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CPSU

PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

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

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THEREALCOST.ORG.AU

PUBLIC
PERSPECTIVE

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> “This is an extraordinary opportunity for young people to have a successful career in the public service’ Wade Noonan Minister for Industry and Employment.
>
> We welcome youth cadets to our fantastic program. Full time work, salaries, super, and real qualifications, not $4 per hour.”
>
> **- Karen Batt**

Fiona Plum moved from Benalla
Photo: Ganesh Malla

CADETSHIPS KICK-OFF

OUR YOUTH CADETSHIP SCHEME (YCS) IS NOW UP AND RUNNING, FOLLOWING ITS LAUNCH IN DECEMBER.

The process till now has been recruiting cadets from a pool of young people who have completed the YES Traineeship.

As part of the initial intake 21 Cadets will be employed directly by a department or agency at a VPS Grade 1 level.

The cadetship runs for two years and cadets will undertake a nationally-recognised qualification, a Certificate IV in Government, through Box Hill Institute.

The program is a joint initiative between CPSU and Jobs Victoria (DEDJTR).

Over three years the program will give 155 disadvantaged young people the opportunity to develop a meaningful career in the public service.

Fiona Plum, 23 is a current cadet within DEDJTR and former YES Trainee. Fiona made the move from rural Victoria in Benalla to Melbourne after she had difficulty finding a suitable job.

“I always had an idea of what I wanted to do which was admin but there were no opportunities in Benalla. Living in a country town you have to know someone in that job or you have to have experience or have gone to uni. There was nothing where you could get a job and learn at the same time.”

Fiona says the cadetship means she can continue working in her department, and continue gaining key skills rather than looking for other work. She hopes to have a career in project or business management.

