Indicators of a Thriving Workplace Survey

2022 KEY INSIGHTS

Super*friend*

We exist to help people thrive at work, both today and tomorrow!

Indicators of a Thriving Workplace

A Super*friend* Initiative

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Message from Darren Black, SuperFriend, Chief Executive Officer

At SuperFriend, we exist to help people thrive at work, both today and tomorrow. This is the eighth year that SuperFriend has conducted the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey, and in 2022 there have been some important changes. There is a recognised need to shift from raising awareness and reducing stigma, to providing actionable insights that will "shift the dial" in workplace mental health and wellbeing across industry and workplaces nationally. SuperFriend is leading the way in this space.

At first glance, it may look as though we have taken "culture" out of our five Domains of workplace mental health. Shifting workplace culture is the result of a number of actions, like upskilling leadership with knowledge around supporting mental health and designing work tasks in a way that supports workers to thrive.

A positive culture not only puts policies in place but ensures there is widespread capability to put them into practice, helping to provide an environment where workers can feel connected and safe at work. In reality, culture sits at the heart of a thriving workplace, and identifying the Domains of Leadership, Connectedness, Safety, Work Design and Capability provide areas of focus for workplaces to take steps towards becoming (and continuing to be) a mentally healthy workplace.

Darren Black MBA GAICD
CEO

Indicators of a Thriving Workplace

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Message from Ross Iles, SuperFriend, Chief Research Officer

The 2022 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey was the widest we have ever conducted, capturing more factors influencing workplace mental health than ever before.

As workplaces continue to change, our measurements need to change too. We drew from the most recent research to update the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace, which has led to a new, but familiar, set of Domains.

Our future work will also refresh the targets for workplaces that want to describe themselves as truly thriving. For now, our focus is on what insights we can draw from this dataset, with an eye on concrete markers we can use to demonstrate the impact of a thriving workplace culture.

We have collected a vast dataset, too large to report it all at once. We have collated this report to provide Australian employers, health and safety professionals, and workers themselves with high-level insight into the factors that impact mental health in the workplace. In reality, our data goes much deeper, so if you want to know more, please get in touch with SuperFriend. We look forward to working and learning with you to shift the dial on mental health in Australian workplaces.

**Ross Iles Associate Professor
CRO**

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About the 2022 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey

General awareness of the importance of mental health is higher than ever before. Because work is intrinsically associated with mental health, it is essential to understand how workplaces in Australia are focusing their efforts on creating mentally healthy workplaces and striving to meet the mental health needs of their workers.

The 2022 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey is the widest survey we have ever conducted. We captured more factors influencing workplace mental health than ever before from almost 10,000 Australian workers.

However, the indicators we used to measure mental health and wellbeing in the workplace are different from those of previous years. Australian workplaces are constantly evolving, and this is reflected in our measurement tools.

Informed by SuperFriend's review of the latest research literature and backed by an independent review of the survey methods, the 2022 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey represent the most contemporary insights into workplace mental health.

The questions for each of the Domains have changed to highlight the need for action on mental health in the workplace. With our 2022 data, we have made it easier to understand each of the Domain scores, national benchmarks, and what it means to be a thriving workplace.

Instead of focusing on how things have changed since 2021, the new Domain scores speak to the actions needed and indicate where we need to focus our efforts to improve mental health in the workplace in 2023.

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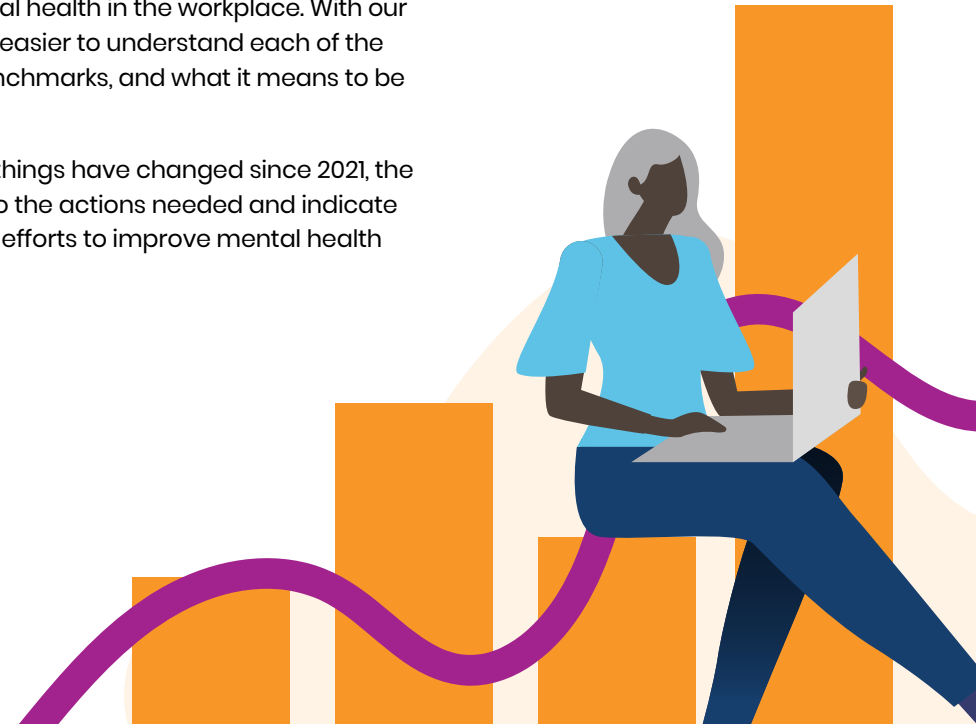
Who completed the survey?

9,944 Australian workers completed the survey via an online portal in November and December 2022. Workers from a range of industries*, role types and locations were asked about their experiences in their current workplace.

To ensure the findings are representative of the Australian workforce, responses are weighted by location, industry, gender identity and age using recent workforce data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

*See glossary for the full list of industries

How did we determine the five Indicators of a Thriving Workplace Domains?

The 2022 survey contained over 100 questions drawn from the most recent research literature relating to factors that influence workplace mental health. Our analysis identified five core groups, or Domains, comprising a total of 47 questions that best summarise the information.

The five Indicators of a Thriving Workplace Domains* are **Leadership**, **Connectedness**, **Safety**, **Work Design** and **Capability**. Each of these Domains has a common theme and a summary score.

Analysing the data in this way allows us to compare how each Domain varies by industry, workplace size, and a range of other characteristics. In this report, we summarise the key highlights for each Domain.

What does it mean to be a thriving workplace?

The average of all the Domain scores enables us to provide a single Thriving Workplace score as a benchmark for mental health in the workplace.

The 2022 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey also provides national and state benchmark scores by industry, location, workplace size, and a range of other characteristics.

In previous surveys, we defined a Domain as being "thriving" when a score was 80 or above. Since our Domains have changed, we need to do further work to establish a meaningful target across each of our new Domains. Future versions of the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey will establish clear targets for workplaces looking to move beyond compliance with work health and safety legislation.

What is the national benchmark for workplace mental health in Australia?

The 2022 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey has measured **Australia's national Thriving Workplace score as 72.8 out of 100**. There is plenty of room for improvement in mental health across Australian workplaces.

