



MEDIA ALERT: Thursday 1st October 2026

WorkSpace Week: Prevent injuries today. Protect workers for tomorrow from head to toe **WORKSPACE WEEK 19–25 OCTOBER 2026**

“WORK WELL FROM HEAD TO TOE” – That’s the theme of National WorkSpace Week 2026 (19-25 October), dedicated to the prevention and early intervention of a wide range of work-related injuries responsible for around 146,700 serious workers’ compensation claims in Australia annually.

Work-related injuries cost the Australian economy around \$14.7 billion annually (ABS 2021-22) in direct health costs that, according to a Deloitte Access Economics, when combined with lost productivity, absenteeism, and reduced quality of life, the real cost to our economy exceeds \$55.1 billion annually.

Australia’s majority (57%) of workers’ compensation claims for serious injuries are work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) that can lead to developing chronic musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) with serious long-term implications for workers, their families and their employers’ bottom line.

In 2022, **7.3 million Australians, or 29% of the population**, were estimated to be living with chronic MSDs with the prevalence unchanged since the previous survey in 2017-18 (AIHW June 2024).

Dr Billy Chow, President of the ACA said, “Aligned with *Safe Work Australia’s National Safe Work Month* and the *‘Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2023–2033’*; WorkSpace Week, now in its fifth year, promotes safe work practices to encourage employers and workers to help reduce the occurrence of WMSDs caused by physical and mental stress, repetitive work and poorly set up non-ergonomic workspaces.

According to Key Work Health and Safety Statistics (Safe Work Australia Oct 2025), body stressing was the most common mechanism for injury across every major occupation group causing traumatic ligament and muscle/tendon injury (53,300) and musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases (22,500).

84% of all serious workers’ compensation claims involved body stressing (50,600 or 34.5%), falls, slips and trips (32,000 or 21.8%), being hit by moving objects (23,400 or 16.0%), mental stress (16,800 or 11.5%), and desk or computer users made up 10% of serious workers’ compensation claims. However only 3 in 10 workers injured (30.5%) received workers’ compensation with 69.5% of injuries unclaimed (Safe Work Australia 2025).

“With the number of serious claims having increased by 37,600 (34.5%) over the past 10 years, WorkSpace Week increases awareness of the importance of preventing injuries and illnesses that affect workers physically and mentally to minimise the impact on workers’ health and wellbeing and quality of life,” he said.

“Over 400 serious claims are lodged every day across Australia, so reducing the incidences of WMSDs and promoting the importance of employers reviewing workplace controls and conducting regular internal reviews of risk management procedures can aid in the prevention and early detection of WMSDs,” Dr Chow said.

WMSDs are a range of inflammatory and degenerative conditions affecting the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, peripheral nerves and supporting blood vessels that can be caused by a single workplace event but commonly result from repeated harmful workspace activities over an extended period.

Mental stress in the workspace is also on the rise accounting for 11.5% of serious workers’ compensation claims with 36.8 weeks being the median time lost at work and a median compensation cost of \$69,900.

Mental stress can also impact workers physically, which can trigger neuro-musculoskeletal disorders, including tension and cervicogenic (neck-related) headaches that affect workers’ concentration, productivity, social engagement and their overall wellbeing and quality of life.

A large range of factors influence the risk of WMSDs including body stressing caused by poorly executed lifting, pushing, pulling or bending, using computers in non-ergonomic workspaces (in an office or remotely), poor posture, extended driving of vehicles, and repetitive strain injuries can all cause WMSDs including chronic neck and back pain, shoulder stiffness and headaches.

Australians most at risk of WMSDs include community and personal service workers such as healthcare, aged care, childcare, NDIS and disability service workers. Construction, manufacturing, tradies, labourers, technicians, drivers, and machinery operators are also among those at high risk of work-related injuries.

With 75.5% of Australians aged 16 to 64 using computers daily, incorrect and non-ergonomic use of technology in the workplace or when working remotely can also lead to Tension Neck Syndrome or 'tech neck', a debilitating WMSD common among office workers.

