



# Working better through wellbeing

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## Scion Grows Workplace Wellbeing through Biophilic Office Design

Scion is a Crown Research Institute that specialises in research, science and technology development for the forestry, wood product, wood-derived materials, and other biomaterial sectors. Scion's head office is based in the Rotorua Te Papa Tipu Innovation Park, a 112 hectare area shared with other forestry-associated organisations, on the edge of the city's Whakarewarewa Redwoods Forest. With a new office refit on the horizon it was no surprise that Scion landed on a biophilic design.

Humans' relationship with the natural environment can be understood through the concept of biophilia, which recognises the innate human affinity (or inborn 'love, awe and respect') for nature. Evidence shows how exposure to nature is good for health, wellbeing and happiness. "Biophilic design is design that connects people to nature," says Dr Neil de Wet, Medical Officer of Health at Toi Te Ora Public Health. "This could be by simply using natural light and ventilation, bringing plants indoors increasing the visual connection to the outdoors, through to using natural materials and natural patterns and forms."

Staff engagement was high on the agenda when Scion set out to refit their office. Before the design phase, Aoife Mac Sharry, Scion's Campus Redevelopment Project Manager says they undertook a utilisation study to understand how workspaces were used. "Then we did a mass engagement process with staff about what they wanted to see in their future workspaces. Many of the suggestions involved biophilic design because they really wanted to embrace the environment, to bring the outdoors in, both because it's good for people and because it fits the work done here."

Scion has certainly achieved what they set out to do. The building makeover sees plants proliferate among various timber features, with soft furnishings chosen in shades of green and brown, reflecting the colours surrounding the forest.

While reflecting and replicating the forest in the workplace is



One of Scion's atriums filled with natural light and vegetation.

clearly in-keeping with Scion's research focus, Aoife says it's also very much about wellbeing. "Scion has strong principles around staff health and wellbeing. Given our unique location nestled amongst the Redwoods, we encourage everyone to embrace the outdoors."

And that, says Dr de Wet, is another biophilic benefit. "While it increases our sense of wellbeing at work, increases productivity and creativity, and reduces absenteeism, it also celebrates and respects nature."

Scion believes they have reaped the benefits of bringing the outdoors indoors. "Now that we have bright, open, welcoming spaces, people have come out from their shells and back into the office. They're talking to each other more; engaging more. The change has been massive."

Biophilia not only looks at how to enhance human health and wellbeing but also how it enhances the health and wellbeing of nature. Beyond the immediate benefits for workers and employers, biophilic design is gaining importance because it's about valuing nature.

For more information on biophilic public health, see [www.toiteora.govt.nz/biophilic\\_public\\_health](http://www.toiteora.govt.nz/biophilic_public_health).

## Kick into Gear this February with the Aotearoa Bike Challenge

February is fast approaching which means it's time to dust off that bike, adjust that seat and get pedalling! The Aotearoa Bike Challenge is a fun, sociable competition which is free for your workplace to take part in, and there's no lycra required! During the month of February, workplaces around the country will battle it out to see who can get the most staff to ride a bike for just 10 minutes or more.

Gold Maintenance Accredited workplace, Lakes District Health

Board (Lakes DHB) topped the podium last year taking home the regional prize for the highest percentage of staff taking part in their workplace size category. Their recipe for success was a fair amount of healthy competition supported by great communication around the workplace about the challenge.

Can your workplace measure up to Lakes DHB this February? Get involved by checking out [www.lovetoride.net/nz](http://www.lovetoride.net/nz) and sign up today.



[www.workwell.health.nz](http://www.workwell.health.nz)

## Current News and Research

### Don't Make #dumbburn your Summer Look

Summer is upon us so there is no better time to remind your staff to stay safe out in the sun. #dumbburn are a new set of resources particularly aimed at young outdoor workers as a reminder that sunburn is painful, inconvenient, potentially deadly, and just not a good look. Evidence shows that younger people aged between 18-24 years who work outside are at greater risk of getting burnt. Younger people are also more motivated to be sun smart as a result of the immediate consequences of getting sunburnt, than the long-term implications of high sun exposure. Videos, posters and online banners are available at [www.hpa.org.nz/campaign/dumbburn](http://www.hpa.org.nz/campaign/dumbburn).



### Makeover your Workplace Morning Teas

Sick of soggy sausage rolls and sugar filled cakes dominating your workplace morning teas? The Health Promotion Agency can help you reinvent your workplace catering menu with some easy-to-use tools to help provide healthy kai.

The resources are aimed at making it easy for workplaces to overhaul kai on offer at work and support staff wellbeing with nutritious kai options. Start with the 'Manaaki at Mahi Guidelines' then use other tools as appropriate to help make the healthy choice the easy choice when catering in your workplace. Check out the helpful resources at <https://wellplace.nz/resource-library/healthy-kai-guidelines/>.

## Recently Accredited

**Gold** - Rotorua Community Hospice

**Bronze** - Accessible Properties



## Upcoming Events – 2019

**01-Feb – 29th Feb**, Aotearoa Bike Challenge

<https://wellplace.nz/event-calendar/aotearoa-bike-challenge/?date=2020-02-01>

Remember to be sun smart



**Slip, slop, slap and wrap!**

## Make your Event SunSmart

Whether it's an after work BBQ, or staff taking part in an outdoor community event, it's important to ensure your team is SunSmart this summer.

Follow the below tips to ensure your staff are safe in the sun:

1. Provide sunscreen
  - Supply broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen that is at least SPF30 for visitors and workers to use. Be sure to check its expiry date!
  - Keep sunscreen in a shady spot (so it doesn't overheat).
2. Check the time to be SunSmart
  - The Sun Protection Alert is specific to each region and displays the time each day that you need to protect your skin and eyes (see [sunsmart.org.nz/sun-protection-alert](http://sunsmart.org.nz/sun-protection-alert)).
3. Create shade
  - Assess outside areas by looking for trees and buildings to see how much shade your site has.
  - If there isn't much shade, provide it. You can use marquees, awnings, umbrellas and/or tents.
  - Contact your local Cancer Society via [Cancernz.org.nz](http://Cancernz.org.nz) (or use their drop down list on their website for information for your region) or check in with your local Council to see if they have shade structures for use.
4. Remind people to be SunSmart  
Encourage people coming to your event to:
  - Bring their own shade, such as umbrellas or pop-up tents.
  - Protect their skin and eyes from the sun – remind them to Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap.
  - Use MC announcements to remind people to be SunSmart.
5. Protect your workers  
Make sure your workers, including volunteers or spectators are SunSmart by:
  - Wearing long-sleeved collared shirts, wide-brimmed hats, and wrap around close fitting sunglasses.
  - Using, and regularly reapplying, sunscreen.Rotate the duties of your workers between shaded and non-shaded areas. If possible, ensure they have breaks indoors (this could include a building, shipping container, caravan, or a tent with sides).
6. Provide water
  - Keep the group hydrated by providing water or non-sugary sweetened beverages.

For more information on how to keep your staff safe out in the sun please visit [www.sunsmart.org.nz](http://www.sunsmart.org.nz).



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