

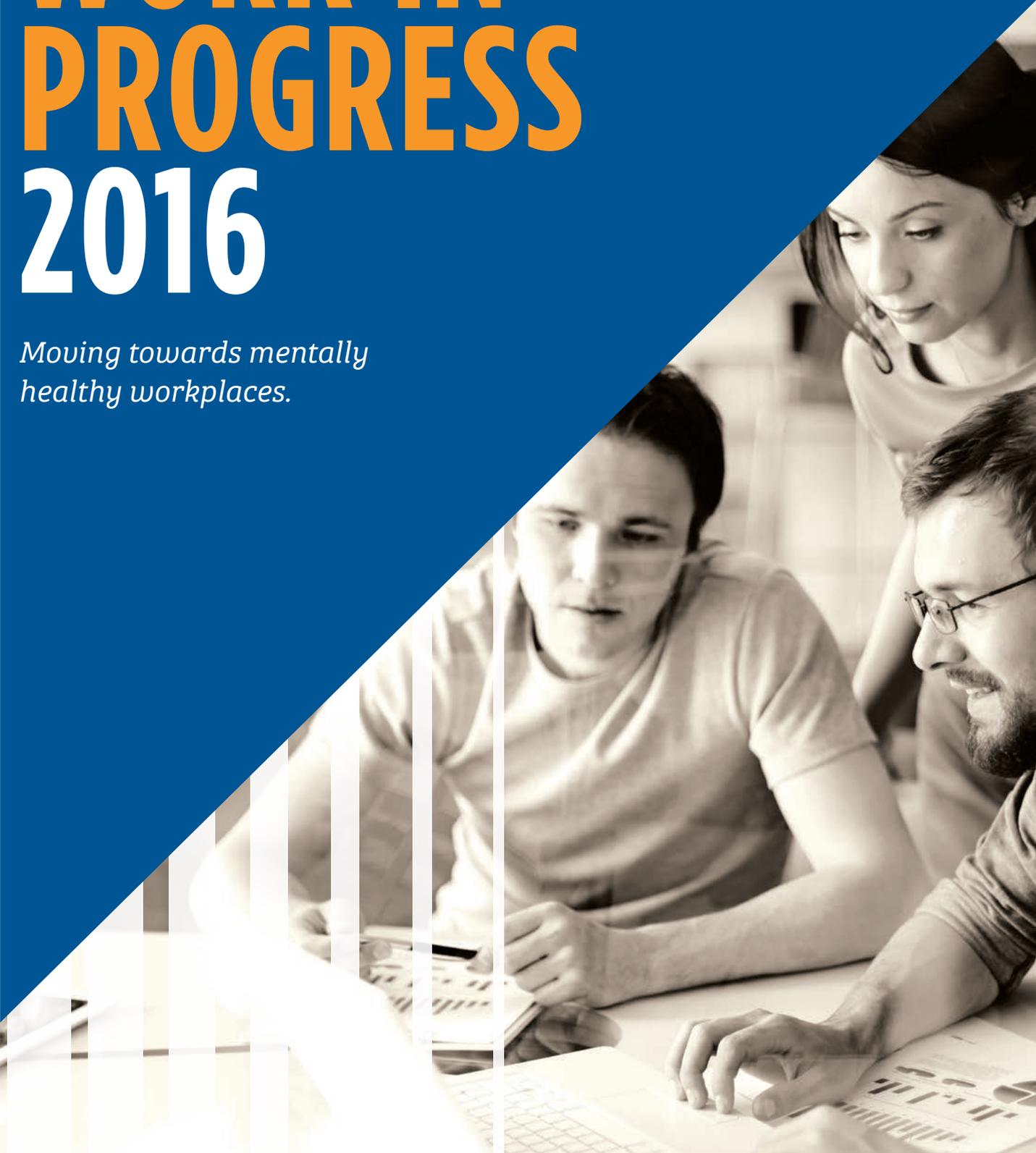
Year 1
2015

Superfriend[®]

Year 2
2016

WORK IN PROGRESS 2016

*Moving towards mentally
healthy workplaces.*





CONTENTS

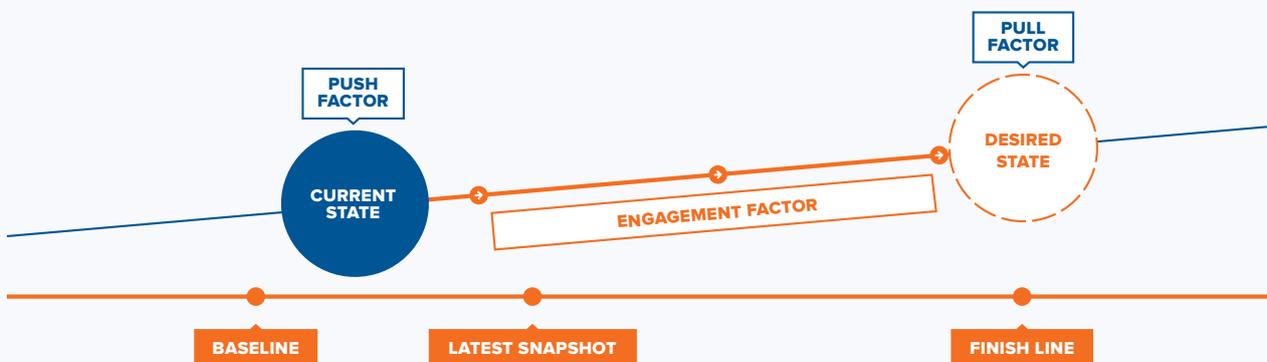
ABOUT THE SURVEY	4
SAMPLE PROFILES	6
INTRODUCTION	8
MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK	10
CHARACTERISTICS OF MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES	12
WHAT THE BEST ORGANISATIONS DO	22
BENEFITS OF A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE	26
A COMMITMENT TO WELLBEING PROMOTES LOYALTY	28
LEADERS SAY IT’S TIME FOR ACTION	29
WHAT’S PREVENTING PEOPLE FROM THRIVING AT WORK?	30
ARE WE TACKLING THE PROBLEM?	31
WHAT’S NEXT?	32
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	33
DESIRED STATE CHARACTERISTICS	34

ABOUT THE SURVEY

In 2014, SuperFriend commissioned a Needs Analysis project, in order to clearly identify workplace mental health needs and gaps in current initiatives designed to address those needs. The objective of this project was to determine the organisational priorities for action and direct resources toward developing and implementing feasible and targeted solutions based on solid information and advice.

As part of this project, stakeholder interviews, a workshop, and a wide-ranging knowledge review helped to determine the key characteristics of a mentally healthy workplace. Having identified what success looks like, a national quantitative survey was conducted to measure the progress between the “desired-state” and the current-state across Australian workplaces. Refer Figure 1.

Figure 1: Desired-State Planning, the Dynamics of Change, and Measurement Framework



There are three key dynamics of change – Push away from an undesirable current-state, Pull towards a compelling future desired-state, and Engagement in the process of change. Measuring progress from a baseline to the ‘finishing line’ are also part of the change process.

The 2015 survey identified management practices, policies and attitudes in mental health action at work in three core areas: prevention, intervention support and specialist mental health interventions.

The survey was conducted again in 2016 to track progress towards the desired state of optimal mental health in Australian workplaces.

The survey was completed online by 1051 business owners, managers and frontline staff in large, medium and small organisations. Smaller companies (defined as 2-19 employees for the survey) reported consistently higher ratings of mentally healthy workplaces than medium sized (20-199 employees) and larger companies (200+ employees).

The **Work in Progress** report will enable business leaders to identify what a mentally healthy workplace looks like, what they do differently and how they can move their organisation to support their workers to thrive at work.

