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Foreword

GREG JONES
ACT WORK SAFETY COMMISSIONER

The ACT Government, through the free Healthier Work service, is committed to supporting Canberra’s workplaces and ensuring that they thrive as health-promoting environments.

While the most recent ACT Chief Health Officer’s Report indicates that Canberrans are living longer and with more years in good health, it is of concern that roughly half of all adult Canberrans report having a long-term health condition.1

Chronic disease risk factors – such as smoking, risky alcohol consumption, poor diet, physical inactivity and being overweight or obese – are a daily reality for many Canberrans. To add to this, around one in three adult Canberrans is experiencing psychological distress2. It is also important to remind ourselves of the relationship between mental health and physical health outcomes.

Our ability to make healthy choices and maximise our health is heavily influenced by our environment. Given the amount of time the average adult spends at work, businesses must play a role in promoting healthier outcomes for their workers. Healthy workers are more productive and are generally happier, both at work and in their personal lives. It makes sense for businesses to undertake relatively simple changes to create a supportive plan for better health. This assists their workers and benefits the business as a whole.

By signing up to a 12-month health and wellbeing plan, businesses can receive free tailored support from Healthier Work. Businesses are encouraged to consider people and place initiatives, supporting individual behaviour change alongside cultural and practical supports within the workplace (see page 9 for suggested approaches). The plan is seen as a cycle, allowing continuous review and improvement and progression through the Recognition ranks.

As at 1 June 2019, Healthier Work is supporting 75 local businesses, listed on pages 6-7. An ongoing commitment to workplace health and wellbeing has impressively seen 19 businesses recognised with Platinum Status so far this financial year. This means that they have consistently implemented a health and wellbeing plan for four or more years.

In addition, ten businesses achieved **Third Year Gold Status** and 14 were recognised with **Second Year Silver Status**.

Of the remaining 32 **Recognised Status** businesses, 28 came on board within this financial year and the rest are due to soon progress to Silver.

To ensure our Healthier Work program is meeting the expectations of our stakeholders, an independent evaluation of the program has recently been completed. I am thrilled to report that the evaluation found that Healthier Work is associated with significant positive impacts on workers and workplaces, as summarised below.

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<tr>
<th>IMPACTS FOR WORKERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Increased morale and engagement amongst workers</td>
<td>• Improved organisational capacity to implement workplace health and wellbeing initiatives</td>
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<td>• Improved health literacy</td>
<td>• Increased workplace profile and attractiveness to workers</td>
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<td>• Positive changes in workers’ health attitudes and behaviours</td>
<td>• Improved workplace culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• New or improved workplace policies, practices and changes to the physical workplace that support health and wellbeing</td>
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<td>• Return on investment through productivity improvements</td>
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It is important to remember that workplace health and wellbeing programs can take time to effect substantial or lasting change – as demonstrated by many of our Platinum and Gold Recognised workplace case studies. They require a long-term investment, with adequate resourcing and commitment. But with time, persistence and following best practice, the benefits to workers and workplaces can be significant.

So where to for the next 12 months? Healthier Work has always been part of WorkSafe ACT and that relationship will be strengthened in the years ahead. As we do each year, the application of the Healthier Work program will be examined, especially in the context of the recent independent review, to ensure it is best meeting the needs of local businesses.

WorkSafe ACT is committed to supporting businesses to implement preventive health and safety measures. Our ability to support local businesses around mental health has been greatly strengthened with the recent appointment of a dedicated Psychosocial Officer, who will work closely with Healthier Work and WorkSafe ACT’s Operational team.

I trust you will enjoy reading about the many local businesses and their various approaches to investing in the health and wellbeing of their employees. This booklet is full of great ideas and tips. We congratulate all our participating workplaces and look forward to supporting more Canberra businesses in the future.

Greg Jones  
ACT Work Safety Commissioner
### Our Recognised workplaces

#### PLATINUM – FOUR YEARS +

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<th>AIATSIS</th>
<th>Animal Health Australia</th>
<th>Barmco Mana Partnership</th>
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<td>Canberra Labor Club Group</td>
<td>Capital Chemist Wanniassa</td>
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<td>Civium Property</td>
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<td>Delnas Metal Roofing</td>
<td>Greening Australia</td>
<td>Lend Lease</td>
<td>Moulis Legal</td>
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<td>National Capital Private Hospital</td>
<td>National Community Care/National Healthcare Service/National Nursing Agency</td>
<td>OPC IT</td>
<td>PhysioSport O’Connor</td>
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<td>Synergy Group</td>
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#### GOLD – THIRD YEAR

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<th>Goodwin Aged Care</th>
<th>Griffin Legal</th>
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<td>Nexus Human Services</td>
<td>Office of Parliamentary Counsel</td>
<td>PJ Shaw &amp; Associates Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Radford College</td>
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<td>SPOC Landscapes</td>
<td>UNSW Canberra at the ADFA</td>
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## SILVER – SECOND YEAR

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<th>ACTEW AGL Retail</th>
<th>Aspen Medical</th>
<th>Epicon</th>
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<td>National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)</td>
<td>National Archives of Australia</td>
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<td>Pharmacy Guild of Australia</td>
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<td>Woden Community Services</td>
<td>XACT Consulting</td>
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## RECOGNISED – FIRST YEAR

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<th>Acacia Children’s Education Care</th>
<th>Access HQ</th>
<th>Allied Health Office / Clinical Education Unit</th>
<th>Alta Pete</th>
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<td>Australian War Memorial</td>
<td>Bendigo Bank - ACT Branches</td>
<td>Binara Early Childhood Centre</td>
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<td>Callaghan’s Accountants</td>
<td>Canberra and Region Visitors Centre</td>
<td>Cancer Council ACT</td>
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<td>Centre for Invasive Species</td>
<td>Canberra Girls Grammar School – Junior &amp; Senior School</td>
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<td>McDonald Jones Homes</td>
<td>Narrabundah Children’s Cottage – junior and senior campuses</td>
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About Healthier Work

Healthier Work is a free ACT Government service established to support local businesses to thrive as health promoting environments. Healthier Work’s areas of focus include healthy eating, physical activity, mental health through social and emotional wellbeing, reduction of alcohol consumption and smoking cessation.

Getting started

You can access free support and resources from Healthier Work at any stage of your workplace health and wellbeing journey – from gaining management commitment and undertaking a needs assessment, to establishing your health and wellbeing plan, maintaining momentum with its implementation, right through to monitoring your program’s effectiveness.
Finding the right mix

Finding the right mix of program components and strategies is critical to a successful health and wellbeing plan. It is vital to involve workers in initial discussions. Through this, ideas can be formulated about what kinds of activities or initiatives are needed, how they might be introduced and who would like to be involved. This participatory approach will help to ensure your initiative or program is relevant to workers and the environment at your workplace (including any relevant health and safety issues) – and aid in maximising participation.

Your program should provide some variety to cater for differing individual interests. A combination of people and places strategies is most effective. People strategies may look to increase the health knowledge, awareness and positive attitudes of workers (personal development) and/or facilitate their active participation in healthy behaviours (behaviour change). Places strategies are about providing a health-promoting workplace environment through facilities, supportive cultures and policies.

People: Building knowledge, awareness and positive attitudes

Building everyone’s knowledge and understanding of the importance of health and wellbeing helps change attitudes. Promoting a positive outlook that highlights the proven benefits of physical activity, healthy eating and a healthy work–life balance is fundamental to achieving improved awareness and program involvement. The key is to create educational initiatives that are not only highly informative, but also fun.
These can be in the form of ‘guest speaker’ get-togethers, seminars, workshops or simply the dissemination of information on specific issues such as physical activity, nutrition and hydration, smoking cessation, risky alcohol consumption, and mental health through social and emotional wellbeing.

