



Stat Report 2022/04

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Opportunities for changes in the health sector in 2022

2022 presents Australians with an opportunity to make changes in the health sector with the federal election expected to be announced very soon.

Unfortunately, we have seen over this term of the federal government that there are a lot of problems within the national healthcare system. We've seen this play out in aged-care residential care. We've seen it play out in the rollout and delivery of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

We've certainly seen the failures of the federal government in protecting Australians over the past couple of years as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage on.

It is simply shocking that a government could have failed so miserably to protect Australians and those working in healthcare by failing to secure and plan for access to personal protective equipment, rapid antigen tests and vaccines.

We saw the Morrison government give handouts, under the JobKeeper scheme, to large companies who refused to pay it back when it was clear they didn't need the handouts in the first place.

Yet the Coalition slashed the financial support given to Australians too early in the pandemic. They even started chasing people for so-called debts despite the report into the disastrous Robodebt scheme.

They have failed time and time again to respond to the pandemic with the urgency needed or the compassionate response we would expect during a global health emergency.

It has been extremely disappointing to see the Morrison government fail to look after the most vulnerable in our society and witness the terrible situation playing out in aged-care residential care, especially given how wealthy we are as a nation.

However, this year we have an opportunity to make our voices heard about the state of our healthcare system and the Morrison Government's response to the global pandemic.

This year's federal election gives us an opportunity to repudiate the views of a federal government that puts the elderly, those with disabilities and people working in healthcare clearly at the bottom of their list of priorities.

It says a lot when Prime Minister Scott Morrison's biggest priority is passing legislation that allows for discrimination against the LGBTIQ+ community.

In related news, I'm very happy to report a win for all workers, with legislation finally passing that will remove the \$450 threshold to receive Superannuation contributions.

This is a significant win for Australian unions who have campaigned to have this threshold removed. There's more on it in this edition of *STAT Report*.

The Union is also working with the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) to encourage health services to use fewer single-use plastic items. We all know the impact that single-use plastic has on our environment and the ramifications for our own health and well-being.

Unfortunately, it's everywhere and about a third of a hospital's general waste is plastic, with less than 10% of plastic being recycled. That's why we're working with CAHA to prove there is demand for action.

You can help by signing up to find out ways to encourage your health service to do more to reduce single-use plastic and the use of plastic in our hospitals - https://www.caha.org.au/reducing_sup_in_health

Finally, we want to let Public Sector members know that the Union has commenced meeting with the VHIA to start the drafting process.

We reported at the end of last year that the Union had signed off on the Heads of Agreement and revoked the protected action ballot to work to finalise drafting the new agreement.

Drafting is an exact science, involving pretty much line-by-line scrutiny of a document which is 200+ pages long.

So, I want to warn members that the process of drafting the new agreement can be lengthy, but we are working to have it completed as quickly as possible.

We will continue to update members about the progress of finalizing the new draft agreement for it to be put to a vote.

Please contact us to report workplace issues by calling on 9623 9623 or emailing us at enquiry@msav.org.au

In solidarity
Paul Elliott
Secretary

Positions not backfilled?

Let us know

Union Round Up

Bargaining at Epworth

The Union has some great news for members at Epworth!

The Fair Work Commission has approved the new agreement and it will come into force on Monday (14 February).

Members can find their [new agreement on our website here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Heidi at heidib@msav.org.au

Bargaining at St Vincent's Private

The St Vincent's Private agreement is going back out to ballot after it was defeated by a slim margin.

The Union understands that the new access period starts on Monday 14th February, however, we have not been told the dates for when the ballot will open and close.

The agreement will cover Allied Health which includes Dietitians and Medical scientists.

There are slight improvements to the offer, however the Union continues to believe that members should make up their own mind about the agreement and vote accordingly.

If you have any queries, please direct them to Heidi at heidib@msav.org.au

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.

Casual workers: Have you been offered casual conversion?

The National Employment Standards have changed to insert casual conversion provisions.

Employers were required to assess whether existing casual employees were eligible to be offered permanent employment under the new entitlements by *27 September 2021*.

If you are a casual employee, you should have received correspondence from your employer around this date, offering or denying permanent work.

If you work permanent hours and didn't receive this invitation, or you received advice that your employment would not be converted, get in touch if you would like support. Email enquiry@msav.org.au

Union wins on Superannuation

The Federal Government has finally passed legislation to remove the \$450 threshold to receive Superannuation contributions. The requirement to earn \$450 per month from one employer to receive superannuation payments will be scrapped from 1 July 2022.

Unions have long advocated for the removal of the threshold. We recognise it has unfairly disadvantaged low paid workers and led to poorer retirement outcomes.

