



# INTRODUCING SIGNaI

An organisational intervention to manage psychosocial hazards in the workplace through the development of high-relational leadership competencies

Centre for Work  
+ Wellbeing  
STRATEGIC RESEARCH CENTRE



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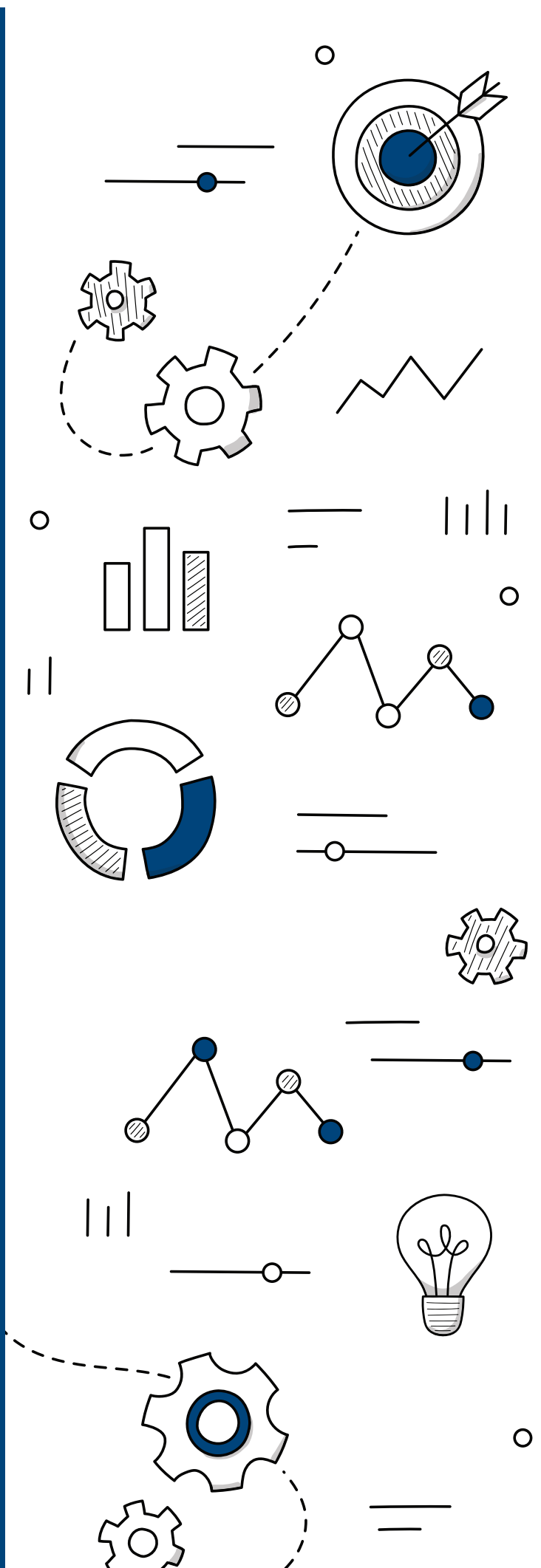
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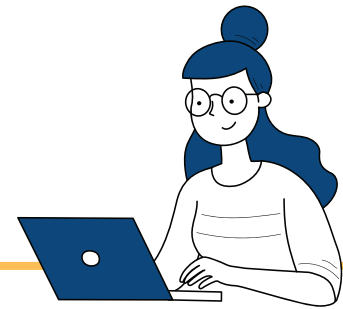
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# ABOUT SIGNaI



## WHAT IS SIGNaI?

**SIGNaI** is an evidence-based organisational intervention that activates high-relational leadership competencies for line-managers and team leaders. Its goal is to enhance employee wellbeing.

