

# A Guide to Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace



# A Guide to Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace

These pages have been designed to provide both businesses and workers around the ACT with guidance on how to promote and implement physical activity and wellbeing initiatives within their workplaces.

The guide includes recommendations aimed at helping employers and workplace professionals to prevent the diseases that may be associated with a lack or insufficiency of physical activity.

The site also examines the background to workplace health and wellbeing, the financial and corporate reasons for investing in such programs and the outstanding benefits that can be gained from implementing a workplace health and wellbeing program.

This guide will provide you with information on how to develop a program suitable for your organisation or business. You will find that workplace health and wellbeing initiatives can range from simple programs requiring minimal resources to more detailed programs supported by substantial resources.

**NOTE:** Refer to the web-based version of this guide on our website at [www.worksafety.act.gov.au](http://www.worksafety.act.gov.au) for any internal weblinks that may not be accessible from this PDF version.

# A Message from the Commissioner

Half of the ACT adult population do not undertake sufficient physical activity to meet current National Physical Activity Guidelines of thirty minutes of moderate physical activity on 5 or more days of the week. Evidence shows that physical activity levels vary according to age and gender. Women tend to be less physically active than men, older people tend to be less physically active than younger people and levels also vary according to socioeconomic class and ethnicity.

Adequate physical activity is essential for good health, assisting in the prevention and management of over 20 health conditions and diseases and promoting mental wellbeing. The trend of increasing levels of sedentary has resulted in a rise in public overweight and obesity and serious health related conditions such as heart and circulatory disease, the diabetes epidemic, some cancers and depression.

The decline in the general health and well-being of the population is cause for tremendous concern. The impact is being felt in workplaces across the ACT, through reduced productivity, high stress levels, poor job satisfaction, increased sickness and absence and high staff turnover.

The direct health care cost of physical inactivity nationally is over \$7 billion per annum. With spiralling health costs, major state and national skill shortages, and an ageing population, it is clear that ACT workplaces need to take the promotion of health and wellbeing very seriously.

With the average working person spending around 25 per cent of their week at work; it makes good sense to tackle the decline in the general health and well-being of the population in the work setting.

This interactive resource has been designed to provide organisations, and in particular employees, around the ACT with a guide for promoting and implementing physical activity and wellbeing initiatives within their workplaces. The site

includes recommendations aimed to help employers and workplace health professionals prevent the diseases associated with a lack of physical activity. The site also examines the background of workplace health and wellbeing, the financial and corporate reasons for investing in such programs and the outstanding benefits that can be gained from implementing a workplace health and wellbeing program.

This resource will provide you with information on how to develop a program suitable for your individual organisation. You will find that workplace health and wellbeing initiatives can range from simple programs requiring minimal resources to more detailed programs supported by substantial resourcing.

Along with an identified process to develop a program, this site features a range of resources, case studies and some great examples of workplaces that have begun health and wellbeing programs. These workplaces are now reaping the many physical, economic and social benefits enjoyed by an active and healthy workforce.

I encourage you to take advantage of this great resource and to take the challenge to promote health and wellbeing in your workplace.

# 1. Your Bottom Line

The increasing demands of modern life have eroded our standards of health and wellbeing. Gradually, we have become victim to competing demands, both at home and at work. The cost of this kind of lifestyle to our health and wellbeing has been profound on all levels.

The direct cost of poor health is reflected through workplace injury and disease. This alarming situation is played out in workplaces across the ACT and represents an enormous cost to individuals, employers, families, communities and our economy.

A survey conducted by Medibank Private 2005 on the Health of Australia's Workforce found:

- 10 per cent of Australian workers are inactive
- 40 per cent of Australian workers do minimal exercise
- 46 per cent of Australian workers live on high fat diets
- 62 per cent of Australian workers are overweight
- 28 per cent of Australian workers are obese
- 53 per cent of Australian workers felt overwhelmed with stress and pressure for a significant proportion of the time
- 56 per cent of Australian workers are participating in risky behaviours (including smoking, drinking and lack of sun protection) at medium to high-risk levels
- More than half of Australian workers do not get enough sleep
- Employees with poor overall health status take up to 9 times more sick leave than their healthy colleagues.
- Healthy employees are nearly 3 times more productive than employees with poor health

- The financial cost of poor health and wellbeing is estimated at over \$7 billion per year, nationally.

Changes to the way we work are contributing to inactive lifestyles and unhealthy living. Our workplaces have become increasingly sedentary. Labour-saving technology has significantly reduced the physical effort required, even for occupations that were traditionally very physical. The extension of this inactivity beyond the workplace is also a major reason for our increasingly inactive lifestyles.

- jobs today are significantly less physical and workers often sit for long periods of time in front of computers
- the range of leisure time options are more often than not inactive activities, such as watching television or movies
- people are often working long hours in mentally and physically demanding positions
- many workers have limited leisure-time during the working week
- it is common in many families for both parents to be employed outside the home, which results in an emphasis on doing domestic activities outside of work hours
- many people hold down more than one part-time job.

The sedentary nature of work and our increasingly inactive lifestyles are also compounded by the growth in consumption of fast foods and general life stresses. The result is a negative impact on our health and wellbeing.

## **Occupational Health and Safety Legislation**

Work Safety legislation aims to:

- promote a safe and healthy work environment for people at work
- foster cooperation and consultation between employers and workers
- protect employees from injury and illness
- provide for the physical and psychological needs of

employees

- secure and promote work safety of people at work
- eliminate, at their source, risks to work safety whether of people at work or others
- protect people from risks resulting from the activities of people at work
- foster cooperation and consultation between organisations representing employers and workers
- provide a framework for continuous improvement and progressively higher standards of work safety.

The Work Safety ACT 2008 states that work safety, of people, means the health, safety and wellbeing of people in relation to work.

Under this legislation the health of workers is, in fact, a legal duty of care for employers. Your health and wellbeing program will assist by contributing to these legal responsibilities.

### **The Workplace Impact**

The increase in preventable disease and workplace injury, resulting from unhealthy living and low levels of physical activity, are a major cause of workplace absence and disruption in today's workforce.

Across Australia, increases in the prevalence of degenerative disease and the ageing population have heightened the need to change lifestyle behaviours and increase physical activity levels. With most adults spending at least half of their life working it makes good sense to consider this environment as an important setting for promoting health and wellbeing change.

### **The Australian Perspective**

The National Health Survey (NHS) conducted in 2004-05, found:

- 70% of Australians aged 15 years and over were classified as sedentary or having low exercise levels.
- Of these 70%, just under half (48%) recorded no or very little exercise in the previous two weeks and were

classified as sedentary while 52% recorded a low level of exercise.

A study undertaken by Medibank Private revealed that the "...healthiest Australian workers are almost three times more productive than their unhealthy colleagues."

<b>COMPARISON OF THE AUSTRALIAN WORKER</b>	
<b>Unhealthy:</b>	<b>Healthy:</b>
<i>- 18 days annual sick leave</i>	<i>- 2 days sick leave</i>
<i>- Self-rated performance 3.7 out of 10</i>	<i>- Self-rated performance of 8.5 out of 10</i>
<i>- 49 effective hours worked (full-time) per month</i>	<i>- 143 effective hours worked (full-time) per month</i>
<i>- High fat diet</i>	<i>- Healthy diet</i>
<i>- Low energy levels and poor concentration</i>	<i>- Fit, energetic and alert</i>
<i>- Obese or overweight</i>	<i>- Normal body weight</i>
<i>- Irregular sleep patterns</i>	<i>- More attentive at work and better sleep patterns</i>
<i>- Poor stress management techniques</i>	<i>- Actively manage stress levels</i>

### **The Australian Capital Territory Perspective**

Canberra is, on the whole, a highly educated community. The results of the 2000 National Physical Activity Survey suggest that this translates into a heightened awareness of the issues surrounding physical activity. Along with being better informed, results also indicate that Canberrans' are more likely to be active participants in physical activity than our interstate counterparts.

The 2000 National Physical Activity Survey, found:

- 52% of all ACT adults participated in physical activity for a 'sufficient' time, and in 'sufficient' sessions, to meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines.
- that participation at a 'sufficient' level was most

common amongst those who had a tertiary education.

