



On the Road to Wellbeing: Transforming Mental Health in Transport and Logistics

HEALTHY HEADS INDUSTRY FORUM **THINK TANK REPORT, JANUARY 2026**

*"Talk to the people, and be
the champions of change"*

Panel Discussion Healthy Heads Forum Think Tank



Executive Summary

The transport and warehousing industry plays a vital role in **keeping Australia moving**, yet the people behind the wheel, in the sheds, on the road, and in roles across logistics continue to face some of the highest levels of psychological risk of any sector. Over the past eight years, SuperFriend's Indicators of a Thriving Workplace (ITW) data has consistently shown the Transport, Postal and Warehousing Industry* ranks among the **lowest of 19 ANZSIC industries** measured for mental health and wellbeing.

When compared with other industries, transport and logistics teams also report lower scores across all psychosocial hazards **measured**. The main areas of concern include

- exposure to **traumatic events** (74 vs 77#),
- **unclear roles and expectations** (73 vs 78),
- **limited management support** (72 vs 76),
- and **heavy workloads** (69 vs 72).

These findings show that workers are under increasing pressure, creating growing risks to the sustainability of the industry. **Stress, burnout, and high turnover** are now key challenges that require urgent action to improve workforce health and wellbeing.

To better understand and address these challenges, Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds (Healthy Heads) partnered with SuperFriend, supported by Pickles (Transport Services), to host an Industry Think Tank and panel discussion on 22 October 2025.

This event brought together drivers, operators, leaders, and wellbeing experts to share lived experiences, listen to the voice of people who work in the industry, and discuss practical, people-first solutions.

The aims were to:

- Collaborate on current issues and trends in psychological health and safety
- Deep dive into the industry challenges
- Provide practical solutions to inform Healthy Heads' future priorities and programs

From the discussions, **several key challenges emerged** including; **lack of connection, leadership gaps, isolation, inefficient work design, and low trust** in support systems being the most common. Participants also noted that long hours, automation, and poor human connection continue to reduce wellbeing, while stigma and inconsistent support make it harder for people to seek help.

Despite these pressures, the Think Tank discussions revealed a strong appetite for change. Participants proposed clear, **practical actions** which were mapped to SuperFriend's Five Domains of a Thriving Workplace, centred on:



Embedding the best mental health and wellbeing practices into transport and logistics workplace culture **is not optional, it is essential.**

This report highlights critical areas of concern and presents workforce-informed solutions to guide the transport industry toward safer, healthier, and more sustainable workplaces.

Use these insights to advocate for change, shape future programs, and align with what people who work in the industry need, to thrive at work.

- **improving workplace connections,**
- **building capable and caring leaders,**
- **improving conversations and capability around mental health,**
- **redesigning work systems for safety and balance,**
- **and embedding mental health awareness into everyday practice.**

Together, these insights form a roadmap for a more connected, safe, and thriving transport and logistics.

This report was led by Dr Elizabeth Pritchard, Qualitative Research and Insights Specialist, with input from Ivan Volkov, and the SuperFriend team.

*ANZSIC definition of the industry used across the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey: Transport, Postal, and Warehousing industry.

#All data come from SuperFriend's 2024 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace (ITW) national survey and report a matched sample - 584 Transport workers, 584 other workers; matched on age, gender, organisation size. Differences of 3 points or more are considered meaningful and statistically significant based on Minimal Detectable change metrics.



Who is SuperFriend?

SuperFriend is a leading workplace mental health and wellbeing not-for-profit, with a vision for all Australian workplaces to be mentally healthy.

With the support of our Partners, we work towards this vision by:

- helping organisations navigate their workplace wellbeing journey by providing research, data, evidence informed strategic support and resources
- advocating for policy, regulation and workplace system change through strategic alliances.
- providing insights to industry, government and workplaces by analysing industry trends and data and conducting Australia's largest annual national workplace mental health survey, the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace.

Grounded in 11 years of national data collection, the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey has benchmarked workplace mental health across Australia. It has produced five peer-reviewed, validated Domains that form an evidence-informed framework to help workplaces assess, benchmark, and improve mental health and wellbeing.

superfriend.org.au



Who is Healthy Heads?

Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds (Healthy Heads) is a registered not-for-profit foundation that supports the mental health and physical wellbeing of people working in the transport and logistics.

Officially established in August 2020, we were created by industry, for industry, to address the unique mental and physical health challenges faced by our sector.

Our approach includes educational programs, support resources, and industry-specific wellness initiatives. By providing these tailored tools and fostering a community of support, we aim to transform the sector into a healthier workplace for all, in which every individual can thrive.

healthyheads.org.au



Overview of the Five Domains

SuperFriend's Five Domains of a Thriving Workplace provide a practical, evidence-based framework that helps identify what's working well and what could be improved.

These validated Domains make it easy to understand and measure the main factors that affect mental health, wellbeing, and performance at work across the Transport, Postal, and Warehousing industry*.

Insights from the Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds Forum have been mapped against these five Domains to show where the transport and logistics can focus to build better mental and physical health.

Each Domain is colour-coded throughout this report.



Connectedness: The quality of interpersonal relationships in the workplace. High-quality connections are characterised by mutual respect, trust and collaboration. This can be seen when workers support each other to succeed and there is a sense of belonging.



Leadership: How leaders/managers enable their teams to achieve shared organisational goals. Includes modelling positive behaviours, providing feedback for growth and nurturing a culture where workers can utilise their strengths.



Capability: Equipping the workplace with skills and resources to support mental health. Involves actioning policies to minimise risks, responding to harm, and promoting the positives that support good mental health and wellbeing for all.



Work Design: The way that roles, tasks and responsibilities are organised. Stronger engagement occurs when workers feel empowered to shape the way that they work, promoting a balance between work and individual preferences.



