



Stat Report 2021/30

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Reforming private pathology in public health

In this year's State budget it was acknowledged 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 the budget will be used to begin to consolidate existing public pathology laboratories into merged pathology services. The funding will be used to improve capacity and quality in public pathology services and return outsourced hospital laboratories back to public health services.

The Victorian Government allocated nearly \$20 million for the first year of pathology reforms with significant additional funding over the next four years; this doesn't include investment in new technology or equipment. Investment in technology has been done over the past few state budgets but this is the first budget in a very long time that specifically identified direct investment in public pathology services.

The Union has been given a "roadmap" for how the reforms will be implemented, but it does not seem to be much of a plan with very little detail.

The Union has continued discussions with senior department officials who are planning this very significant reform. We continue to advocate for issues of job security and maintenance of pay rates and conditions, including salary packaging. We have demanded that current enterprise agreement coverage must be maintained.

All of the health unions involved in the discussions have made it clear that Government commitments to the issues we have raised are essential to having our ongoing support for the reforms.

The timeframe for the proposed reforms is a critical issue. We have expressed a strong view that the success of the proposed reforms in pathology will depend in large part on quickly returning outsourced pathology back to public hospitals, and any delays in doing this will seriously disrupt the reform process.

Reformed public pathology must be properly funded, resourced and staffed in all laboratories across public health. We are mindful of additional funding allocations for reforms for the next two years, and we will work hard to ensure as much as is needed goes into staffing and resourcing.

The Union will continue to strongly advocate that more investment in staff is vital; and that the consolidation is a truly state-wide approach to restoring public pathology laboratories.

We remain confident there is a genuine commitment to the reforms, and hear the growing strong support for the reforms, especially from regional and rural health services which are anxious to have public pathology services in their hospitals.

It's clear the government has seen, albeit through the lens of the pandemic, the vital importance of the work of our public pathology laboratories. It's also clear that the Union's staunch advocacy for our members to Members of Parliament is paying off, albeit we'd have preferred to see our advocacy acted on much sooner.

Jim Alcock Award

The MSAV held its Annual General Meeting earlier this week. One of the longstanding items for the AGM's is the nomination(s) for the recipient of the year's Jim Alcock Award. The Award recognises a member or members for their outstanding contribution to the Union and their support for and of members.

I'm happy to announce Paulina Wajchman and Georgia Bezas are this year's very deserved winners of the Jim Alcock Award.

There was unanimous support for their nominations at this year's MSAV Annual General Meeting.

Congratulations Paulina and Georgia.

As always, I want to remind members to contact us with your workplace concerns by calling on 9623 9623 or emailing us at enquiry@msav.org.au

In solidarity
Paul Elliott
Secretary



Positions not backfilled?



Let us know

Union Round Up

Monash IVF – Scientists' negotiations

Thank you to everyone who was able to make the members meeting. The MSAV has circulated a table of the changes proposed by Monash IVF to the current classification structure. If you have any feedback, please send this through.

Any questions or concerns, get in touch with Lisa at lisaa@msav.org.au

Enterprise bargaining at Epworth

The Union has received an offer from Epworth that includes a 4-year agreement with pay increases of 2.25% per year. Unfortunately, the Union didn't get much response to a survey we sent to members at Epworth.

However, the proposal removes HQAs for base classifications and the Union will not accept this as it would result in a pay cut for most members and we strongly encourage members to vote NO when it's put out to vote.

For more information contact Heidi at heidib@msav.org.au

Meal breaks in Microbiology Lab at Monash Health

It has come to the Union's attention that staff in Microbiology at Monash weren't being paid the meal allowance for overtime and recall. An audit is being undertaken with respect to back pay.

The Union believes that this issue only affects micro, but we want to remind members in other departments & services to check they're getting the paid meal allowance under cl 50.4 of our enterprise agreement.

If you have any questions or wish to raise this issue if you're from another department or service to contact Heidi at heidib@msav.org.au

St Vincent's Private EBA Update - new Ballot

After a long wait and many calls to St Vincent's Private representatives about a new ballot, we are told the organisation has set a new ballot timetable.

