



MEDIA RELEASE: Monday 20th October 2025

From Tech Neck to Chronic Pain: WorkSpace Week Highlights Women's Health at Work
WORKSPACE WEEK 20–26 OCTOBER 2025 – “WORK WELL EVERY DAY”

Australian women are being urged to join the National WorkSpace Week (20-26 October 2025) movement, to prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs), the most common injuries impacting Australia's female workforce.

National WorkSpace Week, an initiative of the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA), aligns with Safe Work Australia's National Safe Work Month (October) and the '*Australian Work Health and Safety (WHS) Strategy 2023–2033*' to ensure our female workforce can '*work well every day*' to minimise WMSDs.

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

Dr Michelle Ronan, a chiropractor for 20-years said, “Australian workers most at risk of WMSDs are community and personal service workers including healthcare, aged care, childcare, NDIS and disability services sectors.

“With women dominating employment in these workforces, it's imperative employers and workers implement interventions and early detection to minimise the risk of chronic WMSDs,” she said.

“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 can significantly reduce the instances of WMSDs and minimise their impact to prevent the long-term burden while reducing workers' compensation claims and overall costs to the Australian economy,” Dr Ronan said.

A wide range of risk factors lead to female workers developing WMSDs including body stressing caused by poorly executed lifting, pushing, pulling or bending, poor posture, repetitive strain injuries, computer use in non-ergonomic workspaces (in an office or remotely); and incorrect use of electronic devices such as smartphones and tablets.

According to Safework Australia (2024), serious workers' compensation claims for mental stress in women were more than double (12.5%) that of men (6.0%).

Mental stress in the workspace can also lead to WMSDs when the body's "fight or flight" response is triggered releasing stress hormones causing muscle tension that can lead to pain, stiffness and cervicogenic (neck related) headaches affecting concentration, productivity, social engagement, wellbeing and quality of life.

Incorrect and non-ergonomic use of technology in the workplace or remotely can also lead to developing *Tension Neck Syndrome* or '*tech neck*' which is a debilitating WMSD common among office workers. With 75.5% of Australians aged 16 to 64 using computers daily, desk or computer users make up 10% of serious workers' compensation claims.

An 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. Sufferers reported impacts on mental health and productivity with 24% experiencing higher irritability, 20% noticing poorer concentration and 23% had sleep disruption; with women 43% more impacted by productivity loss than men.

In a separate study (2023) it was revealed that 89% of workers who used a desk reported suffering a WMSD with female desk workers reporting the highest incidence (91%) compared to men (76%) while sedentary female workers experienced the highest rate of neck pain and were 22% more likely to experience neck pain than men – 71.7% vs 59%.

Dr Billy Chow, President of the ACA said, "With prevention the best protection against tech neck, holding a smartphone at eye level (the recommended position) was associated with the lowest neck pain prevalence (64%) but was only used by 37.5% of smartphone users.

"Correct posture, taking regular breaks and applying correct ergonomics when using devices had a significant impact on reducing prevalence of neck pain when using a range of devices.

In 2022, an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey reported chronic musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) impacts around **7.3 million** (29%) Australians with an estimated direct health cost in 2021-2022 of **\$14.7 billion**. However, when accounting for lost productivity, absenteeism, direct health costs and reduced quality of life, in 2018 Deloitte Access Economics reported the real cost to our economy exceeded **\$55 billion** annually.

"WMSDs can lead to long-term chronic pain and possibly life-limiting outcomes with early diagnosis and treatment recommended to prevent deterioration, improve recovery, reduce severity and help prevent long-term implications such as mental health conditions and reliance on medications for chronic pain that can be harmful," Dr Chow said.

"During national WorkSpace Week, we're urging employers and workers to join the movement and focus on interventions by taking a proactive approach to preventing WMSDs caused by physical stress, mental stress, repetitive work, poorly set up non-ergonomic workspaces and incorrect use of devices.

"With WMSDs leading to reduced productivity, poorer quality of life, psychological distress, bodily pain and disability, employers and workers can implement preventative measures by reviewing workplace controls and promoting early detection and rehabilitation to ensure we all *work well every day*," said Dr Chow.

"WMSD interventions in the workplace can include modifying worker's behaviour through training (improve posture); regular exercise (stretching and strengthening); task-specific changes (holding smartphones and iPads at eye level) and equipment modifications (establish ergonomic workstations); education (manual handling/lifting techniques); organisational change (hours, workloads and increased breaks); and workplace environment (culture) to minimise mental stress," he said.

While medications may offer temporary relief from WMSDs, academic studies, including research from the University of Sydney, show opioids do not benefit people with acute neck or back pain (lasting up to 12 weeks) and have no positive role in treatment; comparatively, studies have shown that commencing treatment for WMSDs promptly is crucial in preventing further functional decline and progression to a chronic condition.

ACA chiropractors can provide drug-free healthcare, advice to help prevent work-related back and neck injuries, how to set up an ergonomic workspace, how to effectively manage stress, improve posture, how to best use technology to prevent tech neck, provide exercises to improve spinal health and stabilise core muscle groups and guidance on rest and maintaining a healthy diet to promote overall health and wellbeing.

"By promoting prevention and minimising long-term harm through early diagnosis and effective chiropractic healthcare; we can improve the spinal health and overall wellbeing of Australia's female workforce to minimise WMSDs and reduce the negative impact on employers and the economy," Dr Chow said.

