

Update

BANNERS AND SHOUT OUTS

As part of March's activities, we are encouraging individual workers, workplaces and even regional organising groups to unleash their creative side and make banners for the campaign! The banners can include your own slogans or pictures – things that tell us who you are as individuals, who we are as a profession, why you support the campaign or why you think the government should do more. If you want to organise a banner making session at your workplace, you can contact the member contact centre on 1300 8555 70 or info@asuvic.com

This month, many regions are also having 'Shout Outs', where members make some noise at a prominent place like a shopping mall or a train station while handing out flyers to the public about the campaign. A 'Shout Out' is easy to organise and only takes an hour or so but can make a big impact. Check out our regional round up for your local event. And if this is not yet happening in your area, call your local organiser or the member Contact centre on 1300 8555 70 or info@asuvic.com



Important Training Reminder for you!

With the campaign heating up in 2009, the ASU office is running essential one-day campaign training for members across Victoria. The training will cover different campaigning techniques, effective lobbying, recruitment tips, dealing with the industrial environment and workplace planning.

Your participation at these sessions is vital.

The training dates are as follows:

Date	Venue/Region
Thursday 19th March	Morwell
Friday 20th March	Melb Metro <i>(to be held in Carlton)</i>
Tuesday 24th March	Melb Metro <i>(to be held in Carlton)</i>
Wednesday 25th March	Ballarat
Thursday 26th March	Bendigo

As places are limited please contact:
Grace Contessa on (03) 9342 3464 or at gcontessa@asuvic.com for registration.

Please get in touch with your regional organiser for more information or if **you need to discuss getting paid time off** work to attend.

Talking to politicians

The other way you can make a difference is by lobbying your State Member of Parliament, as these are the people that have the power to make decisions about sector funding. Already, ASU members in some regions have met with their MP to talk about the problems in the sector. The tip from these members when meeting politicians is - be specific and on message. Follow up activities like writing to the local paper about your experience and any promises or sentiments expressed is also useful. So if you are interested in either organising or just being part of a meeting with an MP, contact your local organiser or the member Contact centre on 1300 8555 70 or info@asuvic.com for some tips and/or support!



Whatever it takes!

In 2008, ASU members committed to doing whatever it takes to win this campaign.

We know from other successful campaigns that getting government to listen means making lots of noise! So that means putting our all into the various campaign events planned for the first half of this year – it makes sense that if you make the time to come along and add your voice to a rally, meeting with an MP or a Mass Meeting, then we all get louder and the people who make decisions about funding find it harder to ignore you.

We also know from other successful union campaigns that sometimes this type of lobbying is not enough. Nurses, teachers, health professionals, ambulance officers – there is a long list of caring professionals who have had to up the ante in order to get everyone to the table to negotiate realistic and fair funding levels for workers' wages and conditions.

Continued page 2...



And upping the ante has sometimes meant that these workers have had to exert industrial pressure as well as political pressure in order to achieve their aims.

In line with our members' commitment, the ASU office is currently finalising a plan focused on possible industrial pressure, in case this becomes necessary. It is important that members understand that this does not mean that the union office or union officials will be telling you what to do. There are various steps in any legal industrial process that mean that every member has a say in what happens at their particular workplace.

So in the next few months there will be meetings at SACS workplaces all around Victoria. At these meetings, we will provide comprehensive information about our minimum industrial claim and ask for feedback about how this could apply at your workplace. Any interested worker will be welcome to attend these information sessions.

Immediately after each information session, there will be a meeting for union members to endorse any claims arising from the meeting and to decide what will happen at their particular workplace.

Building Power

So if there are people in your team or agency who agree that poor wages and conditions are putting the sector at risk of being unable to deliver services to our community, you should make sure that they come to the workplace information session. You should also talk to non-members about the importance of joining the union. After all, the success of the campaign will be determined not just by effective and smart campaigning, but by our strength in numbers. It will be much harder for *anyone* to argue against our claims if the majority of workers in the industry are united, by being in the union.

To arrange a meeting at your workplace, please contact our Member Contact Centre on 1300 855 570.

MEMBERS TIP

1. Make being a union member a social thing at work by having union t-shirt days, lunches, going for coffee/drinks etc.

2. You can start small – getting other workers active begins with things like asking them to collect signatures for a petition or getting them to invite their team members to come to a meeting to find out about the union campaign and why it is important that they join up.

