

# Healthy Workers – Healthy Futures

## Case Study: SafeWork SA

A state government department is committed to improving staff health and wellbeing through their Health and Wellbeing Committee who develops and coordinates health and wellbeing activities on site.

### The Approach

SafeWork SA is South Australia's work health and safety (WHS) agency and large employer with six work sites, including 5 country locations, and consisting of 240 workers. Their primary role is to promote and encourage safe, fair and productive working lives in South Australia by working with employers, employees, unions and industry representatives. SafeWork SA is responsible for administering work health and safety laws and certain industrial relations law in South Australia.

SafeWork SA's health and wellbeing program aims to provide activities that minimises the impact on work time and commitments, as well as family time. Workers have had input into the direction and type of activities through a staff survey, that gauge their health interests and health issues that have been deemed important to them. This information helps guide the Wellbeing Group in deciding the schedule of health and wellbeing activities.

SafeWork SA health promotion activities include:

- Provision of local walking tracks/maps that staff can use at lunch breaks;
- Active travel through provision of public transport Metrocards, and more recently, bike hire, which were purchased through a successful bid for a community grant through Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure. The grant enabled SafeWork SA to purchase three bikes, helmets, safety vests, and spare parts, and they have established an online bike booking system, as well as several processes, including rider competency assessment, a Bicycle for Work Related Travel Guideline, maintenance register, and a logging system that records the number of kilometres that the bikes have been used for.
- A calendar of wellbeing events
- Seasonal themed events
- A SafeWork SA health and wellbeing intranet site that workers can access for health and wellbeing information and resources,

including mental health resources and links to other healthy worker initiatives.

- Monthly Well @ Work Newsletter
- Allocated Wellbeing room that can be utilised for Yoga, Meditation, respite, breastfeeding facilities, as well as a health station to measure blood pressure, bone density, and other biometric measures.

### The Rationale

SafeWork SA has had a long standing Be Active physical activity based program including: volleyball, rock wall climbing, and organised walks. When SafeWorkSA relocated offices to their current location in 2012, the work dynamic changed, and the Be Active model no longer was the right fit. It was decided that a Wellbeing Group should be established so that a similar, if not improved, range of workplace health and wellbeing opportunities could be offered.

This decision received high level support from Executive, with resources from Be Active, SA Health, Life Be In It, and other SafeWork SA workers contributing towards the planning and provision of expanded health and wellbeing activities. The newly established Wellbeing Group promotes government initiated monthly activities that require initiative from employees, such as forming teams and groups activities. This encourages workers to be pro-actively involved, and gain a sense of program ownership.

The new SafeWork SA site location has also offered the opportunity to build new working partnerships with a nearby private allied health provider, Smart Health. SafeWork SA workers can now access significant discounts if they choose to utilise Smart Health services.

### The Process

The Wellbeing Group, through promotion, and provision of support and information, is the means for SafeWork SA employees to make healthy choices at work. The Wellbeing Group runs parallel to the Work Health and Safety Committee, as well as the Social Club, delivering a comprehensive service to their workers. The Wellbeing Group



consists of representatives from various SafeWork SA workgroups, including ICT, HR, Policy, and field services, ensuring a broad representation of the workforce, and to allow the Wellbeing Group to provide activities that captures the interest of several work groups.

### **Positives and Achievements**

SafeWork SA workers have embraced the health and wellbeing program, and there are consistent participation rates. Staff report particularly looking forward to the monthly 'Well @ Work' newsletter that provides them with healthy tips, and health wellbeing information.

SafeWork SA's wellbeing program is positively embedded into workers mentality, the culture of the workplace, and has strong support at Executive level.

SafeWork SA was the recipient of the "Be Active Award for Workplace Physical Activity Initiatives" in 2010.

SafeWork SA were also the recipient of the Department of Planning, Transport, and Infrastructure Community Grant in 2012, which allowed them to purchase 3 bikes to allow workers utilise active work travel.

SafeWork SA has built strong partnerships with other organisations in the provision of health and wellbeing activities, including private organisation Smart Health, and Department of Planning, Transport, and Infrastructure to provide SafeWork SA workers with a personalised journey plan that focusses on active travel.

### **Overcoming the Challenges**

Organising the activities within SafeWork SA's health and wellbeing program is time consuming. In addition, finding a supportive group to promote activities and ideas is also challenging. However, with strong Executive support the health and wellbeing program, and the Wellbeing group has allowed these challenges to be circumvented.

### **The Future**

The health and wellbeing program and the Wellbeing Group will continue to be an integral part of SafeWork SA's services for its workers. It has a strong relationship with SafeWork SA's Executive leaders, and its workers who continue to show interest in taking part in the health and wellbeing activities, as well as some workers volunteering to be part of the Wellbeing Group.

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