

RUN

<https://www.australianunions.org.au/retired_unionists_network>

*We may be retired from the workforce but we will never retire from the workers’ struggle!*

**Minutes**

**Thursday 24 June, 2021 2-4pm**

**Present**: Phillip Brown (Retired CPSU/SPSF Retired Officers, VIC); Deirdre Chance (Retired UWU); Bruce Dalkeith (Unions NSW’s Retired Unionists); Patricia David (Secretary, Unions Shoalhaven, NSW); Paul Doughty (ACTU, Melbourne); Peter Duffy (Vintage Reds, QLD); Evol Fayers (UWU, NorthQueensland**)**; Murray Geddes (Service Union, Riverina); Lauren Hutchins (Guest Speaker HSU); Janine Kitson (Retired Unionists, Unions NSW); Peter Moylan (CPSU, VIC); Marta Hodul-Lenton (Organiser, Unions Tasmania); Colin Ormsby (AMWU Retired, VIC); Con Patralis (Retired Firefighters Union, VIC); John Price (Hobart, Unions Tasmania); Garrett Purtill (Vintage Reds, ACT); Norm Short (Retired ETU, NSW); Debra Smith; Neil Smith (Retired Unionists Network, Tasmania); Carolyn Smith (Guest Speaker); Debra Smith (Blue Mountains Unions & Community, NSW); Heather Smith (Hobart, Tasmania); Neil Smith (Hobart, Unions Tasmania); Rodger Smith (Retired ASU PS Branch VIC); Allan Taylor (Tasmania); Jane Timbrell (Vintage Reds, ACT); Ian Thomas (CPSU/SPSF VIC); Mara Tudorin (Retired Officers Association - PSA, QACAG, CPSA, Unions NSW, Sydney); Robert Tunks (IEU, VIC); Chris Warren (Vintage Reds, ACT); Alan Woodcraft;

**Apologies:** Sue Bellino, Political Director, Australian Nurses and Midwifery Federation (ANMF); Barry Blanchard (PSA Retired Unionists, NSW); Deb Hanlon (Unions Shoalhaven, NSW); Anne Learmonth (Retired NTEU, VIC); Brian Salter-Duke (NTEU Retired Members, VIC); Irene Henley (NMU, QLD); Isabella Martinis (ASU PS Branch, VIC); David Cragg (AWU Retired Members); Paul Hawkins (Unions Shoalhaven, NSW); Gordon Penhall (CEPU, South Australia)

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**RUN Mapping of RUN retired unionists:** Jane Timbrell (ACT VR) janetimbrell@gmail.com

**RUN Committee: Colin Ormsby** (VIC AMWU) colinormsby@iinet.net.au; Peter Duffy (QLD VR) [pwd03@optusnet.com.au](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CJanine%5CDownloads%5Cpwd03%40optusnet.com.au)

**Tabled with Agenda:**

1. RUN letter to MP Andrew Wilkie re YOUR FUTURE, YOUR SUPER BILL 2021
2. NZ NEW IR LAWS
3. [Cutting minimum wage does not lead to more jobs (smh.com.au)](https://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace/cutting-minimum-wage-does-not-lead-to-more-jobs-20210527-p57vne.html)
4. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/as-a-mother-senator-challenges-ndis-reforms-20210603-p57xv7.html>
5. [Four reasons why cashless 'welfare' card trial must stop | Mirage News](https://www.miragenews.com/four-reasons-why-cashless-welfare-card-trial-must-stop/#:~:text=%20Four%20reasons%20why%20cashless%20%E2%80%98welfare%E2%80%99%20card%20trial,%2410%2C000%20per...%204%20It%20is%20ineffective%20More%20)

**Acknowledgement of Country** - Rodger Smith

**Welcome:** Retired Unionists from: Blue Mountains Unions & Community, NSW; Unions NSW; Unions Shoalhaven; Victoria Trades Hall; Vintage Reds QLD; Vintage Reds ACT; South Australia Retired Unionists; Unions Tasmania; Unions Western Australia

**Acceptance of Minutes of Last Meeting** - 27 May, 2021.

**Guest speakers:**

**Carolyn Smith** (National Director Aged Care, WA State Secretary, United Workers Union) **and Lauren Hutchins** (National Director Aged Care, WA State Secretary, United Workers Union)on **Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.**

The **Royal Commission** highlights what has been known for decades - Australia’s aged care system has systematically abused older Australians due to **systemic underfunding**, understaffing and underpayment of workers.

**May 2021 Budget Failure**

Despite announcing $17.7 billion over 5 years this amount falls well short of the **extra $10 billion a year** needed to fully implement the Royal Commission’s recommendations.

