

# The Australian Workplace Barometer (AWB)

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- Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Grant
  - Working wounded or engaged? Australian work conditions and consequences through the lens of the Job Demands-Resources Model.
- ARC Linkage Grant
  - State, organisational, and team interventions to build psychosocial safety climate using the Australian Workplace Barometer and the StressCafé
- SafeWork SA
- Safe Work Australia

## Project partners

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**Professor Anthony Winefield**  
 Centre for Applied Psychological Research, University of South Australia, Australia

**Assoc Prof Tony LaMontagne**  
 University of Melbourne, Australia

**Associate Professor Anne Taylor & Dr Tiffany Gill**  
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**Professor Arnold Bakker**  
 Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

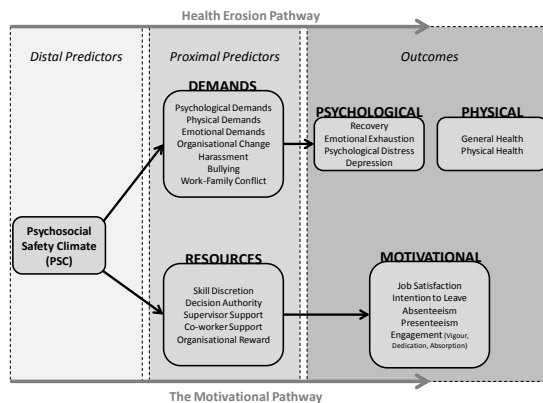
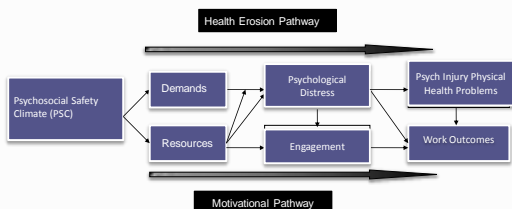
**Cameron Mustard & Peter Smith**  
 Institute for Work and Health, Toronto, Canada

**Professor Christian Dormann**  
 Mainz University, Germany

## AWB development

- 2<sup>nd</sup> International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) in 2005 at Okayama, Japan
- AWB tool is based on well known and highly regarded psychometric scales to identify psychosocial factors that impact on people's wellbeing and effectiveness at work such as:
  - Demands and pressure
  - Resources, supports and control
  - Psychosocial safety climate
  - Job satisfaction and engagement
  - Bullying and violence
  - Work-family balance
  - Physical health and Psychological wellbeing
  - Burnout and cardiovascular risk

### Theoretical Background



## AWB psychometric tools

- Psychosocial Safety Climate – CAPR
- Job Demands & Job Hazards JQ/COPSOQ/Job Stress & Health Behaviours Survey
- Organisation Characteristics – Demands Role Expectations (QPSNORDIC); Change & Conflict (HSE); Harassment (Richman); Bullying (QPSNORDIC); WFC (Netemeyer et al., 1996).
- Resources – Control /Support –JQ
- Flexible Work (Hill, 2006)
- Organisation Characteristics / Resources - Justice (Moorman,1991); Trust (Schoorman et al., 2006); Professional Development (Vandenberg et al., 1999); Rewards & Security (ERI)

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## AWB health outcome measures

- Recovery – Offer15
- Mental Health – Emotional Exhaustion (MBI); Psychological Distress (Kessler 10); Depression (QHQ-28x7)
- Physical Health/Cardio/Muscular – WHO HPQ (Rose et al., 1977)
- Work Outcomes – Job Satisfaction (Warr et al., 1979); Productivity & Absenteeism (WHO HPQ)
- Engagement - Vigour/Dedication/Absorption (UWES-9)

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## Procedure

- The participant contact details from Electronic White Pages directories for four Australian states and two territories:
  - New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia, Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Tasmania.
- Information letter with purpose of the study and subsequent phone contact.
- Criteria for inclusion:
  - Must be employed
  - Must be over 18
  - Member of household with most recent birthday.
- Sample was weighted based on following demographics:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Number of phone numbers in the white pages
  - Number of members of the household.
- Data was de-identified and provided in SPSS (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences) format for analysis.

