



MONASH HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2021-2025

Rebounding through resilience

Monash is recognised as a global healthy workplace. Supporting the health and wellbeing of our community during COVID-19 is a top priority.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic suddenly and significantly impacted every element of the tertiary sector. As we navigate the pandemic across the next few years, your health and wellbeing is important. We have developed a new *Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025* that outlines our commitment, vision and initiatives to safeguard and promote your wellbeing. We identify six core pillars - *mind* (mental health), *body* (physical health), *work* (occupational health), *culture* (cultural determinants of health), *place* (environmental health) and *nutrition* (nutritional health) to create the foundation for innovative digital technologies and resources for the Monash community.

These resources will promote inclusive, empowering campaigns that seek to change the world for good. The *Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025* ensures Monash University will continue to be at the global forefront of workplace health and wellbeing through the COVID-19 recovery and beyond.

Vision and mission

Our vision is to ensure that all Monash University staff, wherever they are based, have access to tailored, evidence-driven resources (both digital and on-campus) to promote and sustain their health and wellbeing and to feel part of a thriving, inclusive workplace and culture.

Our mission is to support staff through a holistic, iterative, university-wide approach that emphasises excellence, respect, diversity and connection in line with the University's values.

Goals

Excellence

We will adopt a rigorous, evidence-driven, measurement-based approach to developing, evaluating and sustaining all current and proposed health and wellbeing initiatives.

Awareness

We will collaboratively develop more dynamic, inclusive information ecosystems in which to promote offerings, share learnings and invite staff voices on what works; awareness and education will be two-way between the Monash staff community and Monash Health and Wellbeing Strategic Committee.

Empowerment

We will develop accessible and inclusive initiatives that promote staff autonomy and dignity; staff must be able to access help or strengthen wellbeing in their own time and on their own terms.

Innovation

We will ambitiously push the boundaries on what is possible for university workplace health and wellbeing through stronger cross-Monash partnerships and the creative use of novel digital technologies.

Guiding principles

1. Embed inclusivity into all health and wellbeing initiatives
2. Connect with all Monash staff across all campuses and work locations and move from 'one-size-fits-all' models to personalised, inclusive models of health and wellbeing
3. Leverage Monash's vast capabilities through a living network of collaborations and partnerships within and across campuses
4. Rapidly translate individual and community feedback into action for change
5. Identify and pursue the key enablers that will facilitate long-term, systemic change

Our new *Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025* encompasses six fundamental pillars that promote and sustain health and wellbeing at Monash: **‘Mind’** (mental health), **‘Body’** (physical health), **‘Work’** (occupational health), **‘Culture’** (cultural determinants of health), **‘Place’** (environmental health) and **‘Nutrition’** (nutritional health)¹.

Each pillar’s core 2021 initiatives are outlined. Each strives to be excellent, visible, empowering and innovative, while guided by our key principles.

Our principles in action: Mind

At its core, good mental wellbeing is a healthy way of thinking, feeling and creating meaningful relationships. It’s a vital foundation that supports prosperous and socially cohesive communities. As a result of the pandemic, never before has there been a time to protect and sustain mental health in our community and workplaces.

Empower staff to maintain and protect their cognitive and mental health through new, innovative digital tools and resources.

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Revitalise our mental health services to create greater uptake and peer promotion.

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Expand awareness of cognitive and mental health through innovative, evidence-based training.

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- Monash staff will have access to a co-designed suite of digital technologies that will allow them to better understand, monitor and

- The tele-mental health services of Monash Counselling will be more widely promoted.

- Mental health literacy training will be expanded and made freely available for all staff.

¹ These broad pillars have a degree of universality but can also have different meanings in different cultures. Staff from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds may understand them differently, as might staff located at campuses in Malaysia, Indonesia, China, India or Italy. Wherever our staff are based, we wholeheartedly support our staff adapting the pillars for use in ways that best suits their local environment and culture.

manage their own mental health and wellbeing.

