

# Collaboration and innovation for workforce health

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The redistribution of budget and time pressures on site Health and Safety personnel are key challenges to implementing traditional health and wellbeing programs within the Queensland mining and resources sector. An innovative and sustainable approach to workforce health and wellbeing can help overcome these challenges, to yield improved workforce morale and culture, improved worker productivity and reduce the organisational impact of absenteeism, injury and illness.

A collaborative approach to workforce health was exemplified at Yancoal Yarrabee Coal. The program at Yancoal Yarrabee provides evidence for best-practice health and wellbeing program implementation. Since winning the inaugural QMIHSC Health Program Award in 2013, the Yarrabee Health and Safety Team have continued to implement an innovative program, despite the mining and resources downturn, that has produced measurable health outcomes. This paper will provide an insight into how this holistic model can be tailored to other mining workplaces to achieve a return on investment for both the employer and employee.

## Introduction

The 2010 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Risk factors and participation in work* report found 96% of working age Australians had at least one chronic disease risk factor, while 75% of Australian workers had multiple risk factors for chronic disease<sup>1</sup>. This is a concerning reality for Australian businesses, given unhealthy employees are estimated to be three times less productive than their healthier colleagues<sup>2</sup>. However, workplace health promotion and intervention present a powerful avenue for raising employees' awareness of their health risks and providing support and education to facilitate change.

Research demonstrates workplace health programs result in a 25% decrease in absenteeism and a 41% decrease in workers compensation costs, which represents a \$5.81 saving for every dollar invested<sup>3</sup>. Further the Australian Government Department of Health and the Healthy Workers Initiative recognise a healthy workplace environment can facilitate improvements in productivity and employee engagement<sup>4</sup>. It has been well established that the most effective activities are multidimensional<sup>5</sup> with initiatives spanning different modes of delivery and targeting varying interests for the benefits extend beyond the individual's health.

Yancoal Yarrabee and Corporate Bodies International (CBI) commenced a partnership in 2009 to deliver health and wellbeing services to the Yarrabee workforce. In April 2012, a long-term Lifestyle Coordinator program was implemented, with a combination of onsite and offsite initiatives. The aim of the 2012/2013 program was to engage the workforce in the

health and wellbeing program and retain participants throughout the program's varied initiatives.

In February 2013, Health Professionals from CBI collaborated with the Yarrabee Health and Safety team to submit an application for funding by the Healthy Workers Initiative, for an innovative, best-practice program. Yarrabee were successful in winning a grant and engaged CBI to assist in the delivery of the 2013/2014 Health and Wellbeing Program.

## **Needs Assessment**

The first stage in any best-practice program is the needs assessment that identifies risk factors and collates baseline data, to enable the health and wellbeing initiatives to be specific and tailored. The Australian Government Healthy Workers Initiative has identified risk factors within the mining industry that are more prevalent compared to the Australian population average. The identified risk factors include waist circumference, overweight and obesity, smoking rates and alcohol consumption.

Further industry data is provided by Corporate Bodies International's *Employee Health – A Snapshot of Australia's working bodies* report, released in June 2014. This report relates to a sample of 12,497 health assessments performed by CBI between 2010 and 2013 across a spectrum of Australia's businesses, representing multiple industries. Of this sample, 875 participants worked in the mining industry. Based on this sample, 64% of mining participants were 'at risk' for nutrition when assessed against the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE). Twenty percent of the sample participated in adequate physical activity levels with the remaining cohort at moderate or high risk according to the National Physical Activity Guidelines. Despite the well-established benefits of regular exercise, the majority of mining employees did not meet the minimum recommendations.

With over 12 years' experience in the mining and resources industry, CBI has been involved in improving the health and wellbeing of numerous employees. Common elements underlying a successful program are;

- Collaborative effort between CBI and key site representatives
- Senior Management 'buy-in'
- Program ownership, by providing the workforce with the opportunity for feedback and identification of Health Champions
- Acting upon feedback and tailoring a program unique to demands of the workforce and workplace
- Long term investment in order to build rapport and encourage the 'high risk' workers to participate

The 2013/2014 Health and Wellbeing Program targeted these key elements as integral in improving the health parameters at Yarrabee. The measurable program objectives were based on findings from the 2012 program;

- Only 12% of the workforce participated in adequate levels of physical activity meaning 88% are 'at risk' due to low levels of physical activity
- 81% of the workforce were 'at risk' for their dietary intake
- 75% of the workforce carried excess body fat, with 68% of those with excess body fat carrying it around the waistline

The 2012 results, in addition to workforce feedback and meeting with the Health and Safety team, informed the needs assessment and shaped the objectives and framework for the 2013/2014 Program.

## **Objectives of the program**

The 2013/2014 Yarrabee Health and Wellbeing Program included targeted interventions to improve the health of the workforce. Nutrition behaviours, physical inactivity and waist circumference were highlighted from the needs assessment as priority health areas for the mining industry and the Yarrabee workforce. The program objectives were;

1. A reduction of 15% of the Yarrabee workforce categorised as 'at risk' for diet and nutrition practices from May 2013 to January 2014 based on the AGHE
2. A reduction of 15% of Yarrabee workforce categorised as 'at risk' for physical activity level from May 2013 to January 2014 based on the recommendations from the national Physical Activity Guidelines, ACSM and WHO
3. A reduction of 10% of Yarrabee workforce categorised as 'high risk' for waist circumference from May 2013 to January 2014 in accordance with NHMRC guidelines

Additional program objectives included:

- Tailor initiatives based on workforce interest and feedback
- Pilot innovative services and assist in providing measurable outcomes to show repeatability alongside other CBI pilot services
- Share success with company and wider industry
- Give the workforce more ownership over the program to facilitate greater 'buy-in'

## **Innovative Program Design**

Having already delivered a Lifestyle Coordinator service for 12 months throughout 2012/2013, Yarrabee Health and Safety Team identified the need to create and design a tailored solution to continue to address the health risk factors present at this site.

The 2013/2014 Yarrabee Health and Wellbeing Program commenced in May, with a CBI Health Professional onsite to deliver Toolbox Talks to the whole Yarrabee Workforce, launching the program for 2013. The innovation was not only in the tailored design but in the nature of the delivery of the program initiatives and promotion.

Throughout the 2013/2014 program, the following program initiatives were undertaken;

1. Onsite promotional Toolbox Talks
  - Conducted onsite at existing shift pre-start times to all segments of the workforce across the different work locations on site
  - Conducted by CBI Health Professionals and Yarrabee Health and Safety team members

- Utilised to promote the program and deliver 'health hit' educational sessions to a captive audience
  - Utilised to share program outcomes and success stories and to celebrate the success of individuals in front of their peers
  - Registration for program components achieved at these sessions
2. Initial and review Health Assessments
    - Conducted offsite, outside of work hours to encourage individuals to take ownership of their health
    - Individuals deemed 'high risk' were offered follow-up consultation by a CBI Dietitian and Exercise Physiologist
    - Contractors and employees were able to participate
    - Some consultations conducted at Blackwater camp to allow DIDO workforce ease of access to program
  3. Dining room food audit discussions
    - CBI Dietitian met with local camp management and chef to discuss menu options and dining room health promotional materials
    - Dietitian offered recommendations following discussion but auditing of facility deemed outside the scope of current budget
  4. Food and beverage policy auditing tool
    - Creation of a tool to be applied by onsite personnel
    - Audits crib room facilities and food provision, vending machine offerings, conference and meeting food provision and on site BBQ events.
  5. High risk one-on-one nutrition and exercise consultations
    - Partners and family members of participants encouraged to attend consultations to increase motivation for change in home environment
  6. 8 week team Lifestyle Challenge
    - Onsite promotional Toolbox Talk used to launch and create hype around the challenge
    - Teams and individuals signed-up onsite at the launch and provided their contact details to enable the CBI Program Manager to communicate throughout the challenge
    - Initial, mid and final challenge measures conducted at onsite and offsite locations
    - SMS health tips and communication regarding the program sent throughout the challenge duration to all participants
  7. Boot Camps
    - Run in conjunction with the Lifestyle Challenge
    - Participants encouraged to attend with their team to show support for each other throughout
    - Challenge measures tested throughout boot camp sessions
    - Family members also encouraged to participate with the Yarrabee participants
  8. SMS Top Tips and reminder system

