



THE
CHANGE
LAB 2020
WORKPLACE
REPORT

THE STATE OF CHANGE IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES

THEchangeLAB
A MICHELLEmcQUAID PROGRAM

AHRI
Australian HR Institute®



CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE | STILLER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
David L. Cooperrider
CENTER FOR APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE DAVID L. COOPERRIDER CENTER FOR APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AT CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE

The age-old saying, “change is the only constant,” has likely echoed in the halls of your organisation. It is perhaps the epitome of irony, however, that while we know these words to be true, we continue to cling to an outdated conceptualisation of change itself.

Too many organisations maintain a simplistic view of change, grounded in management theories that were designed to enable us to handle unambiguous, technical issues that were commonplace in early 20th century industrial workplaces. The principles of scientific management that governed the industrial age have left an enduring legacy on our approaches to change, resulting in an antiquated mindset that change is something to be “managed” with discreet beginnings and endings. It is this mindset that has contributed to an enduring negative narrative of organisational change, with many continuing to cite change failure rates being upwards of 70%.

What if we updated our view of change to more appropriately reflect the current reality of continuous disruption that comprises our world and workplaces? What if we expanded our view of change to embrace the reality that there are not always clear indicators of success or failure, and instead recognise that change is actually an open-ended development process, often with no clear end point?

These questions ignited our curiosity and inspired us to more closely explore what is really going on in organisations today. With a global backdrop of exceptional and sustained disruption that the COVID-19 pandemic is creating for employees, there has perhaps never been a more fitting time to take a closer look at just how individuals are truly perceiving change, and how their experience of change is interconnected with their wellbeing.

What we found was intriguing.

With perhaps one of the first studies to examine employees' perception of change not simply as a unidimensional construct (i.e. Did the change succeed or fail?), but rather along two distinct, but related, continua: (Thriving and Struggle), our findings suggest that it is possible to thrive in the midst of change despite struggle, and that it is possible to not handle change well even in the absence of struggle. These findings begin to shine a light on the change dynamics employees experience in today's organisations, thus deepening our "change intelligence" for navigating the realities of the modern workplace.

We also explored factors that might affect perceptions of the change processes. We found that those who reported higher levels of thriving also reported experiencing what we are calling the MAGIC factors: Meaningful work, Activation of strengths, Generative and diverse conversations, Invitations to self-organise and Clear feedback. Building on insights from the 2019 Change Lab Workplace Survey, we once again found that a leader's approach to change had a significant impact on outcomes, with the invite & inquire leadership style being associated with higher levels of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment.

The results of this report are clear: **It is time to change how we think about change.** The way we talk about, measure, and even conceptualise change needs to evolve to more effectively reflect the complexities, relational dynamics, and continual evolutions of the modern workplace.

At the core of my work in Appreciative Inquiry is the act of asking generative questions regarding what we want to cultivate more of. The findings in this report inspire me to ask: How might we continue to evolve our perception of change in ways that help us successfully navigate the dynamic world around us in ways that support our individual and collective thriving? I hope they inspire you to do the same.



Dr. Lindsey Godwin, Ph.D.

Robert P. Stiller Endowed Chair of Management | The Stiller School of Business

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ABOUT THIS STUDY

The Change Lab Workplace Survey was first conducted in the United States in February 2019 with a sample of 1,026 randomly selected workers across the country.

After repeatedly being told by workplaces that the pace of change was burning their people out, we felt it was important to test the truth behind this assumption. To help us assess the most successful workplace change approaches and their impact on workers levels of resilience and wellbeing, we used a version of the PERMAH Wellbeing Survey (www.permahsurvey.com) developed by **Dr. Peggy Kern** from the University of Melbourne.

The 2019 data found no significant relationship between the pace of change and the levels of perceived change success or workers' wellbeing. However, it did surface a virtuous cycle between leadership approaches, workers' wellbeing and the success of workplace change efforts.

We were curious if this pattern would hold in other contexts, so in early August 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and severe economic downturn creating significant change in most workplaces, we gathered a new sample of 1,400 randomly selected Australian workers. All respondents were employed at the time of the survey, such that this report represents the current workforce, not those recently unemployed.

GENDER	
Men	679
Women	720
Other/Not reported	1

AGE GROUPS	
18 - 24 years	137
25 - 34 years	334
35 - 44 years	335
45 - 54 years	315
55 - 65 years	279

LOCATIONS	
New South Wales	446
Victoria	350
Queensland	290
South Australia	108
Western Australia	133
ACT	28
Tasmania	31
Northern Territory	14

JOB ROLES	
Owners	138
Directors	21
C-Suite/Managers	47
Professionals	369
Technical Experts	89
Coordinators	36
Administrative	206
Customer Service	134
Contractors	29
Other	82

Industries were representative of Australian workplaces including Agriculture, Banking & Finance, Community & Social Services, Construction, Education, Government & Public Administration, Healthcare & Medical, Technology & Telecommunications, Manufacturing, Mining, Retail, Science, Tourism and Transportation & Warehousing.

If you would like more information about this report or additional findings by gender, age, location, job role or industry (not reported), please contact chelle@thechangelabs.com.

1. CURRENT STATE: CHANGE IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES

As the dynamic, demanding, and unpredictable nature of modern workplaces grows, too many workplaces remain stuck in the outdated early 1900's principles of scientific management, which focused on solving straight-forward technical problems by "managing change" to deliver measurable improvements. While this was adaptive for the industrial age, such approaches fail to account for the dynamic, human-centric nature of the modern workplace. The need to navigate ongoing disruption has become the new normal in most workplaces. Yet human beings rarely respond to changes like machines that can be managed or controlled. Although workers often perceive change as negative, others embrace and thrive with change. People are adaptative beings who are most likely to thrive when given the freedom to meaningfully meet their individual and collective needs for connection, learning and growth as they navigate the changing world around them.



39.1%

OF AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES AND TEAMS ARE CONSISTENTLY THRIVING WHEN IT COMES TO THE CHANGES EXPERIENCED OVER THE LAST THREE MONTHS.

THRIVING ≠ FREE OF STRUGGLE

Traditionally, workplaces measure change on a single continuum – *did the desired change succeed or fail?* While this simplistic approach is sufficient for technical problems with clear solutions, for the complex challenges and ongoing changes that are the norm today, there are not always clear indicators of success versus failure. Rather, change is a continual process with a need for ongoing experimentation, evaluation and refinement. And a person’s perception of this process is critical to both their assessment of “success” as well as their ongoing support of the change initiative.

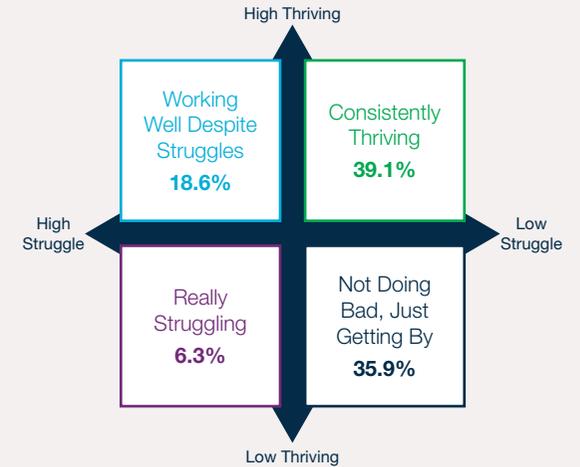
Based on our previous research, we hypothesised that measuring a worker’s perception of the functioning of their team and organisation through change on two related, but distinct continua – *thriving and struggle* – would provide a more insightful, employee-centred metric of change success. Thriving reflects feeling good and functioning effectively, while struggle reflects experiencing challenges with cultural, strategic, operational, financial, relational, or other systemic aspects of a particular situation.

Notably, both workers who reported that their teams and organisations were *consistently thriving*, and workers who reported their teams and organisations were *working well, despite struggle*, were statistically more likely to report higher levels of individual, team and organisational performance. This suggests that it is possible to thrive in the midst of change despite struggle, and that it is possible to not handle change well even in the absence of struggle.

STATE OF CHANGE



% STATES OF CHANGE IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES



STATES OF CHANGE FOR OUTCOMES BY MEANS



CONTEXT MATTERS

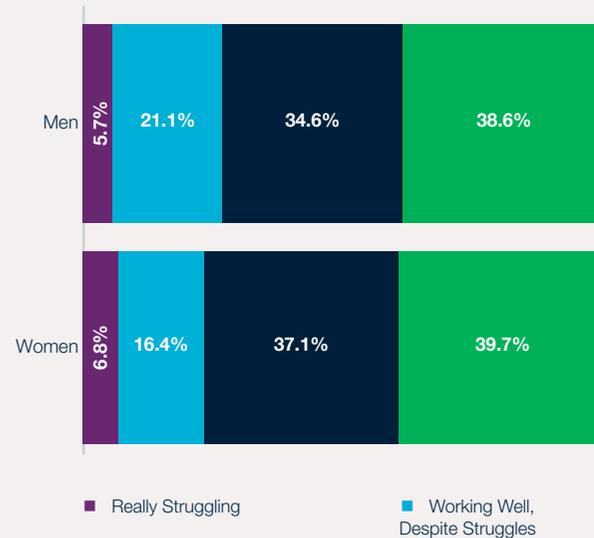
There were no significant gender differences in the reported states of change.

Workers who have returned to their work premises after working at home due to COVID-19 were the least likely to report that their teams and workplaces were *consistently thriving* through change, and the most likely to report that their teams and workplaces were *not doing badly, just getting by*.

