



Stat Report 2017/22

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Yes Minister or Hollowmen – you choose

We have been reporting for too long now that the new public sector enterprise agreement is delayed by the Government's final approval process.

The Union has been relentless in pursuing anyone and everyone in Government we can to have that process completed as soon as possible so that members can receive wage increases, back pay and the other benefits that are in the new agreement. This is a task that has very few rewards, and is more likely to make those involved want to take a long walk off a short jetty!

The latest development that gives us no pleasure to report is that the Government's final approval is no nearer being granted. A committee meeting which has the job of approving our enterprise agreement has by all accounts again been cancelled and no one can tell the Union when it will meet again.

A reminder of some pertinent facts (which are likely to get your blood boiling): in principle agreement was reached in February 2016 (6 months ago) and the final draft agreement was completed in May (3 months ago). Also, we have been advised the Ministers of Health and Industrial relations months ago gave the agreement preliminary approval.

How about this additional perverse fact: the Government's final approval process will take longer than the time spent negotiating over 120 claims and redrafting a 200 page document.

So, we are now facing further delay because some bureaucrats and Ministers aren't able to organise a meeting to get together to approve the agreement, which would take all of 5 minutes given that all of the work has already been done.

The Government's dysfunction forces the Union to now seriously consider making application to the Fair Work Commission to take industrial action – not over our claims or wage increases because these are agreed, but to force the Government to finalise a bureaucratic step that should have been completed at least 5 months ago.

Hospital services disrupted by industrial action because this Government is incapable of finalising a straight forward approval process; we understood this is the exact opposite of what Daniel Andrews promised when he came to office.

Dorevitch Industrial Action

As reported last week HWU members employed by Dorevitch Pathology will commence industrial action next week. The first action involves a 24 hour stoppage of work from midday on Monday 7 August.

The industrial action will impact across all of Dorevitch's operations, including public hospitals where there are contracted pathology services.

Of course your Union supports HWU members in taking this action to win a wage increase, which would be the first in over 10 years. However, Dorevitch is an unconscionable employer which is unlikely to respond rationally or sensibly to the HWU's actions.

We have cautioned the Government to safeguard against any attempt to transfer any Dorevitch work into any other public sector laboratories during this strike. We advise MSAV members to contact us immediately they become aware of any attempt to do this.

Change the Rules: Contracting out pathology in Victoria

The mistake that is contracting out of vital pathology services in regional and rural Victoria is coming home to roost for the Victorian government as private pathology providers are downgrading and closing laboratories in public hospitals across regional and rural Victoria putting patient safety at risk.

Across regional and rural Victoria public hospitals are experiencing shrinking capacity to deliver their full range of clinical services as private pathology providers downgrade and close pathology laboratories. Over 80 per cent of diagnoses in public hospitals come from a pathology test of one kind or another which makes turn-around times for the results crucial to ensuring treatments can start as soon as possible. A fully functioning pathology laboratory is as important to maintaining a hospital's key clinical services as an ambulance is to maintaining accident and emergency department services.

In some health services we are currently witnessing a rapid decline in quality and patient safety standards as private pathology providers make very significant cuts to services based on commercial interests.

We're getting a grim picture of how much private pathology providers are dictating public health standards by moving work out of regional and rural areas and centralising it in Melbourne. We're witnessing this happening across regional and rural Victoria in places like Kyneton, Latrobe Valley, Geelong, Mildura, Alexandra, Warrnambool, Bendigo, Cohuna, Kerang and Kyabram.

The very worrying trend is that health service Executives and Boards are not lifting a finger to stop private providers implementing changes that are contrary to patient safety and clinical standards. Instead of better healthcare, we get in pathology services closures of microbiology and other specialist services, redundancies of senior scientists, escalating workloads and widespread dysfunction in laboratories.

And with the ongoing job losses it means there are fewer scientists working in our healthcare system. It also has very real impacts on local communities as more jobs are lost in regional and rural Victoria, taking away the ability for highly trained and qualified scientists to remain in local communities.

