



Stat Report 2019/07

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Monash Health; the tip of the iceberg

It seems there is now a flood of reports and studies all pointing to the fact that there is an over-reliance on unpaid work in order to keep vital clinical services like pathology functioning in public hospitals.

It's quite simple: there is a shortage of medical scientists in Victoria.

It's a shortage that is affecting the entire country and it's one that the Victorian government knew was coming since 2001. But despite the years of the Union pointing out the shortage, pointing out the extreme over reliance on unpaid work, the massive explosion in workloads; the harm of privatisation and the cuts to the scientific workforce, the Victorian Government continues to think everything is fine.

Take the current situation at Monash Health.

Through independent research, and a thorough in-depth review, it has been shown quite clearly and without equivocation that there needs to be another 30 scientists employed to ease workloads and ensure the highest standard of patient safety is maintained. Despite the hard evidence, Monash Health went to the Fair Work Commission and said that they had never agreed that there was a shortage or that they would employ more scientists.

Just this week there has been more reporting about the huge workloads and expectations to do unpaid work in the health sector. What's happening at Monash Health is only the tip of the iceberg.

Across the entire health sector there are severe shortages of medical scientists and the expectation that medical scientists will keep doing more work without additional staff is finally being challenged. And rightly so since medical scientists are living with the ridiculous expectation by hospital managements that they will do unpaid work which is in effect wage theft.

There's also the lack of respect for medical scientists and the contribution they make to our health system. There's the inescapable sense, fostered by hospital managements, that you're not a professional unless you're working ridiculous hours and getting through ridiculously large workloads. Plus there's the added pressure of treating doctors ringing furiously about delayed results. And if you're suffering a workplace injury as a result, management doesn't seem to care and don't seek to backfill vacancies. They just expect everyone else to pick up the additional work.

With all the research pointing to the crisis facing medical pathology laboratories in Victoria, you'd expect that public hospitals' managements and their boards would be feverishly working hard to secure the funding needed to avert this crisis. You'd also expect the Victorian Government, whose agencies have undertaken the research pointing to the crisis, would be more proactive in averting the crisis. But what we find is the exact opposite. We have public hospitals' managements and the Victorian Government wringing their hands and claiming there isn't enough funding to properly protect the health and well-being of scientists, which by extension means they also don't have the funding to properly protect patient safety. We're told that allied health is vital but we're never given the funding needed or the respect that is deserved; all we're given are excuses about why funding is not available. But they expect the work to be done regardless of the damage it's doing to scientists or the harm that may befall a patient.

That's why we're fighting so hard at Monash Health to not only expose the crisis facing pathology but to address the gross under-staffing of medical pathology laboratories.

So what now?

- Members at Monash Health are urged to keep going and remain firm on your actions to date – do not accept extra shifts or overtime – continue taking your breaks and leaving on time and so on. We know all this is having an effect so don't stop!
- Report your concerns about occupational health and safety via email to Kevin Ericksen k.ericksen@monashhealth.org and CC enquiry@msav.org.au
- Talk to your OH&S reps about action you can take to address the dangerous workloads
- Where necessary put in a Riskman report since it's vital we report all hazards through formal channels

Most importantly, don't back down from your right to a safe work environment. Monash Health's strategy is to continue to deny there are issues and to tell the government that everything is fine.

Monash Health's management is relying on the fact that concern for patient safety is so high that you'll compromise your health and safety and do unpaid work. And this is not just the experience at Monash Health, this is an invasive workplace culture across medical pathology laboratories in the public and private health sectors.

Please stand with members at Monash Health and send your messages of support to enquiry@msav.org.au or leave them on [our Facebook page](#).

Paul Elliott
Secretary

Bargaining Update

Dorevitch

More than eleven years after the expiry of the last enterprise agreement covering scientists and technicians at Dorevitch, a new draft agreement is out for your consideration.

Whilst not perfect, all in all it is good enough for MSAV to recommend a “yes” vote to members.

What's in the agreement?

The agreement is broadly a consolidation and modernisation of the old Mayne Health Agreement that has covered most members since 2004.

Conditions are protected and a healthy pay rise is delivered that will bring Dorevitch members back into the same ball park as other pathology employers.

What's the payrise?

The agreement delivers a 22% pay rise between now and 2022.

