“Healthier Work is available to all workplaces across Canberra, no matter the size or industry. From micro businesses who want to set the groundwork of a healthy culture before they expand, to large workplaces with 500+ staff.

While individuals make daily choices around their health and wellbeing, the ACT Government is supporting healthy decision-making through opportunities to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Healthier Work sits within the Healthy Weight Initiative, a whole of government approach that works across multiple directorates. Healthier Work assists workplaces with individualised support to get a health and wellbeing plan up and running, as well as ongoing engagement activities to ensure you get the assistance needed to make the healthier choice the easier choice in your workplace.”

Christine Spicer, Manager, Healthier Work
Healthier Work Recognised workplaces in 2015–16

The following Canberra workplaces were formally Recognised by Healthier Work for their commitment to creating a healthier workplace for their staff during the 2015-16 financial year. Businesses that have achieved Silver Status are now in their second year of health and wellbeing activities that are tailored to the needs of staff and the workplace. Businesses classified as Recognised are in their first year of their Healthier Work activities.

This booklet highlights the ideas and approaches used by workplaces to make the healthier choice the easier choice.

Second year Silver Status businesses are featured first, followed by first year Recognised businesses.

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Organisations that implement health promotion strategies in the workplace can reduce their workers’ health risk factors by up to 56%.

*The Health of Australia’s workforce, Medibank Private (2015)*
Foreword

People are our most valuable resource. Any business, whether public, private, big or small, relies on the health and wellbeing of employees to ensure success. Yet many businesses overlook the benefit small changes can make to their people and workplace culture.

This publication outlines some simple, low-cost, creative and practical activities Healthier Work businesses in the ACT have adopted to foster and embed a healthier – and happier – workplace culture.

Sadly, chronic disease risk factors – such as smoking, alcohol misuse, poor diet, physical inactivity and unhealthy weight – are a daily reality for 96 per cent of working-age Australians.1 Many risk factors are preventable and business can play a key role and reap the benefits of reducing chronic disease risk factors in their workforce.

In the ACT, only 11 per cent of adults eat enough vegetables each day and more than half of adults are overweight or obese. Consuming high risk levels of alcohol is still a factor for 21 per cent of ACT adults.2 The facts are staggering.

The good news is adult smoking rates continue to decrease in the ACT and nationally3, and many people are recognising the importance of making healthier choices.

For more than three years the ACT Government, through the Healthier Work service, has been helping Canberra businesses to embrace their duty of care to employees and create a workplace culture where people are healthier, happier and enjoy better work-life balance.

We are delighted to see so many of these businesses noticing tangible benefits from being involved in the Healthier Work program.

These workplaces have recorded reduced absenteeism and increased productivity, staff engagement, team cohesiveness and resilience.

They report that becoming healthier isn’t onerous or demanding. Big changes have been experienced through small simple steps, plenty of enthusiasm and regular communication.

This year, we were thrilled to recognise 18 businesses with Healthier Work Silver Status. These businesses are now into their second year of maintaining a structured approach to health and wellbeing within their workplace.

We also welcome another 35 businesses as Healthier Work Recognised for embracing their commitment to 12 months of health and wellbeing activities in their workplaces.

We hope the ideas shared in this booklet spark a healthy work journey for your business too.

Dave Peffer
Access Canberra, Deputy Director-General

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Healthier Work – what’s in it for you?

You can access support and resources from Healthier Work to establish your health and wellbeing plan and maintain momentum with its implementation. Many resources are free.

MENTORING LUNCHES
- Learn from other businesses
- Meet new people
- Pick up resources
- Get motivated
- Take part in professional development

NETWORKING BREAKFASTS
- Meet other business people
- Celebrate your Healthier Work status
- Learn from other’s experiences

VISITS AND ADVICE
- Personalised visits
- Advice to address your particular workplace needs
- Ideas and online resources

BUSINESS PROMOTION
- Social media presence
- Case study profiles
- Networking opportunities

Getting started

Step by step technique Healthier Work guides you through to create a healthier workplace.

Get started
Commitment from management

Get organised
Find your champion/start a workgroup

Get information
What do workers want/need? What facilities are available?

Plan it
What? When? How?

Contact Healthier Work at any stage

Review it
Did it work?

Do it
Let staff know how to be part of it

Check it
How is it going?
AIATSIS

Activities appeal to different staff interests

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is a world-renowned research, collections and publishing organisation. They promote knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions, languages and stories from the past and present.

For their second year of health and wellbeing activities, AIATSIS has put the spotlight on physical movement.

“We have consulted staff and asked for their input in relation to what they would like to see in the plan,” says Amit Barkay, Facilities Coordinator at AIATSIS.

The new plan features weekly cricket and boxing open to all staff at lunch times. Plus staff have been joining in fun runs and their AIATSIS football team plays at the ANU. They also facilitate a weekly yoga class.

Beyond the physical activities, AIATSIS also encourages staff healthy eating as well as social and emotional wellbeing.

“We had some mental health awareness sessions and we have a meeting room that can be used as a 30-minute meditation retreat,” explains Amit.
“Moving into autumn as the weather cools down, people tend to consume more comfort food, so we then start to focus on healthy eating.”

This includes hosting a seminar with a nutritionist, promoting healthy eating with posters and flyers, and running a monthly soup day.

When summer rolls around again, the team at AIATSIS will introduce fortnightly volleyball games to break up the work day, along with promoting ride and walk to work days.

For AIATSIS, the enduring theme that has kept the momentum going has been the support of senior management.

“Senior management support, along with good partners to help drive the program, is crucial for its success,” says Amit.

He also suggests regular communication with staff as an important factor for keeping things moving.

“Before the end of your first year, reignite and motivate staff by asking for their input for the coming year,” says Amit.

**TIP**

Give it time and persistence and you can achieve significant benefits for your employees, as well as healthy returns for your business.

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Most Australians spend about one third of their lives at work, so it makes good business sense to invest in making the work environment a key setting for promoting positive health and wellbeing.
Barmco Mana Partnership offers consulting expertise in projects, commercial buildings, specialised engineering services and related activities within the property and construction industry in the ACT and surrounding region.

Proactively participating in the Healthier Work program has paid off for the small team at Barmco Mana Partnership. “Promoting a happy, healthy office environment has a positive effect on staff wellbeing and productivity,” says Leah Wheelhouse, Business Development Manager at Barmco Mana Partnership. “We’ve seen the entire team take on changes, which is reflected in the day-to-day office operations as well as some lifestyle adjustments at home.”

The team used their first year of planning to explore and introduce new methods for being a healthier workplace. Now in their second year, they are maintaining the activities that worked well, while continually refining them to meet staff needs.

