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## Acknowledgement of Country

Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSPHN) respectfully acknowledges First Nations peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the nations and countries on which we work, and commit to building relationships, respect and opportunities with all First Nations Peoples in our region.

We pay respect to Elders past and present and extend recognition to all First Nations people reading this message.

We respectfully acknowledge the following nations: Wiradjuri, Gamilaraay / Gamilaroi / Kamilari, Wailwun, Wongaibon, Ngemba / Nyemba / Ngiyampaa, Murawarri, Bakiindji, Biaindji, Barundji, Nyirrpa, Karranggapa, Waligali, Wylakali / Wiljali, Wandjiwalgu, Danggali, Muthi-Muthi, Kureinji, Guru, Barrahnya, Bandjigali, Malyangaba and Dadi Dadi.

We acknowledge Elders who are the knowledge holders, teachers and pioneers, the youth who are the hope for a bright future and who will be the future leaders.

We acknowledge and pay our respect to First Nations people who have gone before us and recognise their contribution to First Nations people and community.

### Artwork:

*Maradhal-Yandhul-Girinya*  
by Nathan Peckham (Tubba-gah Wiradjuri artist)



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# Message from the Chair

I am pleased to introduce this 2024-2025 Annual Report for the Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN).

I would like once again to take this opportunity to publicly thank our staff, healthcare providers, partners and the Commonwealth Government for their support.

I would also like to thank our members and stakeholders for their advice and guidance on the organisation's strategic direction and the tireless efforts of the members of our community and clinical and Aboriginal councils.

We recognise the great importance of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to health service delivery in our region. We look forward to further enhancing our relationships with these organisations, as well as with all clinicians working in primary care and further collaboration with the Western and Far Western LHD's, RFDS and RDN.

I am delighted to welcome Ms Carmen Dwyer as our new Independent Chair as my term concludes and thank Melina Saunders and Shaun McDonagh as retiring Directors for their terms of service on the Board. I acknowledge the contribution of the continuing Directors and welcome new Directors to the Board who will be appointed after this year's AGM.



I would like to convey the Board's appreciation to our CEO Brad Porter and his Executive Team for their dedication and professionalism once again in the last year. I wish them even further success in the coming years in enhancing health care delivery in our region to our communities.

**Dr Robin Williams**  
Chair, Western Health Alliance Ltd.



# Message from the CEO

I am pleased to present the Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) Annual Report for 2024–2025.

This year, our organisation has enhanced its role as a leader in coordinating, commissioning and capacity building in one of the most diverse and geographically expansive Primary Health Network regions in Australia.

Our mandate remains clear: to commission services that meet local needs, to improve coordination across the health system, and to support the primary care sector to deliver high quality, sustainable care to our communities.

This year, we have deepened our focus on system integration, commissioning reform, and supporting the workforce that underpins our health system.

A key priority has been embedding the Commonwealth's Strengthening Medicare reforms into practice. We have worked with general practice and primary care providers to implement multidisciplinary team-based care models, improve data-driven service planning, and support the transition towards more person-centred and preventive care.

We have also strengthened our place-based commissioning agenda. By leveraging local data, engaging directly with communities, and partnering with Local Health Districts, Local Government, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, we have commissioned services that reflect the unique needs of rural and remote communities. This approach is

helping to make services more connected, drive efficiency and support more sustainable models of care for our communities.

Our commitment to Aboriginal health equity is a central part of our work. We have strengthened our partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, invested in culturally safe commissioning frameworks, and embedded Aboriginal leadership in decision-making processes. Closing the gap in health outcomes requires sustained commitment, and we remain focused on ensuring equity is a system-wide priority.

Digital health, data capability, and workforce resilience have also been major themes. We have supported practices to adopt new digital tools, including MyMedicare, telehealth, and secure data-sharing systems, while providing education and training that help our workforce adapt to rapid change. These initiatives not only improve care delivery but also position our region to take advantage of national reforms and innovations.

I extend my thanks to our Board for their governance and strategic guidance, and to our dedicated staff whose commitment to commissioning services that make a real difference is advancing equity, strengthening primary care, and improving health outcomes. I also acknowledge the critical role of our many partners across general practice, health and social care providers, and local communities. Together, their combined efforts enable us to continually strive toward delivering the best possible health outcomes and lasting improvements in wellbeing for communities across Western NSW.

Looking forward, WNSW PHN will continue to align with national and state health reform agendas while championing local innovation. Our focus will remain on building a strong, integrated primary health system that delivers equitable outcomes for all communities across Western NSW.

**Brad Porter**  
CEO, Western NSW Primary Health Network

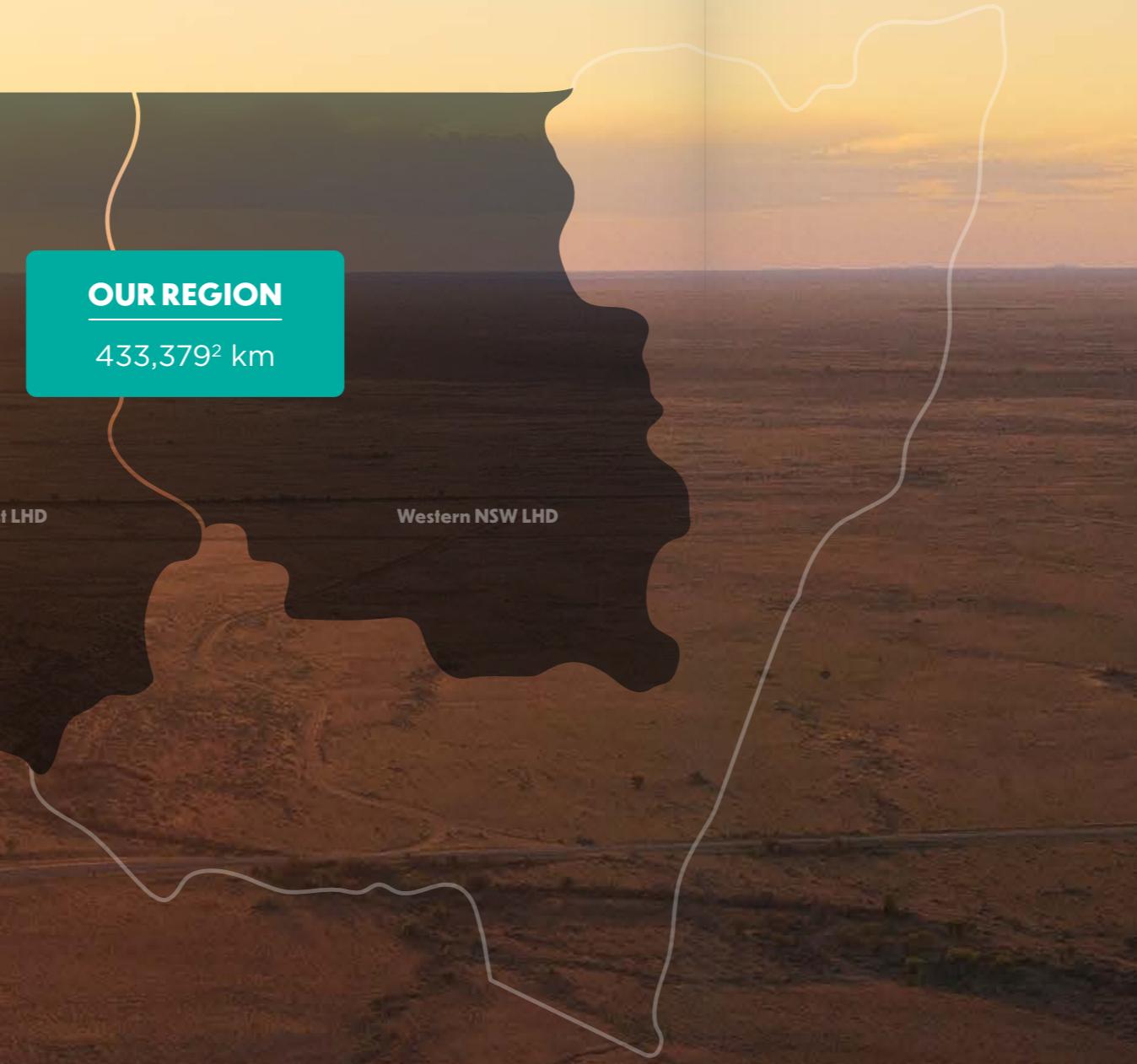


## Who we are

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 20% over the age of 65 years (ABS 2021).



