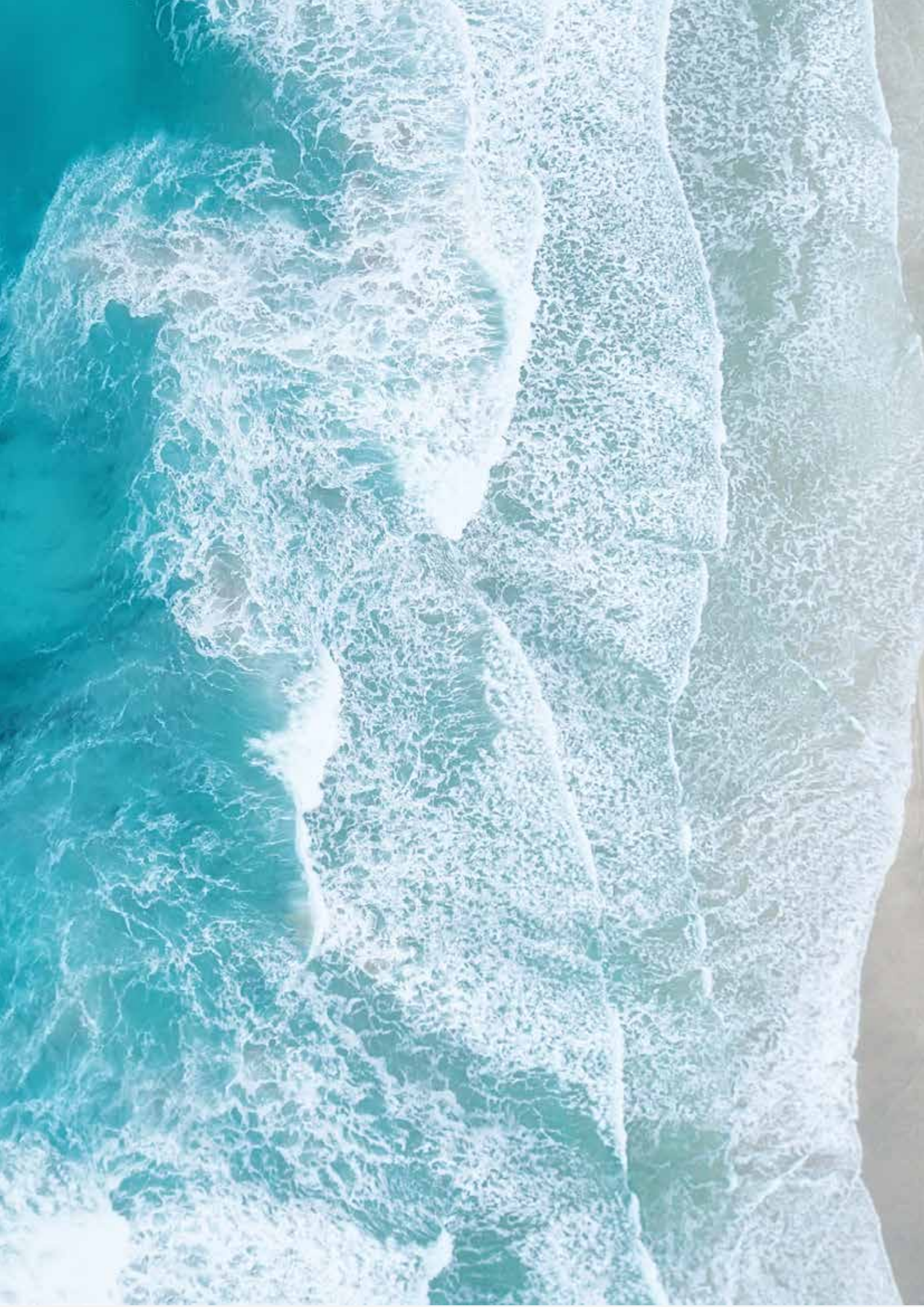




Student Mental Health Strategy



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Why do we need this?

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR STUDENT
MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

