


Human-Centred Change for Human Services

It's the HOW that matters





Australia's human services sector is facing a significant transformation driven by new competition, sector consolidation, and regulatory reforms.

However, the common top-down approach to **pushing down change, with a success rate of less than 30%**, often results in resistance, burnout, and disengaged employees.

It's the HOW that matters. This paper addresses **how to lift your organisation's capacity** for more human-centred and collaborative change, **empowering frontline teams to accelerate sustainable transformation.**



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WHY

does change need to be more human-centred?

It's a once-in-a-lifetime transformation

It's a time of disruption and an ever-increasing pace of change around the world.

In Australia, the human services sector is now going through a once-in-a-lifetime transformation. Almost every aged care, children's services, education, transport, and community services provider is transforming the way their organisation works.

None of this is a small change.

It's reimagining the way your whole organisation works. It's repositioning in the market in response to new competition, growth, sector consolidation, and reforms.

What is the pace of change?

In the next 3 years, 5 major changes in most organisations



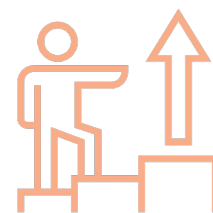
In the near future nearly 75% expect it will multiply by 3x



Put humans back into changing human services

Your people are a powerful force you can use to transform your organisation. You need to do more than developing people-centred services. It's important to engage those who deliver services in the change—carers caring for elders, teachers engaging students in their learning, transport and community workers improving the lives of everyone.

When you empower people with lived experience to co-create the changes they'll embrace it. You'll get a behaviour shift en masse with rapid transformation starting within 3-4 months.



Human-centred change leads to > 78% success

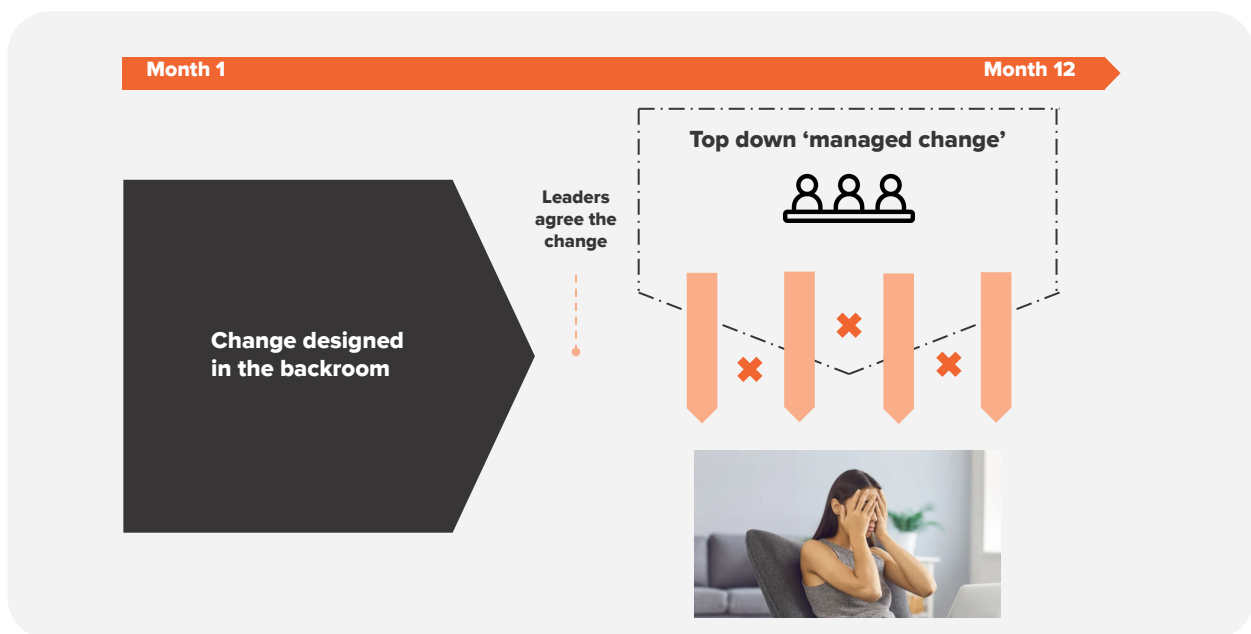
WHY

does change need to be more human-centred?

