



Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan

2020-2025



Womin djeka

The Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025 (the Plan) is a longitudinal, systematic and evidence-informed approach to creating a mentally healthy work and study culture.

The Plan is data-driven and evidence-based and so we track our performance each year against a formal evaluation framework. The dedicated Mental Wellbeing Initiatives team implements a range of evidence-based mental health promotion activities and ensures these activities have desired outcomes and impacts over both shorter and longer terms.

The initiatives are made possible thanks to funding through SSAF, CSF, and the RMIT Health Safety and Wellbeing strategic project.



The Plan contributes to RMIT's commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). In particular, it represents strategic action towards SDG3 to "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages." Our focus on partnerships is also aligned with SDG17 to "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development".

Acknowledgement of Country



RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

RMIT recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the proud custodians of Earth's longest surviving cultures. The value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional ways of wellbeing are evidenced by the resilience and resourcefulness in the face of colonisation and unjust attempts to destroy their cultures or force assimilation.

RMIT acknowledges the importance of history and culture in understanding and promoting social and emotional wellbeing. The University values cultural diversity, believes all staff and students should be treated with dignity and respect, and seeks to contribute to creating a nation that provides equal life chances for all and works in collaboration with its Indigenous heritage.

Artwork *Luwaytini* by Mark Cleaver, Palawa



Bundjil's statement

Bundjil Womin Djeka ngarna-ga – Bundjil asks you to come and asks what is your purpose for coming and understanding

“Bundjil was a powerful man, who travelled as an Eagle. He was the head man of the Kulin people. Bundjil taught us to always welcome guests. Bundjil asks what is your purpose for coming and understanding place.

When you are on place you make dhumbali (promise/commitment) to Bundjil and the land of the Kulin Nation.

The first dhumbali, is to obey the ngarn-ga (understandings) of Bundjil.
The second dhumbali, is to not harm the bubups (children).
The third is not to harm the biik biik (land) and wurneet (waterways) of Bundjil.

As the spirit of Kulin ancestors live in us, let the wisdom, the spirit and the generosity in which Bundjil taught us influence the decisions made on place. Do this by understanding your ways of knowing, your ways of doing, and your ways of being on place.”



Contents

This document provides background to the development of the Plan, as well as key metrics and indicators of progress towards the ultimate vision.

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“Together we create a mentally healthy community in which everyone can realise their potential and feel safe and supported in their experience of mental wellbeing.”



Code of Conduct

RMIT’s new Code of Conduct is grounded in the principles of the Bundjil Statement.

This sent a strong and nationally significant signal that RMIT is serious about the conditions of ‘Welcome’ and of living respectfully on the lands of the Kulin Nations. As the University’s foundational policy document, the Code of Conduct demonstrates the University’s dhumbali to embedding reconciliation in everything we do.

Foreword



Emma Blee

**Director of Health,
Safety and Wellbeing**

At RMIT we are committed to promoting and protecting the social and emotional wellbeing of all our people. We believe strongly that people work and learn most effectively when they are mentally healthy.

In 2019, we committed to an integrated approach for both students and staff. This represented a major shift in our focus and a major innovation for the tertiary education sector.

To carry our commitment from words into action, RMIT's Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025 (the Plan) was drafted in 2019 by the newly formed Wellbeing Initiatives Team, with extensive internal and external consultation. The Plan was subsequently endorsed by the then Vice-Chancellor, Martin Bean CBE, along with a draft Implementation Plan and Evaluation Framework.

At that point we had not anticipated the turmoil that we would all experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as RMIT and our wider community adapted to the challenges of new risks and restrictions, we found that the actions we had already planned provided a strong base for the rapid response the pandemic demanded. We were able to anchor in our foundational principles while adapting efforts to focus on the short-term needs of our people through the early stages of the crisis. In 2021 our core initiatives resumed, balanced with ongoing responsive supports connected to the pandemic.

Our approach is not designed as a short-term fix for risks or problems that are easily identified and remedied or removed. While student and staff supports such as counselling and employee assistance programs are crucial to our ongoing work for those confronting wellbeing challenges or mental ill-health, the Plan was designed to shift our attention towards promotion, prevention and early intervention activities that address more the underlying causes of work- or study-related distress. This focus on upstream factors is a key pillar in our work and features heavily in this long-term Plan.