*See glossary for definition of Domains

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Executive Summary

## The Australian workplace landscape in 2022

Connectedness is the top-scoring Domain, suggesting that many Australian workers have high-quality relationships with their co-workers. The lowest scoring Domain is Capability, suggesting that targeted efforts need to be made to empower workplaces and workers with skills and resources to support their mental health and that of others in the workplace.

72.8
out of 100

Overall Australian Thriving Workplace score

National Thriving Workplace Scores

Domain	Score
Overall	72.8
Connectedness	78.5
Safety	76.1
Leadership	71.4
Work Design	70.1
Capability	67.9
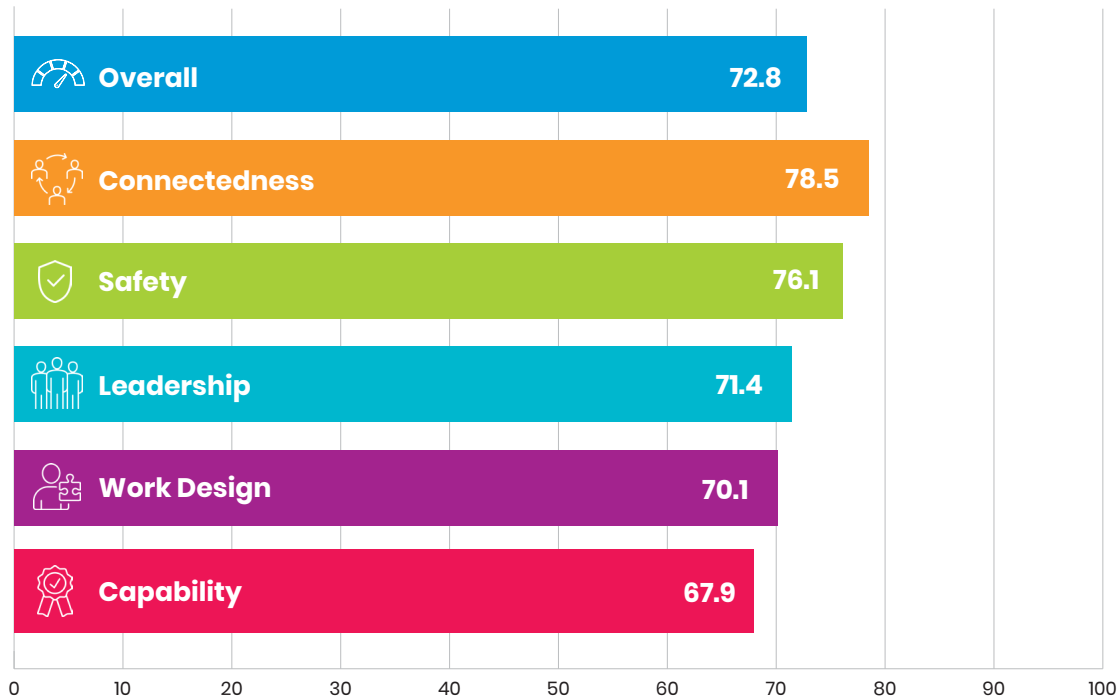
It is in everyone's best interests to support mental health in the workplace.

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National Thriving Workplace Scores Ranked by Industry

Rank	Industry	National Thriving Scores
1	Information Media and Telecommunications	77.8
2	Arts and Recreation Services	77.0
3	Financial and Insurance Services	76.4
4	Manufacturing	75.8
5	Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	75.6
6	Construction	75.5
7	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	74.9
8	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	74.7
9	Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	73.0
10	Transport, Postal and Warehousing	73.0
11	Administrative and Support Services	72.9
12	Retail Trade	72.8
	NATIONAL AVERAGE	**72.8**
13	Wholesale Trade	72.7
14	Mining	71.5
15	Public Administration and Safety	71.2
16	Accommodation and Food Services	70.6
17	Health Care and Social Assistance	70.2
18	Education and Training	70.2
19	Other Services	69.1

Industry-wide thriving workplace performance

The 2022 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey collected responses from every industry to see how they performed against the national benchmark of 72.8.

Information Media and Telecommunications and Arts and Recreation Services were the highest-scoring industries at 77.8 and 77.0, respectively. Information Media and Telecommunications also led the way in the 2021 survey results.

We saw the lowest scores in Other Services* and Education and Training. Other Services was also in the bottom five scoring industries in 2021.

*Other Services comprise services that do not align with any of the other industries (For example, repair and maintenance of cars, machinery, equipment and clothing, hairdressing, weight loss, funeral, dry-cleaning or religious services, professional and labour association services).

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Factors leading to a higher Thriving Workplace score

- Being aged between 30 and 44 years
- Working somewhere between 30 and 49 hours per week
- Working full-time
- Working in an organisation with over 200 employees
- Owning the business or being a manager at some level
- Coming from Tasmania or NSW

Factors leading to a lower Thriving Workplace score

- Being aged between 55 and 64 years
- Working over 60 hours per week
- Working on a casual basis
- Working for an SME (2-200 employees)
- Being financially stressed and unable to access emergency funds
- Coming from QLD or the ACT

Workplaces are in a unique position to influence a large section of the Australian population.

Unique characteristics of workers and Australian workplaces can affect mental health, which is reflected in the Thriving Workplace scores.

For example, workers aged 30 to 44 years are likely to be the most employable. There are likely to be more opportunities for job progression in this age group, such as moving into management or senior roles. Larger organisations often have more opportunities for job growth, as well as clear policies around workplace mental health. These factors can lead to a higher Thriving Workplace score.

In contrast, those between the ages of 55 and 64 years are less likely to have opportunities for job growth. Working over 60 hours a week or even working on a casual basis can affect mental health, leading to lower Thriving Workplace scores.

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Psychosocial hazards

Psychosocial hazards are aspects of work that have the potential to cause psychological harm and may lead to physical harm.

In 2022, we scored psychosocial hazards out of 100 similarly to the Domains. A score of 100 indicates the highest possible control of the level of risk, and lower scores demonstrate less effective control over the risk of harm.

We identified inappropriate workload as the hazard with the lowest score, indicating it was the most poorly addressed hazard in Australian workplaces. Low recognition, poor change management, poor management support, and low job control followed this hazard, making up the five most poorly addressed hazards in Australian workplaces.

Five lowest scoring hazards

	Inappropriate workload: having too much or too little work or responsibility	**69.8**
	Low recognition: lack of positive feedback, recognition or rewards for good work	**72.0**
	Poor change management: lack of clear communication, consultation or effective processes during workplace changes	**75.9**
	Poor management support: inadequate assistance or guidance from leaders	**76.5**
	Low job control: limited control over decisions relating to how work is performed	**76.8**

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Domain: Connectedness

Connectedness 2022 highlights

Scores for Connectedness were high across all industries, particularly for Arts and Recreation Services (82.5) and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (80.3).

Connectedness was highest within small organisations of 2–19 workers (79.9) compared with all others. In smaller organisations, there is more opportunity to see each person as more than their title and the work they perform.

The desire to feel connected is a basic human need. For many people, the workplace is central to their lives and quality social and emotional interactions have a significant impact on mental health. In 2022, the highest-scoring Domain was Connectedness.

