



Stat Report 2021/23

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Mental and physical toll working through a pandemic

We are alarmed at growing evidence of an acceleration in the physical and mental toll members are experiencing as they work through the pandemic.

Alongside the growing mental and physical toll of the pandemic is something we continue to witness, employers propose gratuitous organisational changes and in one particularly egregious case, pursuing forced redundancies of our members. The pandemic has clearly increased the levels of stress and fatigue being experienced by members working in understaffed and highly stressed workplaces.

There are also the threats to your mental and physical health from working at the frontlines of the pandemic.

Your mental health is not helped when it is ignored in your workplace; and you're expected to suck it up and get on with it. Despite the recent efforts by the government to give mental health greater consideration in the workplace, we are not yet seeing this level of care demonstrated by employers in the workplace.

We all want to do our bit to ensure we get through this pandemic and lockdowns. We know that you want to make sure you're doing as much as you can and supporting your colleagues. But we also know that doing your bit includes ensuring you're rested and prepared for the next shift.

Unless you're rested, you're more likely to make mistakes, which all too often will be used against you if there are performance or disciplinary matters that come up. We know the pandemic is putting you under more stress than usual and this puts you at greater risk of being fatigued and unwell, and of making mistakes.

It doesn't help any patient if you're doing your work stressed and/or fatigued because of staff shortages and huge workloads.

That's why it's never been more important to say, "no pay, no way". Please make sure you report to us when there are positions not being backfilled or when there are vacancies due to leave arrangements or they just haven't been filled.

It is unacceptable to expect you to do more work when workloads are very high, especially during a pandemic, at a time employers should be employing more staff to resolve unsustainable workloads, back fill leave and fill vacancies.

I want to take this opportunity to remind Dorevitch members about an extra week of annual leave for shift workers.

We have not been surprised by the response from members so far, but we want to make sure that all eligible Dorevitch members are enjoying their extra week of annual leave. We will continue to be in contact with members and you can help us spread the message by letting your colleagues know about it.

The Union continues to work with relevant employer and government bodies to ensure that members' Higher Qualification Allowance is being properly applied to wages. As I've pointed out before this is not going to be a matter that will be resolved quickly with an audit likely taking some time to be completed.

We do know that the miscalculation of Higher Qualification Allowance is something that is happening across the state but we're working to ensure members receive the allowance into the future and are back paid for past underpayments.

I also want to remind members that the Union continues to work through a range of enterprise bargaining agreements for members in the private sector, with meeting dates and times being finalised for public sector members.

The latest lockdown means staff will continue to work from home. You will find in this edition of STAT Report details about how to contact us.

As always, I encourage you to please raise issues you have by emailing us at enquiry@msav.org.au

In solidarity
Paul Elliott
Secretary



Union Round Up

Dorevitch members – Additional week of annual leave for shift workers

Under the National Employment Standards (which are found in the Fair Work Act), every Enterprise Agreement needs to provide a definition of "shift worker" and an additional week of annual leave for workers who meet that definition.

Clause 28.3 of the Dorevitch Agreements provides this minimum entitlement.

For part-time workers, the essential elements are that:

1. The hours worked on the weekend need to be "ordinary hours" not "overtime";
2. You need to work on 10 or more "Sundays" during a yearly period; and

3. You need to work more than 4 hours on the shift.

For full-time workers, the essential elements are that:

1. You work ordinary hours on weekdays and weekends;
2. The hours worked on the weekend need to be “ordinary hours” not “overtime”;
3. A weekend can include “one or two shifts”, either will count as one weekend; and
4. You need to work more than 4 hours on the shift.

If you meet the above definitions, then as a shift worker you should receive an additional 38 hours of annual leave. If you are not receiving your additional annual leave, please contact Lisa for support at lisa@msav.org.au

Underpayment of Higher Qualifications Allowance

The Union has requested that the Department of Health take the lead in coordinating an audit across all Public Health Services which are party to our Agreement.

By having a centralised approach, it will ensure that the Department rectifies mistakes across the entire state in how this entitlement is applied and correct underpayments for all current and former employees in a systematic way. The Union does expect that any process to audit the payrolls of the state’s Public Health Services will take some time.

The Union is determined to ensure that this matter is resolved.

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.

Leadership scholarships for women in the health sector

Women & Leadership Australia is offering professional development scholarships are open to women across the health sector.

[Women & Leadership Australia \(WLA\)](#) supports emerging, middle, and senior women leaders across all sectors and industries. Our career-defining leadership programs bring together a focus on applied learning with the latest in leadership theory and practice. We believe that advancing gender equity, especially in leadership, is central to creating a more fair and inclusive society.

