

# THE POSITIVE WORKPLACE **EMPOWIR** AND HOW I USED IT FOR THE FIRST TIME

## A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*"I have experienced a lack of respect in my workplace at Western Health and some issues of concern. I tapped into the **EMPOWIR** process that is available to all of us here.*

*I urge all Western Health staff to use **EMPOWIR** to notify when you experience or witness a poor workplace, bad behaviour or a lack of common courtesy. I did and I felt that it was the right thing to do and it made me feel a bit more confident.*

*I hear a lot of people around me say they are too scared to speak up or they will lose their job. I have used **EMPOWIR** twice and there hasn't been one consequence directed back at me. I got to talk a few things over with a Positive Workplace Contact Officer and they gave me options. It is a no blame and informal process and that is how it worked out.*

*If our employer knows about the "hot spots", they can address the poor behaviour. Wouldn't it be good to have a positive workplace for all employees and volunteers? I try to tell other people I work with that they could use it too but they just fob me off!*

*I just used **EMPOWIR** again, quite recently and felt like the weight had lifted off my shoulders. Give it a try, I don't think you will be disappointed."*

**Anonymous: Western Health Staff Member Sunshine**

## RESPONSE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF WORKPLACE STRATEGY AND WELLBEING, LEONIE HALL

I have been reflecting: About the manner in which we, as employees and volunteers, interact with each other every day. That is; how do each and every one of us really think about how we speak, act, email or respond to each other in situations during the workday? It also led me to think about how we engage with our colleagues, ones we do or don't know. One thing I notice is how many of us are in a hurry or on the phone and perhaps fail to look up and say hello or give a smile or acknowledgement to any of our colleagues throughout the course of the day.

There are 7000 of us working at Western Health. Some people we like, some we don't, some who occasionally frustrate us or don't understand what we say and some who can be downright rude and disrespectful, some of the time. Western Health is our own little society! There has always been one thing that I have held close in my time here... **"We are one Western Health!"**

No one person is more important than another, more prestigious or unequal in any way..... We all work together to achieve a common goal....that is to deliver the best health outcomes for the people of the west.

Western Health has been developing and promoting the Positive Workplace Strategy loudly and **EMPOWIR** was created as a vehicle to enable all of us to reach out and talk to someone in the event that, when, where and how, we experience someone's poor workplace behaviour, we can speak to someone about the impact.

Since **EMPOWIR** commenced, in 2016, there have been over 330 notifications from employees and volunteers outlining how the impact of poor workplace behaviour by a colleague has affected them, personally and professionally.

Those effects range from being humiliated in front of others, put down, personally or professionally, yelled at, sworn at, or had their competency questioned. Not surprisingly, people feel upset and dejected by this treatment, let alone what it does to their personal confidence and desire to come to work to face it again.

The bottom line here is that over 330 people, who have either witnessed or experienced poor workplace behaviour or have been affected, have been prepared to speak up and address the matter.

As they say....."the behaviour you walk past is the behaviour you accept so **DON'T WALK PAST**"

One of the key things I have observed and learnt since the inception of **EMPOWIR** is that our personal style, delivery and behaviour can have a deep impact on other people. I urge you to please consider how you interact with your colleagues whether in face to face discussion, email, memo or simple conversation. Please take the time to remind yourself how that message will be received, with the what, when and how, it is delivered.

Often we forget or fail to consider the effect of our message, content and delivery style ..... before we send or say it!

When we are later made aware of the impact ... we may be stunned or genuinely surprised. Responses like, "WOW I didn't mean it that way or "I didn't mean to upset them" are common in these situations.

Statistics show that 25% of people in our workgroup are suffering anxiety or mental health issues. We need to be able to consider our colleagues and the impact our behaviour could have on them by extending basic respect and courtesy in the way we communicate with each other. I would like everyone to focus on **WHAT** and **HOW** you deliver your messages to your colleagues.

Your chosen style, tone, words, voice, volume and in particular, key harsh words can have a profound impact on the person receiving that message.

The Western Health Values should be reflected in the tone, manner and style in which we interact and communicate with patients and colleagues.

## **COMPASSION ACCOUNTABILITY RESPECT EXCELLENCE SAFETY**

My number one "non-negotiable", is **RESPECT**. If I get respect consistently right, it seems to flow through everyone I come into contact with and invariably is given back to me on a consistent basis.

When respect is not returned, it is time to speak up and ask for respect. The more **EMPOWIR** notifications received, the more obvious are trends, particular individuals or areas where poor behaviour occurs and is normal. I know that this is not Western Health's idea of a Positive Workplace!!

