Transport, Postal and Warehousing
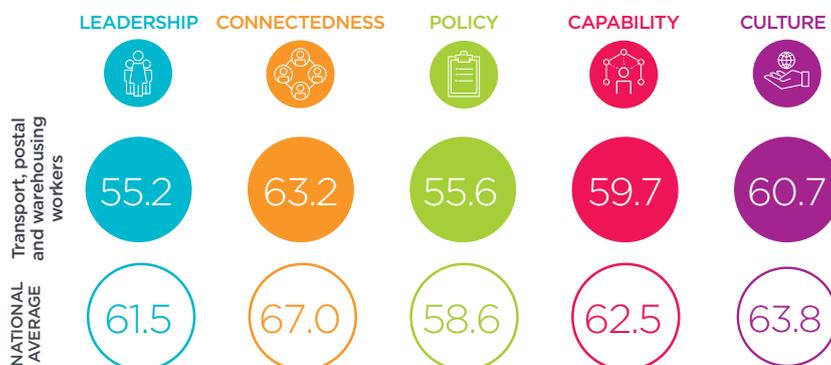
2020 INDUSTRY PROFILE
Based on 2019 data

This **Indicators of a Thriving Workplace Report** measures the **current state** against the **desired state** of a thriving or mentally healthy workplace, by asking people currently employed about their experience in their workplace.

A snapshot of mental health and wellbeing in the Australian transport, postal and warehousing workforce

The transport, postal and warehousing industry's overall thriving workplace index score fell from 59.3 in 2018 to 58.9 in 2019; **the lowest score of any industry.** Declines were recorded for three of the five domains necessary for a thriving workplace – leadership, connectedness and policy – with the largest drop evident in the leadership domain (down 1.7 index points). Fewer workers love their job (down 5.3pp~) and retention has declined somewhat with only 44.2% of workers definitely planning to stay at their current workplace for another 12 months (down 1.6pp).

Note that this survey was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
~ pp denotes percentage points

	LEADERSHIP	CONNECTEDNESS	POLICY	CAPABILITY	CULTURE
Transport, postal and warehousing workers	55.2	63.2	55.6	59.7	60.7
NATIONAL AVERAGE	61.5	67.0	58.6	62.5	63.8

DESIRED

THRIVING

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

58.9

INDUSTRY SCORE

RANKED 19 OUT OF 19 NATIONALLY

62.7

NATIONAL SCORE

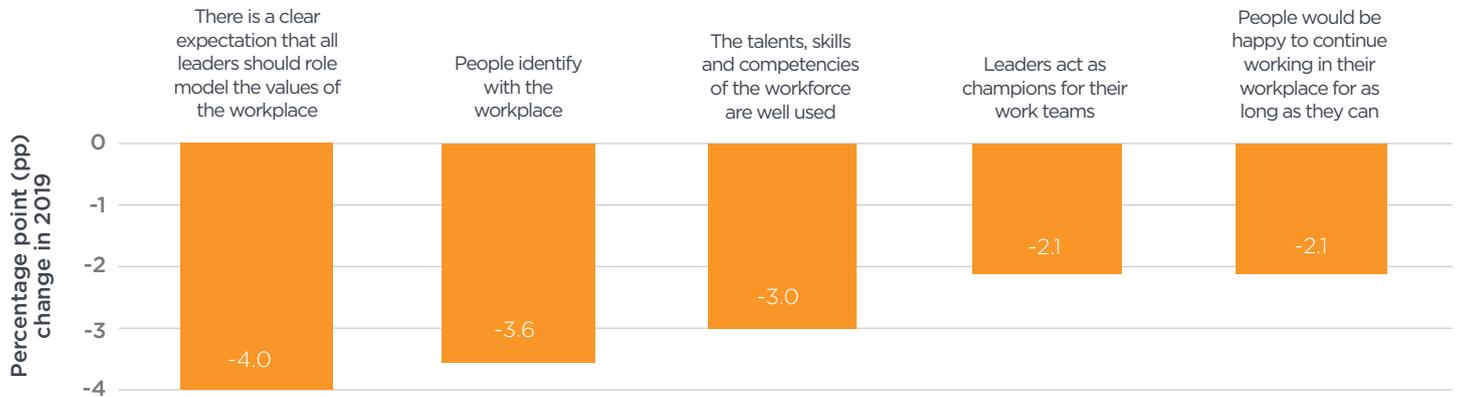Progress towards the desired state of workplace mental health and wellbeing.