Scholarships of \$1000-\$5000 per person are available for women in the health sector

To encourage more women to step into leadership roles across the health sector, WLA is offering scholarships for three leadership development courses.

Apply by 10 September or find out more by clicking here: <https://www.wla.edu.au/health.html>

COVID-19 vaccination rollout webinar

As healthcare workers you are eligible to access the COVID-19 vaccination. We've seen the huge impact that COVID-19 is having on healthcare workers and the infection rates experienced. As a union which supports science, we encourage members to get their vaccination and make arrangements with your employer about making sure you're fully vaccinated.

To provide support, the Victorian Department of Health is inviting members to a free webinar on 17 August at 6pm to 7:30pm; *COVID-19 Vaccines: Webinar for healthcare workers - part 2*

Hosted by the Victorian Department of Health, join Dr Tom Schulz, Dr Anita Muñoz, Dr Vijay Roach and A/Prof Margie Danchin for a free webinar exploring the COVID-19 vaccines.

Topics covered during this 90-minute session include:

- The latest information on the vaccine rollout
- Addressing your questions about safety, side effects and variants
- COVID-19 vaccines, fertility, pregnancy and breastfeeding
- COVID-19 vaccines and teenagers
- Answering challenging questions from patients

The webinar will be held from 6:00 – 7:30pm, on Tuesday 17 August 2021.

Find out more and register now via Eventbrite <https://c19vacp2.eventbrite.com.au>



Department
of Health

Join our free
COVID-19 vaccines
webinar — your
questions answered

Contacting the Union

Here's how you can contact the Union while staff continue to work from home.

For industrial advice and assistance:

Paul Elliott | paule@msav.org.au | 0418 543 682
Rosemary Kelly | rosemaryk@msav.org.au
Matt Hammond | matth@msav.org.au | 0418 149 261
Heidi Brown | heidib@msav.org.au
Lisa Alcock | lisaa@msav.org.au
Alex Schlotzer | alexs@msav.org.au

For membership related enquiries please contact Anastasia at anastasiap@msav.org.au

For all other enquiries please send your email to enquiry@msav.org.au

Membership Issues – Experiencing hardship?

Non-Members

For non-Union members who work in workplaces across our coverage; **we will give advice immediately over the phone if they join.**

In the spirit of supporting health workers through this unprecedented time we hope you might have a quiet word to colleagues who are not members and suggest that there has never been a more important time to join a Union. Let them know that it is as simple as going to our website and [clicking on the 'JOIN' link](#).

Members

If you are in the unfortunate position of being stood down or forced on to unpaid leave, [contact us to move your membership payments to a 'non-working' subscription rate of \\$8.26 per month.](#)

Psychologists: If you need help at work you need the VPA Inc.

If you are a psychologist and not in the VPA, you are taking unnecessary risks with your reputation and career. [Download an application form and join today.](#)

Common beaches of employment entitlements and negotiation of enterprise agreements

The VPA routinely assists members over issues such as harassment and bullying, under classification, organisational re-structuring, incorrect calculation of leave entitlements and health and safety. In addition, it negotiates enterprise agreements for psychologists in the public and private sectors to ensure that rates of pay and conditions remain up to date.

Support the Healthy Futures campaign



The Union strongly believes that climate change is union business. We know that climate change threatens our health by increasing the risks of heatwaves, bushfires, droughts and storms, displacing people and straining our health systems.

Right now, Aware Super, Australia's biggest health industry super fund, is investing our money in fossil fuels - oil and gas. While they have plans to divest from fossil fuels, it's vital that we maintain the pressure to make sure they divest faster to ensure a reduction in financial issues posed by stranded assets like fossil fuelled power stations.

Join us in asking Aware Super to divest from fossil fuels at

<https://www.healthyfutures.net.au/awaresuper>

Stopping Gendered Violence at Work

Far too often women are attacked, harassed and threatened in their workplaces. And it needs to stop. That's why the Union is fighting back against gendered violence in the workplace – it's a very serious occupational health and safety issue.

Gendered violence is like a disease in our workplaces. Working women's experience of violence at work indicates that the problem of gendered violence is endemic in our workplaces.

Sign up to support the campaign at: <http://www.unionwomen.org.au/stopgv>

Do you need access to Domestic Violence services?

If you're experiencing domestic violence and need help, here is a list of Victorian services which may be able to assist you.

