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FOREWORD:

Welcome to the Sunsuper 2018 Australian Employee Insights Report

At the heart of everything we do at Sunsuper is our commitment to helping our members reach their retirement with adequate superannuation savings. We also want them to enjoy their retirement dreams once they get there. This is why we provide a range of services to help our employer clients support their employees’ financial, physical and mental wellbeing. We know these services have the potential to strengthen an employer’s employee value proposition (EVP) just as much as they improve each employee’s individual wellbeing.

The findings in this, the fourth annual, Sunsuper Australian Employee Insights report reinforce that. In particular, this year’s report highlights Australian workers’ views on how new technology is undeniably changing the nature of work. As well, our insights show pressures both at and outside of work are leading Australian employees to increasingly expect their employer to offer flexibility and support in dealing with stress.

At Sunsuper, we are committed to walking the talk when it comes to employee wellbeing. Key planks of our journey towards customer centricity and a high-performance culture are providing a clear, strong and compelling workplace culture and an employee experience that supports our people to deal with stress both within and outside of work. Whether that is through our recent “wellbeing week” that offered our employees development sessions and activities to help put the focus on all aspects of their physical, mental, social and financial wellbeing. Or celebrating our successes with social gatherings that encourage our people to stop and appreciate the results their hard work has achieved.

On these results, I am proud to say our clear focus on becoming a high-performance organisation has led us to cementing our place as the 9th largest Australian super fund with $55 billion in funds under management, and being recognised as the best of the best when it comes to super – winning five fund of the year awards in a single year.

I hope you find this year’s Sunsuper Employee Insights report as informative and useful as I have in helping to understand employees’ experiences and their needs from today’s evolving workplace. And if you would like more information on the services Sunsuper can offer employers to build their EVP and support their employees’ wellbeing, as well as make managing super obligations as easy as possible, please get in touch with us, we’d love to speak with you.
While an employee value proposition (EVP) encompasses the services and benefits employers offer to give people a compelling reason to work for them, the “employee experience” is how employees engage with the elements of the EVP.

The employee experience is becoming an increasingly important area of focus for employers as today’s employees demand greater workplace flexibility, a culture that aligns with their values, and increasingly advanced digital solutions in order to best do their job.

Australian workers of all ages, genders, household incomes and employment types say creating a positive culture is the top way their employer can make their employee experience great.
**ONE: BUILDING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE**

The majority (79%) of Australian workers say their employer could do more to make their experience at work great, highlighting employers may need a greater focus on improving the employee experience in order to retain and engage their staff.

**How a great employee experience benefits business**

60% of workers say their productivity would improve if their experience at work was great. Workers also say a great employee experience would enable businesses to keep the best employees (58%) and achieve better results (45%).

Workers with higher household incomes and in larger organisations are most likely to say their employer could do more to make their experience at work great (83% for those earning more than $150k p.a., 85% for those in companies with more than 500 employees). Older workers and workers in large companies and in companies with more than 500 employees are most likely to say their experience at work great (60%).

18% of Australian workers rate a positive culture as the single best way their employer could make their employee experience great, ahead of 12% who believe additional financial benefits, and 11% who say flexible working arrangements would be the biggest contributor to a great employee experience.

When considering the ways their company could make a great employee experience aside from a positive culture, different generations are focused on different things. Older workers value clear goals and expectations higher than their younger peers. Gen X is more focused than other generations on additional financial benefits and flexible working arrangements. And Millennials are more motivated by career opportunities.

**Best way to make a great employee experience**

18% of Australian workers rate a positive culture as the single best way their employer could make their employee experience great, ahead of 12% who believe additional financial benefits, and 11% who say flexible working arrangements would be the biggest contributor to a great employee experience.
A company’s culture is its personality and an important factor in its success, or otherwise, as an organisation. It is unsurprising that Australian workers rate a positive culture as the single best way their employer could make their employee experience great given it defines the environment in which they work, provides the parameters for their behaviour and decision making, and can help a business attract, engage and retain the right people to achieve results.