- SMS reminders were utilized for all program bookings, including Health Assessments, Consultations, Boot Camps and Lifestyle Challenge
- Top Tip messages were utilized to motivate and encourage the workforce to improve their health and wellbeing and attend sessions

#### 9. YarrabeeLife newsletter

- Content designed and approved by Yarrabee
- CBI contributed health and wellbeing updates to the quarterly newsletter
- Newsletter delivered to home address to engage partners and family members in the program
- Newsletter used to share and celebrate success of individuals and their health and wellbeing improvements
- Included a health calendar with upcoming events and CBI initiatives

#### 10. Staff Surveys

- Used to gauge the interest of the workforce
- Assessed satisfaction with the delivery of different program initiatives
- Utilised in program reporting and as a strategy to tailor the program initiatives

Throughout the program, a total of 203 Yancoal Yarrabee employees and contractors actively participated in at least one health initiative. The entire workforce, however, was exposed to the health and wellbeing program via the onsite promotional visits, pre-start announcements by Yarrabee Health and Safety team members, the YarrabeeLife health-focused newsletter and the onsite health calendar and health calendar events.

### **Collaborative Effort**

Throughout the initial Lifestyle Coordinator program, the value of a collaborative site and external provider partnership was instrumental in ensuring program objectives were met. The Health and Safety team from Yarrabee, CBI Health Professionals, Qld Government Healthy Workers Initiative stakeholders and key program participants worked together to maintain workforce interest and engagement, ensuring a successful program. Below is a demonstration of this collaborative approach and the resulting key outcomes achieved.

#### 1. Corporate Bodies International Program Manager and Health Professionals

In February 2013, CBI identified an opportunity for Yarrabee to secure funding assistance for the 2013/2014 Program through a submission in Round 1 of the Queensland Government's High Risk Industry Funding scheme. CBI and Yarrabee had already discussed extending the program for another year and the funding was an opportunity to increase the value of the program. In consultation with two Health and Safety team members, CBI created the successful funding submission.

Having established great rapport with the Yarrabee workforce during the previous years' health initiatives, the CBI Health Professionals were keen to deliver a successful program that achieved individual and business outcomes. As such, the improvement in health and wellbeing can be a contributing factor for Yarrabee to assess cultural shift, morale, injury, incidents, absenteeism and in turn, deduce return on investment (ROI). CBI Health

Professionals played a pivotal role in identifying 'at risk' individuals through the health assessment phase of the program and referring them in to other various initiatives to assist in risk reduction.

In June 2013, CBI developed a submission for the Queensland Mining Industry Health and Safety Conference Inaugural Health Program Awards. Yarrabee approved and submitted the application, which was successful in winning the 2013 Health Program Awards presented at the QMIHSC.

In 2013, Corporate Bodies International developed two case studies based on the Yarrabee Health and Wellbeing Program. In order to professionally produce and make these case studies available to the mining and resources industry and wider public, Yancoal was required to approve the content and depiction of the program. This approval was granted and the case studies have been cobranded with the Yancoal Yarrabee and CBI logo. These case studies are available on the CBI website and in hard copy format at various mining and resources events around Australia. The 2013/2014 Health and Wellbeing Program case study is in the final stages of approval.

## 2. Health and Safety Team

The Yancoal Yarrabee Health and Safety team played a key role in the success of this program. The team members identified their program contribution through internal functionality. The time and effort spent on program promotion and communication with the whole of the workforce added value to the professional services offered by CBI. Health and Safety team members also demonstrated program support by participating in the ongoing program initiatives.

From the launch of the program, the Health and Safety team members actively promoted and sought after workforce involvement. Onsite presence and the rapport this team has with the workforce was a leverage point for program success. CBI established a strong working relationship with this team to utilise the communication pathways available on site.

Although the initial Health Assessments were an opportunity to identify 'at risk' participants, the nature of a voluntary program means not all 'at risk' individuals will participate. The Health and Safety team encouraged individuals who they knew would benefit from the program to take part. The Health and Safety team referred multiple individuals who had previously suffered a heart event into the program for lifestyle coaching and monitoring by the CBI Health Professionals. This is particularly important when considering return on investment (ROI), given individuals at risk of incident or injury as a result of chronic disease risk factors can have impacts on the bottom line of business.

