



Stat Report 2014/44

A year of achievements

2014 was a very big year at the Union – it was truly a year of achievements.

This year the Union completed a number of outstanding agreements in the private sector. It has always been the goal of the Union to make sure that all of our members have agreements that give better conditions and wages.

This year saw the Union organise its first ever Annual Conference. The Conference explored a range of topical issues from the attacks on Australia's universal healthcare system and the ongoing industrial issues to the broader political issues facing our members. It also showed the level of respect the Union has within Victoria as the key health spokespeople from the three major parties attended and spoke about their policies and priorities leading up to this year's State Election. It certainly attracted a big audience with lots of questions.

The Union has invested in updating its membership technology with work commencing on updating the Union's website. Updating the Union's membership database has been a very large undertaking in 2014 with the bulk of the work now finalised. The Union continues to test the database to make sure that all the bugs have been ironed out. While testing continues, the Union is also finalising applications to make it possible for members to update their own details through the Union's website; as well as let people join the Union online.

The year saw the Union campaign to highlight the ongoing concerns about the Red Cross Blood Service cutting the scientific workforce. While the campaign did not result in the Blood Service backing down, it did bring the issue to the attention of a number of Members of Parliament. We'll be working with federal Members of Parliament in 2015 to make sure the Red Cross Blood Service is meeting every standard required. We'll be especially interested in making sure any reports about delays in delivering blood supplies and/or errors in the type of blood products are known.

In the lead up to this year's State Election the Union got behind the Trades Hall "We Are Union" campaign. The campaign proved how important it is for unions and union members to be involved in the democratic processes of our state and nation. It also highlighted how important the issue of health and other community services such as education and fire safety are to Victorians and how these issues will influence the way we vote. The We Are Union campaign proved that when Victorian Unions rally together to talk to the community about our issues we can have a big impact. Together we made a huge difference and changed governments.

And this year the Union launched its "No Pay? No Way!" campaign to tackle the real problem of growing workloads and falling staff numbers to meet demand, and how one of the most insidious impacts has been the rapid growth of unpaid work. In launching the campaign, the Union has undertaken research in an attempt to get a better picture of the extent and impact of unpaid work. It is becoming apparent that for many health services the workplace culture is such that new staff feel pressured into doing unpaid work on their own initiative rather than because they've been asked to by their supervisor or management team. The research also points to a

growing problem in the public healthcare system – unpaid work is systemically relied upon to keep vital services in public hospitals functioning.

The Union is finalising its research report and will publish the report in the New Year. We'll be sure to distribute the finished report to members.

But as we say farewell to 2014, we're looking to forward to another big year in 2015 as the Union continues its "No Pay? No Way!" campaign; we'll keep up the fight to make sure our professions are not further eroded and we'll stand with the community against federal government's efforts to destroy Australia's universal healthcare system.

It's been a big year of achievements and together we'll make 2015 another big year.

Have a safe and happy festive season.

Paul Elliott

When a GP co-payment isn't a GP co-payment

This week the Abbott Government was forced to admit that its plan to force Australians to pay a co-payment to see their medical practitioner was unpopular and needed changing. But what was announced to replace their awful co-payment is just as bad.

So what's going on?

The sad truth is that the Abbott Government's new co-payment is just like the old co-payment. Instead of forcing every Australian to pay an upfront fee of \$7 to visit the GP, the 'new' policy touted this week will see Australians (excluding young people and those with concession cards) open to doctors charging a co-payment of \$5 – a payment that was already in the Budget announced in May this year.

And despite declaring the \$5 payment as a "discretionary fee" that doctors may opt to charge, the Government has already been forced to admit that the majority of Australians who do not hold concession cards will end up paying the \$5 payment.

The Government will also cut some rebates by much more. For example, standard Level B consultations of up to 10 minutes currently attract a \$37.05 rebate while under the changes they will be classified as Level A and attract \$16.95 for the young and concession holders and \$11.95 for everyone else.

And the Government's freeze on increasing the amount of Medicare rebates will now extend until June 2018. To justify such an assault on the nation's universal healthcare system, we're told the Government will still have saved an estimated \$3.5 billion in the Budget and make Medicare more sustainable.

We're not sure how slashing Medicare rebates and pushing a terrible policy onto GPs will make Medicare more sustainable. But then when is a GP co-payment not a GP co-payment?

Regardless of the shiny headlines declaring a back-down, the Government is still seeking to radically undermine our universal healthcare system and make it unnecessarily expensive for Australians to get the medical attention they need when they need it.

Whether it's the Government's old GP co-payment scheme or the new GP co-payment scheme: it will make Australians sicker and poorer; and constitutes an assault on Medicare, Australia's universal healthcare system.

Know Your Rights: The Christmas close down period

and you

It's that time of year again when employers will try to coerce you into taking annual leave to cover their close down periods.

It is very clear from our public sector Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and most of our private sector agreements that there is no capacity for your employer to force you to take annual leave or long service leave for this purpose. It is not acceptable for your employer to make arrangements about close down periods under the assumption that staff will be required to use annual leave or long service leave to cover it.

