

Workplace Health: The Injuries of Neoliberalism

Edited by Toni Schofield

School of Behavioural and Community Health Sciences

The University of Sydney

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The Coalition's proposed Industrial Relations changes will entrench values, principles and practices of an aggressive new liberalism in Australian workplaces, in both public and private sectors. The working lives of most Australians and the conditions under which they work may be radically altered as a consequence. One of the major but largely unmentioned casualties of IR reforms is their likely injury to workers' health and well-being.

Dr Toni Schofield, Editor

Workplace Health and Neoliberalism – a call to action

Mounting difficulties in employment injury prevention and management are indicated for workplaces with neoliberal health and safety policies. In fact, emerging research suggests the possibility of an impending occupational health crisis. Major 'reforms' in public management of occupational health and safety, employment injury and fatality and workers' compensation, over the past decade, have encouraged corporate disregard and disrespect for workplace, employee and community health.

This work provides an invaluable update and analysis of neoliberal workplace health legislation, OH&S, workers' compensation and IR case law, 'self regulation' and their HR workplace impacts.

Workplace Health and Neo-liberalism draws on cases and subjects from Australia and the UK:

The evolution of Workers' Compensation policy in Australia – **Kevin Purse**

From industrial citizen to therapeutic client: the 1987 Workers' Compensation 'reforms' in NSW – **Kate O'Loughlin**

Injured workers' experiences of the workers' compensation claims process: institutional disrespect and the neoliberal state – **Margarita Parrish and Toni Schofield**

The time of their lives? Academic workers in neoliberal time(s) – **Bronwyn Davies and Peter Bansel**

'My way or the highway': managerial prerogative, the labour process and workplace health – **Dennis McIntyre**

The neoliberal state and the gendered prosecution of work injury – **Suzanne Jamieson**

Rehabilitation of workers with musculoskeletal injury and chronic pain – **Lyn Guy and Stephanie Short**

Restructuring and the production of occupational stressors in a corporatised ambulance service – **Kerry Mahony**

Structural interventions in the Australian economy and workplace since the 1990s have irrevocably changed the lives of working Australians. Casualized working conditions, holiday & sick leave and rates of pay have resulted from 'de-unionization' and contract employment beyond legislative safety.

A central impact of neoliberal policy has been the retreat by business and governments from ensuring that workplaces do not kill or maim workers. Injury management schemes now also fail to recognize injured workers as citizens with rights to dignified, compassionate and appropriate treatment. Several articles in this collection identify **strategies for addressing the effects of neo-liberal governance and management that involve collective industrial and political action.**

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Workplace Health and Neoliberalism

Edited by Toni Schofield, University of Sydney

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