

ST JOHN NT

Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2025 – 2028



St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc.



St John



Acknowledgement of *Country*

St John NT acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we live and work and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We pay respect to their continuing connection to land, and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Contents

Foreword	3
Our People	4
Our Values	4
Introduction to the Strategy	5
Work, Health & Safety – Psychosocial Risks	7
Key Strategic Objectives	8
What do these key results look like?	10
How will we measure our success?	10
Your Mental Health Support Team	11
Bibliography	12
Places for 24/7 Support	13

What is Mental Health and Wellbeing?

“Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.

— World Health Organisation



Foreword

No matter where you are in the world, mental health and wellbeing is becoming increasingly apparent in our everyday lives. Whether it is at home, at work, being part of a sporting team or undertaking social activities, mental health interacts with us every day in healthy or not so healthy ways.

Regardless of your role in the organisation, mental health affects everyone at some point.

Mental health and wellbeing is a positive state of mental, emotional, and social health, which enables all of us to deal with the stressors that life can sometimes throw at us, helps us work more productively and contribute more collaboratively.

Good mental health is an essential element of overall health and can be supported through a range of activities such as regular exercise, eating healthily, getting sufficient sleep, learning skills, spending time in nature, managing stress and maintaining social connections. Showing up with your best self each day fosters positivity within yourself and those around you.

The St John NT Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy is designed to enhance our current delivery of mental health and wellbeing services to our staff in different ways.

Our first step in changing the way in which we support our staff is through the introduction of our new Mental Health Clinician. This role will serve to augment our current offerings and support our staff through times of immediate need and assist staff through more proactive measures, through mental health check-ins outside of any reactive trauma. Mental health and wellbeing is not just about what is happening now, but also about putting structures in place that support our people in the future.

This strategy has full support from both the Board and the Executive Leadership Team of St John NT as we renew our commitment to the importance of investing in the welfare of our people. Creating and maintaining a psychologically safe work environment is everyone's responsibility and together we can all achieve a healthy and safe workplace.



Andrew Tombs
Chief Executive Officer



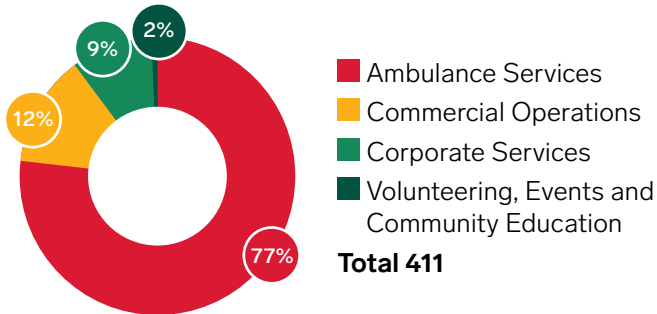
Natalie Wilson
Director People & Culture



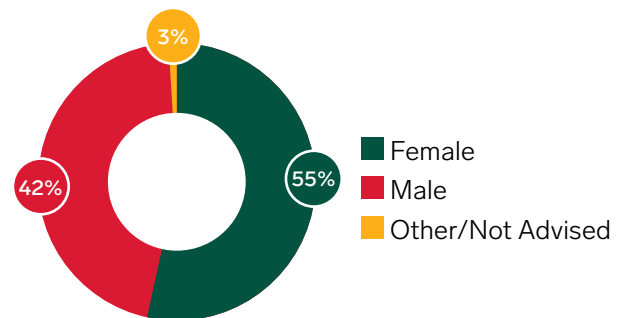
Our People

Our Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy applies to all of our people.

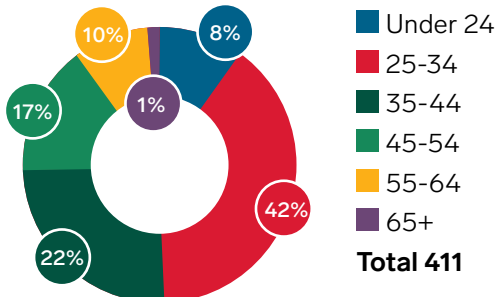
Service Areas



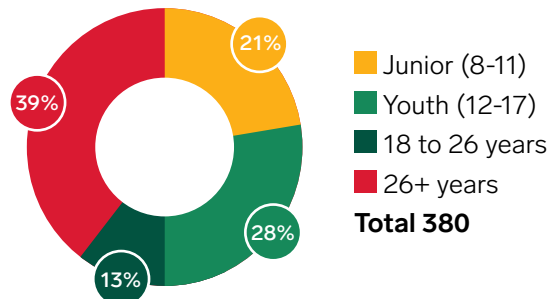
Gender – Workforce and Volunteers



Workforce by Age



Volunteers by Age



Our Values

Our values reflect what we believe in and set a standard as to how we will behave, they are intrinsically linked to how we will achieve our goals and deliver on commitments to our people, patients and stakeholders.



