

“Premier Barry O'Farrell gets set to wield the axe through the public service”

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/sydney-nsw/premier-barry-ofarrell-gets-set-to-wield-the-axe-through-the-public-service/story-e6freuzi-1226112682694>

The O'Farrell government is at war with the NSW public sector. Gone are the days of easy negotiations and back room deals on wages and conditions. Many PSA members are still angry at the 2008 pay deal made behind their backs which included tradeoffs that were not put to members. This resulted in a large loss of votes for the incumbent PSA leadership at the union elections. But this was not quite enough to make a much needed leadership change. Union members need to be vigilant and prepared to become much more involved in their union in order to win a fight with the NSW government.

The Premier's anti-worker amendment to the Industrial Relations Act was quickly followed up with a non negotiable forced redundancy policy. Today's Daily Telegraph news story "[Premier Barry O'Farrell gets set to wield the axe through the public service](#)" confirms all the worst rumours about a 'slash and burn' state budget in September. Over reliance on outcomes in the Industrial Court will not ultimately deter this agenda.

Now is the time to mobilise union members and their supporters in the community to fight these attacks. Public sector union members, their families and other supporters have turned out in their thousands at rallies in front of Parliament House and in towns and cities across the state. But this should be only the beginning. Members are angry at their industrial bargaining rights being taken away and have shown they are prepared to fight.

Rolling industrial actions of various types organised by the different public sector unions would build confidence, build support and help create a belief that public sector workers are capable of defeating O'Farrell's 'worse than WorkChoices' agenda. Now is the time to use this anger and activism to re-energise the ongoing 'Rights @Work' committees in unions and communities to keep these issues alive across the state.

As well as the regional rallies and committees members should be meeting and organising small scale bans and limitations, work to rule, as well as stopwork meetings in the lead up to the planned mass rally in the Sydney Domain on 8 September.

PSA members at the State Library have carried resolutions along these lines as have TAFE members in support of the 15 June rally. Union leaders who are far removed from the working lives of their members sometimes need to be convinced that industrial action will be supported. As each day passes it is increasingly clear that the O'Farrell government is at war with its public servants. Union members and their supporters need to take up the challenge in a serious way. Both the government and the cross benches need to know that we are serious about winning this fight.

Already Department Heads in emails to employees and the Premier in Parliament (as reported in the media) have tried to allay fears of major job losses. But significantly, outright denials of jobs cuts have not been made. The story stands in strong contrast to Coalition promises before the election of strengthening the public sector.

Check www.progressivepsa.org for updates on the salaries case and the government's attack on the public sector.