CULTURE

Less than one in ten (9%) Australian workers say their company’s culture is great how it is.

TWO: IMPROVING COMPANY CULTURE
According to Australian workers, embedding culture isn’t the sole responsibility of employers, with 63% saying consulting with and involving employees more would improve their company’s culture.

How company culture could be improved

Australian workers want their company culture to support their wellbeing, with 70% of employees saying their workplace culture could be improved through better work–life balance or their employer offering more employee benefits.

Ability to describe company culture

Overall, close to two thirds (61%) of Australian workers can describe their company’s culture. Millennials, employees in smaller organisations and, interestingly, casual and contract employees can most easily describe their company’s culture. Employees in the finance and IT industries are most likely (70%) to be able to describe their company’s culture. Those in the healthcare, social services and arts and media industries are the least likely (55%).

How company culture is primarily communicated

Australian workers say the primary way culture is communicated in their company is through open conversation (18%); however, 16% say communications in their company don’t make it clear what the company culture is, and 12% say they don’t know how the culture is communicated.
DIVERSITY

82% of Australian workers say diversity in leadership in their company is important.

THREE: VALUING WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

A gender-balanced workforce with employees of all ages, cultural backgrounds and physical abilities introduces a broad range of perspectives, and can help increase a company’s innovation, productivity and results.

Employees are also more likely to feel comfortable and better able to manage workplace stress in an inclusive workplace environment that is flexible and understanding of different employees’ needs and approaches.
More than half (55%) of Australian employees say their company clearly values diversity among employees, and only 8% believe their company doesn’t value diversity.

Areas of diversity that can most benefit companies

The majority (88%) of Australian workers say embracing diversity in the workplace can benefit business. They see diversity in age as the area that can most benefit companies (47%), closely followed by diversity in cultural background (45%) and gender (43%).

Outcomes of embracing diversity

Australian employees say a better understanding of different viewpoints and approaches (48%) and introducing more creative and innovative thinking (41%) are the two biggest outcomes to companies of embracing diversity.

Of all the potential outcomes of embracing diversity, workers rate two negatives as the least likely to eventuate.

Valuing diversity in the workplace

Millennials (59%) and those who work for large employers (61%) are most likely to say their company clearly values diversity. Across industries, government workers are most likely (65%) to be clear their employer values diversity; workers in the mining and farming industries are least likely (45%).

Most valued employer benefits to increase workplace flexibility

Creating a flexible workplace is one way companies can ensure they treat employees of diverse ages, genders and backgrounds equally and as individuals. 72% of Australian employees consider their workplace to be flexible, with Millennial workers valuing additional leave and job sharing more than their older peers.
As emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and cognitive computers continue to advance and proliferate, there is increasing debate as to the changes these technologies will have in the workplace.

AI and robotics have the potential to reinvent workers’ roles, and companies will need to consider how they’ll design job roles, organise work, and train and re-train their employees in the future.

44% of Australian workers say they are concerned about emerging technologies coming into their workplace.
Employers should be aware that employees’ feelings towards emerging technologies coming into the workplace are divided. Half (51%) of Australian employees aren’t concerned about emerging technologies coming into their work and 5% are quite looking forward to it, but the remainder are not so sure.

Concern about emerging technologies coming into the workplace

Millennials are more concerned than older generations about emerging technologies coming into their workplace, with more than half (55%) of Millennials concerned compared with just 30% of Baby Boomers.

Biggest workplace changes from emerging technologies

Australian workers are also divided when it comes to predicting the biggest changes emerging technologies could have in their industry, with 25% saying the biggest change will be time and/or cost savings but another 24% saying there will be no change.

25% of workers in the finance and IT industries say emerging technologies will mean there won’t be many jobs for humans in their industries, compared with just 10% in the education, mining and farming industries.

