

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS
TURNAROUND STRATEGY IN THE OFFICE OF THE
PREMIER: LIMPOPO .2015-2020

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1. BACKGROUND

In 2008, the minister of Public Service and Administration approved the Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework, whereby government departments were mandated to implement the Employee Health and Wellness Management Programme in line with National Strategic Framework with effect from 01 April 2009. Employee Health and Wellness Programmes in the Public Service are rapidly transforming the nature of holistic support provided to employees to ensure risk management, occupational health, safety, productivity and wellness of government employees and their families as well as the safety of citizens in the Public Service world of work.

Following extensive investigation of international and local best practices and obtaining inputs from internal stakeholders and discussions at several Employment Health and Wellness INDABA Conferences, specific areas of focus have been identified as the key components of EH&W, which have informed the outline and contents of the proposed Public Service strategic response. A clear need for a common approach, understanding and uniformity of implementation programmes emerged, hence the need for this EH&W Strategic Framework for the Public Service.

This strategy is influenced by but not limited to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Plan of Action on Workers Health 2008-2017, the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Decent Work Agenda in Africa 2007-2015 and the recommendations of the report of the WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health released in August 2008. It is based on what is currently considered national priority as guided by current disease burden in the South African Worker Population of which the Public Service constitutes 10%. It is also based on what are considered priority issues to be addressed in so far as employee's health is concerned.

2. OBJECTIVE OF TURNAROUND STRATEGY

The key objective of this document is to communicate the EHWP turnaround Strategy, which provides for an integrated, needs-driven, participative, and holistic approach to Employee Health and Wellness in the Office. The integrated approach to employee health and wellness recognizes the importance of linking individual health, safety and wellness, organisational wellness, environmental sustainability, quality management to productivity and improved service delivery outcomes.

3. RATIONALE FOR THE TURNAROUND STRATEGY

The Turnaround strategy is a response to the following issues:

- a) Ineffective utilization of Employee Health and Wellness Programs: It has been realized that most of the employees in the Office are not utilizing the services offered by EHWP. Events and workshops are arranged, but the attendance thus far is unsatisfactory. The EHWP Sub Division can't even reach 50% of the employees.
- b) Passive involvement of Top Management in EHWP activities: Most of the SMS members do not attend to events and workshops organized by EHWP. Failure to recognize the importance of EHWP might send a contradictory message to the employees in the sense that they (employees) might regards EHWP services as relevant to the low rank employees only.

- c) Targets as expected by the National Strategic Framework are not met: Due to shortage of EHW practitioners, the sub division finds it difficult to attain the sub objectives of each program pillar. The EHWP Sub Division is currently manned by two staff members (**1 Manager and 1 Deputy Manager**) for the whole four programs. According to NSF, all four pillars and their sub objectives have to be implemented for improved service delivery.
- d) Budgetary constraints: One of the major roles of EHWP Sub Division is to sensitize employees on health issues that might have a negative impact on productivity. This can only be achieved if the EHWP is allocated its separate budget, in order to promote its programs and respond to the Dept. of Health's calendar events.
 - i. Lack of Office space: EHWP's main focus is on the psycho social wellness of the employees, whereby participation in in- house exercise and sport is highly recommended for physical fitness and improved productivity. EHWP strongly believes that the implementation of physical fitness program in the workplace helps to improve productivity in the sense that the employees can utilize the in -house programs for exercise and in the meantime return to work for service delivery.
 - ii. GEMS health screening reports analysis: Based on the outcome of the results obtained from health screenings, the EHWP realized that ineffective weight management, obesity and high stress levels contribute to the high rate of communicable and non-communicable illnesses, which also impacts negatively on productivity.

