



The Australasian Faculty of  
Occupational and Environmental Medicine



The Royal Australasian  
College of Physicians

# The Health Benefits of Good Work

## What is Good Work?

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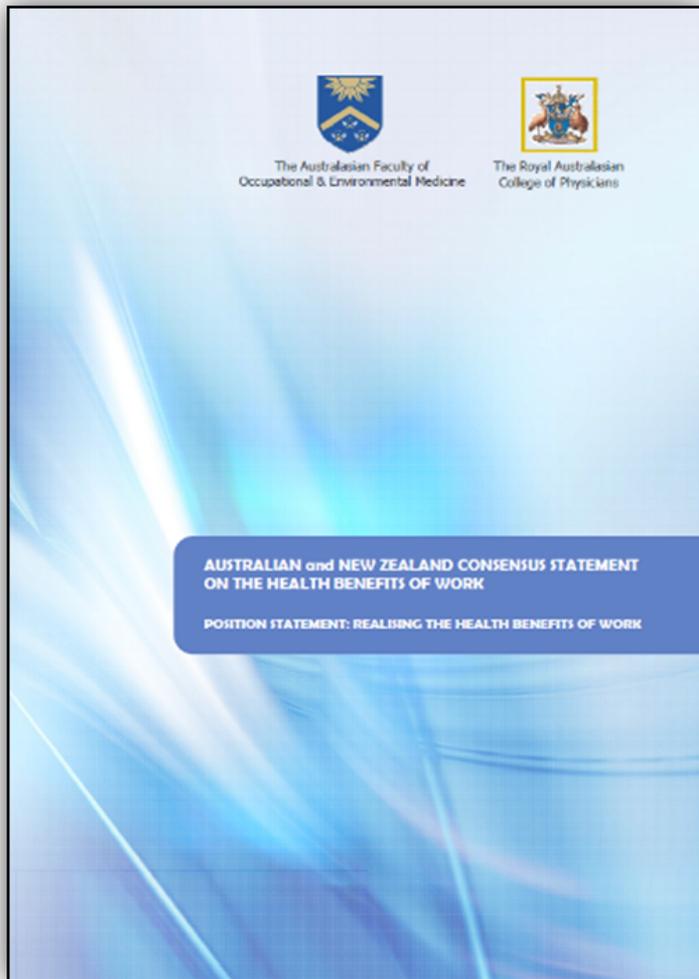
Consulting Physician in Occupational and Environmental Medicine

