

phn
WESTERN NSW
An Australian Government Initiative

Annual Report
2025-26

wnswphn.org.au

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Acknowledgement of Country

Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) recognises the Traditional Custodians of the sovereign and unceded lands where our offices are located, and where our staff live and work, including people from the following Nations:

Wiradjuri / Wiradyuri, Gamilaraay / Gamilaroi / Kamilaroi, Wayilwan / Wailwun / Wailwan / Weilwan / Wailywan / Wilwan / Wallwan / Wilawun / Weilwun, Wongaibon / Wangaaypuwan, Ngemba / Nyemba / Ngiyampaa, Murrawarri, Barkindji, Barindji, Barundji, Nyirrpa, Karenggapa, Wadigali, Wilyakali / Wiljali, Wandjiwalgu, Danggali, Muthi-Muthi, Kureinji, Gunu, Barranbinya, Bandjigali, Malyangaba and Dadi Dadi.

We pay our respects to their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

We thank them for their ongoing care for Country.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reading this message.

WNSW PHN commits to demonstrating respect by continuing to listen to local Aboriginal communities and building relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, honouring their rights to self-determination.

WNSW PHN is privileged to be in this region, where the strengths, expertise and leadership of Aboriginal people and organisations continue to deliver sustainable health and wellbeing outcomes for the entire community.

We welcome the opportunities to partner with Aboriginal people and organisations to enhance our impact on the communities we serve.



Broken Hill, NSW

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Message from the Board and Executive

We are pleased to present the Western NSW Primary Health Network Annual Report for 2025–26, reflecting a year of meaningful impact for the communities we serve across Western and Far West NSW.

As one of the largest and most diverse PHN regions in Australia, covering 53% of NSW, our focus has remained clear: improving health outcomes, strengthening access to care, and supporting a primary healthcare system that is responsive to local needs. Working alongside general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, health professionals, service providers, aged care providers and communities, we have continued to invest in solutions that help people access the care and support they need, closer to home.

This year, we delivered more than $53 million in funding through commissioned services and grants, continuing significant investment across priority areas including Aboriginal health, mental health, urgent care and aged care. Through new and enhanced services, partnerships and system improvements, we have strengthened access to care and delivered initiatives that make a direct difference to people, families and communities throughout the region.

Our commitment to Aboriginal health and wellbeing remained a priority. Through the delivery of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026, we invested in partnerships and community-led initiatives including Yarning Groups and NAIDOC activities that foster connection, cultural strength and wellbeing. These initiatives reinforce our commitment to working alongside Aboriginal communities to achieve better health outcomes and support self-determination.

Supporting a sustainable and capable primary care workforce also remained central to our work. We assisted providers to implement national Medicare and digital reforms, strengthened disaster preparedness across the sector and continued to deliver place-based education programs that enhanced capability, referral pathways and collaboration. Our Big Opportunities, Bigger Impact campaign reached more than 1.6 million people and showcased the benefits of living and working in Western and Far West NSW, helping to attract and retain primary healthcare professionals in our region.

Recognising excellence across the sector was another important milestone. The introduction of the Western NSW Primary Health Excellence Awards has created an opportunity to celebrate the dedication and innovation of those delivering outstanding primary healthcare outcomes. With more than 60 nominations received, the Awards highlight the strength, commitment and achievements of our local primary health workforce.

The progress achieved this year has been supported by continued organisational growth and maturity. We successfully attained certification in ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems and ISO 27001 Information Security Management Systems, demonstrating our commitment to quality, governance, risk management, information security and continuous improvement. These achievements provide a strong foundation to support our communities and partners into the future.

The year also saw important changes to our governance and membership. We welcomed new Directors Ricky Puata, Anthony Paulson and Dr Aidan Tan, whose expertise across health, governance, Aboriginal communities, education, research and economic development further strengthens the Board. We were also pleased to welcome the University of Sydney School of Rural Health and Charles Sturt University as member organisations, broadening the knowledge and perspectives that support our work.

A significant achievement during the year was the development and launch of the WNSW PHN Strategic Plan 2026–2030. Shaped through extensive engagement with communities, health professionals, service providers and Aboriginal health leaders, the Plan provides a clear roadmap for the future. It reinforces our commitment to Aboriginal health and wellbeing, coordinated access to primary care, workforce sustainability, community-led commissioning, strong partnerships and effective governance.

This year also marked an important leadership transition. We thank outgoing Chief Executive Officer Brad Porter for his significant contribution over the past two years, including his leadership in developing the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and guiding the organisation through ISO certification. We sincerely acknowledge his professionalism, commitment and service to our staff, partners and communities.

We are pleased to welcome Brendon Cutmore as Chief Executive Officer, commencing in August 2026. Brendon brings more than 20 years of experience across health and social services in regional NSW and a strong commitment to partnership, equity and improving access to services for regional communities.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication and collaboration of our staff, Board Directors, member organisations, Advisory Councils, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Local Health Districts, primary care providers, commissioned service providers, government agencies and community partners. Their commitment continues to strengthen the primary healthcare system across our region.

As we look ahead, the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 provides a clear direction for the future. Together, we will continue building a stronger, more sustainable and community-centred primary healthcare system shaped, for our community.



Carmen Dwyer
Board Chair
Western Health Alliance Ltd



Brendon Cutmore
Chief Executive Officer
Western NSW Primary Health Network

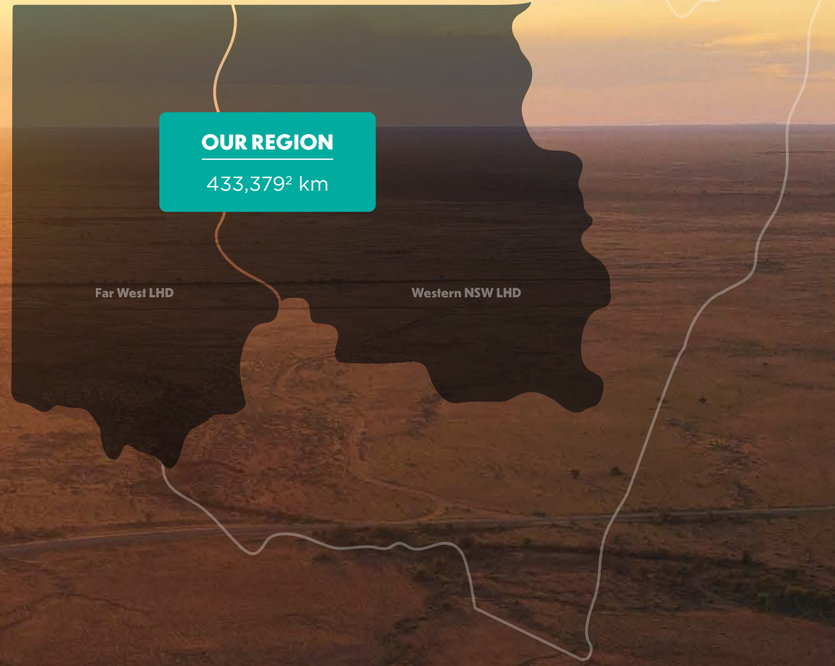
Silverton, NSW

Who we are

Western Health Alliance Limited (WHAL), trading as the Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN), is one of 31 Primary Health Networks in Australia. We work to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and coordination of primary health care, with a focus on people at risk of poor health outcomes.

We partner with General Practices, Aboriginal Medical Services, Local Health Districts, hospitals, and the community to align services with local needs.

As a not-for-profit organisation primarily funded by the Australian Government, our vision is to lead, support, and strengthen person-centred primary health care across Western NSW.



WNSW PHN covers both Far West and Western NSW Local Health Districts, making it the largest PHN in NSW **(at 53.5%).**

The total population of our region is estimated to be over **310,000** people, with 21% over the age of 65 years **(ABS, 2021).**

Approximately **14.3%** of people in our region identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

We support **320** General Practitioners that operate from **112** practices in our region, including AMSs and ACCHOs.

WNSW PHN Advisory Councils

WNSW PHN's five Advisory Councils continued to provide valued advice and local insight to support strategic planning, service design and evaluation. Each Council reports through to the WHAL Board and plays an important role in ensuring the needs and priorities of communities across the region are reflected in WNSW PHN's work.

Clinical Councils provide advice on opportunities to strengthen and further develop clinical services in response to community need.

Community Councils support WNSW PHN to better understand local health needs, including access to services, emerging priorities and service gaps.

The Aboriginal Health Council provides locally relevant Aboriginal Community perspectives on health needs, access to services and opportunities to address service gaps.

Across 2025-26, the Advisory Councils held 20 meetings in total.

Key initiative

WNSW PHN convened a joint meeting of all Advisory Councils to discuss priorities for the next two years, supporting alignment with the WNSW PHN Strategic Plan and Activity Work Plans.

Consultation topics

- Alcohol and other drug services provided in the region
- Chronic disease and multidisciplinary teams in general practice
- Aus Hearts program
- Disaster and emergency needs assessment
- Codesign Framework Project
- Grants in chronic condition management and prevention
- Changes to NDIS funding
- Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone and its impact on the region
- Protocols relevant to NSW pharmacists





Harvest, Coonabarabran, NSW

A new strategic direction for WNSW PHN

In March 2026, Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) launched its Strategic Plan 2026–2030, providing a clear roadmap for improving health and wellbeing across Western and Far West NSW over the next four years.

Developed through consulting with key stakeholders, the Plan reflects the priorities, challenges and opportunities identified across one of Australia's largest and most diverse regions. It recognises the unique needs of rural and remote communities and outlines how WNSW PHN will continue to support equitable, person-centred and sustainable primary health care.

The Strategic Plan establishes five priorities that will guide the organisation's work to 2030: improving Aboriginal health and wellbeing; strengthening coordinated access to primary care; supporting a sustainable primary health workforce; delivering community-driven commissioning; and maintaining effective governance and organisational performance.

Importantly, the Plan provides a shared framework for collaboration across the region. It brings together government agencies, health services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, general practice, service providers and community organisations around a common vision for improving health outcomes and reducing inequities.

The Plan aligns with key national priorities, including Australia's Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, while remaining firmly grounded in local evidence through WNSW PHN's Health Needs Assessment. This ensures that future planning, investment and commissioning decisions continue to reflect the health needs and priorities of communities across Western and Far West NSW.

The launch of the Strategic Plan marks an important milestone in supporting a sustainable healthcare system for the region. By focusing on collaboration, evidence-based decision-making and locally responsive solutions, the Plan provides a strong foundation for addressing ongoing workforce challenges, improving access to care and supporting more connected services.

It also reinforces WNSW PHN's commitment to continuous improvement, accountability and strong governance, helping ensure resources are used effectively to deliver the greatest benefit to communities.

By establishing a shared vision and clear priorities for the next four years, the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 positions WNSW PHN and its partners to work together to strengthen primary health care and create a healthier future for the people of Western and Far West NSW.

Strengthening Quality, Security and Sustainability

During 2025–26, WNSW PHN strengthened the foundations that support high-quality, sustainable primary health care by achieving certification in two internationally recognised standards: ISO 9001 (Quality Management) and ISO 27001 (Information Security).

The certifications reflect a coordinated organisation-wide effort to strengthen governance, improve performance monitoring, and embed consistent processes across the organisation. Together, they provide assurance that WNSW PHN is delivering services in a way that is quality-focused, secure and continually improving.

For primary health professionals, service providers and partners, this work helps ensure greater consistency in the way programs and services are planned, managed and evaluated. It also supports stronger accountability and decision-making, helping WNSW PHN respond effectively to the needs of communities across Western and Far West NSW.

The ISO 9001 certification recognises the systems and processes in place to monitor performance, manage quality and drive continuous improvement. ISO 27001 certification confirms that robust information security practices are in place to help protect sensitive information and manage risk in an increasingly digital healthcare environment.

