

# Unions NSW

## 2008 Annual Report





# Contents

<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Mark Lennon Secretary’s Report</b> .....	<b>6</b>
John Robertson.....	6
“Stop the Sell-Off” Campaign.....	6
Fair Work Bill .....	7
Paid Parental Leave Campaign.....	7
State Wage Case.....	7
OH&S.....	8
Other Staff Changes.....	8
Finance Reports.....	9
The Year Ahead .....	9
<b>Chris Christodoulou Assistant Secretary</b> .....	<b>11</b>
National OH&S Review .....	11
Federal Industrial Relations Bill.....	11
Construction.....	11
UnionStart.....	11
Procurement Issues .....	12
Other Responsibilities.....	12
<b>Adam Kerslake Deputy Assistant Secretary</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Rail Industry .....	13
NSW Public Sector Campaign.....	13
NSW Electricity Campaign.....	13
Federal IR Campaign .....	13
Correctional Industries Consultative Council of NSW .....	13
Unions NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee.....	13
Strategic focus for Unions NSW following the “Your Rights at Work” Campaign .....	13

<b>Amanda Tattersall Deputy Assistant Secretary .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Sydney Alliance.....	14
Women’s Rights at Work .....	14
Working NSW Research and Events .....	14
Other Responsibilities.....	15
<b>Mary Yaager Campaign Director.....</b>	<b>16</b>
"Stop the Sell-Off" - Power Campaign.....	16
Super Saturday .....	16
YR@W Campaign.....	17
NSW Fire Fighters Lobbying Campaign.....	17
International Day of Mourning .....	17
Paid Maternity Leave Campaign .....	17
Cancer Council Daffodil Day.....	17
Other responsibilities .....	18
<b>Alisha Wilde Industrial &amp; OHS Officer.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Federal Industrial Relations System .....	19
NSW Public Sector .....	19
Health.....	19
Occupational Health & Safety.....	19
National OH&S Review .....	20
Other Responsibilities.....	20
<b>Peter McPherson Industrial Officer, Northern Region.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Jill Biddington Acting Executive Officer .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Sarah Gardner Paid Parental Leave Campaign .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Paul Doughty Campaigns Officer .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Rights at Work.....	25
Other activities .....	25
<b>Alison Rudman Research Officer .....</b>	<b>27</b>

Stop the Sell-Off .....	27
Paid Parental Leave .....	27
Working NSW Research and Events .....	27
Other Responsibilities.....	28
<b>Neale Towart Librarian and Heritage Officer .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Trades Hall Heritage .....	29
Exhibitions.....	30
<b>Matt Dixon &amp; Kate Minter Union Start Coordinators .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Education in Schools.....	31
Media and Mass-Mail Out .....	31
Workplace Visits .....	32
<b>Arthur Rorris Secretary, SCLC (Regional Branch Council) .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix A: 2008 Scrolls of Honour .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix B: 2008 Motions of Condolence .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix C: 2008 Guest Speakers .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendix D: Significant Events of 2008 .....</b>	<b>37</b>

## Mark Lennon Secretary's Report

2008 has been a year of change for Unions NSW. It was a year that gave the union movement an opportunity to change from a reactive to an active agenda and build on the events and lessons of the past 3 years.

It was also a year of change inside Unions NSW. Late in the year saw a number of significant personnel changes to the organisation leading to me becoming Secretary in October.



### John Robertson

The most notable personnel change of course, was the resignation of John Robertson after seven years as secretary. John was a leader during a critical time for the union movement. He was always prepared to take on the hard causes. He had a leading role in the 2001 Workers Compensation dispute, he advocated strongly on behalf of refugees and, in particular, he masterminded the "Your Rights at Work" strategy, particularly in NSW. He left the movement in NSW with a significant legacy that is stronger and more united.

On a personal level I must thank John for his support and friendship over a number of years. On a professional level he deserves congratulations for turning Unions NSW into one of the foremost campaigning organisations in the country. We look forward to him continuing his work as an advocate for working people in the NSW Parliament.

### "Stop the Sell-Off" Campaign

Shortly after the wonderful result of the 2007 Federal Election, the NSW Government announced its plans to privatise the generation and retail arms of the state's electricity sector. It was evident to the union movement that this proposal was not in the best interests of the community or the workforce. Privatisation meant higher prices, less reliable supply and jobs being sent off-shore. A campaign was launched to oppose the proposal, and building on the experiences of the "Your Rights at Work" campaign, Unions NSW and relevant affiliates were quick to mobilise.

The "Stop the Sell-Off" campaign was one of the most difficult and intense campaigns in which the union movement had been involved. It pitted the parliamentary and industrial

wings of the labour movement against one another resulting in a divisive vote on the matter at the ALP state conference in May.

Ultimately the right outcome was achieved as the proposal was withdrawn by the Government when it became obvious it would not have sufficient support for it on the floor of Parliament.

Credit must go to officials, delegates, workers, and “Rights at Work” groups for the hard work and long hours they put into defeating the privatisation proposal.

### Fair Work Bill

The year saw the introduction of the Fair Work Bill, the Federal Government’s response to WorkChoices. It was a significant step to see the bill introduced into the parliament and a testament to working peoples resolve over a period of three years to have the WorkChoices legislation overturned.

The new legislation which contains a significant number of rights for working people, including the right to collectively bargain, is a work in progress. In particular Unions NSW believes that the legislation has to allow an ongoing role for the states in industrial relations and have advocated that position in our submission to the senate inquiry into the bill.

