



CITY OF WHITTLESEA IS LEADING THE WAY IN STAFF WELLBEING WITH THE *LIFE!* PROGRAM



Research shows that individuals with an unhealthy weight are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes and heart disease and be absent from work, resulting in lost business productivity¹.

By creating a workplace environment that supports healthy lifestyles, an organisation can greatly improve staff retention, productivity, morale and organisational culture².

The *Life!* program can help a workplace to achieve this. We do this by providing your workforce with a flexible program that promotes realistic and sustainable lifestyle changes. The *Life!* program makes it easy by offering the tools, resources and support required to improve the health and wellbeing of any workforce – no matter the industry or size. To add to the appeal, the program is free.

City of Whittlesea recognises the value of staff wellbeing and is leading the way for other workplaces in Victoria by implementing the *Life!* program.

“Coming to these sessions has taught me it’s not a diet, it’s a change in thinking. It’s taught me so much about why it’s important to eat well and exercise. I’ve lost weight and I feel fantastic now.”

City of Whittlesea staff member

Since launching in 2007, the *Life!* program has supported over 48,000 Victorians to take their first step to better health. Those who completed the program saw, on average, a weight reduction of 2-3 kilograms and reduced their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by up to 40%*.



Program topics include maintaining a healthy weight, reading food labels, overcoming barriers to physical activity, controlling stress and improving sleep patterns.

“As a result of the course, I am shopping with the ‘How to Read Food Labels’ wallet card and reading the nutritional labels on food. I am eating more balanced meals and include more wholemeal products such as brown rice instead of white rice.”

City of Whittlesea staff member

City of Whittlesea offered staff the *Life!* program to help enhance the Council's health and wellbeing program. Wellbeing at Work Officer at City of Whittlesea, Agnieszka Miller, said “*Life!* addresses a gap in our current program by educating staff on the risks of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease and importantly, how these risks can be reduced through lifestyle changes.”

Life! is a state-wide lifestyle behaviour change program available to Victorians at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Supported by the Victorian Government and coordinated by Diabetes Victoria, the program is delivered by expert health professionals and teaches participants how to live healthier lives and reduce their risk of chronic disease.

The *Life!* program recognises that improving diet and increasing exercise can be hard. Participants are therefore equipped with the tools and techniques to get the best results and achieve their lifestyle goals. Ms Miller believes that the strategies offered by the program are, “Practical and engaging - not alarming or off-putting.”

City of Whittlesea wanted a program that fits with their priorities around physical activity and healthy eating, as well as appealing to its diverse workforce. “We also wanted a program which has measurable results,” Ms Miller said. The *Life!* program captures participant information at various points throughout the program to track progress. This not only motivates individuals, but it provides workplaces with evidence of success.

“I loved that I was among other people who were there for the same reason, it made it comfortable knowing we all wanted the same goal.”

City of Whittlesea staff member

The group sessions create a dynamic learning experience that encourages peer learning and peer support.

Life! has a strong focus on providing flexibility to support workplaces like City of Whittlesea to implement the program, including offering sessions before or after work, incorporating sessions into lunch breaks, and having health professionals deliver the sessions on-site. “Having the flexibility to change the length of the sessions enabled more staff to participate as it fitted nicely into their lunch breaks,” Ms Miller said.

Staff at City of Whittlesea valued the opportunity to do this course at work. One staff member commented, “I appreciated that it was all organised for us and I found it to be a great way to get to know others in the office.”



Interested in making your workplace healthier?

Contact the *Life!* team now.

Call (03) 8648 1880 or email life@diabetesvic.org.au