Achieving both certifications reinforces WNSW PHN's commitment to maintaining the confidence of service providers, government partners, funders and the community. Strong governance and secure information management are essential to supporting effective collaboration across the health system and ensuring resources are used responsibly.

The certifications support primary care sustainability in the region by strengthening organisational capability, improving oversight and creating a culture of continuous improvement. We are now better positioned to support primary care services, respond to emerging challenges and deliver positive outcomes for people across the region.

This achievement demonstrates that sustainable healthcare is supported not only by frontline services, but also by the systems, processes and governance that underpin them. Through a continued focus on quality, security and accountability, WNSW PHN is helping create a stronger primary healthcare system for the future.

Annual snapshot of our achievements

Education

We delivered **78** education events

We established and maintained **19** educational partnerships

We hosted **1,577** health professionals at our education events

Digital Health

Uploads to My Health Record by General Practitioners increased by **5.8%**

General Practitioner cross views of My Health Record increased by **77.8%**

Immunisation

96.07% immunisation rate for all children at 5 years, **which is the highest coverage rate nationally**

96.51% for Aboriginal children at 5 years, which is the third highest coverage rate nationally

Needs Assessments

We completed **two needs assessments** this year to better understand the primary care needs of homelessness and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in our region

HealthPathways

157 HealthPathways pages went live, representing a 15% increase

Page views increased by **24%**, with 34,914 views

Use of HealthPathways increased by **18.5%**, with **9,856** user sessions recorded

Clinical governance saw **122** partial updates and **19** content reviews completed

Commissioned Services

We have **66** commissioned services, with five new contracts this year

We commission **16** Aboriginal Medical Services and **1** Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service

Funding and Grants

We delivered more than **$53 million** of funding through commissioned services

Aboriginal Health Services received more than **$6.5 million** across **35 providers**

GPs and workforce received **$121,215** in grant funding

Aged care and social isolation received **$197,700** in grant funding

After Hours services received **$913,798** in grant funding

Mental health and wellbeing community grants received **$612,000**

Homelessness and culturally and linguistically diverse communities received grant funding of **$588,382**

Our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2026

Throughout 2025–26, WNSW PHN continued to deliver on its commitment to reconciliation through the implementation of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2024–2026. Guided by the pillars of Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance, our RAP provides a framework for building stronger partnerships with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations while embedding culturally safe practices across our organisation.

This year, we completed 15 RAP deliverables, demonstrating meaningful progress towards our commitment to strengthen relationships, promote cultural understanding and create opportunities for Aboriginal people and communities across Western and Far West NSW.

Community engagement remained central to our reconciliation journey. Staff participated in 13 Aboriginal-led and community-based activities across the region, including men's gatherings, youth empowerment events, community suicide prevention initiatives and NAIDOC celebrations. These engagements provided opportunities to listen, learn, and better understand community priorities while strengthening relationships with local organisations and communities.

Truth telling series

A key focus throughout the year was increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal cultures, histories, knowledge and rights. WNSW PHN delivered 13 cultural learning newsletters to staff, supporting ongoing learning and reflection on significant events, reconciliation and Aboriginal history. Internal cultural learning campaigns continued to evolve in response to staff feedback, helping create more engaging and accessible opportunities for learning.

Across the cultural learning email series, staff engagement was strong, with an average open rate of 55% in 2025-26. The most engaging content covered topics including 26 January, the 1965 Freedom Ride and the Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations.

Overall, the series provided a consistent organisational emphasis on historical awareness, truth-telling content and resources that promote reconciliation. Staff reported that the cultural learning email was informative and supported meaningful reflection and discussion.



Cultural immersion

In April 2026, staff participated in a cultural immersion tour with the Three Rivers Regional Assembly as part of the WNSW PHN All-Staff Conference in Dubbo. During the tour, staff visited local sites and learned about their cultural and historical significance. The experience concluded with a presentation at Yarradaimarra Centre by Uncle John and Aunty Beth, who shared insights into Aboriginal culture and the connection between people and Country.

The immersion provided an opportunity for local Elders to share stories, knowledge and lived experience, supporting truth-telling and increasing staff awareness of the deep cultural, historical and spiritual connection Aboriginal people have with Country. This portion of the agenda was highly regarded by staff as a highlight of the conference.

"The session with Aunty & Uncle provided more insight and understanding into culture, beliefs and values of the people in our region which gives me a different perspective and allows me to reflect on my interactions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People."

– WNSW PHN staff member

'All In' for National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week 2026 provided an opportunity to bring our RAP commitments to life. Guided by the theme 'All In', staff, stakeholders and community members participated in events across the region, reflecting on the role each of us can play in advancing reconciliation.

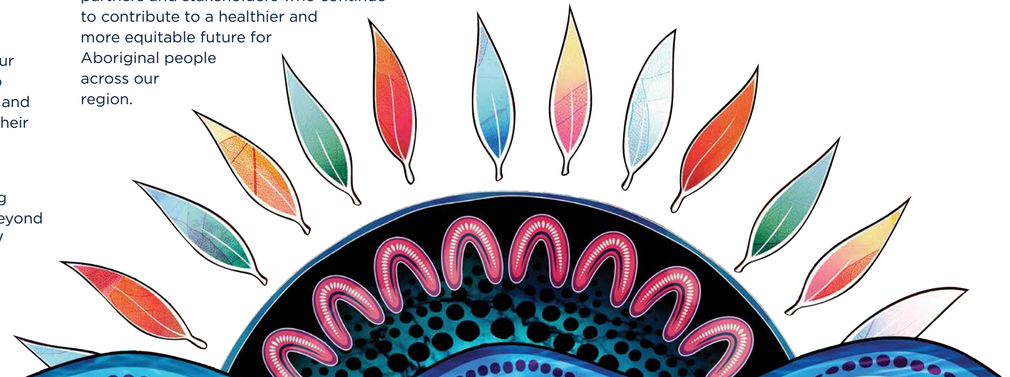
In Orange, community members, partner organisations and WNSW PHN staff gathered at the TAFE NSW Winhanganha Aboriginal Learning Centre to hear from local speakers and explore what being "all in" means in practice.

In Bathurst, staff hosted a morning tea with a group of young Aboriginal students participating in a WNSW PHN-funded Yarning Group program, celebrating culture, leadership and connection.

In Dubbo, staff learned more about our RAP journey and were encouraged to reflect on the importance of building and strengthening relationships through their everyday work and interactions.

These activities reinforced that reconciliation is built through ongoing conversations, learning and action. Beyond National Reconciliation Week, WNSW PHN continued to support community-led initiatives that strengthen cultural connection and wellbeing. This included funding 26 Yarning Groups across Western and Far West NSW, supporting Aboriginal communities to lead local activities focused on health literacy, cultural connection, leadership and wellbeing. These initiatives demonstrate how RAP commitments are translated into practical actions that support self-determination and improved health outcomes.

As we approach the final year of our Innovate RAP, WNSW PHN remains committed to listening, learning and working alongside Aboriginal people and communities. The progress achieved during 2025–26 reflects the collective efforts of staff, community members, partners and stakeholders who continue to contribute to a healthier and more equitable future for Aboriginal people across our region.



Snapshot of achievement

- **15 RAP** deliverables achieved
- **13** cultural learning newsletters delivered
- **13** Community engagement events attended
- **26** Yarning Groups funded across Western and Far West NSW
- **National Reconciliation** Week events delivered
- Ongoing implementation of the **Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan** 2024–2026



Improving access to care with HealthPathways

HealthPathways is an online clinical and referral resource that supports health professionals at the point of care, supporting people across the region to access the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

A team of five local GP Clinical Editors from across the region play a key role in developing and maintaining health pathways tailored to local health needs, services and referral options. Their expertise helps clinicians navigate complex care pathways and access up-to-date, locally relevant information.

Guided by the WNSW PHN Health Needs Assessment, health pathway development this year focused on strongest community need, including cancer screening, chronic disease management, healthy lifestyles and women's health. The team also worked closely with the WNSW PHN Education team to align HealthPathways resources with education and training activities, supporting greater awareness and use by local clinicians.

In recognition of its expertise, WNSW PHN took on the role of State Lead Region for the development of breast cancer screening pathways. This work supports the broader HealthPathways network by reducing duplication and improving efficiencies across various PHN regions. The team also continued to work closely with the Cancer Institute NSW and the National Lung Cancer Screening Program Operational Readiness Group to ensure lung cancer screening pathways remain current and aligned with best practice.

Collaboration remained a key focus throughout the year. Major achievements included supporting the implementation of Statewide Referral Criteria and expanding electronic referrals (eReferrals) beyond Far West and Dubbo. eReferrals now include Bathurst, Orange and a growing number of Western NSW Local Health District outpatient services, making referrals more consistent, efficient and accessible for both clinicians and patients.

Through ongoing collaboration and clinical leadership, HealthPathways continues to strengthen primary healthcare delivery across the region, supporting better coordinated care and improved access to services for local communities.

Data snapshot

- HealthPathways – Total of **344** pages, having developed and localised **157** new pages, an increase of **15%** from the previous financial year
- Completed **122** partial updates and **19** reviews of content as part of our clinical governance
- **9,856** user sessions where a user may visit several pages, an increase of **18.5%**
- **34, 914** page views, an increase of **24%**

Our strategic goals

At WNSW PHN, we are committed to improving the health outcomes of Western and Far West NSW communities.

Our vision is to lead, support and strengthen person-centred primary health care in our region, with consumers and communities at the heart of everything we do.



Goal 1

Engage with communities and stakeholders to improve health and wellbeing in our community

Effective community and stakeholder engagement is central to both delivering and building trust in a place-based approach to primary health care. In the WNSW PHN region, this requires ongoing efforts to reach and engage small communities across the region, particularly Aboriginal communities. Services need to meet the needs, circumstances and resources available in different communities.

Dying to Know Days: Bringing communities together for end-of-life conversations

Talking about death and dying can be difficult, but these conversations help people make informed choices, reduce uncertainty, and ensure their wishes are understood and respected.

In 2025-26, Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) partnered with local health services, community organisations and community members to deliver six Dying to Know Day events across the region. The events provided practical information about end-of-life planning, palliative care, grief support and local services, while creating safe spaces for meaningful conversations.

These events attracted 516 community members, carers, health professionals and representatives from local support organisations in Mudgee, Canowindra, Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo and Parkes.

By listening to communities and working alongside partners these events responded to a growing need for accessible information and support with end-of-life planning and care.

Collaborating with partners to enhance community knowledge

A key strength of the program was its collaborative approach. WNSW PHN partnered with Local Health District teams, including palliative care services, and organisations such as Preparing the Way, NALAG, Carer Gateway, Orange City Council, Central West Women's Health Centre and Dubbo Neighbourhood Centre.

Together, these partners provided information and resources on advance care planning, palliative care, grief and loss support, medicines management, legal considerations, end-of-life doulas, Voluntary Assisted Dying, cultural perspectives and community support services.

Bringing these services together in one place helped participants learn about available supports, ask questions, connect with providers and better understand options for themselves and their families. The events also strengthened relationships between communities, health services and local organisations, supporting a more coordinated approach to care.









Improving death literacy in the region

To better understand the initiative's impact, participants completed the Death Literacy Index-9 (DLI-9), a recognised tool that measures the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to navigate end-of-life care.

A total of 261 participants completed the survey, representing more than half of all attendees. Results showed significantly higher death literacy scores than the benchmark average, suggesting the events increased confidence in discussing death and dying, understanding care options and accessing support services.

Feedback highlighted the value of open conversations in a supportive environment. Many participants reported gaining practical knowledge, discovering new services and feeling more prepared to discuss future wishes with family and friends.

The initiative has also provided important insights into community needs and priorities, helping inform future service planning and engagement activities.

