Beyond Physical Safety: The Power of the Social Experience

...AND HOW IT MAKES OR BREAKS YOUR SAFETY CULTURE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Sentis acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Australia and recognises their connections to land, waters and community.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today and pay our respects to elders past and present. We extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today. We do this because we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and knowledge.

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Our Experience

- ✓ Over 200,000 participants

- ✓ 500 + organisations

- ✓ 35 countries

- ✓ Broad industry experience

- ✓ Dedicated team of Organisational Psychologists

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Our Mission

To change the lives of individuals and organisations for the better, every day.

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Contents

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Safety Culture Self-Reflection

The company doesn't care much about me or my safety, so I don't care much about anything besides looking out for myself and getting the job done.

COUNTER PRODUCTIVE

Most of the time, safety procedures are a burden to getting the job done. But, I need to make sure I'm following them when management is looking.

PUBLIC COMPLIANCE

Safety rules and procedures are there to protect me. It is my responsibility to follow them so that I can stay safe for the things that matter to me.

PRIVATE COMPLIANCE

In part, my safety depends on my teammates. To stay safe as a team, we need to work together and look out for one another.

COLLABORATIVE

The company's safety is a core part of everyone's job and a shared responsibility. We strive to improve ourselves and learn from our collective mistakes.
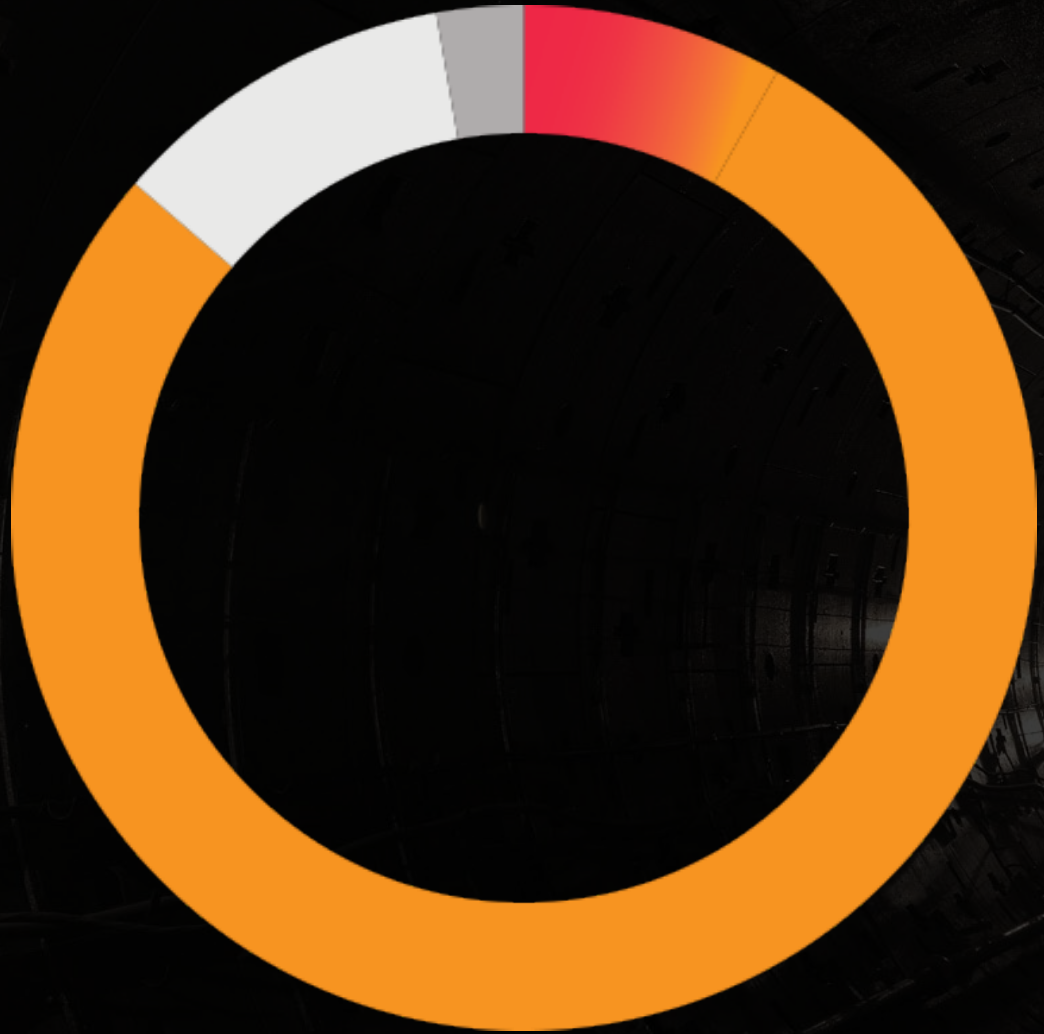
CITIZENSHIP

Sentis Safety Culture Maturity Model

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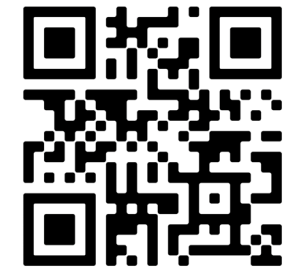
Scan the QR code to find out your safety culture maturity!

