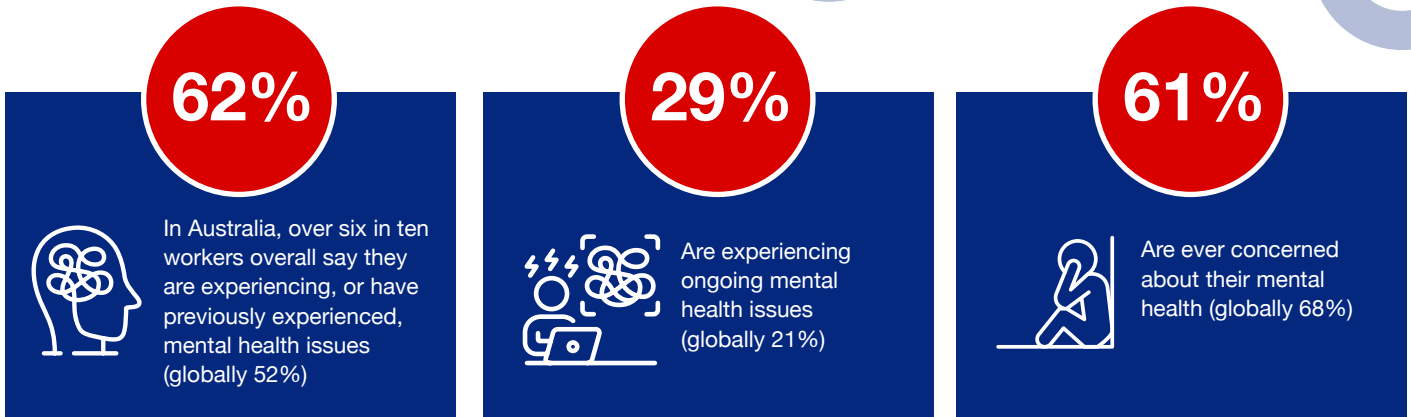




## SECTION 1.

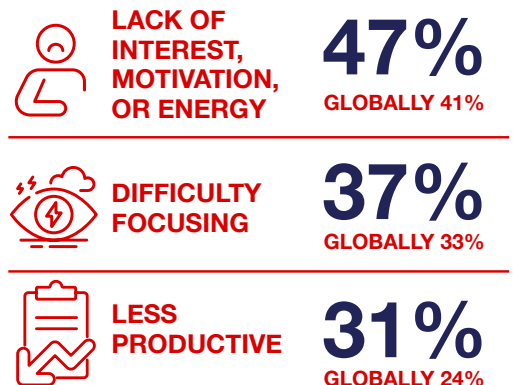
### THE STATE OF WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH



#### ISSUES EXPERIENCED IN THE PRIOR MONTH:

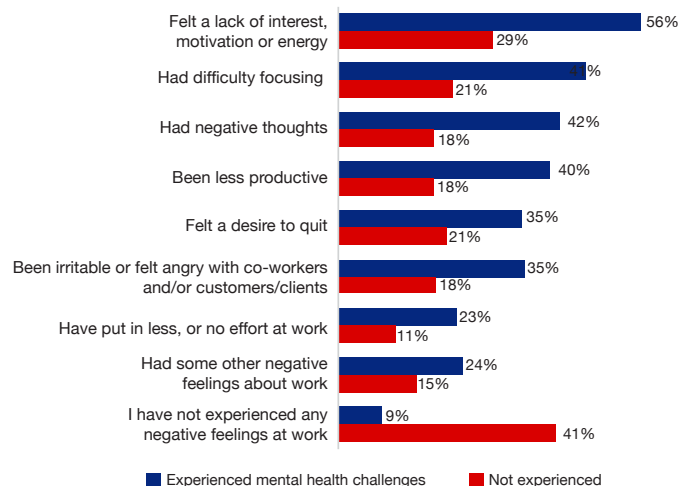


#### FEELINGS AT WORK IN THE PRIOR MONTH:



At 62%, Australian workers' experience of mental health issues is higher than found globally (52%), but the proportion who report concerns about their mental health is lower (61% compared with 68% globally). When asked whether they had felt negative emotions at work over the previous month, 91% of workers who have experienced mental health issues in Australia said they had felt one or more (compared to 59% of employees who have not experienced mental health issues). A lack of interest, motivation or energy – symptoms often associated with burnout – was the most commonly experienced by those affected by mental health challenges (56% vs 29% amongst those not affected). Difficulty focusing came second (46% vs 21%). Worryingly, 40% (vs 18%) considered their productivity was reduced, and more than three in ten felt angry or irritable towards co-workers or clients, or felt a desire to quit their job over the previous month (both 35% vs 21% and 18% respectively) – showing the extent to which mental health can influence behaviours and mindsets in the workplace.

#### Feelings at work



The proportion of employees affected by work-related stress reaches 56% among Gen Zs and 53% among millennials.

While the reasons behind a person's mental health issues are often complex, the data shows that work-related causes could play a significant role. Fifty percent of workers in Australia mention they have experienced stress at work in the month before the survey – making it the highest-ranking issue of the seven issues measured behind concerns about money. The proportion of employees affected by work-related stress reaches 56% amongst Gen Zs and 53% among millennials.

Australian Gen Zs are also more likely to have negative thoughts (39% in comparison to 34% Australian overall average and 38% of Gen Zs globally), and consider they have been less productive (44% against 31% globally).

In considering the impact of various work-related aspects on mental health and in line with global numbers, slightly more people in Australia believe their workload supports their mental health (31%) than undermines it (28%). The most supportive aspects for workers in Australia are the culture at work (40%), the management style of their manager (40%), and the working hours (38%), each of which are slightly above global averages.

## SECTION 2.

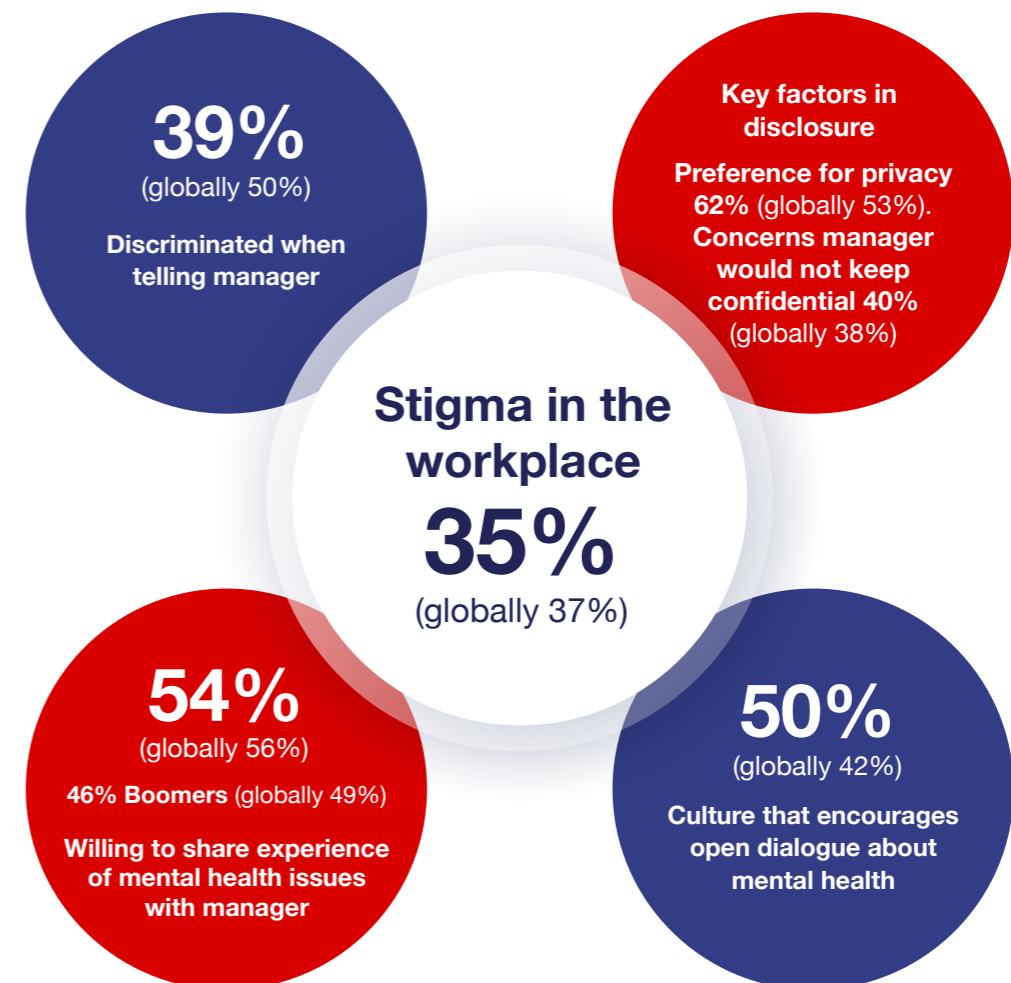
### STIGMA AND THE BARRIERS TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AT WORK