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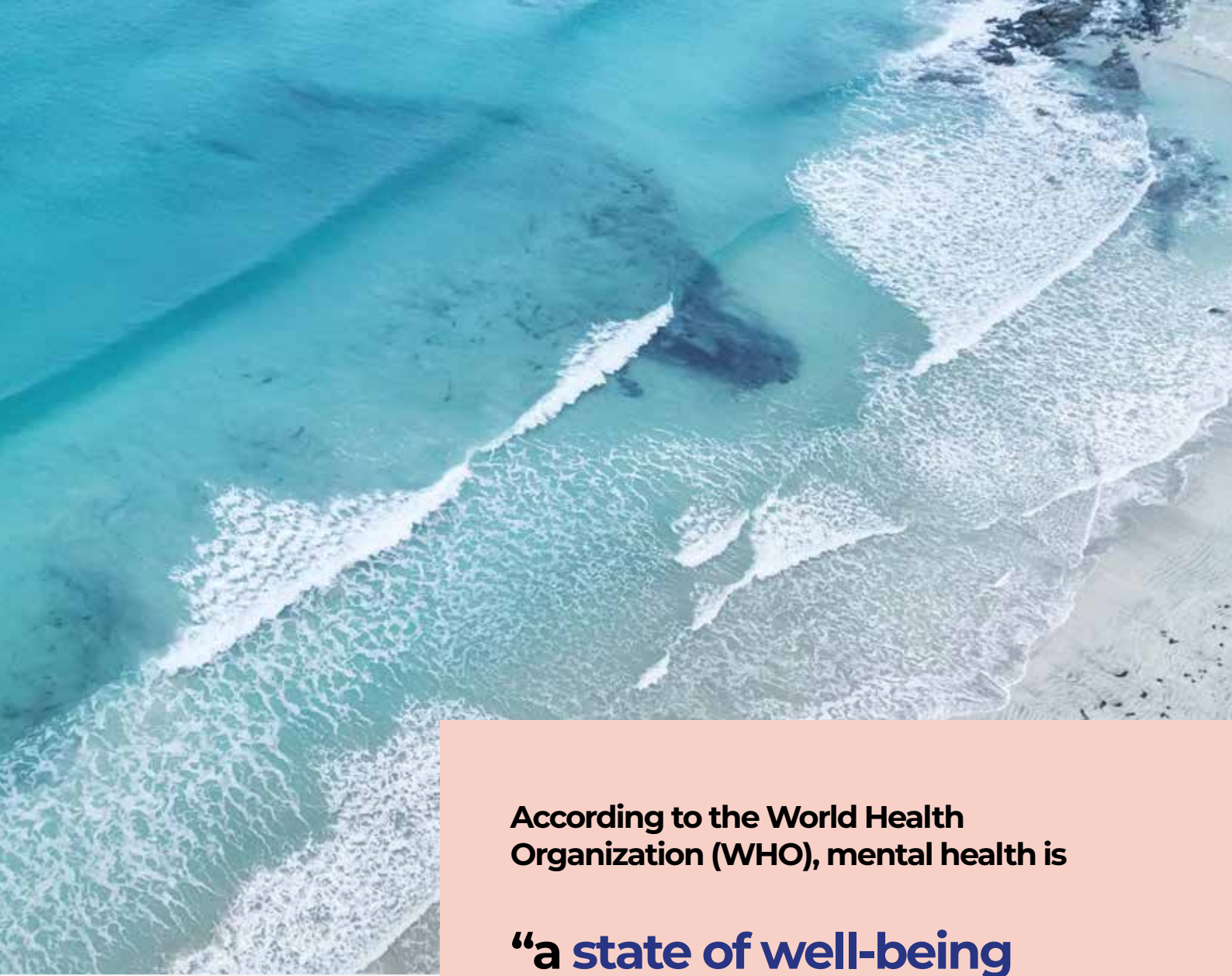
STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR FOUR
STRATEGIC AIMS



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is

“a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, 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”

Source: World Health Organization (2004) Promoting Mental Health (summary report) Geneva:World Health Organization

Why do we need this?

SERC is committed to providing an inclusive, supportive learner experience that promotes positive mental health, well-being and resilience and equips our students with the skills they need to reach their full academic and personal potential.

SERC is also committed to taking a whole College approach to creating an environment which embeds the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing into every aspect of learner engagement, and this will be driven by our Governing Body, Senior Management Team, Heads of Units/Department and all staff.

SERC works to support all our students not just to learn, but also to deal with the variety of personal and social challenges that they face while they attend College. It can be even more difficult for those students who come to us with a past history of trauma or other adverse circumstances.

SERC recognises that we have an opportunity to positively impact our student's health and wellbeing. By embedding student mental health and wellbeing into all aspects of the learner experience we can seek to reduce stigma associated with mental ill health and create a safe space for learners to feel supported to succeed and reach their potential.

This document presents a revised strategy for student mental health and wellbeing, renewing our commitment to:

- Taking a whole College approach to creating an inclusive environment and promoting student wellbeing.
- Being responsive in our approach by identifying and responding to mental health challenges early as possible.
- Empowering our students to take responsibility for their own wellbeing, and;
- ensuring that students who experience mental ill health are appropriately supported while they learn.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

This strategy will contribute towards the following strategic aims and objectives:

Aims

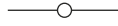
1. Create an inclusive environment which promotes and enables good mental health, wellbeing and resilience.
2. Early identification and intervention for learners who disclose a mental health issue.
3. Enable and empower students to maintain and enhance their own wellbeing; being able to access the right support when they need it.
4. Provide appropriate practical Support Services (including through external partnerships) that are easy to access and responsive to the needs of our learners.