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## Demographics

	Individual States						
	Australia (N = 3515)	NSW (N = 725)	WA (N = 804)	SA (N = 1143)	ACT (N = 255)	TAS (N = 416)	NT (N = 170)
Age (years)	M 46.62 SD 11.85	M 47.53 SD 11.29	M 47.92 SD 11.49	M 46.09 SD 12.36	M 45.27 SD 12.46	M 45.85 SD 11.58	M 44.15 SD 11.20
Percentage (%) of sample							
Gender							
Men	45.5	43.6	47.3	44.5	49.8	45.7	44.7
Women	54.5	56.4	52.7	55.5	50.2	54.3	55.3
Indigenous Australian (ATSI)							
No / Not stated	98.4	98.2	99.2	99.6	99.0	97.3	90.8
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	1.6	1.8	0.8	0.4	1.0	2.7	9.2
Martial Status							
Married	60.5	61.2	63.1	59.1	59.2	63.7	50.0
Living with partner	9.5	8.8	8.8	9.8	8.2	8.9	17.6
Separated	3.6	4.0	2.5	3.3	5.9	3.4	7.1
Divorced	9.5	9.8	9.6	10.2	8.2	8.2	7.1
Widowed	2.0	2.9	2.4	1.8	1.6	1.0	1.8
Never married / Refused	14.9	13.2	13.7	15.8	16.9	14.9	16.5
Education level							
Bachelor degree or higher	34.6	37.1	36.8	27.7	50.2	33.9	38.8
Below bachelor level	65.4	62.9	63.2	72.3	49.8	66.1	61.2

## Age summary

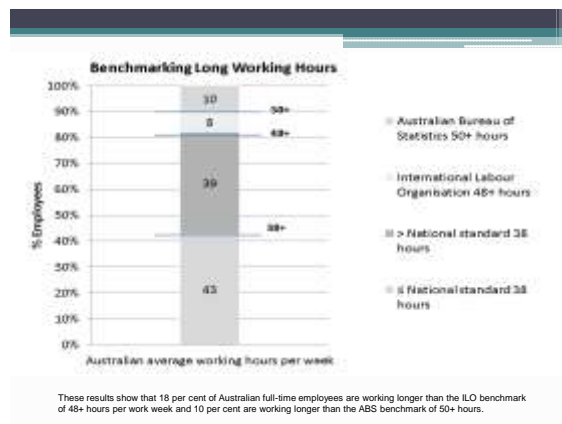
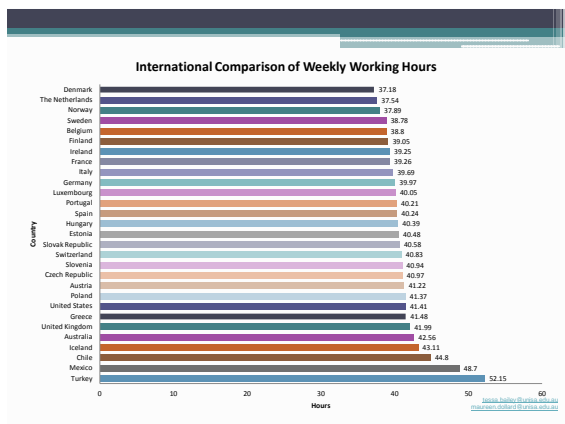
- Workers aged 65 and over:
  - Low levels of job demands
  - High levels of job resources
  - Positive health outcomes
- Workers aged 25 – 34 had the poorest psychological health overall
- Workers aged 18 – 24 experienced the lowest levels of engagement
  - Engagement was strongly associated with PSC and skill discretion for 18 – 24 age group.

