Civil Train SA is the training arm of the Civil Contractors Federation (SA). As a registered training organisation (RTO), Civil Train offers a range of accredited and non-accredited training relevant to the civil and allied construction industries. There are over 50 accredited and non-accredited courses, including White Card Construction Induction, Basic Levelling, Working in Confined Spaces and Pipe laying. Approximately 20,000 students are trained annually.

The Rationale
A key entry level program delivered by Civil Train SA is a seven week Certificate II in Civil Construction. Students must complete 16 units of competency including Workplace Health and Safety Law and Safe Work Method Statements; Workzone Traffic Management and Plant Operation course to qualify for operational roles within the industry. Students undertaking this Certificate are largely male, of varying ages, unemployed and usually disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 2016, 16 students enrolled in a 7 week course, delivered by Civil Train, in conjunction with the Department of State Development’s WorkReady Program.

It wasn’t long before Civil Train staff recognised that a number of this group weren’t eating breakfast. The usual excuses; ‘not enough time’ or a preference for sleep, rather than food were given; but for some, the issue was food insecurity: poor access to food or little money to purchase food. Civil Train felt it was important to step in and offer support.

The Process
As part of initial scoping it was recognised a solution needed to be quick to administer; not eat into class time; be nutritious and as a not for profit organisation, low cost. All of which, would aid long term sustainability. After investigating a number of options, a partnership with Foodbank was established and the Breakfast Club was born.

Foodbank is a non-profit organisation, dedicated to feeding those in need by rescuing and redistributing edible surplus food. Food is sourced from farmers, manufacturers and retailers and includes foods that are close to date code, have incorrect labelling or damaged packaging as well as excess stock and deleted lines. Without Foodbank, much of this food would simply go to landfill.

A satiating solution
With access to Foodbank’s supplies, the Breakfast Club provided Cert II students with a small, sweet or savoury breakfast ‘bag’, with items such as stewed fruit,
muesli bars, breakfast biscuits, baked beans or flavoured milk. The combination of foods was established by the CCF Healthy Workers Advisor to ensure healthier options were provided. The provision of a snack rather than a full continental spread meant that breakfast could be eaten relatively quickly, without infringing on class time as well as reducing mess.

Fruitful Feedback
The benefits of breakfast are well known; eating breakfast restores glycogen reserves, boosts energy levels and metabolism; while providing a significant portion of the day’s total nutrient intake. Particularly noticeable were effects on the students’ ability to stay focussed and concentrate. This strategy was an effective way to fuel students’ minds to get through classes. This in turn, assisted with attendance and subsequent course completion rates - a key outcome of the WorkReady initiative.

Students said: “The Breakfast Club has made me realise the importance of eating breakfast everyday”.

Next steps
For future Cert II courses, the Breakfast Club will be implemented, with a few minor adjustments. Students will be asked to complete an initial survey to ascertain taste preferences, any allergy/religious requirements and gauge health beliefs, particularly around breakfast. Results from the survey will help tailor the approach and a repeat of the health belief survey upon course completion will meter any behavioural or attitude changes.

Further an additional health education component within the Cert II will focus on dispelling health misinformation and build food preparation skills, complementing the Breakfast Club approach.

At Civil Train there is strong acknowledgement by both management and the training group about the importance of a healthy workforce in terms of productivity and lost time injury recovery. This recognition ensures ongoing investment of resources and staff time for the Breakfast Club.

Find out more about how you can create a healthy workplace and find a Healthy Worker Adviser for your sector:

Healthy Workers Healthy Futures Initiative: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/healthyworkers
Email: healthyworkers@health.sa.gov.au

This program was implemented by the Healthy Workers Adviser, Civil Construction Federation run through the SA Health Healthy Workers Healthy Futures initiative