



MONASH
University

MONASH
RURAL
HEALTH

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

2026-2030





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Monash University recognises that its Australian campuses are located on the unceded lands of the people of the Kulin Nations, and pays its respects to their Elders, past and present.



Professor Shane Bullock
Head of School
Monash Rural Health

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Adapted with permission from: A Framework for Promoting Student Mental Wellbeing in Universities created through an Australian government Office for Learning and Teaching grant. The Project Team comprised Baik, C., Larcombe, W., Brooker, A., Wyn, J., Allen, L., Brett, M., Field, R., and James, R.

Prioritising staff and student mental health

Students in the health professions frequently provide feedback that there is a high degree of satisfaction with the effectiveness of their rural placement learning.

However, they indicate there are challenges related to isolation, access to psychosocial and wellbeing supports, as well as financial stresses, associated with their rural experiences. These challenges can impact student mental health and wellbeing.

A recent student-led study highlighted this experience for medical students (Elliot, J., Luk, M., Varshney, K., Williams, K. and Wright, J., 2023, Assessing medical student satisfaction with rural placement: The Australian rural clinical school support survey, *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, DOI: 10.1111/ajr.13028)

Monash Rural Health's Strategic Plan prioritises staff and student mental health. The ***Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026-2030*** is designed to enhance the supportive academic, psychosocial and physical environments for students and staff across our regional and rural footprint.

This document sets a framework for supporting students' mental health and wellbeing during their rural experiences.



Priority areas

The four major actions underlying this strategy to promote student health are:



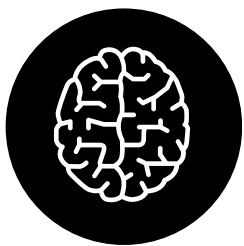
Fostering engaging curricula and learning experiences

Student mental health and wellbeing are supported when curricula and learning approaches afford choice and flexibility, create social connections, build competence and foster motivation.



Cultivating supportive social, physical and digital environments

The social, physical, and virtual settings in which students live and engage academically significantly influence their wellbeing, either positively or negatively.



Strengthening awareness and actions, developing students' mental health knowledge and self-regulatory skills

Student mental health and wellbeing are supported when individuals have the opportunities to develop mental health knowledge and skills within their course of studies.



Ensuring access to effective services

Students who may be experiencing health difficulties need access to appropriate services and reasonable academic adjustments. We need to ensure that these services are in place and that any barriers to accessing these services are addressed.



Implementation Plan

With the priority areas in student mental health and wellbeing clearly articulated, the School will work with staff across our sites, Faculty and University student services, the relevant student clubs - WILDFIRE, Monash University Medical Students' Society (MUMUS) and Monash Graduate Association - to implement this strategy.

We will monitor and report on our actions annually and respond to change as required.

OUR GOALS	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE
1. The academic program			
i) Rural placement imperatives are considered in the implementation of course curriculum and program delivery.	Rural representation at all levels of course governance.	An increased number of Staff and student representatives in course placement, curriculum, assessment and evaluation committees/working groups.	• Head of School • Directors and Managers • Director, Rural Nursing and Allied Health Partnerships
ii) Rural sites have some flexibility in program delivery.	The implementation of continuing in-semester competency assessment can be modified (where appropriate) to suit resourcing at rural sites. Use best practice teaching and learning strategies promoted by the University that are inclusive and promote student wellbeing. Provide opportunities, facilitated by a mental health professional, for students that promote the management of stress, build resilience and develop mindfulness strategies.	Students provide feedback via student clubs, evaluation surveys, or communicated directly to key site staff, indicating that they feel well supported with regard to wellbeing during their rural experiences and placements.	• School Director of Education • Directors • Year level Coordinators • Director, Rural Nursing and Allied Health Partnerships • HDR Coordinator
iii) Clear and consistent processes across the School regarding the measurement of student engagement and participation.	Consistent engagement and participation requirements at all rural sites. Student involvement and feedback in communicating these processes. Clear business practices for student sick leave from class or the course.	The School conducts a regular audit to report consistency in measurement of engagement and participation across rural sites.	• Head of School • Directors • WILDFIRE and MUMUS • HDR Coordinator • School Executive Committee

