

MINDWAVES 2.0

Mental Health
and Wellbeing Plan
2024-2028

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At CQUniversity, we acknowledge the lands upon which we work and learn have been under the custodianship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for many thousands of years. Importantly, we recognise that in the history of Australia, the diverse land and sea Country of First Nations peoples has never been ceded.

We acknowledge the strengths, knowledge, creativity, and endurance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise their rich story telling history and how it shapes our world and our connections to it. We respect their deep ongoing connection to Country, and their deep understanding of the relationships between people and their environment and its centrality to wellbeing.

We walk in solidarity with First Nations peoples, recognising our shared history in anticipation of a shared future. As a university, we participate in shaping this common future, through truth-telling and mutual understanding to achieve empowerment, equity and wellbeing for all.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

Good mental health and wellbeing throughout our university is vital to the achievement of our goals. We cannot change lives without that foundation.

This second Mindwaves plan demonstrates the University commitment to ensuring the best possible mental health and wellbeing for students and staff.

I know how critical such a plan can be from the experiences in my family. Therefore, I and the University Council are dedicated to the success of this plan.

I am proud of the success of our first plan, and dedicated to the success of the second.

Graeme Innes AM
Chancellor



MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT

In today's fast-paced, ever-evolving global landscape, the wellbeing of our CQUniversity community needs to be prioritised and valued. When we talk of being a sustainable university, this starts with our people feeling supported and empowered to reach their full potential. It is therefore vital that we foster a culture that not only prioritises productivity and innovation, but also places a profound emphasis on the mental health and holistic wellbeing of our workforce and our students.

Since its inception in 2020, the Mindwaves whole-of-university mental health strategy has delivered a vision to actively support the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing of the University's students and staff, while also engaging with the broader community to advocate and promote an inclusive, resilient and supportive society.

In Mindwaves 2.0, our new Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan for 2024-2028, we reinforce our commitment to nurturing an environment where every staff and student feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

In the pages that follow, you will find a comprehensive roadmap designed to promote mental wellness, de-stigmatise conversations around mental health, and provide accessible resources and support systems for everyone within our university community.

From proactive measures such as mental health education and training initiatives to the implementation of robust support and reporting mechanisms, this strategy represents our commitment to creating both a university environment, and also a society that values and champions good mental health and wellbeing as a fundamental human right. By embracing Mindwaves 2.0, we also affirm our commitment to fostering a culture of compassion, empathy, care and inclusivity.

I take pride in leading an institution that is deeply committed to the wellbeing and mental health of its community. I look forward to the positive changes this Plan will bring for our staff and students.

Professor Nick Klomp
Vice-Chancellor and President



MESSAGE FROM THE STUDENT VOICE

As Mindwaves Connectors, we are proud to be student leaders advocating for mental health and wellbeing at CQUniversity. Our name speaks volumes as to our purpose – we are here to foster meaningful connections with our peers (and staff) and help support our fellow students' wellbeing and connect them to any support services they may need.

'The impact of psychological distress and mental health issues on academic performance, productivity and wellbeing is widely recognised and CQU has a role to play in mitigating these negative effects. I believe CQU can foster a healthy and productive academic environment that benefits everyone involved by taking proactive measures and providing a range of services and resources specifically designed to promote, support and safeguard the mental health and wellbeing of both its students and staff.'

Ashleigh Fry,
Mindwaves Connector 2024
Bachelor of Psychological Science

'University can be stressful at times. It can be a bit of a struggle. Your friends and family won't always understand if they don't go to university. It's really comforting to know that you can talk to somebody from all walks of life at CQU and they'll understand a little bit of what you're going through. They might be able to offer some advice. Sometimes, it's just good to know that you're not the only student who's struggling.'

Richard Coffison,
Mindwaves Connector 2024
Bachelor of Psychological Science



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF WELLBEING OFFICER

At CQU, we strive to meaningfully contribute to the lives of our students, our staff and the wider community.

This aspiration is to ensure that people feel valued and empowered while they study and work at CQU. Foundational to this is nurturing mental health and wellbeing, which shapes our personal experiences, capabilities, and life outcomes.

Each year we are increasingly witnessing distressing events that are putting mental health, wellbeing and inclusion at the forefront. It is important as both a university community and as members of a broader community that we continue to have powerful and important conversations that lead to meaningful change.

These events also highlight the need for responsive support when our students and staff need it the most, and to take a preventative and positive organisation-wide approach to mental health and wellbeing to create a flourishing culture and university community. We are committed to supporting every student and staff member to be the best versions of themselves.

Mindwaves 2.0 is a Plan that builds upon our achievements by further embedding mental health and wellbeing priorities across the organisation. It prompts us to continue fostering opportunities for authentic connection, creating an environment where people have a sense of belonging; where the remarkable qualities, individuality and strengths of each person are recognised and celebrated.

It is our hope that realising the objectives and outcomes of Mindwaves 2.0 will support you to progress towards reaching your goals and full potential within a university community that is responsive, inclusive, and compassionate.

Dr Bethany Mackay
Chief Wellbeing Officer



Good mental health is a personal and community asset that needs to be promoted and protected. It is linked to positive study and work outcomes, greater lower rates of mental disorders, better physical health and increased life expectancy.

Australian University Mental Health Framework

INTRODUCTION

Mental health and wellbeing is foundational to all aspects of university life for students and staff, and universities play a key role in shaping and supporting individuals' health and wellbeing.

A student's experience of mental health and wellbeing while they are studying at university can have a significant role in their educational success, employment and career opportunities, self-efficacy and motivation (Baik et al., 2019). Successful engagement in tertiary education can also act as a protective factor for mental health and can support the recovery process from mental ill-health (Orygen, 2014). For employees, the workplace can have a significant role in their financial security, social connection, and opportunities for personal and professional development. A mentally healthy workplace can help people manage periods of stress from life outside work (National Mental Health Commission, 2022).

