

SPEAKOUT

THE MAGAZINE FOR AUSTRALIAN SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS

DECEMBER 2022

ACU 2022 YOUNG
ALUMNI OF THE YEAR
AWARD WINNER
OLIVIA RAYNER



Olivia Rayner

New Collaboration:
Delegated care - speech
pathology students
working as AHA's

Unsure of what to expect
on Rural Placement?
Q&A with a speech
pathology student



Speech
Pathology
Australia

PREPARING YOUR PRACTICE FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

At this time of year, it's important for practice owners to plan ahead for a smooth transition into the New Year.

Here are some of the key workplace factors to consider with preparing your practice for the festive season.

END OF YEAR WORK PARTIES

Even if your Christmas party is held at an off-site venue or outside of normal work hours, it is still legally considered a workplace. Practice owners should take proactive measures to mitigate the risks associated with work functions, such as:

- ensuring ahead of time that your staff know the practice guidelines and expectations around behaviour and alcohol consumption, including reviewing your code of conduct
- establishing and regularly reviewing your policies and procedures, including your prevention and response to WHS risks and managing serious workplace incidents
- checking the venue for safety hazards including COVIDSafe compliance
- limiting the amount of alcohol being served and ensuring your staff are not intoxicated
- providing suitable transport to ensure everyone gets home safely.

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE AND ANNUAL LEAVE REQUIREMENTS

Some private practices may close during the festive season and require their staff to take annual leave during this time. The Fair Work Ombudsman considers directions to take annual leave 'reasonable' when the employees are not covered by an award or agreement. However, if your employees are covered by an award or an agreement, you will need to check the relevant provisions.

Practice owners must provide staff with a minimum of one month's notice of your closure period, including any requirements for staff to take annual leave. Make sure you check your award or enterprise agreement regarding what employees should be paid when working on a public holiday.

Tip: Monitor your staff's annual leave balances at regular intervals throughout the year. Not taking accrued annual leave can be hazardous to the health and safety of employees, and excessive accrued annual leave balances can represent a significant financial liability for practice owners.

While the Fair Work Act doesn't define how much leave is 'excessive', **greater than 4 weeks** can be used as a general guide. It is important for practice owners to be familiar with the rules around annual leave entitlements and, ideally, be able to come to an agreement with employees around managing leave balances.



SKELETON STAFF

Some practices continue to operate over the Christmas/New Year period. In this case, practice owners should prepare by:

- finalising staff rosters including any extra arrangements needed for contract workers
- clarifying accountabilities including who will have building access during this period
- providing updated emergency contact information
- planning ahead for any financial transactions or admin procedures that may be needed during the closure period.

PROTECTING YOUR ASSETS

If your practice will be closed for an extended period, make sure you check all security and emergency procedures, ensure your IT systems are backed up, and turn off any equipment that won't be needed. For equipment that will be needed, ensure that it has been serviced.

If you need help preparing your practice for the festive season, you can contact 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.

Anna Pannuzzo



WorkPlace|PLUS

