WHAT AUSTRALIA THINKS, FEELS AND DOES AT WORK

The latest insights into workplace trends across Australia for 2024

Ipsos

Introduction

This report offers the latest research into employee experience in Australia.

It explores topics including:
• Are employees proud to work where they do?
• Would they recommend their employer?
• What attracts them or pushes them out the door?

It also prompts employers to reflect on whether they are meeting these needs and expectations.

About Ipsos

Our global team is made up of business psychologists, consultants, project managers, data scientists and content creators, all using their specialist skills to improve employee experience in organisations across the world.

We use the latest research practice and technology to provide accurate, relevant information to some of the world's biggest brands, alongside trusted advisory to help them turn that information into practical actions with transformative outcomes.

We help our clients manage all aspects of the employee experience. We know what matters most in a partner for employee research, strategy and campaigns – that's why so many choose to partner with us today.

About this report

Data from this report comes from research undertaken by Ipsos among a representative sample of 1,000 Australian employees in December 2023.

This icon is used throughout this report when making comparisons to global benchmarks. These benchmarks are from a range of multinational employers and panel surveys conducted by Ipsos Karian and Box.
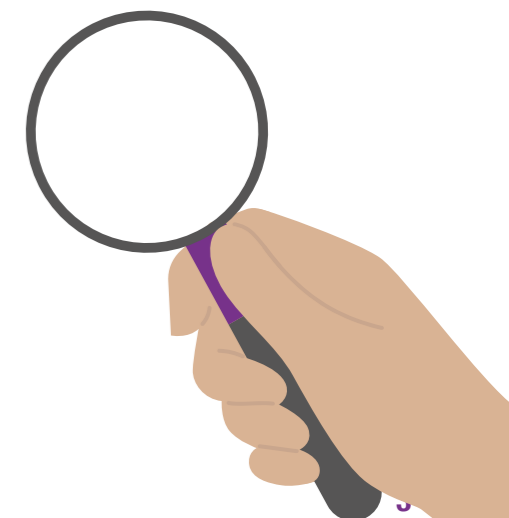
Response breakdown

Gender

45% Man

55% Woman

Age

13% 18–24

27% 25–34

30% 35–44

17% 45–54

13% 55–65

Job role

62% I work in a team and am not a team leader

25% I lead a team

8% I manage people who lead teams

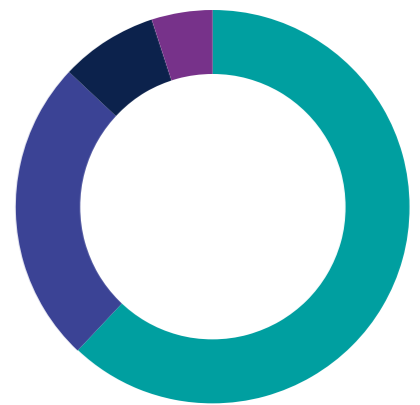**5%** I am a senior leader of my organisation

Headline insights

01 — Pride and advocacy fall below global average

7in10

...are proud to work for their organisation

- 69% are proud to work for their organisation. Pride and advocacy sit 7 and 9 points below the global benchmarks, respectively.
- However, Australia's senior leaders are much more engaged, with four in five saying they would recommend their employer as a place to work.
- 18–24-year-olds are the greatest advocates for their employers, but most likely to consider leaving in the next 2 years.

02 — Not feeling valued creates talent flight risk

30%
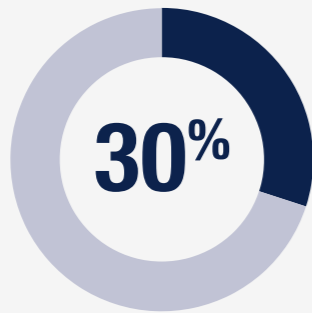
...cite not feeling valued as the main reason to consider leaving their employer

- Among 'flight-risk' employees (planning to leave in the next year), this rises to 38%.
- For this group and the wider population, not feeling valued is the second most common push factor after pay / benefits.
- Overall, 35% of Australia's workforce say they plan to leave their employer in the next 2 years – 15pts higher than the global norm.

