



Stat Report 2020/01

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Welcome to the New Decade

Welcome to the new decade, although it has been quite a frightening and unnerving start.

Firstly, the HSU#4, MSAV, VPA and AHP Committees and staff pass on our thoughts to all members and their families who have been affected by the bushfires which have wreaked and continue to wreak such devastation across our country. In particular we are thinking of members who have lost loved ones or properties in the fires.

And we pass on our thanks and appreciation to all members who have been involved in fighting the fires or in emergency relief services, or assisting in any way.

The Victorian union movement has been meeting and is working out how it can best respond to the crisis and is actively considering what support can be provided. We already know the fire affected communities will need a variety of support once the rebuild commences.

We are working with the Victorian Trades Hall Council to collect a list of people who can help. If you can help build a fence, cook and serve food, handle hazardous material, drive a bus/truck or volunteer your time [please fill out this short form](#). There are already 800 unionists across Victoria who have pledged their expertise when it comes time to rebuild our local communities. Or you can [make a donation](#) – those working on the front line are telling us that they need money right now and don't need donations of goods at this time.

The Union will continue to work with the Victorian Trades Hall Council and unions across Victoria to provide as much assistance as possible to people in fire affected regions.

As these meetings are taking place it is important to not forget that the bushfire crisis we are experiencing is a result of climate change; and made worse by the failure of our political leaders to implement outcomes from the numerous enquiries and royal commissions into bushfires. As a Union we firmly believe that climate change is having an impact on us right now; and is leading to poorer physical and mental health outcomes. We must invest in a national strategy to deal with the increasing health impacts of climate change; and we need to take immediate action to address climate change.

And while there is an ongoing failure of leadership offered by the Scott Morrison and the Coalition, it is good to see that the Australian Greens and the Australian Labor Party have not abandoned the need to take strong, immediate action on climate change and work to mitigate the impacts we're already experiencing. You can read [Labor's statement about the need to protect people's health and well-being](#) which is in line with the joint statement the Union signed with the Climate and Health Alliance (and others) before the summer break about concerns around air quality in NSW and the impacts on people's health and well-being.

The Union won't shy away from talking about climate change and the current crisis; or that immediate action is needed if we are to avert the worst impacts of climate change. That's why we encourage members to support and [attend the rally on Saturday at the State Library from 2pm to 4pm.](#)

As we look to the rest of the year and what's in store, we already know it's going to be busy.

The Union will continue to press for compliance with our agreements especially in areas related to workloads and the failure by many health services to backfill positions in a timely manner. The sheer degree and amount of unpaid work being performed continues to illustrate the failure of health services to take staff shortages and their health and well-being seriously. The Union will be working with members to continue to lobby the Victorian government to address the huge shortfalls in staff numbers across all of our disciplines. And with the current environmental disaster befalling our state, the staff shortages are likely to make recovery slower for those seeking treatment.

We are finalising the *No Pay? No Way! Report 2019* which we hope to circulate to members towards the end of January. The report so far confirms that health services are continuing to ignore the crisis facing our disciplines and still believe that they are able to maintain the level and quality of services as demand explodes while staff numbers have stagnated and vacancies remain unfilled. And it is showing that there are significant concerns about the high workloads and the impact this is having on members' physical and mental health and well-being.

2020 also means that we will commence the next round of public sector bargaining for a new agreement. It only seems like last year that we secured the last public sector agreement. But to make sure we're well prepared for bargaining, we are starting to build a survey to circulate to public sector members. We will kick off our member survey shortly to be followed by workplace member meetings immediately after. Make sure you let us have your thoughts and ideas for claims and priorities over the next few months.

This year is going to be another big year for the Union and we look forward to working with you to make it another successful year.

Paul Elliott
Secretary

Union Round Up

Bushfires – Leave Entitlements

Members employed in the public and community health sectors, Forensicare and the Australian Red Cross Blood Service are entitled to unlimited PAID emergency services leave if they are members of the CFA, SES or similar organisations, under the provisions that the Union has negotiated in the relevant EBAs. There is no limit on the period of paid leave that may be taken.

The only caveat is that the employers can refuse time release where it will adversely affect their operations but we would be astounded if any of the employers used this provision to refuse paid leave under the circumstances. Under the National Employment Standards all members who are not entitled to paid emergency services leave under their EBA are entitled to unpaid leave where they are engaged in a voluntary emergency management activity involving an emergency or natural disaster, including firefighting. But you will have to make sure that you advise your employer as soon as practicable that you will be taking emergency services leave.

Bushfires – Hardship

We understand that some members may find themselves in hardship due to bushfire related circumstances. We want to make sure that you don't have to worry about the small but important things. If you're affected by the bushfires and experiencing hardship please reach out to us and we will provide what assistance we can.

