

# 01

# GOOD HEALTH IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

## Key questions to ask

- What is a healthy workplace?
- What are the benefits to my organisation?



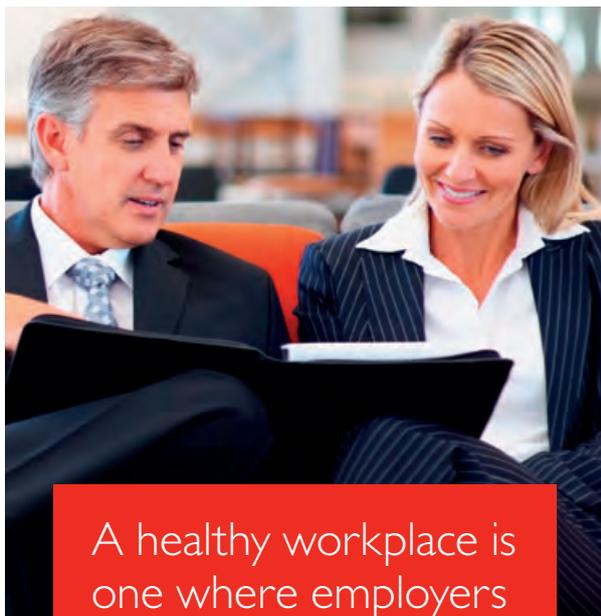


In this section of the Healthy Workplace Resource Toolkit, we look at the 'what' and 'why' of workplace health and wellbeing.

# WHAT IS A HEALTHY WORKPLACE?

*It's not always obvious*, but your workplace has a direct influence on the health of your employees – this may include their physical, mental, economic and social wellbeing. This, in turn, can affect the health and wellbeing of their families and their communities. Promoting good health in the workplace therefore offers the opportunity to create positive health changes in a very wide audience.

*It's no surprise* that the World Health Organisation has identified the workplace as 'one of the priority settings for health promotion into the 21st century'!



A healthy workplace is one where employers value the health and wellbeing of their employees. They do this by creating a supportive culture and environment that encourages healthy lifestyles.

*A workplace health and wellbeing program* refers to activities or initiatives that are designed to make healthy choices easy choices in your workplace, and have a positive impact on the general health and wellbeing of your employees. These programs may also have a positive influence on the health and wellbeing of your employees' families and communities.

Typically, a program may focus on healthy eating, physical activity, sedentary behaviour, social and emotional wellbeing, smoking cessation and minimising alcohol and drug use.

A workplace health and wellbeing program does not have to be expensive or consume significant resources, and it can bring considerable rewards to your organisation. A healthy workplace will also complement your workplace safety systems by supporting the health and vitality of your workforce. There is solid evidence that health and wellbeing programs can improve employee productivity and efficiency and therefore your business bottom line.

*You can implement a successful health and wellbeing program* whether your workplace is large or small.

*How you do this* depends on the needs of your employees and the culture of your workplace.

*Putting employee health and wellbeing at the forefront* of your agenda is one of the smartest moves you can make for your business.



To what degree does your workplace influence your employees' health?



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# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR MY ORGANISATION?

*Australians spend* about one third of their lives at work.<sup>2</sup> It makes good sense to consider the workplace as an important setting to improve health and wellbeing.

## So what are the benefits?

Organisations that implement workplace health and wellbeing programs are known to have:

- increased employee morale and engagement
- improved corporate image
- reduced workplace injuries and associated expenses
- increased attraction and retention of employees.

According to research<sup>3</sup>, healthier employees:

- are more productive
- are more engaged in their work
- have less sick leave
- have greater levels of energy and concentration.

*In short, a healthy workplace is good for business.*



What might be the benefits for your organisation?

'The wealth of business depends on the health of workers.'

– Dr Maria Neira, Director,  
Department of Public Health and Environment,  
World Health Organisation

**4x** Organisations that don't promote health and wellness are four times more likely to lose talent within 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

Healthy workers are almost three times more productive than unhealthy workers.<sup>3</sup>

**3x**

**9x** Unhealthy workers have up to nine times the annual sickness absence of healthy workers.<sup>3</sup>

Employees that work in organisations that actively promote health and wellbeing are three times more likely to identify their workplace as a high or above-average performer.<sup>4</sup>

**3x**

**20** A 20% reduction in an employee's emotional wellbeing leads to a 10% drop in their work performance.<sup>5</sup>



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# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR MY ORGANISATION?

↗ Productivity	↘ Workplace injuries
Concentration	Absenteeism
Employee morale	Employee turnover
Job satisfaction	Stress
Engagement	Workers compensation claims
Retention of employees	
Corporate image	



Looking at these benefits, it's tempting to think that a workplace health and wellbeing program will be the answer to all business problems.

Of course, that's not the case.

Changing workplace culture takes time and persistence, and you can't expect all of these benefits in the short term.

A more realistic scenario might look like the following:

## Within a few months

- ↗ Employee engagement
- ↗ Team cohesiveness

## Within 1-2 years

- ↗ Health knowledge
- ↗ Job satisfaction
- ↗ Productivity
- ↗ Corporate image

## Within 3-5 years

- ↘ Absenteeism
- ↘ Injuries
- ↘ Workers compensation costs

In the following sections, you'll see how to develop a well-structured and sustainable workplace health and wellbeing program that can create ongoing benefits for your workplace.



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# FURTHER READING

For more general information on workplace health and wellbeing, download the following resources from this CD-ROM, or from [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au)



Medibank Private:  
The health of Australia's workforce



Health and Productivity  
Institute of Australia (HAPIA):  
Best practice guidelines -  
Workplace health in Australia

## REFERENCES

1. World Health Organisation 2011, *Workplace health promotion*, WHO, Geneva, [www.who.int/occupational\\_health/topics/workplace/en](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/topics/workplace/en)
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3. Medibank Private 2005, *The health of Australia's workforce*, Medibank Private, Australia.
4. Sims, J, Right Management 2010, *Wellness and Productivity Management. Presentation to the Health and Productivity Management Congress 2010*, [www.hapia.com.au](http://www.hapia.com.au)
5. Wright, TA, Cropanzano, R, Denney, PJ & Loline, GL 2002, 'When a happy worker is a productive worker: A preliminary examination of three models', *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, vol. 34, pp. 146–150.



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