The link between MSDs, including back pain and depression is well documented in research studies including a study by the *International Association for the Study of Pain* (2021) that found people living with chronic back pain are at heightened risk of experiencing mental health problems.

The independent survey '*The impact of tech neck and neck pain in Australia*' (2025) by global research company *Pureprofile* found that tech neck doesn't only affect Australians' physical health but impacts sufferers' mental health and productivity with 24% experiencing higher irritability, 20% noticing poorer concentration and 23% had sleep disruption; with women 43% more affected by productivity loss than men.

Unresolved WMSDs including tech neck can lead to developing chronic MSD conditions, an increased risk of long-term physical disability, and psychological and social problems, while depressive symptoms can worsen MSD pain that in turn can exacerbate the pain's negative impact on the mental health of sufferers.

"The coexistence of back pain and mental health conditions can stimulate a vicious cycle that without interventions to break the pain cycle, can lead to accelerating both conditions with the costs of unresolved MSDs to workers, significantly impacting workers, employers and the Australian economy," Dr Chow said.

"WMSDs can reduce workers' productivity and quality of life while increasing psychological distress, bodily pain and disability, so it's essential for employers to implement preventative interventions," he said.

"During WorkSpace Week, we're urging employers and workers to join the movement and focus on interventions by reviewing workplace controls and promoting early detection and rehabilitation to minimise the risk of chronic MSDs that severely impact individuals, business productivity and financial outcomes."

Interventions can include modifying behaviour to improve workers' posture; promoting regular exercise, stretching and strengthening; establishing ergonomic workstations; implementing task-specific changes and equipment modifications; ongoing education in manual handling/lifting techniques; and organisational change to balance work hours and workloads and improve workplace culture to minimise mental stress.

"With MSDs the second largest contributor to disability and, lower back pain being the single leading cause of disability globally, workplace interventions combined with early diagnosis and treatment of WMSDs can significantly minimise their impact and prevent the long-term burden while reducing workers' compensation claims, costs to employers and significant cost to the Australian economy," Dr Chow said.

ACA chiropractors are Australia's leaders in providing holistic, evidence-based, patient-centred, and clinically proven healthcare with over 300,000 Australians visiting a chiropractor each week for non-surgical, low-risk, drug-free therapeutic care in the assessment and treatment of WMSDs.

ACA chiropractors can provide advice to help prevent WMSDs including how to set up an ergonomic workspace, how to effectively manage stress, improve posture and methods for using technology, provide exercises to improve overall spinal health and stabilise core muscle groups, and guidance on rest and how to maintain a healthy diet to promote overall health and wellbeing.

To help prevent injuries and reduce the impact of WMSDs, employers and workers are encouraged to visit **workspaceweek.org.au** to access a range of free resources including the WorkSpace Week Checklist, exercise posters, factsheets and podcasts to learn how to maximise spinal health and wellbeing, minimise workplace injuries and improve productivity, ensuring Australians ***can work well from head to toe***.

- ENDS -
workspaceweek.org.au

Join the Workspace Week 2026 movement & register your organisation at workspaceweek.org.au.

INTERVIEW REQUESTS

Contact: Insight Communications 02 9518 4744 or aca@insightcommunications.net.au

- ☉ Alice Collins: 0414 686 091 or alice@insightcommunications.net.au OR
- ☉ Clare Collins: 0414 821 957 or clare@insightcommunications.net.au

Media Centre:

Download comprehensive journalist notes, images, footage and more from <https://bit.ly/WSW26-MediaCentre>

ACA'S FREE PREVENTION & INTERVENTION RESOURCES – workspaceweek.org.au

- ☉ **Factsheets Checklists and Posters** – Organisations large and small can download ACA's free factsheets to help minimise WMSDs including, Work Well From Head To Toe, Sitting, Standing, Lifting/Bending and Headache Factsheets, the Ergonomic Checklist and the Stand Corrected Stretching Poster.
- ☉ **Back Pain & Mental Health Factsheet.**
- ☉ **Avoiding Tech Neck** Factsheets and Electronic Device Checklists for adults, parents and students.
- ☉ **Consult A Chiro Podcast** – A resource that provides information on preventing and managing work- related musculoskeletal disorders.