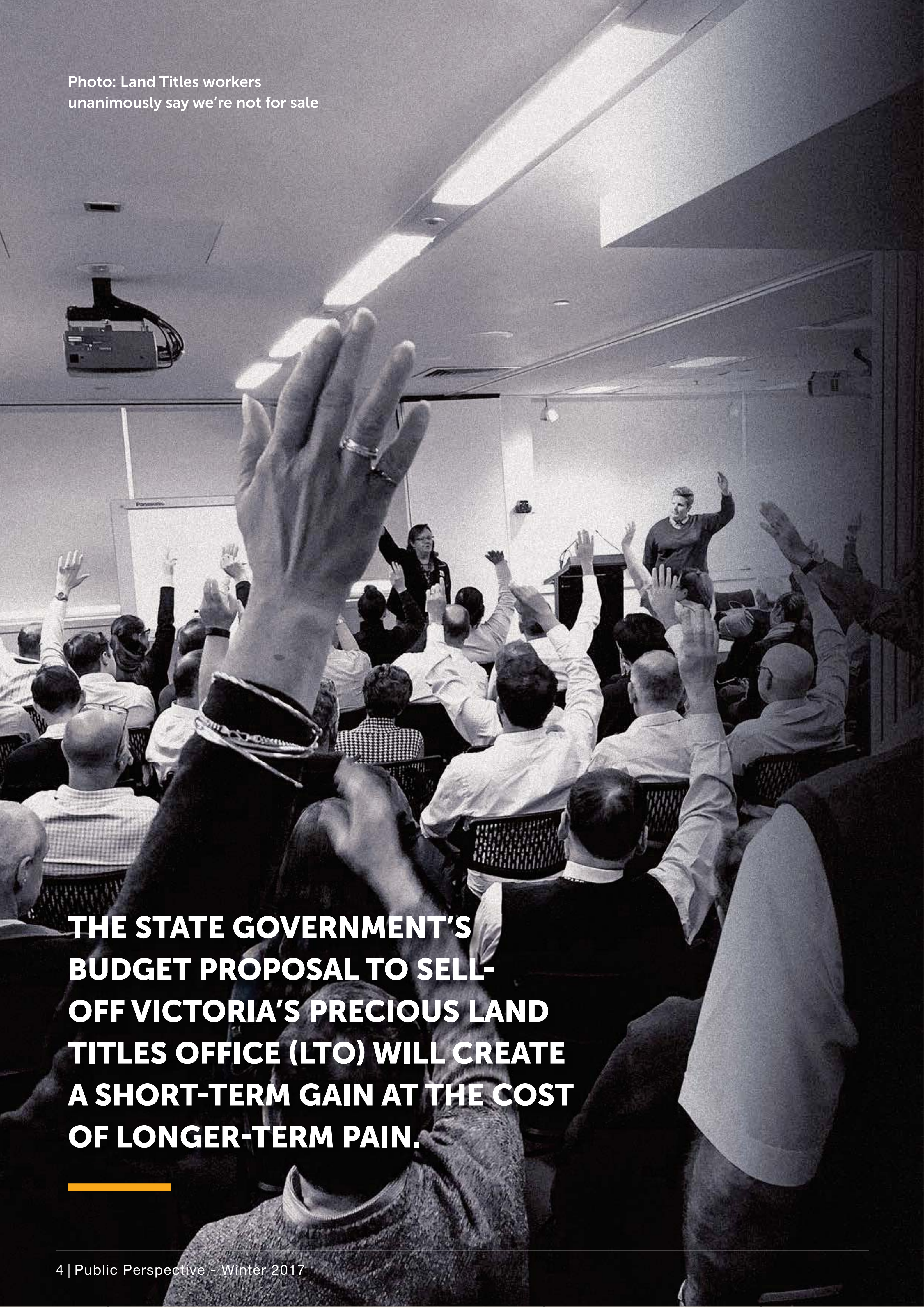


Photo: Land Titles workers unanimously say we're not for sale

THE STATE GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET PROPOSAL TO SELL-OFF VICTORIA'S PRECIOUS LAND TITLES OFFICE (LTO) WILL CREATE A SHORT-TERM GAIN AT THE COST OF LONGER-TERM PAIN.

THE REAL COST

OF SELLING THE LAND TITLES OFFICE

IN JUNE, WITH SUPPORT FROM MEMBERS, CPSU LAUNCHED 'THE REAL COST' CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT THE UNIQUE AND VALUABLE TITLE SYSTEM AND ITS DEDICATED WORKERS.

In the coming weeks and months the union will be calling on you to support this campaign and share it far and wide to ensure the titles office stays in public hands.

For 155 years, our LTO has tirelessly scrutinised every survey, mortgage and transaction on Victoria's four million-odd properties, perfecting this priceless public asset.

They even provide a free guarantee against fraud or error to every title-holder.

Last year our LTO brought in approximately $300 million in revenue.

If the titles office is sold that funding will line the pockets of private providers, not hard working Victorians.

This sale would provide a one-off sugar hit for the government that will see millions of public funds stripped from future budgets.

The annual revenue from Land Titles helps fund other public services like schools, hospitals and roads.

It's nonsensical to remove that constant and valuable source of public revenue.

Removing the titles office from public hands is a tragedy.

Through our campaign CPSU members are challenging all Labor MPs to stand up for public services and reject Treasury's push to privatise a valuable state asset.

This is a straightforward test to establish whether they're Labor or neo-Liberals.

There is a far greater cost of selling the titles office and that is the cost to everyday Victorians.

It will mean increased conveyancing and insurance costs, and a possible loss of the title guarantee.

Victorians don't want a situation like what occurred in NSW recently where 200 families unknowingly purchased property in the path of a future freeway.

The selloff hammers Labor's push to improve housing affordability.

When fees are increased under a private provider, you can bet that developers will pass that cost onto home buyers, making it even more difficult for people, especially first homeowners, to enter the property market.

We all know that privatisation in general doesn't work, just look at the price of electricity, which increased again on 1 July, with profits going overseas to international owners.

CPSU is urging members and the wider Victorian community to visit our website **therealcost.org.au** and let MPs know that this sale isn't on.

