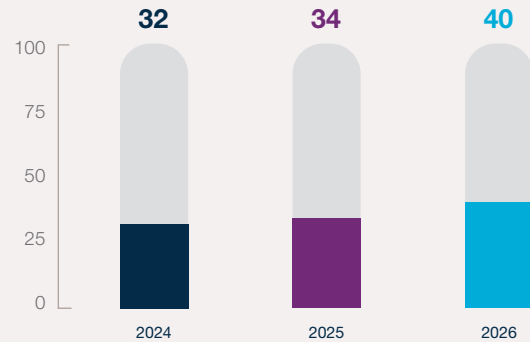


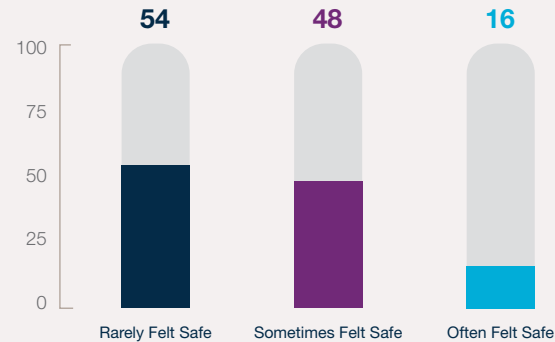
THE COMPOUNDING BURNOUT RISK

% CLINICAL BURNOUT



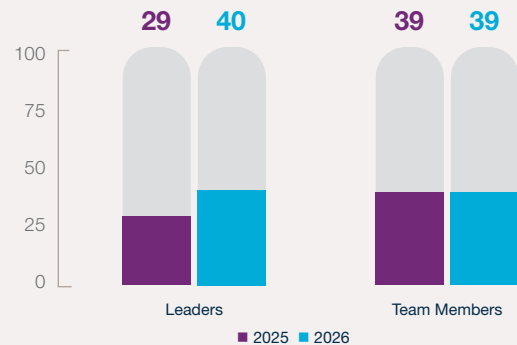
2 in 5 Australian workers now meet the criteria for burnout, up six points in 2026 after two flat years.

% BURNOUT BY PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



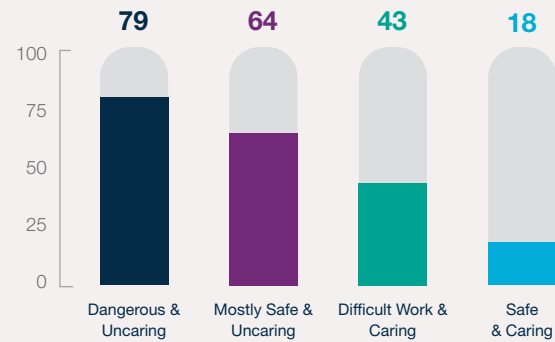
Workers who rarely feel safe speaking up are three and a half times more likely to be burning out.

% BURNOUT BY ROLE



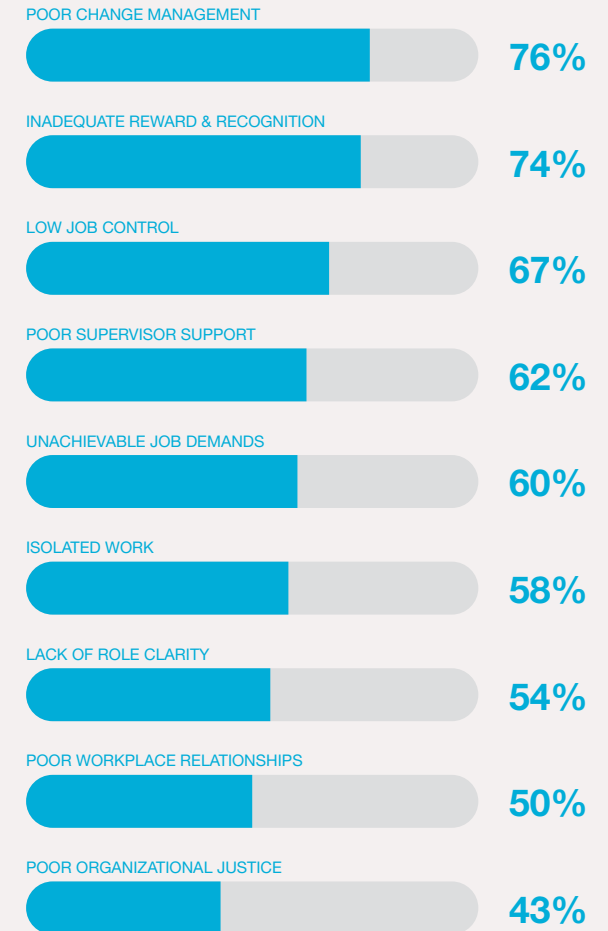
Leaders and team members now burn out at nearly the same rate: leaders were 10 points lower just a year ago.

