



# Queensland Safe Work and Return to Work Awards 2017

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## Safe Work and Return to Work Awards 2017 example entry Category 5 – Best work health and wellbeing initiative

### 1. Describe your workplace health and wellbeing initiative and how it was developed. What does your initiative entail and how does it work?

Be Healthy, Be Wealthy is Seqwater's overall workplace health and wellbeing program which delivers targeted specific health programs based on the SNAP (smoking, nutrition, alcohol and physical activity) risk factors for chronic disease and identified health risks and wellbeing issues present in the Seqwater staff population.

Seqwater is one of Australia's largest water businesses with the most geographically spread and diverse asset base of any capital city water authority. Our operations extend from the New South Wales border to the base of the Toowoomba ranges and north to Gympie.

Recently embedded into Seqwater's award winning Safety Management System, Be Healthy, Be Wealthy is about putting the 'H' in WHS (work health and safety) and has Board, CEO and management endorsement to continue to continue enabling employees to improve their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing whilst reducing their health risk profile, in particular for cardiovascular and other chronic disease.

This is achieved through wellness planning in consultation with employees, workplace health and safety committees and management, identifying wellbeing program needs through an annual staff feedback survey and organisational results from annual health assessments, implementing a yearly calendar of events as an action plan and evaluating results through outcome measures and staff feedback.

Be Healthy, Be Wealthy was developed in 2009 in consultation with management and staff and through workplace health and safety committees, feedback mechanisms, launch programs and leadership meetings.

Be Healthy Be Wealthy is Seqwater's overall workplace health and wellbeing program which enables all staff to access information and initiatives to improve physical, mental and emotional wellbeing despite the challenge of a wide geographical spread throughout SEQ. The program is holistic in nature, aiming to increase healthier places, healthier culture and healthier bodies and minds.

Once wellbeing program needs are identified (as explained further below), an annual calendar of health and wellbeing events are distributed to staff. Onsite activities can be booked online or through site contacts to make it as easy as possible to participate and access the initiatives. Feedback is then sought via paper based or online surveys for evaluation and continuous improvement.

Each year an external provider conducts voluntary and confidential health and wellbeing assessments for staff which includes an organisational health report outlining the aggregated results. A specific feedback survey on Be Healthy, Be Wealthy is also distributed annually. The results from both the organisation's health profile and staff feedback are used to develop specifically targeted programs and initiatives which also align with reducing the SNAP risk factors for chronic disease.

The overall goals of Be Healthy, Be Wealthy are to:

- Reduce employee health risks through tangible outcome measures
- Provide employees with opportunities to participate in activities that will increase knowledge and skills and facilitate behaviour change to improve health and wellbeing
- Increase employee physical activity
- Increase the number of employees who are meeting healthy eating and alcohol consumption guidelines
- Reduce the number of smokers
- Reduce employee stress

We strive to realise these goals through the objectives of:

- Increase the minimum employee participation rate from 25% across all wellbeing programs.
- Registering three new people on the Quit Smoking program each quarter.
- Achieving 25% of staff who participate in 2013 and 2014 health assessments to improve their BMI and waist measurements in 2014.
- Increase employee satisfaction levels to 50% of all employees being satisfied or very satisfied with Be Healthy, Be Wealthy.
- Increase the average employee fruit and vegetable consumption to the recommended 2 and 5 serves per day by 10% in 12 months.
- Increase the average number of employees engaging in 30 minutes or more of physical activity on most, if not all, days of the week by 10% in 12 months.
- Decrease the average number of employees consuming alcohol above the recommended national guidelines by 10% in 12 months.
- Reduce the average number of staff who are at increased risk developing Metabolic Syndrome Risk by 10% in 24 months.

