

# Hidden Hazards

Integrating Psychosocial Risks Into Your  
Safety Framework



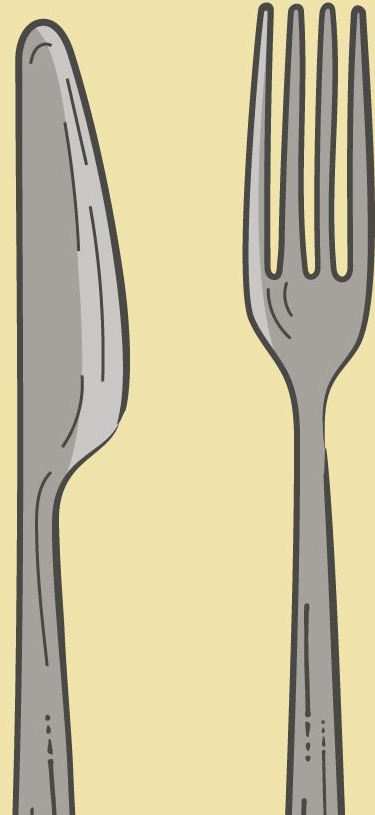
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# Agenda

1. Applicable **legislation** and relevant facts
2. **Breaking down** psychosocial hazards & risks
3. The systematic **4-step process** for managing psychosocial hazards at work
4. **Controlling** psychosocial risks
5. The common **pitfalls**
6. See it in **action**



POLL

**Who owns psychosocial  
risk management in your  
organisation?**



# What Does the **Law** Say?

## Primary duty of care

A PCBU must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the **health** and safety of their workers and others affected by their work.

The law defines **health** as physical and **mental health**.



# What Does the Law Say?



## Roles & responsibilities

### PCBU

Ensure the lowest level of psychosocial risk reasonably practicable via risk assessments, safe systems of work / controls, monitoring, learning and improving

### Officer

Take reasonable steps to understand psychosocial risks, ensure risk management is prioritised and resourced, verify that systems and controls are in place and working effectively

