

Public Services Bulletin – February 2015

Out of Pocket Child Care Costs higher Under the Liberals

Senate Estimates has today revealed that child care costs under this Liberal Government are higher than at any time since Labor was elected and increased the Child Care Rebate to 50 per cent. The Department of Social Services has confirmed that for the latest available period – the March quarter 2014 – the out-of-pocket cost of child care is taking up a greater proportion of family income across all reported income groups. “For every income group, out of pocket child care costs are higher under the Liberals than at any time since Labor was elected and increased the Child Care Rebate,” Shadow Minister for Early Childhood, Kate Ellis, said. “This re-enforces Labor’s position that the Government’s Child Care Package needs to bring down the cost for families, not just for Government.”

[Out Of Pocket Child Care Costs Higher Under The Liberals - Kate Ellis MP Shadow Minister For Early Childhood Media Release](#)

Update - ASU Library Survey

Advice has been forwarded to all ASU State Branch Library reps – that it appears the responses from our survey are in favour of both career options and the inclusion of the qualifications in the direction of Library and Information systems. [Just to update you on the ASU library survey](#)

Win for James Hardie Asbestos Victims

Unions have ensured that thousands of Australians suffering from asbestos related diseases will continue to be properly compensated, said the ACTU. After campaigning by unions and asbestos victim support groups, the NSW government has agreed to lend the Asbestos Injuries Compensation Fund an extra \$104 million to cover a shortfall caused by increasing number of claims for mesothelioma. ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said it’s a win for unions and asbestos victim support groups who have worked tirelessly to hold James Hardie and the NSW Government to account. “James Hardie and the NSW government have been toying with people’s lives by refusing to top up the compensation fund or stop a move to change compensation payments to instalments instead of a lump sum. “Asbestos victims and their families have been living with this stress and uncertainty for the past six months. [Unions win for James Hardie asbestos victims](#)

Global day of Action

Global Day of action sends a strong signal to employers around the world – hands off our right to strike

PSI affiliates joined the ITUC, ITF, EI and other Global Unions’ affiliates around the world for the Global Day of Action for the Right to Strike on 18 February. From Japan, Korea, Indonesia, India, Thailand, Russia, Turkey, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Botswana, South Africa, Canada, to Argentina and Columbia and in many other countries, workers joined actions in defence of the right to strike. The day of action took place a few weeks before the ILO Governing Body has to take a decision, in March 2015, on the resolution of a conflict that has had a chilling effect on the ILO supervisory mechanism since 2012. At the same time, governments are negotiating the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Rosa Pavanelli, general secretary of PSI says:” We live in a globalized economy and workers have to be strong and united in their action.

<http://www.world-psi.org/en/global-day-action-right-strike-sends-strong-signal-employers-around-world-hands-our-right-strike>

Unemployment Soars

Today’s ABS figures showing record low wages growth is further evidence the Coalition Government needs to stimulate the economy instead of continuing to cut. Wages grew by just 2.5 per cent in 2014 – the slowest wages growth recorded in any 12 month period since the Wage Price Index was created 18 years

ago. ACTU President Ged Kearney said the Abbott Government has its head in the sand. “Even during the depths of the Global Financial Crisis, wages growth only slowed to 2.9% and then quickly rebounded. “Not only is wages growth at a record low, it’s showing no signs of having bottomed out – if current trends continue we are facing an even greater slump in wages growth next quarter “Wages are stagnating and unemployment is soaring – yet the Government’s response is to cut, cut, cut. “Well the figures clearly show you simply can’t cut your way to economic.

[Wages slump while unemployment soars – time for a new economic direction](#)

Anti Electricity Privatisation Video

Please pass onto to all anywhere who oppose electricity privatization <http://youtu.be/7tpuirS6zrl> plus just even clicking on shows support for the great work of Qld Unions. We owe you a lot to show your support by viewing this clip nothing more just have a look! Thanks Neil from Queensland well done great to see ASU state Branches supporting one another.

