



# PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

A Publication of the Community & Public Sector Union / Victorian Branch [www.cpsuvic.org](http://www.cpsuvic.org)

## Town And Country

The announcement that TAC was moving its headquarters from the heart of Melbourne's CBD to provincial Geelong meant major decisions for each of its 600 or so employees.

Continue working for a generally respected organisation and move life and family down the highway, or give up a rewarding job and stay?

Alan Woodroffe, a senior manager in policy and service improvement who has worked for the TAC for 12 years, made the decision to continue his role and move his family to Barwon Heads.

Kristen Wischer, a TAC/CPSU Liaison Officer and 10 year employee of the TAC, has decided to stay.

Here, they explain the reasons for their choices.

"I made the sea change," – Alan Woodroffe

At first I thought I would not go to Geelong, even though I love working for the TAC.

I have two teenage children and was concerned about disrupting their schooling.

My wife was the catalyst for changing my thinking and we decided if we were going to consider it, we would need to move early to settle the kids into a new school before they got into years 10 to 12.

"Melbourne's where the heart is," – Kristen Wischer

As of January 2009 if I don't go to Geelong I don't have a job.

I've always worked part time (at TAC), initially as a solicitor doing claim advice and litigation.

The Geelong move has meant a job change; I'm now TAC CPSU Liaison Officer.

It's been an opportunity to see the business from a different perspective and contribute in a way I wasn't before.

The relocation benefits secured by CPSU were good, so we decided to see if we could make it work says Alan. We moved in January 2007. I am pleased with the decision, because I can keep working at the TAC. I love the TAC scheme, which is the best system of compensation for motor accident victims in the world.

I've done a lot of thinking about what I will do in the future admits Kristen, which I still haven't worked out. As a solicitor I would find another job, but I don't think with the same conditions as I have at TAC.



Alan Woodroffe and Kristen Wischer

I don't want to move to Geelong because I don't want to move my family, but certainly the good conditions secured by CPSU are a reason to stay until the end in the Melbourne office.

Alan's family avow to Barwon Heads as a beautiful part of the world and when I am there I enjoy it immensely. My family has settled well and my wife was able to get transferred to the Geelong Court.

It's a significant change in lifestyle from the suburbs of Greensborough to a seaside village outside Geelong.

Kristen says with three children and my husband working in Melbourne that we're happy where we live, and our family and friends are here.

My daughter has just started high school, so I'm reluctant to move her.

I've thought about commuting but there would be no point.

Because I work part time, I would be spending nearly three hours a day driving, so I might as well be working full time and getting paid.

I already enjoy riding my bike around the area says Alan and I am only 20 minutes away from the home of the greatest team of all.

I have noticed that my place has become quite a popular weekend visiting place for family, which is good.

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### Global Labour University students visit PSI



Young members of three of PSI's affiliated unions are participating in the 2007-2008 Masters course on Labour Policy and Globalisation at the Global Labour University in Kassel, Germany, including CPSU's Karen Douglas.

Kateryna Yarmolyuk from the Public Services Workers' Trade Union in Ukraine, with Kim Kang Jeung of the Korea National Electrical Workers' Union and Karen, pictured on the left, said the Global Labour University course was a great way to learn more about trade unionism, especially in a global context.

# Star Delegates

The hard work of CPSU Prisons Division President Mark Nestor and Secretary Gary Greaves was recognised nationally recently when the pair won ACTU Delegate of the Year awards.

Shocked, followed closely by honoured, is how both Mark and Gary describe their reaction to learning they had won ACTU Delegate of the Year award.

"We had no idea we had been nominated," recalls Gary.

"We were under the impression we were going to Melbourne for a meeting... it was a lovely shock. To me it's the most important recognition I have received."

Mark's initial reaction was similar to Gary. "I was a little embarrassed at first however it is nice to be recognised for our achievements," he says.

"It was extra special to gain such an award in the year where the 'Your Rights at Work' campaign was an issue for all workers and the public voted against work choices."

Mark has worked at Ararat Prison for almost 20 years, starting on general duties and is now an industry supervisor where he manages up to 40 prisoners producing Victorian numberplates.

Gary has worked at maximum security site Barwon Prison for 26 years, currently in the security division, describing himself as a "gatekeeper – nothing fancy".

Since taking on their respective roles in the Prisons Division three years ago, Mark and Gary have worked together to identify and implement much-needed change for the organisation.

