Understanding burnout in the NSW public sector

A growing prevalence of workplace burnout highlights the need to understand its effects, manage risks, and better support employee wellbeing.

Burnout is a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.

Contents

Introduction

In today's fast-paced and rapidly evolving environment, workplace burnout has emerged as a critical concern affecting employees worldwide. Global events, such as the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, have magnified the urgency of addressing workplace burnout.

The changing work environment has amplified the risk of burnout, leading to detrimental effects on individual wellbeing, productivity, and employee engagement. As burnout continues to garner attention, understanding its causes and potential prevention strategies is crucial to cultivating healthier and more sustainable workplaces.

Recent changes to the Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulation 2022 in NSW have resulted in employers having a more explicit duty to manage psychosocial hazards at work. Employers are encouraged to address psychosocial hazards by promoting a healthy work environment and implementing strategies to manage and reduce workplace stress and burnout.

The purpose of this report is to increase the understanding of what is driving burnout in the NSW public sector and provide guidance on how to effectively address and mitigate the risk of burnout. This report will equip organisations with actionable strategies to implement changes that foster a more balanced and supportive work environment that prioritises employee wellbeing.

What is burnout?

Burnout is often used to describe feelings of stress, tiredness, and exhaustion, with stress and burnout used interchangeably. However, stress can be experienced intermittently and does not always lead to burnout.

In 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined burnout as 'a syndrome conceptualised as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed'. Burnout is a specific phenomenon which is localised to the workplace and is defined by the three dimensions below:

> **Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion.**

> **Increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job.**

> **Reduced professional efficacy.**

What causes burnout?

Burnout is typically the result of prolonged exposure to chronic work-related stress and a combination of additional factors. Research by Maslach identified six areas that contribute to burnout:

Workload:

This refers to the quantity and intensity of the work an individual is expected to perform. High workload, constant pressure to meet deadlines, and lack of control over work pace can lead to burnout.

Control:

Control is the level of autonomy and decision making an individual has over their work. Lack of control can contribute to feelings of powerlessness and frustration, leading to burnout.

Reward:

This encompasses both extrinsic rewards (e.g. pay and benefits) and intrinsic rewards (e.g. recognition and job satisfaction). When employees feel their efforts are not adequately recognised or rewarded, they can experience burnout.

Community:

This relates to the social aspects of work, including relationships with colleagues and managers. A lack of supportive relationships, conflicts, and a sense of isolation can contribute to burnout.

Fairness:

This involves perceptions of fairness in terms of work distribution, promotions, and decision-making processes. When employees perceive inequality or unfair treatment, it can lead to burnout.

Values:

This refers to the alignment between an individual's personal values and the values of an organisation. When these don't align or there is a perceived lack of meaningfulness in the work, burnout can occur.

Maslach's model emphasises the importance of an integrated approach that considers multiple factors within the work environment. Addressing these six areas can help organisations create a more supportive and conducive work environment that reduces the risk of burnout.[1]

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[1] Leiter MP, Maslach C. Six areas of work life: a model of the organizational context of burnout. J Health Hum Serv Adm. 1999 Spring;21(4):472-89. PMID: 10621016.

Burnout leads to a decline in an individual's overall wellbeing and significantly impacts performance, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life.

Why is action needed?

Addressing burnout is crucial. It has profound consequences on both individuals and organisations. By taking action to prevent burnout, the impact on employees and organisations can reduce and the risk significantly mitigated.

Impact of burnout on individuals

Burnout leads to a decline in an individual's overall wellbeing and significantly impacts their performance, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life.

Physical and mental health:

Burnout takes a toll on individuals' physical health, contributing to chronic conditions such as hypertension, heart disease, and a weakened immune system. Mentally, burnout can lead to anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders, seriously impacting a person's quality of life.

Work performance:

Burnout significantly impairs job performance, resulting in decreased productivity, reduced focus, and decreased creativity.

Job satisfaction and engagement:

Burnout erodes job satisfaction and engagement, causing individuals to feel disconnected from their work and organisation. This lack of fulfillment can lead to decreased motivation and a diminished sense of purpose in their roles.

Research identified that burnt out employee are:

63%
more likely to take **sick days**.

2.6x
as likely to be **actively job searching**.

Half
as likely to discuss how to approach **performance goals** with their manager.

23%
more likely to visit a hospital's **emergency department**.

13%
less confident about their **performance**.[2]

2 Gallup (2020). Employee burnout: The biggest myth. https://www.gallup.com/workplace/288539/employee-burnout-biggest-myth.aspx

Impact of burnout on the organisation

On an organisational level, burnout can result in decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, higher turnover rates, and reduced employee engagement.

Productivity and performance:

Burnout can lead to decreased productivity and a decline in work performance, affecting the overall quality of work.[3] Burnout also stifles creativity and innovation within organisations. Burnt out employees are less likely to think creatively, propose innovative ideas, or contribute to problem solving initiatives. This can hinder an organisation's ability to adapt to changes.

Long term sustainability:

Persistent burnout can compromise the long-term sustainability of an organisation. A chronic cycle of burnout-related issues can lead to a loss of organisational knowledge, a decline in organisational resilience, and difficulty in adapting to changes in the environment.