[Please share this great anti electricity privatization video](#)

Tagged in: Energy [Privatisation](#)

Labor’s Child Care Principles

Labor will continue to take a constructive approach to discussions with the Government on their child care package, Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Kate Ellis said today. “Labor is considering the Productivity Commission’s report carefully, and while the Liberals’ record on child care is disappointing, we are ready to work constructively with them if they are now serious. “Labor’s key policy principles on child care are centred on improving affordability, improving accessibility, safeguarding quality and increasing workforce participation. “We will work to ensure the Government’s response takes into account the best interests of children, feedback from the sector, and an assessment of the impact on families.” Labor is committed to four key principles which will guide our support for any future child care package: 1. Any child care package must be based on the dual policy pillars of increasing workforce participation and promoting the best interests of Australian children; 2. Reform

[Kate Ellis MP Shadow Minister For Early Childhood - Media Release - Labor’s Child Care Principles](#)

QLD Electorate says NO to Privatisation of Electricity

Unions call on Employment Minister Eric Abetz to put his money where his mouth is and make submissions to the Productivity Commission and the Fair Work Commission calling for penalty rates and minimum wages to be protected. ACTU President Ged Kearney said attempts by Minister Abetz to distance the government from a push by employers to cut penalty rates and the minimum wage is ludicrous. “On one hand Eric Abetz is saying the Government won’t use the Productivity Commission inquiry into workplace relations to cut penalty rates and the minimum wage, but on the other Tony Abbott is blaming penalty rates for his hotel restaurant being closed on a Sunday – which was later discovered to be untrue,” said Ms Kearney.

[Unions call on Abbott & Abetz to take action to protect wages and conditions](#)

Productivity Commission Report into Child Care

The Productivity Commission report into Child Care has now been released by the Federal Government. The ASU will have concerns on number of recommendations, in the Commission Report and is currently reviewing the report for detail advice to Branches, and the Convening of an ASU National telephone hook-up of Branch Officials - In the meantime details around the report of the Productivity Commission can be located at <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childcare>

Report Summary - <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childcare/report/childcare-overview.pdf>
Report Volume one - <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childcare/report/childcare-volume1.pdf>
Report Volume two - <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childcare/report/childcare-volume2.pdf>

Advice from Productivity Commission web site as follows - Childcare and Early Childhood Learning Public inquiry this inquiry has concluded. The final report was sent to Government on 31 October 2014 and released on 20 February 2015. Issues paper 5 Dec 2013 Draft report 22 Jul 2014 Inquiry report 20 Feb 2015 The issues paper was released on 5 December 2013 and was intended to assist you in preparing a submission. It covered a range of issues on which the Commission sought.

Say No to Privatisation

ASU before Senate Committee to say no to privatisation.

ASU national office, on behalf of all State Branches with the US NSW Branch and Services NSW/ACT Branch along with Unions NSW and other Unions held a round table discussion with the Chair and the Committee of the Australian Parliament (Senate), examining the Federal Government proposal to offer State Governments an incentive payment to 'privatize state owned assets.' State Government proposals for privatisation are being encouraged by the federal government but will see state governments lose long term revenue from current state owned corporations such as electricity and place privatisation of anything from schools to hospitals on the agenda. In the trade off for short term infrastructure spend being pushed by business and Conservative Governments. In the lead up to Round Table between the Senate Committee -- National and State Unions, lodged separate submissions to concentrate on their main areas of concern. But all had one thing in common, total opposition to privatization, keeping public assets in public hands and the losers in privatization, the citizens of Australia. Information on the inquiry can be located at http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Economics/Privatisation_2014/Public_Hearings

ASU Submission can be located at <http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=5f4797fd-1784-4983-a385-539e3f88cc3b&subId=303065>

Early Childhood

Every single family day care centre in Western Sydney is set to have their funding cut as a result of the Abbott Government's cruel and ill-considered budget cuts. Shadow Minister for Early Education, Kate Ellis, Shadow Finance Minister Tony Burke and NSW Candidate for Lakemba, Jihad Dib, joined families at the Creative Family Day Care Scheme in Western Sydney and heard first-hand the impacts of Tony Abbott's budget cuts. These cuts to family day care alone will drive prices up by \$35 a week, putting more pressure on both the family budget and the child care industry. "Any bipartisan approach must start with reversing the Government's \$157 million cut to family day care," Kate Ellis said. "The Government's own figures show that half a million low and middle income families will be hurt by cuts to the means-tested Child Care Benefit. These are cuts to everyday families already hurting from a cruel.