## RATIONALE FOR SIGNaI

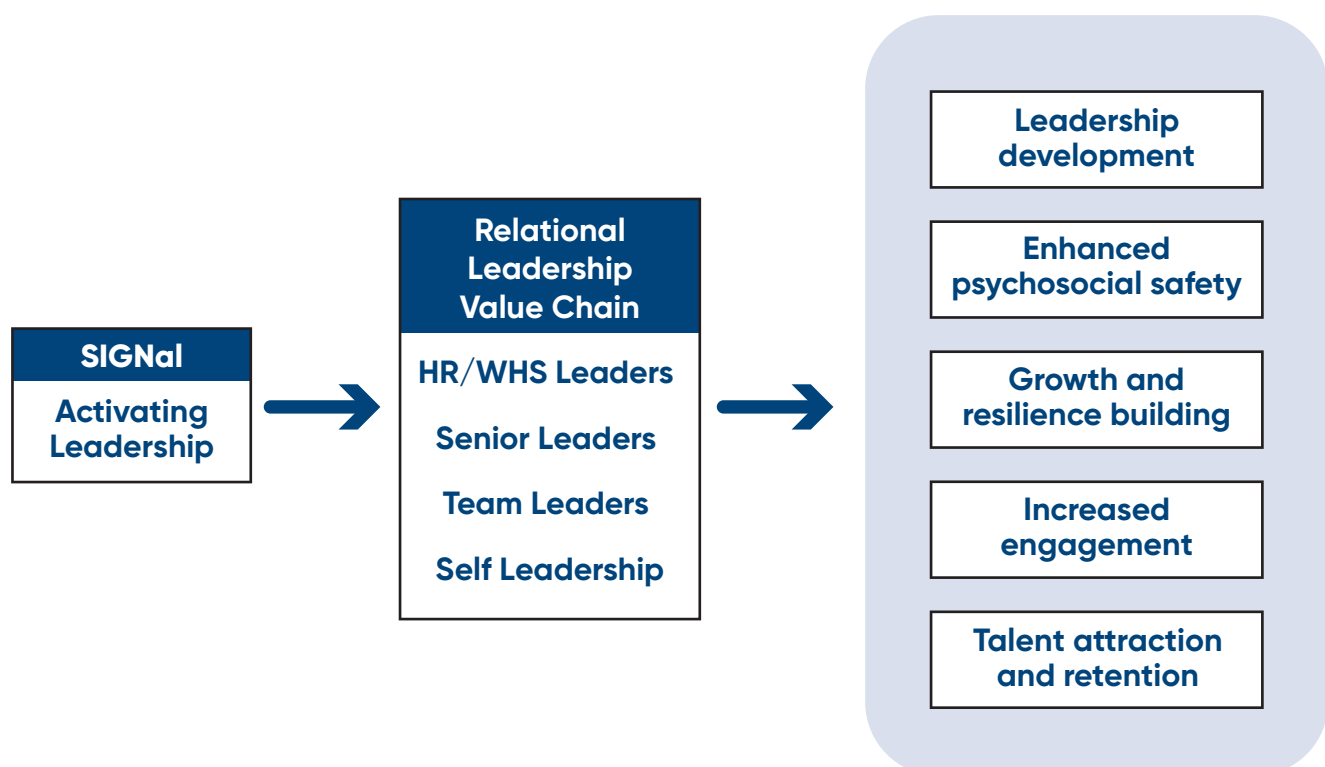
The **SIGNaI** intervention is a response to findings from Centre for Work + Wellbeing research across multiple projects examining the changing demands on organisations and their employees brought about through rapid and turbulent change, COVID-19 restrictions on work, and the limited ability of leaders to effectively manage these demands. The initiative is also motivated by the limitations of currently utilised approaches to promoting employee wellbeing through the management of psychosocial hazards, which typically focus on the individual rather than the causes of poor mental health.

Psychosocial hazards are factors in the design or management of work that increase the risk of psychological or physical harm.