Remember: there is no requirement for anyone to agree to take annual leave or long service leave to cover regular working days over the Christmas and New Year period.

Contact the Union for assistance on 9623 9623 if you need further advice.

Know Your Rights: Payment for Public Holidays over Christmas

It is important to know their rights about payment for working and not working on Public Holidays, particularly for part timers.

The three Public Holidays during the festive season are:

- Christmas Day - Thursday 25th December 2013
- Boxing Day - Friday 26th December 2013
- New Year's Day - Thursday 1st January 2014

Public Sector**

Where a full time employee is rostered for duty on a public holiday are entitled to be paid for the time worked with a minimum of four hours wages at the rate of time and a half in addition to their normal weekly wage i.e. in addition to payment for the day. (Time off in lieu at the penalty rate with a minimum of six hours time off may be taken by agreement, as well as payment for the day). If an employee is entitled to a full working day off, this may be added to annual leave by mutual consent.

Where a full time shift employee is rostered off on a public holiday (i.e. those who are normally rostered over a seven day cycle where a public holiday falls on a Rostered Day Off – i.e. a day when they are not rostered for duty) are entitled to the normal weekly wage plus one and a half days pay (or one and a half days' time in lieu) for the public holiday.

For a full time employee, where a public holiday falls on a day on which they normally work but they are not required to work, they are entitled to one day's pay i.e. are paid for the public holiday.

For a part time employee, where a public holiday falls on a day on which they normally work but they are not required to work they are entitled to one day's pay at the number of hours that they normally are rostered on that day.

For a part-time employee, where a public holiday falls on a day when they are never rostered to work, they are entitled to a pro rata payment for the day, where a day means 8 hours, based on the average weekly hours worked over the last 6 months divided by 38

*** NB It is important to note that the entitlements for the Private Sector may vary slightly. In this case it is best to read the "Public Holidays" clause within the Enterprise Agreement which applies to your employer (this can be found on the MSAV website).*

Remember that the MSAV Office is closed until 5 January 2014 so if an issue does arise

with your employer about payment for the above days, retain your payslip or any emails from your manager and contact the office for assistance when we open again next year.

Union Office Closure over Festive Season

The Union will be closing its office over the festive season.

The office will be **closed from Tuesday 23 December and reopens on Monday 5 January**. Over this time there will be no-one available to deal with standard industrial matters or respond to queries.

For *urgent matters only* call 0421 999 502 during office hours only.

Join the campaign - No Pay? No Way!

Show your support for the campaign by downloading & using one of our graphics for your email signature.



Festive Season Savings

Are you looking to save some dollars this festive season? Well you might like to see [what deals are on offer from Australian Unions](#) but here are two great offers to pique your interest:

A cracking deal from Cracka Wines

Australian Unions and crackawines.com.au/unions have put together a special Deluxe Entertainer's mixed dozen for this year's festive season packed with a range of premium whites and reds to enjoy this summer. Whether it is wines for casual drinking you are after or for a Christmas Day feast the Deluxe Entertainers dozen has it all.

Picked by the Cracka team of wine experts the Deluxe Entertainer's Dozen includes 11 bottles of wine from top winemakers such as Geoff Merrill, Cumulus and Grant Burge plus a 750ml bottle of Moet & Chandon Brut Imperial Champagne for a toast on Christmas day.

Including your exclusive 5% Unions discount this Deluxe Entertainers Wine Pack, with an RRP of over \$300 is yours for only \$122.55 plus delivery, which is only \$6.95 to most households in Australia.

Need some new tyres?

This festive season Tyresales.com.au continues to deliver up to 50% savings off RRP on the leading brand tyres, making tyre buying easier than it has ever been before. Being 100% online with much lower overheads, means tyresales.com.au can pass huge savings directly onto you. Even better still, union members can get access to an additional 10% off the already heavily discounted prices by simply using the redemption code "UNIONS" at the cart checkout.

The tyresales.com.au service and pricing includes free fitting and balancing and all purchases are backed by a full 12 month warranty and money back guarantee. With over 1,000 new car dealer fitment locations Australia wide - you can get the tyres fitted wherever is most convenient for you. Simply go to tyresales.com.au, search by vehicle or tyre size, and then select the tyres

you want to buy - it's that easy!

Don't forget to use your discount code "UNIONS" to save an additional 10% off the price.

Festive Season Reading

The festive season is upon us and as we start looking at spending time with family it's a great time to catch up on some reading; or even read some new and interesting pieces. To help get you started this festive season the Union has compiled a wide range of articles and commentary that we think you might find interesting, revealing and worth sharing with your friends, colleagues and family.

Worth Reading: Vic election: we are union, hear us roar

"On Saturday [29 November], the Denis Naphthine-led Liberal-National coalition government was turfed out by Victorian voters after just one term in power. The election was won in the key southern bayside seats of Carrum, Mordialloc, Bentleigh and Frankston – seats where Victorian unions had concentrated campaigning and resources most of 2014. This is the inside story of how a grassroots union campaign helped swing the election."

