

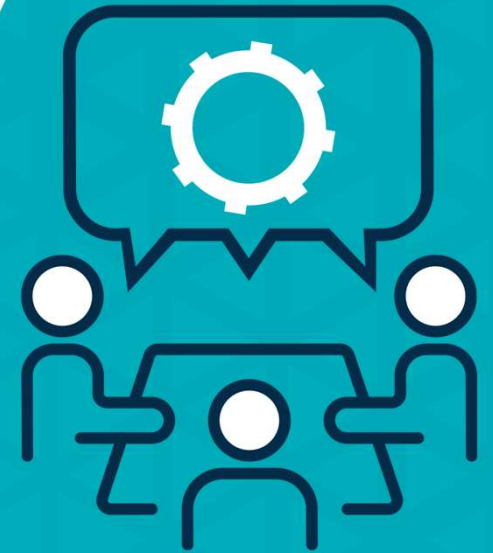


Australian Government

Comcare

**Mental Health Community of Practice:**  
**People at Work in-person**  
**workshop**

June 2024



# Acknowledgement of Country



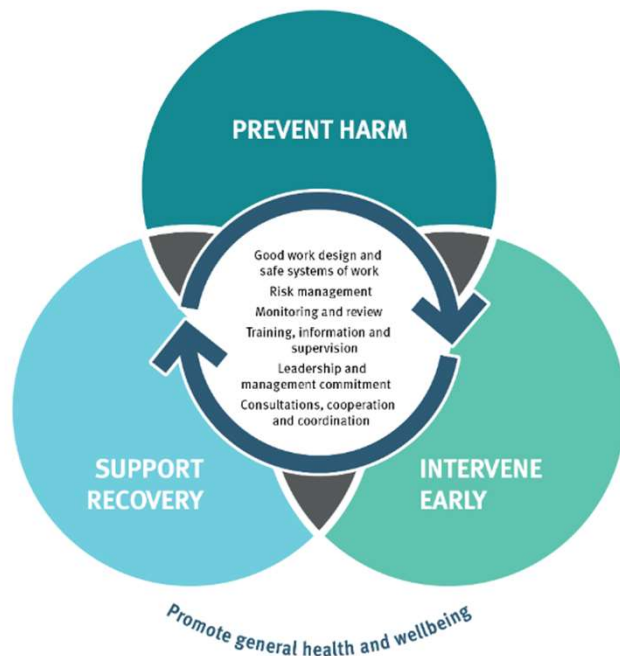
# Introduction and Housekeeping

- Where possible, please keep your phones on silent
- The team may take some candid photos today, if you do not wish to be in these, please let us know
- Questions will be addressed towards the end of today's session
- Morning tea break will be provided at 11:00am
- All slides and resources will be emailed following the event

# Event Overview

- Introduction to People at Work
- Step 1: Preparing your workplace
- Step 2: Setting up your survey
- Step 3: Interpreting results
- Morning tea break
- Step 4: Taking action and Step 5: Monitoring and reviewing
- Panel discussion and lessons learned

# Introduction: Psychosocial Hazards



- Psychosocial hazards are aspects of work with potential to cause psychological or physical harm.
- Employers have responsibilities under WHS laws to identify and manage psychosocial hazards and risks in the workplace.
- People at Work is one of the available tools that can be used to help understand psychosocial hazards in the workplace.



# Benefits of People at Work®

Helps workplaces comply with health and safety duties

Improved management of work-related psychosocial hazards

Provides a consulting mechanism for engaging workers on psychological health & safety

Demonstrates to workers that the workplace values their psychological health & safety

Potential to improve worker productivity, satisfaction & engagement

Potential reduction in workers' compensation claims related to psychological health

# People at Work® Overview

A **5-step psychosocial risk assessment** to identify and manage hazards to psychological health and safety at work

Contains an **evidenced-based** and validated survey, with Australian benchmarking

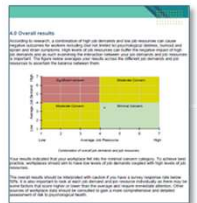
Nationally available **digital platform** with built-in resources

Suitable for businesses with **more than 20** workers

[www.peopleastwork.gov.au/](http://www.peopleastwork.gov.au/)



