



## Stat Report 2017/05

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### Private equity playing with people's lives

If you've been following business news you'd have seen a large rise in private equity firms buying up private service providers in healthcare. And with the rise of private equity firms in the public healthcare space, there should be many red flags raised about the future of our public healthcare system.

When a private equity firm takes control of a pathology service provider, the first things we hear about are the jobs to be lost among the scientific workforce. Almost without fail these for-profit businesses start out by cutting the very workforce that drives their profits. And without fail these private equity firms believe that opening more collection centres is the way to increase profits, ignoring the costs involved to sustain such ventures.

Instead of getting better healthcare, we get large numbers of collection centres without the corresponding number of scientists doing the work. We found out in last year's federal election campaign that the Turnbull Government was prepared to subsidise the rental costs for private pathology providers' collection centres in response to a rent war, started by the private pathology companies, which sent rental rates skyrocketing. This was a sweetener offered to private pathology providers to keep out-of-pocket fees for patients down because of the Government's insistence on forcing people to pay up-front fees for pathology test which were going to be passed on to patients in full.

But when the work starts coming in, the private pathology provider's budget-airlines operational means they don't have the numbers of scientific staff with necessary seniority to do the work and meet the turn-around-times for vital tests. You'd expect more staff to be employed but instead existing workforces are forced to cope with continually increasing workloads and all too often longer unpaid hours.

When the work is not being completed in time, because there aren't enough scientists, the workforce is bullied and intimidated into taking on more work. We know that scientists are regularly told that they have to be 'professionals'; and to remember that the work they do have real-world consequences for patients. It's the use of these terms and the emotional connectivity they have, which forces scientists to work longer hours and undertake more work.

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As the scientific workforce is made smaller and the amount of work grows, there comes an obvious point at which either the work (ie the patients) suffers or the workforce suffers or both. And more often than not it's both that suffer. Making scientists work longer hours and take on more work means that it's more likely that they're going to suffer from fatigue. Increased fatigue greatly increases the risk of mistakes which impacts on quality and the possibility of adverse outcomes for patients; whether it is additional samples being required or incorrect diagnoses resulting in incorrect or delayed treatments.

This is serious business; without medical scientists there are no diagnoses and no treatments. Yet private equity has little concern for the well-being of patients when the well-being of the company is at stake. And the well-being of the company is always at stake.

One significant issue that has emerged from the decline of pathology services is that, unlike every other clinical service in health care, there are no clear quality standards to restrain corporate profiteering. Clinical quality standards would ensure accountability in relation to broader health care standards which at this point in time is sorely missing. A workforce that is working longer hours, experiencing more fatigue and more stress will inevitably result in a diminution of the quality of the pathology work being done. Add to that the demands of private equity firms to process more work with fewer staff means a health system facing a very significant crisis.

We cannot continue to allow private equity firms to buy up critical clinical services, like pathology, and deliberately run them down to improve profitability. Every time we make cuts to our universal healthcare system, the more we're allowing private equity to dictate the future level of healthcare we receive.

It's time we took a stand against outsourcing and privatisation of critical clinical services like pathology. It's not delivering the quality of care required and isn't improving the ability of our health system to respond to ever increasing demands.

## Update on Public Sector bargaining

We're continuing our work to inform members about the offer made with members' meetings at public health services. The next members' meetings we've organised are:

### **Dandenong Hospital**

2 March at 12pm at the Clinical Meeting Room (AAU)

It's important that you come along to hear a report on this 4 year deal and discuss your feelings about all of the possible improvements and changes.

Keep your eyes peeled for notices and more details about member meetings in your workplace.

Or if you're keen get in touch with us and let us know when it's a good time to meet with members in your workplace.

## FWC Penalty Rates Decision

In a decision that has devastated incomes and careers for 700,000 to 1,000,000 Australian workers, the Fair Work Commission has ruled that penalty rates across a number of key industry Awards will be reduced by significant amounts. The Retail Award, for example, will have the current Sunday penalty reduced from 200% to 150%.

In the stroke of a pen the FWC has slashed the incomes of workers by as much as \$77 per 8.0 hour Sunday shift.

In this appalling decision, the FWC acknowledges that reduced penalty rates will cause "hardships" for workers. The FWC decision doesn't bother to pretend that it accepted the employers' arguments that additional jobs would be created with savings generated through cutting wages. On this point the FWC says that, at best, "reducing penalty rates may have a modest effect on employment."

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It is important that Pharmacist members note that this decision will not impact on your current weekend penalty rates, which are preserved in our enterprise agreement.

Stay tuned for further information about campaigns to save penalty rates.

## Bargaining at Monash IVF

The Union is aware that Monash IVF management want to organise meetings with scientists in Melbourne.