The government has agreed to:

* accept 107 of the 148 recommendations; accept 19 in principle; but reject six relating to sustainable long term funding model that includes tax increases or levies to fund improvements to the system
* report total care staffing minutes by registered nurses, enrolled nurses and personal care workers on a quarterly basis. It will also introduce a star rating system which will be published from 1 July 2022
* guarantee a minimum care time of 200 minutes a day; have a registered nurse onsite for 16 hours per day from 1 October 2023
* Provide an additional $10 a day per resident from 1 July 2021
* Provide an extra 80,000 new home care packages (but does not deal with the backlog of 100,000 home care packages; difficult to attract workers on low pay)
* Spend more on dementia care and nutrition in aged care facilities

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Recommendations: <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-03/final-report-recommendations.pdf>

Australian Government Response to the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, May 2021:

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/05/australian-government-response-to-the-final-report-of-the-royal-commission-into-aged-care-quality-and-safety.pdf>

**Aged Care Workforce Industry Council**

HSU’s engagement with the Aged Care Workforce Industry Council is less than ideal.  Many of its Council Directors are CEO’s of the-for-profit aged care industry.  They refuse to address the real barriers to improving the aged care sector - better working conditions and rates of pay for its workers (the average hourly pay for an Aged Care Worker in Australia is $23.22.  The average part time retail salary in Australiais $25.31 per hour).

Without financial transparency, the public has no way of knowing how providers spend the billions of dollars of government subsidies - on improved aged care or shareholder profit?

**What do we do now?**

It is critical that strong action is taken to ensure all the Royal Commission’s recommendations are fully implemented. Pressure must be on the government leading into the upcoming Federal election.

**Activate Aged Care workers**

HSU are empowering their aged care workers to take action, including industrial action. A significant proportion of aged care workers are from culturally diverse backgrounds and many are on student visas or partners of 457 visas.

**Aged Care WATCH campaign**

HSU plans to launch a digital and online ‘Aged Care WATCH' where members of the public, across the nation, can share their experiences of aged care and report understaffing and failures.

HSU invites RUN to learn more about Aged Care WATCH campaign, when this online resource is ready.

**RUN Breakout Discussion Group Report**

**#1 STAFFING RATIOS**

RUN participants remain concerned that only four of the 108 recommendations relate to aged care staff.

In RUN’s view, there can be no substantive improvement to aged care unless mandatory staffing ratios and mandatory skill mixes are enforced forRegistered Nurses, Enrolled Nurses and Personal Carers.

RUN participants believe it is time to overwhelmingly reject the privatisation model that underpins the Aged Care Act (1997) and reinstate strong public provisions in the new 2023 Aged Care Act.

RUN argues that the Howard Government’s deregulated Aged Care Act (1997) is the cause of the aged care crisis. It transformed Australia’s ‘nursing home public health care system’ into a free-market ‘industry’ for profit. The Howard Government effectively deregulated aged care by deregulating its staff. Employers were allowed to determine the ‘adequate’ numbers of ‘appropriately skilled and trained staff’. This enabled private providers to replace registered nurses with less qualified staff. Aged care was transformed into a profit driven multibillion-dollar private sector industry based on secure public funds.

COVID-19 has shined a light on the abject failure of this privately run residential aged care system with the COVID-19 pandemic.  Private aged care homes have not invested in quality infection prevention and control measures; sufficient staff ratios; and adequately trained staff.  Its low-paid casual workforce are forced to work at multiple sites.

The Victorian government run aged care homes recorded no COVID-19 deaths because it had qualified nurses and permanent staff to care for patients.

**#2 RUN Breakout Discussion Group Report**

**REMUNERATION**

RUN members are particularly sensitive to the issue of aged care as many face the prospect of living in aged care in the near future. RUN members want dignity and quality of care when they are forced to retire from the workers’ struggle.

Aged care reform must also focus on home care support with the rapid expansion in home care providers, with limited scrutiny, transparency and accountability.

Aged care system must be returned to public hands. Aged care should not be an ‘industry’ for making profit. The Howard aged care experiment has failed. It is time to return aged care back into public hands. The ALP needs to be pressured for whether they would support an aged care levy.

The big for-profit aged care’s companies Bupa, Opal, Allity, Regis, Estia and Japara made $1.7 billion in profits in 2018-19.

The not-for-profit sector, including Blue Care, Uniting Care, Bolton Clarke, Catholic Healthcare, Anglicare in NSW, Mercy Aged and Community Care and Southern Cross Care generated millions in aged care revenues.  Many then reinvest into property to expand their business.  Losses are then used to justify calls for increased federal funding.  The Greek Orthodox Church’s St Basil’s aged care home charged their aged care home $14.6 million in rent over five years.

Registered Nurses (RN),Enrolled Nurses (ENs), Assistants in Nursing (AIN) and Personal Care Attendants (PCA) **in** residential aged care should be paid the same as nurses and carers workinginthe public hospital sector.  They currently earn less than those who work in the public hospital system. Experience and training do not translate into wage increases. Nurse to patient ratios in the aged care sector can be as high as 20 to 1 (relative to a typical 4 to 1 in the public hospital sector).

Retired Unionists from Tasmania are lobbying MPs face to face, writing letters to MPs, to newspapers and holding demonstrations to force action on the implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations.

**#3 QUALITY OF CARE – Same standards across ALL Aged Care homes**

**Need for**

RUN includes members who live in aged residential care and as such are acutely aware of the prohibitive costs that fall on patients in privately run aged care homes.

