



Stat Report 2020/03

In this issue of STAT Report we cover:

- Public health workforce neglected
- Union Round Up
- Public Holiday Pay
- Union Bushfire Appeal
- MSAV members taking on Coronavirus
- Women's Rights at Work Festival
- Campaign Corner
- Worth Reading
- Member Benefits

Public health workforce neglect

It won't come as a surprise to many to learn that there is a crisis in the sciences, allied health and pharmacist workforces in Victoria.

All the research points to one thing – there is a crisis in the medical scientists workforce with not nearly enough scientists available to fulfil the required work; or to deal with the continued growth and demand on pathology services. There are not enough psychologists, pharmacists, audiologists, dietitians, medical physicists and the list goes on. Without these workforces being adequately staffed Victorians are not going to get the world-class healthcare they should expect. It's not possible to get more work out of people who are already over-worked and burned out from extreme workloads; coupled with the failure to recognise the need to employ more people.

This research supports the most recent research by RMIT University in the Bartram report, which confirms the research the Union has been independently doing since 2011; and again confirms the results from our 2019 survey.

The Department's own commissioned independent workforce report (published in Feb 2019) on Medical Laboratory Science found understaffing of pathology laboratories is a widespread issue with "*frequent reports of increased overtime, high levels of stress, fatigue and burnout*" for scientists. The DHHS is maintaining a dogmatic refusal to engage genuinely with the MSAV to discuss the report – it is being buried!

For dietitians the research highlights key areas of concern included inadequate resourcing to meet the increasing prevalence of obesity and diabetes; and the lack of funding and changes in funding models resulting in dietitians not providing services to all of those who would benefit from seeing them. A recurrent theme in the research of the dietetics workforce was an absence of career development opportunities and difficulty in securing permanent employment. Career pathways are not clear and a lack of post-graduate training pathways and opportunities were highlighted. Despite working in a clinical role, 30% of dietitians had no clinical supervisor and highlighted the need for early career graduates to be supported. No one working as a dietitian will be surprised by the research outcomes or the work done by the Union which have highlighted these very concerns over a number of years.

For audiologists the concerns are very similar to dietitians. There are poor opportunities for career progression and senior roles are scarce and career pathways are not clear and a lack of publicly-funded services in the community, particularly in regional areas and Indigenous communities. There is a need to better support audiologists in coping with reforms arising from government inquiries into the industry, changing funding arrangements (particularly the introduction of the NDIS), and the possibility of tighter regulatory arrangements. And the research noted there was a strong recurrent theme in the need to provide more opportunities for career progression and recognition.

There is a lack of appropriately funded and graded positions within the community to meet the needs of clients and there are not enough psychologists working across the public health sector. The VPA has been doing significant work around workforce issues especially around ensuring there is a large enough workforce to deal with the growing demand for mental health care, and the results of this research shows the VPA has been successful. Research does indicate that there is a need for clearer career development pathways including continuing professional development opportunities, mentorship and opportunities to undertake research were identified. It has also been revealed that there is the need to review the impact of privatisation and fee-for-service payments on the workforce, the understanding of supervision, peer consultation and mentoring. This is not surprising given how frequently the VPA has to intervene and ensure that members have access to supervision. It's also extremely frustrating and disappointing that health services fail to understand the value and significance that supervision, peer consultation and mentoring provides psychologists in delivering world-class mental health care.

What all of this research says, and again reinforced by the results from the 2019 *No Pay? No Way!* Survey, is that there has been massive neglect of the scientific, allied health and pharmacist workforces to the detriment of patients and the people working across these services. Successive Governments of both persuasions have wilfully neglected vital aspects of Victoria's health care system by failing to properly fund our workforces.

The sheer impact of this neglect can be seen in the comments members left in the most recent *No Pay? No Way!* Survey including:

"Extra work is done to complete patient care-related tasks. And this is often done by cutting breaks short, or having meals at the desk while working. Of course it feels uncomfortable to say no if tasks are urgent and timely completion benefits patient outcome. Due to short staffing, my preferred leave was not able to be given and this caused turmoil in my family life."

"Sometimes management tells us we must leave on time but gives us an impossibly large work load to complete it within time. This means that we get in trouble for staying back but also we cannot leave our work unfinished so we lose either way. We are given time in lieu given they approve/agree that the over time was warranted but cannot use it anyway due to understaffing."

"The workload is too high for even regular hours. Overtime is regularly organised for the weekend but we are still falling behind and patient reports are going out at around double the recommended time. Understaffed."

"Unrealistic expectations from management with regard to completion of workload. Management has no idea how long duties take to be performed even when done as quickly as possible as there are situations where testing can take longer depending on the requested tests. Managements statistical figures are erroneous showing a lack of understanding of maths at the most basic level with regard to manual testing of samples."

