

THE STATE OF WELLBEING IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES

THEWELLBEINGLAB





pione<u>era</u> FACULTY



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FROM THE AUSTRALIAN HR INSTITUTE

AHRI is delighted to partner once again with The Wellbeing Lab on this important research that provides unique insights into employee wellbeing in Australia. A number of themes have emerged from the research that will be of significant interest to HR professionals.

With a rise in the proportion of employees who report they are "Really Struggling", HR professionals and people managers should continue to be concerned about the impact of the evolving range of challenges that employees are facing.

It was alarming to see that the proportion of employees who said they would reach out to their boss when they are struggling has fallen by half over the past two years, despite bosses being an effective conduit for employees to become more confident about caring for their own wellbeing in the workplace.

The results also suggest that in 2022, workers have less trust in management, are less likely to be consulted about workplace changes and are more likely to be at risk of burnout compared with last year. In addition, the data shows a dramatic fall in the share of workers who feel that their work is being sufficiently recognised.

Ways of working continue to evolve, with recent AHRI research on remote and flexible working suggesting ongoing changes and differences between the expectations of employees and management. It is therefore interesting to note that hybrid workers are most likely to report that they are "Living Well, Despite Struggles" and that those who are returning to physical work premises report higher levels of burnout than the all-survey average.

These findings underline the critical importance of people management capability in managing remote and hybrid workers, and the need for specific support for remote and hybrid workers to help them deal with some of the challenges they might be experiencing.

The research also demonstrated the positive correlation between management practices that support employee happiness, positive work commitment and worker output. This research provides data that HR professionals can draw on to reinforce the need for employers to continue to support and fund programs and training to uplift people management capability in their organisation.



SARAH MCCANN-BARTLETT

Chief Executive Officer, AHRI

ABOUT THIS STUDY

The Wellbeing Lab Workplace Survey was first conducted in September 2018 with a sample of 1,002 randomly selected full-time workers representative of the Australian workforce. The Workplace Survey was a variant of The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey (www.permahsurvey.com), developed by Dr. Peggy Kern from the University of Melbourne to better understand the factors that support and undermine workplace wellbeing. The survey was repeated in November 2019 with 1,007 respondents.

In early August 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic was being felt around the world, The Wellbeing Lab surveyed 1,400 full-time workers representative of the Australian workforce (401 of whom had previously participated). For this survey we created an additional set of questions to gauge the impact of the pandemic and its challenges. At the time, workers located in Victoria were under Stage 4 lockdown restrictions, while workers in the rest of Australia were not.

By May 2021, public health restrictions in Australia had been relaxed as vaccinations rolled out, workplaces were encouraged to re-open all work premises, and the economy had rebounded from recession and was outperforming growth expectations. In the middle of May – just prior to Victoria's fourth lockdown – we surveyed 1,034 full-time workers representative of the Australian workforce (157 of whom had previously participated).

By September 2022, Australia was learning to live with COVID-19 as part of daily life. Workplaces were trying to establish a 'new normal' with some insisting everyone return to their work premises while others explored hybrid and other flexible ways of working as they navigated the 'Great Resignation' and rising interest rates and inflation. In the middle of September, we surveyed 1,009 full-time workers representative of the Australian workforce. In addition to the PERMAH Wellbeing Survey questions to establish the State of Wellbeing in Australian Workplaces, we asked questions about these new ways of working and the psychosocial hazards many Australian workplaces will soon be legally required to assess. The demographics of the sample included:

GENDER	
Men	503
Women	505

AGE GROUPS	
24 - 34 years	210
35 – 44 years	185
45 – 54 years	275
55 – 65 years	240
66 – 99 years	99

127
15
807
23

253
307
214
90
94
19
8
24

COMPANY TYPE		
Privately funded organisation	546	
Publicly funded organisation	127	
Government organisation	189	
Not for profit organisation	84	
Other	63	

JOB ROLES	
Business owner	139
Responsible for leading a team	353
Not responsible for leading a team	517

Industries were representative of
Australian workplaces including
agriculture, banking & finance, community
& social services, construction, education,
government & public administration,
healthcare & medical, technology &
telecommunications, manufacturing,
mining, retail, science, tourism, and
transportation & warehousing.

If you would like more information about this report or additional findings by gender, age, location, job role or industry (not reported), please contact chelle@thewellbeinglab.com.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



WELLBEING COMPRISES MOMENTS OF THRIVING AND STRUGGLE.

Our findings continue to consistently demonstrate it is possible to thrive even in the midst of struggle. Sustaining our wellbeing at work is less dependent on situations and more dependent on our abilities to navigate both the good times and successes and the challenges and struggles that occur. Unfortunately, workers' resilience levels are waning, with only 43% now reporting they were *Living Well, Despite Struggles* versus 53.1% in 2021. More than two-thirds of workers (68.5%) felt like they were burning out at work. This is impacting workers' levels of performance, job satisfaction and commitment.



WELLBEING EBBS AND FLOWS.

The goal is not to constantly "improve" our levels of wellbeing. Rather it is to become more impactful and active participants in caring for our wellbeing, so that we can effectively engage and function well at work as we navigate the highs and lows we all experience. Worryingly, levels of Wellbeing Ability and Psychological Safety (two of the three key ingredients that help us to AMPlify our wellbeing) are at a four year low with only 34.1% of workers feeling completely able to care for their wellbeing, compared to 47% in 2019.



WELLBEING IS MULTI-DIMENSIONAL.

The most effective workplace wellbeing approaches are multi-dimensional. Since 2019 workers' individual levels of Positive Emotions, Meaning and Physical Health have significantly declined. Notably, there is a crisis for meaningful work unfolding. Only 39.1% of workers said their work was valuable and worthwhile, versus 47% in 2021, and 52.9% in 2020. This decline in meaningful work is being most felt by workers who were *Consistently Thriving* and those who were *Living Well, Despite Struggles*, who are statistically the best performers in workplaces.



WELLBEING IS NOT A SOLO ENDEAVOUR.

Our wellbeing perceptions, experiences, and behaviours are diverse and spread through a complicated web of social connections at the Me (individual workers), We (leaders and teams), and Us level (whole workplaces). Consequently, a systems lens needs to be applied across your workplace when it comes to effectively caring for wellbeing. This includes assessing and addressing psychosocial hazards in the workplace. Workers who often felt like they were burning out reported most frequently experiencing Unachievable Job Demands (93.5%), Poor Workplace Relationships (90.6%) and Harassment (87.9%) in their workplaces.



TINY IS MIGHTY WHEN IT COMES TO CARING FOR WELLBEING.

When it comes to sustainably caring for our wellbeing at work, we often struggle individually and collectively because we set goals that are too big and expect results too fast. Almost one-third of workers don't feel comfortable talking about mental health (31.9%) or accessing mental health programs (33.1%) at work, but significantly more workers feel comfortable talking about wellbeing (76.2%) and accessing wellbeing programs (73.5%). Workplaces can make a tiny but mighty change in their workplace wellbeing investments by prioritising Workplace Wellbeing Artificial Intelligence Bots, Wellbeing Apps, Wellbeing Workshops and Wellbeing Coaching, the most effective forms of workplace wellbeing support.