### Paid Parental Leave Campaign

To celebrate the centenary of International Women’s Day, the Unions NSW Women’s Committee convened the “Women’s Rights at Work” Conference in March. The conference was an opportunity for over 250 women, many of them rank and file activists to come together and plan campaigns around the issues that are important to them. Overwhelmingly, they expressed their support for 6 months paid parental leave. The parental leave claim was developed further by the Women’s Committee and a series of campaigning events followed. These included a video petition and submissions to the Productivity Commission’s inquiry into paid parental leave. A highlight for both officials and activists was a bus trip down to Canberra with over 20 activists (and some of their children) to advocate for paid parental leave directly to our federal politicians. Whilst the Productivity Commission’s interim report did not support the view that women should be able to access 6 months paid maternity leave, suggesting 18 weeks instead, the campaign will continue and we are confident this goal will ultimately be achieved.

### State Wage Case

Unions NSW again ran the State Wage Case in 2008 for those workers who are not covered by the federal industrial relations legislation. It was of particular importance that we ran the case as these workers are often in low paid occupations in unincorporated small

Unions NSW  
2008 Annual Report

workplaces. The case was particularly successful this year with the Industrial Relations Commission awarding a 4% increase across all classifications. The outcome was a credit to all involved, particularly those affiliates who provided us with statements from working people struggling on low incomes.

### OH&S

During the year, the federal Government launched a proposal to harmonise the states' OH&S systems. Unions NSW expressed concern with the proposal as we believe it will weaken the protections for workers presently available under the NSW OH&S ACT.

This concern was realised with the publication of the first report from the panel appointed by the federal government to consider the matter. The report recommended a weakening of a number of provisions of the NSW system including the reverse onus of proof.

Unions NSW will be campaigning most strongly in 2009 for the protection of workers OH&S rights in NSW under any harmonisation proposal.

### Other Staff Changes

Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Thistlethwaite also left Unions NSW after four of years to become General Secretary of the NSW branch of the Australian Labor Party.

Matt has a sharp analytic mind that was essential in understanding and educating the NSW union movement about the detail and implications of both the WorkChoices legislation and the Forward with Fairness Bill. He also spent considerable time on the yearly State Wage Case. Most recently Matt led the "Stop the Sell-Off" campaign.

I am very grateful to Matt for his diligence, determination and support over the past 4 years and look forward to continuing to work with him in his new role.

Daniel Kildea also left the organisation this year. Daniel did an enormous amount of work on the "Your Rights at Work" campaign, most notably with the bus trips in 2007. Notably it was done in a calm and measured way. He has embarked on a career as an organiser with the Independent Education Union. I thank him for his hard work and wish him the best.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Amanda Tattersall went on maternity leave in August and we look forward to her return in March.

## Finance Reports

### *Management Account*

Total Income for the year included Sustentation Fees of \$1,659,111 (2007 \$1,647,206) and a dividend from Chifley Financial Services Limited of \$1,000,000 (2007 \$1,000,000) making total income \$117,714 higher than the previous year.

Total expenditure for the year was \$5,430,025 and this included the “Your Rights at Work” Campaign expenses of \$977,584. The total expenditure for the year was \$330,328 lower than the previous year.

The result for the year was a deficit of \$1,797,145 as compared with a deficit of \$2,245,187 for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

### *Property Account*

Total income for the year was \$2,072,644 which was an increase of \$164,236 on the previous year. Total expenditure of \$1,258,702 was \$219,610 higher than the previous year. The result for the year was a surplus before a significant item of \$813,942 as compared with a surplus of \$869,316 for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007. The significant item was an increase of \$3,259,373 in Provision for Doubtful Debt – Other Fund (in respect of Unions NSW’s internal inter entity loans).

### *Currawong*

The deficit for the year was \$54,762. This was \$43,145 lower than in 2007.

### *Wireless Committee*

Total income for the year was \$4,369,791 as compared with \$3,851,068 for 2007. Total income includes interest of \$3,679,927 ( 2007 \$3,019,132 ) charged to the Trades Hall Association Limited on the loan facility made available to that company and rent received from the tenants of the Gough Whitlam Plaza building at Parramatta.

### *Trades Hall*

The result for the year was a deficit of \$5,245,252 compared to a deficit of \$4,534,484 for the previous year.

Total income of \$784,438 was \$303,346 greater than the previous year due mainly to the receipt of rental income.

Total expenditure of \$6,029,690 included depreciation of \$1,003,924 and interest \$4,073,350, (2007 \$3,013,422).

## The Year Ahead

The consequences of the downturn in the economy present the biggest challenge ahead.

Unions NSW  
2008 Annual Report

Unions NSW will be seeking both the state and federal governments to take the necessary steps to boost the economy in order to protect jobs.

The year will also present unions with opportunities to grow with the roll out of the new federal legislation. Whatever the challenges, Unions NSW will continue being a vibrant voice for the working people of NSW.

I commend the report to you.



*Sydney Trades Hall as pictured in 1912.*

## Chris Christodoulou Assistant Secretary



During the year Chris has been responsible for overseeing the areas of OH&S, Workers' Compensation, Building & Construction and the UnionStart Program, working in conjunction with other Officers. Chris has also taken on responsibility for overall office management.

### National OH&S Review

During the year Chris was responsible together with Alisha Wilde for co-coordinating the Unions NSW response to the OH&S Review. Chris also liaised with affiliates and WorkCover over the benefits issue.

In relation to the benefits issue, Unions NSW opposed the amalgamation of Sections 66 and 67 lump sum benefits unless it could be demonstrated that workers would be better off. The State Government decided not to proceed with the proposal following lengthy negotiations. We were also successful in having the Government improve the lump sum payments made to families where workers have died as a consequence of work.