An index score of 100 represents the desired state of mental health and wellbeing in a workplace.

This report is based on responses from 511 people working in the transport, postal and warehousing industry. For more information about the research methodology, **download the national report.**

KEY FINDINGS

- The transport, postal and warehousing industry declined in three of the five domains needed for a thriving workplace in 2019, resulting in the lowest overall thriving workplace index score of any industry

- Industry workers are less stressed than the average working Australian, although the stress caused by deadlines is well above the norm

- Workplace stigma around mental health issues has increased over the last year, despite heightened encouragement of discussions about mental health (albeit from a low base)

- Only 1 in 3 workers believe their workplace is taking action to improve mental health and wellbeing, and are increasingly seeing the associated costs as a major barrier

- Simultaneously, there has been extremely strong growth in workers recognising the benefits of working in a mentally healthy workplace, particularly in reduced presenteeism and improved optimism about completing work tasks

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2019 YIELDED MIXED RESULTS

The industry moved further away from thriving in three of the five domains, particularly leadership (down from 56.9 to 55.2). There is less of an expectation that leaders should role model workplace values, and fewer leaders are acting as champions for their work teams. Declines in other domains reveal that workers now identify less with their workplace, and believe that their talents and skills could be put to better use.

Domain	Change (pp)
There is a clear expectation that all leaders should role model the values of the workplace	-4.0
People identify with the workplace	-3.6
The talents, skills and competencies of the workforce are well used	-3.0
Leaders act as champions for their work teams	-2.1
People would be happy to continue working in their workplace for as long as they can	-2.1

Percentage point (pp) change in 2019 (chart y-axis range: 0 to -4)

"Bullying/harassment from a certain manager is leading to worker depression."

"Management need to deal with troublemakers who are causing stress and grief."

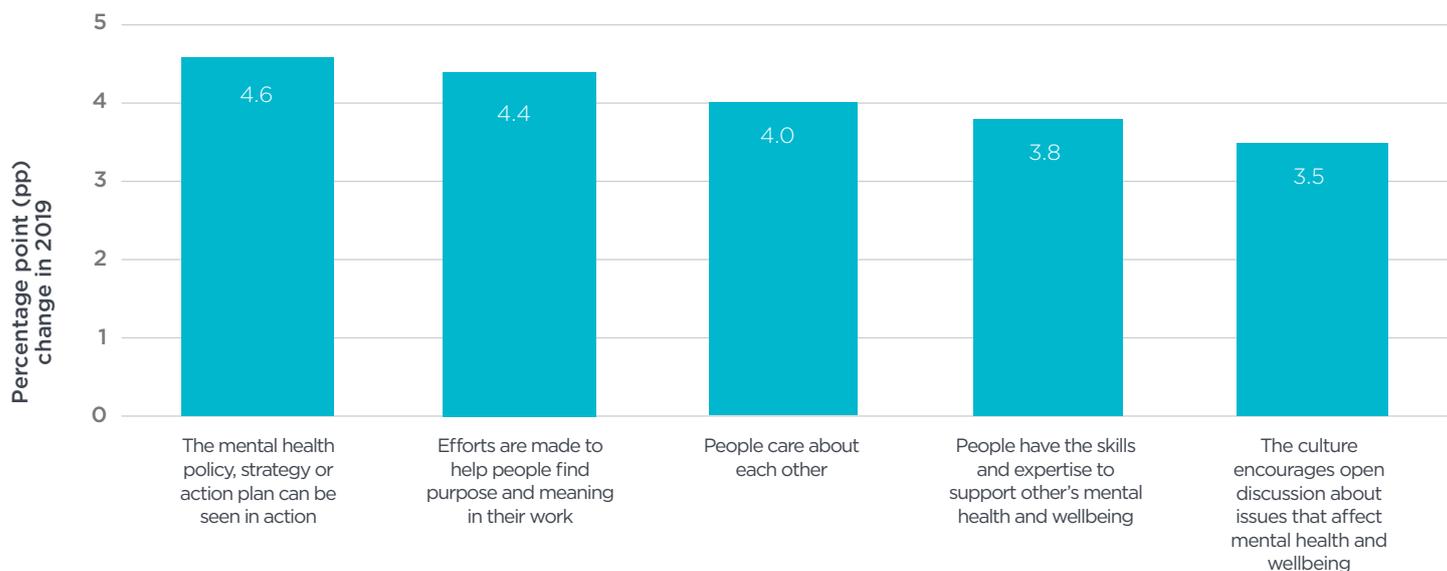"Nobody in the higher levels cares about others – as long as they do their job that's [apparently] enough."