Online resources and learning modules



Detailed reports and guidance on taking action

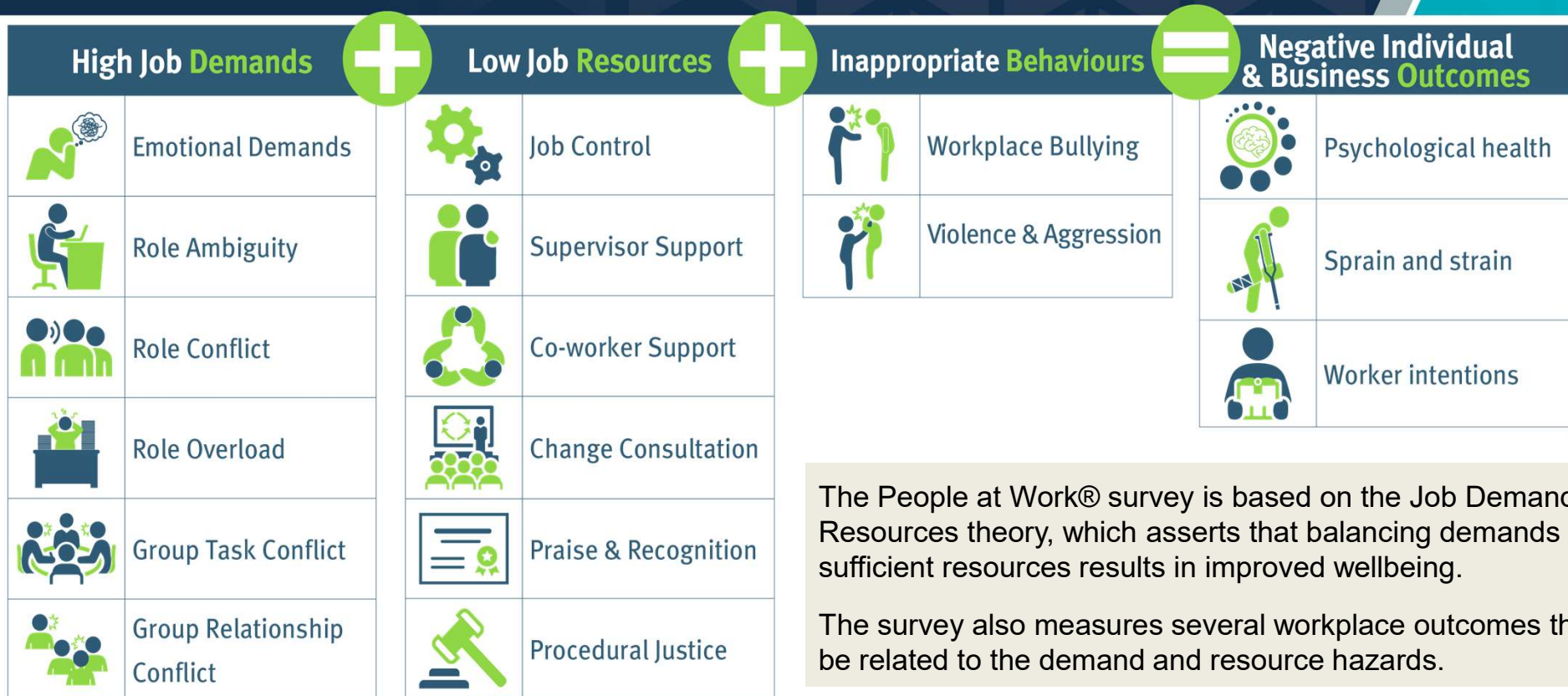


Industry benchmarking



Easy to set-up and administer psychosocial risk assessment survey

# What does People at Work® measure?



The People at Work® survey is based on the Job Demands and Resources theory, which asserts that balancing demands with sufficient resources results in improved wellbeing.

The survey also measures several workplace outcomes that can be related to the demand and resource hazards.



# People at Work funding partners

People at Work is proudly funded by



# Outline for today



Preparing  
the workplace



Conducting  
the survey



Understanding  
your result



Taking  
action



Reviewing  
and improving

# People at Work®: Step 1



## Key activities:

- Business case
- Project plan
- Communications plan
- Stakeholder consultation

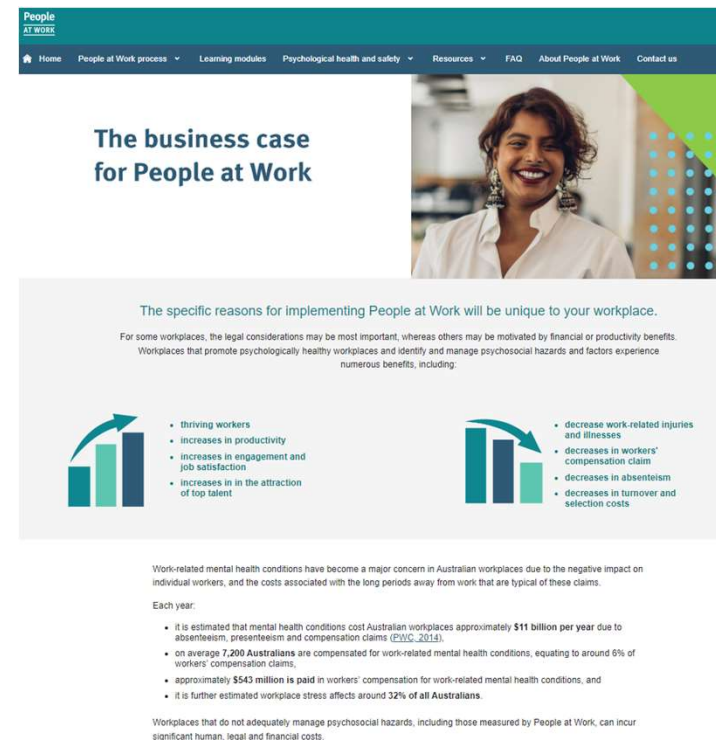
## Resources include:

- Promotional Poster
- Communications plan guide
- Participant FAQs
- Project Timeline
- Managing PAW Guide
- The Business Case for PAW



# Step 1: Develop a business case

- Gain senior leader engagement and accountability
- Clarify purpose and rationale for People at Work
- Identify key benefits
- Outline the approach and identify personnel
- Lesson: Strong engagement supported higher response rate



The screenshot displays the 'People at Work' website. The header includes navigation links: Home, People at Work process, Learning modules, Psychological health and safety, Resources, FAQ, About People at Work, and Contact us. The main heading is 'The business case for People at Work', accompanied by a photo of a smiling woman. Below this, text states: 'The specific reasons for implementing People at Work will be unique to your workplace. For some workplaces, the legal considerations may be most important, whereas others may be motivated by financial or productivity benefits. Workplaces that promote psychologically healthy workplaces and identify and manage psychosocial hazards and factors experience numerous benefits, including:

- thriving workers
- increases in productivity
- increases in engagement and job satisfaction
- increases in the attraction of top talent
- decrease work-related injuries and illnesses
- decreases in workers' compensation claim
- decreases in absenteeism
- decreases in turnover and selection costs

Work-related mental health conditions have become a major concern in Australian workplaces due to the negative impact on individual workers, and the costs associated with the long periods away from work that are typical of these claims.

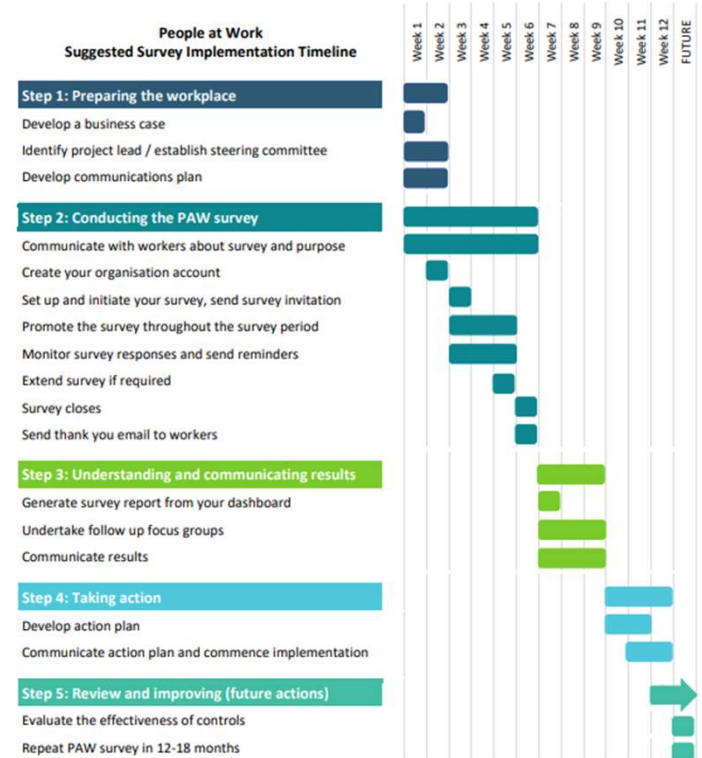
Each year:

- it is estimated that mental health conditions cost Australian workplaces approximately \$11 billion per year due to absenteeism, presenteeism and compensation claims (PWC, 2014).
- on average 7,200 Australians are compensated for work-related mental health conditions, equating to around 6% of workers' compensation claims.
- approximately \$543 million is paid in workers' compensation for work-related mental health conditions, and
- it is further estimated workplace stress affects around 32% of all Australians.

Workplaces that do not adequately manage psychosocial hazards, including those measured by People at Work, can incur significant human, legal and financial costs.

# Step 1: Create project plan

- Identify the project lead and team
- Skillset include research, engagement and subject matter experts
- Key tasks, dates, milestones
- Lesson: Access PAW champion to seek guidance and support delivery





# Step 1: Communications plan

## People at Work Communication planning

It is important to promote People at Work (PAW) in your workplace as the greater the number of survey responses you receive, the more representative the data will be of your workforce.

