

The logo consists of a solid red square. Inside the square, the text 'AMWF' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below 'AMWF', the word 'AUSTRALIA' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

AMWF
AUSTRALIA

ARCHITECTS MENTAL WELLBEING TOOLKIT

The Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum

JULY 2021

INTRODUCTION



Welcome to this first edition of the Architects Mental Wellbeing Toolkit (Australia). This is an edited version of the UK Toolkit, which was compiled by members of the Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum in the UK – a group that John Assael and Ben Channon set up in late 2017 with the ambition of improving mental health across the profession.

This toolkit includes content and resources specific to Australia. We would like to thank Ben Channon and the AMWF UK for their generosity in allowing us to tailor this Toolkit for the Australian profession. Thanks also to Artemis Nikolopoulou, who designed the UK Toolkit, and Siân Rearden for the illustrations.

WHO IS THE AMWF UK?

The [UK AMWF](#) comprises of 12 architectural practices, all of whom are renowned for their forward thinking approaches to staff welfare, plus additional support from the RIBA, the Architects' Benevolent Society, Golightly Associates cultural consultancy, and their student representative Melissa Kirkpatrick. The group meets regularly to share knowledge and discuss ideas for nurturing mental wellbeing in a supportive, thoughtful environment.

WHO IS THE AMWF AUSTRALIA?

The [Association of Consulting Architects \(ACA\)](#) leads the [AMWF in Australia](#), with the ongoing support of Brian Clohessy from BVN and ACA branches and supporting practices around Australia. We have now established AMWF groups in Queensland (also covering Northern Territory), NSW (+ ACT), Victoria (+ Tasmania), South Australia and Western Australia. AMWF meetings and events are open to all interested parties regardless of ACA membership.

We have been fortunate to have had support and guidance from the Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum (AMWF) in the UK. Our aim is to raise awareness of mental health issues within the profession and to create a supportive community of practitioners in each state and territory to meet on a regular basis to share knowledge, experiences, research and strategies in a bid to support architects' mental wellbeing in the workplace.

ACA MESSAGE

The ACA is delighted to take the lead on the development of an Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum (AMWF) in Australia, which will build on the great work being done by AMWF in the UK.

Mental wellbeing in the architectural profession and its impact on running a business is more important than ever. Managing and directing an architecture practice is often gruelling, frustrating and relentless. Low fees, poor procurement practices, long hours and an undervaluing of architecture in the wider community are all longstanding challenges that can put enormous strain on a workplace culture.

Creating an environment that supports a healthy and vibrant workforce can be difficult, particularly in times like these, when COVID-related challenges such as remote working, isolation and health risks provide additional stresses for employers and employees. The ACA does not take these issues lightly. Mental wellbeing is a serious workplace issue, and we are committed to raising awareness, reducing stigma, sharing knowledge and experiences, and helping each other where we can.

We are delighted that we have been able to customise the UK Toolkit for Australian architectural practices, including useful tips, resources and advice on a range of workplace-related wellbeing priorities in a simple and easy-to-use format. The aim is to provide ideas, reminders and food for thought, as well as practical advice, solutions and links to a range of mental health resources and specialists. I encourage every practice to take time to go through this document, use it as a conversation piece with your team, or simply as an enabler to create a healthier, safer and more vibrant culture in your workplace.

Angelina Pillai

CEO, Association of Consulting Architects

THANKS

The QLD/NT Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum conceived the Australian version of the AMWF Toolkit and has been instrumental in its development. Special thanks to Faye Holmes and Justine Ebzery for their initiative, hard work and expertise, and ACA Editor Susie Ashworth for research, writing and compilation. Thanks also to Ian Hore, Kirby Roper, Michael Lewarne, Angelina Pillai, Sascha Byrne and Louise Street for their invaluable feedback and assistance.

AMWF PARTNER

Special thanks to NATSPEC for supporting the Australian AMWF and the development of this revised Toolkit.