### Federal Industrial Relations Bill

Chris has together with Alisha Wilde shared responsibility for liaising with the ACTU regarding the Federal Government's Fair Work Bill and preparing Unions NSW's submission to the Senate Inquiry.

### Construction

During the year Chris has continued to oversee activities in the construction industry including representing Unions NSW on the National ABCC Campaign Committee, reviewing the Bluescope Construction Award as it relates to the \$300 million upgrade of the Number 5 Blast Furnace, assisting the unions to finalise the Port Botany Agreement and problems associated with John Holland's attitude towards unions at the Kurnell Desalination Project.

### UnionStart

During the year Chris has worked on a youth project following approval by Unions NSW Executive and the ACTU. The strategy is to both help educate young people about unions and to also organise them as early as we can into the trade union movement.

The pilot program will commence over the 2008/2009 school holiday period targeting 14 – 18 year olds in the Parramatta area.

Unions NSW  
2008 Annual Report

The program called UnionStart will utilise organisers (1 fulltime and 1 part-time) for approximately 6 months and will be a third tier of membership of the Unions Australia Program.

### Procurement Issues

During the year Chris has been representing Unions NSW in developing the ACTU procurement position and has attended a number of meetings with the ACTU and the government in this regard.

### Other Responsibilities

During the year Chris also was active on a range of Board and Committees including:

- Chairperson, Wollongong Sportsground Trust
- Sydney Olympic Park Authority
- Correctional Services Industry Council
- Building & Construction Long Service Leave Committee

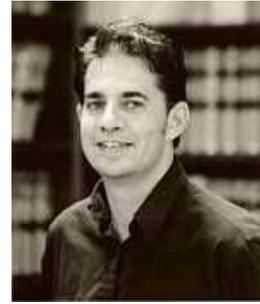
Chris also coordinated the infrastructure associated with the successful Power Industry Rally outside Parliament House, and has been assisting affiliates in various aspects of the NSW Public Sector wages round, and convening meetings of Sydney Ferries affiliates as appropriate.



*Assistant Secretary Chris Christodoulou participating in the anti ABCC rally held in Sydney.*

## **Adam Kerslake**

### **Deputy Assistant Secretary**



Adam worked on the following during the course of 2008:

#### **Rail Industry**

In the later part of 2008, Adam assumed responsibility for the NSW rail industry. One highlight was that Adam worked with unions to secure the future for the public ownership of the Railcorp rail maintenance facility.

#### **NSW Public Sector Campaign**

Adam was given responsibility for developing a 3 year campaign for the NSW public sector. This campaign will be a feature of Unions NSW work over the next three years.

#### **NSW Electricity Campaign**

Adam worked to support the Stop the Sell Off campaign. Adam worked with Mary Yaager and Matt Thistlethwaite specifically in the areas of campaign design, delegate development, mobilisation of local groups and political campaigning.

#### **Federal IR Campaign**

Adam worked with the ACTU to coordinate the NSW political lobbying and grass roots campaign in support of improved federal IR laws.

#### **Correctional Industries Consultative Council of NSW**

Adam is the Unions NSW nominee for this consultative Council and attends periodic board meeting and various follow up actions.

#### **Unions NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee**

Adam was the convener of the Unions NSW ATSI Committee.

#### **Strategic focus for Unions NSW following the “Your Rights at Work” Campaign**

Following on from the successful “Your Rights at Work” campaign, Adam has worked to develop our thinking into 2008 and beyond.

## Amanda Tattersall Deputy Assistant Secretary



Amanda had three key areas of responsibility this year. They were the Women's Rights at Work agenda, Sydney Alliance and the development of Working NSW events and research. Amanda went on maternity leave in August 2008.

### Sydney Alliance

Amanda continued to facilitate Unions NSW support for the Sydney Alliance. The Alliance has gone from strength to strength moving from the building phase to the organising phase. Unions NSW had been involved in training with other community, religious, union and social group partners in the organising model that the Alliance uses. A significant proportion of the funding for the Alliance now comes from partner organisations.

### Women's Rights at Work

Amanda organised the Unions NSW Women's Conference attended by 250 women. It was from this conference that the paid parental leave campaign developed.

Amanda was responsible for developing a campaign plan that other staff executed once she herself went on maternity leave.

Amanda oversaw Unions NSW first submission to the Productivity Commission on this matter including a number of media events during the Commission's hearings, alongside key activists.

Amanda began the ground work for the paid parental leave lobbying days. She also represented Unions NSW at numerous forums, branch meetings and union conferences to encourage community involvement in the campaign.

Amanda also oversaw submissions to parliamentary inquiries on other issues relating to women and work including pay equity.

### Working NSW Research and Events

Amanda completed evaluative research projects for a number of affiliates to help them improve their organising capacity.

Amanda was assisted by Alison Rudman to plan and execute a roundtable on the future of the industrial relations system in Australia.

She also planned the role of Working NSW in hosting a variety of visiting scholars for ad hoc seminars. These included coalitions, community campaigning and union strategic planning experts.

Before going on leave, Amanda was responsible for coordinating the Australia@Work study and the evaluation of the “Your Rights at Work” campaign by external academics.

Until the time of her leave she was also the primary contact point for scholarly inquiries to Unions NSW.

