

Public Services Bulletin



A•S•U

• local government • energy-electricity • railways & public transport • water •
• state & federal government services •
26th February 2009

Award Modernisation – Electricity/energy industry award - Discussions underway on the award modernization process for the electricity industry, even though all of the industry is covered by collective bargaining either a Federal EBA or state award / agreements etc. The employers were well represented over 11 industry employers or their legal reps representatives at the Union & Employer meetings this past week. Further discussions are scheduled with between the unions and the also the unions and employers. it would appear we have been able to reach a first basis agreement that their will be one modern award covering the entire industry of generation, transmission, distribution and retail areas. Under the new industrial relations legislation Unions will be restricted to their rules coverage when entering the workplace for recruitment purposes.

Why is Australia the only developed nation in the world without a bill of rights? Many of those who argue against a bill of rights think we live in the best of all possible worlds, but Geoffrey Robertson QC believes we should think again. In this special Sydney Writers' Festival out of season event, he puts forward his case, illustrating his point with evidence from other countries of how a statute of liberty helps ordinary citizens and improves standards of governance and public services. He will discuss what he considers to be distortions and urban myths propagated by opponents of the bill, and outline why he believes the charter he has drafted reflects the history and real contemporary values of Australians. Wednesday 1 April 2009 - 6:30-7:45pm - City Recital Hall - Angel Place, Sydney - Cost: A Reserve: \$25 (full)/\$20 (concession), B Reserve: \$20 (full)/\$15 (concession). Purchase tickets from City Recital Hall box office on (02) 8256 2222 or at www.cityrecitalhall.com

20th February World Day of Social Justice [http://www.world-](http://www.world-psi.org/TemplateEn.cfm?Section=Home&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=22325)

[psi.org/TemplateEn.cfm?Section=Home&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=22325](http://www.world-psi.org/TemplateEn.cfm?Section=Home&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=22325)

At its sixty-second session, in November 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 20 February as World Day of Social Justice. The observance of the day should contribute to the further consolidation of the efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.

PSI Women, Water, Workers and Health Website <http://www.psiwater.org> PSI is marking International Women's Day (8 March), World Water Day (22 March) and World Health Day (7 April) with the theme Women, Water, Workers and Health. Women and trade unions call for quality public water and health services FOR ALL. PSI has used this opportunity to launch the new PSI Women, Water, Workers and Health Website. On this website you will find campaign information and materials that we hope will assist you in your campaigns for quality public water and health services. Please let PSI know about any campaign or activities your union is organising on these themes – **post cards and related aerals will be in their way to ASU branches soon.**

Police to replace transit officers on public transport <http://www.smh.com.au/national/police-to-replace-transit-officers-on-public-transport-20090220-8dor.html?page=-1> TRANSIT officers on Sydney's transport network are expected to be replaced with police officers, amid fears of a reduction in security patrols on trains and buses.

The slow train from China <http://www.smh.com.au/national/the-slow-train-from-china-20090220-8dov.html> THE NSW Government's record on public transport has taken another blow, with revelations that a private group's \$3.6 billion project to deliver Australia's largest rail contract is running late.

Centre for Excellence for Local Government Endowment ASU Advises Federal government on the ideals and operation on the move to establish Centre for Excellence for Local Government Endowment. The ASU has lodged a submission with the federal govt / department of infrastructure covering off on range of issues around the establishment of the for Excellence for Local Government Endowment -including the promotion of industry skills, portability of skills, and in general need for the centre to cover all areas of local govt, the respect for ILO charters and other positive labour initiatives A local government centre for excellence should seek to embrace a broad scope of areas in local government's operations, this should also include –

- Financial accountability and responsibility
- Openness, transparency and access to the community.
- Recognition of local government workers providing services to the community.
- Creation of local government employment and local community spend through local employment.
- Encourage the in house skills in both management and employees to retain work in house and or work with other councils and their staff to retain services and skills in house to inturn assist councils in keeping local employment, jobs in their community – as opposed to contracting out of services.
- Councils working to be a model employer, working with its employees and recognising their commitment to the community and the work they are undertaking.

Produced for ASU Branches with members in the public services: NSW US Branch / Victorian Authorities & Services Branch / Tasmanian Branch / NSW & ACT (Services) Branch / South Australia & NT Branch / Western Australian Branch / QLD Services Branch (QSU) / Central & Southern QLD C&A Branch / North QLD C&A Branch / Taxation Officers Branch

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- Methods and workplace relationship that discourage contacting out and keeping skills and jobs in local communities, via local government direct employment

A copy of the submission and enquires to ASU assistant national secretary Greg McLean gmclean@syd.asu.asn.au

Public Services Division Consultative Meetings 2009- Update

As part of the consultative program around quality public services, climate change and the ABCC legislation, a round of technical meetings have commenced with ALP Ministerial Advisors, as well as incidental meetings with Ministers and MP's , for 2009. The consultation is in line with the ASU public services divisions' workplans as well as the broad strategic plan for the Public Services Division as a whole. Meetings held recently include -

- Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett –
- Parliamentary Secretary - Child Care, Maxine McKew –
- Minister for Energy Adviser –
- Local Government –
- Kelvin Thompson – MP
- Hon Robert McClelland Attorney General of Australia