03 — Pay and benefits are most common pull towards a new job

63%
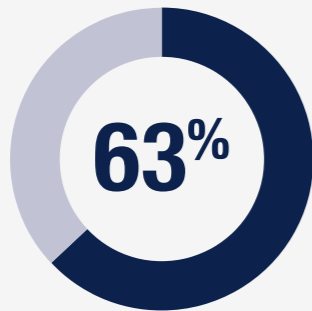
...say pay and benefits are among the most important factors when considering a new job

- This is followed by flexible working opportunities (44%), which is an even greater consideration for women (50%).
- Working location is in third (33%) and grows more important as employees get older – while career opportunities (30% overall) become less important.

04 — Caring, supportive cultures lift advocacy

81%
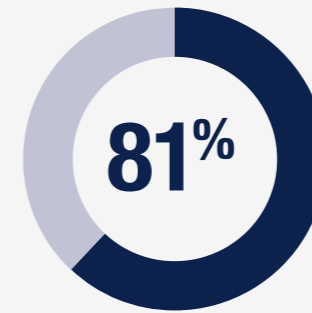
...advocacy among employees who describe a mostly positive culture

- High advocacy is most associated with 'friendly' and 'caring' cultures. The latter is less commonly reported (21%) than the former (34%).
- Organisations with 'hypocritical', 'uninspiring' or 'arrogance'-prone cultures are least recommended.
- Overall, over seven in ten Australians experience a positive workplace culture, 2pts above the global norm.

05 — Execs feel employers are less open to feedback

65%
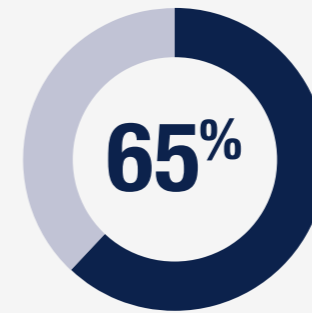
...of Australia's senior leaders feel their employer welcomes honest feedback

- This bucks global trends, with senior leaders far less positive about their employer's listening culture than middle managers (78%).
- Those who feel their employer is open to feedback are far more likely to recommend their organisation as a place to work (+51pts) and feel proud to work there (+55pts).
- Less than half of employees aged 55-65 feel their employer welcomes feedback.

Pride and advocacy solid, but below global norms

Insights

- 69% of employees in Australia feel proud to work for their organisation, while 67% would recommend it as a great place to work.

- Both measures are key to attracting and retaining talent, and both fall below global benchmarks.

- 35% plan to leave their organisation within 2 years – 15pts above the global benchmark.
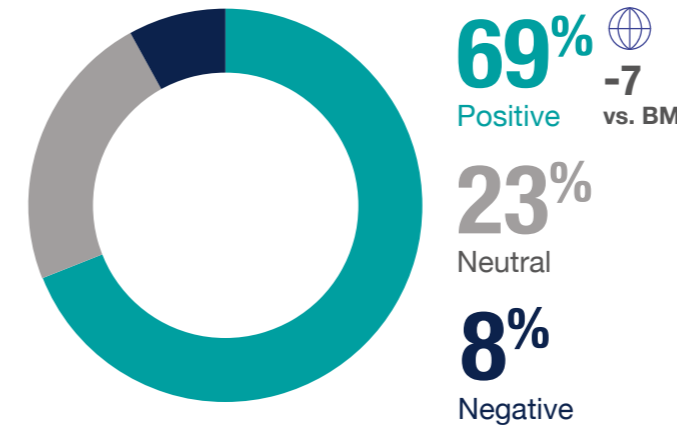
Key population differences

