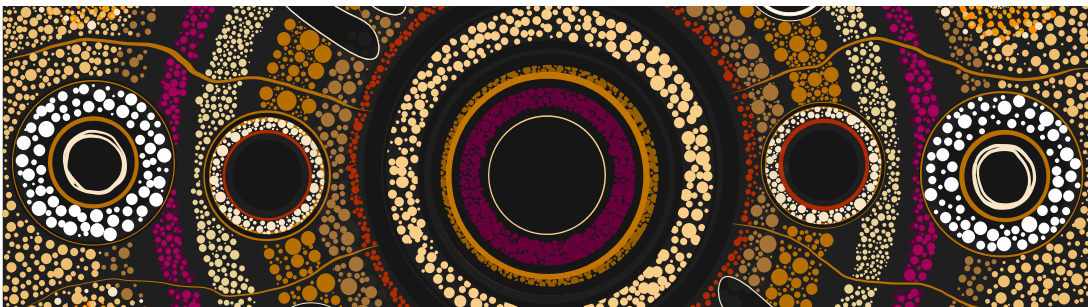


Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing Work Plan 2023–2024





Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

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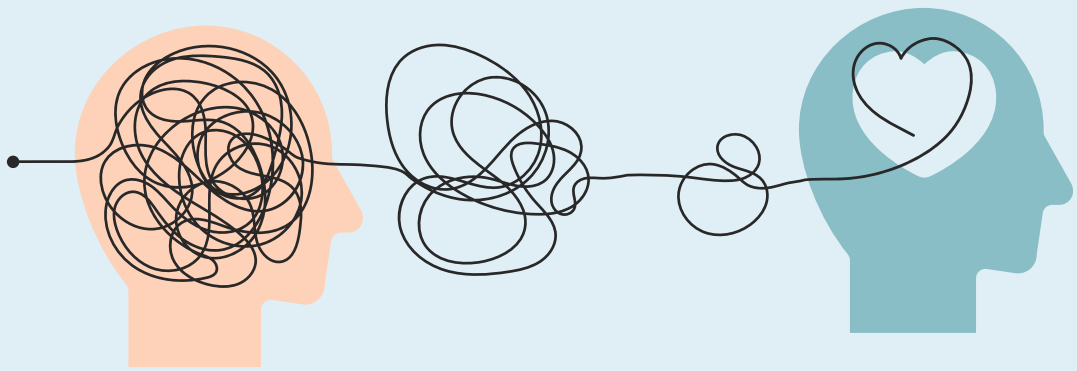
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Coordinator-General Mental Health and Wellbeing, Foreword



Since the establishment of the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing in 2018, we have worked collaboratively with lead agencies and key stakeholders to enhance the mental health and wellbeing of our community. We have led and participated in a range of initiatives to better understand the mental health and wellbeing needs of our community and have worked towards better outcomes that support and maintain positive mental health.

Positive working relationships with the ACT mental health sector and the broader community, and within government have been key and through co-design initiatives and have we led change projects with and for the sector.

With the bushfires in 2020, and the recent global pandemic, mental health has received national attention as a key concern for our communities. The ACT government has made investments into mental health to increase the range and scope of services and continues to work with the community to improve accessibility within the ACT. We also know there is still work required to enhance the mental health sector and to ensure those needing support are able to receive the right care when they need it. We are committed to contributing to this work over the next two-year period of this work plan.

In our discussions with stakeholders to develop our new work plan, we heard that focusing on priority populations groups was urgently needed, to better support the mental health and wellbeing needs of these communities. We will undertake this work with key stakeholders, government agencies and the broader community and are looking forward to continuing to lead and support the necessary changes required for better mental health outcomes.

Dr Elizabeth Moore

Coordinator-General,
Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Introduction

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing (the Office) Work Plan outlines the current and future commitments to continue working to enhance the mental health and wellbeing of our community. We will continue to work in partnership with government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), parents and carers, people with lived experience and the broader community to ensure we address the social determinants of health and the impact this can have on our mental health and wellbeing.

This is a two-year commitment that has been informed through a co-design process with government agencies, NGOs and members of the community to ensure the work we are leading and supporting contributes to enhancing the lives of our community members.

Leading with the vision for mental health and wellbeing, the Office will continue to work collaboratively with the community to support the mental health and wellbeing of all.

A kind, connected and informed community working together to promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of all.



This tree represents strength through collaboration. A community that builds on input from a diverse range of people, is grounded and grows together. Together, we'll improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Canberrans.

