



AHRI - MARTIN SELIGMAN WELLBEING AWARD 2021

CASE STUDY

**BENNY
BUTTON**

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SURF COAST SHIRE'S WHY

The back story

Surf Coast Shire Council has an organisational purpose to help our community and environment to thrive – that's our why, and we have a direction that speaks of the place that we want to be, a place where people can do their best and be proud of their achievements. This sums up our culture and our Surf Coast DNA.

We'd been focusing on our employee experience as a way to understand and strengthen our culture. Our past focus on mental health and wellbeing included initiatives such as sharing stories of mental health experiences, mental health awareness training, first aid training, RUOK days, fruit bowls and fitness programs – and at the same time we've worked on our culture through the lens of engagement.

We knew that there were different solutions for different people and that this wasn't just about responding to mental health issues. Mental health felt too narrow – this was bigger and we recognised that. We needed something more than just rolling out the same old 'one size fits all' corporate wellness program. We knew that if we wanted our people to thrive it had to be holistic – thriving in all areas of life is about being well, staying well, building strength and resilience in wellbeing across all aspects of life.

Through participation in industry discussions, external research and growing awareness of the factors that impact performance we recognised that wellbeing and performance are interdependent – the relationship between them is clear and undeniable. People perform better when they feel well, and when wellbeing drops, so too does performance. Engagement is both influenced by and influences performance and wellbeing. We needed to address wellbeing and performance as a pathway to engagement rather than having a focus on one at the expense of the other. And so we set out to design a program that would focus on enhancing individual wellbeing and enabling positive behaviour change of leaders to enable and drive both wellbeing AND performance.



SURF COAST SHIRE'S WHY

The mission

We embarked on a mission to enhance our organisation's collective wellbeing by assisting our people to be their best in all aspects of their lives.

Over the past 18 months we partnered with Benny Button to integrate wellbeing into our DNA. In a really challenging time, in which the world had never faced before, we invested heavily in our people with wellbeing profiling and culture analytics, a dedicated wellbeing check in software platform and targeted learning and development experiences.

None of this work could have been done without the strong commitment from our leaders who have been instrumental in encouraging all of our employees to be curious and open minded to having wellbeing conversations. You see, the more we normalise the wellbeing conversation the simpler and easier it becomes.

A strong wellbeing relationship with our people has allowed us to engage early and assist our people in accessing tools and resources to assist them to take proactive steps to enhance their own wellbeing and mitigate the risk of sickness and mental illness.

The commitment to our people was recently recognised at the 2021 Australian HR Institute Awards. We were awarded the Martin Seligman Health and Wellbeing Award recognising outstanding strategies and initiatives that promote and embed good health and wellbeing of the workforce. The demonstration of our commitment to workforce health and wellbeing as an organisational priority outshone Australia's largest and most recognised organisations.

In a time where we keep hearing about the Great Resignation, the Surf Coast Shire have created a place recognised as a Great Workplace Destination.

This investment in wellbeing is good for our people, it's good for our performance and it's good for the Surf Coast Shire community.



EXPLORE

Know what you need to do



THE SOLUTION: **EXPLORE**

Benny Button guided Surf Coast to undertake an Explore phase as the first step in a systematic methodology. Gathering important data and intelligence on individual and organisational wellbeing provided a science-based approach to the design and implementation of wellbeing initiatives.

WELLBEING PROFILER EMPLOYEE

The Benny Button Wellbeing Profiler was rolled out to all employees. The Profiler is a simple, online, self-directed assessment and personalised web-application report and resources. Individuals received their personalised results to better understand their strengths and challenges, as well as resources to support their independent learning and growth. Across 3 divisions and 19 departments a 74% response rate to the Profiler allowed organisational analytics to provide valid and meaningful insights.

Leaders were provided with a comprehensive de-identified report on the work and life wellbeing and performance levels of all employees, including key strengths as well as challenges or areas for improvement.