The **Work in Progress** survey took the 38 desired-state characteristics of a mentally healthy workplace and identified and measured the extent to which they are perceived as being the current-state reality in Australian workplaces.

Survey respondents were asked to rate how each characteristic described their current workplaces, using a scale from 'yes definitely' to 'definitely not'. The higher the percentage confidently answering 'yes, definitely', the greater the evidence that organisations are achieving, or at least moving towards, the desired-state of a mentally healthy, thriving workplace.

In addition to measuring the current-state reality against the desired-state characteristics, the survey included other important contextual questions. Key results from these questions are included later in this report, along with analysis of the results by size of organisation and by type of respondent – business owners/managers/non-managers.

A number of questions were also included to provide a profile of the sample on other important dimensions, such as exposure to mental health issues, gender, age, location, and sector.

The list of 38 desired-state characteristics can be found on pages 34-35.

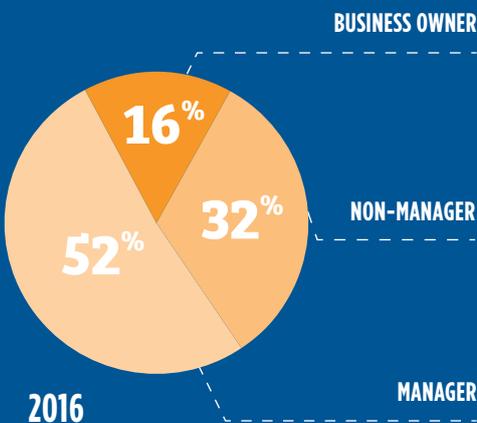
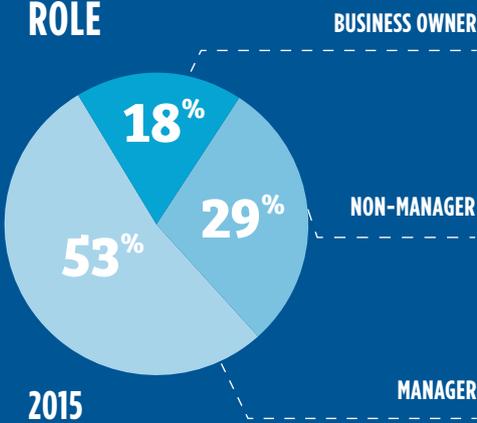
Due to the size and complexity of data, only key insights have been included. For further information about the complete results of the survey, please contact SuperFriend.

SAMPLE PROFILES

PARTICIPANTS



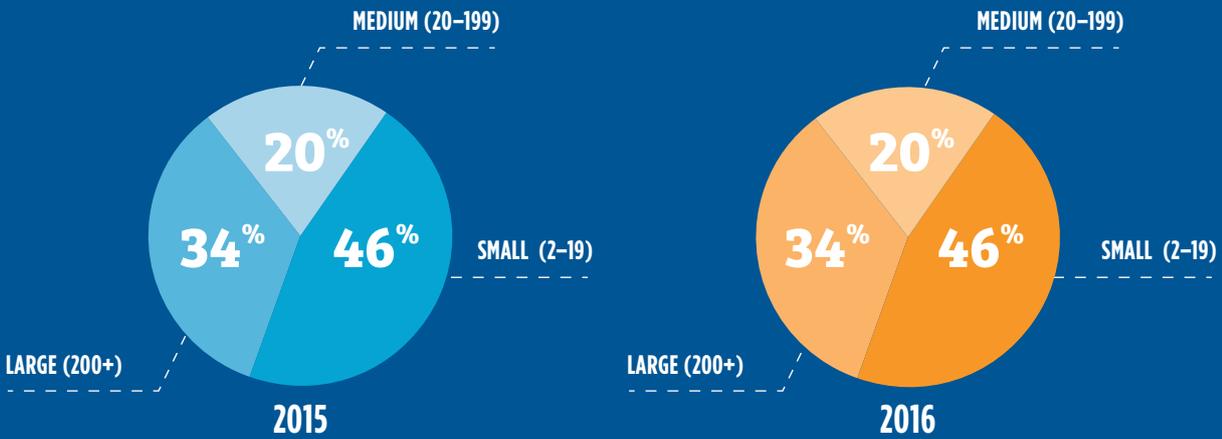
ROLE



SECTOR

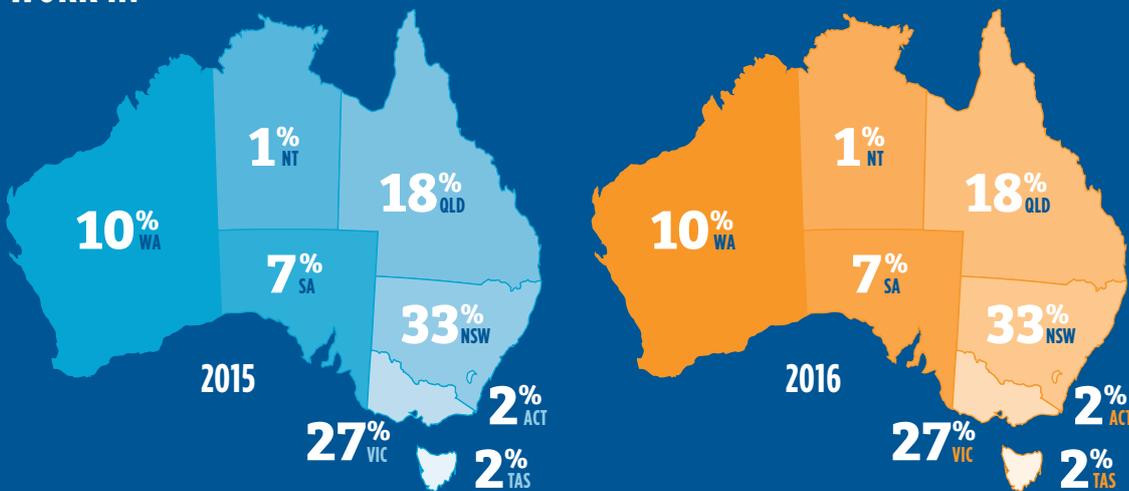
SECTOR	2015	2016
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	16%	14%
Retail trade	12%	13%
Health Care & Social Assistance	8%	9%
Manufacturing	8%	7%
Construction	7%	6%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	6%	6%
Financial & Insurance Services	5%	5%
Accommodation & Food Services	5%	5%
Administrative & Support Services	6%	5%
Wholesale trade	4%	4%
Education & Training	2%	3%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	2%	2%
Information Media & Telecommunications	2%	2%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	3%	2%
Public Administration & Safety	1%	2%
Arts & Recreation Services	2%	2%
Mining	1%	1%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	1%	1%
Other Services	9%	11%

EMPLOYEES IN ORGANISATION

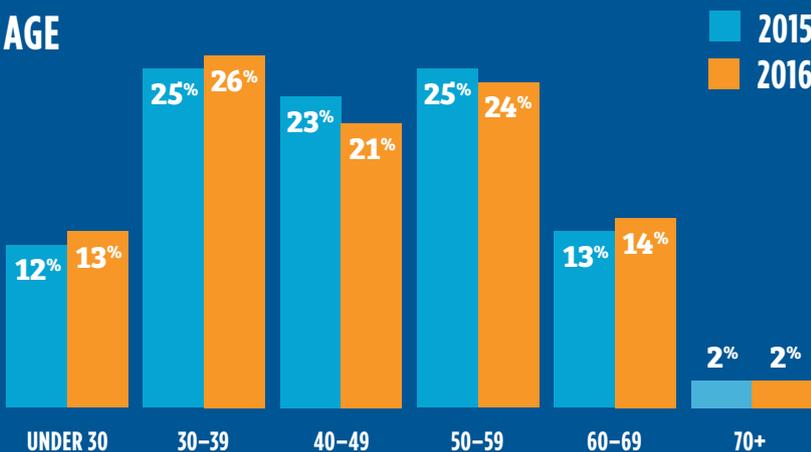


Other key variables were quota-controlled or closely monitored to ensure comparability of the 2015 and 2016 samples – location, gender, and age:

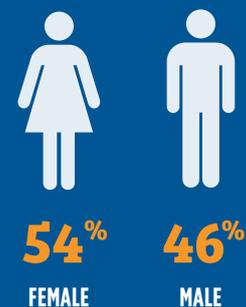
WORK IN



AGE



GENDER



INTRODUCTION

The health and wellbeing of an organisation's workforce is a critical driver of productivity, performance and sustainability.

