

ANU College of Health and Medicine

School of Medicine & Psychology Strategic Plan

July 2024



Australian
National
University



From the Director

Our experience through life is defined by the capabilities and potential of our mind and body. Appreciating the interdependence and inter-relationship of both is essential to understanding and improving human health.

That is why ANU is leading the way as the first University in Australia - and one of the first in the world - to integrate the schools of Medicine and Psychology. We are dissolving the artificial boundaries between these disciplines and focusing on leading the development of new knowledge and health solutions through interdisciplinary research, education and practice.

The ANU School of Medicine and Psychology came into existence at the start of 2023 with the merger of the ANU Medical School and the Research School of Psychology. There are reasons why this hasn't been done before, why Medicine and Psychology have not been brought together at a school level. Most obviously because it is not necessarily easy. Universities are traditional organisations, and we work in relatively traditional disciplines. It takes effort, courage and ambition to step out of our comfort zone and to do something as fundamentally new and different as the enterprise we are now undertaking.

To my mind, the greatest value in the creation of the school lies in what we can learn from each other and the potential to create something that is a much more substantial whole than the sum of its parts. If the COVID-19 pandemic did nothing else, it convinced us of the inexplicable link between physical health, psychology and emotional wellbeing. The psychological, neuropsychological and cognitive consequences of COVID, the societal reactions and counter reactions to medical advice, rumours and conspiracy theories and the widespread impact of the pandemic on mental health, let alone the challenges for our health care workforce, all demonstrate the profound interconnections between medicine, health care systems and numerous sub-disciplines found within psychology.

The coming together as one school is a truly exciting opportunity: to create something that can profoundly contribute to our society and individuals within it, whilst being a place where people want to come and work, and students want to come and study. We can develop novel educational programs ensuring that we educate the most well-rounded doctors and psychologists in the country, if not in the world. Doctors who have a substantive understanding of the psychological aspects of illness and health. Psychologists who can appreciate the medical challenges that intersect with the wellbeing of their clients.

But also, and perhaps most importantly, the opportunity to create systems that allow our students to flourish as they learn. To think about how we can help our students grow as individuals in ways that go well beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skills. To establish our school as a place where students leave equipped to thrive in what will be an extraordinarily rapidly changing society and workforce over the coming decades.

There is considerable potential for the development of enhanced research capacity within the school, and for the development of research programs that cross disciplines and bring our complimentary skills and knowledge together. There is also, substantive potential in taking advantage of the different ways of thinking that exist across our areas of work and study.

This Strategic Plan sets us on the pathway to achieve these ambitious goals. It has been developed by the school executive drawing on consultations with staff and students.

Implementing the plan, and the creation of a new school culture, will take time. And together, we will find common ground and agree on new ways of working. We are off to a really good start. I'm truly excited for what the future holds as we build the School of Medicine and Psychology together.



**Professor
Paul Fitzgerald**

Director, School of
Medicine and Psychology

We're advancing human health, experience, and wellbeing, enhancing the lives of individuals and strengthening communities locally, nationally and globally.