If you’ve used the ACT Online Employee Health and Wellbeing Survey (available from the Healthier Work website), consider what topic areas to target based on where knowledge levels or confidence to change are lowest. Many organisations and service providers in Canberra are able to assist and actively participate in this area. You can also use messages and associated resources from current health promotion campaigns. See the Healthier Work website for supporting information.

**People: Facilitating active participation in healthy behaviours**

Initiatives that provide the motivation or support for behavioural (lifestyle) change are likely to have a greater impact beyond the workplace and for longer periods of time. Promoting lifestyle change could be as simple as:

- encouraging using stairs instead of lifts or escalators and walking to external meetings
- establishing a lunchtime walking group or a simple ‘Walk Challenge’
- providing fruit in staff rooms
- ensuring canteens and vending machines have healthy food options
- supporting participation in quit smoking sessions.

**Place: Creating health-promoting environments**

Initiatives that demonstrate your organisation’s commitment to the health and wellbeing of staff and acknowledge the role that your workplace setting can play in influencing staff health can be extremely effective. These initiatives may be around:

- improving access to facilities that support healthy choices and healthy behaviours, such as change rooms, showers and bike racks
- improving the psychosocial culture through, for example, good management practices, promotion of work–life balance, and recognition of staff achievements
- policies that support healthy choices and health behaviours, such as smoke-free workplace, alcohol and healthy catering policies.

Your managers have a particularly important leadership role to play, not only through monitoring the health of workers but by good role modelling and nurturing healthy organisational cultures. Your leaders need to be appropriately trained and supported, so include training and signature leadership behaviours in your plan.
**DID YOU KNOW?**

Every dollar you spend creating a mentally healthy workplace can, on average, result in a positive return on investment of $2.30.

*Creating a mentally healthy workplace. Return on investment analysis, Pricewaterhouse Coopers (2014)*
Platinum workplaces
**Snapshot: AIATSIS**

**Government – 130 staff**

- Table tennis
- Smoking reduction information circulated
- Online chess tournament
- Online mindfulness
- 10 week personalised fitness and dietary plan
- Ride2Work Day
- Tennis Fridays

**Snapshot: Animal Health Australia**

**Not-for-profit – 25 staff**

- Ideas on tracking water consumption for hydration
- ‘Taste of Harmony Day’ event
- Comfortable and practical furniture for outdoor lunch/meeting space
- Gratitude Board
- Bring your dog to work day
- Monthly walks/jogs/runs up Mt Ainslie
- Weekly walking group
- Shower supplies to promote physical activity
Inspired by a common goal

Barmco Mana McMurray Pty Ltd – 12 staff

*Barmco Mana McMurray* offers consulting expertise in projects, commercial buildings, specialised engineering services and related activities within the property and construction industry in ACT and surrounds.

A foosball table in the Barmco Mana McMurray office sets the scene for a team committed to staff welfare and a fun, agile workplace.

“Foosball matches are now a regular feature of our Friday afternoon activities, and if anything, the competition has become fiercer as player skills have grown,” says Director Trent Gourgaud. “It is a great way to end the week.”

This is just one way Barmco Mana McMurray injects health and wellbeing into their workplace culture.

“We also provide fruit bowls for our Canberra office where staff and visitors can get an instant healthy energy fix during our meetings,” says Trent. “We never forget to include socio-cultural activities at least once per quarter – with the recent one, clay target shooting, being a great way to release any negative vibes and create comradery.”

Having been part of the Healthier Work program for many years, Barmco Mana McMurray has seen how their planned activities and events have influenced and inspired their people.

“Healthier Work shaped our team’s culture because even when the company is its busiest, we still manage to integrate activities,” explains Trent. “Simply preparing our own healthy foods for lunch and breakfast, having to walk to buy a coffee, walking while on a meeting, or committing to help through our group blood donations drive, inspires us to be healthy with a positive outlook in life and to be able to help others as well.”

They’ve seen firsthand how a healthier workplace creates a more positive work environment and results in less mistakes and excellent work quality.

“The team is dedicated to helping each other through a common goal.”
Holistic plan delivers variety
Bradley Allen Love Lawyers – 75 staff

Bradley Allen Love Lawyers is a law firm that prides itself on its lawyers being not only talented and innovative, but capable of going beyond the traditional legal role of reactive adviser to working as an extension of their clients’ businesses.

Variety is the defining factor for the annual health and wellbeing plan at Bradley Allen Love Lawyers. They make sure there is something for everyone and have found participation has increased as they widened the activities to include a focus on mental wellbeing.

“Not everyone enjoys bootcamp, but those staff may enjoy a trivia night, salad club or a mindfulness session,” explains Helen Parrett, Human Resources Manager. “Mental health and stress management are particular components of the program we have spent more time on to support staff wellbeing, recognising high stress is a natural occurrence in a fast-paced law firm.”

Each year the team comes together to raise money for a nominated charity of the year, which also brings awareness to their community and helping others. It’s a fitting way to keep everyone focused on the greater good.

For 2019, their charity of the year is Menslink. Recently they added new initiatives such as celebrating Harmony Day, putting together a netball team for the ACT Law Society competition, providing healthy snacks, and promoting stress management techniques including mindfulness practices.

“For us, the main outcomes of the program are removing hierarchy and facilitating team bonding, providing an outlet for stress, and improving staff health and morale,” says Helen. “We love the opportunity to add new activities to our plan each year.”

Making the plan all-inclusive makes a big difference, and Helen recommends others take an approach that considers all focus areas of health and wellbeing.

“We suggest making your health and wellbeing plan holistic – look at all sections of health, not just physical,” explains Helen. “Also, don’t put it off – it can be hard to get started, but once you do, it’s really rewarding. Healthier Work activities have shaped our team’s culture by providing something for everyone and making sure all staff have an activity they enjoy participating in.”
A genuine team culture
Canberra Labor Club Group – 150 staff

With more than 60,000 members across four Canberra venues, Canberra Labor Club Group provides great dining and entertainment options in a relaxed and stylish club atmosphere.

Even after five years executing a formal health and wellbeing plan, the Canberra Labor Club Group still finds value in regularly updating their tactics and activities, and seeking input from Healthier Work.

“Having the program is a great reference point,” says Lynda Bailey, the Club’s Group Human Resources Manager. “I go back to the program monthly to ensure I am hitting our targets and it supports me to research other healthy options and ideas for our people.”

Even within a large team across multiple venues, staff engagement has been high because the Club invests in flexible options to support and empower staff.

“This program ensures we maintain our commitment to having healthy employees, in body and mind, which supports a positive friendly and fun workplace,” says Lynda. “Our staff enjoy looking at new ways to promote, support and encourage health and wellbeing.”

As part of the Club’s 12-month plan, they have found discounted corporate gym memberships have been particularly well received. The annual ski trip to Thredbo creates a feeling of comradery (and sore muscles), and the introduction of an employee wellness day has been a big success.

“We sent baskets out to each of the venues with fruit, herbal teas, cereals and gym passes to all our employees,” explains Lynda. “They loved it.”

The popular Steptember challenge last year helped them raise over $3,000 for the Cerebral Palsy Alliance.