[Kate Ellis MP Shadow Minister For Education Shadow Minister For Early Childhood](#)

Early Childhood

Leading figures in the German trade union movement have issued an appeal for solidarity with Greece following the resounding election victory of the leftist Syriza party. Request from labour start

Leading figures in the German trade union movement have issued an appeal for solidarity with Greece following the resounding election victory of the leftist Syriza party. It's an extraordinary statement and trade unionists around the world are being asked to add their names to those of the German trade union leaders. Thousands have already done so.

<http://www.labourstart.org/go/greece> please share this message with your friends, family and fellow union members. Thank you! Eric Lee.

Abbott a message: Drop your cruel cuts and give families a fair go

Shadow Minister for Families and Payments, Jenny Macklin, Shadow Minister for Early Education, Kate Ellis, and NSW Candidate for Prospect, Hugh McDermott, will today join families at the Cassia Community Centre in Western Sydney to renew Labor's campaign against the Liberals' cuts to families. It's time to send Tony Abbott a message: drop your cruel cuts and give families a fair go. The campaign includes an online petition calling on Tony Abbott to drop his budget cuts to families and childcare. "The Liberals' first budget rips \$5.5 billion from family payments and more than \$1 billion from childcare" said Shadow Minister for Families and Payments, Jenny Macklin. "If Tony Abbott gets his way, some families will lose as much as \$6,000 a year as a result of the budget" she said. "This is an extraordinary attack on the living standards of low and middle income families" she said. [Families Send Tony Abbott A Message](#)

Commonwealth Grants to councils

Commonwealth Grants to councils support local communities 18 February, 2015 Local councils across Australia have received the third payment of Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) for this financial year, providing funds that are invested in essential community infrastructure and services ranging from local roads to swimming pools and libraries. Financial Assistance Grants are a vital part of the revenue base of all councils, and local government this year will receive \$2.3 billion from the Australian Government to provide funding for local infrastructure and services. For many smaller rural and remote councils, FAGs form the majority of their revenue. ALGA President Mayor Troy Pickard said FAGs payments are welcomed by all councils as it assists them to provide essential local services and infrastructure. "Councils use FAGs to maintain a wide range of infrastructure to ensure all local residents, no matter which community they live in. [Commonwealth Grants to councils support local communities](#)

NSW Not For Sale

The NSW union movement will today officially launch its election campaign in Newcastle targeting the Baird Government's privatisation agenda. Entitled 'NSW Not For Sale' the campaign includes strategic door knocking, phone and digital campaigning, as well as radio and television advertisements which began airing over the weekend. (<http://youtu.be/4exTNoA0R8E>). The campaign from NSW unions follows similar campaigns in Victoria and Queensland which helped defeat pro-privatisation governments in recent months. Unions NSW Secretary Mark Lennon said unemployment figures released last week showed the Liberals and Nationals had neglected Newcastle and the Hunter ever since they came to power. "Newcastle and the Hunter are heading for an unemployment crisis under Mike Baird," Mr Lennon said. "Unemployment in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie is 8.3 per cent across the rest of the Hunter it's 7.9 per cent and it's vital that the State government starts investing in more jobs instead of selling off the farm."

[NSW Not For Sale' NSW union movement launches anti-privatisation campaign in Newcastle](#)

Push for new workplace rights on pregnancy discrimination and domestic violence

Australian Unions are lodging a claim with the Fair Work Commission to give more than four million Australian workers who are covered by an award the right to return to work after parental leave either part time or on reduced hours. The ACTU will lodge the new claim for family friendly hours with the Fair Work Commission under the review of modern award agreements currently underway, as well as the full details of its domestic violence leave claim. ACTU President Ged Kearney said the claims will increase women's participation in the workforce, help end pregnancy discrimination and boost economic growth. "Having more women in paid employment increases government revenue through income tax, increases economic demand through higher household wealth and spending, and improves economic independence for women with less reliance on welfare," said Ms Kearney

