

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Update #22

**CityLink toll credit for frontline workers; be part of the nursing and midwifery exhibition;
fast-tracked WorkCover claims extends to personal care workers;
state of emergency extension bill passes Upper House;
how to raise an aged care retention bonus payment issue**

ANMF has collated the important links all in one place, so you don't have to go looking. Please bookmark and check this page regularly – anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19

Members with COVID-19-related employment questions can ask via the Member Assistance online inquiry form anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19. Please read the information on our website before submitting a question. Member Assistance is not taking phone inquiries as ANMF staff are working remotely. Members whom ANMF deems have complex inquiries will still have phone contact with staff.

The DHHS Coronavirus Guidance Note on Employment-Related Matters (bit.ly/2UhDSU2) was last updated 20 July.

Latest COVID-19 statistics

Victorian statistics (**new dashboard**) via <https://bit.ly/3j5vJwC>

Read the Victorian Chief Health Officer daily update via <https://bit.ly/34Et8Ug>

Read the Victorian Chief Health Officer daily media release via <https://bit.ly/2EDiQLb>

National statistics via <https://bit.ly/2RyEXX1>

National residential aged care cases and deaths via <https://bit.ly/32FdfwD>

Additional ANMF support for members

To provide additional support to members with urgent issues during this time, an ANMF staff member has been available on Saturdays and Sundays, between 8.45 and 5pm. To reach the on-call weekend contact, call the ANMF office number on 9275 9333.

No concern too small or too big: call NMHPV before you feel overwhelmed

Did you know Victorian nurses, midwives, students of nursing and midwifery and aged care personal care workers have access to the independent, free and confidential mental health support, counselling and referral services?

The Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria is run by nurses and provides tailored support for the nursing, midwifery and personal carer workforce in public and private facilities.

Since May the Andrews Government has provided NMHPV with an additional \$600,000 so the service can respond to the increased need for its services during the pandemic.

Watch NMHPV Chief Executive Officer Glenn Taylor talk about how they can support you anmfvic.asn.au/nmhpv

To contact NMHPV call 9415 7551 or email admin@nmhp.org.au

Find out more www.nmhp.org.au

Can you help us promote support for nurses, midwives and carers?

We want all nurses, midwives and personal care workers, feeling stress and anxiety during this pandemic, to know that support is a phone call away. Please take this two-minute survey to help us spread the word about the important Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria service. The survey will close Thursday 10 September.

Tell us what you think via <https://bit.ly/3hLPOb4>

CityLink toll credit for frontline workers

Nurses, midwives and aged care personal care workers using CityLink to travel to and from work may be eligible for toll credits for the duration of Stage 4 restrictions — from 2 August to 13 September (subject to the Victorian Government's confirmation).

You will need proof of employment, such as a copy of your ID card, an application submitted via your work email address or a letter from your current employer. Details and applications <https://bit.ly/2QNkv3Y>

COVID-19 call out: be part of the nursing and midwifery exhibition

Victorian nurses and midwives are being asked to share their 'caring under COVID-19' experience and photographs as part of an exhibition to mark the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife.

Drawing on more than 200 years of history, the exhibition will be set against a backdrop of social and political change, highlighting nursing and midwifery in civilian and military life, in peace-keeping spheres, in practice, business, politics, activism and advocacy.

Due to COVID-19, the launch of the Her Place museum exhibition in East Melbourne has been delayed until early 2021. The exhibition is also expected to travel to regional Victoria.

Funded by the Victorian Government, the exhibition will be hosted in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services and Safer Care Victoria and is supported by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch).

To participate, go to <https://bit.ly/caringundercovid>

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

Resources to prevent and manage post-traumatic stress syndrome

Nurses, personal care workers and midwives have felt the full brunt of the COVID-19 outbreak. The impact of the stress and anxiety working during this incredibly difficult period will affect members in different ways. The way people cope or respond to these pressures can also change with time.

