



Stat Report 2021/14

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What does the Victorian Budget do for you?

What can be said about the Victorian Budget and what does it do for you? There are some great outcomes from the Victorian Budget and many that will directly benefit our members.

It is extremely pleasing to see the Victorian Government has taken seriously the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. There has been a massive injection of investment and long-term funding put into the mental health system with \$3.8 billion pledged to begin to revamp the sector. There has been major investment in mental health services in regional and rural Victoria as well as recognition that there are not nearly enough options for people to seek mental health support and assistance in regional and rural Victoria. There will be funding put aside to separate child, youth and adult mental health care, which is hoped to deliver the health care that people need when they need it. The budget establishes specific funding to improve access to mental health beds and better acute care for Victorians living with mental illness.

It is significant that the budget appears to have picked up on all of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. This includes establishing an ongoing levy to ensure the mental health system, which was an issue of much discussion ahead of the budget being delivered to Parliament. The levy will only apply to the state's largest employers who have more than \$10 million in wages nationally and revenue raised through the levy will be dedicated to the state's mental health system.

The massive investment in mental health does not just consider the services and their availability, the budget also ensures that there is an appropriate workforce to cope with the increased demand. The budget will see an additional 3,000 jobs created from the investment in mental health which will include an increase in psychologists. There has been a clear acknowledgement of the need to ensure that the mental health system

has the right mix of staff, while looking to increase the workforce to accommodate the increasing demand to access mental health support. At this stage we haven't been able to identify what the increase will be in effective full-time employment for psychologists. However, in our discussions with department officials it seems that there will be a greater emphasis on psychologists and psychiatrists and not just social workers or mental health nurses.

The budget acknowledges that private pathology providers in our public health care system have not delivered, with their significant divestment in people and equipment needed to deliver world-class health care. The funding delivered in this budget will be used to begin to consolidate existing public pathology laboratories into networks supported by new laboratory information systems. The Victorian Government is putting in nearly \$20 million in the first year of reforms with significant additional funding over the next four years; this doesn't include investment in new technology or equipment.

It's clear the government has seen, albeit through the lens of the pandemic, the vital importance of the work of our pathology laboratories. Whether this consolidation will result in a much-needed investment in more medical scientists and technicians being employed, is still to be seen but we are not going to hold our breath. We will have to work to ensure that more investment in staff continues; and that the consolidation is a truly state-wide approach to restoring public pathology laboratories. There are still some big issues that need to be resolved in consolidating public pathology laboratories and we will not shy away from raising them.

Members will have also seen the announcement of a public IVF services with \$70 million allocated to developing a public IVF service. The proposal from the government would see a full IVF service being established in the public health sector. This significant investment will also require a significant investment in the people needed to deliver the new IVF service. It will mean more scientists and more genetic counsellors. However, it is unclear what funding is allocated to the workforce and what levels of employment will be expected to deliver a public IVF service.

Unfortunately, the budget doesn't acknowledge the significant investment needed to address the shortages in pharmacists. The Union was hoping to see in the budget funding allocated to boost the numbers of pharmacists working in the public health sector given ongoing negotiations in our public health sector agreement bargaining. It is also disappointing that the government has not acknowledged the significant workforce shortages in our disciplines more broadly.

While there is still a lot of work to do to ensure there are more people working across our disciplines, this year's state budget is a major win for the Union. It is a testament to the years of lobbying we have done to highlight the significant under-investment in staff and the failure to reduce staff shortages across our disciplines. Our team will continue to comb through the budget for additional details, but it appears that the 2021-22 Victorian State Budget is a significant boost for mental health and the healthcare system in general and for many of our members more specifically.

If you need to contact us, please use the enquiry email at enquiry@msav.org.au or via telephone on (03) 9623 9623.

In solidarity
Paul Elliott
Secretary



Positions not backfilled?



Let us know

Union Round Up

Alfred/Monash Cluster Pathology Project

It has come to the Union's attention that the taskforce for the Alfred/Monash Cluster Pathology project have reference the Union as being in partnership with them. While the MSAV has indicated our support for the

broader pathology reforms advised by the Government, we are concerned that the taskforce continues to present this project as being in partnership with the MSAV and other Unions.

Members should be made aware that this is not the case. Indeed, we have been frustrated by the inability of the taskforce to provide us with information about the work done on the project, with claims that much of it was to be commercial in confidence.

The Union has consulted with Government about the Cluster project and expect to continue receiving briefings from the taskforce and DHHS about the work that has been done by the taskforce but we have not been invited to be part of the taskforce (despite requests), we have not been invited to sit on any of the Cluster projects at the various Health Services, and as such, have not been allowed to have input into the appropriate form a cluster or clusters should take and the associated flow on of decisions.

The MSAV's role to date has been limited to asking questions that in the main have not been answered.

We have made it clear to the taskforce team that we want them to stop representing to members that there is partnership when there is not.

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact Heidi at heidib@msav.org.au

Enterprise Agreement Updates

NextSense (formerly the Royal Institute of Deaf and Blind Children) Agreement

We have now been bargaining with NextSense since December 2020. This has been a really complex round of bargaining, in part because the organisation is trying to combine more than 5 industrial instruments into the one agreement.

