



# Work, Stress, & Burnout in 2025

Victorian Leaders, April 2025



What could  
be causing us  
stress and  
strain in  
2025?

Is 'stress' the  
enemy?

What can we  
do to thrive in  
2025?





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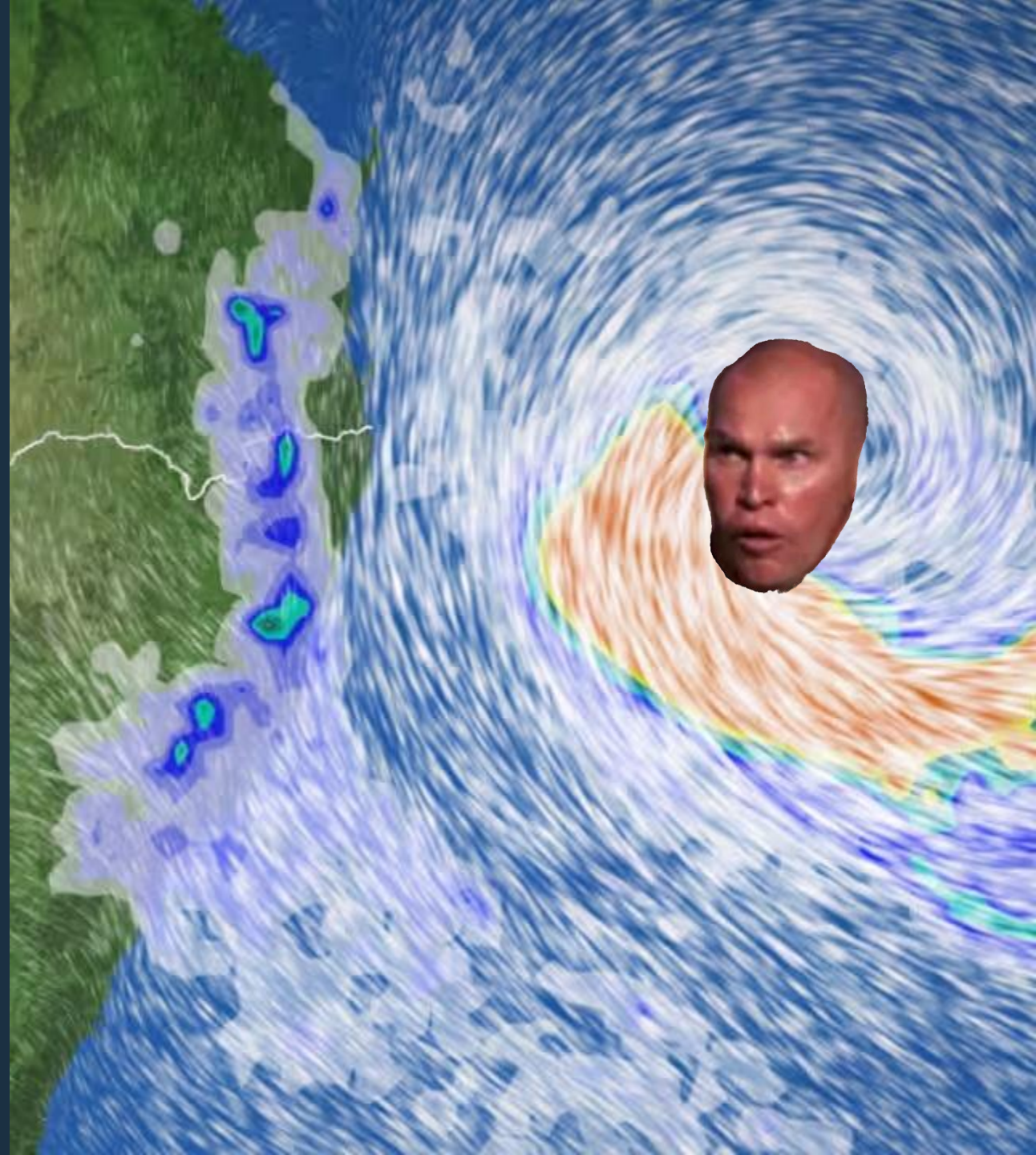


