



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS
FRIDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2024

Last year, I noted that the coming round of bargaining would present a range of challenges – some of which could be predicted, some of which would come as a surprise. One year on, and I can confirm that those anticipated challenges came thick and fast.

Negotiations for a new agreement covering Nurses and Midwives were notable for several reasons, including that it was the first major agreement for our sector since the pandemic. Negotiations featured an increased number of bargaining parties, including a non-union bargaining party. This meant more claims, a greater diversity of views and challenges as how negotiations were to be conducted.

I anticipate these issues will be a feature in future negotiations.

Whilst these developments increase the complexity of negotiations, they may ultimately support our strategic objective of consolidating the number of enterprise agreements applying to our sector. Specifically, the attendance of multiple bargaining parties at negotiations runs counter to the need for separate agreements.

One of the most significant IR developments this year occurred outside bargaining. The decision of the Expert Panel of the Fair Work Commission (known as ‘the Aged Care decision’) regarding historical undervaluation on the basis of gender was both thorough and impactful.

It should be noted that the Fair Work Commission is continuing to consider these issues, with further proceedings relevant to our sector scheduled for December.

Other unexpected events during negotiations meant that we were more reliant than ever on the willingness of members to participate in Reference Group meetings. We benefited greatly from this input. This was also true when industrial action commenced. In particular, the work of those members who supplied data during this time was of critical importance, as it enabled us to articulate the impact in real time.

Our submission to the *Ministerial Review with respect to Victoria Public Sector Medical Staff Workplace Systems and Employment Arrangements* was a significant piece of work and a valuable opportunity to highlight a range of long-standing issues impacting the employment of doctors and the industrial arrangements that apply to them. Again, we were greatly assisted by members and were grateful for the input of the Victorian Medical

Executive, our Reference Groups and feedback submitted following the distribution of the draft submission.

Our focus in the coming year will be two-fold – implementation activities with respect to Nurses and Midwives, and bargaining (or preparation) for a range of agreements including Mental Health, Health and Allied Managers and Administrative Employees, Medical Scientists, Doctors and, for community health, Social and Community Services and Dentists.

With respect to implementation, we will shortly issue our 300th podcast and an updated 'Know Your Agreements' module for Nurses and Midwives will be available this year.

I wish to record my thanks to the staff of VHIA who have met each of the challenges of the past twelve months – whether anticipated or otherwise – with enthusiasm and intelligence. I also wish to thank the Board for its support, oversight and advice over the past 12 months, especially Adam Horsburgh for his leadership as Board President. I must also record my thanks to departing Board member, Dr Mark Garwood, whose presence on our Board had a profound effect. If I could highlight one thing, it would be Mark's participation in enterprise bargaining which, beyond being a feat of endurance, provided invaluable insight and wisdom.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart McCullough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Stuart McCullough
Chief Executive Officer