SNAPSHOT: HYBRID WORK

13.9% of the sample reported that they had started to use both their work premises and home as needed after COVID-19, while 10.4% of the sample reported always having worked in a hybrid arrangement. These arrangements were most likely to have been organised in a conversation with their leader (31.4%), through a staff survey (23.4%) or individual negotiations (20.8%).

We found that hybrid workers were:

- MORE RESILIENT. These workers were significantly more likely
 to report that they were Living Well, Despite Struggles. They
 were significantly more likely to feel Psychological Safety, and able
 to bring up problems and be honest about mistakes with their
 teams.
- STRUGGLING THE MOST WITH UNACHIEVABLE JOB DEMANDS. 62.4% of hybrid workers felt they were burning out (significantly fewer than those who have started working from home or returned to work premises). However, these workers were experiencing the psychosocial hazard of *Unachievable Job Demands* more frequently than others.
- BEING BETTER SUPPORTED BY THEIR WORKPLACES AND LEADERS. These workers were the least likely to be receiving Nothing when it comes to workplace wellbeing support. They were also the most likely to report that they were receiving the support they needed from their direct supervisor.

WORKPLACE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Take a systems lens. Help your leaders address the psychosocial hazards burning workers out. Leaders need help addressing the Unachievable Job Demands, Poor Workplace Relationships and Harassment workers are reporting. Start by reviewing the strategic goals, plans and measures of success in your workplace to ensure they are setting your leaders up with the time, resources and support they need to address these risks for workers.
- Promote wellbeing, don't just protect mental health. Review the balance of your workplace wellbeing support investments. Most workplaces have too much invested in EAP services (which are proving only slightly more effective than doing nothing) and not enough in more effective tools that workers are more comfortable accessing like Wellbeing Artificial Intelligence Bots, Wellbeing Apps, Wellbeing Workshops and Wellbeing Coaching.
- Make work meaningful. Many workers are questioning the why and how of their work. Now is the time to engage your workers in open conversations about your shared hopes for what your workplace can achieve, the positive impact it can have, and the ways you want to work together to make this a reality.

TRUTH #1:

WELLBEING COMPRISES MOMENTS OF THRIVING AND STRUGGLE.

In its simplest form wellbeing is the ability to feel good and function effectively as we navigate the inevitable highs and lows of work and life. Studies – including ours – find that how we feel (physically, mentally and socially) and how we perform at work have a mutually reinforcing cycle. Work provides opportunities for ongoing learning and development, meaningful achievement, and connection with others, which nourish our wellbeing. And when we feel physically, mentally and socially well, we are able to bring more energy, focus and motivation to work and thus have better outcomes. While we might assume that thriving would only occur in good times, our findings continue to consistently demonstrate it is possible to thrive even in the midst of struggle. Sustaining our wellbeing at work is less dependent on situations and more dependent on our abilities to navigate both the good times and successes and the challenges and struggles that occur.

How does your workplace wellbeing strategy normalise moments of thriving and struggle? Is this part of your everyday wellbeing language?

68.5%

OF AUSTRALIAN WORKERS
FELT LIKE THEY WERE
BURNING OUT AT WORK.

THRIVING ≠ PROBLEM FREE

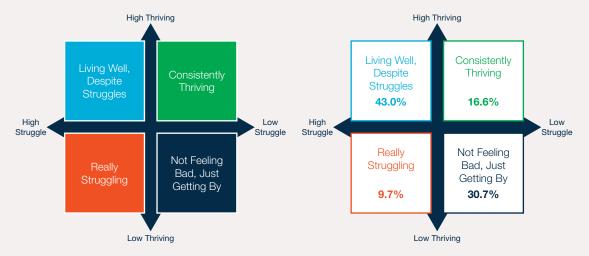
Wellbeing ranges from languishing (low levels of wellbeing) to thriving (high levels of wellbeing). We might imagine that those who thrive have problem-free lives, but across nine different surveys with almost 10,000 Australian, American and Canadian workers we have replicated the findings that both workers who were *Consistently Thriving* and those who were *Living Well, Despite Struggles* were statistically more likely to report higher levels of individual, team and organisational performance, engagement, and satisfaction at work. This 2022 data further replicates this finding.

Even when navigating the ongoing challenges of a global pandemic, rising inflation, and environmental disasters it is possible to thrive despite struggle, and it is possible not experience wellbeing even in the absence of struggle. Overall, as the immediate crises of COVID-19 lockdowns and border closures have receded, the number of workers who reported they were *Consistently Thriving* (16.6%) has stabilised to pre-pandemic levels.

However, the 2021 surge of workers who reported they were *Living Well*, *Despite Struggles* (52.1%) has significantly declined to 43%. Add this to the growing numbers of workers who reported they were *Not Feeling Bad, Just Getting By* (from 26.7% to 30.7%) or *Really Struggling* (from 6.9% to 9.7%), and it appears that workplaces need to take action if they wish to stabilise the resilience of workers.

STATE OF WELLBEING

2022 STATE OF WELLBEING (%)



2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY PERFORMANCE (MEANS)



AH-HA:

Significantly fewer Australian workers are Living Well, Despite Struggles and this loss of resilience is negatively impacting performance outcomes.

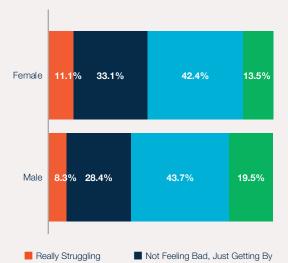
PERSONAL CONTEXT MATTERS

Female workers remained significantly less likely than their male colleagues to be *Consistently Thriving*, but both genders continued 2021's healthy upward trend for this state of wellbeing. However, while both genders also reported a similar and significant decline in the number of workers who were *Living Well, Despite Struggles*, there was only a significant increase in the number of female workers who were *Not Feeling Bad, Just Getting By* (from 27.4% to 33.1%).

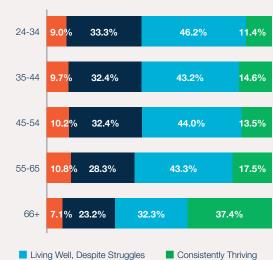
Research has suggested that from the age of 18 to 50 people's overall levels of wellbeing tend to decline, then slowly increases to surpass previous levels from the age of 70 onwards. However, during the global pandemic our data, and others, found that the wellbeing of young people had significantly declined. While this sample reported some improvement in the number of workers aged 24 – 34 years who were *Consistently Thriving* (11.4%), it is still significantly below their pre-COVID numbers (17.1%). This contrasts with all other age groups.

Researchers often find that ethnic minorities are at risk for greater struggle. We found that Indigenous workers were the most likely to be *Really Struggling*, and Asian workers were significantly more likely to be *Not Feeling Bad, Just Getting By.* Notably, workers who were Asian and People of Colour were significantly more likely than other workers of other ethnicities to be *Living Well, Despite Struggles*.

