



VICTORIA POLICE

VICTORIA POLICE

Mental Health Strategy and Wellbeing Action Plan 2017–2020



Foreword

I am very pleased to launch the *Victoria Police Mental Health Strategy and Wellbeing Action Plan 2017-2020*.



This Strategy establishes a comprehensive framework for promoting and protecting the mental health of employees across Victoria Police. A career in policing is extremely rewarding but, as with all first responder work, it is a challenging and highly demanding environment.

The Strategy complements the outcomes of the independent Mental Health Review, published in 2016, that helped us better understand mental health issues in Victoria Police. Our people are confronted with distressing and complex circumstances on a daily basis – and we know that this can take a heavy toll on our wellbeing.

One of the most important things we have learned is that the stigma associated with mental health issues can hold people back from asking for help. We know that early help-seeking can be a very effective intervention in responding to mental health issues.

Most importantly, the Strategy will make sure that we support our employees across the full lifecycle of their careers with Victoria Police and into post-employment.

I encourage everyone to reach out for help if you feel you're not coping.

Graham Ashton AM
Chief Commissioner

Contents

About the Strategy	2
What is mental health?	3
Our Mental Health & Wellbeing Vision	4
Why is mental health important?	5
The Victoria Police Mental Health and Wellbeing Model	6
Framework for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy	8
How will we achieve better mental health in Victoria Police?	9
Our Priorities	10
Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan	11
Appendix 1: Overview of Existing Services	16



About the Strategy

The *Victoria Police Mental Health Strategy and Wellbeing Action Plan 2017-2020 (Strategy)* reflects Victoria Police's commitment to promoting and protecting the mental health of employees.

The Strategy presents background information, an organisational vision, strategic objectives, a Mental Health and Wellbeing model, and an Action Plan. It identifies how we will measure success to enable us to assess, continually refine, and improve our approach.

The Strategy serves as a road map to a future state in which Victoria Police continues to support the mental health of employees who work as policing first responders or support delivery of policing services. A diagrammatic representation of the framework for *The Strategy* is also presented.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing model presented in this *Strategy* recognises the unique nature of policing, and that the needs of an employee may change. It provides direction, and ensures continuity in improving the mental health and wellbeing of employees across the lifecycle of their careers and beyond.

The Strategy is a key component of our work to expand our suite of occupational health and safety practices and initiatives. An overview of existing wellbeing support services is presented in **Appendix 1**.

The Strategy forms a component of Victoria Police's Zero Harm Health and Safety Vision, which looks to every Victoria Police employee to be personally committed to the health and safety of themselves, their fellow employees and the community in which they serve.

The Strategy also complements the outcomes from the *Mental Health Review (Review)* that assisted Victoria Police to better understand the effectiveness of current approaches to supporting the mental health needs of our employees.

Importantly, it is underpinned by the *Victoria Police Capability Plan 2016-2025* that is guiding long term, staged and planned capability growth for the organisation. Specifically the commitments in the *Strategy* are in alignment with the 'Enabling Capabilities' in the People Management category. These include Leadership, Workforce Planning, Occupational Health and Safety, Training/Professional Development, People Performance Management and Employee relations. Through a contribution to the maturation of these capabilities, as aligned to the Blue Paper Transformation Pathway of Safety, the *Strategy* will help develop an organisation that is safer, professional and more agile for Victoria Police employees and the wider community they serve.





What is mental health?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), mental health is “a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.¹

Work undertaken as part of the *Review* and development of *The Strategy* has informed understanding about a Mentally Healthy Workplace for Victoria Police.

