Here's an update on what's been happening recently in the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative (HWI).

**Stakeholder forum**

April saw HWI’s first stakeholder forum, held in North Sydney.

The interactive forum drew over 60 people from health-related organisations, health advocates, local government, industry groups, unions and research organisations.

Connecting these groups brought to light the potential challenges and opportunities of the initiative.

“The first forum was a great success and all stakeholders were actively involved in making it an interesting and productive event”, said Centre for Population Health Acting Director, Jo Mitchell.

NSW Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, Jillian Skinner, spoke about the importance of partnerships between government, community and business in supporting working adults to live a healthy lifestyle.

“The approach being taken by the Healthy Workers Initiative gives us the best chance of improving health outcomes for working adults in NSW”, said Mrs Skinner.

**Feedback from the forum continues** to inform HWI planning.

**Health Check Service trial**

The Health Check Service component of HWI was trialled with over 50 staff at WorkCover NSW in May.

This trial has allowed us to improve the way the service is delivered prior to running a full pilot – eg better communicating to the workers the scope of what will be discussed, prior to them getting the health check.

**Industry analysis**

An agency has been engaged to analyse the three focus industries for the initial stage of HWI – housing construction, road freight transport and manufacturing.

The agency will develop a profile of those three industries to guide the development of HWI services.

**Communications strategy**

A suitable agency is being engaged to develop a communications strategy for HWI. This piece of work will advise on key messages, audiences and communication strategies for the broader HWI program, as well as specific plans for the target industries.
Localised pilots
Planning is progressing to pilot the Healthy Workplace Service – including the Health Check Service and Workplace Support Service – in the selected Central Coast, Western Sydney and Murrumbidgee local health districts from July 2013.

Further stakeholder consultation
Building on the success of the recent forum, the HWI team will continue to seek and integrate stakeholder feedback. This includes plans to meet with key stakeholders in the local health districts identified for the pilots from July.

Additionally, the NSW Ministry of Health hosted an HWI roundtable discussion on mental health and alcohol with the NSW Office of Preventive Health and WorkCover NSW in early June 2013.

A range of experts attended and contributed to the discussion, from organisations including the:

- National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
- Alcohol and Drug Information Service
- Brain and Mind Research Institute
- Beyond Blue
- Mental Health Commission of NSW
- NSW Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Office.

Other stakeholder forums are planned for the future.

Is porridge the answer?
During building work for the London 2012 Olympics, a culture among the workforce of fatty lunches and dinners, and skipping breakfast, meant that:

- 41 per cent of the workforce were overweight
- 29 per cent had high blood pressure
- accidents were peaking just before lunch – with workers’ minds on what they were going to eat instead of the work at hand.

The answer? Porridge, of course.

Olympics chiefs started offering porridge for breakfast at one pound a bowl, improving diet and worker concentration through the morning.

The result? The best ever work health and safety record for a major UK construction project.

Read it for yourself …

For more information on HWI visit health.nsw.gov.au/healthyworkers