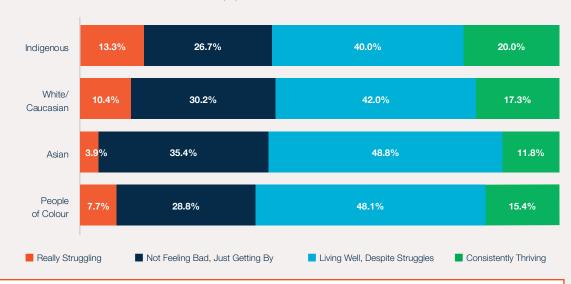
2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY GENDER (%)



2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY AGE (%)



2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY ETHNICITY (%)



AH-HA:

Female workers, workers aged 24 – 34 years, and Indigenous and Asian workers are more likely to need additional wellbeing support right now.

WORK CONTEXT MATTERS

In the past we've found that workers in job roles with more autonomy (e.g., owners, directors, c-level and managers) were more likely to report they were *Consistently Thriving*. This has remained true for business owners. However, workplace leaders were the least likely to be *Consistently Thriving*, and the most likely to be *Living Well*, *Despite Struggles*. While those not in leadership roles were the most likely to be *Not Feeling Bad*, *Just Getting By*.

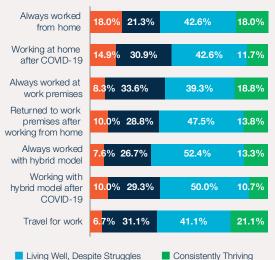
Having experienced one of the largest and fastest changes to working conditions ever encountered over the past two years, almost one third (31.1%) of workers reported changes to their working arrangements. Those who have not experienced any change were the most likely to be *Consistently Thriving*, while those navigating hybrid work arrangements were the most likely to be *Living Well*, *Despite Struggles*. Whether they'd always worked from home or had started working from home, these workers were more likely to be *Really Struggling*.

Consulting & Professional Services workers remained the most likely to be *Consistently Thriving*, while frontline workers in Community & Social Services and Education were the most likely to be *Living Well*, *Despite Struggles*. Hospitality & Tourism workers were the most likely to be *Not Feeling Bad*, *Just Getting By*, and Banking, Finance & Insurance, Government & Public Administration and Community & Social Services workers were more likely to be *Really Struggling*.

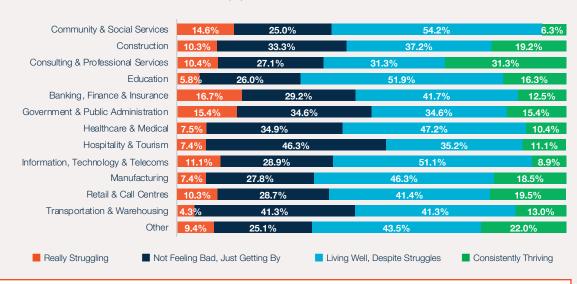
2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY ROLE (%)



2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY WORK ARRANGEMENTS (%)



2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY INDUSTRY (%)



AH-HA:

Team members, people working from home, and those in Hospitality, Banking, Government and Social Services are more likely to need support.

BURNOUT

Burnout is the manifestation of chronic workplace stress and energy depletion for which researchers have identified the tell-tale signs of: physical and emotional exhaustion, chronic cynicism and a sense of inefficacy.

68.5% of Australian workers reported they felt like they were burning out at work, 47.8% felt this was sometimes and 20.7% felt this was often.

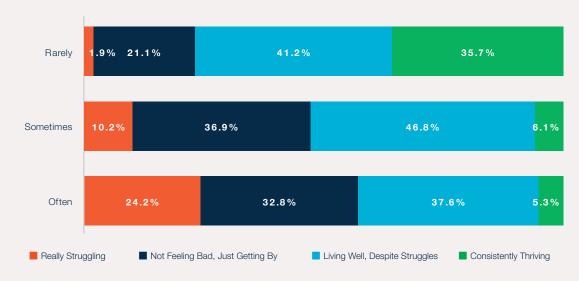
Workers who reported they *sometimes* or *often* felt like they were burning out at work were more likely to report *Not Feeling Bad, Just Getting By* or *Really Struggling*. The workers were also more likely to report significantly lower levels of performance, job satisfaction and workplace commitment.

Workers in leadership roles were more likely to report they felt like they were burnt out than their team members.

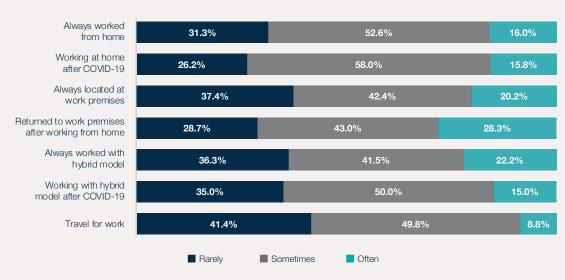
Banking & Finance workers reported feeling the most burnout (74%). They were followed by Healthcare & Medical workers (70.6%), Education (69.7%) and Hospitality & Tourism workers (68.8%).

Workers who had started working at home after COVID (73.8%) and those who had returned to their work premises after working at home (71.3%) were the most likely to report feeling burnt out at work.

2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY FEELING BURNOUT AT WORK (%)



2022 WORKING ARRANGEMENTS BY FEELING BURNOUT AT WORK (%)



AH-HA:

Almost 7 in 10 workers felt like they were burning out. Leaders and those working from home or returning to work premises reported the highest burnout.

TRUTH #2:

WELLBEING EBBS AND FLOWS.

Studies have found that wellbeing – much like body weight – has a genetically determined set-point range that for most of us is stable and relatively positive. Thus, the goal is not to constantly "improve" our levels of wellbeing. Rather it is to become more impactful and active participants in caring for our wellbeing, so that we can effectively engage and function well at work as we navigate the highs and lows we all experience. Our findings indicate three key ingredients to amplify our wellbeing: Wellbeing Ability (A), Wellbeing Motivation (M), and Psychological Safety (P).

How are you measuring the effectiveness of your workplace wellbeing strategy? Are your goals healthy, realistic, and actionable when it comes to caring for your workers' wellbeing.

34.1%

OF AUSTRALIAN WORKERS FELT COMPLETELY ABLE TO CARE FOR THEIR WELLBEING, VERSUS 36.7% IN 2021.

WELLBEING EBBS AND FLOWS

Professor Robert Cummins has found across 13 years of general population data gathered from more than 60,000 people that the normative range for wellbeing is 73.8 to 76.7 on a 100-point scale and that this can be predicted with 95% certainty. This has led Cummins and other researchers to suggest that people have a predetermined genetic set-point (a score they consistently return to) when it comes to their wellbeing.