Safety: The processes put in place, so workplaces are free from harassment, bullying, discrimination and violence. These provide proactive support and promote positive social interactions.



Find out more in our peer-reviewed paper:

Iles, R. & Sheppard, D. (2025). Establishing Key Domains for Measuring Workplace Mental Health: The Indicators of A Thriving Workplace Survey. Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation

[Download here.](#)



Indicators of a
**THRIVING
WORKPLACE™**

*ANZSIC definition of the industry used in the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey - Transport, Postal, and Warehousing industry.

How To Get The Most Out Of This Report

This report is designed to help transport and logistics organisations understand the real pressures facing drivers, warehouse staff, workshop and maintenance teams and other frontline workers, and turn those insights into practical actions that improve mental health, safety, and overall wellbeing.

It brings together insights from the panel, the challenges raised by Think Tank participants, practical solutions and real examples, and SuperFriend's industry wellbeing data and evidence.

How to Navigate This Report:

- ① Start with the **Panel Insights** - sets the scene and highlights the key pressures facing the industry.
- ② Review the **Challenges** Identified by Participants - compare these with what you see in your own organisation.
- ③ Explore the **Domain Pages** - each Domain blends participant insights (**left** block); evidence and examples (**right** block); and a real-world case from industry
- ④ Finish with the **Solutions** - these offer practical steps that you can tailor to your own workplace.

Use these pages to understand what's happening, why it matters, and what effective action looks like.

How to Use This Report in Your Organisation

- **Share & Discuss:** review this report with your WHS, HR or People & Culture leads.
- **Reflect:** identify what resonates with your own workforce and where gaps exist.
- **Prioritise:** choose the Domains or challenges that matter most for your context.
- **Plan:** use the evidence and examples to guide a strategy session or improvement plan.
- **Apply:** adapt the suggested actions to your teams, depots, or sites.

Understanding the Layout

On pages 14 to 18 we present an overview of the data relating to each of the Five Domains, a summary of the main themes that emerged on the day, and present specifics of what this can look like in practice, in your workplace. This structure allows you to quickly distinguish between **worker voice, evidence,** and actionable **guidance.**

This report is both a reflection of the transport and logistics workforce's lived experience and a practical guide to improving mental health and wellbeing across your organisation. Use it to **spark discussion, shape priorities, and support strategic action** that creates safer, more connected, and more sustainable workplaces across the industry.



The Background: Thriving at Workin Transport and Logistics

Transport and logistics play a vital role in keeping Australia moving; yet the people behind the wheel, on the road, and in logistics face some of the **highest levels of psychological risk** of any industry.

Over the past eight years, transport, postal and warehousing Industry has consistently ranked among the **lowest two of 19 industries** on the Indicators of a Thriving Workplace (except in 2022), indicating **ongoing challenges with mental health, safety, and wellbeing** at work.

One example of psychological risk gathered is:

10% of transport workers (1 in 10)* report experiencing **intrusive surveillance** (Fig 1), compared with **3% (3.3 in 10) of other Australian workers**. High levels of monitoring can create **stress and mistrust**, reduce workers' sense of autonomy and psychological safety, and negatively impact on mental health and work performance.

To better understand and address these and other issues, **Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds along with SuperFriend** hosted an **Industry Forum** (22 October 2025) with people working in transport and logistics and industry representatives. The forum was supported by **Pickles**.

Quarterly data from the 2024–2025 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace national survey conducted by SuperFriend, shows what is generally known, that **December is the most stressful month** for transport, postal, and warehousing workers, with **50%** reporting they feel **more stressed and under pressure** than at any other time of year. This reflects end-of-year workload peaks and rising levels of **burnout and psychological distress experienced** by workers in the transport industry. This needs to be planned for and addressed more effectively so people who work in the industry are prepared for the seasonal peaks.

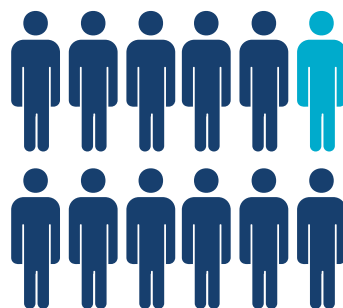


Fig 1: 1 in 10 transport workers report intrusive surveillance

“Drivers drive trucks because they’re a free spirit... you put a camera in their truck, you break that free spirit.”

Panel Discussion

“Four weeks in December is probably the biggest chunk... then we see this huge dive [in mental health] in January.”

Think Tank Panel discussion, Healthy Heads Forum

* All data come from SuperFriend's 2024 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace (ITW) national survey and report a matched sample - 584 Transport workers, 584 other workers; matched on age, gender, organisation size. Differences of 3 points or more are considered meaningful and statistically significant based on Minimal Detectable change metrics.



The Background: Thriving at Work in Transport and Logistics (continued)

A comparison of drivers and warehouse workers (ITW 2024) highlights some differences in work conditions, wellbeing, and attitudes toward mental health.

- Drivers report having less control over their work and poorer work design than warehouse workers, which reflects the more fixed and constrained nature of driving roles.
- Wellbeing challenges differ across the two groups. Warehouse workers report poorer outcomes on some metrics, including a high rate of severe psychological distress (24%) compared to transport workers (11%).
- Drivers are less comfortable talking about mental health. Around half of transport workers (49%) feel able to speak openly about their mental health, compared with 57% of warehouse workers.

Important note: These results should be seen as early signals rather than firm conclusions, as the sample included many more drivers (around 400) than warehouse workers (around 100), which may influence the overall findings.

These findings reveal an industry under pressure, where **workplace demands, leadership, and culture** are affecting mental health, safety, and wellbeing, leading to the development of the Think Tank discussions.

