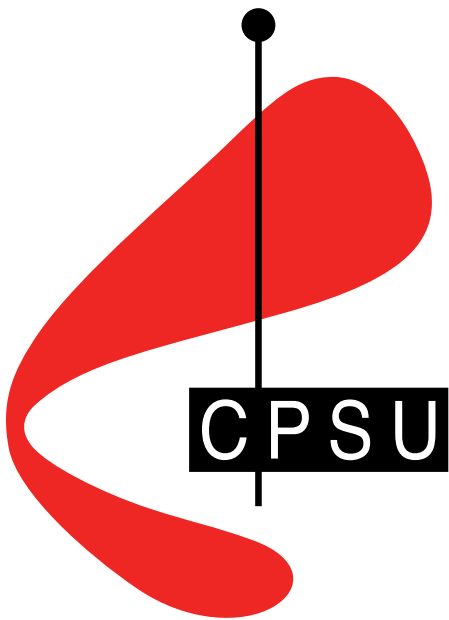


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PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE

A PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY & PUBLIC SECTOR UNION
SPSF GROUP - VICTORIAN BRANCH - WWW.CPSUVIC.ORG

SUPER WITHDRAWAL POLICY FIASCO

PAGES 14-15

OUR DISEASE DETECTIVES

PAGES 4-5,20



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SUPERANNUATION GUARANTEE PAYMENTS WILL BE REPAID ON SHIFT WORKER ANNUAL LEAVE LOADING UNDER OUR VICTORIAN PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT.

CPSU and the State of Victoria have been in negotiations for over a year after a member raised with the union questions about the accuracy of superannuation guarantee payments being made to him as a shift worker.

Upon investigation it was clear the ATO had ruled in 2009 that annual leave loading related to shift allowances were to be treated as Ordinary Time Earnings (OTE) for the purposes of payment of superannuation guarantee.

CPSU was able to ascertain that the payments required by the ATO ruling had not been made by Department of Justice and Community Safety and Department of Health and Human Services.

CPSU wrote to the Treasurer and made a claim for this underpayment to be paid to all eligible shift workers with interest.

CPSU has reached a settlement that will have Departments pay seven (7) years of Super Guarantee backpay for all eligible shift workers who worked between 20013-2020.

CPSU explored different means of pursuing this matter and was advised that legally back payments in court settlements are limited to six years. CPSU has negotiated a settlement with the State of Victoria for payments to go back seven years for shift workers. In addition, members who have their own pay records indicating payments of the shift penalties prior to April 2013 may apply to their employer for the additional SG payments.

The two Departments will make all reasonable efforts to conclude this process by 1 September 2020.

Payments will be made through the ATO where required and/or remitted to the relevant employees' superannuation accounts.

This will include payment of interest as required under Superannuation Guarantee law and Departments will write to affected employees in the coming weeks with details.



OUR DISEASE DETECTIVES

Our Public Health Officer members have been doing an amazing job leading the COVID-19 response in Victoria within the Department of Health and Human Services.

Supplemented with other members within the Department and the public service more broadly, the public health team are responsible for the important tracking and tracing work to ensure all 'close contacts' are identified and isolated as soon as possible to help prevent further spread of the virus.

Whilst for many of us, COVID-19 became a prevalent issue in around March this year, our members in the Communicable Diseases area who ordinarily track and trace other diseases, started their fight back in January.



This dedicated group have been working around the clock in the fight against coronavirus and they have supported their colleagues as DHHS rapidly grows to respond to the public health emergency.

What a contact tracer does? An editorial.

Can you tell me everywhere you've been in the past two weeks? Who have you been with? How did you get there? How close were you to the people around you?

Contact tracing describes the process undertaken to track the movement of a disease through a community.

The spread can occur through family gatherings, sporting clubs, workplaces or any other network or community where there has been in-person interaction.