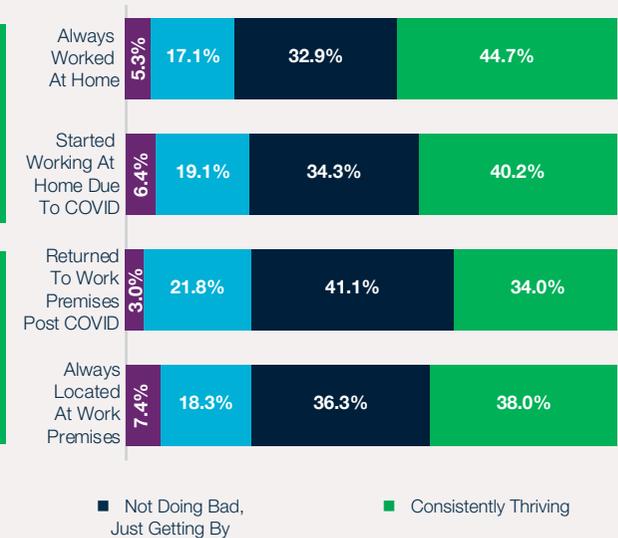
Workers in job roles with greater autonomy, but potentially fewer day-to-day operational responsibilities (e.g., professionals and technical experts), were more likely to report their teams and workplaces were *consistently thriving* through change. However, those who have more autonomy and potentially more day-to-day operational responsibilities (e.g., C-Level, Director and Owners) were the most likely to be *working well, despite struggles*.

Workers in 'Community & Social Service', 'Science and Technical Services', and 'Retail & Call Centres' were the most likely to feel their teams and organisations were *consistently thriving* through change, while workers in 'Construction and Transportation' and 'Warehousing' were the most likely to be *working well, despite struggles*.

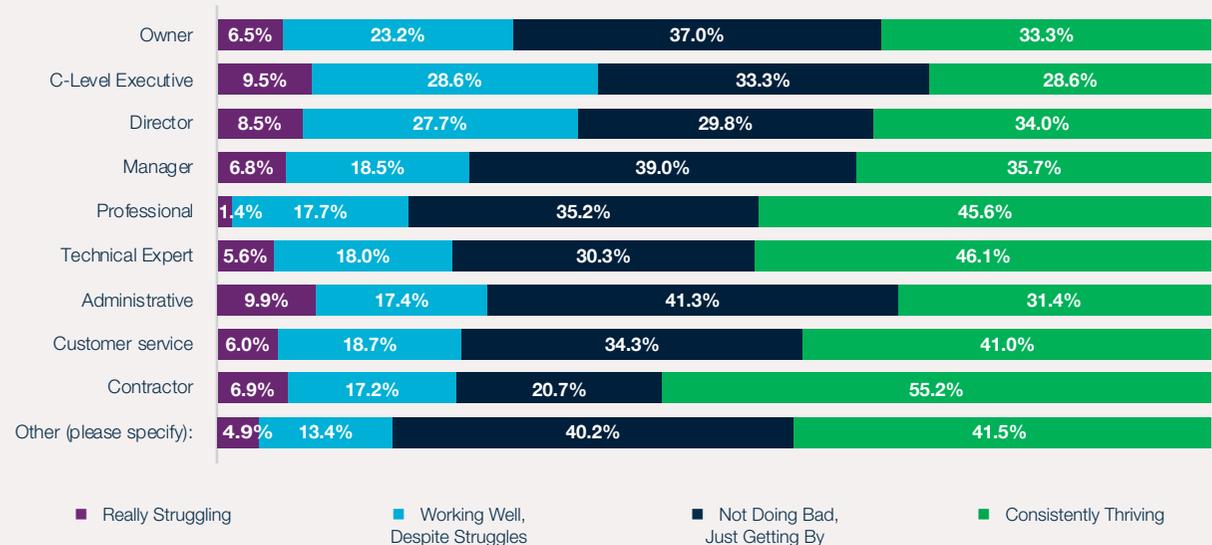
% STATES OF CHANGE BY GENDER



% STATES OF CHANGE BY WORK LOCATION



% STATES OF CHANGE BY JOB ROLE

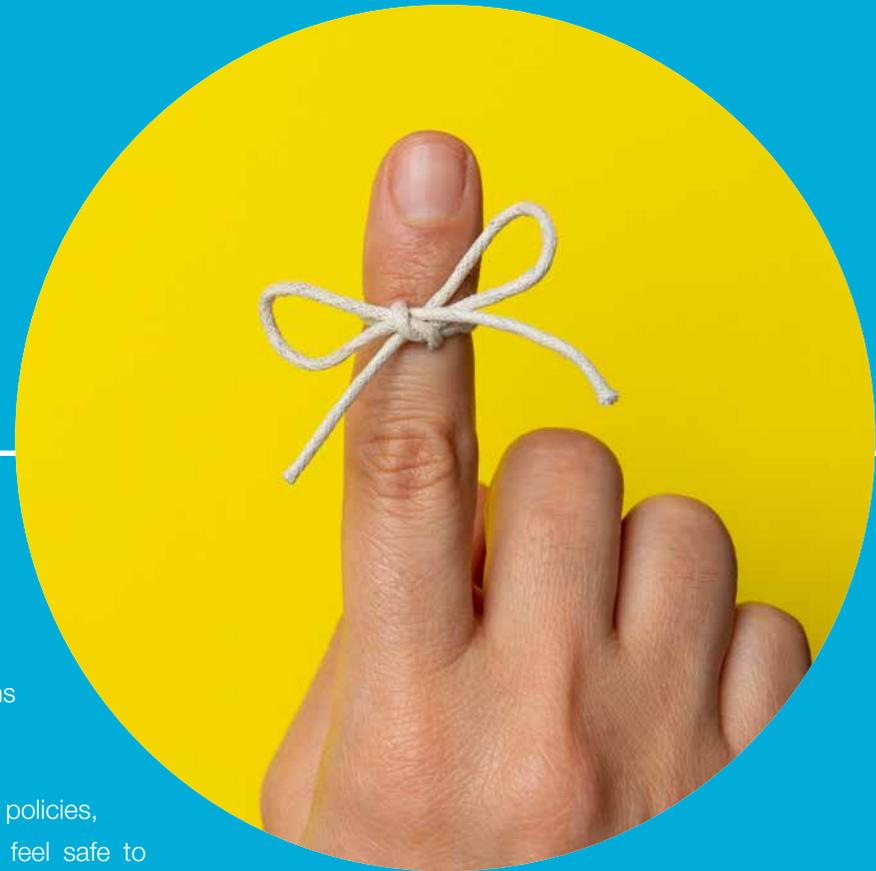


AN AH-HA MOMENT

Our findings support that experiences of struggle for teams and workplaces navigating change don't have to undermine day-to-day performance, or even the positive long-term impact of change. In fact, struggle can open up many valuable opportunities, provided workers know how to respond to these situations as opportunities for learning, creativity, innovation and growth.

HR needs to understand the current state of change in their workplace, and review policies, procedures and even goals and structure to enable a culture where workers feel safe to experiment and iterate to solve the complex and interconnected challenges we are up against. They need to identify how workers are feeling about and functioning within those changes, as an ongoing indicator of the success of change processes, and empower leaders to create this kind of change culture.

How does your workplace measure successful change? Do you have formal and informal strategies in place to help workers experiment when it comes to addressing complex challenges?



2. THE ESSENTIAL CHANGE SKILLS NEEDED: CONFIDENCE AMPLIFIERS

Research has found that workplaces, teams and people thrive when they have the confidence and resilience to navigate between states of change and stability. Instead of confusing the need for control with the desire for order, these workplaces create psychologically safe spaces that are guided by their vision and values, and encourage their people to take meaningful, independent and collective actions that benefit their organisation and everyone who depends on it. If this sounds potentially messy, chaotic and risky, that's because it usually is. The truth about change is that it invites differences of thought that can create conflict, but when navigated with intention and care, these differences can also lead to the creation of new possibilities. The good news is that when a diverse interplay of thought is characterised by playful give-and-take within a respectful environment, ideas and actions emerge that no one could have predicted or accomplished on their own. Rising to these opportunities, however, requires the ongoing amplification of our abilities, motivation, and psychological safety to successfully navigate change.

31.1%

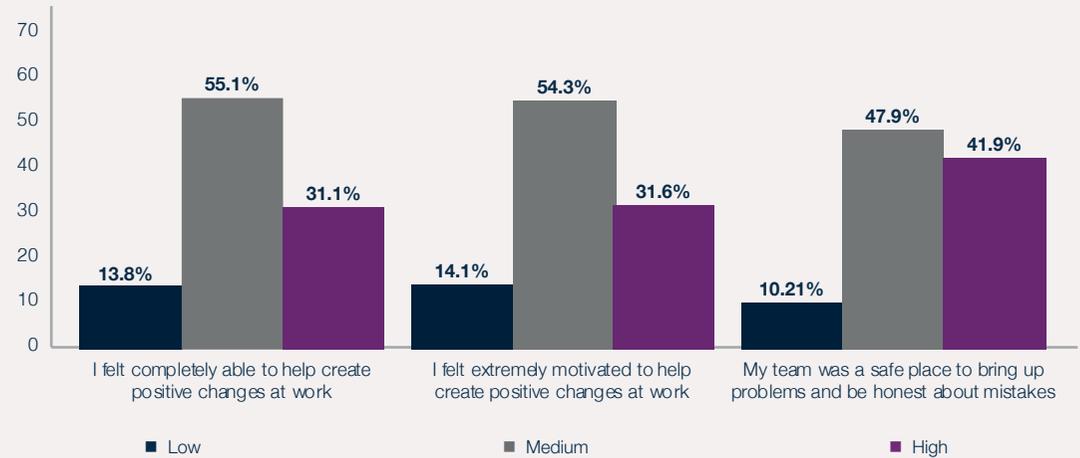
OF AUSTRALIAN WORKERS
FELT COMPLETELY ABLE
TO HELP CREATE POSITIVE
CHANGE IN THEIR WORKPLACE.

