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This publication is part of a Minerals Council of Australia initiative endorsed by the Board of Directors of the Queensland Resources Council. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the individual members of the respective Boards.
Mental health
The ability to cope with life stresses and the fulfilment of goals and potential. Mental health is a critical component of overall health and wellbeing, enabling an individual to interact successfully with their family, friends, work-mates and the broader community.

Mental health problem
A term used to describe symptoms such as changes in emotion or behaviour not of sufficient severity to be diagnosed as a mental disorder (distress or difficulty coping during periods of stress).

Mental disorder (or mental illness)
A clinically recognisable set of symptoms or behaviours associated with distress and with interference with personal functions.

Mental ill-health
The term ‘mental ill-health’ encompasses both ‘mental health problems’ and ‘mental illnesses’.

Mentally healthy workplace
A workplace that strives to support the mental health of employees at all levels. A mentally healthy workplace creates a positive working environment that builds individual skills and resilience, reduces workplace risks to mental health problems and supports staff with mental health conditions.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Blueprint was developed by the Minerals Council of Australia, built on work initiated by the NSW Minerals Council and conducted in collaboration with the University of Newcastle’s Institute for Energy and Resources, Centre for Resources Health and Safety and the Hunter Institute of Mental Health.

The Queensland Resources Council acknowledges the invaluable contributions of Professor Brian Kelly, Jaela Skehan, Robyn Considine and Associate Professor Carole James.
FOREWORD

After centuries of derision and ignorance, mental illness is being recognised as a serious health challenge for Australia.

Coupled with growing community awareness of its prevalence is recognition of the role employers and industries can play in addressing the challenge.

As the peak representative body for Queensland’s minerals and energy developers, the Queensland Resources Council (QRC) has an absolute commitment to the health and safety of sector workers.

Historically, our focus has been the identification and mitigation of safety risks, and promotion of a workplace culture that aims to protect the physical welfare of the individual and their workmates.

Over recent years that focus has widened to include the wellbeing and mental health of our employees working in cities, towns, resource communities and some of the most isolated parts of the state.

It is well accepted that the debilitating impacts of mental illness on individuals, their families and communities can invade the workplace. Along with fundamental concerns such as lower productivity, mental illness can also harbour the unacceptable threat of compromising workplace safety. It has been shown that workplace mental health programs can deliver direct benefits through reduced absenteeism and workplace injury claims, as well as aiding staff recruitment, staff retention and growth of a supportive workplace culture.

The wider impact of such programs should not be underestimated as the positive contribution to individuals translates into health benefits for the broader community.

This Blueprint for Mental Health and Wellbeing provides a framework to promote health and wellbeing, as well as reduce the risks and impacts of mental illness.

It identifies key directions for the Queensland resources sector, promoting evidence-based strategies that can be applied at workplaces across the state.

I commend this Blueprint to all minerals and energy sector companies and those from other industries seeking to progressively incorporate mental health and wellbeing as a fundamental element of their commitment to workforce health.

Michael Roche
Chief Executive
Queensland Resources Council
Brisbane Queensland
INTRODUCTION

A core value of the Queensland resources sector is the safety and health of its workforce, where everyone goes to work and returns home safely.

Mental health is a key element of health and safety and is therefore a vital part of the sector’s commitment to our workforce.

The Australian minerals and energy sector is considered a world-leader in the area of Workplace Health and Safety (WHS). Across our industries, mental health problems can have an adverse impact on workplace safety, health and productivity.

The workplace itself can play an important role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of employees.

Although addressing mental health in the workforce has not been a traditional focus for the resources sector, it is increasingly being recognised within the WHS frameworks.

Our sector is ideally placed to deliver programs that aim to promote mental health and wellbeing, prevent mental health problems, provide an effective and early response to employees experiencing mental ill-health and integrate such programs within a sector-wide health and safety framework.

The Queensland Resources Council’s Blueprint for Mental Health and Wellbeing (the Blueprint) has been developed in proud association with the Minerals Council of Australia and the NSW Minerals Council, whose groundbreaking collaboration with the University of Newcastle’s Institute for Energy and Resources and the Hunter Institute of Mental Health is gratefully acknowledged.

This Blueprint was further developed in consultation with industry and health service leaders, informed by leading research into this field.
About the Blueprint

The Blueprint articulates the commitment of the Queensland minerals and energy sector (through the Queensland Resources Council) to support the mental health and wellbeing of employees.

