

Annual Report 2022



Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan

(2020-2025)



Introduction

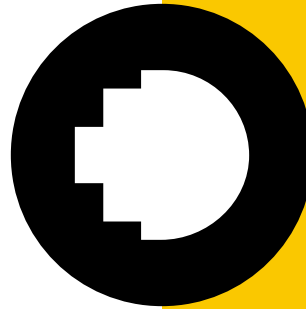
The Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025 (the Plan) is a longitudinal, systematic, and evidence-informed approach to creating a mentally healthy work and study culture. This is the second annual report published, and the third year of the delivery of the Plan.

As the Plan is data-driven and evidence-based, we track our performance each year against a formal evaluation framework. The dedicated Mental Wellbeing Initiatives (MWI) team implements a range of evidence-based mental health promotion activities and produces this annual report to ensure these activities have desired outcomes and impacts over both shorter and longer terms.

The initiatives in 2022 were possible thanks to funding through SSAF, TSF 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".



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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."



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PART 1

Acknowledgement of Country
Foreword
Executive Summary

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 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.



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.



Artwork *Luwaytini* by Mark Cleaver, Palawa

RMIT's Code of Conduct is grounded in the principles of Bundjil's Statement. This aims to send a signal about how RMIT interprets 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



Bridgid Connors
Chief People Officer

I am pleased to present the Mental Wellbeing Annual Report for 2022, the third year of implementing our RMIT whole-of-community Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan.

This report highlights the progress and challenges of generating a mentally healthy university culture, that requires a broad endeavour of activities led not just by our internal Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) team but also by teams across our RMIT community. Here, you will read about projects and initiatives that have been crafted and implemented across the continuum of wellbeing, from mental health promotion and prevention, to early intervention and enhancing supports.

We recognise 2022 was a year of recovery from the significant disruption and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given this, the core principles of mental health and wellbeing promotion remained ever-present around:

- (i) strengthening community action through supported bespoke action planning
- (ii) developing personal skills through capability framework development and opportunities for learning and growing
- (iii) building policy through launching procedures and policies around psychosocial risk and relationship safety
- (iv) creating supportive environments through on campus activations and conversations
- (v) advocating for wellbeing through presentations and papers, and
- (vi) strengthening supports through our complex case support and suicide prevention work

This collection of RMIT wellbeing initiatives is delivered alongside the myriad of additional local area initiatives led by our colleges and portfolios, who through compassionate leadership and staff and student wellbeing champions are committed to their part in enabling a mentally healthy culture. Some of these activities are highlighted in the second half of this report, yet we acknowledge we cannot capture all the great initiatives underway and there is much more occurring across the RMIT community. For this I would like to express my gratitude. We take heart knowing there is an abundance of passion, accountability and imagination in RMIT as we embody the guiding principle of shared responsibility in creating a mentally healthy community.

Our approach for evaluating this strategic action plan is maturing with us. This year, our annual Mental Wellbeing Survey included the addition of items to measure the prevalence and impact of 7 key psychosocial factors. This enabled us to lead the way for the university sector, to lean into the challenging areas with open eyes so that we can implement our psychosocial risk approach. Workplace factors that impact our emotional, social and psychological wellbeing are complex, multilayered, and often have no one-size-fits-all solution. This work requires collaboration, participation, deepening our understanding of psychosocial risks, a curious 'lifelong' learning mindset, and trust in our relationships to enable respectful and robust conversations that open up both innovative and effective solutions for the long-term.

I am proud of the progress we have made together in shifting the dial for mental health and wellbeing at RMIT University. I would like to thank our staff and students for their support and participation in our initiatives. Together, we can and are creating a healthier and more supportive community for all.

Executive summary

This is the second Annual Report for the Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025, which integrates action on both student and staff mental wellbeing. 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.

This report was compiled by the Mental Wellbeing Initiatives (MWI) team. MWI are a specialist team established within the Health, Safety and Wellbeing area of Operations to deliver all aspects of RMIT’s Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan.

This Annual Report outlines how RMIT is “shifting the dial” of mental wellbeing towards mental health promotion and prevention. The Key Action Areas are aligned with external frameworks for student and staff mental health and wellbeing, and the Plan helps RMIT maintain our commitment to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

Major milestones were achieved in 2022, including the launch of our Psychosocial Risk Management procedure, guide and template; along with our Local Area Action Planning Process which included psychosocial risk assessment. We also began design and development of the Mental Wellbeing Learning Pathways Project which aims to outline a structured series of learning and development activities for our students and staff to develop and implement core mental wellbeing skills and knowledge.

In addition, we commenced planning our Peer Support Program which aims to strengthen our range of inclusive support offerings and create a capability uplift that empowers our community with the skills to assist others in distress and contribute to a culture of prevention and early intervention.

Survey data show that RMIT’s Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) remains at “medium” risk which, while concerning in itself, continues to be a relatively strong result compared to other universities around Australia. It means that more work needs to be done prioritising mental wellbeing at a community level in terms of policies, procedures, and psychosocial risk management.

Other results there has been a recovery from the height of COVID lockdown stress in August 2021 with improvements in exhaustion levels and the wellbeing continuum, especially for international students.

Some staff are faring better than others, so more work needs to be done to understand the psychosocial and work-related factors that are driving higher levels of exhaustion and PSC risk.

Together with other key student and staff data points, our measures enable us to paint a more comprehensive picture of mental health and wellbeing, and track outcomes and impacts for the Strategic Action Plan.

Finally, we shine the light on some local initiatives led across other RMIT business areas. This reinforces the principle that mental health and wellbeing is everyone’s responsibility.

Wellbeing at RMIT

Culture

250 staff attended Staff Wellbeing Expo events at City and Bundoora Campuses



Staff and students celebrated Uni Mental Health Day at a screening of 'Playing for Keeps', about the importance of play. All attendees reported an increased overall sense of wellbeing after the event.

80

27K R U OK? Day reel views on Instagram and TikTok developed by students



Skills and Experiences

Strengthening a Culture of Respect and Engagement

Participants in 15 workshops reported improvements in self-awareness, job satisfaction and openness to change

1.9K
students

900
staff

attended wellbeing sessions and training

800 VE students attended stress prevention and management course

2022 Highlights

Support

Sudden Death Response Team integrated into the Critical Incident Management Team with new protocols and resources

92 mental wellbeing check-ins conducted with staff by the Wellbeing team



Systems

2400 staff took the Mental Wellbeing Survey
Key changes in results since 2021 survey

- higher student and staff mental wellbeing
- lower exhaustion in staff and students
- big improvement in international students' wellbeing



50 staff
33 students
acted as wellbeing champions in 2022

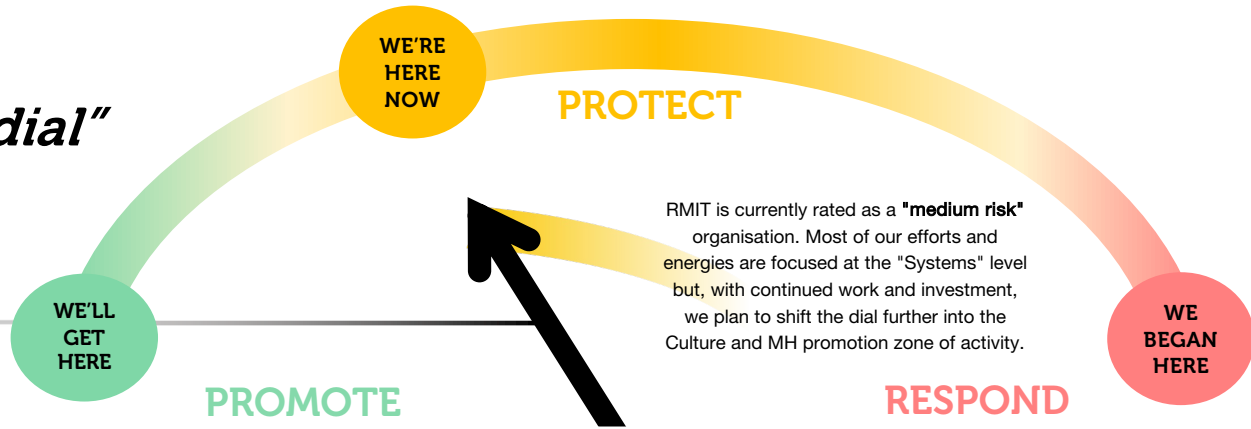


New information and resources on psychosocial risk management published on the Mental Wellbeing Hub



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 MH promotion zone of activity.