THE CONFIDENCE AMPLIFIERS

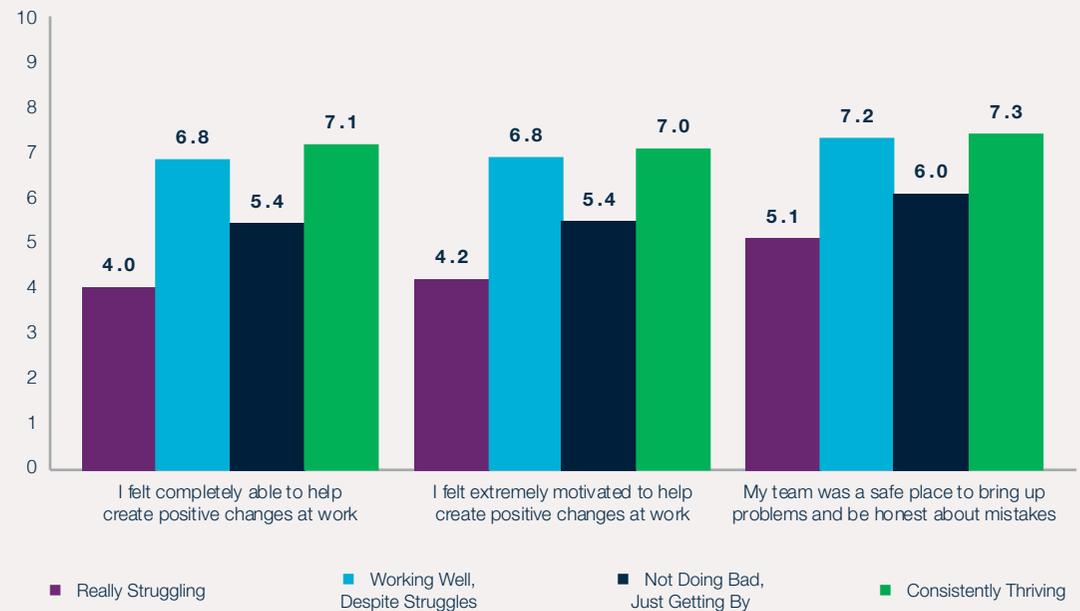
31.1% of workers felt completely able to create positive changes at work, and 31.6% of workers felt extremely motivated to help create positive changes at work. Statistically, these workers were significantly more likely to report that their workplaces and teams were *consistently thriving* or *working well, despite struggles* when it came to the changes experienced over the last three months.

Ability and motivation are necessary, but not sufficient for creating positive changes in workplaces. Thriving in the face of ongoing struggle and disruption not only requires skills and ongoing effort, but also requires support from the organisation, evidenced through psychologically safe spaces for workers to experiment, learn and grow amidst the inherent chaos and order that change brings. Notably, 41.9% of workers felt that their teams were safe places to bring up problems and talk about mistakes. Statistically, these workers were significantly more likely to report that their workplaces and teams were *consistently thriving* or *working well, despite struggles* when it came to the changes experienced over the last three months.

% CHANGE ABILITY, CHANGE MOTIVATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



MEANS FOR ABILITY, MOTIVATION, & PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY & STATE OF CHANGE



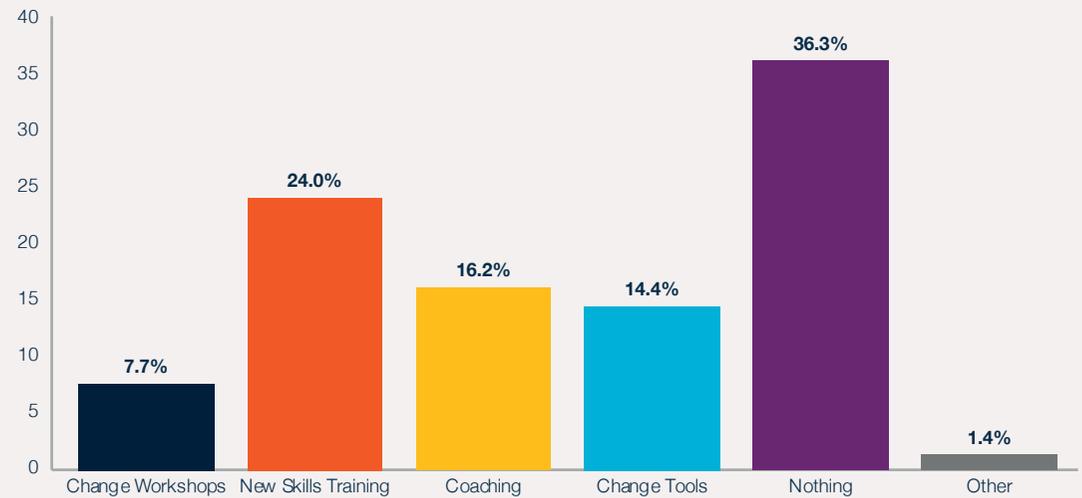
BUILDING CONFIDENCE FOR CHANGE REQUIRES SUPPORT

Despite the unprecedented volume and speed of change experienced in workplaces since March 2020 due to the COVID pandemic and economic downturn, over a third of employees perceived that their workplaces were not supporting them to have the skills they need to navigate change well.

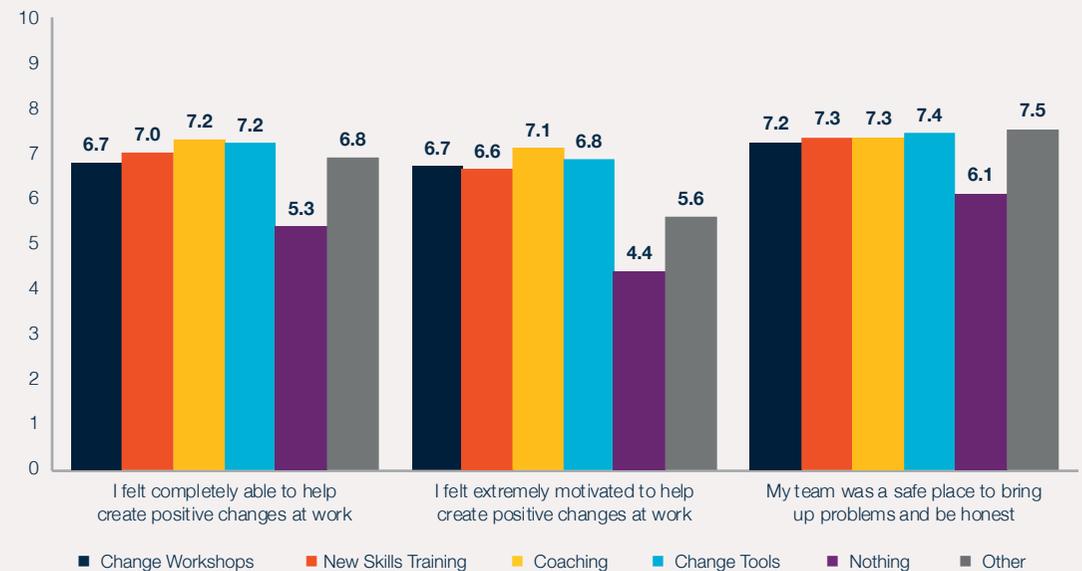
Workers who felt that their workplace and teams were *not doing bad, just getting by* or *really struggling* when it came to the changes experienced over the last three months were significantly more likely to be in workplaces where no support is available. In contrast, workers who reported that their workplaces and teams were *consistently thriving* or *working well, despite struggles* were significantly more likely to be in workplaces where a mix of change workshops, new skills, coaching and change tools were provided to support their change capabilities.

Overall, new skills training was the most common form of support workplaces provided. However, although new skills training appeared effective, it was significantly less motivating than coaching, pointing to the powerful amplifying effects that coaching can have for supporting workers through change.

