**[Bentley is a new slider]**

**[Image captions]**

Associate Professor Bevan Catley

Professor Tim Bentley

**Creating healthy work environments**

Several high-profile bullying cases, including one involving a sitting MP, have hit the headlines this year. But this will be just the tip of the iceberg, say the directors of Massey University’s Healthy Work Group. Associate Professor Bevan Catley and Professor Tim Bentley will share insights from their team’s research into the impact of unhealthy work at the final ‘Big Issues in Business’ event for 2018.

Fitting with the 2018 theme for the public speaking series, the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, the pair will focus on the challenge of creating good jobs and economic growth. Their key message is that if organisations improve their work environments, staff engagement and productivity will follow.

“The research is clear that individual characteristics are important, but the work environment is even more important because it's the work environment that allows individual behaviours and unhealthy work to take hold if they are not well managed,” Professor Bentley says.

With stress-related illnesses, such as depression, anxiety and burnout, rising dramatically, he says workplaces have a key role to play in reducing societal health costs. Yet, many organisations don’t realise they have a problem until it is too late, Dr Catley says.

“The first thing you need to do if you’re taking the issue seriously is to collect data,” he says. “Start processing the data around complaints, staff turnover and absences. Record what happens when someone makes a complaint and make sure you follow up with after-action analysis. That's the only way to understand if you have a problem and, if so, the scale of the problem.”

Dr Catley says the next step is to identify what can be done to create a healthy work environment. He says organisations need to allocate resources to identifying and supporting managers, as well as making sure processes are designed to achieve the right goals.

“Ask, ‘Are the values and competencies we believe are important for good leaders reflected in our performance appraisals?’ Ask, ‘Are we identifying managers with the required interpersonal skills, or are we focusing solely on technical competencies?’

“The alignment of your internal processes and the development of your people is very important. It's about doing a number of things to build a healthy system.”

**Event details:**

Dr Catley and Professor Bentley will speak at three events in Auckland, Wellington and Palmerston North. They will be joined by Sophie Shieff from Employsure and Zane Yates from PeopleSafe, who will share practical insights from their work in the health and safety sector. Presentations will be followed by a panel discussion with Massey researchers and industry representatives. The events are part of the Massey Business School’s ‘Big Issues in Business’ series, which brings research and practitioner insights together to address the big issues faced by businesses.

**Auckland, 16 October 2018**

5:30 – 7 pm

Massey Business School Building, Massey University Auckland campus

Gate 1, Dairy Flat Highway (SH17), Albany

**Wellington, 17 October, 2018**

5:30 – 7 pm

ANZ Centre

Level 18, 171 Featherston St, Wellington

**Palmerston North, 18 May 2018**

4 – 5:30 pm

The Factory

21 Dairy Farm Road, Palmerston North

For more information, or to register: http://www.massey.ac.nz/bibs