



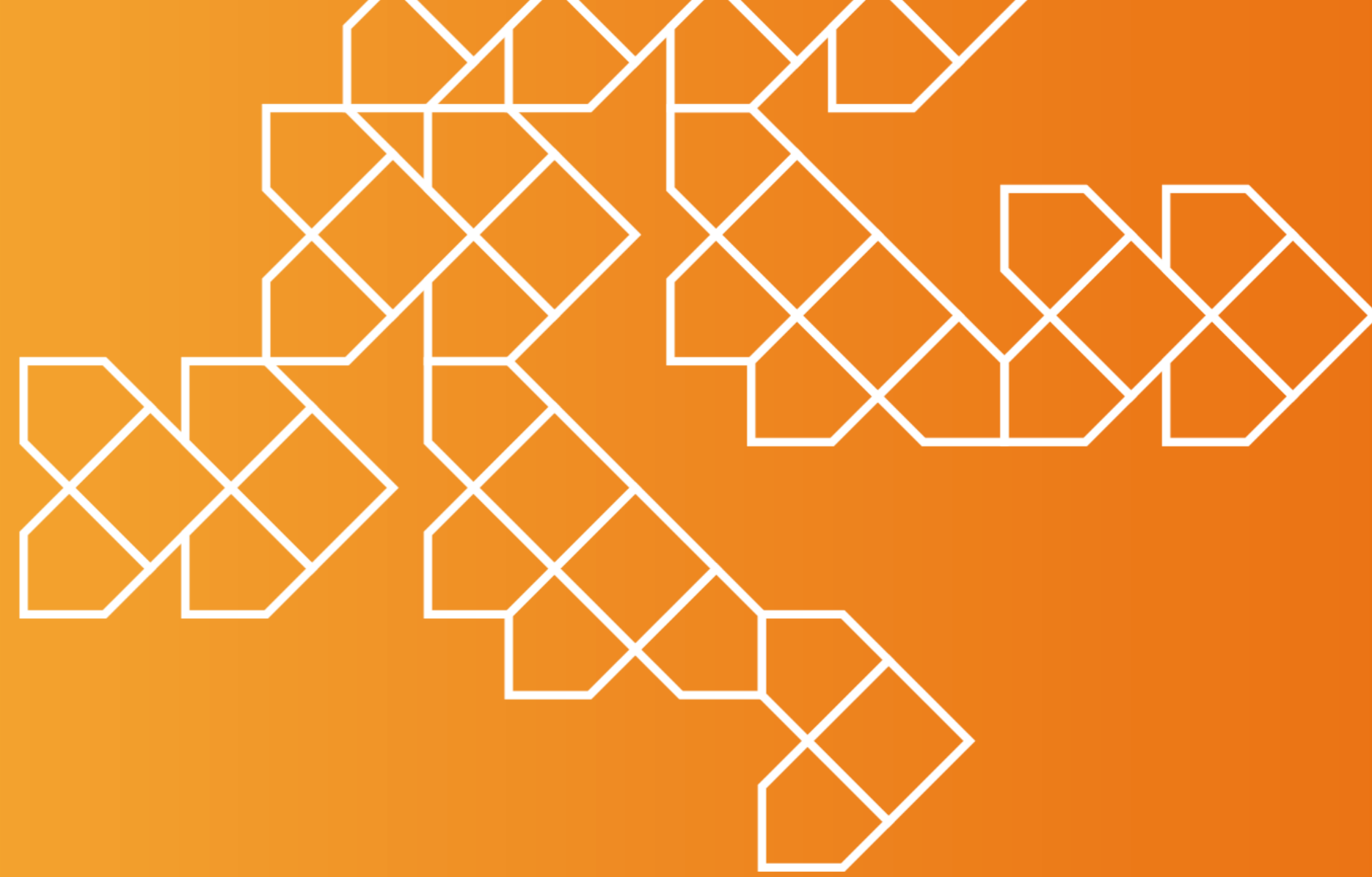
HEALTH AND SAFETY MONTH 2017

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ONE WAY →



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#hsmmonth





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Workplace Bullying – Prevention & Response

Damian Hanlon, WorkSafe Inspector from Psychosocial Operations



What is WorkSafe's role in workplace bullying?