The ballot timetable will be as follows:

- Access period began on Monday 11 October 2021
- Ballot opened at 9am on Tuesday 19 October 2021
- Ballot closes at 4pm on Monday 25 October 2021

There are some small changes to the agreement most notably increases in pay and parental leave Medical Scientists and Dietitians pay increases will be as follows:

- 2.25% from the first full pay period on or after 1 January 2021
- 0.25% from the first full pay period on or after 1 July 2021
- 2.5% from the first full pay period on or after 1 January 2022
- 2% from the first full pay period on or after 1 January 2023

St Vincent's also proposes to increase paid primary carers' leave (parental leave) as follows:

Leave that commences after:	Period of paid leave
Commencement of the Agreement	11 weeks
1 July 2022	12 weeks
1 July 2023	13 weeks

If you are casual we can also confirm that you should have received a ballot - if your manager says no, please contact Heidi as soon as possible at heidib@msav.org.au

Dorevitch members – Are you receiving your change of shift allowance?

The shift allowance should not be confused with the "change of roster" allowance, which is paid when your roster is changed without 7 days' notice.

The "change of shift" allowance is paid when your shift start times, changes by 4 hours or more.

For instance, if you're rostered to work Monday 3pm-11pm and then Tuesday 11pm-7am, you're entitled to the change of shift allowance. The allowance is currently \$47.04.

There are 2 exceptions when you're not entitled to be paid the allowance:

1. If a colleague has asked, and you agree to work the shift with changing start times – and this agreement is in writing; or
2. If there is a break between the shifts of 48 hours or more.

If you're not receiving your allowance, get in touch with the union by emailing 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.

Mental Health Workforce Strategy

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (RC) recommended, as part of its final report, that the Department of Health develop, implement and maintain a Workforce Strategy and Implementation Plan by the end of 2021 (Recommendation 57).

The new Mental Health and Wellbeing Division of the Department has established a Workforce Advisory Group (WTAG) which is meeting at least meet monthly until December 2021, when the Workforce Strategy is due to be released.

The VPA is represented on WTAG.

The main issues that the Division is exploring to inform the workforce strategy are supply and demand issues for different disciplines; workplace safety; attraction and retention of clinicians in rural and regional Victoria; and workforce capability.

Helpfully the Commonwealth government has been doing work on a national mental health workforce strategy. A background paper and consultation paper were released in August 2021.

The national work referred to the following as important to the development of the mental health workforce strategy:

- Identification of the competencies required to deliver care and the specifications of the occupations that are trained to perform these competencies is critical
- Carers and consumers needs are more likely to be met if the mental health workforce perform roles which reflect their full scope of practice, together with the adoption of multi-disciplinary team approach (this is consistent with the views of the RC)
- Definition of clear scopes of practice means that the mental health workforce can better respond to increases in demand for mental health services as there will be a much clearer view of which occupations are trained to provide which components of care
- Employment conditions impact on attraction and retention of the mental health workforce
 - employment conditions vary considerably across occupations and employers in the mental health sector in terms of remuneration and employment stability.
 - where there is a lack of access to quality supervision, it impacts on employee satisfaction and willingness to stay within the mental health sector.
 - current service delivery contracts can limit access to continuing professional development (CPD) as they do not include funding for CPD or backfill for providers to release staff to attend training
 - insecurity of employment associated with short term contracts and low levels of remuneration can impact both the attraction and retention of the workforce.
 - access to opportunities for progression in level, role and responsibility is an important contributor to career satisfaction and retentions but varies across occupations
 - lack of employment security impacts negatively on retention (likely to be exacerbated if there is a move towards contract services to non-government providers as proposed by the RC). The federal strategy suggests aligning government funding across sectors to improve consistency of salaries
- There is a need to develop a shared understanding of training pipelines, workforce needs and supports to support ground-up and top-down workforce planning
- Strategies to strengthen the rural and remote mental health workforce include provision of PD and supervision, and student placements

Many of these findings are consistent with the RC's findings and the issues we discussed in the recent VPA PD.

The Background paper states that the largest shortfall of mental health workforce is for psychologists and that there is a 7,787 FTE gap. The current psychology workforce is estimated to be only meeting 35% of the national target. The undersupply is across all geographies, but with the biggest shortfall of psychologists being in rural and regional areas.

The VPA has stressed the following issues:

- psychologists being able to work to their scope of practice; identification of competencies of the workforce; implementing true multidisciplinary teams as opposed to generic case management
- problematic training pipeline for endorsed psychologists including the closure of some Masters courses – e.g. neuropsychology, possibly forensic; linking to supply
- employment issues associated with contracting out including matching public sector salaries; time for professional development and supervision to be mandated in any contracts with NGOs or private providers
- appointment of a Chief Psychologist to the Department

Members' comments are welcome.

Contact Lisa Alcock at lisaa@msav.org.au with your comments.