Timing of interventions	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 work- or study-related risk and protective factors.	Resilience is targeted to prevent mental ill-health and some limited MH promotion activities implemented.	People are offered more timely support but there is little investment in upstream promotion and prevention activities.	People tend to only receive support when they need urgent care or to assist their recovery.
Examples	Psychosocial Safety Climate Mental Wellbeing Action Planning Campaigns	Psychosocial risk management Learning pathways Survey, evaluation framework, and local area action planning	Training, webinars, workshops etc. Capability framework Enhancing civility and reducing burnout	Suicide prevention Assisting Others in Distress	Optimising services 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 Mental Wellbeing Survey lets us track our progress

The 2022 annual survey was held in mid-August in partnership with the research team from University of South Australia (UniSA).

In this survey, we asked participants four main things (items in Appendix):

1. Their view on RMIT's "**Psychosocial Safety Climate**" or PSC (i.e., what they think about RMIT's general approach to supporting mental wellbeing)
2. Their own **positive mental wellbeing** (i.e., not symptoms of mental ill-health like depression, anxiety or distress)
3. How **engaged or exhausted** their work or study makes them feel, and
4. Experiences of **psychosocial risk factors** informed by anticipated legislation requirements

Final participants across all onshore RMIT included:

- 1362 current staff (15% response rate),
- 928 current students (1% response rate),
- and an additional 73 who were both

What is Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC)?



Psychosocial safety climate is a property of an organisation. It is reflected in the organisational policies, practises and procedures for the protection of worker psychological health and safety. *Evidence strongly suggests that enhancing PSC can:*

- Increase positive outcomes (e.g. learning, social connectedness, healthy behaviours) and
- Reduce negative outcomes (e.g. bullying, depression/anxiety, physical health conditions).

As such, PSC is a lead indicator, and a key measure in the survey is the "Psychosocial Safety Climate-4", consisting of 4 questions measuring different principles of PSC:

- Organisational Communication
- Organisational Participation
- Senior Management Commitment
- and Senior Management Priority

What are psychosocial factors?

Psychosocial Factors are areas of risk that can impact wellness at work/study.

Items were included in response to requests from leaders and mental wellbeing action plan working groups for more local-area data about specific risks.

We chose 7, based on the [Model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work](#), proposed Victorian psychological health regulations and on our knowledge of what impacts people most at RMIT.

- Workload
- Bullying and harassment
- Civility and respect
- Fairness
- Traumatic content or experiences
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Violence and aggression

We asked three questions about each Psychosocial Factor:

1. Is it an issue in your area?
2. How frequently does it occur?
3. What is the impact on wellbeing?

Evidence: Tracking progress and outcomes

Summary

Performance metrics 2022 v 2021: PSC risk level is the same (Medium) although average PSC score improved for students. Exhaustion and Mental Wellbeing improved for everyone, and engagement remained unchanged.

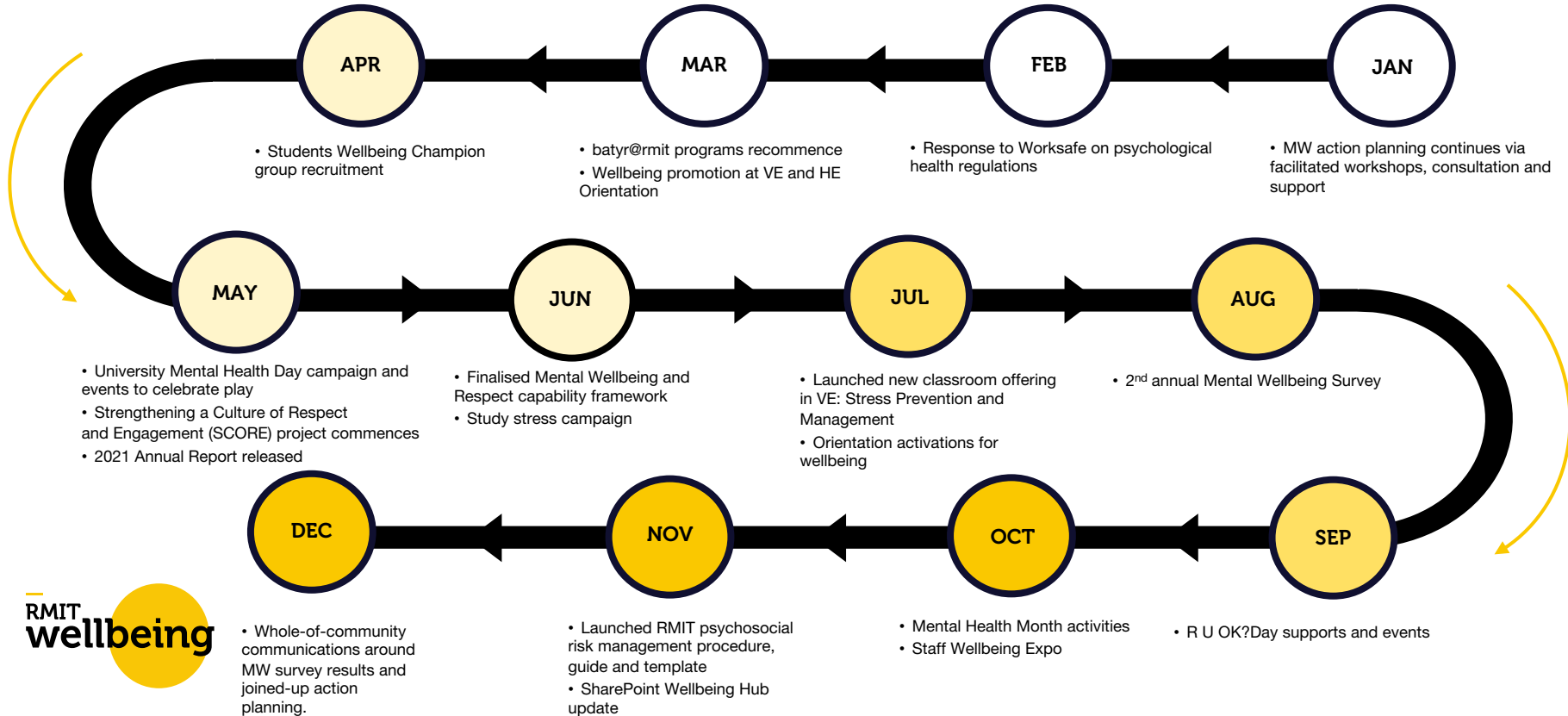
Psychosocial factors: Perceptions of workload as a stressor were universally high but there were four out of seven “Low” exposure ratings for staff, and six out of seven for students. Bullying and (Un)Fairness were also elevated for staff.

International students registered a dramatic increase in wellbeing compared to 2021. Where they previously lagged behind domestic students, now they report greater wellbeing, lower exhaustion and lower PSC risk.

Staff: Performance metrics were typically poorer in Colleges compared to Portfolios (e.g., “High” versus “Low” PSC risk). College staff, both Professional and Academic, experienced higher levels of perceived bullying, incivility and unfairness than Portfolio staff.