Following recent legislative changes, there are now legal obligations to manage psychosocial hazards in the workplace under the new Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA) for Persons Conducting a Business or Undertakings (PCBUs). Our recent research has indicated that organisations find the management of psychosocial hazards challenging, with little or no practical guidance available. **SIGNaI** is designed as an organisational intervention that addresses psychosocial hazards at the line-manager/team leader level, as these leaders play a key role in the design and management of work.

## THE VALUE PROPOSITION OFFERED BY SIGNaI

Acting through intervention delivered across the 'relational leadership value chain', **SIGNaI** provides value through cost savings in the key areas of: **employee attraction and retention** – the employee value proposition of leadership development; and reduced **stress leave, absenteeism and compensation** associated with unmanaged psychosocial hazards. Most importantly, **SIGNaI** delivers benefits to the bottom line through **effective people and performance management**.

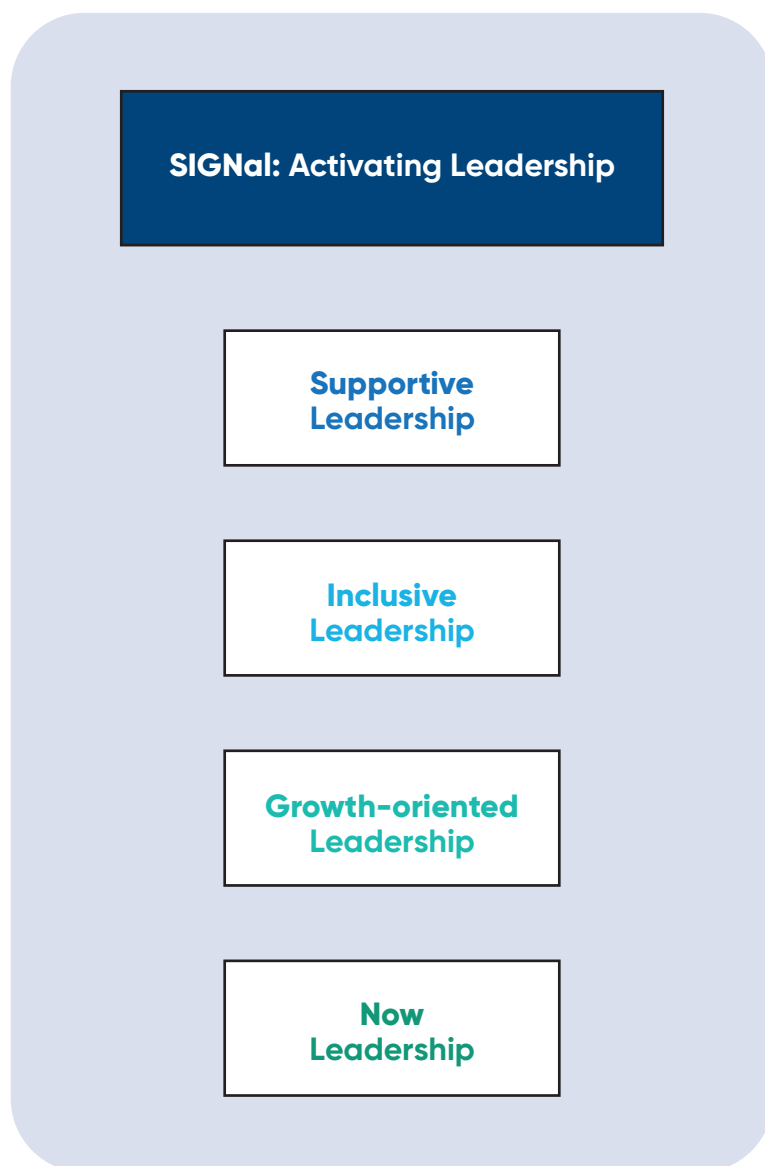


# UNPACKING SIGNaI

**SIGNaI** is an *evidence-based approach* to managing psychosocial hazards and associated employee mental health and wellbeing through enhancing high-relational leadership competencies.

