

EMPLOYEE HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Installing practices that attract and retain Australia's best talent

"Workplace wellness" is a term used with increasing frequency in Australia's workplaces, and with good reason. The correlation between staff well-being and productivity/retention is widely documented, so it's a good time for companies to look into how they can invest in creating a positive and healthy workplace.

Google, Pixel and Facebook are amongst the large tech companies famous for their expensive workplace wellness initiatives, including gigantic slides, on-site dry-cleaning and world-class gymnasiums. Whilst this is likely to be unrealistic for most companies, you can still implement a health and well-being program regardless of company size.



WORKPLACE WELLNESS IN ACTION

In Seek's recent *Top 20 Job Roles that Demand the Highest Salary*, we were interested to note that the role of Health and Well-being Manager featured in the list. In a world inundated with stress, it's clear that companies are paying greater attention on how they can alleviate this in the workplace. Canva, voted Australia's Best Place to Work, has a Head of Vibe dedicated to how employees are feeling. Canva offers free bike servicing for employees that cycle to work and food sourced from local farmers. Australian tech giant Atlassian created a 'coffee date program' for women after noticing that some were isolated in their teams, giving them the opportunity to have coffee or simply go on a walk with another member of the team. They also offer mentoring programs focusing on professional development, sharing tips on presenting and confidence building.

Whilst clearly larger organisations may be better resourced to offer substantial health and wellness benefits, even minor changes can enhance your employees' time at work. Little changes can make your employees feel healthier, more engaged and valued. Any improvements, large or small, in these areas can be beneficial to your business.

"Stress-related presenteeism and absenteeism are directly costing employers \$10.11 billion a year."

Medibank-commissioned research

As cited in the ACT's Guide to Promoting Health and Well-being in the Workplace "the most important aspect to remember is to make your program relevant to your workers". So businesses can begin by asking employees for suggestions that may help alleviate stress and promote health, whether this be through focus groups or something as simple as suggestion boxes. These ideas could take a variety of forms, but reasonable suggestions might include:

- Stand-up desks.
- Offering walking catch-ups with staff and managers instead of sitting.
- Office fitness competitions or lunchtime running clubs.
- Swap kitchen snacks with healthy alternatives such as fresh fruit, perhaps staff members can create a healthy recipe to share with the team?
- Allowing employees to listen to music where appropriate.
- Adding plants/greenery or views of nature where possible.

For Further Reading:

- Worksafe's WorkWell Toolkit
- Black Dog Institute Workplace Wellbeing Factsheet
- Australian Government's Healthy Workers Initiative