THE AMWF TOOLKIT

Ben Channon, Chair of the AMWF in the UK, explains the genesis of the AMWF Toolkit:

"After our early meetings, we realised there were a number of recurring themes that we all felt played a key role in mental wellbeing, from the office culture through to the physical environment itself. This Toolkit collates these key themes discussed by the forum, with the aim of sharing some of the insight of the practices we gathered together. It has also been informed by a number of other papers and publications in this rapidly emerging area of staff welfare. For example, the Health and Safety Executive has identified six key areas of work that impact on health, productivity and sickness absence rates, all of which we have touched upon within this document:

DEMANDS – Including workload, working patterns and the work environment

CONTROL – How much autonomy people have in the way they do their work

SUPPORT – Including encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, management and colleagues

RELATIONSHIPS – Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour

ROLE – Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles

CHANGE – How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

We feel that now, perhaps more than ever, it is vital for practices to review how staff are coping with the various stresses and strains of working in what is undoubtedly a challenging industry.

We created this Toolkit, therefore, as a handy guide for anybody working within the architectural industry – it has been written with both employers and staff in mind. We hope that it imparts useful guidance and references to practices small and large, to support them in providing outstanding mental wellbeing support to their staff.

It is important to recognise that reasonable levels of stress and everyday pressures are not only part of working life, but they can be beneficial – they help to motivate us and achieve great things. But there is a difference between healthy pressures and the sorts of sustained stresses that can lead a person to feel out of their depth and struggling to cope. This is what we at the Forum would like to address – we hope that this Toolkit helps you to achieve that."

Ben Channon

Chair, Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum (UK)



HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

- Find the section relevant to the issue you're interested in – or just read from cover to cover!
- In each section you will find a brief introduction to the topic, as well as tips for both employers and individuals.
- Make use of the 'Useful References' provided in each topic – we wanted to keep this guide short and digestible, but these resources offer much more information on each subject.

OFFICE CULTURE AND OVERTIME



Successfully managing stress levels within the workplace is an important component of long-term health for anyone. Having an office culture that supports and promotes healthy habits will reap many benefits – increased productivity, reduced absence, employee engagement, creativity, reduced staff turnover. A team with long-term healthy working habits will work sensible hours, take full lunch breaks, take annual leave and rest after busy periods.

The ideal is a workplace where individuals work hard and productively during core hours, but have the time to take care of their own lives and health – whether that be playing sport or going to the gym, seeing friends and family, putting time and effort into hobbies and interests outside of work or relaxing in order to get a good night's sleep. When people feel frazzled, overwhelmed and exhausted they are less likely to give their best, focus, be creative and have patience – attributes that are vital for any architect to be successful in their role (in the short and long term).

TIPS FOR PRACTICES

- Work with the team to develop shared values and a respectful, positive culture.
- Lead from the front! Encouraging senior staff to leave at a sensible hour can have a trickle-down effect through the practice.
- Monitor hours and take action to address the development of a long-hours culture.
- Encourage transparency and open, honest communication and consultation.
- Consider ideas such as flexible working, time off in lieu or paid overtime, which foster trust in staff.
- Train staff in 'soft skills' such as time-management and communication.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Plan out your work and goals each morning before you start.
- Aim to work smart and hard – it is possible to achieve more in a productive 8 hours than a sluggish 14.
- Keep a 'daily habits' diary for a few weeks and honestly review the way you work.
- Reconsider the way you approach tasks – read up on 'chunking' systems such as the Pomodoro technique.
- Avoid multi-tasking – it is a false-economy!
- Look up the 80/20 rule (Pareto Principle) and try to resist perfectionism.



USEFUL REFERENCES

- [Mental Wellbeing conversation with Naomi Stead & Ben Channon](#) – Transformations: Action on Equity conference, Parlour.
- [How to make work-life balance work](#) – Nigel Marsh, TEDxSydney.
- [Long-hours culture](#) – Parlour Guide to Equitable Practice. Guide examines the complex factors behind architecture's long hours culture and offers suggestions about how to manage workload and workplace culture for the benefit of all.
- [Long hours, fatigue and mental health](#) – Ceilidh Higgins, Parlour: gender, equity, architecture.
- [Long hours - Go hard or go home](#) – Lee Hillam, Association of Consulting Architects (ACA).
- [Avoiding burnout](#) – Peter Raisbeck, ACA.
- [The Pomodoro technique](#) – Francesco Cirillo, Work Smarter, not Harder.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND STAFF EDUCATION



The more that a practice can do to help educate, support and empower people the better. The key is to remove the stigma surrounding mental health and prevent problems developing into full-blown crises. The ideal is to have at least one person in the senior management team who is fully educated and champions mental health within the practice. Their role is to help create an open culture where it is acceptable to discuss mental health. They can also facilitate basic training on mental wellbeing, mindfulness, team-building and creating healthy workplaces.

