



THE FUTURE@WORK HEALTH REPORT

Employees and their Workplace



November 2006

Commissioned by



Executive Summary

Introduction

Australian employers are facing serious challenges trying to attract and retain workers in an era of a shrinking, ageing workforce. Many employers are meeting this challenge with a range of workplace strategies to enable them to claim “employer of choice” in their particular sector. Another emerging challenge is that the workforce is facing major health risks. Heart disease, obesity, diabetes, cancer and stress are lifestyle health issues no employer can afford to ignore. Every 10 minutes an Australian dies from heart disease, we are facing an obesity epidemic with 60% of adults overweight or obese, diabetes is our fastest growing disease and stress is a major cause of extended absenteeism.

The rapidly changing world of business and increasing demands on employees is taking its toll on employee health and perpetuating these lifestyle diseases. Today’s employee is working longer hours and is under increasing stress. Inability to manage work/life balance is causing employees to neglect their health. This directly affects productivity, staff retention and the business bottomline.



Corporate social responsibility, being an employer of choice and productivity are the business drivers for the increasing focus on employee health and wellbeing. This is reflected in the growing demand for green buildings, the institution of work/life balance policies and technology to support flexible work styles and the trend to provide amenities such as onsite gymnasiums and child care facilities.

Leighton Properties and Grosvenor Australia commissioned workplace health leader Wesley Corporate Health to produce a report on the major health risks affecting today’s workforce, their impact on productivity and the impact of the workplace environment on health. The Future@Work Health Report is the result of this research and presents strategies employers can implement to improve employee health, productivity and their image as employers of choice and good corporate citizens.

The Future@Work Health Report outlines the key findings of Wesley Corporate Health’s health data on 8,600 employees as well as Australian and overseas workplace health studies. The Report examines trends towards green buildings, campus style buildings and smart workplaces and examines how their features can reduce the major workforce health risks and provide the ideal healthy environment for the Future@Work. The Future@Work Health Report presents the health and business case for a healthy workplace environment.

The Future@Work Health Report presents the health and business case for a healthy workplace environment and reveals workplace strategies to address the major health risks affecting today’s workforce



The Report examines trends towards green buildings, campus style buildings and smart workplaces finding that their features can reduce the major workforce health risks and provide the ideal healthy environment for the Future@Work



The Future@Work Health Report

Key Findings – The Future@Work Health Report

The Future@Work Health Report researched and authored by Wesley Corporate Health has found the following:

- Heart disease, obesity, diabetes, cancer and mental health issues are the major health issues facing today's worker.
- Health risks can be reduced by workplace health strategies.
- Health risks can also be addressed by occupying a healthy, green building with facilities to promote work/life balance.
- A Wesley Corporate Health study of 4,800 employees found that the average worker had 2.9 health risks and was potentially up to 6.96% less productive because of these risks.
- The Wesley Corporate Health study compared US results and found Australian workers had higher health risks than workers in the US. The average US worker in a major study had 2.1 risks.
- The study estimated the effect on the Australian economy from lost productivity due to ill health was \$34.8 billion per annum or 4.2% of GDP.
- Another Wesley Corporate Health study of 3,900 employees revealed that those who score highly on mental health surveys (for stress, anxiety and depression) are three times more likely to take extended sick leave.
- A Wesley Corporate Health study of 800 management staff found 26% were at risk of metabolic syndrome which increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.
- The total cost of absenteeism is estimated to be 3 to 5 times the initial salary cost.
- Presenteeism costs are estimated to be double the direct cost of sick leave.
- The Future@Work Health Report found that proactive organisations which implement health promotion strategies in the workplace can reduce their employee's health risk factors by up to 56%.
- The Report found that productivity gains of up to 15% can be achieved by upgrading the workplace environment. 80% of the documented productivity gains are attributed to better indoor environmental quality (IEQ); specifically lighting, day lighting and air quality gains.



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Wesley Corporate Health

Wesley Corporate Health, established in 1990, is a leading provider of health and wellbeing services to individuals and organisations and is one of Australia's largest corporate health providers, having worked with more than 700 private and public organisations. In August 2006 Wesley Corporate Health was awarded the Telstra Queensland Business of the Year. Wesley Corporate Health believes that as adults spend a significant proportion of their lives at work, the corporate environment is ideally placed to assist in the education and support of healthier behaviours and lifestyles which also improve productivity within the sponsoring organisation.

Leighton Properties, Grosvenor Australia, and Wesley Corporate Health have made the report available at cost as part of their commitment to best practice in commercial building design, environmental sustainability and workplace health.

To receive a PDF copy of either the Executive Summary or the full Future@Work Health Report please click here info@weshealth.com.au

For the hard copy of either the Executive Summary or the full Future@Work Health Report please complete this form and fax back to (07) 3377 7870

Please send me..... copy/copies of the **full Future@Work Health Report** (101 pages).
(There is a \$50 payment per report to cover printing, posting and handling).

Please send mecopy/copies of the **Executive Summary** (21 pages).
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