



Stat Report 2019/35

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2019: Attacks on members and unions

2019 has certainly been a big year. There has been a lot of things happening.

This year the Union reached agreements with the Community Health Sector, Dorevitch Pathology, Ballarat IVF and Relationships Australia.

Having a new enterprise agreement with Dorevitch Pathology has been a major achievement given the company's belligerent refusal to negotiate with members and the union in good faith for the past decade. This has been a particularly pleasing outcome and it's due to the willingness of members to continue fighting for an agreement and to get management back to the bargaining table.

In the new year the Union will be bargaining for a new agreement at the Red Cross Blood Service while trying to finalise agreements with Melbourne IVF, Clinical Labs and Melbourne Pathology.

The Union has been working with the state government on addressing a range of under-staffing and workload issues. It remains a major disappointment to us that the state government, despite all the evidence, continues to allow public hospitals to maintain private pathology contracts that are clearly unsustainable and have now resulted in services being downgraded. In a few cases, we have seen that hospitals have had to cut previously offered clinical services because there is now no on-site pathology service.

It is particularly disturbing that the Health Department, Health Minister and public hospitals are blatantly ignoring research that illustrates unequivocally that there are severe shortages of medical scientists and that the situation is getting worse.

In addressing the clear shortage of staff across our disciplines, the Union has been working on the pharmacist leave relief bank while also working to increase the psychologist workforce. Last year the state government announced there would be additional funding specifically for the recruitment of more psychologists into Victoria's mental health system. To this end, the Union continues to work with the government and stakeholders to ensure that our mental health system is properly staffed because we know there still aren't enough psychologists for the rapidly increasing demand for better mental health.

As we've worked through the new provisions of the public sector agreement it has highlighted a chronic problem for public health managers, by and large, that they have lost the capacity to effectively address workforce management as a key responsibility. We continue to receive reports that staff are not replaced when they go on leave, work isn't prioritised when staff are on sick leave and management refuses to step up to argue with DHHS for more staff. Instead they keep trying to make staff do more work which is having a significant impact on the general and mental health and well-being of members.

The Union remains unapologetic about our backfill and staffing level campaigns given the very real need for all health services to employ more staff to deal with the ever-growing workloads.

We have been working with other health unions on a range of issues that are of common interest like addressing shortages in staff; gaining greater recognition for the work our members do and tackling gendered violence in the workplace to name a few. The Union will continue to develop our working relationships with the other unions in the health system because we know that to achieve some big things, we will be much more effective if we work together. It's absolutely vital that we continue to highlight the vital work you do and make sure there is greater recognition of the contribution you make to the world-class health care Victorians enjoy. It was working together with VAHPA that enabled us to defeat Monash Health's terrible plan to introduce finger print scanning to 'log in' at work.

Unfortunately, our work for 2019 isn't quite finished yet.

Scott Morrison has put his anti-worker, union busting bill back on the agenda and using Christmas in the hope it provides political cover to his government and the Senators who say they're prepared to consider the changes. There is nothing in the amendments that make the bill better, and it remains a piece of legislation that is designed to silence working people. It would make it harder for all workers to win pay rises and protect their jobs and ensure workplaces are safe. It is designed to make it easier for governments and businesses to attack unions; giving bosses a say in who leads unions and who will represent members.

Senators will have the opportunity to again either stand up for your rights or deny them. Help us defeat Morrison's union busting bill again. [Sign the petition](#) and then share it with your friends, family and colleagues. We won't forget the Senators that vote to take our rights away.

But as we look to 2020, we know there are still some big challenges we face. Chief among them is the need to address chronically high workloads through increased workforces across all of our disciplines. If we continue to fail to address the critical understaffing across all of our disciplines, members will experience higher levels of work stress, manifested in exhaustion, burnout and other injuries; and leading to people seeking to leave the health sector sooner or enter retirement sooner.

The Union will continue to work with Victorian Trades Hall Council and the Australian Council of Trade Unions on big, society-wide issues like the very real problem of gendered violence at work; addressing wage theft; creating more secure jobs and changing the rules for working Australians.

2020 is shaping up to be another huge year for the Union and we look forward to continue working with you to achieve real and genuine change on the full range of workforce issues that impact on you.

Paul Elliott
Secretary

Holiday Close Down Period

The Union will close for summer holidays on 23 December 2019 and reopen on 6 January 2020. However, if you're facing disciplinary action or you've been sacked please contact the Office on 0418 543 682.

We want to take this opportunity to thank each and every member for their support. We also want to thank you for your work and keeping Victorians healthy; without you our healthcare would suffer!

All other queries will be dealt with upon returning to work on 6 January 2020.



Joint Statement: The air pollution in NSW is a public health emergency

The Union along with 25 other health and medical groups released a joint statement calling on Prime Minister Scott Morrison and NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian to demonstrate the leadership this public health emergency demands and act to help alleviate the health and climate crisis.

Help us reach more people with this powerful joint statement by sharing it with your friends on Facebook or on Twitter.

Below is the entire statement.

Smoke from bushfires has produced air pollution of up to 11 times the base 'hazardous' level in parts of Sydney and New South Wales. High levels of air pollution are expected to continue.

There is no safe level of air pollution. The higher the level of pollution, the more hazardous the risks to health. Bushfire smoke is particularly hazardous because of the high levels of tiny particles (PM2.5).

Babies, young children and those who are elderly or already experience chronic respiratory or cardiovascular disease are at higher risk, as are the socially and economically marginalised who may not have access to air conditioning or air purifiers.

Air pollution is linked to diseases throughout life: including premature births, low birth weight babies, impaired lung development in children, asthma, heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and lung cancer.

The levels of air pollution in NSW in recent weeks, and in the immediate future, remain hazardous to people's health.

This is a public health emergency

Governments have a responsibility to protect the people they represent.

Both the Federal and State Government of NSW must prioritise action to help reduce the risks to people's health arising from hazardous air pollution from the bushfires that continue to burn relentlessly across the state.

We call on Prime Minister Scott Morrison and NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian to demonstrate the leadership this public health emergency demands, and to implement measures to help alleviate the health and climate crisis.

Authorities are encouraging people in affected areas to avoid exercise and stay indoors with windows and doors closed and, if they have medication for respiratory conditions, to use their medications as directed.

In accordance with advice from the NSW Department of Health, if you are particularly susceptible to bushfire smoke, consider staying with a friend or relative whose house has clean indoor air or leaving the area for a cleaner environment.

Protecting health requires climate action

Climate change is worsening many extreme weather events such as serious bushfire weather, which is having devastating impacts on human health.

The air pollution events resulting from bushfires will become more and more frequent and are a result of climate change. Our governments must act quickly to rapidly and deeply reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which we know are driving climate change.

This moment calls for political leadership

All of our political leaders must acknowledge the health and environmental emergency of climate change, and step up and commit to urgent climate action by reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with what the science demands.

In addition to responding to this public health emergency, we call on Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Premier Gladys Berejiklian to lead action on climate change to protect our health.

This must include a multi-portfolio response involving Federal and State governments and the development of a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being. This will ensure a nationally coordinated approach to tackling the worsening health impacts of climate change, and that health service planning includes climate change preparedness to respond to the increasing demand for health services from extreme weather events, such as bushfires and heatwaves.

This joint statement is signed by:

- Climate and Health Alliance
- Doctors for the Environment Australia
- Royal Australian College of Physicians
- Australasian College of Emergency Medicine
- College of Emergency Nursing Australasia
- The Thoracic Society of Australia & New Zealand
- Lung Foundation Australia
- Public Health Association of Australia
- Australian College of Nursing
- Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation
- NSW Nurses & Midwives' Association
- Queensland Nurses & Midwives' Union
- Australian Medical Students Association
- Australian Health Promotion Association
- Australasian College of Health Service Management
- Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association
- Australian Epidemiological Association
- Australian Association of Social Workers
- cohealth
- Dieticians Association of Australia
- Health Services Union Victoria Number 4 Branch
- Healthy Futures
- Medical Scientists Association of Victoria

- Australian Institute of Health Innovation
- Madden Sainsbury Foundation

Positions not backfilled? Let us know

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.

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.

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>

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: The government is hyping digitalised services, but not addressing a history of e-government fails

"In politics, when you have little to show for your achievements, you can release a "roadmap" for what will supposedly be achieved in the future.

You can look on the bright side. Use phrases such as "[ontology of capabilities](#)", and disregard a number of crashes, traffic jams, protests and policy detours.

This is what we're seeing with the national government's [Digital Transformation Strategy Update](#) and subsequent planned [two-year rolling roadmap](#), announced last week by Minister for Government Services Stuart Robert.

When the strategy was launched last year, it was [described](#) as offering a "clear direction" for the government's digital efforts over the next seven years. It would ensure Australia's place as one of the "top three digital governments" by 2025.

It purportedly offers a "complete view of digital activities" occurring across national government agencies, in the form of a roadmap spanning the next two years."

Read the entire article by Bruce Baer Arnold in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/the-government-is-hyping-digitalised-services-but-not-addressing-a-history-of-e-government-fails-128117>

Worth Reading: From army barracks to shopping malls: how hospital design has been a matter of life and death

"Although architecture surrounds us and we engage with it daily, most assume design is benign or inert. Yet it shapes our actions and interactions. In the hospital, design can make the difference between life and death.