Absenteeism and turnover:

Burnout is a leading factor in increased absenteeism and turnover rates. Employees experiencing burnout are more likely to take sick days or extended leave due to their physical and mental health challenges. This can disrupt team dynamics, strain resources through constant recruitment, and increase training costs for new hires. Research indicates that stress related presenteeism costs employers $6.63 billion and stress related absenteeism $3.4 billion within Australia.[4] Research suggests that burnout may be responsible for approximately 20% to 50% of turnover depending on the organisation.[5]

Workplace morale and engagement:

Burnout contributes to a negative work environment, eroding morale and engagement. As individuals become disengaged and disillusioned, their willingness to contribute to team goals and participate in collaborative efforts decreases. This can lead to a toxic work culture characterised by cynicism and indifference. Research indicates that burnout leads to more disengaged employees and reportedly costs employers 34% of their annual salary as a result.[6]

[3] The State of Workplace Burnout 2023, Infinite Potential, https://infinite-potential.com.au/the-state-of-burnout-2023

[4] Medibank (2008) The cost of workplace stress in Australia. https://www.medibank.com.au/content/dam/client/documents/pdfs/The-Cost-of-Workplace-Stress.pdf

[5] Borysenko, K. (2019). Forbes: Burnout is now an officially diagnosable condition, here's what you need to know about it. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/karlynborysenko/2019/05/29/burnout-is-now-an-officially-diagnosable-condition-heres-what-you-need-to-know-about-it/?sh=76936c4b2b99

[6] Borysenko, K. (2019). Forbes: Burnout is now an officially diagnosable condition, here's what you need to know about it. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/karlynborysenko/2019/05/29/burnout-is-now-an-officially-diagnosable-condition-heres-what-you-need-to-know-about-it/?sh=76936c4b2b99

Global trends in burnout

Research indicates that workplace stress and burnout rates continue to grow, hitting new record levels.

Global employee trends research conducted in 2023 found the burnout risk for government and public sector employees was 35%. Differences in risk levels were seen for different employee segments and across industries.[7]

The report also found the global burnout risk for government and public sector employees was 35%. Differences in risk levels was seen for different employee segments and across industries.

This indicates a growing prevalence of burnout among employees in the workplace around the world and emphasises the significance of addressing this issue to support employee wellbeing.

Research conducted between 2019 and 2022 by the Australian HR Institute (AHRI) found that within Australia:

Almost

7 out of 10

workers reported feeling they were burned out at work, where:

48%

of respondents indicated they were **sometimes** burned out at work.

21%

reported they were **always** burned out at work.[8]

The growing prevalence of workplace burnout emphasises the significance of taking action to support employee wellbeing.

The State of the Workplace Burnout 2023 report found:

38%

of global participants reported **burnout**.

Burnout **increased** across every demographic at different rates.[9]

Similarly, the 2023 global employee trends research found that 38% of workers report experiencing signs of burnout. Looking at the three dimensions of burnout:

42%

felt **emotionally drained** at work.

38%

didn't care about work as much as they used to.

32%

felt that their efforts at work made **no impact**.[10]

[7] Qualtrics (2023). The ultimate guide to employee burnout. 2023 global employee trends research. https://www.qualtrics.com/experience-management/employee/employee-burnout/?rid=cookie&prevsite=au&newsite=en&geo=&geomatch=

[8] Australian HR Institute (2022) 2019-2022 Workplace Report: The state of wellbeing in Australian Workplaces. https://www.ahri.com.au/wp-content/uploads/MMcQ_WellbeingLab_Australia_WorkplaceSurvey_2019-2022-1.pdf

[9] The State of Workplace Burnout 2023, Infinite Potential, https://infinite-potential.com.au/the-state-of-burnout-2023

[10] Qualtrics (2023). The ultimate guide to employee burnout. 2023 global employee trends research. https://www.qualtrics.com/experience-management/employee/employee-burnout/?rid=cookie&prevsite=au&newsite=en&geo=&geomatch=

Burnout in the NSW public sector

Measuring burnout

Research suggests that measuring burnout is the first step to effectively mitigate burnout risk and provide the necessary support to employees. Therefore, in 2022, a single item burnout measure was added to the People Matter Employee Survey (PMES). The burnout survey question was *I feel burned out by my work* and used a 5-point agreement scale.
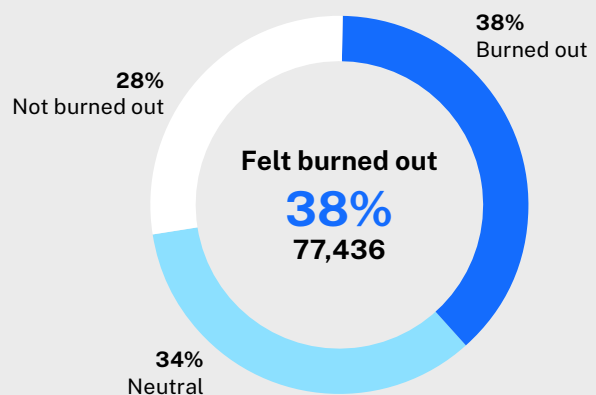
Findings from the 2022 People Matter Employee Survey

The 2022 PMES results found that 38% of sector employees felt burned out at work. A further 28% of employees had a neutral response which implies a substantial proportion of employees are at risk of burning out. 34% of employees indicated they did not feel burned out at work.