This doesn't mean our levels of wellbeing never change. In a safe environment where good experiences dominate our wellbeing will increase, and in a difficult environment where bad experiences are commonplace our wellbeing will decrease. However, the extent of these fluctuations in our wellbeing is normally found to be quite modest and is calculated to be around 10 percentage points of either side of the set-point.

We can see these fluctuations in evidence across the states of wellbeing as the circumstances of most workers changed dramatically between 2019 and 2022. Unfortunately, despite large population studies in Germany and Britain finding that powerful events can change wellbeing set-points, it appears the 2021 surge in the number of workers *Living Well, Despite Struggles* has already subsided and returned to their pre-pandemic set-points.

2019 - 2022 STATE OF WELLBEING (%)



AH-HA:

The 2021 surge in the number of Australian workers who were Living Well, Despite Struggles has unfortunately already subsided.

THE WELLBEING AMPLIFIERS

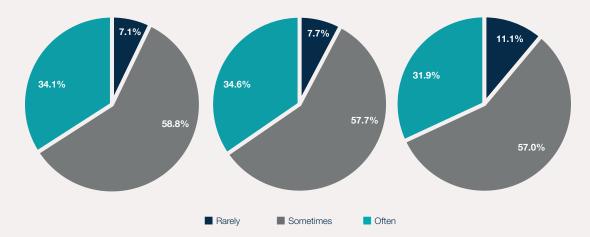
We have consistently found in our workplace studies that people who were *Consistently Thriving* or *Living Well, Despite Struggles* report statistically higher levels of Wellbeing Ability, Wellbeing Motivation, and Psychological Safety – we call these the Wellbeing AMPlifiers. And this sample of Australian workers was no different.

Approximately one-third of workers (34.1%) reported being able to confidently care for their wellbeing. This represents a continued decline from 51% in 2019, 54.1% in 2020 and 36.8% in 2021. Encouragingly, 34.6% of workers felt extremely motivated to care for their wellbeing, a slight increase from 31.5% in 2021 and 31.9% in 2020, but well below 2019's 47%.

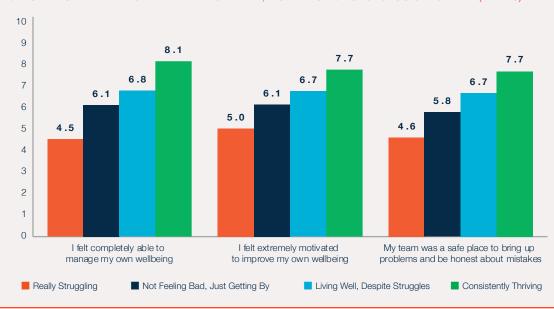
As we have observed in the past however, Wellbeing Ability and Motivation are necessary but not sufficient for workplaces where people feel well. Thriving not only requires skills and ongoing effort, but also requires psychologically safe spaces for workers to experiment, learn and grow amidst the ups and downs we all experience at work and in life. Notably, Psychological Safety was also at the lowest level we have reported in the last four years with only 31.9% of workers reporting that their team was a safe place to be honest and bring up mistakes, compared to 37.5% in 2021, 42.2% in 2020 and 45% in 2019.

2022 WELLBEING ABILITY (%)

2022 WELLBEING MOTIVATION (%) 2022 PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY (%)



2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY WELLBEING ABILITY, MOTIVATION & PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY (MEANS)



AH-HA:

A third of workers can confidently care for their wellbeing, but declining levels of Wellbeing Ability and Psychological Safety need to be reversed.

TRUTH #3:

WELLBEING IS MULTI-DIMENSIONAL.

There is no one magic mental health and wellbeing strategy that will help every person to be well. Depending on someone's values, resources, preferences, and context, different strategies are suitable for different people at different times. This is why studies have found that the most effective workplace wellbeing approaches are multi-dimensional. One way to understand, measure, and act on an evidence-based multi-dimensional approach to care for wellbeing is Professor Martin Seligman's PERMAH Wellbeing Framework, which suggests that wellbeing comprises: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Physical Health.

Is your workplace wellbeing strategy built around an evidence-based, multi-dimensional wellbeing framework that allows your workers to choose the wellbeing approaches that work best for them?

39.1%

OF AUSTRALIAN WORKERS SAID THEIR WORK WAS VALUABLE AND WORTHWHILE, VERSUS 47% IN 2021, AND 52.9% IN 2020.

WELLBEING IS MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

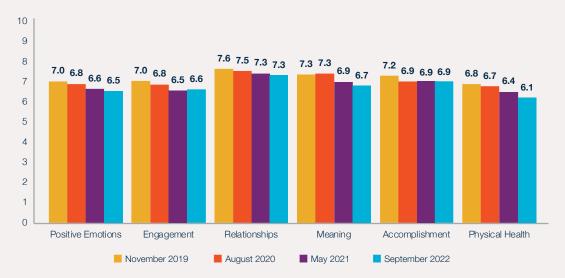
As noted, Professor Martin Seligman's PERMAH wellbeing framework points to six dimensions of feeling and functioning: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Physical Health. Different domains will be important for different people but feeling poorly in one often results in feeling poorly in other areas as well.

We discussed earlier that most workers report healthy levels of wellbeing. This is evidenced in our samples, with individual scores averaging around 7 out of 10 for most of the PERMAH factors. We can also see there is some ebb and flow to workers' levels of wellbeing over time, but this is rarely more than the predicted 10% shift, even when circumstances have been challenging.

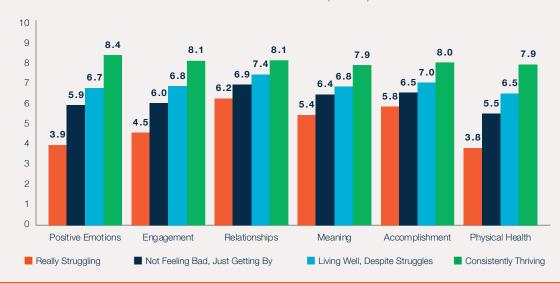
However, it is worth noting that since 2019 workers' individual levels of Positive Emotions (from 7.0 to 6.5), Meaning (from 7.3 to 6.7) and Physical Health (from 6.8 to 6.1) have significantly declined. These changes may help explain the Great Resignation and 'quiet quitting' witnessed across many workplaces during 2022.

Workers who were *Consistently Thriving* and those who were *Living Well, Despite Struggles* were more likely to report higher levels of all PERMAH factors however the level of Meaning for these workers has significantly declined since 2021.

2019 - 2022 PERMAH INDIVIDUAL WORKER WELLBEING FACTORS (MEANS)



2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY PERMAH WELLBEING FACTORS (MEANS)



AH-HA:

Declining levels of Meaning at work need to be reversed, especially for workers who are Consistently Thriving and those Living Well, Despite Struggles.