ACA MEDIA SPOKESPERSONS - NATIONAL & ALL STATES & TERRITORIES

Note: Case studies are also available on request.

ACA MEDIA SPOKESPERSONS - NATIONAL & ALL STATES & TERRITORIES

Dr Billy Chow – President, Australian Chiropractors Association – National & South Australia

Dr Billy Chow, President of the Australian Chiropractors Association, graduated as a chiropractor from RMIT University in 1998. Since graduating, he has built a varied career in private practice, on boards, and in business. Dr Chow is passionate about educating and inspiring people to make better choices and live healthier lives. He serves as a Lecturer and ACC Program Coordinator (Diploma) at the Australian Chiropractic College, Adelaide, and runs a healthcare business consultancy providing practitioners with personalised business support and mentorship.

Dr David Cahill – Vice President, National & Victoria

ACA Vice President, Dr David Cahill has been a registered, practicing chiropractor since 1991, in the Malvern East area of Melbourne since 1998. He loves helping people of all ages, from newborn babies and toddlers to those in their more senior years. David is very active in post-graduate education, continually upskilling in many aspects of chiropractic. David's passion is to help people have transformative experiences, and help the chiropractic profession advance its standing in the Australian community.

Dr Damian Kristof – National & Victoria

Nutritionist, Naturopath and Chiropractor, Dr Damian Kristof is a highly sought-after presenter and speaker in the Wellness industry. With 30 years of experience, Damian's in-depth knowledge of the body, nervous system, food functions and responses coupled with his friendly and dynamic presenting style, has him in high demand. Focusing on food as key to unlocking optimal health and wellness, Damian presents in-depth facts and concepts that have never been readily available to the public - offering all audiences from industry experts to the general public highly valuable content as he engages, educates and inspires audiences across the globe.

Dr Kim Lie Jom – National & NSW

Dr Kim Lie Jom has been a registered and practicing chiropractor in NSW for the past 30 years. His commitment to the wellbeing of his patients extends beyond chiropractic adjustments, as he understands the importance of holistic health for every individual. With a family of three kids of his own, he truly comprehends the value of family wellness. As a respected community leader, Dr Jom has become an integral part of the local community. His reputation extends not only for his exceptional chiropractic skills but also for his dedication to community service. He is a Board Director and proud member of the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA), showcasing his commitment to the highest standards of professional practice. His involvement in the ACA goes beyond membership – he currently holds several key positions within the organisation, including Public Education, Audit and Risk, the Eastern Regional Committee. He is a dedicated member of the Australian Spinal Research Foundation (ASRF), demonstrating his commitment to advancing chiropractic knowledge and contributing to research in the field. Dr Jom's prominence in the chiropractic community is exemplified by his passion, dedication, and leadership in promoting health and wellbeing for individuals and families alike.

Dr Ashley Dent – Tasmania

Dr Dent graduated from Macquarie University in Sydney in 2010, where he received the Ed Devereaux Award for Services to the Student Body. He is actively involved with the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) at both state and national levels, currently chairing the Public Engagement Committee and contributing to two other committees. In 2023, he was recognised with a Meritorious Service Award from the ACA. Dr Dent has a keen passion for helping people improve their long-standing (chronic) back and neck pain and then progressing their spinal health through exercise and rehabilitation so that they are stronger and healthier than they've ever been.

Dr Michelle Ronan – Victoria

Michelle has been a registered chiropractor since graduating from RMIT in 2005 and has practiced in the Albert Park area since 2010. Michelle's passion lies in helping people's bodies perform better to allow them to get more out of life, whether that be to enhance sports performance, rehabilitation of chronic conditions, during pregnancy, or to support general health and wellbeing. Michelle loves helping people of all ages and stages of life on their health journey. Michelle previously sat on the Victorian branch of the CAA (now the Australian Chiropractors Association), and is currently completing a Master's through RMIT.

