Safe Work Australia report shows why right to disconnect is so important

Safe Work Australia has just released it *Psychological health and safety in the workplace* report, which outlines some startling statistics.

The report reveals that:

- Hi Work-related mental health issues continue to rise, with a 36.9% increase since 2018
- 57.8% of all mental health conditions were reported by women.
- The median time lost and compensation paid for mental health conditions were more than 4 times greater than that of all injuries and illnesses.
- Workers with claims for mental health conditions reported poorer return to work outcomes and were more likely to report stigma from colleagues and their employers.

The report also suggests that the higher number of mental health conditions that are reported by women can in part be attributed to the industries that have a higher percentage of women workers, namely health care and social assistance and public administration and safety. These professions sit at the top the list as the sectors exhibiting the highest cases of serious mental stress, workplace bullying, work pressures and exposure to workplace or occupational violence.

Earlier this month, the government passed a 'right to disconnect' law, empowering employees to ignore unreasonable communication from their employer outside of their work hours.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien:

"Work-related mental health conditions are the fastest growing injury or illness in Australian workplaces and more needs to be done to make work mentally safe.

"This report shows us that work pressures, accounting for 1 in 4 claims, is having an adverse effect on people's mental health. This is why the right to disconnect is so important. Establishing clear boundaries to separate work and the rest of our lives is important for reducing burnout and ensuring all of us can spend quality time with our loved ones.

"Peter Dutton's decision to scrap the right to disconnect will says he intends to scrap the right to disconnect will have real life consequences for workers. If we are serious about improving the nations mental health these workplace safeguards are critical to reducing work pressure and minimising work stress."

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A copy of the report can be found here: https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/media-centre/media-release/new-report-psychological-health-australian-workplaces

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