Just as physical health requires a range of services that promote healthy behaviours and prevent illness or injury, research shows that mental wellbeing services need to span the whole spectrum of people's experiences, including those who are generally "well" most of the time. Keeping people well is as important as helping people to recover, regardless of the situation but especially during challenging times like a prolonged and highly disruptive global pandemic.

PHILOSOPHY AND CONCEPTS



Defining mental wellbeing

The [World Health Organization](#) defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. In this context, mental wellbeing is part of “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2020).

These WHO definitions tend to prioritise the individual and individual factors of mental wellbeing as opposed to wider social or cultural factors. A broader conceptualisation of mental wellbeing continues to evolve over time. More recent formulations define mental health as “a dynamic state of internal equilibrium which enables individuals to use their abilities in harmony with universal values of society” (Galderisi et al, 2015) but, again, the focus is on the internal state of the individual.

Along with First Nations peoples of Australia (Gee et al, 2014), RMIT embraces internal/individual and environmental/cultural factors of social and emotional wellbeing, such as:

- The need for cultural understanding
- The impact of history in trauma and loss
- Recognition of human rights
- The impact of racism and stigma
- Recognition of the centrality of kinship
- Recognition of cultural diversity
- Recognition of Aboriginal strengths.

Noogal means “belonging” in the Woi-wurrung and Boon-wurrung languages of the Eastern Kulin nations, some of the Traditional Owners of Naarm (Melbourne). *Durrung* means “heart” in the Woi-wurrung language. Vietnamese culture also emphasises “collectivist” values (Ralston et al, 1999) which are aligned with social wellbeing in this context, and so RMIT’s approach needs to be holistic, global and inclusive of all its people.

As described below in relation to the Mental Health Continuum, RMIT places equal importance on both the social (noogal) and emotional (durrung) aspects of mental wellbeing for our people individually and collectively as a whole organisation.

- Individual mental wellbeing is the type we are most familiar with, namely our personal experiences of emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing.
- Organisational mental wellbeing is what RMIT displays at a “higher level” than the individual, in terms of our policies, systems and culture.
- In-between these two “levels”, there are also factors related to work and study. This is where organisational and individual aspects of mental wellbeing interact. For example, if RMIT is enacting positive mental wellbeing policies and culture at a high level, then the expectation is that individuals will experience more positive mental wellbeing as a result of engaging in (or being exhausted by) work or study.



The Mental Health Continuum

As part of the evaluation of the Strategic Action Plan, RMIT uses a scientifically-validated measure of mental health/wellbeing named the Mental Health Continuum. People shift along the continuum over time depending on how well they are feeling (emotional wellbeing), functioning (psychological wellbeing), and relating to others (social wellbeing).

This continuum is distinct from, but related to, the continuum or spectrum of experiences of mental ill-health (like anxiety, depression, or general psychological distress). It refers to positive aspects of mental health and wellbeing.

We can divide people's current experiences of wellbeing into three broad categories, at different points on the continuum:

1. **Flourishing:** High levels of mental wellbeing
2. **Languishing:** Low levels mental wellbeing
3. **Moderate:** Medium levels of mental wellbeing

The Plan is designed to help people move up the continuum, not only because it helps support work and learning outcomes, but because we want everyone in our community to have the opportunity to live full and meaningful lives.



Languishing
Generally negative feelings,
functions, and relationships

Moderate
Mixed or average feelings,
functions and relationships

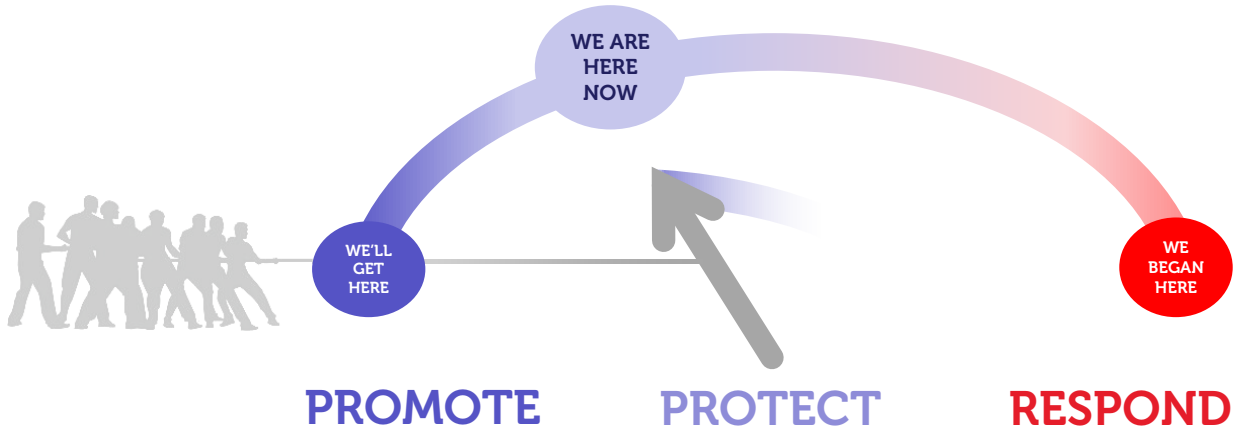
Flourishing
Generally positive feelings,
functions and relationships

