



Stat Report 2020/06

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Clinical services becoming unsustainable

One of the big issues that is becoming clearer and of greater concern, especially as we start preparations for the next round of public sector enterprise bargaining, is the impact that unpaid work is having on the sustainability of key clinical services.

The intolerance of the broader community plus government (Federal and State) intentions to legislate against 'wage theft' has generated pressure on employers outside hospitality on employment practices that involve non-compliance with industrial agreements. In short, the noose is tightening around the widespread practice in the health sector of unpaid work, our version of wage theft that involves many millions of dollars of unpaid wages each year.

Members have told the Union, through the No Pay No Way survey, that the biggest contributors to workload increases were increases in demand for services, increases in patient numbers and the expansion of services offered. It is also worth highlighting that staff not being replaced when leave is taken or a vacancy arises is another significant contributing factor for workload increases. The Union believes non-backfilling is under-reported given that for many workplaces the 'new' workplace culture is to work harder and longer when there aren't sufficient staff available.

This is significantly damaging in the workplace and putting members directly in harm's way. It also shows a dangerously cavalier attitude towards the health and well-being of members and the potential ramifications for patient care.

The Union's concerns about the management of health services is further compounded by members indicating that staff on extended leave are not replaced, and where staff are replaced it took between 4 and 8 weeks. The failure of management is also highlighted with more than 85% of members indicating in the No Pay No Way survey that there is not sufficient staff to cover workloads when staff take annual leave or sick leave. And if unplanned absences occur, nearly 95% of members indicated that management required staff to pick up the work of the absent staff member as extra work.

There are further implications about the management of vital clinical services within our public health system. Members reported that their clinical service would not be sustainable if they stopped performing unpaid work. While 36% of respondents indicated that they were uncertain about whether their service would be unsustainable, it is of significant concern that the balance of respondents (+60%) indicate their service is unsustainable without unpaid work or unsure if their service would be sustainable. It further implicates the inability and ineffectiveness of direct supervisors and health services management and executives in ensuring that all clinical services are properly staffed.

This approach to management is creating highly stressed and unhealthy workplaces where more than 51% of members indicated they were refused leave because of understaffing. In creating unhealthy workplaces with onerous workload expectations, staff are being injured at work causing more unplanned absences and further compounding the level of understaffing and unpaid work undertaken.

One insidious consequence of understaffed and pressurised workplaces is the growing incidence of our members being threatened with disciplinary action because departments are underperforming in relation to quality and patient safety standards. A recent case saw a member issued with a warning (now withdrawn), as a result of a doctor's complaint in relation to a delayed pathology test result, even though the delay clearly resulted from understaffing and unsustainable workloads.

The Union's research clearly shows that unpaid work is structurally relied upon to keep vital clinical services functioning. The cuts to workforces are being compounded by ever increasing workloads. In order to ensure a world-class healthcare system, it is essential to ensure there is a professional workforce, not one made up of underqualified or inexperienced people, of sufficient size to meet the growing demand.

These are extremely important issues that we will be pursuing in the next round of bargaining; and we look forward to exploring these and other issues with members as we begin preparations for bargaining.

Paul Elliott
Secretary



Union Round Up

COVID-19 Health Emergency

The Union is closely monitoring events and government responses surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak. We note that the Prime Minister on Thursday this week enacted the Government's national emergency response plan. The Union will continue to monitor the situation closely and will issue advice, where necessary, when key decisions are made.

If you do have any questions or concerns please contact the Union on 9623 9623

Certification for Medical Scientists

Late in 2019 the Australian Institute of Medical Scientists announced the registration of a national certification body for medical laboratory scientists.

According to the AIMS, the new governing body will be called the [Australian Council for Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce \(ACCMLSW\)](#) and it will utilise a not-for-profit, limited liability company governance structure that, along with consumer representation, allows for the formal participation of representatives from all key scientific disciplines.

The certification scheme is scheduled for formal commencement on 1 July 2020 but piloting for the certification process has commenced in preparation for the full launch.

It is important to note that all of our enterprise agreements define what a scientist is. The proposed new body can not in any way alter the agreement's definition of a scientist, and therefore can not infect existing employment arrangements.