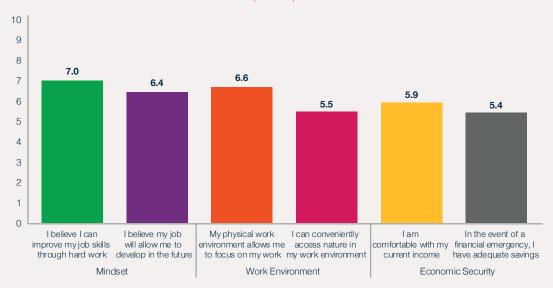
ADDITIONAL FACTORS AT WORK

Professor Seligman has encouraged researchers to explore factors that may also shape wellbeing in addition to PERMAH. As a result, Dr. Scott Donaldson and his colleagues have found three additional factors which are also strong predictors of wellbeing. These are Mindset (the belief that workers can improve their job skills and that their job will allow them to develop in the future), Work Environment (workers' physical work environment), and Economic Security (comfort with current income and adequate savings in a financial emergency). We found in this sample that these additional factors were highly predictive of work outcomes, such as job performance, job satisfaction, and workplace commitment.

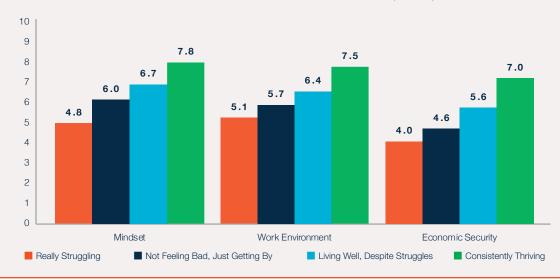
Workers who were *Consistently Thriving* and those who were *Living Well*, *Despite Struggles* were more likely to report higher levels of Mindset, Work Environment, and Economic Security. These findings suggest that the additional PERMAH factors not only add useful information to the measurement of employee wellbeing, but they are also effective at improving desirable work outcomes and the performance of teams, leaders and workplaces.

Interestingly, given rising interest rates and inflation, only 29.1% of workers were comfortable with their current income with 73.6% indicating that in the event of a financial emergency they would struggle to have adequate savings.

2022 ADDITIONAL PERMAH WELLBEING FACTORS (MEANS)



2022 STATE OF WELLBEING BY ADDITIONAL PERMAH WELLBEING FACTORS (MEANS)



AH-HA:

In addition to PERMAH factors, Mindset, Work Environment and Economic Security are strong predictors of wellbeing and workplace outcomes.

TRUTH #4:

WELLBEING IS NOT A SOLO ENDEAVOUR.

Associate Professor Aaron Jarden notes that our wellbeing perceptions, experiences, and behaviours are diverse and spread through a complicated web of social connections at the Me (individual workers), We (leaders and teams), and Us level (whole workplaces). In particular, leaders' actions play a significant role in nurturing or impairing this web. This means it is not enough to simply teach and support workers to improve their 'self-care'. A systems lens needs to be applied across your workplace when it comes to effectively caring for wellbeing. It is why new Australian workplace laws and international standards have recently been established to ensure workplaces are clear on their wellbeing responsibilities.

Does your workplace strategy take a systems lens to caring for wellbeing? How are you addressing the new psychosocial hazard requirements in your workplace? 93.5%

WHO FEEL BURNT OUT REPORTED UNREASONABLE JOB DEMANDS.

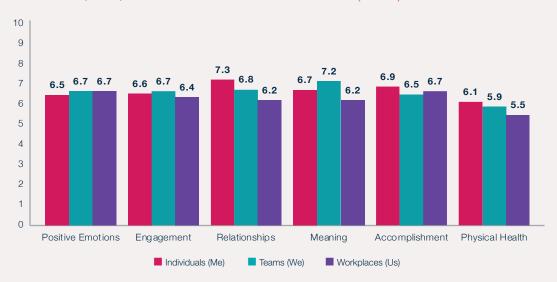
WELLBEING IS SYSTEMIC

Respondents rated their individual PERMAH factors (Me), in addition to the PERMAH factor levels for their team (We) and workplace (Us). The team and workplace scores represent workplaces norms, attitudes, and actions that undermine or amplify individual experiences of wellbeing.

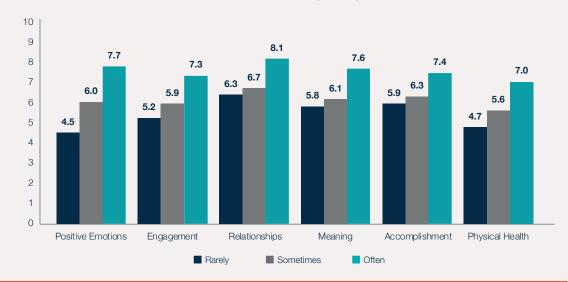
As we have seen since 2019, workers continued to report significantly higher levels of individual Relationships, than their teams or workplace – this is particularly true for those who have started working at home after COVID-19. Likewise, individuals and teams continued to report significantly higher level of Physical Health than their workplaces – this is particularly true for those located at their work premises.

Previous studies by Associate Professor Mandy O'Neill at George Mason University and her colleagues have found that leaders have a significant impact on workers' wellbeing. Our data again confirmed these findings, with workers who reported that they often received the support they required from their direct supervisor reporting significantly higher levels of all PERMAH factors. They also reported higher levels of job satisfaction, performance, and commitment to their workplace. Unfortunately, 76.8% of leaders reported that they often provide the support their workers need, but only 33.9% of workers felt this was the case.

2022 INDIVIDUAL, TEAM, WORKPLACE PERMAH WELLBEING FACTORS (MEANS)



2022 LEVEL OF DIRECT SUPERVISOR SUPPORT BY PERMAH (MEANS)



AH-HA:

Almost two-thirds of workers believe they're not receiving the support they need from their direct supervisors, which is negatively impacting their wellbeing.

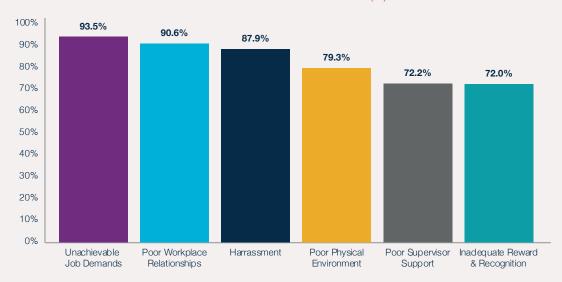
PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

Psychosocial hazards cause psychological and physical harm and arise from or relate to the design or management of work, the working environment, or workplace interactions and behaviours. With a new SafeWork Australia code of practice just published and updates to Work Safety & Health laws underway in some Australian states, organisations are facing new responsibilities to identify, measure and proactively manage workplace psychosocial hazards.

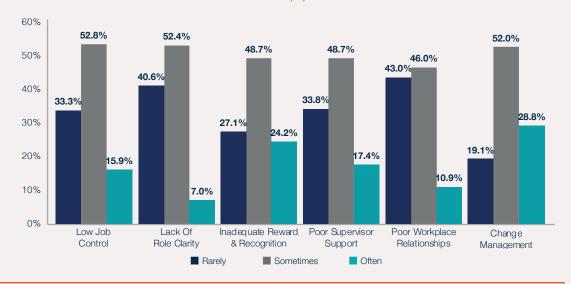
When it came to the impact different psychosocial hazards had on their wellbeing, workers who often felt like they were burning out reported (68.5% of respondents), most frequently experiencing *Unachievable Job Demands* (93.5%). This was followed by *Poor Workplace Relationships* (90.6%), and *Harassment* (87.9%) in their workplace.

