



Stat Report 2021/22

In this issue of STAT Report we cover:

- Morrison Government attacking Medicare
- Union Round Up
- Vale Ian Goodall
- Contacting the Union
- Leadership scholarships for women
- Membership Issues – Experiencing hardship?
- Campaign Corner
- Worth Reading
- Member Benefits

Morrison Government attacking Medicare

It probably comes as no surprise that the Morrison Government has renewed its attack on Medicare. The Federal Government has quietly announced over 1000 changes to how Medicare pays for important treatments and surgeries but has not released full details of the over 1000 changes.

They think they can sneak through big changes to undermine Medicare by quietly removing over 1,000 items that get Medicare coverage, and they are things we rely on.

There is little doubt this was done quietly because the Morrison Government is once again mired in rorts, with the latest being carpark funding for electorates they want to win, nothing to do with easing traffic and parking congestion. This is on top of the sports rort, the rort involving the community development fund for pools and the building better regional communities rort.

Liberal Governments have already cut billions in funding from Medicare and other health programs since 2014. Morrison is bungling the vaccine roll-out, the most important public health program in a generation. This comes at a time when we're in most urgent need of a well-funded and well-staffed healthcare system. What's worse is that they froze the Medicare indexation rate, which undermines bulk-billing.

Medicare has been a vital part of Australian society that has ensured that everyone, regardless of their bank account, gets the world-class medical care they need when they need it.

The attack on Medicare is entirely ideological as they seek to boost private health and private health insurance using funding that should be put into our public healthcare system and into Medicare.

We need to stop the Morrison Government from wrecking Medicare. Sign the petition at <https://www.megaphone.org.au/petitions/stop-more-changes-and-cuts-to-medicare>

Speaking of wrecking healthcare, it is extremely concerning when we receive reports of organisational change that results in the loss of positions.

We're particularly concerned that scientists involved in cancer diagnosis, research and treatment development are being threatened with the loss of their jobs at Peter Mac. That's why we can't understand why Peter Mac refuses to be clear about the changes that are insisting on, which will result in scientists losing their jobs.

It's bad enough that a public hospital is looking to sack scientists employed in a service that has seen testing volumes increase 2.5 times in the last 5 years and who are overworked, but the changes come at a time we know that more Victorians are coming forward to deal with cancer diagnoses or continue their treatment.

Peter Mac scientist well remember the comments of the Premiere and Health Minister praising the efforts of pathology workers through the pandemic and how they must be respected and protected. Scientists now facing losing their careers hope the Premiere and Minister will intervene and help them protect their jobs.

We also hope that Peter Mac comes to its senses and realises that their current course of action will risks profound negative impact on patients and further stretch already overworked scientists.

Bargaining in the community sector will soon begin with the team making preparations to engage with community sector members. The Union is about to undergo negotiations with TissuPath and other private providers while negotiations continue with several IVF providers. We are also working on matters related to bargaining at Forensicare, which we are disappointed by management's holding up of bargaining unnecessarily.

Members at Dorevitch are reminded to get in contact with the Union if you are not receiving an additional week of annual leave as a shift worker. If you're working at Dorevitch make sure you let your colleagues working shift work know they are entitled to an additional week of annual leave. There are more details in *Union Round Up*.

Unfortunately, the Union received sad news this week about the passing of Ian Goodall.

Ian was a life member and the founding President of the MSAV. He joined the precursor to the Medical Scientists Association of Victoria in 1987 and helped establish the Union. He always stood up for the workers and his fellow scientists to ensure their workplace rights were protected.

Please raise issues you have by emailing us at enquiry@msav.org.au

In solidarity
Paul Elliott
Secretary

Vale Ian Goodall

The Union received sad news this week about the passing of Ian Goodall.

Ian was a life member of the MSAV. He joined the precursor to the Medical Scientists Association of Victoria in 1987 and helped establish the MSAV.

He was the founding President of the MSAV and was on the Medical Scientists Wages Board before the wages boards were abolished and replaced by the Victorian IR Commission, where were later abolished in turn by the Kennett government in the 1990s.

Ian was a passionate unionist and was a senior Biochemistry scientist at the Austin. He always stood up for the workers and his fellow scientists. Ian stood up in the face of management harassment and bullying to ensure his fellow scientists workplace rights were protected.

Ian will be missed by many but will always have a special place in the MSAV.

Our thanks to Ian for his tireless work and support for MSAV members in pathology services across Victoria.

Positions not backfilled?

Let us know

Union Round Up

Dorevitch members – Additional week of annual leave for shift workers

Under the National Employment Standards (which are found in the Fair Work Act), every Enterprise Agreement needs to provide a definition of "shift worker" and an additional week of annual leave for workers who meet that definition.

Clause 28.3 of the Dorevitch Agreements provides this minimum entitlement.

For part-time workers, the essential elements are that:

1. The hours worked on the weekend need to be "ordinary hours" not "overtime";
2. You need to work on 10 or more "Sundays" during a yearly period; and
3. You need to work more than 4 hours on the shift.

