

Stat Report 2016/13

Turnbull's pathology deal is a bad deal for patients

Last weekend, Turnbull was chasing votes as the federal election campaign kicked off in earnest.

In an effort to head off attacks over the handling of healthcare funding, the Prime Minister used a leadership debate to claim that people would still be able to access bulk-billed pathology tests. In an apparent deal with private pathology lobby group, Pathology Australia, the cuts to bulk-billed pathology tests will be delayed for a couple of months, while the Government will provide financial relief to private pathology companies for the high rents they pay for collection centres.

The truth is the Prime Minister has not ensured that bulk-billing will continue for pathology tests. The only deal that has been done is the Government is giving private pathology providers guarantees to make rents for collection centres cheaper. Somehow the Prime Minister was attempting to claim that delaying the end of bulk-billed pathology tests as a victory for patients.

It's disingenuous for the Turnbull Government to claim that making rents for collection centres cheaper will somehow ensure that patients won't be charged up-front fees for pathology tests. Instead of announcing that the Government would reverse its decision to end bulk-billed pathology tests, the Turnbull Government is rewarding the bad business practices of private pathology companies.

The reason for exorbitant rents for collection centres is due to the predatory practices of private pathology providers. In an effort to reduce competition, private pathology providers like Sonic and Primary Health Care engaged in collection centre warfare by deliberately offering medical centres and doctor's surgeries much more for rent than market rates. When private pathology providers are deliberately engaging in this kind of anti-competitive business practice, which massively inflated the rental market for collection centres, tax payers shouldn't be forced to subsidise it. Instead of protecting patients from up-front fees for pathology tests, the Turnbull Government is protecting the interests of private pathology providers.

It should be of great concern to everyone that the details of the 'deal' have not been made public and there is no way as ordinary voters to be guaranteed that private pathology providers will do the right thing and not pass on the cost of pathology tests when the bulk-billing incentive for them ends in September. The deal also exposes the hypocrisy of Pathology Australia. Instead of ensuring that the deal would protect patients from increasing costs, the deal protects their profit margins and poor business model.

We shouldn't allow ourselves to be fooled by Turnbull's announcement when the reality is that private pathology providers will still be able to force patients to pay up-front fees for life-saving pathology tests. The only difference now is that they'll be able to charge those up-front fees from 1 October instead of 1 July. This so-called deal has nothing to do with ensuring patients can get the test they need when they need them; and everything to do with ensuring that Pathology Australia ends its campaign which was clearly seen by the Turnbull Government as quite

damaging in the midst of an election campaign.

Public sector bargaining – what are members saying?

The Union has been visiting various health services speaking with members about this year's public sector enterprise bargaining. The visits have been useful in giving the Union a chance to speak with members about the issues raised from our survey and to further discuss issues around the claims we'll prepare for this year's bargaining.

It was clear from our survey that members are very concerned about lack of career progression, unsustainable workloads, unpaid work and the health impacts that these are having on people. Members responding to the survey overwhelmingly want to ensure that we do not trade off hard-won conditions for wage increases; as well as being very clear about wanting to have more control over workload and duties.

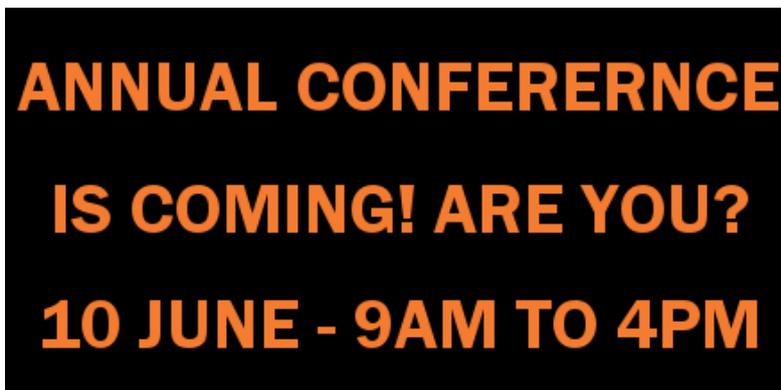
There is also clear support for the Union to make claims regarding classification/grade level so that members are able to move to higher grades. Approximately 80% of members who responded to the EBA survey were at the top of their classification/grade level with approximately 25% of respondents indicating they had been stuck at the top of their classification/grade level for 5 years or more and another 25% for more than 10 years.

There are big issues that we want to tackle in this year's enterprise bargaining and that's why it's important that we have as many members come to Annual Conference as possible. We want to be able to continue to explore the important issues underpinning this year's public sector enterprise agreement bargaining.

Annual Conference 2016

Join us for Annual Conference on 10 June at the Downtowner on Lygon and share your experiences.

