Work, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan

2023-2026

Significant Work, Health and Safety (WHS) changes have occurred between 2018- 2022 such as the enactment of the Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA), the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022 (WA) and the creation of International Standard 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems. ECU recognises that our people are our greatest asset and the WHS & Wellbeing Plan outlines the university's commitment to providing a healthy and safe workplace and study environment for all staff, students, contractors, volunteers and visitors.

The Plan also reflects a commitment to maturing our WHS Management system through continuous improvement and strategically moving beyond legal compliance to WHS best practice. It includes a shared vision for action through the implementation of key initiatives that will allow ECU to evolve into a values-based, proactive and responsive organisation that manages workplace hazards to protect our people across the spectrum of all activities we are engaged in.

The Work, Health, Safety (WHS) and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2026 supports the Edith Cowan University (ECU) strategic direction outlined within ECU's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 and the People and Culture Plan 2023-2026. It is underpinned by five guiding principles: visible and active leaders, risk-based approaches, mutual accountability, practical and simple solutions and consistency.

Enhanced WHS & Wellbeing approaches requires active engagement from all levels of ECU. We are confident that all ECU staff and stakeholders will welcome and support this Plan by working together to implement the many targeted WHS & Wellbeing approaches that will enable us to continue to provide high quality education and research in safer working environments. While ECU's People and Culture team will support the development of initiatives, processes and system improvements, this will be done in collaboration with ECU leaders who are ultimately responsible for the people they lead.

The ECU WHS and Wellbeing Plan's Senior Executive sponsor is the **Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor,** and it was approved by the A/Vice-Chancellor on 21/06/2023**.** Progress against the plan will be reviewed annually, with adjustments incorporated where necessary.

Enhancing Risk-Based Decision Making

Objective 1: Our staff make informed decisions to minimise harm without constraining our core business of teaching and research.

1.1	Ensuring effective, pragmatic and proportional WHS risk management processes are incorporated throughout all operations of the university, which align with the ECU Risk Appetite Statement and support ECU to continue to be leaders in innovation, creativity and research.
1.2	WHS risks and issues are proactively identified, understood and prioritised at all stages of the work and employee lifecycle across ECU, including design of our workplaces, work processes and workforce.
1.3	Improved focus on reducing risks of injury or illness by targeting high consequence activities based on data analysis, audit results and emerging issues.
1.4	Increased WHS presence and interaction by expanding WHS support across ECU with the intent of continuing to provide high quality practical information and advice, strengthening working relationships and expanding problem solving assistance, with a focus on moderate or high risk operations.
1.5	Enhanced incident investigation processes and training to ensure appropriate controls are identified and implemented, reducing risk of repeated incidents.

What will success look like?

- Streamlined WHS approaches, documents and procedures where possible to ensure a user-friendly and proportionate WHS management system while meeting compliance requirements.

- Existing WHS risk management processes are integrated into all facets of business decision making for early identification of foreseeable hazards to eliminate or minimise risks.

- An increased and embedded incident and hazard reporting culture throughout ECU, supported by WHS expertise and improved education programs

- Safety in design (SID) principles for new/refurbished facilities are applied in collaboration with the WHS team and relevant stakeholders, including those directly affected by change.

- Increased WHS advice and guidance for the University with identifying, planning and implementing WHS actions.

- Development of improved WHS Incident Investigation processes and fit for purpose tools; and implementation of enhanced education for Managers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs).

Fostering Health and Safety Leadership, Culture and Capability

Objective 2: Our Leaders and Managers recognise they influence the safety culture in their work areas and commit to ensuring health, safety and wellbeing is a high priority.

2.1	Visible WHS commitment, leadership and accountability by Senior Leaders and Managers including the prioritisation of health, safety and wellbeing in all work planning and initiatives.
2.2	Strengthening WHS accountability with key performance indicators (KPIs) and actions to be embedded in Leadership and Manager role requirements and performance discussions.
2.3	Improving our Officer Due Diligence education and processes to empower our Leaders to be inquisitive, consultative and visible in WHS matters.
2.4	Strengthening the capabilities of our Leaders, WHS Team and the wider University community in WHS & Wellbeing through enhanced advice, support, creation of Community of Practice opportunities and development of tailored training programs and tools.
2.5	Recognising and celebrating innovation, good practices, behaviours and success in health and safety, wellbeing and injury management.

What will success look like?

- Leaders and Managers will examine and implement WHS improvements within the span of their control, considering WHS consultation and collaboration, sharing and integration across the University where possible.

- Design and delivery of improved Officer Due Diligence tools, education and support.

- WHS performance KPIs, targets and actions will be included in role requirements and performance discussion processes for Leaders and Managers.

- Improved WHS training, appropriate to ECU School/Centre risk profiles and individual role requirements.

- Increased Health and Safety Representative (HSR) capability and engagement by enhancing our ongoing HSR training and support.

