

The Workplace Bullying and Incivility (WBI) Management CMM

Effectively addressing bullying and incivility in the workplace is critical, particularly in high-risk sectors like mining. Safe Work Australia defines workplace bullying as “repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety,” while workplace incivility refers to low-intensity deviant behaviour that violates workplace norms for mutual respect, with an ambiguous intent to harm the target. The MARS Landmark study (2024) revealed that 16% of workers in Western Australia’s mining sector experienced bullying in the past six months, with women being twice as likely to be affected as men.

The impact of bullying and incivility is far-reaching, with victims and witnesses reporting heightened stress, anxiety, and depression, along with decreased job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment. These issues not only harm the well-being of individuals but also have significant financial consequences for organizations, including lost productivity, errors, absenteeism, turnover, and the costs of managing complaints. Research shows that the most effective approach to preventing bullying and incivility is multi-faceted and tailored to the specific needs of an organization.

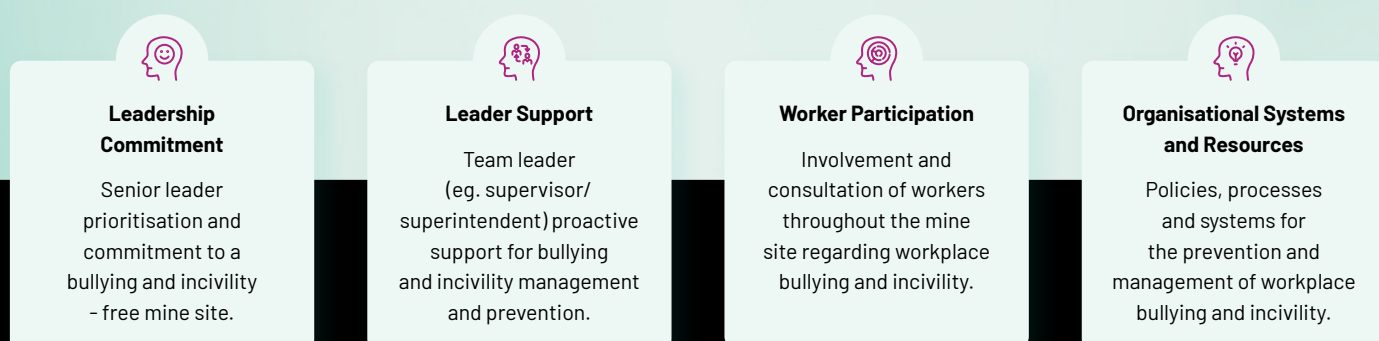
This requires the active engagement of workers at all levels, both in shaping the process and in its implementation. Crucially, for these efforts to succeed, senior leaders must demonstrate a genuine commitment to fostering a respectful and supportive workplace culture.

The MARS Workplace Bullying and Incivility (WBI) Management Capability Maturity Model (CMM) has five levels of maturity (passive, reactive, calculative, proactive and continuously improving) and addresses four dimensions that are critical to building a positive work culture. The MARS WBI CMM in matrix format is provided on the next page.