“The delivery of a fruit basket to the office worked well last year, so it’s also part of this year’s plan,” says Leah. “Each year we encourage staff to enter a couple of fun runs – this year it’s the 5km Miss Muddy and the Proximity Team Triathlon Challenge.”

Around the office, changes in behaviour have been noticed, with more stand-up or walking meetings, standing up while on the phone, and registrations with OzHelp for health tune-ups.

The events put on for Healthier Work Champions and Recognised businesses have also been really valuable for boosting staff motivation levels.

“The Healthier Work team put on some great events through the year,” explains Leah. “We have been to the networking lunches to see what has worked for other companies.”

Leah says they also enjoyed the various challenges posed by Healthier Work including the Hula Hoop Challenge, Squat Challenge and the 8-week Active Workplace Challenge.

“We have a fantastic team and want to ensure that we look after them by providing a healthy work environment and information to help achieve a healthier lifestyle both in the office and at home,” says Leah.
Campbell High School enjoys an enviable position, situated at the base of Mount Ainslie, next to the Australian War Memorial and only minutes to Canberra’s CBD. It is a welcoming space, which combines traditional architecture with contemporary elements of education. This Year 7–10 school was founded in 1965 and has an enrolment of 730 students.

As key role models for the students at Campbell High School, the health and wellbeing of teachers is paramount.

“We were spending a lot of time supporting students and decided we needed to ensure that we were focussing on, and maintaining, our own health,” says Sonja Marmont, Executive Teacher at Campbell High when they signed up to Healthier Work.

“When staff prepare healthy meals, use pedometers, participate in boot camps and carry water bottles, this not only improves staff wellbeing, but also encourages the students,” explains Sonja.

This attitude inspired both their first and second year of health and wellbeing activities, and now Campbell High School has silver Healthier Work status.

Some of the activities chosen for their current plan include weekly boot camps, a Lighten Up challenge aimed at eating healthier, and better promotion of their Employee Assistance Program for social and emotional support.

“We have also had monthly challenges where staff select one thing that they would like to focus on,” says Sonja. “Some of the things chosen are drinking more water, not eating lollies and walking 10km at day. They make a commitment to stick to it.”

The introduction of healthier morning teas has also been of benefit to the whole team.

“We have a happier and more health-conscious team that feel supported and valued,” says Sonja.

Sonja also offers some advice to other workplaces thinking of signing up to Healthier Work.

“Involve staff in the decisions about what should be in the plan, and have a champion or two to drive the program,” suggests Sonja. “Enthusiasm is key to making long-term changes.”
Canberra Labor Club forms part of a progressive Group that is experiencing continual growth. The Group has grown into one the most successful licensed clubs in the Canberra region, and is proud of its 60,000 strong membership. The Group consists of four modern venues: Belconnen, City (Civic), Ginninderra (Charnwood) and Weston Creek (Stirling).

When reflecting on their first year as a Healthier Work Recognised business, Canberra Labor Club Group noted a positive approach to teamwork was one outcome of their activities. “There’s a sense of unity among the group – a feeling like you belong,” says Lynda Bailey, the Group’s Healthier Work Champion. “That is important to work harmony, cohesiveness and a healthy workplace.”

Now into their second year – and with Silver Status – Canberra Labor Club Group developed their second 12-month health and wellbeing plan by reviewing what worked well last year.

“We sought consultation with our workforce on what interests them and looked at the benefit of these activities to promote wellbeing and inclusiveness for all employees,” says Lynda. Some of their activities include providing maps of local bike routes, promoting a corporate gym rate, participating in FebFast and planning a paintball social activity.

Canberra Labor Club Group knows how critical their employees are to the success of their business.

“We recognise that to have a productive, successful business, we need to ensure we have a healthy workforce, both mentally and physically,” explains Lynda.

“We also understand there are many factors that contribute to the overall health of the team and we actively seek to support them in living and working well.

“Total wellbeing and work-life balance are important and acknowledged through our involvement in Healthier Work,” says Lynda.
Joining in for health and fun

Capital Chemist Wanniassa

Capital Chemist is wholly-owned by like-minded pharmacists dedicated to providing quality pharmaceutical and ancillary services to their clients.

As the first business to be Healthier Work Recognised back in 2014, Capital Chemist has maintained the momentum into their second year. The team continues to plan and implement small changes that make an immense difference to their work environment. “I’ve seen the impact on staff morale and the visible enjoyment when staff complete the activities,” says Elise Apolloni, Manager of Capital Chemist Wanniassa. “People often talk about the activities before and after they take place.”

To compile their 12-month plan of health and wellbeing activities, the team holds a ‘Pharmspiration’ staff meeting to discuss suggestions. It’s this collaborative approach that makes a difference to the types of activities that are chosen. “For the second year of our plan, we are introducing ‘healthy hump day’ for staff to bring healthy food in on Wednesdays,” explains Elise. “We’re also taking on a Steptember challenge and inviting staff to a lawn bowls social day.” To educate about, and encourage, the responsible consumption of alcohol, the pharmacy has stocked 0.5 alcohol tests and subsidised the cost of these for staff. The combination of all these activities adds up to a happy and motivated workforce. “Healthier Work is something we all decided we wanted to be part of,” says Elise.

The average worker is up to 7% less productive because of their health risks.

Delnas Metal Roofing is a leading Canberra-based contractor specialising in metal roofing and cladding solutions for commercial, industrial and residential projects.

After two years focusing on the health and wellbeing of their staff, Delnas Metal Roofing continues to address a team culture that doesn't always put personal health and wellbeing first.

“The construction industry is predominantly male and they’re not always committed to their own personal health,” says Nicole Leishman, owner of Delnas Metal Roofing.

Still, the business commitment to raise awareness of healthy practices and decision-making remains strong.

“We want to change this ingrained culture and improve engagement with healthier work activities,” says Nicole. “We’re doing some one-on-one consultation with all levels of staff to identify, model and promote positive language and behaviours around workplace wellness.”

In support of this, their second 12-month plan of healthy activities continues to promote good practices around physical and mental health.

“We’re promoting men’s mental health issues, offering free skin checks, hosting a SunSmart seminar, organising Tradies Tune-ups and providing free flu vaccinations,” explains Nicole.

Delnas Metal Roofing is also on their way to becoming a smoke-free workplace.

As their experience shows, it can take perseverance to effect change across a business culture, but they’re quick to say that it’s all worth it.

“We have implemented a few simple initiatives and made small changes to others,” says Nicole. “None have been at a great expense either financially or with staff resources.

“Incorporating Healthier Work initiatives does not have to be onerous or costly, and staff respond when they feel valued,” Nicole says.
Greening Australia is a not-for-profit organisation working on private and public lands to make positive changes to landscapes. They also offer regular environmental activities for the local community.

The benefit of working in the environmental sector is that Greening Australia staff are often outside and physically active. Yet it still takes conscious effort to ensure the workplace is a healthy and happy one.