In relation to bullying at work, WorkSafe's role is to ensure that employers are meeting their obligation to provide a work environment that is safe and without risks to health (including psychological health) by:

- preventing bullying and
- dealing bullying effectively when it occurs

WorkSafe provides advice and guidance to employers and employees about how to meet their obligations, and how to access agencies that may assist with this process

What is workplace bullying?



*“Bullying is characterised by **persistent and repeated** negative behaviour directed toward an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety”*

Examples of bullying behaviour

Direct Behaviours

- Verbal abuse
- Intimidation and threats
- Putting someone down
- Spreading rumours about someone
- Interfering with someone's personal property or work equipment

Indirect Behaviours

- Unjustified criticism or complaints
- Deliberately excluding someone from work activities
- Withholding information that is vital for effective work performance
- Setting tasks unreasonably above or below a worker's ability

Examples of what is NOT workplace bullying



- An employer has a legitimate authority to direct and control the way work is done.
- It is reasonable for employers to allocate work and for managers and supervisors to give fair and reasonable feedback on an employees performance.
- Informing a worker about unreasonable behaviour in a fair and constructive way
- Transferring a worker to another area or role for operational reasons
- Setting realistic and achievable performance standards and deadlines

The impacts of workplace bullying



Recent prosecution



A Geelong builder was recently convicted and fined \$12,500 in the Geelong Magistrates Court.

Victim exposed to:

- Being spat at.
- Having liquid nails squirted in his hair.
- Having hot drill bits held against his skin.
- Plaster smeared across his face and into his eye and ear.
- Inappropriate questioning about his sex life.
- Posting inappropriate sexual comments on a female friends facebook page.
- Continuous derogatory remarks and name calling.

Role of employer and senior managers



- ✓ Have policies and procedures addressing psychosocial hazards
- ✓ Set standards of behaviour
- ✓ Provide information, training and induction
- ✓ Consult with employees and HSR's
- ✓ Be aware of psychosocial risks and develop framework to address
- ✓ Monitor, evaluate and review workplace processes and risk assessments
- ✓ Drive a positive culture

Role of the supervisor



- ✓ Know how to recognise bullying
- ✓ Monitor work environment
- ✓ Act on inappropriate behaviour
- ✓ Support employees to speak up
- ✓ Support workplace processes
- ✓ Take matters seriously
- ✓ Act impartially and confidentially
- ✓ Model positive behaviour and leadership styles

Role of employees



- ✓ Comply with workplace policy
- ✓ Recognise when something may be inappropriate and alert supervisors
- ✓ Comply with prevention measures
- ✓ Participate in training
- ✓ Cooperate with investigations

Impact of Social Media

- Cyber bullying is as prevalent as other forms of workplace bullying.
- It is important to develop and implement a social media policy to set the standard for employee behaviour.
- In the absence of a social media policy, it will be difficult to argue that you have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent the offending behaviour.



Inspectors from Psychosocial Operations look for...



- Prompt and appropriate action to address inappropriate behaviour.
- Impartial and thorough investigation with outcomes /feedback communicated to all relevant parties.
- Policies and procedures addressing workplace behaviours including the prevention and management of workplace bullying.
- Regular training provided to employees addressing workplace behaviours (records of attendance and topics covered should be maintained)
- Thorough induction provided to new employees
- Policies are easily accessible to all employees

Questions?

