



Stat Report 2016/20

What now for Australian health care?

After a marathon election campaign and a couple of weeks of counting we now know the Turnbull Government has been returned but by the slimmest of majorities, eroding any claim to have a 'mandate' to implement their agenda.

But now we must start considering what the new agenda for Turnbull Government will be for healthcare. It was certainly an interesting election campaign as the Turnbull Government attempted to claim they weren't attacking Medicare or the very foundations of our universal healthcare system. We saw how the ALP's Medicare campaign had an impact during the election campaign with immediate promises from Turnbull that they weren't going to privatise Medicare.

Unfortunately we must be vigilant with Turnbull reiterating that their plan for Australia is the one outlined in this year's federal Budget, handed down in May – it feels like a long time ago now. But that plan would mean the GP rebate freeze will stay as will the removal of bulk-billing incentives for pathology and diagnostic imaging tests.

Despite the so-called promise to not privatise Medicare, the Turnbull Government is making sure that it continues to defund health care and pushes the financial burden on to Australians.

We're concerned that Australia's universal healthcare system will continue to be attacked by the Turnbull Government. This is on top of the continuing push to privatise more and more clinical services within public hospitals; the continued assault on science and the scientific workforce at the Australian Red Cross Blood Service; funding cuts to public and community health; and the increasing cost of prescriptions and vital medicines.

Australia's health system is very affordable but as the population continues to age, and with more and more funding stripped from healthcare, it will soon start to more resemble the US health care system than Australia's world-class, and world-leading universal healthcare system.

It's up to each of us to continue to fight for our universal healthcare system where you get the medical help you need when you need it, not if you have enough money.

Have Public Pathology Services Become Another Commodity for Sale?

St John of God Healthcare (SJOG) announced in July that it had entered into a sale agreement with Australian Clinical Labs for the sale of its Victorian and Western Australian pathology service operation.

The bulk of SJOG's operations in Victoria comprise operating public sector pathology laboratories under contract arrangements. These contracts are with various public health services, including Barwon Health, Victoria's largest public health service outside of metropolitan Melbourne.

The sale of SJOG's pathology operation to Clinical Labs is fundamentally about the 'sale' of all of SJOG's public pathology contracts to Clinical Labs, which will take over all of SJOG's pathology contracts, without any say by the public health services that have engaged SJOG to provide pathology services for their hospitals.

One day SJOG are providing public pathology services to Barwon Health; the next day they are replaced by Clinical Labs, a change that the Health Service has had absolutely no say in. Bear in mind that pathology is a vital clinical service in any public health service.

Also bear in mind that the pathology work in a public health service, including pathology work that is performed under a contract arrangement with a private pathology provider, is public health sector work. The fact of contracts changing ownership under this 'sale' arrangement results in public sector pathology services effectively becoming a commodity that has been traded between commercial entities seemingly outside the control of the owner of the pathology service, the public health service.

Of equal concern for the Union is that the sale deal includes agreement that jobs will be cut across the pathology services. The Union was informed by SJOG management that the number of jobs would be between 100 – 200.

Obviously it is not just pathology service contracts that have been commodified by commercial interests. This sale arrangement has reduced public sector jobs to a commodity that have also been part of the trading between SJOG and Clinical Labs.

And there is doubt as to whether there automatically exists a formal contract between Barwon Health and Clinical Labs.

The Union has put a strong position to both the State Government and Barwon Health that our pathology services and public sector jobs must be protected from private interests who now regard these as a commodity to be traded in commercial 'deals'.

Save the Date: VPA Inc. PD – 14 September



**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

14 SEPTEMBER

SAVE THE DATE

More information about the PD session will be included in future editions of STAT Report but in the meantime save the date – 14 September.

Public Health Sector: Feedback on claims for a new agreement in 2016

Negotiations for a new agreement in 2016 are about to start. But before negotiations commence we want to make sure that our draft claims best represent the key issues for you, our members.