Approximately **11.4%** of people in our region identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.



We support **320** General Practitioners that operate from **110** practices in our region.

# Advisory Councils

WNSW PHN has five Advisory Councils with each reporting through to the WHAL Board.

The Councils assist the organisation to set strategic direction, evaluate outcomes of services, and support the design of new services to meet the needs of local communities.

Clinical Councils provide support and advice to the Board on opportunities to further develop clinical services to meet community needs.

Community Councils support WNSW PHN to understand and address health needs within local communities, including access to services and service gaps.

The Aboriginal Health Council supports WNSW PHN to understand locally relevant Aboriginal Community perspectives in relation to their unique health needs, access to services and service gaps.

Number of meetings overall: **20**

## Initiatives:

- Joint meetings with Far West and Western Councils regarding WNSW PHN Planning Framework and the Workforce Planning and Prioritisation Program

## Consultation with Councils:

- Design of Medicare Mental Health Centres
- Draft National Allied Health Workforce Strategy
- Scope of Practice - Pilot programs of multidisciplinary teams into sole general practices
- Health Needs Assessment
- Immunisation and Cancer Screening
- Chronic Disease and Multi-Disciplinary Teams Consultation
- Digital Health Maturity
- Suicide Prevention
- Integrated Team Care (ITC)
- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- WNSW PHN website redesign and development

# Celebrating 10 years of PHNs

**This year marks 10 years since the establishment of the Primary Health Networks (PHNs). A decade of working to build healthier communities, both nationally across 31 PHNs and locally through the Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) in the Far West and Western regions of NSW.**

PHNs were established by the Australian Department of Health in 2015. Their role is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the healthcare system, particularly for those most at risk of poor health outcomes.

WNSW PHN Executive Manager of Corporate Services Graeme Allen has been here since the PHNs' inception.

"I've seen firsthand how WNSW PHN has transformed over the past 10 years; growing not just in size, but in impact.

"We've broadened our reach, deepened our connections, and consistently kept community needs at the centre of everything we do."

As we've grown, our focus has sharpened around three key goals that guide everything we do to improve health outcomes in our region:

- Identifying local gaps in health services and commission (or fund) services or system improvement, particularly in underserved or vulnerable populations.
- Building the capacity of primary care by supporting GPs and other primary care providers by offering training and professional development, support quality improvement

including accreditation and workforce planning, and helping with adopting new systems and technologies.

- Supporting the development of a more connected and cohesive healthcare system by connecting general practitioners, allied health professionals, hospitals, specialists, and community services. This helps ensure patients experience well-integrated care, especially those with complex or chronic conditions.

WNSW PHN CEO, Brad Porter said he's proud to see the way the WNSW PHN has evolved and to be part of the impact being delivered today.

"We are proud of the crucial role we play in ensuring people at risk of poor health outcomes receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

"We do that through funding chronic disease care for Aboriginal people in Integrated Team Care or expanding access to mental health support through services like Strong Minds Western NSW.

"We remain committed to leading, supporting and strengthening person-centred primary healthcare across our region."

Reflecting on the last decade has also given us space to look ahead at our commitment to innovation, collaboration and continuous improvement in primary healthcare.

With strong local partnerships and a deep understanding of our region's unique needs, WNSW PHN will continue to work to close the health gap and build healthier, more connected communities into the future.

# Our decade of impact

## Funding

We've invested **\$308.5 million** worth of funded services and grants into the community.

## General practice support

We've conducted **7,500\*** visits to general practices in the region to provide support.

We've supported general practice accreditation through the evolution of the second, third, fourth, and fifth editions of the RAGCP Standards of General Practice – with the sixth edition on the way!

## Education

We've held **812** education events over the last decade.

**10 years**

We've spent **3,650 days in business**, serving our region.

## Child immunisation rates

We've achieved the **highest percentage** of five year old children fully vaccinated for 8 of the last 10 years out of the 31 Primary Health Networks across Australia.

## Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

We've expanded culturally safe, community-led **Aboriginal health partnerships and programs** through commissioning nine Aboriginal Medical Services and five Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

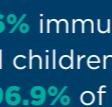
## Our people

When we opened in July 2015, we had 24 employees.

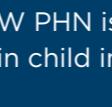
We've now grown to **60 employees**.

\* figures are based on available data and should be interpreted as indicative estimates.

# Annual snapshot of our achievements



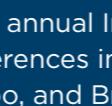
**96.36%** immunisation rate for all children at five years, and **96.9%** of Aboriginal children at 5 years.



We established **20** educational partnerships.

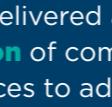


**115** HealthPathways went live in 2024-25.

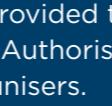


**28,134** HealthPathways page views in 2024-25 (up from 15,621 in 2023-24 - an **80% increase**).

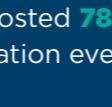
**4,375,869** My Health Record uploads.



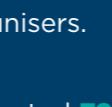
We delivered almost **\$43 million** of commissioned services to address health needs of our region's communities.



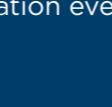
We provided training to **18** Authorised Nurse Immunisers.



We hosted **78** WNSW PHN education events.



**67** commissioned services, **1** new service, with **18** services provided by AMSSs.



**1380** health professionals participated in education events.



\$4,800 grant funded activities across 9 grants to support a broad range of primary care providers, community groups and organisations.

Types of grants we funded:

- **\$596,000** was invested in grants provided to primary care providers homes to improve after hours access.
- **\$50,000** was invested in grants provided to Far West GPs to support access to allied health.
- **\$733,000** was invested in grants provided to primary care providers to support COVID-19 vaccinations in a range of vulnerable groups.

# Reconciliation

## Reconciliation Action Plan Launch

In November 2024, more than 70 staff and stakeholders attended the launch of WNSW PHN's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) on Wiradjuri land in Dubbo. The event highlighted our commitment to reconciliation, inclusion, and equitable health outcomes. The launch marked a key milestone in WNSW PHN's ongoing journey toward meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

WNSW PHN CEO, Brad Porter gave an opening address that positions this RAP as a journey for all staff to go on and take personal responsibility for.

"Each of us has a role to play in driving reconciliation forward, and it starts with commitment. This commitment means listening to understand, learning from the wisdom shared with us, and ensuring our words are backed by action."

Managing Director of Yurana Creative, Nathan Peckham, a descendant of the Tubbah-gah clan within the Wiradjuri nation, spoke about the RAP artwork he created for WNSW PHN.

"The artwork depicts a gathering of people in camp (dhandha) along a river (bila or ghi). The camp shelter was made from gathering leaves which were thrown over a contemporary frame made of branches. They are on a journey (birrang) to find a new home."

"This piece represents the journey WNSW PHN is on with the aim of reaching a unified understanding and commitment to reconciliation across the nation," Nathan said.

Executive Manager of Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing, Donna Stanley, spoke to WNSW PHN's commitment to partnering with communities to achieve reconciliation.

"To our communities, we say this: we see you, we hear you and we stand with you. Your resilience and strength inspire us, and your voices are at the core of this RAP.