"Management are aware work out of hours (afternoon and weekend) has increased by 35% in last couple of years but do not intend to staff adequately - because the government has no money"

“hospital decided to implement 0930 discharges. Problem is the prescriptions for identified patients are written late in the day and when the pharmacist says it can't be completed before 0930 the next day, they are threatened with the phrase "well I'll tell the nursing co-ordinator then."

“Often unpaid work is not requested however implied. For example, unreasonable deadlines are set and it is the expectation that these are met. Even though it is physically impossible to complete all of the operations work and then meet the additional deadlines. So Management are not directly requesting for the work to be done as unpaid overtime however there is no time provided during work hours to complete this.”

The Union will continue to determinedly advocate for increasing workforces across all allied health disciplines and we certainly make no apologies for it. To us there is no other choice if we truly want a world-class healthcare system then we must have the people; and we have to put an end to this ongoing reliance on people who are overworked, stressed and burned out.

Paul Elliott
Secretary



Union Round Up

Eastern Health – Pharmacy

The Union has been informed of proposed changes to the management structure in pharmacy at Eastern Health. If you have any feedback or need to review the change impact documentation please contact Heidi on 9623 9623 or at heidib@msav.org.au

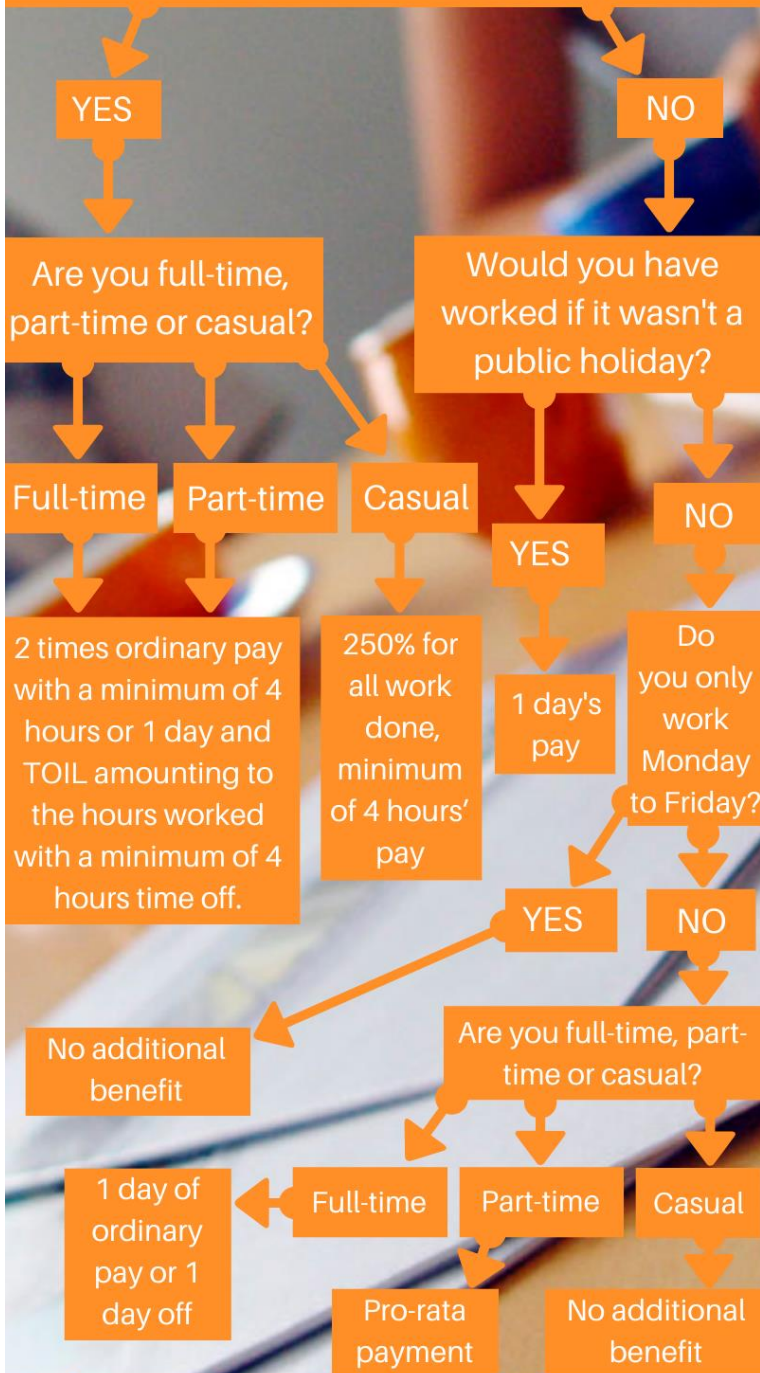
Public Holiday Pay

The Australia Day public holiday has come and gone so it's important to know if you've been properly paid for it and the public holidays over the Christmas and New Year period.