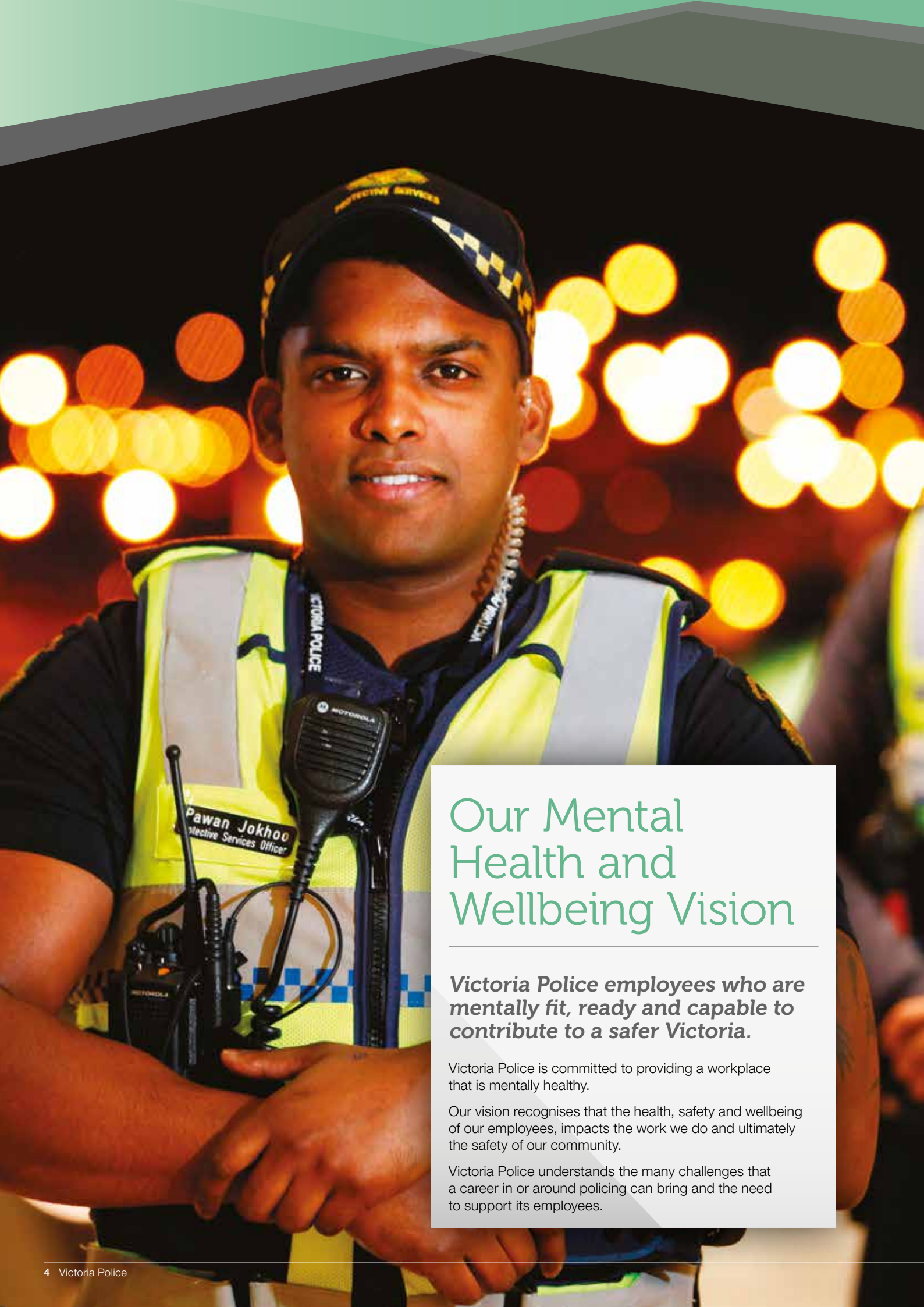
A mentally healthy Victoria Police workplace:

- Promotes mental health and wellbeing through supportive leadership.
- Promotes ongoing psychological wellbeing.
- Encourages a shared responsibility for mental health.
- Proactively addresses psychological risk.
- Reduces stigma and supports strong mental health literacy.
- Promotes creativity and productivity.
- Encourages pro-social behaviour.
- Develops positive relationships.
- Promotes increased physical health.

¹ World Health Organisation. Mental health: a state of well-being (Updated August 2014)

A mentally healthy workplace requires a focus on:

- Building resilience.
- Reducing risks by building workplace protective factors.
- Encouraging and supporting early help-seeking behaviour.
- Ensuring multiple pathways to access help.
- Enhancing recovery when impacts do occur.



Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Vision

Victoria Police employees who are mentally fit, ready and capable to contribute to a safer Victoria.

Victoria Police is committed to providing a workplace that is mentally healthy.

Our vision recognises that the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, impacts the work we do and ultimately the safety of our community.

Victoria Police understands the many challenges that a career in or around policing can bring and the need to support its employees.

Why is mental health important?

Policing is rewarding but can also be a challenging career. Constantly evolving expectations from the community, the nature of policing, and continuously striving to respond to changing crime patterns, has seen increased demands on organisational adaptability and our employees.

Many of our employees face situations that the majority of the community do not see, and this exposure can result in varying degrees of psychological impact. For some, these effects persist well after their career with Victoria Police has ended.

Mental health matters.

Victoria Police has long been committed to the overall health and safety of its employees. The focus on psychological safety, health and the way we support mental health and wellbeing has not always been as visible or as well communicated as physical and operational safety.

What do we know?

Emergency service employees face a complex range of mental health risks². In addition to a range of internal and external drivers (refer to framework page 9), the *Review* commissioned by Victoria Police sought to critically examine the current psychological risks and needs of our organisation and our employees. It also reported on how we can best deliver mental health and wellbeing services to support people throughout their careers and into their post-employment life.

The *Review* found that Victoria Police faces increasing risks to occupational health and safety due to an evolving policing environment, workplace conflict, and higher levels of recurrent exposure to traumatic events compared with other industry sectors. Therefore, it is likely that mental health related issues in Victoria Police are more common than available information suggests.

