

Workplace Big Day Out

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is The Workplace Big Day Out?

Each year local businesses are sent out the challenge by BacLinks to volunteer their services to the community for a day. The event involves employee volunteers supporting and having fun alongside people with disabilities for a day. Activities may include ten pin bowling, art and craft, tai chi, cricket, netball, soccer, bocce, dancing, martial arts, ball games, waterslides, canoeing and mini golf just to mention a few.

Who are BacLinks?

Business and Community Links (BacLinks) is an exciting and innovative project initiated by Karingal and formed in partnership with United Way Geelong.

The purpose of BacLinks is to support collaborations of businesses and community agencies in social investments that promote sustainability, community involvement, community well-being and community prosperity. Collaborations will take many forms and are likely to change and develop over time, but they will provide both mutual benefit and positive social impact.

BacLinks establishes links and brokers activities with businesses and community agencies through a variety of activities. While financial support is accepted, the major focus is on in-kind support. This may include:

- Volunteered time or labour
- Sponsorship
- Employee skill sharing
- Employee volunteering
- Cause related marketing
- Access to company resources and contacts
- Donation of goods, equipment and resources

Through this exciting project we expect to link businesses and community agencies right across Geelong. This means adopting thinking and practices that are economically competitive, environmentally sound, and socially responsible.

When and where is the event held?

Due to popular demand the event is held twice a year. The winter event takes place at the Corio Leisuretime Centre and the summer one is held at Adventure Park in Wallington. Businesses can choose to send employees to one or both events.

How many employees can I send along to the Workplace Big Day Out?

This will depend on the type and size of your business. Previous events have involved employees from the small family business to large corporations. Businesses can choose to send along one or a number of employees (5-20 employees).

What information will I receive to help me prepare for the day?

On the morning of the event employee volunteers will be given an orientation session. This will include an overview of the day and an introduction to supporting people with a disability. This usually involves a number of interesting guest speakers.

What is expected of me on the day?

You will be allocated a team for the day. The team will consist of other employee volunteers, trained staff and people with a disability from various agencies. There will be a team leader who is an experienced trained staff member. As an employee volunteer you will be offering basic support and assistance for people to participate in

the allocated activities. Trained staff will be responsible for all the personal care requirements of the clients if required.

Is there a cost involved?

Some of the running costs of the Workplace Big Day Out are met through sponsorship of the event; however, additional income is required to ensure its continuation and to maintain the established standards that have made it a premier local event. As such businesses are asked to fund employees at a \$20 donation per employee and program members from participating agencies will be required to pay a \$10 donation per registered program member.

Who participates in the Workplace Big Day Out?

Business and Community leaders, who come from a wide range of fields [telecommunications, sport, unions, process, mechanical, law, media, finance, the arts, construction, automotive, emergency/defence services, information technologies etc.] and a wide range of backgrounds [geographical location, age and gender; commercial, not-for-profit, government/non-government, experience etc]. The Workplace Big Day Out is unique to Geelong.

Do I need experience with People with Disabilities?

No previous experience is required as trained staff are in attendance on the day to support and guide you along the way. The idea is to get involved and have fun alongside people with a disability, with a focus on ability rather than disability.

What do I have to wear?

Comfortable and casual clothing with closed in shoes made for comfort! (runners or sport shoes are ideal). Employee volunteers will be supplied with a cap and T-shirt (to pop over a long sleeved shirt) that they will be required to wear throughout the day. For the Winter Workplace Big Day Out you should dress very warmly as the venue isn't heated. For the Summer Workplace Big Day Out come dressed for outdoor activity, as much time will be spent in the sun.

What do I have to bring?

Just yourself and some energy. Morning Tea, a BBQ lunch, tea, coffee, water and cordial are supplied. For the Summer event please bring along your bathers, a towel, and sunscreen if you are interested in participating in the water-based activities.

What is the time commitment?

The event usually commences at 8.30 am and concludes around 3.15pm.

What happens on the day of the event?

Each Workplace Big Day Out varies and is a unique experience. Generally the event will include the following:

- Registration and Team Allocation
- Getting to Know You Activity/Team Challenge Activity
- Opening Address and Volunteer Briefing
- Program members arrive
- Official Welcome
- Participate in allocated team activities
- Lunch - BBQ and drinks supplied
- Entertainment
- Grand finale (program members exit)
- Employee volunteers, evaluation and farewell

How are teams made up?

Generally there are between 10-13 teams each with around 8-12 employee volunteers and 10-14 program members drawn from various disability agencies. To enhance the experience for employee volunteers BacLinks attempts to maintain a larger amount of program members than employee volunteers, however, depending on registered participant numbers this is not guaranteed. The Workplace Big Day Out is a great networking opportunity. For this reason teams generally contain at least two, but more commonly three employee volunteers drawn from a number of businesses. To the best of our ability a different arrangement can be accommodated if necessary.

What happens after the event?

Employee volunteers will complete an evaluation which will be used by BacLinks to create a report that will be sent to the employers of all staff who attend the event. The employee volunteers will also receive a certificate of participation.

What is the purpose of the Workplace Big Day Out?

The Workplace Big Day Out is seen as an introduction to businesses and communities working together and provides an opportunity for employees to volunteer for a day on behalf of their companies. BacLinks' research of Geelong businesses shows that most are looking to actively support their community in some way but need assistance to get started. Others (including large businesses) may have a willingness to be active community participants but feel they lack community links and knowledge of community projects or issues.

A key strategy to orient a broad range of businesses to participate in community building is the conduct of the Workplace Big Day Out – currently there are two per year with task groups involving business and community agencies that plan the day. The WBDO provides a starting point to actively learn more about meanings of, and possibilities for, social responsibility within the context of the 'triple bottom line'.

The Workplace Big Day Out has provided the vehicle to bring people together who otherwise may never have the opportunity to cross paths. It encourages and provides opportunities for people to get actively involved in their community and allows businesses to form genuine, meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships within the Geelong community to build real social cohesion.

What are the benefits to my business by being involved?

The Workplace Big Day Out provides an opportunity for your business to put something back into the community in which you operate and provides the opportunity for your employees to think and work outside the square they generally operate with in. Many businesses utilize this day as a great networking opportunity (given the range of businesses who participate), for staff training and team building, to thank staff by providing them with an opportunity to try something different or as a practical way to contribute and be connected with their community.

Employee Volunteer Programs benefit your business through developing employee strengths:

- Employees reap personal rewards and can gain valuable experience
- Increase teamwork, management and/or technical skills
- Meet interesting people
- Strengthen workforce skills and experience
- Improve morale and promote loyalty and pride
- Get to know colleagues and establish new connections

This helps your business to:

- Realise solid reputation, benefits and appreciation from both staff and the public
- Become an employer of choice
- Attract high-quality applicants, enhance your company's image and raise its profile in the community
- Showcase products and services
- Strengthen and improve interdepartmental communication

What if my question has not been answered?

BacLinks staff are available to respond to your individual queries and would love to hear from you.

Please phone the BacLinks Office on **5249 8989**, or visit our website:

www.baclinks.org.au

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