



Wellbeing in the Hospitality Sector

A Case Study

No other industry suffered the impact of COVID more than hospitality

And as the world has opened up again, the Australian businesses that were hardest hit are still feeling the effects.

Nonetheless, there is a way forward. And four hotels – including a winery - across the Victorian region are marching ahead thanks to the help of Australian-owned wellbeing self-assessment program, *Readiness*.

The Provincial Hotel Ballarat, The Golden City Hotel Ballarat, Lake View Hotel Ballarat, and Mitchelton Winery and Hotel in the Goulburn Valley all made the decision to make the wellbeing of their staff a priority throughout and after COVID lockdowns, and not only do they now have engaged, healthy and motivated staff, but their businesses are flourishing.

Employees use the **Readiness** platform by completing an online self-assessment each week, answering a short series of questions about their mental health, physical wellbeing, and sleep, and, says Mitchelton Human Resources manager Leysa O'Brien, it is an efficient functional platform that provides an informal way for teams to track their wellbeing.



The topics of most concern that arose from prior research conducted by Readiness were sleep, mental health, physical health, and workplace factors including job demands, and based on this, Readiness was able to provide tailored wellbeing resources.

“With the growing complexity of managing staff and ever-growing importance of providing a modern supportive workplace Readiness has allowed our business to provide a level of support (around holistic, mental health, physical health, sleep health and workplace health) to staff that would not be possible without this new technology” says Simon Coghlan, The Provincial Hotel owner and operator.

“The ease of administration allows us to provide this support without the burden of additional management staff which is critical at this time.”

Through the use of Readiness, in the six months from March to August (inclusive) 2022, the mental health scores of all employees across the four hospitality organisations improved by 28%; physical health was up by 23%; and sleep health increased by 24%.



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For Mitchelton winery, the use of the buddy system - where employees are paired as advocates for one another – proved to be an efficient and beneficial tool for full time, part time, and casual staff members.

“Our staff particularly have enjoyed the buddy system, where you can choose a colleague for support. This functionality has been instrumental over the difficulties that we have all been faced with over the past 2 years.”



Tim Kearney, Director of The Golden City Hotel, was impressed with the level of information supplied to his leaders.

“I found the program very effective in providing my team with is a rich source of data to inform me of the current status of holistic wellbeing amongst my staff, enabling me to make smart performance decisions.”

This was echoed by Lake View Hotel Director, Brett Quinlan: *“We have really benefited from not only the hundreds of high-quality resources but also the dashboards displaying the wellbeing status of our staff. This knowledge enables us to keep a close check on how our staff are feeling, intervene early and provide expert solutions to those needing assistance”.*

“The Readiness team take care of all the administration and also provide support to my leaders on resourcing.”

Staff shortages continue to cripple the hospitality sector, with no immediate sense of improvement. So, it makes sense to invest in the wellbeing of all current employees to forge ahead in a difficult environment.

But, what is the cost of implementing a wellbeing program in a hospitality business? Less than the cost of not looking after employee physical and mental health.

The Work Health and Safety Act (2011) requires all businesses to ensure the health and safety of their workers, so far as is reasonably practicable. And the act defines health to mean both physical and psychological health.





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As Readiness co-founder Paul Francis says, *“Despite one in five employees reportedly taking time off work in the past 12-months due to feeling mentally unwell, wellbeing initiatives are often seen as a cost to the business, which can be hard to quantify. But, let’s be clear, investing in a mental health program is far less costly than a corporate fine – or even jail time.”*

Victoria’s anti-bullying legislation, Brodie’s Law, was introduced in September 2006, as the result of the tragic passing of 19-year-old Brodie Panlock, who ended her life after enduring ongoing humiliating and intimidating bullying by her co-workers at a café in Hawthorn.

It made serious bullying a crime punishable by up to 10 years in jail.



Further Victorian state government workplace manslaughter laws came into effect in 2019, ruling that negligent bosses can face up to 20 years in jail and \$16 million in fines over the suicide of their workers. The laws cover deaths caused by mental injuries including trauma from bullying, and other forms of abuse sustained on the job, as well as accidents and illnesses caused by unsafe workplaces.

Every year in Australia, \$543 million is paid in workers’ compensation for work-related mental health conditions.

The untreated mental health cost to the Australian Economy is \$10.9 billion per year, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and this figure includes \$4.7 billion in absenteeism, \$6.1 billion in presenteeism, and \$146 million in compensation claims.

“In my observation, business leaders who are prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of their employees are streaking ahead. The flow-on benefits to their business include greater productivity, reduced absenteeism, reduced presenteeism, happy and loyal staff,” declares Francis.

And the proof is the pudding, so to speak, with tangible and trackable wellbeing improvements in all staff members from the four Victorian hospitality businesses that have implemented the Readiness platform in the past 12-months.

In a still uncertain world, for them, the future is bright.

readiness

*Making employee wellbeing
your competitive advantage*

For more information visit www.readiness.com.au