



Stat Report 2015/41

Reflecting on 2015; Gearing up for 2016

As the end of 2015 approaches it's time to reflect on the year that was. And it was a year of big achievements for the Union.

It started early in 2015 with the Union working to establish a review of pathology contracts and services at the Latrobe Regional Hospital. And it was successfully established because the Union worked to build relationships with the incoming Andrews Government.

We built on the success of the 2014 members' conference with this year's conference. The conference explored ongoing issues for members; it highlighted the progress of the research and the campaign to raise awareness about unpaid work and its impacts on members. The conference also heard from the Assistant Minister for Health who addressed members concerns about the successive cuts to healthcare and the approach of the new State government to healthcare and the health workforce. These opportunities to come together to meet and learn from each other about what is happening across our sector are vital for members to continue standing up for their rights at work.

This year we've been working hard to keep standing up for members. And in particular we have been working hard to highlight issues important to all members like proper workforce planning; addressing workloads; and the gross misuse of unpaid work to keep services functioning. The Union has been in regular discussion with the new Victorian Government and working to use these relationships to make it clear to decision makers that Victoria's health workforce is under extreme pressure.

This year the Union launched its Pathology Petition to help highlight the growing concerns about a decline in pathology standards and the growing shortage of medical scientists. And with over 400 signatures we're working with concerned Members of Parliament to have the petition presented to Parliament in early 2016.

2015 also saw the Union launch a new website with new features like letting you change your personal details online and to let people join the Union online. The new website also features forums that give you a chance to interact with other members and to highlight the pressing issues for you and your colleagues. And we have been engaging more members with more workplace meetings. It's our goal to continue meeting members in their local workplaces through 2016 to keep building momentum for enterprise bargaining.

Of course we have had our share of disappointments with the new state government, especially with the release of the state budget and the lack of additional resources to address health workforce issues, or ongoing shortages in staff across a growing number of disciplines. And we saw health services continue cutting mental health programmes even as the state's mental health minister boldly declared they're improving services for people seeking help for their mental wellbeing

But we will continue to advocate and lobby for better pay and conditions as we gear up for public sector bargaining in 2016. And we're working hard to make sure we're prepared and ready to bargain for the best outcomes for members.

However to make sure we get the best deal in 2016 it's going to take all of us working together.

And to have an even stronger voice and stronger bargaining position we're going to need to keep growing our membership. That's why it's vital that you speak with your colleagues about joining the Union.

But in the meantime we hope you have safe and festive holiday period. If you have to work we thank you for your service over the holidays and to helping keep our health services going at a difficult time of year.

We look forward to working with you in the new year as we gear up for public sector bargaining.

-- Paul Elliott

Psychologists: If you need help at work you need the VPA Inc.

If you are a psychologist and not in the VPA, you are taking unnecessary risks with your reputation and career. [Download an application form and join today.](#)

Here's a 'real-life' case where the VPA has acted on behalf of VPA members.

Psychologist 'C' kept his clinical notes succinct as a measure to protect the privacy of his patients. However, without his knowledge or permission, these notes were accessed by his employer who then passed them onto a third party external to the health service. In a subsequent dispute between the psychologist and his employer, the third party was called as a witness by the health service in proceedings before the Fair Work Commission (FWC). This witness attempted to use the notes to discredit the psychologist. As VPA, representing the psychologist, was a party to the proceedings, it was able to protect her and prevent sensitive information being publically divulged.

Common beaches of employment entitlements and negotiation of enterprise agreements

In addition to the above, VPA routinely assists members over issues such as harassment and bullying, under classification, organisational re-structuring, incorrect calculation of leave entitlements and health and safety. In addition, it negotiates enterprise agreements for psychologists in the public and private sectors to ensure that rates of pay and conditions remain up to date.

The Paris climate agreement is now a public health agreement: Climate and Health Alliance

The global climate change negotiations have concluded with the Paris Agreement, approved by 195 nations on 12th December 2015. The outcome has been welcomed as a historic agreement that sets the world on a course to rapidly phase out fossil fuels to tackle climate change.

Significantly the Paris Agreement includes an ambition to limit global warming to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures. It also establishes a mechanism to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change in particularly vulnerable developing countries; and it brings into effect a process to regularly evaluate and increase national emissions reduction commitments.

An unprecedented number of health delegates at the COP worked with negotiators to ensure health was a core element in the global climate agreement.

A series of climate and health declarations and campaigns with signatories representing more than 1700 health organizations, 8200 hospitals, and 13 million health professionals called on governments to reach a strong agreement to protect public health.

As a result, the Paris Agreement includes the right to health in its preamble and for the first time, acknowledges the health co-benefits available from cutting emissions. During the COP, health groups and institutions committed to leading the way toward climate solutions by promoting healthy energy choices, low carbon healthcare, climate resilient health systems, and healthcare leadership to combat climate change.

While there remains much to be done, health and medical groups and climate action advocates have hailed the agreement as a historic and important agreement that marks the beginning of the end for fossil fuels.

