

Why does this matter?

*“There’s never been a more important time
for us to prioritise the wellbeing of social
changemakers.”*

Julia Keady, Founding Director, The Wellbeing Hub

THE SITUATION'S NOT GREAT

Mental ill health and the norm of people being on the spectrum from stress to burn-out have been simmering away in the social sector for too long.

If the people that turn up every day to work and volunteer in our sector are healthy and strong, then it follows that the impact we create will be greater. Put simply, we have a better chance of shifting the dial on the issues we care about. Working in the social sector is exacerbated by constraints including funding uncertainty, a culture of being asked to do more with less, and people that care a lot.

*Lack of wellbeing can show up as stress, anxiety, depression,
compassion fatigue (stress related mental injury), frontline or
vicarious trauma.*

This can lead to absenteeism, extended leave periods, mental health injury / claims, high rates of employee and volunteer turnover, high HR costs. These ultimately affect the communities we serve.

Despite these challenges, very few social sector professionals leave the sector. In this, the issue has not subsided, but merely become culturally acceptable.

Lack of wellbeing creates a lack of resilience.

This poses a threat for our sector's sustainability, and its capability to address future challenges and disasters.

I have been diagnosed with early exhaustion and burnout and simply need a break / relief for time out."

RESET 2020 National Research Study participant.

IT'S TIME TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

We're collectively building a solution - The Social Sector Wellbeing and Resilience Hub for a mentally healthy and resilient social sector.

WHAT'S THE VISION?

Despite these challenges, very few social sector professionals leave the sector. In this, the issue has not subsided, but merely become culturally acceptable.

Can you imagine our thriving and well social sector? Where our people that get up every day to work and volunteer are flourishing and at their best? In Australia that's 5 million volunteers¹ and 1.2 million employees². They have strong workplace connections, fair workloads, and are supported to stay safe. Conflict is dealt with promptly and fairly, there is zero tolerance to bullying and harassment. Whilst there are natural ups and downs, work is a good and

¹ Volunteering Australia (2022), *Key Volunteering Statistics*, accessed December 09, 2022

² Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (2018), *Australian Charities Report 2018*, accessed October 31, 2022

inclusive place to be. As a result, productivity increases, HR costs reduce, and the world is a safer and more equitable place for all.

We delight in the beauty of the butterfly but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."

Maya Angelou

LET'S GET ON THE SAME PAGE ABOUT THESE TERMS

Wellbeing is multi-dimensional and includes a state of positive mental health where each individual can realise their own potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and make a contribution to their community.³

Resilience or 'bounceback' reflects the capacity for recovery and maintained adaptive behaviour that may follow an initial retreat or incapacity after stressful circumstances, including workplace stress.⁴

Social sector includes not for profits, charities, community organisations and social enterprise staff, volunteers, boards, and leaders. It includes social, environmental, and cultural issue areas and organisations of all sizes, including voluntary lead organisations. Peak bodies, membership bodies, educational bodies, grantmakers and intermediaries are here too! They actively affect the sector through teaching and training, advocacy, funding, and influence. They watch out and wish well for the social sector.

³ Adapted from World Health Organization (2004), *Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice, Summary Report*, p10, 12

⁴ Adapted from Garmezy, N. (1991), *Resilience in children's adaptation to negative life events and stressed environments*, *Pediatric Annals*, 20, 459-460, 463-466

WE REALLY CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO...

Cost savings have to be made but it's a false economy to neglect looking after staff.⁵

Workplaces with poor psychological working conditions also accrue 43% more sick days per month. Mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety, cost Australian businesses about \$6 billion dollars each year through absenteeism, reduced work performance, increased turnover rates and compensation claims.⁶

Work pressure, harassment / bullying, and exposure to occupational or workplace violence accounted for more than half (51%) of serious mental health claims.⁷

More than 55% of employees who go on leave because of a psychological injury are still away from their jobs after 6 months, compared with 23% for physical injuries.⁸

A 20% reduction in a person's wellbeing leads to a 10% drop in their performance.⁹

HOW AND WHERE TO START? IF YOU ARE ...

- a leader, take the organisational organisational health check and go to the toolboxes you need, step by step.
- a staff member show your leaders the why and wellbeing stats and if there are further issues or barriers, read more.
- an advocate for our sector, open the advocacy page.

⁵ Katie Duckworth (2015), Director at Be The Change Coaching and Training, UK

⁶ SafeWork Australia (n.d), <https://safework.sa.gov.au/workers/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health#Common-causes>, accessed 27 October 2022

⁷ Safe Work Australia, National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics 3rd Edition (Revision 1)

⁸ Towell, N (June 28, 2021), *Workers Mental Health Claims help put WorkCover back in the red*, The Age

⁹ Goetzl, R, & Ozminkowski, R. (2008) 'The health and cost benefits of work site health-promotion programs.' *Annual Review of Public Health*, 29:303-23 doi: 10.1146

- a partner, wellbeing organisation or professional, open our [partners page](#) or [contact us](#).