Annual health and wellbeing assessments conducted by an external provider give Seqwater aggregated data on the health risk hot spots for Seqwater and information on improvements made by individuals who have been participating across multiple years. In the last 12 months there were 173 participants comprising 57% males and 43% females. Based on data collected, employee health risks identified were:

- 32% of staff reported alcohol consumption levels that exceeded the national guidelines
- 8% of staff were smokers
- 53% of staff had unacceptable BMI
- 29% of staff were at moderate risk and 22% were at high risk of developing Type II Diabetes as assessed by AUSDRISK
- 4% of staff were at moderate risk and 2% at high risk of developing cardiovascular disease as per the Australian Cardiovascular Disease Risk Rating tool
- 30% of staff were at increased risk of developing metabolic syndrome and metabolic syndrome was evident in 11% of staff
- 6% of staff reported severe stress on the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Score (DASS) and 4% reported moderate stress levels

Of these staff, 68 participated in both 2012 and 2013 health assessments and the percentage of individuals who saw improvement from 2012 to 2013 are as follows:

- 38% of staff improved their blood glucose
- 49% improved blood pressure and total cholesterol levels
- 29% improved their BMI
- 46% improved their waist measurements
- 3% quit smoking (4 of the repeat participants were smoking and 2 successfully quit)

Staff feedback on Be Healthy Be Wealthy is sought on a yearly basis for continuous improvement. Findings from the last 12 months include:

- 20% of staff have never participated in a wellbeing program
- 12.23% were very satisfied
- 46.76% were satisfied
- 33.09% were neutral

As an example of acting on staff feedback, there were many requests for discounted or partially subsidised gym memberships. As a result of this feedback, Seqwater partnered with local gyms to provide staff with discounted memberships and free trials to promote physical activity.

Initiatives that have been implemented to address the identified Seqwater health risks and SNAP risk factors include:

- Annual health and wellbeing assessments
- Free Quit Smoking Program which includes 14 weeks of free NRT and contact with Quitline
- Subsidised weight watchers at work
- Physical activity programs such as bootcamp and yoga
- Nutritional seminars and workshops e.g. label reading and healthy cooking demonstrations
- Provision of herbal teas in lunch rooms
- Awareness programs and training on alcohol consumption and drugs
- Yearly 10,000 Steps Challenge and free pedometers
- Information sessions with Bicycle Queensland on safe riding and routes
- Sponsorship in events such as Corporate Games, Somerset Fun Run
- Heart foundation presentations on healthy heart
- Men's health seminars focusing on prostate cancer, depression and tuning into health
- Health across the lifespan seminars discussing diseases, typical health issues, screening tests and preventative strategies at each stage of lifespan
- Fit4Work program voluntary alcohol and drug testing – all sites are provided with disposable oral drug screen testers and breathalysers; fatigue management training and the provision of Fatigue Calculators which uses an algorithm developed by the Centre for Sleep Research, University of South Australia
- Emotional health and mental wellbeing programs such as workshops on resilience, daily vitality, stress busters, healthy relationships at work, healthy relationships at home, mindfulness
- Breast cancer and bowel cancer presentations by QLD Health
- Initiatives to align with other state, national or internationally recognised health events e.g. Ovarian Cancer, Bowel Cancer, Men's Health Week, Mental Health Week, Dry July, National Heart Week
- Employee Assistance Program – free confidential counselling program for staff and their immediate family

In addition, other health programs available include Onsite flu vaccination program; Health Monitoring Program for biological and chemical hazards; Onsite podiatry program in progress; Safer Living presentations by Queensland Police; Eye health awareness; Annual skin checks; Danger Sun Overhead Program; Job Demands Analysis – job dictionaries for operational roles outlining the inherent physical demands of each role for use in rehabilitation, pre-employment and fitness for duty assessments; Office Ergonomics program.

CEO and Chairman: endorsement of Seqwater's WHS policy which includes a commitment statement to employee wellbeing and our safety management system which incorporates a Health, Wellbeing and Fitness for Work element and procedures, embedding Seqwater's commitment to employee wellbeing within our safety management system framework.

Board: health and wellbeing is a standard item in the board report. The board review data and information from Be Healthy, Be Wealthy initiatives are also invited to attend executive health evaluations.

Executive Leadership: approval and endorsement of proposed wellness programs and driving health and wellbeing on the senior leadership agenda and into their respective work groups. Senior leaders (managers) and supervisors: consultation, development and implementation of wellbeing programs. Encouraging and supporting employees to attend wellbeing initiatives.

