



ACT
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HELPING PEOPLE AND
BUSINESS THRIVE

CASE STUDIES 2017-18

SILVER

NEXUS HUMAN SERVICES

30 staff

Nexus Human Services was interviewed by Grosvenor Management Consulting on 4 May 2018 as part of a formal Healthier Work Evaluation. Nexus is a not-for-profit which offers a wide range of support services for individuals with mental health issues or other disabilities in their journey of finding employment. They employ 30 people across three sites in the ACT.

Lisa McPherson is the CEO of Nexus Human Services and Nexus' Healthier Work Champion. She heard about Healthier Work through a Canberra Business Chamber information session, and signed up in the hope that it would be an opportunity to broaden Nexus' Health and Safety remit.

"It's all been a very positive experience," says Lisa. "We had an existing committee to make sure there were fun activities around work, but Healthier Work was an opportunity to improve physical health as well as mental health."

Nexus persevered with initiatives and changes aimed at making it a more physically healthy place to work.

"We've done flu shots and lots of other activities as the result of Healthier Work," explains Lisa. "There was some resistance to the changes to the food in the office initially – it took us a while to get used to not having biscuits! But I think it helps that I'm leading a lot of this; I often go out and lead the morning stretches.

"The fruit, the stretches, drinking more water – these are all habits that are embedded in the office now. We've had very positive feedback from staff on our physical and social activities for Healthier Work, such as going for lunchtime walks as an office and the multicultural lunches where we cook healthy food for each other and all get the chance to find out more about each other and our home lives."

In fact, says Lisa, one of the unexpected benefits of Healthier Work has been an improved sense of community among the staff at Nexus.

"We have multiple offices in the ACT so we coordinate many of our activities through our office in Braddon, and it's something that gets all the offices together. Overall, the impact has been that it's a much more inclusive office now. Everyone has the opportunity to participate in our activities outside work, where, for example, activities involving alcohol used to exclude people who don't drink, or don't like to drink much."

Nexus is a not-for-profit, but that doesn't mean that they're not concerned about their bottom line!



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“Absenteeism has decreased steadily over the last two years,” says Lisa. “Our discussions around health have changed the culture around sick days, and morale has improved, so people just want to be here. In fact, our improved morale is key to all the material benefits we’ve seen from Healthier Work. We’re definitely going to stay in the program. Apart from anything else, it’s good for our image and branding. When Healthier Work put us on an ad on the back of a bus, it actually generated a lot of interest in the business; we even took out our own bus ad as a result.”