Read the full article by Mark Phillips in This Working Life at:
<http://workinglife.org.au/2014/12/01/we-are-union-hear-us-roar/>

Worth Reading: Back to the future with Coalition attacks on Medicare bulk billing

"In the government's latest "scraping away the barnacles" of unpopular and blocked policies, prime minister Tony Abbott and health minister Peter Dutton have announced they're abandoning the plan to have doctors charge a \$7 co-payment for consultations. Facing a massive backlash from both the medical profession and the public, the budget measure was facing almost certain defeat in the Senate.

Abbott and Dutton have outlined an "optional" co-payment, which makes doctors responsible for charging it. It reduces the rebate doctors receive for treating patients by \$5 and freezes it until July 2018. General practitioners can pass on this cut by charging patients who do not have health-care (concession) cards and are aged over 16.

Both versions of the co-payment policy are just the latest stoush in long battle over bulk billing, which lies at the centre of Medicare, and the scope of universal health coverage in Australia. Bulk billing – where general practitioners bill Medicare directly without charging patients upfront fees – has, in fact, played an unusually prominent role in Australian health policy conflicts."

Read the entire article by Jim Gillespie, Deputy Director, Menzies Centre for Health Policy & Associate Professor in Health Policy at University of Sydney, in The Conversation:
<http://theconversation.com/back-to-the-future-with-coalition-attacks-on-medicare-bulk-billing-35311>

Worth Reading: Abbott's GP co-payments aren't dead: it's a tweak not a termination

"Tony Abbott has cut the size of the co-payment and he has excluded children and Australians on benefits, but he is insisting on a co-payment, or as he puts it a "price signal".

Like a price signal for pollution (the carbon tax) or a price signal for traffic congestion (road tolls) the theory is that if we are charged for something we'll use less of it.

But visits to the doctor aren't quite like those other things. One of the things we are buying when we go to the doctor is information - information about whether we really needed to go in the first place. We can't know until we go. Doctors and patients have what health economists call an "information asymmetry". And so that makes it entirely possible that co-payments could deter necessary, as well as frivolous, visits."

Read the entire article by Peter Martin in The Age at: <http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/abbotts-gp-copayments-arent-dead-its-a-tweak-not-a-termination-20141209-123ljo.html>

Worth Reading: Tell them they're dreaming

"With Australia's energy and climate-change policy in a state of chaos, it's not surprising that we are seeing renewed calls to pursue nuclear energy. And given the urgency of reducing global carbon dioxide emissions, it would be a mistake to dismiss the nuclear option out of hand. But in thinking about the possibility of nuclear power, particularly for Australia, it is important to avoid wishful or magical thinking.

The history of commercial nuclear power is, by and large, one of failure. Costs have proved far higher than expected, catastrophic accidents more frequent, and routine breakdowns more common. After a burst of construction in the 1970s and 1980s, most countries abandoned the technology for these reasons, along with public concern about safety and radioactive waste.

Few countries have revisited that decision. A partial exception is Sweden, where the impact of a 1980 referendum calling for a phase-out of nuclear power was watered down, in 2009, by a policy allowing for the replacement of existing plants. Any such plants are at least a decade away, however."

Read the entire article by John Quiggin at Inside Story: <http://insidestory.org.au/tell-them-theyre-dreaming>

Worth Reading: This GP price signal will work - that's frightening

"The announcement that the proposed \$7 GP co-payment will be replaced by a \$5 rebate cut to GPs when they see non-pensioners and non-concession card holders is a kick in the guts to working Australians, and a threat to affordable health care for all but the rich.

The intention of the Government is unchanged. It still regards its budget policy as a good policy, but one that isn't possible to legislate.

It wants doctors to charge co-payments. It wants patients to see doctors less often, claiming that patients see doctors too often despite a complete lack of evidence for such a claim."

Read the full article by Tim Woodruff on ABC's The Drum at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-12/woodruff-this-gp-price-signal-will-work-and-thats-frightening/5962594>

Worth Reading: Don't blame the workers for poor productivity

"Productivity is often regarded by economists as the most important thing in a nation's economy. Get that right and everything else will follow.

Recently Australia's productivity has grown solidly, but challenges remain over the long term. One of the biggest challenges, as data from the Bureau of Statistics revealed last week is the poor performance of capital investment in leading to improved productivity."

Read the full article by Greg Jericho on ABC's The Drum at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014->

Worth Reading: 'Pride' and 12 other must-see union movies

"We haven't had too many lately, but the release of Pride sees the reprise of the union-themed film.

Pride portrays the true story of how a group of gay and lesbian activists from London joined the campaign to support Welsh villagers in the 1984 British miners' strike. Both groups were feeling under siege from the Thatcher Government and found solidarity together.

Some of the greatest moments in cinema have come when workers band together to take on power and give the Tories nightmares."

Read the rest of this article at: <http://workinglife.org.au/2014/12/05/pride-and-12-other-must-see-union-movies/>

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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.

Some of the excellent organisations that make up our [Australian Unions Member Benefits](#) family have made some generous contributions to our festive season hampers this year which are sure to bring joy to five lucky union members to share with workmates, family and friends!



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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