

# We all have a Role to Play

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Information Pack for WayAhead Workplaces Mental Health Month Initiative for 2023

Thank you for your interest in our Mental Health Month initiative throughout October 2023. We've been closely examining how WayAhead Workplaces contributes to mental health promotion within Australian workplaces and we're incredibly excited to continue to evolve and enhance our activities in this area. We hope to provide free resources to support your workplace in forging high-level conversations about workplace wellbeing.

This document will contain information regarding the background of our organisation, details around the proposed initiative, as well as how you can implement this campaign within your organisation.

Let's build a more mentally healthy world together!



Edman Tam

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WayAhead – Mental Health Association NSW

## Major Partner



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# About the Organisation

## WayAhead – Mental Health Association NSW

WayAhead – Mental Health Association NSW specialises in mental and emotional health promotion. We do this with advocacy that recognises lived experiences and challenges mental health stigma. Backed by research and informed by lived experience, our diverse programs share a focus on connection, education, and early intervention to create a future where communities and individuals can thrive.

WayAhead is a non-government and not-for-profit organisation. We are a registered charity with QIC accreditation.

## WayAhead Workplaces

WayAhead Workplaces is one program within WayAhead. Our purpose is to extend the vision of WayAhead into the workplace context. We undertake a range of activities that aim to improve the quality of workplace mental health in Australia by supporting, connecting, upskilling, educating, and resourcing professionals within the workforce.

## WayAhead Workplaces Members

One of the activities of WayAhead Workplaces is to coordinate a network of members who are passionate about developing wellbeing within their workplaces. Our diverse membership base consists of public and private sector organisations from a wide range of industries, key sector bodies, academics, and a range of industry providers.



# Introduction to Mental Health Month

## What is the Mental Health Month

WayAhead understands that the journey an individual takes towards developing mental wellbeing within themselves and their loved ones often starts with a single conversation. However, we also realise that the conversation can often be difficult to initiate and complicated to navigate. In light of this, WayAhead has been coordinating the annual Mental Health Month campaign to engage Australians in a conversation around mental health.

Of course, many social and environmental factors impact individual mental health. As the mental health climate which we live in continues to change, Mental Health Month has continued to align these conversations to best align to the concerns of the day. Past themes have included:

- 1997: Labels belong on Jars, Not People
- 2015: Value Your Mind
- 2022: Tune In This Mental Health Month

Mental Health Month has had a long legacy. Starting as a collaborative activity alongside the Australian National Association for Mental Health back in the 1950's, WayAhead (then known as the Mental Health Association of NSW) took on the coordination of this event for the state of NSW. In that time, WayAhead has evolved this campaign from a one-day event, to one week, and now a one-month long endeavour. It is now recognised as one of the key events in the annual calendar for anyone interested in mental health and wellbeing within Australia. [See here for a more in depth look at the history of the Mental Health Month.](#)

## WayAhead's Activities for Mental Health Month

### *Diverse Initiatives*

As part of Mental Health Month, WayAhead will be conducting activities in a diverse array of contexts. This will include initiatives aimed at schools, universities, key community groups, and workplaces. [See here for more information or resources.](#)

### *Mental Health Matters Awards*

WayAhead also hosts the annual Mental Health Matters Awards. This is an annual celebration of the achievements of (various organisations) in the development of mental health within NSW, across several key categories.

You are invited to join us for this celebration! [Find out more here.](#)

# WayAhead Workplaces and the Mental Health Month

The focus of this initiative is to offer free and easily accessible resources to organisations to assist them to run a workplace wellbeing initiative during this time. We seek to assist organisations who might not have their own resources to run an initiative at such a scale.

## WayAhead Workplaces Initiative for 2023

### *Rationale*

In aligning the theme of Mental Health Month (We All Have a Role to Play), the initiative by WayAhead Workplaces will focus on the following question: How can employees at different levels of the organisation help each other in developing overall wellbeing within the workplace. Instead of seeing the responsibility of one's wellbeing as exclusively in the hands of the individual, the initiative hopes to start a conversation around the various roles and capabilities of different cohorts within and outside the organisation – peers, immediate managers, strategic level management, organisational resources (such as HR or mental health first aiders/ wellbeing champions), external resources (such as EAP's), and governing bodies in the sector.

This theme integrates well with recent updates to legislation within Australia, related to the topic of Psychosocial Risks. This legislation has clarified and defined key areas of focus, as well as provided guidance on possible solutions on meeting these risks. It outlines the role of organisations in the protection of individual wellbeing, as well as highlighting the strategic opportunities various cohorts and resources have in this area. Although there have been many resources developed around this topic, resources have largely been aimed at organisational leaders (particularly strategy level leaders). This information has been slow to trickle down to frontline managers as well as general employees.

