



The Royal
Australian &
New Zealand
College of
Psychiatrists



July 2023

RANZCP Member Wellbeing Action Plan

Head Office

309 La Trobe Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Australia

T: +61 (0)3 9640 0646
F: +61 (0)3 9642 5652
E: membership@ranzcp.org



RANZCP Member Wellbeing Action Plan

The health and wellbeing of every psychiatrist and those in training is critical for competent and safe psychiatry practice.

We all have a role in supporting and advocating for each other – every day. It's part of what it means to be a part of our College community.

The reality is we know that not all our colleagues are as healthy and well as they could be. Intensified demands on the psychiatry workforce, coupled with increased community need compounds the challenge for everyone when it comes to attending to our own wellbeing needs.

Over the last three years, where it can, the College has increased what we do to support members' wellbeing, through mentoring, new resources, events, awareness, and activities. But we also know that's only one component of the wellbeing puzzle. Wellbeing is intersectional and personal. What matters for a psychiatrist in training may not be as relevant for those transitioning toward retirement. Part of being a contemporary and connected College is to listen to what our members' needs are and respond with actions to elements within our control, and advocate when they are beyond.

Starting with a College-wide member survey where over 1,200 members shared their experiences, as well as through hosting many forums, events, and panels – online and in-person – the Membership Engagement Committee, supported by its Wellbeing Subcommittee has developed this five-year action plan designed to provide the College membership with a roadmap of 26 recommendations towards improving the wellbeing of all psychiatrists and those in training.

Living out this action plan does require us all to lead with compassion, increase and share our knowledge, improve our workplace cultures, promote accountability and strengthen our health systems, contribute to partnerships, and advocate for each other.

These pillars, action plan and our College Strategic Plan will help to guide what we do to support the health and wellbeing of all our colleagues and members. But they can only truly be fulfilled by us in our daily interactions and how we work – in every way.

We look forward to bringing this action plan to life and continuing to advance our efforts in support of each other's wellbeing.

Dr Elizabeth Moore
RANZCP President

Leadership and knowledge

Promoting positive cultures in psychiatry practice, leadership, and modelling appropriate behaviour.

Immediate action (6 months–1 year)	Near term (2–3 years)	Extended term (up to 5 years and beyond)
<p>Publish a new College Position Statement (PS48) on the safety and wellbeing psychiatrists and those in psychiatry training that contains a clear statement on recognising, addressing and eliminating workplace bullying, harassment, and discrimination.</p> <p>Make improvements in how the College communicates with its members (including approach, manner and style), and ensure all College Committees and staff make member wellbeing a key consideration in decision-making and processes.</p>	<p>Implement cultural change to ensure trainees are seen as an integral part of the membership from the beginning of their training.</p>	<p>Continue to review, improve, and enhance core College programs and activity that supports wellbeing, including mentoring and peer review groups, and ensure that they remain relevant and helpful for members.</p>
<p>Support regular opportunities for members to connect with peers and colleagues through taking part in local branch or National Office activities, and encouraging wellbeing focussed events (e.g. trainee wellbeing weekends).</p>		

Lead with courage and compassion to influence workplace cultures to prioritise wellbeing by proactively advocating for each other.

Immediate action (6 months–1 year)	Near term (2–3 years)	Extended term (up to 5 years and beyond)
<p>Profile and publish member stories that raise the profile and importance of initiatives that provide support to colleagues or themselves.</p>	<p>Undertake work to address stigma experienced by psychiatrists and trainees with a lived experience of mental illness.</p>	<p>Continue to normalise self-care as important and necessary for good medical practice, including addressing the stigma of seeking help for clinicians.</p>
<p>Integrate wellbeing change in cross-cutting and intersectional College projects on improving diversity, equity and inclusivity, gender equity, eliminating racism, as well as membership groups including private practice psychiatrists, or members who are transitioning towards retirement.</p>	<p>Develop new training modules (e.g. for supervisors) that builds on other member education content addressing: discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment, cultures in medicine, and respectful collegiate interactions.</p>	
<p>Maintain a consistent focus on encouraging all members to contribute to cultures of 'being a helpful colleague'.</p>	<p>Conduct a feasibility assessment of introducing College-facilitated Balint Groups for trainees.</p>	
<p>Implement reforms to training fee structures, particularly for those undertaking part-time training, and continue to provide fee-relief to members experiencing hardship or serious medical conditions.</p>	<p>Repeat the College member wellbeing survey in an appropriate format, evaluate against past results, and reassess what are the priority areas wellbeing need for our members.</p>	
<p>Develop new resources for trainees on available processes and how to take action on bullying, harassment, discrimination, racism, and sexual harassment in the workplace, or at College events.</p>		
<p>Develop member education content and new information on discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment, the fundamental importance of culture across various settings, as well as respectful, collegiate interactions and expected standards of professional behaviour.</p>		

Advocacy and partnerships

Promote accountability for strengthening health systems to provide safe, positive working environments at organisational and systemic levels.

Immediate action (6 months–1 year)	Near term (2–3 years)	Extended term (up to 5 years and beyond)
Deliver a symposium panel session at Congress 2023 on bullying, harassment and cultures in medicine.	Develop guidance and information for employers, health services and members on effective measures to support the psychological safety of the psychiatric workforce, and that promote wellbeing and work-life balance.	
Ensure that the College's Accreditation Standards that focus on wellbeing are being used effectively in the accreditation of training posts and programs.		

Address systemic issues with access to health care and workforce development.

Immediate action (6 months–1 year)	Near term (2–3 years)	Extended term (up to 5 years and beyond)
Advocate to employers to ensure that trainees and supervisors have access to protected time for supervision, Formal Education Courses, study leave etc.	Advocate to governments and health services to ensure safe health practices at work.	

Be part of advocacy driving change and improvement in the culture of medicine.

Immediate action (6 months–1 year)	Near term (2–3 years)	Extended term (up to 5 years and beyond)
Endorse the Ahpra statement of intent to create a positive culture change and improve accountability and responsibility for making that change happen. Continue to promote the annual Medical Training Survey. Participate in external working and steering groups where possible.	Continue to advocate strongly at state, territory and national levels to increase the psychiatric workforce and improve models of care in diverse settings.	

Promote the importance of workplace capacity, appropriate resourcing and supporting how time and stressors can be managed.

Immediate action (6 months–1 year)	Near term (2–3 years)	Extended term (up to 5 years and beyond)
Encourage innovative enabling roles within health services, e.g. Director of Staff Wellbeing roles.	Encourage the availability of work arrangements that reflect the changing needs of the workforce.	Work with governments, policy-makers and representative groups to advocate for the remodelling of unsustainable and unsafe working hours and actively managing fatigue as a key pillar of doctor wellbeing.