Developing a communication plan can help you to build awareness and encourage uptake of the PAW survey in your workplace.

Your communication plan should identify:

- your audience/s
- what you need to communicate to them (your 'key messages')
- how you will communicate your PAW activities to them at each stage of the survey process (for example, pre-survey, launch, during, close and post-survey).

### Audiences

Your audiences are individuals or groups in your workplace that you need to reach to build awareness and encourage participation, and support of your PAW survey.

Each workplace is different; however, audiences could include a workplace's senior leaders and managers, and workers. These two audiences form the focus of this document.

### Key messages

#### Senior leaders and managers

Your workplace's senior leaders and managers should have a good understanding of the PAW process and why it is being implemented in your workplace. They will play a key part in promoting the survey and answering any questions from workers.

Key messages to your senior leaders and managers should focus on communicating:

- the drivers for implementing PAW in your workplace – why now?
- the PAW process including how
  - the survey will be implemented
  - worker anonymity will be protected
  - the survey results will be used to address any identified areas of concern
  - what improvements will be made in the workplace following the survey.
- their role in the process and what the benefits will be to the workplace (for example, a clearer understanding of psychosocial hazards and factors, compliance with work health and safety duties, commitment to psychological health and safety)
- the benefits of consulting with workers and the importance of promoting the survey to them.

- Keep workplace informed and encourage uptake:
  - key messages – why, how, benefits for senior leaders, managers, workers
  - Pre-prepared email template
  - Survey timing – when open, close
  - Distribution process – who, how
    - Anonymous survey
- Lesson: Early, regular and appropriately targeted messages-built awareness and improved survey uptake

# Step 1: Stakeholder consultation

- Involve senior leaders of key business groups
  - Consult with Privacy for data capture and storage, where applicable
- Continually seek feedback and validate findings
- Tailor discussions for audience – Managers and Workers
- Lessons: Senior leaders to be accountable and responsible

# People at Work®: Step 2



## Key activities:

- Set-up and initiate survey
- Questionnaire design
- Opening the survey
- Monitor responses and send reminders
- Close and thank participants

## Resources include:

- Paper Survey
- Email Templates
- Learning Module: Setting up and initiating your survey



## Step 2: Set-up and initiate survey

- Create user account (Regulator = Comcare)
- 3 users per organisation
- Optional/mandatory question modules
- Time to complete
- Participants
- Open window
- Draft surveys

The screenshot shows the 'Organisation Profile' form in the 'People AT WORK' system. The form is titled 'Organisation Profile' and includes a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Surveys', 'Manage Users', 'Organisation Profile', 'People at Work process', 'Learning modules', and 'Resources'. The form contains the following fields and options:

- Organisation name\***: Text input field containing 'Comcare'.
- Head office postcode\***: Text input field containing '2601'.
- Industry\***: Two dropdown menus. The first is set to 'Public Administration and Safety' and the second to 'Public Order, Safety and Regulatory Services'.
- Sector\***: Dropdown menu set to 'Federal government'.
- Business size\***: Dropdown menu set to '200-999 employees'.
- Which state or territory do you have workers located in?\***: A list of checkboxes for Australian states and territories, all of which are checked: Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia. There is also an unchecked checkbox for 'Offshore'.
- Which health and safety regulator covers your organisation?\***: Dropdown menu set to 'Comcare'. Below this dropdown is a note: 'Comcare typically covers Commonwealth Government agencies and statutory authorities; and some private organisations.'

# Step 2: Questionnaire design

The screenshot shows a web-based survey design interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Surveys, Manage Users, Organisation Profile, People at Work process, Learning modules, Resources, and FAQ. The main content area is titled 'Survey' and has four tabs: 1 Details, 2 Modules, 3 Demographics, and 4 Custom Demographics (which is currently selected). Below the tabs, there is a section for 'Locations/sites' with instructions and an 'Add' button. This is followed by a 'Roles' section with instructions and an 'Add' button. Then, there is a 'Workgroups' section with instructions and an 'Add' button. At the bottom, there is a 'Summary' section showing 'Total # of questions' as 86 and 'Estimated time to complete (min:sec)' as 12:36. Navigation buttons for 'Back' and 'Save & Finalise' are also visible.

Survey

1 Details 2 Modules 3 Demographics 4 Custom Demographics

Add these questions to your survey if you want to examine differences across locations, roles and/or workgroups. Enter the values that you would like the survey respondents to select from.

**Locations/sites**

If the location or site question is included, the respondent will be asked to select from the locations or sites that you enter. Enter up to 20 different locations or sites (e.g. Brisbane). You need a minimum of two entries to use this question. Click the "Add" button to create a new line for each location or site.

