

Meritas

Australia & New Zealand

Wellness Survey 2019

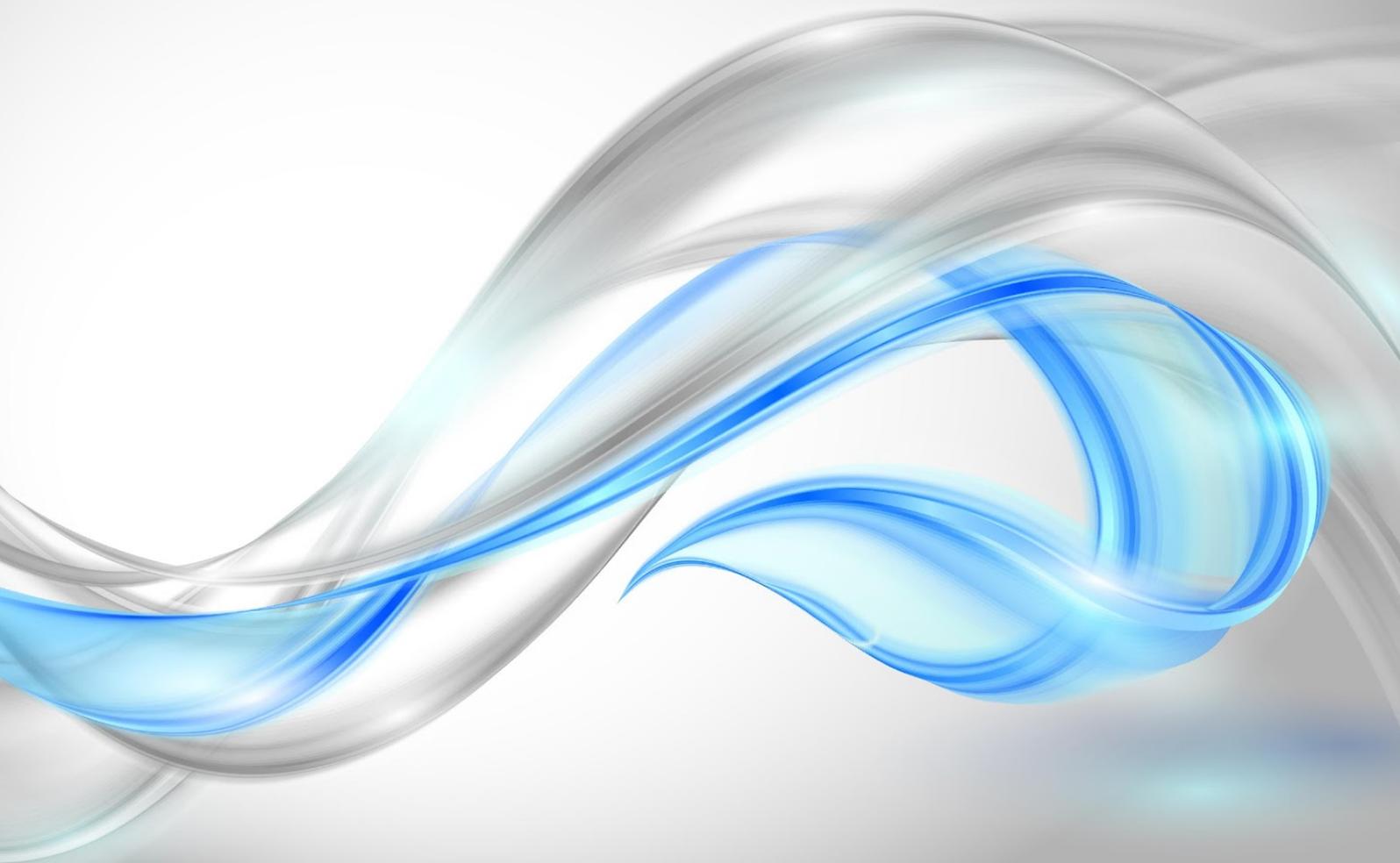


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Forward

Wellness in the law is an issue about which I have much passion and interest, both in my role as Managing Partner at Swaab, Sydney, Australia and as a director of the Minds Count Foundation (formerly the Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation).

