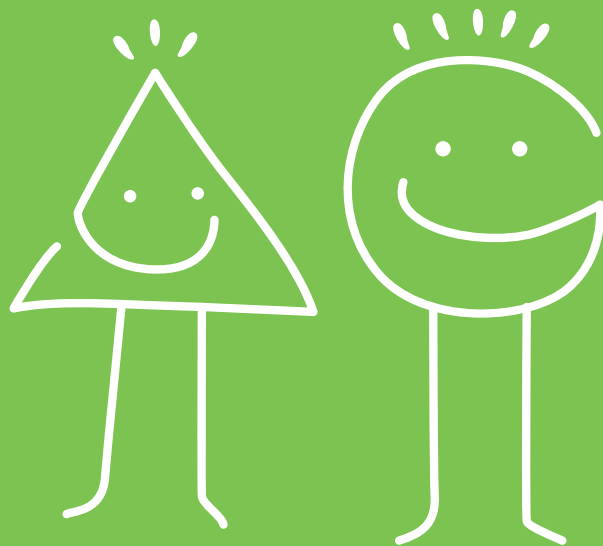


# Active Geelong



## THE MOVEMENT MOVEMENT



LEADERS FOR GEELONG PROGRAM 2017-2018  
Andrew Cornell, Beth Davis, Jessica Fay, Ben Flynn,  
Monique Leffanue, Cameron Loftus



AUSTRALIA'S  
**MOST**  
ACTIVE  
**CITY**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Active Geelong is an ambitious project that seeks to establish a sustainable model to make Geelong Australia's most active city. The concept has considerable support from local businesses, a committed Board and highly effective representatives.

The Leaders for Geelong project team integrated well into the structure to play an important role in the research and engagement component. Particularly, we sought to identify ways businesses can improve their workers physical activity while using the engagement process to foster movement endorsers and businesses who would actively support the concept.

Our project team conducted global and national research to understand existing models and identify learnings which could be considered. We were privileged to have access to representatives of current and previous programs including the Workplace Achievement Program and Healthy Together Geelong, both of whom provided valuable feedback.

We also targeted 1100 small to medium local businesses with a short survey to understand the current active environment and identify the barriers that existed, to which we had 79 respondents. From these, 11 businesses volunteered for an extended interview.

Overwhelmingly, 99% agreed that an active workplace is beneficial and that the biggest barriers in uptake of activity were time and workload. 67% of businesses currently incentivise workplace activity, although less than half of their employees take up the offers. 62% of respondents would definitely be interested in the website navigation tool to find activity they could be involved in near their workplace.

Respondents identified a range of workplace activity ideas including walking groups, group fitness classes and subsidised gym memberships, along with better practises such as meeting-free lunch breaks and flexible work hours. 90% of respondents supported corporate challenges and competitions.

It is clear that local small to medium businesses need support to gain the interest of staff and build value in the Active Geelong 'Movement Movement'. Education through communications and face to face meetings with ambassadors was considered critical. Suggestions around how a business might invest is also considered a fundamental driver while ongoing engagement through a variety of channels underpins the sustainability of the program.

For the 'Movement Movement' to be successful it needs to appeal to prospects on an emotional level. Developing an almost tribal collective through good news stories, celebrations, competitions and exclusive events which get people talking is the key to its success.



# INTRODUCTION

Active Geelong (AG) aims to increase the uptake of physical activity and make Geelong Australia's most active city. By engaging with local businesses, addressing challenges and developing an activity navigator to promote participation, AG seeks to become a recognised brand and sustainable model that is best practice in Australia.

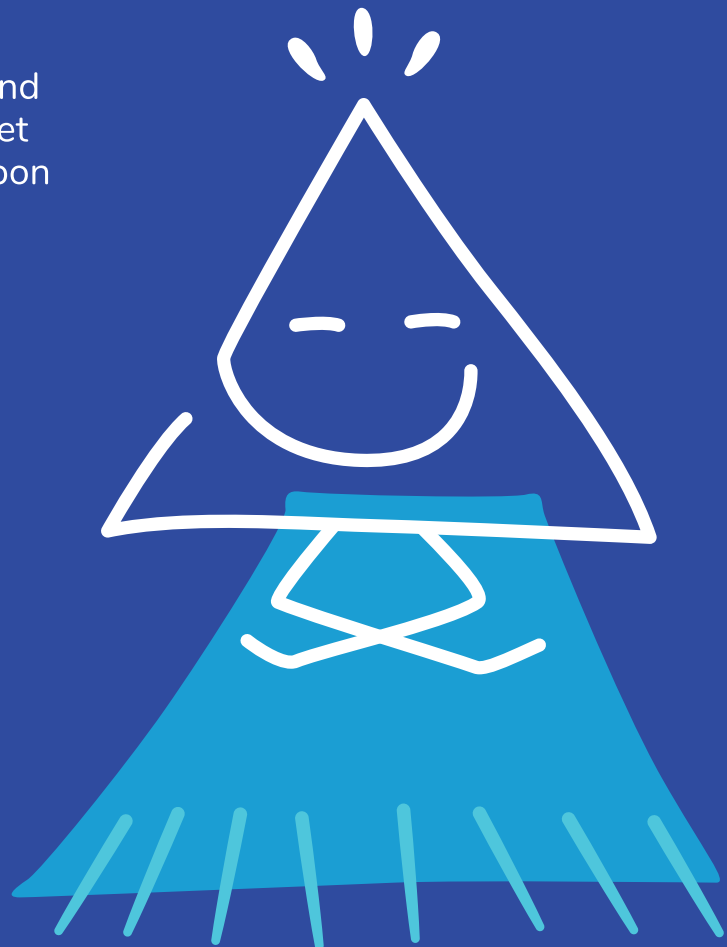
By increasing physical activity by 7% in the Geelong region, AG will help prevent cardiovascular disease, Type 2 Diabetes, depression, anxiety and obesity, while reducing the cost of healthcare and increasing health and wellbeing.

