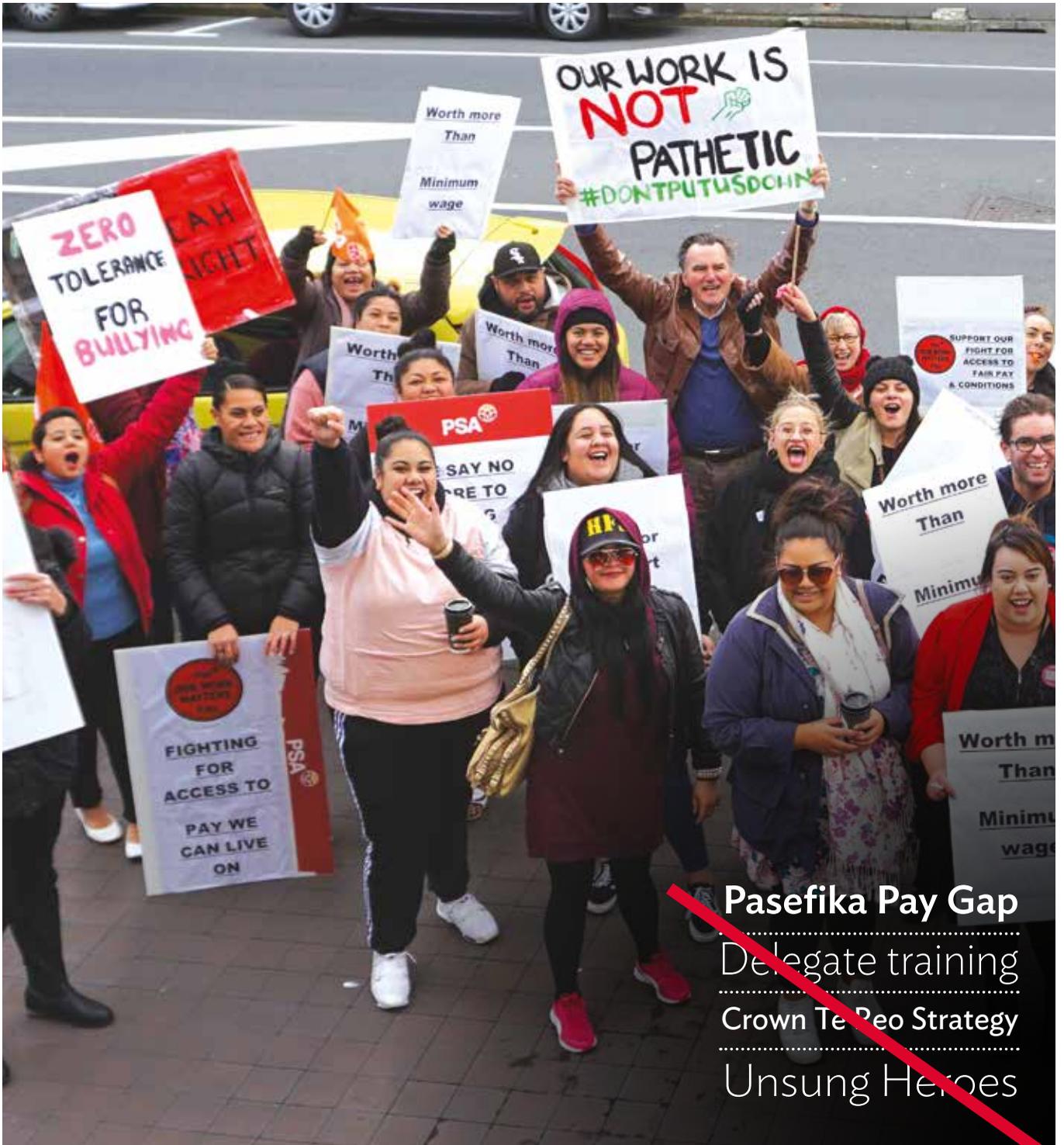


# Working Life



THE PSA JOURNAL JULY 2019



**Pasefika Pay Gap**

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Delegate training

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Unsung Heroes

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## Working Life Te Mahinga Ora

THE PSA JOURNAL

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**On the cover**

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## TĒNĀ KOUTOU KATOĀ

It's hard to believe we are halfway through 2019, but as we look back over the first half of the year it is important to firstly acknowledge the devastating attacks in Christchurch on March 15.

In this issue of the journal we mark the loss of loved ones, family, friends and workmates of our PSA whānau.

We also pay tribute to PSA members who have played or continue to play a critical role in the response to the attacks. It's been a truly cross-agency effort which encompasses members from Christchurch and around the country. We will always be grateful for the strength and heroism of those members in one of our darkest times.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of PSA staff and delegates who have supported members that have been affected by the attacks.

I had the pleasure of meeting with PSA staff at their recent conference in Wellington. The conference was a great opportunity to thank our staff from around New Zealand for the awesome work they are doing on behalf of members.

Among that mahi is the fight members and organisers have taken to Access Community Health for fair pay for its lowpaid coordinators, call centre and administration workers.

It is especially disappointing that Access has so far refused to significantly up its pay offer, when you consider the millions in profit made by its owner, Green Cross Health last year.

Kia kaha to the kaimahi at Access in their continued fight for a fairer deal!



I, along with a large number of members was disappointed by the Government's decision not to proceed with a capital gains tax, which would have helped to reduce inequality and ensure that everybody pays a fair share in our society.

But it is pleasing to see a major investment in mental health in this year's budget, which shows the value of the PSA's campaign to raise awareness of this issue.

It's also pleasing to see the equal pay claims for care and support workers, mental health and addiction workers, and Oranga Tamariki social workers were funded in the budget, but we now need to ensure our present and future claims are funded.

We are making headway on equal pay with the delivery of a petition to Parliament in support of the DHB admin workers' claim, and the launch of an equal pay claim for local government library assistants.

These will be a key part of the PSA's agenda as we campaign for candidates to reflect our values in the local body and DHB elections later in the year.

So take some time now to read about the challenges and achievements of your fellow members in this issue.

Ma whero ma pango ka oti ai te mahi  
If everyone plays their part, the work will be complete

**Janet Quigley, PSA President**



# Empowering fight for fair pay

It's the first time many of the co-ordinators, administrators, and call centre workers from Access Community Health have gone on strike – but they say the principle of fair pay is worth fighting for.

THE WORKERS COORDINATE home support for more than 21,000 elderly, disabled or injured clients.

In May and June, about 100 Access members have taken to the streets repeatedly to demand a fair deal from their employer.

“Brrr it’s cold up there, there must be some Access in the atmosphere,” they chant, in reference to the company’s cold-hearted pay offer which leaves many on or near the minimum wage.

Access Petone delegate Keila Jensen says the industrial action has been “really empowering”.

“We have got an upbeat street party vibe going on. The PSA brings the barbeque out, we do our chants.”

PSA assistant secretary Melissa Woolley admires the members’ enthusiasm.

“Many of them are young and striking for the first time, but they have heaps of energy, making signs, chanting for hours out in the cold.”

Keila says they rallied together when Access suspended some members, and tried to pit them against each other by offering some more than others.

“The suspensions were scary, there were a few tears. But the team bonded and we walked back in there together.”

The strikes are a last resort, but Keila says they need to support their families, and ensure a quality service is maintained for clients.

“We build up a rapport with support



workers and clients. If we don’t turn up, our clients don’t get seen. We go outside of our job description on a daily basis and it’s just not acknowledged.”

## NATIONWIDE ACTION

Workers have been taking action at other Access sites including Auckland, Whangarei, Hamilton, Havelock North, Palmerston North, Porirua, Nelson, Milton, Oamaru, Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill, and Balclutha.

Invercargill Access senior care co-ordinator Andi Smyth says working in a small town, they know people doing similar work for other companies earn \$5-6 an hour more. She says they’re standing up for fair pay.

