



Stat Report 2014/38

Health Minister failing to address private pathology in public hospitals undermining health outcomes

The Union has expressed dismay at the Health Minister's apparent lack of interest in reports that public hospitals are being compromised because of continued outsourcing and privatisation of pathology services. And in one case, a public hospital is operating with a pathology laboratory that does not have enough staff to ensure every shift is staffed.

Around 85% of all patient clinical diagnosis is based on a pathology test of one form or another. And on-time test results are an absolutely vital element to delivering world-class health care. But we know this is being compromised as public hospitals look to do more with less and it has become increasingly clear pathology services have become an easy target for health executives locked into continuous budget cuts.

But while the number and volume of pathology testing is significantly increasing we have hospital managers publicly admitting that experienced scientific staff are being retrenched because of continuing budget cuts.

Which is why the Union is completely dismayed the Victorian Health Minister hasn't lifted a finger to investigate our growing concerns about the increasing reliance on private pathology providers in public hospitals.

The Napthine Government's cuts to funding are forcing public hospitals to outsource and privatise essential services, like pathology. It's already happening in public hospitals in regional and rural Victoria, and it's only a matter of time before metropolitan hospitals begin to privatise or outsource their pathology services as well.

To date the Minister hasn't replied to our correspondence or phone calls, which makes us very concerned that he is in above his head and has no idea about how to create a world-class health

system for all Victorians. Even more worrying is the fact that Minister Davis pledged at the 2014 MSAV conference to address our concerns.

The Napthine Government must end its ideologically driven push for ever more privatisation of health care or face having a health care system increasingly incapable of meeting even the most basic health needs of Victorians.

Make sure our Better Path Plan is on the agenda for the State Election – send your email today: <http://msav.org.au/news-mainmenu-2/latest-news/1920-the-better-path-plan>

Dorevitch Pathology breaching EBA

Members at Dorevitch Pathology have been reporting that management have begun to unilaterally allocate extra work days to part time staff without first seeking consultation.

This is a clear breach of work contracts and also highlights the reliance on overtime at Dorevitch Pathology to get work done because there are not enough staff.

Reports have also been received of managers making ad-hoc changes to rosters whenever they feel like it, again without consultation. When this was pointed out as being a breach of the Dorevitch EBA, management stopped drawing up rosters altogether, leaving staff to work it out amongst themselves.

But it doesn't stop there.

Management have also been caught out unilaterally forcing staff to take leave. In one case, a member stood up for their rights at work only to be later bullied and intimidated; a situation that was only resolved after intervention from the MSAV. The chaotic management style at Dorevitch Pathology is further highlighted with senior managers contacting members who are on approved leave, demanding to know why they aren't at work.

Rest assured that claims made by Dorevitch Pathology that they can force staff to take leave are entirely baseless, regardless of the length of time employed by Dorevitch Pathology, or how much leave you have accrued.

If you're experiencing unilateral changes to your roster, additional work being allocated without consultation or pressure to take leave, please get in touch with the Union on 9623 9623 or at enquiry@msav.org.au

Better Path Plan

Pathology is a key scientific service in delivering Victorians world-class health care.

It is complex pathology science that doctors and specialists rely on to make a diagnosis and to find treatments. Pathology is vital to help make sure that the treatment your doctor or specialist has prescribed is actually working. It's also the medical scientists in pathology that cross-match blood for life-saving transfusions.

At every turn the Victorian Government has cut funding to the health system with little regard for the actual workforce needs of Victoria's health sector. And with the increasing attacks on budgets, and efforts by hospital managements to do more with less, more medical scientists are walking away. High turnover is now directly impacting on the standard of pathology science practised.

It's pretty simple to work out – No Medical Scientists = No Diagnosis + No Treatment

That's why the Union has developed the Better Path Plan.

Just like the Public Sector bargaining campaign used Medical Physicists to highlight the issues for members, the Better Path Plan is a mechanism for the Union to raise a range of issues that affect all of us like increasing workloads; not enough staff to handle increasing demands on services; and the continued privatisation and outsourcing of vital services.

The Better Path Plan has three components that are fundamental to restoring pathology services and ensuring pathology continues to be a strong and vital part of the healthcare of Victorians.

