



# AFP

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2018–2023

POLICING FOR A SAFER AUSTRALIA





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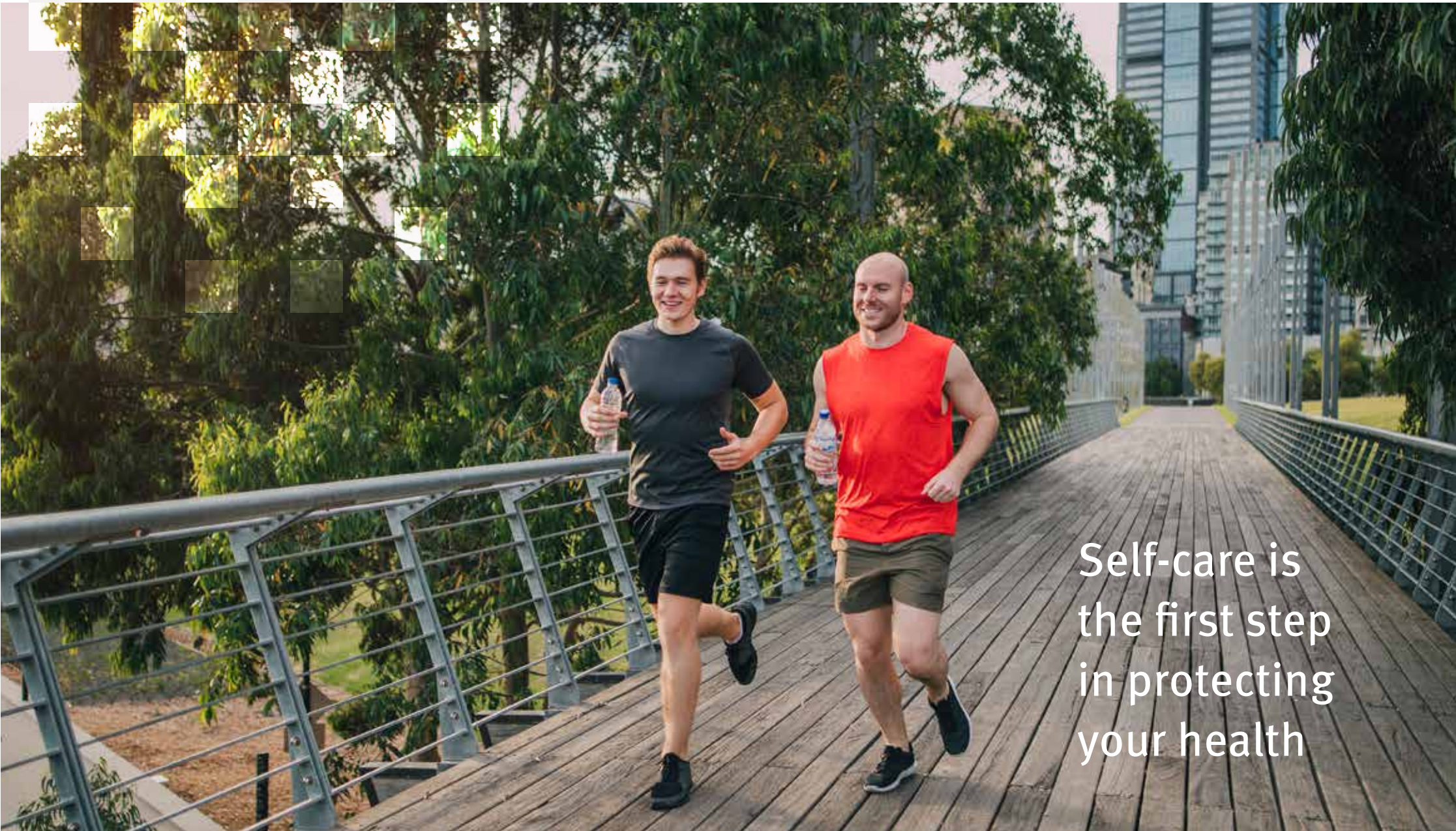


## FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Australian Federal Police *Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018–2023*. There are unique considerations in the delivery of health and wellbeing services for dynamic organisations such as the AFP and we acknowledge the high risk nature of the work undertaken carries an inherent risk of harm and injury. Recognising and acknowledging this risk is the first step towards health protection and this underpins the need for a health and wellbeing strategy.