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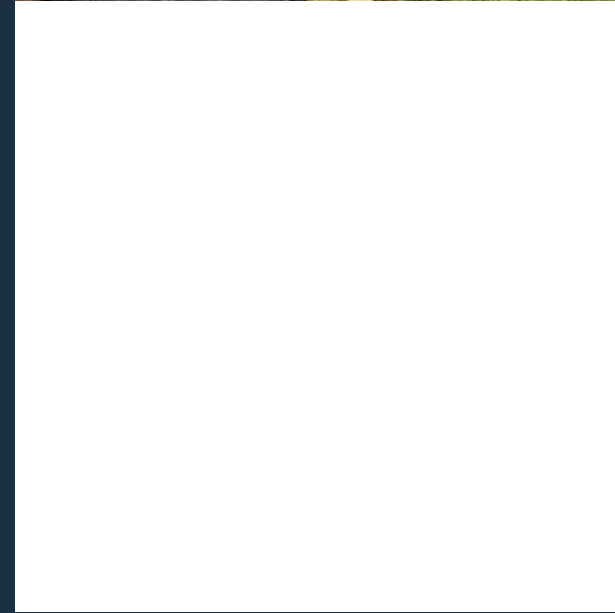
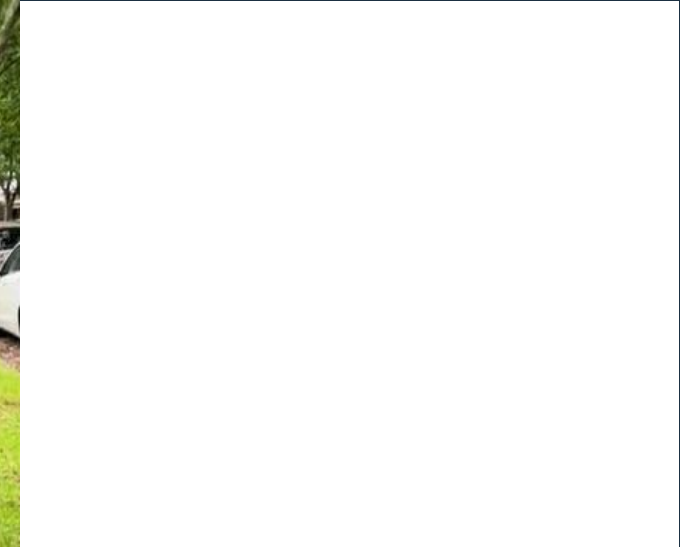
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90%

- of Australians believe cost of living is the #1 issue in the country

57%

- of Australians aged 18-34 are using less gas / electricity / hot water

61%

- of Australians aged 18 – 34 are undertaking additional work hours or finding part time work