### Other Responsibilities

She also represented Unions NSW on the following boards and committees until her leave:

- Convenor- Unions NSW Women’s Committee
- Get Up Board
- Australia@Work Advisory Group
- Work and Organisational Studies Advisory Group (University of Sydney)



*Rank and file union members campaigning for paid parental leave.*

## Mary Yaager Campaign Director



Mary was extensively involved in the YR@W Campaign over the past four years and during this period Mary developed comprehensive campaigning skills. Unions NSW decided to continue with its dedicated campaigning focus and Mary has been transferred into the campaign unit under Deputy Assistant Secretary, Adam Kerlake. Mary in her new role will be spending the majority of her time in campaigning however will assist Assistant Secretary, Chris Christodoulou from time to time in Industrial and Workers Compensation matters.

### "Stop the Sell-Off" - Power Campaign

Mary assisted Deputy Assistant Secretaries Matt Thistlethwaite and Adam Kerlake in the "Stop the Sell-Off" Campaign against the State Government trying to privatise the State's electricity assets.

Adam Kerlake developed a strategic and comprehensive political campaign strategy to defeat the government's plan. Mary Yaager and Peter McPherson implemented this campaign plan on the ground and worked extensively with the power industry delegates to run one of the most successful political campaigns in the history of New South Wales.

The campaign was similar to the YR@W campaign targeting the community through petitions, street stalls, community festivals and sporting events, workplaces and protest rallies. During this period Mary and Adam worked closely with developing a number of delegates in the power industry and this led to them organising community meetings, lobbying and delegations to politicians including Liberal, Labor and National parties.

### Super Saturday

During the campaign Mary and Adam organised *Super Saturday* where YR@W, power industry workers and Power to the People activists engaged in a massive event. This event targeted key politicians Liberal, Labor and National in over 55 seats in New South Wales. The purpose of Super Saturday was to put pressure on the local Member of Parliament to vote against the legislation when it was introduced into parliament.

The power campaign was successful and a number of the members of the Australian Labor Party in both houses of parliament were willing to cross the floor to vote against the legislation. In addition we obtained the support of the Liberal and National Parties and the legislation was withdrawn.

### YR@W Campaign

Mary was given the responsibility of coordinating and supporting all of the YR@W groups which had been formed during the YR@W Campaign. Mary involved all of the groups in a number of the campaigns that Unions NSW had initiated in 2008 such as “Stop the Sell Off” and “Super Saturday” which targeted every single electorate in New South Wales, paid maternity leave and the lobbying of key NSW federal politicians regarding the industrial relations legislation and the abolition of the ABCC.

### NSW Fire Fighters Lobbying Campaign

Mary Yaager assisted Adam Kerslake and Stephen Dampf in the development of a Unions NSW lobbying training resource “*How to Successfully Lobby a Politician*” This training was piloted with the NSW Fire Brigade Employees Union. The Union’s organisers and delegates participated in this pilot and it also assisted them with their campaign to maintain current safety standards in the face of government proposals and to withdraw this Award Application which will seriously undermine frontline community safety.

### International Day of Mourning

Mary was responsible for organising this year’s International Day of Mourning Ceremony held 24<sup>th</sup> April 2008. This year’s event paid a special tribute to Bernie Banton by his family. This year’s service was our most successful to date with over 400 people attending from as far as New Zealand and Western Australia. The then Deputy Premier the Hon. John Watkins also attended.

Mary is currently working with the Darling Harbour Foreshore Authority to landscape and improve and upgrade the surroundings at Reflection Park. Reflection Park will be upgraded to include park benches, landscaping and stepping stones which will provide the history of the union movement as well as details outlining the significance of the bronze memorial sculpture. A commemorative inscription plaque will be placed within the park.

### Paid Maternity Leave Campaign

Mary Yaager assisted Amanda Tattersall in the campaign for six months paid maternity leave. Mary, along with the YR@W groups, organised a number of launches in over 20 electorates with Federal and State Politicians. The purpose was to get the local State and Federal members to support the campaign. The campaign received fantastic community support and every launch received overwhelming media coverage with a front page feature and the number one story on local TV and radio.

### Cancer Council Daffodil Day

Mary organised a Union stall at Wynyard Station to assist the Cancer Council in raising funds for daffodil day. Mary organised for t-shirts to be printed ‘*Unions support Daffodil Day*’ in

Unions NSW  
2008 Annual Report

August. Mary has advised the Cancer Council that in 2009 stalls will be organised throughout New South Wales.

Other responsibilities

- Mary is a Member of ASSET Board.



*Mourners gather on the International Day of Mourning 2008 to remember those who lost their lives at work.*

## Alisha Wilde

### Industrial & OHS Officer



Alisha has continued her role as an Industrial officer throughout this year. Her duties included general advocacy in the Industrial Relations Commission and responsibilities for the Department of Health, in particular the Department of Health Skilled Trades Award, general public sector matters and the review of NSW Awards.

#### Federal Industrial Relations System

Alisha is working with Assistant Secretary, Chris Christodoulou in coordinating the Unions NSW response and Senate submissions to the Fair Work Bill. Alisha also has established Forums for Industrial Officers regarding the Bill.

#### NSW Public Sector

Alisha was also responsible for coordinating public sector union discussions around Policy changes in the Public Sector. Such policy changes included the Sick Leave Policy, Managing Displaced Employees, Consultative Policy and Transition to Retirement Policy. Alisha is the Unions NSW representative on the Public Sector Union Consultative Committee and has also taken over responsibility to the NSW Public Sector Employees Superannuation Committee.

#### Health

Alisha was responsible for the Public Hospitals Skilled Trades Award negotiations. The award expired on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 and re-negotiations are currently in progress.