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86%

of organisational sites operate from a negative safety culture

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Our Other Research Suggests...

24%

of leaders are effective safety leaders

25+%

of incidents on average go unreported globally in a 12-month period

Wellbeing Climate

is strongly impacted by safety leadership

45%

of serious incidents fly under the radar*

*Incident Analytics© analysis of 2000+ incidents and near misses across multiple industry sectors 2019–21.
Incidents reviewed for corporate risk rating accuracy:
- 45% of incidents with serious or fatal potential were listed in lower corporate risk categories
- 29% of incidents appearing in major corporate risk categories had NO serious or fatal potential
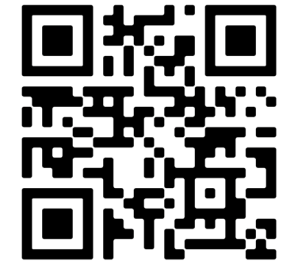
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The Research

Aiming to reshape our collective understanding of what workplace safety means, as well as how people on the ground experience it, we're pleased to introduce *Unpacking Safety Experiences: Employee Perceptions of Safety Climate*.

In this eye-opening report, we explore the balance and interplay between the physical, psychological and social experiences of safety.

Unpacking Safety Experiences:
Employee Perceptions of Safety Climate

2024 EDITION

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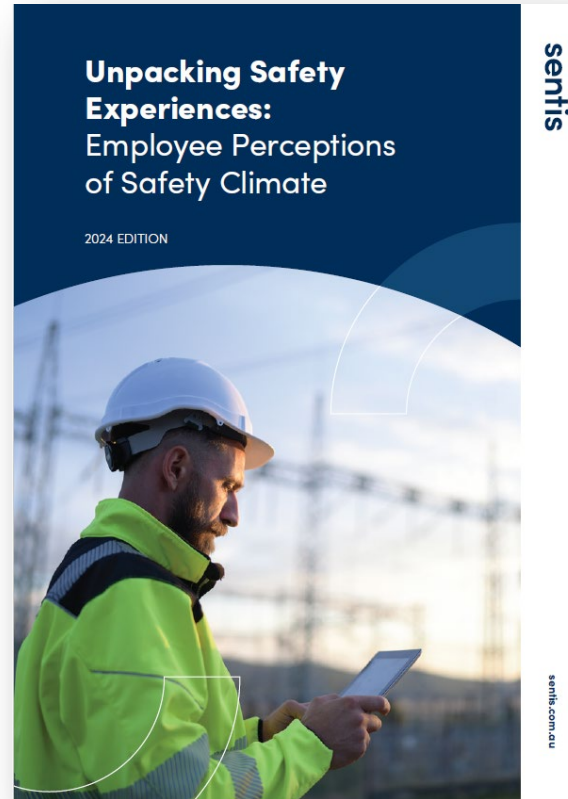
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"While physical safety is fundamental to our survival, it's not all we need in order to experience a safe, happy, healthy and thriving life at work."

Scan the QR code or visit sentis.com.au to download!

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More than 59,000 respondents participated in the SCS to share their perceptions of safety climate at work.
To ensure that no industry or organisation was over-represented, the responses were stratified to a sample of 29,390 respondents. The survey included workers at all levels – including frontline, supervisor and management positions – and a cross-section of demographics.

Sample

Stratified sample of

29,390

from a total sample of more than 59,000

Countries

15 countries:

Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States, Ireland, Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam
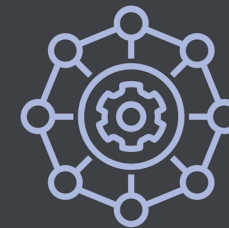
Industry

12 industries:

Utilities, mining, construction, oil and gas, transport, healthcare, manufacturing, government, agriculture, aquaculture, industrial services and education
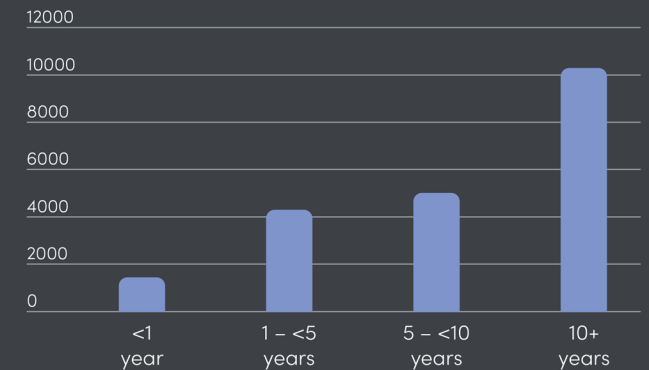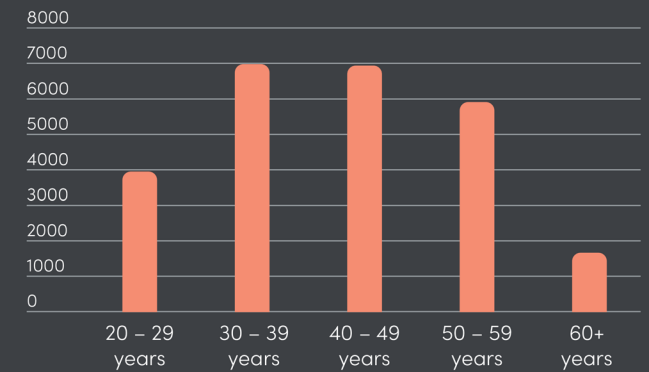
Organisations