**SIGNaI** is an organisational intervention that activates leadership competencies across the program's four related elements. Advancement for each of the elements will be achieved through a combination of interactive workshops and self-learning utilising SIGNaI's interactive activities, case studies and multimedia-resources, and self-assessment of SIGNaI competency development.

The initial SIGNaI intervention is completed across four intensive interactive workshop sessions, followed by a period of activation and continuous improvement. Evaluation is built into the SIGNaI intervention. Advancement for each element of SIGNaI across this period is self-assessed using the **SIGNaI Maturity Model**.



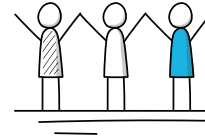


**SIGNal has the following elements:**



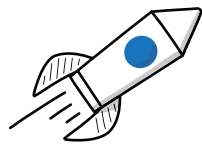
## 1. Supportive

Leaders develop relational leadership competencies and strategies for connecting with, coordinating, and supporting their team wherever they are working, including workers based at home and those with vulnerabilities. Competencies include strategies for navigating personal and emotional issues arising through their interaction with team members. This strategy can proactively manage psychosocial risks such as social isolation, work-family conflict, job insecurity, and role clarity, as well as providing support to vulnerable workers in the team.



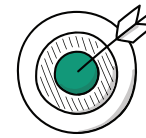
## 2. Inclusive

Leaders develop competencies and strategies for the development of an inclusive team climate, utilising inclusive leadership approaches that recognise uniqueness and enhance excellence in diversity management, team trust in the leader, and team belonging. This approach is fundamental to managing interpersonal psychosocial hazards such as bullying and sexual harassment, while providing support to team members and creating a psychologically safety work climate.



## 3. Growth-oriented

Through recognition of potential and achievement, leaders develop resilience building competencies and strategies for both their own growth and that of their team members. These capacities help members to maintain wellbeing and performance during periods of high job demands and grow as a result of such experiences. This strategy can help promote personal and team resilience and coping resources and reduce the risk of harm from psychosocial hazards.



## 4. Now oriented

*New ways of working require new ways of leading.* Leaders develop competencies and strategies for outcomes-based performance management relevant to today's workplace, setting goals for performance in partnership with workers and providing feedback at appropriate points. This strategy is crucial where leaders need to develop trust and where workers are based at home or in remote work situations. Leaders enhance their skillset around virtual leadership for their team members who work remotely or alone, in leading older members of their team effectively to maintain a sustainable ageing workforce, and to developing effective ways to lead through changes to work brought about through new technologies.