3. Getting agencies to sign the Statement of Support and getting managers and team leaders on side can help reassure potential members that joining up is not about 'making trouble' but that it is a commitment to working together to make the sector a better place to work, now and into the future.

Occupation Health & Safety

Did you know the national average for workers' compensation claims is 11 claims per 1000 workers, but the community sector average is 18 claims per 1000 workers? To make matters worse, the ASU, key statutory bodies and sector peaks all believe this figure is under-reported. In the ASU Contact Centre the most common OHS concern raised is occupational violence, particularly bullying from their employer.

That's why safer workplaces is one of the key goals of our campaign - we need everyone to start focusing on the safety of workers as a matter of priority and we need the government to come to the table fund this properly.

However, the ASU is not waiting – ASU members and officials are already taking action in relation to this issue. Some examples of union activities are:-

- Supporting Health and Safety Reps (HSRs). If you are an HSR and an ASU member we can support you in your role with info, advice, and resources. So get in touch with us so that we can add you to our list and make sure that you have the most up to date information going around! Email gcontessa@asuvic.com
- Working in collaboration with DHS Community Sector Investment Fund, WorkSafe, VCOSS and other sector peak bodies on a range of steering and advisory groups as part of the Community Services OHS Framework Prevention Fund Projects. These include projects to provide community sector organisations with small equipment grants, training to the sector around OHS and occupational violence and projects to improve OHS awareness, resources and practice in the sector. For more information about some of these initiatives, contact our Member Contact Centre on 1300 855 570 or go to <http://www.vcross.org.au/what-we-do/OHS>
- Developing publications/resources to break down the OHS system into digestible pieces for ASU members. Research shows that there are big gaps in knowledge about OHS in the community sector. Do you know where your OHS rights come from? Who is involved in choosing your HSR? What role they play in resolving an OHS issue? Members have said that they want some basic, user friendly information about the OHS system and how to resolve issues and areas of high risk in our sector.
- Developing a Discussion Paper on a Zero Tolerance approach towards Occupational Violence - a common, often avoidable and potentially devastating cause of injury to the worker. If you have an experience you would like the ASU to know about or are just interested in this issue, please get in touch, via twark@asuvic.com

Our campaign team is keen to hear from you if you are interested in OHS or hold office as an elected HSR/Assistant HSR. Please forward your details to twark@asuvic.com

Council of Homeless Persons (CHP) and ASU combined employer meeting

On February 26, the ASU and CHP met with about 20 housing employer representatives to talk about funding to the housing, homelessness and family violence sector. At the meeting, Deb Tsobaris from CHP provided details about their campaign to get the Office of Housing to fund agencies at a higher level. At the moment, most housing, homelessness and family violence agencies are funded at around \$68,000 to \$75,000 per position (including on-costs). This is in contrast to sections of DHS Funded family services sector, where positions are funded at \$105,000 including on-costs. CHP argues that that both sectors should have positions funded at the same level, in recognition of the complexity of the work undertaken by housing, homelessness and family violence workers and the ASU supports this.

At the meeting, the ASU took the opportunity to talk about our 'Respect the Workers!' campaign. Whilst the CHP and ASU campaigns are not focused on achieving the same objectives, they are both about strengthening the sector. The ASU are very happy to be actively supporting CHP in achieving this and for its part, CHP is supporting the ASU campaign and has signed the ASU Respect campaign 'Statement of Support'

If you want more information about the ASU Respect campaign and how it specifically relates to the Housing, Homelessness and Family Violence sector please contact Organiser, Julie Kun on (03) 9342 3480 or jkun@asuVIC.com

ASU, HACSU AND VCOSS - all on the same page!

The ASU, Health & Community Services Union, and VCOSS all acknowledge that workforce issues are now a key barrier to achieving a strong 'not-for-profit' community sector and that in order to address this issue, the wages and conditions of workers must be improved so as to be at least comparable with their government/public sector counterparts.

We are therefore very excited to report that the ASU and HACSU will now be working together on our respective campaigns to improve wages and conditions of workers in the 'not-for-profit' government-funded sector.

The ASU, HACSU and VCOSS all acknowledge that workforce issues are now a key barrier to achieving a strong 'not-for-profit' community sector and that in order to address this issue, the wages and conditions of workers must be improved so as to be at least comparable with their government/public sector counterparts.

We are therefore very excited to report that the ASU and HACSU will now be working together on our respective campaigns to improve wages and conditions of workers in the 'not-for-profit' government-funded sector.