- 24% of ACT adults surveyed were undertaking some form of physical activity, but not enough to be considered 'sufficient', in terms of time spent, to be beneficial to their health.
- 13% of ACT adults reported undertaking no leisure-time physical activities and were classified as 'sedentary' according to the survey definitions.
- that the percentage of ACT adults engaged in activity for an 'insufficient' time and sedentary behaviour increased with age.
- that the number of ACT adults classified as sedentary decreased with increasing education levels.

Although results show that Canberra adults are more active than the rest of the Nation we can not afford to rest on our laurels. The impact of poor health and wellbeing is being felt in workplaces across the ACT, through reduced productivity, high stress levels, poor job satisfaction, increased sickness and high staff turnover. With an ageing population, major state and national skill shortages and spiralling health costs, it is clear that ACT workplaces will need to take the promotion of health and wellbeing very seriously.

Canberra has an enviable wealth of facilities and infrastructure to support people taking on physical activity and we need to make sure that we are putting those to good use. We also need to work to reduce smoking, improve nutrition and address unhealthy alcohol consumption, as well as encouraging physical activity. It's time to combine our knowledge with our fantastic facilities and beautiful environment to put the ACT in the very top echelon of active Australian cities.

### **Exploring the Benefits of Corporate Wellness**

The impact of overall poor health and wellbeing is being felt in workplaces across the ACT. With most adults spending at least half of their life working it makes good sense to consider this environment as an important setting to address health and wellbeing issues.

Employee morale and stress in the workforce as well as lifestyle risk factors such as smoking, drinking, lack of physical

activity and excess weight all contribute significantly to high absenteeism, sick leave and high staff turnover.

Evidence confirms that workers who are moderately to extremely obese, have increased health – related absenteeism and reduced productivity on the job compared with other workers. This finding has led to a new word, presenteeism meaning the days workers are at work but performing at less than full capacity. Presenteeism is increasingly being viewed as an important contributor to costs related to employee health.

To address major health concerns, we must focus on the underlying causes. The role of prevention is recognised, both within the workplace and outside, as a key to reducing disease and injury. As a primary element in any such prevention, the promotion of positive, healthy lifestyles and initiatives which both encourage and support this lifestyle have been recognised as fundamental to reducing a range of chronic health conditions.

Many employers are now recognising their social obligation to their workforce and are becoming increasingly engaged in assisting workers manage their health and wellbeing.

Employers across the ACT are motivated not only by their social responsibility but also to improve business performance. They are recognising the importance of health and wellbeing to productivity and profitability. Like their counterparts, both internationally and in other states of Australia, they can see that the road to improved workplace health and wellbeing is one that delivers greater job satisfaction, reduced staff-related costs, less absenteeism, reduced staff turnover, higher individual productivity and, ultimately higher profits.

Promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace makes good business sense. Businesses benefit by a more positive workplace culture, healthy, happy and balanced workers and reduced economic costs.

National and international studies provide compelling evidence supporting the value of workplace health and wellbeing initiatives. This evidence supports the impact such initiatives are having on physical, mental and social wellbeing amongst workers.

An Examination of Australian Workplaces found:

- Organisations which implement health promotion

strategies in the workplace can reduce their workers health risk factors by up to 56%.

- Productivity gains of up to 15% can be achieved by upgrading the workplace environment.
- The average worker is up to 7% less productive because of their health risks.

**BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE INCLUDE:**

- increased productivity
- improved staff health and wellbeing
- staff who feel valued
- increased staff morale, satisfaction and motivation
- decreased stress and other work-related illness
- reduced sick leave
- fewer worker's compensation claims
- reduced worker turnover
- increased return on training and development investment
- improved corporate citizenship and image
- increased ability to attract new employees
- improved industrial relations
- improved alertness and concentration among staff
- reduced risk of accidents
- reduced long term health problems
- reduced health-related litigation

"Lifestyle 'risk' factors such as smoking, drinking, lack of physical activity and excess weight contribute to time away from work. Worker morale and stress in the workforce contribute to absenteeism and sick leave."

The relationship between workers health and wellbeing and workplace performance sends a clear message to employers

that the health and wellbeing of their workforce is a critical ingredient in management and business success. Management has a unique opportunity to create a culture at work that supports and encourages such initiatives.

Can you afford NOT to invest in the health and wellbeing of your workforce?

### **Health and Wellbeing Initiatives in ACT Workplaces**

Many organisations in the ACT have already recognised the benefits of promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace. Like their international counterparts, these workplaces are providing supportive, coordinated, encouraging environments and initiatives designed to promote positive and healthy lifestyle behaviours.

By doing so, ACT workplaces are playing a major role in the prevention of chronic disease and benefiting from a reduction in workplace absenteeism, increased productivity and a more positive workplace and community culture.

The Canberra Institute of Technology, in association with Creative Safety Initiatives, developed a training suite for their building and construction industry apprentices. The intention of the training suite was to help fully prepare apprentices for the challenges of working in a difficult and stressful industry. Training included drug and alcohol awareness for first year apprentices. Sun Smart and nutrition training was provided for all second year apprentices. OHS responsibilities and fatigue management training was considered important for third year apprentices.

The PCA People Wellness Program, developed collaboratively with management and staff in 2008, took a multifaceted approach to wellbeing. The program was designed to inspire, engage and motivate workers enabling them to make positive behavioural changes to improve their individual health and lifestyles, both in and beyond the workplace. The program consisted of monthly themes related to health and wellbeing including massage, Tai Chi, work/home lifestyle balance, flu vaccinations, heart health screening and many more.

The Wellness Program has become an integral element of the change process in the organisation. Since the program's introduction, PCA People have noted an 80% improvement in staff retention. Workers also reported that they are generally

happier and healthier and this has impacted positively on the general health and happiness of their families.

### **Australian Companies Committed to implementing Health and Wellbeing Initiatives**

Woolworths Supermarkets are proud of their safety record. They are committed to protecting the safety, health and welfare of their workers, customers, contractors, visitors and the community.

In 2007, Woolworths launched their wellness program Destination ZERO. This program clearly demonstrates the company's commitment to their goal of zero harm to people, property and the environment. To achieve this goal, Woolworths believe each individual has an important role to play. Their vision is for people at all levels of the organisation to be passionate about their own safety and the safety of others. Woolworths are also striving to ensure that safety is an integral part of the way business is performed and not simply a separate issue. [Click here to read more about Woolworths safety initiatives.](#)

**Zinifex Rosebery mine**, located on the west coast of Tasmania, was joint winner of the 2006 Tasmanian Workplace Safe Awards – Best Workplace Health and Wellbeing Program.

Zinifex Rosebery mines found:

- 42% of all their workplace injuries were musculo-skeletal.
- Absenteeism amounted to 10% of all their labour costs.

The organisation implemented a holistic approach to promoting healthy lifestyle choices involving the local community.

“The workplace was transformed in terms of health interest and knowledge and the holistic approach witnessed the active involvement of spouses, families, schools and the local community.”

Reference: Case Study – Zinifex, Rosebery Mine.

In feedback, the **Tasmanian Department of Police and**

**Emergency Management** highlighted their stimulus for establishing a health and wellbeing program: "If you're not genuinely concerned about the health and wellbeing of your employees and invest energy into the whole person, you may get compliance but not commitment." Reference: Case Study – Tasmanian Department of Police and Emergency Management.

A Tasmanian call centre reported that their program was instrumental in reducing 'lost-time injury-frequency' by 50%. Reference: Case Study – Call Centre

A shift in corporate philosophy that embraces health and wellbeing will lay a foundation for success. Such a philosophy is underlined by the following principles:

- an organisation's most precious resource is its people
- concern and care for the health of people is a key to business success
- worker health is an integral part of the business and is built on the belief that all injuries and most illnesses are preventable
- healthy workers contribute significantly to an organisation's competitive position
- a company with healthy workers will impact positively on its community and customers
- optimal worker health is consistent with business excellence
- people adopt values that are emphasised by their organisational leaders
- every worker at every level has responsibility for creating a healthy work environment and promoting healthy lifestyles.

### **Health and Safety Awards**

The emerging importance of workplace health and wellbeing programs is highlighted by awareness and award programs such as:

- Safe Work ACT Awards
- National Safe Work Australia Awards
- The Employer of Choice Awards
- Defence Safety Awards Program
- International Day for Health and Safety at Work
- Blue Scope Steel, Zero Harm Awards
- Woolworths, Destination Zero Awards.

