



Stat Report 2016/11

Turnbull Government making tests more expensive

The Medical Scientists Association of Victoria (MSAV) is extremely alarmed that the Turnbull Government is attacking health care to fix the economy.

In particular the Union is 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. The changes to bulk-billing arrangements announced by the Turnbull Government illustrates that they have little regard for the future healthcare of Australians.

And they demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of healthcare needs of ordinary Australians 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 many people in our community 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 and more poor and vulnerable people unable to afford the upfront payment and not getting tests done. The Turnbull Government is creating a healthcare system where poor and vulnerable people will no longer be able to afford to access the level of healthcare they need when they need it.

The decision to cut the bulk-billing incentive for pathology tests 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 good health of Australians because they are incapable of properly managing the Australian budget.

Victorian Budget boosts funding for mental health

The Andrews Government's budget commits significant funding to mental health services in Victoria. The Victorian Psychologists Association welcomes this funding and believes it will provide a much needed boost to expand mental health services across Victoria.

In particular the Victorian Psychologists Association is pleased to see additional funding for the state's mental health institutions and to increase access for those requiring urgent mental health assistance.

This budget will go a long way to setting Victoria up to better support the growing mental health needs in our community and to better address mental health issues in young people.

While this year's budget could be dubbed the mental health budget the VPA is disappointed that the funding doesn't include targeted funding for the employment of psychologists. The increase in funding will necessitate an increase in mental health workers as services are able to expand to meet the growing demand placed on mental health services.

The challenge now for the Andrews Government is ensuring that the initiatives contained in the budget mean more psychologists are available to support Victoria's mental health needs.

Hospital Pharmacists' hours of work could be targeted

Rumours have started to filter back to the Union that the existing conditions for Pharmacists could be under attack. Specifically, rumours are suggesting that management may target the hours and days of work for hospital pharmacists.

If these rumours are true then negotiations for hospital pharmacists will become much more difficult.

But it's clear from our public sector EBA survey that members don't want to give up on their hard won conditions – in fact members made it clear they want the Union to fight hard to protect conditions.

Even though we only have rumours at this time, we have seen in the past efforts to have conditions for hospital pharmacists wound back. And the only way that we can stand up to efforts to wind back hard won pay and conditions is by having more members. By having more members we have more power to fight for your conditions. And by having more members we can stop management's attacks on your profession.

Annual Conference 2016

The MSAV, VPA and AHP joint Annual Conference will be held on 10 June at the Downtowner on Lygon.

The Union will explore some key themes in our sector affecting our workplaces given we'll commence negotiations for a new agreement. In particular the conference will consider in more depth how to tackle the issue of unpaid work and explore what lies behind the culture of our workplaces that indirectly encourages people to do unpaid work.

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE
IS COMING! ARE YOU?
10 JUNE - 9AM TO 4PM**

We'll also be joined by the secretaries for the Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association and the Health and Community Services Union for a panel discussion on the state of the health sector and the work they are doing as part of their public sector bargaining. It gives us an opportunity to hear first-hand what to expect as we begin bargaining for a great deal in 2016.

The Conference will also cover what rights you have during enterprise bargaining. This will be especially relevant to Job Reps and members actively involved during negotiations but it is always better that more people know their rights.

And it's a great opportunity to meet up with other members to share experiences and stories to help strengthen our collective work.

Want to attend? RSVP today at: enquiry@msav.org.au

Victorian Budget fails public pathology

While the Victorian budget delivers massive investment in health services in Victoria, the Medical Scientists Association of Victoria is disappointed the Andrews Government continues to ignore public pathology services.

In delivering more funding for critical clinical services the Andrews Government has ignored public pathology services, which is one of the most vital services in Victoria's hospitals. Pathology services are a key clinical service in our health system and are used to provide diagnoses in up to 80% of acute care settings.