% WORKPLACE SUPPORT FOR CHANGE SKILLS



MEANS FOR CHANGE CONFIDENCE AMPLIFIERS BY WORKPLACE SUPPORT

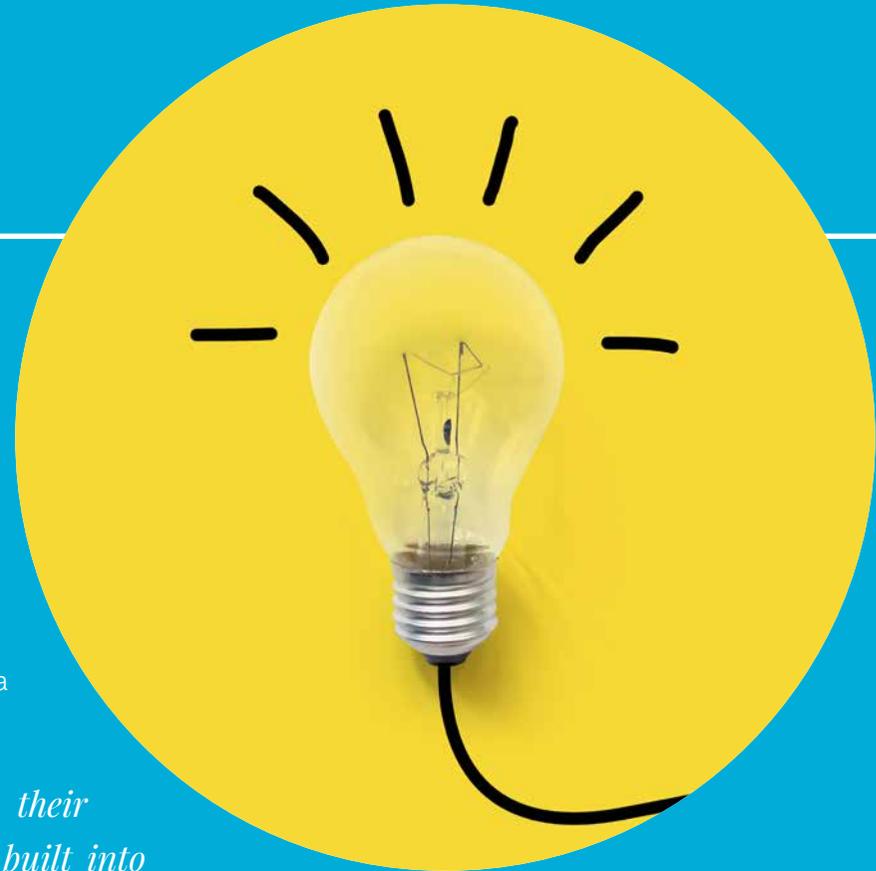


AN AH-HA MOMENT

Thriving – even in the midst of struggle – requires the ability (A), motivation (M), and psychological safety (P) for workers to navigate change. To support thriving, workplaces need to prioritise training, coaching and other tools that help workers to feel confident to individually and collectively learn and grow as they navigate the chaos and order that change inherently brings.

HR needs to ensure they are providing the training, coaching and tools that workers need to confidently create positive change, along with creating safe, supportive environments to experiment with new behaviours in the face of a changing workplace.

Do your workers have the supports they need to improve their capabilities to thrive as they navigate change and are these built into professional development plans that are aligned to organisational strategy?



3. BOOSTING THRIVING: TAKING A SYSTEMS APPROACH

Creating change is not a solo endeavour. Associate Professor Aaron Jarden notes that our perceptions, experiences, and behaviours are diverse and spread through a complicated web of social connections at the *Me* (individual workers), *We* (teams) and *Us Levels* (the entire workplaces and the communities that surround them) that not only impacts workers' experiences and performance, but also their wellbeing.



40.4%

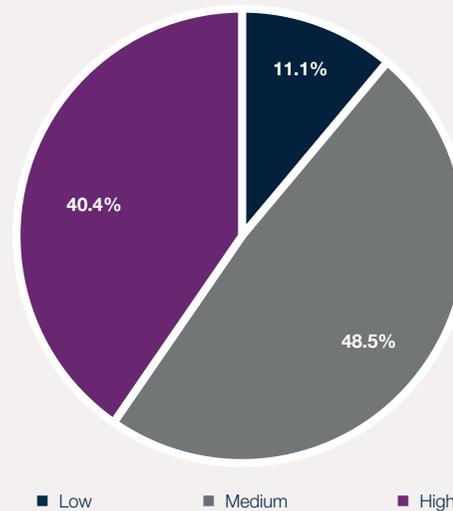
OF AUSTRALIAN WORKERS
REPORTED THAT THEY
UNDERSTOOD THE KEY
DECISIONS BEING MADE
IN THEIR WORKPLACE.

US LEVEL: CHANGE IS MULTI-FACETED

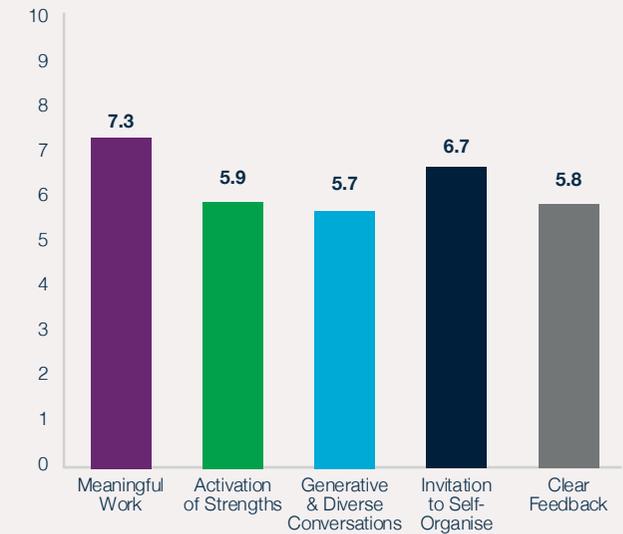
Organisations play a key role in helping workers thrive through change. A sense of purpose has been found to provide a bridge between chaos and creativity, helping to ignite people's commitment and energy to act. 40.4% of workers reported a clear understanding of the key decisions being made, suggesting that greater focus on identifying the purpose behind decisions and change is an important, but often overlooked part of workplace change efforts.

Beyond understanding the reasons for changes being made, we tested a number of other factors that might affect the change process. Workers who reported that their workplace and teams were *consistently thriving* or *working well, despite struggles* when it came to the changes they had experienced, had statistically higher scores for: Meaningful work, Activation of strengths, Generative and diverse conversations, Invitations to self-organise and Clear feedback. We've called these the MAGIC change factors and look forward to doing further research to understand how they help systems – and the people in them – thrive through change.

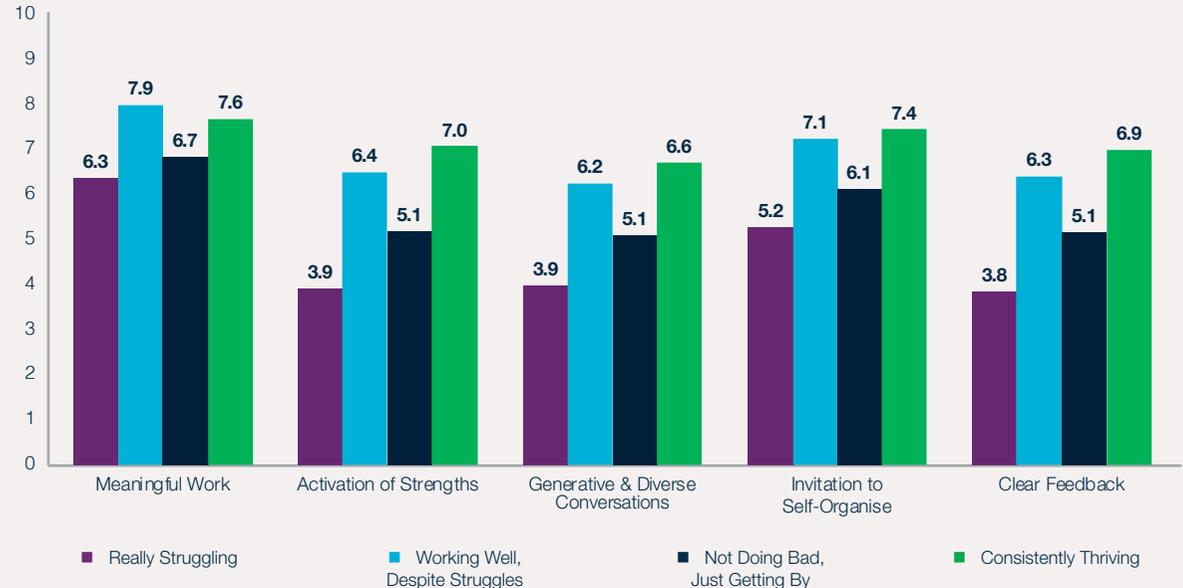
% UNDERSTAND SYSTEM CONNECTIONS



MAGIC CHANGE FACTORS BY MEAN



STATE OF CHANGE BY MAGIC CHANGE FACTORS MEANS



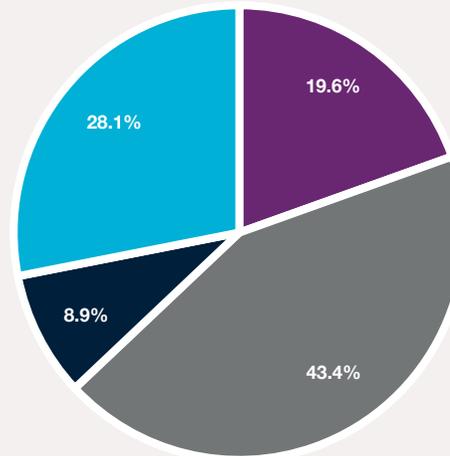
WE LEVEL: LEADERS HAVE A BIG IMPACT

Our previous research found that a leader's approach to change had a significant impact on the experience, performance and wellbeing of workers. Our new data further supported this finding.

Workers whose leaders took an *invite-and-inquire* change approach (where workers' input to solutions was invited and they were encouraged to self-organise and find ways to make the best ideas happen), and leaders who took a *tell-and-inquire* change approach (where workers' were told what was expected and then left alone to get on with it) were significantly more likely to report that the changes in their workplace were very successful or somewhat successful. The most successful changes in workplaces appear to create a working environment that gives workers the freedom to willingly take responsibility for finding ways to make the desired changes happen.

Notably, workers whose leaders took an *invite-and-inquire* change approach were statistically more likely to report higher levels of engagement, job satisfaction and commitment to their organisation.