An important category of the ACT Safe Work Awards is The Best Workplace Health and Safety Management System Award. This award recognises demonstrated commitment to continuous improvement of workplace health and safety through the implementation of an integrated systems approach.

Blackett Homes developed a comprehensive and effective AS4801 compliant OHS management system. The system was developed in full consultation with workers and management and received the active support of Matrix Compliance Management. Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner accreditation was achieved, within three months from start to finish with no corrective actions required.

Blackett Homes and Matrix Compliance Management received recognition for the successful development and implementation of their OHS management system by winning The Best Workplace Health and Safety Management System Award in 2008.

Blackett Homes and Matrix Compliance Management Best Workplace Health and Safety Management System Award Winners - 2008.

Positive outcomes of the implementation of the OHS management system for Blakett Homes include:

- heightened awareness of OHS in the organisation.
- improvements in the safety practices of the subcontractors used by Blakett Homes.

- significantly increased communication and consultation.
- reduction in the frequency of incidents both on sites and in the office.

[Click here for further information on ACT Safe Work Awards](#)

BlueScope Steel's inaugural Zero Harm Awards were launched in 2006. Nominations for the awards were made by Occupational Health and Safety representatives across the business. Awards were presented to teams, individuals, departments, sites and whole countries in reward and recognition of achievements made in the journey toward Zero Harm. The Zero Harm awards are now an important annual event at BlueScope Steel.

[Click here for other examples of the many initiatives undertaken by BlueScope Steel.](#)

2006 was also a year of recognition in safety excellence for BlueScope Steel with the company receiving awards for their operations in Indonesia, the United States and Australia. The Australian Steel Institute National Health and Safety Excellence Awards are designed to recognise and encourage excellence in safety performance and programs.

Mike Robertson, BlueScope Steel's Engineering Manager, Logistics and International Trade Services, won the Individual Award at the Australian Steel Institute's 2006 Safety Excellence Awards. Mike received this award in recognition for his work in the field of load restraint and transport safety.

BlueScope Steel's Queensland Logistics Terminal also received a high commendation in the Site Award category for excellent safety performance, site transformation and improved safety culture.

The Logistics Technical Services team also received a high commendation in the Improvement Initiative Award for its "Carlson Corners" rail load restraint, improving the restraint of painted coils when shipped by rail.

BlueScope Steel Indonesia was presented with a Zero Accident National Award in acknowledgment of their business' safe workplace and outstanding safety performance.

The national award recognised BlueScope Steel Indonesia's

achievement of 1,365 days or 3.1 million hours without a lost time injury (LTI) for workers and contractors during the period 4 February 2002 to 30 November 2005.

Refer to the Resources section for further information on awards.

Click here to read more about BlueScope Steel's comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety Management System

## **Resource Management**

Attraction and retention of staff is a critical issue for ACT organisations facing skill shortages or looking to engage the best staff. Build your reputation as an employer focused on the health and wellbeing of your staff and you will benefit from the retention and engagement of high quality workers that want to work in an environment that is interested in their health and wellbeing. As an employer that encourages health and wellbeing you will not only stand out as an employer of choice, but it is highly likely your bottom line will reflect the increased productivity within the workplace.

Confront the skill shortage – engage the best staff – build your reputation – retain your most productive employees and improve your corporate image.

## 2. A Simple Guide to Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace

### Introduction

A variety of options, ranging from the very simple to the more complex, may be considered when establishing and implementing a workplace health and wellbeing program.

If you are ready to get started straight away, this Simple Guide will provide a basic approach and you will see that implementing initiatives can actually be done quite easily and without great expense.

A workplace health and wellbeing program refers to activities or initiatives undertaken within the workplace that are designed to impact positively on the general health and wellbeing of workers. In some instances, such programs may also impact positively on the general health and wellbeing of the associated families of these workers.

It is important to recognise that workplace health and wellbeing programs differ in cost, size and the range of initiatives offered. If you think you will need to implement a more detailed program, please see SECTION 3: A Detailed Guide.

### **Productivity and Profitability**

Employing workers means relying on human resources for productivity and profitability. This is just as true for a small business as it is for a big business. If we rely on people for the ongoing operation of our business then we must also invest in keeping our people happy, motivated and healthy. Health and wellbeing in the workplace is an important strategy that benefits both the employer and the worker.

For further information about the benefits of workplace health and wellbeing programs see SECTION 1: Your Bottom Line.

## **Getting Started**

### *Setting the Foundation*

Initial momentum for a health and wellbeing program may be sparked by the interest and enthusiasm of one worker. This person becomes the leader, providing the energy to encourage management and others within the workplace to get on board and move forward. Without this energy and enthusiasm it is not easy to establish commitment and without commitment there is little value in progressing.

### *Building Commitment*

It is essential to establish a solid commitment from management and workers. A program or initiative supported by management has a firm foundation and is more likely to see greater engagement and involvement from workers. Commitment from both staff and management contributes to a positive culture throughout the organisation. It is important for management to be openly seen to support the initiative and is even better if they can 'talk the talk' and 'walk the walk'. It is also important to make sure staff members understand the rationale behind the initiative. Be honest about what's in it for both the company and its workers. From a management perspective, the objective might be about improved productivity, whilst for the workers, the objective may be about having a better lifestyle and better work/life balance. A well-conducted program will achieve both of these objectives.

### *Involve Workers*

It is vitally important to involve workers in the initial discussions. Through these discussions, ideas are formulated about what kinds of programs are needed, how they might be introduced and who would like to be involved. This inclusive approach will help to ensure your initiative or program is relevant to the workers and the environment at your workplace and it will also help to engage the maximum number of participants.

Make sure you educate and highlight the benefits of your program for workers, to establish WHY the program is valuable.

Encourage the involvement and ideas of workers to determine what initiatives are important and HOW the program will

operate.

### **Constructing your Simple Health and Wellbeing Program**

All that may be needed is a shared belief that implementing simple strategies could go a long way to improving the health and wellbeing of workers. Your organization's contribution might be as simple as committing some time to getting started. A committee is not required and it is not necessary to write a policy. The most important aspect to remember is to make the program relevant for your workers.

To identify the current issues, ideas and preferences of workers an approach may be to undertake a whole-of-staff survey or survey a cross-section of workers. Along with an understanding of staff issues, an understanding of your workplace infrastructure (e.g. shower facilities, kitchen facility) and policies (e.g. flexible work time) will help you identify what initiatives are likely to be suitable and successful in your workplace. Questions that might help you understand these issues are included in the sample workplace audit tool see SECTION 4: Resources.

Planning is vitally important for ensuring a successful health and wellbeing program. With planning you will be able to clarify what it is you are trying to achieve and the strategies you will use to achieve your goals. A plan doesn't have to be formal or highly structured but it should establish a clear and shared understanding throughout the organisation, of the direction the program will take.

### **Selecting some Simple Strategies**

In SECTION 4: Resources, you will find a range of suggested strategies ranging from simple strategies to those that require careful planning and a more significant investment of time and money.

The most important thing to remember is to keep it simple, with strategies that are tailored to your organisation's needs, workers interests and available resources.

A SIMPLE PROGRAM MIGHT INCLUDE one or a combination of, inexpensive strategies that link to the issues identified in your workplace. Strategies might include any of the following actions:

- provide educational material and other information on health and wellbeing issues
- host on-site visits from organisations such as the ACT Cancer Council, SunSmart, and The Heart Foundation or similar organisations
- provide information about walking and cycling routes and encourage workers to walk, cycle or use another mode of transport involving physical activity to travel part or all of the way to and from work
- encourage workers to make active choices where possible by distributing written information and using promotional and motivational posters at strategic points, encouraging using stairs instead of lifts or escalators and walking to external meetings
- establish a physical activity notice board or circulate physical activity opportunities to workers via email, newsletters, pay slips, etc.
- provide access to filtered water to encourage appropriate hydration
- encourage workers to take short walks during work breaks.
- establish a lunchtime walking group or a simple 'Walk Challenge' (for examples, please see the Launceston City Council or call centre case studies)
- encourage workers to set goals on how far they walk or cycle in a given time and monitor the distance they cover
- establish a time-in-lieu arrangement to support individual or group physical activity
- establish lunchtime activities such as yoga, bellydance, skating depending on interest
- encourage workers to complete simple stretching exercises during the day
- encourage workers to take breaks during the day to

look away from screens and refocus

- when catering for meetings, request the food supplier to provide foods of nutritional value
- if you have vending machines, stock them with healthy food
- provide a fresh fruit bowl in the meeting or lunch room
- provide a dedicated eating area that is clean, comfortable and inviting, to encourage workers not to eat at their desks.