The process starts when the department is notified of a case via a laboratory test result. Since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic began in Victoria, case and contacting workloads have ranged from zero cases a day, right up to nearly 300 cases a day – all of which need investigating.

Regardless, the first step is always the same - a case interview.

Case interviews are undertaken to not only understand where the individual may have been since becoming infectious (i.e. who they may have exposed/given the virus to), but also their movements prior to their infection, to work out how they contracted it.

While this seems simple, it takes a particular set of skills to make what can be a confronting, emotional and/or challenging experience for those on the other end of the phone into a productive and meaningful conversation.



The level of detail required from the cases is immense and when put on the spot it's surprising how quickly the simplest of details can escape your memory.

Did you attend work? If so, what do you do? How many shifts did you work in the past two weeks? How many people work in your team? Are they stationed within 1.5m of you? Are there additional people on site you may have interacted with? Is it an enclosed setting? Do you wear personal protective equipment? Is there a shared break room or bathroom facilities? If so, how often are they cleaned? Are there various shifts at the workplace or just the one? Did you work the same shift or across multiple shifts in the past two weeks, perhaps across multiple work locations? Did you carpool with anyone, or catch public transport?

So many questions – and that's just about work.

Case interviews can last an hour or more, with highly trained department staff members putting their years of experience to use, extracting vital information about the comings and goings of cases.



Surely, it's not that hard to just make phone calls? Can't anyone do these jobs?

When it comes to case interviews and contact tracing, it's not as simple as just asking questions. The case, contact and outbreak management team, made up of public health officers, environmental health officers, nurses, doctors and others in the medical and public health field, are constantly evaluating the information given to them.

Which details need further investigation? Which factors require escalation? What elements prompt the net for contact tracing to extend to a wider group?

They're assessing the impact of factors like duration, distance and feasibility of transmission - some of these decisions trigger a domino effect that can impact thousands of people and businesses.

Having said this, there are roles that are more suitable to extracting information and recording into the database; and less about assessing and evaluating risk.

These roles could be performed by others not as highly skilled in clinical and preferred backgrounds.

But I had lunch with my friend the other day, what does this mean for them? Is it bad that I went to a party while I was sick?

After the case interview is conducted an assessment is made about which steps to take next, including identifying close contacts.

A close contact is defined as someone who has spent more than 15 minutes within 1.5 metres of a case or someone who has spent more than two hours within the same enclosed space as a case, e.g. an office, restaurant or home.

On average, each case has around ten close contacts.

Once these individuals are identified, they are contacted by the department and the requirements of being a close contact are explained. These requirements include entering into 14 days quarantine.

As you can expect, this information is not always met with excitement.

CONTINUED PAGE 20



THE ROLE OF THE

NONE OF THIS HAPPENS BY CHANCE.

As Australia emerged from one of its worst bushfire seasons with the loss of multiple lives and significant damage to property, flora and fauna, a new challenge was emerging off our shores in the form of the Coronavirus.

Initially, the Government response was focused on bushfire recovery and rebuilding communities, but a watch was in place on the emerging threat spreading through China, other parts of Asia, and Europe.

By late January it was clear there were issues confronting governments and communities overseas, but it wasn't until February that this challenge became a reality in Australia.

So real that the Federal Government convened an unprecedented National Cabinet to deal with the crisis.

The new National Cabinet, not seen since the Second World War, which initially met twice weekly, has evolved into an unprecedented model of governing.

The Australian Government invited the State and Territory leaders to join the Cabinet.

The National Cabinet was swift in making decisions that impacted on our movement, our working lives, including our entertainment, schooling, and travel - all in the name of public health.

For the first time since the Spanish Flu of 1919 our state, territory, and international borders were effectively closed.

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews and the Chief Health Officer advised that a State of Emergency had been declared under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 in Victoria back in late March.

This declaration, amongst other measures, provided the CHO with far-reaching powers to act to eliminate or reduce a serious risk to public health by detaining people, restricting movement, preventing entry to premises or providing any other direction reasonable to protect public health. Similar declarations were made in every jurisdiction across Australia.