Stigma is still holding people back from sharing mental health issues at work: only half of respondents (50%, slightly higher than the global average of 45%) feel that people would not be adversely impacted if they shared their thoughts and emotions in their place of work.

Thirty-five percent of Australian respondents overall feel there is stigma in their workplace around mental health (37% globally). In those workplaces, 49% of those affected by mental health challenges say they have felt stigma personally as a result of those issues (with the global proportion being 57%.)

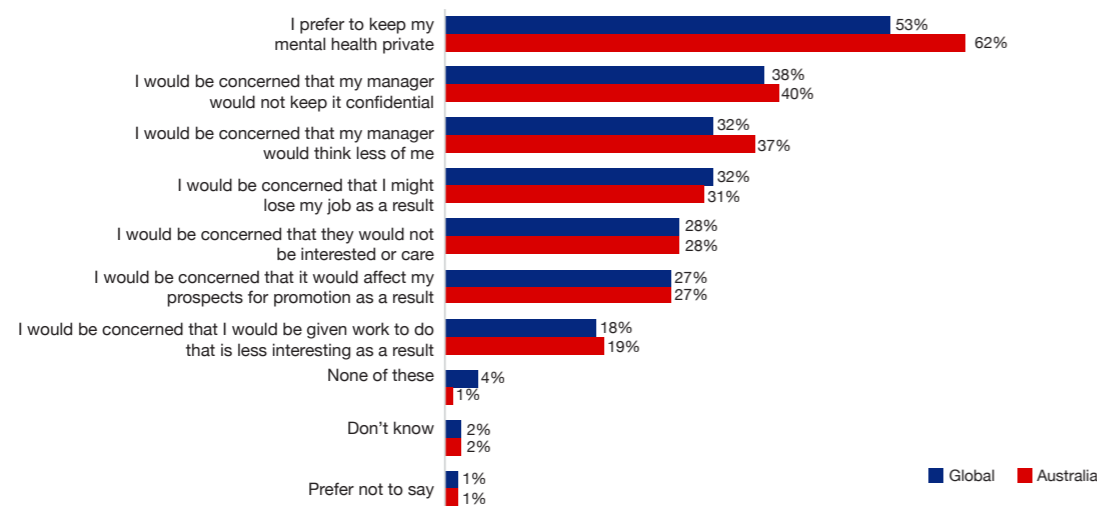
Among those affected by poor mental health in Australia, 46% have told their managers about their issues, lower than the global figure of 53%, and 39% of those have been discriminated against as a result, lower than the global figure of 50%. This proportion is higher in under-represented groups (52% neurodivergent and 49% with a disability.)

Fifty-four percent of workers in Australia are willing to share mental health issues with their managers (in line with the global average of 56%) and 54% would be comfortable disclosing them as the reason for taking time off (61% globally).