The Blueprint also describes the key elements of effective mental health programs that our sector, work sites and partners can adopt to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our workforce.

It provides helpful direction to the sector as a whole and individual work sites to:

- Promote mental health
- Prevent mental ill-health
- Build capacity and culture to effectively address mental health and mental ill-health in the workplace
- Respond effectively and early in order to reduce the impact of mental ill-health on employees and their families
- Through research, address the gaps in our knowledge of mental health and mental ill-health in the industry.

A cohesive and integrated framework will reduce the risk of duplication and facilitate the identification of any gaps to ensure a best-fit model tailored to the specific needs of industry, with flexibility for implementation across sites and cultures.

Mental health and the resources sector

Mental health problems are common in Australia with 20 percent of the population experiencing one of the common mental illnesses in any 12-month period.²

The resources sector is a significant employer in diverse regions across Queensland and the mental health needs of those working in the sector are likely, at the very least, to reflect those of the general community.

Characteristics of the workforce (age, gender mix), the nature of the work and the challenges of working and living in sometimes isolated regions (without ready access to social and health service supports) are factors we need to consider in evaluating needs.

Furthermore, the sector has a key role in the social and economic fabric of many regional and remote communities, and is therefore uniquely placed to contribute to supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities through strategies outlined in this Blueprint.³

As a first step, and demonstrating a solid commitment to addressing mental health needs in the sector, the NSW Minerals Council commissioned the University of Newcastle and the Hunter Institute of Mental Health to prepare the report ‘Mental Health and the NSW Resources sector’.⁴ The report provided a snapshot of the impact of mental ill-health on mining operations, concluding that:

- Data on mental health needs within the industry is limited. Industry-supported research is under way to build the knowledge of mental health needs and importantly, solutions.
- People working in the resources sector are drawn from the broader Australian community and based on Australian figures, an estimated average of 8,000 to 10,000 employees experienced a common mental illness like anxiety, depression or substance use disorders during a 12-month period in the NSW resources sector.
- It is estimated that people from across all employment categories are affected equally, from managers and professionals through to machinery operators and drivers.
- The estimated costs to industry including lower productivity are estimated at $320-$450 million per year or around $300,000-$400,000 for an average site of 170 people.

This Blueprint provides evidence-based advice to the minerals and energy sector and identifies what is needed for an effective organisational mental health program. It is a guide to help identify the specific needs and priorities of an organisation over time.
WHY HAVE A BLUEPRINT FOR MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health problems are common and have significant impacts on individuals, their families and industry productivity.

Treatments for mental health problems are effective and have the potential to reduce associated health care, productivity and disability costs.

However, it is estimated that only 35 percent of those currently experiencing mental health problems access treatment.\(^5\)

The workplace provides unique opportunities to support better mental health. Mental health, wellbeing and physical health are closely connected, and mental health interventions work best when integrated with general health programs. A mentally healthy workplace creates a positive working environment that builds individual skills and resilience, reduces workplace risks to mental health problems and supports staff with mental health conditions.\(^6\)

Workplace mental health programs are a sound investment, delivering significant return.

Comprehensive organisational strategies have multiple benefits including improvements in staff engagement and workplace morale, improved productivity, improvements in employee mental health and wellbeing and reduction of suicide.

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff at all levels can improve organisational adaptability, general health and safety, and workforce sustainability with reduced staff turnover. There may also be an indirect social return on investment with these programs. Workplace mental health programs can deliver broad social benefits through the positive impact on family and community.

A mentally healthy workplace creates a positive working environment that builds individual skills and resilience, reduces workplace risks to mental health problems and supports staff with mental health conditions.
Key elements for a successful mental health framework and mentally healthy workplace

As with other health and safety programs, a strategy to address mental health in the workplace should have clear and robust governance, underpinned by an evaluation and review framework.

An effective organisation-wide framework should comprise multiple linked strategies integrated within a general health program tailored to the needs and characteristics of the industry. It should include a demonstrated commitment by leaders, executives and managers, and be supported by clear communication and effective mental health policies.

Principles guiding the Blueprint

The following principles guided the development of the Blueprint.