"We affirm our commitment to walking this path with you, not as leaders but as partners, listening and learning every step of the way.

"Together we can shape a future where culture is celebrated, where health outcomes are equitable and where reconciliation is a lived reality," Donna said.

We've been fortunate to work with RAP consultant and Barkindji woman Dixie Crawford of Nganya to develop our Innovate RAP.

Dixie invites organisations to reflect on the impact of their practice and interrogate ways we can improve outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities in the region.





## Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation

As part of our ongoing commitment to reconciliation, we are proud to share the progress achieved through our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) during 2024-25.

WNSW PHN remains committed to strengthening relationships with Aboriginal people, communities, and organisations. This year, we completed 17 deliverables, and we continue to progress with the completion of more than 30 deliverables.

## Key highlights

This year, our team participated in seven internal and external engagement events and activities, including National Reconciliation Week events across all offices. These events created space for truth telling and open conversations between staff, Aboriginal community members and organisations.

We launched an internal Cultural Learning campaign, providing newsletters to educate staff and stakeholders about some of the significant dates in our history. This campaign produced seven newsletters, covering the 1965 Freedom Rides, Close the Gap Day, the 1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NSW) 1983, National Reconciliation Week, National Sorry Day, and the Myall Creek Massacre.

The newsletters are distributed to WNSW PHN staff, Board Directors and our advisory councils, with an average open rate of 50.8%. The campaign has deepened our collective understanding of Aboriginal culture, history, achievements and experiences of colonisation.

We've continued to build and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal organisations and communities across Western NSW through ongoing consultation and collaboration.

As we prepare for the next phase of our RAP journey, WNSW PHN is focused on deepening connections with the community and Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations.

## What's next?

Our Innovate RAP is focused on building relationships, raising awareness, and delivering structural reform in recruitment, procurement and governance, and building internal capacity to expand our sphere of influence in reconciliation. This all works towards delivering better health outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities in our region.

We are in the process of reviewing and strengthening internal policies to better support Aboriginal staff, the way we engage with Aboriginal stakeholders, identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and ensure Aboriginal staff and their needs are considered.

In future, we look forward to expanding our sphere of influence into primary health care settings and empowering our service providers to achieve reconciliation outcomes in the region.

## 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.*

### Supporting general practice

The WNSW PHN Practice Development team delivers a range of support services to the 110 general practices operating in the Western and Far West NSW region.

The team is guided by six main drivers of practice support: Aboriginal Health, Quality Improvement, Accreditation, Digital Health, Education and Training, and Business Support. Support is tailored individually to meet each practice's needs.

In addition to the regular support provided by the team, there have been changes driven by The Strengthening Medicare Taskforce. MyMedicare commenced for general practice in July 2023. Since then, there has been a staged introduction of programs implementing practical measures to address challenges in our healthcare system and build a stronger Medicare for future generations.

As part of the work in MyMedicare reform, the Practice Development team is involved in supporting the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive (GPACI) which commenced on 1 July 2024.

GPACI is a new government incentive designed to encourage GPs to provide regular care planning and visits to their registered patients living in residential aged care homes. The purpose of GPACI is to improve continuity of care and health outcomes for residents by providing incentive payments to eligible GPs and their practices.



### The 2024 Koori Knockout in Bathurst

The WNSW PHN was a proud sponsor of the 52nd Koori Knockout in Bathurst in October 2024, organised by the Waggett Aboriginal Connection (WAC), in partnership with the Western NSW Local Health District and Justice Health.

The Koori Knockout is known as the 'largest modern corroboree in Australia' hosting up to 25,000 event participants.

Over the last 52 years the Koori Knockout has grown into a highly professional event attracting amateur players through to NRL players and drawing Aboriginal people from all over NSW in an annual celebration of football, family and community.

Executive Manager of Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Doreen Stanley said the event provides an opportunity to 'celebrate who we are as a community.'

George Rose from WAC said the community health benefits of the event are broad.

'It's not only the sporting aspect and health benefits you get from playing sport, but the wellbeing side of it too.'

The WNSW PHN was a Bronze-level sponsor, contributing \$15,000 to an event that injected approximately \$6 million into the local economy and engaged over 1 million viewers on social media.

The Koori Knockout 2024 was an excellent opportunity for us to connect with the community, promote positive health outcomes, and celebrate Aboriginal culture and achievements in our region.

## Strengthening immunisation capacity across Western NSW

This year, Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) continued its commitment to strengthening immunisation in the region, bringing together 314 healthcare professionals—including practice nurses, nurse immunisers and Aboriginal Health Practitioners—for our annual Immunisation Conference. Held across Orange, Dubbo and Broken Hill, the event provided an essential forum for learning, collaboration and professional connection.

The WNSW PHN, in partnership with the Western NSW Local Health District and the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance provided a platform for the sector to learn, collaborate and reaffirm their commitment to vaccination.

A diverse panel of respected experts, including Dr Archana Koirala, Dee Brogan, Prof. Julie Leask, Dr Victor Carey, Priscilla Stanley, Belinda Tracy, Fiona Quinn, Kim Rice, Kendal Ball, Wendy Holmes and Alice Gordon, shared insights into immunisation coverage, emerging threats, and evolving public health challenges.

Their presentations equipped attendees with the latest evidence and practice advice, covering updates on vaccines, local coverage data, catch-up schedules, managing anaphylaxis and immunising immunocompromised patients.

Sessions also addressed current guidance on COVID-19, influenza, RSV, Q fever, arbovirus and pneumococcal disease, while offering practical strategies for having respectful, evidence-informed conversations with patients who have vaccine safety concerns. With vaccines saving an estimated 3.5 to 5 million lives globally

each year, empowering the workforce with contemporary knowledge remains vital.

The conference also highlighted the importance of community-led health strategies, particularly for supporting vaccine confidence among Aboriginal communities.

Vaccination rates in the region remain among the highest in the nation, with Western NSW holding the highest coverage rate nationally for five-year-olds (96.34%) and third highest for Aboriginal children (97.17%). Despite this, there is a national decline in vaccination rates that requires collective attention.

Feedback from attendees reflected the value of the experience and the strong sense of professional community:

- “A wonderful experience. The presenters were knowledgeable and approachable, with great content.”
- “Great variety of speakers who engaged participants differently.”
- “Fantastic speakers delivering clear, evidence-based research.”
- “An excellent learning experience – well-rounded, well-organised and well-presented.”
- “These updates are vital for keeping us current and inspired.”
- “Always an enjoyable and informative experience – lovely to connect and share with other immunisers from our area.”



## GP Masterclass Program: building knowledge and confidence for GPs

This year, WNSW PHN delivered a successful GP Masterclass Program, designed to strengthen clinical knowledge, empower and build collaboration in primary care. Across the region, GPs, registrars and medical students had regular opportunities to engage with local and visiting specialists to learn about emerging treatments and connect with peers. The program has become a valuable way to support continuous professional development in the local GP community and improve community health outcomes.

### Key achievements and highlights

The 2024-25 program featured a wide range of clinical topics including: heart failure, pituitary disease, osteoporosis, urology, navigating burnout, suicide prevention, ADHD, menopause, Voluntary Assisted Dying, gynaecology, rheumatology, Colorectal cancer, chronic pain, liver disease, obesity, melanoma, skin cancer, and palliative care. More specialised sessions, such as cultural safety workshops, Kahler's disease and Parkinson's disease further enriched the program, adding depth and diversity to the learning experience.

Events were hosted in Orange, Dubbo, Mudgee and Broken Hill, making training more accessible for rural clinicians. Attendance was strong, with some sessions attracting more than 40 participants.

Partnerships played a crucial role in the program's success. Presenters included experts from Western NSW Local Health District, HammondCare, DMAHG Cardiology, Black Dog Institute, Highlands Healthcare and Orange Specialist Clinic. WNSW PHN acknowledges with sincere gratitude the active involvement and commitment of local and visiting specialists, ensuring each education activity is evidence-based, practical and closely aligned to the realities of rural general practice.