ACT Mental Illness Snapshot

Mental Health¹ _____

In a year approximately

1 in 5 of adults experience a mental behaviour condition (20.8%)



14% experience an anxiety related condition with higher rates for females and Canberrans aged 25-44 years.



1 in 10 experience depression or feelings of depression, with the higher rates for females and Canberrans aged 45-64 years.

13.6% females and **8.6% males self-report** high to very high levels of **psychological distress**.



Suicide and Self-harm _____



The suicide rate for **males is three times higher** than females.



Nearly three quarters of self-harm hospitalisations were for females, and just under half (48.1%) of these were aged 10-24 years.



Hospitalisations of self-harm have increased for people aged 10-24 years but remain relatively stable for other age groups.

¹ ACT Chief Health Officer's Report 2020 - <https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/data-and-publications/reports/chief-health-officers-report>

Role of the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing

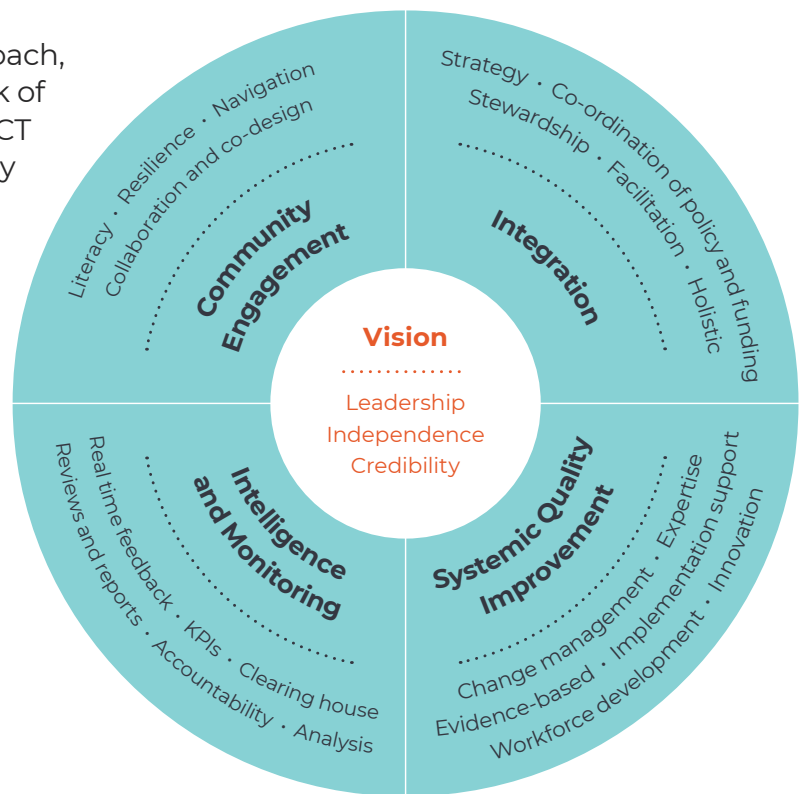
The Office is committed to a whole of community approach to support mental health and wellbeing, suicide and self-harm prevention.

We work with key stakeholders across government and the community to focus on issues relating to the broad social factors that impact on the mental health of individuals and the community including housing, education, employment, community services and the justice system. The Office continues to advocate for the prevention of mental illness and promotion of social inclusion.

The Office sits administratively in the ACT Health Directorate and is one of two separate units within the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Division.

Taking a whole of government approach, the Office seeks to enhance the work of policy and programs teams across ACT Government directorates and actively works with NGOs and the voices of lived experience to work towards our vision for mental health and wellbeing.

The Office also undertakes some specific targeted policy and funding activities for new innovative initiatives and manages the whole of government suicide prevention planning and implementation.



Who we work with

The Office has developed a range of relationships across the sector since its establishment in 2018 and is actively involved in the following:

ACT Mental Health Advisory Council (the Council)

The Council provides advice to the Minister for Mental Health and the Coordinator-General for Mental Health and Wellbeing. The council meets regularly throughout the year 2021–22 and considered a range of topics. Information on the Council and meeting communiques are available on the Office website.

Prevention, Mental Health & Wellbeing and Family Safety Inter-Directorate Committee

This whole of ACT Government committee is managed by the Office and provides a coordinated approach to mental health and wellbeing across the ACT, addressing key systemic issues and social determinants of mental health. The committee also provides leadership and guidance on preventative health, mental health and wellbeing, and family safety initiatives across the ACT. This committee meets bi-monthly.

