



## Stat Report 2015/23

### State Government launches investigation into pathology services and contracts at Latrobe Regional Hospital

The Medical Scientists Association of Victoria has welcomed the decision of the Victorian Health Minister, Jill Hennessy, to conduct a review into whether the Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) and Dorevitch Pathology have failed to comply with the terms of the pathology services contract, particularly the requirement to deliver effective and quality pathology services for the Latrobe Valley community.

The investigation follows a number of issues concerning the pathology services contract raised publicly by the Union over the past two years.

And the review represents a massive win for the Union for our efforts over years of highlighting the damaging business model of Dorevitch Pathology and its impacts on quality healthcare standards in public hospitals.

It's also clear that there must be a number of significant issues with the way LRH and Dorevitch Pathology have managed this critically important contract because a Government doesn't organise an investigation of this nature unless there are very convincing reasons for it.

The investigation will be undertaken by Paxton Partners on behalf of the Health Minister and will determine whether pathology services at the LRH are being delivered to the quality standard set under the pathology services contract.

The investigation will also review the current pathology services contract to determine if it contains clear service requirements, whether these have been complied with and whether or not there are penalties for the contractor not complying with them.

The management at LRH has known for some time that Dorevitch Pathology has consistently failed to comply with key contract performance requirements relating to quality and clinical care performance standards.

But what needs to be answered in this investigation is why the Latrobe Regional Hospital flatly rejected repeated requests from the MSAV to do something about it. Why did the LRH Board turn a blind eye to very serious issues that are now to be investigated by the Health Minister? And why did LRH agree to vary clinical care contract performance standards?"

Minutes of an internal hospital pathology committee reveal that LRH executive managers have raised repeated concerns that Dorevitch Pathology was not complying with the pathology contract from as long ago as 2011. On 13 December 2011 the LRH CEO is minuted as expressing his doubt that Dorevitch Pathology would be able to comply with contract requirements.

The important work of this investigation is much more than determining what has happened, because the facts and evidence about contract breaches and the harmful impacts this has had are clear. This investigation must get to the bottom of how Dorevitch Pathology was allowed to implement changes that improved its profits but compromised pathology quality and healthcare standards.

And this investigation must make clear recommendations about putting in place safeguards that ensure this can never happen again and guarantee quality healthcare in the Latrobe Regional Hospital.

The CEO and Board of Latrobe Regional Hospital have a responsibility to cooperate fully in this investigation and must answer to the Latrobe Valley community about why they have allowed health care standards to drop.

The Union looks forward to giving evidence and providing relevant information to assist the investigation. The Union will also ensure that members at Latrobe Regional Hospital are given the opportunity to make submissions and present their evidence.

We'll provide regular updates for members about the progress of and key opportunities in the investigation.



  
**PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
SEMINAR  
16 SEPTEMBER**  
**Register your interest by 9 September  
at [enquiry@vicpsych.org.au](mailto:enquiry@vicpsych.org.au)**

## Asbestos removal at Eye and Ear

It has been brought to the Union's attention that there have been reports that there are serious and on-going problems with the asbestos removal at the site. Despite the best efforts of construction unions and their OHS representatives to contact WorkSafe, raising the matter continually with the Hospital's management and the construction/removal companies, they are convinced that the situation for workers and the public is unsafe.

Concerns already highlighted by construction unions and their OHS representatives include:

- rather than working from the bottom to the top, the removal is occurring from the top to the bottom;
- to date 17 clearance certificates issued by the hygienists have had to be rescinded when it was found the areas were still contaminated;
- workers are not being informed; and
- certain procedures with the public continued despite asbestos removal works underway in the immediate area

The Union is working with the relevant construction unions and other health unions – the ANMF

and HACSU – to resolve this situation and to ensure workers and the public are not exposed to asbestos. It is being proposed that a Hospital-wide meeting take place to provide information about the current situation and how safety standards will be applied to ensure exposure is minimised.

If you have any concerns please contact the Union on 9623 9623.

## The Abbott Government wants to destroy good governance of industry superannuation funds

Industry superannuation funds boards have always been based on a representative model, with equal numbers of Trustees nominated by employers and trade unions.

And industry superannuation funds, being not-for-profit, have historically out-performed the big for-profit retail superannuation funds run by the big banks and insurance companies.

No problems have been identified with the governance of industry superannuation funds unlike the banks and financial services companies which have been hit by scandals involving their financial advisers.

Yet the Abbott Government wants to destroy the representative basis of industry superannuation funds.

Why? Because the Abbott government hates the fact that working people are represented by trade unions? Because the Abbott government hates the fact that members of industry funds have representatives on the Boards who are unionists?

The Boards of Industry Super Funds were the first to decide to divest from holding shares in tobacco companies at a time when the Liberal and the National Parties were still accepting donations from Big Tobacco. The Liberal Party only stopped accepting donations from big tobacco in 2013 prior to the last federal election, when the ALP promised to ban political donations from the tobacco industry.