75%

- of all Australians are negatively impacted by the rising cost of living

57%

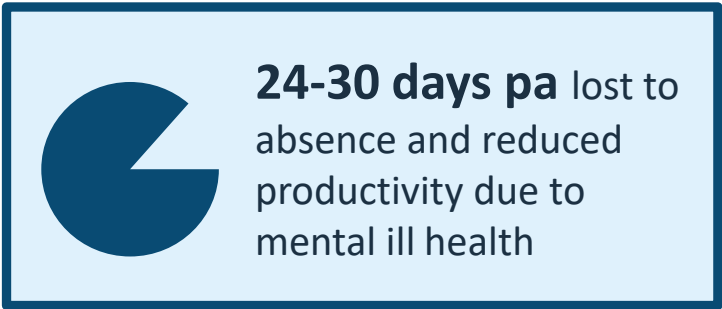
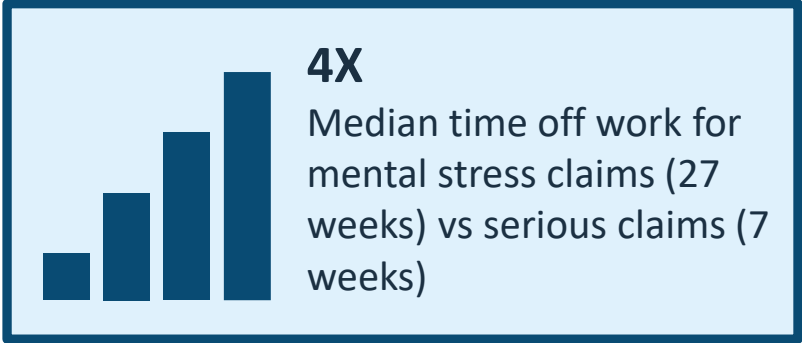
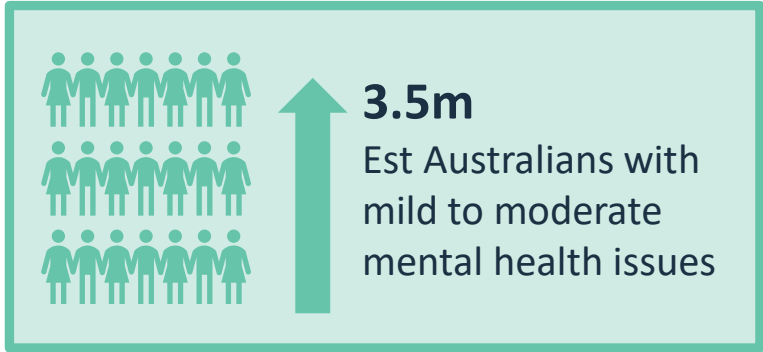
- of Australians aged 18 – 34 are cutting subscriptions and memberships

56%

- of Australians aged 18 – 34 are cancelling overseas travel plans



# In Australia



*Mental Health and the Workplace: How can employers improve productivity through wellbeing? CEDA (2022).*



- Yes, stress is entirely possible in 2025
- Stress does not compartmentalise – absolutely everybody brings their stress with them
- So what do we do?





Is 'stress'  
the  
enemy?



## Stress

a natural human response to challenges or threats, involving physical and emotional reactions