The Royal Commission estimated that one-in-three Australians living in aged care in Australia experience neglect, physical or emotional abuse.

There is an urgent need for accounting transparency standards but this should not fall on workers with increased surveillance, ‘administratrivia’ and draconian codes of conduct for whistleblowers.

The pandemic has exposed the systemic weaknesses of its casualised, overworked and underpaid workers with three-quarters of COVID deaths in aged care homes.

The Labor Party needs to be pressured to return to a policy of supporting a social wage or living wage.  One that guarantees minimum liveable wages along with universal access to  quality aged care, housing, education, hospitals, Medibank, family assistance and superannuation to ensure a life of dignity and where every Australian can fully participate in the community and ensure equitable income distribution.

**YOUR FUTURE, YOUR SUPER Bill**
RUN wrote to crossbench opposing the Bill but unfortunately it was passed in the Senate on 16 June, 2021.

The Your Future, Your Super “stapling" provisions will lock workers into their current fund and deny them insurance provisions if they change and work in dangerous industries. However the power of the Treasury to decide where funds could be allocated was stopped. Organisers need to explain to members as the implementation will be delayed to 1 November 2021.

**CUTTING PENALTY RATES?
Tabled:** [Cutting minimum wage does not lead to more jobs (smh.com.au)](https://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace/cutting-minimum-wage-does-not-lead-to-more-jobs-20210527-p57vne.html)

The hospitality industry argued before the Fair Work Commission that cuts to penalty rates would employ more people but this has been refuted.

**NDIS “REFORMS”
Tabled:** <https://www.smh.com.au/national/as-a-mother-senator-challenges-ndis-reforms-20210603-p57xv7.html>

NSW Liberal Senator Holly Hughes has a disabled son and is against the government’s proposals for punitive ‘independent assessors’.

**CFMMMEU GREEN BAN at Parramatta, NSW**

**Tabled:** <https://www.facebook.com/savewillowgroveparramatta/posts/351846263226337>

A court injunction stopped the demolition work on this heritage property until its hearing on 2nd July, 2021.

**CASHLESS WELFARE CARD
Tabled:** [Four reasons why cashless 'welfare' card trial must stop | Mirage News](https://www.miragenews.com/four-reasons-why-cashless-welfare-card-trial-must-stop/#:~:text=%20Four%20reasons%20why%20cashless%20%E2%80%98welfare%E2%80%99%20card%20trial,%2410%2C000%20per...%204%20It%20is%20ineffective%20More%20)

The cashless welfare card (also known as the Indue Card) limits most welfare spending.  It is cruel and demeaning and punishes the First Nations peoples and low income Australians.  There is limited evidence that it achieves its objectives. There is no transparency over the taxpayers funding for the private company and banks who administer the cards.

The card has caused suffering across the nation - inCeduna (South Australia); Kununurra, Wyndham, Kalgoorlie (Western Australia); Hinkler, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay (Queensland); Tennant Creek (Northern Territory)**.** Real fear is that the cashless debit card will be expanded to include aged pensioners and youth allowance recipients.

**THAT RUN write to Senator Anne Ruston, Minister for Families and Social Services opposing the cashless welfare card**(John Price, Unions Tasmania to draft the RUN letter and send to RUN Chair Rodger Smith)

**THAT RUN invites Kathryn Wilkes, campaigner against the cashless welfare card to speak at a future RUN meeting.**

**THAT RUN notes the following event:**

Living Incomes for Everyone’s (LIFE) ‘Cashless Welfare Debit Cards: Lived Experience, Other Facts and Stats’ with Kathryn Wilkes from “No Cashless Welfare Debit Card Group”

Time: July 6, 2021 7:30 PM Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87423223617?pwd=VHJqRkRiU2F1czVMa2pMYVRFQlZNdz09>  Meeting ID: 874 2322 3617 Passcode: **860058**

**Retired Members Stream at ACTU CONGRESS 2021**

Monday 26 July 12.30 – 1.30 PM

The ACTU Congress is held every three years where delegates debate and vote on policies regarding the workplace, rights, and campaigns to improve wages, conditions and quality of life for Australian workers and their families.

**THAT RUN attends the Retired Members stream in lieu of the July RUN meeting.**(Paul Doughty to send ‘Hopin’ link for RUN members to register and attend)

# **UWU General Mills strike – Rooty Hill, NSW**

https://cpa.org.au/guardian/issue-1966/uwu-general-mills-strike-rooty-hill-nsw/

Since 4th June, United Workers Union’ (UWU) workers at the US-owned General Mills (GM) Rooty Hill factory have been on strike over an unacceptable wage offer and cuts to working conditions and locking in a substandard two-tiered system for new workers. RUN sent an email of support to UWU's picket line.

**Next RUN meetings:**

Monday 26 July 2021 at 12.30 – 1.30 pm Retired Members Stream at ACTU CONGRESS 2021 in lieu of JULY RUN MEETING

Thursday 15 July 2021 at 11am     Committee Meeting