

Friday 22 May 2020

## **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) Update #10**

**COVID-19 memorial roll names 300 nurses; ANMF working to speed up bank nurse and midwife payments; ANMF freezes membership fees; principles for safely visiting aged care**

Members are encouraged to read our newsflashes and the COVID-19 information for health workers provided on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Commonwealth Department of Health websites.

Information is updated regularly and at short notice. 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](https://anmfvic.asn.au/COVID-19)

Members with COVID-19-related employment questions can ask via the Member Assistance online inquiry form via [anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19](https://anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19). Please read through the information on our website before submitting a question. Member Assistance is no longer taking phone inquiries as ANMF staff are working remotely. Members with complex inquiries will still have phone contact with staff.

ANMF has written to all private, not-for-profit, local government and stand-alone community health centre employers urging them to follow the DHHS advice in the Coronavirus Guidance Note on Employment-Related Matters ([bit.ly/2UhDSU2](https://bit.ly/2UhDSU2)). This document was last updated on 15 May.

### **Latest coronavirus statistics in Victoria**

As of 21 May 2020, the Victorian Chief Health Officer reported:

- the state's number of COVID-19 cases was 1581 – there were four new cases, two were duplications and one was reclassified to another state. This means a net increase of 1 new case since the day before.
- 10 people are in Victorian hospitals with COVID-19, including 5 in intensive care. 18 people have died.
- 168 cases have an unknown source of infection, an increase of 2 since the day before.
- 1,473 people have recovered. More than 378,000 tests have been completed.

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View the latest Victorian statistics via [bit.ly/34Et8Ug](https://bit.ly/34Et8Ug) and the latest national statistics via [bit.ly/2RyEXX1](https://bit.ly/2RyEXX1)

## **The lives of more than 300 overseas nurses honoured**

On International Nurses Day, Global Nurses United released the names of more than 300 overseas nurses known to have died after treating and caring for COVID-19 patients. The memorial list can be read via [bit.ly/36lWyrf](https://bit.ly/36lWyrf)

Nurses, midwives and carers, health services and their executives and politicians across Australia and New Zealand participated in a vigil on International Nurses Day to honour those nurses who have lost their lives. The vigil, shared on ANMF's and the New Zealand Nurses Organisation's social media pages, was one of many held across the world. The vigil featured a beautiful performance by Vika and Linda Bull and has been viewed more than 125,000 times.

You can view the vigil on Facebook via [bit.ly/nvigil](https://bit.ly/nvigil)

## **ANMF working to resolve COVID-19 backpay and pay for bank members**

ANMF is working with a number of members, employed as bank staff in public and private hospitals, to secure back pay and ongoing payment for shifts lost due to COVID-19 restrictions.

These members have raised concerns via ANMF Member Assistance about payments being delayed or denied due to employers adding extra conditions.

The 'stability payment' applies to bank staff employees with 12 months service who have been employed on a regular and systematic basis. It also covers part-time staff who have regularly worked above their contracted hours.

ANMF has been working with the Department of Health and Human Services and individual public health services to ensure that bank staff continue to be rostered and paid backpay paid, so that they continue to receive their average remuneration from 1 April. This process has taken longer than expected.

ANMF understands that casual employees (who fall within the defined group) should now be back on the roster. Many will have also received their backpay from their public sector employer if they are entitled to it.

ANMF also understands that those who have not yet received back pay for the period from 1 April will be paid in one of the next two pay runs.

Members were advised in an ANMF COVID-19 newsflash on 23 April that the federal and state government's agreement with the private hospital sector required hospitals to retain their bank nurses and midwives and pay them an average of their historical hours worked, operable from the beginning of April.

On 22 April, the Victorian Government confirmed that the same arrangement applied to public sector bank nurses and midwives. The arrangements also apply to bank nurses working in mental health services.

ANMF has also assisted a number of members, particularly agency nurses, who have not worked shifts for a period of time and do not have access to the 'stability payment' through the COVID-19 hardship fund. Assistance includes membership fees waived for a period and/or financial payments.

Members experiencing difficulties can make an application to the ANMF COVID-19 financial hardship fund. See details at the end of this newsflash.

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ANMF advises affected bank staff members to provide your manager with information about your lost shifts since 1 April and apply for payment. If after escalation to your manager, you continue to have an issue contact ANMF Member Assistance via [anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance](https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance)

## Branch Council freezes membership fees

ANMF (Vic Branch) membership fees will not increase for the 2020-21 financial year.

The membership fees freeze is aimed at further supporting members and their families who have been impacted by the summer bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the vast majority of members have retained their employment, ANMF is aware that a number of members, particularly those employed through agencies, will not have worked shifts for a period of time in 2020.

Unfortunately, agency nurses have not been able to access the same average weekly payments as bank nurses attached to public and private hospitals. A number of these members have been assisted through the ANMF COVID-19 hardship fund.

Family budgets are also under stress with some members becoming the household's sole earner as spouses and partners have been impacted by job losses in other sectors and industries.