"The Paris Agreement is a positive response to the grave threats we face from our fossil fuelled societies and a clear sign the world's nations are willing to work together to help achieve the necessary and urgent transition to a low carbon world. This Agreement signals a shift from rhetoric to action, and, we hope, marks the beginning of a global effort to protect and promote people's health and wellbeing through cutting emissions and combatting climate change. Health professionals and groups will be watching closely to ensure the Australian government plays its part in protecting people from the harmful impacts of climate change." -- Fiona Armstrong, Executive Director, Climate and Health Alliance

[Read the report by the Climate and Health Alliance from COP21](#)

Know Your Rights this Festive Season

The Christmas close down period and you

The festive season is almost upon us and our attention has turned to the Christmas close down period.

And as day follows night some employers haven't learned that they cannot coerce you 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 on 9623 9623 if you need further advice.

Payment for Public Holidays over Christmas

It is important to know their rights about payment for working and not working on Public Holidays, particularly for part timers.

The three Public Holidays during the festive season are:

- Christmas Day – Friday 25th December 2015
- Boxing Day – Saturday 26th December 2015 & Monday 28th December 2015 is an additional day
- New Year's Day - Friday 1st January 2016

Public Sector*

Where a full time employee is rostered for duty on a public holiday are entitled to be paid for the time worked with a minimum of four hours wages at the rate of time and a half in addition to their normal weekly wage i.e. in addition to payment for the day. (Time off in lieu at the penalty rate with a minimum of six hours time off may be taken by agreement, as well as payment for the day). If an employee is entitled to a full working day off, this may be added to annual leave by mutual consent.

Where a full time shift employee is rostered off on a public holiday (i.e. those who are normally rostered over a seven day cycle where a public holiday falls on a Rostered Day Off – i.e. a day when they are not rostered for duty) are entitled to the normal weekly wage plus one and a half days pay (or one and a half days' time in lieu) for the public holiday.

For a full time employee, where a public holiday falls on a day on which they normally work but they are not required to work, they are entitled to one day's pay i.e. are paid for the public holiday.

For a part time employee, where a public holiday falls on a day on which they normally work but they are not required to work they are entitled to one day's pay at the number of hours that they normally are rostered on that day.

For a part-time employee, where a public holiday falls on a day when they are never rostered to work, they are entitled to a pro rata payment for the day, where a day means 8 hours, based on the average weekly hours worked over the last 6 months divided by 38

** NB It is important to note that the entitlements for the Private Sector may vary slightly. In this case it is best to read the "Public Holidays" clause within the Enterprise Agreement which applies to your employer.*

Remember that the MSAV Office is closed until 5 January 2014 so if an issue does arise with your employer about payment for the above days, retain your payslip or any emails from your manager and contact the office for assistance when we open again next year.

Union Office closure over the Festive season

The Union's offices will be **closed from Wednesday 23 December and reopens on Tuesday 5 January**. Over this time there will be no-one available to deal with standard industrial matters or respond to queries.

For urgent matters only call 0418 543 682 during office hours only.

Join the Union

Are your workloads increasing? Are your stress levels increasing? Are you doing longer hours at work? Is your workload increasing?

You're not alone.

Health services are relying on you to do unpaid work to keep many services afloat. In fact without you doing unpaid work many services would be unable to function properly. And the evidence is showing that the amount of unpaid work is increasing along with ever-growing workloads and fewer staff to fill the gaps. Increasing unpaid work and high workloads are having a seriously negative impact on our lives.

And in 2016 we commence negotiations for a new collective agreement with the public sector.

But to protect our professions and stand up for our rights at work we must strengthen our collective voice and strengthen our bargaining position by increasing our membership.

And you can help right now by sharing one of the images below through Facebook.

Suffering from:
Higher workloads
Longer hours at work
More unpaid work
Work related stress
Join the Union!
msav.org.au

Suffering from:
Higher workloads
Longer hours at work
More unpaid work
Work related stress
Join the Union!
vicpsych.org.au

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Higher workloads
Longer hours at work
More unpaid work
Work related stress
Join the Union!
ahpv.asn.au

[Share on Facebook](#)

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Your Union is on Facebook

Keep up to date with what's happening by liking us on Facebook

[Medical Scientists Association of Victoria](#) | [Victorian Psychologists Association Inc](#) | [Association of Hospital Pharmacists](#)

Get the most out of the Union's website

The Union's website has a number of special features for members. These features, like the Members section and the Forums, require you to have a log-in and password.

But to ensure that your privacy is protected we have created the website in such a way that you will need a separate log-in and password for the Members section and the Forums section. It might seem to be inconvenient but it does better protect you and your private information. It also means that we can be more certain about the source of a hack if such an event is ever to arise.

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.
- Discounted electronic gift cards - for JB Hi-Fi, Rebel Sport, Dick Smith, iTunes and My Fun (which includes major theme parks, zoos and aquariums).
- A discounted accommodation booking site.
- 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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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.

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