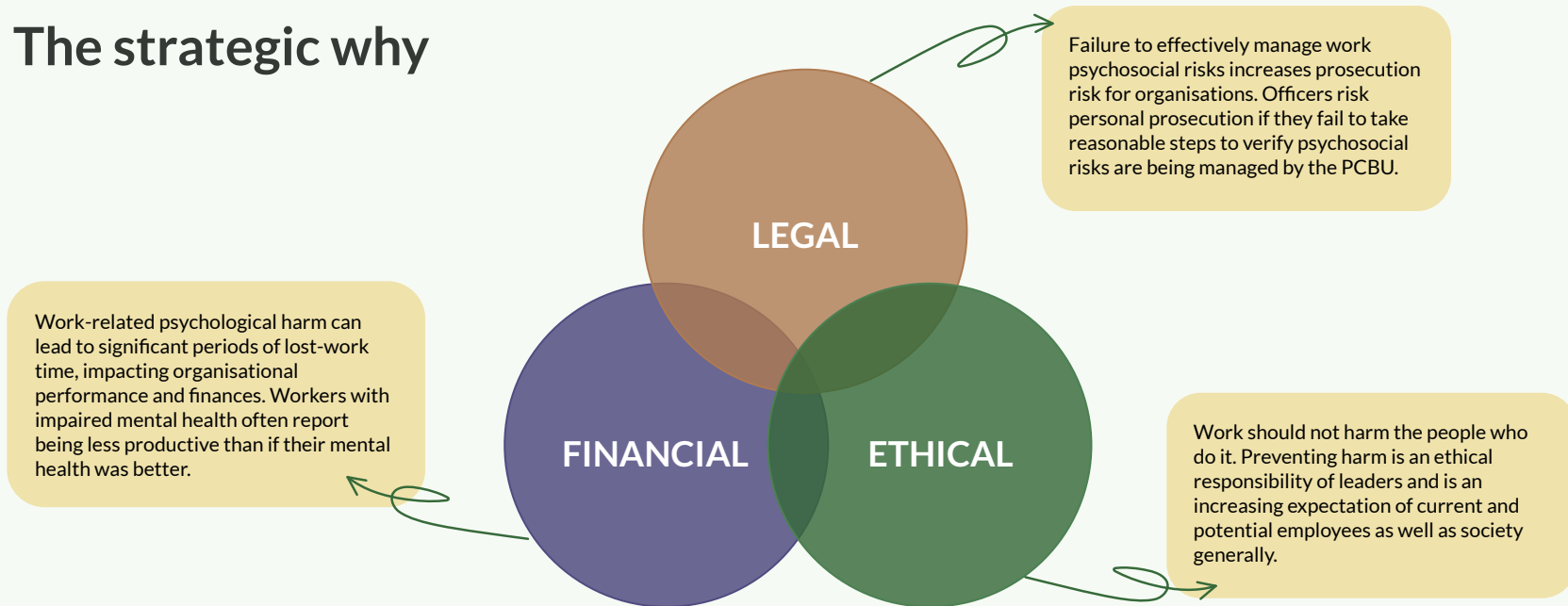
### Workers

Follow reasonable policies and procedures to keep themselves free from psychosocial harm and participate in workforce consultation



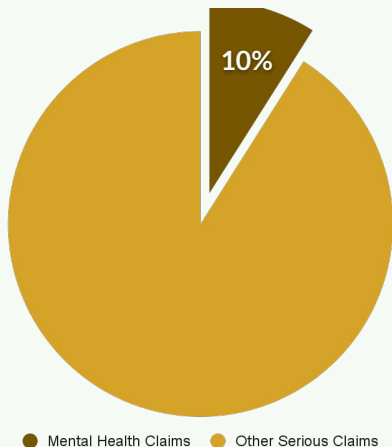
# Why should we care?

## The strategic why



## The data speaks Australia

**Mental health conditions accounted for 10.5% of all serious work claims (2023).**



This represented a **19% increase** in claims since 2021-22, and a **63% increase** since 2017-18.

**Mental health in the workplace -**

**AU  
37**

**weeks is the median time lost due to mental health-related claims, compared to just 7 weeks for other types of injuries**

**\$65K**

**is the median compensation for these claims**

**30%**

**is the increase on psychological claims over 4 years, compared to 11% for physical ones**

## Mental health in the workplace - NZ

33%

experienced work-related  
mental health issues

18%

took time off as a result of  
mental health issues at work

20%

experience work-related  
depression

60%

experience work-related  
stress

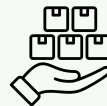
## Most common psychosocial risks across all workers



High work pace



High demands for hiding  
emotions



High quantitative  
demands



# Breaking Down Psychosocial Hazards & Risks

## PSYCHOSOCIAL

refers to how a person's **thoughts, emotions and behaviours** interact with their **social environment**

## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

are **aspects of work and situations** that may cause a **stress response**, which can lead to psychological or physical harm

## PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS

refers to the **likelihood** that a psychosocial hazard will cause harm, **and the degree of harm** that might result from the hazard



# Breaking Down Psychosocial Hazards

Common work factors that may cause a stress response

The way work is designed:



**Role overload or  
underload**



**Lack of role  
control**



**Low role clarity**



**Exposure to  
traumatic events**



# Breaking Down Psychosocial Hazards

Common work factors that may cause a stress response

## Work environment factors:



**Physically  
hazardous  
environments**



**Remote or  
isolated work**




**Poor organisational  
change consultation**



# Breaking Down Psychosocial Hazards

Common work factors that may cause a stress response

## Social factors at work:

 Workplace  
violence, bullying,  
harassment



Conflict or poor  
workplace  
relationships



Poor support  
from managers or  
co-workers



Inadequate  
reward and  
recognition



Poor  
organisational  
justice



# Breaking Down Psychosocial Risks

The likelihood that a psychosocial hazard will cause harm.

**Risk assessment: what can increase the likelihood or severity of harm:**

## Interaction of hazards

While some hazards like occupational violence can cause harm on their own, often it's the interaction of multiple psychosocial hazards that significantly increases the risk

## Frequency and duration of exposure & severity of potential harm

When assessing risk, consider how often and for how long someone is exposed to the hazard. The severity of potential harm must also be weighed

## Unique circumstances

Not all workers face the same risk. Individual differences can influence how people perceive and respond to the same hazard (*e.g. younger or older workers, diverse background workers*)

