



## Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, their elders past and present. As an organisation with National reach, SuperFriend would also like to pay our respects to First Nations people across all of Australia.



We also acknowledge all Australian communities including those who, through their lived experience, help guide our research and education so that we can help build more mentally healthy and thriving workplaces. We recognise their valuable contribution at all levels and value the courage of those who share their unique perspectives for the purpose of learning and growing together to achieve better outcomes for all.

## Chair and CEO's Message

SuperFriend's strategy is to improve workplace mental health and wellbeing across the system through innovative use of data and evidence to produce actionable mental health insights for workplaces.

Over the years and particularly in the last financial year, SuperFriend has elevated our focus on delivering the most meaningful data and insights into the state of Australian workplace mental health. In its 8th consecutive year and with a 10,000 person data set representative of all Industries and Sectors, the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey is the benchmark report on the health and wellbeing of Australian workplaces.

We have invested in our research, data and analytics capability and evolved the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace in 2022/23 into the most comprehensive survey on the health and wellbeing of workplaces in Australia. Notable from this year's research was that:

- one in two had a mental health condition in their lifetime;
- 28% experienced a mental health condition in the last 12 months;
- and of those, over 50% indicated that work had contributed to or caused that mental health issue.

The above data suggests workplaces have a lot to do to ensure they create places where people can thrive and not be harmed by their work. Indeed, we know work can and should be good for people's mental health, providing not just employment but a sense of meaning, purpose, contribution and social connection.

We know the protective factors of work, when work is good, are tremendously positive and it is in highlighting these that SuperFriend makes a difference.

Our deliberate use of technology and innovation has seen significant strides in our data analytics capability. The newest iteration of the Thriving Workplace Index has been tested with workplaces large and small and is gaining traction as a highly valued workplace diagnostic tool that incorporates psychosocial hazards, distress factors and burnout, making it a uniquely valuable tool for Australian workplaces.

Consistent with our vision, these tools to support workplaces and workers, will provide the evidence to influence systems level change so all workplaces can be mentally healthy.

### Our Board

At the Board level we are pleased to announce some changes and new members to our Board. Nicholas Vamvakas took on the role of Chair after Elizabeth Proust stepped down and Deanne Wilden joined the Board from Australian Retirement Trust (ART) following the retirement of Teifi Whatley. We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt thanks, Elizabeth for her leadership through a challenging period for SuperFriend, and to Teifi for her longstanding 16 year service since SuperFriend's inception.

### Executive Appointments

SuperFriend built and established a new Executive Team commencing with appointment of CEO Darren Black in September 2022.

Appointments following Darren Black included:

- Assoc. Professor Ross Iles as Chief Research Officer
- Dr. Denise Hamblin as Chief Customer Growth Officer
- Dr. Natalie Flatt as Innovation and Mental Health Lead
- Nicolas Porter as Chief Operations Officer.

### Industry Partnerships

We want to acknowledge the continued support of our founding members and Partners from across the Industry Super Funds and Life Insurance Industry. Without your continued support, our work would not be possible.

Looking to the future ahead, we are excited by SuperFriend's potential to shift the dial on mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. As we chart this journey, we look forward to strengthening our collaboration with our Fund Partners and critical stakeholders across Industry, Government and the Unions in the coming years.



**Nicholas Vamvakas**  
Chair  
Board of Directors,  
SuperFriend



**Darren Black, MBA  
GAICD**  
CEO,  
SuperFriend

## Partner news

This year saw further consolidation of Industry Superannuation Funds in Australia. Australian Catholic Super merged with UniSuper in July 2022, Statewide Super moved out of partnership, merging with HostPlus in April 2022 and Energy Super merged with LGIA Super in July 2021 and became Brighter Super in September 2022. With the recent changes and mergers, SuperFriend had 15 Superannuation partners at the conclusion of the financial year.