It is unclear, however, what status the new body has with respect to future employment requirements and whether new scientists could be refused employment if not certified. We now know from correspondence from this body that they do in fact hope it is used by employers. There is no detail about how this new body intersects with higher education and existing professional bodies. It is also disappointing that AIMS did not bother to engage with the MSAV in their consultation in relation to this change.

In correspondence with the Union, the Australian Council for Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce indicates they have now included a privacy policy on their website. However, that policy is dangerously problematic when it makes claims that it doesn't collect personally identifiable information when in fact it does. The site dangerously compromises people's privacy in the worst way by giving any visitor access to your first and last names and your employer. It's worth pointing out that this body only developed their privacy policy after the Union pointed out there was no privacy policy.

We remain very concerned that the website being used is not based in Australia, which means that all data is held offshore and not controlled properly by the organisation.

While the MSAV is not opposed to the concept of certification for medical scientists in order to protect the profession from rogue elements, certification must be done properly. Given recent revelations the Union is not at all confident the new body will be able to properly undertake the ambitious plans it was designed for; or for that matter be able to start 'certifying' people by 1 July 2020.

[You can read the final report here](#)

[Download a copy of the implementation plan](#)

[Download a copy of the implementation timeline](#)

The MSAV is seeking your feedback and comments about the Australian Council for Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce.

[Send your comments and feedback here](#)

Women's Rights at Work Festival

The annual festival for Women's Rights at Work kicks off next week! And we know it's going to be a great week!

The Union proudly supports WRAW Fest and we certainly encourage members to get involved and get active. You already know that women play an essential role in society in both paid work and unpaid caring work, and yet it is clear the system is rigged against women.

We Are Union Women's Conference 2020

It's not too late to register for the conference and this year's conference is going to be huge! At the 2020 We Are Union Women's Conference, we're bringing together unionists to discuss our upcoming 'Safe, Respected, Equal' campaign for working women. [RSVP for the Conference here.](#)

[Make sure you check out all the other great events happening as part of WRAW Fest from March 1st to March 8th](#)

Solidarity BBQ for refugees, Unions and Allies

As part of Victoria's largest Multicultural Celebration, Cultural Diversity Week, held from 21 to 29 March, with the theme "Curiosity, Conversation, Community", HACSU invites you to join the conversation and attend the Solidarity BBQ for refugees, Unions and Allies.

When: 25 March 2020 at 12Noon At Victorian Trades Hall Council 54 Victoria Street, Carlton

Union Bushfire Appeal

The Union is working with the Victorian Trades Hall Council to collect a list of people who can help rebuild our communities when the bushfire threat has passed and it's safe to rebuild.

Bushfires – Hardship

We understand that some members may find themselves in hardship due to bushfire related circumstances. We want to make sure that you don't have to worry about the small but important things. If you're affected by the bushfires and experiencing hardship please reach out to us and we will provide what assistance we can.

Email on enquiry@msav.org.au or call us on 9623 9623.

Sign up to help out

If you can help build a fence, cook and serve food, handle hazardous material, drive a bus/truck or volunteer your time [please fill out this short form](#).

Make a donation

Like the rest of Australia, we too are reeling from the stories coming from bushfire affected areas. Those working on the front line are telling us that they need money right now and don't need donations of goods at this time – [make a donation](#) today!



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

The 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.

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.

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>

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: Wage theft: Employer calls to 'reform' award system are a bare-faced con job

"This week an already impressive list of [wage theft](#) offenders has gotten a bit longer.

On Monday, the likes of Caltex, 7-Eleven, Pizza Hut, Domino's Pizza and Bunnings (to name a few), were joined by Coles, which underpaid its staff \$20 million over six years.

On Wednesday, Target admitted to underpaying workers about \$9 million.

On Thursday, [Super Retail Group](#) – whose brands include Rebel and Super Cheap Auto, said that it had short-changed workers by \$8 million more than it had originally estimated, bringing the total to \$61.2 million.

On Friday, cleaning and catering company Spotless admitted to underpaying workers \$4 million.

The total wage theft uncovered this week: \$94.2 million."