## Strain (psychological)

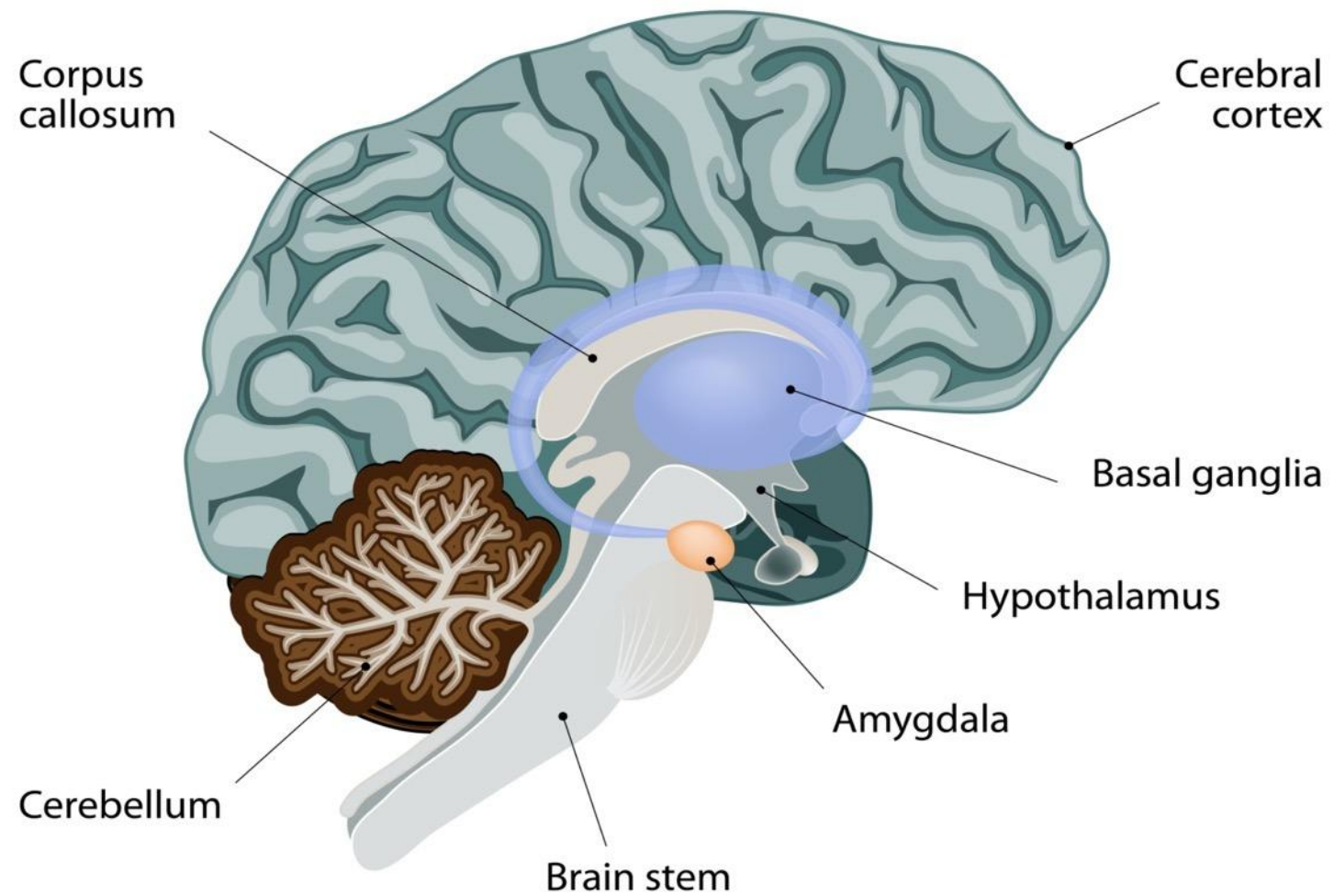
refers to the pressure, stress, and negative emotional, cognitive, and behavioral impacts experienced in response to internal or external factors, potentially leading to mental health issues

## Burnout

a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged or excessive stress, characterized by feelings of energy depletion, increased mental distance from one's job, and reduced professional efficacy



