

Overview of the FIFO Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey

The FIFO Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey is a central part of a research project that has been commissioned by the Mental Health Commission of Western Australia to investigate mental health and wellbeing in the context of FIFO work.

The Survey

The survey consists of four key blocks.



1) The first block of the survey asks about the mental health and wellbeing of FIFO workers. There are also questions related to drug and alcohol use and optional questions about suicidal intention.

2) The next questions focus on employees' perceptions and experiences at work. This includes questions about their team and line managers, their views on their organisation as well as the camp facilities available to them on site.

3) Questions in the third block are about the FIFO workers themselves. This includes their resilience, coping strategies, and the ability to relax during their time off.

4) Finally, a fourth block focuses on the social life of FIFO workers outside of work and includes questions about their friends and family.

Why are these blocks included?

The survey was designed so that it measures mental health and wellbeing as well as some of the factors that may be associated with these as outcomes. The questions are deliberately covering those four blocks to provide a comprehensive view onto the dynamics and ways in which FIFO work may both positively and negatively affect mental health and wellbeing in workers.

In doing so, the results from the survey will be ideally placed to provide guidance for workers, companies, and the government with regards to the ways in which FIFO work can be designed to enhance and protect worker mental health and wellbeing. This approach aims to build on the strengths of FIFO work that already exist and are positive for mental health and wellbeing. It can also identify particular areas that may affect workers negatively.

A separate survey has been set up for the partners of FIFO workers. The questions in their survey also cover mental health and wellbeing as well as an extended block on their perceptions of the ways in which FIFO work may affect their day to day life, both positively and negatively.

How was the Survey developed?

The survey was developed by a multi-disciplinary group of experts consisting of psychologists, workplace researchers, epidemiologists and social workers. The project is also guided by a reference group that includes industry, worker and family representative, as well as mental health organisations. The survey development followed best practices and applied the highest scientific standards to identify the scales and items and to validate and develop the overall survey. This included screening of a large number of scales from peer reviewed research and existing large scale surveys on mental health and wellbeing. The process also involved a validation step in which individuals with FIFO work experience reviewed the survey and provided feedback.

How were the survey items selected?

The large majority of the scales that are part of the survey are established scales in the research literature that have been extensively tested and developed, in most cases in processes that can take years.

Scales will usually measure one concept with more than one item as that allows us to establish the reliability, or consistency of the responses to that scale. The reliability is one indicator of response quality that researchers may use. Asking more than one question to assess perceptions, attitudes and behaviour also allows us to gain a more refined and nuanced understanding of the subtle differences that exist between individuals and their perceptions.

Further, some of the questions may be negatively framed. This is common practice in good survey design as it allows detection of careless responders. It also enables researchers to capture views on issues from many angles and counterbalances bias from solely asking positive questions.

What happens with responses and the data that is generated?

All information provided by participants will be kept confidential. Companies and industry may receive a summary of the findings from this research, but no information from individual surveys will be passed on to them. The Mental Health Commission, who has commissioned this work, will receive de-identified individual level data and in specific cases the data may be shared with other researchers. All data will be stored within the university. In some cases where strong suicidal tendencies are indicated the researchers may contact a respondent to provide guidance on where to seek help.

How can people take part?

A multi-pathway distribution strategy is intended for the survey. The first pathway through which the survey will be distributed is by making it available via a freely accessible link online. The second pathway will involve key industry stakeholders directly, who will be invited to distribute survey links to their members. This dual process ensures a wide reach of the survey, as well as a targeted focus on key players in the industry.



Do you have any further questions?

Please contact the research team via

FIFOsurvey-sbus@uwa.edu.au