



## Stat Report 2016/02

### Being a Professional

It's time we rethink the popular myth that being a professional in health means accepting high workloads, mounting personal pressure and performing whatever amount of unpaid work it takes to get our work done.

Being a medical scientist, a psychologist or a pharmacist, by the very nature of the professions and the work, means being a professional. Too often when discussing workplace issues like increasing workloads and insufficient staff available to cover workloads the notion of accepting this as part of a professional role is raised.

Unfortunately when the work keeps piling up without the staff needed, it will create significant pressure. Situations where people get over-worked and neglect their own health because they have to plough through the work are apparent in every workplace. Invariably whenever these sorts of issues are raised, someone is likely to insist people should be 'professionals'; and that excessive workloads go with being a 'professional'.

It's not clear to us as to why raising issues about workloads is not being 'professional'.

What we can say about being 'professional' is that there is nothing professional in allowing your health to deteriorate because executive managements are seemingly incapable of managing workloads appropriately. There is nothing 'professional' about having excessive workloads because managements refuse to employ sufficient staff to do the work. And there is nothing 'professional' about working through meal breaks and after rostered shifts in order to get more work done.

In fact, excessive workloads in many respects rob you of your ability to be professional.

When you are stressed and overworked errors can occur and mistakes can be amplified. Stress and being overworked can lead to serious health problems leading to increased time away from work. As you will know, errors and mistakes can make a major difference in a diagnosis or treatment; or critically delay a diagnosis for urgent treatments to be established.

We know from experience in representing members in disciplinary processes resulting from an error being made that there is not a single employer that accepts a defence of stress and anxiety from my high workload and pressure to get the job done.

It's when you're stressed and overworked that you're most at risk of making an error.

Excessive workloads are not about you and your level of professionalism; it's increasingly clear excessive workloads are about management refusing to properly manage workloads by ensuring the availability of sufficient staff. It's about management lacking the professionalism they demand of you

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These are among some of the big issues we have to take up as we head into negotiations for a new public sector agreement. At its core these issues speak to the growing concern that many vital services are reliant on you doing unpaid work; and an unspoken workplace culture of doing unpaid work.

It is up to us fight back. It is up to us to protect our professions, wages and hard won conditions and rights at work. And the best way to fight back is to strengthen our collective voice and our bargaining strength by increasing our membership – please encourage your colleagues to join the Union.

-- Paul Elliott

## No Pay No Way Survey 2015 Snapshot

The results from our “No Pay? No Way!” Survey 2015 show that workloads are continuing to increase, adding to the already excessive workloads reported in the 2014 survey results. And sadly the results from the Survey will not necessarily surprise or shock anyone working in the Sector.

Here is a snapshot of the outcomes from the latest “No Pay? No Way!” Survey:

### Unpaid Work

- More than 80% have done unpaid work in the last 12 months
- Nearly 80% are doing unpaid work on a daily and weekly basis

### Workloads

- 85% are doing unpaid work on their own initiative because of being unable to complete tasks in ordinary hours – 71% are doing unpaid work because the department is understaffed
- 89% of unpaid work is performed after rostered hours and 77% is being performed through meal and rest breaks
- 90% agree that workloads have increased over the last 12 to 24 months with 79% saying this was due to increase in demand for services

### Non-replacement of staff

- 87% said there is not sufficient staff to cover the workload when staff take annual leave or sick leave
- 52% said they had been refused leave due to understaffing
- If unplanned absences occur 94% said staff are required to pick up the work of the absent staff member(s)

## Payment for Public Holidays over Christmas

Unfortunately we are already being informed that some health services have failed to properly pay members for the Public Holidays held over the festive season. This is despite the information contained within our Agreements and the advice provided by the health services' own industrial consultants.

We hope that the public holiday arrangement for Australia Day is straighter forward for health services. Although we suspect we will have to chase payment for this day too. But in the meantime here are the payments you should have received for public holidays over Christmas.

