

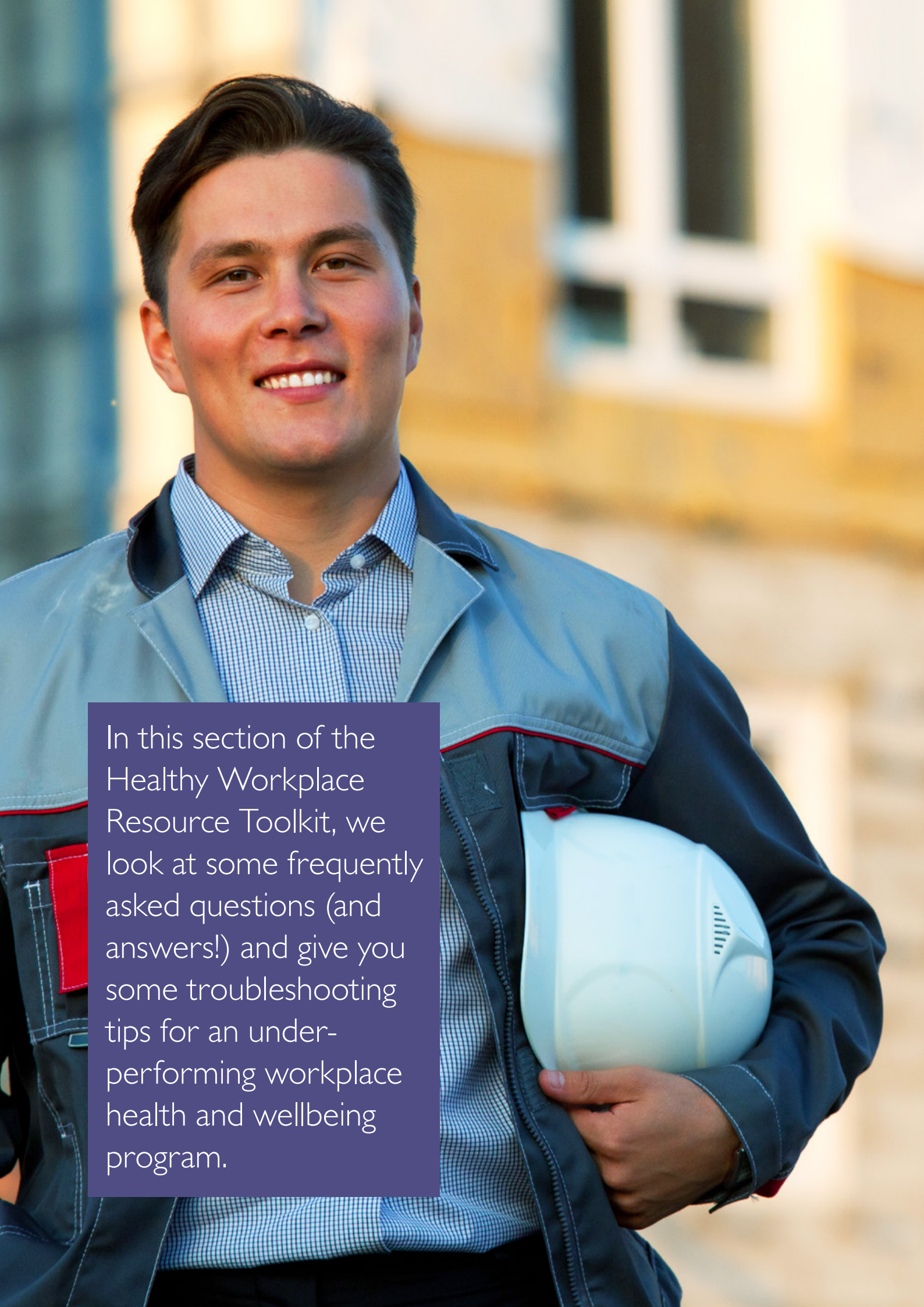
08

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Key questions to ask

- So what about ...
- It's not working ... what can I do?





In this section of the Healthy Workplace Resource Toolkit, we look at some frequently asked questions (and answers!) and give you some troubleshooting tips for an under-performing workplace health and wellbeing program.

SO WHAT ABOUT ...