“It’s the principle. We are only asking for an extra dollar, which won’t

even get us near pay parity with other companies. I don’t see it as unreasonable.”

Andi says they should be valued as they make sure patients receive the care they need.

“For older clients we are a health and safety check to make sure they’re okay.”

Access is a subsidiary of Green Cross Health, which owns ‘The Doctors’, Unichem and Life Pharmacies. Green Cross’s net profit attributable to shareholders was \$18.7 million in 2018.

The PSA and E tū are urging Access to come back to the negotiating table.

You can support Access members and the PSA hardship fund here:

[www.psa.org.nz/media/resources/psa-hardship-fund](http://www.psa.org.nz/media/resources/psa-hardship-fund).

# NEWS IN BRIEF

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## BACK TO THE FUTURE



With a theme and a playlist that's borrowed from the 80s, the Back to the Future PSAY Hui promises to be as much fun as a ride in Marty McFly's time-travel machine.

The agenda for the youth network hui includes skits, dancing, and a workshop on self-care.

But there will also be serious mahi, with sessions on union history, gender issues at work, international events, rule changes, mentoring, and guest speakers including MP Chloe Swarbrick.

PSAY Hui 2019 at Wellington's SPCA & Brentwood Hotel from July 31-August 2.



## POSITIVE SIGNS FOR MANA WAHINE

The PSA is encouraged by signs the Crown intends to address employment inequities suffered by wāhine Maori, which are highlighted in Te Rūnanga o Ngā Toa Āwhina's Waitangi Tribunal claim.

Claim Wai 2864 was registered by the Tribunal earlier this year, as part of its Mana Wahine Kaupapa Inquiry.

The PSA and Te Rūnanga welcome \$6.2 million funding announced in Budget 2019 to progress the inquiry.

We are also pleased by Women's Minister Julie Anne Genter's comments that the inquiry will look to make early acknowledgement of problems, and focus on what can be changed to address injustice and inequality.

During sector hui Te Rūnanga will seek to involve members affected by treaty breaches such as the Crown's failure to provide adequate education, and to eliminate workplace bias for wāhine Māori.

Legal aid has also been granted for the claim.



## PARLIAMENTARY BULLYING

The PSA is backing recommendations to reform the culture of the Parliamentary workplace, including greater funding, reforming employment relationships and aligning terms and conditions across agencies.

In May the Francis Review found 'systemic' bullying and harassment in the Parliamentary Service, Ministerial & Secretariat Services/DIA and the Office of the Clerk.

Proposed reforms included overhauling events-based employment of political staff, confidential and specialist reporting channels and greater investment in the workforce.

The PSA is now calling for accountability for the implementation of the reforms, and for worker voices to be included during the transformation process.



## TAX REFORM STILL NEEDED

The PSA believes the Government's decision to rule out a capital gains tax is a lost opportunity, but the union will continue to promote reforms that will increase revenue for public services and to reduce inequality.

National secretaries Glenn Barclay and Kerry Davies say the CGT decision limits the tax revenue base needed to achieve those goals.

The PSA had supported the Tax Working Group's recommendation to introduce a CGT, alongside several leading economists, and a network of community groups and citizens who had been gaining a voice through the Tax Justice Aotearoa fairer tax campaign.



## FAIR PAY AGREEMENT RESEARCH

A Report produced by BERL for the CTU has found a return to sector bargaining in the form of Fair Pay

Agreements is the single biggest thing the Government could do to improve wellbeing.

The agreements would deliver a better deal to vulnerable low paid workers in industries where collective bargaining is difficult.

The research also highlights economic benefits to good employers who compete on quality and innovation.

The PSA is now calling on the Government to introduce the agreements.



## DHB ADMIN MECA RATIFICATIONS

The ratification of new collective employment agreements for Auckland, Northland and Lower North Island in May brought a long overdue pay rise for DHB admin workers in those regions.

It came after admin workers in those DHBs voted for industrial action in February.

Bargaining has been proceeding for members in South Island and Midland Regions.



## EQUAL PAY CLAIMS UPDATE

The PSA and public and state sector agencies are working together to identify female dominated occupations in the Public Service, their size, pay and ethnic makeup. The working groups are also deciding how to approach equal pay claims for those occupations.

Public sector, health and education working groups have also been formed to identify gender pay gaps to be addressed in each sector.

Processing and bargaining for the DHB claim resumes later this month. A petition with more than 12,800 signatures in support of the claim was presented to Parliament in April.



## LAW CHANGE SPARKS RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITY

Changes to the Employment Relations Act are enabling the PSA to reach out to potential new members, and enact the right for workers to get information about unions in new workplaces.

Employers must now, where a collective agreement exists, provide new staff with PSA material when they start work.

Employers are also required to forward their names to the

union, unless the new worker doesn't want that.

The union has sent out "Join the PSA" handouts to all employers to give to new staff.

We have also set up a system for employers to send names and details, so we can invite them to join by text and email.



## FAIRER PAY FOR FAMILY CARERS

The PSA welcomes fairer pay rates for family who provide care to whānau with disabilities.

Under changes to the Funded Family Care policy, pay rates will increase from the minimum wage to a fairer pay equity rate of between \$20.50 and \$25.50.

The PSA has a long history of supporting family carers and believes it is only fair the Government is bringing their pay rates into line with those earned by care and support workers under their pay equity settlement.



## CTU-GOVT FORUMS

The second in a series of Council of Trade Unions-Government Forums was held in Palmerston North on July 3.

The regional forums provide an opportunity for union members and delegates to meet Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Ministers and Associate Ministers to discuss issues relating to their industries.

Further forums will be held in Wellington on August 9, Dunedin on September 5, Auckland on November 26 (TBC), and Christchurch TBC.



## CARTOON BOOK WINNERS:



Copies of PSA member Paul Diamond's book *Savaged to Suit: Māori and Cartooning in New Zealand* are on their way to four members who entered our competition in the last issue.

They are Trish Johnson from He Puna Waiora, Ken Ross from Far North District Council, Jacqueline

Neilsford-Jones from Corrections, and Alan Cruis-Johnston, an Associate Member.

They correctly answered that Louisa Wall was the MP who challenged two Al Nisbet cartoons in the High Court.

# PSA members step up in our darkest hour



The mosque attacks in Christchurch shocked Aotearoa and the world, but for some of our members it was also a moment when they had to put professionalism before emotion and tend to the needs of the victims. Here are a few of their stories.

## AT THE HOSPITAL

Admin worker Susan was in the ambulance area when word came through of a drive-by shooting.

“Initially we were expecting about five wounded but suddenly it was 50. The best way I can describe it was like being in an episode of MASH,” she says.

For the admin workers the goal was to process patients quickly, with as little form filling as possible. When the identity of patients was unknown they were given a tracking number. Making sure their details stayed with them and were not lost was the challenge.

“Everyone was running on adrenalin. We knew what we had to do and we just did it. Despite all our

training, it was a situation I never expected to experience in real life. I’m proud of the work we did that day,” says Susan.

For the hospital social workers, the first sign something was wrong was the sight of police running around outside with guns.

Within half an hour they were dealing with shocked and distressed relatives and friends trying to find their loved ones.

“Some were looking for the living, some were looking for the dead. It was heart-rending,” says social worker Austin Coulthard.

“Because of our work, someone got to the bedside in time of someone who later died.”

## DISASTER PROTOCOLS

Staff quickly fell into the systems outlined in their disaster protocols, but with rumours flying in the hospital of a gunman loose, and the sudden influx of victims, it was a terrifying and overwhelming time.

“I had a responsibility to the people in front of me, but we’ve all got families as well, so we were worrying about the impact on them,” says social worker and PSA Allied Health delegate Jacqui Turner.

“A lot of people dug deep, to find the energy they needed.”

The ripple effects of the tragedy quickly spread through the hospital. Medical lab scientist and PSA delegate Sue Lloyd says they were soon inundated in the lab building.