Feedback from participants highlighted the value of being able to “ask questions in a supportive environment” and “take practical strategies back to patient care.” As one GP reflected, “The masterclass format makes it easier to keep up with advances in medicine without leaving our region.”

### Challenges and lessons learned

Like much of the health sector, the program faced challenges linked to workforce pressures and rising clinical demand. It was not always easy for GPs to take time away from busy practices. However, by offering sessions in multiple locations and working closely with local providers, WNSW PHN was able to maintain strong engagement. We learned that interactive and case-based approaches are particularly effective in supporting learning and practice change.

## Virtual aged care education series

The WNSW PHN and Western NSW Local Health District teamed up in April and May 2025 to deliver a three-part virtual aged care education series, to help with navigating the aged care system.

The sessions focused on the aged care assessment system, early identification of cognitive decline, and healthy ageing.

The series attracted 37 participants, including Nurses, Aboriginal Health Professionals, Allied Health Professionals and a GP.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to chat with experts in aged care, ask questions, and meet their learning needs.

Feedback indicated that the sessions were "informative and relevant for patients and carers."

One participant remarked that there was definite value in staying up to date with best practice.

"The majority of those I consult with are older citizens and it's good to know how best to be able to care for them in a proactive way."

This initiative highlights the importance of ongoing professional development in equipping the aged care workforce to deliver quality, evidence-based and person-centred care for our ageing population.

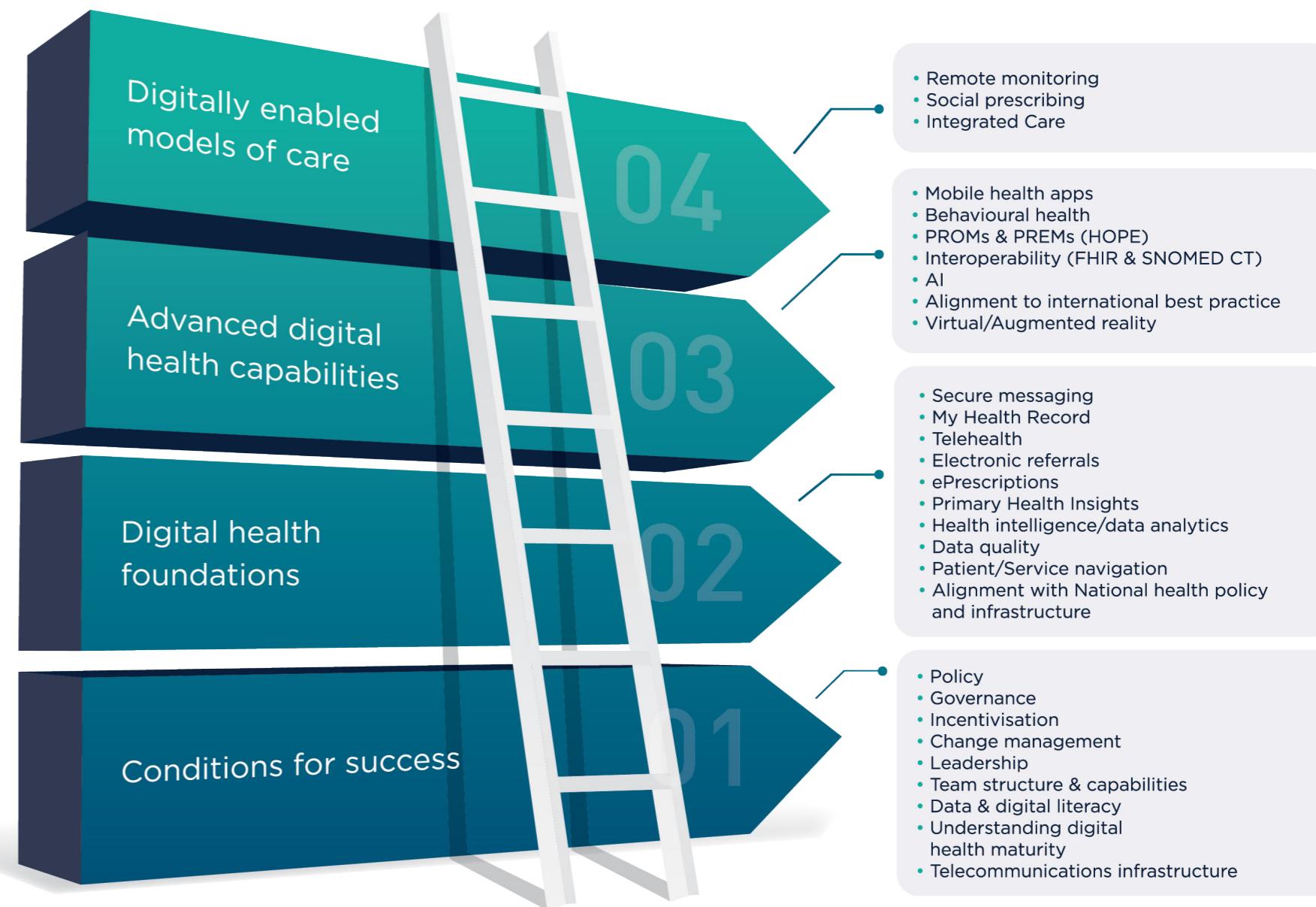
## Digital health maturity assessment

In August 2024, the WNSW PHN Digital Health Team completed its first Digital Health Maturity Assessment for General Practitioners (GPs) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).

70% of GPs and ACCHOs completed the survey, providing a comprehensive insight into each practice's relative digital health capabilities, maturity and training or adoption needs.

### Key findings

- Practices with an older average age of GPs tended to be more digitally mature.
- There was a correlation between the patient billing method and digital health maturity, with practices that do not bulk bill generally more digitally mature. This observation could be attributable to practices with lower bulk billing rates having more resources to invest in digital infrastructure.
- ACCHOs are less digitally mature than GPs.
- Fax machine usage continues to be high, primarily for referrals. Whilst fax machines are not a secure form of communication, this finding provides insight into the broader landscape of communication across the healthcare system, supporting the need to boost local uptake of secure messaging options such as eReferral SmartForms.



- Communications platforms used for telehealth are not fit for purpose - Skype and Zoom continue to be widely used by practices providing video-based telehealth. These platforms are not fit for purpose and lack appropriate security for use in healthcare.
- Practices identified gaps in cyber-security and disaster recovery knowledge - these processes should be improved to address critical vulnerabilities.
- While 72% of practices felt ready to implement new models of care using digital health, findings from other areas of the assessment suggest foundational capability should be built first to support sustainable implementation.
- Many general practices report that a low percentage of staff are skilled and confident in using digital technologies. This shows a continued need for training and support to implement and use new digital technologies.

## Care finder annual Community of Practice

In September 2024, WNSW PHN hosted the second annual care finder Community of Practice in Dubbo—an important opportunity to build capability, strengthen networks, and enhance support for vulnerable older people across our region.

### Day One: Sharing knowledge and strengthening connections

The opening day brought together care finders and a broad range of aged care service providers, including Services Australia, Seniors Rights Service, Orange Aboriginal Medical Service (Elder Care Support Program), LiveBetter (Carer Gateway), and Marathon Health.

A key highlight was a presentation from Jennifer Morser, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, who shared insights into the Western Regional Office in Dubbo and the evolving direction of the care finder program. The session generated a valuable 20-minute Q&A discussion, enabling attendees to deepen their understanding of program changes and operational challenges.

Participants also heard from Garry Walters, Dementia Australia Business Support Consultant, whose presentation explored current dementia support tools. In the afternoon, smaller groups engaged in hands-on learning with dementia simulation goggles and new dementia support apps.