“As leaders in customer service, this program has assisted in supporting staff to enjoy their jobs and the place in which they work, which then reflects in the great service they provide,” says Lynda. “It has supported a real sense of team.”
Snapshot: Capital Chemist Wanniassa

Health – 25 staff
- Picnic at Pine Island
- Bowling night
- Healthy cook-off
- 2&5 Challenge
- Exercise buddies
- Water alarms
- Healthy hump day
- Dance challenge night

Snapshot: CIT Centre for Health, Community & Science

Health – 200 staff
- Promote telephone support services
- Swap it
- Circulate/exchange healthy recipes
- Stretch application on all staff computers
- Access to CIT gym
- Corporate teams for events such as fun runs/walks
- Safe consumption of alcohol training session
Snapshot: Civium Property
Professionals – 75 staff
- Step challenge with Heart Foundation
- Alcohol consumption guidelines for work events
- House games
- Quit Smoking seminar and QuitCoach
- Healthy cooking class by Nutrition Australia ACT
- Weekly fruit deliveries
- Chilled tap water

Snapshot: Delnas Metal Roofing
Construction – 26 staff
- Reimburse skin checks by a qualified practitioner
- Tradies Tune Ups
- Hosting all-staff meetings and social BBQs to encourage discussions
- Reimburse nicotine replacement therapies
- Movember
- Annual flu vaccinations
- Sunscreen provided
Snapshot: Greening Australia

Not-for-profit – 15 staff

- Feb Fast
- Healthy recipe sharing lunch
- Health and wellbeing as part of induction process
- Water for a week challenge
- Dry July
- Walking group
- Circulate information on responsible alcohol use
- Staff BBQ lunches

DID YOU KNOW?

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


TIP

Go for a ‘walking meeting’ instead of sitting around the boardroom.
Snapshot: Lend Lease
Construction / Real Estate – 55 staff

- Healthy cooking demonstrations
- Skin checks
- Mental Health First Aid
- Break-out lounge
- Corporate gym memberships
- Fatigue management awareness
- Beyond Blue workshop
- Lend Lease family day

Snapshot: Moulis Legal
Professionals – 18 staff

- Healthy Friday team breakfast
- Health appraisals
- Activity bingo and scavenger hunt
- Weekly mindfulness hints and recommended activities
- Water bottles
- Seminar on proper posture
- Personal training sessions
- Fruit and nuts provided for the office
Healthy staff making a difference
National Capital Private Hospital – 450+ staff

Located in Garran ACT, the National Capital Private Hospital provides a range of acute and medical healthcare services including orthopaedics, cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, general surgery, neurosurgery, plastic surgery, vascular surgery, urology and geriatric medicine.

“Healthy staff leading the way is how we show Canberra we are an elite hospital,” says Jessica Kearney, Health Information Manager at National Capital Private Hospital.

This attitude towards health has become an embedded part of the hospital’s culture, thanks to the way staff have embraced the activities and initiatives of their health and wellbeing plan.

“The feedback we get from staff is that they genuinely enjoy having healthier work goals and feeling supported in this way,” says Jessica. “This motivates me to find new ways to engage them to continue our success as a Healthier Work hospital.”

Steptember has always been a big hit with hospital staff, with departments competing against each other for bragging rights. Their plan also includes a water awareness program and subsidised nicotine replacement therapy.

Management support is a defining factor for their success.

“By having such a large number of staff working over a 24-hour period it can be challenging but all managers are regularly involved in pushing forward our Health Wellness Program to staff,” explains Jessica. “By involving more managers I have found they take pride in the program and help me continue to promote what we started.”

It makes a difference, not only to staff, but to patients and the hospital’s staffing scorecard.

“Being healthy and happy at work has a follow-on effect – we see less absenteeism and greater productivity around the hospital,” says Jessica. “By promoting a positive work health balance, we can continue to provide our patients with the best care possible.”
Valuable investment in team success

National Healthcare Services | National Nursing Agency | National Community Care – 150 staff

The three companies provide carers and nurses to the Canberra community in hospitals and nursing homes, along with community care within client homes.

Carers work incredibly hard, often putting the needs of others before their own. That’s why keeping National Healthcare Services, National Nursing Agency and National Community Care staff healthy is a priority for management and the benefits are truly priceless.

“We want to ensure we care for our carers,” explains Lisa Walker, Managing Director of National Healthcare Services and National Nursing Agency. “This is important as the general burnout rate of all types of carers is far too high.”

To make sure their health and wellbeing plan can provide the right level of support at the right times, they proactively and regularly survey staff.

“We ask our team for input on what they want through an annual survey,” says Natashia Telfer, Managing Director of National Community Care. “We simply ask for three suggestions. This can be anything from prize ideas, social events, challenge ideas, or local charities we wish to sponsor that are close to the hearts of our team members.”

This feedback helps them make modifications and tailor initiatives accordingly; often resulting in expansion of their Healthier Work plan each year.

“More recently we adjusted one of our less successful challenges to a ‘stop it or swap it’ 30-day challenge and it was a huge hit and the team has continued to talk about what they each will stop or swap for this coming year,” says Lisa. “We also continued our family-focused Christmas party for five consecutive years now, which has seen attendance increase.”

The companies know their commitment to a healthier workplace has paid off and become ingrained into their business ethos.

“Over the years our annual plan has become integrated into our everyday culture,” says Lisa. “They say it takes 18 months to three years to change workplace culture and ours has certainly benefitted. Our team sick days have decreased, employee productivity has increased, and we have nearly doubled in size as our employees are referring others to join our team.

“Our team is constantly wanting to do social things as a group!” says Lisa. “This has been amazing as in our line of work we are often working independently alongside an already established team.”

It has made such a big difference that they think it would be detrimental to stop offering a formalised health and wellbeing plan. In fact, Natashia says other businesses should think seriously about signing up.

“You have nothing to lose and so much to gain! This Healthier Work plan has been beyond invaluable to the worth and success of our team and the services we provide our community, and in turn, to those who receive our services,” explains Natashia.
An inclusive and socially active workplace

OPC IT – 30 staff

OPC IT delivers sophisticated ICT solutions and web services tailored to suit all business sectors. They have been proudly Canberra-based and family-owned for 33 years and have a strong commitment to their community.

A long-term pledge to provide a healthy workplace aligns with OPC IT’s business objectives.

“A healthier team both physically and mentally is a vital part of our three core objectives – Our Team, Our Company and Our Customers – because they are interdependent and cannot exist in isolation,” explains OPC IT’s Tim Cox. “Healthier Work activities have shaped the daily rhythm of life at OPC IT and help integrate new members into the team.”

A program that fits so cohesively with their approach to work means it can remain a non-negotiable part of everyday planning.

“We spend so much time at work it needs to be fun,” says Tim. “We are working towards even greater levels of flexibility and a relaxing of some of our traditional operational models.”

Healthier Work activities help create that inclusive and socially active work environment.

“A great part of the Healthier Work program is that it encourages you to try lots of new things and you can then keep what works for you,” explains Tim.

For OPC IT, this includes fresh fruit in the morning and daily meditation in the afternoon.

“These activities have become part of the fabric of daily life at OPC,” says Tim.

Given OPC IT is now recognised with Platinum status, they’re keen for other businesses to know how easy it is to get started with a health and wellbeing plan.

“Jump on board,” says Tim. “The Healthier Work team has always been there to help when we’ve had any questions about putting together a plan and are very responsive.

“Plus the bus competition is always a source of enthusiastic photo suggestions!”

