

Stat Report 2022/06

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An important change to OHS landscape

The Victorian Government committed to introduce regulations to address psychological health in May 2021.

This is a major and important change to the occupational health and safety (OHS) landscape. It is perhaps one of largest changes to OHS for a very long time.

The proposed regulations recognises that safe workplaces include the need to minimise psychological harm to workers; and that psychological injuries are as harmful as physical injuries.

The proposed regulations strengthen existing occupational health and safety requirements in Victorian workplaces which have long been designed to cater to risks that could cause physical harm to workers.

WorkSafe was tasked with preparing the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Psychological Health) Regulations.

The Union does have some reservations about the proposed new regulations. For example, there are some concerns around the limited number of reportable matters. The Union also has concerns about the thresholds needed before a workplace review is triggered.

While these are important issues for the Union, they do not negate the fact that the proposed regulations are quite significant and a massive step in the right direction to ensuring workplaces are just as safe from psychological injury as they are from physical injury.

The proposed regulations are now available for public comment.

Members can get more information about the proposed regulations along with details on how to make a submission at: [Proposed OHS Amendment \(Psychological Health\) Regulations | Engage Victoria](#)

Next week on Tuesday we celebrate International Women's Day.

It's a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender equity and equality.

This year the theme is Break the Bias.

Whether deliberate or unconscious, bias makes it difficult for women to move ahead. However, just knowing that bias exists isn't enough; action is needed to level the playing field.

We're encouraging as many members as possible to get involved and join the march on 8 March. There's more detail about <https://www.iwd22.com.au/>

Members are also encouraged to attend the Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA online conversation celebrating global solidarity and sisterhood on 7 March at 6:30pm. Members participating in the Zoom chat will be joined by Melbourne APHEDA activist Lisa Zanatta (CFMEU) and APHEDA partner Ou Tep Phallin (CFSWF), for a wide-ranging discussion about women's rights, activism and union campaigns in Cambodia.

Details and RSVP at: https://www.weareunion.org.au/apheda_international_solidarity

Finally, please make sure you contact us to report workplace issues by calling on 9623 9623 or emailing us at enquiry@msav.org.au

In solidarity
Paul Elliott
Secretary



Union Round Up

Proposal to merge 3 Community Health Services

We have received advice this week, that there is a proposal to voluntary amalgamate Connect, STAR and Central Bayside Community Health Services.

We have already reached out to all members to provide support and will be working with the community health services to provide representation throughout this process.

If members have any initial questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Lisa at lisa@msav.org.au

If you know a colleague who is not part of the union and who is impacted by this change, please share this information and encourage them to join to access support: www.msav.org.au

Change at Northpark Private Hospital

The Union received advice that there are going to be some changes at Northpark Private Hospital to accommodate construction activity.

The Emergency Department closure of Northpark only affects nurses but the renovations may affect psychologists, dietitians & sleep / respiratory scientists.

If you are going to be impacted by the proposed changes, please contact Heidi at heidib@msav.org.au

Monash Pharmacy Roster Changes

It has come to the Union's attention that there have been changes to rosters for pharmacists at Monash with less than 7 days notice.

Apparently, Monash Health is claiming that the change of rosters is as a result of an emergency but in some cases, members got more notice (3-4 days) which suggests it wasn't an emergency scenario and therefore they should pay change-of-roster allowance.

The Union is seeking information from pharmacists at Monash who had rosters changed with less than 7 days notice during the Code Brown. In particular, the Union wants to know; did shifts get changed and how much notice was received and whether the change-of-roster allowance was paid.

Please send information 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

International Women's Day 2022

On 8 March women around the world will unite to march for safety, respect and equality. International Women's Day - historically International Working Women's Day - is not about pink-washed girl-power corporate displays, but about taking action to demand change.

And this year, the patriarchy has met its match!

Sisters! (Not just cis-ters!) Join us for the Melbourne International Women's Day march! Bring your co-workers, your kids, and your friends (as well as your mask and your sanitiser). Let's organise for equality.

Details and RSVP at: <https://www.iwd22.com.au/>

Join Lisa from 5:30pm at the Old Treasury Building – look for the flags – to march with your union.

COVID-19 Vaccinations & Boosters

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.

We also strongly support members getting their booster shot as soon as possible.

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: COVID mask mandates might be largely gone but here are 5 reasons to keep wearing yours

"Mask mandates in most indoor settings have been dropped in New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT, with Queensland to follow later this week.

Without a mandate, mask use tends to drop, so we can expect only a minority of people to be masked in public indoor spaces.

With thousands of cases a day and just over half (57%) of Australians having received a third COVID vaccine dose and children still under-vaccinated, we may see a surge in infections.

While masks are a small inconvenience, they remain vital in preventing SARS-CoV-2, because the virus spreads through the air we breathe."

Read the entire article by C Raina MacIntyre in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/covid-mask-mandates-might-be-largely-gone-but-here-are-5-reasons-to-keep-wearing-yours-177824>

Worth Reading: We can't keep relying on charities and the food industry to supply food after disasters – the government must lead

"Australia is facing yet another "unprecedented" weather event as extreme flooding across Queensland and New South Wales submerges entire towns.

In the immediate aftermath, there's a new challenge for many Australians in these flood-ravaged areas. On top of damage to houses, livelihoods and water supply, it's hard to get food. Stores are running short of fresh food. Major supermarkets have been forced to introduce buying limits on some foods.

Empty supermarket shelves and temporary food shortages are becoming more common in Australia, due to disruptions in food supply related to the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather events.

Australia can expect to see extreme weather and disasters such as floods, heatwaves, bushfires and droughts become more common and worse, according to the latest report from the global authority, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That means food supplies will become disrupted more often and food will cost more."

Read the entire article by Rachel Carey, Leila Alexandra and Maureen Murphy in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/we-can-t-keep-relying-on-charities-and-the-food-industry-to-supply-food-after-disasters-the-government-must-lead-178215>

Worth Reading: Still 'Waiting for Gonski' – a great book about the sorry tale of school funding

"You may think "not another article on school funding". But this important story has to be told and the book, Waiting For Gonski: how Australia failed its schools, should be read by every parent, economist and Australian committed to "the fair go".

The title is apt and who would have thought a book on school funding would be a riveting read? Authors Tom Greenwell and Chris Bonnor have all the angles covered."

Read the entire article by Rachel Wilson in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/still-waiting-for-gonski-a-great-book-about-the-sorry-tale-of-school-funding-178016>

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.