Be inclusive in your selection of activities. Try to appeal to the majority, while being careful not to alienate others. For example, in addition to the more physical strategies, you might consider other low impact activities, like dancing. These types of options can help build a good program mix and encourage broad participation.

Remember to take into account the nature of the work and any relevant health and safety issues. For example, many people already walk long distances during their working day, while workers involved in shift work may be vulnerable if walking home alone at night time.

### **Managing your Program**

Program management comprises three key areas.

- program design
- program implementation (coordination of activities)
- program evaluation.

You may choose to select initiatives as part of your program design and implement these to fit with workplace requirements.

Program evaluation can provide valuable insight into the success of the overall program or specific initiatives and generate ideas for future activities.

The outcomes of your evaluation can also be used to promote the benefits of your health and wellbeing program within the organisation. Evaluation may be formal or informal. Evaluation may involve repeating the process you used to identify staff

issues, such as using a whole of staff survey, cross section survey, informal discussion amongst staff who took the opportunity to participate in particular initiatives, or observation. Feedback is beneficial to assisting you understand the impact of your initiatives and planning for continual improvement. The key to effective program evaluation is to seek feedback from workers and then to act on that feedback.

### **A Closing Word**

Improving health and wellbeing in the workplace is not a one-dimensional process. It can take time to change the culture of a workplace, but by involving workers and listening to what they have to say, you will be able to tailor a program to their needs, within the capacity of the organisation and the business operating environment.

A simple program is as much about showing a genuine interest in workers as is a sophisticated program. Taking care of workers and their health and wellbeing in the workplace will achieve greater productivity and better job satisfaction.

### **A FLOW CHART FOR A SIMPLE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAM**

<b>Establish organizational commitment</b>	<b>Construct your program</b>	<b>Manage and evaluate your program</b>
<b>Identify a key leader(s)</b>	<b>Identify staff issues</b>	<b>Implement your specific initiatives</b>
<b>Ensure a commitment from management</b>	<b>Identify the workplace environment and policy issues</b>	<b>Evaluate your initiatives and program</b>
<b>Encourage staff</b>	<b>Identify simple initiatives</b>	<b>Refine your program commitment and initiatives</b>

# 3. A Detailed Guide to Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace

## **INTRODUCTION**

This section focusses on developing a comprehensive workplace health and wellbeing program. Organisational commitment and support, together with a structured framework to successfully develop and implement the program are critical to the success of the program.

A workplace health and wellbeing program refers to activities or initiatives undertaken within the workplace that are designed to impact positively on the general health and wellbeing of workers. In some instances, such programs may also impact positively on the general health and wellbeing of the associated families of these workers and the greater community.

It is important to recognise that workplace health and wellbeing programs will differ in cost, size and the range of initiatives between organisations. A simple program, as outlined in SECTION 2: A Simple Guide, can be implemented with little or no cost, while a more detailed program may be the result of a more substantial investment and detailed planning.

Health and wellbeing is defined by the World Health Organisation as; "... a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

This guide comprises three sections.

Part 1:

Setting the Foundation

- getting the commitment, promoting the benefits, identifying the needs and setting the benchmarks.

Part 2:

Constructing your Health and Wellbeing Program

-identifying suitable initiatives.

Part 3:

Managing your program

## **PART 1: SETTING THE FOUNDATION**

Setting the foundation for establishing a health and wellbeing program is easy if you remember the following steps:

1. Establish commitment, especially from management within your workplace
2. Promote the benefits to workers and management
3. Look to build a picture of the health and wellbeing issues currently impacting on workers
4. Take into account your workplace environment, including infrastructure, policies and procedures

### **Establish Organisational Commitment**

Building support for your health and wellbeing program is an important place to start. This commitment is the foundation for any health and wellbeing program. Three groups within the organisation should underline this commitment.

They include:

- management and the leadership group - should demonstrate their commitment to the program
- A key individual (or group) - must be prepared to drive the health and wellbeing program. This person must become the leader and provides the energy and motivation to drive the initial impetus and ongoing commitment. This person may be given the responsibility of program administration and coordination
- A committee - in larger organisations a committee representative of different interest groups within the organisation should ideally be charged with the responsibility of program planning and policy development. This may be either a new committee or

an existing committee.

### **Promote the Benefits**

The success of your health and wellbeing program will be a direct reflection on the enthusiasm of workers. Programs should therefore be introduced and promoted from the perspective of workers.

Workers are unlikely to be interested in the corporate benefits of a health and wellbeing program. Communicating a message that clearly outlines the benefits to them is a key element in setting the foundation.

Some messages that are important to communicate to the employee are; how the program is designed to improve their health, how they are able to access important information and how you will deliver the flexibility and opportunity for them to become more active and healthy.

These messages are more likely to build support and overcome reluctance, or even suspicion. A failure to engage workers in the development of the program is likely to create barriers. Without employee involvement during the foundation stage the program is less likely to succeed.

### **Identify Issues and Establish Benchmarks**

It is important that your program is designed to address the issues and needs of your workers. A simple staff survey is one way to identify the health and wellbeing issues facing staff.

An employee health and wellbeing survey will allow you to identify the key issues for staff and help you include initiatives in your program that are suited to their needs. This will increase the likelihood of your program making a difference and increase staff involvement in the program. To reassure staff and to encourage honest answers, surveys should always be completed anonymously.

Information obtained from employee surveys, or other measures, must be used by the organisation to identify issues across the employee group and not used by the organisation to identify issues for specific individuals.

Support for staff to identify individual issues (e.g. health checks), can be done as part of your program, in a confidential

environment with trained professionals.

Conducting an employee survey every 6 to 12 months is a way of evaluating the progress of your program. This evaluation will help you to continually improve your program content and make sure it is making a difference.

An example employee health and wellbeing survey is included in SECTION 4: Resources.

Your health and wellbeing program can also be evaluated using a number of other measures including sick leave, absenteeism, medical assessments, fitness testing or progress against a workplace audit tool.

An example workplace audit tool is included in SECTION 4: Resources.

### IMPORTANT NOTES

It is vital the collection of information to identify issues and measure program performance is done in a way that does not impinge on employee privacy. A high level of sensitivity should be given to personal health information.

An organisation should not have access to or collect identifiable individual information.

All care should be taken to ensure individual workers do not feel alienated if they are unable to participate in your program for any reason. By developing your program based on employee issues you will decrease the chances of this happening.

Remember that ultimately, the organisation can only educate and provide opportunity. It is the individual worker who must choose their lifestyle. However, the organisation can undertake many activities that help make health and wellbeing choices easy choices.

An active communication and education program, along with ongoing encouragement and a supportive culture, are critical factors influencing motivation and sustained participation.

### **Assessing Your Workplace**

Your existing workplace environment (e.g. infrastructure, policies, and procedures) will play a part in the kinds of activities chosen for inclusion in a health and well being program. There will be areas within the physical environment

that make it easy to conduct particular activities. For example, a multi-story building may provide an opportunity for a 'take the stairs' program, or the existence of shower facilities may make it easier to promote a 'bike to work' initiative.

On the other hand, the absence of these characteristics may make it difficult to include all suggested activities generated from employee surveys. For example, if a large number of workers showed an interest in a 'bike to work' initiative or a lunch time walk/run, the existence of bike racks, a shower and change room facilities becomes an important part of the decision making process. Without these the option is impractical.

Remember to consult with workers in the workplace in order to identify their physical activity preferences. Once you have done this, you will need to find a balance between these preferences and what is practical in your physical environment

To assist in the evaluation of your workplace, a 'workplace audit' can be performed. It will assist in identifying existing levels of support, along with barriers that might exist in the workplace physical infrastructure, policies or general procedures.

#### A Checklist For Setting The Foundation

- Do we have a commitment to the program from management and staff?
- Do we have a health and wellbeing leader to drive the program forward?
- Have we established a person (or committee) responsible for coordination and administration?
- Have we communicated program detail and direction to staff and sought their input?
- Do we have an ongoing communication process that invites feedback and encourages participation?
- Have we found out what the health and wellbeing issues are for staff?
- Have we assessed the workplace environment (policies, procedures and infrastructure) prior to program implementation?
- Have we established program benchmarks to allow for ongoing measurement of progress and improvement?