We also want a structure which recognises the skills, qualifications and experiences of our members, and provides a clear career structure for progression.

Contact Lisa at lisaa@msav.org.au for more information about bargaining at NextSense.

Monash IVF Scientists Agreement

The current Agreement expires on 30 September 2021. We are working with members now to understand what they want negotiated.

We are also scheduling a members' meeting for 19 May 2021 via Zoom. If you have any questions about bargaining at Monash IVF, please contact Lisa at lisaa@msav.org.au

Melbourne IVF Counsellors Agreement

The Union is in the process of finalising negotiations with MIVF. We have negotiated 10% wage increases over a 4-year agreement, plus a sign on bonus which has been endorsed by members.

The first wage increase will commence on 26 April 2021 and will be passed to workers on the 10 May 2021.

We're happy to share that we negotiated for MIVF to withdraw plans to implement a Christmas close down clause. And, Genetic and IVF Counsellors will now be able to access higher qualifications allowance.

Questions about the new enterprise agreement with Melbourne IVF should be directed to Lisa – lisaa@msav.org.au

TissuPath Laboratories Agreement

Negotiations for the new TissuPath Labs agreement has now commenced. We are working with members to understand what they want negotiated.

Negotiations are scheduled to recommence with VCCI and management after 17 May 2021. In the meantime, if you have any questions about negotiations with TissuPath Laboratories please contact Lisa at lisaa@msav.org.au

Annual Leave Entitlements

Here's a couple of quick facts about public sector annual leave:

- Under our Agreement, annual leave needs to be taken at a time “determined by mutual agreement”. If you don’t agree to take your leave, you can’t be forced to take it: cl 60.3
- There is no provision in our Agreement, about excess annual leave. And there is also no clause in our Agreement, which enables an employer to direct a worker to take annual leave;
- If more than 2 weeks annual leave is taken, this leave must be backfilled: cl 34.1

Having said that, employers can have respectful conversations with workers about annual leave planning. And, the Union does encourage workers to take their annual leave to generally recharge and to be happy and safe at work when they’re there!

If you do feel pressured to submit leave requests, here’s some advice:

- Think about when you actually want to take your leave and try not to feel pressured by arbitrary dates presented by management (such as, needing to submit a plan to use X amount of leave before the end of the financial year);
- Put this plan to your employer and have a conversation about that proposal;
- Then, when that proposal is agreed, advise your employer that you do not intend to discuss leave planning further; and,
- If you’re ever in doubt, the Union is always here for support.

Whilst the above references are to our Public Health Sector Agreement our private sector agreements contain the same, or similar, provisions. If you have any queries about your annual leave entitlements, please contact the Union at enquiry@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.

Free the Medevac Refugees Union Solidarity Rally

Unionists for Refugees is organising a rally outside the Park Hotel in Carlton, where 33 refugees are currently in detention.

The "Free the Medevac refugees - union solidarity rally" will be held at 2pm on Saturday 29 May at 701 Swanston Street, Carlton.

It is supported so far by the Victorian Trades Hall Council, the ANMF, HACSU and the Refugee Action Collective, and others.

Speakers include:

Victorian Trades Hall Council official
Taqi Azra (United Workers Union organiser)
Hassan Jaber (Justice for Refugees)
Maddy Harradence (Assistant Secretary ANMF Vic)
Don Khan (refugee locked up in the Park)
Lucy Honan (Teachers for Refugees)

Need more information or RSVP? <https://fb.me/e/2qzHcXDRY>

Social Media + Work

Social media is a lot of fun. It's a great way of keeping up with the news or what your friends and family are doing, wherever they are in the world. But there are some big downsides to social media, especially when they include the workplace.

The ubiquity of mobile devices in our day-to-day lives, combined with social media means there is an ever-increasing blur in the distinction between work and private life. We can't forget that employers are regularly monitoring and watching social media for what employees are saying.

Like other areas of the law, industrial law has been slow to react with the increasing use of social media.

However there have been a range of matters brought before the Fair Work Commission (FWC) relating to the use of social media by employees. FWC will consider if the conduct in question:

1. Is likely to cause serious damage to the relationship between the employer and employee
2. Damages the employer's interest
3. Is incompatible with the employee's duty as an employee

Unfortunately, workers have to be extremely careful in using social media when talking about their work and workplace. It is vital to avoid some of the following pitfalls:

1. Social media is not private interaction; unless you set the strictest privacy levels for your content to protect yourself from being monitored by your boss.
2. Make sure you don't follow or friend the boss and your work colleagues. It seems harsh but the number of work colleagues that have access to your social media can be an important determinant in any FWC proceedings.
3. Don't mention your boss and the company you work for. FWC will consider whether there has been a direct reference to the company or any one individual. This doesn't mean you can't discuss wages and conditions or genuine grievances but make sure you don't mention the boss or the company.
4. Don't discuss patients and definitely don't name them. This is particularly relevant for health sector workers as it can result in immediate termination of employment because of breaches of the privacy of a patient or patients.
5. The degree of offence of the comments posted to social media will be an issue consider by FWC.
6. Only post material that you would be happy to post in a public forum, see printed on the front page of The Age or Herald Sun; or shout out in the middle of the MCG on Grand Final day.

