

# Where do you sit in workplace wellbeing?

## Examples of bringing together the elements of Workplace wellbeing

Below are examples of three different employers who are at different stages of creating positive workplace culture through the different aspects (mental, physical, cultural, social wellbeing).

### Case Study 1 – Needs Addressing

Jake, an employer at a mid-sized orchard, makes no efforts to create a healthier and more supportive work environment. This leads to employees burning out, getting injured, and feeling unsatisfied at work, and eventually leaving the business.

A few of Jake's employees have been struggling with several issues outside of work that have impacted their overall wellbeing and productivity.

There are several areas that Jake is neglecting that could be quick, low-effort fixes.

#### Mental Wellbeing:

- × Employees have been feeling increasingly stressed and anxious due to the demanding nature of their work. There is no support at work and people feel uncomfortable bringing up mental health support.

#### Cultural wellbeing:

- × Employees from diverse backgrounds do not feel fully included or understood. They feel like they have to hide a part of their identity at work to fit in. Recognising and celebrating cultural events and traditions, such as Matariki, could foster a more inclusive environment.

#### Physical wellbeing:

- × The team has not received proper training on safe working practices, resulting in frequent injuries and fatigue. Improving health and safety training is essential to protect employees' physical wellbeing.

#### Social wellbeing:

- × Employees feel isolated as they haven't formed strong connections with their colleagues. The rural orchard site doesn't help, as the social scene is limited.
- × There is a lack of social activities and team-building exercises that foster strong relationships among staff. Creating opportunities for social interaction and team bonding is necessary.
- × Jake doesn't encourage staff to get connected with their local communities in clubs or collectives.

#### Communications

- × **Lack of team meetings:** The orchard does not have regular team meetings or briefings to ensure everyone understands their tasks, so employees often receive unclear or incomplete instructions, leading to confusion and mistakes.
- × **Weak feedback culture:** Employees rarely receive feedback on their performance, making it hard for them to improve. Without regular check-ins or performance reviews, employees don't know if they're meeting expectations or how they can develop their skills. Implementing a feedback system is essential for employee growth and morale.
- × **No Open-Door Policy:** Employees don't feel comfortable approaching Jake with concerns – he is always perceived as too busy, and not very friendly or easy to start a conversation with.

The lack of an open-door policy means employees' ideas and issues often go unheard, adding to their stress and frustration. Creating a more open and approachable environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their concerns is important.



## Case Study 1 – Needs Addressing

### Buddy system

- ✗ **Lack of Guidance or process:** New hires do not have a designated person to guide them through the initial days. Without a buddy, new hires feel lost and overwhelmed, struggling to learn the ropes on their own. A buddy system would provide much-needed support and guidance.
- ✗ **No Hands-On Training:** New employees do not receive practical training during their induction. The absence of something like a buddy system means new hires miss out on hands-on learning from experienced colleagues, leading to slower skill development and more mistakes. Hands-on training is vital for new hires to learn effectively.
- ✗ **Poor Social Integration:** New hires find it hard to integrate socially with the team. New joiners are somewhat left to figure out the ropes themselves. This means new joiners may feel disconnected for a longer period of time.

## Case Study 2 – Doing Well

Maisie, the owner and manager of a mid-sized pork farm, has made significant strides in noticing issues in the workplace culture, and making changes to support employee wellbeing.

Her efforts have resulted in a more supportive and productive work environment. There is still room for improvement, using tools like communications and buddy systems to get the most out of the culture-building initiatives that are in place. This makes the team more productive and increases job satisfaction.

### Mental Wellbeing:

- ✓ Maisie understands that rural based farmers are at increased risks of mental health issues due to the geographic isolation, small work teams, and the social stigma amongst farmers about mental health challenges.
- ✓ She puts mental health resources in the breakroom and encourages open conversations about mental health.

### Cultural wellbeing:

- ✓ Maisie talks to her team about their cultural backgrounds, and makes an effort to acknowledge and sometimes celebrate relevant cultural events, such as Matariki or Diwali. This helps create an environment where employees feel respected and valued, albeit on a somewhat limited scale.

### Physical wellbeing:

- ✓ Regular health and safety training is conducted to keep everyone safe while conducting day to day tasks, and comply with Worksafe requirements.

### Social wellbeing:

- ✓ Maisie organises a weekly morning tea where all employees chat and connect.
- ✓ Maisie encourages all staff to connect in with the local catchment group.