[Push for new workplace rights on pregnancy discrimination and domestic violence](#)

Employers are trying to Cut the Wages

Employers are trying to cut the wages of hospitality, retail, pharmacy, dry cleaning and laundry workers, the ACTU said. ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said employer groups have lodged submissions with the Fair Work Commission to cut penalty rates paid to workers in these industries under the review of modern awards currently underway. "Hospitality, retail, pharmacy, dry cleaning and laundry workers are some of the lowest paid workers in the country who rely on penalty rates as part of their take home pay," said Mr Oliver. "These workers sacrifice their weekends away from family and friends, they work late nights and early mornings, and they should be paid for that. Mr Oliver said a sudden pay cut will leave many workers struggling to pay their bills. "Penalty rates are not spare cash people splash around they are part of take home wages that hard working Australians rely on to pay their.

[Employers Try To Cut Wages Of Australia's Lowest Paid Workers Media Release](#)

Fast-Tracking of Level Crossing Removals in Victoria

TrackSAFE is encouraged by the fast-tracking of level crossing removals in Victoria and expresses its strong support of the efforts of the new government in addressing this important safety issue. TrackSAFE Director and ARA CEO Bryan Nye OAM said the actions of Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Public Transport Jacinta Allan are welcomed by TrackSAFE and will be supported as TrackSAFE continues to raise awareness about matters that ultimately affect rail employees. "The announcement of the fast-tracked removal of 50 level crossings is welcomed by the rail industry and we are encouraged to see a state government taking action in addressing this ongoing national issue," Mr Nye said. There are thousands of near hits at level crossing every year and each one is just seconds' way from becoming a potential disaster. "TrackSAFE invests considerable time and resources into education and awareness campaigns directed at improving behaviour around level crossings".

[TrackSAFE applauds fast-tracked removal of 50 level crossings in Victoria](#)

Tokyo Rengo

Meetings have been held today in Sydney with were held with representatives of Tokyo Rengo, through the ASU USB. The meetings were part of 25 year exchange program between UNIONS NSW and Tokyo Rengo. The exchange program allowed for a range of discussions from Trade/TPPA/ changes facing workers in the global economy as well as Unions structures, operations and membership structures. Discussions on the role of the international union movement as well as the global union Federations. Representatives attending included - ANDO Tetsuo Mr Vice President of Rengo Tokyo/ Confederation of Japan Automobile Workers' Unions Tokyo. YUMOTO Kazuaki Mr An executive committee member of Rengo Tokyo/Tokyo Office of All Mint Labour Union. KONDO Yasushi Mr Vice general secretary of Rengo Tokyo/Tokyo Office of General Federation of Private Railway & Bus Workers' Unions of Japan. ISHIZUKA Hiroko Ms An executive committee member of Tokyo Office. [Tokyo Rengo](#)

Abbott Government cuts to Child Care

Abbott Government cuts to child care; the Government's refusal to release the Productivity Commission's child care review; bi-partisanship on child care policy Interview ABC 24 Thursday, 12 February 2015 Greg Jennett, Journalist: Kate Ellis, picking up where Scott Morrison left off, he says that he's written to you about the productivity report into child care, where do you think this is going to lead? Kate Ellis, Shadow Minister for Child Care: Well I Certainly Hope That It Will Lead To, One, The Government Finally releasing the report. There's absolutely no reason that we know for them to continue sitting on it, and in the interest of proper consultation and serious debate about the way forward, we need to see that document.

[Kate Ellis MP Shadow Minister For Education Shadow Minister For Early Childhood Interview](#)

Commonwealth Grants to councils

Over the past 12 months Child Care Services have received more attacks by the Federal Government, be it via the changes to family day care or the Prime Ministers statements on the need to talk more on child care services " it's now time to stop talking and act to support local government child care services and bring more services back to communities. To help families, mums return to work as well as public child care services delivered by local government " said Greg McLean, ASU head of local government The ASU as the key union in public sector child care, delivered by local government, has been a strong advocate of increased funding, greater recognition of child care and related services as part of the education and development recognition, and a key part of affordable child care for mums to return to their work carriers.