Pushed-down change is not the answer

For a long time, experts around the world have recognised that top-down, heavily managed 'Industrial Age' change has **less than a 30% success rate**. This is particularly the case with major organisation change. It just doesn't work.

Despite this, nearly **80% of organisations** still use this approach today. Why?



The problem is that it's not human-centered

We fall back to what we know.

Primarily led by senior leaders, 'managed change' is often designed in the back room. Some people may have been consulted along the way to get buy-in, but it's essentially change pushed down through the organisation.

Lots of pushed-down change overloads your people, so it's not human-centred.

When you have a lot of disconnected initiatives, your people simply can't connect them all up and make sense of the change.

It has only a 30% success rate.

Unlikely to be embraced, pushed down change is much more likely to spark major resistance. Not only that, it can lead to other problems like burnout, disengagement, absenteeism, and increased staff turnover.

Pushed Down Change < 30% Success

But is it actually faster?

Some CEOs push change down to disrupt and get things moving. While it may seem faster, it causes chaos, it won't shift your people's behaviour and it's more likely to slow everything down.

WHAT

are the successful outcomes?



74%

of senior leaders think they involve their employees



Only 48%

of employees feel consulted about change



74%

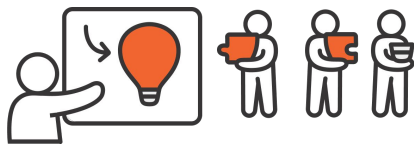
of frontline leaders want to be more engaged



Only 18%

of senior leaders admit they know what needs to change

Empower your people



Employee engagement

38%

Intent to stay

46%

Get 3X outcomes

33% faster

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Source: Gartner 2019

HOW

can you lift your organisation capability?

The Fire up™ formula will help you rapidly lift your organisation’s capability for human-centred change by freeing up capacity, and empowering your people to deliver sustainable innovation and organisation change.