You might consider a Health and Wellbeing Policy containing:

- a documented declaration of the organisation's commitment to health and wellbeing
- clearly defined program objectives that are both realistic and easily measured
- an outline of the various responsibilities for key groups, such as management, organising committee, workers and external providers.

For a guide on developing a Health and Wellbeing Policy please see SECTION 4: Resources.

## **PART 2: CONSTRUCTING YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAM**

### **A Planned Approach**

The implementation of a health and wellbeing program needs to be well planned. Taking into account the issues discussed previously in *Setting the Foundation*, the next step is to establish a clear outline for the future. This planned approach should include setting some program objectives – decide what you want to achieve through your health and wellbeing program. You might include some timelines and select the strategies you intend to use in your program.

You need to decide on a starting point and make sure this is communicated clearly to workers. Your plan should offer opportunities for immediate implementation as well as some longer-term strategies. You might like to include an official launch, which creates some initial momentum and emphasises the support of management.

### **Promote Your Program**

Internal promotion needs to be sustained to build interest and participation. Communication should focus initially on the overall health benefits, followed by strategies designed to address specific workplace health and wellbeing issues.

### **Variety and Choice**

The program should provide some variety to cater for differing individual interests. It should include an educational component as well as the practical strategies designed to change behaviour.

### **Building Knowledge and Awareness**

It is favourable to incorporate education initiatives to support the practical initiatives of your program. Education initiatives will outline why health and wellbeing in the workplace is important and provide valuable knowledge for workers. Education initiatives can be in the form of seminars, workshops or simply the dissemination of information on specific health and wellbeing issues such as nutrition, hydration and exercise.

### **Looking Beyond the Workplace:**

As part of your planning, consider the broader environment of worker's. There may be benefits to be gained from involving families in selected workplace strategies. A good example of this is an initiative conducted by Zinifex Tasmania. Zinifex conducted a workplace health and wellbeing forum hosted by AFL great, Alistair Lynch. The forum was held for workers, their family members and community members and was very well received. Reference: Case Study – Zinifex, Rosebery Mine

#### Points to Remember

- Take the time to understand your workforce, their interests and any special health and wellbeing issues.
- Take into account your workplace environment and any particular positive or negative features.
- Communicate the benefits of the program to all staff so they have a clear understanding.
- Establish a way forward tailored to your workplace.

### **Building Knowledge and Positive Attitudes**

#### **Creating Awareness**

A fundamental part of any health and wellbeing program is the contribution it makes to an individual's knowledge and understanding about their individual health and wellbeing. This

knowledge, together with the implementation of popular initiatives will create the necessary awareness to change attitudes and encourage involvement.

### **Changing Behaviour**

Great options to consider as part of any program are initiatives that address the knowledge and attitude 'gap'. These initiatives generate behavioural change and promote lifestyle changes. This knowledge becomes the driver for making better lifestyle choices around issues such as eating, sleeping, exercise, alcohol and drug use and time management.

Initiatives that provide the motivation to encourage behavioural changes are more likely to have a greater impact beyond the workplace and for longer periods of time.

### **Building Positive Attitudes**

Building knowledge and an improved understanding of the importance of health and wellbeing are important in changing attitudes. Promoting a positive outlook that highlights the benefits of physical activity and associated health and wellbeing is important in creating improved awareness about the negative and positive factors that impact on health and wellbeing.

### **Points to Remember**

- The lasting value of any health and wellbeing program is its capacity to encourage greater participation and achieve positive attitude and behavioural change that will extend the program's benefits beyond the workplace.
- Effective program design is crucial to creating awareness and building knowledge and understanding.

### **A Multi-level Approach**

A multi – level perspective when designing a workplace health and wellbeing program, acknowledges the broader workplace environment and considers all the various factors influencing worker's and his or her participation. This is

valuable as it allows you to account for any important issues within the broader environment when introducing your program. When designing a health and wellbeing program in the workplace, implementation from an integrated multi – level perspective will ensure greater success.

With a multi - level approach, your program will:

- be pitched correctly.
- reach the maximum number of workers.
- promote a cycle of continuous improvement.

## **Factors To Consider**

### **The Individual**

Determine the existing levels of fitness, knowledge, confidence and general wellbeing of workers. The general wellbeing of your workforce can be identified by using an employee survey tool, or something similar.

### **The Social Environment**

Gain an understanding of existing corporate culture, social relationships and general social influences within the workplace. This can be achieved by using a workplace audit tool or your own resource.

### **The Organisational Environment**

Take into account your organisation's infrastructure, views of management and general support from the leadership group. This can be achieved by using a workplace audit tool or your own resource.

### **The Community Environment**

Consider the organisation's external partners and stakeholders, such as community groups and government.

Reflect on what is happening around your workplace, potential government or community initiatives, or even other organisations in your industry or divisions within your

organisation.

### **Policy Environment**

Develop an understanding of existing organisational and government health and wellbeing policies and consider these as part of the broader environment.

### **Exercise Your Options**

There are numerous options to consider in assembling your workplace health and wellbeing program. Many initiatives are inexpensive and easy to implement. A selection of initiatives for consideration can be found in SECTION 4: Resources. The initiatives identified in SECTION 4 are not exhaustive. Your options may be as varied as the different workplaces and people that work in them.

A Checklist for Constructing your own Health and Wellbeing Program

- How are we going to promote our program?
- How does our program cater for a range of individual needs?
- Does our program have a mix of education and action-based initiatives?
- Is our program based on a 'multi-level' approach to the workplace environment?
- Does our program respond to the employee issues and workplace audit identified in 'Setting the Foundation'?
- Does our program build on the strengths of our existing resources?
- Does our program meet the needs of as many workers as possible and recognise varying attitudes and preferences?

## **PART 3: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

The size of an organisation, the capacity to allocate resources

and the scope of the program are variables that impact on the level of management a program requires.

For a small organisation wishing to adopt only a few targeted strategies, the level of resources required will differ from a larger organisation looking to introduce a comprehensive workplace health and wellbeing program.

Regardless of the variables, sound administration and program coordination are important to the success of your workplace health and wellbeing program design, delivery and management.

The maintenance of a sound record-keeping system and coordination of risk management strategies are important elements of administration.

Program Recordkeeping includes the maintenance of program records such as initiatives conducted, levels of interest, outcomes and general details. This information is valuable as an ongoing management tool and for program evaluation purposes, particularly for larger organisations conducting more sophisticated programs over multiple sites.

Risk Management Strategies are an important part of program management. Risk management strategies include safety and emergency procedures and risk minimization associated with the delivery of the program. Although a totally risk-free environment is not possible to achieve, you can manage the risk associated with your health and wellbeing program, just as you would with other aspects of your organisation.

Effective management of your health and wellbeing program includes three key areas: program design, program implementation (coordination of activities) and program evaluation.

**Program Design** includes the selection of activities to be conducted in the health and wellbeing program. The choice of initiatives should be in response to the interests and needs of individual workers. The workplace environment is also a key determinant of program design and should reflect the social, organisational, community and policy influences on implementation. The size of the organisation, number of workers and availability of resources are all important to consider during program design.

**Program Implementation** requires energy and enthusiasm and regular communication. Leadership is required to manage health and wellbeing program activities, including timing, roll-out and recruitment of participants. A mix of strategies that include health and wellbeing awareness and education, together with practical initiatives, should be considered in a planned and structured manner.

**Program Evaluation** is a vital component of your health and wellbeing program and enables your organisation to measure the benefits of the program. A variety of strategies may be used for program evaluation and evaluation may be broad or focus on specific data. Program evaluation may be based on an initial worker survey and workplace audit, satisfaction surveys and ongoing program evaluations. You may also choose to evaluate your program against benchmarks for productivity, sick leave or worker turnover.

Typically, PROGRAM EVALUATION WILL:

- determine if the program has been implemented as planned.
- identify opportunities for improvement in the Program.
- assess if the program is attracting the volume of participants that it intended
- document changes in health and wellbeing attitudes.
- assess the perceived value of the program.
- assess the overall worker and management satisfaction.
- identify the health outcomes of the program against measurable criteria.
- determine the cost benefit of the program.
- determine if the program has met its quality assurance criteria
- establish whether an ongoing commitment to the program is justified.