AG has significant support and there is a high level of momentum associated with the undertaking. A passionate Board has been established and work is underway to define the brand and engage with significant stakeholders and ambassadors to foster public support.

The Leaders for Geelong project team has worked closely with the AG drivers to play an important role in the research and engagement component of a much broader project plan: to achieve AG's year one priorities.

The team has undertaken an environmental scan to identify best practice and insights from across the world, including Australia. Similar programs closer to home have also been evaluated and these may offer further insights to assist implementation. A business survey was conducted, targeting small to medium Geelong businesses, and extended business surveys have revealed further insights identified in this report.

For the team, there will be opportunities to stay involved beyond October 2018 although these are yet to be defined and are dependent upon the needs of the Board.



# SCOPE

The Leaders for Geelong team has conducted research that identifies the challenges and opportunities around increasing physical activity in the workplace by engaging with businesses and identifying insights and recommendations to support the implementation the scheme later in the year.

## Specific parameters include;

- The sole audience was Geelong businesses, specifically targeting small to medium sized businesses. Schools, medical professionals and community groups were excluded as these are addressed in other areas of AG.
- The scope of research related to increasing physical activity in the workplace and excluded improved diet, weight loss, smoking and alcohol consumption.
- The campaign launch is not in scope.

## The three main objectives of the team included:

- Identify ways that businesses can improve their workers level of physical activity.
- Engage with businesses to gather support and foster a group of more supportive Movement Endorsers.
- Provide insights and recommendations that contribute to the successful launch of the campaign.

## The 'AG' Leaders for Geelong project team is made up of the following:



**ANDREW CORNELL**  
Principle Manager  
(Worksafe)



**BETH DAVIS**  
Major Events Manager  
(Royal Geelong Yacht Club)



**JESS FAY**  
Solicitor  
(TAC)



**BEN FLYNN**  
Group Marketing &  
Public Relations Manager  
(genU)



**MONIQUE LEFFANUE**  
Inspector  
(Victoria Police)



**CAM LOFTUS**  
Chief Executive Officer  
(Barwon Sports Academy)



# SITUATION ANALYSIS

A natural starting point was to conduct a broad environmental analysis that identified and assessed the outcomes of existing programs from a global, national and local perspective.

## 1. INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL

In 2002, the World Health Organisation advised that physical inactivity is not only a major health risk, but one of the top ten causes of death and disability in the world. Since then, many studies have sought to understand the benefits of physical activity in the workplace, while identifying the barriers and enablers of workplace participation in physical activity.

There have also been numerous wellbeing programs developed around the world by governments and business organisations, including in Australia, looking to promote an increase in physical activity. Many of those programs identify that physical activity during the work day is paramount to an individual's health and wellbeing.

The following case studies outline working examples across the world. Aimed at improving wellbeing by including physical activity in the work day, they provide insights into the factors that affect increased participation and engagement.



## CASE STUDY 1.1

# SCOTLAND



## HEALTHY WORKING LIVES BY THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Healthy Working Lives (HWL) focussed on providing advice to employers centred on the belief that an active workforce can help a business flourish.

### Benefits included;

- Reduced accidents and ill health
- Better staff morale
- Reduced absences and increased employee productivity
- Retention of experienced staff

### HWL provides a variety of services, including;

- A website providing practical advice, guides and tools to help improve workplace health, safety and wellbeing.
- Self-assessment tools where employers can assess their current practices and create an action plan outlining steps to improve workplace activity.
- An advice-line run by specialist advisers with information on workplace activity and wellbeing.
- Face to face and online training to educate and inform employers and;
- A nationally recognised award program offering a structured path to workplace improvement and recognising employers who have taken action to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of their employees.

### Research facts that underpin the programme include:

- Staff ill health has cost implications for businesses through loss of productivity, early retirement, staff turnover and absenteeism.
- Back pain is the most common cause of sickness from work in the UK, with the cost to industry estimated at £5.7billion each year. However, evidence shows that exercise can reduce a person's risk of suffering from back pain.
- Workplace stress, depression and anxiety is the second most common type of work related sickness absence in the UK, costing the economy between £3.7 to £7 billion each year. Physical activity has shown to have an anxiety reducing effect and reduce short term reactions to stress.

Source: NHS Scotland, Healthy Working Lives, Simple Guide: Promoting Physical Activity in the workplace.

## CASE STUDY 1.2

# MISSISSIPPI, USA



## STATE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

The State Employee Wellness (SEW) program was created under state legislation in 2010, requiring state government agencies to have mandatory wellness programs in place for their employees. This legislation was enacted on the back of Mississippi holding the highest adult obesity rate in the USA at 35.1%. Only 40% of adults in Mississippi met the standard of 150 minutes of exercise per week.

The State Employee Wellness program focussed on more than just physical activity, including nutrition and tobacco intake, but physical activity was a primary focus.

The aim of the program was to put a framework in place to support government agencies to implement wellness programs. There were wellness coordinators employed, training and assistance provided to each agency and evaluations of the workplace practices.

