



Stat Report 2021/15

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Long working hours are unhealthy for everyone

According to research released by the World Health Organisation and the International Labour Organisation, long working hours led to 745,000 deaths from stroke and ischemic heart disease in 2016, a 29 per cent increase since 2000. The results of the work done by the WHO and ILO were published in Environment International earlier this month. This new research is on top of the various studies globally that have linked long working hours with increased risk of a variety of health conditions like strokes and heart attacks.

This latest research from the World Health Organisation and the International Labour Organisation supports what we have been saying for a long time. We've seen in our disciplines an ever-increasing amount of work with an ever-increasing amount of pressure applied to staff to do more and more work, increasing people's working hours. Between understaffing and increasing workloads, we know our members are working longer and longer hours.

The Union has been working to address under-staffing and the ever-growing workload issues through our public sector bargaining negotiations. It remains a major disappointment that the state government and employers, despite all the evidence, continue to ignore the significant workloads of our members and the ever-increasing hours of unpaid work being done, putting our health and welfare at risk.

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 is working 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 mental health support. We are holding the government to account to ensure there is an actual increase in psychologist numbers and we don't mean an increase in counsellors who have been employed as psychologists; a trick being used by some health services.

It is increasingly clear to us that hospital executives are turning a blind eye to the critically important responsibility to effectively address workforce management. 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, vacant positions are not being filled.

Instead, there are executive managers that rely on a model of demanding you do more work. Rather than treat you like professionals, management would rather work you until there is a burnt-out and injured workforce.

It is essential that you let your managers know that it is not acceptable to be forced into unsustainable workloads and doing unpaid work on a regular basis just to get your normal work done. It is important to remember that you have the right to refuse o unpaid work.

With working long hours now known to be responsible for about one-third of the total estimated work-related burden of disease, it is established as the risk factor with the largest occupational disease burden. Unfortunately, it is something that hospital management are contributing to by turning a blind-eye to their responsibility to properly staff services to keep workloads and hours at safe and sustainable levels..

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 and longer working hours. Please make sure you report positions not being backfilled or vacancies that remain open so that we can take it up.

It also a good time to remind members that the end of financial year is approaching. We'll soon be sending out reminders about payment of membership fees the 2021/2022 financial year via email. Check our article about membership fees in this edition of STAT Report.

Finally, we want to make sure members know that the Union's office has closed because of the latest COVID-19 outbreak and the announcement of the 7-day lockdown.

Our staff will be working from home until further notice. They have everything they need to continue delivering representation, support and advice for members; and can do most of the things we do normally, including conducting meetings via face-face when needed, telephone and video conferencing, and of course phone and email contact.

The Union will review announcements regarding the latest outbreak and continue assessing the risk to our staff to determine when it is safe to return to working from our office.

If you require assistance, please send an email to enquiry@msav.org.au which is constantly monitored by our staff.

In solidarity
Paul Elliott
Secretary



Union Round Up

Change at Eastern Health - Community Health Yarra Junction

The Union has been notified about a change of location for workers at Eastern Health – Community Health Yarra Junction.

We have been informed through the Change Impact Statement that a recent review found multiple occupational health and safety (OHS) and infection control risks which they are unable to appropriately control. Impacted staff members include those who were rostered to work at Yarra Junction in conjunction with other sites or were located primarily at Yarra Junction.

If you have questions or concerns about the proposed change, please contact Heidi at heidib@msav.org.au or on 9623 9623.

Alfred/Monash Cluster Pathology Project

It has come to the Union's attention that the taskforce for the Alfred/Monash Cluster Pathology project have reference the Union as being in partnership with them. While the MSAV has indicated our support for the broader pathology reforms advised by the Government, we are concerned that the taskforce continues to present this project as being in partnership with the MSAV and other Unions.

Members should be made aware that this is not the case. Indeed, we have been frustrated by the inability of the taskforce to provide us with information about the work done on the project, with claims that much of it was to be commercial in confidence.