Metric	All staff <i>n</i> =1402 (15%)	All students <i>n</i> =961 (1%)	International students <i>n</i> =195 (1.4%)	
Performance metrics Arrows note significant improvement from 2021 to 2022	PSC risk	Medium	Medium ↓	Low ↓↓
	Exhaustion	Medium ↓	Medium ↓	Low ↓
	Engagement	Medium	Medium	High
	Mental wellbeing	Medium ↑	Medium ↑	Med-High ↑↑
Psychosocial factors New in 2022 (Exposure ratings from Low to Critical)	Workload	High	High	High
	(In)Civility	Low	Low	Low
	Bullying	Medium	Low	Low
	Trauma	Low	Low	Low
	Violence	Low	Low	Low
	(Un)Fairness	Medium	Low	Low
	Sexual harm	Low	Low	Low
	Overall	Concern level	Medium	Medium

2022 timeline of key events





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PART 2

Report on action areas

How did we perform in 2022?

Over the length of the Plan, our aim is to build a thorough evaluation over successive reports from year-to-year.

Quantifying outcomes and impact takes time, so this report will highlight baseline measures of Mental Wellbeing Initiatives and their contribution to implementing the Plan throughout 2022.



Illustrating progress in this report

Each Key Action Area and specific action within each Area are marked to signify progress towards completion or level of ongoing activity. Specific activities are coded as “Yes” if complete/in-place, “Partial” if in-progress or some work achieved, or “Not yet” if not started.



Not implemented
Means yet to begin



Partially implemented
Means incomplete or in development



Fully implemented
Means complete or continuing

The Strategic Action Plan will be assessed according to three types of evaluation: process, outcome, and impact.

1. **Process** evaluation describes what was implemented and how successful it was in terms of raw numbers and qualitative feedback.
2. **Outcome** evaluation focuses on whether the implemented activity had the desired effect in the short term and in a specific domain.
3. **Impact** evaluation asks whether the processes and outcomes had more general effects over the long term.

In 2022, the focus was on the collection of follow-up Outcome and Impact data in addition to continued collection of Process evaluation data. We have made consistent progress towards implementing each of the activities listed in the Strategic Action Plan's [Evaluation Framework](#) and Logic Model.

Our commitment

Articulate our commitment

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

Our way

Collaborate for collective impact

Develop whole of community engagement model for staff and students to be co-creators of mental wellbeing initiatives. **NOT YET**
 Develop governance structures to foster collaboration with RMIT academics and researchers. **YES**
 Foster opportunities for RMIT students' collaboration with RMIT Wellbeing. **PARTIAL**

Our stories

Grow meaningful engagement and tell our stories

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

Our growth

Learn, celebrate and share our success

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



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

Key initiatives



University Mental Health Day movie screening

To celebrate University Mental Health Day in May, RMIT Wellbeing hosted the Australian premiere of the documentary *Playing for Keeps* at The Capitol. The film explored the benefits of play through a health lens, and attendees enjoyed a pre-screening talk from play expert Daniel Teitelbaum. 165 attendees registered, with some streaming from home and 74 attending in-person. This immersive experience was brought about in collaboration with Student Life, D&I, RUSU and the Ngarara Willim centre – each area facilitated conversations and playful activities to engage students and staff.

Welcome events

RMIT Wellbeing joined welcome events for Higher Education and Vocational Education students, offering activities and information, and encouraging students to complete the Mental Wellbeing Essentials module. An estimated 4000 students engaged with our stalls, learning more about RMIT's approach to mental health and wellbeing – including how to access training and supports during their study.

Staff Wellbeing Expo

A Staff Wellbeing Expo was held at the Bundoora and City campuses. Featuring stalls from key RMIT service areas and partner organisations, this was a space for staff to prioritise their wellbeing and feel invigorated. Stalls offered information, giveaways and playful opportunities for staff to care for and build their mental health and wellbeing, and 250 staff attended across the two events.

Our policies

Review and uplift our policies and procedures

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

Our responsibilities

Identify, address and monitor key psychosocial risks

Enhance process for identifying, addressing and monitoring psychosocial risks. **NOT YET**

Develop a planned approach and consultation process to develop resources for local/program level psychosocial safety management. **YES**

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. **NOT YET**

Embed mental wellbeing as a key consideration of RMIT research.

PARTIAL

Embed key mental wellbeing information (e.g. model for wellbeing, key supports) into staff programs. **NOT YET**

Strategic communications plan for whole of community to embed mental wellbeing messages. **NOT YET**

Uplift influential groups, networks and leaders including HSW, champions networks, advisory groups. **YES**



Overall
progress

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

Key initiatives



Psychosocial risk management

Psychosocial risk management is essential for mental health prevention and safe support. In 2022, we launched our Psychosocial Risk Management procedure, guide, and template. Proactive development of these tools puts RMIT in a strong position ahead of proposed psychological health regulations being considered by the Victorian Government in 2023.

Wellbeing Hub SharePoint page

RMIT Wellbeing continued to develop the “[Wellbeing Hub](#)” SharePoint page for RMIT staff, with links to: wellbeing events and activities; resources for supporting students, colleagues, and staff themselves; survey results; and wellbeing action planning information.

Systems for responding to suicide and other sudden deaths

A cross-university multidisciplinary team is the core of our expanded suicide postvention response, which now activates following any sudden death in our community. This Sudden Death Response Team is now integrated into existing processes for critical incident management, and templates and guidelines have been developed to allow timely responding and resourcing.

Local area mental wellbeing action planning

After the 2021 pilot process, RMIT Wellbeing supported local Mental Wellbeing Action Planning through 2022 based around existing Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) committees, inviting area staff to join a working group, and to work towards a tailored Action Plan to address issues important to their colleagues and students. 12 local areas completed wellbeing action planning in 2022, with more underway.



Our knowledge

Build the mental health capability and literacy of our community

Develop a model for promoting mental wellbeing. **YES**

Provide mental health promotion and literacy through various comms channels. **YES**

Develop a mental wellbeing skills capability and resilience framework. **YES**



Our skills

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

Student and staff training in Assisting students/others in distress. **YES**

Source and/or deliver skills specific training around self-care, supporting others, and resilience. **PARTIAL**



Our resources

Provide tools to proactively build psychological safety and resilience

Develop staff and student engagement plan to share our resources and support implementation. **PARTIAL**

Resources are made readily available, easy to access, download and implement. **YES**

Explore digital mental health promotion tools that offer scale and impact.

PARTIAL



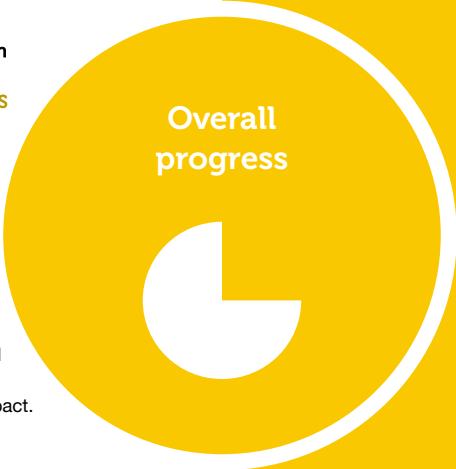
Our environments

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

Develop online spaces for Champions groups and Communities of Practice collaboration. **YES**

Strengthen online channels for wellbeing skills e.g. Facebook, Yammer. **YES**

Enhance access to online resources, online architecture and website uplift. **YES**



Overall
progress

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

Key initiatives

Mental Wellbeing and Respect Capability Framework

The RMIT Mental Wellbeing and Respect Capability Framework was finalised in 2022, outlining 5 domains of core wellbeing skills, knowledge, and behaviours for students, staff, and leaders:

1. wellbeing knowledge
2. supporting personal wellbeing
3. supporting the wellbeing of others
4. psychosocial safety management
5. care and respectful relationships

This Framework outlines responsibilities for the overall prevention of harm and risk management (according to role), and supports everyone at RMIT in developing capabilities, skills, knowledge, and confidence to support their own and others' wellbeing and manage psychosocial risks.