Where previously the Prisons Division was disorganised and met infrequently with scant attendance, Gary and Mark, along with CPSU industrial organisers have rewritten the constitution and now oversee monthly, structured meetings, usually through phone link up, and regularly provide members with updates and reports across all prison sites.



The pair have also introduced training and structure to enable prison sites to handle more issues such as Occupational Health and Safety at a local level, are in the process of developing a standardised roster system across the state, and negotiating complex issues such as medication distribution in prisons.

Meanwhile, membership has ballooned to over 1500 correctional officers.

Both men downplayed the significance of their

achievements, insisting they've only done what they believed they were elected to do.

"One of the most rewarding parts of my role is seeing change through agreed processes that you were a part of," says Mark.

While Gary credits Mark as being the driving force behind many of the changes they've achieved, he admits the ACTU Delegate of the Year award has been good for his confidence. "I rang almost everyone I knew," he confides.

# Town and Country

I'm a bit scared about what I'll do in the future concedes Kristen but I'm also quite looking forward to working somewhere else and doing something different.

CPSU members at TAC will benefit from a comprehensive package of options, both pre and post Geelong, no matter what choice they make.

These include a Retention Incentive comprising 20% of salary or \$15,000 or up to an additional 8 weeks paid leave if employees

stay until December this year as well as a Retraining Knowledge Transfer Allowance of either \$5,000 or \$7,500 or \$10,000 to be paid based on years of service to train replacement staff.

TAC employees will also be eligible for Career and Financial Planning assistance and either the Government's redundancy package whether voluntary or targeted, or access to redeployment in other areas of the Victorian Public Sector.

Those heading to Geelong will receive a Relocation Incentive of 10% of salary or an additional 4 weeks paid leave.

A Commuting Allowance varying from \$7500 up to \$15,000 depending on distance to be travelled and the full ETAG cost reimbursement will be paid or a 3 Year Vline return pass or TAC provided shuttle bus.

Rental Assistance of \$20,000 will be available per household as well as removal assistance up to \$3,000, paid leave to move, and the cost of utility connections reimbursed.

Legal expense reimbursement and conveyancing costs plus real estate agent fees and a further \$1,000 to make good the property if selling to relocate to Geelong will be paid.

A further \$1,000 reimbursement per child is



available for new school uniforms and school expenses plus the reimbursement of childcare payments of up to \$1,500 per child per year for 3 years.

Spouses and Partners will also benefit with assistance in job interviews, placement and selection.

For TAC employees relocating prior to December 2009 then \$30,000 towards the purchase price of a property in the Geelong area will be paid plus the full reimbursement of stamp duty for first home buyers or up to a cap of \$17,000 for a second or subsequent purchase with this tapering off to \$20,000 if the relocation occurs during 2010.

The Geelong area is defined as the shire boundaries of the City of Geelong, Golden Plains, Surf Coast, Colac Otway, and the Borough of Queenscliff.



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# Accident Compensation Act Review

The Victorian Government is undertaking a review of the Accident Compensation Act 1985 and has appointed Mr Peter Hanks QC, a pre-eminent constitutional and administrative lawyer, to conduct the review.

CPSU WorkCover Services Director Geoff Lewin says the union has been heavily involved in the development of the Trades Hall submission as well as participating in the stakeholder reference group established by Mr Hanks.

The Trades Hall submission seeks to increase injured worker weekly payments to 100% for the first twelve months and thereafter a minimum of 80%.

CPSU has provided a complimentary submission seeking to expand on s82(2A) of the Act, the preclusion for compensation for psychological injuries that the Kennett Government included in the legislation to limit the number of successful stress claims, Geoff says.

CPSU has sought that the preclusion be deleted from the Act and that workers suffering a psychological injury should be assessed no different than a worker suffering a physical injury.