### Day Two: Building capability through collaboration

On the second day, 11 care finders participated in a half-day professional development workshop facilitated by Diana Carbines, Manager Aged and Palliative Care.

The workshop opened with a moving Acknowledgement of Country delivered in language by Bec Trindall, care finder from Kirinari Community Services in Walgett. Bec also led a powerful group activity illustrating the feelings of dispossession often experienced by vulnerable community members, particularly Aboriginal people.

Care finders worked collectively through solution-generation exercises, posed operational questions, explored a complex case study, and took time to recognise and celebrate their collective achievements.





## Workforce engagement

### School of Regional Health Welcome Dinner

In February 2025, the School of Rural Health, Dubbo Regional Council, and the WNSW PHN, alongside The Welcome Experience, hosted a dinner to welcome RACGP GP Registrars to the region.

This event provided an opportunity for GP Registrars to network with senior GPs in the region, and learn about their work, career pathways and lifestyles.

This was a great opportunity for Registrars to meet local supervisors and supporting organisations and establish relationships that can enhance their training experience in our region.

### Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine Workshop

In March 2025, WNSW PHN attended the ACRRM Registrar Workshop at Dubbo's RFDS Visitor Centre where we met Registrars training to become rural generalists. The event was a great opportunity for Registrars to learn more about the WNSW PHN and how programs like The Welcome Experience can help them to integrate into rural communities.

The Welcome Experience explained their role and what assistance they can provide with housing, childcare and community integration.

The Welcome Experience supports medical professionals by connecting them with relevant organisations, resources and experiences that resonate with the professional's lifestyle and hobbies.

### Welcoming International Medical Graduates to the region

On 5 March 2025, WNSW PHN hosted a welcome event for newly arrived International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in the region.

The event aimed to introduce IMGs to WNSW PHN's role in the healthcare system and the support available for their professional journey.

The evening was well attended, with 12 overseas-trained doctors joining the session. Attendees gained valuable insights into WNSW PHN's mission, strategic goals, and services, including quality improvement initiatives, digital health systems, and accreditation processes. Presentations covered local referral pathways, specialist networks, GP education opportunities, and workforce support, ensuring IMGs are equipped to deliver high-quality patient care.

A highlight of the event was the interactive networking session, where IMGs connected with experienced local GPs interested in mentoring. This engagement fosters relationships that will support ongoing professional development and integration into the local healthcare community.

## 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.*

### Annual education survey results: shaping the Continuing Professional Development calendar

323 professionals responded to our 2025 Annual Education Survey. Respondents represented a diverse range of healthcare professionals including GPs, Registrars, Aboriginal Health Professionals, Allied Health Professionals, Nurses working in general practice, Aboriginal Medical Services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Residential Aged Care Homes, and Local Health District settings.

Practice Managers, Receptionists, non-clinical and executive staff also contributed valuable feedback.

The top six identified priority learning needs were Aboriginal Health, Antenatal Care, Cancer, Cardiology, Child and Family Health, and Dermatology.

The overall rating of engagement experiences for the Education Program remained consistent with last year, averaging 4.14 out of 5.

### Cultural safety education series

This year, we've delivered a series of Cultural Safety education events across Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange and Broken Hill.

Led by Executive Manager, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing, Donna Stanley, the program equipped health professionals with the knowledge and confidence to provide respectful and culturally informed care that is responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people.

The training brought together general practitioners, practice staff and service providers from across the region. Sessions focused on:

- the influence of key historical events and intergenerational trauma
- understanding and addressing unconscious bias
- building culturally safe systems, environments and communication practices

Participants appreciated Donna's facilitation and the depth of insight her leadership brought to the program. One participant reflected:

"Donna was terrific in the way she conducted the training. She is obviously a very proud and experienced First Nations woman, passionate about educating everyone to conduct themselves in an appropriate and culturally safe manner."

### Strengthening our practice in the region

Participants engaged in meaningful discussion and identified practical changes they could introduce including:

- Incorporating Acknowledgment of Country into organisational meetings
- Reviewing intake forms and communication processes
- Assessing workplace environments through a cultural safety lens



## Feedback and lessons learned

Feedback highlighted how the sessions exceeded expectations.

One attendee noted: "The information was presented in a very engaging manner which provided scope for questions and discussions. I would highly recommend attendance to any organisation wanting to improve the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal people they work with."

Delivering training across a geographically large region continues to present logistical challenges, particularly in balancing high demand with busy clinical schedules.

Many participants also reflected on confronting but valuable insights around unconscious bias and the need for more culturally safe spaces within their organisations. These reflections reinforced the importance of ongoing learning, support and system-level change.

In 2026, WNSW PHN will expand its cultural safety education initiatives, offering additional in-person sessions in rural and regional communities and exploring online delivery to increase accessibility.

A key focus will be supporting organisations to translate learning into sustainable improvements in policy, practice and environment.

## The Initial Assessment and Referral initiative

The Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) is a national initiative from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to establish effective systems for the initial assessment and referral of individuals presenting with mental health conditions in primary health care settings.

Guided by clinicians' own assessment and clinical judgement, the Initial Assessment and Referral – Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST) provides a consistent framework to deliberate decisions when matching a person's mental health needs with the right level of service intensity, at the right time.

Since the commencement of training in WNSW PHN in 2022, 260 health professionals have undertaken the training in the region, including 130 GPs and Registrars, Allied Health Professionals, Commissioned Mental Health Providers, Nurses, Peer Workers and Intake Staff. National widespread use of the IAR-DST aims to build a common language across the mental health sector about treatment needs based on the person-centred stepped care approach.

This year, 106 people completed training in our region, 54 of whom were GPs. This year, we partnered with the National IAR TSO Support Project to deliver National Training to primary health providers across Australia. The partnership brings valuable insights and diverse perspectives into the training, highlighting the importance of the IAR-DST in achieving a nationally consistent approach.

To further ensure the integrity of the IAR-DST training, WNSW PHN partnered with the National Training and Support Network, The InsideOut Institute, and the National IAR Project teams to develop training content and materials for new Training Support Officers.

This collaboration has successfully supported the upskilling of trainers across Australia, ensuring the ongoing provision of IAR-DST training to mental health professionals.

WNSW PHN will continue to deliver IAR-DST training to commissioned mental health providers and other primary health providers locally and nationally, further socialising the IAR-DST in our region.

## Co-located GP clinics project

This year, the WNSW PHN partnered with eHealth NSW, Western NSW and Far West Local Health Districts, Royal Flying Doctor Service and Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation to help general practitioners in the Far West share medical information more safely.

The Co-located GP clinics project provides GPs in the Far West NSW region with view-only access to consenting patient's NSW Health medical information via a clinical portal, 'HealtheNet.' HealtheNet was designed to address issues with accessing and sharing patient information between current systems and across providers, impacting the transfer of care and patient experience.

## Aims of the initiative

- Improve continuity and transfer of care between health care providers
- Allow greater sharing of comprehensive medical information
- Streamline clinical workflow and coordination of care
- Save time and reduce costs by minimising duplication of tests
- Reduce clinical risk by increasing available health information at the point of care

- Increase consumer and clinician satisfaction

The project required all participating GPs to register and publish their details via Provider Connect Australia. GPs must also use the federally recognised Provider Digital Access (PDA) portal to verify their identity using two-factor authentication before viewing the NSW Health clinical information.

## Outcomes achieved

- More meaningful use of My Health Record helped achieve greater sharing of health information through document cross-views and uploads.
- The project contributed to a 6% increase in cross-views and 15.6% increase in total uploads compared to the previous financial year.
- 79,773 patients consented to information sharing with GPs and GP clinics.
- There were 75 access encounters to view patient information shared by NSW Health.
- There are nine GP clinics in the Far West Local Health District using the co-located solution.