The aims of the Think Tank forum were to:

- **Collaborate** on current issues and trends affecting **psychological health and safety** in transport
- **Explore** these issues in depth with workers through a **Think Tank discussion**
- **Provide findings to inform** Healthy Heads' future **priorities and programs**

These discussions provided the foundation for understanding current workforce experiences and highlighted the priority actions required within transport and logistics and were **mapped across our Five Domains of a thriving workplace** to give valuable insights. The next page outlines how the Industry Think Tank brought together workers and leaders across the transport sector to explore the challenges and identify possible solutions for future building of effective programs and resources.



A Closer Look at Men in Transport and Logistics:

The risks identified in this Think Tank report reflect what's happening across Australia, linked to the higher numbers of men working in the industry. In 2023, data from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator shows that 96- 97% of truck drivers in Australia are men.

Our Men's Mental Health White Paper breaks down these national issues and gives workplaces practical ways to support men's mental health more.

[Access our Men's Mental Health White Paper](#)

Methods & Context: Elevating Lived Workplace Wisdom

A total of **44 industry representatives** took part in the forum, spanning large transport and logistics companies, national supply and postal services, and smaller haulage operators. Participants included people who work in frontline roles, health and safety, leadership, and people & culture.

Data were drawn from two sources:

- ① **the panel discussion**, and
- ② **small group discussions**.

Eight groups were formed, with four facilitated by SuperFriend and four self-facilitated, ensuring a balance of voices and ranges of perspectives.

Discussions explored **three key topics**:

- ① The main **challenges** impacting mental health and safety in transport and logistics
- ② What **has been working** (or not), and why
- ③ **Practical solutions** participants would like to share or see implemented

All conversations were recorded (with consent), transcribed and reviewed to identify* the main ideas and common themes.

Our research team revisited all **15 transcripts in full**, listening again to every discussion to ensure accuracy, nuance, and context were captured. We then conducted a detailed thematic analysis, identifying recurring patterns and standout insights, which were then **coded, categorised, and consolidated into the major themes**.

These were then **mapped across SuperFriend's Five Domains** to provide a clear, structured understanding of what challenges and supports mentally healthy workplaces in transport and logistics

This report brings these insights together, **highlighting the key challenges** faced by people working in transport and logistics, the **changes** participants believe are needed across the industry, and the **practical, participant-driven solutions** (mapped across our Five Domains) that can strengthen mental health, wellbeing, and safety across the industry.



Reduce Burnout, Improve Safety:

Our burnout insights show the system-level causes of exhaustion across industries, including transport, postal, and warehousing, and the practical steps workplaces can take to protect their people.

[View the Burnout Across Industries White Paper](#)

"If we want long-term change, organisations need to listen to the frontline staff, build more effective connections and mental health awareness, and reinforce professional pride."

Think Tank Participant, Healthy Heads Forum



Overview: Insights From the Industry Panel

A panel of industry professionals began the forum, sharing their real-world experiences from their roles as drivers, warehouse staff, and specialist mechanics, on mental health and safety in transport and logistics. The day was MC'd by Hugh Rainger – National Manager, Trucks and Machinery at Pickles with over 25 years guiding major corporate fleets and government clients across Australia.

The panel discussion featured:

- **Ian (Eno) Taylor**, Transport Manager & Head Float Driver, **Prehaulage**: Bringing lived experience from years on the road and in management
- **Lianne Watchman**, Site Manager, **BevChain/Linfox**: Offering a leadership perspective on supporting teams in busy operational environments
- **Shane Pendergast**, Heavy Vehicle ABS/EBS Service Technician, **Air Brake**: Sharing insights from the technical and maintenance side of industry

The panel was chaired by Dr Elizabeth Pritchard – a researcher with SuperFriend and leadership coach, bringing her expertise in workforce health and wellbeing, to the transport and warehousing industry drawing from projects like *Driving Health* and *Workers' Voice*.

Key themes emerging from the panel included:

- **Human Connection & Culture**: Loss of contact affects trust and morale; engagement, mentoring, and pride (uniforms, clean trucks) help rebuild connection and culture.
- **Workload & Fatigue**: Long, unpredictable hours and peak demands drive stress and burnout.
- **Job Security & Technology**: Automation reduces human contact and raises anxiety; upskilling is essential.
- **Mental Health & Safety**: Accessible resources, leader education, and stigma reduction are critical.
- **Infrastructure & Basic Needs**: Limited showers, access to healthcare, and 24-hour services compound stress.

Together the panel members explored the daily realities behind the transport, postal and warehousing industry statistics; discussing **pressures, strengths, and opportunities** for creating safer, more supportive workplaces.








Overall insight summary statement from SuperFriend:

Several clear themes emerged from the panel. Panelists emphasised that improving mental health and safety in transport begins with listening to staff more closely, strengthening human connection, and building trust through consistent, supportive leadership. They highlighted the impact of limited contact between workers and leaders, noting that small moments of engagement, mentoring, checking in, showing appreciation, can make a meaningful difference.

The discussion also reinforced the **need for practical improvements** to facilities and basic amenities, alongside targeted education and leadership development to help teams navigate growing pressures, new technologies, and changing demands. Overall, the message was unmistakable: **Mental health and wellbeing in transport and logistics rely on people feeling heard, valued, and supported in the realities of their daily work.**

These panel insights set the foundation for the themes and participant quotes highlighted on the next page.