“We are generally healthy people, but by joining Healthier Work we have been able to assess our habits and make improvements,” says Greening Australia Capital Region’s Jeni DeLandre. “Along the way, we have developed new ideas and had great discussions about healthy bodies and minds.”

Moving into their second year with Healthier Work, the Greening Australia team has refined their 12-month health and wellbeing plan via staff meetings. The focus continues to be on keeping the activities simple and relevant.

“We encourage a walk around the adjacent oval during the days when you’re in the office for long periods,” says Jeni. “We also make sure there are healthy options for staff and volunteer morning teas.”

The team spend time on social and emotional wellbeing, with stress management seminars, social events and blood donation drives.

The staff awareness of a healthy lifestyle – including managing stress and staying hydrated – has also translated beyond the office.

“Having a healthier workplace has given us a better understanding of staying healthy and safe when out in the field, particularly when it is busy and hot,” says Jeni.

The impact of a healthier workplace continues to offer tangible benefits, making the program worthwhile for Greening Australia Capital Region.

“This program actually helps you take the steps to improve your workplace instead of just talking about it,” says Jeni.
The Housing Industry Association is the official body representing the home building industry in the ACT and Southern NSW. It has a large membership base and aims to lead by example in many areas, including workplace health and wellbeing.

Now into their second year as a Healthier Work Recognised business, HIA ACT/SNSW has certainly noticed a difference in the wellbeing of their staff and the general impact healthier approaches have had on the business.

“We seem to have a happier workplace since coming on board with Healthier Work,” says Kristie Burt, HIA ACT/SNSW Workplace Adviser. “We have seen a reduction in sick days and staff are becoming more involved in our activities.”

The activities – a mix of healthy eating, physical activity and social or emotional wellbeing – have evolved over the two years and are largely suggested by staff.

“We incorporate activities that worked well last year, and also consult with staff on what they would be happy to get involved with,” says Kristie.

Each activity is listed in a 12-month plan and broken into seasonal pursuits – to address different health and wellbeing needs, to adjust to the outside temperature, and to support the flow of workloads.

“For autumn, we have scheduled a walk once a week, we will hold a pedometer challenge, and our focus around the office is on encouraging walking to talk, rather than emailing each other,” says Kristie.

Then in winter, computers will offer regular prompts to move and stretch and the team will hold social Friday trivia events.

When the warmer weather comes around again, the team plan to get together for exercise classes like hula hooping or yoga.

“We also encourage staff to form teams to enter fun runs and walks,” Kristie says.

Sometimes it can be the simplest things – like ordering a water cooler to encourage the team to drink more water – that make a big difference.

After a couple of years of adjusting their approach, Kristie now notes that the extra support required at the beginning really does pay off.
“If you can encourage a little to begin with, you will notice changes to attitudes and responsiveness in a relatively short period of time,” Kristie says. “The positives of becoming involved definitely outweigh the negatives and the business will reap the benefits.”

Kristie also notes that having Healthier Work there every step of the way provides the encouragement and support she needs to keep the office happy and thriving.

**TIP**

Keep good records of program initiatives, participation rates and any identified barriers or enablers in implementation. This will assist in your ongoing monitoring and evaluation of your program.

“I’m proud that MBA is Healthier Work Recognised Silver Status. From improved staff morale to the mentoring offered by Healthier Work – engaging with Healthier Work is good for business.”

*Kirk Coningham*, Executive Director, Master Builders Association of the ACT
Lendlease is a leading international property and infrastructure group with capabilities spanning the property value chain. In Australia that includes development management, investment management, project management and construction, and asset and property management. In Canberra, Lendlease is largely represented by the local office of Lendlease’s Building business.

In their second year of creating Healthier Work plans, the Canberra team’s approach to a healthy workplace fits within the Group’s Health & Wellbeing Framework, which supports the physical and mental wellbeing of employees through multiple channels and a supportive culture and environment.

Chris Sofatzis, Canberra Regional Manager, Building says health and wellbeing is a key driver for the business, which has sustainability as a core value.

“We were putting together our annual health and wellbeing plan and scheduling in the regular activities provided by the Lendlease Foundation like flu vaccinations, skin health checks and awareness and fundraising events like Movember,” says Chris.

“We then looked at what additional seasonal activities could work around our other business commitments.

“We settled on a two-month diet and exercise challenge through MeasureUp.

“The challenge included education on diet and exercise and tracked results of lifestyle changes by using dual xray body absorptiometry (DEXA) scans to provide before and after measurements around body composition – fat, muscle and bone density.

“More than 40 people participated with 91 per cent seeing an improvement in body composition.

“Overall, the group dropped more than 60kg of fat over two months which was an average of nearly 2kg per person,” says Chris.

The program developed a real competitive momentum.

“The measurable results and element of friendly competition helped to make the activity a success for our people,” Chris explains.
“Because of this, we’ve increased activity and awareness without people deliberately thinking about ‘doing more exercise’ or ‘eating more healthy foods’.

“We’re as committed as ever with fresh ideas to help bring health and happiness to our employees, their families and the communities where we live and work,” says Chris.

**TIP**

Establishing a health and wellbeing plan takes a commitment from management – consider a workplace health and wellbeing policy.

“Canberra Business Chamber supports Healthier Work. We have partnered to deliver workshops to our members highlighting the business benefits of creating a healthier work environment. It is good for both your business’ bottom line and the health of your staff.”

Robyn Hendry, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Business Chamber
Master Builders Association ACT was formed in 1925 and represents the interests of commercial and residential builders, civil contractors, suppliers/subcontractors and professionals. It is also a Registered Training Organisation and a Group Training Organisation.

The team at Master Builders ACT hasn’t looked back since signing on to be a healthier workplace in 2015.

“One of our members, Delnas Metal Roofing, was already involved with Healthier Work and they encouraged us to be part of it,” says Kirk Coningham, the association’s Executive Director.

Now into their second year, the impact of investing in a plan to get staff more active and aware of healthy choices for their bodies and their minds is being noticed.

“We've seen more engaged, productive and healthy staff members,” says Kirk.

Developing their second 12-month plan was easier after embedding processes for continual feedback from staff.

“We use our Health and Safety Committee as the primary consultative resource,” explains Kirk. “We reviewed all of last year’s activities to draft the 2016 plan, then refined it at our regular team meeting.”

This year’s plan addresses physical activity, healthy eating, social and emotional wellbeing, as well as responsible consumption of alcohol.

“We’ve lined up a cooking demonstration, a fundraising activity for charity, and an outdoor challenge,” says Kirk. “We’re also auditing our vending machine menus and providing information on alcohol use and misuse.”

A large part of the Master Builders ACT approach is to recognise staff efforts along the way – to acknowledge the individual’s commitment to achieving their health and wellbeing goals.