**Some of the activity initiatives that were used by state government agencies included:**

- Walking and fitness challenges – aimed at setting fitness challenges over short blocks of time;
- The purchase of on-site fitness equipment for employees to use throughout the work day;
- Bringing in fitness providers, such as yoga and kickboxing instructors, to the workplace.

**The University of Mississippi conducted an evaluation of the wellness mandate, which showed that:**

- Over 30% of responders indicated that they rarely participated in wellness activities at their workplace;
- Of those, 40% cited that the non-participation at their workplace was due to a lack of time;
- 90% of responders identified that the type of wellness activities they would like to participate in, were physical activities.

**Further feedback was provided on recommendations for the future improvement in workplace physical activity, which included:**

- Focus on small changes first;
- Ensure that there are activities to accommodate all levels of users;
- Work with what you have;
- The need for a centralised resource to outline fitness centres, activities and local resources; and
- Train supervisors and leaders on how to support and promote physical activities in the workplace.

Source: National Network of Public Health Institutes: *Worksite Physical Activity Success Story: Mississippi*, article, undated



### CASE STUDY 1.3

# WESTERN AUSTRALIA




## HEALTHIER WORKPLACE WA

Healthier Workplace WA was established in 2012 under the Healthy Workers Initiative, which is a joint Federal and State Government initiative for supporting preventative health.

The program has a holistic focus, incorporating mental health and wellbeing, unhealthy eating, physical inactivity, alcohol and smoking. The program offers free services to workplaces across Western Australia to help them support and encourage their workers to make positive lifestyle changes that benefit everyone.

In relation to physical inactivity, Healthier Workplace WA provides a range of tools which encourage physical activity and assist to reduce sedentary workplace behaviour. These tools outline steps to a healthier meeting, including walking and standing meetings, assist in creating workplace policies around reducing physical inactivity in the workplace and provide links to a range of challenges which help promote and encourage more physical activity through team and individual based challenges.

There are four main challenges which Healthier Workplace WA link to, being:

- **Get on Track Challenge:** a free, team based challenge that uses fun and friendly competition to encourage workers to make healthy choices with respect to physical activity and healthy eating.
  - **My Healthy Balance:** a free, online educational healthy lifestyle program which encourages and supports healthy behaviour changes related to physical activity, healthy eating and healthy weight.
  - **Your Move:** a free workplace initiative focussed on promoting active travel (to and from work) and incorporating physical activity into the work day; and
  - **Walking@Work:** a free resource designed to help workplaces start a workplace walking group.
- 


Healthier Workplace WA empowers workplaces through providing a range of tools which allow workplaces to assess their current levels of physical inactivity and assists the workplace to put in place a plan to reduce the levels of physical inactivity.

Source: [healthierworkplacewa.com.au](http://healthierworkplacewa.com.au)

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## SUMMARY: INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL

These international examples were generally state funded and not sustainable. Despite being ambitious and well-intended, they lacked ongoing support and relied on workplaces driving behavioural changes in their staff. The localised and collective approach of Active Geelong is seen as a distinct advantage.



# 2. VICTORIA

The state of Victoria has a history of supporting activity or fitness based initiatives and these are detailed below.

## CASE STUDY 2.1

### WORKPLACE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

HEALTHY  
WORKPLACES

Achievement  
Program

In 2012 a statewide initiative began with the Workplace Achievement program. This program is still available to all organisations in Victoria to support the development of healthy workplaces. It provides an evidence based framework and gives practical steps and easy to use tools and templates to promote and improve health and wellbeing in the workplace.

**This program is built on the premise that by assisting with the health and wellbeing of their staff, workplaces benefit in the following ways;**

- Improved staff retention
- More productive staff
- Healthier staff
- Staff that feel valued
- Better team relationships

#### **Underlying facts include;**

- Organisations that don't promote health and wellbeing are four times more likely to lose talented staff in the next 12 months.
- Unhealthy workers take nine times more sick days per year than healthy workers.
- On average, six working days of productivity are lost per worker every year as a result of workers coming to work sick or injured.
- On average, a smoker will cost their employer 30 days of lost productivity every year, due to time taken to smoke while at work.
- Loss of productivity due to obesity is estimated to cost \$6.4 billion a year in Australia.
- On average, three working days are lost per worker every year as a result of workplace stress.

Source: Barwon Health Workplace Health brochure



## CASE STUDY 2.2

### CREATING HEALTHY WORKPLACES PROGRAM 2012-2015

CREATING HEALTHY WORKPLACES SERIES



This was a pilot project that aimed to build a body of knowledge about how to promote good health and prevent chronic disease in the workplace. This was done through partnering with Victoria's foremost researchers, business and industry. It specifically focused on identifying best practice approaches for addressing stress, gender inequality, alcohol related harm, race-based discrimination and prolonged sitting at work.

Of the five pilot projects, the one that specifically relates to activity in the workplace was Pilot 2 'Reducing Prolonged Sitting'.

### REDUCING PROLONGED SITTING

Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, The University of Queensland and Deakin University designed, implemented and evaluated strategies to reduce prolonged sitting in office-based staff in the Australian Government Department of Human Services.