The objective of the Minds Count Foundation is to decrease work related ill-health in the legal community and to promote workplace psychological health and safety. Anxiety, depression and substance use disorder are issues of prevalence in the legal industry in Australia and New Zealand.

The ANZ Meritas firms first started a dialogue around this issue in 2018 and in 2019, as a region, we agreed to ask our people to participate in a survey, so that we could be better informed about wellness in our firms and to have direct access to relevant data to assist us in directing our initiatives as employers.

As a region, we are motivated to support each other to seek to improve health and well-being in our workplaces by adopting a more proactive and inclusive approach to mental health so that our people are not afraid of stigma and are empowered to seek help. I have witnessed firsthand the power of change that can be realised through education, knowledge, support and understanding regarding ill-health and well-being.

I would like to thank my fellow ANZ Meritas member firms for their support and for encouraging their people to complete the survey.

Mary Digiglio
Managing Partner, Swaab and
Chair Meritas ANZ Regional Committee

Background

At the 2018 Regional Meeting of Australian and New Zealand (ANZ) Meritas Member Firms the important topic of mental well-being within the law firm environment was discussed by the Regional Committee members and also by the ANZ YLL Group.

The well being of everyone working in the legal sector is a subject being examined worldwide. This includes the pioneering work done in 2009 by the Brain and Mind Institute in Australia for the Tristan Jepson Memorial Foundation (now called The Minds Count Foundation) and the first national study in the US in 2016 which led to the American Bar Association developing the Well-Being Toolkit for Lawyers and Legal Employers.

Each of the Meritas firms in the ANZ region has programmes or approaches within their business which assists with the well being of their employees. The purpose of this survey is to assess the current awareness of, and interest in, the well being of people across the Meritas member firms in ANZ.

About Meritas

Founded in 1990, Meritas is the premier global alliance of independent law firms. As an invitation-only alliance, Meritas firms must adhere to our uncompromising service standards to retain membership status. With 183 top-ranking law firms spanning 92 countries, Meritas delivers exceptional legal knowledge, personal attention and proven value to clients worldwide.

About the survey

The Meritas Australia and New Zealand 2019 Wellness Survey is an initiative of the Regional Meeting of Australian and New Zealand (ANZ) Meritas Member Firms and the Meritas Regional Young Lawyer Liaison Group. The survey was designed by Meritas with the assistance of Prodonovich Advisory and The Minds Count Foundation.

Awareness of depression

In your career have you, or someone close to you in the workplace, ever experienced depression?



Half of respondents believe there is more than 50 per cent chance they or someone close to them at work will experience depression during their career

Awareness of anxiety

In your career have you, or someone close to you in the workplace, ever experienced anxiety?