“We actively promote employee recognition as part of the 12-month plan,” Kirk says.

Kirk also has some encouraging advice for other businesses looking to embed healthy habits: the second year of being a healthier workplace does get easier.
“Initially businesses may face resistance to some ideas proposed as part of Healthier Work,” explains Kirk. “However, they should persevere because once staff become involved they are keen to share ideas, achievements and participate in the initiatives that create a healthier workplace.”

Snapshot

PhysioSport O’Connor

Physiotherapy practice

- Fruit supplied weekly
- Healthy Christmas party lunch with families invited
- FebFast Challenge
- Enter team in Mother’s Day Classic
- beyondblue online training
- New bike rack for work courtyard
- Pilates classes

TIP

Before considering what program strategies are needed and wanted by staff, review what initiatives relating to health and wellbeing your organisation may already offer to staff.
QBE Insurance is one of the world’s top 20 general insurance and reinsurance companies, providing a broad range of insurance products including car and home insurance, and workers compensation cover.

“Apart from the general wellness of our staff, we want our people to have more fun at work and be more engaged,” says Renee Creech, QBE Insurance Australia’s designated Healthier Work Champion for the ACT Workers Compensation business.

This attitude, along with a desire to be an employer of choice, was the driver behind QBE Insurance Australia’s ACT Workers Compensation team signing up to Healthier Work two year ago.

“When we met with the Healthier Work team, it highlighted the connection between a healthy workplace and staff engagement, productivity and customer satisfaction,” explains Renee.

“We could see that we were doing some good things already, but with a small amount of effort, we could transition to doing some great things.”

It was an encouraging base from which to start, with the delivery of their health and wellbeing plan relatively straightforward. And the plan was also enhanced by input from staff to ensure the activities aligned with staff interests.

For their second year of health and wellbeing activities, QBE Insurance is organising a session with Pedal Power to encourage active travel to and from work, plus plenty of other activities to align with the seasons.

“We’re establishing a recipe club, and providing staff with monthly massage sessions to help de-stress, and taking part in weekly Pilates sessions,” says Renee.

The team is also creating opportunities for staff to contribute to their local community through volunteering their services – a great initiative for social and emotional wellbeing.

“If we can achieve our health and wellbeing goals, we hope our customers will experience better outcomes and an even better level of services – and become advocates for our business,” explains Renee.
Ray White Woden is a one-stop-shop for all your property needs.

The team of Ray White Woden has found new, healthy ways to socialise with colleagues through common interests, such as bike riding. Now into their second year – marked by Healthier Work Silver Status – Ray White Woden’s focus is now on refining policies and continuing with activities that were successful last year.

“For our focus on healthy eating, we have a fruit box delivered weekly and this year we’re organising a seminar with a nutritionist,” says Paige Cameron, Ray White Woden’s Office Manager and Healthier Work Champion. “We’ll also be expanding our staff library in the breakout area to encourage staff to read and relax at lunchtimes away from their desks.”

The team is also reviewing their workplace policies to ensure they promote positive mental health, and support workers with any issues.

To encourage the responsible consumption of alcohol, they are organising a work-related social function at a time or venue where alcohol is not expected, such as a breakfast or ten-pin bowling.

Ray White Woden is engaging in walking groups and offering discounted gym memberships to continually promote the importance of regular physical activity.

“Office morale has definitely picked up,” says Paige. “It is clear to see that healthier living has increased across the office overall, with staff exercising more, eating better and keeping well. We expect to see a decrease in sick leave levels in our second year.

“The Healthier Work program highlights to us that as an organisation we are helping our staff create a healthier lifestyle by making small changes,” Paige says.
Richardson Primary School

A strong staff culture is the ultimate benefit

Richardson Primary School is a small school in the south of Canberra providing meaningful learning experiences to students from preschool through to Year 6. Their motto is, ‘Success for Every Student’.

The activities that form Richardson Primary School’s 12-month health and wellbeing plan aim to address the management of individual workloads and personal physical health.

“Creating our 12-month plan was about formalising a lot of the things we already do to address staff wellbeing,” says Mitch Bartholomew, Executive Teacher at the school.

“It provided us with the opportunity to engage staff in the process and create a more targeted plan.”

The more formal approach has worked, with Richardson Primary School achieving silver Healthier Work status and plenty of staff involved with the various activities.

“In week six of each term, we have a ‘Family Friendly Week’ where we don’t schedule any after school commitments for staff,” says Mitch.

“We encourage staff to leave early and spend time with their families.”

On top of this initiative, the school is investing in simple measures to embed a culture of health and wellbeing.

“We have agreed finish times to avoid staff burnout, we offer 15-minute massages to all staff in weeks nine and 10 of each term, and have negotiated a discounted rate at the local gym,” says Mitch. “Our weekly boot camp sessions are also very popular.”

For the small team, the benefits go even further than reduced absenteeism – which is still a significant measure of success for the school.

“A strong staff culture is crucial to the success of any business, especially a primary school,” says Mitch. “We value our staff and a focus on health and wellbeing enables our teachers to be at their best when it counts, and that’s when they are in the classroom.

“It’s a small investment in time and money for significant benefits,” Mitch says.
Snapshot
Sportsman’s Warehouse
Retail store
• Flu vaccinations for all part-time and full-time staff
• Healthy morning teas every Friday
• Encourage the use of the lounge/chill out area in the tea room
• Table tennis competition
• Social bike riding
• Encourage participation in Dry July

Snapshot
St Vincent de Paul Canberra-Goulburn
Not-for-profit
• Healthy recipe sharing
• Fruit and nuts to replace biscuits
• Workplace posters to promote quit smoking
• 10-minute breaks and stretching exercises throughout the day
• Team squat challenge
• Gratitude board
The Tradies

Regular communication and incentives for healthier staff

Operating in Canberra for 50 years, with licensed community clubs and hotels in Dickson and Woden.

Tackling the challenge of going smoke-free in their first year as a Healthier Work Recognised business was well worth the effort for The Tradies.

Now into their second year – with silver Healthier Work status – The Tradies has demonstrated what can be achieved with the right commitment and planning.

“Receiving silver status from Healthier Work showed us how successful our first year was,” says Kim Knight, The Tradies’ Health and Safety Officer. “Twelve months smoke-free for us is a great achievement.”

With a large staff across multiple venues, the success of the first year came down to regular staff communication, ongoing adjustment to their approach, and incentives to encourage participation.

Plus The Tradies found the support and help offered by the Healthier Work team invaluable.

“We found it took 12 months for us to identify the best form of communication was text messaging, not posters or emails,” explains Kim. “We also found staff were more interested in physical activities rather than information sessions.

“And prizes are a great way to get staff involved.”

The Tradies has been a smoke-free workplace since December 2014 and they have also seen other behaviour changes since signing up to Healthier Work.