### Communications

- ✓ **Morning check in:** The farm has a start of shift team huddle to talk through what needs to get done each day, and everyone shares a high and a low from the day before.
- ✓ **Two way radios:** The station uses two-way radios for real-time communication. Every worker has a radio, and they can talk to each other quickly for both routine work and emergencies. This makes the farm safer and more efficient.
- ✓ **Open-Door Policy:** Maisie encourages team members to share their thoughts and concerns anytime. Employees feel comfortable talking to Maisie, and are not scared to ask questions, knowing they will be heard and respected. This builds trust and a positive work culture.



## Case Study 2 – Doing Well

### Buddy system

- ✓ **Warm Welcome:** New hires are paired with experienced buddies who greet them on their first day. The buddy meets the new joiner at the farm gate, introduces them to the team, and shows them around the station, including key areas like the barn, paddocks, and emergency exits.
- ✓ **Hands-On Training:** The buddy provides practical training to the new employee. New hires shadow their buddies for the first few weeks, learning essential tasks such as animal care, machinery operation, and maintenance. This hands-on approach helps them gain confidence and skills quickly.
- ✓ **Social Inclusion:** The buddy invites the new employee to join any social events, which happen occasionally.

## Case Study 3 – Excelling

Liam is owner and station manager of a rural sheep station.

Liam's workplace is a great example of how good communication, a supportive buddy system, and a focus on wellbeing can create a positive and productive work environment.

By going the extra mile, Liam has built a culture where employees feel valued, safe, and motivated, leading to improved productivity and reduced staff turnover.

### Mental Wellbeing:

- ✓ Liam provides access to counselling services and mental health resources. He also organises mindfulness workshops and encourages the team to discuss mental health openly.
- ✓ Liam regularly acknowledges hard work and celebrates team successes. He also encourages a healthy work-life balance, making sure everyone takes breaks and has time off.

### Cultural wellbeing:

- ✓ Liam encourages the team to celebrate cultural events and traditions. He ensures that everyone feels included and respected, regardless of their background.

### Physical wellbeing:

- ✓ Regular health and safety training is conducted to keep everyone safe.
- ✓ Liam arranges for experts to run workshops on topics like first aid, handling livestock safely, and using machinery. This proactive approach reduces accidents and ensures a safe working environment.

### Social wellbeing:

- ✓ Liam set up a monthly mountain bike club – employees that are interested ride together on Friday evenings.
- ✓ Liam encourages staff to always be learning and improving, including asking for feedback regularly. He encourages managers to also create spaces where team members can come to them with feedback, or asking for feedback.

## Case Study 3 – Excelling

### Communications

- ✓ **Morning check in:** Liam starts the day with a brief ten minute team huddle at the main shed. Everyone talks about the day's tasks, any concerns, and shares positive news. This helps everyone know what's happening and where they can pitch in.
- ✓ **Two way radios:** The station uses two-way radios for real-time communication. Every worker has a radio, and they can talk to each other quickly for both routine work and emergencies. This makes the farm safer and more efficient.
- ✓ **Open-Door Policy:** Liam encourages team members to share their thoughts and concerns anytime. Employees feel comfortable talking to Liam, and are not scared to ask questions, knowing they will be heard and respected. This builds trust and a positive work culture.
- ✓ **Monthly Newsletters:** Liam sends out a monthly email newsletter to all employees. The newsletter includes updates on farm activities, employee achievements and celebrations (like birthdays), upcoming events in the local community, and safety reminders. It's a simple way to keep everyone informed and engaged.

### Buddy system

- ✓ **Intentional buddy selection:** Buddies are selected based on Liam's assessment of if they have similar hobbies, similar stage of their working career, and might get on well. Employees are happy to take up a buddy role because they know from experience how it helps you feel part of the team really quickly.
- ✓ **Warm Welcome:** New hires are paired with experienced buddies who greet them on their first day. The buddy meets the new joiner at the farm gate, introduces them to the team, and shows them around the station, including key areas like the barn, paddocks, and emergency exits.
- ✓ **Hands-On Training:** The buddy provides practical training to the new employee. New hires shadow their buddies for the first few weeks, learning essential tasks such as animal care, machinery operation, and maintenance. This hands-on approach helps them gain confidence and skills quickly.
- ✓ **Regular Check-Ins:** Buddies and new hires have regular check-ins to discuss progress and address any concerns. These check-ins happen during breaks or at the end of the day, fostering open communication and continuous support.
- ✓ **Social Inclusion:** As an employer, Liam fosters a sense of community on the station. Liam organises social events like BBQs and after-work gatherings, helping everyone bond. The buddy invites the new employee to join any social events, letting them know when and where they are happening.

