

1 in 2 Australians Facing Workplace Burnout - Young Adults and Caregivers Leading the Trend

Burnout is commonly experienced by Australian workers, with new Beyond Blue data finding it's the country's young people and parents who are most at risk.

A community poll* commissioned by Beyond Blue found that half of people surveyed had experienced burnout in the last year, with those aged 18-29 years experiencing the highest rates.

The primary drivers of burnout among young people included inappropriate workload (38%), lack of management support (25%), and inflexible working conditions (24%).

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman AO said despite their shorter tenure in the workforce, there's a lot going on for our young people.

"High rates of burnout sit in the wider context of constant change, disruption and uncertainty," Ms Harman said.

"Young people face compounding pressures and concerns including housing affordability issues, cost of living pressures, climate change and rising loneliness.

"We need a re-think in how we support the mental health of our young people, including how workplaces can reduce the risk of burnout early in their working lives," Ms Harman said.

While the sample for small business owners (SBOs) was small, the data suggested that SBOs were the *employment type* most likely to be experiencing burnout in the last 12 months, with 35% often or always feeling burnt out in the last 12 months, compared to 26% of full-time employees, 18% of part-time employees, 11% of those who are self-employed, and 11% of casual employees.

In addition, 89% of SBOs also reported feeling burnt out from work in the past at least sometimes (sometimes, often, always), compared to 67% of full-time workers.

Ms Harman said, SBOs are the backbone of our economy, and they should be looked after.

"We owe it to them, their families, their employees, and their communities," she said.

"Small businesses employ almost half the private sector workforce, yet they operate in a unique and often challenging context, facing financial pressures, isolation, and long working hours.

"These factors, combined with limited access to resources and mental health support, create a perfect storm for mental ill-health."

Across all ages, the poll also found:

- The primary drivers of burnout included inappropriate workload (49%), lack of management support (32%), and inflexible working conditions (21%).
- Burnout was closely linked to feelings of loneliness and exclusion at work, with 50% of those who always feel burnt out also reporting loneliness at work often or always.
- Around 1 in 3 workers didn't feel they could talk to their manager about feeling burnt out – they feared negative consequences for their job or promotion opportunities, they didn't want to be seen as weak or incapable, or they just wanted to handle it privately.

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- Nearly 1 in 2 people who experience burnout do not seek professional support for it.
- 2 in 5 workers were unsatisfied or had low satisfaction with what their workplace was doing to reduce burnout in staff, while only 1 in 5 workers was highly satisfied with what their workplace was doing to reduce burnout in staff.
- Survey respondents wanted support that addressed the root-causes of burnout; reduced workloads (41%), more staff and resources (28%), and more support from their manager (23%).

Burnout can leave people feeling exhausted, feeling negative about – or less connected to – the work they do, and reduces personal efficacy, so people feel like they're achieving less than normal.

"Burnout is never a personal failing," Ms Harman said.

"Burnout is the result of someone facing too many demands, for too long, without enough support. It's a process of someone being worn down to the point they shut down."

The latest data also showed that around 1 in 2 people were experiencing burnout for non-paid work activities, with the top reason attributable to family and parenting responsibilities.

Anxiety and burnout had manifested themselves to the point where single mum and **Beyond Blue lived experience speaker Peta Sitcheff** could no longer physically or mentally function.

"I would get in the car to go to work and my hands were shaking so violently on the steering wheel I simply couldn't drive," she said.

"Seven years ago, I abruptly left my corporate sales job in the medical device industry. Not because I wanted to, I simply had no choice – the bad days had been outweighing the good for months."

In 2003, Peta started a job she can only describe as an *education in life*.

"I was a corporate athlete, managing the prosthesis needs of 20 of Melbourne's neurosurgeons. I was part of their surgical team and spent most of my time in the operating room. I worked when they worked," she said.

"For more than 13 years I was on-call 24/7. Patients never presented neatly between 9am-5pm."

The other side of Peta's role was the work pressure and looming sales targets.

"You couldn't take your foot off the pedal because you had a sales target to hit. If you didn't, you wouldn't be paid," she said.

"As a single mum, that wasn't an option."

Juggling corporate and customer demands left Peta physically depleted and living in a constant state of hypervigilance.

"My life came to a screeching halt. I was instructed not to work for six months," Ms Sitcheff said.

"As I recovered, I realised my priorities had shifted and life needed to look different. I needed to find a sustainable, professional life which worked for my son while also prioritising my wellbeing needs."

Today, Peta is much more self-aware.

"I live life more outside than in – nature is my greatest inspiration. My laptop rarely opens after 5pm and my mobile phone is a tool for my convenience, not everyone else's," the self-employed coach said.

"Today, I'm the mum I always wanted to be. I wouldn't have had that chance if I continued life the way it was."

Ms Harman said understanding burnout at home and at work helps people to act sooner and protect their health.

“In the work context, while there have been significant improvements to elevate mental health at work, there is more work to be done.

“[Beyond Blue](#) has been a leader in workplace mental health for more than 20 years. Our latest offering is a unique early intervention service, [Before Blue](#) – that provides proven mental health support for workers.

“It’s never too late to reach out for support, but it’s better to address stress before it reaches the point of burnout,” she said.

**The community poll was commissioned by Beyond Blue and surveyed a sample of 1,000 people nationally representative for age, gender and state/territory in June, 2025.*

ENDS

Beyond Blue Support Service available 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au/getsupport
Beyond Blue resources re: Work and mental health: www.beyondblue.org.au/mental-health/work
Before Blue: www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/before-blue
National Debt Helpline [1800 007 007](https://1800007007.org.au) or ndh.org.au
Small Business Debt Helpline 1800 413 828 or sbdh.org.au
Workplace Wellbeing business.vic.gov.au/business-information/workplace-wellbeing

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Talent

- Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman AO
- Lived experience Peta Sitcheff (VIC-based)

Background

Burnout and mental health

- According to the community poll*, nearly half of people had experienced burn out in the last year.
- Burnout has been found to be widespread among Australians this year, with cost-of-living pressures, family demands, and increased workloads leading to high levels of stress and anxiety.
- Burnout has been recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an occupational phenomenon.
- Nearly 1 in 5 people experience poor mental health each year, and almost half of us will experience poor mental health during our lives. Various settings, including workplaces, homes, and communities, are key to improving and supporting mental health.
- Beyond Blue’s Burnout check-in tool: www.beyondblue.org.au/mental-health/work/burnout/burnout-check-in-tool

Before Blue

- Launched in 2024, Before Blue is a tailored mental health support service adapted from Beyond Blue’s [NewAccess Program](#) to support workplace mental health, with personalised coaching, as well as content accessed via a specially designed and secure digital platform.
- Employers can learn more about purchasing Before Blue for their employees here: www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/before-blue