There is a golden rule for social media use: don't drink or use drugs and use social media.

If you have any questions, make sure you contact the Union at enquiry@msav.org.au or on 9623 9623.

Membership Fees and Invoices

Members paying union fees by manual annual subscription will be receiving the upcoming renewal subscription invoice for the 2021/2022 FY early June 2021 via email. Members who have not yet paid the current 2020/2021 FY subscription, or haven't received an invoice, please contact Anastasia on 9623 9623 or anastasiap@msav.org.au to receive another one or to pay by credit card over the phone. Members can also log in to the membership portal to make sure all contact details are correct. Please email Anastasia if you require another activation link emailed to you.

Members who have had changes in their work hours or have returned to work from maternity leave, or from a period of being stood down please contact Anastasia to update your subscription rate, in order to maintain the correct coverage for Professional Indemnity Insurance purposes.

Members paying by Direct Debit will receive tax receipts for the current FY early July 2021. Payments for the 2021/2022 will continue as usual. Members can update their payment details, when necessary, via the membership portal. Any changes to work hours, please contact Anastasia on 9623 9623 or anastasiap@msav.org.au

You can access your membership details, PI Insurance information and details on what you've paid in membership fees from your own page through our membership portal. The membership portal allows you to update your membership details, download your PI Insurance information and your tax receipts when it comes time to prepare your tax return. It's easy to use, secure and gives you the information you need whenever you need it! To access your membership portal, visit <https://msav.360membership.com.au/login.aspx>

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: ACIC thinks there are no legitimate uses of encryption. They're wrong, and here's why it matters

"Australia's parliament is considering legislation to give new powers to the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and the Australian Federal Police. These powers will allow them to modify online data, monitor network activity, and take over online accounts in some circumstances.

Last week, in a submission to parliament regarding the proposed powers, ACIC made an inaccurate and concerning claim about privacy and information security. ACIC claimed “there is no legitimate reason for a law-abiding member of the community to own or use an encrypted communication platform”.

Encrypted communication platforms, including WhatsApp, Signal, Facetime and iMessage, are in common use, allowing users to send messages that can only be read by the intended recipients. There are many legitimate reasons law-abiding people may use them. And surveillance systems, no matter how well-intentioned, may have negative effects and be used for different purposes or by different people than those they were designed for.”

Read the entire article by Gernot Heiser, Lyria Bennett Moses and Vanessa Teague in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/acic-thinks-there-are-no-legitimate-uses-of-encryption-theyre-wrong-and-heres-why-it-matters-160975>

Worth Reading: Money for telescopes and vaccines is great, but the budget’s lack of basic science funding risks leaving Australia behind

“The story of the past year has been the pandemic: from the first outbreaks in early 2020, the identification of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and methods to detect it, through to lockdown and quarantine measures, vaccine development, testing and finally distribution. The pandemic is not over, but the recovery has started.

At each stage, it has been scientists and researchers at the forefront of a rapid and successful national and global response to the pandemic. A nation’s capacity to respond to threats like a pandemic does not exist in a vacuum. It depends on scientists. You can’t research a solution without researchers.

In Australia, the higher education sector performs the vast bulk of research, including basic foundational research. This sector has been hit extremely hard by the pandemic, losing billions in revenue leading to the loss of research capacity — the very capacity we need to continue to respond to the pandemic and recover.

For this reason, the lack of recognition for science and scientists in the federal budget, and in particular for the foundational capacity in basic discovery science, is perplexing indeed. Such science capability underpins Australia’s resilience, not just against pandemics but also against natural disasters, economic shocks, technology disruption, the needs of an ageing population, and cyber warfare – many of the government’s stated priority areas.”

Read the entire article by John Shine in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/money-for-telescopes-and-vaccines-is-great-but-the-budgets-lack-of-basic-science-funding-risks-leaving-australia-behind-160780>

Worth Reading: Flexible solar panels: new stretch of the imagination

“Victoria’s 2020 ‘second-wave’ COVID-19 lockdown meant our top researchers could not use their labs.

Determined to make flexible solar panels a reality, the team overcame adversity with stunning innovation to advance the field – all from the comfort of home.

For Dr Doojin Vak, time away from the lab led to an epiphany that could transform the solar industry.

Doojin and the Printed Photovoltaics Team use industrial printers to make super thin and flexible solar panels that can be applied to pretty much anything, including awnings, tents and backpacks.

While the team has been working hard to improve the energy efficiency of their flexible solar panels to rival traditional silicon cells, Doojin used his time during lockdown to prevent COVID-19 impacting on the progress of his research.”

Read the entire article by Emma Malcolm in the CSIRO Blog at: <https://blog.csiro.au/flexible-solar-panels/>

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.](#)



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.