

Public Services Bulletin – July 2015

06 July 2015
ASU

This edition contains a summary of blog items published by Greg McLean in the previous calendar month. Items cover the areas of local government, energy and water, rail and public transport, international news including trade agreements, privatisation and general public sector matters

The articles all relate to the [blog of Greg McLean, ASU Assistant National Secretary](#)

ALGA

ALGA calls on councils to add to growing list of declining community infrastructure

ALGA calls on councils to add to growing list of declining community infrastructure. On 30 July 2015 Councils Australia-wide have submitted more than 100 examples of ailing community infrastructure in need of replacement, maintenance or upgrades within just a week of a callout from the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), highlighting local government's broader challenge of meeting the backlog and underspend in community infrastructure that has accumulated over the years and strengthening ALGA's call for more examples. The examples submitted so far to ALGA's Community Infrastructure Ideas Register include community recreational facilities such as ovals, swimming pools and walking paths, and community facilities such as halls, libraries and senior citizens centres. The President of ALGA, Mayor Troy Pickard, said: "The staggering response to our register from councils shows the critical need for more to be done to support local government in delivering adequate and appropriate community infrastructure."

Councils Mergers

Council Mergers from US Branch of ASU

The NSW Upper House has launched an inquiry into the government's Fit for the Future policy and the spectre of forced amalgamations. The USU has made a substantial submission to the inquiry expressing absolute opposition to forced amalgamations. The USU has argued against forced amalgamations. Amalgamations have historically not led to cheaper rates and improved financial performance for councils as has been claimed by those promoting amalgamations as a solution. They also often result in reducing local employment in the smaller communities (where every job and dollar counts) by relocating jobs and services into the larger centres which only adds to population decline in smaller communities

Protect Penalty Rates for Geelong and Colac Workers

Unions take action to protect penalty rates for Geelong and Colac workers

ACTU Australian Unions will today launch a campaign to 'Save Our Weekend' and protect penalty rates for thousands of workers in the Geelong, Colac and Surf Coast regions. Around 100 people will gather at the Geelong Trades Hall Council to launch the campaign. Show your support for weekend rates by signing the online petition over the next two weeks, weekend workers including nurses, paramedics, cleaners and hospitality staff will be door knocking homes, holding rallies and community events throughout the region to encourage people to support the campaign and help protect their wages. The local campaign comes at the same time as the local Geelong Chamber of Commerce (GCC) has called for penalty rates to be cut for thousands of local workers in its submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into the Workplace Relations.

E-OZ Bulletin

What is the future of electricity skills and employment and the grid and network - looks like Australia's best conference yet, where we think of the workers

Only 1 week left to take advantage of the Early Bird registration discount Register for the E-Oz Energy Space Annual Conference 2015 by Friday 31st July to receive the "Early Bird" discount on your registration. If your organisation is interested in becoming a sponsor for the 2015 E-Oz Energy Space Annual Conference.

ARA Media

ARA - Media

G:Link first anniversary prompts calls for phase two rollout The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) welcomes the first anniversary of the Gold Coast light rail, also known as the G:Link, which in its first year of operation has achieved patronage figures far greater than anticipated at a whopping 6.18million trips. Acting Chief Operating Officer of the ARA, Phil Allan, said "he wasn't surprised by the success of the project and that it was just another example of how light rail is improving Australian cities. "Australia is undergoing a light rail renaissance and the G:Link project shows that a light rail system can support the transit needs of a cities of all sizes and complexity," said Mr Allan. "The Gold Coast is one of Australia's iconic tourism destinations and within one year the G:Link has become a local icon itself, providing 18,200 trips each day up and down the scenic.

Bulletin from Standards Australia

Latest bulletin from Standards Australia

Australia and Singapore to Expand Cooperation in Standards Australia to Lead APEC Data Flows Project to Increase Small Business. Trade Public Comment Commences on Important Refrigeration Standards Update on Second Phase of Aged Standards Review. Dr Bronwyn Evans at Vinnie's CEO Sleep out 2015 David Singleton and Dr Bronwyn Evans among Australia's Top 100 Influential Engineers. The Queen's Birthday Honours List Report: ISO COPOLCO Meeting in Geneva Forum, Powered Wheelchairs and Scooters Forum, Concrete Placing Equipment Conference, International Standards & Public Policy, Geneva World Standards Day, Committee Member Deed 2015 International Update Sector Updates Drafts Open for Comment CEO Report.

Advice from Service Skills

ASU Local Government Sport and Recreation Members - Sport and Recreation Qualifications - advice from service skills

The Sport and Recreation Qualifications of the SIS Training Package are now open for consultation. Feedback on the proposed draft qualifications can be submitted until Friday 31 July 2015 on our online feedback register. We are a not-for-profit independent organisation, which supports skills and workforce development in the service industries. Our industries include retail, wholesale, sport, fitness, community recreation, outdoor recreation, travel, tourism, meetings and events, hospitality, accommodation, restaurants and catering, holiday parks and resorts, hairdressing, beauty and floristry.

For further information please [click here](#) or contact [Elly Snyder](#).

