

Case Study

Reducing musculoskeletal injuries & strengthening early intervention at Major Regional Health Service (Victoria)

A major regional health service in Victoria supporting approximately 6,000 workers daily across clinical, operational and support services. With a highly dynamic and productivity-driven workforce, maintaining staff wellbeing is critical to ensuring uninterrupted patient care.

Challenges

The regional health service was experiencing high workers' compensation claims and elevated musculoskeletal injury rates across multiple departments, particularly within Kitchen Services, Nursing, Surgery, Cleaning and Hygiene, and patient transport services.

- Physically demanding roles involving repetitive movements and sustained manual handling
- Time pressure were contributing to injury risk within a 24-hour operational environment
- Injured workers were often triaged through the public Emergency Department system, receiving the same pathway as non-work-related patients
- Delayed early intervention and increased the likelihood of claims escalating

The result was rising claims costs, operational disruption and increased pressure on leadership and workforce planning in a time-sensitive healthcare setting.

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Case Study: Regional Health Service

Solutions

Work Healthy Australia partnered with the regional health service to implement a structured, preventative and onsite approach to injury management. Work Healthy Australia's approach included:

Task Analysis	Onsite Treatment
<p>We undertook detailed task analysis within nursing, kitchen services, cleaning, surgery and transport roles to better understand the physical demands and injury drivers.</p> <p>This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observing workflow and manual handling practices• Identifying repetitive strain exposure and movement patterns• Assessing environmental and equipment factors• Providing evidence-based recommendations to reduce injury risk <p>Our findings were presented with clear data insights and practical strategies designed to integrate into daily operations – not disrupt them.</p>	<p>To address delays in care and reduce claim escalation, we introduced our permanent onsite clinicians to provide treatment to any workers experiencing pain.</p> <p>Our onsite treatment program ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immediate access to treatment during work hours• Early reporting before injuries became claims• Reduced reliance on Emergency Department• Support tailored to shift workers and time-poor clinical staff• Increased utilisation of preventative services <p>By embedding our experts within the workplace, we removed barriers to care and normalised early intervention.</p>

The impact

Following implementation, the regional health service saw measurable improvements in both injury outcomes and operational continuity:

- ✓ Reduction in LTIs and reported incident rates
- ✓ Increased early intervention before escalation to WorkCover
- ✓ Decreased reliance on Emergency Department triage for workplace injuries
- ✓ Reduced absenteeism in high-risk departments (notably Kitchen Services)
- ✓ Improved workforce availability and productivity
- ✓ Overwhelmingly positive employee satisfaction survey results (9.5/10 on average)

“*Our WorkCover rates have dropped substantially this year, and there's been a clear shift in trust and safety culture. Staff are accessing support earlier and feel genuinely looked after.*”

Early Intervention Consultant, Regional Health Service (Victoria)