Instalments are as follows:

- 12% payable in the first pay period on or after a positive vote.
- 12 Months thereafter: A further 4% in the first pay period on or after that date;
- 24 Months thereafter: A further 3% in the first pay period on or after that date.
- 36 months thereafter: A further 3% in the first pay period on or after that date

These increases are based on the current Dorevitch “company” rates, so they may be different for some scientists at Western Health.

Salary based allowances will also be increased by the same percentages. Additionally, there will a \$5000 lump sum payment, pro-rata for part-timers, payable upon a positive vote. The \$5000 will also be paid pro-rata (on a monthly basis) for employees with less than one year's employment with Dorevitch.

Changes to conditions

Changes to conditions (based on the Mayne Health Agreement) are minimal with key entitlements protected.

- Conditions such as shift allowances, on call / recall rates, overtime rates all stay consistent with previous entitlements
- Five days Family and Domestic Violence leave has been included.
- Other leave entitlements stay effectively unchanged.

The Timeline

The proposed agreement is now available for member consideration. Please have a look over it.

- The consideration period will continue until Tuesday the 12th of March
- The voting period will commence on Wednesday the 13th of March and continue until the 20th of March. Voting will be conducted on line.
- If there is a successful “yes’ vote, the agreement will be forwarded to the Fair Work Commission for their approval.

For members at Western and in Gippsland

For members in Gippsland and at the Western, there may be some clauses that affect you differently to other staff due to previously different entitlements. More information will come out in the next few days explaining how the agreement affects you specifically.

Members meetings

A members meeting has been arranged for 12 noon this Friday in Heidelberg.

More meeting will be arranged for bigger labs in the coming days. To give members in smaller and more remote labs the opportunity to have your say, we will arrange a phone hookup early next week.

[Want to know more?](#)

Send an email to enquiry@msav.org.au or call us on 9623 9623

St Vincent's

After a conciliation in the Fair Work Commission. St Vincent's Health has agreed that the position of quality manager in pathology (however titled) is properly classified under the public sector EBA as a Scientist Grade 4. This is after having called the position a 'Quality Coordinator' and paying at Grade 3 for a number of years.

As a result of the conciliation in the Commission, the current incumbent will be upgraded from Grade 3 to Grade 4 and previous the incumbent will receive back pay.

Another example that it always pays to be a member of the Union.

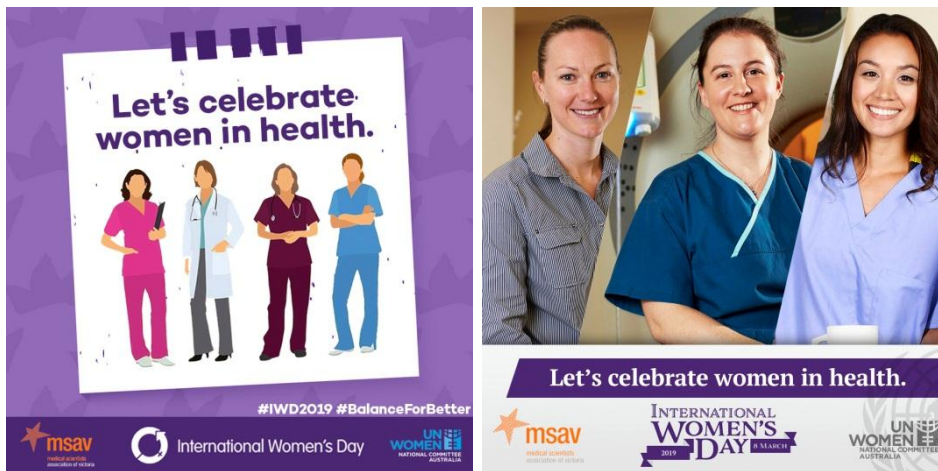
International Women's Day

March 8 (today) is International Women's Day with this year's theme being about balance.

It's a great theme because it's something the Union talks about with great regularity, especially working to ensure we enjoy a better work-life balance. It's also a great theme because it speaks to our issues of under-staffing across allied health. To ensure a better balance in our healthcare system we must ensure allied health is as well funded as the rest of the health system.

We also want to take this opportunity to celebrate the massive contribution that women make to our world-class healthcare system. We know the vital work women do and the huge difference it makes each and every day.

And to celebrate International Women's Day we've produced a couple of social media graphics you can use to celebrate the day too.



Researching Pay Equity

The Union is teaming up with RMIT to undertake research into pay equity.