This has disproportionately impacted women, particularly those carrying out essential yet still grossly underpaid work, in sectors such as aged care. These workers are more likely to be insecurely employed in casual and part-time roles, having to work with multiple employers just to make a living.

For too long, the \$450 threshold has seen them miss out entirely on receiving superannuation.

This decision is a win in the fight against job and income insecurity.

Public Holiday Pay

It seems some health services continue to be confused about what they are required to pay for public holidays under our agreement. The Union is chasing health services that continue to be confused about the wages they are required to pay under our agreement for public holidays, especially the ones over the Christmas and New Year period.

Here's how you should have been paid to cover the public holidays over the Christmas and New Year period, or for any public holiday for that matter.

For time worked on a public holiday occurring on a weekday, the pay rate is 200% of the normal rate. For time worked on public holidays on a weekend day, the rate is 250% of normal pay. For casuals, the loading is paid on top of these rates.

If you worked on both Christmas Days, both Boxing Days or both New Year's Days, you receive the weekend penalty for the actual day (not the public holiday rate) and the public holiday rate for the additional day.

If you work part of the day on a public holiday, you must receive a minimum of four hours pay at the public holiday rate.

For days not worked, it gets a bit more complex.

- Full-timers and part-timers who only work Monday-Friday get no benefit for a public holiday on a Saturday or Sunday.
- Full-timers and part-timers who only work Monday-Friday get a normal day's pay for a public holiday on a weekday that they would normally work.
- Full-timers who work the roster and have an RDO on a public holiday receive an additional day's pay or a day in lieu (your choice)

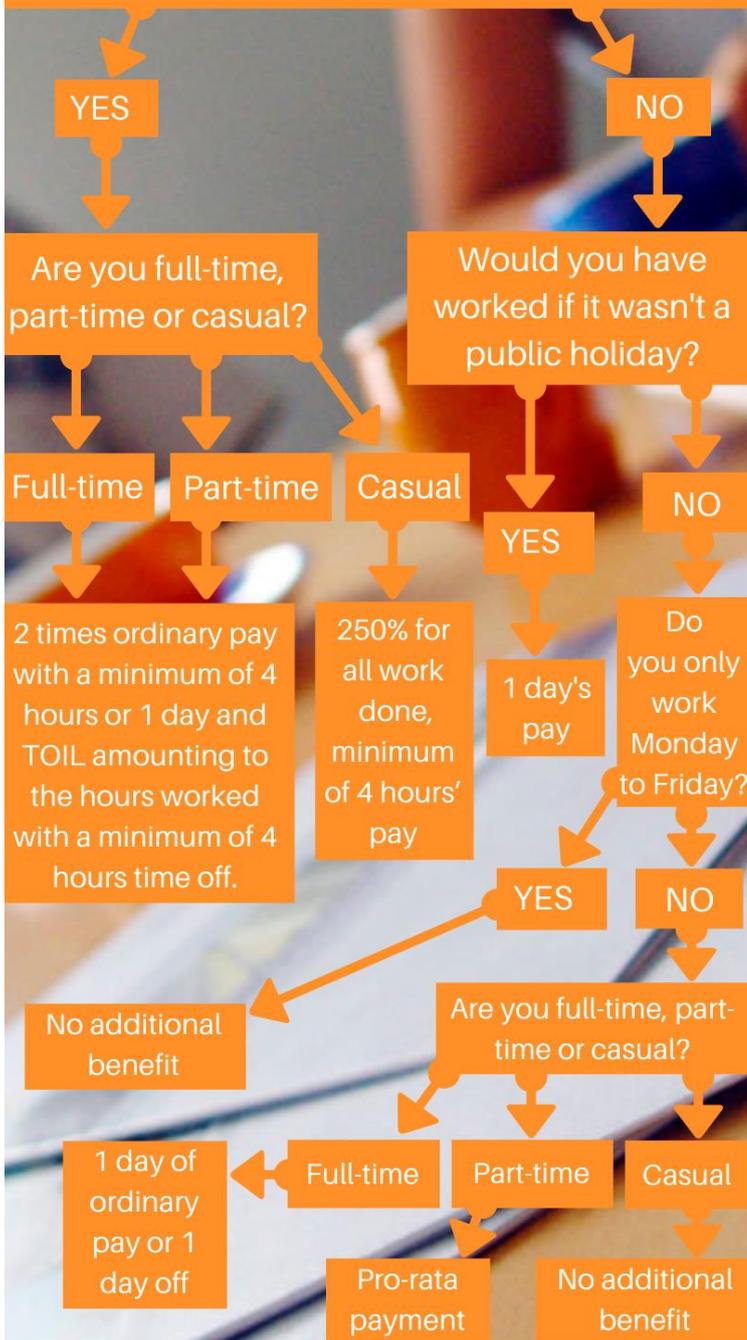
- Part-timers who work weekends get pro-rata pay according to the formula in the table for public holidays occurring on a day which they would not normally work.
- Part-timers who work **weekdays only** get pro-rata pay for weekday public holidays occurring on a day which they would not normally work
- Casuals receive no payment for not working on public holidays.

