

Staff and students benefit from health promotion

UNSW Canberra – 400+ staff

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. "It doesn't have to be expensive, but it has to be meaningful to staff, so ask for their input and involvement in developing the best activities."

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.



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