



Stat Report 2022/08

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Psychological health at work important

The Victorian Government is introducing major changes to the occupational health and safety landscape by including regulations that specifically address psychological health in workplaces.

The proposed regulations recognise that for workplaces to be safe it is necessary to minimise psychological harm to workers; and that psychological injuries are as harmful as physical injuries.

It is perhaps one of largest changes to OHS for a very long time.

The proposed regulations strengthen existing occupational health and safety requirements in Victorian workplaces which have long been designed to cater to risks that could cause physical harm to workers.

The Union does have some reservations about the proposed new regulations. For example, there are some concerns around the limited number of reportable matters. The Union also has concerns about the thresholds needed for before a workplace review is triggered.

We maintain the very strong view we have held for some time that workload stress related impacts are injuries in every sense of the word and will advocate for this to be reflected in new regulations.

While these are important issues for the Union, they do not negate the fact that the proposed regulations are quite significant and a massive step in the right direction to ensuring workplaces are safe from psychological injury as they are from physical injury.

The proposed regulations are available for public comment with submissions due by the end of March.

Members can get more information about the proposed regulations along with details on how to make a submission at: [Proposed OHS Amendment \(Psychological Health\) Regulations | Engage Victoria](#)

In other news, the Union is supporting the School Strike 4 Climate campaign.

The rally today was the start of a 3-day campaign being run in Melbourne. Over the course of the 3 days, there will be a range of activities and events. The 3-days have been designed to get young people more involved in the campaign for action on climate change and to provide training.

If young people in your life are concerned about climate change and want to get more involved, then this is a great opportunity for them; share this Facebook event with them - <https://fb.me/e/2n2p5MDg4>

I'm also very happy to announce a new addition to our team.

Angus Middleton is our new industrial officer and comes to us from the United Workers Union. Members will be seeing Angus around as he gets himself acquainted with workplaces and the range of issues we deal with working in the health sector.

Finally, I want to remind everyone that the next federal election could be called any day now.

Once it's called you might only have a few days to get your enrolment sorted out. If you're not yet enrolled to vote, make sure you visit aec.gov.au/enrol or use check.aec.gov.au if you need to check and update your voter enrollment details.

As always, I strongly encourage members to contact us to report workplace issues by calling on 9623 9623 or emailing us at enquiry@msav.org.au

In solidarity
Paul Elliott
Secretary

Introducing Angus Middleton

Greetings comrades

I'm Angus, the new guy starting with the Union. Some of you may have already spoken with me or seen emails from me.

I've come to work for the Union after working for the United Workers Union, formerly the National Union of Workers, where I worked as an organiser representing workers in wide variety sectors; from the oil and chemical industries, to building product manufacturing, the mining supply chain, call centres, and the brilliant young zoologists who keep the (for profit) Melbourne Aquarium running and the animals alive (despite the best efforts of the management there).

I admire how you have maintained your professional identities within your union, and how you have asserted control over your work and your professions through the detailed classification structures in your Agreements and old Awards.

This is something that I think is extremely important as employers increasingly push multiskilling and 'flexibility' (for them, not for you), at the expense of specialisation and expertise.

Outside of work I enjoy watching the footy and playing strategy games.

These are challenging times and I'm relishing the opportunity to work through these times, ensuring your rights at work are protected.

I'm looking forward to getting to know you and working with you all.

Positions not backfilled?

Let us know

Union Round Up

Public Sector Bargaining

The Union continues working hard to finish drafting the new agreement.

While it might seem like we are taking our time, it is vital that clauses are worded correctly, especially since the agreement is 200+ pages. We want to avoid unnecessary future disputes because clauses in our agreement were poorly worded or don't reflect what was agreed upon.

We already have agreement that salary increases and parental leave improvements will be applied retrospectively from December 2021.

When the draft has been finished it still needs to be approved by the Victorian Government before it can be voted on by members. Then, if members vote for the agreement, it will require final approval by the Fair Work Commission before it comes into force.

Once it comes into force, payments will be backdated to 1 December 2021, as well as the first \$1000 skills and incentive payment.

If you have any questions please send them to us at enquiry@msav.org.au

Viewing Health Records

Unfortunately, we must warn members about viewing health records of others or themselves without a therapeutic work-related reason to do so.

Viewing records without a valid reason can lead to disciplinary action, which may include being sacked from your job.

We understand that members may be put under pressure from friends and relatives to look up records. It can be difficult to say no, but should you cave in and look up those records you are putting your job at risk.

Monash IVF Scientists Bargaining Update

The MSAV has continued to meet with Monash IVF to represent scientists in bargaining.

We are happy to share that Monash IVF has accepted our claim to insert a workload provision into the new Agreement. Among other requirements and new entitlements, this clause provides that Monash IVF must be "sufficiently staffed and resourced" to enable workers to perform their role in ordinary hours, to take meals breaks and leave. This is a really good achievement!

We expect a response to these claims at our next bargaining meeting in early April. We will also be negotiating wage increases at our next meeting. We have already rejected the current offer.

Members should have received a survey, asking for your feedback. If you haven't, please contact us so we can make sure you are receiving our emails.

You can take the survey by visiting: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8BW75QW>

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa at lisa@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.

COVID-19 Vaccinations & Boosters

With the Omicron variant rapidly spreading and the seemingly increasing threat it poses, 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.

We also strongly support members getting their booster shot as soon as possible.

There are special leave provisions available to help you get a COVID-19 vaccine, which we've covered in *Union Round Up*

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.](#)

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: Stress can cause heart attacks. Could tackling workplace bullying save lives?

" The sad passing of Kimberley Kitching and Shane Warne (both 52) from suspected cardiac conditions has put a spotlight on the causes of heart disease.

In recent days, attention has turned to the issue of psychological stress in the context of allegations of workplace bullying as a potential contributor to Ms Kitching's physical health before her death. Ms Kitching's ALP colleagues have strongly denied bullying claims.

But we are learning more and more about how mental stress can endanger our hearts."

Read the entire article by Adrienne O'Neil in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/stress-can-cause-heart-attacks-could-tackling-workplace-bullying-save-lives-179578>

Worth Reading: More than 1 million Australians have no access to childcare in their area

" About 9 million Australians, 35% of the population, live in neighbourhoods classified as childcare deserts – populated areas where there are more than three children per childcare place.

In the first research of its kind in Australia, the Mitchell Institute has examined access to childcare in more than 50,000 neighbourhoods across the country.

We found about 1.1 million Australians live in regional and remote areas where there is no childcare available at all.

The map below shows the accessibility of childcare across Australia. Areas in orange and red indicate suburbs more likely to have childcare deserts. Areas of blue indicate where there is greater relative supply."

Read the entire article by Peter Hurley in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/more-than-1-million-australians-have-no-access-to-childcare-in-their-area-179557>

Worth Reading: Governments love to talk about 'shared responsibility' in a disaster – but does anyone know what it means?

"The devastating floods in Queensland and New South Wales have taken everyone by surprise.

People have been left to fend for themselves while bickering governments scrambled to provide a coordinated and adequate disaster response.

The intensity of the rainfall may not have been possible to predict, but having a clear roles for governments, emergency services, the military, the charity sector, volunteers and individuals is possible – and absolutely necessary."

Read the entire article by Rowena Maguire, Amanda Kennedy, Annastasia Bousgas, Bridget Lewis and Melissa Bull in The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/governments-love-to-talk-about-shared-responsibility-in-a-disaster-but-does-anyone-know-what-it-means-179459>

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.