Email on enquiry@msav.org.au or call us on 9623 9623.

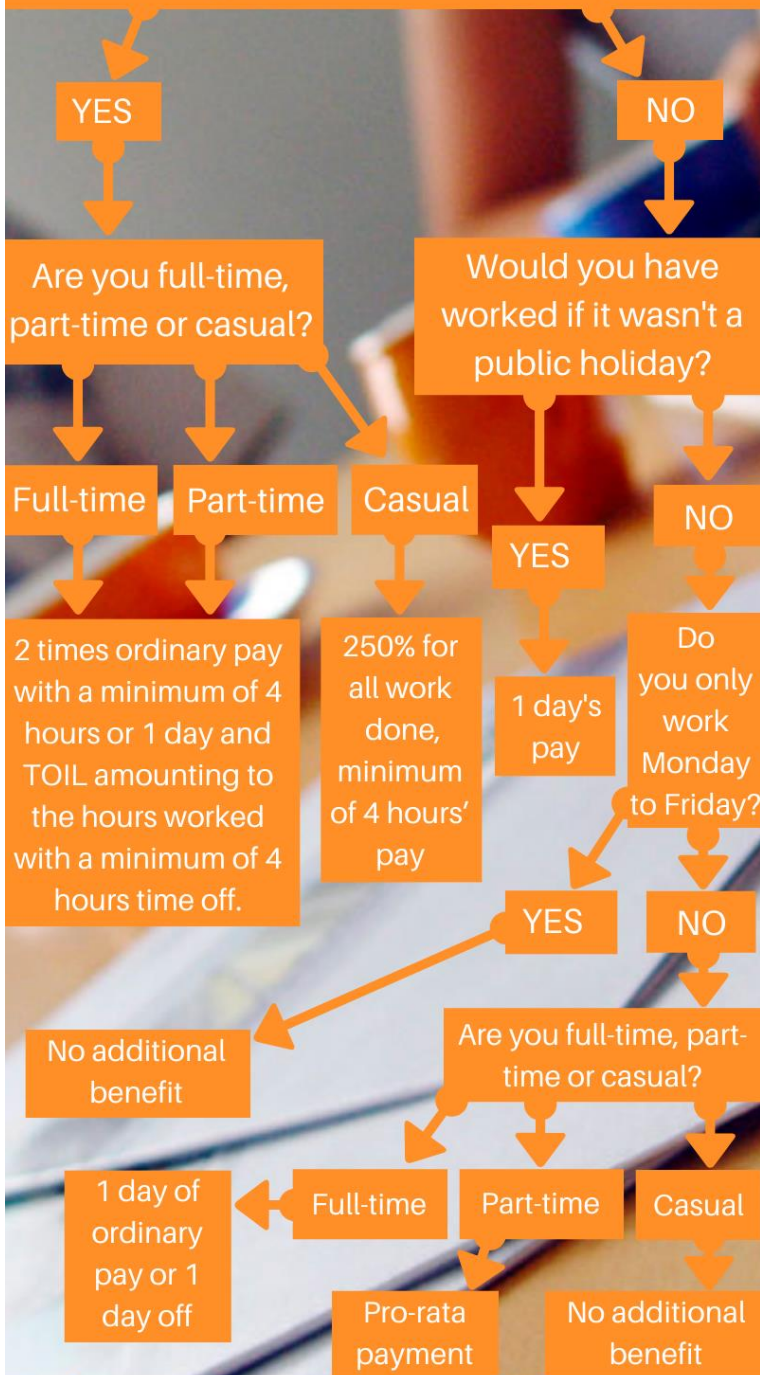
Public Holiday Pay

It's the new year which means there's been some public holidays and there's a public holiday coming up later in January, which means you need to know what your public holiday pay entitlements. It's important to know if you've been properly paid for the public holidays.

To make sure you know what your entitlements are and whether you've been properly paid, use the flowchart below. The flow chart applies mostly to public sector members so if you have any questions about your public holiday pay and you work in the community or private sectors, please contact the Union on 9623 9623 or at enquiry@msav.org.au

Public Holiday 2020 Payments

Did you work that day?



Positions not backfilled?

Let us know

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: When air quality is bad what helps (and what doesn't) reduce smoke in your home

"Rooms reeking of smoke, alarms going off due to the visible haze inside your home, waking up in the middle of the night smelling smoke in the air.

Australia's bushfire crisis is [affecting air quality](#) and the wellbeing of many of us. Smoke haze has been blanketing many parts of the country, including some of our major population centres - Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and other capitals.

So we asked the experts about some of the things you can do to try and keep your home smoke-free.

Here are their responses to common questions."