1. Monitor and enforce existing contracts for private pathology services in public health services like hospitals.
2. Return pathology services to the public sector where they have been privatised.
3. No new contracts to be entered into for pathology services with private providers.

The Union is calling on all candidates at this year's State Election to sign our Better Path Plan pledge to show their commitment to having world class healthcare underpinned by strong, public pathology services.

TAKE ACTION: Make sure our Better Path Plan is on the agenda for the State Election – send your email today: <http://msav.org.au/news-mainmenu-2/latest-news/1920-the-better-path-plan>

Your Pay and the Melbourne Cup Weekend

Under the public sector agreement (and some private sector agreements), both full time AND part time employees have an entitlement to be paid for the Melbourne Cup public holiday.

The payments vary depending on whether or not you work on the public holiday, but it is important to know that you are either way entitled under the agreement to a payment.

If you are unsure or have been denied payment contact the union for advice and assistance.

NOTE: The Union's offices will be closed on Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 November. As a result, monthly membership fees will not be processed until Wednesday 5 November.

The Christmas close down period and you

It has come to our attention that a number of employers are already trying to coerce members into taking annual leave to cover their close down periods.

It is very clear from our public sector Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and most of our private sector agreements that there is no capacity for your employer to force you to take annual leave or long service leave for this purpose.

It is not acceptable for your employer to make arrangements about close down periods under the assumption that staff will be required to use annual leave or long service leave to cover it.

Remember: there is no requirement for anyone to agree to take annual leave or long service leave to cover regular working days over the Christmas and New Year period.

Contact the Union for assistance if you need further advice.

Association of Hospital Pharmacists Committee Vacancy

A vacancy currently exists for a committee member of the AHP committee of management. The AHP is calling for nominations from AHP members who are interested in joining the committee and become directly involved in the important work of representing hospital pharmacists and managing the affairs of the AHP.

Interested AHP members should contact Victor Reginato or Paul Elliott in the Carlton Office.

Join the campaign - No Pay? No Way!

Show your support for the campaign by downloading & using one of our graphics for your email signature.



Go Home On Time Day

Do you find yourself working back late to do just one more thing, check one more email? Never enough hours in the day to do all the things you need or want to do? Feel stressed that you're behind in your workload? Are work calls or emails getting in the way of enjoying free time?

National Go Home on Time Day is an initiative of The Australia Institute to start a serious conversation about the impact of poor work/life balance on our health, relationships and workplaces. The Day gives unions an opportunity to highlight the huge amount of unpaid overtime Australians work each year.

Life doesn't need to revolve around work. Go Home on Time Day is your chance to win back some work/life balance.

More than a decade after then Prime Minister, John Howard, declared work-life balance to be a barbecue-stopper, overwork still presents a massive imposition on the personal and social wellbeing of many Australians.

It's really easy to get involved in Go Home on Time Day and everyone can do it - when your shift at work is over you go home.

This year Go Home on Time Day will be celebrated on 19 November. Mark it in your calendar and start discussing it with your colleagues.

Find out more at <http://www.gohomeontimeday.org.au>.

Share your story and stand up to the Napthine Government

It's clear every worker has been let down by the Napthine Government.

But union members just like you are standing up to the government by sharing their experiences about what budget cuts mean to them and Victoria.

Be a part of the We Are Union campaign to highlight workers' voices this election. Share your story at: http://www.therealstory.org.au/share_story

Worth Reading: "PM admits thousands to forego tests because of co-payment"

"Thousands of potentially deadly illnesses may go undetected until they are well advanced because of the Federal Government's \$7 co-payment for diagnostic imaging services and other Budget measures, it has been claimed.

As the Federal Government continues to struggle to secure the support it needs to introduce its co-payment, Prime Minister Tony Abbott has admitted that there are likely to be a million fewer diagnostic imaging tests each year, many of them for potentially fatal conditions such as breast cancer and liver metastasis, by 2017.

Asked by Opposition Leader Bill Shorten in Question Time last week whether he was aware of estimates there would be 680,000 fewer such tests in 2015-16 and about one million less by 2017, the Prime Minister said that "the short answer is yes and yes".

