PRRR™ PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK SERIES

PRRR-04 · Executive Psychosocial Risk Governance

Product Overview

Audience: Executives, directors and senior managers · Duration: 90–120 minutes

Version 1.0 · 30 October 2026

Executives decide the resourcing, structure and priorities that create or remove psychosocial exposure across the organisation. This briefing equips them to oversee the risk, ask the right questions, and recognise when reporting is telling them nothing.

Built on Book 1 of the series, chapter 19, Governance and the executive question. Executives compare a typical green board paper with the same organisation reported properly, and work through a restructure that went wrong, stage by stage.

Learning outcomes

- Describe the governance responsibilities for psychosocial risk, and how officer duties differ between jurisdictions
- Explain how organisational decisions on resourcing, structure and change create or reduce exposure
- Interpret psychosocial risk reporting critically, and recognise reporting that tells them nothing
- Distinguish leading from lagging indicators, and know the limits of each
- Recognise and respond to a significant control failure
- Accept exposure only knowingly: named, owned and time-limited
- Set clear accountability for psychosocial risk controls, and ask 'how do you know?'

Session outline

Part	Covers
1. The green paper	What boards typically receive, and what it hides
2. What governance requires	Three things to know; four questions and 'how do you know?'; officer duties by jurisdiction; materiality; accepting exposure knowingly
3. Reporting	What the board should receive; Activity 1, read the report; leading and lagging indicators
4. Assurance	The green dashboard; the implementation moment; is your assurance real; Activity 2, the restructure
5. Close	The executive question set; knowledge check; commitments

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What is in the package

Folder	Contents
01_START_HERE	Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information
02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION	Training Presentation: the executive briefing (.pptx with speaker notes, and PDF)
03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE	Facilitator Guide (.docx and PDF), Session Plan
04_PARTICIPANT_RESOURCES	Participant Workbook: the executive briefing workbook (.docx and PDF)
05_ACTIVITIES_AND_ASSESSMENTS	Risk Reporting Example (PDF), Governance Scenario, Knowledge Assessment, Assessment Answers (PDF)
06_WORKPLACE_TOOLS	Assurance Checklist, Board Report Template (editable)
07_TRAINING_ADMINISTRATION	Attendance Register (.xlsx), Completion Certificate Template, Training Evaluation

Document control

Item	Detail
Product	PRRR-04 Executive Psychosocial Risk Governance
Document	Product Overview
Version	1.0
Status	Released
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Executive Psychosocial Risk Governance

What the board needs to know, and how to know it is true.

[Insert organisation name] · [Insert date]

04

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What this briefing is, and is not

This briefing is

- ✓ About governing a material risk
- ✓ About the decisions only executives make
- ✓ About what to receive, and what to ask
- ✓ Practical: your own reporting, tested

This briefing is not

- ✗ A wellbeing program pitch
- ✗ Mental health awareness for leaders
- ✗ Legal advice
- ✗ A replacement for your WHS or risk advisers

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Today

Part	What it covers	Time
1. The green paper	What boards typically receive, and what it hides	15 min
2. What governance requires	Three things to know; four questions and a fifth; duties; materiality; accepting exposure	20 min
3. Reporting	What the board should receive; Activity 1, read the report	25 min
4. Assurance	Verification; the green dashboard; Activity 2, the restructure	25 min
5. Close	Knowledge check; the question set; your next report	15 min

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PART 1

The green paper

What boards typically receive

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A line from a board paper

> **“Psychosocial risk. Managed through our wellbeing strategy. Engagement score 7.2, up from 7.0. EAP utilisation 4.1%. Mental health first aid officers trained across all sites. Status: Green.”**

Four facts, all true, and a colour.

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Executive Briefing Workbook

Duration: 90–120 minutes

Name: _____

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How to use this workbook

A short companion to the briefing. Make notes, use it for the two activities, and keep the executive question set at the back.

- Describe the governance responsibilities for psychosocial risk, and how officer duties differ between jurisdictions
- Explain how organisational decisions on resourcing, structure and change create or reduce exposure
- Interpret psychosocial risk reporting critically, and recognise reporting that tells them nothing
- Distinguish leading from lagging indicators, and know the limits of each
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Part 1. The green paper

Psychosocial risk. Managed through our wellbeing strategy. Engagement score 7.2, up from 7.0. EAP utilisation 4.1%. Mental health first aid officers trained across all sites. Status: Green.

