



ACT
Government

healthier
work

HELPING PEOPLE AND
BUSINESS THRIVE

CASE STUDIES 2017-18

SILVER

GRIFFIN LEGAL

21 staff

Griffin Legal was interviewed by Grosvenor Management Consulting on 17 May 2018 as part of a formal Healthier Work Evaluation. Griffin Legal is a law firm which employs 21 people in its offices in Canberra and Melbourne, both of which participate in Healthier Work.

Griffin Legal is about to enter their third year in the Healthier Work program, after becoming aware of the program through Twitter. Penelope Gibbons, Office Manager at Griffin Legal, explains that Healthier Work is a good fit for Griffin Legal.

“One of our Partners, Peter McGrath, played for the Raiders and is a former Chairman of the Australian Rugby Union, and we do a lot of advisory work for sporting organisations, so we take sport quite seriously,” says Penelope. “Griffin Legal supports staff to play sports outside the office, and we’ll always ask each other how we played at the weekend! We’re very proud of our culture here, and Healthier Work has become a priority – it keeps health at front of mind for us.”

As a law firm, there can be times when our lawyers were unable to participate in certain planned Healthier Work activities due to their commitments to clients and the Courts, and so there are some limitations on what initiatives and activities are appropriate.

“Healthier Work has been really good at tailoring our activity plan to what we need,” explains Penelope. “Early morning and late evening activities don’t always work for us, and we wanted a focus on initiatives that would combat stress in the workplace. The mental wellness initiatives have really had an impact on our culture and opened up a dialogue in the office.. We also do activities to keep the place physical and healthy in work hours – encouraging staff to get out of the office at lunchtime, offering healthy food options at all functions and staff meetings and walking meetings are embedded in our daily practices now.”

Penelope describes some of the changes to Griffin Legal policies and the physical workplace that have come about as a result of involvement in Healthier Work.

“Although, we have always been champions of good mental health and have always had policies and procedures that encourage healthy practices, being a part of the Healthier Work program has encouraged us to develop these policies more thoroughly and to make these policies more practical and easily implemented. We have incorporated mental health awareness and strategies into our professional development sessions, and our workplace policies have been altered to make sure it’s easy for staff to take leave for mental health issues if they need to. We have standing desks now, and as part of the ACTSmart Business recycling program we’ve taken away deskside bins to get people on their feet. There’s more space for yoga now! We’ve also created a quiet room and provide plenty of quiet spaces for staff to give people a place for a break away from the open-plan.”



ACT
Government

healthier
work

HELPING PEOPLE AND BUSINESS THRIVE

CASE STUDIES 2017-18

SILVER

Penelope says that these changes, and the initiatives undertaken as part of Healthier Work, have fed through into positive impacts on the business.

“Absenteeism has dropped, we have fewer people away on Mondays,” explains Penelope. “Law firms can have a high turnover of staff, but ours is low. People like being part of the team, and the people who are here now want to be here for a long while. Healthier Work accreditation is also a good publicity and recruitment tool; we promote our participation to our clients and put it on our website – it makes it obvious that you have embedded, long-term policies around health and wellbeing.”