The Union has consulted with Government about the Cluster project and expect to continue receiving briefings from the taskforce and DHHS about the work that has been done by the taskforce but we have not been invited to be part of the taskforce (despite requests), we have not been invited to sit on any of the Cluster projects at the various Health Services, and as such, have not been allowed to have input into the appropriate form a cluster or clusters should take and the associated flow on of decisions.

The MSAV's role to date has been limited to asking questions that in the main have not been answered.

We have made it clear to the taskforce team that we want them to stop representing to members that there is partnership when there is not.

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact Heidi at heidib@msav.org.au

Social Media + Work

Social media is a lot of fun. It's a great way of keeping up with the news or what your friends and family are doing, wherever they are in the world. But there are some big downsides to social media, especially when they include the workplace.

The ubiquity of mobile devices in our day-to-day lives, combined with social media means there is an ever-increasing blur in the distinction between work and private life. We can't forget that employers are regularly monitoring and watching social media for what employees are saying.

Like other areas of the law, industrial law has been slow to react with the increasing use of social media.

However there have been a range of matters brought before the Fair Work Commission (FWC) relating to the use of social media by employees. FWC will consider if the conduct in question:

1. Is likely to cause serious damage to the relationship between the employer and employee
2. Damages the employer's interest
3. Is incompatible with the employee's duty as an employee

Unfortunately, workers have to be extremely careful in using social media when talking about their work and workplace. It is vital to avoid some of the following pitfalls:

1. Social media is not private interaction; unless you set the strictest privacy levels for your content to protect yourself from being monitored by your boss.
2. Make sure you don't follow or friend the boss and your work colleagues. It seems harsh but the number of work colleagues that have access to your social media can be an important determinant in any FWC proceedings.
3. Don't mention your boss and the company you work for. FWC will consider whether there has been a direct reference to the company or any one individual. This doesn't mean you can't discuss wages and conditions or genuine grievances but make sure you don't mention the boss or the company.
4. Don't discuss patients and definitely don't name them. This is particularly relevant for health sector workers as it can result in immediate termination of employment because of breaches of the privacy of a patient or patients.
5. The degree of offence of the comments posted to social media will be an issue consider by FWC.
6. Only post material that you would be happy to post in a public forum, see printed on the front page of The Age or Herald Sun; or shout out in the middle of the MCG on Grand Final day.

There is a golden rule for social media use: don't drink or use drugs and use social media.

If you have any questions, make sure you contact the Union at enquiry@msav.org.au or on 9623 9623.

Special Leave for COVID-19 vaccines

Below is what is being advised by the Victorian Department of Health with respect to employees in the public sector who have an adverse reaction after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine (emphasis is ours):

Where an employee experiences an adverse event after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine

Employees may experience minor side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccination. There is some overlap between an expected adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) following the COVID-19 vaccination and the presenting symptoms of COVID-19. This can lead to uncertainty around requirements for testing and isolation in a person with symptoms following vaccination.

The Department of Health has issued Recommendations for testing and isolation following COVID-19 vaccination which provide guidance on distinguishing AEFIs from other symptoms of illness that an employee may experience.

Where an employee is required to isolate in the circumstances described in the Recommendations for testing and isolation following COVID-19 vaccination, the employee has access to paid Special Leave for the requisite period of isolation.

Paid Special Leave should also be made available to an employee who was prioritised in Group 1A or Group 1B to receive a COVID-19 vaccination and who suffers an AEFI that does not require them to isolate, but does result in them being unable to attend work because of the symptoms experienced. To access paid Special Leave in this circumstance, the employee is required to provide a medical certificate confirming that the reason for not attending work is due to an AEFI that does not require them to isolate.

