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PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

A PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY & PUBLIC SECTOR UNION
SPSF GROUP - VICTORIAN BRANCH - **WWW.CPSUVIC.ORG**

COMPANY TAX CUTS WOULD SLASH REVENUE

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CASH CRASH ON FAMILY VIOLENCE LEAVE

The Governments 'controversial' domestic violence ad

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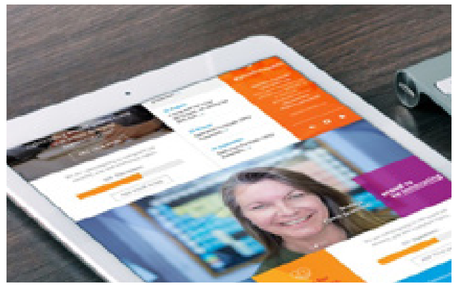

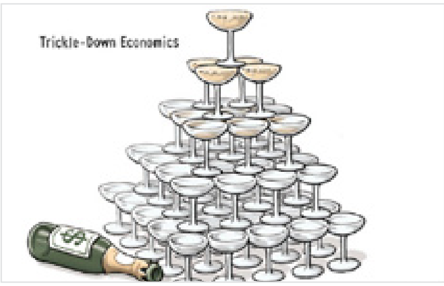

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SERVICES, JOBS AND RIGHTS

›› CPSU MEMBERS ARE CAMPAIGNING TO SAFEGUARD THEIR JOB SECURITY, PAY AND WORKPLACE RIGHTS FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S HARSH BARGAINING AGENDA.

Nearly half of all APS workers have been asked to vote on proposed enterprise agreements.

Among the ballots, there was a 91% NO vote from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, including the new Border Force, and an 83% NO vote from the Department of Human Services.

After two years of workplace strife, only about 20% of the 150,000 Commonwealth public servants have signed up to deals offered under the policy, mostly at small agencies and departments.

The Attorney-General's public servants returned a 61% no vote recently in the wake of giant ballots at the Australian Taxation Office with a 71% no-vote and the Defence Department where workers by a margin of nearly 55% to 45% also rejected the deals on offer.

The Department of Agriculture has voted three times to reject proposed enterprise agreements.

The Australian Electoral Commission dumped plans for a ballot of its public servants on a controversial workplace deal after being advised not to do anything "politically contentious" during the caretaker period leading up to the federal election on July 2nd.

CASH CRASH ON FAMILY VIOLENCE LEAVE

» DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE WILL STOP EMPLOYERS HIRING WOMEN ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN.

Our Federal CPSU members have been locked in a bitter dispute since March over the leave issue.

Commonwealth public service departments are following instructions from the Government, sometimes against their will, to reject our members' proposals for specified paid domestic violence leave in enterprise agreements.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet was forced to remove an explicit reference to domestic violence from its proposed enterprise agreement while Senator Cash rejected a recent plea from the Human Rights Commission to reconsider her stance.

The federal government has argued that existing leave provisions are enough to cover public servants if they need time off work after being victims of family violence.

Senator Cash told an election campaign event in Victoria last month that the entitlement might act as a "perverse disincentive" to employers considering hiring women.

"I think you have to be very careful as a policymaker in saying to businesses, an employee can now take an additional four weeks leave that you pay for," Senator Cash said.

"Do you put in a perverse disincentive that 'I just won't employ women'?"

ACTU President Ged Kearney said the Minister is out of touch with the growing acceptance of the merit of domestic violence leave in the business community.

Senator Cash's comments undermined the multi-million dollar violence against women T.V. advertising campaign by the Government and drew widespread criticism.

Unfortunately she has echoed reactionary concerns about maternity leave and advancements for women in the workplace stretching back to the start of modern industry.

They are simply not reflective of modern Australia.

The introduction of paid domestic violence leave and workplace measures supporting employees suffering through family violence allows victims to stay at work and serves to widen understanding and sensitivity to this complex issue.

One quarter of employers had received requests for alternate work arrangements, such as differing starting times, alternate car parking and change in phone numbers to improve the safety of employees who were victims of family violence.

Employers reported highly positive outcomes with raised workplace morale and employees feeling safe, supported and free from fear of losing their jobs.

The typical amount of leave taken was two to three days.

The ACTU has claimed in the Fair Work Commission 10 days paid domestic violence leave for workers to attend court appearances, medical and legal appointments and make safety and re-location arrangements.

The ACTU claim seeks to extend the right to domestic violence leave to all workers and is backed by 2015 Australian of the Year Rosie Batty.

Labor says it will make domestic and family violence leave a universal workplace right, by providing for five days paid domestic and family violence leave in the National Employment Standards.

BARGAINING WITH THE BOSS

WHO FORMS GOVERNMENT IS MORE CRUCIAL FOR OUR UNION MEMBERS THAN FOR MOST EMPLOYEES.

OUR VICTORIAN STATE PUBLIC SERVICE MEMBERS KNOW THAT ALL TOO WELL AND CAMPAIGNED IN 2014 TO CHOOSE THEIR EMPLOYER.