Both globally and domestically, however, we are seeing an increase in the prevalence of psychological distress, mental health concerns and lower wellbeing. There is strong evidence that University students are at increased risk of experiencing mental ill-health compared to the general population. In addition, Australian university staff are reporting unsustainable workloads, high rates of burnout, and mental distress (Neser et al., 2023).

Given this context, universities have a vital role in providing supportive and health-promoting environments and developing whole-of-university approaches to support and enrich student and staff mental health and wellbeing.

VALUING PEOPLE AND THEIR WELLBEING

Mindwaves represents CQU's ongoing commitment to valuing and supporting student and staff mental health and wellbeing. The original Mindwaves strategy was endorsed by CQU Executive, Council, and Student Representative Council and launched by Vice Chancellor and President Professor Nick Klomp on University Mental Health Day, Tuesday 5 May 2020. Mindwaves moves beyond traditional views of health to place emphasis on recognising the symbiotic relationship between health, education and the workplace. It focuses on building individuals' life skills to help them better cope with adversity and to flourish (Seldon & Martin, 2017), while also recognising that the community a person studies, works and lives in has a direct impact on their health.

Working in the TAFE and higher education sector, and as Australia's most inclusive university, CQU has the platform to provide its students and staff with meaningful opportunities to connect, cultivate a sense of belonging, and develop coping skills to enhance their mental health and wellbeing, while also engaging at an institutional level in policy and cultural change in this area. It is vital that we continue to prioritise strategic leadership in mental health and that our institutional approach is coordinated at all levels – from policy and governance, health promotion and prevention to therapeutic service provision and critical incident response. There has never been a more crucial time for Mindwaves 2.0, to reaffirm our commitment and implement effective practices to support and promote the mental health and wellbeing of those who choose to work and study at CQU.

PURPOSE AND VISION

OUR PURPOSE

To develop a mental health and wellbeing plan that promotes student and staff mental health and wellbeing and provides a positive educational and workplace experience via a healthy, resilient, inclusive, compassionate and connected University community.

OUR VISION

CQU is actively supporting the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing of students and staff, while also engaging with the broader community to advocate and promote an inclusive, resilient, and supportive society.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

A considerable amount has been achieved since the launch of Mindwaves in 2020¹.



SKILLED WORKPLACE RECOGNITION FROM MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID AUSTRALIA

- » We've trained over 500 CQU Students and current Staff in MHFA.
- » We've trained over 50 CQU Students and Staff in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA.



CHIEF WELLBEING OFFICER APPOINTED

Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Social and Emotional Wellbeing Services have been established.



CLUSTER FOR RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING (CRew) ESTABLISHED

300+ research papers produced across mental health, health economics, positive psychology and more.



POLICY ENHANCEMENTS TO SUPPORT STUDENT WELLBEING

Including Compassionate Response to Extension Requests, Support for Students Policy and Student Conduct Policy.



CAMMS REPORTING SYSTEM

We've responded to 72 Confidential Incidents and 835 General Safety Incidents since Oct 2022 reflecting CQU's commitment to student and staff safety and wellbeing.



DARE TO BE DEADLY STUDENT JOURNEY

We've supported more than 1233 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students on their study journey, including 22 graduations and 23 cultural sashes².



MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING SERVICES

3897 students have accessed Counselling. 51% of students contemplated withdrawing prior to accessing counselling, with 78% remaining engaged in studies following counselling support³.



CULTURAL SAFE SPACES

'BIDYIRI WOORWAYA' (To Dream Big) Cultural Gardens and 'YINDA BIDHI YAMBA' (Your Dream Place) Cultural Space established on Yuwi country (Mackay campuses).



OUT OF HOURS STUDENT SUPPORT LINE

290+ students provided with urgent mental health and crisis counselling support since Sept 2021.



ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUITY

1412 students registered with the service 2022-2023. Of those, 48% have one or more mental health condition. There is an upward trend of neurodivergent students seeking support.



INCREASED ACCESS TO STAFF SUPPORT SERVICES

We've enhanced EAP services by offering 10 sessions (up from 6) and extending to RHD students. Service usage demonstrates strong help-seeking.

¹ See *Mindwaves Report 2023* for a comprehensive summary of achievements and outcomes from 2020 to 2023.

² 2022 data.

³ Evaluation data, 2021 - 2023.

MINDWAVES 2.0 FRAMEWORK



Mindwaves 2.0: CQU's Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan 2024-2028 builds upon the framework and achievements of the original strategy *Mindwaves, CQU's Mental Health Strategy, 2020-2022*.

The original Mindwaves Framework included eight focus areas designed to promote student and staff wellbeing. Mindwaves 2.0 retains this framework, streamlining these focus areas within three strategic pillars to align with the CQUniversity Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028 and integrate the public health model of health promotion. The Mindwaves strategic pillars progress from systems-level and community-level practices through to targeted supports and individual intervention to ensure the mental health and wellbeing needs of the CQUniversity community are holistically addressed.

Within each pillar are strategic objectives and outcomes that are informed by research, evidence-based practice and student and staff voice. The proposed objectives and outcomes strengthen the existing services and initiatives provided by the University and continue the Mindwaves aim of creating a sustainable, coordinated, and collaborative response to student and staff mental health and wellbeing needs.

