MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2025 - 2028

APRIL 2025

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Message from Raymond

At Metro Trains, we are committed to creating a workplace where every employee feels supported, valued, and empowered to thrive. Mental health and wellbeing are at the heart of a safe, inclusive, and high-performing workplace, and we recognise that fostering a mentally healthy environment is essential for both our people and our passengers.

That's why we are proud to introduce our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy - a proactive and comprehensive approach designed to support our employees' mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. This strategy reinforces our commitment to providing the right resources, training, and culture to ensure that mental health and psychological safety is prioritised just as much as physical safety.

We know that real change comes from collective effort. That's why we encourage every Metro Trains employee to take part in this journey - whether through engaging in wellbeing initiatives, looking out for colleagues, or seeking support when needed.

Together, we can build a workplace where mental health and wellbeing are truly embedded in our culture. I encourage you to take the time to explore the initiatives available and to support each other as we move forward.

At Metro Trains, our people are our greatest asset, and your wellbeing is our priority. Let's work together to create a healthier, happier, and safer workplace.

Purpose

This Strategy provides a clear, evidence-informed roadmap to embed a mentally healthy workplace culture that supports our ability to safely and dependably move Melbourne. It focuses on reducing psychosocial hazards, improving wellbeing outcomes, and building a culture where every person feels safe, supported, and able to thrive - reflecting our values of Making a Difference, Dependable, One Team, Caring, and Zero Harm.

Introduction

With the adult population spending about a third of their life at work, workplaces and employers play a fundamental role in protecting, supporting, and improving the mental health of their people.

In recent years, there have been significant advances in understanding mental health at work. Increasing research, global development in support materials and strengthening of legislation by industry regulators have increased expectations on individuals and employers.

Positive, mentally healthy workplaces can provide people with fulfillment, purpose, and a connection to the community. The importance of mentally healthy workplaces was reinforced by the findings of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

Metro operates, build, and maintains Melbourne's rail network. The operating environment is defined by:

- Interface with passengers and members of the Victorian community.
- Reconciling competing demands across the rail network with high expectations of punctuality and reliability.
- Challenges associated with reactive responses to network priorities and maintaining safe, reliable, and efficient train services.
- Complying with legislative and contractual requirements.
- Completing and commissioning major infrastructure projects and interfacing with multiple project and community stakeholders.

Metro operates 269 trains across 16 lines, 222 stations and 998km of track, seven days a week, 365 days a year. We have just under 7000 employees across diverse locations from frontline train drivers and signallers to station staff and corporate office workers.

The nature of Metro's operating environment exposes our people - particularly those in public-facing roles - to deeply distressing incidents. Staff are frequently the first responders to critical incidents, including self-harm involving members of the public, which have a profound psychological impact. In addition, anti-social and aggressive behaviour from passengers presents an ongoing challenge to maintaining emotional safety at work. These experiences contribute significantly to cumulative stress, vicarious trauma, and burnout. As such, our strategy must acknowledge, prioritise, and proactively mitigate the specific psychosocial hazards linked to these high-impact events.

This mental health strategy represents a commitment by Metro to its employees, contractors, and members of the Victorian community, recognising the opportunity to promote positive mental health outcomes through the reach and influence of its operating environment. In addition, proposed regulatory changes, including Victoria's psychosocial hazard regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, heighten employer responsibilities to protect psychological safety. This strategy responds to these legal obligations and integrates international best practice, positioning Metro as a leader in mentally healthy workplace design.

The Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

This strategy outlines the key principles to inform the Metro integrated people-centred approach to mental health and wellbeing, underpinned by a proactive commitment to psychological safety.

Contemporary thinking around Mental Health advocates building a strategy across 3 pillars:

- Protection/Prevent Harm: Identify and manage psychosocial hazards to mental health
- Promotion: Recognize, promote, and enhance the positive aspects of work that contribute to good mental health
- Support: Build capability to identify and respond to people experiencing mental ill-health or distress

This model is generally referred to as the Integrated Approach to Workplace Mental Health (LaMontagne, et al., 2014) and is aligned with this research, many organizations are becoming more mature and strategic in their approach by shifting their focus from reacting to mental ill-health, to promoting an integrated approach by advocating preventative action.

