

# **The Study of Australian Leadership (SAL)**

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## **Abstract:**

Supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Employment, SAL is significant for a number of reasons.

It is the largest ever survey of leadership in Australia. Consisting of five matched survey instruments, SAL surveyed almost 8,000 individuals across 2,703 organisations and 2,561 workplaces. Respondents included senior leaders (such as CEOs), workplace leaders and specialists (such as HR managers), frontline leaders and employees.

The size of this study also means that, for the first time, there is a comprehensive and representative picture of leadership in Australian organisations at different levels, which can be used to assess how different aspects of leadership relate to workplace performance, innovation and employee outcomes.

This study is also significant because it is the first major review of leadership and management capability in Australia since the Karpin Report in 1995, and the first workplace study undertaken since the 1995 Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey.

Since then, the Australian economy has been transformed, and many new challenges now confront organisational leaders. SAL provides a thorough assessment of leadership and determines whether Australian workplaces are well-placed to meet the many challenges they now face.

## **Why leadership must change now**

Fuelled by the resources boom, the Australian economy has enjoyed an unprecedented 25 years of economic growth, more than doubling in real terms over that period. But, now, the Australian economy is slowing. Productivity is sluggish, employment growth is weakening, and consumer confidence is faltering. Many economists are now predicting an extended period of slow economic growth and recovery.

A critical question is whether Australian organisational leaders are ready to meet these new challenges. Or whether the extended period of economic growth driven by the resources boom has made Australian organisational leaders complacent and unprepared for the future? Have Australian organisations invested adequately in their leadership and management capabilities to navigate through these complex and uncertain times? If not, will these various changes have adverse and lasting effects on future growth and prosperity? These questions have informed the surveys developed for this study.