Alisha has also had responsibility for the health sector and has been involved in coordinating joint union responses to the Managing Displaced Employees policy.

#### Occupational Health & Safety

Alisha was appointed as the Unions NSW representative on the WorkCover NSW Advisory Council and the WorkCover NSW Centre of Excellence.

Alisha was also appointed as the Unions NSW Board Member on the Workers' Health Centre.

Alisha and Assistant Secretary, Chris Christodoulou re-established the Unions NSW OHS & Workers Compensation Committee. The Committee meets on the second Monday of each month to discuss all current workers compensation & OHS matters.

### National OH&S Review

During the year Alisha was responsible together with Chris Christodoulou for co-ordinating the Unions NSW response to the OH&S Review. Alisha also liaised with affiliates and the Review Panel as to the appropriate content of any model legislation.

2009 shall prove to be a busy year in relation to the final outcomes of any harmonized OHS Legislation. Unions NSW shall be working with all affiliates to ensure that OHS standards in NSW are not reduced.

### Other Responsibilities

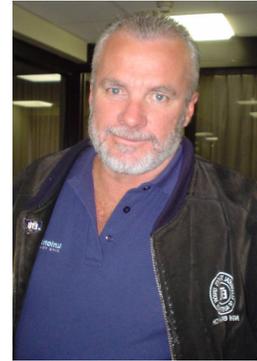
Alisha was also responsible for the following: -

Working with the Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Thistlethwaite, with the 2008 State Wage Case.

Section 19 Award Reviews in the NSW IRC

- Assisting affiliates with the implementation of the State Wage Case and other matters in the NSW IRC
- Providing general advice to affiliates on industrial matters
- Attending Public Employment Office Consultative forums
- Intervening in matters in the Industrial Relations Commission of NSW on behalf of Unions NSW affiliates
- Union elected representative on the Industrial Relations Society of NSW
- Training Wage (State) Award, State Wage Case variation.
- Discussions with affiliates and NSW Government for a Public Holidays Amendment Act for NSW.

## Peter McPherson Industrial Officer, Northern Region



Peter's responsibilities include power generation companies; Macquarie Generation, Eraring Energy and Delta Electricity, Power Transmission company TransGrid, Civil and Building Construction Activities in the Newcastle, Hunter, Central Coast and Northern NSW regions.

Peter provided assistance in the "Stop the Sell-Off" campaign regarding the NSW Governments proposal to privatise the NSW power industry.

All Power Generators continue to have 146 A Referral Agreements with the Power Industry Unions referring all Industrial Matters to the Industrial Relations Commission of NSW (IRC of NSW).

Delta Electricity and Macquarie Generation renewed their Enterprise Agreements for a period of 12 months that delivered 4.75% increase to wages and allowances. Eraring Energy will follow with the same arrangements at the end of 2008. Negotiations with TransGrid to replace their Agreement that expires in December 2008 are continuing, the major problem here being the wages policy of the NSW Government.

The Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales assisted the power unions in numerous disputes with each of the Generators throughout 2008 as well assisting the parties in the dispute with the NSW Government over Power Privatisation.

2008 saw the commencement of construction activities on the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the NCIG Coal Export Loader; a \$1billion investment to the local coal chain. An industrial Agreement reached in late 2007 with the construction unions has provided excellent rates of pay and conditions as well as a good OH&S record and industrial stability.

Other ongoing construction projects are the Alstom Colongra gas fired power station, the 3Exp expansion at PWCS and the upgrade at Hydro aluminum smelter, a total value of approximately \$1billion. All have Agreements in place between the unions and contractors. Discussions have commenced with EDI Downer to cover construction work at the Mangoola coal mine project in the upper Hunter.

Unions NSW  
2008 Annual Report

The future looks rosy for the region with approximately \$8 billion worth of projects on the drawing board over the next 2 to 5 years.

Peter is the Assistant Secretary of Newcastle Trades Hall Council, a Director of Hunter Valley Training Company and a member of the Vocational Training Tribunal.



*Power industry workers protesting outside NSW Parliament House as a part of the 'Stop the Sell-Off' campaign.*

## Jill Biddington Acting Executive Officer



Jill was appointed on a contract basis to work part-time with Unions NSW to fill the vacancy left by Amanda Tattersall whilst she is on parental leave. She commenced work at the beginning of September 2008.

Her role is to have oversight of the maternity leave campaign, Working NSW and to represent Unions NSW as the partner in the Sydney Alliance.

In addition to managing these strategic areas of work, Jill has assisted with a range of trainings and development opportunities for officers and has been asked to co-ordinate a development program for union managers regarding the administration of unions with a network of union managers. She is also involved in drafting and editing a number of internal staffing policies and providing associated training for officers and staff.



*Young unionists participating in training during their 'Union Summer' internship.*

## Sarah Gardner

### Paid Parental Leave Campaign



Sarah Gardner joined Unions NSW in late August on a part-time secondment for six months to work on the Paid Parental Leave campaign and assist in facilitating the Unions NSW Women's Committee.

Sarah worked with Alison Rudman to facilitate a trip to Canberra by a group of roughly 25 rank-and-file union activists and union officials who met with 30 Members of Parliament and Ministers over two days to discuss the Unions NSW paid parental leave policy.

Sarah assisted with the development and launch of a 6-12 month paid parental leave Coalition, with 12 other groups including women's organisations, child advocacy and health groups.

She co-facilitates a mailing list and discussion group with the NSW Commission for Children and Young People amongst the coalition.