With more public health services under pressure to cut budgets, it is often pathology services that suffer through staff cuts, or worse, are outsourced to private pathology providers interested more in delivering profits to shareholders than the best possible healthcare.

It is disappointing that the Andrews Government cannot commit to funding public pathology services.

Unfortunately this budget has failed to address the growing concerns about the capacity of our public pathology services.

For years the state of public pathology has been declining through cuts and outsourcing

The Andrews Government could've sent a strong message to health services about valuing public pathology by putting funds directly into public pathology.

Unfortunately for the Andrews Government, the initiatives around health care cannot be fully realised while public pathology is ignored.

Federal Budget and changes to superannuation

More than a dozen superannuation changes were announced in the Turnbull Government's Budget.

The changes have been labelled as an attempt to improve fairness in the super system by targeting the overly generous tax concessions for high income earners, while also limiting the lifetime amount individuals can contribute to super.

In total, the Government has estimated the changes will raise \$6 billion over the four years with the majority of this coming from four per cent of high end superannuation account holders.

The Turnbull Government has been embarrassed into retaining the Low Income Super Contribution scheme but calling it a Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset (LISTO) which will boost superannuation savings of 3 million low paid workers, 2 million of whom are women.

It is also worth noting, these measures have different starting dates, some are effective immediately, others next year and some retrospectively.

Below is a list of the key changes the Turnbull Government made to superannuation:

- Low Income Super Contribution (LISC) to be replaced with identical Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset (LISTO)
- Personal super contributions to be tax deductible for everyone
- New lifetime non-concessional cap of \$500,000
- New \$1.6 million cap on amount of super that can be transferred tax-free into retirement

phase

- Concessional cap to be reduced to \$25,000 for everyone
- Flexibility for unused concessional caps to be rolled over for 5 years for balances under \$500,000
- Those with incomes over \$250,000 to pay 30 per cent tax on concessional contributions
- People aged 65 to 74 to be able to continue making contributions to their superannuation
- Earnings tax exemption removed from TTR income streams
- Extension of the spouse tax offset up to \$40,000
- Earnings tax exemption in retirement extended to annuities
- Anti-detriment payment axed
- Changes replicated in defined benefit funds
- Government to legislate the objective of super
- \$10 million to go to APRA
- ASIC to receive \$121 million funding boost

The Union does not provide any advice on superannuation and this has been produced for your information only. To find out how these changes affect your superannuation please contact your superannuation fund.

Profiling your work and educating the public

For many people health care is defined by doctors and nurses because they are the professionals most visible to people who access health care. But as people inside the health industry, we know that it takes many people in many professions to deliver world-class health care.

It's important that more people have a better understanding of the many different professionals it takes to deliver world-class health care. That's why the Union is creating member profiles so we can better educate people about the many different professionals working in health care.

If you're interested in participating in this project please contact Alex on 9623 9623 or at alexs@msav.org.au

Climate change and investing in health

The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) has released a report, in conjunction with Doctors for the Environment Australia, highlighting the impacts of climate change on human health and sets out the case for the importance of the health system to end any investment in fossil fuels. There are some excellent reports that outline the growing concerns about the impacts on human health from climate change, including the Global Climate and Health Alliance's Climate Change: Health Impacts and Opportunities; the 2015 Lancet Commission on Health and Climate; and the American Psychologist The Psychological Impacts of Climate Change.

And unsurprisingly, many of the contributors to climate change (such as fossil fuel combustion, poorly designed cities, overdependence on motorised transport) are also major drivers of the world's fastest growing public health problems (such as heart disease, asthma, chronic respiratory disease, obesity, diabetes and road deaths). Working in healthcare you will have seen just how much human health is affected by climate change as Australia experiences longer and more intense climate events.