Read the entire article by Suzannah Lyons from the ABC at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-01-11/keeping-your-home-smoke-free/11857898>

Worth Reading: Car accidents, drownings, violence: hotter temperatures will mean more deaths from injury

"What we suspected is now official: 2019 was Australia's hottest year on record. The country's average maximum temperature last year ([30.69°C](#)) was a scorching [2.09°C](#) hotter than the 1961-1990 average.

For the whole planet, 2019 is expected to come in second (behind 2016) making the last five years the hottest on record since 1880.

As we brace for increasingly hot summers, we are mindful extreme heat can pose significant health risks for vulnerable groups. But the effects of heat on the incidence of accidents and injury are less clear.

In research published today in [Nature Medicine](#), researchers in the United States looked at the impact warmer temperatures will have on deaths from injury. They found if average temperatures warmed by 1.5°C, we could expect to see 1,600 more deaths each year across the US.

Given Australia is ahead of the [global temperature curve](#), we could see an even greater number of deaths from injury per capita as a result of rising temperatures."

Read the entire article by Liz Hanna in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/car-accidents-drownings-violence-hotter-temperatures-will-mean-more-deaths-from-injury-129628>

Worth Reading: 4½ myths about sunscreen and why they're wrong

"Many Australians are [reluctant to use sunscreen](#), even though it's an important element in preventing the skin cancers that affect about [two in three of us](#) at some time in our lives.

The Cancer Council [says](#) myths about sunscreens contribute to this reluctance.

Here are 4½ sunscreen myths and what the evidence really says. Confused about the ½? Well, it's a myth most of the time, but sometimes it's true."

Read the entire article by Katie Lee and Monika Janda in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/4-myths-about-sunscreen-and-why-theyre-wrong-125879>

Worth Reading: Viral stories of wombats sheltering other wildlife from the bushfires aren't entirely true

"If you've been following the bushfire crisis on social media and elsewhere, you may have seen reports of [benevolent wombats](#) herding other animals to shelter into their fire-proof burrows.

These stories went quickly viral – probably reflecting the appetite for good news after the horrors of the bushfire crisis. However the accounts are not entirely accurate.

Wombats do not heroically round up helpless animals during a bushfire and lead them to safety. But wombats do help other animals in a different way – even if it's not their intention."

Read the entire article by Dale Nimmo on The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/tales-of-wombat-heroes-have-gone-viral-unfortunately-theyre-not-true-129891>

Worth Reading: A life of long weekends is alluring, but the shorter working day may be more practical

"When Microsoft gave its 2,300 employees in Japan [five Fridays off in a row](#), it found productivity jumped 40%.

When financial services company Perpetual Guardian in New Zealand trialled [eight Fridays off in a row](#), its 240 staff reported feeling more committed, stimulated and empowered.

Around the world there's renewed interest in reducing the standard working week. But a question arises. Is instituting the four-day week, while retaining the eight-hour workday, the best way to reduce working hours?

Arguably, retaining the five-day week but cutting the working day to seven or six hours is a better way to go."

Read the entire article by Anthony Veal in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/a-life-of-long-weekends-is-alluring-but-the-shorter-working-day-may-be-more-practical-127817>

Worth Reading: Biodiversity and our brains: how ecology and mental health go together in our cities

"Mental health in our cities is an increasingly urgent issue. Rates of disorders such as [anxiety and depression are high](#). Urban design and planning can promote mental health by refocusing on [spaces we use in our everyday lives](#) in light of what research tells us about the benefits of exposure to nature and biodiversity.

Mental health issues have [many causes](#). However, the changing and unpredictable elements of our physical and sensory environments have a profound impact on [risk, experiences and recovery](#).

Physical activity is still the mainstay of urban planning efforts to enable healthy behaviours. Mental well-being is then a hoped-for byproduct of opportunities for exercise and social interaction."

Read the entire article by Zoe Myers in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/biodiversity-and-our-brains-how-ecology-and-mental-health-go-together-in-our-cities-126760>

Worth Reading: Virtual reality may be the next frontier in remote mental health care

"In recent years, experts have focused on finding better ways to improve remotely delivered mental health care.

Now, virtual reality (VR) may pave the way for myriad new opportunities.

Using VR for remote therapy involves conducting "face-to-face" sessions in a virtual environment. This mode of treatment could make counselling more accessible to those living and working remotely.

My colleagues and I published [a paper](#) exploring VR's potential in providing counselling for people in regional areas.

While face-to-face therapy remains the optimal treatment method, we discovered VR-based therapy was more effective than Skype-based counselling."

Read the entire article by Dr Shiva Pedram in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/virtual-reality-may-be-the-next-frontier-in-remote-mental-health-care-129187>

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 one of the images below on Facebook.



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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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