UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

WELLBEING, HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

2020-2025

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

"We are committed to developing a culture that strives for continuous improvement in health, safety and wellbeing that embodies strong leadership commitment, high levels of staff and student engagement, and is integrated into – not separate to – business decisions and processes."

"Affirming programs that equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to support and prioritise their safety and wellbeing will be essential in producing graduates who are able to connect and support themselves and their communities"

- *Looking Ahead Strategic Plan 2020-2025*

We are responsible for establishing and maintaining campuses where our staff and students feel safe, valued and empowered. This involves adopting a "beyond-zero" approach to our safety management and being an exemplar in meeting or exceeding international work health and safety standards.

The success of the University depends on our people and we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of everyone who comes here to work or learn. This will be achieved by adopting a shared mentality of care and a personal commitment to the safety and wellbeing of everyone on our campuses.

[photo and signature]

OUR VISION: MOVING BEYOND-ZERO

We host large numbers of students, staff, contractors and visitors on our campuses. We also host a diverse range of activities including teaching, research, events, sports and retail services. The various physical environments and specialised activities present differing challenges in terms of safety. This includes a wide range of complex research infrastructure and equipment with significant inherent safety risks.

The concept of zero harm has driven our wellness, health and safety (WHS) activities in recent years, with the expectation of continuous improvement to enhance the WHS culture. We have been successful in minimising hazards and injuries, engaging staff, increasing the rate of preventative reporting, and improving WHS processes and management.

The challenge now is to not only minimise injury and illness but to also promote positive health outcomes and wellness. Zero harm will no longer be the ultimate goal of our approach to WHS. Rather, a *beyond-zero* approach will be adopted as the goal where people entering our campuses not only remain injury free but improve their physical and mental wellbeing while with us.

OUR HEALTH AND SAFETY MATURITY

Our *Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2021* was a foundation strategy with the aim of applying best practice, meeting legislative requirements and driving a positive safety culture. The *Looking Ahead 2020-2025* Strategic Plan provides the opportunity to further develop and align our WHS approach with our *Looking Ahead* strategic priorities and goals.

We have made good progress in our WHS journey, but we need to continue to mature our safety culture. Maturity models provide a basis to understand current maturity and how to move up the maturity ladder to meet strategic goals. Safe Work Australia provides a three-tier maturity model that plots the journey from:

1. **Immature** – reactive, compliance focus, emerging capability

2. **Developing** – informing, managing, developing awareness, towards improvement
3. **Maturing** – proactive, generative, learning, continuously improving

Apart from providing a safe and secure work environment, a mature safety culture has other benefits including attracting and securing talent, brand and reputation protection, and stakeholder value.

We are currently positioned mainly within the Developing maturity tier and are committed to moving wholly within the Maturing tier, in keeping with our strategic goal of **beyond-zero** performance.

This *Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategy 2020-2025* supports the journey to a fully mature safety culture.

DELIVERING OUR VISION: OUR PRIORITIES

Our journey will be focused around five key priority areas that support an environment where people are safe, healthy and well.

To achieve our vision and adopt a beyond-zero approach, we will:

- foster leadership to support a proactive WHS culture
- embed WHS in organisational planning and thinking
- grow the dialogue on and response to psychological wellbeing
- promote shared ownership of outcomes
- view WHS as an outcome of business culture and strategy rather than a process
- think creatively and be open to new ideas
- commit to being a sector leader in WHS performance
- commit to continuous improvement

A VALUES-BASED CULTURE

A values-based WHS culture involves a shared mentality of care and personal commitment of everyone. A values-based culture involves:

- active and open engagement across all parts of the organisation
- genuine concern for the wellbeing of staff and students
- accountable leaders who act on issues
- shared and individual responsibility for safety
- timely and reliable information that is acted upon
- ongoing innovation and improvement
- trust that is maintained through experience

Key Initiatives

Shared responsibility
Our staff, contractors and students need to have a clear understanding of their obligations as well as the benefits to everyone of an effective WHS culture. We will:

- redesign our induction and orientation programs to emphasise our WHS approach and expectations
- grow the visibility and awareness of WHS issues through an ongoing series of staff, contractor and student campaigns and training programs

Recognising innovation and continuous improvement
A Beyond-zero approach to WHS is characterised by ongoing innovation and improvement. We will:

- revise our safety awards and recognition program for engagement, innovation and improvement
- identify and promote best practices and support broad adoption

