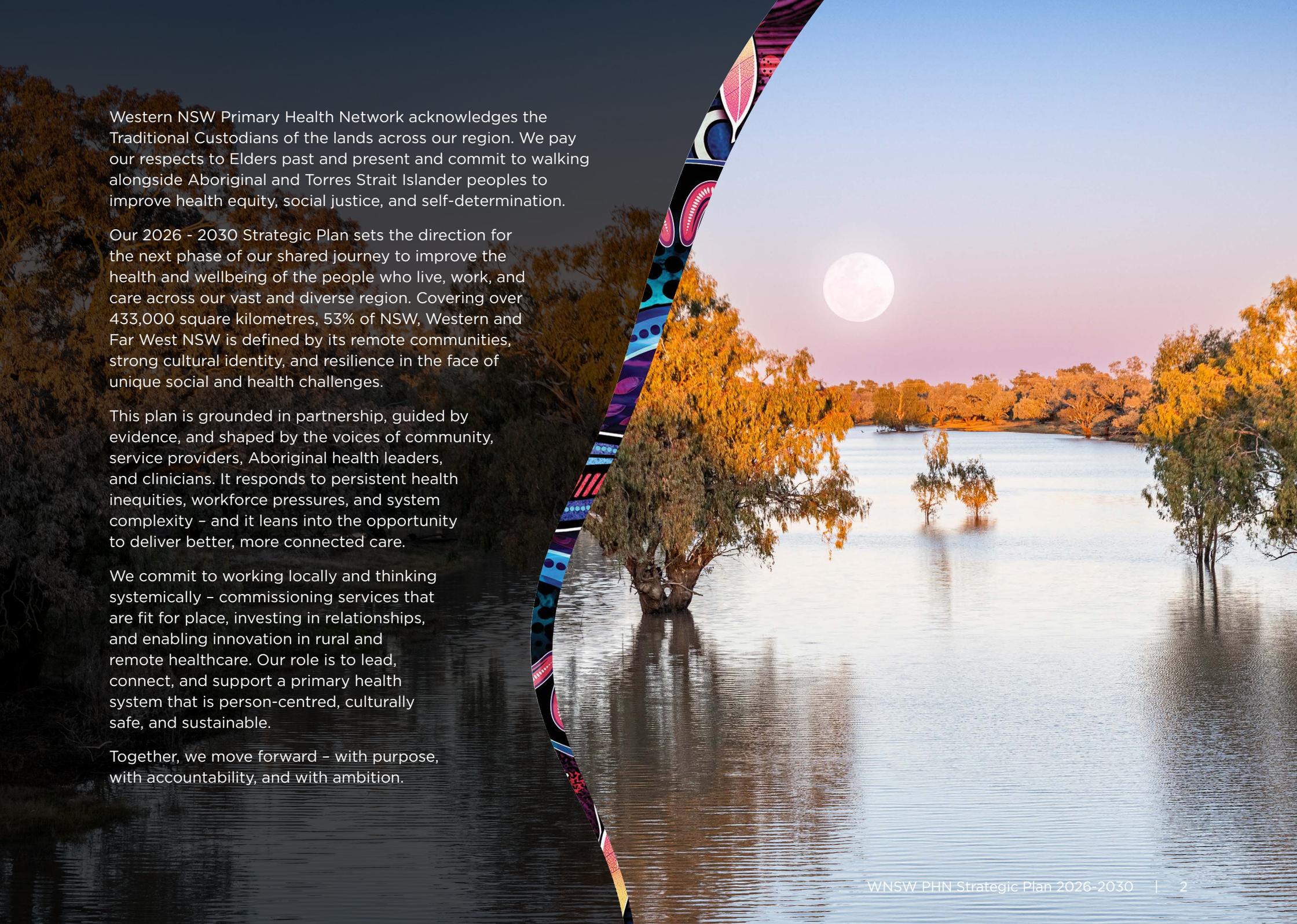




WESTERN NSW PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK

Strategic Plan 2026–2030





Western NSW Primary Health Network acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands across our region. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and commit to walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve health equity, social justice, and self-determination.

Our 2026 - 2030 Strategic Plan sets the direction for the next phase of our shared journey to improve the health and wellbeing of the people who live, work, and care across our vast and diverse region. Covering over 433,000 square kilometres, 53% of NSW, Western and Far West NSW is defined by its remote communities, strong cultural identity, and resilience in the face of unique social and health challenges.

