



PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

A Publication of the Community & Public Sector Union / Victorian Branch

www.cpsuvic.org

Our Year Ahead . . .

Last year CPSU members joined with thousands of Australians to try and stop the Coalition from ramming its radical industrial relations plan through Parliament.

Your hard work turned the tide of the nation's opinion. The November 15 rallies were an unprecedented show of community strength. But the Howard Government ignored the overwhelming public opposition to WorkChoices.

Our campaign does not end with the passage of these unfair laws.

Unions have major state and national events planned for 2006. Thanks to generous donations from workers, our advertising campaign will continue to reach out to the community. Local Rights at Work groups have been forming all over Australia. Some already have more than 300 volunteers. More than 100,000 people have joined the Rights at Work website www.rightsatwork.com.au

As we approach the next federal election, we will take this fight to the very doorstep of the Liberal and National politicians who lumped us with these unfair laws. We will target them in their electorates. We will put their jobs at risk.

Together, we will create a vision for an alternative industrial relations system. The Labor Party has promised to tear up these unfair laws. We must maintain our pressure on them to make sure they do so.

You can help by keeping your eyes peeled.



CPSU Victorian State President Kelvin Goodall (left) and Secretary Karen Batt (right) welcome ACTU Secretary Greg Combet at the CPSU Federal Executive meeting on 7 December 2005

People will be hurt by these laws. Look out for one another. If you're not yet in a union, join – and ask your colleagues and family to join too. Over the coming years, the best protection will be achieved by standing shoulder to shoulder and staring the Howard Government down.

Your help and input are vital to the continued success of the campaign. Please

consider adding your name and a comment to our ever-growing Rights at Work Pledge www.rightsatwork.com.au/campaigns/pledge

I've had a good break and I've come back refreshed. I look forward to working with CPSU members in 2006 – it's going to be a big year.

Greg Combet – Secretary, ACTU

Applying the Forensic Touch

Explaining in plain language what you do for a living is a challenging task for many of us – and this is probably no more so the case than for a Forensic Officer.

The task becomes even harder when giving expert witness during criminal trials, or detailing the intricate nature of blood sampling for the presence of alcohol and illicit substances.

"It's not just knowing how to do something," says CPSU member Catherine Davies, "but you have to explain what you do for a jury of laypersons so they can make an informed decision based on the evidence, which, if I'm talking to another

chemist, is really easy but in Court this situation is much more difficult!"

Part of the Pharmacology Team with Victoria Police based at Macleod in Melbourne's northern suburbs, Catherine works together with crime scene examiners and fingerprint experts – "such as what you see on television in shows like CSI," she says rather matter-of-factly.

"I joined CPSU a week after I started here – it just seemed a natural thing to do." Her 20-year involvement ranges from "just talking to workmates about issues" to participating in walkouts and implementing work bans during the difficult Enterprise Bargaining negotiations of 1999 & 2000, to the position she currently holds representing members on our Branch Council that meets monthly.

"I'm proud that our Forensic EBA contained the first new classification and review of rates of pay following the broad band era." "For scientists to walk off the job is a very rare occurrence but it did achieve a lot for our members and set a precedent."



Latest Campaign News

Last month communications staff from all unions gathered in Sydney for a meeting convened by the ACTU and Unions NSW to discuss the direction of the Your Rights at Work campaign. Officers were briefed on the details of the ACTU's continuing marketing strategy and key ways in which the union movement intends to effect decisive political change at the next federal election.

We can now tell all members to keep an out for the television advertising blitz to re-start according to the following initial schedule:

- March 26 – April 8 and;
- April 16 – April 22.

The ACTU's 30 second ads will be

complemented by 15 second ads, culminating in a total of 2,277 spots allotted for prime-time broadcasting on the 7 and 9 networks and regional equivalents.

Important research to emerge from recent ACTU polling has also revealed that:

- 62% of voters oppose the Howard Government's IR laws;
- 58% of voters believe that that IR issues alone are reason enough to vote against the Howard Government;
- 49.3 % of voters do not believe the Howard Government deserves re-election;
- 69.1% of voters believe that the economic policy of the Howard government has disproportionately benefited large corporations and CEOs.

Clearly there is plenty of political concern within the community about how the Government's IR laws will impact on families and take away the rights of working people.

CPSU, in concert with the ACTU and all Australian unions, will continue to campaign to ensure that the attack on your rights in the workplace remains an issue at the forefront of the political arena through continued media and communications strategies and on-ground organisation.

There will be activities planned for targeted federal electorate seats and members will be kept up-to-date with the schedule for all national activities including:

- Workers events to protest the introduction of the Howard Government's IR legislation;
- May Day activities;
- A Community Forum on 28-29 May;
- A National Week of activities from 25 June – 2 July with rallies on Wednesday 28 June under a National Community banner;
- A further National Day of Community Protest involving a Sky Channel broadcast in mid to late November.