WELLBEING ANALYTICS ORGANISATION

When the online profiling survey closed the collected employee responses were de-identified prior to developing group-level analytics to ensure anonymity throughout the organisation and work-area reporting. The organisation and work area levels of reporting unpacked how teams were going on each of the 8 factors and their sub-factors.

The group level data on employee wellbeing and performance dimensions were plotted into a heat map for the organisation overall, as well as each team. The heat maps showed the spread of employees across the wellbeing and performance dimensions to reveal how in sync people were and the proportion of people experiencing challenge. Team comparison analysis was provided to show which areas of the business were strong and where there areas of the business to prioritise.

WELLBEING ANALYTICS TEAM

Leadership commitment is critical to wellbeing cultural evolution. It was important that each people manager/leader was provided with team data analytics so they could appreciate the uniqueness of their team. Comparison insights to the organisation data was also provided.

Leaders utilised team data to report back to their employees and kick off team focused initiatives for wellbeing and performance growth.

[Watch the video](#)



TRANSFORM

Do what needs to be done

“It takes practice to move from knowing better to being better”



THE SOLUTION: **TRANSFORM**

Using data insights Surf Coast & Benny Button designed and delivered learning and development experiences based on performance psychology and wellbeing science.

Wellbeing Fundamentals launch

This workshop was designed to inject energy, positivity and hope into Surf Coast Shire employees life and work. The aim was connect employees through a digital webinar and inspire them to integrate self care practices into work and life and take action for their wellbeing.

A 'Your One Thing' mini-campaign was established. Employees were encouraged to find one thing within their profile they wanted to focus on to either maintain or improve wellbeing. Leaders encouraged people to share their 'one thing' and their profiles in team meetings and to talk about their greatest area of strength in their profile and their greatest area of challenge.

'Your One Thing' was a discussion point for 1:1s between leaders and employees. In an attempt to replicate life beyond lockdown and the support that would ordinarily have been available in person, employees were encouraged to find an accountability or wellbeing buddy."



THE SOLUTION: **TRANSFORM**

Leader, team and organisation commitment were a top priority and a core requirement for the investment to have impact.

Leader commitment

Ensuring that leaders had the capability to lead and support the conversations and actions to enable performance and wellbeing was a key success factor in this project. To this end, we delivered two “Leading for Performance & Wellbeing” programs for Managers and Executive level leaders and next level or Coordinator level leaders.

These workshops, facilitated by Steople, aimed to build the capability and accountability of leaders, encouraging and empowering individual and team capability and accountability through delegation and coaching.

Team commitment

Profiler data highlighted the Connect factor was one of the highest challenges of wellbeing and performance, and was a vitally important focus following 112 days in lockdown.

Leaders were provided with a ‘Team Wellbeing Commitment template” and used the team diagnostic results to bring a focus on ‘Your One Thing’ that the team would action over the short to medium term. More than 20 Team Wellbeing Commitments were developed with initiatives focussed across all 8 factors.

One group of senior Managers identified the impact of negative self talk on wellbeing and established a routine of sharing ‘prouds’ each Friday as a way to practise thinking about and verbalising things they’re proud of on a regular basis. Teams were encouraged to meet in-person each month to renew their wellbeing commitments.

Organisation commitment

Whilst Surf Coast were deeply conscious of the individual experience they could see immediate opportunities to positively impact wellbeing across the organisation. Their CEO reacted to the challenge by introducing a 30-minute paid wellbeing break for all staff during lockdown. The break could be taken in addition to other breaks and provided an opportunity for employees to focus on their wellbeing - i.e. their ‘Your One Thing’ focus and action.

Wellbeing was added as a standing agenda item in most department leader and team meetings and was introduced as a key discussion point in regular 1:1 meetings.

THE SOLUTION: **TRANSFORM**

A science-based innovation process designed to transform wellbeing insights into innovative ideas that can be implemented for positive impact on wellbeing behaviour and culture.