Working parents and vulnerable children could lose their places in the child care system.

Working Parents And Vulnerable Children Could Lose Child Care Places

The Hon Kate Ellis MP Shadow Minister For Education Shadow Minister For Early Childhood Working Parents and Vulnerable Children Could Lose Child Care Places. The list of unanswered questions on the Government's child care changes continues to expand, with new concerns that working parents and vulnerable children could lose their places in the child care system. As reported today, the Government is considering scrapping priority access guidelines that ensure vulnerable children and children with working parents get first access. We already know that the Government's child care changes will make it harder for parents especially those working casually and part-time to get back into the workforce. We also know that Tony Abbott and Scott Morrison's new child care restrictions will see some children locked out of early education altogether, while others will have their access cut in half.

News from IBSA

NEWS from IBSA

IBSA is adding new products to the store every week! You can check out the full range of delivery and assessment materials on the IBSA store page. General News Register now for the 2015 National VET Conference Registration is open for Velg Training's 2015 National VET Conference, which will be delivered over 17-18 September at the Adelaide Convention Centre. "Build it in: How to merge foundation skill development for adult education and training" workshop If you are looking for practical ideas to identify strategies to recognise, support, and build foundation skills into existing adult education and training practices.

ARA

Rail supports announcement on freight infrastructure reform - media from ASU industry affiliate ARA

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) has welcomed an announcement made yesterday by Premier Jay Weatherill to establish a trial of a national heavy vehicle road user charging system. The ARA's Acting Chief Operating Officer, Mr Phil Allan, said all rail freight operators and the peak body had long been calling for road user charging and that the reform would provide a strong incentive for freight businesses to improve the efficiency of their freight supply chains and drive productivity growth. "We welcome Premier Weatherill's announcement for freight infrastructure reform, which would see a charging system based on mass, distance and location a system that reflects actual use of the road network," said Mr Allan. "The interstate rail network has already operated with a similar regime of mass-distance charging for over a decade. "The rail industry welcomes proposals for road-user charging as a way to level the playing field.

More Funding for Childhood Education

New report says vital early childhood education needs more funding

The ASU has welcomed the release of a new Australian report which confirms the need for increased support for early childhood education. The findings of the McKell Institute report are broadly consistent with the views put forward by the ASU in a recent Productivity Commission Inquiry into early childhood education. "The ASU continues to draw attention to the important role played by local government workers in early childhood education and care (ECEC)," said ASU Assistant National Secretary Greg McLean.

<http://www.asu.asn.au/news/categories/localgovt/150707-vital-early-childhood-ed-needs-funding>

Unanswered Questions on Child Care Changes

It's Time The Government Addresses Unanswered Questions On Child Care Changes By The Hon Kate Ellis Mp Shadow Minister For Education Shadow Minister For Early Childhood

The Government cannot continue to hide the facts about who will be worse off under their proposed child care changes, with a new report Monday questioning key aspects of the package. Early education experts have raised serious concerns about the impact of the changes on the affordability and availability of child care, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, casual and part-time workers, and parents returning to the workforce. For months, Labor has been asking for details of these child care changes, but Tony Abbott and Scott Morrison have refused to provide them. This comes just a week after NATSEM modelling revealed one in four families will be on average \$1,880 a year worse off because of the Abbott Government's child care changes with low-middle income families, and single income families hardest hit. This comes on top of their cuts to family payments, which simply rob Peter to pay.

Paid Parental Leave

Take action against Abbott Fed Govt attacks on paid parental leave

It is now well known that amongst its many broken election promises, the Federal Government broke Abbott's key centrepiece promise on paid parental leave (PPL). The fact they chose Mother's Day in May this year to announce the death knell of their policy just rubbed salt into the wound of workers planning to start or extend their families, and other workers who had fought so hard over decades to build this important entitlement. Now we need to take action to prevent PPL entitlements being undermined! The Budget Bill making the cuts to PPL has been referred to a Senate Inquiry and this gives us time to convince Senators to vote against the Bill when it comes before the Senate in the near future. Sign the petition to Senators – save paid parental leave Women who have accessed both the Government PPL and employer PPL are not double dipping.

<http://www.asu.asn.au/news/categories/lifefamily/150705-take-action-abbott-attacks-ppl>

ALGA

ALGA - concerns on federal government funding

Campaign to immediately restore FAGs indexation continues. ALGA wrote to Federal MPs and Senators this week to seek their support for the campaign to immediately restore the indexation of Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs). The Government's decision in the 2014 Federal Budget to freeze the indexation of FAGs for three years beginning in 2014-15 is now threatening the provision of services in local communities as councils are forced to look at difficult decisions which may involve cutting services.

China-Australia Free Trade Agreement

Take action on the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement

The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement was finalised in November 2014 but the text was only released on 17 June 2015. It appears that the Australian Government made huge concessions on temporary labour and investor rights in its desperation to complete the deal. Click here to read this on the AFTINET website Email your MP now to tell them to vote against the China FTA AFTINET's preliminary analysis reveals that the Australian Government has made arrangements for Chinese

investors to increase the use of temporary migrant workers. It has also agreed that Chinese investors will be able to sue Australian governments if they can claim that a change in law or policy "harms" their investment, known as Investor-State Disputes or ISDS, but those provisions are unfinished and ambiguous. An unprecedented Memorandum of Understanding separate from the text of the trade agreement gives Chinese investors in projects valued over \$150 million additional rights to bring in temporary migrant.