Overall, the most frequently experienced psychosocial hazards workers reported experiencing were *Poor Change Management*, with 80.9% of workers saying they were not consulted about changes in their workplace. For example, 30.1% of workers reported that their organisation had not consulted with them about their preferred work arrangements. This was followed by *Inadequate Reward & Recognition* (72.9%) and *Low Job Control* (68.7%).

2022 TOP 6 PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS BY OFTEN FEELING BURNT OUT (%)



2022 TOP 6 PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS BY FREQUENCY (%)



AH-HA:

Unachievable Job Demands, Poor Workplace Relationships and Harassment are the psychosocial hazards most frequently reported by burnt out workers.

TRUTH #5:

TINY IS MIGHTY WHEN IT COMES TO CARING FOR WELLBEING.

Caring for our wellbeing is never won-and-done. After all, going for one run, connecting with one colleague or completing one meaningful task isn't enough to keep us healthy. Unfortunately, when it comes to sustainably caring for our wellbeing at work, we often struggle individually and collectively because we set goals that are too big and expect results too fast. The good news is researchers have found that by prioritising small changes and keeping expectations realistic we are more likely to improve our ability and sustain our motivation to care for wellbeing. Not only are tiny wellbeing nudges at the Me, We and Us levels more likely to take root, they are also more likely to endure as the highs and lows of work are navigated.

What are the tiny but mighty wellbeing nudges that are prioritised in your workplace wellbeing strategy? How are you balancing your workers' preferences for mental health and wellbeing tools and support at work?

76.2%

OF AUSTRALIAN WORKERS FELT COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT WELLBEING ISSUES AT WORK.

PROTECTING & PROMOTING WELLBEING

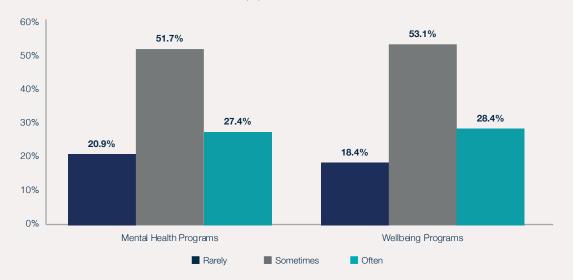
When it comes to caring for the wellbeing of workers, the Australian government's Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces recommends that workplaces prioritise action and commitment around three foundational intersecting pillars: Protect, Respond and Promote.

When it comes to implementing this approach 27.4% of workers reported often having access to Mental Health Programs in their workplace (down from 31.4% in 2021), while 28.4% of workers often had access to Wellbeing Programs (up from 23.7% in 2021).

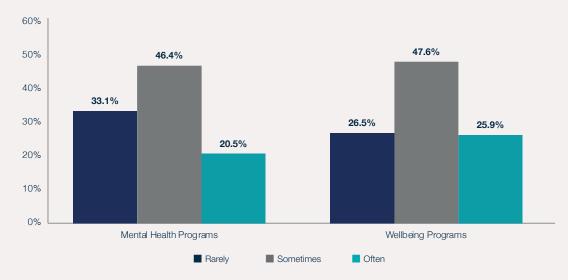
Notably, workplaces which were often providing Wellbeing Programs and rarely providing Mental Health Programs were statistically more likely to have higher levels of worker job satisfaction, organisational commitment and individual performance. This was also true for building Psychological Safety.

It is also important to note that workplaces who were often providing Wellbeing Programs and sometimes or often providing Mental Health Programs were statistically more likely to have higher levels of Wellbeing Ability and Motivation.

2022 WORKPLACE PROVISION OF PROGRAMS (%)



2022 COMFORT ACCESSING PROGRAMS PROVIDED AT WORK (%)



AH-HA:

Workers feel more comfortable accessing Wellbeing Programs and these programs are more likely to be linked with positive workplace outcomes.

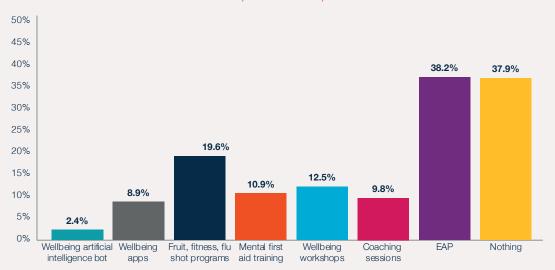
WORKPLACE WELLBEING SUPPORT

82.4% of Australian workers reported knowing where to find help at work when it came to caring for their wellbeing. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) remain the most frequently provided support in Australian workplaces (38.2%, up from 29.8% in 2021). Unfortunately, workers continue to report that EAPs are the least utilised support. EAPs are also the least effective form of support for AMPlifying workers' levels of Wellbeing Ability, Motivation, and Psychological Safety. In fact, EAPs were only slightly better than providing Nothing.

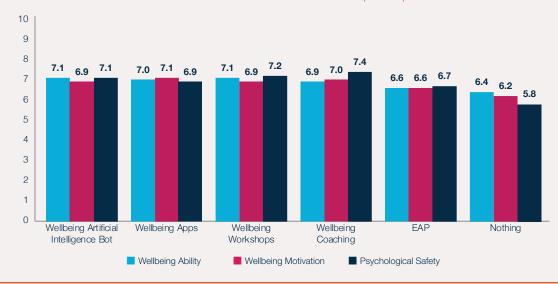
What were the most effective forms of workplace wellbeing support? Wellbeing Artificial Intelligence Bots, Wellbeing Apps, Wellbeing Workshops and Wellbeing Coaching led the way when it came to AMPlifying workers' levels of Wellbeing Ability, Motivation and Psychology Safety.

Workers who were *Consistently Thriving* were more likely to have the support of *Wellbeing Artificial Intelligence Bots* or *Wellbeing Coaching*. While those who were *Living Well, Despite Struggles* were more likely to also have the support of *Wellbeing Apps* or *Wellbeing Workshops*. Unfortunately, despite being no more expensive than EAP services, these forms of wellbeing support are provided by workplaces far less frequently.

WORKPLACE WELLBEING SUPPORT PROVIDED (% FREQUENCY)



2022 WELLBEING WORKPLACE SUPPORT BY WELLBEING AMPLIFIERS (MEANS)



AH-HA:

Wellbeing Artificial Intelligence Bots, Wellbeing Apps, Wellbeing Workshops and Wellbeing Coaching are the most effective forms of support.