A fourth pillar *continuous improvement* has been added to the Strategy to reflect Metro's commitment to evidence-based practice.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework

An integrated person-centered approach to mental health understand that everyone is unique yet, Metro can cover the spectrum of programs at work that cover:

- Prevention: identify and manage psychosocial hazards and build capability.
  - Organisational Level: Building programs which incorporates Positive Duty, Psychosocial hazard management and reporting.
  - Leadership level: Manager Essentials programs
  - Individual level: Onboarding ready for work, capability development plans
- Promote and build protective factors that enhance individual and workforce wellbeing.
- Support for recovery to ensure early intervention.
- Continuous Improvement: Monitor and evaluate. Evidence base data to monitor impacts of our initiatives

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One Team. One Metro

It is intended that the principles, enablers, and actions contained within this document will assist Metro in operationalising practice 'on the ground' that will deliver the pillars above.

The National Context

Mental health is important to every person living in Australia. We all benefit from experiencing high levels of mental health and any one of us can experience periods of mental ill health.

Almost half of all Australians will experience mental ill health in their lifetime and the impacts can be profound. Mental health conditions are the second largest contributor to years lived in ill health. Mental illness is a leading cause of disability and of chronic disease in Australia. The prevalence of mental disorders in the 16-24 years cohort has doubled since 2007, from 26% in 2007 to 39% in 2021. Suicide is the leading cause of death in young people. Men are at the greatest risk of suicide however are the least likely to seek help.

The direct cost to the Australian economy from experiences of mental ill health was between $43-70 billion in 2018-2019.

Unlike cardiovascular health, infectious diseases and skin cancer, our communities know less about the causes of mental health challenges and how to prevent them. Mental health challenges have been termed the chronic disease of the young because 75% of mental health conditions will have their onset before the age of 25 and most adult mental conditions begin during the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

The benefits of comprehensively addressing mental health wellbeing in workplaces		**The true cost of not adequately addressing mental health**	
Engagement	Eight times higher engagement in organisations that prioritise wellbeing (World Economic Forum)	Workcover and compensation	Workcover: 18% increase in claims related to work demands over the last three years (Comcare) The median compensation paid for mental health claims was $55,270 compared to $13,883 for physical injuries and diseases (Safe Work Australia)
Retention	Almost half of Australian employees surveyed have left a workplace because of a poor mental health environment (Beyond Blue)	Productivity	The Productivity Commission estimates that mental health costs the Australian economy between 10 to 18 billion in lost productivity and reduced participation.
Absenteeism	Psychologically healthy workers have 6 times less sickness absence (Safe Work Australia)	Mental Injury	The median time last for mental health conditions was 5x compared to physical injuries and diseases (30.7 versus 6.2 working weeks) (Safe Work Australia)
Psychological Safety	Creates a culture where people feel safe to speak up, share ideas, raise concerns, and ask for help without fear of judgment or reprisal. This drives trust, collaboration, innovation, and early intervention for mental health (Safe Work Australia)	Legal and Regulatory	Non-compliance with workplace mental health regulations can lead to legal consequences and financial penalties (Safe Work Australia)

Guiding Principles

The strategy is underpinned by 4 guiding principles that support workplace mental health and wellbeing as follows:

Systems approach

- A systems approach is based on the idea that mental health is not exclusively dependent on individual level factors (such as a person's ability to handle adversity and feel positive emotions) but that it is also affected by a range of influences in the environments that surround everyone. These influences interact with each other both on their own and collectively, to impact mental health and wellbeing outcomes.
- A systems approach recognises that our wellbeing is linked to the people, the culture, and the social and working environment around us. To support the wellbeing of our people, we must therefore seek to change the balance of risk and protective factors at all levels of the ecosystem.

Evidence Based

- To test the effectiveness of this strategy a set of metrics and controls will be used to measure the impact this strategy is having at Metro.
- A metrics dashboard will be used for reporting on a quarterly basis which links to our governance structure for Mental Health & Wellbeing at Metro.

Person centred and trauma informed approach

- A person-centred approach recognises that everyone is a unique individual, and that we need to respond to the preferences and needs of individuals differently when they experience difficulties.
- Trauma informed practice is a strengths-based framework which is founded on five core principles – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment as well as respect for diversity.
- Trauma informed systems understand the dynamics of traumatic stress, survivors in the context of their lives and the role of coping strategies.