Thriving and positive workers are more committed to their organisation's goals, build better relationships with their peers and produce higher levels of output as dedicated employees.

When Australian businesses think about the wellbeing of their employees they tend to think of their physical health and wellbeing, yet mental wellbeing has a significant impact on the capacity and energy of workers to perform at their best.

With a growing awareness of the value and importance of mental health at work, more Australian enterprises are investing in management practices that enhance the psychological wellbeing of their people.

Through this rising tide of awareness we are seeing the emergence of organisations who see the commercial imperative of caring for the workforce as much as the moral imperative; that supporting the mental health of a workforce is good business practice and responsible corporate citizenship.

For too long, mental health has been avoided in the corridors and lunchrooms of Australian business. It's been seen as a taboo topic, something we don't know how to talk about or address.

However, in line with heightened community awareness and transparency about mental health, organisations of all sizes are stepping up to the leadership challenge of building a resilient, positive and mentally healthy organisation.

One of the biggest issues to advancing mental health initiatives in the workplace has been a lack of data about the problem of mental illness and how companies are tackling the issue.

In 2015 the first **Work in Progress** survey drew a line in the sand by measuring how business owners, managers and employees perceived mental health issues. The 2016 report documents the changes in attitudes and practices to manage mental health and wellbeing.

The findings present a practical road map for Australian business leaders who choose to build a positive organisation, that views its employees as valued stakeholders.

Most significantly, this survey identifies the 38 characteristics, traits and practices that are aligned with organisations who are perceived to be placing the mental health and wellbeing of their people on the leadership agenda as a priority.

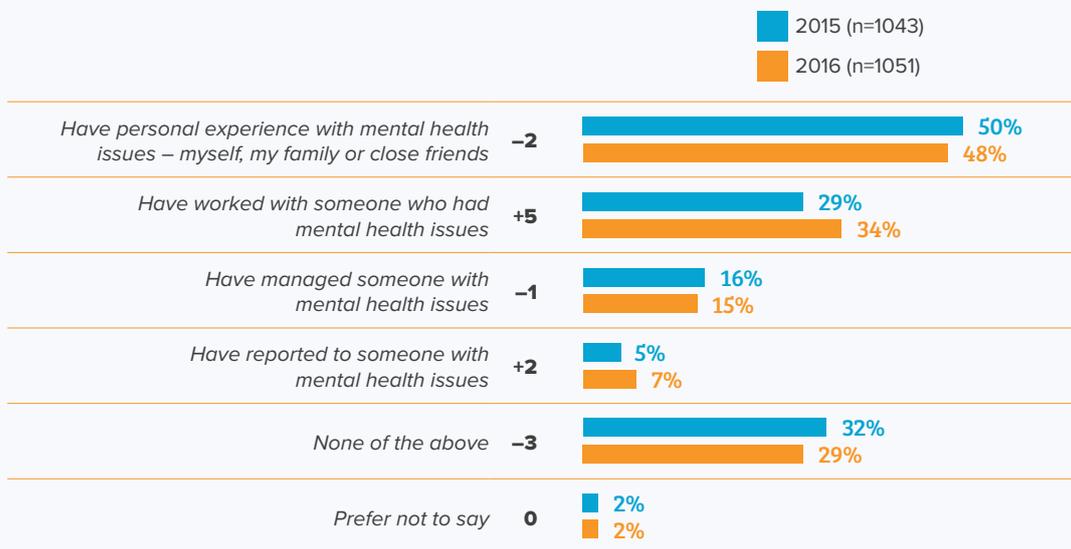


MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

Mental ill health is a social and community issue that is not possible to ignore.

The 2016 **Work in Progress** report found that almost 1 in 2 (48%) say they have experienced mental health issues themselves, or among their family or friends. Refer Figure 2.

Figure 2: What experience, if any, have you had with mental health issues?



This significance flows to the workplace. Positive mental health within a workforce is a critical component of organisational wellbeing and business performance.

The 2016 **Work in Progress** report provides a snapshot of mental health in Australian workplaces and raises the challenge to corporate leaders and business owners to take proactive steps to protect and build the mental health of their employees.

Business owners tend to report greater exposure to mental health issues with their staff than employees themselves, with 41% of owners saying they have experienced situations involving people with mental health issues at work and 19% reporting they have managed employees with mental ill health.

Mental health issues appear to be more prevalent within the workforce of larger organisations, with 40% of large organisations reporting personal experience or working with, someone who has mental ill health compared to 29% for smaller organisations. Refer Table 1.

Based on headcount, larger companies are likely to experience more instances of mental ill health, which requires a co-ordinated leadership strategy to avoid loss of productivity from lost days and lower employee performance.

Table 1: What experience, if any, have you had with mental health issues?

2016	Small n=483	Medium n=214	Large n=354
<i>Have personal experience with mental health issues – myself, my family or close friends</i>	45%	52%	51%
<i>Have worked with someone who had mental health issues</i>	29%	37%	40%
<i>Have managed someone with mental health issues</i>	12%	17%	18%
<i>Have reported to someone with mental health issues</i>	5%	11%	7%
<i>None of the above</i>	33%	24%	26%
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	3%	1%	2%



1 in 3 workers have worked with someone who had mental health issues.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES

WHAT DOES A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE LOOK LIKE?

To date a clear picture of how organisations thrive with mentally healthy workers has been elusive.

The 2015 **Work in Progress** report established a baseline of best practice in building a mentally healthy organisation. Further, the research uncovered the common traits of companies excelling in building positive mental health as part of their culture, staff development and operating models.

Building a mentally healthy workplace covers three key domains:

- ▶ Preventative strategies & programs to build a thriving workforce
- ▶ Interventions to support people experiencing mental ill health
- ▶ Specialist mental health expertise and training

LEADERSHIP ACTIONS

Building a mentally healthy organisation where people can be their best at work is simply good management practice.

A mentally healthy workforce is heavily influenced by the positive actions of managers and leaders. The study found several key management actions that promoted wellbeing at work including:

-  Being accessible to employees and listening genuinely
-  Providing guidance on tasks, resources to do the job effectively, giving feedback on performance and offering recognition on achievements or quality work outcomes
-  Being considerate when employees experience stress due to parenting or family commitments or illness
-  Being flexible to enable employees to work with autonomy to do their best

Leaders and managers also shape the wellbeing of their employees, by demonstrating positive behaviours, that promote a happy, healthy and connected work environment.

One of simplest and visible signals of a strong positive wellbeing culture at work is when colleagues greet each other with the common courtesy of a smile and saying “good morning” and “thank you.”

The results of the 2016 survey indicate a decline in civility in the workplaces of respondents. The survey found that only a little more than one third of all employees (38%) believe their workplace practices these simple courtesies, down from 46% in 2015. Refer Figure 3.

Positive leaders build workplace cultures that create a buffer against the risks of developing or exacerbating mental illness at work.

They take responsibility for building a culture of respect, tolerance and human connectedness and actively lead by example, sending a clear signal to line managers and employees of the organisational values around workforce wellbeing.