Keeping health on the agenda.

Employees: involved in development of program through feedback in healthy workplaces survey and evaluation of effectiveness of programs.

Regional Workplace Health and Safety Improvement Committees: wellbeing or health issues or improvement areas are raised via the committee as well as discussing, endorsing, promoting and implementing proposed initiatives.

Injury Management & Health Program Coordinator: dedicated FTE resource to consult with employees and managers in the development, implementation and management of wellbeing initiatives.

Communications Team: development of engaging materials to promote programs, use of intranet, TV boards, posters, staff emails, newsletters and bulletin boards.

Seqwater is a member of the Workplaces for Wellness program achieving bronze status for Be Healthy Be Wealthy and Headsup.org. Seqwater engages and consults with a number of external organisations and community groups in the interests of continuous improvement and best practice in workplace health and wellbeing.

## **2. Describe how the initiative was implemented and why it represents a real, ongoing commitment to workplace health and wellbeing.**

In recognition of the importance of employee health, Seqwater allocates a dedicated budget to health and wellbeing each year to fund relevant and objective based initiatives targeting the SNAP risk factors, employee feedback and identified health risks in the Seqwater staff population.

Seqwater employs a permanent full time Injury Management & Health Program Coordinator who works closely with business groups, employees and management to develop and implement wellbeing initiatives. Employee Wellbeing is a regular agenda item on the Senior Leadership team meetings and the Manager, Work Health and Safety, dedicates time to the

development, review and evaluation of wellness programs. For accessibility, employees are supported to attend health initiatives during work hours.

Health and wellbeing is a regular agenda item in Executive Leadership and Board meetings for the discussion of health issues and strategic direction. Senior leaders are involved in implementation of initiatives which are provided to staff on-site during work hours. Management and supervisors encourage and support employees to attend during work hours.

People: workshops and seminars incorporating knowledge and skilled based health activities such as cooking demonstrations, nutrition label reading workshops and group personal training is offered.

Places: bike rack, shower and locker facilities are available at head office, cycling maps and routes have been available through Bicycle Queensland presentations, workplace posters as visual cues to encourage people to take the stairs instead of lift, healthy eating behaviours, EAP contact details for support and details to register for the quit smoking program. Quarterly newsletter always has wellbeing features and personal success stories. Work teams are encouraged to have a “standing agenda” to bring awareness to health effects of sedentary activity and to counteract sitting.

Policies: through our initiatives, we aim to foster a culture that embraces employee health and wellbeing so that people are empowered, enabled and feel supported to make healthy lifestyle and behavioural changes, e.g. encouraging staff and their colleagues to walk during breaks, promoting R U OK Day and peer support.

The structure of Seqwater’s award winning safety management system entails 16 foundation elements which includes the Health, Wellbeing and Fitness for Work element, embedding the CEO’s and organisation’s commitment to employee wellbeing within the safety management system framework.

Further, Seqwater’s Work Health and Safety policy which is undersigned by the CEO and Chairman sets out a specific commitment to “support actions aimed at increasing worker safety and wellbeing outside working hours”.

One of Seqwater’s organisational values are “We Work Safe”. The WHS Team supports Seqwater to operationally uphold this value and commitment through a number of initiatives as per attached We Work Safe initiatives map. Employee wellbeing is an inherent element in this map to support our safety management system.

For staff, the use of narrative and real life good news stories of staff who have seen improvements or benefited from programs are used heavily to engage with employees and encourage uptake. Internal comms team utilise a plethora of different methods and styles to make content appealing and increase buy-in. Focusing on the benefits for individuals for their personal wellbeing and health is always key. For management, Be Healthy Be Wealthy is communicated in terms of the impact on operations and the organisation, the benefits of a healthy and resilient workforce to enable workforce capability and sustainability to continue producing water for SEQ. Results of annual assessments are discussed including real figures of the cost of lost productivity based on actual risk factors and the application of research by Burton et al. 2006.

