



MONASH
University

HEALTHY WORKING LIVES RESEARCH GROUP

2022 WRAP

School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine
Monash University



About us

Click [here](#)
to read
more about
what we do



At the Healthy Working Lives Research Group we know that good work is good for health, and that good health is good for work.

We're part of the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

Our research program encompasses three main themes of prevention, recovery and systems.

In each of these areas we lead and participate in local, national and international research projects, provide expert advice and consultancy services, and deliver bespoke education and training.



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A message from our director Professor Alex Collie

It has been another productive year for the Healthy Working Lives Research Group.

As the end of the year approaches, I am incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity this year to work with a talented and committed team of researchers, and a diverse array of partners across our three major programs of prevention, recovery and systems research.

There have been many highlights in 2022, summarised in this end- of-year wrap. While there isn't space to describe everything, I would like to mention a few highlights.

We spent much of the year wrapping up two of our large, long- running research studies in Driving Health and the COMPARE project. These studies demonstrate the way we work WITH partners to ensure research is used to support policy and practice.

“ *This year marks the 5th anniversary of the establishment of this research group. The team continues to grow and flourish – this year we welcomed three new PhD students and four new adjunct staff. And our research continues to have real-world impact.*

”

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We expanded our work into post-graduation education, with a new Graduate Certificate in Personal Injury in partnership with the Personal Injury Education Foundation. This is a key part of our commitment to supporting capacity building in our sector. Look out for more on the education front in 2023 and beyond.

We increased our communication and outreach substantially. This newsletter is part of that effort, but there were many seminars, events, workshops, conferences, publications, reports and discussions during the year. These engagements help keep our work connected to the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and organisations in our field. It has also been wonderful to see our staff and students advance their research careers. Sometimes this means promotion and new research endeavours, such as Dr Shannon Gray starting her prestigious Discovery Early Career Research Award (DECRA) fellowship in our team. Sometimes it means moving on, as is the case with Associate Professor Ross Iles who is moving to a research leadership role in industry as the year concludes. But either way it's an indication of success in supporting the careers of our staff.

On a personal note, I want to thank Ross for his enormous contributions to the team over the past 5 years, and acknowledge the important role he has played as Deputy Director. Ross has agreed to stay on in an Adjunct (Honorary) role and will remain involved in some of our work going forward.

I wish you all a happy and safe holiday season, and a productive start to 2023.

Alex



Introducing Our Team

Click [here](#)
to read
more about
our team



Our team works with diverse partners, across multiple disciplines and settings, and using a range of research methods. We design, conduct and translate research that has real-world impact.



Professor Alex Collie
Director



A/Professor Ross Iles
Deputy Director



Dr Shannon Gray
Senior Research Fellow



Dr Michael Di Donato
Research Fellow



Dr Daniel Griffiths
Research Fellow



Dr Elizabeth Pritchard
Research Fellow



Dr Asmare Gelaw
Research Fellow



Dr Caryn van Vreden
Project co-ord



Luke Sheehan
Research Officer



Kara Tyndall
Communications Manager



Rachel Osborne
Research Officer

Adjunct Staff

- Dr Tyler Lane, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow
- Dr Elizabeth Kilgour, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow
- Dr Yi-Lee Phang, Adjunct Research Fellow
- Dr Janine McMillan, Adjunct Research Fellow
- Dr Jimmy Twin, Adjunct Research Fellow
- Dr Sarah Oxford, Adjunct Research Fellow

Students

- Yonas Tefera, PhD Student
- Haimanot Abebe, PhD Student
- Kai Palihawadana, BMedSci (Hons) Student
- Hewett Ng, BMedSci (Hons) Student
- Seun Adenipekun, MPH student
- Preeti Maharjan, PhD Student

2022 at a glance



15 HWL led seminars with 1500+ registrations

12 reports



35 peer reviewed publications

26

Conference appearances



3 major new grants from the ARC & NHMRC

200+ media mentions



24

personnel



31 students in first post-grad course



30+ industry partners



Celebrated our 5th birthday!



1 x rebrand (we changed our name to Healthy Working Lives Research Group)

Flagship Research Projects

COMPARE Project

The COMPensation Policy And Return to work Effectiveness (COMPARE) project was established in 2014 to develop an evidence base that can support development and implementation of effective return to work policy in Australia.

