on the staff" according to the PSA Senior Organiser Belinda Tsirekas. The idea of change management is the central focus of the program rather than practical leadership development. She said there is a strong emphasis on embracing change and adapting to reform and fails to acknowledge "how to go through change management, how to lead a team along, it is just you who will deal with change".

This has left numerous frontline workers to feel pressured to conform to a particular approach in their work for the Department, with the worry that the messaging risks being perceived as "do as I say, not as I do". These concerns have contributed to growing frustrations from members, prompting the PSA to initiate a survey to seek further insights and feedback on the EVOLVE program.

Members participated in the PSA survey, which reported a high number of participants who felt that the program was not useful to their daily roles. And members indicated they did not feel valued as employees. With these results, a work ban was implemented.

The union has contacted the Department of Communities and Justice as well as the Deputy Secretary, outlining staff concerns and changes they wish to make to the program.

"The Department undertakes genuine consultation with staff and the PSA, the union that represents them, regarding the program's content and purpose," said Ms Tsirekas. "It must demonstrate how the program addresses the practical challenges faced by frontline workers.

"The Department must prioritise action on workload and under-staffing issues, and workplace wellbeing as essential foundations for sustainable reform."

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BRODERICK FORUM HELD AT PARLIAMENT

Union goes to the heart of NSW power.

On the eve of the fourth anniversary of the Broderick Report, the PSA launched the Beyond Broderick campaign, calling for meaningful reform and action on issues affecting parliamentary staff.

The report was commissioned in light of a series of events in the chamber, including sexual assault and bullying.

Chair of the PSA's Members of Parliament Vocational Advisory Group, Suzette Meade, chaired the forum and shared her lived experience as a Members of Parliament (MoP) staff member. Ms Meade spoke about the realities faced by MoP staff and the need for meaningful legislative and workplace reforms to ensure safe, respectful and secure employment.

PSA Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright outlined the PSA's campaign for change, including the need to modernise the Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013. Mr Wright highlighted that NSW remains behind other Australian jurisdictions in delivering the legislative protections and workplace standards that parliamentary staff deserve.

The State Minister for Industrial Relations, Sophie Cotsis, acknowledged the important role played by the PSA and its delegates in advocating for parliamentary staff. The Minister committed to continuing to meet and work with the PSA as efforts continue to advance reforms and address the issues facing staff.

Mr Wright said events such as this were part of the PSA's advocacy for the full implementation of the report. Other moves include writing to the Premier and Minister Cotsis seeking the full implementation of the Broderick Review recommendations, including amendments to the Act.

He added this is just part of the union's advocacy on behalf of PSA members in Parliament.

"As an organisation that knows public service matters, the PSA is the only union recognised and authorised to represent Members of Parliament staff," he said. "The PSA is also the only union that is a party to the Members of Parliament Staff Employment Determination and the Code of Conduct, ensuring your voice is represented on matters affecting your employment, conditions, and workplace rights.

"The PSA has been actively advocating for parliamentary staff and delivering real outcomes, such as the $1,000 Cost of Living Adjustment Payment for Members of Parliament staff."

The union represents the interests of staff through regular Joint Consultative Committees, where the PSA meets with Parliamentary Services to raise and address industrial issues affecting MoP staff.

CPSU NSW CELEBRATES TAFE MEMBERS

Union praises members in vocational education.

The CPSU NSW was part of two celebrations for the work done by members working in the state's TAFE system.

In August Public Education Week was held to recognise CPSU NSW members and celebrate the work of public schools and TAFE colleges.

In addition, the union held a function in Wollongong for National TAFE Day in September, as well as other campuses.

CPSU NSW Organiser Michael George said the staff at TAFE NSW are "some of the hardest workers you'll meet".

Over the course of the week Mr George met with an array of groups, across different TAFE locations. This gave members the opportunity to interact one-on-one with their union.

"These staff members offer everyday support to students and strengthen public education, from roles including librarians, ground staff, administrative staff and disability support," said Mr George. "Behind every successful classroom is a group of dedicated workers, they are the backbone of TAFE.

"It is essential we ensure that all staff are treated fairly and supported at their place of work. The CPSU NSW works with our TAFE council to promote their hard work and fight to make their voices heard."

Some teams the CPSU NSW works with include employees from diverse cultural and migrant backgrounds, who often face cultural barriers in the workplace. With the support of the union, these staff members receive education on their contracts and their rights as an employee.

"We are on their side," said Mr George.

General Secretary Stewart Little said events such as Public Education Week and TAFE Day gave members the knowledge and tools for them to feel secure and respected in their positions.

To conclude this year's Public Education Week, CPSU NSW hosted a TAFE Delegates Council meeting to really highlight the significance of our members and their first-hand experiences in the workplace.

The council is comprised of a strong cohort of delegates who all share the same desire to support and empower members. This meeting gave an opportunity for the CPSU NSW to show our support for our members and provide them with the platform for our delegates to be heard.











PSA RECOGNITION WEEK 2026

Members celebrate the work that matters in NSW schools.

PSA Recognition Week saw members in the NSW school system celebrate their roles in delivering quality public education.

The theme for 2026 was Thriving Schools Start With Us.

"The theme goes to the heart of why we go out and celebrate Recognition Week," said PSA President Nicole Jess. "Without the members we represent, schools would not function.

"There are few government functions as important as education. Our members are there, forging a better future for everyone in NSW,"

Schools held morning teas, lunches and special assemblies, with members of the PSA Executive going out to talk to the staff about the issues they face in the workplace.

"Public service matters, and Recognition Week gives our union a chance to say thank you to our largest cohort of members, the people running the state's world-class school system," said Ms Jess. "We look forward to PSA Recognition Week 2027."



STAFF PUSHED TO DO MORE WITH LESS

PSA members are being swamped with additional tasks.

As workloads in schools increase, the PSA has urged members to contact the union to ensure the Department does not overburden its employees.

"Across NSW public schools, PSA members are telling us the same story: workloads are growing, staffing is not keeping pace, and too much responsibility is being shifted onto school support staff," said Industrial Manager Siobhan Callinan. "The PSA thanks the many members and schools who have contacted us to share their experiences. Your feedback is critical in helping us build the case for change, and we are taking these concerns directly to senior departmental officials and the NSW Government."

Ms Callinan said the administration of student medications has changed dramatically over the years.

"What was once limited to one or two students requiring occasional medication support has become a significant and growing responsibility in many schools," she said. "Members report increasing numbers of students requiring medication throughout the school day, more complex medication regimes, expanded record-keeping requirements and additional compliance obligations to ensure student safety.

"This important work requires time, training, attention to detail and significant administrative oversight. Yet many schools have received no corresponding increase in staffing or resources to manage these growing responsibilities."

The PSA has raised these concerns directly with the Department and continues to advocate for greater recognition of the workload impact associated with medication management in schools.

Recent changes announced by School Infrastructure NSW have raised significant concerns for General Assistants (GAs) across NSW public schools. These include changes to when urgent maintenance requests should be logged and when issues must instead be managed through planned maintenance processes.

The guidance also encourages schools to increase reliance on General Assistants to undertake maintenance tasks as a cost-saving measure.

"This risks shifting systemic resourcing issues onto individual employees without proper recognition of role boundaries, training requirements or workplace health and safety obligations," said Ms Callinan.

"The PSA is concerned these changes could lead to an unacceptable expansion of duties beyond the GA role description, including pressure to undertake skilled trade work such as plumbing or electrical tasks."

The PSA is collecting feedback from GAs impacted by these changes.

The PSA is also working with the Department to address concerns arising from the Enterprise Financial Planning Tool (eFPT), finance processes and other administrative systems that are increasing workload within schools.

"Members have consistently raised concerns about the ongoing blurring of responsibilities between School Administrative Managers and Business Managers, despite both roles having distinct Statements of Duties," said Ms Callinan. "The PSA maintains clear role boundaries are essential to ensuring workloads remain manageable and staff are not expected to undertake duties outside their classification without appropriate recognition.

"The PSA will continue to hold the Department accountable for consultation, clear processes and systems that genuinely support schools rather than shifting additional work onto already overstretched staff.

NEW DELEGATES JOIN SCIENCE GROUP



Advisory group continues to advocate on behalf of members.

At a meeting at PSA House, Schools Administrative Officer Science Advisory Delegates welcomed their new Delegates.

"At their first meeting were Sue Nosti from Ryde Secondary College, Brooke May from Callaghan College Waratah and Melissa Siddons of Peel High School," said Organiser Susan Chee Quee. "The Advisory Group continues to advocate for School Administrative Officers working in science.

"This hard-working group of members are campaigning for training, safety and recognition."

THE CASE FOR AN UPDATED NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE AWARD

PSA Central Councillor Bradley Stewart states the case for upgrading RFS conditions.

For most people, the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) is synonymous with volunteers protecting communities from bush fires, floods and other emergencies.

What is often less visible is the dedicated workforce that works alongside volunteers to serve the communities in which we live and work.

Every day, staff across the RFS support volunteers, coordinate emergency responses, manage aviation operations, oversee community engagement programs, develop mitigation strategies, maintain operational systems, deliver training, manage fleet and infrastructure, and provide planning and intelligence.

Without these staff, the organisation's ability to effectively plan for and coordinate emergency operations would be significantly diminished. Fires would take longer to extinguish, recovery would be slower, and the risks to communities would significantly increase.

Our work has evolved significantly since the inception of the *Crown Employees (Rural Fires) Award 2002*, particularly over the past decade. The responsibilities, expectations and complexity of our roles have increased substantially. New systems, technologies, programs and operational requirements have been introduced, often without corresponding changes to the framework that governs the workforce delivering them.

In many respects, staff are being asked to do far more than the Award originally contemplated and allows for.

It is critical to understand that modernising the Award is not simply an industrial issue. It affects operations, work health and safety, the workforce and, ultimately, community safety.

Happy, supported staff contribute to a positive organisational culture, stronger volunteer support and better operational outcomes. The relationship between staff and volunteers is symbiotic; when one is struggling, the other feels the impact.

For years, the PSA and delegates have advocated for changes to an Award many believe no longer reflects the realities of contemporary emergency service work.

Negotiations and reviews have continued for more than a decade, focusing on matters such as hours of work, overtime, allowances, shift arrangements and incident conditions. These discussions have highlighted the growing gap between historical employment arrangements and the operational demands now placed upon RFS employees.

Importantly, legal action in the Supreme Court pursued by the PSA resulted in a significant outcome regarding the payment of overtime, reinforcing the principle that employees should be properly compensated for work performed.

The challenge is simple: the RFS of today is not the RFS of 20 years ago. Today's workforce is highly skilled, professionally trained and increasingly specialised. Recognition of these skills through contemporary employment conditions and remuneration is long overdue.

Climate change is increasing the frequency, duration and intensity of natural disasters. Fire seasons are becoming longer and more complex. Major incidents no longer occur in isolation. Staff are increasingly required to work across multiple hazards including bush fires, floods, storms and other emergencies.

The expectations placed upon employees



have expanded considerably. Staff must navigate increasingly sophisticated technology platforms, manage growing compliance obligations, respond to heightened community expectations, and support volunteers operating in ever more challenging conditions.

Many employees regularly work extended hours during major incidents, support operations well beyond traditional business hours and manage workloads that fluctuate dramatically depending on operational demands. These expectations are accepted as part of serving the community, but they must be supported by employment conditions that are fair, transparent, reasonable and sustainable.

The Award should recognise the unique nature of emergency service work while ensuring employees are appropriately compensated for the demands they face.

Importantly, this is not just about pay. It is about recognising specialist skills, retaining experienced personnel and attracting the next generation of emergency management professionals. It is about ensuring staff who dedicate their careers to supporting volunteers and protecting communities are not left behind by outdated industrial arrangements.

Across the public sector, organisations compete for skilled professionals in areas such as emergency management, intelligence, risk management, aviation, communications, engineering, technology and community resilience. The RFS is competing in that same market.

When employment conditions fail to keep pace with expectations, recruitment and retention become harder. The loss of experienced personnel has consequences as knowledge walks out the door, relationships built over decades disappear, and operational capability is diminished. Ultimately, communities bear the cost.

An updated Award would provide certainty for both employees and the organisation. It would create a clearer framework for managing operational demands while recognising the realities of modern emergency service delivery.

It would also demonstrate that the contribution of RFS employees is valued.

