



Healthy minds:

Our mental wellbeing strategy
2022–2025



AUDIENCE

CATEGORY

All Treasury staff

Human Resources Strategy

For further information or questions, contact the Performance and Wellbeing Section on (02) 6263 2257 or email orgwellbeing@treasury.gov.au

If you or a colleague are experiencing distress and need immediate assistance, contact:

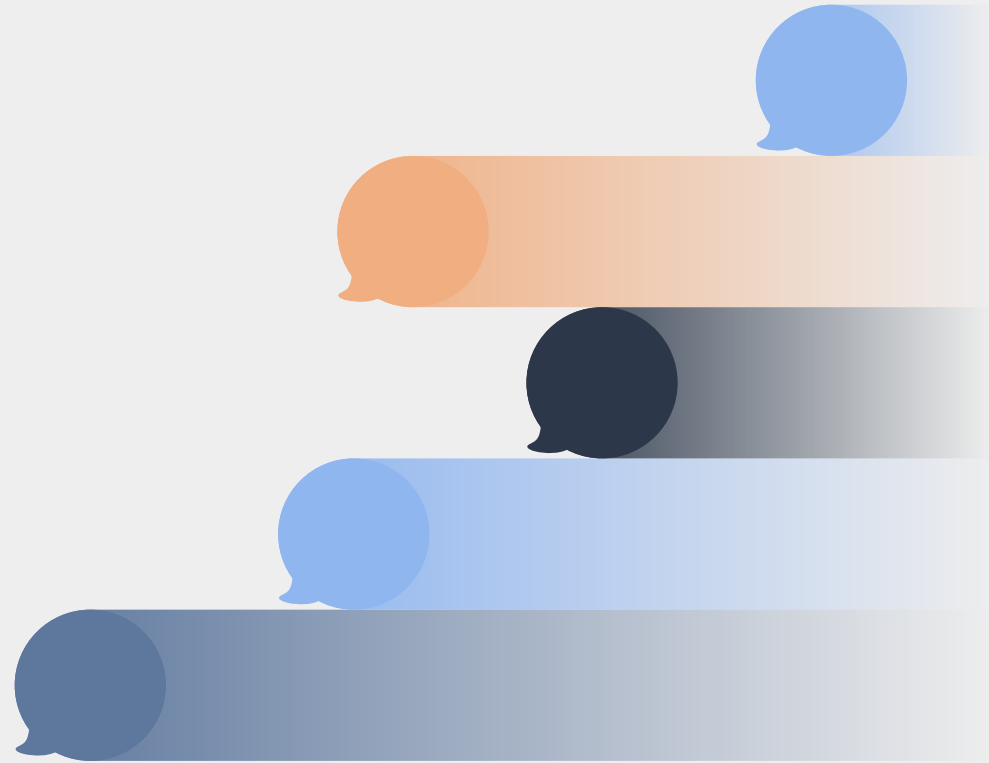
Benestar – 1300 360 364

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636

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Message from the **Secretary**

I am pleased to launch **Healthy minds: Our mental wellbeing strategy 2022–2025**.

This strategy demonstrates my commitment, and that of the Treasury Executive, to the mental health and wellbeing of all Treasury staff.

Mental health and wellbeing have always been a personal and professional priority for me. I am pleased that the conversation in the public service and society more generally around mental health has changed significantly over the years. This strategy will focus us on continuing to evolve and mature the conversation, integrating the many lessons learned through our individual and collective experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. I recognise we all need to increase our comfort and confidence in the thinking and talking about mental health and psychological safety in the workplace.

To ensure that we can continue to deliver our vital work in support of the Australian economy and the community, we must look out for our own wellbeing, and the wellbeing of our colleagues. Our people are passionate about their work. At times this commitment can create a risk to our wellbeing if it is not managed deliberately by taking regular breaks to refresh our minds and bodies. A key focus of embedding this strategy will be to foster a culture at Treasury which enables our people to thrive professionally and personally and offering the tools to identify and respond effectively to mental health issues in the workplace.

This strategy outlines a comprehensive range of initiatives and commitments which provide the foundation for creating and sustaining a positive mental health culture and providing access to support and assistance for people when they need it.

I encourage each of you to consider how you can contribute to bringing this strategy to life and how you can engage in more sophisticated conversations about mental health with your colleagues and in your workplace.