Respect



Integrity



Collaboration



Empathy

Introduction to the Strategy

St John NT employees and volunteers are committed to serving their community and caring for others. However, due to the nature of the work, there is significant exposure to trauma and distressing events that can have a negative impact on an individual's mental health and wellbeing.

Beyond Blue conducted a study on the mental health and wellbeing of police and emergency service workers across Australia: Answering the Call.

The report identified common challenges across all jurisdictions and sub-sectors including Ambulance, Fire and Rescue, Police, and State Emergency Services.

It found that "police and emergency service workers are **more than twice** as likely to experience high or very high rates of psychological distress compared to the general population".

The report made several recommendations, including that police and emergency service agencies develop an organisational mental health and wellbeing strategy.

Mentally Healthy Workplaces

This strategy is for all of St John NT employees and volunteers, including paramedics, patient transport officers, emergency medical dispatchers, corporate staff, managers/supervisors, trainers, workshop mechanics and sales staff. It recognises the importance of maintaining a healthy workplace, and that each person contributes to the health of the organisation. Every employee and volunteer plays an important part in reducing stigma around mental health and promoting access to supports when needed.

This strategy aligns with both the NT Mental Health Strategic Plan 2019 – 2025 and The Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan 2017 with a focus on early intervention, evidence based care, and reducing stigma around mental health.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a framework for St John NT to implement evidence based, preventative and supportive measures, and to foster a mentally healthy workplace. The scope of this strategy applies to all St John NT staff as well as volunteers.

The strategy has been developed in consultation with staff members across the organisation as well as mental health and wellbeing teams across St John Ambulance Australia. Key stakeholders have been consulted including the The Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA) as well as other first responder services.

The strategy uses as its guide the Good Practise Framework for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Police and Emergency Services (2020), produced by Beyond Blue. The strategy is aligned with the St John NT Strategic Plan and helps to achieve the key result of expansion of mental health and wellbeing services by 31 December 2025.





Work, Health & Safety – Psychosocial Risks

Under the national Work Health and Safety Act 2011, all persons conducting a business or undertaking have a legal responsibility to manage psychosocial risk. This means that everybody at St John NT needs to be involved in identifying psychosocial risks and implementing appropriate controls

The People at Work Survey is an evidence based psychosocial risk assessment survey tool that was conducted with St John NT staff in 2024, with a 44.27% response rate. Focus groups were then developed to address some key findings.

Some of these findings are below and help St John NT to identify where it needs to focus its attention. The implementation of the MH&W strategy should see improvements in survey results when it is readministered.

Some of the *good* stuff

Overall result The overall result of the People at Work Survey was good. The organisation's overall result was 'Minimal Concern'. Whilst we are on the low end of this category, it is still the best category to be in and should be celebrated.

Psychological Stress The Finance and IT team were standouts with 64.29% of staff reporting low psychological stress and 0% of staff in the very high category. The Katherine Region was the standout region for psychological stress with 81.81% of staff in the Low – Moderate range and 0% in the Very High range.

Some of the *not so* good stuff

Workplace Bullying This area is very concerning. 56.77% of respondents reported experiencing bullying in the last 6 months and almost 70% reported either experiencing or witnessing bullying in the last 6 months.

Workplace Violence This area is also very concerning. 48.70% of respondents reported that they had experienced workplace violence in the last 6 months. Of that, 26.95% of these had experienced workplace violence more than monthly.

Psychological Distress Sadly only 34.62% of St John NT staff feel as though they are currently only experiencing low levels of psychological stress. 65.39% of staff are experiencing moderate to very high psychological stress with 40.66% either high or very high.

Key Strategic Objectives



Recruitment & Induction

Objective 1: Create a positive mentally healthy workplace culture that reduces stigma.

Key results

- 1.1 Job advertisements will reflect St John's commitment to a mentally healthy workplace including outlining mental health benefits.
- 1.2 Position descriptions will reflect an individual's responsibility to contribute to a mentally healthy workplace in line with our workplace health and safety legislation and policy.
- 1.3 Managers will have access to subject matter experts via the Mental Health & Wellbeing Team (MH&W) who can interpret psychological assessments as required.
- 1.4 All new employees will participate in undertaking standardised wellbeing measures during the induction process including the development of an individual wellness plan.
- 1.5 All staff will undertake Appropriate Workplace Behaviour training as part of their induction.