This plan is grounded in partnership, guided by evidence, and shaped by the voices of community, service providers, Aboriginal health leaders, and clinicians. It responds to persistent health inequities, workforce pressures, and system complexity – and it leans into the opportunity to deliver better, more connected care.

We commit to working locally and thinking systemically – commissioning services that are fit for place, investing in relationships, and enabling innovation in rural and remote healthcare. Our role is to lead, connect, and support a primary health system that is person-centred, culturally safe, and sustainable.

Together, we move forward – with purpose, with accountability, and with ambition.



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Message from the Chair and CEO

This Strategic Plan sets the direction for Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) from 2026 to 2030. It reflects our deep commitment to contributing to better primary healthcare across one of Australia's most geographically vast and diverse regions. We recognise the unique challenges faced by rural and remote communities, and we are determined to address them with a strong focus on equity, access, and collaboration.

Our strategy is anchored in community-identified priorities and delivered through our core pillars of coordination, commissioning and capacity building, driving stronger primary care and improved health services through innovation.

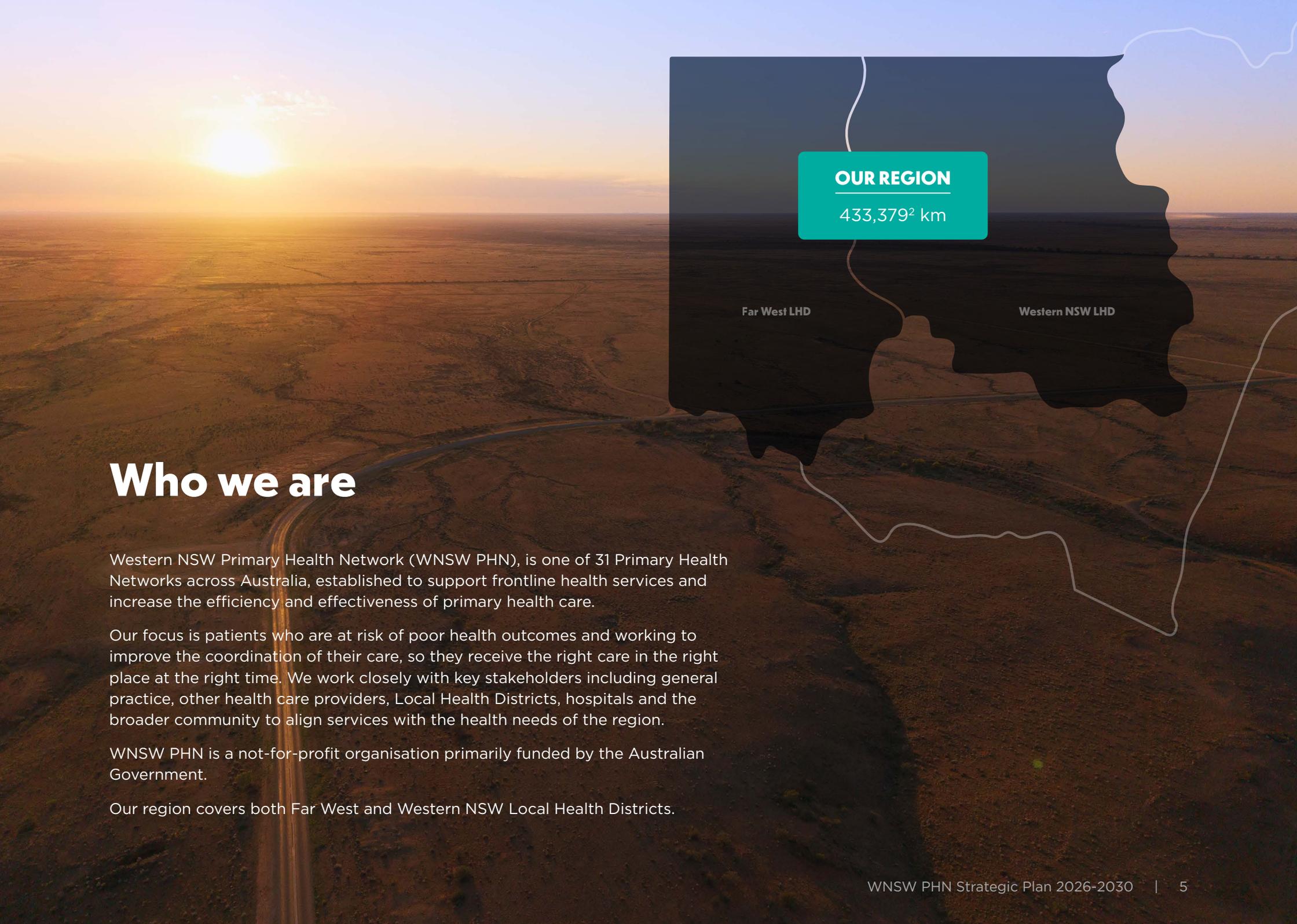
The health system is evolving, and we must evolve with it. We will strengthen partnerships, invest in data-driven decision making, and commission integrated, culturally safe care in our region. Through coordination, commissioning, and capacity building, we are committed to shaping a stronger, person-centred health system for Western and Far West NSW.