75 organisations

Industry Tenure

Bar chart with y-axis labels: 12000, 10000, 8000, 6000, 4000, 2000, 0
x-axis: <1 year, 1 – <5 years, 5 – <10 years, 10+ years

Position

- Executive Management
- Middle Management
- Supervisor / Frontline Leader
- Frontline Employee

Age

Bar chart with y-axis labels: 8000, 7000, 6000, 5000, 4000, 3000, 2000, 1000, 0
x-axis: 20 – 29 years, 30 – 39 years, 40 – 49 years, 50 – 59 years, 60+ years

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Positive Safety and the Safety Experience

Positive safety is about focusing on proactive safety controls and genuine, helpful attitudes that can guide organisations to create a culture of trust, growth and excellence that leads to safer results.

Positive safety addresses the physical, social and psychological aspects of safety, resulting in an environment that supports each individual to bring the best of themselves to work.

Physical Experience
For example, work environment, equipment, hazardous tasks, shift work

safety experience

Psychological Experience
For example, resilience, engagement, wellbeing and mental health

Social Experience
For example, quality of relationships with team and leaders, communication, trust, support

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The Social Experience

The SOCIAL experience relates to our experience of interactions with others in our workplace. This includes a sense of community, mutual respect and collaborative problem-solving among employees.

A strong social experience indicates a culture of trust and shared responsibility for safety, where people feel included and invited to contribute.

By enhancing the social experience, we promote a culture where safety is not just an individual responsibility but a collective one, moving us beyond compliance to citizenship.

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The Social Brain
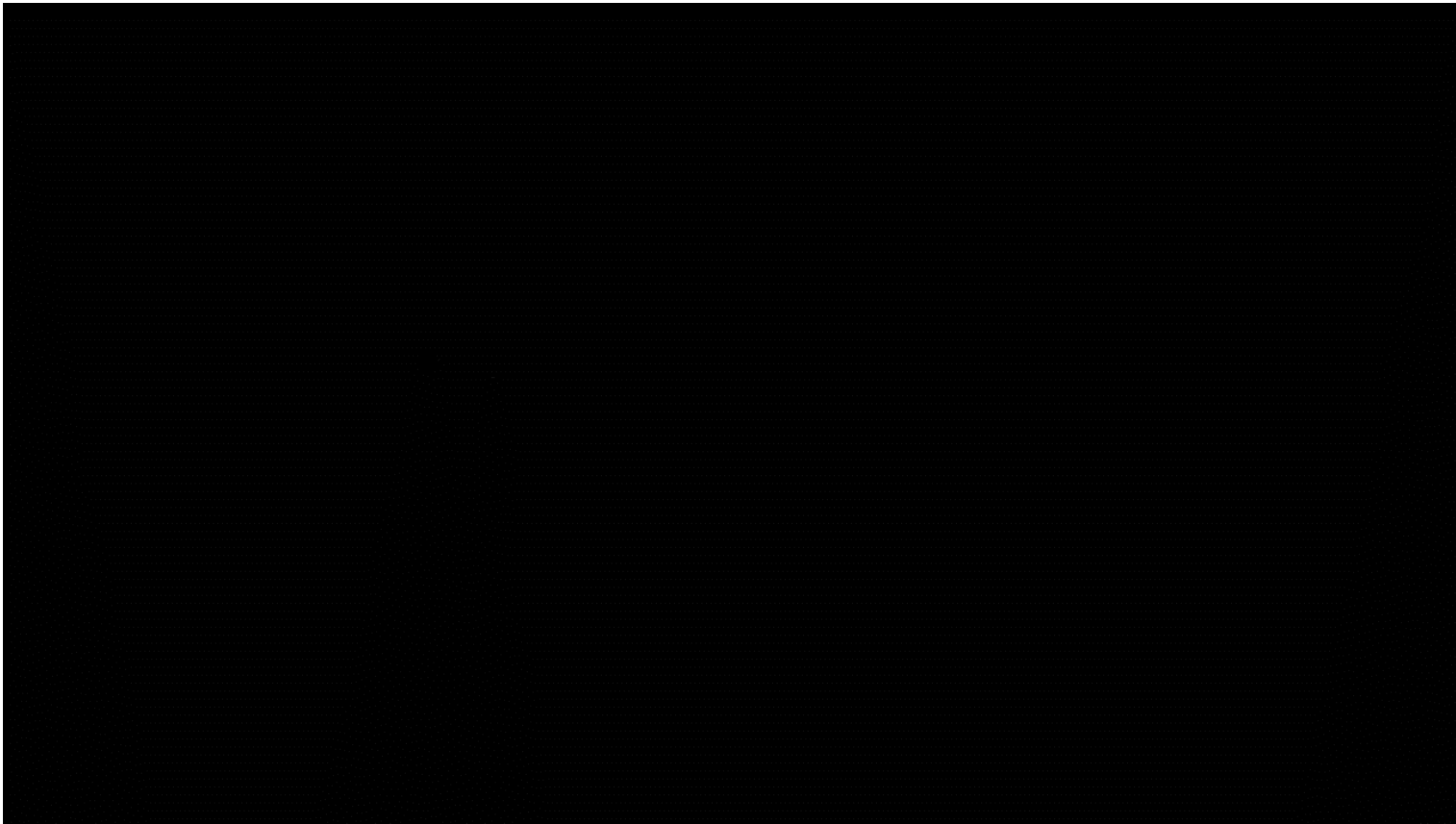
The Results