When looking at the portfolios, burnout rates ranged from 23% to 49%. The portfolios with the highest burnout rates were Education (49%) and Health (42%) which is not surprising given the challenges in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
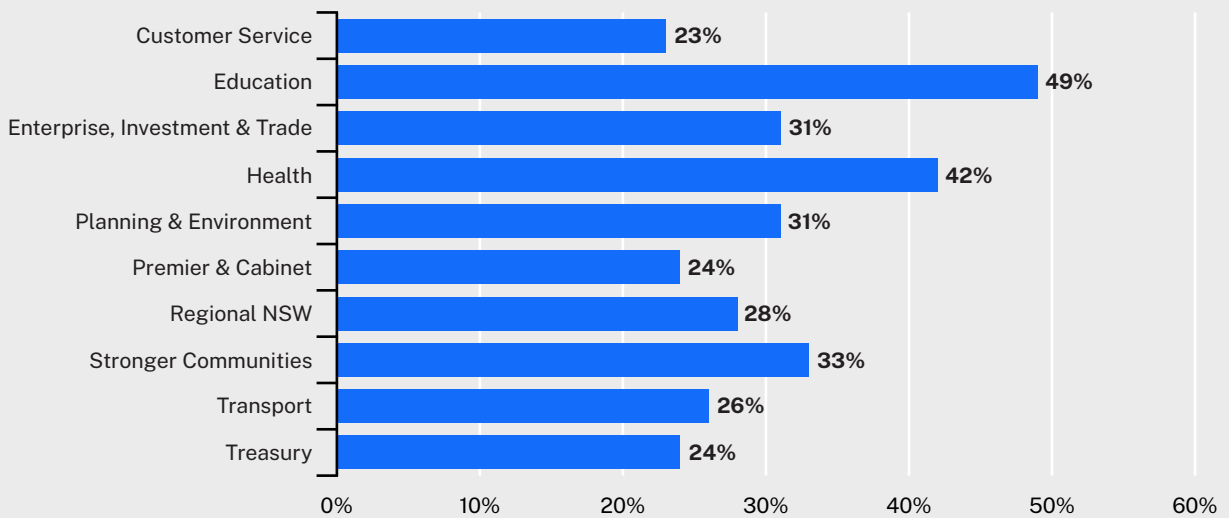
38% of NSW public sector employees felt burned out at work.

Experiences of burnout

28%
Not burned out

38%
Burned out

Felt burned out
38%
77,436

34%
Neutral

Portfolio breakdown

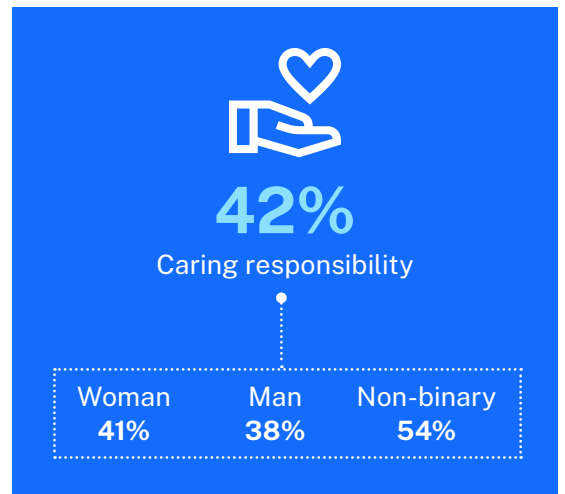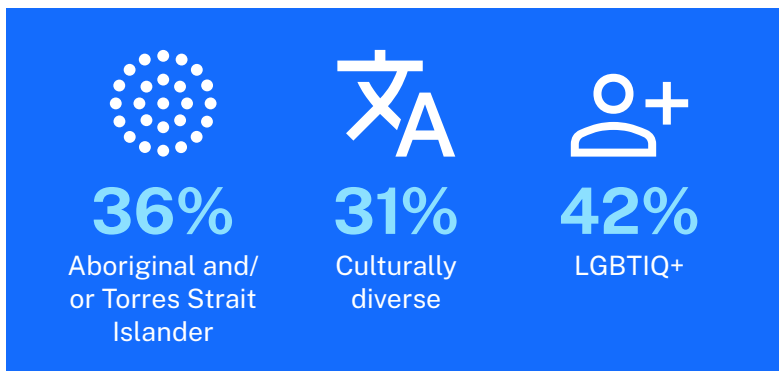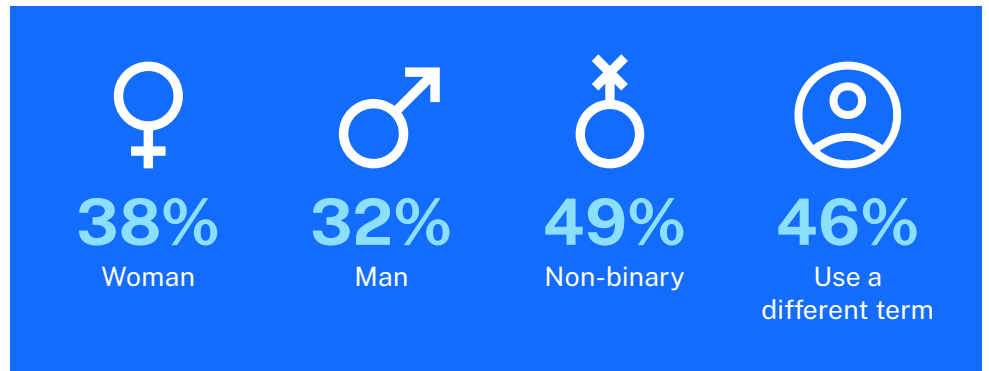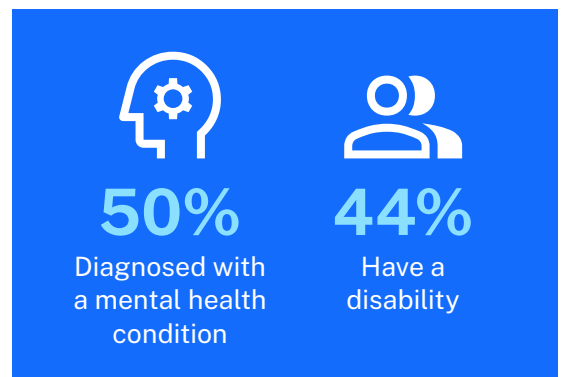| Portfolio	Percentage
Customer Service	23%
Education	49%
Enterprise, Investment & Trade	31%
Health	42%
Planning & Environment	31%
Premier & Cabinet	24%
Regional NSW	28%
Stronger Communities	33%
Transport	26%
Treasury	24%