And the National Party continues to accept donations from big tobacco even now.

If the Abbott Government were fair dinkum about the good governance of superannuation boards, then they'd start with the investigation of the scandals involving the big banks, the financial services companies and their advisers before investigating the need for so-called 'independent' board members on industry superannuation funds' boards.

This effort from the Abbott Government to undermine the governance of industry superannuation funds is at worst malicious and at best represents a willingness to reward the incompetence of the big banks and financial services companies.



## It Pays to Belong to the Union

A member had been trying to negotiate part-time work under section 21 of the public sector EBA – Request for Flexible Working Arrangements – to assist in meeting her caring need for her preschool-aged children.

After being fobbed off for months by her head of department, the member contacted the MSAV.

The MSAV assisted the member in getting agreement to reduce her hours plus ensuring that her amended contractual arrangements specified in writing the days of the week she would be working, and her starting and finishing times, as well as her new weekly hours (as required by the EBA).

This is why it pays to belong to the Union.

## VPA Professional Development Seminar

### Turning Psychological Practice into Research

The VPA's next Professional Development Seminar and its Annual General Meeting will be held on 16 September starting at 12pm at the Treacy Centre, Parkville.

#### **Seminar Overview:**

Associate Professor John Farhall will be the keynote speaker for the next VPA professional development session on 16 September on the topic, *Turning Psychological Practice into Research*. As well as John's keynote address, this session will include project presentations by members from a range of practice areas. We will conclude with a problem-solving panel, for which others who have experienced the pleasure and pain of turning practice into research will join John.

#### **About Associate Professor John Farhall**

Dr John Farhall holds a joint appointment as Associate Professor at the School of Psychology and Public Health at La Trobe University and Consultant Clinical Psychologist at North Western Mental Health. His role aims to build bridges between the public mental health services and university research and training. His primary interests are in innovations in mental health care, psychopathology, therapy for psychotic disorders and evidence-based practice. His research is centred on understanding psychotic disorders, including evaluating and disseminating evidence-based psychological treatments for people who have psychotic disorders and understanding the disorder processes those treatments seek to address. His research experience includes multicentre large scale randomized controlled trials, qualitative studies, postgraduate and

Honours student projects, unfunded projects in mental health services and local routine evaluations.

### **Seminar Program:**

12.00 - 12.30 Registration and Lunch

12.30 - 1.00 VPA Annual General Meeting

1.00 - 2.00 Keynote Address: Associate Professor John Farhall 'Turning Psychological Practice into Research'

2.00 – 3.00 Members' Projects: Session One

3.00 – 3.20 Afternoon Tea and Networking

3.20 – 4.00 Members' Projects: Session Two

4.00 – 4.30 Problem-solving panel (Associate Professor John Farhall + others)

### **Calls for Expressions of Interest to Present – We want your input!**

1. Present your project: No matter how large, small, complete or incomplete, part of a higher degree, a larger study or a practice improvement project and from any area of psychological practice. If it involves turning your practice into research, then members want to hear about your project!

**Fill out the form ([PDF](#) or [Word](#)) on the website and return it by 31st of July.**

We will advise VPA members of the final program by mid-August. If we can't schedule all submissions for oral presentation (20 mins) then an alternative way of circulating your project will be offered.

2. Bring your ideas, problems, obstacles, opportunities and questions – test the problem solving skills of our expert panel.

Contact the Union on 9623 9625 or at [enquiry@vicpsych.org.au](mailto:enquiry@vicpsych.org.au) to register for this PD, to submit your project to present at the PD or if you have any questions.

## **Service Redesign at Mercy Mental Health**

Mercy mental health is undergoing a service redesign. Staff have been advised that several positions will be "reclassified".

The Union has asked Mercy to confirm that they will not be forcibly downgrading psychology staff as the EBA says people can only be "redeployed" to positions in the same substantive classification.

In response Mercy are saying they are waiting to hear back from the Victorian Health Industry Association for advice. This is despite the Agreement being clear about redeploying staff into positions of the same substantive classification.

The Union will continue to press Mercy for responses and to ensure that our members are not adversely affected by this so-called service redesign. We will also be sure to continue to provide updates through STAT Report.

If you're impacted, or believe you will be impacted, by Mercy's so-called service redesign please contact the Union on 9623 9625

## **No Pay? No Way! – The Next Steps**

*"Management value budget savings over patient safety and staff welfare"*

Here are 5 things you can do right now in the next step of our "No Pay? No Way!" campaign:

1. Talk to your colleagues about workloads and saying "No" to unpaid work. Remember: You can't be forced to perform unpaid work and your refusal is a lawful action for which

- you cannot be disciplined or punished.
2. [Sign up for our Workplace Kits](#) and help spread the word about our campaign in your workplace.
  3. Let us know when you're doing unpaid work. Click [here](#) and report it.\*
  4. Help us identify breaches in your workplace. By helping us to identify breaches of our Agreement, you are enabling the Union to take action on those breaches and enforcing our Agreement. Click [here](#) and report breaches.\*
  5. Ask your colleagues to join the Union. Together we are stronger to fight back against increasing unpaid work and growing workloads.