HACSU is the union that covers workers in the disability sector and they have decided to run a campaign in 2009 focused on achieving the same four priorities as our current campaign – better wages, portable long service leave, paid parental leave and safer workplaces. Their campaign – 'Respect in Disability' will kick off soon and we are continuing to talk to them about how we can all best work together to maximise pressure on the government around funding for wages and conditions for all of our members working in the sector.

You may also be aware that VCOSS is currently campaigning around funding increases to apply to 'not-for-profit' agencies for the next three years. The VCOSS campaign is focused on ensuring that the real value of current sector funding does not go backwards and they are asking the State Government for an annual increase to sector funding of 4.2 per cent to achieve that. Both the ASU and HACSU support the VCOSS campaign. We believe that it is vital for the well being of the sector and therefore for our community that, as a minimum, the real value of funding to the sector is not reduced.

While the unions support the VCOSS campaign, it is important that you know that their indexation campaign will not deliver any guaranteed improvements to your wages and conditions. In the past, some sector agencies have passed on the VCOSS negotiated funding increases to their workers in the form of wage increases and the government has said that by providing agencies with yearly indexation, they are effectively making provision for improvements to your wages and conditions.

We know, however, that the majority of agencies continue to pay you and your colleagues in the sector the minimum Award rates, which means that these funding increases are not being passed on in the majority of cases. Many agencies say this is because they are so tightly stretched as a result of poor levels of base funding and unfunded program costs that even with these annual increases to their funding, it is not possible for them to make real improvements to your wages or conditions. VCOSS acknowledges that the different processes that they have negotiated with the State Government around increases to funding – including indexation - cannot achieve this.

That is why the ASU and HACSU are campaigning together to achieve funding increases that are specifically tied to improvements to your wages and conditions. And we are very happy to be able to report that VCOSS has committed to supporting the ASU and HACSU in our campaigns on the basis that we all agree it is vital to address the disparity between your wages and conditions and those of workers doing the same or similar work in the public/government sector.

The ASU, HACSU and VCOSS all agree that our various campaigns are complementary - in that they all aim to strengthen the 'not-for-profit' sector – albeit not the same – in that the outcomes we want to achieve are different. To that end, the ASU, HACSU and VCOSS are now finalising a joint Memorandum of Understanding which will set out the broad principles around which we all agree. This will include commitments to ensuring that we all know what is happening in our respective campaigns and to working together whenever possible so that all of these important campaigns can achieve the kinds of outcomes we need to ensure a strong, sustainable 'not-for-profit' sector now and into the future.



Respect the Workers Sustain the Services

Regional Round Up

Ballarat Region

Following on from the Mass Meeting in October 2008, members of the Local Organising Network are planning to meet with Local MPs in April to talk about the workforce crisis facing the sector. Then on Wednesday 6th May, there will be a 'Shout Out' rally and march through Ballarat commencing at 12.00noon. Members are encouraged to put this in their diaries now! More details will be provided closer to the date. There will also be a local activists all day training session on Wednesday 25th March. To come along RSVP to Grace Contessa at gcontessa@asuvic.com. For more information on the campaign, contact Kim Delahey at kdelahay@cafs.org.au.

Bendigo Region

Put the following date in your diary - March 26th!! This is the day of the Bendigo Delegates/Activists campaign training as well as the Bendigo 'Shout Out' in the Hargreaves St Mall. Get your registration forms for the training in ASAP and make sure you have your red 'respect' t-shirt for the 'Shout Out' which kicks off at 12:30 sharp! For more information contact Shaun shaunrosai@bchs.com.au or Judy judy@commander360.com.

Broadmeadows Region

Planning for our next meeting and local events is underway. For more info, please contact Jake Argyll jake@merri.org.au or Luz Espinoza luz.espinoza@anglicarevic.org.au.

Brunswick Metro

Local workers have organised a 'Shout Out' outside the Brunswick Town Hall from 12:30pm to 1:30pm on Wednesday the 25th of March. The idea is to engage local community, media, and workers who are not yet members of the union. For more information speak to Pier pier@hepcvic.org.au or Leo sexton@foundationhouse.org.au.

Box Hill Metro

There are no activities planned for the campaign for Box Hill at the moment, so if you would like to be involved in getting this started, please contact Tash at twark@asuvic.com or (03) 9342 3477.