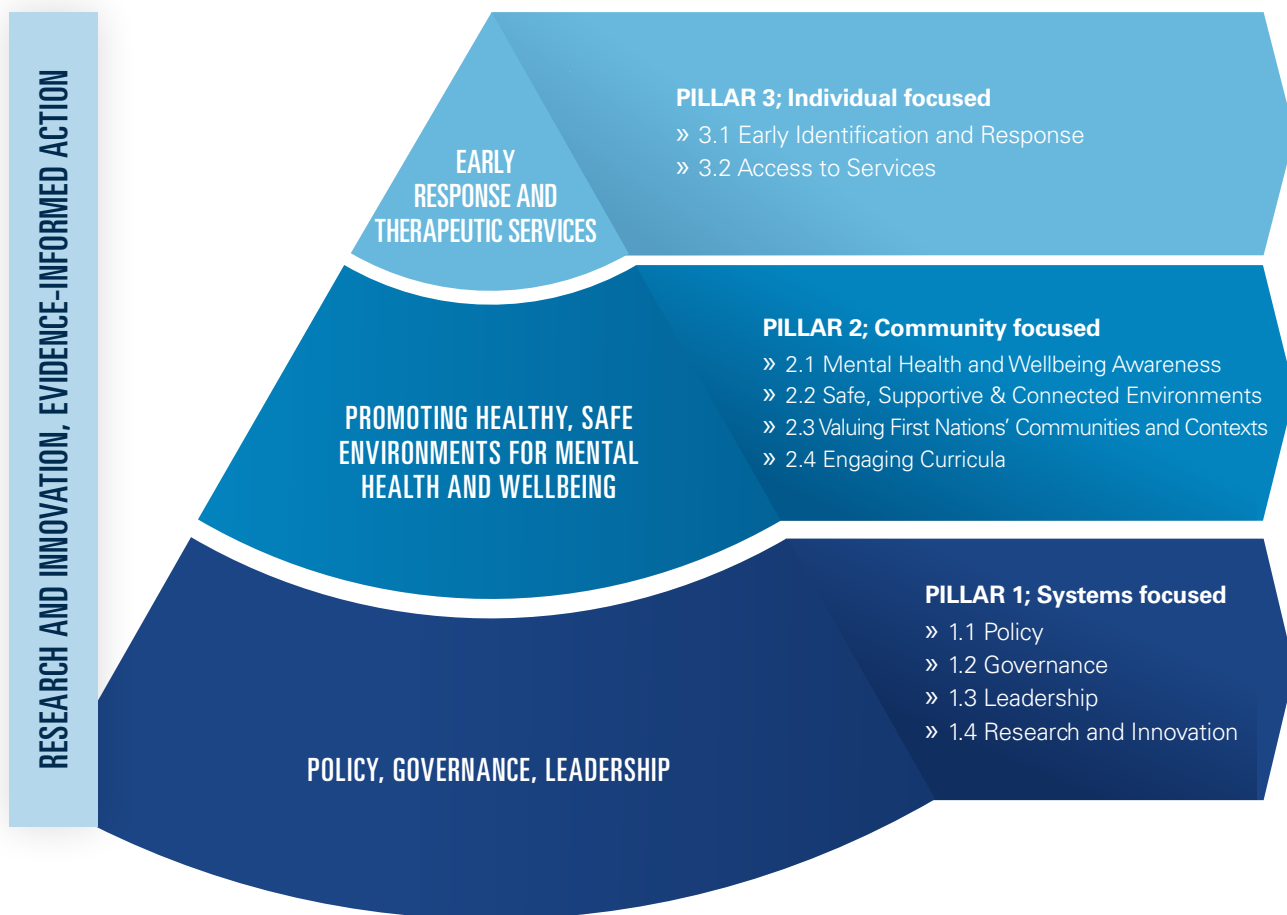


Figure 1: Mindwaves 2.0 Framework

PILLAR 1:

POLICY, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP

IDENTIFIED LEAD: Vice-Chancellor and President | Chief Operating Officer | Vice-President, Research

OBJECTIVES

OUTCOMES

1.1 POLICY

1.1.1 University policies and procedures are designed and updated with consideration of the potential impacts on mental health and wellbeing, in partnership with students and staff.

(a) Adapt and implement an evidence-based framework (i.e. mental health impact assessment tool) to ensure policies and procedures prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff.

1.2 GOVERNANCE

1.2.1 Position student and staff mental health and wellbeing as a priority that informs decision making at a governance and management level.

(a) Develop and implement good practice guidelines to inform co-production and decision making that prioritises the mental health and wellbeing of students¹ and or staff.²
(b) Demonstrate that a genuine process of information sharing, and consultation underpins University decision-making at all levels.

1.2.2 Embed co-production to promote student and staff voice as equal stakeholders to shape and design meaningful strategies and solutions to achieve mental health and wellbeing priorities.

(a) Coordinate approach to capturing all modes/avenues of staff and student wellbeing feedback to monitor and report and ensure continuous improvement.
(b) Elicit annual feedback from staff and students on Mindwaves 2.0 implementation with a commitment to transparency and effective actions taken as a result.

1.3 LEADERSHIP

1.3.1 Visible leaders and leadership who inspire and set the tone from the top and are committed to improving and investing in mental health and wellbeing.

(a) Visible commitment from leaders to prioritise and promote the mental health and wellbeing of staff and self (e.g. championing open conversations, facilitating check ins with staff, promoting Mindwaves, including mission statement in written bio, and modelling self-care).
(b) Ensure that leadership, individually and collectively is supported to further develop skills in leading a compassionate, responsive, and mentally healthy university via training and professional development.
(c) Build capacity for leaders and leadership to identify, respond and evaluate effectiveness of solutions to psychosocial factors, including workload demands and systems to support continuity planning.
(d) Ensure leadership are supported and accountable for their development and growth to provide and promote psychological safety.

1.4 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

1.4.1 To evolve as an engaged and innovative research institution undertaking globally relevant research that benefits students, staff and the wider community.

(a) Apply learnings from CQU's research strength areas to inform evidence-based practice and promotion of healthy environments and inform evaluation.
(b) Collaborate and build research skills in staff and students progressing Mindwaves outcomes.
(c) Disseminate research findings to academic and non-academic audiences using a variety of pathways to contribute to better understanding of university staff and student mental health and wellbeing.

¹ aligned with relevant Government policy, i.e. University Accord, Support for Students Policy, Action Plan Addressing Gender-Based Violence.
² aligned with relevant awards, legislation and Enterprise Agreement

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- » Number of policies and procedures reviewed and updated or developed using evidence-based framework
- » Evidence of information sharing and consultation on student and staff mental health and wellbeing underpins decision making (e.g. via official agenda item submissions and consultation groups)
- » Embedding of Mindwaves outcomes in Divisional plans and University wide strategies
- » Staff and student satisfaction ratings
- » Number of leaders who have completed evidence-based mental health and wellbeing training (i.e. MHFA and Mental Health Leadership Training)
- » Number of effective control measures implemented to address psychosocial factors identified in the University risk assessment
- » Increase dissemination of strategies, engagement activities, or evaluations as research outputs



PILLAR 2:

PROMOTING HEALTHY, SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

IDENTIFIED LEAD: Vice-President, Student Success | Vice-President, Academic | Executive Director, People and Culture

OBJECTIVES

OUTCOMES

2.1 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING AWARENESS

2.1.1 Build upon the capability of students and staff to enhance mental health and wellbeing literacy, reduce mental health stigma and encourage help-seeking behaviours.