\* To report your unpaid work and breaches of our Agreement you will need to register for the website.

## Red Cross Blood Service: What's going on with payment for Public Holidays not worked?

Earlier this week, MSAV took the Red Cross Blood Service to the Fair Work Commission to discuss the public holiday clause in the Union agreement. Unfortunately no agreement was reached as a result of the conciliation hearing, however we thought it opportune to provide you all with an update.

### What's the argument all about?

The Union contends that the public holiday clause, which is virtually identical to that in the public sector agreement, means the same thing as the clause in the public sector agreement, which is the same thing that it has meant since the late 1980's and that is that Monday to Friday full-time workers have an entitlement to be compensated 1 and ½ days pay or time for a public holiday on a day that they are not rostered to work.

In the context of this year, that means Easter Sunday (new public holiday) and Anzac Day (which occurred on a Saturday this year). It does not mean Easter Saturday which has its own separate entitlement.

This form of words:

*"Where such holiday occurs on his or her rostered day off, the employee shall be entitled to receive one (1) and a half (1/2) day's pay in addition to the weekly wage or one (1) and a half (1/2) days off at a time convenient to the employer without loss of pay in lieu thereof."*

has been virtually unchanged for scientists for about 25 years and its meaning is well understood across the health sector.

Unfortunately, the Red Cross Blood Service does not necessarily accept the history and common understanding at this stage.

### What's next?

We will continue to pursue the matter. The Red Cross Blood Service has indicated that it is seeking legal advice in relation to the evidence the Union presented. The Union hopes we're able to reconcile our differences of interpretation quickly, or the Union will need to instigate further proceedings in Fair Work or elsewhere.

### What if I'm a part-timer and I didn't get paid?

It is agreed that part-timers have an entitlement for the public holiday (if they don't work that day) under clause 22.7 to a pro-rata payment.

If you haven't been paid and you're a part-timer, speak to payroll.

If you have any other questions or concerns about this matter please contact the Union on 9623 9623.

[Worth Reading: It Might Say Free Trade On The Label,](#)

## But What's In The Tin?

“Economic modelling with unstated assumptions is a bit like chicken nuggets with unstated ingredients – one swallows at one’s own risk. And yet there’s been a lot of it about lately. Just this weekend, reporting on a new study of negative gearing, the Australian warned that abolishing this much-used tax concession could lead to “rents increasing by almost \$10,000 on average each year.”

The report was released by the Property Council of Australia and the article was written by the newspaper’s Troy Bramston, who was for a time employed by the Property Council. The \$10,000 figure was based on a misunderstanding of the report’s observation that the immediate removal of negative gearing is likely to result in a “portion” of the average rental loss of \$9500 being passed on to renters. The report didn’t specify what the “portion” was, but it certainly can’t be more than the income tax that would hypothetically be paid on the no-longer-deductible \$9500, which, given a top marginal tax rate of 49 cents in the dollar, would be less than \$5000, and almost certainly much less.”

Read the entire article by Tom Westland in the Inside Story at: <http://insidestory.org.au/it-might-say-free-trade-on-the-label-but-whats-in-the-tin>

## Worth Reading: A year on, Australia’s health star food-rating system is showing cracks

“The government has [started the second phase of its awareness campaign](#) for Australia’s year-old health star food-rating system. The A\$2.1 million campaign is aimed at educating grocery buyers about how to shop for healthy food and encouraging the food industry to adopt the voluntary system.

But it’s unlikely the campaign will fulfil its first aim because health stars are predominantly being used by the food industry to market highly processed food products. It would be unfortunate if it was successful in its latter aim because unless we change the way the system currently works, consumers will be the losers.”

Read the entire article by Mark Lawrence and Christine Pollard, in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/a-year-on-australias-health-star-food-rating-system-is-showing-cracks-42911>

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### 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.

Australian Unions Member Benefits 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



Australian Unions Member Benefits on 1300 362 223.

## New Australian Unions Member Benefits app

Over the last month Australian Unions launched some new and exclusive Member Benefits - did you see our recent email telling you about this? If not, check your inbox! Search for "Lifestyle Rewards" for your login code.

Our program has expanded to include:

- Discounted movie tickets for Village, Hoyts, Palace and Event cinemas.
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- A new secure member only website and smart phone app.

All this is free to all members of affiliated unions. If you have not got a login and would like join in [register for Member Benefits now](#).

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