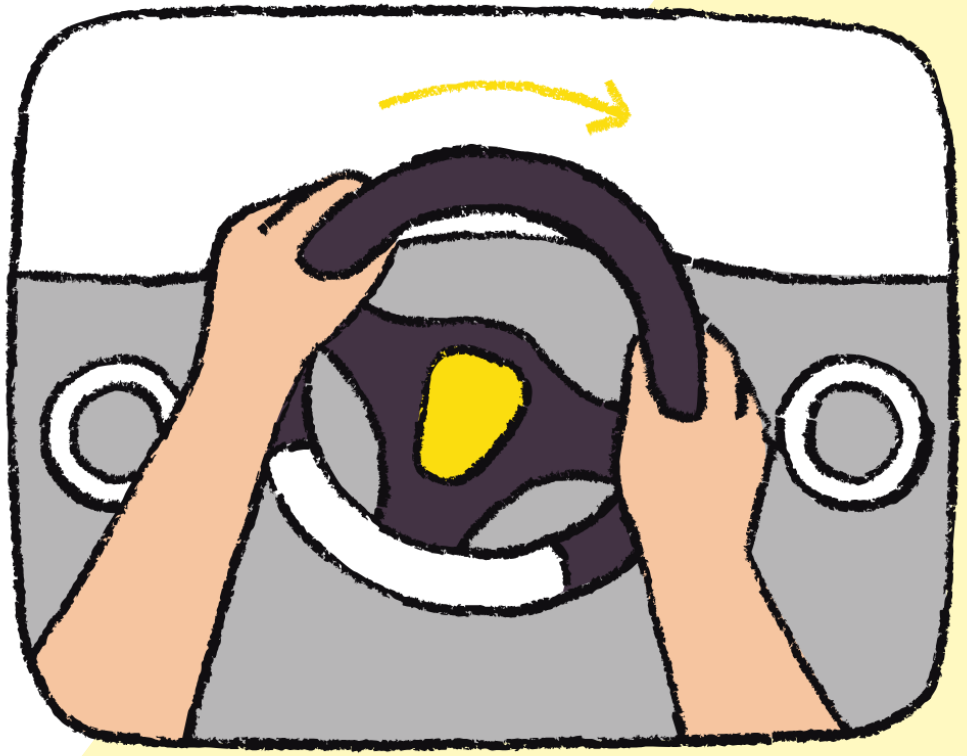
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Beyond human error:
How workplace culture influences driving behaviour



Dr Dougal Sutherland
Principal Psychologist

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Today's roadmap:

1. What is organisational culture?
2. How does culture influence driving behaviour and safety outcomes?
3. How do we get into the green and blue zones, and stay there?



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The pedestrian's impairme
crash.