When emerging technologies might start replacing jobs

Overall, only one third (36%) of Australian workers say emerging technologies will start replacing jobs within the next few years. Millennials (48%) are most likely to say emerging technologies will start replacing jobs within the next few years.

Workers in the finance and IT industries (57%) are most likely to see robots and AI impacting jobs in their industry within a few years. Workers in the healthcare, social services and arts and media (29%) and education (27%) industries are most likely to say emerging technologies won’t ever replace jobs in their industry.
Aside from emerging technologies such as AI and robotics, technology in general seems to be evolving at ever-increasing rates, and it is impacting the ways we live and work. Companies need to balance the need to adapt to new technology quickly enough to remain competitive with ensuring employees build the skills to adopt new technologies. All without allowing the expectation to be always connected to adversely impact their general wellbeing and life outside of work.

**TECHNOLOGY**

12% of workers see the ability to always be connected as the biggest positive impact to workplaces of the increasing speed of new technology. A slightly higher 16% see this same always-on connectivity as the biggest negative impact.
As companies strive to keep abreast of the increasing speed of new technology in their industries, it’s good to know Australian workers are generally positive about the potential impacts in their workplace, with 38% saying it is making work more efficient, and 50% saying their company adopts new technology quickly enough to stay competitive.

Impact of increasing speed of new technology in the workplace
Workers believe the biggest positive impact of the increasing speed of technology is that it is making work more efficient (38%). On the flipside, however, they say the biggest negative impact is that it is increasing their workload (21%).

Company policies for using technology at work
Companies seem to have their policies around technology use at work about right, with 57% of workers saying their company’s rules around using social media, the internet and personal mobile phones at work are appropriate.

Impact of technology at work on broader life
Two thirds (67%) of employees believe technology at work has impacted their broader life. Baby Boomers (56%) say they are less impacted than their Millennial peers (75%). Millennials are more likely than older generations to say they are able to work less hours and more flexibly, but also that they have learned to be more careful using social media.

Adopting new technology to stay competitive
Close to 60% of workers say their company is adopting new technology quickly enough to stay well ahead of or competitive with others. Millennials (13%) are almost three times as likely as Baby Boomers (5%) to say their organisation is ahead of others in adopting new technology.

Workers in the construction and engineering (25%) and retail and wholesale distribution (24%) industries are most concerned about the increasing speed of new technology resulting in redundancies. Government workers (10%) are the least concerned.
Encouraging employee resilience

SIX: ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE

Stressed employees can take more unplanned leave and be less engaged at work. Their physical and emotional wellbeing is also likely to be lower than employees who are relaxed and focused.

Encouraging and helping to build employee resilience is one way to reduce stress in the workplace and contribute to more mentally healthy and productive employees.

More than half (54%) of Australian workers say they feel stressed at work every week.
Resilience is the ability to adjust to adversity and hold on to some sense of control over your environment. It is concerning that more than two thirds (68%) of Australian workers don’t regularly feel a sense of control over their environment at work.

Feeling a sense of control at work

Feeling a sense of control at work can be the first step to reducing workplace stress and building resilience. Overall, just one third (32%) of workers say they regularly feel a sense of control at work. Interestingly, Baby Boomers (13%) are almost three times as likely as their Millennial peers (5%) to always feel a sense of control at work.

Feeling stressed at work

Not feeling a sense of control and workplace stress seem to go hand in hand, and can result in employees who find it challenging to adapt to change and deal with difficult situations. So it is concerning that almost one in five (17%) employees feel stressed at work daily. Millennials are significantly more likely to feel stressed at work than their older peers. Those working in government are the most likely (60%) to feel stressed at least weekly and those in the mining and agriculture sectors the least likely (42%).

Cause of most stress at work

The cause of the most stress at work according to Australian workers is workload pressure, including excessive workload and unrealistic expectations (34%), followed by personal issues with managers or workmates (16%), and lack of work-life balance, including dealing with issues outside of work (15%). Just 8% of employees say they don’t get stressed at work. Perhaps unsurprisingly, part-time, casual and contract employees feel more stressed about job security (23%) than their permanently employed colleagues (15%), and Baby Boomers feel more stressed about keeping up with technology (13%) than their Millennial peers (8%).