7 June 2018

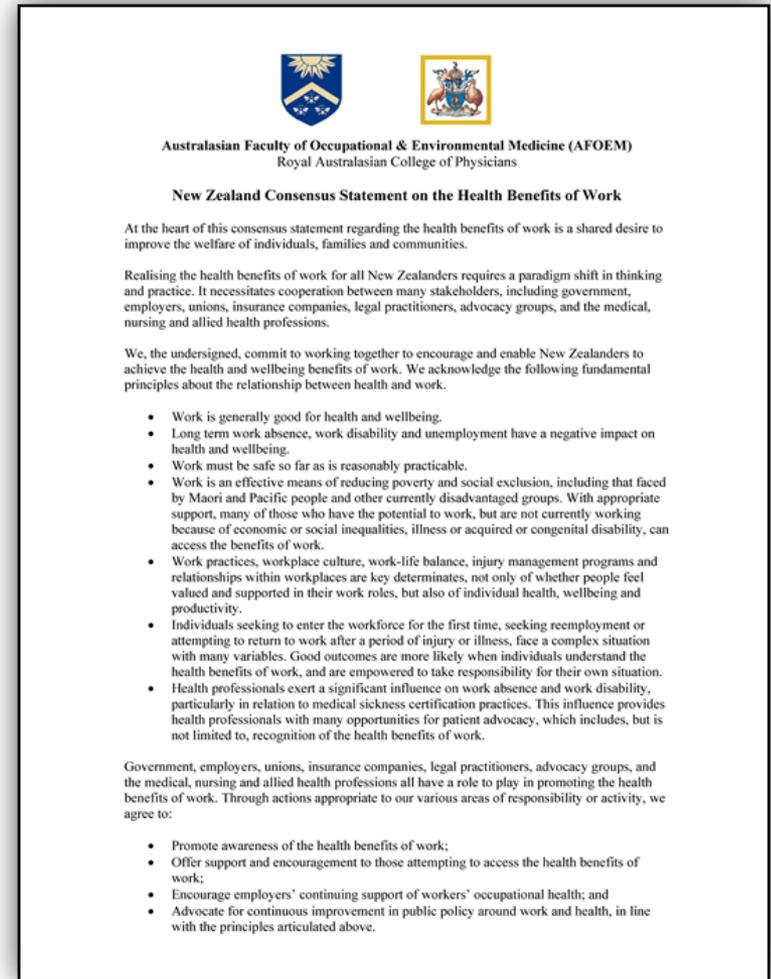
# Health Benefits - 2010



## The Position Statement



## The Consensus Statement





## What is Good Work?



### Position Statement | 2013

Good work is good for workers' health. The next step is to characterise what is meant by 'good work'. Broadening our understanding of workplace health and safety culture to include health and wellbeing and productive engagement in the workplace can result in significant benefits for the individual, employer and the community.

By identifying the characteristics of good work across the spectrum of work environments, this position statement aims to:

- ✓ Foster understanding;
- ✓ Promote recognition; and
- ✓ Enable intervention strategies and research to create more good work from which individuals and communities can benefit.

#### The four domains of good work

1. Engages and partners with workers and suppliers.
2. Engages with the culture of the community in which the work is performed.
3. Respects procedural justice and relational fairness – promotes civility and is intolerant of incivility, discrimination and bullying.
4. Appropriately balances job demands, job control, and job security.

An initiative of the RACP's Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM), *Realising the Health Benefits of Work*, was launched in 2010 to raise awareness that good work improves health and wellbeing.

The *What is Good Work?* Position Statement is the third in a series exploring work and health and is supported by a companion Position Statement on *Improving Workforce Health and Workplace Productivity*.



#### What is good work?

Good work is a source of productive engagement, economic stability and personal interaction, all of which have a positive impact on recovery or managing an ongoing illness or disability.

With increasing awareness of the health benefits of work, it is important to recognise that not all work has a beneficial impact on health.

When work is good, the impact on the worker's life beyond work can be very significant.

For most individuals, the evidence is compelling: good work improves general health and wellbeing and reduces psychological distress.

The resilience that good work instils can be protective against other challenges the worker faces.

For instance, if someone is facing personal difficulties for reasons such as divorce, or related to the care of a child or ageing parent, their work can provide invaluable social connections and emotional support that they otherwise may not receive.

## Improving Workforce Health and Workplace Productivity



### Position Statement | 2013

Employers have much to gain from actively engaging with their workers, particularly in relation to organisational factors that impact employees' health and wellbeing.

The role of health in the workplace must be a fundamental principle on which to create and develop workplace culture.

#### The impact of the workplace on the worker

Underpinning a productive workplace is a healthy workplace culture.

A workplace with substandard organisational culture results in poor worker health and well-being. Poor worker health translates into a lack of worker engagement and productivity losses which have direct and indirect costs.

When workplaces embrace the health of employees as a fundamental principle, employee quality of life improves. There is a sense of support, mutuality, a place where they contribute and feel valued.

An organisational culture that supports the workers' health and wellbeing can have a significant impact on improving the health of workers and increasing worker engagement and productivity.

An initiative of the RACP's Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM), *Realising the Health Benefits of Work*, was launched in 2010 to raise awareness that good work improves health and wellbeing.

The *Improving Workforce Health and Workplace Productivity* Position Statement is the third in a series exploring work and health and is supported by a companion Position Statement on *What is Good Work?*



The virtuous circle: Health and productivity in the workplace

The evidence is clear and undisputed: organisational characteristics affect the mental and physical health of workers. In this way the relationship between the organisation and the worker can be viewed as symbiotic. When both come together in a cooperative fashion, the result is a healthy and productive workplace.

Furthermore, leadership behaviours and management interaction are linked to employee behaviour in a "feedback loop".