Total Records: 0 + Add

**Roles**

If the role question is included, the respondent will be asked to select from the roles that you enter. Enter up to 20 different roles (e.g. administration officer). You need a minimum of two entries to use this question. Click the "Add" button to create a new line for each role.

Total Records: 0 + Add

**Workgroups**

If the workgroup question is included, the respondent will be asked to select from the workgroups that you enter. Enter up to 20 different workgroups (e.g. Human Resources). You need a minimum of two entries to use this question. Click the "Add" button to create a new line for each workgroup.

Total Records: 0 + Add

**Summary**

|                      |                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Total # of questions | Estimated time to complete (min:sec) |
| 86                   | 12:36                                |

← Back Save & Finalise →

- Details, Modules, Demographics
- Custom demographics options for:
  - Workgroup / role / location
  - 20 categories per question
- Is one survey appropriate?
- Reporting: 10 responses for breakdowns



## Step 2: Custom Demographics - Illustrative examples

### Case 1

- 20,000 workers
- 15 branches
- 45 teams (>15 ppl)
- 12 locations
- **Multiple surveys, one for each branch, then broken by team, location and role level**

### Case 2

- 5,000 workers
- 5 branches
- 19 teams (> 20 ppl)
- 2 locations
- **1 survey, broken by team, location and role level**

### Case 3

- 500 workers
- 5 branches
- 50 teams (>5 ppl)
- 15 locations (<5 ppl)
- **1 survey broken by branch and role level, and combined locations**

## Step 2: Activity – Questionnaire design

- Breakout to discuss custom variables
  - Primary workgroup – e.g. team or branch
  - Role – e.g. level or risk type
  - Location – e.g. city or country or office
  - Number of surveys



10 responses for  
data to be  
reported

## Step 2: Conducting the survey

- Lessons learned / tips
  - Design of the survey(s) is very important
  - A draft survey is useful for view questions and testing purposes
  - Add wellbeing supports to your distribution e-mail
  - Custom demographics are important considerations for reporting
    - > 20 responses for a report and 10 responses for breakdowns
  - Survey must be completed in one go, unable to come back
  - Overall response rate once survey closes

# People at Work®: Step 3

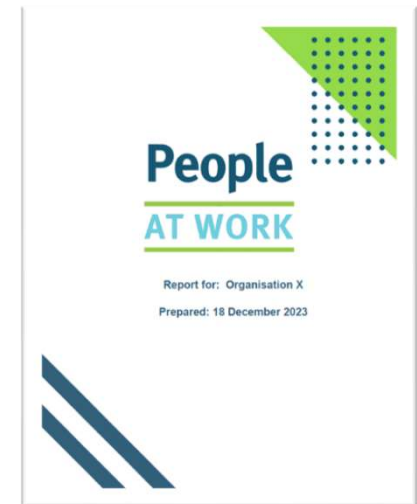
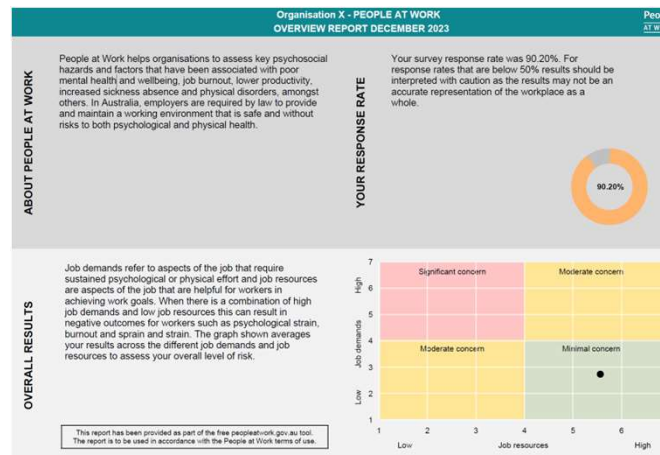


## Key activities:

- Generate overview and comprehensive reports
- Review and interpret of results
- Summarise results: key themes and benchmarks
- Undertake focus groups, where appropriate
- Communicate with key stakeholders

# Step 3: Generating your Results

- Overview report
- Comprehensive report
- Traffic light rating system



## Other supporting resources:

Focus Group Guide

Learning Modules on interpreting results and focus groups



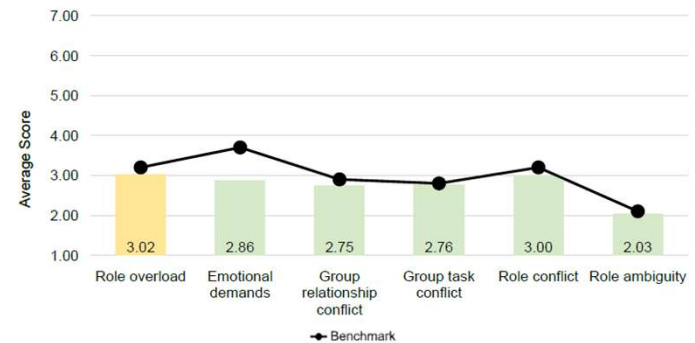
# Step 3: Review and Interpret results

- Coloured bars represent the organisations result
  - Green – low
  - Yellow – moderate
  - Red – high
- Role overload is the most frequently experienced hazard
- Black dots represent national results: benchmark - all jurisdictions