Ways companies can ease stress at work

The good news is, workers say there are positive steps their employer can take to ease workplace stress. Almost half (47%) of employees say a positive workplace, including confident managers and good teamwork, would help to prevent workplace stress and support employees who are stressed. Millennials are more likely to want their company to offer financial wellbeing benefits (28%) and mental health services such as counselling (25%) than their Baby Boomer peers (12% and 16% respectively).
39% of Australian workers say they feel financial stress at least weekly.

Offering employees wellbeing services that focus on improving physical, mental and financial health, and a sense of community belonging can be central to a company’s EVP and employee experience, and help employees cope with stress. In particular, with money-related issues causing Australian workers significant stress, employee demand for their company to provide financial wellbeing benefits is increasing.
More than a quarter (28%) of Australian workers define “financial wellbeing” as not being stressed about their finances. And it seems employers can do more to support their employees’ financial wellbeing, with workers saying they would most value additional super contributions (40%) and financial advice and education (31%) from their employer.

Causes of stress
Australian workers rank lack of financial security, managing household finances, and lack of savings for retirement as the factors causing them the most stress.

Main reason for feeling financial stress
Juggling the general cost of living is the main reason Australian workers feel financial stress across all household incomes, genders and employment types. Unsurprisingly, not having enough super or savings for retirement (29%) overtakes the general cost of living (17%) as the main reason Baby Boomers feel financial stress.

The meaning of financial wellbeing
While employees are most likely (28%) to equate not feeling stressed about their finances with financial wellbeing, they also associate having enough savings to cover unexpected expenses (21%) and being able to retire comfortably at a time they choose (19%) with being financially “well”.

Biggest concern about retiring
Given 19% of Australian workers say they equate financial wellbeing with being able to retire comfortably when they want, it is concerning that 42% of workers say their biggest concern about retiring is not having enough money.

Employer services to support financial wellbeing
Employees say they would most value additional super contributions (40%) and financial advice and education (31%) from their employer to support their financial wellbeing.
The insights in this report show that Australian workers’ expectations of their employer are increasing. Are you doing enough to build an employee experience that your employees value enough to stay with your company, and go the extra mile when you need them to? And are you offering the support and benefits that will help your employees manage stress, adopt new technology and deliver results for your organisation? Here are some tips to get you started.

**ONE: The employee experience**

Just as businesses need to walk in the shoes of their customer, creating a compelling employee experience involves seeing the world through employees’ eyes and focusing on what they most value. Our insights indicate Australian workers are most focused on a positive culture, financial and other rewards, and flexible working arrangements. Start by involving your employees in focus groups to validate their priorities and then workshop how each could be addressed and improved in your organisation.

**TWO: Company culture**

Your culture is shaped by the words and actions of your organisation’s leaders and how they make decisions. Your culture is also influenced by how your employees are rewarded, and how everyone in your organisation interacts with your customers and with each other. Given our insights show a large proportion of Australian employees can’t easily describe their company’s culture, start by asking yourself if you are doing enough at all levels of your organisation to clearly communicate and engage your employees with your culture.

**THREE: Diversity and flexibility**

The majority of Australian employees believe embracing workplace diversity is good for business. In particular, a flexible workplace is one way to help ensure you treat employees of diverse ages, genders and backgrounds equally and as individuals. Workers say they most value varied work hours, additional leave options, and the ability to work from home when it comes to improving workplace flexibility. Are you already, or is it possible for your organisation to adopt strategies to deliver these benefits?

**FOUR: New technology**

Our insights show that Australian employees believe workplaces that adopt and adapt to new technology can make their work more efficient. To realise these efficiencies, employees may need training and other support. Are you doing enough to help your employees prepare for the speed of new technology and the impact of emerging technologies? At the same time, has your company recognised the importance of non-technical skills such as adapting to change, open communication and problem solving?