Managerial behaviour can cause or prevent workplace stress. High standards of leadership and management practice lead to higher standards of employee health and productivity, which in turn lead to higher standards of leadership. This is another iteration of the virtuous circle that develops through investment in workplace health and productivity.

Empowering businesses to take actions that help keep their workers healthy and productive can help save billions of dollars and improve societal wellbeing.



## It's more than the absence of harm

- UN's International Labour Organisation  
“decent work” (2005, 2008)
- The Work Foundation / ACOEM  
“good jobs / healthy work” (2009 and 2011)
- IOSH (Cardiff University)  
“good jobs” (2011)

# What is 'Good Work'?



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## ***Additional*** clues?

- Attributes that distinguish high performing companies (WoMACs)
  - Fortune's World's Most Admired Companies
- Trends in human resource management
- Motivators of unpaid volunteer workers
- What works to constructively engage Indigenous workers

# Good Work has 4 domains



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## **A safe, healthy, engaged and productive workforce**

makes a positive contribution to the  
health and wellbeing of the worker *and*  
*those affected by the worker*

# First of Four Domains



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Engages, and where necessary partners with,  
key stakeholders

# Second of Four Domains



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Engages with the community culture which reflects the local, regional and operational contexts in which the work is performed



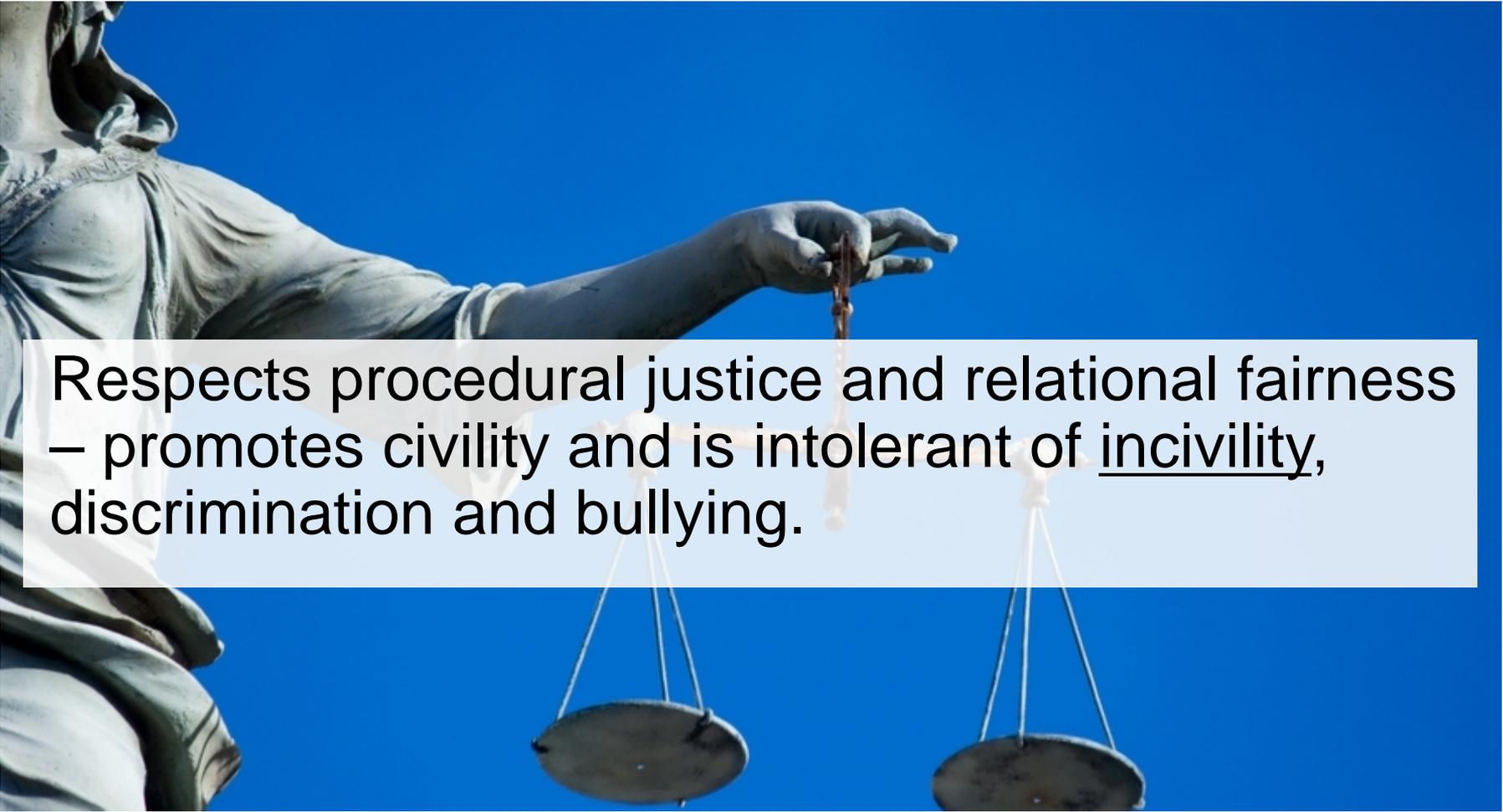
# Third of Four Domains



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A photograph of a statue of Lady Justice, the personification of the goddess of justice, holding a pair of scales of justice. The statue is shown from the waist up, wearing a white robe and a blindfold. The background is a solid blue color.

Respects procedural justice and relational fairness  
– promotes civility and is intolerant of incivility,  
discrimination and bullying.

# Fourth of Four Domains



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By design, appropriately balances job demands, job control, workplace support and job security:

- clear and *realistic performance indicators*
- uses *hard and transparent* “people productivity metrics”
- requires *matching* “the work” and “the individual”
- requires aware managers *but not necessarily aware employees*
- requires managing change effectively
  - mental and psychological wellbeing

“Life Balance”



# The caveats

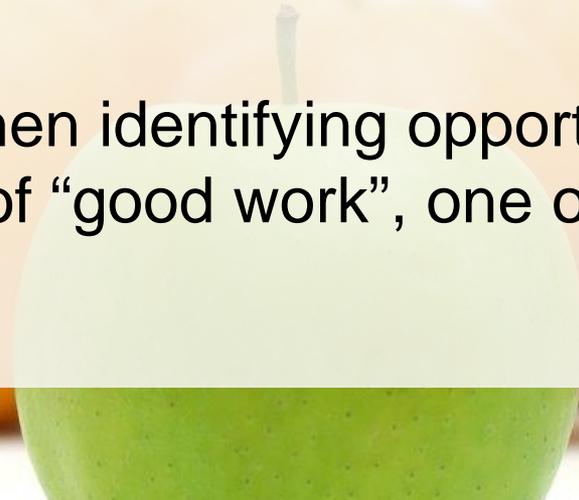


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- Not all domains need to be prominent in order for the work to be “good” for the health and wellbeing of the individual
- Not all domains apply equally to all industries
- For any specific industry, when identifying opportunities to enhance the prevalence of “good work”, one or two domains predominate