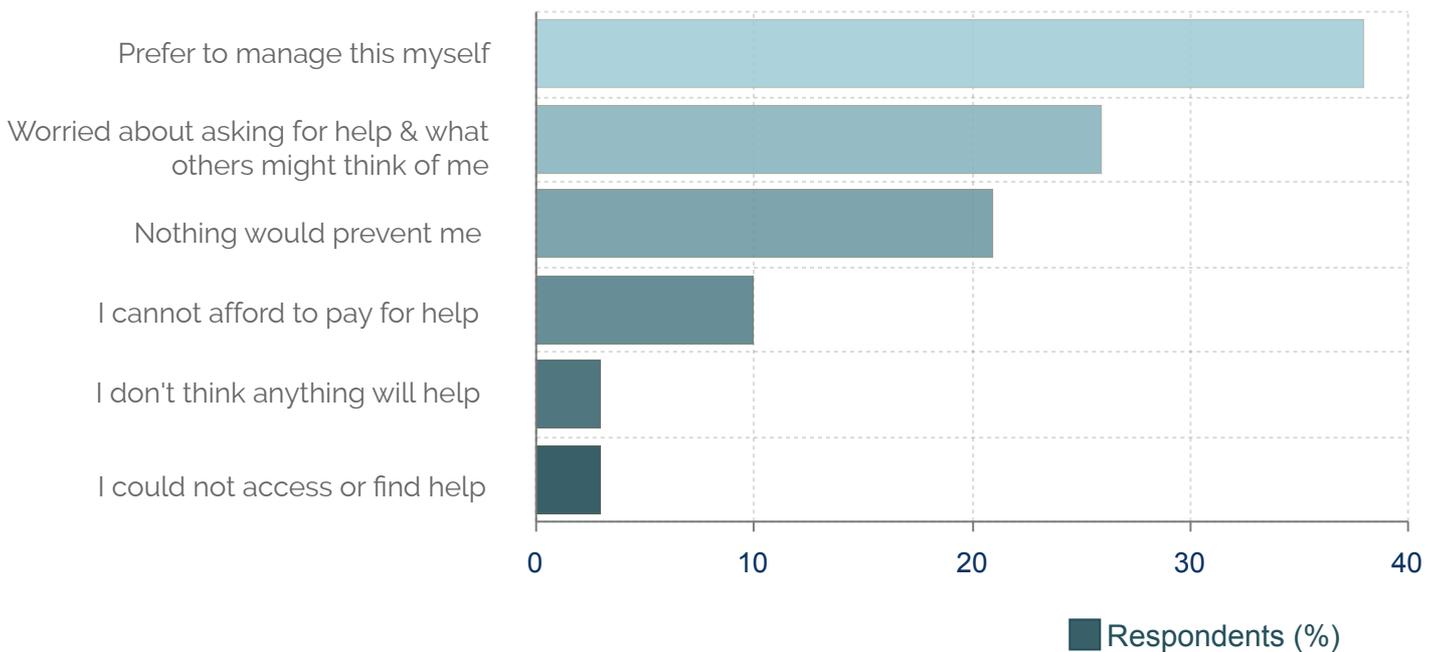


Of respondents believe there is more than 50 per cent chance they or someone close to them at work will experience anxiety during their career

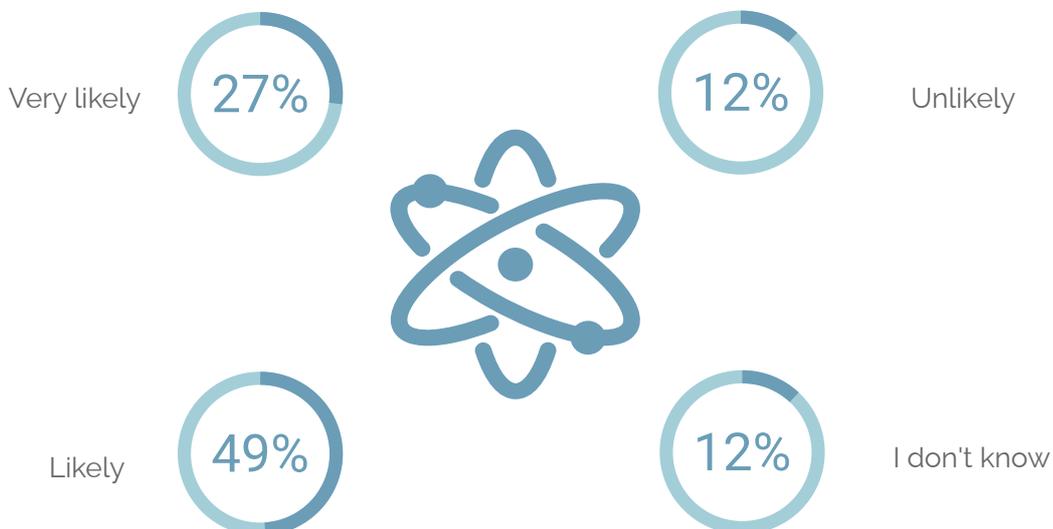
Barriers to seeking help for depression or anxiety

If you were to experience feelings of depression or anxiety ...