Insights from the Industry Panel: Challenges and Solutions

The Problems	Transport and Logistics Context	Illustrative Quotes*	What Actions We Need to Take (summarised from the panellist discussions)
 <p>Loss of Human Connection (Connectedness)</p>	<p>Automation, bypasses, and self-service systems reduce interpersonal interaction for drivers, warehouse staff, and logistics operators. Social isolation is common on long-haul routes and in distribution work environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I pull up at a service centre... I get given a ticket... I go sit back in my truck and I eat on my own. No human connection.” • “A lot of the drivers are out on the road, and they miss out on that face-to-face interaction...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage meaningful engagement between drivers, staff, and support teams. • Introduce structured check-ins, mentoring, or peer support systems to maintain social connection.
 <p>Access to Basic Services and Professional Standards (Leadership)</p>	<p>Long-distance drivers and warehouse staff often lack access to adequate hygiene, medical, and nutrition facilities. Professional presentation, uniforms, and standards affect both worker pride and public perception.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We don’t get priority [to showers] because we’re non-paying customers... after a 14-hour day, it’s not much to ask.” • “I don’t think we’re going to see real change in this industry until we see drivers in uniforms again... professionalism, pride, and public perception.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accessible, 24/7 facilities for drivers, including hygiene, healthcare, and nutrition. • Reinforce professional standards and pride through uniforms, clean equipment, and clear company values.
 <p>Mental Health and Psychological Safety (Capability)</p>	<p>High-pressure, isolated work in transport and logistics exposes workers to fatigue, trauma, and stress. Lack of psychological safety can exacerbate mental health risks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In 2022 I lost a good friend, a co-worker, to suicide... His boss... did not understand anything about mental health.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop leaders’ understanding of mental health and available resources. • Expand access to confidential EAPs, counselling, and trauma support. • Normalise mental health conversations and reduce stigma across all levels.
 <p>Workload and Fatigue (Work Design)</p>	<p>Transport and logistics face high seasonal demand, long hours, and irregular shifts. Heavy workloads impact both operational efficiency and personal wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They [drivers] don’t have an opportunity to plan to pick their kids up from school... really big, heavy commitment on their families.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce predictable rosters, recovery periods, and flexible scheduling for leave. • Provide support programs during peak periods, and recovery time after, to reduce stress and prevent burnout.
 <p>Job Security and Technology/Automation (Safety)</p>	<p>Automation in transport and logistics is increasing efficiency but creating uncertainty about job roles, especially for long-term drivers and frontline operators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They’re [employees] very worried about [automation] and what that means to their jobs... they want reassurance about upskilling.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate clearly about technological changes and career pathways. • Offer upskilling and reskilling programs to adapt to evolving roles. • Recognise and discuss the impact of automation on the individuals.

*The quotes presented in this table are taken directly from the panel members. # The coloured titles in this column refer to SuperFriend’s validated Five Domains of a Thriving Workplace, page 4

Overview: Key Challenges Identified

When compared with other industries, transport workers report **lower scores across all 9 psychosocial hazards collected** in the ITW (Fig 2). The main areas of concern include:

- **Exposure to traumatic events (74 vs 77*);**
- **Unclear roles and expectations (73 vs 78);**
- **Limited management support (72 vs 76); and**
- **Heavy workloads (69 vs 72).**

These results highlight the **cumulative pressure** facing workers and the increased risk of **stress, burnout, and turnover** across the industry.

While many of these challenges, such as workload demands and unclear expectations are common across Australian workplaces, others are more specific to the transport sector, where exposure to **trauma, long hours, and isolation** amplify the risks.

Transport, postal, and warehousing workers also report a **lack of positive stories being shared**, which reduces awareness of what could change and what improvements are possible. Recognising this mix of shared and industry-specific factors draws on SuperFriend's history and expertise in measuring Australian workplace mental health, helping to identify where tailored interventions are most needed.

From the group discussions, many challenges emerged which were then mapped to SuperFriend's validated five key Domains of a Thriving Workplace (See page 3 for more explanation), displayed in order of most discussed on the day. Transport workers face mental health risks due to **leadership gaps, isolation, inefficient work design, and low trust in support systems**, making it harder for employees to seek help.

Relationships & Fairness	76	
Environment	75	
Traumatic events	74	↓ 3
Role clarity	73	↓ 5
Management support	72	↓ 4
Job control	69	
Workload	69	↓ 3
Change management	68	
Recognition	65	

Fig 2: Transport workers reported that **all collected psychosocial hazards were more poorly managed**, compared to other workers*

"The work and the jobs cause a lot of their stress."

Quote From Healthy Heads Forum,
Small group discussion



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Key Challenges: Identified from Participants

This page highlights the specific challenges that people working in transport and logistics shared during small group discussions. These challenges have been organised and mapped across SuperFriend's Five Domains of a Thriving Workplace, showing how issues in Connectedness, Leadership, Capability, Work Design, and Safety impact day-to-day mental health, wellbeing, and workplace support.

It provides a detailed view of the **barriers** staff experience, highlighting where targeted interventions could make the greatest difference.






 <p>Connectedness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation and loneliness are common (long shifts, remote work) • Automation and safety rules reduce chances for human contact • Digital messages often don't reach frontline staff • Awareness campaigns don't often lead to meaningful follow-up • One person's stress can affect team mood and morale
 <p>Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some leaders don't know about mental health or how to respond • Promotions go to people good at their 'job', not good with people • Wellbeing gets pushed aside when operations are busy • Leaders often don't get the training they need • Leaders are often hard to reach or rarely visible to staff
 <p>Capability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders and staff are not always trained to spot or respond to mental health issues • Many leaders lack the ability, and struggle with talking about sensitive issues • Training is often generic and doesn't fit the role or context • Limited mentoring or peer support are available • Upskilling is reactive rather than proactive • There is a lack of positive stories being told so people don't know what could change • Workers don't trust confidentiality of support services or are unsure how to access
 <p>Work Design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes and systems can be inefficient, creating extra work • Workload is often managed reactively, instead of being planned • Long or irregular hours make it hard to rest and recover • Workers have little control over how they do their work • Feedback on problems or systems often doesn't get acted on
 <p>Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma around mental health is still common • High-risk or stressful roles go unnoticed, contributing to burnout • Support after incidents is absent or inconsistent • Mental health concerns aren't always taken seriously, like physical safety issues are

Summary of Solutions: Identified from Participants

The table below presents **practical solutions** directly from participants from the small group discussions. They identified many specific strategies, some that had worked effectively in their organisations and others they believed were needed.