ARE ORGANISATIONS IMPROVING WELLBEING AT WORK?

Despite increased awareness of the importance of mental health at work the study found that the most recognised positive wellbeing factors declined in the past year by 5–7%.

Most significantly, fewer employees think their managers give clear guidance and direction on what is expected of them and their priorities, a decline of 10% in 2016 from the previous year’s survey.

Employees also feel less able to contribute to the mental health and wellbeing discussions in their workplace (22% of workers, down 9% from 2015), less confident in suggesting ways to improve their workplace (13%, down 8%) and feel their workplace provides less purpose and meaning in their work (15%, down 6%). Refer Figure 3.

Clearly, this report card presents a challenge for business leaders and managers to reverse the decline if they wish to improve organisational performance.

Figure 3: To what extent does this describe the reality of your workplace right now?



MENTALLY HEALTHY CHARACTERISTICS

Mentally healthy workplaces take proactive, positive action to support and empower their employees to manage workloads, stresses and the emotional effects of change and demanding economic conditions.

Best practice mental health management is conceptualised as a planned, integrated and sustained program of initiatives and support services to help leaders, managers and employees thrive, particularly when experiencing pressures at work or family and lifestyle challenges.

When employees encounter tough times at work or experience personal adversity, work performance can suffer. Mentally healthy companies respond by enabling managers to offer support for employees. Mentally healthy practices include:

-  Having policies in place to deal effectively with workplace bullying
-  Ensuring work/life balance is a reality by making sure employees take annual leave and monitor excessive working hours to avoid burnout
-  Providing mental health wellbeing awareness and training programs and physical health programs to promote exercise, healthy eating and wellness for optimal performance
-  Conducting regular job satisfaction reviews with employees to ensure their job role fits with their skills and interests
-  Conducting formal wellbeing audits among employees to objectively monitor mental health of the organisation
-  Ensuring all employees are compassionately and respectfully supported through organisational change

JOB PERFORMANCE

A supportive manager can assist employees to stay focused and boost emotional resources that help the employee maintain job performance standards and minimise further stressors through challenging times.

When people experience mental health issues, job performance and motivation can be affected.

The study found that just over a quarter (27%) of employees believe their organisation helps positively support them when experiencing job performance issues which may or may not be linked to a mental health condition.

WORKPLACE BULLYING

Bullying at work is against Federal and State law in Australia and affects both job performance and personal mental health and wellbeing. A mentally healthy company takes a proactive stand on workplace bullying, offering training, support and interventions, when required.

Only one quarter of workers (down 6% from 2015) were aware of their organisation having an effective policy to deal with bullying.

WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Over-work and high pressure can significantly affect mental health and physical wellbeing. Best practice mentally healthy organisations ensure work/life balance is a reality by monitoring work hours and ensuring staff take accrued annual leave to avoid burnout. They also offer physical health programs to promote resilience and healthy lifestyles.

Based on the results of the 2016 survey, the vast majority of organisations surveyed are not seen to be promoting best practice in managing work/life balance for sound mental health.

The 2016 survey found just 21% of workers felt their company encouraged them to take leave (down 9% from the previous year), 16% reported their workload was monitored to avoid burnout (also a decline of 9%), 18% believed they had support for work/life balance and only 14% said their company offered any physical health initiatives to support their wellbeing and job performance.

JOB SATISFACTION

Doing work that matters, as well as being valued and respected by managers and co-workers is crucial to wellbeing at work.

Best practice mentally healthy organisations take job satisfaction seriously by conducting regular reviews with employees to assess their job fit and satisfaction. They also support employees transitioning into new roles, whether it's experienced voluntarily through career progression or involuntarily through restructuring.

In 2016, the study found just 19% of workers (down 6% from 2015) felt their organisation encouraged their job satisfaction and career development through regular reviews.

MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Promoting positive wellbeing at work demands action, not simply words or well-intended encouragement.

Best practice mentally healthy organisations take action through mental health audits, development programs and mental health awareness training that evidences the organisations’ commitment to positive change. Leaders lead from the front on these initiatives to send a clear and compelling signal that mental health and wellbeing matters.

Disappointingly, the majority of Australian workplaces are yet to reach this standard.



BUSINESS OWNERS ARE MORE POSITIVE ABOUT THEIR EMPLOYEES AND THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THEIR BUSINESS

Business owners tend to be more positive about their employees’ wellbeing reporting consistently higher assessments across all 38 best practice factors. Refer Table 2.

Owners of smaller workplaces report that managers in their organisations tend to be more accessible and listen more to their employees (50% of business owners); the business is a supportive team environment (48%); employees are given the resources to do their jobs (48%); managers offer praise and recognition (47%) and workers greet each other with courtesy (47%).

Table 2: To what extent does this describe the reality of your workplace right now?

% answering 'yes, definitely'	2016	Owners n=165	Managers n=342	Non-managers n=544
Prevention characteristics				
<i>People greet each other in the morning, smile, make eye contact and say 'thank you' – it's common courtesy</i>		47%	34%	38%
<i>Managers support and facilitate flexible working to meet individual needs</i>		42%	32%	32%
<i>Managers are accessible when you need them and will listen</i>		50%	32%	30%
<i>There is effective team working and a supportive team environment</i>		49%	32%	27%
<i>Managers make sure employees have the resources to do the job</i>		48%	29%	27%
<i>There is praise and recognition for good performance and achievement</i>		48%	28%	24%
<i>Managers give clear guidance on priorities and what is expected of employees</i>		41%	26%	24%
<i>Managers set a good example for a happy, healthy and productive workforce</i>		46%	25%	23%
<i>There is sensitivity to the needs of those who have children or others to care for</i>		34%	22%	24%
<i>Managers provide regular feedback in a way that helps employees improve their performance</i>		42%	23%	21%
<i>Employees are encouraged to identify ways to improve the workplace</i>		37%	21%	18%
<i>Employees are involved in the planning of work and how it is carried out</i>		36%	19%	16%
<i>It feels like a community at work with people supporting each other beyond just getting the work done</i>		35%	17%	18%
<i>The culture encourages open discussion about issues that affect work performance</i>		31%	16%	13%
<i>Efforts are made to help employees find purpose and meaning in their work</i>		32%	12%	11%
<i>Has managers who are committed to promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff</i>		25%	13%	12%
<i>The culture encourages open discussion about issues that affect mental health and wellbeing</i>		26%	11%	11%

SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTISE

When mental health issues manifest themselves in the workplace, organisations must be able to respond with effective support, often demanding professional expertise and resources.

Best practice mentally healthy workplaces establish the capability to manage situations where employees experience mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses.

Specialist mental health interventions include:

- ▶ Access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
- ▶ Return to Work and equal opportunity policies for employees experiencing mental illness
- ▶ Counselling services
- ▶ Manager training in supporting employees experiencing mental illness conditions
- ▶ Willingness of managers to have conversations with employees about their mental illness

SMALLER ORGANISATIONS

There are significant differences in mental health commitments between larger and smaller organisations.

It may be that managers in companies are able to invest time in and attending to the needs of employees which promotes sound mental health and wellbeing.

Employees in smaller organisations greet each other with a smile and practice common courtesies more than larger companies (46% versus 29% for larger organisations); are more flexible in meeting the individual needs of employees (41% versus 27% for larger organisations).

However, even in smaller companies, the critical conversations about mental health and wellbeing and actively involving staff in their workplace wellbeing are less likely to happen. In 2016, the survey found that just 18% of smaller organisations are believed to have a culture enabling conversations about mental health (compared to just 7% for larger companies).

Larger companies are much more likely to offer Employee Assistance Programs (41% compared to 11% for smaller companies) and counselling services and support to employees (30% against 11% for smaller organisations).