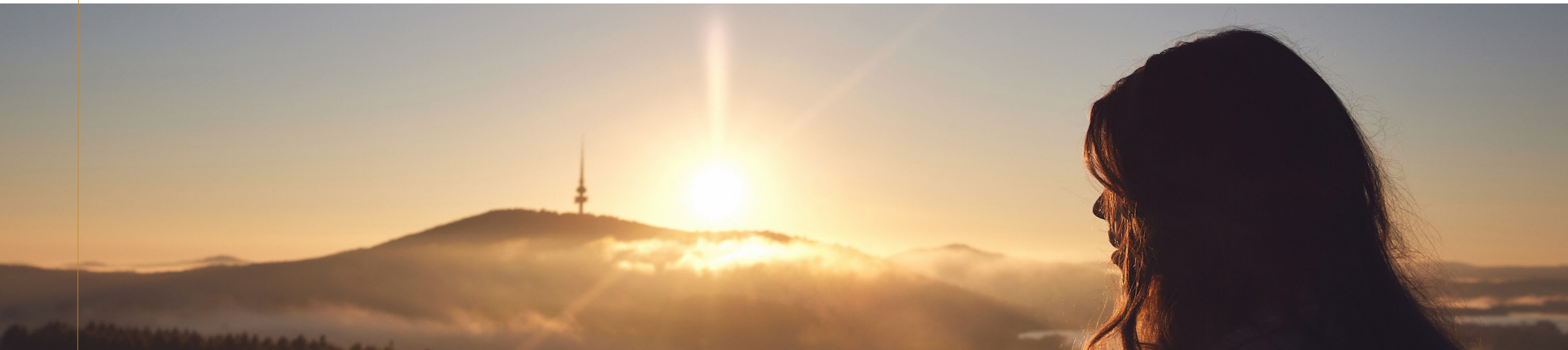
Our Vision & Purpose

The ANU School of Medicine and Psychology (SMP) works to advance human health, experience, and wellbeing, enhancing the lives of individuals and strengthening communities locally, nationally and globally. The health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities is a priority for the school.

Integrating medicine and psychology, we aim to create unique approaches to improving our world including developing effective interventions, solving local, national and international health problems, and leading impactful health and psychosocial change.

To do this we:

- conduct collaborative, courageous, translational research that challenges assumptions, transcends disciplinary boundaries, informs healthcare practice and transforms human lives; and
- educate and develop excellent, resilient, and innovative clinicians, academics and healthcare contributors and leaders.





Where we work

The School of Medicine and Psychology (SMP) is primarily based in the Australian Capital Territory and have an established presence in the following locations:

- South Eastern New South Wales
- Sydney
- The Northern Territory / Central Australia
- Melbourne.

Ways we work

- We treat everyone with respect, regardless of their background, role, or position.
- We build trust in one another and respect that trust by behaving with integrity.
- We communicate honestly and with kindness and responsibility.
- We invest in each other and hold each other accountable.
- We support each other, take risks, and embrace our mistakes as we strive for excellence in all that we do.

Our strategic priorities

- Objective 1:** Retain excellence in discipline-specific education whilst building distinctive transdisciplinary programs
- Objective 2:** Establish a sustainable and aspirational HDR program that facilitates high quality research and training
- Objective 3:** Develop a school with research excellence through support of researchers across all career stages
- Objective 4:** Establish supportive and positive values, beliefs, behaviours, goals, attitudes and wellbeing practices
- Objective 5:** Ensure staff and students are seen as trustworthy and demonstrate professional conduct with all people in all settings
- Objective 6:** Retain and build engagement with clinical partners, alumni, honorees, government, industries and professional bodies



Education: Preparing clinicians and leaders who make a difference

Objective: Retain excellence in discipline-specific education whilst building distinctive transdisciplinary programs