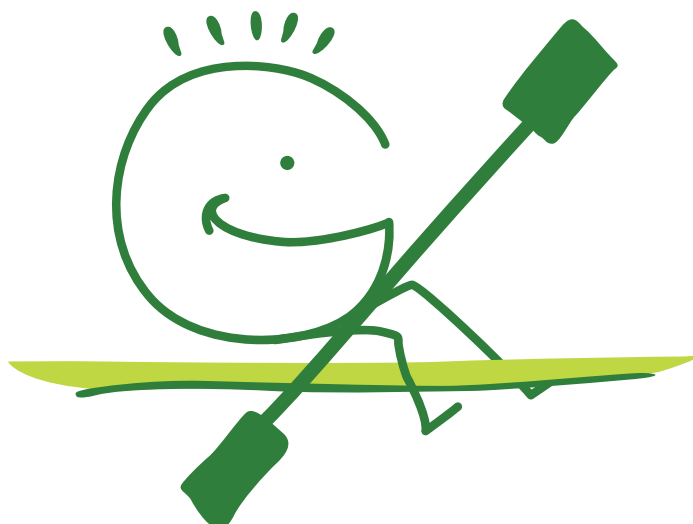
The world first Stand-Up Victoria program delivered sit-to-stand workstations in selected offices, health coaching sessions, and telephone & email support in a bid to reduce the time office workers were sitting each day by encouraging them to stand up, sit less and move more. Prolonged sitting is a risk factor for chronic illness, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and early death, even among people who meet or exceed physical activity guidelines. These reports and results can be found in the References section of this report.

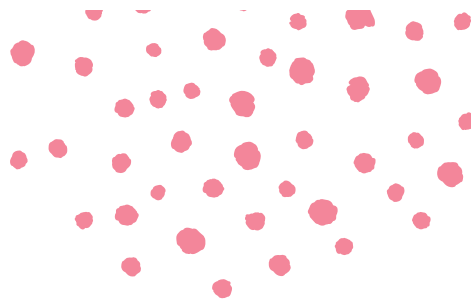
As part of the projects results they created 10 Strategies for a healthier life.

Of relevance to this project were;

**Exercise Daily:** [vichealth.vic.gov.au/be-healthy/be-healthy-exercise](http://vichealth.vic.gov.au/be-healthy/be-healthy-exercise)

**Be Active at Work:** [vichealth.vic.gov.au/be-healthy/be-healthy-work](http://vichealth.vic.gov.au/be-healthy/be-healthy-work)





### CASE STUDY 2.3

#### ACTIVE VICTORIA (2017-2021)

Vic Health have a state based program called Active Victoria (2017-2021)

This is a strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria. It is not focused on workplaces, rather physical activities before and after work.

[sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/strategies/active-victoria-strategic-framework-sport-and-recreation](http://sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/strategies/active-victoria-strategic-framework-sport-and-recreation)

## Active Victoria

### CASE STUDY 2.4

#### PREMIER'S ACTIVE APRIL

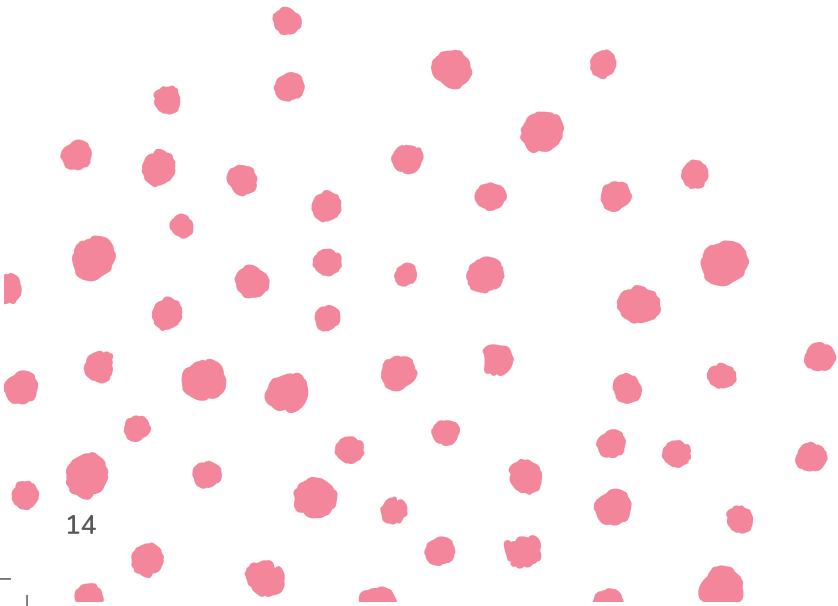
This is a state based initiative that encourages all Victorians to get involved, provides resources and encourages 30 minutes of exercise a day for the month of April.

[activeapril.vic.gov.au](http://activeapril.vic.gov.au)



## SUMMARY: VICTORIA

Similar to our global examples, the Victorian research indicated broad support for initiatives that increased participation although the challenges of achieving a sustainable program existed due to uncertainty in funding and a lack of buy in at workplace level.



# 3. GEELONG REGION

Given that Geelong's local experiences have been in connection to Victorian initiatives, these programs have been affected beholden to state funding and ongoing support.

## CASE STUDY 3.1

### WORKPLACE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

As the lead agency for the Workplace Achievement Program in the Barwon region, Barwon Health supports workplaces to achieve best practice benchmarks, to influence areas such as morale, safety and productivity, and create a healthier workplace for staff. Initially coordinated by Chad Foulkes, this program is now run by Lynn Quick and Rowenna Rittinger.



**Barwon  
Health**

There are currently 109 businesses registered, 12 organisations are industry experts and each business works through benchmarks under 5 pillars. These include; Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, Alcohol, Smoking and Mental Health & Wellbeing.