"Upper management don't hold employees to certain standards. They refuse to intervene to try and make the environment we work in a healthy atmosphere."

"The company's code of ethics isn't worth the paper it's printed on."

"People in management seem to be always stressed and not very cohesive. There is a constant change of management due to their lack of ability to cope, so they are not able to help their employees."

While the overall thriving workplace index score fell in 2019, many of the individual indicators improved. The industry's culture is slowly changing in a myriad of small ways, such as encouraging open discussions about mental health and actively helping people find meaning in their work.

Percentage point (pp) change in 2019

Indicator	Value
The mental health policy, strategy or action plan can be seen in action	4.6
Efforts are made to help people find purpose and meaning in their work	4.4
People care about each other	4.0
People have the skills and expertise to support other's mental health and wellbeing	3.8
The culture encourages open discussion about issues that affect mental health and wellbeing	3.5

"I suffered anxiety when my marriage broke down. The company supported me at the time and I'm still there."

"There has been an increased focus in recent years on mental health training and getting help when needed, which are positive steps."

"One of our leaders had a mental [health] breakdown and had to leave for a few months, but came back and even got promoted."

"I have a very supportive workplace."

"I work for a top company that looks after its workers."

"Workplace mental health is the top priority within my workplace already, they are very understanding."

HOW ARE DIFFERENT WORKERS FARING?

GENDER

Women are closer to thriving than men (overall index score of 63.7 vs 57.3). This represents a reversal of fortunes since 2018 when men were leading the way (59.5 vs 58.6 among women).
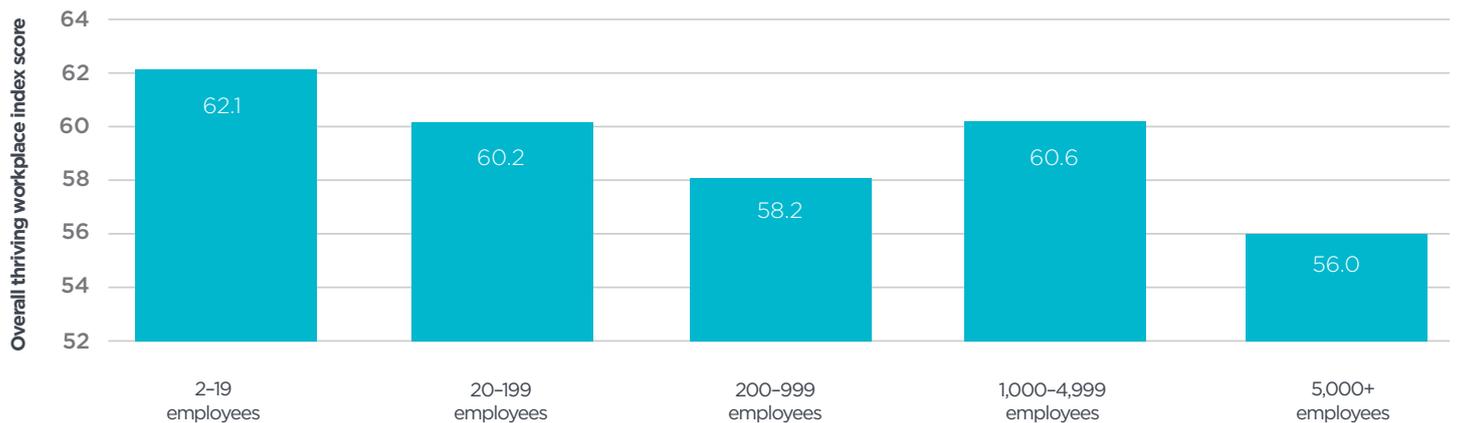
Women tend to love their job more than men (28.5% vs 17.1%) and consider their employer highly supportive of employee mental health and wellbeing (50.2% vs 39.9%).