MARS WBI CMM Maturity Levels



MARS WBI CMM Dimensions



MARS WBI QUICK GUIDE

 Level 5 Continuously Improving	Dimension 1: Leadership commitment	Dimension 2: Leader Support	Dimension 3: Worker Participation	Dimension 4: Organisational Systems & Resources
	Senior leader prioritisation and commitment to a bullying and incivility-free mine site Senior leaders lead the way at this mine site when it comes to psychological health and safety. Senior leaders are passionate about driving improvements that promote a bullying and incivility-free workplace. Senior leaders model and communicate zero tolerance of workplace bullying and incivility. Senior leaders foster a culture of inclusion, respect and safety.	Leaders live the organisation's values relating to a healthy and respectful work environment. Leaders are empathetic and continually seek to improve team connectivity and wellbeing such that every team member feels safe, trusted, and well-supported and can thrive in their role. Strong communication and relational skills of leaders create an environment for effective identification and management of bullying and incivility risks at the team level.	There is an understanding across the mine site that psychological health and safety is everyone's business. Participation in promoting a bully and incivility-free workplace is an expectation of everyone at this mine site. There are high levels of formal and informal involvement in preventing workplace bullying and incivility across the mine site.	Policies and processes reflect the mine site's stance on workplace bullying and incivility as an organisational problem and underpin a culture of respect and safety. Policies and processes for workplace bullying and incivility prevention and management are well-resourced and consistently and effectively applied. This is a learning organisation. Continuous improvement is achieved through frequent monitoring and review.
	Senior leaders are routinely involved in initiatives to proactively promote a culture of respect and safety. Senior leaders unquestioningly provide support and communicate commitment towards workplace bullying and incivility prevention. Senior leaders recognise the business benefits of promoting positive psychological health and safety.	Leaders are aware of risks that might be present within the team and provide effective support to team members in need. Leaders regularly communicate about respectful behaviour and workplace bullying and incivility within their teams. Leaders have well-developed relational leadership capabilities for navigating bullying and incivility, and consistently address identified concerns. Leaders encourage and support their team's engagement within initiatives relating to workplace bullying and incivility.	Widespread participation and consultation in matters relating to bullying and incivility is evident. Workers feel safe to report their concerns and experiences regarding workplace bullying and incivility. Worker input into addressing problems and fostering bullying and incivility-free workplaces is encouraged.	Policies articulate the mine site's values and expectations regarding a bullying and incivility - free workplace. Tailored bullying and incivility-related processes are embedded in the organisation's systems. Policies and processes for the prevention of bullying and incivility are well-communicated and effectively enable the identification and management of risks at the site and team level.
	Senior leaders ensure the mine site has systems in place to manage workplace bullying and incivility in accordance with its duty of care under legislation. Senior leaders delegate responsibility for anti-bullying and incivility initiatives, providing only high-level support. Some commitment to addressing bullying and incivility is communicated from senior leaders within the mine site.	Leaders are aware of the organisation's legal obligations under the WHS Act and other legislation and Codes of Practice regarding preventing and responding to workplace bullying and incivility. Leaders follow the mine site's workplace bullying and incivility policies to ensure compliance. Leaders exhibit the basic relational capabilities required to navigate interpersonal conflict.	Workers are encouraged to report workplace bullying and incivility although feedback is patchy. There is some effort to encourage workers to provide suggestions for preventing bullying and incivility at work.	There is a tick-box approach to managing bullying and incivility consistent with guidance and legislative requirements, but without tailoring to the organisational context and needs. Clear reporting channels are available to workers should issues arise.
	Senior leaders are largely silent regarding their position on workplace bullying and incivility, and only offer support when significant problems regarding bullying and incivility arise. Senior leaders appear reluctant to take decisive action to eliminate or mitigate the risk of workplace bullying and incivility where productivity is threatened.	There is little attention to relational aspects of leadership at this mine site. Trust, support, and empathy towards team members are low. Leaders rarely communicate about workplace bullying and incivility and its management, although will offer support when one of the team experiences harm as a result of bullying and incivility.	Worker participation and consultation in preventing and managing bullying and incivility is limited to formal processes (e.g., WHS Committee) and reporting/complaint procedures. Worker participation in anti-bullying and incivility initiatives, such as training, is offered only in response to significant and widespread concerns.	Limited support is available to parties of a workplace bullying and incivility experience. Resources and systems for managing bullying and incivility are piecemeal, (introduced in response to specific issues), are not integrated and rolled-out through the organisation.
 Level 1 Passive	Senior leaders do not communicate interest in addressing workplace bullying and incivility. Senior leaders may model bullying or uncivil behaviours or support senior organisational members who do so.	Interpersonal conflict is seen by leaders as an issue to be resolved by the individuals involved. Leaders typically lack relational leadership capabilities and a culture of distrust is evident. Workers do not expect support where targeted by bullying or incivility.	There is minimal worker consultation on workplace bullying and incivility with the organisation taking a tokenistic approach to demonstrate compliance. Workers do not feel encouraged or safe to report workplace bullying or incivility.	If policies and processes to guide the reporting and management of workplace bullying and incivility complaints exist, they are not widely understood by workers and are rarely used.