Since 2016, we have opened our organisation to external and independent review and it is not lost on me how difficult this has been. This strategy is the culmination of many years of work and sets the foundation for health and wellbeing in the AFP for the next five years. It recognises that health is holistic; mental or physical, illness is illness. Most importantly this strategy was developed by our workforce, for our workforce. It is specific to the AFP and directly relevant to our daily work. This strategy is a long-term commitment to all our health.

Andrew Colvin APM OAM  
AFP Commissioner





## VISION

The AFP promotes individual health  
and protects workforce health;  
our workforce is resilient and ready.



A healthy AFP workplace:

- has a positive workplace culture
- recognises health as a key capability
- develops leadership capability
- raises health awareness and reduces stigma
- reduces risk and builds resilience
- encourages support and early intervention
- creates a community of health support.



The AFP operates in a complex and dynamic environment locally, nationally and internationally. The evolving nature of traditional and new crime types mean our people must be as agile, responsive and adaptable as possible. To support our people to deliver this, we must also support their total health.



\* Road2Ready – Physical Health Concept Paper 2017–2020  
\*\* Phoenix Australia Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, 2018.  
AFP Structural Review, Reform and Policy Development on Mental Health: Final Report.  
# Comcare Workers' Compensation Data 2013–2017  
^ AFP Chief Medical Officer, Dr Katrina Sanders

## THE AFP HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

The *AFP Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018–2023* (the Strategy) sets the strategic direction for health in the AFP. It demonstrates a commitment to our people by restoring and promoting health, and by preventing illness and injury, no matter the cause. Health and wellbeing is a priority for the AFP and this strategy explains what, why and how we will achieve this.

The Strategy describes our AFP Health and Wellbeing Model, a long-term commitment to physical, psychological, organisational and social health, for all employees across their AFP lifecycle. Three strategic objectives provide the roadmap for the AFP Action Plan included in this strategy. The *AFP Health and Wellbeing Implementation Plan* is an accompanying document that details the specific projects, timelines and responsibilities to achieve our strategy.

The Strategy builds on the draft *AFP Mental Health Strategy* authored in 2016 and complements the recommendations of the Phoenix Australia Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health review and Australian National Audit Office report. The Strategy aligns with the AFP Future Ready transformation initiative where health and wellbeing is a key initiative and links with the *AFP Learning Strategy* and the *Cultural Change: Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the Australian Federal Police* reports.



When health is respected  
and valued, a culture of  
health supports you



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

For the purposes of the Strategy, the terms health and wellbeing are best defined as:<sup>1</sup>

### Health:

‘a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’.

### Wellbeing:

‘a state of being comfortable, healthy or happy. Broader than just mental health, a state of wellbeing is where a person is considered to be flourishing in both mental and physical health’.

The Strategy has been developed to support both current and former AFP employees and their families under a model of shared responsibility. The Strategy acknowledges that friends and family play an essential role in looking after AFP employees.

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* guiding principle is that safety is everyone’s responsibility<sup>2</sup>. Employers have a duty to provide a safe working environment for its workers and to ensure a worker is not exposed to risks to health and safety. Workers also have a duty to maintain their own health and safety and take reasonable care for their own health and safety.

The Strategy acknowledges that health and wellbeing are the responsibility of the individual, the supervisor and the broader AFP.

Work conditions, relationships with colleagues, work variety and pride in work are positive aspects of working for the AFP. They are committed and dedicated to the AFP mission<sup>3</sup>.

1

### HEALTH PROTECTION

All our people are committed to self-care and our leaders are educated and supportive of delivering a culture of health.

2

### HEALTH INTERVENTION

Timely access, irrespective of location, to appropriate support options for all our people.

3

### HEALTH FRAMEWORKS

A governance structure of standards and quality assurance, partnered with industry experts.

When we achieve these objectives,  
our workforce is agile and ready.