## People AT WORK

### 5.0 Job demands

The job demands the People at Work survey assesses are role overload, emotional demand, group relationship conflict, group task conflict, role conflict and role ambiguity. The figure below provides an overview of your workplace results for each of these job demands. **Higher scores indicate higher job demands and increased risk.**

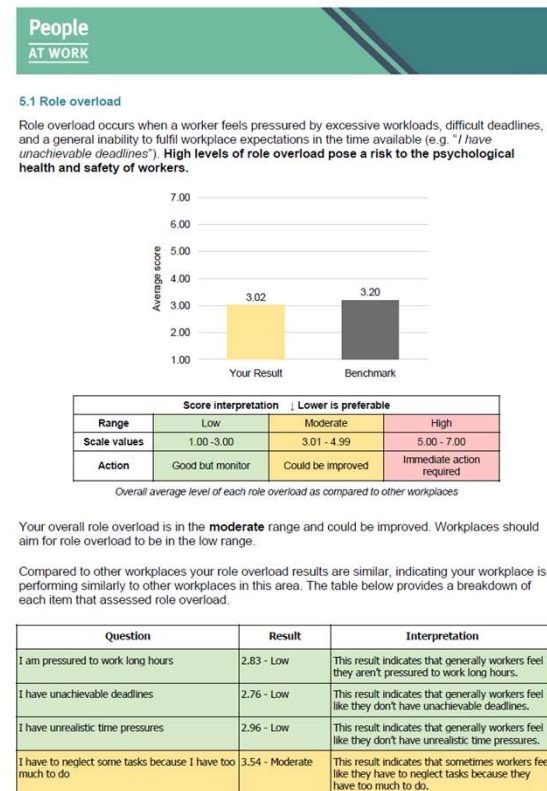


|                     | Score interpretation ↓ Lower is preferable |                   |                           |
|---------------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Range</b>        | Low  | Moderate          | High                      |
| <b>Scale values</b> | 1.00 - 3.00                                | 3.01 - 4.99       | 5.00 - 7.00               |
| <b>Action</b>       | Good but monitor                           | Could be improved | Immediate action required |

Overall average level of each job demand as compared to the benchmark

# Step 3: Question level results

- Overall suggests role overload is 'moderate' risk
- Question level breakdowns may indicate potential focus areas:
  - Most questions are low risk
  - Last question indicates moderate risk
- *'I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do'*
- Benchmark: compares performance to other Australian workplaces



# Step 3: Workgroup results

- Demographics are used for breakdowns
- Example: Demands broken down by Workgroup
- Indicates potential focus areas:
  - Team C moderate on 5 of 6 job demands
- Team A, Team E and Other– no result as less than 10 people responded
- Benchmark: compares performance to organisation average

## People AT WORK

### 11.0 Group breakdowns

#### 11.1 Job demands and job resources

The table below provides a breakdown of your results across your selected group(s) for those with more than 10 responses. Any groups that meet any of the following criteria may be a priority area:

- Groups that have job demands in the high range or job resources in the low range; and/or
- Groups that have higher job demands as compared to the workplace average; and/or
- Groups that have lower job resources as compared to the workplace average.

| Job Demands                                |                  |                   |                             |                     |                           |                |
|--|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Score interpretation ↓ Lower is preferable |                  |                   |                             |                     |                           |                |
| Range                                      | Low              |                   | Moderate                    |                     | High                      |                |
| Scale values                               | 1.00 - 3.00      |                   | 3.01 - 4.99                 |                     | 5.00 - 7.00               |                |
| Action                                     | Good but monitor |                   | Could be improved           |                     | Immediate action required |                |
|  | Role overload    | Emotional demands | Group relationship conflict | Group task conflict | Role conflict             | Role ambiguity |
| Workplace average                          | 3.02             | 2.86              | 2.75                        | 2.76                | 3.00                      | 2.03           |
| Team A                                     | 0.00             | 0.00              | 0.00                        | 0.00                | 0.00                      | 0.00           |
| Team B                                     | 2.54 ↓           | 2.90 ↔            | 2.12 ↓                      | 2.29 ↓              | 2.63 ↓                    | 1.92 ↓         |
| Team C                                     | 3.09 ↔           | 3.06 ↑            | 4.20 ↑                      | 3.11 ↑              | 3.52 ↑                    | 1.64 ↓         |
| Team D                                     | 2.71 ↓           | 2.47 ↓            | 2.35 ↓                      | 2.90 ↑              | 2.85 ↓                    | 2.54 ↑         |
| Team E                                     | 0.00             | 0.00              | 0.00                        | 0.00                | 0.00                      | 0.00           |
| Other                                      | 0.00             | 0.00              | 0.00                        | 0.00                | 0.00                      | 0.00           |

