

Healthier  
Work.



# How to build a healthier work team

September 2023



# A guide to your approach

Creating a healthy workplace takes time, coordination and resources. It requires people working together across all areas of your organisation. Participation and support from leadership is crucial to achieving positive outcomes.

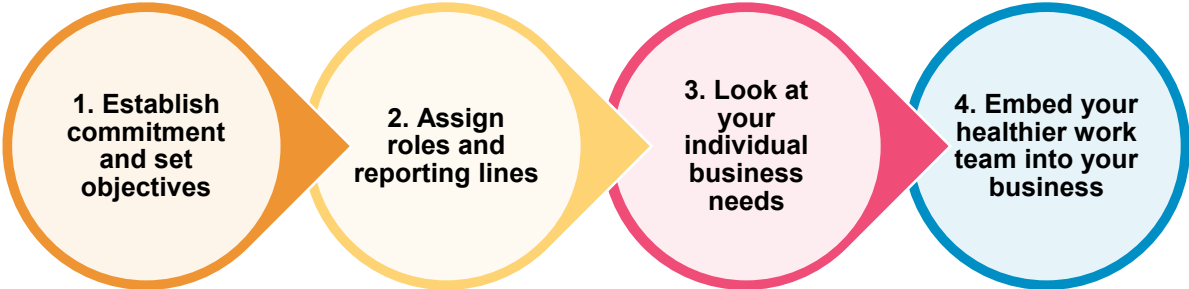
A healthy workplace takes an integrated approach to protect, support and promote health, safety and wellbeing across all areas of its business. Build a healthier work team to consider all aspects of employee health, safety and wellbeing.

We recommend bringing together the following workplace functions under a single banner.



## Take these four steps

All businesses are different and face unique challenges. Health, safety and wellbeing teams need to be built to suit individual business needs. Consider these four steps when putting together your healthier work team.



# 1

## Establish commitment and set objectives

Use these prompting questions to reflect on your business needs for a healthier work team. Engage your leaders in this early stage to gain their support.

### Why does our business need a healthier work team?

- » To demonstrate your organisation's commitment to providing a healthy and safe workplace for employees.
- » To acknowledge that workplace health safety and wellbeing is a shared responsibility across your organisation.
- » To ensure that responsibility and accountability for decisions and actions does not fall to one person.
- » To demonstrate that all parts of our business need to be involved to achieve positive outcomes.
- » To ensure that a diverse range of opinions and interests are considered.
- » To spread workload for sustainability and engagement.
- » To avoid duplication of effort

### What will the team do?

- » Identify gaps and opportunities to improve workplace health.
- » Liaise with related workplace health teams.
- » Identify strategies to meet these gaps.
- » Create an action plan and schedule of activities.
- » Consider and allocate budget and resources.
- » Conduct evaluation of initiatives and activities.
- » Keep records.
- » Develop reports to management.
- » Represent all employees interests.



## Assign roles and reporting lines

Use these prompting questions to set a framework for your healthier work team.

### Who should be part of the team?

- » People with interest in and commitment to workplace health, who can be change agents and opinion leaders.
- » Employees with decision making authority, the ability to get things done and drive change.
- » Health and safety representatives.
- » Supervisors and managers.
- » A range of staff at different levels and from different parts of the business.
- » People with good reach and connections into all areas of the business.

### Who should the team report to and how?

- » Report workplace health, safety and wellbeing outcomes regularly to the highest authority in your business. This might be the CEO, Director, Board members or Owner.
- » Consider your existing business governance and management arrangements and what would work for your business.
- » Understand how your team can support business compliance with reporting obligations for all related legislation.

### What and who else should report up to the team?

- » If separate, existing WHS, injury management and wellbeing committees.
- » Individual departments or business areas that have their own workplace health and wellbeing activities or plans.
- » Employees that undertake workplace engagement activities such as social committees.

### Who should the team consult with?

- » All employees within the organisation.
- » Management and executives.
- » External or community service providers if applicable.



# 3

## Look at your individual business needs

### Advice for small to medium businesses

- » Keep your scope and outputs realistic.
- » Start small and look to scale up.
- » Ensure members can speak on behalf of management and employees and act as program decision makers.
- » Provide suitable training.

