



## Stat Report 2015/40

### MYEFO attacks healthcare, targets crucial services

The Medical Scientists Association of Victoria (MSAV) is extremely alarmed that the Turnbull Government is attacking health care to fix the economy.

In particular the Union is very concerned that health care standards for Australians will be significantly damaged by removing bulk-billing incentives for pathology, a clinical service used by General Practitioners for diagnosis and treatment. And by changing the bulk-billing arrangements for diagnostic imaging services and Magnetic Resonance Imaging services, the Turnbull Government is making these vital health services too expensive.

The Union is also very concerned that the proposed slashing of the health workforce programs which will lead to further shortages in critical areas like medical sciences with private pathology companies likely to slash workforce terms and conditions to absorb revenue reductions to maintain current profit levels.

The changes announced by the Turnbull Government illustrates that they have little regard for the future healthcare of Australians. And they demonstrate a lack of understanding given that a great number of visits to a General Practitioner involve getting a pathology test done.

Removing bulk-billing incentives for pathology tests will now make it more expensive for people to get the tests they need done. Healthcare standards will decline leading inevitably to adverse health outcomes for many patients.

And it's very likely that removing bulk-billing incentives from pathology tests, and vital imaging services, will lead to more and more poor and vulnerable people not getting tests done, which could lead to significant health problems.

The Turnbull Government is creating a situation where poor and vulnerable people will no longer be able to afford to access the healthcare they need when they need it.

This decision is not about governing for everyone or improving the lives of all Australians. This is a calculated attack on Australia's universal healthcare system."

Slashing the health workforce programmes will only lead to a situation that exasperates a current growing shortage in critical areas like medical sciences.

Private pathology companies have a history of attacking workforce terms and conditions to protect profits. Dorevitch Pathology, for example, has refused to negotiate wage increases for the scientific workforce for the past 8.5 years. This decision will see pathology companies harden their attitudes to negotiating fair and reasonable conditions.

The Turnbull Government is sacrificing the good health of Australians because they are

incapable of properly managing the Australian budget.

## Public Sector Pay Increase

Last week we mentioned in STAT Report that if you're working in the public sector you might have noticed an increase in your pay packet during November.

If you haven't noticed a fatter pay packet after the 2.5% increase (payable to public sector members) which was due in the first full pay period on or after 1 November 2015 then you need to contact the Union as soon as possible on 9623 9623 or at [enquiry@msav.org.au](mailto:enquiry@msav.org.au)

The 2.5% increase is the final increase under the 2011-2016 enterprise bargaining agreement, which is up for renegotiation in 2016.

## Slashing pathology bulk-billing bad news for hospitals & patients

The Union fears the changes announced by the Turnbull Government will see new unfunded costs for pathology laboratories in public hospitals leading to even greater pressures on pathology services workforces which are already experiencing unprecedentedly high workloads.

Removing bulk-billing incentives for pathology tests will make it more expensive for public hospitals to run pathology laboratories. Successive cuts to healthcare have already seen some public hospitals in Victoria outsource pathology services resulting in significant reductions in quality standards, particularly through increases in turn-around times for pathology tests.

What we fear is that public hospital executives will panic and look at cost-saving options that will compound continually increasing workloads and declining quality standards.

Healthcare standards under the Turnbull Government will ultimately decline and these sorts of attacks demonstrate a complete failure to appreciate innovation in healthcare, making a mockery of the Prime Minister's innovation scheme.

The real losers will be the poor, the elderly and the vulnerable. This is a short sighted gain for what will end up being long term pain.

## Psychologists: If you need help at work you need the VPA Inc.

If you are a psychologist and not in the VPA, you are taking unnecessary risks with your reputation and career. [Download an application form and join today.](#)

Here's a 'real-life' case where the VPA has acted on behalf of VPA members.

*Psychologist 'B', is a neuro-psychologist at a major mental health service. The service had discontinued a specialist treatment programme which left some patients without specialist care. One of these patients asked the psychologist for advice about how to make a complaint against the service. The psychologist provided information about the patient's rights under the Mental Health Act. Subsequently, the employer asserted that by so doing, she had breached professional standards and lodged a complaint against her to AHPRA. The member has been provided with legal representation at AHPRA at no cost to herself as the cost is covered by VPA professional indemnity insurance.*

## Families put last in move to cut Paid Parental Leave

The Turnbull Government's Paid parental Leave will lower family incomes forcing many parents to choose between putting very young babies in childcare, or women - and some men - stepping out of the workforce.

The \$968 million cut will mean a huge strain both financially and emotionally for families struggling to juggle family and work commitments. This will especially hit low and middle income earning families with the average taxable income of Paid Parental Leave recipients at \$47 thousand.