The RFS's strength has always been its people. Volunteers are rightly recognised as the backbone of the service, but volunteers rely upon a professional workforce that supports, enables and coordinates their efforts. The relationship between volunteers and staff is not competitive. One cannot succeed without the other.

Just as sporting teams rely on coaches, trainers, analysts and support staff behind the scenes, volunteers rely upon the expertise and dedication of RFS employees to help deliver successful outcomes.

Every hazard reduction burn achieved, every fire trail maintained, every training event delivered, every aircraft dispatched, every hazard complaint investigated, every operational plan and every incident response dispatched reflects the work of dedicated staff working alongside volunteers to keep communities safe.

This environment demands a workforce that is agile, skilled and resilient. That workforce deserves an Award that reflects contemporary expectations and realities. Staff cannot pay bills with goodwill alone.

The staff of the RFS have been neglected by successive governments and past commissioners when it comes to ensuring their employment conditions reflect the increasingly complex and demanding nature of their work. After more than a decade of discussion and review, there is now an opportunity for Commissioner Trent Curtin, Premier Chris Minns, Treasurer Daniel Mookhey and Minister Jihad Dib to right this long-standing wrong and deliver an Award that properly recognises the value of RFS employees. Such reform would not simply benefit staff; it would strengthen the operational capability of the Service and help ensure the RFS remains fit for purpose in meeting the challenges of the 21st century. The question is no longer whether the Award requires updating.

The question is whether the RFS and the NSW Government are serious about investing in the workforce that underpins one of the largest and most respected emergency services in the world.

A quality public safety capability cannot be built solely through new aircraft, shiny new trucks or state-of-the-art facilities. Those investments must be matched by investment in the people who operate them.

A modern Award is not a reward. It is an investment in people, capability and operational readiness. Most importantly, it is an investment in our communities.

Those who work alongside the volunteers protecting our state deserve employment conditions that recognise the complexity, responsibility and commitment required.

The time for modernisation is now.



SEAL BE RIGHT: INSTITUTIONS TOO KEEN ON UNPAID LABOUR

Often volunteering becomes 'hope labour'.



In NSW it is calculated there are more than 4.3 million people who volunteer their time to help others, contributing at least 893.9 million hours.

Volunteering can build esteem, and the service it provides to society is invaluable. And, in times of desperate emergency, Australians are exceptional at giving their time and labour to very worthy causes.

However, our acceptance of volunteering has enabled some practices that exploit people's willingness to donate their time and labour freely.

NSW government departments that utilise volunteer programs are largely ethical in their use of volunteers, and volunteers donating their time and labour to government departments are treated with utmost respect and enjoy the experience immensely. The areas where volunteer programs raise concerns for the PSA and our members are where volunteering has become an accepted component of the pathway to employment. Where employers have now structured particular areas to use volunteers as part of the day to day running of departments; where volunteers are doing the same type of work as employed workers.

Careers that now use volunteering as part of the pathway to gaining paid work include community services and social work, healthcare and allied health, education and training, zoos, conservation and environment, some areas of administration and business, and arts, culture, and heritage.

To gain employment in these fields, formal academic qualifications are almost always essential. And part of that education involves practical placement in workplaces, usually unpaid. However, this unpaid work is short term, and highly supervised, and gives students real-world experience in their chosen field. The NSW government is a major employer of the above-mentioned fields. And the PSA supports appropriate academic qualifications for roles which require a focused background.

Where people are volunteering their time and labour to a department with the aim of gaining a paid role, they can, unfortunately, be open to exploitation. That exploitation is not necessarily deliberate or devious; it is simply that volunteering has crept into certain career paths to the point where both employers and hopeful candidates for employment view volunteer work as an essential part of a CV.

Academics writing in industrial relations disciplines have labelled this phenomenon as 'hope labour'. And where PSA members are reporting the use of hope labour is endemic in the state's cultural institutions. PSA Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright said "The career path to becoming a paid worker in art galleries, museums, libraries and zoos now invariably involves volunteer work. And our members are telling us the work these people are volunteering to perform is the same work that paid workers are performing."

Mr Wright went on to state "It has become ingrained in institutions in part due to neoliberal ideology amongst senior management. Hope labour has been rebranded as 'entrepreneurialism' or 'investing in oneself,' which makes the lack of pay feel like a personal choice rather than institutional exploitation." Sadly, hope labour is a source of value that remains relatively unacknowledged, despite its disruptive impact on the labour market for cultural institutions. Free labour is not simply appropriated, but voluntarily offered and structured within business practices and social relations that are not directly managed and often go unquestioned.

Also, members report to the PSA that the internal culture of the state's museums, galleries and libraries has changed. Much like the professions of law and medicine, it is difficult for people from a less affluent background to engage in periods of unpaid labour.

"Members and delegates need to be aware of this phenomenon in their workplaces," said Mr Wright. "If volunteers are performing work that is a duty that a paid employee should be doing, report it to the union. An institution's volunteer program can easily be an ongoing agenda item for Joint Consultative Committees."

PSA RECEIVES VISIT FROM PNG ADVOCATE

Public service matters worldwide; a Melanesian perspective on unionism.



Abraham Matafolu, an Industrial Advocate with the Public Employees Association of Papua New Guinea (PEA) visited PSA House in July and August.

Mr Matafolu said his union faces many of the same challenges as the PSA CPSU NSW, including recruitment and dealing with an ageing workforce.

"In Papua New Guinea, public sector employees have to retire at 60," he said. "Replacing them is a challenge but also an opportunity for us."

Less familiar to PSA CPSU NSW members will be the time it takes Mr Matafolu to get to his workplace in Port Moresby from his childhood home in Utalo Ward on Goodenough Island in Milne Bay Province

"It is a 13-hour boat ride to the provincial capital Alotau, then a one-hour flight to Port Moresby," he said.

The PEA was formed on 5 May 1947, when the two territories of Papua and New Guinea were merged under the post-war Australian administration.

The union covers government workers all over the country and has a former employee familiar to many in the Australian labour movement.

"In 1965-1967 Bob Hawke, who had just graduated, came and worked as an Industrial Officer for the PEA," said Mr Matafolu, who has a wide knowledge of industrial relations history in his country.

The New Guinean said he is "learning a lot" from the PSA CPSU NSW and "is thankful for the opportunity".

As well as visiting the union, Mr Matafolu went to his first live NRL game. As a "die-hard Cowboys fan", he said he will stick to the North Queensland team even when the competition expands in 2028 to include a team from Papua New Guinea.

PRIORITIES OUTLINED FOR PRIDE COUNCIL

Busy term ahead.

Marking four years since its establishment, the PSA Pride Council has entered the 2026-2028 term, eager to support, and empower LGBTQIA+ union members.

"We strive to create spaces for people to feel welcomed, safe and respected to be their authentic selves," said Pride Council Vice-Chair Emma Pearce.

In August, the Pride Council held a meeting, addressing an action plan for the term and defining their statement of scope with the inclusion of strategic priorities and priority actions.

The council has outlined several strategic priorities to enable positive change throughout the union.

Priorities include advocating for industrial, professional, social and workplace rights of LGBTQIA+ workers and providing advice and recommendations to the union in relation to policies, campaigns, and workplace issues that have an effect on them.

The council will look at strategies to support those experiencing discrimination, harassment, bullying or inequitable treatment.

"The establishment of these strategic priorities from the Pride Council allows for the improvement of LGBTQIA+ staff wellbeing and overall workplace culture," said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess.

The PSA CPSU NSW Pride Council plans to formally approach politicians and seek engagement with the Council to discuss LGBTQIA+ issues that concern our members.

"We have high hopes for the PSA Pride Council to participate in the upcoming Mardi Gras, and associated events," said Ms Jess. "This provides an opportunity for our members to celebrate, and for the PSA to publicly show our support to the LGBTQIA+ community."





CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS A PUBLIC SERVICE THAT MATTERS TO NSW

Union shines the light on the organisation's paid staff.

The PSA launched its Value Us because We Value You campaign to highlight the importance of paid staff to the State Emergency Service (SES).

The campaign was officially launched at the NSW SES headquarters in Wollongong.

The launch also received a show of support, with Commissioner Michael Wassing making an appearance. Mr Wassing acknowledged the common ground of the organisation and the PSA in supporting SES employees, saying: "We both have the best interest of the staff in mind."

"The Value Us because We Value You campaign emphasises that SES employees dedicate themselves to protecting communities every day, and in return deserve recognition, investment and safe, sustainable working conditions," said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little.

"Because behind every NSW SES response are dedicated staff working tirelessly to ensure volunteers are prepared, supported, and equipped to do their jobs safely and effectively.

"When an emergency strikes, the community sees the NSW SES volunteers on the ground. What people often don't see is the salaried staff working behind the scenes to make these responses possible, maintaining critical systems, managing intelligence, ensuring equipment is operational and offering support to volunteers before, during and after emergencies."

The NSW SES was founded in 1955 and serves the state as the lead agency for floods, storms and tsunami responses, outlined by the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 (NSW). The organisation comprises more than 10,500 highly trained members, covering both volunteer and paid staff who are dedicated to serving the community. Ninety-seven per cent of these members are volunteers.

"Understandably, the volunteers are the most visible part of the organisation, as these are the people who are seen working amongst communities in times of need," said Mr Little. "However, the PSA wants all aspects of the SES to be acknowledged equally; including the salaried staff.

"These employees dedicate themselves to protecting communities every day, and they deserve recognition in return."

The campaign is to raise recognition for the 3 per cent of workers who "quietly keep this organisation moving," said Chair of the SES delegates, Nicole Harding. The salaried staff who work from training and planning, to logistics, systems support, and incident management.

"Without our people, we can't support our volunteers, we can't ensure we have operational capability and we can't support our communities during their most difficult moments," said Ms Harding.

Salaried staff have expressed serious concerns about workplace bullying, occupational violence, increased workplace pressures, and feelings of being undervalued.

With these alarming issues, "we want to be proactive" said PSA Senior Organiser Anne Kennelly.

A FAILURE: A HISTORY OF THE PARKLEA GAOL PRIVATISATION

As another private prison goes into state hands, Red Tape looks back at a sell-off gone bad.



In October 2026, Parklea Correctional Centre returned to public hands, ending 17 years of private operation.

This is the result of relentless campaignng by the CPSU NSW, with General Secretary Stewart Little taking up the issue with senior figures in the NSW Government, including Premier Chris Minns.

In 1979, the NSW Government bought a parcel of land from the City of Blacktown for the purpose of building a metropolitan maximum security prison, one that was proclaimed on 19 October 1983.

The prison was the product of a penal philosophy emerging from the Nagle Royal Commission, which brought sweeping changes to the Department, seeing it transition from 'the Department of Prisons' to 'Corrective Services'.

Before the Nagle Report was even published, the Labor Wran government sacked the Commissioner of Corrective Services Walter McGeechan in January 1978. When the report was published two months later Mr McGeechan's sacking was one of the 250 recommendations. His replacement, and the person given the task of implementing the Nagle Report's recommendations was social reformer and academic Tony Vinson, who had worked in the department for many years.

Several of the Nagle report's recommendations were favourable to PSA members, such as better salaries and increased consultation between the union and the department, and the establishment of a new gaol at Parklea.

However, Parklea Prison, later named Parklea Correctional Centre in 1992, has had a chequered history of stabbings, jailbreaks and a spate of scandals; particularly since its privatisation in 2009 by a Labor Government. US-owned operator GEO Group Australia undertook the first private contract in 2009; and after a parliamentary inquiry found serious and systemic problems, MTC Australia took over in 2019.

GEO Group Australia lost its contract to run Parklea following severe security failures and public scandals. Significant quantities of smuggled contraband, weapons, mobile phones, and missing keys were just some of the critical operational issues exposed. High-profile incidents such as an inmate posting a video on YouTube in 2017 wielding a knife and boasting about drugs, as well as stabbings and cell fires broke government confidence in GEO Group's management and revealed that the company failed to fulfil its key contractual obligations regarding safety and order.

Swapping out one private operator for another did not help. Under MTC Australia a contraband smuggling operation was operating, while a 33-year-old detainee was stabbed to death by a fellow prisoner, both incidents taking place in 2020. The following year poor security and operational issues only escalated. A 41-year-old inmate died within 24 hours of being released from the prison in an epileptic seizure in public. His family alleged it was due to him not getting access to medication while on remand in the facility. Later the same year, more than 40 prisoners took part in a rampage scaling the roof and torching parts of the facility, causing $8 million worth of damage.