78.5
out of 100

The Connectedness Domain score in 2022
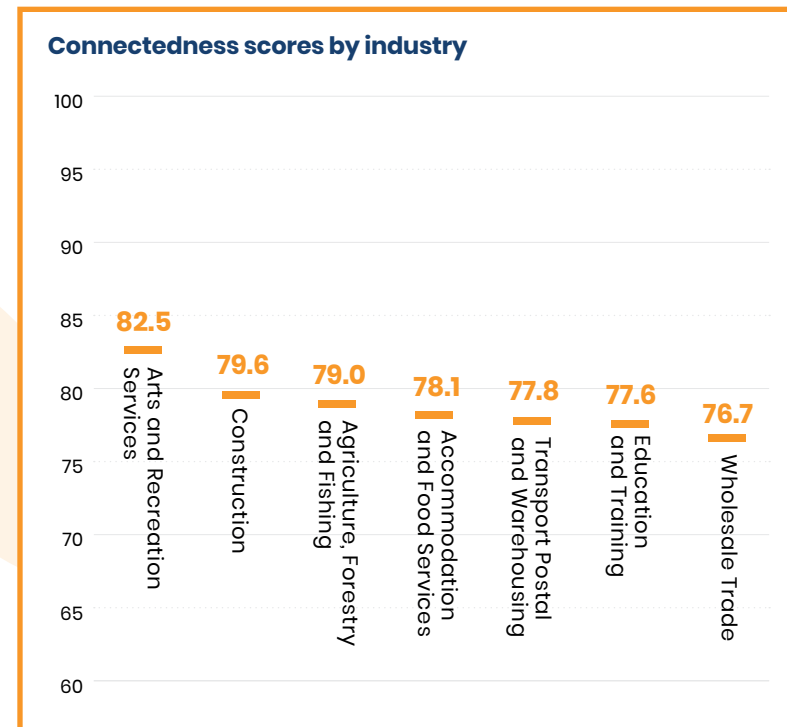
Connectedness refers to the quality of interpersonal relationships in the workplace. High-quality connections are characterised by mutual respect, trust, and collaboration. This can be seen when workers support each other to succeed and there is a sense of belonging.

Connectedness scores by industry

Industry	Score
Arts and Recreation Services	82.5
Construction	79.6
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	79.0
Accommodation and Food Services	78.1
Transport Postal and Warehousing	77.8
Education and Training	77.6
Wholesale Trade	76.7

Graph illustrates a selection of industries only

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Connectedness was very high in Tasmania (81.2), but much lower in the Northern Territory (NT) at 75.0. It seems the size of the "community" may not be as important as distance. Mostly, the NT is remote, with a high proportion of remote jobs and higher risk factors for loneliness, making it more difficult for workers in the NT to feel connected.

Non-managers had a lower score (76.8) than Senior Managers (80.6). Senior Managers were more likely to agree that they feel comfortable talking openly about their mental health compared with non-managers (71% vs 54%). This variance may reflect differences in job tenure and having a voice in day-to-day activities, of which non-managers may have less. It may also reflect the potential difference in consequences when disclosing difficulties around mental health.

In 2022, **28% of workers reported experiencing a mental health condition in the past 12 months**, which is roughly similar to those reporting this in the 12 months leading to the end of June 2021. **We consistently see one in four people reporting mental health conditions, and appropriate action is essential.** Those who took action and sought support for their mental health from co-workers had a higher Connectedness score (79.9). Those who reported that their mental health was either slightly better or a lot better compared with a year ago, all recorded a Connectedness score of over 80.

Insight

When workers proactively sought support for their mental health, it reflected in their higher Connectedness score. This speaks to better relationships with others, mutual respect and trust.

When teams feel connected they are empowered to drive collaboration, foster healthy and trusting working relationships, and facilitate the sharing of knowledge. When employees are connected, the efficiency and innovation of the workplace increases significantly.

"Everyone at my workplace has a good connection and good relationship with each other, that's why whenever we had any problem, we help each other out so everyone's mental health is good so far."

Quote from a person working in Health Care and Social Assistance as a junior or middle level manager

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Domain: Safety

Safety 2022 highlights

The Australian Capital Territory (70.9), NT (73.4) and QLD (73.7) had the lowest scores for Safety. So did casual workers (71.0).

Workplaces scored higher if respondents reported a mental health or wellbeing policy was in place (80.2). In fact, workplaces that had policies such as OH&S, Remote/Flexible Working, and Discrimination almost always scored more highly in all 5 Domains compared to those without policies. Having a policy is a clear step in the right direction, but if leadership does not practise or model these strategies, then it can become a tick-box exercise that has little or no impact.

Insight

Employee wellbeing strategies are crucial for organisations to attract the best talent and ensure sustainable business performance. Some areas to consider include promoting health and wellbeing at work, establishing organisational values, and fostering positive workplace relationships.

Mental health is fundamentally linked to feeling safe in the workplace. Demonstrating a zero-tolerance approach to negative behaviours in the workplace sets the stage for a mentally healthy and safe working environment. Safety was the second highest-rated Domain in 2022.

76.1
out of 100

The Safety Domain score in 2022

Safety describes the processes put in action so that workplaces are free from harassment, bullying, discrimination and violence. These processes provide proactive support and promote positive social interactions.

Safety scores by industry

Industry	Score
Information Media and Telecommunications	81.2
Manufacturing	79.3
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	77.2
Administrative and Support Services	75.8
Wholesale Trade	75.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	74.4
Other Services	71.9

Graph illustrates a selection of industries only

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One in 10 people experienced bullying at work in the past 12 months. The same number experienced discrimination (based on gender, age, race, religion, disability, or family responsibilities) at work in the past 12 months.

Smaller organisations of 2–19 or 20–199 people (scoring 72.8 and 74.5 respectively) had lower scores for Safety than larger ones. Smaller organisations (2–19 people) were less likely to have policies specifically against bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence, but were actually far less likely to have experienced these events.

"Any issues with other co-workers or bullying isn't tolerated and always made a priority"

Quote from a non-manager working in a small Construction organisation

Workplace policies in place

Legend: ■ 2-19 people ■ All other organisations

% of organisations with policies in place

Category	2-19 people	All other organisations
Mental health / Wellbeing	43%	69%
Bullying	45%	52%
Harassment	47%	55%
Discrimination	48%	55%
Violence	28%	34%
Traumatic events	19%	28%

Experience of negative events

Legend: ■ 2-19 people ■ All other organisations

Category	2-19 people	All other organisations
Violence by people within my workplace	3%	10%
Violence by people outside my workplace (e.g. customers)	6%	11%
Bullying	9%	12%
Sexual harassment	2%	5%
Discrimination	5%	12%

