

WELLNESS CENTRAL

A modular safe space with resources and an environment conducive to managing mental health and wellness.

Wellness Central is an area reserved for discussing and contemplating mental health and wellness. Secluded from the rest of the project site compound, workers will find an environment suitable for reflection, and wellness-focused discussions, and where related support services may be hosted.



Wellness Central is a remodelled shipping container, decorated in indigenous artwork, surrounded by a fenced courtyard.

The situation

Distractions in the workplace reduce performance, affect productivity, and pose a significant safety risk. Workforce mental health and wellness are important factors in avoiding distractions and maintaining situational awareness.

A recent survey of Western Program Alliance (WPA) workers found that the top concerns that impacted their performance were:

- Relationships 81%
- Mental health 63%
- Work pressure 59%
- Finances 48%

Increased awareness of psychosocial topics – through programs such as R U OK? Day – means workers are aware of mental health issues and are more likely to look out for and support each other. However, construction industry sites are not generally conducive to personal reflection or wellness-focused discussions.

Lack of a suitable space where workers would feel comfortable to address psychosocial concerns was a gap in WPA's suite of wellness support preventative measures.

The solution

To bolster their wellness support preventative measures, the team at WPA's Webb St Narre Warren Level Crossing Removal Project (NWA) developed and deployed Wellness Central.

Wellness Central is a redeployable module, easily integrated into construction industry site compounds.

Stepping into this purpose-designed space – secluded from the rest of the project site compound – workers find an environment suitable for reflection and wellness-focused discussions, where related support services may be hosted (e.g. WPA's Wellness Program 1-on-1 coaching sessions).

Internally, it has been arranged to promote a relaxed environment and conversation. It contains a variety of equipment for use in the courtyard, including yoga mats, skipping ropes, and sporting equipment.

The courtyard is a multi-recreational space including a half basketball court, grassed area with a patio-style setting, and a garden.

Benefits and learnings

Implementing Wellness Central at our NWA site has delivered immediate benefits, with workers quickly adopting it as a business-as-usual space where they can – individually or in groups – maintain their wellness.

We have seen an increase in wellness-related conversation across the site; this alone is an important indicator of a workforce engaged in maintaining their mental health.

Key learnings from Wellness Central's success are:

- Embedding static and dynamic resources and activities on opening is important for quick up-take and engagement.
- Having a worksite and workforce-relatable theme and fit-out is important for setting a collaborative tone and sense of community.
- At launch, educating workers is important to ensure they understand the purpose is.
- A wellness support preventative measure, not a reactive resource such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Program Office: Level Crossing Removal Project
Work Package: Western Program Alliance
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