OPC IT delivers sophisticated ICT solutions and web services tailored to suit all business sectors. They have been proudly Canberra-based and family-owned for 33 years and have a strong commitment to their community.
Snapshot: PhysioSport O’Connor

Health – 50 staff

- Healthy snacks for morning teas and staff meetings
- Feb Fast
- Courtyard furniture to encourage staff to take breaks away from their desks
- R U OK? Day
- Mental health seminar
- Encourage staff to walk or ride to work on a regular basis
- Pilates
- Pedometers

Snapshot: Synergy Group

Professionals – 120 staff

- Spartan Race
- Dragon Boating team
- Wellbeing apps
- Neverest Challenge
- Mental Health Resilience training
- The Bloody Long Walk
- Dry July
Gold workplaces
Flexible wellbeing time for all
Early Childhood Australia – 70 staff

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is the national peak body for early childhood, acting in the interests of young children, their families and those in the early childhood field. ECA advocates to ensure quality, social justice and equity in all issues relating to the education and care of children aged birth to eight years.

After implementing initiatives to support staff for four years, ECA’s healthier work culture is now well embedded into their daily work habits.

“It only takes one idea and one person to create change, but the value of having a team to develop a vision and champion healthier work for us has been invaluable,” says Paige Pollard, ECA Media Manager. “It is so important to recognise and understand different people have different things that motivate them, so you need to find what motivates people in your organisation and use that to get them on board with what it is that you’re trying to achieve.”

For ECA, their focus is on helping staff make smarter choices by offering alternatives to the way things have always been done.

“We recently swapped our cookie jar for a healthy alternative and we now have a nut jar,” explains Paige. “Another recent hit included purchasing second-hand puzzles and creating a space for mindfulness puzzle activities.”

Staff had also provided feedback via a survey that indicated the first thing people sacrifice when they feel stressed is wellbeing, including exercise. Restoring balance can be difficult during busy times, yet this is often when people need to be reminded of options for their health and wellbeing.

“Management have been really proactive in tackling this challenge and have introduced flexible wellbeing time,” says Paige. “The idea is that two to three times a week, staff can take time to practice wellness, whether this is going for a walk, doing mindfulness activities, going to the gym over lunch, or joining groups such as the ECA Bookclub.

“The hope is that this initiative will lead to a better balance, increase socialisation and collaboration at work, and reduce stress – both mental and physical.”

A couple of other popular features of their most recent plan is their filtered water cooler, which has brought back the ‘watercooler chat’ for greater cohesion, as well as a scheduled reminder to stand up regularly.

“It has been so pleasant to hear the change in workplace conversations!” says Paige. “Everyone has started to use their standing desks more often with the encouragement of ‘stand o’clock’. We have seen an increase of walking meetings and more conversations sharing healthy eating tips and recipes.”
Gold

Spread the word
Goodwin Aged Care Services – 545 staff

Goodwin Aged Care is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation that provides Canberra and regional communities with experience-driven independent living villages, reliable in-home care, and superior standard residential aged care facilities.

“We recognise how important it is to have healthy and happy employees who feel valued, and we want to help provide them with opportunities to make a difference to their wellbeing,” says Emma Woods, Wellbeing and Rehabilitation Advisor at Goodwin Aged Care.

Over the several years that Goodwin has implemented a wellness calendar, they have seen an overall improvement in staff morale. Staff culture has also been enhanced, with workers naturally encouraging each other to be healthier.

“With such a large and dispersed workforce, the main challenge for Goodwin is to get the word out about what activities are available to attend and when they’re on,” explains Emma. “A lot of our employees work across a 24/7 roster, so aligning events and activities so that all employees have a chance to participate can be difficult.”

Some of their successful initiatives include multicultural food festivals (where staff register to bring a traditional dish to share with their colleagues at their staff meeting), a health quiz prize draw (where staff are given a free Goodwin water bottle with a short quiz inside), and Thank You boards (which give employees the chance to recognise each other’s efforts).

They also trialled a ‘health journey’ where staff could register their weight loss goal and several staff received a gift voucher for their weight loss efforts.

Goodwin suggests having a few keen champions from different areas or teams – particularly with a larger workforce – to spread the word and help build enthusiasm.

“Healthier Work ACT has been instrumental in providing resources, advice, and pointing us in the right direction with getting our wellness calendar going,” says Emma.
Wellness ingrained in the culture

Griffin Legal – 20 staff

Griffin Legal is a nationally operating commercial law firm with offices in Canberra and Melbourne. They provide practical, reliable and quality legal services, and cultivate a supportive team culture.

For a bustling law firm, managing stress is particularly important for ensuring staff can maintain a healthy balance.

“We recognise that the legal professional has a reputation for poor mental health for lawyers and law students,” explains Penelope Gibbons, Office Manager at Griffin Legal. “A healthier workplace is important to us because it means we are taking proactive steps to improve healthy practice and good mental health for our professionals and for our industry.”

It’s this attitude that has helped keep the firm focused on their staff health and wellbeing over the years.

“While we have always had healthy practice policies and procedures in place, the Healthier Work program has helped us to formalise this commitment,” says Penelope. “This has had a positive impact on our culture, as it shows our employees that our annual planning involves this commitment, and that healthy work practices are and will continue to be a priority.”

Undoubtedly, the juggle between working with clients and attending planned activities is never easy. Griffin Legal keep their plan flexible and avoid planning compulsory activities outside of business hours.

“It took some trial and error to develop a plan that suited our lawyers. In the legal profession, there is pressure on lawyers to meet a billable budget and there are pressures for lawyers throughout their day,” explains Penelope. “We believe any effective healthy workplace plan should not demand too many resources or too much time. It should be easy to implement and ingrained in the culture of the business.”

Griffin Legal’s most successful activities have involved sessions on stress management and stress resilience, as well as incentives for employees, such as FitBits, Sportsmans Warehouse vouchers and reimbursements towards employee fitness costs.

“Our healthy workplace plans have assisted with increasing staff morale, reducing absenteeism, and increasing productively,” says Penelope. “We especially appreciate the positive impact the program has had on our culture and the mindset of our employees.”
ACT Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety, Rachel Stephen-Smith, speaking at a WorkSafe ACT function.
The Heart Foundation is a health promoting charity that funds lifesaving heart research and is focused on improving heart disease prevention and care for all Australians.

The Heart Foundation ACT promotes a healthy lifestyle to all members of the community. Yet a health and wellbeing plan still makes it easier for the team to come together and stay motivated for their own physical and mental health. “Our culture is already very health focused but taking part in Healthier Work activities has cemented this,” says Robyn Smith, Heart Health Coordinator. “Healthier Work has many messages that are in line with the Heart Foundation, particularly around active living, nutrition and reducing smoking.”

The team genuinely enjoy spending time together, so the plan is full of interesting and fun things to do, which keeps everyone engaged. “Everyone is very enthusiastic about the plan but time and availability is probably our biggest hurdle,” explains Robyn.

“We enjoy working as a team and doing things together which is convenient given the team is so small. We try to keep things flexible to accommodate everyone.”

It seems delicious food holds a certain charm for the Heart Foundation staff, with any activities involving cooking and eating attracting the most interest.

Activities related to food are always successful. They have held several ‘cook-offs’ where colleagues try to out-health each other in their dishes. They’ve also held a ‘soup-off’ and a ‘salad-off’.

Their 12-month plan also includes weekly walks, and an ongoing approach to taking walking meetings, which has shown to generate innovative and valuable ideas.

“Having the support of Healthier Work ACT makes doing workplace wellness activities easy,” says Robyn. “Taking advantage of all the things Healthier Work offers and engaging with other workplaces is of great benefit to us.”