Skills and training offerings

Approximately 900 staff members and 1900 students participated in a variety of wellbeing webinars, workshops and training, or attended wellbeing events, including:

- **Assisting Students in Distress:** 136 staff completed the online training module, 90 staff completed the skills workshop
- **Vocational Education Stress Prevention and Management:** 800 students completed the workshop

Three evidence-based, targeted intervention programs were piloted to promote psychosocial safety and address psychosocial risks:

- **Vicarious Trauma:** 3 workshops were facilitated
- **Occupational Violence and Aggression:** 8 workshops were facilitated
- **Incivility:** 15 workshops were facilitated

Open Education Resources

To contribute to wellbeing resources in the broader education sector, the RMIT Library supporting RMIT Wellbeing in publishing some of the first university's first Open Education Resources through the RMIT Pressbooks site – versions of our Mental Wellbeing Essentials (student) and Protocols for Assisting Students in Distress (staff) learning modules for adaptation by other learning institutions.

Our model

Promote initiatives that support personal mental wellbeing

Offer wellbeing initiatives connected to the wellbeing model. **YES**
 Student focused events, such as Orientation, wellbeing support during assessments, Calm Zone for exams. **YES**
 Staff focused events, such as wellbeing sessions, individual wellbeing professional development and training. **YES**

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). **PARTIAL**
 Collaborate to review and create plan for best practice for prevention, with attention to tailoring for target populations (e.g., international students). **PARTIAL**

Our supports

Optimise our services and supports to those in need

Quality improvement initiatives in student and staff support services (e.g., student support, ELS, and EAP). **PARTIAL**
 Injury Management Team optimise return to work processes. **PARTIAL**

Prevent, prepare, respond

Strengthen our suicide prevention and postvention protocols and processes

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



Overall progress

Key action area #4

Supports

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

Key initiatives



Staff supports focusing on prevention and early intervention

Staff wellbeing support and interventions grew in 2022, supported by increased resourcing and a new secure case management system. Data collection (commenced from May 2022) showed that the Staff Wellbeing team provided individual wellbeing check-ins and support to 92 RMIT staff, involving 256 discrete instances of support over the final 8 months of 2022.

Staff wellbeing advisors now collaborate formally with People Partners, PWR Advisors and Injury Management Advisors to actively case-manage more complex HR cases.

Suicide prevention and support

The suicide prevention project includes activity across the continuum of wellbeing, from promoting early support seeking, stigma reduction and mental health literacy to secondary and tertiary prevention. The aim is to reduce risk and further decline in mental health issues (secondary prevention) by collaborating with the student supports group, as well as supporting those experiencing the impact of suicide around recovery (tertiary prevention) through participation in the Sudden Death Response Team.

During 2022, the SDRT was activated 15 times following 2 staff deaths, 11 student deaths and 2 preventative activations. Additionally, there were 2 international activations. Feedback from staff and students being supported by this process has been overwhelmingly positive.



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PART 3

Highlights across RMIT

Highlight

Student orientation

Orientation is a crucial stage in the student lifecycle, preparing students for the transition into study – and setting them up for success. We're embedding wellbeing from Day 1.

RMIT's Orientation model encourages students to participate in 3 key elements to help support a successful transition into the University:

1. Attend How2RMIT,
2. Attend their program induction, and
3. Get involved in social events and activities



How2RMIT

A new [How2RMIT Canvas course](#) was built in 2022 and launched in Semester 1 2023, and currently has 7089 student enrolments. It provides important wellbeing information such as personal support services, medical services, accommodation guidance, welfare support, support for under 18s, financial support, and looking after yourself (5 Ways to Wellbeing) – and also promotes RMIT Wellbeing's *Mental Wellbeing Essentials* module.

[Youtube: What is How2RMIT?](#)

Welcome Days

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic mental health impacts on students, RMIT Student Life created a dedicated Wellbeing zone as part of the 2022 Welcome Day events.

For the largest event at City campus, this zone was located in and around Ellis Court, chosen as a quieter space away from the DJ and main bustle of the event, where students could chill out under some trees. The area included marquees for the RMIT Wellbeing and Safer Community teams, *batyr* and Delta Therapy Dogs. Students could also grab a free donut and hot drink in this space. 2172 students attended the Semester One 2022 Welcome Days.

Wellbeing initiatives are now included in all Student Life Orientation events as business-as-usual, with an aim to provide students with both the energy of orientation events, but also the option of quieter chill-out spaces - especially for the busier events - as part of the event planning and footprint design.

Highlight

Neurodiversity

An estimated 15% of humans are neurodivergent – having brains that are not neurotypical.

RMIT has had a sustained commitment to inclusivity and diversity, and there is growing recognition of the need to embrace and affirm neurodivergence. While there is always more to be done, efforts are underway to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and staff.

One of RMIT's priorities is to create a more affirming environment for neurodivergent students. The University recognises that neurodivergent learners have unique strengths, needs and challenges, and that they often face significant barriers in education. To address this, RMIT continues to improve supports for students – such as Equitable Learning and Accessibility processes – and by building staff capacity in supporting neurodivergent students. By prioritising neurodivergent students' needs, RMIT is creating a more inclusive and empowering environment for all learners.

RMIT also recognises that some neurodivergent staff members also require support and accommodations to ensure that they can flourish in their roles. By creating a more supportive and inclusive workplace for all staff members, RMIT is ensuring that everyone can contribute to the University's vision and mission.

Activities included:

- **Neurodiversity 101: An Affirming Approach:** A workshop created by neurodivergent and neurotypical staff within Student Services and the People area. The session shares information about neurodivergence and neurotypes, experiences of staff and students with different neurotypes, and adjustments and accommodations to support participation
- **Support for ND Students in Study and Work:** A second workshop for neurodivergent students that explains support services within the university that may assist with some of the challenges faced in tertiary education. Staff across these services attended the webinar to warmly welcome attendees, offer support, and share the ways their services can support neurodivergent students
- **Neurodivergent-friendly study sessions,** including a sensory-sensitive venue courtesy of the Library team, structured timing for focus periods and breaks thanks to Equitable Learning and Accessibility staff, and snacks and fidget toys courtesy of RUSU. Participants provided very positive feedback.
- The growth of a **Disability and Neurodiversity Staff Network** with emphasis on: mutual peer support; celebration of network members' strength, tenacity, courage, and humour; exploration of best practice; and advocacy for dignity and inclusion in the workplace
- Celebration of World Autism Awareness Day 2022 via University social media and an [accompanying article](#) focused on lived experiences of RMIT students with autism.
- Promotion of Affirmative Measures roles for student who are Neurodiverse (for example, *Specialisterne*, *Xpceptional*, *the Aurora Program*, *Untapped*)
- RMIT representation at the *Amaze* Autism and Employment Seminar in June 2022

Highlight

The Big Anxiety – Naarm

The Big Anxiety brings together creative thinkers – including artists, researchers, scientists, health and community workers, and people with a wide range of lived experiences – to re-imagine mental health care for the 21st century.

A radically new kind of arts festival, in which every project is an open and continuing conversation, designed to promote curiosity, insight and action, The Big Anxiety presents arts events tackling the major anxieties of our times, as well as the practical challenges of supporting emotional distress and trauma recovery. An initiative born at UNSW since 2016, RMIT brought this amazing festival to Naarm/Melbourne in September-December 2022.

The Naarm festival collaborated with the RMIT Culture team to utilise RMIT's spaces and galleries, and with the Mental Wellbeing Initiatives team to ensure psychologically safe delivery of provocative experiences for staff, artists, and attendees. The festival involved exhibitions, interactive works, talks, and culminated in a 2-day forum focused on lived experience of psychological distress. The festival also extended to works displayed in Footscray, at Federation Square, at ACMI, and in the Yarra Ranges.