In this instance, **paid Special Leave will be capped at a maximum of two days per COVID-19 vaccination received, or four days of leave in total per employee across all COVID-19 vaccinations received by the employee in 2021.**

Employers should retrospectively authorise paid Special Leave to an employee who has already received a COVID-19 vaccination as part of the Group 1A or Group 1B vaccinations and took Personal Leave for any absence that resulted from an AEFI that did not require them to isolate. The evidentiary requirement may be waived in such cases and the employee may have their Personal Leave recredited.

Employers should assess such situations on a case-by-case basis.

Annual Leave Entitlements

Here's a couple of quick facts about public sector annual leave:

- Under our Agreement, annual leave needs to be taken at a time "determined by mutual agreement". If you don't agree to take your leave, you can't be forced to take it: cl 60.3
- There is no provision in our Agreement, about excess annual leave. And there is also no clause in our Agreement, which enables an employer to direct a worker to take annual leave;
- If more than 2 weeks annual leave is taken, this leave must be backfilled: cl 34.1

Having said that, employers can have respectful conversations with workers about annual leave planning. And, the Union does encourage workers to take their annual leave to generally recharge and to be happy and safe at work when they're there!

If you do feel pressured to submit leave requests, here's some advice:

- Think about when you actually want to take your leave and try not to feel pressured by arbitrary dates presented by management (such as, needing to submit a plan to use X amount of leave before the end of the financial year);
- Put this plan to your employer and have a conversation about that proposal;
- Then, when that proposal is agreed, advise your employer that you do not intend to discuss leave planning further; and,
- If you're ever in doubt, the Union is always here for support.

Whilst the above references are to our Public Health Sector Agreement our private sector agreements contain the same, or similar, provisions. If you have any queries about your annual leave entitlements, please contact the Union at enquiry@msav.org.au

Contacting the Union during the 7-day lockdown

Our staff will be working from home until further notice. Don't worry though, they have everything they need to continue delivering representation, support and advice for members. Our staff can do most of the things we do normally, including conducting meetings via face-face when needed, telephone and video conferencing, and of course phone and email contact.

The Union will review announcements regarding the latest outbreak and continue assessing the risk to our staff to determine when it is safe to return to working from our office.

If you require assistance, please send an email to enquiry@msav.org.au which is constantly monitored by our staff.

For industrial advice and assistance:

Paul Elliott | paule@msav.org.au | 0418 543 682

Rosemary Kelly | rosemaryk@msav.org.au

Matt Hammond | matth@msav.org.au | 0418 149 261

Heidi Brown | heidib@msav.org.au

Lisa Alcock | lisaa@msav.org.au

Alex Schlotzer | alexs@msav.org.au

For membership related enquiries please contact Anastasia at anastasiap@msav.org.au

If you find yourself in an urgent situation, for example where your employment is being threatened or you have been stood down, please ring on 0418 543 682.

If you need to contact us, please use the enquiry email at enquiry@msav.org.au which is constantly monitored by our staff.

Membership Fees and Invoices

Members paying union fees by manual annual subscription will be receiving the upcoming renewal subscription invoice for the 2021/2022 FY early June 2021 via email. Members who have not yet paid the current 2020/2021 FY subscription, or haven't received an invoice, please contact Anastasia on 9623 9623 or anastasiap@msav.org.au to receive another one or to pay by credit card over the phone. Members can also log in to the membership portal to make sure all contact details are correct. Please email Anastasia if you require another activation link emailed to you.

Members who have had changes in their work hours or have returned to work from maternity leave, or from a period of being stood down please contact Anastasia to update your subscription rate, in order to maintain the correct coverage for Professional Indemnity Insurance purposes.

Members paying by Direct Debit will receive tax receipts for the current FY early July 2021. Payments for the 2021/2022 will continue as usual. Members can update their payment details, when necessary, via the membership portal. Any changes to work hours, please contact Anastasia on 9623 9623 or anastasiap@msav.org.au

You can access your membership details, PI Insurance information and details on what you've paid in membership fees from your own page through our membership portal. The membership portal allows you to

update your membership details, download your PI Insurance information and your tax receipts when it comes time to prepare your tax return. It's easy to use, secure and gives you the information you need whenever you need it! To access your membership portal, visit <https://msav.360membership.com.au/login.aspx>

Membership Issues – Experiencing hardship?

