



Stat Report 2015/34

The TPP and healthcare

It seems like there is a news story everyday about the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) or the Trans-Pacific Partnership. And you'd be right to think that.

But there are very good reasons for why there is so much talk about these free trade agreements.

Firstly, the text of the documents surrounding the Trans-Pacific Partnership is secret. Only those people who have been involved with the negotiations know what's contained within different parts of the final agreement. There is no information available about the TPP, other than that information which has been leaked to the public. Yet, while much of the final document remains secret, the Federal Government has been actively spruiking the benefits of the TPP.

Remarkably, we're expected to just believe that something we weren't informed about will somehow magically improve exports from Australia and grow our economy. But what we know from the leaked documents is that the TPP is far from something that will magically improve our exports or enhance our economy.

In fact what has been leaked to-date should send chills down the spines of everyone working in Australia's healthcare system, especially those in medicines. And it is the area of medicines that has public health professionals expressing significant concern.

The intellectual property rules proposed in the TPP, if adopted, would likely have the impact of delaying the availability of cheaper, generic medicines while extending the monopolies over new medicines. And with changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

As you'll know when a medicine is produced, the manufacturer usually obtains data exclusivity to protect the clinical trial data for the medicine, including safety and efficacy data. It means that competitors hoping to produce cheaper, generic versions cannot use the original company's data to prove the safety and efficacy of their drug version while seeking approval from regulators.

But the new intellectual property rules would result in delays in allowing cheaper versions to enter the market, and subsequent cost blowouts to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). This would cause patients to have higher copayments and reduced access to expensive new treatments, with disadvantaged patients bearing much of the burden.

Changes to PBS processes also proposed for the TPP could compound these problems by preventing effective price regulation and giving the pharmaceutical industry more say in PBS decision making. And on top of that pharmaceutical companies may be able to use the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism to sue, or threaten to sue, governments over their pharmaceutical policies. It sounds fanciful but pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly and Company is currently using an investor-state dispute settlement mechanism to sue the Canadian

Government for invalidating patents for two drugs that were found not to deliver the promised benefits.

Plus rules in the TPP that are focused on domestic policies, which have nothing to do with the country's international trade, can reduce the options available to governments to regulate products like tobacco, alcohol and food. For example, proposed rules on transparency and regulatory coherence in the TPP would enshrine the right of industry to contribute to making national nutrition policy.

In addition there are expectations that the TPP will include rules to ensure that private companies can 'compete' on an equal footing with publicly funded or provided services. Combined with the Turnbull Government's attack on Medicare and universality of access, such provisions would make it almost impossible to reverse any privatisation of health services, even if it is proven that the privatisation of those services has detrimental impacts.

The Turnbull Government might be praising the merits of the TPP but without knowing what's in the agreement we cannot simply extol its virtues. And the Union is very concerned that if the rumours are true about the provisions contained in the TPP, we will see Australia's universal healthcare system seriously damaged, with disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians put most at risk.

No Pay? No Way! 2015 Survey

The Union wants to continue its advocacy around workforce issues, which the State Government has become more acutely aware of, as the Union continues to highlight workload issues, non-payment of EBA provisions, rostering problems and ineffective management.

And to make our advocacy stronger, the Union wants to be able to better understand the nature and extent of unpaid work, and more importantly, how unpaid work has changed and the impact it has on members over time.

That's why the Union is repeating our survey from 2014. [Do the survey today.](#)

Over the past decade staff reductions forced through budget cuts has caused workloads to steadily increase. We regularly witness health managers that have long stopped thinking about how we cope with the extra work, and instead try to build an expectation that if you don't do unpaid work, you're letting everyone else down – your colleagues, the patients and the management.

It's clear that the expectation is that we just do more and more work in the same amount of time. And in 2015, we know that hundreds of thousands of hours of unpaid time will be worked to cope with unreasonably high workloads.

Based on the results of last year's survey, there is growing evidence that health services have a systemic reliance on unpaid work to keep many services afloat. And we suspect that this situation has become worse since we last did our No Pay No Way survey.

We want to be able to use our research to continue lobbying and advocating for proper workforce planning that takes into account the ever growing workloads and the increasing demand on health services.