Following the release of the Productivity Commission Draft Report on paid parental leave, Sarah worked with the Women's Committee to co-ordinate campaign actions around the hearing and submission dates, involving paid parental leave activists at every stage.

Sarah has developed a database and mailing list of paid parental leave activists and mapped union involvement in key paid parental leave activities throughout the final quarter of 2008, and has been involved in supporting and developing key activists throughout the campaign actions, which have culminated in a video campaign and competition targeted at the Prime Minister, Strategic Budget Committee and Expenditure Review Committee.

## Paul Doughty Campaigns Officer



Paul commenced at Unions NSW in September 2008 on secondment from the National Tertiary Education Union.

After spending 2007 based in Lismore as the *Your Rights at Work* Community Campaign Coordinator in the northern rivers seat of Page, Paul's role at Unions NSW involves working with *Your Rights at Work* (YRAW) groups on the ongoing campaign to restore and improve rights at work. This includes working with Mary Yaager and Adam Kerlake on developing union activists' campaigning capacity at the local and regional level using the *Growth - Agenda - Politics* (GAP) framework.

### Rights at Work

Paul is the liaison and support person for the YRAW groups on the Far North Coast and Parramatta. He has also commenced working towards building a presence in South West Sydney with a local union-community council. Other work is being developed to support YRAW groups with their continuing development outside the context of an election period.

Along with other officers of Unions NSW, Paul assisted in communicating the concerns of NSW unions and *Rights at Work* groups to Federal Labor MPs and others as part of the ACTU's lobbying effort nationally through the latter stages of development of the *Fair Work Bill*. He has also given briefings to other groups on progress towards the new industrial relations system and efforts to improve the legislation.

### Other activities

The November State Government Mini-Budget presented further challenges to the NSW union movement and particularly the workers in the additional areas earmarked for privatisation. These included the Superannuation Administration Corporation, trading as Pillar, which administers the superannuation accounts of 1.7 million workers (mostly from the public sector but also has private sector client funds) and provides employment for around 600 workers in the Illawarra. Paul is currently working with the Public Service Association and their local delegates in workplace organising at the Pillar's Coniston and Wollongong sites. Along with the South Coast Labour Council and affiliate unions whose members' superannuation is at risk from higher administration fees resulting from privatisation, a community and union campaign is commencing to remove the ill-advised

Unions NSW  
2008 Annual Report

proposal from consideration by the Government and protect the ongoing job security of Pillar workers and their location in Wollongong.

Other activities have included assisting with organisation of events and activities as part of the campaign for a universal scheme of paid maternity leave, and participation in the Sydney Alliance.



*Community members outside the NSW ALP annual conference calling upon delegates to 'Stop the Sell-Off'.*

## Alison Rudman Research Officer



Alison was appointed research officer at the beginning of this year after her initial work on the “Stop the Sell-Off” campaign. She was involved in a number of campaigns this year. Alison also worked extensively on developing and executing Working NSW events and research. She also had responsibility for the internship programs.

### Stop the Sell-Off

Alison was responsible for the industry and corporate research that was used in the campaign. She also acted as the liaison for external academics engaged to deal with specific aspects of the government’s proposal. Alison was a proxy for Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Thistlethwaite on the Unsworth Committee.

### Paid Parental Leave

Alison assisted in the execution of the Unions NSW Women’s Conference attended by 250 women. It was from this conference that the paid parental leave campaign developed. Alison was responsible for both Unions NSW submissions to the Productivity Commission on this matter. This included organising activists for media opportunities during the Commission’s hearings. She also played an active role in developing the 6-12 month coalition on this issue which culminated in a media launch event she executed. Alison worked with other campaign staff to plan a trip for over 20 activists as well as union leaders to Canberra to lobby for paid parental leave. She also represented Unions NSW at numerous forums, branch meetings and union conferences to encourage community involvement in the campaign.

### Working NSW Research and Events

Alison worked with Deputy Assistant Secretary Amanda Tattersall to plan and execute a roundtable on the future of the industrial relations system in Australia. She also assisted in Working NSW hosting a variety of visiting scholars for ad hoc seminars. Once Deputy Assistant Secretary Amanda Tattersall went on leave, she took over responsibility for coordinating the Australia@Work study and the evaluation of the “Your Rights at Work” campaign, these included hosting events for affiliates to report on both studies.

Alison has acted as the primary contact point for scholarly inquiries to Unions NSW. This has included being invited to present guest lectures at a number of universities on issues to do

Unions NSW  
2008 Annual Report

with women and work and youth and unions. She has also planned and coordinated the Link research internship program which has been completed by ten students this year and seen graduates pursue jobs in the union movement. She has also assisted affiliated with developing their research capacity.

**Other Responsibilities**

Alison was also working with Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Thistlethwaite on the 2008 State Wage Case. She also worked with Secretary Mark Lennon to formulate the Unions NSW response to the mini-budget. Alison also had responsibility for coordinating and writing Unions NSW social and economic policy submissions. Alison took over responsibility for the 2009 Unions Summer Program.

She also represented Unions NSW on the following boards and committees:

- Fairwear Policy Group
- Australia@Work Advisory Group
- Work and Organisational Studies Advisory Group (University of Sydney)



*Unions NSW Secretary Mark Lennon, with union members, lobbying MPs for paid parental leave at Australian Parliament House, Canberra*

## Neale Towart Librarian and Heritage Officer



The Library has been moved back into the building after three years in storage facilities whilst the Labor Council Building and then the Trades Hall were refurbished. A new home in the basement is our location. We have been carefully assessing some of our remarkable range of pamphlet material, dating from the early 1900s up to current material. This is a treasure trove of documentation of union and political campaigning on peace, union rights, ALP splits, Communist Party campaigning for the unemployed, international union organisations and many other subjects.