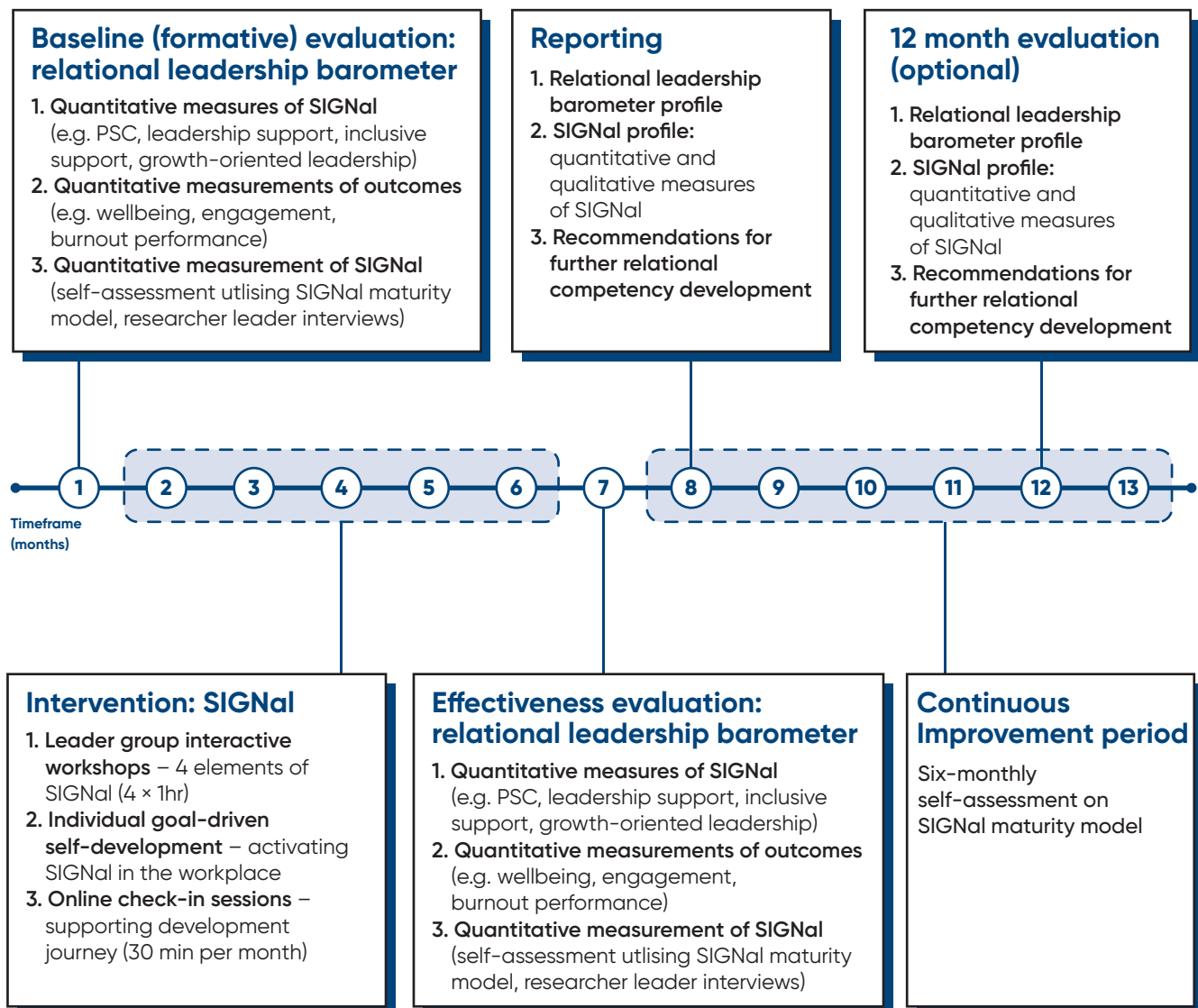
# IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING THE SIGNaI INTERVENTION

The **SIGNaI** intervention is implemented across line-managers from participating organisations utilising an on-line leadership forum and virtual developmental workshops. Prior to commencing the intervention, the researchers engage with the participating organisation to contextualise the implementation strategy through a co-design process.

Progress in competency development through engagement with **SIGNaI** is facilitated and supported by the research team through monthly check-in sessions.

Comprehensive effectiveness evaluation of the intervention will be undertaken utilising the Centre for Work + Wellbeing's **Relational Leadership Barometer**. Participating teams and organisations also self-evaluate their advancement for each of the Program's four elements using the **SIGNaI Maturity Model**.