RMIT's use of the Mental Health Continuum is an evidence-based approach using scientific measures such as the Mental Health Continuum Short-Form (Keyes, 2002). However, aligned with [The Okanagan Charter's](#) framework for health promoting universities, we recognise that health is an expanding concept and that the Mental Health Continuum cannot capture all aspects of an individual's health and wellbeing.

For example, The Okanagan Charter also accepts findings from the World Health Organization's 2012 *Our Planet, Our Health, Our Future* initiative stating that all human health "ultimately depends on ecosystem services that are made possible by biodiversity and the products and services derived from them."

Our vision: Shifting the dial

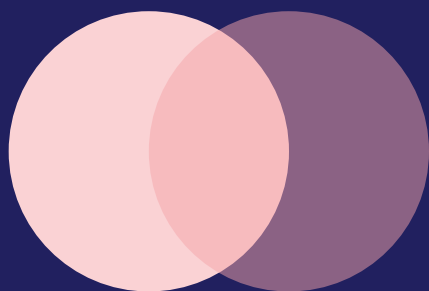
RMIT is currently rated as a "medium risk" organisation. Most of our efforts and energies are focused at the "Systems" level but, with continued work and investment, we plan to shift the dial further into the Culture and Mental Health Promotion zone of activity.



	Long-term proactive	Short-term proactive	Present-focused	Early reactive	Late reactive
Definitions	A fully mature culture of MH promotion addresses the root causes of mental ill-health by also building potential for human flourishing.	MH promotion activities tackle systems that drive organisational and study-related risk and protective factors. We try to shift rates of mental ill-health among students and so the focus is still on negative outcomes.	Student resilience is targeted to prevent mental ill-health and some limited MH promotion activities are implemented around training and self-care. Wellbeing is still viewed as an individual "problem" to be solved as opposed to something with intrinsic value.	Students are offered more timely support but there is little investment in upstream promotion and prevention activities that could have stopped them needing acute or recovery support in the first place.	Students tend to only receive support when they need urgent care or to assist their recovery. Little attention to paid to the positive aspects of mental wellbeing and human flourishing.
Examples	Psychosocial Safety Climate Mental Wellbeing Action Planning Campaigns Lived experience project	Psychosocial risk management Learning pathways Survey, evaluation framework, and local area action planning Trauma Informed practices RMIT-wide MH&W policy	Training, webinars, workshops etc. Capability framework Ways to Wellbeing project Student activations and social media Enhancing civility and reducing burnout	Suicide prevention Assisting Others in Distress	Optimising services (Complex Case Management, ELS, complaints management) Critical Incident Management (incl. Sudden Death Response Team)
How we measure progress	Rates of flourishing among students and staff	Levels of psychosocial risk	Engagement	Exhaustion	Service usage rates, wait times and satisfaction levels

THE PLAN

RMIT's integrated approach to student and staff wellbeing



The Plan applies to everyone at RMIT regardless of their role as either student or member of staff.

Many students go on to become staff and many staff are also students, and both have the right to be part of a community that cares about their wellbeing, so there is no clear distinction between the two.

We also know that staff wellbeing is impacted by the wellbeing of students they work with, and vice versa. Wellbeing is contagious and relational.

The hope is that an integrated approach to mental wellbeing will lead to innovative solutions that tackle work and study issues simultaneously.

Plan Overview

The Plan was developed in 2019 in response to a community call-to-action around mental health and wellbeing and was subsequently endorsed by former Vice-Chancellor, Martin Bean.