Staff Writer • Editorial

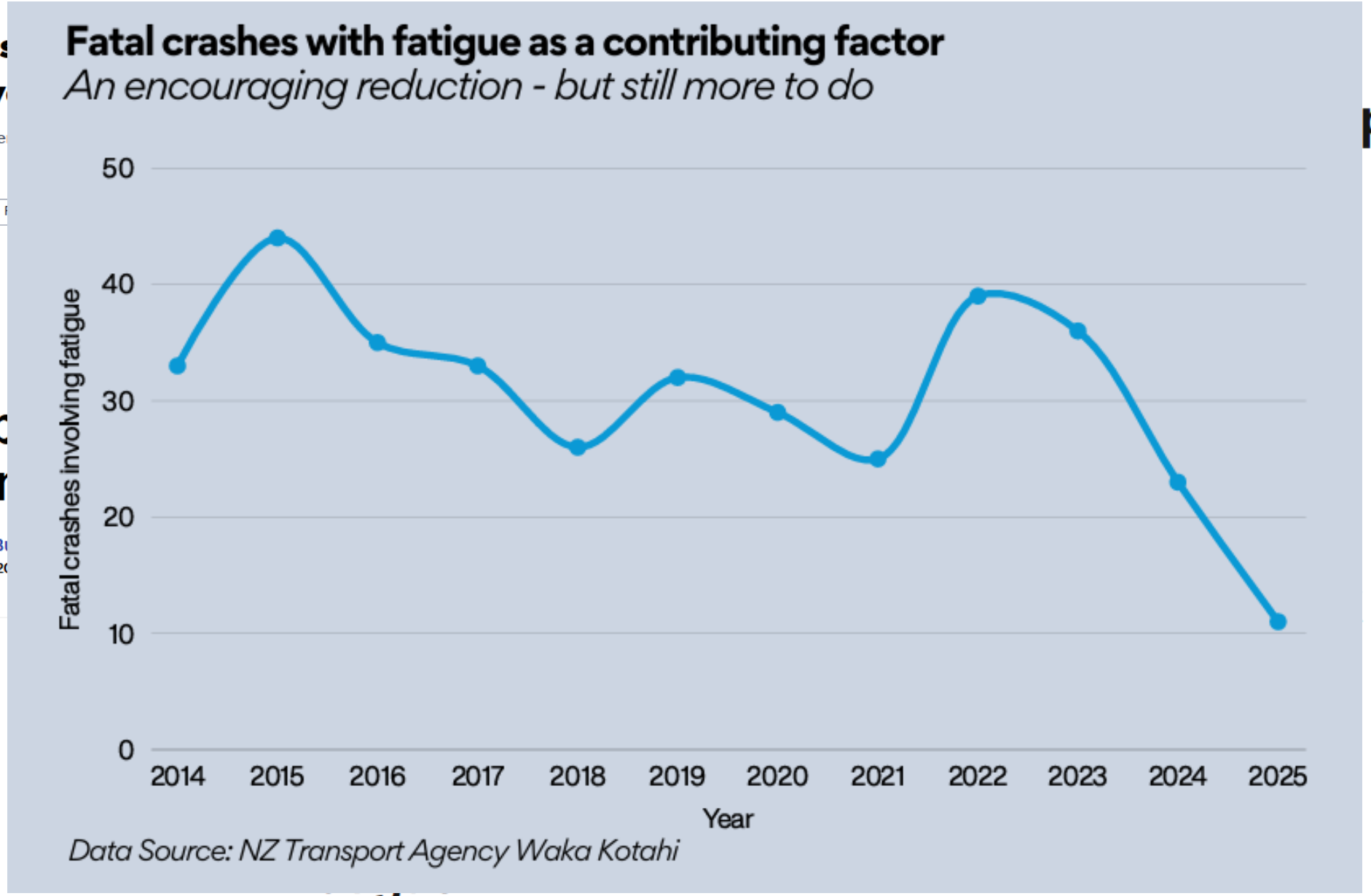
Health | Sleep

Sleep
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Lloyd Bu
June 8, 20

putting

crash



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What does your workplace really prioritise?



"Safety always comes first"



Fatigue policies, training and reporting processes



"It's all about getting out there, getting the job done and getting back as quickly as you can"

Safety culture

the ideas and beliefs that all of the organisation shared about risks, accidents and ill health

(Dominic, 2002)

Safety climate

employee perceptions about the value of safety in an organisation

(Neal & Griffin, 2004)



