



# Workplace *Wellness* Program

## Alcohol & Drugs – Why Introduce an Alcohol & Drug Policy in the Workplace

During April and May you will have received information on the introduction of the **Landscape Queensland Workplace Wellness Program** and might recall that the construction industry, including landscape construction has been identified as a **'high risk'** industry when it comes to the health and wellbeing of its workers.

Over the next few weeks, we move on to the second high risk topic of Alcohol - our bulletins will present information on effects excessive alcohol consumption can have on an individual's health as well as safety and productivity consequences for business. We'll also take a look at drugs both illegal and prescription and how they can compromise safety in the workplace.

**Create an inbox folder called Workplace Wellness Program right now and then move the bulletins to that folder so you have all the information handy in one easily accessible place.**



*Discuss the information below with your staff to get the ball rolling!*

**It is estimated that excessive alcohol consumption costs Australian businesses \$6 billion a year!**

This figure includes reduced workforce participation due to absenteeism but does not include presenteeism which is estimated to be four times higher.

Workplace alcohol and other drug (AOD) testing has become a component in some workplaces in Australia. Testing can be used for pre-employment screening or may be random or following an incident in the workplace.

Employers have a general **'duty of care'** to provide a safe workplace free from hazards under the WSH Act. It allows flexibility for employers and workers to agree upon an alcohol and other drugs policy for their workplace. Some employers have interpreted their 'duty of care' obligations to provide a safe working environment to require alcohol and/or drug testing of workers.

**It is essential that all people at the workplace are aware that alcohol and other drugs may impact on their ability to work safely and may affect the safety of others.**

Workers can only take 'reasonable care' when they understand the effects of alcohol and other drugs and the safety and health risks that could arise. **Therefore, where there may be risks arising from alcohol and/or other drugs usage, employers must provide information, instruction and training in relation to safety and health at the workplace,**

**as with other hazards and risks.** Similarly, workers should inform themselves of the effects of alcohol and other drugs on their ability to work safely.

Regular heavy consumption of alcohol can lead to a range of psychological, social and medical problems, and is associated with poor work performance and attendance. Alcohol dependence is also likely to lead to deterioration of skills and interpersonal difficulties.

**The workplace is an ideal place to run effective alcohol and other drug prevention programs because the peer support network at a workplace can be used to shape behaviour.**

Policies that facilitate some peer involvement may be useful, as peers can pick up changes in behaviour and assist in cultural changes. Workers also have a better chance of recovery from alcohol problems if they can continue working.

As a business owner you probably have to manage staff. Retaining quality staff and ensuring you get the best from them can take a lot of time and effort. Studies have shown that employers who take an active interest in the health and wellbeing of their staff achieve greater productivity, improved morale and less absenteeism.

**If you're serious about investing in your staff as a business asset consider implementing a Workplace Wellness Program into your business today!**

**Landscape Queensland will be providing various policy templates for members at the conclusion of this information program**

**In our next edition we'll look at exactly what represents a 'standard drink' and provide some fun interactive tools for you to share with your employees as well as looking at what the current safe drinking guidelines are.**

This information was reproduced from the following sources-

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

[www.druginfo.adf.org.au](http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au)

[www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/441-460/tandi454.html](http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/441-460/tandi454.html)

For more information visit [www.landscapequeensland.com.au/healthier-happier-workplaces](http://www.landscapequeensland.com.au/healthier-happier-workplaces)

Landscape Queensland is working with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland on a Healthy Workers Initiative as part of the Queensland Government's Healthier.Happier.Workplaces.Initiative.

**Healthier. Happier. Workplaces**