4. Legal framework

- 1) Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996
- 2) Disaster Management Act, No. 57 of 2002
- 3) Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997
- 4) Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998; 97 of 1998; 9 of 1999)
- 5) Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 National Disaster Management Framework
- 6) National Strategic Plan on HIV&AIDS 2007-2011
- 7) National Strategic Framework on Stigma and Discrimination
- 8) Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 4 of 2000
- 9) National Strategic Framework on Stigma and Discrimination
- 10) National TB Infection Control Guidelines, June 2007
- 11) Public Service Act, 1994 as Amended & Regulations Compensation for Occupational Diseases and
- 12) Injuries Act, No.130 of 1993
- 13) The Medical Schemes Act, No. 131 of 1998 Health Care Act
- 14) Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act No. 12, 1999

5. CORE PRINCIPLES

5.1 Confidentiality

Employees utilizing the EH&W programme are assured of confidentiality, except in cases of risk to self and others or in terms of legislation. Strict confidential records and information outside the personnel records should be maintained at all times. The Unit will ensure the confidentiality of all medical and personal information of employees. The employees within the Public Service have a constitutional right to confidentiality about their HIV and AIDS status, in particular, should an employee reveal his/her HIV status, this information shall not be disclosed to any other party including other employees, union member or management. Consent for disclosure should be in writing.

5.2 Ethical Behavior

The EH&W units shall ensure professional and ethical behavior as well as the protection of the client's confidentiality. Only registered professionals will be allowed to provide therapeutic interventions. EH&W/ EAP professionals who are registered with their respective professional bodies will have to adhere to codes of conduct of such bodies as well as the code of conduct of the departments. The EH&W/ EAP professionals will therefore be held responsible for the consequences of their actions should they behave in an unethical manner such as breaching confidentiality. As far as possible the generic principles of respect for autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and distributive justice will guide the actions of programme managers and coordinators working at Employee Health and Wellness in the Office.

6. The main tools for the implementation of EH&W

- Policies
- Generic Implementation Plan
- An Implementation Step-by-step Guide (Policies, Protocols, Standards, Handbooks etc.)
- An Annual Implementation Plan (with operational plans for EH&W programmes)
- A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, plan, and tools to provide Public Service organisations with the opportunity to report on progress in implementing the EHWP to the EHWP steering committee.
- An Annual Performance Progress Report.

7. THE STRATEGY

7.1 Vision

To promote programs that can develop and maintain a healthy, dedicated, responsive, and productive employees within the Public Service who can add value within the Office of the Premier.

7.2 Mission

To build and maintain a healthy workforce for increased productivity and excellent service delivery for the benefit of employees and their families.

7.3 EH &W Strategic Pillars

The EH&W Strategic Framework is based on four functional pillars, which represent the recommended core functions of the EH&W Unit in the Office, and identify a critical set of initiatives to be undertaken by the health and wellness practitioners in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. EH&W initiatives in the Public Service embrace the occupational health of employees and to promote the quality of work life within the Public Service. This will be effectively achieved through critical common strategic interventions in priority areas of:

- HIV&AIDS and TB Management
- Health and Productivity Management
- Safety, Health, Environment, Risk and Quality Management (SHERQ)
- Wellness Management

The Parthenon house (Conceptual Framework) for Employee Health & Wellness (EH&W) is illustrated below:

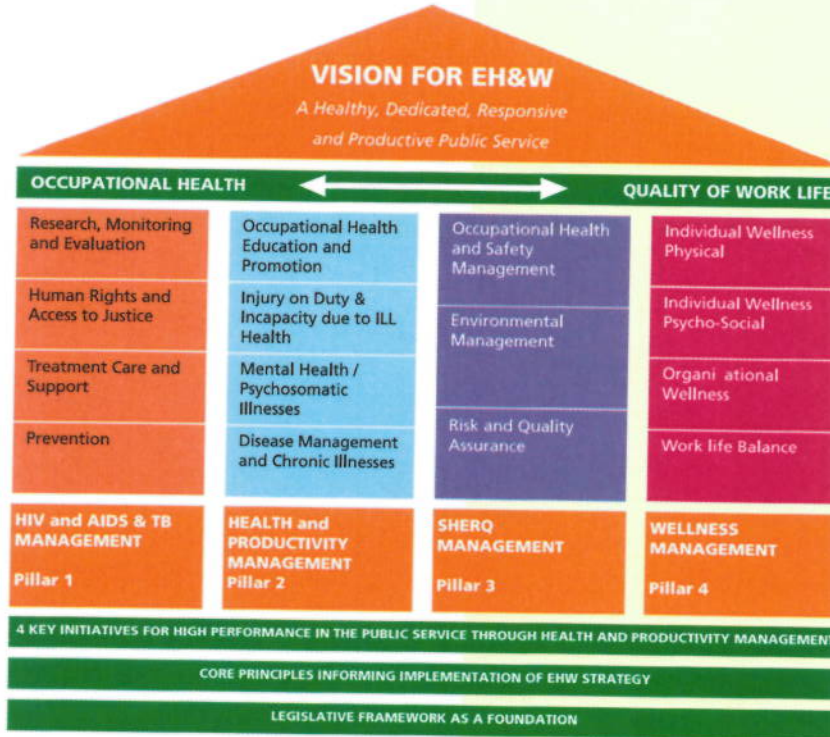


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Employee Health & Wellness (EH&W) in the Public Service