% BURNOUT BY CARE CULTURE



Uncaring but mostly safe workplaces sit at 64% burnout, more than three times the rate of workplaces that are both caring and safe (18%)

% PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS



Poor change management is affecting 3 in 4 workers experiencing burnout, just as it did in last year's data.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

- **BURNOUT IS RISING AGAIN:** Clinical burnout held at 32% (2023) and 34% (2025), then rose to 39% (2026). Three years into legislation requiring workplaces to assess, control, and monitor psychosocial hazards, a two-year plateau has turned into a climb.
- **THE LEADERSHIP GAP HAS CLOSED:** In July 2025, leaders' burnout rate (29%) sat 10 points below team members (39%). By July 2026, leaders reached 40%, 1 point above team members (39%). The people delivering psychosocial controls now carry the same risk as those they protect.
- **SAFETY TO SPEAK UP TRACKS LOWER BURNOUT:** Where workers often felt safe to bring up problems and be honest about mistakes, 16% met clinical burnout criteria. Where they rarely felt safe, 55% did, three and a half times the rate.
- **CARE SUPERCHARGES SAFETY:** Workplaces described as caring and safe carry 16% burnout, and even caring workplaces with difficult work sit at 43%. Safety alone does less: uncaring but mostly safe workplaces reach 64%, a pattern first reported in 2023.
- **PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS ARE COMPLEX AND DYNAMIC:** Workers who are burning out rarely face just one hazard. Poor change management (74%), inadequate reward & recognition (75%), and low job control (67%) all affect more than half of this group at once.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Only 26% of teams often tell the truth about how a change really feels, even though 43% often talk about the change itself. That gap shows up hard in burnout: teams that talk honestly often sit at 11% burning out. Teams that only sometimes do: 49%. Teams that rarely do: 50%. The protection only shows up when honest conversation is a habit, not an occasional event.

Four questions, asked regularly, are enough to help build that habit.



How is your workplace making it easier for teams to be open and honest with each other?

ABOUT THIS STUDY

The Change Lab Workplace Survey was first conducted in December 2019 with 1,007 randomly selected Australian workers, based on research items developed by Dr. Peggy Kern (University of Melbourne) to understand the impact of navigating change on people’s wellbeing.

In 2020 and 2021, as the global pandemic raged, we expanded the survey questions with the assistance of Dr. Mandy O’Neill (George Mason University) and Dr. Lindsey Godwin (Champlain College) to understand the impact of leadership behaviors and systemic changes. Data from more than 3,750 workers in Australia and the United States was gathered to understand how leaders and teams might thrive, amid unprecedented workplace disruption and uncertainty.

In 2022 and 2023, we expanded the questions to include the frequency and impact of psychosocial hazards, responding to emerging workplace mental health legislation. In July 2025, we added questions to explore how workers were navigating the supercycle of change, gathering data from 1,004 randomly selected, full-time Australian workers.

Now in July 2026, we returned with new questions to explore how AI is reshaping the way people work, lead and change. We worked with an independent research agency to gather data from 811 randomly selected, full-time, Australian workers who included:

GENDER		WORKPLACE	
Male	414	Sole Operator	56
Female	397	Not For Profit	60
AGE		Government Funded	121
18-24	57	Privately Funded	361
25-34	176	Publicly Listed	112
35-44	204	Other	101
45-54	188	RESPONSIBILITIES	
55-64	138	Team Member	431
65+	48	Leader	303
ETHNICITY		CEO/Owner	77
White/Caucasian	594	Industries were representative of Australian workplaces including Agriculture, Banking & Finance, Community & Social Services, Construction, Education, Government & Public Administration, Healthcare & Medical, Technology & Telecommunications, Manufacturing, Mining, Retail, Science, Tourism, and Transportation & Warehousing.	
Asian	145		
Indigenous	11		
Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial	9		
People of Color	41		
Prefer not to answer	11		

WANT MORE?



FREE – HEART OF CHANGE SURVEY TOOL

You've just read about the four stages of change fatigue. This free five-minute survey shows you which one your team is closer to right now. It's scored across the five HEART factors, and hands you a personalized report with small, practical next steps.

[Click here to take the survey.](#)



THE NERVOUS SYSTEM ADVANTAGE TOOLBOX

Why do people say "I'm fine" when they're anything but? This toolbox decodes what's happening in the body before words catch up, then hands your people 10 body-based tools to use in meetings, hard conversations, on the witness stand. Five brain-based tools help when trust is hardest to find. [Click here to get the toolbox.](#)



THE HEART OF CHANGE TOOLBOX

Change brings fear, uncertainty, and doubt with it. This toolbox puts 75 evidence-based tools in your people's hands, at the Me, We, and Us levels, so they can stay curious instead of resistant when the changes keep stacking up. [Click here to get your tools.](#)



LEADING HEART OF CHANGE MASTERCLASS

Ready to help others navigate change with HEART, at your own pace? This self-paced masterclass walks you through the assessment tools, conversation templates, and evidence-based practices behind this report, at the Me, We, and Us levels, so you can put them to work with your team or clients. [Click here to learn more.](#)