For full-time workers, the essential elements are that:

1. You work ordinary hours on weekdays and weekends;
2. The hours worked on the weekend need to be "ordinary hours" not "overtime";
3. A weekend can include "one or two shifts", either will count as one weekend; and
4. You need to work more than 4 hours on the shift.

If you meet the above definitions, then as a shift worker you should receive an additional 38 hours of annual leave. If you are not receiving your additional annual leave, please contact Lisa for support at lisa@msav.org.au

Underpayment of Higher Qualifications Allowance

It appears that the miscalculations of the allowances may be quite widespread and certainly appear to go much further than the Melbourne Health payroll network.

The Union has requested that the Department of Health take the lead in coordinating an audit across all Public Health Services which are party to our Agreement.

By having a centralised approach, it will ensure that the Department rectifies mistakes across the entire state in how this entitlement is applied and correct underpayments for all current and former employees in a systematic way. The Union does expect that any process to audit the payrolls of the state's Public Health Services will take some time.

The Union is determined to ensure that this matter is resolved.

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.

Contacting the Union

Here's how you can contact the Union while staff continue to work from home.

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

For all other enquiries please send your email to enquiry@msav.org.au

Leadership scholarships for women in the health sector

Women & Leadership Australia is offering professional development scholarships are open to women across the health sector.

[Women & Leadership Australia \(WLA\)](#) supports emerging, middle, and senior women leaders across all sectors and industries. Our career-defining leadership programs bring together a focus on applied learning with the latest in leadership theory and practice. We believe that advancing gender equity, especially in leadership, is central to creating a more fair and inclusive society.

Scholarships of \$1000-\$5000 per person are available for women in the health sector

To encourage more women to step into leadership roles across the health sector, WLA is offering scholarships for three leadership development courses.

Apply by 10 September or find out more by clicking here: <https://www.wla.edu.au/health.html>

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: How can the new Closing the Gap dashboard highlight what indicators and targets are on track?

"The 2021 Close the Gap report declared the national agreement on Closing the Gap "a game changer" that sets a new standard for how governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

The national agreement was signed a year ago and put its signatories on a 12-month timetable for action.

Since then, the Productivity Commission has released a new dashboard for reporting on the government's progress across 17 key socioeconomic indicators and on priority reforms when the data is available. The first report based on this data has been released today.

We are now at a crucial moment, with the federal, state and territory governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peaks due to hand down their implementation plans and begin the task of annually reporting on their actions."

Read the entire article by Janine Mohamed in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/how-can-the-new-closing-the-gap-dashboard-highlight-what-indicators-and-targets-are-on-track-163809>

Worth Reading: Invasive species have cost Australia \$390 billion in the past 60 years, study shows

"They trample fragile environments and devastate crops, and now we can put a figure on how much damage invasive species like feral cats and weedy plants are doing to Australia's bottom line.

Invasive species have cost the Australian economy \$390 billion in just the past 60 years, according to research published in the journal NeoBiota today.

Feral cats are the most costly individual species, which is mostly down to population control, coming in at over \$13.5 billion.

But it's weedy plants that are the most expensive group on the list, according to author Corey Bradshaw from Flinders University."

Read the entire article by Jo Khan in the ABC at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-07-30/invasive-species-cost-billions-australia/100333710>

Worth Reading: Yarns from the heart: the role of Aboriginal English in Indigenous health communication

"Indigenous Australians experience poorer health outcomes than non-Indigenous Australians. They are sick more often, die younger and are at higher risk of serious health complications, including heart disease.

One way to improve health outcomes is through targeted health communication in local languages.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen increased attention given to the use of Indigenous languages in health settings around the world, including Australia.

Many COVID-19 resources have been developed in partnership with local communities, including in widely-spoken Australian Aboriginal languages such as Kriol. Other initiatives have inspired new Indigenous health professionals to effectively communicate complex medical terminology and concepts to communities."

Read the entire article by Celeste Rodriguez Luoro and Glenys Dale Collard in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/yarns-from-the-heart-the-role-of-aboriginal-english-in-indigenous-health-communication-163892>

Worth Reading: How the Groundhog Day grind of lockdown scrambles your memory and sense of time

"With roughly half of Australia in lockdown at the moment, a common experience is a warped sense of time and poor memory. What day is it? What week is it? Did I go to the supermarket yesterday, or was it the day before? Am I actually in the movie Groundhog Day and experiencing the same day over and over?"

While lockdown can have a range of impacts such as anxiety and depression — both of which can impair memory — these aren't the whole picture. There is increasing theoretical and experimental evidence that suggests both memory and time perception are based on the same underlying principle: a change in your physical and/or mental state.

So it follows that when there is less change, it becomes harder to determine how much time has passed, or to remember what happened and when."

Read the article by Adam Osth in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/how-the-groundhog-day-grind-of-lockdown-scrambles-your-memory-and-sense-of-time-164951>

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.](#)



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