- A suite of digital cognitive health tools will also be developed to promote focus, alertness and decision-making at work.
 - Staff will have access to an online resource portal and linked smartphone application that will be regularly customised to respond to the unique and changing needs staff may have.
- The Monash Employee Assistance Program will be revitalised to provide a greater awareness of mental health services available for staff.
 - Annual staff surveys, focus groups and anonymous system reports will generate data on uptake of these newly revitalised services.
- Peer-to-peer networks to support and discuss cognitive and mental health will be expanded across all campuses.
 - Cognitive and mental health resources will be embedded into staff induction and professional development programs (e.g., mindfulness and resilience).
 - Information will be promoted through our workplaces, including all teaching venues and lecture theatres, to maximise awareness of mental health resources at Monash.

Our principles in action: Body

Exercise is a critical component of good health and wellbeing. Even small amounts of regular exercise can improve our mood, concentration and self-esteem. Monash University is committed to providing all staff with opportunities to be active.

Increase staff awareness and visibility of wellbeing and fitness programs through various strategies

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- Review the recruitment, coordination and structure of staff fitness advocates from across all faculties, institutes and departments to drive participation in the Staff Wellbeing Activity Program (SWAP).
- Improve awareness of the importance of physical exercise to good mental health and wellbeing.
- Provide clear, consistent guidance across Monash on physical health activities are supported during work hours.
- Provide information to new staff during induction on wellbeing and fitness initiatives across University locations.

Enhance participation in a range of different staff-focussed fitness and social activities

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- Enhance the social sport program to include a wider range of activities such as darts, pool, bowls and eSports.
- Extend the Monash Walk and Fun Run event to more regular, engaging challenges on campus.
- Provide faculties, divisions and institutions with the opportunity to have tailored programs to increase uptake and ongoing participation amongst staff.

Refine and evolve suite of digital offerings to give staff freedom and flexibility to exercise

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- Continue to promote Active Bodies Online – Monash Sport’s online recorded and live offerings available to all staff – to complement the in-person SWAP.
- Increase flexibility in SWAP programs by offering options to include both face-to-face and digital classes.
- Continually evaluate digital offerings to better understand the preferences of staff (e.g., convenience, comfort, privacy).

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- Collaborate with university-wide events (e.g., 10,000 steps challenge) to provide opportunities to partner with Monash Sport.
 - Continue to encourage staff to be active through incentives (e.g., faculty subsidies for SWAP and gym membership); options to salary sacrifice.

Our principles in action: Work

The University is committed to the health and wellbeing of its staff and this is underpinned by progressive policies that prioritise the health, safety and unique needs of staff. Whether a commitment to gender equality, ensuring safe and healthy workplaces, supporting new parents and LGBTIQ staff or promoting vaccination and health assessment programs, strong sets of workplace policies provide reassurance and respect for the staff community. Through ongoing input and feedback, staff play a critical role in helping shape the development of support measures that support their wellbeing in the workplace.

Review and expand policies and procedures related to 'work health'

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- Triennially, or as the need arises, review policies and procedures that act as work determinants of health and health determinants of work:
 - OHS for safe work practices (e.g., ergonomics and health surveillance), workplace adjustment procedures, flexible work, types of parental leave, transition training, and volunteering.
 - Immunisation programs, health checks, First Aid for Workplaces programs, and Staff Wellbeing and Activity Program.

Increase education and awareness of work health information and support

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- Use multi-pronged, university-wide communication as well as targeted communication to specific cohorts to raise work health awareness.
- Introduce goals in supervisors' myPlan to distribute work health information and support work flexibility.
- Track the extent to which evolving COVID-19-related practices and guidelines are utilised by staff.
- Learn from staff accessing COVID-19 support measures to inform future education, awareness, induction and compliance efforts related to work health.

Hear staff voices on what 'work health' means to them

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- Develop novel, creative and engaging ways of regularly 'checking-in' with staff across different demographic profiles (e.g., carers, staff with disability, new arrivals, transgender staff) to understand how work and health intersect for them.
- Include in the ongoing Thrive surveys measures of work health and wellbeing to capture broad, population-level insights.
- Enabling staff to participate in in-depth staff forums, workshops and focus groups that examine refinement or expansion of particular policies, procedures and support measures.

