

Strategic Plan

2021-2025



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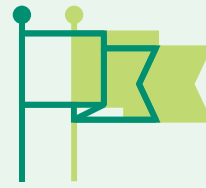


We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which **Mental Health First Aid Australia** operates today, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend our respects to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander who are reading this document.



We recognise, value and celebrate diversity and act in the spirit of inclusion.

Mental Health First Aid™ and MHFA™ are registered trade marks of Mental Health First Aid International.



Our Purpose

Provide high quality, evidence-based, accessible mental health first aid education to everyone.



Our Program

Mental Health First Aid™ training equips people with the knowledge and confidence to approach or respond to someone who is experiencing a mental health problem, or mental health crisis, until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves.



Our Values

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Empathy
- Inclusivity
- Integrity



Our Vision

A world where we all have the skills to support people experiencing mental health problems.

Our Guiding Principles

- We are informed by the lived experience of people with mental health problems and those who care for them.
- We are evidence-based and use rigorous scientific research methods to create and evaluate our work.
- We are dedicated to achieving excellence in our work and are committed to continuous improvement.
- We respect and embrace the diversity of all people.
- We make mental health education accessible for all.
- We care for and support our communities in all that we do.

Mental health: a global priority

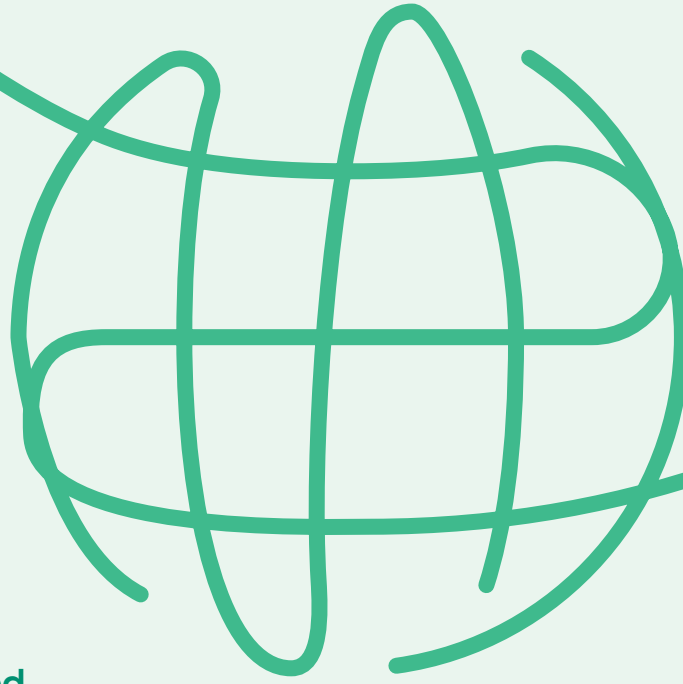
It is evident that the world faces constant community crises, and public health and well-being problems that cross geographic boundaries. Mental illness and suicide are international concerns, that some nations are better equipped to respond to than others.

Implementing preventative and interventional care options involves navigating complex environmental factors including the political, economic, cultural, religious and social systems that can be both benefits and barriers to people receiving care. Doing this on a local, let alone global scale, is a challenge.

Mental illness is among the ten leading causes of 'disability' in both developed and developing countries, with depression ranked third in the global burden of disease. According to the World Health Organisation, suicide is a leading cause of death internationally, and premature death as a result of severe mental health conditions, affects global life expectancy by as much as two decades.



Mental Health First Aid International Licensed Provider Summit, Melbourne 2019



Mental Health First Aid™ is a truly global initiative, with unparalleled reach through 26 accredited programs across 24 countries.

The loss of productivity from depression and anxiety disorders alone (as the most commonly diagnosed problems internationally) is estimated to cost the global economy US\$1 Trillion per annum (WHO, 2019). This has impacts on nations, communities, industries, workplaces, families and individuals. Mental health problems impact overall well-being, quality of life, and social and economic opportunities.

At a macro-scale, a lack of systemic support for mental health also prevents world-development in other domains; "There is growing recognition within the international community that invisible disabilities, such as mental health is one of the most neglected yet essential development issues in achieving internationally agreed development goals," (United Nations, 2020). Further, the World Health Organisation has specified a Sustainable Development Goal to reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment, and promotion of mental health and well-being by 2030.

Mental illness touches every nation and international population, and even with our global diversity there are common experiences and knowledge that can be shared to support mental health education on early intervention.

From its origins as a program first developed by Professor Tony Jorm and Betty Kitchener AM in 2001, Mental Health First Aid™ is a unique example of an Australian not-for-profit sector innovation that is making a difference in diverse communities around the world. It is a truly global initiative, with unparalleled reach through 26 accredited programs across 24 countries.