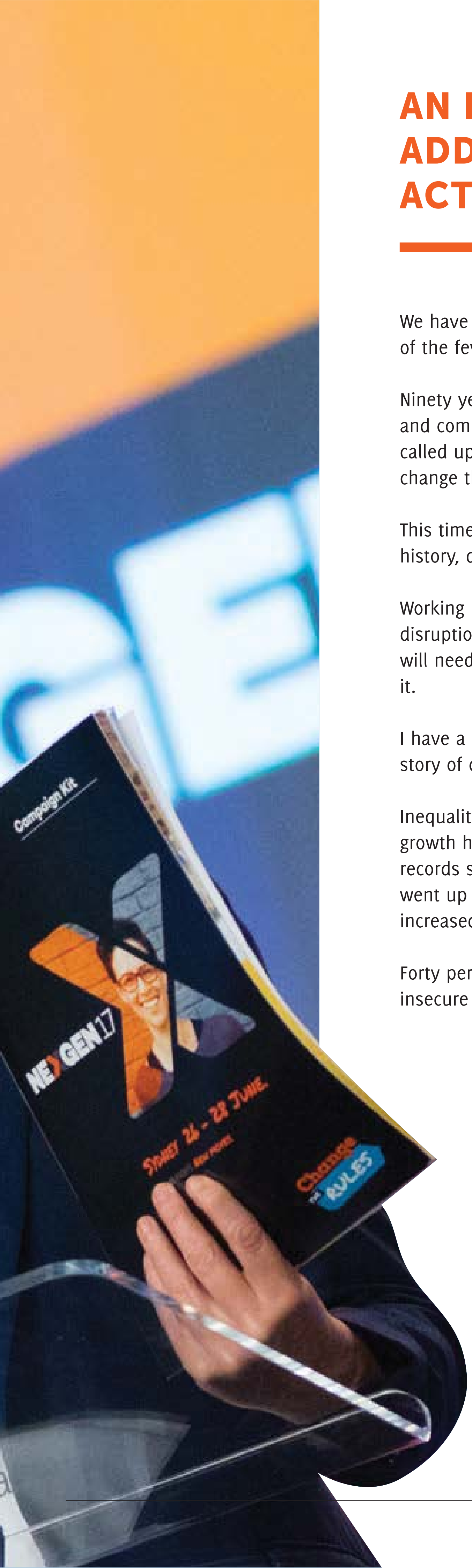
Because once it's gone, it's gone for good.

KAREN BATT

Change THE RULES

'they only call it class war when we fight back'

CPSU officials and organisers at NexGen17



AN EXCERPT OF OPENING ADDRESS BY SALLY MCMANUS TO ACTU NEXGEN17 SYDNEY JUNE

We have been saying no to the greed of the few for a long time.

Ninety years ago we were doing this and comrades once again we are called upon to be the disruptors, to change the rules.

This time in history, our time in history, demands this of us.

Working people need some disruption of the status quo and we will need to be the ones who bring it.

I have a story to tell you. It is the story of corporate greed today.

Inequality is at a 70 year high. Wage growth hasn't been this low since records started being kept. Profits went up 40 per cent while wages increased less than 2 per cent.

Forty per cent of the workforce is in insecure work.

A generation of people do not know what it is like to have a paid sick day or holiday.

Our minimum wage does not keep people out of poverty.

> Wage theft is a business model where employers ignore our minimum wages from celebrity chefs to multinational pizza chains.

Employers have been bending and breaking the protections working people have built.

678 corporations paid no tax.

48 millionaires paid no tax, not even the Medicare levy.

Wealth and power has become so unbalanced. One group of people now have too much power.

The rules that were meant to protect our rights are now not strong enough. They need to be rewritten.

We need to change the rules to make them pay their fair share of tax.

We need to change the rules so working people have more power.

Surely the answer to the greed of the few is more power for the many.

We need better and stronger rights at work.

JULY PAY RISE

Many of our Agreements include further pay increases from 1st July 2017 which should flow into member pay pockets this month.