The research project will help shed a light on the growing concerns about pay equity in Victoria's health services. This isn't just about the growing gap in pay but also to look at what happens to pay equity when women work part-time or casual; and what happens after returning to work from maternity leave or the transition to retirement.

Ethics approval has now been received for the proposed Gender Equity Research being undertaken by RMIT University and Monash University. Funding was locked in last year, but it has taken a long time to finalise the survey instrument and then get ethics approval.

The research aims to produce important empirical data on gender equality between men and women employed in the Victorian public health services in classifications covered by our union including medical scientists, dietitians, physicists, clinical perfusionsists, pharmacists and

psychologists. The research is aimed whether there is gender equality in relation to pay and position and what factors contribute to gender equality or inequality. The research methodology will include a survey of everyone employed in these classifications across 10 health services.

Ethical approval for this project applies at the following public health services

- Alfred Health
- Austin Health
- Eastern Health
- Goulburn Valley Health
- Melbourne Health
- Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute
- Royal Children's Hospital
- Monash Health
- St Vincent's Hospital
- Victorian Clinical Genetics Service

There are still a few bureaucratic hurdles to be overcome before the survey can be sent out. The survey is confidential and is to be returned directly to the researchers.

We are expecting that you will receive the survey in the second half of April – and we urge everyone to complete it. It should provide great data and insights; and support the work of the Union in its lobbying and advocacy work.

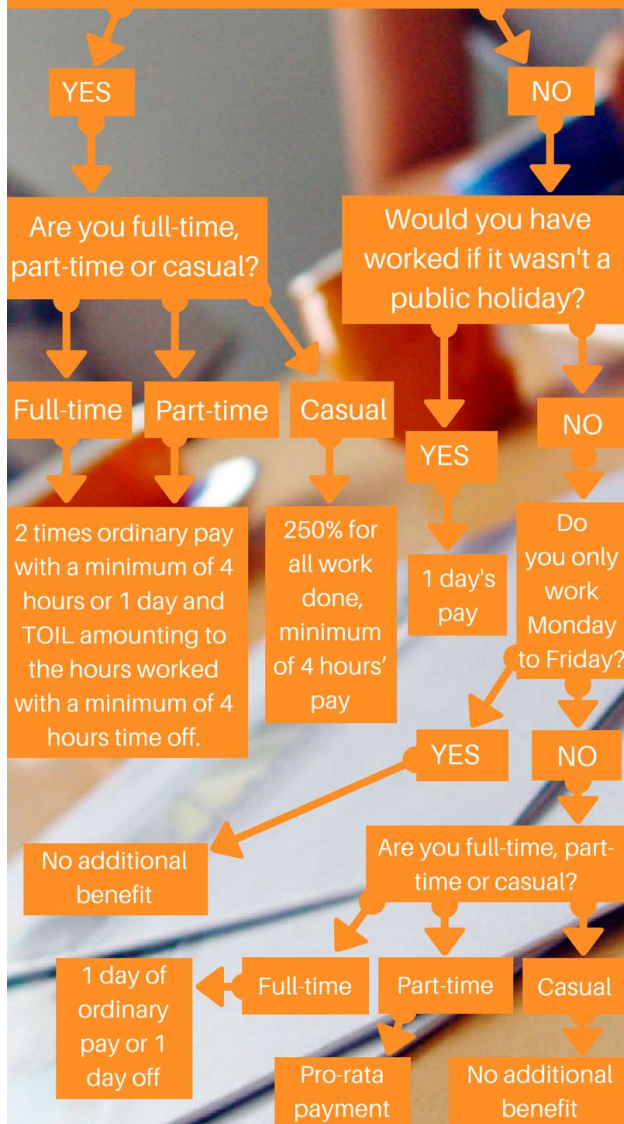
Public Holiday Pay

On Monday, Victorians will be enjoying Labour Day. It also means that with a public holiday comes public holiday pay. With the new public sector agreement in place, the graphic below outlines how your public holiday pay will be determined. It covers the majority of circumstances but it won't cover everything, especially if you work across more than one public health service.



Public Holiday 2018 Payments

Did you work that day?



If you're unsure about how your public holiday pay works, or you work in the private or community health sectors call the Union on 9623 9623 or via enquiry@msav.org.au

Productivity Commission inquiry into Mental Health

The Productivity Commission is undertaking an inquiry to examine the effectiveness of the spending on mental health. Make sure you have your say and make a submission or you can make a comment. The deadline for initial submissions is 5 April.