Activities included:

- Exhibitions and events at RMIT venues, ACMI, the Yarra Ranges, Frankston, and the BOLDER Footscray Community Arts Centre, attracting over 12000 attendees across the festival period
- 150+ participants in the Big Anxiety Forum at RMIT's Storey Hall - a 2-day conference-style forum with creative approaches to mental health, exploration of lived experiences, and talks from experts
- Work-integrated learning placements for 2 RMIT social work students to support the MWI team in psychosocially safe oversight and delivery of the festival and forum
- Adaptation of the Don't Rush Home protocol to Melbourne: WIL students and MWI co-delivered training for staff and volunteers to be available to attendees for discussing, processing, or reflecting on experiences during festival events and exhibitions so that no-one leaves the festival feeling upset, distressed, concerned or confused
- Creation of a process for collaborative psychosocial risk assessments for use by Creative Producers from RMIT Culture, WIL students, and RMIT Wellbeing, to carefully consider the specifics of each work or festival event and ensure appropriate safeguards and disengagement/exit points were made available to attendees



Image: Keelan O'Hehir Imagery and TBA, The Big Anxiety Naarm, 2022



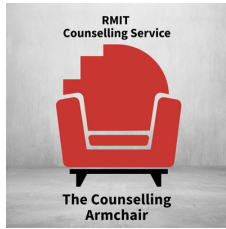
Image: Jude Worters, *Malajusted (Hiding)*, Digital Photograph, 2021



Highlight

Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS created new offerings to improve student wellbeing, and facilitated new pathways for students to access support and resources.



Podcast: The Counselling Armchair

The CAPS team recorded and released 9 episodes of a new podcast – [The Counselling Armchair](#) – covering topics relevant to RMIT students, including university processes, procrastination, impostor syndrome, sleep difficulties, assessment anxiety, international student supports, and how student welfare advisors can support students. The podcast also aimed to demystify student counselling and remove barriers and stigma for students in accessing support through CAPS.

Webinars and workshops

Utilising CAPS team expertise, new webinar and workshop offerings were created and offered this year, in addition to returning offerings from 2021. These sessions aimed to:

- support the psychological wellbeing of students and staff
- increase mental health literacy and awareness
- reduce stigma around mental ill-health and promote help-seeking behaviours, and
- provide opportunities to develop skills, resilience and strategies to improve management of psychological wellbeing

A total of 71 workshops/webinar sessions were run in 2022, with 735 attendees. The core of these was a range of topic-specific webinars and workshops offered to students over the year, including:

- Building Resilience
- Brain skills – CBT for everyday life
- Self-compassion
- Keep calm & Zzz: Strategies for sleep
- Managing Stress & Anxiety 101
- Mindfulness in May
- Take a Mindful Moment – R U OK?Day
- Dealing with Uncertainty
- Put off Procrastination
- It's About Time Management
- Mastering Exam Anxiety
- Can we all just get along? Groupwork Strategies
- How to Communicate Effectively
- The S factor: Social Anxiety
- Life Hacks for Wellbeing

In addition, offerings specific to an identified need within a staff or student group (for example, supporting HDR students' mental health and wellbeing) were organised by request.

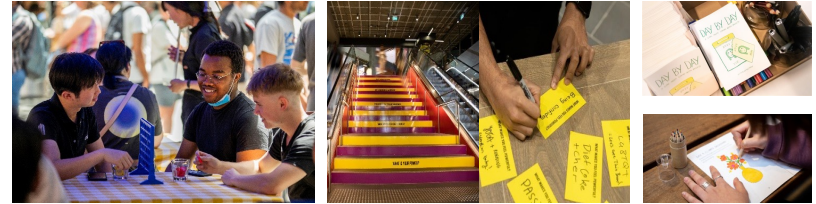
Highlight

RMIT Creative

RMIT Creative continues to collaborate with RMIT students in exploring novel approaches for building students' wellbeing.

Clay Play

Developed by a student artist as part of the Creative Wellbeing commissions, this project used therapy sensory clay to encourage participants to get out of their heads and into their bodies for a moment of calm. Students would chat and connect to fellow students by swapping clay colours and cherish a sense of shared community by filling up a campus map with a diverse community of clay creations. The project appeared at a number of RMIT student events over the year, and 766 creations were made in 2022.



ConnectUs

Developed by a student artist as part of Public Art Trail, this project aimed to foster connection between participants by inviting them to take turns asking questions. The questions were developed by the student artist using research by psychologists on forming meaningful human connections between strangers. ConnectUs was also utilised by the International Student Peer Support team during their social connection and support activities to help start conversations

Day by Day zine workshops

A continuation of a 2021 student artwork originally delivered online, in 2022 the Day By Day 'zine was printed and delivered in hardcopy. In 2022, the printed zines were shared at workshops with the student artist – talking through activities and explaining how they found them helpful in managing their anxiety and mental health. Workshops included creative supplies and ingredients for participants to create their own tea/hot drink care practice

What Makes You Feel Powerful

A student artist facilitated conversations with fellow students about power, feeling empowered and empowering others. Some students shared their responses on cards, which were then displayed

Supporting international students

Supported by the Victorian Government International Education Resilience Fund (IERF), RMIT Students Group designed and delivered new initiatives to strengthen support for international students' employability, welfare, and wellbeing.

Employability and Student Life

- International students were offered initiatives to facilitate social connection and belonging (to RMIT, to their cohort and to Melbourne) including participation in Melbourne International Student Week, swimming lessons, food festivals, welcome events, on-campus drop-in spaces. 814 students attended events, and feedback showed 91% satisfaction, 78% made a new connection, 88% felt a sense of belonging to RMIT, and 82% felt more connected to Melbourne
- A significant stream of work was also dedicated to improving employability and work readiness of international students
- More than 2400 students attended employability events, with 300 attending 1:1 career counselling (98% satisfaction), 85% reported feeling more confident and prepared after attending. Over 60 industry partners were engaged to co-deliver skills sessions and events

International students' wellbeing

New programs were developed in 2022 to support international students' wellbeing, including:

- **Outreach Calls:** International students were recruited to make outreach calls to other international students and offer an opportunity to talk, and to connect them to relevant RMIT support. Post-survey data indicated that 86% had increased awareness of services. 60% of students' calls were connected to employability support, 76% sought new friendships and connection, and 18% needed support with mental health
- **Strengths Coaching:** Accredited coaches supported international students in building strengths-based awareness to reach their personal and professional goals – personal growth, confidence, work-study-life balance, motivation, and career planning. Evaluation showed greater awareness of strengths (61%/87% pre-/post-program) and confidence in using them (59%/74%), and greater confidence in navigating uni life (71%/88%)
- **Mental Health Peer Support:** In partnership with *Orygen*, international students with lived experience of mental health recovery were recruited and trained in peer-to-peer conversations about mental health and wellbeing. These peer workers joined and organised events with international students including visits to the zoo and NGV, games nights, walks, and coffee, with goals of destigmatising mental health difficulties and encouraging help-seeking. Peer workers engaged with 228 students during events and 392 students in 1:1 engagements, with 95% satisfaction, as well as 73% reporting increased connectedness, 81% increased belonging, and 88% more connected to Melbourne
- **Social Media:** Content was created and shared across student channels (website, social media, email newsletter) providing information and advice on common priorities for international students – such as rental advice from RMIT's Legal Service, information and support around Australian workplace culture, and international students' workplace rights



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PART 4
What's next

Progress across our key action areas

Culture

Overall, significant progress has been made towards actualising RMIT's collective value on care, collaboration, health and wellbeing, so that both groups and individuals thrive in work and learning.

Systems

Overall, significant progress has been made towards enhancing the way people work and study, the prevalence of psychosocial risk, and the rates of psychosocial injury.

Skills and Experiences

Overall, some progress has been made towards improving the links between mental health promotion activities, psychosocial protective factors, and the emotional and psychological wellbeing of staff and students.

Supports

Some progress has been made towards strengthening a continuum of wellbeing supports, upstream service enhancement, and improvement of downstream services.

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.