Peak Mental Health Non-Government Organisations Committee

The Office meets regularly with the peak bodies to seek input to activities of the Office, consider joint activities, and identify the emerging trends and developments across the mental health sector.

Children and Young People Community of Practice

This group has members from government and NGOs. The group met throughout the year to share information about and collaborate on mental health and wellbeing initiatives for children and young people in the ACT.

ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance

This newly established Alliance has members from government, NGOs and the community to progress key sector priorities and shared decision-making and aims to improve communication, connection and collaboration with the child and youth mental health sector.

ACT Suicide Prevention Coordinating Committee

This committee provides collaborative leadership and promotes partnership to reduce suicide in the ACT. Membership consists of representatives from the community, ACT Government, NGOs, universities, the ACT Coroner, Capital Health Network (CHN) and the convenors/chairs of the Suicide Prevention Partnership groups. Currently there are four Suicide Prevention Partnership groups: the Data and Evaluation Suicide Prevention Partnership Group, the “Connecting with People” Partnership Group, the Youth Aware of Mental Health Partnership Group and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Partnership Group.





Mentally Healthy Communities

Mentally Healthy Communities

Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness. The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a “state of well-being that enables people to cope with the stressors of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community”.²

A mentally healthy community is one that is supportive and promotes good mental health and wellbeing and aims to improve the outcomes for individuals enabling them to thrive. This involves looking at healthy lifestyles, physical health, enhancing engagement in education, supporting people to have meaningful employment and improving social connections. To build mentally healthy communities we are taking a whole of government and whole of community approach to the promotion of mental health and prevention of mental illness.

Drivers for Change

Need for a paradigm shift to focus on improving mental health at a whole of the community level.

Recognising that improving the mental health of individuals improves their lives across other domains.

Achieving a balance between prevention and early intervention and high cost acute and crisis care.

Action Areas



² Mental health: strengthening our response (who.int)

Community engagement and awareness raising

The Office has led key communication and community engagement activities, including the development of a Commitment to Community Engagement that outlined how the Office works with the community using principle based, quality engagement approaches. This commitment has led all key communication activities.

A key component of this is a quarterly newsletter that highlights key projects, provides information for the community on mental health and wellbeing and promotes links to relevant websites. Newsletters are sent out quarterly to the community. In addition, the Office sends out Newsbytes with timely information on emerging issues for community awareness and has developed a range of webinars over the last 4 years.

In 2022 the Office hosted a mental health conversations series with a variety of guest speakers. Elizabeth and her guests discussed a range of diverse subjects, and we heard some great tips on how people can support their mental health and wellbeing during Mental Health Month.

The Office has communicated on areas of interest in response to changes in the community in relation to mental health and wellbeing, none being more true than through the global pandemic, where the Office took a lead role in communication activities relating to mental health for the community. There is clear evidence of impacts on mental health, psychological distress and mental illness during a pandemic. In response, the Office has linked nationally and taken a key role locally in tracking these trends and actively worked, in conjunction with the ACT Health and Community Services Directorates, in developing responses. Studies of previous national and international disasters and pandemic/epidemics have identified mental health impacts last well beyond the actual time period of the event.

Climate change and other highly visible public debates/discussions on issues of critical importance for priority populations have also been highlighted as having the potential for impacting on mental health and wellbeing. These will continue to be monitored by the Office.

A copy of previous newsletters, newsbytes, webinars, the conversation series and all Office publications is located on the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing website.



Action: Continue to promote positive mental health and wellbeing messaging with a focus on proactively responding to emerging issues arising for priority population groups.



Early support for children and young people

In 2019 the Office undertook the Review of Children and Young People in the ACT in partnership with MIEACT. The review identified a number of issues including navigation of the mental health sector and access to services. This resulted in the Office designing, developing and implementing MindMap – ACT Youth Portal through a co-design process with the community. This navigation portal is managed by Marymead and includes phone, chat and email support from 11am until 10pm 7 days per week. A key aspect of MindMap is the Active Hold service that enables a young person to engage with a Clinical Youth Navigator while they are on the waiting list for a mental health service. Clinical Youth Navigators are outsourced to services with expertise in responding to needs of population groups.

The next steps for MindMap will be to support the ongoing awareness of MindMap through targeted marketing campaigns to ensure young people and parents and carers are utilising the support that is available to help navigate the mental health sector and to build stronger connections to better meet the needs of young people from priority population groups.