With ongoing support from our Industry Superannuation and Group Insurance Partners and their members, SuperFriend has been able to:

- conduct Australia's largest and trusted workplace mental health survey and benchmarking tool, the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace. The 2022 survey was our 8th year of this unique longitudinal data with rich insights into workplace mental health;
- continue advocacy efforts to improve the mental health of working Australians across several industries.
- deliver practical and relevant mental health solutions and training to Australian workplaces.

SuperFriend's CEO, Darren Black met with key stakeholders from all our Partner Funds to discuss our future vision and working relationships. These conversations and the feedback gathered have been pivotal to building our 2024 strategic plan.

We continued to deliver online and facilitated training to support employees from our Superannuation and Group Life partners with Understanding Mental Health, Navigating Uncertainty, Improving Wellbeing, Recognising and Responding to Suicide Risk and Improving Communication Strategies. We provided leadership training to assist people managers to foster mentally healthy teams. SuperFriend also supported several Superannuation partners deliver retirement sessions targeted at members with our Retiring Well program.

### A heartfelt thank you from the SuperFriend team!

Without the support of our Partners, our valuable research work and advocacy efforts towards shifting the dial across mental health and wellbeing in workplaces and industries would not be possible. To our all Partners, we thank you for your ongoing commitment to SuperFriend.



## Insights and impact

The Indicators of a Thriving Workplace Survey continues to be SuperFriend’s research focus and was launched externally through the 2022 Key Insights report in June 2023. An extensive internal review of the questionnaire resulted in the 8th iteration of the survey being the widest ever, ensuring that SuperFriend once again ran Australia’s most comprehensive measure of workplace mental health and wellbeing.

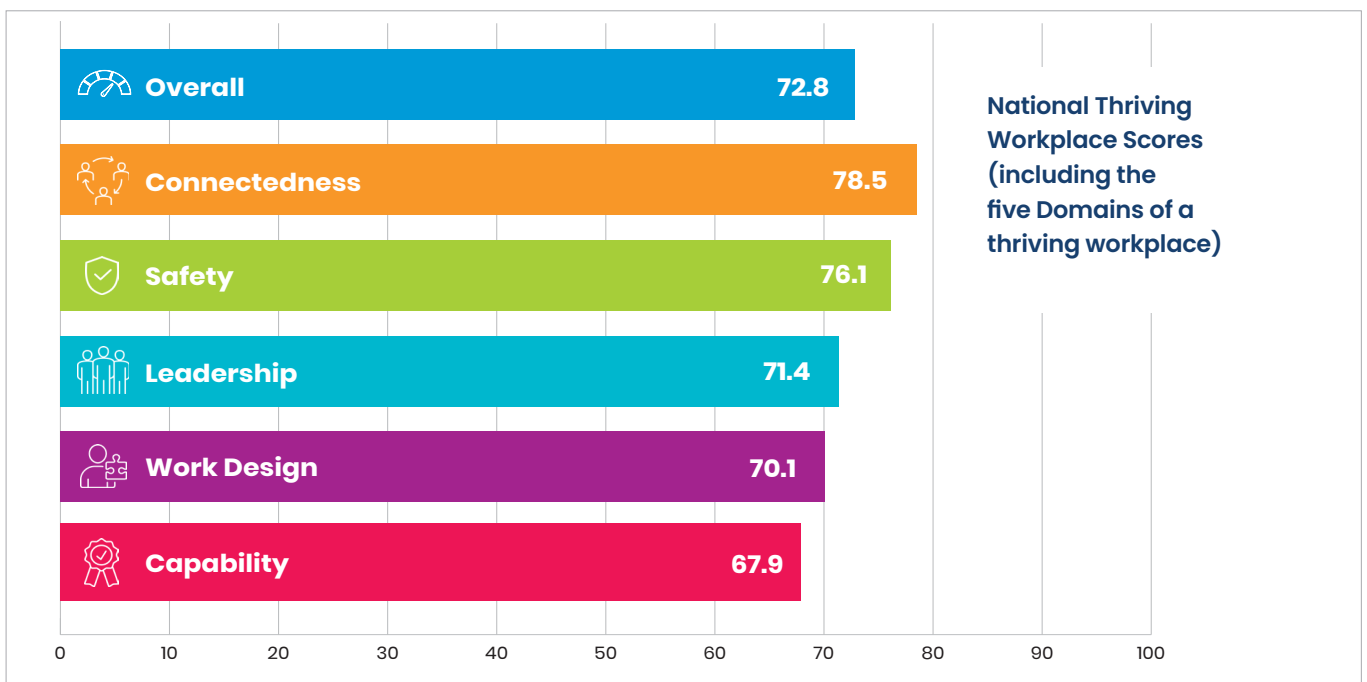
Data analysis was conducted in the first half of 2023 to validate and develop an updated set of five Domains reflecting the most current trends in workplace mental health. Combining our expertise with a data-driven approach has embedded the Domains across everything that SuperFriend does.

