

## Employer excellence (large or self-insured) – Forestry SA

Forestry SA is a self-insured employer that leads the way in injury prevention and injury management. Using a holistic approach the organisation has found communication and consultation are the keys to successful outcomes.

This high-risk industry employs a variety of staff from planters to pruners, nursery staff, machinery operators, and scientists. Forestry SA promotes a culture in which good relationships between management and employees across the organisation means injured workers feel safe and valued.

A culture of mutual respect is fostered in which communication is open and people are respected for the roles they play in the organisation. Through the support from senior management, Forestry SA is able to achieve positive outcomes for injured workers.

Senior HR Coordinator, Emma-Kate Thorpe, promotes a balanced view regarding both the injured worker and the organisation, helping to achieve outcomes. This is supported by local Forestry Union Workers Compensation Advocate, Les Birch, who says, "she displays a neutral position between the employer and employee and consequently she achieves a reasonable balance between the parties".

Forestry SA engages all staff members in the injury management and occupational health and safety process through regular updates in staff meetings, with newsletters, surveys and additional training.

Early reporting and early intervention is a key focus, and an integrated claims management system is in place to support this. Staff awareness programs such as 'Take 5' and 'Safe Behaviour Observation' help reduce the incidence and severity of injuries.

All workers' claims are assessed within two days of being lodged, which means workers are engaged in the process from the beginning and Forestry SA's commitment to recovery and return to work is clear.

Ben Williams, from Physiotherapist Northcare in Mt Gambier confirms Forestry SA's caring and engaged approach following a workplace injury. He says, "employees who are unfortunate enough to suffer injuries as a result of employment in the Forestry SA workplace have been afforded the relief of knowing that their claim is managed in a sympathetic, professional and best practice manner".

Forestry SA has recently trained two additional rehabilitation and return to work coordinators located at depots away from the head office. This allows for greater support of workers in their local area and swift action in the event of a workplace injury.

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