High engagement shows interest in end-of-life support

Building on the strong attendance and engagement achieved at these events, WNSW PHN is continuing to work with communities and partners to expand the program, with future events planned in Coonabarabran, Oberon and Wellington, and a follow up event in Mudgee. Up-to-date event information will be available on the WNSW PHN website.

By creating opportunities for people to learn, connect and plan ahead, Dying to Know Days are strengthening community understanding of end-of-life care and supporting more informed, person-centred decision-making across Western and Far West NSW.

"This was a fantastic event. I was able to build on previous knowledge, connect with friends who make safe places to share conversations around life, death and all the spaces in between. I was able to forge new connections with community organisations and the wider community."

— Community member,
Orange Dying to Know Day

"Thank you for putting this together. There was so much interesting information to consider and valuable resources to help start conversations with my family and friends."

— Community member,
Bathurst Dying to Know Day







At a glance

6 Dying to Know Days delivered across Western NSW during 2025–26

516 participants attended

261 DLI-9 surveys completed

Strong **partnerships** established with Local Health Districts and community organisations

Improved community knowledge and confidence around end-of-life planning and support services

Future events planned to expand community access across the region

My Care Future: Building confidence through community conversations

In 2025-26, WNSW PHN commissioned Orange City Council to deliver the My Care Future program, to help people build confidence in discussing, planning and documenting their future health and care preferences.

Using a community-led approach, Orange City Council worked with Dubbo Neighbourhood Centre and Orange Aboriginal Medical Service to bring together health professionals, community organisations and volunteers. Together, they created practical opportunities for people to learn about advance care planning and end-of-life care.

Since commencing in April 2025, the program delivered 35 community workshops across the region, engaging 310 community members by July 2026. Participants accessed evidence-based information and resources to better understand their options and the importance of communicating their wishes with family members and healthcare providers.

A key focus was reaching people with limited exposure to advance care planning. Evaluation findings showed increased knowledge and confidence among participants, while also identifying barriers people face when navigating services and completing planning documents.

The program also prioritised culturally safe engagement. Working with Orange Aboriginal Medical Service and local Aboriginal communities, a co-designed First Nations pilot explored how future care planning conversations can be approached with meaning, respect and relevance.

Community engagement remained central to delivery, with coordinators working alongside local groups, health services and palliative care providers to understand local needs and support future education opportunities. Volunteers were also recruited and trained to extend the program's reach.

By bringing together community members, health professionals and local organisations, My Care Future strengthened regional partnerships and supported more informed decision-making about future care. The program demonstrates how community-driven approaches can help ensure services remain responsive to the diverse needs of communities across the region.



Building the future primary health workforce

Throughout 2025-26, WNSW PHN engaged with medical students, junior doctors, GP registrars, training providers and regional partners to promote careers in general practice and strengthen the future primary healthcare workforce across Western and Far West NSW.

Recognising that workforce development begins well before clinicians enter practice, WNSW PHN supported initiatives that showcased the opportunities available in regional communities and helped future healthcare professionals make informed decisions about where they live, train and work.

In August 2025, we promoted the region at the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Rural Showcase in Sydney, attended by more than 200 metropolitan and composite GP registrars preparing for their next training term. Registrars heard from rural doctors and healthcare professionals about careers in general practice and rural medicine, while learning about training opportunities, workforce needs and community life across regional NSW.

In September 2025, WNSW PHN sponsored the Western NSW Regional Training Hub's To GP or Not GP Night, bringing together medical students, junior medical officers, GP registrars, rural generalists and experienced GPs. The event provided practical information about the Rural Generalist Pathway and career opportunities in general practice, alongside firsthand insights from clinicians working in regional communities.

In October 2025, WNSW PHN participated in two major workforce engagement activities. At Rural Medicine Australia 2025, the organisation connected with 43 visitors at its exhibition booth, including 24 GPs, GP registrars and medical students. WNSW PHN also supported the RACGP Western NSW Rural Roundup in Parkes, which attracted 33 participants, including six GPs, 23 GP registrars and four medical students. Visits to practices in Dubbo, Wellington, Parkes, Forbes and Condobolin provided valuable exposure to rural practice and community life.

In February 2026, WNSW PHN partnered with the University of Sydney School of Rural Health's Western NSW Regional Training Hub, Dubbo Regional Council and RACGP to deliver the Western NSW GP Registrar Career and Networking Event in Dubbo. The event welcomed 37 participants, including 23 first-year GP registrars, 13 medical students and one junior medical officer. Through structured networking, participants connected with experienced clinicians and regional stakeholders to explore career pathways, professional development opportunities and the benefits of living and working in regional communities.

Together, these initiatives strengthened connections between future healthcare professionals, education providers and community partners. By promoting regional training pathways, showcasing career opportunities and creating meaningful engagement with local clinicians and communities, WNSW PHN continued to support efforts to attract, retain and grow a sustainable primary healthcare workforce across Western and Far West NSW.









Yarning Groups strengthen connection, culture and community-led wellbeing

During 2025-26, WNSW PHN continued to support Aboriginal communities through its Yarning Group Grants Program, creating opportunities for local Aboriginal representatives to lead health and wellbeing initiatives in their communities.

The program supported 26 Yarning Groups across Western and Far West NSW through an investment of $312,000, with each group receiving $12,000 to deliver locally designed activities.

Based on a community-led model, the program recognises the importance of culture, connection and local decision-making in improving health and wellbeing outcomes. By supporting Aboriginal organisations and community groups to determine their own priorities, activities remain relevant to local needs and circumstances. Across the region, Yarning Groups provide culturally safe spaces where Aboriginal people can discuss health and wellbeing, share experiences, strengthen community connections and build confidence in accessing services and support.

WNSW PHN Executive Manager Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing, Donna Stanley, said the program reflects the organisation's commitment to working alongside Aboriginal communities to promote health literacy and wellbeing.

"Yarning Groups create opportunities for Aboriginal people to discuss the issues that matter most to them in ways that are meaningful and relevant to their communities.

"Through direct funding, communities can lead activities that support health literacy, wellbeing, cultural connection and chronic disease prevention and management, while strengthening local leadership and self-determination," Ms Stanley said.

One example is the Walan Yinaagirbang Health and Wellbeing Yarning Group in Bathurst, led by Katrina Lane, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer with the Department of Education. This year, the group supported 12 Aboriginal students in Years 8 to 10, helping strengthen cultural identity, build confidence and develop leadership skills.

Students participated in activities including smoking and vaping workshops delivered by Orange Aboriginal Medical Service, traditional jewellery-making with Elder Aunty Sally Beale, and healthy cooking sessions through the Marang Dhali Healthy Eating Program led by Aunty Loretta Stanley. These activities encouraged informed health choices, practical life skills and stronger connections to culture and community.

"The program provides young Aboriginal women with opportunities to connect with culture, build friendships and develop skills that will support them into the future," Ms Lane said.

During National Reconciliation Week 2026, students shared the program's impact with WNSW PHN staff and proudly represented their community at TAFE NSW Reconciliation Week celebrations and the Bathurst Dance Festival, wearing dance uniforms funded through the program.

The group is now preparing to participate in Bathurst NAIDOC Week celebrations and an inter-community trip to Goodooga for the Traditional Indigenous Games, providing opportunities to connect with young Aboriginal people from across NSW, celebrate culture and build friendships.

The Yarning Groups support Aboriginal communities to lead their own health and wellbeing initiatives, strengthening culture, connection and self-determination while contributing to improved health outcomes.

Using storytelling to strengthen connections within Aboriginal communities

In Wellington, WNSW PHN worked with community members, schools and local partners to support the Show Me The Way (SMTW) program. The program engages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students through storytelling, mentoring and documentary filmmaking.

SMTW provides students with opportunities to develop new skills while connecting with local Aboriginal role models. Working alongside experienced mentors, students document stories from their communities that highlight education, employment and cultural leadership.

WNSW PHN supported local engagement to ensure community voices guided program activities. This included working with schools, Aboriginal Education Officers, Elders, community members and SMTW staff to identify participants and strengthen connections between the program and local communities.

In Wellington, WNSW PHN supported planning activities and attended the local program launch in June 2026. Community consultation helped identify local role models whose stories reflect the strengths, achievements and diversity of the community and inspire young people.

By supporting community-led storytelling, SMTW created opportunities for young people to build confidence, explore future pathways and strengthen their connection to community and culture.

Raising the voices of Mental Health lived experience

People with lived and living experience of mental health challenges play an important role in shaping services, improving care pathways and strengthening outcomes for others in their communities. In June 2026, Being Mental Health Consumers, the NSW peak organisation representing people with lived and living experience of mental health challenges, visited Dubbo to connect with local services, better understand the regional service landscape and explore opportunities to contribute to future service planning and improvement activities.

Through facilitated meetings with WNSW PHN service providers, including Mission Australia's The Way Back Service (Universal Aftercare) program, participants learned about available supports, local services and challenges experienced when navigating care in regional communities.

WNSW PHN facilitated introductions to commissioned services and community organisations, helping strengthen relationships between consumers and providers while increasing awareness of local support options. Participants also met with mental health and suicide prevention service providers to discuss local service delivery models, identify areas of need and explore how lived experience perspectives can contribute to improving accessibility and responsiveness.

The engagement highlighted the value of ensuring people with lived and living experience are represented in conversations about service design, planning and evaluation. Their perspectives provide important insights into what helps people access support, where barriers remain and how services can better meet the needs of individuals, families and communities.

By supporting these opportunities, WNSW PHN is helping ensure consumer voices remain central to future planning, commissioning and service improvement activities. These partnerships strengthen understanding, encourage collaboration and contribute to more person-centred and responsive mental health and suicide prevention services across Western and Far West NSW.

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2026 PRIMARY HEALTH EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Celebrating excellence in local primary care

In 2025–26, WNSW PHN is hosting the inaugural Western NSW Primary Health Excellence Awards. The awards program was created to recognise the people, teams and organisations making a positive contribution to primary health care across Western and Far West NSW.

As well as providing an opportunity to celebrate the dedication, leadership and innovation in the sector, the program highlights the importance of primary health care and strengthens stakeholder relationships in the region's primary care sector.

WNSW PHN ran a nominations campaign between 11 May to 22 June 2026, with messaging promoting the award categories, how to nominate and the key program dates. The campaign targeted staff, the local primary health sector, and the public, attracting more than 60 nominations across six award categories. The digital campaign reached more than 300,000 people and generated strong community engagement, including more than 156,000 interactions with campaign content and almost 2,500 visits to the awards webpage.

The Western NSW Primary Health Excellence Awards reflects WNSW PHN's commitment to engaging with communities and stakeholders to improve health and wellbeing. By recognising excellence across the sector, the awards promote stronger relationships, promote greater understanding of primary health care and acknowledge the valuable contribution of those delivering services across Western and Far West NSW.