Once a practice has established a mental health strategy, policy or initiatives, clear communication is key, so all employees are aware of the supports available to them. It is also important to raise awareness within practice that just as we look after our physical health to avoid becoming ill, so too should we take care of our mental wellbeing.

TIPS FOR PRACTICES

- Develop a Mental Health Strategy and consider the best way to convey to staff how the practice promotes, supports and provides guidance on mental wellbeing.
- Consider investing in training to help staff recognise early signs of a mental health condition – Mental Health First Aid courses are a good place to start.
- Consider using an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider for professional support to all in the practice.
- To try to reduce stigma, run short sessions explaining the basics of mental health to all staff within the practice. These can be CPD sessions or even lunchtime TED Talks.
- Make staff aware of external support, such as Beyond Blue and Lifeline.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Take advantage of the many resources available to help you gain a better understanding of mental health. These may be YouTube videos, podcasts, websites or mental health blogs – all of which are free and easily accessible.
- Play your part in creating a culture of openness, where people feel comfortable to say if they're struggling.
- If mental health isn't a topic that's on your company's radar yet and you'd like to learn more, let senior staff know you'd be interested in completing a Mental Health First Aid course.



USEFUL REFERENCES

- [Ten things you can do to make your workplace mentally healthy](#) – Heads Up (Beyond Blue).
- [NewAccess for Small Business Owners](#) – free and confidential mental health coaching program for small business owners, Beyond Blue.
- [People at Work](#) – Australia's only validated online psychosocial risk assessment tool, available to all employers. Includes info on workplace responsibilities, psychosocial hazards and building a business case, and a hub of useful resources. Funded by federal and state governments.
- [Heads Up Training and Resources](#) – Free webinar series and online training programs.
- [Employee Assistance Professional Association of Australasia](#) – Peak body for Employee Assistance Programs in Australasia.
- [Mental Health First Aid Australia](#) – Courses for individuals, organisations and instructors.
- [Why we all need to practice emotional first aid](#) – Guy Winch, TEDxLinnaeusUniversity.

CARING FOR STUDENTS, INTERNS & GRADUATES IN PRACTICE



Studying architecture can be a stressful process, which takes place at a particularly vulnerable point in our lives. The transition to architecture school, with high workloads, long hours and competing deadlines, often comes with financial and accommodation stresses, and the need to combine study with work. Student surveys by the *Architects' Journal* in the UK in 2016 revealed alarming statistics about the prevalence of mental health problems among students. Anecdotal evidence suggests we have a similar situation here in Australia, though the [Wellbeing of Architects: culture, identity + practice](#) research project is currently underway to gain a clearer picture of the situation on the ground and to provide a framework for mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention in the profession. It's important that employers provide structured development and a supportive environment to help make the work/study balance as easy as possible for students, interns, and graduates on the pathway to registration.



TIPS FOR PRACTICES

- Ensure that the mental wellbeing champion in the office has regular check-ins with students and graduates.
- Liaise with universities and students to understand what is required of them.
- Ensure that the practice does not take on unpaid interns unless they are part of an accredited vocational placement.
- Create a mentoring system – to impart advice but also to monitor how employees are coping.
- Ensure that managers and teams are aware of key dates and deadlines for studies and registration, so these can be taken into consideration when resourcing projects.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Before joining a practice or starting a course, make it clear to your employer what will be required of you in your studies.
- If possible, create a written agreement with your practice, clearly setting out issues such as study allowance, key dates etc.
- Communicate important dates to your manager and those around you.
- Be aware that studying and working in parallel can be intense – the best way to manage this is to be well organised and very disciplined with your time.
- Find a routine that works for you, and allows you to successfully balance your work and study responsibilities.



USEFUL REFERENCES

- [Managing mental health](#) – Architects and Mental Health Literature Review, NSW Architects Registration Board.
- [An anxious discipline](#) – Byron Kinnaird, Parlour: gender, equity, architecture.
- [Stress test: addressing mental illness at architecture school](#) – Sandra Kaji-O'Grady, AA.
- [My first architecture job](#) – Sarah Lebner. Includes the Architect Project, which aims to support students and graduates, and bridge the divide between university and practice.
- [2021 National Standard of Competency for Architects](#) – AACA, Framework for education and professional experience on the pathway to registration as an architect.
- [Mentoring guideline](#) – *Parlour Guides to Equitable Practice*, Parlour: gender, equity, architecture.
- [Legal advice: Unpaid internships](#) – Nick Ruskin from K&L Gates, ACA.

