

## LAUREN AHWAN

**W**ELLNESS training is forecast to become a prerequisite for business managers, in much the same way as they are required to undertake regular occupational health and safety programs.

The prediction follows research that shows basic mental health training for managers can reap significant benefits for workers' mental well-being, cutting absences because of work-related sickness by 18 per cent.

Australasian Sustainable Wellness Academy founder Angela Derks says wellness training is commonplace in the US and it is only a matter of time before it is embraced in Australia.

"(Wellness training) will be absolutely integral (for managers)," Derks says. "It will become part of Work-Cover and Fair Work (Commission requirements), just like workplace health and safety is."

Compensation for mental stress costs Australian employers three times more than compensation for accidents, injuries and body stress cases, with sickness and absenteeism because of poor mental health setting businesses back \$3230 for each worker every year, Derks says.

She says companies such as Google, Nike and Apple are already embracing the wellness trend because "they have realised the detrimental impact that a lack of wellness

has on the engagement, creativity and productivity of their staff, and the flow-on effects on the organisation's bottom line".

ASWA recently partnered with Prestige Service Training to deliver a Diploma of Wellness qualification, the first Australian accredited vocational workplace wellness course.

Derks says the online course teaches students how to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate wellness programs in the workplace, along with practical solutions for reducing workplace stress.

Associate Professor Samuel Harvey, who leads the Black Dog Institute's Workplace Mental Health Research Program, says managers can play an active role in assisting their employees to have mentally healthy lives.

He says investing in wellness training for managers has significant cost benefits – with a return on investment of \$9.98 for each dollar spent on training.

"Having a supportive manager can make a huge difference to a person's mental wellbeing," he says.

Jenna Moses, 27, has enrolled in the Diploma of Wellness program and hopes eventually to find employment as a wellness and lifestyle coach.

"Sometimes people can look at wellness (initiatives in the workplace) and see it as something that's a bit fluffy (frivolous)," Moses says.

"But bringing wellness into your life is really helping you to be the best version of yourself that you can be."



LIFESTYLE: Jenna Moses is studying wellness and aims to find work as a wellness coach. Picture: NIGEL HALLETT

## COURSE OF THE WEEK

# WELLNESS

### QUALIFICATIONS

A Diploma of Wellness can be studied at a vocational level, while a graduate certificate, graduate diploma or master of wellness are available for postgraduate study.

### TOPICS COVERED

The course has common components in wellness no matter where students enrol, such as coaching and nutrition. Electives vary, with some providers offering marketing or leadership and others including disease prevention and biology subjects in partnership with other faculties.

### FURTHER STUDY

A diploma qualification may provide credits towards a bachelor degree such as a Bachelor of Applied Public Health or Health Science.

### COURSE DELIVERY

Students can complete much of the learning online. Some providers require projects to be completed on the job for those already employed.