These insights have been collated and aligned with **SuperFriend’s Five Domains of a Thriving Workplace**, showcasing actions to **strengthen trust, foster connection, enhance safety, and build capability** throughout transport and logistics.

Domains	Focus Area	Solutions and Opportunities	Quotes from the Day
 Connectedness	Rebuilding trust, inclusion, and belonging across a dispersed, isolated workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer mentoring and wellbeing check-ins • Family connection initiatives (newsletters sent out, flexible rosters, “connect from the road”) • Truck stop events and roadhouse pop-ups with health checks and counsellors • Storytelling campaigns to rebuild pride (e.g. “Make Trucking Cool Again!”) • Share positive EAP stories led by frontline champions who share lived experience and can relate to the workforce, to reduce stigma • Unite industry bodies under one wellbeing voice for greater advocacy 	<p><i>“Doesn’t have to be a big deal, doesn’t have to be scripted, doesn’t have to be professional, just [a] real quick button [strategy] to create more points of connection.”</i></p> <p><i>“That probably needs to be a priority, is to engage with the team, build a rapport.”</i></p> <p><i>“Something simple is like allowing drivers to use a shared canteen. Why do drivers need to have,... a separate canteen?”</i></p>
 Leadership	Building empathetic, accountable, and people-first leaders who model care and drive culture change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver structured leadership development and manager assist programs • Coaching on emotional intelligence, communication, and care-first decision-making • Recognise and reward people-focused leadership behaviours, establish frontline care champions and “visible empathy” • Authentic leadership storytelling; “Care is real” • Engage large operators (e.g. Linfox, Woolworths) to model “wellbeing-first” culture • Link wellbeing outcomes to business metrics like safety, retention, and reputation 	<p><i>“But I think one of the things that has probably helped just as much, is it does come down to the leadership group and having them on board.”</i></p> <p><i>“But at the same time, take the time to listen to them [employees who share about mental ill-health], but we don’t have the solution, so we can’t fix it, and we’re not trained psychologists and professionals. You know, so very challenging.”</i></p>

Domains	Focus Area	Solutions and Opportunities	Quotes from the Day
 Capability	Building the skills, literacy, and confidence to recognise and respond to mental health and wellbeing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make mental health awareness mandatory training for all staff • Train leaders and peers to identify early signs of distress • Provide English, digital, and cultural literacy programs; translate resources into multiple languages to reach all people who work in the industry • Offer practical mentoring and peer learning (“learning by doing”) • Collaborate across large and small operators to share wellbeing resources and ensure equal access for contractors • Upskill drivers and mechanics in modern safety systems (EBS, roll stability) • Provide future-focused education on technology changes and automation • Reinforce training through repetition and reflection • Build capability through ongoing learning, inclusion, and support 	<p>“And we’re trying to say, if there is an issue, then you need to raise it. Don’t sit there in silence. So we’re trying to break that barrier down here”</p> <p>“Let’s have a KPI, how many meaningful check-ins with your teams [have you had]... but also,... thinking about the role of training, you know, organisations really prioritising mental health awareness training.”</p>
 Work Design	Structuring work environments, rosters, and systems to manage fatigue and improve wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include mental health risk assessments in Work Health & Safety (WHS) and risk assessments • Predictable rosters balancing safety, rest, and family time • Co-design rosters and facilities with drivers and mechanics • Improve rest facilities; showers, toilets, food, medical and pharmacy access • Enable flexible scheduling and early return-to-work options after injury • Integrate wellbeing into daily routines (toolbox talks, reflection boards) 	<p>“They don’t know when they’re going to get home, it’s hard on families.”</p> <p>“And then it comes to peak and we’ve put on double the amount of employees to get through peak season. But what happens to our people that are the FTAs or part timers. They’re working that pace year round.”</p>
 Safety	Embedding psychological safety, dignity, and trust into all safety systems and behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate psychological safety into WHS systems and audits • Hold open, no-blame safety forums that include emotional wellbeing discussions • Use wellbeing technology transparently; build trust, not surveillance • Provide post-trauma support for all affected roles (e.g. drivers, mechanics, dispatchers etc) • Communicate the “why” behind safety measures • Link leadership behaviours to safety outcomes 	<p>“I think that’s where that management program sounds fantastic, because whilst there’s a genuine care for leaders... there’s also some genuine leaders that do care, but I don’t want to bring it [traumatic event] up, because I don’t want to exacerbate the condition rather than having the conversation.”</p>



Connectedness: Relationships at Work

It is interesting to note that only **69%* of Transport workers** agree that people care about each other in their workplace, compared to **76%** across other industries. This lack of 'care' can impact many areas of mental health and wellbeing.

The Think Tank discussions noted that connectedness has been eroded over recent times and highlighted the importance of keeping people connected at work, even in busy, remote, or long-haul environments. Participants suggested **simple, practical ways to strengthen relationships, share useful information, and maintain personal connections**, both between teams and with family, using everyday interactions and smart use of technology.