We expressed our concern to management that the proposed 'workshops' were an attempt to try to bargain and negotiate with you directly, put you under pressure to agree with them, and cut the MSAV out of representing you.

We have been subsequently informed that:

- Monash IVF does not see the workshop proposed as a bargaining meeting
- Monash IVF's intent is to take on board any employee suggestions in preparing new classifications to take to the next bargaining meeting to discuss with representatives
- The actual negotiation of the classifications, or any suggestions from staff, will occur at bargaining meetings.

On that basis – ie that management listens to what you think about the classification definitions that they included in the Agreement that was voted down – then we do not have a problem.

If they try in any way to negotiate with you, do not engage with them and make sure you inform the Union.

Remember the proposition that we put to them was a four level structure – ie Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4 with increments/levels – the increments apply with the acquisition of skills and/or annually at a minimum.

The definitions need to be clear and unambiguous so that we don't get the situation where management have the right to decide on your classification despite your experience and skills.

In general terms the MSAV proposed a four level structure:

- Grade 1 – New recruits, training provided to achieve competency in basic/routine procedures and laboratory processes and procedures (levels 1-7)
- Grade 2 – Experienced scientists training provided to achieve competency in advanced/complex procedures (levels 1- 4)
- Grade 3 – Experienced scientists engaged in specialist work; assists in supervision/training of Grade 1 and Grade 2 scientists; could include supervisor of satellite site depending on size; deputy to laboratory supervisor; troubleshooting; may be a team leader (Levels 1-4)
- Grade 4 – Engaged on work requiring advanced knowledge and skills; laboratory supervisor; research coordinator (if relevant to Monash IVF) (Levels 1-5)

Please contact Jimmy if you want to discuss or have any concerns on 9623 9623 or at [enquiry@msav.org.au](mailto:enquiry@msav.org.au)

Bargaining will continue with Monash IVF and we will keep members informed of the progress.

## Bargaining at Forensicare

While the negotiations at Forensicare haven't attracted the same level of attention as our public sector bargaining, members at Forensicare can take pride in having won a new agreement with improved conditions.

The VPA Inc. was able to secure enhancements for psychologists which were finally agreed to

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by VHIA and Forensicare.

It's worth noting that they have agreed to apply the new psychologists EBA rates from 1 October 2016 with increases from 25 January 2018, 2019, and 2020; including a sign on bonus of \$2076.42

The draft Agreement is being considered and will be put to members for a vote as soon as possible.

## Open Letter to Mary Wooldridge MP to support Victorian climate change bill

Healthy Futures, in conjunction with Act on Climate Victoria, have hand-delivered an open letter calling on Mary Wooldridge MP and the Coalition to back stronger climate change laws for Victoria. The letter was backed by leading health figures and health organisations including the MSAV and VPA Inc and we've included a copy of the letter below:



# PROTECT VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES BY ALLOWING PASSAGE OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE BILL 2016



**To: The Hon Mary Wooldridge,**

For the last six years Victorians have lacked the ability to hold successive governments to account regarding action on climate change following the annulment of many sections of the Climate Change Act 2010. This Act has the potential to be a critically important instrument in facilitating action on climate change in Victoria.

An ineffective Climate Change Act leaves Victorian families further exposed to the impacts of climate change, including increasing heatwaves, storms, bushfires and droughts.

Climate change already poses significant threats to public health—your portfolio area. Heatwaves cause direct heat-related illnesses and deaths particularly in vulnerable sections of the community such as the young, the elderly and those with pre-existing illnesses.

New analysis released by NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) confirmed 2016 as the hottest year ever recorded. Resolute efforts to tackle climate change and protect the health of Victorian families are now more urgent than ever before.

In 2010, the Liberal-National Coalition allowed passage of the Climate Change Bill 2010. Friends of the Earth, Healthy Futures and the undersigned believe the Coalition can show political leadership once again by supporting the Climate Change Bill 2016. Successful passage of amendments to the Act will represent a positive step forward on this critically important issue.

The proposed amendments to the Victorian Climate Change Act come after an independent review of the legislation. The review recommends reinstating measures to ensure the government is transparent with its climate change goals, and that the latest science is taken into account when making policy.

Successful passage of the legislation will also bring state climate policy into alignment with the Paris Agreement, which the Turnbull Coalition government ratified in November 2016.

As leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council and Shadow Minister for Health, you have an opportunity to show that the Coalition cares about protecting Victorian families from climate change—an outcome all political parties can support.

The community will welcome the Coalition's support for amending the Climate Change Act in the upper house.

