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## **icare funds national study tracking Australian workforce changes throughout COVID-19 pandemic**

Insurance and Care (icare) NSW, which provides workers insurance to more than 325,000 businesses across the state, is investing in stage one of a long-term Monash University study to track the employment and health outcomes for Australians who have lost work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The [COVID-19 Work and Health Study](#) will run over 12 – 24 months to compare two groups of people – those who have lost their jobs and those who have less work but are still employed.

icare Head of Research Associate Professor Caroline Howe said understanding the impact of changes COVID-19 has had on people's work and health would be critical for future prevention and return-to-work strategies for employers across the nation.

"Work loss and its associated financial distress is likely to have a major impact on mental and physical health. Likewise, unemployment and underemployment are going to have major impacts on the people who remain in the NSW workforce," Assoc. Prof Howe said.

"The best injury is one that never happens, and icare's continued focus on prevention is at the core of helping businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic and our support for the survey."

[icare Foundation](#) is investing \$500,000 in the first stage of the COVID-19 Work and Health Study, which is being carried out by the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University.

The university's Professor Alex Collie who is leading the nation-wide study said this investment by icare Foundation would enable the study to enrol more people and track them over a longer period of time. This will deliver richer insights to help contribute to better outcomes in the road to recovery.

"In addition to looking at individuals' health and work status, our research will document changes in the way people work during and after COVID-19, and the impacts these changes have on health, safety and productivity," he said.

"The research will enable us to identify the industries, employers and workers who are more impacted during and after the pandemic, which is critical for targeting effective intervention strategies."

The study will also produce insights into people's coping strategies, use of health services and help-seeking for mental health concerns during the pandemic.

The research will enable icare to receive regular insights about changes in the way people work and the impact these have on workplace health and safety, as well as return to work. It will also track the health and work outcomes of Australians who have become unemployed or lost work during the COVID-19 pandemic and identify factors that support return to work.

“This wealth of rich data and information will help inform icare’s support for NSW businesses and bolster workforce sustainability as we recover from the COVID-19 global pandemic,” Assoc. Prof Howe said.

**ENDS**

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