



# Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association

## Membership Policy Ver 3.0

This is the Membership Policy of the Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association. This policy was adopted by the Branch Committee of Management on 28 September 2023.

## **Introduction**

This policy seeks to provide all Allied Health Professionals with unfettered access to their union, so they are able to act as a unified and democratic community of workers.

Freedom of Association is a fundamental collective right. It forms the foundation of our civil liberties and underpins a fair and mature system of employment relations. Political and ethical considerations behove all workers to associate with political purpose as part of a workers' collective.

## **Interactions**

The Rules of the Health Services Union (**the Union**) and the provisions of the Fair Work Act 2009 and Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009 will prevail over the terms of this policy to the extent of any inconsistency. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with, and is subject to, other VAHPA and Union policies. While VAHPA strives to ensure members are fully informed of their rights under this policy, it does not take responsibility for this.

## **References**

Rules of the Health Services Union:

Rule 2 Industry, Rule 3 Conditions of Eligibility for Membership, Rule 6 Admission to Membership, Rule 7 Consequences of Membership, Rule 8 Life Members, Rule 9 Register of Members, Rule 10 Termination of Membership, Rule 11 Union Dues, Rule 12 Financial and Unfinancial Members, Rule 13 Misconduct of Members, Rule 37 Student Members, Rule 38 Branches, Rule 72 Associate Members.

## **Membership Categories**

Category A (Ordinary Membership): members who work over 24 hours per week irrespective of the term, type, or number of employment contracts as allied health professionals (as outlined in Rule 38(d)) or in accordance with the 'Branch Coverage Summary' or with the Union or Branch (as outlined in Rule 3(C.)) are to be allocated to Category A.

Category B (Ordinary Membership): members who work between 9 and 24 hours per week irrespective of the term, type, or number of employment contracts as allied health professionals (as outlined in Rule 38(d)) or in accordance with the 'Branch Coverage Summary' or with the Union or Branch (as outlined in Rule 3(C)) are to be allocated to Category B.

Category C (Ordinary Membership): members who work fewer than 9 hours per week irrespective of the term, type, or number of employment contracts as allied health professionals (as outlined in Rule 38(d)) or in accordance with the 'Branch Coverage Summary' or with the Union or Branch (as outlined in Rule 3(C)) are to be allocated to Category C. Note,

early career discounts do not apply to Category C save for in those circumstances where legacy arrangements exist.

**Category E (Parental Leave):** members who are on parental leave, and who would otherwise be in Categories A or B are to be allocated to Category E. Inclusion in this category is contingent upon a written application, including relevant supporting documentation, being made by the member to the Branch, and approval by the Branch membership officer. Members are properly considered to be Category E members from the commencement of parental leave. Ordinarily, this category is limited for a period of up to 12 months only, unless otherwise approved by BCoM under Rule 11(d).

**Category F (Significant Financial Hardship):** members who would otherwise fall within Categories A, B, or C and who are experiencing a period of significant financial hardship are to be allocated to Category F. Inclusion in this category is contingent upon a written application being made by the member to the Branch and approval by the Branch membership officer. Members are properly considered to be Category F members upon approval of the application. Ordinarily, this category is limited for a period of up to 6 months only, unless otherwise approved by BCoM under Rule 11(d).

**Category G (Associate Membership):** those members who are not otherwise eligible for membership of the Union in any other category (including resigning or retiring members and members who otherwise support the objects of the Branch or Union). Category G members are not considered to be financial members for the purposes of the Rules of the HSU.

**Category H (Student Membership):** those members who are currently enrolled in a course of study that will enable them to seek employment in the classifications outlined in Rule 48(d) of the Union Rules. Category H members are not considered to be financial members for the purposes of the Rules of the HSU.

**Category I (Life Membership):** those members who have been granted a Life Membership or Honorary Life Membership of the Union or of the Branch in accordance with Rule 8 of the Rules of the HSU. A Branch life member who is no longer in employment shall not be liable for payment of any Union dues. A Branch life members shall be entitled to attend and speak at all general meetings of VAHPA and unless he or she continues to pay Union dues as they fall due, a Branch life member shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting, election or ballot and shall not be entitled to nominate for or hold any office.

### **Membership Dues (Contributions)**

The Full Membership Contribution Schedule is set out below.

#### **Full Membership Contribution Schedule (rate per fortnight)**

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Category	Category A	Category B	Category C
Hours worked per week *	>24 hours	9-24 hours	≤9 hours
Ordinary Membership	\$28.91	\$21.70	\$14.49
Early Career Discount 2 **	\$19.10	\$14.35	-
Early Career Discount 1 ***	\$9.57	\$7.18	-
Category E - Parental Leave ****	\$7.25	-	-
Category F – Significant Financial Hardship	\$7.25	-	-
Category G – Associate ◊	Free	-	-
Category H – Student ◊	Free	-	-
Category I – Life Member ◊	Free	-	-

\* Failure to provide accurate information about your hours of work or to disclose any relevant pre-existing workplace issue may invalidate your professional indemnity insurance.