2.2 VISION

The vision for the EH&W Strategic Framework is to provide programmes that can develop and maintain healthy, dedicated, responsive and productive employees within the public service who can add value within public service organisations. This vision is articulated as follows:

“A healthy, dedicated, responsive and productive public service”.

7.3.1 Occupational Health

Pillar 1: HIV&AIDS and TB Management:

The greatest challenge is to prevent new infections (primary and secondary), accelerate access to treatment for those clinically eligible for treatment, reduce stigma and discrimination, with special focus on TB stigma, and accurately monitor and evaluate all interventions for both the workplace and the external responses in accordance with the HIV&AIDS and STI National Strategic Plan 2007-2011 and Tuberculosis Strategic Plan for South Africa, 2007-2011.

Medical Assistance for Treatment and Care of Public Servants Living with HIV AND AIDS is provided by GEMS. As far as possible Government Departments should encourage all government employees to be members of the Government Employee Medical Scheme (GEMS) to access the benefits of health care in relation to treatment Care and Support in all HIV&AIDS interventions. Treatment and Care could also be accessed at Government hospitals and clinics, which have extensive health care programs and services.

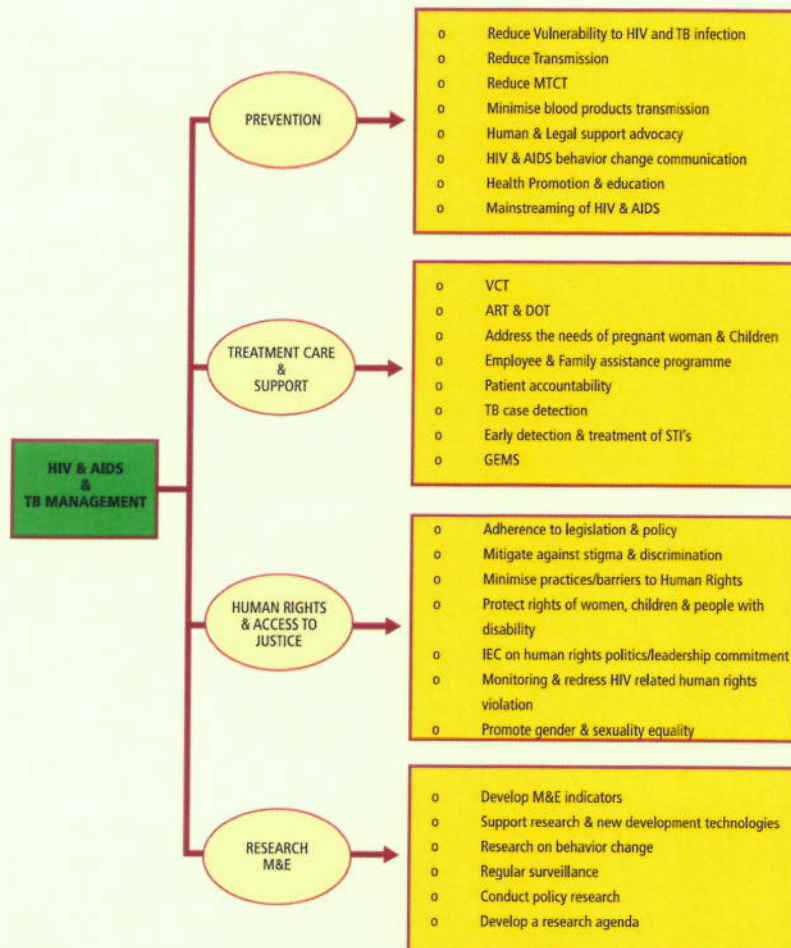


Figure 4: Framework for operationalising PILLAR 1: HIV and AIDS & TB Management

This pillar consists of the following four sub-objectives:

- Prevention
- Treatment, care and support
- Human and legal rights and access to justice

- Monitoring, research and surveillance.