All benefits paid in connection with employment, overtime, all allowances,

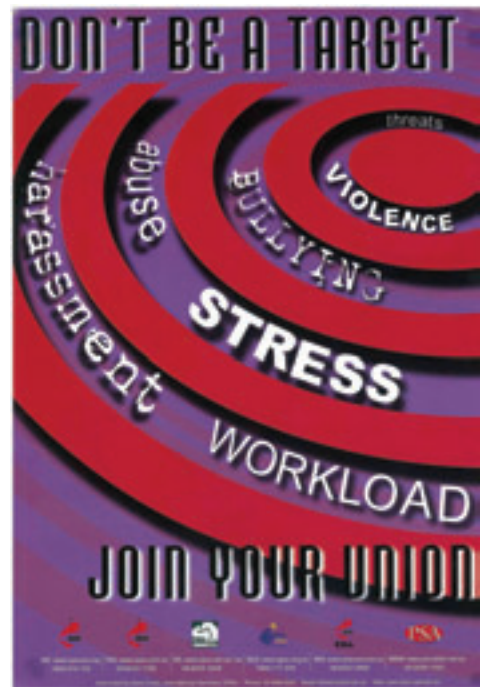
including salary packaging and superannuation be included in the calculation of Pre-Injury Average Weekly Earnings, which is the basis of what a worker receives as weekly payments of compensation is another demand covered by our submission.

Geoff says that CPSU is also seeking to have a separate regulator be established, as has occurred in other States of Australia, to split this function from the Victorian WorkCover Authority who is unable to appropriately make decisions on liability for workers injuries and be the regulator enforcing compliance at the same time.

The period a worker is entitled to Weekly Payments should be extended from 130 weeks to 260 weeks and non recoverable provisional weekly and medical and like Payments be made to injured workers, as occurs in NSW, within 7 days of lodging a claim, are a vital part of our submission.

CPSU has sought that the obligation on an employer to provide employment to a injured worker be extended from 12 months to the full period of entitlement to compensation (260 weeks) and that any offers of suitable employment made by an employer must be agreed by the worker and treating practitioners.

Geoff states that the Act must also be



amended to provide a full Administrative Review in place of the current toothless disputes conciliation process with workers having a legal right to be represented through the disputes process.

Mr Hanks QC, who is required to report back to the Minister by the second half of 2008, has released a discussion paper and sought public submissions.

The Trades Hall with CPSU and others submission to the review are available at [www.compensationreview.vic.gov.au](http://www.compensationreview.vic.gov.au)

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**Submission seeks to increase weekly payments to workers for double the time under Accident Compensation Act Review.**

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## No Weeping for the Murray's Willows

When Parks Victoria commences a program to remove the willow trees from a stretch of the Murray River few will be sorry to see them go.

One of the first non-indigenous trees planted in Australia, the wispy old willows shading the banks of the Kings Billabong Wildlife Reserve near Mildura might look innocent enough, but unfortunately they're also a threat to the native waterbirds and other wildlife the region is loved for.

"An increase in the population of willows has developed over the years, which has overtaken critical water frontage areas of Kings Billabong Wildlife Reserve," explains Parks Victoria ranger and CPSU delegate, Kym Schramm.

"These areas of willow infestation are continuing to spread and have impacted on the regeneration of native plant species."

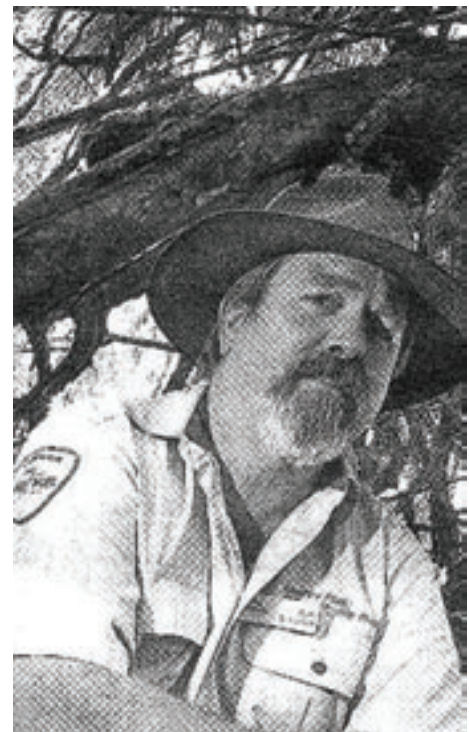
Despite a government-endorsed willow-planting program to stabilise the banks from erosion through 1950-1980, willows were now listed among Australia's top 20 Weeds of National Significance in 1999.



Willows cause havoc to the native wildlife and flora by trapping sediment with their root systems, densely shading water and inhibiting aquatic food-webs which negatively impacts fish numbers, reducing oxygen in the water through leaf composition, and sucking up great volumes of water.