Action:

Continue the enhancement and capacity of MindMap and respond to evaluation feedback.



Prevention and early support for priority populations

A key consideration under this theme is the need to support population cohorts that experience external challenges that can have a significant impact on their mental health and wellbeing. In particular the focus is on population cohorts that experience higher rates of mental health concerns and/or have greater difficulty in accessing supports.

Culturally and linguistically diverse populations

Culturally and linguistically diverse populations experience unique challenges that can have a significant impact on their mental health and wellbeing. We have heard the challenges these communities face in relation to discrimination, stigma and cultural barriers. We have also heard that this is a very diverse group of people with a wide range of different experiences and needs. It has been highlighted that we need to better understand the breadth of needs across different communities and to how best to maximise their mental health and wellbeing and address their mental health concerns.



Action:

The Office will work with key stakeholders to commence a review of the mental health and support needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

LGBTIQ+ people

Although most LGBTIQ+ people living in Australia live healthy, happy lives, surveys and reports have identified that a disproportionate number experience poorer mental health and higher risk of suicidal behaviours than their peers. Around half the trans and/or gender diverse population will experience anxiety, depression, or both at some point in their adult lives, with a higher rate of three quarters for young people.³

These mental health outcomes are directly related to experiences of stigma, prejudice, discrimination and abuse on the basis of being LGBTIQ+⁴. For example, trans and/or gender diverse adults are four times as likely to experience sexual violence or coercion than the general population.



Action:

The Office will work closely with the Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs and key stakeholders to promote the mental health of the LGBTIQ+ community and identify and promote activities that address the drivers of poor mental health.

³ Eckstrand, K.L. & Potter, J. (2017). Trauma, resilience, and health promotion in LGBT patients: What every healthcare provider should know, Springer

⁴ The 2021 update - LGBTIQ+ Health Australia



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Social and emotional wellbeing is the foundation for physical and mental health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Social and emotional wellbeing is affected by the social determinants of health including education and unemployment and a broader range of problems resulting from colonisation and its intergenerational legacies: grief and loss, trauma and abuse, violence, removal from family and cultural dislocation, substance abuse, racism and discrimination and social disadvantage⁵. Social and emotional wellbeing problems are distinct from mental health problems and mental illness, although they can interact and influence each other. The National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023⁶ recognises this distinction.

5 Zubrick S, Shepherd C, Dudgeon P, Gee G, Pardies Y, Scrine C, Walker R, "Social Determinants of Social and Emotional Wellbeing" in Dudgeon P, Milroy M, and Walker R (eds.), Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice " Revised Edition, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2014, pp.93-94; 99-104.

6 AIHW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework (2023) - <https://www.indigenoushpf.gov.au/measures/1-18-social-emotional-wellbeing>

While most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (67%) have low/moderate levels of psychological distress, the national rates for very high psychological distress and intentional self-harm and suicide are higher for non-Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain a major priority for suicide prevention in the ACT. The development of the culturally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention, aftercare, and postvention service for the ACT is progressing. Thirrili is continuing community engagement and co-design activities to ensure the service meets the needs of the ACT community and providing Aftercare supports.

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing has also continued to support members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to become Trainers in Suicide Prevention and run workshops for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ACT Community.

The Indigenous Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Community Forum was held on 22 July 2022 at Yarramundi Cultural Centre.

Suicide prevention

In the 2018-19 the ACT Government committed to the Black Dog Institute's (BDI) LifeSpan Integrated Suicide Prevention Framework over a three-year period. Since the conclusion of the LifeSpan research trial on 30 June 2021, the Office has continued its priority focus on multifaceted approaches to suicide prevention in the ACT. Many of the suicide prevention initiatives commenced through the trial continue, including:

- Suicide Prevention programs for young people, with a particular focus on prevention and early intervention – continued implementation Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM)
- Improving the skills and confidence of frontline workers in addressing suicidal ideation and ensuring a compassionate approach through the implementation of the "Connecting with People" program
- The inclusion of the voice of lived experience in all our suicide prevention work.
- The continuation of a major focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention
- Improvements in suicide and self-harm data and monitoring in the ACT

We know that suicide remains a complex and significant issue, and we will be continuing this work, with an enhanced focus on:

- Improving youth access to mental health communications, focussing on schools/universities as a key access point
- Promoting positive help seeking across the ACT Community
- Inclusion for all age groups and identities



Actions:

- Develop an ACT Suicide Prevention Implementation Plan
- Continue the multi-faceted approach to suicide prevention
- Continue to work in partnership with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Partnership Group, and other key individuals and organisations from across the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve outcomes across mental health and suicide prevention.
- Expand the Suicide Prevention Governance Framework to include a University/Higher Education Partnership Group and a Community Suicide Prevention Partnership group





Enhancing lives

Enhancing lives

Mental health plays a pivotal role in our ability to connect and interact with others and feel a sense of genuine connection with our community. A key focus here is on how people experiencing mental ill health live their lives and participate and engage from a social and economic perspective and receive support when it is needed. This includes support for housing, education, skills development and employment.