<sup>1</sup> Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency, 2016. *Health and Wellbeing Scoping Report*

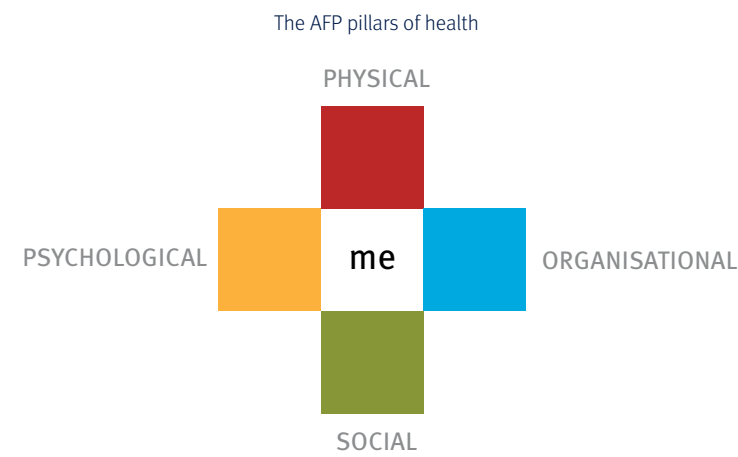
<sup>2</sup> *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth)

<sup>3</sup> Phoenix Australia Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, 2018. *AFP Structural Review, Reform and Policy Development on Mental Health: Final Report*.





# THE AFP HEALTH AND WELLBEING MODEL



Health and wellbeing is the complex interplay of physical, psychological, organisational and social health that affects an individual's wellness at work. The Strategy recognises the evidence linking physical and psychological health outcomes, and goes further, to acknowledge organisational and social health as critical to individual health and more broadly to AFP capability. The AFP health and wellbeing model is represented by these four pillars of health.

AFP pillars of health are considered in the context of the individual, role, team and more broadly the organisation. Each pillar has a traditional definition which, when overlayed with AFP context, becomes relevant and tangible. Our diverse organisation has unique health needs and the AFP pillars of health assists us to focus on the right combination of pillars, for the right person, at the right time.

Exercise, diet, blood pressure and cholesterol, amongst others, are traditional concepts of **physical health**.

**Psychological health** is a state of wellbeing and the ability to cope with daily stressors. In the AFP context these traditional definitions transform to the physical application of use of force under immense psychological pressure, international deployment to remote locations with limited health support, high risk operations necessitating the highest levels of physical and psychological performance, and exposure to trauma through sight, smell, psychological connection and memory.

**Organisational health** is not simply work demands and pressure, but extends more broadly to support from colleagues and supervisors, and culture. In a law enforcement agency organisational health is often the most crucial pillar in health protection.

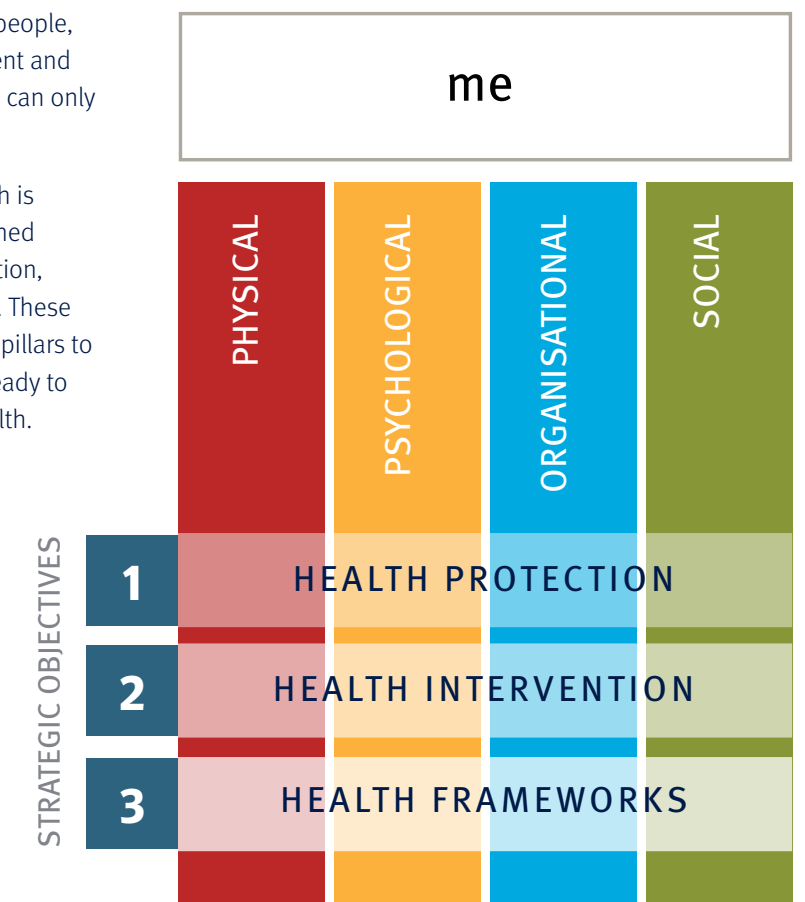
A healthy workforce can withstand the daily stressors and threats inherent to high risk organisations and the AFP recognises the value of **social health** in contributing to overall health. Including social health as an AFP pillar of health demonstrates respect for personal time and for family and friends who support us outside