The cuts proposed by the Government reject conventional wisdom about the best outcome for babies and the economic benefit of keeping women in the workforce. The amount of paid time at home will be capped to when the baby is just four months old rather than the four months being a minimum. We understand that women need 26 weeks paid leave plus superannuation in order to care for young babies and support future generations.

Women will be forced to choose between caring for their babies and paying the bills and undoubtedly many will leave the workforce which is not what we want. The Union is dismayed by the move and will not accept any cuts to the minimum Paid Parental Leave entitlements.

The current system is working well and 18 weeks at the minimum wage is a very modest scheme by international standards with 26 weeks being recommended for infant and maternal wellbeing. The Government has taken the easy road of cuts rather than clamping down on superannuation concessions and other tax loopholes that favour high income earners and multi-national companies.

## Know Your Rights this Festive Season

### The Christmas close down period and you

The festive season is almost upon us and our attention has turned to the Christmas close down period.

And as day follows night some employers haven't learned that they cannot 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.

### 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 – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December 2015
- Boxing Day – Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2015 & Monday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2015 is an additional day
- New Year's Day - Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016

#### 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.*

**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.**

## Join the Union

Are your workloads increasing? Are your stress levels increasing? Are you doing longer hours at work? Is your workload increasing?

You're not alone.

Health services are relying on you to do unpaid work to keep many services afloat. In fact without you doing unpaid work many services would be unable to function properly. And the evidence is showing that the amount of unpaid work is increasing along with ever-growing workloads and fewer staff to fill the gaps. Increasing unpaid work and high workloads are having a seriously negative impact on our lives.

And in 2016 we commence negotiations for a new collective agreement with the public sector.

But to protect our professions and stand up for our rights at work we must strengthen our collective voice and strengthen our bargaining position by increasing our membership.

And you can help right now by sharing one of the images below through Facebook.



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[Share on Facebook](#)

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## Union Office closure over the Festive season

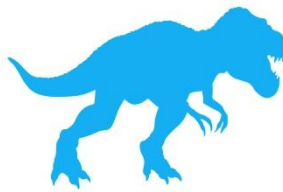
The Union's offices will be **closed from Wednesday 23 December and reopens on Tuesday 5 January**. Over this time there will be no-one available to deal with standard industrial matters or respond to queries.

*For urgent matters only call 0418 543 682 during office hours only.*



**Allied Health Professionals say...**

**Stop the delays  
BARGAIN NOW!**



**RALLY  
RALLY  
RALLY**



**Date:** Tuesday 22 December 2015

**Time:** 12:30 - 1:30pm

**Location:** Treasury Building, 1 Treasury Place Melbourne

**Wear your Code Blue T-shirt!**

**Your Wages & Conditions Your Agreement Your Campaign!**

**VAHPA  
YOUR UNION**

Join today.

[www.vahpa.asn.au](http://www.vahpa.asn.au) or call 1300 322 917

Authorised by: Craig McGregor VAHPA Secretary



**VICTORIAN  
ALLIED HEALTH  
PROFESSIONALS  
ASSOCIATION**

## Worth Reading: How the 'fair go' became the last bulwark for Australia's freedoms

"Australian governments have, over the last few years, passed laws that explicitly, or in their effect, breach fundamental human rights.



Not only have our parliaments failed to exercise their traditional restraint to protect common law freedoms and liberties, they've also allowed the executive government to expand its discretionary powers and, increasingly, excluded the courts and judges from exercising judicial scrutiny or control.

Parliaments all too often ignore the separation of powers doctrine. The government's uncontested assessment of national interest and security often trumps the rule of domestic and international law, as well as Australia's obligations under human rights treaties."

Read the entire article by Gillian Triggs in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/how-the-fair-go-became-the-last-bulwark-for-australias-freedoms-49743>

## Worth Reading: Australia's innovation agenda: embracing risk or gambling with public health?

"The just-released Innovation Statement aims to be a catalyst for a cultural shift "where we embrace risk" in the name of innovation.

Turnbull's stated aim of an "agile" society brings to mind a trapeze artist. But while all eyes are fixed on the acrobat soaring at death-defying heights, the safety net lies below, ensuring no one breaks their neck.

To realise the promise of innovation, we need to equally embrace the need for comprehensive and adept measures to assess and manage the risks of industry-researcher collaboration."

Read the entire article by Quinn Grundy in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/australias-innovation-agenda-embracing-risk-or-gambling-with-public-health-52003>

## 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](#)

## Get the most out of the Union's website

The Union's 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.

## 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



## 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.

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](#).

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