The flow chart below provides a visual representation.

This mostly applies to members working in the Public Sector, however, if you work in the Community and Private sectors the provisions are similar in many cases. If you're unsure as to whether you have been paid correctly for recent public holidays, please contact the Union at enquiry@msav.org.au

Public Holiday 2022 Payments

Did you work that day?



COVID-19 Vaccinations

With the Omicron variant rapidly spreading and the seemingly increasing threat it poses, the Union strongly supports members getting a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can; after all we support science and the science that's behind the vaccines.

There are special leave provisions available to help you get a COVID-19 vaccine, which we've covered in *Union Round Up*

Check out this great video from the Australian Academy of Science on what you need to know about COVID-19 vaccine - [COVID-19 vaccine: What you need to know](#)



The Australian Academy of Science has some great resources about COVID-19 and the vaccines, which you can access and share with your family and friends. [You can find those resources here.](#)

If you have any queries regarding the vaccine rollout and how it may impact you, please contact the Union at enquiry@msav.org.au

Contacting the Union

Members can ring the Union to seek support, advice and assistance with workplace issues.

MSAV: (03) 9623 9623

VPA: (03) 9623 9625

AHP: (03) 9623 9624

As always members can raise workplace issues by emailing the Union at enquiry@msav.org.au

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: Non-Indigenous Australians shouldn't fear a First Nations Voice to Parliament

"The 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart is one of the most significant documents on constitutional change in Australian history. The result of extensive consultation and debate, it explains how First Nations want to be included in the constitution.

Despite the enormous moral authority of the statement, its call for a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament was immediately rejected by then-Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. His successor, Scott Morrison, is also opposed.

Instead, Morrison has proposed a legislated Voice to Government. In December, his government published a report on how that might work. The Indigenous co-design group who worked on it was not allowed to consider whether the Voice should be put in the Constitution.

Opponents of the Voice to Parliament have used three main arguments. In a technical sense, they have claimed it will make our current Westminster system unworkable. Morally, they argue it is undemocratic and creates privilege for a specific group. And pragmatically, they have said the Voice is "not capable of winning acceptance in a referendum".

Read the entire article by Harry Hobbs and Benjamin T. Jones in The Conversation at:

<https://theconversation.com/non-indigenous-australians-shouldnt-fear-a-first-nations-voice-to-parliament-176675>

Worth Reading: Here comes the window dressing (Cheers, Biloela family!)

"The good news: I'm quietly confident the Biloela family will be "home to Bilo" before the election.

The bad news: They should have been there years ago.

The despicable news: The timing of their release is being delayed for political theatre, the staging of a "Liberal moderates acting tough, achieving change" pantomime.

Spoiler alert if you intend to watch the show, but it starts with "leaks" of Liberal moderates "working" to allow Priya, Nades, Kopika and Tharnicaa to return to the country town from which they were snatched in a dawn raid four years ago next month."

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

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/2022/02/09/michael-pascoe-window-dressing-biloela-family/>

Worth Reading: 15 things not to do when using a rapid antigen test, from storing in the freezer to sampling snot

"Many of us have taken a rapid antigen test (RAT) or have administered them to our school-aged children.

But how many of us are using them correctly?

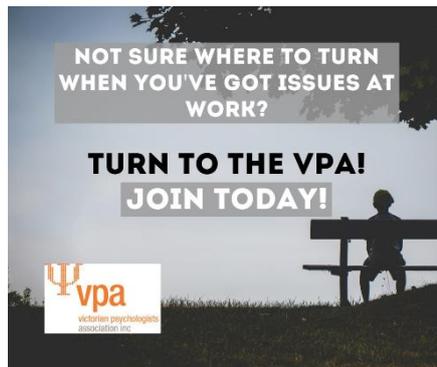
Here are 15 pitfalls to avoid if you want to get the most out of your RAT."

Read the entire article by Thea van de Mortel in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/15-things-not-to-do-when-using-a-rapid-antigen-test-from-storing-in-the-freezer-to-sampling-snot-176364>

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.