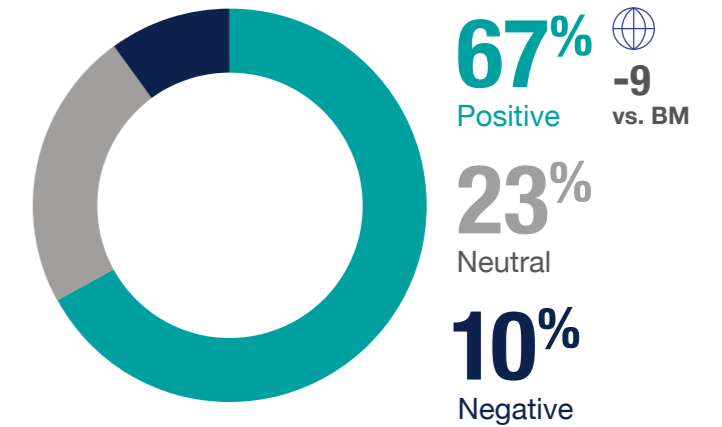| **18**pt	**10**pt	**52**%
drop in advocacy between youngest and oldest employees (77% vs. 59%)	difference in pride between senior leaders and non-managerial employees	of employees aged 18-24 plan to leave in the next 2 years

Implications for employers

- When employees' expectations and experiences align, they can be your biggest advocates in the talent marketplace.

- Pride and advocacy reflect that alignment, or misalignment.

- A well-defined, accurate employee value proposition is an opportunity to match employee expectations and experiences.

- Australia's younger employees have the highest intent to leave in the next 2 years, despite being the greatest advocates for their organisations.

- Are employers doing enough to satisfy young employees' desire for change, so that those with positive experiences don't have to look elsewhere?

I am proud to work for my organisation

69% Positive
🌐 **-7** vs. BM

23% Neutral

8% Negative

I would recommend my employer as a great place to work

67% Positive
🌐 **-9** vs. BM

23% Neutral

10% Negative

I plan to stay working for my employer for:

35% 🌐 **+15** vs. BM

Our research shows between 30–50% of employees who say they will leave, do so.

Proportion (%)