Dr Adam Smith – Queensland

Dr Adam Smith (Chiropractor) has over 22 years of experience in family-based chiropractic care. He has experience working in many communities around Australia and internationally, including regularly serving on committees that guide health policy on a state and Australian federal level, as well as in the UK. With a special interest in family health and wellness, Dr Smith works with local community groups, charities, workplaces and schools to improve access to chiropractic care for those who want it. He believes that all Australians should have access to quality chiropractic services, so he is currently working with a group that is expanding chiropractic access in regional and rural areas of Australia across six states and territories.

Dr Joshua Tymms – Western Australia

Dr Joshua Tymms is a registered chiropractor with two decades of clinical experience, having graduated from Murdoch University in 2006. Throughout his career, he has worked with a wide range of patients, including elite-level athletes, with a strong focus on structural correction and long-term spinal health outcomes. Josh holds dual Master's degrees in Public Health and Business Administration, equipping him with advanced expertise in health leadership, strategy, and research. He serves as Vice President of the Advanced Bio-Structural Correction Australasia (ABCA), where he leads initiatives to expand the research base supporting structural correction and strengthen the profession's evidence-informed direction. Over the past decade, Josh has held multiple leadership and advocacy roles within the Australian Chiropractors Association, contributing to policy, professional standards, and the future direction of chiropractic in Australia. In addition to his clinical and leadership work, Josh is the founder of Chiro Van, a mobile healthcare service designed to improve access to chiropractic care across the community. He remains committed to helping people move better, feel better, and live more active lives through high-quality, patient-centred care.

Dr Ali Young – Western Australia

Dr Ali Young is a Chiropractor with over 23 years' experience working specifically with families, children and women. She has owned practices and worked in both Western Australia and Queensland, and loves taking care of those children who love that extra jolt of frivolity, playfulness and joy in their healthcare. She is an advocate for Working Mothers, with her book, *Work. Mama. Life* widely received upon its publication in 2022. She is a mother of two and now works with female chiropractors inside her coaching and membership programs, combining these two great loves with her chiropractic work. She is a sought-after speaker, MC, and strategist for female chiros wanting to "have it all" – a supercharged practice, a work/life balance and a whole lot of fun. She has written for most major newspapers around Australia, has a podcast "Work Mama Life" with over 20,000 downloads, and is often called upon as an expert for the neurological regulation for working mothers. She has been a chiropractic patient since she was 15 years old and thinks there is no greater gift than providing the support families need to allow their health to shine.

JOURNALIST NOTES

THE AUSTRALIAN CHIROPRACTORS ASSOCIATION

Established in 1938, the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) is the peak body representing chiropractors. The ACA promotes the importance of maintaining spinal health to improve musculoskeletal health through non-invasive, drug-free spinal health and lifestyle advice to help Australians of all ages lead and maintain healthy lives.

The premier association for chiropractic healthcare in Australia with over 3,000 members, the ACA is Australia's largest chiropractic health body and has taken a leadership role in promoting the importance of maintaining a healthy spine to improve the overall health and wellbeing of every Australian. ACA develops and promotes professional standards for chiropractors, has invested \$2.4 million to advance research in musculoskeletal health, builds evidence-based practice for chiropractic healthcare and actively promotes the importance of spinal health through its annual flagship campaign, national Spinal Health Month. Every week 400,000 chiropractic healthcare consultations are creating well-adjusted Australians demonstrating chiropractors play an important role in improving the spinal health of everyday Australians.

