

## Health and rehabilitation achievement (individual) – Mary Saloniklis

Anyone who meets Mary Saloniklis immediately notices the passion with which she goes about her work. A rehabilitation provider for the past 22 years, and director of her own company, MSVS Consultancy, Mary provides service to injured workers across South Australia. She helps them find innovative solutions and education programs to improve their return to work journey.

Over the past year Mary has personally helped 45 injured workers get back into the workforce and her company has assisted another 180 people get back into work. In addition to this, as professional development manager supervising other workplace rehabilitation providers, she has assisted 94 people return to work during the past year.

Mary uses a biopsychosocial approach to injured worker return to work planning. She takes the time to listen to concerns and work out solutions to issues.

She examines the barriers to return to work and is developing a model to assist with diminishing these barriers. This model looks at communication in the workplace as it relates to supervisors, teaching them how to foster open communication between them and their staff.

She is a strong advocate of Dr Richard Pimentel (well known disability and return to work advocate) and has negotiated the rights to use his 'Windmills' program which helps transform attitudes to people with disabilities in her work.

In addition, she has developed a peer support program to assist injured workers with attitudinal healing. Mary meets with supervisors and managers to educate them on the importance of communication and attitudes in the workplace and their relationship to the recovery and return to work of an injured worker.

One injured nurse was fearful of what her colleagues and managers would think of her returning to work on a graduated work program. Mary liaised with colleagues and managers to explain the reasons for the graduated return to work and this gave them a better understanding of the situation. In turn they showed empathy to the injured worker. The injured worker was able to complete her graduated return to work and is now back in her pre-injury role doing pre-injury hours.

Another example is an injured worker who mistook a supervisor's comment. The worker was deemed severely depressed and unfit for work. Through coordinating a meeting with the supervisor, together with the rehabilitation and return to work coordinator, Mary was able to discuss the worker's fears. Together they formulated a plan, consulted with the injured worker, and worked together to ensure the worker returned to work with ease and dignity.

Mary is in constant contact with case managers to ensure workers' needs are being met and that programs for return to work are being implemented and acted upon. She is always looking for areas for improvement and ways she can assist injured workers and the rehabilitation industry to continuously improve the way rehabilitation is undertaken within the South Australian Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Scheme.

She has partnered with the Job Bureau to help organisations prevent workplace injuries and to be proactive with injury claims management. Using the JobFit System, software that compares worker capabilities to job demands, she is able to help employers make decisions about job placement, suitable duties, health monitoring and other risk management activities.

Mary enjoys a reputation for excellence within the workers compensation arena.

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### WorkCoverSA

100 Waymouth Street, Adelaide South Australia 5000

General enquiries: 13 18 55

Fax: (08) 8233 2290

Email: [info@workcover.com](mailto:info@workcover.com)

Website: [www.workcover.com](http://www.workcover.com)

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