Cook-off for healthy competition
Heart Foundation ACT – 12 staff
Nexus Human Services is a disability employment and NDIS provider. They offer a wide range of support services for individuals with mental health issues or other disabilities in their journey to finding employment. Support services are also available to assist people already working to maintain employment and develop career aspirations.

It has taken a few years to establish the right mix of activities to meet the interests of the Nexus Human Services workforce, but now their health and wellbeing plan is hitting the mark. “We struggled with a concept to create healthier work activities across our interstate sites but feel we have found a balance now,” says CEO Lisa McPherson. “Staff are more productive and positive.”

The Nexus Human Services team has been prominent on Canberra’s bus network, showcasing their smiling faces in support of their approach to healthy behaviours. “We have been lucky to win two photo competitions in a row and have our photo on the bus for a year,” says Lisa. “This has been great publicity.”

The free publicity is a bonus, but it’s how the initiatives – including multicultural lunches, juicy June, flu shots and a water drinking challenge – impact on team building and productivity. “Having a healthier workplace has improved employee motivation and how efficient and productive they can be,” explains Lisa. “It creates a fun team culture.

“Most of the team members look forward to what activities will be happening during the year.” Lisa also notes that absenteeism has decreased and the overall team culture has really benefitted. “Try it for just one year and you will see the difference within your team environment,” says Lisa.
A long-term wellbeing focus
Office of Parliamentary Counsel – 106 staff

The Office of Parliamentary Counsel is a Commonwealth Government agency delivering legislative drafting and advisory services for Bills and subordinate legislation, preparing compilations of laws, and publishing laws and instruments on the Federal Register of Legislation website.

The Office of Parliamentary Counsel uses thorough planning and evaluation to devise their health and wellbeing activities, and this has been integral to their continued success.

“High levels of staff satisfaction and positive feedback about the activities we have run keeps us inspired,” says Susan Roberts, General Manager and Chief Finance Officer.

Their 12-month plan involves a series of activities to support staff mental health, such as Bootcamp for the Brain, as well as mental health training for managers, supervisors and other staff. They also offer health checks, and nutrition and cooking presentations.

Importantly, keeping their people healthy is truly valued and supported by management.

“As many employees stay with the Office for many years, both short-term and long-term health issues are important to us,” says Susan.

It makes a difference, with higher levels of staff awareness of the importance of good health and wellbeing at the Office.

“I see more people using the stairs instead of the lift, getting out for some form of physical activity at lunch time, and making healthier food choices,” Susan says.

Susan notes that at times the plan’s activities will ebb and flow with the pace of work and that’s to be expected.

“It can be challenging to introduce new activities and encourage participation when staff are very busy,” says Susan. “To overcome this, we generally try to choose more than one date or time to run an activity to widen the opportunity for more staff to attend, and we also try to conduct most activities on the premises.”

Regular engagement of staff through a champion network can help keep the plan running.

“How can we encourage participation when staff are busy?” Susan asks. “To overcome this, we generally try to choose more than one date or time to run an activity to widen the opportunity for more staff to attend, and we also try to conduct most activities on the premises.”

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Regular engagement of staff through a champion network can help keep the plan running.
Snapshot: PJ Shaw & Associates Pty Ltd

Professionals – four staff

- Water bottles
- Encourage staff to eat healthy options both in the office and while in the field
- Breaks away from desk
- Million Paws Walk
- Promote work–life balance
- Team coffee once a week
- Minimum of two laps around Kingston shop block each day

Snapshot: Radford College

Education – 300 staff

- Social club gatherings
- Staff health clinic
- Staff teams participate in sports days (athletics, basketball, swimming, cross country)
- Soup lunch
- Blood donations
- Provide bike racks, shower room, change rooms
- Bootcamp
Snapshot: SPOC Landscapes
Construction – two staff

- Host a Christmas lunch/dinner with healthy options available
- Stop work for morning tea and lunch
- Social functions for employees and their families
- Promote positive mental health resources
- Steptember
- Workplace challenges

DID YOU KNOW?
Research indicates that people who are physically active in their daily lives are more productive in the workplace and have better attendance records.

*Physical Activity, Absenteeism and Productivity: An Evidence Review. Davis & Jones (2007)*
Through experience in education and achievements in research, UNSW Canberra excel in teaching undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral research students across arts, business, cyber security, engineering, IT, logistics, management, space and science. Their undergraduate programs are tailored to the educational needs of members of the Australian Defence Force, while graduate and doctoral research programs are available to all students. Since 2016, entry to undergraduate study in all engineering specialisations has been opened up to civilian students.

UNSW Canberra’s approach to health and wellbeing has been highly effective. They put this down to how involved their people have been in suggesting activities, and the strong rates of participation by many staff, including their leaders.

“It doesn’t mean giving your staff everything their hearts desire but at least finding a compromise on activities and/or events that will give staff a sense of value and respect while assisting the overall objectives of the organisation,” says Pru May, Manager – Health, Safety & Facilities for UNSW Canberra.

“Given many of us spend most of our waking lives at work, having activities for staff to improve their physical and psychological wellbeing means they’ll feel more positive about being at work. And social occasions serve to build comradery and a sense of shared purpose.

“Not only are we giving them tools and skills to improve their own lives, we are also helping to reduce absenteeism, increase staff engagement and improve the overall productivity and output for the university,” explains Pru. “With some of the workplace leaders also participating in the activities, it makes our leaders more approachable and understanding of the demands on our staff.”

Some of the most successful initiatives are weekly yoga classes, weekly stretch and flexibility sessions, Mental Health First Aid training, RUOK Day, and the World’s Biggest Morning Tea. Importantly, many of the activities are available to both staff and students of the university.

“We have involved our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Manager to ensure that the diversity of our staff and student cultural backgrounds are highlighted and celebrated to ensure a sense of belonging for all,” says Pru.
Silver workplaces
Snapshot: ACTEW AGL Retail
Retail – 250 staff

- Fluid challenge
- 10% challenge – reducing carbon emissions
- Mindful lego
- Proactive health testing
- Spring clean
- Safety Week activities
- Keeping well in winter

DID YOU KNOW?
The average worker is up to 7% less productive because of their health risks.
The Health of Australia’s Workforce, Medibank Private (2015)

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.
Helping staff feel valued
Aspen Medical – 100 staff

Aspen Medical is an Australian-owned, multi award-winning, global provider of guaranteed and innovative healthcare solutions across a diverse range of sectors and clients including defence, mining and resources, oil and gas, government, and humanitarian.

Aspen Medical has been dedicated to providing a variety of health and wellbeing options to their staff for many years, so they’re well-practiced at devising their 12-month plan of activities.

“Each year we design the health and wellbeing program with activities that promote a healthy, safe and supportive work environment,” says Azadeh Hatami, Aspen Medical’s Senior HSE Coordinator.

Their activities include yoga and meditation, Steptember, and special celebrations for Harmony Day, Mental Health Week, Women’s Health Week and Men’s Health Week.

“Harmony Day is a celebration of our cultural diversity – a day of cultural respect for everyone in the workplace who calls Australia home, and it gets lots of interest from staff,” says Azadeh.

It’s this passion and interest from staff that helps build momentum for activities and events, and motivates Azadeh to keep promoting and refining the plan each year. And it’s the effort that counts.

“Creating a healthier workplace is worth the effort and all the staff appreciate it,” says Azadeh. “It increases staff engagement and the feeling of worthiness in the workplace.”
Snapshot: Epicon

IT – 70 staff

- Health checks
- Promote Beyond Blue
- Replace biscuits with fruit and nuts
- Posters on benefits of giving up alcohol and sugar
- Walking challenge
- Tough Mudder group
- Dry July

DID YOU KNOW?