SENIORITY

Senior managers are closer to thriving than middle/junior managers, while those in non-management roles are even further from thriving (overall index scores of 63.4, 60.2 and 56.4 respectively).

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Part-time workers are closer to thriving (overall index score of 63.3) than their full-time or casual colleagues (57.9 and 58.2 respectively).

Overall thriving workplace index score

Employees	Score
2–19 employees	62.1
20–199 employees	60.2
200–999 employees	58.2
1,000–4,999 employees	60.6
5,000+ employees	56.0

ORGANISATION SIZE

Small businesses with less than 20 employees are closest to thriving, with overall index scores progressively dropping as employee numbers increase **except** in the case of moderately large organisations.
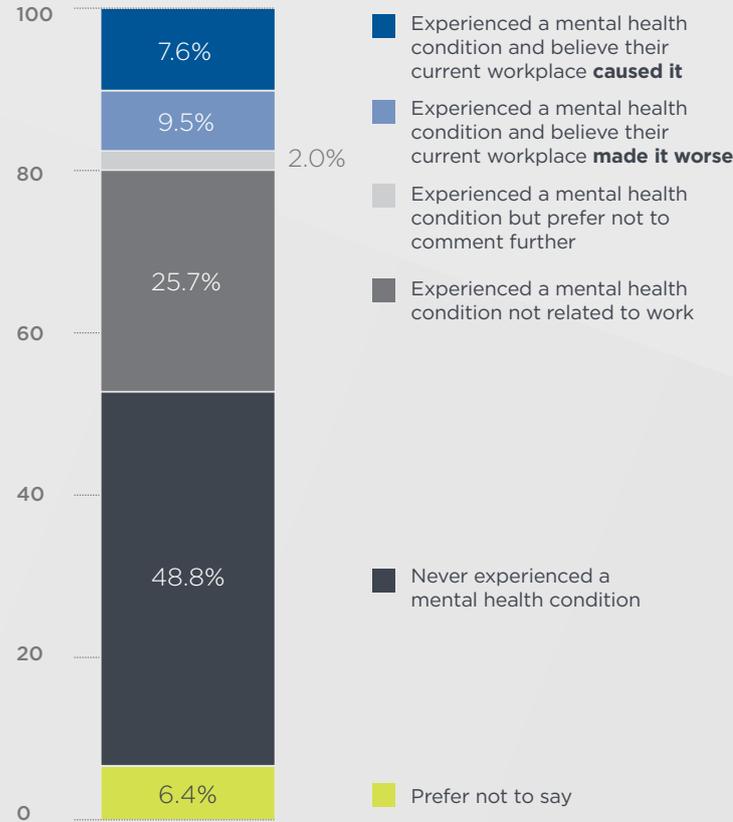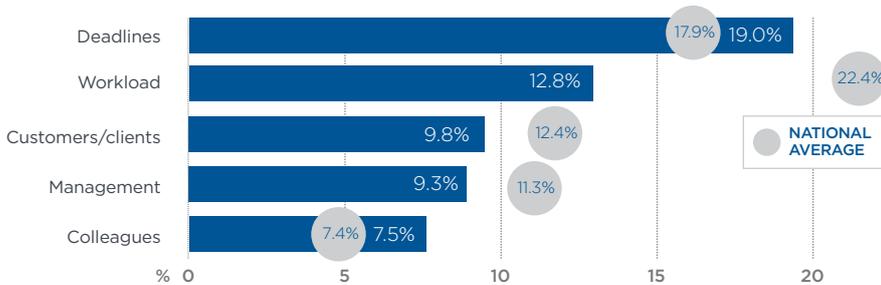
IMPACT OF WORKPLACES ON PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH

44.8% of industry workers have experienced a mental health condition, although the transport sector is higher at 46.4%. Nearly one in five (17.1%) workers believe their workplace caused or worsened their mental health condition.

Stacked bar chart (0–100):

- 7.6% — Experienced a mental health condition and believe their current workplace **caused it**
- 9.5% — Experienced a mental health condition and believe their current workplace **made it worse**
- 2.0% — Experienced a mental health condition but prefer not to comment further
- 25.7% — Experienced a mental health condition not related to work
- 48.8% — Never experienced a mental health condition
- 6.4% — Prefer not to say

One in five (19.7%) workers describe their job as highly stressful, which is below the national average of 22.0%. Similarly, frequent periods of high stress are less common than the norm, with 28.8% of workers finding their jobs highly stressful at least once a week (the national average is 32.1%).

> "
> "I've had problems with mental health [and] I think my job has made my mental health worse over the years. I've also noticed that my workers in the warehouse are dealing with mental health issues due to the workplace."

What's causing workers' stress?

Bar chart with national average markers:

Cause	Industry	National Average
Deadlines	19.0%	17.9%
Workload	12.8%	22.4%
Customers/clients	9.8%	12.4%
Management	9.3%	11.3%
Colleagues	7.5%	7.4%

Within the transport, postal and warehousing industry, timely delivery is critical to success. Unsurprisingly, deadlines are the biggest cause of stress for these workers, more so than for the average working Australian. However, workload, customers/clients and management are less common stressors when compared to the national results.
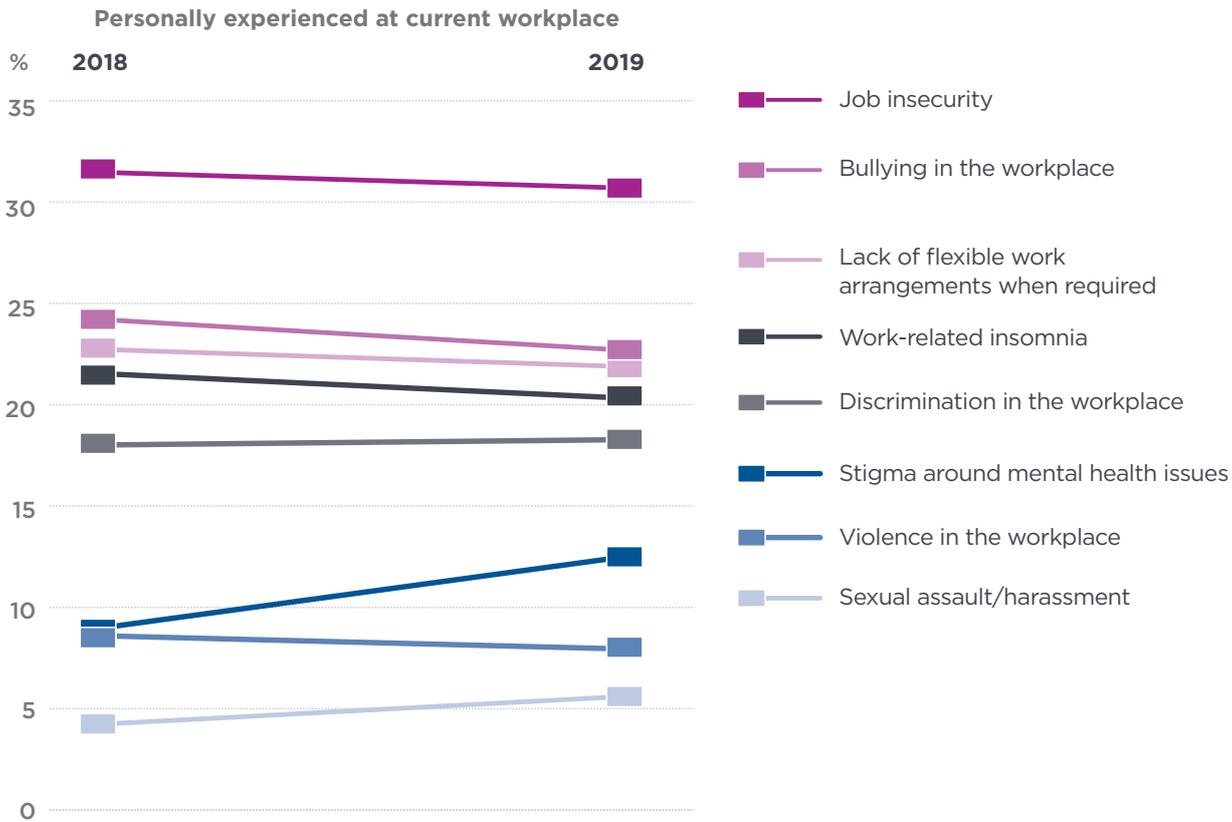
> "Amateurs, inconsiderate, impatient or ignorant drivers are the main cause of my stress."