% LEADERS CHANGE APPROACH

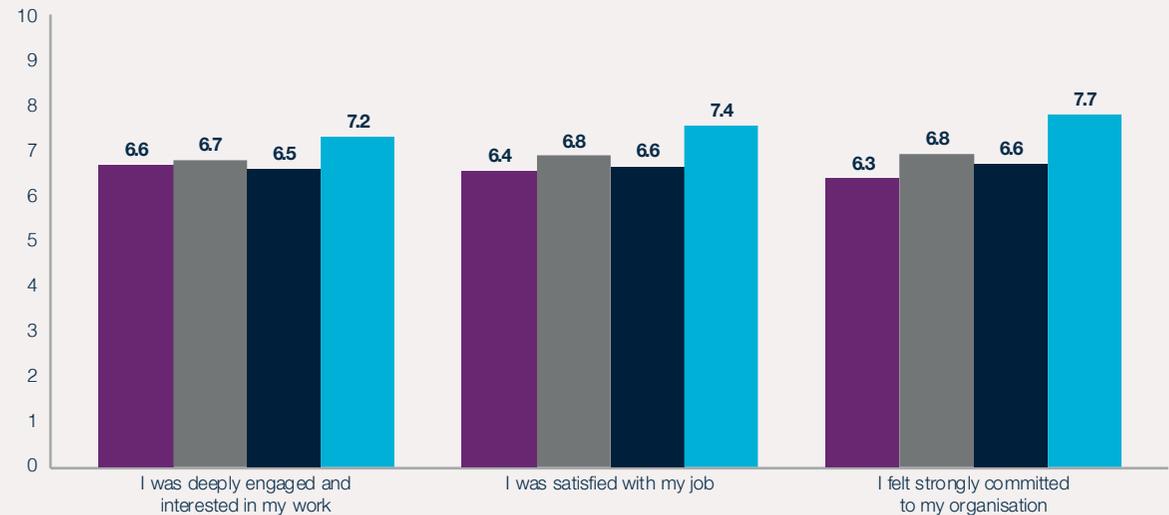


■ Tell & Control ■ Tell & Inquire ■ Invite & Control ■ Invite & Inquire

% LEADERS CHANGE APPROACH BY CHANGE SUCCESS



LEADERS CHANGE APPROACH BY MEANS INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES



■ Tell & Control ■ Tell & Inquire ■ Invite & Control ■ Invite & Inquire

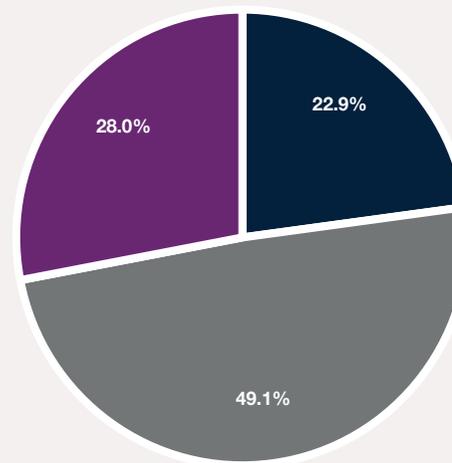
ME LEVEL: THE ABILITY TO COACH IS IMPACTFUL

Studies over the last decade have consistently found that workplace coaching helps to generate positive and desired changes in performance and wellbeing, as it helps to foster psychologically safe relationships and conversations that facilitate learning, development and positive change.

As might be expected, workers who reported often having coaching conversations with a leader and/or a professional coach were statistically more likely to have higher levels of change ability, change motivation and psychological safety than other workers.

What was surprising was that this was also true for the 28% of workers who reported feeling completely able to have coaching conversations with others at work. These workers were also statistically more likely to feel that their teams and workplace were *consistently thriving* or *working well, despite struggles* when it came to the changes they'd experienced. Rather than simply teaching workers to have "hard", "tough" or "courageous" conversations, could improving their ability to have coaching conversations also help them more confidently navigate change?

% ABILITY TO COACH OTHERS



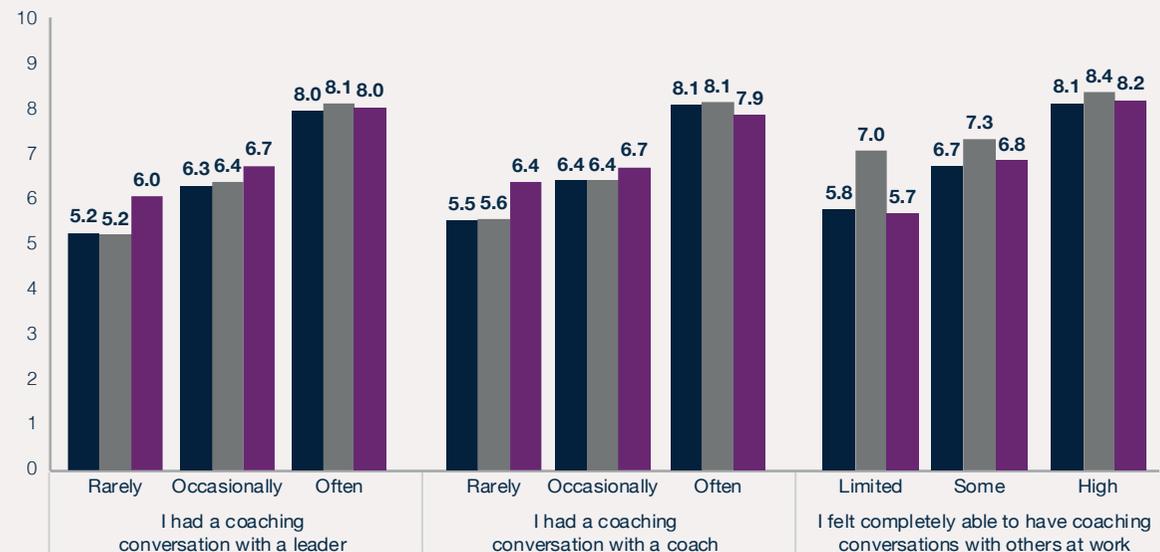
■ Limited Ability ■ Some Ability ■ High Ability

COACHING ABILITY BY STATE OF CHANGE



■ Really Struggling ■ Working Well, Despite Struggles ■ Not Doing Bad, Just Getting By ■ Consistently Thriving

COACHING BY MEANS CHANGE ABILITY, CHANGE MOTIVATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



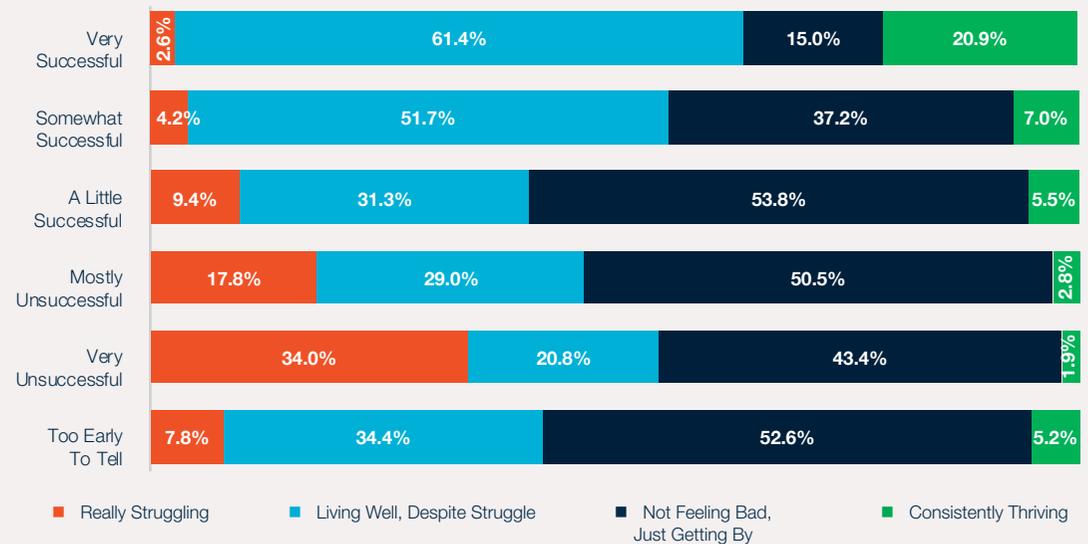
THE WELLBEING CONNECTION

Our previous research found that workers' wellbeing, the change approach taken by leaders and the success of organisational change endeavours were intricately inter-connected. Changes were more likely to be successful when workers had higher levels of wellbeing, and workers were more likely to have higher levels of wellbeing when workplace changes were successful. This same pattern emerged in the current data.