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?



Union Bushfire Appeal

The Union is working with the Victorian Trades Hall Council to collect a list of people who can help rebuild our communities when the bushfire threat has passed and it's safe to rebuild.

Sign up to help out

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](#).

Make a donation

Like the rest of Australia, we too are reeling from the stories coming from bushfire affected areas. 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. If you feel you don't have the skills to help with the rebuild then [make a donation](#) instead.

MSAV members taking on Coronavirus

We have always known the importance and value of our medical scientists and this article proves just how important, how vital fully functioning pathology labs are to deal with emerging medical threats just like the coronavirus. Congratulations and thank you for your work.

Australian lab first outside of China to re-create coronavirus, helping vaccine push

"In a major breakthrough in the global fight against coronavirus, scientists in Australia have developed a lab-grown version of the disease.

Described as a "game-changer" which will help scientists determine whether a future vaccine is effective, experts at Melbourne's Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity on Tuesday became the world's first scientific lab outside of China to re-create the virus.

They will now share it with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Europe, which will in turn share it with labs worldwide — including [one from Queensland — involved in the worldwide race to develop a vaccine](#).

The team of scientists grew the virus from a patient who had been infected since Friday."

Read more in The New Daily at: <https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/world/2020/01/29/australian-lab-re-create-coronavirus/>

Women's Rights at Work Festival

It's that time of year again - the annual festival for Women's Rights at Work, WRAW Fest 2020 is starting soon!

The Union proudly supports WRAW Fest and we certainly encourage members to get involved and get active. You already know like we do that women play an essential role in society in both paid work and unpaid caring work, and yet it is clear the system is rigged against women.

Here are some facts:

- Two thirds of women have experienced sexual harassment or violence at work.
- One in five mothers are sacked from their job because of pregnancy
- Women are more likely to be working in insecure, precarious, and low paid jobs.
- The gender pay gap is 14% for full-time workers, and 20% overall.
- Women retire with half as much superannuation as men and subsequently, many women are now facing poverty in retirement.

We Are Union Women's Conference 2020

We've spent decades researching the problem, talking about the problem, and asking for the problem to be fixed. There are clear solutions. Yet nothing changes.

Enough is enough. No more asking politely. No more roundtables, committees, inquiries, reports. No more morning teas, ribbons or 'champions for change.'

At the 2020 We Are Union Women's Conference, we're bringing together unionists to discuss our upcoming 'Safe, Respected, Equal' campaign for working women. [RSVP for the Conference here](#).

[Make sure you check out all the other great events happening as part of WRAW Fest from March 1st to March 8th](#)

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: Australian government secretly releasing sensitive medical records to police

"The Australian government is releasing highly sensitive medical records to police through a secret regime that experts say contains fundamentally flawed privacy protections.

The Department of Human Services fields large volumes of requests for Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) data from state and federal policing agencies each year.

The records can paint a detailed picture of a person's medical history, including, for example, any history of mental health issues, HIV, abortion or sexually transmitted diseases.

But, unlike the controversial My [Health](#) Record, no warrant or court order is needed for the department to release the information to police.

The department instead uses a set of internal guidelines to decide how and when it will acquiesce to a police request. It has never made the guidelines public and has actively fought to keep them secret.

[The Medical Republic](#), a specialist medical news publication, recently won a year-long freedom of information battle with the department to secure the release of the guidelines and has shared the document with experts and Guardian Australia."

Read the entire article by Felicity Nelson in The Guardian at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/27/australian-government-secretly-releasing-sensitive-medical-records-to-police>

Worth Reading: Less choice, less affordability: the private school subsidy paradox

"Just weeks after he became prime minister in August 2018, Scott Morrison announced an [additional \\$4.6 billion](#) in federal funding for non-government schools. "Our government believes that parents should have choice in education," he [explained](#). "The policies that we pursue as a government are about ensuring that choice for parents." Just in case anyone missed the message, the extra cash was branded as the [Choice and Affordability Fund](#).

As marketing, Morrison's line may have worked; as public policy it simply doubled down on what was already an abject failure. Over the past twenty years, the Commonwealth has massively ramped up funding for non-government schools. And still, every summer, as reliably as Christmas and the Boxing Day Test, reports of steep

increases in private school fees surface in the nation's newspapers, along with stories of parents struggling to cope and principals struggling to explain. Now figures from the My School website, encompassing every school in Australia and incorporating all sources of revenue, confirm what the anecdotal evidence has long suggested.