"Private companies are trying to make money, and the way they do that with prisons is by cutting staff, paying them less and working them longer," Stewart Little, General Secretary of the PSA CPSU NSW said. "It results in fewer staff on the ground, inmates spending longer inside cells and having less time having a structured day or being rehabilitated because they're locked in. It is also part of the reason for the increased violence like the deaths in custody, increases in assaults, both assaults on our members, the officers and inmates to each other."

Following the transition of Junee Gaol to public hands in 2025, Parklea was next in the queue in the recovery from the state's failed private-prison experiment.

"Privatisation hurts everyone. When you've got key government areas like law and order or providing wellbeing for children, that's a public sector responsibility of the government. You should not look to outsource that and outsource your responsibility," said Mr Little.

NEW AGREEMENT ACCEPTED BY CLARENCE CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISORS

Members vote for series of pay increases.

The Serco *Clarence Correctional Supervisors Enterprise Agreement 2026* has successfully passed, with all voters ticking the yes box.

"Through months of negotiation, the CPSU NSW was able to receive an adequate offer from the British multinational that will aim to deliver wage growth, and revised conditions for leave and roster arrangements," said Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright. "The deal improves the work environment and welfare of our Correctional Supervisors [CSs]."

The Enterprise Agreement confirms a 12 per cent pay increase across three years. With a 6 per cent component in the first year with an increase of hourly rate backdated to 31 March 2026. Then a 3 per cent increase in hourly rate 31 March 2027, then an additional 3 per cent increase in hourly rate 31 March 2028.

For employees undertaking higher duties, their pay was adjusted accordingly to the Functional Manager Salary, and eligible employees receiving backpay for periods in which they performed higher duties.

The deal includes a minimum seven-day notice period for roster adjustments, helping to establish a healthy work environment, building trust, and fewer disputes. Public holidays are now recognised per the National Employment Standards, which states "employees are entitled to a paid day off on each public holiday, employees who work a public holiday must be compensated with a penalty rate typically applied and, employees have the right to be absent during a public holiday".

Emergency leave will be maintained, granting additional paid leave to employees, in the case of natural disaster or state emergency.

"Through the collective action and vital role of the CPSU NSW and members' votes we have achieved fairer work conditions for the Clarence Correctional Supervisors," said Mr Wright. "The approval of the new Enterprise Agreement marks a major step forward for workers by securing improvements to wages, rostering arrangements, and employment conditions."

While urging members to support the agreement, Mr Wright said the prison ideally should be operated by Corrective Services NSW as a public-run gaol.

A May 2026 report by the McKell Institute, supported by the Public Service Association SA Branch, highlighted several systemic issues associated with the operation of privatised prisons.

These concerns directly related to Serco, the company which operates the Clarence Correctional Centre on behalf of the NSW Government, the last remaining private prisons in NSW. Parklea Correctional Centre returns to government ownership in October 2026.

"With concerns about Correctional Supervisors' rights, the CPSU NSW urged system reform to ensure fair workplace practices," said Mr Wright. "This push for reform helped shape expectations for stronger workplace protections and improved conditions. Serco's new Enterprise Agreement reflects these demands, with significant improvements in pay and employment conditions."



NON-CUSTODIAL TEAM MEETS AT PSA HOUSE

PSA Non-Custodial members play a vital role in the state's prisons, with roles as varied as running rehabilitation and driving trucks.

The Non-Custodial Delegates Committee met at PSA House in August then with the Corrective Services NSW Executive for a Joint Consultative Committee.

"The main topics discussed were consistency for workplace flexibility for Non-Custodial staff working in correctional centres, inmate Disciplinary process, the Metropolitan Reception and Remand Centre's 24-hour reception model, Parklea coming online into the public system and consultation in relation to Goulburn Correctional Centre," said PSA Senior Organiser Chris Auld.



DIESEL AND TRUST: SPONSORSHIP GIVES BACK

The PSA continued its sponsorship of the Junee Diesels Reserve Grade Rugby League team.

When the local prison was transferred to Corrective Services NSW's control, the PSA stepped in to sponsor the team, which had previously been supported by the private operator.

"By bringing the gaol into the public fold, the State Government is bringing more money into the community," said Prison Officers Vocational Branch Chair Darren King. "And we are doing our bit, sponsoring the team and letting the people of Junee know we have their best interests at heart."

MEMBERS TAKE STAND ON GOULBURN MOVE

Officers refuse to aid shift of inmates to other centres.

Prison Officers who are PSA members refused to move inmates out of Goulburn Gaol as part of the closure of two wings.

"Goulburn Prison Officers Vocational Branch [POVB] subbranch has submitted a motion to not assist the Department in the decanting of the Goulburn Correctional Centre Main Gaol units two and three to any other centre including the processing of these inmates via the normal reception-room process," said POVB Chair Darren King.

The State Government plans to close two maximum security wings at the facility. A total 170 inmates will be relocated and staff offered redeployment. Two other wings closed in 2024. This move is opposed by the PSA and local government and business bodies.

"PSA members will continue normal scheduled court and medical movements. Management will be responsible for the movement of inmates out of Goulburn Gaol," said Mr King.

OFFICERS WALK OVER BAIL DECISION

Members take action over leniency.

Corrections Officers at 30 prisons and dozens of court houses across NSW walked off the job after a prisoner who seriously assaulted a Corrections Officer, leaving him with a broken eye socket, broken nose, and missing teeth was released on bail in August.

Prisoners were locked down and trucks took prisoners involved in court proceedings back to their cells after Corrections Officers across the state voted to walk.

The Officers did not return until 7:00am the following day.

The assault occurred a number of weeks earlier at the John Morony Correctional Centre near Windsor.

PSA General Secretary, Stewart Little, says his members were seething.

"They were livid, a Corrections Officer gets bashed and left with life-changing injuries and the guy gets released back into the community without being charged? It's outrageous," said Mr Little.

"Every Corrections Officer in the state is forgoing a day's pay today over this because the message they're hearing is it's OK for them to get bashed in their workplace.

"The gaols are full of DV offenders due to the Minns Government's crackdown, but it means serious assaults inside prisons are up by 30 per cent.

"These DV offenders come in off the street, they're drug affected, they're on remand, and they cause problems, Corrections Officers need to be backed up by the rest of the justice system and the government otherwise this strike will only be the beginning."

Around 6000 to 6600 adults, nearly half the state's prison population are held on remand in NSW gaols.

The proportion is even higher for young people in detention, where about three-quarters of detainees are on remand.

Much of the increase in the remand population is due to a PSA CPSU NSW campaign for stricter conditions to be imposed on inmates charged with domestic violence offences.



UNION VISITS ARUMA

PSA CPSU Union organiser Alex Sala attended various Aruma sites with workplace delegate at the disability service provider, John Fenton.

"This is to promote the work done by union representatives who are attending bargaining meetings and representing members' matters," said Ms Sala. "It is also to promote the work John does as one of the Aruma delegates

"We met with members who are very grateful with the work of the delegates and their union and they engaged in meaningful conversations with us."

The duo spoke to members and potential members about the $500 dollar gift card that will be drawn fortnightly until mid December 2026."

"It pays to be in the union," said Ms Sala. "We are stronger together."





EMPLOYER TOLD TO CONSULT WITH WORKERS

Northcott ordered to open dialogue.

A disability service provider has been accused of ignoring its obligation to consult.

Northcott has been neglecting its obligations under the Northcott Enterprise Agreement to consult with impacted employees and CPSU NSW when proposing workplace changes that may affect our members.

"Consultation is not a process that begins after decisions have already been made," said Assistant General Secretary Troy Wright.

The CPSU NSW has formally raised concerns with Northcott regarding its consultation obligations under the Enterprise Agreement. The union has made it clear that Northcott must comply with the Agreement and properly consult with impacted members and CPSU NSW regarding any proposed changes. This includes providing timely information, engaging in meaningful discussions and ensuring the consultation process allows members and their union to provide feedback before decisions are finalised.

"The changes proposed to the company could have a significant impact on our members, so consultation is essential," said Mr Wright.

Northcott is considering the closure of group homes including the Woodbine Group Home, and the Lavington Group Home.

The Liberal-National Government's wholesale privatisation of NSW's Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) department as a direct service provider resulted in the transfer of approximately 14,000 public sector workers to private employers. Despite the massive disruption to the lives of our members who had to endure that period, the PSA, via the CPSU NSW name, is still representing members in the ageing and disability care sector.

"All CPSU NSW members have the right to be properly informed and consulted before any final decisions are made about your workplace," said Mr Wright. "We remind members that if you do hear about any proposed changes in your workplace, talk to your delegate, or contact the CPSU NSW."

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.







Danielle works as a Caseworker for the Department of Communities and Justice in Broken Hill and western NSW towns such as Wilcania.

"Every day is very different working out in the far west," she said.

"We cover just over 60 children, and that's not including aftercare. And we only have two full-time caseworkers.

"It would be amazing to have government-funded, domestic violence support, to then ensure that we can meet the needs of our families."

Although Danielle has a tough role, she loves her job.

"I do love working with the families," she said. "I love helping to support and break down generational impacts and break family violence.

"For a lot of our families, it's generational, it's ongoing, it's been happening for the past 10 to 20 years.

"It would be incredible to have more support, more caseworkers, and just more funding to support our families."

Danielle is a Champion of the State.

With a housing crisis gripping NSW Champions of the State such as Sangita play a vital role.

Sangita works for the Private Rental Pathway team at the Strawberry Hills offices of Homes NSW.

"I help homeless people to find homes in the private rental market," she said. "I'm really keen to find them a property and get them some type of roof over their head."

Sangita said in the current housing crisis, it can be "very hard to find properties".

She said community housing providers don't have many properties available at the moment, so her team is looking to get more clients into private rentals.

"We are heading out, putting our heads down and trying to find a secure property for them," she said.

"I like my job. I really want to do, something for our community. This role gives me an opportunity for me to find a house for everybody who is struggling at the moment."

John is working to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in NSW.

"I work at Aboriginal Affairs NSW on closing the gaps, specifically Priority Reform Two," he said. "Priority Reform Two is about strengthening the Aboriginal community-controlled sector."

John is part of a team that works to improve policies and procedures in Aboriginal-run organisations to ensure they continue to provide the best quality services. The NSW Government has found that these services are better for Aboriginal people, achieve better results, employ more Aboriginal people and are often preferred over mainstream services

"I love my job," he said. "I love where I work, I love the people. I love the opportunity to contribute to a really important piece of work. I love the opportunity to work on issues that Aboriginal people in NSW think are important."

John is a true Champion of the State.

CHANGES MADE TO AMBULANCE COVER

Members still protected.

The PSA CPSU NSW recently completed a review of its Ambulance Cover member benefit.

"This benefit was originally introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic to support members during a particularly challenging time," said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess. "We recognise that it remains a valued benefit and continues to assist members with rising cost-of-living pressures."

Following the review, the PSA Executive has refined the terms and conditions of the benefit.

A maximum benefit of $2000 may be claimed by a member within any 12-month period.

Claims may only be made in respect of the member, their spouse, partner, de facto partner, and financially dependent children up to and including 18 years of age who reside in the member's household.

Claimants must be residents of NSW or a recognised border region.

No benefit will be payable for ambulance services utilised while the member or eligible dependent is on holiday.

Where a claim is denied, the member has the right to appeal the decision to the PSA Executive.

There has been no change to the existing eligibility requirements. Members who hold private health insurance that includes ambulance cover remain ineligible to claim this benefit. The requirement for claimants to complete a statutory declaration confirming they do not hold such cover also remains unchanged.

These changes took effect from 1 September 2026.



ELECTRIC CARS AND NOVATED LEASES DRIVE AFFORDABILITY

Going green is even cheaper.

Electric cars have become a sustainable choice not just for those on higher incomes.

A survey by novated leasing provider Maxxia of more than 1200 workers reveals that middle-income earners ($40,000-$79,000) are seeing real financial relief, reshaping the conversation around affordability.

Maxxia partners with the PSA CPSU NSW, offering novated leasing packages for members.