The removal program gets under way in May and the Friends of Kings Billabong Reserve couldn't be happier.

"There has been no community concern due to the fact that it is well recognised that willows are a highly invasive species that cause a major problems congesting our waterways," says Kim.



*Kym Schramm photographed by the Murray River recently by Sunraysia Daily*

# Much Achieved in the Face of Seemingly Unassailable Adversity

Kelvin Goodall steps down as our Union's longest serving President this month and here he reflects on the last 12's years during celebrations to open CPSU's new offices in Richmond.

In reflecting I have adopted 2 inter-related themes: Firstly, like "flotsam and jetsam in the great tide of life" much of what has happened to this union and many of our comrades over the last 12 years or more has been many would argue as beyond our control.

CPSU has had inflicted upon our membership two of the most radically conservative regimes in the history of Victoria and Australia, personified by Jeff Kennett and John Howard.

Kennett's so called "reforms" of the 1990's and Howard's infamous "Work Choices" legislation was the equivalent of successive tsunamis on the industrial relations tide in this State.

However, together CPSU has achieved much in the face of at times seemingly unassailable adversity.

"Modesty being our only failing", we faced and overcame huge challenges and CPSU's Victorian Branch consequently became the unsung trailblazers in the fight against the reactionary legislation imposed initially by Kennett and then Howard.

Not only did we weather the storm, we prevailed.

It is of immense satisfaction that I leave the position of President having seen Kennett and Howard relegated to history and trust in some small way I had a part in their demise.

One thing is certain, the support and unity of the membership of this union were integral in the journey from the darkest times in the union's history to the position of strength we find



ourselves today, ready to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and reflected in this magnificent building tonight.

On a personal note, I leave the Presidency knowing that I have made many friendships that will last for the rest of my life and I cherish the fact that many of the people I once simply called "comrade" I can now call "mate".

While I do not wish to single out individuals I cannot fail to make special mention of Karen Batt.

Like flotsam and jetsam we have been buffeted by the tide of history over the last 12 years but while Karen may be modest in advocating her achievements, I can say her leadership, dedication and inspiration have been unflinching.

For me most importantly, out of the experience with the union in the first instance, travel and many "debriefings" together, I am

proud to be able to call KB a "real mate".

Together we have changed from financial impoverishment to financial strength; illustrated by our changing fortunes in office accommodation as all can attest.

All the industrial successes especially the federal award and with the restitution of holiday leave loading, pay rises and public holidays in the time of Kennett.

Our fight against Work Choices and the campaign for our rights at work have melded our and others diverse memberships into one government changing force.

The successive improvements through the wage deals, our brilliant new Career Structure, and restoring decent conditions across the Service for our members making us the high water mark so keenly sought by others in the Sector.

I wish the union, its leadership and members, all the very best in the years ahead.

I cannot say it better than former World Boxing Champion Jeff Fenech did "I love youse all!"

– Kelvin Goodall



Retiring Branch Councillors Honored – Karen Batt with from left Michael Tiliakos (DHS), Andrew Liston (DSE), Paul Coghlan (DSE), Alan Woodroffe (TAC), Mick Donohoe (VWA) and Ron Kennelly (RODs).

## History finally for CPSU members

CPSU is finally free of all Australian Workplace Agreements after a deal was struck recently to secure all Traffic Camera employees onto collective agreements in late March.

Four months of intensive bargaining came to an end recently when a Union Collective Agreement between Serco Traffic Camera Services, CPSU and ASU was lodged with the Workplace Authority. The deal not only provided improved conditions for employees, but effectively sent Australian Workplace Agreements into the archives of CPSU history.

When Serco assumed traffic camera



operations on behalf of the Victorian government from previous operator Tenix Solutions last October, many Tenix employees also came on board, each bringing with them their individual AWA.

Though Serco were keen to work with the unions, dismantling the AWA's of Tenix and arriving at a new agreement proved no easy task.

"There were different rules governing their employment," explains CPSU Industrial Officer Wayne Townsend.

"The former Tenix employees had to end their transmitted AWA's before they could enter into another agreement, but the process for terminating the AWA's was complicated by different provisions for the pre-reform AWA's – AWA's entered into prior to 27 March 2006 – and post-reform, Work Choices AWA's. It took from November to March to sort out all the technicalities."