However, most interestingly, there are little or no differences reported in the policies to support employees returning to work after mental health incidents of physical illness.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

Mental illness experienced in a workplace can be challenging and confronting for workers. The need for confidential and discreet counselling from qualified psychological professionals provides a safe environment for employees to reach out for help and support.

Many mentally healthy workplaces offer professional advice and support through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) at no cost to employees.

The different responses (between managers and non managers) to questions about the availability of support services demonstrate that it is important that support programs (like EAP's) available are promoted widely throughout the organisation, to ensure they are appropriately utilised. Refer Table 3.

Table 3: To what extent does this describe the reality of your workplace right now?

% answering 'yes, definitely'	2016	Owners n=165	Managers n=342	Non-managers n=544
Specialist mental health intervention characteristics				
<i>There is access to confidential external support services such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)</i>		16%	27%	22%
<i>Has good return to work policies and practices for those who had time off with physical health problems</i>		25%	23%	15%
<i>There are internal counselling or support services that employees can use</i>		18%	21%	16%
<i>Has good return to work policies and practices for those who had time off with mental health problems</i>		21%	17%	11%
<i>People with known mental health issues would have an equal chance of employment or promotion</i>		30%	9%	11%
<i>Employees with mental health problems, like anxiety or depression, feel comfortable discussing their mental health issues with their manager</i>		20%	8%	9%
<i>Training is provided for all managers in how to support employees with mental health issues</i>		22%	10%	9%
<i>Managers have the knowledge and skills to be able to effectively support employees with complex mental health issues</i>		18%	8%	8%

MENTAL ILLNESS POLICIES

When employees experience mental illness, documented policies and procedures at work can assist with early responses to support the recovery of the worker and limit the impact on the workplace.

Best practice mentally healthy organisations build a robust policy framework to help employees return to work after leave for mental illness and ensure equal opportunity in seeking new job roles.



MANAGER TRAINING AND CAPABILITY

Developing the capability and skills of managers to effectively deal with mental illness is a critical component of best practice intervention. It is one of the most effective strategies.

The 2016 survey identified that just 11% of organisations provide formal training to help identify and support staff experiencing mental illness (down 5% from 2015) and only 10% of workers believed their organisation’s managers had the skills and knowledge to effectively support employees with complex mental health issues (down 7%).

All the corrections have been correctly applied

Can you just look at the table on page 20 again please - on my screen it seems as though the top (title) row is sitting at two different levels

I think the orange cells for owner, manager etc, just might need to be made a smidge longer at the bottom to match the description and year

Let me know what you think

WHAT THE BEST ORGANISATIONS DO

What do the most outstanding and progressive organisations do differently to promote a thriving workplace?

The survey identified a cohort of organisations (n=229) whose employees rated their organisation as high performers in supporting a mentally healthy workplace.

These organisations reported mental health prevention, intervention and specialist support interventions, 20–30% above the rest of the sample.

ACTIVELY WORKING TO CREATE A SUPPORTIVE MENTAL HEALTH ENVIRONMENT

The best organisations have management practices to support preventative mental health in their workplace. Refer Figure 4.

In these organisations there is an effective, supportive team environment (65% of those who say their employer is the best or one of the best in providing a mentally healthy organisation, compared with 32% of the sample as a whole); managers are accessible when employees need them and will listen (64%) and managers support and facilitate flexible working to meet individual needs (62%).

Other management practices that promote positive mental health at these companies, are managers who make sure employees have the resources to do the job (62%) and offer praise and recognition for good performance and achievement (62%).

Employees at these organisations say their organisation has managers who are committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of their staff, significantly more than the full sample (40% say this at the best companies compared to just 14% overall).

STEPPING UP TO PROVIDE INTERVENTION WHEN IT'S NEEDED

The best organisations also demonstrate stronger intervention practices and policies than their peers.

These comparisons are demonstrated in ***“To what extent does this describe the reality of your workplace right now?”***

- ▶ Figure 4: Prevention characteristics
- ▶ Figure 5: Intervention characteristics
- ▶ Figure 6: Specialist mental health intervention characteristics

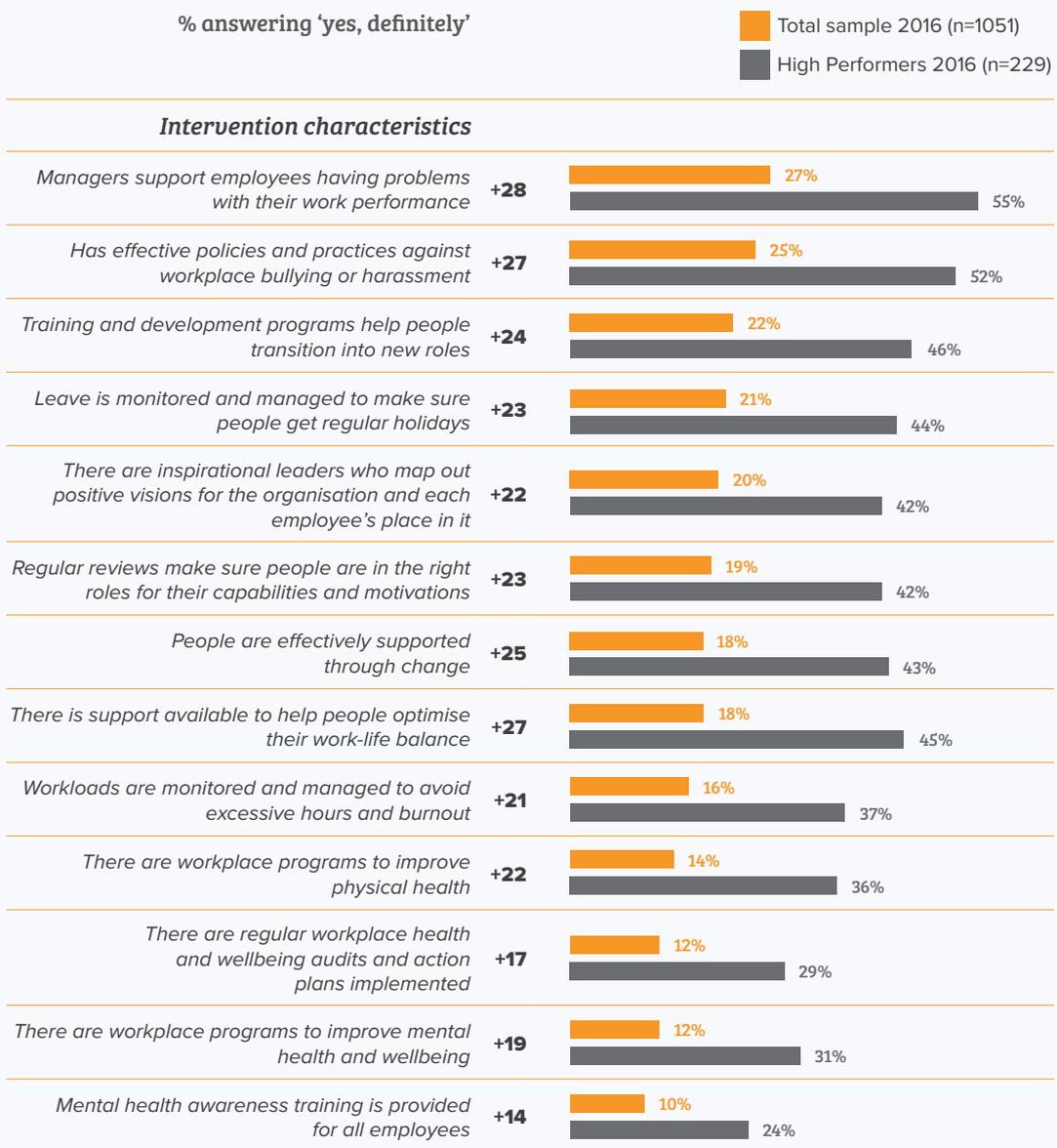
Figure 4: To what extent does this describe the reality of your workplace right now?