These powers brought into sharp focus the role the public service workforce and other public sector workers have in managing crisis such as the current pandemic. Business as usual was quickly superseded.

The need to refocus energies on matters related to the directives of the CHO and importantly getting the community to accept the change to their lives became the priority.

Departments ramped up tracing processes so community infections could be tracked to the source.



SERVICE REBORN

Policies around self-isolation were developed and implemented.

Operational procedures have had to be redesigned so courts, prisons, youth justice and child protection operations could continue but with new protections for maintaining social distancing.

Legislation needed to be drafted by Parliamentary Council to facilitate these social distancing requirements. Residential and commercial leasing support was provided.

Supply needed to be maintained without a budget being handed down.

Regulatory frameworks applicable across a range of Government activities were managed.

All these changes are in place for an initial 6 months and whilst legislated for, they require a complete reconfiguration of the operation of government services underpinned by legislation.

Public sector workers are at the forefront of tackling the state of emergency priorities and making it work outside the immediate health response.

Those priorities include the procurement of emergency housing for the homeless, PPE for workers in close contact with others, emergency funding to keep people in homes, and recalibrating the way we deliver education by requiring the procurement of over 40,000 devices for kids now learning from home.

None of this happens by chance.

The Service doesn't happen without our members.

The impact on services will be felt for years as we look at the underpinning funding model for many government-funded institutions to ensure they are financially secure into the future.

In the wake of COVID, governments could properly recognise the contribution of their public services

by removing arbitrary staffing caps to better target recovery assistance and help citizens struggling in a post pandemic economy.

There also need to be improved pathways into public sector work for people from disadvantaged, rural, and regional areas.

By training up their workforces, all tiers of government could reduce their dependency on consultants and contractors and give Australians from all backgrounds a real opportunity to contribute to society.

Politicians have the ultimate say on the policy settings, but it is the unsung people of the public service and within the wider sector that are making the changes to our lives work, so we can be free of this invidious disease into the future.

It's time to acknowledge that contribution and the important role we all play in our society.

KAREN BATT



THE FUTURE IS PUBLIC.

TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC SERVICES

A new publication tracks more than 1,400 successful cases of bringing public services back from private ownership and/or management.

In recent years, the Transnational Institute and partner organisations have identified more than 1,400 successful (re)municipalisation cases involving more than 2,400 cities in 58 countries around the world.

This publication is about more than just numbers.

It shows that public services are more important than ever in the face of the climate catastrophe, mounting inequalities and growing political unrest.

The COVID-19 crisis too has made painfully clear the disastrous effects

of austerity, social security cuts and privatised health care systems, but it has also demonstrated that public services and the people who operate them are truly the foundation of healthy and resilient societies despite years of privatisation and austerity choking democratic control and funding.

As privatisation fails, a growing international movement is choosing (re)municipalisation as a key tool for redefining public ownership for the 21st century.

Resistance to privatisation has turned into a powerful force for this change.

Each (re) municipalisation has its own specific challenges: from waste management in Egypt to

the new public pharmacies in Chile, and to the many remote US municipalities that have delivered jobs and improved quality of life by developing broadband internet.

Together, civil society organisations, trade unions and local authorities are shaping a new template for how to expand democratic public ownership to all levels of society and opening new routes to community-led and climate conscious public services.

This book is the result of their collaboration.

https://pop-umbrella.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/9ced65c2-418e-44c5-8e80-a11dfd67e549_FutureIsPublic_online_def.pdf

MORE STEPS TOWARDS A SINGLE SERVICE



Over 42,000 state government employees will get a chance to place their stamp of approval on a proposed new Victorian Public Service Agreement after both CPSU and the State Government signed off on the new deal.