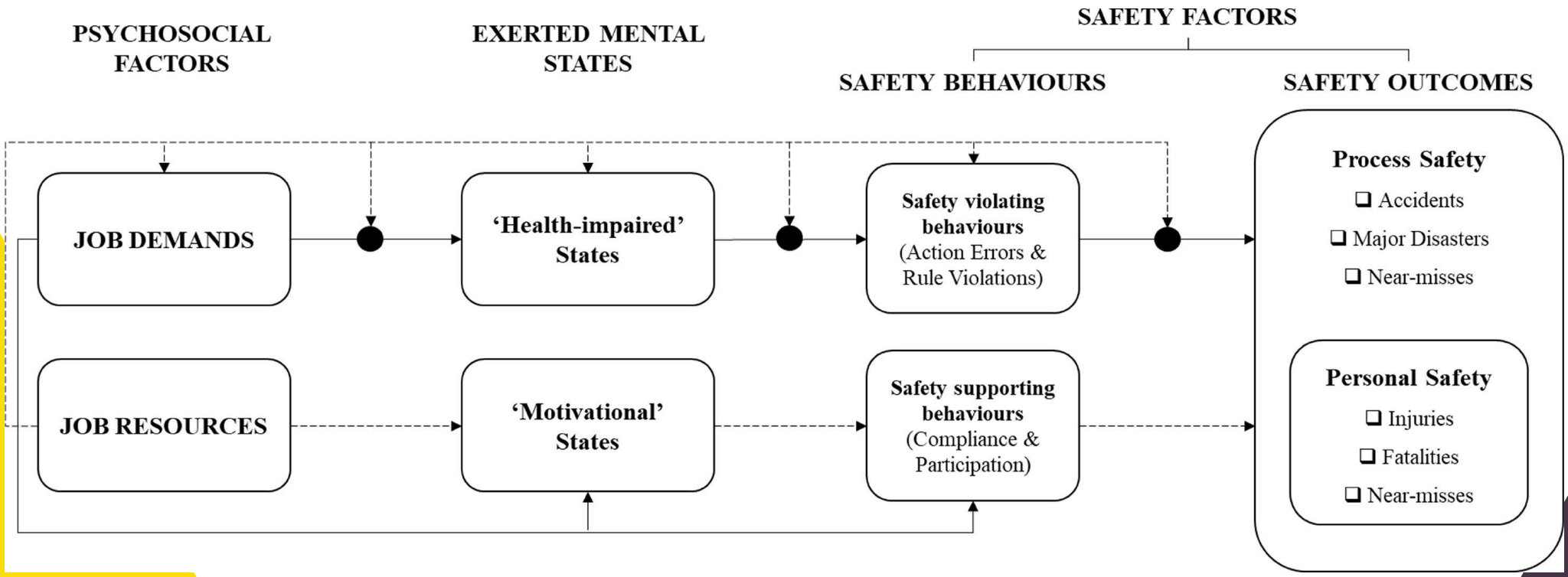
Risk factors for occupational fatigue

- Sleep deprivation
- Mental exertion
- Muscular exertion
- Poor psychosocial health
- Workload characteristics
- Overtime and long work hours
- Incomplete recovery
- At-work environmental factors
- Safety culture

(Techera et al., 2016)

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The harmful and protective pathways



Adapted from Derdowski & Mathisen (2023)



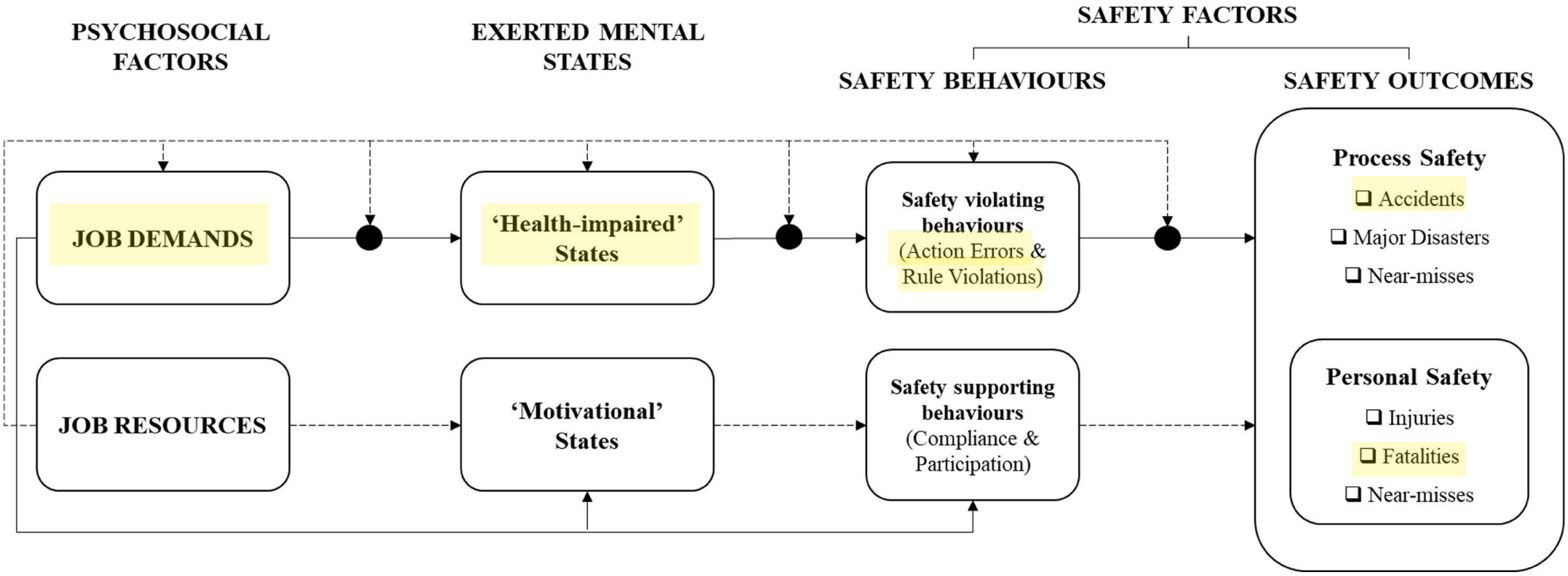
The “Job Demands” pathway

Company and director fined $1.43 million after fatigued driver's fatal crash

A Keysborough warehousing and logistics company and its sole director have been convicted and fined a total of $1.43 million following the fatigue-related death of a delivery driver.