1. What is a workplace health and wellbeing program?

A workplace health and wellbeing program refers to activities or initiatives in your workplace that are designed to have a positive impact on the general health and wellbeing of your employees. These programs may also have a positive influence on the health and wellbeing of your employees' families and communities.

Typically, a program may focus on areas such as healthy eating, physical activity, sedentary behaviour, social and emotional wellbeing, smoking and alcohol or drug use.

A workplace health and wellbeing program does not have to be expensive or use significant resources, and it can bring considerable rewards to your organisation. There is solid evidence that health and wellbeing programs can improve employee productivity and efficiency and therefore your business bottom line.

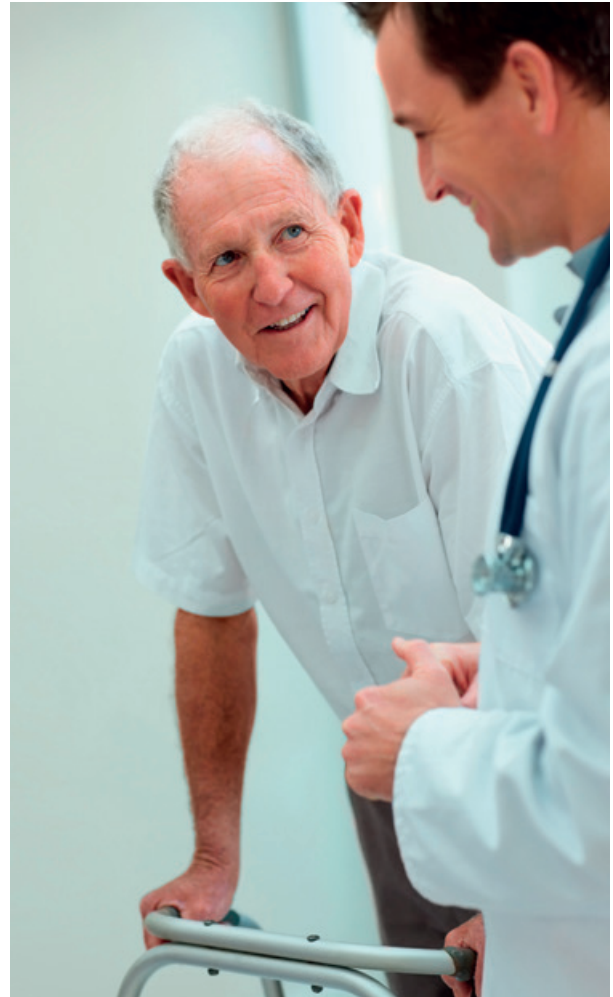
2. What are the benefits to my workplace?

A workplace health and wellbeing program can deliver a number of direct and indirect benefits to both employees and the organisation. Improved workplace morale, reduced absenteeism, improved productivity and better employee and employer relations are all benefits that can flow from a well-planned program.

A workplace health and wellbeing program also makes good business sense when it comes to attracting and retaining employees. Employees who work in an environment that provides a well-planned and managed program generally feel more valued and motivated.

3. Why use the workplace to promote health and wellbeing?

A supportive and healthy work environment can encourage positive lifestyle choices and help build healthy habits that become a natural part of everyday living. With Tasmanians spending at least a third of their day at work, the workplace is an ideal environment for addressing health issues that contribute to the high rates of chronic disease in the state.



SO WHAT ABOUT ...

4. How much will a workplace health and wellbeing program cost?

Workplace health and wellbeing program costs vary depending on the type of activities undertaken. Even simple no- or low-cost activities can have significant benefits for the health of your employees.

5. Some people at work may be unsure about participating in a new program. How can I address their concerns?

Two-way communication is vital. Right from the start, seek input from your employees. Explain why you are considering implementing a health and wellbeing program and what its objectives are. Find out their specific concerns and address them fully.

Remember, you can't make people do something they don't want to do. Seek voluntary participation by engaging employees and valuing their input. If you can do this, your program will have an excellent chance of being successful and sustainable over the long term.