[READ MORE](#)



MORE STEPS TOWARDS A SINGLE SERVICE

The agreement will deliver improved salaries and new conditions over the next four years after extensive and detailed negotiations in the past months, but in reality it's been the sum of twelve months of negotiations, but importantly more recently, the key involvement of our members, doing their job during the Bushfire and Coronavirus crises.

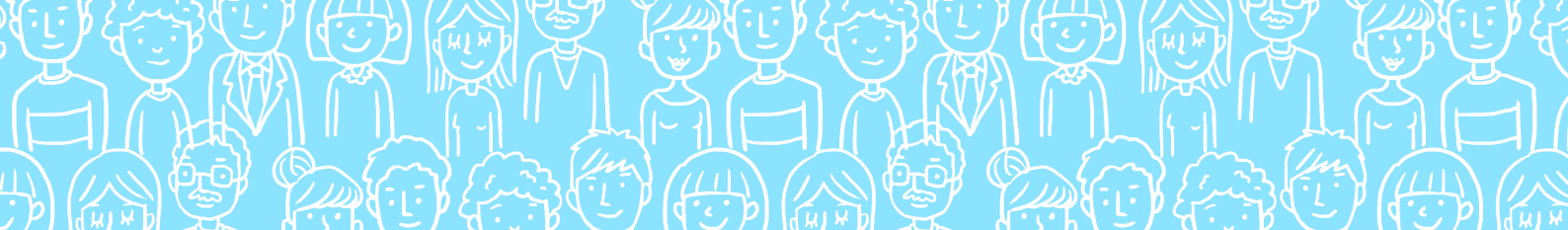
The pay rises are structured to maximise the dollar amounts, with

the State Government's wages policy being re-organised to front load the Agreement.

Agreement increases comprise salary and annual mobility payments.

Total increases with mobility payments over 48 months (20 March 2020 – 20 March 2024) will be 13%-13.5%. Of this total, 6.75% in increases will occur in the first 18 months.

	SALARY INCREASES	MOBILITY PAYMENTS (OTE)
2020	1.5% on 20 March 2020 1.25% on 1 December 2020	1.25% on 1st July 2020
2021	1.5% on 1 September 2021	1.25% on 1st July 2021
2022	1.25% on 1 June 2022	1.25% on 1st July 2022
2023	1.5% on 1 March 2023 1% on 1 December 2023	1.25% on 1st July 2023



Mobility

The primary goal of Mobility is to facilitate the ongoing employment of staff who may be displaced through organisational change and/or reprioritisation of budgets.

More recently mobility has been utilised to provide a surge workforce for the State Government to deploy to fight bushfires over summer and assist with community recovery, as well as respond within multiple agencies tracing and tackling COVID-19.

The Government has said it has no plans for a program of voluntary or forced redundancies with the goal being that staff with required skills and experience be deployed in other parts of the VPS or other statutory authorities covered by CPSU agreements.

Any reduction of staff in program areas affected is to be managed via attrition.

- Aim for secure, flexible employment in the public service.
- Promote VPS as career path of choice for the broader workforce.
- Encouragement to continue career development and diversification in the public service.

Mobility payments equal to VPS amounts will apply to the other classification structures in the Agreement.

Legal Officer, Allied Health, Science, Housing Services Officer, Housing Customer Services Officer, Custodial Officers, Sheriff's Officer, Community Corrections Officer, Fisheries Officer, Court Registrar, Police Custody Officer, Child Protection Practitioner, Youth Justice, Children, Youth and Families Stream, Forensic Officers, and Ministerial Transport Officers.

Accredited Training Package for Members

CPSU has been working with the Victorian Skills Commission behind the scenes to establish an accredited training package for members to operationalise the jobs and skills exchange.

CPSU knows that the ability to improve capability and promote sensible job building mobility is training.

CPSU has just been advised that our proposal to create a public sector training package has been approved and accredited by VRQA.

The accreditation is for seven (7) short courses designed to provide a nationally recognised micro qualification taken from the Certificate in Government and the Certificate in Government Investigations.

