



# Stat Report 2016/01

## Fired Up for 2016

Happy New Year and welcome to 2016 from everyone at the Union. We hope you had a safe and enjoyable festive season.

2016 is an important year for the Union for lots of reasons but in particular because this year we kick off negotiations for a new public sector enterprise agreement. Though we can't forget that this year will see a federal election too.

In 2015 we saw the continued devastating impacts of budget cuts by successive State and Federal governments. And now Victoria's 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.

I also believe that your unpaid work is ultimately detrimental to properly funded health services. Unpaid work can hide the true picture of chronic underfunding of services and more and more we see can provide a rationale for not restoring proper funding.

We'll be working hard to ensure health remains a pressure point for the state and federal governments. It will be up to us to ensure that the Victorian Government is held to account for its promises on health; and to do that we have to keep growing our Union and maintaining our work to protecting your rights at work.

We will continue to strongly hold the Victorian Government to its pre-election Policy Platform on job security; base public sector employment levels on needs; reduce, and where possible eliminate outsourcing of public services/jobs; and conduct enterprise agreement bargaining more fairly and efficiently.

With growing concerns about our professions being dumbed down with increasing workloads and workplace stress, it is vital we use this year's bargaining to address these big issues while protecting the hard won pay and conditions we already enjoy. We know health service executives have stopped properly resourcing workforces and now simply expect you to keep doing more and more work.

It is up to us fight back. It is up to us to protect our professions, wages and hard won conditions and stand up for our rights at work. But to do that we must strengthen our collective voice and strengthen our bargaining strength by increasing our membership. Please encourage your colleagues to join the Union.

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We're back and fired up and we look forward to working with you all to protect our rights at work and our professions in 2016.

-- Paul Elliott

## Payment for Public Holidays over Christmas

It is important to know your rights about payments for working and not working on Public Holidays, particularly for part timers. And we already know that some health services have failed to properly pay members for the Public Holidays held

The three Public Holidays during the festive season were:

- Christmas Day – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December 2015
- Boxing Day – Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2015 & Monday 28<sup>th</sup> 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.*

**Contact the Union for assistance on 9623 9623.**

## Primary Health Care set to be broken up?

For the last 12 months Primary Health Care, the parent company of Dorevitch Pathology, has been suffering from a steadily declining share price. Shares in Primary were as high as \$5.52 but have slumped to \$2.93 with an 18 per cent fall in the share price over December 2015. It has also been reported that Primary Health Care will be seeking to expand its pathology business into overseas markets.

While Primary Health Care appears to have challenges ahead, one of its major challenges will have to be how Dorevitch Pathology is coming under increasing scrutiny for how it operates pathology laboratories in Victoria. with growing concerns that it breaches contract requirements.

This is on top of an investigation into contracts for pathology services held by Dorevitch Pathology at Latrobe Regional Hospital because of concerns regarding clinical/quality issues such as turn-around times increasing, the lack of testing done on site and the expansion of the hospital's oncology unit.

With a falling share price and rumours of the company being broken up, the Victorian Government must step in and ensure that the public hospitals that have outsourced their pathology services to Dorevitch Pathology don't end up with major holes in a crucial clinical services.

And now with the announcement by Treasurer Scott Morrison in December that will see bulk-billing removed from pathology services, and changes to bulk billing for diagnostic imaging and Magnetic Resonance Imaging, it is even more important the Victorian Government steps in to ensure pathology services are not being adversely affected.

## Turnbull Government's Christmas gift: Cuts to healthcare

In the lead up to the festive season the Turnbull Government used this time when people are distracted by family gatherings, winding down and season's greetings to announce significant cuts to healthcare.

The Union remains very concerned that health care standards for Australians will be significantly damaged by removing bulk-billing incentives for pathology, a clinical service used by General Practitioners for diagnosis and treatment. And by changing the bulk-billing arrangements for diagnostic imaging services and Magnetic Resonance Imaging services, the Turnbull Government is making these vital health services too expensive for many people. And with the Health Minister coming out to attack pathology providers, it's clear the Turnbull Government has little interest in ensuring the best possible healthcare is available to Australians when they need it.

The Union is also very concerned that the proposed slashing of the health workforce programs will lead to further shortages in critical areas like medical sciences with private pathology companies likely to maintain wage freezes to absorb revenue reductions to maintain current profit levels.

The changes announced by the Turnbull Government illustrates that they have little regard for the future healthcare of Australians. And they demonstrate a lack of understanding of the drivers of healthcare given that a great number of visits to a General Practitioner involve getting a pathology test done. Removing bulk-billing incentives for pathology tests will now make it more expensive for people to get the tests they need done. Healthcare standards will decline leading inevitably to adverse health outcomes for many patients. And it's very likely that removing bulk-billing incentives from pathology tests, and vital imaging services, will lead to more poor and vulnerable people not getting tests done, which could lead to significant health problems; ultimately requiring more extensive healthcare.

The Turnbull Government is creating a situation where poor and vulnerable people will no longer be able to afford to access the healthcare when they need it. This decision is not about governing for everyone or improving the lives of all Australians. This is a calculated attack on Australia's universal healthcare system.