Carmen Dwyer
Board Chair



Brad Porter
CEO



OUR REGION

433,379² km

Far West LHD

Western NSW LHD

Who we are

Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN), is one of 31 Primary Health Networks across Australia, established to support frontline health services and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care.

Our focus is patients who are at risk of poor health outcomes and working to improve the coordination of their care, so they receive the right care in the right place at the right time. We work closely with key stakeholders including general practice, other health care providers, Local Health Districts, hospitals and the broader community to align services with the health needs of the region.

WNSW PHN is a not-for-profit organisation primarily funded by the Australian Government.

Our region covers both Far West and Western NSW Local Health Districts.

What we do



Coordinate

We play a pivotal role in the coordination of health care services in Western and Far West NSW.

At WNSW PHN we work closely with local health providers to understand what services are available and to work collaboratively to coordinate and integrate these services. The aim is to improve quality of care, and enhance the health system experience for the communities we serve.

WNSW PHN coordination and integration work includes collaborating with primary, secondary and tertiary health, aged, disability and social services in Western and Far West NSW.



Commission

PHN commissioning refers to the process by which WNSW PHN plans, purchases, and oversees health services to meet the specific needs of the communities we serve.

Rather than directly providing services, we act as intermediaries, ensuring that healthcare delivery is effective, equitable, and aligned with community priorities.

We use data to identify health needs and collaborate with stakeholders, consumers and clinicians to co-design and commission evidence-based services that seek to address identified health gaps in Western and Far West NSW.



Capacity Build

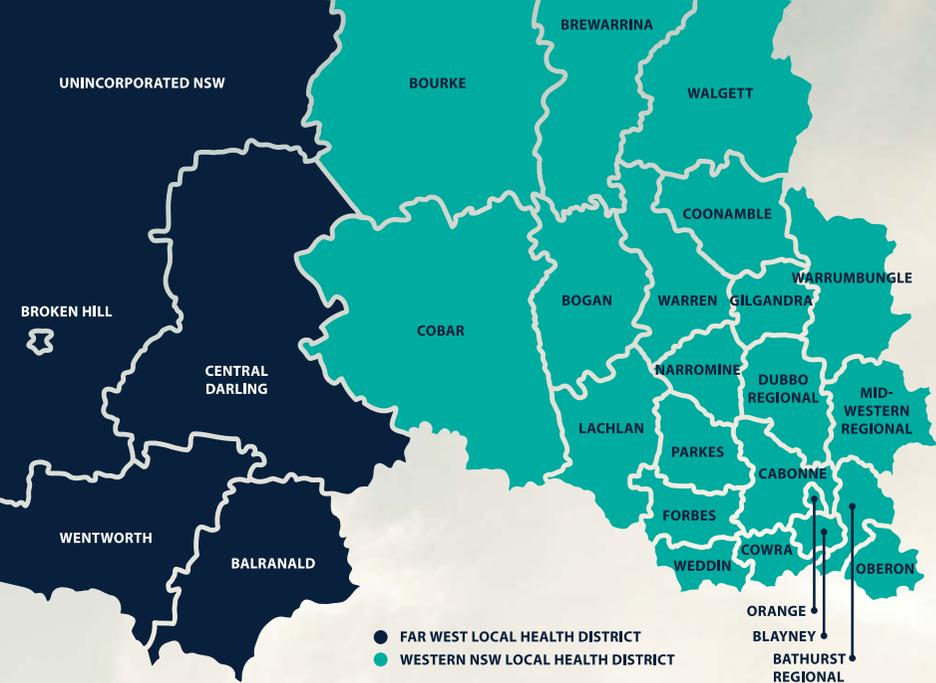
WNSW PHN's approach encompasses a range of strategies designed to enhance the skills, resources, and resilience of local healthcare providers, ensuring the delivery of high-quality, patient-centred care. We support general practices and other health service providers in Western and Far West NSW with professional development, accreditation, sharing data, cultural safety, and the adoption of digital health systems.