Discussion with the NSW Board of Studies on the school curriculum and the place of trade unionism within subject areas has been useful in this sorting process. Trade union campaigning and histories will fit into various areas of the secondary school studies programs. The Trades Hall itself as a site of union history has been placed on that agenda.

### Trades Hall Heritage

The refurbishment of Trades Hall and our promotional efforts have meant many tours of the building, on average twice a week, with numbers ranging from two people to over seventy. The large groups of school students have been especially welcome, particularly when we receive positive feedback from teachers. Overseas union delegations, conference groups and union delegates attending organising courses have been regular attendees.

Trades Hall was on the itinerary for History Week and Heritage Week in NSW and attracted a positive response. In November the Historic Houses Trust ran a *Sydney Open* day with over fifty buildings being open to the public. We attracted 589 people on one day with 45 guided tours run by Bill Pirie and Neale Towart, with great help from Caroline Pryor from the AMWU and seven volunteers from the Historic Houses Trust. This has meant that much rare material held by the Trades Hall Association has had a good audience and the Lorna Morrison Exhibition Room has been admired by more and more people.

We aim to develop a website on the history and contents of the Trades Hall in coming months, and to then create a large web presence on Australian union history, using our banner, poster, badge, photo and other ephemera as the basis of a broad ranging sweep on unions in Australian history.

## Exhibitions

We held a major exhibition in the Atrium on the history of International Women's Day in March, followed by a May Day show. A selection of poster sized copies of union banners and a number of trade union certificates have been popular. Our final show of the year celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with the right to trade union membership being a key part of that.

A major exhibition is planned for Lithgow in 2009, along with a show focused on the Broken Hill Lockout of 1909 and Tom Mann's role in trade union history.

2009 is the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tolpuddle Martyrs transportation to NSW and the Festival Committee in Dorset, UK has asked us to participate which we hope to do with some NSW trade union banner material.



*Neale Towart and Bill Pirie facilitate tours of the Trades Hall for students and members of the public.*

## **Matt Dixon & Kate Minter** **Union Start Coordinators**



Late 2008 saw the creation of the UnionStart program. This youth oriented initiative is a joint partnership between Unions NSW, the ACTU and related affiliates. There are two main components of the program. The first is education of young workers in schools and educational institutions. The other is workplace organising. UnionStart is being trailed in the Parramatta/Holroyd area.

Unions NSW employed two officers for the trial and implementation of the program. Matt Dixon is employed on a full time basis and Kate Minter is employed part-time.

### **Education in Schools**

Matt and Kate have been busy developing curriculum to meet with the Department of Education guidelines which will allow them to present information in high schools. This would involve syllabus based presentations for years 9-12. The presentations will aim to educate students of some of their rights in the workplace, the role of unions and the significance role that they have played in protecting and fighting for working Australians.

A trial presentation was given to year 10 classes at Sydney Secondary College on the 25.11.08, with positive responses from students.

### **Media and Mass-Mail Out**

UnionStart aims to be accessible to its target membership group, using communications tools that suit their interests. UnionStart is able to contact, message and receive inquiries from its members via various social networking sites including Facebook, MySpace and Bebo. UnionStart will also have its own fully accessible website operational in early February, with information on young workers rights and school resources. UnionStart members also have full access to the Unions Australia call centre and information desks.

In early February a mail out of Unionstart pamphlets will be distributed to the members of several unions in the Parramatta/Holroyd area. A letter will be attached to the pamphlets encouraging members who have younger relatives/friends join the program. To date five unions have agreed to participate in the mail out.

### Workplace Visits

Matt and Kate have begun workplace visits in the Parramatta area. Matt and Kate have completed training in workplace organising, with a number of unions in different industries throughout December. The main target area of organization and education in the workplace are with employers where unions do not currently have a presence. They have already visited over 40 retail stores in the Parramatta area.

Matt and Kate are will also be liaising with a variety of community and youth organisations with the ultimate aim of broadening awareness of the trade union movement though the UnionStart program.



*The Union Start program aims to organise and educate young workers.*

**union**  **start**

## Arthur Rorris Secretary, SCLC (Regional Branch Council)



Arthur as the Secretary of our Regional Branch Council on the South Coast has had a very busy year with respect to its industrial and community campaigning in the region. The Regional Branch Council strongly supported the campaign against Electricity Privatisation with a range of activities such as forums, rallies and community events being held throughout the region to raise awareness of the issues and place pressure on regional MPs.

The South Coast Regional Branch Council extended the anti- privatization agenda by including other government agencies and public assets in its strategy to increase public support for the retention of public assets. This culminated in the conference organized by the Regional Branch Council titled Australia for Sale: Privatization, Politics and the Community held in Wollongong and which provided a unique insight into privatization trends in a range of industries.

Another major challenge for the union movement on the South Coast was the corruption scandal which tainted local government and certain political representatives and which left a leadership vacuum in the region following the dismissal of two key local Councils. The Regional Branch Council played a pivotal leadership role throughout this period in galvanizing the community around a new movement for civic renewal that became known as the Reclaim Our City Campaign which continues to unite and organize our local community.

