

Managing employee wellbeing in a pandemic.

How St Kilda Football Club reaped the benefits of a proactive approach to mental health and wellbeing using Readiness.



readiness*

Readiness Case Study:

How St Kilda Football Club reaped the benefits of a proactive approach to mental health and wellbeing using the Readiness.



Background.

Since COVID-19 reached Australia in January 2020, workplaces have drastically changed. For many, job insecurity hit hard, while the majority of those who kept working did so remotely, many with the added task of homeschooling simultaneously.

In fact, changes to the nature of work, the working environment and people's workload, had a major impact on Australians mental health, according to recent [Relationships Australia data](#).

As a result of the challenging year, more Australian businesses are prioritising employees' health and wellbeing –

particularly as employees embrace ongoing flexible working arrangements.

St Kilda Football Club (St Kilda FC), is one such organisation on the front foot. The Australian Football League (AFL) club began using the Readiness digital wellbeing platform in June 2020.

Through regular and quick assessments via the Readiness platform, St Kilda FC were able to monitor employee mental and physical health and provide personalised solutions and resources to help improve focus areas such as mental health, sleep, nutrition, stress and exercise. Here's how.



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Matt Finnis, CEO, St. Kilda Football Club



The Challenge.

Like many organisations, St Kilda FC staff faced a number of challenges in 2020. Located in Melbourne, most employees were plunged into the state's lengthy COVID-19 lockdown. Forced to work from home, many simultaneously juggled home-schooling and uncertainty around their own job security. Add to this a number of industry-specific hurdles around the postponement of the AFL season until May 31, the resumption of a shortened 17-match season and two-thirds of staff relocating away from home to interstate hubs for up to 100 days to keep the season going. It was a recipe for workplace stress and anxiety.

Kate Pollock, St Kilda FC General Manager, People & Culture, confirms 2020 was one of the most challenging years for staff.

"The Club was concerned about staff mental health and wellbeing, and we had to look for a solution to provide support for our remote workforce."



The cost of mental health on business

In a normal year, existing [Work Safe Australia research](#) indicates that stress costs Australian businesses **more than \$10 billion per year, while the direct financial impact on Australian business of mental health issues is in the vicinity of \$11 billion every year** due to absenteeism and reduced productivity from unwell workers, according to [Creating a mentally healthy workplace: return on investment analysis.](#)

Simon Kearney, the co-founder of Readiness and a former Sports Scientist, says during a pandemic, the impacts are expected to be far greater and more far-reaching.

"The need for prioritising employee health and wellbeing is more important than ever. We know businesses which put wellbeing front and centre have reduced absenteeism, increased productivity and better staff morale."

- Simon Kearney, Readiness Co-founder

The Solution.

St Kilda FC were committed to helping their staff during this testing period and in June 2020, introduced Readiness for 68 employees across their football and administration areas.

Through self-assessments completed online every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the Club began to monitor the health and wellbeing of their staff, wherever they were located.

A total of 12 questions are asked covering topics of mind, body and sleep, then wellbeing scores and recommendations are sent directly to each participant.

Based on individual results, Readiness provides tailored wellbeing educational resources via an extensive library of mental health and wellbeing courses and learning resources.

This means employees can immediately access information relevant to their current state of physical and mental health.

For staff experiencing deeper concerns or challenges, Readiness can provide referrals to qualified health and wellbeing practitioners.

Every employee is also paired with an advocate, which means there is always someone to talk to within the organisation who is not necessarily a direct line manager.

These strategies and the ability to provide immediate feedback means those that need support, get it. Plus, employees at risk of mental health and wellbeing issues are identified early before potential situations escalate.

The Results.

After the first six months of using Readiness to monitor employee wellbeing – from June to November, 2020 – the St Kilda FC and Readiness studied the scores generated from the staff self-assessments. The results showed strong improvements in staff mental health and wellbeing:



7% increase
in overall employee wellbeing



10% increase
in employee
mental health



14% increase
in employee
body performance



4.5% increase
in employee
sleep

Matt Finnis, St Kilda FC chief executive officer, says using Readiness is an initiative the Club has taken to aid in supporting its people's performance and wellbeing in a challenging year.

"We are pleased to see improvements in staff mental health, body performance and sleep ratings throughout the year, particularly given the stresses faced as a result of work interruptions, living away from home and COVID-19 lockdown restrictions."

Readiness Co-founder, Simon Kearney believes that employers should take St Kilda FC's lead and focus on the whole picture when it comes to employee wellbeing.

"There is a tendency to only focus on mental health when we talk about wellbeing, but for employees to perform at their best, they need to ensure there is a focus on holistic wellbeing and there is the right balance of mind, body and sleep."

The Future.

St Kilda FC continues to invest in their people and support mental health and wellbeing using Readiness. As a result, the staff are ready for whatever 2021 throws at them.

Dr Darren Hocking, PhD, chief scientist who is leading the partnership between Readiness and Swinburne's Centre for Mental Health, says this proactive approach is vital after the challenges of last year.

"Promoting wellbeing and preventing poor mental health in the workplace is a national priority, which is only heightened by the devastating economic impact of COVID-19 on our work and home lives. The positive results from the Readiness trial at St Kilda FC emphasise the need for a more proactive approach to identifying early risk signs of poor mental health and to respond appropriately with self-directed and personalised resources. This preventative approach not only benefits the individual employee in their personal life but also provides a holistic strategy for optimising workplace productivity."

Building a proactive workplace culture using a platform like Readiness has never been so important – with Readiness pleased to see similar results among other clients and industries, including Telstra Energy, Ferguson Plarre Bakehouses and Jayco.

For more information regarding the Readiness complete wellbeing platform, visit readiness.org.au.



readiness*



Readiness is a scientifically-backed platform to help businesses and schools support the mental health and physical wellbeing of their employees and students.

To find out more visit: www.readiness.org.au