To achieve the mentioned sub objectives, EHWP unit has an implementation that allows them to:

- Conduct 4 quarterly educational workshops.
- Conduct 4 awareness sessions
- Recruit, train and monitor peer educators
- Organize 4 HIV Counselling and Testing and TB screenings
- Respond to calendar events e.g. World Aids Commemoration, STI/Condom week, etc.

Pillar 2: Health and Productivity Management:

Health and Productivity Management: Non communicable diseases including Chronic Diseases of lifestyle, occupational injuries and diseases, are increasingly becoming main contributors to high absenteeism rate which impact negatively on productivity in the Office. The World Health Organisation's Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health together with the National Departments of Health's Healthy Lifestyle Campaign helps to inform the workplace health education and promotion interventions to be put in place in addressing the concerns of the organization and the employees.

The pillar consists of the following sub objectives:

- Disease Management
- Mental Health and Productivity Management
- Injury on Duty & Incapacity due to Ill-Health
- Occupational Health Education and Promotion.

As already alluded to above this pillar consist of the following four sub-objectives:

- *Disease Management*
- *Mental Health and Productivity Management*
- *Injury On Duty & Incapacity due to Ill-Health*
- *Occupational Health Education and Promotion.*

Each of the above-mentioned sub-objectives consists of constituent components which form the essence of the relevant focus areas and is illustrated in Figure 4. Each sub-objective will have critical success factors and proposed activities which will be included in the Generic Implementation Plan (Annexure A).

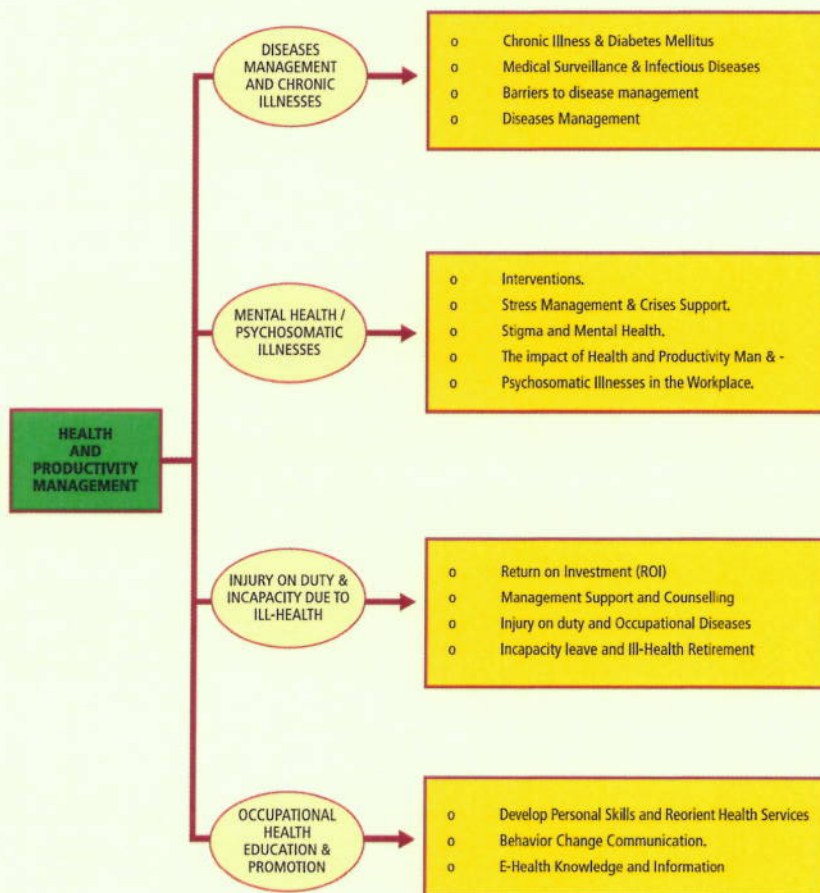


Figure 5: Framework for operationalising PILLAR 2: Health and Productivity Management

The EHWP unit has to ensure that the following sub objectives are met through:

- Promotion and maintenance of the general health of employees through:
 - Planning of 4 health screenings per year.
 - Analysis of health screening reports from GEMS and implement intervention programs.
- Education and awareness workshops on communicable and non-communicable diseases.