WNSW PHN aims to create a more resilient and responsive primary healthcare system to ensure that services are equitable, accessible, and aligned with the evolving needs of the communities we serve.



Compliance

WNSW PHN operates under a comprehensive compliance framework that spans regulatory, financial, clinical, and governance obligations. WNSW PHN must comply with the Corporations Act, ACNC governance standards, WHS and Fair Work laws, and the Privacy Act. We are also bound by strict requirements under our PHN Commonwealth funding agreements, including meeting Performance and Quality Framework targets, reporting obligations, and ensuring that government funds are applied to approved health priorities. WNSW PHN must uphold strong clinical governance by ensuring commissioned providers meet accreditation standards, deliver safe and high-quality services, and safeguard vulnerable populations.



● FAR WEST LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT
● WESTERN NSW LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

Our Health



17%
increase in suicide rates in the region from 2017 to 2021

17%
current smokers, compared to 11.2% for NSW

34.8 per 100
living with one or more long term health condition, compared to 30.8 per 100 for NSW

72.8%
are overweight or obese, compared to 59.4% for NSW

12%
people with active depression and 10.7% active anxiety diagnosis with a GP

43.1%
Risky alcohol consumption compared to 31% for NSW

17.8%
High or very high psychological distress compared to 19.1% for NSW

27 LGAs
21 of our 27 LGAs are among the 50% most disadvantaged in the country

Our Population



310,000+
Estimated Population

156,169 (49.7%)
Females

157,807 (50.3%)
Males

333,485 (6.7% ↑)
2041 projected population

19.8%
aged over 65 years

41% increase
of the 70+ years age group between 2021- 2041

Our Aboriginal Population



35,244 (11.4%)
Estimated Aboriginal Population

33.2%
Aboriginal people had health checks in the last 12 months

15.3%
Aboriginal population over 55 years

73.8 years
Life Expectancy - Males*

2.3 times
Burden of disease among Aboriginal people than that of non-Aboriginal Australians

32.4%
of the Aboriginal population in our region reported one or more long-term conditions in 2021

77.9 years
Life Expectancy - Females*
*in NSW

Life Expectancy & Older Australians



79.9 years
Life Expectancy

77.2 years
Life Expectancy - Males

82.8 years
Life Expectancy - Females

1 in 25 adults
65+ in permanent residential care

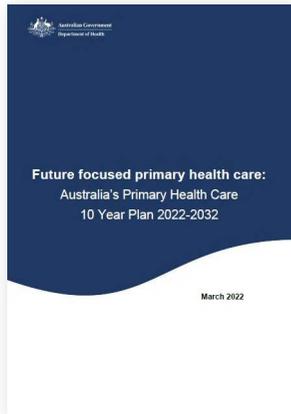
1 in 5 adults
65+ utilising home support services



Services in our Region

	2	Local Health Districts
	97	General Practices
	13	Aboriginal Medical Services
	320	General Practitioners
	40	Hospitals
	132	Aged care services
	3804	Aged care places
	2	Medicare Mental Health Centres
	5	headspace centers and satellites with headspace outreach to 10 small communities
	1	Urgent Care Service (NSW state funded)
	1	Medicare Urgent Care Clinic (federally funded)

Key strategic drivers



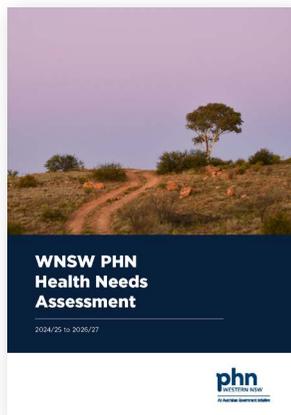
Australia's Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan 2022-2032 ([view online](#))

The Australian Government's *Future focused primary health care: Australia's Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan 2022-2032* is about strengthening primary health care as part of the health system and providing an agenda for primary health care reform over a decade.

The plan identifies 12 action areas that are grouped under 3 reform streams:

1. Future focused primary health care.
2. Person-centred primary health care supported by funding reform.
3. Integrated care, locally delivered.

This Strategic Plan has been developed to ladder up to this key national document, whilst maintaining our focus on and commitment to local priorities.



WNSW PHN Health Needs Assessment ([view online](#))

Every three years, WNSW PHN conducts a major Health Needs Assessment with expert analysis, using qualitative and quantitative data about the population living within Western and Far West NSW. This is continually updated as new information is made available and together with supplementary Health Needs Assessments and other key reports, we can identify and analyse the health and service needs in our region and prioritise activity to address those needs.