**FIVE: Employee resilience**

There’s a good chance a number of your employees are currently feeling stressed due to the pace and demands of work, or issues they are dealing with outside of work. In light of our insights, consider whether you are setting clear goals for your teams and individual employees, monitoring workloads and ensuring they are manageable, encouraging and supporting employees’ physical wellbeing, offering financial wellbeing services, and providing flexible working arrangements.

**SIX: Financial wellbeing**

A significant proportion of Australian employees’ stress is caused by money worries. Offering support and resources to help employees manage their finances can ease this stress and free up their energy and focus to be more productive at work. This could be the most challenging wellbeing deliverable of them all, however, requiring solutions that cover household budgeting, debt management, financial hardship and retirement planning. Consider offering tangible financial assistance to employees through additional superannuation contributions, financial advice and education services, and access to everyday rewards programs. Don’t forget that Sunsuper offers our members a range of benefits, including financial education and superannuation advice, often at no additional cost.
Understanding of super

Overall, 56% of workers say they fully understand and are on top of their super. Baby Boomers (70%) are more likely to feel on top of their super than their Millennial peers (53%).

Financial confidence for retirement

Close to two thirds (62%) of employees aren’t confident or don’t know if they will have enough super when they retire.

Obstacles to seeking financial advice

The right financial advice can help in managing financial stress, yet workers say they see a number of obstacles to seeking financial advice.

Employer services to help workers understand super

Australian workers say they would value a range of services offered by their employer to help them feel more on top of their super and retirement.

Trust in employer’s choice of super fund

The majority (70%) of Australian employees trust or support their employer’s choice of super fund. Older workers trust their employer’s choice of super fund more than their younger peers.
SUNSUPER:

GROWING YOUR BUSINESS
BY GROWING YOUR PEOPLE

At Sunsuper, we don’t just want our members to have adequate savings for their retirement. We also want to help them get to retirement in excellent financial, physical and mental health. After all, what good is reaching retirement if you can’t enjoy it?

Sunsuper offers benefits and member services that can help you support your employees’ wellbeing and build an employee experience that will engage and retain your people. These include:

- A track record of delivering strong investment returns to members
- Low fees
- A range of financial advice options: on the phone and face-to-face, often at no additional cost
- Financial education: complimentary seminars and events, including in your workplace
- The ability to manage super on the go: through the Sunsuper app
- Online information, education and inspiration: start exploring the Dream Project  
  sunsuper.com.au/thedreamproject
- Everyday discounts from retailers across Australia: our Dream Rewards program  
  sunsuper.com.au/dream-rewards can help your employees save money today
- Opportunities to support and give back to the community: through our Dreams for a Better World grants program  
  dreamsforabetterworld.com.au

Sunsuper is also committed to help make managing your super obligations as easy as possible, and we provide a range of other services for employers’ businesses, including dedicated support teams, research and insights, customised reporting, and professional development opportunities for leaders and staff.

Is it time to talk to Sunsuper?

Naturally, we’d like you to think so. Curiosity can be good for business, and at the very least we’re confident a conversation with Sunsuper will leave you better informed about the right questions to ask for your company to optimise your employee superannuation arrangements. It could also lead to understanding what “competitive” looks like in today’s ever-changing superannuation marketplace, and how we could help you to support your employee experience and wellbeing initiatives.

Want some help on the right questions to ask to optimise your employees’ super? Download our factsheet at  
sunsuper.com.au/growyourbusiness

Join us on the wave of success

With five major award wins in one year, Sunsuper has been recognised as the best of the best when it comes to super.
OUR PURPOSE IS TO INSPIRE AND EMPOWER AUSTRALIANS TO FULFIL THEIR RETIREMENT DREAMS.
Find out how we can help you and your business in our Growing your business by growing your people publication.
To start the conversation, please call us on 13 11 84.