22547VIC Course in Public Sector Administration
22548VIC Course in Public Sector Investigations
22549VIC Course in Public Sector Management
22550VIC Course in Public Sector Policy and Project Work
22551VIC Course in Public Sector Procurement
22552VIC Course in Public Sector Regulatory Compliance
22553VIC Course in Public Sector Service Delivery

The short courses will be provided by a TAFE college and will be provided free (other than the student amenity fee) for members of CPSU.

The courses are designed to fill a gap for VPS and wider sector staff who want a career in the service but are often not able to undertake professional development.

The skills will also assist in the operationalising of the mobility agreement, so people are able to be trained to meet the demands of new or different roles.

Our focus is to both provide much needed professional development for members but to also assist people keep a job.

Agreement Delivers Comprehensive Package

The package delivers dollars up front, so members will receive;

- 6.75% in first 18 months out of total funding of 13% - 13.58% over the four-year agreement.
- have our progression steps preserved in addition, as well as the top of grade payments.
- common 12-month rule to apply for progression eligibility,
- increased night shift rate to 20%, up from 15%.
- 10-hour break between periods of work including shift duty and overtime with 6-months to implement,
- a new raised overtime calculation cap to Grade 4.1.1. up by 6 increment steps,
- Best Practice Employment Commitment (BPEC) that an employee classified as VPSG5 or higher who performs regular overtime at the direction of the employer may be granted time in lieu,
- mobility protections to forgo need for redundancies with a payment equivalent to 1.25% of the top of each value range paid as Ordinary Time Earnings (OTE) on 1 July each year,
- early retirement package for identified employees where there are program or budget changes set out in BPEC,
- superannuation on unpaid parental leave up to 12 months,
- the first 52 weeks of parental leave counting as service for Long Service Leave,

CONTINUED



- increased primary carer's and/or secondary carer's leave to 16 weeks with more flexibility with how leave can be taken and paid lactation breaks upon return to work, with opportunity to make up any progression increment lost during primary carer parental leave (up to 52 weeks).
- 12-month qualifying provision waived for paid parental leave for employees not subject to probation, with no need to return to work to access further parental leave,
- recognition of other caring arrangement e.g. Foster and kinship care,
- employees who enters a formal surrogacy which complies with the Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008 (Vic), are entitled to Pre-Natal leave and six weeks of paid leave,
- 15 days per annum paid personal leave at the rate of pay had employee worked including can be used for medical appointments with a broader definition of significant family or personal connection introduced for compassionate leave,
- Employees in receipt of workers compensation payments will be able to take and accrue annual and personal leave,
- new clause that supports the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic), and explicitly sets out the Gender equality principles, with a clause to enable equal pay cases to address gender pay gap (currently 12%),
- 20 days paid gender transition leave,
- paid leave up to 10 days for members of First Peoples Assembly of Victoria,
- study leave clause to recognise micro-credentialing and CPD (compulsory professional development),
- recognition that the union can raise disputes in its own right, with the ability to raise a dispute about unreasonable delays in a misconduct investigation,
- probation increase to 6 months to align with the minimum employment period under the Fair Work Act, but for new employees only and not required for employees moving between VPS departments/agencies

All the agency specific appendix negotiations have also been concluded including a host of further improvements for members.

CPSU recommends the agreement because it achieves many of the claims sort by the union.



THE KEY IS MOBILITY

RECENT EMERGENCIES CONFRONTING VICTORIANS, BUSHFIRES OVER SUMMER AND NOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, HAS SEEN THE VPS WORKFORCE MOBILISED BY THE STATE AS ITS FRONTLINE AND LAST LINE SURGE WORKFORCE.

Many thousands of government workers have been prepared to assist in the responses and will be needed in the State's recovery as we all deal with the environmental, economic and personal fallout post pandemic.

This ground-breaking new approach to staff deployment raised many issues but has seen the Government and the Union agree to codify existing provisions for staff mobility and to set down new entitlements, processes, and procedures in our proposed new EBA.

