The National Summit on the Mental Health of Tertiary Students was held in Melbourne in August 2011. The Summit attracted over 200 delegates from almost every university in Australia and New Zealand, as well as Institutes of TAFE, peak bodies representing tertiary education interest groups and the mental health sector, and government departments. Delegates included staff in leadership roles, researchers and service managers. Professor Elizabeth Harman, the former Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University, took a sojourn from retirement to chair the Summit with flair and passion, for which the Summit organisers are grateful.

The overwhelmingly positive response of the tertiary sector, delegates and media to the Summit reinforced the belief of the Summit organisers that the mental health of tertiary students is an issue of pervasive and growing concern. Elevated tertiary sector, community and government concern for mental health is leading to increased activity targeted at promotion of mental wellbeing and support of those experiencing mental ill-health.

The following strategic checklist is intended to assist institutions in prioritising activity around student mental health in a manner that is appropriate for individual contexts. The optimal institutional responses to improved policy, program and practice around student mental health will of course depend on the particular nature, character and needs of each institution. There is a likelihood that staff in tertiary sector leadership roles will be faced with more frequent requests to implement policies, programs or initiatives that intersect with student mental health. Some staff may benefit from guidance in determining the priority that should be afforded to potential requests.

### Institutional responsiveness to student mental health: A 7-point Strategic Checklist

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategic priority</th>
<th>Potential institutional responses</th>
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| 1. Does your institution delegate responsibility for student mental health issues to appropriate staff? | • Overt responsibility included within senior staff member position description.  
• Inclusion of student mental health focus within terms of reference of a committee. |
| 2. Does your institution policy architecture adequately consider student mental health issues? | • Discrete student mental health policy.  
• Inclusion of student mental health within range of student policies.  
• Policies targeted at student mental health such as quarantining of place on mental health grounds. |
| 3. Does your institution offer support services and reasonable adjustments for students experiencing mental ill-health? | • Presence of disability services where students with mental ill-health are eligible for services.  
• Presence of counselling services.  
• Mechanisms for provision of reasonable adjustments. |
| 4. Does your institution promote mental health and wellbeing? | • Mental health promotion programs which may include mindfulness, positive psychology and mental health first aid. |
| 5. Is your institution adequately prepared to manage a mental health crisis or critical incident? | • Critical incident and emergency management policies encompass the psychosocial needs of institutional community.  
• Establishment of a Campus Threat Assessment program. |
| 6. Are your staff and students adequately informed about mental health issues? | • Inclusion of mental health information during student orientation and staff induction.  
• Inclusion of mental health information on institutional websites. |
| 7. To what extent can your institution evaluate the success of mental health promotional activity or inclusion of those experiencing mental ill-health? | • Survey instruments targeted at those experiencing mental health issues.  
• Survey instruments incorporating consideration of mental health issues. |
The following list of initiatives demonstrates the breadth of activity pertinent to student mental health across the sector. Hyperlinks to each initiative, along with presentations from each of the Summit presenters can be found on the Summit website www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/nationalsummit/

We hope to maintain this site as a resource to assist tertiary institutions.

- Guidelines for tertiary education institutions to facilitate improved educational outcomes for students with a mental illness: Orygen Youth Health Research Centre, University of Melbourne
- The Desk: University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology
- Student Mental Health Wiki: Orygen Youth Health Research Centre, University of Melbourne
- Just Ask Us: Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre Inc, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aging
- Mental Health Strategy: University of Melbourne, University of Canberra
- Headspace ACT: National Youth Mental Health Foundation, University of Canberra
- Safer Community Program: Monash University
- Mental Health First Aid: Orygen Youth Health Research Centre, University of Melbourne
- Healthy Universities: University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom
- Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre: Inspire Foundation
- Cooperative Research Centre for Mental Health
- Creating Accessible Teaching and Support: University of Tasmania
- HEADS Up: University of Canberra, Australian National University

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Matthew Brett
Jonathan Norton
Richard James

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