Compelling and transparent evidence
A strong safety culture is informed by staff, contractors and students' knowledge and experience. We will:

- ensure that WHS reporting is used to grow understanding of current performance and to drive improvement
- further develop the suite of performance indicators to capture both lead and lag indicators, helping ensure that our decisions are fully informed

Measuring Success

We will see increased perception of - and participation in - our WHS culture among our staff and students

STRONG SAFETY LEADERSHIP

Leadership in WHS is a fundamental part of our business and is integral to success. Strong and effective safety leadership involves:

- consultation and clear two-way communication
- role clarity and shared involvement
- systematic management of risks
- organisational learning
- appropriate training
- an environment of trust and respect

Key Initiatives

Equipping our leaders
Our leaders have a critical role in actively fostering WHS culture. We will:

- develop and implement a WHS Leadership Program to support enhanced leadership capability at all levels and to ensure a consistent approach
- identify and support "champions" to promote and facilitate good WHS practices

Accountability and responsibility
Our leaders and managers are accountable for WHS performance. We will:

- embed leadership and management responsibility and accountability through performance reviews, the University Leadership Framework and further development of the Professional Staff Capability Matrix
- increase engagement with Council and Executive Committee to support governance oversight of this Strategy and implementation of initiatives

Driving powerful conversations
Effective communication drives change and improvement. We will:

- develop "new conversations" that focus on WHS as an outcome of our strategy, business decisions, culture and performance
- ensure that performance discussions and evaluations between supervisors and staff include WHS performance

Measuring Success

We will see increased visibility and effectiveness of our safety leadership among our staff

A FOCUS ON WELLNESS

There is a growing need to support physical and psychological wellness as part of a shared commitment to enhanced wellbeing for our staff and students. A focus on wellness involves:

- the University as a health promoting organisation
- wellness contributing to staff/student satisfaction and productivity
- shared commitment to wellness outcomes
- understanding incentives to wellness
- identification and active management of mental health hazards
- destigmatising and actively discussing mental health issues
- engaging with community wellbeing promotions
- identifying and engaging with our researchers in this field for their expertise and advice

Key Initiatives

Promoting wellness
Physical and psychological wellness benefits our staff and students individually as well as the University through stronger organisational performance. We will:

- develop a communications and promotions program that states our commitment and approach to wellness, including physical and physiological wellbeing
- redevelop our web-based information and tools including establishment of a Wellness Hub

Growing our focus on mental health
Psychological conditions are a growing concern in contemporary workplaces. While we have established programs that address the mental health of students, we need to build a stronger set of resources, processes and services to support the mental health of our staff. We will:

- introduce a Mental Health and Wellbeing Program for staff that lifts our response in this area
- ensure our Mental Health and Wellbeing Program aligns with our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion programs in supporting psychologically safe environments across our campuses

Wellness services
Wellness services can encourage participation and provide support when needed. We will:

- review existing benefit programs & uptake and consider new Corporate Health Benefit Programs such as Private Health Fund partnerships
- we will ensure the availability and effectiveness of the University Health Service, counselling services and other allied health services offered on our campuses

Measuring Success

We will see increased satisfaction in terms of physical and psychological wellness among our staff and students

ROBUST SYSTEMS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

An effective WHS management system includes systematic risk assessment and management, policies, procedures, training, signage and systems that provide the underpinning "infrastructure" to manage WHS programs. Robust systems and risk management involve:

- active involvement of staff and students in the identification of risks
- well designed and understood processes for assessing and managing risks
- comprehensive, up-to-date and clear policies and procedures
- fit-for-purpose and user-friendly IT support systems
- appropriate training
- legislative and regulatory compliance

Key Initiatives

A holistic risk approach
Our approach to risk as it relates to WHS will involve a life-cycle view. We will:

- ensure our WHS risk approaches are aligned to Enterprise Risk Management Systems and integrated into core business decision making
- review our resourcing levels and approach to risk management throughout the research life-cycle in high risk work and research areas
- review and manage procurement, storage, use and disposal of hazardous materials

Supporting platforms
We want to make it easy for our people to fulfil their WHS obligations. We will:

- review the use of the AIMS system and other safety systems with a view to simplifying use, automating manual processes and extending use to all students, as well as exploring new systems solutions for complex and time-consuming compliance processes
- explore opportunities for data integration, reporting and analytics to support a better-informed understanding and approach to supporting WHS