> "It's stressful when there are delayed flights [resulting in] people shouting and getting angry at us."

> "Planning jobs for drivers and time slot bookings can be stressful."

Stress is a normal part of life, but too much stress can have detrimental effects on our mental and physical health. Support workers by **planning for stress as a team**, **creating a safe, accountable space**, and providing them with a copy of SuperFriend's **Looking After You** booklet.

WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES

Personally experienced at current workplace

%

2018	2019
35	
30	
25	
20	
15	
10	
5	
0	

- ■ Job insecurity
- ■ Bullying in the workplace
- ■ Lack of flexible work arrangements when required
- ■ Work-related insomnia
- ■ Discrimination in the workplace
- ■ Stigma around mental health issues
- ■ Violence in the workplace
- ■ Sexual assault/harassment

> "There are some workers who like to make life difficult for others."

> "Managers need to be better educated about mental health and actively engage this information and training [when dealing with] staff to ensure stigma around [mental] illness is reduced."

> "Working in a male dominated industry with strong Union representation can be challenging. Shipping has old school values [but] luckily the younger generation is not so limited in their understanding of [mental health] topics."

It's become far more common for workers to experience stigma around mental health issues in the workplace over the last year. In addition, the lack of flexible work arrangements in the industry continues to limit workers' ability to address mental health issues (e.g. attending medical appointments).

Although job insecurity remains the most common issue within the industry (30.8%), it's improved slightly over the last year along with bullying and work-related insomnia.
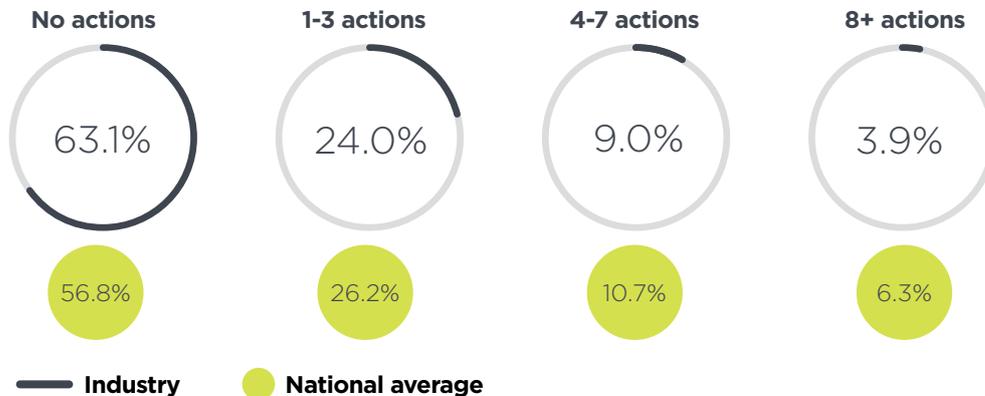
TAKING ACTION

