



*An analysis of the abolition of
State Branches
of the Community and Public
Sector Union (Australia)*

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Workshop 1.3

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Introduction



- Decline in union membership (crisis)
- Strategic responses to the decline union membership
- Iron Law of Oligarchy v renewal strategies
- Adoption of the Organising Model (justification)
- Amalgamation – arguments for & against
- Corporations Power – demise of State jurisdictions (CPSU never in state jurisdictions)
- Centralisation of power and functions

Research Question



- *What impact does centralisation of union power have on union renewal strategies?*
- Case Studies:
 1. CPSU
 2. FSU
 3. NUW

Australian Context



- Australia has 3 tiers of Government with 6 States and 2 Territories at 2nd tier
- Constitution provides express powers to Commonwealth and residue to states
- Extremely complex over-lap of industrial relations system - State & Federal jurisdictions with registration of unions

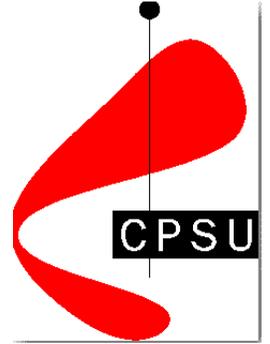


Australian Context Cont.

- Unions have developed with State Branches & Federal Union as a result of the jurisdictions (NB not Locals/Nationals/Internationals)
- Very structured amalgamation process in late 1980s early 1990s = Super Unions
- 2005 WorkChoices used a new constitutional power to regulate industrial relations (neo-Liberal)
- Unintended consequence?



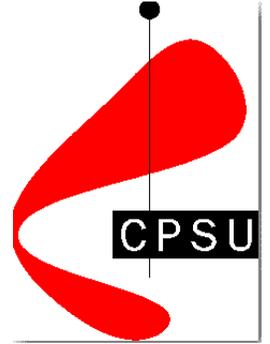
CPSU



- Tendency to follow ACTU strategies (model affiliate):
 - Amalgamation
 - Organising union
 - Unions@Work > CPSU@Work
- Federal jurisdiction (total)

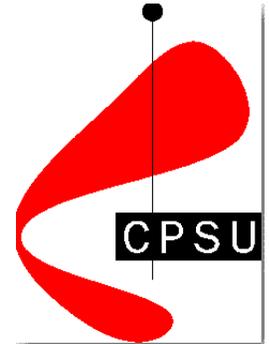


CPSU



- CPSU covers employees of the Federal Government
- *...crash test dummies for the Howard government...going to practice their industrial relations beliefs on their own employees before they visited those beliefs upon the rest of the Australian workforce. (Interview CPSU 8 2011)*

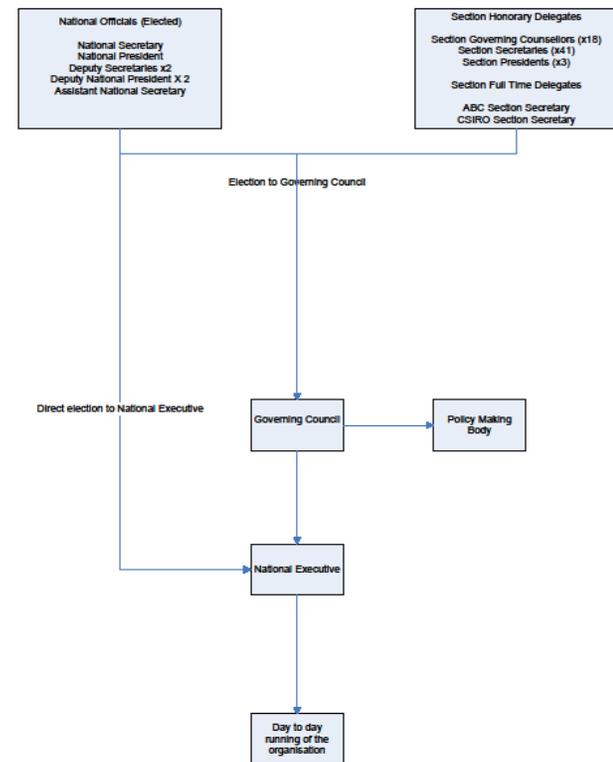
3 phase approach (not predetermined)



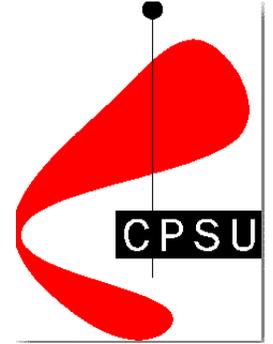
1. 1995 Section Structure
with Secretaries & Council

2. 2001 Honorary Section
Secretaries & 5 Divisions

3. 2005 Abolition of
Divisions & State Branches

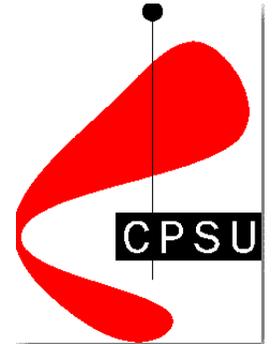


Quotes for



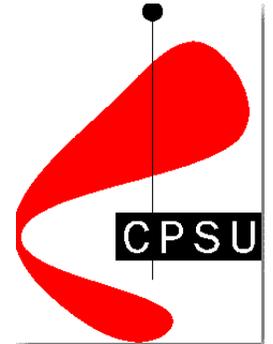
- *“I’ve got no doubt whatsoever that if we had not taken the decisions that we took ... how we managed our money, staff and our core business ... reformed ourselves structurally....*
- *“If we hadn’t have done those things the CPSU would not exist today...” (Interview CPSU 8 2011)*

Quotes against



- *“In terms of campaigning I think what sometimes is lost is that ability to tailor your campaign that suits the workplace that you know (Interview CPSU 2 2011)*
- *It seemed disempowering of, you know, us at the local level (Interview CPSU 6 2011)*

Conclusions



- Irresistible from finance/admin perspective (see quotation for)
- Former sceptics converted
- Some evidence of national structures stifling local campaigns
- Slight membership turn around 2.4%+ to December 2011 (other explanations e.g. legislation)
- Future of State Branches is uncertain if CPSU anything to go by
- Technology = enabler
- Shape of things to come?