The SOCIAL experience of safety showed both the most *positive* and the most *negative* perceptions

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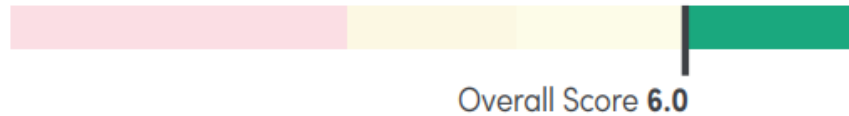# Social Strengths

Classification: Social

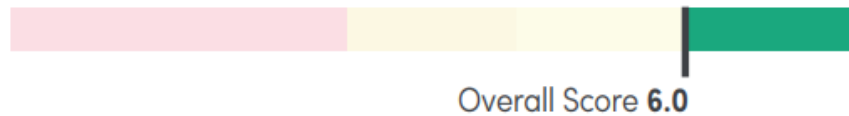Team members' genuine belief that safety is everyone's duty to maintain

Overall Score **6.0**

Classification: Social

Extent to which team members look out for each other's safety and wellbeing

Overall Score **6.0**

Classification: Social

Expectations that team members have of each other to work safely

Overall Score **6.0**

"Everyone wants to get home safely; we all have the same goals in mind."

Classification: Social

Positivity of working relationship with supervisors

Overall Score **6.0**

Classification: Social

Comfort with talking about safety and wellbeing concerns with direct supervisors
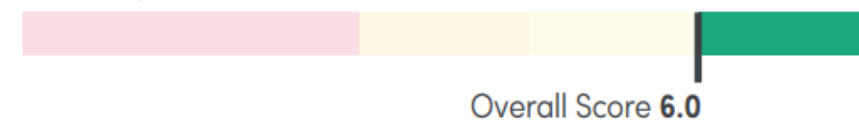
Overall Score **6.0**

Negative   Fair – Low   Fair – High   Positive   Scale range 1–7

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What We're Doing Well

✓ Strengths in the social experience are observed at the *team-level*

✓ Individuals accept personal responsibility for safety

✓ Individuals feel supported by their team to operate safely

✓ Individuals believe their supervisors are supportive of employee safety and wellbeing

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Social Areas for Improvement

"People are a little guarded and don't want to get in trouble. Blame and finger pointing can occur."

Classification: Social
Fairness of how mistakes during high-risk activities are managed

Overall Score **4.3**

Classification: Social
Extent to which safe behaviour is recognised and rewarded

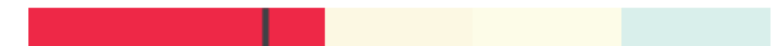Overall Score **4.7**

Classification: Social
Employees' opportunity to contribute to organisational decisions

Overall Score **4.5**

Classification: Social
Effectiveness of change communication and implementation

Overall Score **4.8**

Negative   Fair – Low   Fair – High   Positive   Scale range 1–7

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Where we can Improve

Improvement areas in the social experience relate to the *organisational-level*

✓ Improve <u>recognition and reward</u> processes for positive safety behaviour

✓ How <u>fairly mistakes</u> are managed during high-risk work

✓ Offer more opportunities to <u>contribute to decision making</u> regarding safety