Craigieburn Metro

Please join in with the Broadmeadows area activities! Any queries, please contact Tash at twark@asuvic.com or (03) 9342 3477.

Dandenong Metro

There will be a Shout Out in early April at the Market during lunchtime. We need about 10 volunteers to hand out flyers about the campaign at the station. All participants who do not have a Respect T-shirt will be given one. To RSVP contact Grace Contessa (03) 9342 3464 or gcontessa@asuvic.com or contact Dalene Salisbury on dalenes@waysltd.org.au.

Echuca Region

There are no activities planned in Echuca at the moment. To organise some campaign activities or for a workplace meeting contact Clancy Moore at cmoore@asuvic.com.

Fitzroy Metro

The Fitzroy Local Network met at lunchtime on Thursday 5th March at Neighbourhood Justice Centre and is planning events for the region. For more information please contact Rosie Mullany, YSAS at rmullany@ysas.org.au.

Footscray Metro

A 'Shout Out' rally is planned for the Footscray Mall on Thursday 26th March at 12.00noon, where we will make some noise to raise community awareness of the issues facing the sector and collect signatures for the campaign petitions. So lock that date into your diaries and bring along your drums and whistles! We are encouraging members to wear their 'Respect' t-shirts or, if they do not have one, to wear something red to show support for the campaign. For more information, contact Fran Ryan at franr@carersvic.org.au or Matilda Langley at info@networkwest.net.

Geelong Region

There will be a 'Shout Out' rally at Market Square to lunchtime on Wednesday 18th March, where we will call on the State

Government to commit to strategies that will fix the workforce problems in the sector.

Members are encouraged to wear their 'Respect' t-shirts or to wear red to show their support for our campaign! We will collect signatures for our petitions and distribute information to the public letting them know why it is so important that we are successful in this campaign! The following week, we will be handing out flyers in the morning at Geelong Station. In the meantime, the Local Organising Network meets on a regular basis after work at the Carrington Hotel. For more information, contact Joe Dejar at jdejar@barwonyouth.org.au.

Gippsland Region

On 4th March, the Gippsland Network held a mass meeting and campaign launch, in Bairnsdale. Members enjoyed a free BBQ and speakers included ASU Quantum Delegates, Val Marshall and Lisa Darmanin, ASU Assistant Secretary. There will be delegates and activist training plus Local Organising Committee meeting at 42 Buckley St., Morwell on Thursday 19th March all day. Please complete registration form to attend, or if you do not have a form contact Grace Contessa (03) 9342 3464 or at gcontessa@asuvic.com.

Horsham Region

Members in the area have been talking about ways to build up awareness of the campaign and to build up union strength in the region. If you want to get involved, contact Wil Stracke wstracke@asuvic.com. In the meantime, members are being encouraged to watch out for events in the Grampians at either Ballarat or Stawell/Ararat.

Inner Southern Region

South Yarra Station 'Shout Out', Tuesday 24th March between 4.30 and 6.30pm at South Yarra Station. We need about 10 volunteers to hand out flyers about the campaign at the station. All participants who do not have a 'Respect' t-shirt will be given one. To RSVP contact Grace Contessa on (03) 9342 3464 or at gcontessa@asuvic.com.

Campaign regional round up. . .



Lilydale Metro

Watch this space, or get in touch with Tash - a Lilydale event is being organised very soon! Please feel welcome to come along to Ringwood events. For more information contact Tash Wark on (03) 9342 3477 or at twark@asuvic.com.

Melbourne Metro

There will be a 'Shout Out' at Flinders St. Station on Wednesday 25th March from 4.30 - 6pm, (*Meet under the clocks*). We need about 10 volunteers to hand out flyers about the campaign. All participants who do not have a 'Respect' t-shirt will be given one. To RSVP contact Grace Contessa on (03) 9342 3464 or at gcontessa@asuvic.com.

Mildura Region

Local members organised a Paying Respect Breakfast on Thursday 5th March from 8am at Grinders, Mildura and are planning further events for the region. To find out more about the campaign or local activities contact ASU Organiser, Clancy Moore at cmoore@asuvic.com or ASU members, Chris Hobart at chobart@malleefamilycare.com.au or Louise Hodgson at lhodgson@masp.org.au.

Outer West Metro

This group comprises members from Deer Park, St Albans, Werribee, Melton and Bacchus Marsh. The Local Organising Network group is encouraging members to attend the rally in Footscray on 26th March at 12.00noon. For more information or to get involved with the local group, contact Helen Hoffman at h.hoffman@goodshepvic.org.au or Charmaine Chew at c.chew@goodshepvic.org.au.