The new agreement provides for a four per cent pay rise, backdated to November 2007, with provision for set annual pay rises until October 2010, and the opportunity to review some of the conditions over the life of the agreement including hours of work, rostering arrangements and classifications.



Karen Batt signing the new Serco EBA ending the last of the AWA's



CAMPAIGN UPDATE

2008

**your rights at work**  
worth fighting for

# Your Rights at Work the campaign continues...

Well before last year's stunning election victory, we made two promises to those Australians who joined us in the Your Rights at Work campaign.

We said we would not stand back and allow our children and grandchildren to inherit fewer rights at work than us, fewer rights than those fought for and won by our parents and grandparents.

And to guarantee this, we said we would build a community-based movement for change.

Our campaign teams and union members played a huge role in shaping the conversations in our communities against WorkChoices. We galvanised the public debate and mobilised volunteers on a scale not seen before in Australia's political history.

Congratulations to everyone for what we have achieved so far. But our goal of achieving a fair and balanced industrial relations system is still some way off. We need to re-activate the Your Rights at Work campaign so we can finish the job we started.



ACTU President  
Sharan Burrow



ACTU Secretary  
Jeff Lawrence



## ELECTION FACTS

### **5000 election day volunteers**

On election day the Your Rights at Work campaign had nearly 5000 volunteers working at polling booths in Coalition marginal seats right around the country — by far the biggest presence of any group or political party.

### **39,000 voters door-knocked**

Our marginal seat coordinators and community campaigners door-knocked and spoke to 39,000 people about voting to protect their rights at work.

### **Prime Minister loses his seat**

For only the second time in history a Prime Minister lost his seat in Parliament. In both cases the Prime Minister of the day had attacked the workplace rights of Australians.

### **8 out of 10 said no to WorkChoices**

Australians overwhelmingly rejected WorkChoices. A union exit poll found 8 out of 10 people who voted Labor said this was a key priority. And almost 9 out of 10 voters said the Liberals' attack on unions either made them more likely to vote Labor or made no difference to their vote.

### **The Your Rights at Work swing**

The national swing against the Howard Government was 5.4% — one of the biggest swings against a Government in Australia's history. In the marginal seats targeted by our campaign, the swing away from the Coalition was up to 3.0% higher than the average.

[www.rightsatwork.com.au](http://www.rightsatwork.com.au)

# Our campaign goals



*At last year's election the Australian people voted overwhelmingly to reject WorkChoices and to restore the rights of working Australians.*

*Unions are determined to carry on the Your Rights at Work campaign to ensure the voices of the Australian workers and their families continue to be heard. We will campaign for laws that provide:*

## **1. No AWA individual contracts**

The former Liberal Government's AWA individual contracts have cut the pay and conditions of thousands of workers. Australian voters have sent a clear message that there should be no new AWAs.

## **2. Right to union membership and representation**

Every worker should have the right to join and be collectively represented by a union, to access advice and information from their union in the workplace and to have a say about decisions that affect their work.

## **3. Collective bargaining rights**

All workers should have the democratic right to collectively bargain on all matters if a majority of the workers in their workplace want to.

## **4. Protection from unfair dismissal**

Job security and protection from being unfairly dismissed are important rights that all Australian workers deserve.

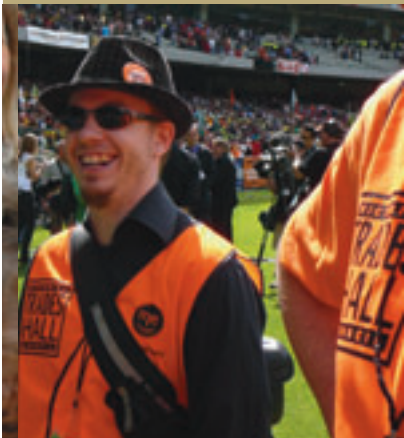
## **5. A strong safety net**

Australian workers must have a decent and comprehensive safety net. There should be a combination of legal minimum standards and a modern and easy to understand award system to provide a floor of dignity for all workers in Australia.

## **6. An independent umpire**

A genuinely independent workplace umpire should be established to resolve disputes.

## STOP PRESS



### Workers continue to be hurt by WorkChoices

Since the election thousands more Australian workers have continued to be hurt by WorkChoices.

While the Coalition's unfair laws remain in place there are still employers that are using them to cut workers' pay and conditions, to dismiss people unfairly and to deny workers the right to bargain collectively.

