
Case study

How health and wellness underpins our success



At our Escondida mine in Antofagasta, Chile, we have implemented an integrated wellbeing and quality of life program for all our workers. The program, a demonstrable step towards cultivating a culture of care and trust, recognises both our responsibility to manage the risks of altitude exposure and the opportunity we have to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our people.

We recognise that exposure to altitude, such as that experienced at the Escondida mine (which is more than 3,000 metres above sea level), and shift work can aggravate existing chronic illnesses. This can cause ongoing issues for our people and their families, and can contribute to absenteeism and reduced productivity.

In response, we created a program that employed both preventative and mitigating health measures to make sure everyone who works for us can go home healthy and mentally well.

Results were substantial.

At the start of the program, there were around 500 workers who did not meet the health requirements to work at altitude. After just eight months of case management and preventative treatments, this number had fallen to just 17. Of those deemed unfit for work, recovery times fell from an average of 67 days to 15 days – a reduction of over 77 per cent.

Aside from the management of existing chronic illness, the program also taught workers and their families how to live a healthy life. The promotion of regular physical activity and healthy diets saw the total Body Mass Index (BMI) of our workforce fall by one per cent.

The improvement in health outcomes for our people resulted in lower absenteeism, increased worker availability and higher productivity.

The results of the program were shared with the forthcoming Mountain Medicine Centre in Antofagasta to help deliver long-term scientific improvements in the management of those who undertake shift work or are exposed to altitude.

The success of this project proves that the health and wellbeing of our people is key to our long-term success.