Architecture has played a crucial role in the hospital: as an instrument of status, of hygiene, of therapy, of control and, more recently, of support.

As far as we know, the first hospital in Australia was built in Sydney in 1788 and [Governor Phillip](#) quickly prioritised building it. It was just the third permanent building colonists erected after the governor's house and commissariat store (which provided food and other supplies).

The hospital was little more than a dirt-floored hut. It was soon replaced by a prefabricated hospital that arrived with the Second Fleet.

Sydney's third hospital — the infamous [Rum Hospital](#) — was a grand Georgian-style edifice.

The creation and design of these three hospitals said much about their status as key buildings in the colony, but little about the care provided within."

Read the entire article by Julie Willis in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/from-army-barracks-to-shopping-malls-how-hospital-design-has-been-a-matter-of-life-and-death-123377>

Worth Reading: Crowdfunding: when the government fails to act, the public wearily steps up

"In a year that began with floods and will finish with fire, emergency fundraisers have grown rapidly, [increasing by 35%](#) during 2019. Many farmers seeking relief from extended drought conditions [have been compelled to turn to crowdfunding](#).

As for the wreckage wrought by the current bushfires, GoFundMe reported that by the end of November, [more than 700 campaigns](#) were launched in response.

Australia is now ranked third globally in donations per capita, with one in ten contributing to a GoFundMe campaign this year. [Regional towns are the most generous donors](#), with Wagga Wagga, Mackay, and Launceston ranking highest.

What's more, GoFundMe fundraisers specifically [highlighting climate change](#) increased by more than 65% in 2019.

And globally, on GoFundMe alone, crowdfunding campaigns [have raised over US\\$9 billion](#) from 120 million donations.

Between bushfires, devastating floods, and a drought with no end in sight, crowdfunding campaigns reflect a weary resolve [amid the perceived inadequacy](#) of government responses to natural disasters."

Read the entire article by Matthew Wade in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/crowdfunding-when-the-government-fails-to-act-the-public-wearily-steps-up-128924>

Worth Reading: Extinguishing bushfire myths and misconceptions

"Bushfire has been part of the Australian landscape for millions of years. Much of our vegetation has evolved with fire, and like the vegetation in other harsh and dry environments, it has developed characteristics that promote the spread of fire.

Understanding how bushfires work is important when it comes to protecting life and property.

Did you know reducing trees in forested areas can actually increase the speed at which fires can travel? Or that ember attacks don't always travel with the wind?"

Read the entire article by Nick Kachel in the CSIRO Blog at: <https://blog.csiro.au/extinguishing-bushfire-myths-and-misconceptions/>

Join the Union

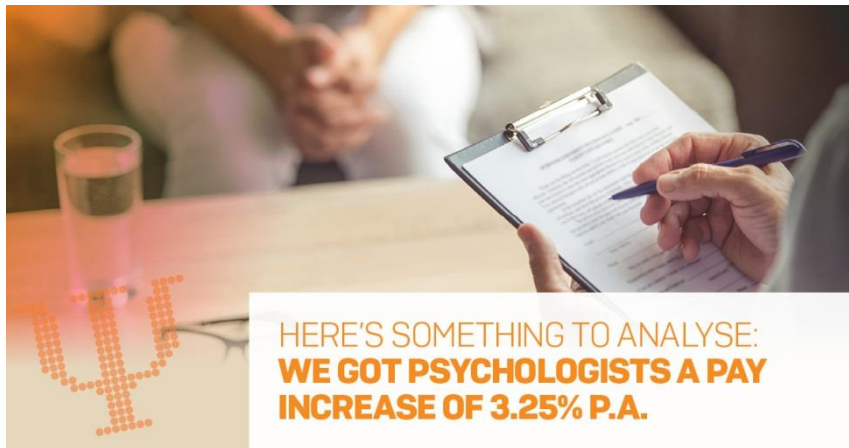
Are your workloads increasing? Are your stress levels increasing? Join the Union today!

To protect our professions we must strengthen our collective voice by increasing our membership. You can help by sharing one of the images below on Facebook.



WE DIAGNOSE AN **INCREASE
IN PAY OF 3.25% PER YEAR
OVER 4 YEARS.**

[Share on Facebook](#)



HERE'S SOMETHING TO ANALYSE:
**WE GOT PSYCHOLOGISTS A PAY
INCREASE OF 3.25% P.A.**

[Share on Facebook](#)



WE WON PHARMACISTS AN EASY
TO SWALLOW **3.25% PER YEAR
PAY INCREASE.**

[Share on Facebook](#)

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](#)

Australian Unions Member Benefits app

As a Union member you get access to exclusive Member Benefits. The 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 – that means you! If you have not got a login and would like join in [register for Member Benefits now.](#)



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