Read the entire article by Martijn Boersma in The New Daily at: <https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/finance-news/2020/02/22/wage-theft-employer-awards/>

Worth Reading: What the sports rorts scandal reminds us about health spending

"When senator Bridget McKenzie moved to the backbench in the aftermath of the sports rorts controversy, the federal government was no doubt hoping that the furore provoked by self-interested funding decisions had run its course. But [reports](#) suggest that funds from another grants program, the Female Facilities and Water Safety Stream — funds intended to support women's participation in sport across Australia — have been used to build swimming pools in a handful of Coalition-held seats.

The fact that the government was able to use these two programs so easily for political ends raises questions about the extent to which electoral factors are influencing other areas of health-related funding.

Health spending ranges from targeted, small-scale grants schemes to multibillion-dollar national programs. Over the past two weeks alone, health minister Greg Hunt has made [six significant funding announcements](#), including \$22.3 million for "new treatments and breakthrough cures," \$5.5 million for ten new medical research projects, \$32 million for partnerships between industry and researchers, an unspecified amount for additions to the list of subsidised pharmaceuticals, and the provision of free glucose monitoring devices for 21,000 people with diabetes (as part of a broader \$300 million program). Two weeks earlier the prime minister had announced [\\$76 million in new funding](#) to support the mental health needs of people affected by the bushfires, including grants targeting affected communities."

Read the entire article by Jennifer Doggett in Inside Story at: <https://insidestory.org.au/what-the-sports-rorts-scandal-reminds-us-about-health-spending/>

Worth Reading: It's now a matter of when, not if, for Australia. This is how we're preparing for a jump in coronavirus cases

"While countries around the globe have been taking precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, it has now been reported in [37 countries](#) outside China.

As of February 26, close to [3,000 cases and 43 deaths](#) had been recorded outside China. In Australia, we've so far seen [23 cases](#) across five states.

The good news is currently there's no evidence of "community transmission" of the virus in Australia. This means it's not spreading locally. All cases have had travel connections to China or the Diamond Princess cruise ship, or very close contact with a confirmed case in Australia (being in the same family or tour group).

But as the list of countries with community transmission increases – it's happening in [South Korea](#), which has more than 1,200 cases, and [Italy](#), which has 400 – so too does the risk of an escalation in Australia. It's now a matter of "when" local transmission occurs, not "if".

Read the entire article by Katherine Gibney, Brett Sutton and Jodie McVernon in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/its-now-a-matter-of-when-not-if-for-australia-this-is-how-were-preparing-for-a-jump-in-coronavirus-cases-132448>

Join the Union

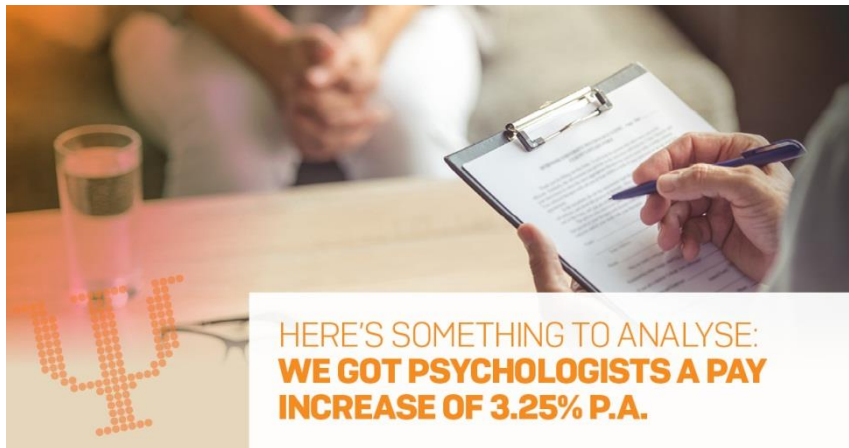
Are your workloads increasing? Are your stress levels increasing? Join the Union today!

To protect our professions we must strengthen our collective voice by increasing our membership. You can help by sharing one of the images below on Facebook.



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Australian Unions Member Benefits app

As a Union member you get access to exclusive Member Benefits. The 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 – that means you! If you have not got a login and would like join in [register for Member Benefits now.](#)



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