Slashing the health workforce programmes will only lead to a situation that exasperates a current growing shortage in critical areas like medical sciences. Private pathology companies have a history of attacking workforce terms and conditions to protect profits. Dorevitch Pathology, for example, has refused to negotiate a single wage increase for its entire workforce for the past 8.5 years. This decision will see pathology companies harden their attitudes to negotiating fair and reasonable conditions.

And already the Turnbull Government's gift has resulted in Australia's largest private pathology providers coming out to clearly let the public know they'll be passing increased costs onto

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patients.

The Turnbull Government is sacrificing the good health of Australians because they are incapable of properly managing the Australian budget. Instead of attacking our universal healthcare system, the Turnbull Government could have ended the hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies given to the mining sector; or closed the negative gearing loophole. There are many ways the Turnbull Government could have chosen to start addressing budget concerns, but they chose to attack the healthcare industry and the health and wellbeing of every Australian.

## 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.

*When a patient of a major public health service committed an act of serious self-harm, Psychologist 'D', who had seen the patient many months previously, was subjected to disciplinary proceedings concerning her clinical notes. After enduring unfounded allegations by the employer, the psychologist decided to resign. VPA was able to negotiate on her behalf to obtain an attractive severance package in recognition of the injustice to which she had been subjected.*

### **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.

## Union Pride! We Are Union Pride March

The We Are Union team have planned their first action for 2016 – Pride March.

Pride March happens each year as part of Melbourne's annual LGBTIQA+ festival and the Union is helping to make sure there is a huge turnout of members showing their support.

The theme of the march this year is marriage equality and given that this is the most public and visible opportunity for us to show our support, the Union is keen to get a good turn out with lots of flags and banners.

### **Event Details**

**Date:** Sunday 31st January – assemble from 1pm for a 2pm SHARP kick off

**Assemble:** Lakeside Drive, St Kilda

**March:** down Fitzroy Street to Catani Gardens

For more information about Pride March visit <https://midsumma.org.au/participate/pride-march/info?showall>

You can also get updates about the We Are Union Pride March on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/events/531985323646025/>

## Join the Union

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

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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.



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## Union's IT system down

Late last week the Union experienced what became an on-going problem with its internet connectivity. This problem had major flow on impacts affecting our email and fax services.

If you sent the Union an email or fax in the last week it is entirely possible that we have not received it. Please make sure you get in contact with Union to ensure your query or concern was received so the Union can follow it up.

Contact the Union on 9623 9623.

## Worth Reading: 150,000 people have signed our petition because pathology cuts affect all of us

"It was a nasty surprise to hear that, in the lead up to Christmas, the government announced yet another measure targeting the affordability of healthcare.

This time, they've gone after essential pathology services and diagnostic procedures, including pap smears, MRIs, urine/blood tests, STI checks, x-rays and ultrasounds by cutting \$650m from bulk billing incentive payments.

I am a 25-year-old woman who has thyroid problems and I require regular blood tests in order to stay healthy. Not only that, I rely on regular pap smears to stay safe from cervical cancer. Some of my friends were similarly outraged when they heard they might have to start paying for these services, so we worked together to start a campaign against these changes."

Read the full article by Brigitte Garozzo in The Guardian at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/08/150000-people-have-signed-our->

## Worth Reading: Paid parental leave changes could see new mothers miss out on almost \$12,000 of support

“Analysis by the University of Sydney's Women and Work Research Group found that if adopted, the changes could leave new parents in jobs such as teaching, nursing and retail worse off.

The [proposed changes were announced late last year](#), modifying initial plans put forward by former prime minister Tony Abbott to prevent mothers accessing both their employer and Government leave schemes.

Currently, the Government provides new mothers with 18 weeks of paid leave at \$657 per week — no matter how many weeks of employer-paid PPL is available.”

Read the entire story by Stephanie Anderson at the ABC at: [http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-14/mothers-could-lose-\\$12000-under-changes-to-paid-parental-leave/7087916](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-14/mothers-could-lose-$12000-under-changes-to-paid-parental-leave/7087916)

## Worth Reading: Budget update brings deficit blowout and hits to health and aged care

“Health, welfare compliance and aged care have been targeted for savings in a budget update that forecasts deficits bigger than expected in May and pushes out further the return to surplus.

In some 180 savings measures more than offsetting extra spending since the May budget, there will be another welfare compliance crackdown, while people with welfare and family assistance debts will face an interest charge, encouraging them to pay back their debt.

Changes to the Medicare Benefits Schedule for diagnostic imaging and pathology bulk-billing incentives will save more than \$650 million over four years, while savings in aged care are to yield more than \$500 million. Former Prime Minister Tony Abbott's “green army” is being capped, saving \$317.5 million.

The deficit this financial year is now forecast to be \$37.4 billion, compared with \$35.1 billion in the May budget. By 2018-19 the deficit is projected to be \$14.2 billion; at budget time it was projected at \$6.9 billion by then.”

Read the entire article by Michelle Grattan in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/budget-update-brings-deficit-blowout-and-hits-to-health-and-aged-care-52378>

## 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](#)

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## 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 including 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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