The Plan consists of a Vision, the “Why”, Guiding Principles, Key Action Areas, and Enablers to ensure a systematic, values-driven and broad-based approach to mental health and wellbeing.

It also defines specific Actions within each Key Action Area so that the Plan can come to life “off the page” and translate into specific, targeted, and concrete activities on the ground. Although it precedes external frameworks, the Plan’s Key Action Areas broadly map onto external frameworks of mental health promotion and prevention in Australia’s university context. For students it reinforces core principles of the [Australian University Mental Health Framework](#), and for staff it aligns with the [Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces](#) (see [Table](#) below on page 17).

The Plan on a page



Our Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025

Vision

Together we create a mentally healthy community in which everyone can realise their potential and feel safe and supported in their experience of mental wellbeing.

Why

- We value our people and want them to thrive
- Positive mental wellbeing is an enabler of study and work success
- Mental ill-health is growing global challenge with diversity across cultural groups
- Individual and collective resilience helps navigate disruption and change
- There are both individual and organisational influences on mental health outcomes
- There are clear points in the university year that have greater psychosocial risk

Guiding Principles

1. Initiatives are aligned with our values and core priorities
2. Initiatives focus across the mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention
3. We have an integrated, yet tailored approach to student and staff mental wellbeing
4. Mental wellbeing is embedded in all that we do
5. Mental wellbeing as a shared responsibility

Key Action Areas

Culture

1. Articulate our commitment
2. Collaborate for collective impact
3. Grow meaningful engagement and tell our stories
4. Learn, celebrate and share our success

Systems

1. Review and uplift our policies and procedures
2. Identify, address and monitor key psychosocial risks
3. Influence key organisational system levers in teaching, research and work
4. Audit our practices and strive for accreditation e.g. eSmart

Skills and Experiences

1. Build the mental health literacy of our community
2. Increase capabilities to assist others (and self) when in distress
3. Provide tools to proactively build psychological safety and resilience
4. Create physical and online environments that foster mental wellbeing, engagement and access

Support

1. Promote initiatives that support personal mental wellbeing
2. Develop prevention initiatives to support early action
3. Optimise our services and supports for those in need
4. Strengthen our suicide prevention and postvention

Enablers

Leadership

Our leaders are committed and set the tone from the top and invest in mental wellbeing

Partnerships

We partner with internal and external experts to increase our capability, capacity and impact and to respect different ways and knowledges

Evidence

Our work and ways of working are informed by the latest evidence and we use data, monitoring and evaluation to inform decisions



Action Area Mapping

RMIT's Key Action Areas mapped onto external frameworks for student and staff mental health and wellbeing

RMIT key action areas	Australian University Mental Health Framework	Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces
<p>Culture</p> <p>Actualising the organisation's collective value on care, collaboration, health and wellbeing, so that both groups and individuals thrive in work and learning.</p>	<p>3) Mentally healthy university communities encourage participation; foster a diverse, inclusive environment; promote connectedness; and support academic and personal achievement.</p> <p>4) The response to mental health and wellbeing is strengthened through collaboration and coordinated actions.</p>	<p>Promote: Recognise and enhance the positive aspects of work that contribute to good mental health.</p>
<p>Systems</p> <p>Strengthen the organisational policy and processes that drive to reduce risk and increase protective factors for wellbeing.</p>	<p>6) Continuous improvement and innovation is informed by evidence and helps build an understanding of what works for student mental health and wellbeing.</p>	
<p>Skills and experiences</p> <p>Strengthen individual and shared literacy for mental wellbeing, promote resilience, and capability to respond to others in distress.</p>	<p>1) The student experience is enhanced through mental health and wellbeing approaches that are informed by students' needs, perspectives and the reality of their experiences.</p> <p>2) All members of the university community contribute to learning environments that enhance student mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Protect: Identify and manage work-related risks to mental health.</p>
<p>Support</p> <p>Support personal mental wellbeing through optimising support services, and uplifting systems and processes for suicide prevention and postvention.</p>	<p>5) Students are able to access appropriate, effective, timely services and supports to meet their mental health and wellbeing needs.</p>	<p>Respond: Build capability to identify and respond to support people experiencing mental ill-health or distress.</p>

KEY ACTION AREAS



Key action area #1

Culture

Actualising the organisation's collective value on care, collaboration, health and wellbeing, so that both groups and individuals thrive in work and learning.