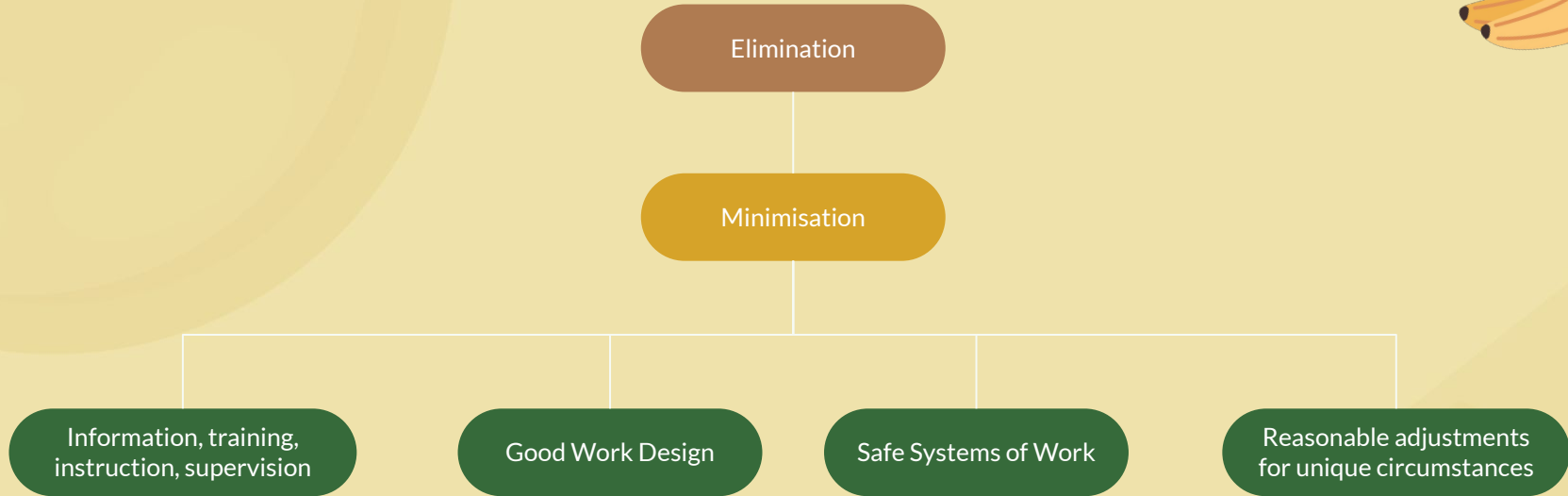


# Systematic **4-step process** for managing psychosocial hazards at work



# Controlling the risk

Hierarchy of controls



# Controls that have an impact

## Good Work Design

- Ensuring adequate staffing and resources
- Realistic task deadlines
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Increasing worker control over their job
- Providing opportunities for development and recognition

## Safe Systems of Work

Organisational rules, policies, procedures, and practices, like:

- Rostering
- Task rotation
- Working hours, shift patterns, and breaks
- Policies for managing hazardous tasks and workplace behaviour

## Information, training, instruction, supervision

Ensuring both workers and managers are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need, including:

- Any training on the nature of their work
- Associated hazards and risks
- Required control measures
- How to report problems

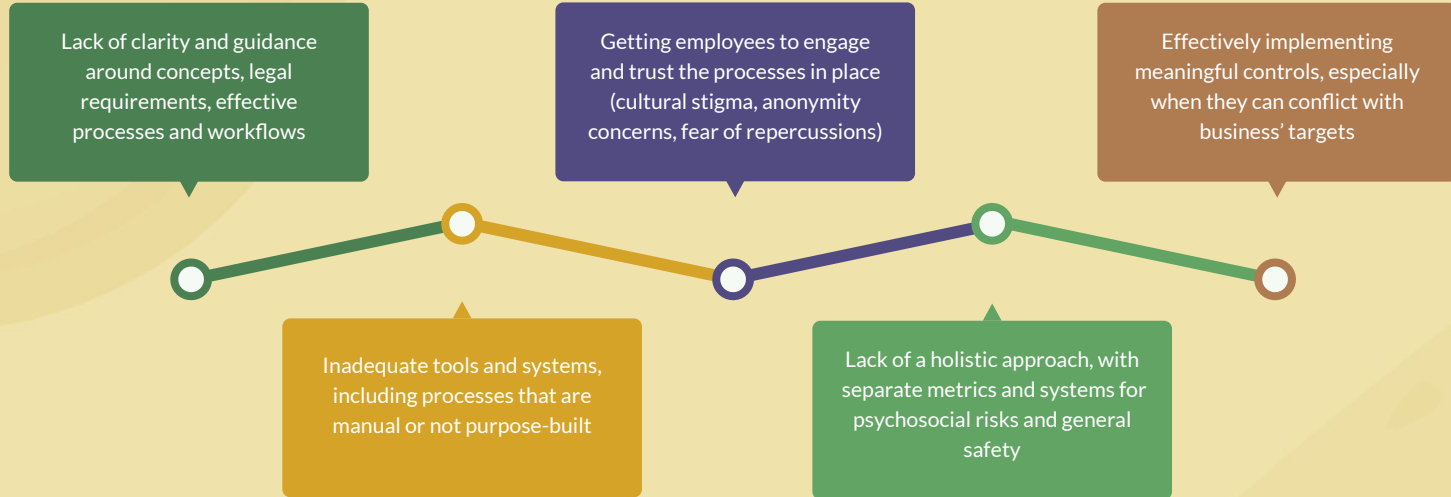
## Reasonable adjustments for unique circumstances

