

# WHAT IS YOUR WORKPLACE TELLING EMPLOYEES?

## A WORKPLACE OBSERVATION FACT SHEET

### Look beyond what's written down

Most workplaces have policies, procedures and values that describe how people should work together. However, workplace culture is often shaped by something less obvious - what employees see, hear and experience every day.

The conversations people have, the way managers respond to challenges, how workloads are managed and whether

employees feel comfortable speaking up all influence how a workplace is experienced.

Taking a step back and observing these everyday interactions can provide valuable insights into workplace culture and help identify psychosocial risks that may otherwise go unnoticed.

### 1 Observe what happens

For the next 48 hours, imagine you're seeing your workplace for the first time. Pay attention to:

- Who speaks up in meetings
- How mistakes are handled
- Whether employees ask questions freely
- How managers communicate with their teams
- Whether employees take breaks
- How people respond when concerns are raised

### 2 Look for patterns

One-off events don't tell the whole story. Instead, look for recurring behaviours and workplace habits:

- Are workloads generally manageable?
- Do employees support each other?
- Are expectations clear?
- Is respectful communication the norm?
- Are people encouraged to share ideas and concerns?

### 3 Consider the messages being received

Even when nothing is said directly, workplace behaviours send messages. Ask yourself:

- What behaviours appear to be rewarded?
- What behaviours are discouraged?
- Do employees feel safe speaking up?
- Is wellbeing genuinely supported?
- What would a new employee quickly learn about "how things are done around here"?

### 4 Reflect and take action

Small observations can reveal opportunities for meaningful improvement. By identifying issues early, organisations can:

- Strengthen workplace culture
- Improve psychological safety
- Reduce psychosocial risks
- Support employee wellbeing
- Meet WHS obligations

Sometimes the best way to understand your workplace culture is to stop looking at what's written in your policies and start looking at what employees experience each day.