Strategies

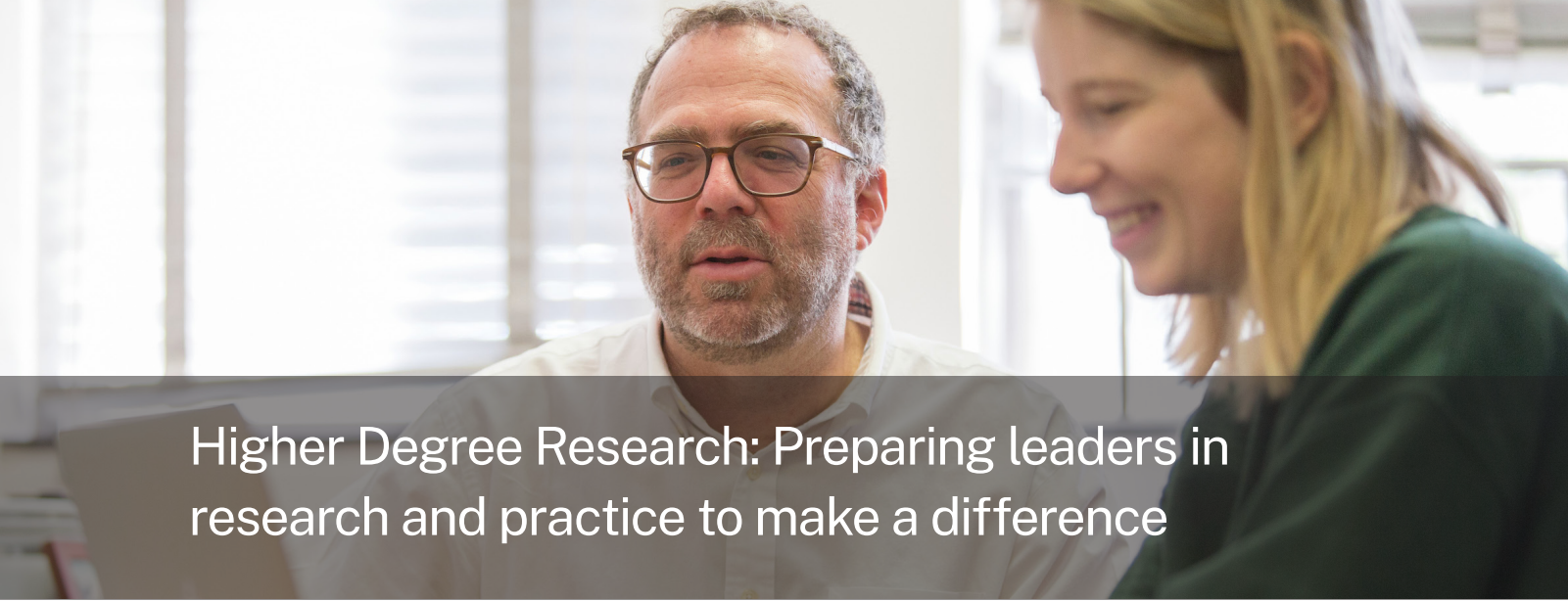
- Implement accreditation standards with excellence
- Create distinctive ANU medical, health and psychology courses and programs
- Ensure sustainable teaching capacity and methods

Activities & Initiatives

- Implement and maintain Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) & Australian Medical Council (AMC) accreditation standards within a best practice evidence-based framework
- Develop transdisciplinary courses and programs: Bachelor Health-Psychology (BHLTH-PSYC), Bachelor of Philosophy, Neuroscience & Psychology (BPNP), Master of Applied Psychology (MAP) and relevant Executive Education, ready for 2025
- Develop *Core and Plus* approach to programs with a focus on current strengths including social foundations, public policy, Indigenous health, technology enhanced learning and rural and remote medicine
- Invest in a school-wide focus on mental health and wellbeing
- Review staff workload to balance teaching/research/service/clinical roles and achieve sustainable loads
- Establish an SMP Teaching Faculty Development Subcommittee
- Increase student diversity, including Indigenous, rural and international
- Develop pathways for student progression to Postgraduate (PG) and Higher Degree Research (HDR)

Measures

- Accreditation standards implementation on track
- Regular education forums scheduled
- BHLTH-PYSC, BPNP, MAP and Executive Education ready for 2025
- Student and staff evaluations
- Staff/student ratios at G08 levels with progression towards best practice
- Achievement of ANU Teaching & Learning (ANU T&L) Strategy goals



Higher Degree Research: Preparing leaders in research and practice to make a difference

Objective: Establish a sustainable and aspirational HDR program that facilitates high quality research and training

Strategies

- Reevaluate domestic and international recruitment including pathways
- Review offerings and positioning of programs
- Enhance student experience
- Facilitate timely completion of research and submission

Activities & Initiatives

- Revisit pathways including providing resources to clarify pathways from undergraduate to HDR
- Develop funding model for more international HDR students
- Ensure recognition for clinical contributions whilst completing HDRs
- Implement new supervisor training
- Implement new supervisor model to ensure fixed term and junior staff can supervise students
- Collect data on student experience and develop an improvement strategy
- Scope the need for coursework and training and propose program if necessary