- (a) Provide mental health and wellbeing information, resources and training for students and staff.
- (b) Deliver and evaluate research-informed health promotion campaigns for staff and students.
- (c) Share the stories of staff and students with lived experience (across the continuum from mental ill health through to experiencing high levels of wellbeing and flourishing) to positively shape mental health and wellbeing attitudes and behaviours.

2.2 SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND CONNECTED ENVIRONMENTS

2.2.1 Actively foster safe, inclusive, and supportive University environments (physical and online), applying a framework of intersectionality and anti-racism, to promote meaningful participation, connection and belonging.

- (a) Facilitate engaging activities and events adopting an inclusive and intersectional approach to implementation to cultivate meaningful participation, connection and belonging.
- (b) Embed opportunities for meaningful, personalised, authentic connections for staff and students across multiple touch points.
- (c) Establish and expand the Safer Communities Service to address primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery regarding sexual harm and other problem behaviours of concern (that involve students) and impact student and staff safety and wellbeing.
- (d) Address and prevent gender-based violence using an inclusive and intersectional approach, in co-production with students, staff, victim-survivors, and community.
- (e) Design and utilise physical spaces and online platforms to promote safety and wellbeing (e.g. Safe Zone and Moodle).
- (f) Establish a platform and process to endorse student-led, staff-led, and community-led initiatives that promote mental health and wellbeing.
- (g) Strengthen and promote the Mindwaves connectors student peer to peer program to improve visibility and access.
- (h) Implement a Mindwaves Award program that recognises staff and student contributions to promoting mental health and wellbeing at CQU.
- (i) Apply transition pedagogy to scaffold and enhance the student learning journey inclusive of future students and alumni.

2.2.2 Promote an inclusive environment that assists members to accept diversity, adapt to change and embrace challenges more effectively.

- (a) Provide resourcing and staffing to embed the Ally program as a sustainable offering to support the experience and rights of LGBTIQ+ persons and to promote acceptance and understanding for the LGBTIQ+ community.
- (b) Strengthen inclusive and accessible approaches and practices across the institution and align with the Disability-Informed Action Plan

2.2.3 Embed compassionate, strength based, trauma informed language and practices into the university's culture and communications.

- (a) Consolidate and disseminate resources and training to staff and students to support compassionate and trauma informed language and practices.
- (b) Prioritise Intra-institutional collaborations to ensure communications are informed by best practice.

2.2.4 Foster a psychologically safe workplace that enables staff to feel valued, identify improvements and raise concerns about culture and practice that may impact on mental health and wellbeing.

- (a) Map the staff journey and identify needs across the career lifecycle and apply a health and wellbeing framework to identify proactive supports and resources.
- (b) Provide resources, tools, and training to proactively build psychological safety and resilience in staff and students.
- (c) Promote reporting mechanisms for staff to raise concerns about mental health and wellbeing risk factors and incidents.
- (d) Resource and establish a staff peer to peer program to provide a safe and accessible first point of contact for staff seeking connection or support (resourcing dependent).

IDENTIFIED LEAD: Vice-President, Student Success | Vice-President, Academic | Executive Director, People and Culture

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
2.3 VALUING FIRST NATIONS' COMMUNITIES AND CONTEXTS	
2.3.1 Nurture a strong university community that promotes social and emotional wellbeing and a sense of belonging and supports First Nations students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Develop and incorporate a social and emotional wellbeing framework that recognises and implements Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing in a therapeutic and supportive context for students (RAP Innovate 2021 – 2023, 9.4). (b) Ensure Mindwaves aligns with current and future RAP; inclusive of targeted initiatives, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The 'Dare to be Deadly' (D2BD), Student Journey (a culturally safe case management program that engages with students online and on campuses). » The First Nations Workforce Strategy.
2.4 ENGAGING CURRICULA	
2.4.1 Foster intra-institutional collaboration to embed mental health and wellbeing priorities within curriculum and pedagogic practice to support and promote student experience and success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Promote mental health and wellbeing services and help seeking within the learning space. (b) Develop and embed curricular and co-curricular mental health and wellbeing learning opportunities for students (related to topics such as interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, values, character strengths, reflective capacity, stress management, compassion and self-compassion) to promote holistic development. (c) Continue to ensure that curricula design and learning experiences support student mental health and wellbeing, afford choice and flexibility in approach, and promote connections among students and between students and their educators. (d) Collaborate across the University (and sector) to share expertise and good practice (e.g. through Communities of Practice). (e) Develop and disseminate student guidelines to equip students with knowledge and skills to cope with curriculum materials that are confronting.
2.4.2 Empower staff to identify and be responsive to the diverse needs of students and adopt teaching practices that optimise student learning and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Provide scaffolding and resources to build educators' capacity for inclusive, safe, compassionate, and trauma-informed teaching practices (e.g. CQU Guide to Trauma Informed Practice, checklist). (b) Clarify the role of staff in supporting student mental health and guide staff to maintain supportive, appropriate boundaries.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- » Evidence of health promoting initiatives, resources and help seeking.
- » Number of training completions by students and staff.
- » Staff and student evaluations of initiatives, resources and training.
- » Feedback on the extent to which CQU's culture, including physical and online environments, prioritises and promotes student and staff mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.
- » Effectiveness of reporting mechanisms and response for prioritising student and staff mental health, wellbeing and safety.
- » Evidence of research outcomes in the area of Mental Health and Wellbeing in the tertiary education and training sector.
- » Evidence of RAP deliverables achieved.
- » Evidence of ways that mental health and wellbeing priorities have been embedded within curricular and co-curricular opportunities.

