



Stat Report 2014/11

Dumbing down in health a recipe for long-term damage to Australia's healthcare system

It seems like every day we hear from politicians and healthcare administrators about the need to have a more 'sustainable and affordable' healthcare system. Every day we hear about the growing numbers of people that need healthcare; about the ever-growing waiting lists for elective surgery and the impact that an ageing population will have on our healthcare system into the future. And every day, healthcare providers seek to implement new 'measures' to reduce the 'costs' to the Australian taxpayer.

There are some very real issues facing Australia's healthcare system but to maintain the mantra of 'sustainability and affordability' will fundamentally see our healthcare system collapse as patients' actual healthcare needs aren't met at the time they present and recidivism increases.

State governments continue to play political games with healthcare while holding on to dangerous attitudes of cutting costs, regardless of how health outcomes are impacted. And worst of all, in all the chest-beating about cutting costs, nothing is said about whether there have been improved healthcare outcomes for Victorians.

The Napthine Government regularly trots out this mantra of 'sustainable and affordable healthcare' and claims they are improving healthcare outcomes by funding 'more beds' in hospitals and the 'front line' of the health sector. Too often state governments only see the nurses and the doctors as being the entirety of the health sector with little to no attention paid to those that aren't in the front line – the pharmacists, the psychologists, the dietitians, and the scientists.

But we all know that 'sustainable and affordable healthcare' is loaded language which simply means in practical terms budget cuts, redundancies, more outsourcing, more privatisation and dumbing down qualifications. We see it every day – replacing scientists with less qualified workers, merging and contracting out pharmacies and replacing psychologists with less qualified counsellors.

Worst of all, fewer health workers to do more and more work while hospital executives behave indifferently to the injuries arising from the stress and anxiety that increased workloads cause.

Every day we see how 'sustainable and affordable healthcare' is actually leading to a dumbing down in health; and while it might be okay today or tomorrow, what happens when the system is loaded with people that just don't have the qualifications? What happens to patients health care outcomes when those charged with providing the healthcare don't have the qualifications to know how best to provide the care needed.

Governments and healthcare administrators must rush back from the cliff if we are to have a truly sustainable and affordable healthcare system. Making sure that patients have access to the best quality healthcare is vital to reducing the risks of patients returning shortly after treatment.

Easter Saturday, the Agreement and You

Under the public sector agreement (and many private sector agreements), full time employees can choose to be paid for Easter Saturday, take a day off in lieu within 4 weeks, or have a day added to annual leave. For part time employees you are entitled to be paid for Easter Saturday.

You may have heard that if you ordinarily work Monday to Friday only and do not work on Easter Saturday you are entitled ONLY to take one day off in lieu, within four weeks of the Easter Saturday public holiday. This is incorrect!

You may have also been told that part time employees are only entitled to Easter Saturday provisions if they work every day from Monday to Friday. This is also incorrect.

Been given information to the contrary? Is your employer refusing to give you your correct entitlement? Contact the Union immediately so we can pursue any claims to that effect.

Did 'Dodgy' Doros make a dodgy promise on pay increases?

It has been brought to the Union's attention that Dorevitch Pathology issued a memo in June last year stating that the company would be increasing staff wages.

The memo notes that staff would see an increase of a total of 2.5% in pay with an additional 0.25% increase in superannuation contributions, which would be delivered in two instalments over the 2013/2014 financial year.

To-date there have been no increases paid and no indication of when the two instalments will be processed.

Interestingly, Dorevitch believes that 2.5% is an increase in pay above CPI. Unfortunately, such statements confirm that Dorevitch and its management team are painfully out of touch with reality in Australia, with CPI increasing at 2.7% - and it totally ignores that wages have remained stagnant for more than 5 years.

With only a few months left in the 2013/14 financial year, it will be interesting to see if Dorevitch will come good on the pay increase or whether it's another dodgy Dorevitch promise.

Watch this space but if you know more let us know on 9623 9623.

Community awareness growing to Keep Blood Safe

On Thursday the Keep Blood Safe campaign received a major boost with ABC 774's 'Mornings with Jon Faine' speaking about the Red Cross Blood Service cutting scientists from the testing and processing of blood donations. It was clear that many people listening to the program are appalled that the Red Cross Blood Service is cutting scientists from testing and processing.



Quite rightly, the callers to the show, noted that the safety of the blood supply could be compromised if the scientific knowledge and skills leave, as scientists leave the Blood Service.

Your support, as professionals in our health system, is vital to making sure that more and more people know what is happening at the Red Cross Blood Service.

We know that the restructure will be finalised by April 14 and we are also aware that this organisational change is now impacting on the quality teams. We understand that the restructure to quality teams will also be finalised by April 14.

We know that members will be anxious about their future, especially with the date for finalising the restructure looming so please contact the Union if you need to on 9623 9623.

In order to mark the significant changes to the Red Cross Blood Service, and in recognition of the loss of scientific knowledge and skills, the Union will hold a public meeting at the Red Cross Blood Service's headquarters in Melbourne on April 14.