Key findings from this year’s research were an overall Thriving Workplace score of 72.8 out of 100 as the national benchmark, the highest score on SuperFriend record. For the fifth year in a row, the highest scoring Domain was Connectedness (78.5).

The lowest scoring was the new Domain Capability (67.9) which has identified that supporting organisations to provide skills and resources to support employee mental health is a priority area.

### Capability

“ In my ideal workplace, all staff would have general knowledge and skills with how to discuss and deal with mental health. All managers and senior leaders would have a good understanding of someone going through a mental health condition. In this environment I would feel very comfortable to talk about my problems and very safe in knowing that everyone working has a basic understanding of mental health and ignorance to mental health doesn’t exist. ”



In 2022, SuperFriend once again reported nine psychosocial hazards aspects of work that have the potential to cause harm. While scoring was updated in 2022 (scored out of a possible 100, with higher scores indicating a hazard is better controlled) the three poorest scoring hazards were inappropriate workload, low recognition and poor change management, unchanged from 2021. The best scoring was workplace relationships (80.6), consistent with the high score for the Connectedness Domain.

SuperFriend disseminated 2022 Key Insights across multiple channels including a number of a presentations for the Comcare Mental Health Community of Practice, the Shared Value Project and the WayAhead Workplaces Annual Forum to name a few. The research team also tested new Industry Snapshot reports, developed for 19 industries, alongside a new prototype Industry Deep Dive report currently in progress for launch in the new financial year.

In 2022-23 SuperFriend transitioned from a focus on raising awareness of workplace mental health towards providing actionable insights using an evidence-based approach. The next iteration of the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey will add a series of individual and workplace-focused mental health outcomes to our national and industry benchmark measures. Connecting our Domains with these outcomes will continue to build SuperFriend’s long-lasting reputation for providing the deepest level of insight into workplace mental health.

Psychosocial hazards		
	<b>Inappropriate workload:</b> having too much or too little work or responsibility	69.8
	<b>Low recognition:</b> lack of positive feedback, recognition or rewards for good work	72.0
	<b>Poor change management:</b> lack of clear communication, consultation or effective processes during workplace changes	75.9
	<b>Poor management support:</b> inadequate assistance or guidance from leaders	76.5
	<b>Low job control:</b> limited control over decisions relating to how work is performed	76.8
	<b>Traumatic events:</b> exposure to abuse or violence, or lack of support following trauma	77.7
	<b>Poor role clarity:</b> limited understanding of work tasks, responsibilities or expectations	78.4
	<b>Poor working environment:</b> high temperatures or noise levels, cramped workspace, poor lighting or an unsafe environment	79.5
	<b>Poor workplace relationship:</b> interpersonal conflict, inappropriate behaviour, discrimination or bullying	80.6

### Connectedness

“ Everyone who works there always has a positive attitude...we all treat each other with respect and empathy. Each day we say good morning and ask how each of us are going to ensure we are thriving and ready for work.

My workplace has worked to improve the way we communicate with each other. Communication has become more frequent and we have monthly online catch-up sessions to check in on each other. We have created team leaders and delegated each employee to a team. This has helped a lot to make everyone feel like they are closer to each other and better supported.