In 2009, the Lancet referred to climate change as "the biggest global health threat of the 21st century". It is already responsible for an estimated 400,000 deaths annually, and poses significant threats to human health and survival, mandating that the world urgently reduce emissions. Australians face serious (and deadly) risks to health from climate change. Recent examples include a spike in deaths from heatwaves in Victoria (2009 and 2014) and Sydney (2011). Hundreds of people were admitted to hospital in South Australia with heat-related conditions during the January 2014 heatwave. An increase in domestic violence in affected communities following the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria illustrates the pressures on communities in the aftermath of extreme weather events.

The key findings from the latest report released by the Climate and Health Alliance and Doctors for the Environment Australia include:

- Climate change has been identified as both the “defining health issue” and the “greatest global health threat” of the 21st century.
- The health impacts of climate change occur due to heat, extreme weather events, ecosystem change and collapse, and social system destabilisation. Climate change is currently responsible for 400,000 deaths per annum.
- Health professionals have a long history of acting beyond the clinic, taking active steps to improve the social, economic and environmental determinants of health. Actions against the tobacco and asbestos industry are recent examples.
- Production and consumption of fossil fuels – coal oil and gas – adversely impact human health through air pollution, psychosocial impacts, water contamination and land degradation, as well as being the major driver of climate change.
- To have a reasonable chance (66% likelihood) of staying below a 2°C limit of global warming, up to 80% of known fossil fuel reserves must remain in the ground.
- Fossil fuel assets are worth five trillion US dollars. Many health professionals and health organisations have investments in the industry via their financial portfolios, superannuation or banking; most are unaware they are supporting the fossil fuel industry.
- There are clear financial risks in investment in carbon intensive industries which will become ‘stranded assets’ in a carbon constrained world.

HESTA responds to Union call to divest from fossil fuel

Climate change is union business. As professionals in healthcare we know the impact that climate change will have on our health with increasing extreme weather events. And we know that we have to stop investing in fossil fuels.

That’s why the Union, in support of the Healthy Futures campaign, wrote to HESTA calling on them to divest from fossil fuels and to put more investment into renewable and alternative energy sources. Unfortunately the response the Union received from HESTA was very disappointing to say the least.

HESTA informed the Union that it does not believe that divesting from fossil fuels is the most effective way of addressing climate change or addressing social and health outcomes. Remarkably, HESTA also argues that by continuing to invest members’ money into polluting fossil fuel projects they can influence decisions and see a reduction in the expansion of new fossil fuel projects.

We’re uncertain about how HESTA has performed such leaps in logic. It is disappointing members’ money is being poured into projects that continue to harm the planet and people’s health. If HESTA did believe in the potential for financial markets to drive the change to renewable energy, it would logically follow to make the decision to divest from fossil fuels. And it seems obvious to us that with more and more of the world moving away from fossil fuels, HESTA is investing in projects that could soon be stranded or worth next to nothing putting members’ funds at risk.

HESTA’s claims that it won’t invest in new thermal coal production, its expansion or infrastructure associated with thermal coal completely misses the point; and in no way provides any comfort about its investment strategy with respect to fossil fuels. And there can be no confidence when the response then goes on to say they believe reducing greenhouse gas and other emissions means investing in low carbon or non-fossil fuel energy solutions. Surely if they believe this then there would be a stronger emphasis on investment in renewable energy and a concerted move away from fossil fuel projects.

Unfortunately HESTA’s response to the Union seems confused and at odds with the growing worldwide investment in renewable energy projects.

Add a link to view correspondence?

Support the Healthy Futures campaign



The Union strongly believes that climate change is union business. We know that climate change threatens our health by increasing the risks of heatwaves, bushfires, droughts and storms, displacing people and straining our health systems.

And right now HESTA and First State Super (FSS), Australia's biggest health industry super funds, are investing our money in fossil fuels - coal, oil and gas.

Join us in asking HESTA and FSS to divest from fossil fuels at 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.