- Under a year: 11%
- 1–2 years: 24%
- 3–5 years: 24%
- More than 5 years: 23%
- For the long term / until I retire: 18%
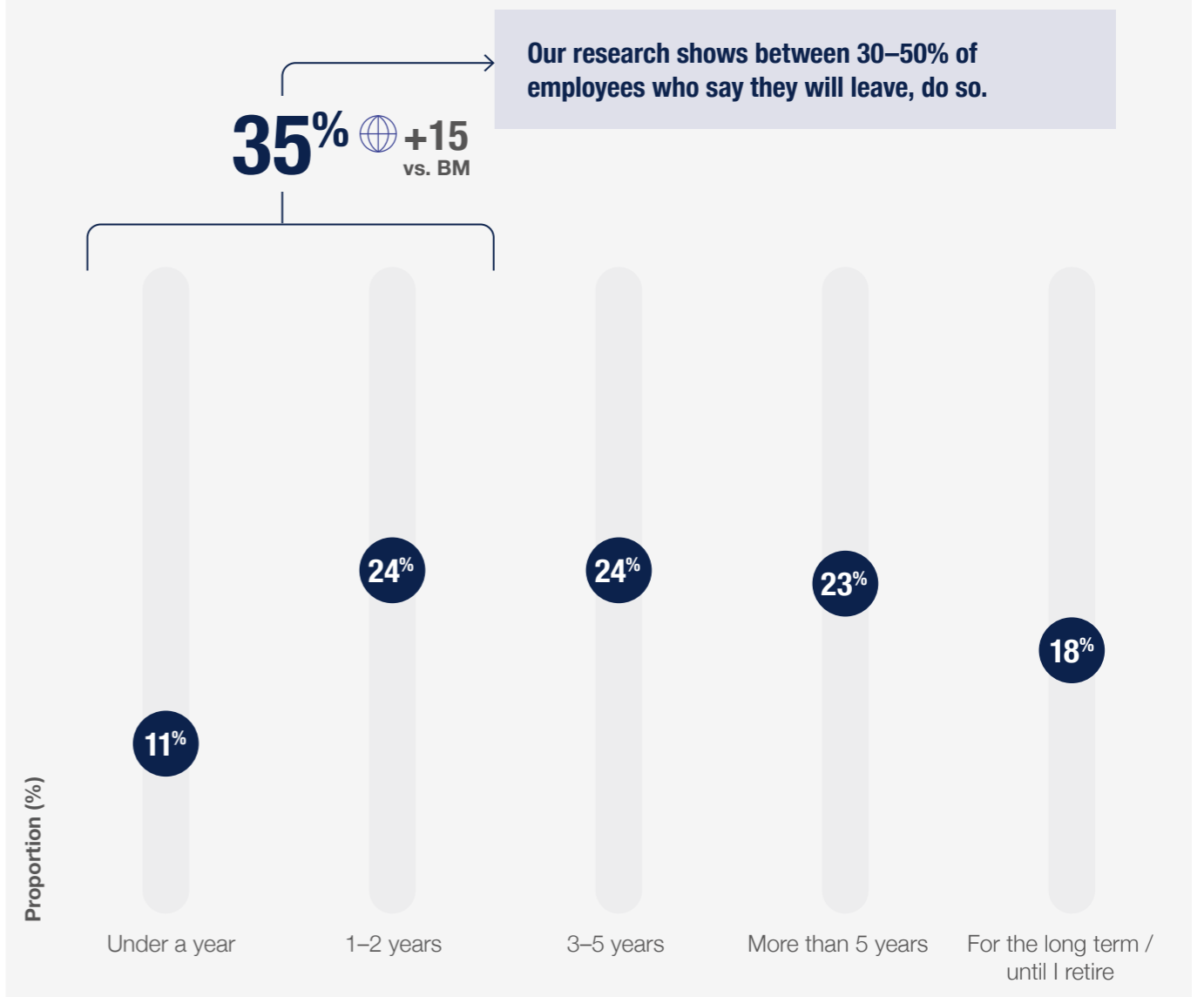
Lack of recognition drives short-term talent attrition

Insights

- Employees consider leaving an organisation for a range of reasons, including career opportunities, culture and management.

- However, pay and benefits are the most common factor across almost all demographic groups.[1]

- Recognition, career opportunities and a lack of motivation are also major push factors among the 'flight risk' population (those who plan to leave within a year).

Key population differences

After pay and benefits, feeling ready for a change is the most important push factor for 18–24-year-olds	**Lack of recognition is a greater push factor as employees get older, and surpasses pay as the top factor for 55–65-year-olds**	**Not feeling valued is a more important push factor for men than women (36% vs. 24%)**

Implications for employers

- Employers must address the top reasons people consider leaving to limit attrition.

- Though pay and benefits is among these reasons, cultural factors are just as important. A positive culture can promote a sense of belonging that makes employees reluctant to leave – even for higher pay elsewhere.

- Managers strongly influence motivation, career development and how valued employees feel. Ensure that they prioritise the right behaviours to drive a positive culture.

[1] For those aged 55–65, retirement was cited as the top consideration for leaving their current employer.

What would be the main reasons for you to consider leaving your current employer?