Most vitally, these progressive organisations tend to provide more mental health awareness training for all employees (24% v 10% for other organisations) and offer workplace programs to improve mental health and wellbeing (31% v 12% for other organisations).

While the incidence of training, policy and support is lower than a progressive business community would expect in 2016, it presents a benchmark for other companies to follow.

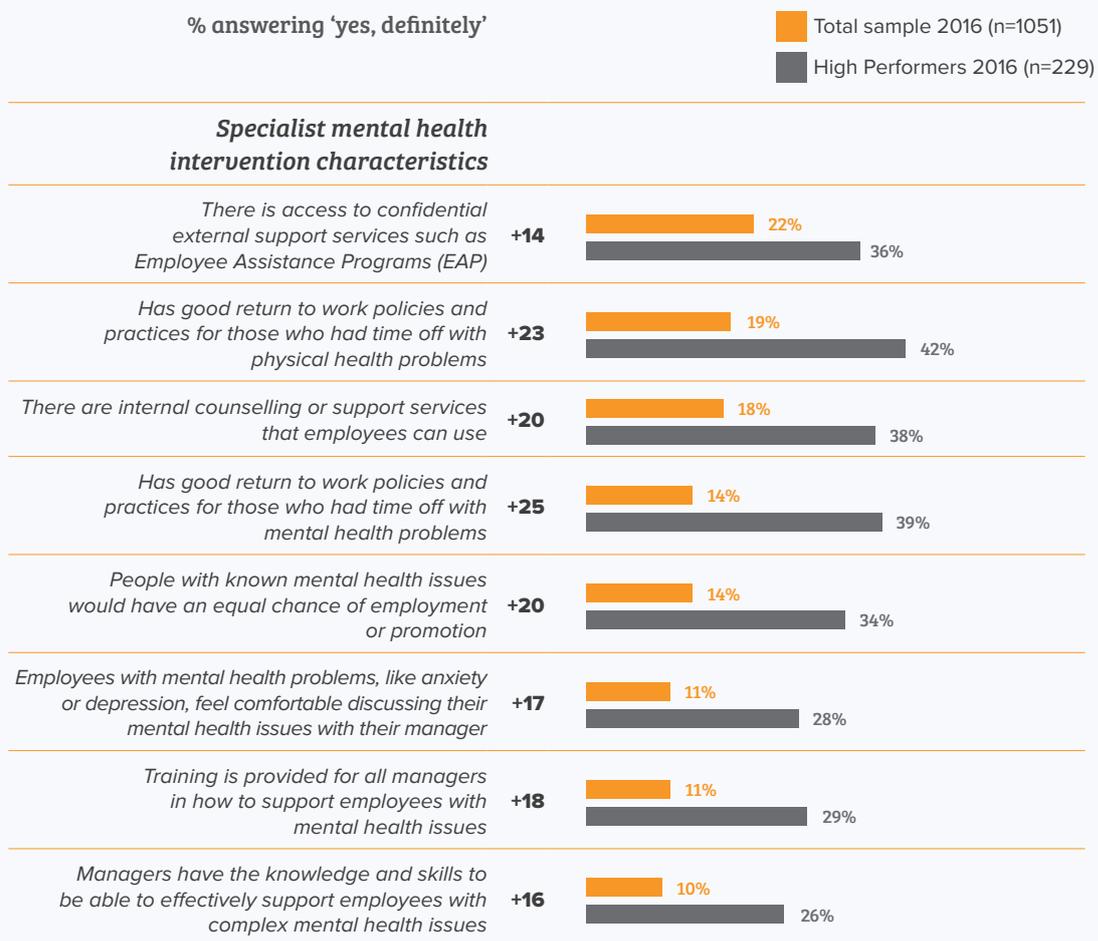
Figure 5: To what extent does this describe the reality of your workplace right now?



OFFERING SPECIALIST SUPPORT AND SERVICES

Progressive organisations are more likely to offer EAPs (36% vs 22% for other organisations); have good return to work policies and practices for those who had time off with mental health problems (39% vs 14% for others) and training is provided for all managers in how to support employees with mental health issues (29% vs 11% for others).

Figure 6: To what extent does this describe the reality of your workplace right now?



BENEFITS OF A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE

The 2016 survey has again confirmed that building a mentally healthy workplace delivers substantial benefits to both the organisation and individual employees.

The survey found that employees perceived a number of benefits for investing in mental health and wellbeing including:

- ▶ Increased productivity
- ▶ Lower workers' compensation costs
- ▶ Lower sickness and absence from work
- ▶ Ability to attract and retain top talent
- ▶ Sense of a caring organisation

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Half of workers believe mental health and wellbeing helps increase productivity (53% of all respondents).

57% of managers, 44% of business owners and 54% of staff say investing in mental health at work leads to higher productivity.

LOWER SICKNESS LEVELS AND COMPENSATION COSTS

When employees experience mental illness and distress, it becomes evident at work through increased absences, affecting productivity.

In 2016, half of all respondents surveyed believed that an investment in mental health prevention and interventions reduces sickness and days lost to ill health.

43% of respondents believe that mental health initiatives would lower workers compensation costs, (down slightly from 47% in 2015).

The belief that investing in mental health and wellbeing is beneficial to organisations was consistent reportedly in the survey, with half of all respondents strongly agreeing with this statement.

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TALENT

Businesses that invest in the wellbeing of their people also have an advantage in attracting and keeping talent, with three in four workers believing that their company is more likely to recruit and retain the best employees by adopting mental health practices and initiatives.

A POWERFUL MESSAGE

Investing in mental health and wellbeing sends a powerful signal that leaders care about employees, with 40% of workers saying everyone in the organisation feels better for knowing their organisation is committed to mental health.

A COMMITMENT TO WELLBEING PROMOTES LOYALTY

The cost of replacing key employees who choose to leave their employers because of a poor mental health environment is significant.

Mental illness affects not only the individual experiencing it, but also their colleagues and the wider organisation.

The 2016 survey found a strong case for a mentally healthy organisation being likely to encourage employees to remain with the company, avoiding replacement cost and loss of talent.

44% of respondents (42% in 2015) say they have stayed longer with their employer because of its approach to wellbeing and psychological support and policies.

Good mental health is particularly valued by younger employees, with a higher proportion of employees under 40, almost half of all workers surveyed (49%), remaining in a mentally healthy organisation.

POOR WORKPLACE CULTURE ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO LEAVE

On the flip side, in workplaces where there is poor culture, this may impact the mental health of employees and result in increased resignations, which may incur unnecessary employment replacement costs for the business.

When employees who suffer mental illness and distress at work, leave it sends a signal to remaining workers that employers failed to invest in the necessary policies and resources to support and care for these employees.

Half of all employees surveyed reported they have left a job because of a poor mental health environment (49% in 2016 and 51% in 2015), more significantly among younger workers under 40 (59%) and women (57%, compared to 40% for men).

EMPLOYEE TOLERANCE IS DROPPING

Often employees in a workplace that does not promote positive mental health, will try to stay with the organisation and attempt to improve their situation.

However, the 2016 survey indicated that workers' tolerance for poor mental health at work is declining, mostly likely in line with growing awareness of mental health as an issue in the workplace and that there are better organisations committed to employee wellbeing.

In 2015, 30% of workers surveyed would remain and try to improve the environment, yet this commitment dropped significantly in 2016 to just 17% (a drop of 13% in just one year).

Employees may be more likely to look for work elsewhere in 2016, with half of all workers saying mental health would trigger a job search (51% compared to just 39% in 2015).