The project adopts a comparative effectiveness methodology, comparing outcomes between jurisdictions and using sophisticated statistical techniques to identify policy settings that have positive, negative or neutral effects on return to work and duration of income replacement.

We also compare outcomes before and after changes in policy, such as amendments to workers' compensation legislation.

To date, the COMPARE project has produced over 10 reports and 19 peer-reviewed publications.

View our major research reports, presentations, and journal articles [here](#).

Driving Health

The Driving Health project is a 5-year study that aims to develop evidence-based strategies to improve the health of the Australian truck driver and characterise the physical and mental health of Australian truck drivers, and identify major areas of concern.

The study involved three main phases:

- Analysis of three large insurance claims databases that provided insight into the health conditions affecting transport workers ability to work.
- Collection of information directly from 2000 drivers themselves and their families through online and telephone surveys.
- Develop programs to improve health by integrating the findings from Reports 1-8 in the development of the Driving Health Allocator Training - an online training program targeted at managers with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of truck drivers.

To date, the study has released 10 papers and 5 peer-reviewed publications.

To read more about the Driving Health project click [here](#).



Flagship Research Projects

Transition Study

The first study in Australia and one of few globally to examine post-claim health service among people with accepted workers' compensation claims.

The Transitions study sought to answer the question "What happens to the health and welfare of workers with long duration claims after their workers compensation benefits stop?" and to specifically examine transitions from the workers compensation system to Centrelink.

We have found that many workers transition to Centrelink benefits after workers' compensation and that the patterns of healthcare use also change significantly.

So far the study has released 3 reports. You can read the reports and more about the Transition Study [here](#).

SMART Design for Care

This research aims to understand and improve workplace mental health and well-being in Australia's Healthcare and Social Assistance (H&SA) industry by developing evidence-based work design interventions to prevent psychological injury, which include but not limited to burnout and sustained work stress.

At the heart of SMART Design for Care is the prevention of psychological injury through good work design.

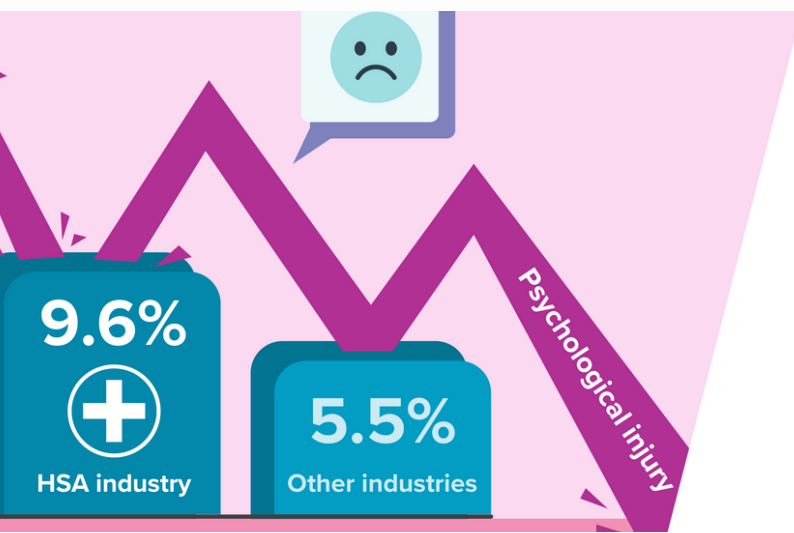
As part of the project we conducted a comprehensive analysis of NSW workers compensation claims data from 2010/11 to 2020/21, to examine the frequency, incidence, patterns and outcomes of psychological injury among distinct occupational groups in the HSA industry compared to workers in other industries.

So far one report has been released with more on the way. Read more about the SMART Design for Care project [here](#).

Design for Care is a collaborative research project led by Curtin University's Centre for Transformative Work Design in collaboration with University of Sydney, Monash University and a range of industry partner organisations, with funding support from icare NSW.

Workers' compensation claims for psychological injury are nearly twice as common among Healthcare and Social Assistance (HSA) industry workers in New South Wales (NSW) than workers in other industries.

SMART Design for Care Project



Flagship Research Projects

NHMRC funded Centre of Research Excellence: Better health outcomes after compensable injury

NHMRC's largest scheme, provides funding over five years for the highest performing researchers.