Our commitment

Articulate our commitment

- Advocacy for inclusion of mental wellbeing in key university strategy documents.
- Support senior leaders to articulate their commitment to prioritising mental wellbeing at RMIT.
- Launch our Action Plan.

Our way

Collaborate for collective impact

- Develop whole of community engagement model for staff and students to be co-creators of mental wellbeing initiatives.
- Develop governance structures to foster collaboration with RMIT Academics and researchers.
- Foster opportunities for RMIT students' collaboration with RMIT Wellbeing.

Our stories

Grow meaningful engagement and tell our stories

- Deliver tailored whole of community mental health promotion and stigma reduction campaigns.
- Consultation with RMIT Academic/s, staff and students with a lived experience of mental ill-health.
- Support staff and students to share their lived experiences in safe ways that support our commitment to reduce stigma of mental ill-health.

Our growth

Learn, celebrate and share our success

- Develop the Action Plan Evaluation Framework, including program Logic.
- Produce publications and conference presentations showcasing Action Plan initiatives.
- Create strategic partnerships with other universities.

Example Outputs

Our commitment

- Action Plan key focus in HSW Strategic Plan 2020 – 25 and mental wellbeing called out in new RMIT Strategy
- Endorsement from Academic Board and VCE Sponsorship
- Action Plan overview document and webpages (internal and public)

Our way

- Mental Wellbeing Advisory Group and Mental Wellbeing Research Advisory Group established
- Enhanced Mental Wellbeing Champion networks, HSW networks and active RMIT Mental Wellbeing Community of practice
- Student's provided opportunities for internships / WIL placements with RMIT Wellbeing

Our stories

- Yearly whole of community mental health promotion and/or stigma reduction campaign, including all campaign assets
- Resource/guidelines for sharing mental health and wellbeing related stories, with a focus on lived experience of mental ill-health or suicidality
- RMIT Mental Wellbeing Language Guide and signatory to EveryMind Charter

Our growth

- Action Plan Evaluation Annual Report
- Action Plan data dashboard and initiative level evaluation
- RMIT's whole of university approach showcased at conferences and in the National Mental Health Framework for Australian Universities
- Statements of strategic collaboration



Key action area #2

Systems

Evaluating the links between the way people work and study, the prevalence of psychosocial risk, and the rates of psychosocial injury.

Our policies

Review and uplift our policies and procedures

- Create a plan, process action plan and consultation process for suicide prevention approach.

Our responsibilities

Identify, address and monitor key psychosocial risk

- Enhance process for identifying, addressing and monitoring psychosocial risks.
- Develop a planned approach and consultation process to develop resources for local/program level psychosocial safety management.

Our systems

Influence key organisational system levers in teaching, research and work

- Embed key mental wellbeing information (e.g. model for wellbeing, key supports) into student curriculum.
- Embed mental wellbeing as a key consideration of RMIT research.
- Embed key mental wellbeing information (e.g. model for wellbeing, key supports) into staff programs.
- Strategic communications plan for whole of community to embed mental wellbeing messages.
- Uplift influential groups, networks and leaders incl. HSW, champions networks, advisory groups.

Example Outputs

Our policies

- Resource to support reviewing documents with wellbeing lens

Our responsibilities

- Annual psychosocial risk management plan
- Resources for staff to develop localised/program specific Psychosocial safety plans
- Piloting workshops for local area risk assessment and action planning

Our systems

- Sustainable process for distributing "Good mental health" slide pack & teaching notes for teaching/academic staff
- RMIT Wellbeing Information embedded in:
 - How2 RMIT
 - Leadership development
 - Guideline/s to support Mental Wellbeing in work/study – e.g., Local Initiatives Guide, Trauma informed teaching, responding to disclosures, facilitation



Key action area #3

Skills and Experiences

Evaluating the links between mental health promotion activities, psychosocial protective factors, and the emotional and psychological wellbeing of staff and students.

Our knowledge

Build the mental health capability and literacy of our community

- Develop a model for promoting mental wellbeing.
- Provide mental health promotion and literacy through various comms channels.
- Develop a mental wellbeing skills capability & resilience framework.