Our programs draw on international best evidence, and our population focus has enabled training to be adapted to different cultures and languages with high efficacy. The role for Mental Health First Aid International – with the support of its head operations in Australia – is to work in collaboration with organisations around the world to offer high quality training that can have positive impacts in both developed and developing nations. We strive to continue this growth and collaboration.


Mental health in Australia: our unique role

Australia faces an ongoing mental health crisis with far reaching impacts on individuals, families, workplaces, communities and the economy. Nearly half of all Australians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime (AIHW, 2018), and certain high-prevalence mental illnesses affect millions of Australians, of all ages and lifestyles.

Sadly, suicide remains a leading cause of death in Australia across most age cohorts (and is the single leading cause of death for people ages 15 to 44), with the latest figures from the ABS recording an average of nine deaths per day by suicide, and an almost unfathomable 65,000 plus suicide attempts annually. The cost to Australia's economy from mental illness and suicide is reported as being \$200-220 billion per annum, at a conservative estimate (Australian Productivity Commission, 2021).



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Every person is likely to know several family members, friends and colleagues who are experiencing a mental health problem.

Every person is likely to know several family members, friends and colleagues who are experiencing a mental health problem. In fact mental illness is now said to affect every Australian either directly or indirectly. This makes mental health everybody's business and demonstrates the need for community care models that empower individuals where they live, work and play.

In addition to the overall impacts and threats of mental illness for whole of population, there are certain people for whom risk factors may be greater including (but not limited to): Indigenous Australians; people in rural and remote communities; people in high-risk work industries; LGBTQI+ people; and people with comorbidity with other well-being problems. These people and communities form priority audiences where improved mental health education and supports will have significant benefits. The sheer magnitude and depth of the mental health crisis means that to develop a broad safety net, that will catch

more Australians experiencing mental health problems and troubled times, we need more mental health literacy and support skills in the community. Mental Health First Aid™ mobilises and empowers communities in this way.

Mental ill-health is complex, and the challenges facing individuals and communities in terms of diagnosis, access to supports and treatments, social and economic inclusion, and barriers such as stigma and lack of mental health literacy, are extensive.

A multi-faceted, collaborative approach that embraces both clinical and informal community supports is needed. To achieve this on a large scale, Australia needs to build the capacity of individuals and communities to understand and respond to mental health challenges that may arise. Mental Health First Aid™ empowers and equips individuals with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make a difference.

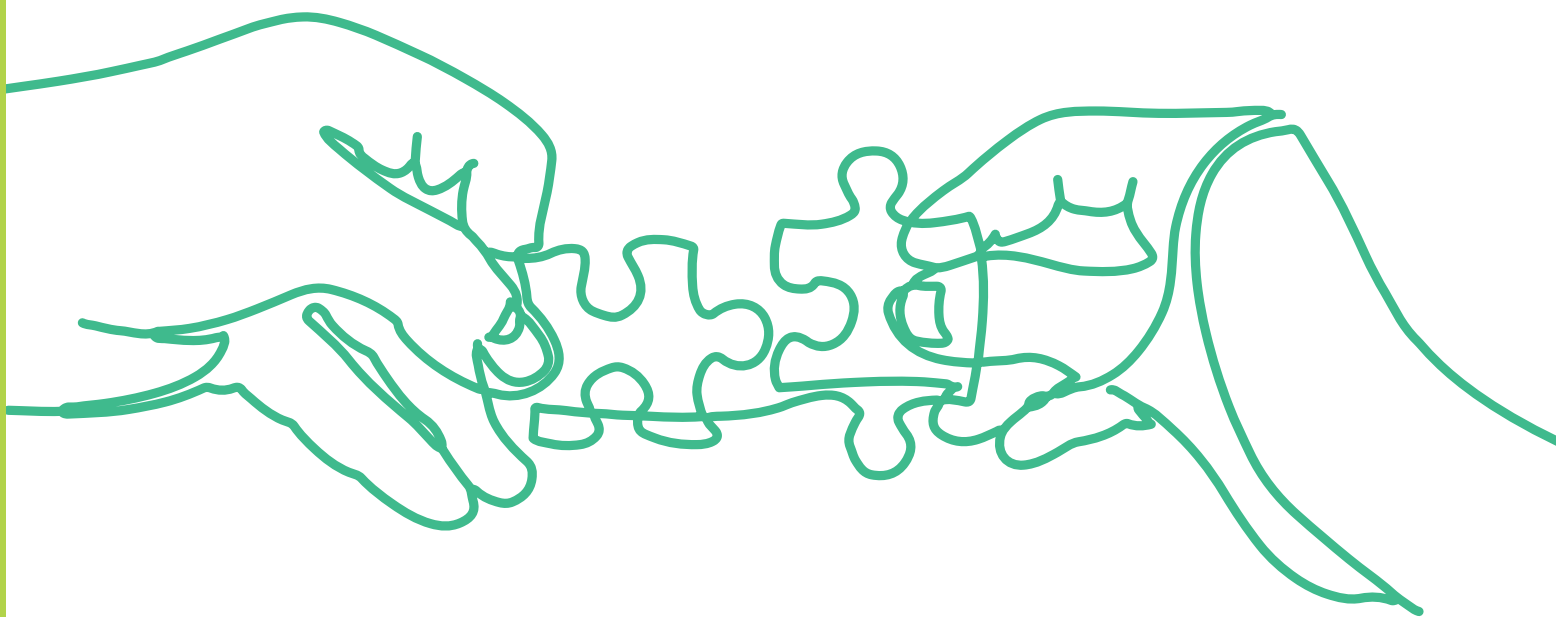
Responding to the need: actioning change

