

Australian Affiliate's *People's Inquiry into Privatisation*

PSI affiliates in Australia have come together in a joint campaign that seeks to increase member and community awareness about the effects of privatisation. The aim of the project is to develop political lobbying tools through the shared experiences of our members and community. The tools will be used to influence politicians away from a privatisation agenda. We want to argue for a move away from neo-liberal agendas to a social democratic ethos where the interests of communities come before corporations. For this to occur we need a greater understanding within our communities about the role of government.

The first step in this project was to convene a People's Inquiry into Privatisation. The inquiry seeks to give voice to workers and their communities, allowing them to share their experiences of privatisation and to talk of their vision for services.

An independent panel is running the Inquiry with administrative support from PSI Oceania and the Australian affiliates. The panellists have donated their time and expertise to the inquiry. We are currently half way through a series of nationwide public hearings. The Inquiry's report will provide the lived and spoken evidence of the effects of privatisation and make recommendations.

The core strategy here is one of community unionism. Through the inquiry we are reaching out to civil society organisations, academics, community members and unions not affiliated to PSI including private sector unions. We have begun working closely with Action Aid Australia and this will lead to on-going work around public sector services and the rights of women. The links with Tax Justice Network in Australia to are being strengthened.

Whilst we could have gone straight to developing the lobbying tools, the Australian affiliates believe that this process will build the momentum and knowledge needed for lobbying and will grow our power beyond our individual unions' capacity.

Finally, the campaign has highlighted PSI's presence in the Australia and is creating links within unions and organisations not previously connected to PSI. This will strengthen our future capacity to mobilise around our issues – in the first instance building power for our political lobbying.

More information is available at: <http://www.peoplesinquiry.org.au>