OUR GOALS	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE
2. The School environment			
i) Physical spaces for private study, social interaction and relaxation suitable for students.	Regular audit and review of usage of physical and surrounding natural space.	Student feedback on access to physical spaces for a variety of uses. An increase in use of suitable spaces.	• Directors and Managers • School Manager • Ops Manager
ii) Range of student activities are inclusive and engender a sense of belonging.	Student involvement in the design and implementation of these activities. Support provided for student-led activities. Student engagement in cultural education, for example, includes opportunities for students to visit Country with local Indigenous Elders and peers, listen to traditional stories, and take part in cultural dances.	In program evaluation, students express a sense of belonging to the School site.	• Directors and Managers • Director, Rural Nursing and Allied Health Partnerships • Aboriginal Communities Engagement Lead • WILDFIRE
iii) The School environment promotes respectful communication, inclusion and diversity.	Student orientations include introduction to relevant procedures and policies. University policies and procedures on inclusion, diversity, and appropriate use of IT and social media are readily accessible both in print and online. Staff resourced to respond to student classroom behaviours that are disruptive.	Staff and student knowledge of where to find the relevant policies and procedures.	• Directors and Managers • School Director of Education • HDR Coordinator
iv) Sites promote healthy food options, access to local sporting and recreation facilities, and participation in extracurricular activities.	Organise events or campaigns that raise awareness about healthy food options. Discounts sought for students to access local sporting and recreational facilities.	Percentage increase in the availability and consumption of healthy food options on site. Student participation in extracurricular activities. Student use of local sporting and recreational facilities.	• Directors and Managers • Wellbeing Champions • Student Wellbeing Liaison Officers

OUR GOALS	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE
3. Student knowledge and awareness			
i) Awareness of policies addressing discrimination, bullying, harassment, consent as well as the process to report an incident or concern.	Collect and organise online eHealth tools and apps, along with print materials, that promote mental health literacy. Orientate students to university anti-discriminatory, bullying, harassment and consent policies and introduce them to the processes involved in making a complaint. Regularly review currency and appropriateness of information.	As a part of student site orientations, all students are introduced to relevant policies, and provided with information of mental health tools and resources.	• Ops Manager • School Manager • Directors and Managers • Wellbeing Champions • Student Wellbeing Liaison Officers • School Mental Health Academic • HDR Coordinator
ii) Raise awareness of mental health, wellbeing and stigma.	Involve students in the development, implementation and evaluation of mental health and wellbeing activities at sites across the calendar year. Provide opportunities for students to complete mental health first aid training. Promote workshops and training programs provided by the University that raise student awareness of mental health and wellbeing. Staff are aware of support services that can be accessed to assist students with mental health conditions.	Increased student registrations in mental health first aid training. Increased number of mental health and wellbeing activities at sites. Student wellbeing support staff are provided with regular updates on University mental health services and activities.	• Ops Manager • School Manager • Directors and Managers • School Mental Health Academic • Wellbeing Champions • Student Wellbeing Liaison Officers • Mental Health First Aid Ambassadors • WILDFIRE and MUMUS • HDR Coordinator

OUR GOALS	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE
4. Access to services			
i) Increased awareness of student services (health and non-health related) in mental health and wellbeing.	Regularly update links to internal Monash student support services. Compile a list of current local community health and non-health services for students.	Reliable and up-to-date directory of local and Monash student support services.	• Ops Manager • Directors and Managers • Wellbeing Champions • Mental Health First Aid Ambassadors • Student Wellbeing Liaison Officers • WILDFIRE
ii) Facilitate access to services and support.	Peer support through local student leaders and student clubs. Enhance visibility of these resources at sites. Staff are aware of and trained in ProFESS processes that support students with mental health conditions.	Printed material referring to these services widely available and visible at our sites. All staff involved in teaching receive ProFESS induction.	• Directors and Managers • Ops Manager • Wellbeing Champions • Student Wellbeing Liaison Officers
iii) Review and evaluate service accessibility and quality.	Where possible, liaise with local community services to facilitate access for students studying at our sites. Regularly review lists of local community services and their contact details. Involve students in evaluation of and feedback on University support services.	The School conducts a regular audit to report consistency in measurement of engagement and participation across rural sites.	• Directors and Managers • WILDFIRE and MUMUS • Ops Manager • Wellbeing Champions • HDR Coordinator

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