## Advocacy

SuperFriend stands as a proud advocate for our Partners and their members, fostering strategic alliances to bring about systemic level change in Australian workplaces. This year, we have been very intentional in building relationships to create impact and visibility around the importance of workplace wellbeing.

Our team has reactivated SuperFriend's participation in vital national and state based Mental Health alliance networking meetings, where we exchange quarterly insights with other participatory Partners. These Strategic Alliances include:

- Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance
- Mental Health Australia
- EveryMind
- Suicide Prevention Australia
- Victorian Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Network
- NSW Workplace Mental Health Network
- QLD Mental Health at Work Community of Practice

We also continue to work with the National Workplace Initiative (NWI) created by the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance, who aim to create an evidence-based framework for workplace mental health strategies and help workplaces find suitable resources and support in Australia.

SuperFriend continue to be a signatory of the "Health Benefits of Good Work" initiative for the RACP (The Royal Australasian College of Physicians) and an active committee member of ANZIIF's (Australian and New Zealand Institute of Insurance and Finance) Group Life Seminar.

Towards the end of the financial year, SuperFriend commenced a partnership with the University of South Australia to run the Psychosocial Safety Climate survey alongside the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace. The partnership is an exciting step towards validating and strengthening the research rigour behind SuperFriend's measurement tools.



## Product Development

### Indicators of a Thriving Workplace

This year, SuperFriend realigned product design efforts to focus on actionable workplace insights - these will be the springboard into product offerings for our Partners and Customers. Our focus on the research of Australia's most trusted workplace mental health survey was sharpened and our five Domains refined. We began work on a peer reviewed manuscript focusing on how the refined Domains we established.

Our 2022 key findings were successfully delivered to the market and launched at the end of May. Data collection for the 2023 survey is already underway. The new survey will include an external measure (the PSC-12) along with clinical data points (k10), burnout, and financial wellbeing, enabling us to create a more rigorous organisational benchmarking tool (Thriving Workplace Index) for workplaces.



### Thriving Workplace Index 2.0

Version 2.0 of the Thriving Workplace Index is currently under development using clinical, quantitative and qualitative measurements and will now include the clinical index (k10) as per our 2023 national survey. Data storage is now owned internally, and data collection will be centralised.



### Mental Health Training Evolution

We launched a revamped Mental Health Essentials digital module, for Partners and the public and began work on SuperFriend's Building Thriving Workplace Guidelines (to be launched in 2024).

### Psychosocial Hazards Workbook

A practical and interactive workbook is in development, simplifying 14 psychosocial hazards and facilitating mentally safe environments. This new approach, different from standard anxiety-inducing checklists, will also emphasise proactive thinking. Integrated into SuperFriend's five Domains, it will be a key resource in our toolkit.



### Polaris: Advancing Mental Health Analytics

Development work began on a new interactive platform which combines diverse external and internal data to provide a holistic view of workplace and mental health. It will guide organisations by providing practical insights and clear action steps.

Beyond fostering academic collaborations, it will position us to influence policy changes across 19 industries. By merging data with predictive insights, Polaris will shape the narrative on evidence-based workplace policies and redefine standards in mental health analytics and workplace wellbeing.



## Customer news

With a refinement of our strategic direction, it was necessary to redefine the SuperFriend customer, who is distinct from our foundational Partners (Superannuation Funds and Group Life Insurers). Our customers are workplaces and may also include Government departments, Unions or Regulators who engage us for services including workplace mental health intervention, bespoke research, the use of diagnostic tools, training or adoption of our educational resources.

Behind the scenes, SuperFriend also developed a customer value proposition in addition to a new look service offer for 2024 and beyond. This focuses on our data, actionable insights and the capability to create predictive indicators and a quantifiable return on investment (ROI). A more diverse customer base will enable SuperFriend to have stronger impact including improving employee productivity and longevity, reducing compensation claims, lowering insurance premiums, increasing superannuation balances and ultimately, improving mental health for many Australians.