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE CUTS SCRAPPED

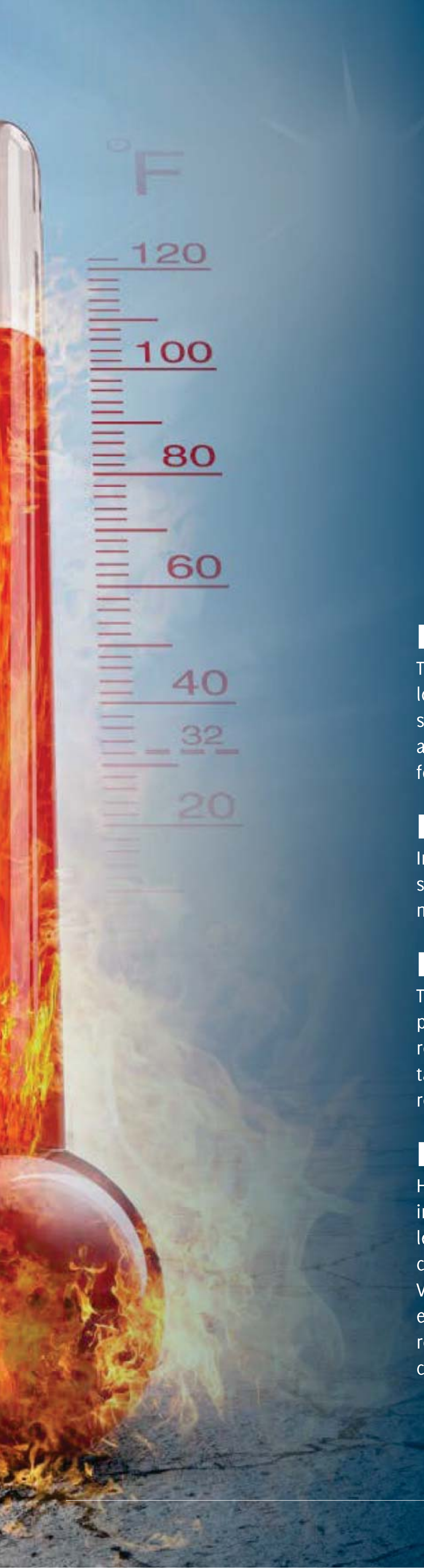
The Turnbull Government's decision NOT to go ahead with the callous cuts to paid parental leave flew relatively under the radar in the media following the budget announcement back in May, but was nonetheless an important achievement. CPSU campaigned against the decision of the government to introduce an 18-week cap of paid time at home. The federal government's proposal would have meant that parents who receive employer paid leave, like Victorian public sector workers, would be stripped of time at home with their newborns.

WAGE RISES

Public sector wages increased on average by 3.2 per cent in the last year and the minimum wage was increased by 3.3% per annum while most CPSU negotiated Agreements increased wages by 3.27 per cent per annum.

G&C MUTUAL BANK EXCLUSIVE MEMBER OFFER

Save on Your Home Loan with our Member Only Offer. CPSU is pleased to announce a brand new, member-only home loan package from G&C Mutual Bank: 3.89% interest rate (for owner-occupiers); and $375 annual fee waived for the first 12 months.
Contact pmeilak@gcmutualbank.com.au for details on this exclusive offer for our members.



PRIVATISATION OF LAND TITLES

The State Government announced in the budget that it would look at selling Victoria's state-of-the-art Land Titles Office. The sale will see $300 million removed annually from public revenue, and will remove the integrity of the office that services Victoria's four million properties. More P4.

HOT DESKING

Increased hot-desking arrangements within the Victorian public service have been met with a strident push back by CPSU members about overcrowding and individual workstations.

PENALTY RATE CUTS

The Fair Work Commission announced cuts to weekend and public holiday penalty rates for workers in hospitality, fast food, retail and pharmacy will be phased in from 1st July. The cuts to take home pay will impact 700,000 workers and will hit women reliant on weekend work the hardest.