THE BURDEN OF WMSDs IN AUSTRALIA - KEY FACTS

- ⦿ Work-related injury and illness impact workers and their families deeply, as well as employers and the economy.
- ⦿ MSDs still account for the **majority (57%) of workers' compensation** claims for serious injuries.
- ⦿ Around **7.3 million (29%) Australians** were estimated to be living with chronic MSDs with the prevalence unchanged since the previous survey in 2017-18 (AIHW June 2024).
- ⦿ MSDs are ranked the **third highest chronic disease** in the Australian Burden of Disease Study (2023) before cardiovascular disease.
- ⦿ **Direct health costs for MSDs: \$14.7 billion** – 9.8% of the total health expenditure budget (ABS 2021-2022)
- ⦿ **58% of WMSD sufferers are of working age** (25-64) in peak income-earning years
- ⦿ The real cost to the Australian economy for WMSDs exceeds **\$55.1 billion** annually when lost productivity, absenteeism, direct health costs and reduced quality of life for WMSD sufferers is factored in (Musculoskeletal Australia, 2020-2021 & Deloitte Industries).
- ⦿ MSDs account for the **greatest proportion of persistent pain** conditions (WHO, 2019).
- ⦿ MSDs are the **second largest contributor to disability** worldwide, with low back pain being the single leading cause of disability globally (Musculoskeletal Australia, 2020-2021).
- ⦿ Back pain is usually as a result of a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD).
- ⦿ **The increase in musculoskeletal cases is projected to be 43% over the next two decades** (Musculoskeletal Australia, 2018).
- ⦿ Back problems can cause lost social and physical activity, concentration and work capacity and are a significant cause of disability and lost productivity with the economic burden on Australia, significant.
- ⦿ International guidelines provide compelling evidence that opioids have a limited role in the management of acute back and neck pain and no role in managing chronic back pain.
- ⦿ A University of Sydney study published in the Lancet medical journal (23 June 2023), found opioids (among the most commonly prescribed pain-relief for people with low back and neck pain) do not benefit people with 'acute' low back or neck pain (lasting up to 12 weeks) and can result in patients experiencing worse pain.
- ⦿ Prescribing opioids for low back and neck pain can also cause harms ranging from common side effects including nausea, constipation, dizziness, dependency, misuse, poisoning and death. Opioids should not be recommended for 'acute' low back pain or neck pain or chronic low back pain or neck pain (RACGP).
- ⦿ Chiropractic healthcare provides effective, low risk, drug-free treatment for back pain for all Australians regardless of their age, profession or lifestyle. This is particularly effective when combined with a holistic person-centred approach, addressing factors such as exercise and stress management.

KEY CHIROPRACTIC FACTS

- ⦿ **The Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA)** is the peak body representing chiropractors nationally with over 3,000 members dedicated to promoting the importance of maintaining a healthy spine to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians.
- ⦿ **ACA has invested over \$2.3 million** in evidence-based research into chiropractic healthcare.
- ⦿ **Chiropractic healthcare targets the cause**, not just the symptoms, offering effective, low-risk, drug-free treatment for WMSDs for all professions. This approach is especially beneficial when combined with holistic, person-centered care, including exercise and stress management.
- ⦿ **Over 300,000 Australians visit a chiropractor** each week.
- ⦿ **Australian chiropractors conduct over 400,000** chiropractic healthcare consultations every week.
- ⦿ **With so many Australians visiting a chiropractor every week**, chiropractors play an important role in treating WMSDs and improving the spinal health of Australians including workers suffering WMSDs.
- ⦿ **Chiropractors use a patient-centred model of healthcare** to provide a therapeutic approach incorporating a range of manual therapies to treat a range of MSDs including back pain.
- ⦿ **Chiropractors are degree qualified healthcare professionals** who undergo a minimum five years of university study encompassing a bachelor's and a master's degree that covers a breadth of health subjects, including anatomy, physiology, radiology, diagnostic techniques, and clinical training.
- ⦿ **Chiropractors are registered with the Chiropractic Board of Australia** under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. Board members are appointed by the Australian Workforce Ministerial Council. The Board regulates chiropractors in Australia under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme with chiropractors one of 16 health professions in the National Scheme.

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PLEASE NOTE: For a comprehensive list of references please visit workspaceweek.org.au

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