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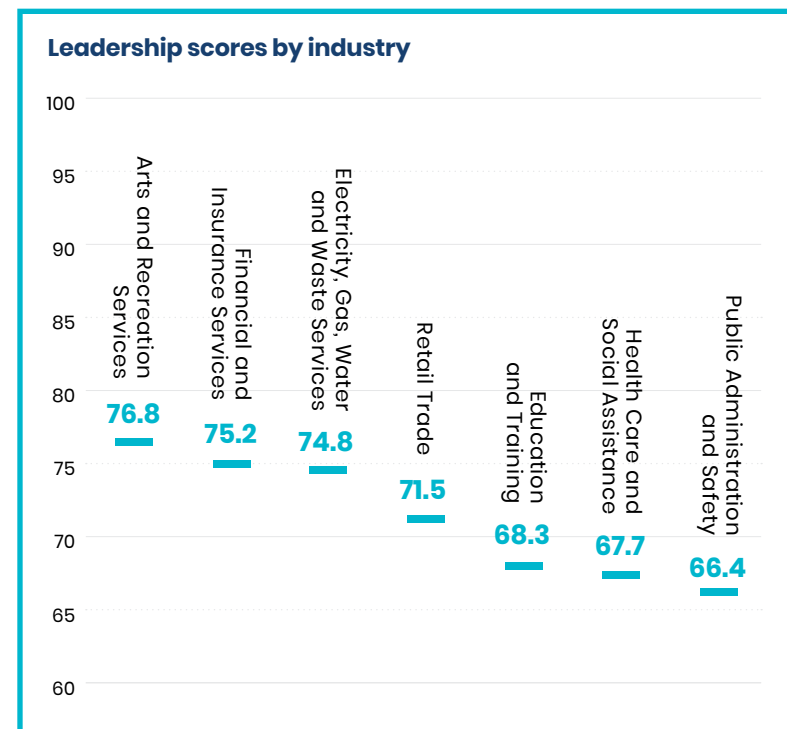
Domain: Leadership

Leadership 2022 highlights

Workers who were not in a leadership role were more likely to give a low rating for Leadership (66.3) compared to Senior Managers who were likely to give a higher score (77.2). This may be confirmation bias, meaning those not in a leadership role felt they had little input to leadership, or believed they were not being heard. Alternatively, managers could be biased towards overestimating their own leadership skills in practice. Regardless, **there are more complex demands being placed upon leaders when it comes to mental health.**

Medium to large organisations (200–4,999 workers) were most likely to have a higher Leadership score.

Having an organisational strategy or organisational goals was also associated with a higher Leadership score (73.3 and 73.1 respectively).

Leadership plays a key role in workplace mental health. Workplace leaders have a vital role in creating a positive environment for workers to excel. It is important that they not only support the mental health of workers, but that they also demonstrate how they support their own mental health.

71.4
out of 100

The Leadership Domain score in 2022

Leadership* comprises how managers enable their teams to achieve shared organisational goals. This includes modelling positive behaviours, providing feedback for growth and nurturing a culture where workers can utilise their strengths.

Leadership scores by industry

- Arts and Recreation Services — 76.8
- Financial and Insurance Services — 75.2
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services — 74.8
- Retail Trade — 71.5
- Education and Training — 68.3
- Health Care and Social Assistance — 67.7
- Public Administration and Safety — 66.4

Graph illustrates a selection of industries only

*Leadership includes, but is not limited to, Executive, Senior and Middle Managers, Supervisors, and Team Leaders.

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Respondents largely reported that they received a lot of support from their managers, however, only 59% agreed that managers role-modelled h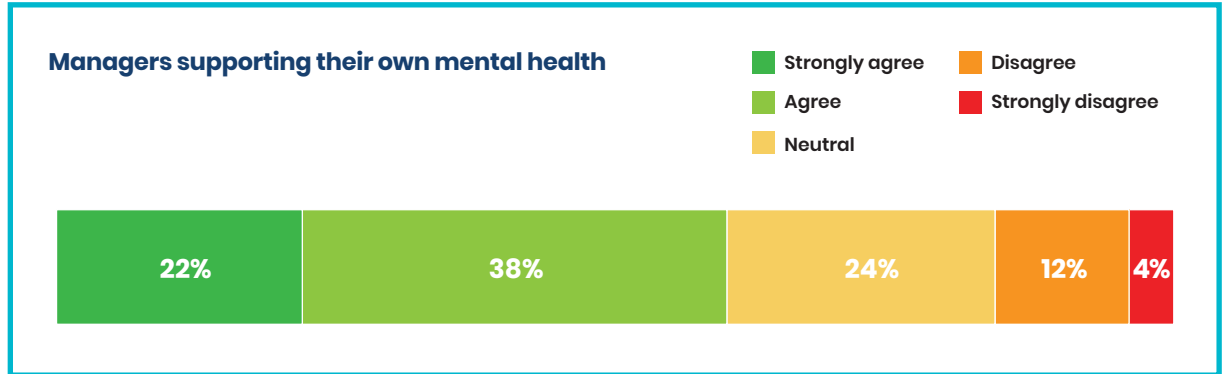ow they support their own mental health. **Employee burnout is likely to be lower when managers model self-care, including work-life balance and setting boundaries around weekend work and responding to emails.**

Managers are already supporting their teams to get their work done effectively, however, they are not taking enough steps to support their team's mental health. This may indicate that a manager is not comfortable about mental health, does not understand mental health, or feels it is not part of their role.

Insight

Managers must support their team members, including addressing mental health struggles. By being open about their own health, managers can foster better relationships and connections, which encourage employees to discuss their challenges freely. Leaders should hold regular check-ins with direct reports, ask specific questions and actively listen, in order to create space for compassion and support.

Managers supporting their own mental health

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
22%	38%	24%	12%	4%

"**Staff culture is highly driven in my workplace. Leadership is very encouraging of us to look after our own mental health and wellbeing**"

Quote from a person working in a non-management position within Education and Training

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Domain: Work Design

Work Design 2022 highlights

The two lowest-scoring industries were Health Care and Social Assistance (64.7) and Education and Training (63.6). The scores may reflect challenges specific to these industries, such as set timetables and high patient-to-carer ratios.
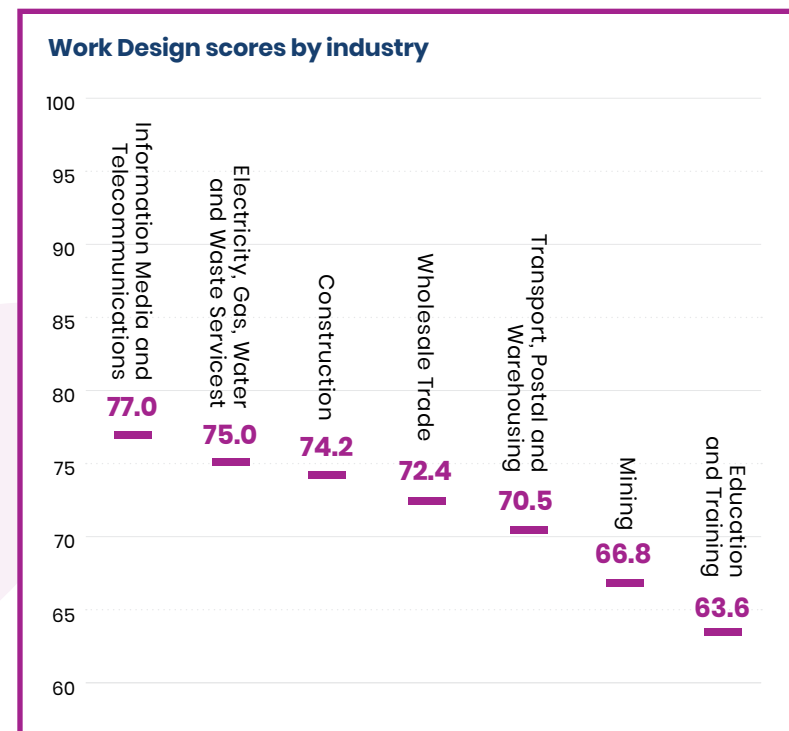
Providing access to flexible working arrangements and opportunities for workers to influence how and when they do their work has a tremendous impact on psychological health. Where possible, a proactive approach to work design encourages not only a better work-life balance, but is also conducive to better mental health. Work Design was the second lowest Domain in 2022.
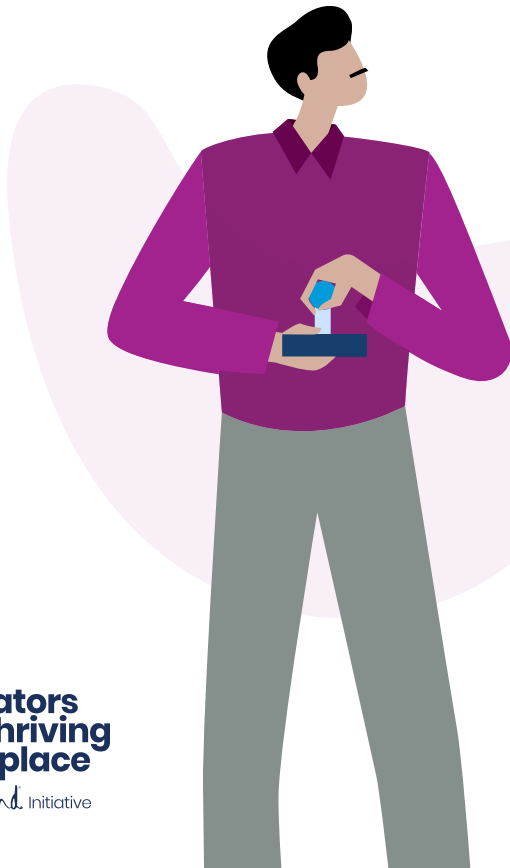
70.1
out of 100