Each and every one of us here at Western Health can be part of this change by identifying what is happening and how it is affecting us at work - "**DON'T WALK PAST**."

# POSTIVE WORKPLACE CONTACT OFFICER PROFILE

## DR. CANDIDA MARANE



Anaesthesia and Pain Medicine  
Consultant Anaesthetist  
4 Years at Western Health  
Interests outside of work include  
cooking, travelling and reading

## HOW TO ACCESS EMPOWIR

- 1.** Use the **“Issue Vault”** email [pwic@wh.org.au](mailto:pwic@wh.org.au) and someone will respond in 48 hours. You can just leave your concern in the vault if that is your preference.
- 2.** Reach out to one of our trained **Positive Workplace Contact Officers**
- 3.** Go to the **People and Culture site** on the intranet for details on how the system works or talk to People and Culture or a Positive Workplace Contact Officer about how the system works.

# EMPOWIR: NO BLAME AND INFORMAL PROCESS OF RESOLUTION

## HOW EMPOWIR WORKS EMPLOYEE WORKPLACE ISSUE RESOLUTION

THE BEHAVIOUR YOU WALK PAST IS THE BEHAVIOUR YOU ACCEPT!  
**DON'T WALK PAST**

A MATTER OR CONCERN ARISES  
YOU EITHER WITNESS OR  
EXPERIENCE IT YOURSELF OR YOU  
ARE THE THIRD PARTY IN THE  
SITUATION

YOU CAN CHOOSE TO SEND AN  
EMAIL TO THE VAULT  
PWIC@WH.ORG.AU

**OR**

NOTIFIER DEALS WITH THE  
MATTER AND ENDS THE  
PROCESS

REACH OUT AND MAKE AN  
APPOINTMENT WITH A PWCO TO  
DISCUSS THE MATTER AND DECIDE  
HOW YOU WANT TO HANDLE IT

IF IT REMAINS  
UNRESOLVED THE  
PROCESS ENDS

YOU CAN CHOOSE TO SEEK AN  
INFORMAL APPROACH TO A  
RESOLUTION

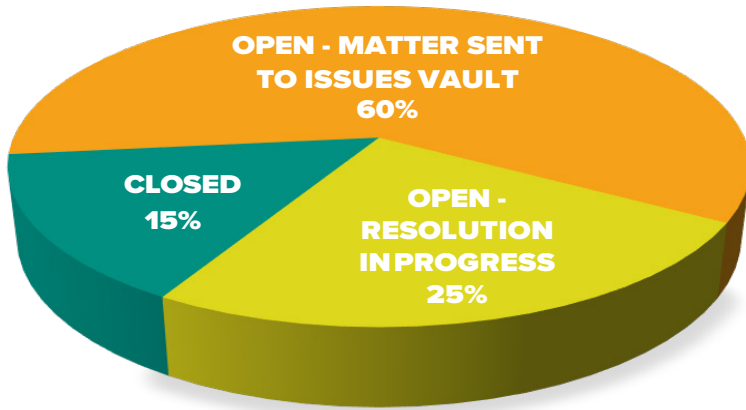
A RESOLUTION OFFICER  
MEETS WITH YOU TO  
DISCUSS THE DIFFERENT  
OPTIONS AVAILABLE

PROPOSED RESOLUTION  
IS REACHED

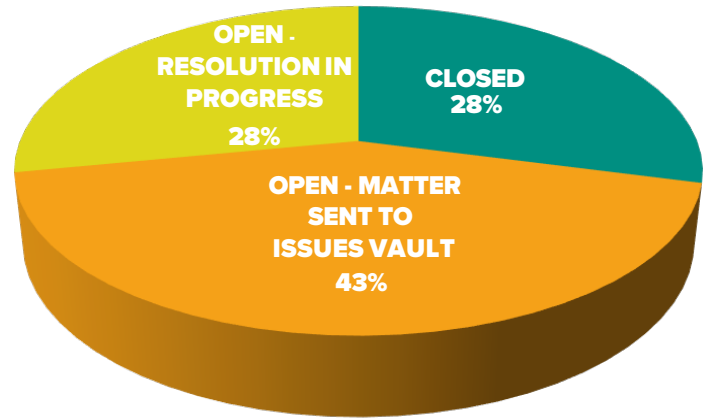
FINAL RESOLUTION IS SIGNED  
OFF BY ED/DD