CONTRACTS, CLIENTS & MANAGING DEADLINES



The issue of how architectural contracts and fees are agreed is complex, and can have a huge impact on the culture and the difficulties faced by many practices. Unfortunately, undercutting by competing practices often leads to fees that are not appropriate to resource a given project.

When practices take on projects without sufficient resources built into the fee, staff find themselves over-stretched, which can negatively impact mental wellbeing. Under-resourced fee bids should be avoided. On all projects it is important for project managers to understand and manage resources well, and to spot the signs that a project is under-resourced or a deadline might be missed.

TIPS FOR PRACTICES

- Develop a strong working relationship with clients – without this it is much more difficult to negotiate on fees and deadlines.
- Agree a clear program, brief and responsibilities matrix, which can be used as a tool to negotiate deadlines and variation fees as projects progress.
- Develop an open dialogue with staff over resources, and promote transparency about program fees, budgets and timeframes. This can give a clearer picture of requirements and give team members a greater sense of autonomy and involvement.
- Ensure staff feel confident to speak up when they feel a deadline is unrealistic, or to make the case for more resources.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Develop your time management skills and your understanding of how long a given task will take. It is a key skill for any architect and will help you to anticipate when a workload might be unrealistic.
- Voice your concerns if you are struggling with a deadline. It is better to speak up early so resources can be reviewed.
- Take up any opportunity to sit in on resourcing meetings or fee and variations discussions – you will learn to understand how the business operates.
- Build negotiation skills. Argue your case for sustainable fees that will allow you to resource your team appropriately.



USEFUL REFERENCES

[Fees & Negotiation](#) – The ACA has a suite of articles and advice around setting fees and negotiation tactics.

[ACA Time Cost Calculator Guide](#) – A vital tool to help practices assess the time and costs involved in providing an appropriate level of service for a broad range of building types.

[The Best Fee Proposals Have These 10 Things In Common](#) – Ian Motley, Blue Turtle Consulting.

[Is Regulation the Answer to Fee Madness?](#) – Ceilidh Higgins, ACA.

[15 Clients You Will Encounter as an Architect \(And How To Deal With Them\)](#) – ArchDaily.

PHYSICAL OFFICE ENVIRONMENT



When it comes to mental wellbeing, it is important to understand the impact of the physical office environment on staff happiness (and subsequently productivity). We realise that many architectural practices work where they do out of necessity and, of course, very few practices ever provide their 'dream office environment'. However, there are numerous small, inexpensive changes that can be made to any office that can have a positive impact upon mental wellbeing. In our post-COVID world, with many people in forms of lockdown, it is also important to consider the quality of your home work space and make adjustments there too.

TIPS FOR PRACTICES

- Talk to your team about the practice's prioritisation of a safe, healthy and productive workplace.
- Provide generous levels of natural light and appropriate artificial lighting
- Incorporate nature (including pets!) and, if not possible, provide views of nature.
- Make the office ergonomically and physically comfortable, from furniture to temperature and acoustics.
- Allow employees to personalise and adapt their work spaces.
- Encourage movement and activity – both in commuting and throughout the day.
- Provide an aesthetically pleasing office – this can have a surprising impact on mood, as well as the sense of pride in a company.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Speak up if your office set-up isn't working for you – everybody has different needs and it is vital you feel comfortable in your working environment.
- If you have an idea for a positive change in your office, put together a good case (with evidence of the wellbeing benefits) before presenting it to senior staff.
- Remember to stay active throughout the day, even if your office layout may not be designed to promote this. Rather than bring one large bottle of water to work, use a smaller glass that encourages you to stand and refill it regularly, for example.
- If working from home, ensure your workspace is ergonomically sound and comfortable, and that you have regular check-ins with colleagues and exercise breaks away from the computer.



USEFUL REFERENCES

[Happy by Design - A Guide to Architecture and Mental Wellbeing](#) – Ben Channon, RIBA Publishing. Reveals how architecture and design can make us happy and support mental health, and explains how poor design can have the opposite effect.

