

Overloaded, anxious and disengaged: it's the Aussie workplace

STUART TAYLOR

Australian workers increasingly are at risk of burnout, and hypervigilance is endemic in the workplace. While it may sound like sensationalist rhetoric, this is among the key findings from our latest report, *Resilience Enables Strategic Agility*, which studied the resilience of more than 21,000 professionals across the globe.

The survey measured more than 60 factors of resilience in participants and found the Australian workforce was one of the most worried. In terms of overall resilience, Australian professionals ranked just ahead of Singaporeans and Americans, who fared worst.

So why are Australian professionals increasingly anxious, overloaded and disengaged at work?

The obvious factor is that the typical Australian workplace is

dealing with significant change. This is occurring within organisations and can be due to external forces such as new systems, restructures or international competition entering the market.

A key indicator of poor resilience is that workers feel increasingly insecure about their futures. This suggests Australian businesses are not doing enough to keep workers focused and at ease with the reality of constant change.

A small proportion of Australian organisations is built on a culture of trust, and high-trust organisations are those where employees are willing to take risks in the face of transformation.

Based on our findings, Australian workplaces struggle to build this environment because they lack definition on where they are headed and what they wish to achieve beyond short-term goals.

Workers with the least resili-

ence have difficulty focusing at work and, tellingly, Australian workers ranked poorly on their ability to focus.

A lack of focus indicates a lack of motivation and, in a milieu of constant disruption, negative reinforcement no longer holds the same motivational clout. The threat of punishment in a fear-based work culture sends workers into a downward spiral that has an adverse effect on performance.

Defining an organisation's purpose makes focus much easier for leaders and employees. Everything can be linked to that purpose, bringing clarity to decision-making and boosting resilience.

Stuart Taylor is the chief executive and founder of Springfox, the Australian arm of The Resilience Institute. To read the full report, visit www.springfox.com/global-resilience-report-2018.