LEADERS SAY IT'S TIME FOR ACTION

The majority of employees surveyed, believe that protecting and managing mental health is a significant responsibility for business.

81% of employees surveyed believe that it is morally right for employers to care for the health and wellbeing of workers, a finding that has remained steady from 2015. This belief was held across respondents from all industries and business sizes.

There's also a strong belief that governments have a role to play to protect the wellbeing of employees, with 78% of workers surveyed saying governments should invest in mental health and wellbeing to boost public health and business efficiency (up slightly from 77% in 2015).

While almost four in five workers surveyed feel legislation and regulations protect their physical health and wellbeing at work, just two thirds of workers (64% in 2016) believe that laws make sure employers maintain work environments that are psychologically safe.

Twice as many workers disagree that legislation protects their mental health and wellbeing at work (28% in 2016) than those who disagree that these rules protect their physical wellbeing (14% in 2016).

WHAT'S PREVENTING PEOPLE FROM THRIVING AT WORK?

While awareness of mental illness is improving in the community and business. There is still resistance to accepting that mental health is a real and significant issue for organisations.

LACK OF AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE

A number of perceptual barriers still seem to be holding companies back from investing in mental health, respondents surveyed highlighted:

- ▶ A lack of awareness about mental health and wellbeing issues (41%)
- ▶ Mental health is not a significant enough problem to warrant action (27%)
- ▶ There are more important business issues to address with the company's financial resources (33%)

About one quarter of employees surveyed (down slightly from last year) believe there is a lack of commitment among leaders and managers to invest in mental health and wellbeing.

LACK OF TIME AND SKILLS

Despite the wider access to mental health training and support, the 2016 survey results show a significant proportion of the workforce believe the failure to invest in mental health is due to a lack of time (37% in 2016), a lack of skills by managers (38% in 2016, down from 41% in 2015) and not knowing where to start to take practical steps (29% in 2016, up slightly from 28% last year).

PHYSICAL HEALTH COMES FIRST

Organisations are continuing to invest in physical health and wellbeing before mental health (40% in 2016, slightly less than 41% in 2015) and see the costs of investing in mental health initiatives as a barrier.

MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA REMAINS

The stigma of mental health as a taboo issue at work lingers in organisations. Around one quarter of workers believe mental health is not a topic they would feel comfortable raising at work, though the survey showed some slight improvement in this sentiment (26% in 2016, down from 29% in 2015).

BUSINESS OWNERS AREN'T CONVINCED THERE'S A PROBLEM

Around one third of business owners are more likely to say that mental health is not enough of a problem in their workplace to warrant action compared to managers (26%) and frontline staff (25%), suggesting a possible disconnect between the owners and their workers. Owners are also less likely to say there is a lack of understanding about mental health and wellbeing (29% compared to 41% of managers and 44% of frontline staff).

Despite being seen as the best or one of the best workplaces in their sector, employees surveyed still perceive barriers to investing in mental health and wellbeing, with the most common factors being a lack of understanding around mental health and wellbeing issues (38%), a focus on physical health and safety/OH&S, not mental health (34%) and a lack of skills and training for managers (33%).

At those organisations that were rated poorly by the employees surveyed, the biggest barrier to action was a perception of a lack of commitment among their leaders (46%) and among their managers (50%) to invest in the wellbeing of their people.

ARE WE TACKLING THE PROBLEM?

Based on the results of the 2016 survey, mental health still has some way to go to be seen as a priority for business.

In 2015, three quarters of workers surveyed agreed that mental health was a big problem for all Australian businesses, yet only 17% say it's being addressed and in 2016 this rate drops to just 8% who believe action is being taken.

While most workers agree that mental health is an issue in Australian businesses they are far less likely to say that it's a problem in their workplace, suggesting a dissonance in understanding of the significance of the mental health challenge. In 2016 only 53% say mental health is a big problem at their own workplace and 44% say it's not a problem at all (up from 40% in 2015).

Business owners are far more likely to say that mental health isn't a big problem at work (60% in 2016), compared to managers (39%) and frontline staff (43%).

Respondents from smaller organisations don't see mental health as an issue as much as larger organisations – just 7% of smaller organisations see it as a big problem not being addressed compared to 14% for larger organisations.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Work in Progress provides an opportunity to rate your organisation against the 38 desired state characteristics of a mentally healthy workplace. When utilising these benchmarks within your internal culture and climate survey, you can then identify the action points for your next mental health investment.

A mentally healthy workplace is one that encourages its employees to stay well and supports those who are experiencing mental health challenges. Creating such a workplace can require some major cultural shifts as well as small yet effective steps on a day-to-day basis.

It all starts with the leadership team. Everything the leaders and managers do impacts on the workplace culture.

EDUCATE THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Education is the first step in any major change to your workplace's climate. The organisation's senior management team and team leaders need to know why the change is happening and how to implement it well.

There are many resources available including SuperFriend's **Wellbeing Works**. This program looks at the elements of a safe workplace culture in relation to mental wellbeing, and what the organisation is doing daily, to ensure that a mentally healthy workplace climate is fostered. This includes a focus on leadership, building knowledge, policies and the occupational health and safety environment.

SHOW REAL COMMITMENT

Commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of your employees can be shown through actionable plans. Incorporate the mental health and wellbeing of your staff in the strategic plan. This shows you recognise that they're a key enabler to the organisation achieving its vision.

From there, it's a matter of putting those plans into place. Decide on the mental health action plan you're going to roll out within their organisation over the next couple of years. A key component of this will be making sure that individuals have access to various supports and services, such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

REDUCE THE STIGMA

There is a significant amount of stigma attached to mental health, so organisations should address this as an early priority and create an environment where employees feel safe to disclose their mental health challenges or to seek support.

To reduce stigma, it's important to show employees that mental health challenges are understood within the workplace. The best way to reduce stigma is to invest in training that

gives staff and managers the skills to identify, understand and respond to situations where mental health may be a factor. SuperFriend provides **Mental Health and Wellbeing Training** to equip staff with the confidence, skills, strategies, and tools to ensure they are supported, safe and productive at work.

REMOVE OR MINIMISE STRESSORS AND RISKS

Some mental health risk factors and stressors can be removed through careful planning and targeted actions. Consider your working environment, and how it can be modified to reduce those risk factors. The **Additional Resources** listed below may prove helpful in identifying and proactively addressing these factors.

With one in three people saying they have worked with someone with a mental illness, it is vital to know how to manage mental health at work.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▶ Promoting Positive Workplace Mental Health – <http://www.superfriend.com.au/resources/promoting-positive-mental-health-in-the-workplace/>
- ▶ Peer Support Booklet – <http://www.superfriend.com.au/resources/peer-support-booklet/>
- ▶ Mental Health & Wellbeing Training – <http://www.superfriend.com.au/how-can-we-help/mentally-healthy-workplaces/mental-health-wellbeing-training-staff-managers/>
- ▶ Wellbeing Works – <http://www.superfriend.com.au/how-can-we-help/mentally-healthy-workplaces/wellbeing-works-program/>
- ▶ Workplace Prevention of Mental Health Problems Guidelines – <http://prevention.workplace-mentalhealth.net.au>
- ▶ Psychological health and safety in the workplace - Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation – <http://shop.csa.ca/en/canada/ohs-management-systems/occupational-health-and-safety-management/icat/ohsmanagement>
- ▶ Best-Practice Guidelines – Workplace Health in Australia – http://www.workplacehealth.org.au/_literature_51087/HAPIA_Best_Practice_Guidelines
- ▶ Assembling the Pieces: An Implementation Guide to the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/issues/workplace/implementation-guide>
- ▶ Guide to Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace – http://www.healthierwork.act.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Guide_to_Promoting_Health_and_Wellbeing_in_the_Workplace_3.pdf
- ▶ beyondblue and The Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance Heads Up – <http://www.headsup.org.au/>
- ▶ Improve Psychological Health and Safety in your Workplace – <https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/>
- ▶ Guarding Minds @ Work: On the Agenda – <https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/free-training-and-tools/on-the-agenda>

DESIRED STATE CHARACTERISTICS

The 38 identified characteristics of a mentally healthy workplace have been incorporated into a survey. Participants are asked:

“To what extent does this describe the reality of your workplace right now?”