In terms of reasons for not disclosing mental health issues as the cause of people's absence, preference for privacy (62%) comes first. But other reasons point to stigma: four in ten feel that their manager would not keep their mental health challenges confidential (40%), or would think less of them (37%), while three in ten (31%) would fear losing their job as a result. Privacy is a greater concern for men than women (64% against 60%), and Boomers (71%) than Gen Zs (52%).

### Reasons for not disclosing mental health as the reason for taking time off



In general, policies and cultural aspects that support mental health are more common in Australian organisations than globally: half (50%) say they have resources to help promote positive mental health (vs 44% globally), as well as policies and procedures to help prevent psychological harm at work (50% v 45%). Designated meeting-free days (30% vs 40%) are less commonly available in Australia than seen globally.

### Workplace culture and policies that are in place



## SECTION 3.

### SETTING THE TONE: THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF LEADERSHIP ON MENTAL HEALTH

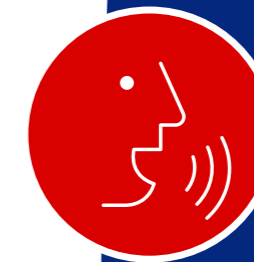
Seventy-five percent of workers in Australia feel that it's extremely or very important for employers to look after the mental health of their workforce, compared to 73% globally. But only 54% believe that supporting employee mental health is a top or high priority for their leaders (globally, 56%), and 52% consider they have senior leaders who understand the importance of prioritising mental health. When asked whether the head of their organisation talks about mental health four in ten workers (38%) answer positively, in line with the global average (40%).

Within organisations where leaders do not vocally address mental health, 55% of respondents think they should, slightly behind the global average (59%).

Yet the research shows a clear improvement in perceptions and attitudes to work when heads of organisations choose to speak about mental health: in organisations where they do speak, 85% of workers feel their organisation cares about their mental wellbeing, whereas only 38% do when their leaders do not address it.

A clear narrative from senior leaders on mental health also correlates with more people opening up about their own issues: where heads of organisations speak about mental health, 69% of people are willing to disclose their issues to their managers, compared to 39% where they don't.

Crucially, whether senior leaders speak about mental health or not seems to impact workers feelings about their place of work: those in organisations where senior leaders do not speak up are more likely to feel a desire to quit (37% vs 22%).



**38%**

Heads of organisations speak out (globally 40%)



**55%**

Would like their head of organisation to speak out, where they do not already (globally 59%)



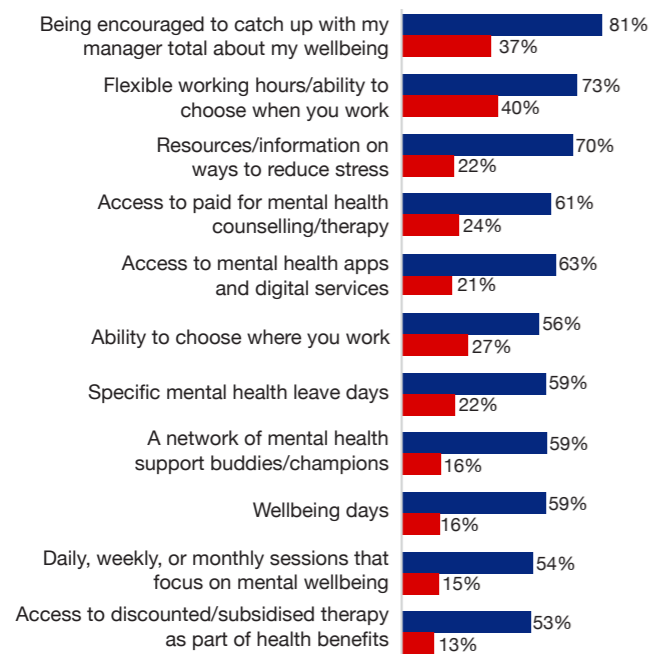
### WHERE THE LEADER SPEAKS OUT:

- The view of whether their "Employer cares about mental health" increases from **38% to 85%**
- Workers' desire to quit reduces from **37% to 25%**