[barwonhealth.org.au/healthy-communities/healthy-workplaces](http://barwonhealth.org.au/healthy-communities/healthy-workplaces)

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## CASE STUDY 3.2

### HEALTHY TOGETHER GEELONG

Another initiative that was a part of the Workplace Achievement Program was Healthy Together Geelong. This involved the Health Promotion unit of Barwon Health and focussed on encouraging workplaces to promote and encourage health and wellbeing at work.



As part of the Healthy Communities program by City of Greater Geelong, promotion of Workplace Achievement initiatives has been ongoing. Below are examples of the areas used in promotion and provided as tools for workplaces.

- Local health provider services
- Health Promoting Workplace awards which was announced at the Geelong Business Excellence Awards
- Healthy fundraising
- Health sharing in the workplace

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## SUMMARY: GEELONG REGION

Like our global and national examples, Geelong faces the same challenges to building a sustainable program: ongoing funding and workplace engagement. We hope the unique Active Geelong model is a step forward in ensuring better outcomes over the long term and ongoing sustainability.



# SURVEY RESULTS

Following on from the environmental scan the AG project group began a substantial engagement process with local businesses through an online survey and extended interviews which yielded tremendous insights and identified leads for AG to follow up as endorsers and supporters.

The 'How Active is Your Workplace' Survey was distributed to over 1100 businesses in the greater Geelong area. The survey was included in the Geelong Chamber of Commerce newsletter (distribution of 900+), the Barwon Health Geelong Workplace Health Network newsletter (approximately 100), the Committee for Geelong network (48 directly targeted) and targeted businesses from the LfG network (approximately 60 directly targeted).

From this distribution of over 1100 businesses, we received 79 responses – a response rate of approximately 7.12%. Given that the bulk of the survey requests were sent via e-newsletters and not through a directly targeted email, there were some limitations in the response rate.

For the purposes of our survey, we were interested in learning more about small to medium businesses in Geelong. Small to medium businesses are defined as having less than 200 employees. Of the 79 survey responses received, 85% were considered small to medium businesses with less than 200 employees.

Following are some extracts of data from the 85% of respondents who can be considered a small to medium business.



**67%** of businesses currently already offer something in their workplace to encourage employees to be active.

Conversely, **33%** of businesses do not currently have any offers in place.

Of those businesses who do have offers in place, **64%** indicated that less than half of employees actually engage in or take up these offers.

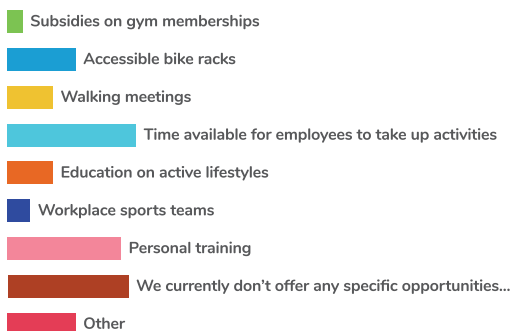


**99%** of people surveyed agreed that having an active workplace is beneficial to the business. Of the **1%** that disagreed, reasons given were that some people prefer to just work at work and be active in their own time and in their own way.

**62%** of respondents would **definitely** be interested in a central navigation tool to find activities for employees to participate in. A further **24%** would **possibly** be interested in such a tool.

**What do you currently offer in your workplace to encourage employees to be active?**

Answered: 67 Skipped: 0



Other offers that businesses currently implement that were not listed as options include:

**SURFING** **LUNCHTIME WALK GROUPS**  
**HEALTHY EATING OPTIONS**  
**ACCESS TO PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES** **YOGA** **FREE HEALTH CHECKS**  
**STEP CHALLENGES**  
**DISCOUNTS OR FREE USE ON BIKES AND SPORTS EQUIPMENT** **WEEKLY MASSAGE**

The biggest barrier for those who do offer activities or incentives to encourage employees to be active is

# TIME

or the workload of employees.

If your business does currently offer specific opportunities for employees to be more active, what do you see as barriers for employees taking up these offers?

Answered: 47 Skipped: 20



### OTHER BARRIERS TO ENTRY INCLUDED:

**COMMUTERS** who prefer to go home early than engage in workplace activity

**NO SPACE / BAD WEATHER**  
**INDOORS / OUTDOORS**

**PART-TIME, SHIFT WORKERS**  
**+ CRITICAL STAFF** that require cover to participate

**BUSY FAMILY LIFE**  
**POOR PROMOTION**



Of the 99% of respondents who believe that having an active workplace is beneficial to the business, the biggest theme that came out from the comments was that most believe:

**ACTIVE EMPLOYEES = INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY FOR THE BUSINESS**

Other comments that were made giving reasons why respondents believe having an active workplace is beneficial to the business included:

**"BEING ACTIVE SUPPORTS GOOD MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH. WHEN PEOPLE FEEL GOOD, THEY TEND TO ENJOY WORK MORE AND GENERALLY FEEL MORE FULFILLED."**