Published: 22 September 2025

WorkSafe (Vic)– fatal driver fatigue case

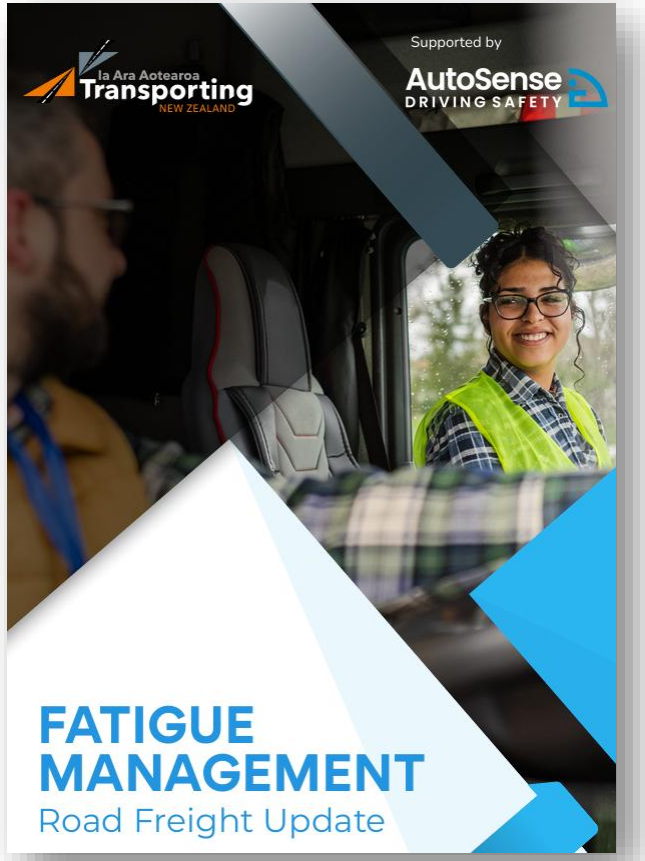


Derdowski & Mathisen, 2023



The “Job Resources” pathway

Safety culture from the top down



"The new technology and the conversations around fatigue have helped build a much stronger safety culture within the business.

"We do it for everybody's safety - not just our business, but for our employees, their families, and everybody else sharing the road."

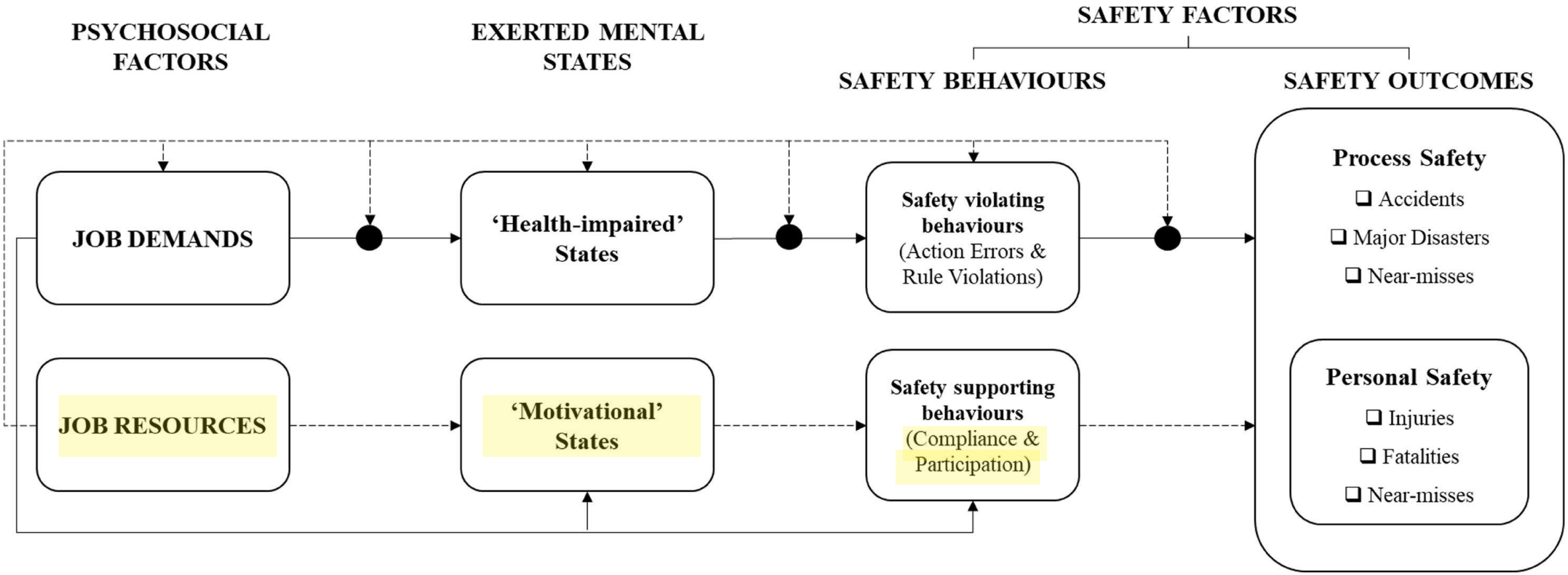
Paul Fossi, AutoSense National Sales Manager, says VT Transport has embraced a proactive approach to fatigue management and driver care.

