



## Stat Report 2015/22

### Public pathology heading for a crisis

The Union is warning that public hospitals may be unable to meet required world-class pathology standards while it continues to be treated as a non-essential service with a race to the bottom attitude from private providers in public hospitals.

Turn-around times on pathology tests are crucial to ensuring patients are diagnosed quickly so treatment can begin as soon as possible. Turn-around times are the pathology equivalent to waiting times for ambulances. The continued cuts to healthcare by successive governments has resulted in many public pathology laboratories being contracted out to private providers only interested in making profits.

As a result of this race to the bottom, pathology standards set out in contracts with public hospitals are not being met with quality standards declining and turn-around times for some tests being allowed to increase.

Critical pathology testing is being stripped out of local laboratories and sent to factory laboratories that can be several hours away in some cases. And usually includes the loss of well-paid local jobs and highly qualified staff. The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) acknowledges the impacts of how such practices can inevitably result in curbing of quality and research activities which may impact on clinical services.

The loss of local pathology testing can put other services at risk like the emergency department, obstetrics and paediatrics and oncology services. And it can have a devastating impact on public hospitals in regional Victoria, effectively reducing their ability to treat patients locally.

The Union is calling on the Minister for Health, Jill Hennessy, and the Andrews Labor Government to end the contracting out of pathology services; and ensure local public hospitals have fully functioning pathology laboratories staffed with properly qualified scientists.

But we're going to need your help to make this happen.

And that's why we have prepared a petition to present to the Victorian Parliament to turn up the heat.

The petition respectfully asks that the Government place a moratorium on the contracting out of pathology services and instigate a full investigation into the procurement practices in public hospitals with respect to pathology services.

Our aim is for at least 1,000 medical scientists to sign the petition so that the Government can't ignore our voice on this critical health issue.

[Download the petition and get your colleagues to sign it](#)

# No Pay? No Way! – The Next Steps

“Management value budget savings over patient safety and staff welfare”.

This is what members are saying whether they work in the largest of our public hospitals or the smallest. It's a message we can't ignore and it's up to us to fight back.

We still have a lot of work to do to make sure members know that it's okay to say “No” to unpaid work or doing the work of absent colleagues. Help us fight to reverse the trend of larger workloads, more unpaid work and growing numbers of stress related injuries.

Here's 4 things you can do right now in the next step of our No Pay? No Way! campaign:

1. Talk to your colleagues about workloads and saying “No” to unpaid work. Remember: You can't be forced to perform unpaid work and your refusal is a lawful action for which you cannot be disciplined or punished.
2. [Sign up for our Workplace Kits](#) and help spread the word about our campaign in your workplace.
3. Let us know when you're doing unpaid work. Click [here](#) and report it.\*
4. Help us identify breaches in your workplace. By helping us to identify breaches of our Agreement, you are enabling the Union to take action on those breaches and enforcing our Agreement. Click [here](#) and report breaches.\*

\* To report your unpaid work and breaches of our Agreement you will need to register for the website.

## VPA Professional Development Seminar

### Turning Psychological Practice into Research

The VPA's next Professional Development Seminar and its Annual General Meeting will be held on 16 September starting at 12pm at the Treacy Centre, Parkville.

#### Seminar Overview:

Associate Professor John Farhall will be the keynote speaker for the next VPA professional development session on 16 September on the topic, *Turning Psychological Practice into Research*. As well as John's keynote address, this session will include project presentations by members from a range of practice areas. We will conclude with a problem-solving panel, for which others who have experienced the pleasure and pain of turning practice into research will join John.

#### About Associate Professor John Farhall

Dr John Farhall holds a joint appointment as Associate Professor at the School of Psychology and Public Health at La Trobe University and Consultant Clinical Psychologist at North Western Mental Health. His role aims to build bridges between the public mental health services and university research and training. His primary interests are in innovations in mental health care, psychopathology, therapy for psychotic disorders and evidence-based practice. His research is centred on understanding psychotic disorders, including evaluating and disseminating evidence-based psychological treatments for people who have psychotic disorders and understanding the disorder processes those treatments seek to address. His research experience includes multicentre large scale randomized controlled trials, qualitative studies, postgraduate and Honours student projects, unfunded projects in mental health services and local routine evaluations.

#### Seminar Program:

12.00 - 12.30 Registration and Lunch

12.30 -1.00 VPA Annual General Meeting

1.00 - 2.00 Keynote Address: Associate Professor John Farhall 'Turning Psychological Practice into Research'

2.00 – 3.00 Members' Projects: Session One  
3.00 – 3.20 Afternoon Tea and Networking  
3.20 – 4.00 Members' Projects: Session Two  
4.00 – 4.30 Problem-solving panel (Associate Professor John Farhall + others)

### **Calls for Expressions of Interest to Present – We want your input!**

1. Present your project: No matter how large, small, complete or incomplete, part of a higher degree, a larger study or a practice improvement project and from any area of psychological practice. If it involves turning your practice into research, then members want to hear about your project!