Building Human Connection in Everyday Work

- Bring back simple, everyday human interactions; like greetings, brief chats, and acknowledging people (in person) at work, across all settings
- Create easy ways for teams to stay in touch, even when remote, such as short, informal video updates from managers
- Support family connections for long-haul drivers through extended days off or visits at key stops
- Share practical tips and information across teams, for example, safe places to pull over or rest
- Use technology, like AI, to recognise people (identifying their name) and help maintain a personal, human connection at facilities

What It Looks Like in Practice

One organisation shared how **Conversation Huddles** have strengthened connection across their workforce. Every fortnight, small groups meet online for a 45-minute semi-scripted chat about weekend activities, work challenges, and what's happening in their teams. Cameras stay on, groups rotate every three months, and staff consistently report that the huddles give them a welcome break to connect with colleagues they wouldn't normally meet.

Participants emphasised that staying connected is essential for wellbeing in transport and logistics, especially when people work remotely, across sites, or on the move. Simple actions like personal greetings, brief check-ins, and regular updates help maintain relationships and build trust.

Participants also highlighted that trust makes harder conversations easier. In stressful moments, employees often open up to people they already know and feel comfortable with.

When connection is prioritised, people feel valued, supported, and part of a stronger workplace community.

*All data come from SuperFriend's 2024 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace (ITW) national survey and report a matched sample - 584 Transport workers, 584 other workers; matched on age, gender, organisation size. Differences of 3 points or more are considered meaningful and statistically significant based on Minimal Detectable change metrics.



"The concern for us is that longer distance piece, where they're doing eight, nine hours in a truck on their own, [there's] no connection with people."

Healthy Heads Forum, Small group discussion



Leadership: Support from Managers to Achieve Organisational Goals

Compared to other industries, the transport, postal, and warehousing industry reported a four-point lower score than other workers, **64 vs 68*** in this domain, indicating the second largest priority gap that needs to be addressed.

From the Think Tank discussions, it was clear that leaders play a critical role in supporting mental health and wellbeing, by **actively backing initiatives, modeling self-care, having courageous conversations about mental health, providing the appropriate resources, and listening to and co-creating solutions with their teams. Specific suggestions included:**

Leadership That Makes a Difference

- Leaders to actively back mental health initiatives and long-term wellbeing changes
- Managers to send short, informal video updates to connect with teams and celebrate wins
- Provide financial incentives or support for training, upskilling, and wellbeing programs
- Leaders to model wellbeing themselves (taking mental health days, using structured recharge time)
- Ensure staff have access to the right resources, like confidential EAP programs or Care Coaches
- Include mental health in operational decisions and risk assessments
- Co-create solutions with staff rather than imposing changes from the top down

What It Looks Like in Practice

One participant shared their **Skip a Step strategy**: Where employees engage directly with senior leaders (one above their line manager), to discuss a specific agenda item, e.g. a new strategy/policy. The outcomes were better connections, clearer information, and employees feeling like they have been heard.

This strategy links strongly to research that shows leadership profoundly shapes workplace culture, employee mental health, engagement, and overall wellbeing in transport and logistics.

Leaders who model self-care, speak openly about mental health, and actively support mental health and wellbeing create trust, safety, and stronger connections across teams.

When leadership is visible, consistent, and human, wellbeing becomes embedded in everyday work, driving both culture and performance.

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"I think it's a challenge with the line manager... if they have a negative view of mental health, then it's very hard to influence down the line, and therefore their workers aren't coming to them with their challenges or speaking openly."

Healthy Heads Forum, Small group discussion



Capability: Skills and Resources to Support Mental Health

The ITW survey identified that only **50%*** of transport workers are comfortable talking about their mental health in the workplace, compared with **61%** in construction (a similar male dominated workforce). Also, only **12%** sought help from an external healthcare provider for their mental health compared with **15%** of workers in other industries. Participants in the Think Tank said training and support needs to be practical, hands-on, and relevant to the real work. They talked about the importance of **building skills of supporting mental health, across all levels** (from drivers to managers), all the time, so everyone feels confident to talk about mental health, support others, and take care of themselves. Their specific suggestions included:

Help Staff Learn, Share, and Thrive

- Make mental health awareness part of all training, from new starters to managers
- Help leaders build skills in listening, communication, and coaching
- Offer easy access to industry-specific support programs, with government funded support services where needed
- Create more opportunities for mentoring and peer learning
- Make programs ongoing, not just a one-time thing (e.g. not just an annual R U OK event)
- Co-design practical tools and resources with staff; for example, healthy meal ideas “by drivers, for drivers”

What It Looks Like in Practice

One organisation shared how they built a network of **Frontline Wellbeing Champions**; drivers and former drivers who speak from lived experience and understand the industry deeply. These champions lead conversations in depots, share real stories, and help others feel safe to open up because they “look like, sound like, and have lived the same life as the workforce,” their messages land with authenticity and trust.

Participants highlighted that capability grows fastest when people receive practical, hands-on support that fits the realities of transport and logistics. They emphasised the importance of simple, accessible skills that help people who work in the industry talk about mental health (e.g. conversation starters, short mini-trainings), to support each other and manage day-to-day pressures.

Participants explained that this peer-led model creates stronger engagement than top-down messages, helping workers feel seen, supported, and confident to access tools and training.

When capability is built from within, through people the workforce respects and relates to, wellbeing becomes practical, relevant, and part of everyday work.

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“We have the R U OK... but it's not frequent enough. So we have to create more opportunities for communication engagement, to give them those opportunities to come forward and talk more openly.”

Healthy Heads Forum, Small group discussion



Work Design: Organisation of roles, tasks and responsibilities

Compared with other industries, transport, postal, and warehousing industry reported **61 vs 67*** in this domain, indicating a priority gap which needs addressing.

Think Tank participants shared how work can be designed in smarter, more supportive ways that make it easier for people to stay healthy and do their best work. They suggested **building in rest and recovery time, improving rosters to manage fatigue, fixing processes that add stress, and using technology to track wellbeing** in real time (but not at the cost of human interaction). Small changes, like putting in place mental health safety checks, can make every day work safer, fairer, and more sustainable.