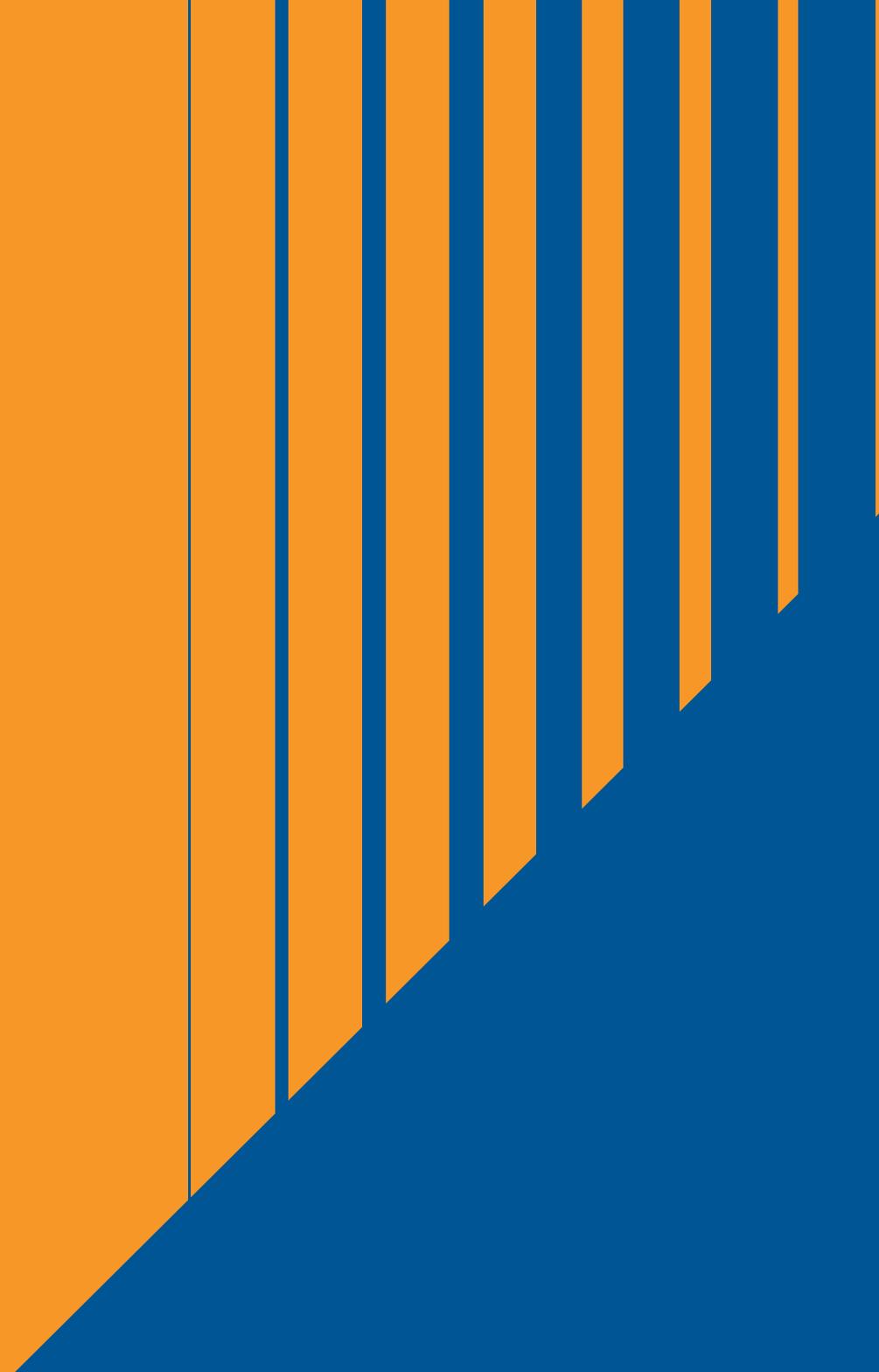
- ▶ Yes, definitely
- ▶ Yes, probably
- ▶ Probably not
- ▶ Definitely not
- ▶ Don't know

Using this approach, participants are indicating the extent to which the desired-state characteristics are reflected in current policies and practice. The list of characteristics can, and should, be used as an audit tool and a survey tool to provide insight, verification of the current-state reality, and a dynamic for change.

The key focus of the analysis was on the percentage of respondents answering ‘yes, definitely’. The other responses provide indicators, but ‘yes, definitely’ provides clear evidence of the desired-state being realised.

1	<i>There is access to confidential external support services such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)</i>
2	<i>It's a very human environment with people greeting each other in the morning, smiling, making eye contact and saying thank you</i>
3	<i>Managers support and facilitate flexible working to meet individual needs</i>
4	<i>Has effective policies and practices against workplace bullying or harassment</i>
5	<i>There is sensitivity to the needs of those who have children or others to care for</i>
6	<i>There is effective team working and a supportive team environment</i>
7	<i>There is praise and recognition for good performance and achievement</i>
8	<i>Managers are accessible when you need them and will listen</i>
9	<i>There are internal counselling or support services that employees can use</i>
10	<i>Managers give clear guidance on priorities and what is expected of employees</i>

11	<i>There are workplace programs to improve physical health</i>
12	<i>Employees are encouraged to identify ways to improve the workplace</i>
13	<i>It feels like a community at work with people looking after each other and well connected socially</i>
14	<i>Leave is monitored and managed to make sure people get regular holidays</i>
15	<i>Managers provide regular feedback in a way that helps employees improve their performance</i>
16	<i>Managers set a good example for a happy, healthy, and productive workplace</i>
17	<i>Regular reviews make sure people are in the right roles for their capabilities and motivations</i>
18	<i>Managers support employees having problems with their work performance</i>
19	<i>Has good return to work policies and practices for those who have had time off with physical health problems</i>
20	<i>Managers make sure employees have the resources to do the job</i>
21	<i>There are inspirational leaders who map out positive visions for the organisation and each employee's place in it</i>
22	<i>Employees are involved in the planning of work and how it is carried out</i>
23	<i>The culture encourages open discussion about issues that affect work performance</i>
24	<i>There is support available to help people optimise their work-life balance</i>
25	<i>Training and development programs help people transition into new roles</i>
26	<i>There are workplace programs to improve mental health and wellbeing</i>
27	<i>Mental health awareness training is provided for all employees</i>
28	<i>Has managers who are committed to promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff</i>
29	<i>Has good return to work policies and practices for those who have had time off with mental health problems</i>
30	<i>Efforts are made to help employees find purpose and meaning in their work</i>
31	<i>The culture encourages open discussion about issues that affect mental health and wellbeing</i>
32	<i>People are effectively supported through change</i>
33	<i>There are regular workplace health and wellbeing audits and action plans implemented</i>
34	<i>Workloads are monitored and managed to avoid excessive hours and burnout</i>
35	<i>Training is provided for all managers in how to support employees with mental health issues</i>
36	<i>People with known mental health issues would have an equal chance of employment or promotion</i>
37	<i>Employees with mental health problems, like anxiety or depression, feel comfortable discussing their mental health issues with their manager</i>
38	<i>Managers have the knowledge and skills to be able to effectively support employees with complex mental health issues</i>



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