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Reward and Recognition

REWARD →

Oxytocin & Dopamine

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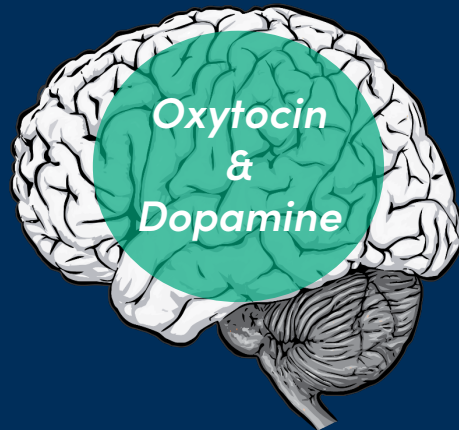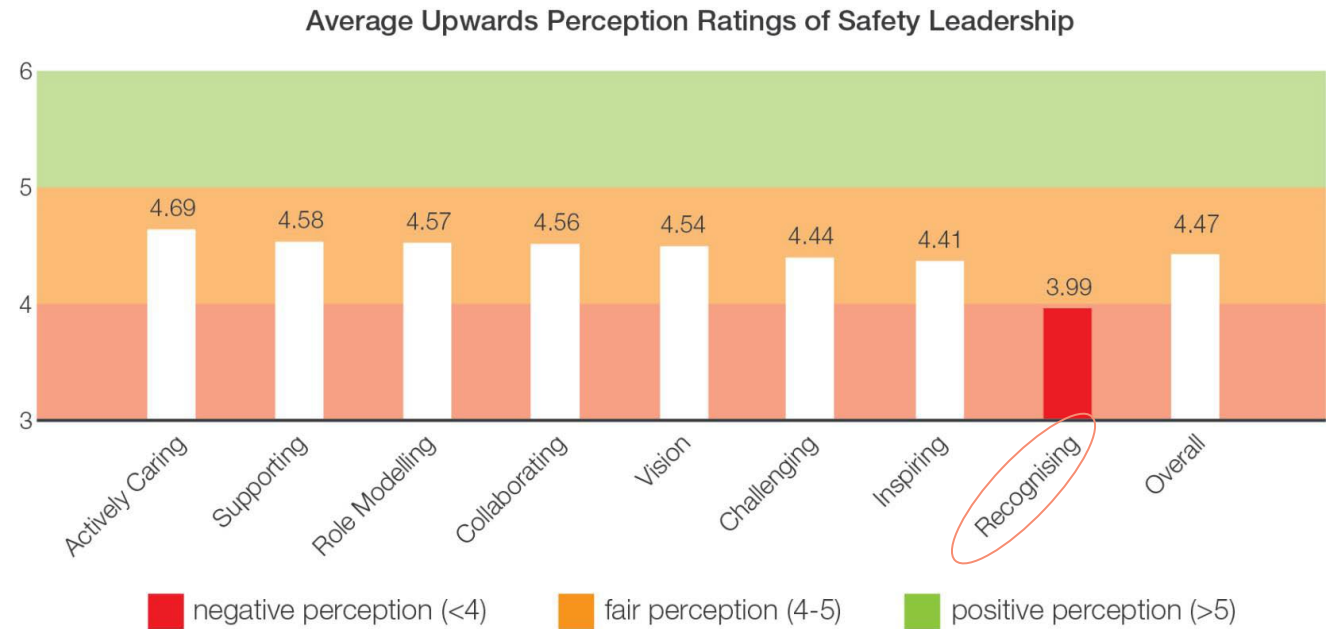
Driving a Positive Safety Culture

Top five opportunity areas identified across sites operating at *Counterproductive* and *Public Compliance* levels of safety culture maturity.

Safety Culture Dimension	Opportunity Frequency (% of Sites)
Quality of safety procedures*	56%
Management safety commitment*	51%
Internal context*	48%
Willingness to report incidents and errors	40%
Employee safety performance*	37%

*Denotes dimensions that have a strong correlation with safety culture maturity (Pearson Correlation ≥0.70).

Based on a separate study of 73 organisational sites. See our 'Driving a Positive Safety Culture' study for more detail, available at *sentis.com.au/insights*

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Why Reward & Recognition?

Average Upwards Perception Ratings of Safety Leadership

Actively Caring 4.69
Supporting 4.58
Role Modelling 4.57
Collaborating 4.56
Vision 4.54
Challenging 4.44
Inspiring 4.41
Recognising 3.99
Overall 4.47

negative perception (<4) · fair perception (4-5) · positive perception (>5)

8 SAFETY LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

RECOGNISING · SUPPORTING · CHALLENGING · ROLE MODELLING · INSPIRING · VISION · COLLABORATING · ACTIVELY CARING

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8 Steps to Building a Culture of Recognition

1. *Identify the positive safety behaviours* the organisation wants to see.

2. *Make a list* of the types of recognition/reward available. By aligning your employee engagement strategies to human motivation drivers, you tap into dopamine reward loops and create a lasting positive feeling.

3. *Spend time in the field* with your team and actively look for opportunities to recognise/reward.

4. When you observe positive behaviours, consider the individual or work group and select the reward/recognition *they would value most.*

5. *Take action* to recognise the behaviour as soon as possible.

6. *Be genuine –* insincere feedback is often worse than no feedback at all*.*

7. *Foster peer to peer recognition –* Give team members a platform to recognise others up, down and across the business.

