

ABSENTEEISM IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES

IN A NUTSHELL

9.7 employee days per

9.5 days private sector

11.4 days public sector

THE COSTS:

DIRECTLY

\$578 per worker per absent day

\$3608 per worker per year

>\$44 billion annually to the Australian economy

INDIRECTLY

8% of payroll costs:

- Replacement labour
- Low morale from doing absent worker's work
- Lost productivity
- Increased risk

MAIN CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM



Genuine illness



Employee disengagement



Culture of sick leave entitlement



Management practice



Work related stress

87%

of employers believe at least one employee will call in sick after a major sporting event

MAIN REASONS EMPLOYEES GIVE FOR SHORT-TERM ABSENCES



93%

Minor illnesses (colds, headaches, stomach upsets)



76%

Family/carer's responsibilities



30%

Recurring conditions (asthma and allergies, stress, injuries/illnesses)



21%

Mental ill health



5%

Alcohol/drug related

MAIN REASONS EMPLOYEES GIVE FOR LONG-TERM ABSENCES



Acute medical conditions (heart attack, stroke, cancer)



Injuries/illnesses unrelated to work



Family/carer's responsibilities

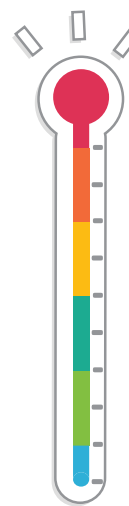


Mental ill health



Stress

EMPLOYERS FAIL TO MEASURE ABSENTEEISM



- **20%** measure the cost of absences
- **50%** regularly analyse absenteeism data
- **22%** study employee survey data
- **40%** don't analyse underlying causes of absence at all

An employer may require reasonable evidence to support the reason(s) for the absence (e.g. medical certificate or statutory declaration)

Absences can be:

- ✓ Approved
- ✗ Denied
- 💰 Paid
- 🚫 Unpaid

Requesting medical evidence

Referral to Employee Assistance Programs

Provision of flexible work options

Disciplinary procedures

Health/wellbeing initiatives

Clear communication of attendance expectations

Manager training

Return-to-work interviews

EMPLOYER STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING ABSENCES

PRESENTEEISM

What is presenteeism?

- Lost productivity from employees working while sick

The cost

- \$35 billion annually to Australian organisations
- But only 20% of employers think it's a big problem

Main contributing factors

- High workload/work-related stress
- Sick-ness not serious enough to take time off
- No-one to cover job while absent
- Self-pressure
- Pressure from management/peers to stay at work

Employer strategies for managing presenteeism

- Sending sick employees home
- Providing flexible work options
- Employee Assistance Programs