

Article Information

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Piper Alderman reports its 3rd annual Employment Relations survey findings

National law firm Piper Alderman has announced the results of its 3rd annual Employment Matters Survey, 'What's keeping you awake at night?' The survey invited over 2,500 HR Managers, General Managers, COOs, CEOs and legal teams across all industry groups nationally to reflect on their experiences in dealing with employment and safety related matters over the 2015/2016 financial year. The survey also asked for their expectations for the 2016/2017 financial year.

Key findings

- Only 16% of respondents anticipate a reduction in headcount over the next year. This is broadly consistent with the 2015 and 2014 results and reflects resilient business sentiment, despite several potentially disruptive events such as 'Brexit' and the 2016 Australian Federal election.
- Encouragingly, 73% of respondents reported that they anticipated their employees would receive pay increases at the beginning of the 2016/17 financial year, however only 32% of those respondents reported that the pay increase would be more than the CPI or minimum Award wage increase.
- As expected, union activity varied significantly between industries and locations, but overall 54% of respondents reported coming into contact with at least one union representing an employee or group of employees at their workplace. This is precisely the same figure as the 2015 and 2014 results. The most common reasons for union contact were terms and conditions and enterprise bargaining, performance management and misconduct investigations.
- 35% of respondents reported they had been visited by a safety inspector in the past year. This is an 8% increase on the 2015 results and suggests moderately increased safety regulator activity.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents (97%) have bullying, harassment and equal opportunity policies in place. Notably, almost half (47%) of respondents reported they had dealt with between one and three bullying allegations in the past year, while a significant proportion (31%) reported they had not faced any issues.
- A strong majority (86%) of respondents now have social media policies in place, an increase of 6% on our 2015 results. Consistent with the pervasive nature of social media in modern life, social media policy implementation has increased even in industries where social media may play a less significant role within the workplace. A clear example of this is the Manufacturing Industry, which has seen figures rise from 38% in 2014 to 74% in 2016.
- Requests for flexible working arrangements were very common, with 86% of respondents reporting they had received at least one request for flexibility in the previous year.
- Return to work from maternity leave was the most common reason cited, followed by requests relating to care for children under school age, and care for school aged children. 99% of respondents had been able to accommodate at least one flexible working arrangement. The most common types of flexible work continue to be working part time and flexible start and finish times.
- The survey also offered an opportunity for respondents to voice their 'wish list' in terms of what they would change about the current industrial relations and safety regimes.

To request a full copy of the report, please click [here](#).