8. *Identify and address safety conflicts –* Ask where people feel like the business is pulling them in opposite directions.
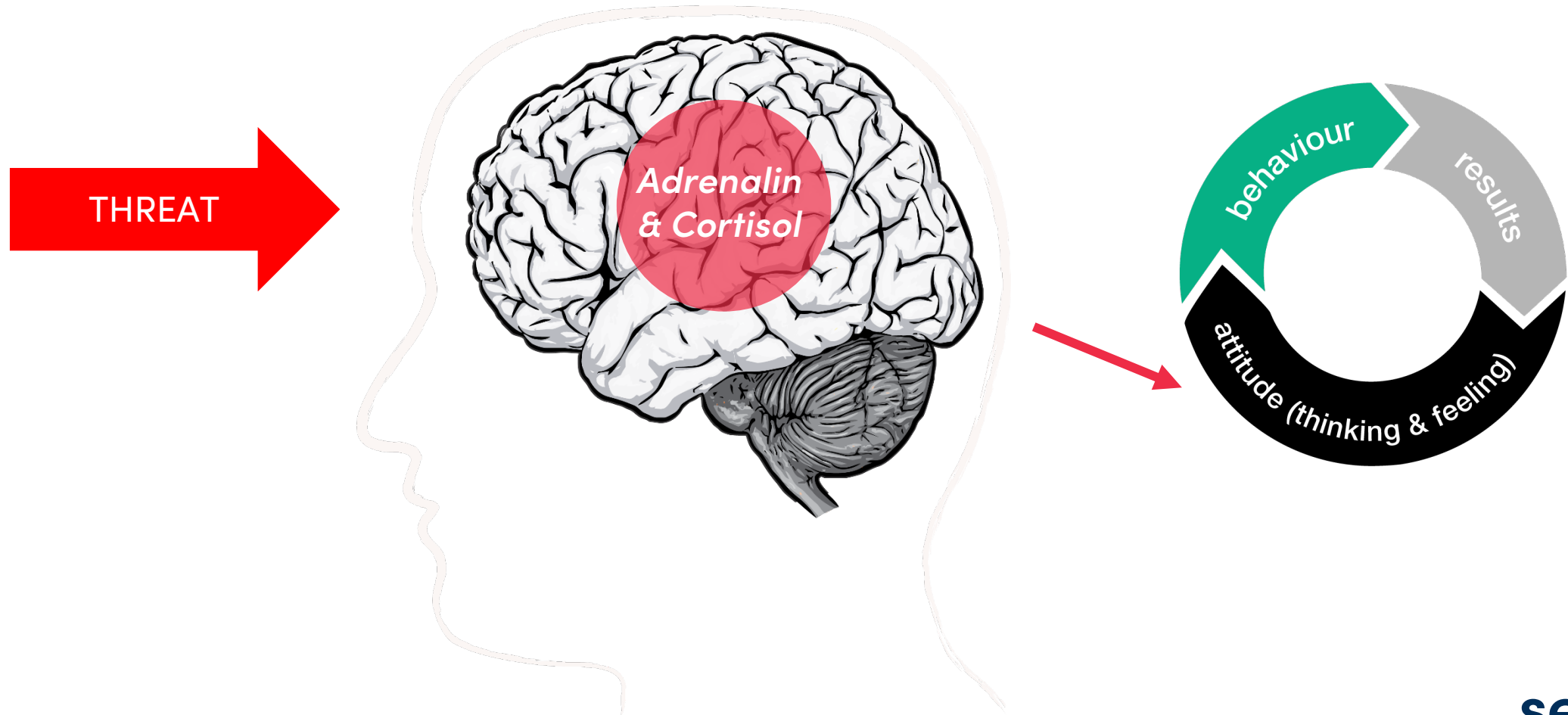
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What have you
seen work well?

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Managing Mistakes and Errors

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The Importance of Managing Mistakes

- Mistakes are inevitable

- How leaders react to mistakes can set the organisational culture

- A culture of blame leads to resentment, distrust, withholding information and a lack of accountability

- When leaders respond without blame, they can create a culture of learning and continuous improvement
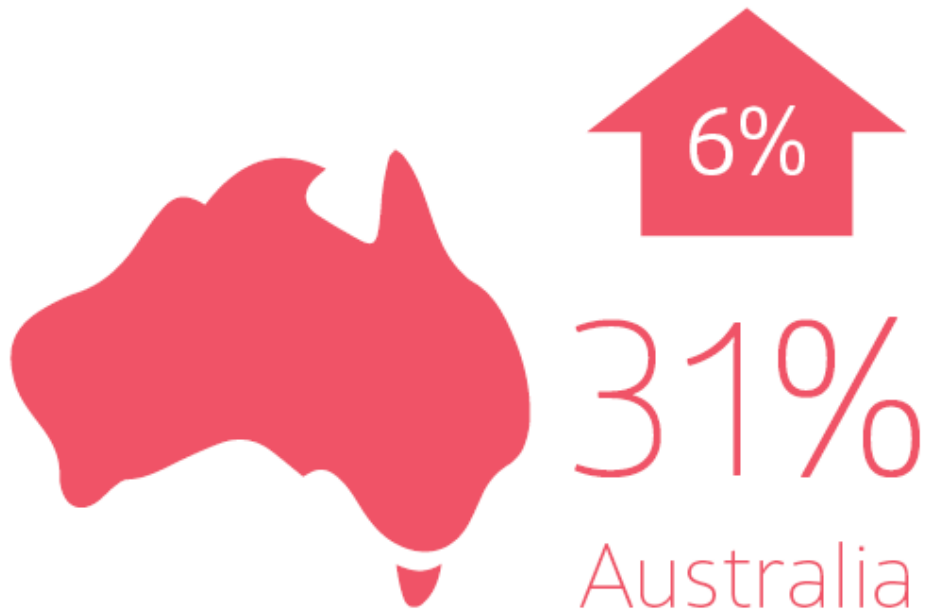
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Why can Admitting a Mistake or Error be Perceived as a THREAT to our Social Brain?