# Since 2013

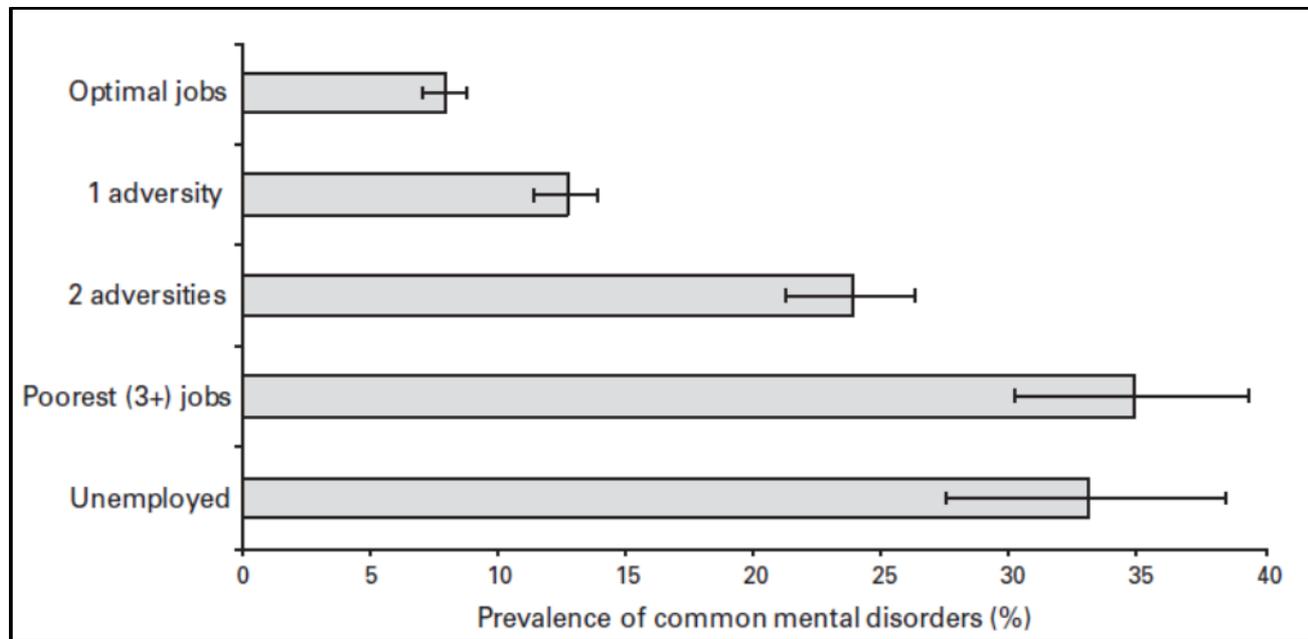


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Low control, high demands, insecurity and low job esteem



Butterworth, P., Leach, L.S., McManus, S & Stansfeld, S.A (2013) Common mental disorders, unemployment and psychosocial job quality: is a poor job better than no job at all? *Psychological Medicine*. Vol 43: 1763-1772).