Leadership

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

Evidence

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

Partnerships

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



Our Focus for 2023

Enable the RMIT community to drive evidence-based mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiatives

Now we have foundations in place, our focus is on equipping and empowering RMIT at all levels to engage building a culture of care, mental health and wellbeing. Our work will support HSW committees, leaders and staff across colleges and portfolios to adopt an evidence based approach. This includes being data-informed, using technology available to us (e.g. dashboards) and implementing the RMIT psychosocial risk management process.

Broaden the reach of mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiatives beyond Melbourne campuses

After piloting the mental wellbeing survey, local area action planning, and other mental wellbeing initiatives at our Melbourne campuses, in 2023 we plan to expand these offerings to our Vietnam and Europe campuses.

Optimise student and staff wellbeing response models through Continuous Improvement projects

This year we have a focus on supporting continuous improvement and finessing the sustainability of student and staff supports. A key quality improvement project is the establishment of a Peer Support Program for staff. This embeds a secondary prevention model into RMIT, to support early intervention and reduce the negative impact mental health issues can have on individuals. For students, the focus will be on supporting the review of complex case management and the complaints management process.

Develop and embed evidence-based strategic frameworks for staff and student wellbeing activities

As we mature our approach, we now look to tailoring our evidence-based models and best practice in RMIT. This will include a refresh of our 5 ways to wellbeing model, as well as more officially engaging people with lived and living experiences of mental ill-health to shape and contribute to building a culture of care.

Bring together a safe and effective whole of community approach to wellbeing activities and campaigns

Mental health and wellbeing promotion is an art and science. Our focus will be continue to uplift local groups to design and implement evidence-informed approaches that strengthen, compliment and reinforce each other. We will engage our internal and external partners to offer key events, such as the Staff Wellbeing Expo, University Mental Health Day, and RU OK?Day.

Drive forward mental wellbeing capability and skills development

2022 saw the finalisation of our capability framework for Mental Health and Wellbeing. Our focus in 2023 is two-fold. Firstly, designing learning pathways for staff and students. Secondly, as we wait for the pathway, building engagement in our interim mental health literacy and capability building offerings to increase reach and sustainability of limited resources.

2023 Initiatives mapped onto the Strategic Action Plan

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.

Action Areas

Culture

- Lived and living experiences project
- Sharing stories and mental health promotion messaging around key dates including
 - University mental health day
 - R U OK?Day
 - Mental health month
 - staff wellbeing expo

Systems

- Learning pathways project
- Engagement and wellbeing action planning
- Psychosocial risk management
- Sharing resources, learning and assets within RMIT (e.g. RMIT Vietnam)

Skills and Experiences

- Ways of Wellbeing review and project
- Streamlining staff and student offerings
- Psychosocial risk training programs (Vicarious trauma and Occupational Violence)

Support

- Suicide prevention project
- Covid wellbeing supports
- Peer support program (staff)

Enablers

Leadership

Fostering psychosocial safety climate through participation, role modelling and communication.

External Partnerships

Benestar, BUPA, and Medibank
batyr
RMIT Health Innovation Lab

Internal Partnerships

Studentlife
RMIT sustainability
RMIT Health Innovation Lab
RUSU

Evidence

Data Dashboard Project
Mental wellbeing survey 2023 and internal research partnership



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Noon gudgin
Thank you

Noon gudgin - Thank you

The work of the Wellbeing Initiatives Team would not be possible without the contribution of many others across RMIT.

We would like to acknowledge our funding sources for 2022 from HSW, Student Services Amenities Funds, and the TAFE Services Fund. We thank all those who have lent their time, presence, expertise and encouragement, whether directly or indirectly, in the many ways that go above and beyond their day-to-day work or study.

We would also like to thank everyone who has contributed towards Mental Wellbeing Initiatives in 2022 – our staff, students, and partners. In particular we would like to thank members of our governance groups for their contributions:

- Our Strategic Advisory Committee
- Our Research & Practice Advisory Group
- and our Staff and Student Mental Wellbeing Champions

Connect with us

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

- your thoughts on our Annual Report
- our activities in 2022
- our plans that you'd like to know more about for 2023
- wellbeing activities or needs in your area in 2023

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

About the team...

The Wellbeing Initiatives Team is a specialist team established within the Health, Safety and Wellbeing area of Operations to deliver all aspects of RMIT's Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan, including the Evaluation Framework which this Annual Report reports against.

The team includes clinical and organisational psychologists, mental health researchers, and project management and population health experts equipped to administer a wide range of programs to both students and staff.

The Wellbeing Initiatives Team does not provide one-on-one counselling or EAP services – the focus is on health promotion and prevention. Instead, the team uses a “many-to-one” mental health promotion approach to provide information and support to large groups of individuals, teams, work areas, leaders, or the whole RMIT community through information sessions, training, focus groups and workshops, campaigns and messaging, or other means as necessary.

Population mental health is for everyone, including those who consider themselves to be well, and is better suited to the overarching promotion, prevention and early intervention principles underpinning the Strategic Action Plan, and so complements more traditional therapeutic counselling and recovery services.



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Appendix A

About our strategic approach

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 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

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

Read The Plan:

Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan

2020-2025

RMIT wellbeing

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



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Appendix B

Data points in detail

2022 evaluation data

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

Baseline data of these key indicators has been 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.

Data reported in 2021 Annual Report

Occasionally, 2021 data reported last year will be slightly different in this report. The primary reason is that some data points change retrospectively as more data becomes available, errors are corrected, or data coding/categorisation changes to reflect current approaches. If you have a query about any changes or anomalies, please contact RMITwellbeing@rmit.edu.au.

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 in 2021. The aim is to improve data collection and collation procedures in 2022 and beyond.

Statistics can be misleading when taken out of context. We urge readers to quote these figures in the context of this Annual Report and in conjunction with the commentary provided.

Staff data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
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>MHC-SF scale averages (range 0-5): EWB 2.90 SWB 2.24 PWB 2.65</p>	<p>MHC-SF scale averages (range 0-5): EWB 2.97* SWB 2.31* PWB 3.12</p>	<p>Results are from a self-selected sample. Emotional and social wellbeing are still low but significant increases may be explained by there being no COVID-19 restrictions in place in 2022 compared to Stage 4 lockdowns in 2021.</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><i>During the PAST MONTH, how often did you feel... 0. Never 1. Once or twice 2. About once a week 3. About 2 or 3 times a week 4. Almost every day 5. Every day</i></p> <p><i>*significant change in 2022</i></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>	<p>MHC-SF categorical results: Flourishing 31% Moderate 54% Languishing 15%</p>	<p>MHC-SF categorical results: Flourishing 10% Moderate 61% Languishing 29%</p>	<p>Despite improvement, rates of Languishing remain higher than we would like to see (circa 1-6%) and Flourishing rates remain much lower (circa 40-60%). RMIT needs to continue to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of staff in 2023 and beyond to bring these results into healthier ranges.</p>



Staff data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC-4)	<p>1. Management commitment: Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment.</p> <p>2. Management priority: Senior management considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity. (Management priority)</p> <p>3. Organisation communication: There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect me. (Organisational communication)</p> <p>4. Organisation participation: In my organisation, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organisation. (Organisational participation)</p>	<p>PSC-4 scale averages (range 1-5): Management commitment 3.19 Management priority 3.09 Organisation communication 3.11 Organisation participation 3.67</p>	<p>PSC-4 scale averages (range 1-5): Management commitment 3.13 Management priority 3.10 Organisation communication 3.09 Organisation participation 3.77*</p>	<p>PSC across RMIT remains at a "medium" level of risk for staff. The aim is to bring RMIT into the "low" risk category in future surveys and so we need to enhance our approach to PSC in 2023 and beyond.</p> <p><i>Note: Results are sampled from voluntary onshore participants in the Mental Wellbeing Survey, comprising less than 20% of students and staff. Convenient selection may have skewed results higher or lower and increased variability, depending on people's motivation for participating.</i></p>
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree or disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree <p><i>*significant change in 2022</i></p>		