THREAT

Adrenalin & Cortisol

behaviour

results

attitude (thinking & feeling)

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"

Reporting culture as an indicator of how people experience how mistakes are dealt with

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Incidents Unreported

6%

31%
Australia

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Driver 1: Underappreciation

I took care of the problem myself

38%

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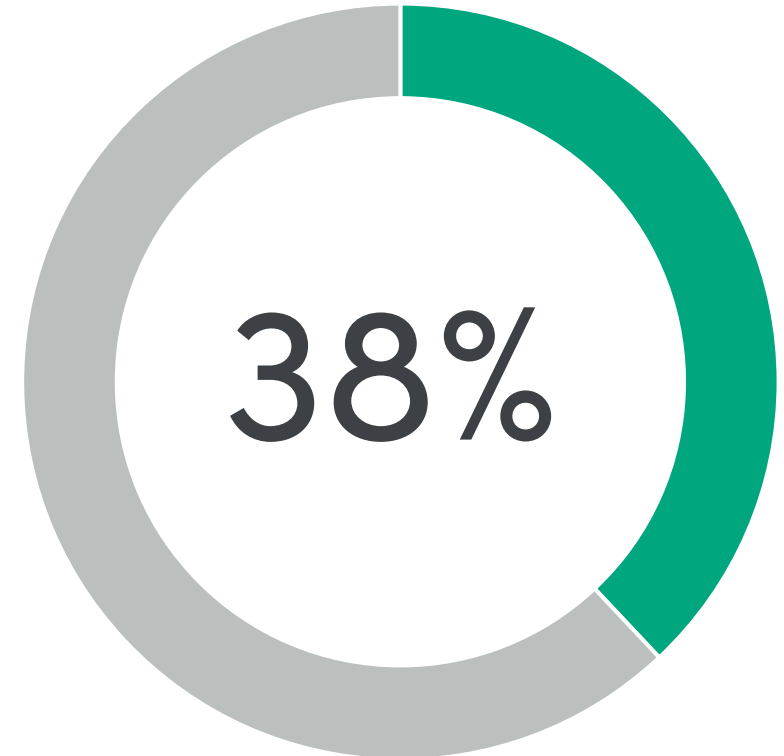
Driver 2: Fear

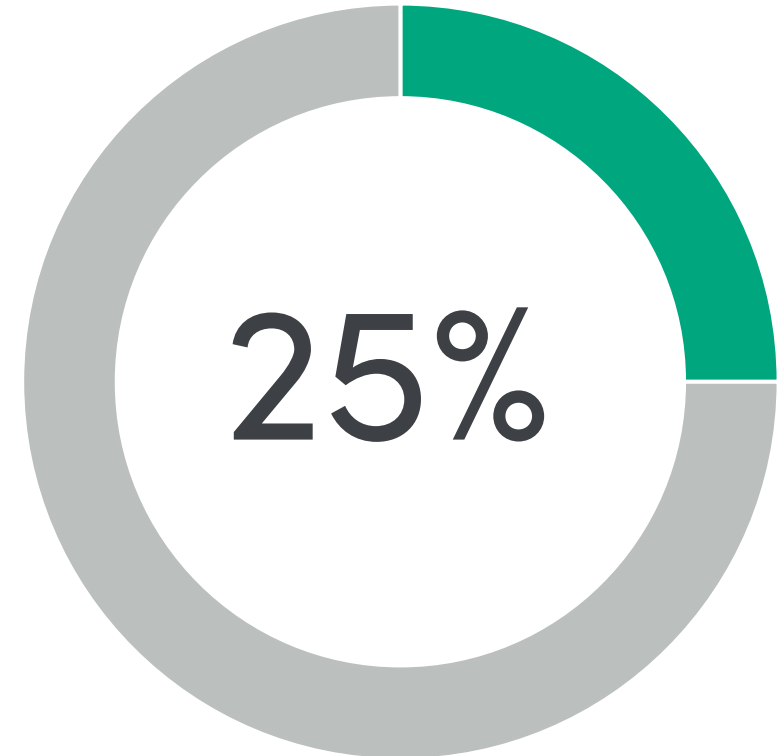"Putting stuff into [the reporting system] can be like putting your head in a noose"

37%

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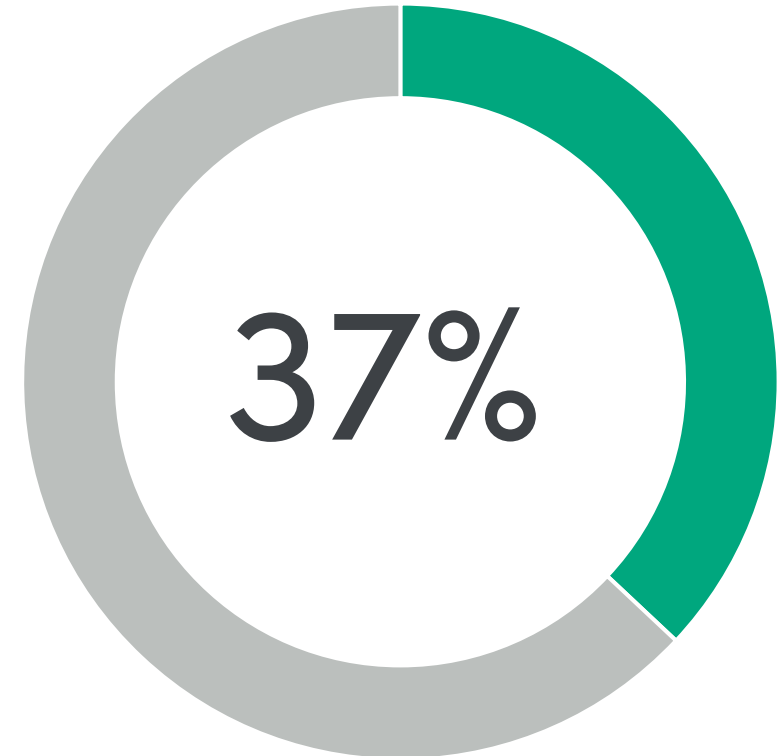
Driver 3: Process

