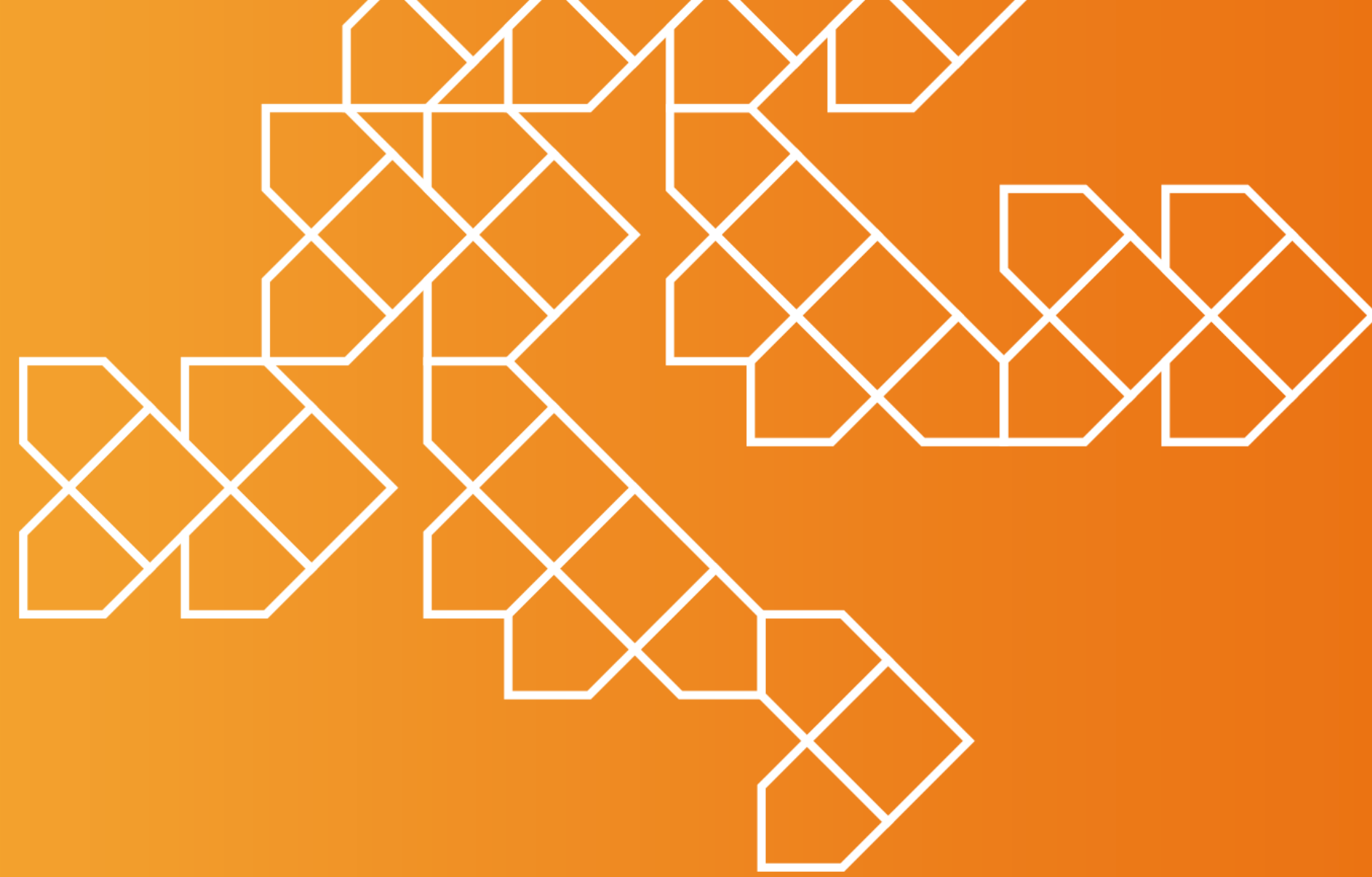




# HEALTH AND SAFETY MONTH 2016

Planning for tomorrow





# Workplace Bullying

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# What is 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 an employee's ability



# What is not 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 employee's performance, including:

- Setting performance goals, standards and deadlines
- Allocating work to an employee
- Deciding not to select an employee for promotion
- Informing an employee about unsatisfactory work performance
- Performance management processes
- Informing an employee about inappropriate behaviour

# The impacts of workplace bullying

- Reduced efficiency, productivity and profitability
- Absenteeism, presenteeism, sick leave, staff turnover
- Workers' compensation claims
- Indirect costs - management time, engaging mediators or counsellors
- Negative publicity, impact on reputation
- Personal impacts including anxiety, depression, loss of self esteem and self confidence

# Recent prosecution

A Geelong builder was recently convicted and fined \$12,500 in the Geelong Magistrates Court. The victim began working for the employer when he was 16 as an apprentice carpenter. He was subjected to physical and psychological bullying over an extended period of time, including:

- 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 friend's Facebook page
- Continuous derogatory remarks and name calling



# Partnerships

WorkSafe has recently partnered with Brodie's Law Foundation.

The psychosocial team has conducted over 50 presentations with the Panlocks to raise awareness of workplace bullying and the importance of preventing and responding to it.



# Duties and obligations

## Section 21 OHS Act, 2004:

**Employers** must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain for employees a working environment that is safe and without risk to health.

## Section 25 OHS Act, 2004:

While at work, an **employee** must take reasonable care for their own health and safety as well as the safety of others affected by their acts or omissions.

# Young workers

Are less likely to raise their concerns because:

- They are new to the workforce and don't want to cause trouble
- They are more likely to be employed casually and fear that raising concerns will lead to reduced shifts
- They may be unaware of their rights
- They may not know how to raise their concerns, or who to raise them with
- They may believe that things will improve if they ignore the problem

# 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 Health and Safety Representatives
- Be aware of psychosocial risks and develop a framework to address them
- Monitor, evaluate and review workplace processes and risk assessments
- **Drive a positive culture**

# Role of supervisors

- 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

# What Inspectors from Psychosocial Operations look for:

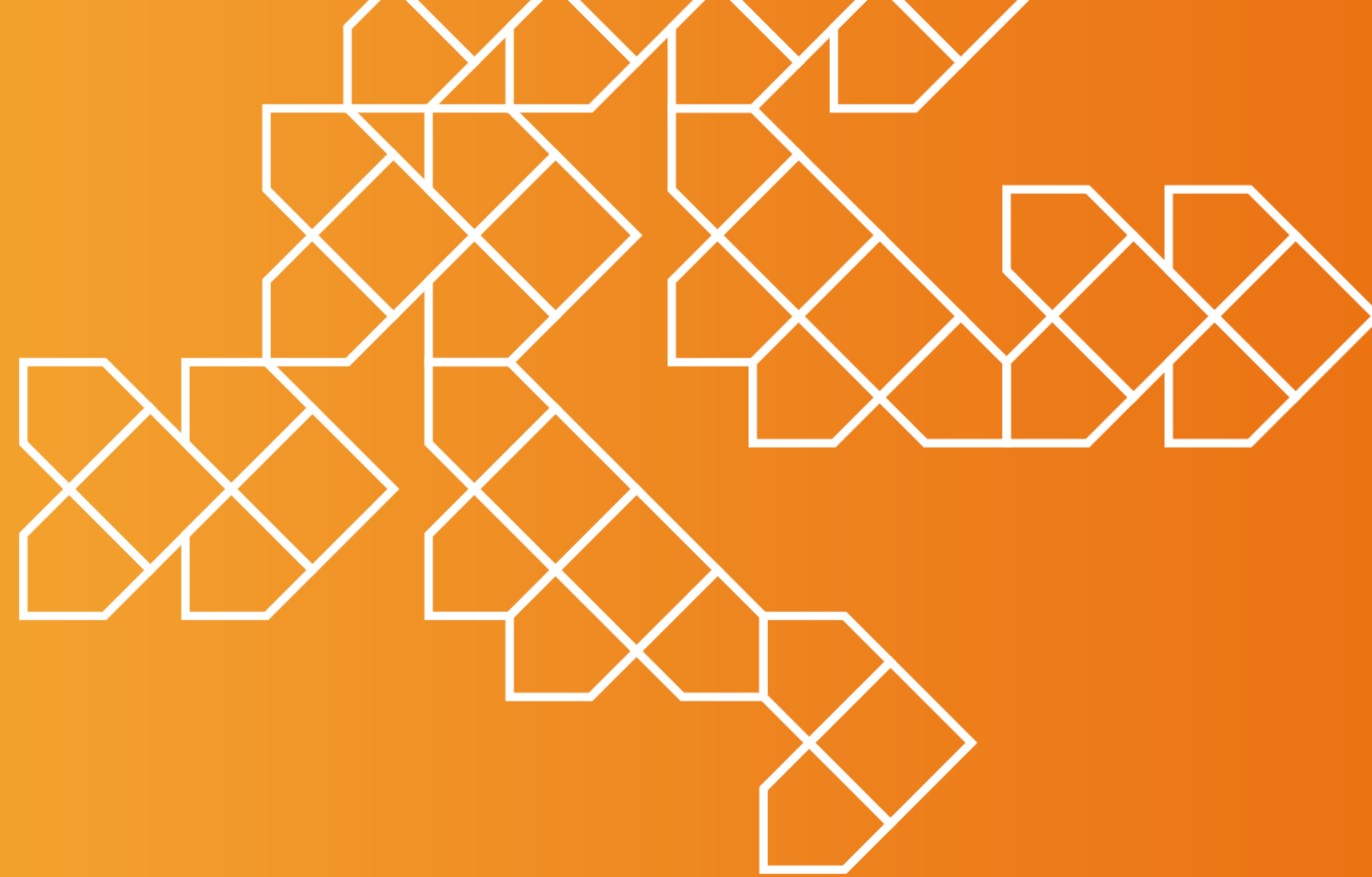


- Policies and procedures addressing workplace behaviours
- Regular training provided to employees addressing workplace behaviours
- Thorough induction provided to new employees

## If there are allegations of workplace bullying:

- Investigations have been conducted in a fair and timely manner
- Outcomes have been reached and appropriate actions taken
- Outcomes have been communicated to relevant parties





**Thank you.**