Unrecognised health issues can affect decision-making and capacity to cope in high pressure situations

of work. The AFP relies on the health of its people, from entry into the organisation to retirement and beyond, to contribute to capability and this can only be achieved through shared responsibility.

The AFP Health and Wellbeing Model, which is the foundation of this strategy, is underpinned by three strategic objectives: health protection, health intervention and health frameworks. These objectives guide us to achieve health in all pillars to support a healthy workforce that is agile, ready to respond and respectful of each other's health.

The AFP Health and Wellbeing Model





The AFP commits to  
our people's health  
when well and unwell

# OUR APPROACH

Our approach to achieve the Health and Wellbeing Model is defined by eight outcomes.

Each outcome demonstrates a shared responsibility between individuals, supervisors and the wider AFP. To achieve these outcomes, health must be embedded in our thinking, our business practices and our culture.

**Health protection**

Our leaders must be trained in recognising the signs of ill health and in supporting our people to seek help. An education framework will combat stigma and equip each of us in understanding our own health. Leadership and education will create a culture where recovery from illness and injury is presumed until proven otherwise, delivering on the first strategic objective.

**Health intervention**

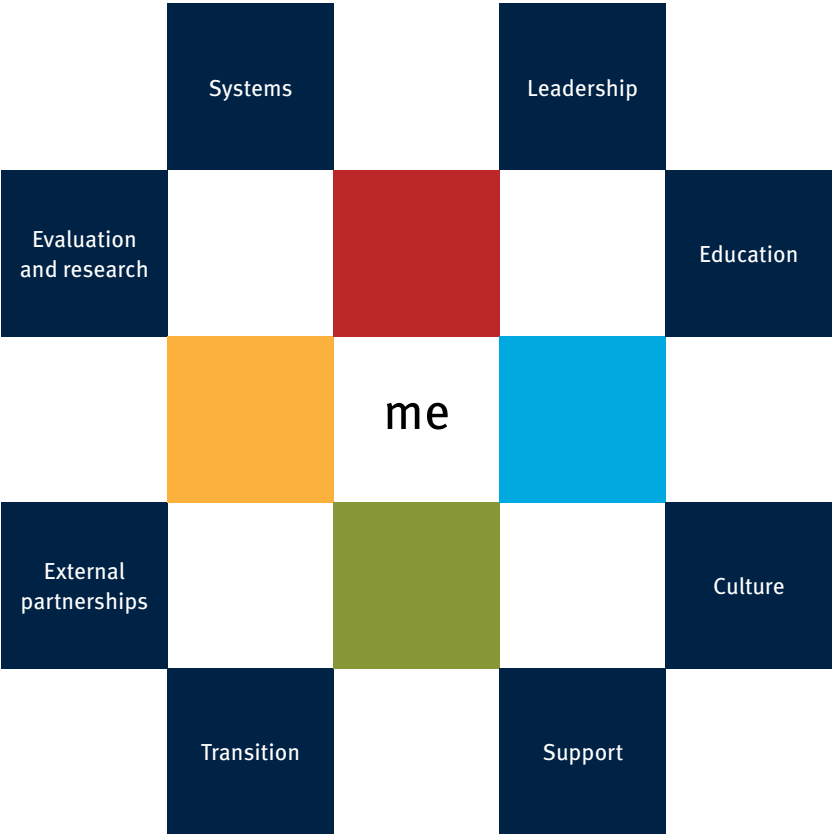
Timely access, irrespective of location, to appropriate support options for all our people underpins the second strategic objective. The AFP recognises that with a high risk organisation such as ours, comes a high risk of injury. The right level of intervention, at the right time, supports our people to restore their health and remain at work. Further recognition that health intervention at key career transition points, such as post-deployment or retirement, can prevent illness and injury.