Innovation

A 2-part innovation workshop series was designed to bring leaders together to generate and prioritise organisation-level initiatives targeted towards improving wellbeing culture. The group reviewed organisational diagnostic data and explored needs and future trends. The desired outcome for these workshops were for individuals, teams and the organisation to generate and prioritise innovative ideas for employee wellbeing improvement and workforce wellbeing culture transformation. The workshops were attended by more than 60 leaders from all levels and departments.

Wellbeing ideas generated = 255 ideas, 44 of which were highlighted as the best individual ideas.

The 8 best group ideas were shortlisted to explore in greater detail. Ideas were strengthened and pitched by teams and an independent voting process was used to assess idea impact and implementation feasibility.

There were 3 ideas identified as 'no brainers' which were subsequently endorsed by the Executive Management Team. These were:

1. Pilot Benny Button Check-in tool
2. Implement Yammer for special interest groups
3. Introduce Zero Zoom Zone – no zoom meetings between 12pm and 2pm on Monday and Wednesday

Exploration of the remaining 252 ideas continues.



THE SOLUTION: TRANSFORM

Workshops were targeted on areas where the Benny Button Profiler showed opportunities for an impactful ROI.

Behaviour Change

The workshops helped people understand the science of behaviour change, and explore the key phases of growth from awareness to mastery. During the workshop employees looked at where in the behaviour change process they typically relapse and why; and learned practical resilience tips to navigate and recover from relapse.

A goal setting approach focussed on action rather than outcomes assisted staff to establish simple, target and stretch actions for the short term. Employees completed the workshop with a simple action planning template and were encouraged to commit to doing 'Your One Thing' - a practice of setting 1 wellbeing focus for action which continued throughout the program. The webinar was recorded for on-demand access by any employee who was unable to attend the workshop.

Stress Mastery

An immediate insight from the diagnostic was the impact that COVID19 was having on the stress levels of employees, particularly those on the frontline dealing with community members who in turn have their own challenges. Employees participated in a very interactive workshop with learning outcomes including:

- A framework for mastering stress that promotes wellbeing and performance resilience and growth.
- The impact of mindsets on our experiences of stress and strategies for working through counterproductive stress reactions.
- Evidence-based strategies for developing a growth-mindset and demonstrating resilience through periods of challenge, pressure and uncertainty.

Recovery

It was important to draw a line in the sand, and transition from surviving to thriving. A webinar was designed to inspire employees to think about what "time well spent" investing in wellbeing would look like for them, and in particular, actions promoting rest and recovery.

This session

- Acknowledged unique and challenging experiences people encountered throughout the year.
- Provided insight into the science and impact of regulating the 'survival mode'.
- Avoiding the trap of another New Year's Resolution that falls flat!
- Why rest and recovery is essential for optimal wellbeing and performance.

THE SOLUTION: **TRANSFORM**

The Wellbeing Checkpoint app and dashboard makes it easy to regularly check in on employee wellbeing, focus on what matters most, and take action.

Benny Button Wellbeing Checkpoint

Five teams piloted the Benny Button check-in tool over a six month period and participants realised improvements in both performance and wellbeing. Focus areas for these individuals were varied and spread across the 8 factors.