Our skills

Increase capabilities to assist others in distress and look after own wellbeing

- Student and staff training Assisting students/others in distress.
- Source and/or deliver skills specific training around self-care, supporting others, and resilience.

Our resources

Provide tools to proactively build psychological safety and resilience

- Develop staff and student engagement plan to share our resources and support implementation.
- Resources are made readily available, easy to access, download and implement.
- Explore digital mental health promotion tools that offer scale and impact.

Our environments

Create physical and online environments that foster mental wellbeing, engagement and access

- Develop online spaces for Champions groups and Communities of practice collaboration.
- Strengthen online channels for wellbeing skills e.g. Facebook, Yammer.
- Enhance access to online resources, online architecture and website uplift.

Example Outputs

Our knowledge

- Collateral/resources available for wellbeing Model to be implemented
- Emails, articles, website content, Facebook posts, yammer posts
- Staff and Student Mental Wellbeing Capability Framework

Our skills

- Blended training on Assisting student/others in distress for staff and students
- Offerings (webinar, training) for targeting skills development, e.g. 5 Ways to Wellbeing, skills for resilience, study skills, leading for wellbeing.

Our resources

- Engagement plan
- Key resources
- Digital tools that support mental health promotion

Our environments

- Established online Teams Groups
- Strong engagement in wellbeing content, conversations and participation
- Website uplift



Key action area #4

Supports

Evaluating the links between a continuum of wellbeing supports, upstream service enhancement, and improvement of downstream services.

Our model

Promote initiatives that support personal mental wellbeing

- Offer wellbeing initiatives connected to the wellbeing model.
- Student focused events: Orientation, wellbeing support during assessments, Calm Zone for exams.
- Staff focused events: Wellbeing sessions, individual wellbeing professional development and training.

Shift the dial

Develop prevention initiatives to support early action

- Use data to inform area and population specific prevention initiatives (e.g. enhanced peer support options, promotion of EAP).
- Collaborate to review and create plan for best practise for prevention, with attention to tailoring for target populations (e.g. international students).

Our supports

Optimise our services and supports to those in need

- Quality improvement initiatives in Student and Staff Supports Services e.g. counselling service, student support, ELS and EAP etc.
- Injury Management Team optimise return to work processes.

Prevent, prepare, respond

Strengthen our suicide prevention and postvention protocols and processes

- Support the development of the headspace postvention toolkit for the sector.
- Review of RMIT's current approaches.

Example Outputs

Our model

- Partnerships with providers who can deliver mental health promotion supports and awareness raising e.g. BUOA, Medibank, batyr, Benestar
- Participation of staff and students in mental wellbeing events

Shift the dial

- Cohort specific initiatives to be negotiated with Service Areas.

Our supports

- To be negotiated with Service Areas, e.g. Counselling waitlist strategic management plan, data collection and evaluation, risk management assessment

Prevent, prepare, respond

- RMIT Guidelines & procedures for suicide prevention and postvention
- Recommendations report including gatekeeper training

Enablers

Key Action Areas are complemented by Enablers that will drive strategic action across the board. Enablers speak to factors that will ensure activities remain supported, comprehensive, and evidence-based over the course of the Plan.



RMIT recognises that strategic action is only possible when a leaders are fully committed, when diverse groups come together, and when principles of best-practice are adhered to.

These three principles of Leadership, Partnerships and Evidence are key to the successful implementation of actions at all levels of the RMIT community.

Leadership

Our leaders are committed, set the tone from the top and invest in mental wellbeing.

Although the Strategic Action Plan was spurred by a community call-to-action in 2018 and 2019, it would not have come to fruition without RMIT leaders listening, engaging and responding to their people.

This includes leadership at all levels, and is enacted through the ongoing commitment, leadership communication, governance groups, reporting mechanisms and opportunities to participate

Leading for mental wellbeing means being equipped with knowledge, skills and capability. Our activities in 2021 progressed this work through a Partnership with AP Psychology/Workwell to join four other universities in training offerings focused on increasing psychologically safe workplaces.

Evidence

Our work and ways of working are informed by the latest evidence and we use data, monitoring and evaluation to inform decisions.

There are several ways we ensure that our activities are data-driven. Firstly, by sourcing only evidence-based or evidence-informed programs and interventions from third parties. Secondly, by using data to prioritise specific programs to address emerging or urgent issues. Thirdly, monitoring and evaluating any program developed internally for quality assurance. And finally, by ensuring best practice guidelines and external frameworks for action are adhered to across RMIT.