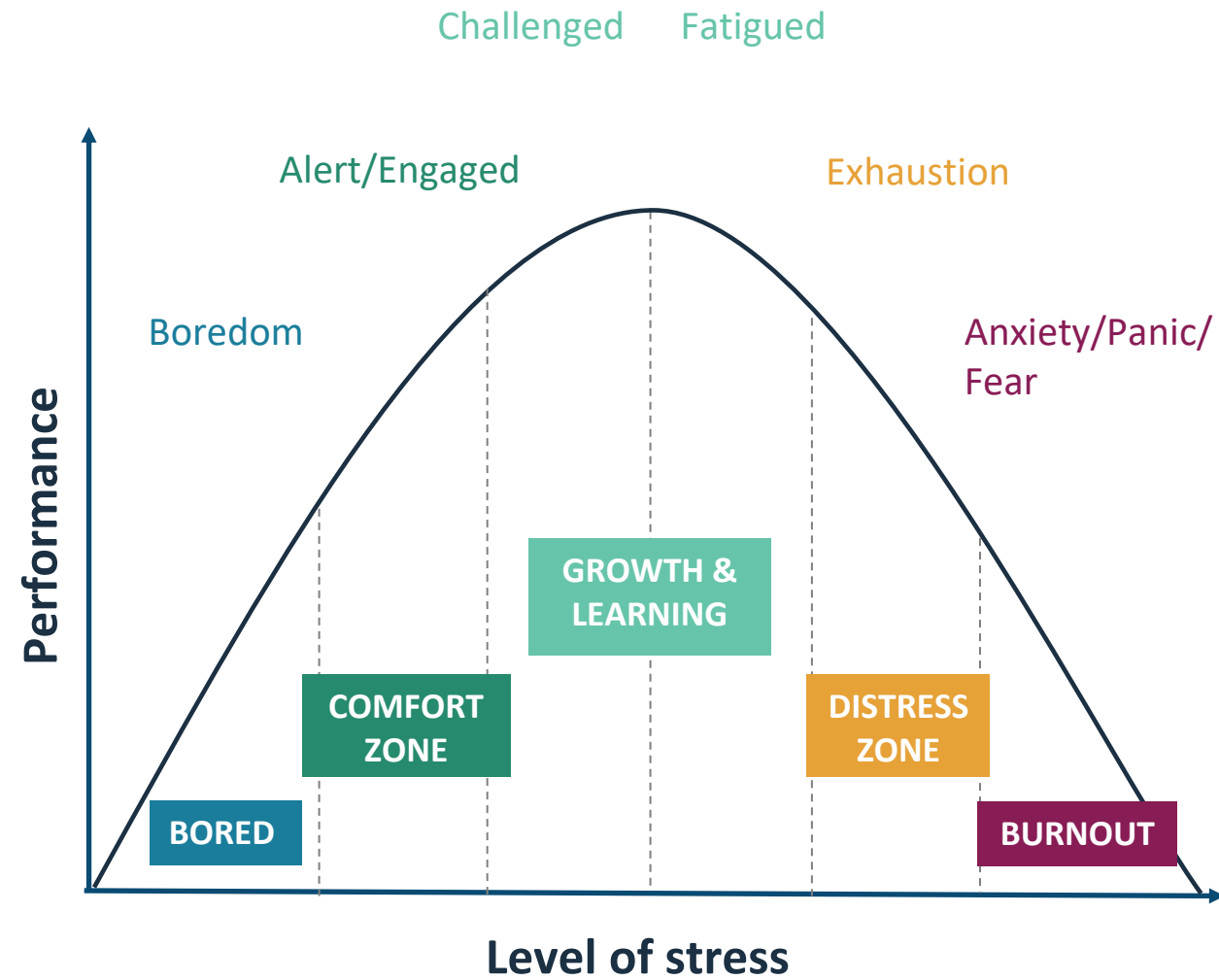






# 'Stress' is not the enemy

Balance





# What causes stress at work?

## SCARF



**Status** perceived importance in relation to others



**Certainty** desire for clarity and an ability to forecast the future



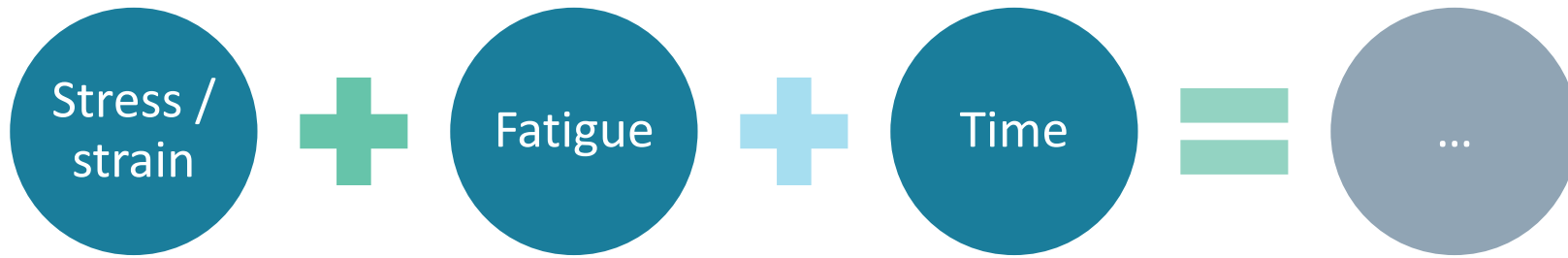
**Autonomy** fundamental need for personal control and choice



**Relatedness** need for belonging and connection to others



**Fairness** perception of just, unbiased social exchange



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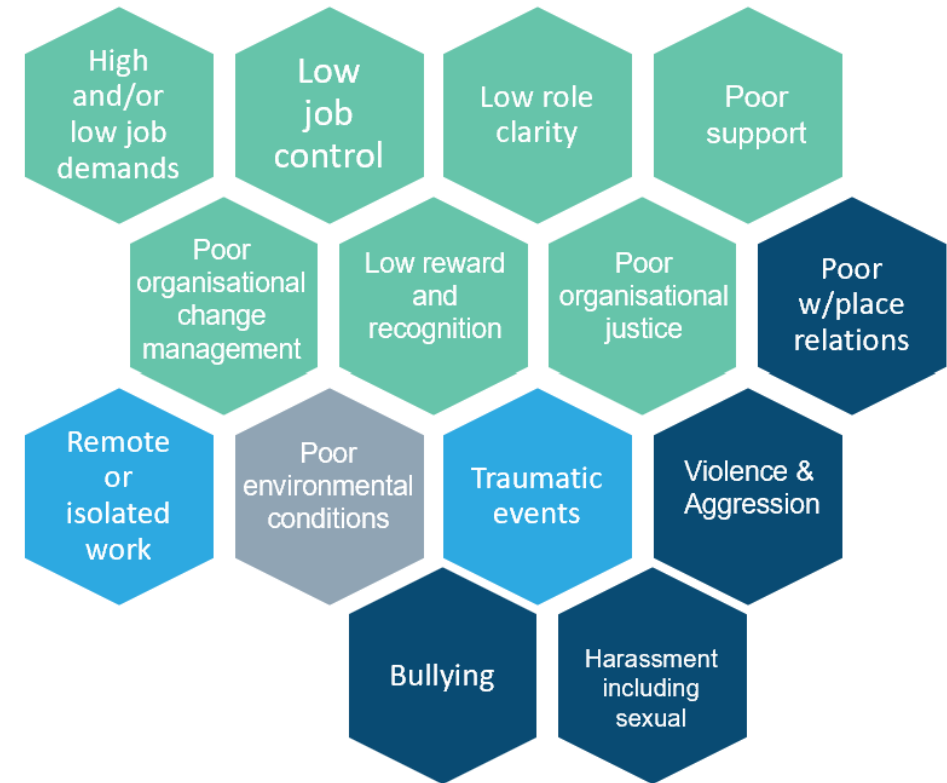






# What causes stress at work?

## Psychosocial Hazards



Psychosocial hazards relates to the **design or management of work**, a **work environment**, plant at a **workplace**, or **workplace interactions and behaviours** and may cause psychological harm, whether or not the hazard may also cause physical harm.

(Code of Practice 2022, pg. 5).



- Stress is unavoidable, work-related or otherwise
- Stress is an emotion, a warning system, like a fuel light or a temperature alert – it is not the enemy
- Small stressors occur, are allowed because they are manageable, and then they stack up until they fall
- What can we do then?





What can  
we do to  
thrive in  
2025?

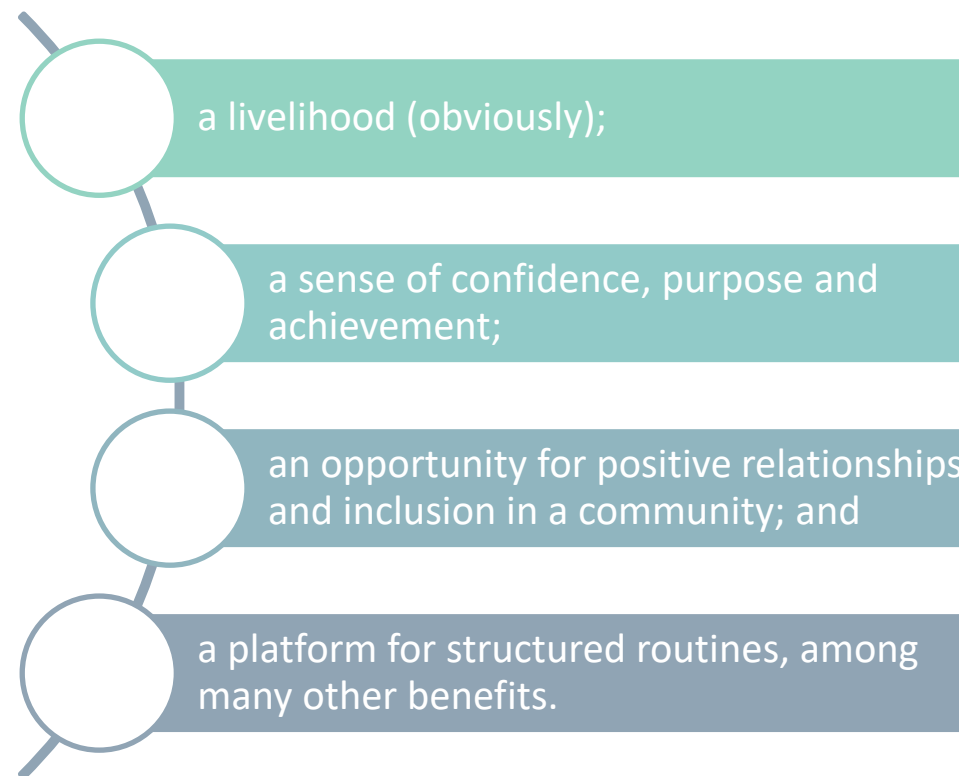




# Work as a protective factor

Work strain is a good thing

According to WHO, work can provide:







- Our obligations as business leaders is to reduce the impact of the **ROLE** as much as practicably possible
- It is easy to forget that we are also tasked with doing this for **OUR OWN** roles and responsibilities
- Not all stress is bad – in fact the challenges of work
- Small stressors occur, are allowed because they are manageable, and then they stack up until they fall
- What can we do then?



# At your tables (5 mins)

Among yourselves, discuss the following:

- What factors cause you the most strain/stress in your role, and how much of an impact do they have on you? How?
- What are some things that you find yourself doing (actions that you take) to manage that factor, and your stress?
- Everybody at the table to think of **one** thing that they can commit to doing in the next **week** to reduce excess stress / strain

Remember the dirty fishbowl – will this control help medium to long term?  
Help your peers.

- High and/or low job demands
- Low job control
- Low role clarity
- Poor support
- Poor org change management
- Low reward / recognition
- Poor org justice
- Remote or isolated work
- Poor environmental conditions
- Traumatic events
- Violence & aggression
- Bullying
- Conflict
- Harassment (incl. sexual harassment)

# Controlling risks

- Remember the hierarchy of controls – system first (the fishbowl)
- Any change of behaviour and habits is a cultural change

## Leadership culture

- Clarity of priorities as most influential voice
- Feedback and consultation from employees
- Modelling of expectations and supporting employees
- Focus on prioritising support for employees, and communication

## Capability and behaviour

- Managing challenging behaviour/conversations, mental health first aid, psychosocial hazards
- Cultural development to emphasise support for team members and each other
- Reward speaking up, collaborating, and focusing on the right things

## Adjust roles, ways of working / systems

- Managing equitability of tasks – spreading timing and workload
- Structural change of service delivery model to support worker wellbeing (customers & community)
- Pair-up / buddy system for isolated or more risky tasks
- Prioritise communication habits and support for in-field workers