Key: ⚠ Indicates factors that are considerably more important to those planning to leave their employer imminently

		When planning to leave in under a year	🌐 Global norm
Pay / benefits	44%	46%	48%
Not feeling valued, appreciated or recognised	30%	38% ⚠	26%
Workload / work-life balance challenges	29%	29%	21%
Feeling ready for a change	27%	28%	26%
Manager behaviours	26%	27%	25%
Not feeling motivated in your job	23%	29% ⚠	22%
Career progression / development opportunities	21%	25% ⚠	30%
Job security / concerns over job stability	20%	15%	23%
Wanting to broaden experience / career change	20%	21%	14%
Flexible working policies	15%	8%	22%
Lack of confidence in the organisation's future	13%	11%	8%
Retirement	12%	11%	15%
Slow and complex processes making it hard to get things done	11%	9%	11%
Major / too much change (restructures, reorganisation)	11%	10%	9%

Top pull factors for new jobs include pay, flexibility and career opportunities

Insights

- Over three in five (63%) say pay and benefits is one of the most important factors when considering a new job – the most common choice by a wide margin (19pts).

- This is followed by flexible working opportunities and location of primary workplace, then career development and job security.

- Overall, the most important factors relate to individual experience rather than an organisation's broader vision or ethos.

Key population differences

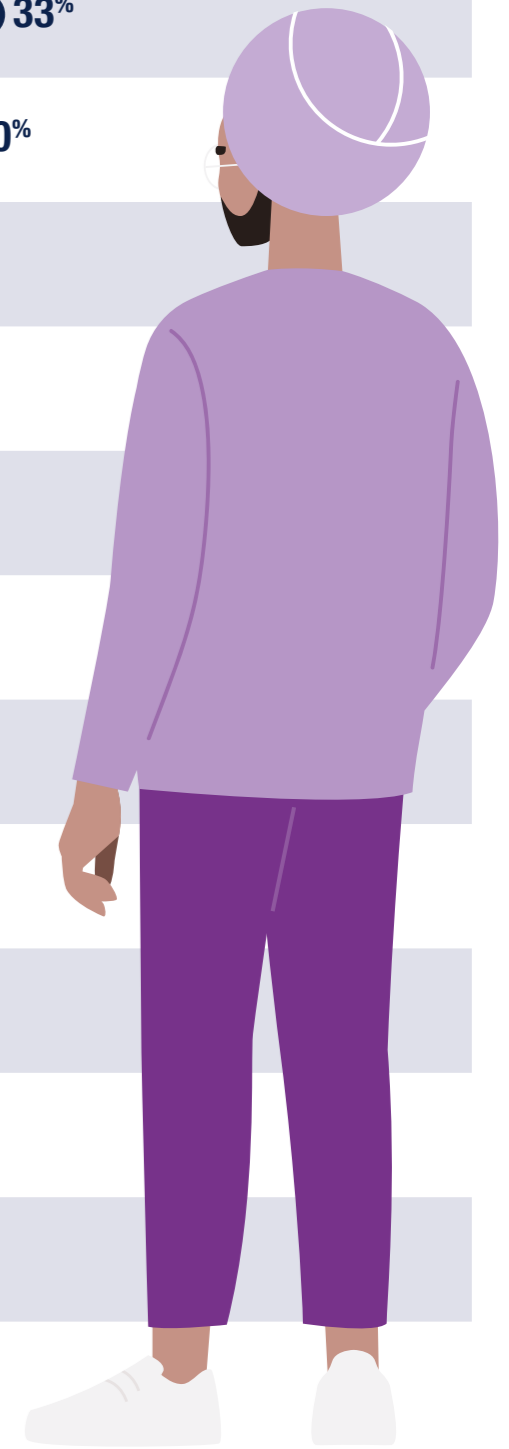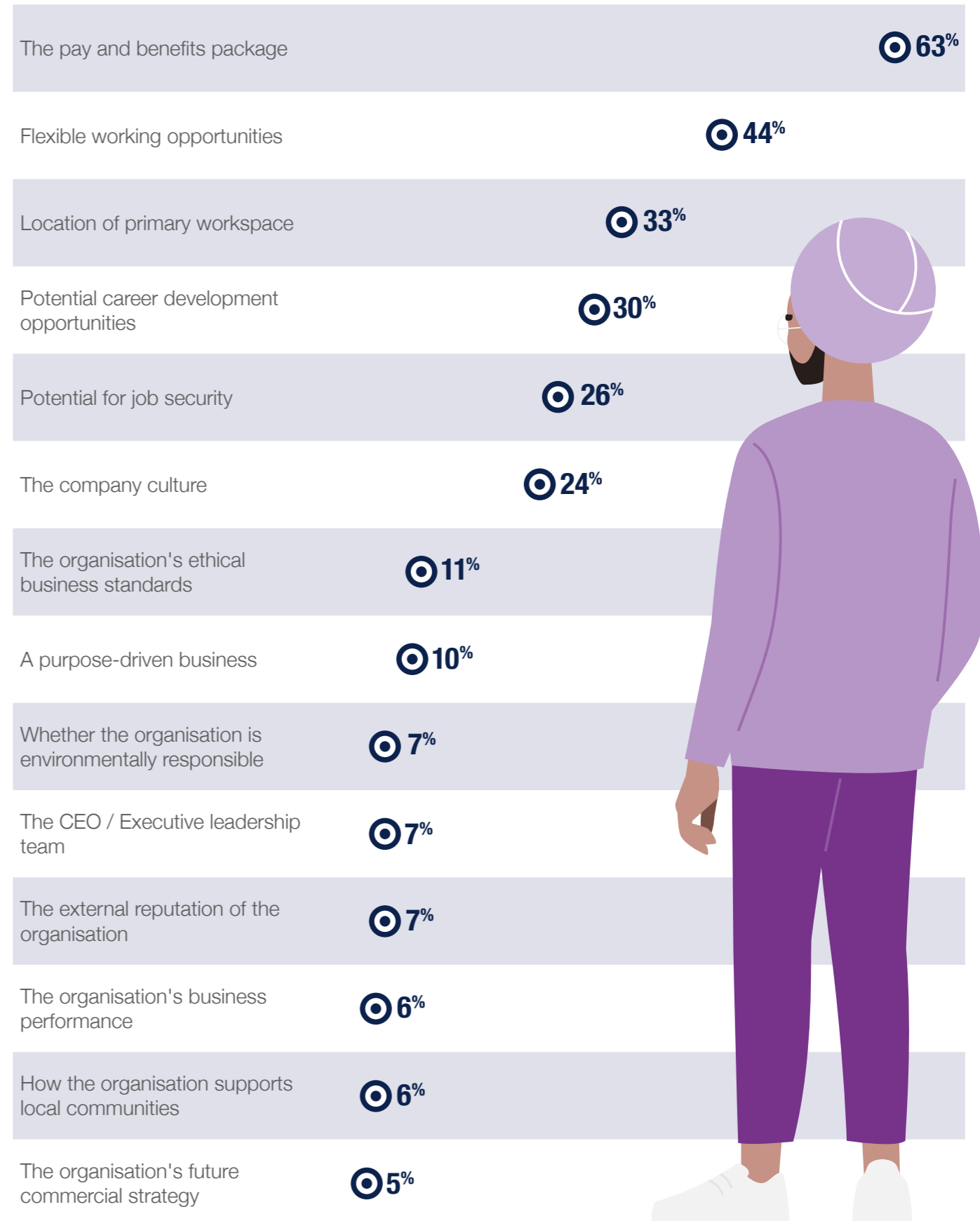| Workplace location becomes more important with age	Flexible working is more important to women than men (50% vs. 36%)	Career development is the second most important factor for middle managers

Implications for employers

- Employees generally see flexible working as a key benefit, and ways of working should reflect this.

- However, employers also need to manage how this impacts innovation, decision-making and career development.[2]

- Given that lack of motivation is a common reason to leave (see pg. 9), an organisation's vision and ethos can be critical for motivating and retaining new starters.

- They should therefore be clearly set out during recruitment, even though they are not top pull factors.

[2] Making the Case for the Office

Which of the following factors would be the two or three most important when considering a new job?