The Work Design Domain score in 2022

Work Design is the way that roles, tasks, and responsibilities are organised. Stronger engagement occurs when workers are empowered to shape the way that they work. This promotes a balance between work and individual preferences.

Work Design scores by industry

Information Media and Telecommunications **77.0**

Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services **75.0**

Construction **74.2**

Wholesale Trade **72.4**

Transport, Postal and Warehousing **70.5**

Mining **66.8**

Education and Training **63.6**

Graph illustrates a selection of industries only

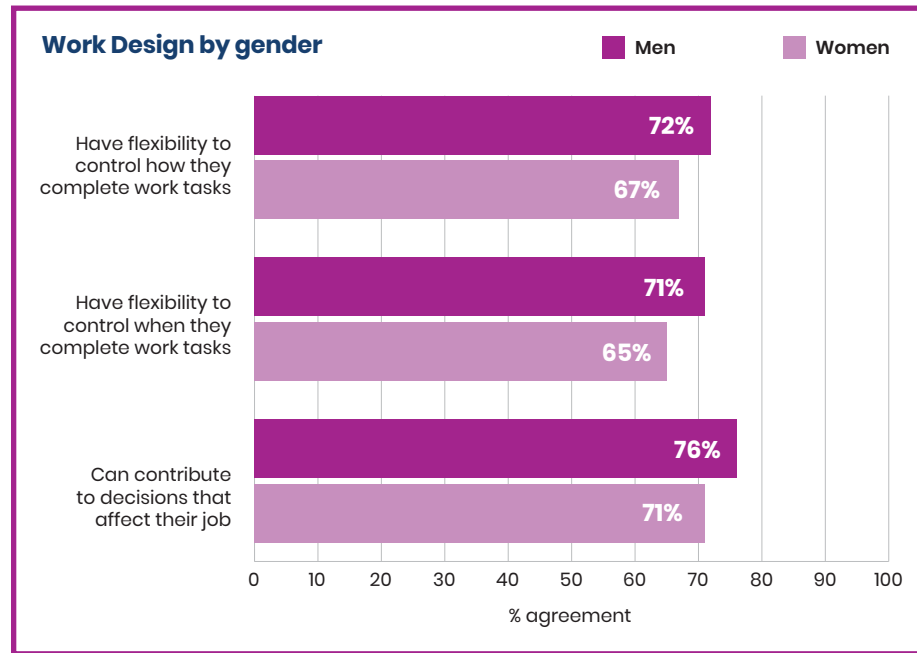**Indicators of a Thriving Workplace**
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30–44-year-olds had the highest scores for Work Design (73.3), compared with younger or older respondents. So did Senior Managers (76.5) compared with non-managers (64.6), which is consistent with the assumption that non-managers have less influence over how they do their work. Workers whose role included mostly physical activities also had a lower score (65.9) compared to those with more mental activities (71.6).

There is a strong relationship between Work Design scores and individuals that show signs of positive engagement and good mental health in the workplace:

• Those who agreed they were satisfied with their job had a higher score (77.3) than those who didn't (44.4)

• Those who intended to stay with their organisation for the next 12 months had a higher score (73.9) as opposed to those who didn't (49.7).

Men indicate that their workplace has more flexible work arrangements, with a higher score for Work Design (71.7) compared with women (68.4).

Work Design by gender

Men | Women

Have flexibility to control how they complete work tasks: 72% / 67%

Have flexibility to control when they complete work tasks: 71% / 65%

Can contribute to decisions that affect their job: 76% / 71%

% agreement

"**Offering flexible working arrangements has been hugely beneficial and has allowed for everyone to take the changes at their own pace and in a way that suits their circumstances.**"

Quote from a person based at a small organisation within Information Media and Telecommunications

Insight

It seems that women feel like they have less choice over how and when they do their work, less influence over decisions, and less flexibility in their working arrangements. These results may be in part because women dominate the Education and Training and the Health Care and Social Assistance industries – the two lowest scoring industries for Work Design. These industries face significant challenges to alter how work is performed, given traditional hospital-based or school-based work.

Considering work design, and in particular for women, provides an opportunity to attract and maintain the best working talent. Future research should focus on how work design may impact opportunities for women remain in the workforce, as well as the impact on women in leadership roles.

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Domain: Capability

Capability 2022 highlights

Women reported a lower score (66.5) compared with men (69.3) in this Domain. Similarly, those aged 18–29 years old and over 55 years old had scores below 67.9.

The Capability Domain registered the widest range of scores across industries, with almost 15 points separating the lowest score recorded for Other Services (59.6) and the highest score for Information Media and Telecommunications (74.4).

In order to close the gaps between industries, those performing well in this Domain can serve as examples of policy in action, building the workplace knowledge and skills required to support positive mental health at work.

While policies to promote workplace mental health are essential, empowering workers with skills, knowledge, and resources to support their mental health is also important. It's about getting the support they need without any barriers. In 2022, Capability was the lowest-scoring Domain.