F

Free

Free Capacity

... to engage everyone in human-centred change

I

Ignite

Ignite a Mindset Shift

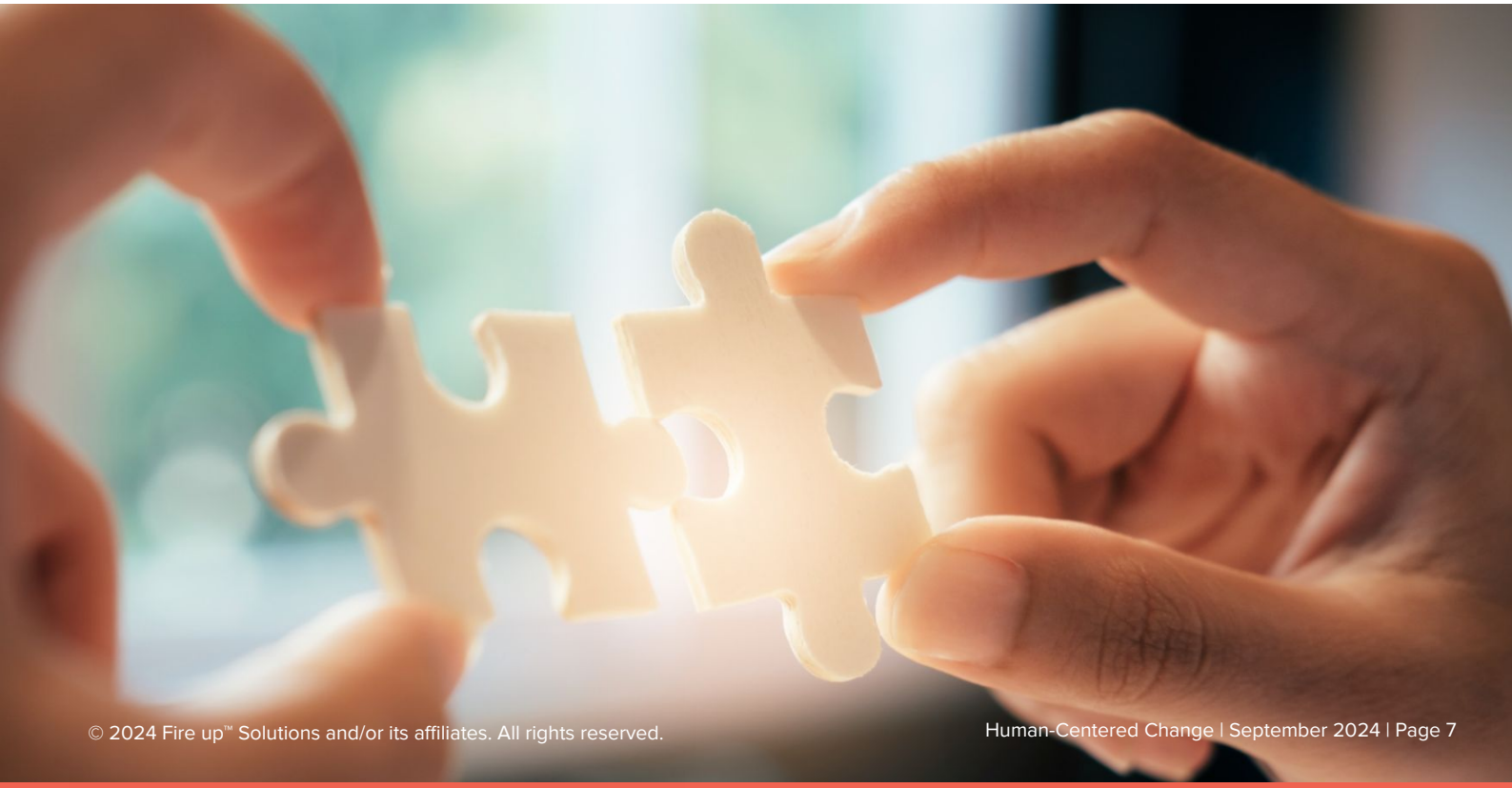
... to empower people to co-design changes to services and new ways of working

RE

Re-connect

Re-connect to a Positive 'Big Picture'

... to scale-up sustainable strategy, innovation and organisation change





1 Free capacity to be more human-centred

Over 70% of frontline employees are enthusiastic to be engaged. Surely that's untapped potential you can't ignore? It's the key to your success.

But, your people are busy so you naturally want to protect their time. They're overloaded with regulatory compliance, constant change, and workforce shortages. All their time is spent 'putting out spot fires' and 'being drawn into the weeds'.

Perhaps you've made an attempt to involve your people in collaboration that's more human centred - but that hasn't worked. You hired a facilitator and got people in a room. Unfortunately, it became a 'talkfest'. In the end, it created lots of extra work and you lost control of the outcomes.

It's the HOW that matters

Human-centred change does makes sense. So do you go slow, before you go fast?

Freeing up 20-30% of your people's capacity up front for human-centred change is essential first step. You'll achieve this with a **realistic, step-by-step plan** that addresses:

- **What needs the most focus** for your strategic change?
- **Which capabilities do you need to invest in** to create more capacity for change?
- **Who to involve** and when to involve them?
- **How to design an effective collaboration process** that brings the right people together at the right time, including making better use of existing meetings?

2 Ignite a mindset shift to empower your people

Empowering teams to co-create change is a powerful lever. People embrace change they create themselves, resulting in a **96% success rate**. Buy-in cannot be achieved with a passive acceptance of change. As a leader, you must engage their **hearts and heads** in the change and empower them to collaborate and get involved in the **hands-on co-design** of new ways of working.

Head, Heart, and Hands Together Make a Big Difference



Source: BCG analysis.

¹Improvement is defined as “breakthrough” or “strong” performance improvement as self-reported in survey.

It’s challenging though, as it’s a significant mindset shift for most leaders. Instead of directing change, your leaders will need to be prepared to empower frontline teams, and guide them on a journey to co-design changes that will move the whole organisation forward.

