



PSA strategies for fairness and public value



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“Almost everything that happens here is as a result of partnership. We are looking at issues together and how we are going to find a solution.”

Heather Relf, delegate, Waitakere City Council



# PARTNERSHIP FOR QUALITY: FAIRNESS AND PUBLIC VALUE

The PSA has just signed a third Partnership for Quality agreement with the Government and the State Services Commission. The first two agreements laid the groundwork, especially at senior levels, for better relationships. This third one is designed to strengthen day-to-day partnership in the workplace.

## What is partnership?

Partnership is a way of working together that brings out the best in union members and employers. It leads to high-quality jobs that deliver high-quality services.

Partnership is based on good faith, respect, and engagement. Union members are constructively involved in decision-making.

In Europe, the partnership model has worked well to improve productivity and job satisfaction.

## Delegates – the key to success

PSA delegates are the key to successful partnerships at work. The new partnership agreement sets out the parties' responsibilities for delegates:

- The PSA commits to ensuring good delegates are chosen, regular elections held, and that delegates maintain accountability.
- Union roles will be clear and designed to encourage members' participation and maximise their strengths.
- Employers commit to paid time off for delegates, training for management and delegates, the provision of facilities and structures to enable managers and delegates to meet.

## Rolling out the agreement

Over the next few months the PSA will meet with senior managers across the state sector to ensure the implementation of the agreement is properly planned, with enough resources.

The first stage includes Social Development, Labour, Inland Revenue, Conservation, LINZ, ERO, Statistics, Health, and Archives.

The PSA will be talking with employers and seeking workplace partnership agreements through bargaining right across the public sector.

*"The partnership agreement at MSD definitely makes for a better workplace." – Sonya Wilson, delegate, Ministry of Social Development*

*"Partnership doesn't mean you have to agree with everything your employer says, but sitting down in a forum and discussing the issues is a good way to go." – Bruce Bycroft, delegate, Crop and Food*

*"Consultation with the union is starting to look like real consultation rather than a fait accompli. It's been developing for a while and it's getting better all the time." – Geoff Kelly, delegate, Open Polytechnic*

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“The people best placed to find better ways to do the work are the ones who know most about it – the people directly involved in that work on a day-to-day basis.”

*James Buwalda, chief executive, Department of Labour, Wellington*



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“A new professionalism...[through] open discussion between frontline public servants, service users and managers about the needs of local people, the barriers to meeting them and the techniques that can be used to overcome those barriers.” *Demos report*

“Mutual gains can only really be secured if strong workplace institutions give unions effective voice over the process of workplace reform.” *David Coats, Reviving the Public – A New Governance and Management Model for Public Services*

“Public value – the idea that citizens are more than consumers and ought to be able to influence the design and delivery of services.” *David Coats, Reviving the Public – A New Governance and Management Model for Public Services*

# DEMOCRACY AT WORK

Democracy at Work takes Partnership for Quality to new levels. It has a strong emphasis on decent work and decent workplaces and aims to provide a stronger citizen and worker voice as well as developing high-trust work environments through changes to management culture and through Public Value.

## Decent work, decent workplaces

Decent work, decent workplaces recognises the social and human nature of work. This is an important focus for unions and includes:

- A collective voice
- Fairness – pay and conditions
- Quality flexible work
- Work/life balance
- Safe and healthy workplaces
- Progressive union agenda
- Sustainable workplaces
- Environment of trust and autonomy

## Public Value

Public value offers a new model for public services and looks for more citizen and worker involvement in decision-making.

- It challenges the way public services are managed and the management culture
- It promotes working with citizens and frontline workers to deliver a valued and relevant public service
- It re-appraises structures and relationships in government

## How do we get there?

To implement these strategies the PSA will need to organise politically and industrially. This includes:

- Engaging with and influencing government decision-making
- Lobbying political parties
- Promoting and implementing PFQ3 across wider public sector
- Engaging in public dialogue, including media
- Strengthening the role of delegates and supporting them with effective training and resourcing
- Bargaining that advances political and industrial aspirations
- Getting a stronger collective voice in workplace
- Building membership to extend influence





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*“A definition of ‘good work’ includes full employment, fair pay, the absence of discrimination, secure and interesting jobs, and a style and ethos of management that is based on high levels of trust.”*

*David Coats, Reviving the Public – A New Governance and Management Model for Public Services*



# FAIR PAY AND GOOD JOBS

## The PSA's approach to bargaining

Collective bargaining is one of the PSA's central tasks and one of its most visible with the power to improve members' working lives and spending power.

The PSA bargains for members in around 400 organisations that, between them, represent the full breadth and diversity of the public sector. They include:

- public service departments and ministries
- over 80 local councils
- 21 district health boards
- providers of services such as disability support
- crown entities such as science and research, commissions and universities
- state-owned and other government-funded enterprises.

Each has its own particular needs and characteristics and the PSA has bargaining strategies for each distinct group that respond to these. Here are a few examples.