[ASU calls for the Federal Government to get on with the Job for Child Care](#)

Electricity - more people in NSW say NO

Fairfax/Ipsos poll reveals fewer than one in four voters or 23 per cent support the partial privatisation of the electricity "poles and wires".

[Electricity - more people in NSW say no - article from Sydney Morning Herald](#)

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/support-falling-for-mike-bairds-electricity-privatisation-plan-despite-20-billion-infrastructure-promise-20150209-139iqh.html>

Perth Councils Vote against Mergers

[Perth councils vote against mergers, defeating WA Government amalgamation plans - item ABC news](#)

Mergers in some Perth councils will not go ahead, the West Australian Government has confirmed, despite its plan to slash the number of metropolitan local governments from 30 to 16. Related Story: Perth councils maintain the rage over amalgamation plans Related Story: Legal action over council mergers to be lodged Related Story: Perth councils lose bid to challenge mergers plan Map.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-08/councils-vote-against-mergers-in-wa/6078388>

Abbott Government on Notice - Union Campaign Kicks Off

A new survey of more than 43,000 people shows working Australians feel anxious about their living standards and are deeply dissatisfied with the Abbott government's policies and the direction it is taking Australia. The ACTU surveyed 43,188 union and non-union members across all industries, in all states and territories, between November 2014 and January 2015. ACTU President Ged Kearney said the findings are being used to help determine the issues unions will be campaigning on from now until the next election. "We have been out talking to our members and the wider community about what their concerns are both at work and more broadly ever since Tony Abbott handed down his disastrous budget," Ms Kearney said. "They've told us living standards, wages and rights at work are the biggest concerns and they want us campaigning on these issues."

[Abbott Government On Notice – Union Campaigns Kick Off - Australian Council Of Trade Unions Media Release](#)

Latest update from service Skills

CEO's Corner My husband is an Engineer—nothing to do with government, policy or VET. When I told him the other day how much I enjoyed the stakeholder engagement part of my job, he rolled his eyes and asked what that term actually means in the real world. I gave him my explanation and he rolled his eyes again and said 'In my world we measure "engagement", as you call it, in sales. How do you measure it?' Read More Upcoming Events Money in sport conference 17-18 March, Etihad stadium, Melbourne.

[Latest update from service skills - includes local government sport and recreation](#)

New Railway Line Canberra

Rail industry applauds opening of South West Rail Link The peak body for the rail industry, the Australasian Railway Association (ARA), congratulates the NSW Government on its significant achievement in opening today Sydney's newest rail line, the South West Rail Link (SWRL), ahead of schedule and under budget. Chief Executive Officer of the ARA, Bryan Nye OAM, commended the efforts Minister Berejiklian and Premier Baird for delivering the vital infrastructure the congested city of Sydney needs to function efficiently as the nation's powerhouse. "This 11.4 kilometre major piece of track infrastructure will transform Sydney and open up the rapid growing areas in the south-west, giving people in the suburbs access to a reliable and efficient train system that connects them to the rest of the city," said Mr Nye.

[Advice from ARA - new railway line Canberra](#)

Advice from ARA

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) has welcomed this morning's announcement from Nationals Leader, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss reiterating the National Party's commitment to the Inland Rail project, a critical piece of rail infrastructure that will connect Melbourne to Brisbane and enhance freight movements along the entire east coast of Australia. Chief Executive Officer of the ARA, Bryan Nye OAM, said he felt reassured by this show of continued support for the project, particularly given construction is set to commence later this year. "Australia needs an Inland Rail to meet the growing freight demand along the east coast and importantly have less of that freight travelling by road and more on rail," said Mr Nye.

[The Nationals pledge ongoing support for Inland Rail - advice from ARA](#)

General Municipal Workers UNION UK - say well done to ASU win in Queensland

General Municipal Workers UNION UK - say well done to ASU win in Queensland

General Municipal Workers UNION UK say well done to ASU win in Queensland. "Many congratulation to all the unions and the communities who fought off the privatisation of Public Utilities in Queensland. You should all be proud of this achievement it's something the UK unions are trying to reverse here. Since our public utilities were privatised all it has done is put public money into the pockets of private company shareholders and the public are paying vast amounts for the supply of Water, Gas, and Electricity while shareholders deep in the profits and drain the services with high annual bonuses, which I'm in no doubt go to the Conservatives as donations. The same is said for Local government contracts which we are now having limited success in returning services to in house provision, moving away from private involvement.