REACHING OUT FOR HELP

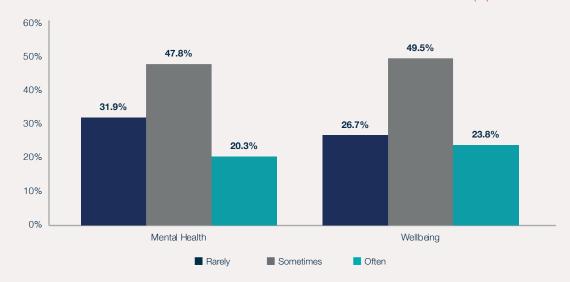
Almost one-third (31.9%) of workers didn't feel comfortable talking about mental health issues in their workplace. This was particularly true for workers who were *Not Feeling Bad, Just Getting By* who were the most likely to never tell anyone they were struggling to care for their wellbeing at work.

In contrast, 73.3% of workers felt comfortable talking about wellbeing issues in their workplace. This was particularly true for workers who were *Living Well, Despite Struggles* who were the most likely to reach out to someone when they were struggling. However, it is important to note that workers who were *Really Struggling*, were the least comfortable talking about wellbeing issues in the workplace. Similar results have appeared in other studies, and in order to do no harm it is important that workplace wellbeing programs take this into account.

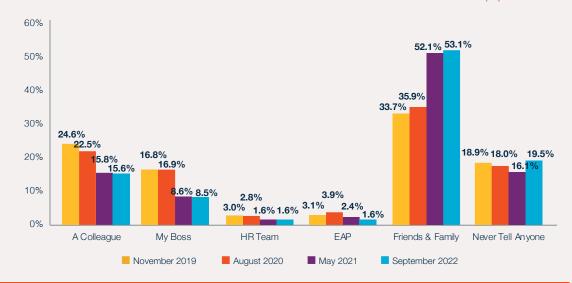
At work, bosses remained an effective option for AMPlifying people's confidence to care for their wellbeing, but only 8.3% of workers reported reach out to their boss for help (the fewest we have ever seen). This is despite 84.6% of leaders reporting they feel comfortable talking about mental health issues at work and 90% of leaders saying they feel comfortable talking about wellbeing at work.

The majority of Australian workers (53.1%) continue to seek help by reaching out to their friends or family making them a valuable source of workplace wellbeing support.

WORKERS FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING AT WORK (%)



2022 PERSON I REACH OUT TO WHEN STRUGGLING TO CARE FOR MY WELLBEING AT WORK (%)



AH-HA:

Workers are more comfortable talking about wellbeing issues than mental health issues, except for those workers who are *Really Struggling*.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY WHAT WE'VE LEARNED IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

Remember that caring for wellbeing is never 'won-and-done'. Your goal is not to create the perfect workplace wellbeing strategy, but to support your workplace to continue becoming more impactful and active in their wellbeing approaches. Don't forget that the struggles you'll encounter are normal, and simply an invitation to continue responsibly experimenting as you figure out what works best for your workers and the outcomes you all want.

As you experiment use the five surprising wellbeing truths to shape your wellbeing strategy:



WELLBEING COMPRISES MOMENTS OF THRIVING AND STRUGGLE.

How does your workplace wellbeing strategy normalise moments of thriving and struggle? Is this part of your everyday wellbeing language?



WELLBEING EBBS AND FLOWS.

How are you measuring the effectiveness of your workplace wellbeing strategy? Are your goals healthy, realistic, and actionable when it comes to caring for your workers' wellbeing?



WELLBEING IS MULTI-DIMENSIONAL.

Is your workplace wellbeing strategy built around an evidence-based, multi-dimensional wellbeing framework that allows your workers to choose the wellbeing approaches that work best for them?



WELLBEING IS NOT A SOLO ENDEAVOUR.

Does your workplace strategy take a systems lens to caring for wellbeing? How are you addressing the new psychosocial hazard requirements in your workplace?



TINY IS MIGHTY WHEN IT COMES TO CARING FOR WELLBEING.

What are the tiny but mighty wellbeing nudges prioritised in your workplace wellbeing strategy? How are you balancing your workers' preferences for mental health and wellbeing tools and support at work?

WANT MORE?



TAKE THE FREE PERMAH WELLBEING SURVEY

Measure your wellbeing and see how you're doing when it comes to your levels of thriving and struggle, and your abilities and motivation to care for your wellbeing, by taking the FREE PERMAH Wellbeing Survey. You can even create a free personal wellbeing plan, drawing on more than 200 evidence-based wellbeing actions. You can also use this tool for teams or entire workplaces.



BOOK A FREE 30-MINUTE WORKPLACE WELLBEING REVIEW

Take a deeper dive into the workplace wellbeing research and how the surprising truths can be applied to your workplace wellbeing strategy with our team. This free 30-minute online conversation is designed to give you the confidence, support and actions you need to care for wellbeing across your workplace. Click here to book your session.



GRAB A DONE-FOR-YOU WORKPLACE WELLBEING TOOLBOX

Our evidence-based, done-for-you workplace wellbeing tools will save you time and money by putting everything you need at your fingertips to help care for your people's wellbeing. Whether you're wanting a step-by-step guide and worksheets to help coach people around caring for their wellbeing, a set of team tools to build psychological safety, or everything you need to design and deliver an appreciative inquiry workshop or summit to ensure your people feel consulted around the changes you are making, you'll find everything you need. Click here to learn more about our done-for-you toolboxes.

ABOUT THE WELLBEING LAB RESEARCHERS



DR. MICHELLE MCQUAID

Dr. Michelle McQuaid is a best-selling author, workplace wellbeing teacher and playful change activator. An honorary fellow at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education, in addition to hosting the highly acclaimed weekly podcast, *Making Positive Psychology Work*, which features leading researchers and practitioners from around the world, Michelle blogs for *Psychology Today, The Huffington Post* and *Thrive*, and her work has been featured in *Forbes*, *The Harvard Business Review, The Wall Street Journal, Boss Magazine, The Age* and more. You can find more of Michelle's work at **The Wellbeing Lab**.



DR. PEGGY KERN

Dr. Peggy Kern is an associate professor at the Centre for Positive Psychology at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education. Her research draws on a variety of methodologies to examine questions around who thrives in life and why, including understanding and measuring healthy functioning, identifying individual and social factors impacting life trajectories, and systems-informed approaches to wellbeing. She has published three books and more than 100 peer-reviewed articles and chapters. You can find out more about Peggy's work at www.peggykern.org.



KATIA MURPHY in

Katia Murphy is the PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Research Manager and is a passionate health and wellbeing advocate. Katia is currently completing her Bachelor of Business, specialising in Management & Leadership, with electives in Psychological Research Methods, Qualitative Research Methods and Psychological Assessment. Her interests are in integrating health and wellbeing concepts to build meaningful lives and enhance performance at all levels. Katia also has qualifications as a coach for exercise and nutrition, with nine years of experience helping a range of clients with health goals. Katia is a qualified PERMAH Wellbeing Survey debriefer and has completed the Certificate in Creating Wellbeing in Small Business Workplaces. You can find more about Katia's work at **The Wellbeing Lab**.