67.9
out of 100

The Capability Domain score in 2022
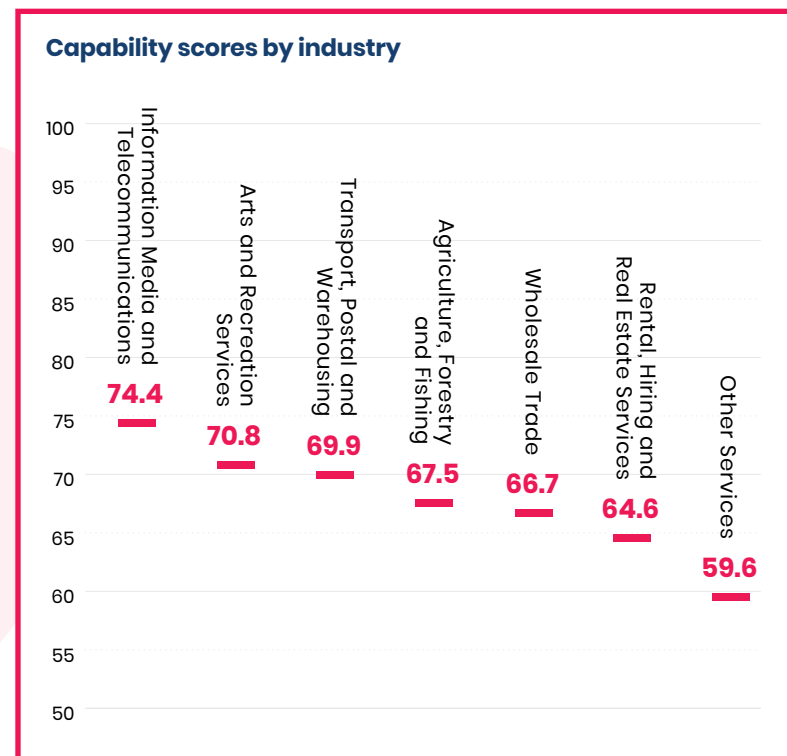
Capability is about equipping the workplace with skills and resources to support mental health. It involves putting policies into action to minimise risks, respond to harm, and promote the positives that support good mental health and wellbeing for all.

Capability scores by industry

- Information Media and Telecommunications — 74.4
- Arts and Recreation Services — 70.8
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing — 69.9
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing — 67.5
- Wholesale Trade — 66.7
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services — 64.6
- Other Services — 59.6

Graph illustrates a selection of industries only

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Independent contractors/freelancers only scored 57.0 for Capability, and casual employees had a score of 55.9. This is much lower than full-time employees (70.6) who seem to have much better access to vital mental health skills and resources.
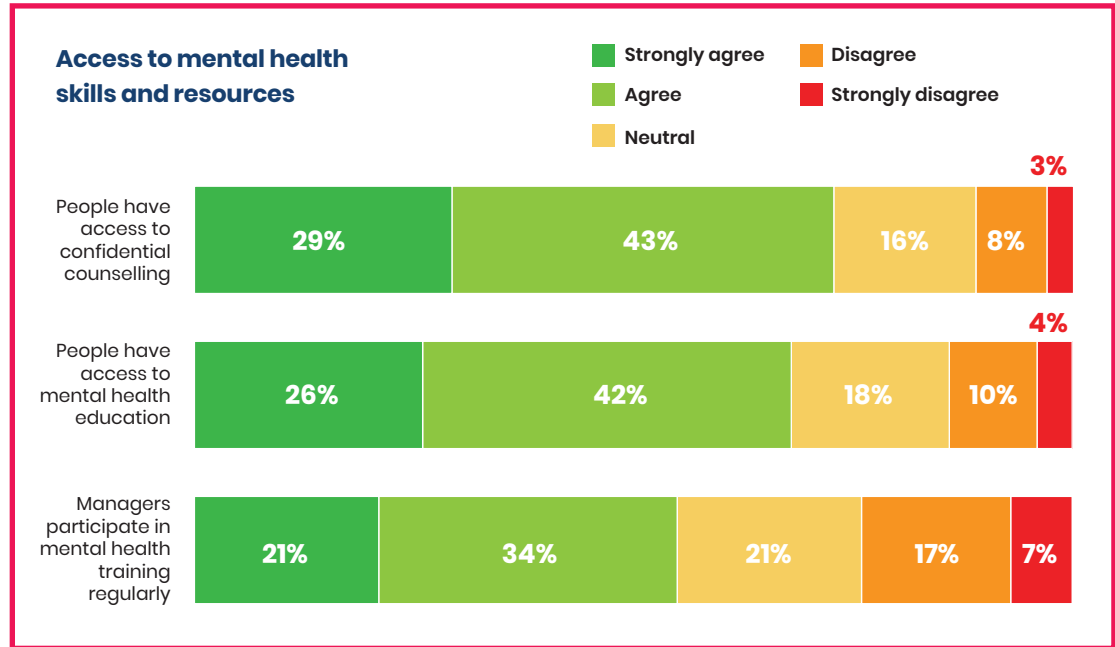
Workers whose role included mostly physical activities also had a lower score (63.1) compared to those with more mental activities (69.6), suggesting that those working in a predominantly physical work environment may have less access to training and formal mental support options such as counselling.

Public sector organisations had better access to skills and resources with a score of 71.5 than private, for-profit organisations (65.7). This is most likely a reflection of stronger initiatives in the public sector to support mental health at work.

Insight

While 72% of employees have access to confidential counselling, just under half said that managers don't regularly participate in mental health training. Managers with skills in understanding mental health in the workplace can contribute to reducing the risk of mental health issues and guide workers to relevant professional support when and where needed. These results demonstrate that managers should be participating in training alongside their employees.

Access to mental health skills and resources

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

People have access to confidential counselling: 29% | 43% | 16% | 8% | 3%

People have access to mental health education: 26% | 42% | 18% | 10% | 4%

Managers participate in mental health training regularly: 21% | 34% | 21% | 17% | 7%

"When we go to jobs that are traumatic or suit certain criteria, we are placed on a mental health watch where a supervisor will check in on us and make sure we are doing okay."

Quote from a person working within Public Administration and Safety at a large organisation

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Psychosocial hazards

Over 20 psychosocial hazards identified in a SuperFriend research literature review were captured and matched to nine distinct themes. We asked respondents about the extent that each hazard was controlled in their workplace. Hazards were scored out of 100, with a lower score indicating lower levels of controlling for the risk of harm. This means that the lower the scores, the worse the psychosocial hazard is in the workplace.

Psychosocial hazards are aspects of work which have the potential to cause psychological harm and may lead to physical harm.

Psychosocial hazards

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

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Controlling these psychosocial hazards often comes down to strong leadership in the workplace. How well psychosocial hazards are controlled differed by industry:

Psychosocial hazards ranked by industry

■ Three best performing industries   ■ Three worst performing industries

Inappropriate workload

Industry	Score
Arts and Recreation Services	73.4
Financial and Insurance Services	72.1
Rental Hiring and Real Estate	71.9
Mining	69.6
Healthcare and Social Assistance	67.3
Education and Training	66.6

Low recognition

Industry	Score
Information Media and Telecommunications	78.7
Construction	78.0
Manufacturing	77.7
Education and Training	67.7
Health Care and Social Assistance	66.2
Public Administration and Safety	65.6

Some industries have more work to do than others to control psychosocial hazards in the workplace. Public Administration and Safety received the lowest scores for four out of the nine psychosocial hazards, while Health Care and Social Assistance received the lowest scores for three of the nine hazards.

Across these two industries:

- Nearly twice as many respondents strongly disagreed that they had enough time to rest between scheduled work times compared to other industries.

- A much higher proportion (22%) disagreed that they were rewarded appropriately for their achievements compared to the overall sample

In contrast, the Arts and Recreation Services, and Information Media and Telecommunications industries both scored the highest ratings for 4 out of 9 psychosocial hazards.