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 gazetted by the State Government as a public holiday
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- 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.**

## 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 'E' was denied additional annual leave for CATT on-call duties to which he was entitled under the VPA enterprise agreement. VPA advised him of this entitlement. However, when the psychologist raised the matter with his employer he was told that the health service 'couldn't afford' to provide the leave. The VPA was able to inform the health service that rights conferred by enterprise agreements are legally enforceable and that the union would take enforcement proceedings if need be. The employer elected to provide the leave.*

### **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.

## Professional Development in 2016

Continuing professional development is something that ensures as professionals in health we

are up-to-date with the latest information. And it ensures that skills and knowledge are developed as new research, information or tools are made available.

For VPA members the Union will work with hosts of future Professional Development seminars to record those seminars and make them available through the Online CPD platform either as videos to stream or podcasts to download. And we're keen to expand the professional development opportunities available to AHP members.

That's why the Union is investing in its Online Continuing Professional Development platform to recognise your needs for ongoing professional development.

But to make sure that we're offering the best possible professional development; and the further development you need, the Union wants your feedback on the sort of professional development you're looking for. With our new online platform we have more opportunities to deliver an extensive range of professional development and we want to make sure it's what you need.

So get your thinking caps on about the sort of professional development we can offer in 2016 and send us your feedback to [enquiry@msav.org.au](mailto:enquiry@msav.org.au)

## 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/>

## Cuts Are Killing Us Rally

The Turnbull Government cuts to healthcare ahead of Christmas last year will see essential clinical services like pathology test and diagnostic imaging become unaffordable for vulnerable people as the cost of tests explode.

Access to pathology and diagnostic testing is vital to ensuring people are able to get the care they need when they need it. Approximately 80 per cent of all diagnoses are done through a pathology test. Pathology and diagnostic testing are vital in ensuring treatments are working. Removing bulk-billing incentives for pathology tests and diagnostic imaging will make it more expensive for vulnerable people to get the tests they need done. Healthcare standards will decline leading inevitably to adverse health outcomes for many patients; and a greater burden on the healthcare system.

Australia's two largest private pathology companies – Sonic Healthcare and Primary Health Care – have already committed to passing on the costs to patients. The Turnbull Government is creating a situation where vulnerable people will no longer be able to afford the healthcare they need when they need it.

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At the same time these companies will use the government's decision to cut bulk-billing incentives to extend wage freezes. Dorevitch Pathology – a wholly owned subsidiary of Primary Health Care –has refused to negotiate wage increases for the entire scientific workforce for the past 8.5 years.

These changes will heavily impact patients, and will heavily impact on private pathology providers who rely on referrals from GPs and medical practitioners and could lead to much less competition, despite claims about there being enough competition in the sector.

Slashing hundreds of millions of dollars from healthcare is not about governing for everyone or improving the lives of all Australians. This is a calculated attack on Australia's universal healthcare system.

**The Turnbull Government is sacrificing the long-term good health of Australians for short-term budget gain. Join us on 20 February to call on the Turnbull Government to reverse the cuts to bulk-billing for pathology tests.**

### **Event Details**

**When:** 12pm on 20 February

**Where:** State Library of Victoria

Get more information about the rally on Facebook at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/168635080164318/>

## Healthy Futures: HESTA needs to divest from fossil fuels

Every day we work to protect health - but what's the health impact of our super?

Right now HESTA and FSS, Australia's health and community services industry super funds, are investing our money in fossil fuels - coal, oil and gas. Burning these fuels for electricity is hugely harmful to our health. Air pollution from coal-fired electricity contributes to cardiovascular and respiratory disease, including lung cancers, leading to hundreds of thousands of premature deaths worldwide each year [1,2]. There are uncertainties around the safety of unconventional gas extraction (including "fracking") given case reports from the United States of significant groundwater contamination with benzene and other highly toxic petrochemicals [3,4]. And all fossil fuels, when burned, contribute to climate change, which has been identified as the greatest global health threat of our time [5]. Climate change threatens our health by increasing the risks of heatwaves, bushfires, droughts and storms, displacing people and straining our health systems [6].