[The WELL Building Standard](#) – A vehicle for buildings and organisations to deliver more thoughtful and intentional spaces that enhance human health and wellbeing.

[Working Well: Office design for good mental health](#) – Niels Kramer, *WorkDesign Magazine*.

[Working from home: A checklist to support your mental health](#) – Black Dog Institute.

[Graduate Certificate in Design for Health and Wellbeing](#) – Melbourne University, Australia's first qualification in design for health and wellbeing.

TECHNOLOGY



On the surface, it is easy to assume that technology has made life easier for architects. However, it brings with it its own stresses, such as software crashes, lost files, and the frustration of the spinning loading wheel. All of these reduce the amount of control we have over our work – decreasing autonomy and making us feel less empowered. It also makes it harder to predict how long a task will take. A great deal can depend on how the software or server is performing on any given day – which creates ‘unknowns’ in trying to plan your time.

On top of this, CAD and now BIM bring with them the perception of increased working speeds for clients, who are expecting increasing amounts of work and levels of detail in less and less time. This creates additional stress, and the potential of more overtime.

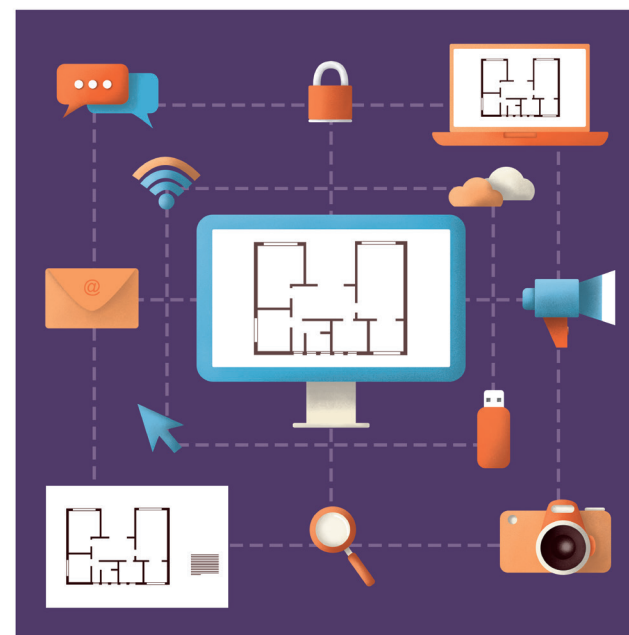
Developing communication technologies have made remote working much easier. However, convenience and increased accessibility often comes with expectations of 24/7 access by colleagues and clients. With more people at home, the lines between work and domestic life are becoming blurred, leading to increased employee overload, exhaustion, stress and burnout. It's important to set boundaries and prioritise time away from screens, emails and social media.

TIPS FOR PRACTICES

- Put systems in place to create an efficient working methodology (with a good backup system!) Ensure that employees are well supported when working from home.
- Invest in good equipment (and training). Software and hardware are expensive, but can save money in the long-term.
- Provide good technical support systems.
- Consider the impact of mobile technologies on staff wellbeing and work-life balance when supporting remote working.
- Consider policies around tech-free time.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Speak to your team leader if you feel training may help with a lack of software knowledge, or seek out online tutorials.
- Dealing with constant emails can make us less productive, and rest time is vital to good performance. Adopt a mindful, intentional use of digital technology to ensure your tech use doesn't drain your time, energy and feeling of wellbeing.
- Everyone has different preferences and priorities. Set personal boundaries around your email accessibility, particularly outside work hours.



USEFUL REFERENCES

- [How to choose the right BIM software](#) – BIM Learning Centre.
- [5 Reasons why IT support is important](#) – Dan Miller, Small Businesses do it Better.
- [Power of an Hour: Why an off the grid hour at work is so crucial](#) – Bryan Lufkin, Worklife, BBC.
- [Email as a source and symbol of stress](#) – Stephen Barley, Debra Meyerson & Stine Grodal, Organization Science. Research paper into the impacts of email overload on wellbeing.
- [Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World](#) – Cal Newport.
- [IT advice for working remotely](#) – Peter Johns, ACA.
- [Technology and mental health: The dos and don'ts of working from home during COVID-19](#) – Markus Groth, UNSW Business School.