- Facilitation the implementation of absenteeism and presenteeism programs.
- Coordinate and arrange 2 team buildings for the whole Office through sport participation for improved psychosocial fitness and productivity.
- Respond to calendar events as well e.g. Drug & alcohol awareness campaigns.

7.3.2 Quality of Work Life (QWL)

Pillar 3: SHERQ Management:

Safety, Health, Environment, Risk and Quality Management: (SHERQ). This pillar deals with the intangible and tangible factors of safety, health environment, risks and quality management for purposes of optimal occupational health and safety of employees, the safety of citizens and also the sustainability of the environment, the management of occupational and general risks and quality of services in the Office.

It is in response to international instruments, National legislation and generally accepted standards of international Organisation of Standards and other standard generating authorities. This include but not limited to the OHSAS 18001 for Occupational health and safety, ISO 14001 for Environmental Management, ISO 9001 for Quality Management.

- national programme on occupational safety and health or national programme which is a national programme that includes objectives to be achieved in a predetermined time frame, priorities and means of action formulated to improve occupational safety and health, and means to assess progress. For EH&W SHERQ pillar this will also include environment risk and quality management.
- a national preventative safety and health culture which is a culture in which the right to a safe and healthy working environment is respected at all levels, where government, employers and workers actively participate in securing a safe and healthy working environment through a system of defined rights, responsibilities and duties, and where the principle of prevention is accorded the highest priority. For EH&W SHERQ pillar this will also include environment risk and quality management.

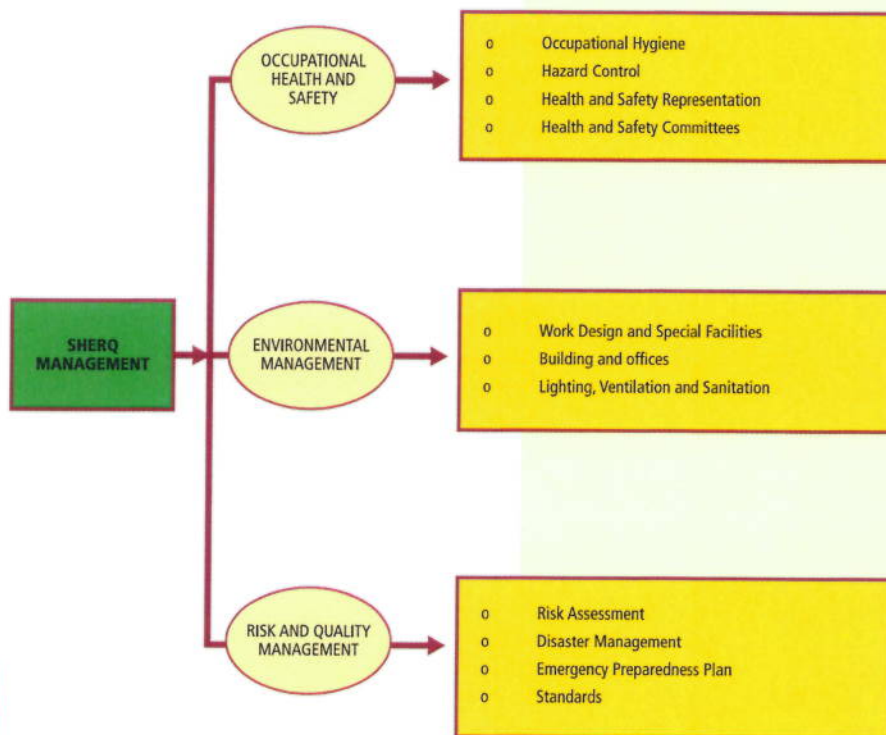


Figure 6: Framework for operationalising PILLAR 3: SHERQ

The National Strategic Framework requires the EHW practitioners to implement health and safety in the Office by:

- Conducting 4 quarterly workshops.
- _Recruiting, appointing, training and monitor SHE reps on SHE functions. (Act 85 of 1993)
- _Conducting 4 meetings with SHE reps as per the OHS Act 85 of 1993.
- _Managing the Injury on duty and Compensation of IOD cases.