- Increased and targeted WHS communication across the University community to ensure cohesive and high impact messaging is conveyed in a variety of mediums.

Driving Systematic Change by Adopting Innovative Systems, Processes and Technology

Objective 3: We will mature our WHS system by investing in improvement initiatives and technologies that will strengthen our systems and processes, improve efficiencies and drive engagement in WHS activities.

3.1	Delivering easily understood WHS reports, data and analysis of trends to inform decision making and promote proactive and effective reduction of potential hazards.
3.2	Reviewing current WHS systems and platforms against best practice to ensure they are fit for purpose.
3.3	Exploring and applying innovative technological solutions to assist in the collection, measurement, reporting and management of WHS risks and information.
3.4	Examining opportunities to improve and streamline systems and processes for managing Radiation, Biosafety/Biosecurity and Hazardous Substances (RBHS) activities and risks.

What will success look like?

- Improved availability of WHS data and reporting, leading to improved confidence in WHS monitoring by ECU Leaders and stakeholders.

- Targeted WHS interventions are informed by enhanced use of WHS data, metrics and analysis.

- Reduced administrative burdens by implementing streamlined WHS processes such as automating WHS Committee reporting requirements and sharing of high quality WHS risk assessments and operating procedures across Schools/Centres where possible.

- Exploration of enhanced technological solutions to support integrated, user-friendly and contemporary approaches.

- Improved user-friendly processes to ensure oversight and support timely approval for RBHS use

Enriching the Health and Wellbeing of our Staff

Objective 4: We will inspire a culture that encourages physical and psychological health and wellbeing that will support our staff to develop and thrive.

4.1	Collaborating with key stakeholders to develop an evidence-based, holistic, inclusive and accessible wellbeing program that enhances the overall physical and psychological health of our staff.
4.2	Developing and implementing psychosocial risk management processes to identify and address work related factors that influence the psychological health and wellbeing of our staff.
4.3	Promoting ECU Mental Health programs and networks across all campuses to provide support to those who are experiencing mental health problems until professional help is available.
4.4	Strengthening and promoting our early intervention, injury management processes and proactive support for staff who experience injuries or illnesses that affect their ability to perform their work tasks.
4.5	Enhancing our ability to measure, track and promote health and safety culture and wellbeing.

What will success look like?

- Development, implementation and extensive communication of the improved Wellbeing program.

- Design of a contemporary Psychosocial Risk Management process and tools, including education to ECU Leaders and Managers on sound application of process and controls that will improve workplace culture.

- Improved mental health support, networks and tools for staff in crisis.

- Improved early intervention processes and education to ensure work-related and non-work related injuries and illnesses are identified and managed in a consistent and timely manner.

- Development and implementation of a reasonable adjustments process to make ECU workplaces safe, inclusive and accessible for all staff.

- Development of a defined methodology to measure and track health and safety culture and wellbeing, incorporating best practice and technological solutions.

- Development of a Staff Occupational Health Monitoring program for staff who may be exposed to potential health risks in the workplace (e.g. noise, specific high risk substances).

* ECU Student and Staff Mental Health Strategy 2021 -2024 also includes a number of success measures.

Embracing Continual Improvement

Objective 5: Grow our WHS management system through a lens of continuous improvement, adopting the best of current contemporary approaches.

5.1   Ongoing monitoring and continual evolution of our WHS management systems and processes to improve practices that will ensure the health and safety of our university community.

5.2   Benchmarking and examining WHS best practice across universities and other industries to seek to adopt contemporary and innovative WHS systems and processes, moving beyond compliance.

5.3   Developing and implementing a WHS audit program that measures legislative compliance and identifies opportunities for continual improvement.

5.4   Encouraging discussion and reflection about WHS & Wellbeing to ensure ongoing application and engagement and identify opportunities for continual improvement.

What will success look like?

- Delivery of robust WHS reporting, including escalation of WHS performance, trends, risks and compliance.

- Development and implementation of a structured WHS Audit program which examines a variety of known or anticipated WHS risks, utilising a mix of internal and external expertise.

- Conducting periodic reviews of critical risks and controls to ensure that risk management processes are documented and controlled effectively.

- Tracking and timely completion of identified WHS gaps and actions within allocated timeframes.

- Growing stronger bonds and collaboration between ECU WHS Committees, Health and Safety Representatives and Subject Matter Experts.

- Increased collaboration with the Australasian University Safety Association and other Industry partners to explore best practice approaches.

Next Steps

Effective implementation of the WHS & Wellbeing Plan 2023-2026 will require collaborative efforts, active involvement and partnerships with ECU staff and stakeholders.

An implementation plan will be developed to operationalise the WHS Plan, focussing on areas of highest risk as a priority. Governance mechanisms will be established to oversee the implementation of the Plan with progress monitored through integrated reporting. Annual reviews will be conducted within the governance arrangements to assess implementation plan progression and prioritise upcoming initiatives while considering all organisational requirements.