6. I need help! Can someone come and visit me?

Yes. WorkCover Tasmania provide a Workplace Health and Wellbeing Advisory Service and you can book a visit from an advisor at a time that suits you. The advisor will come and visit your workplace and offer free and confidential advice about developing and implementing a workplace health and wellbeing program. This service is offered statewide. To book a visit, call the service on **1300 366 322** send an email to workcoveradvisors@justice.tas.gov.au or visit www.worksafe.tas.gov.au



IT'S NOT WORKING ... WHAT CAN I DO?

1. I'm finding it difficult to convince my organisation's management team that implementing a workplace health and wellbeing program is worthwhile.

- Try illustrating the business benefits of your program by presenting some of the statistics relating to the impact of poor health on absenteeism, sick leave and productivity from the 'Why invest in health and wellbeing?' section of this toolkit.
- Show your management team examples and case studies of how other organisations are benefiting from having a workplace health and wellbeing program.
- Suggest trialling a smaller version of a workplace health and wellbeing program before rolling out a broader program to the whole of your organisation. This may help generate enthusiasm and secure support for further activities.
- Talk to other employees to gain a sense of the support for a workplace health and wellbeing program.

2. Our office building doesn't have shower facilities and we don't have the budget to install them. This is having an impact on employees' interest in participating in lunch-time fitness classes.

- See if employees are interested in attending classes after hours so they don't have to go back to work feeling sweaty.
- Gentle exercise – such as yoga or Pilates – can provide a great lunch-time workout for employees of all ages and abilities, without getting them too hot and sweaty.
- Consider offering gym subsidies so that employees can attend a gym close by during times that suit them best. Most gyms offer shower facilities.

- Investigate premises nearby that may have shower facilities (including gyms). Negotiate with these businesses to enable your employees to use the shower.
- Promote acceptance of employees remaining in active clothes after exercise until they have cooled down.

3. I've tried conducting a workplace needs assessment using a written survey, but it has received a low response.

- Make sure your survey is confidential.
- Consider using a small but valuable incentive to encourage participation (e.g. movie tickets or a grocery voucher).
- Consider organising some focus groups or informal interviews to gather needs, wants and ideas (use incentives to encourage participation).
- Offer employees the option of emailing their suggestions to a key contact.
- Arrange for managers to champion the survey with their teams and encourage responses.
- Organise a morning tea to discuss issues and gather information.

4. My business doesn't have a budget to support a health and wellbeing program.

- Health and wellbeing strategies don't have to be expensive or take up a lot of time. Even the most simple, low-cost strategies can make a difference, like organising a lunch-time walking group or using poster prompts to encourage stair use.
- Explore opportunities to apply for funding for your program. **WorkSafe's** Health and Wellbeing Advisory Service offer \$1000 grants towards a program. Call **1300 366 322** for more information.



A healthy workplace is good for business

IT'S NOT WORKING ... WHAT CAN I DO?

5. We have started some healthy activities, but we're struggling to get employees to participate.

While this initial response may be disappointing, don't give up now. Check how you have promoted your program to see if you can find out why people aren't participating. Things to look at include:

- whether the healthy activities you have put in place are relevant to the needs and interests of employees in your workplace
- if the place and time for the activities is suitable and convenient for employees
- what information you provided about the program activities, e.g. why people should participate; how they can find out more about the activities; when and where the activities will be held; and what costs are involved
- how and when you let people know about the program (e.g. how far in advance did you announce the activities and what follow-up information did you provide to remind them that the activities were happening?).

To increase participation you might try a mix of strategies including:

- using existing communication networks to help promote your message (newsletters, all-staff or broadcast emails, payslips, screen savers, team meetings, posters in work lifts and staff rooms)
- linking your activities to other community events to generate interest and increase participation
- celebrating success by sharing positive stories, highlighting strong performances, and posting pictures from events
- offering incentives and prizes, such as subsidised gym membership, free promotional materials (e.g. water bottles, hats) or fruit and vegetable vouchers.



Image courtesy of TasPorts

6. Who can I talk to if I have more questions?

WorkSafe Tasmania provides a Workplace Health and Wellbeing Advisory Service and you can book a visit from an advisor at a time that suits you. The advisor will come and visit your workplace and offer free and confidential advice about developing and implementing a workplace health and wellbeing program, or help you troubleshoot your program. This service is offered statewide. To book a visit, call the service on **1300 366 322**, send an email to workcoveradvisors@justice.tas.gov.au or visit www.worksafe.tas.gov.au



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