"For years, electric vehicles were seen as something only the wealthy could afford. But we're seeing a real shift in who's buying them, and why," said Maxxia Chief Executive Antonia Albanese. "It's people who aren't chasing status or making an environmental statement, but who simply want to make their budgets go further."

Sixty per cent of electric vehicle drivers surveyed reported lower transport costs after switching from petrol or diesel. These numbers are supported by the Electric Vehicle Council's second EV Ownership Survey, which revealed that more than 70 per cent of drivers reported fuel savings of more than 60 per cent compared with their previous petrol car, while 73 per cent spent less than $300 a year on maintenance.

Electric vehicle drivers also report feeling less affected by broader cost-of-living pressures, thanks to predictable monthly expenses and freedom from fuel-price volatility.

Then there's the Federal Government's Electric Car Discount, which is available through novated leasing and has helped reduce car costs through the exemption of Fringe Benefits Tax on eligible vehicles of up to $91,661.

Long favoured for its tax-saving potential, novated leasing becomes even more attractive with electric vehicles, helping many drivers make payments entirely from before-tax income.

The discount has accelerated EV adoption, growing the number of models available in Australia from 56 to more than 160. According to the Electric Vehicle Council this has lifted new-car sales from 6 per cent to more than 24 per cent between December 2022 and August 2026.

"If you're interested in an electric vehicle via novated lease, call the Maxxia team on 1300 123 123," said Ms Albanese.

FEES INCREASE

PSA CPSU NSW fees were increased by 3 per cent in line with the Public Service pay rise from 1 July 2026, with an effective date of 3 August 2026.

There is no action required from members regarding the fee increase. Members can update their membership details through the Members Portal.

MEMBERS WIN BIG PAYOUTS

It pays to call your union.

Two members have received substantial payments from their employers thanks to union action.

One member received $150,000, while the other received $50,000.

Under the terms of the payments, the PSA CPSU NSW is unable to supply further details.

"This proves the union is there for you," said General Secretary Stewart Little. "In both cases, members felt their employer had a case to answer for. By being a union member, they had someone to turn to and confirm this. If you think you have a genuine issue at work, talk to us."





FIGHT RISING LIVING COSTS

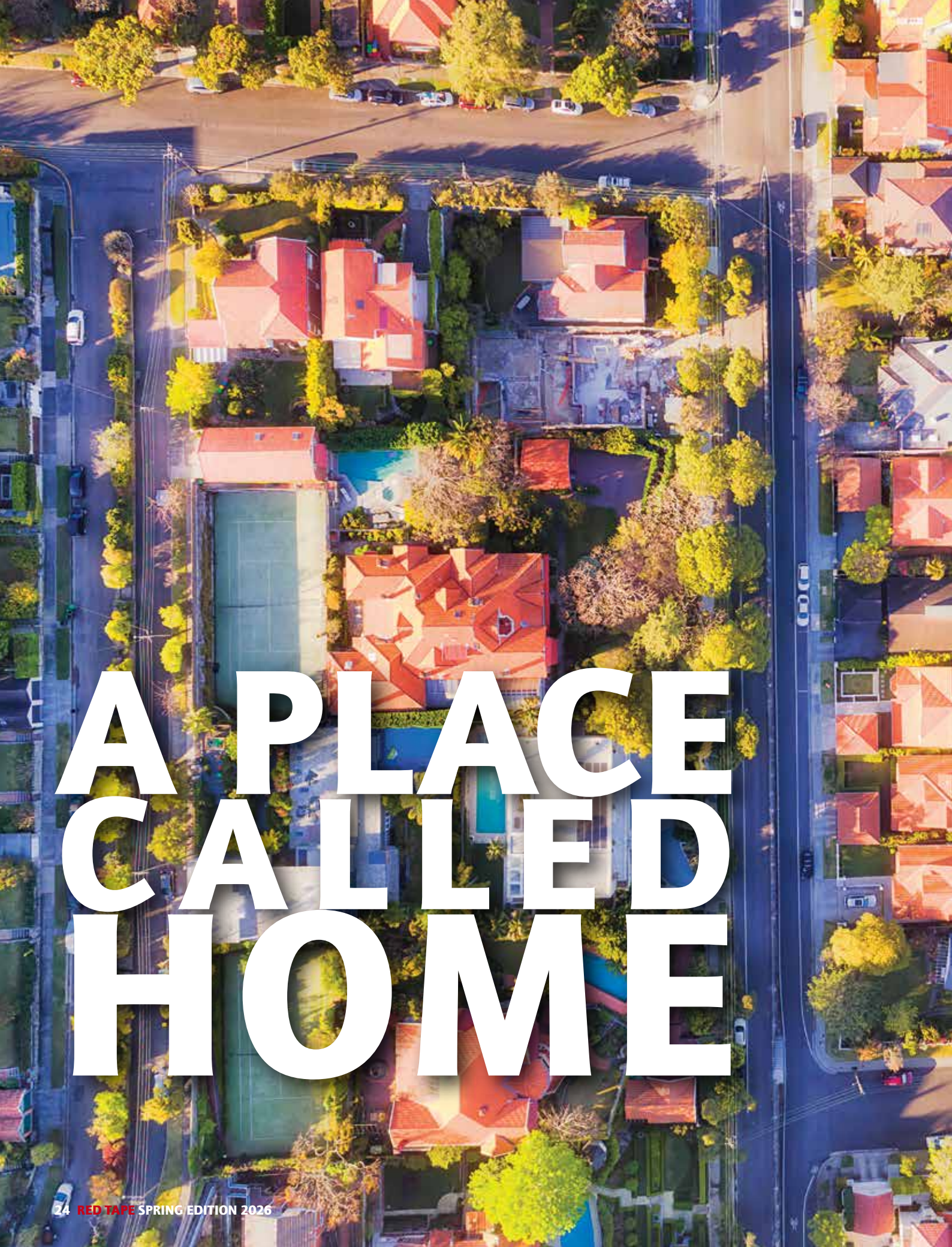
PSA CPSU NSW members have a chance to win $500 every fortnight.

"The PSA CPSU NSW knows members are doing it tough," said President Nicole Jess. "Housing costs are up, which, along with sky-high prices for groceries, are putting extraordinary pressure on household budgets."

Every two weeks the PSA CPSU NSW will draw a member's name, with the winner collecting a $500 WISH gift card to help with the cost of living. The card can be used on groceries, fuel and other everyday costs.

"This is just one way we can say thank you for the vital work you do for the people of our state," said Ms Jess. "Let any colleagues who are non-members know that by signing up they will be in with a chance to win."





A PLACE CALLED HOME



NSW needs to build more public housing. And it needs to build housing that essential public sector workers can actually afford.

For decades, public housing in Australia has increasingly been treated as a safety net: something reserved for people who have fallen furthest through the cracks of the private housing market.

And as governments retreat from building public homes, that approach is no longer enough as housing affordability becomes a workforce issue all over NSW. This looming crisis affects whether public sector workers can afford to live near their workplaces, whether they can remain in the communities they serve, whether they can start families, whether they can leave unsafe relationships and whether they can look towards retirement without the fear of housing insecurity.

The evidence from the PSA CPSU NSW's 2026 Housing Affordability Survey is stark.

More than 5000 PSA CPSU NSW members responded to the survey, providing a picture of housing stress among the people who deliver essential public services across NSW. The survey found that 65.5 per cent of respondents answering the relevant question were spending more than 30 per cent of their income on rent or mortgage payments, which is the figure used in the report for housing stress. More than four in 10 described their housing as unaffordable or very unaffordable.

These aren't abstract statistics. PSA CPSU NSW members are among the army of public sector workers who keep NSW functioning.

And increasingly, these are people who work full-time, contribute to their communities and pay their taxes, still cannot secure a home they can afford.

"That should concern every NSW Government," said PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little, himself a product of a childhood in public housing. "The idea that housing affordability is only a problem for people on the lowest incomes is increasingly disconnected from reality.

"Our survey found that 44 per cent of respondents experiencing housing costs above 30 per cent of their income earned between $70,000 and $110,000.

"In other words, a person can earn what might once have been considered a solid income and still find themselves under serious housing pressure."

For renters, the situation is particularly difficult.

Thirty-seven per cent of survey respondents were private renters. Among the 1872 renters who answered whether they expected ever to own a home, 66 per cent said they did not expect to do so.

Almost one quarter of respondents said they did not feel secure in their housing, while four respondents reported that they were homeless while working.

"These figures challenge an old assumption: that if you have a job, you will eventually be able to secure a home," said Mr Little. "For many public sector workers, that promise is simply no longer holding.

ALMOST ONE QUARTER OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS SAID THEY DID NOT FEEL SECURE IN THEIR HOUSING

"The system is letting these hard-working people down. Housing stress isn't simply about having less money left over at the end of the month. It can determine whether people eat properly, whether they see a doctor and whether they can afford essential services."

The PSA CPSU NSW survey found that 42.4 per cent of respondents said housing costs had caused them to miss meals or delay or avoid medical or dental care.

"That is a profound warning," said Mr Little. "A worker shouldn't have to choose between paying the rent and



visiting the dentist. A parent shouldn't have to decide whether the family grocery bill can stretch far enough after the mortgage or rent has been paid."

As pointed out in the PSA CPSU NSW's DV Needs Public Services campaign, too often people have to remain in an unsafe relationship because they cannot afford somewhere else to live.

The housing survey identified 62 members living with an abusive partner, 47 of whom said they could not afford to leave.

"Housing is therefore not just about bricks and mortar," said PSA CPSU NSW Women's Industrial Officer Simone Scalmer. "It is about security, safety, health and dignity."

The NSW Government relies on a workforce that is distributed across the state.

Members are found in regional schools, courts and correctional facilities, service centres and government offices. Often these communities affected by natural disasters and in the many places where government services are delivered every day.

"Those workers need to live somewhere," said Mr Little. "If housing becomes unaffordable in the communities where essential workers are needed, the consequences extend beyond individual households.

"Recruitment becomes harder. Retention becomes harder. Workers can be pushed further away from their workplaces, increasing commuting times and costs.

"And communities can find themselves increasingly dependent on workers who cannot afford to live in them."

Mr Little said housing should be considered part of NSW's essential infrastructure, spoken in the same terms as roads, schools and hospitals.

Consensus across the political spectrum is that NSW needs more homes and that increasing housing supply will alleviate spiralling costs. However, the PSA CPSU NSW's housing recommendations make an important distinction: building more private housing alone will not solve the affordability problem.

"A home can be approved without being affordable," said Mr Little. "A development can add hundreds of dwellings to the planning pipeline without putting an affordable home within reach of a public sector worker.

"And a new apartment can be built while rents in the surrounding area remain beyond the means of the people who need to live there.

"Our union is therefore calling for a fundamental change in the way governments think about housing. Rather than simply helping people compete in the private market, government should build and retain a much larger stock of permanently affordable homes.

That means treating public housing as a permanent part of the housing system, not as a small residual sector reserved for people who have nowhere else to go and have fallen through the cracks.

"Public housing should not be regarded as the home of last resort," said Mr Little.

Among proposals in the PSA CPSU NSW's recommendations is to broaden the idea of who public and affordable housing is aimed at. The report urges the gap between traditional social housing and the private market to be changed, with full-time essential workers considered part of who is eligible for a public home.

"As it stands, a worker can earn too much to qualify for conventional social housing while simultaneously earning too little to comfortably afford private housing," said Mr Little. "That gap is where many essential public sector workers now find themselves."

The PSA CPSU NSW proposes expanding eligibility for essential-worker housing to public sector workers who spend more than 30 per cent of their income on private rent. It also supports mixed-tenure developments that combine public housing, affordable or key-worker housing and private housing.

THE REPORT URGES FULL-TIME ESSENTIAL WORKERS BE CONSIDERED FOR A HOME

"This is important because public housing doesn't need to mean a building occupied exclusively by people on the lowest incomes," said Mr Little. "A modern public housing system can include schools staff, corrections officers, child protection workers, administrative officers and other essential workers alongside households requiring traditional social housing.

"That approach can create more diverse communities while making public housing a normal part of the housing system."

The PSA is calling for a substantial increase in the amount of public housing in NSW.

Its recommendation is for public housing to reach 6 per cent of NSW's housing stock in the medium term, rising to 10 per cent in the longer term.

To help achieve that, the PSA proposes an additional $2 billion a year from the NSW Government until the 10 per cent target is reached.