You can find the terms of reference and how to make a submission at:

<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health>

Positions not backfilled?

Let us know

The Zelda D'Aprano Activist Award

Each year the Victorian Union movement recognises and reflects on the activism of unionist Zelda D'Aprano, whose courage, determination and no holds barred direct action changed history for working women in Australia.

Know a union woman who is making change through activism? Nominate them for the Zelda D'Aprano Activist Award! Nominations close on 29 March.

You can find all the details and how to nominate at: <https://www.unionwomen.org.au/zelda-award19>

Victorian Mental Health Royal Commission

The Victorian Government has established a Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System with the terms of reference being recently finalised and announced. And now that the terms of reference have been announced, along with the names of the Commissioners, the Royal Commission's work will begin in earnest.

This is a major Royal Commission upon which the outcomes will provide direction for mental health care in Victoria for the foreseeable future. It is a unique opportunity for the Union to draw together the expertise and experience of members to address a growing issue in our communities. As such the VPA Inc. is looking to appoint someone on a fixed term contract to assist in the preparation and production of the Union's submission to the Royal Commission.

More details about this fixed term contract will be outlined in the next edition of STAT Report.

In the meantime you can check out the Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission at: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/royal-commission-mental-health-terms-of-reference>

Change the Rules Campaign – National Protest

We have a crisis of insecure work and low wages in this country and Scott Morrison's Liberals are to blame.

That's why on 10 April we're taking to the streets with a national political protest for fair wage rises and better job security.

The Morrison Government has overseen the largest decline in living standards in 30 years. We need to take to the streets in HUGE numbers in cities all over the country to stand up for the fair go.

[Sign up for details and reminders](#)

Other Campaign Activities

There are lots of different activities you can join to help Change the Rules at this year's federal election and they're taking place all across Victoria. You can find out what activities are on by visiting <http://www.weareunion.org.au/when>

Join our one of organising groups to work on activities in our workplaces and neighbourhoods on Facebook

MSAV members – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/348061059362550/>

VPA members – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/361680581227455/>
AHP members – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/376346993187375/>

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: The workplace challenge facing Australia (spoiler alert – it's not technology)

"With all the hype around the future of work, you could be forgiven for thinking the biggest issue in the future of employment is the impending takeover of your job by a robot or an algorithm.

Talk about the workplace of the future has become fixated on technological displacement almost to the point of hysteria. There is little doubt that technological development will change the way we work, as it has in the past.

But for most Australians the reality will be much less dramatic. The biggest changes in the working lives of Australians over the past 20 years have arguably not been technological – few of us are sending our avatars to meetings or writing code.

Many of us are, however, lamenting the paradox of feeling overworked yet, at the same time, insecure in our employment. A significant proportion contend with [record low wages growth](#). Others remain [less than fully employed](#).

Some will say that the rate of insecure or non-permanent work has remained fairly constant over the past two decades. This belies the lived experience of workers. They have repeatedly been found to perceive their connections to the workplace and labour market as [precarious](#) and [laden with personal risk](#)."

Read the entire article by Sarah Kaine in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/the-workplace-challenge-facing-australia-spoiler-alert-its-not-technology-111492>

Worth Reading: Our culture of overtime is costing us dearly

"The story of [Yumiko Kadota](#), whose gruelling schedule as [a Sydney hospital](#) registrar included clocking up more than 100 hours of overtime in her first month, has highlighted the punishing work schedules required in the medical profession.

Research indicates working more than 48 hours a week is associated with significant declines in productivity, more mistakes and more mental health problems. Yet the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons [reckons](#) working up to 65 hours a week "is appropriate for trainees to gain the knowledge and experience required".

It's an attitude that explains why a 2017 [audit](#) found more than 70% of surgeons in public hospitals were working unsafe hours. And it's symptomatic of many areas where pushing the hours envelope is seen as part of the job.

Last month, for example, a [study](#) by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau found almost one in four long-haul pilots reported working on less than five hours of sleep in the previous 24 hours – putting them in the risk zone where fatigue leads to impaired performance."

Read the entire article by Joshua Krook in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/our-culture-of-overtime-is-costing-us-dearly-110566>

Worth Reading: No matter your skin colour, all non-Indigenous Australians are complicit in colonialism

"A few years ago I embarked on a 30,000km solo road trip around Australia. Like many first-generation Sydneysiders, I knew next to nothing about the far-flung lands beyond my city's limits and had only a threadbare understanding of the country's diverse Indigenous cultures.