**Health frameworks**

The third strategic objective recognise systems are needed to support health. Policies, processes, partnerships and technology underpin this objective and allow it to be recognised.

Together, eight outcomes will recognise our three objectives to achieve the AFP Health and Wellbeing Model.

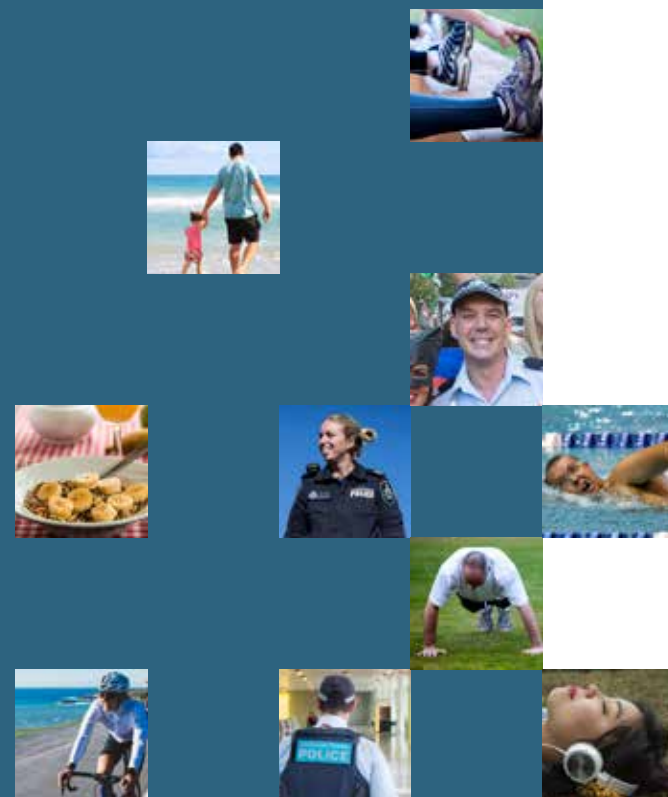
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES		OUTCOMES		
1	HEALTH PROTECTION	Leadership	Education	Culture
2	HEALTH INTERVENTION	Support	Transition	
3	HEALTH FRAMEWORKS	Systems	External partnerships	Evaluation and research



# THE ACTION PLAN

To build on the historic AFP Mental Health Strategy, the AFP engaged Phoenix Australia Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health to undertake the *AFP Structural Review, Reform and Policy Development on Mental Health*. The AFP recognised the need to invest further in the health and wellbeing of its people and independent, external expert advice would be required to achieve this. Concurrently the Australian National Audit Office undertook a review into mental health support services, *Managing mental health in the Australian Federal Police*. Both reports recommend the AFP develop a comprehensive organisational health and wellbeing strategy and governance arrangements based on an integrated approach to employees' health.

The *AFP Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018–2023* complements these reports and incorporates the recommendations which have been accepted in full. The action plan on the following pages defines how we will deliver the Strategy. Underpinning this plan is a separate, detailed Implementation Plan which allocates tasks, resourcing and timelines for achievement.



1

## HEALTH PROTECTION

All our people are committed to self-care and our leaders are educated and supportive of delivering a culture of health.

### Leadership

To commence implementation within 1 year

WHAT	For health to be a priority, our leaders must be trained and encouraged to monitor and manage the health of their people.
WHY	To promote help-seeking, senior leadership must view injuries as able to be rehabilitated until proven otherwise.
HOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop policy and procedure documents that provide guidance to managers on how to manage health concerns in their teams, including how to identify health issues, make necessary referrals and make decisions about fitness to perform role.</li><li>2. Supervisors undergo mental health and psychological first aid training on a regular basis to maintain currency.</li><li>3. Supervisors undergo Commonwealth workers' compensation training on a regular basis to maintain currency and understand their responsibilities for health protection of their workers.</li><li>4. Establish compulsory leadership training which incorporates information on how to appropriately manage team employees with a health issue as a prerequisite for promotion to management positions across the AFP.</li></ol>
OUTCOMES	Improved support for ill and injured employees in staying and returning to work.