11 ways to improve worker wellbeing

1 Ensure **all leaders** regularly participate in **mental health and wellbeing training**

2 Provide access to **mental health and wellbeing education** (i.e. training and information)

3 Actively provide **professional development** opportunities

4 Let people see the mental health **policy and processes in action**

5 Implement **effective policies and practices against workplace bullying and harassment**

6 Develop **good return to work policies** and practices for people who have had time off work with mental health conditions

7 **Recognise** people who do good work and **reward** them appropriately

8 Put clear structures in place for **transparent decision making**

9 Develop policies to ensure that **changes** are managed in **clear, supportive and positive ways**

10 Help people to practice **good work/family/life integration**

11 Make it easy for everyone to access **confidential counselling** or support services

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HOW MANY WORKPLACES ARE DEMONSTRATING THESE ACTIONS?

No actions	1-3 actions	4-7 actions	8+ actions
63.1%	24.0%	9.0%	3.9%
56.8%	26.2%	10.7%	6.3%

— **Industry**   ● **National average**

Only 36.9% of industry workers believe their workplace is taking action, down from 38.4% in the previous year.

Workers have identified a shift in focus toward physical health instead of mental health over the last year (21.1%, up 5.1pp), and are increasingly seeing the costs associated with taking action as a major barrier (26.9%, up 4.6pp).

"

"There's not enough interest; it's too expensive for them to fix."

WHAT DO INDUSTRY WORKERS SAY WILL IMPROVE THEIR WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

Provide cover for all staff if they're sick	Address workers who are not performing their duties as expected	Invest in better systems, processes and IT infrastructure, especially for communication
Provide in-house mental health and wellbeing specialists	Create a plan to prevent stress more effectively at the end of each month	Offer alternate duties for workers undergoing treatment for workplace mental health issues
Educate all managers and staff about mental health and wellbeing issues	Implement better policies and practices to prevent workplace bullying	Include mental health in **all** return to work policies and practices

Top barriers for workers who report their workplace is **not taking any action**

1. Lack of appropriate skills held by managers **(22.9%)**
2. The costs associated with taking action **(19.8%)**
3. Lack of understanding around mental health and wellbeing issues **(16.6%)**

SOME BARRIERS TO INVESTING IN MENTAL HEALTH ARE BREAKING DOWN

1. Lack of appropriate skills held by managers **(down 4.2pp)**
2. The stigma of mental illness **(down 4.0pp)**
3. Compliance culture so employers only do what they have to do **(down 2.6 pp)**

OPTIMISM AT WORK

Positive thinking about the future, or optimism, is associated with positive outcomes at work including performance, job satisfaction and happiness at work[1].

Optimism allows workers to face into tasks and work situations with a positive expectation of success, making them more open to taking on new challenges and to persevering even when the going is hard[2].

Optimism is an important component of resilience in the face of adversity and change. Building optimism in the workplace is good for worker and organisational outcomes.

1. Youssef CM, Luthans F. Positive organizational behavior in the workplace: The impact of hope, optimism, and resilience. J Manag [Internet]. 2007 Oct [Cited 2020 Feb 19];33(5):774-800. Available from: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0149206307305562

2. Carver CS, Scheier MF, Segerstrom SC. Optimism. Clin Psychol Rev [Internet]. 2010 Nov [Cited 2020 Feb 19];30(7):879-89. Available from: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S027273581000019X

HOW WILL A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE HELP?

Workers say that they will be able to bring the best version of themselves to work (58.7%) and it will increase employee productivity (57.8%).

Compared to the previous year, a much larger share of workers also believe that presenteeism would decline (42.8%, up 22.9pp) and optimism about completing work tasks would improve (48.9%, up 14.0pp).