To help prevent workspace 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 injuries and improve productivity ensuring all Australians ***can work well every day***.

For information or to register for **National WorkSpace Week 2025** visit **workspaceweek.org.au**.

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workspaceweek.org.au

[#WorkSpaceWeek](#) [#WorkWellEveryDay](#) [#AdjustYourThinking](#) [#ConsultAChiro](#) - [#SafeWorkMonth](#)

INTERVIEW REQUESTS

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JOURNALIST NOTES

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, Sitting, Standing, Lifting/Bending and Headache Factsheets, the Ergonomic Checklist and the Stand Corrected Stretching Poster.
- ⦿ **Consult A Chiro Podcast** – A resource that provides information on preventing and managing work- related musculoskeletal disorders.
- ⦿ **Avoiding Tech Neck** Factsheets and Electronic Device Checklists for adults, parents and students.

THE BURDEN OF WMSDs IN AUSTRALIA - KEY FACTS

- ⦿ Work-related injury and illness impact workers and their families deeply, as well as employers.
- ⦿ 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 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 around 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.
- ⦿ 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 everyday Australians including workers suffering from 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 required to register 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.

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 neuromusculoskeletal health through non-invasive, drug-free spinal health and lifestyle advice to help Australians of all ages lead and maintain healthy lives.

The ACA is the premier association for chiropractic in Australia. With around 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 \$2.2 million to advance research in musculoskeletal health, builds evidence-based practice for chiropractic healthcare and actively promotes the importance of maintaining spinal health through its annual national Spinal Health Week and WorkSpace Week dedicated to preventing work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) which currently costs the Australian economy over \$55 billion annually.

Every week 400,000 chiropractic healthcare consultations are creating well-adjusted Australians. With so many Australians visiting a chiropractor every week, chiropractors play an important role in improving the spinal health of everyday Australians including workers suffering from WMSDs.

ACA MEDIA SPOKESPERSONS - NATIONAL & ALL STATES & TERRITORIES

Note: Case studies are also available on request.

Dr Michelle Ronan – National & 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 Masters through RMIT.

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

ACA President, Dr Billy Chow graduated as a chiropractor from RMIT University in 1998. Since graduating he has had a varied and enriching career in private practice, on boards and in business. Dr Chow is passionate about educating and inspiring people to make better choices and to live happier and healthier lives. Dr Chow is a lecturer at the Australian Chiropractic College, Adelaide and has a healthcare business consultancy where he provides healthcare 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 newborns 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, enabling them to do more of what they love in their lives.

Dr Anthony Coxon – National & Victoria

Dr Anthony Coxon is a caring and respected chiropractor with 30 years' experience. In 2009, he completed Post Doctorate studies in Chiropractic Neurorehabilitation. This additional qualification gives Anthony skills in dealing with more complex cases, particularly patients that experience balance disorders and dizziness. He is the current Vice President of the Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA). In addition to running a busy practice, Anthony has also appeared on countless print, radio and television media spots including 'A Current Affair', 'Today Tonight', the 'Today Show' and the Evening news on all commercial television stations. Anthony sees daily how chiropractic care and a healthy lifestyle can bring vitality and wellbeing to his patients.

Dr Ashley Dent – Tasmania

Dr Dent graduated from Macquarie University in Sydney in 2010 where he was awarded the Ed Devereaux Award for Services to the Student Body. He is active within the Australian Chiropractors Association at a state and national level chairing the public engagement committee and being a member of two other committees. He volunteers his time with St Vincent de Paul to bring chiropractic care to the homeless and vulnerable in Hobart. 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 Kim Lie Jom – NSW

Dr Kim Lie Jom has been a registered and practicing chiropractor in NSW for the past 30 years. His commitment to the well-being of his patients extends beyond the 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 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 Damian Kristof – Australian Chiropractors Association – National & Victoria

Nutritionist, Naturopath and Chiropractor, Dr Damian Kristof is a highly sought-after presenter and speaker in the Wellness industry. With over 20 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 public highly valuable content as he engages, educates and inspires audiences across the globe.

Dr Adam Smith – Queensland

Dr Adam Smith (Chiropractor) has more than 20 years' 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 Adam 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 nearly two decades of clinical experience, graduating from Murdoch University with a double degree in 2006. He has worked with many elite-level athletes throughout his career and remains passionate about advancing spinal health. Josh is currently completing a double Masters degree in Public Health and Business Administration to strengthen his skills in health leadership, research, and advocacy. He serves as Vice President of the Advanced Bio-Structural Correction Australasia (ABCA) Board, leading efforts to grow the research base supporting spinal health interventions. Josh has held various leadership roles within the Australian Chiropractors Association over the past decade, advocating strongly for the profession and its future. He remains committed to helping communities live healthier, more active lives through chiropractic care.

Dr Ali Young – Western Australia

Dr Ali Young is a Chiropractor with over 20 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 that 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 women in her Holistic Health Business space, combining these two great loves with her chiropractic work. She is a sought-after speaker, MC, and strategist for working mothers in the allied health space who both own businesses and want to live large whilst avoiding burnout. She has written for most major newspapers around Australia, has a podcast "Work Mama Life" with nearly 20,000 downloads, and provides support in the online space for women and 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.

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