

Media Release



NOVOTEL SYDNEY MANLY PACIFIC

25-28 JUNE 2009

24 JUNE 2009

One in four Aussie bosses are bullied

Office gossip, withholding information, and intentionally missing deadlines are among tactics used to bully one in four Australian bosses, according to a new study.

The study into staff who target and harass their managers - a behaviour coined 'upwards bullying' - found other common bullying tactics included spreading workplace rumours, skipping meetings, and ignoring the views and opinions of managers.

"Upwards bullying, like other forms of workplace bullying, is often more subtle and less obvious to other staff," said Sara Branch, psychologist and study author from Griffith University. "However, it can also include more aggressive behaviours such as yelling, verbal threats, and confrontational phone conversations."

"We found that many managers felt uncomfortable about reporting the bullying for fear of not being taken seriously or being expected to deal with the situation on their own.

"Workplaces need to understand that bullying can occur at any level in an organisation. Although managers clearly have formal authority, they can also be victims of bullying and need just as much support as other staff."

Dr Branch will present her findings at the Australian Psychological Society's (APS) 8th Industrial & Organisational Psychology (IOP) Conference at the Novotel Sydney Manly Pacific from 25 to 28 June.

The study found one of the main triggers for upwards bullying is organisational change.

"If an employee is disgruntled by change, such as new working conditions, management, or processes, they may blame their manager and respond by bullying them."

Dr Branch said upwards bullying has the potential to damage a manager's mental health and wellbeing.

"We know that bullying can cause psychological stress, anxiety, and in some extreme cases, even depression. Managers may also lose confidence in their abilities and feel less satisfied in their jobs."

"Upwards bullying has the potential to impact the bottom line, with loss in productivity, increased absenteeism and higher staff turnover, as well as the cost of intervention programs. Organisations must take all forms of bullying seriously, as it is destructive and can have devastating affects on people's careers."

"Workplaces should adopt grievance management processes that employees can trust. Encourage managers to report the bullying and bring employees together to discussing the issues openly."

<more>

Platinum sponsor



MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Please direct all media queries to:

Elaine Grant
+61 412 683 068

Ellise McLoughlan
+61 428 445 097

Under the auspices of



Media Release



NOVOTEL SYDNEY MANLY PACIFIC

25-28 JUNE 2009

The study involved 162 (105 male, 57 female) participants from both public and private organisations across a range of industries across Australia. Participants came from a range of managerial levels including senior, middle and supervisory positions.

Dr Branch said the 25 percent rate of bullying reported by her participants was high compared to similar studies in Europe, which have found on average 11 per cent of managers had experienced upwards bullying.

For more information on the APS IOP Conference visit: www.iopconference.com.au.

<ends>

About the IOP Conference: The eighth biennial IOP Conference will explore contemporary issues in workplace psychology such as employee engagement, work/life balance and the impacts of new media. Keynote speakers include: *Professors Beryl Hesketh, Deniz Ones, Eduardo Salas, Sabine Sonnentag, Phillip Taylor and Robert Wood.*

Dr Branch is available for interview during the week of the conference. Please contact Elaine Grant on: 0412 683 068 or Ellise McLoughlan on 0428 445 097.