Staff data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
Work related wellbeing measures	<p>Emotional Exhaustion from Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)</p> <p>1. At work, I feel mentally exhausted. 2. After a day at work, I find it hard to recover my energy.</p>	<p>BAT scale averages (range 1-5): Mentally exhausted 3.54 Hard to recover 3.45</p>	<p>BAT scale averages (range 1-5): Mentally exhausted 3.43* Hard to recover 3.32*</p>	<p>When risk factors outweigh protective factors, the outcome is exhaustion. Exhaustion remains elevated across RMIT onshore staff in 2021. We would like to see BAT levels no higher than 2.7/5. (Shaufeli et al., 2020)</p> <p>RMIT needs to continue to work to reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors in 2022 to prevent negative psychosocial outcomes for staff such as anxiety, depression, and burnout.</p>
	<p>Engagement items from Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)</p> <p>1. For my work, I feel bursting with energy. 2. I am enthusiastic about my work.</p>	<p>UWES scale averages (range 1-7): Energy 4.29 Enthusiasm 5.08</p>	<p>UWES scale averages (range 1-7): Energy 4.24 Enthusiasm 5.03</p>	

- 1. *Never*
 - 2. *Rarely*
 - 3. *Sometimes*
 - 4. *Often*
 - 5. *Always*
- *significant change in 2022*

- 1. *Never*
- 2. *A few times a year or less (almost never)*
- 3. *Once a month or less (rarely)*
- 4. *A few times a month (sometimes)*
- 5. *Once a week (often)*
- 6. *A few times a week (very often)*
- 7. *Every day (always)*



Staff data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 73% favourable (v. high impact) 2. Data unavailable 3. 79% favourable (medium impact) 4. 59% favourable 5. 61% favourable 6. 72% favourable 7. Data unavailable <i>Compared with 2019 My Voice Counts survey (no 2020 or 2021 data)</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 69% favourable (v. high impact) 2. 67% favourable (high impact) 3. 80% favourable (medium impact) 4. 68% favourable (high impact) 5. 61% favourable (high impact) 6. 78% favourable (high impact) 7. 85% favourable (medium impact) 	<p>Feelings of belonging have fallen further since 2019 and 2021 surveys, which has a very high impact on staff engagement. People feel more in control of their work, perhaps owing to the return to campus since 2021. Despite workload exposure being reported as high in the MW Survey, the favourability rating here has improved since 2021.</p>
Annual and Sick Leave	<p>Number of staff with more than 25 days accrued annual leave, sick leave taken</p>	<p>Across all of RMIT, 1077 staff members have accrued annual leave in excess of 25 days and 11661 days of sick leave were taken between 7 June and 31 December (after Workday system implementation).</p>	<p>Across all of RMIT, 742 staff members have accrued annual leave in excess of 25 days and 11625 days of sick leave were taken between 1 January and 31 December 2022.</p>	<p>Excessive annual leave can indicate excessive workload or work pressures preventing or discouraging people from taking time off. The amount of sick days is down markedly since 2021, owing to the lessening of exposure to COVID-19 and other pandemic stressors. It is hoped that all these indicators to continue to improve.</p>

Staff data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
EAP (Employee Assistance Program)	1.Utilisation data	1. EAP utilisation rate of 4.8% , above Education sector benchmark of 2.4%.	1. EAP utilisation rate of 4.9% , above Education sector benchmark of 2.6%.	<p>The relatively high rate of EAP utilisation at RMIT could be due to either higher demand (e.g., greater need, higher stress levels, or less stigma) or more supply (e.g., lower barriers to uptake, more availability or better-quality service). This elevated rate does not necessarily mean that distress levels are higher at RMIT than elsewhere in the Education sector.</p> <p>RMIT actively encourages staff to use EAP and, at least in the early years of the Plan, we would expect to see efforts to provide support reflected in higher utilisation rates. Over time, utilisation may then come down and stabilise as longstanding promotion and prevention initiatives take effect to reduce the prevalence of work-related stressors and incidence of mental ill-health.</p>
	2.Presenting issue data	2. Presenting issues: 34% work-related and 66% personal	2. Presenting issues: 32% work-related and 68% personal	With no benchmark data for comparison, this ratio of personal to work-related presenting issues cannot be interpreted as either high or low but is consistent between years. However, we would like to see the proportion of work-related issues decline in successive years.
	3.Presentation (standard or crisis)	3. Presentation: 7 critical incidents (1.27%)	3. Presentation: 19 critical incidents (3.55%)	Again, there is no benchmark data for critical incidents. While a low figure, there has been an increase in the raw number in 2022 which may be related to the return to campus. From such a small baseline, we expect considerable fluctuation given criticality is influenced by work, personal and wider environmental factors.
	4.Service satisfaction data	4. Satisfaction: Data not available at time of publication	4. 78% Very positive (58/74), 12% Somewhat positive (9/74), 7% Very negative (5/74), and 3% Neural or Somewhat negative (2/74)	These data indicate that the vast majority of people are satisfied with the service provided by Benestar. A new EAP provider will be launched in 2023 and so satisfaction data may not be easily comparable in 2024.

Staff data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
People Connect	Categories: Harassment, discrimination, bullying, interpersonal conflict (number of complaints)	Harassment 2 , discrimination 1 , bullying 4 , and interpersonal conflict 20 .	Harassment 5 , discrimination 4 , bullying 13 , and interpersonal conflict 73 .	As above, these figures are an underestimate because they do not represent all incidents, just those captured in the HR Assist system. However, they do show many more cases in 2022 which may reflect a return to campus facilitating greater opportunities for interpersonal conflict and other negative outcomes. This may represent a return to baseline or even an improvement, which we will not know until comparable 2023 data is available.
PRIME incident report data	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanism of injury description: Bullying, Harassment, Exposure to mental stress factors (incidents logged) Bodily location description: Mental wellbeing/health Student or Staff (person injured) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanism: Bullying 5, Harassment 10, Exposure to mental stress factors 11 Bodily location: Mental wellbeing/health 13 Student or Staff: Student 5, Staff 21 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanism: Bullying 1, Harassment 5, Exposure to mental stress factors 8 Bodily location: Mental wellbeing/health 14 Student or Staff: Student 2, Staff 12 	The number of incidents in 2022 is down by 1/3 on 2021 figures (i.e., incidents cases). These figures probably underestimate the true numbers as they only include cases filed in the central reporting system (PRIME). With such low raw numbers, change over time will be heavily influenced by random variation and we will need to enhance data collection in order to interpret meaningful trends. It is hoped that promotion and prevention initiatives will help to improve wellbeing (MHC-SF) as well as reduce incidence of mental ill-health or psychosocial injury at RMIT in 2023 and beyond.

