



ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE





Balance in the Workplace is designed to equip organisations in the health and community services sectors with practical tools and resources to mitigate **psychosocial hazards** and create safer, healthier work environments. These freely available documents, which can be used in digital formats or printed as needed, aim to address challenges such as **workload management**, **work-life balance**, and mental health monitoring.

The mission of this initiative is to foster workplaces where health and wellbeing workers feel **safe** and **supported**, enabling them to provide effective care to those who depend on their services. By adopting these resources, organisations can actively promote a culture of care, **resilience**, and **sustainability** within their teams.

Queensland
Workforce Strategy
2022–2032



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Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032.

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Overview

Organisational change is essential for growth but can lead to stress, low morale, resistance, and decreased productivity if not managed well. This document provides practical strategies and tools to help organisations navigate change effectively while minimising psychosocial risks.

Legal Responsibilities

Under the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011 and the Psychosocial Hazards Code of Practice 2022, employers must identify and manage risks related to workplace change. Poor change management is recognised as a key psychosocial hazard, requiring consultation, communication, and support to reduce uncertainty and maintain well-being.

Key Strategies & Tools

This guide offers:

Best-practice strategies for managing stress, resistance, and engagement.

Training and leadership support to promote psychological safety.

Practical templates including a Change Communication Plan, Employee Feedback Form, and Well-being Check-In.

Monitoring and evaluation methods to assess impact and ensure continuous improvement.

Why It Matters

Effective change management fosters a healthy, engaged workforce, enhances productivity, and ensures compliance with WHS laws. By prioritising clear communication, employee involvement, and well-being, organisations can reduce resistance, build trust, and support long-term success.

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Understanding the Risks of Organisational Change

Organisational change encompasses restructuring, mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, policy shifts, or technological transformations. These changes can be disruptive, and if poorly managed, they pose significant risks to both the organisation and its employees. Below are key risks associated with organisational change and their potential consequences:

Increased Stress and Anxiety:

- Uncertainty about roles, job security, and future expectations can elevate stress levels among employees, leading to decreased morale and higher absenteeism rates.
- Stress often manifests as physical symptoms, including fatigue, headaches, and difficulty concentrating, impacting overall productivity.

Low Morale and Engagement:

- Employees may feel undervalued or disconnected if they are excluded from decision-making processes or not adequately informed about changes.
- A lack of engagement can lead to decreased commitment to organisational goals and reduced innovation.

Resistance to Change:

- Employees may resist change due to fear of job insecurity, additional workload, or loss of familiar work practices.
- Resistance often stems from poor communication, insufficient training, or a lack of clarity around the benefits of change.

Decreased Productivity:

- Distracted or disengaged employees are less likely to perform at optimal levels, which can result in missed deadlines, errors, and reduced quality of work.
- Teams may experience operational inefficiencies as they adjust to new systems, processes, or structures.



High Turnover and Absenteeism:

- Prolonged stress or dissatisfaction during periods of change can lead to employees leaving the organisation, resulting in the loss of valuable skills and institutional knowledge.
- Increased absenteeism due to stress or burnout further disrupts team dynamics and continuity of work.

Erosion of Trust:

- If employees perceive a lack of transparency or fairness during the change process, it can damage trust in leadership and hinder future change initiatives.

Impact on Leadership:

- Poorly managed change can also affect managers and leaders, increasing their stress levels and reducing their capacity to support their teams effectively.

The Importance of Addressing These Risks

Addressing these risks is not only critical to employee well-being but also to organisational success. Ignoring psychosocial hazards during change can lead to:

- Increased costs associated with turnover, absenteeism, and recruitment.
- Reduced organisational resilience and adaptability to future changes.
- Damaged employer reputation, making it harder to attract and retain talent.

By proactively managing these risks, organisations can build trust, maintain employee engagement, and ensure a smoother transition to new processes or structures. The following sections provide detailed strategies and tools to mitigate these risks effectively. Organisational change encompasses restructuring, mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, policy shifts, or technological transformations. Poorly managed change can lead to:

Increased Stress and Anxiety: Uncertainty about roles, security, or expectations can elevate stress levels.