“Staff are more conscious of their diets – they look for the fruit basket now not the lolly jar,” says Kim.

Using their learnings, The Tradies created their second-year plan to incorporate free gym memberships and healthy staff meals.

Plus they continue to push the smoke-free message with seminars and 4-week quit your bad habit challenges.

“We found the gradual introduction of new ideas works better than immediate changes,” says Kim. “Not every idea will suit every employee, so we adjust to find what interests staff.”
Wizard People Pty Ltd

Evidence of a strong, happy team

Wizard People is a boutique specialist recruitment firm providing recruitment, payroll and scribing services to government and the private sector. They have extensive knowledge of the industries and markets they work within.

Extending on last year’s success with Healthier Work activities, Wizard People has taken their plans up a notch.

“We recognised the immediate benefits of the first 12-month plan,” says Peter Berlis, Wizard People’s Resource Coordinator. “We wanted to take our healthier workplace to the next level.”

“It was a simple to decision to continue with last year’s efforts and move forward – we want to enable a greater work–life balance with healthy initiatives,” says Peter. “And management was at the forefront of the planning.”

The small team has seen impressive results, with a reduction in absenteeism of more than 50 per cent.

“Now that employees are taking less than 20 per cent of their sick leave each year, we’ve implemented a sick leave transfer option to enable portions of sick leave to become annual leave,” explains Peter.

This year Wizard People purchased a Fitbit for all staff to help them track sleeping patterns, water intake, calories and fitness activities. They also organise monthly yoga classes and they’re compiling a workplace recipe book.

“The benefits are far greater than we anticipated,” says Peter. “Not only has it increased productivity, it has also created working relationships amongst members of the team who now exercise together while on breaks.”

“The current business environment is highly motivating with all employees leveraging off the positive vibes created by the healthier approach,” Peter says.

Don’t underestimate the benefits of starting health and wellbeing initiatives in your workplace, whatever their size or scope.
Snapshot

Access HQ

IT

- Walking challenge
- Host a family-orientated outdoor Christmas function with games (cricket, touch footy, bocce)
- Access HQ branded water bottles
- Recipe exchange club with a focus on traditional, multicultural recipes
- Information about healthy lunch options and healthy eating/hydration

Snapshot

Animal Health Australia

Not-for-profit

- Incentives to promote physical activity, such as flexible work hours
- beyondblue online workshops monthly for three months
- Training for managers on the impact of the work environment on social and emotional wellbeing
- Walking groups and other activity groups that meet before, during or after work
- Promote on-site bike racks, showers, change rooms and lockers for walkers, runners and cyclists (shampoo and soap provided)
A healthy culture from the ground up

ArrowFM is a Supply Nation certified provider of national facilities management, specialising in electrical services. They support local SMEs and provide a single point of contact and technical project management.

With a very small – yet growing – team of staff, ArrowFM is keenly aware of the importance of building a healthy workplace from the ground up. They recently signed up to Healthier Work in an effort to formalise their approach.

“We have just commenced our 12-month health and wellbeing plan,” says Corinne Wallis, General Manager at ArrowFM. “Our employees are actively engaged in their own health and wellbeing and we wanted to entrench this attitude into the business.”

Adequate physical activity is at the very heart of good health – promoting emotional wellbeing and assisting in the prevention and management of over 20 medical conditions and diseases.

For a new business, engaging Healthier Work at these early stages sets the tone for the future culture as the workplace inevitably expands.

“As a start-up company that is rapidly expanding, we want to engage all new employees and foster a vibrant, healthy culture,” explains Corinne.

Their list of health and wellbeing activities now includes a Tradies Tune-up through OzHelp, a focus on healthy eating around the office, discounted gym memberships and participation in Dry July.

The process for compiling their first plan was straightforward for ArrowFM.

“We started talking about what is important within our workplace, then the rest fell into place,” says Corinne.
Barton Private Hospital

Getting active to promote team work

Barton Private Hospital is an accredited hospital with three operating rooms and 10 overnight beds.

The management of Barton Private Hospital see their involvement in Healthier Work as a great way to promote team work and encourage social interaction amongst staff. “We work in a highly demanding environment, so Healthier Work activities help people to get along better and encourage more patience,” says Jessy McGowan, the hospital’s CEO.

While keeping all 50 staff motivated to participate isn’t always easy, Jessy continues to plan activities and encourage involvement. “For this year so far, we’ve organised three outings,” explains Jessy. “It’s how we are getting active to promote team work.” The outings include a team climb of Mount Taylor near Woden, a walk around Lake Burley Griffin, and a ten-pin bowling night. “Healthy staff are happy staff,” says Jessy. “And happy staff increase your productivity and decrease your sick leave.”

TIP

Try the Healthier Work online Score Card to identify potential workplace changes.
Bradley Allen Love Lawyers (BAL) believes in providing a supportive, healthy and dynamic workplace to its staff.

The Directors of BAL are passionate about encouraging staff to adopt a healthy outlook and facilitate this by providing numerous different health programs for staff. BAL started a formal wellbeing program including bootcamp-style physical fitness lessons for all staff from 2006. Over the years, the program has evolved to include running groups, yoga classes, nutritional and mental health seminars, health checks, massages, weekly fruit baskets and its own physical challenge networking event called Sweatworking®, which supports local charities and is now in its fifth year.

In 2015 BAL gained recognition from Healthier Work for their existing program captured in a 12-month health and wellbeing plan.

BAL continued to adopt a holistic approach which now includes activities for fitness, mental health and healthy eating. They bolstered the already impressive program with new initiatives such as a walking group, a pedometer challenge, FebFast, plus promotion of stress management techniques, including mindfulness practices.

Mental health and stress are particular components of the program BAL has spent more time on to support their staff’s wellbeing, recognising high stress is a natural occurrence in a fast-paced law firm.

Since formalising their 12-month health and wellbeing plan with Healthier Work, BAL has already seen improved employee engagement and enthusiasm about participating.

The Directors recognise the correlation between health and wellbeing and productivity, so they are proud of BAL’s focus on the program.
Canberra Endodontics is a specialist dental practice that takes appointments by referral only.

Practice Manager of Canberra Endodontics, Deborah Henry, has been thrilled to find new linkages with other workplaces through their involvement with Healthier Work.

“I love the community of Healthier Work workplaces!” Deborah says. “The breakfasts and lunches for Healthier Work Recognised businesses are just amazing. It is really great to be able to get more information to help our staff, through both the interaction with other workplaces and with the guest speakers at these functions.

“It makes you realise just how much information and help is out there to assist us all to be healthier in both body and mind.”

The sharing of ideas with other businesses who focus on a healthy culture for their staff has been very valuable, as has the input provided by the Healthier Work team.

