



Stat Report 2020/09

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Work continues amid COVID-19 Outbreak

The Union continues working closely with the State Government, DHHS and Health Services to best address the major issues around ensuring the Victorian health system has the resources and people it needs to effectively respond to the outbreak.

The Union remains very vigilant about the workload impacts that might arise from COVID-19 response plan, which could give rise to significant occupational health and safety issues. This is especially the case where staffing resources are insufficient to meet service demand surges. It is our priority to advocate for additional staff, in the first instance, across medical pathology laboratories during this time.

It is still unclear how the COVID-19 response will impact across the health system more broadly; but it is widely expected that our public health system will be stretched to breaking point to cope. COVID-19 is already highlighting many critical gaps in our system, especially the reliance on private pathology providers in much of Victoria who are unable or unwilling to undertake the necessary work to assist the public sector deal with the outbreak. It also leaves many Victorians vulnerable and unable to access the rapid testing promised under the Government's [Pandemic plan for the Victorian Health sector](#).

We understand that during this time, many members will want to do whatever they can to assist in delivering the response plan, however, it is critical that in any circumstance where members are impacted by increased activity, and therefore workloads, that we are advised as quickly as possible so we can pursue additional staff.

It is first and foremost the responsibility of your health service to provide you with a safe and healthy workplace, which includes properly and responsibly staffing to appropriate levels and managing workloads when service demands surge. It is also your employer's responsibility to provide you with information about how your health service is responding and how they are going to keep your workplace safe and healthy.

The Union strongly encourages you to also keep yourself informed through accessing information supplied by your health service and from the [Department of Health and Human Services](#). There is a great video from the [Australian Academy of Science about COVID-19 here](#); and here's an excellent video from the [Australian Council of Trade Unions outlining your rights to a healthy and safe workplace](#).

The Union will keep you informed about your rights at work as the situation continues to unfold.

Note that consistent with DHHS and other guidelines in relation to COVID-19 our staff will shortly be working remotely. I want to emphasise however that officials and other staff will be contactable and will continue to represent and support members as we otherwise would. We will send more details contacts and other information next week.

It also reminds us how fragile our community truly is and why it's vital that we work together at times like these.

Should you have any questions or queries please direct them to enquiry@msav.org.au

Paul Elliott
Secretary



Union Round Up

COVID-19 Advice

Being told to get a medical certificate:

Members have been reporting that they are being asked to provide medical certificates to prove they don't have COVID-19. There is no industrial basis for your employer to make this demand; and they cannot direct you to have a consultation with your, or the employers', health practitioner.

If you are asked to get a medical certificate to prove you are free of COVID-19 please contact the Union as soon as possible on 9623 9623 or at enquiry@msav.org.au

Here's the Union's advice for members at St John of God:

SJoG is providing 'special paid sick leave' in the event a worker is required to undergo a period of self-isolation in accordance with Australian Government Department of Health's guidelines. This paid leave is in addition to workers' existing paid personal (sick/carers) leave entitlements. And, if a worker is required to self-isolate following travel, SJoG will also provide special paid sick leave. However, SJoG is encouraging workers have regard to the Governments travel advisories. If a worker subsequently becomes unwell and is declared unfit for duty, this special paid leave will cease and workers will be able to access their existing leave entitlements.

Regardless of whether you work in the public, community or private health sectors, should you find yourself having to be isolated whether at the direction of your employer or due to contact outside of the workplace, please contact the Union as quickly as possible on 9623 9623 or at enquiry@msav.org.au

Workplace meetings:

The Union will stop holding non-urgent workplace meetings with members in their workplaces or the Union's offices in the short term due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This is inline with the protocols being enacted across a range of health services and at the recommendation of Victoria's Chief Medical Officer.

We understand that this may cause some issues for some members, however it is vital that the Union limits the potential for members to be exposed to or aid in the transmission of COVID-19. This does not mean that the Union will cease to engage with members about any concerns or issues.

Understandably preparations for Public Sector Enterprise Agreement negotiations have been dramatically slowed given the immediate need to focus attention and effort at responding to the outbreak.

We remain committed to begin negotiations for a new Public Sector agreement as near as possible to July 2020. Consultation with members will commence initially through a survey.

If you have any questions please direct them to enquiry@msav.org.au

Paid Special Leave: Protecting all workers during the COVID-19 outbreak

Australian workers are facing extreme uncertainty and financial stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Morrison Government is failing us by not guaranteeing all workers – permanent, casual and contract – two weeks paid special leave if they need to self-isolate, are sick or their workplace is shut down as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is a public health emergency and we need a response that slows and contains the virus by allowing workers to self-isolate if they have symptoms. This will save lives.

You can urge Scott Morrison to [pass laws protecting all workers by signing the petition here](#).

Supporting workers and their families through this unprecedented crisis should be the Government's top priority. The Government should support businesses to pay this leave, especially small businesses.

1 in 3 workers in Australia do not have any access to paid leave. We need the Government to step in and ensure employers can fund proper leave for workers who must self-isolate due to these public health concerns. Working people in Australia are already struggling with a slowing economy and domestic spending is drying up across the nation. They shouldn't be left to fend for themselves. Not now, through this pandemic. Not ever.

The union movement stands with casual and contract workers.

[Sign the petition and let Scott Morrison know that in tough times, all Australians need a Government that will put their well-being first.](#)

Work Shouldn't Hurt – Respect at Work

The Australian Council of Trade Unions' survey found that 2 in 3 women, and 1 in 3 men, have been subjected to sexual harassment at work. 64% told the ACTU they had witnessed sexual harassment. 40% of workers who are harassed tell no one at all about their experiences, because they fear that they will not get justice. Only 27% made a formal complaint.