“We were busy, but we were in shock. Everyone was given a number and triaged, tests were done on every patient. We were quickly aware, there was not just a few, but a lot.”

## LOCKDOWN

On the afternoon of the shootings police advised much of the city including council buildings to go into lockdown.

The central library is mostly staffed by PSA members who swung into action.

“It was all very sudden. We had about a thousand people in the building, a lot of students from the climate strike were there, so we were just trying to make people comfortable,” says library worker Tom Roud.

“Most of the public were really happy to abide by the lockdown. We gave out hot chocolates, tea and coffee.”

People in the library were keeping up to date with the disturbing news of the attacks, and staff arranged quiet areas for people to go if they were feeling distressed.

Staff also gathered to support each other in quick huddles during the four-hour lockdown.

“We were obviously feeling concerned too, but in a public facing role you have a duty of care to the public and you need to act professionally. We were trying not to add to the distress of others.”

## RESPONSE HUB

Within days of the attacks an inter-agency response hub was set up to help victims and their families.



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Among those providing the face-to-face service were staff from Victim Support, ACC, the Ministry of Education, Housing NZ, and Immigration, along with Muslim leaders, and legal advisors.

Immigration officer Emily Hanham says a 24-hour facility was set up with workers in immigration offices around the world processing visas to enable family members to come to New Zealand.

“We also had people who were here on visas who couldn’t work because they were injured,” Emily recalls.

“What are they going to do? We had to come up with a humanitarian response to these issues for people who were in desperate situations.”

“A lot of it was listening to people’s stories, referring them on to who they needed. Some of the stories, some of the things I saw, I’m never going to forget that. People tell you terrible sad news.

“But to be able to listen, to witness their dignity, and to be able to help was the only way for me to process it.”

“ We had to come up with a humanitarian response to these issues for people who were in desperate situations.”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The PSA also wishes to acknowledge and honour the work of so many members around the country across the public service, state sector, community public services, local government and district health boards, who have played and continue to play a role in the response to the March 15 attacks.



# Caring for the carers

In the aftermath of the March 15 attacks it became clear that people who had been caring for others were in need of care themselves.

THE PSA HAS been playing a critical role in supporting its members from the outset.

MSD delegate and national convenor for contact centres, Jessi Abrams was one of many who got in touch with members to check on their welfare.

“All sites had instant access to counselling and time off,” she says.

“Some members in contact centres in Auckland had relatives or people they knew directly affected by the shootings. They got the support they needed.”

But a few months down the track, Jessi says fatigue has set in.

“We provide financial help to those in need when there’s an emergency, so that’s an extra workload. People still keep going to work, but across the board people are tired.”

## EMOTIONAL TOLL

That fatigue can also be seen at Christchurch Hospital where the

tragedy has continued to stretch the resources of the social work department.

“We had forty injured patients with extraordinarily high needs, who all required intense input for weeks. This was not just run of the mill social work,” says social worker Austin Coulthard.

“It’s been a stressful time and there is an emotional toll. It’s important but not always easy to remember to take time out.”

Social worker Karen Butler agrees. “It was difficult to wind down. The helicopters overhead, the police guarding the hospital, it was triggering. The sounds and sights took us back to the earthquakes. It brought everything back.”

## WELFARE RESPONSE

Canterbury District Health Board Chief People Officer Michael Frampton says the DHB initiated a welfare response plan to help staff cope with the trauma.

“Within hours, we’d mobilised a team including clinical psychologists to get alongside our people. We listened to what people told us would be helpful, and more than 1,600 staff have participated in sessions led by our teams.”

Staff at the DHB and many other workplaces have also been advised of other sources of help such as GPs and Employee Assistance Programmes, and urged to speak with their managers if they need support.

“We’re employing people whose work is to care for other people, so it can be a challenging conversation to ask them to think about what they need” says Michael, who also leads a whole-of-government welfare response group in the region, which the PSA attends.

“We’re committed to putting our people at the heart of everything we do, so they can continue to support our community.”

## NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL

Also at a regional level, PSA delegate meetings have been held monthly since March 15 to monitor how employers are supporting workers through the tragedy.

Christchurch Organiser John Stace says many employers were initially

sympathetic to requests for time off, and offered other assistance such as group counselling sessions.

He says while members are appreciative of their employers' understanding, in some cases attitudes have been shifting.

"My biggest fear is that employers will

think it's time to get back to business as usual, but some of our members gave a part of themselves they may never get back.

"Their extraordinary deeds were a true example of public service. We need to be understanding of what they continue to go through, and may do for months and years to come."

## Hei maumaharatanga

THE PSA HAS been shocked and saddened by the death of Dr Haroon Mahmood, a student member of our union, who was killed at the Masjid Al Noor Mosque on March 15.

The 40 year-old was an Academic Supervisor at Canterbury College, a private school for international students. He has been described by a colleague as a "very gentle good person".

Dr Mahmood had recently completed his PhD in Finance from Lincoln University where he previously tutored in Finance, Economics and Statistics.

In May, his wife and two children aged 12 and 11 attended his graduation ceremony and accepted his parchment from the university on his behalf.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Dr Mahmood's wife Kiran Munir, a researcher at Landcare Research in Lincoln, and children Ahmad and Izzah Haroon.

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PSA member, Hanan Aladem, a clinical coder at the Canterbury District Health Board, lost her husband Dr Amjad Hamid in the attacks.

Dr Hamid was a cardiologist who had worked at Christchurch Hospital for 20 years. The 57 year-old also worked at Hawera Hospital in South Taranaki.

The couple moved from Qatar to New Zealand in 1995, hoping for a better, safer future for their family.

Hanan says her husband was known as 'The Saint' because of his good will. "He was the perfect man, it's a big loss."

We extend our deepest condolences to Hanan and her two sons, aged 20 and 23 for the tragic loss of their husband and father.

We would also like to acknowledge and send our aroha to many other members across the PSA who have lost loved ones, friends and workmates, or have been touched by this tragedy in other ways.

**Me te aroha tino nui atu. As salaam alaikum**

**With loving sympathy. Peace be with you**

## Support is Available

The PSA is acutely aware the March 15 attacks have also impacted members not directly involved in the emergency response, and members outside of Christchurch. Members should feel free to talk to their employer and the PSA, or to contact an EAP provider if in need of support.

Other support sources: Free call or text 1737 to talk to a trained counsellor; Victim Support – **0800 842 846**; Lifeline – **0800 543 354**; **allright.org.nz**

For advice on talking to children about trauma: Parenting Place **www.theparentingplace.com**; Kidsline – **0800 54 37 54** for people up to 18 years old; Youthline – **0800 376 633**, free text 234, email **talk@youthline.co.nz**, or find online chat and other support here.

# ‘The biggest transformation in 30 years’: What could a new look Public Service mean for you?

A new Public Service Act has been unveiled by the Government to create a more effective and unified Public Service.

STATE SERVICES MINISTER Chris Hipkins says all public service departments and crown agents will be included in the new Public Service, “unleashing a sense of purpose, pride and passion” in the public servants within it.

Crown agents include most crown entities including DHBs, Housing NZ, ACC and NZTA, except those that are independent and autonomous.

## ONE STOP SHOP

The changes will involve a cross-agency or “one stop shop” approach to tackling complex issues like child poverty, climate change and mental health.

The renamed Public Service Commissioner will lead a team of chief executives, who will take on cross system leadership roles and set strategy.

“In delivery terms we’re talking about one car up the drive instead of six,” the Minister says. “This should make it easier for families to get services.”

## JOINED-UP REGIONS

One immediate change may be for agencies to work together at a regional level.

This will include appointing regional cross-government leaders, who work with local government, iwi and other stakeholders to develop service delivery strategies.

“The PSA welcomes the potential to breakdown barriers between central and local government,” say national secretaries Glenn Barclay and Kerry Davies.