# Step 3: Workplace bullying results

- Results are presented as counts i.e. frequency of occurrence rather than score
  - 17% of respondents experienced bullying in the past 6 months
- Bullying behaviours and source of behaviour are also reported
- There are no group breakdowns to protect privacy of respondents

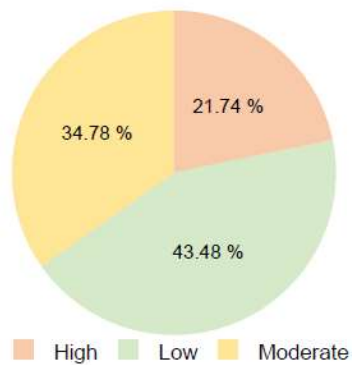
Workplaces should aim to have no bullying within their workplaces. Respondents were asked about the frequency of their experience and witnessing of workplace bullying. Of respondents, 17.39% reported experiencing bullying at some point in the previous 6 months whilst 36.96% reported witnessing bullying at some point in the previous 6 months.

|                  | Experiences of workplace bullying |                   | Witnessing workplace bullying |                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
|                  | Response Counts                   | % Response Counts | Response Counts               | % Response Counts |
| Never            | 38                                | 82.61%            | 29                            | 63.04%            |
| Rarely           | 4                                 | 8.70%             | 4                             | 8.70%             |
| Once in a while  | 2                                 | 4.35%             | 6                             | 13.04%            |
| Some of the time | 1                                 | 2.17%             | 3                             | 6.52%             |
| Monthly          | 0                                 | 0.00%             | 1                             | 2.17%             |
| Weekly           | 1                                 | 2.17%             | 2                             | 4.35%             |
| Almost daily     | 0                                 | 0.00%             | 1                             | 2.17%             |

Experiences and witness of workplace bullying

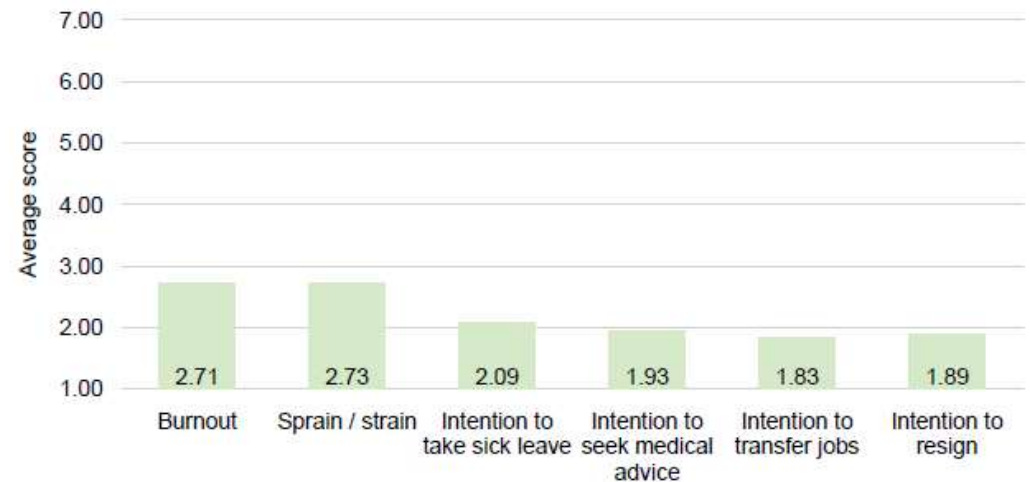
# Step 3: Health and business outcomes

## Psychological Distress (K-10)



- Low to moderate for majority
- 1 in 5 workers experiencing high level
- Indicative of general symptoms, may relate to work or personal

## Sprain, Strain and Worker Intentions



- Low risk: review group breakdowns



## Step 3: Review Results

- Lessons learned / tips
  - Take time to work through the detail of the comprehensive report
    - Drill down into demographic breakdowns
  - Tailor result summaries and discussions to audiences:
    - Senior Management versus all staff
  - Appropriate interpretation of results including benchmarks
  - Use focus groups to validate results and action areas
    - Formal or informal