Shared responsibility

- Achieving positive mental health and wellbeing for our workforce is dependent on everyone working as one team. We all have a part to play in maintaining our own mental health and wellbeing and creating a positive working environment for others. We all have a responsibility to support others to seek help early when mental health challenges arise.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy on a Page

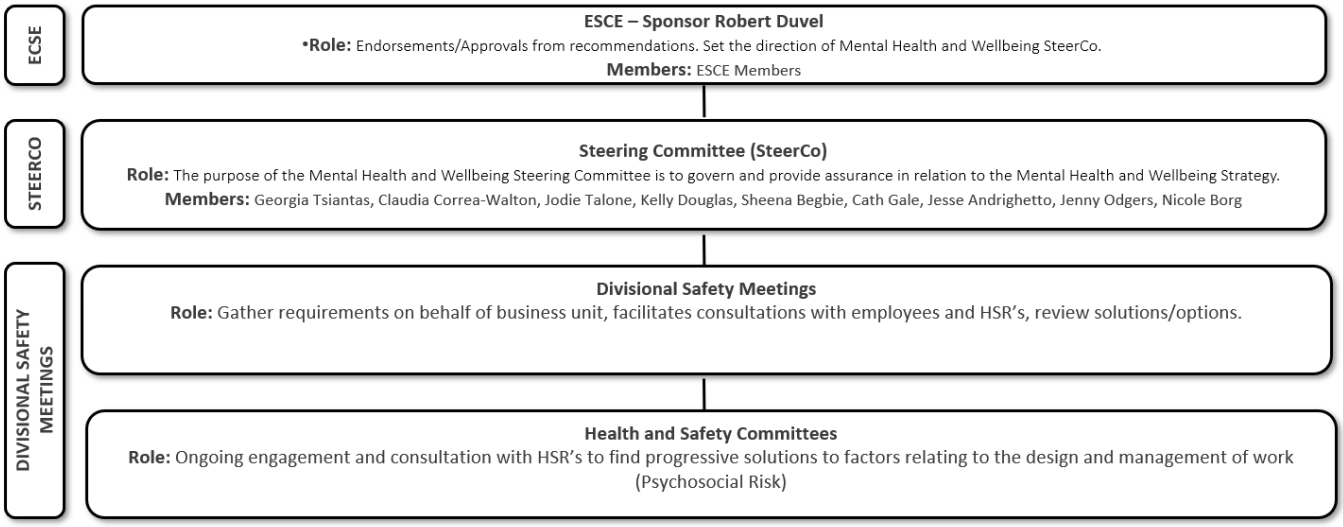
PILLARS

Prevent Harm	Promote the Positive	Support for Recovery	Continuously Improve
Exposure recognition and reduction	Build protective factors	Early intervention and recovery support	Monitor and evaluate
Identify and manage existing and emerging psychosocial hazards. Build capability across the business to empower all employees to play their part in managing risk.	Promote and enhance the positive aspects of work to embed individual and workforce wellbeing.	Support our people experiencing distress or mental ill health as early as possible and support their recovery journey. Effectively manage the aftermath of a critical incident to avert further harm.	Collect data to monitor the impacts of our initiatives to support continuous improvement. Foster a culture of innovation, research and evaluation.

ENABLERS

VALUES | GOVERNANCE | PARTNERSHIPS | EVIDENCE AND DATA

Appendix 1 – Mental Health and Wellbeing Governance



Appendix 2 - Mental Health and Wellbeing Roadmap FY 25-28

FY25/26	FY26/27	FY27/28
Psychosocial Risk Management Framework (Development)	Occupational Health and Safety (Psychological Health) Regulations	Psychosocial Risk Management Framework (Embed)
Trauma Management Program (Development/Implementation)	Evidence-based reporting dashboard development	Peer Support Program (Embed)
Peer Support Program (Development)	Psychosocial Risk Management Framework (Implement)	Mental Health Essentials for Leaders and Employees (Embed)
High-risk roles	Trauma Management Program (Embed)	Customer Aggression (Embed)
Mental Health Essentials for Leaders and Employees (Development)	Peer Support Program (Implementation)	
Respect at Work (Positive Duty) Framework	Mental Health Essentials for Leaders and Employees (Implementation)	
Wellbeing Champions (Remit)	Internal complex behaviour	
Contact Officers (Remit, Recruitment)	Customer Aggression (Development and Implementation)	
Wellbeing Intranet Page	Recruitment Processes	
Annual Wellbeing Calendar	Leader Psychological Safety and Wellbeing toolkit	
Metrics and reporting framework	Contact Officers (Recruitment, Training, Support)	
	Standards, Policies and Procedures	
	Community of Practice for Peer Supporters, Contact Officers, & Wellbeing Advocates	