<http://www.asu.asn.au/news/categories/international/150703-take-action-china-free-trade-agreement>

Camden Council NSW

A story around Camden Council NSW - upgrade its customer service centre, not contract out

The Camden advertiser has published a story around Camden Council NSW moving to upgrade its customer service centre, not contract out the work or move to a shared services arrangement, looks like some councils are focusing on quietly not the lessening of the service via contacting out under shared services arrangements.

<http://www.camdenadvertiser.com.au/story/3180905/new-camden-council-customer-contact-centre/>

AFTINET July Bulletin

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Take Action on the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA). US Congress grants TPP Fast Track as Productivity Commission slams ISDS, medicine monopolies and campaign continues Senate Inquiry Report on Trade Agreement Process condemns current process, supports release of text and independent evaluation before signing RCEP. More leaks on proposals for stronger medicine monopolies PACER-Plus, seasonal worker scheme consultations Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) leaks expose corporate deregulation agenda for financial and human services. Take Action on the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA).

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E-OZ Bulletin

E-OZ bulletin

This monthly publication will provide updates and the latest information within the electricity generation, electricity supply, electrotechnology, and gas supply industries. In this June 2015 issue E-Oz Annual Conference 2015, Registrations now open E-Oz Energy Skills Australia and eProfiling Training Package Update 10559NAT Course in Working Safely with Asbestos Containing Materials. The Wire Magazine: Issue 19 E-Oz Media Kit - Advertising with E-Oz today E-Oz Annual Conference 2015. The 2015 E-Oz Annual Conference will focus on "Your Future and the Energy Space" and how our industry can develop skills to meet the future expectations of the global technological advancement in the Energy space sectors.

TUED Bulletin

The ASU is not a member of TUED, but will be discussing the Organisation with the ASU national energy/electricity industry division meeting

A new TUED working paper titled Power to the People: Toward Democratic Control of Electricity Generation shows how “another energy is possible, and absolutely necessary.” The paper documents how and where energy democracy is expressing itself - and argues that public renewable power can drive the energy revolution the world needs. Union leaders from different sectors have welcomed the report. UK: Is the 'dash for gas' fracturing the labor movement? Within days of the gas union GMB signing a charter with the gas industry to develop fracking, Britain's largest union urges its members to join an anti-fracking demonstration. And public services union leader challenges the GMB's pro-fracking logic. Argentina: The Workers Central of Argentina (CTA) works with Mapuche indigenous communities to spread the word about the impacts of drilling.

<http://us4.campaignarchive2.com/?u=f221f934e081bc32b8fcd79e2&id=3ae2d50217&e=b76194089c>

Report by ACELG

In Focus: Why Local Government Matters - report by ACELG

A new ACELG report about the value of local government to all Australians was launched at the Australian Local Government Association 2015 National General Assembly of Local Government. Why Local Government Matters is a major piece of social research on community attitudes to local government by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG), undertaken with substantial expertise from staff of the Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS:CLG). The research aims to better understand how and why the activities of local governments are valued by communities.

PSI

Yet another series of leaks confirm PSI's repeated concerns on the restriction of governments' right to regulate in the public interest as well as underlining the lack of transparency surrounding the Trade In Service Agreement (TISA) negotiations.

Yet another series of leaks confirm PSI's repeated concerns on the restriction of governments' right to regulate in the public interest as well as underlining the lack of transparency surrounding the Trade In Service Agreement (TISA) negotiations. The documents released by Wikileaks include the Core text and annexes relating to Transparency, Domestic Regulation, Mode4 and Government Procurement.

Prior to Public Services International (PSI) publishing the first available critique, TISA vs Public Services in March 2014 and the negotiations had been shrouded in secrecy. This latest leak only serves to highlight the increasingly ridiculous cat and mouse game that nations negotiating the TISA are playing.

It is becoming farcical that we see most of the texts because they are being leaked so often but we still don't know the full picture and therefore a public debate is occurring with only partial information.

Read online: <http://www.world-psi.org/en/new-tisa-leaks-confirm-psi-concerns-deregulation-and-secrecy>

Child Care Changes

Jenny Macklin MP Acting Shadow Minister For Early Childhood

Child Care Changes Leave One In Four Families Worse Off a new analysis has revealed that the Government's child care changes will leave one in four families in the child care system worse off by an average of \$1,880 per year. Independent modelling by NATSEM shows what the Government has been trying to keep a secret that the child care changes will hurt, not help 270,000 families. Some children will be pushed out of early education altogether, while others will have their access cut in half. Low and middle income families, single income families and parents trying to get back into the workforce will be hit the hardest by their child care restrictions. The NATSEM modelling also found that two-thirds of families that receive Family Tax Benefits and use child care will be worse off overall.