PILLAR 3:

EARLY RESPONSE AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

IDENTIFIED LEAD: Vice-President, Student Success | Executive Director, People and Culture

OBJECTIVES

OUTCOMES

3.1 EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND RESPONSE

3.1.1 Ensure students and staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to recognise, respond and refer when early signs of distress, issues of safety, matters impacting welfare and wellbeing or mental health difficulties are identified in themselves and others.

- (a) Continue to provide evidence-based and evidence informed Mental Health and Wellbeing training and resources to equip staff and students with Mental Health awareness and responder skills.
- (b) Design and implement initiatives and supports for priority student cohorts (e.g., First Nations, International, LGBTIQ+, persons with a disability, mature age, and students in professional programmes who may require more in-depth preparation and specific interventions).
- (c) Design and implement initiatives and supports for priority staff identified as being exposed to psychosocial risks.
- (d) Co-produce a suicide prevention and response plan with students and staff.
- (e) Ensure that university processes and services, including reporting and referral pathways are appropriately promoted and responsive.
- (f) Provide scaffolding and resources to build staff capacity for inclusive, safe, compassionate, and trauma-informed approach to service provision (i.e. trauma informed checklist, gender transition guide, guidelines for supporting students experiencing domestic and family violence).

3.2 ACCESS TO SERVICES

3.2.1 Ensure students and staff who are experiencing distress, issues of safety, matters impacting welfare and wellbeing, disability, or mental health difficulties have direct access to appropriate services to ensure that the University response is timely, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally sensitive.

- (a) Ensure that university support services are appropriately resourced.
- (b) Students identified at risk of dropping out are proactively contacted and connected directly with appropriate services.
- (c) Ongoing coordination and implementation of student and staff critical incident response processes that are effective and informed by best practice.
- (d) Develop and share resources to improve access and reduce real and perceived barriers to support services for students and staff.

3.2.2 Ensure support services are equally accessible and equitable and further enhanced to meet demands.

- (a) Ensure processes are accessible and equitable for students with mental health and other conditions to pursue reasonable adjustments for their studies.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- » Number of Mental Health and Wellbeing Training completions by students and staff
- » Benchmarking of support services across the sector
- » Staff and student evaluations of service provision and responsiveness, trainings and resources
- » Student retention targets
- » Staff retention targets





KEY FEATURES OF MINDWAVES 2.0

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We have strengthened the language used in Mindwaves 2.0 to ensure that the term wellbeing is included alongside mental health. The Plan uses the phrase 'mental health and wellbeing' to encompass the dual continuum of mental health states from severe and persistent mental ill-health and limited wellbeing through to no experience of mental ill-health and optimal wellbeing.

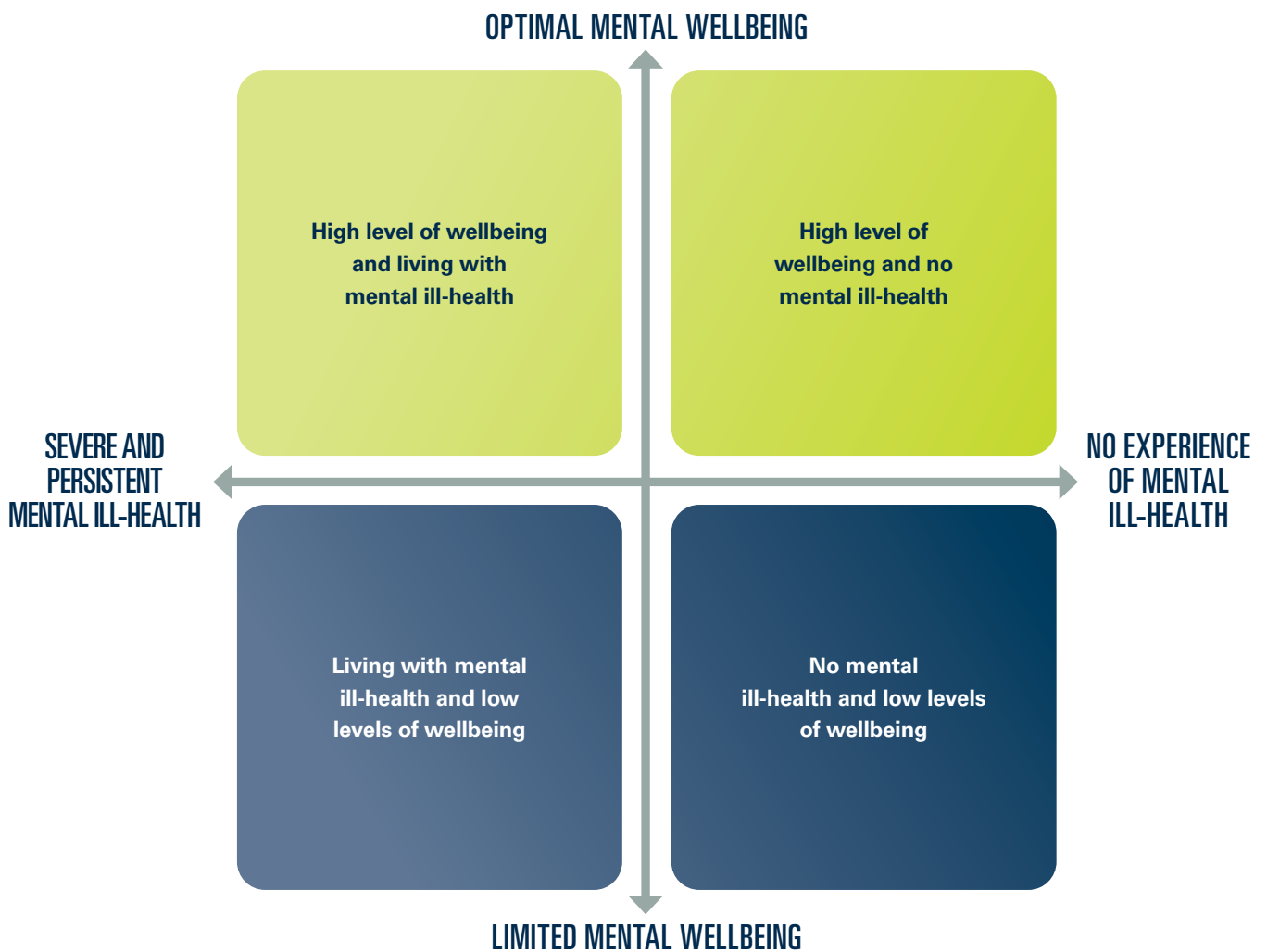


Figure 2: Dual Continuum Model of Mental Health (Orygen, 2020).