Launching a more accessible and user-focused website

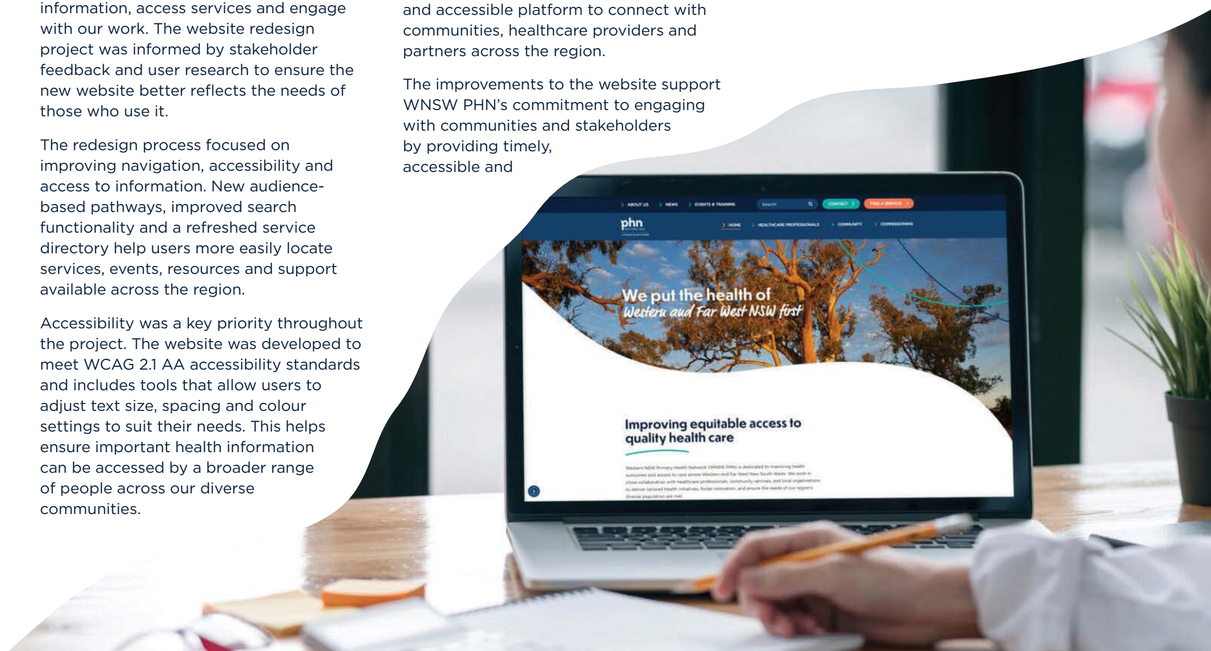
In October 2025, WNSW PHN launched a new website to make it easier for community members, health professionals, service providers and partners to find information, access services and engage with our work. The website redesign project was informed by stakeholder feedback and user research to ensure the new website better reflects the needs of those who use it.

The redesign process focused on improving navigation, accessibility and access to information. New audience-based pathways, improved search functionality and a refreshed service directory help users more easily locate services, events, resources and support available across the region.

Accessibility was a key priority throughout the project. The website was developed to meet WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards and includes tools that allow users to adjust text size, spacing and colour settings to suit their needs. This helps ensure important health information can be accessed by a broader range of people across our diverse communities.

The project was recognised with a Web Excellence Award in the Health Care Services and Public Services category, acknowledging the website's focus on accessibility, usability and community engagement. More importantly, it has provided WNSW PHN with a modern and accessible platform to connect with communities, healthcare providers and partners across the region.

The improvements to the website support WNSW PHN's commitment to engaging with communities and stakeholders by providing timely, accessible and easy-to-understand information that helps people connect with healthcare services and opportunities across Western and Far West NSW.





Warrumbungles, Coonabarabran, NSW

Goal 2

Strengthen health system reform through service integration, innovation and place-based initiatives

Working in partnership to pursue health system reform as enablers of change. We are committed to regional planning with our stakeholders to integrate services and reduce duplication through joint needs assessment (including place-based), shared data for decision-making and evaluation of outcomes together.

Supporting general practice across Western and Far West NSW

In 2025-26, WNSW PHN's Practice Development Team supported general practices in the region with quality improvement activities, accreditation, workforce capability and preparation for ongoing change across the healthcare system.

The team delivered more than 300 practice visits and additional virtual support across communities including Broken Hill, Balranald, Bourke, Dubbo, Bathurst, Orange, Eugowra, Millthorpe, Grenfell and the Southern Border region.

A key achievement was supporting accreditation and continuous quality improvement across the region, with 102 of 112 general practices accredited, representing more than 92% of practices in the region. Support included accreditation preparation, education, practice systems improvement, workforce development and tailored guidance for both new and established practices.

The team's education and training activities covered accreditation, clinical and administrative systems, practice management and professional development. They also worked to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal Medical Services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to support culturally safe, high-quality care.

Data snapshot

- **301** practice visits
- **102** of **112** practices accredited **(92.7%)**
- Support delivered across **10+ regional communities**
- **Weekly** multidisciplinary practice support and **education initiatives**
- **New GP and practice establishment support** in Bathurst and Bourke

Collaborating to improve Alcohol and Other Drug support

In 2025-26, WNSW PHN developed partnerships to strengthen collaboration and improve coordination of Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) services across the region, supporting a more connected health system and accessible primary health system.

In April 2026, WNSW PHN partnered with the Western NSW and Far West Local Health Districts to host an AOD Roundtable in Dubbo. The event brought together around 30 service providers, clinicians, researchers, government representatives and sector leaders from across the region.

The Roundtable responded to sector feedback identifying a need for stronger partnerships and better coordination across health and community services. By bringing organisations together, the event provided an opportunity to discuss shared challenges, identify gaps and explore practical solutions to improve care for people affected by alcohol and other drug use.









Bringing together evidence, experience and local knowledge

Participants explored current trends in alcohol and drug-related harm alongside local research findings. Presentations highlighted emerging service needs and evidence supporting family involvement in treatment and recovery.

A lived experience presentation from Wiradjuri woman Melissa Whitton provided valuable insights into addiction and recovery, highlighting the importance of culturally safe, community-led approaches that support people throughout their recovery journey.

Facilitated discussions focused on workforce sustainability, culturally safe care, trauma-informed approaches, service coordination, data and outcomes, and the relationship between mental health and alcohol and other drug services.

These conversations identified opportunities to improve referral pathways, strengthen communication between organisations, support more integrated care and reduce duplication across services. Participants also agreed on actions to strengthen regional collaboration, including establishing regional networks and communities of practice to support ongoing learning, shared planning and system improvement.

By bringing together health professionals, service providers, researchers and government partners, the Roundtable demonstrated the value of partnership, shared knowledge and collective action in strengthening services and improving outcomes for communities across Western and Far West NSW.

Building local capability to improve access to opioid treatment

This year, WNSW PHN worked with partners to improve access to opioid treatment services across Western and Far West NSW, supporting training that enables clinicians to deliver care closer to home for people experiencing opioid dependence.

In May 2026, we partnered with Western NSW Local Health District (WNSW LHD) to deliver the region's first Opioid Treatment Accreditation Course (OTAC) in Dubbo. Funded by the NSW Ministry of Health, the training was delivered by Western NSW LHD Addiction Medicine Specialist Dr Stanley Theodorou. The course was developed in response to a recognised need for more local clinicians able to provide opioid treatment services, particularly in regional, rural and remote communities where long distances, workforce shortages and limited service availability can make access to treatment difficult.

Developing workforce capability

OTAC supports General Practitioners and Nurse Practitioners to become accredited to prescribe opioid treatment medications, including methadone and buprenorphine, helping people manage opioid dependence and reduce the harms associated with opioid use.

23 clinicians attended the training, including 11 participants from the WNSW PHN region. Attendees came from communities across the region, including Broken Hill, demonstrating strong interest in expanding local treatment capacity.

The course covered patient assessment, treatment planning, ongoing care, prescribing requirements and local referral pathways, while also providing opportunities to connect with specialist clinicians and strengthen professional networks.

Creating care pathways through partnerships

The training was delivered through a partnership between WNSW PHN, WNSW LHD and the NSW Ministry of Health, enabling partners to respond to local workforce needs and support a more coordinated approach to alcohol and other drug treatment.

For GPs, Nurse Practitioners and other health professionals, the training increased skills and confidence in delivering opioid treatment services. For patients and communities, a larger network of accredited prescribers can improve access to care, reduce travel requirements and support continuity of treatment.

Strengthening health system reform through co-design and regional planning

This year, WNSW PHN began redesigning its Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) service model to align services to the needs of communities across Western and Far West NSW. The work supports a more coordinated, evidence-informed approach to planning, with a focus on service integration, improved access and better outcomes for people seeking AOD treatment and support.

A key component of the redesign was a supplementary regional needs assessment, providing a clearer understanding of service needs, community experiences and opportunities to improve coordination across the health system. As part of this work, WNSW PHN conducted a community and stakeholder survey involving consumers, carers, service providers, health professionals and partner organisations. The findings are providing valuable insights into local priorities, service gaps and areas for improvement.

WNSW PHN also undertook comprehensive mapping of AOD services across the region. This identified the range of services available to communities, how people access care across different locations and settings, and gaps in service provision. The mapping process is in its final stages and will inform future planning and decision-making.

Recognising that effective reform requires strong partnerships, WNSW PHN developed a consultation process involving workshops and interviews with consumers, community representatives, clinicians, service providers and government partners. These activities are designed to ensure the redesigned model reflects local needs, supports collaboration across organisations and reduces duplication where possible. Consultation will take place during 2026-27 and inform the future service model.

To guide the project, a multidisciplinary Steering Group was established to bring together stakeholders from across the region to provide oversight and advice throughout the redesign process. Through this co-design approach, WNSW PHN is working with partners to build a shared understanding of priorities and strengthen the delivery of integrated, place-based AOD services across Western and Far West NSW.

Shaping the Continuing Professional Development calendar

This year 312 professionals contributed to WNSW PHN's Annual Education Survey, providing valuable insight into clinical learning needs and priorities in the region. The survey continues to play an important role in shaping a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program that reflects the needs of WNSW PHN stakeholders and the health priorities of our region.

Respondents represented a diverse range of professions, including GPs, registrars, Aboriginal Health Professionals, allied health professionals, nurses in general practice, Aboriginal Medical Services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Residential Aged Care Homes and Local Health District services. Practice managers, receptionists, non-clinical staff and executive staff also contributed valuable feedback.

The top clinical learning priorities identified included diabetes, older person's health, preventive health, women's health, immunisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, wound care, cardiology, cancer and mental health.

The Education Program's engagement rating remained consistent with the previous year, averaging 4.2 out of 5. These results provide a strong evidence base for maintaining a responsive, relevant and regionally focused CPD calendar next year.



Improving ear health workforce capability

In March 2026, WNSW PHN partnered with TAFE NSW to deliver EarTrain workshops in Dubbo and Broken Hill to strengthen ear health assessment skills in the region. 15 health professionals took part in the face-to-face training including Aboriginal Health Practitioners, nurses and allied health professionals working in a range of community and primary health settings.

The workshops responded to a need for practical training that supports early identification of ear conditions and timely referrals. The training was delivered by audiologist Jean Tsembis and focused on developing practical skills that participants could apply in their day-to-day work. The sessions covered safe otoscopy techniques, recognising normal ear anatomy, identifying signs that require referral, and using ear health equipment correctly.

Participants also learned how to perform, record and interpret tympanometry assessments. Training included information on common ear conditions, and the signs and symptoms health professionals may encounter in practice. A key feature of the workshops was the opportunity for hands-on learning. Participants used equipment in a supported environment and gained practical experience assessing ear health.

Many participants reported a readiness to apply their new skills in their own services and increased confidence in recognising ear conditions and understanding what they were observing during examinations. Many also identified opportunities to expand ear and hearing assessments and strengthen referral pathways for patients requiring further care.



Strengthening primary care for unintended pregnancy

In 2025-26, WNSW PHN partnered with Family Planning Australia (FPA) and the WNSW LHD to deliver two Unintended Pregnancy: Pathways in Primary Care training events. These events engaged 86 primary healthcare professionals and helped to strengthen access to informed, person-centred care across the region.

Held in Orange and Dubbo, the events brought together GPs, GP registrars, pharmacists, nurses and medical students. The training was designed to support a more connected and coordinated approach to care by bringing together professionals from across primary care, specialist services and the hospital system. Participants received practical, evidence-based information on managing unintended pregnancy, including referral pathways, patient care options, consultations for medical termination of pregnancy (MTOP), prescribing MS-2Step™, follow-up care, and navigating local support services.

The event focus was on building confidence among primary care professionals to provide timely information, support and referrals for patients facing an unintended pregnancy.

For clinicians working in regional and remote communities, understanding available services and local care pathways can be challenging. The training helped improve awareness of local resources while strengthening professional networks that support integrated, patient-centred care.