## The SIGNaI process:



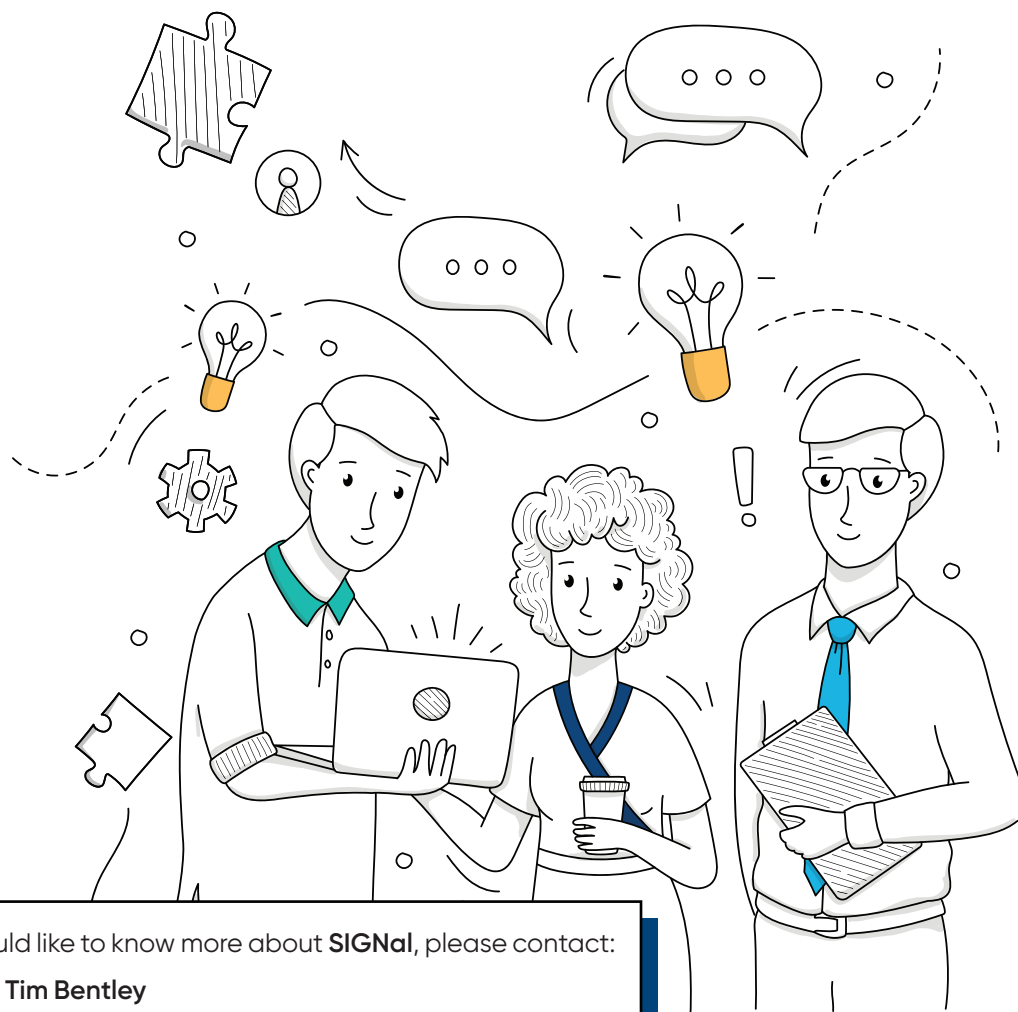
# IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT

The SIGNal intervention is positioned at the intersection of cutting edge-scholarly research and a pressing industry need designed to enhance productivity, as well as employee safety and wellbeing.

Australia continues to lag behind the OECD average in relation to labour productivity<sup>1</sup>, and the proportion of serious compensation claims due to Mental stress in Australia has increased from 5.8% in 2014-15 to 8.6% in 2019-19<sup>2</sup>.

Leading consultants, think tanks and workforce representatives including the Grattan Institute, the Australian Public Service Commission, Mercer, are calling for new leadership capability frameworks that focus on inclusion, communication and emotional balance.

**SIGNal** equips workplace managers and leaders with the capabilities necessary to drive positive workplace through a strong focus on effective workforce management techniques that enhance both positive mental health and performance.



If you would like to know more about **SIGNal**, please contact:

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1. <https://www.oecd.org/sdd/productivity-stats/>

2. <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-11/CPM%2023%20-%20Work%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Performance.pdf>

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