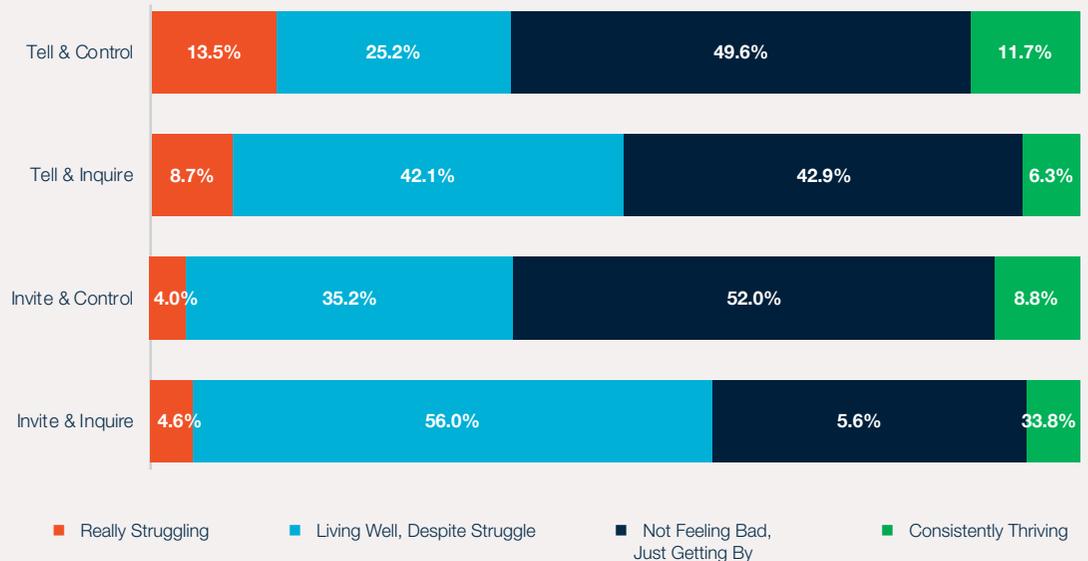
Of course, we are not claiming that these elements alone determine how successful change will be, or what people's levels of wellbeing will be. The data in this report alone also suggests that the MAGIC change factors, the ability to have coaching conversations with others, and worker's overall levels of change ability, change motivation and psychological safety all play a role in creating successful changes.

However, as our research continues to explore these relationships, we do believe it is worth noting that there is a reinforcing relationship between workplace change and workplace wellbeing that should be reflected and incorporated into organisational change strategies, implementation and measurement.

LEVEL CHANGE SUCCESS BY % STATE OF WELLBEING



LEADERS CHANGE APPROACH BY % STATE OF WELLBEING



AN AH-HA MOMENT

Supporting thriving through change requires a systems approach that provides support at the *Me* Level by helping workers to have coaching conversations with each other; at the *We* Level by helping leaders to inquire how workers want to take responsibility for making changes happen, and at the *Us* Level by leveraging the MAGIC change factors to create safe and effective environments in which change can unfold.

HR should find ways to help workers build their abilities for coaching conversations. HR should also help leaders and change champions understand how to confidently create working environments that support the MAGIC change factors, particularly self-organisation by workers.

Does your workplace support taking a system-wide approach including encouraging actions at the Me, We and Us Levels when it comes to creating change?



4. REDUCING STRUGGLE: UPDATING OUR BELIEFS ABOUT CHANGE

Feelings of struggle, uncertainty and stress are not signs that we are breaking, but simply signals that something important for us is unfolding that needs our attention and action. When we have the confidence to navigate change, struggle does not undermine thriving. Unfortunately, studies suggest that we underestimate our ability to tolerate the discomfort that accompanies struggle and undervalue the opportunities for learning and growth that come from disruptive experiences. Stability often wears the disguise of advantage – making everything feel calm, steady and in control. But prolonged periods of stability can dull our senses and resilience for new challenges. In short, experiencing struggle does not necessarily diminish our ability to thrive and can even enhance it.



34.9%

OF AUSTRALIAN WORKERS REPORT THAT THEY ARE STRUGGLING WITH THE AMOUNT OF UNCERTAINTY THAT CHANGES BRING.

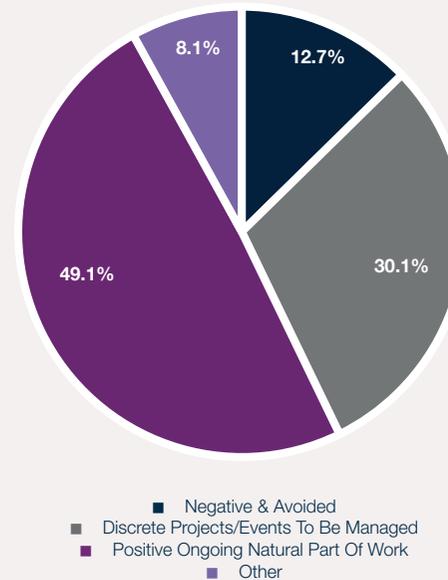
US LEVEL: OUR BELIEFS ABOUT CHANGE

Workplace cultures are created by the beliefs that people hold, which in turn shape their behaviours and interactions. Cultural mindsets in organisations have been found to impact levels of thriving for workers, teams and organisations.

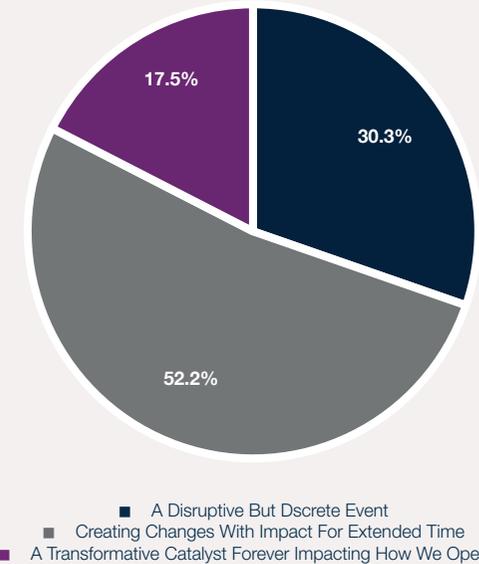
Prior to COVID-19, 49.1% of workers reported that their workplaces saw change as a *positive, natural part of work*. Statistically, these workers were more likely to report higher levels of change ability, change motivation and psychological safety than the 12.7% of workers in organisations who saw change as a *negative to be avoided*, and the 30.1% of workers in organisations who framed change as *discrete projects and events to be managed*.

Despite this, workers reported that 30.3% of their workplaces are approaching COVID-19 as a *disruptive but discrete event* and 52.2% as *creating changes with impact for an extended time*. Only 17.5% of Australian workplaces are perceived to be harnessing COVID-19 as a *transformative catalyst that will forever impact how they create change*. These findings will be interesting to track over time, as we hypothesise that cultures where change is embraced as a natural and ongoing process will support higher levels of change success and worker wellbeing over the long run.

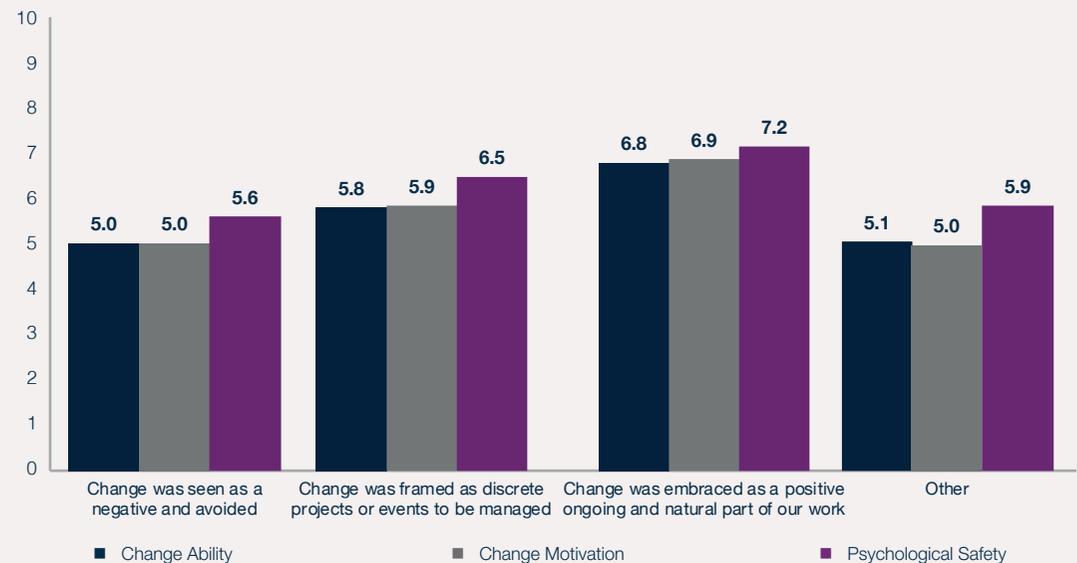
% CHANGE CULTURE PRIOR TO COVID-19



% COVID-19 CHANGE PHILOSOPHY



CHANGE CULTURE PRIOR TO COVID-19 BY MEANS ABILITY, MOTIVATION & PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



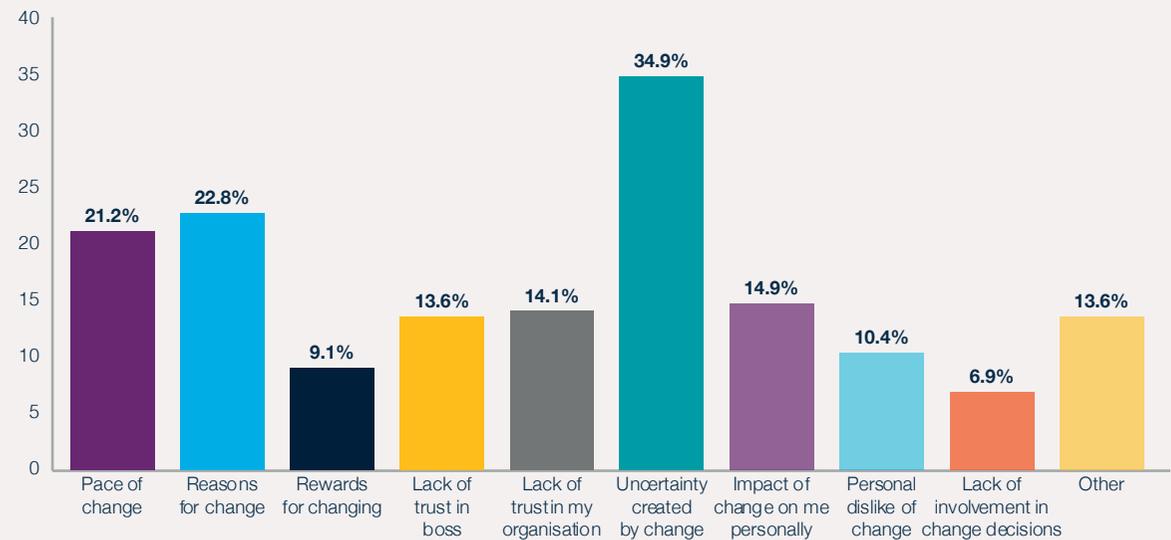
WE LEVEL: BIGGEST CHANGE STRUGGLES

The uncertainty created by change was the leading cause of struggle for workers (34.9%), especially for those who felt that their teams and workplace were *working well, despite struggles* when it came to the changes they'd experienced.

