



**THE MENTALLY  
HEALTHY  
WORKPLACE ALLIANCE**

**Heads ûp**

Encouraging leaders to take  
action in the workplace





**Mentally healthy workplaces work better for everyone – employees, managers, business owners and organisational leaders. They're productive, positive places where everybody feels supported and able to do their best work.**

Every organisation is different, but a safe and healthy workplace:

- encourages everyone to speak openly about mental health
- supports all staff, including those with mental health conditions
- identifies and reduces, where practicable, risks to employee mental health
- prevents discrimination
- views diversity as an organisational advantage
- has low employee turnover and sick/stress leave
- enjoys high staff loyalty
- encourages personal and career development.

Untreated depression  
results in over

**6 million**  
**working days lost**

each year in Australia

PwC  
research shows a

**\$2.30**

**average return** on  
investment for every **\$1**  
invested in creating  
a mentally healthy  
workplace<sup>1</sup>

## Mental health is a solid investment

Taking action to promote a healthy working environment and culture has clear financial benefits, with PwC research finding an average return on investment of 2.3.<sup>1</sup>

A strategic approach, tailored to your business's specific needs, is likely to result in a much higher ROI. Small businesses also receive strong returns as it's easier to involve their people in the process – employee participation being a critical factor for success.

This is set against the cost of untreated mental health conditions for Australian employers, which is about \$10.9 billion every year due to absenteeism, reduced productivity and compensation claims.<sup>1</sup>

As well as improving productivity and morale, mentally healthy workplaces contribute to reduced turnover and better interpersonal relationships among employees. Supporting someone with a mental health condition to stay at or return to work helps the organisation retain valuable skills and experience, avoiding the costs associated with retraining or hiring new employees.

Businesses that provide fair and healthy workplaces also strengthen their reputation among current and potential clients, customers and employees. At a collective level, the wider community benefits from increased workforce participation.

From a legal perspective, a healthy workplace ensures that employers meet their ethical and legal obligations to protect employee health and safety.

<sup>1</sup> PwC PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia (2014). *Creating a mentally healthy workplace: Return on investment analysis*. Retrieved May 2014 from [headsup.org.au](http://headsup.org.au)

## TAKE THE LEAD ON MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a leadership issue, and change must start at the top. Business owners and organisational leaders play a critical role in driving policies and practices that promote mental health in the workplace. They have the capacity to positively influence workplace culture, management practices and the experience of employees.

A key factor for success is ensuring organisational leaders and business owners practise what they preach, leading by example.

## What can I do to take action?

Creating a mentally healthy workplace means building on the positive aspects of the working environment and considering changes or target areas that will help to reduce any risk factors for stress.

It's also about recognising that you may already be taking some of the steps towards making your workplace more mentally healthy – many of the actions are simply good business practice backed up by an increased awareness of mental health.

As a business owner or organisational leader, some of the things you can do to create a mentally healthy workplace include:

- demonstrate a visible, active commitment to mental health in the workplace
- speak openly about mental health in the workplace, including any personal experiences
- make mental health an objective of the business
- treat mental health as you would physical health – integrate good health and safety management into all business decisions, policies and procedures
- develop your own leadership and people management skills
- allocate necessary resources for change and establish performance measures
- communicate a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination

- provide flexible working conditions that promote employee mental health
- identify and support internal 'champions' with the skills and influence to lead workplace mental health.

While change needs to start at the top, everyone within your organisation has a role to play – managers, supervisors, your human resources team, and employees at all levels. As well as taking care of their own mental health, people from within these groups can contribute in a number of ways, depending on their skills, responsibilities and influence.

*beyondblue* encourages businesses to take action across three broad areas:

- raising awareness and reducing stigma
- supporting employees with mental health conditions
- promoting a positive working environment.



## How can I get started?

The good news is that there are a number of simple, effective actions you can take to promote positive mental health in your workplace, and a range of information resources and tools available to help you get started.

Visit **headsup.org.au** to:

- create a tailored action plan for your business
- get started with 10 actions specific to your business size
- download your leadership kit.

Creating a mentally healthy workplace is not the responsibility of one person. It requires the commitment and participation of all employees across the organisation. Involve your people in the process – get their ideas, get creative, and get your entire workplace talking about mental health. Together, you can create a supportive, responsive and productive working environment that benefits everyone.

For more information and to register, visit **headsup.org.au**

### YOUR THREE STEP APPROACH TO TAKING ACTION

1



Identify priority areas

2



Implement actions

3



Review and monitor outcomes

# UNCOVER THE SAVINGS A MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN COULD BRING YOUR BUSINESS.

For a happier, healthier and more productive workplace, create a free tailored action plan today at [heads-up.org.au](https://heads-up.org.au)

## Heads <sup>^</sup>up

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beyondblue



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**Heads up**

## Where to find more information

### Heads Up

[www.headsup.org.au](http://www.headsup.org.au)

Heads Up is all about supporting Australian businesses to create more mentally healthy workplaces. Access a wide range of resources, information and advice for all employees and create a tailored action plan for your business.

### The Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance

[www.workplacementalhealth.com.au](http://www.workplacementalhealth.com.au)

A national approach by business, community and government to encourage Australian workplaces to become mentally healthy for the benefit of the whole community and businesses, big and small.

### *beyondblue*

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

Learn more about anxiety and depression, or talk it through with our Support Service.

 1300 22 4636

 Email or  chat to us online at  
[www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport)

### *mindhealthconnect*

[www.mindhealthconnect.org.au](http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au)

Access to trusted, relevant mental health care services, online programs and resources.

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