Operational Service

Objective 2: Provide proactive and ongoing support to staff to create a mentally healthy workplace

Key results

- 2.1 Biannual voluntary wellness assessments offered to all staff and volunteers, including baseline psychometrics, psycho education around mental health, and short-term counselling based on goal setting around wellness.
- 2.2 A proactive, responsive Employee Assistance Program in line with EAPAA Service Standards Australia and New Zealand EAPAA Service Standards Australia and New Zealand, and St John NT EAP policy. Promotion of this policy to occur quarterly to employees and volunteers.
- 2.3 A Peer Support Program that is facilitated by appropriately trained Peer Support Officers (PSOs) and provides support to all staff/volunteers in accordance with the Peer Support Policy and Peer Support Code of Conduct
- 2.4 A significant incident response as needed through the internal MH&W team, including utilising PSOs, and ensure the procedure to initiate is readily available to staff.
- 2.5 A Chaplaincy service in line with the scope of practice for Chaplaincy and ensure the procedure to access Chaplaincy support is readily available to staff.
- 2.6 Training as requested for all staff on topics of relevance including self-care and resilience, mindfulness, and sleep hygiene.
- 2.7 A yearly calendar of wellbeing activities that staff can attend/access.

Transitioning Out of Service

Objective 3: Create a support system that helps people to have a successful transition from service

Key results

- 3.1 Exit interview data that informs of the employee's experience of mental health support in the workplace and any improvements that could be made.
- 3.2 Two coaching sessions through the EAP for staff transitioning from service.
- 3.2 Access to the EAP for people transitioning up to 12 months after service.



What do these key results look like?

- › A dedicated multidisciplinary mental health team comprising of mental health clinicians and a chaplain and supported by peer support officers.
- › A fully trained and committed peer support team comprising of approximately 20 peer support officers who can respond to both significant events and generalised requests for support.
- › Every new staff member being aware of the organisation's commitment to mental health and leaving their induction with a personalised wellness plan.
- › A minimum of 10% of staff/volunteers participating in voluntary wellness assessments during the first 24 months of the strategy.
- › A minimum of three training courses developed by the mental health team to be used internally in the first 24 months of the strategy.
- › A minimum of quarterly Pulse stories per calendar year reminding staff of the mental health supports available to them and how to access them.

How will we measure our success?

We should see:

- › Improvements in the key areas of our People at Work Survey when readministered
- › An increase in our peer support contacts, including a faster response time
- › An increase in the number of people accessing EAP, as awareness of the program grows
- › An increase in the number of significant events being reported to the MH&W team
- › An increase in the number of people attending organisationally led mental health events and on-line supports e.g. webinars
- › A reduction in absenteeism

Furthermore:

We will evaluate our success in each of these measures by consulting with staff around their satisfaction with each area of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy, through a yearly survey.

Your Mental Health *Support Team*

St John NT provides holistic mental health support with numerous internal avenues as well as a comprehensive external system via the Employee Assistance Program. This allows for workers to choose from different types of support, as well as where and when they would like to receive that support.

Mental Health & Wellbeing (MH&W) Team



Director People & Culture – The executive position that is responsible for the entire branch of People & Culture which includes the Mental Health & Wellbeing Team.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Manager – Reports to the Director People & Culture and is responsible for the MH&W team, including the Peer Support Team and the Employee Assistance Program.

Mental Health Clinician – Reports to the MH&W manager and assists with the PSO team as well conducting MH&W assessments and provides counselling as required.

Chaplain – Reports to the MH&W Manager and assists with the PSO team as well as providing pastoral and spiritual care.

PSOs – Trained volunteers with similar life/work experiences who offer support to their peers. This support is in the form of a listening ear and complements more formal support, such as the Employee Assistance Program.

Employee Assistance Program – A program where employees, volunteers and their immediate families can access counselling support through a wide variety of external counselling agencies. This support is completely confidential, and people are eligible for six sessions with the possibility of extension.

To find out more about any of the above please contact the **MH&W Manager** on **8922 6202**.

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Places for 24/7 Support

In all emergencies call 000.

- › Northern Territory Mental Health Line – 1800 682 288
- › Lifeline – 13 11 14
- › Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636
- › Samaritans – 08 6383 9850
- › Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467





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