<http://gmpsiaprec.blogspot.com.au/2015/02>

TISA

A new trade proposal is aiming to commodify health care services globally, with higher costs for governments and poorer performance for patients, to the benefit of large health corporations and insurance companies in a USD 6-trillion business. A discussion paper – leaked by Associated Whistle-Blowing Press - has exposed negotiators of the secretive Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) who are discussing wide-ranging reforms to national public health systems which will promote offshoring of health care services and privatisation. The proposal, reportedly tabled by the government of Turkey, was discussed by EU member states last September at the Geneva TISA negotiations. It suggests an annex on health care services in the TISA that would facilitate patients travelling abroad to access health services.

[TISA: another leaked document reveals secret talks to promote health "tourism", privatisation and to raise health costs](#)

No Action on Child Care

Abbott Proves He Is All Talk and No Action on Child Care Tony Abbott has failed to reverse his Government's \$1 billion cuts to child care and in refusing to do so, he has failed Australian families. Tony Abbott today demonstrated his only priority is saving his political skin, and his empty statements will do nothing to make life easier for Australian families. Tony Abbott made a fleeting reference to "consulting" on child care. What he is really saying is that this government has no clue and no direction for child care policy. There is more detail in what the Prime Minister didn't say than what he did. He didn't say the Government's own figures show the cost of child care is set to explode by 30 per cent by 2018.

[Kate Ellis MP Shadow Minister For Education Shadow Minister For Early Childhood Member For Adelaide](#)

Council Mergers and Amalgamations

As state governments continue to tinker with council mergers and amalgamations, rather than look at how councils can provide more and better services to meet our growing community needs, the local government councils themselves, along with their employees and their Union (the ASU), and the community at large focus on more important matters. Amongst our concerns are how to respond to merger proposals to ensure the best continuation of services to the community and how to maintain the employment of those with the detailed knowledge and skills to deliver the best for the community through direct local government employment, as well as looking at how to plan the workforce of the future in local government. To assist ASU Branches and officials, the ASU National Office has published a discussion paper.

[National discussion paper released](#)

<http://www.asu.asn.au/news/categories/localgovt/150202-council-amalgamations-mergers>

Queensland Electorate says NO to Privatisation of Electricity and Public Sector Assets

Last weekend in Queensland a State election was held, with privatisation of the State Governments Electricity and other public sector assets a corner stone plank of the conservative liberal national party government proposals for their next term in government. Over many months in the lead up to the election the then Labor opposition had championed the opposition to privatisation, if anything it was one of their key messages to the electorate "opposition to the sale of public sector assets". The opposition campaign saw the largest political change at election time in Australia's history. While there are always a range of factors in citizens minds at election times, in this election both sides of politics made it a key campaign and stuck their reputations on it.

[Queensland Electorate says NO to Privatisation of Electricity and Public Sector Assets](#)

Revision to Australian Standards on General Conditions of Contract and Lifejackets

ASU Members are often required as part of their work in local government, water industry and water ways work

For Public Comment: Revision to Australian Standards on General Conditions of Contract and Lifejackets as 11000 General conditions of contract Australian Standards 2124 and 4000 provide guidance and suggested language to be used in legal contracts. The Standards are voluntary and are used widely by institutions, governments and businesses across Australia. They underpin many contracts for construction and public works projects. The Standards are now undergoing a major revision, in consultation with many stakeholders such as the Australasian Procurement and Construction Council, AustRoads, Australian Industry Group and the Civil Contractors Federation, to name a few. Under the proposed revision, the Standards are to be combined into a new Standard, AS 11000 General conditions of contract. The objective of AS 11000 is to provide general guidance for legal contracts in all sectors of industry, including construction, engineering, health, manufacturing and infrastructure.