Management consultant organisation Performance Science (<https://bit.ly/31LqUCT>) has developed resources for the prevention and management of PTSD in conjunction with WorkSafe Victoria. ANMF (Vic Branch) was also given an opportunity to provide feedback.

Below are links to these documents for individuals and organisations:

- **Reducing the risk of PTSD in hospital workers during covid-19 – tips for health service staff**
<https://bit.ly/34SsVis>
- **Reducing the risk of PTSD in hospital workers during covid-19 – tips for organisations and leaders**
<https://bit.ly/31LKn6D>

ANMF continues to encourage members – nurses, midwives and aged care personal care workers to access the free counselling, support and referral services of the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria. Call 9415 7551

Personal care worker WorkCover claims will be fast-tracked

ANMF has confirmed the Victorian Government's announcement to fast-track nurses' and midwives' WorkCover claims, if they test positive to COVID-19, also extends to aged care personal care workers.

The last few weeks have been brutal and traumatic for the workforce with nurses and aged care personal care workers representing the highest number of health care workers who have contracted the virus in the second wave.

ANMF understands that all nurses', midwives' and personal care workers' COVID-19 WorkCover claims have been accepted. However, **ANMF encourages all impacted members to submit a claim to ensure future protection.**

ANMF wrote to Attorney-General and Minister for Workplace Safety Jill Hennessy in August requesting that WorkCover claims from nurses, midwives and personal care workers who test positive to COVID-19 are automatically accepted.

Providing access to uncontested WorkCover claims if they test positive to COVID-19 is one way the Victorian Government can show nurses, midwives and personal care workers they have their back and acknowledge the critical work you are doing caring for the community.

Students on clinical placement and WorkCover

ANMF is working to ensure student nurses and midwives on clinical placement have the protection of WorkCover if they test positive to COVID-19.

Whilst students on clinical placements are not technically employed by a health service or an education provider that does not mean they should fall through the cracks.

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

State of emergency legislation extension passes Victorian upper house

The Victorian Upper House has passed the Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment Bill providing a six-month extension to the Victorian Government's state of emergency powers.

The extension will ensure the Chief Health Officer continues to have the ability to recommend enforceable rules and measures in four-week blocks to reduce and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The bill was passed in the early hours of 2 September with the support of crossbenchers Reason Party MP Fiona Patten, Animal Justice Party MP Andy Meddick and Greens MP Samantha Ratnam.

The bill will now move to the lower house.

ANMF strongly supported an extension arguing it would provide much needed certainty to nurses, midwives, personal care workers and all healthcare and emergency workers.

This bill is not about extending the stage four lockdown, but about the necessary legal framework for a COVID-safe normal until there is a vaccine.

Victoria will continue to need rules to live with the virus, respond quickly to further outbreaks and to prevent the health and aged care systems from becoming overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients. These rules must be decided by the Chief Health Officer based on the epidemiology, not debated and won on numbers in the Parliament.

No other state or territory needs to seek an extension to their state of emergency powers.

Read the ANMF media release via <https://bit.ly/31MAg1q>

Aged care retention bonus complaints process

Aged care nurses and personal care workers who have a concern about their workforce retention payment - if you think it was incorrect or you haven't received a payment and you think you should have – can contact the Federal Department of Health.

ANMF is aware some aged care providers have inconsistently applied for the bonus on behalf of staff particularly those in a nurse unit manager or clinical care manager role. The Federal Department of Health's website says if you are a registered nurse and provide direct and non-direct care, you are eligible for the direct care part of your work.

Payments are scheduled for July and September. A third payment, announced on 31 August, is scheduled for November.

If you have an issue with your payment the Department of Health says it is okay to ask. Follow these steps:

1. **Check the Department of Health's frequently asked questions** for aged care workers via <https://bit.ly/34RgAvd> in case your question is already answered.
2. **Talk to your employer** or write an email.
3. If you feel you can't talk to your employer or if your employer was not able to help, **download and fill in an aged care workforce retention inquiry form** via <https://bit.ly/3gRJ4r0>

Your information should include whether the department can contact your employer.