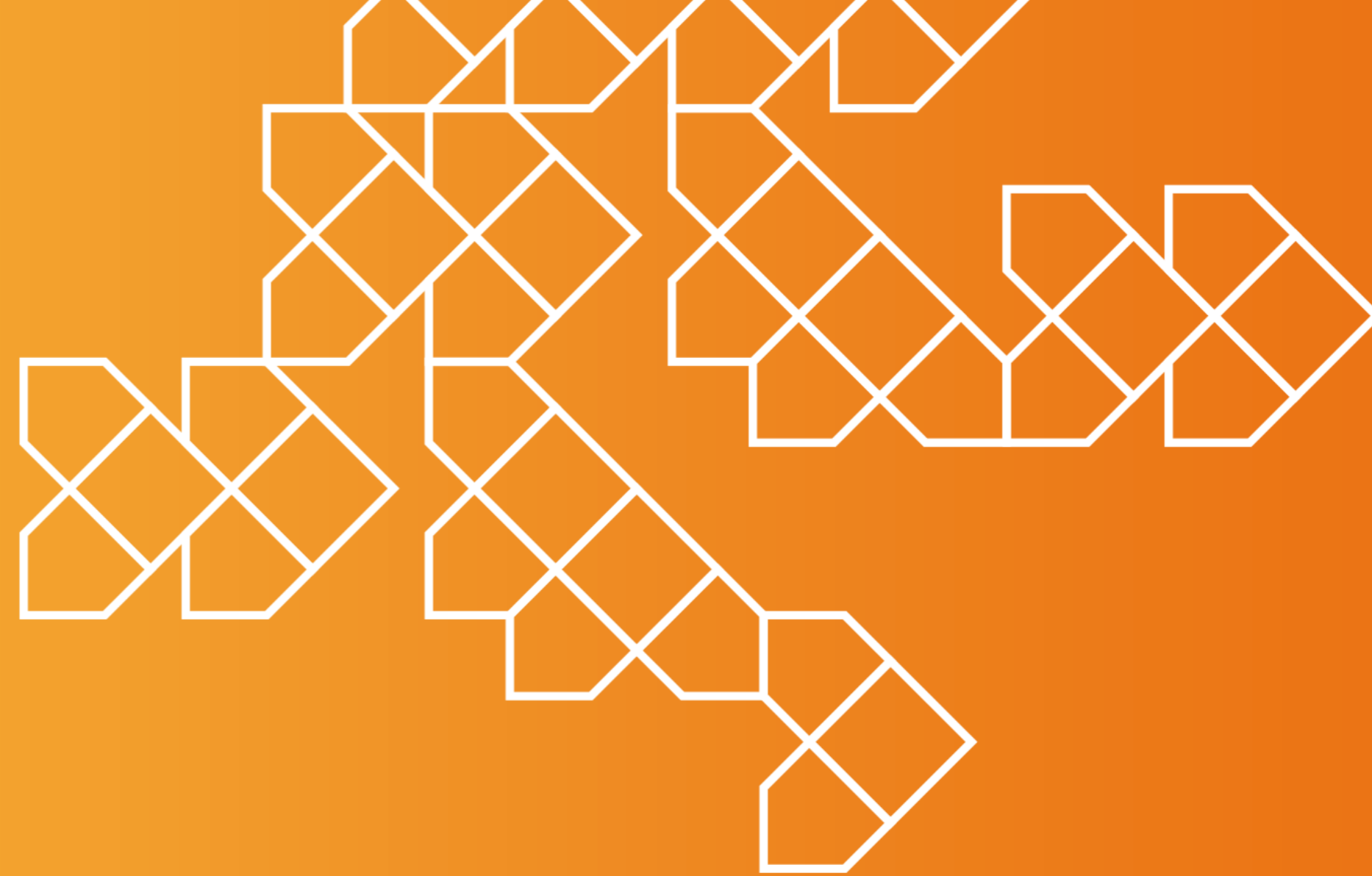


www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

WorkSafe Advisory Service: **1800 136 089**

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Thank you.