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

- Do we have an individual or a group, to undertake program management and coordination?
- Has the design of our program taken into account the availability of sufficient resources?
- Do we have an individual to provide the leadership and coordination of strategies?
- Is there a record-keeping system of prior and/or proposed health and wellbeing initiatives?
- Are workers regularly consulted and provided with feedback on prior and/or proposed initiatives?
- Do we know if our program is making a difference?
- Do we know what needs to be changed with our program?
- Is there a risk management plan in place, including emergency response procedures?

## 4. Resources

This section provides a range of guides and tools to assist you in implementing a health and wellbeing program within your organisation.

Health and wellbeing providers and corporate program providers

Health and Wellbeing Campaigns and useful links

Health and Wellbeing award programs

A sample health and wellbeing mission statement

A sample health and wellbeing policy

A list of initiatives to get you started

The Healthy Eating Pyramid

A sample Employee Health and Wellbeing Survey and evaluation

A sample Workplace Audit Tool and evaluation

### 1. Health and Wellbeing providers

The following is brief information and contact details for a range of government and 'not-for-profit' organisations which may be of assistance to your health and wellbeing program. This list is grouped according to topic and is not exhaustive.

Please [click here](#) to visit the ACT Occupational Health and Safety Commissioner website to register your organisation as a provider of health and wellbeing services.

#### GENERAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

**ACT Department of Health.** Provides a range of co-ordinated health and community health care services. [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)

**ACT Health Promotion.** Provides professional online information, resources and support for health promotion workers and all people

involved in health promotion practice. [www.healthpromotion.act.gov.au](http://www.healthpromotion.act.gov.au)

**Division of General Practice.** Aims to improve health through general practice. [www.actdgp.asn.au](http://www.actdgp.asn.au)

**Breast Screen ACT & SE NSW.** A nation wide program providing information and screening aimed at promoting early detection and reducing breast cancer mortality. [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au) .

**Women's Centre for Health Matters.** Provides innovative, appropriate and accessible services to support women in their pursuit of improved health and well being. [www.wchm.org.au](http://www.wchm.org.au)

**Men's Health.** Provides information on services available specifically for men. [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)

## ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES

**Department of Health and Aging.** This site is designed to give Australians a basic knowledge and understanding about alcohol and its consequences and to assist informed decision making to minimise the risk of alcohol-related harms. [www.alcohol.gov.au](http://www.alcohol.gov.au)

**ACT Alcohol and Drug Information Service.** A confidential telephone service providing assistance and advice for people who have problems with alcohol (6205 4545). [www.alcohol.gov.au](http://www.alcohol.gov.au)

**Community Health- Alcohol and other drugs.** A 24 hour helpline staffed by professionals from the Alcohol and Drug Program providing information, advice, referral, intake, assessment and support (6207 9977). [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)

**Directions ACT.** An organisation committed to improving access to health and related services for all people especially those whose lives are affected by alcohol and/or other drugs. They strive to reduce the harms associated with alcohol and/or other drugs by the provision of information and education, clean injecting equipment, practical health interventions, counselling, referral, support and detoxification services. The organisation offers a range of holistic, client focussed and evidenced based health interventions delivered in accordance with harm minimisation principles designed to reduce or limit harms and improve personal and public health. A particular focus of these interventions is to prevent the spread of blood borne viruses and diseases. [www.directionsact.com](http://www.directionsact.com)

## NUTRITION SERVICES

**Nutrition Australia** Promotes optimal health by providing nutritional information and encouraging food variety and physical activity. [www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)

**Dieticians Association Of Australia (DAA)** This website provides practical, up-to-date and reliable nutritional information including links to other service providers. [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)

**Sanitarium Nutrition** A team of nutritionists and dieticians provide education aimed to assist people to develop healthy food habits and enjoy the benefits of a healthier lifestyle. [www.sanitarium.com.au](http://www.sanitarium.com.au)

## CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION PROVIDERS

**The Heart Foundation** Information on heart health and Heart Foundation events, such as the walking program. [www.heartfoundation.com.au](http://www.heartfoundation.com.au)

**Arthritis ACT** Canberra's central source of on-line information about arthritis, osteoporosis and associated conditions. [www.arthritis.gov.au](http://www.arthritis.gov.au)

**Diabetes Australia- ACT** An organisation whose key focus is to improve health outcomes and quality of life for people living with diabetes, their families and carers. [www.diabetes-act.com.au](http://www.diabetes-act.com.au)

**The Asthma Foundation of the ACT** Provides information, contacts and resources for people living with asthma. [www.asthmaact.org.au](http://www.asthmaact.org.au)

**The Cancer Council- ACT** Promotes a healthier community by providing information, services, support and fundraising aimed at reducing the incidence and impact of cancer in the ACT and surrounding region. [www.actcancer.org](http://www.actcancer.org)

## CORPORATE HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAM PROVIDERS

**Capital Health Care.** A team of health and fitness advisors providing quality workplace health checks aiming to improve the quality of health of all Australians. [www.capitalhealthcare.com.au/index.html](http://www.capitalhealthcare.com.au/index.html)

**Fitness Journal.** A suite of online integration tools for health and wellness programs. [www.fitnessjournal.com/corp\\_overview.html](http://www.fitnessjournal.com/corp_overview.html)

**Professional Physical 'bootcamps' and lunchtime Training.** Provide tailor made packages and operate fitness sessions to suit your corporate needs. [www.professionalpt.com.au](http://www.professionalpt.com.au)

**Good Health Solutions.** Provide health management programs designed to maximise workplace performance, minimise workplace health issues and associated costs. The programs also help businesses create a culture of care and commitment for workers. [www.goodhealthsolutions.com.au/en-au](http://www.goodhealthsolutions.com.au/en-au)

**Fitness2live.** Provide a range of services designed to maximise productivity and reduce health costs through healthier and more motivated workers. [www.fitness2live.com.au](http://www.fitness2live.com.au)

**Ford Health.** An innovative and client focussed provider committed to improving the health and performance of all working people. [www.fordhealth.com.au](http://www.fordhealth.com.au)

**He@lthwork.** Aims to improve the health of workers and therefore business performance to optimise the reputation of businesses allowing them to be recognised as an 'employer of choice'. [www.healthatwork.net.au](http://www.healthatwork.net.au)

**FitSense Australia.** Research based and customised programs aimed to improve the health and fitness of workers. [www.fitsense.com.au](http://www.fitsense.com.au)

**Healthworks.** A range of services that deliver tangible and measureable productivity benefits including market- leading publications, expos, health checks and Team Challenges that help companies to attract, maintain, and retain a healthy, happy and productive workforce. [www.healthworks.com.au](http://www.healthworks.com.au)

**OzHelp.** This organisation works in conjunction with building and construction industry associations, training organisations and employers to target health issues and reduce the impact and incidence of stress, depression and suicide amongst the building and construction industry workforce. [www.ozhelp.org.au](http://www.ozhelp.org.au)

## 2. Health and Wellbeing Campaigns and useful links

ACT Work Safety Commissioner [website](#)

ACT [Work Safety Awards](#)

General Health Information [www.abc.net.au/health](http://www.abc.net.au/health)

General Health Campaigns [www.healthyactive.gov.au](http://www.healthyactive.gov.au)

Nutrition information [www.healthyactive.gov.au](http://www.healthyactive.gov.au)

Nutrition at work [www.completeperformancesolutions.com](http://www.completeperformancesolutions.com)

Nutrition Australia [www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)

Measure Up Campaign

[www.health.gov.au/internet/abhi/publishing.nsf/Content/Home](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/abhi/publishing.nsf/Content/Home)

Facts about overweight and obesity

[www.howrahgardencentre.com.au/TipsHints/fact\\_about.pdf](http://www.howrahgardencentre.com.au/TipsHints/fact_about.pdf)

BMI calculator [www.alfitness.com.au/BMICalculator.asp](http://www.alfitness.com.au/BMICalculator.asp)

Alcohol campaign [www.whatareyoudoingtoyourself.com](http://www.whatareyoudoingtoyourself.com)

Smoking campaign [www.cancerinstitute.org.au](http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au)

Skincare campaign [www.darksideoftanning.com.au](http://www.darksideoftanning.com.au)

Mental health [www.mentalhealth.asn.au](http://www.mentalhealth.asn.au)

Cancer Institute NSW Melanoma Campaigns

[www.cancerinstitute.org.au](http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au)

Cancer Institute NSW Screening campaigns [www.cancerinstitute.org.au](http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au)

### **3. Health and Wellbeing Award Programs**

The ACT Occupational Health and Safety Awards have three major aims:

1. To encourage public and private workplaces throughout the ACT to develop, implement and evaluate initiatives that help to achieve healthier and safer work environments.
2. To share learning and assist award-winning initiatives to be promoted and adopted into ACT workplaces.
3. To reward ACT workers and organisations for outstanding achievements in workplace health and safety.

