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icare employer toolkit supports NSW workplaces in COVID-19 recovery

icare has created a [COVID-19 Recovery Employer Toolkit](#) to support NSW businesses prepare and plan for a safe return to the workplace within the context of COVID-19.

During COVID-19 people may have experienced heightened emotional states such as feelings of isolation, anxiety or stress. The employer toolkit recognises this and offers practical steps to identify operational needs and protective strategies NSW workplaces can use in the current phase of the COVID-19 recovery.

icare Chief Executive Officer John Nagle said: "Following this unprecedented period of quarantine and social isolation, safely mobilising a sustainable workforce is critical to NSW's economic recovery post COVID-19".

"As employees begin to return to their workplaces, in what will most likely be a phased transition, icare is dedicated to supporting the workforce sustainability and smooth reintegration of employees to the workplace".

"Our COVID-19 Recovery Employer Toolkit provides employers with clear guidance on how to identify risks and implement best practice within the new working environment to create better mental and physical health outcomes for the people of NSW," Mr Nagle said.

The icare COVID-19 Recovery Employer Toolkit identifies the top three areas business leaders and employers can focus on to help their employees feel safe in transitioning to the new work environment:

- Good leadership
- Consistent and clear communication
- Best practice support

The COVID-19 Recovery Employer Toolkit was based on icare's research team's report: *"The effects of public health events (epidemics and pandemics) on workforce sustainability",* which is also available on icare's website.

The report, which outlines the findings of a literature review of 70 papers from the past 100 years of epidemics, pandemics and crisis situations, provides insights into the potential mid to long-term effects of COVID-19.

"Our pandemics research report identifies the key factors that impacted people over the past 100 years of epidemics, pandemics and crisis situations, so we could model how COVID-19 is likely to affect workers today and in the future," Mr Nagle said.

The findings of the research report provide insights into psychological wellbeing and trends in the consequences of health, social, economic and policy impacts.

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Key highlights from the findings include:

1. Each person's experience of COVID-19 will be unique but most people will go through a four-phased recovery process:
   - Pre-return to the workplace
   - Immediate return to the workplace
   - Mid-term
   - Long-term

2. In reintroducing people back to the workplace it is recommended employers ensure they deliver:
   - Good leadership
   - Timely and accurate information
   - Evidence-based best practice support

3. There is a likelihood there may be psychological consequences for employees (even those working from home during physical distancing) with some evidence suggesting frontline workers may be impacted more, so it is important to be aware of, and mitigate risks with strategies such as planning and preparedness, clarity of information, good leadership and recognition of the efforts of staff.

icare's COVID-19 Recovery Employer Toolkit is provided in addition to, not as a replacement to the national COVID-19 Safe Workplace principles, which operate subject to the measures agreed and implemented by Governments through the National Cabinet process.

Ends.

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