



BlueScope: Creating an inclusive workplace where everyone belongs



INTRODUCTION

BlueScope plays a vital role in Australia's manufacturing sector. They supply steel not only to Australian markets but also globally, in New Zealand, Northeast Asia and North America. With a team of more than 15,000 employees located across 150 sites, BlueScope is committed to creating 'safe, healthy, and inclusive workplaces' for diverse teams.

The commitment is justified. Diverse teams are better at decision making. They resolve conflict and bring increased creativity and innovation to the table. More diverse organisations also enjoy increasingly engaged and satisfied employees and retain their top talent - an area that BlueScope has invested in. With a strong, people-oriented culture, employees stay working with BlueScope longer than any other manufacturer in Australia.

By applying a multipronged approach to diversity and exploring business areas where improvements could be implemented, they have created more inclusion. They are recruiting and training for increased gender representation and focusing on culture and their workplace environments for retaining diverse employees.

In this case study, we explore initiatives by BlueScope to introduce and modify frameworks that enhance psychological safety, and ensure workplace facilities support diversity.



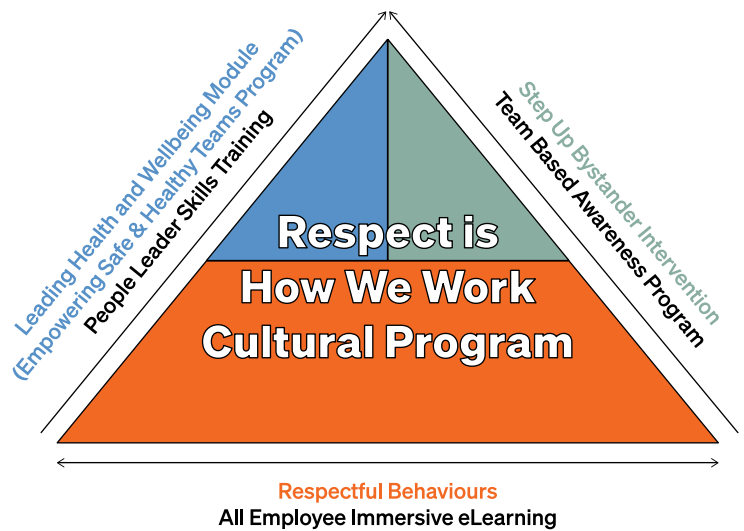
PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Last year, the Respect at Work legislation passed. The Bill endeavours to implement seven of the remaining 55 recommendations from the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) Respect@Work Report. The Bill's 2022 amendment includes a positive duty on employers to prevent workplace sexual harassment, sex discrimination, and victimisation. The Bill has prompted rapid responses nationwide and like many organisations in the NAWO network, BlueScope has implemented several initiatives to ensure a psychologically safe environment for all its employees.

Recognising that a Positive Duty and Psychosocial Code of Practice (CoP) is much more than compliance, BlueScope have continued to evolve their approach to these important cultural aspects of the workplace ecosystem through a coordinated approach across their business and functional areas.

BlueScope's How We Work Cultural Program starts with their Code of Conduct for all employees and then comprises multiple layers of knowledge, education, reporting and analysis - to ensure they're reaching every part of their Australian business. It is designed to create and sustain a positive workplace culture.

- **EMPOWERING SAFE & HEALTHY TEAMS** involves leadership training for all leaders on leading Health and Wellbeing. This includes a well-established approach to physical safety, then extends further to include psychosocial risk management.
- **STEP UP BYSTANDER INTERVENTION** is a program that allows local teams across BlueScope's 100 properties nationwide to engage in meaningful grassroots discussions. These uncover what a positive workplace culture filled with respect and psychosocial safety looks like and feels, and how individuals and teams can support each other to maintain those standards.



- **RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOURS** is an all-employee immersive eLearning product due to be launched in January 2024. It will encourage all of BlueScope's more than 7,000 Australian employees to play their part in maintaining a workplace where "Respect is How We Work". This is also being accompanied by a *Leading Respectful Behaviours Application* session for all BlueScope leaders of teams and people.
- **INCIDENT REPORTING AND RESPONSE** by BlueScope Australia has involved revising its *Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Guideline*, lifting the capability of HR Generalists through *Trauma Informed Investigation Training* to enable them to care for their people through the lens of lived experience. All internal complaint handling protocols and reporting has been revised to ensure that when something has gone wrong, it is easier for people to have issues addressed in a caring and considered way.

BlueScope Australia's prevention and response to Respect at Work and other legal and ethical obligations is a multi-layered and evolving journey. It is one they will continue to refine in coming years, as they work to establish and maintain proactive and empowered employees at every level.

STEPPING UP AT WESTERN PORT MANUFACTURING FACILITY

“Step Up” is a leader led program of team based conversations, designed to provide individuals and teams with the confidence to intervene when they notice a situation that is not safe, inclusive or respectful.

Each of the modules support this message through reflection, conversation, and a call to action, enabling a cultural shift in attitude and behaviour with a focus on respect, inclusion, psychological safety and teamwork. It’s about empowering teams to “Step Up” in those moments that matter.

At Western Port, BlueScope have completed a roll out of the Step Up program across a Manufacturing facility in Hastings, Victoria that comprises 800 employees. Asked about the results, Sanam Sharma, Western Port People Manager said the programs have materialised in different ways.

“The Step Up program has been highly effective in supporting our people to engage in more constructive conversations about psychological safety and how they can foster it. Team members now have the tools to articulate their concerns and feel empowered to give candid feedback that can then be used to improve relationships and the working environment”.

Sanam and the team have also noticed that the specific phrase “step up” is being used with increasing frequency. In everyday interactions in the workplace, team members are challenging norms, unconscious biases and challenging traditional thinking.

GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT IS KEY TO FACILITATING BELONGING

From a recruitment perspective, BlueScope is underway with removing barriers to employment. The company understood that in order to support the initiatives they had implemented to attract more women into their operations, they would need to investigate where barriers to inclusion existed in different business areas.

Amenities were one of the first areas that BlueScope examined via an internal audit when they began their operations-specific diversity journey back in 2015. Through their research, they discovered some female facilities weren’t operational and were actually being used as storerooms or lockers because there weren’t any women on those specific factory floors to use them. Ensuring functional bathrooms were equipped with sanitary bins was a basic first step.

Removing barriers to diversity that existed within amenities and facilities also required challenging traditional ways to work in operations, especially in roles that previously relied on physical strength for manual handling.

“When we challenged some of those things that relied on a bit of brute strength in the past, we made it better for everyone. Even though some strong people, men in particular, could have done the job, that doesn't mean it wasn't leading to potential injuries as well. So, I think although often it's the women who start those changes, everyone benefits from them.”

● REBECCA FORSTER KNIGHT, SHIFT SUPERVISOR

During their diversity journey, BlueScope continually challenged questions like, “how can women do this job? It needs a lot of strength” and discovered that the outcomes are positive for everyone, and the whole workplace is better for it. Thanks to these shifts in mindset, broader safety improvements have taken place across the company.

Numerous innovations in the form of automation, safety upgrades, and engineering solutions are now in place to reduce the manual aspects of roles, including:

- Adapting crane platforms to allow people who are shorter to reach and attach cables and perform all required activities.
- Engineering adaptations to keep tools attached to a holder so the full weight doesn't have to be lifted by the operator.
- Improving facilities by updating toilets, keeping a higher sanitisation schedule standard, and adding sanitary bins.
- Expanding PPE size ranges to include smaller glove sizes in catalogues.

Rather than one big change in certain areas, BlueScope has learnt that numerous small ticket adjustments has led to a workplace that accommodates gender diversity. These adjustments have increased employee satisfaction. And they've meant women joining the team feel more psychologically safe and integrated.

Via word of mouth, creating a more inclusive workplace by focusing on psychological safety and improving facilities has in turn attracted more women to the organisation.

BlueScope's success in attracting more diverse employees has led to outcomes like fostering a psychologically safe culture, which has in turn enticed more diverse candidates and created a cycle of positive reinforcement.

For enquiries please contact:
Louise Weine
Chief Executive Officer
0423 120 786
lweine@nawo.org.au

We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations people of Australia and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn, work and connect.

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