[Click here to read more about the ACT Occupational Health and Safety Awards and previous award recipients.](#)

The National Safe Work Australia Awards recognises and awards outstanding initiatives in occupational Health and Safety. [Click here to find information about Safe Work Australia and the 2008 National Safe Work Australia Award recipients.](#)

### **4. A Sample Health and Wellbeing Mission Statement**

The following is an example of a mission statement that could be used by your organisation as part of establishing your health and wellbeing program.

“To create a happy workplace environment where the health and wellbeing of workers is highly valued - an environment sensitive to issues around health and wellbeing that provides both flexibility and opportunity to encourage workers to adopt healthy living practices.”

## 5. A Sample Health and Wellbeing Policy

A workplace policy focused on health and wellbeing provides a clear and positive statement underlining the value the organisation places on the health and wellbeing of its workforce. It serves as a very practical and formal way of making a statement that the organisation is serious about the health of its workers.

A function of the health and wellbeing committee, if you have one, might be to create a policy that is acknowledged and supported by senior management within the organisation. Once signed, the policy becomes a key element in the foundation of your program. All workers should then be made aware of the policy and its intentions.

Your organisations Health and Wellbeing Policy may become part of your existing occupational health and safety policy manual and the organisation's induction process.

Your policy might contain:

- a documented declaration of the organisation's commitment to health and wellbeing.
- clearly defined program objectives that are both realistic and easily measured.

Sample policy objectives

- To raise awareness within the workplace about issues that impact on health and wellbeing, including the health benefits of physical activity and the health risks of physical inactivity.
- To promote and encourage participation in workplace health and wellbeing initiatives within and outside the workplace.
- educate workers about issues related to health and wellbeing.

Sample policy actions

Sample policy communication

- All existing workers will be made aware of this policy and its provisions via mediums, such as the organisations notice board/intranet/email system/newsletters.
- All new workers will be made aware of this policy as part of the formal induction process.

Sample policy review

- This policy will be reviewed every 12 months.

## 6. Some Initiatives to Consider

The range of initiatives you might consider for any health and wellbeing program is unlimited. It is always good practice to seek feedback within the workplace to ensure your initiative will meet the particular needs of the workplace, the needs and interests of workers and available resources.

The following examples are just a few of the types of initiatives you might consider. You are not restricted to these, but rather use them as a starting point.

Remember that it is good practice to include education initiatives to support the physical initiatives.

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING INITIATIVES – Examples

#### General Initiatives

- Sell the benefits to top and middle management – show the productivity gains.
- Encourage participation in external health and wellbeing initiatives through subsidisation of selected events.
- Encourage participation in external initiatives by entering a team eg The Canberra times Fun Run.
- Provide workplace massages.
- Conduct hypertension screening and cholesterol testing.
- Provide support and encouragement in the establishment of organised sport or recreation teams.
- Encourage and facilitate active commuting to and from the workplace, such as walking or cycling.
- Subsidise memberships to selected facilities that promote health and wellbeing, such as gyms and pools.
- Provide details or maps of suitable lunch-time walking routes to promote walking/ jogging.
- Establish a 'Walk Challenge'.
- Promote activities, such as walking the stairs instead of taking the lift.
- Target specific groups (sedentary), e.g. fitball or pilates for women/martial arts for men.
- Have a central point for activity, where changeover of shifts occur e.g. call centres.

- Support 'leaders' to lead activity groups.
- Provide incentives to promote physical activity, such as flexible work hours.

#### Education and Training

- Host workplace seminars and activities designed to improve awareness of issues around health and wellbeing such as smoking, diabetes, cancer, mental health, hydration, heart disease, alcohol abuse and sleep patterns.
- Provide educational material and information on health and wellbeing issues.
- Host on site visits from specialists, such as fitness experts, dieticians and the Heart Foundation designed to build awareness and knowledge about health and wellbeing.
- Promote opportunities for participation in initiatives via newsletters, email, payslips and meetings.
- Use promotional and motivational posters encouraging workers to make active choices such as using stairs in preference to elevators.
- Liaise with external providers and government departments to access information, resources and expertise.
- Establish a physical activity notice board.

#### Workplace Nutrition and Hydration

- Develop a nutrition policy for the workplace that may include the use of 'heart-friendly' foods.
- Provide access to fresh or filtered water to encourage appropriate hydration.
- Encourage water bottles at desks.
- Request food suppliers to provide foods of nutritional value.
- Alter canteen menus, where appropriate.
- Stock vending machines with healthier food and drink items.
- Encourage staff catering for meetings to meet healthy catering guidelines.
- Provide a fresh fruit bowl in the meeting or lunchroom (free or at cost price).
- Provide an alternative to fundraising chocolates.
- Consider providing free or at-cost alternatives to tea/coffee (such as herbal teas).
- Collaborate with nearby cafes, takeaways and other food vendors

to offer healthy foods and promote nutritious specials, at reasonable prices.

- Provide a dedicated eating area that is inviting to encourage staff not to eat at their desks.
- Ensure your eating area has a refrigerator, a microwave, toasted sandwich maker and other key items identified by staff.
- If you have a staff cafeteria, get an Accredited Practising Dietician (APD) or use the healthy catering Workplace Nutrition and Hydration guidelines to review your menu, and advise on how to provide and promote healthy food and drink choices for staff.
- If you have workers who do a lot of travel within the state, consider marking out cafes and takeaways that provide healthier options and provide workers with information on making healthier food choices when eating out.
- Promote healthy eating for staff using the Dietary Guidelines for Australians and Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.
- Put up posters of delicious, fresh produce or motivational posters about eating more vegetables and being more physically active.
- Establish a nutritional notice board.
- Distribute nutritional information via newsletters, meetings or the nutritional notice board.
- Offer coupons for fruits and vegetables as rewards.

#### Workplace Flexibility

- Provide a flexible work environment designed to facilitate health and wellbeing activities, particularly physical activity.
- Provide time off for physical activity.
- Establish a time-off in-lieu arrangement for individual or group physical activity.

#### Facilities/Processes/Policies

- Provide continuous review, and improvement of, workplace practices to promote improvements that support health and wellbeing.
- Provide on-site facilities in support of health and wellbeing activities, such as showers and change rooms to encourage greater physical activity.
- Ensure that new or existing workplace practices do not present barriers to health and wellbeing.
- Develop policies that discourage the eating of food while using computers at desks.

- Establish an on-site gym for larger organisations.
- Provide bicycle racks to encourage people to cycle to work.
- Provide workers with a pedometer as a Christmas gift.
- Develop processes that are consistent with the size and resources of the company, which will make participation in health and wellbeing initiatives easier for workers.

Remember: Your health and wellbeing program should be tailored to meet the needs of your workplace. Take into account the interests of workers and the special circumstances of your workplace and ensure your program caters for all.

## **7. The Health Eating Pyramid**

[Click here to view or download the Healthy Eating Pyramid in table format.](#)

## **8. A Sample Employee Health and Wellbeing Survey and Evaluation**

A simple worker survey is one way of identifying the health and wellbeing issues facing workers. The information gained from such a survey along with an understanding of your workplace environment will help you to design a successful health and wellbeing program. Conducting an worker survey every 6 to 12 months is one way in which you can evaluate the progress of your program.

[Click here to view a sample employee health and wellbeing survey](#)

[Click here to view an explanation for the health and wellbeing survey](#)

## **9. A Sample Workplace Audit Tool and Evaluation**

Conducting an audit of your workplace every 6 to 12 months is a useful way of evaluating the progress of your program.