CO-PRODUCTION

Prioritising student and staff voice during the development of Mindwaves 2.0 has been vital to ensure we are creating a compassionate, inclusive, and accessible Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan for CQUniversity students and staff.

Mindwaves 2.0, CQU's Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan 2024-2028 has been developed through an active process of co-production which will continue throughout implementation. We have gathered perspectives from a diverse cross-section of student and staff communities via staff and student surveys, consultation workshops and stakeholder consultation. The insights, ideas and contributions from students and staff, including Student Mindwaves Connectors, Student Representative Council, Senior Leadership, the Mindwaves Working group, Mindwaves Educator Consultation group, and CQU researchers have been invaluable.

WHY CO-PRODUCTION?

Co-production is a way of working which engages groups of people at the earliest stages of design, development, and evaluation. It is a person-centred approach that positions people with 'lived experience' (in this case with lived experience of studying or working at CQUniversity), as best placed to advise on what supports, services and structures will positively contribute to their experience. The process of co-production can improve health outcomes and mental health literacy, increase institutional transparency, build a sense of belonging and buy-in, and develop effective change makers and leaders (Piper & Emmanuel, 2019).

'A complex, multifaceted challenge such as mental health and wellbeing, requires collaborative, multi-sector and multi-component approaches. It requires strong leadership and a long-term commitment to change. Accelerating advances to improve university student mental health and wellbeing requires working together, and across sectors, sharing expertise and experience, consolidating understanding and practice, and driving continuous improvement.'

Australian University Mental Health Framework

A WHOLE-OF-UNIVERSITY APPROACH

Mindwaves adopts a whole-of-university approach that proactively embeds mental health and wellbeing into all aspects of university life. Collaboration, participatory decision-making and design, and innovative and compassionate practice across all levels of the university are essential elements of Mindwaves 2.0.

This approach recognises that many factors influence mental health and wellbeing. These can include social, cultural and environmental factors, as well as individual thoughts, behaviours, experiences, biology and learning. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people it is recognised that body, mind and emotions, family and kinship, community, culture, land and spirituality all contribute to a holistic experience of wellbeing (Gee et al., 2014).

University-wide action is required to cultivate a university culture, community and environments which centre and support mental health and wellbeing and create meaningful, sustainable change.



WE ASKED AND YOU TOLD US

Students and staff provided their valuable perspectives on what mental health and wellbeing mean to people at CQU, and what the University can do to best support mental health and wellbeing. These were obtained via surveys (250 student responses, 270 staff responses), and consultations workshops (45 staff and 51 students attended across 20 workshops).

What can CQU do to support student and staff mental health and wellbeing?

STUDENTS TOLD US

- » Increase opportunities for check-ins with educators, and support for distance/remote students.
- » Policies and procedures could have greater flexibility, simplify processes, be more realistic/better reflect actual student experience.
- » More empathetic and supportive staff (provide more training and support for staff).
- » Increase pathways for mental health and wellbeing conversations in class.
- » More opportunities for connection and belonging.
- » Greater access/visibility of supports.

STAFF TOLD US

- » More empathetic management – have leaders who walk the talk and are skilled to support staff.
- » Workload – review expectations (explicit and implied) and reduce excessive workloads.
- » Increase opportunities for check-ins and connection (e.g. group support for frontline teaching staff; team get togethers at minimal expense).
- » Respond to staff feedback and concerns.
- » Streamline systems and processes – but appreciate impact of changes.
- » Increase Wellbeing supports – e.g. access to fitness/physical wellbeing opportunities.
- » Ensure student supports are appropriately resourced (i.e. Counselling, Advocacy, Accessibility and Equity).

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AND FRAMEWORKS

Mindwaves 2.0 supports the University to achieve broader strategic objectives including those embedded within:

» **CQUniversity Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028** **We Change Lives**

For example, but not limited to:

Students: Access and Participation: Provide opportunity for all students, no matter where they are, to access high quality education and training that supports their unique needs and wellbeing.

Staff: Healthy Work Environment: Ensure a safe and healthy work environment with a focus on personal and professional growth, wellbeing, and work-life balance, where values-driven behaviour is exemplified.

» **CQUniversity Reconciliation Action Plan** **July 2022 – July 2024**

- » Mindwaves 2.0 aligns with the RAP commitments and highlights a specific focus on implementing a Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework and promoting and prioritising cultural safety.

» **CQU Communications Charter** – with a commitment to (for example):

- » Promote a culture of honesty, trust, acceptance, and support.
- » Be supportive and demonstrate kindness, empathy, care, and compassion.

» **Australian Universities Accord Final Report**

- » The Accord has a key focus on improving student experiences in tertiary education, including their safety and wellbeing and addressing the safety and wellbeing of staff.

» **Support for Students Policy**

» **Sustainable Development Goals:**

- » As the World Health Organisation acknowledges, there can be no health or sustainable development without mental health (WHO, 2019).