This is not as radical an idea as it may seem in a world where governments, both left and right, took a step back from participating in economies in the 1980s and 1990s. In Sydney's southeast, for example, streets are named after battlegrounds in France because these suburbs were built by the government for returning soldiers.

Yet in recent decades, public housing has represented an increasingly small proportion of the overall housing system. Therefore, a small increase in the number of public homes will do little to address the scale of the problem facing workers and families.

"Our position is that NSW needs to build a permanent housing asset," said Mr Little. "The government should not simply spend money helping households pay increasingly expensive rents to private landlords. It should also invest in housing that remains in public or non-profit ownership and continues to provide affordable homes over decades."

One of the simplest opportunities available to governments is land they already own. The PSA CPSU NSW is calling for surplus government land to be prioritised for public and affordable housing rather than routinely sold to developers.

The union also proposes keeping land in government ownership where possible, using long-term leases rather than selling land outright, and making surplus public land available below market value where appropriate.

"This matters because land is one of the largest costs in housing, particularly in high-value areas," said Mr Little. "If government already owns the land, it does not necessarily need to sell that asset and then attempt to buy it back indirectly through housing subsidies.







"Instead, it can use the land to create a long-term public asset. A government-owned block of land can support affordable housing for generation after generation.

"Once sold, it is gone."

The PSA also proposes trialling cost-based rental housing. Where private rents are ultimately determined by what the market can charge.

Cost-based housing starts from a different question: what does it actually cost to provide, finance, maintain and renew this home over the long term?

The PSA proposes using surplus public land and low-interest Commonwealth financing to test this model.

NSW does not have to invent this idea from scratch. It can look overseas, often to quite wealthy countries, and look at how other jurisdictions have developed much larger non-market housing sectors.

Singapore, which is a services-based economic powerhouse in the region, has about 80 per cent of its citizens in high-quality public homes.

Vienna is often held up as the world's most liveable major city. It also has a large municipal housing sector alongside limited-profit housing associations. The Netherlands has a substantial housing-association sector, while Denmark has a significant non-profit social housing sector.



"These systems differ from one another, and none can simply be copied into NSW," said Mr Little. "But they demonstrate an important principle: public or non-profit housing does not have to be a tiny welfare sector.

"It can be a major part of the housing market and our recommendations draw on this broader idea of housing as a permanent public or community asset.

"The economic logic is straightforward; the State Government can contribute land and borrow at comparatively favourable rates. It can build at scale, using standardised designs and procurement.



"It can retain ownership. And it can spread the cost of a building over the many decades during which that building provides housing.

"The result is an asset rather than simply a one-off expenditure.

The result is also workers with roofs over their heads."

The PSA CPSU NSW has also proposed investigating a public modular and prefabricated housing factory, alongside pre-approved designs for prefabricated housing, to lower costs.

"The housing crisis also raises a question about what kind of public service NSW wants in the future," said Mr Little. "A government can advertise jobs. It can train workers and offer career pathways.

"But if those workers cannot afford to live within a reasonable distance of where they are required to work, recruitment and retention become increasingly difficult. Housing therefore belongs in workforce planning.

"When governments plan a new hospital, school, correctional facility or public service hub, housing should be part of the conversation."

The PSA CPSU NSW survey places particular emphasis on women over 45 and the growing number of single older women approaching retirement without home ownership or secure affordable rental housing.

For a public sector worker who has rented throughout their career, retirement can fundamentally change the housing equation. A person may have had a reliable wage and a stable career but still reach their 50s or 60s without the asset that comes with home ownership. If rent continues to consume a large share of income, retirement savings have to stretch further.

The PSA therefore recommends specific measures for older workers, including a dedicated social-housing eligibility category for people aged 55 and over and discounted government loans for public sector workers, including workers over 45.

Mr Little said public housing can help create cohesive communities.

"When essential workers can afford to live in the communities they serve, they are more likely to be able to put down roots," he said. "They can participate in local life, with their children attending local schools.

"They can contribute to community organisations, spend money in local businesses and remain connected to the people and places their work supports."

Conversely, when workers are pushed further and further away by housing costs, communities become more transient, and commuting becomes more burdensome. The survey found some members undergoing gruelling commutes, including one worker travelling between Newcastle and Sydney.

"The PSA CPSU NSW is not arguing against private development," said Mr Little. "We need to support simpler planning processes, more gentle density, three-storey townhouses and apartments on residential land, a townhouse development code and the removal of unnecessarily restrictive planning rules."

A larger supply of private housing can help increase choice and accommodate population growth.

PSA CPSU NSW members in areas such as Planning or the Sydney Olympic Park Authority are working to open up more housing opportunities.

However, the collapse of the Bathla Group showed there are challenges for private companies trying to build affordable housing.

"At the heart of the PSA's recommendations is a question about the role of government," said Mr Little. "For too long, housing policy has often focused on helping people survive an expensive housing market.

"The alternative is to change the housing market itself by ensuring that a substantial part of the housing stock is outside it.

"That does not mean abolishing private housing, it means recognising that a healthy housing system can contain different forms of ownership.

"If NSW wants a strong public service, it needs to build a place for public servants to live."



Women meet to see how they can make their workplaces better in the future.

The 2026 PSA CPSU NSW Women's Conference focused on the role women have in shaping the future.

"Women make a clear majority of the public sector, and most other agencies our union covers will have similar gender make-ups," said Women's Council Chair Leanne Smith. "

Koori entrepreneur Binowee Bayles opened conference, speaking of her diverse background of many Aboriginal communities, which means she has a place to sleep "anywhere from Redfern to Townsville".

Ms Bayles told the room "country does not see colour" and that all women had a role in improving working lives.

"There are no words for goodbye in the many Aboriginal languages I have learned," she said. "Instead, we will see you later."

Ms Smith later spoke at the lectern, welcoming delegates, praising the membership's diversity and urging attendees to support the PSA CPSU NSW's campaign for a bigger public role in combatting domestic and family violence.

"Every show of support helps build momentum," she said.

Ms Smith also threw her support into getting better reproductive and menstruation leave provisions, and discussed her determination to get these into an Enterprise Agreement that covered her workplace. Adding a personal note to her fight, Ms Smith mentioned her own reproductive issues and her battle with endometriosis and talked about how important it is that such issues are discussed freely rather than cloaked in shame.

"We aren't the first generation to go through menopause," she said. "But we are the first to talk openly about it."

Outgoing President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), Michele O'Neil, was welcomed to the stage, introduced as "a great friend of our union" by PSA CPSU NSW General Secretary Stewart Little. Along with recently retired ACTU Secretary Sally McManus, Ms O'Neil was part of the first all-woman duo to run the union body.

Ms O'Neil, whose father was a card-carrying union member who worked in the public sector, praised the "often unseen" work done by government workers, and urged her hosts to continue their fight against privatisation and outsourcing.

The outgoing union leader also praised the PSA CPSU NSW for straying from a narrowly industrial focus and launching campaigns on issues that will assist broader society. She singled out the DV Needs Public Services campaign as an example of a union that is "not just fighting for yourselves, you are fighting for all of us".

"I know how important that work is," she said.

Ms O'Neil also talked about moves to force employers to take a more proactive approach to sexual harassment in the workplace. She told attendees a "positive duty to prevent sexual harassment" meant "no-one should have to choose between employment and safety".

Ms O'Neil praised younger women bucking generational trends by joining their unions and shaping the future of Australian workplace.

Looking back on her term as ACTU President, Ms O'Neil said she was happy to see the gender gap had shrunk, particularly since the election of a Labor Government in 2022.

"The long struggle results in real change," she said. "There are always people with powerful interests standing in our way.

"None of these happen by chance. Wins like this are not easy."

A common theme to emerge throughout the conference was housing, which Ms O'Neil said was a vital fight "for workers and for women".

"We need to expand public housing," she said. "Public housing should not be a home for last resort.

"Think of it as basic infrastructure."

NSW Young Person of the Year, Milli Weaver, took to the stage to discuss the organisation she established; the Australian Endometriosis Foundation. Ms Weaver talked about how women can shape the future and overcome the country's difficulty getting reproductive




WOMEN SHAPING
THE FUTURE













and menstrual issues taken seriously.

She talked about her own struggles getting medical personnel to take her health issues seriously, to the extent she began to doubt her own ability to "toughen up" and ride out debilitating pain.

Enduring endometriosis, a condition she had never heard of until she was 19 years old, was a challenge, she said, pointing out there was a lack of research conducted into the condition.

"One in seven women lives with endometriosis; someone you love, know or work with," she said.

"Bravery isn't obvious. Ask for a second opinion and don't let yourself be fobbed off."

APHEDA Union Aid Abroad held a presentation on women suffering under the dictatorship in Myanmar, before General Secretary Stewart Little and President Nicole Jess welcomed attendees.

Later, Ms Jess and Communications and Campaigns Manager Marianne Ledic chaired a forum on how campaigning together can shape a better future for women.

Later in a panel on women shaping their communities, three members talked about what the union meant to them.

"The best thing about my job, as a delegate is that I mentor a lot of young women," said Amy Riddle, from Community Corrections. "Without the union, I wouldn't have this job and I would have dead colleagues."

Christina Nicholas of Taronga Zoo said she "was always looking for something"



and found this in being an active delegate.

Ruth said younger colleagues need to join their union and help shape a better future for their colleagues.

O'Bray Smith, President of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, said her union supported the PSA CPSU NSW's DV Needs Public Services campaign.

She revealed your typical union member is a woman in her 40s: often a nurse, and not the blue-collar men more commonly associated with the movement by the conservative media. She said therefore it is vital the union movement campaign on issues important to these members in the future.

"Women still retire with less superannuation and do more unpaid work," she said. "Economic independence puts the steering wheel in the hands of the woman. Financial insecurity is one of the major reasons women stay in abusive relationships."

The following day PSA CPSU NSW Women's Industrial Officer Simone Scalmer talked about some of the wins the union has secured for women. She highlighted that while rules are there for members, it is vital managers know how conditions need to be applied in the workplace.

A panel consisting of Zeina Issa of Multicultural NSW (MNSW), Trina Leask from Service NSW and Trudy Penni from the Office of the Sheriff talked about how wins improved members working lives,

















including an overtime ruling at Service NSW, full-day pay for MNSW workers and health and safety wins in court houses.

The conference next moved to a presentation by Ms Ledic and Senior Organiser Glenn Duncan pushing for better campaign and organising strategies, with the pair outlining how to best get action.

"Conversations build participation," said Ms Ledic, who demonstrated on screen how delegates can develop interest in union issues by focusing members' attention towards issues that are of importance to them.

The event ended with information on the housing survey presented by Ms Jess, Principal Policy Analyst Anna Patty and Senior Organiser Belinda Tsirekas.

The trio talked about the importance of affordable housing, particularly with women over 50 being the fastest-growing sector of the homeless population.

At the conference's conclusion, Ms Jess said the issues raised pointed to a stronger future, shaped by activist women in the workplaces represented by the PSA CPSU NSW.

"The event, as always, gave us a chance to exchange ideas and work for a world where women shape the future for all," said Ms Jess. "When we get women like our attendees together, we can thrive.

"We look forward to the 2027 PSA CPSU NSW Women's Conference."

PRESSURE DELIVERS CHANGE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

State Government updates rules after PSA CPSU NSW intervention.

Following concerns raised by the PSA CPSU NSW, the NSW Government has reissued its Domestic and Family Violence Workplace Support Policy, removing the restrictive approach to evidence requirements and updating the guidance for managers.

When the policy was first released in November 2025, the PSA acted immediately to challenge the Government over the inclusion of new, restrictive evidence requirements that had been added after consultation had concluded. At the time, we informed members of the policy's release, acknowledged its positive elements, and highlighted our serious concerns with these last-minute changes.

"The union's position was clear: the new requirement for employees to provide evidence when accessing more than five consecutive days of Domestic and Family Violence [DFV] leave, or more than 10 days in a calendar year, was inconsistent with the 2022 DFV Leave Determination," said Women's Industrial Officer Simone Scalmer. "That determination makes it clear that managers should exercise discretion when deciding whether evidence is required and, where it is, what type of evidence is appropriate. Importantly, evidence should only be requested in exceptional circumstances."