Key: ⊙ proportion of employees selecting option (%)

The pay and benefits package	⊙ 63%
Flexible working opportunities	⊙ 44%
Location of primary workspace	⊙ 33%
Potential career development opportunities	⊙ 30%
Potential for job security	⊙ 26%
The company culture	⊙ 24%
The organisation's ethical business standards	⊙ 11%
A purpose-driven business	⊙ 10%
Whether the organisation is environmentally responsible	⊙ 7%
The CEO / Executive leadership team	⊙ 7%
The external reputation of the organisation	⊙ 7%
The organisation's business performance	⊙ 6%
How the organisation supports local communities	⊙ 6%
The organisation's future commercial strategy	⊙ 5%

Caring, supportive, and friendly cultures lift advocacy

Insights

- Compared to the global average, more people in Australia describe their organisational culture positively.

- 'Friendly' and 'customer / client focused' are the most common descriptions, followed by 'respectful', 'supportive' and 'healthy work-life balance'.

- Unsurprisingly, advocacy is much higher among those who chose mostly positive culture terms (81%) than those who chose mostly negative terms (32%).

- Organisations with 'hypocritical', 'uninspiring' or 'arrogance'-prone cultures are least recommended.

Key population differences

Non-managers were more likely to cite 'bureaucratic' and 'hierarchical' than senior / team leaders

Women were 13pts more likely to select 'customer / client focused' than men
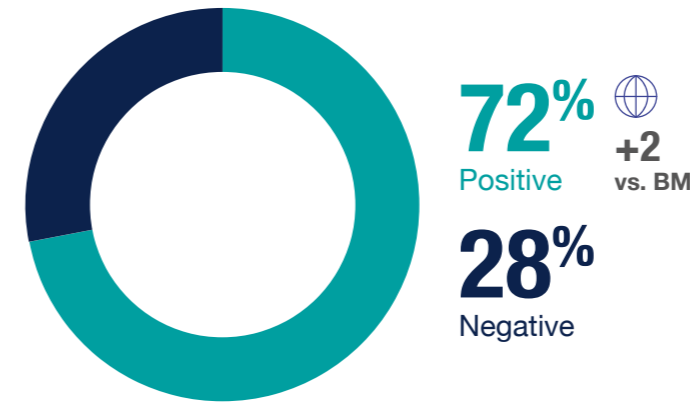
25% of employees aged 18-24 selected 'long hours', 6pts higher than any other age group

Implications for employers

- These insights emphasise that a positive culture can win employees' hearts and minds.

- Embracing learning and development could drive advocacy and limit the flight risk seen on page 9.

- It is common for different subcultures to take root within a wider organisation. Ensure that functional and demographic subcultures don't create silos or tensions, but complement the overall culture and values.

Culture words

Experience of workplace culture in Australia

72% Positive +2 vs. BM

28% Negative

81% employer advocacy for those who report a **mostly positive cultural experience**

32% employer advocacy for those who report a **mostly negative cultural experience**

% selected	Global norms		Advocacy when selected
Positive words			
34%	37%	Friendly	86%
29%	26%	Customer / client focused	74%
27%	28%	Respectful	85%
26%	25%	Supportive	85%
22%	20%	Healthy work-life balance	83%
21%	18%	Caring	90%
21%	23%	Always looking to improve	84%
19%	20%	Diverse	73%
18%	19%	Learning / developing	82%
17%	33%	Collaboration	82%
Negative words			
13%	21%	Long hours	51%
13%	11%	Favouritism	39%
11%	13%	Hierarchical	43%
10%	20%	Bureaucratic	40%
9%	10%	Controlling	32%
9%	14%	Political	47%
9%	16%	Inefficient	30%
7%	6%	Hypocrisy / Hypocritical	28%
7%	8%	Uninspiring	26%
7%	7%	Arrogance	17%

Key: cultural factors with greatest **positive impact** on advocacy

Key: cultural factors with greatest **negative impact** on advocacy

Employers who are seen to welcome feedback have more engaged employees

Insights

- Around two thirds (64%) feel their organisation welcomes open and honest feedback.

