

## Workers, businesses and economy to benefit from workplace health service

8 October 2014

Industry and business leaders gathered in Sydney today for a special briefing on *Get Healthy at Work*, a NSW Government service offering businesses all the tools, resources and support they need to address lifestyle-related risk factors for chronic disease in the workplace.

Hosted by WorkCover NSW in partnership with NSW Health, the business community heard how the innovative new service would improve the health of workers, enhance the competitiveness of NSW businesses and deliver long-term benefits to the State's economy.

In his opening address, Safety, Return to Work and Support CEO, Vivek Bhatia said the NSW Government had put healthy workplaces on the agenda of every small, medium and large business in the State.

Building upon much of the work both WorkCover NSW and NSW Health do in the community, Mr Bhatia said the new workplace health service helps deliver on a number of NSW Government commitments.

"NSW is committed to reducing the burden of chronic disease and reducing smoking rates, overweight and obesity rates and total risk drinking. In doing so, it is hoped these changes will drive economic growth and increase the competitiveness of doing business in NSW," he said.

"*Get Healthy at Work* is a \$12 million investment by the NSW Government that is geared towards achieving these important goals."

*Get Healthy at Work* will improve the health of working adults by making it easy for businesses to develop and implement a customised workplace health program that focusses on healthy eating, healthy weight, physical activity, active travel, smoking and harmful alcohol consumption.

An important component of the program is a free, confidential and voluntary health check available for workers at participating businesses. Completed either online or with a trained health professional at the workplace, the health check helps individual workers understand their risk of developing heart disease and type 2 diabetes and offers lifestyle advice and referrals as required.

WorkCover NSW General Manager, Peter Dunphy said four industries - transport, construction, manufacturing, and primary production - had been identified as a priority for the new service, and encouraged all businesses to participate.

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“These four industries were highlighted as their workers are most at risk of chronic disease, the main cause of death and disability in Australia. But we want all businesses – regardless of size or industry – to benefit from this significant investment in preventive health,” Mr Dunphy said.

“*Get Healthy at Work* represents a window of opportunity for NSW workplaces to enhance their health, safety and performance. All they have to do is register at [gethealthyatwork.com.au](http://gethealthyatwork.com.au).”

Sixteen companies including TNT Australia, Woolworths, James Hardie, Nestle, and Australian Financial Services participated in a pilot of the program ahead of its official launch in July 2014. Speaking at the event, TNT Australia outlined a number of changes the company had made at its Enfield worksite as a result of *Get Healthy at Work*. These changes included:

- Overhauling its canteen menu boards to offer healthier options
- Placement of ‘traffic light’ stickers in each truck to remind drivers of healthy eating choices
- Partnerships with local associations, gyms and health insurers to offer better deals for employees
- Creation of a smoke-free environment

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

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,” Mr Zichy-Woinarski said.

Workplace health programs can deliver additional business benefits including improved morale, productivity, staff attraction/retention and corporate image. Businesses could also expect to see reductions in absenteeism as well as workplace injuries and claims.

Businesses can learn more about the service and register to participate at [www.gethealthyatwork.com.au](http://www.gethealthyatwork.com.au)

Industry fact sheets can be accessed on the Get Healthy at Work website: <http://gethealthyatwork.com.au/en/About-GHaW/Workplace-health-in-the-news.aspx>

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