The new approach provides staff with certainty and will allow Government to respond to multiple changing needs of Victorians simultaneously.

Together we have identified four (4) types of mobility that staff can be asked to participate in.

From a short-term placement at another Government office in a defined area such as the CBD, right through to the vexed issue of a residential relocation, that we have seen with agencies involved in the regional GovHubs initiatives, and in recent times with WorkSafe moving from Exhibition Street to Geelong.

Each type (or Tier as we have called them in the proposed agreement) has certain entitlements, criteria for agreeing or not agreeing to move (for short term project through to permanent relocation of the family home). and appeal mechanisms in the event of a personal hardship on an employee.

Each tier attracts certain timelines for consultation dependent on the scale of the move.

The codification of the existing processes will give departmental and agency employees covered by the agreement certainty into the future about work locations and the principles that are to apply.



SUPER WITHDRAWAL POLICY FIASCO

THERE'S BEEN AN AVALANCHE OF MEMBERS SEEKING TO ACCESS THEIR RETIREMENT SAVINGS TO GET THROUGH THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS, BUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S SCHEME IS PLAGUED WITH PROBLEMS, FROM SCAMMERS TO TAXATION, TO TREASURY COST ESTIMATE BLOW OUTS, TO FUTURE PRESSURE TO FUND THESE SHORTFALLS IN RETIREMENT BENEFITS, HIGHLIGHTING THE UNPRECEDENTED POLICY FAILURE.

ATO data shows more than 2.8 million Australians have been approved to access super early with around 5% of accounts having been wiped out while thousands more now have a negligible balance.

One of the federal government's earliest responses to the pandemic was to expand early access to super on compassionate grounds for the unemployed, people made redundant by COVID-19 and those whose work hours had been reduced by 20 per cent or more.

After rejecting an ASFA idea that the government could avoid the sale of assets at the bottom of the market and just issue a bond for super funds to subscribe to, which could then be used to on-lend money to members for repayment later, this ill thought through support initiative has been hit with multiple problems.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) had to freeze more than 50 bank accounts suspected of defrauding the early access program with around \$200,000 being frozen with the belief criminal syndicates are behind the alleged fraud.

AFP Commissioner Reece Kershaw said the investigation found criminal syndicates, including some overseas based, were behind the fraudulent activity to steal the retirement savings of Australians.

People are now also surprised that the payments are being scrutinised afterwards.

Many who applied to withdraw their super thought that their claim would be assessed before the money was paid out but in fact there were very few checks made other than basic identification and fraud precautions.

Speed was a priority given the nature of the pandemic now raising the question about just how tough is the Australian Tax Office (ATO) is going to get with people who withdrew their superannuation under the initiative.

It is an interesting question given the unique circumstances that surrounded the withdrawals of up to \$20,000 per worker over two financial years and revelations that lots of money was paid out to people who were not entitled to access it.

The ATO is already indicating that it will be handing out \$12,600 fines to those who grabbed their super money incorrectly.

With the money paid out and, in most cases, spent frivolously, the penalty could be felt in ways other than the lower retirement savings and missed investment earnings.

ATO assistant commissioner Karen Foat said those who accessed super they weren't entitled to faced fines or prosecution.

The Government scheme was designed to help people struggling financially during the pandemic and only people who suffered financial hardship due to COVID-19 were supposed to be eligible.

Australian Taxation Office figures supplied by the federal Treasurer's office suggest a multibillion-dollar spike in claims lodged coinciding with the opening of a second round of applications on the first day of the new financial year.

A man and a woman are sitting on a tall stack of coins. The man is on the left, wearing a light-colored suit and a yellow shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a green dress. They are both looking towards the right. The stack of coins is very tall, reaching up to their chests. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of yellow and blue.

SUPER ON LEAVE LOADING FROM 1ST APRIL

Superannuation Guarantee payments on annual leave loading amounts for the current quarter (from 1 April) will be paid when they are due and for future financial quarters after State Government Departments also agreed to consider Annual Leave Loading payments as Ordinary Time Earnings for superannuation purposes.