Low Morale and Engagement: Employees may feel under valued or disconnected if they are not adequately involved in or informed about the change process.

Resistance to Change: Fear of job insecurity, role ambiguity, or inadequate resources may lead to resistance.

Decreased Productivity: Distracted or disengaged employees are less likely to perform at optimal levels.

High Turnover and Absenteeism: Stress and dissatisfaction during periods of change can lead to increased absenteeism or loss of skilled workers.



Key Strategies for Organisational Change

Successful organisational change requires clear communication, employee involvement, and structured support to minimise resistance and maintain workplace well-being. This section outlines key strategies, including transparent communication to reduce uncertainty, employee consultation to foster engagement, role clarity to ease transitions, and specialised training programs for both staff and leadership. By prioritising psychological safety and well-being, organisations can navigate change smoothly while maintaining productivity and trust.

1. Transparent Communication

Purpose: Reduce uncertainty and build trust by keeping employees informed.

Detailed Best Practices:

- Develop a comprehensive communication plan that outlines what information will be shared, when, and through which channels.
- Use a variety of communication formats such as emails, town hall meetings, FAQs, and one-on-one sessions to ensure everyone is reached.
- Be honest about challenges and limitations while also highlighting opportunities and benefits of the change.
- Provide regular updates to prevent the spread of misinformation and rumours.

2. Employee Consultation and Involvement

Purpose: Foster collaboration, trust, and buy-in from employees.

Detailed Best Practices:

- Conduct surveys or focus groups to gather employee opinions and address concerns before implementing changes.
- Create working groups or committees that include employee representatives to ensure diverse perspectives are considered.
- Actively listen to feedback and make visible efforts to incorporate suggestions where possible, demonstrating that employee input is valued.



3. Role Clarity During Change

Purpose: Prevent confusion, uncertainty, and inefficiency by clearly defining expectations.

Detailed Best Practices:

- Provide updated organisational charts and job descriptions reflecting any changes in roles, reporting structures, or responsibilities.
- Host individual or team meetings to clarify how changes will impact day-to-day tasks and long-term goals.
- Ensure managers are well-equipped to answer questions about role transitions and provide guidance as needed.

4. Training and Support

Purpose: Equip employees with the knowledge and skills to adapt effectively to changes.

Detailed Best Practices:

- Identify specific skill gaps or training needs related to the changes (e.g., new technology, workflows, or procedures).
- Offer a mix of in-person and online training sessions to cater to different learning preferences.
- Provide ongoing access to resources, such as instructional guides, video tutorials, and peer mentoring programs.
- Ensure managers receive training on how to support their teams during transitions, including coaching and stress management techniques.

5. Psychological Safety and Well-being

Purpose: Create an environment where employees feel supported and safe to express concerns.

Detailed Best Practices:

- Encourage open dialogue about mental health and well-being during all stages of the change process.
- Actively promote Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and ensure employees know how to access these resources.
- Train managers to recognise early signs of stress, burnout, or disengagement and provide appropriate support.
- Implement regular well-being check-ins with employees to monitor their mental health and address any emerging issues proactively.



Templates and Tools

1. Organisational Change Communication Plan Template

DATE	AUDIENCE	MESSAGE/UPDATE	CHANNEL	RESPONSIBLE PERSON

2. Employee Feedback Form

1. I understand the reasons behind the organisational change.

☐

STRONGLY
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY
AGREE

2. I feel my concerns about the changes are being addressed.

☐

STRONGLY
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY
AGREE

3. I have the resources I need to adapt to the new environment.

☐

STRONGLY
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY
AGREE



3. Well-being Check-In Template

EMPLOYEE NAME	DATE	CURRENT CONCERNS	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION ITEMS

Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation are essential to understanding the impact of organisational change on employees and ensuring that psychosocial hazards are identified and addressed in a timely manner. This process involves continuous data collection, analysis, and feedback loops to improve change management practices.