Details on the meetings and issues' discussed are available from your state branch reps

UNESCO Director-General calls for increased investment in global public goods at World Economic Forum in Davos - With discussions focused on the theme of "shaping the post-crisis world", the Director-General underscored the need for greater investment in global public goods such as education and water, arguing that this was "not only a question of social justice and of protecting the poorest from the effects of the downturn, but also of laying the foundations for a more inclusive and sustainable economic recovery". – http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=44484&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

ASU addresses local government managers and senior officer seminar on the need to work with all local govt employees to secure the industry's future skills .ASU assistant national secretary greg mclean , the CEO of government Bernard Meatheringham and the Federal Minister for work force participation Brendan Oconnor addressed the forum of local government leaders. The forum aimed at identifying the training, up skilling workplace retention, as well as what steps are necessary to meet the industry skills shortages of local govt. The ASU also advised the forum that it was important to develop the additional skills as well as recognition for local govt workers at all levels, keep staff turn over low, promote career advancement, and increase employment numbers. Greg Mclean quoted a number of examples in a range of public services including water, electricity and local govt - the forum also heard of the work the ASU was undertaking in the industry through the Local Government Industry Skills Council advisory committee including the role that ASU local government branch representatives across the country, as well as the peak industry groups.

Trains cost 50% more than in rest of Europe Rail fares in Britain are on average 50 per cent higher than the rest of Europe, a study has shown, putting pressure on rail operators and the government to cut ticket prices. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ced22280-fe24-11dd-932e-000077b07658.html>

Unions NSW leads call for changes to Fair Work Bill (FED) Unions NSW led a call for changes to the Fair Work Bill at the Senate Hearing in Sydney. Unions NSW Secretary Mark Lennon has welcomed the introduction of the Fair Work Bill but will propose an amendment to allow parties to opt into the state system by agreement. Many unions and employers in recent times have continued to use state jurisdiction by agreement, and Unions NSW is calling for this to continue. Mr Lennon said that without amendments, the proposed laws would disadvantage many NSW workers, particularly those in low paid employment.

The NSW State Government is considering selling off prisons in Cessnock and Parklea and court transport services to international corporations.

There are also no guarantees that Justice Health Services will continue to provide health services inside a private prison either. The Prison Officers Vocational Branch of the Public Service Association (PSA) is requesting support for their campaign – please see below:

- Will you join us in telling the NSW State Government that prisons are not for sale? You can sign our Not For Sale petition here www.stopthecelloff.org.au
- Selling our prisons to corporations will guarantee job losses, lack of scrutiny and transparency and increased risks for the prisoners and the surrounding communities.
- Privatised prisons overseas have seen increased numbers of escapes, more assaults on prisoners and guards and higher reoffending rates.
- We need to ask the question - who will this benefit from the sell off? Private prisons are run purely for profit which means higher inmate numbers and cost cutting measures provide bigger profits and better results on the stockmarket.
- Is this how we want to run our justice system? NSW prison officers oppose these plans because we do not believe corporations should be trusted with a fundamental part of the justice system.
- We have a small but critical window of opportunity while the government is deciding. They need to hear that our jails are not for sale – loud and clear.
- You can sign the Not for Sale petition here www.stopthecelloff.org.au
- If you have already signed up, why not tell some of your mates about it. You can use the form here <http://www.stopthecelloff.org.au/refertofriend2.php> **Brett Holmes – General Secretary, NSWNA**

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Class begins for Government's early years workforce plan -Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Child Care, Maxine McKew, today met with the first generation of children's services TAFE students to have their diploma course fees waived by the Australian Government. The Government is investing \$60.3 million so that, for the first time this year, people who want to enrol in diplomas or advanced diplomas of children's services at TAFE institutes will no longer have to pay the regulated course fees. Over four years, the states and territories will offer these fee free courses to an estimated 8,000 TAFE students. "This is part of the Rudd Government's commitment to invest \$126.6 million over the next four years to train and retain the early childhood workforce" Ms McKew said after meeting some of the children's services students at Meadowbank TAFE in Sydney. http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/McKew/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_090216_132710.aspx

Address to Australia Business Economists Lunch, Sydney In a speech entitled 'Australia's low pollution future: economic reform to tackle climate change', the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, discussed tackling climate change and the global financial crisis, alternative policy responses, initiatives without economic reform, the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, modelling, developing Australia's carbon market - creating opportunities for businesses, complementary measure - fast tracking the low pollution future, and the international climate change agenda in 2009.

Minister for Youth, Kate Ellis, opens youTHINK, an event of the Federal Government's Australian Youth Forum -
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Transcripts/Pages/Article_090224_093234.aspx

Councils need funding to help revive childcare industry (NSW)- Local Government is willing to help revive the childcare services sector but can only do so with the support of the federal government, says the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW. President of the Local Government Association, Cr Genia McCaffery, says in order to secure the future of the childcare industry, current legislative, policy, administrative and funding arrangements need to be reconsidered. Relying solely on the private sector to produce adequate childcare facilities is risky, as demonstrated by the recent collapse of ABC Learning Centres.