Once these needs are identified, Activity Work Plans are developed that outline how we will work with stakeholders and partners to improve health outcomes across our region.



Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan ([view online](#))

The Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan sets out the Australian Government’s responsibilities and commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, with a focus on improving life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The plan outlines priority reforms and targets designed to drive systemic change, strengthen shared decision-making, and support culturally safe, community-led approaches across all sectors.

This Strategic Plan has been developed to align with and contribute to these national priorities, ensuring that our actions locally reinforce the broader commitment to improving equity and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Western Health Alliance Limited Members

WNSW PHN's Strategic Plan outlines “collaboration” as a key value in achieving our goals. Forming strong partnerships allows us to better focus on our role in driving, supporting and strengthening primary healthcare in our region.

Membership is one mechanism through which WNSW PHN seeks to increase, strengthen and diversify our partnerships. The following organisations are members of Western Health Alliance Limited (WHAL), the company operating WNSW PHN:

- Bila Muuji Aboriginal Health Services Incorporated
- Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Australian Association of Practice Management Ltd
- Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Incorporated (SARRAH)
- Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (RFDS) - South Eastern Section
- NSW Farmers Association
- Rural Doctors Association of NSW (Inc)
- The University of Sydney - Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health



Our Strategy at a Glance (2026-2030)

Our Vision

Lead, support and strengthen person-centred primary health care for Western and Far West NSW

Our Purpose

To make primary healthcare more culturally safe, socially equitable and easier to access for people across Western and Far West NSW

Our Strategic Priorities

Goals for the people of our region

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Improved Aboriginal health and wellbeing

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Coordinate primary care access, equity and sustainability

How we can contribute to that

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Support for a strong and sustainable primary health workforce

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Community driven collaborative commissioning

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Effective governance that drives organisational performance

Our Values

Integrity • Collaboration • Professionalism • Respect • Innovation

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Improved Aboriginal health and wellbeing

We will actively engage and partner with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to reduce health inequity and continue our commitment to improve health outcomes and reduced burden of disease for Aboriginal peoples.

“Aboriginal people and communities require advocacy and support from the PHN to improve many aspects of health service delivery for their communities. This includes consideration of the Aboriginal population in all activities the PHN undertakes, support for locally designed and delivered services, improvements in the cultural safety of services in the region and greater understanding of the unique needs of Aboriginal patients.”

[Western NSW Primary Health Network Needs Assessment, 2025-2028](#)

What will we do?

Strategic initiatives

- 1.1 Work in a culturally safe way to increase partnerships with Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and recognised governance structures in co-design of health programs.
- 1.2 Commissioned services by ACCHOs are place-based and support the self-determination in addressing locally-identified health and wellbeing priorities.
- 1.3 Fund leadership pathways for Aboriginal health professionals.
- 1.4 Work to improve access and choice of appropriate services for Aboriginal people, including early intervention and prevention across the lifespan.

How will we know if we are making a difference?

Shorter-term/operational targets

- Aboriginal communities are partners in service design and delivery.
- There is increased investment in Aboriginal health workforce development across the health landscape in our region.
- We continue to grow meaningful partnerships with ACCHOs and Aboriginal organisations.

Longer-term/outcome targets

- Aboriginal communities and their ACCHOs are self-determining health needs and priorities, supported by strategic partnerships and place-based funding.
- Health and wellbeing are improved within Aboriginal communities across our region.

Coordinate primary care access, equity and sustainability

We will work to coordinate and improve community access to appropriate, timely, affordable and equitable primary care.

Enhancing access and equity in health means ensuring that all individuals – regardless of their socio-economic status, race, gender, sexual orientation, geography or disability – can obtain health services they need, when they need them, and without suffering financial hardship.

What will we do?

Strategic initiatives

- 2.1 Support appropriate models of care to improve access to primary, secondary and tertiary preventative care.
- 2.2 Support the implementation of regionally-led integrated multidisciplinary care team.
- 2.3 Commission services that are culturally safe and responsive, human-centred and trauma-informed
- 2.4 Enable mobile and telehealth solutions to extend reach in remote or underserved regions.
- 2.5 Invest in service integration, navigation and community health literacy.
- 2.6 Co-design localised mental health programs, aftercare and crisis response models to support mental health and wellbeing.
- 2.7 Support access to continuity of care.

How will we know if we are making a difference?