The Union will explore some key themes in our workplaces like workplace cultures that give rise to people feeling anxiety, stress and exhaustion. The conference will explore how we can work together to tackle the issues of unpaid work and workloads.



The conference will also cover what rights you have during enterprise bargaining. This will be relevant to all members actively involved during negotiations. And conference is a great opportunity to meet up with other members to share experiences and stories to help strengthen our collective work.

The Conference is open and free to all members. RSVP today at:
<http://goo.gl/forms/bUe0q5aZzU>

St Vincent's and Health Employee Connect

Right now St Vincent's is trying to force its workforce to contact one of their in-house health

professionals when you ring up to inform them you're away from work due to illness.

You are under no obligation to inform the St Vincent's health professionals of your health problems as the only information they need to know is whether you're fit for work on that day. If you have a medical certificate from your health professional then you're covered for the day that you were away; and St Vincent's management cannot refuse it.

Don't be fooled into sharing your personal health matters with your employer. It is none of their business and they have no right to interfere in the continuity of your care or the relationship between you and your medical professionals. They also can't force you to seek medical advice from their nurses/doctors regarding your health as that is a private matter between you and your health professional. And they absolutely cannot discipline you for not using their health professionals when you ring up to say you'll be away from work due to illness.

If you have any concerns or questions about this please contact the Union on 9623 9623 or at enquiry@msav.org.au

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

We Are Union – Join the Campaign

The federal election has been called and there are lots of ways you can get involved to help protect Medicare and Australia's universal healthcare system.

Joining the We Are Union campaign means you'll be helping to make sure that more voters hear about the cuts to essential services, the cuts to education and the cuts to healthcare. Plus it's your opportunity to speak with voters about the Liberals forcing up the cost of pathology tests.

The We Are Union campaign is already firing up for what's going to be one of the longest election campaigns in Australian history.

Check out what's happening and how you can get involved at:

<http://www.weareunion.org.au/when>

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.healthvfutures.net.au/divest.

Need a holiday? APHEDA can help.

Buy a ticket to your dreams with an APHEDA raffle ticket [BUY ONLINE NOW](#)

Your support is vital in keeping Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA independent, effective and strong and helps build unions and social movements, provide skills training and create jobs in over 60 projects in 15 countries. The Federal Government has slashed aid funding so now more than ever we need your support.

GREAT PRIZES

FIRST PRIZE: \$8000 travel voucher

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: Southern hemisphere joins north in breaching carbon dioxide milestone

“As we [predicted two months ago](#), the background atmospheric carbon dioxide levels measured at Cape Grim on Tasmania's northwest coast have officially passed the 400 parts per million (ppm) mark. Our measurements, compiled by our team at CSIRO together with the Bureau of Meteorology, show that the milestone was reached on May 10.

In the past few days, the 400 ppm level has also been breached in Antarctica, where CSIRO's measurements at [Casey Station](#) show the 400 ppm level was exceeded on May 14.

Together, these measurements show that the atmospheric CO₂ concentration of the entire southern hemisphere is now at or above 400 ppm. It is unlikely to dip back below this level for many decades to come.”

Read the entire article by Paul Krummel and Paul Fraser in the CSIRO Blog at: <https://blog.csiro.au/southern-hemisphere-joins-north-breaching-carbon-dioxide-milestone/>

Worth Reading: It's time to see Medicare as an investment

"Labor's pledge to re-index Medicare rebate payments to inflation is being discussed virtually everywhere as a 'cost' due to the fact that it will put a \$2.4 billion dent in the budget over four years.

Or as one news website howled, "taxpayers will be hit an extra \$12.2 billion over a decade to cover the plan to increase the Medicare Benefits Schedule every year from January 1".

May the journalist who wrote that line never work as an accountant. That "hit" will also save taxpayers billions in out-of-pocket expenses. It is shifting the cost of healthcare, not increasing it."

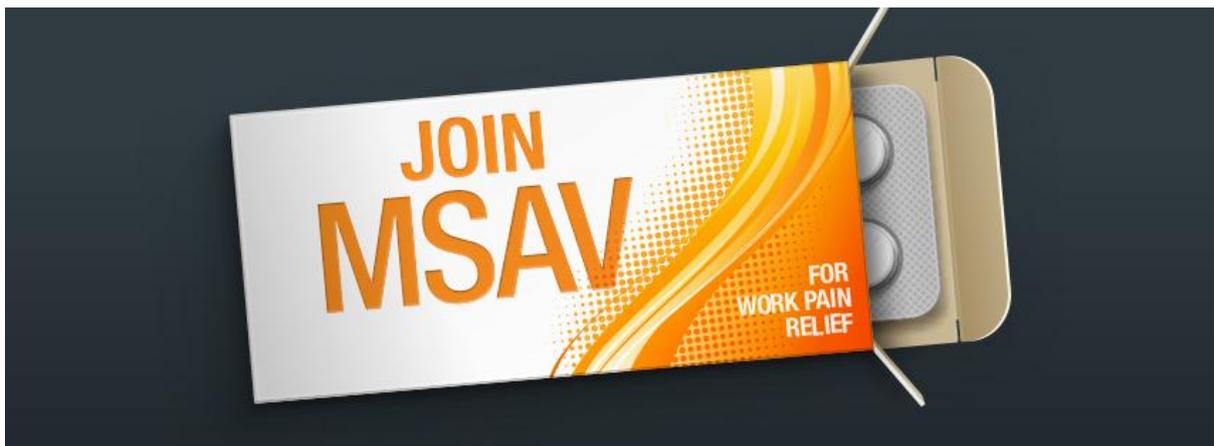
Read the entire article by Rob Burgess in The New Daily at:

<http://thenewdaily.com.au/news/2016/05/19/time-see-medicare-sound-investment-cost/>

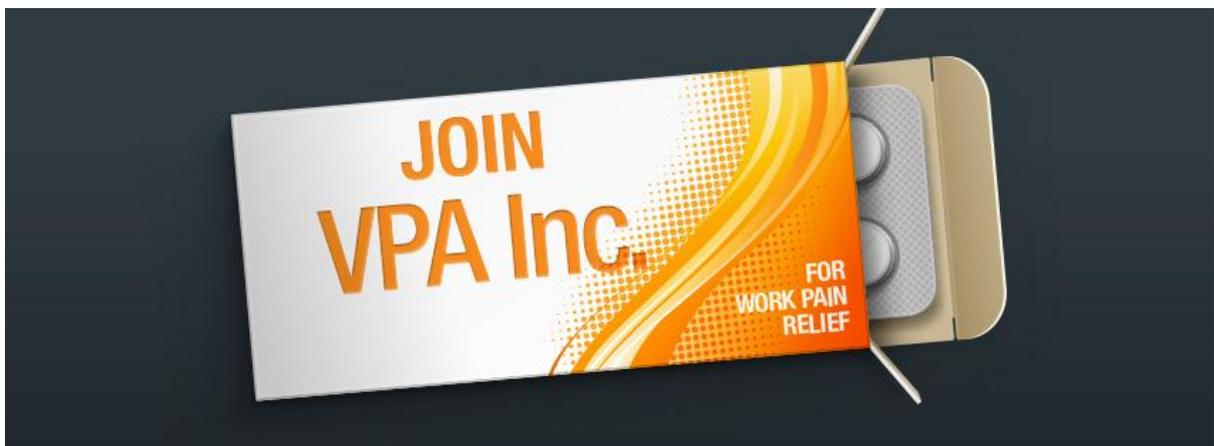
Join the Union

Are your workloads increasing? Are your stress levels increasing? Are you doing longer hours at work? Join the Union for work pain relief!

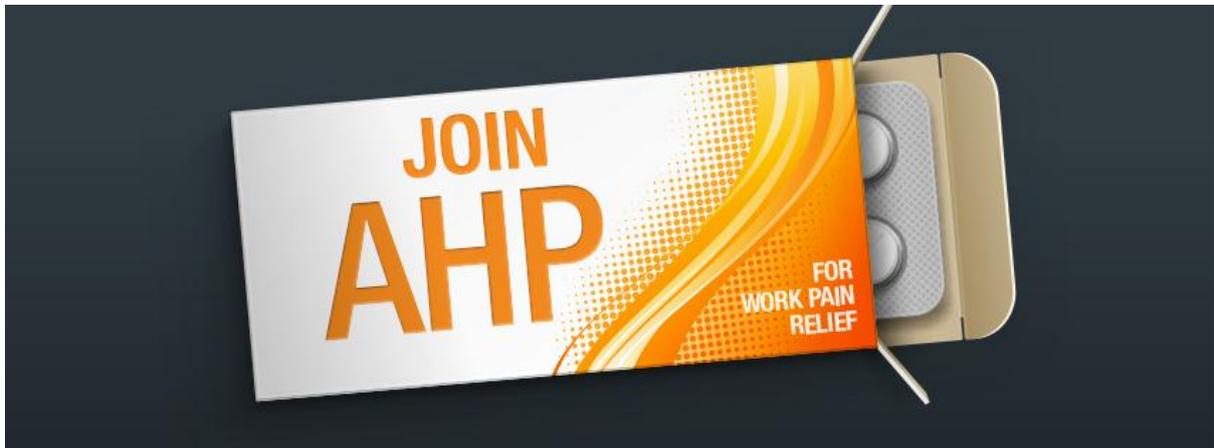
To protect our professions and stand up for our rights at work we must strengthen our collective voice and strengthen our bargaining position by increasing our membership. And you can help right now by sharing one of the images below through Facebook.



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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 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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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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