

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE RESOURCES SECTOR

We Can Improve Outcomes



The Australian minerals sector has maintained a vigilant focus on workplace health and safety. Historically, efforts were directed toward the identification and mitigation of physical safety risk, and the promotion of workplace culture that aims to prevent injury to the individual or their workmates. Over the past few years there has been a widening of this focus to include the wellbeing and mental health of those working in the resources sector. There is now a strong body of evidence that attention to mental health in industry can bring substantial benefits. This approach has been supported in principle by the Minerals Council of Australia in their 2015 *'Blueprint for Mental Health and Wellbeing'*.

The main concern with the approach outlined in this 'Blueprint' is that there are a number of areas that have been identified as *'possible actions that the minerals industry, companies, sites or employees may undertake'*. In the past five years there has been little change in the mental health and wellbeing in the resources sector, mainly because no clear actions were taken. In order to achieve a goal, research shows that you have to ensure that certain criteria are met. The Blueprint provided ideas about improving mental health, but didn't get into the specifics of ownership for the idea or the specifics of the what, where, when, how, who and why. Without specifics that are measurable, and holding someone to account for them, the chances of success pale into insignificance.

To achieve real and lasting cultural change for the sector, there must be specific interventions clearly identified that provide guidance about exactly what activities are going to result in improved mental health and wellbeing for the cohort. They require a timeframe for achievement and a plan for getting there. These outcomes need to be measured and monitored for ongoing and iterative improvement.

Authored by

KERRY HOWARD

Trauma Prevention Strategist
Principal Psychologist