You will need to confirm the calculations made and if you need assistance please contact CPSU.

PROVISIONAL PAYMENT PILOT



IF YOU HAVE A WORK-RELATED MENTAL HEALTH INJURY, IT'S IMPORTANT TO GET TREATMENT EARLY.

You may be eligible to access payments for mental health treatment and services through the State Government's Provisional Payments Pilot.

The pilot allows eligible emergency workers to access payments for medical treatment and services while their compensation claim is being determined.

All the following are included in the pilot;

- Employees and volunteers of Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Country Fire Authority, Victoria State Emergency Services
- Employees of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and the Emergency Service Telecommunications Authority
- Public sector nurses and midwives
- Child protection practitioners employed by the Department of Health and Human Services
- Corrections Victoria employees – Correctional and Detention Services
- Youth Justice employees – Correctional and Detention Services
- Forest Fire Fighters employed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and partner agencies.

CPSU members who lodge a WorkCover claim must opt in if employed by the above Agency's and will be provided by the employer with an opt in consent form once the claim is lodged, (required for legal reasons).

The agency will then commence paying for the reasonable medical treatment and services while the members claim is being determined.

If the claim is rejected, payment of medical expenses will continue for up to 13 weeks from date claim lodged upon the employer.

CPSU members can choose their own medical provider under the pilot, however, the employer will only pay the prescribed fee to the doctor, so there may be an out of pocket payment the CPSU member will need to pay.

Medical expenses payable will include GP, Psychiatrist, psychologist and other like services for mental injury.

CPSU members can still utilise a Medicare mental health treatment plan without affecting medical treatment under the Pilot.

CPSU members will receive provisional payments for medical and like services at the prescribed WorkCover fee rate while their compensation claim is being determined.

For more information about the Provisional Payments Pilot visit www.vic.gov.au/provisional-payments or contact your employer or CPSU's WorkCover Services Geoff Lewin on (03) 9639 1822.

HELPING FIRST HOME BUYERS

BUYING A HOME OF YOUR OWN IS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL DECISIONS YOU WILL EVER MAKE. THERE'S CERTAINLY NO PLACE LIKE YOUR FIRST HOME, BUT IT CAN BE HARD TO KNOW WHERE TO START.



At G&C Mutual Bank, we have over sixty years' experience of helping Australians own their own home. With a strong history of providing flexible, competitively priced and award-winning products for first home buyers, we're ready to help you every step of the way.

We're proud to have been chosen to offer loans under the Australian Government's First Home Loan

Deposit Scheme, to help even more first home buyers realise their dream of home ownership.

We look forward to welcoming a new generation of home loan customers. Whether you're saving for a deposit, seeking home loan pre-approval, or just need support navigating the process, we're ready to help you make your move.

Find out more at <https://www.gcmutual.bank/products/home-loans/first-home-premium-package/>

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AUSTRALIA NEEDS A NATIONAL JOBS PLAN

THE DELIBERATE SHUTDOWN OF LARGE SECTIONS OF THE ECONOMY TO STOP COVID-19 INFECTION AND PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH HAS CAUSED AN UNPRECEDENTED ECONOMIC CONTRACTION.

This is not a normal cyclical downturn: it happened much faster and went deeper.

The downturn was led by synchronised closures in the industries most vulnerable to infection: customer-facing service sectors like retail, hospitality, transportation and personal services.

Over 660,000 jobs were lost between February and June – and it is not yet clear that the worst is past.

Australia's rate of unemployment is going up, and FAST!

After the COVID-19 catastrophe, if left to its own devices, the private sector economy will likely sink into years of depression.

We need an ambitious, sustained, multi-dimensional plan for full-fledged national economic reconstruction.

We need a new vision for generating jobs, incomes, and growth in the aftermath of the pandemic.