### **3. Explain how an evaluation process was used to show that the initiative achieved its objectives.**

The annual health and wellbeing assessments provides information about overall organisational health risks but also comparison data for staff who participate from year to year, providing more accurate information about the effectiveness of the program in reducing health risks in individuals who participate year to year as described later in this submission. See attached Be Healthy, Be Wealthy Supporting Information.

Participation rates year to year are also monitored with the goal of increasing participation rates and therefore engagement from year to year.

Anonymous online/paper based feedback surveys to gauge the relevance of initiatives to staff, satisfaction with information delivered an impact on healthy behaviour change.

- 27% of all staff participated in the annual Health and Wellbeing Assessments
- Of the 68 staff who participated in the 2012 and 2013 Health and Wellbeing assessments, the following percentages of staff made improvements in these health indicators:
  - 38% improved their blood glucose levels
  - 49% reduced their blood pressure
  - 49% improved their total cholesterol levels
  - 29% improved their BMI
  - 46% reduced their waist measurement
  - 2 out of the 4 smokers have successfully quit smoking
  - One worker had a melanoma detected through a workplace skin check and was successfully treated
  - 10% increase in participation rates for skin checks from 2013 to 2014 with 61 out of 300 eligible staff to 100 out of 300 eligible staff respectively
  - 39 Seqwater employees/family members/contractors have registered on the Quit Program
  - Almost one third of the whole workforce participated in the annual 10,000 Steps Challenge in 2013 including the CEO and three Executive General Managers.

Messages, learnings and results from Be Healthy Be Wealthy initiatives are often showcased on our intranet page with 'real life' case stories to make learnings personal, relevant, engaging and inspiring to staff. For example Senior Project Manager Nigel Smith shared his story in promoting the annual health and wellbeing assessment program: "This will be my 3rd year attending the health and wellbeing assessment program. Since my first assessment I've quit smoking and lost 17kg. As a result of the program I've become more conscientious about my diet and exercise. Through the program I have a better understanding of my health risks and lifestyle choices to reduce them. I find the annual health and wellbeing assessments beneficial in tracking my health and look forward to it this year - just remember not to eat beforehand!".

Personal stories are also used to promote wellness programs and increase participation. For example through a workplace skin check a melanoma was detected and the staff member was able to remove it in the early stages which was potentially life-saving. This story was used to promote the skin check program for 2014 which significantly increased participation numbers from 61 eligible staff in 2013 to 100 eligible staff in 2014 (out of 300 staff eligible for free skin check due to working outdoors).

The Executive Leadership Team and Board receive participation numbers, findings and learnings from initiatives to inform future decision making. For example, following the 2014 skin checks, 4 staff were identified to have suspicious lesions (suspected melanoma) and were referred to their doctors urgently whilst 49 staff were identified to have lesions that

required regular monitoring by their GP. In recognition of the devastating effects of Melanoma and the high prevalence amongst Australians, this data informed the executive's decision to offer skin checks to all staff from 2015, instead of only to staff who work outdoors.

All staff and levels of management including the board receive a summary of the aggregated data from the annual Health and Wellbeing Assessments which are presented and discussed at team meetings.

One of the strengths and unique features of Be Healthy, Be Wealthy is that it is embedded into Seqwater's safety management system with an element in our work health and safety framework committed to employee health and wellbeing. From this element, health and wellbeing initiatives and related procedures follow meaning employee wellness is inherently integrated in the organisation's management system, truly addressing the "H" in Workplace Health and Safety.

Following the 5-Steps to Workplace Wellness guide closely, Be Healthy, Be Wealthy has involved employees and all levels of management in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Seqwater's health and wellbeing program achieving real employee and organisational benefits as evidenced by our outcomes and data.

A holistic approach to wellness is used by incorporating Seqwater data and SNAP risk factors into the development of initiatives, and by reminding employees that the meaning of Be Healthy, Be Wealthy far extends beyond being healthy and fit for work to make a living and be financially 'wealthy' but to be healthy and well in body and mind to live a life that's 'wealthy' of experience.