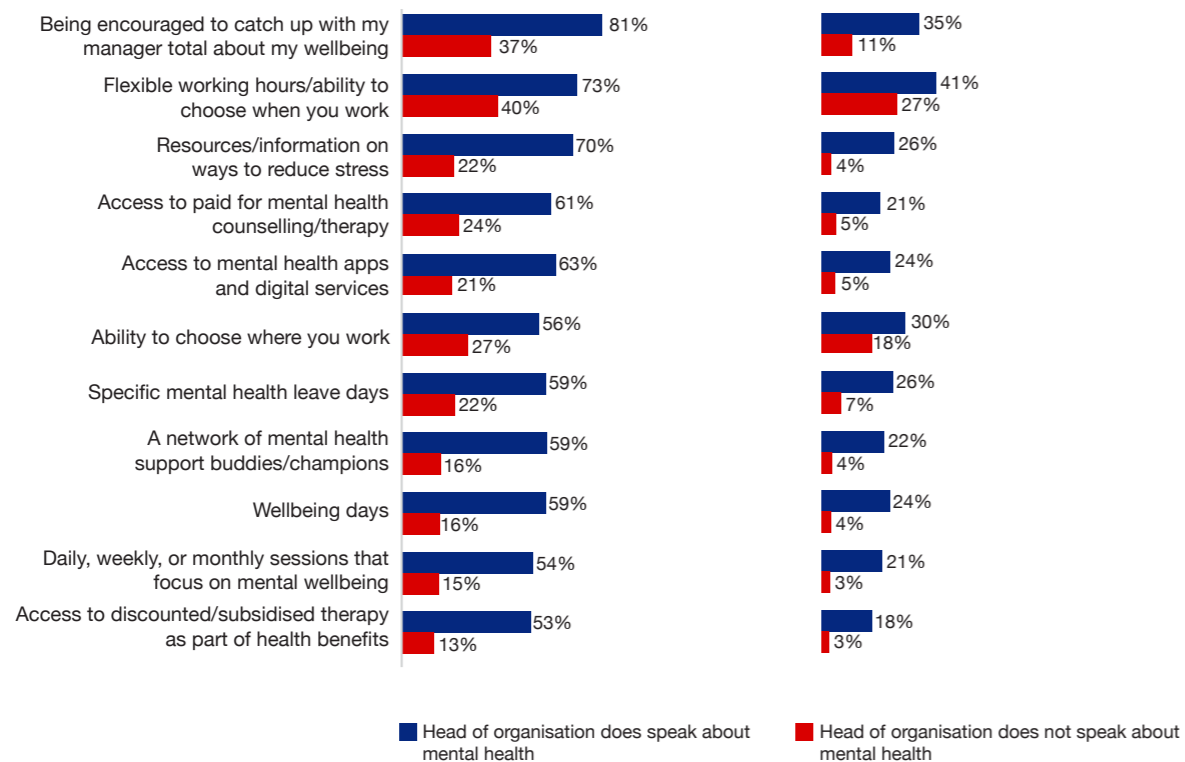


In organisations where the head of organisation speaks out, workers are more likely to report that support is available, and there is a greater tendency for that support to be used. For example, provision of resources on ways to reduce stress rises from 22% to 70%, and the use of wellbeing days increases from 4% to 24%.