# EMPOWIR OUTCOMES

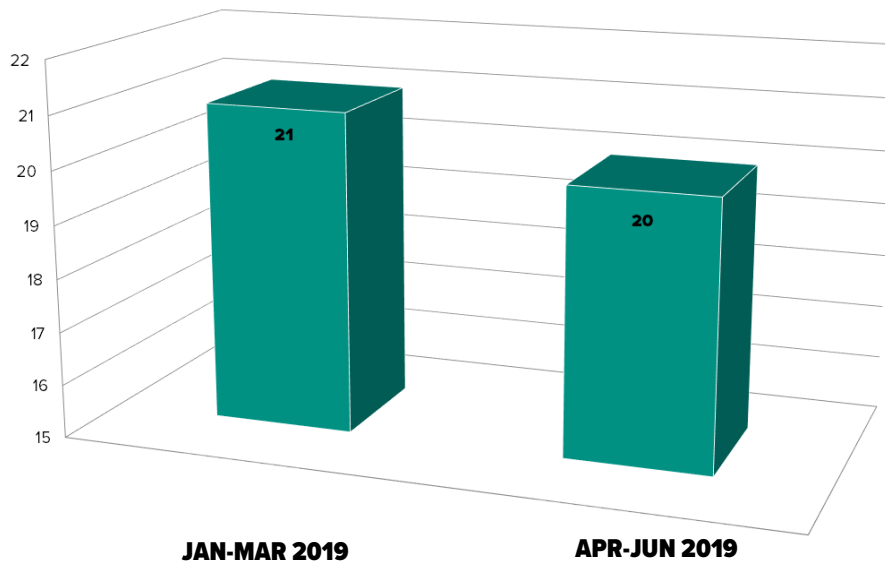
## JAN-MARCH 2019



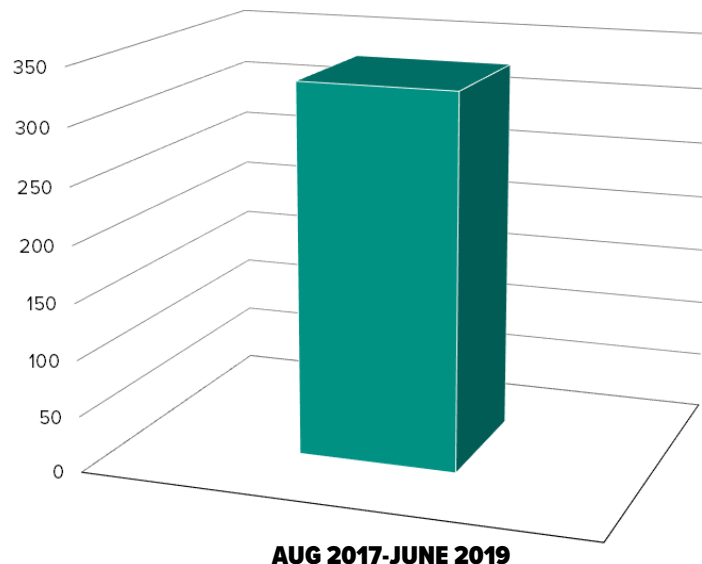
## APRIL-JUNE 2019



## TOTAL NOTIFICATIONS



## NOTIFICATIONS SINCE EMPOWIR STARTED



# SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU WANT TO USE **EMPOWIR**

- 1.** It is a **NO BLAME AND INFORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS** to manage and identify poor workplace behaviour.
- 2.** It cannot be used if you are already in a performance management process or using it as a defence for other behaviour.
- 3.** You are in charge of the process. It is you decides the level of confidentiality and when you want to stop the process.
- 4.** The **'ISSUE VAULT'** is a good way to record an incident of poor behaviour in your workplace. Email [pwic@wh.org.au](mailto:pwic@wh.org.au). Your email is only viewed by one person at Western Health. You should recieve a response in 48 hours. Your notification only needs to indicate if you want it to stay in the vault or you will be asked if you want to see a contact officer. Again the choice is yours!
- 5.** If the matter (you have witnessed/experienced/or been involved in as a 3rd party) has upset or distressed you? - Please use Caraniche at Work to seek support.

**Caraniche at Work**  
**Employee Wellbeing Services**  
**1800 099 444**  
**[work.caraniche.com.au](http://work.caraniche.com.au)**  
**[work@caraniche.com.au](mailto:work@caraniche.com.au)**  
**Call us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

- 6.** If the vault recieves multiple notifications about the same person or work unit - it starts an informal discussion about the pattern of behaviour and what can be done to change the behaviour.
- 7.** Ultimately you choose whether you want to follow your concern or matter to the point of resolving it.