That's why we, the ACTU, has launched a National Jobs Plan. We know young people, women, and workers in rural and regional Australia are being hit the hardest.

Without a plan that addresses the issues of job insecurity, inequality and record-low wage growth, unemployment is likely to get worse.

The ACTU is calling for a Government led National Economic Reconstruction plan and the labour movement offers up five concrete ideas that are designed to create and save jobs, protect and nurture whole industries,

support public and private sector jobs, invest in future skills and training and strengthen Australia's physical and social infrastructure.

These ideas include a national commitment to free early child education and care, massive investment in training (including 150,000 free TAFE places), a 'Rediscover Australia' initiative to help our travel and hospitality sectors survive, a large and sustained increase in infrastructure investment and a comprehensive plan to expand sustainable manufacturing.

Reconstruction must address critical failures in the business-led economy that were painfully evident before COVID-19 hit: vast underutilisation of labour, the growing prevalence of insecure and precarious jobs, widening inequality, persistent wage stagnation, and the impact of climate change.

In other words, we cannot expect that the economy will naturally bounce back to 'normal' of its own volition.



"WE NEED TO REBUILD THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY AND SOCIETY AND MAKE JOBS MORE SECURE."

- Michele O'Neil President, ACTU

The crisis has shown that pre-pandemic 'normal' was neither acceptable nor sustainable.

Instead, we must work collaboratively and ambitiously to build a new normal.

The ACTU's plan focuses on three core areas:

1. Creating jobs
2. Stimulating the economy
3. And getting us all back to work

The common thread linking all of these elements is a willingness to mobilise vast resources, under the active leadership of government, to undertake and finance needed work, and fill the economic void left by a shattered private sector.

There is no shortage of work to do after the pandemic.

With effective unemployment at 20%, there is clearly no shortage of willing Australians to do that work.

Trying to restore previous neoliberal macroeconomic and fiscal priorities (like balancing the budget, privatising public services and assets, and further eroding employment protections and entitlements) would be a disastrous mistake.

Putting Australians back to work in decent, secure jobs, as we continue to protect public health, must now be the overarching priority of everything the government does.

A national jobs and reconstruction plan – ambitious, comprehensive, and properly funded – can do exactly that.

Five Ideas to Get Started

1. Early Childhood Education and Care Strategy
2. Training for Reconstruction
3. Rediscover Australia
4. National Reconstruction Investment Plan
5. Sustainable Manufacturing Strategy

We need to make sure as many people as possible hear our positive plan for secure job creation.

<https://action.australianunions.org.au/nerp>



OUR DISEASE DETECTIVES

CONTINUED FROM PAGES 4-5

So, I can't go to work? I have to stay in my bedroom? How do I look after my kids? What if I don't have a separate bathroom to use? How will I pay my bills? How do I make sure I don't jeopardise the health of my family?

These are kind of questions contact tracers are met with every day.

All valid and often asked by someone with real concerns for the health of their family and friends.

As such, it takes time and care to respond.

But what does the data mean? How are the cases linked? Where are the areas of concern?

Epidemiology is a crucial part of the contact tracing process.

Once the information is collated by the team making the calls, it is entered into a database (The Public Health Event Surveillance System or PHESS).

From there the 'epis', as they're lovingly known, crunch the numbers. They look for patterns, links, trends – anything that could indicate areas of concern or areas of improvement.

The work of the epidemiologists and the reports they create directly inform decisions that impact the entire state and they're literally working 24 hours a day, seven days a week to do it.

In a pre-pandemic world, it was widely accepted that for an epi team to be comfortable releasing data, once it had been thoroughly 'cleaned' (checked for error or duplication), it could take months, even years.

Currently, numbers are being turned around in about seven hours.

A truly extraordinary effort.

When will we have zero cases in Victoria? When will I be able to hug people again? When will this end?

Our disease detectives don't hold all the answers, but they're a big part of moving Victoria toward a future that does.