Right now our key draft claims include:

- Wages
- Career progression
- Workload and staffing levels
- Leave relief
- Annual leave standards

Download the draft claims at: <http://msav.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2016-Public-Sector-Log-of-Claims-Web.pdf>

We believe this draft log represents the kind of claims members want and are based on our survey of public health sector members and members' meetings. What members want was expressed very clearly in the survey results.

And because these claims are still a draft we want your feedback. Your feedback now means we can strengthen our claims ahead of negotiations commencing. Please send your feedback to enquiry@msav.org.au

If you would like a meeting to discuss the draft claims in your workplace please contact us to make arrangements on (03) 9623 9623.

Growing the Union

More members means a stronger collective voice for enterprise bargaining.

With bargaining for a new public sector agreement to begin very soon, it is vital that the Union continues to grow its membership.

It will be the support of our membership that ensures we can achieve a great deal in 2016. But unless we are able to grow our membership we may be limited in how great the deal is and how long it may take to secure a great deal.

By increasing our membership now we are able to take a more powerful position during bargaining. Membership growth means that we have a stronger collective voice when arguing for our claims. And by increasing our membership it also means that public sector employers are less likely to attempt to offer members second-rate agreements which aren't supported by the Union.

If each member recruits 2 members each, we will be in an even stronger position to pursue claims for pay increases and improved benefits.

Your support in membership growth is pivotal. The experience of the trade union movement is that it is people like you, our members, who are the most effective recruiters of new union members. And there's no secret to success – all it takes is for you to ask your colleagues to join.

If you would like a meeting to discuss membership and enterprise agreement bargaining in your workplace please contact us to make arrangements on (03) 9623 9623.

Victorian OHS Regulations Review

How well is WorkSafe working for you? Have your say on WorkSafe.

The government is reviewing WorkSafe and it needs to hear from Health and Safety

Representatives (HSRs) and union members about your experiences. To ensure that you are heard, the union movement has created an online Submission Portal so you can review WorkSafe's performance.

Submit a review of WorkSafe here: http://www.weareohs.org.au/worksafe_review

We know that active HSRs, union members and strong unions are the key to safe workplaces. But, we also need a tough WorkSafe inspectorate prepared to enforce the law. It's vital that WorkSafe supports HSRs and our members. Has that been your experience of WorkSafe? Have your say now: http://www.weareohs.org.au/worksafe_review

First State Super responds to Union call to divest from fossil fuel

You won't be surprised that the Union strongly believes that climate change is union business. As healthcare professionals we know the impact that climate change will have on our health with increasing extreme weather events. And we know that we have to stop investing in fossil fuels if we want to stop the worst impacts of climate change.

And that's why the Union, in support of the Healthy Futures campaign, wrote to First State Super calling on them to divest from fossil fuels and to put more investment into renewable and alternative energy sources. The response the Union received from First State Super was very positive.

First State Super informed the Union that it believes that climate change presents significant risks to asset owners, including having policy changes in place for a transition to a low-carbon global economy. First State Super also identified that their approach to climate change is about ensuring best-practice risk management and building greater resilience to climatic, technological and policy events; including using their influence to positively impact decisions made by companies and other investors around climate change.

First State Super also outlined the fund aspires to reduce greenhouse gas emissions attributable to their portfolio holdings by 50% or more. And they noted the work they're doing in other areas like undertaking a major study of the carbon footprint of their equities portfolio.

While it could be argued that every superannuation fund in Australia can be doing more about climate change and utilising their investment power to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, First State Super has been proactive in considering its investment mix to limit investment in polluting sources of energy.

You can read First State Super's Climate Change Position Statement at: www.firststatesuper.com.au/Investments/ResponsibleInvestment

Mental Health in Australia - Where we are, how we got here, and where we need to go

"Mental health reform remains in a tenuous state in Australia. Reforms like the National Disability Insurance Scheme; Primary Health Networks; Health Care Home; and, the Digital Gateway for mental health all have the potential to transform support for people who experience mental illness.

But if mental health reform is to be understood, we must also understand the factors that contribute to that reform."

Join Mr Frank Quinlan, CEO of Mental Health Australia as he addresses the 17th International Mental Health Conference, being held in just 4 weeks' time on the Gold Coast.