\*\* Applicable to members during the third and fourth years of their career. That is, for the period between 24 and 48 months after graduation.

\*\*\* Applicable to members during the first two years of their career. That is, for 24 months from the date of graduation.

\*\*\*\* Support documentation required.

◊ This category of membership does not grant voting rights nor provide Professional Indemnity Insurance.

Membership Contributions generally increase in accordance with public sector rates of pay. In this way your Membership Contributions as a proportion of your wage decrease year on year. However, in recognition of the current cost of living crisis, Membership Contributions for the 2023-24 financial year have been maintained at the 2022-23 rate.

## Early Career Discounts

Early Career Discounts apply to those VAHPA Members who are in the early stages of their career as described in the notes to the table above. Early Career Discounts are applicable to membership Categories A and B<sup>1</sup> and apply in two distinct tiers:

- VAHPA Members who are within the first 2-years of their career, as measured from the date of graduation, including an intern year and/or other periods of paid clinical placement, are eligible to receive a 66% discount on their what would otherwise be their ordinary Membership Contribution in accordance with this policy;

<sup>1</sup> Save for those circumstances where discounts are applied as a product of legacy arrangements.

- VAHPA Members who are within the second 2-years of their career, as measured from the date of graduation, that is, in years 3 and 4, are eligible to receive a 33% discount on their what would otherwise be their ordinary Membership Contribution in accordance with this policy.

### **Review of Membership Contributions**

Membership Contributions are reviewed by the Branch Committee of Management on an annual basis. It is standard practice to increase contributions in accordance with public sector rates of pay. In this way Membership Contributions as a proportion of wages decreases year on year.

### **Membership Status**

Members in the following membership categories are financial members for the purposes of the Union Rules:

- Full-time, part-time or casual employee members (Categories A, B and C);
- Members on parental leave (Category E);
- Significant Financial Hardship members (Category F).

Any discount applied to Member Contributions in accordance with this policy will not impact the financial Status of members for the purpose of the Union Rules.

Members in the following membership categories are not financial members for the purposes of the Union Rules:

- Associate members (Category G);
- Student members (Category H);
- Life members (Category I).

Financial membership status confers on members benefits including:

- The right to stand as a candidate and vote in Branch elections, plebiscites and meetings where eligible under the Union Rules;
- The right to receive the Branch's print publications and other membership benefits, including access to the Union's continuing professional development service;
- Industrial advice and support from the Branch;
- Professional indemnity insurance from the Branch's insurer if eligible under the relevant policy (Note, if a member's membership category is not a true reflection of hours worked, then professional indemnity insurance cover may be compromised or invalidated).

## **Validity of Membership**

All paying members, irrespective of their Membership Category, must remain financial so as to ensure their membership remains current and valid;

A member may accumulate up to three months of arrears and yet remain financial;

Upon accumulating one month of arrears a member is considered to be 'lapsed'. Such a member remains financial during this period;

Upon accumulating in excess of three months of arrears a member shall be un-financial;

Where a member's payment of Union dues has not been received by the Branch within three months of the date on which it is due, the members shall be un-financial;

Membership arrears are accumulated on a daily basis;

A member who is not an un-financial member shall be a financial member for the purposes of this rule.

## **Payment of Membership Contributions, Dues and Fees**

- a. Members may pay their dues by either direct debit or, upon application and mutual agreement, by invoice/statement.
- b. Payment by direct debit:
  - i. Membership fees may be paid by direct debit from a member-nominated bank account.
  - ii. Members have 4 options with regards to the frequency of direct debits: fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, and annually. Members are encouraged to pay their contributions via monthly direct debits.
- c. Payment by invoice:
  - i. The Branch recognises that payment by invoice is problematic (being costly, time consuming and environmentally damaging). The Branch will not accept this method of payment unless necessary.

## **Non-Payment of Membership Contributions, Dues and Fees**

Un-financial members are not entitled to benefits including those outlined above.

If a member remains un-financial for a period of six months (being a total 26 weeks without payment of membership dues), the member will generally be purged from the Branch's

register of members. Purges of the register of members will usually occur once a year at a time determined by the BCoM.

Un-financial members continue to incur fees until such time as they are purged from the register. A member who is un-financial for more than two years automatically ceases to be a member and the name of the member shall be purged from the register.

Purged members with outstanding membership fees seeking to re-join the Union must pay the Branch all outstanding membership fees. Arrangements for payments by instalments over time may be negotiated with the Branch Secretary.

The Branch Committee of Management, or any officer authorised by the Branch Committee of Management, may, at the member's request, decide to waive a member's annual contribution or any levy imposed by the Committee, in whole or in part, for such time as it decides because of the member's special circumstances.