Burnout by select demographics

The results found that burnout disproportionately affects individuals based on demographic characteristics. For example, there was significantly higher rates of burnout for employees identifying with the following dimensions:

- Living with a diagnosed mental health condition (**50%**)
- Non-binary (**49%**)
- Frontline employees (**48%**)
- Living with a disability (**44%**)
- Caring responsibilities (**42%**)
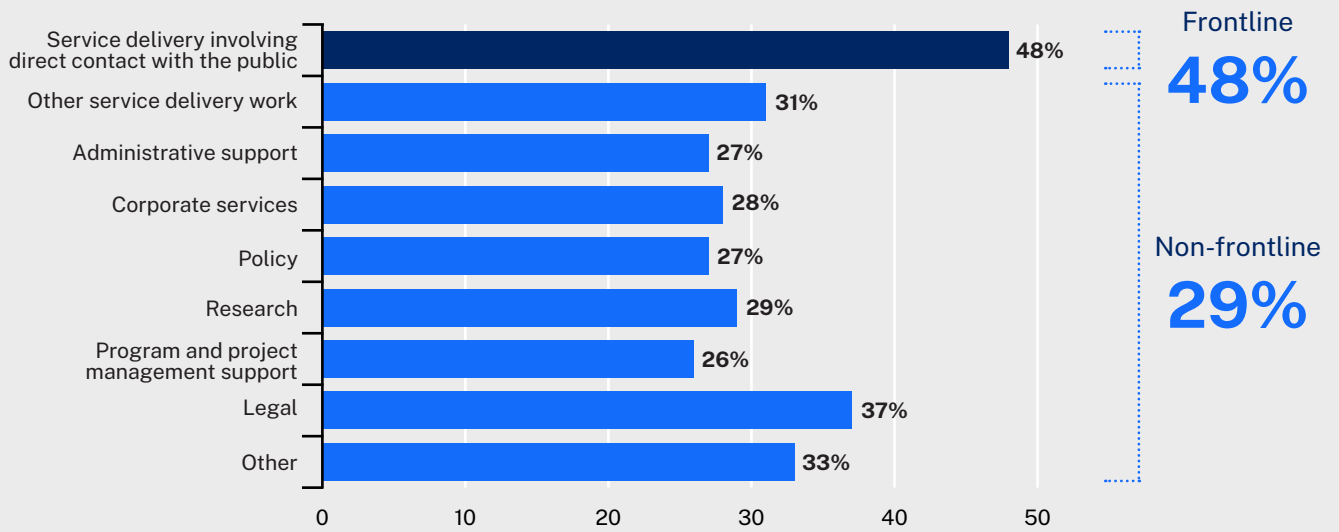- LGBTIQ+ (**42%**)
- Culturally diverse (**31%**)

Burnout was also found to correlate with other workplace outcomes such as engagement, wellbeing, and job satisfaction. Similarly, strong correlations were found between burnout and role clarity and support which supports research indicating that a lack of time, resources, training and development, and job clarity can all contribute to burnout.

50%
Diagnosed with a mental health condition

44%
Have a disability

38%
Woman

32%
Man

49%
Non-binary

46%
Use a different term

36%
Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander

31%
Culturally diverse

42%
LGBTIQ+

42%
Caring responsibility

Woman	Man	Non-binary
41%	**38%**	**54%**

Frontline and non-frontline burnout results

Category	Percentage
Service delivery involving direct contact with the public	48%
Other service delivery work	31%
Administrative support	27%
Corporate services	28%
Policy	27%
Research	29%
Program and project management support	26%
Legal	37%
Other	33%

Frontline
48%

Non-frontline
29%

Key drivers of burnout for the NSW public sector

Although burnout is prevalent, it remains preventable and organisations can take steps to effectively reduce the risk of employee burnout. The first step is to understand what is driving burnout with a key driver analysis. A key driver analysis assesses the PMES questions most strongly correlated with burnout.

Improving perceptions of time to do my job well, support to do my job well, and access to wellbeing resources reduces the risk of burnout.