Doing something is better than nothing

Many organisations find that knowing where to start is the most difficult part of building a thriving workplace. However, not everything needs to be done all at once – the most effective approach is to start with one or two small actions and build from there. SuperFriend can help you identify which actions to prioritise in your workplace.

TAKING ACTION IN YOUR WORKPLACE

The **Getting Started** section of SuperFriend's website tells you everything you need to know if you're keen to improve your workplace's mental health and wellbeing.

These brief articles also give you a few initial ideas if you're short on time:

- **Getting the wellbeing ball rolling**
- **Improving workplace mental wellbeing: where do you start?**

SuperFriend can also help you build a mental health and wellbeing strategy to suit your workplace.

FURTHER RESOURCES

SuperFriend offers a range of further resources and support to provide simple and practical solutions for workplaces to improve mental health and wellbeing.

You can access these at **superfriend.com.au/workplace-wellbeing-resources**

Transport, Postal and Warehousing
40 indicators of a thriving workplace

		2018	2019
LEADERSHIP	Leaders are accessible when you need them and will listen	17.0%	15.9%
	There is a clear expectation that all leaders should role model the values of the workplace	17.8%	13.9%
	Leaders provide useful and constructive feedback to improve work performance	12.3%	12.2%
	Reward and recognition are received for good work	11.6%	12.2%
	Leaders act as champions for their work teams	13.0%	10.9%
	Leaders can be seen to proactively encourage and promote good mental health policies and practices	12.2%	10.5%
	Leaders actively provide opportunities to develop professionally	9.2%	9.8%
	Leaders create a sense of cohesion within work teams	10.3%	9.2%
CONNECTEDNESS	People feel that they are part of a team	20.3%	18.7%
	People are courteous and treat me with respect	19.6%	20.0%
	People identify with the workplace	16.2%	12.6%
	Work feels like a community where people support each other beyond just getting the work done	14.9%	15.6%
	Relationships are built on trust	14.7%	16.1%
	Everyone works together effectively, particularly when trying to accomplish difficult goals	14.3%	13.9%
	There is a strong sense that people have a shared purpose	13.7%	14.5%
	People care about each other	9.7%	13.7%
POLICY	There are effective policies and practices against workplace bullying and harassment	19.1%	17.2%
	There is easy access to confidential counselling or support services	16.4%	15.3%
	There is a good mental health policy, strategy or action plan	12.1%	12.5%
	There are policies to ensure that any changes are managed in a clear, supportive and positive way	9.9%	10.3%
	The mental health policy, strategy or action plan can be seen in action	5.3%	9.9%
	There are clear structures in place to ensure transparent decision making	7.4%	9.8%
	There is a policy to ensure that all leaders regularly participate in mental health and wellbeing training	7.5%	8.8%
	There are good return to work policies and practices for those who have had time off work with mental health conditions	9.0%	8.7%
CAPABILITY	People are able to successfully overcome most of the challenges they face	13.6%	16.4%
	People rarely feel bored and disengaged	15.1%	16.3%
	People are generally highly engaged with their work	11.5%	14.9%
	People are comfortable voicing concerns about their job or things that might affect their job	14.4%	14.4%
	Team leaders make sure workers have the resources to do the job	13.4%	13.1%
	The talents, skills and competencies of the workforce are well used	14.1%	11.1%
	There is access to mental health and wellbeing education (i.e. information, training)	7.7%	10.4%
	People have the skills and expertise to support other's mental health and wellbeing	4.6%	8.4%
CULTURE	People would be happy to continue working in their workplace for as long as they can	24.7%	22.6%
	People feel good about working there	16.4%	17.8%
	People are motivated to work hard because their job is interesting and important to them personally	19.1%	17.2%
	People feel committed to their work team	16.0%	17.2%
	Experiences at work contribute positively to mental health	13.8%	12.1%
	There is support to help people practice good work/family/life integration	11.5%	11.7%
	Efforts are made to help people find purpose and meaning in their work	5.9%	10.3%
	The culture encourages open discussion about issues that affect mental health and wellbeing	5.6%	9.1%