Contributing factors to mental health, whether they are personal, workplace or operational, interact in complex ways to cause varying degrees of impact. Stigma, low rates of help-seeking, and access to a variety of supports outside the organisation means it is difficult to obtain an accurate profile of the psychological needs of our employees.

With improved awareness of mental health, the implementation of the current *Strategy* and reduction of stigma, help-seeking and reporting of mental health is likely to increase, at least in the immediate term.

We welcome this increase as it provides us with the information we need to better prevent injury, build resilience, provide support and enhance recovery where impacts do occur.

Given the importance of mental health in an employee's overall health, safety and wellbeing, as well as their operational capacity and capability, it is essential that Victoria Police employees feel safe to speak up when they do need help and know that help will be available.

This *Strategy* sets out our commitment to supporting the mental health of our employees.

Mental health at Victoria Police:

- On average employees who have a psychological injury claim are away from the workplace for 103.23 shifts.
- Mental health related injuries make up 28% of WorkCover claims yet account for 70% of total claim costs.
- Our rate of returning people with psychological injury to work is 64%, while for physical injury it is 93%.
- 46% of counselling referrals indicate a work related matter as the primary reason, which includes exposure to trauma.
- The remaining 54% present with 'personal' issues, of which 14% are classified as mental health related conditions or concerns, such as anxiety, depression, and personal stress.

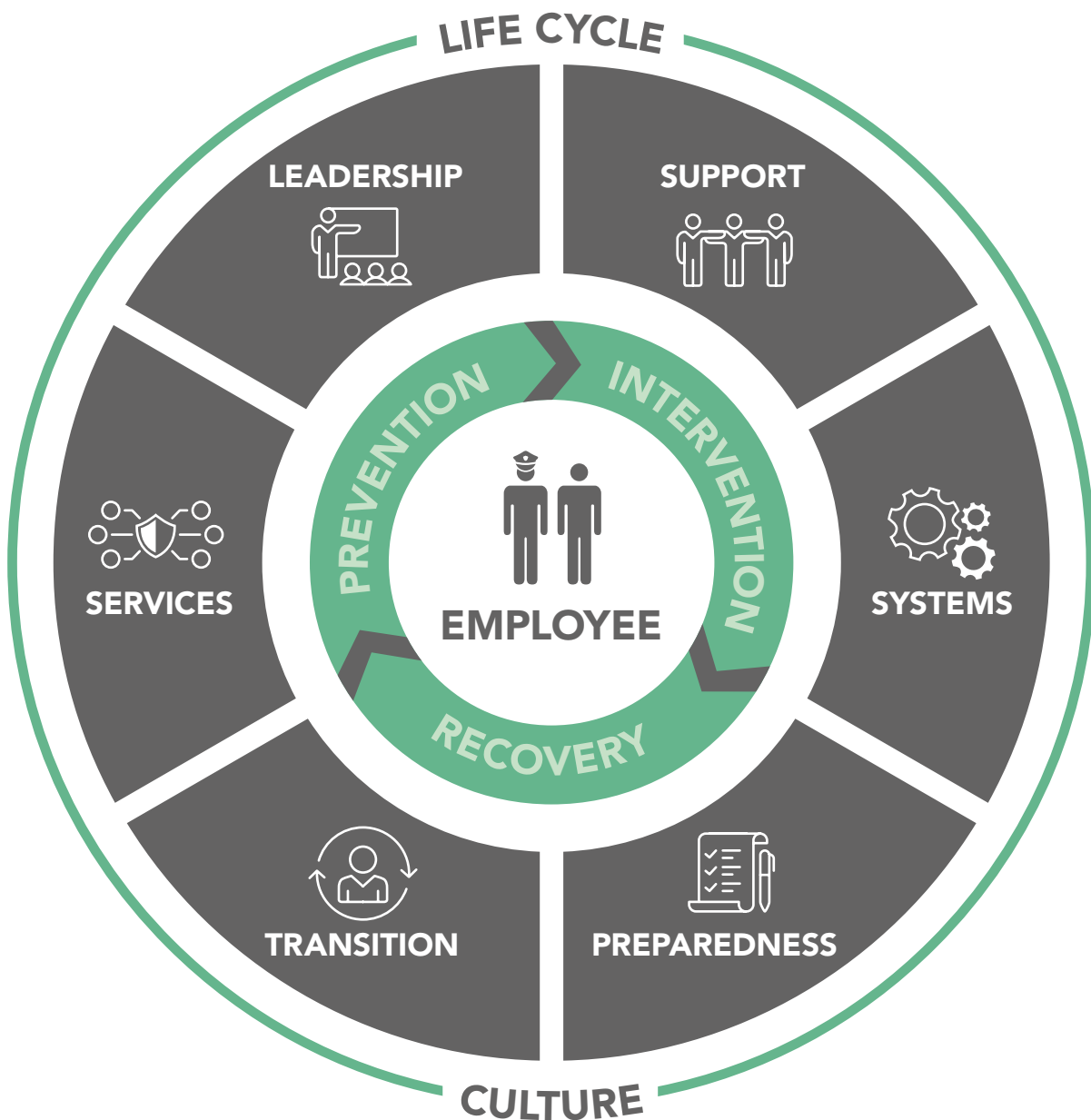
(Source: GB Monthly Report for claims up to April 2017; Data from the Police Psychology Unit (PPU) and our Employee Assistance Provider, Davidson Trahaire Corpsych.)