"Jeremy and the team genuinely care about their drivers and are always looking at ways to improve safety outcomes," says Fossi.



"Making sure our staff get home safely every day is my number one priority, If we're looking after our drivers properly, we're helping make the roads safer for everyone."
Operations and Health and Safety Manager Jeremy Shute, VT Transport

VT Transport



Derdowski & Mathisen, 2023

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How does your organisation approach safety?

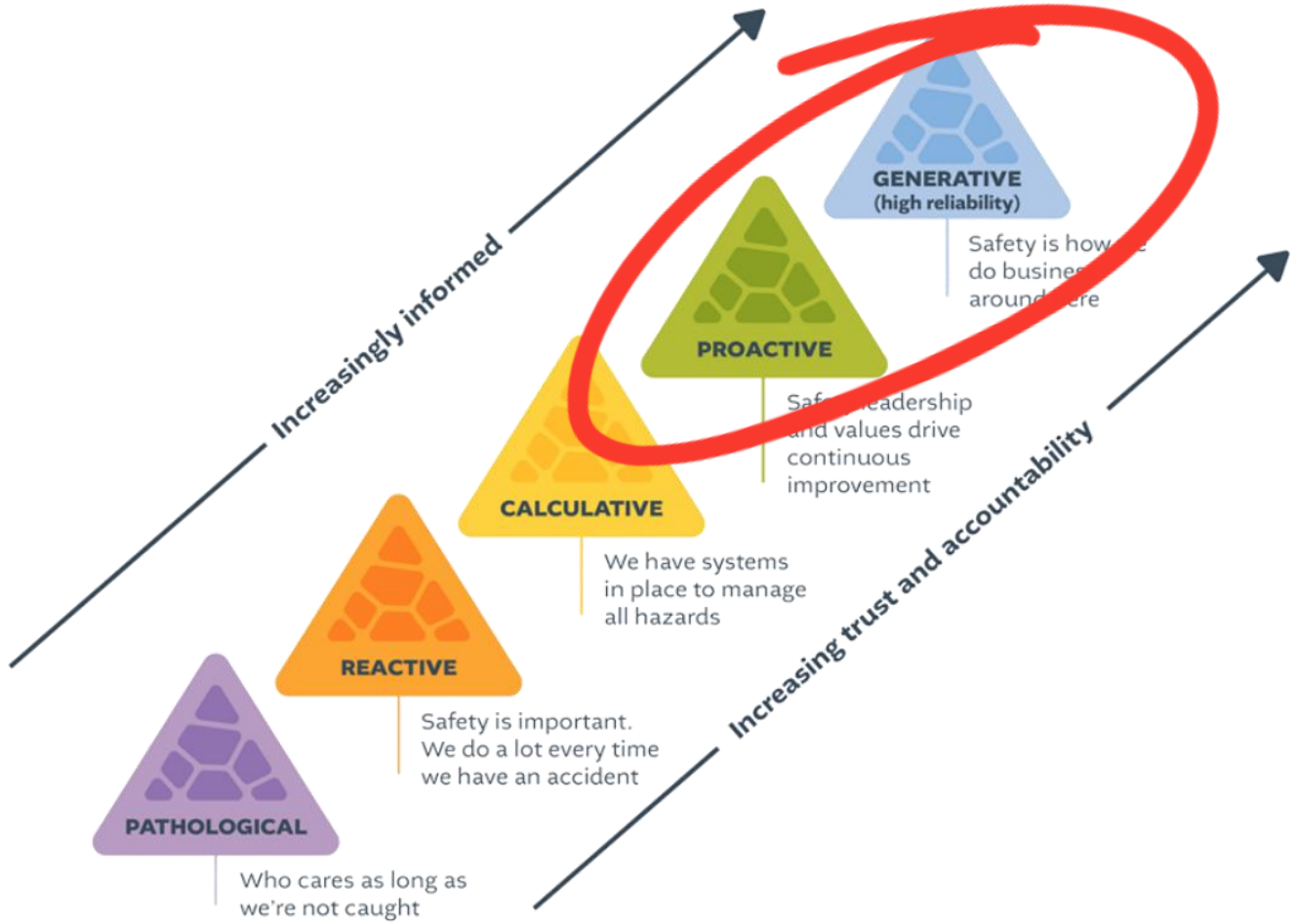


Image source: The safety culture ladder – Cairn Risk Consulting

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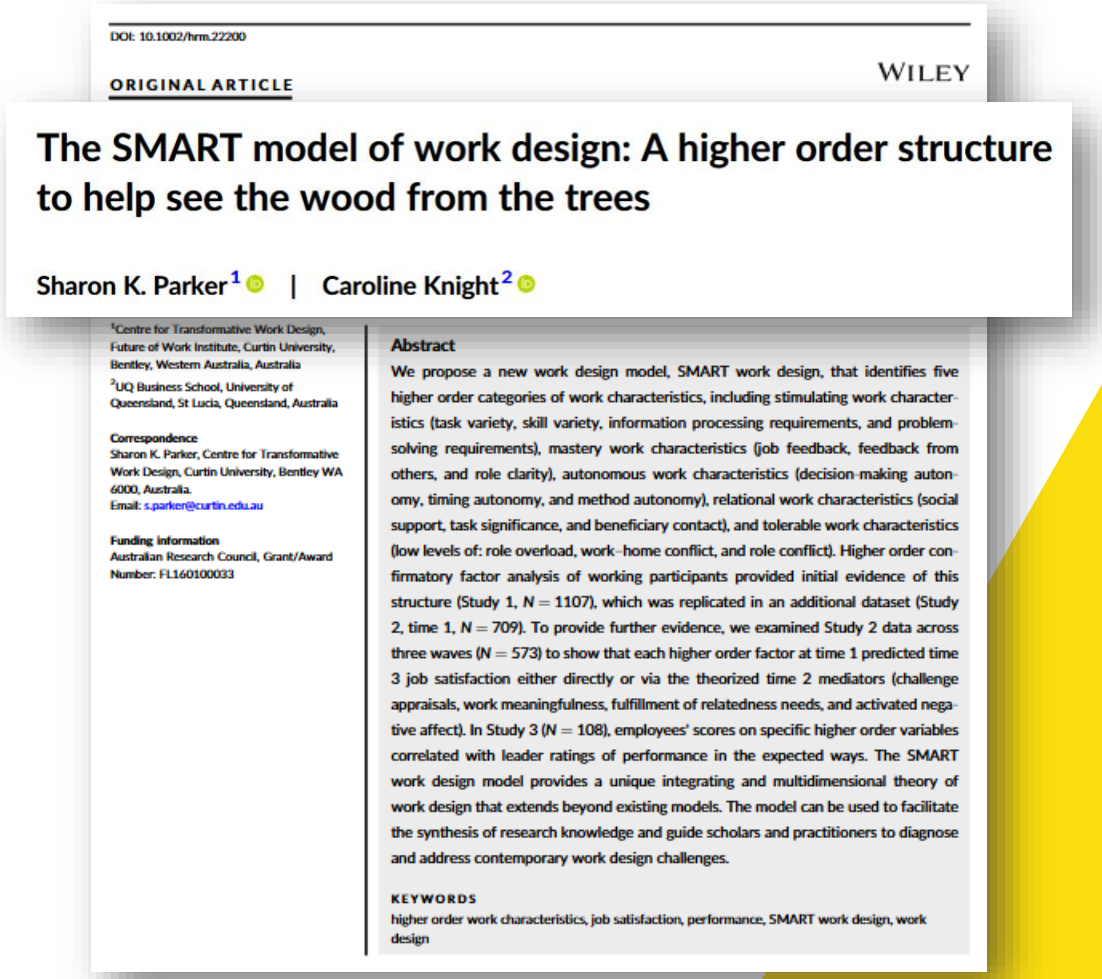
So, what works?