Email your form to aged.care.workforce.retention.payment.enquiries@health.gov.au

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If the department cannot help you, they will let you know straight away. **If they can help, they will:**

- a) contact your employer, if you have given permission, to find out more (they will tell you when they do this)
- b) look at the information you and your employer provide and make a decision
- c) let you know the outcome.

If the evidence shows wrongdoing by your employer, they may take audit action. If this happens, they may not tell you about the outcome.

4. **If you are unhappy with the decision or the way your inquiry was handled you can submit a Federal Department of Health online complaint form** via <https://bit.ly/3hPNu2l> or contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman via <https://bit.ly/32M3e0i>

The information above can be found on the Federal Department of Health website via <https://bit.ly/2Ga3C16>

Members who need advice or support can contact ANMF via the Member Assistance online inquiry form via <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance>

Additional aged care funding includes a third retention bonus payment

On 31 August, the Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt announced a further \$563.3 million aged care funding as part of its COVID-19 response. The funding injection takes additional aged care funding announced since March to more than \$1.5 billion.

ANMF argues residential aged care providers should be required to publicly account for how funding, including the new additional funding, is spent. The sector receives approximately \$13 billion in taxpayer funding each year.

ANMF cannot support underfunding claims or calls for additional funding because there is no spending transparency or accountability in the sector. This is one of the reasons we argue for ratios because mandated minimum staffing levels and skills would be tied to funding.

The additional \$563.3 million includes:

1. A further **\$245 million support payment** provided to all residential aged care providers to fund and support enhanced infection control capability, including through on-site clinical lead. Funding may also be used to address other COVID-19 related costs such as increased staffing, communication with families and managing visitation arrangements.

Providers will receive \$975 per resident in major metropolitan areas and \$1435 per resident in all other areas. Payment will be made in October.

Providers are required to report how these funds were used in the providers' end of financial year returns. These reports are not public and don't have to be submitted until 31 October 2021.

2. **\$92.4 million** will be available to extend the single site workforce arrangement from eight weeks to 12 weeks.
3. **\$154.5 million** to pay the aged care workforce a third retention bonus based on employment at 30 November. The first bonus payment was paid in July and the second is due in September.
4. **\$71.4 million** for the Commonwealth Home Support Program for older Australians who temporarily relocated from residential aged care to live with family in the community due to COVID-19 concerns.

Read Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt's media release <https://bit.ly/3hOla0D>

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This funding is in addition to:

August 2020 Federal aged care funding announcements:

1. \$81 million for additional surge workforce and increased training for aged care workers.
2. \$8.4 million for supplementary payments to include quarantine costs and interstate staff
3. \$50 million to account for additional demand for retention bonus measures, (ANMF understands that this is not new money but rather money announced in March. Eligibility to access the bonus payment has not changed)
4. \$9.1 million for the Victorian Aged Care Response Centre, established with the Victorian Government, to boost their additional workforce while undergoing more training, providing a workforce that could quickly respond to outbreaks in other states;
5. \$12.5 million to support residents and their families with increased availability of grief and trauma support services to assist aged care residents and their families who have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak
6. Supporting more compliance and quality checks on aged care providers by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, checking on preparations and responses to COVID-19 outbreaks.

May 2020 Federal Government aged care funding announcements:

1. \$205 million support funding for residential aged care providers – approximately \$900 per metropolitan aged care resident and \$1350 per regional resident. Funds intended for additional staff, training, support visitation and connection and personal protective equipment.
2. \$48 million for short-term grants to eligible providers at risk of severe financial difficulty.

