



# Workplace testing challenges

With employers increasingly seeking to implement drug and alcohol testing in the workplace, employers need to carefully review their policies and practices in conducting these tests, according to Jamie Robinson, Brisbane Partner at Harmers Workplace Lawyers.

He warns that employers face the risk of decisions being challenged, possibly through litigation.

He says while employers can genuinely use drug and alcohol testing in many circumstances to ensure they continue to meet their OH&S obligations to protect the health and safety of all employees, they will need to act with increasing diligence in their testing procedures. "While certain industries have legislation to assist with the implementation of drug and alcohol testing, such as the police force, rail and mining industries, the majority of workplaces, especially small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), face an increasing risk of challenge when trying to implement and act upon drug and alcohol policies."

Robinson says, "Employers have always had to tread very carefully when implementing and acting on drug and alcohol testing in the workplace, however, the new legislation will likely re-open avenues for employees to claim unfair dismissal so these types of practices will come under more scrutiny."



## Business wake up call

The latest Edelman Trust Barometer in business reports that 74 per cent of all Australian respondents trust corporations less than they did 12 months ago.

Officially released at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the study surveyed 4475 upper-income, highly educated people in 20 countries, including 1375 in Asia-Pacific countries.

Amanda Little, Managing Director, Edelman Australia, noted that Australians' attitude to regulation and government intervention in business was one of the key results from this year's study.

"The gap in trust between government and business is the highest in the developed world, and the reverse of the global average," Little says. "Fifty-six per cent of respondents in Australia said they trusted government, versus just 43 per cent saying they trust business. The global average has government at 43 per cent, versus business at 50."

Australian respondents voted overwhelmingly in favour of greater government intervention and regulation of business across all sectors, particularly the finance sector.

So, who do people trust?

The data shows that 39 per cent of respondents will trust information from company employees and peers, and 41 per cent trust what Edelman calls 'a person like me'.



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### **Recruitment** message

The talent management and workforce solutions sector needed to connect with CEOs and boards in order to demonstrate their value in the current downturn, according to a recent Recruitment and Consulting Services Association panel discussion.

"We should be in the boardrooms of Australia to show that a flexible workforce is an effective cost-reduction strategy. We can partner with industry to help drive their costs down while still keeping people employed," Debra Loveridge, CEO of staffing agency Randstad, told the panel discussion.

Lincoln Crawley, Managing Director Australia & New Zealand, Manpower Services Australia, agreed that it was crucial to connect with corporate leaders. "We can provide organisations with agility and flexibility, and we need to be saying so in conversations with CEOs, boards and leaders. We don't want to be seen as simply a supplier that's chosen by procurement teams."

According to Greg Hargrave, Managing Director and CEO, SKILLED Group, it was important to take the conversation beyond costs.

"We have good people, and we aren't just about putting bums on seats," he says.

He also predicted that, with many putting off retirement – or coming out of it – due to falling super funds, there would be even more quality people looking for flexible or part-time work options.