“The support from Healthier Work has been fabulous,” Deborah says.

When Canberra Endodontics first started their 12-month health and wellbeing plan, Deborah asked staff to vote on the particular areas they wanted to focus on. Then they came up with a seasonal list of activities.

“Our staff were already generally healthy, but Healthier Work just made them more aware,” says Deborah. “We chose to do healthy eating in winter so that we could be more aware of not just eating comfort food,” says Deborah. “This was beneficial as the staff then felt that they didn’t put on that bit of extra weight that often comes with winter!”

The team is also looking at introducing a 10-minute walk at the commencement of staff meetings.

And Deborah’s enthusiasm for embedding a healthy team culture is contagious.

“I love promoting a healthier workplace,” says Deborah. “It makes our staff feel better!”
Snapshot
Capital Chemist Southlands

Health
- Fruit supply to promote healthy snacking
- Workplace challenges (such as eat well for a week or try a different vegetable each day)
- Saturday morning Park Runs
- Pedometers for walking/step challenges
- Organise social functions at a time when alcohol is not expected (breakfast or morning tea)

Snapshot
Casino Canberra

Hospitality
- Fortnightly summer sport ‘have a go’ nights (free or low cost)
- Organise a speaker on ‘New Year’s Resolutions’
- Corporate gym rates
- Flu shots
- Healthy lifestyle ‘share a tip’ day to encourage staff connection
- Collect canned food for the Food Bank in November for the lead up to their Christmas rush
- Provide healthier staff meals with a focus on ¼ protein, ¼ carbohydrate, ½ vegetable ratio
Snapshot
CIO Division – Department of Human Services

Government
- Lighter and non-alcoholic options available at social and work events
- Give up smoking program
- Fruit stations
- Social functions such as fishing competition, Melbourne Cup, book clubs, chess competition, knitting club
- 10,000 steps challenge
- Reconciliation walk

Snapshot
CIT Centre for Health, Community and Service

Health/Education
- Circulate information about the CIT Smoke Free Policy
- Social and emotional wellbeing sessions
- ‘Healthy vegetable intake week’ challenge using eLearn quiz functions
- Walking/standing meetings
- Promote campus walking tracks
- Healthy vegetable snack platters at planning days
Snapshot
Civic Early Learning Centre

Education

• Weekly fruit bowl for the staff room during summer
• Employee Assistance Program staff talk
• Participate in fundraiser related to mental health issues
• Use Quit Coach and/or My QuitBuddy app to assist with smoking cessation
• Awards given out weekly for most improved step count as part of pedometer challenge

Snapshot
Communities@Work – Head Office

Not-for-profit

• NewAccess presentation on services to staff
• Lake walking groups
• Healthy eating and hydration posters
• Recipe exchange club or staff healthy recipe book
• Walking meetings
• Staff challenge to try a different fruit or vegetable each day
Snapshot
Communities@Work – Weston Hub
Not-for-profit
- Summer monthly staff BBQ with healthier options and team games
- Employee recognition for exceptional efforts in supporting a healthier work environment
- Remove biscuit jar and replace with fresh fruit and health bars
- NewAccess presentation on services they provide for stress management
- Enter a staff team into a fun run/walk
- Incentives to promote physical activity

Snapshot
Datacom
IT
- Kitchen fridge stocked with non-alcoholic or mock alcoholic beverages
- Recipe competition for ‘healthy warming food’ with winner receiving a prize
- Workshops by nutritionists: Making the most of seasonal produce
- Provide healthy alternative snacks in vending machine
- Relaxation workshops on yoga and meditation
- Inaugural Datacom Games – for staff and family to encourage
Early Childhood Australia (ECA) combined their experience to bring together a plan that would create a stronger workplace culture through healthier practices and social connectivity.

“Drawing on team skills in areas such as project management, workplace health and safety, mental health, policy development and media/publications, we formed a Health and Wellbeing subgroup as part of our ECA Workplace Health and Safety Committee,” explains Chris Steel, ECA’s Policy & Research Manager.

From there, the group consulted with staff on their interests, outlined a plan, and has proactively driven the activities in their health and wellbeing plan.

As part of the plan, ECA has updated organisational policies and procedures to incorporate a stronger focus on health and wellbeing, and created a central ‘portal’ for the sharing of helpful information and resources. ECA has managed to assign a dedicated budget linked to their health and wellbeing plan.

“We’re doing staff training on mental health and promoting events and resources each month,” says Chris. “We cover topics like Ride to Work Day, Stress Down Day and Healthy Eating month.”

They also have a regular fruit basket and ergonomic office equipment.

“We’re even looking at the beautification of our office spaces,” explains Chris.

Chris notes that it is important to allow time for the ideas and plans to be implemented and for staff to have time to start embracing them.

“It has been rewarding to see staff slowly come on board, and to see that their wellbeing is on its way to becoming an embedded part of culture and practice at ECA,” says Chris.
Snapshot
Franklin Early Childhood School

**Education**
- Staff recipe book with healthy ideas for meals and snacks
- FebFast
- Promote the Smiling Mind app
- Create a Fuzzy Feelings Board in each class kitchenette
- Encourage participation in ‘Dry July’
- Circuit training at the FLEX Park next to school
- Register a team in *The Canberra Times* Fun Run

Snapshot
Goodwin Aged Care

**Aged Care**
- Put up healthy eating posters around the workplace
- No smoking while wearing company uniform
- Encourage employees to join local recreation and community clubs and activities
- Multicultural festival and family day
- Promote the use of stairs instead of lifts
Snapshot
Hays Specialist Recruitment

Recruitment

- Encourage walking meetings and walking to client’s offices
- ‘Build & name your sandwich’ challenge
- Distribute information on Heads Up for mental health
- Staff lounge with books and magazines
- Recognise Stress Down Day
- Host a workplace challenge on sleep: go to sleep every night at the same time and maintain the same waking time

Snapshot
Heart Foundation ACT

Not-for-profit/Health

- Monthly walking meetings for the Cardiovascular Health team
- Install sit/stand workstations for staff
- Secure bike parking and shower facilities
- Lunchtime Heart Foundation walks on Monday and Wednesday
- ‘In Recognition Program’ for staff members to commend another staff member on the values displayed by them in carrying out their role
- Mid-afternoon stretch session on Tuesdays
- Fresh fruit box provided each week in the staff kitchen
Kennards Hire started in Bathurst in 1948 and has grown into one of Australia’s largest and most respected hire companies, with over 149 branches in Australia and New Zealand.

In their industry, Kennards Hire must take a practical approach to the safety of their staff. Yet they also want to see their staff happy too. “We have a very strong safety culture within Kennards Hire and being proactive about it is one way we can help our team to go home every day both happy and healthy,” says Ben Hitchen, Manager of Kennards Hire in Canberra.