Effective policies & training
It is vital that all our people understand their obligations and where to turn for assistance. We will:

- review and update all our WHS policies and procedures to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and readily accessible
- refresh and promote the WHS training program to ensure our staff, students and contractors receive appropriate and timely training

Measuring Success

We will see a decreased frequency and severity of work-related injury and illness of our staff and students as measured through our WHS performance indicators

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The University has the objective of creating safe and vibrant campus environments for students, staff and our communities. Safe and vibrant environments involve:

- a focus on our spaces and their impact on WHS
- public spaces that foster engagement, vibrancy, social connection and safety
- social spaces that encourage personal connections
- the right infrastructure to ensure safety on campuses at all times
- built environments that consider wellness for occupants as a core requirement
- engagement with community partners to promote WHS beyond our campus borders

Key Initiatives

Safe Campuses
Safety on our campuses is a key expectation of our students, staff and other stakeholders. We will:

- develop and implement a high-risk reduction program based on identified hazards across campuses and continue to manage estate compliance, health and safety obligations to ensure the ongoing safety of our built environments
- continue to implement the Security Improvement Program focusing on safety infrastructure such as lighting, CCTV, signage, help points and security technology

Engaging Spaces
Campus spaces should not only be safe but also promote wellbeing and social inclusion for our students and staff. We will:

- create a feeling of connectedness to our University by providing reasons for students and the community to engage with us, physically and digitally

Building a healthy future
Campus infrastructure should support the wellness and safety of our occupants and visitors. We will:

- update our campus master plans to identify opportunities to create improved public spaces that are vibrant, activated and safe

Measuring Success

We will see a reduction in the number of health and safety incidents that have a physical environmental contributing factor as measured through our WHS performance indicators

IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGY

Annual WHS operational plans will be developed to support the achievement of this Strategy.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME					
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
A VALUES-BASED CULTURE	Shared Responsibility	Maximum effort	Maximum effort	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition
	Recognising innovation and continuous improvement	Maximum effort	Maximum effort	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition
	Compelling and transparent evidence	Maximum effort	Maximum effort	Scale-up / transition	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity
STRONG SAFETY LEADERSHIP	Equipping our leaders	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity
	Accountability and responsibility	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity
	Driving powerful conversations	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition
A FOCUS ON WELLNESS	Promoting wellness	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity
	Growing our focus on mental health	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort
	Wellness services	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort
ROBUST SYSTEMS AND RISK MANAGEMENT	A holistic risk approach	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity
	Supporting platforms	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity
	Effective policies & procedures	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition
SAFE & SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS	Safe Campuses	Maximum effort	Maximum effort	Maximum effort	Maximum effort	Maximum effort	Maximum effort
	Engaging Spaces	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity
	Building a healthy future	Scale-up / transition	Scale-up / transition	Maximum effort	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity	Lowest intensity

Legend: **Scale-up / transition** | **Maximum effort** | **Lowest intensity**

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

These measures are our headline expression of what success in WHS looks like and will be supported by a detailed set of lead and lag indicators that will form the basis of regular reporting to the Council and Executive Committee.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	2025 GOAL	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR			
		PERFORMANCE MEASURE	BASELINE		2025 TARGET
			YEAR	RESULT	
OVERALL	We will be an exemplar in meeting or exceeding international work health and safety standards	University score in the SafeWork Australia WHS Maturity Model	2019	2	3
A VALUES-BASED CULTURE	We will see increased perception of - and participation in - our WHS culture among our staff and students	YourVoice and SFUN survey questions	2019	79.9%	85%
STRONG SAFETY LEADERSHIP	We will see increased visibility and effectiveness of our safety leadership among our staff	YourVoice survey questions	2019	74.4%	80%
A FOCUS ON WELLNESS	We will see increased satisfaction in terms of physical and psychological wellness among our staff and students	YourVoice and SFUN survey questions	2019	64.4%	80%
ROBUST SYSTEMS AND RISK MANAGEMENT	We will see decreased frequency and severity of injury and illness of our staff and students as measured through our WHS performance indicators	The University will report on: • Total Recordable Injuries, including Total Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 injuries • Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate (TRIFR)	2019 2019	16 5.65	0.0 0.0
SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS	We will see a reduction in the number of health and safety incidents that have a physical environmental contributing factor as measured through our WHS performance indicators	Incidents and injuries related to physical environmental factors	2019	LTI: 14	LTI (Physical): 0

October 2020