



Stat Report 2015/24

Union calling on Government to act before public pathology ends in crisis

The Union is warning that public hospitals may be unable to meet required world-class pathology standards while it continues to be treated as a non-essential service with a race to the bottom attitude from private providers in public hospitals.

Turn-around times on pathology tests are crucial to ensuring patients are diagnosed quickly so treatment can begin as soon as possible. Turn-around times are the pathology equivalent to waiting times for ambulances. The continued cuts to healthcare by successive governments has resulted in many public pathology laboratories being contracted out to private providers only interested in making profits.

As a result of this race to the bottom, pathology standards set out in contracts with public hospitals are not being met with quality standards declining and turn-around times for some tests being allowed to increase.

Critical pathology testing is being stripped out of local laboratories and sent to factory laboratories that can be several hours away in some cases. And usually includes the loss of well-paid local jobs and highly qualified staff. The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) acknowledges the impacts of how such practices can inevitably result in curbing of quality and research activities which may impact on clinical services.

The loss of local pathology testing can put other services at risk like the emergency department, obstetrics and paediatrics and oncology services. And it can have a devastating impact on public hospitals in regional Victoria, putting at risk their capacity to treat patients locally.

The Union is calling on the Minister for Health, Jill Hennessy, and the Andrews Labor Government to end the contracting out of pathology services; and ensure local public hospitals have fully functioning pathology laboratories staffed with a sufficient number of properly qualified scientists.

But we're going to need your help to make this happen.

And that's why we have prepared a petition to present to the Victorian Parliament to turn up the heat.

The petition respectfully asks that the Government place a moratorium on the contracting out of pathology services and instigate a full investigation into the procurement practices in public hospitals with respect to pathology services.

Our aim is for at least 1,000 medical scientists to sign the petition so that the Government can't ignore our voice on this critical health issue.

[Download the petition and get your colleagues to sign it.](#)

After you've filled up a page with signatures make sure you send the petition back to us at:

Level 1, 62 Lygon St
Carlton South VIC 3053

Union to meet with Members over review of pathology services and contracts at LRH

The Union will be meeting members at Latrobe Regional Hospital to discuss the review the Government is undertaking into pathology contracts and services at the hospital.

As we reported in last week's STAT Report, the Union welcomes the Review and is very keen to work with Paxton Partners who have been contracted to undertake the Review. The Union will be meeting with Paxton Partners to outline a range of concerns we have raised over a number of years. And the Union will be making a comprehensive and substantial submission.

But we want to make sure that members at Latrobe Regional Hospital have their opportunity to present submissions to this investigation; and to discuss how members can present submissions confidentially.

Keep your eye out for details of a member meeting at Latrobe Regional Hospital.



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.



Online Continuing Professional Development Has Arrived

The Union is pleased to be able to offer members of the MSAV, VPA Inc and AHP access to online CPD courses.

Whilst starting with significant number and range of course, this will continue to expand over the years meeting the needs of members with relevant and topical professional subjects.

We think this is an important and ongoing union membership benefit for our members.

Check it out: <http://msav.org.au/slider/new-online-continuing-professional-development/hsu-cpd.net.au>

Worth Reading: Government's proposed country-of-origin labels leave you to guess where your food comes from

"The government has [presented a snapshot](#) of its proposed new country-of-origin food labels, after a [four-month development and consultation process](#). The current laws came under fire in February, after a hepatitis A outbreak from [frozen berries](#) that were grown in China and Chile.

[Reluctant to act](#) initially because he said new labels may impose a "burden on industry", Prime Minister Tony Abbott [changed his mind](#) just days later, announcing an inquiry to be led by Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce and Industry and Science Minister Ian Macfarlane. The information [released yesterday during a joint press conference](#) is a glimpse of what Australia's country-of-origin food labels could look like as early as "later this year"."

Read the entire article by Melanie Voevodin in The Conversation at:

<https://theconversation.com/governments-proposed-country-of-origin-labels-leave-you-to-guess-where-your-food-comes-from-44973>

Worth Reading: Closing the Wrong Gaps

“For many years the debate about Australian schools has been influenced by the claim that public funding of non-government schools is good policy because it saves money for governments. As the Australian’s Adam Creighton [claimed](#) last year, “If the 1.24 million students now in private primary and secondary schools were shifted back to public schools, Australian governments would face an annual extra cost of \$9 billion.” To stop funding private schools would amount to “[fiscal suicide](#),” one commentator has claimed; according to another, it would create a “[financial tsunami](#).” Government funding for private schools is “a highly efficient and effective use of government resources,” [says](#) the Independent Schools Council of Australia.

Claims like these usually refer to average recurrent costs across the entire government, Catholic and Independent school sectors. In reality, the costs of schooling vary according to location and enrolments. Students with advantaged backgrounds and circumstances are less costly to educate; those coming from less well-off households need more support.”

Read the entire article by Chris Bonner and Bernie Shepherd in Inside Story at:

<http://insidestory.org.au/closing-the-wrong-gaps>

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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.

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