The paper says	What it actually tells you
Engagement score 7.2, up from 7.0	A sentiment measure, moving within its own margin of error
EAP utilisation 4.1%	Neither good nor bad without knowing what it would be if things were going well
Mental health first aid officers trained	Real, and a support arrangement. Not a control
Status: Green	A judgement nobody in the room can test

What the board has not been told:

- Which roles carry the highest psychosocial exposure
- Whether any control has ever been verified
- How long the oldest open grievance has been running

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- Whether anybody has been harmed

Part 2. What governance requires

The board must know	Which means
What the material exposures are	Not categories. Which roles, doing what work, under what conditions, and how many people
Whether the controls relied on are working	Not whether they exist. Whether anybody has tested them, when, and what the test found
What is changing	Because most of what changes the exposure happens for reasons unconnected to safety

Four questions, and a fifth

1. What are we doing to stop harm occurring?
2. What happens when exposure occurs anyway?
3. How do we help people recover safely, and make sure it does not happen to them again?
4. What do we learn, and what changes as a result?
5. How do you know?

Duties, in outline

	In outline
Harmonised WHS jurisdictions	Officers have a positive duty to exercise due diligence (model WHS Act s27). Its elements include keeping up-to-date knowledge of WHS matters; understanding the operations and their hazards and risks; ensuring appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risk; ensuring processes for receiving and responding to information about incidents, hazards and risks; ensuring processes for complying with duties; and verifying that those resources and processes are provided and used.
Victoria	No positive due diligence duty. Under the OHS Act 2004 (s144), an officer can be liable where an offence by the company is attributable to the officer's failure to take reasonable care. The employer's general duty covers psychological health, and the Psychological Health Regulations require the work itself to be changed where it can be: information, instruction and training cannot be the main control.
Who is an officer	Broadly, a person who makes or participates in decisions affecting the whole or a substantial part of the organisation. Most supervisors and many managers are not officers.

The law that applies here: _____ Am I an officer? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Ask

What makes an exposure material

- Serious harm is reasonably foreseeable from the exposure
- It affects a significant number of people, or a whole role or site
- A critical control for it is unverified, ineffective or not in place
- It has already produced harm, and the control decision arising has not been implemented
- The organisation has knowingly accepted it
- It arises from a decision the board itself made: a restructure, a funding decision, a service change

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Activity 1. Read the report

The same organisation, in the same quarter as the green paper, reported properly.

Psychosocial risk: quarterly report

Material exposures

Role	Holders	Exposure	Current rating
Customer Service Officer, service centre	4	Face-to-face public contact, several aggressive interactions weekly since the March fee change, no physical separation, no supervisor on site after 3pm	Extreme
Case Coordinator, community services	5 positions, 3 filled	Caseload 44 to 51 against guidance of 32, sustained 19 months, no authority to refuse or defer allocation	Extreme
Payroll Officer	3 of 5	Fortnightly immovable deadline, two vacancies held 7 and 3 months, no deferral authority	High

Critical control status

Control	Status	Last verified	Result
Minimum staffing at public counter	In place, ineffective	14 Oct	Single-staffed on 9 occasions in the quarter
Duress communication, 2-minute response	In place, not verified	Never	No test register exists
Caseload ceiling	Not in place	n/a	No ceiling defined
Vacancy backfill standard	Not in place	n/a	
Escalation producing a decision in 5 days	In place, ineffective	2 Nov	4 escalations, 1 documented decision

Overdue verification	4 of 5 critical controls have never been verified or were last verified outside their required frequency
Accepted exposures	Payroll team operating at 3 of 5 under a recruitment freeze. Accepted by the Chief Financial Officer, 14 March. Review overdue since 14 September
Open matters by age	12 open. Median 7 weeks. Oldest 14 months: a bullying matter in which the complainant has been on leave throughout
Claims	1 accepted psychological injury claim this quarter. Reviewed as a control failure: no
Changes approved this quarter	3. Assessed for psychosocial exposure before approval: 0
What changed as a result of review	Nothing

One page. No sentiment measure. No colour.

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