Read this article from the Australian Medical Association at:

<https://ama.com.au/node/15581>

Worth Reading: "How the US trade deal undermined Australia's PBS"

"Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is one of the few pieces of national public health policy with unquestioned democratic legitimacy. It was established by the vote of a majority of citizens in a majority of states in a referendum in the late 1940s. Since then, it has lowered the cost of pharmaceuticals to citizens through expert assessment of their cost-effectiveness.

The PBS uses public funds to reimburse pharmaceutical companies for the “health innovation” value of listed medications, as determined after review of scientific evidence by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. The government negotiates the price with drug companies and wants a good deal for taxpayers, who ultimately foot the bill.

Central to the processes of the PBS is the idea that drugs with identical or similar clinical outcomes should have similar prices, known as reference pricing. Unfortunately, the PBS process of reference pricing was considerably disrupted by the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA) – though this is not something the Australian government wishes to admit.”

Read the full article by Thomas Faunce, ARC Future Fellow at ANU, on The Conversation at: <http://theconversation.com/how-the-us-trade-deal-undermined-australias-pbs-32573>

Your Union is on Facebook

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We Are Union - Get Active! Help change Victoria!

Saturday 1 November – Leopold street stall: We Are Union volunteers will visit Leopold to talk to locals about the jobs crisis in Greater Geelong and cuts to Gordon TAFE.

[RSVP](#)

Saturday 1 November – Frankston mini-doorknock and street stall: Come along with us to Frankston, where just 489 votes can change the government! Join local unionists, firefighters, paramedics, and nurses telling the real story on the Emergency Services, Health and Jobs crises in Victoria.

[RSVP](#)

Saturday 1 November – Upper Ferntree Gully street stall: Join us to chat with local Bently community members



Share STAT Report

Is there a copy of STAT Report on your Union noticeboard or in your staff room?

If not print out a copy and leave it on the noticeboard or in the staff room for your colleagues.

about Napthine's devastating cuts to TAFE and public schools and show your support of education & skills in Victoria!

[RSVP](#)

Monday 3 November – Bellarine phone bank: We are Union volunteers will gather at Geelong Trades Hall to make calls to union members in the electorate of Bellarine to find out the most important issues to them.

[RSVP](#)

Tuesday 4 November – Monbulk Cup Day street stall:

Join us to hand out "DENIS' FORM GUIDE" and help us tell the REAL story on HEALTH, EDUCATION, EMERGENCY SERVICES and JOBS. Let's have some fun on Cup Day and see the Liberals SCRATCHED this November.

[RSVP](#)

Wednesday 5 November – Trades Hall phone bank: Join us on Wednesday 5th November for the Trades Hall phone bank! We're aiming to call 500 union members in marginal seats across Victoria, to speak with them about their key issues in this Victorian State Election year.

[RSVP](#)

Thursday 6 November – Kananook & Frankston train

station leafleting: Join Paramedics, Firefighters and Nurses at Frankston & Kananook stations leafleting and talking to local commuters about the Emergency Services and Health crisis in Victoria!

[RSVP](#)

Thursday 6 November – Chelsea train station leafleting:

We Are Union volunteers will join firefighters, paramedics, teachers and nurses to speak with local commuters about Napthine's cuts to Emergency Services!

[RSVP](#)

Thursday 6 November – Bellarine phone bank: We are Union volunteers will gather at Geelong Trades Hall to make

calls to union members in the electorate of Bellarine to find out the most important issues to them.

[RSVP](#)

Thursday 6 November – Trades Hall phone bank: Join us on Thursday 6th November for the Trades Hall phone bank! We're aiming to call 500 union members in marginal seats across Victoria, to speak with them about their key issues in this Victorian State Election year.

[RSVP](#)

Benefits for Union Members

As a union member, you can take advantage of the collective buying power of more than 1.9 million members to get discounts on a great range of products and services.

ACTU Member Connect makes sure the products and services are from companies you can rely on to deliver high-quality products with reliable customer service.

There is more information about a range of other benefits union members can access at

<http://www.memberconnect.com.au/> or you can call ACTU Member Connect on 1300 362 223.

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