None of these harms are acceptable when our society should be investing instead in clean, safe, low-carbon alternatives. The price of solar panels has fallen by 80% in the past seven years [7], and renewable energy industries are growing faster than any other form of power generation [8].

Healthy Futures is a new Melbourne-based group of health professionals, students and supporters working to address the health impacts of climate change and fossil fuel use. We're calling on HESTA and FSS to protect health by divesting from fossil fuels, just as they've previously divested from tobacco and HESTA from Transfield Services, who run asylum seeker detention centres.

In addition to the health impacts, investments in fossil fuels can have serious financial risks. Last year Market Forces estimated that HESTA lost \$165 million on its thermal coal investments [9].

**Join us in asking HESTA and FSS to divest from fossil fuels at [www.healthyfutures.net.au/divest](http://www.healthyfutures.net.au/divest). We know that if enough of us raise our voices, HESTA will do the right thing for health and help pave the way to a safe and healthy future.**

References:

1. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/dec/12/china-coal-emissions-smog-deaths>

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2. <http://www.psr.org/resources/coins-assault-on-human-health.html>
3. [http://dea.org.au/images/general/viewpoint\\_issue\\_8\\_CSG.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/general/viewpoint_issue_8_CSG.pdf)
4. <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/oil-gas-industry-fracking-pavillion-wyoming-2012-10>
5. <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/igh/research/a-z/lancet-commission-climate-change>
6. <http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/uploads/1bb6887d6f8cacd5d844fc30b0857931.pdf>
7. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/solar-energy-be-cheapest-power-source-10-years-says-report-1489228>
8. <http://cleantechnica.com/2015/01/16/renewable-energy-growth-outstrip-fossil-fuels/>
9. <http://www.marketforces.org.au/super/hesta>

## 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.



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## Worth Reading: Piecemeal policies and PPL cuts

“Nurses, teachers, ambulance and retail workers will be hardest hit by proposed cuts to the Federal Government's paid parental leave (PPL) scheme, new research by the Women and Work Research Group at the University of Sydney has confirmed.

The current national scheme, introduced by the Rudd Labor Government, was designed to underpin employer-provided schemes, and to assist women (and their partners) to reach the recommended 26 weeks of time off work to bond with newborns. The national PPL scheme provides a basic 18 weeks of government payments at the minimum wage level.

Under the Turnbull Government's proposed cuts, the families modelled in the research would be left with just 7-13 weeks of living costs covered by the government system. That's less than half of the 26 weeks experts recommend. The financial loss suffered by these families would range from \$3,942 to \$10,512.”

Read the entire article by Marie Coleman at The Drum at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01->

## Worth Reading: Fossil fuel investments damaging Australians' retirement savings, research shows

"Investment in fossil fuels is dragging down the returns of Australians' superannuation, with funds that limit or exclude fossil fuels performing above average in 2015.

Balanced investment funds are estimated to have returned about 5.7% on average in the 2015 calendar year, according to preliminary analysis by Chant West, a superannuation research firm. But Future Super, which avoids any investment in fossil fuels, returned 7.04% in its balanced investment option, new figures reveal."

Read the entire article by Michael Slezak in The Guardian at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/jan/20/fossil-fuel-investments-shown-to-be-damaging-australians-retirements>

## Worth Reading: Heydon royal commission a 'stitch-up' say unionists

"One of Tony Abbott's first acts as Prime Minister was to announce a Royal Commission to "shine a spotlight" onto the so-called "dark corners" of the trade union movement. The commission would expose the criminality and impropriety that allegedly blights Australia's trade unions.

Led by former High Court Judge John Dyson Heydon, the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption officially began in February 2014.

It called more than 500 witnesses in 189 hearing days and cost the public purse nearly \$50 million. More than a million documents were collected and multiple task forces were set up to assist the commission."

Read the entire article by Jim McIlroy in Green Left Weekly at:

<https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/60846>

## 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.



Share STAT

## 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](#).

## 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.

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