DANIELLE JACOBS 177

Danielle Jacobs is a registered psychologist, certified and licensed Tiny Habits® Coach, affiliate member of the APS College of Organisational Psychologists, Co-Founder of The Wellbeing Lab & Co-Creator of The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey. Danielle uses evidence-based organisational scholarship and positive psychology practices within businesses locally, nationally and internationally to help their people flourish at the individual, team and organisational levels. What gets Danielle up in the morning is a drive to leave everyone she comes into contact with better than she found them. You can find more about Danielle's work at **The Wellbeing Lab**.

ABOUT ADDITIONAL RESEARCHERS



DR. SCOTT DONALDSON

Dr Scott Donaldson is a Postdoctoral Scholar in Evaluation, Statistics, and Measurement at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine, Moores Cancer Center. Scott received his Ph.D. in Psychology with a concentration in Evaluation and Applied Research Methods and a co-concentration in Positive Organizational Psychology from Claremont Graduate University. He received an MS in Organizational Psychology from the University of Southern California, and his BA in Psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles. His research focuses on the design, measurement, and evaluation of individual, workplace and community-based wellbeing interventions. You can find out more about Scott's work at: https://www.scottdonaldsonphd.com.



DONALD E. FREDERICK (PH.D.)

Donald is a data science consultant, technologist and entrepreneur focused on the future of technology, work and flourishing. He completed his postdoctoral research on the psychology of work and flourishing at The Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University's Institute for Quantitative Social Science. He holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Chicago. He also holds master's degrees in computer science and divinity, also from Chicago. You can find out more on his website https://neurofoo.com.

ABOUT THE AHRI RESEARCHERS



SARAH MCCANN-BARTLETT

Sarah McCann is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian HR Institute. She has extensive, global experience in membership and trade bodies and has held senior roles across a variety of sectors in Australia, the UK and the USA.

Sarah was Director General (CEO) of the British Constructional Steelwork Association from September 2011 to December 2019. In this role, she established a new sector apprenticeship programme, created a new market development programme to drive market share gains for constructional steelwork, and drove rapid growth of the group's certification arm. Previously, Sarah held a number of senior executive positions at the Victorian Building and Plumbing Industry Commissions, including as Deputy Commissioner. She helped lead the Commissions' response to the February 2009 bushfires, and developed and implemented a shared Corporate Services model between both Commissions, including developing and leading strategies to drive the change process.

Sarah has also held roles representing and supporting the Australian wool industry with the Australian Wool Corporation and its successor The Woolmark Company in Melbourne, the UK and New York where she held the role of President and Group Manager, Americas. Sarah holds Commerce and Arts degrees from the University of Melbourne, an MBA from Monash University, and postgraduate qualifications in marketing. She is a Fellow of the UK Institute of Directors. Sarah lives in Melbourne with her husband and teenage son, and their three dogs.



GERWYN DAVIES

Gerwyn is AHRI's research and advocacy specialist, having moved to Australia earlier this year from the UK, where he was employed as a public policy specialist for the CIPD, AHRI's cousin organisation. Gerwyn was a national media commentator and a member of various government working groups and taskforces in the UK; including the government's EU Immigration Employers' Representative Group. Gerwyn's previous publications have covered migration, the atypical workforce and the National Living Wage alongside the institute's highly influential quarterly 'Labour Market Outlook' report.



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 MELISSA ELF, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AT FLIGHT CENTRE



ABOUT THE NEUROPOWER RESEARCHERS



PETER BUROW in

Peter is the author of the NeuroPower framework - a system explaining human behaviour through the integration of neuroscience, psychology and best practice management theory which he has applied with organisations around the world. He is also the author of numerous books on the application of neuroscience and behavioural economics to business and leadership. With over 25 years' experience, Peter is an expert in business transformation, strategy and leadership. He is internationally regarded as a trusted advisor of senior executive teams who are faced with leading through complex people challenges such as mergers and acquisitions, changes in senior leadership, large-scale restructures, significant cultural performance uplifts and organisational realignments due to changes in markets, policy, leadership or governments.



MISHA BYRNE in

Misha is a neuroscientist with experience working in complex, sensitive and rapidly changing environments. He specialises in engaging diverse groups to develop implementable strategies for challenges where problems are poorly defined but clear outcomes are required. He is a Faculty Member of Singularity University (Portugal), where he lectures on the disruptive impacts of technology on our organisations, and how to harness human collaboration during major change. Born and raised in Australia, Misha has worked extensively across the globe (including, for example, Thoughtworks (UK), Siemens, Allianz and Roland Berger (Germany), Emirates Airlines (UAE) and Genesis Energy (New Zealand). In 2019 Misha and his guitar relocated to Munich where he leads the European Consulting Practice for NeuroPower Group.



PIPPA HAGUE in

Pippa is a change architect, building systems and behaviours across businesses that enable teams to manage transformative change agendas. With 13 years corporate business experience across finance and healthcare (UK and AU) and five years consulting, Pippa brings high energy and focused delivery experience. Her current obsession is with helping businesses build flow into hybrid practices, as businesses try to make returning to the office worth the individual's effort. Pippa's experience spans Government, Health Sector, General Insurance and Financial Services. Her passions are patient-/customer-centred service design, the application of behavioural economics and social cognitive neuroscience to change navigation, maximising the human value gained through technologies and driving organisational agility in building the capabilities of individuals and teams to thrive in a world of rapid change.



ANNA WATERS In

Anna Waters has 12 years' experience working as a psychologist and management consultant, using evidence-based approaches to design, develop, implement and evaluate practical interventions to humanise work – for individuals, groups and organisations. Working across health, education, information technology, professional services, financial services, energy, government and not for profit, Anna translates the insights from psychology and neuroscience research to understand and shift human behaviour and performance in the workplace. Anna has co-authored articles on topics such as leading in a crisis, resilience, focus and cognitive attention; guest lectures at the Monash University Evolving Health Leadership program; and supervises postgraduate organisational psychology and neuroscience students.



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ABOUT THE PIONEERA RESEARCHERS



DANIELLE OWEN WHITFORD

Danielle Owen Whitford is the Founder & CEO, of start up Pioneera, founded in 2018 to improve mental health by tackling the crippling issue of workplace stress and burnout.

Pioneera's Al platform combines technology with psychology to prevent workplace stress whilst promoting positive productive cultures and is gaining strong interest across both corporate Australia and small businesses.

Danielle has a Bachelor in Psychology and Masters in Communication and speaks regularly on wellbeing, AI, women in technology, leadership; and preventing burnout.



BRIAN HAY

Brian is an experienced software engineer manager, with 25 years spent researching, developing, and program managing in mining, telecommunications, ICT services and government. Whilst in Telstra Research Laboratories, Brian led Research & Development in identity, knowledge management and learning and established a project with the Centre for the Mind to investigate human focus and attention for enhancing productivity. More recently has consulted on development in personal privacy management using blockchain. Brian holds a Bachelors degree in Engineering & IT and a Masters in Business & Technology.

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