A particular focus for the Kennards Hire health and wellbeing plan is to provide guidance and information on smoking reduction or cessation. “We’re creating and implementing a comprehensive smoke-free workplace policy, which helps create a physical environment and culture that supports non-smoking and employees who wish to quit,” explains Ben. Some staff members have already given up smoking, which is a fantastic result for Kennards.

They have also implemented a ‘Move 4 Life’ training program that focuses on preventing injuries, strains and sprains. “We also participated in the Run for your Lifeline challenge in November,” says Ben. “We also hope to enter a team in the Canberra Walking Festival.”
“HIA has recently received its Healthier Work Silver status. By creating a healthier work environment, we have seen the direct benefits it has had on our staff and business overall. It can do the same for you too.”

Greg Weller, Regional Executive Director ACT/Southern NSW, Housing Industry Association

Snapshot

Lifeline Canberra

Not-for-profit/Mental health

• Display posters on benefits of quitting alcohol/smoking
• Hold a walking challenge and lunch time walking group
• Encourage employee recognition for exceptional efforts
• Seminar with a qualified nutritionist
• Encourage employees to join local recreation and community clubs and activities

The cost of presenteeism was estimated at $34.1 billion in 2009–2010.

Moulis Legal is a progressive, modern legal business handling commercial and international matters. Their mission is to deliver legal services at the highest level, on a personal basis, and with understanding and commitment.

Inspired by other businesses that were already Healthier Work Recognised, Moulis Legal signed on to the program in late 2015.

“I attended one of the Healthier Work mentoring sessions and came back to the office inspired, enthusiastic and keen to get the ball rolling on becoming a recognised workplace,” says Melissa Miller, Moulis Legal’s workplace champion.

From there, Melissa sourced further inspiration from the Healthier Work book of case studies and started to make a list of the activities that could support the health and wellness of Moulis Legal staff.

“I compiled a survey with a range of activities and sent it around to all staff for their input,” explains Melissa. “The top 12 activities were then chosen.”

These activities were mapped into a 12-month health and wellbeing plan, covering healthy eating, social and emotional wellbeing, physical activity, and the responsible consumption of alcohol.

“We’ve incorporated personal training sessions once a week, a walking challenge between our two offices, and a Feb Fast challenge, which gave us four weeks to break a habit,” says Melissa.

The team also participated in the Get Active Challenge run by the Physical Activity Foundation and plan to have a presentation on how to better deal with stress.

“We are already seeing the benefits,” says Melissa. “Our employees are leaving their offices and taking part in the activities. There is more laughter around the office and better communication.”

It’s easy to see how Melissa’s motivation rubs off on others – highlighting the value of a passionate and driven workplace champion.

“There is no downside to creating a healthier workplace,” says Melissa.
National Capital Private Hospital

Activities for physical and mental workplace health

National Capital Private Hospital is a private Healthscope hospital providing a range of acute and medical healthcare services including orthopaedics, cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, general surgery, neurosurgery, plastic surgery, vascular surgery, urology and geriatric medicine, along with rehabilitation services.

When National Capital Private Hospital decided to formalise their approach to health and wellbeing activities, they wanted to make it a part of their team culture.

“We got started with Healthier Work to educate and promote the importance, and benefits to our staff, of being fit and healthy both physically and mentally,” says Shayne Logue, National Capital Private Hospital’s WHS Manager. “This would also help to reduce work-related injuries and sick leave.”

With medical expertise on hand, they were able to draw on professional advice from their own team. Some of the activities the hospital has introduced include nutrition advice from one of their own dietitians and physiotherapy sessions for clerical staff.

“We’re also entering a team in the MS Fun Run and looking to subsidise nicotine replacement therapy for employees,” says Shayne.

With 300 staff, the coordination of activities has been assigned to a WHS representative in each department of the hospital.

“The WHS rep in each department is also the Healthier Work Champion, who works with their direct line manager and myself to coordinate activities specially for their department staff,” explains Shayne.

This enables flexibility in the plan to meet staff interests and availability.

“This approach is important to ensure you have a good support base to encourage active involvement from all staff,” says Shayne.
National Healthcare Services, National Nursing Agency and National Community Care are nursing care agencies based in Canberra. They specialise in providing compassionate care, delivered by registered nurses, enrolled nurses, assistant nurses and community support workers.

The question driving the National Nursing Agency’s motivation to become Healthier Work Recognised is: ‘Who cares for the carer?’.

“Nurses and carers are so busy putting others first and delivering care to their patients, we quickly worked out that nobody cares for the carer,” explains Natashia Telfer, the Agency’s Care Coordinator. “The rates of staff burnout in our industry is statistically high and proves our theory that we need to actively look after our employees holistically.”

Given the nature of the Agency’s work, the biggest barrier was for all staff to come together at any one time, so when devising their 12-month health and wellbeing plan, they needed to be flexible and meet the differing requirements of all team members.

“We ran an anonymous in-house survey asking what was important to our team,” explains Natashia. “From this data, we were able to identify areas of need.”

Mental health support was high on the agenda for staff, so the Agency took a strong focus on staff social and emotional wellbeing.

“We put together mental health packs with a range of services available for our team, and put them in the tea rooms of the facilities our team work amongst,” says Natashia. “We also expanded the role of our Quality Assurance Manager to visit employees to ask if they are okay and feeling supported.

“We found a smiling familiar face breaks so many barriers in the various work spaces our team find themselves in.”

These simple steps have proven effective, with a new platform of communication now open via the quality assurance reviews as well as ongoing 24/7 text or call options for staff support.

“Sick calls have decreased significantly and employee availability has increased,” says the
Nursing Agency’s Managing Director, Lisa Walker. “Workers compensation claims have decreased from two claims every three months, to none in the last seven months. “We are really proud of our mental health initiative,” Lisa says.

In support of these programs, the Agency also ran a pedometer challenge for the month of March and were able to offer terrific prizes including Fitbits and a Pushy’s bike voucher to keep the team actively engaged. “By making a few small changes, we’ve made our team more reliable, productive and happy,” says Natashia.

