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WHAT'S EVERYONE ELSE DOING?



A healthy workplace is good for business

CASE STUDY – METRO TASMANIA



Metro Tasmania is the state's largest passenger transport service provider, operating a fleet of 220 buses in and around Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. Metro employs approximately 450 staff, of which around 380 are bus drivers.

Metro recently identified a workplace safety risk with the load limit on driver seats in their buses. Seats on all Metro buses were rated to hold a maximum of 130 kg, and were a risk for the driver if loaded in excess of this weight.

Metro recognised that some of its staff members may have been at risk on the existing seats, and costed the option of installing new seats on all their buses with an increased carrying capacity of 150 kg. It was found that the only seats available were specifically built for long-distance driving, and not appropriate for drivers who were constantly interacting with passengers. Furthermore, to install these seats on all Metro buses would have cost in excess of \$690 000.

'I am really grateful to Metro for offering me this life-changing opportunity. I could not afford to go to dietitians and fitness advisers to help me get healthier and this is the motivation and help that I really need.'

– Steven
Metro bus driver for 6 years



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After consultation with other bus companies around Australia who had encountered a similar safety hazard, Metro developed a more cost-effective approach. This involved asking drivers to self-identify if they were in excess of 130 kg, and to offer these drivers extended support to reduce their weight and develop healthier lifestyle practices. This support involved consultations with a GP, dietitian, exercise trainer and psychologist, all fully funded by Metro. This support would be offered for six months, during which time the driver would be reassigned to other duties at Metro.

To date six bus drivers have signed up to the program.

Metro also consulted with the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, which was initially resistant to the approach, but then realised it was in the best interests of their members. The union now fully supports the initiative.

Metro has since been contacted by other bus companies around Australia to discuss their process, with the aim to implement a similar approach. There was considerable media interest in the story with reports as far afield as Finland commenting on the wellbeing initiative.



‘Safety is at the forefront of everything we do, and this guides our decisions. If we can help our drivers lead healthier lives in the process, then it’s a win-win situation.’

– Heather Haselgrove
CEO, Metro Tasmania



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