Dr Steven Kennedy PSM

Secretary

7 September 2022



Vision

Treasury has a mentally healthy workplace that **enables our people to thrive** while doing their best work.

This will assist in Treasury **delivering on its purpose** of providing advice to Government and implementing policies and programs that achieve strong and sustainable economic and fiscal outcomes for Australians.



Overview and purpose

Treasury's employees are **our most valuable asset**. Treasury values its people and is committed to supporting them to thrive in a mentally healthy workplace.

We are focused on building and sustaining a culture based on positive behaviours that will enable us to grow and thrive organisationally through:

- ensuring our work aligns with our purpose,
- creating and sustaining productive relationships,
- developing high performing teams, and
- rewarding an inclusive culture.

The World Health Organisation notes that good mental health is much more than the absence of a diagnosed condition: 'Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with

the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community'¹

Across Australian society – and within Treasury's workforce – people's mental health can be described along a spectrum from positive healthy functioning to severely impacted by mental illness which is impacting on everyday functioning. Mental health is not fixed or in a static state. We can move back and forth along this scale at different times during our lives (Heads Up, 2021).

Working at Treasury provides opportunities to contribute to high-profile work in a fast-paced, and at times, high-pressure environment.

This environment offers great explicit and intrinsic rewards but is not without risk. The rapidly changing environment brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic created additional risks to mental health across the community. This strategy is reflective of Treasury's evolving wellbeing journey and is focused on managing identified risks and preventing harm through boosting wellbeing, intervening early, and supporting recovery.

Treasury is focused on enabling and supporting employees to thrive professionally and personally, and to achieve their potential by:

- placing a priority on developing and sustaining a mentally healthy workplace, and
- building upon existing resources, support, and practices to create a positive environment.

Through this strategy, we aim to build a shared aspiration of positive mental health and demonstrate a clear commitment to strengthening a positive mental health culture. This includes supporting employees, managers, and Senior Executive Service (SES) to speak openly about mental health, without fear of stigma or discrimination.

¹ World Health Organisation 2011. Mental Health: A state of wellbeing

The business imperative

Organisations that actively support mentally healthy workplaces are more productive, have higher levels of employee engagement and attract and retain top talent. They're better places to work!

A PwC, Beyond Blue and National Mental Health Commission report from 2014 showed businesses that implemented effective mental health strategies produced an average return on investment of \$2.30 for every dollar invested, due to lower absenteeism and presenteeism and fewer claims.

In Australia:



Strategic priorities

This strategy is aligned to the Australian Public Service Mental Health Capability Framework and takes a whole-of-system approach to developing and sustaining mental health and wellbeing.

Our strategy focuses on three priority areas:

- Boosting wellbeing
- Intervening early, and
- Supporting recovery.





Boosting wellbeing

Creating and sustaining a positive mental health culture in our workplace by preventing harm through strengthening our sense of community within our teams and branches, promoting mental health and wellbeing initiatives, building our literacy and developing capability.

We will do this by:

- Creating and sustaining a positive mental health culture by working with Branches and Divisions to strengthen the sense of community within teams, promote behaviours and practices that support good mental health, and identify and manage risks,
- Making reasonable adjustments for employees in the workplace to ensure that jobs fit with employee's skills, capacity and capabilities,
- Raising and sustaining awareness of best practices in developing mentally healthy workplaces and building the capability of employees, managers and the SES to have conversations about mental health,
- Providing support and resources for employees to practice self-care and build individual and collective resilience,
- Providing managers and SES with support to sustain healthy work practices and workplaces, and
- Using data to inform regular risk assessments of mental health risk factors and tracking and reporting on the effectiveness of our approaches.

Key actions:

- Establishing principles for job design that assess and mitigate psychosocial risks (such as work demand, fatigue management and appropriate job fit)
- Establishing a baseline assessment of our Mental Health Capability using the Australian Public Service Commission's Maturity Scale Assessment tool
- Providing access to online learning modules, Mental Health Awareness and Mental Health First Aid training for individuals and managers
- Developing a Manager's toolkit for better practice tips on supporting workload management, and supporting employees during peak workload periods
- Equipping managers and employees to engage in quality conversations about mental health



Intervening early

Supporting our people to recognise risks to mental health, identify symptoms of mental ill health, discuss concerns and enabling referrals to appropriate support.