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## Work-family conflict (WFC)

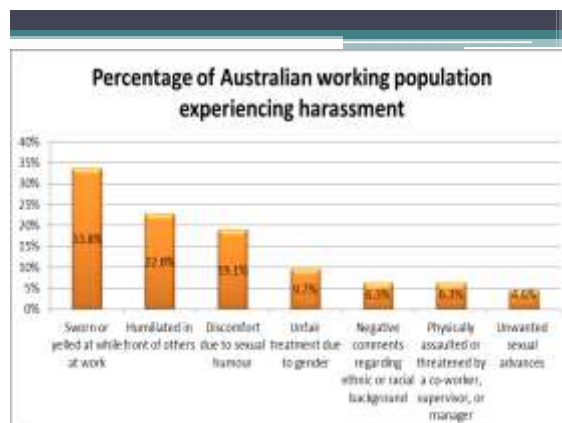
- WFC had a strong association with poor psychological health and general physical health
- WFC was most strongly correlated with:
  - Emotional demands
  - Psychological demands
  - Organisational harassment
  - Psychosocial safety climate (PSC)
- WFC was highest in middle aged workers
- WFC correlated strongly with work hours

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## Workplace bullying

- 6.8% experienced bullying in the last six months with
- 3.5% experience bullying for longer than a 6 months
- Females reported significantly higher levels of bullying
- Females experienced bullying for significantly longer periods of time



## Workplace harassment

- Females report significantly more:
  - Unwanted sexual advances
  - Humiliation in front of others
  - Unfair treatment due to gender
- Men experience significantly higher :
  - Physically assaulted or threatened by co-worker supervisor or manager
  - Being yelled or sworn at in the workplace

## Health outcomes

- 16% (approximately 1.6 million working Australians ) of experience mild levels of depression
- Approximately 560 000 working Australians experience moderate to severe depression
- 27% of the variance in poor psychological health:
  - Work-family conflict
  - Emotional demands
  - Psychological demands
  - Physical demands
  - Bullying
- 14% of the overall variance in poor psychological health:
  - Organisational reward
  - Psychosocial safety climate (PSC)
  - Decision authority

### Costs to employer

- Mild depression = 2 x sickness absence
- Severe depression = 5 x sickness absence
- Most psychologically unhealthy = 6 x sickness absence

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### Cost of Depression in Australia

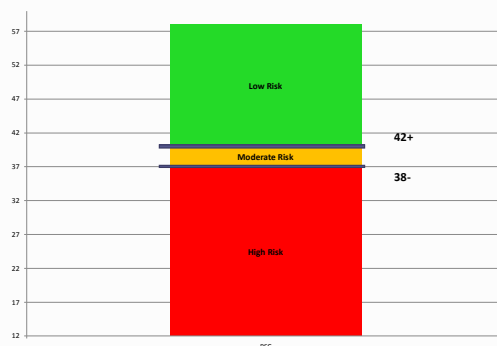


Developed by Wesa McCartney

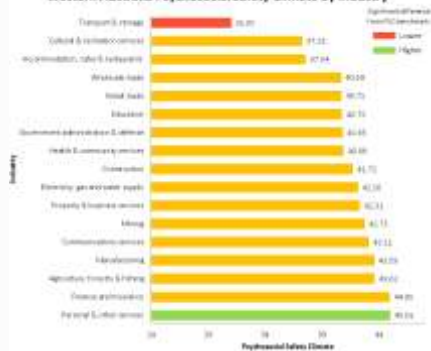
### PSC as a leading indicator

- PSC explained 9% of variance in overall psychological health
- PSC explained an additional 13% of variance in engagement
- Longitudinal evidence (N = 2074) found PSC as a predictor of new depression
- Mean PSC scores for:
  - No clinical symptoms of depression
  - Low job strain

Wesley E. Tetlow, University of Queensland, Australia



### Western Australia Psychosocial Safety Climate by Industry



Wesley E. Tetlow, University of Queensland, Australia

### Australian Workplace Barometer: Psychosocial safety climate and working conditions in Australia

Federation Press Australia, 2012

Wesley E. Tetlow, University of Queensland, Australia

**ICOH-WOPS**  
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