Many employers are still using WorkChoices to push workers onto unfair AWAs. One recent case involves 170 workers at a well-known airport valet parking service who were sacked and then offered their jobs back on an AWA that cut their pay by up to \$300 a week.

## DID YOU KNOW...

**New figures released by the Government confirm that hundreds of thousands of Australian workers lost pay and conditions under WorkChoices AWAs:**  
**70% lost shift work loadings**  
**68% lost annual leave loadings and**  
**65% lost penalty rates.**

*This is an insult to the Australian people who voted overwhelmingly to reject WorkChoices at last year's election.*

**We must continue the Your Rights at Work campaign if we are to stop WorkChoices hurting more working Australians.**

*The first of the Labor Government's new laws to ban new AWAs and begin dismantling WorkChoices (called the Transition Bill) has already been held up in*

*the Parliament by the Liberals and Nationals.*

*Other laws to be introduced later this year to abolish WorkChoices, re-introduce protections for workers from unfair dismissal and give workers the right to bargain collectively could also be held up, changed or blocked by the Liberals, Nationals and other Senators.*

*We must hold to account any politician who still supports WorkChoices and opposes decent rights for workers.*

*It is essential that we continue the Your Rights at Work Campaign and ensure the Rudd Labor Government delivers on its promise of implementing fair and balanced IR laws.*

## Coalition holds on to AWAs

Patricia Karvelas  
Sid Manns

THE Coalition has decided to continue supporting John Howard's Australian Workplace Agreements, despite his Liberal success, because it is

not that much more than a relevant award or enterprise agreement — should become permanent.

## Bishop seeks help in saving AWAs

Jennifer Hewett  
National affairs correspondent

JULIE Bishop is expected to ask the Opposition front bench today to back her plan to write the

bill, give us your Work Choices staff and we can get on with it."

She had not formally asked the Government to do this, she said.

"I will do after I have spoken to shadow cabinet members. We

## IMPORTANT DATES

### February 2008

- Labor Govt proposes 'Transition Law' to ban AWAs and restore safety net of awards and minimum legal standards. Liberals use Senate numbers to defend AWAs and delay changes
- Two-year award modernisation process begins
- Ten new national legal employment standards released for public discussion

### July 2008

- Newly-elected Senators start their term and balance of power in Parliament changes

### August – September 2008

- Labor Govt to introduce in Parliament main set of new laws to restore unfair dismissal protections, establish right of workers to collectively bargain and set up a new independent umpire
- Liberals, Nationals and other Senators expected to oppose Labor's IR changes

# Your Rights at Work the campaign continues...

*The Your Rights at Work campaign could not have happened without the dedication of people like you.*

*But we cannot allow the arrogance of a few politicians and big business bosses to ignore the will of the Australian people who voted for workplace rights.*

*We need to continue the campaign to restore workers' rights, to build stronger unions and to achieve a better society in which all Australians share in a fairer, more sustainable and prosperous future.*

## WHAT CAN YOU DO...

**Tell your local MP or Senator how important your rights at work are.** Ask the Government members to keep you informed of their progress and when the Liberals try to block fair workplace laws in the Senate, make sure they are reminded that the Australian people voted for rights at work.

**Get involved in union campaigns and public events** around important issues for Australian workers and their families such as paid maternity leave and superannuation.

**Make sure employers who exploit workers are kept in check.** Contact the Union Hotline on **1300 362 223** if you know someone being forced on to an AWA or being hurt by the legacy of the former Liberal Government's laws.

**Be active through your union** – strong unions are the best way to protect your rights at work and improve your wages and conditions. If you are not already a union member call the Unions Australia hotline on **1300 4 UNION (1300 486 466)**.

**Sign up to Email updates** – Join nearly 200,000 supporters on the Rights at Work website [www.rightsatwork.com.au/joinin](http://www.rightsatwork.com.au/joinin)

# Rosella Complex

## Our New Home



CPSU has moved from Trades Hall with the newly re-fitted Rosella Complex in Palmer Parade Richmond East our new Melbourne office.

It's just a Ben Graham torpedo from the 'G'.

Our new location is well serviced by PT with the Richmond and East Richmond rail stations adjacent to Swan Street.

The Route 70 tram towards Wattle Park runs out of Flinders Street and down the Exhibition Street extension around the Tennis Centre and then also into Swan Street as well.

