



33rd AHSP0 Conference

Mantra Lorne

PRESIDENTS OPENING ADDRESS

Aldo Santo

Good morning, everyone and welcome to the 33rd Annual AHSP0 Conference here at the Mantra Lorne, and once again this year's conference has been a sell-out.

Can I start by 'acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are having our conference. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Aboriginal Elders of other communities who may be here today

The theme of this year's conference is Wellbeing in the Workforce – Be the Change, and as you all know workplace wellbeing plays a large role in promoting and maintaining our mental health. In fact, research shows that mentally healthy workers are more productive and less likely to take sick leave.

Also, it is estimated that 45% of Australians will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime, with the most common being anxiety or depression...and

Around 90% of employees think mental health is an important issue for businesses, but only 50% believe that their workplace is mentally healthy.

These key facts are from the State of Workplace Mental Health in Australia report.

As you can probably guess I've been trawling the Internet and Googling What is a Healthy Workplace and this is what I found.

There are 9 key attributes for a healthy workplace, so in no particular order let me identify and expand on what they might be,

Number 1 – Prioritising Mental Health

- This is about providing mental health education for all levels of staff to raise the awareness, increase understanding and encourage open discussion.

Number 2 – A Trusting Fair and Respectful Culture

- This is about providing employees at all levels, with skills to interact honestly and respectfully with colleagues and customers.

Number 3 – Open and Honest Leadership

- This is about employing effective leadership to give employees a sense of shared purpose in the goals of the organisation.

Number 4 – Good Job Design

- This is about providing job roles equal to people's skills and abilities, ensuring they are physically safe and to also offer working arrangements that suit employees.

Number 5 – Workload Management

- This is about setting tasks that can be accomplished successfully in a reasonable time, using readily available resources.

Number 6 – Employee Development

- This is about offering an environment where employees have regular two-way feedback and are encouraged, acknowledged, and rewarded.

Number 7 – Inclusion and Influence

- This is about arranging for employees to have control of the way they work and input into the important decisions of the organisation.

Number 8 – Work – Life Balance

- This is about recognising the importance of work-life balances and providing employees with the opportunity to balance the demands of work, family, and personal life...and finally,

Number 9 – Mental Health Support

- This is about ensuring that Managers and staff are responsive to employee's mental health conditions, regardless of cause and that adjustments to work and counselling support are available.

As you can see there is a lot to consider and to my mind it backs up my earlier statement that around 90% of employees think mental health is an important issue for businesses, but only 50% believe that their workplace is mentally healthy.

Let me give you a quote from Steve McCann, the Managing Director of Lendlease,

‘A healthy person is a productive person – they are engaged – they feel safe – they like that they are cared for – and they are focused on the job that they do.’

During the course of the next two days, you will hear from a number of speakers, but I just want to draw your attention to our keynote speakers, namely

Olly Bridge who, as his name suggests will be 'Building a Bridge' to a future where employees leave work healthier and happier than when they arrive...no small task I think you will agree, and...

Jo Stanley, who is currently the Co-host of 'The House of Wellness' and will be sharing her passion for mindfulness, meditation, gratitude and self-compassion.

Two presentations not to be missed.

So let me now introduce an award-winning senior journalist and presenter with over 20 years of experience in Australia and Internationally, who has enjoyed her time with us as much as we have with her, so much so that this is her 3rd AHSPPO Conference as our MC...

Ladies and gentlemen please welcome Emily Rice.