

# Healthy best practice - workplaces

## Healthy Queensland AWARDS

In the busy corporate world of competing business interests, it's easy to lose focus on the best asset you have – your people. By supporting your staff to be healthy and active, you are not only helping them to live happier, healthier and longer lives, but your business can also benefit through improvements to employee morale, organisational commitment, job satisfaction levels and improved corporate image, as well as reduced workplace absences.

### What can I do to help make my workplace healthier?

The following checklist provides some overarching ideas to keep in mind when planning your workplace activities. Make sure your initiatives, programs and activities are:

- based on the needs of staff:** involve staff at all levels in the planning, implementation and evaluation of employee healthy lifestyle programs; develop content of the program directly related to the expressed and measured needs of the workforce
- covering a broad range of activities:** which impact on health, such as job, organisation, environmental and management factors (avoiding a narrow focus on individual attitudes and behaviour)
- inclusive:** target the entire workforce and encompass strategies to make activities available and accessible e.g. to people from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, people with transport or access issues and people with disabilities
- monitored:** monitor and evaluate implementation and performance e.g. a staff survey before, during and after program activities, measuring participation and satisfaction rates, monitoring workplace health and safety (WH&S) measures (absenteeism, employee satisfaction, productivity etc)
- sustainable:** obtain ongoing commitment from senior management, establish a workplace health committee (broader than WH&S) and allocate adequate resources for ongoing programs and initiatives

### Healthy workplace examples

The Healthy Queensland Awards are about helping people to be more physically active, make healthier food choices, achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be smoke free, encourage responsible drinking and be sun smart. Below are some *examples* of activities that may be suitable to use or adapt for your workplace:

### Programs and promotion

- provide workplace programs or referral to low-cost or free community based programs e.g. walking groups, yoga classes, reputable healthy weight programs, stress management, relaxation training, skin cancer screening, blood pressure and cholesterol monitoring
- promote information and education about smoking and alcohol, related harms and health consequences for workers and their families
- offer programs to assist workers who wish to quit smoking or to manage alcohol, or improve access to existing support services such as Quitline and the Alcohol and Drug Information Service
- give employees information about ultraviolet radiation, sun safety behaviours and the prevention of skin cancer.
- promote physical activity programs which link with local community groups e.g. sporting clubs, gyms, to encourage staff to be active outside of work hours

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- promote healthy food and drinks in the staff cafeteria and vending machines, and limit unhealthy options
- encourage participation in community-based healthy lifestyle events e.g. Walk to Work Day
- use staff newsletters, lunch rooms, the intranet and staff bulletin boards to highlight key healthy lifestyle messages and activities
- promote activities that encourage good health e.g. signage near stairwells and elevators encouraging stair use or stretching charts near photocopiers

## Policies and planning

- establish a workplace health committee (different to WH&S) to foster and promote healthy lifestyle programs and policies in the workplace. Include regular review and monitoring of the policies

Implement policies that help make healthy choices the easy choices, such as:

- a healthy social function policy e.g. Christmas parties and functions promoting responsible alcohol practices, events and activities which include physical activity e.g. Barefoot Bowls Days, Family Picnics in the Park
- a physical activity workplace policy which decreases amount of time spent in continuous sitting and allows staff to incorporate physical activity into their day eg earlier start/finish times to encourage people to walk or cycle to work, walking to meetings and regular physical activity breaks
- a food and nutrition policy in the workplace, including healthy food and drink catering provided for workplace meetings and events
- a workplace breastfeeding policy
- tobacco and alcohol management policies in the workplace (including, but not limited to workplace health and safety policies)

- a policy, plans or programs which considers the effects of passive smoking in workplaces, particularly for workplaces with outdoor duties such as building, trade, transport etc
- a sun safe policy that incorporates time of day, shade, clothing, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen recommendations

## Facilities

It is important to provide:

- well-maintained and adequate equipment and facilities to encourage and support active travel to the workplace and physical activity during work time e.g. secure bike racks, showers and lockers
- adequate food preparation facilities and meal break areas for staff
- shade for outdoor workers and outdoor eating areas
- facilities to support breastfeeding mothers
- water bubblers

## Monitoring

- monitor levels of participation in healthy lifestyle activities - aiming for at least 70 per cent of all staff being involved in the program
- monitor policies and their implementation and modify them as the needs of workers and the workplace change

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## What sort of things will be considered for funding from the Awards prize money for workplaces?

Documented plans will need to be provided for the workplace health program detailing future activities and infrastructure planning. These plans need to include details on how any infrastructure will be maintained. The following types of healthy infrastructure may be considered for funding:

- facilities which support health
- infrastructure which encourages walking, cycling or other active transport to travel to and from work
- policies and plans which support health
- individual lifestyle counselling and group-based behavioural modification programs
- promotional and motivational activities to encourage good health (you will need to demonstrate how these contribute to long-term strategies)
- initiatives to improve access to workplace health promotion programs and services to those most at risk of chronic disease.

## Want to know more?

There are a large number of resources and tools which can help you. Find out more from the 'helpful links and resources' on the Awards website at [www.keeppaustraliabeautiful.org.au/qld](http://www.keeppaustraliabeautiful.org.au/qld)