



# ACT PUBLIC SERVICE

## WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT WORKPLACE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### 1. PURPOSE

This document articulates the principles that underpin the ACT Government's commitment to workplace health and wellbeing and provides guidance to support the development and implementation of health and wellbeing policies and programs within ACTPS Directorates.

This commitment is articulated in all ACTPS enterprise agreements under the heading of "Promoting a healthy and safe working environment".

Under each agreement the following is stated:

'Given the clear evidence of the benefits and cost effectiveness of workplace health initiatives for both employers and employees, Directorates will develop health and wellbeing policies and programs that promote healthy lifestyles and help maintain a high standard of physical and mental health, along with supporting individual workplace safety and general wellbeing. Such policies and programs may include:

- a) Organisational/environment policies and programs;
- b) Awareness and educational programs that promote healthy lifestyles and reduce risk factors; and
- c) Traditional and non-traditional physical activity programs.'

### 2. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all ACTPS Directorates and their employees.

### 3. LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE

The key principles of this policy are consistent with:

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT)*;
- *Public Sector Management Act 1994*;
- Public Sector Management Standards 2006; and
- *The Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)*.

#### **4. DIRECTION STATEMENT**

The ACT Government recognises that programs to promote, encourage and reinforce health and wellbeing are of benefit to the ACTPS and its employees.

Directorates are to develop and implement workplace health and wellbeing programs that:

- aim to improve the health and wellbeing of employees and the whole of the ACTPS;
- identify and address the individual needs of their Directorates and its employees;
- consist of a range of individually targeted initiatives and broader organisational based strategies, targeting issues such as increasing physical activity, improving nutrition, reducing risky alcohol consumption and tobacco smoking, and improving social and emotional wellbeing;
- are focused on prevention and proactive strategies; and
- promote equity by meeting the needs of employees irrespective of their health, age, gender or employment status.

Directorates' primary responsibility is to ensure they have in place robust workplace health and safety management systems to minimise any risk of harm to employees. Health and wellbeing programs are intrinsically linked to workplace health and safety and these programs can complement and enhance mandatory health and safety approaches.

The ACT Government strives to lead by example by creating a workplace culture and environment that values, supports and promotes the health and wellbeing of ACTPS employees, in turn making a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of the ACT community as a whole.

A service that values and fosters the health and wellbeing of its employees can:

- improve the health and wellbeing of employees;

- reduce the rate of work-related illness, absenteeism and the cost of associated leave;
- reduce the risk and impact of chronic illness and disease;
- reduce the occurrence of workplace accidents;
- improve attraction and retention of staff;
- assist employees to enjoy longer working careers;
- reduce employees' need for health related services;
- improve productivity and staff morale; and
- improve the ACT Government's profile in becoming an 'employer of choice'.

The benefits associated with positive health and wellbeing in the workplace transcend an individual's working life into their personal life, and vice versa.

#### **4.1. Policy Principles**

The guiding principles which underpin this policy include that ACTPS health and wellbeing programs should:

- be informed by the World Health Organization definition of health and wellbeing as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing – and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity;
- promote positive health and wellbeing for all ACTPS employees;
- equip, facilitate and support employees to improve and maintain their health and wellbeing by including components aimed at:
  - increasing the health knowledge and skills of employees;
  - promoting and facilitating active participation by employees in health promoting initiatives; and
  - creating health promoting environments.
- focus on primary and secondary prevention and proactive strategies and where possible, utilise existing mechanisms to enhance health and wellbeing programs e.g. Employee Assistance Programs;

- be adequately funded and resourced, whilst striving for long term sustainability;
- provide equity of access to and outcomes of programs;
- encourage voluntary participation, without overriding specifications of existing or new workplace legislative requirements or policies (e.g. smoke free and alcohol policies);
- not stigmatise health conditions or behaviours;
- ensure measures are put in place to protect the privacy of individuals (programs should also comply with relevant legislation);
- include mechanisms for continuous quality improvement, including monitoring and evaluation arrangements;
- recognise the diversity of ACTPS employees and job types; and
- establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to be able to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of program initiatives.

#### **4.2. Health and wellbeing program guidelines**

Health and wellbeing programs should be developed in accordance with the Health and wellbeing program guidelines (Attachment A).

#### **4.3. Health and Wellbeing Program Funding**

Individual work areas may decide to fund health and well being initiatives that are specifically targeted to the needs of their employees or may negotiate funding with their Corporate Services/Human Resources areas area.

Depending on the initiatives being offered, employees may be asked to contribute to the cost of an initiative, partially or fully, on an upfront or pay-as-you-go basis.

### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **a) Directors-General/Executives**

Directors-General/Executives are responsible for developing and introducing a health and wellbeing program into their workplaces in accordance with the principles and guidelines set out in this policy. Directors-General/Executives are responsible for:

- providing resources and funding to address health and wellbeing initiatives;
- facilitating consultation with employees to identify and implement health and wellbeing initiatives specific to the needs of the employees within their individual Directorate;
- communicating their support for the principles of this policy and behaviours contributing to positive staff health and wellbeing;
- encouraging participation in health and wellbeing initiatives and implementing initiatives that benefit all employees within their Directorate ; and
- informing employees of any specific health and wellbeing risks intrinsic in the nature of their work.

**b) Directorate/Entity HR Director/Manager**

Directorate /Entity HR Director/Managers are responsible for:

- developing and implementing Directorate-based initiatives to enhance employee health and wellbeing, in line with the principles set out in this policy; and
- ensuring compliance with relevant privacy legislation, practices and principles.