The new office consolidates all our operations across a single floor and significantly improves member amenities for our meetings and training with free on site visitor parking available if booked.



CPSU, State Public Services Federation Group, Victorian Branch PO Box 4355, Richmond East, 3121 or c/- Rosella Complex, 6 Palmer Parade, Richmond VIC 3121



## PSI's Quality Public Services Campaign is about a positive alternative

History shows that quality public services are essential in building strong economies and inclusive societies.

Yet existing services sometimes fail to meet community needs.

Often privatisation is promoted as the only solution to failing services, and countries dependant on financial assistance through development loans and aid may be given little choice.

After 20 years of pro-privatisation policies, the world is neither a better nor a fairer place.

The gap between rich and poor has widened and 54 countries are poorer than they were in 1990 and there are many world wide examples of privatisation failing.

Unions around the world are campaigning to promote government investment in quality public services through adequate financing, improved accountability, better jobs and accessible, affordable and relevant services.

Unions within countries are identifying their most important priorities and pursuing campaigns to win quality public services.

This work is supported by PSI through the union development program and our Resource Bank which provides information and campaign experiences from unions around the world.

International work includes building alliances with others who share our

objectives, and participating in global actions. We work with broad coalitions to change the pro-privatisation policies of the International Financial Institutions, the World Trade Organisation and meetings of rich nations such as the G8.

PSI and Public World are developing a

General Agreement on Public Services, for without governments and international organisations making a strong commitment to quality public services there is no chance of building a better, fairer world.

<http://www.world-psi.org>



President Kelvin Goodall with Federal Secretary David Carey and Assistant Secretary Jim Walton attending the PSI Conference recently .

# Relentless Campaigner

Recently re-elected CPSU State Secretary Karen Batt is as motivated as ever in the position she's held since 1993 and describes as "an honour."

"The fact you have 15,000 members who are prepared to request advice, seek assistance, and have you be their spokesperson on a range of issues, I think it's really important and it's an honour to have."

Yet, her 15 year journey has hardly been a walk in the park.

In fact, the job Karen took on in 1993 was something akin to walking into a minefield.

She was just 31, a woman in a male-dominated arena, and faced with the unenviable task of taking on the Kennett Liberal government, hell-bent on crippling unions.

Thousands of public servants had been sacked, the industrial tribunal was abolished, and changes to industrial relations laws gave the union no right of entry, therefore severely hampering union income and ability to be seen as relevant.

"Kennett was the pioneer of individual contracts, (of) forcing people to accept reduced wages and conditions," says Karen.

"We were able to fight that, regaining annual leave loadings through federal award coverage and with the election of the (Steve) Bracks government in 1999, re-establish a Career Public Service which I think everyone is extremely proud of."

With the support of the Bracks government, CPSU began the intricate task of unpicking 10,000 individual contracts and negotiating a single enterprise agreement – achievements Karen looks back upon with immense satisfaction.

"I always said we would survive Kennett, we did.

We always said we would re-establish a career structure for the public service, we did.

And we always said we would reintroduce a concept of one enterprise agreement for the whole service and we did that."

Karen admits the job is a needy beast, demanding she jump to attention at a moment's notice, but wouldn't have it any other way.

"The job is 24/7.

In the event an issue comes up over a weekend you have to make yourself available," she says.

"On the other hand, it's one of the most rewarding jobs you can ever do, to be able to represent people who deliver a service on behalf of the community and do so in some of the most challenging areas of state government administration."

Karen continues to be inspired by the efforts of other pioneering union leaders.

"I think Sharan Burrow is a fantastic leader, her ability to take very big picture issues and condense them into accessible themes that everyone can understand made industrial relations a pivotal point for the last federal election.

Similarly, Greg Combet, one of the great leaders I think, of not just the trade union movement, but of the country.

## "I am very motivated by this position"

I also have a very strong commitment to working with the Minister of Industrial Relations and Deputy Premier. Rob Hulls has always been prepared to work through many complex issues with us."

Not about to start resting on her laurels as she commences her next term Karen says there's still much work to focus her energies on.

"Enterprise bargaining for the Public Service Agreement later this year will present new challenges as we work through the transition period of Work Choices.

And we have to focus on the economic pressures facing our members.

We've got quite a few issues to deal with but we're confident we'll do that in a constructive way with the government."