Regards,



Professor Peter Doherty AC FAA FRS  
 Professor Fiona Stanley AC FAA FASSA  
 Professor Richard Larkins AO FAAHMS FTSE FRACP FRCP  
 PhD LLD(Hon)(Melb) LLD(Hon)(Monash)  
 Emeritus Professor Frederick Mendelsohn AO MD PhD  
 FRACP FAA  
 Professor Rob Moodie AM MBBS DipRACOG DTMH MPH  
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 Associate Professor Tilman Ruff AM MB BS(Hons) FRACP

Professor Mary Chiarella RN RM LLB(Hons) PhD  
 Professor Melissa Haswell MSc PhD  
 Professor Paul Johnson MBBS PhD FRACP  
 Professor Lynne Madden BSc(Med)Hons1 MBBS MPH MSc  
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 Professor Michael Richards MBBS FRACP  
 Professor Ann Sanson BA MBSc PhD  
 Professor Judith Savige MBBS PhD FRACP  
 Associate Professor Louis Irving MBBS FRACGP FRACP  
 Associate Professor Peter Sainsbury MBBS PhD FAFPHM

Associate Professor David Smallwood MBBS FRACP  
 PhD GCCT  
 Associate Professor Steven Tong MBBS FRACP PhD  
 Associate Professor Mardie Townsend BSocSci PhD  
 Dr Susie Burke PhD FAPS  
 Dr Stephen Parnis MBBS DipSurgAnat FACEM  
 FAICD FAMA  
 Dr Robyn Schofield BSc(Hons) PhD Grad Cert  
 University Teaching  
 Fiona Armstrong BN GradDipJourn MPPP  
 Clare Walter BPharm

You can also watch a video about our call for the Victorian Opposition to get behind Victoria's climate change laws. Check it out at: <http://www.healthyfutures.net.au/climate>

**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, the VPA negotiates enterprise agreements for psychologists in the public and private sectors to ensure that rates of pay and conditions remain up to date.

## Calling all former and current OHS reps

The Victorian Trades Hall occupational health and safety team are calling on all former and current OHS representatives to share your stories with them.

They want your hints, tips and tricks to win better occupational health and safety at work. If you're keen to help out visit <http://weareohs.org.au/handbook>

## Health in Action Workshop

Join others working in health for a weekend workshop on how to make social and political change to protect public health. This workshop is being developed by Healthy Futures and the Melbourne Population Health Student Association and will be run over the weekend of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July.

**When:** 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> July

**Where:** Level 1, Alan Gilbert Building, University of Melbourne

Get more information about the workshop at: <http://tinyurl.com/JEL93PS>

## Support Family Violence Leave for all workers

Survivors have suffered for too long behind closed doors. We all have a part to play in ending violence: it's time that employers played theirs. Tell employers that everyone has the right to paid days away from work if they are subjected to family violence.

Make your voice heard: <http://bit.ly/FDVLeave>

## Stopping Gendered Violence at Work

Far too often women are attacked, harassed and threatened in their workplaces. And it needs to stop. That's why the Union is fighting back against gendered violence in the workplace – it's a very serious occupational health and safety issue.

Gendered violence is like a disease in our workplaces. Working women's experience of violence at work indicates that the problem of gendered violence is endemic in our workplaces.

Sign up to support the campaign at: <http://www.unionwomen.org.au/stopgv>

## 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.

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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](http://www.healthyfutures.net.au/divest).

## Do you need access to Domestic Violence services?

If you're experiencing domestic violence and need help, here is a list of Victorian services which may be able to assist you.

[Safe Steps \(formerly Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria\)](#)

[Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria \(FVPLS\)](#)

[Centre Against Sexual Assault \(CASA\) Forum](#)

[Community Legal Centres](#)

[Court Network](#)

[Domestic Violence Victoria](#)

[Elder Rights Advocacy \(ERA\)](#)

[Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service](#)

[inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence](#)

[Men's Referral Service](#)

[No To Violence](#)

[QLife Australia](#)

[Seniors Rights Victoria \(SRV\)](#)

[The Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence](#)

[Victoria Legal Aid \(VLA\)](#)

[Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency](#)

[Women with Disabilities Victoria \(WDV\)](#)

[Women's Housing Ltd](#)

[Women's Information Referral Exchange \(WIRE\)](#)

[Women's Legal Service](#)

[Women's refuges](#)

## Worth Reading: With record low wages growth, workers don't need anymore 'flexibility'

"With the Fair Work Commission announcing its decision on penalty rates today, the latest data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows worker's wages are growing at record lows and their real wages remain at the level they were nearly four years ago.

The Reserve Bank governor, Philip Lowe was spot on when [he suggested in a speech](#) yesterday that "wage increases are likely to remain below average for some time yet".