### Types of support available



### Types of support used

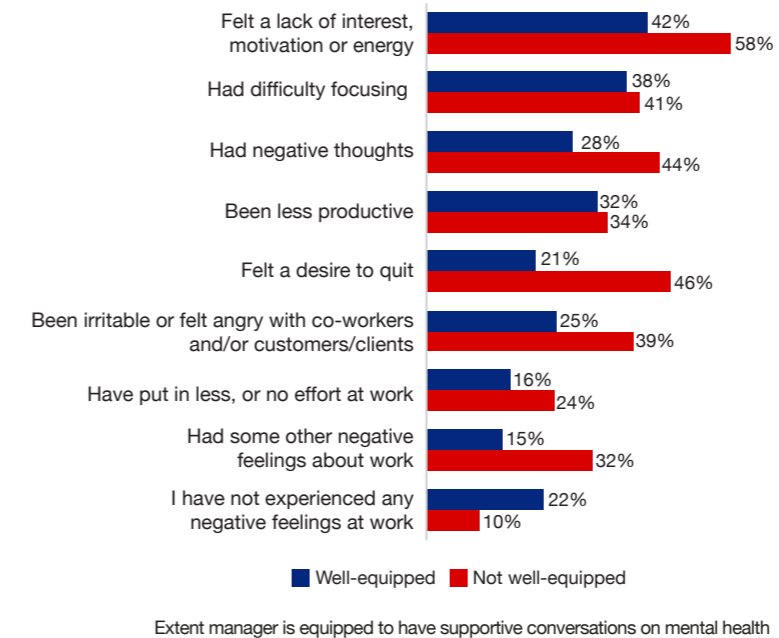


## SECTION 4. TRUST AND PROXIMITY: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS

Besides the instrumental role that senior leaders can play in speaking about mental health, the personal behaviours and attitudes of those with line management responsibilities are likely to be a key factor in supporting people's wellbeing. Employees in Australia who consider their direct manager well-equipped to hold conversations about mental health report even fewer negative feelings at work – including desire to quit – than when they have a senior leader who speaks about mental health.

Conversely, Australian workers who feel their manager is not equipped to have supportive mental health conversations report markedly worse experiences. Nearly six in ten (58%) felt low levels of motivation in the month preceding the survey (vs 42% in those whose manager is well-equipped), 44% had negative thoughts (vs 28%) and 46% report having felt a desire to quit (vs 21%).

### Feelings at work

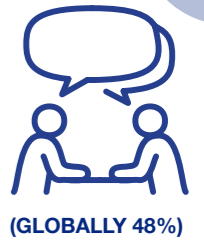


Managers who haven't had training report lower levels of confidence in their ability to support people in their teams (63% vs 78% of those who have been trained). Similarly, only 55% believe their manager is equipped to hold conversations that would help someone with mental health issues (vs 48% globally), although 66% of workers overall feel their manager would be supportive if they shared their mental health challenges with them (above the global figure of 62%).

Despite this, many employers are under-investing in their managers' skills on mental health, with the Australian figure of 37% having had training below the global average of 41%. Even amongst managers who have had training, 49% say this training was a 'one off' (globally 42%).

**55%**

OF MANAGERS ARE EQUIPPED FOR SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATIONS



**37%**

OF MANAGERS HAVE HAD TRAINING ON MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS



### WHERE THE MANAGER IS WELL-EQUIPPED TO HAVE THOSE CONVERSATIONS:

FEELINGS OF LACK OF INTEREST, MOTIVATION OR ENERGY REDUCED FROM **58% TO 42%**

DESIRE TO QUIT REDUCED FROM **46% TO 21%**

## SECTION 5.

### WORKPLACE SUPPORT: EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY

**75%**

employees consider it important that workplace mental health is prioritised (globally 73%)



**54%**

perceive mental health to be a priority for their employer (globally 56%)



**62%**

say their employer provides mental health support (globally 53%)



**14%**

use wellbeing days where available (globally 21%)



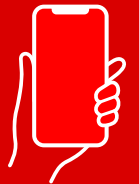
**42%**

have access to paid-for mental health counselling/therapy (globally 39%)



**42%**

have not used mental health apps and digital services but are willing to do so (globally 45%)



Whether mental health issues stem from work-related causes or not, it is clear that workers look to their employers to provide support. When asked about what can make the most positive impact on them personally at work, 48% of people mention employers looking after their mental health – ranking it behind a safe working environment (53%) and just above ensuring that employees can manage work and home lives effectively (40%), which themselves are both conducive to mental wellbeing.

Encouragingly, in Australia, a higher proportion of workers feel that their employer provides that support: 62% versus 53%. Yet, most types of support are available for fewer than half of workers in Australia, and the support is generally used by fewer than half of those for whom they are available.

#### Types of support available

#### Types of support used

#### Not used but willing to