The sessions also strengthened collaboration between primary care providers, FPA and the WNSW LHD Pregnancy Options Care and Support Team. By bringing healthcare professionals together to discuss local challenges and share experiences, the training fostered stronger relationships and more coordinated approaches.

Session feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Participants valued receiving clear guidance on referral pathways and medical termination of pregnancy services in the region. Attendees also highlighted the importance of understanding the support available to those experiencing unintended pregnancy and welcomed the opportunity to learn from experts and colleagues across the healthcare system.











Promoting better menopause management

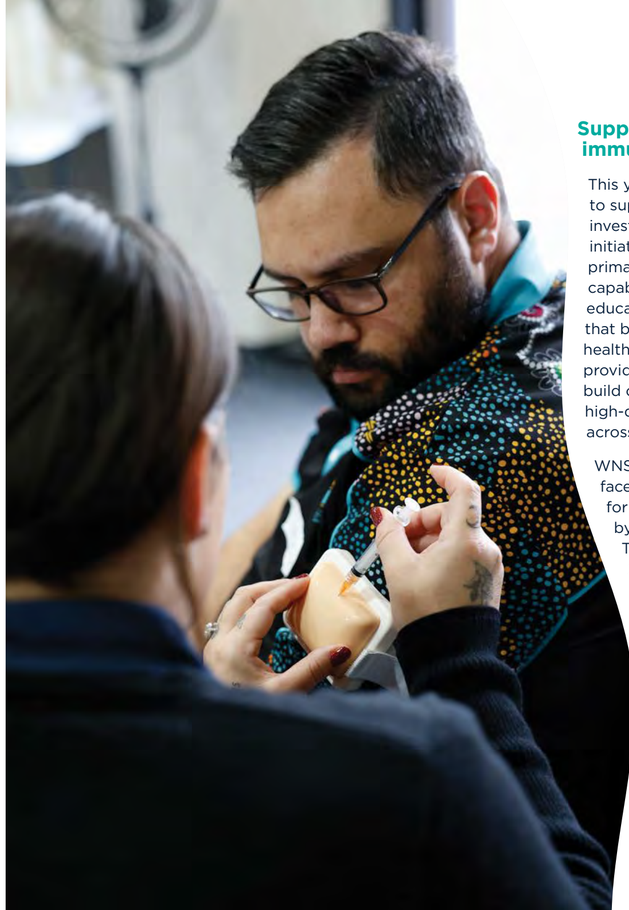
This year, WNSW PHN partnered with the Specialist Menopause Service at South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) to support 126 primary care professionals in the region improve care for women experiencing perimenopause and menopause.

Menopause can have a significant impact on a woman's physical health, mental wellbeing, relationships, work and quality of life. The SWSLHD Specialist Menopause Service is one of four major state-run hubs in NSW, providing specialist medical, nursing, and allied health care for women experiencing severe or complex menopause symptoms.

As part of this partnership, WNSW PHN worked with Dr James Brown and the SWSLHD's Specialist Menopause Service to deliver two online educational webinars for GPs, registrars, nurses, pharmacists and allied health professionals. The sessions focused on practical approaches to menopause management, menopausal hormone therapy (MHT), perimenopause, PMDD and other women's health presentations in primary care.

The strong attendance from primary care clinicians across the region highlighted the demand for quality women's health education in regional and rural communities. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% indicating they would recommend the sessions to colleagues.

Many reported increased confidence in assessing and managing menopause-related concerns, discussing treatment options with patients and understanding referral pathways to specialist menopause services.



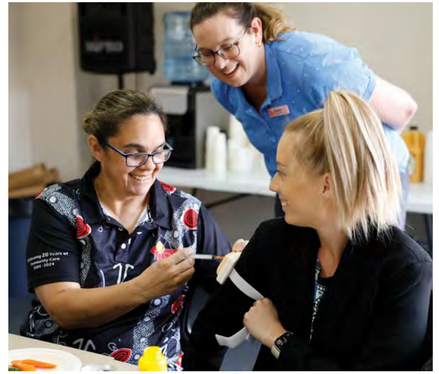
Supporting sector capacity in immunisation

This year, WNSW PHN continued to support health system reform by investing in workforce development initiatives that strengthens the local primary health sector's immunisation capabilities. A key focus was practical education and training opportunities that brought together primary healthcare professionals, service providers and health system partners to build capability and support consistent, high-quality immunisation practice across the region.

WNSW PHN funded two five-day face-to-face Immunisation Training for Health Professionals, delivered by The Benchmarque Group. Training was delivered in August 2025 and March 2026 with 24 Practice Nurses, Aboriginal Health Practitioners and Aboriginal Health Practitioner Trainees completing their training. A further 65 places of online Immunisation Training for Health Professionals have been funded by the WNSW PHN through The Benchmarque Group, with four registered nurses completing training in June 2026.

The course provided hands-on learning in vaccine preparation and administration, patient education, immunisation schedules and adverse event management. Participants reported increased confidence in delivering vaccinations, managing catch-up schedules and supporting community members to make informed decisions about immunisation.

Many participants identified practical benefits for their communities, including the ability to provide a broader range of immunisation services locally, support outreach clinics, and reduce waiting times for patients. By strengthening skills within existing healthcare teams, the training helped expand local service capabilities and improve access to care closer to home.





Annual Immunisation Conference 2026

In April 2026, WNSW PHN delivered its Annual Immunisation Conference in partnership with The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) and the Western NSW Local Health District's Public Health Unit. The conference brought together 314 health professionals across face-to-face full-day events held in Dubbo and Orange.

The conference complemented local training initiatives by providing access to current clinical information, practical updates, networking and shared learning opportunities. The program featured national and regional experts covering COVID-19, influenza, RSV and pneumococcal vaccines, management of anaphylaxis, use of the Australian Immunisation Register, travel vaccinations and strategies to reduce vaccine-preventable diseases.

By offering in-person and virtual options, the conference supported health system collaboration, accessible learning and strengthened workforce capability in immunisation.











Strengthening diabetes care through partnership and innovation

The Care Partnership – Diabetes (CP-D) Program concluded on 30 June 2026 after several years of collaboration to improve diabetes prevention, management and care across Western and Far West NSW. Delivered through a partnership between Western NSW Local Health District, Far West Local Health District, WNSW PHN and Rural Doctors Network, the program strengthened workforce capability, improved care access and supported a more connected health system for people living with Type 2 Diabetes.

A key contribution from WNSW PHN was supporting health professionals with education, clinical collaboration and shared resources. The Type 2 Diabetes ECHO program connected local clinicians with specialist expertise through virtual case-based learning and peer discussion. Since launching in 2022, it delivered 32 virtual sessions and two face-to-face events, engaging 950 health professionals across the region. Clinicians reported increased confidence in diabetes management, stronger collaboration and practical improvements in everyday practice.

WNSW PHN also partnered with Western Sydney Diabetes to deliver an annual Type 2 Diabetes Masterclass. More than 190 health professionals attended the 2025 and 2026 events, exploring emerging treatments, prevention, nutrition, culturally safe care, diabetes technology and complication management.

Another significant achievement was the partnership with HealthPathways. Through CP-D, 19 new diabetes-related pathways and referral pages were developed, providing consistent local guidance, referral options and evidence-based information. The pathways improved navigation between primary care, community health and hospital services, supporting more coordinated care and reducing duplication.

The broader partnership also delivered significant outcomes. More than 1,000 community HbA1c screening tests were completed in Far West NSW, helping identify people at risk and connect them with support earlier. The program established the Western NSW Diabetes Hub, a multidisciplinary virtual service providing specialist diabetes education, allied health support and care coordination, while supporting local clinicians with specialist advice, consultation and referral pathways. In addition, 14 health professionals completed a Graduate Certificate in Diabetes Education and Management, with a further four progressing towards completion.

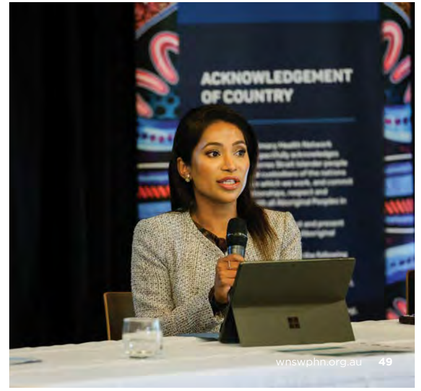
Through shared planning, workforce development and service integration, the Care Partnership – Diabetes program demonstrated the value of collaboration in improving health outcomes and strengthening regional health services. While the program has concluded, the partnerships, workforce networks, clinical pathways and resources established through CP-D will continue to support better diabetes care across Western and Far West NSW.











Goal 3

Lead evidence-based commissioning

Service commissioning is undertaken based on a gap analysis of our region to improve equity and access to local services. Service solutions are identified, monitored and evaluated to ensure service impact is improving health for our communities who have limited access to services. .

Continuing to connect older adults with the right care

In 2025–26, WNSW PHN continued to commission care finder services across Western and Far West NSW, helping older people who face barriers to navigating the aged care system to access the support they need.

Care finders provide free, face-to-face assistance for vulnerable older people, who may be socially isolated, have complex circumstances, or who do not have the support of a carer, family, kin or friends. This approach connects older adults with health and community services and supports them to complete paperwork and make informed decisions about their future care.

For general practitioners, primary health professionals and service providers, the program offers an important pathway for patients who may need additional support to engage with aged care services.

This year, WNSW PHN care finder contracts were streamlined, with Marathon Health commissioned to deliver care finder across the Greater Dubbo and Orange regions from 1 June 2026 to 30 June 2029. Kirinari Community Services is continuing to provide the program across other parts of Western and Far West NSW. We thank our outgoing service providers, Social Futures and The Benevolent Society for their service delivery throughout 2025-26.

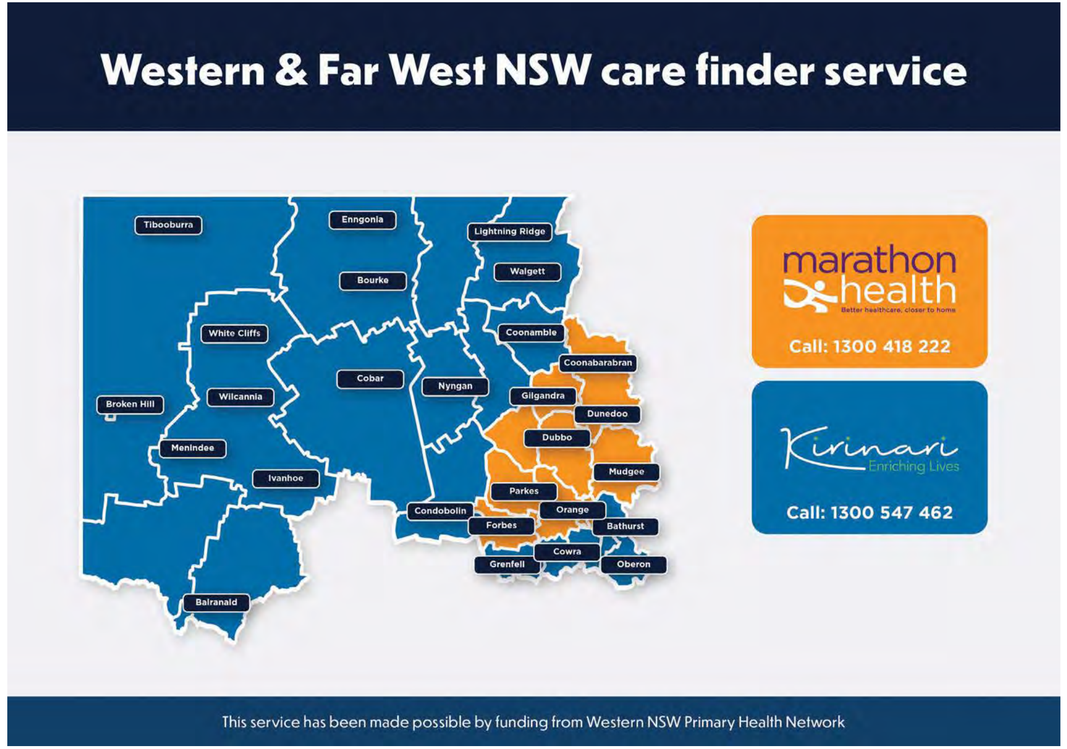
care finder supports couple to continue living together in aged care

When an older couple were no longer able to live safely at home, they faced the difficult decision of moving into residential aged care; their greatest concern was staying together during the process.