Three years of job cuts, a pay freeze, a staffing freeze and a relentless bargaining attack have not dampened the energies of our federal CPSU cousins though, who are more determined than ever to do what they can to secure a change of Employer.

Under the Government our CPSU federal members have suffered:

- A two year attack on rights, conditions and real wages in bargaining that has left a massive mess
- 18,000 job cuts with the Coalition cutting much deeper than the previous Labor Government and 3000-4500 more jobs to go as a result of the recent Budget
- Further attacks on jobs and services through privatisation, contestability and a raft of changes
- Relentless attacks on crucial public services including CSIRO, ABC, Medicare, DHS and the ATO.

The Federal government's public service bargaining framework has been forcing agencies to strip entitlements like domestic and family violence out of agreements and place them into policy which can be changed unilaterally on a whim.

The Federal Government should establish a series of binding Government as a Model Employer Principles.

CLIMATE OF TRUTH FOR PM

INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE IS MOUNTING ON THE PRIME MINISTER TO INTERVENE TO PREVENT FURTHER DAMAGE TO AUSTRALIA'S GLOBAL REPUTATION CAUSED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CLIMATE SCIENCE CUTS.

Plans to cut 350 more science jobs at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) will slash Australia's capacity to predict and adapt to climate change.

The criticism comes following an announcement of further job cuts over the next two years, primarily in the CSIRO's Oceans and Atmosphere and Land and Water divisions.

Federal Government cuts to the CSIRO have already done untold damage.


Cuts could close Dish

Over a two year period, CSIRO has shed more than 1,300 positions equating to the loss of one in five jobs after a record $115 million budget cut to the nation's premier research organisation in 2014.

The Federal government last budget has been criticised both for the lack of focus on science and innovation and the failure to repair funding to the CSIRO with critical research already halted into Alzheimer's disease and dementia, bowl cancer, geothermal energy and liquid fuels.

This latest body blow to climate science shows the Government have their priorities fundamentally wrong.

WHO'S NOT PAYING?

›› A NEW REPORT* HIGHLIGHTS THE DEGREE OF WRONGDOING AMONG CORPORATIONS AND IT'S BECOMING INCREASINGLY PREVALENT AS AGENCIES THAT MONITOR CORPORATE MALFEASANCE SEE THEIR STAFFING SAVAGELY CUT BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

The research, commissioned by the ACTU, reviews figures from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), Australian Tax Office (ATO), Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO), Fair Work Commission (FWC) and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Perhaps the most worrying revelation is the reduced number of regulators with the authority and resources to pursue and investigate corporate criminals.

The six major regulatory bodies and other agencies have seen 3,926 staff cut (or 14.9%) between the 2013-14 and 2015-16 budgets.

The report strongly recommends that the current government reinstates staffing budgets and resources for relevant agencies such as the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission to help fight the problem.

* http://www.tai.org.au/content/corporate-malfeasance-australia

MEDICARE PRIVACY THREAT

›› UNIONS, HEALTH, PRIVACY AND TECHNOLOGY EXPERTS HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERNS ABOUT THE SECURITY OF OUR HEALTH DATA AFTER TELSTRA WAS AWARDED THE CONTRACT TO MANAGE A NEW NATIONAL CANCER SCREENING REGISTER FROM NEXT YEAR.

The register will contain information such as pap smear and bowel screening results.

The profit-making venture, worth $220 million over the five year contract, will be run by a division of the telco, Telstra Health, replacing public sector and other not-for-profit registers currently operating in Australia.
The privacy of every Australian's medical records could be at stake.

The Federal government has already cut billions from Medicare but also wants to now privatise Medicare payments putting thousands of jobs at risk.

Medicare absolutely needs to stay in public hands. Privatising Medicare would mean handing control of a system that we all rely on to a private company that would not be answerable to the Australian public.

Australians are right to be suspicious of privatising Medicare and other Government payments, when privatisation always seems to result in increased costs for worse services. Australians should be able to access healthcare when and where they need it.

Telstra has been struggling recently to even run a functioning mobile phone network, a direct result of management's decision to put profit before services by sending tens of thousands of Australian jobs offshore. Telstra's poor track record on protecting the private customer information it now holds would make it even harder to trust with highly sensitive health records.

The Federal government wants to impose a United States-style health system that will cost more and deliver less while Australians want a healthcare system based on need, not their bank balance or credit card limit.

WHAT'S TRICKLING WHERE?

›› PLANNED COMPANY TAX CUTS WOULD SLASH AUSTRALIAN REVENUE WHILE DELIVERING A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR TAX WINDFALL TO THE US TREASURY BY TRANSFERRING MORE THAN $11 BILLION IN REVENUE FROM AUSTRALIAN TO US COFFERS, NEW RESEARCH SHOWS.

Treasury conducted modelling of the tax cuts and commissioned more from Chris Murphy's Independent Economics and both make clear that big cuts to the corporate tax rate will not be funded by "jobs and growth" but by "bracket creep and spending cuts".

