

## **A Guide for Calling your State Member of Parliament**

Making a phone call to your local State Member of Parliament is a powerful way of informing them of your concerns. In this case it's important to let your Member of Parliament know about the very real concerns we have about the future of microbiology pathology services at Bendigo Health as a result of Australian Clinical Labs, a private pathology provider wholly owned by a private equity firm, deciding to downgrade the lab and move services to Melbourne.

When you call your local State Member of Parliament it's very unlikely that you'll speak to the Member directly. You're more likely to speak to one of their staff members. You should let them know that you are a voter in the electorate and that you would like your message passed on to the Member of Parliament.

It's best to keep your phone call to one issue so that it can be properly recorded. You should also ask the person you speak to about having the Member of Parliament respond, in writing, to your call with their position on downgrading of microbiology pathology services at Bendigo Health and a private pathology provider dictating health quality standards along with another cut of experienced scientists.

During the conversation you may be asked questions and you should answer them directly; but if you don't know the answer it's okay to say so – make sure you note down the question so you can get more information. If you find that you disagree with the position being taken make sure to remain calm and collected. It won't be good if you end up having an argument with the Member of Parliament or their staff members.

**Remember:** Your personal story is always a powerful way of getting your point across.

### **Important information for your phone call**

We know that you're not an expert on every little detail about the Clinical Labs decision to downgrade the microbiology pathology services at Bendigo Health and that's why we've put together some important information you can refer to.

1. Australian Clinical Labs wants to sack scientists, downgrade the microbiology laboratory at Bendigo Health and move work from Bendigo to Melbourne.
2. There are growing concerns about patient safety as a result of the announcement that the microbiology laboratory will be downgraded.
3. Quality standards are rapidly declining leading to a decline in healthcare standards across the Bendigo Health.
4. Pathology test results are delayed leading to delayed diagnosis and treatment for patients.
5. More than 80% of all patients in the public health system get their clinical diagnosis from a pathology test of one kind or another. Outsourcing pathology services increases turn-around times and leads to job losses with more work and fewer scientists.
6. Australian Clinical Labs is a wholly owned subsidiary of Crescent Capital, a private equity firm.
7. A private equity firm buying up pathology providers raises serious concerns about future quality of health care as private equity firms have no expertise or knowledge of delivering pathology services.
8. Australian Clinical Labs has been buying up pathology services in order to have a large enough scale to be profitable. The company speaks only about delivering profits rather than delivering world class pathology services.

9. The Union’s experience with Clinical Labs to-date, leads the Union to believe that Australian Clinical Labs will pursue corporate strategies similar to other private pathology providers, like Dorevitch, by centralising work, sacking scientists and closing pathology labs in hospitals.
10. Pathology, a critical clinical service in public health, has been reduced to a commodity that venture capital companies will buy and sell as a routine part of the business of making bigger profits.

Don’t forget that your personal story is very powerful and that it will likely have more impact during your phone call with your State Member of Parliament.

If you want more information contact the Union on (03) 9623 9623 or at [enquiry@msav.org.au](mailto:enquiry@msav.org.au)

**Contact Details for Members of Parliament**

Here are the contact details for the relevant State Members of Parliament.

<b>Member and Electorate</b>	<b>Electorate Phone Number</b>	<b>Other Phone Number</b>
Maree Edwards (Bendigo West)	(03) 5444 4125	
Jacinta Allan (Bendigo East)	(03) 5443 2144	(03) 8392 6100
Jaclyn Symes (Northern Victoria Region)	(03) 5783 2000	
Jill Hennessy (State Minister for Health)	(03) 9395 0221	(03) 9096 8561