A care finder worked closely with local aged care providers, My Aged Care assessors and hospital staff to coordinate assessments, manage administrative requirements and advocate for the couple's needs. Through this collaborative approach, a placement was secured that allowed the couple to move into care together.

The outcome provided both the clinical support they required while enabling them to remain connected and continue living alongside one another.

This story reflects the important role care finders play in supporting vulnerable older residents in our region to access services while maintaining dignity, independence and social connection.



Dubbo Medicare Mental Health Centre opens its doors

In October 2025, the Dubbo Medicare Mental Health Centre (MMHC) opened, providing free, walk-in mental health support for people in the region.

Funded by the Australian Government, commissioned through WNSW PHN, the service provides a safe and welcoming environment for adults to access mental health care without an appointment, referral or Medicare card. Services are available during extended weekday, weekend and public holiday hours, helping reduce barriers to care.

Delivered through a partnership between Stride, Wellways and Clarity, the service combines clinical and peer-led support tailored to individual needs. People visiting the service can access immediate support, one-on-one appointments with mental health professionals, personalised care planning, and assistance connecting with local services.

The service helps individuals, their families and carers to access quicker support with short- to medium-term mental health challenges. The service also supports clients to navigate the broader mental health system more effectively. Community members can attend directly when they need support, but general practitioners can refer patients when required. The centre also strengthens local service coordination by creating clearer pathways between primary care, specialist services and community-based supports.

The Dubbo centre joins a growing network of Medicare Mental Health Centres across the region, helping ensure more people can access mental health support when and where they need it.





headspace Dubbo improving access to youth mental health support

Access to timely mental health support is critical for young people, particularly in regional and rural communities. In November 2025, the new home of headspace Dubbo officially opened, marking a decade of service delivery and continued growth in demand for youth mental health support across the region.

Demand for the service has increased significantly, with occasions of service rising from 2,031 in 2020-21 to 3,901 in 2024-25. During 2024-25, 669 young people accessed support. In response, the service relocated to a larger, purpose-designed facility in Dubbo's central business district.

Commissioned by WNSW PHN and operated by Marathon Health, the new facility also supports delivery of the headspace Outreach Program (hOP), extending mental health services into smaller rural communities across the region. Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Workers provide culturally appropriate support in Bourke, Brewarrina, Collarenebri, Condobolin, Coonamble, Gulargambone, Lightning Ridge, Nyngan, Walgett and Warren.

Nearly half of the young people accessing headspace Dubbo identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, highlighting the importance of locally designed and culturally responsive services. The Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative has helped build a workforce that reflects the communities it serves and improves access for young people who may otherwise face barriers to care.

In addition to mental health support, headspace Dubbo delivers Individual Placement Support (IPS), helping young people experiencing mental health challenges engage with education and employment opportunities.

Expanding suicide aftercare in Western and Far West NSW

Strengthening suicide aftercare services remained a key focus in 2025-26, with WNSW PHN and Western NSW Local Health District (WNSW LHD) announcing a joint investment of $1.86 million to expand The Way Back (Universal Aftercare) program.

The funding forms part of a bilateral agreement between the Australian and NSW governments to improve outcomes for people at increased risk of suicide. It supports localised aftercare services for people following a suicidal crisis or suicide attempt, with a focus on rural and remote communities and priority populations.

Delivered through a commissioned partnership with Mission Australia, The Way Back Service has operated in Broken Hill since 2021 and was later expanded to Orange and surrounding communities. The expanded service investment extends access to aftercare support across a larger part of the region including Dubbo, Bathurst, Walgett, Cowra, Condobolin, Lightning Ridge, Grawin, Mudgee, Gulgong, Cobar and Coonabarabran.

Improving support for priority populations

A key feature of the Universal Aftercare Way Back Service is its focus on local delivery and culturally responsive care. Dedicated First Nations engagement roles help ensure services are accessible and appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the region. The expansion also includes an Older People's Aftercare Expanded Referral Pathway Pilot, designed to improve access to specialist mental health care and aftercare services following a suicidal crisis.

By strengthening connections between individuals, their care networks and local support services, the pilot aims to improve continuity of care, support early identification of suicide risk and help people access the support they need during recovery.

Strengthening approaches to homelessness

People experiencing homelessness often face significant barriers to accessing the healthcare they need. In response, WNSW PHN took a comprehensive approach to strengthen research, workforce development and innovative service delivery, for some of the region's most vulnerable communities.

Better understanding local needs

In 2025-26, WNSW PHN completed a Homelessness Primary Care Needs Assessment to better understand the health needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness across Western and Far West NSW.

Drawing on demographic data, service mapping, stakeholder consultations and lived experience, the assessment found homelessness is driven by intersecting social, economic and health factors, including housing affordability pressures, domestic and family violence, mental ill-health, alcohol and other drug use, disability and social exclusion.

The assessment identified approximately 1,032 people experiencing homelessness across the region, although the true number is likely higher due to hidden homelessness in rural and remote communities.

Consultations highlighted significant barriers to primary healthcare, including cost, transport, workforce shortages, fragmented systems, stigma and difficulties navigating services. Mental ill-health, chronic disease, oral health concerns and maintaining access to medications were identified as priority health issues. The findings now provide a strong evidence base for future planning, commissioning and partnership opportunities.

Building workforce capability and partnerships

Recognising that improving outcomes requires collaboration across sectors, WNSW PHN partnered with Home Address Australia to deliver a regional homelessness training and systems engagement program for primary care providers and frontline workers.

Delivered in Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo and Broken Hill, the program brought together GPs, practice managers, care coordinators, community-based case workers and other frontline staff. Sessions focused on trauma-informed and culturally safe practice, improving understanding of homelessness, identifying homelessness within healthcare settings, strengthening referral pathways and improving coordination between health, housing and community services.

The program placed particular emphasis on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women and children escaping domestic and family violence, people experiencing mental health and alcohol and other drug challenges, and those exiting custodial settings.

Training was delivered by nationally recognised experts including lived-experience advocate and sociologist Dr Gregory P Smith OAM, nurse-led homelessness care pioneer Sonia Martin CF and educator Catherine Player.

Bringing primary health care to vulnerable communities

Building on the Needs Assessment findings, WNSW PHN partnered with Coast & Country Primary Care to launch Health on the Streets, an innovative pilot bringing primary healthcare directly to people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

The eight-week pilot launched in Bathurst and Orange in May 2025 and operated through trusted community locations including Bathurst Uniting Support Services, Orange Uniting Church and FoodCare Orange. The pilot delivered 69 occasions of service, including welfare checks, health assessments, vaccinations, referrals and essential items.

The nurse-led model provided health assessments, wound care, chronic disease screening, mental health and alcohol and other drug support, vaccination assistance, medication continuity and care coordination. Registered nurses worked alongside GPs to ensure care remained safe, responsive and connected to ongoing healthcare pathways.

By delivering services in familiar community settings, *Health on the Streets* reduced barriers to care while supporting earlier intervention, stronger engagement and improved continuity of care.



Bathurst swaps after-hours service for Medicare Urgent Care Clinic

Access to urgent care in Bathurst changed during 2025–26 with the opening of the Bathurst Medicare Urgent Care Clinic (UCC) in December 2025, and the closure of the After Hours service in March 2026.

Funded by the Australian Government and commissioned by WNSW PHN, the UCC provides walk-in care for people with urgent, non-life-threatening health concerns, offering timely treatment closer to home and helping people access care when they need it.

The service has quickly become an important part of the local primary care system. During 2025-26, the Bathurst Medicare Urgent Care Clinic delivered 6,337 episodes of care, providing an alternative to the hospital emergency department for some common urgent presentations, and complementing existing general practice services.

The clinic gives residents another option when their usual GP is unavailable and helps ensure people can receive prompt treatment without needing to travel or attend the emergency department for conditions that can be managed in a primary care setting.

WNSW PHN worked closely with Marathon Health, local healthcare providers and government partners to manage the transition from the Bathurst After Hours GP Service. The after-hours service continued operating until 31 March 2026, allowing residents to access both services during the transition period.

Supporting Aboriginal communities with coordinated care

During 2025–26, WNSW PHN continued to commission services that improve access to care for Aboriginal people across Western and Far West NSW.

The Integrated Team Care (ITC) program supports Aboriginal people with chronic conditions to navigate the health system and connect to the care they need. Commissioned by WNSW PHN and delivered through local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and health providers, the program helps people manage complex health conditions by coordinating care, improving access to specialist and allied health services, and providing practical support.

Over the last year, there's been an increase in ITC support available, with the program supporting 5,040 clients and providing 55,882 occasions of service. ITC services include care coordination, supplementary services, clinical services and outreach work. The most common specialist access provided by the program includes cardiology, oncology and respiratory physicians. The most common allied health supports included podiatry, optometry and dietetics. Outreach workers supported 3,244 patients to access services by organising appointments and arranging travel and accommodation.

For people living with conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease and chronic respiratory illness, ITC helps make healthcare more accessible and less overwhelming. By supporting communication between healthcare providers and helping people understand their options, ITC supports individuals and families to make informed decisions about their health while remaining connected to culturally safe care closer to home.





Sector engagement and support

WNSW PHN regularly host ITC Roundtable events to support the ten service providers delivering the program. The two ITC Roundtables delivered in 2025-26 gave service providers an opportunity to network and connect with others delivering the program across Western and Far West NSW.

The events also featured external presenters who shared information on the program and chronic conditions. Nukal Murra presented on the Western Queensland ITC model, delivered in partnership with Western Queensland PHN and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services, which received positive feedback from ITC providers. Anthony Carter also presented on the NSW Aboriginal Cancer Strategy and how it can impact work within Aboriginal Medical Services.

Supporting people to stay connected to care

The impact of ITC can be seen in the experiences of people receiving support through the program.

One woman living with diabetes and kidney disease found it increasingly difficult to manage her health as her conditions became more complex. Through the local ITC team, she received ongoing support from nurses, doctors and allied health professionals who worked together to coordinate her care. When specialist treatment required travel outside her community, transport was arranged and her care remained connected when she returned home.

With clear information, practical support and trusted relationships, she felt more confident making decisions about her health. Over time, she chose to begin dialysis, a step she had previously not felt ready to take.

Another ITC client faced the challenges of a cancer diagnosis including surgery, treatment and frequent appointments away from home. In addition to the emotional and physical impacts, travel costs created further pressure.

Through ITC-funded support, transport and accommodation costs were reduced, allowing the client to focus on treatment and recovery. During the year, they completed chemotherapy and continued to receive support while undertaking radiation therapy.



Improving the quality of Alcohol and Other Drug services

During 2025-26, WNSW PHN undertook a comprehensive review of its commissioned Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) service contracts to strengthen the quality, consistency and usefulness of service monitoring across the region. The work supports a more evidence-based approach to commissioning by ensuring performance information can be used to better understand community needs, monitor outcomes and inform future planning and investment.

A key focus was improving consistency across commissioned AOD services. Existing contracts were reviewed to align performance measures, reporting requirements and service deliverables where possible, creating a more consistent approach across providers and making it easier to understand service performance and identify opportunities for improvement.