Decisions regarding approaches by the resources sector and at work sites are guided by these principles:

- The Queensland resources sector is committed to maximising and fostering employee mental health, wellbeing and safety
- Mental health and wellbeing is a shared responsibility among all workplace stakeholders
- Leadership and commitment are critical for the development and sustainability of a safe and mentally healthy workplace
- Wellbeing strategies should focus on promoting mental health as well as preventing and responding effectively and early to mental ill-health in the workplace
- The Queensland resources sector is committed to building knowledge about mental health and mental ill-health.
A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Building on the approach of the NSW Minerals Council’s Blueprint for Mental Health, our framework for addressing mental health is aligned to the overall approach to health and safety in the minerals and energy sector. This framework supports the Blueprint. Resources supporting the Blueprint are outlined in Appendix 1.

Figure 1. Overview of the minerals and energy sector approach to mental health and wellbeing

KEY ACTIONS

Leadership | Effective policy | Education, training and health promotion | Promoting and supporting access | Partnerships

KEY DIRECTIONS

CAPACITY

Increase knowledge and skills to identify and respond to mental ill-health in the workplace.

PREVENTION CONTROLS

Prevent onset of mental ill-health through addressing risk and protective factors

RECOVERY PREPARATION

Promote recovery through return to work

All Queensland resources sector workers are supported to develop and maintain good mental health

CULTURE

Create a culture that supports wellbeing across sites and industry

Promote good health and wellbeing in all workers

Reduce stigma associated with mental ill-health

Research and development
Blueprint directions and targets

The Blueprint is underpinned by key directions and suggested targets. It is supported by actions that are recommended to support the implementation of the Blueprint in the Queensland resources sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY DIRECTIONS</th>
<th>TARGETS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the mental health and well-being in all resources sector workers</td>
<td>The sector has developed, implemented and evaluated appropriate mental health promotion initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevent onset of mental ill-health through addressing risk and protective factors</td>
<td>The sector has a clear understanding of workplace risk and protective factors and responded with implementation of evidence-based programs to mitigate such risk (e.g. promoting positive and supportive work environments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity and culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop knowledge and skills to identify and respond to mental ill-health in the workplace</td>
<td>• Management and supervisory staff have tailored strategies relevant to their workplace roles and staffing profiles to address mental health problems in the workplace • Links and clear referral pathways between the workplace and health care providers are established and/or enhanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a culture that supports wellbeing across sites and sector industries</td>
<td>• Programs to improve knowledge and understanding of mental health and ill-health implemented • Programs that address the supportive role of peers, workplace and culture have been implemented across all levels of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote recovery through return to work</td>
<td>Evidence-based return to work practices for staff with a mental illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce stigma associated with mental ill-health</td>
<td>Stigma reduction strategies relevant to the resources sector and employee profile are applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake research into mental health in the resources sector</td>
<td>Research and evaluation are key features of the approach to mental health across the sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote sharing of information on best practice mental health and wellbeing strategies and approaches</td>
<td>Sector collaboration to proactively share information regarding mental health and wellbeing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Actions for implementation in the Queensland resources sector

Building on the integrated elements of a ‘mentally healthy workplace’, this framework recommends possible actions that industries, companies, sites or employees may undertake. The scope and size of the actions and their respective milestones will reflect the risk profile being considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>MILESTONES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate leadership commitment to the mental health strategy, its implementation and monitoring</td>
<td>A commitment to addressing mental health and wellbeing of the resources sector workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a whole of organisation mental health strategy in collaboration with employees</td>
<td>Industry-based consensus strategy in place for organisational guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish effective strategies to communicate the strategy to all staff</td>
<td>Communication strategies are implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure governance for strategy with clear accountabilities for implementation and monitoring</td>
<td>Mental health KPIs a key element of organisational performance reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocate resources to support the strategy</td>
<td>Resources match mental health strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote sustainability of the program through policy and leadership</td>
<td>Regular reviews of strategy established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement robust measurement strategy to monitor and evaluate performance of the program.</td>
<td>Review the psychosocial characteristics of the organisation at regular intervals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effective systems and policy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure sector policies focus on promoting mental health and wellbeing, preventing mental ill-health and supporting those with mental ill-health to stay at or return to work</td>
<td>Review of HR policies to ensure support of the mental health and wellbeing of staff completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review current opportunities and challenges in company processes to address risk and protective factors for mental ill-health regularly identified</td>
<td>Reviews completed at regular intervals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake routine review of risk factors that contribute to mental health problems as part of risk assessment and control processes</td>
<td>Reviews completed at regular intervals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure management of critical events occurs in a manner that reduces psychological risks to the extent possible and supports ongoing psychological safety</td>
<td>Psychological safety a key element of reviews of critical incidents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As with other health and safety programs, a strategy to address mental health in the workplace should have clear and robust governance, underpinned by evaluation and a review framework.