**Snapshot**

**Novotel Canberra**

**Hospitality**

- Create a Facebook page and newsletter to promote healthy living
- Staff Christmas party held during the day to help reduce intake of alcohol
- Sponsor a puppy initiative
- Free flu vaccination
- Promote the benefits of soup plus free soup available in staff canteen during winter
- Apples at front desk area
- Mission Australia fundraiser
Snapshot

OPC IT

IT

- Fitbits for staff plus workplace challenges
- Software to monitor timeout and stretching routines
- Dry July
- Blog on the journey to quitting smoking by staff member
- Selection of seasonal fruits available in breakout area
- Participate in fundraising for mental health issues

Snapshot

Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Health

- Online modules from beyondblue
- Lunch and learn on stress management and resilience
- Take the stairs challenge
- Staff family day
### Snapshot

**Raiders Group Weston**

**Hospitality**

- Speak with local businesses to organise discounts on healthy meals
- beyondblue workplace online workshops
- Create and implement a comprehensive smoke-free workplace policy
- Steptember
- Staff team building exercises
- Remove biscuits from tea rooms and replace with healthy options

### Snapshot

**Ruiz Constructions**

**Construction**

- Weekly fruit box for both office and field staff lunchrooms during summer
- Organise skin checks for field-based staff at risk of skin cancer
- Tradies Tune-up onsite via OzHelp for construction-based workers during winter
- Circulate information about stress and general mental health
- No alcohol policy for staff while representing the company at social events
- Water bottles for staff
Snapshot
Stewart Architecture Professionals

- 10-week fruit supply
- Encourage staff to join local recreation and sports clubs
- Promote local yoga and tai chi classes
- Fitness challenge (10K steps or points board)
- Walking meetings
- Staff social function and give out recognition awards

Cutting down and quitting smoking is much easier if it is supported by the workplace environment, managers and co-workers. Workplace quit smoking programs have shown immediate return on investment, with significant return on investment within as little as two years.

Synergy is one of Canberra’s fastest growing, dynamic accounting and consulting firms, serving government and commercial clients. They adopt a modern, inclusive and agile approach to their work.

Addressing the impact of regular computer work and the potential for sedentary behaviour is particularly important to the team at Synergy. “Healthy eating, being active, and social and emotional wellbeing are our priorities,” says Phil Toole, Executive Director at Synergy. “The Healthier Work framework allows us to focus on wellbeing and have some serious fun to help beat the problem of sedentary behaviour.”

To get their 12-month health and wellbeing plan started, Synergy engaged four volunteers, or Healthy Work Champions, to help drive the activities and build enthusiasm amongst the large team.

“Our volunteers have been meeting throughout the past year, identifying opportunities as they emerge, and scheduling activities and events for the whole team to participate in,” says Phil. Some of those activities include walking meetings, promotion of R U OK? Day and other mental health initiatives, and replacing the biscuit bowl with fruit to encourage healthier decision making.

“We participated in The Canberra Times Fun Run in September last year and are already planning to enter again,” explains Phil. “We entered a team in the local touch football competition and we were crowned the overall winner of the MONT 24 Hour mountain bike race earlier this year!”

Their approach to health and wellbeing is being embraced and enjoyed by Synergy staff. “A healthier workplace provides the opportunity for our team to come together in a social environment and build deeper relationships,” Phil says. “Important conversations have also started as a result of the materials that have been left around the office for staff to read.

“The Healthier Work initiative can make a really positive impact,” Phil says.
Snapshot

Tuggeranong Childcare and Education Centre

Education

- Health Tune-ups through the Employee Assistance Program
- Walking challenge
- Allocate a space for a staff breakout area
- Fruit for the office provided regularly
- Q&A with a qualified nutritionist

Snapshot

University of Canberra – Pharmacy Discipline

Education

- ‘Fruit club’ – all bring a favourite fruit to share/try each week
- Recipe exchange club
- Reminders to get out of chair and stretch
- Enter a staff team in the MS Walk and Fun Run to raise money to support people with MS
- ‘Laughter yoga’ workshop
- Promote walking meetings around UC campus instead of traditional seated meetings
Working at the intersection of a leading university and a military academy, UNSW Canberra at the Australian Defence Force Academy has been educating defence leaders for half a century. UNSW Canberra teach undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral research students across arts, business, engineering, IT and science. Undergraduate programs are tailored to the educational needs of members of the Australian Defence Force.

While having a healthier workplace has always been a focus in one way or another for UNSW Canberra, it took defining a health and wellness program to make a real difference for staff and the organisation.

In 2016 UNSW Canberra completed a 12-month health and wellbeing plan with help from Healthier Work so their activities became more clearly structured to meet the needs and interests of staff.
“Focusing on the areas we were lacking in a planned and systematic way made all the difference,” says Jasleen Bhinder, the Senior Health Safety and Facilities Officer for UNSW Canberra. “Since we’ve been Healthier Work Recognised, the overall vibe is positive – especially with staff who are participating in the planned activities.”

In deciding on the types of activities to include in their 12-month plan, UNSW Canberra surveyed staff to uncover interests, likelihood of participation and how they wanted to receive information about activities.

“The survey really provided us with the right background to plan our 12 months of health and wellness,” says Jasleen.

The main activities UNSW Canberra is focusing on include yoga classes twice a week, creating a smoke-free campus, organising a self-defence workshop and participating in the ride to work day.

“We also organised a walking challenge where people participate in groups of seven for a period of 100 days to try to walk 10,000 steps per day,” Jasleen says.

Importantly, UNSW Canberra received significant support from management.

“UNSW Canberra made the activities free for all and staff were also offered flex time,” says Jasleen. “This support was the driver for a successful health and wellness campaign.”

According to Jasleen, offering healthier workplace activities showcases that the organisation you work for really does care for you.

“In turn, this results in a positive work culture and a feeling of goodwill and happiness,” says Jasleen.

For those workers spending many of their waking hours sitting, emerging research is showing that this is also a risk for poor health, even for adults who are undertaking the recommended 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days.

The Vikings Lanyon, located in Conder, provides first choice options in services, hospitality and facilities for the use of members and guests. They are proud to support affiliated sporting groups and the broader community.

Many of the staff at Lanyon Vikings intuitively knew how important it was to be healthy at work and at home. Yet knowing how to put this philosophy into a commonsense action plan required some guidance.

“While many of us are aware of the benefits of living a healthy and active lifestyle, some of us were unaware of how to get started,” explains Mitch Longman, Duty Manager at the Lanyon Vikings. “We felt that getting Vikings involved in Healthier Work would be an easy way to help staff take part in a healthy lifestyle and enjoy doing things with work colleagues.”

So Mitch got in touch with the Healthier Work team, organised a meeting and they were off and running.

“I received guidance and assistance from Healthier Work throughout the entire process,” says Mitch.

After exploring options with Healthier Work, Mitch also discussed activities with staff.

“We wanted to find out what activities would interest staff,” says Mitch.

They developed their 12-month health and wellbeing plan to include a discounted healthy menu for staff, a social indoor soccer team, discounted gym memberships, and healthy snacks always on hand in the staff room. They were even the top fundraisers for the first South Canberra Relay for Life.

Vikings has already seen a positive impact on their staff and the workplace vibe in general.

“Staff morale has increased and we’re seeing more teamwork,” says Mitch. “It’s a great initiative – why not do it?”

TIP

Mentally healthy workplaces work better for everyone, and Heads Up is all about giving individuals and businesses free tools and resources to take action. Visit www.headsup.org.au