We also apply a data-driven approach to the core pieces of evidence that underpin the Strategic Action Plan, namely the [Evaluation Framework](#) and the Mental Wellbeing Survey. The aim is to not just use data to drive our own activities, but also to create tangible evidence that mental health promotion works in the university context. RMIT is not the sole beneficiary of this work. We want others in the sector to benefit as well.

The Annual Report is a key public-facing document that demonstrates our commitment to openness and transparency for our own RMIT community and similar communities in Australia and around the world.

Partnerships

We partner with internal and external experts to increase our capability, capacity and impact and to respect different ways and knowledges.

The University Framework for Mental Health (principle four) notes how population wellbeing is strengthened through collaboration and coordinated actions.

The Plan acknowledges the essential role that expertise within RMIT plays in guiding and participating in RMIT initiatives, as well the importance of partnering with external organisations and institutions whose primary focus is on mental health and wellbeing services, consulting, and research.

Our 2021 partnerships have enabled us to be confident in our approach, and to implement a broader range of evidence-based initiatives. These collaborations unlock the potential for cross disciplinary action, inter-sector learning, and greater impact.

We would like to express our gratitude to all the people, groups and organisations who we have partnered with over the year. It is through this spirit of collaboration that we can more generously shift the dial for whole of community wellbeing.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

An Evaluation Framework was implemented to foster accountability and commitment to our Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan.

The [Evaluation Framework](#) articulates:

- A logic model, evaluation principles and assumptions
- Quality improvement processes and data management practices
- Evaluation stages, hypotheses and primary measures
- Governance, reporting and risk management.

The Evaluation addresses four main aspects of the Plan:

- The extent to which the Plan improves RMIT psychosocial culture, stigma reduction and mental wellbeing.
- How implementing key policies and processes can reduce psychosocial risk and improve mental health outcomes.
- The impact of building our knowledge and skills on mental health and wellbeing capability and outcomes.
- The impact of enhancing our resources, programs and supports on early intervention, recovery and mental wellbeing outcomes.



Evaluation data

The Plan's Evaluation Framework articulates a set of quantitative indicators we will track over time to determine impact.

Baseline data of these key indicators is compiled in this first formally-evaluated year of the Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025. Subsequent years will be compared against this baseline data to identify trends and then, if those trends are informative, to determine impact.

Some of the main barriers to strategic, evidence-based, and data-driven action tackling complex problems like mental health and wellbeing are lack of consistency over time, lack of integration of data, and lack of transparency. The following tables of staff and student data points represent only a minimal dataset that we hope will remain relatively stable, integrated, and transparent over time and across RMIT.

Qualitative data

Quantitative data is essential for longitudinal tracking across the multiple years of the Plan (2020-25). Qualitative data is equally important in bringing impact to life by telling the story of mental health and wellbeing at RMIT from the point of view of the beneficiaries themselves – students and staff.

Different qualitative data analyses will be performed to assess what people think about mental health and wellbeing at RMIT, including thematic and sentiment analysis.

Data in context

What the numbers can and cannot tell us

As with any quantitative data, the following tables come with inherent limitations and should be interpreted with care and caution. In many cases, individual data points may underestimate the true extent of the measure being tracked over time.

Importantly, though, the data can still be informative if we continue to track the same sources over successive years from baseline. The aim is to improve data collection and collation procedures over time as the evaluation matures.

Evaluation is about processes, outcomes and impacts

Initially, we want to know whether activities and initiatives are appropriate, accessible, and actionable - called *process* evaluation. Then we want to know whether they worked as intended – called *outcome* evaluation. In the end, we want to know what difference the Plan has had in the long-term – called *impact* evaluation.

Has it led to increased wellbeing? Has it protected against psychosocial injury? Has it improved critical support services? These are all questions about day-to-day experiences across the RMIT community that the Plan's systematic evaluation is intended to answer.



