MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 4 February 2015

Transport companies make long haul commitment to workplace health

There's a new place to get healthy in 2015, and it's not the gym or the doctor. In fact, it's a place where most Australians already spend about a third of their life -- work.

More than 850 workplaces across New South Wales (NSW) have already made a pledge to support healthier lifestyles by embracing a new free workplace health service called *Get Healthy at Work.*

Get Healthy at Work is a $12 million NSW Government initiative that makes it easy for businesses to support workers in making healthier food choices, becoming more physically active and maintaining a healthy body weight. Participating workplaces can also use the service to support the New Year's resolutions of workers who want to quit smoking or reduce their alcohol intake.

In response to data that shows many transport workers are at high risk of developing chronic disease, particularly Type 2 diabetes and heart disease[i], two transport companies have been among the first to implement their *Get Healthy at Work* programs.

In Sydney, TNT Australia made a number of changes at its Enfield worksite to support workers in making healthier food choices and exercising more. These included overhauling its canteen menu boards to offer healthier options, 'traffic light' stickers in each truck to remind drivers of healthy eating choices and new partnerships with local associations, gyms and health insurers to offer better deals for employees.

"Feedback from staff indicates they are healthier, they tend to be happier and more are making informed food and lifestyle choices," said TNT General Manager – Workplace Risk, Chris Zichy-Woinarski.

Employee engagement was another benefit the business attributed to the enhanced focus on health.

"The minute you start to take a sincere interest in your people, in turn they take a more sincere interest and investment in the company – and that's good for business," Mr Zichy-Woinarski said.

In Tamworth, Carey's Freight Lines has launched both weight loss and fitness challenges as part of a workplace health program developed with support from a *Get Healthy at Work* workplace health provider.

For Marco Rindo, Work, Health, Safety and Compliance Manager, Carey's Freight Lines, the benefits for both the workers and the business are obvious.

"Healthy workers are happier in their work, less likely to be home sick and also more productive when they are at work. For drivers in particular, a healthy, fitter worker is more alert and less likely to become fatigued and put at risk themselves or others on the road," he said.

"Our drivers have really taken the idea and run with it, with our own 'Biggest Loser' competition as well as a 'Fitness Fanatic' challenge for the guys that don't have so much weight to lose. It's great to see everyone encouraging each other along the way."

General Manager of WorkCover's Work Health and Safety Division, Peter Dunphy, said it was fantastic to see workers in one of the most high-risk industries for chronic disease embracing the opportunity to get healthy at work.

"The working environment has an undeniable impact on the health of an individual, particularly when you consider how much time the average Australian spends at work throughout their life," he said.

"For truck drivers, the lifestyle of long hauls, shift work and fast food means obesity, diabetes and heart disease can often be major health issues.

"Simply planning ahead for better food, or making healthier choices such as drinking water instead of soft drink can have a huge impact on weight and general wellbeing."

Joining those in the transport industry, workers in the manufacturing, construction and agriculture industries have also been shown to be at high risk for chronic disease.

In addition to the individual health benefits, businesses that value workplace health have been shown to benefit through improved worker morale, productivity, staff attraction and retention, and corporate image. In the longer term, reductions in absenteeism as well as workplace injuries and claims could also be achieved.

About Get Healthy at Work
Developed by WorkCover NSW in partnership with NSW Health, *Get Healthy at Work* gives businesses access to an accredited workplace health provider who can help set some health goals, supported by a simple action plan tailored to the needs of the business and its workers. Alternatively, businesses can choose to develop their action plan independently using *Get Healthy at Work's* interactive training tutorials and easy-to-use resources, tools and templates to guide them every step of the way.

As part of the service, workers at participating businesses are offered a free and confidential 15-minute health check to assess their risk of Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. At-risk individuals are then provided with advice and referrals to set them on the path to better health. The health check can be completed online or with an onsite health practitioner during work hours.

Businesses can learn more about the service and register to participate at www.gethealthyatwork.com.au or call WorkCover NSW on 13 10 50.

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[i] Analysis by PriceWaterhouseCoopers in 2010 using results from the National Health Survey, combined with industry data sourced from occupational health and safety bodies across Australia.