

Case study

Department of Sport and Recreation



The Department develops and implements government policy and initiatives in sport and recreation, while contributing to the healthy lifestyle of Western Australians by increasing physical activity through sport and recreation.

Large business
(200+ workers)

Public administration
and safety

Background

The Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR), in Leederville WA, contacted the Healthy Choices Healthy Futures (HCHF) team after receiving an e-newsletter.

In early 2015, HCHF met with Karen Smith, DSR's Corporate Health and Wellness Program (CHWP) Coordinator. Discussions with Karen provided a greater understanding of the workplace health promotion (WHP) activities and an insight into the workplace culture at DSR.

The HCHF team helped identify key barriers and/or enablers that had an influence on WHP. The culture at DSR was positive, particularly relating to physical activity, with a number of factors supporting employees to engage in healthier behaviours.

- There is a clear **understanding of health risk factors**
- A range of **WHP activities** on offer e.g. international food days, soup days, team sports, yoga and healthy eating and lifestyle program (HELP)
- **Management** and **employees** are supportive and **participated** in WHP activities
- Employees are **surveyed** to determine their needs
- There are various **kitchen facilities** available to employees (e.g. microwave, sandwich press, blenders, hot and cold water, tea and coffee)
- Comprehensive **catering guidelines** were established in 2008 to encourage **healthier catering** options at meetings and events.

HCHF service

The discussions with DSR also identified the key food environments where HCHF could be of assistance:

Catering

Food and drink provided at DSR functions and events using Government expenditure, including training courses, meetings and functions provided by an external provider or by internal staff.



- There are catering guidelines in place at DSR, to assist employees in selecting, preparing and purchasing healthier catering choices for meetings and events. The catering guidelines are reviewed bi-annually.

Vending machines

The food and drink available through onsite machine/s.



- There was one vending machine onsite. This vending machine contained soft drinks only.

The plan

Goal

To supplement DSR's existing healthy behaviours by influencing the supply of food and drink in the workplace

Objectives

To review the **supply** and **sale** of healthier drink choices available to employees in the onsite vending machine

To review the **supply** of healthier food and drink choices at catered functions, meetings, workshops and events

Strategies

Ensure the **availability** of healthier food and drink items on offer in the vending machine and at catered meetings and events.

These strategies complement other nutrition-focused initiatives already in place such as the comprehensive, targeted healthy eating and lifestyle program.

The process

- With comprehensive health and wellbeing programs already on offer at DSR, it was important to consider the availability of healthier food and drinks to echo this positive culture
- The HCHF team reviewed the food environments and provided a detailed report with recommendations and practical suggestions.

Vending machines

- The vending machine was stocked with a range of soft drinks ('red')
- Meeting with the CHWP Coordinator assisted HCHF to identify that improving the range of healthier drinks in the vending machine was important
- The HCHF team assessed the nutritional value of each drink and provided recommendations to increase the number of 'green' or 'amber' options e.g. plain or sparkling bottled water, water flavoured with fruit juice or small 250mL varieties of 100% fruit juice. Suggestions as to the placement and promotion of these healthier items were also made.

Catering

- The existing catering guidelines were endorsed by DSR's Director General in 2008 and are reviewed bi-annually
- HCHF reviewed these guidelines and made recommendations to update them with the current Australian Dietary Guidelines, released in 2013.

Results

Vending machines

- Rather than adopting the recommendations for improving the range of drinks in the vending machine, it was decided that there was no need for a vending machine at all and the Department's decision was to remove the vending machine
- A table and four chairs replaced the vending machine for staff to use as an informal meeting/dining room
- For the first 10 days or so, there were a few questions about where the vending machine had disappeared to. Beyond this initial period, there has been no mention of the machine. Some employees reported not noticing the vending machine had been removed!
- Reports to the CHWP Coordinator include that some staff have significantly reduced their sugar intake as there is no longer the 'convenience factor' of purchasing soft drinks from the vending machine
- Other staff have reported that they are drinking more water and utilising the tea and coffee facilities that have always been available.

Catering

- HCHF's recommendations for DSR's catering guidelines have been considered
- A review of the current DSR catering guidelines is scheduled for 2016. This is a great opportunity to increase engagement and awareness of healthier eating in the workplace.
- DSR is seeking endorsement as a 'Recognised Healthy Workplace' with Healthier Workplace WA in 2016 to recognise their achievements in the WHP space, for example, being a finalist in the 2013 National Preventative Health Awards - Small Agency.

Quotes from Karen Smith, DSR's Corporate Health and Wellness Program Coordinator:

- *"Claire from the HCHF team was professional, friendly and very helpful. She provided quality up-to-date relevant information, resources and support. HCHF provided a thorough report and the whole process was simple, easy and productive".*
- *"I would recommend ALL workplaces seek assistance from the HCHF team for objective assessment and feedback for potential improvements for their staff and work environments."*

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