We urgently need a new health and safety regulation requiring employers to proactively deal with the underlying causes of sexual harassment at work and stop it before it starts. Over 100 community organisations have signed the #Power2Prevent joint statement calling for urgent changes, including stronger health and safety laws requiring employers to tackle the underlying causes of sexual harassment at work and stop it before it starts.

It's time to speak up and tell the Attorney-General and Minister for Women to make workplaces healthy, safe and respectful for all of us. [Click here to send them an email.](#)

Certification for Medical Scientists

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](#)

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

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: It's official: the last five years were the warmest ever recorded

"The World Meteorological Organisation today published a definitive climate report card showing concentrations of greenhouse gases continue to rise, and the last five years were the warmest on record.

The [Statement on the State of the Global Climate](#) also confirmed that the ongoing drought and recent bushfires in Australia were a globally significant climate event.

The report is an annual, comprehensive overview of the latest information from the world's meteorological services and other key institutions. We are among the many authors who contributed.

It's an important record of the magnitude and speed of changes to global climate, drawing on the latest data from across the fields of climate science."

Read the entire article Blair Trewin and Pep Canadell in the CSIRO Blog at: <https://blog.csiro.au/last-five-years-warmest-on-record/>

Worth Reading: Why Singapore's coronavirus response worked – and what we can all learn

"Singapore's response to the coronavirus has been held up by many around the world as a model. As of this week, the country [has had 266 total cases](#) (with zero deaths), and its infection rate is much slower than the rest of the world.

The first thing that helped with its response was it was ready before the outbreak even occurred because of the [SARS outbreak](#) of 2002-03.

It was aware then that its infrastructure wasn't ready for an outbreak of this kind. So, in the years since, isolation hospitals were built, more negative pressure rooms were created and legislation was put in place.

Then, on December 31, when the world first became aware of coronavirus in China, Singapore started to get prepared. By the time the World Health Organisation declared a [public health emergency](#) at the end of January, it was ready."

Read the entire article by Dale Fisher in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/why-singapores-coronavirus-response-worked-and-what-we-can-all-learn-134024>

Worth Reading: Superfood or supermyth? Researching current food trends

"Health communication has changed a lot over the years. We're bombarded with information about healthy foods, from the latest 'superfood' trends to the easiest way to tone up and trim down. While social media is a really easy way to access health information, how do we know if the information is correct?

Well, grab a kombucha and read on. We've compiled the most hotly debated 'superfoods' out there – and then applied a research lens.

However, if you have any specific questions, it's best to go to an Accredited Practicing Dietitian (APD). Please note the information here may not be suitable for you."

Read the entire article by Kashmi Ranasinghe at the CSIRO Blog at: <https://blog.csiro.au/superfood-trends/>

Worth Reading: Social distancing can make you lonely. Here's how to stay connected when you're in lockdown

"COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, is a challenge for everyone.

We know [positive social support](#) can improve our capacity to cope with stress. But right now we're being asked to keep our distance from others to minimise the spread of the virus.

Many people are facing periods of enforced isolation if they are believed to have COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who has.

Even those of us who appear to be healthy are being directed to practise [social distancing](#), a range of strategies [designed to slow the spread of a disease](#) and protect vulnerable groups from becoming infected.

Among other things, this means when we're around others, we shouldn't get too close, and should avoid things like kissing and shaking hands.

This advice has seen the cancellation of large events of more than 500 people, while smaller groups and organisations have also moved to cancel events and regular activities. Many workplaces with the capacity to do so have asked their staff to work from home."

Read the entire article by Michelle H Lim and Johanna Badcock in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/social-distancing-can-make-you-lonely-heres-how-to-stay-connected-when-youre-in-lockdown-133693>

Worth Reading: Our politicians are not fit to oversee the coronavirus response. It's time they got out of the way

"Prime Minister Scott Morrison this week [announced sweeping measures](#) to stop the spread of the coronavirus in Australia, including bans on indoor gatherings of more than 100 people and a warning for Australians not to travel anywhere in the world.

However, Morrison's press conference is still grossly inadequate when it comes to the government's overall response to the pandemic. The problem, from the beginning, has been a lack of clarity and structure.

In principle, most of what the prime minister said this week would have been far more relevant last week. It's too late and not enough."

Read the entire article by William Bowtell in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/our-politicians-are-not-fit-to-oversee-the-coronavirus-response-its-time-they-got-out-of-the-way-134035>

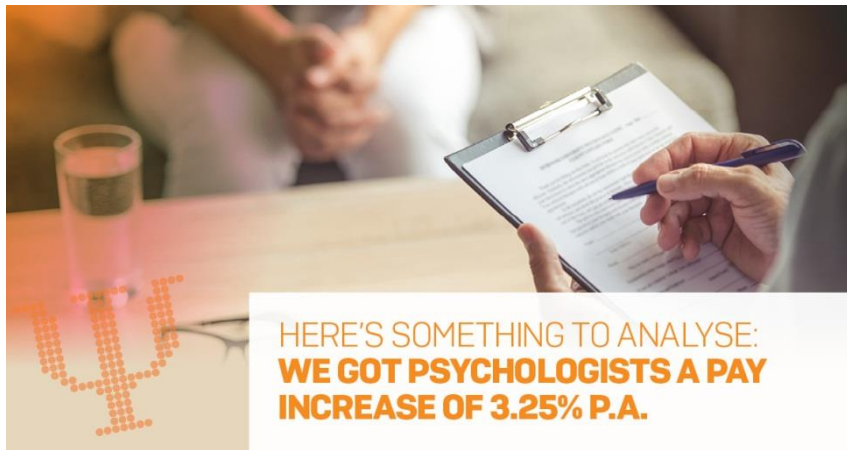
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Are your workloads increasing? Are your stress levels increasing? Join the Union today!

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.



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

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

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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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