Throughout this period the Regional Branch Council continued to organize and assist affiliates in various industrial campaigns including:

- TAFE Teachers qualifications campaign
- Transport Infrastructure Summit and Campaign
- ABCC Campaign
- Bulli Hospital Campaign – successful in keeping the operating theatres open
- Keelong Juvenile Justice Centre - an ongoing campaign to keep this centre open
- Pillar Administration – an ongoing campaign to save hundreds of local jobs
- Womens Committee Activities

## Appendix A: 2008 Scrolls of Honour

Each year, affiliated unions are given the opportunity to nominate individuals worthy of recognition to receive a Unions NSW Scroll of Honour.

Each year at the Unions NSW Annual General Meeting these awards are presented, in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the trade union movement.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Dick Whitehead	CFMEU
Bill Docherty	CFMEU

## Appendix B: 2008 Motions of Condolence

The Secretary of Unions NSW moved Motions of Condolence, to the family and friends of the following former trade union figures who have passed away in 2008.

<b>Vale</b>	<b>Union</b>
Martin (Harry) Pitt	Former State Secretary, Electrical Trades Union
Ted Ellery	Former Organiser, United Services Union
Berna Buchanan	Former Union Official, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
Madge Neilson	New South Wales Nurses' Association
Harry Quinn	Former Secretary – Transport Workers' Union
Harold Dwyer	Former Secretary, Rail Tram & Bus Union

## Appendix C: 2008 Guest Speakers

The following guest speakers addressed weekly meetings of Unions NSW during 2008.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mitch	From the Luritja and Eastern Arrernte clans from Alice Springs.
Ms Shikha Joshi	Secretary, Self-Employed Women's Association, India representing women workers who are self-employed
Ms Carol Beaumont	Secretary, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions
Ms Katherine Black	American Anti-War Activist
Ms Katrina Dorrough	Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Accreditation, NSW Project Officer, Australian Breastfeeding Association
Mrs Cheryl Romer	Convenor, Workplace Tragedy Family Support Group
Ms Alison Peters	Director, NCOSS
Mr Erik Peterson	Labor Director, Wellstone Action USA
Mr Campbell Sallabank	Link Me
Mr Walter Shaw	Alice Springs Tangentyere Council
Hon. Ian West MLC	Member of Legislative Council, NSW Parliament
Paul Innes	Australian Jockey's Association
Cate Faehrmann	Executive Director, Nature Conservation Council of NSW
Maria Guerrero	Cuban 5
Jeff Lawrence	Secretary, ACTU
Rod Silber	Business Development Manager, St Vincent de Paul Society

## Appendix D: Significant Events of 2008

This section provides a lasting record of the significant events of Unions NSW and the Trade Union Movement over 2008.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
7 <sup>th</sup> February	Resignation of Sonia Minutillo as a member of the Unions NSW Executive.
13 <sup>th</sup> February	Apology by Prime Minister Rudd to the Stolen Generations in Canberra
21 <sup>st</sup> February	Unions NSW Annual General Meeting
26 <sup>th</sup> February	“Stop The Sell Off – Keep Power in Our Hands” Rally outside NSW Parliament House Sydney
3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Power-Privatisation March & Rally outside the offices of Member for Wollongong Noreen Hay
8 <sup>th</sup> March	International Women’s Day March and Rally
10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> March	“What Women Need” – Conference for Centenary of International Women’s Day
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Palm Sunday Rally March For Peace
20 <sup>th</sup> March	Special Anti-Privatisation Meeting of Retired Union Members
28 <sup>th</sup> March	Community Protest to Stop Exploitation of Guest Workers on 457 Visas
31 <sup>st</sup> March	Australia Tibet Council A Global day of Action
3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Announcement of Inquiry Into Children and Young People 9-14 Years in NSW
7 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> April	MUA Labourfest OZ
18 <sup>th</sup> April	Community Rally To Protest the Privatisation of Electricity - Newcastle
22 <sup>nd</sup> April	“CloseTheGap” Day Event
28 <sup>th</sup> April	International Day of Mourning
1 <sup>st</sup> May	May Day Toast

Unions NSW  
2008 Annual Report

3rd & 4th May	NSW ALP State Conference
3rd May	Community Rally To Protest the Privatisation of Electricity Outside ALP Conference
13th May	National Day of Action “Stop the Racist NT Intervention”
13th May	Federal Government Budget
3rd July	Seminar - Professor David Coats – Work Foundation London
3rd July	Members Equity ‘Christmas in July’ Celebration
30th July	Public Sector Unions Day of Action
2nd August	Hiroshima Commemoration
5th August	Australian Trade Union Program at Harvard Foundation Seminar – “Strategic Choice for Labor Union Leaders”
15th August	IR Society of NSW Annual General Meeting & Luncheon
16th August	Super Saturday – Anti- Electricity Privatisation
17th August	Save The Eveleigh Blacksmiths Workshop – Open Day
27th August	Lobbying Federal Politicians in Canberra – Paid Maternity Leave Campaign
4th September	Launch of ‘The State of Industrial Relations’ – Evatt Foundation
20th September	Anti-Privatisation Rally Sydney Town Hall
9th October	80th Anniversary of South Coast Labour Council
22nd October	Resignation of Secretary, John Robertson
23rd October	Resignation of Deputy Assistant Secretary, Matt Thistlethwaite
29th October	PSA Rally – Protest Privatisation of NSW Correctional Centre
30th October	Mark Lennon elected Secretary, Unions NSW Chris Christodoulou elected Assistant Secretary, Unions NSW



**Unions NSW**  
**2008 Annual Report**

Level 3, 4 – 10 Goulburn St, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph 9881 5999 • Fax 9261 3505

[mail@unionsnsw.org.au](mailto:mail@unionsnsw.org.au)

<http://www.unionsnsw.org.au>