WNSW PHN also reviewed and updated key performance indicators (KPIs) to better reflect contemporary practice and sector expectations. The revised KPIs were informed by recommendations for the NSW non-government AOD sector and adapted to suit the needs of Western and Far West NSW, providing a stronger foundation for monitoring service delivery and understanding community impact.

Data collection requirements were refined to ensure information is practical, meaningful and capable of generating insights to support planning, quality improvement and evidence-based decision-making. Improved data consistency will help identify trends and emerging needs across the region.

A significant outcome was the co-design of a new AOD-specific client experience survey. Developed with stakeholders, it replaces the previous mental health-focused survey and provides a more relevant way to understand the experiences of people accessing AOD treatment and support services. The survey aligns with the NSW AOD Care Charter and focuses on issues important to consumers, including respect, involvement in decision-making and access to appropriate support.

The survey will be implemented across commissioned AOD services from 2026-27, providing valuable feedback to help service providers and WNSW PHN continuously improve the quality, accessibility and responsiveness of AOD services across Western and Far West NSW.



Expanding and improving chronic disease care across the region

Improving health outcomes for people living with chronic conditions remains a priority across Western and Far West NSW, where distance, workforce shortages and limited service access can create barriers to care. In 2025-26, WNSW PHN increased investment in the Keeping Healthy Puura Manti program by nearly 30%, expanding support for people aged 15 years and over who are living with, or at risk of developing, multiple chronic conditions.

The program is delivered by NSW Outback Division of General Practice, Marathon Health and the Royal Flying Doctor Service in partnership with general practices, Aboriginal Medical Services and state health services.

The program brings together chronic disease practice nurses, Aboriginal health workers and allied health professionals to help people manage their health, access services and improve care coordination. Increased investment enabled providers to deliver additional clinical care coordination, expand chronic disease upskilling for general practice teams, and increase service frequency or available disciplines in communities where services are limited or demand exceeds capacity.

Patient Impact

Patients accessing direct care reported strong outcomes, with 85% saying they better understood their condition and felt confident managing it. Following the service, 89.8% said they would commit to changing one or more behaviours to improve their health.

"I really need this service. Without it I would be a lot worse, I have reduced my medication, and with this service I continue to do so – win!"

- Patient

Alarmingly, 40% of patients who provided feedback said they would do nothing if the service was not available.

"Really not sure what could be done as health practitioners in our area are extremely hard to come by and travelling to major centres where services are is not possible."

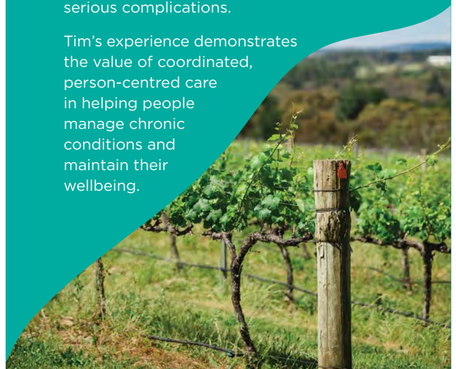
- Patient

Tim's Story

One person who benefited from the program was Tim, a 60-year-old living with Type 2 diabetes who was experiencing circulation and sensation issues in his feet, placing him at risk of serious complications. After developing a slow-healing wound, he was referred by his GP to a podiatrist through the Keeping Healthy Puura Manti Program.

With support from his care team, Tim learned daily foot care, improved his blood glucose management, adopted healthier lifestyle habits and increased his physical activity. As his understanding and confidence grew, improved blood glucose control supported wound healing, while ongoing podiatry care helped identify issues early and reduce the risk of more serious complications.

Tim's experience demonstrates the value of coordinated, person-centred care in helping people manage chronic conditions and maintain their wellbeing.



Understanding the primary care needs of CALD Communities

In 2025-26, WNSW PHN completed a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Primary Care Needs Assessment to better understand the experiences, challenges and health needs of CALD communities across Western and Far West NSW.

Undertaken to inform future service planning and evidence-based commissioning, the needs assessment drew on demographic data, service mapping, literature reviews and consultation with community members, service providers and key stakeholders. It examined how people from CALD backgrounds access and experience primary healthcare across the region.

The findings showed that while CALD communities represent a relatively small proportion of the population, they face significant barriers to timely and appropriate care. These include language and communication challenges, difficulty navigating the health system, limited health literacy, transport issues, workforce shortages and concerns about cultural safety. In rural and remote communities, these challenges are often compounded by distance and limited access to interpreters and culturally responsive services.

Consultation identified key health priorities including mental health and emotional wellbeing, oral health, chronic disease management, and access to sexual and reproductive health services. Participants highlighted the importance of trusted information, culturally appropriate communication and stronger connections between health services and communities.

The assessment provides a stronger evidence base for future commissioning and service development. Recommendations include improving health literacy resources, strengthening culturally responsive care across the primary care workforce, exploring bilingual and bicultural navigation support, developing a regional service directory, and expanding outreach models that bring services closer to communities.

The full report is available on the WNSW PHN website.

Bringing providers together to strengthen services and connections

Each year, WNSW PHN brings service providers together through its annual Service Provider Forum to share knowledge, discuss local health challenges and strengthen collaboration across the region.

Supporting a connected and informed provider network is an important part of evidence-based commissioning. By bringing organisations together to share experiences and identify emerging needs, WNSW PHN gains valuable insights that help inform service planning, commissioning decisions and future investment priorities.

Held in Dubbo in June 2026, the forum attracted more than 60 attendees from commissioned services, health providers and partner organisations. The event focused on understanding the current operating environment, learning from providers and exploring opportunities to address shared challenges.

Presentations and discussions covered health needs assessments, risk and governance, cultural awareness, workforce challenges, digital health, service mapping and examples of regional innovation. Service providers also shared experiences of delivering services in rural and remote communities, highlighting both achievements and challenges.

A key outcome was the opportunity for providers to build connections and identify areas where greater collaboration could improve community outcomes. Structured networking, facilitated discussions and provider-led presentations encouraged participants to share ideas, discuss service gaps and explore practical solutions.

Feedback reinforced the value of the forum as a platform for strengthening relationships. The strongest theme identified through evaluation was the importance of bringing providers together to collaborate, share insights and work collectively to improve access to quality primary care services.

> *"I'd like to extend a thank you to all the WNSW PHN staff and their collaborative approach. The WNSW PHN, in this forum and outside of it, treat providers as partners. There is a feeling of mutual respect, and acknowledgement that there are challenges in effectively delivering services to meet community needs, but that solutions are best found together. Not all funders seem to operate this way, and the approach of the WNSW PHN is appreciated."*
>
> *– Participant*





Improving access to Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Care

For many people living with endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain, obtaining a diagnosis and appropriate treatment can be a long and challenging journey. To address gaps in access to specialised care, WNSW PHN continues to commission and support the Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Management GP Clinic at Orange Family Medical Centre.

The service was established to support earlier diagnosis, better care coordination and improved access to multidisciplinary care for people experiencing endometriosis and pelvic pain. For those living in regional and remote communities, barriers such as travel distances, workforce shortages and limited access to specialist expertise can make care difficult to access.

The clinic provides a coordinated model that brings together general practice, nursing, physiotherapy and specialist referral pathways, helping patients access care closer to home. Patients can self-refer or attend through a GP referral, creating a more accessible pathway into care while strengthening links with local primary healthcare providers.

Demand continues to grow, with the clinic receiving an average of six to 10 new enquiries each day. During 2025-26, the service delivered 1,616 occasions of service, reflecting the significant need for specialised endometriosis and pelvic pain care across the region.

To help meet demand, the clinic expanded through the renovation of a second consultation room equipped with a gynaecology examination bed and specialised examination lighting. The additional space has increased capacity and helped reduce waiting times for patients.

Monitoring and evaluation remain central to the program, and performance data helps the service understand who is accessing care and identify emerging needs to ensure services continue to meet community needs. Since commencing in 2023, more than 500 patients have accessed the service.

By investing in a specialist regional model of care and supporting continued service growth, WNSW PHN is helping ensure people living with endometriosis and pelvic pain can access the support, information and treatment they need, regardless of where they live.

Increasing awareness of endometriosis care in the region

During 2025-26, WNSW PHN worked with the clinic to raise awareness among consumers, GPs and healthcare providers through a patient-focused campaign. The campaign highlighted the importance of listening to patient experiences, improving awareness of available supports and encouraging earlier access to care.

The campaign reached more than 130,000 people across WNSW PHN's social media channels and generated almost 7,500 webpage visits during the 15 day campaign period, demonstrating strong community interest in women's health and access to specialist care in regional communities.



Gaining insight into community wellbeing at the Dubbo Waratahs Knockout

Understanding community needs and priorities is an important part of evidence-based planning, commissioning and service development. In September 2025, WNSW PHN's Suicide Prevention and Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing teams partnered with Three Rivers Regional Assembly (TRRA) at the Dubbo Waratahs Aboriginal Knockout to promote community health and gather feedback from Aboriginal communities.

The event provided an opportunity to engage with community members in a culturally safe and familiar setting. WNSW PHN staff shared information on mental health, suicide prevention and postvention, grief and loss, Sorry Business, and social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) supports available across the region.

A community wellbeing survey collected 102 responses, providing valuable insights into service awareness, barriers to support and factors that contribute to wellbeing within Aboriginal communities.

Highlighting the importance of culturally safe services

The survey found that around 75% of respondents were aware of mental health and SEWB services in their community, although some could not identify specific providers. Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations were the most frequently identified service type. Stigma, access issues, and safety or cultural concerns were identified as the most significant barriers to seeking support, reinforcing the need for services that are culturally safe, accessible and stigma-free.

When asked what helps people feel good in their community, respondents commonly identified family, culture, connection, community and pro-social activities. Groups and gatherings, exercise, employment and access to services were also highlighted. These findings reinforce the value of culturally grounded, community-based and socially connected approaches to supporting mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.





Goal 4

Support high quality sustainable primary health care

Advocate with partners and stakeholders to support high-quality, person-centered sustainable primary health care in Western NSW.

Guiding general practice through Medicare reform

General practice is central to Australia's primary healthcare system. In 2025-26, WNSW PHN supported practices across Western and Far West NSW to prepare for and implement major national Medicare and health system reforms.

Following changes to Chronic Disease Management arrangements from 1 July 2025, WNSW PHN helped practices transition from GP Management Plans and Team Care Arrangements to the new GP Chronic Condition Management Plan (GPCCMP).

WNSW PHN also supported the rollout of the Bulk Billing Practice Incentive Program (BBPIP), introduced in November 2025. The Practice Development Team provided resources, webinars, registration guidance and business modelling tools to help practices understand the program's financial and operational impacts.

With changes to Assignment of Benefit (AoB) arrangements due next year, WNSW PHN supported practices, residential aged care services, Aboriginal Medical Services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to prepare for the reforms.

The Practice Development Team also raised awareness of reforms within the Digital Health and Compliance Framework, including requirements for pathology and diagnostic imaging reports to be shared to My Health Record by default. Support focused on legislative compliance and digital health readiness.

Many reforms are underpinned by MyMedicare, which allows patients to register with their preferred practice and GP. WNSW PHN continued promoting registration and helping practices maximise opportunities for continuity of care, new funding arrangements and improved patient engagement.



Walgett, NSW

Supporting primary care in Balranald through coordinated support

In 2025-26, WNSW PHN partnered with Balranald Medical Centre to strengthen local primary care capability and improve community access to coordinated healthcare.

Following a period of change and new clinical leadership, WNSW PHN worked with the practice to identify local priorities and deliver coordinated support across Aboriginal health, aged and palliative Care, chronic disease, and education and training. This included initiatives to strengthen culturally safe care, improve chronic disease management, enhance care for older people and build workforce capability through targeted training.