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


TIP

Do not underestimate the benefits of starting health and wellbeing initiatives in your workplace, whatever their size or scope.
Team happiness comes first
Independent Property Management – 46 staff

Independent Property Management has extensive and thorough knowledge of the local rental market. The team are skilled negotiators, problem solvers, wealth creators and trusted advisors for their clients in relation to all things property.

While Cleo, the old English sheep dog, is just one – albeit very cute – element of Independent Property Management’s health and wellbeing plan, she’s been a fantastic source of stress reduction and all-round smiles for the team.

“There have been many studies conducted to confirm that dogs in the workplace reduce team member stress levels and promote happier employees and improved culture,” says Grace Hooper, Head of Property Management Growth. “This has certainly been the case in our business.”

Beyond Cleo, the team’s health and wellbeing plan includes F45 training, boxing classes, meditation classes, healthy eating seminars, the CEO sleepout and Ninja Warrior ropes courses.

“We believe the healthier and happier our team are, the better they perform,” says Grace.

“We also believe that work–life balance is a critical part of a productive employee.”

With a large team, it’s important for all team members to bond with each other and their managers for overall morale. The initiatives in their health and wellbeing plan help to drive a culture of inclusion, which in turn creates close bonds, which is important for staff retention.

“Our team really enjoys the programs, and their happiness is at the forefront of what we do every day,” says Grace. “The engagement and productivity of the team has increased as a result of a healthier environment.”

To ensure the plan is an embedded part of their calendar, Independent Property Management decided to employ a team member in a ‘people and culture’ role.

“We have found that having a dedicated staff member responsible for driving this has enabled us to add more events to our calendar and allowed us to surprise and delight the team with fun and thoughtful gestures such as celebrating Valentine’s Day, International Women’s Day, Easter and any number of other key dates across the year,” explains Grace.
Snapshot: National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)
Not-for-profit – 23 staff
- Staff health and wellbeing survey to inform future activities
- Posters on ergonomic stretching
- Seminar on managing stress and change
- Fruit bowl
- Promote current policies covering flexible work arrangements
- Health tune-ups
- Information about local fitness and recreation opportunities

Snapshot: National Archives of Australia
Government – 400 staff
- Encourage staff to take breaks and go for a walk during lunch breaks
- Time management training
- Employee recognition for exceptional efforts
- Boot Camp for the Brain workshop
- Smoke-free workplace policy
- Healthy eating options for morning teas, meals, vending machine and social club
- Promote telephone support services
Snapshot: National Library of Australia

Government – 400 staff

- Healthy options at social club and social events
- Promote walking groups in the ACT/local area
- Sunscreen and fruit stand for those who go out for a walk/activity
- Tip sheets on managing day-to-day stress
- Next Step (mental health) presentation
- Water challenge

TIP

Consolidating your existing initiatives under the banner of workplace health and wellbeing is an excellent way to start giving your program a profile, engaging staff and building momentum within your organisation for a more comprehensive program.
Snapshot: Netier
IT – 14 staff
- Remind employees to get out of their chair and move
- Discounted gym rates
- Free water bottles
- Healthy food days or events
- Staff ‘chill space’
- Corporate team in a fun run or ride

Snapshot: Pharmacy Guild of Australia
Health – 96 staff
- Mental health training for managers and individuals
- Staff family social function
- Mindfulness training
- Annual health checks and flu vaccinations
- Heads Up
- Walking challenge
- Q&A with in-house dietitian
Snapshot: Questacon

Government – 500 staff

- Healthy eating on a budget presentation
- Fruit box
- Running groups/social sports
- Dry July
- Random acts of kindness initiative
- Mindfulness topics and TEDX links
- Odd Sock Day
- Start and finish meetings on time

TIP

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

Not-for-profit – 38 staff

- Adult colouring-in books and jigsaw puzzles for mindfulness activity
- Relaxation/meditation techniques
- Magazine subscriptions to Better Homes and Gardens and Australian Healthy Food Guide
- Yoga classes
- Healthy food lunch club once a month
- Flexible time arrangements for staff to attend sessions that increase physical activity
Snapshot: The Woden School

Education – 55 staff

- Professional learning session on mental health and wellbeing
- Fruit and herbal tea options
- Promote services that provide information, advice, counselling and referral to treatment services
- Staff massages offered at the end of term
- Agreed finishing times to avoid excessive workload
- Family friendly week six each term with no after-school meetings
- Wednesday Walkers group

Snapshot: Woden Community Services

Not-for-profit – 360 staff

- Mindfulness sessions
- Display responsible drinking/smoking posters
- Mountain walks around Canberra
- Pot luck quarterly healthy lunch
- Relationships Australia course
- Indoor group physical activity (smooth moves or yoga)
- Puzzles in the tea room
Reducing health risks with enthusiasm

Xact Project Consultants – 22 staff

Xact Project Consultants provides independent client-side project leadership through a range of project management and advisory services applied to the building, property and infrastructure sectors.

“Since implementing Healthier Work initiatives, we’ve noticed a greater collaboration between team members, a boost in productivity and an all-round increase in happiness,” says Hayley Bowyer from Xact. “Our staff actively engage with all our initiatives, which include weekly yoga and bootcamps, healthy snacks, and mental health and wellbeing workshops.”

The team at Xact – like many who have been implementing a health and wellbeing plan for a couple of years – has watched wellness become an integrated part of their business planning and workplace philosophy.

“We’ve had great staff participation in our Healthier Work program, and it is now a fundamental part of our team culture,” notes Hayley. “Happier staff, higher productivity and enjoyment at work are driving us to continue the plan over the next 12 months and beyond.”

Hayley believes it supports people to deliver their best, both at work and in their personal pursuits.

“A healthy workplace is important to us as it provides an opportunity to support our employees and improve their quality of life,” says Hayley. “By being able to provide physical activity options, healthy food options, mental health support and education for employees, we’ve been able to provide a healthier workplace and reduce health risks.”

To demonstrate how committed staff are to the plan, they’re happy to attend out of hours yoga or bootcamp sessions, even when they’ve been seconded to work in another office.

And for businesses considering signing up to Healthier Work, Xact is quick to offer encouragement and advice.

“If it’s your first time creating a healthier workplace, just start small,” explains Hayley. “For example, organise a morning walk before work, get a speaker in to talk about mental health, engage in conversations with staff to hear their ideas and interests. You’ll be surprised with what they come up with!”

“The Healthier Work website has some great resources that helped us form a base for our plan. Other resources we’ve utilised include Heads Up, the Chamberlain Foundation and Beyond Blue.”
Recognised workplaces
Snapshot: Acacia Children’s Education Care

Education – 25 staff
- Encourage healthier choices rather than takeaways
- Promote good oral health
- Spinal Health Week
- Add greenery to staff room
- Stretch and hydration plan for ‘transition times’ across the day
- Employee satisfaction survey
- OzHelp Workplace Tune Up

Snapshot: Access HQ

IT – 115 staff
- Walking challenge
- Family orientated outdoor Christmas function with games (cricket, touch, bocce)
- Walking meetings
- Recipe exchange club
- Promote Beyond Blue resources
- Information about sedentary behaviour and the benefits of physical activity (through email/newsletter)
Allied Health Office / Clinical Education Unit

Health – 10 staff

- Lunchtime mindfulness sessions (knitting, colouring, craft)
- Promote and encourage staff to get outside into the workplace garden

- Steptember
- Walking meetings
- Go for 2&5 fruit and vegetable challenge

Snapshot: Alta Pete

Education – six staff

- Healthy food for seminars and workshops (as per ACT traffic light system)
- Promote telephone support services and coaching services like Next Step
- Coaching ‘walk and talks’

- Subsidise nicotine replacement therapy
- Traditional Okinawan Karate-related stretches and warm ups before team meetings
- ‘Brain breaks’ in the sunshine
Staff eager to participate
Australian War Memorial – 317 staff

The purpose of the Australian War Memorial is to commemorate the sacrifice of those Australians who have died in war or on operational service. Its mission is to assist Australians to remember, interpret, and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society.