The updated policy now reflects this approach, reinforcing a more supportive and trauma-informed process for employees experiencing domestic and family violence.

"Members who have issues with accessing DFV leave or other support in their workplace in relation to experiencing DFV should contact their union," said Ms Scalmer.

The PSA CPSU NSW was the first union in Australia to get DFV leave written into an Award or Enterprise Agreement.

COUNCIL READY TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

Women prepare for next term.

A new chapter has begun for the PSA Women's Council, with a newly elected Executive team stepping into their roles for the 2026-2028 term.

Entering the new term, the council aims to build on their legacy, with a strong focus on domestic violence, reproductive leave, women's housing, and further campaigning.

Leanne Smith has been re-elected into her third term as Chair, continuing her long standing commitment to the council.

"Bettering the rights and working conditions for our women, is what our council is about," said Ms Smith.

The fight for domestic violence justice continues for the Women's Council in support of the PSA NSW Domestic Violence campaign.

"We need to keep focused and keep pushing for what is important," said Ms Smith. The campaign urges NSW to rebuild a publicly delivered, fully accountable, domestic and family violence (DFV) system.



It is time for NSW DV fragmented model to be remodeled, "A coordinated response to DV will save lives," added General Secretary Stewart Little.

For the Women's Council, continuing to advocate for meaningful reform is critical to ensure women experiencing DFV receive the support and protection they need.

The newly elected executive council members are also passionate about the need for paid workplace leave granted to those who are managing or receiving treatment for reproductive health issues.

Reproductive leave provides support for staff and assists them in navigating situations of menstruation, menopause, IVF, and pregnancy, without sacrificing income or job security. The council hopes that with this being implemented, the wellbeing of women staff is overall improved.



AN AUSTRALIAN SUCCESS STORY

Ask Australians in 1990 how they expected to fund retirement and many would have pointed to the age pension and whatever savings they had managed to accumulate along the way. Steven Travis, Group Executive Member Growth at Aware Super, writes that compulsory superannuation changed the answer to that question for good.

For more than 30 years, superannuation has quietly transformed retirement in Australia. It has helped millions of people build savings, access long-term investment opportunities and approach retirement with greater confidence, independence and choice.

At a time when superannuation is again making headlines, it is worth stepping away from the political noise and looking at what the system has done: changed the way millions of Australians save, invest and ultimately enjoy retirement.

Superannuation now holds $4.4 trillion across 25 million accounts. In the past year, it paid $143.5 billion to retirees and beneficiaries, helping people pay for healthcare, maintain their homes, support family, travel and enjoy the retirement they worked for.

Before 1992, a comfortable retirement usually meant you already had money, a generous employer pension or property to fall back on. Super handed the same access to long-term investing that once belonged to company directors to everyday workers, from Prison Officers to school staff and TAFE employees, and let them build wealth the same way the wealthy always had.

The success of super is not measured only in trillions of dollars. It is measured in outcomes: the couple who can finally take the trip around Australia, the worker who retires with a reliable income, and the family supported by insurance through super during one of life's hardest moments.

These are the stories that show superannuation's real purpose: helping to give Australians financial security and dignity in retirement.

It has also opened access to investment expertise, opportunities and long-term growth that would otherwise be hard for most people to achieve on their own.

The part that rarely makes headlines is that returns matter as much as contributions. Money invested in super in your twenties has decades to grow, benefitting from the power of compounding investment returns. For younger Australians, investment returns are on track to make up around half their balance at retirement. For the retired, investment earnings will contribute around a third of income paid by your super. Time invested in the market, not just contributions going in, is what builds the savings that fund retirement.

Keeping savings invested so they can compound over the long term is central to the system's success. Australians can already access super in limited circumstances, but proposals to syphon off retirement savings for other purposes would weaken the financial security super is designed to provide.

Collectively, super has also delivered benefits beyond personal retirement savings. It helps fund the airports people fly through, the transport links they commute on, the renewable energy

projects powering their homes and the housing developments for future generations. That makes the system one of the country's largest sources of long-term investment capital, supporting jobs and growth while generating investment returns on their super.

Super has also helped reduce reliance on the age pension. Since 2012, the share of people aged 65 and over receiving a full or part pension has fallen by 12 per cent, even as the retirement-age population has grown by 50 per cent over the same period.#

Ultimately, the measure of success is not the size of a super balance. It is whether people can use those savings with confidence - confidence to retire on their terms, manage unexpected expenses, support loved ones and enjoy the life they've worked so hard to build.

The superannuation system is not perfect, and it will continue to evolve. But its impact is undeniable. It has opened the door to long-term investing for ordinary Australians, helped fund the infrastructure and businesses that power our economy, and transformed retirement for generations of workers.

Think of where we'd be if compulsory super had never been introduced. Super Members Council modelling found that, by 2028, the average income of Australians aged 67 and over would be $7,600 a year lower. Taxpayers would be carrying a far greater burden, with more than 512,000 additional Australians receiving the Age Pension at the cost of an additional $12 billion a year. Instead, millions of Australians have been able to build savings, invest for the future and retire with greater confidence and choice.

That is why super is one of Australia's great success stories. Not because it has created a $4.4 trillion pool of savings, but because it has helped give millions of Australians greater independence, security and dignity in retirement.

Issued by Aware Super Pty Ltd (ABN 11 118 202 672, AFSL 293340) trustee of Aware Super (ABN 53 226 460 365).

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.



RETIREES URGE PARTIES TO KEEP HANDS OFF SUPER

Members have seen the benefits of compulsory savings.

The PSA CPSU NSW Retired Associates have urged politicians to keep their hands off superannuation.

In recent months, the superannuation system has attracted criticism from Liberal Party politicians such as Tim Wilson and Andrew Bragg, who want compulsory contributions scrapped. Both Mr Wilson and Senator Bragg are part of the generous superannuation provisions afforded to federal parliamentarians.

One Nation has also floated the idea that account holders should be able to access superannuation balances to purchase property. The move has been criticised by economists for being inflationary and increasing the country's future pension bills.

"Many of us in the Retired Associates are now seeing the benefits of Australia's world-class superannuation scheme," said Dave McKeough, President of the group.

"We are seeing people have fulfilling retirements with the savings the scheme has provided.

"We also know that the country will be facing a debt crisis if superannuation is not there for future retirees."

The Retired Associates meet regularly at PSA House to discuss issues of importance to senior Australians, including the superannuation system.

In recent meetings, members discussed what happens to a person's digital assets after they die. The group has also had appearances from organisations such as Service NSW, the Sydney Retired Unionists Group and the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association

"We urge all members who leave the workforce to take advantage of the reduced membership prices available to the Retired Associates," said Mr McKeough "It is an excellent way to support campaigns such DV Needs Public Services, as well to keep in touch with former comrades.

"Meetings are held online or in person at PSA House."

Public Service Association of New South Wales

Summary of Financial Information

For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

The financial statements of the Public Service Association of New South Wales have been audited in accordance with the provisions of the Industrial Relations Act 1991, and the following summary is provided for members in accordance with Section 517(2) of the Act, as applied by section 282(3) of the Industrial Relations Act, 1996.

A copy of the Financial Statements, including the independent Audit Report, will be supplied free of charge to members upon request. Certificates required to be given under the Act by the Accounting Officer and the Executive have been completed in accordance with the provisions of the Act and contain no qualifications.

	2025 $	2024 $
SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SURPLUS OR DEFICIT AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025		
Membership revenue	25,888,195	24,999,323
Other income	2,483,395	2,164,909
TOTAL INCOME	28,371,590	27,164,232
LESS TOTAL EXPENDITURE	(29,497,801)	(28,085,930)
RESULT FOR THE YEAR	(1,126,211)	(921,698)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
Remeasurement of net defined benefit obligations	2,228,262	1,020,089
Revaluation of land and buildings	29,827,841	-
Fair value revaluation of financial assets at FVOCI	(7,365)	116,488
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	30,922,527	214,879
SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025		
TOTAL EQUITY	104,473,862	73,530,517
Represented by:		
Current assets	34,450,393	35,025,323
Non-current assets	81,527,788	50,697,522
TOTAL ASSETS	115,978,181	85,722,845
Current liabilities	10,924,872	9,631,798
Non-current liabilities	579,447	2,560,530
TOTAL LIABILITIES	11,504,319	12,192,328
NET ASSETS	104,473,862	73,530,517

Public Service Association of New South Wales

Additional Information Under the Rules of the Association

For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED TO MEMBERS OR REGISTRAR

In accordance with the requirements of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act 1996, the attention of members is drawn to the provision of sub-sections (1) and (2) of section 512 of the Industrial Relations Act 1991, which reads as follows:

(1) A member of an organisation, or the Industrial Registrar, may apply to the organisation for specified information prescribed by the regulations in relation to the organisation.

(2) An organisation must, on the making of such an application, make the specified information available to the member of the Industrial Registrar in the manner, and within the time, prescribed by the regulations.

The full financial report and auditor's report will be sent to members on request, free of charge. Please call Mr Michael Cairns on 1800 772 679 or email him at mcairns@psa.asn.au and a copy will be forwarded to you.

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
31 December 2025

In accordance with a resolution of the Executive Committee of Public Service Association of NSW ("the Association"), the Executive of the Association declare that the summary financial report of Public Service Association of NSW for the financial year ended 31 December 2025, as set on pages 38-40:

(1) is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 31 December 2025 and has been derived from and is consistent with the full financial report of Public Service Association of NSW; and;
(2) cannot be expected to provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the Association as the full financial report, which is available on request.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Executive Committee.

Nicole Jess
President

Stewart Little
General Secretary

Dated: 13 April 2026

DALEY
AUDIT

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary balance sheet as at 31 December 2025 and the summary statement of surplus or deficit and other comprehensive income for the year then ended are derived from the audited financial report of Public Service Association of New South Wales for the year ended 31 December 2025. In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial report.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Section 510 of the *Industrial Relations Act 1991 (NSW)* or Australian Accounting Standards. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 13 April 2026. The audited financial report is included in the 2025 Annual Report. Our Independent Auditor's Report to the members dated 13 April 2026 on the Financial Report did not contain any particulars of any deficiency, failure or shortcoming as referred to in the *Industrial Relations Act 1991 (NSW)*, as applied by Section 282(3) of the *Industrial Relations Act, 1996*.

Executive Committee's Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

The Executive Committee is responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Daley Audit

Stephen Mugate
Partner

13 April 2026
Wollongong

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

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AUSTRALIA + NEW ZEALAND

VOICE OF OUR MOB

Aboriginal Education Officer Delegates meet at PSA House.



Delegates from the Aboriginal Education Officers' group sat down at PSA House in August 2026 to undergo training with Organiser Monique Anderson and Senior Organiser and Trainer Glenn Duncan.

Aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs) work to provide support to First Nations students and their families.

"It is a hands-on job that requires these Officers to dedicate their time to nurture and guide these children through their schooling and to overcome adversity in their school environment," said PSA CPSU NSW President Nicole Jess.

Three new delegates have joined for the group. Diana Flanders (pictured right), Patricia Daniel (third from right) and Fiona Ritchie (second from right), who are all proud Aboriginal Education Officers in their communities. Passionate and involved in the education system ready to "learn more and uplift the community," said Ms Ritchie.

The AEO group has partnered with the PSA to strengthen workplace support. Delegates have stepped up into these representative roles with the shared desire to improve the workplace conditions of AEO staff. Throughout the training delegates expressed both personal and indirect experiences with AEOs facing harassment or exploitation from staff and children. Ms Daniel added "the treatment of our staff is really sad".

Mr Duncan said the purpose of these sessions is to "empower people to actually want to stand up for themselves" by providing delegates the tools to become confident in advocating for members.

"This is where the PSA training comes into play," he said. "Gathering these representatives and providing the skills to navigate workplace policies, such as understanding of employment rights and support work colleagues. Developing delegates with PSA training is essential for these groups especially the AEOs as it establishes a direct link between their members and the union.

"Public service matters, and we are ensuring these workers have a stronger voice, and fair workplace treatment."

Ms Daniel spoke about her role as an AEO.

"My job is to be there for the children and their families to allow them to feel comfortable and supported, it goes way beyond just school hours," she said.

Ms Daniel said the role not only involves hands-on support with Indigenous students, you also must work to educate non-indigenous students and staff to establish a culturally inclusive classroom.