In addition, Mindwaves promotes a holistic view of health and wellness, and draws on the following health recommendations, frameworks and blueprints to do so:

» **The Wicked Problem of University Student Mental Health** (Veness, 2016)

» **A Framework for Promoting Student Mental Wellbeing in Universities** (Baik & Larcombe, 2016)

» **“On the Radar”: Supporting the mental wellbeing of mature-aged students in regional and remote Australia** (Crawford, 2021)

» **The University Mental Health Charter** (Hughes & Spanner, 2019)

» **Australian University Mental Health Framework** (Orygen, 2020)

» **Stepchange: Mentally Healthy Universities** (Universities UK, 2020)

» **National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023** (Australian Government)

» **Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education** (Department of Education)

» **ISO 45003:21 Occupational Health and Safety Management – Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for management psychosocial risks** (International Standard)

» **Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces** (National Mental Health Commission)

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Mindwaves 2.0 articulates the high-level purpose and vision and key priorities through strategic pillars, objectives and outcomes to support mental health and wellbeing at CQU over the next five years.

This Plan will be implemented via a whole-of-university approach and provides overarching guidance to inform the development of annual planning in partnership with each Division and continuous co-production with students and staff. The University Executive and senior leadership have responsibilities in delivering the actions identified in the Plan and ensuring outcomes are achieved. All staff will be encouraged to incorporate Mindwaves objectives within annual goal setting to recognise that the mental health and wellbeing of staff and students is everyone's priority. Students will be invited to contribute on an ongoing basis via the co-production process, opportunities for feedback, wellbeing checks and via student leadership roles.

The implementation of initiatives will be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. A formal review will be conducted annually (using the Step Change: Mentally Healthy Universities Self-Assessment Tool (Universities UK) to report on progress and ensure the University remains responsive to emerging needs. Progress will be reported annually to the Student Representative Council, University Management Committee, and University Council. Progress and achievements will be communicated to the broader university community to foster connection, inform continuous improvement and ensure successes are celebrated.



KEY APPROACHES, DEFINITIONS AND LANGUAGE

The key definitions and language of Mindwaves include:

POSITIVE EDUCATION: A STRENGTH BASED APPROACH

Mindwaves is a strength-based framework drawing on a Positive Education model that promotes student and staff wellbeing by:

- i. Understanding, recognising and developing individual's strengths and abilities. To build and maintain resiliency through self-care.
- ii. Empowering individuals to be decision makers in their academic learning and personal development.
- iii. Building upon individual's life skills to help them to better cope with adversity and to flourish (Seldon & Martin, 2017).

HEALTH PROMOTION APPROACH

CQUUniversity takes a positive approach with a focus on the interconnectedness between an individual and their environment, recognising that:

- i. Individuals who have choice and control over their health will have better health outcomes.
- ii. The community a person studies, works and lives in has a direct impact on their health.
- iii. A 'whole of University approach' is required.

CO-PRODUCTION

At CQU, we use the term co-production to promote student and staff voice in transforming the state of mental health within our university community.

Co-production promotes positive academic, social and cultural outcomes as being involved in decision-making and planning can encourage motivation, connection and commitment to study and work (Piper and Emmanuel, 2019).

CURRICULUM

Curriculum encompasses academic, social, and support aspects of the student experience and include co-curricular activities in addition to formal learning (Kift & Field, 2009).

DISABILITY

Disability, in relation to a person, means:

- a. total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d. the presence in the body or organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- e. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- g. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

- h. presently exists; or
- i. previously existed by no longer exists; or
- j. may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
- k. is imputed to a person.

To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability. (Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)).

HOLISTIC

Refers to the recognition that people and their behaviours are complex, and consideration of all aspects of a person's life as a total entity is integral to understanding health and illness. Holistic approaches use the biopsychosocial model which refers to a person's biological system, psychological system and their social systems. These systems are interrelated and each system can affect—and be affected by—any of the other systems (Sarafino, Caltabiano & Byrne, 2008).

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity and membership of multiple interconnected social categories can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. It offers a lens for understanding systems and structures of power (visible and invisible) and how they shape inequality.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their own potential, can learn and work productively, and are able to contribute to their community. It is a basic human right and crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development (WHO, 2022).

MENTAL ILLNESS

A clinically diagnosable disorder that significantly interferes with an individual's cognitive, emotional or social abilities. The diagnosis of mental illness is generally made according to the classification system of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders or the International Classification of Diseases (Muir-Cochrane, Barkway & Nizette, 2014).

MENTAL ILLNESS PREVENTION

Prevention includes reducing the incidence, prevalence, recurrence of mental disorders, time spent with symptoms, risk factors for mental illness, preventing or delaying recurrences and decreasing the impact of disease on the affected person, their families and society (WHO, 2004).

POSITIVE EDUCATION

Positive Education is a scientific approach to education that blends academic learning with the development of character strengths and the promotion of wellbeing. It focuses on building upon strategies to defend against low self esteem, depression and anxiety (Seldon & Martin, 2017). Positive Education teaches and equips people with life skills, such as: perseverance and passion, optimism, resilience, growth mindset, engagement and mindfulness (Oades et al., 2011).

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Psychological distress is largely defined as a state of emotional suffering with symptoms of depression (e.g., sadness, worthlessness and hopelessness) and anxiety (e.g., feeling unease, tense and restless). These symptoms can also be linked with somatic symptoms, such as insomnia, headaches and lethargy (Drapeau, Marchand & Beaulieu-Prevost, 2010).

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Psychological safety refers to an environment where people feel safe and are comfortable expressing their concerns, ideas or mistakes and being themselves without interpersonal risk (such as being punished or embarrassed) (Edmondson, 2018).

PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS AND RISKS

A psychosocial hazard is anything in the design or management of work that increases the risk of psychological or physical harm. The potential for these psychosocial hazards to cause harm, and what could happen if someone is exposed to these hazards is a psychosocial risk (Worksafe Qld). Examples of psychosocial hazards include: high and/or low job demands; low job control; poor support; low role clarity; poor organisational change management; low reward and recognition; poor organisational justice; interpersonal conflict; remote or isolated work; poor environmental conditions; traumatic events; violence and aggression; bullying and harassment; and fatigue.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

In broad terms, social and emotional wellbeing is the foundation for physical and mental health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is a holistic concept which results from a network of relationships between individuals, family, kin and community. It also recognises the importance of connection to land, culture, spirituality and ancestry, and how these affect the individual. Social and emotional wellbeing may change across the life course: what is important to a child's social and emotional wellbeing may be quite different to what is important to an Elder. However, across the life course a positive sense of social and emotional wellbeing is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to lead successful and fulfilling lives. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's understanding of social and emotional wellbeing varies between different cultural groups and individuals (National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing, 2017).