[Click here to view or download a sample audit tool.](#)

# 5. Case Studies and Examples

## **SECTION 5: Health and Wellbeing Programs and Initiatives - Case Studies and Examples**

In 2001, the Australian Taxation Office set themselves the goal of being recognised as providing excellence in safety and health management for their workers. They enlisted the support of Wesley Corporate Health Services to conduct a health risk assessment and survey the Taxation Office workers. A number of key health risks were identified as a result of the survey and health assessment. As a part of their Wellness Program, The Australian Taxation Office chose to address the following identified key health risks:

- depression
- stress and anxiety
- musculoskeletal
- cardiovascular
- cancer
- diabetes
- asthma
- obesity—nutrition and exercise
- life and work balance

To drive their health and wellbeing program, The Australian Taxation Office appointed Wellbeing site representatives. The representatives, all existing Australian Taxation Office workers, were accredited through training developed with Adelaide University. The site representatives had key responsibility for educating workers and delivering the initiative to 52 sites across Australia.

All taxation workers also received information about the Wellness Program initiatives through newsletters, emails and the intranet.

Taxation Office Wellbeing Representatives were paid a fortnightly allowance for their time commitment of two to four hours per week. During this time the representatives organised, delivered and evaluated at least two activities a month for their colleagues, focussing on the identified key health risks. The organised activities catered for groups of people rather than individual sessions and were mainly held at lunch time. Some activities were 'user pays' such as yoga, pilates, seated massage, line dancing, belly dancing and weight management.

Funds were provided for each site and were utilised by the Wellbeing Representatives for low cost session providers from the local community. These included physiotherapists, hospitals, nutritionists and organisations such as the Cancer Council.

Feedback from workers showed that some of the most popular initiatives involved guest speakers. One such initiative, presented by the local Rotary association, involved a number of workers and participants were given free 'bowel kits' (bowel cancer screening kits).

The Australian Taxation Office Health and Wellbeing Program was so well received by workers that participation rates for initiatives quickly rose to 80 per cent of venue capacity.

The OzHelp Foundation strives to enhance the resilience of apprentices and workers, whilst strengthening the leadership and support roles of industry leaders in the Construction and Building Industry. The Foundation operates a high profile workplace based early intervention suicide prevention and social capacity building program. Research conducted by The OZHelp Foundation indicates that in relation to other workers, male blue collar workers have:

- poorer average health
- increased mortality rates
- increased disability rates
- increased incidences of serious chronic disease

In recognition of these alarming health and wellbeing issues and to raise awareness amongst Building and Construction

workers of personal preventative health measures, Oz Help initiated the 'Tradies Tune – Up'.

Tradies-Tune-Up utilises a purpose built van which is accessible to any worksite making the intervention more industry friendly and attractive to the workers. The program, delivered to workers free of charge, is based on motoring analogy and likened to a car service. During the Tune-Up, registered nurses conduct a series of 'Pit Stops' (health screening stations) with the entire intervention taking about 20 minutes to complete. Each participant receives a card stating their results against 'healthy' levels and recommendations.

As a part of the Tradies Tune-Up program, health brochures are available for all participants providing further information about each of the health checks conducted. Health brochures are also available on other major relevant health topics such as sexual health, prostate cancer, erectile dysfunction and skin cancer.

To ensure the success of Tradies Tune-Up it was acknowledged that solid networks with the Building and Construction Industry would be essential. With these networks established, the Tradies Tune-Up program has won the support and trust of workers and managers and is allowed easy access to construction sites.

An evaluation of the Pit Stop model stated that it was a valuable tool in engaging men and encouraging them to take an interest in their health. Men's recall of the health check was high. Almost half of the respondents indicated they had made a change in their behaviour and/or connected with health professionals as a result of the health check ups. [Click here to find out more about the OZHelp Foundation and Tradies Tune-Up.](#)

For Goulburn Valley Health (GV Health), a regional health service in Victoria, the high number of overweight nursing and general staff was the impetus for a Health and Wellbeing Program. As a result, GV Health implemented a Weight

Watchers at Work (WW@W) program in April 2005.

Classes and weigh-ins were conducted at lunchtime and

workmates supported each other by sharing their experiences with the program. Stacey Minotti, HR officer for GV Health explained that, "it started off with a few people going to Weight Watchers and then HR thinking that if we could encourage more people, they could attend the classes on site during their lunch break, making it easy to maintain".

Being a health service provider itself, building a business case for this program and others such as the QUIT program for smokers, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), and Family Day Care initiatives was not difficult for the HR team.

As a result of the Weight Watchers at Work (WW@W) program, the combined weight loss by workers reached 407.3kg in 2006. Both Stacey Minotti and Kerryn Healy, director of finance at GV Health, believe that initiatives such as the WW@W program have been so successful due to the support and involvement of the executive team. "It is really about getting the buy-in at the top and trying to encourage executive or senior people to be involved in the programs and be fully supporting them," says Healy. "I think it is also about trying to ensure you've got the resources and that you have an idea about what you're trying to achieve. That is, if it's a culture change or if it's a set participation that you're really focussing on. You must genuinely try and make it as accessible as possible, so look at timing when you run things, make sure you're flexible with your staff and make sure they can feel that they can attend these things and not be penalised for doing it."

In 2003 Optus rolled out a health and wellbeing program born out of their workers Enterprise Partnership Agreement (EPA). To achieve their health and wellbeing goals and to be recognised as an Employer of Choice, Optus acknowledged that they needed to put into place a range of health and wellbeing initiatives. Before this time, the company did not have a detailed health program, so the idea was tendered and various providers pitched different programs.

Initially, Optus developed an intranet site on health and wellbeing providing information on fitness and nutrition and a monthly calendar of topics on different health issues. Newsletters were also developed and distributed to all 10,000 workers nationally and this initiative was very well received.

Optus now runs a biannual Health Expo for workers. The expo is attended by a range of service providers who give workers general health information, screening tests for cholesterol and blood glucose and healthy eating demonstrations. The Health expos have proved invaluable for the organisation. Optus have been able to build a profile of the organisation's fitness and mental wellbeing, of which they had no information on prior to the Expos.

The company directors found that they, "didn't really have to do a hard sell," when driving their health and wellbeing initiatives. They found that, "the timing was right," and the programs were, "very much driven by the notion of Optus as an Employer of Choice." Following on from the success of these initial programs, Optus found building ongoing initiatives simple and they became a key objective of the company OH&S program. A key objective of the company now is ensuring they maintain their status as an Employer of Choice. Therefore Optus are aware that it is crucial that the initiatives and types of programs they offer continue to be tailored to meet the needs of their workers.

Medibank Private commissioned research in 2005 looking into the health of Australia's workforce. The research found that the majority of Australian workers don't exercise enough, have poor diets, are overweight and suffer from stress. The research also established strong links between an employee's health profile and their productivity. In response to the findings and their health industry affinity, Medibank Private developed and implemented their My Wellbeing program. The program recognises the importance of supporting workers and provides annual 'good-health days.

Google strive to be the best at everything they do and this includes their approach to looking after their workers – the Googlers. Talented people are attracted to Google because the company believes their workers are hard working and inspiring and the company's greatest assets. Therefore Google are focused on providing an environment where Googlers are rewarded for their contributions with an award-winning array of services, schemes, and programmes.

Google believe these initiatives enable workers to keep

creating, inventing, finding solutions, breaking boundaries, and realising new technologies never even imagined possible.

Google also believe their health and wellbeing initiatives ensure their workers are happy and able to get on with the things they love to do – both in and out of the office.

Google also recognise that the needs of their Googlers are unique and vary from country to country. A company priority is to offer benefits, perks, and policies that reflect the local market and make life easier and better for all workers.

Google offer an enviable and extensive range of Health and Wellness initiatives for their workers including:

- Medical Insurance
- EAP - Employee Assistance Program
- Business Travel Accident Insurance
- pay for all Statutory Sick Leave and Public Holidays
- paid maternity/parenting leave (capped) for the primary caregiver
- parental Leave (for non-primary caregivers)
- new mums and dads are able to expense a capped amount for take-away meals during the first four weeks that they are home with their new baby
- tuition reimbursement
- workers who recommend candidates for employment opportunities are given a monetary bonus
- matching contributions up to a certain monetary amount from eligible workers to non-profit organizations
- healthy and delicious meals and snacks are available every day free of charge
- subsidized on-site seated and table massages
- careers fair
- pool tables, table tennis and wii
- various company events and parties
- discounts on some consumer products

The Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) operate an on line HR discussion forum where you can read about the Health and Wellbeing initiatives of others and share your own experiences. [Click here to view this forum.](#)

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