### ACTIONS

**Education, training and health promotion**

Implement programs tailored to enhance mental health skills among health personnel working across the resources sector which includes:
- Knowledge and understanding of mental ill health and its impacts
- Importance of good physical health and mental wellbeing
- Address stigma that exists about mental ill-health

Implement workplace education programs at individual sites that address specific risk factors for employees with a focus on:
- Work design and management
- Financial management
- Relationship breakdown
- Isolation and disconnection - both geographic and workplace related
- Lifestyle factors e.g. use of alcohol and other drugs and their impact on mental health

Implement programs aimed at building employee resilience through improved coping skills and social support

Implement training programs for supervisors and managers that:
- Support early recognition and early intervention for mental ill-health
- Build capacity to effectively support people in the workplace who are experiencing mental ill-health
- Promote constructive and supportive workplace interactions, including prevention of bullying and harassment in the workplace

### MILESTONES

- Workforce has an increased understanding of positive mental health and wellbeing
- Workforce has a reduced stigma about mental health and wellbeing
- Workforce has an increased understanding of risk factors for mental health problems and strategies to assist or mitigate these risks in themselves or others
- Programs implemented that address key areas of concern (e.g. family relationships, mateship, finances, social support, alcohol and other drug use)
- Improved skill and confidence in identifying and supporting employees experiencing mental health problems
- Improved workplace support interactions and relationships
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>MILESTONES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting and supporting access to care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support mental health needs through existing workforce services such as Employee Assistance Programs and occupational health staff</td>
<td>EAP reporting to reflect mental health referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review existing support systems (including EAP systems) to support sector approach to intervening early and effectively to mental-ill health</td>
<td>Contractual arrangements with EAP providers reflect early intervention to mental health problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review health and safety policies/systems to ensure support for people experiencing mental ill-health stay at or return to work</td>
<td>Mental health routinely monitored as part of all return to work (RTW) programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate evidence-based mental health-related initiatives within general workplace health programs</td>
<td>General health programs include mental health as a key component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure linkages with existing health, welfare and relevant community services to support early access to effective assistance for mental health problems (including substance use), and factors that might be associated with such problems (e.g., financial, family, legal concerns). These should include links to effective online options, integration of both online and face-face education</td>
<td>Referral information about key health and social services is readily available for staff Training and support provided for staff in encouraging staff to seek appropriate help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide clear assessment and timely referral pathways for employees</td>
<td>Workforce awareness of referral pathways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure mental health assessments included as part of RTW programs and address environmental and personal risk factors for mental ill-health</td>
<td>RTW procedures include mental health assessments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Resourcing and partnership opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>MILESTONES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish links between resources sector companies and existing programs and organisations that can support the development of mental health promotion messages and strategies for the sector and broader community</td>
<td>Formal linkages with health service providers established and jointly developed pathways to health care for employees and their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of mental health networks in the resources sector</td>
<td>Engagement with relevant community agencies and services to address key risk factors</td>
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</table>

# Research and development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>MILESTONES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build partnerships between the sector and research institutions to build the evidence base for effective strategies</td>
<td>Research priorities and research partnerships established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop understanding about the prevalence, determinants and impact of mental ill-health across the resources sector in Queensland</td>
<td>Research framework to evaluate priority elements of Blueprint established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an evidence-base for effective mental health programs across the Queensland resources sector</td>
<td>Increased level of knowledge about mental health needs in the sector and effective workplace intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased evidence regarding effectiveness and quality workplace strategies in diverse settings (including online strategies, availability, acceptability and cost effectiveness)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLUEPRINT

Reflecting its commitment to better mental health, the Queensland Resources Council will monitor implementation of the Blueprint, through a range of activities.

These will include:

• Observing companies with a mental health strategy
• Examining and evaluating the type and nature of activities undertaken as part of mental health strategies
• Identifying and responding to key gaps in knowledge for addressing mental health, mental ill-health and associated risk and protective factors.

An effective framework should include a demonstrated commitment by leaders, executives and managers, and be supported by clear communication and effective mental health policies.
What will success look like?