There is also a flow impact of diminishing economic activity as people who were employed in good, well-paid positions either seek to cut their household expenditure or leave the local area to pursue employment opportunities in other parts of the state, or leave to go interstate or overseas. Once these roles are lost, it is highly unlikely they will be reinstated and makes retaining high paying, quality jobs in regional and rural Victoria much more difficult, leading to a further brain

drain.

Cutting pathology services and laboratories in regional and rural Victoria also impacts on other local care services like aged care facilities and local GP services which rely on local pathology services to deliver quick and timely turn-around times for tests.

The Medical Scientists Association of Victoria has long been reporting that quality standards in pathology have been declining. Unfortunately, we are now witnessing a more rapid decline in turn-around times, to the point that in health services like Bendigo Health, doctors have publicly expressed concerns that patient safety is being seriously compromised.

Safer Care Victoria is currently investigating the actual impact of the closure of the microbiology laboratory on Bendigo Health's full range of clinical services.

The dangers of making scientists work longer hours, across disciplines without adequate competencies and undertaking more work are obvious. As the scientific workforce is made smaller and the amount of work grows, there comes a point at which either quality standards suffer or the workforce suffers, or more likely both.

This is serious business; without medical scientists there is no clinical diagnosis and no treatment. Likewise, delayed turn-around times means delayed diagnosis and delayed treatment. Each scenario has dire consequences for patient safety. But many public health services seem to be willingly ignorant to the consequences of delays in getting test results as the business decisions of private pathology providers are excused and patients are told that services won't be affected. Yet it's a complete furphy to tell patients that services won't be affected when it is clear that closing and downgrading laboratories and shifting work to Melbourne increases in turn-around times, which has a direct impact on the quality of healthcare given.

Worryingly, the MSAV has recently discovered that at two major regional public hospitals have failed to monitor clinical quality standards in contracted pathology services, despite the fact that the respective contracts have prescribed standards and contract monitoring and enforcement provisions. In both cases this significant governance failure has been occurring for many years, and in one case the hospital's pathology service was critically reviewed by the Victorian Coroner after an avoidable death.

There is no place in public health for private equity firms to effectively determine levels of clinical quality and patient safety by cutting scientific staff and downgrading services. If a pathology laboratory is essential to being able to deliver safe, high quality clinical services to patients this week, how can the same services be delivered safely the next week with no or reduced pathology? The government needs to resolve this critical question.

Unfortunately the business decisions of private pathology providers are dictating the safety of patients and the quality and range of care delivered at public hospitals. There is every chance that, without a pathology laboratory, local patients will now have to travel large distances to receive medical treatment currently delivered in their local public hospital.

These sorts of decisions by private pathology providers means that local public hospitals in regional and rural Victoria may not be able to safely perform many clinical services, for example obstetrics and general surgery, without medical scientists in a fully functioning pathology laboratory in the hospital. It also means that local public hospitals could be left without an onsite blood bank meaning the hospital's full range of acute care services are unlikely to continue or at the very least will be severely impacted.

Decisions to cut and downgrade pathology services will lead to patients being required to travel long distances in order to access the basic healthcare services they need. It doesn't bode well for the prospects of large regional centres like Bendigo, Traralgon and Geelong when local patients may be forced to travel to Melbourne on a regular basis for treatment that can no longer be delivered in their local hospital because of cuts to pathology.,

The Medical Scientists Association of Victoria has strongly advocated for the end to contracting out of crucial clinical services like pathology laboratories. For the health system to be world class there needs to be access to a full range of pathology laboratories on-site which means there has

be an end to contracting out of pathology services. Unless health services in Victoria start enforcing contractual obligations required of private pathology services, the only reasonable course of action for the government to take is to stop the now obviously broken model of contracting out the services.

It's also becoming evident that the state establish an independent body to be responsible for pathology clinical and quality standards oversight to ensure that public hospitals have consistent minimum standard for pathology services. Such a body would complement the work done by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) and safeguard against cuts or closure of other clinical services because a private provider has decided to close or downgrade a lab.