**"ACTIVITY KEEPS THE MENTAL MIND STIMULATED AND FRESH AND REDUCES ABSENTEEISM DUE TO POOR HEALTH."**

**"ACTIVE PEOPLE ARE HEALTHY HAPPIER PEOPLE."**

**"PHYSICAL HEALTH SUPPORTS MENTAL AND INTELLECTUAL HEALTH."**

**"ACTIVITY PROMOTES POSITIVITY."**

**"ENCOURAGES A FOCUS ON HEALTH AND WELL-BEING."**

**"REDUCES STRESS AND ABSENCES AND IMPROVES ENGAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY."**

**"HEALTHY EMPLOYEES MEANS BETTER PRODUCTIVITY."**

**"IMPROVED SLEEP AND ENERGY LEVELS, DECREASED STRESS, INCREASED CONCENTRATION AND PRODUCTIVITY."**

**"ACTIVE PEOPLE BREEDS HIGH ENERGY LEVELS AND POSITIVE MOODS AND BEHAVIOUR."**

Finally, the respondents were asked to come up with their own ideas for what could realistically be implemented in their own workplace to encourage employees to be active. Some of the suggestions included:

- Publicly available yoga/tai chi in centrally located CBD park
- Walking groups
- Competitive challenges between offices
- Stylish activewear as acceptable corporate clothing
- Meeting free lunchtimes
- Workplace sports team
- Subsidised gym membership
- Presentations by local health and wellbeing experts
- Flexible working times

The results of the survey show that the majority of businesses do believe that having active employees increases the productivity in their workplace. The major barriers around providing or implementing this activity are around the workload of employees and the perceived lack of time available to take up these opportunities.

**AG can help businesses achieve a more active workplace by providing simple, quick and cost effective activities, ideas & promotions that can be easily implemented.**

# LONG FORM SURVEY RESULTS

Following on from the short survey responses, 11 small to medium businesses were identified and invited to participate in additional deep dive interviews to further explore the barriers and challenges that Geelong businesses face in getting their employees active.

A list of the businesses interviewed is below.

- **Roger Grant**  
(Tourism Geelong & Bellarine)
- **Chris Nivan**  
(Bendigo Bank, Malop St Geelong)
- **Marcus Dripps**  
(Corio Bay Health Group)
- **Matt Ackroyd**  
(Swanson Surveying)
- **Tania Goss**  
(Car Detailing)
- **Rob Lazic**  
(First State Super)
- **Wendy Gladwin**  
(Select Architects)
- **Ashley McLachlan**  
(G.Force)
- **Mark Osborne**  
(Tuckers Funerals)
- **Bernard Kelly**  
(Birdwood Publishing)
- **Marnie Shepherd**  
(Roderick Insurance Brokers)

The majority of businesses interviewed commented that the Geelong region was extremely fortunate to be geographically located in such a magnificent environment with access to the waterfront, bike paths and walking tracks.

Many commented that Geelong had great sporting facilities (some of which may be underutilised).

Several of those interviewed commented that there was still a divide in the Geelong region with some areas of the community facing barriers in terms of access and participation rates, particularly areas of lower socioeconomic background.

There were three top benefits identified from having a healthy workplace:

1. Productivity
2. Reduced absenteeism
3. Improved mental health

### Other notable findings:

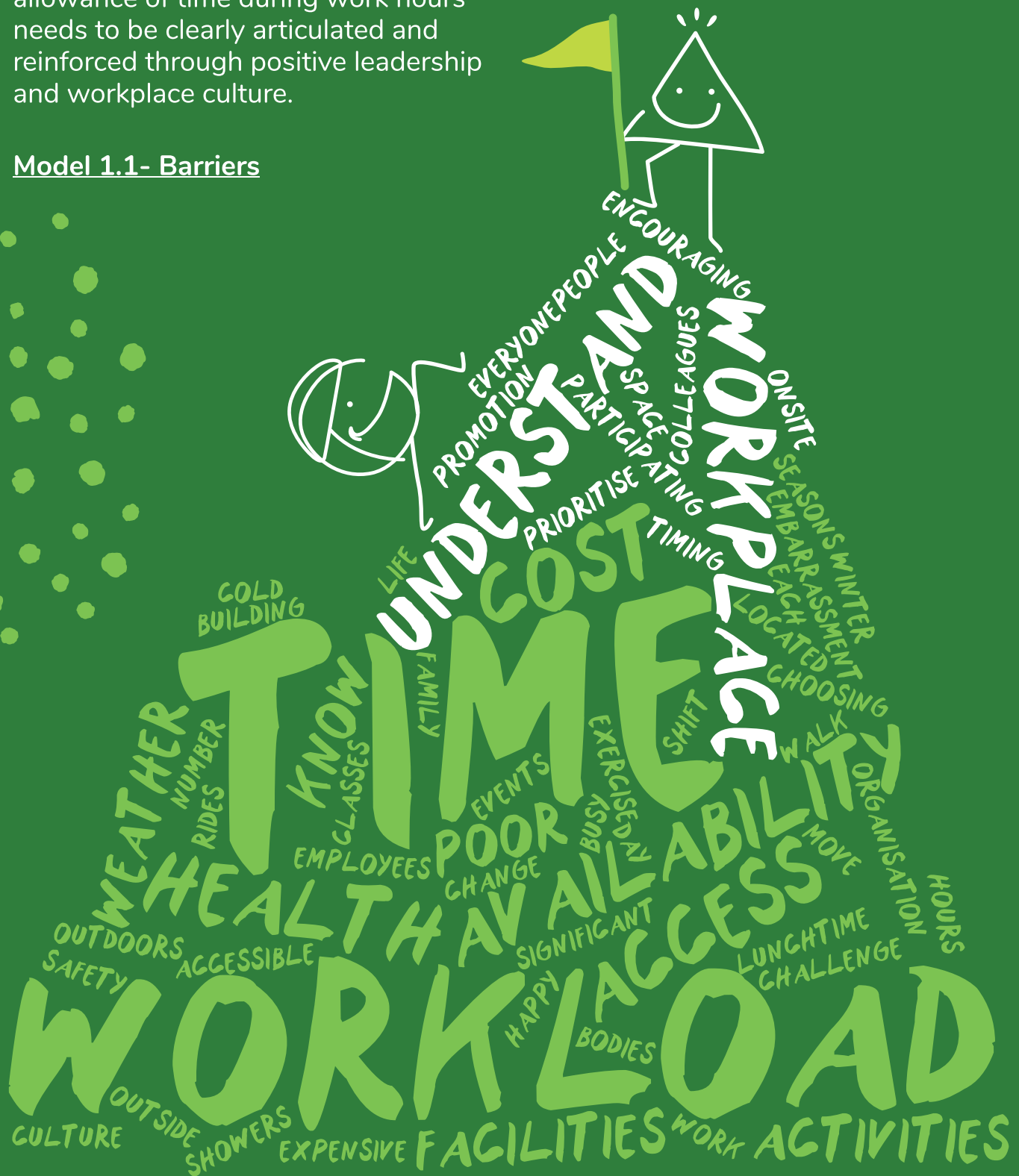
- Businesses interviewed offered a variety of options for employees, based on the size of the organisation and the industry in which the organisation operates.
- Numerous businesses commented that walking groups or one off activities involving walking or running such as step challenges and fun runs were popular, easy to implement and often for a good cause (e.g. raising money for charity).
- Some businesses offered a healthy living rebate. One business that was interviewed stated that they offered a \$750 healthy living rebate to be used on memberships, equipment or activewear but only about 50% of employees take up this offer.
- Many businesses had tried different ideas and programs – forming sporting teams, offering yoga, running darts competitions, lawn bowls days and boot camps.
- Many businesses appeared to offer ad hoc opportunities throughout the year instead of formalised weekly activities.
- Other businesses stated that they did not offer any programs or opportunities to employees. Some businesses stated that this was because of the physical nature of the job and hence extra activity was not required, whilst other businesses stated it was because of the nature of the industry (e.g. on call 24/7), whilst others simply did not offer anything.
- 90% of those interviewed agreed that goals, targets and competitions are great motivators to get staff involved in being active. Ideas such as technology enhanced competitions (e.g. 'FitBit challenges') and 8-week challenges with prizes were some of the suggestions for incorporating goals and targets. Of those that did not agree, it was suggested that a better focus than short term goals would be long term behavioural change. Again, we found that businesses are willing to implement these type of challenges, goals and activities, but need guidance and assistance in setting them up and providing all of the information to their staff.
- The majority of businesses interviewed were located in or close to the Geelong CBD, with a wide range of fitness centres close to their workplace. Of the 12 surveyed, only 1 had implemented exercise equipment within the workplace site itself, however uptake, while initially good, has slowed and the equipment is now rarely used. There were not many businesses who indicated that they had shower facilities available for employees to use if going for a run/walk/being active during a lunch break.
- Interestingly, about 20% of businesses interviewed do not have formal breaks. Breaks range in time from 30 minutes to 60 minutes. Having more formal breaks is a great opportunity to promote the programs on offer and benefits that can be achieved with activity in short timeframes.

- The biggest inhibitors in implementing programs or staff taking up the offers that was identified by the majority of businesses was time. This includes two factors – employees not having the time, or the perception that they do not have the time, and the organization not having the time (or resources) to come up with ideas that can be implemented.

In looking at the perception of time being a key factor in why staff may not take up offers, we found that changing the culture and prioritizing activity over social drinks or meals could improve the uptake of offers.

The communication of offers and allowance of time during work hours needs to be clearly articulated and reinforced through positive leadership and workplace culture.

Model 1.1- Barriers



- Surprisingly, whilst the cost of implementing programs was a consideration for businesses, very few specifically commented that this was a barrier.
- The businesses surveyed were a combination of centralised office employees and employees who are either on the road, commuting, remote or in separate offices. It is important to identify ways for non-centralised staff to still engage in activities available to centralised staff.
- Most businesses have staff who live in the Geelong, Bellarine or Surf Coast regions. With the majority of staff being local residents, businesses are interested in investing in the community and members of the community.
- Overwhelmingly, most businesses interviewed are positive about investing in a healthy workplace. Many organisations are already investing in a more active workplace, although not yet achieving the right balance. Smaller businesses saw little benefit in spending money to encourage staff to exercise. Businesses need help to make it easy, they are keen to hear ideas and need guidance on how to make it work well. A structured program, assistance with awareness and ongoing support would be greatly appreciated.
- About half of respondents were able to identify business success stories in workplace activity although with little detail. Notably, Rowville Clinic, Cotton On and Quiksilver were considered good examples. These offered the use of a gym and classes, as well as time for a surf. The other half of respondents were not able to recall any useful examples and this presents an opportunity for AG to better promote the heroes of the movement.
- There was general acknowledgement that work does either positively or negatively affect employee's home lives and health. Employees are aware and want to have a positive, not negative impact. A number of employees do try to cater for some flexibility with family. There was also some acknowledgement of responsibility of employees to encourage good health.
- A number of businesses commented that there is more demand on time due to access to phone, emails and that this must be avoided where possible.