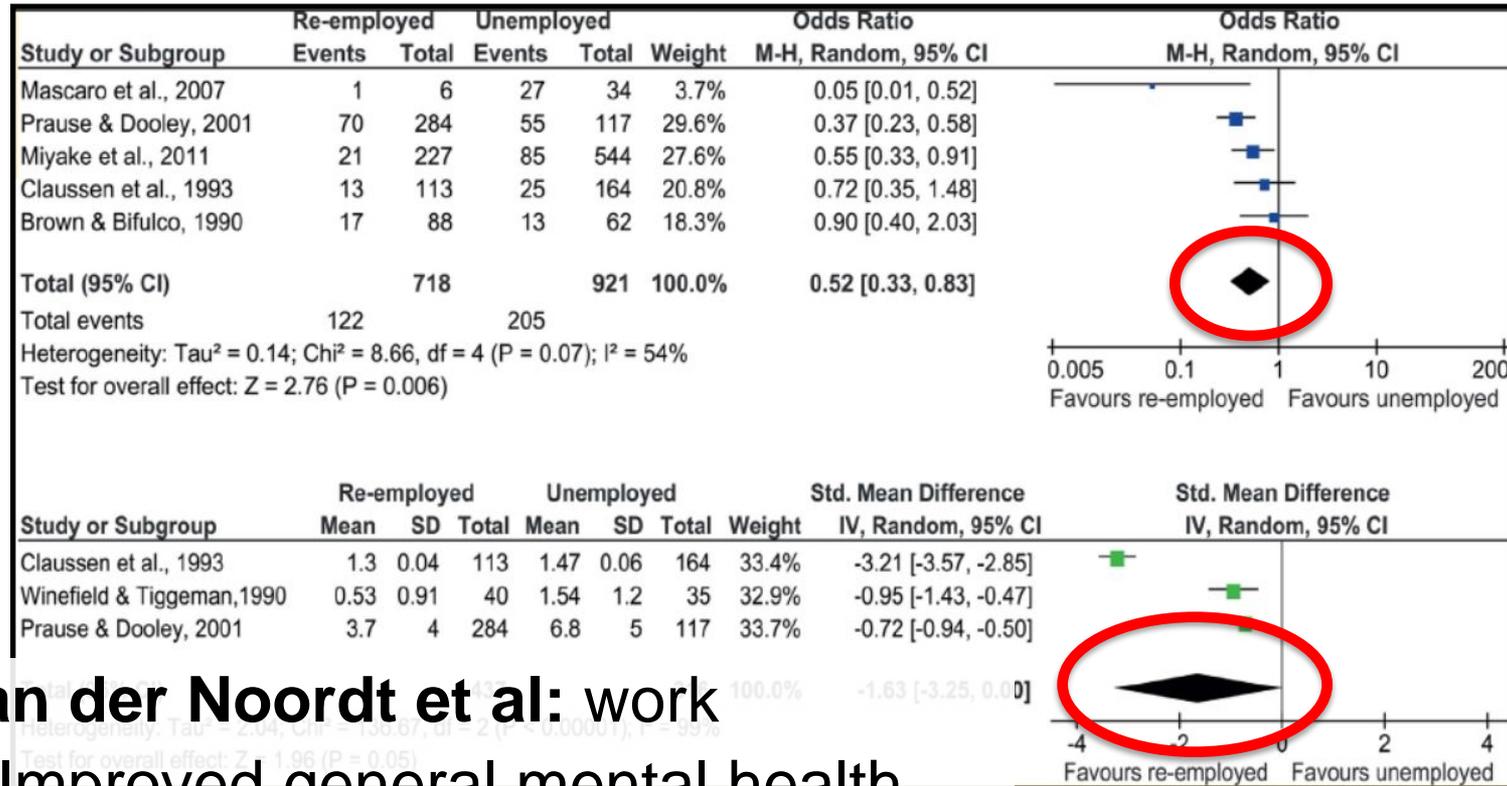
# 2014 Protective effect of work



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## Van der Noordt et al: work

- Improved general mental health
- Reduced the risk of depression



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## CHARTER OF PRINCIPLES

- Where appropriate, we encourage people with chronic illness and disabilities to be accommodated in the workplace with a supportive work culture.
- We promote the mental and physical health and well-being of people by fostering a supportive working environment and good interpersonal relationships.
- We understand that good work promotes good health and increases productivity.
- We advocate for safe and healthy work practices knowing this has socioeconomic benefits for both business and the wider community.
- We recognise that involvement in good work can promote social cohesion and increase peoples' sense of contribution to society

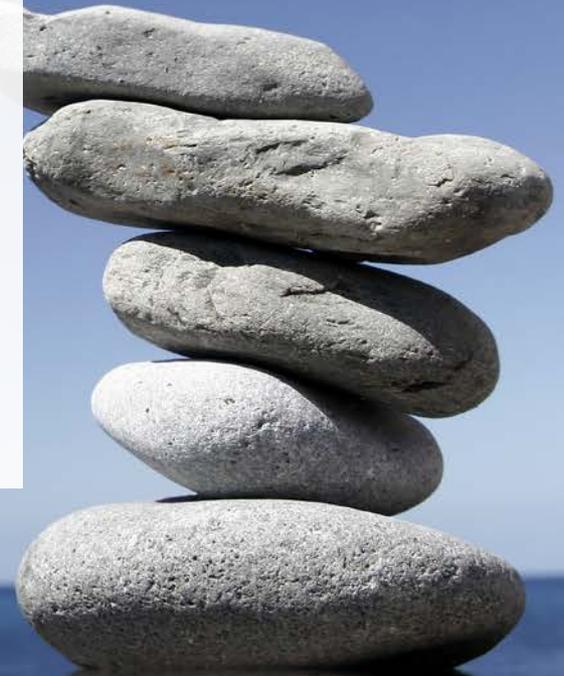
Dr David Beaumont

President

Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine



the evidence is  
compelling: good work  
improves general health  
and wellbeing and  
reduces psychological  
distress



# The return



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Do it properly and your business will benefit ...

**McKinsey's**  
**comparing their top 25% with their bottom 25%**

- **2.2X** EBITDA
- **2.0X** Growth in enterprise/book Value
- **1.5X** Growth in net income/sales

# References



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## Slide 12

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