How should your leaders empower their teams to do the work? You want your people to actively engage in surveys, focus groups, workshops and cross-functional forums—where people feel the challenge and excitement of learning, creating something new and working together to achieve real outcomes.



2 Ignite a mindset shift to empower your people

If your top team of leaders sponsor the change it **contributes to over 50% of your success**. It's crucial they are on the same page and consistently sponsor the change. Otherwise, it can lead to confusion, wasted effort, and adds to overload.

It's the HOW that matters

To set-up for for success, you'll need to invest in lifting all your leaders' capability to lead more adaptive change, so they:

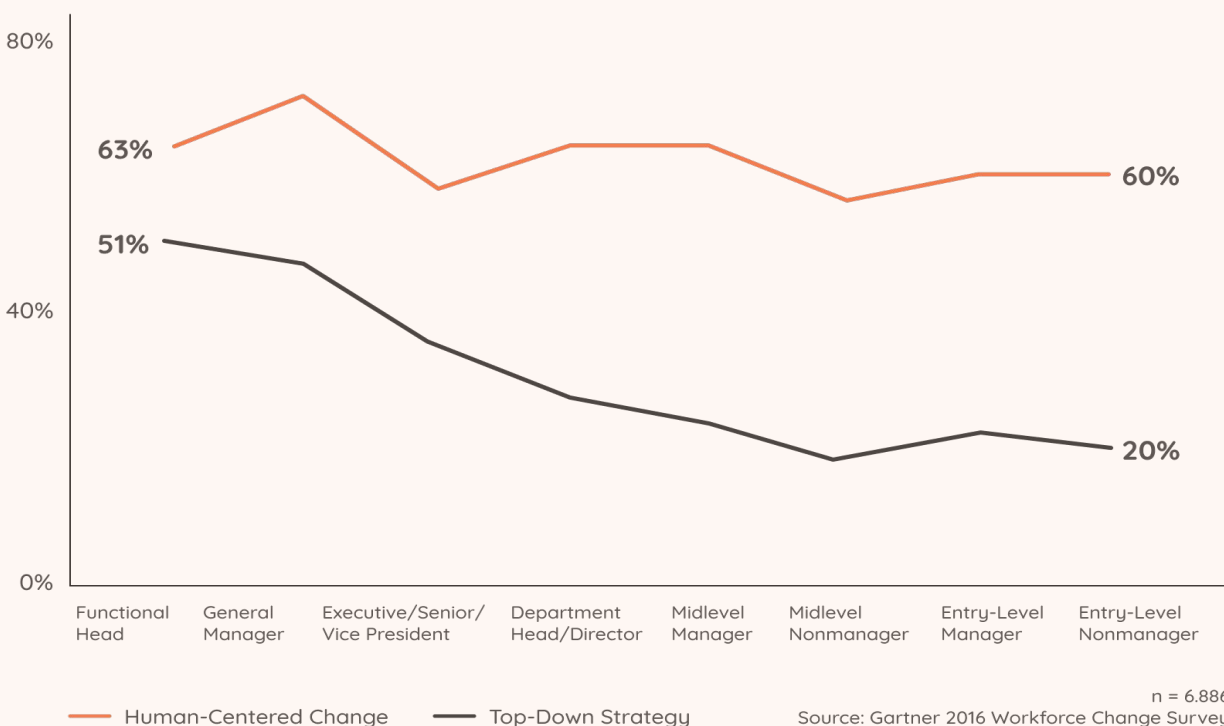
- **Start the change journey with listening.** Start from the 'outside-in'. Listen with genuine empathy to your customers, employees and partners, to frame the challenge and get their ideas, before jumping in to co-create solutions.
- **Facilitate co-design sessions with people, rather than for people.** Create a safe space and involve people with lived experience and other experts to make decisions and co-design solutions that will work better for everyone.
- **Put in place feedback loops.** Pilots and early-wins are a good start, but then seek feedback at every step to iterate the solution before you begin to scale.