Key drivers

The 2022 PMES data was analysed to understand the key drivers of workplace burnout in the NSW public sector and determine tangible actions the sector can take to address burnout.

A series of regression analyses were performed to understand which behavioural drivers (survey questions) were predictive of the outcome (burnout). Relative weights analysis was chosen to understand the contribution of each behavioural driver to the outcome.

The analyses showed various key drivers were associated with a reduced risk of employee burnout. The top five key drivers are summarised below in order of importance.

Together, these five behavioural drivers help us understand almost 40% of the reason why employees feel burned out. This amount of explanatory variance is strong because behaviour is complex and not as easy to predict compared to more controlled research.

Top 5 behavioural drivers, 2022 PMES result

🕐	As perceptions of **time to do their job well** increases, the risk of burnout decreases.	I have the time to do my job well. **52%** favourable score
👥	As perceptions of **support to do their job well** increases, the risk of burnout decreases.	I get the support I need to do my job well. **63%** favourable score
🧘	As perceptions of **effective resources to support employee wellbeing** increases, burnout risk decreases.	There are effective resources in my organisation to support employee wellbeing. **64%** favourable score
💲	As perceptions of **fairness in pay** increases, the risk of burnout decreases.	I am paid fairly for the work I do. **48%** favourable score
☺	As perceptions of **satisfaction with the ability to access and use flexible working arrangements** increases, the risk of burnout decreases.	How satisfied are you with your ability to access and use flexible working arrangements? **60%** favourable score

Source: 2022 PMES

Key drivers

Time to do my job well

Employee perceptions of 'having the time do their jobs well' was the most important driver of burnout in the model. When analysed as the only factor to understand burnout, it helped explain 33% of why burnout happens.

When interpreting this finding, it is intuitive that if employees feel they do not have the time to do their job well, then they are more likely to be burned out. They may be overcompensating by doing hours outside of what is expected, feeling overwhelmed or resentful of their performance without the resources they need, and potentially not taking the leave they require to sustain their wellbeing. These findings are in line with research by Gallup, which identified longer hours and unmanageable workloads as key causes of burnout.[11]

Support to do my job well

This was the second most important driver. Having the support of resources or people around them (e.g. their manager, team) was found to impact burnout risk. When employees endorsed that they had the support they needed, they were less likely to be burnt out. Employees that perceive a lack of support may be feeling isolated, and this may result in doing a larger portion of the workload; they may not be able to collaborate, or they are needing the support of their manager, and this is not available to them.

Access to effective resources in the organisation to support employee wellbeing

The third most important behavioural driver of burnout was access to effective employee wellbeing resources. Given the highly related area of wellbeing, it is intuitive that employees who feel they have effective tools and resources in managing their wellbeing, have lower burnout. Employees who did not feel they had the information they needed reported higher rates of burnout.

Perceptions of fairness in remuneration

Perceptions of fairness in remuneration was the fourth most important key driver of burnout risk. With less than half of the sector endorsing this item, this signals an area of negative sentiment.

Satisfaction with access to, and use of, flexible working arrangements

Flexible work satisfaction was the fifth top driver of burnout risk. Employees who responded more favourably to flexible work satisfaction questions were less likely to be burnt out. Those employees who can access and are satisfied with flexible working arrangements may be able to manage their stress and wellbeing more effectively, and therefore are at lower risk of burnout.

[11] Gallup (2020). Employee burnout: The biggest myth. https://www.gallup.com/workplace/288539/employee-burnout-biggest-myth.aspx

The top three drivers of burnout were consistent across portfolios, job types, and demographic characteristics.

Additional analyses

Analyses were also conducted to understand whether there were differences in the key drivers of burnout when looking at the following groups of employees:

- Those who indicated they were burned out at work (high-risk) vs. those who indicated they were not burned out at work (low-risk)
- Frontline vs. non-frontline employees
- Different portfolios and specific agencies of interest
- Demographic characteristics

While differences in burnout rates were seen in the 2022 PMES results across demographic characteristics, the top three key drivers (time, support, and wellbeing resources) were consistent across organisations, work types (e.g. frontline/ non-frontline), and demographic groups.
This emphasises the significance of these drivers in predicting burnout and provides a starting point for organisations to address burnout effectively for all employees.

Summary of results

The research established three key drivers of burnout across the NSW public sector:

- Time to do their job well
- Support to do their job well
- Access to effective wellbeing resources

These findings provide key areas for the sector to effectively address burnout.

Taking action to reduce burnout risk

The following section integrates research and the insights from the 2022 PMES results analysis to provide actions that organisations, managers and employees can take to prevent and respond to burnout.

How managers can support employees to mitigate burnout risk

Based on the literature and data analysis presented in this report, there are recommended practices to support employees in reducing job burnout. Commonalities in these approaches show the following groups of actions:

Data and insights	• Encourage open and confidential communication with team members about burnout concerns • Use employee surveys (e.g. the PMES) to gauge wellbeing, job satisfaction and burnout levels. Use this data to assess the effectiveness of your strategies and make necessary adjustments. Monitor and evaluate the impact of your efforts through future surveys. • Identify and address organisational risk factors for burnout and implement strategies to mitigate these factors. • Listen and act on employee feedback. Feedback may come in formal or informal mediums; it will be important to address actionable aspects of this feedback and show your employees that you care by working to enhance their overall experience at work.
Workplace culture	• Create an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their concerns, challenges, and potential burnout symptoms. • Regularly share information with employees on the indicators and impacts of burnout. • Encourage day-to-day practices in the team such as breaks to go for a walk, regular lunch breaks and regular mental breaks. • Set expectations and respect boundaries that work should not be done in personal time, while acknowledging that there may be instances of urgency where work in personal time is necessary. • Encourage employees to take leave days instead of working when unwell. • Encourage employees to use leave to support mental health needs. • Consistently role model the above expectations and behaviours that you have set with your employees around managing their wellbeing and mitigating risk of burnout.