**c) Managers/Supervisors**

Managers/supervisors are responsible for:

- being aware of, and understanding, this policy and promoting it to employees;
- actively contributing to the objectives of their Directorate in implementing the principles set out in this policy;
- ensuring compliance with relevant privacy legislation, practices and principles;
- consulting with employees to assist in identifying appropriate health and wellbeing initiatives within their Directorates; and
- actively supporting and encouraging employee participation in initiatives.

#### **d) All staff**

Although participation in health and wellbeing initiatives is voluntary, all staff are encouraged to:

- be aware of, and understand, the ACTPS health and wellbeing policy;
- support and encourage those who take part in health and wellbeing initiatives at work;
- actively contribute to the objectives of their Directorate in implementing the principles of this policy;
- assist in identifying and sharing ideas for promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace; and
- take reasonable care for their own health and wellbeing and embrace the assistance their workplace offers them.

## **6. DICTIONARY**

“Employee” is defined under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* as:

- a person employed in the Public Sector by or under an employing authority.

## **7. REFERENCES AND LINKS**

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011A00137>

ACT Public Sector Workplace Health and Safety Policy Statement:

<http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/governance/public/wpsafety>

ACT Public Sector Policy Statement WHS-04-2012 – Consultation in the Workplace:

[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/202876/whs0411.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/202876/whs0411.pdf)

Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework

<http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/governance/public/RED>

HAPIA, *Best Practice Guidelines* – available as PDF at:

<http://www.hapia.com.au/CorporateWellness.html>

Commonwealth, Peak Employer Representatives and Trade Union Joint Statement of Commitment: Promoting Good Health at Work

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/E544605F8BEE417DCA2578E30015E9D2/\\$File/Joint%20Statement%20of%20Commitment%20-%20Promoting%20Good%20Health%20at%20Work.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/E544605F8BEE417DCA2578E30015E9D2/$File/Joint%20Statement%20of%20Commitment%20-%20Promoting%20Good%20Health%20at%20Work.pdf).

WorkSafe ACT website – Consultation:

<http://www.worksafety.act.gov.au/page/view/1240/title/consultation>

ACT Workplace Health Audit Tool

[www.healthierwork.act.gov.au](http://www.healthierwork.act.gov.au)

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/en/>.

World Health Organization (1946). Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19–22 June 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948

[http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who\\_constitution\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf)

## **8. REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed after 3 years unless earlier review is required.

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**ACT**  
Government

Chief Minister and Treasury

## ATTACHMENT A

### Health and Wellbeing Program Guidelines

These guidelines outline the strategic elements required for ACTPS health and wellbeing programs.

#### **a) Establish a need and Senior Management commitment**

To enable identification of specific health and wellbeing priorities in the workplace and ensure that initiatives are successful and tailored to the needs of employees, Directorates must undertake a comprehensive needs assessment which includes consulting with employees on the scope, content and approach to health initiatives. Consideration must also be given to the workplace environment and its existing policies, facilities and programs. This approach will increase the effectiveness of programs, and also enable Directorates to establish a robust baseline individual and organisational health profile.

Senior management advocacy is critical to the success of Health and Wellbeing programs and their support should be regularly communicated within Directorates. Employee champions and advocates can also lend valuable support to the promotion of Health and Wellbeing policies and will increase uptake amongst employees. Careful consideration should be given to how implement health and wellbeing initiatives using Senior Management support.

#### **b) Develop the program**

Directorates are to use their needs assessment key themes and identified priority areas to develop program initiatives with defined goals and objectives. In developing the program, Directorates should identify what initiatives will be offered, the level of their intensity and what level of funding the Directorate and/or employee will need to contribute and how they will be managed in the future. Oversight of these arrangements should link in with each Directorate's Health and Safety Governance arrangements.

Programs that address a variety of behavioural and environmental risk factors and issues increase participant engagement and ensure lasting change. Integrating health and



wellbeing programs with existing business planning and values will embed the policy into practice. Management involvement and support from senior management through to middle and line managers across an organisation ensures equal access, opportunity and support to all employees, regardless of position or job type.

There are a range of health and wellbeing programs that Directorates may give consideration to implementing in their organisations. Program initiatives may include:

- increasing health knowledge and skills, e.g:
  - provision of health promotion resources and information, such as posters promoting use of stairs and health information in staff rooms;
  - seminars, information stalls and health events; and
  - health risk assessments and health coaching.
- facilitating active participation in health promotion, e.g.:
  - provision of work based mental health/stress management programs, weight management programs, physical activity classes, smoking cessation programs; and
  - establishing corporate sports teams or groups to participate in charity events, such as fun runs and charity walks.
- initiatives that lead to health promoting environments, e.g.:
  - provision/maintenance of health promoting facilities, e.g. food preparation areas, bike racks, showers, changing rooms;
  - development and implementation of policies, such as food and drink policies that cover canteens, vending machines, catering and fundraising, smoke free policies, and policies that support physical activity at work ; and
  - actively supporting staff to access work life balance and personal development initiatives.

Other Directorate specific health initiatives should also be considered where they meet identified workplace needs and are consistent with the purpose of this policy. The aim for each Directorate is to create a working environment that supports employees to improve and maintain their health and wellbeing in the short and long term.

### **c) Publicise the program**

To maximise employee interest and participation and ensure the success of the health and wellbeing program, Directorates should ensure that they develop a health and wellbeing communication strategy. Such a strategy should ensure that all employees have access to program information and that senior management support is regularly communicated.

### **d) Evaluate and monitor the program**

Monitoring and evaluation of all program components should be established during program planning and inception. Directorates are responsible for regularly reviewing initiatives and their impact, results, key themes and priority areas to determine whether programs are meeting their stated objectives for both employees and the organisation. Evaluation of program outcomes will be aided greatly by sound program management and good record keeping throughout each of the above stages of development and implementation.