The Australian War Memorial registered with Healthier Work in April this year.

When the Australian War Memorial surveyed staff last year about the types of health and wellbeing initiatives they would like to see in the plan, the level of staff interest was very encouraging.

Frances Henderson Head HR says, “Staff interest in our health and wellbeing plan was beyond our expectations and the survey itself has already got the ball rolling with staff talking and looking forward to the upcoming initiatives.

“The plan is already contributing to growing a positive workplace culture here at the Memorial. Establishing initiatives for our staff lets them know we value them.

“Being open to people’s suggestions is the key to creating involvement, engagement and interest and it has been a great boost in getting started with help from ACT Healthier Work and other small agencies,” explains Frances. “It has really made getting started so easy.”

The HR team has set up a health and wellbeing intranet site with helpful information and interactive seasonal calendars. They have also trialled Steptember with great success.

“I have no doubt we will continue to grow an even healthier, happier and positive workplace culture where the level of staff engagement in health and wellbeing activities increases,” Frances forecasts. “We believe our connection with Healthier Work highlights our ongoing commitment to staff wellbeing.”
Snapshot: Bendigo Bank
Finance – 30 staff
- Staff break area
- Healthy eating challenge
- Team participation in charity physical activity event
- Park further away and walk to work
- Staff breakfast catch-up
- Local gyms approached for discounted staff rates

Snapshot: Binara Early Childhood Centre
Education – 25 staff
- Healthier food options at staff celebrations and meetings
- ‘Bring a plate’ to share multiculturalism and encourage socialisation
- Flu vaccinations
- Stress Down Day
- Wellbeing at Work online and face-to-face training
- Encourage walking before work and at lunch time
Snapshot: Birrallee Education and Care Centre

Education – 30 staff

- Nutritionist seminar with a focus on incorporating more vegetables into everyday meals
- Staff share their ideas for making tasty, healthy meals/beverages using kitchen’s facilities

- Fruit and vegetable delivery trial
- Spinal Health Week
- EAP
- Stretch and hydration plan
- Promote shower, change room, and bike rack facilities

TIP
Use your calendar to remind you to schedule in some breaks to get a glass of water or go for a walk.
Snapshot: Callaghan’s Accountants

Accounting – 23 staff

- Brain hack – try one each week for 12 weeks
- Callaghan’s Sports Day
- Fruit bowl in kitchen
- Multicultural lunch day

- 3 for 3: three reminders per day to stand, breathe and stretch
- Movie night
- Steptember

Snapshot: Canberra and Region Visitors Centre

Government – six staff

- Walking challenge
- Promote standing workstations
- Walk around the lake after work
- Dry July

- Healthy social snacks
- Healthy staff breakfast BBQ
- EAP
Snapshot: Canberra Girls Grammar School – Junior and Senior Schools

Education – 340 staff

- World Health Day
- New staff welcome drinks
- Workplace assessments
- New bubs morning tea
- Tai Chi
- Mindful communication speaker
- Sleep Health Foundation presentation
- Principal’s lunch

TIP
Establishing a health and wellbeing plan takes a commitment from management – consider a workplace health and wellbeing policy.
Snapshot: Canberra Youth Theatre

Arts – five staff
- 30-second dance break on the hour
- Walk for first 15 minutes of staff meeting weekly
- Free water carafes
- Monthly soup/salad club
- Social functions for employees and their families
- Staff discussions about effective stress management strategies

Snapshot: Cancer Council ACT

Not-for-profit – 12 staff
- ‘Next Step’ (mental health) promotion
- Participation in Dragon’s Abreast Social and Corporate Regatta
- March Charge (fitness fundraiser for Cancer Research)
- Accidental counsellor training for all staff
- Mental health presentation (resilience, stress management)
Snapshot: Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn

Not-for-profit – 38 staff

- Walking meetings
- Provide information and healthy recipes in break room
- Eat away from the desk challenge
- Stress management tips
- Wear White to Work Day
- Recipe exchange
- Heads Up

**TIP**

The most important aspect to remember is to make your health and wellbeing program relevant for your workers.
Snapshot: Centre for Invasive Species Professionals – eight staff

- Regular staff lunches with active options by the lake
- Once a month staff breakfast
- Thank you box
- Promote access to staff counselling
- Encourage employees to participate in local recreation and community clubs
- Regular walking breaks

DID YOU KNOW?
Most Australians spend about one third of their lives at work (or half their waking hours), so it makes good business sense to invest in making the work environment a key setting for promoting positive health and wellbeing.
Tristan Metcalfe, Beyond Blue Ambassador, speaking at a Healthier Work Networking Breakfast.
Community Services #1 – 195 staff

In their first year as a Healthier Work Recognised workplace, Community Services #1 has already seen changes in staff interest and behaviour when it comes to wellbeing at work.

“This is our first year and I think it’s fair to say that it has been a significant mind-shift for our client-focused team to take time for themselves,” explains Kelly Altenburg, Manager Capability and Culture. “Anecdotally, we are already seeing a greater focus on healthy choices in our lunch room, mobility across the workday and also greater emotional support and understanding between teams.”

Their 12-month health and wellbeing plan has a strong focus on healthy eating and social and emotional support.

“Morning teas look a lot different!” says Kelly. “Everyone have been really responsive to the changes – I think the food disappears a bit quicker than it used to.

“We have a highly multicultural workforce who love coming together to share cultures and we do love our food, so our pot-luck lunch to celebrate Harmony Day at each of our locations was a great success.”

Introducing new activities has involved some trial and error, with Kelly noting the need for creative solutions to fit in with the demands of the job. Ensuring dedicated staff to drive the plan in each location is also critical.

“Our champions have been great in bridging communication gaps,” says Kelly. “Everyone seems really receptive to the changes that are being made and, I believe, would support almost anything our champions propose. I feel like there’s lots of optimism around having and continuing a health-focused plan.”

Kelly also recognises that they’re not going to achieve all their health goals in the first year, but having a formal health and wellbeing plan is what matters the most.

“We recognise that having a happy, healthy team is critical to providing the best support for the community we serve,” explains Kelly. “We consider ourselves to be an agile, fun and responsive organisation and having a healthier workplace plan helps the team work together to stay happy and healthy.”
Snapshot: Department of Finance  
Government – 1400 staff
- Workplace Mental Health Advisers
- Steptember
- Introduction to Mindfulness
- Smoke Free Workplace policy
- Flu vaccination program
- Suicide awareness workshops

Snapshot: DFK Everalls  
Property and Business Services – 30 staff
- Seminar with nutritionist
- Water bottles
- Information on responsible alcohol use
- Staff breakout area with books and magazines
- Mix of lighter and non-alcoholic options available at work functions
- Next Step (mental health) presentation
- Provide healthier eating recipes approved by the CSIRO


Positivity boosts health

Evoenergy – 400 staff

Evoenergy operate and maintain the networks associated with the supply of electricity to over 200,000 customers across the ACT, and 146,000 gas customers in the ACT and NSW.