Preventing and responding to workplace burnout risk factors early can prevent burnout and significantly uplift employee engagement, wellbeing, and productivity.

Role clarity and support	• Clearly communicate role expectations and the broader purpose of their work. These factors (lack of role clarity, connection, and motivation with the purpose of their work) were identified as important contributing factors in the research.
	• Effectively manage workloads by:
	  ◦ Working with employees to set achievable goals and expectations.
	  ◦ Ensuring that workloads are manageable and aligned with individual skills and capabilities. Avoiding overloading employees with unrealistic demands.
	  ◦ Regularly checking in with team members to monitor workloads and their own appraisals of their wellbeing. Creating this as a recurring agenda item and prioritising listening to work-related problems will also create a more psychologically safe environment for employees.
	  ◦ Monitoring work distribution to prevent burnout caused by uneven workloads. Being prepared to redistribute tasks when necessary to ensure fairness and equity. Workload demands may fluctuate, so monitoring regularly is important.
	• Give employees a sense of control and autonomy over their work, where possible. Allow them to make decisions and have input on projects. Micromanaging can contribute to burnout, so trust employees to review and monitor work outcomes and timelines effectively.
	• Ensure employees have the necessary tools, resources, and support to perform their job effectively. Address any barriers they might be facing and provide support when needed as early as possible.
	• Focus on career development of employees. Facilitating development and long-term views of careers within the organisation was found to be important to buffer against burnout risk.

Capability uplift	• Provide learning and development opportunities for employees to develop the capabilities required to successfully perform their current role and build capabilities to progress to their next desired role. • Foster a growth mindset and encourage team members to take ownership of their professional development.
Performance and recognition	• Provide timely and constructive feedback to team members. • Recognise and celebrate team achievements and individual contributions. • Create opportunities for skill-building and professional development aligned with performance goals.
Work-life balance	• Encourage employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Respect boundaries and discourage excessive overtime. Lead by example in taking breaks and using leave days to demonstrate the importance of self-care. • Support and encourage employees to use annual leave regularly. • Offer flexible work arrangements where possible. Accommodate individual needs to reduce stress and promote work-life balance. Encourage access to flexible working practices to help employees manage the commitments they may have outside of work.
Wellbeing resources and support	• Promote mental health awareness and provide access to resources to manage employee wellbeing. • Encourage team members to prioritise self-care and wellbeing. • Normalise discussions around wellbeing in the workplace.

How organisations can support employees to mitigate burnout risk

Research recommends organisations take action in the following areas to help mitigate the risk of burnout in employees:

Data and insights	• Promote engagement in the annual PMES as the key measure of burnout across the organisation. This will help in understanding where burnout is occurring as evidence for prevention strategies and focusing on targeted interventions for teams/areas at higher risk • Analyse survey data to identify trends and implement strategies to address burnout. • Listen and act on employee feedback. Feedback may come in formal or informal mediums; it will be important to address actionable aspects of this feedback and show your employees that you care by working to enhance their overall experience at work • Establish a data-driven feedback loop for continuous improvement • Provide training for managers on recognising and addressing burnout among their team members.
Workplace culture	• Promote a culture that values employee wellbeing and recognises the importance of work-life balance. Emphasise that employees' health and wellbeing are essential to overall performance. • Provide collaborative spaces that will facilitate greater levels of team interactions and support to help mitigate burnout risk. • Promote and offer flexible working practices to employees. • Ensure organisations track and encourage usage of paid time off to support employees in managing work-life balance and the demands of their non-work roles and responsibilities. • Encourage open communication between employees and management. Enable managers to create a team culture where employees are comfortable to share their concerns, challenges, and potential burnout symptoms.

Organisation processes, work design, communication, flexibility, and people managers are key to creating and maintaining a culture of wellbeing and reducing burnout risks.

Role clarity and support	- Develop clear job descriptions and expectations for all roles. - Design roles to allow for autonomy and control where practically possible. Research found that these factors are important in mitigating burnout risk. - Invest in ongoing training and development programs. - Review and provide efficient systems and processes for employees to conduct their work. Making it easier for employees to be productive in their work has positive impacts on wellbeing and helps reduce burnout risk.
Capability uplift	- Invest in ongoing learning and development opportunities for all employees. - Hire, develop and promote effective people managers. The direct impact of effective managers is well established, with research in burnout supporting the importance of the day-to-day role that managers play. - Train managers to be empathetic, approachable, and supportive. Managers who prioritise their team's wellbeing create a positive work environment that reduces burnout risk.
Performance and recognition	- Implement recognition programs that acknowledge employees' efforts and achievements. Recognised employees are more likely to feel valued and motivated, reducing burnout risk. - Where possible, establish performance targets based on output, rather than time to do the work or where the work is conducted. - Establish a culture of regular feedback and performance improvement.
Work-life balance	- Encourage employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Encourage senior leaders to lead by example and share their self-care strategies such as taking breaks or using leave days to disconnect from work. - Encourage using the organisation's flexible working policy.
Wellbeing resources and support	- Offer access to employee assistance programs (EAPs) and resources such as stress management workshops, mindfulness training, and wellness programs. - Equip employees with techniques to cope with stress and maintain their wellbeing. Review these offerings with employees to gauge their effectiveness and offer segregated wellness resources to meet different employee needs.