If you do it well, the pay-off will be results that you can immediately measure:

- **Common understanding and buy-in improved up to 60%**
- **Change resistance reduced by over 50%**
- **Get 3X more ideas** to design solutions that achieve better outcomes.

Human-Centered change improves buy-in and common understanding

Percentage of Respondents Understanding Change by Seniority



3 Re-connect everyone to a positive picture of the future

As you scale up an organisation change, it's crucial to keep everyone connected to a positive 'big picture' view of the future. By inspiring people to be part of the change journey and helping them 'connect the dots' so the changes make sense to them in their day-to-day work, you will **achieve up to 3X the outcomes**.

However, without keeping everything connected, you risk breaking your people or your organisation. Disconnected changes can overwhelm your workforce, leading to burnout and reduced effectiveness. Tired people make poor decisions, with the risk of downstream impacts on customer experience and compliance.

It's the HOW that matters

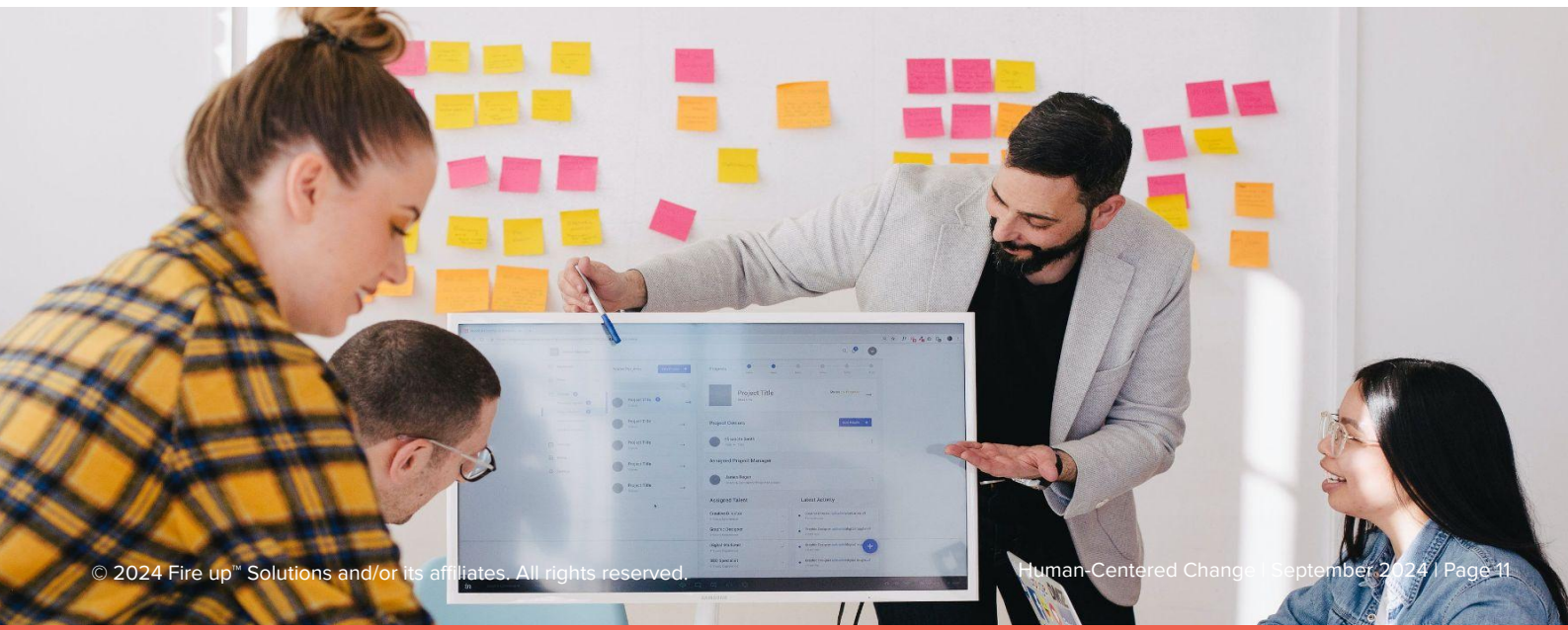
Start by getting everyone aligned around a clear strategic intent. Connect your strategic intent to your vision, co-create a view of how you want to operate, and then develop the detailed initiatives that ladder up to the strategy and an integrated plan.