Appendix 3 - Mental Health and Wellbeing Business Plan FY 25-28

Strategic Objectives	Key Initiatives and Focus Areas	Priority	Actions	By	RAG
Exposure Recognition and Reduction	Develop and implement an enterprise-wide Psychosocial Risk Management Framework	H	Collaborate with the Safety team to develop framework for consultation with the business. Framework endorsed by ELT and rolled out across business. Integrated into Safety Management System	Apr-25	
Exposure Recognition and Reduction	Develop and implement an enterprise-wide Trauma Management Framework	H	Stand up working group of stakeholders. Review of existing Drivers' trauma program with consideration for group level education	Jun-25	
Exposure Recognition and Reduction	Identify and risk assess high-risk roles across Metro	M	Identify high risk roles in conjunction with People Experience and Safety leaders. Develop plan to determine order of role risk assessment. Risk assessment plan development	Sep-25	
Exposure Recognition and Reduction	Strengthen recruitment processes to ensure best fit against inherent role risk	M	Following identification and assessment of high risk roles, update PDs and medical assessment process	Nov-25	
Exposure Recognition and Reduction	Develop and implement Mental Health Essentials for Leaders and Employees	M	Collaborate with L&D to develop a proposal for training aimed at individual and leadership levels	FY 2026	
Exposure Recognition and Reduction	Implement a consistent framework & education for dealing with complex behaviour	M	Develop internal complex cases training. Review/develop/extend customer aggression training program	FY 2026	
Exposure Recognition and Reduction	Support the build and implementation of the Respect at Work (Positive Duty) Framework	M	Collaborate with Workplace Relations, Safety and People Delivery to complete risk assessment process, to identify current controls and opportunities	Jun-25	
Exposure Recognition and Reduction	Develop and implement post-incident support and RTW reintegration pathway	H	Review existing RTW and critical incident protocols. Consult and co-design reintegration process including support options, phased return, and manager guidance. Pilot and refine	Dec-25	

Exposure Recognition and Reduction	Integrate cultural safety into psychosocial risk and wellbeing strategies	M	Embed cultural intersectionality into frameworks, policies, and training. Co-design approaches with culturally diverse employees. Ensure alignment with Metro's DEI Strategy and cultural safety principles	Dec-25	
Promote	Introduce a practical leader toolkit to support wellbeing including the management of psychosocial hazards	L	Collaborate with L&D to include in Manager Essentials program	Aug-25	
Promote	Wellbeing Intranet page	M	Review with a view to improving optics, refining exiting content, introducing new content and improving user relevance	FY 2025	
Promote	Wellbeing champions	M	Review and strengthen existing program •Develop PD •Determine current pool and locations •Recruit to gaps •Set up communication forum	Dec-25	
Promote	Annual Calendar of activity	M	Develop annual Calendar •Develop content •Seek Steerco endorsement of draft •Engage with Communications for graphics and distribution	Feb-25	
Promote	Embed manager accountability for wellbeing (engagement) outcomes through KPI linkage	H	Integrate wellbeing (engagement) metrics into manager KPIs. Align with leadership capability framework and performance review cycle. Develop guidance for managers.	Apr-26	
Support	Refresh Peer Support Program	H	Determine number of existing Peers and their location •Conduct audit of the existing program for gaps and opportunities •Consult with stakeholders and Peers for feedback on program effectiveness •Review of existing recruitment, training, supervision, administration and data gathering processes •Collate feedback and recommendations •Consult with Steerco /seek endorsement of next steps	Oct-25	
Support	Review of the Contact Officer Role	L	Determine number of existing Contact Officers and their location •Conduct audit of the existing program for gaps and opportunities •Consult with Contact Officers and stakeholders for feedback on program effectiveness and	Jun-25	

			remit •Consult with WR for feedback on remit •Collate feedback and form recommendations •Consult with Steerco /seek endorsement of next steps		
Support	Actively promote diverse EAP offering	L	Develop EAP communications plan for re-launch	May-25	
Support	Review and strengthen Standards, Policies and Procedures through a Wellbeing lens	L	Develop plan with PIMS team •Develop a 2 year plan •Endorsement from Steerco	Jun-25	
Support	Establish employee advisory group (network) to inform wellbeing initiatives	M	Invite EOIs across diverse employee cohorts, including those with lived mental health experience. Define purpose, terms of reference, and meeting cadence. Align with broader employee listening strategy	Nov-25	
Support	Review EAP and audit wellbeing resources for quality, usage, and accessibility	M	Conduct audit of current EAP and wellbeing offerings. Analyse usage data, employee feedback, and provider performance. Identify gaps, overlaps, and improvement opportunities. Report findings and recommendations to Steerco	Sep-25	
Continuous Improvement	Establish a metrics and reporting framework	L	Conduct audit of current wellbeing/mental health/psychological safety data points available •Address immediate data gaps where viable •Capture existing data points into a single source •Consult with stakeholders re (future) metrics needs •Collate feedback and report to Steerco	Dec-25	
Continuous Improvement	Stand up a Community of Practice for Peer Supporters, Contact Officers, & Wellbeing Advocates	M	Knowledge sharing, cross-referral, and promotion	Dec-25	