Launching Healthy Regenerative and Just: A framework for climate, health and well-being in Australia

The *Healthy, Regenerative and Just* framework, **will be launched on Friday 29 October at 8am** in an exciting breakfast webinar hosted by Fiona Armstrong, with speakers including:

- Professor Peter Doherty, Nobel Laureate for Medicine and CAHA Patron;
- Dr Helen Haines MP, Independent Member for Indi, and
- Professor Ying Zhang, co-chair of MJA Lancet Countdown.

Join us at the webinar and RSVP at: https://www.caha.org.au/framework_launch



The graphic features a light blue background with silhouettes of a female healthcare worker and a male healthcare worker in the foreground. In the background, there are wind turbines and a city skyline. A bird is flying in the sky. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with teal and white accents.

LAUNCH + EXPERT PANEL EVENT

Healthy, Regenerative and Just: A framework for climate and health

Friday 29 October
8-9am · via Zoom

 CLIMATE AND HEALTH ALLIANCE

RSVP at [caha.org.au/launch](https://www.caha.org.au/launch)

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The Union strongly supports members getting a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can; after all we support science and the science that's behind the vaccines.

There are special leave provisions available to help you get a COVID-19 vaccine.

There are lots of questions about the COVID-19 vaccines and no doubt you're getting some friends and family asking you about them because you work in the health system. Sometimes you might not have all the answers.

Check out this great video from the Australian Academy of Science on what you need to know about COVID-19 vaccine - [COVID-19 vaccine: What you need to know](#)



The Australian Academy of Science has some great resources about COVID-19 and the vaccines, which you can access and share with your family and friends. [You can find those resources here.](#)

As a Union we support science and the science that stands behind vaccines; as such we believe that to protect yourself, your colleagues, your patients and your family and friends, it's vital to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

If you have any queries regarding the vaccine rollout and how it may impact you, please contact the Union at enquiry@msav.org.au

Contacting the Union

Members can ring the Union to seek support, advice and assistance with workplace issues.

MSAV: (03) 9623 9623

VPA: (03) 9623 9625

AHP: (03) 9623 9624

As always members can raise workplace issues by emailing the Union at 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: Why you might feel anxious returning to 'normal' after lockdown – and how to cope

"As lockdown eases today in New South Wales, and will do so in Victoria later this month, many people will begin readjusting to "normal" life.

Exiting lockdown after several months can lead to a range of feelings, from excitement and relief to stress and worry.

While it may seem counter-intuitive to feel anxious about returning to past freedoms and ways of life, it's natural for such a major change to be stressful.

So why might it be anxiety-inducing, and how can you cope?"

Read the entire article by Kristin Naragon-Gainey in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/why-you-might-feel-anxious-returning-to-normal-after-lockdown-and-how-to-cope-169089>

Worth Reading: Unrepentant, the Coalition pork barrel rolls on with Building Better Regions Fund

"Exposure will not weary them, nor shame condemn – the giant pork barrel that is the federal government's web of grants and rorts rolls on regardless.

With the stench of the "#carporks" still fresh, the latest instalment from grant corruption central is Round Five of the Building Better Regions Fund – \$300 million worth of political largesse hopelessly skewered towards electorates held by the coalition and independents.

Spreadsheet sleuth Vince O'Grady analysed the \$294 million "infrastructure projects stream" to find funds were allocated according to form – 16 per cent to Labor electorates, 11 per cent to seats held by independents and 73 per cent to Coalition seats."

Read the entire article by Michael Pascoe in The New Daily at:

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/2021/10/12/michael-pascoe-coalition-pork-barrel-building-better-regions-fund/>

Worth Reading: Sam Frost knows nothing about segregation: white settlers co-opting terms used to oppress

"This week, actress Sam Frost made headlines for the use of the word "segregation" in an Instagram video. Frost, who is white, spoke emotionally about how her choice to remain unvaccinated made her feel "less of a human" in Australian society.

The video, which Frost has now deleted, refers to New South Wales easing restrictions on travel and socialising. She complains that vaccinated people are allowed out of lockdown as of October 11, while unvaccinated people have to wait until December 1.

The post received significant critique on social media where some called it an expression of white privilege.

By invoking segregation to describe what she frames as prejudice against her vaccination status, Frost likened her experiences as a white settler with unimpeded access to free health care to the violent racial discrimination, incarceration and forced removal experienced by Indigenous and migrant communities in Australia.

Read the entire article by Bronwyn Carlson and Madi Day in The Conversation at:

<https://theconversation.com/sam-frost-knows-nothing-about-segregation-white-settlers-co-opting-terms-used-to-oppress-169613>

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.