A mentally healthy community is one that is supportive and promotes good mental health and wellbeing and aims to improve the outcomes for individuals enabling them to thrive. This involves looking at healthy lifestyles, physical health, enhancing engagement in education, supporting people to have meaningful employment and improving social connections. To build mentally healthy communities we are taking a whole of government and whole of community approach to the promotion of mental health and prevention of mental illness.

Drivers for Change

Mental ill health is impacted by a range of social and economic circumstances.

Almost half the population experience mental ill health over their lifetime.

Stigma and discrimination continue to impact on help-seeking.

There are low levels of mental health literacy and difficulties in accessing appropriate mental health care.

Complex services systems are not well connected and are hard to navigate.

Action Areas



Strengthen social connection
and economic participation

Integrated personalised
mental health supports

Improving mental health outcomes of people from priority population groups

Children and youth

The Review of Children and Young People identified the need to respond to children and young people with moderate to severe mental health concerns and the issues they experience accessing services and support, known as the 'missing middle'. In 2020 the Office partnered with the Youth Coalition of the ACT and the Capital Health Network to undertake a co-design process with key stakeholders from the community to contribute to the local evidence base around why children and young people with moderate to severe mental health concerns experience challenges accessing support. The Final Report: Understanding the 'Missing Middle' provides an overview of the findings of this project.

A key recommendation from this project was the establishment of a Child and Youth Mental Health Service Alliance to be led in partnership with the Office, the Youth Coalition of the ACT and with the Capital Health Network. The purpose of the Alliance is to provide a structured ongoing formal mechanism for community, government and potentially private services to continue working together to address the complexity associated with the missing middle.



Action: Continue to lead, in partnership with the Youth Coalition of the ACT and Capital Health Network, the development of an ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance.



Trans and gender diverse people

It has been identified that LGBTIQ+ community continues to experience limited access to inclusive and culturally safe mental health services (in particular for trans and gender diverse people and those living on temporary visas)⁷.

In 2021 the Office released the Guidance to support gender affirming care for mental health (the Guidance). The Guidance was officially launched during Transgender Awareness Week. The Guidance has been developed as a collaboration between the Office, the Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs, ACT Health Directorate (the Directorate), A Gender Agenda (AGA), and Meridian.

This Guidance is a first of its kind in Australia and has been designed to support providers of mental health care to deliver their services in a gender affirming way that meets the needs of trans and gender diverse people.

In April 2022, AGA commenced targeted training to health care practitioners in Canberra Health Services (CHS). The training outlined the key messages of the Guidance and how practitioners can become more gender affirming in their care to those seeking support for their mental health. The Office commenced the Guidelines Implementation Advisory Working Group in April 2022, working with key stakeholders to make recommendations and share further strategies to implement the Guidance in practice.



Action:

Build on the work undertaken through the Guidance to promote and advocate for safe and accessible mental health services for LGBTIQ+ people.

Older people

In 2022, the Office released the Older Person's Mental Health Strategy: Towards our Vision Re-envisioning Older Persons Mental Health and Wellbeing in the ACT Strategy 2022-2026. The strategy identifies initiatives to be implemented over the next five years to enhance the mental health and wellbeing of older Canberrans. The strategy was developed in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders including older people, mental health service providers and government and non-government organisations.

The strategy incorporates the perspectives on the key priorities for older Canberrans in relation to their mental health and wellbeing.

Following the development of this strategy, the Office will promote the implementation of the actions in the Strategy.



Action:

Oversee the progress and implement actions under the Older Person's Mental Health Strategy

⁷ The Capital of Equality Strategy Second Action Plan 2022-2023 ACT Government

People experiencing suicidality

We continue to increase awareness in the general community about tackling suicide and self-harm via gatekeeper training (Question Persuade Refer (QPR)) the free online suicide prevention training program.