### Advice for large businesses

- » Establish formal terms of reference.
- » Set meeting schedules and agendas.
- » Consider branding and marketing your health, safety and wellbeing program. Give it a name that works for your business.
- » Make team membership and participation a career development opportunity for employees.
- » Provide suitable training.

### Other considerations and questions

- » Where are your teams located? Do you have employees in offices, onsite, offsite and working from home? You may want to consider having separate workplace health, safety and wellbeing teams for different workplace environments.
- » What experience and expertise do you need on the team?
- » Is training and development needed to fulfil duties?
- » Do you have industry specific needs to consider?



# 4

## Embed your healthier work team into your business

### Build health and wellbeing into roles and responsibilities

- » Formally acknowledge healthier work team participation.
- » Where health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities and team membership are an expected part of the role (e.g., HR or WHS managers and supervisors) make sure this is included in position descriptions, duty statements and performance management plans.
- » Make job applicants aware of a positions, health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities throughout the recruitment process.
- » When updating existing role descriptions include health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities talk with employees throughout the process.

### Communicate initiatives and outcomes

- » Use engaging ways to keep employees informed of health, safety and wellbeing initiatives.
- » Regularly report outcomes and publish data.
- » Celebrate positive results and reward participation in health, safety and wellbeing programs.

### Review and evaluate

- » Seek feedback from employees on your healthier work team's activities.
- » Based on feedback received and reported outcomes, evaluate your team's activities to determine their effectiveness.
- » Review your teams activities, terms of reference, responsibilities and roles annually to track progress and initiate changes that may need to be made.





# Resources

These are only suggested resources. Organisations should consider their own needs when selecting resources to use.

## General

- » **SafeWork Australia:** [Health and Safety Committees](#) – general information on health and safety committees with supporting resources and information.
- » **WorkSafe ACT:** [Health and Safety Committees](#) – information on the responsibilities, obligations and functions of health and safety committees.
- » **Comcare:** [Participating in effective health and safety committees: a guide for committee members](#) (PDF) – guide for members including information on roles and how to make a committee effective.
- » **SafeWork Australia:** [Managing Health and Safety: Consultation and Resources](#) - resources to assist persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) in understanding their WHS duties to consult with workers, their representatives and other duty holders.
- » **Comcare:** [Workplace health and safety management system](#) – information on how to develop a system and the Australian standard.
- » **SafeWork Australia:** [Health and safety committee templates](#) - Downloadable Word document with templates for PCBUs to use or refer to when forming a health and safety committee.
- » **University of Queensland Australia:** [Health and Safety Committee - Terms of Reference template](#) - template to develop health and safety committee terms of reference.
- » **Comcare:** [Safety practitioners and advisers](#) - safety practitioner role explained including duties, liabilities and practical strategies.

## Training

- » **Comcare:** [Training](#) - relevant courses include: effective health and safety committees, WHS - roles and responsibilities, WHS committees, WHS consultation and introduction to WHS risk management.
- » **Master Builders Association ACT:** [Health and Safety Committee Training \(HSC\)](#) - a four hour course (approved by WorkSafe ACT) to provide information to workers on health and safety matters and the purpose, functions and responsibilities of a HSC.
- » **Pinnacle Training:** [Health and safety committee \(HSC\) training](#) - an overview of the functions, responsibilities and roles that contribute to a successfully functioning health and safety Committee.
- » **Safety Australia:** [Health & Safety Committee](#) - provides committee members with the skills and understanding to contribute to improved health and safety performance in their workplace through effective committee participation.
- » **AI Group:** [Health & Safety Committee](#) – designed to provide committee members with a practical understanding of safety and how they can assist in developing effective risk management strategies and improving safety outcomes.





Healthier Places.  
Healthier People.  
Healthier Work.



**Healthier  
Work.**

For further assistance, please  
contact the Healthier Work team.

Healthier Work, GPO Box 158, Canberra City,  
ACT 2601 or email: [healthierwork@act.gov.au](mailto:healthierwork@act.gov.au)

[www.healthierwork.act.gov.au](http://www.healthierwork.act.gov.au) | [www.act.gov.au](http://www.act.gov.au)