We will do this by:

- Building the capability of employees and managers to recognise risks to mental health, and to identify early signs of mental ill health which will enable them to reach out individually or refer colleagues for appropriate support,
- Supporting people to build their confidence and capability to raise and respond to mental health concerns in the workplace,
- Encouraging and supporting our people to have open conversations about their mental health and supporting managers to take the lead in identifying and managing mental health risks, supporting early intervention strategies and implementing reasonable adjustments,
- Providing professional expertise from the Wellbeing Team and/or external professionals to enable employees, managers and SES to act early and resolve emerging issues, and
- Being proactive in managing emerging crisis events to support and reassure employees.

Key actions:

- Educating employees and managers to recognise early warning signs and providing information on how to reach out for help
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive range of resources that enable managers and employees to act on emerging issues
- Consolidating educational and support resources in a WellbeingHub on the Treasury Intranet that is accessible remotely
- Enhancing access to EAP support services, including the Coaching for People Leaders offering and other specialist external support services



Supporting recovery from episodes of mental ill health

Working with individuals and managers to ensure sustainable and effective return to work or stay at work plans that are supported by professional expertise and resources.

We will do this by:

- Developing structured stay at work or return to work plans to support the recovery of our people,
- Working in partnership to ensure appropriate external medical and professional resources and information form the basis for the development and implementation of plans, and
- Making appropriate adjustments to support people and enable recovery.

Key actions:

- Ensuring resources, including counselling, coaching and rehabilitation support are readily available to assist and enable recovery
- Working with individuals and their manager to determine the best, fit for purpose program or plan, tailored to their needs and circumstances
- Enhancing the development of professional skills and knowledge within the Wellbeing Team

Our overall strategy emphasises the importance of prevention over intervention. Our immediate focus is therefore on our first strategic priority, **Boosting wellbeing**. Success in this area will help minimise the requirement for early intervention and support recovery as required.

All priority areas have a key focus on building and enhancing the capability of employees, managers, SES and HR professionals through raising awareness, training and coaching.

Further details on each strategic priority, including actions and responsibilities are included in **Attachment A**.

Roles and responsibilities

Our SES, managers, employees, and the Wellbeing Team have key and defined roles and responsibilities in creating and sustaining a positive mental health culture and ensuring there is early intervention and recovery is supported.

- **SES** create an environment that promotes mental wellbeing as well as demonstrating a positive, inclusive and respectful culture in the workplace.
- **People** look after their own mental health; recognise the early signs of mental health concerns for themselves and for colleagues and feel supported to take action and ask for help where they need.
- **Managers** recognise the signs of mental health concerns, feel empowered to act and know how to access advice and support for their teams.
- **The Wellbeing Team** has the professional expertise to provide advice and access to resources for our people and are able to connect them with tailored and targeted support.

Evaluation and continuous improvement

We will regularly evaluate and report on the implementation and outcomes of our strategy. We will report quarterly to the People and Inclusion Committee on implementation progress and initial outcomes. We will report bi-annually to the Executive Board on the outcomes the strategy is achieving.

To establish a baseline measure for our strategy we will engage with the Australian Public Service Commission's Mental Health and Wellbeing onboarding process to access practical implementation support and coaching and ensure that our practices align with the APS Mental Health Capability Framework. The first step of this process will be the completion of a baseline maturity scale assessment to measure the maturity of Treasury's mental health and wellbeing activities to inform our future work plan. Annual maturity assessments will inform continuous improvement.

Our evaluation and reporting will be informed by APS Census information, specific wellbeing pulse surveys, take up rates of proactive interventions, training undertaken, access to support services provided, and case management experiences.

Attachment A

Strategic priorities, actions, responsibilities and timeframes



Four **time horizons** (calendar years from 2022 to 2025) have been used to identify deliverable actions through to the end of life of the Strategy. The delivery of the Strategy will be an iterative process, with key points between Horizons to review, reflect and revise our approach and initiatives.



Strategic priority 1: Boosting wellbeing

Boosting wellbeing – creating and sustaining a positive mental health culture in our workplace by preventing harm through strengthening our sense of community within our teams and branches, promoting mental health and wellbeing initiatives, building our literacy and developing capability.