March 2020 Federal Government aged care funding announcements

1. \$101.2 million to upskill aged care workers in COVID-19 infection control, boosting staff numbers, support and training when an urgent health response is required, for telehealth consultations for anyone aged over 70 years, onsite pathology, additional funds to enable the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to work with providers to improve infection control
2. \$234.9 million announced to pay aged care workers two retention bonuses totalling up to \$1600 (taxable)
3. \$78.3 million to support residential care continuity of workforce supply
4. \$26.9 million to increase the Residential and Home Care Viability Supplements and the Homeless Support Supplement
5. \$92.2 million in additional support to home care providers
6. \$12.3 million to support the My Aged Care service to meet the surge in specific COVID-19 inquiries
7. \$10 million to support and expand a community visitor scheme
8. \$59.3 million for the delivery of prepared meals, food stables and essential daily items for senior residents following COVID-19 restrictions

Important PPE guidance and infection control links

1. DHHS PPE guidance webpage <https://bit.ly/DHHSppe> includes definitions of tiers and when N95 respirator masks should be worn
2. COVID-19 – PPE and levels of protection (20 July) <https://bit.ly/2G7VCO7>
3. DHHS COVID-19 – a guide to the conventional use of PPE (updated 27 August) <https://bit.ly/2yBnmaa>
4. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Infection Prevention and Control guideline (8 August) <https://bit.ly/3deTBLE>
5. Personal Protective Equipment for the provision of mental health care (1 September) <https://bit.ly/2ALJgch>
6. PPE for community service providers for prevention of COVID-19 (1 September) <https://bit.ly/3hlsWt0>
7. Maternity and neonatal care during COVID-19 (18 August) <https://bit.ly/3aWCnmc>
8. Respiratory support for children during the COVID-19 emergency (updated 27 May) <https://bit.ly/3dcA2DL>
9. WorkSafe Victoria Managing coronavirus (COVID-19) risks: Healthcare and social assistance industry – Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) <https://bit.ly/3ddwqRT>

Do you have a personal protective equipment concern?

ANMF continues to advocate and raise and resolve members' issues at the PPE taskforce union consultation meetings. **Members with concerns about PPE should:**

1. **continue to raise and submit OHS incident reports with your employer as well as speaking directly with your manager**
2. **involve your Health and Safety Rep if you have one**
3. **contact ANMF via anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance (include your report and response if applicable) for further support and advice if after you have raised your concerns they are not addressed by your employer.**

Please see our 'Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection' poster at the end of this newsflash.

National nursing, midwifery and personal care worker COVID-19 survey

The ANMF, in all states and territories, has partnered with the Rosemary Bryant AO Research Centre at the University of South Australia to research the effects the Australian outbreak of COVID-19 has had on the nursing, midwifery, and personal care workforce.

Your experience will assist the ANMF to advocate for more improvements nationally that will lead to better workforce wellbeing, preparation, job satisfaction and quality of care.

The national 20-minute survey is open to nurses, midwives and personal care workers in all states and territories. All members are encouraged to participate in the survey by 31 October. Please share the link with your colleagues.

Take the survey now is.gd/covidandwork

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Don't bring it home: guide to minimise the risk of infection

A reminder that ANMF (Vic Branch) has developed a guide to assist you in relation to returning home from work after a shift.

Job Reps and HSRs are encouraged to print the poster which is part of this PDF newsflash. You can also download the 'Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection' A4 poster via bit.ly/COVID19-DBIH

Don't bring it home!

Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection.

- 1** On entry, remove your shoes and place in a plastic box.
- 2** Leave your bag, wallet, mobile, keys, etc in a box near the entry.
- 3** Change out of your clothes immediately and wash them. Use the hottest possible machine wash setting and dryer if you can.
- 4** Have a shower.
- 5** Clean items you've brought in and surfaces you've touched.

Remember to wash your hands regularly.

Cleaning tips

Hot soapy wash, wipe or disinfectant spray (depending on surface) phone cases, keys, ID, lanyard, glasses, etc.

Consider changing in and out of your uniform/scrubs at work.

ANMF Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation
VIC BRANCH
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