When formalising their health and wellbeing plan, Evoenergy wanted to enhance their workplace’s positivity.

“The bigger picture is to see an increase in staff engagement and a reduction in sick leave and safety incidents,” says Glenn Pallesen, Branch Manager Customer Connections at Evoenergy. “We’re seeing glimpses of this and need to remain resolute with the healthier workplace initiative to achieve sustainable improvements.”

Their 12-month plan includes nutrition seminars and healthy cooking demonstrations with Nutrition Australia, as well as a gym challenge and ‘summer packs’ for staff, with sunscreen, water bottle, hat and fact sheets.

“The activities reinvigorated a common sense of purpose and focus,” says Glenn. “The added benefits included a positive layer of collaboration, social banter and supportive ‘side discussions’.”

Given Evoenergy’s large number of employees, the challenge is offering a range of activities that suit everyone.

“We have found that sometimes ensuring our activities meet the requirements of all worker groups can be tricky, given our field-based colleagues are out and about throughout Canberra every day,” explains Glenn.

Part of the implementation is learning through trial and error, and involving staff in decisions through their health and safety committee.

As Glenn puts it: “Plan your work and work your plan. Healthy workers contribute to a positive work and safety culture. There is a direct correlation between healthy and engaged staff and a generative safety culture.”
Snapshot: Forrest Early Childhood Centre

Education – 20 staff

- Healthier food options available at staff events
- Promote good oral health
- ‘Bring a plate’ lunch
- Stress Down Day
- OzHelp Workplace Tune Up
- Employee satisfaction survey on work engagement, environment and relationship management

Snapshot: Interaction Consulting Group

Consulting – 14 staff

- Walking challenge out of work hours
- Connect with a colleague
- Move, drink water and have a healthy lunch
- Guest speaker/information about dealing with trauma
- In-office neck/shoulder massage service
- Provide fruit
- Promote health and wellbeing policies/guidelines to staff
Snapshot: Karinya House
Not-for-profit – 20 staff

- Staff lunch everyday – recipe sharing
- Walking groups
- Six-monthly dinners with all staff and volunteers
- Nutrition groups with clients and staff
- Canberra Running Festival
- Bikes available for staff use

Snapshot: Kingsford Smith School
Education – 136 staff

- Yoga or bootcamp instructor
- Presentation on a different mental health topic each quarter
- ACT Nutrition Support Service for advice/planning
- Tip sheets on managing day-to-day stresses
- Next Step (mental health) presentation
- Nicotine replacement therapy
Snapshot: Master Builders ACT
Construction – 33 staff

- Provide fatigue management and safety information around alcohol consumption
- Workplace wellness tips
- Tradies Tune Up for new and existing staff
- Workstation stretches
- Clothing drive
- Mission and Core Values to be posted around the office
- Onsite yoga
- Bring in a plant for your workstation

TIP
By involving workers and showing a genuine interest in what they have to say, you’ll be able to tailor a program that achieves greater productivity and job satisfaction.
Snapshot: McDonald Jones Homes

Construction – 20 staff

- Feb Fast
- Circulate information on breaking addiction habits
- Movember
- Subsidise nicotine replacement therapy
- Discounted gym memberships
- Canberra Running Festival
- Yoga, Pilates or Tai Chi classes

Snapshot: Narrabundah Children’s Cottage – Junior and Senior Campuses

Education – 25 staff

- Spinal Health Week
- Cooking demonstration
- Greenery in staff room
- Wellbeing at Work online and face-to-face training
- EAP
- Encourage walking before work and at lunch time
- Family friendly social gatherings
Building a cohesive team

Scott Leggo Gallery – five staff

A gallery of premium quality artworks and gifts from Australian landscape photographer Scott Leggo. The gallery, located in Kingston, features unique and inspiring photographs from across Australia that can transform your home or workplace.

The Scott Leggo Gallery is proving that a focus on improving staff productivity and morale is vital, no matter how small the team.

“As a small business, maximising our performance is critical,” says Scott Leggo, Managing Director. “This means not just improving our business processes and systems, but maximising the performance of everyone on our team.”

Introducing a health and wellbeing plan has been a helpful method for enhancing performance and injecting some fun.

“The healthier we all are, the better we feel and the better we will perform,” explains Scott. “It’s a win for us and our clients.”

A seasonal approach to their wellness planning enables them to introduce variety and keep the program activities relevant to the whole team.

“As we grow the number of staff, the Healthier Work activities and plan have provided us with a battle rhythm to follow throughout the year,” says Scott. “It means we can start to embed healthier activities into our forward plans and to ensure this is part of our culture as the business grows.

“Every quarter is different, so as the seasons change, this is a perfect time to change the activities or emphasis on different aspects of a healthier workplace.”

For their first health and wellbeing plan, they offered fresh fruit for staff along with healthy eating posters and tips. They have also decided to introduce the gallery’s health and wellbeing philosophy at staff inductions.

“People are one of our core values,” says Scott. “Having practical initiatives in place that are a manifestation of placing our people at the forefront of our thinking is critical. For us, it’s about doing what you say you are going to do, not just talking about it.

“Who doesn’t want to live a healthier happier life?”
Snapshot: Sigma Bravo
Construction – 64 staff

- Fun run team
- Circulate health and wellbeing policies
- Seminar with a nutritionist
- Information about healthy lunch options and healthy eating/hydration
- Promote positive mental health resources
- Fortnightly fruit delivery

DID YOU KNOW?
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.

TIP
Dehydration (lack of water) can result in fatigue, headaches and reduced physical and mental performance. Keep a water bottle topped up at your desk or with you when you’re out and about.
Keep talking about health
Trade Guardian – 10 staff

Trade Guardian provides outsourced business administration and bookkeeping services to small businesses, professionals and tradespeople.

It’s still early days for Trade Guardian’s formalised approach to health and wellbeing in the workplace, yet they’re already seeing how it brings the team together. “We have enjoyed working together and communicating about ways to keep us all healthier,” says Trade Guardian’s Kristin Miller. “The hope is that staff will be happier as a result.” The team has gathered a variety of information and tools from Healthier Work to help them create their first health and wellbeing plan, which includes stress management tips, walking groups and a healthy eating recipe exchange. “We had a great range of information provided to us about mental health and supports, which was really useful,” says Kristin. “Trying to eat healthier has been the most popular with staff.” While they continue to implement health-promoting activities and supports for staff, they recognise how important it is to keep talking about health at work. “It is always difficult to keep momentum with additional tasks when we are all focused and busy delivering services to our clients,” notes Kristin. “Having staff involved has helped to keep the conversation about the importance of our health continue on an ongoing basis.”
Snapshot: UAE Embassy
International Relations – 30 staff
- Ainslie walks
- Feb Fast
- Mother’s Day Classic
- Stress management workshops
- Soup day
- Run for your Lifeline
- Steptember
- Floriade Walk of Nations

Snapshot: Universities Australia
Education – 26 staff
- Walking challenge with a trophy
- Information on mental health resources
- Healthier options for food cupboard
- Walking meetings
- Information about healthy lunch options and hydration
- Eat lunch away from desk challenge
For more information and support contact the Healthier Work team:

Email  healthierwork@act.gov.au
Web  www.healthierwork.act.gov.au
Facebook  /HealthierWorkACT
Twitter  @HealthierWork
Phone  6205 1079 or 6207 4766

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