> *If you've ever gone to an ICAM, you'll think twice about reporting next time*

25%

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Top Tips

❑ Stay down the ladder of assumption

❑ Make it easy to report

❑ Create an investigation culture that doesn't seek to attribute blame

❑ Reward transparent discussion

❑ Focus on process improvement

❑ Hold people to account for wilfully or repeatedly make unsafe choices

❑ Hold systems to account

❑ Try to create a culture where mistakes are expected, accepted and used as learning opportunities

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Employee Input in Decision Making

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Why is a Lack of Opportunities to Provide Input Perceived as a THREAT?

Employees may feel like:

- They have no control over how to do their job

- They have limited control over their safety

- Their opinion is not valued or important therefore they are not valued or important

- Their leader/employee doesn't think they are capable/intelligent/experienced enough to make decisions

- They are not trusted to make decisions

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Top Tips

- ❑ Create opportunities for people to have input

- ❑ Give employees notice of the opportunity early, allowing them time to think and bring solutions to the table

- ❑ Conduct problem solving sessions

- ❑ Seek diversity

- ❑ Senior leaders speak last

- ❑ Don't underestimate the effort involved in using a suggestion box

- ❑ Don't make employees feel wrong

- ❑ Make it safe

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CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS SAFE FOR *INTERPERSONAL* RISK TAKING

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Tips to Creating a Great Input Environment

Seek to understand

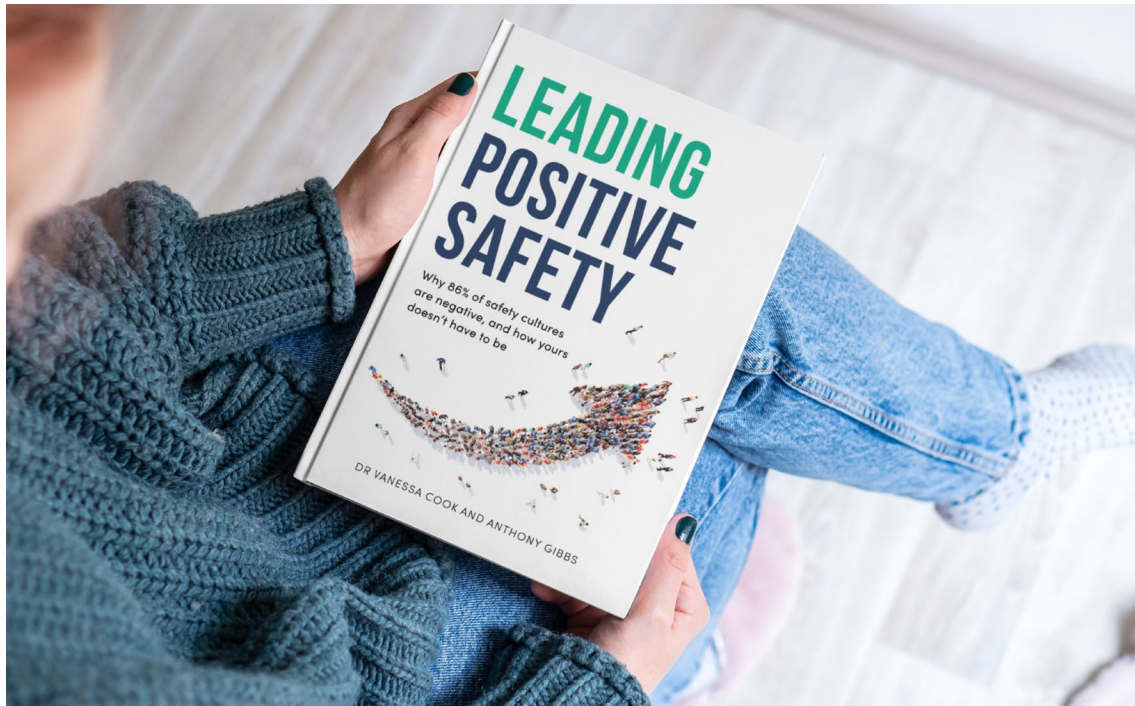Define a goal that everyone can get behind
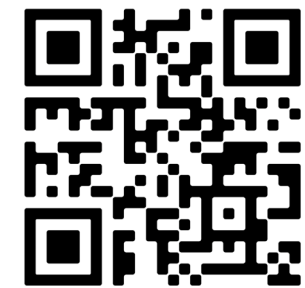
Give time to prepare

Give permission and recognise

Address group think, create safety

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Keep the Conversation Going – Join our Positive Safety Community!

The Positive Safety Community offers a treasure trove of resources, tools and opportunities tailored to your safety career development needs.

Scan the QR code or visit positivesafetycommunity.com.au/register

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