But saying "below average" is putting a nice spin on it. The latest [wage price index](#) figures saw wages grow by a record low 1.9% in 2016 – only slightly more than half the long-term average rise of 3.4%."

Read the entire article by Greg Jericho in The Guardian at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/23/with-record-low-wages-growth-workers-dont-need-anymore-flexibility>

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## Worth Reading: When a psychologist's true calling is social activism

"It all started at the LSE in 1972. I'd just successfully completed a post graduate diploma in social policy to add to my degree in psychology and felt troubled. My degree had mainly covered behaviourism, new research on sensory perception and a sneering glance at psychoanalysis. It was a time of social protest, especially at the LSE, and my conventional Northern working class conscience was in crisis. In the political times of the 1970s, what sense could we make of psychology and how was I going to survive work in this real world where right was wrong and wrong was right?"

At that time, two experiences influenced me heavily."

Read the entire article by Keith Venables in the London School of Economics Business Review at: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2016/12/05/when-a-psychologists-true-calling-is-social-activism/>

## Worth Reading: Workplace culture driving unpaid rampant overtime in Australia, experts say

"The news [ATO employees lashed out over a request they work an extra nine minutes a day](#) has reignited the discussion about unpaid overtime.

Jim Stanford from the Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute said he was confident the typical ATO staffer worked a lot more than just nine minutes of overtime a day.

"If workers started tallying up every single minute, I think the onus would be on the other side," he told the ABC.

The ATO workers doing unpaid overtime are not alone.

"Across the economy, we found about \$116 billion worth of labour time each year is uncompensated," Dr Stanford said.

Every year, the institute's Centre for Future Work surveys Australian workers to find out how much unpaid extra work they are doing."

Read the entire article by Jonathan Hepburn and Edwina Seselja on the ABC at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-21/workplace-culture-driving-rampant-unpaid-overtime-experts-say/8287376>

## Worth Reading: Bystanders often don't intervene in sexual harassment – but should they?

"As the summer music festival season winds down, there has been much reflection on the spate of sexual harassment and assaults at festivals this year. In one such piece, published in The Guardian, the author lamented the fact that no other punters stepped in when his female friend was harassed and assaulted in full view of others.

This lack of response is unsurprising. Bystanders are those who witness an event – sexual harassment and assault in this instance – and can choose to either ignore it or intervene in a way that aims to make a positive difference.

This unwillingness to intervene was reaffirmed in my own recent research on street harassment in Melbourne, where only a minority of participants had ever had someone else step in, despite the highly public nature of this behaviour.

Why don't people intervene when they witness sexual harassment and assault? And, more importantly, should they?"

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Read the entire article by Bianca Fileborn in The Conversation at:  
<https://theconversation.com/bystanders-often-dont-intervene-in-sexual-harassment-but-should-they-72794>

## 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!**

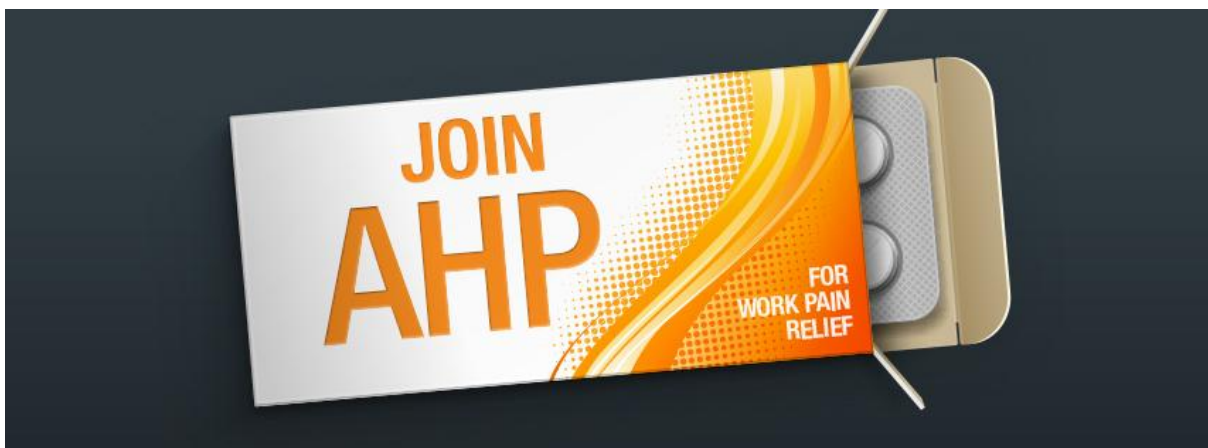
To protect our professions and stand up for our rights at work we must strengthen our collective voice and strengthen our bargaining position by increasing our membership. And you can help right now by sharing one of the images below through Facebook.



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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.

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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