WELLBEING

Wellbeing encompasses mental health, but also includes physical and social wellbeing. Optimum wellbeing is defined by the ability of an individual to fully exercise their cognitive, emotional, physical and social powers, leading to flourishing (Kraut, 2009).

WORK-RELATED STRESS

Describes the physical, mental and emotional reactions of workers who perceive that their work demands exceed their abilities and/or available resources (Worksafe NSW, 2018).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Strategic alignment ensures that all aspects of our planning are directed toward CQU's strategic goals. The below table demonstrates the alignment between Mindwaves strategic objectives and the CQU strategic goal focus areas.

NO.	MINDWAVES STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT
1.1	Policy	Students Staff First Nations Commitment
1.2	Governance	Students Staff First Nations Commitment
1.3	Leadership	Students Staff Society
1.4	Research and Innovation	Research Sustainability
2.1	Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness	Students Staff Society
2.2	Safe, Supportive and Connected Environments	Students Staff Society Place and Presence
2.3	Valuing First Nations' Communities and Contexts	First Nations Commitment
2.4	Engaging Curricula	Students Staff Research
3.1	Early Identification and Response	Students Staff First Nations Commitment
3.2	Access to Services	Students Staff First Nations Commitment

MINDWAVES 2.0 FRAMEWORK

PILLAR	IDENTIFIED LEAD
1. Policy, Governance, Leadership	Vice-Chancellor and President Chief Operating Officer Vice-President, Research
2. Promoting Healthy, Safe Environments for Mental Health and Wellbeing	Vice-President, Student Success Vice-President, Academic Executive Director, People and Culture
3. Early Response and Therapeutic Services	Vice-President, Student Success Executive Director, People and Culture

APPENDIX 2: CONSULTANT AND STAKEHOLDER LIST

NAME	POSITION/ROLE
Mr Graeme Innes AM	Chancellor
Professor Nick Klomp	Vice-Chancellor and President
Professor Michelle Bellingan	Vice-President Academic
Professor Jonathan Powles	Vice-President Student Success
Professor Grant Stanley	Vice-President Research
Ms Narelle Pearse	Chief Operating Officer
Ms Barbara Miller	Executive Director, People and Culture
Professor Sally Ferguson	Director, Appleton Institute
Professor Lee Di Milia	Dean, School of Business and Law
Professor Stephen Dobson	Dean, School of Education and the Arts
Professor Steve Hall	Dean, School of Engineering and Technology
Professor Moira Williamson	Dean, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Sciences
Professor Andy Stewart	Dean, School of Health, Medical and Applied Sciences
Ms Karen Seary	Associate Dean, School of Access Education
Mr Robert Buttery	Associate Dean, School of Trades
Mr Peter Heilbuth	Deputy Vice-President Business Development
Professor Christina Hong	Deputy Vice-President (Education and Quality)
Shweta Singh	Director, VET Learning and Teaching
Ms Kylie White	Director, Governance
Mrs Kristie-Lee Alfrey	Director, MoHB Lab
Mindwaves Connectors	CQU student peer-to-peer support program.
Student Representative Council	Elected student representatives
Research Higher Degree Students	Members of Motivation of Health Behaviours (MoHB Lab)
Dr Ben Veness	Adjunct Professional
Dr Gemma Mann	Senior Lecturer, School of Access Education and Ally Program Coordinator
Ms Cate Rooney	Manager, Accessibility and Equity
Ms Leonie Taylor	Senior Coordinator Indigenous Student Engagement
Ms Emma Cerff	Executive Officer, Office of Indigenous Engagement
Ms Danessa Willie-White	First Nations Employment Office, Office of Indigenous Engagement
Dr Lydia Mainey	Senior Lecturer/Head of Course Re-entry Nursing, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Sciences.
Mrs Chris Maurer-Smolder	Discipline Coordinator (Academic Communication, ALC) and Associate Lecturer School of Access Education

NAME	POSITION/ROLE
Ms Kristie Mahon	Policy and Compliance Officer
Kristy Dawson	Manager, Counselling
Ms Veronica Campbell	Deputy Director Strategic Planning, Risk and Ins
Mr Rob Rule	Manager, Workplace Relations
Counselling, Wellbeing and Safer Communities Team	Staff working in Counselling, Wellbeing and Safer Communities services.
MoHB Lab Staff	Members of Motivation of Health Behaviours (MoHB Lab)
Mindwaves Working Group	
Associate Professor Robert Stanton	Head of Course, Bachelor of Science (Honours), Research Cluster Lead CReW, Chair Human Ethics Research Committee
Professor Chris Doran	Professorial Research Fellow – Health Economics, Research Cluster Lead CReW
Professor Kate Ames	Director Learning Design and Innovation
Dr Adam Gerace	Head of Course, Positive Psychology
Mr Jade Carroll	Indigenous Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellor
Mr Will Alderton	Program Director – Retention Equity
Mrs Diane Gallais	Accessibility Consultant
Mr Justin Wylie	Learning Designer
Dr Trixie James	Lecturer School of Access Education
Miss Amanda Abeysinghe	Student Representative
Mindwaves Educator Consult Group	
Dr Adam Rose	School of Graduate Research
Dr Ana Larsen	School of Access Education
Dr Angelique McInnes	School of Business and Law
Dr Candice Pullen	School of Health, Medical and Applied Sciences
Mr Mick Bowles	School of Engineering and Technology
Ms Kelley Borg	School of Education and the Arts
Ms Leonie Keating	School of Access Education
Mrs Lorraine Oliveri	School of Health, Medical and Applied Sciences
Dr Manjo Oyson	School of Business and Law
Mr Stephen Haines	School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Sciences
Mr Stewart Larsson	School of Trades
Dr Teresa Moore	School of Graduate Research

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