

## Healthy Workers – Healthy Futures

# Case Study: DK Quarries

A medium sized business in Port Lincoln, DK Quarries, has made a commitment to improve the health and wellbeing of their mainly male workforce. With leadership from a key staff member, management support and the help of the Healthy Worker Adviser for Cement, Concrete and Aggregates Australia (CCAA) the organisation is seeing real changes.

### The Approach

DK Quarries has up to 25 staff in roles including quarrying, earth moving, machine operating, maintenance as well as five staff in the office in administrative and clerical positions. A lot of the work involves sitting on machinery for extended periods and truck driving.

A multi-strategy approach has been adopted. Lack of physical activity was identified as a concern and so through a state government grant from DPTI, the purchase of two bikes was made. These are now available for use on site as well as for lunch-time rides, short trips, meetings in town and are also available to be borrowed over the weekend. Therabands™ were also provided to workers to encourage physical activity and promote the program.



DK Quarries employees receiving new push bikes

Following the lead of one person who was determined to improve their fitness and lose weight, a lunch-time walking group is now operating and health information on the SNAP risk factors is discussed at monthly toolbox meetings and provided on the health board. All employees are aware of the Healthy Workers program, and that support can be offered.

This is not compulsory for staff and nor are staff bombarded with information; it's up to individuals to decide to participate or not.

### The Rationale

As a peak industry body, the CCAA supports its members in a range of ways – creation of healthy workplaces is one of these areas. As a member of the State Executive of CCAA, the owner of DK Quarries supported the proposal for a Healthy Worker Adviser (HWA)<sup>1</sup> to work with industry members. Like other CCAA members it was a natural step to invite the Adviser to work with his business, especially given the enthusiasm of the DK Quarries office manager who is also the Work, Health and Safety Manager.

DK Quarries recognise the need to keep their workers healthy and happy. They believe that a Health and Wellbeing program leads to fitter workers who are more productive with less sick days and less injuries. The healthier the workplace, the better able people are to do their job.

### Fit with organisational core values

This medium sized business has been operating for 50 years and is committed to creating a very positive work environment. Whilst not documented low staff turnover, multiple social functions, and a commitment to work- life balance are testament to the importance of these values. Work safety is also a priority and this program complements this focus.

### The Process

Commitment to develop a healthier workplace came right from the top in early 2013. Planning for the Healthy Worker program began in February 2013. The HWA visited in May 2013, kick starting the initiative, and provided staff with general information on the SNAP risk factors and sharing ideas on what is being undertaken in other workplaces. The Adviser assisted DK Quarries to perform a brief health assessment to determine the priorities and complemented this with small group discussions on topics of interest to staff. An audit of current practices and the environment was also conducted.



A summary of needs and ideas was then prepared by the CCAA Healthy Worker Adviser, and discussed with staff and management informing the development of an action plan some three months after the initial consultation.

### Positives and Achievements

***“After attending one of my CCAA meetings in Adelaide I was introduced to this concept of a Healthy Workers Program working with Peter as the Adviser. It has been great to see more staff than expected get involved in the first year of the program running and the impact it has had on our workplace. We can already see the employees’ motivation towards the program is positive. Along with Peter and Holly who have been running the program, we aim this year to get a few more participating in walking programs, bike riding and healthy eating options as well as myself contributing in some way such as walking.”***

*Tim McDonald  
Managing Director/Owner*

It's the small changes made by individuals towards leading healthier lives that is a major achievement. One driver has intentionally lost 12 kg through increasing his physical activity and changes to diet including reducing his meal size. This has encouraged others to follow suit. Another staff member has stopped drinking alcohol. Awards provided at the Christmas party to those who've made changes for better health, has encouraged other staff to consider altering their behaviour.

For a relatively small rural business everyone is very positive about the focus on good health and the strong management support at DK Quarries is essential to the success of the initiative.

As a result of their Healthy Workers Healthy Futures program, DK quarries were successful in receiving an award for significant contribution to men's health in a medium sized organisation.

This was awarded by AMHF (Australian Men's health Forum) at the 2013 National Mens Health Gathering.

### Overcoming the Challenges

There are challenges!

Not everybody is keen to use the bikes or walk at lunch-time; gentle encouragement is being used to support participation and some have been encouraged by changes in others. Employees are spread out across the site and often off-site for hours, their breaks are spread out and they have split shifts so doing whole of staff activities can be problematic.

The number of kilometres travelled by bike is being recorded providing regular feedback to staff but it is difficult to measure the impact of other initiatives, such as information provision, though employees have reported improvements in health, including weight loss.

### The Future

Based on staff interest, and need, DK Quarries hope to be able to support those staff that currently smokes, to quit.

A walking program or competition is also planned as well as more of a focus on stretching and standing and then a focus on healthy foods. DK Quarries hopes that all employees will feel comfortable to participate in the program at some level.

In collaboration with the HWA a yearly plan of activities has been developed which includes a policy statement of commitment to health and wellness in the workplace.

### Duration and resources

At present the program is conducted internally with the Workplace Health and Safety Manager playing a key role. External providers may be brought in over time.

<sup>1</sup> CCAA Healthy Worker Adviser  
(<http://www.concrete.net.au/>)

Find out more about how you can create a healthy workplace, find a Healthy Worker Adviser for your sector, or submit your own case study:

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