

Psychological Hazards

Understanding Psychosocial Hazards in the
Australian Red Meat Industry – Stage 2

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1.0 Executive summary

The Beta phase of the project has identified significant psychological hazards within the meat processors assessed.

It appears that the processors assessed have little understanding of psychological hazards and as such have done little to identify, assess and control these hazards.

Gaining a better understanding of the impact and implications of psychological hazards within the industry is essential. With a new focus amongst regulators on addressing this risk, processors are currently exposed to financial and reputational risk with the current level of understanding and controls in place.

2.0 Introduction

Mental injury claims are increasing in both frequency and severity across the country. They now make up 9% of all claims nationally, result in 5 times more lost time and are 4 times more expensive than physical claims. In the last 12 months there has been a shift, at a regulatory level, in most jurisdiction to include a focus on psychological safety and the identification and control of psychosocial hazards.

This is a very new area and historically employers have ignored most psychosocial hazards with their focus being on the more tangible and understandable workplace hazards or the overt psychosocial hazards such as Occupational Violence. Across the country various jurisdictions have and are releasing updated codes and regulations. These are aimed at highlighting employers existing obligations in these areas and creating additional obligations.

Very little is known about this issue and the current approach to assessment of these hazards, psychosocial surveys, are limited in their scope and lack academic validity in the capture of data against the 14 measures identified by Safe Work Australia

All industries are currently working to gain an understanding of this growing issue and the significant changes to their obligations being implemented at a regulatory level.

3.0 Project objectives

The aim of the project is to identify the common psychological hazards within the Australian Red Meat Industry.

The project objective is to:

- Identify common themes relating to psychosocial hazards in the workplace.
- Increase awareness of the industries obligations as they relate to psychosocial hazards.
- Increase the focus of individual meat processors on assessing and addressing psychosocial hazards in their workplaces.

The identification of common themes in the industry would enable future research on how to appropriately control the risks associated with these hazards.

- This will assist employers in the industry to understand and address:
- their obligations under the various state and territory safety legislations.

- the specific obligations outlined under new regulations.
- the common psychosocial hazards.

4.0 Methodology

Aegis Risk Management Services has worked with Deakin University to develop a market leading Psychosocial Hazard Assessment based on the latest research in the area. The assessment utilises artificial intelligence to analyze the data obtained, removing the impact of assessor bias in data interpretation.

Across 15 meat processors within Australia, conduct individual psychosocial hazard assessments comprising of:

- Analysis of organizational data including but not limited to:
 - Staff turnover
 - Annual leave
 - Sick leave
 - Hours of work
 - Physical location
 - Organizational structure
 - Exit interviews
 - Grievance and complaint investigations
 - Bullying and harassment investigations
 - Incident reports
 - EAP Data
- Psychosocial Survey addressing:
 - The 14 hazards identified by Safe Work Australia.
 - Management styles, experience and interpersonal skills
- Qualitative Interviews:
 - A set number of qualitative interviews designed to obtain detailed information relating to the 14 hazards identified by Safe Work Australia
- Collation of data gathered from the 15 sites to:
 - Rank the 14 common hazards identified by SafeWork Australia based on the risk presented to the industry.
 - Identify any current strategies being implemented to address these hazards
 - Review the industries current level of understanding of these hazards
 - Review the industries current level of risk relating to these hazards
- Deliver a industry level report outlining the above and providing recommendations for how the industry can address these hazards.

5.0 Project outcomes

Assessment of the common psychological hazards has been completed at:

- WAMMCO

A draft report is ready for release. A finalized report will be provided at the completion of the project which will utilize the industry level data to provide industry comparisons.

In addition, where missing data, is provided prior to the release of the final report, this data will be analyzed and incorporated into the final report.