This could even involve the sharing of accommodation and IT systems across agencies.

## EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

The changes aim to improve mobility and career paths across the public service by allowing people to transfer leave entitlements between agencies, and to be restructured into different jobs without going through a formal application process.

The Commissioner will be able to direct groups of chief executives to bargain collectively to set terms and conditions for different occupations across agencies.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH MĀORI

As called for by the PSA, the new act will include a section on the Crown’s relationship with Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

It will include expectations the Commissioner and chief executives work in partnership with Māori, deliver services that work for Māori, develop a workforce that reflects the community it serves, and empower Māori to succeed in the public service.

Te Rūnanga o Ngā Toa Awhina is pleased its submission has been acknowledged within the reforms.

“Maori are over-represented in negative statistics in health, education and other areas. We hope these changes will improve outcomes for Māori,” Te Rūnanga convenor Marshall Tangaroa says.

Te Rūnanga also welcomes a proposal that will enable the appointment of a deputy commissioner with responsibility for Māori issues.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The new act recognises the political neutrality of the public service, but acknowledges public servants have the right to freedom of political expression in their private lives.

“We have been advocating for the recognition of your rights and we celebrate this,” say the national secretaries.

While the PSA believes the reforms are largely positive, we will be seeking your views on how they can be improved on at sector committee meetings and hui.

This will feed into our submission on the bill, which will be drafted and referred to select committee later this year.

You can read more about the changes in PSA newsletters or go to [www.ssc.govt.nz/changes-state-sector-act-1988](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/changes-state-sector-act-1988)

# Love your Library Assistants

An equal pay claim for local government library assistants is underway, with the six largest city councils agreeing to meet with the PSA to set terms of reference for the claim.

THE AGREEMENT CAME after PSA national secretary Glenn Barclay wrote to the councils in Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin notifying them of our belief that library assistants suffer from gender-based pay discrimination.

“It’s a big step forward for the claim. We believe the current pay rates are unlawful under the Equal Pay Act,” Glenn says.

“We hope this will lead to an agreed equal pay rate for library assistants that we can bargain to implement with individual councils.”

It’s welcome news for Eleanor Haggerty-Drummond, a Wellington City Council library assistant who is the Wellington representative on the PSA Libraries’ Panel.

“We are seeking pay equity to right an historical injustice. Over 80% of library assistants are women. We perform complex roles, but a lot of us earn about the living wage or just under.”

Eleanor says there is an expectation that library assistants have qualifications that contribute to their roles, but there is little financial reward for doing so.

“Some people think our job is just about issuing and returning books, but public libraries cater to a huge cross section of society with a range of abilities, so it is challenging,” she says.



With advances in technology, library assistants are expected to help customers use sophisticated databases, download e-books, connect to wifi, and print out material.

“I had a mum asking about a database suitable for her dyslexic daughter. We get requests from people about books, where they can’t remember the title, but they know it has a blue cover! Sometimes it requires a bit of detective work.”

We work with diverse communities, people who are homeless or have mental health issues, which can be emotionally taxing, Eleanor says.

“But it’s also rewarding, sharing your knowledge with children, or running book groups for senior citizens.”

“People love their libraries, we get

that feedback all the time. They are a place where people can be citizens, not customers. Everybody can get a library card.

“So we are asking the public to value your library staff as well.”

The PSA Libraries’ Panel will be working to build support for their claim in the next few months and libraries will be a big part of the PSA’s local government election campaign this year.

This is the first equal pay claim for local government workers. The PSA believes it will be a platform to help achieve equal pay settlements for members in other female-dominated occupations over time, including other library workers, administrators, customer service and personal assistants.

# Wellbeing budget welcome but what about the elephant in the room?



It was trumpeted as transformational but Budget 2019 has left some questioning whether wellbeing can truly be achieved within current fiscal constraints.

The wellbeing approach of Budget 2019 is being praised as world leading, but there are questions about how much can be achieved within the current fiscal constraints.

The PSA supports the new focus on wellbeing which significantly changes the way the budget is put together.

“It’s world leading in moving away from GDP as the main measure of economic performance, and embedding in wellbeing criteria” say national secretaries Glenn Barclay and Kerry Davies.

For the PSA there were pleasing announcements including the significant investment in mental health, the indexing of benefits to wage increases, and the provision of some funding for equal pay settlements.

## BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY RULES

“However, like many others we are wondering how wellbeing can be achieved within the constraints of the Budget Responsibility Rules,” says Mr Barclay.

CTU economist Bill Rosenberg agrees. He says the budget’s focus on improving wellbeing is “praiseworthy,” but we can’t overlook the elephant in the room.

“We can have the best decision making in the world, and the best intentions to produce good results but if there is not enough money to pay for them then vital priorities will go unaddressed.”

Mr Rosenberg says the relaxation of the Government’s Budget Responsibility Rules is essential to truly achieve well-being.

BERL chief economist Ganesh Nana agrees the Government’s conventional view of budget responsibility throws a “dark shadow” over its desire to transform New Zealand.

## NEW SPENDING

Dr Nana says \$3.5 billion of new spending including money for mental health, family and sexual violence, Whānau Ora, hospital and school buildings, and Kiwi Rail is impressive.

But he says with debt projected at under 20% of GDP in 2023, and a track of growing surpluses, there was “elbow room” to do more to trigger a dramatic transformation in business, economy and communities across Aotearoa.

“Why do we have to have those rainy day surpluses... We are embedding in current levels of poverty if we don’t go further than indexing benefits to wages.”

## ADEQUATE FUNDING NEEDED

For the PSA there were also some disappointments including a \$7 million drop in funding for disability support, and the failure to raise

in-between travel rates for home support workers.

Funding for District Health Boards is not expected to keep up with the demands of a growing and ageing population.

New funding to end homelessness is admirable, but the PSA would also have liked to have seen significant new investment in low cost housing.

“The impact of the housing crisis has been felt across our membership, with over two-thirds living in unaffordable housing,” says national secretary Kerry Davies.

The PSA is also pleased to see acknowledgement of the costs of closing the gender pay gap, minimum wage increases, and boosting funding for contracted

providers in the social sector.

But there appears to be little provision to fund these costs, the national secretaries say.

“The government’s goal of improving well-being is to be applauded, but it must adequately fund agencies so they have the capacity to bring it to fruition.”

## Waring’s Wellbeing

Former MP and economist Marilyn Waring presented her own take on wellbeing during two lunchtime seminars at PSA House in Wellington in May, prior to the budget announcements.

Ms Waring told the audiences GDP failed to take into account the enormous contribution women make to the economy through unpaid labour such as child rearing and food gathering.

She said it would be more accurate to measure the time spent on activities rather than their monetary value. Her analysis was based on her book, *Still Counting: Wellbeing, Women’s Work and Policy Making*.

Huge interest in the first seminar led the PSA policy team to organise a second session to meet the demand.

## More for mental health but workforce concerns remain

The PSA has strongly welcomed funding for mental health and addiction services in the 2019 Wellbeing Budget, with increases for front line services, drug and alcohol support, transitional housing and more.

But while the PSA mental health and addiction committee is excited by the positive funding allocations, it is also voicing concerns for high needs service users.

“The bulk of mental health funding allocated to DHBs to cover services for people with the most severe needs has technically increased, but amounts to nil in real terms,” says committee co-convenor Andy Colwell.

Prior to the budget release, the Government shared its long-awaited response to He Ara Oranga – Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction.

It accepted in principle or agreed to further consider 38 of the report’s 40 recommendations.

In its post-budget hui, the PSA mental health committee agreed the Government’s response is a positive step, but believes it’s essential workers’ voices are heard as the recommendations are acted on.

“We want representation in the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, and in the design and implementation process. The worker voice has been under-represented in the past, and we see it as crucial that

those involved in providing these services be given a say,” Mr Colwell says.