↑ *resources* or ↓ *demands*



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It's about *smart* work design



DOI: 10.1002/hrm.22200

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

WILEY

The SMART model of work design: A higher order structure to help see the wood from the trees

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Abstract

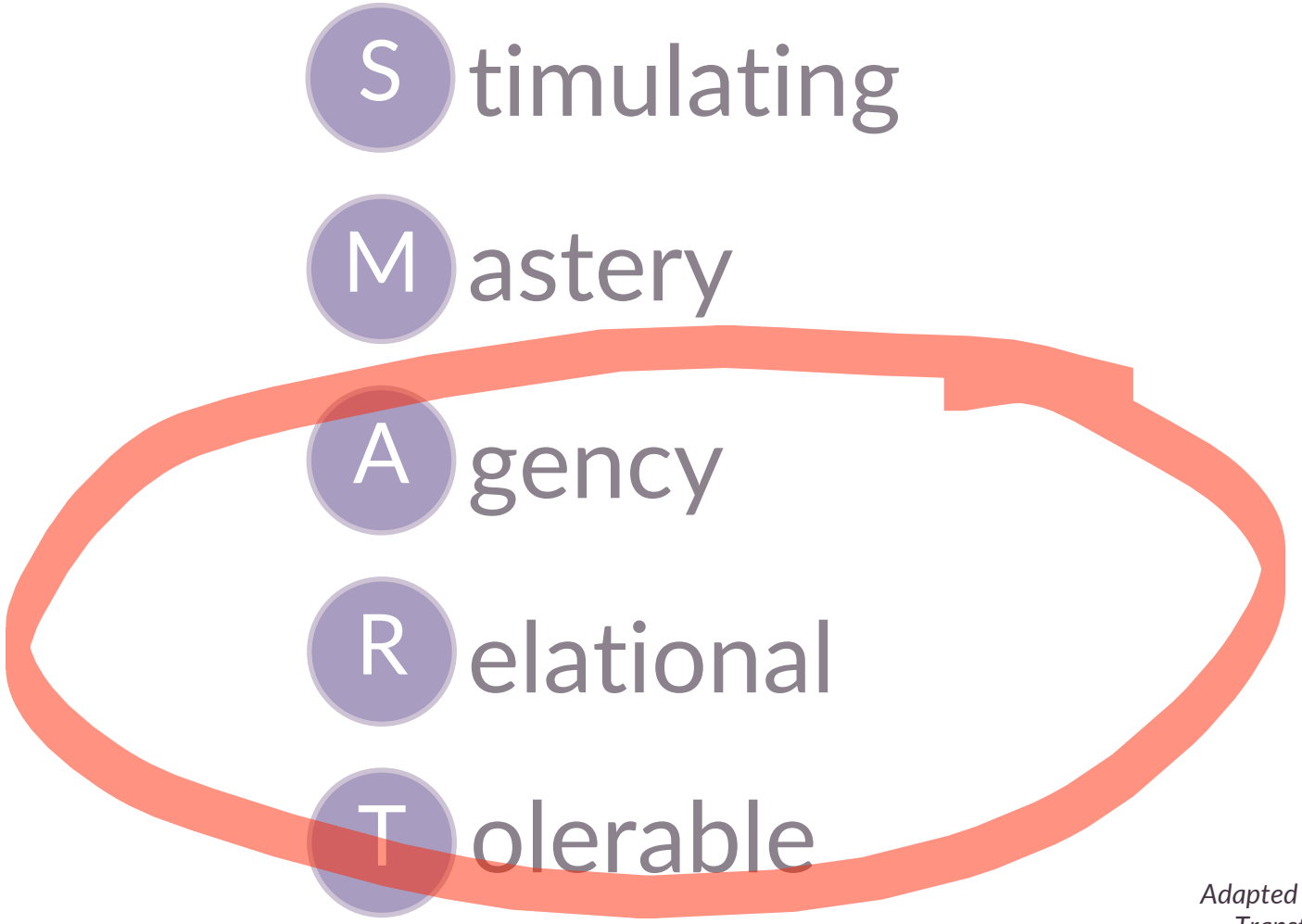
We propose a new work design model, SMART work design, that identifies five higher order categories of work characteristics, including stimulating work characteristics (task variety, skill variety, information processing requirements, and problem-solving requirements), mastery work characteristics (job feedback, feedback from others, and role clarity), autonomous work characteristics (decision-making autonomy, timing autonomy, and method autonomy), relational work characteristics (social support, task significance, and beneficiary contact), and tolerable work characteristics (low levels of: role overload, work–home conflict, and role conflict). Higher order confirmatory factor analysis of working participants provided initial evidence of this structure (Study 1, $N = 1107$), which was replicated in an additional dataset (Study 2, time 1, $N = 709$). To provide further evidence, we examined Study 2 data across three waves ($N = 573$) to show that each higher order factor at time 1 predicted time 3 job satisfaction either directly or via the theorized time 2 mediators (challenge appraisals, work meaningfulness, fulfillment of relatedness needs, and activated negative affect). In Study 3 ($N = 108$), employees' scores on specific higher order variables correlated with leader ratings of performance in the expected ways. The SMART work design model provides a unique integrating and multidimensional theory of work design that extends beyond existing models. The model can be used to facilitate the synthesis of research knowledge and guide scholars and practitioners to diagnose and address contemporary work design challenges.