## HealthPathways

HealthPathways is an online resource supporting clinicians at the point of care. This localised source of clinical and referral information enhances the patient journey by standardising care and ensuring the patient receives the most appropriate care at the right time and place.

WNSW PHN HealthPathways has 208 live pathways, developed and administered by a team of local GP clinical editors who work in Far West and Western NSW and a WNSW PHN HealthPathways Manager.

A key focus has been collaborating within the WNSW PHN to enhance projects and service delivery and incorporate the available HealthPathways content in education events.

## Priority areas developed

- Cancer Screening pathways
- Menopause
- Osteoporosis
- Palliative Care
- STI
- Health suites completed for specific populations:
  - » Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
  - » Disability Support
  - » Interpreter Services plus Migrant and Refugee Services

- » Rural Health
- » Transgender Health
- » Veteran Health

## Engagement

- Collaborating with the Local Health Districts when developing request pages to ensure accurate service information.
- Maintaining links with the whole HealthPathways community, with Western NSW assuming the role of national lead region for the Lung Cancer Screening page.
- Associated with the Lung Cancer Screening pathway is ongoing engagement with the Cancer Institute and the National Lung Cancer Screening Program (NLCSP) Operational Readiness Group, responsible for continuing development of the program, including module management.
- Currently working with Murrumbidgee PHN to develop a state level opioid lead region suite of pages and outlining a framework to collaborate with the Murrumbidgee HealthPathways team more broadly. Our intention is to minimise duplication of effort and share subject matter expert input to facilitate ongoing pathway development.
- 300 individual registered account users since early adoption of individual logins on 1 July 2024.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity reporting was enabled with the CPD Reporting feature associated with having an individual HealthPathways account.





## Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing virtual education series

This year, WNSW PHN worked with the Western NSW Local Health District Public Health Unit to finish delivering the six-part Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Virtual Education Series.

64 participants attended the sessions, which addressed priority health topics including vaping, Q fever, and the importance of healthy skin practices—all critical areas in disease prevention and management across local Aboriginal communities.

### Building knowledge and capacity

Participants said the sessions were relevant and provided practical value and accessibility with virtual access across the region. The sessions were focused on building confidence and capability to support community health outcomes.

Feedback demonstrated the program's impact in strengthening local knowledge and equipping attendees with tools to engage communities in positive health behaviours. One participant reflected the session “provided a deeper understanding of community-specific health challenges and practical approaches to improve patient care.”

Many participants also expressed deep appreciation for the culturally grounded approach and the opportunity to learn in a safe, respectful environment:

“I am so grateful for this opportunity... Thank you for your hard work, dedication and the incredible efforts you've put in. Please continue to strengthen and empower our people.”

“I’m so proud to be a Wiradjuri woman learning about different aspects of health to help our people grow and become aware of health issues.”

Others noted the program's value in supporting their professional development:

“This was a great reminder and refresher for my community education work.”

“Vaping is very common here, and the content was directly relevant to my daily work promoting healthier lifestyles.”

# Care Partnership Diabetes

## Building capacity in diabetes care

### Care Partnership – Diabetes

The aim of the Care Partnership – Diabetes (CP-D) program is to improve health outcomes for people living with type 2 diabetes in Far West and Western NSW.

The program works to enhance patient access to quality services, support health professionals, and improve the integration of the broader health system. CP-D is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health's Collaborative Commissioning program and contributions from a partnership comprising Western NSW Local Health District, Far West LHD, WNSW PHN and the Rural Doctor's Network.

This year, the CP-D partners worked together to deliver educational workshops to build the sector's knowledge and collaborative capacity to respond to the region's developing needs and dynamic environment.

The Type 2 Diabetes Masterclass and Type 2 Diabetes ECHO program - which engaged hundreds of health professionals across our region on sector specific challenges - were both delivered through the CP-D program.

### The Type 2 Diabetes ECHO Series

In 2024-25, the Type 2 Diabetes ECHO sessions showcased how regional collaboration can strengthen clinical capability and improve outcomes for people living with, or at risk of, diabetes. The program includes clinicians, expert panels, and partner organisations, and is delivered by WNSW PHN, in partnership with the Western NSW and Far West Local Health Districts and the Rural Doctors Network through the Care Partnership – Diabetes initiative.

Since launching in September 2024, the program has delivered seven virtual ECHO sessions and one face-to-face masterclass, engaging more than 160 health professionals from right across the region. Participants included GPs, GP Registrars, Nurses, Pharmacists, Aboriginal Health Workers, and Allied Health professionals—reflecting the multidisciplinary approach needed to address the growing burden of type 2 diabetes.

At the heart of the program is the **Project ECHO® model**, a hub-and-spoke learning framework that connects local clinicians with a panel of experts in real time. Each monthly session enables participants to present real patient case studies, seek specialist advice, and engage in practical, solution-focused discussions. GPs can also access MBS case conferencing items through participation, further supporting integrated care.

This year's series highlighted best practice for newly diagnosed patients, culminating in the Western NSW Type 2 Diabetes Masterclass in June. Case presentations from a variety of health professionals and Care Partnership program staff generated rich discussion and shared problem-solving. Participant feedback reflected the program's strong value, with 100% rating the sessions as relevant and a positive overall experience. Participants described the program as "interactive, excellent, and a great combination of education and discussion", with many clinicians noting that they "learn something new every session."

The expert ECHO panel featured a diverse team including Endocrinologists Dr Manik Mayadunne and Dr Minoli Abeysekera, GPs Dr Martin Watson and Dr Alex Hoyle, and Credentialled Diabetes Educators Alison Amor and Amanda Taylor. Together, they reinforced principles of individualised care, evidence-based lifestyle management, and multidisciplinary teamwork—key components in improving diabetes outcomes across rural and remote communities.

Together, these partners are building a stronger, more connected regional workforce capable of delivering high-quality, patient-centred diabetes care.





## Type 2 Diabetes Masterclass

In June 2025, more than 100 health professionals from across the region came together in Dubbo for the Type 2 Diabetes Masterclass—a full-day, multidisciplinary learning event designed to advance regional excellence in diabetes care.

The day opened with a Welcome to Country from Aunty Margaret Walker, followed by speeches from WNSW PHN CEO Brad Porter and MC Dr Alex Hoyle. The program brought together GPs, Practice Nurses, Aboriginal Health Practitioners, Diabetes Educators, Allied Health Professionals, and Care Coordinators.

## Expert insights and lived experience

Keynote speaker, Professor Ted Wu provided the latest clinical updates in diabetes management, while a powerful lived experience presentation from Aunty Marg highlighted the challenges of living with type 2 diabetes and the essential cultural considerations.

## Interactive and practical learning

Throughout the day, participants engaged in highly interactive learning sessions, including:

- A live case conference on complex diabetes presentations, led by Professor Glen Maberly and the Western Sydney Diabetes team.



- A live ECHO session exploring models of care and access for Aboriginal patients.
- A session on early diagnosis and opportunities for remission, reinforcing the importance of proactive screening and early intervention.
- Breakout workshops covering digital tools, dietary strategies, patient communication, and a multidisciplinary view of diabetic eye disease.

Participants described the event as “very informative,” “fabulous,” “excellent,” and appreciated the chance to network with peers across the region.

## Acknowledging contributors

WNSW PHN extends its sincere thanks to all presenters and panellists, including Professor Ted Wu; Professor Glen Maberly and the Western Sydney Diabetes team; Dr Manik Mayadunne and the WNSW T2D ECHO panel; Dr Wilson Pujavijayana; Dr Madhuri Velegala; the Western NSW Eye Health Partnership; and presenters from Marathon Health and the Care Partnership—Diabetes team.

A special acknowledgment goes to Aunty Marg, whose generosity in sharing her lived experience enriched the event and reminded attendees of the people and communities behind every clinical decision.

