

An introduction to healthier food and drink in the workplace

Food and drink in the workplace has the potential to contribute positively to workers' health and productivity. **Small changes** such as encouraging the supply of healthier food and drink options throughout workplace can make a **big difference**.

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With so many of us spending a large part of our day at work, we tend to also consume a large portion of food and drink over the course of our working day.

For some of us, our meals might be provided by an on-site café or staff canteen; others might be lured to the vending machine or the chocolate fundraising box for a quick fix. Perhaps a food van visits the workplace or you take advantage of the catering provided at a meeting.



Whatever the source of food and drink is at your workplace, being able to select healthy choices is important.

A nutritious diet helps to maintain energy levels and concentration, while also being associated with better mental health and boosted immune function¹.

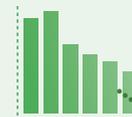
This has obvious benefits for those of us in the workforce, with healthy workers demonstrating²:



improved work performance and productivity



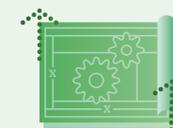
reduced absenteeism and sick leave



decreased incidence of attending work when sick - presenteeism



improved staff morale, satisfaction and motivation



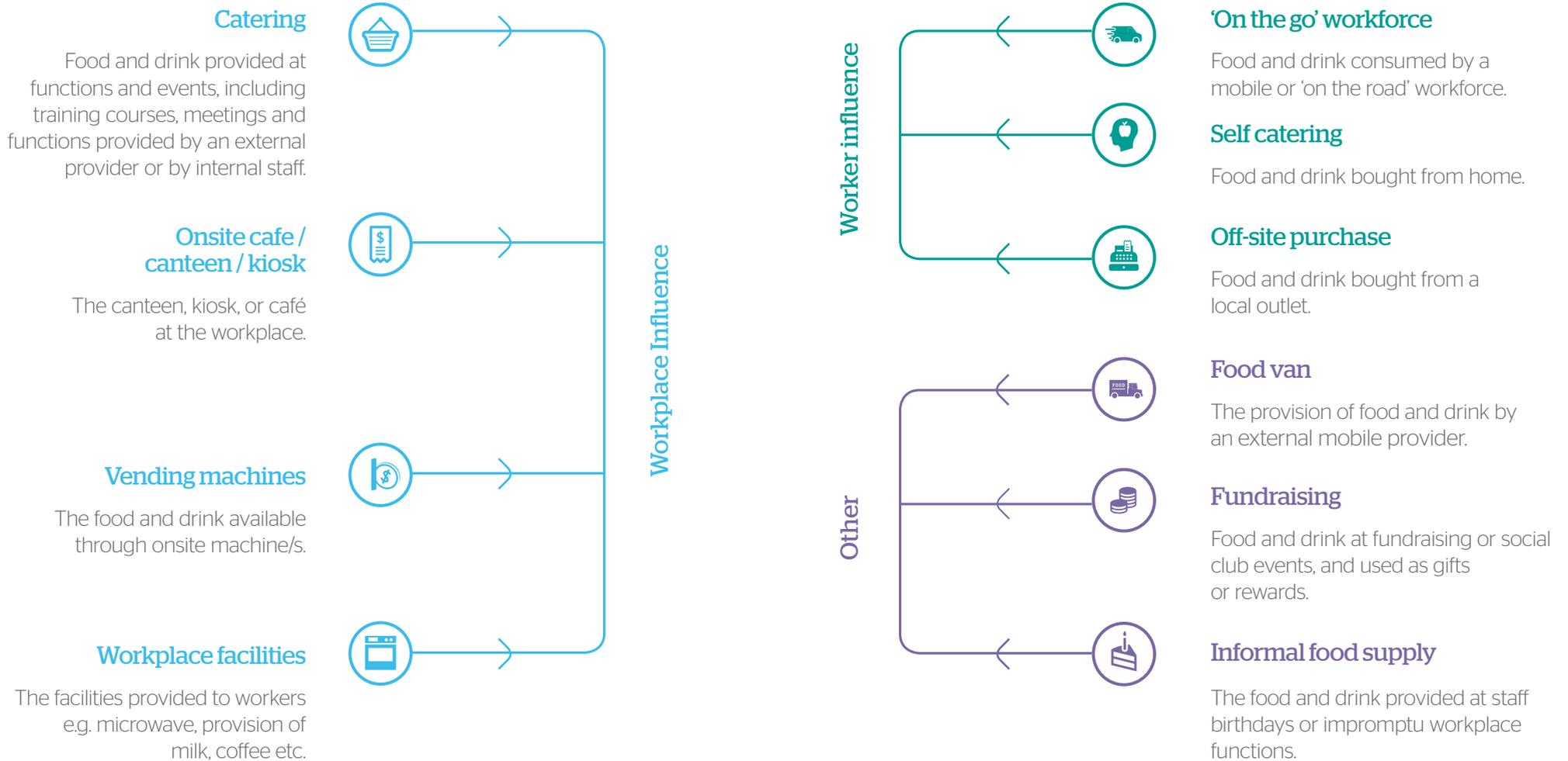
improved staff engagement and relationships

¹ National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) Australian Dietary Guidelines. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council

² Medibank Private (2005) The Health of Australia's Workforce, www.medibank.com.au/pdfs/MEDL_Workplace_Web_Sp.pdf

Where can the workplace influence our food and drink choices?

Consider the diagram below and the many different 'food environments' within the workplace:



Small changes can make a big difference.

Consider the scenarios below.

SWAP
360G
SATURATED FAT

Catering

Swapping a tray of apricot danishes for a tray of mini fruit muffins saves 360g of saturated fat. The equivalent fat in 3 blocks of butter!



SWAP
006G
SATURATED FAT

Onsite café/ canteen/kiosk

Swapping a serve of oven-fried potato chips for a serve of oven-baked potato wedges saves 6g saturated fat, more than a teaspoon of fat!

Swapping a serve of chocolate mousse for a tub of vanilla yoghurt reduces the saturated fat by 7 teaspoons and sugar by 1 teaspoon.



SWAP
09KG
SATURATED FAT

Workplace facilities

Swapping full fat milk for skim milk in the workplace fridge saves 9kg of saturated fat over a year. That's the equivalent amount of fat in 66 blocks of butter.



SWAP
310G
SATURATED FAT

Fundraising

Substituting a fundraising box of giant chocolate Freddo Frogs for a fundraising box of dried fruit and nuts saves 310g saturated fat and introduces 120g fibre.

Equivalent to the fat in 2.5 blocks of butter and the fibre content of 55 apples!

Using chicken sausages instead of regular beef sausages at the workplace sundowner saves 600g saturated fat and 11,000mg sodium. Equivalent to the amount in 2.5 tubs of margarine and 5 teaspoons of salt!



SWAP
3.3KG
SUGAR IN A YEAR

Vending machines

Swapping a 600ml regular sugar cola drink for a 600ml diet cola drink saves 3.3kg sugar over a year. That's the equivalent amount of sugar in 21 jars of jam.

Offering a lean ham and salad sandwich instead of a cheese and bacon sandwich saves 52g saturated fat and introduces 7g fibre. Comparable to the fat in ½ block of butter and the fibre content of 3 apples