We also utilised our Service Provider Network and online LMS (learning management system) to provide \$246,000 worth of mental health training. This has been supported by the SuperFriend website, our customer-facing team members, and content which has been designed to improve and support mental health in workplaces. Our Mental Health Essentials online course modules and FSC21 Standard Mental Health Training have attracted the highest uptake.

Our e-learning, workshop content and presentations and training (via our Preferred Provider network) are continually being refreshed to be more relevant and evidence-based, and work has begun on integrating the five Domains as defined by our Indicators of a Thriving Workplace in all our workplace mental health content.

In order to connect and keep up to date with current workplace wellbeing trends, SuperFriend attended the 2023 National HR Summit, the 2023 Workplace Wellness Festival and The Thriving Workplace 2023. We also exhibited and presented at the 2022 Workplace Mental Health Symposium (Gold Coast) and presented at Comcare's Mental Health Community of Practice and WayAhead Workplaces' 2023 Annual Members Forum.

### Future Direction

Towards the end of the financial year, we began developing a Customer Reference Group - SuperFriend's Thriving Workplace Ambassadors. This will be a collaborative cohort with whom we will "test and learn" in the context of today's businesses needs across multiple organisation types and industries, ensuring our offerings are relevant, contemporary and impactful.



## Financials

SuperFriend is a registered not-for-profit organisation with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC).

Revenue	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Insurer Contributions</b>		
Consists of revenue contributions paid to SuperFriend on behalf of Funds.	3,696,048	3,675,278
<b>Fee for Service</b>		
Revenue generated from commercial arrangements with Partner & non-Partner organisations for services such as mental health consulting & bespoke mental health content creation.	172,292	505,124
<b>Interest Income</b>		
Income generated from investing cash reserves into term deposits throughout the financial year and interest received on positive bank balances.	110,439	12,126
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>Employee Related</b>		
All expense costs relating to SuperFriend staff employment costs.	2,260,643	3,509,362
<b>Professional Fees</b>		
All costs incurred by SuperFriend for external professional services.	352,195	50,707
<b>Initiative Delivery &amp; Development</b>		
Consists of all costs related to SuperFriend solutions delivery & development.	223,238	267,930
<b>Business Operations</b>		
All supporting costs to enable SuperFriend to operate.	714,432	579,708
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>		
Surplus/(Deficit) Before Tax	428,271	(215,179)
<b>Balance Sheet</b>		
SuperFriend's Total Net Assets have increased from FY22	3,844,667	3,416,398

**Revenue:** SuperFriend's Revenue from Insurer Contributions has remained fairly stable in FY23 while Fee for Service Revenue has dropped as we proceed to refresh and redefine our service offerings. Services such as mental health consulting & bespoke mental health content creation are being refreshed and retargeted to existing and new customers. Interest Income has increased dramatically from the previous year as was expected due to overall rate increases, however, this increase is not expected to continue at the same rate in future years.

**Expenses:** Employment Related Costs have reduced from FY22 due to the departure of staff and the refreshment of SuperFriend's structure. Professional Fees have increased from FY22 while SuperFriend refreshed its strategy, course of activities and managed staff recruitment lag. Initiative Delivery & Development costs have reduced slightly in FY23 but are expected to increase during FY24. This remains a strong focus area. Business Operational Costs have increased during FY23 but is expected to remain fairly stable in FY24.

**Surplus/Deficit:** SuperFriend achieved its first surplus for many years in FY23..

**Balance Sheet:** SuperFriend has grown its Asset Base in the last financial year by \$428,269. This provides a strong assets to liabilities ratio of 8 – reversing the previous years' downwards trend.

## Summary

We sincerely thank all of our Partners and customers for the opportunity to work with them and support them on their journey to creating mentally healthy workplaces. We also wish to thank our network of strategic stakeholders and our Preferred Provider Network who have helped guide our work and enabled us to make a difference to the lives of many Australian workers across a range of industries. Finally, we would like to thank our Board and Committee members for their continued support and guidance in helping create our vision for all Australian workplaces to be mentally healthy.