[Please take a few minutes to do our survey and help us continue to highlight the issues.](#)

State Member for Melbourne visits RMH Path Labs

Last week on Friday the State Member for Melbourne, Ellen Sandell, visited the pathology laboratories at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. Ms Sandell has a background in working with non-government organisations around climate change; and has a degree in science majoring in genetics so she understands the importance of science.

Ms Sandell made her way around the laboratories inspecting the equipment being used and finding out about the specific work undertaken in each laboratory. Starting out at the specimen reception, Ms Sandell was shown around the core lab before making her way to the microbiology and anatomical labs.

Ms Sandell took an active interest in our members' work and asked incredibly insightful questions about the nature of the work; the differences in the work undertaken across the different laboratories; and the sources of frustration members' experience. And she took an active interest in understanding how the looming crisis in public pathology has come about, and the how it might be addressed.

It was an awesome opportunity to show case the amazing work our members do and the environments in which they work. It was also an awesome opportunity to speak about workforce issues, exploding workloads and the extent and reliance on unpaid work. And we never pass up an opportunity to point out the importance of the work of medical scientists to the world-class healthcare Victorians currently enjoy.

The Union is always proud of our members and the important role they play in delivering world-class healthcare in Victoria. And we'll never shy away from providing opportunities to Members of Parliament to see our members at work and to hear from them.

We want to thank Maria Bisignano, our Job Rep at RMH, for helping us organise the tour and we want to thank the senior scientists and the Hospital's executive for ensuring Ms Sandell's visit went ahead.

People's Climate March – Melbourne

The People's Climate March will be held across Australia on 27-29 November.

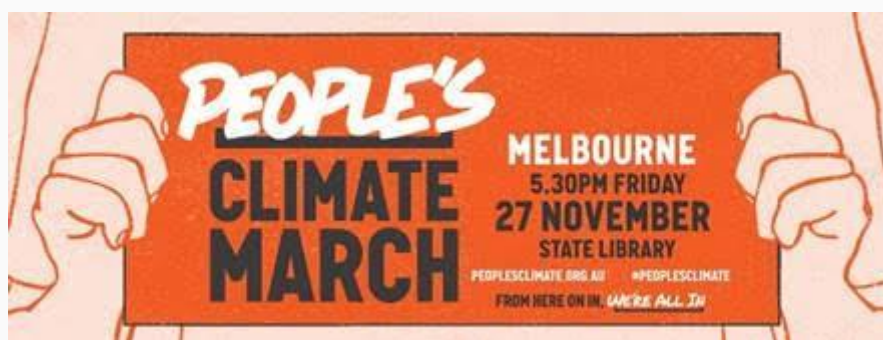
Over that weekend, People's Climate Marches will take place in hundreds of major cities around the world with the goal of creating a massive mobilisation to call for real action on climate change. And it comes at a crucial time when the world's leaders and diplomats are in Paris to negotiate the kind of cuts and assistance required to make deep cuts in our emissions.

The Melbourne march will be at 5.30pm on Friday 27 November.

A coalition of unions, environmental and other organisations is being built to facilitate the march.

Make sure you join the Union's contingent to help send a message to Australian and world leaders that we want and must take urgent action to avoid a global climate catastrophe. It's up to us in the health system that know better than most how climate change will have a serious negative impact on the health and lifestyles of all Australians.

Get more information at: <http://www.peoplesclimate.org.au/>



Poster Competition

Calling all creative types! What does the People's Climate March look like to you?

We need as many people on the streets at the end of November as possible. and your poster

design could encourage thousands more people to join.

Find out more about the competition and enter here:
http://www.peoplesclimate.org.au/poster_competition

Last chance on Pathology Petition

Victorians are starting to get the picture – medical scientists are an essential part of the healthcare system. And it's thanks to the pathology petition we've had running for the last couple of months, which has generated a lot of interest among Members of Parliament and in the broader community.

This is our last chance to get as many signatures as we can to our petition calling on the Andrews Government to end contracting out of pathology services.

It's vital we get as many signatures as possible so the Government cannot ignore our voices.

