

SPEAKOUT

THE MAGAZINE FOR AUSTRALIAN SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS

DECEMBER 2023



**LONG-TIME
PRACTITIONER
CONTINUES TO
LOVE HER WORK**

Lynette Lloyd

Speechie Library
Talks 2023 wrap up

New graduate
mentoring program



Speech
Pathology
Australia

NEW YEAR'S TIPS FOR PRACTICE OWNERS

To navigate the festive season and ensure a smooth start to the new year, our HR/IR partner **WorkPlacePLUS** has compiled some HR reminders for speech pathology practice owners:

CLOSING YOUR PRACTICE OVER THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

You must follow applicable rules and obligations outlined in the Health Professionals and Support Services Award, National Employment Standards and the *Fair Work Act*. This includes providing your staff with at least 1–2 months' reasonable notice of any compulsory shutdown period, with directions to take a period of paid annual leave.

The exception to this rule is when you already have a clause in the employment contract indicating that your practice has a compulsory shutdown period over the Christmas holidays. However, providing a written reminder is still best practice.

If an employee does not have enough accrued annual leave, they may agree in writing to take leave without pay (leave in advance can be agreed but it's not best practice), but you cannot direct them to take leave without pay. If the employee does not agree, they may be entitled to wages during the shutdown period.

Remember to protect your assets over the shutdown period. For example, make sure your IT systems are backed up and secure, and turn off any equipment that won't be needed. For equipment that will be needed, ensure that it has been serviced and the power supply is backed up. Check that your security and emergency procedures are in place.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY PAY RATES AND ENTITLEMENTS

Review your obligations regarding pay rates and entitlements over public holidays. Your award or enterprise agreement will outline what employees should be paid when working on a public holiday. Public holidays can be different depending on the state or territory you work in. Refer to this [Fair Work web page](#) to confirm which public holiday days apply over the Christmas period in your jurisdiction. Also, don't forget to check the [2024 public holidays](#) to ensure you are paying the correct rates and entitlements over new year's and Australia Day.

PREPARING FOR 2024

The down time after Christmas is a great opportunity to review your workplace practices. This is important to ensure that you are meeting your employment obligations, preventing risks and operating smoothly into the new year. For example, consider doing some planning, reviewing and auditing in the following areas:

- **Payroll** - Review employee records, timesheets, and any outstanding leave balances to ensure accuracy. Verify that all employees have been paid correctly, including any bonuses or incentives. If you identify any discrepancies, fix these as a matter of priority. Read more [advice on how to fix overpayment and underpayment of wages](#).
- **Employment contracts and policies** - Ensure that all contractual arrangements and workplace policies are up to date, compliant with relevant legislation, and reflect any changes in employment terms or conditions. [Access WorkPlacePLUS's 2023 compliance checklist for employers here](#).
- **Performance reviews and goal setting** - The end of the year can be a good time to conduct performance reviews with your employees. This allows you to give and receive feedback, recognise achievements, and set goals, while fostering a culture of open and honest communication in your speech pathology practice.

As you reflect, plan, and prepare for the upcoming year, we hope these HR tips will help you rest assured that you are meeting your employer obligations. If you have any questions or require more detailed or tailored information, it is advisable to seek professional advice, whether this be through the [Fair Work Ombudsman, the WHS authority in your jurisdiction](#), or an HR consultancy that works closely with the allied health sector such as [WorkPlacePLUS](#).

All SPA members receive special member benefits through WorkPlacePLUS for support with HR and IR issues. For more information, contact Anna on (03) 9492 0958 or visit www.WorkPlacePLUS.com.au.

WORKPLACEPLUS HOLIDAY HOURS

OPEN:

Monday 18 December–Thursday 21 December

CLOSED:

Friday 22 December–Friday 5 January

OPEN (Skeleton Staff):

Monday 8 January–Friday 19 January

OPEN:

Monday 22 January onwards.

Anna Pannuzzo
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