# THEMES & SUGGESTIONS

The feedback from the survey respondents and the Business Managers fell into three main themes: Education, Investment, and Engagement.

## EDUCATION

### Get in front of people

There is a real appetite for face to face presentations by ambassadors and health professionals to staff at team meetings to build value in the program and encourage participation.

### Make communications accessible

Ongoing communications such as newsletters and Electronic Direct Mail will be needed to showcase the opportunities to become involved and celebrate success stories as busy people will need to be able to absorb the information at their own pace.

### Be social

Social media containing regular statistics, photos and videos of participants, workplace specific research and other insights will drive engagement and build value in a healthier workplace.

### Provide helpful resources

Printed collateral such as information kits with advice and guidance combined with a calendar of events will make it easy for managers to gain buy in from their staff.

### Model 1.2- Suggestions





## INVESTMENT

### **Lead by example**

Get business managers involved and active with manager specific education, fitness sessions and networking events to lead the way for their staff and encourage their advocacy in their own workplaces.

### **Time is not always money**

Promote flexibility as the simplest form of support allowing staff to exercise during their workday with extra lunch time, late starts or early finishes on specific days.

### **Chip in some financial assistance**

Encourage workplaces to make a contribution such as an annual fitness allowance, discounted gym memberships or dedicated yoga or personal training sessions to get staff involved.

### **Consider technological innovation**

Better understand how wearable technologies can connect individuals and workplaces globally to assist in engaging staff and allowing workplaces to compete online.

### **Tidy up their facilities**

Making space for classes and providing access to shower facilities is important for businesses seeking to allow staff to exercise during business hours.

## ENGAGEMENT

### **Introduce personal training and formal sessions**

Developing a menu of products so that workplaces can invest in a range of programs show that they are committed to making their workplace more active and this makes better fitness more attainable for staff.

### **Target those who are inactive**

Encouraging those who are not participating to engage at their own pace in a walking group, walking bus or walking meeting as a great way of starting slowly and choosing between an individual or group setting.

### **Make the movement tribal**

Set individual goals and targets, establish workplace activity based programs and connect workplaces in challenges and competitions to engage staff and create a competitive environment.

### **Celebrate successes and tell people's stories**

Engage with participants across all channels and utilise video to document their journeys, show how easy it is to become involved and celebrate the results people achieve.

### **Bring the tribe together**

A launch event and regular networking events will allow businesses to engage with connected workplaces and better substantiate their investments beyond just having a healthier workforce.



## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Make it easy**

Overwhelmingly businesses owners responded that Active Geelong needs to make it easy to encourage staff to participate. Programs, collateral and events that guide people on their journey were important and personal efforts need to be made during the initial phases of the launch to garner support and build value in the initiative. Education is crucial to run alongside the activities and programs on offer must cater to the entry level needs of the target group.

### **Campaign periods (pulse marketing)**

It is important that Active Geelong identify campaign periods to allow integrated communications to maximise their exposure during times of higher engagement. Major events and publicity that get people's attention could be supported by stories and social media and networking opportunities that allow businesses to engage more during optimum periods such as spring.

### **Make it sustainable**

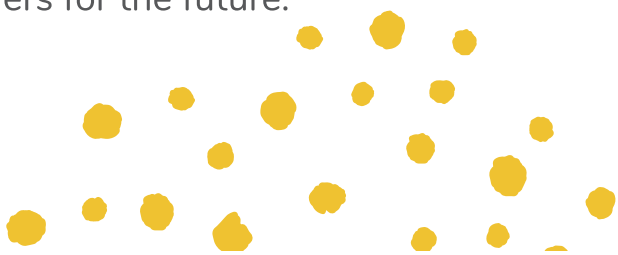
It is recommended that Active Geelong launch slowly, with well targeted communications which don't over-promise. To avoid participants being disappointed, build a following and allow people to get results at their own pace. Map out an annual communications plan and build on that every year. It is all about creating an authentic movement that delivers in line with the expectations of participants. Making it accessible to all people, from the aged, to those with a disability and minority groups, will increase the results and create better brand warmth.

## REFLECTION

Leadership, throughout our careers, requires development and nurturing. "Active Geelong" has been a pivotal point in enhancing our understanding and thought around our own leadership style and when working in collaboration. It has also highlighted the opportunities to lead within the local and broader communities. We have been very fortunate to have worked as a team on this project.

On reflection, our success derived from working cohesively as a team, contribution with commitment, knowing our individual strengths and honest communication. This resulted in a natural energy and momentum, within the team, and the positive outcomes we achieved.

The Active Geelong project has given us tremendous exposure to our own personal leadership journey and has provided an exciting springboard to exhibit our work and develop as leaders for the future.





# CONCLUSION

Active Geelong is an ambitious undertaking that will see Geelong become Australia's most active city. While similar programs exist on a global, national and local level, the Active Geelong model is unique. Geelong businesses understand the benefits of a more active workplace but they also acknowledge the barriers their staff face.

Overwhelmingly, businesses are very supportive of the concept, understand their responsibility and are ready to embrace the movement and support their staff on the journey. They did however note that businesses will require considerable assistance particularly in educating and engaging their staff as well as clear guidance on how they can best invest in a more active workplace.

Given that the target group are those not currently exercising, it is important to make activities readily accessible. Walking proved a popular entry point for respondents. Overall, we see tremendous opportunity for Geelong's cohesive business community to greatly contribute to Active Geelong's vision and we look forward to all being part of a fully sustainable 'Movement Movement'.

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