The partnership involved local Aboriginal health organisation Maari Ma Bes Murray, supporting culturally safe engagement and increasing awareness of Aboriginal health assessments, the Practice Incentives Program Indigenous Health Incentive and Closing the Gap PBS Co-payment arrangements.

To support care for older people, WNSW PHN provided guidance on the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive (GPACI) program and explored multidisciplinary models of care for people with chronic and complex conditions. Education opportunities, including spirometry and venepuncture training, were identified for Aboriginal Health Workers, Aboriginal Health Practitioners, nurses and practice staff.

The initiative strengthened relationships between the practice, local health partners and WNSW PHN while creating opportunities for ongoing quality improvement.



Supporting primary care to prepare for disasters

General practices play a vital role in supporting communities during emergencies. In 2025-26, WNSW PHN continued to strengthen disaster preparedness by helping practices plan for, respond to and recover from emergency events.

WNSW PHN subsidised access to the Emergency Response Planning Tool (ERPT), which helps practices develop and maintain emergency response plans aligned with RACGP accreditation standards. Across the region, 44 practices have registered for the tool, 40 are developing plans and 32 have published plans. During the year, eight new practices registered and 17 either published or reviewed their plans.

WNSW PHN also provided advice and practical support to help practices review, develop and tailor emergency plans to local needs. HealthPathways resources were promoted alongside the tool, providing access to local service and referral information to support emergency preparedness and response.

During the 2025 bushfire season, WNSW PHN delivered a targeted social media campaign promoting disaster support resources for health professionals and community members. The campaign reached more than 1,200 people and increased traffic to the disaster support webpage, improving awareness of available support.

A supplementary disaster needs assessment is now underway to better understand preparedness levels and challenges across the region.

Encouraging digital health reform across the region

Digital health reform continues to transform how health information is shared, accessed and used. In 2025-26, WNSW PHN supported primary healthcare providers across Western and Far West NSW to prepare for key national and state initiatives designed to improve connectivity, reduce administrative burden and strengthen continuity of care.

Understanding uses and barriers to digital prescriptions

A major focus was a research partnership with the Western Health Research Network (WHRN) and Charles Sturt University, commissioned by the Australian Digital Health Agency, examining uptake of ePrescribing and the Active Script List (ASL) across rural and remote communities.

The study found ePrescribing is now well established, with 91% of participating GPs reporting routine use. GPs identified benefits including improved access for telehealth patients, people in remote areas and those managing multiple medications. Key enablers included convenience, workflow integration and patient accessibility.

However, barriers remained, including patient distrust of digital systems, technical issues and lower uptake among some older and vulnerable populations. In contrast, awareness and adoption of ASL remained low, with only 11% of surveyed GPs using the system. Despite concerns around software integration and digital literacy, participants recognised its potential to improve medication safety, continuity of care and management of repeat prescriptions. Findings are helping shape future digital health education and support activities.

Strengthening connectivity and referrals

WNSW PHN continued to promote Provider Connect Australia (PCA), supporting healthcare providers to update business information once and automatically share changes across multiple health systems. This helps reduce administration, improve data accuracy and strengthen service coordination.

Improving referral pathways also remained a priority. WNSW PHN promoted awareness of new statewide Referral Criteria for NSW Health Outpatient Services, helping referrers provide more consistent and complete information. Together with increased eReferral adoption, these reforms are supporting a more streamlined, patient-centred referral process.

Supporting high-quality care through better use of data

In 2025-26, WNSW PHN supported a 34% increase in GP engagement with the NSW Lumos program, helping practices use health data to drive quality improvement.

Lumos links de-identified information from general practice, hospitals and other health services, providing a broader view of patient journeys and outcomes. This enables practices to identify opportunities to improve care, better understand patient needs and support local service planning.

WNSW PHN reviewed participation across the region, analysing population distribution, existing coverage and practice readiness to identify opportunities for expansion. An initial group of 18 practices were identified for future engagement.

Recognising the time pressures faced by general practice teams, WNSW PHN focused on making health data more accessible and practical. In November 2025, the Q&A for QI program was launched, supporting six general practices to review their Lumos data. The program provided tailored guidance, local insights and practical quality improvement opportunities to help practices translate data into action.





Building digital capability in Residential Aged Care

In 2025-26, WNSW PHN supported residential aged care services to strengthen digital capability and prepare for ongoing reforms. Support focused on promoting tools such as My Health Record, telehealth, electronic medication management (eNRMC) and the 1800MEDICARE app to improve communication, access to clinical information and coordination of care.

In August 2025, WNSW PHN hosted the region's first Digital Health Symposiums in Dubbo and Orange, bringing together aged care staff from across Western and Far West NSW. The events aimed to build digital skills, increase confidence with technology and prepare providers for emerging models of care.

Participants heard from experts from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, Western NSW Local Health District, the University of Sydney and digital health organisations. Sessions focused on practical applications of technology, including digital records, medication management systems, virtual care and new reporting requirements. Attendees explored how My Health Record can improve communication between aged care services, hospitals, general practices and other healthcare providers.

The Symposiums also highlighted virtual care models that help residents access healthcare closer to home. Presenters showcased telehealth services, telepresence robots and digital wound assessment tools, demonstrating how technology can improve access to specialist expertise and reduce unnecessary transfers in regional communities.

A key theme was the importance of digital readiness in responding to growing demand and workforce challenges. Feedback showed participants gained a stronger understanding of digital health and greater confidence in applying technology to everyday care.

Healthy Warrumbungles partnership recognised for strengthening local primary health care

Collaboration between local organisations is helping build a stronger and more sustainable health system across the Warrumbungle region.

In June 2026, the Healthy Warrumbungles initiative received the Local Government Professionals Award for Collaboration and Partnerships in communities with a population under 100,000. The award recognised the contribution of local government, health services, community organisations and Aboriginal partners working together to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Throughout 2025-26, WNSW PHN supported the initiative by leading the Primary and Community Care Implementation Group and working with partners to identify practical solutions to local health challenges. This included exploring shared training pathways, strengthening professional networks and supporting workforce planning to improve the long-term sustainability of local health services.

WNSW PHN also worked with stakeholders to strengthen local services, improve coordination across the health system and implement community-led solutions. Funding was provided for a dedicated Project Coordinator role within Warrumbungle Shire Council, helping bring partners together, coordinate initiatives and identify opportunities for future investment.

Strengthening the region's health research ecosystem

This year, WNSW PHN continued its partnership with the Western NSW Health Research Network (WHRN) to strengthen research capability, collaboration and evidence-informed decision-making across Western and Far West NSW.

A key highlight was partnership in the 2025 WHRN Research Symposium, themed Collaborating for Impact: Growing our Region's Health Research Ecosystem. The event brought together researchers, clinicians, health services, universities, community organisations and policy leaders to share knowledge, strengthen partnerships and explore opportunities for collaborative research.

The symposium showcased research and innovation across priority areas including healthy ageing, mental health and wellbeing, strengthening communities, virtual and digital health, and primary healthcare. A strong focus was placed on culturally safe and inclusive research, highlighting the importance of Aboriginal governance, co-design, data sovereignty and conducting research with communities rather than on communities.

The event also strengthened collaboration between WNSW PHN, WHRN, universities, health services and community partners. By supporting research partnerships and knowledge exchange, WNSW PHN is helping build a sustainable research culture that translates evidence into improved health planning, commissioning and service delivery across Western and Far West NSW.



Attracting the next generation of GPs through a targeted campaign

In February 2026, WNSW PHN launched a targeted GP Registrar Attraction Campaign, Big Opportunities, Bigger Impact to raise awareness of training opportunities in Western and Far West NSW and support the long-term sustainability of the region's general practice workforce. The campaign focused on priority locations identified through workforce planning activities, including Broken Hill, Wellington and Blayney, and aimed to encourage GP Registrars to undertake their training in Western and Far West NSW.

Developed in collaboration with local practices, supervisors, workforce partners and healthcare professionals, the campaign used authentic stories to showcase the benefits of living, training and working in the region. Through a series of clinician-led videos, the campaign highlighted the breadth of clinical experience available, strong supervision and mentorship, meaningful patient relationships, and the lifestyle opportunities offered by regional communities. These messages were designed to address common misconceptions about rural training and position Western and Far West NSW as a rewarding destination for GP Registrars.

The campaign generated strong engagement among its target audience. Across paid and organic channels, campaign content reached more than 1.6 million people, generated more than 454,000 video views and drove almost 36,000 visits to the campaign landing page. Visitors spent an average of more than 16 minutes exploring information about training and living in the region, indicating strong interest and engagement with the campaign content.

While workforce decisions are influenced by many factors and often occur over extended periods, the campaign successfully increased awareness of GP training opportunities and strengthened engagement with prospective registrars.





Financial Reports

WESTERN HEALTH ALLIANCE LIMITED
(a company limited by guarantee)
ABN 59 605 922 156

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Notes	2026 $	2025 $
REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME			
Revenue	2	61,523,321	58,134,760
Other income	2	2,031,839	2,011,705
TOTAL REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME		**63,555,160**	**60,146,465**
EXPENSES			
Service supplier expenses		(50,478,378)	(49,051,615)
Employee expenses		(9,178,913)	(7,316,189)
Interest expense	3	(46,357)	(40,790)
Information technology and communication		(1,017,287)	(799,903)
Travel expenses		(319,986)	(293,167)
Property expenses		(187,847)	(169,680)
Council payments		(58,657)	(45,691)
Program delivery expenses		(986,406)	(882,931)
Motor vehicle expenses		(85,447)	(112,432)
Depreciation expense	3	(499,862)	(464,012)
Other expenses	3	(409,534)	(704,266)
TOTAL EXPENSES		**(63,268,674)**	**(59,880,676)**
SURPLUS / (LOSS) BEFORE INCOME TAX		**286,486**	**265,789**
Income tax expense		-	-
SURPLUS / (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR		**286,486**	**265,789**
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR		**286,486**	**265,789**

WESTERN HEALTH ALLIANCE LIMITED
(a company limited by guarantee)
ABN 59 605 922 156

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2026

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	48,118,502	48,107,890
Trade and other receivables	5	1,856,785	1,697,877
Other assets	6	477,001	698,839
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		**50,452,288**	**50,504,606**
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	7	185,595	-
Right of use assets	8	689,473	1,094,137
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		**875,068**	**1,094,137**
TOTAL ASSETS		**51,327,356**	**51,598,743**
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	9	12,788,964	6,805,931
Lease liabilities	10	471,143	471,853
Provisions	11	1,042,233	762,110
Contract liabilities	12	35,032,875	41,490,128
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		**49,335,215**	**49,530,022**
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease liabilities	10	247,736	640,253
Provisions	11	170,509	141,058
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		**418,245**	**781,311**
TOTAL LIABILITIES		**49,753,460**	**50,311,333**
NET ASSETS		**1,573,896**	**1,287,410**
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		1,573,896	1,287,410
TOTAL EQUITY		**1,573,896**	**1,287,410**

WESTERN HEALTH ALLIANCE LIMITED
(a company limited by guarantee)
ABN 59 605 922 156

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipt of grants		61,040,686	74,781,044
Other receipts		9,483	27,055
Interest received		2,022,356	1,987,110
Payments to suppliers and employees		(62,341,536)	(67,055,532)
Net cash flows provided by/ (used in) operating activities	14.2	**730,989**	**9,739,677**
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(194,665)	-
Net cash flows provided by/ (used in) investing activities		**(194,665)**	**-**
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Repayment of lease liabilities		(525,712)	(505,696)
Net cash flows provided by/ (used in) financing activities		**(525,712)**	**(505,696)**
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		10,612	9,233,981
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		**48,107,890**	**38,873,909**
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR	14.1	**48,118,502**	**48,107,890**

WESTERN NSW PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK

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An Australian Government Initiative