



Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch

Level 3, 10 Yarra Street, South Yarra VIC 3141

P: 8825 4600 W: adavb.org E: ask@adavb.org

ARBN 152948680 ABN 80 263 088 594

Reg Assoc # A0022649E

Public sector enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) negotiations

FAQs – March 2022

Why has ADAVB engaged Professionals Australia again?

During the last round of EBA bargaining, Professionals Australia (PA) was contracted by ADAVB to assist our members in bargaining for a new enterprise agreement (public sector dentist and dental specialist employees). PA was instrumental in achieving an unprecedented improvement in wages and entitlements for Victorian public sector dentists.

PA provides the industrial relations expertise and advice about how we should proceed with bargaining to get the best result for our members.

PA is a national union and professional association that represents the interests of many professions, including pharmacists, engineers, scientists, veterinarians, managers and information technology professionals. While PA works across many industries, it also has a strong presence in the health sector, including representing medical scientists and researchers, biomedical engineers, translators and interpreters and management professionals at Ambulance Victoria.

We are working with a new team at PA for this round of bargaining and the ADAVB has taken on member organising activities including being the point of contact for member enquiries. The team we are working with at PA has substantial experience in industrial relations and knowledge of the Victorian public sector. The Victorian Director of PA, Scott Crawford, is heading up our negotiating team. In addition to previously managing industrial relations for a major health union, Scott was formerly a principal industrial relations consultant at the Victorian Department of Health. We are also supported by PA's national industrial/legal team.

What is the ADAVB's role in the next round of EBA negotiations?

The ADAVB will collaborate with PA and other stakeholders during the planning, negotiating and implementation phases. PA provides industrial relations advice to the ADAVB and leads bargaining discussions. ADAVB's activities broadly include:

- Preparing and submitting a log of claims
- Working and negotiating with stakeholders, including the employers' representative, the Victorian Hospitals' Industrial Association (VHIA), Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) and the Victorian Department of Health throughout the process

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- Coordinating member organising activities (for communication and in the event protected industrial action is required)
- Providing updates to public sector members
- First point of contact for member enquiries.

What is a log of claims and how is the ADAVB consulting with public sector employees?

A log of claims is what we are asking for in the next agreements on behalf of employees – both in wages and other entitlements. Consultation began in mid-2021 with the ADAVB Public Dentistry Committee, via periodic surveys of public sector members, at dedicated webinars and other feedback received. The draft log of claims is available [here](#).

Throughout negotiations, we can add, vary and amend our claims, based on member feedback.

How are salary increases being approached in the next agreement?

The Victorian Government has implemented a public sector [Wages Policy](#) due to the current economic environment. The pandemic has had a significant impact on Government finances and the landscape has significantly shifted since the last agreement was negotiated. The ADAVB is strongly focusing on improving entitlements, implementing strategies to ensure that dentists are appropriately progressing through classifications, recognising where work is performed above classification levels, and more. See the [draft log of claims](#) for further detail. Wage claims remain a priority and will be made later in the process and we are monitoring outcomes of other agreements currently being renegotiated.

The ADAVB and PA requested to commence bargaining early to avoid the 1.5% annual wages and conditions cap that was introduced for agreements negotiated after 1 January 2022. The Minister for Industrial Relations declined the request.

How is the ADAVB advocating for dental specialists in training?

Specialists in training are crucial in the delivery of specialist services at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne and we are working to achieve remuneration for their work. This was included in the current specialist EBA however the funding source could not be agreed on. Our position is that specialists in training are performing the work of employees and we are addressing this issue in parallel with EBA negotiations.

We have already raised this as a priority issue with the Department of Health and with the Minister for Health.

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What salary increases are other Victorian public sector professions getting now?

Victorian teachers are a large group with significant bargaining power that have recently renegotiated an EBA. They agreed on a deal in February 2022 to receive 2% pay increases annually over the next four years – the union was calling for 7% annual increases and were bargaining under the Government’s 2% wages cap. Other achievements included boosting the workforce with additional teachers, cutting face-to-face teaching hours and allowing more time for lesson planning, structural salary and classification adjustments and allowances in some circumstances.

Other agreement negotiations are in progress and we are monitoring outcomes which may give us an indication of the likely result of our bargaining.

While other public sector agreements are only achieving modest wage growth, they are nevertheless winning many other improved conditions and entitlements that have a monetary value, and that will form part of our focus during bargaining.

What is the process (what happens next)?

We have been having informal pre-bargaining discussions with the VHIA and the Department of Health since late 2021. These discussions are continuing from March 2022. We anticipate that formal bargaining for this round of EBA negotiations will commence in April 2022. Members will be kept up to date as things progress and are encouraged to provide feedback along the way.