The Federal government announced in its May budget that it would cut the corporate tax rate from 30 cents in the dollar to 25 cents for all companies by 2026-27, and under pressure conceded some days later that this move would cost the budget an estimated $48.2 billion in revenue over the decade.

US companies currently pay a 35 cent company tax rate and are by far the biggest source of direct foreign investment in Australia but would have to make up the difference at home under a tax treaty.

Further cuts to spending or increased taxes would also be needed after the election to avoid the company tax cuts sending the budget backwards, according to the Federal government's own independent advice.

The tax cut will deprive the budget of more than $8 billion a year in revenue but recovers only a fraction of that through the extra growth predicted in jobs and wages.

The modelling also reveals that nearly all of revenue to be recovered through greater economic activity is if companies voluntarily decide to do the right thing.

This would require a dramatic improvement in the level of corporate tax compliance.

Key modelling behind the proposal states that fewer companies will attempt to hide profits or send them abroad because of the lower company tax.

The Australia Institute said the modellings assumption that companies will voluntarily engage in far less profit shifting is bizarre.

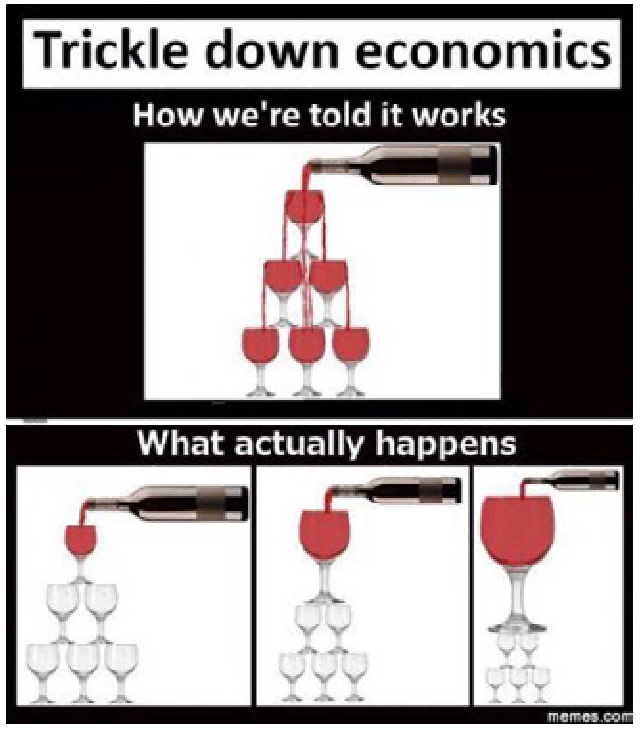
The major source therefore of 'self-funding' for the corporate tax cuts according to the Federal Government's advice isn't increased wages or employment.

Goldman Sachs found that if companies distributed the value of the tax cut as profits or dividends to investors then 60% of the benefit would flow to offshore investors, 10% to domestic investors and around 30% to the Australian economy.

International and Australian data on tax rates and macroeconomic indicators provides no support to corporate Australia's 'instinctive' claims that lower company tax rates bring wider economic benefits.

Neither the Prime Minister nor the Treasurer has stated definitively where the money to pay for the company tax cuts would come from.

By cuts to public services obviously.



POOREST BEAR BRUNT AS PS PENSIONS SMASHED

›› THE POOREST PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONERS ARE BEARING THE BRUNT OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S $465 MILLION CUTS TO THEIR INCOME PAYMENTS, NEW OFFICIAL FIGURES REVEAL.

Former state and federal public servants as well as retired teachers, police officers, firefighters and nurses saw Centrelink payments reduced under new rules, known as the '10 per cent cap' which came into force on January 1.

Official figures from the Department of Social Services show that by January 1, nearly 48,000 people had their income support reduced and nearly 1600 people were cut off outright.

The Federal Government justified its changes to the rules around public sector pensions and Centrelink payments, saying former public servants were earning $120,000 from their employer super schemes and still claiming the age pension.

But an analysis of the department's data shows most of the claimed savings, about $277 million, will come out of the pockets of those of the lowest income.

Retirees groups say the cuts have left many below the poverty line and advocates say it is unfair to "move the goalposts" after people have already retired and have little or no ability to change their circumstances.

The situation for state retirees from the former government scheme is exacerbated by a decision of the Kennett Government in late 1993, early 1994 to reduce its Employer notional Super contributions to the inferior minimum Super Guarantee rate set by the Commonwealth.

Contributors to the existing Super Pension scheme at the time were given the option of either paying extra or "freeze" their current entitlement and "start again" with the Government paying just the minimum Employer Super Guarantee rate into a new VicSuper accumulation fund (or into another fund of the employee's choice).

The ASFA calculates that the five new superannuation tax breaks either abolished or curbed in the recent federal budget will affect up to 1.26 million people.

Labor has said that part pensioners had been unfairly treated by the Federal government and that, if elected, Labor would review pension rules.