Actions, responsibilities and timeframes

EMPLOYEES, MANAGERS AND SES ESTABLISH AND SUSTAIN MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMEFRAMES
Establish a baseline for our Mental Health Capability and review annually	POSB	Horizon one (2022)
Educate SES and managers in identifying and managing potential psychosocial hazards (e.g. job demand, interpersonal conflicts, personal issues and challenges outside of the workplace)	POSB and managers	Horizon one (2022) Horizon two (2023)
Establish and promote work design principles across Treasury (in line with POSB strategic workforce planning, manager and SES development)	POSB, SES and managers	Horizon one (2022) Horizon two (2023)
Strengthen the sense of community within teams and branches and build collective resilience across our workforce	POSB, SES, managers and employees	Horizon two (2023)
Strengthen the capability of individuals and managers through targeted programs and access to resources including self-care, development of resilience to adversity, and employee support	POSB, ISB and CB	Horizon one (2022) Horizon two (2023)
Promote the positive correlation between physical and mental health, overall wellbeing and individual benefits	POSB and CB	Horizon one (2022) Horizon two (2023)

EMPLOYEES, MANAGERS AND SES ESTABLISH AND SUSTAIN MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMEFRAMES
Agree flexible work approaches where appropriate to enable a sustainable work life integration to be achieved by employees	POSB and CB	Ongoing
Managers ensure regular planned leave is encouraged and taken to refresh and recuperate	POSB and managers	Ongoing
Identify development goals through the Performance Development System (PDS) which include core soft skills that assist in managing mental health wellbeing, for example, self-awareness, adversity resilience and coping with pressure	POSB, managers and employees	Ongoing
Enable reasonable adjustments for employees where appropriate, throughout the employee life cycle from entry to separation	POSB, managers and employees	Ongoing
Enhance our risk management methodology to include the identification, monitoring and management of wellbeing risks, including psychosocial risks	POSB, ECGB, Assistant Secretaries and First Assistant Secretaries	Ongoing review and reporting
Ensure change management approaches and plans include positive mental health initiatives and actions	POSB, managers and employees	Ongoing
Strengthen our capability to assess and manage psychosocial risks through the effective design of work and roles	POSB	Horizon one (2022) Horizon two (2023)
Enhance analytical capability through the development and implementation of advanced analytic tools that draw on quantitative and qualitative data, including those data sources that are primary or secondary risk indicators	POSB, managers and employees	Horizon two (2023) Horizon three (2024)



Strategic priority 2: Intervening early

Intervening early – supporting employees to recognise risks to mental health, identify symptoms of mental ill health, discuss concerns and enabling referrals to appropriate support.

Actions, responsibilities and timeframes

EMPLOYEES, MANAGERS AND SES RECOGNISE SYMPTOMS EARLY AND TAKE ACTION	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMEFRAMES
Educate our people to recognise and understand the early signs of emerging or escalating issues	POSB, managers and employees	Ongoing
Improve access to resources and support to take action on emerging issues	POSB, CB, SES, managers and employees	Ongoing
Increase individuals' participation in mental health awareness, mental health first aid training and other adversity resilience courses	POSB and managers	Horizon two (2023) Ongoing
Monitor, manage and provide reassurance to employees in crisis events where it is anticipated employee mental health wellbeing will be adversely impacted	ECGB, POSB, CB	Horizon two (2023) Horizon three (2024) Ongoing
Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of interventions	POSB	Ongoing review and reporting



Strategic priority 3: Supporting recovery from episodes of mental ill health

Supporting recovery from episodes of mental ill health – working in partnership with individuals and managers to create structured return to work or stay at work plans supported by professional expertise and resources.

Actions, responsibilities and timeframes

EMPLOYEES, MANAGERS AND SES WORK TOGETHER IN SUPPORTING RECOVERY	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMEFRAMES
Establish and resource clear plans to support recovery	POSB	Ongoing
Enhance professional HR capability and accessibility by employees and managers	POSB	Ongoing
Expert and professional assistance is accessed and contributes to effective recovery	POSB	Ongoing



Contacts

For advice, please contact the Performance and Wellbeing Team, People and Organisational Strategy Branch (02) 6263 2257 (option 4), who are also responsible for updating and maintaining this Strategy.

Version control

DATE MODIFIED	VERSION	SECTION OF DOCUMENT	AUTHOR OF CHANGE	SUMMARY OF CHANGE
07/09/2022	1	-	Performance and Wellbeing Team	Creation of document