It should go without saying, but it's well past time that governments at state and federal levels and of all persuasions need to stop cutting funding from healthcare and truly invest in the system to ensure that every public hospital has the full range of pathology laboratories operating on-site.

Victorians should be able to expect access to world-class healthcare when they need it regardless of where they live. We should not have delays in test results being returned or delays in or compromised treatments because entrepreneurial pathology companies close pathology to turn a larger profit.

Medicine Shortages and Workloads

The Society for Hospital Pharmacists Australia [released a report in June on medicine shortages](#) in Australian hospitals. According to the report, the most commonly reported shortages of medicines included antimicrobials and anaesthetics/analgesia.

But the report also highlighted the troubling increase in workloads that medicine shortages create. Managing medicine shortages creates additional workloads as individual pharmacy departments across the country work to secure medicines they need, which in turn creates a destabilising workplace environment while pharmacists work to improve clinical collaboration and patient care.

It's important to know how your management responds to workload increases due to shortages in medicines and whether your management ensures additional staff are brought in to help cope with increased workloads. Are medicines shortages creating additional work for you? If so let the Union know on 9623 9624 or at enquiry@msav.org.au

Our Climate, Our Health

Health professionals launched the Our Climate, Our Health campaign in Parliament House in June. Like you, the Union knows that climate change union business and that's why we're part of the Our Climate, Our Health campaign.

As part of the launch of the campaign, health professionals from around Australia asked Labor, Liberals, and Greens to support the Framework for a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-Being and take action on an issue that is already affecting millions of people in Australia and worldwide.

It's thanks to your support and advocacy that the Greens and Labor have committed to implement a Climate, Health and Well-Being policy.

This is a huge step toward addressing the devastating effects of climate change on health that we are already witnessing, such as thunderstorm asthma, worsening heatwaves, and more extreme weather events.

But there is still plenty of work to be done.

The Federal Government is still failing to take action on climate health, and most Liberal MPs don't believe the science behind climate change.

The only thing that is going to push this government to action is an army of health professionals and members of the community speaking up. With your help, we can reach every member of

Parliament and tell them we want them to act now to protect our health from climate change.

Will you join? Visit <http://www.ourclimate-ourhealth.org.au/>

SHPA Medicines Management Conference 2017

The Society for Hospital Pharmacists Australia (SHPA) is holding its Medicines Management Conference in November at the International Convention Centre in Sydney.

It is a landmark event on the pharmacy calendar and will feature three leading national and international speakers, including:

- Emeritus Professor Kim Oates from The University of Sydney and Director of Undergraduate Quality and Safety Education at the Clinical Excellence Commission will focus on patient safety.
- Professor Zubin Austin, Academic Director, Centre for Practice Excellence at the University of Toronto will explore the essentials of cultural competency in pharmacy practice.
- Futurist Michael McQueen will help delegates guide their thinking into the near and not-so-near future with his presentation “Decoding the next generation”.

The Conference will be held over 16-19 November. More details and registration can be found at: <http://mm2017shpa.com/>

VPA: Professional Development Seminar

The next VPA Inc. Professional Development Seminar will be held on 13 September. The theme for the Seminar will be Anger Management with the main speaker being Dr Tony McHugh.

More details will be announced as soon as possible but in the meantime make sure you save the date – 13 September – for the next VPA Professional Development Seminar.



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.](#)

Common beaches of employment entitlements and negotiation of enterprise agreements

The VPA routinely assists members over issues such as harassment and bullying, under classification, organisational re-structuring, incorrect calculation of leave entitlements and health and safety. In addition, it negotiates enterprise agreements for psychologists in the public and private sectors to ensure that rates of pay and conditions remain up to date.

Stop the Victorian Government from selling our Land Titles Office

The Victorian Government has announced its intention to privatise Victoria's Land Titles Office. For 155 years, the Land Titles Office has tirelessly scrutinised every survey, mortgage and transaction on Victoria's four million-odd properties, perfecting this priceless public asset. This decision must be reversed.