[Safe Steps \(formerly Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria\)](#)

[Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria \(FVPLS\)](#)

[Centre Against Sexual Assault \(CASA\) Forum](#)

[Community Legal Centres](#)

[Court Network](#)

[Domestic Violence Victoria](#)

[Elder Rights Advocacy \(ERA\)](#)

[Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service](#)

[inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence](#)

[Men's Referral Service](#)

[No To Violence](#)

[QLife Australia](#)

[Seniors Rights Victoria \(SRV\)](#)

[The Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence](#)

[Victoria Legal Aid \(VLA\)](#)

[Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency](#)

[Women with Disabilities Victoria \(WDV\)](#)

[Women's Housing Ltd](#)

[Women's Information Referral Exchange \(WIRE\)](#)

[Women's Legal Service](#)

[Women's refuges](#)

Worth Reading: Australia's vaccination plan is 6 months too late and a masterclass in jargon

"Six months after the prime minister received his first jab, Australia finally has a national plan to roll out COVID vaccines.

The plan's goals, set out in the Operation COVID Shield document released this week, are to ensure public confidence in the vaccine rollout and to get as many Australians as possible vaccinated as early as possible.

The plan looks to reach the vaccination targets set out in modelling from the Doherty Institute and announced after national cabinet.

That would aim to have 80% of eligible Australians fully vaccinated by the end of the year. This figure has been criticised by some experts as too low. On this basis alone the plan is short-term and arguably short-sighted."

Read the entire article by Lesley Russell in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/australias-vaccination-plan-is-6-months-too-late-and-a-masterclass-in-jargon-165603>

Worth Reading: Rorting – do ‘they all do it’?

"The Coalition members' attempt to run interference in Senate estimates for their colleagues caught breaching ministerial standards on #carporkrorts basically came down to the claim "they all do it".

Such is the low ebb of Australian politics.

When lacking integrity in the use of public funds, claim there is no integrity in the use of public funds.

Cue NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and now Finance Minister Simon Birmingham effectively declaring "it is what it is – get over it".

But do "they all do it"?

Senator Jane Hume made a big deal of an Australian National Audit Office report on two of the four rounds of Regional Australia Development Fund spending under the last Labor government."

Read the entire article by Michael Pascoe in The New Daily at: <https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/2021/08/04/michael-pascoe-rorting/>

Worth Reading: Yarns from the heart: the role of Aboriginal English in Indigenous health communication

"Indigenous Australians experience poorer health outcomes than non-Indigenous Australians. They are sick more often, die younger and are at higher risk of serious health complications, including heart disease.

One way to improve health outcomes is through targeted health communication in local languages.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen increased attention given to the use of Indigenous languages in health settings around the world, including Australia.

Many COVID-19 resources have been developed in partnership with local communities, including in widely-spoken Australian Aboriginal languages such as Kriol. Other initiatives have inspired new Indigenous health professionals to effectively communicate complex medical terminology and concepts to communities."

Read the entire article by Celeste Rodriguez Luoro and Glenys Dale Collard in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/yarns-from-the-heart-the-role-of-aboriginal-english-in-indigenous-health-communication-163892>

Worth Reading: Australians are 3 times more worried about climate change than COVID. A mental health crisis is looming

"As we write this article, the Delta strain of COVID-19 is reminding the world the pandemic is far from over, with millions of Australians in lockdown and infection rates outpacing a global vaccination effort.

In the northern hemisphere, record breaking temperatures in the form of heat domes recently caused uncontrollable "firebombs", while unprecedented floods disrupted millions of people. Hundreds of lives have been lost due to heat stress, drownings and fire.

The twin catastrophic threats of climate change and a pandemic have created an "epoch of incredulity". It's not surprising many Australians are struggling to cope.

During the pandemic's first wave in 2020, we collected nationwide data from 5,483 adults across Australia on how climate change affects their mental health. In our new paper, we found that while Australians are concerned about COVID-19, they were almost three times more concerned about climate change."

Read the entire article by Rhonda Garad, Joanne Enticott and Rebecca Patrick in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/australians-are-3-times-more-worried-about-climate-change-than-covid-a-mental-health-crisis-is-looming-165470>

Join the Union

Are your workloads increasing? Are your stress levels increasing? [Join the Union today!](#)

To protect our professions, we must strengthen our collective voice by increasing our membership. You can help by sharing the image below on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit or your favourite social media platform.

Your Union is on Facebook

Keep up to date with what's happening by liking us on Facebook

[Medical Scientists Association of Victoria](#) | [Victorian Psychologists Association Inc](#) | [Association of Hospital Pharmacists](#)

Australian Unions Member

Benefits app

As a Union member you get access to exclusive Member Benefits. The program has expanded to include:

- Discounted movie tickets for Village, Hoyts, Palace and Event cinemas.
- Discounted electronic gift cards including major theme parks, zoos and aquariums.
- A discounted accommodation booking site.
- A new secure member only website and smart phone app.

All this is free to all members of affiliated unions – that means you! If you have not got a login and would like join in [register for Member Benefits now.](#)



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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.