



**Australasian Faculty of Occupational & Environmental Medicine (AFOEM)
Royal Australasian College of Physicians**

Australian/New Zealand (delete one) Consensus Statement on the Health Benefits of Work

At the heart of this consensus statement regarding the health benefits of work is a shared desire to improve the welfare of individuals, families and communities.

We, the undersigned, acknowledge the following fundamental principles about the relationship between health and work.

- Work must be safe.
- Work is generally good for health and wellbeing.
- Long term work absence, work disability and unemployment have a negative impact on health and wellbeing.
- Work is an effective means of reducing poverty and social exclusion. With appropriate support, many of those who have the potential to work, but are not currently working because of illness, disability, or the disadvantages facing indigenous peoples/Maori/Pacific peoples [delete as appropriate], can access the benefits of work.
- Work practices, workplace culture and relationships within workplaces are key determinates, not only of whether people feel valued and supported in their work roles, but also of individual health, wellbeing and productivity.
- Health professionals have a significant influence on work absence and work disability, particularly in relation to medical sickness certification practices. This influence provides health professionals with many opportunities for patient advocacy, which includes, but is not limited to, recognition of the health benefits of work.
- Unions play an important role by educating their members about the beneficial relationship between suitable work and health, supporting their members in appropriate return to work programs and advocating for continuous improvement of working conditions.
- Knowing that good work is generally good for health, policy makers have the opportunity to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Australians / New Zealanders [delete one], including those groups and communities who are most vulnerable.
- Individuals seeking to enter the workforce for the first time, seeking reemployment or attempting to return to work after a period of injury or illness, do best when empowered to take responsibility for their own situation and future.

Realising the health benefits of work for all Australians / New Zealanders [delete one] requires a paradigm shift in thinking and practice. It necessitates cooperation between many stakeholders, including government, employers, unions, insurance companies, legal practitioners, advocacy groups, and the medical and allied professions.

We commit to working together to enable Australians / New Zealanders [delete one] to achieve the health and wellbeing benefits of work.

Signatories: