Good governance for psychological health and safety

Key points for Officers

WHAT IS GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance of psychological health and safety means actively probing and taking a due diligence approach, rather than being a passive recipient of information or delegating to the experts. It also means prioritising your focus on what has (or could have) the most impact on the psychological wellbeing of your organisation's workers and others, and ensures that the organisation's efforts and resources address and match these risks. Good governance also treats psychological health and safety as a part of the organisation's operations.

Good governors are...

CAPABLE
- Continuously develop psychological H&S knowledge and capability
- Welcome and seek diverse advice, insights and perspectives to understand normal work.

CURIOUS
- Stay curious about the realities of how work is prioritised, planned, resourced, completed and experienced.
- Constructively sceptical of continuously positive reporting.

COURAGEOUS
- Acknowledge they don't have all the answers
- Challenge themselves and others, ensuring an environment of honesty, transparency, learning and improvement.

CONTEXT-DRIVEN
- Understand the internal and external factors that affect work and an organisation
- Build understanding of their organisation's psychosocial risks and effectiveness of controls.

CARING
- Recognise people (and their wellbeing) are the organisation's greatest asset
- Create environment of trust and transparency.

Better Governance Project 2023

ROLE AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

To meet your duties as an Officer under the <u>Health and Safety at Work Act</u>, you must take reasonable steps to:

1 ...**develop** and **keep up-to-date knowledg**e of **psychological** health and safety matters

2 ...**know** the **operations of the PCBU** and the health and safety **psychosocial risks associated** with it

3 ...**ensure** and **verify** the PCBU has and uses all **appropriate resources** and **processes** to **eliminate** or **minimise psychosocial risks** to health and safety to lowest level reasonably practicable

4 ...**ensure** and **verify** that the PCBU has **appropriate processes** for **receiving** and **considering information** about incidents, **psychosocial** hazards and risks, and for responding in a timely way to that information

5 ...**ensure** and **verify** the **PCBU has**, and **implements**, **processes** for **complying** with **any duty** or **obligation** of the PCBU **under HSWA**

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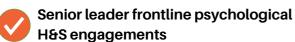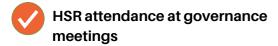
GATHERING INSIGHTS ⌄

✓ **Psychosocial risk assessments**

✓ **Incident reports**

✓ **Senior leader frontline psychological H&S engagements**

✓ **HSR attendance at governance meetings**

✓ **Employee engagement surveys**

→ **Organisational overview of psychological health and safety**

REASONABLY PRACTICABLE ⌄

What is *'reasonably practicable'* cannot be definitively determined by the PCBU themselves. The knowledge, practice and controls that others outside of the PCBU have or are using informs what is deemed *reasonably practicable* and is designed to be progressive in nature.

As one PCBU improves the way a risk is eliminated or minimised, it sets a higher bar for all other PCBUs in terms of what is deemed *reasonably practicable.*

GOOD PRACTICE DUE DILIGENCE QUESTIONS ⌄

The role of Officers is one of active due diligence, seeking assurance and being *'chronically uneasy'* about the work-related psychosocial risks that their workers may face. **Here are some questions that you should be able to answer, based on the information provided to you by management of your organisation (PCBU):**

Risk identification
- *What are the major business/operational activities of our organisation?*
- *What are the psychosocial hazards associated with each of those business/operational activities?*
- *Are particular groups/cohorts/demographics exposed to particular psychosocial hazards?*

Risk management
- *What are the reasonably practicable controls and processes to eliminate / minimise these risks?*
- *What process have we followed to determining when a control may not be reasonable?*
- *How assured am I that all workers/leaders have the necessary training and competencies relating to psychological health and safety?*

Engagement
- *How assured am I that workers are being effectively involved in psychological health and safety matters, including design of controls, inspections and investigations?*

Assurance and learning
- *What are the processes for verifying and stress testing psychosocial risk controls and processes?*
- *How well are psychosocial risk controls and processes known about, understood and being applied?*
- *How assured am I that the organisational causes of work-related psychological harm are being uncovered, actions to address are being assigned to appropriate leaders for actioning across the PCBU and that actions are being tracked and monitored?*