## 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.



#### Medicare Mental Health Centre launch in Bathurst

A free, walk-in mental health service opened its doors in Bathurst in May 2025, increasing access to essential support services in the town with no appointments or referrals needed.

The Medicare Mental Health Centre (MMHC) provides a range of support for adults facing short and medium-term mental health challenges, including peer-led and clinical support.

As well as immediate support for people in distress, the MMHC helps clients navigate mental health services, with referrals, information, and support for family members or carers.

WNSW PHN is proud to commission the MMHC service, which is being delivered through a unique collaborative approach, with providers Stride, Wellways, and Clarity Health Care teaming up to deliver the service.

This collaborative approach was designed to ensure clients have access to safe, inclusive, and holistic care, which includes telehealth and digital mental health platforms.

Clients have shared that the centre feels 'welcoming and calm'. Clients appreciate the offer of a cuppa and a relaxed space to be in, to talk about the things on their mind with someone who will listen to them.



The MMHC in Bathurst has embedded a range of Aboriginal design elements in its service environment to facilitate cultural safety. The artwork in the displayed image represents 'one that provides and cares for another' by local Wiradjuri artist Nathan Peckham.

## The Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Program

The Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Program (CPS) is a non-clinical, community-based support program for people living with severe mental illness.

The CPS Program connects clients with a non-clinical recovery coach who supports clients to identify and achieve their goals and reconnect to the things they love. The team provides one-on-one coaching and works in partnership with family members and carers (where possible).

Each session with the recovery coach is goal oriented in focus and delivered based on a personalised recovery plan.

WNSW PHN commissions the program in Western and Far Western NSW through Marathon Health and Flourish Australia.

### Mark's journey back to his love of music

Mark was referred to the CPS program via the Community Mental Health team. Mark initially needed some assistance to navigate mental health support appropriate to his needs. As Mark established a rapport and worked alongside his recovery coach, he was supported to identify his strengths. Mark shared his desire to get back to his passions of music, humour and hosting local live radio, something he had not done for several years.

Mark was supported by his recovery coach to work through any barriers and challenges he faced and received ongoing encouragement and motivating support to attend the local radio station with his recovery coach to chat with the manager.

Since then, Mark has secured training and has commenced hosting again at his local radio station. Through hosting, Mark has reconnected with his community and shared many laughs and memories.

"I've gained a new sense of purpose, and a spark has returned to my life.

"CPS has been a glimmering light in a time of darkness," Mark said. The CPS program is designed to support people with severe mental illness who are able to have their needs met through short-term, low-intensity support ensuring independence within the community.

## Residential aged care virtual services

We've commissioned Healthcare Australia to deliver Residential Aged Care virtual services this year, with the program providing evidence-based psychology to residents of Residential Aged Care Homes (RACHs) and Multi-Purpose Services (MPSs).

The focus of the online mental health support service is on residents with mild to moderate symptoms. Residents have been referred to the program for support with adjustment, depression, anxiety, grief, loneliness, and trauma.

This year, the service has been engaging RACH staff and residents through training modules and awareness programs to address barriers to accessing the service, including stigma.

### Removing barriers to access

The program rebranded its offering to a 'wellbeing' focus instead of 'mental health' to reduce stigma and barriers to access, especially for aged care clients.

Despite being a virtual service, the benefits of a face-to-face connection can be a valuable way to build trust. The program's lead psychologist conducted quarterly regional visits to deliver information sessions for RACH residents, onboard them in person, and conduct staff training.

The use of online education modules became a successful strategy in effectively engaging key stakeholders.

## Success factors

The service has delivered 56 RACH visits this year and 83 face-to-face consultations with residents. This has built rapport with staff and residents and generated an increase in referrals to the program. 92% of the RACHs across Western and Far West NSW have referred to this program. The service has grown to 18 clients and conducts an average of 550 consultations per quarter.

Feedback has been collected and questions and concerns addressed during staff training and education sessions. This has been invaluable in addressing access obstacles and developing training material for RACHs in the region.

The resident information sessions are an important part of the face-to-face visits. In these sessions residents have been empowered to ask questions and share their positive experiences of talking with a psychologist with the group.

The Online Educational Modules have engaged 13 RACH staff members since they were launched in October 2024.

The modules only take 10-15 minutes to complete and include seven topics including: Transitioning into Residential Aged Care, Depression and Anxiety in Residential Aged Care, Promoting Mental Wellness in Residential Aged Care, End of Life Care, Behavioural Management, Introduction to Trauma Informed Care in Older Persons and Communication Strategies to address Stigma in RACH Residents.

## Supporting Aboriginal people with chronic conditions

The Integrated Team Care (ITC) program continues to support Aboriginal people across Western NSW to manage chronic health conditions and access timely, culturally safe care.

As well as providing culturally safe care coordination, the ITC program supports early detection of chronic health illnesses and improves access to specialists and essential services.

Over the last year, the ITC program delivered a total of 33,815 points of service including care coordination and specialist and supplementary services.

Specialist support is a key delivery with 2,144 specialist services delivered. The top three specialist areas accessed by ITC clients were cardiology, respiratory, and ophthalmology, reflecting the ongoing need for cardiac, lung, and eye health services within our communities.



This year, ITC delivered 4,634 supplementary services, supporting Aboriginal patients living with chronic illness to navigate the healthcare system, attend appointments, understand their treatment, and manage their conditions.

By removing barriers such as transport, cost, and service availability (especially in regional and remote areas), the program supports better health outcomes, increased confidence in managing health, and stronger wellbeing across communities.

## Program impact

*“A few months ago, I started feeling a bit off - tired all the time, not eating properly, and just not feeling like myself. I thought it was just age catching up, but my Aboriginal Health Worker encouraged me to have a health check.”*

*“I didn't think much of it at the time, but looking back now, that checkup saved my life.”*

*“I was booked for a full health assessment. The AHPA and doctor were great; they explained everything clearly and made me feel comfortable. They picked up something unusual and referred me straightaway for further tests, and the ITC program.”*

*“Within a few weeks, I was diagnosed with early-stage cancer. It was a shock, but I was lucky. Because it was caught early, I was able to get treatment quickly. The ITC Care Coordinator helped me with everything, from getting to appointments to understanding my treatment plan. They even helped me to organise transport and like me up with support services while I recovered.”*

*“Now I'm doing well, and my doctors are happy with my progress. If it wasn't for the ITC team, I might not have found out until it was too late.”*

- 

**ITC Client**



## Lifelong Strength and Wellness program

The Lifelong Strength and Wellness program was delivered through Orange Aboriginal Medical Service and funded by WNSW PHN.

The program is a 12-week multi-disciplinary intervention to support older adults to reduce frailty and prevent falls. Participants received dietetic consultations, exercise physiology sessions, home safety assessments, and weekly check-ins coordinated by a dedicated Navigator.

Of the 68 people enrolled, 50 completed the program, with measurable improvements in strength, balance, mobility, and mental wellbeing. Notably, 100% of participants with potential for improvement reduced their FRAIL score, and 92% improved their sit-to-stand performance.

Cultural safety was a key feature of the program, with 12 Aboriginal participants completing the intervention and achieving outcomes comparable to non-Indigenous participants.

Participant feedback highlighted the value of personalised care and supportive staff.

*"At all times I felt well cared for and listened to. Friendly staff, great environment."*

## The Greater Choice for At Home Palliative Care 'My Care Future' project

Commissioned in April 2025, the My Care Future 12-month pilot project responds to the growing need for palliative care education, advance care planning, and culturally safe support services in local communities.

With funds of \$462,000, the project will be delivered by Orange City Council, in collaboration with the Dubbo Neighbourhood Centre, and the Orange Aboriginal Medical Service (OAMS).