### WORKFORCE CONCERNS

He says concerns still remain about building and sustaining a workforce capable of delivering needed services.

“In the PSA’s response to He Ara Oranga earlier this year, we made it clear the workforce is under-resourced and understaffed to successfully implement the recommendations,” Mr Colwell says.

“While the budget refers to allocations for workforce development across the health service being a major focus, we are yet to know how this workforce development is going to progress.”



Alexandra Guevera



# My Life To Live

An exhibition in Wellington is highlighting the plight of refugees who often come to New Zealand with big dreams, but end up working long hours in low paid jobs just to get by.

THE PSA IS one of the sponsors of My Life To Live, which tells the story and celebrates the contribution of refugee background workers in Aotearoa.

In photos by Iranian Ehsan Hazaveh the stories of six workers from South Sudan, Iraq, Ethiopia, Eritrea Myanmar and Colombia are told.

Many have escaped war and conflict in their homelands to come to New Zealand.

One of the first memories of Colombian Alexandra Guevera is of a man pointing a gun at her mother.

There was fighting in her home region, but after leaving for Ecuador, her family was chosen to come to

New Zealand when she was 18.

Now she works in a minimum wage security job – but dreams of a better life for herself and her family.

“A lot of young people come here with dreams but they don’t go further. They just work, work, work and then they burn out.”

‘If my job paid the living wage it would be a big change. I want to pay for my studies... for medical school.

Help out my mother.

‘Some people think that because a person is doing something else, we don’t have something in our minds for ourselves. But I’ve never stopped dreaming about being a doctor.’

## SHOCKING REALITY

A Living Wage Aotearoa spokesperson Ibrahim Omer says life is tough for refugees on low wages.

“The reality is shocking. Getting a job is the first challenge. After that they get low paid jobs, supermarkets, cleaning, security, they have to work double shifts.

“A lot of young people come here with dreams but they don’t go



Niguise Fenja



Participants in the Exhibition

further. They just work, work, work and then they burn out.”

Niguise Fenja is an example of what a difference a fair wage can make.

Growing up in an orphanage in Ethiopia, Niguise only managed to avoid being recruited into the army when he was 14 by pretending he had a limp. At age 15 he was arrested and beaten up by civil security.

In 2002 he arrived in New Zealand as an asylum seeker, working first as a supermarket cleaner. He went on to work in a rest home because he wanted to ‘pay something back’ by caring for others.

‘When I started as a care support it was a minimum wage job. You can’t even dream and it’s hard to survive.

But he says life changed when support workers achieved their pay equity settlement.

‘I’d been working overtime, asking for more shifts. Then suddenly we had the pay rise. I could now focus on

helping people, on social time, time for my child, time to go to church.’



The Prime Minister visits the exhibition, with Ibrahim Omer

## LIVING WAGE LIFE CHANGING

Ibrahim Omer has also benefited from the living wage. Originally from Eritrea, Ibrahim says he was working 70-80 hour weeks when he first came to New Zealand, but after five years he still hadn’t saved enough money to study.

It was only when an employer paid

the living wage, that he was able to go to Victoria University and graduate three years later.

Ibrahim says refugees have often come from traumatic situations.

“They have a lot of issues that need a lot of support, but their resilience and determination gets them through.”

There has been strong interest in the exhibition, including a packed opening night and a visit by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. Ibrahim says it has helped draw attention to the issues of refugee workers but now they need to keep the momentum going.

“Our job is to push further and make things change.”

The exhibition can be viewed at Wellington Cathedral of St Paul until July 14, and may be moved to Auckland after that. A koha is welcome to support Changemakers Resettlement Forum.



# Oranga Tamariki members want to be part of the solution

Nā Amy Ross, PSA organiser with national responsibility for Oranga Tamariki and a registered social worker

THE PSA REPRESENTS over 3000 social workers, 1300 of whom work for Oranga Tamariki.

In the wake of the controversy over ‘uplifting’ babies, our priority has been to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our members. They have always experienced fairly high levels of on-line and in-person abuse, which for many has increased significantly in recent days. Wrapping support around our members has been our focus, but it is also important to speak up and ensure their voices are heard.

As an organiser at OT, I have supported members through many dark places. Statutory social work is a complex and challenging job. Difficult decisions are made daily, that will have life-changing implications for those involved. But they are not decisions that are made lightly, or in isolation from other professionals.

It can be beautiful, lifesaving and life enhancing work. This has not been shared. I have seen social workers return children to whānau

after intensive support has helped that family recover from significant trauma. I have observed them engaging tirelessly with whānau to ensure children stay in their family unit and remain safe. I have seen staff receive messages from children years later containing simple words like “Thank you, I am only here because of you.”

I have witnessed Oranga Tamariki members challenge other agencies and systems, at personal cost, to get the best outcomes for children and families. There are many selfless people doing incredible, albeit invisible work out in the community.

Yet all is not perfect. The PSA has advocated for years for social workers to have time and resources to ensure the highest quality practice is achieved. We are not there yet, but are making steps forward every day.

This issue cannot be overstated. For a profession built on forging strong relationships in difficult circumstances, having the time to do this well is critical. It is a

fundamental reality that mistakes are more likely when a worker is overloaded and stressed.

Oranga Tamariki social workers undertake their mahi within the context of broader society. Poverty, homelessness, intergenerational trauma, social, political and economic alienation are a blight on many of our communities. In these indicators, Māori are disproportionately represented. This is why Oranga Tamariki interacts with whānau to the degree it does. Until we as a society take the necessary steps to eliminate these inequities and injustices, the problems will persist.

It must be acknowledged that our workplaces are manifestations of our communities. Both good and bad. Where racism exists in communities, it will manifest in workplaces. Oranga Tamariki is no exception to this. We all have a part to play in recognising this and ensuring systems and behaviour are subject to critical reflection.

Social workers have a responsibility

and a commitment to social justice and social change. It is embedded within our code of ethics and is an integral part of our role. It is a hard task - speaking out can be scary and leave people feeling vulnerable. We know that if social workers feel empowered they will speak out if they feel something is unjust. It is why we went into the profession to start with.

The PSA must continue to protect this space for our members. Social workers must have the freedom to challenge systems, agencies, policies and their own organisation if outcomes for whānau are to be transformative.

The media thus far has focused too much on Oranga Tamariki, as if it alone can end the impacts of colonialism and inequality. There is too much finger pointing and abuse of individuals. This is about all of us. Our members want to be part of the solution and there are few who are better equipped to lead this change.

Puao-te-ata-tu, Te Tiriti and the PSA's own Kaupapa Māori principles are embedded within our collective agreement with Oranga Tamariki. These require the promotion and empowerment of Māori voices and leadership, recognition of Te Ao Māori in everyday practice, and policies that acknowledge the systemic injustices Māori continue to face. Our members put these principles into practice every day.

As the union for social workers we will continue to use our voice to shape the future of the organisation. We hope our communities will join us to have constructive, courageous conversations about how we want the future to look and how we might get there.



## Inaugural Justice Hui a long time in the making

MĀORI STAFF FROM the Ministry of Justice have finally had an opportunity to discuss their issues with senior management at the first hui of its kind in almost 20 years.

The National Hui in Tauranga last month was the outcome of a PSA bargaining claim lodged by the Justice Rūnanga Committee in 2018.

About 75 Māori staff from the Ministry attended the hui to discuss Te Haerenga, the Ministry's Māori strategy.

They were able to raise issues directly with the Ministry's chief executive around te reo, tikanga, Māori recruitment and retention, building a network of Māori staff, and continuing engagement with senior leadership.

MOJ Rūnanga Convenor Karley Nyman saw the hui as very positive.

"It was fantastic that we as Māori employees of the Ministry were able to take part in this hui! All attendees were on the same page, regarding issues we face daily."