Peninsula Region

On 1st April there will be ASU Delegate / Activist training in Frankston all day. To RSVP contact Grace Contessa on (03) 9342 3464 or at gcontessa@asuvic.com.
April 23rd, 1 - 2pm: Campaign update and banner making lunchtime session in the area. Come join in the fun at the Brotherhood of St Laurence, The High Street Centre, 26 High St., Frankston.
Please bring your banner-making creativity. To RSVP contact Grace Contessa on (03) 9342 3464 or at gcontessa@asuvic.com.

Mornington event: Planned for April, 'Shout Outs' at the Market during lunchtime. We need about 10 volunteers to hand out flyers about the campaign. All participants who do not have a 'Respect' t-shirt will be given one. To RSVP contact Grace Contessa on (03) 9342 3464 or at gcontessa@asuvic.com.

Portland/Hamilton Region

There are currently no activities planned in Portland or Hamilton, but members are encouraged to watch for upcoming events in Warrnambool. If you would like to get involved in organising something specifically for this area, contact Wil Stracke at wstracke@asuvic.com.

Preston Metro

Workers from the Preston, Northcote and Thornbury areas are planning a rally outside the Darebin Town Hall, corner of High St., and Gower St., Preston. For more information contact local members Adam Bottomley at Sue at suem@nehs.org.au or Adam Bottomley at adambottomley@hotmail.com.

Richmond Metro

Please join in with the Fitzroy area activities! Any queries, please contact Tash Wark on (03) 9342 3477 or at twark@asuvic.com.

Ringwood Metro

Next Ringwood LOC meeting is 1:00 Monday April 6th at EACH, 46 Warrandyte Rd, Ringwood. A well attended 'Paying Respect' BBQ was held Monday March 16th, also at EACH. Members and delegates from the local area spoke about why the campaign is important to them and were joined by Lisa Darmanin. Delegates are following up with meeting with local MPs, lobbying for increased funding for the community sector. For more info please contact Cherie Marian cheriem@edvos.org.au.

Seymour Region

Information about the Seymour network is available from Pam Lawler at pam.lawler@aus.salvationarmy.org.

Shepparton Region

The Shepparton Local Organising Group is planning to hold a 'Paying Respect' event in a little while, so please contact Tash Wark on (03) 9342 3477 or at twark@asuvic.com to find out more.

Stawell/Ararat Region

Members are planning a local event in the

coming months. In the meantime, members in the Stawell/Ararat region are being encouraged to make sure they are available to attend the activists training in

Ballarat on 25th March and the upcoming campaign rally in Ballarat on Wednesday 6th May. For more information or to get involved in the campaign in the Grampians region, contact Veronica Pascall at veronica.p@gchc.org.au or Jeanine Jones jeanine.j@gchc.org.au.

Sunbury/Kyneton Region

Local Members are having breakfast at Kaddy's, 8 High St., Kyneton on 2nd April between 8.30 and 9.30am to renew their commitment to the Respect the Workers, Sustain the Services campaign in the area. All workers are encouraged to come along. Union members are entitled to free tea/coffee. For more information contact Leonie Farrugia at leonie.farrugia@cobaw.vic.gov.au or Clancy Moore at cmoore@asuvic.com.

Swan Hill Region

There are no campaign activities planned in Swan Hill at the moment. To organise some activities or to arrange for a workplace meeting contact Clancy Moore at cmoore@asuvic.com.

Wangaratta Region

There are no activities planned for the campaign for Wangaratta currently, so if you would like to be involved in getting this started, please contact Tash Wark on (03) 9342 3477 or at twark@asuvic.com.

Warrnambool Region

Members will take to the street and march through Warrnambool on Tuesday 28th April. We will assemble at 12noon at a central point and then march to the Civic Green, where we will 'Shout Out' in support of the campaign. For more information or to get involved, contact Gary Lucas at glucas@comconnect.com.au.

Wodonga Region

Next Wodonga meeting is 12.00 - 1pm Thursday March 19th, Fellowship Room, Uniting Care, Cnr of Beechworth Rd & Nilmore Ave, Wodonga. We hope to see you there, or for more info, please contact Andy Martin andrewmartin@chss.net.au or Rebecca Eberle reberle@umfc.com.au.