What is the most likely thing that would prevent you from seeking help?

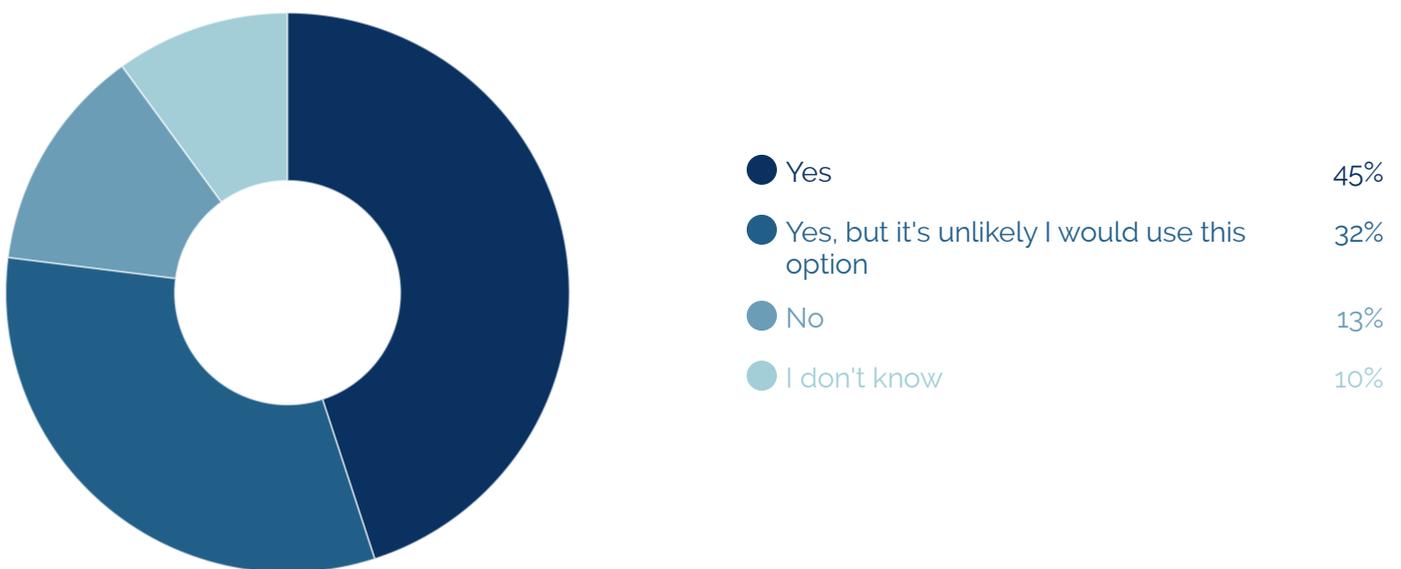


If your firm offered more dialogue, resources, training, and/or initiatives around well-being in the law then how likely would you be to take part or use of them?

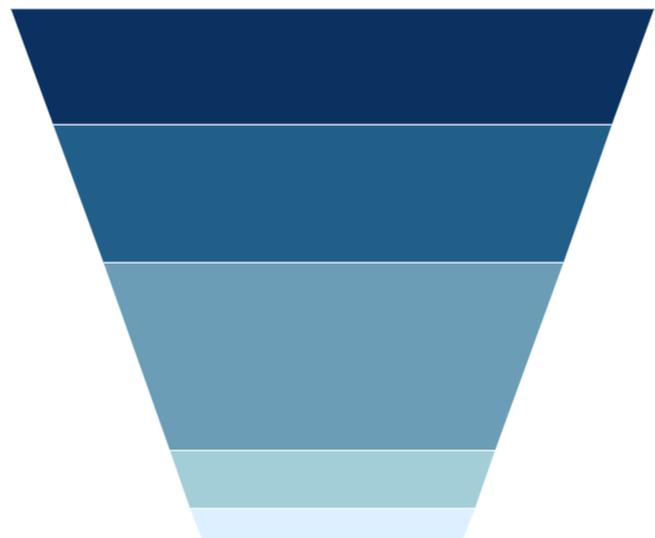


Workplace culture

Do you feel there is an 'open door' policy or you have someone you can talk to in the workplace about personal or professional issues that might affect your performance?