They highlighted the need to **put people first before the job**. Their specific suggestions included:

Make Work Fit People, Not the Other Way Around

- Set up regular, flexible time during work hours for rest and wellbeing, like recharge breaks or wellness days
- Plan rosters and schedules to manage fatigue and give people proper rest
- Provide recovery times and processes after busy periods (e.g. January)
- Fix inefficient processes that create extra work, pressure, and stress
- Give clear instructions so all staff can use shared facilities easily and safely

- Include mental health and wellbeing safety checks, just like doing physical risk assessments and safety checks
- Use technology to keep track of wellbeing in real time, things like fatigue level, mood, and nutrition

What It Looks Like in Practice

A standout example from the day was **Co-designing rosters, shifts, and psychosocial hazard training** with frontline staff. Rather than presenting final decisions, leaders actively sought input, asking staff to share moments when work felt difficult or “just wasn’t right.” These real experiences were then linked to specific psychosocial risks and changes in work design.

Our research shows that how work is structured directly affects wellbeing, performance, and people’s ability to do their best.

When jobs, schedules, or processes don’t match real workplace needs, employees can feel stressed, fatigued, and disconnected. Thoughtful work design creates space for recovery, sets clear processes, balances workloads, and incorporates regular wellbeing check-ins.

This simple yet powerful approach, built clarity, trust, and shared ownership, demonstrating that when work is designed with people, everyone thrives.



“So, if you are behind the desk or doing something, get with a driver, experience their world... you have [a] greater appreciation of the challenges and the issues.”

Healthy Heads Forum, Small group discussion

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Safety: Preventing harassment, bullying, discrimination and violence

Our ITW survey identified that only **50%*** of transport workers agree that they feel safe to speak up about things that concern them (in the workplace/relevant to their job) compared with **55%** of other Australian workers. Also, **54%** of transport workers agree overall that their organisation is mentally healthy, compared with **59%** of other workers. These rates are **11–15% lower** than those seen in the similar male-dominated **construction industry**, showing the need to build stronger cultures of openness and support.

Make Safety Practical, Accessible, and Inclusive

- Use practical tools to stay safe (e.g., apps showing safe pull-over spots)
- Support health before problems happen with coaches who check fatigue, sleep, and nutrition
- Make facilities and support easy for everyone to access, to reduce stress and isolation
- Treat mental health as part of overall safety conversations, not separate from it
- Remove obstacles to getting help through shared resources, services and/or financial support to access the right services as required

What It Looks Like in Practice

One organisation shared how **Go-See Walks** are strengthening safety culture across their sites. Leaders regularly walk the floor, engaging directly with people working in the industry to observe the environment, ask about challenges, and identify solutions together.

Participants emphasised that the safest workplaces are those where physical and mental safety are integrated into everyday tasks, conversations, and risk assessments. Embedding mental health alongside physical hazards helps ensure environments are free from bullying, harassment, fatigue risks, and other psychosocial harms.

These conversations focus not only on physical risks but also on pressures, stressors, and team dynamics that may impact mental health. Staff report that the walks build trust, visibility, and appreciation, with leaders acknowledge what's working well, not just what needs fixing.

When organisations take this proactive, relational approach, people feel safer, respected, and more confident to speak up, supporting wellbeing and performance across the workforce.



"We encourage people to have those conversations. We do daily, stand ups, toolboxes, and it's always an open conversation around what's on your mind..."

Healthy Heads Forum, Small group discussion

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Case study: Getting Support and Feeling Better!

Behind every insight in this report is a real person, working hard in demanding conditions. The findings reflect the lived experiences of those working across transport and logistics. The following case study describes what these findings look like in real life, when effective mental health support moves from policy to action, and when a single conversation can positively change someone's life-story. The box on the right highlights the key actions needed to make a positive impact in the workplace.

John is a long-haul truck driver in his job over 10 years. Recently he found started feeling things were getting on top of him. He noticed he was feeling constantly tired and stressed from the long shifts and irregular hours, felt guilty about missing family events, and was struggling to sleep, even when he was at home.

He used to be able to handle it but recently, things had gotten harder. His mood was affected, he was often irritable, argued with his wife over little things, and sometimes had trouble focusing when on the road.

At first, John ignored it, and thought it was just the Christmas pressures looming. He didn't want to talk to anyone or ask for help because "blokes don't admit weaknesses or share stuff." Then he had a near miss on the road, and got so shaken by it, he decided he needed to talk to someone.

He'd heard from a work mate he had talked to about the work EAP service, and that the strategies he was given were really helpful.

John saw a flyer in the tea-room for EAP and decided to give it a go. When he rang, the first question he asked, was to find out if anyone at work would know he's calling, or what he talked about. He was reassured that his name and what he said, were completely confidential from everyone at work, including his boss.

He worked out that he could have six sessions, once a week, and that he could do them when having a break on the road. He still wasn't sure initially about it but found that he soon felt comfortable to speak about feeling stressed, having problems with his sleep, and feeling anxious about his family. The psychologist seemed to have a great understanding of what it was like on the road, being away from family for days on end, and she gave him some practical tools to improve sleep, manage stress, handle frustration, and begin talking to his wife about things.

Over the next few weeks, by using these strategies, John noticed he was starting to sleep better, feel calmer, and things were improving at home. There were fewer arguments, and he began to feel like he was getting back on track, in his work and home life.

This experience showed him that confidential workplace support really does make a difference to his mental health, even if it felt a bit uncomfortable at first.

He said: *"It really worked, I wish I had done it earlier".*

NB: While names and workplace details have been changed, this scenario is based on true events as described by a driver in the industry.

"[Its important to] have that opportunity for an employee to show... what their positive experience [with] EAP is like... to create more of a positive ripple effect and break down that stigma..."