Key Components of Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Measure Engagement

Regular Surveys: Conduct quarterly or monthly surveys to assess employees' understanding, acceptance, and satisfaction with the change process. Use a mix of closed and open-ended questions to gather comprehensive insights.

Focus Groups and Feedback Sessions: Facilitate in-depth discussions with small groups to explore specific issues or challenges related to the change.

Pulse Checks: Deploy short, frequent pulse surveys to gauge immediate reactions or concerns about ongoing changes.



2. Track Well-being Metrics

- Absenteeism and Turnover Rates: Monitor trends in absenteeism and voluntary turnover as potential indicators of stress or dissatisfaction.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Usage: Track the frequency and reasons for EAP usage to identify recurring stressors or issues.
- Workplace Incidents: Record and evaluate incidents of interpersonal conflict, harassment, or grievances to understand the impact of change on workplace culture.
- Performance Data: Use productivity metrics, error rates, and quality assurance reports to assess how the change affects operational outcomes.

3. Review Outcomes

- Pre- and Post-Change Comparisons: Collect baseline data before implementing changes and compare it with post-change metrics to measure progress and success.
- Employee Feedback: Aggregate and analyse feedback to identify recurring themes and areas for improvement.
- Manager Assessments: Engage managers to report on team morale, challenges, and successes throughout the change process.

4. Implement Corrective Actions

Use insights from monitoring to adjust strategies or interventions.

For example:

- If absenteeism increases, re-evaluate workloads or communication practices.
- If feedback indicates confusion, provide additional training or clarity on roles.

5. Report Findings

- Transparent Reporting: Share monitoring results with employees and stakeholders to maintain trust and demonstrate accountability.
- Data Dashboards: Create visual dashboards to present key metrics and trends in an accessible format.
- Periodic Reviews: Schedule quarterly or biannual reviews to formally evaluate progress and refine change management practices.



Evaluation Tools and Techniques

- **Surveys:** Develop customised surveys for pre-, mid-, and post-change phases.
- **Observation:** Use direct observation during team meetings or workflow processes to identify stress points or inefficiencies.
- **One-on-One Interviews:** Provide employees with an opportunity to discuss their experiences in a confidential setting.

Creating a Feedback Loop

- **Act on Feedback:** Implement tangible changes based on employee and manager input.
- **Close the Loop:** Communicate what actions were taken in response to feedback, reinforcing that employee voices are valued.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Use lessons learned to refine future change initiatives, ensuring ongoing enhancement of organisational resilience.

By implementing a thorough and adaptive monitoring and evaluation process, organisations can ensure that changes are not only successful but also foster a supportive and productive work environment.

Measure Engagement:

- Conduct regular employee surveys to assess their understanding, acceptance, and satisfaction with the change process.
- Use focus groups or feedback sessions to dive deeper into specific issues or challenges.

Track Well-being Metrics:

- Monitor absenteeism, turnover rates, and EAP usage as indicators of employee stress or disengagement.
- Review productivity data to assess the impact of changes on performance.

Review Outcomes:

- Compare pre-change and post-change data to evaluate the success of the initiative.
- Document lessons learned and best practices to improve future change processes.



Conclusion

Effectively managing organisational change is essential to minimising psychosocial hazards and supporting employees through transitions. Change is inevitable, but its impact on employees can be controlled with careful planning, clear communication, and ongoing support. By prioritising transparent communication, role clarity, and employee well-being, organisations can foster a resilient workforce that thrives amidst change. Use the strategies and tools in this guide to navigate your organisation's journey toward a healthier and more productive future.





Balance in the Workplace is an Employee Assistance Program developed by **Centacare FNQ**, a local organisation committed to delivering quality **Mental Health and Wellbeing Services** since 1981.

For more information about Balance in the Workplace and how it can support you or your team, please contact:

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