- Making modifications to duties for workers returning after an injury
- Improving supervision and support for new workers
- Ensuring workers are not exposed to more risk due to their health status, illness, or disability.

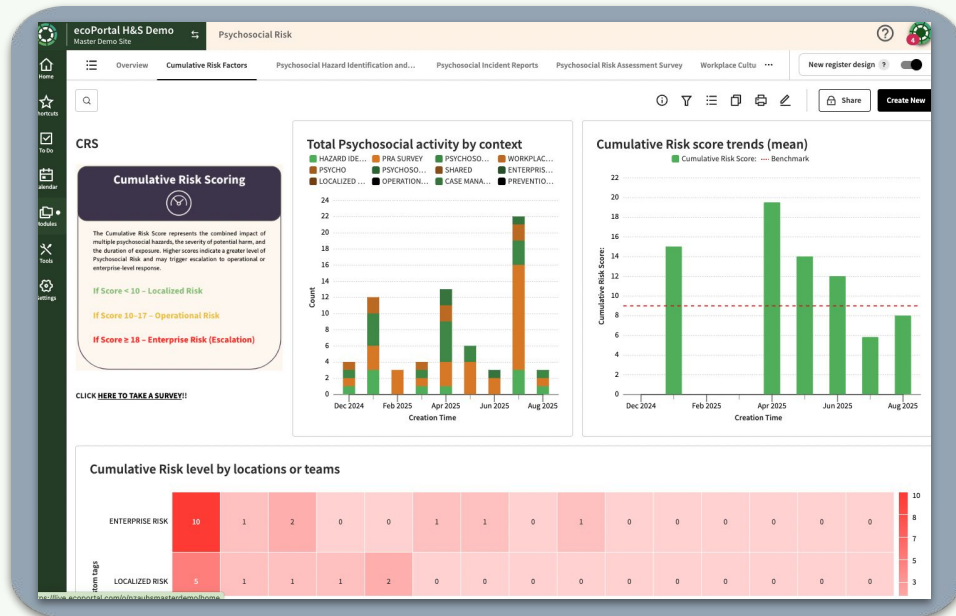




# The common pitfalls



# Managing Psychosocial Risks in ecoPortal



# Pros & Cons

## Integrated vs. Standalone

### INTEGRATED



- Embedded into daily H&S processes
- Easier adoption & reporting
- Broader visibility across risk types



- May not capture full psychosocial nuance
- Limits depth of worker sentiment and perception data

### STANDALONE



- Richer data and insights
- Dedicated to psychosocial health
- Ideal for deep thematic analysis and targeted interventions



- Requires commitment to new workflows and alignment with existing processes

# Book a Follow Up Session

A 30-minute session with you and your team to assess how to integrate psychosocial risk management into your existing systems.





**Got any feedback?**  
We'd love to hear



# Questions?

Enter them into the Q&A tab



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# Annex: Useful Reference Documents

WorkSafe  
Guidelines for  
Managing  
Psychosocial Risks  
at Work (NZ)



SafeWork Code of  
Practice for  
Managing  
Psychosocial Risks  
at Work (AU NSW)