She said despite the vital role as an AEO, "you are stuck between a rock and a hard place", revealing the struggle AEOs face with working under a "white system" whilst trying to acknowledge and uphold their cultural beliefs.

"It comes with a whole lot of traumas," said Ms Daniel, who also discussed how the difference between cultural beliefs and systemic rules often contribute to conflict and disputes between families and the schools, placing stress on AEO workers as their relationships with their students and their families can be strained as a result.

"Our training equips these representatives, and the PSA is working closely with AEOs to ensure the voices of Aboriginal workers are represented and empowered," said Mr Duncan. "The AEO group is strengthening their delegates and therefore to build the connection between workers and their union, helping to create more inclusive workspace and give Aboriginal Education Officers a stronger voice in shaping their work conditions."

SHOWING UNION PRIDE

St George Illawarra players joined community figures and PSA members at the Ricky Walford Shield in Walgett.

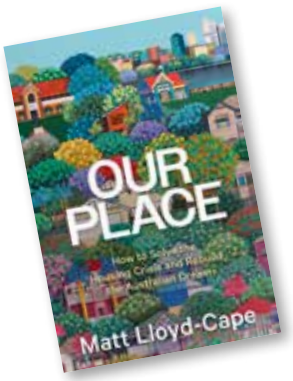
Named after now PSA CPSU NSW Aboriginal Industrial Officer Ricky Walford, the rugby league tournament is a major event in the town.



OUR PLACE

How to Solve the Housing Crisis and Rebuild the Australian Dream

Matt Lloyd-Cape
$36.99
La Trobe University Press





Australia's housing crisis has become so entrenched that it is easy to treat it as an unavoidable fact of modern life. Young people cannot afford to buy. Renters face escalating costs and insecure tenure. Public housing is chronically undersupplied. Homelessness continues at unprecedented levels, affecting people who would never have imagined it's something they would have to face. For many Australians, the old promise that hard work would eventually lead to a secure home has become increasingly difficult to believe.

It is this broken promise that sits at the heart of Matt Lloyd-Cape's *Our Place*.

This is a big, not particularly easy book. However, there are very cogent answers in it. And answers that the PSA has published in *Housing Affordability Survey and Policy Recommendations 2026*, which is the union's response to how the housing crisis is affecting NSW public servants.

Mr Lloyd-Cape's starting point is refreshingly optimistic. Australia has experienced serious housing crises before, and governments have successfully intervened to address them. The current crisis is therefore not inevitable. It is the product of political choices, economic settings and policy failures, and what has been created by policies can also be changed by policies.

Housing debates are often reduced to arguments about planning approvals, population growth or whether enough houses are being built. Mr Lloyd-Cape takes a much broader view. Housing is not simply a commodity or an investment vehicle. It is a fundamental component of a decent life.

Housing costs are, in effect, a form of pressure on wages. A worker whose rent or mortgage consumes a greater proportion of their income has less economic security, regardless of what their payslip says. A generation of workers can receive nominal wage increases while seeing much of that increase swallowed by housing costs.

For public sector workers, the implications are obvious. Governments require employees to live within reasonable proximity to the communities they serve. When housing becomes unaffordable, recruitment and retention become more difficult and governments increasingly struggle to maintain essential services.

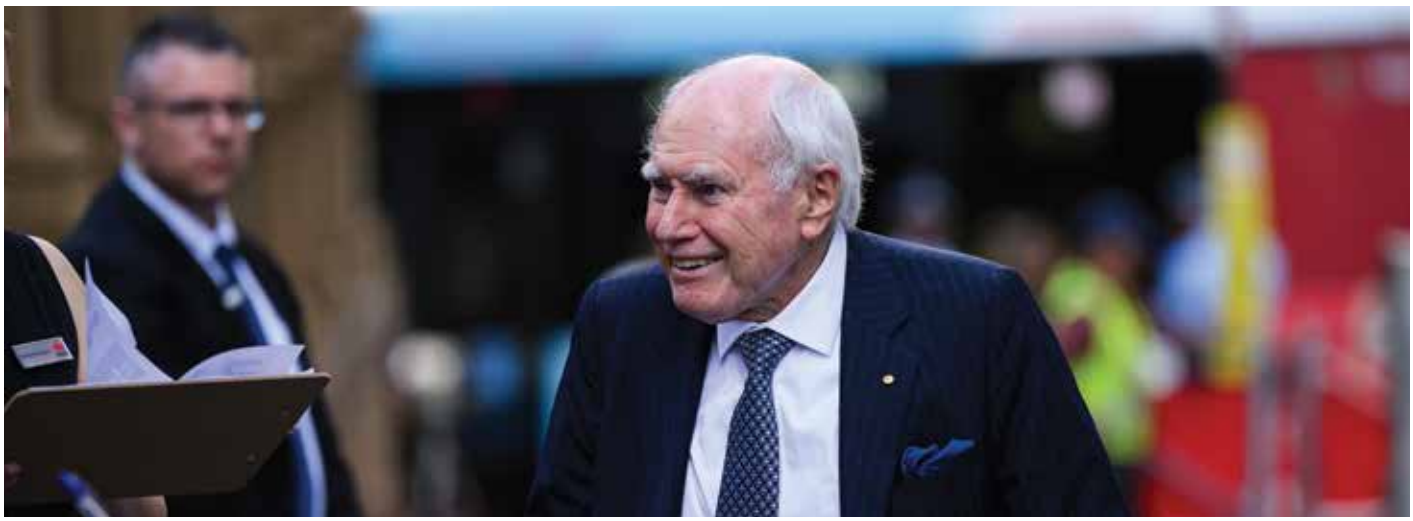
For decades, governments of both major political persuasions have benefited from a system in which rising property values are treated as evidence of economic success. Home ownership has been encouraged and protected, while housing has simultaneously become one of Australia's most attractive investment assets.

The result is a system in which existing property owners have a powerful interest in maintaining high prices, while those who do not own property face an increasingly difficult entry point.

Our Place argues that this cannot be fixed through minor adjustments at the margins. Lloyd-Cape calls for a much more ambitious national housing strategy, including stronger protections for renters, expansion of public housing and expanded changes to the tax and investment settings that currently reward speculation.

For much of the neoliberal era, public housing has too often been treated as a residual service for people who have failed to secure housing through the private market. Lloyd-Cape's approach points towards something different: housing policy as an essential part of national economic and social infrastructure.

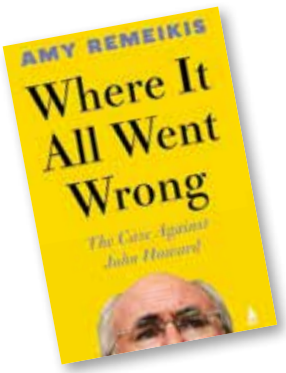
Australia routinely accepts that governments should invest in roads, railways, schools, hospitals and utilities because these things underpin economic activity and social wellbeing. Housing should be understood in the same way.



WHERE IT ALL WENT WRONG

The case against John Howard

Amy Remeikis
$29.99
Simon & Schuster



For many Australians, the Howard years are remembered as a period of economic prosperity, low unemployment and political stability. To his admirers, John Howard remains the consummate political tactician who modernised the Liberal Party, balanced the budget and presided over more than a decade of uninterrupted economic growth.

Amy Remeikis has written a book that asks readers to look beyond that "relaxed and comfortable" narrative.

Where It All Went Wrong is not a conventional political biography. It is, unapologetically, a political argument: that many of the economic, social and democratic challenges confronting Australia today can be traced to decisions taken by the Howard Government between 1996 and 2007.

The thesis is essentially that Howard mortgaged the future during his prime ministership. And Ms Remeikis makes some very persuasive arguments to back this up.

The author argues the Howard years accelerated the transfer of wealth from labour to capital, entrenched insecure work, deepened housing inequality, weakened collective institutions and fostered a political culture in which market outcomes became accepted as natural rather than political choices. Rather than viewing today's housing crisis, stagnant wages or declining trust in government as isolated problems, she presents them as the logical consequences of policy choices made a generation ago.

The book ranges across taxation, industrial relations, privatisation, higher education, immigration, Indigenous affairs, media concentration and Australia's relationship with the United States. Throughout, Ms Remeikis challenges what she describes as the enduring myth of Mr Howard as "Australia's great economic manager", arguing that many of his celebrated changes came at costs that were either ignored or deliberately postponed.

For those of us involved in the trade union movement, perhaps the strongest chapters are those dealing with Mr Howard's industrial relations programs, including the ideological foundations that culminated in WorkChoices, is placed within his broader plan to reduce the bargaining power of organised labour. Ms Remeikis contends that this was not merely an economic program but a cultural one, reshaping Australians' expectations about work, citizenship and the role of government.

There is also a topical discussion of housing policy. Ms Remeikis argues that tax settings such as the capital gains tax discount and the expansion of investor incentives transformed housing from a social necessity into a financial asset, with consequences that continue to burden younger Australians. Whether readers agree with every conclusion or not, it is difficult to deny that housing affordability has become one of Australia's defining political failures.

The book's greatest strength is its accessibility. Ms Remeikis writes with the clarity that characterised her journalism. Complex policy issues are explained without becoming simplistic, and she succeeds in connecting many of Mr Howard's policies and political statements with the situation Australians find themselves in today.

Nearly 20 years after Mr Howard left office, many of the structural changes introduced during his government remain embedded in Australia's political economy. Casualisation, contracting-out, declining union density, unaffordable housing and widening inequality continue to shape the working lives of public sector employees.

PODCASTS TAKE ON HOUSING CRISIS

As the union representing many members involved in housing, it is inevitable that the PSA CPSU NSW dedicates a number of podcasts to the issue.

A recent episode interviewed the union's Policy Analyst Anna Patty to discuss the PSA CPSU NSW's recent housing survey.

"This episode shatters the myth that steady employment guarantees housing security," said Assistant General Secretary and podcast host Troy Wright. "With an incredible response rate of over 5100 members, the survey provides a statistically powerful and genuinely representative slice of the public sector workforce across NSW.

The episode covers stories from members who replied to the survey, detailing extreme commutes, working people facing hidden homelessness, those sleeping upright in utilities, living in caravans, or couch-surfing while trying to maintain full-time jobs.

In the episode, Mr Wright and Ms Patty discuss structural failures driving this crisis. They examine the 33 per cent decline in public housing stock since the 1990s, the accountability issues within the community housing sector, and the fundamental flaw in "affordable housing" schemes that are tied to market rates rather than real incomes.



"By comparing Australia's broken system to international models like Canada, this episode makes an urgent case for genuine government intervention and a complete overhaul of housing policy," said Mr Wright.

Another episode talks to Nikki Corner and Sally Deans of Legal Aid. The duo talk about the work done by PSA members in Legal Aid, with housing taking up an increasing percentage of cases as more people come looking for help with matters relating to renting.

"The housing crisis is just one area where our members are making a real difference," said Mr Wright. "These episodes show how important our members are in keeping a roof over people's heads.

"Other episodes show the sheer variety of workplaces we cover, from Forensic Officers to the people protecting our fishing stocks.

"Listen wherever you download podcasts; you won't be disappointed."



MORE HOUSING PODCASTS

Looking to learn more about the housing crisis? There is a plethora of podcasts you can brush up on.

In 2024, Australian journalist, and radio presenter Ange McCormack produced a five-episode ABC podcast called *The Great Housing Disaster* that still resonates today.

Last year think tank The Grattan Institute looked at high-density solutions in its podcast *Want to Fix the Housing Crisis? Build Up*.

There are also podcasts from Sydney University (*The Business of Housing*) and the Australian National University (*Fixing Our Social Housing Crisis*).

BLUE, RED, GREEN AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

Disillusioned with the polarised political environment, three former staffers talk about the world behind Australian political parties.

The three staffers, Liberal Rachel Howard, Larissa Brown from the Greens and Annie O'Rourke from Labor, deliver exactly what its tagline promises;"politics without the punch-ups".

The result, hosted by journalist Annabel Crabb, is a show that is both informative and surprisingly engaging.

One of the podcast's greatest strengths is the chemistry between its hosts. Drawing on their experiences within the Labor, Liberal, and Greens parties, they offer insider perspectives that are rarely available to the public. Rather than simply defending their former political camps, the hosts are willing to challenge one another respectfully and acknowledge the complexities of political decision-making. This creates a level of nuance often missing from mainstream political commentary.