### Education

To commence implementation within 1 year

WHAT	A health education framework that enhances self-care knowledge, supervisor responsibilities and available support. Critical to the education framework is the concept that self-care is the first part of a stepped care model.
WHY	Education enhances health awareness and challenges stigma.
HOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop a health education framework tailored to the AFP career lifecycle.</li><li>2. Develop an organisational health communications plan.</li><li>3. Provide information and encourage mutual support networks for families.</li><li>4. Implement a cultural uplift aimed at current and emerging leaders.</li></ol>
OUTCOMES	Individuals understand their own health responsibilities and support others in achieving theirs.

### Culture

To commence implementation within 1 year

WHAT	A culture where recovery from illness and injury is presumed until proven otherwise. Mental or physical, illness is illness.
WHY	Supporting the right mindset and expectations surrounding health and wellbeing is critical in achieving a health culture. Transition between roles for health reasons can be challenging and can potentially exacerbate injury.
HOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Normalise the requirement for recovery from injury/illness through open and transparent conversation – National Manager sponsor, socialising and educating all leadership courses.</li><li>2. Implement flexible solutions for physical fitness programs and resources that are commensurate with the role requirements of AFP people, regardless of location with implementation to commence within 3–5 years.</li><li>3. Work with Comcare to make the claims process easier for affected AFP employees to minimise the distress associated with the claims process.</li></ol>
OUTCOMES	Injury and illness is normalised and individuals feel supported in their recovery.



2

## HEALTH INTERVENTION

Timely access, irrespective of location, to appropriate support options for all our people.

### Support To commence implementation within 1–2 years

WHAT	All our employees have access to a suite of stepped support services commensurate with need.
WHY	Increased use of robust evidence-based treatments and interventions will protect health and prevent injury. Robust treatment pathways will ensure timely and relevant health intervention improving outcomes for injured and ill employees.
HOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organisational Health will coordinate and manage health promotion initiatives and internal health support services to a level commensurate with accepted risk.</li><li>Re-design Organisational Health to be fit for purpose and implement a new service delivery model adopting core, contingent and partnership mode with enhanced regional footprint.</li><li>Communicate a clear mandate for the service to maximise and prioritise what it contributes to the support system.</li><li>Establish a stepped care approach to mental health support to ensure that care is coordinated and commensurate with need.</li><li>Engage services of external health specialists with experience in working with first responders.</li><li>Ensure the <i>AFP Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018–2023</i> is available to families.</li><li>Monitor individual and force health and wellbeing as a shared responsibility.</li><li>Support current, transitioning and former employees, and families.</li></ol>
OUTCOMES	A holistic health and wellbeing system helping to deliver preventative and responsive services based on risk.

### Transition To commence implementation within 1–2 years

WHAT	Supporting individual health at key career transition points such as entry into or exit from the AFP, specialist and high risk roles, pre- and post-deployment. Acknowledging that these key transition points can affect family, they must be included in transition planning.
WHY	Transition into and out of high risk roles can be a period of significant change, including to identity, community and residence, social networks, family roles, physical health, support and culture. Enhanced transition arrangements will support the health of the individual at the time of transition and into the future.
HOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Periodic medical, psychological (where relevant) and physical fitness testing to retain suitability for the role to be built into the Job Family Model as essential requirements.</li><li>Develop a formal process to monitor and provide assurance that employees in specialist roles have their gateway clearance in place before commencing in the role.</li><li>Develop a two-phased (upon return and subsequent) health and wellbeing screening for employees returning from overseas deployment.</li><li>Organisational consideration of an Organisational Health lifecycle for the AFP workforce which would include recruit, retain and separate.</li><li>Develop family support options including education sessions, information bulletins, and an information package for international deployment.</li><li>Prepare employees for separation from the AFP.</li></ol>
OUTCOMES	Health and wellbeing intervention prevents illness and injury.

3

## HEALTH FRAMEWORKS

A governance structure of standards and quality assurance, partnered with industry experts.