The Victorian Public Service at a Glance	
AGE	
Median	
Females	39
Males	45
Total	42
Distribution	
Females- proportion aged under 30	21.4%
Females- proportion aged over 50	21.6%
Males- proportion aged under 30	11.5%
Males- proportion aged over 50	32.3%
EMPLOYMENT TYPE	
Ongoing Staff	80.2%
Fixed Term	15.1%
Casual	4.6%
PART TIME/FULL TIME	
Full time	80.2%
Part time	19.8%
WORK LOCATION	
Metro- CBD	43.4%
Metro- Other	30.2%
Country	26.4%
EDUCATION	
Highest level of education	
Doctoral/masters degree	11%
Graduate diploma/certificate	13.8%
Bachelor degree/honours	29.1%
Advanced diploma	10.4%
Certificate level/trade	14.8%
No post-secondary/tertiary qualifications	20.9%
BIRTHPLACE*	
Australia	79.9%
Overseas	20.1%

*According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey of March 2005 74% of the general Victorian labour force were born in Australia and 26% were born overseas.



- FILM REVIEW -

Good Night, and Good Luck

Nominated for six awards at this year's Oscar Awards, including Best Picture, Best Actor and Best Director, *Good Night, and Good Luck* presents a courageous – and powerfully resonant – critique of the role of the press in a democratic regime and what occurs when the media is a voice of dissent against the government.

Chronicling the real-life conflict between esteemed radio and television journalist Edward R. Murrow (David Strathairn) and the anti-Communist Senator from Wisconsin Joseph McCarthy, the film takes its title from the line with which Murrow routinely closed his news documentary program for CBS, *See it Now*. With the support of producer Fred Friendly (George Clooney), Murrow uses his program as a platform from which to examine the contentious issues the day, such as that involving US Air Force Reservist Lieutenant Milo Radulovich, whom the US government has dismissed from service citing "security risk" status and deemed guilty without trial.

The story takes place during one of the most defining periods in US political and social history. The infamous McCarthy-led hearings into "Un-American Activities" has inculcated a sense of paranoia into the public consciousness; civil liberties are being eroded in the name of state security; public discourse is dominated by the language of fear and the television industry, still in its infancy, is increasingly diverting air-time and financial resources to the burgeoning "infotainment" trend whilst paring back content with incisive and critical political commentary.

Because Murrow reports and examines the intricacies of the Radulovich case, he himself is alleged to harbour Communist sympathies and is subjected to intimidation

tactics by the government to censor his programming. Yet Murrow is not dissuaded - he and fights back harder, further analysing the lies and inadequacies perpetrated by the McCarthy hearings. His tenacity finally pays off when McCarthy is brought before the Senate and his bullying and lying is uncovered.

Writer and director George Clooney employs the unique tactic of using only original archival footage of McCarthy so that the Senator is seen and heard only in the context of his own words. This footage flows seamlessly into the rest of the film (which is shot entirely in black and white) and renders the film an unnerving authenticity and clarity all too rare in most Hollywood-produced, period-based cinema.

Despite Murrow's ultimate vindication, the film ends on a bitter-sweet note: *See it Now* is moved out of its weekly slot to Sunday afternoons, and only five more shows are ordered. Perhaps this is a sign of the times; perhaps it is a sign of all times. But for a time at least, the lessons that Murrow gave his viewers is that however radical the notion of truth-telling; however disciplined it may be to remember that accusation is not proof and to uphold the doctrine that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law; these values are integral parts of a robust democracy. Fittingly, perhaps for today's cinema audience as much as the the 1950s CBS audience, Murrow advises: "We cannot defend freedom abroad by deserting it at home".

Marion Sigmont

Good Night, and Good Luck is due for DVD release on 10 May 2006.



Public Perspective is a publication of the CPSU (Victorian Branch), authorised by Karen Batt, CPSU Victorian Branch Secretary.
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Funds in Court – Those Who Lend a Helping Hand Win

When the State Government last year engaged a major multi-national finance firm to review the value of the Office that manages compensation funds of Victorians with a legal disability, the possibility of more than 40 jobs becoming redundant was regarded a *fait accompli* by many staff.

The Senior Master's Office (Funds in Court) faced a real threat of having its funds re-directed and function absorbed by another institution with State Trustees or Victorian Funds Management the likely recipients.

The Office, a discrete part of the Supreme Court of Victoria, devotes substantial skill, expertise and sensitivity to managing the award

compensation funds for beneficiaries including many with an acquired brain injury. This is a distinctly unique and demanding responsibility that carries serious implications for the well-being of those whom life has dealt major challenges.

CPSU members worked together focusing on what our rights were and what could be achieved together by identifying which people needed to become involved.

Working groups were formed and ways of including everyone in collating submissions for the review and for the DOJ/CPSU reference group were found.