DELWP SPILL

Hundreds of jobs within the Forests, Fire, and Regions Group inside DELWP are thrown in the air again for another consultant led re-organisation barely fourteen months after the group was created leaving over three hundred positions, mostly in regional Victoria, unmatched causing maximum angst for long standing employees at this critical time. DELWP says there'll be more roles but refuse to neither rule out forced redundancies nor commit to 'no existing worker will be worse off.'

By Josh Bornstein - Partner at Maurice Blackburn

WHAT'S STIFLING WAGE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

When Reserve Bank governor Philip Lowe recently declared a "wages crisis" following a prolonged period of low wages growth, it appears that this is one crisis that renders our federal government mute.

There is no plan, no working group, or commissioning of a white paper from the Productivity Commission.

Instead, the federal government has announced a plan to pay up to 10,000 "interns" to work in the retail industry for as little as $4 an hour. This plan will only exacerbate the wages crisis.

Lowe's suggested remedy – *'that employees need to speak up more to request higher pay'* – is strikingly naive, inviting the obvious question. What if the boss says "no"?

The collapse in bargaining power for workers is reflected in the plight of Australian trade unions, which are languishing at their weakest point in their history.

Australian trade unions are fighting for their survival.

That wage growth and employee share of GDP has hit record lows is no coincidence. The decline in union density in Australia has been far more pronounced than in any other OECD country.

Why has this happened?

The same global economic forces that have challenged unionism the world over are to be found here.

The loss of blue collar jobs in highly unionised industries like manufacturing. The increase in precarious, insecure work. The piecework economy. The relentless conservative campaigns to strip unions of their legitimacy.

The explanation for the severity of the collapse of unionisation is far more prosaic.

It's our laws. Unions have been seriously weakened by 30 years of constant political and legislative attacks.

For decades, business lobby groups have permanently and successfully campaigned for legislative change that weakens unions.

In this era, workplace laws have been changed in two key ways.

First, the laws have been deregulated to encourage employers to cut wages and de-unionise their workplaces.

At the same time, unions have been subjected to complex regulation that restricts their ability to access workplaces, recruit members and to bargain for better wages and conditions.

The laws have allowed employers unprecedented ability to cut labour costs, outmanoeuvre employees and their unions while at the same time inveigling unions into a kind of regulatory quicksand.

Bosses aren't handing over money to their employees and without unions workers have less power to demand it.

Under the current system, employers can choose from a menu of wage cutting and de-unionisation options.

Many large businesses have chosen to disengage from directly employing staff and instead source labour through an array of intermediaries and other structures including labour supply companies, sham contracting, franchises and supply chains.

In doing so, they have cut their labour costs, fragmented the workforce, impeded collective bargaining and de-unionised the workforce.

...Continued on page 15

EMERGENCY VEHICLE SAFETY CHANGES

INCIDENTS ON OUR ROADS PLACE FIRST RESPONDERS AND OTHERS INVOLVED AT A HIGH RISK OF BEING STRUCK BY PASSING VEHICLES OR DEBRIS.

A new road rule has been introduced to improve safety for our emergency and enforcement workers including DELWP and Parks forest fire management vehicles as well as SES vehicles.

Motorists cannot exceed 40km/h when passing the vehicle and can't increase speed until a safe distance from the scene.

The new rule applies to all roads, including freeways and covers.

- Police vehicles
- Ambulance Victoria vehicles
- Metropolitan Fire Brigade vehicles
- Country Fire Authority vehicles
- Forest Fire Management Victoria vehicles
- State Emergency Service vehicles
- VicRoads Transport Safety Service vehicles (magenta, purple flashing lights)
- Enforcement vehicles (magenta, purple flashing lights) under the control of a state transport body including Fisheries and Taxi enforcement vehicles
- Other emergency patient transport vehicles with red and blue flashing lights

The new speed limit rule means that motorists must slow down to a speed that would enable them to stop safely if necessary when approaching and passing enforcement, emergency or escort vehicles that are stationary or moving less than 10km per hour and have flashing lights activated or an alarm sounding.

It doesn't apply to vehicles on the other side of a divided carriageway from an emergency or enforcement vehicle scene.