The series also succeeds in demystifying the world of political staffers. Listeners gain valuable insight into election campaigns, policy development, media strategy, and the often-unseen work that shapes public debate. Episodes covering election strategy, leadership, voter behaviour, and the cost-of-living crisis are particularly strong, blending practical experience with broader political analysis.



What makes the podcast stand out, however, is its tone. Even when discussing contentious issues, the conversation remains civil, curious, and occasionally humorous. The hosts demonstrate that disagreement does not have to descend into hostility, offering a welcome model for public discourse.



ENVIRODYNAMICS

This podcast, which began this year, reports from the frontline of the climate crisis.

Envirodynamics talks to farmers and community members affected by changes to the weather.

Early issues, called *Voices of Resilience*, focus on Tasmania's Derwent Valley, which is suffering drier conditions as climate change takes effect.

The podcast is bankrolled by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.



HELP AVAILABLE ON YOUR TERMS

The Workers Health Centre provides a worker-focused rehabilitation service.

The PSA has a strong relationship with the Workers Health Centre, the state's only not-for-profit rehabilitation service for injured workers.

In addition, the centre does not have a relationship with an insurance provider.

"Most or all other rehab providers are connected with insurance companies," said Chief Executive of the Workers Health Centre, Natasha Flores. "They're what we call panel providers, and they have connections to insurance companies. So, when a person is injured, the insurance company will often refer that person to the panel provider and that panel provider has a relationship with the insurer."

"What you find with the panel providers is there's a lot of box ticking and often the injured work is left out. So you'll have a panel provider talking to a case manager who works for an insurer and the employer and they're all talking, but the injured worker is not part of that conversation."

Ms Flores said the Workers Health Centre focuses on the injured worker.

"We do what is what we call worker-centric," she said. "So we will look at the person and the injured worker. We use our rehab consultants, who are allied health specialists, so they all have different qualifications. They will use that allied health knowledge and work with the injured worker to return them to work."

The Workers Health Centre has been operating for 50 years, beginning as a research organisation for health issues affecting employees.

"Our board comprises of unions and union officials only," said Ms Flores. "We have two positions that are community positions, but generally a union will recommend someone. It might be a retired member or a retired delegate.

"At the moment, one of our board members is actually a Police Association member and he is a working police officer."

In compensation cases the injured worker has a right to choose their own return-to-work provider and to refuse a recommended provider from an insurance company.

"People who come to us don't have to worry about being treated like a number, which is what they'd generally be treated like at a panel provider," said Ms Flores. "There is a lot of pressure on workers from insurers to use the panel providers."

She said if a worker is pushed to accept a panel provider, they should "contact their union".

"A more timid worker is unlikely to engage in a heated argument with an insurer over something like this," she said. "I think it's just worth saying if the pressure is put on you, and it very likely will be, contact your union or contact the Workers Health Centre for assistance."

Ms Flores said it is vital the rehabilitation process commences as soon as possible.

"You need quick treatment and you need quick rehabilitation services," she said. "And if that all happens very, very quickly and timely at the right time for you, you will get back to work and you will recover. If things are left to fester, then that's when it's very, very difficult for us to get people back to work.

"If you want a career change, we have the people here who can help you do that. And we can do that within six to eight weeks.

"We can assist them in looking at their skills, saying, what are you, what are you, here are your skills, what would you like to do?"

NEW COMPENSATION LAWS IN PLACE

Changes will make some claims harder to prove.



Changes to the NSW workers' compensation scheme will have a profound effect on those suffering psychological injuries at work.

The legislation changes how psychological injury claims are assessed and compensated, making it harder for a worker to prove their case.

Before the reforms, a worker with a psychological injury could access certain long-term benefits if they had at least 15 per cent Whole Person Impairment (WPI). The reforms increase that threshold to 25 per cent from July 2026, with further increases scheduled to over 26 per cent in 2027 and at least 28 per cent in 2029.

This is significant because psychiatric WPI assessments above 25 per cent are relatively uncommon. Many workers who are unable to return to work may nevertheless fall below the new threshold and therefore lose entitlement to extended benefits.

Critics of the reforms, including the PSA CPSU NSW, argue that this will leave injured workers without adequate support.

While the State Government argues the changes are needed to control rapidly growing claim costs and maintain scheme viability, others are not impressed. Unions and other worker advocates say it will deny assistance to those who need it.

There will be no provisional claims and no claim is dated until the paperwork has been completed. PSA CPSU NSW Lawyers have found not one claim has been accepted since 1 July 2026.

In addition, the new rules broaden the definition of "reasonable management action". Historically, employers could defend claims arising from reasonable actions such as performance management or disciplinary processes. However, broadening this definition may make it harder for workers to claim for psychological injuries that stem from workplace bullying, excessive workloads, conflict at work, stressful management processes, or cumulative workplace stress.

While some categories of workers, including Police Officers, Firefighters and Paramedics, are treated differently under parts of the reforms, Prison Officers are lumped in with other workers. This is despite them performing the same type of work as all three of the aforementioned frontline workers. So if a worker is employed at the Rural Fire Service, they are covered if they are in the field, but not if they work in the office at RFS.

The NSW workers' compensation system underwent major reforms in late 2025 and early 2026. In addition to the changes to psychological claims, workers will find it harder to qualify for long-term benefits, as the threshold for accessing weekly compensation payments beyond 130 weeks is being increased over time.

Previously, workers with a lower level of permanent impairment could continue receiving benefits for longer. Now, higher WPI percentages will be required to qualify for extended support.

In practice, this means some workers with serious but not catastrophic injuries may lose access to long-term income support sooner than they would have under the previous rules.

This goes against the principle of accepting medical advice. Rather than accepting medical timelines, it creates a hard barrier for return to work regardless of advice.

The reforms gradually raise the impairment thresholds that workers must meet before becoming eligible for certain lump-sum compensation payments and work injury damages claims.

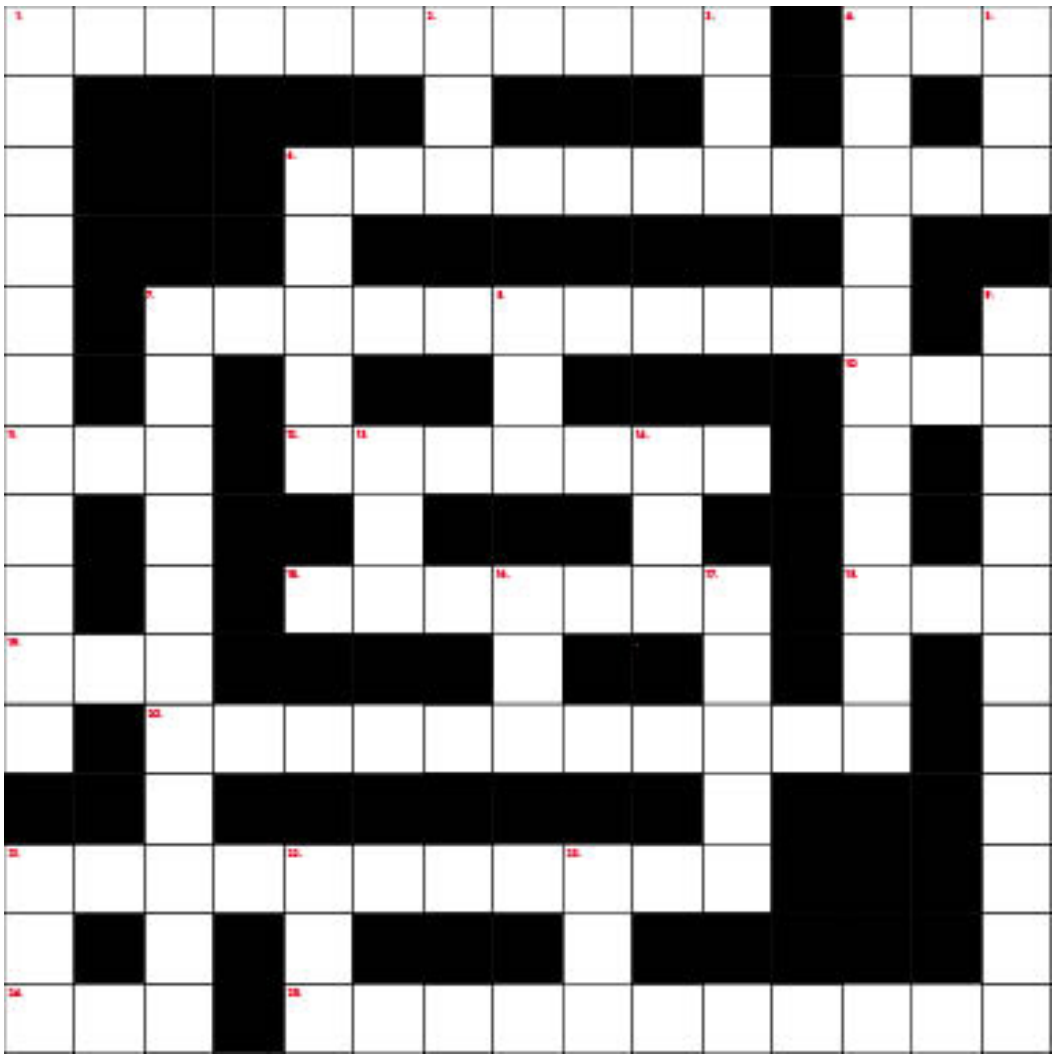
That generally means fewer injured workers will qualify for these payments, while some workers who previously would have been eligible may no longer meet the threshold. Larger claims will become concentrated among workers with more severe permanent injuries.

While access is becoming more restrictive for some workers, those with very high levels of permanent impairment may receive longer periods of weekly benefits. For example, workers above specified WPI thresholds become eligible for additional weeks of compensation under the reforms.

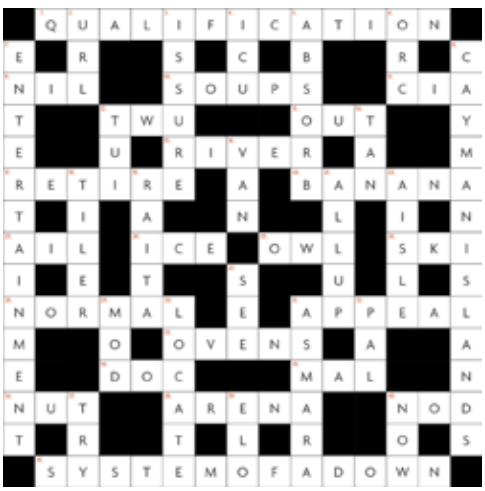
The Government claims reforms are designed around earlier recovery, rehabilitation, and return-to-work outcomes. However, unions such as the PSA CPSU NSW believe this is a heartless decision designed to stop claims, not support workers. The fund may have been at risk of default but every concern the Unions had raised about insurance wastage, management issues and other improvements to limit claims or get workers back to work quicker and cheaper were either discounted or ignored. This option punishes workers while protecting insurance agencies' bottom lines. It's not a workers' comp scheme, it's a government-run protection racket for insurance companies and bad management.

If you're a NSW worker with an existing workers' compensation claim, are considering lodging a claim, has a psychological injury claim, or may have a permanent impairment assessment coming up, you should contact your union for assistance.

CROSSWORD



Last issue's solution



ACROSS

1. Bradman's birthplace (11)
4. Young child (3)
6. Lose quality (11)
7. Subject of numbers (11)
10. Maori performing arts involving twirling (3)
11. Not no (3)
12. Move soccer ball (7)
15. Constantly changing, active, or full of energy (7)
18. Biggest Australian bird (3)
19. East German initials (1,1,1)
20. Substitution (11)
21. Father's father (11)
24. Strive for superiority against others (3)
25. Bargaining (11)

DOWN

1. Rural lands (11)
2. Long-life milk (1,1,1)
3. Stay-away order for violent partners (1,1,1)
4. See-through (11)
5. Used to hold up golf ball (3)
6. Showed extreme, excessive love or fondness for someone (5)
7. Failure of justice (11)
8. Koori group (3)
9. Movement of blood (11)
13. Beam of sun (3)
14. Hawaiian garland (3)
16. A curved shape or a part of a circle line (3)
17. Bonhomie (5)
21. Internet suffix for public administration (3)
22. Mafia boss (3)
23. Not cold (3)

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