### **Fill out the form on the VPA website and return by 31st of July.**

We will advise the final program by mid-August. If we can't schedule all submissions for oral presentation (20 mins) then an alternative way of circulating your project will be offered.

2. Bring your ideas, problems, obstacles, opportunities and questions – test the problem solving skills of our expert panel.

Contact the Union on 9623 9625 or at [enquiry@vicpsych.org.au](mailto:enquiry@vicpsych.org.au) to register for this PD, to submit your project to present at the PD or if you have any questions.

## **We'll Stand Up to Funding Cuts. We Are Union.**

Lend your voice as we tell Australia about the damage of planned funding cuts to health and medical sciences.

In 2015, union members all across Australia will work millions of hours of unpaid time.

With huge cuts to health and medical science spending announced in the Federal budget, these unworkable conditions look set to get much, much worse.

As workloads continue to grow without the required increases in staff, the pressure is mounting on already over-worked and stressed Australian workers.

The [WE ARE UNION campaign](#) run by our Trades Hall is about people from all industries standing together to protect our rights at work and tackle important issues facing all workers.

Together with people from other unions, members just like you regularly get together in the community to speak with people about attacks on funding vital health, science and education services.

Members are already joining in, speaking to the community about issues facing the future of hardworking Australians. You don't need experience - this is about amplifying your voice!

Go to [WEAREUNION.ORG.AU](http://WEAREUNION.ORG.AU) sign up as a volunteer and a fellow union member will be in touch to tell you more.

## **Professional Indemnity Insurance**

MSAV and VPA membership fees include professional indemnity insurance (PI). PI cover includes representation in the coroner's court and representation if any allegations of and (for psychologists) for any complaints which are made to the Psychologists Board of Australia.

So to make sure that

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. Have members needed to use their PI insurance to get legal advice and/or representation?**

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Yes, on a number of occasions. This has ranged from representation in the Coroner's Court in relation to suicide or homicide by a patient of a psychologist, to representation in relation to patient complaints or legal action being taken by patients or former patients of a health service or an individual member.

**2. Have psychologists had to call on their PI insurance to get legal advice regarding complaints to the Psychologists Board of Australia?**

Yes, and in all instances the individual psychologist has been successfully represented.

**3. What happens if I retire or no longer practice as a psychologist and a claim is made against me in relation to the period of time I was employed in my profession?**

As long as you continued as a financial member up to the time you ceased practicing, your cover extends for 7 years after you ceased to practice.

**4. I do volunteer work in my profession. Does my MSAV PI insurance cover me for my volunteer work?**

Yes, the policy covers volunteer work.

**5. I am a psychologist. Does the Union policy cover my private practice?**

No, the VPA policy only covers you for work that you do as an employee. You need to take out additional insurance for any private practice you may undertake.

**6. Am I covered for incidents or claims that are made against me before I became a financial member?**

Yes, you will be covered for a claim that is made while you are a financial member of the MSAV or VPA as a result of an incident which occurred in the past except for any claim or circumstance which was known to the member at the time that they joined, or prior to the insurance being renewed annually.

It is important that members notify the Union of any incident which may give rise to a claim as soon as they are aware of such an incident, such as an error in a patient result (for example). This applies to all professions covered by the Union PI insurance including medical scientists, IVF scientists, IVF and Genetic counsellors, medical physicists, dietitians and psychologists.

To notify the Union of such incidents please use the Form which is available either by contacting the Union or [from our website](#).

## Worth Reading: What's the biggest challenge in financial services regulation?

“Systematic problems in financial services offered by the big banks that rip off tens of thousands of Australians?

A continuing series of financial scandals among the banks and other major financial institutions costing hundreds of millions?

The Australian Securities and Investments Commission's inability, or more correctly unwillingness, to upset the top end of town, let alone regulate it?

The high price Australians pay for super funds management?

The growing dead weight of a super system that's now significantly bigger than our actual economy?

No – the urgent issue, apparently, is getting more independent directors onto industry super fund boards, which the government announced late last week having backgrounded journalists to that effect at its favoured outlets, the Financial Review and The Australian. (And, interestingly, before we see the government’s response to the final report of Murray inquiry into the financial sector.)”

Read the entire article by Glenn Dyer and Bernard Keane in The New Daily at:  
<http://thenewdaily.com.au/money/2015/06/29/super-idea/>

## Your Union is on Facebook

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[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.



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Authorised by Paul Elliott, 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](mailto:enquiry@msav.org.au) A.B.N. 30 345 343 541 (MSAV), 72 520 393 213 (AHP), 87 851 818 075 (VPA Inc).

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