



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS
FRIDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2022

The enterprise bargaining round that began in October 2019 is finally concluding.

The prolonged nature of this round of bargaining tested our capacity and patience but it is useful to reflect on the significant variances between agreements.

In this round, negotiations for three (3) agreements were completed on time (Nurses and Midwives, Doctors in Training and Medical Specialists). That is, negotiations concluded before the nominal expiry date.

What those negotiations had in common was that they started on time – six months before the relevant agreements expired. The degree to which all bargaining parties had prepared for bargaining was also a factor. Also, the level of cooperation between the parties was a key factor to completing negotiations in a timely manner.

In addition, we found that the level of VHIA member engagement was sustained where negotiations were completed on time. Specifically, member attendance at both Reference Groups and at bargaining remained high throughout the negotiation process.

The negotiations that ran long were impacted by a range of factors including whether negotiations commenced on time and the degree of preparation. It was common to receive an extensive list of claims but, on occasions, those claims weren't supported by a reasonable level of preparation. In some instances, cooperation was not so much unachievable as it was actively opposed.

The longer the negotiation, the more difficult it was to sustain member participation.

Over time, we want all negotiations to be timely and cooperative. In my view, the maturation of our industrial relations culture is overdue, and we will be working with stakeholder unions with a view to achieving a more consistent standard. Improvements in this area are likely to be incremental, but they are inevitable.

In the coming year, our attention will turn to community health bargaining and implementation activities for public health service members. That will begin with a series of Agreement Forums in September and (finally) the return of 'Know Your Agreements' training.

We're also looking forward to spending more time with our members, particularly regional members. The past two and half years has impacted our ability to visit members, but we expect that our Rural and Regional Forums will return to a 'face to face' model next year.

In the coming year, we also expect to issue a revised version of our Public Sector Bargaining Framework, taking into account member feedback and the things we've learned during the most recent round.

I would like to record my thanks to all the staff at VHIA for their persistence and hard work this past year, as well as their commitment to developing new ideas that continue to improve our services to members. In particular, I wish to thank the members of the Executive Team at VHIA, Tim Nagle and Rob Bell for their tireless work. Thanks also to Board members, past and present, for their dedication to the organisation and their wise counsel and support.

I remain in awe of our members who have done the extraordinary over the past (nearly) three years in their service to the Victorian community. We, as an organisation, have benefited greatly from the participation and insight provided to members as part of the industrial process.

Finally, I want to thank Lisa Iacobucci, who is leaving us this year. Her title, 'Support Services Manager' gives no indication as to the depth and breadth of the work that she has done for VHIA. There would barely be a member that hasn't interacted with Lisa during her 16 years here or know her by name. Lisa has been tireless in her work for VHIA and, without her support, many of the changes we've implemented over the past five years would not have been possible. Lisa will be greatly missed, and I am grateful for all that she has done. Thank you, Lisa.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart McCullough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and 'M'.

Stuart McCullough
Chief Executive Officer