## 3. Management support

Program 'buy-in' by senior management is an integral enabler to program success. Senior management had representation at all initiatives throughout the program and maintained health and wellbeing as an agenda item at management meetings. Senior management authorised the funding application proposal to the Healthy Workers Initiative and the Yarrabee Healthy and Safety team to submit the winning application for the Health Program Award at the Queensland Mining Industry Health and Safety Conference in 2013.

Throughout the duration of the program, CBI happily accepted multiple incoming referrals from the management team, including requests of support for family members.

#### 4. External training provider

All new employees and contractors are required to undertake a Yarrabee-specific induction process. Provision of the most current YarrabeeLife newsletter and introduction to the Health and Wellbeing program was conducted at all induction sessions for workers new to Yarrabee mine. This not only helped raise program awareness and maximise participation, but worked towards establishing health and wellbeing as part of the culture at Yarrabee.

#### 5. Health Champions

In 2013, CBI identified the desire of the workforce to have more responsibility for the success of the program and formally engaged site Health Champions from different segments of the workforce. The Health Champions were invited to assist with program promotion and initiative sign-up, demonstrate positive health behaviours and encourage their peers to improve their health. The role of the Health Champions was pivotal in assisting the CBI Program Manager and Yarrabee Health and Safety team to retain individuals throughout the different components of the program. The CBI Program Manager communicated with the key individuals throughout the program via text message, email and face-to-face communication.

#### 6. Queensland Government Healthy Workers Initiative (HWI) representatives

In April 2013, Yarrabee was granted funding to add value to the proposed 2013/2014 Health and Wellbeing Program. Throughout the 12 month program, the CBI Program Manager, Yarrabee Health and Safety team members and Healthy Workers Initiative representatives were in consultation regarding the program schedule, status of program objectives and program challenges. The HWI representatives were on hand to provide feedback and guidance regarding the ongoing program and ideas for strategy implementation.

The Queensland Healthy Workers Portal was used throughout the program by the CBI Program Manager to gain access to resources and tools to guide the development of auditing templates for the program.

#### 7. Village management

Consultation was conducted with the Manager and Head Chef at the village in Blackwater where the majority of out of town Yarrabee employees and contractors reside during their days at work. The purpose of this consultation was to engage the food service provider to assist in promoting health and wellbeing in the dining room and through the provision of healthy food choices. A variety of recommendations were discussed at a meeting in November 2013 and health resources were delivered following the meeting for display in the dining hall.

### **Key Program Outcomes**

Key outcomes of the program not only included the measurable health improvements, but the relationships and innovative services offered.

#### 1. Success of Health Champion initiative

The utilisation of ten Health Champions from different segments of the workforce throughout the duration of the program was the first time CBI successfully implemented this initiative throughout the duration of a program in the mining industry.

## 2. Workforce feedback

Testimonials from program participants reflected the program impact on morale and culture at Yarrabee. A sample of testimonials received;

- *Thanks again for the opportunity you give employees, it is great to have something like this available to us all*
- *The text message system worked great and was a really good reminder and a great way of keeping people informed of what was happening*
- *This program has been very worthwhile and taught me a lot about health and wellbeing*
- *The Lifestyle Challenge was a great initiative to encourage weight loss and teamwork. Would love to see it for a third year running*

## 3. Measurable shifts in injury and human resources data retained by Yarrabee and management support for health and wellbeing

In 2013, Yarrabee were successful in winning the QMIHSC Inaugural Health Program Award, a submission approved and recognized by management at Yancoal Yarrabee. Management representation in program initiatives were prevalent from all segments of the workforce demonstrated recognition and value for the program. Although statistics aren't reported upon in this paper, conversation with Health and Safety team members reflect management knowledge of improvements to the business.

## 4. Approval of CBI services

The Lifestyle Challenge and Boot Camp program delivered by CBI was piloted at different sites in Australia throughout 2012 and 2013. At the end of 2013, this service became an approved service within CBI, with the outcomes of the 2012 and 2013 Yarrabee Challenges contributing to the evidence for repeatability and therefore approval.

## 5. Health improvements

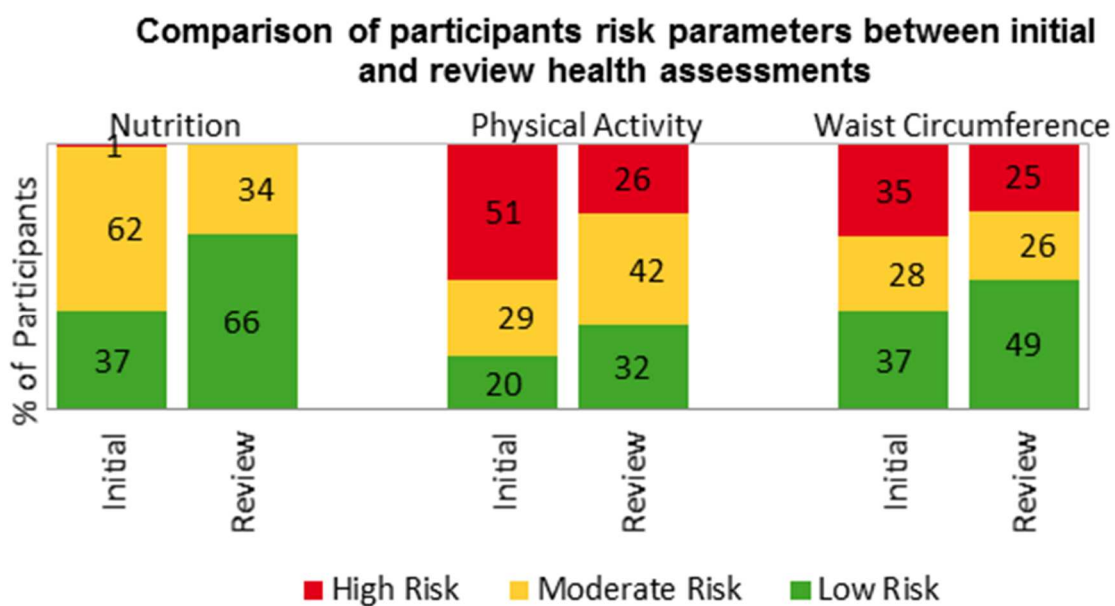
The table and graph below identified the health improvements when measured against the three key program objectives.



**Table 1:** 2013/2014 Yarrabee Health and Wellbeing program objectives and outcomes

	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Program Outcomes</b>	<b>% Goal Achieved</b>
Objective 1	15% reduction in 'at risk' dietary behaviours	26% reduction in 'at risk' dietary behaviours	173%
Objective 2	15% reduction in participants 'at risk' for physical activity	9% reduction in participants classified 'at risk' for physical activity	60%
Objective 3	10% reduction in participants at 'high risk' for waist circumference	10% reduction in participants at 'high risk' for waist circumference	100%

**Graph 1:** 2013/2014 Yarrabee Health and Wellbeing program risk factor changes



## Conclusion

Achieving measurable health outcomes is a by-product of tailoring an innovative program and implementing that program through collaboration with key stakeholders. The health parameter improvements as measured against the three key health objectives in this program were only possible as a result of designated strategies that involved workforce engagement, stakeholder collaboration and flexibility in program design based on stakeholder feedback.

With the mining and resources sector currently moving through a challenging time, health and wellbeing programs can play a pivotal role in more than just the health of the workforce. Addressing culture, morale, teamwork and the bottom dollar of business are benefits difficult to measure, but easily recognized through the implementation of a best-practice program. The innovative and collaborative approach at Yancoal Yarrabee is evidence for a program achieving measurable health outcomes. Beyond the health outcomes delivered in the program, the collaborative effort now extends to within the Yancoal business, where the Health and Safety team members, Human Resources Department and greater management team collate figures to determine the impacts of the program on the business.

Corporate Bodies International encourages businesses targeting measurable return to bring forward their objectives to ensure the program can work in line with the business goals. To determine the impact, the business requires knowledge of their starting point in order to assess the change brought on through the program. Furthermore, business return brought on by a program such as the Yancoal Yarrabee 2013/2014 Health and Wellbeing Program can also be qualitative in nature. Evidence for this is through the testimonials and feedback provided by the workforce. When measuring program success, a broad view should be applied, incorporating health outcomes, human resources figures, injury statistics and qualitative and anecdotal feedback. The true success of the Yarrabee program lies in the even distribution of success across all of these measurable factors.

## References

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