Another outcome of PSA bargaining was the establishment of Te

Haerenga Committee, where the Ministry and the PSA can engage jointly and implement the strategy.

Rūnanga delegate Michelle Beattie says an event of this stature was long overdue for Māori staff.

"The opportunity to portray their issues, ideas and their contribution towards implementing Maori initiatives, spoke volumes."

PSA national secretary Glenn Barclay spoke at the hui about how members could get involved with kaupapa, including the Hāpaitia Oranga Tangata justice review, public service reforms, and the PSA Rūnanga's Mana Wahine Waitangi Tribunal claim.

"It was great to hear firsthand the challenges facing frontline Māori members at the Ministry. It is important their voices are also heard in the significant reviews affecting the justice sector and the public service," he says.

The Māori Ministry of Justice staff are now looking forward to making the hui an annual event.

**Na Paula Davis, PSA delegate**



# Health workers want action on workforce capacity, conditions and culture

MORE THAN 800 PSA members have painted a grim picture of our health system in responses to a PSA survey – but they've also made positive suggestions to overcome the challenges.

The survey was designed to capture the voices of those on the frontlines, following Health Minister David Clark's announcement of a health and disability system review.

## OVERWORKED AND UNDERVALUED

Most members expressed concerns about staffing levels, with many reporting teams could be under-staffed for months or years.

A downward spiral of low staffing levels was frequently described leading to increased workloads and pressure, which in turn led to staff burnout, more staff leaving, and further declining workforce numbers.

Members also expressed frustration at time limitations hindering their ability to provide optimal care for patients, and workloads so high they had no time for breaks.

'When we are under-staffed due to

unfilled vacancies, this prevents the remaining staff from providing high quality services, and it puts them at risk of burning out' – one PSA member commented.

While respondents recognised staffing couldn't be fixed by "throwing more money at us", they called for improved pay rates and conditions to improve staff retention.

References to undesirable working conditions were frequent, ranging from complaints about relationships with management, to frustration at the poor quality of equipment and resources.

## INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND INCLUSION

A desire to improve health outcomes for Māori, Pasifika and other population groups prompted the PSA to ask members about their experiences providing culturally responsive and services. It revealed demand for more cultural support and training.

Members also called for a truly multi-cultural perspective to be integrated into the health system.

'We need services that address people's needs in a holistic way and respond to the person within their cultural and social setting,' another member commented.

Infrastructure was also a concern, with calls to introduce an integrated digital information sharing platform, and to improve communication between the health and disability sectors' various service providers and agencies.

'Differing infrastructure means time lost chasing records and correcting incorrect contact details,' commented a PSA member.

The survey results formed part of a submission from the PSA to the Health and Disability System Review panel, which can be found at [psa.org.nz/submissions](http://psa.org.nz/submissions).

An Interim Report from the Health and Disability review panel is due to be completed in August, with a second phase of the review set to run till November 2019.

The PSA will continue to make our members' voices heard loud and clear in the meantime.



# PSA Pasefika powers ahead

The PSA Pasefika Network is reigniting with the endorsement of new principles at its National Fono in Wellington last month.

WHILE THE NETWORK was originally formed in 2005, it has primarily been left to co-convenor Brian Palalagi and Pasefika organisers Stella Teariki and Duane Leo to provide a Pasefika voice in the PSA since that time.

But in the past two years the Pasefika Network has been reviving and it now has an ambitious work programme to help improve the working lives of Pasefika members.

## PAY GAP PRINCIPLES

Brian Palalagi says this includes the development of Pasefika gender pay principles which apply a Pasefika lens to the Government's gender pay principles. He says a top priority is raising awareness of this work amongst Pasefika workers.

"With Pasefika women experiencing the biggest pay gap in the Public Sector, we hope these principles will help highlight this issue and the role the union is playing in addressing it," says Brian.

The network is also working on PSA Pasefika principles, which involves

translating Ngā Kaupapa from Te Rūnanga into the languages of the diverse Pasefika population.

A mission statement has also been completed.

"The statement gives us relevance, defines who we are within the PSA, and guides the work we do in contributing to the wellbeing of our Pasefika workers," Brian says.

## CONNECTING WITH MEMBERS

An engagement strategy has been

devised to inform and educate members and delegates, and increase membership.

While PSA Pasefika has 1,762 members, there are currently almost 4,000 PSA members of Pasefika descent.

"There has been a lack of connectivity of Pasefika members within the PSA. We are reaching out now as a network to raise our profile and connect members back to the parent organisation and the wider union movement," Brian says.

## SAMOA LANGUAGE WEEK

### Talofa Lava!

In the last week of May we celebrated Vaiaso o le Gagana - Samoa Language Week.

Gagana Samoa is the third most commonly spoken language in Aotearoa.

Capital & Coast DHB member Mercy Brown has supplied us with two alagaupu or proverbs which may be relevant to the work of our union.

E pala le ma'a ae le pala le upu | *Stones decay but words last*

E le sua se lolo i se popo e tasi | *One coconut is not enough to produce coconut oil*

# Te Reo Tax Triumph

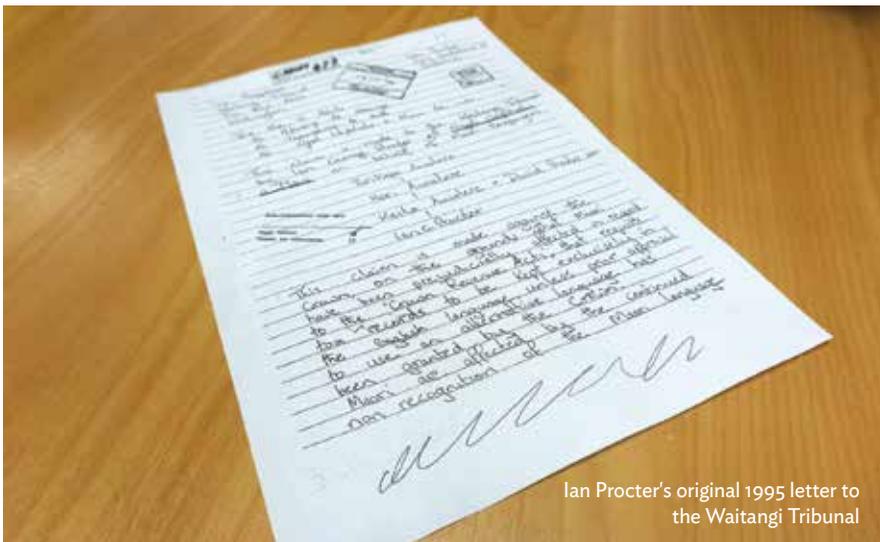
IT'S BEEN ALMOST 25 years since PSA member and IRD senior advisor Ian Procter took a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal challenging a legal requirement that taxpayers apply to keep their business records in te reo Māori.

Now a law has finally been passed enshrining the right to keep te reo Māori records, without it being at the discretion of the Inland Revenue Commissioner.

Mr Procter says he took the claim in the 1990s on behalf of Te Kohanga Reo, because the requirement breached treaty principles.

“Previously English was determined to be the appropriate language to use and everyone else had to apply. It was an affront that in their own land Māori had to apply to use their own language, especially when we were trying to revitalise the reo.”

Mr Procter says the claim Wai477 was never officially heard as attempts were made to negotiate a resolution to the issue over the years.



Ian Procter's original 1995 letter to the Waitangi Tribunal

But it was only recently that he was advised informally of the new law.

“While Māori was recognised as an official language some time ago, this is very positive progress in recognising te reo as a legal language,” Mr Procter says.

Ngā Toa Āwhina Rūnanga member Walter Kupa says the PSA Rūnanga acknowledges the law change. “It took years of perseverance to get there, but this change will enable

the growth of te reo as a universal language.”

Revenue Minister Stuart Nash says while it has long been Inland Revenue's operational practice to allow tax records to be kept in te reo Māori, the new legislation enshrines that right.

