



Stat Report 2020/07

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Public health emergencies and staffing

In the face of a major public health emergency there has been little talk about the staff resources that will be needed to deal with it. While there has been lots of talk about planning and being prepared, there has not been the vital discussions about the sheer staff resources that will be needed to properly respond. This is absolutely the case for all of our members and especially members working in medical laboratories. Our research, along with that done independently, has shown time and time again that there are not enough medical scientists to deal with the existing workloads, which continue to grow at an exponential rate.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 outbreak is going to prove to be challenging should Victoria's health system have to scale up testing to deal with high volumes quickly. Members have advised that corona virus testing will be at least a significant amount of additional work, and could very likely be a very large amount of additional work. Either way, members are concerned that the additional corona virus testing plus annual flu testing will have a very significant impact on workloads, and likely to be unsustainable with existing scientist staffing numbers. Members are conscious of the critical role pathology services will play in the broader response plans to corona virus that are now being implemented, and are committed to support and help in every way possible.

The Union has long been aware that the state-wide pathology workforce barely copes with the normal testing demands as it stands and has no capacity to perform additional testing in the volumes that will be required to make the COVID-19 response plan work effectively.

Our highest priority at this stage of the response planning is to ensure that appropriate staffing will be funded for pathology when COVID-19 testing commences and that the capacity of pathology services to meet testing demands is not compromised.

Given the timeframes involved in hiring and training new scientific staff we are urging Health Services, DHHS and the Government to start immediately. Scientists are well aware that rapid testing and diagnosis are a key clinical component of the response plan and any breakdown in this capacity could seriously undermine the emergency response plan's effectiveness.

The Union is also concerned about the fact that microbiology labs in regional Victoria have been closed by private providers and patient samples are road couriered to Melbourne. This effectively puts regional and rural Victorians at significant risk as regional hospitals have no capacity to test for COVID-19, or to get test results in a timeframe that enables those hospitals to properly treat people.

The Government must support regional and rural communities in this health emergency by urgently restoring pathology services to guarantee that we don't wind up with a public health system that delivers two very different levels of care and treatment.

Community Health Sector Agreement

We are extremely happy to let members know that the variation of your agreement to increase Grade 2 rates has finally been approved by the Fair Work Commission. An error picked up in the salary scales after the agreement was first approved by the FWC has finally been resolved.

The increases are operative from June 2018. Members who have not yet received the increases or backpay will receive an advice from their employer shortly. If you don't receive your increases and back pay in your next pay make sure you let us know straight away.

At no stage did the Union stop fighting for members to receive their entitlements as agreed during the negotiation process. It's worth noting that the Community Sector made every attempt to use the error to deny members their proper pay and entitlements and initially opposed correcting the error. In effect they initially attempted to renege on the agreement terms negotiated with the Union and members.

This means that agreement is now in affect and the pay increases will begin to flow.

Paul Elliott
Secretary



Certification for Medical Scientists

Late in 2019 the Australian Institute of Medical Scientists announced the registration of a national certification body for medical laboratory scientists.

According to the AIMS, the new governing body will be called the [Australian Council for Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce \(ACCMLSW\)](#) and it will utilise a not-for-profit, limited liability company governance structure that, along with consumer representation, allows for the formal participation of representatives from all key scientific disciplines.

The certification scheme is scheduled for formal commencement on 1 July 2020 but piloting for the certification process has commenced in preparation for the full launch.

It is important to note that all of our enterprise agreements define what a scientist is. The proposed new body can not in any way alter the agreement's definition of a scientist, and therefore can not infect existing employment arrangements.

It is unclear, however, what status the new body has with respect to future employment requirements and whether new scientists could be refused employment if not certified. We now know from correspondence from this body that they do in fact hope it is used by employers. There is no detail about how this new body intersects with higher education and existing professional bodies. It is also disappointing that AIMS did not bother to engage with the MSAV in their consultation in relation to this change.

In correspondence with the Union, the Australian Council for Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce indicates they have now included a privacy policy on their website. However, that policy is dangerously problematic when it makes claims that it doesn't collect personally identifiable information when in fact it does. The site dangerously compromises people's privacy in the worst way by giving any visitor access to your first and last names and your employer. It's worth pointing out that this body only developed their privacy policy after the Union pointed out there was no privacy policy.

We remain very concerned that the website being used is not based in Australia, which means that all data is held offshore and not controlled properly by the organisation.

While the MSAV is not opposed to the concept of certification for medical scientists in order to protect the profession from rogue elements, certification must be done properly. Given recent revelations the Union is not at all confident the new body will be able to properly undertake the ambitious plans it was designed for; or for that matter be able to start 'certifying' people by 1 July 2020.

[You can read the final report here](#)

[Download a copy of the implementation plan](#)

[Download a copy of the implementation timeline](#)

The MSAV is seeking your feedback and comments about the Australian Council for Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce.