Student data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC-4)	<p>1. Management commitment: Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment.</p> <p>2. Management priority: Senior management considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity. (Management priority)</p> <p>3. Organisation communication: There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect me. (Organisational communication)</p> <p>4. Organisation participation: In my organisation, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organisation. (Organisational participation)</p>	<p>PSC-4 scale averages (range 1-5): Management commitment 3.19 Management priority 3.09 Organisation communication 3.11 Organisation participation 3.67</p>	<p>PSC-4 scale averages (range 1-5): Management commitment 3.23* Management priority 3.28* Organisation communication 3.20* Organisation participation 3.42*</p> <p>1. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 2. <i>Disagree</i> 3. <i>Neither agree or disagree</i> 4. <i>Agree</i> 5. <i>Strongly agree</i></p> <p><i>*significant change in 2022</i></p>	<p>PSC across RMIT remains at a "medium" level of risk for staff but has significantly improved since 2021 for all four items. The aim is to bring RMIT into the "low" risk category in future surveys and so we need to enhance our approach to PSC in 2023 and beyond.</p> <p><i>Note: Results are sampled from voluntary onshore participants in the Mental Wellbeing Survey, comprising less than 15-20% of students and staff. Convenient selection may have skewed results higher or lower and increased variability, depending on people's motivation for participating.</i></p>



Student data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
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>	MHC-SF scale averages (range 0-5): EWB 2.47 SWB 1.83 PWB 2.58	MHC-SF scale averages (range 0-5): EWB 2.75* SWB 2.12* PWB 2.75*	Results are from a self-selected sample. All domains of individual mental wellbeing remain moderate on average (< 3/5 which equates to between 1-3 times a week), all increased significantly from 2021 and the return to campus.
		<p><i>During the PAST MONTH, how often did you feel...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 0. Never 1. Once or twice 2. About once a week 3. About 2 or 3 times a week 4. Almost every day 5. Every day <p><i>*significant change in 2022</i></p>		
		MHC-SF categorical results: Flourishing 18% Moderate 52% Languishing 30%	MHC-SF categorical results: Flourishing 20% Moderate 62% Languishing 18%	Rates of Languishing were much higher than we would like to see (circa 1-6%) and Flourishing rates were much lower (circa 40-60%). Other research (Dollard & Bailey, 2021) suggests this may still be attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic but these figures remain concerning and RMIT needs to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of staff in 2023 and into the extended recovery period.
		<p>Flourishing: 'everyday' or 'almost everyday' for at least seven of the categories, with one from the hedonic EWB cluster</p> <p>Languishing: 'never' or 'once or twice' for least seven items, with one from the EWB cluster.</p> <p>Moderately mentally healthy: Neither flourishing nor languishing</p>		

Student data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
Work related wellbeing measures	<p>Emotional Exhaustion from Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)</p> <p>1. While studying, I feel mentally exhausted. 2. After a day of study, I find it hard to recover my energy.</p>	<p>BAT scale averages (range 1-5): Mentally exhausted 3.83 Hard to recover 3.62</p>	<p>BAT scale averages (range 1-5): Mentally exhausted 3.61* Hard to recover 3.41*</p>	<p>When risk factors outweigh protective factors, the outcome is exhaustion. Exhaustion remains elevated across RMIT onshore staff in 2022 but has reduced significantly since 2021. We would like to see BAT levels no higher than 2.7/5. (Shaufeli et al., 2020) and addressing psychosocial risk factors such as workload is one key way to drive down exhaustion.</p>
	<p>Engagement items from Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)</p> <p>1. For my study, I feel bursting with energy. 2. I am enthusiastic about my study.</p>	<p>UWES scale averages (range 1-7): Energy 3.91 Enthusiasm 4.61</p>	<p>UWES scale averages (range 1-7): Energy 4.01 Enthusiasm 4.73</p>	
		<p>1. <i>Never</i> 2. <i>Rarely</i> 3. <i>Sometimes</i> 4. <i>Often</i> 5. <i>Always</i> <i>*significant change in 2022</i></p>		
		<p>1. <i>Never</i> 2. <i>A few times a year or less (almost never)</i> 3. <i>Once a month or less (rarely)</i> 4. <i>A few times a month (sometimes)</i> 5. <i>Once a week (often)</i> 6. <i>A few times a week (very often)</i> 7. <i>Every day (always)</i></p>		<p>Work engagement is present when protective factors are equal to or exceed risk factors. Engagement levels should be around 4.8/7 but energy levels did not match enthusiasm and so averaging both items brings current engagement below this benchmark. (Carmona-Halty et al., 2019). Engagement has not increased significantly since 2021.</p>

Student data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
Student Experience Survey	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)	Scale averages (range 1-5): 1. 3.09 2. 3.66 3. 3.84 4. 3.35 5. 3.70 6. 4.22 7. 3.66	Scale averages (range 1-5): 1. 3.34* 2. 3.67 3. 3.82 4. 3.43* 5. 3.70 6. 4.19 7. 3.67	These items tell us how students feel about issues related to study that affect their mental health and wellbeing, and are important indicators of psychosocial risk and protection. Sense of belonging significantly improved from the lockdown periods of 2021 but still rated the lowest for student at RMIT in 2022. Students' feelings of control also improved significantly from 2021 but remain lower than most other items which above 3.6 on average, with the exception of tolerance for bullying and harassment which is >4.
		1. <i>Strongly disagree</i> 2. <i>Disagree</i> 3. <i>Neither agree/or disagree</i> 4. <i>Agree</i> 5. <i>Strongly agree</i> * signifies significant change since 2021		

Student data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
Counselling service	1. Utilisation data	2396 students attended (4% of student cohort), 8029 appointments attended (12% cancellation rate and 9% no-show), 28% initial appointments, 12.5 days between booking and appointment (12.4 days for initial appointment).	2110 students attended (3% of student cohort), 5714 appointments attended (15% cancellation rate and 11% no-show), 32% initial appointments, 15.6 days between booking and appointment (17.8 days for initial appointment)	Around 1 in 33 of RMIT's enrolled students accessed the counselling service in 2023, very similar to utilisation rates in recent years and at comparable universities. Wait-times for initial appointments has increased substantially, reversing a pre-pandemic trend of improvement.
	2. Presenting issue data	67% psychological (anxiety, depression, self-esteem) 54% academic (study stress, special consideration, academic skills, assessment anxiety) 40% psychosocial (relationships, isolation/loneliness, friendships) 35% mental health (stress, ADD/ADHD, panic attacks, ASD)	62% psychological (anxiety, depression, sleep issues) 51% academic (study stress, assessment anxiety, procrastination) 42% psychosocial (relationship issues, family conflict, friendships) 30% mental health (stress, ADD/ADHD, panic attacks, ASD)	These percentages do not add up to 100% because multiple codes are assigned to each person. Overall, very similar reasons for attendance compared to 2021. The reason codes were revised in 2022 to standardised usage among staff at the counselling service and so ensure that high-quality data is gathered regarding the reasons students attend the service.
	3. Presentation (standard or crisis)	Of the 1814 students surveyed, 328 (18%) reported extremely severe distress at intake	Of the 1501 students surveyed, 284 (19%) reported extremely severe distress at intake	This figure tells us that a substantial proportion of students continue to present to student counselling in an acute state of severe distress and/or crisis. We would like to see this proportion reduce over time as we shift the dials towards promotion, prevention and early intervention.

Student data points summary table

Data source	Key questions	2021 data	2022 data	Interpretation
Equitable Learning Services	No. of registrations for students with mental health conditions	508 students who have registered for an ELS plan reported a mental health condition	529 students who have registered for an ELS plan reported a mental health condition	An increase here in reporting could be seen as a good thing if it means that there is less stigma associated with registering a mental health condition. These figures will need to be interpreted in context of other data associated with incidence and prevalence of mental ill-health at RMIT.
Enrolment	Leave of absence	9980 students took a leave of absence from study (1723 due to COVID-19 and 2283 due to personal reasons)	4125 students took a leave of absence from study (194 due to COVID-19 and 1085 due to personal reasons)	Comparisons between 2021 and 2022 are very difficult due to the pandemic but these numbers will be tracked over time. Again, these figures will need to be interpreted in context of other data associated with incidence and prevalence of mental ill-health at RMIT.
Other student support services	Reason codes (headcount of students reporting particular issues when seeking support other than counselling) Behaviours of Concern – Bullying Behaviours of Concern - Discrimination/Vilification/Victimisation Health and Wellbeing - Mental health issues Health and Wellbeing - Suicidal ideation	Bullying 2 Discrimin./Vilific./Victimis. 2 Mental health issues 82 Suicidal ideation 15	Bullying 2 Discrimin./Vilific./Victimis. 1 Mental health issues 52 Suicidal ideation 16	As above, these numbers will be tracked over time. They tell us how many students are experiencing negative outcomes related to mental health and wellbeing, and some of the potentially RMIT-related causes related to interpersonal wellbeing. With the exception of mental health issue, which has reduced in prevalence, other reason codes are very consistent between 2021 and 2022.