Karen Batt



**EXCLUSIVE TO  
UNION MEMBERS**



The Australian Movie Voucher is valid at over fifty cinemas across Australia, including Palace, Moonlight, Dendy, IMAX Sydney, and many more. Vouchers are only \$9 each with 12 months validity and can be used any day of the week. For a full list of participating cinemas, visit [www.memberconnect.com.au](http://www.memberconnect.com.au)

# Wool Sales and Mulesing – The New Australian Dichotomy

International campaigning against mulesing practice by the Australian wool industry has hit home for Seymour Tech school support officer and family merino farm operator, Jenny Leishman.

Banning Australian wool seems to be 'so hot right now' for many international fashion houses. Responding to pressure, US fashion giant Abercrombie & Fitch and major European chain H&M have pledged not to use Australian wool to be seen as ethically responsible with the practice of mulesing to combat flystrike in sheep, attracting strong criticism from animal rights organisation PETA.

Though the decision to ban Australian wool affects very little of their business it's a hit woolgrowers don't need.

Already battling the effects of drought, fire and economic downturn resulting in a drop in wool prices in recent years, the Leishman

family's merino farm has been forced to significantly downsize, while other farmers have quit the industry altogether.

Jenny fires back that the fashion house ban could be seen just as a superficial attempt to win back a bit of moral high ground. The industry is fraught with its own ethical questions like the use of adolescent models and sweatshops.

Merinos are popular here because of their ample wool clip per head, yet this is what makes them susceptible to flystrike throughout Australia.

Extra skin folds grow around their rump, which become soiled by urine and faeces, creating a perfect environment for flies to lay their eggs.

The eggs hatch into maggots which eat into the live flesh, and if undetected and treated, eventually kill the sheep.

Mulesing, the surgical removal of excess skin surrounding the breech area of lambs, coupled with annual crutching, which shears the hind legs and belly of the animal, is considered the most effective method for preventing flystrike.

Though Jenny says the international boycott of Australian wool is yet to impact sales, it does force woolgrowers to defend a necessary practice.

The Australian wool industry is looking to alternatives such as clipping the skin to the lambs' back, causing the skin to rot off, while PETA, also unhappy with clipping as a measure, are calling for better sheep supervision during flystrike season, more regular crutching, or breeding of 'bare breech' sheep."

"Clips may reduce stress on lambs at application, but research has not factored in the repeated mustering of the lamb and its associated stress to the lamb or cost to the farmer," says Jenny.

"Breeding sheep resistant to strike will take up to 20 years and it has not been shown it can be achieved without a reduction in wool clip per head, while ceasing mulesing will require more stock supervision and handling, both at a cost to the sheep in stress and the farmer's costs of operation."

Interestingly, one solution Jenny believes could be further developed is one not being pushed, either by the wool industry or PETA.

"A realistic option would be increased research into the use of pain relief practices at mulesing. However this has not been factored into the (Australian Wool and Sheep Industry Taskforce) commitment to ban mulesing by 2010, and may not be giving time and credibility.

Have Your Say enquiry@cpsuvc.org



fly strike



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# Unified Green Action

The ACTU has signalled its intent to meet the challenge of climate change head-on with the release of its Principles and Policies on global warming statement in March.

Scientific evidence that global warming is caused by human activity and that urgent action must be taken to combat it is now overwhelming.

The ACTU recognises the challenges facing the climate and is committed to ensuring workers are part of the solution through creating greener and more environmentally-friendly workplaces.

At the ACTU National Executive last March, a set of priority campaigns were agreed upon, one of which was ensuring workers have a say over changes in their workplaces about the measures taken to address climate change.

Outlining a set of fundamental principles to support workers' engagement and action in tackling climate change, workers will be able to participate in decision making related to environmental concerns in their workplace.

They will be made aware of environmental hazards in their workplace

and be able to refuse dangerous work or work which harms the environment.

The ACTU also wants Australian unions to lead by example in the fight against climate change by taking necessary action to reduce their environmental footprint and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It has recommended a set of actions

trade unions can commit to, including co-ordinating workplace campaigns for bargaining, establishing workplace environment committees, adding sustainability to the agenda of branch council/executive meetings, and having a Climate Policy.

E-mail your suggestions to [enquiry@cpsuvic.org](mailto:enquiry@cpsuvic.org)



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