It is members' responsibility at all times to ensure that their employment and contact details are up-to-date and accurate. Failure to do so may affect membership status and entitlement to other benefits such as Professional Indemnity Insurance. Members must notify the Branch within 14 days of any change of contact address. Members are encouraged to manage their own contact and employment details via the online Member Portal.

### **Member Resignation**

Members may resign from the Union at any time. Members who wish to resign from the Union must notify the Branch, in writing, of their intention to do so. This is required by law and is necessary to ensure fair and proper democratic practice. The notice of resignation can be sent to the Branch electronically. The Branch will take reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy of the resignation and will then process the resignation as soon as practicable.

### **Members Joining with Pre-Existing Issues**

Non-members are not entitled to industrial advice and representation from the Branch. In the interest of fairness, if a member joins the Union with a pre-existing issue about which they seek advice and/or representation, the Branch may (at its discretion) require back payment of up to 12-months membership fees and ongoing direct debit of membership fees in order to provide assistance and/or representation to the member in relation to the issue. A waiting period of up to 3-months may apply to members who join with pre-existing issues.

### **Removal of Members of a General Bad Character**

The Branch reserves the right to have members of a general bad character struck from the register for matters including misconduct, bringing the Branch or the Union into disrepute, or wrongfully acting as an authorised representative of the Branch.

Any financial member of the Branch may raise a complaint with the President over the actions of a member (including an Officer). The President shall investigate and report to the Branch Committee of Management any alleged impropriety or misdemeanour that a member is alleged to have committed.

Such complaints can include the following:

- Divulging any of its confidential business to anyone not entitled to know the same; or,
- Refusing to obey the Rules of the Union; or,
- Refusing to abide by a resolution carried at any meeting of his/her Branch Committee; or,
- Engaging in discriminatory behaviour; or
- Defrauding or attempting to defraud the funds of the branch;
- Making a false charge against a fellow member; or,
- Violating or attempting to violate the terms of any industrial award or agreement; or,
- Entering or attempting to enter into any agreement with any employer contrary to the provision of any award or agreement secured by the Union and applicable to him/her; or,
- Obstructing the Branch Committee or other lawful committee or body of the Branch in any way in the performance of any of its functions; or,
- Obstructing any officer of the Branch in the course of his/her duties; or,
- Wrongfully holding himself/herself out as occupying any office or position in the Union or Branch of the Union or as being entitled to represent the Union or Branch of the Union thereof in any capacity (to which charge it shall be a defence that the member believed bona fide and on reasonable grounds that he/she was entitled to so act); or,
- Behaving in a disorderly manner at any meeting held under the Rules of the Union, in the office of the Union or in the Branch of the Union; or,
- Aiding or encouraging any other member or members in any offence under this policy

In any such report, the President shall include their conclusions as to the validity of any allegations, as well as recommendations for action to be taken by the Branch Committee of Management if any action is deemed to be necessary.

Any reports from the President will be provided to the party alleging the impropriety and the party under investigation prior to the report being considered by the Branch Committee of Management. Where such a report recommends action be taken against any party, such party



shall be afforded the opportunity to respond and put their case to the Branch Committee of Management before action is considered.

Where a member is unhappy with the decision of the Branch Committee of Management, the matter can be referred to the National Executive for consideration.

### **Policy Review**

The Membership Policy is to be reviewed annually, generally at the May meeting of BCoM. This policy can be amended by a resolution passed by the Branch Committee of Management. Such an amendment can be rescinded by a plebiscite of the members of the Branch.

### **Dissemination of Policy**

A copy of this policy will be published on the website of the Branch.

## **END OF POLICY**

### **Policy Version Control**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author/Department</b>	<b>Ver #</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
31 July 2013	Branch Committee	1.0	
25 Sept 2013	Branch Committee	1.1	
10 Sept 2014	Branch Committee	1.2	
10 Feb 2015	Branch Committee	1.3	
16 Jun 2015	Branch Committee	1.4	Introduction of rate for low income earners
08 Dec 2015	Branch Committee	1.5	Branding and references update
07 Jan 2016	Branch Committee	1.6	Insertion of new rates for dues
26 Feb 2016	Branch Committee	1.7	Alteration to student rates for dues
12 July 2016	Branch Committee	1.8	Clarification of membership categories
06 Jun 2017	Branch Committee	1.9	Update quantum of Member Contributions
25 Jul 2017	Branch Committee	1.10	Move to paperless invoicing
17 Oct 2017	Branch Committee	1.11	Insertion of new rates for Membership Contributions and insertion of second tier early career discount.
28 Nov 2017	Branch Committee	1.12	Reduction in Associate Membership rate to facilitate growth in number of retired members

06 Feb 2018	Branch Committee	1.13	Clarification of Category F member application process
14 May 2019	Branch Committee	2.0	Updated introduction and contribution rates
21 Sept 2023	Branch Committee	3.0	Redraft to vary categories of membership and update contributions.

Approved by resolution of the VAHPA Branch Committee of Management on 28 Sept 2023.



Signed:

Cheryl O'Connor  
VAHPA President

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