Frank will join a line-up of exceptional keynote speakers plus over 75 session speakers as they address the issues confronting those that work in and those that live with mental health in Australia and abroad.

This is your chance to have your voice heard and discuss issues with leaders in the field.

For more information or to view the Conference Program, please visit the website.

Registration is available online at: <http://anzmh.asn.au/conference/registration/>

Protect Health through Climate Action

The health of people in Australia and around the world is being adversely affected by climate change. However unlike many nations, Australia has no national strategy to respond to this serious risk.

Individuals, families and communities are at risk of health impacts from heatwaves, extreme weather, and changing patterns of disease associated with global warming. A national approach is needed to ensure the community and health professionals are ready to respond to these risks.

Australia's response to climate change must address the urgent need for emissions reductions to reduce risks to health, as well as take advantage of the opportunities to improve health through low carbon strategies, including clean renewable energy and transport systems.

There are many benefits to health, as well as environmental and economic benefits, from cutting emissions.

It's time Australia had a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being.

Please support this call by sending a letter to your representatives in the federal parliament. Ask them to commit to the development of a national strategy on climate and health.

[Send an email to your local MP and Senators now!](#)

Support the Healthy Futures campaign



The Union strongly believes that climate change is union business. We know that climate change threatens our health by increasing the risks of heatwaves, bushfires, droughts and storms, displacing people and straining our health systems.

And right now HESTA and First State Super (FSS), Australia's biggest health industry super funds, are investing our money in fossil fuels - coal, oil and gas.

Join us in asking HESTA and FSS to divest from fossil fuels at www.healthyfutures.net.au/divest.

Worth Reading: Gutting Science: Malcolm Turnbull Has The Power To Reverse The Cuts And Stop The Exodus

“Despite his bruising election experience, it appears that the Prime Minister has still not heard the message that buzzwords and a wide smile are no substitute for real innovation policy.

‘Disruption’ may sound exciting when you have more money in the bank than you could possibly spend in a lifetime, but most Australians rightly greet it with caution, with one eye on the security of their jobs and the working future of their children.

Yet Malcolm Turnbull has declared business as usual, intending to submit his damaging budget and regressive program to the Parliament without revision. If he found the old Senate inconvenient, when it acted to defend the jobs and prospects of millions of Australians, he is going to find the new configuration even less receptive to a battering ram approach.”

Read the entire article by Senator Kim Carr in the New Matilda at: <https://newmatilda.com/2016/07/28/gutting-science-malcolm-turnbull-power-reverse-cuts-stop-exodus/>

Worth Reading: Climate policy needs a new lens: health and well-being

“As the new Australian parliament takes the reins, health groups are moving to ensure that health minister Sussan Ley addresses a major health threat in this term of government: climate change.

Largely ignored by successive federal governments, the health risks from climate change are increasingly urgent. One or two degrees of warming at a global level may not sound like much, but if you take many organisms (including humans) too far outside their comfort zone, the [consequences are deadly](#).

The [Climate and Health Alliance](#) – a coalition of concerned health groups, researchers, academics and professional associations – is calling on the Australian government to develop a national strategy for climate, health and well-being.”

Read the entire article by Fiona Armstrong and Peter C. Doherty in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/climate-policy-needs-a-new-lens-health-and-well-being-62482>

Worth Reading: Giving high power bills the cold shoulder

“You’re happily wearing tracky dacks, your Ugg boots aren’t leaving your feet, and the heater is cranking – the cold has hit Australia, and getting out of the bed in the morning is that much harder.

It’s not quite Antarctica, but Australia can still get rather chilly. As you try and keep warm and toasty, your energy demand tends to increase and this can have a hefty impact on your electricity bills. We’ve rounded up some handy hints to make sure you can still warm your cockles without compromising on energy efficiency – your wallet will thank you too.”

Read the entire article by Natalie Kikken at the CSIRO Blog at: <https://blog.csiro.au/giving-high-power-bills-cold-shoulder/>

Join the Union

Are your workloads increasing? Are your stress levels increasing? Are you doing longer hours at work? Join the Union for work pain relief!

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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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.

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 including 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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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).

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