Led by the University of Queensland, Professor Alex Collie is a Chief Investigator of the CRE, which started this year.

The Centre of Research Excellence in Better Health Outcomes for Compensable Injury, funded by a \$2.5 million NHMRC grant, will address the urgent need to improve health outcomes for individuals with non-catastrophic road traffic injury through translational research, capacity building and end-user engagement focused on health, compensation and legal systems.

Read more [here](#).

Movement of Australians injured in road traffic accidents through the established benefits systems

One of our team members, Dr Shannon Gray was awarded with the Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Early Career Research Award (DECRA) to investigate the movement of Australians injured in road traffic accidents through the established benefits systems.

With the ultimate goal of reducing the road traffic crash burden in Australia, on individuals, their families, and on the nation's social support systems, the project will determine the impact of pre-claim social factors on compensation system outcomes including claim duration, benefits and costs, and the impact of compensation system design on claim and social outcomes of road traffic crash survivors.

Addressing an unmet need, this project will determine the impact of macro-level compensation system design on social and claim outcomes and allows identification of groups at higher risk for poor post-crash outcomes, in whom earlier identification and intervention can improve these, and potentially save the Australian economy \$300m annually.



Highlights of 2022



REAL WORLD IMPACT

It has been rewarding to see our research have real world impact. Some examples include:

Our Driving Health research prompted the launch of a [Nutrition Pilot Program](#) at BP for truck drivers.

Our experience in researching psychological injuries prompted [SIRA](#) to engage us to conduct a multi-stage intervention mapping project into prevention and management of psychological injury claims. as part of their mental health recovery and support action plan.



PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL INJURY SCHEME DESIGN SHORT COURSE

Our first ever Principles of Personal Injury Scheme Design nine-week short course wrapped up at the end of July with 31 participants.

We partnered with Personal Injury Education Foundation (PIEF) to deliver a unique postgraduate educational offering for people working in the workers' compensation and motor accident compensation industries in Australia, New Zealand and globally.



ARC DISCOVERY PROJECT GRANT

Professor Alex Collie has been awarded an Australian Research Council Discovery Project Grant for the project titled "Harnessing lived experience to redesign Australia's workers' compensation systems: A participatory modelling study".

The team will work with people that have lived experience of work disability to co-design a workers' compensation system that works for them. They'll evaluate the social and economic impacts of that system using agent-based modelling, and compare the lived experience model to the current approach.



2022 HWL SEMINAR SERIES

For the first time, our group hosted an online Seminar Series featuring events that disseminated key findings from the COMPARE project, Driving Health project and the Transition study.

The series was deemed a success with over 1500 people registering to attend, 24 guest speakers and 15 live seminars that are also available to view on-demand [here](#).

Media headlines



Read more media highlights from HWL



Injured workers at higher suicide risk

Risk of suicide elevated in people with workers' compensation claims, on long-term sick leave and receiving disability pensions.



New research has revealed teachers are more likely to be assaulted on the job compared to the average Australian worker. To discuss, @Rebecca7Maddern spoke with @DrTLane from @MonashUni. [7NEWS.com.au](https://www.7news.com.au) #7NEWS



News / Health

Deadly perils for truckies exposed in driver health study



By Mark Saunokonoko • Senior Journalist | 10:26am Nov 21, 2022

Monash University research finds poor truck driver health could cost Australia \$2.5 billion

National NSW Healthcare

'Tip of the iceberg': The jobs most at risk of psychological injury



One-third of workers 'at high risk of workplace injury or illness'

Researchers estimate between 25 and 36 per cent of workers are at high risk of future workplace injury or illness



Strong rebound after lockdown

Melbourne's 112-day lockdown increased psychological distress but the mental health of Victorians recovered within two months.



Physical boost for stood-down workers

Workers stood down during the pandemic had a short-term increase in their physical health.



Teachers' shock assault horror revealed

Teachers are being abused by parents and students at an alarming rate and are more likely to be assaulted than the average worker.

Contact us

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Websites:

Healthy Working Lives - Monash University
www.monash.edu/medicine/sphpm/units/healthy-working-lives-research-group

COMPARE Project
<https://www.monash.edu/medicine/compare-project>

Driving Health:
<https://drivinghealth.net/>

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