KEYWORDS

higher order work characteristics, job satisfaction, performance, SMART work design, work design

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Good work design is…



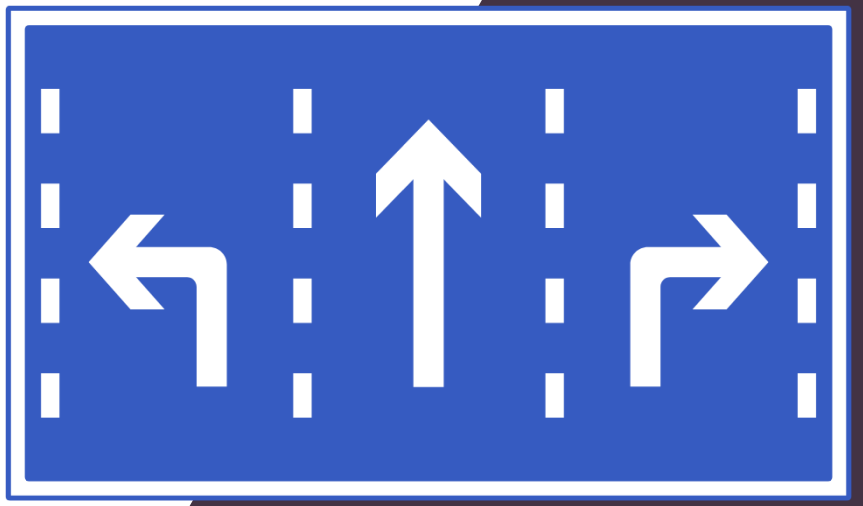
Adapted from Professor Sharon Parker, Centre for Transformative Work Design, Curtin University

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A

Increase job control and decision-latitude

- Build flexibility into work methods (e.g., sequencing, hours and breaks)
- Use consultation and learning-team approaches to understand *work as done* and co-design improvements
- Remove unnecessary limits or constraints on decision-making



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R Leverage social support

- Make management and leadership support visible
- Encourage peers to look out for each other
- Train leaders to have strong interpersonal skills to enable highly supportive leadership
- Build a shared commitment to safe driving



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T

Make demands manageable

- Regularly review workload demands and capacity and adjust resourcing accordingly
- Use rostering and task rotation to distribute demands
- Protect opportunities for recovery (micro and macro)



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Good work design is…

S	M	A	R	T
Stimulating work	**Mastery**	**Autonomy**	**Relational**	**Tolerable demands**
• Involve employees in improving routes or work processes	• Provide clear expectations about safe driving • Give regular feedback and refresher training	• Allow drivers to stop, delay or change a journey when conditions become unsafe	• Regular check-ins • Create opportunities for people to stay connected with peers	• Plan realistic routines, schedules and delivery times • Build in adequate breaks and recovery time

Adapted from Professor Sharon Parker, Centre for Transformative Work Design, Curtin University



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Recap

- ✓ Organisational culture and work design shape behaviour behind the wheel
- ✓ Think job demands and job resources
- ✓ Focus on the upstream factors

Thank you

- Wellbeing and Psychosocial Risk Assessment & Strategy
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- Enhanced EAP

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