² beyondblue. Good practice framework for mental health and wellbeing in first responder organisations (2016)

The Victoria Police Mental Health and Wellbeing Model

Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Model is the basis for achieving our Vision. We place the employee and their health, safety and wellbeing at the centre. We recognise that the needs of our employees change throughout their careers and beyond. As a result, we take a life cycle approach to employee mental health and wellbeing. We define the life cycle stages as including pre-employment and recruitment, career and work life, transition to exit, and post-exit.



The model also acknowledges the different stages in responding to mental health problems and includes a three tier approach to meeting the needs of our employees, namely prevention, intervention and recovery. These foundations allow us to ensure that at every opportunity, career stage, and transition point, we are focused on prevention and early intervention as much as response. Furthermore, we aim to use a strength-based approach to build skills and personal strengths, while reducing risks to mental health and wellbeing. This should take place at the individual, as well as the organisational level.

Prevention – Be aware, then prepare

This means being aware – aware of the risks in the work environment, and putting in place initiatives that will reduce the risks of mental health injury. It also means developing and strengthening the skills and capability of our people to prepare and equip them to undertake their roles.

This includes effective selection strategies, increasing mental health literacy, engaging families, building leadership skills, enhancing resilience and coping abilities, developing confidence in operational skills, developing more streamlined and integrated work systems, and developing a robust suicide prevention framework.

Intervention – Spot the signs and act

This means being ready – that at the earliest signs and stages, we are ready to provide effective and accessible early intervention to employees and their workplaces. This includes increasing awareness, encouraging people to speak up, supporting help-seeking behaviour, educating managers and improving all aspects of mental health services.

Recovery – Respond, recover and grow

This means being responsive – maintaining a person-centred approach to provide the right care at the right time that meets the employees' needs. Response and intervention should support employees to not only recover, but to reclaim their mental health and wellbeing, grow, and be able to participate in a fulfilling life and career. This includes accountability for return to work programs, flexible employment options, and a culture that upholds the role of family and support networks in the recovery process.

The Victoria Police Mental Health and Wellbeing Model is underpinned by six (6) strategic objectives Leadership, Preparedness, Support, Systems, Services and Transition.

These objectives are further defined in the framework (page 9).

Mentally healthy workplace definition (beyondblue):

"A mentally healthy workplace is one that actively minimises risks to mental health, promotes positive mental health and wellbeing, is free of stigma and discrimination, and supports the recovery of workers with mental health conditions, for the benefit of the individual, organisation and community."³

³ beyondblue. Good practice framework for mental health and wellbeing in first responder organisations (2016)



Framework for the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy*

What

Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Vision

Victoria Police employees who are mentally fit, ready and capable to contribute to a safer Victoria.

Why

The Victoria Police *Zero Harm* strategy, *Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy* and the *Mental Health Review*, along with high profile media support for mental health have supported the development of *The Strategy* and Action plans.

The increasing number of employees presenting with mental health issues, claim costs and the need for a responsive and resilient workforce, make this a priority for Victoria Police and its employees.

Internal Drivers

- *Zero Harm* strategy and program of works.
- Victoria Police *Mental Health Review*.
- Victoria Police Worker's Compensation Premium.
- *Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Report*.
- Increased demand for psychological services.
- Victoria Police Corporate Advisory Group.
- safe-t-net Early Intervention Wellbeing System.

External Drivers

- Victorian Government/Whole of Victorian Government *Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter*.
- Community Expectations.
- Family.
- The Police Association Victoria.
- Community and Public Sector Union.
- *Community Safety Statement 2017*.
- Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Legislation.

How

The strategic objectives that underpin the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2020* will guide the actions and initiatives across the complete employee life cycle from prevention, to intervention, and to recovery.

Leadership

Building confidence, capability and accountability at all leadership levels across the organisation to support a culture of mental health.

Support

Building a culture that supports safe workplaces where all employees can recognise, reach out and respond to the mental health needs of themselves and their colleagues without stigma.

Preparedness

Preparing our employees and their families to meet and manage the psychological demands of their roles.

Systems

Provide work environments and systems that reduce risks to mental health, including suicide.