Understanding the reasons for change was the second biggest struggle for workers (22.8%). This was also highlighted earlier in the report by the large percentage of people who said they did not understand the key change decisions being made in their workplace.

The pace of change was the third biggest struggle for workers (21.2%). Notably, although COVID-19 has accelerated the pace of change considerably in nearly all workplaces, and despite the concern we often hear from leaders that the pace of change is burning their people out, the data does not fully support this fear. This finding was echoed in our previous research as well. In fact, workers who reported having experienced a high level of change over the last three months at work were no more likely to feel that their workplace and teams were *really struggling*, or that they themselves were *really struggling*.

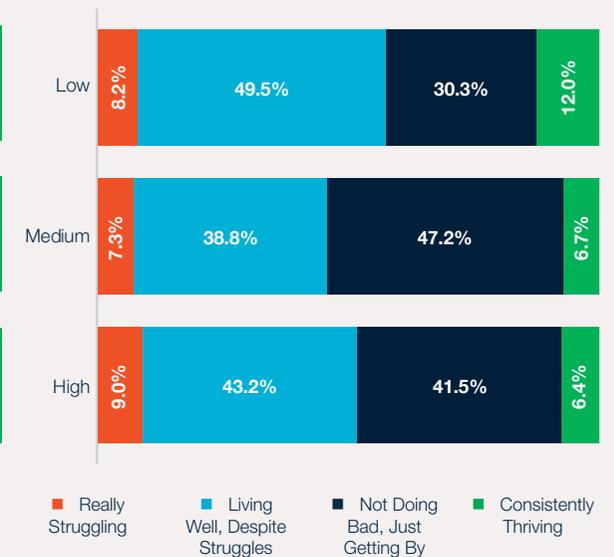
TOP THREE CHANGE STRUGGLES % FREQUENCY



AMOUNT OF CHANGE BY % STATE OF CHANGE



AMOUNT OF CHANGE BY % STATE OF WELLBEING



ME LEVEL: COVID WORK CHALLENGES

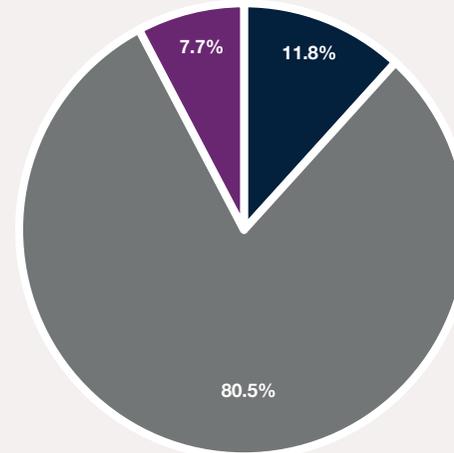
When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020, millions of workers around Australia were asked to start working from home in an effort to minimise infection. While some workers have since returned to their work premises, millions have continued to work at home, some by their own choice where workplaces have allowed this and some by government order such as in Victoria.

Only 7.7% of workers who continue to work from home reported feeling *completely satisfied* with their working arrangements. Despite this, only 38.8% of workers currently working at home reported *feeling positive* about returning to their work premises.

However, those workers who reported feeling more satisfied working from home and those who reported feeling positive about returning to work, statistically were more likely to have higher levels of change ability, change motivation and psychological safety.

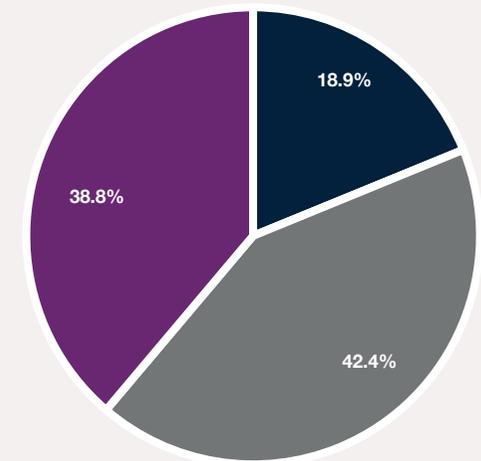
When it comes to helping workers navigate unusual challenges – such as changes in their working conditions – providing workers with the knowledge, tools and support to more confidently navigate change may be a worthwhile investment.

% SATISFACTION WITH WORKING FROM HOME



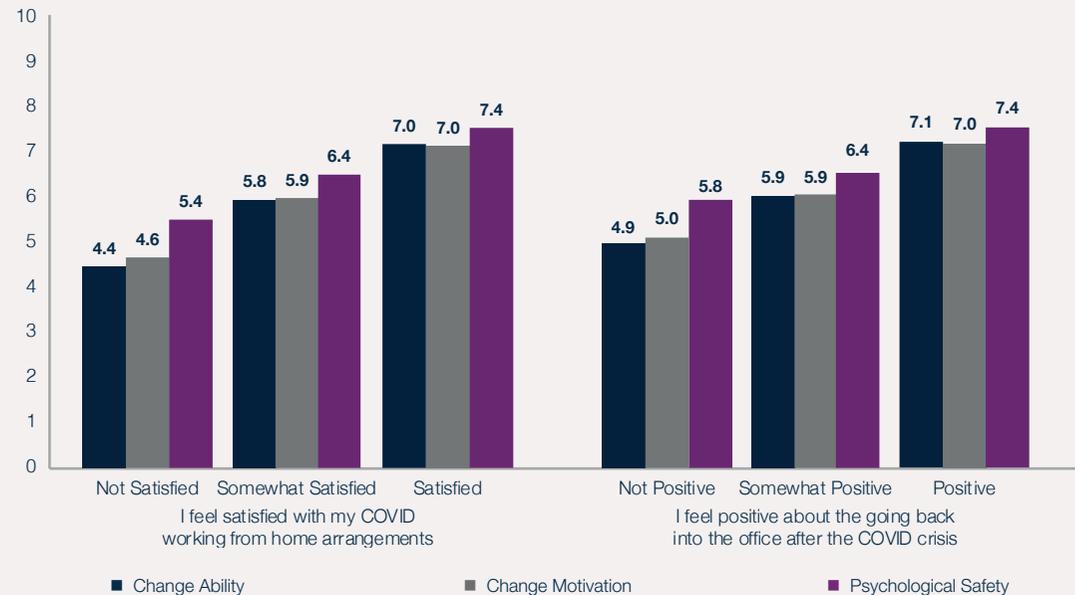
■ Not Satisfied ■ Somewhat Satisfied ■ Satisfied

% FEELING POSITIVE ABOUT RETURNING TO WORK



■ Not Positive ■ Somewhat Positive ■ Positive

ABILITY, MOTIVATION & PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY MEANS FOR COVID CHANGES

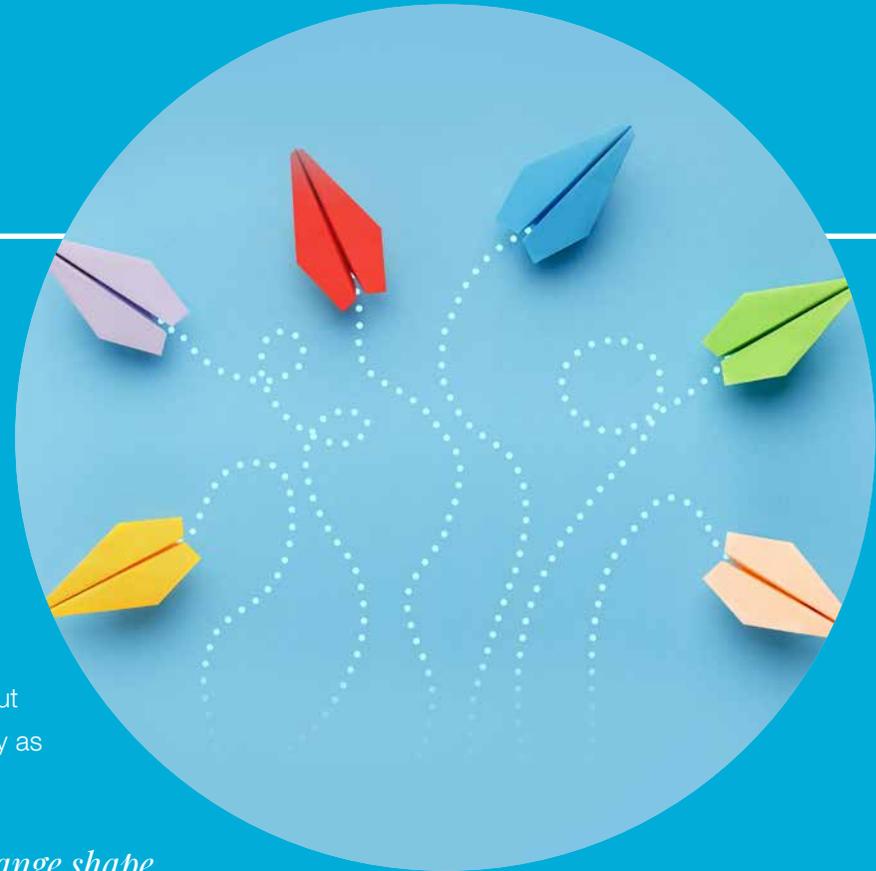


AN AH-HA MOMENT

Successfully navigating the struggles and uncertainties that often accompany changes in workplaces requires support at the *Me Level* by helping workers to have confidence to navigate disruption, at the *We Level* by helping teams understand the reasons for change and improving their ability to cope with uncertainty, and at the *Us Level* by normalising change as a positive, ongoing part of the work that enables individual and collective learning and growth.