Objectives

1. To support the mental health of students at whatever point of the continuum they find themselves at.
2. To support learners to prevent them withdrawing prior to completing their course through early intervention.
3. To signpost or refer students to the most appropriate resources to support and promote their mental health and wellbeing.
4. To develop students' wellbeing and resilience so they can achieve to their full academic and personal potential .



Promotion, Prevention and Intervention



Mental Health and Wellbeing lies on a continuum, and we need to be equipped to address issues at multiple levels so that we have the appropriate support in place for students at their particular point of need.

Our approach to mental health and wellbeing is based on the principles of promotion, prevention and intervention.



We will promote positive mental health, wellbeing and resilience to all our learners through our culture, engagement activities, our staff and the curriculum.

We will aim to prevent the development of mental health problems through acting early to identify issues and respond with appropriate strategies for these students.

For students who are experiencing mental health issues we will seek to intervene through the provision of timely and effective mental health support services; or for students at immediate risk of harm we will facilitate rapid access to crisis management and care.

Actions to achieve our strategic aims

STRATEGIC AIM ONE

Create an inclusive environment for all which promotes and enables good mental health, wellbeing and resilience.

In order to create an inclusive environment for all we need to identify and address barriers to engagement and participation for students with mental ill health. Removing stigma attached to mental ill health is central to this, and through awareness campaigns we can develop both staff and students' mental health literacy so as to reduce the negative perceptions attached to mental illness. This will encourage the development of a safe and supportive environment for everyone, including those whose lives are affected by mental health difficulties.

Actions to support Strategic Aim 1:

- Communicate to our students information which encourages wellbeing and resilience.
- Provide activities and events to support healthy behaviours, positive mental health, and coping strategies to enable learners to enhance their own wellbeing.
- Create a 'suicide safer' environment which aims to prevent suicide through education and awareness.
- Increase student awareness of campus facilities and extra-curricular activities (eg clubs, societies, resources) to promote physical and psychological wellbeing and resilience, sense of belonging and connectedness with other students.
- Deliver a range of effective and easily accessible learner support services by developing a point of focus where students know that help and support will be available within an integrated structure.
- Promote student services for student equity groups and particular cohorts (eg those with a disability, LGBTQ+, Care Experienced and Young Carers).



STRATEGIC AIM TWO

Early identification and intervention for learners who disclose a mental health issue

We will continue to encourage the early disclosure of mental health issues so that we can deliver appropriate supports services.

Actions to support Strategic Aim 2:

- Ensure front line staff (both Academic and Corporate) are able to identify when a student is experiencing problems that would benefit from support by being aware of the early signs and risk factors associated with mental health problems. These staff also need to be equipped with the information on appropriate resources to signpost and refer student to.
- Maintain on each campus a number of trained Mental Health Champions who can be called upon to support students as required.
- Through our Safeguarding processes we will continue to encourage staff to report any concerns regarding emerging or existing mental health problems through the Cause for Concern App.



STRATEGIC AIM THREE

Enable and empower students to maintain and enhance their own wellbeing; being able to access the right support when they need it.

Empowering students to take responsibility for maintaining or improving their own mental health and wellbeing can have positive effects not only on academic success but also on their personal confidence, self-esteem and resilience. By equipping students with these skills now, it can help them to sustain good mental health throughout life.

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC AIM 3:

- Provide students with the opportunity to learn and adopt self-care strategies and healthy habits to improve their overall wellbeing and resilience through our programme of activities outlined in the Wellbeing and Resilience Framework.
- Raise awareness of the support provision available to learners through a variety of means.
- Explore the Social Prescribing model as a means of reducing the need for clinical intervention by supporting students with mental health issues by linking them to a range of support in their local community.



STRATEGIC AIM FOUR

Provide appropriate practical Support Services (including through external partnerships with agencies) that are easy to access and responsive to the needs of our learners
There must be available, accessible and effective services to which students can be signposted to and the staff know about, understand and can rely on.

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC AIM 4:

- Continue to enhance our Pastoral Support through the Cause for Concern process which provides a highly responsive and individualised response to student wellbeing issues.
- Collaborate with external services and providers to support the delivery of an effective, holistic and wide-reaching mental health and wellbeing provision, for example Youth Health Advice Service and Inspire counselling and the South Eastern Trust's Community of Interest group.
- Provide focussed and practical support for all students through the programme of activities and events delivered through the Wellbeing and Resilience Framework.
- Ensure our staff are trained and supported in the area of mental health and wellbeing, not only for their own welfare, but so they can identify the signs and risk factors associated with mental health problems and understand our internal processes.
- Provide specialised support for specific groups of students to ensure they are supported whilst at College, for example Young Carers, Care Experienced Students and those with gender identity concerns.
- Ensure students have easy access to the full range of support services available to them, for example Careers Service, Student Finance, Students' Union, Learning Support.



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