



FORD HEALTH

# CASE STUDY Thiess Corporate

## Highlights

### Objectives

- To act as a **retention** and **attraction** tool for Thiess who suffer from a shortage of qualified engineers and other skilled workers
- To determine the **key health concerns** facing the Thiess white collar executives.

### Challenges

- Geographically dispersed workforce extending into regional areas

### Ford Health Solution

- Initial pilot program then rolled out to the entire organisation's Executive Management team
- The comprehensive **Healthy Engineers Program** was implemented including in-depth Executive Health Assessments and Ford Health's unique **Healthy Change Program**
- Ford Health ensured **equity** by inviting eligible employees to complete their assessments at Ford Health venues in all states

### Results

- **High participation** in the Program (69%)
- Work profiling revealed participants **working long hours** and not taking adequate holidays
- Physical profiling revealed **obesity, high blood pressure** and **high blood lipids** in more than 1 in 2 participants with corresponding **high cardiovascular risk**
- Psychological profiling revealed overall stress levels in 1 in 4 participants being high



One of Australasia's largest construction, mining and services companies, Thiess employs over 18,000 staff in Australasia. Like all Australian resource based companies, Thiess are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain the limited workforce of Engineers. Health & Wellbeing strategies are one way Thiess communicate this message "The health and safety of our people is of the highest priority and cannot be compromised."

## Overview

Ford Health's association with Thiess began in 2005 with their Head Office based in Queensland.

A pilot of Senior Executives was established to investigate the concept of health promotion within a white collar setting and to justify the implementation of a company wide program. With a high level of support found in stakeholders, the next stage of the Program began

Spearheaded by the Executive Management Team, 2006 saw the Thiess Corporate Health program open up to over 260 Engineers and Executives across Australia in the form of the Healthy Engineers Program.

## Strategy

Ford Health's **Healthy Engineers Program** was implemented in 2006. The program began with a fully comprehensive Executive Health Assessment which is a thorough evaluation of health and well-being. Conducted by Ford Health's team of Doctors and Exercise Physiologists, a Healthy Engineers Program identifies health risk in the areas of work, lifestyle, physical, medical and psychological health.

Following the assessment, Thiess Engineers and Executives had access to Ford Health's **Healthy Change Program**. This unique program is based on behavioural change psychology and is designed to provide ongoing motivation, support and counselling in the management of the identified health risks.

A detailed corporate report was prepared benchmarking Thiess Engineers against a Ford Health reference group. The report clearly showed which health risks were a concern to this workforce over the next 10 years. Through the Healthy Change program, Ford Health was able to measure the behaviour changes taken by participants since their assessment.

## Results

- A significant **69%** of those eligible for the Healthy Engineers Program took part in the health program. Almost all participants were male and over 40 years. (with almost 1 in 2 being over 50 years)
- Significant work profiling risks were identified, including **working extremely long hours**, not taking adequate holidays and significant **self-reported absenteeism due to stress**
- Obesity, high blood pressure and high blood lipids were a problem for more than 1 in 2 participants
- Almost 1 in 2 participants had moderate to **high risk of developing cardiovascular disease** over the next 10 years
- Mental health risk was similar to other organisations with 1 in 4 reporting that their overall **stress levels** were high or very high

The results of the Healthy Change Program were most favourable, with the majority of individuals making lifestyle adjustments to address the health risks identified.

## Where to from here?

The majority of Thiess workers are outdoor based, with over 80% of the organisation's staff in regional locations. With GP services extremely limited in these locations, and the effects of the sun's UV amplified, Thiess are now looking into offering a company wide Skin Cancer Screening Program for all employees.

The equitable delivery of assessments to all staff at all locations is going to be a strong pivot point in the success of the program.