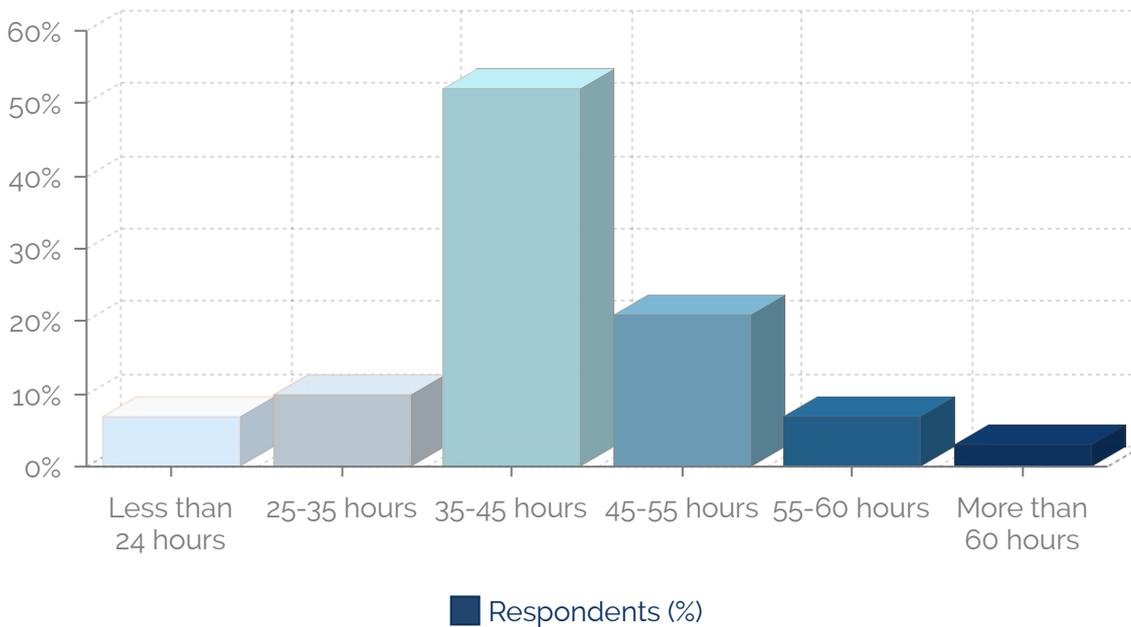


How important do you feel the issue of well being is at your firm?

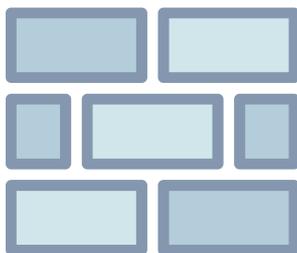


Work life

On average, how many hours do you usually work each week on a full time equivalent basis?



Do you believe the number of hours you are physically present in the office has a direct and significant impact on how your contribution to the firm is judged?



Respondents found the demands of their work generally manageable

- 39% Yes
- 26% No
- 26% Probably
- 10% Not sure

Participant profile

Gender

	RESPONSES (%)
Male	29%
Female	70%
Non-binary	0%
Prefer not to nominate	1%

Age

	RESPONSES (%)
18-24 years	11%
25-34 years	33%
35-44 years	18%
45-54 years	15%
55-64 years	14%
65 years +	5%
Prefer not to say	3%

Experience working in a law firm

	RESPONSES (%)
Less than 2 years	15%
2 to 5 years	22%
6 to 10 years	14%
11 to 15 years	10%
16 to 20 years	9%
21 to 25 years	8%
More than 26 years	20%