Make your voice heard! [Download the petition and get your colleagues to sign it.](#)

Get your completed petitions to us by 30 October.

If you've already signed the petition you can keep making a difference by getting your colleagues and co-workers to sign the petition too.



Industry super funds outperform again – All profits to members

The release of the latest SuperRatings data on the performance of Australia's superannuation funds provides further evidence that the Government's proposed changes to not-for-profit super funds and the default scheme are misguided and unnecessary. The latest monthly data highlights a consistent, long term difference in average performance between not-for-profit super funds and the for-profit bank owned super funds.

The Federal Government has flagged its intention to change the way superannuation funds have been selected for millions of Australians over the past three decades. And it is also pushing ahead with planned changes to the structure of superannuation boards. This is something the Union strongly opposes especially when there is shown to be consistent outperformance by the industry super fund sector over the bank-owned super fund sector. This fundamentally embodies the differences between for-profit and not-for-profit governance arrangements.

And according to Industry Super Australia, there is no doubt that the governance of industry super funds is a key driver of their superior outperformance.

It also helps that the sustained outperformance of not-for-profit funds is the product of a member-focused culture and an all-profits-to-member's governance structure.

Regardless of the Government rhetoric around superannuation, it's important to protect and maintain the current default superannuation system which ensures that only high performing super funds can be used as default funds for the majority of members who don't choose a fund.

Get the most out of the Union's website

You might have noticed that the Union has a new website. The new website has a number of special features for members. These features like the Members section and the Forums, require you to have a log-in and password.

But to ensure that your privacy is protected we have created the website in such a way that you will need a separate log-in and password for the Members section and the Forums section. It might seem to be inconvenient but it does better protect you and your private information. It also means that we can be more certain about the source of a hack if such an event is ever to arise.

By the way, don't forget to tell non-members they can join on line – a few clicks on the website and they can be a fully-fledged union member.

Worth Reading: Racism in the workplace. It stops with me

“IT happened in my office. I can't speak up because I cannot afford to lose my job.”

It's a common story. You hear something racist in the workplace and you don't know what to do about it.

In 2011, around one in five Australians said they had experienced race-hate talk. About one in 10 people say they have experienced exclusion in the workplace or social events because of their ethnicity.

You might also experience race discrimination in less obvious ways. For example, research has shown that people with Chinese and Middle Eastern names have to submit over 50% more job applications to receive the same number of responses as Anglo-Australian candidates.”

Read the entire article by Gillian Triggs, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, in Working Life at: <http://workinglife.org.au/2013/06/11/racism-in-the-workplace-it-stops-with-you/>

Worth Reading: From farm to pharmacy: regulating medicinal cannabis in Australia

“The Commonwealth government [announced plans](#) on the weekend to legalise growing cannabis for medicinal and research purposes in Australia.

The news follows the [Victorian government's announcement](#) earlier this month that it will legalise access to medicinal cannabis products for patients with severe symptoms from 2017.

Meanwhile, the New South Wales government [will provide up to \\$A9 million](#) to support cannabis clinical trials.

It also launched the [Terminal Illness Cannabis Scheme](#) to allow people medically certified as terminally ill and their carers to register to use cannabis for therapeutic purposes.

But Australia is a signatory to three international drug control agreements, including the [Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961](#), which limit narcotic drug production, trade and use to medical and scientific purposes.”

Read the entire article by Nola Ries in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/from-farm-to-pharmacy-regulating-medicinal-cannabis-in-australia-49050>

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.

Australian Unions Member Benefits 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 Australian Unions Member Benefits on 1300 362 223.

New Australian Unions Member Benefits app

Over the last month Australian Unions launched some new and exclusive Member Benefits - did you see our recent email telling you about this? If not, check your inbox! Search for "Lifestyle Rewards" for your login code.

Our program has expanded to include:

- Discounted movie tickets for Village, Hoyts, Palace and Event cinemas.
- Discounted electronic gift cards - for JB Hi-Fi, Rebel Sport, Dick Smith, iTunes and My Fun (which includes 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. If you have not got a login and would like join in [register for Member Benefits now](#).



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.

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 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](#)