### Systems To commence implementation within 1–2 years

WHAT	Design and implement new health frameworks, policies and processes that support the AFP pillars of health.
WHY	Consistent and transparent application of standards supports a culture of health. Access to accurate and timely health information, supported by technology, enhances preventative health measures at individual and organisational levels.
HOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Using a risk based approach, create an Organisational Health strategic and governance framework.</li><li>Design and implement a new case management system and e-health portal.</li><li>Define and consistently apply health standards.</li><li>Define a holistic risk assessment framework which identifies and monitors health risks across the AFP workforce.</li><li>Develop and maintain health reporting to assist managers and employees in day-to-day health management.</li><li>Broaden routine and regular health and wellbeing screening to all operational areas.</li></ol>
OUTCOMES	Delivery of targeted health intervention through an understanding of health risks. Intervention is commensurate with risk.

### External partnerships To commence implementation within 1 year

WHAT	Specialist service partnerships that are contemporary and relevant to the AFP. Organisational Health will coordinate this care rather than be responsible for clinical service delivery.
WHY	A network of health professionals that understand AFP core business can better support and treat our employees. Robust treatment pathways support the restoration of health and contribute to AFP capability.
HOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Referral to external specialists includes accompanying information regarding AFP operational requirements and risk assessment.</li><li>Engage the services of external health specialists with experience and expertise in working with emergency services personnel, and educate them on AFP processes, including individuals who provide Employee Assistance Program services.</li><li>Undertake a uniqueness and value assessment to help understand what roles are better placed to be supported by partnerships.</li><li>Recognise the important role ex-employee networks provide in supporting former employees.</li></ol>
OUTCOMES	Increased understanding from specialist service providers of the stresses and challenges of working with the AFP.

### Evaluation and research To commence implementation within 1–2 years

WHAT	A feedback mechanism to ensure AFP Health and Wellbeing services remain relevant and accessible.
WHY	Quality assurance mechanisms are critical to providing a service that is respected and utilised.
HOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop an Organisational Health Evaluation Plan and associated policies.</li><li>Implement and encourage AFP employees to use online survey tools which allow them to provide constructive, real-time feedback on support services.</li><li>Explore the potential for a system of non-liability health care for mental health conditions amongst police members and protective service officers, enabling immediate access to care.</li><li>Develop partnerships with external agencies to assist in research.</li><li>Create a reporting capability to track, analyse and report on AFP health and wellbeing.</li><li>Analyse, define and report on health risks across the organisation in a consistent manner.</li><li>Develop arrangements to align employee health and wellbeing resources to areas assessed as highest risk.</li></ol>
OUTCOMES	A health and wellbeing model that remains relevant and accessible for all our people.