> "Eliminate stress by setting reasonable workload expectations, prioritising what must be done, and recognizing what can be reduced if necessary."
>
> **Quote from a person working in the Transport, Postal and Warehousing industry**

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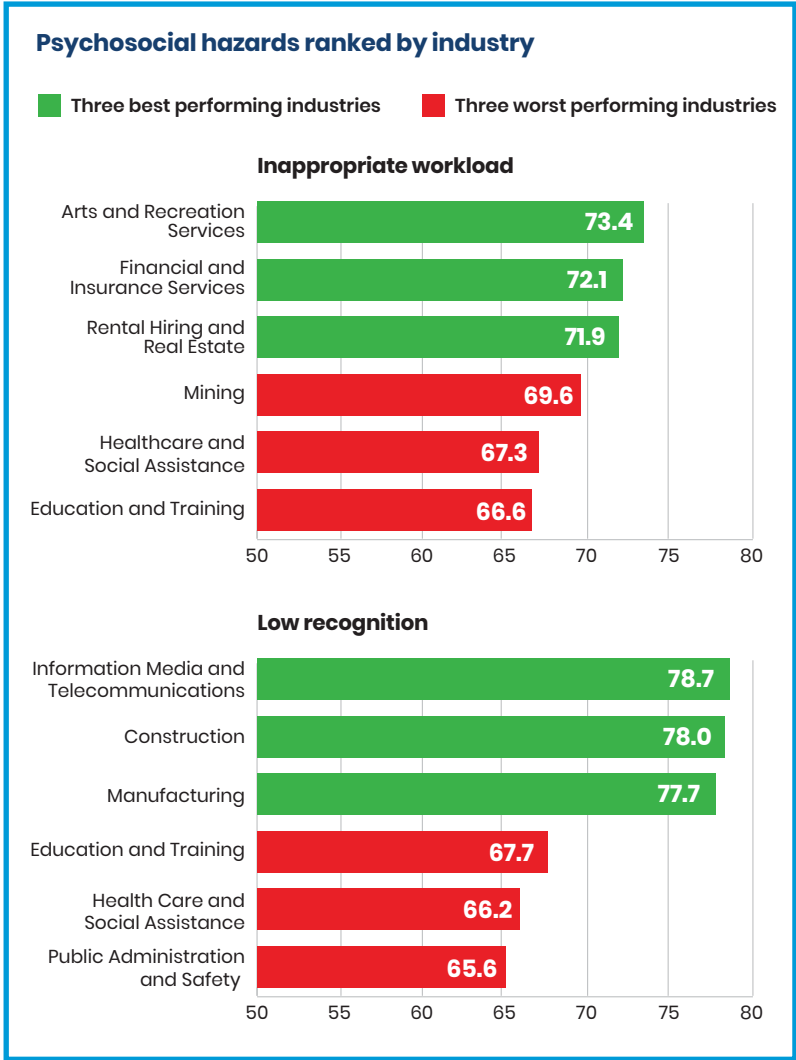
# How psychosocial hazards influence the five Domains

Two important themes stood out—the amount of work and how work-from-home roles impact the Domains.

Inappropriate workload

When asked about workload, having too little work to do had a bigger impact on scores for Leadership, Work Design, and Capability than having too much work to do. Having a sense of purpose and achievement at work has a strong relationship with mental health.

People who strongly agreed with statements about having clear job descriptions and realistic deadlines scored, on average, twice as high in almost every Domain compared to those who strongly disagreed.

Thriving Workplace score based on agreement that people have clear job descriptions

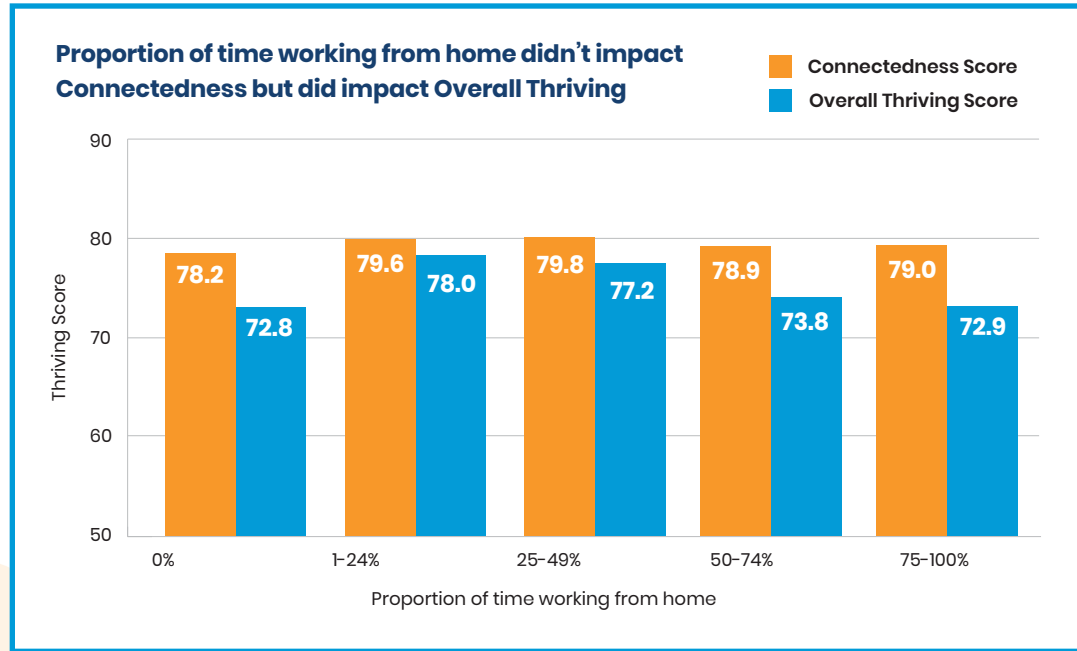|	
Strongly disagree	41%
Disagree	54%
Neutral	63%
Agree	72%
Strongly agree	83%
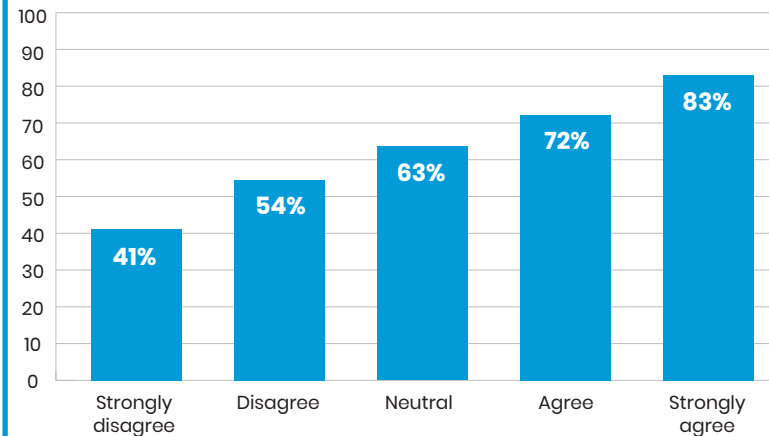
"An ideal workplace is an environment where people are encouraged to take regular breaks away from work, people resources are matched to align with the workload and people are not over-stretched but kept busy. People do not fear job loss due to stress, over-work, lack of resources or other factors which may impact their ability to deliver."

Quote from an independent contractor working within Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services at a large organisation

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Remote work

The impact of remote work has been a focus since COVID-19 changed the way many workplaces function. The proportion of time working at home did not impact Connectedness scores, probably because workers had the technical capabilities to remain engaged with work. However, **every other Domain score improved when between 1% and 50% of time was spent working from home.**

Working from home for up to 50% of the time also had a positive impact across 8 out of 9 psychosocial hazards. The exception was inappropriate workload, which scored worse than working from home for more than 50% of the time (but better than doing no remote work at all). Working from home can easily blur the distinction between work and home life, readily perceived as a higher workload.