Non-Members

For non-Union members who work in workplaces across our coverage; **we will give advice immediately over the phone if they join.**

In the spirit of supporting health workers through this unprecedented time we hope you might have a quiet word to colleagues who are not members, and suggest that there has never been a more important time to join a Union. Let them know that it is as simple as going to our website and [clicking on the 'JOIN' link](#).

Members

If you are in the unfortunate position of being stood down or forced on to unpaid leave, [contact us to move your membership payments to a 'non-working' subscription rate of \\$8.26 per month](#).

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.

Right now, Aware Super, Australia's biggest health industry super fund, is investing our money in fossil fuels - oil and gas. While they have plans to divest from fossil fuels, it's vital that we maintain the pressure to make sure they divest faster to ensure a reduction in financial issues posed by stranded assets like fossil fuelled power stations.

Join us in asking Aware Super to divest from fossil fuels at

<https://www.healthyfutures.net.au/awaresuper>

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: TikTok and geopolitics: how 'digital nationalism' threatens to entrench big tech

"The massive digital platform market has until recently been dominated by a handful of US-based companies such as Facebook and Google. However, as foreign governments and competing platforms try to erode this domination, platforms are becoming a new sphere of geopolitical manoeuvring.

The European Union wants to gain more control over international tech companies and achieve more independence in the digital arena. India has banned 177 Chinese apps on the grounds they are "prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India".

And in 2020, the then US President Donald Trump spent months attempting to ban the Chinese-made video-sharing platform TikTok or force its sale to an American owner. While some claimed Trump was piqued by a supposed prank against him by teenage TikTok users, a look at statements from US government officials over the course of the year shows geopolitical concerns were the main driver.

If governments are continue to be driven by "digital nationalism", the US-based big tech companies are likely to continue to dominate."

Read the entire article by Joanne Gray in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/tiktok-and-geopolitics-how-digital-nationalism-threatens-to-entrench-big-tech-160919>

Worth Reading: Best evidence suggests antidepressants aren't very effective in kids and teens. What can be done instead?

"Even before COVID-19 lockdowns, school closures and strict social distancing, depression was on the rise in children and teenagers around the globe.

By the age of 19, around 25% of adolescents are estimated to have experienced a depressive episode. By the age of 30, this figure grows to 53%.

A number of studies point to an increasing use of antidepressants in young people.

So, what do we now know about how well antidepressants work in children and young people?"

Read the entire article by Sarah Hetrick, Joanne McKenzie, Nick Meader and Sally Merry in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/best-evidence-suggests-antidepressants-arent-very-effective-in-kids-and-teens-what-can-be-done-instead-160758>

Worth Reading: Deliveroo judgment could be one for the ages for workers rights

"Last week's Fair Work Commission judgment in Diego Franco v Deliveroo could be as important for our time as the Harvester judgment was in 1907.

It's also an echo of the Great Shearers' Strike of 1891, when independent contractors first got organised and, in the process, founded the Labor Party.

But it makes you wonder why these battles have to be refought again and again.

Commissioner Ian Cambridge found that under Common Law, Diego Franco, a Brazilian national who arrived here on Christmas Day 2016, was an employee of Deliveroo, not an independent contractor as the firm asserted.

He was therefore subject to unfair dismissal rules and had been unfairly dismissed, as he and the Transport Workers Union claimed."

Read the entire article by Alan Kohler in The New Daily at: <https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/2021/05/24/alan-kohler-deliveroo-judgment/>

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 the image below on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit or your favourite social media platform.

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.](#)



Share STAT Report

Is there a copy of STAT Report on your Union noticeboard or in your staff room?

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