- Among this group, pride and advocacy are much higher (+55pts and 51pts respectively), and they are more likely to describe their workplace as 'friendly', 'respectful' and 'supportive'.

- Those who don't feel their employer is open to feedback are more likely to report a 'controlling', 'bureaucratic' or 'favouritism'-prone culture.[3]

Key population differences

Middle managers more likely than senior leaders to feel their organisation welcomes open and honest feedback (78% vs. 65%)

49% of employees aged 55-65 feel their employer welcomes feedback

40% of those wanting to leave within a year feel their employer welcomes feedback

Implications for employers

- There is a disconnect between the most senior leaders and middle managers on their employer being open to feedback. Why might senior leaders be less positive? Perhaps the value of honest dialogue is not yet fully realised at boardroom level.

- Not feeling appreciated or recognised was the biggest consideration for employees aged 55-65 in leaving their role (see page 8). Less than half feel their employer welcomes feedback, suggesting employers may be missing out on experienced voices.

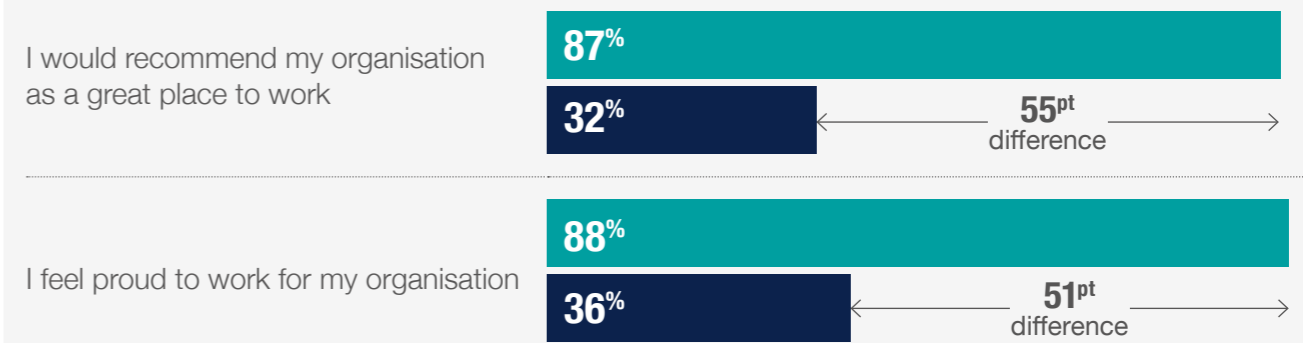[3] In an equally weighted list of positive and negative words

I feel my organisation welcomes open and honest feedback on them as an employer

Key: ■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative

64% 🌐 **+11** vs. BM   **20%**   **16%**

Impact on advocacy and pride when an organisation welcomes feedback vs. when it doesn't

Key: ■ Score when positive ■ Score when not positive

I would recommend my organisation as a great place to work
87%
32% ← **55pt** difference →

I feel proud to work for my organisation
88%
36% ← **51pt** difference →

Impact on culture words most chosen when an organisation welcomes feedback vs. when it doesn't

	Doesn't welcome feedback	Gap	Does welcome feedback
Things those who believe their employer welcomes feedback are more likely to say			
Friendly	18%	+25	42%
Respectful	14%	+21	35%
Supportive	14%	+19	33%
Caring	9%	+18	27%
Healthy work-life balance	12%	+16	28%
Things those who believe their employer does not welcome feedback are more likely to say			
Favouritism	25%	-19	6%
Controlling	18%	-14	4%
Bureaucratic	18%	-13	5%
Hierarchical	19%	-12	6%
Arrogance	14%	-12	2%

For more information reach out to

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