ANMF had assisted almost 100 members through the COVID-19 hardship fund and 50 members who applied for assistance during the bushfires. Assistance has included waiving membership fees for a period and/or financial payments.

In May ANMF membership grew past 90,000 members. This consistent growth will ensure ANMF can continue to provide [our core services](#) including legal, professional, educational, industrial and workplace health and safety support, advice and representation and professional indemnity insurance.

All financial members are encouraged to use their annual [CPD Portal](#) credit to access modules and case studies. This membership benefit is intended to support members meet their annual registration renewal obligations.

In the 2019-20 financial year all members received an additional \$60 credit to access the new ANMF's [new series of clinical assessment online modules](#) to support those wanting to develop their clinical skills in recognising and responding to acute clinical deterioration, including a COVID-19 patient.

The bonus credit was in addition to the \$400 credit for full and part-time members, the \$120 credit for primary carer leave members and the \$80 credit for student and associate members. Annual credit is renewed in July.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions ANMF continues to adapt its affordable [Education Centre program](#) to interactive online platforms. The classroom and nursing simulation labs are in limited use with strict social distancing. The [library](#) continues to provide study and research assistance to members.

ANMF is also moving many of our union training courses and events to online platforms. This includes the upcoming student study days for [final year undergraduate nursing and midwifery students](#) and [enrolled nursing students](#).

Eligible members may apply for a [range of grants](#) to assist with further education and study.

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To help build Victoria's workforce capacity and address clinical shortages ANMF continues its annual fee grant assistance to undertake study in specialty areas such as palliative care, midwifery, mental health nursing and alcohol and other drugs. [Grants totalling \\$500,000 are available each financial year](#). The 2020-21 grants will open in the new financial year.

Your membership fees are tax deductible as a work-related expense.

## **PPE update: time to start respirator fit testing programs**

ANMF continues to raise members' concerns about personal protective equipment at the weekly Safer Care Victoria committee.

The personal protective equipment taskforce is currently reviewing its guidelines for fit testing P2/N95 respirators. This involves staff testing different respirators to confirm which type is the most appropriate fit for their face shape and provides the best seal. Each test uses up a respirator.

Increased respirator stocks mean it is time Victorian health facilities start implementing a respiratory protection program which is recommended under the Australian/New Zealand Standard on *Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment* (AS/NZS 1715:2009). The ANMF (Vic Branch) position is that it is now reasonably practicable to start fit testing programs in most circumstances.

Irrespective of fit testing, fit checking should be undertaken every time someone puts a respirator on. If the appropriate fit is not achieved, the respirator is not providing adequate protection. In these circumstances someone who can achieve an appropriate fit should undertake the procedure or the procedure will need to be delayed until an appropriate fit can be achieved.

The relatively low COVID-19 patient numbers are allowing the Department of Health and Human Services to accumulate PPE. Planning continues to ensure there are contingencies if stock runs low.

The DHHS is also collecting significant data tracking PPE delivery and its use. This is intended to improve the transparency of how stock is being used and ensure adequate supply is maintained. This is critically important as elective surgery, which will also use PPE, is increased.

The taskforce is investigating local manufacturing of difficult to access PPE supplies including face shields and gowns.

ANMF has raised members' issues relating to CPR/ resus and PPE requirements. In response the taskforce is undertaking significant work in consultation with other clinical stakeholders. ANMF anticipates clarification and guidance within a week.

ANMF continues to work to resolve members' concerns as they are raised through Member Assistance. These include a number of health service guidance documents causing confusion because they do not clearly align with the DHHS recommendations. We are actively working with these health services to ensure that they meet the minimum standards provided for in DHHS guidance.

Members are encouraged to ensure they read the most up-to-date PPE guidance:

1. DHHS *COVID-19 – a guide to the conventional use of PPE* (updated 20 April) via [bit.ly/2yBnmaa](https://bit.ly/2yBnmaa)
2. DHHS - *How to put on (don) and take off (doff) your personal protective equipment (PPE)* via [bit.ly/2zqYT89](https://bit.ly/2zqYT89)

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3. DHHS *Healthcare worker personal protective equipment guidance for performing clinical procedures* (updated 23 April) via [bit.ly/3d6HglW](https://bit.ly/3d6HglW)
4. DHHS *Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Use of n95 respirators in clinical settings* (updated 6 April). via [bit.ly/2VPTlqY](https://bit.ly/2VPTlqY)
5. *COVID-19 PPE for maternity and neonatal services* via [bit.ly/2yN9dqN](https://bit.ly/2yN9dqN)
6. *Federal ANMF evidence brief COVID-19: personal protective equipment* (updated 30 April) via [bit.ly/3asr5Ed](https://bit.ly/3asr5Ed)

Members with concerns about PPE should continue to submit incident reports with their employer and contact ANMF via [anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance](https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance)

## Appropriate staffing key to safe visitor procedures at aged care facilities

Federal ANMF has issued guiding principles for facilitating safe and compassionate visits to aged care facilities during the pandemic.