Shorter-term/operational targets

- Structured models of care have been implemented (including chronic disease, mental health models of care).

Longer-term/outcome targets

- All commissioned services are culturally safe and trauma aware.
- Telehealth connects more people to timely care and helps reduce wait times.
- Gaps in service delivery are reduced in priority locations.
- Health literacy and service navigation are improved across the region.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Support for a strong and sustainable primary health workforce

We will work to improve the overall effectiveness and sustainability of primary health care services and support the regional primary health workforce.

As shown in our [Strategy at a Glance](#), the work in Strategic Priority 3 feeds up to Strategic Priority 1: *Improved Aboriginal health and wellbeing* and Strategic Priority 2: *Coordinate primary care access, equity and sustainability*.

For example, we will seek to build the capacity of our own and the wider primary health workforce to embed Aboriginal perspectives into their work, as a means of improving the cultural relevance, safety and outcomes of primary health care across our region.

What will we do?

Strategic initiatives

- 3.1 Advocate for incentives for rural placements and professional development.
- 3.2 Invest in technology and tools to support data insights, analytical reporting and digital maturity in primary care.
- 3.3 Support continuous quality improvement and capacity building to meet the needs of local general practice and allied health professionals.
- 3.4 Collaborate with regional partners, health care providers, education sector and councils to support the wellbeing and sustainability of workforce.
- 3.5 Improve the preparedness of general practices for emergency response to natural disasters.

How will we know if we are making a difference?

Shorter-term/operational targets

- Continuous quality improvement processes have been implemented across the sector.
- There is evidence of improved data and digital maturity in the primary care setting.

Longer-term/outcome targets

- General Practices and allied health services are sustainable and supported.
- Recruitment and retention rates of the regional primary health workforce are improved.
- General practices are better prepared to respond to community emergencies.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Community-driven collaborative commissioning

We will collaborate with communities and regional partners to plan and fund health services that improve care and strengthen system integration.

As shown in our [Strategy at a Glance](#), the work in Strategic Priority 4 feeds up to Strategic Priority 1: *Improved Aboriginal health and wellbeing* and Strategic Priority 2: *Coordinate primary care access, equity and sustainability*.

For example, our place-based planning approach will enable us to better reflect on the local issues affecting primary care access, equity and sustainability.

What will we do?

Strategic initiatives

- 4.1 Implement evidence-based planning approaches and service design driven by population health needs, and community engagement.
- 4.2 Collaborate with local communities and health service providers to develop joint health intelligence to identify service gaps, emerging health issues, and enable joint planning and integration of services.
- 4.3 Monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of commissioned services to ensure outcomes-focused, efficient and effective care.
- 4.4 Undertake place-based planning focused on specific population and geographical data as well as community and provider consultation.

How will we know if we are making a difference?

Shorter-term/operational targets

- Shared regional priorities are identified with primary care organisations, Local Health Districts, and other health partners.
- Resources are pooled to create integrated models of care.
- Shared governance supports aligned evaluation and impact.
- A comprehensive understanding of the current data landscape is achieved, enabling informed and evidence-based commissioning decisions.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Effective governance that drives organisational performance

We will establish structures, processes and accountability mechanisms to guide decision-making, monitor progress and ensure organisational goals are achieved efficiently and ethically.

As shown in our [Strategy at a Glance](#), the work in Strategic Priority 5 feeds up to Strategic Priority 1: *Improved Aboriginal health and wellbeing* and Strategic Priority 2: *Coordinate primary care access, equity and sustainability*.

For example, our performance management systems will reflect how the work being done can be directly linked to the delivery of those high-level goals.

What will we do?

Strategic initiatives

- 5.1 Strengthen Board and Advisory Councils support and implementation of effective governance to drive organisational performance.
- 5.2 Invest in technology to enable improved data collection, governance and analytics to ensure data-driven decision-making in the organisation.
- 5.3 Ensure strong governance, finance, quality, risk management and compliance frameworks are in place.
- 5.4 Support a diverse, skilled and culturally safe workforce that is engaged and aligned to our values.
- 5.5 Implement performance management systems to ensure all departments are working towards strategic goals.

How will we know if we are making a difference?

Shorter-term/operational targets

- Systems and processes have been reviewed and transformed.

Longer-term/outcome targets

- WNSW PHN staff are proud and excited about making an impact on Western and Far West NSW communities.
- There is increased alignment between WNSW PHN strategy and performance.

WESTERN NSW PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK

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WNSWPHN.ORG.AU

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WESTERN NSW

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