“This bill addresses the growing interest in using te reo as an everyday language, including by business.”

## Te Reo o Te Tari

THIS ISSUE OF *Working Life* introduces a series of columns on Māori in the Office – Te Reo o Te Tari.

The columns are part of the PSA's effort to tautoko the reo revitalisation strategy, Te Maihi Karauna. The strategy highlights the important role public servants have to play in revitalising te reo, as they are on the

frontline of delivering services on behalf of the Crown.

We begin the series with some mihi or Māori greetings you can use at work. The resource has been provided by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori – the Māori Language Commission. It is an example of the resources it can provide in support of organisations

taking part in language planning.

So as we look ahead to Māori Language Week from September 9-15 remember to celebrate Te Reo in the workplace, at home, and in the community.

‘Ahakoa iti, akona, kōrerotia. Learn a little. Use a little!



# NGĀ MIHI

## GREETINGS & SIGN-OFFS

Note that the Māori phrases provided are often not literal translations of the English terms given alongside them. Rather, they are equivalent ways of expressing the same ideas.

### Ngā mihi | Greetings

The following are examples of suitable greetings in correspondence

<b>Tēnā koe</b>	Dear Sir/Madam
<b>E te rangatira, tēnā koe</b>	Dear Sir/Madam
<b>Tēnā anō koe</b>	Greetings again
<b>Tēnā koe i roto i ngā āhuatanga i te wā</b>	Greetings to you and the circumstances of the time
<b>Kia ora</b>	Hello/Hi
<b>Kia ora rā</b>	Hello/Hi
<b>Kia ora anō rā</b>	Hello/Hi again

### He whakakapinga | Sign offs

The following expressions are suitable ways of ending the main part of a letter before the concluding salutation. (In Māori there are perfectly polite and do not seem abrupt, as might their literal English translation)

<b>Me mutu pea i konei</b>	I'll leave it there
<b>Kua rahi tēnei</b>	That's enough for now
<b>Kāti ake i konei</b>	Let's leave it there for now
<b>Ka nui tēnei</b>	That's it for now
<b>Ā kāti</b>	Let's leave it there

### He mihi whakakapi | Concluding salutations

The following are suitable salutations to conclude correspondence

<b>Noho ora mai rā</b>	Look after yourself
<b>Hei konā mai</b>	Goodbye for now
<b>Hei konā mai me ngā mihi</b>	Thanks and goodbye
<b>Kia kōrero anō au i a koe</b>	Until I hear from you again
<b>Māu au e whakamōhio mai</b>	Let me know
<b>Ngā mihi</b>	Thanks
<b>Nāku, nā</b>	Yours faithfully, [NAME]
<b>Nāku noa, nā</b>	Yours sincerely, [NAME]





# West Coast leads the way on Health & Safety

What do an open-cast coal mine, a secure mental health unit, a forest, an NGO, and West Coast's Shantytown theme park have in common?

THEY ALL HAVE newly trained health and safety representatives, thanks to the PSA and Worksafe Reps.

In April, the PSA Westland office hosted a two-day health and safety training course run by Worksafe Reps.

The atmosphere was charged with knowledge that significant changes to our health and safety legislation had followed the tragedies at Cave Creek and Pike River.

It can be difficult to organise quality training in far flung places, and costly to send staff away for courses, so having an organisation like Worksafe Reps willing to adapt and deliver the training locally, was a real bonus.

Word of the course was spread up and down the coast ensuring a diverse range of attendees from the health and disability, mining, forestry, public service and tourism sectors.

Trainer Ann Horner allowed the conversation to flow so people could share experiences on topics including lone and remote workers, drug/impairment testing, heavy vehicles, high-risk environments, violence against staff, protected disclosures and whistleblowing.

As an organiser, the course reinforced my duty to care and ensure members' workplaces have well-functioning health and safety committees, worker participation agreements, and elected health and safety reps in workplaces of 15 or more staff.

It got me thinking about other responsibilities too, for both individuals and employers, such as when staff or volunteers are exposed to psychological harm. I'd already been hearing from friends who had help cleaning up after the Fox River landfill had been exposed. The scale of the environmental disaster, and

seeming futility of their efforts to mitigate it, left them with a sense of trauma.

The issues are endless... are we prepared for the slumbering giant called the alpine fault? What provisions exist in collective agreements for extreme events, when you can't attend work, or it is unsafe to do so? How do you assess the risks for care and support workers in people's homes? How do we reduce the potential for harm in cases of sickness, or absences caused by the stress of excessive workloads or negative behaviours?

It's a journey as challenging as our geography, but the destination is the same, our rights as workers and citizens to be protected from harm and to work in healthy and safe conditions.

**Na Paul Kearns, West Coast organiser**

## Health & Safety Star

ENSURING THE SAFE disposal of hazardous chemicals at Christchurch Men's Prison has helped earn Hamish Thomasson the title of Department of Corrections Southern Region Health and Safety Representative of the Year.

After noticing substances including floor cleaners and dishwashing chemicals were "just being thrown in the bin", the PSA member and health and safety rep undertook an audit of chemicals used in the prison kitchen.

"From the bins, the chemical would go into landfill and be a danger to marine life, which was not good for the ecosystem," Hamish says.

He created a new storage area for the chemicals, educated staff and prisoners about the dangers associated with them, and alerted kitchen staff at other sites to



ensure they disposed of chemicals appropriately.

Hamish is known as an 'Offender Employment Star' because he has also improved safety for staff and prisoners, who undertake training at the prison in employment areas with

high safety risks including kitchen work, horticulture, farming, timber processing and painting.

His award nomination describes him as 'extremely passionate' and a champion for health and safety in the workplace.

## Why choose Worksafe Reps for Health & Safety Training?

WORKSAFE REPS WAS established by the PSA and other unions to provide courses in workplace health and safety.

It is a union-based organisation which deliberately delivers training from a worker perspective.

Worksafe Rep's two-day Stage 1 course explains the duties of health and safety reps, and the Health & Safety at Work Act.

"The legislation was devised in the wake of the Pike River tragedy to give more power to workers to raise concerns without fear it could adversely affect their employment,"

says Worksafe Reps national director Peter Scanlan.

Once reps complete the course and achieve the Unit Standard 29315, they are able to have serious health and safety concerns registered with Worksafe NZ, who can then investigate and issue an improvement notice if warranted.

"PSA members might ask what can go wrong in an office? But health and safety reps can also raise concerns about matters relating to health and well-being, including bullying, harassment, and psychological harm," says Peter.

Worksafe Reps is developing a course on the prevention of workplace bullying, and other hot topics including the prevention of fatigue for shift workers.

Their courses are delivered by highly qualified and experienced trainers, in partnership with the Open Polytechnic.

National secretary Glenn Barclay is a Worksafe Reps board member, ensuring the PSA voice is heard at board level.

Register or call for more information about the courses, which can be run around the country as well as online.



## CPOW! Climate Proof Our Work

A GLOBAL DAY of action encouraging us to climate proof our workplaces generated plenty of interest from PSA Eco Network members on June 26.

We asked members to invite employers to discuss how their organisations can lower emissions, prepare for change and ensure a just transition for workers. Briar Wyatt from Auckland Council says her meeting was super productive.

“We ended up deciding to create an internal memo that guides how our departments could take climate change into account. That’s an exciting work in progress now!”

### CLIMATE PROOFING THE PSA

The PSA has already been taking additional steps towards climate proofing its own offices, and developing policies on sustainability, procurement, and environmentally-friendly and ethical investments.

The Eco Network has made a submission to the Executive Board on the investment policy.

“The Board was really receptive to our ideas. It was a great example of people power in action,” says Eco Network member Samuel Cussen.

### CLIMATE STRIKE

The PSA and the Eco Network have supported the School Strike for Climate, which has seen thousands of students on the streets of

Aotearoa and the world in the past few months.