We are continuing to create a compassionate, empathic mental health workforce across the ACT, with the expansion of Connecting With People to the NGO and community sector.

We are continuing our focus on research and data in the area of suicide prevention. We will ensure that people and communities from across the ACT are included in this (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and LGBTQI+ communities).

Supporting people after a suicide attempt or self-harm is critically important and highlights the importance of viewing a suicide attempt within the person's broader psychosocial needs and responding with effective and empathic care. In collaboration with the CHN, we will be expanding the services available to people after a suicide attempt, and also creating options for people to access care and support sooner.



Action:

Continue to promote QPR (or similar gateway program)

People needing complex responses across multiple service systems

A small cohort of individuals in our community have needs that challenge the service systems and require complex responses across different systems (such as housing, justice, child protection, family violence, health, and mental health). Currently the services supporting this group of people are diverse with different eligibility, scope and timeframes for support based on their separate models of care and funding. This client group also often has complex needs that sit outside of the existing service systems but which impact on successful outcomes of supports and treatment provided within the service systems.

Currently several separate mechanisms are being used to facilitate coordination of responses across systems however gaps still exist. At the highest level, the need for an individualised approach to explore the complex interplay of needs and to address the gaps between service systems has been identified.

The specific needs of people experiencing severe mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues has been identified as a high priority.



Action:

Promote the development of a whole of government model for responding to the needs of people with complex support needs.





Structure and System Capacity

Structural and System Capacity

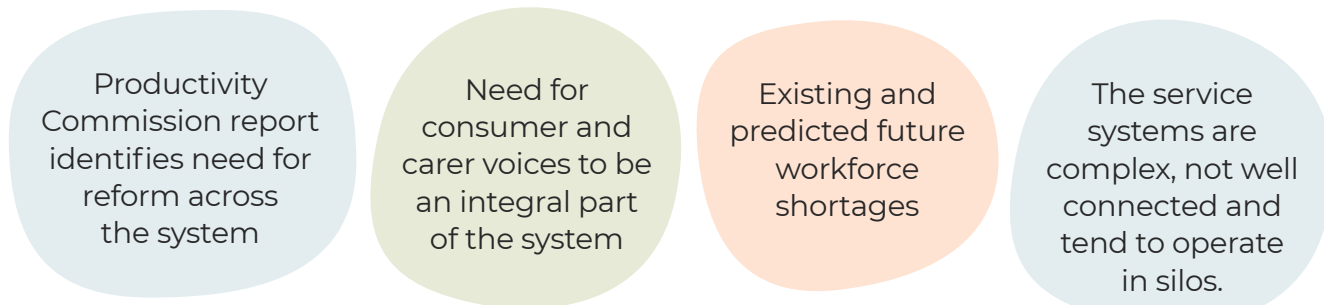
With the demand for mental health services increasing, it is essential we continue to work towards a holistic approach to support the mental health and wellbeing needs of our community.

With the multiple reviews and consultations that have taken place with the community, we know the sector is fragmented, hard to navigate and is currently experiencing service and system gaps and limitations.

This requires government and non-government to continue working closely to support the change needed to enable a more coordinated and connected system.

A key aspect to achieve such a system is to have a mental health workforce that is compassionate, available, diverse, well trained and well supported. We also need a contemporary system that is well designed, responsive and strives for continuous improvement.

Drivers for Change



Action Areas



Workforce

A key theme that has routinely been raised by the community, is the need for a highly skilled and diverse workforce that supports the needs of the ACT community. The feedback received highlighted the need for compassionate care that is not only kind, respectful and safe, but one that is delivered by staff who are highly skilled and led by evidence informed practices. The feedback also raised the need for a recruitment and retention strategy that works towards ensuring the ACT is a highly valued place to live and work.

In 2022, the Office developed the Framework for the ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy that outlines the values and principles and key priority areas that will underpin this important work now and into the future. The next phase of the ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy is the development of the first Action Plan which will run for 2-3 years. This Action Plan will address the key priority actions to take now to start to address the short and long term workforce needs.



Action:

Work with key areas across all relevant Directorates and NGO partners on the development and delivery of the ACT Mental Health Workforce Action Plan

Lived experience

Throughout the various co-design initiatives, the Office has actively engaged with people with lived experience to ensure the voices of lived experience are helping to lead and drive change. There is increasing acknowledgement that engagement with people with lived experience is seen as human right with people having the right to have a say in the decisions that effective their lives. It has also been highlighted that engagement with people with lived experience, their families, carers and support people contributes to reduced stigma and better outcomes.