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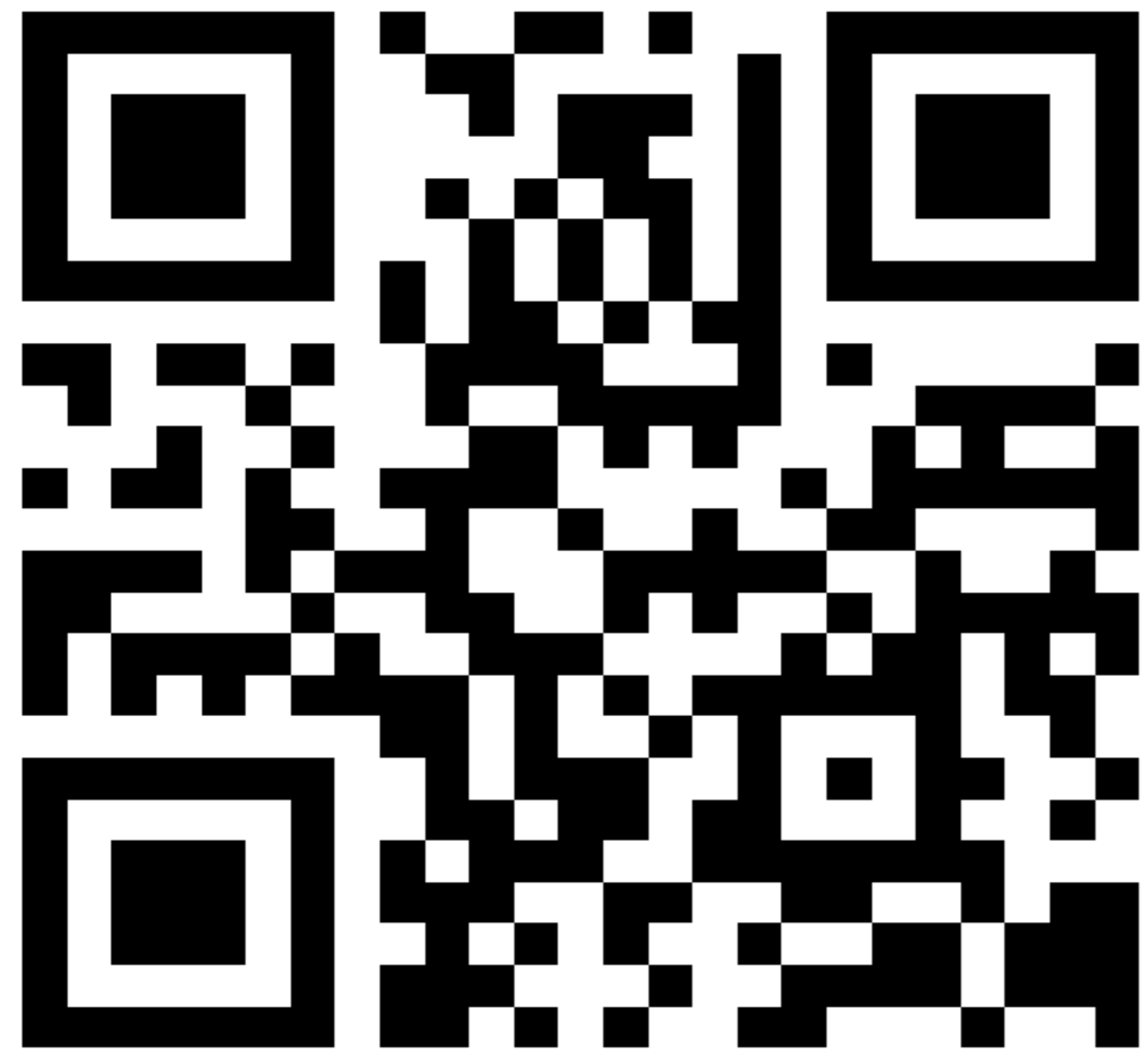
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How did we do?

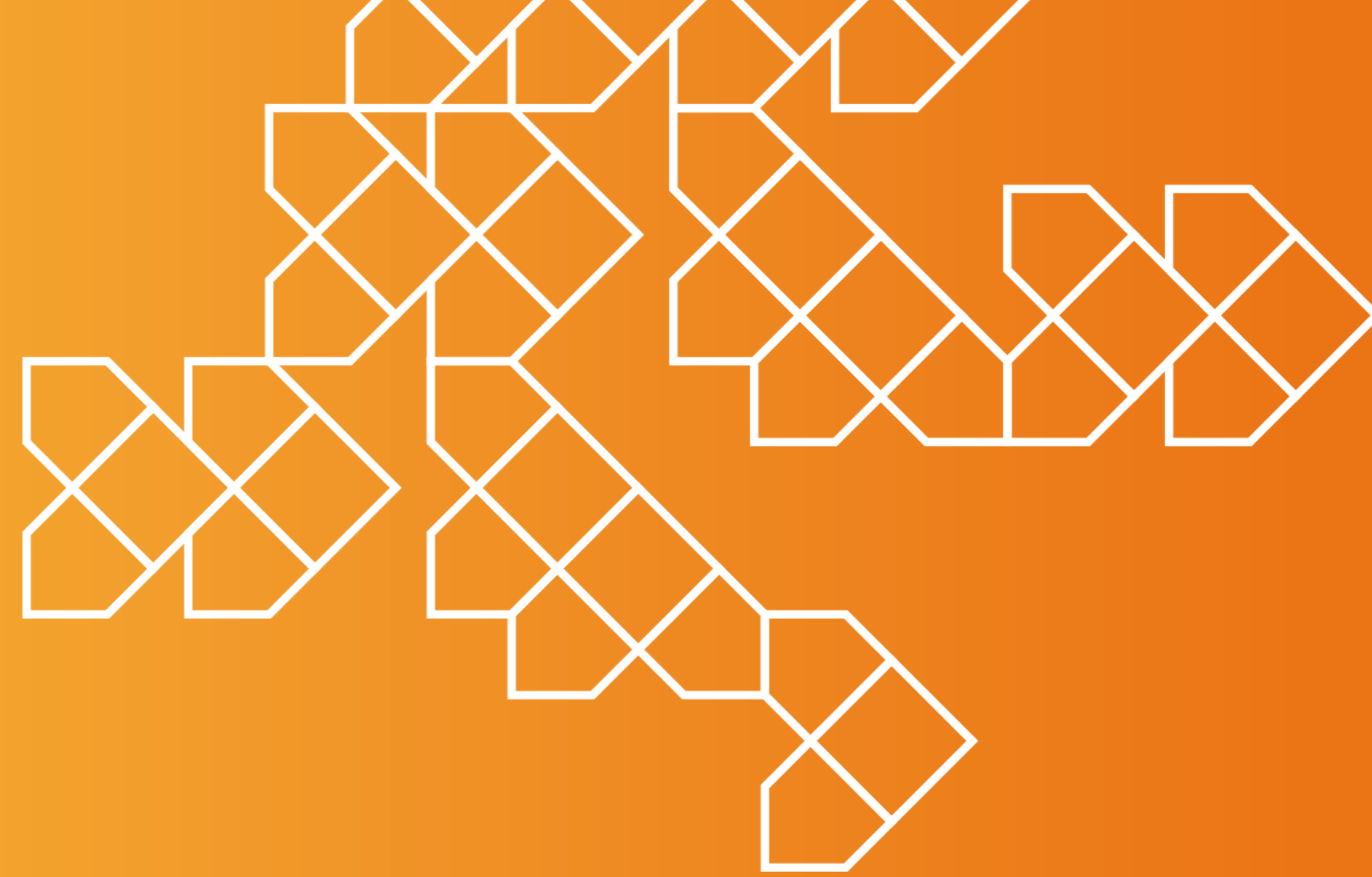
Please take a minute to answer some quick questions about this talk. You could win one of five \$100 Visa gift cards*

Go to <http://go.srnet.com.au/WHSM>



...or scan this QR code with your phone. You should be able to do it from there!

*one entry for each session evaluated





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