At WayAhead Workplaces, our key goal in this initiative is to allow employees at all levels to understand that, when it comes to their mental health and wellbeing at work, they are not alone. Support can stem from various cohorts within a workplace, and can involve a response to existing needs, or to prevent harm as well as proactively develop thriving workplaces.

Key Term	Definition
Psychosocial Risk	<p>The field of Workplace Health and Safety has had a strong focus on understanding and mitigating physical risks to workers. This can include physical injury (falls in construction sites, operating heavy machinery in factories), medical issues (exposure of hazardous chemicals).</p> <p>Of arising interest is potential injuries to workers on a psychological and social level. This includes the management and prevention of social injuries (bullying, sexual harassment) as well as psychological ones (vicarious trauma, burnout).</p> <p>This new domain of interest requires new tools and skills – particularly “soft skills” such as communication, understanding, leadership etc.</p>

### *Outline of the initiative*

The goal of this initiative is then to start a conversation within organisations around the aforementioned topic. To this end, WayAhead Workplaces will be developing the following package of resources:

1. Four online sessions presented once a week for 4 weeks.
  - a. Presentations will be 40 minutes in length, followed by a Q&A
    - i. Sessions are so structured to allow organisations who wish to host a 'Lunch and Learn' to leave the meeting after the presentation component. They can then have a discussion as a group during this time.
    - ii. Those who might want to access this session as individuals, or make the session optional, can participate in the Q&A.
2. Supporting written resources related to each week's theme will be available via the WayAhead Workplaces website.
3. An implementation pack containing printable collateral, background information regarding the initiative etc will also be made available ahead of time.

## **Weekly Themes for this Event**

### *Week 1: We All have a Role to Play*

This week, the core theme of the initiative will be introduced. That is, we are not alone when it comes to workplace wellbeing. Several cohorts within and outside the workplace can help with an individuals' wellbeing (Employees/Peers, Managers/People Leaders, Organisation/Employer, External (Government, other services). The idea that individuals can be assisted in 1) addressing existing harms, 2) prevent potential harms, and 3) building positive wellbeing will also be highlighted.

**Speaker:** Dr Natalie Flatt, Chief Innovation Lead at Superfriend

### *Week 2: Workplace Interactions*

This week will be focusing on one of the major categories of psychosocial risks - that of interpersonal interactions. In sum, this session builds on session one, by giving some evocative examples around how different cohorts within and outside an organisation can assist individuals in their relationships at work.

**Speaker:** Elizabeth Shaw, CEO of Relationships Australia NSW

### *Week 3: Finding Balance in Work Demands*

Another key theme within the Psychosocial risks framework relates to the effects of workplace demands on individual wellbeing. This can include both having too much or too little work, and differences as to how individuals might respond to these situations. This will be done with a focus on the "job resources model", again, using simple to access language. Again, the focus will be on giving evocative examples around how different cohorts within and outside an organisation can assist individuals in managing the design on their work.

**Speaker:** Kevin StMart, Workplace Wellness and Psychosocial Risk Consultant, The Opus Centre

#### *Week 4: Life Transitions and the Workplace*

Individuals change during their lives. With every stage of life we progress through, we develop new priorities, we meet new challenges, we learn new lessons. How can different levels of the organisation help support us as we go through these changes? Although not explicitly stated in a lot of material related to Psychosocial Risks, one's interaction with work changes as one progresses through different life stages. For example, situations that were once considered manageable can become unsustainable due to a change in life situation.

**Speaker:** Gagan Mudhar, Principle Psychologist at Transitioning Well

#### *Week 5: An Evolution to Work, Health and Safety*

SafeWork NSW are in the regulation of workplace health and safety, which means they are on the forefront in seeing trends in workplace mental health and wellbeing. SafeWork NSW has been working on a new strategic plan to re-direct their work away from just enforcing workplace health and safety regulation, but also to contribute to measures to help organisations take a preventative approach to workplace wellbeing. This presentation will still be aimed at general employees, but will examine to more detail how an external entity can support employees.

#### *Quick note:*

Despite talking about key aspects of Psychosocial risk, the emphasis will be around avoiding technical language or jargon. For example, this initiative will actively avoid the use of the terms “psychosocial risk”, “psychosocial hazard”, “Psychosocial risk assessment”, “health and safety regulation” etc.