Within the complex web of mental health problems are some continued systemic gaps and failings that create a paucity of accessible, appropriate, and timely supports for people experiencing mental health problems.

The mental health sector must respond with a mix of complementary clinical and non-clinical services, resources and health promotions activities that address the root causes of mental health problems for prevention, while also ensuring that people with developing, existing, and worsening mental health problems get the support they need.

The role of Mental Health First Aid™ is to complement other efforts through education and training that empowers everyday individuals to support others.

Mental Health First Aid International's Strategic Plan proposes various actions to address identified issues in the populations and communities we aim to support. Using our evidence base, experience, and resources, we will focus on those areas in which we can have the greatest impact.



Using our evidence base, experience and resources, Mental Health First Aid International will focus on populations, settings and communities in which we can have the greatest impact.



Our approach: to mental health education

Mental Health First Aid™ is a purpose-driven, Australian-based global provider of mental health first aid education. We are a registered health promotion charity, operating within a professional, evidence-based model, guided by best practice and the voices of lived experience.



Mental Health First Aid International and its licensed providers have trained over 4 million people world-wide – improving mental health literacy and the capacity for community care.

For over 20 years, our organisation has been committed to quality mental health education and skills development with a community focus. We have trained over 4 million people world-wide – improving mental health literacy and the capacity for community care.

At a time of global uncertainty and rapid change in which mental ill health, community crises and suicide remain complex and important concerns, we are grounded by our purpose and strategic priorities, and reminded of the vital nature of our daily work. Mental Health First Aid™ provides an approach to mental health education that is world renowned, evidence-based and community led.



Mental Health First Aid™ empowers and equips individuals with the skills needed at three key stages:

1

Developing mental health problems

2

Worsening of an existing mental health problem

3

Mental health-related crisis point

First Aiders go on to become members of the community who are able to recognise, connect, understand and respond, when faced with someone who is experiencing a mental health problem.

Our programs are proven to:



Improve knowledge

(increase mental health literacy)



Reduce stigma

(decrease negative attitudes and behaviours regarding mental health problems)



Develop confidence

(increase confidence in providing mental health first aid)



Improve support

(broaden skillset for providing support to others)

Mental illness is among the ten leading causes of 'disability' in both developed and developing countries, with depression ranked third in the global burden of disease.



Strategic map 2021-2025

1

Education and Community Development

- Increase the reach of Mental Health First Aid™
- Increase recognition globally as the authority on mental health first aid education
- Grow, educate and engage our MHFAider community
- Reduce stigma relating to mental health problems and actively promote mental health education

2

Research and Evaluation

- Develop programs and courses that are evidence-based and evidence-informed and centre the voices of people with lived experience
- Demonstrate positive impact through high quality, evidence-based courses that are recognised and respected

3

Quality Program Delivery

- Deliver high quality courses across all settings and communities
- Attract, develop and retain high quality Trainers and Instructors
- Evaluate course delivery and outcomes ensuring quality, safety and impact
- Ensure quality standards for course consistency and fidelity, resulting in positive participant experiences

4

Sustainable Operations and Growth

- Ensure our leadership, culture and ways of working benefit our organisation, stakeholders and staff
- Advance our work through diverse and sustainable income
- Increase our reach and impact through technology
- Support sustainable operations and growth through the effective use of our organisational assets