The involvement of people with lived experience across all areas of policy and program design and development is critical. There is a continuing need to increase opportunities for engagement and leadership which is meaningful, supported and embedded as a fundamental part of good practice.

The Office has also advocated for peer workers since the establishment of the Office. Research has shown a wide range of benefits from increased peer work including, reduced bed days, reduced admission rates, increased levels of empowerment for both providers and recipients, and an increase in the effectiveness in engaging difficult to reach cohorts^{8,9}. Currently in the ACT, peer workers are employed in a small number of services but there is a way to go to build a mental health workforce that actively includes people with lived experience.



Action: Undertake lived experience focussed planning that will support the inclusion of the voices of lived experience and build a stronger peer workforce in the ACT.

8 Meagher, J. et al (2018). *Peer work in Australia: A new future for mental health*. Sydney: Richmond PRA and Mind Australia

9 Repper, J and Carter, T (2011), A review of the literature on peer support in mental health services, *Journal of Mental Health*, 20 (4).

Developing an overarching approach to improving mental health across the community

The ACT has a wide range of existing policies and plans that either, directly or indirectly, contribute to improving the mental health of our community. These plans are diverse in scope and span across many areas of ACT Government responsibility.

Under the first Work Plan, the Office developed a strategic approach to mental health that will enable consideration of planned actions across all areas of government and provide the opportunity to identify the areas for future development that will lead towards the achievement of our Vision. Towards Our Vision - Taking A Strategic Approach to Mental Health in the ACT was released in 2022.

The strategic approach sets out three focus areas and eight priorities for action identified through a wide range of consultation processes including the first Office Work Plan. These focus areas and priorities form the structure for this Work Plan.

By taking this strategic approach we will be able to consider the factors outside of the mental health system that promote mental health and impact on mental illness,



Action:

Undertake the first analysis of the current plans and activities utilising the strategic approach framework.



Action:

Finalise the Outcomes Framework and undertake the first whole of government outcomes analysis

The Office has also been developing an outcomes framework to build on the strategic approach and extend the analysis to the mental health outcomes across the three areas for action. The Outcomes Framework will draw on and be embedded within, the ACT Wellbeing Framework and existing whole of government reporting. The Outcomes Framework will set out a structured systemic approach to analysing outcomes at a broad whole of community level and will enable regular analysis of outcomes to inform policy, program and service development across government.



Suicide prevention

The Office has reviewed and updated the framework and governance processes that support suicide prevention post the LifeSpan trial. We will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure suicide prevention activities in the ACT reflect the needs and issues of the diverse ACT communities, and considers issues arising from gaps in unemployment services, housing and relationship supports, and the supporting the early promotion of help-seeking in children, supporting families and self-harm in adolescents.

We know that accessing care can be difficult and complex, and is even more so for people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTIQ+ communities and we acknowledge the diversity within those communities.

ACT Data and Evaluation Suicide Prevention Partnership Group continues to promote high quality data and evaluation of suicide prevention activities in the ACT. The ACT Coroner's Office, in collaboration with the AIHW National Suicide and Self-harm Monitoring team has established the ACT Suicide Register. The Office will continue to work with the ACT Coroner's Office to support the implementation of the ACT Suicide register.



Action:

- Continue to support the design and implementation of Suicide Prevention activities in the ACT that reflect the needs and issues of the diverse ACT Community.
- Continue to support the ACT Coroner's Office in their implementation of the ACT Suicide Register.



Research, Evaluation and Quality Improvement

Review and evaluation of the Office

An independent evaluation of the Office will be undertaken including the structure, functions, roles and ongoing need for the Office in the ACT community. Leveraging the OMHW Mid-Term Review, this evaluation will continue to ensure the work of the Office is achieving its goals and objectives. This will be completed by August 2023.

Research and quality improvement

The Office has already participated, supported or sponsored a number of data collection and research activities. The opportunity to partner with universities and other research organisations provides a valuable opportunity to promote research and development that is directly targeted to addressing the mental health needs across the community. This included a partnership approach to monitoring the data and research into the mental health impacts of the pandemic.

A key theme that has been raised in multiple forums over the past 4 years, is the need for enhanced data to support the work of the Office and mental health services and programs. Improved sharing of data and the development of more robust data collection and management will provide opportunities for more systemic reform and service development.