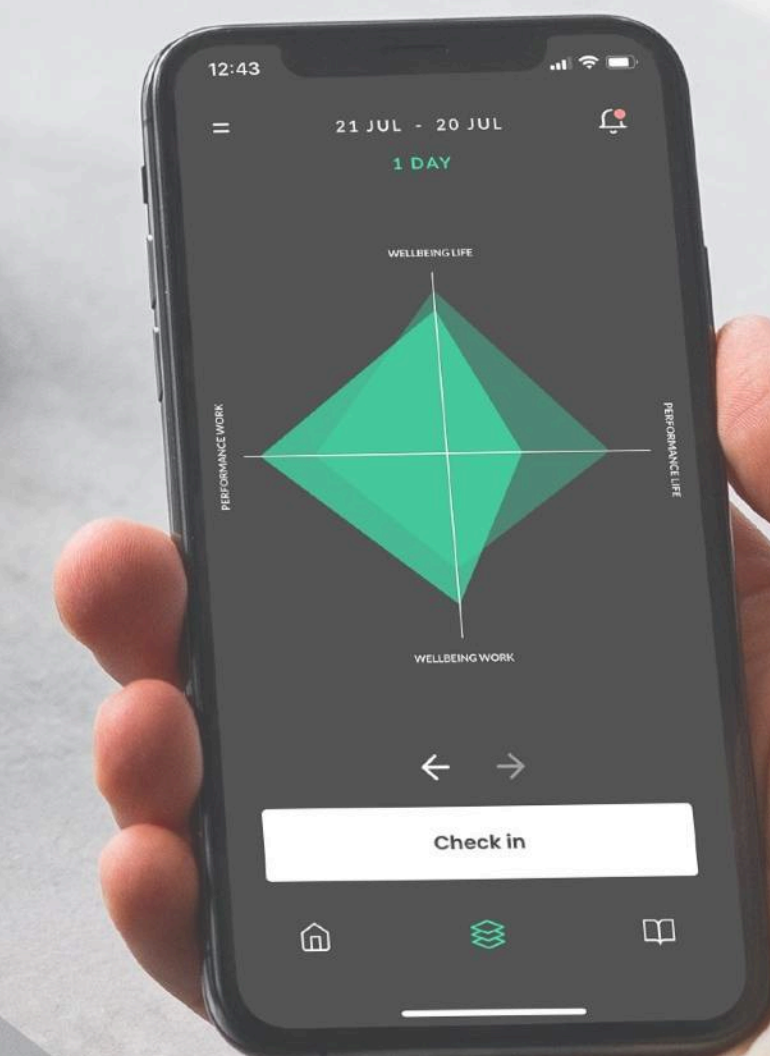
Executive endorsed the expansion of pilot of the check-in tool to be implemented across the whole of the organisation. This endorsement represented a cultural and financial commitment to continue the objective of enabling wellbeing and performance across the organisation.

Benny Button's checkpoint tool makes it easier to regularly check in on wellbeing & performance, focus on and prioritise what's important & take action.

The Check In provides the means for employees and leaders to regularly explore and focus on wellbeing and performance priorities.

Leaders receive a simple live dashboard of how the team are feeling in relation to their wellbeing and performance. It provides insights into what people see as their priority focus in 'life outside of work' and also their priority focus in their 'life at work.' This gives the leader a monthly pulse of how the team are going and makes it easier to support the team in heading towards a high performance culture where the wellbeing and performance discussion is normalised.

[CLICK HERE](#)
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
WELLBEING CHECKPOINT



EVOLVE

Be the best you can



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THE SOLUTION: **EVOLVE**

Having good data allows for impact to be assessed in a quantitative and qualitative way

In an annual audit of our OHS Management System completed in February 2021, the independent auditor observed the following:

“Wellbeing is embedded and evident across every area of the organisation that I visited and is influencing the community as well as staff. It is even included now in the kindergarten programs for children. I commend you on that.”

WELLBEING	Organisation wellbeing zone increased by 6%.
PERFORMANCE	Organisation performance zone increased by 12.5%.
eNPS	Surf Coast employees net promoter score increased by 8%
WORK LIFE BALANCE	72.4% strongly agreed they could maintain a healthy work-life balance

Employees shared numerous comments reflecting the sense of support they felt and positive level of encouragement and commitment to wellbeing. People reported being able to work through the challenges that life presented, particularly during lockdown, and reported feeling valued.



“This was never intended to be a one-off initiative or an overnight fix. Shifting our culture and our leadership DNA to one of individual and organisational wellbeing requires a commitment and an unashamed focus on the factors that impact performance and wellbeing. Early results are positive and reinforcing of our strategy and we have the commitment and support from the top down and bottom up to continue the journey.”

- Leanne Perryman, Manager People & Culture, Surf Coast Shire Council



[Watch the video](#)

TIME TO LIVE WELL & HAVE IMPACT?

BENNY BUTTON

Find out more about this project and the work Benny Button is doing in Australia and abroad.

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Find out more about Surf Coast Shire's award winning culture.

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