Staff data points summary table

Data source	Key questions
Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC-4)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment. (Management commitment) 2. Senior management considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity. (Management priority) 3. There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect me. (Organisational communication) 4. In my organisation, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organisation. (Organisational participation)
Mental Wellbeing Measure	<p>The Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF)</p> <p>Emotional well-being EWB: Happy (Item 1) Interested in life (Item 2) Satisfied with life (Item 3)</p> <p>Social well-being SWB: Social Contribution (Item 4) Social Integration (Item 5) Social Actualization (i.e., Social Growth) (Item 6) Social Acceptance (Item 7) Social Coherence (i.e., Social Interest) (Item 8)</p> <p>Psychological well-being PWB: Self-Acceptance (Item 9) Environmental Mastery (Item 10) Positive Relations with Others (Item 11) Personal Growth (Item 12) Autonomy (Item 13) Purpose in Life (Item 14)</p>
Work related wellbeing measures	<p>Emotional Exhaustion from Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At work, I feel mentally exhausted. 2. After a day at work, I find it hard to recover my energy. <p>Engagement items UWES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For my work, I feel bursting with energy 2. I am enthusiastic about my work
Staff Experience Survey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel like I belong at RMIT 2. My manager gives me useful feedback on how well I am performing 3. My manager genuinely cares about my wellbeing 4. I feel in control and on top of things at work 5. Generally, I believe my workload is reasonable for my role 6. Behaviours like bullying and harassment are not tolerated at RMIT 7. I know how to seek support when concerned about my/others wellbeing
EAP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilisation data 2. Presenting issue data 3. Presentation (standard or crisis) 4. Service satisfaction data
PRIME incident report data	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mechanism of injury description: Bullying, Harassment, Exposure to mental stress factors (incidents logged) 2. Bodily location description: Mental wellbeing/health 3. Student or Staff (person injured)
Annual and Sick Leave	Number of staff with more than 25 days accrued annual leave, sick leave taken
People Connect	Categories: Harassment, discrimination, bullying, interpersonal conflict (number of complaints)



Student data points summary table

Data source	Key questions
Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC-4)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment. (Management commitment) 2. Senior management considers psychological health to be as important as participation. (Management priority) 3. There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect me. (Organisational communication) 4. In my organisation, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organisation. (Organisational participation)
Mental Wellbeing Measure	<p>The Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF)</p> <p>Emotional well-being EWB: Happy (Item 1) Interested in life (Item 2) Satisfied with life (Item 3)</p> <p>Social well-being SWB: Social Contribution (Item 4) Social Integration (Item 5) Social Actualization (i.e., Social Growth) (Item 6) Social Acceptance (Item 7) Social Coherence (i.e., Social Interest) (Item 8)</p> <p>Psychological well-being PWB: Self-Acceptance (Item 9) Environmental Mastery (Item 10) Positive Relations with Others (Item 11) Personal Growth (Item 12) Autonomy (Item 13) Purpose in Life (Item 14)</p>
Study related wellbeing measures	<p>Emotional Exhaustion from Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. While studying, I feel mentally exhausted.. 2. After a day of study, I find it hard to recover my energy. <p>Engagement items UWES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For my study, I feel bursting with energy 2. I am enthusiastic about my study
Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC-4)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment. (Management commitment) 2. Senior management considers psychological health to be as important as participation. (Management priority) 3. There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect me. (Organisational communication) 4. In my organisation, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organisation. (Organisational participation)
Student Experience Survey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At your institution during 2021, to what extent have you had a sense of belonging to RMIT University? 2. The teaching staff normally gave me helpful feedback on how I was going 3. My teacher/lecturer/supervisor genuinely cares about my wellbeing (support) 4. I feel in control and on top of things at university (control) 5. Generally, I believe my study load is reasonable for the course I am enrolled in (demands) 6. Behaviours like bullying and harassment are not tolerated at RMIT (relationships & risk) 7. I know how to seek support when concerned about my/others wellbeing (support)
Counselling service	1. Utilisation data
	2. Presenting issue data
	3. Presentation (standard or crisis)
Equitable Learning Services	No. of registrations for students with mental health conditions
Enrolment	Leave of absence
Other student support services	<p>Reason codes (headcount of students reporting particular issues when seeking support other than counselling)</p> <p>Behaviours of Concern – Bullying</p> <p>Behaviours of Concern - Discrimination/Vilification/Victimisation</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing - Mental health issues</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing - Suicidal ideation</p>

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We'd love to hear from you about any of:

- your thoughts on our **Strategic Action Plan**,
- our plans you'd like to know more about, or
- wellbeing activities or needs in your area.

Please reach out to us at RMITwellbeing@rmit.edu.au.

References

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