What I was aware of was the great tensions that underscored Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. But at the time I was riding a rising wave of contemporary identity politics and, as a Chinese Australian woman, I eagerly flew the flag of a minority person. How could I possibly be a colonial oppressor when I belonged to the oppressed?

What the following six months taught me was that being a card-carrying member of one club didn't give me a free pass into another."

Read the entire article by Monica Tan in The Guardian at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/04/no-matter-your-skin-colour-all-non-indigenous-australians-are-complicit-in-colonialism>

Worth Reading: Beware of groupthink on why the economy's so weak

"According to our top econocrats, the underlying cause of the economy's greatest vulnerability – weak real wage growth – is obvious: weak improvement in productivity. But I fear they've got that the wrong way round.

We all agree that, in a well-functioning economy, the growth in wage rates exceeds the rise in prices by a percentage point or two each year. On average over a few years, this "real" growth in wages is not inflationary, but is justified by the improvement in the productivity of the workers' labour.

If this real growth in wages doesn't happen, then real growth in gross domestic product will be chronically weak. That's because consumer spending accounts for about 60 per cent of GDP."

Read the entire article by Ross Gittins in the Sydney Morning Herald at: <https://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/beware-of-groupthink-on-why-the-economy-s-so-weak-20190303-p511fl.html>

Worth Reading: Equal pay was won by sausage factories 50 years ago, but it didn't close the gender gap

"On International Women's Day, women are marking 50 years since the Meat Industry Employees Union ran the first major national case for equal pay in Australia, largely on behalf of its female sausage-linkers.

At the time, meat-trimming and packing work was favoured by migrant women and those wanting a factory job that finished in time to get home to care for children after school.

Ironically, a decade earlier it had been the same employers who fought against the unions in

order to allow women onto the factory floor because of labour shortages, arguing women "do not tend to become bored and restless so easily" with sausage-linking work.

The union put up a fight in 1959, but when they lost in the arbitration commission, it actually gave them the legal precedent they needed in 1969 to run the equal pay case."

Read the entire article by Alison Branley in the ABC at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-08/international-women-day-marks-equal-pay-campaign-anniversary/10874882>

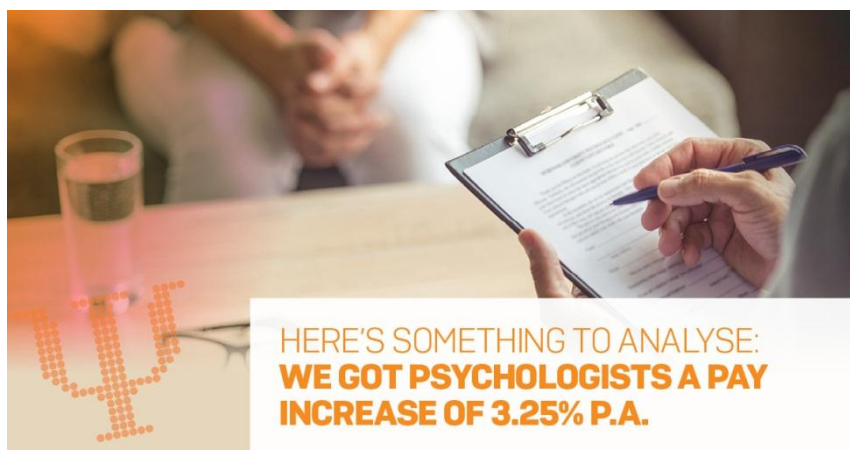
Join the Union

Are your workloads increasing? Are your stress levels increasing? Are you doing longer hours at work? Join the Union today!

To protect our professions and stand up for our rights at work 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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[Share on Facebook](#)



[Share on Facebook](#)

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](#)

Get the most out of the Union's website

The Union's website has a number of special features for members. These features, like the Members section and the Forums, require you to have a log-in and password.

But to ensure that your privacy is protected we have created the website in such a way that you will need a separate log-in and password for the Members section and the Forums section. It might seem to be inconvenient but it does better protect you and your private information. It also means that we can be more certain about the source of a hack if such an event is ever to arise.

Australian Unions Member Benefits app

Over the last month Australian Unions launched some new and exclusive Member Benefits - did you see our recent email telling you about this? If not, check your inbox! Search for "Lifestyle Rewards" for your login code.

Our 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. If you have not got a login and would like join in [register for Member Benefits now.](#)



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