It can't be a 'once-and-done'. Your leaders can help their teams 'connect the dots' by:

- **Engaging their hearts with storytelling.** Storytelling is a simple way to 'connect up' the vision with the changes they need to make;
- **Regularly bringing champions or a community-of-practice together for hands on co-design.** Use cross-collaborative forums to share learnings and iterate changes.
- **Celebrating success, and sharing how people's feedback has had real impact.** Measure progress so you can demonstrate the value delivered—for customers, partners, or teams.

You need new capabilities, to manage the risks as your organisation adapts and grows :

- **A program office with light-touch governance** to manage the integrated plan; and
- **A change centre of expertise** to consistently deliver co-design/ change practices



Your next steps

It's Time to Reimagine the Way Your Organisation Works

Discover how **human-centred organisation change will get you rapid results**. Tap into our powerful blend of human-centred change, leadership development, and leading practices in strategy & innovation.

Our packaged services will help you apply our Fire up™ Formula and **rapidly lift your capability and get your teams moving and deliver sustainable change**.

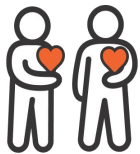


QUICKSTART

Set up your change journey with a plan for rapid success

[LEARN MORE](#)

Free **20% capacity** for human-centred change and innovation



FIREUP

Lift your capability to lead human-centred change

[LEARN MORE](#)

Ignite a **shift in leaders** to contribute up to **50% of your outcomes**



FOCUS

Focus the collective effort to redesign your organisation

[LEARN MORE](#)

Keep everyone connected to fire up **sustainable change for 3X the typical outcomes**



SCALEUP

Scale-up strategy, sustainable change and innovation

[LEARN MORE](#)

Speak to one of our experts

We'll discuss your organisation's goals, your challenges and how we can help set you up for success

[BOOK A CALL](#)

About the Fire up™ approach

What sits behind our approach for rapid and sustainable change?

Human-centered design harnesses the power of people for change. But it's not enough. Our approach is based on **Stanford's d.school Integrative Design** - a blend of human-centered design, leading systems change, strategy and innovation that is ideally suited to creating rapid and sustainable change for greater impact in human services.



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About Fire up™ Solutions

At Fire up™ we believe in harnessing the power of your people to fire up extraordinary outcomes.

We're experts in putting humans back into the centre of changing human-services organisations. We do our best work in the complex and highly-regulated sectors of aged care, disability care, education, children's services and community.

We partner with executive leaders to rapidly transform organisations. Our suite of packaged services help teams 'connect-the-dots' and get change moving quickly, in small steps, that deliver immediate results.

We blend leading practices in human-centred organisation change, leadership development and workforce planning, with award-winning strategy and innovation tools.

We're committed to creating a better future and are proud to be a certified BCorp corporation. Together, as part of the BCorp movement, we're helping to transform organisations and the global economy for impact that matters—people, communities, and the planet.



Our clients

Uniting

Warrigal



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG



What clients say about us

'I would absolutely recommend Fire up to any organisation looking to implement or work on human-centred change'

GM Business Sustainability - National Human Services Organisation

[VIEW CASE STUDIES](#)



Angela Frith

Co-founder and author

Angela has been at the forefront of waves of disruptive change across many sectors for over 25 years, helping to sustainably transform organisations.

Angela likes to keep things simple. She guides leaders on how to put people in the centre, to spark shifts in culture, then 'join the dots' to rapidly transform a complex organisation. She 'knows what works' from her breadth of experience integrating businesses, transforming customer facing functions and shared services/outsourcing.

She is a recognised expert in human centred design and change. She has been director/advisor with a number of top tier firms, a boutique CX firm and has led a centre of expertise in organisation design and change for five years at Woolworths.

Her experience is backed up by leading accreditations with IDEO, Ashridge Business School and MIT and an MBA from the Australian Institute of Management.