Here's what you can do to support the Keep Blood Safe:

1. Sign the petition at <http://bit.ly/KeepBloodSafe> - if you've already signed it share it with your friends and family.
2. Write Letters to the Editor and call talk back radio. We have some [great tips here](#)

Australian Council of Trade Unions seeks increase to minimum wage

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) is seeking an increase in the minimum wage of \$27 per week for our lowest paid workers. This increase is essential if Australia is to avoid creating an underclass of working poor.

New research commissioned by the ACTU shows that if action isn't taken to increase the minimum wage and turn around the alarming decline in the relative earnings of low paid workers then Australia will have an entrenched working poor as they do in the United States within twenty years.

"A \$27 per week increase to the minimum wage will ensure the gap between low paid workers and the rest of the workforce does not widen even further," said ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver.

The ACTU is demanding the National Minimum Wage increase to \$649.20 a week for Australia's lowest paid including cleaners, retail and hospitality staff, child care workers, farm labourers, and factory workers.

If the minimum wage continues to lag behind the ever increasing costs of living then this will make life in Australia much tougher for low paid workers who will find themselves well and truly left behind. Unions are not going to sit back and let that happen.

The annual wage review is the only chance for a pay increase for 1.5 million of Australia's lowest paid workers, and helps set the pay and pay increases of many more.

Given the actual strength and the performance of Australia's economy, the claim of \$27 a week for the National Minimum Wage is affordable and reasonable.

Productivity has been growing at its fastest pace in over a decade, but wages have failed to keep up— especially the wages of the lowest paid. Workers' share of the national income has fallen, while the profits share is near an all-time high.

It is essential that the Fair Work Commission increase the minimum wage to stop the alarming decline in the relative earnings of low paid workers.

The best outcome for workers will be one that stops the gap growing between low paid workers and the rest of the community, especially as the federal government looks to implement severe austerity measures in this year's budget.

[Read the ACTU's full submission for the 2013/14 Annual Wage Review here.](#)

MSAV | VPA | AHP Annual Conference – 30 May 2014

The MSAV | VPA | AHP Annual Conference is on **Friday 30 May at 9am for a 9:30am start to 5pm.**

The Annual Conference will feature plenary sessions on the state of public health in Victoria and the current industrial landscape and challenges for the MSAV, VPA Inc and AHP. Plus the Annual Conference will also be an excellent opportunity to hear from some great speakers including leaders from other unions in the health sector.

With this year being an election year, Annual Conference will look at the political landscape and the campaign to ensure Victorians have a government that looks after health care and puts workers first.

Annual Conference is free and open to all members.

Register your attendance at enquiry@msav.org.au

Professional Development Seminar for Psychologists

The next professional development seminar is on 7 May and is open only to VPA Inc members.

Professor James Ogloff will be our guest speaker, and he is the Director of the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Sciences and Director of Psychological Services for the Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health.

Full details of the presentation by Professor Ogloff will be circulated when they are received.

**Professional Development Seminar
Wednesday 7 May 2014 at the Treacy Centre Parkville**

To register for this Professional Development Seminar please email us at enquirv@msav.org.au

Anna Stewart Memorial Project

Women Changing Unions

As many more women increase their participation in the workforce, they are also joining trade unions. However, the extent of women's union membership is not yet reflected at all levels of the union movement.

Indigenous women and women from non-English speaking backgrounds in particular, are still under represented in the membership as well as in paid union positions.

The aim of the Anna Stewart Memorial Project is to increase women's involvement in the union movement. The project has been in existence since 1984 and so far more than 800 women have participated in the Victorian arm project.

During the two week project, women union members from diverse workplaces and occupations are placed with their own, and sometimes with another union, for two weeks.

They experience the full range of union work, including mass meetings, enterprise bargaining negotiations and hearings at Fair Work Australia. In addition, all participants meet for three and a half days group training during the project at the Victorian Trades Hall Council to discuss women, work and union issues.

The Project runs from 5 May to 16 May.

If you're interested in participating in the Anna Stewart Memorial Project please contact the Union on 9623 9623 or at enquiry@msav.org.au to discuss your participation in detail.

Worth Reading: "Secret recordings with your boss - a good or bad idea?"

The incidence of secretly recorded conversations between workers and bosses is on the rise. Smart phones have made it technologically easier. An industrial relations culture plagued by insecure work has made it more attractive.

But does a covert recording of a discussion with your employer offer you any protection in termination or bullying cases?

Is it even legal?

[Read the full article by Penny Savidis on Ryan Carlisle Thomas Lawyers](#)

Union Shopper Competition

Union Shopper is currently running a fantastic competition with an awesome \$2000 home theatre package prize.

Enter today by visiting www.unionshopper.com.au/win2014 | **Entries close 30/11/2014.**

Let your union mates know that they can enter, too. You'll get an additional entry in the draw for each friend who enters as a result of your referral.

Good luck!

Win a \$2000 home theatre package!*

Sign up to receive our regular email offers, and you'll go into the draw to win a fantastic \$2000 home theatre package.

How to enter

Simply complete the online form at unionshopper.com.au/win2014 or complete the form in your 2014 Union Shopper Directory of Services.

It gets better

Tell your friends and colleagues about this competition, and if they register as a result of your referral you'll both go into the prize draw.

*For T's & C's visit, unionshopper.com.au
Competition closes 30 November 2014



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.

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.



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