**In the health sector** restoring national conditions of employment across all district health boards.

**In local government** better pay and employer subsidies for retirement savings.

**In the public service** common employment conditions across the public service that support and enhance public service-wide careers.

**In crown research institutes** the need to recruit and retain scientists.

**In disability support services** tackling low pay; support for training.

## COMMON THEMES

But while some of the detail may vary, when it comes to bargaining there are some common themes that point the way forward to better workplaces for all members.

These include:

- fair pay that keeps pace with inflation, at least
- support for union organisation and the role of delegates
- a partnership approach to decisions about work and the delivery of services
- greater flexibility around hours of work
- equitable pay and employment opportunities
- employer-subsidised retirement saving schemes
- better support for people facing life changes such as moving to retirement.

The PSA's approach to bargaining has close links to our other key strategies, partnership for quality and democracy at work. Together they form a blueprint for better jobs and high-trust, high-performance workplaces.

*“One of the main things for delegates is to organise so you have a position agreed to by members. Then you can work with management to get a better workplace.”*

*Martin Skinner, delegate*



# DELEGATES MAKE IT HAPPEN

Delegates are the backbone of the PSA. There are about 3000 of them throughout New Zealand, and their work ensures that all members benefit from belonging to the PSA.

The PSA's strategy – for bargaining, partnership, and recruitment – rests or falls on delegates.

Altogether, it's a big ask. Delegates need the skills and the time to do their job well – so that the work is also satisfying and enjoyable!

## Partnership for Quality

The latest Partnership for Quality agreement is a crucial step forward for delegates. It sets out what the PSA and employers must do to support and promote delegates in the partnership relationship. Support for partnership in the workplace includes:

- paid time for delegates to carry out their role
- joint training for delegates and managers
- a process for delegates to meet with all new staff and explain about the union
- membership meetings in work time to discuss issues and develop a collective view
- paid leave to attend union training courses.

## Delegate development

The PSA runs a comprehensive and evolving programme of delegate development, including six linked courses on the skills and knowledge needed for the job. Talk to your local organiser or the PSA organising centre to find out more.

## The vision

PSA members and delegates have developed a vision for the union centred on decent work and decent workplaces. It's about high-paying and satisfying jobs that deliver high-quality public services.

The vision relies on a workforce that is committed and engaged, adaptable to change, and able to influence critical decisions in the workplace.

For the vision to become reality, it requires delegates who enjoy their job and their union work. And they need the skills, knowledge, and time to contribute to their maximum ability.

*"What keeps me going as a delegate is the opportunity to have some influence with management so that this can be a safe place to work and a place that is fair and is equal." – Kathryn Gardner, delegate*

*"Being a delegate is very fulfilling because you grow in self-confidence and learn how to deal with people in a more constructive manner." – Maria Shearer, delegate*



## PEOPLE POWER - IT'S ALL ABOUT RECRUITMENT

The PSA's strength depends on numbers: the more members, the more the PSA can achieve for members.

The PSA may be the biggest union in New Zealand, but there are still workplaces where less than half the staff are in the union. The best people to recruit new people are the PSA members who work alongside them.

Most people welcome an invitation to join the union. It's always nice to be asked even if you don't accept. The main reason people give for not joining is: "Nobody asked me!"

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## TIPS FOR RECRUITING

**Talk to the person.** Nothing beats a face-to-face chat.

**Pick your moment.** Find a time and place that's not too busy.

**Don't be pushy.** People don't like to feel pressured.

**Talk about the benefits.** A stronger voice in bargaining for better pay and conditions, protection from unfair treatment, the PSA holiday homes, PSA Plus.

**Let them know that others belong.** Knowing that other people at the workplace are PSA members may be just the nudge that's needed.

**Have information on hand.** Get hold of information packs from your organiser or the organising centre.

**Run a recruitment drive around bargaining.** People often join the PSA when bargaining for a new collective agreement is underway.

**Organise a union slot at staff inductions.** Most employers see the benefits of a strong union in the workplace and will support the idea.

**Make the union visible at work.** Ask your organiser for some PSA posters, or contact the organising centre. Replace them before they look tired and tatty.

**And if the answer is no?** Some people say no to give themselves time to think. Ask if they'd like more information, get the answers, and go back later for a follow up chat. Don't feel rejected if they really do mean no. They may be glad to join up further down the track.

"It's good to be clear about what you are going to say and give positive reasons for joining. Recruitment is important: more members mean we're more effective and that's better for staff."  
– *Sheryl Pearce, delegate, IRD*

"I don't get in their face. I give them the information and suggest they go and read it at their leisure and come back to me. And the younger staff do a lot of recruiting when they talk among themselves," *Jan Ferguson, delegate, Auckland City Council*

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New Zealand Public Service Association  
Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi  
PO Box 3817, Wellington  
Phone 04 917 0333  
Freephone 0508 FOR PSA  
Email [enquiries@psa.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@psa.org.nz)  
[www.psa.org.nz](http://www.psa.org.nz)