

A question of balance



HAVING A LIFE

YOORALLA

People Helping People Achieve



What is the Having a Life Initiative and why is it needed?

The Having a Life initiative is a response by Yooralla to the strains of stresses of modern work life.

We all want to be in control of our own lives, fitting the pieces together into a jigsaw picture that makes sense to us as individuals. These days, however, more and more people are finding it hard to balance work commitments with other life roles such as being a partner, being a parent or being a carer. Hobbies and recreation time are often given second place and it seems so hard to fit everything in.

Being stressed is usually based on a sense that one has lost control - that one has had to vacate the driving seat in favour of somebody or something else. Living an unbalanced life can add to a sense of powerlessness and the stress that this can induce.

The Having a Life initiative is not - and never can be - a cure-all for every staff member's balance issues. What it's about, and the best it can be, is that it seeks to change people's attitudes and helps to create a caring, supportive structure within which people work. Thus, the Having a Life initiative is not a list of responses or solutions - it is more a means of creating a positive culture within which people can explore life balance options that could work for them.

We want to create an environment in the organisation that makes Yooralla's people feel valued and respected. In particular, Managers and Supervisors will be authorised and supported to make decisions that respond to local staff and their needs.

Answers to the problems that we all face, living in a demanding and hectic world, cannot come from Yooralla. They must come from the people who, collectively, are Yooralla. Ideas and solutions will need to start from the bottom, but be encouraged and authorised at the top.

My commitment as Chief Executive is that I will model openness, flexibility and a welcoming attitude towards new ideas. I will expect the General Managers to adopt this approach with their own management teams and to reinforce innovation wherever and whenever it occurs.

Acknowledging that there are always going to be resourcing, operational and occupational health and safety issues that have to be taken into account, policies and procedures will be interpreted in the least restrictive way.

From my perspective, I will judge the initiative to have been successful when I can look about me and see a range of tailored circumstances at different work sites that are responding to local staff and their needs.

I want to be able to walk around and hear people say “I like working at Yooralla because it is a listening organisation”.

Having a Life is not my initiative. It is our initiative, something that we all need to own and embrace. Give it your best shot. Please.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

March 2003

Having a Life - Goal and Strategies

GOAL

To develop and maintain Yooralla as a flexible organisation that supports and responds to staff as they seek to achieve an individually relevant and chosen balance between work and life.

STRATEGIES

- To publicise the Having a Life goal and strategies.
- To include Having a Life as a Staff Induction Day segment.
- To publicise new, creative Divisional and Departmental responses to the Having a Life initiative.
- To identify and meet staff training needs that would support the successful implementation of the Having a Life initiative.
- To require General Managers to develop, implement, monitor and sustain a Having a Life program as part of their annual Workplan for their Divisions.
- To include Having a Life questions in the annual Staff Satisfaction Survey and to respond systematically and systemically to what the data disclose.
- Where this can be done without detriment or risk to consumers, the organisation or staff, to amend or adapt policies and procedures that have been demonstrated to be counter-productive to the Having a Life initiative.

Yooralla's Culture

An organisation's culture can be positive or negative. Whichever it is, the sort of culture cannot be imposed but, because it is about people, the way statements describe the sort of culture we want in Yooralla. They are a guide, suggest, they will become Yooralla's culture. It is up to all of us.

As a Person-Centred organisation, Yooralla

Sees its staff as team members and colleagues rather than just employees

As a Flexible organisation, Yooralla

Wants to avoid excessive rigidity in the way it does things

Expects people to do their very best at all times, but without heroics

As a Participative organisation, Yooralla

Welcomes constructive suggestions, feedback and comments

As a Balanced organisation, Yooralla

Supports the belief that work is only a part of what we do

As a Learning organisation, Yooralla

Welcomes new ideas

culture will reflect the values and feelings of the majority. A particular they act and the way they see things, it can be influenced. The following ide to behaviour rather than rules. If we try to act as the statements

Can you

Please try to look at things from every point of view when dealing with your colleagues, especially if you are a Manager or a Supervisor

Can you

Please be as flexible as possible within the rules and procedures that we have. Look for win: win outcomes in whatever you do

Can you

Please listen to your colleagues. Sometimes they might need to say “I can’t take that on just at the moment” or “Can we please look at what I’ve got on my plate right now?”

Can you

Please try to focus on the issues, not people, when giving feedback. Of course, there may be times when you need to raise concerns about individuals or their actions, but try to do it as constructively as possible

Can you

Please discuss workplace issues in an open and transparent way. If you have to make decisions, involve the people whom the decisions will affect.

Can you

Please be open to the issues that are brought to you. This will encourage people to raise things which are a concern and to work honestly with you in finding a resolution.

Can you

Please try always to model appropriate behaviour. Treat others as you would yourself wish to be treated. This is especially important if you are in a position of power.

Can you

Please respect everybody’s right to achieve a healthy balance between work and other aspects of their life

Can you

Please see fresh thinking as a way of improving things for everybody, not as a challenge to the way things have always been done or to authority.

Having a Life.

What ideas might we look at?

The following are only ideas ... not realities nor even plans. They are the sorts of things General and Departmental Managers could look at as possible solutions, for some staff members, in some circumstances. The list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. What might work or be possible for some people in some areas might be completely inappropriate for others. The Having a Life initiative will need to be able to respond to Yooralla's complexity and diversity.

- Family-friendly shift structures for parent/carers
- Job sharing and/or tailored part time arrangements
- Flexible and/or tailored work hours
- Tailored maternity/paternity/adoption leave arrangements
- Sabbaticals/career breaks, where appropriate
- Annualised salaries with more unpaid leave
- Telecommuting/working from home
- Full time hours compressed across fewer days
- Twice the leave, but on half pay
- Phasing down hours for people approaching retirement
- Cutting hours by allowing regular single leave days
- Introducing "Pressing necessity" leave
- Enabling staff members to move to different work locations
- Trying to build some fun opportunities into the working regime
- Scheduling meetings to provide meeting-free days and/or avoiding early/late meetings
- Your idea or solution



Everything we do in Yooralla has to assist us in providing excellent services that are consumer focused.

Happy, supported staff are a key element in the service delivery chain.

The bottom line of the Having a Life initiative has to be services that are as good as we can make them.

This is our aim.



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