

YARRA TRAMS TAKES ACTION TO PREVENT DIABETES AMONG EMPLOYEES

Yarra Trams is currently the world's largest tram network and employs over 2,150 staff across 13 locations in Victoria. Recognising that employees perform their best when they are of healthy mind and body, Yarra Trams began working with the *Life!* team in 2012 to include diabetes prevention within its 'myGoodness' health and wellbeing program.



The 'myGoodness' program provides employees with information on health issues and covers a range of issues including fatigue management, lifesaving skills and diabetes.

Kristina Iskra, myGoodness committee member, was a key driver in getting the *Life!* diabetes prevention sessions and course established at Yarra Trams.

"Given that diabetes is a fast growing epidemic in Australia, we thought it would be valuable to include as part of our 'myGoodness' program," Kristina said. "We are aware that many of our employees are both directly or indirectly affected by diabetes."

The *Life!* team presented to Yarra Trams management, educating them on the actual level of risk among their staff according to their WorkHealth checks and explained the options available to them to help reduce their employees risk. These included running diabetes prevention sessions and/or the *Life!* program, both available free of charge to be run within the workplace.

Understanding the huge impact these sessions could have on the health of its employees, Yarra Trams management decided the prevention sessions and the *Life!* course would be a great fit to be included as part of the 'myGoodness' program.

"The prospect of information sessions that not only educate our staff on diabetes but also offer tips and programs to help prevent diabetes was very appealing," said Kristina. "Prevention is always better than a cure!"

Available to all staff, the prevention sessions were promoted as part of the 'myGoodness' program through the staff intranet and posters displayed at sites.

The prevention sessions were well attended by staff across all 13 work sites and generated excellent feedback. In fact 99 percent of attendees reported they had a better understanding of risk factors and how to prevent type 2 diabetes, while an impressive 95 percent were motivated to make changes to their lifestyle.

Responses from participants were excellent, with one employee stating, "This was one more push to do something about my waist," and another explaining he was motivated to make changes because he learnt "simple things are easy to do to try and prevent type 2 diabetes."

During the prevention sessions, a number of staff were found to be at high risk of developing diabetes, prompting Yarra Trams management to provide the *Life!* course onsite to help its employees learn how to live a healthier life to reduce their risk.

Since the prevention session, a number of Yarra Trams employees have enrolled in the telephone health coaching service and a *Life!* group course was set up at a Yarra Trams worksite in 2013, enabling staff to make positive changes to improve their health.

"The team from Diabetes Australia–Victoria have been wonderful to work with," said Kristina. "Their professionalism and clear communications ensured that the sessions ran smoothly at all 13 Yarra Trams locations. From the feedback I've received, the sessions were well received by staff."

The *Life!* team will continue to work with Yarra Trams to support diabetes prevention in the workplace.

For more information please contact Lauren Day at LDay@diabetesvic.org.au or on (03) 9667 1756.

ABOUT YARRA TRAMS

Yarra Trams operates the world's largest tram network, comprising more than 250 kilometres of double track on 29 routes. Yarra Trams employs more than 2,150 staff at 13 locations to almost 500 trams. More than 180 million trips are taken each year on the Yarra Trams network.

For more information, visit www.yarratrams.com.au