Healthy Heads Forum, Small group discussion

"We encourage people to have those conversations. We do daily, stand ups, toolboxes, and it's always an open conversation around what's on your mind..."

Healthy Heads Forum, Small group discussion



Getting Support and Feeling Better! (continued)

Important To Include In The Workplace:

Important actions to include in your workplace gathered from data collected throughout the forum.

- Provide clear information in different languages on how to access support services like EAP
- Reinforce how confidentiality is ensured when accessing EAP
- Share success stories in different formats (written, video, audio, posters) of people who have used EAP successfully
- Confirm the psychologist(s) in EAP services, have industry-specific understanding so people feel confident they will be understood
- Offer flexible session locations (e.g. one organisation provided a safe/private work-space for the people to have their EAP sessions, as privacy was not possible at home)
- Extend support timeframes after a safety incident (beyond one week)
- Support ALL staff affected by a fatality
- Provide regular opportunities to discuss mental health and mental ill-health and model this as the leader
- Ensure services use strategies that work for all genders, ages, languages, and education levels



Summary: Thriving at Work in Transport and Logistics

Transport and logistics keep Australia moving, but its people face some of the **highest risks to mental health and wellbeing identified nationally**. SuperFriend's data show that the sector consistently ranks among the lowest for wellbeing and safety.

Long hours, fatigue, an ageing workforce, reduced retention, and limited control add daily and ongoing accumulative pressure to the workforce. To address these challenges, Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds and SuperFriend brought together people who work in the industry, leaders, leaders, and representatives in an Industry Think Tank, supported by Pickles, to explore how the sector can move from coping to thriving.

Across the day's discussions, several clear themes emerged:



Connectedness

Stronger peer and team connections to reduce isolation, disconnection across sites, and improve morale.



Leadership

People want leaders who listen, communicate with respect, and model care and accountability.



Capability

Upskilling leaders and teams in identifying mental health risks and communicating about mental health, better stress management options, and increasing mental health literacy to build confidence and trust.



Work Design

More consultation to create predictable schedules, fairer workloads, and safer rest facilities for sustainable performance.



Safety

Create safer environments (physically and mentally) where workers can speak up without fear or negative implications to their role, improving both safety and industry culture.



Summary: Thriving at Work in Transport and Logistics (continued)

Suggested **solutions** were mapped to SuperFriend's validated Five Domains of a Thriving Workplace, forming a practical framework for industry action. Together, they show a clear message from the people who know the work best, those behind the wheel and on the floor. Real change starts with understanding your workforce first, then developing connections and leadership that value people as much as their performance.

Next steps

Next steps involve translating these insights into concrete actions.

Participants called for:

- Creating **stronger peer connections** through mentoring, team check-ins, and shared wellbeing initiatives that make support a daily practice to prevent mental ill-health, not just instigating as a crisis response.
- **Leaders to listen and act** on employee feedback through regular, two-way conversations that lead to visible change.

- **Assessment of mental health risks** with the same rigour as physical safety risks, identifying pressure points early and addressing them proactively.
- **Building capability across all levels** to have safe, confident conversations about mental health, supported by training and tools tailored to transport and logistics settings.
- **Access to fit-for-purpose resources and services**, designed around the realities of shift work, remote locations, and diverse roles.

Together, these practical steps can **move the sector from awareness to action, fostering stronger relationships, trust, and engagement**. By prioritising connection and putting people at the centre, transport and logistics can become safer, fairer, and more human-focused, **where mental health and wellbeing not only supports performance but drives it**.



A Call to Act, Not Just Reflect

Towards a Mentally Healthy, Thriving Transport and Logistics

Enhancing wellbeing for workers in transport and logistics requires more than good intentions. It demands a cultural shift across systems, leadership, and everyday practices. This leads toward workplaces that **value people as much as performance, where mental health and wellbeing are embedded in every decision, policy decision, and action.**

To rebuild trust, leaders must actively seek feedback, genuinely listen, and demonstrate through their actions that people's voices have been heard. To improve safety, organisations must design for it and consider both physical and mental health. To strengthen connection, workplaces must **listen deeply, involve their people, and follow through with meaningful action.** Equipping workplaces with the right tools, resources, and support systems is essential to turning these intentions into real improvements in mental health and wellbeing.

The themes and solutions captured in this report are not abstract concepts; they are **practical, workforce-informed steps** that employees and leaders are **calling for now.** This is where knowing how the Domains appear in **your workplace** can be a great starting point for change. Many solutions are already known, yet too often remain unimplemented.

The opportunity is clear: **act with authenticity, courage, and care, embedding these practices at every level of the industry. Sustained commitment, collaboration, and investment** will ensure that wellbeing becomes a core driver of safety, performance, and pride across transport and logistics.

When people thrive, transport and logistics thrives.



Healthy Heads

Explore practical mental health and wellbeing resources designed to support people in transport and logistics. Visit the Healthy Heads website for programs, support resources, and industry-specific wellness initiatives.

[Healthy Heads - Supporting Mental Health in Trucking and Logistics](#)



**THRIVING
WORKPLACE™**
Think Tanks

Empower your leaders with evidence. Support staff with your safety. Learn more about **Thriving Workplace Index** based on data grounded in 15 years of research from *SuperFriend's Indicators of a Thriving Workplace*. [Contact us for more information.](#)



SuperFriend and Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds sincerely thank the individuals and organisations that contributed to these important Think Tank discussions.

We would also like to acknowledge GT Insurance for supporting the forum and insights produced.

Together, we can make a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing, in workplaces across Australia.

For further information regarding Healthy Heads resources:

Contact Melissa Weller, Director Industry Relations and Program Management at Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds.

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Contact us today

If you would like to have support for your organisation in implementing these changes or a deeper level of understanding about your workplace, get in touch with SuperFriend!



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