Pillar 4: Wellness Management:

Individual wellness is the promotion of the physical, social, emotional, occupational, spiritual, and intellectual wellness of individuals. This is attained by creating an organizational climate and culture that is conducive to wellness and comprehensive identification of psycho-social health risk.

Wellness Management emerged as a priority due to increasing recognition that the health, safety and wellness of employees directly impact on the productivity of the entire organization. As employees are the life-blood of the organization it is vital to help them produce at their optimum levels. Both personal and workplace factors influence overall wellness and employee performance. This pillar consists of the following sub objectives:

Individual Wellness (Physical Wellness)

- Individual Wellness (Psycho-Social Issues: Social, Emotional, Spiritual, intellectual
- Financial/ Economical Wellness)
- Organizational Wellness
- Work Life Balance

As already alluded to above, this pillar consists of the following four sub-objectives:

- Individual Wellness(Physical Wellness)
- Individual Wellness (Psycho-Social Issues: Social, Emotional, Spiritual, Intellectual and Financial/ Economical Wellness)
- Organizational Wellness
- Work Life Balance

Each of the above-mentioned sub-objectives consists of constituent components which form the essence of the relevant focus areas and is illustrated in Figure 4. Each sub-objective will have critical success factors and proposed activities which will be included in the Generic Implementation Plan (Annexure A).

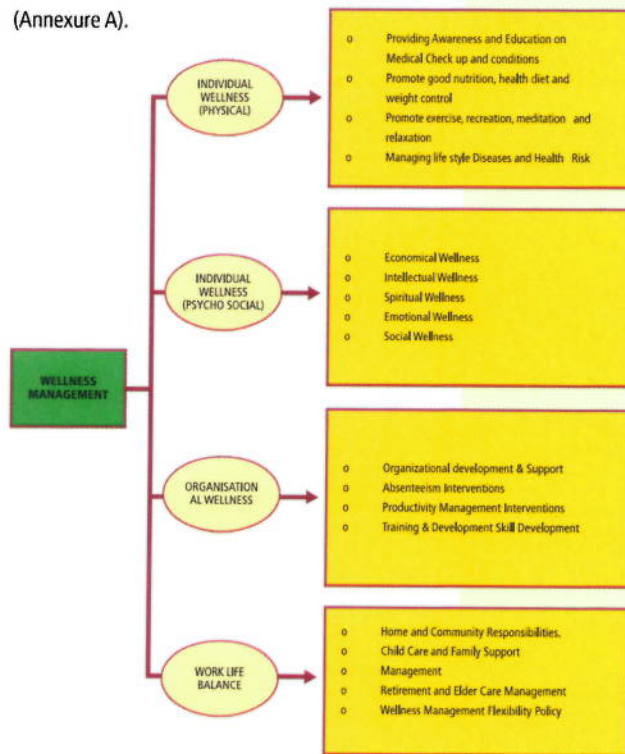


Figure 7: Framework for operationalising PILLAR 4: Wellness Management

The role of the EHWP in the Office is to:

- Provide reactive services (counselling, trauma management, etc.)
- Facilitate Proactive programmes (4 life skills workshops quarterly)
- Coordinate sport in the Office
- Respond to national calendar events: e.g. cancer and eye care months.
- Sensitize the Office on issues relating to Gender Based Violence.


8. CONCLUSION

The turnaround strategy is responsive to current circumstances as it was formulated based on the situational analysis and input from stakeholders, and moved from the Management of HIV and AIDS in the workplace 2002-2006 to an Integrated EH&W in 2008 and beyond.

The focus and content of the framework duly reflects the input and priorities expressed by stakeholders and participants in the review process. EHW practitioners and stakeholders in the Office of the Premier will see the turnaround strategy as a mandate crafted to advance the cause of EH&W in the Office of the Premier as a viable field of practice. The goal, eventually, is healthy, dedicated employees; safe and healthy organisation enhanced performance and improved service delivery.

Management must provide an enabling environment by way of direct participation in all wellness programmes, ensure that the Sub Division is provided with adequate financial, human and physical resources.

APPROVED/DISAPPROVED



DIRECTOR GENERAL

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