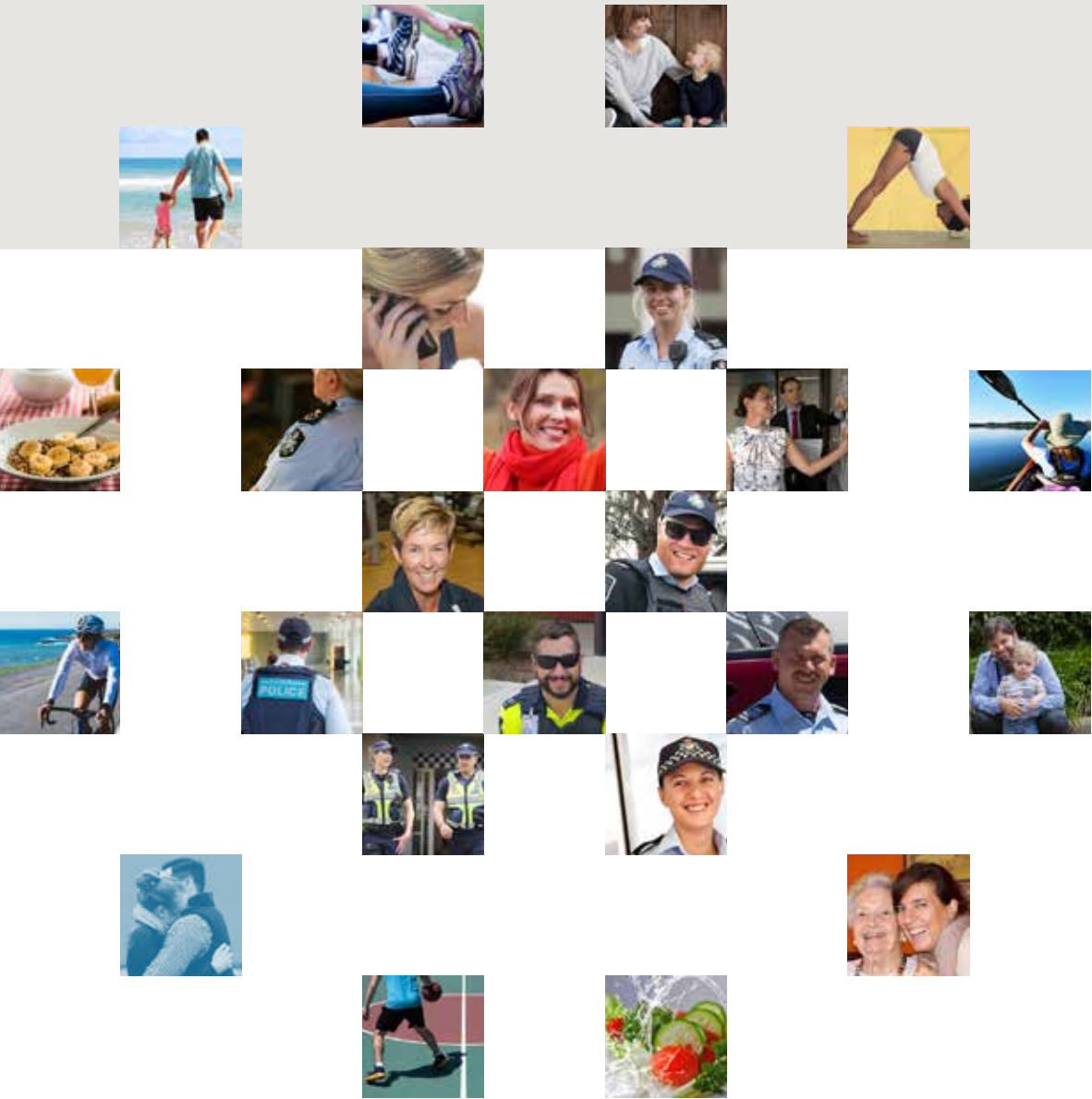
# WHERE TO REACH OUT FOR HELP

## INTERNAL AFP SUPPORTS

	Email	Phone	
AFP Organisational Health Triage	Organisational-Health-Triage@afp.gov.au	+61 2 6131 6000	Your first contact point for any health-related questions
AFP Welfare Officers	welfareofficernetwork@afp.gov.au	+61 2 6131 2977	On the ground peer support
AFP Chaplains		+61 2 6270 4880	Pastoral care and spiritual welfare support
Benestar	https://benestar.com/user/login	1300 360 364	AFP's contracted Employee Assistance Provider for confidential personal and professional support, 24/7 for you and your family
(Formerly Davidson Trahaire Corpsych)	Company Identifier: AFP Token: AFPO1		

## EXTERNAL SUPPORTS

	Email	Phone	
Equipt	Equipt is a free wellbeing app designed for current and former AFP employees and their families, and is available now for iPhone and Android through your app store		
Your doctor	General Practitioner (GP) or other specialist		
Australian Federal Police Association	afpa@afpa.org.au	+61 2 6285 1677	Committed to providing a range of welfare support for all AFPA members
beyondblue	www.beyondblue.org.au	1300 224 636	beyondblue provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live
Healthdirect	www.healthdirect.gov.au	1800 022 222	healthdirect is a free service providing safe, practical health information and advice supported by the governments of Australia
Lifeline	www.lifeline.org.au	13 11 14	24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention
1800 RESPECT	www.180orespect.org.au	1800 737 732	Open 24 hours to support people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse
SoldierOn	soldieron.org.au	1300 620 380	Providing support to those in the national security community and their families
Suicide Call Back Service	www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au	1300 659 467	Suicide Call Back Service is a nationwide service that provides 24/7 telephone, video and online professional counselling to people who are affected by suicide



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General enquiries about this document and contents should be directed to:

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POLICING FOR  
A SAFER AUSTRALIA