## Step 3: Activity - Case study results

### Case Study:

- Small government organisation
- White collar workers
- 5 teams
- 50 employees
- Geographically dispersed across Australia
- Located in Capital Cities



Discussion  
Question

**What are the  
priority risks and  
drivers to  
address?**

**Morning tea break**

# People at Work®: Step 4



## Key activities:

- Consult with workers
- Develop an action plan
- Plan to monitor and review

## Resources include:

- Action Planning Guide
- Example control measures
- Learning Module: Taking action and implementing controls



## Step 4: Activity - Taking Action

- Each table has been allocated a risk or action area
- There are some 'food for thought' example controls on your tables.
- Activity: Discuss your risk area and identify 3-5 controls that could be implemented to mitigate the risk of harm.



Discussion  
Question

**What controls  
would you  
implement?**

# Step 4: Action Planning

## Example action plan template

Use the example action planning template to ensure the actions are easily associated with psychosocial hazards and factors of importance for the workplace or workgroup.

| Psychosocial risk management action plan workplace/workgroup X |  |  |  |                            |                     |                   |           |          |                                       |                                      |                   |
|--|--|--|--|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| PRIORITY   | Psychosocial hazard<br>(taken from survey and focus group results) | Possible causes<br>(taken from focus groups) | Goals<br>(controls or solutions to address psychosocial hazards and factors) | Actions steps              | Potential obstacles | Contingency plans | Resources | Due date | Responsible person to execute actions | Responsible person to review actions | Sign-off complete |
| 1  |  |  |  | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5. |                     |                   |           |          |                                       |                                      |                   |
| 2  |  |  |  | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5. |                     |                   |           |          |                                       |                                      |                   |
| 3  |  |  |  | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5. |                     |                   |           |          |                                       |                                      |                   |
| 4  |  |  |  | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5. |                     |                   |           |          |                                       |                                      |                   |

# People at Work®: Step 5



## Key activities:

- Monitor progress
- Evaluate effectiveness
- Plan to repeat the People at Work survey

## Resources include:

- Reviewing and Improving tool
- Guide to examine and interrogate workplace data



# Step 5: Review and Improve

- Review and evaluate the effectiveness of actions and controls
- Repeat PAW survey (12 – 18 months, depending on when actions will be completed)
- Examine other workplace data

## Reviewing and improving tool

The controls you implemented as part of your People at Work action plan should be included in your risk management plan and incorporated into your workplace safety management system.

You should continue to monitor and review the effectiveness of these controls on a regular basis in consultation with workers. This can be achieved through regular consultation with workers via meetings and forums, focus groups or additional surveys.

If you are not achieving positive results, you may need to make adjustments and improvements to the controls in place. This tool will guide you in reviewing the effectiveness and impact of your People at Work action plan. This action plan can be completed by a health and safety representative or person who is responsible for coordinating the People at Work process.

Additional information is available in SafeWork Australia's guidance materials on [managing work-related psychological health and safety](#) and the [Model Code of Practice: Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination](#).

| Review of People at Work action plan   |  |
|--|--|
| Is the organisation eliminating or minimising the risk to an acceptable level? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  |  |
| You can gather information to help you determine this through consultation with workers, re-administration of the People at Work survey, other psychosocial risk assessment processes and/or regular monitoring of workplace data. |  |
| What control measures currently in place? Review each control  |  |
| Are the controls working? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |  |
| Comment: Why/Why not   |  |
| If an implemented control is not working what are the risks which need further attention? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |  |
| Comment:   |  |
| Have you identified any new risks? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  | How did you identify these (e.g. survey, observations)?      |
|  | How will you record these (e.g. action plan, risk register)? |

# Panel discussion: Lessons learned

- What worked well
- What could be improved
- Q&A

## Concluding Thoughts: PAW

- One of the tools organisations can use to understand the psychosocial hazards within their workforce
- People at Work is a freely available tool, supported by the work health and safety regulators
- The PAW tool provides resources and guidance for organisations to self-manage the process
- Comcare are available to discuss your implementation plans and offer further guidance

**[www.peopleatwork.gov.au](http://www.peopleatwork.gov.au)**



**Comcare**  
National Conference

20-21 August 2024

National Convention Centre  
Canberra



**Collaboration for prevention and change**





## Keynote speakers



Emma Alberici



Stan Grant



Magda Szubanski



Dr Dinesh Palipana



Osher Günsberg  
Conference dinner  
speaker



Georgie Harman



Kate Jenkins



Kirk Docker



Dr Stefan Hajkovicz





**Comcare**  
National Conference

[www.comcare.gov.au/conference](http://www.comcare.gov.au/conference)

[conference@comcare.gov.au](mailto:conference@comcare.gov.au)



**Collaboration for prevention and change**





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