PRIVATISATION MYTHS

CHEAPER

Privateers claim that privatisation will not result in price rises for the public, and will actually be cheaper because competition will drive down prices. One look at our electricity bills tells us that privatisation does nothing to make essential services more affordable. The privatisation of monopolies can also lead to price gouging of the public. There are fears that the privatisation of the land titles registry will lead to similar price rises for homebuyers. Since the land titles registry in Canada was privatised, there has been a dramatic increase in the cost of title surveys and the added cost of homebuyers needing to take out title insurance.

NOT-FOR-PROFITS (NFPS) RUN SERVICES BETTER

The public is sceptical about for-profit companies running public services, so handing over services to NFPs is increasingly attractive for governments. The NFP sector has a vital role to play in our society, but politicians are using NFPs as tools for privatisation. The privatisation agenda is also negatively impacting on these NFPs themselves, forcing them to corporatise and prioritise winning government contracts in order to survive, which distracts from their core mission. The tender process favours larger organisations at the expense of smaller NFPs, as government contracts are often too big for smaller organisations to bid on or deliver turning some NFP's just into a mini version of a Government Department.

GOVERNMENTS CAN FINANCE SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The term 'asset recycling' is often used by politicians as a way of creating an artificial link between the privatisation of assets and the funding of new infrastructure. Promising to build new roads or stadiums if a state owned asset is 'recycled' is about making privatisation more palatable to voters – and making it harder for people to say 'no' to privatisation. For revenue-generating services such as land titles registries, it makes no economic sense to sell these in order to fund other infrastructure that will not generate revenue for government.

DEBT

Privatisation is also seen as an easy fix for governments to avoid increasing borrowings or debt, which is seen often as too politically risky despite low state debt and low interest rates. It’s ironic that a government is prepared to sell off a public asset to a corporation that borrows the capital to purchase the public asset when the government can borrow capital to fund infrastructure at lower interest rates than the private corporation.

WHAT’S STIFLING WAGE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

The result: a two-tiered labour market with secure and insecure dimensions, a litany of extraordinary wage fraud scandals and billions in unpaid superannuation each year.

By dint of Australia's uniquely anti-union laws, trade unions are forced to give away their key service for free.

Union officials spend each day trying to improve workplace conditions.

The result of their labour is found in awards and collective agreements which set the terms and conditions of employment for up to 60 per cent of the workforce.

This means that almost half the workforce are free-riding on the employees who pay union dues.

Under the Fair Work Act, union-negotiated wages and conditions must also be provided to employees who don't join a union.

For the free riders, there is no incentive to join.

What would happen to a business forced to give away its key product to a majority of consumers for free?
It would fold.

Unions in the private sector, in particular, are slowly but surely folding.

If the suppression of wage growth is to be overcome, our laws need to radically change.

A fair system will return only when the loopholes that allow employers to avoid collective bargaining and union-won conditions are closed.

Union member only awards and agreements would provide an incentive for other employees to join.

An alternative option is for a bargaining fee.

A third possibility is to resource unions to police labour standards and to take enforcement action to recover unpaid wages and superannuation.

Josh Bornstein is a Partner at Maurice Blackburn

This article is an edited version of the full opinion piece http://www.smh.com.au/comment/tough-rules-on-unions-have-stifled-australian-wages-20170704-gx44rg.html

ONCE IT'S GONE

IT'S GONE FOR GOOD

Imagine a world where your home could be sold without your knowledge.
Or your newly purchased apartment turns out to have a freeway starting construction next to it.
Or where you suddenly need to take out costly title insurance to protect your home from fraud.

These are some of the predicted outcomes from the proposed sale of the Victorian Land Titles Office.
For 155 years the titles office has tirelessly scrutinised every survey, mortgage, and transaction on Victoria's four million-odd properties, perfecting this priceless public asset.
They even provide a free guarantee against fraud or error to every title-holder.

This is the real cost of selling the Land Titles Office.
If you'd like to keep it in public hands, take action at

therealcost.org.au

THE REAL COST
OF SELLING THE LAND TITLES OFFICE