Specific actions to address key drivers of burnout

The following section contains actions specific to NSW public sector employees and the three key drivers of burnout identified in the research.

Time to do their job well

At an organisational level:

- Review the PMES data to identify organisational units or key roles that have lower scores for this item (see the PSC resources section of this report).

- Review the design of roles at risk of burnout. Identify efficiencies and where possible redesign aspects of roles to reduce burnout risk by making workloads more manageable.

- Focus on developing employee workload management capabilities. Provide opportunities to access development programs and resources that enable employees to demonstrate behaviours aligned to the 'Results' pillar of the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework, specifically the 'Deliver results' and 'Plan and prioritise' capabilities. These capabilities impact the key driver 'time to do job well' and will be critical in mitigating burnout risk.

- Offer time management training to help employees prioritise tasks, manage their time, and work efficiently. Provide tools and techniques for effective time tracking and organisation.

- Equip people managers with the technology and/or process to forecast workload and resource allocation to support their employees with a manageable load within the time to perform their role.

- Provide opportunities to access development programs and resources that enable people managers to demonstrate the behaviours aligned to the capabilities 'Optimise business outcomes' and 'Project management'.

At a people manager level:

- Leverage available training, resources and tools that help build capability in relation to the 'Optimise business outcomes', 'Project management', and 'Manage reform and change' capabilities.

- Set clear outcomes and regularly assess workloads to ensure they are realistic and manageable. Avoid overloading employees with too many responsibilities or tight deadlines. This aligns to the 'Manage and develop people' capability.

- Use workload management tools and methodologies to allocate tasks effectively.

- Have regular conversations with employees to monitor workload levels and future resourcing requirements.

- Set realistic expectations by establishing clear expectations for task completion and quality.

- Maintain open communication channels to clarify task requirements and expectations.

At an employee level:

- Leverage available training, resources and tools that help build capability in relation to the 'Deliver results', 'Plan and prioritise', and 'Work collaboratively'.

- Be open to learning and trialling improved and efficient ways of working.

- Monitor workload consistently and escalate any risks as soon as possible.

Actively promoting sustainable work practices that support employee wellbeing reduces burnout by ensuring a healthy work-life balance.

Support to do their job well

At an organisational level:

- Review the PMES data to identify organisational units or key roles that have lower scores for this item (see the PSC resources section of this report).

- Focus on enabling managers with skills to effectively support their team to perform their jobs well. Review development programs and resources available that align to the 'People management' pillar of the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework. These capabilities impact the key driver 'support to do job well' and will be critical in mitigating burnout risk.

- Review existing data on this capability across people managers to understand whether this is an area of opportunity.

- Encourage team-based working models and enable employees to work collaboratively as a team.

At a people manager level:

- Leverage available training, resources, and tools that help build capability in relation to the 'People management' pillar of the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework.

- Identify targeted learning and development activities (formal and informal) that enable employees to develop the capabilities required to successfully perform their role.

- Empower employees to make decisions within their scope of responsibilities.

- Set and communicate clear role expectations of your team.

- Ensure that employees have access to the necessary tools, technology, and equipment to perform their jobs effectively. Address any resource gaps to prevent frustration and inefficiency.

- Ensure that employees have access to relevant information and resources needed to complete tasks. Maintain well organised knowledge repositories and communication platforms.

- Equip employees with problem solving resources such as templates, guidelines and best practice case studies.

- Pair experienced employees with less experienced ones to provide guidance and support.

- Offer coaching and mentoring programs to help employees navigate challenges.

- Create a team culture that encourages and rewards behaviours aligned to the 'Work collaboratively' capability.

- Encourage cross-functional teamwork to leverage diverse skills and perspectives.

- Create an environment where employees feel comfortable asking questions and seeking help when needed. Address concerns promptly to prevent feelings of frustration.

- Have regular conversations with employees to understand what support they need and adapt your support mechanism based on their input and changing circumstances.

- Have regular individual career planning discussions with employees and identify learning and development activities that enable them to build capabilities required for progression to chosen roles.

At an employee level:

- Seek clarity on role requirements, ensuring that you understand expectations and can escalate when support may be required.

- Take time to recognise the needs that you have in relation to the support available to you.

- Clearly communicate what support you require specifically from your manager, and your colleagues; and provide feedback when your support needs are not being met.

- Have regular performance and development discussions to identify opportunities to develop capabilities required to successfully perform current role and progress to chosen role.

Employee wellbeing resources

At an organisational level:

- Engage in consultation with each business unit to discuss what the wellbeing-related challenges and needs are within their teams, as well as how they best receive and engage with support resources. This will allow for different mediums, and a human-centered design approach to ensure engagement with a wide range of employee needs.

- Promote and regularly reinforce the key wellbeing messages within available resources with all employees.