Unions including the PSA will be supporting further action for the climate on September 27, called for by environmental activist Greta Thunberg.

### JOIN THE NETWORK

The Eco Network is for members interested in building union activity around environmental issues in the workplace and beyond. Interest is growing, with expressions of interest in leadership roles. Go to MyPSA and add the network if you would like to join, or email [eco@psa.org.nz](mailto:eco@psa.org.nz). Read more about us here [www.psa.org.nz/eco](http://www.psa.org.nz/eco)

# ‘We all have a role to play’

Speakers at a top-level summit on Just Transitions have highlighted the role unions, members, and others can play to ensure New Zealand moves towards a sustainable future.

The summit was held in Taranaki in May to bring everyone together to devise a roadmap to achieve a new kind of economy, that combines sustainability with decent and well-paying jobs.

## SUPPORTED TRANSITION

The PSA was represented at the event, along with unions and representatives from business, local government, iwi and other sectors from New Zealand and abroad.

CTU Secretary Sam Huggard says the provision of good jobs and secure incomes in industries which are good for the planet is part of the solution.

“The essence of a just transition is simple – the costs of the necessary changes to ensure a more stable climate must be spread evenly amongst us.”

“Important for working Kiwis is a plan to support them through change.”

He says the plan should include support for people as they transition into new work, including job placement, retraining, and income support.

## ROLE OF UNIONS

PSA national secretaries Glenn Barclay and Kerry Davies agree, we all have a role to play to achieve a low emissions future.

“Our role as union members should be to further strengthen our voice and influence in reaching a just transition.”

Former South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill called for shareholders and workers to put pressure on employer investments.

He acknowledged the role of unions saying, ‘It’s two-fold. Members need to demand their employers start making these changes, while union leaders pressure Government.’

## TARANAKI CASE STUDY

Taranaki hosted the summit, and was used as a case study, due to its heavy economic reliance on the fossil fuel and dairy industries.

While opening the summit, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced a \$27m initial investment in the region, to establish a clean energy centre, with another \$20M allotted in the recent budget.

“The importance of ensuring a sustainable and just transition to a lower emission New Zealand cannot be overstated,” the Prime Minister said.

The CTU’s Sam Huggard welcomed the Taranaki 2050 roadmap, saying it showed the Government is willing to back the transition with practical initiatives to diversify.

Liana Poutou, from Te Atiawa in Taranaki, put the pressing need for change perfectly, ‘there’s nothing like a good deadline to get things moving.’

## NEXT STEPS

Across the two-day event, topics discussed included technology development, research and innovation, education to develop skills to match emerging market changes, and more efficiency across the board.

Increased investment in sustainable ventures was identified as a keystone of change. If viable returns can be established in this area, it would eventually become self-perpetuating.

The initial divestment from current portfolios of investments such as fossil fuels is seen as the hardest step in the process.

MBIE has established a Just Transitions Unit to coordinate the transition to a low emissions economy.

For more information you can visit [www.mbie.govt.nz/just-transition](http://www.mbie.govt.nz/just-transition)



UnionAID, the New Zealand union movement's international development charity, is this year celebrating its 10th anniversary of supporting working people in developing countries in their struggle for decent wages and a life free of poverty.

Here is the story of Pancha, one of the many workers whose life has been transformed through the power of collective action and the support of UnionAID.

IN A BARREN fenced off area on the fringe of her small Tamil township in Nadu, India, Pancha tends carefully to a cremation pit, readying it for its next use. As a Dalit, Pancha was born with the duty of cremation work. It is tough work she and her husband carry out with dignity. They would typically earn less than \$NZ2 for the 24 hours it takes to complete a cremation.

Pancha's working life might seem a world apart from that of PSA members here in Aotearoa but there is an important link between her and our union through UnionAID.

When UnionAID's partner, the Tamil Nadu Labour union started establishing a union for cremation workers nearly 10 years ago, Pancha took the brave step to join. With training and support, she has become a district leader, speaking at public rallies and taking the union's demands to local officials

- something she never thought she could do as a both a Dalit and a woman.

### WORKER RECOGNITION

The collective strength of the union has seen cremation workers officially recognised by the government, issued with ID cards and all the rights - including access to public healthcare - that come with that. Pancha and other cremation workers successfully bargained with the district council to set pay rates for cremation work and raise these each year. Other cremation workers in Madurai City successfully campaigned to become council employees with monthly salaries.

The extra income has helped Pancha send her oldest son Shankar to teacher college. After years studying under the light of the nearby railway station he is now pursuing his passion as an art teacher.

Pancha's story shows unions have the power to tackle the inequalities that keep working men and women trapped in poverty. It is a power that she knows well. When asked why she chose to join the union 10 years ago her answer is simply "When we all clap together, only then will they hear us."

Recently the PSA Executive agreed to support UnionAID with an annual donation of \$3,000 a year for the next ten years. This funding will enable it to grow the support it gives to partners like the Tamil Nadu Labour Union and the important work they are doing. Many PSA staff and members also support UnionAID through monthly donations and you can learn more about UnionAID's work and how to donate at [www.unionaid.org.nz](http://www.unionaid.org.nz)



OUT@PSA flew the flag proudly for the PSA at the Pride Parade in Wellington



A new and refreshed Deaf and Disabled Network committee met in Wellington in May.



Canterbury DHB members from the Medical Records team got into the spirit of Admin Appreciation Day in April



Access members Palmerston North Protest



The PSA Executive Board at the launch of the new Public Service reforms in Wellington



Community and Public Services Sector Committee Meeting

# ‘It’s like whistling a happy tune as the ship goes down.’

*Office Politics* is the twelfth studio album by the Devine Comedy, a band from Northern Ireland formed some 30 years ago. Neil Hannon, the lead and only constant member of the band says “The central characters in *Office Politics* are the machines. Machines that do this, machines that do that. Machines that will smother us all in our sleep.”

It’s a record steeped in ambivalence about the depersonalised nature of the human experience in today’s world of work, workplace humiliations and gross inequities garnished with humour and hooks

fans have come to appreciate from previous albums. *Absolutely Obsolete* is a song about the zero-hour world of work, where your identity is no longer bound to your lifetime vocation- because there are hardly any lifetime vocations any more. *You’ll Never Work In This Town Again* explores the contradiction between the desire for automation and the unemployment which results. And do the lyrics of *Office Politics* resonate in one way or another?

*‘Intern chokes on his gooseberry fool  
Consternation in the typing pool  
Press the flesh, do the deal*

*Book your place on the hamster wheel  
See that PowerPoint presentation  
Worthy of a BAFTA nomination  
Zero hours, maximum pressure  
You know what they say about  
business and pleasure’*

Bitingly smart wordplay makes us laugh. Catchy harmonies make us tap our feet. Yet it is also an album that puts the finger on the negative impacts on the ‘lowly cog in the machine’ who is still called a ‘vital member of the team’.

**Nā Andrea Fromm, PSA Policy Advisor**

## Looking ahead to local government elections

As we look ahead to local authority and DHB elections later this year, the PSA welcomes law changes that reinstate social, environmental, economic, and cultural well-being into the Local Government Act.

The well-being aspects were removed in 2012 and replaced with a narrow purpose of local government focussing on efficiency.

“We hope this promotes recognition

of the wider functions of local government, and encourages democratic participation at a local level - especially considering the upcoming local body elections,” says PSA national secretary Glenn Barclay.

### LOCAL AUTHORITY ELECTIONS KEY DATES:

**July 19-August 16** Nominations open for candidates

**September 20-25** Voting documents delivered to households. Postal voting begins

**October 12** Polling Day – voting closes 12 noon

For advice for local government members considering standing or campaigning go to:

**[www.psa.org.nz/at-work/our-sectors/local-government/psa-lg-election-advice](http://www.psa.org.nz/at-work/our-sectors/local-government/psa-lg-election-advice)**



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