The CPSU have a petition on Megaphone, calling on Daniel Andrews to reverse this decision.

Please sign and share the petition with your friends and family and stop the privatisation of public

services.

<https://www.megaphone.org.au/petitions/stop-the-victorian-government-from-selling-our-land-titles-office>

Support Family Violence Leave for all workers

Survivors have suffered for too long behind closed doors. We all have a part to play in ending violence: it's time that employers played theirs. Tell employers that everyone has the right to paid days away from work if they are subjected to family violence.

Make your voice heard: <http://bit.ly/FDVLeave>

Stopping Gendered Violence at Work

Far too often women are attacked, harassed and threatened in their workplaces. And it needs to stop. That's why the Union is fighting back against gendered violence in the workplace – it's a very serious occupational health and safety issue.

Gendered violence is like a disease in our workplaces. Working women's experience of violence at work indicates that the problem of gendered violence is endemic in our workplaces.

Sign up to support the campaign at: <http://www.unionwomen.org.au/stopgv>

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.

Do you need access to Domestic Violence services?

If you're experiencing domestic violence and need help, here is a list of Victorian services which may be able to assist you.

[Safe Steps \(formerly Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria\)](#)

[Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria \(FVPLS\)](#)

[Centre Against Sexual Assault \(CASA\) Forum](#)

[Community Legal Centres](#)

[Court Network](#)

[Domestic Violence Victoria](#)

[Elder Rights Advocacy \(ERA\)](#)

[Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service](#)

[inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence](#)

[Men's Referral Service](#)

[No To Violence](#)

[QLife Australia](#)

[Seniors Rights Victoria \(SRV\)](#)
[The Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence](#)
[Victoria Legal Aid \(VLA\)](#)
[Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency](#)
[Women with Disabilities Victoria \(WDV\)](#)
[Women's Housing Ltd](#)
[Women's Information Referral Exchange \(WIRE\)](#)
[Women's Legal Service](#)
[Women's refuges](#)

Worth Reading: Why the Great Strike of 1917 still matters today

"Next week will mark 100 years since The Great Strike of 1917, when 100,000 workers around Australia walked off the job to protest changing workplace conditions.

The source of consternation was the introduction of time cards, designed to monitor worker productivity. The time cards were seen as an unreasonable step to monitor workers.

As part of the new workplace systems, foremen began watching over labourers, counting the time it took them to do certain tasks.

The strikers called it "Americanising work" or "Robotism". The managers, "scientific management".

Workers believed the new system was turning them into machines, de-skilling them and destroying their collective bonds."

Read the entire article by Stan Correy in the ABC at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-28/100-years-on-the-great-strike-of-1917/8748132>

Worth Reading: High-tech, low growth

"Every other day the web page of the world's number one search engine features a cute cartoon to celebrate something like World Chocolate Day or the woman who invented potato flour; occasionally it's even animated. It's designed to make Google look like a happy kingdom of approachable hipsters, rather than a company with — how should I put this? — a mixed reputation among consumers and competitors.

Back in January 2012, the US film and music industry promoted a bill before Congress called the Stop Online Piracy Act, or SOPA. It was designed to crack down on search engines like Google that link to sites that host or facilitate the trading of pirated content. What could be wrong with protecting the intellectual property of hardworking songwriters, musicians and film-makers, you might ask? Well, plenty, according to Google, which makes lots of money by redirecting consumers to pirate sites."

Read the entire article by Brett Evans in the Inside Story at: <http://insidestory.org.au/high-tech-low-growth>

Worth Reading: The link between chronic pain and depression: which comes first?

"It's easy to imagine that people with persistent pain have cause to become depressed. After all, it's a problem that affects every part of life, not just the bit that got injured.

But like so much to do with persistent pain, it becomes harder to unravel exactly what the relationship is when one [digs a little further](#). For instance, it has been [repeatedly shown](#) that

people with increased emotional distress going in to surgery use more painkillers and generally fare worse afterwards.

On the other hand, we have also known for a long time that unexplained pain is [one of the common features](#) of diagnosable depressive illness."