6.0 Discussion

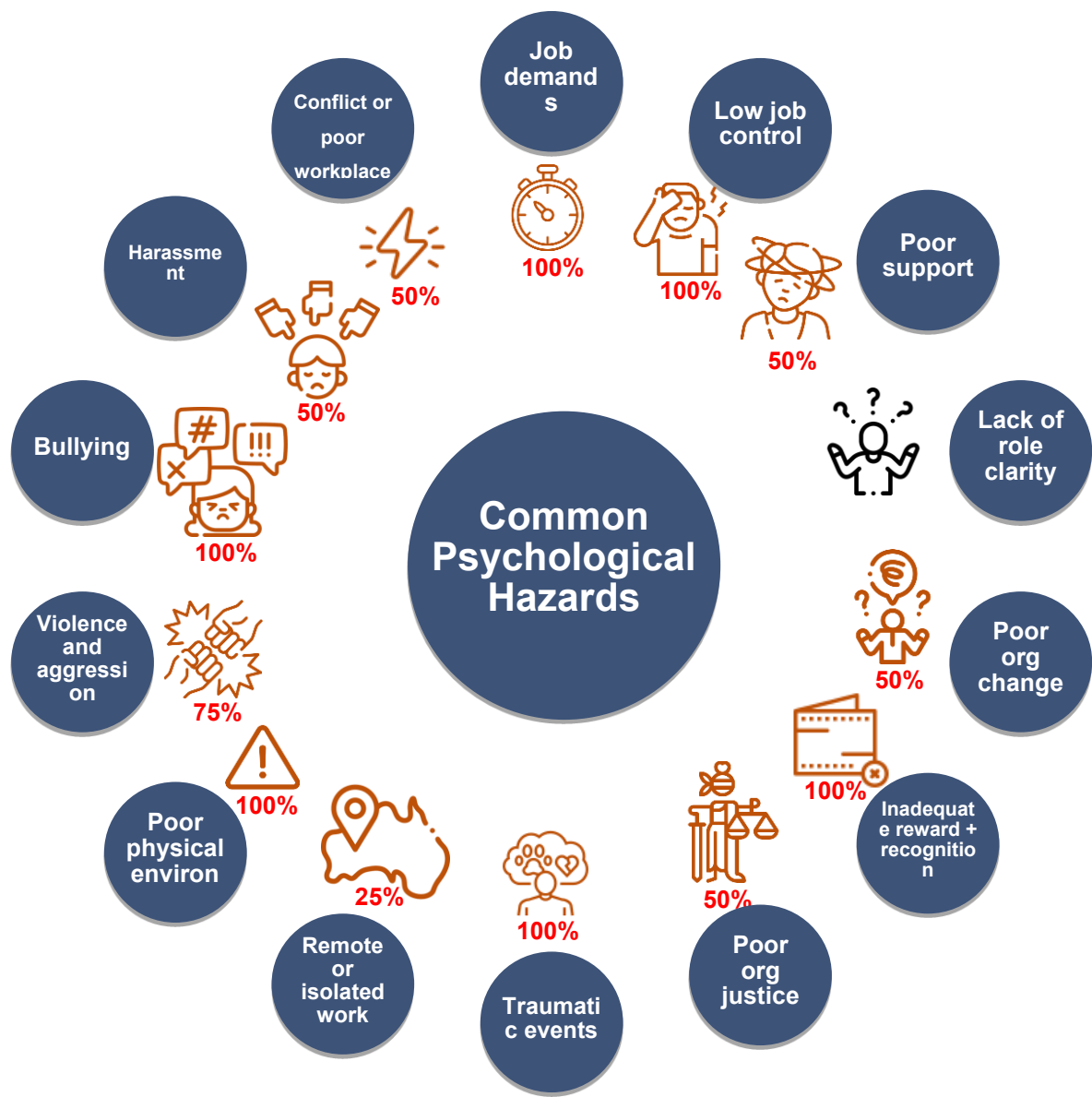
The **pHx Psychosocial Survey** has been completed at 6 processors, with a total of 935 respondents.

At the time of the provision of the report to the processors, none had provided the full data sets required to enable hard data analysis of all of data subsets identified as important for analysis. Further investigation is being undertaken; however, it appears that the data has not been provided for a number of reasons:

- The requested data is not being collected. This is to be somewhat expected as the concept of psychological hazards is new and therefore focus on the data required to understand it remains limited.
- The internal systems lack the sophistication to easily generate the requested data.
- The processors do not want to invest the time required to provide the requested data.

The psychological hazard disc below identifies the psychological hazards that have met the $\geq 25\%$ threshold on the **pHx Psychosocial Survey**.

The percentage of processors that have triggered this threshold is detailed.



Initial findings identify that psychological hazards are a significant issue for red meat processors.

7.0 Conclusions / recommendations

Aegis and AMPC should work to further promote the project to drive interest in processor participation.

8.0 Bibliography

N/A

9.0 Appendices

N/A