HR needs to help their workplace improve their levels of change literacy to help leaders and workers confidently navigate the inevitable chaos and uncertainty that can come with change. In addition, leaders should prioritise conversations about what's working, where we are still struggling and what we can be doing differently as teams and organisations work together to create a new normal.

How do the beliefs that your leaders and workers have about change shape their confidence to navigate disruption and struggle?



THE READY FOR CHANGE CHECKLIST

I KNOW THAT WE'RE READY TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGES WHEN:



We understand that uncertainty, disruption and struggle are not signs of breaking down. Instead we recognise them as an invitation to experiment with more effective ways of thinking, doing and being that honour diversity, enable equity and increase inclusion and justice



We're not willing to settle for compliance, but instead we seek people's commitment by inviting them to share their diverse hopes for the positive differences change can create.



We're willing to think about and talk about change differently, not as discrete projects or events with a clearly defined beginning, middle and end, but instead recognise it as an ongoing process that enables us to learn and grow as we adapt to the changes in the world around us.



We're ready to let go of our need to try and control or manage change and instead, lead by genuinely inquiring into how people want to individually and collectively use their strengths to take responsibility.



We accept that change is not linear, but instead embrace it as complex and messy, where we are thinking at the *me*, *we* and *us* levels to ensure people have the knowledge, tools and support they need to confidently navigate chaos and order that comes with change.



We measure our success not just in terms of workplace outcomes, but instead also focus on our levels of ability, motivation and psychological safety to amplify the positive possibilities of change for everyone.



We're able to deliver and welcome, rather than dread, clear feedback and coaching conversations so we can understand what's working, where we're still struggling and what we're learning when it comes to creating the changes we desire.



We're no longer willing to leave people on their own to figure out how to navigate the changes we face, but instead pro-actively provide an array of supports from new skills training, educational workshops, change management tools and coaching for building both confidence and capacity for thriving through change.

WANT MORE?



CHANGE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Our virtual Thriving Through Change Program is designed to deliver short, powerful, socially supported microdoses of change training that helps leaders, teams, and workers challenge their change mindsets, practice invite-and-inquire behaviors, and create psychologically safe and effective spaces where change can unfold. Immediately actionable and measurable, there are no passive observers in this program which unfolds in live online 30 minute sessions that blends classroom learning, real world experiments, and coaching to quickly build the knowledge, tools and support that people need to thrive, even in the face of uncertainty and disruption. [Click here to learn more.](#)



CERTIFICATE IN CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

Do you want to up your game to create positive change? The Certificate In Creating Positive Change is a live, online training program for people and teams who want effective, evidence based, systems-oriented approaches for creating positive changes, be it through coaching, workshops, AI Summits, or change management strategies. [Click here to learn more.](#)



CHANGE COACHING

Unfortunately studies suggest that most of us are struggling to break free of traditional and ineffective change approaches, but with the right tools and support, and lots of practice and feedback anyone can help others navigate change more effectively. Our highly sought after team of change coaches excel in helping people to fuse the latest evidence-based practices from studies in neuroscience, psychology, and systems science into small, change practices that can be sustained – no matter how busy or disruptive work gets. [Click here to learn more.](#)



ABOUT THE COOPERRIDER CENTER



CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE | STILLER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
David L. Cooperrider
CENTER FOR APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

The David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry, based in the Robert P. Stiller School of Business at Champlain College, is the global hub for connecting people to learn, apply, and amplify Appreciative Inquiry.

WHAT IS APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY?

Simply put, it is the search for what is life-giving and possible within people and the world around us. It is intentionally asking what we want to accelerate and grow, with the realization that what we appreciate, appreciates. For over 30 years, AI has been applied by individuals and organizations around the world to create positive change and generative outcomes. Today, we believe AI is more relevant than ever to help us co-create solutions to the challenges we face as a global community.

Join us to **LEARN**, **APPLY** and **AMPLIFY** Appreciative Inquiry in your own work!

LEARN

We offer a full range of educational programs and AI certifications.

APPLY

We connect organizations with AI experts who can help design and facilitate positive organizational growth.

AMPLIFY

We maintain the AI Commons website and co-publish the AI Practitioner Journal, to encourage sharing research and case studies that highlight the impact of Appreciative Inquiry.

 [DLCCenterforAI](#)  [CooperriderCenterforAI](#)  [CooperriderCenter](#)  [/school/cooperridercenter](#)

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ABOUT THE CHANGE LAB RESEARCHERS



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Dr. Michelle McQuaid is a best-selling author, workplace wellbeing teacher and playful change activator. An honorary fellow at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education, in addition to hosting the highly acclaimed weekly podcast, Making Positive Psychology Work, which features leading researchers and practitioners from around the world, Michelle blogs for Psychology Today, The Huffington Post and Thrive, and her work has been featured in Forbes, The Harvard Business Review, The Wall Street Journal, Boss Magazine, The Age and more. You can find more of Michelle's work at www.michellemcquaid.com



LOUIS ALLORO

Louis Alloro is social entrepreneur and champion of change creating and facilitating highly sought after, evidence-based learning experiences helping organisations and communities evolve. He is a senior fellow at the Center for the Advancement of Wellbeing and co-founder of The Change Lab and guest host of the Making Positive Psychology Work podcast. Louis has trained and certified thousands of practitioners and workplaces in applied positive psychology, creating wellbeing and positive change for over a decade and is currently pursuing his PhD in systems informed leadership and change. You can find out more about Louis' work at www.louisalloro.com



MICHELLE ETHEVE

With a Masters of Science in Coaching Psychology, Michelle Etheve specialises in enabling people to create purposeful, strengths-based change and to thrive as they create, learn and experiment together. As co-founder of The Change Lab, she helps to create cultures of curiosity by teaching people how to design and ask better questions. Michelle has designed and delivered Appreciative Inquiry summits, positive change experiences and coaching development programmes in workplaces, schools and communities around the world. You can find more of Michelle's work at: www.thechangelabs.com

ABOUT OUR ADDITIONAL RESEARCHERS



DR. LINDSEY GODWIN

A professor, practitioner, and possibiliter, Dr. Lindsey Godwin has a passion for helping individuals and organisations leverage their potential through strength-based change. She holds the Robert P. Stiller Endowed Chair of Management in the Stiller School of Business at Champlain College (Vermont, USA), where she serves as the Academic Director of the David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry (AI). An international speaker, consultant and facilitator, her work has been published in a variety of journals and books and she is currently a managing editor for the AI Practitioner Journal. You can find out more about Lindsey's work at: www.lindseygodwin.com



DR. PEGGY KERN

Dr Peggy Kern is an associate professor at the Centre for Positive Psychology at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education. Her research is collaborative in nature and draws on a variety of methodologies to examine questions around who thrives in life and why, including understanding and measuring healthy functioning, identifying individual and social factors impacting life trajectories, and systems informed approaches to wellbeing. She has published 3 books and over 85 peer-reviewed articles and chapters. You can find out more about Peggy's work at www.peggykern.org



DONALD E. FREDERICK (PH.D.)

Donald is a data science consultant, technologist and entrepreneur focused on the future of technology, work and flourishing. He completed his postdoctoral research on the psychology of work and flourishing at The Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University's Institute for Quantitative Social Science. He holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from The University of Chicago. He also holds master's degrees in computer science and divinity, also from Chicago. You can find out more on his website www.neurofoo.com

ABOUT THE AHRI RESEARCHERS



SARAH MCCANN-BARTLETT MAHRI

Sarah McCann-Bartlett is CEO and Managing Director of the Australian HR Institute. She has extensive, global experience in membership and trade bodies and has held senior roles across a variety of sectors in Australia, the UK, and the USA. Sarah was Director General (CEO) of the British Constructional Steelwork Association from September 2011 to December 2019. In this role, she established a new sector apprenticeship program, created a new market development program to drive market share gains for constructional steelwork, and drove rapid growth of the group's certification arm. Sarah holds Commerce and Arts degrees from the University of Melbourne, an MBA from Monash University, and postgraduate qualifications in marketing. She is a Fellow of the UK Institute of Directors. Sarah lives in Melbourne with her husband and 12-year-old son, and their three dogs.



SAMANTHA SMITH

Samantha has been working as the Research Coordinator at AHRI for the last year, and is skilled in research design, writing and data analysis. She has recently completed her Masters of Arts in Psychology, specialising in Social Cognition and Religious Belief, from the University of Otago in New Zealand. Samantha's current research interests are cultural change in relation to HR and metrics, the future of work and AI and automation.

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