



Stat Report 2014/08

Bargaining commences for Psychologists and Dietitians at Healthscope

The first meeting for a new Enterprise Agreement to cover psychologists and dietitians at Healthscope was held Monday.

Employment arrangements for these groups are currently quite messy with an array of documents being needed to be read in conjunction and include a memorandum of understanding which largely just covers wage rates, two expired agreements and an award.

The intent is to build a consolidated document that will pull the four old documents together. The duration of the proposed agreement is still to be determined but may be for up to four years.

The Union expects to have a draft document to look at in the next 2 weeks.

Getting ahead on your HECS debt

Did you graduate university with your science degree after 2008? If you did you might be eligible for the HEC-HELP Benefit scheme for science graduates.

It's not a well-known scheme but the HECS-HELP Benefit scheme helps to reduce the compulsory HELP debt repayments. But there to be eligible for the scheme you need to satisfy at least the following criteria:

- graduated from an eligible undergraduate 'natural or physical science' course after 30 June 2008;
- were a Commonwealth supported student for some or all of that course;
- had a HECS-HELP debt at course completion for that course;
- still have a HELP debt to repay in the income year for which you are applying;
- are required to make a compulsory HELP debt repayment for the income year of your application; and
- were employed for at least one week in an eligible occupation in the income year for which you are applying.

There is a lifetime limit of 260 weeks for the Benefit as a science graduate. That means eligible applicants could receive this HECS-HELP Benefit for 5 years of eligible employment.

For more information visit:

<http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/payingbackmyloan/hecs-help-benefit/pages/maths-and-science>

Note: This is should be taken as general information and not financial advice. To make sure that you are eligible and are able to apply make sure you contact your taxation agent or visit the [ATO's website for additional information](#).

RCH cutting psychological support for kids with cancer unconscionable: VPA

While the Royal Children's Hospital embarks on its yearly fundraising drive, it is quietly cutting psychological support for kids with cancer and their families, said the Victorian Psychologists Association today.

Dr Rosemary Kelly, VPA Inc Executive Officer said:

"The cuts by RCH put into question the ability of the Hospital to ensure the mental health of kids undergoing cancer treatment and facing the fight of their lives.

"These treatments are difficult for adults to go through, and are even more difficult for kids, who are often frightened, anxious and filled with difficult questions about the future.

"For the families of kids with cancer there's a great deal of anger, fear, stress and uncertainty; and if you come from the rural Victoria it can be even more stressful. There is a mountain of research that shows the importance of psychological support for kids, and their families, to better cope with the stress of undergoing cancer treatments.

Dr Kelly continued:

"It's extraordinarily troubling that the Royal Children's Hospital thinks cutting its capacity to deliver the best possible psychological support for kids with cancer is a good idea.

"It's even more extraordinary that Minister David Davis told Victorians last year his government would find the funding to make sure this didn't happen. And here we are twelve months later and we find out the Minister and his government were loose with the truth."

Dr Kelly concluded:

"These kids and their families need the sensitivity that only registered psychologists can provide; the RCH knows it and if Minister Davis was true to his word he'll find the necessary funding and make sure kids and their families get access to registered psychologists to help them through the most difficult times in their lives."

Health Workforce Australia and 'Workforce Reform'

Since the election of the Abbott conservative government it seems that working people and the industrial relations system are being blamed for everything – now it is the turn of health professionals.

It has come to the Union's attention that Health Workforce Australia (HWA) is undertaking a major project to consider the impacts of industrial and legislative barriers to 'ensure Australia has sustainable and affordable healthcare available to everyone.'

It is particularly troubling that this organisation is undertaking such a major review, which will report to Health Ministers later this year, without once contacting the Union. Of particular concern is that this organisation will be considering 'how enterprise bargaining agreements, organisational policies and workplace culture support or hinder workforce reforms in health care'.

We strongly suspect this will mean further attacks on the pay and conditions of members; and an increase in rhetoric around the need to dumb down the qualifications required to undertake important roles. We're already seeing this happening in a range of areas.

HWA has said that the first areas it will be looking at are 'medicines legislation' (whatever that means) and 'medical radiation legislation'.

Watch this space for more information.

NPAAC Consultation on Requirements for the Supervision of Medical Pathology Laboratories

The Union has received notification from NPAAC about public consultation being open on the draft publication "Requirements for the Supervision of Medical Pathology Laboratories". There is a very tight timeline for making submissions, with submissions closing on 21 March. The NPAAC will accept late submissions but will not consider them as part of the consultation process.