Employment Rights Now

Work and how it is regulated is in the public spotlight and bound to be a feature of debate in the upcoming election. In addition to ongoing issues in many industries we've recently heard horrendous stories of exploitation of workers in the agricultural sector, convenience stores and fast food outlets. The government is considering the recommendations from the Productivity Commission report and Trade Union Royal Commission. Now is an important time to consider how to strengthen our workplace relations system.

In *Employment Rights Now*, the latest publication from the Australian Institute of Employment Rights, some of Australia's most expert academics, unionists, lawyers and other practitioners evaluate the current status of Australia's industrial relations system. Instead of being situated in the neo-liberal framework of economic efficiency, *Employment Rights Now* applies the rights-based principles set out in the Australian Charter of Employment Rights.

Employment Rights Now contains a chapter on each of the ten Charter principles. There is also exploration of the not-uncontroversial position that sits at the core of the Charter that labour rights are human rights.

Workplace democracy is one of the Charter principles and a concept that remains under-developed in Australian workplace relations theory and practice. As our economy and the nature of work is rapidly changing around us, there exists exciting opportunities for new forms of enterprises that provide for genuine workplace democracy. Dan Musil from the Earthworker Cooperative makes a compelling case for workers cooperatives as key means of meeting the challenges of providing decent work, addressing global warming and creating an economy that works for people.

To read more, email the Australian Institute of Employment Rights at admin@airights.com.au for your own copy of *Employment Rights Now*.

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SECOND PRIZE: top of the range bicycle valued at \$2,199 from Gazelle.

THIRD PRIZE: a \$500 voucher from Gleebooks, Sydney's leading independent bookseller

Buy tickets online and save APHEDA the costs of postage: <http://apheda.org.au/raffle/>

For a little added incentive we have a booksellers' bonus draw – for every 3 books of tickets you sell (or buy yourself) will give you an entry into an exclusive draw to win a gorgeous Gazelle Bicycle, valued at \$2,199 and the top individual bookseller will receive a travel voucher for \$1,000.

You can request or purchase additional ticket books by FREECALL 1800 888 674, fax (02) 9261 1118 or email office@apheda.org.au

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.](#)

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.

Worth Reading: Hot property: negative gearing and capital gains tax reform

“Long overdue changes to negative gearing and capital gains tax would save the Commonwealth Government about \$5.3 billion a year, according to a new Grattan Institute report.

[*Hot property: negative gearing and capital gains tax reform*](#) shows that the interaction of a fifty per cent capital gains tax discount with negative gearing distorts investment decisions, makes housing markets more volatile and reduces home ownership.

The two measures in combination allow investors to reduce and defer personal income tax, at an annual cost of \$11.7 billion to the public purse. Other taxes, which often drag more on the economy than a capital gains tax does, must be higher as a result.

And like most tax concessions, these tax breaks largely benefit the wealthy.

The report recommends that the capital gains tax discount should be reduced from 50 to 25 per cent, and that negatively geared investors should no longer be allowed to deduct losses on their investments from labour income.

A smaller discount would save about \$3.7 billion a year, while the change to negative gearing would raise \$2 billion a year in the short term, falling to \$1.6 billion as losses start to be written off against positive investment income.

The reforms would provide relief to the Budget in tough times and slightly improve housing affordability with little impact on how much people save. The report estimates that property prices would be up to two per cent lower under these reforms than they would be otherwise.

Contrary to urban myth, rents won't change much, nor will housing markets collapse. The effects on property prices would be small compared to factors such as interest rates and the supply of land.

The report recommends phasing in the reforms, to make them easier to sell and to prevent a rush of investors selling property before the changes come into force.

While other proposals, such as restricting negative gearing to new properties or limiting the dollar value of deductions, would improve the current regime, they nevertheless leave too many problems in place and introduce unnecessary distortions.

These two sensible reforms won't hurt private savings much but will save the government a lot of money."

Read the entire report by the Grattan Institute at: <http://grattan.edu.au/report/hot-property/>

Worth Reading: What has happened to collective bargaining since the end of WorkChoices?