Services

Provide timely access to quality assessment, support and evidence-based professional care and intervention.

Transition

Support our employees and their families through the career life cycle and transition, and provide continuity of care for mental health and wellbeing post-employment.

How will we achieve better mental health in Victoria Police?

An emphasis on people-focused leadership is essential to ensure managers have the skills required to assist and support employees experiencing difficulties in the workplace. This includes recognising that performance discussions are multi-faceted and include wellbeing.

There needs to be an ongoing focus and continued intervention provided for employees (for example, critical incidents, and cumulative exposure to events), to ensure that they receive access to the right support at the right time.

The *Review* highlights the need to be explicit and visible in the way that we discuss and support mental health and to ensure all employees know, now more than ever, mental health matters.

The audience for this work are all of our current and former employees, particularly those who may experience a mental health condition.

Our initiatives are for those who seek help for their difficulties, and importantly, for those who have not yet put their hand up for assistance. Our initiatives via the use of online resources will provide material for the families, friends and support networks of our employees.

The Strategy serves as a roadmap for how to address the main issues that impact mental health and wellbeing in our organisation. It will also provide a direction for how to psychologically support our employees and families across the life cycle of their careers with Victoria Police, now and into the future.

The Action Plan describes how we will enact each objective, how we will measure the success of the actions and which part of the organisation will work towards achieving this.

What we know about our mental health injuries

- 44% increase in shifts lost against mental health injuries.
- 31% of all WorkCover claims are mental health injuries.
- 78.58% of the total claim cost are for mental health injuries.
- Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR) is 6.76 for mental health injuries.

All figures are for the 12 months ended April 2017



Our Priorities

The Victoria Police *Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2020* builds on the work of the *Review* by highlighting the critical areas of focus for the next four years.

The 39 recommendations of the *Review* are configured into a Program of Works, which will be implemented during the life of *The Strategy*. The Human Resource Department has been given the responsibility to deliver the below objectives however, the organisation as a whole has an obligation to ensure all the actions listed are implemented and achieved. The priority areas include:

- Leadership Culture Change Program
- Mental Health Literacy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Services
- Employee Lifecycle Initiatives

In order to gain additional and accurate data, a prevalence study will be commissioned on the mental health and suicide risk profile of the organisation.

By understanding the factors that prevent, protect and promote mental health, and with early intervention, we can minimise the incidence of mental health conditions and their effects when they do occur.

The importance of a Leadership Culture Change Program

Police leadership has typically had its origins in operational incident management, which has carried over into the non-operational work environment. Command and control models of leadership used outside of an operational incident setting can have negative impacts such as reduced morale and engagement.

People-focused leadership positively impacts employees through building supportive and engaged team-based structures and practices. Psychologically healthy environments are associated with improvements in wellbeing and reductions in mental health and risk of psychological injury.



Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan

Victoria Police is committed to providing a mentally healthy workplace. Our Vision recognises that the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, impacts the work we do and ultimately the safety of our community. Victoria Police understands the many challenges that a career in or around policing can bring and the need to support its employees.

Objective: 1 – Leadership

What we know: The gap in people-focused leadership skills regarding the management of mental health has resulted in the development of more targeted programs such as, Healthy Minds @ Work (HM@W) for Managers, ASSIST, Manager Assist, and Resilience for leaders and teams. People-focused leadership needs to be part of a broader leadership framework that is embedded across the organisation. This will significantly contribute to the prevention of mental health issues arising, as employees will feel more supported and valued in their role.

What we're doing	Baseline	Indicators	Outcomes
<p>We will increase our People Leadership Capability by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People Leadership Uplift Program from level 1 and 2 Leaders; The re-organisation and update of all leadership programs; and The development of a people focused leadership framework across the whole of organisation. 	<p>Feedback on existing programs such as HM@W, ASSIST, etc.</p> <p>Climate/Pulse survey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership program participation. Feedback via People Matters Survey, Climate Survey and Pulse Surveys. Individual leadership performance measures. 	<p>Increased understanding and decreased stigma attached to mental health across all levels of the organisation in a psychologically healthy and positive workplace environment.</p> <p>Mental health and wellbeing as a workplace priority.</p> <p>Increased people-related accountabilities for leaders.</p>

Objective: 2 – Preparedness

What we know: There has been a long-standing focus on physical preparation, but psychological preparation needs to be given more attention during recruit training, and continuing throughout the life cycle, as career and life needs change.

Public service employees have often not been provided strategies to prepare for their roles, or what they are exposed to whilst working alongside sworn officers.

Families have not been fully included despite the important role they play as a support network. In addition to including them as a support mechanism, they also need to be prepared and made aware of the requirements of the job their loved one is undertaking.