- Focus on empowering managers to create and maintain a culture of wellbeing. Reinforce the need to set expectations around wellbeing, and for people managers to role model them as well.

- Review the NSW public sector 'Mentally Healthy Workplace Strategy' and any existing wellbeing resources to ensure that it includes recent research and practical tips to support employee wellbeing.

At a people manager level:

- Take time with your team to engage in regular discussion about wellbeing, reinforcing key messages from available wellbeing strategies and resources.

- As a team, schedule time to discuss and set boundaries and practices that will exist in the team to support everyone's wellbeing. As the people manager, leading by example will be critical to embed these practices as team culture.

At an employee level:

- Participate in maintaining healthy work practices.

- Schedule time to review resources and participate in wellbeing initiatives and feedback mechanisms.

Tailoring resources to meet the specific needs of employees provides the necessary support and tools to improve wellbeing and reduce burnout.

PSC resources to assist with addressing burnout

The PSC has developed a suite of resources to assist organisations with addressing burnout.

Action planning templates

The PSC has developed various templates to assist with action planning. These include templates for comparing scores across organisations, demographic groups, and burnout risk groups, and action planning to address the key drivers of burnout. The templates are available on the [PSC website](#).
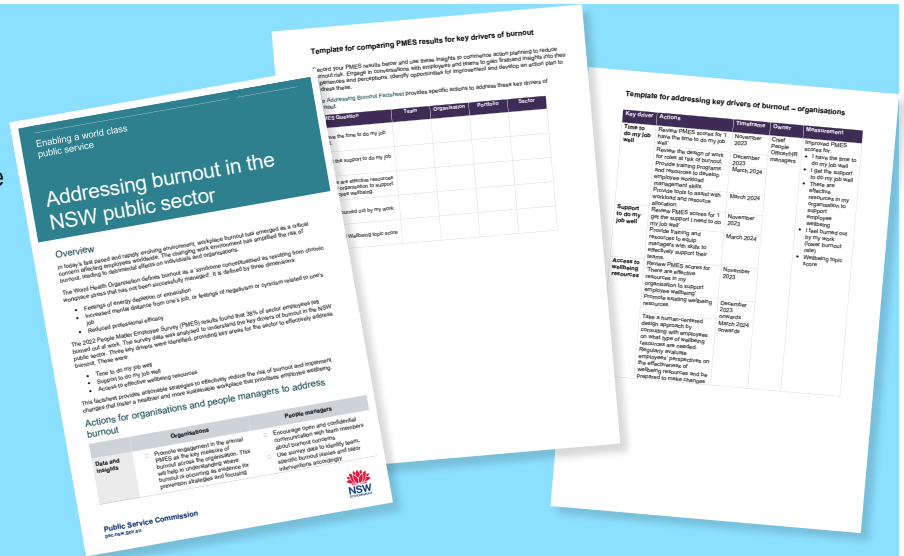
Workplace burnout organisational risk factors

Organisational risk factors for burnout are aspects within the work environment that contribute to an increased risk of burnout. Addressing these risk factors is crucial for creating a healthier and more sustainable workplace.

The key drivers identified in this report serve as a valuable starting point for prioritising the organisational risk factors for burnout. While the key drivers provide a strong foundation, it is essential to recognise that comprehensive prevention efforts should also address the broader spectrum of risk factors identified through research.

The PSC has developed a guide on using PMES questions to assess the risk factors for burnout and targeted strategies to mitigate them. The guide is available on the [PSC website](#).
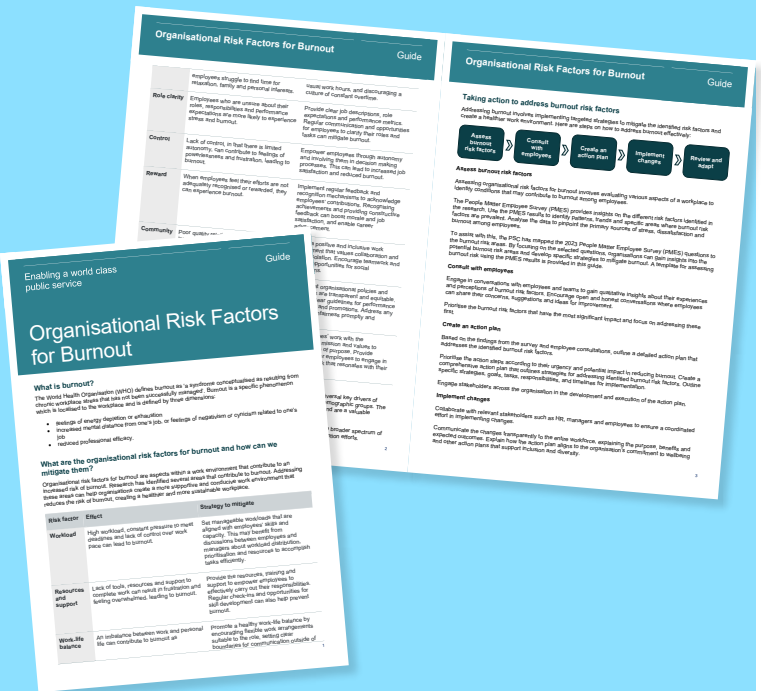
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A literature review was conducted in the development of this report. A list of references and further reading is provided on page 29.

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