Action:

- Promote and support key data linkage projects to improve our understanding of identified priority areas
- Trial processes for in depth data analysis to inform mental health service practice and innovation.

Youth modelling – Right care, first time, where you live

In 2022, the Office partnered with the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre to deliver the Right care, first time, where you live research program. The program worked with ACT stakeholders and young people with lived experience to develop a system modelling tool that can be used to build the case for programs and services to support improved social, educational, and economic outcomes that impact young people's mental health and wellbeing. The program involved three formal workshops with the sector and included dedicated youth engagement to ensure the voices of lived experience were a key consideration in the development of the model.

Following the development of the model, the Office is continuing to work with the Brain and Mind Centre to implement the tool and to ensure the ACT community has the knowledge and understanding on how best to use this tool for advocacy, policy development and business cases into the future.



Action:

Finalise the Right Care, first time, where you live Youth Modelling Tool with the ACT community.

Innovative projects

The Office will work closely with stakeholders to advocate and support innovative projects to achieve the vision and support the progress of this work plan and to improve the mental health of the community.



Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan on a Page



Vision

A kind, connected and informed community working together to promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of all.



Mission

To improve our community's wellbeing and enhance our mental health service system through co-design with consumers, carers, clinicians and the community.



Principles

Collaborative

Person Centred

Evidence Informed

Inclusive

Innovative



Functions

Community Engagement

Integration

Systematic Quality Improvement

Intelligence and Monitoring



Themes

Mentally healthy communities and workplaces

Enhancing lives

Structural and System Capacity

Promotion of mental health and prevention of mental illness

Strengthen social connection and economic participation

Integrated personalised mental health supports

Enhance workforce capacity, capability and diversity

Early intervention in community and workplaces

Integrated suicide prevention

Shared responsibility and collaborative action

Deliver innovation and reform



Areas of action

Research, evaluation and quality improvement

New Actions

Action	End date			
	June 2023	December 2023	June 2024	December 2024
Mentally Healthy Communities				
Develop an ACT Suicide Prevention Implementation Plan				
The Office will work with key stakeholders to commence a review of the mental health support needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.				
Enhancing Lives				
Build on the work undertaken through the Guidance to promote and advocate for safe and accessible mental health services for trans and gender diverse people.				
Promote the development of a whole of government model for responding to the needs of people with complex support needs.				
Structural and System Capacity				
Work with key areas across the ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services on the development and delivery of the ACT Mental Health Workforce Action Plan.				
Undertake analysis of the current plans and activities utilising the strategic approach framework.				
Undertake lived experience focused planning that will support the inclusion of the voices of lived experience and build a stronger peer workforce in the ACT.				

Ongoing Actions

Mentally Health Communities

Continue to promote positive mental health and wellbeing messaging with a focus on proactively responding to emerging issues arising for priority population groups.

Continue the enhancement and capacity of MindMap and respond to evaluation feedback.

Work closely with the Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs and key stakeholders to promote mental health of the LGBTIQ+ community and identify and promote activities that address the drivers of poor mental health.

Enhancing Lives

Continue to lead, in partnership with the Youth Coalition of the ACT and Capital Health Network, the development of a ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance.

Oversee the progress and implement actions under the Older Person's Mental Health Strategy.

Continue to promote actions aimed to improve individual, family and community outcomes for people who experience both mental health and AOD issues.

Structural and System Capacity

Finalise the Outcomes Framework and undertake the first outcomes analysis.

Work with Mental Health Policy and Strategy to improve the interface between mental health and AOD services.

Research, Evaluation and Quality Improvement

Trial processes for in depth data analysis to inform mental health service practice and innovation

Finalise the Right care, first time, where you live youth modelling tool with the ACT community.

Continue to promote and support key data linkage projects to improve our understanding of identified priority areas.

Suicide Prevention

Continue a priority focus on multifaceted approaches to suicide prevention in the ACT.

Continue to support the design and implementation of Suicide Prevention activities in the ACT that reflect the needs and issues of the diverse ACT Community (e.g. the provision of universal and targeted training; strengthening access and support pathways; and collaborations with key partners and communities to identify and respond to systems gaps and challenges). Key partners include people with lived experience of suicide, people who identify as carers, members of ACT communities, the ACT Coroner's Office, ACT Government services, Capital Health Network, and Non-Government Organisations.

Continue to work in partnership with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Partnership Group, and other key individuals and organisations from across the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve outcomes across mental health and suicide prevention.



Office for Mental Health
and Wellbeing