Given the nature of the publication and its relevance to the work of our members, it is important that the Union make a submission.

To allow time for the Union to prepare the submission, please **send your feedback by no later than 14 March** to Alex Schlotzer at alexs@msav.org.au.

The NPAAC has circulated the following documents as part of the public consultation:

- The cover letter outlining the consultation;
- The draft "Requirements for the Supervision of Medical Pathology Laboratories"; and
- The table comparing the current and revised documents.

You can find these documents at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-npaac-publications-draft.htm>

Meeting to prepare Union Submission:

The Union will be holding a meeting of scientist members on **18 March at 3:30pm at the Union's offices in Carlton** to further discuss the Union's submission and to consider the feedback received by 14 March. If you are interested in attending this meeting please contact Alex Schlotzer at alexs@msav.org.au

Union Job Reps Training

As a Job Rep you are the local connection between the Union and members and to help you better understand your role, the Union provides training and information sessions.

The next Job Rep training day is on **Friday 21 March at 9am for a 9:30am start to 5pm.**

As a Job Rep you can attend training days and activities organised by the Union without losing pay if the training is on a day you would normally be rostered to work.

If you've ever thought of being a Job Rep then this training day is open to you too. If you're interested in being a Job Rep please contact the Union.

Please contact Alex on 9623 9623 or at alexs@msav.org.au to register your attendance.

Professional Development Seminar for Psychologists

Union membership isn't just about protecting your industrial interests; it also includes access to on-going professional development. The VPA Inc organises and offers members access to professional development opportunities to ensure members stay up-to-date.

The next professional development seminar is being organised for 7 May and is open only to VPA Inc members – this professional development seminar will be free to attend for VPA members.

Save the Date – Professional Development Seminar
Wednesday 7 May 2014 at the Treacy Centre Parkville

More details about the seminar will be circulated soon so watch this space.

Worth Reading: “On being treated well: reforming Medicare after 30 years”

Treasurer Joe Hockey and health minister Peter Dutton have been in overdrive this past week lowering expectations for the May budget and [reminding Australians](#) that its 30-year-old Medicare system is “unsustainable” and, if we’re not careful, Australia will run out of money to pay for health care.

Health minister Peter Dutton said he wanted to start a conversation about whether it’s fair to charge patients to see their general practitioner. He’s [also suggested](#) that allowing private insurance to cover part of the cost of medical fees will reduce public spending.

As others have already pointed out, these proposals won’t solve a thing. A flat co-payment for doctor visits [will not raise much revenue](#) and will reduce access to those most in need. Allowing [private health insurers](#) to pay for out-of-pocket costs to see a general practitioner will lead to a rise in fees and an increase in total health spending.

A more efficient way to pay for the increasing cost of universal health care is to [raise taxes](#) and to improve efficiency.

[Read the full article by Anthony Harris \(Director of the Centre for Health Economics – Monash University\) at The Conversation](#)

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](#)

Benefits for Union Members

As a union member, you can take advantage of the collective buying power of more than 1.9 million members to get discounts on a great range of products and services.

ACTU Member Connect makes sure the products and services are from companies you can rely on to deliver high-quality products with reliable customer service.

There is more information about a range of other benefits union members can access at <http://www.memberconnect.com.au/> or you can call ACTU Member Connect on 1300 362 223.

Work at St Vincent’s? Take our survey!

We’re circulating a survey for members to identify the extent of concerns regarding additional annual leave for shift workers and personal leave being accredited incorrectly.

The survey has been circulated to members at St Vincent’s and we strongly encourage you to fill it out so we get a better idea of the extent of this situation.

Keep Blood Safe Hotline

Do you have a story about how changes at the Red Cross Blood Service are already affecting your work, or could likely affect your work?

Send them to alexs@msav.org.au or call

0432 364 515 - we'll make sure you remain anonymous.

Sign the petition at:
<http://bit.ly/KeepBloodSafe>

Join the campaign at:
<http://www.facebook.com/KeepBloodSafe>

Share STAT Report

Is there a copy of STAT Report on your Union noticeboard or in your staff room?

If not print out a copy and leave it on the noticeboard or in the staff room for your colleagues.



[follow on Twitter](#) | [friend on Facebook](#)

Authorised by Rosemary Kelly, 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).

[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)