What we're doing	Baseline	Indicators	Outcomes
<p>We will enhance individual and family preparedness and response by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of a mental health literacy plan across the employment life cycle, and involvement from families in these programs; Allocation of sufficient resources to specialist psychology units; The development of a model for various wellbeing monitoring options; and The development of an online mental health intranet to support individuals and families to access quality psychological information. 	<p>New initiative – baseline to be determined.</p> <p>Rates of completion of self-care plans.</p> <p>Prevalence study will contribute to baseline data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from employees and their families. Completion of preparedness training and self-care plans during recruit training. 	<p>Increased mental health literacy and resilience.</p> <p>Increased individual skills and workplace strategies to manage emerging risks to mental health.</p> <p>Employees who feel prepared, confident and mentally fit to undertake their roles.</p> <p>An increase in the number and quality of supportive workplace conversations and improved help-seeking behaviour around operational incidents.</p> <p>Increased family engagement to increase and strengthen support networks.</p> <p>Reduced psychological injury.</p>

Acronyms: Police Psychology Unit (PPU); Mental Health Program Office (MHPO); Professional Standards Command (PSC); Performance & Development Unit (PDU); People Development Command (PDC); Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC); Health Safety and Deployment (HSD); Medical Advisory Unit (MAU); Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT).

Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan (continued)

Objective: 3 – Support

What we know: Entrenched stigma is a barrier to help-seeking, therefore people are still reluctant to seek help.

There are low levels of mental health literacy.

Support and awareness has to occur at all levels for people to be able to recognise the signs and feel safe enough to reach out for support.

The range of support services is effective at providing support and intervention when activated.

Many employees, as well as their families, are unaware of how and where to get help when they need it.

What we're doing	Baseline	Indicators	Outcomes
<p>We will increase mental health literacy across the organisation to reduce stigma or discrimination by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking an environmental scan to determine best practice; Development of an organisational wide mental health literacy program; Revision and enhancement of existing mental health program content; Resilience training included in recruit curriculum; and Inclusion of suicide prevention initiatives as part of the mental health literacy program. 	<p>Wellbeing services and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) data.</p> <p>WorkCover data (Time lost, injury rates and Return to Work (RTW) rates).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback via People Matters survey, Pulse Surveys and Mental Health Prevalence Survey. • Monitor Wellbeing services and EAP data. • Reductions in time lost and injury rates, coupled with improvements in return to work rates. 	<p>Normalising common mental health conditions and the stigma associated, thus increasing help-seeking behaviour.</p> <p>To improve early identification of suicide risk and prevent suicide.</p> <p>High levels of mental health literacy through improved awareness.</p> <p>Workplace culture where help-seeking is validated and supported without discrimination.</p> <p>Work options for those who may be experiencing mental health issues.</p> <p>A comprehensive and consistent internal approach to mental health, aligned to evidence-based and best practice guidelines and recommendations.</p>
<p>We will continue to support employees across the organisation with particular focus on those who have experienced potentially traumatic events, disciplinary action or who are routinely exposed to explicit materials, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to promote and provide psychological services across the organisation; Development of specific programs to support specialist areas such as SOCIT, and individuals going through disciplinary processes; and Continuation of the trauma therapy group. 	<p>Prevalence study will contribute to baseline data.</p> <p>Climate/Pulse survey.</p>		
<p>We will support employees returning to work who have been deployed by military or emergencies services (i.e. ADF) where there is a potential for exposure to traumatic events by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of an organisational wide policy to support the return of employees upon completion of their duties/response. 			
<p>We will increase involvement with the CPSU and TPAV by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental Health Strategy development and endorsement by CPSU and TPAV; and Identification of project involvement and collaboration opportunities with Union partners. 			

Objective: 4 – Systems

What we know: Organisational factors (including systems and structures), play a significant role in employee health and wellbeing. Some organisational systems can have significant negative impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Our employees frequently report that organisational factors have more of a negative impact than operational events, which they feel better equipped to deal with.

Many of our employees that have presented with significant mental health risks have been involved in, and impacted by, organisational systems and processes that have an additional negative impact.

What we're doing	Baseline	Indicators	Outcomes
<p>We will provide integrated and co-ordinated functions to support mental health by:</p> <p>Implementation of electronic Case Management System and co-location of MAU and PPU.</p>	<p>RTW rates.</p> <p>New initiative – baseline to be determined.</p> <p>Climate/Pulse survey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User experience feedback. • Reductions in injury data. • Improvements in return to work rates. • Faster resolution of issues. 	<p>A reduction in risk to mental health and reduced psychological injury.</p> <p>Improvements in access to support and care.</p> <p>Clear accountability for people outcomes and consideration of systemic risks to psychological health.</p> <p>Proactive management of risks.</p> <p>Enhanced mental health service delivery.</p> <p>Integrated and co-ordinated functions.</p>
<p>We will determine mental health risks and mitigation strategies in our existing organisational processes and systems (i.e. Professional and Development Assessments (PDA)), and we will provide tools and support for line managers to have quality conversations with employees about mental health and wellbeing by:</p> <p>Review of policies and the PDA process with the introduction of mentally healthy approaches; and</p> <p>Core mandatory mental health literacy components embedded into recruit training at all levels of leadership programs. This will include content tailored specifically for managers.</p>			
<p>We will develop clear accountabilities for mental health by:</p> <p>Aligning PDA process to support organisational safety value and associated behaviours.</p>			
<p>We will recognise the importance of psychological health through Victoria Police Values and Expected Behaviours and Honours and Awards by:</p> <p>Revision of Values and Expected Behaviours and organisational wide honours and awards system to recognise the importance of psychological safety.</p>			

Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan (continued)

Objective: 5 – Services

What we know: Stigma and poor help-seeking mean that employees at times do not get the care they need.

Some employees are reluctant to seek help from Victoria Police internal services.

Existing services have not been adequately staffed to meet the increasing demand across the organisation.

There is a need for more specialised care for certain mental health conditions.

In some cases, service gaps in regional areas have resulted in employees not having access to care in a timely manner.

There is a need to access services for early assessment and diagnosis.

What we're doing	Baseline	Indicators	Outcomes
<p>We will enhance internal service functions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and realignment of additional mental health professionals into a coordinated and integrated service; The establishment of an external network of specialist mental health providers; and Provision of supervision for mental health workers in the organisation. 	<p>Wellbeing services and EAP data.</p> <p>Prevalence study will contribute to baseline data.</p> <p>safe-t-net data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in resources that provide services to our employees. Reduction in case numbers and an increase in case resolution and client satisfaction and feedback. Prevalence study data. Reducing timeframes in accessing treatment. Improved return to work rates. Increased uptake of training and education. 	<p>Services that are able to meet organisational demand.</p> <p>Improved integration of services to support individual employee needs.</p> <p>Provision of high-quality, integrated services that employees feel able to access, free from stigma or uncertainty.</p> <p>Readily available quality mental health services in rural and remote locations.</p> <p>Flexible treatment models and options that are responsive to individual needs.</p> <p>Professional and peer supervision for employees working within the support services to reduce mental health risks and ensure they can continue to provide high quality care to employees.</p>
<p>We will provide an integrated physical and mental health Fitness for Duty approach by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of existing psychological fitness for duty process and development of process more aligned with organisational needs. 	<p>Climate/Pulse survey.</p>		
<p>We will provide professional mental health support in all locations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a state-wide mental health specialist provider network; and Implementation of E-treatment services to support rural locations. 			
<p>We will reduce mental health risks for employees working in support based services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of peer supervision processes; and Introduction of Peer Support processes, to support our mental health professionals team. 			

Objective: 6 – Transition

What we know: Many employees continue to experience the psychological impacts of their policing career long after they leave the organisation. Those who experience long term absence from the workplace due to mental ill health often feel isolated, disconnected and unsupported. Services for former Victoria Police employees' mental health have been lacking. Employees leave the organisation in a range of ways, some not of their own choosing, therefore leaving the organisation can be a high risk time for mental health. Leaving the organisation can mean leaving behind strong collegial support networks. For some, leaving behind their professional identity after a long career can be challenging.

What we're doing	Baseline	Indicators	Outcomes
<p>We will engage in employee lifecycle management to support mentally healthy career choices by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a pilot career break model and career break options to support mental health; Review of transition programs for end of career exiting employees; and Enhancement of retired peer support network. 	<p>New initiative – baseline to be determined.</p> <p>Climate/Pulse survey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of care plans for different exit paths. Screening and care plans implemented for all exiting employees. Feedback and satisfaction. Increase in help-seeking rates as indicated by clinical and service usage data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An awareness of mental health needs of employees as they leave the organisation. Services that can respond to the varying need of exiting employees. Continuity of care prior, during and after their exit from the organisation. Improved accountability for the management of employees on long term absence. Reduction in poor mental health and mental health risks. Adequate redeployment options. Appropriate career break options.

Appendix 1: Overview of Existing Services

Existing Services

The *Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2020* provides organisational direction that builds upon the existing services and structures to provide a more holistic and integrated level of care and intervention for all employees. Our wellbeing support services provide prevention, intervention, and response services:

24 hour Crisis and Critical Incident On-call Service

Professional psychological support is available 24/7 through our on-call service, which is staffed by the Police Psychology Unit and Police Welfare, and further supported by Chaplaincy and Peer Support. This service provides crisis support to individuals and workplaces, risk assessments, management advice regarding mental health in the workplace and support for other matters of psychological concern. This service also provides formal critical incident response and follow up to operational incidents and other workplace events.