Strategic Objective 1

Education and Community Development

Objective	Action
Increase the reach of Mental Health First Aid™	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop and expand mental health support through the provision of Mental Health First Aid™ within communities, schools and workplaces · Conduct advocacy focused on enhancing mental health education across the community, and the introduction of policy and practice that supports this outcome · Develop and manage strategic relationships and partnerships with government and like-minded organisations including peak bodies, member-based organisations and large workplaces, to increase the reach and dissemination of Mental Health First Aid™ · Invest in our flagship core Standard Mental Health First Aid™ course with a focus on adults as our primary audience · Promote and enhance organisational profile and community awareness and recognition of programs to reach priority audiences · Evolve course design and delivery models in response to latest mental health education research, external markets, and the needs and preferences of customers
Increased recognition globally as the authority on mental health first aid education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Articulate an effective brand and communications strategy that positions Mental Health First Aid International as the global authority on mental health first aid education · Promote Mental Health First Aid™ courses as the training of choice for community-based mental health education · Develop relevant partnerships with government departments and agencies, industry bodies and organisations who can assist with the development of new markets · Ensure currency of course curriculum, including relevant content and resources
Grow, educate and engage our MHFAider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Grow our MHFAider network through a dedicated platform that facilitates knowledge retention, further skill development and promotes additional courses and other engagement opportunities
Reduce stigma relating to mental health problems and actively promote mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Improve mental health literacy through mental health education · Amplify the voices of people with lived experience of mental health problems or mental illness

Strategic Objective 2

Research and Evaluation

Objective	Action
<p>Develop programs and courses that are evidence-based, evidence-informed and centre the voices of lived experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Conduct targeted Delphi Expert Consensus Studies to inform our work · Establish partnerships/relationships to inform the voice of lived experience in all course development and delivery · Establish targets and measures that align with priority settings for Mental Health First Aid™ program dissemination including schools, workplaces and community groups · Develop and disseminate Mental Health First Aid™ curriculum for adults (educators and parents) of primary school aged children · Develop and disseminate Mental Health First Aid™ Standard course curriculum for middle-income countries · Ensure course curriculum developed for disadvantaged or marginalised population groups is guided by and includes the experiences of people within those groups
<p>Demonstrate positive impact through high quality evidence-based programs that are recognised and respected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Focus our research on program content, dissemination, efficacy and effectiveness in different countries and priority settings · Promote dissemination of Mental Health First Aid™ Guidelines · Publish our research and that of our valued research partners · Invest in attracting and retaining internal and external research talent to proactively drive and advance Mental Health First Aid International's global research agenda · Increase participation in research partnerships · Investigate the measurement of our broader social return on investment and impact



Strategic Objective 3

Quality Program Delivery

Objective	Action
Deliver high quality courses across all settings and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Deliver an annual schedule of training courses in accordance with our growth agenda
Attract, develop and retain high quality Trainers and Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Refine selection criteria in accordance with a quality framework and actively manage the recruitment and on-going suitability of our Trainers and Instructors · Support the development, retention and performance of accredited Instructors through a coordinated program of continuous learning and application of best practice training
Evaluate program delivery and outcomes ensuring quality, safety and positive impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Evaluate the efficacy of our course delivery and curriculum · Validate Instructor course delivery to our quality framework and performance standards · Use robust course participant feedback processes to ensure consistency, high quality delivery and high performance of Instructors · Develop and execute a strategy for collecting qualitative stories of mental health first aid interactions to inform program effectiveness and impact
Ensure quality standards for course consistency and fidelity, resulting in positive participant experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop and implement a comprehensive quality framework to underpin all course delivery



Strategic Objective 4

Sustainable Operations and Growth

Objective	Action
Ensure our leadership, culture and ways of working benefit our organisation, stakeholders and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Become an 'employer of choice' with a workplace culture that enables our employees to thrive · Cultivate a mentally healthy workplace with a professional, engaged and skilled workforce, to meet the needs of the organisation · Strengthen our processes for the recruitment, development, management and retention of all team members · Invest in leadership development and values-based behaviours at all levels of the organisation to foster a high performing and accountable workforce · Support the continued development of a diverse and inclusive organisation · Identify ways to make a positive social impact in all aspects of our organisational work
Advance our work through diverse and sustainable income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Grow our existing course delivery funding streams · Diversify our funding streams through grant funding and proactive fundraising activity · Identify and secure additional government funding for organisational strategic priorities that align with mental health program and reform policy agendas · Protect our financial reserves to enable program development, planned expansion and long-term financial sustainability
Increase our reach and impact through technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop a technology roadmap to manage current organisational, stakeholder and customer preferences, and future demands · Protect and manage the data of our stakeholders through the provision of secure technology systems
Support sustainable operations and growth through the effective use of organisational assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop and implement a Customer Relationship Management strategy and system that puts the customer at the centre of everything we do · Direct our strategy for program development and dissemination nationally and internationally through business intelligence and data · Respond to the operational needs and strategic priorities of the organisation with a responsive and agile workforce · Develop and embed clear and collaborative ways of working that will support the delivery of our organisational strategy · Prioritise effective knowledge management across all areas of our operations