## Proposed Calendar of Workplace Relevant Events

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	2nd	3rd	4 <sup>th</sup>	5th	6 <sup>th</sup>
Theme We all have a Role to play		Online Presentation 1	Recording of Presentation 1 Available		WayAhead Mental Health Matters Awards
Week 2	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
Theme Relational Connections and the Workplace		Online Presentation 2	Recording of Presentation 2 Available		

Week 3	16 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>
Theme Finding Balance in Work Demands		Online Presentation 3	Recording of Presentation 3 Available		
Week 4	23 <sup>rd</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>
Theme Life Transitions and the Workplace		Online Presentation 4	Recording of Presentation 4 Available		
Week 5	30 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup>			

*Timeline of Individual Presentations:*

Time:	Description	Note
1pm	Meeting Link is Live	Allow for people to press out tech issues
1:05	Introduction	By Workplaces Team
1:10	Presentation Start	By Presenter
1:40	Start informal activity, and/or Q&A	Option for in-person teams to go into their own group to continue “lunch and learn” session
2pm	Session ends	

This session will be recorded for organisations use, and will be available via the WayAhead Workplaces Website.

## A Note about the Initiative

Note that WayAhead and WayAhead Workplaces work in mental health promotion. Should you be looking for a service or consultant to help resolve a specific challenge, we may be able to point you towards various options. However, we do not currently offer these services.



# Implementing this Initiative in my Workplace

## *Step 1: Download the Implementation Pack*

A package of predesigned resources will be made available in the first week of September. This will be delivered to you via the email you have provided us, or on the WayAhead Workplaces website.

This package includes:

- Printable Posters and Pamphlets, promoting:
  - the general theme, aimed at workplaces
  - A poster talking about each of the topics covered, as well as an invitation to join those sessions
  - A range of general posters designed for Mental Health Month
- Pre-designed Email templates

## *Step 2: Decide which format you wish to implement*

- Online only: Forward an invite to all employees that they can participate in this event.
- Lunch and Learn: For all employees to be physically present
  - Incentivise attendance by providing lunch, or some other cooperative activity before/during the event.
  - The presentation starts at precisely 1:05pm, and will finish approximately 1:40.
  - A group discussion will be hosted for online participants. In person groups can choose to stay and listen to the discussion. However, we encourage organisations to use the provided group activity to lead an in-person session.
- Hybrid: Organise a lunch-and-learn for those who are physically present, and the option for online access for those who cannot.

## *Step 4: Schedule and Communicate*

- Schedule at least 1-2pm, every Tuesday for the month of October to participate in the online sessions.
- Schedule a group activity before or after this event, to encourage higher attendance rates
- Schedule an email reminder to all staff to participate in this initiative. We suggest sending this reminder a few weeks before the start of the initiative, as well as the Monday before the presentation. Feel free to use the email templates provided.
- Have other collateral represented in other ways: posters in common areas, intranet, workplace instant messaging platforms.

## *Step 5: Planning outcomes*

- Are there things the organisation needs to prepare before this initiative?
  - Contact details for your EAP
- If an individual would like to ask a question from the organisation, or is seeking additional support, is there anything in place to help them?
  - Some next steps for individuals will be available via the WayAhead website.

## *Step 6: Additional Assistance*

- If you have any questions regarding this initiative, email Edman Tam at [edman.tam@wayahead.org.au](mailto:edman.tam@wayahead.org.au)

# Other Ways You Can Support this Initiative

## Hosting your own event

- Any additional events that align to the overall theme and objectives of this initiative, as well as WayAhead Workplaces Values, and are open to the public, can be promoted through WayAhead channels, as well as being represented in our events calendar for the month.

## Endorsing the Event

- A mention on social media, reposting our promotional material, or communicating this to your network.
- Allowing for a member of the WayAhead Workplaces team to speak about the event to your network.
- If your organisation has client organisations who you wish to promote this initiative to, you may qualify as an Endorsing Partner. As an Endorsing Partner, we will have your support reflected on our website and other collateral.

## Financial Sponsorship

WayAhead is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation and registered charity with QIC accreditation. WayAhead Workplaces is supported by the NSW Government, our membership fees, and through generous sponsorships and in-kind donations by partner organisations.

The WayAhead Workplaces contribution towards Mental Health Month 2023 has received financial support from SafeWork NSW.

## Benefit to Supports and Sponsors

WayAhead Workplaces will be proud to mention our sponsors in our collateral and our website.

# More Information About WayAhead Workplaces

## More about WayAhead Workplaces

Learn more about the [history of WayAhead Workplaces](#), see our [Current Members](#), or hear from them directly in our [Member's Spotlight](#).

## About our Memberships

WayAhead Workplaces memberships include virtual or in-person access to our Quarterly Meetings and Annual Forum, as well as to our online resource library and member-exclusive discounts to a range of events, conferences, tools, and services.

See the [benefits of becoming a member](#) and what [membership packages](#) are available.

## Our Meetings

See photos and agendas of our previous [Quarterly Meetings](#) and [Annual Forums](#) on our website.

## Contact us

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