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- Proactively enact and advance practices, policies and procedures through structural and social support to promote micro, meso and macro level recovery and rejuvenation (e.g., a semi-annual, targeted health-check program on campus focussing on common health risks, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes).

- Conduct in-depth interviews with staff to better understand which aspects of their position yields health benefits and which aspects negatively affect health.
- Collect and synthesise all findings to ground operational, leadership and management policy and practice development and implementation.

Our principles in action: Culture

Australia has come a long way in confronting mental and physical health issues in the last decade. This has resulted in a cultural shift in the way in which workplaces address mental health and wellbeing and staff are now increasingly open about discussing the insidious impacts of stigma. COVID-19 arguably accelerated these efforts, with all of us feeling its impact in one way or another. That said, there are always opportunities to further destigmatise mental and physical health issues in the workplace and work towards building a truly inclusive and empathic organisational culture at Monash.

Expand current leadership training to develop leaders versed in cultural health across all levels

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- Expand current approaches to leadership training to include:
 - Greater emphasis on the importance of everyday attitudes and behaviours, communication habits (e.g., email timing and tone), inclusivity and openly sharing workplace and career experiences.
 - Advice and support to allow manager to achieve cultural goals (e.g., annual wellbeing goals for staff in myPlan, reaching women in leadership targets, sustainably supporting

Empower staff to raise health and wellbeing issues and advocate for sustained, practical cultural change

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- Promote a culture of agency and respect that sees staff comfortable in advocating for cultural factors affecting everyday wellbeing:
 - Destigmatisation of reporting harassment, discrimination and bullying.
 - Disclosure of and support for disability (broadly defined)
 - Expectations around duration and flexibility of accessing parental, partners and carers leave.
 - Inclusive meeting scheduling.

Provide increased opportunities for peer-to-peer connection on campus and online

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- Sponsored opportunities and events for staff to mingle and discuss common cases (e.g., Elimination of Gender-Based Violence breakfast).
- Explore incorporating various social inclusion activities into Faculty, Division and Schools KPIs.
- Support for staff to participate in mentoring and networking opportunities with measures of connection.
- Link new staff to Workplace interest groups that also host in-person events and connect virtual contacts.

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- disadvantaged students, raising volunteering participation rates, employing more staff from ATSI backgrounds).
 - Ensure leadership training is accessible and allows all staff the opportunity to extend themselves and be part of shaping Monash's organisational culture.
 - Create a leadership training key performance indicator for all faculties and divisions that is internally reported; 'what gets measured gets done.'
 - Actively encourage promotion of policies, procedures, practices, services and resources designed to safeguard staff wellbeing (e.g., through Workplace posts).
 - Provide clear, consistent guidance across Monash on what social connection and wellbeing activities are supported during work hours.
 - Remove barriers to improve equality of access to health and wellbeing resources across Faculties, Divisions and Schools.
 - Conduct surveys, focus groups and interviews with staff to assess the value of all initiatives in terms of cultural cohesion and feeling culturally connected to the community.

Our principles in action: Place

The environment in which we work affects our health, wellbeing and performance. From more subtle factors such as our light exposure in the office to more salient factors such the amount of green space on campus, our office and campus environments all contribute to our everyday experience of our workplace. As science brings more of these factors to light, Monash is responding through placing greater emphasis on the importance of 'place', as Indigenous Australians have done for thousands of years.