Measures

- Increased annual domestic and international enrolments
- Increased students completing program within expected period
- Increase in qualified and registered supervisors in the school
- Baseline established and improvement goals set for student experience
- Timely completion of research and submission



Research: Pushing the frontiers of knowledge

Objective: Develop a school with research excellence through support of researchers across all career stages

Strategies

- Implement a research structure to support all members of SMP
- Develop areas of focused research strength
- Create a research community where transdisciplinary research can thrive

Activities & Initiatives

- Expand SMP Research Seminar Series with invited national and international speakers
- Establish SMP theme leader positions
- Establish SMP Research Committee and operational committee
- Implement SMP Seed Funding for Early to Mid-Career Researchers (EMCR)
- Increase connectivity with all CHM Transform Research initiatives locally and globally
- Build collaborative research with clinical partners
- Support clinician researchers to participate fully and sustainably in research life of the school

Measures

- Progressively increasing grant funding income to school
- Outcomes of seed funding program facilitating new research and collaborations
- Research structures contributing to enhanced research success
- Increased local, national and international research profile and collaborations



Culture & Wellbeing: Supporting our community to flourish

Objective: Establish supportive and positive values, beliefs, behaviours, goals, attitudes and wellbeing practices

Strategies

- Develop, plan and organise strategic plans and initiatives to assist in the cultivation of a new school culture and focus on staff and student wellbeing

Activities & Initiatives

- Engage with staff and students to drive community-led culture and wellbeing strategies and practices
- Establish school subcommittees that steer culture and wellbeing strategies and initiatives
- Analyse and assess school information about culture and wellbeing
- Track and translate University and College policies and practices related to culture and wellbeing
- Build a community of practice among staff and students supporting wellbeing, safety and culture

Measures

- Seminar Series established
- SMP Culture and Wellbeing Committee established, and initiatives developed
- SMP Social Committee established and initiatives developed
- Process for measurement of culture and wellbeing data established and implemented



Professionalism & Performance: Supporting our community to flourish

Objective: Ensure staff and students are seen as trustworthy and demonstrate professional conduct with all people in all settings

Strategies

- Commit to continuous improvement in professionalism skills in all stages of training and practice in all contexts
- Develop professionalism critical thinking skills in staff and students
- Improve detection and management of professional misconduct

Activities & Initiatives

- Review codes of conduct to ensure professionalism expectations are clear and understood
- Review the policies and processes for professional misconduct reporting, evaluation and remediation
- Develop streamlined policies and processes to ensure SMP, University and Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) policies and processes for professional misconduct management are aligned.
- Map professional practice teaching and assessment across professional programs

Measures

- Professional misconduct policies and processes revised and streamlined
- Professional practice curriculum in Medicine, Clinical Psychology and Professional Psychology is mapped and shared curriculum areas are defined
- Rapid review of evidence for the assessment and remediation of professional misconduct completed



External Engagement: Supporting our community to flourish

Objective: Retain and build engagement with clinical partners, alumni, honorees, government, industries and professional bodies

Strategies

- Refine engagement strategy with clinical partners
- Establish a School Advisory Board
- Establish stakeholder engagement strategy
- Instill a community focus with the knowledge of the communities and populations we serve

Activities & Initiatives

- Establish new School Advisory Board
- Review and refine how we work with clinical partners
- Review how we attract philanthropy
- Develop philanthropy program with College supports to attract increased funding
- Develop increased placement opportunities for UG, PG and HDR students
- Devise a strategy for increased engagement with alumni, honorees, government, industries and professional bodies for research and education

Measures

- Advisory Board established
- Alumni engagement process established
- All partnership and other agreements reviewed and updated
- New partnership agreements established



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Contact us

School of Medicine and Psychology

T +61 2 6125 2622

E director.smp@anu.edu.au

W medicine-psychology@anu.edu.au