Read the entire article by Michael Vagg in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/the-link-between-chronic-pain-and-depression-which-comes-first-58415>

Worth Reading: Power, in black and white

"I have formed the view that I have too much power." They're not the most natural of words to fall from a politician's lips, but that's what Labor immigration minister Chris Evans told Senate estimates in February 2008.

He was referring to the unique powers embedded in the prickly portfolio he'd recently been given. "I think the [Immigration and Citizenship] Act is unlike any other act I have seen in terms of the power given to the minister to make decisions about individual cases," he continued. "I am uncomfortable with that, not just because of concern about playing God, but also because of the lack of transparency and accountability for those decisions and the lack in some cases of any appeal rights against those decisions."

Fast forward almost a decade and that same portfolio is presided over by a man who, safe to say, is less uncomfortable with the weight of such power. Peter Dutton has not only embraced the position of immigration minister with gusto, he'll soon have unprecedented power as head of a new "super ministry" that Malcolm Turnbull has dubbed the most significant reform of Australia's national intelligence and domestic security arrangements in decades.

Read the entire article by Sophie Black in Inside Story at: <http://insidestory.org.au/power-in-black-and-white/>

Worth Reading: Damning evidence of wealth disparity highlights inequality across generations

"The latest report of the [Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia \(Hilda\) survey](#), released today by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, shows that the real income of households is now lower than it was in 2009. And while the measure of income inequality appears stable, the report finds that [housing ownership has drastically declined for people under the age of 40](#) as the economic disparity between those who own homes and those who don't continues to widen.

Given the political focus from Bill Shorten on inequality, the release of the annual Hilda survey, which has been tracking the social and economic situation of Australian households since 2001, was always going to be used as ammunition by either side.

The good news from the Hilda report is that income inequality does not seem to be getting worse."

Read the entire article by Greg Jericho in The Guardian at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/grogonomics/2017/aug/02/damning-evidence-of-wealth-disparity-highlights-inequality-across-generations>

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!

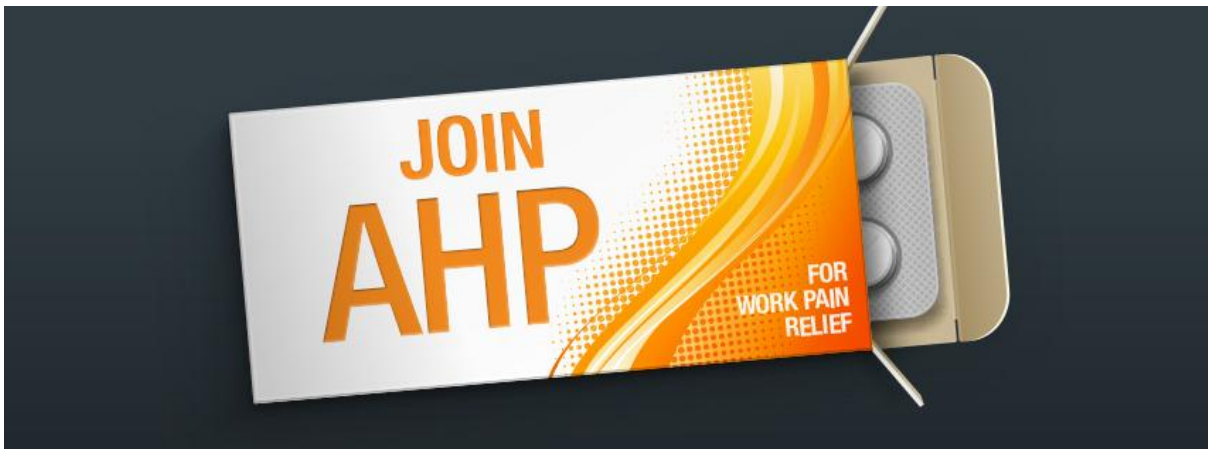
To protect our professions and stand up for our rights at work we must strengthen our collective voice and strengthen our bargaining position by increasing our membership. And you can help right now by sharing one of the images below through Facebook.



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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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