For the sector:
- Increased investment in the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce
- Increased understanding of the extent of mental ill-health, factors that contribute to mental ill-health and the impact mental ill-health has on individuals, families, the workplace and the Queensland minerals and energy sector as a whole
- More initiatives focused on reducing mental illness and promoting mental health and wellbeing
- Development of sector-wide guidance for improving mental health and addressing mental ill-health
- Greater inclusion of mental health programs within general health and safety policy and programs within the sector
- Continued research and evaluation initiatives to increase understanding of programs that improve employee mental health and wellbeing in the minerals and energy sector
- All programs used are in line with current evidence-based practice
- Addressing mental health as part of the overall approach to health and safety

For sites:
- Management commitment to
  - Promoting mental health and wellbeing
  - Preventing mental ill-health
  - Implementing programs that promote early identification and intervention for mental ill-health
  - Supporting employees with mental ill-health
  - Addressing workplace factors that may affect the mental health of employees
- Provision of information and development of employee skills, with approaches tailored to the needs of the minerals and energy sector
- Increase in productivity, reduction in employee absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover
- Supervisors trained in recognising and supporting people with mental ill-health
- Policy that supports the mental health and wellbeing of all employees

For employees:
- Improved mental health and wellbeing
- Increased awareness and understanding of mental health and mental ill-health
- Increased awareness of services available and more favourable attitudes towards seeking help when needed
- Positive attitudes to their own and others’ mental health and wellbeing
- Increased capacity to identify mental health problems in colleagues, and connect/refer to appropriate support services
- Support for workers experiencing mental ill-health to stay at work
- Support for workers overcoming mental illness to return to work
RESOURCE SUPPORT

Support and advice for mental health issues

Lifeline
lifeline.org.au
13 11 14
Access to crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health support services.

MensLine Australia
mensline.org.au
1300 789 978
Professional telephone and online support, information and referral service for men with family and relationship concerns.

Suicide Call Back Service
suicidecallbackservice.org.au
1300 659 467
A free nationwide telephone and online counselling to anyone 15 years and over who has been affected by suicide.

beyondblue
www.beyondblue.org.au
1300 224 636
A national support service that provides professional counselling for anyone who needs someone to talk to.

Mind health connect
mindhealthconnect.org.au
A range of mental health resources and a portal for various online and phone-based support services

Man Therapy
mantherapy.org.au
Practical D.I.Y. tips for tackling depression, protecting wellbeing and providing a pathway to professional treatment if required

Conversations Matter
conversationsmatter.com.au
Online resource to support safe and effective community discussions about suicide.

Organisations that can support workplaces

Hunter Institute of Mental Health
himh.org.au
A national leader in promotion of mental health and wellbeing, prevention of mental ill-health and prevention of suicide. They have developed and run a number of programs that build the capacity of individuals, communities and workplaces to be involved in mental health and suicide prevention. They have been working closely with the NSW Minerals Council to provide advice on interventions and initiatives relevant to the mining and resources sector.

beyondblue
beyondblue.org.au
Provides a national focus and leadership to increase the capacity of the broader Australian community to prevent depression and anxiety and respond effectively to it. They provide a national workplace program, which includes a suite of online and face-to-face resources for workplaces.

Black Dog Institute
blackdoginstitute.org.au
Dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by mood disorders through translational research, clinical expertise and national education programs, including a workplace mental health and wellbeing program

SANE Australia
sane.org
A national charity helping all Australians affected by mental illness lead a better life through campaigning, education and research. The organisation runs a program known as Mindful Employer which is an online and face-to-face workplace mental health training program offered to Australian businesses.

MATES in Construction
matesinconstruction.com.au
Helps to deliver better mental health and wellbeing for construction workers. The program aims to de-stigmatise mental health and wellbeing issues, and to encourage help seeking for a range of issues, not just those that pertain to suicide.

The Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance
workplacementalhealth.com.au
A new national approach by business, community and government to encourage Australian workplaces to become mentally healthy for the benefit of the whole community and businesses, big and small

Centre for Corporate Health
cfch.com.au
A consultancy-based organisation that offers psychological services, as well as training across a range of mental health related areas in the workplace.

CommuniCorp
communicorp.com
Specialises in developing positive workplace mental health, wellbeing and resilience capabilities – Australia wide. They offer mental health and wellbeing training, targeting early identification and intervention across different work levels and roles in organisations, as well as practical programs to develop personal and organisational resilience.

R U OK?
ruok.org.au
A not-for-profit organisation that aims to inspire Australians to have regular, meaningful conversations every day of the year. Their mission is to encourage and equip everyone to regularly and meaningfully ask “are you ok?”.
ENDNOTES