PROMOTING A HEALTHY WORKPLACE



Promoting positive mental wellbeing at work goes further than minimising psychological health and safety risks. It's about focusing on opportunities, strengths and resources that help build a healthy, positive and supportive workplace.

When adopting wellbeing initiatives in practice, it is important to track and evaluate your progress along the way. This can be as simple as capturing data on participation, issuing evaluation forms and having discussions with staff. To gather more specific feedback, you can conduct an employee survey. This is a great way to identify if your initiative has been successful, what's working well and suggested areas for improvement.

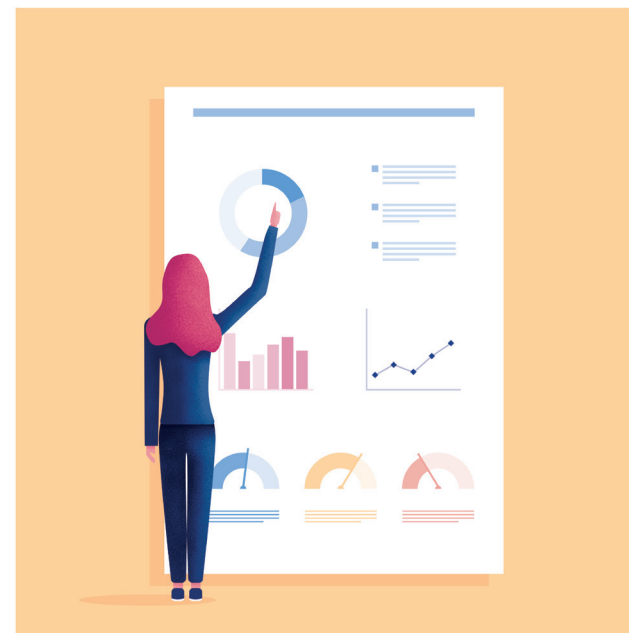
Seeking feedback about staff wellbeing can also highlight potential areas for improvement or 'easy wins', as well as generating ideas that may not previously have been considered.

TIPS FOR PRACTICES

- Establish whether a staff wellbeing survey or a more informal method would be more appropriate for your practice.
- Make surveys anonymous and carefully worded – the resources opposite can give further information and sample questions.
- Be wary of anonymity issues at smaller practices – in such cases, potential problems can also be monitored by mental health champions, who have been trained to recognise signs of stress and mental health warning signs (have taken Mental Health First Aid course).
- Consider signing up for an EAP and keep informed about the program's usage within the practice.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Open up (to an appropriate person) if you feel your mental health or stress levels are not where they should be. Get in touch with the practice's EAP provider if one is available.
- Open up to family or friends if you do not feel it is possible to speak to a colleague or senior staff member.
- Get in touch with the organisations referenced throughout this Toolkit who will be happy to listen or offer assistance if you are seeking support independent from colleagues, family or friends. While it may not always feel like it, talking is the first step to solving any mental health problem.



USEFUL REFERENCES

[Strategies for Healthy Workplaces](#) – Heads Up (Beyond Blue). Framework for workplaces to promote mental wellbeing, minimise workplace risks to mental health, support people experiencing mental health issues and reduce stigma.

[Workplace Wellbeing](#) – Black Dog Institute. Packed with tips on how to create a mentally healthy workplace in a simple, inexpensive way.

[Workplace Mental Health Toolkit](#) – Black Dog Institute. Helps employers and employees recognise the signs of anxiety or depression in colleagues and gives guidance on how to help.

[Digital tools and apps page](#) – Features a number of tools for mental health and wellbeing, including self tests for anxiety and depression, an online clinic with a free personal assessment tool and a range of other resources for specific needs.

[WorkWell Toolkit](#) – Victorian State Government.

[Mentally Healthy Workplaces Toolkit](#) – Worksafe Queensland.

CHAMPION AN ACTIVE, MINDFUL APPROACH



Extra-curricular office activities can play a major part in supporting the wellbeing of all, both physically and mentally. Taking part in group activities can be a great catalyst for strengthening social bonds, reducing isolation, and developing a strong support network within practice – all of which can have enormous benefits. Whether working in an office or from home, it's also important to prioritise lunch breaks, regular movement, physical exercise and mindful activities to improve mental wellbeing but also productivity.