Counselling and Referrals

Confidential counselling is available to all employees, and their partners and children. The Police Psychology Unit provides referrals to experienced mental health clinicians state-wide through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP), as well as, some internal counselling. Where counselling or treatment is not required, the Police Psychology Unit and Police Welfare continue to provide emotional support, monitoring, consultation, and advice to people experiencing difficulty.

Case Managers

The core duty of the case manager role is to provide assessment and intervention for clients in need of support. The case management process begins with development of a working relationship between employee and case manager. The case manager takes a systemic view and will identify and work with key stakeholders and nominated support people to contribute to positive outcomes for the employee.

safe-t-net

safe-t-net is an early intervention wellbeing support system designed to identify, record, and monitor our employees' exposure to events that have the potential to impact their wellbeing. *safe-t-net* has been developed to provide our employees with the opportunity to talk with their manager about the current impact, or cumulative impacts a particular event or series of events is having on their wellbeing and enable access to appropriate support. *safe-t-net* focuses on the relationship between the manager and the employee with "one conversation at a time".

equipt

equipt is a free wellbeing smart phone application developed by Victoria Police and The Police Association Victoria, alongside our employees and Phoenix Australia – Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health. *equipt* is designed for current and former sworn officers, all Victoria Police employees, and their families.

equipt provides tools that can help our employees strengthen their physical, social, and emotional wellbeing. It can measure and track wellbeing over time and put our employees in touch with support if or when they need it. The *equipt* app is completely confidential, available anytime, and free to download from the App Store and Google Play.

Organisational Workplace Support

The Police Psychology Unit provides a range of workplace services that include consultation, coaching, advice, and support, with the aim of creating psychologically healthy workplaces. This includes a service for managers within the organisation to access information, coaching, advice, and support on managing mental health issues that present in their workplaces. In line with the Mental Health Review recommendations an additional thirteen (13) psychologists have been employed to assist employees' access to prompt help and support.

Training and Education

Victoria Police provides educational programs and services on a range of topics relating to mental health and workplace functioning. Such programs range from mental health literacy aimed at individuals, to skill development for managers, to the resilience of teams. Two educators have been employed to provide greater training and education. Current programs include:

- Healthy Minds @ Work
- Healthy Minds @ Work – Managers
- ASSIST (Psychological First Aid for Managers)
- Resilience @ Work (Individual, Team, and Leader programs)
- Working Well, Preventing Stress
- Separating with Support and Safety
- Handling Heavy Workloads
- Change @ Work
- Understanding and Improving Unplanned Leave
- Critical Conversations

Peer Support

The Peer Support Program is a strong network of volunteers across the organisation, who undertake their roles in addition to their normal duties. They are trained to assist fellow employees with personal or work-related matters at the local level. They are often the first point of contact for employees in the workplace, and can provide support, referrals and information, and help people to access other supports and services. Our peer support officers are overseen by the Peer Support Co-ordination Unit.

Internal Witness Support

The Internal Witness Support Unit is located within Police Welfare, and is staffed by police officers who perform a dedicated welfare role. This is a dedicated, confidential service provided specifically to employees reporting or providing information in relation to alleged corruption, criminality or misconduct by another employee. Internal Witness Support Unit accepts referrals in relation to any sworn, Victorian Public Servants, Protective Services Officer or recruit who has made a protected disclosure under the *Protected Disclosure Act 2013*, who are an internal source or a police witness.

Chaplaincy

Our Chaplaincy network comprises of senior chaplains who are supported by a network of chaplains across the state. They provide a range of pastoral care services to employees and their families, and are available 24/7. Our chaplains represent a range of denominations to support the diverse spiritual needs of our employees, and are available for visits, as well as performing a range of ceremonies and formal duties.

External and Related Services:

The following external support services are also available to the employees of Victoria Police:

The Police Association Victoria

The Police Association Victoria provides access to free, confidential counselling to employees and their families through an EAP, and has welfare officers that can support employees.

Community and Public Sector Union

The Community and Public Sector Union provides comprehensive support for both current and retired public servants. A Retired Officers Division can also support employees.

The Retired Police Association

The Retired Police Association co-ordinates a range of activities that facilitate former sworn employees to keep in contact.

Retired Peer Support Program

The recently established Retired Peer Support Program consists of former employees who have volunteered to undertake a formal peer support role for former sworn employees, thereby providing continuity of the peer based support model for people in their post-Victoria Police lives. This program will be supported and expanded as part of the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan 2017-2020*.

Acknowledgement of traditional owners

Victoria Police pay our respect to the traditional owners of lands on which we live and work.

We pay our respects to Elders and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who continue to care for their country, culture and people.

Authorised and published by Victoria Police
Victoria Police Centre
637 Flinders Street
Docklands, VIC, 3008

Published by Victoria Police July, 2017

© The State of Victoria, Victoria Police 2017

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Print managed by Finsbury Green

This document is available online in PDF format at www.police.vic.gov.au

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