The guidance acknowledges not all residential aged care providers have been able to achieve an appropriate balance between ensuring the protection of their residents from COVID-19 and ensuring residents have their social, emotional, and psychological needs met through safe, appropriate contact with their families and loved ones.

Achieving this balance requires both aged care providers and governments to provide sufficient supports and resources, the most important of which is guaranteeing that the right numbers of staff with the right level of skills are available to meet all needs of residents. This will require every facility to have: registered nurses on duty on every shift; sufficient numbers of experienced care-workers; and, sufficient additional staff to undertake screening procedures and any other safety measures, including testing and improved infection control processes, required to enable safe visiting conditions for families and loved ones.

Read *COVID-19 Guideline #3 - ANMF Principles for Safe and Compassionate Entry into Nursing Homes* via [bit.ly/2TrUYPU](https://bit.ly/2TrUYPU)

## Registration renewal deadline 31 May

All nurses and midwives need to renew their registration before 31 May.

Members experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 can make an application to access the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency's two-part payment plan. Eligible nurses and midwives will be able to make the first registration fee payment now and the second payment in October.

Details and hardship application form are available via [bit.ly/2Kt7ngY](https://bit.ly/2Kt7ngY)

Federal ANMF has lobbied AHPRA opposing its \$15 fee rise calling on the regulator to keep registration renewal at the 2019 level of \$160.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) has encouraged nurses and midwives to answer all renewal questions honestly and accurately, acknowledging some may have trouble meeting the CPD requirements this year.

The NMBA says the following may contribute to CPD hours:

1. attending COVID-19 in-services

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2. reading and reflecting on COVID-19 journal articles
3. COVID-19 infection control training and online modules.

ANMF reported to members in a COVID-19 newsflash dated 8 April that the NMBA will not take action if a nurse and/or midwife declares they could not meet their CPD hours for the 2019-20 registration period. However, CPD evidence may be requested for those who declare they are unable to meet the recency of practice registration standard. For more NMBA COVID-19 guidance visit [bit.ly/2JEU9Cn](https://bit.ly/2JEU9Cn)

## **Free dementia care online courses for aged care nurses and carers**

Aged care nurses and personal care workers can access two free online short-courses about providing care to people living with dementia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Dementia Australia two-hour courses are designed to increase participants' understanding of dementia and provide problem solving frameworks.

The courses will be free until the end of June and can be accessed via [bit.ly/2XmL038](https://bit.ly/2XmL038)

## **Clinical assessment modules and an extra \$60 CPD online credit for members**

The ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre is offering a series of clinical assessment online modules to support nurses wanting to develop their clinical skills in recognising and responding to acute clinical deterioration, including the COVID-19 patient. The 12 one-hour modules on the CPD Portal are:

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 1 - Introduction to acute care / recognising and responding to clinical deterioration

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-1](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-1)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 2 - Airway management and unconsciousness

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-2](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-2)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 3 - Respiratory failure

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-3](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-3)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 4 – Oxygen therapy

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-4](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-4)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 5 – Hypotension

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-5](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-5)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 6 - Sepsis

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-6](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-6)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 7 – Non-invasive ventilation

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-7](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-7)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 8 – Mechanical ventilation

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-8](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-8)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 9 – Arterial blood gasses

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-9](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-9)

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ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 10 – Advanced ventilation

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-10](http://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-10)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 11 – Advanced ventilation (prone)

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-11](http://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-11)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 12 – CXR interpretation

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-12](http://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-12)

All members receive annual credit to use on the ANMF (Vic Branch) CPD Portal. Full and part-time members receive a \$400 annual credit\* (or \$120 for members on parental leave and \$80 for student members).

All ANMF members have received an additional \$60 credit to use on the CPD Portal as a special member benefit during the COVID-19 pandemic. This additional credit will be available until 30 June. Members' annual credit is renewed on 1 July.

To access the new online clinical assessment modules, visit [cpd.anmfvic.asn.au](http://cpd.anmfvic.asn.au)

Let your colleagues know that ANMF has halved the module price to make it easier for any non-members to complete these important modules. Non-members should click 'non-member login' to log in or create an account.

## **ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre virtual classroom courses**

The ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre has moved some courses to a virtual classroom. You can find these courses and registration links via [anmfvic.asn.au/virtualclassroom](http://anmfvic.asn.au/virtualclassroom)

## **COVID-19 hardship assistance for ANMF (Vic Branch) members**

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a huge economic impact globally and some ANMF members may be experiencing financial hardship.

The ANMF (Vic Branch) encourages members who are not able to access payment from their employer and are experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 to contact us via this form:

[anmfvic.asn.au/COVID19hardship](http://anmfvic.asn.au/COVID19hardship). All inquiries will be treated with the strictest confidence.

This fund is in addition to the usual assistance members can apply for through the Florence Nightingale Fund.

COVID-19  
IMPORTANT  
INFORMATION

for nurses, midwives and carers about coronavirus  
[anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19](http://anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19)



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