TIPS FOR PRACTICES

- Celebrate and promote group sports or clubs – for smaller practices this could mean pairing up with one or more practices, which brings further benefits such as socialising with new people.
- Explore less competitive sports and activities if this puts people off – group cycling or walking can both fall into this category and are easy 'clubs' to establish.
- Charity events are a great way to motivate staff to get active – and by making charity work part of a company's culture it can not only improve the corporate brand, but foster an attitude of giving.
- Offer yoga and even mindfulness activities. They are shown to have huge impacts on mental wellbeing, creativity and focus.
- Train managers to conduct walking meetings where feasible.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- If there are no clubs or teams at your practice, explore ways to set up one.
- Explore 'active commuting' – be it cycling to work or getting off the bus one stop earlier to up your daily step count.
- Get up and move throughout the day. Standing desks are good but you need to move as much as possible to stay healthy.
- Take a lunch break! As architects we have all been guilty of having lunch at our desks, but getting out of the office for a short walk has benefits to both our mental and cardiovascular health – and the productivity boost you will get in the afternoon will almost certainly outweigh the lost time! Be particularly mindful of taking breaks when working from home.
- Start a healthy recipe exchange and potluck lunch.



USEFUL REFERENCES

[Smiling Mind](#) – Daily mindfulness and meditation app. Also offers workshops on meditation, mindfulness, creating a thriving team culture, connection and clarity.

[Headspace](#) – Meditation app. Focuses on mindfulness and dealing with stress and anxiety.

[Calm](#) – Popular meditation app with an ever-growing content library that aims to improve sleep quality, reduce stress or anxiety and improve focus.

[16 Workplace Health and Wellbeing Activities and Initiatives \(for any budget\)](#) – Dr Steve Aldana, WellSteps. Ideas designed to change policy and improve the work environment so it is easier for employees to adopt and maintain healthy behaviours.

[My Next Challenge](#) – Listing of walks, runs, swims, bike rides and other physical challenge events and activities around Australia.

[The brain changing benefits of exercise](#) – Wendy Suzuki, TED Talk.

[All it takes is 10 mindful minutes](#) – Andy Puddicombe, TED Talk.

SUMMARY



We hope that you have found this first version of the Australian AMWF Toolkit for Practices useful. This Toolkit is an edited version of the UK Toolkit, and includes content and resources specific to Australia. We would like to thank Ben Channon and the AMWF UK for their generosity in allowing us to tailor this Toolkit for the Australian profession. We welcome thoughts, input and further references from the profession. If you would like to get in touch with us, visit [Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum \(Australia\)](#).

In terms of how best to implement the advice within this Toolkit, much depends on the level of input and investment that a given practice is prepared to make. This could range from making small everyday changes, to the implementation of a large-scale mental wellbeing program. Ultimately, anything that can be done to improve the mental wellbeing of all within practice should be celebrated.

The key points that we would like people to take away from this toolkit are the importance of mental health within the industry, and an understanding of how architectural practices can effectively support staff. We believe that a healthy profession, both physically and mentally, is a stronger profession, and that all involved can benefit enormously from this.



FURTHER REFERENCES

[Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum \(AMWF\) Australia](#) – Includes contacts for forums in Victoria/ Tasmania, NSW/ACT, Queensland/Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia.

[AMWF UK](#) – The original Forum contains useful links for architects, HR and employers – or anybody who may be struggling with their mental health.

[Safe Work Australia](#) – Mental health advice for businesses.

[Beyond Blue](#) – Comprehensive information, resources and support to improve mental health around Australia.

[Heads Up](#) – Developed by Beyond Blue, Heads Up promotes mental health in the workplace.

[Black Dog Institute](#) – Free online self-help program for depression, anxiety and stress.

[Lifeline](#) – 24-hour crisis support for all Australians experiencing emotional distress.

[Mindspot](#) – A digital mental health clinic for all Australians.

[Mental Health First Aid Australia](#) – Evidence-based courses for workplaces Australia-wide.

The Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum (Australia)

*Proudly supported by the
Association of Consulting Architects (ACA)*

ABOUT THE ACA

The ACA leads the discussion on business and employment matters in Australian architecture – we provide timely advice, information and resources, promote debate and advocate for better business practices and legislative frameworks.

The ACA initiated the AMWF Australia and proudly leads its ongoing development, including providing organisational and strategic support.



**Association
of Consulting
Architects**

The Business of Architecture