Funds in Court staff discovered that understanding their rights, and putting them

into action collectively and constructively reclaimed an otherwise difficult and potentially disempowering process stimulating the creation of a separate committed community campaign consisting of beneficiaries and external stakeholders.

The outcome was revealed just before Christmas when the Government decided that the Office's vital function continue to exist, and in further wins this year, all staff have achieved confirmation of their employment security as permanent VPS employees.

A fantastic and inspiring example for other workplaces as our message to you all is 'get active, get organised and involved, and join the union'.



CPSU members at the Supreme Court of Victoria – Senior Master's Office – (Funds in Court).

A Massive 10,000+ Votes Secures Entitlements in New VPS Agreement 2006

The largest ever turnout of government employees [10,859 or 40%] has delivered an overwhelming endorsement of CPSU's new Agreement with the State Government to cover ALL non executive staff employed across the 10 Departments and Agencies. The Agreement was certified in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on 14 March, securing all our entitlements and career [classification] structures, and remain in force until 1 March 2009. For all the details, go to www.cpsuvc.org

CPSU thanks ALL members for this outstanding result.

International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers

28 April is the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers. The day provides an opportunity to highlight the effects of unsustainable work, workplaces and forms of production on workers' lives and well-being.

The slogan for this year's 28 April is Union Workplaces – Safer Workplaces. Trade unions can use this occasion to raise the awareness of broad sectors of the public concerning the health and safety issues that concern us all.

In Melbourne, the VTHC, in conjunction

with IDSA, commemorates the event at the Rock at Trades Hall and this year will also be focusing on the Federal Government IR changes and the potential OHS effects to workers.

The OHS Unit of VTHC has badges, with the canary symbol, available (\$2) - contact Amanda Thomas on 9662 3511 or amandat@vthc.org.au to arrange to have some of these to sell in the workplace.

For all other enquiries about the event, please contact Renata Musolino, OHS Information Officer on ph: 9659 3571.

ACTU
your rights at work
worth fighting for

Karak's Carers Get the Chop

Environment Job Losses Leave Key DSE Staff Endangered

Members from the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) marched on Minister Thwaites' office at 1 Treasury Place to call on the Government to take immediate action to stop the abolition of 75 jobs from its division and instead put core services back on a secure financial footing.

Like the official mascot of the recent Commonwealth Games, Karak – an endangered species at risk of extinction – the DSE workers who work within the Land Stewardship and Biodiversity Group (LSB) are similarly under threat for survival.

Speaking at the march, CPSU Victorian Branch Secretary Karen Batt said, "with 1 in 5 jobs set to disappear it appears the Department has given up on its commitment to make Victoria a world leader in environmental sustainability," she said.

Ms Batt said, "the job cuts strike directly at the core capacities of government and will directly reduce the:

- Establishment of new national parks;
- Sustainable management of state forests and oversight of timber harvesting;
- Effective management of the many historic places;
- Knowledge and understanding of Victoria's native plants and animals;
- Capacity to limit overdevelopment along the coast;
- Support for the thousands of volunteers who participate in Coastcare, Landcare and catchment management;
- Support for the Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Zoo, Werribee Zoo and Alpine Resorts at a time when they are under increasing pressure to increase visitations."



Above: DSE members standing on the steps of Victorian Parliament.

Right: Friend of Karak with CPSU Delegate Richard Wadsworth



Ms Batt said, "DSE senior management have not 'tightened' their belts, nor got a handle on Departmental finances, nor secured appropriate funding and their solution just shifts the work to already overstretched regional staff."

"At a time when the scientific evidence clearly demonstrates Victoria's environment is under greater threat than ever before it is inconceivable that the Department would cut core services," she said.

150

150 Years of the Parliament of Victoria – A Celebration of Democracy

On 25 November 2006 the Parliament of Victoria will proudly celebrate its 150th anniversary. This anniversary is an opportunity for all Victorians to commemorate their colourful Parliamentary history, celebrating the events, ideals and people that have shaped continuous democracy in Victoria since 1856. The Parliament invites all Victorians to participate in a year-long program of events, exhibitions and activities across the State. For details on locations and dates, visit www.parliament.vic.gov.au/150th

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The overseas humanitarian aid agency of the ACTU
www.apheda.org.au

Refugees from Burma, living in a Thai refugee camp.

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RAFFLE CLOSURES JUNE 1ST, 2006. THE WINNING TICKET WILL BE DRAWN AT THE TRADES HALL, 4 GOULBURN ST, SYDNEY ON JUNE 15TH, 2006 AT 6:00PM. APHEDA INC. HAS AUTHORITY FUNDRAISE UNDER THE NSW CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING ACT 1991 NUMBER CFN12752. VIC PERMIT NO 11737/05 (ISSUED 28 DECEMBER, 2005) ACT PERMIT NUMBER NO. 06/0001.