"The Rudd government came to power in 2007 with a mandate for industrial relations reform. There was an expectation on all sides that its [Fair Work Act](#), introduced to replace the previous Howard government's [WorkChoices](#), would bring collective bargaining back to the centre of Australian employment relations. Labor and the unions hoped for it. The Coalition and employers feared it.

The Fair Work Act delivers a much more peculiar system of collective bargaining than many realise. It has outcomes that contradict the hopes and fears of both sides of the debate."

Read the entire article by Mark Bray and Johanna Macneil in The Conversation at: <http://theconversation.com/what-has-happened-to-collective-bargaining-since-the-end-of-workchoices-57218>

Worth Reading: Corporate wrongdoing now endemic in Australia, report shows

"Corporate wrongdoing has become endemic in Australia, with hundreds of cases being pursued by the country's regulators each year, and with few signs of their workloads lightening, a new report has found.

But there are also fewer regulators "patrolling the corporate beat" in Australia than there were three years ago, with government agencies that monitor corporate malfeasance having their staffing cut by 3,926 people in total – or 14.9% – since the 2013-14 budget.

The left-leaning think-tank the Australia Institute has released a new report, called Corporate Malfeasance in Australia, that shows the extent of wrongdoing in the country's corporate sector.

It calls on the Turnbull government to restore staffing budgets and resources for key agencies such as the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (Asic), among others, to combat the problem."

Read the entire article by Gareth Hutchens in The Guardian at: <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/may/02/corporate-wrongdoing-now-endemic-in-australia-report-shows>

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. 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.

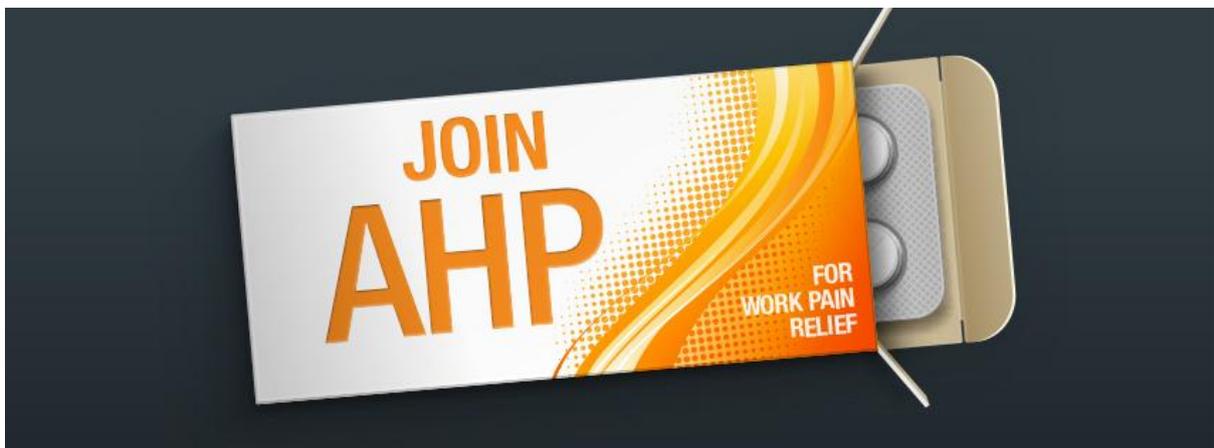
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Get the most out of the Union's website

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.

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Authorised by Paul Elliott, Executive Officer, Level 1, 62 Lygon St, Carlton South. Medical Scientists Association (03) 9623 9623 Association of Hospital Pharmacists (03) 9623 9624 Victorian Psychologists Association Inc (03) 9623 9625 Fax (03) 9663 8109 Email enquiry@msav.org.au A.B.N. 30 345 343 541 (MSAV), 72 520 393 213 (AHP), 87 851 818 075 (VPA Inc).

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