Proportion of time working from home didn't impact Connectedness but did impact Overall Thriving

Legend:
- Connectedness Score (orange)
- Overall Thriving Score (blue)

Y-axis: Thriving Score (50 to 90)
X-axis: Proportion of time working from home

Proportion	Connectedness Score	Overall Thriving Score
0%	78.2	72.8
1-24%	79.6	78.0
25-49%	79.8	77.2
50-74%	78.9	73.8
75-100%	79.0	72.9

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How does your organisation measure up?

The 2022 Indicators of a Thriving Workforce survey was the most comprehensive survey we have ever performed, taking into consideration the dynamic nature of Australian workplaces and the changing characteristics of the workforce.

We have adapted the survey to gather in-depth insights that will guide focused action to improve workplace mental health in Australia. These insights are focused on our Domains of workplace mental health:

Leadership

Leaders can support their teams' mental health and wellbeing by creating safe spaces, delivering training, sharing resources or setting up weekly opportunities to promote and share wellbeing strategies. This will create a 'leaders lead' approach to mental health, where there is room for compassion, empathy and support amongst the team as a whole.

Connectedness

It is important to create a company values system or statement to which all team members contribute. Ongoing review and reference to these values should be used to promote team problem-solving and opportunities for all voices to be heard. A high level of connectedness can lead to greater innovation for teams where they feel their opinions and ideas are respected and welcomed.

Safety

Small businesses can benefit from creating clear workplace policies to cover mental health and wellbeing, bullying, harassment and discrimination. Not only does this work to help control psychosocial hazards but contributes to overall workplace culture. Industries where workers regularly interact with 'at risk' clients or the public are more prone to negative events; support architecture for such frontline workers should be carefully designed to be actionable in the workplace.

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Work Design

Workplaces can benefit from reviewing how work is done in practice. Promoting work-life balance can lead to greater productivity and output, less chance of burnout and a lower turnover of staff. This is particularly important for industries where work-from-home opportunities are limited. Understanding what best practice work design looks like, and developing workplace practices to match, is especially important for women.

Capability

Employees should be provided with accessible and convenient pathways to counselling that can be initiated with autonomy. Providing mental health awareness training for all people in the workplace, including casual or contracting employees, can simultaneously boost workplace mental health and establish a position of being an employer of choice. Initiatives like these create loyalty and positive outcomes around resilience and workplace culture.

The 2022 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey delivers actionable insights for organisations around the nation. While workplaces continue to adapt to the ongoing impact of the global pandemic, lockdowns and new ways of working, the challenge of providing a mentally healthy workplace remains for employers. The Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey provides information for employers looking to comply with their responsibilities to provide a psychologically safe workplace, as well as employers looking to support their workers to truly thrive at work.

To understand where your organisation stands with regard to mental health in your workplace and for a thorough analysis to see how your organisation performs for various psychosocial hazards, you can contact us to access information specific to your needs.

If you would like information about SuperFriend's methodology, literature review and references, or about our findings please send your questions our way!

Contact SuperFriend

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www.superfriend.com.au

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Glossary

Leadership comprises how managers enable their teams to achieve shared organisational goals. This includes modelling positive behaviours, providing feedback for growth, and nurturing a culture where workers can utilise their strengths. (Leadership includes, but is not limited to, Executive, Senior and Middle Managers, Supervisors, and Team Leaders).

Connectedness refers to the quality of interpersonal relationships in the workplace. High-quality connections are characterised by mutual respect, trust, and collaboration. This can be seen when workers support each other to succeed and there is a sense of belonging.

Safety describes the processes put in action so that workplaces are free from harassment, bullying, discrimination and violence. These processes provide proactive support and promote positive social interactions.

Work design is the way that roles, tasks and responsibilities are organised. Stronger engagement occurs when workers are empowered to shape the way they work. This promotes a balance between work and individual preferences.

Capability is about equipping the workplace with skills and resources to support mental health. It involves putting policies into action to minimise risks, respond to harm, and promote the positives that support good mental health and wellbeing for all.

Psychosocial hazards are aspects of work that have the potential to cause psychological harm and may lead to physical harm.

A thriving workplace is a positive culture where workers, teams and the organisation are collectively functioning well, striving for growth, and workers feel good about themselves and their work. The key Domains which support a positive culture include Leadership, Connectedness, Safety, Work Design and Capability. Actions across all Domains protect workers from harm, promote positive behaviours and provide support where required.

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Technical notes

- Index scores are calculated using all scale responses from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' and exclude respondents who are unsure.

- Unless otherwise specified, all insights are based on the 2022 data.

- Mental health conditions are self-reported by survey respondents and include those that have not been diagnosed by a medical professional.

- Industries classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics ANZSIC (Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification) and include:

Industry	Examples	Industry	Examples
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	For example, crop growing, livestock farming, aquaculture, logging, fishing, hunting, shearing services	**Financial and Insurance Services**	For example, banking, building society, health or life insurance, superannuation
Mining	For example, coal and metal ore mining, oil and gas extraction, petroleum exploration, sand quarrying, mineral exploration	**Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services**	For example, motor vehicle or equipment rental, farm animal or copyright leasing, property operators, real estate agencies
Manufacturing	For example, manufacturing of food, beverages, tobacco, textiles, clothing, wood products, paper, jewellery, machinery, equipment, rubber, metals and chemicals, printing, reproduction of recorded media	**Professional, Scientific and Technical Services**	For example, scientific research, architectural, engineering, legal, accounting, advertising, market research, consulting, veterinary or computer system design services
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	For example, electricity, gas or water supply, waste collection or treatment	**Administrative and Support Services**	For example, recruitment, labour supply, office administration, call centre, debt collection, pest control, building cleaning or packaging services
Construction	For example, construction of buildings, bridges or roads, site preparation, bricklaying, roofing, electrical, carpentry or painting services	**Public Administration and Safety**	For example, government administration or representation, justice, defence, correctional, police or fire protection services
Wholesale Trade	For example, agricultural, timber, equipment, motor vehicle, grocery, clothing, furniture or pharmaceutical wholesaling	**Education and Training**	For example, preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary, adult, community, sport, art or special education
Retail Trade	For example, motor vehicle, fuel, food, furniture, sporting goods, hardware, clothing or pharmaceutical retailing	**Health Care and Social Assistance**	For example, hospitals, general practice, specialist, pathology, dental, optometry, physiotherapy, chiropractic, ambulance, aged care or child care services
Accommodation and Food Services	For example, hotels, hostels, cafes, catering services, pubs, bars or clubs	**Arts and Recreation Services**	For example, museum or park operation, creative and performing arts, sports and physical recreation, horse and dog racing, amusement parks, gambling operations
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	For example, road, rail, water or air transport, couriers, stevedoring, airports, freight forwarding, customs services	**Other Services**	For example, repair and maintenance of cars, machinery, equipment and clothing, hairdressing, weight loss, funeral, dry-cleaning or religious services, professional and labour association services
Information Media and Telecommunications	For example, newspaper, magazine, book, software or internet publishing, motion picture and sound recording or distribution, telecommunications, internet service providers, data processing services, libraries		

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