Within 14 days of the Government providing “authority” for the VHIA to start formal bargaining on behalf of *hospital* management, employees will be issued with what’s called a “Notice of Employer Representational Rights” which outlines your right to be represented in negotiations. As part of the process you (as a member) **appoint us** (ADAVB) to be your bargaining representative. Note that this will only happen for employees who work at dental clinics associated with a hospital in the first instance. i.e.,

- Albury Wodonga Health
- Alfred Health
- Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
- Ballarat Health Services
- Barwon Health
- Bass Coast Health
- Bendigo Health
- Boort District Health
- Central Gippsland Health Service



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- Colac Area Health
- Djerriwarrh Health Service
- East Grampians Health Service
- East Wimmera Health Service
- Echuca Regional Health
- Edenhope & District Memorial Hospital
- Goulburn Valley Health
- Central Highlands Rural Health
- Maryborough District Health Service
- Monash Health
- Northeast Health
- Omeo District Health
- Orbost Regional Health
- Peninsula Health
- RDHM - DHSV
- Royal Children's Hospital
- Seymour Health
- South West Healthcare
- Swan Hill District Health
- West Wimmera Health Service
- Wimmera Health Care Group

Community health agencies are not obligated to begin the bargaining process before the current agreements expire. EBA stakeholders are hoping to initiate discussions with agency management as early as possible.

Note also that it's at this stage that we demonstrate our bargaining power, by showing the number of dentists we represent in bargaining. When the time comes, it is important that you nominate the ADAVB to be your bargaining representative. We will communicate with you about this in greater detail at the appropriate time.

The ADAVB and PA attend weekly negotiations when bargaining formally commences. The first milestone we are striving for is an "in-principle" agreement which is summarised by a document called the "Draft Heads of Agreement" and must be submitted to the Department of Health and the Department of Treasury and Finance for approval. It is expected it will take some months to get to this process.

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What happens if the agreements expire and a new one isn't in place?

Employees will still be covered by the agreements already in place but pay increases or entitlement improvements won't take effect until the next agreement is approved. There is no provision for backpay under the Government's current wages policy – it would only be available from the date that the 'Heads of Agreement' is approved, which occurs after in-principle agreement is reached. The ADAVB and PA are working hard to ensure that this occurs in a timely fashion.

What has the ADAVB invested in this project?

The ADAVB Council believes that advocating for public sector dentists, dental specialists and specialists in training is an important part of our association's role. Significant resources are put towards EBA negotiations. This includes funding for the service agreement with PA, countless staff hours for each round of bargaining and expanding the role of the Public Dentistry Committee who work with the ADAVB on a voluntary basis. Work begins 12 months before the agreements expire and continue after agreements are negotiated to monitor implementation.

Why is it beneficial for public sector dentists, dental specialists and dental specialists in training to be members of the ADAVB?

The strength of our bargaining power is directly associated with the proportion of public sector dentists who appoint us as their bargaining representatives.

To achieve outcomes in collective bargaining, we need a strong and united workforce. There is strength in numbers, and that is why we achieve more when we work together.

The significant investment of resources by the ADAVB for EBA negotiations necessitates a high proportion of dentists, specialists and specialists in training maintaining membership. We are supporting you, and we need your support in return to ensure a sustainable model as funding and resources are not guaranteed on an ongoing basis. Maintaining your membership between rounds of bargaining adds value to the project and can support its continuation.

The Professional Support Allowance for eligible employees as an entitlement under the current EBAs can be put towards ADAVB membership fees and we encourage you join and utilise all benefits available. View ADAVB member services, [training](#) and [resources](#) at adavb.org.

To become an ADAVB member and enjoy the great benefits that come along with it, [join online](#) or contact the membership team at membership@adavb.org or call (03) 8825 4600.



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How can I be involved in the EBA renegotiation process?

There are several ways that members can be involved, including:

- Letting us know of any ideas you have about the EBA negotiations – contact advocacy@adavb.org
- Encouraging colleagues at your workplace to join the ADAVB if they aren't already members – strength in numbers is important to put us in the best bargaining position possible and ensure that this work is sustainable for the ADAVB
- Participating in related events or activities
- Staying across our latest updates.

Who can I contact for further information about EBA negotiations?

The CEO and Policy/Advocacy team consisting of two employees (manager and project officer) work with PA on this project as part of their roles. The Public Dentistry Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the ADAVB.

Contact the Policy/Advocacy team at advocacy@adavb.org or call (03) 8825 4600.

Contact the Public Dentistry Committee via the ADAVB adavb.org/about/our-people/committees.

Who can I contact if I have a workplace issue relating to my EBA entitlements?

In the first instance, try to resolve the issue directly with your employer's HR department. We suggest communicating with them in writing and referring to applicable clauses in the EBA covering your workplace. All EBAs are linked to in the FAQ documents for general dentists and specialist dentists at adavb.org/public-dentistry.

Members can contact the ADAVB Policy/ Advocacy team. You may be referred to the ADA HR Advisory Service, one of our exclusive member benefits. E: hrhotline@ada.org.au or call 1300 232 462.

Dentists who are not currently ADAVB members can contact the FairWork Ombudsman if issues can't be resolved with your employer's HR department. Visit www.fairwork.gov.au.