[Send your comments and feedback here](#)

Solidarity BBQ for refugees, Unions and Allies

As part of Victoria's largest Multicultural Celebration, Cultural Diversity Week, held from 21 to 29 March, with the theme "Curiosity, Conversation, Community", HACSU invites you to join the conversation and attend the Solidarity BBQ for refugees, Unions and Allies.

When: 25 March 2020 at 12Noon **Where:** Victorian Trades Hall Council 54 Victoria Street, Carlton

We Are Union Women – Brazen Hussies

An incredible group of women film-makers are developing the documentary BRAZEN HUSSIES, celebrating an exciting and revolutionary chapter in Australian history; the Women's Liberation Movement (1965 -1975).

The film features union hero Zelda D'Aprano in her fight for equal pay and see if you can spot some union women in 'Ask Me About My Feminist Agenda' t-shirts! Women's contributions to history are often invisible and ignored so if you'd like to help these women share such important stories of Australian feminist trailblazers.

[Brazen Hussies are fundraising](#) in order to finish the film and ensure its release far and wide.

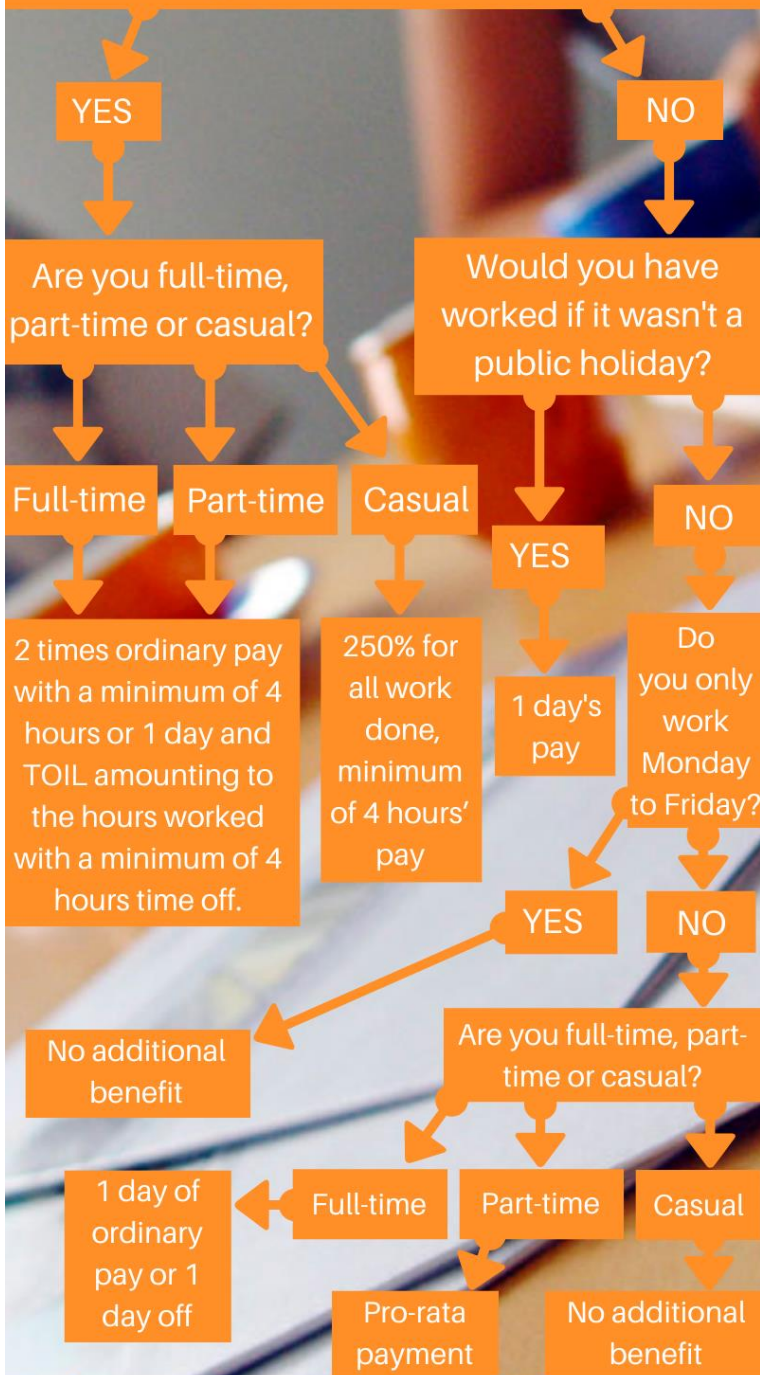
You can watch a trailer for the movie here: <https://documentaryaustralia.com.au/project/brazen-hussies/>

Public Holiday Pay

Monday is Labour Day which means a public holiday and public holiday pay. To make sure you get paid properly for this public holiday use our flow chart below. The chart applies mostly to the public sector so if you're unsure about public holiday pay contact the Union on 9623 9623.

