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## Wellbeing governance guide

### **What is wellbeing governance?**

We think of it as the lens through which a board or committee oversees wellbeing to ensure the organisation can meet its obligations AND safeguard the wellbeing of those that work or volunteer there. It is a holistic approach that goes beyond compliance to include proactive measures that enable charities, not-for-profits and social enterprises to conduct their work with competence, fairness, and care.

### **Who is responsible for it?**

Boards have the ultimate responsibility for health and safety governance and they, along with leaders, play an important role in highlighting mental health as an organisational priority and promoting a positive wellbeing culture.

### **Where do we start?**

You don't have to do everything at once. By starting small and building step by step, you are creating the right foundations for wellbeing governance.

Here are some practical actions that both boards and leaders can take to demonstrate a visible culture of wellbeing to help people to thrive, not just survive.

*Note: This is intended as a guide only and not a comprehensive list of compulsory requirements. It may need to be adapted to take your organisation's unique circumstances into consideration.*

## **Take the lead**

- Make wellbeing a strategic priority so you can respond in an informed way when challenges arise, e.g. have strategic documents and action plans at all levels.
- Take a human-centred approach to mental health and recognise that everyone brings different lived experiences to the workplace.
- Spend the time to build your knowledge about mental health so you can speak about it in an appropriate and sensitive way and show others that it is safe to do the same.
- Create a shared responsibility amongst the board, leaders, managers, team members and volunteers for workplace wellbeing.
- Communicate a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination.

## **Put wellbeing on the agenda**

- Add wellbeing as a regular item on the agenda at board and leadership meetings.
- Identify and discuss issues that might prevent the organisation from meeting its due diligence obligations.
- Report on known hazards, risks and preventative measures planned and implemented, along with the effectiveness of solutions.

## **Develop a wellbeing strategy**

- Create a wellbeing strategy as part of the broader organisational strategy.
- Take an integrated approach to address the range of factors that contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of staff and volunteers. This means that actions might be the responsibility of several parts of the organisations.
- Ensure the strategy can evolve with the unique needs of your people.
- Use the strategy to prioritise the key initiatives and actions your organisation needs to focus on.

## **Create an internal wellbeing committee/working group**

- Nominate someone to take the lead for mental health and wellbeing. This could be a board or committee member, CEO, leader or manager. This is critical if a risk requires escalation or decision-making requires the sharing of information in a timely manner.
- Consider who else could be included as wellbeing committee representatives (depending on your size). It is important to hear the voices of a diverse range of people.

## **Set wellbeing goals**

- Take one small step at a time, if there is a lot to do to get your organisation on track.
- Identify what you **MUST** do right now to comply with laws or regulations.
- Identify what you **CAN** do to make a positive difference.
- Identify what you **COULD** do as part of continuous improvement.

## **Know your obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act**

Executives and the Board have a responsibility to manage workplace health and safety risk and create physical and psychologically healthy workplaces.

- Keep up to date with local, state/territory and federal regulatory obligations for work health and safety, privacy and anti-discrimination.
- Review your policies and procedures to ensure they are fit-for-purpose.
- Conduct regular reviews of your risks and risk management process.
- Put processes in place for identifying and managing psychosocial hazards and risks and record these in a risk register.
- Ensure there are ways for employees and volunteers to raise concerns and put whistleblower protections in place.
- Put policies and protections in place to safeguard vulnerable people that work with your organisation and mitigate any risks.
- Consider setting KPIs for work health, safety and wellbeing

## ✓ Support the CEO/Executive

- If you are on the board, take a genuine interest in the mental health and wellbeing of the CEO/Executive.
- Have regular conversations to provide personal development, peer learning and opportunities to share their day-to-day challenges.
- Ensure the CEO feels supported to take time off, support themselves and in times of crisis and that they know that there is someone to share the load.

## ✓ Make adjustments

- Create a robust process to support the return-to-work experience after a mental health-related absence, including consulting with the impacted individual.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers know what they are entitled to if they need adjustments or other support.

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