The data for the seven years from 2011 to 2017, collected and published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, reveals the sheer scale of the expansion of government funding to non-government schools. For context, between 2011 and 2017, inflation averaged 1.9 per cent annually, compounding to 12 per cent. Over the same period, recurrent government funding to non-government schools increased by around three times as much, with an average per-student increase of 37 per cent at Independent schools and 35 per cent at Catholic schools. Funding to state schools grew by just 18 per cent per student."

Read the entire article by Tom Greenwell in Inside Story at: <https://insidestory.org.au/less-choice-less-affordability-the-private-school-subsidy-paradox/>

Worth Reading: Heat kills. We need consistency in the way we measure these deaths

"One of the most confronting impacts of climate change is the risk of more deaths from hot weather. Heat stress [can exacerbate](#) existing health conditions including diabetes, kidney disease and heart disease. Older people are particularly vulnerable.

It may then surprise you to learn a [few recent studies](#) have suggested climate change will decrease temperature-related deaths in Australia. And a related study published in [The Lancet](#) found the cold kills more people in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane than the heat.

But my research, published in [Climatic Change](#), disputes these results.

Using a similar methodology as that used in the study published in [The Lancet](#), I found the majority of deaths related to temperature in Australia are caused by heat.

As temperature-related deaths are one of the main measures we use to assess the effects of climate change, it's important we measure them accurately and consistently."

Read the entire article by Thomas Longden in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/heat-kills-we-need-consistency-in-the-way-we-measure-these-deaths-120500>

Worth Reading: Don't believe the myths – taxing sugary drinks makes us drink less of it

"This year's Australian of the Year, Dr James Muecke, is an eye specialist with a clear vision. He wants to [change the way the world looks at sugar](#) and the debilitating consequences of diabetes, which include blindness.

Muecke is pushing for Scott Morrison's government to enact a tax on sugary drinks to help make that a reality.

Such a tax would increase the price of soft drinks, juices and other sugary drinks by around 20%. The money raised could be used to fund health promotion programs around the country.

The evidence backing his calls is strong."

Read the entire article by Gary Sacks, Christina Zorbas and Kathryn Backholer in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/dont-believe-the-myths-taxing-sugary-drinks-makes-us-drink-less-of-it-130694>

Worth Reading: We have the vaccine for climate disinformation – let's use it

"Australia's recent bushfire crisis will be remembered for many things – not least, the tragic loss of life, property and landscape. But one other factor made it remarkable: the deluge of disinformation spread by climate deniers.

As climate change worsens – and with it, the bushfire risk – it's well worth considering how to protect the public against disinformation campaigns in future fire seasons.

So how do we persuade people not to be fooled? One promising answer lies in a branch of psychology called "[inoculation theory](#)". The logic is analogous to the way a medical vaccine works: you can prevent a virus spreading by giving lots of people a small dose.

In the case of bushfire disinformation, this means exposing, ahead of time, the myths most likely to be perpetrated by sceptics."

Read the entire article by John Hunter and Stephan Lewandowsky in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/we-have-the-vaccine-for-climate-disinformation-lets-use-it-130008>

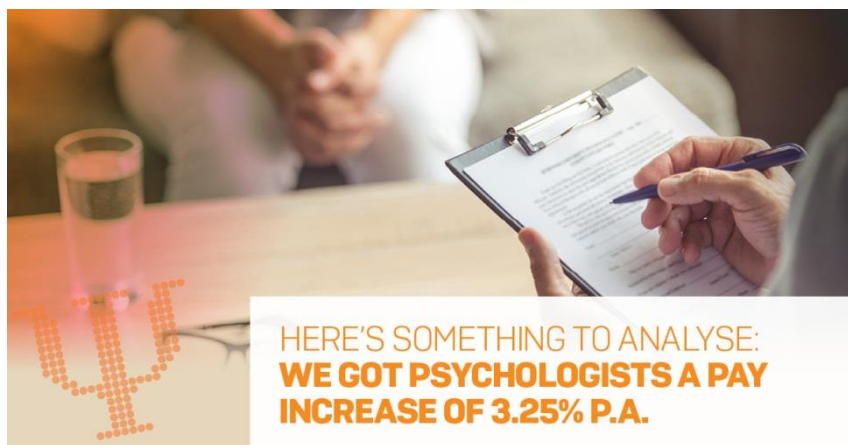
Join the Union

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.



[Share on Facebook](#)



[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](#)

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.](#)



Share STAT Report

Is there a copy of STAT Report on your Union noticeboard or in your staff room?

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