Public Holiday 2020 Payments

Did you work that day?



Union Bushfire Appeal

The Union is working with the Victorian Trades Hall Council to collect a list of people who can help rebuild our communities when the bushfire threat has passed and it's safe to rebuild.

Bushfires – Hardship

We understand that some members may find themselves in hardship due to bushfire related circumstances. We want to make sure that you don't have to worry about the small but important things. If you're affected by the bushfires and experiencing hardship please reach out to us and we will provide what assistance we can.

Email on enquiry@msav.org.au or call us on 9623 9623.

Sign up to help out

If you can help build a fence, cook and serve food, handle hazardous material, drive a bus/truck or volunteer your time [please fill out this short form](#).

Make a donation

Like the rest of Australia, we too are reeling from the stories coming from bushfire affected areas. Those working on the front line are telling us that they need money right now and don't need donations of goods at this time – [make a donation](#) today!



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



oil and gas.

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,

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: Michael Pascoe goes back over the maths on government grant rorts

"I was lazy. I stopped counting politically rorted federal grant programs when I got to \$1.1 billion.

I should have kept going to reach \$8.1 billion.

That's the total for 11 federal programs that have serious question marks – or worse – over their ethics, probity and basic governance.

That's \$8.1 billion of taxpayers' money at the disposal of politicians who can't be trusted not to use it for pork barrelling their way into government.

It makes Clive Palmer's \$83 million anti-Labor campaign look cheap.

In fairness, not all of that \$8.1 billion has been spent – yet – and not all of it rorted.

But having watched the Morrison government so comprehensively raid the public purse, there's no reason to believe they would spend the rest more responsibly."

Read the entire article by Michael Pascoe in The New Daily at:

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/national/2020/03/03/michael-pascoe-liberal-grants-costs/>

Worth Reading: Explainer: what are the Australian government's powers to quarantine people in a coronavirus outbreak?

"The Australian government [has announced](#) its intention to use [powers under the Biosecurity Act](#), if needed, in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Attorney-General Christian Porter has [described](#) these powers as "strange and foreign to many Australians", but potentially necessary in the face of a pandemic.

The 2015 [Biosecurity Act](#) aims to manage biosecurity threats to human, animal and plant health. In the context of coronavirus (COVID-19), a biosecurity risk under this legislation would be defined as:

- the likelihood of a disease spreading in Australian territory
- the potential for that disease to cause harm to human health and/or economic consequences."

Read the entire article by Amy Maguire and Bin Li in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-are-the-australian-governments-powers-to-quarantine-people-in-a-coronavirus-outbreak-132877>

Worth Reading: Sure, save furry animals after the bushfires – but our river creatures are suffering too

"The hellish summer of bushfires in southeast Australia triggered global concern for our iconic mammals. [Donations flooded in](#) from at home and around the world to help protect furry species.

But there's a risk the government and public responses will not see the fish for the koalas.

Of the [113 priority fauna species](#) identified by the federal government as worst impacted by bushfires, 61 (54%) are freshwater species that live in or around our inland rivers, such as fish, frogs, turtles and the iconic platypus.

These animals and ecosystems were already struggling due to prolonged drought and mismanagement of the Murray Darling Basin. Saving koalas and other mammals is of course important, but freshwater species should also be a priority for post-fire environmental programs."

Read the entire article by Jamie Pittock in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/sure-save-furry-animals-after-the-bushfires-but-our-river-creatures-are-suffering-too-133004>

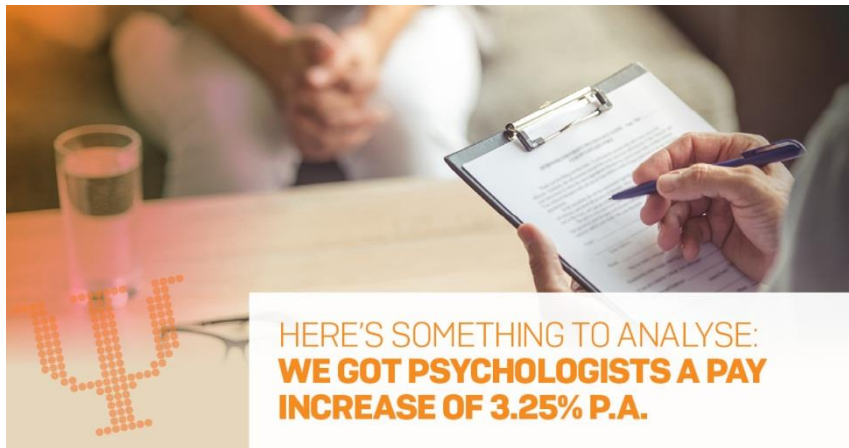
Join the Union

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.



[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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If not print out a copy and leave it on the noticeboard or in the staff room for your colleagues.