Ensuring healthy and safe indoor environments that maximise wellbeing

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- In light of COVID-19, continue to monitor and improve air changes in all buildings and ensure natural ventilation in new builds.
- Lend more importance to the optimisation of daylight, views and high building envelopes in new buildings and major refurbishments.
- Ensure spaces are multi-use and flexible for work and wellbeing where possible.
- Where possible, track adherence to COVID-19 safety plans (e.g., use of wipe stations).
- Building standards: rapidly remove features of building (e.g., cladding)

Enhancing the campus environment

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- Promote the benefits of working outdoors:
 - Increase staff awareness of campus outdoor spaces and their attributes, i.e. power availability, seating typology (incl. DDA), drinking fountains etc.
 - Promote walking meeting venues i.e. Jock Marshall Reserve Nature Walk, the Public Art Trail and Indigenous Garden.
- Strengthen our connection to Place and celebrate our Indigenous heritage, culture and knowledge.

Promoting active movement

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- Promote greater awareness of bike arrival stations and external bicycle network connections.
- Infrastructure development: incentivise active movement through building new 'active loops' (i.e., designated paths) that indicate to users km/steps achieved.
- Promote prominent campus walking tracks (e.g., the Tan Track at Clayton) to encourage increased use.

that no longer conform to building codes.

- Improve WIFI capability in select outdoor environments.
- Complete a Tree Succession Planting Framework for each Australian campus.
- Harness opportunities to increase outdoor weather-protected seating areas for staff and students.

Our principles in action: Nutrition

Eating well is a key part of a healthy lifestyle. It dovetails with good mental health - especially mood - by providing the necessary fuel to juggle our daily lives. At Monash, we are committed to providing easy access to nutritious and healthy foods on all campuses and fostering a diverse and vibrant food environment.

Foster a healthy food environment across campus through greater visibility and awareness

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- Expand communications capabilities and reach more staff with information about Nutrition's ongoing and novel initiatives (e.g., Smart Eating week, Try for 5).
- Promote Monash retailers who demonstrate best practice (through awards and recognition).
- Refresh food labelling practices at Monash retailers to provide transparency and increase the visibility of healthy options at point of purchase.
- Establish and promote a widespread healthy lunch specials program with loyalty rewards.
- Equip Wellbeing Champions at Monash with further evidence-

Lead Monash retail innovation and champion retailers proactively prioritising health and wellbeing

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- Implement a new digital point-of-sale system to empower Monash retailers and provide:
 - Time-sensitive feedback on wellbeing and sustainability metrics.
 - Greater financial oversight and audit efficiency.
 - Empowering retailers to be healthy food champions by providing them data-driven insights garnered through the new point-of-sale system.
- Advocate for the establishment of a new retail liaison role to actively engage and support Monash

Collaborate widely across the University to determine the impact of new initiatives

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- Establish new research collaborations within Monash, explore funding opportunities and conduct new trials to continue to build the evidence base for nutritional health.
- Place Monash at the cutting-edge of research and translation in nutrition and dietetics by partnering with our world-class, cross-disciplinary Monash researchers.
- Support Monash-owned retailers to become active participants in novel nutrition research initiatives.
- Promote research findings globally through academic-retail-university partnerships.

based nutrition training to highlight its importance to various facets of health (e.g., mental and physical health).

- Develop regular online seminars (e.g., 'food and mood' and 'food and sustainability').

retailers with food hygiene, nutrition and promotions.

- Advocate for ongoing benefits (e.g., rental discounts and subsidies) for retailers who actively collaborate with Nutrition and demonstrate genuine commitment to campus health and wellbeing through compliance with Monash healthy food procedures.

Support

If this information has raised issues for you, please contact:

[Monash Counselling Services](#) (03 9905 3020) and [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP) (1300 360 364, available 24/7). They are on hand to provide help to all Monash staff.

You can further access various online psychological wellbeing resources and training programs through [Monash Health and Wellbeing](#), [MyDevelopment](#) and [Workplace](#).

You can also access information on the '[Be Well at Monash](#)' initiative online - a joint effort of Monash Health and Wellbeing, Monash Sport, Monash Counselling and Monash HR.

If you are having difficulties with your sleep, help is available at:

[Healthy Sleep Clinic](#) (part of Monash's [Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health](#))
1/270 Ferntree Gully Road
Notting Hill VIC 3168
Telephone: 9905 1428
Email: Healthy.Sleep@monash.edu

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