My Care Future is a peer-led initiative focused on supporting individuals to complete and upload Advance Care Directives to their My Health Record across the Western NSW region.

The program also works at a community level, engaging with local groups to deliver palliative care education tailored to community needs. Drawing inspiration from a successful model in South Australia, the program adopts a person-centred, early intervention approach to healthcare. Its design was informed by a comprehensive co-design process involving aged care and palliative care providers, community members, and health professionals.

A key highlight of the program is a pilot initiative led by OAMS, which explores and responds to the specific needs of Aboriginal communities in the Advance Care Planning space. This culturally sensitive approach aims to improve accessibility and relevance of care planning for Aboriginal people.

The project aims to increase community death literacy by harnessing local resources to deliver needs-based palliative care education. It also empowers people to complete Advance Care Directives through a peer support model, strengthening community capacity and fostering a more supportive, informed approach to end of life planning.

## 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.

#### New GP Practice in Parkes

After years in the making, Parkes welcomed the opening of a much-needed new general practice in June 2025: Twin Green HealthCare 'Caring for you, Close to home'.

The owner and Practice Manager, Prashanth Parthiban, said, "The road wasn't easy, and it took a while before we were finally able to bring the announcement of the opening of Twin Green HealthCare to reality.

The idea for the clinic was sparked during the post-COVID doctor shortage, when long appointment wait times and limited access to care may have forced many residents to travel for basic medical needs.

"At one point, despite having a doctor in my own family, I couldn't get an appointment in town for over six weeks", Parthiban said.

"That's when we truly felt the urgency to do something."

Twin Green HealthCare aims to help cater to some of the local community's healthcare needs. Leading the clinical team is Dr Madie, a Family Medicine Specialist with nearly 16 years' experience in general practice.

She graduated from Pakistan in 2008 and achieved her MRCGP in 2016. Dr Madie is known for her holistic approach to care, with a strong focus on empathy and patient-centered treatment.

The WNSW PHN has supported the clinic with administrative and software training, digital health, practice incentives, and workforce incentive program registration.





Walgett, NSW



## New Doctor opens books in Balranald

In fantastic news for the Balranald community, General Practitioner Dr Vitalis Ihuarulam opened his books in time for Christmas 2024 - six months after the community's long serving General Practitioner, Dr Zotov retired.

Dr Ihuarulam's commencement was the result of a tremendous collaborative effort between Rural Doctors Network, Balranald Shire Council, the Far West Local Health District, and WNSW PHN.

RDN Recruitment Portfolio Lead, Jess Yuen, said "RDN is delighted to have played a role in helping to secure better healthcare access for the Balranald region by supporting the recruitment and appointment of Dr Ihuarulam, alongside our regional partners at the Shire Council, FWLHD and WNSW PHN.

"Having a local doctor as part of the fabric of a local community is an invaluable asset for continuity of care, and we look forward to continuing to support Dr Ihuarulam as he establishes his practice in Balranald," Ms Yuen said.

Acting General Manager of Balranald Shire Council, Glenn Carroll said the recruitment of Dr Ihuarulam is a major boost for the whole Balranald Shire and Far West region in general.

"We are extremely excited that we can announce we've secured a new GP in Balranald, who will service the 1,100-1,200 people that need primary care services in the Shire.

"Dr Ihuarulam's commencement provides a real boost, particularly to the business sector as people will no longer have to travel out of town to access GP services," Glenn said.

Brad Porter, CEO of WNSW PHN said Dr Vitalis Ihuarulam's passion for aged care and health outcomes for Aboriginal and regional communities is a real asset to Balranald with flow on impacts for surrounding communities.

"Dr Ihuarulam has already committed to providing GP services to Bidgee Haven Retirement Hostel residents.

"He also wants to expand his services to neighbouring areas and partner with Aboriginal Health organisations in the future, which is a real asset to the community," Mr Porter said.

Dr Ihuarulam is providing general practice services from the rooms at the Balranald Multipurpose Centre.

## New podiatry service in Broken Hill

In January 2025, a regular podiatry service launched at Thrive Medical in Broken Hill.

The WNSW PHN General Practices Allied Health Support Grant Far West NSW 2024 funding supported Thrive Medical to engage Podiatrist Sarah Natali. Sarah commenced visits to Broken Hill on an ongoing basis to provide holistic podiatry services when the service opened.

The introduction of podiatry services at Thrive Medical is a positive step forward for Broken Hill, providing locals with access to holistic specialised foot care without the need for long-distance travel. This service supports residents in managing chronic conditions, recovering from injuries, and preventing future health issues, all within their own community.

By expanding healthcare options locally, Thrive Medical is enhancing both convenience and health outcomes, reinforcing its commitment to the wellbeing of Broken Hill and the surrounding region.

Heather Pearce, CEO of Thrive Medical, says they are excited to be bringing this much needed service to the Broken Hill community.

"As a health service provider in Broken Hill, our mission has always been to bring high-quality, specialised care right to our community's doorstep. Offering podiatry at Thrive Medical means locals no longer need to travel away for this vital service.

"This isn't just about convenience; it's about empowering everyone in our community to take confident steps towards better health, whether they're managing chronic conditions, recovering from

injuries, or preventing future issues all while receiving care close to home", says Ms Pearce.

Patients are able to access the podiatry service by making a private booking, through a GP referral, or have the service included in their care plan. The podiatry service will also be covered by private health where applicable.

In some cases, podiatry services can be provided to patients outside of the Thrive Medical Practice - this will be assessed case by case where needed.



## Aboriginal Governance Group for Research and Evaluation (AGGRE)

The Aboriginal Governance Group for Research and Evaluation (AGGRE) provides Aboriginal perspectives, guidance, and direction to research and evaluation activities under the Collaborative Commissioning: Care Partnership – Diabetes (CP-D) program. The group ensures Aboriginal voices and cultural considerations are embedded across all stages of research, governance, and implementation.

WNSW PHN holds a strong leadership role, with the Executive Manager, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing co-chairing the group alongside the Executive Director, Health and Wellbeing, WNSW LHD. This partnership strengthens coordination across primary care and the hospital sector.

Beyond CP-D, AGGRE guides broader diabetes-related initiatives that have direct implications for Aboriginal communities across Western NSW.

### AGGRE deliverables this year

Over the past year, WNSW PHN has supported AGGRE in providing strategic direction and Aboriginal governance to multiple key projects, including:

- The GP/ACCHS Innovation Model under the CP-D initiative
- The AHMRC-UTS-CP-D Diabetes Workshop, fostering workforce capability
- The Aboriginal Health Practitioner/Worker Diabetes Competency Program

- The TRGS Round 8 eCare Model of Care research project

Through its active engagement, the WNSW PHN has continued to ensure Aboriginal health priorities are embedded in research translation, service design, and evaluation processes.

AGGRE's involvement has strengthened the cultural governance of research and evaluation for CP-D and its related activities. The partnership has also fostered stronger cross-sectoral relationships between Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, the PHN, and the LHD, enabling a shared commitment to culturally safe, community-driven, and evidence-based health system improvements.

The ongoing discussion through AGGRE has further enhanced organisational accountability, transparency, and alignment with Closing the Gap priorities.

### What's ahead for the AGGRE?

- Lead Aboriginal research governance for Translational Research Grant Scheme round 8 – eCare Type 2 Diabetes Case Conferencing
- Oversee CP-D evaluations and strengthen regional research governance linkages
- Guide new diabetes research initiatives to ensure Aboriginal leadership and cultural considerations are embedded from inception to completion

## Supporting digital transformation in aged care

Residential Aged Care Homes (RACHs) across Western and Far West NSW continue to face significant change. This year, WNSW PHN travelled over 4,500km to deliver hands-on support and tailored digital health education.

We prioritised face-to-face training to build staff confidence in using My Health Record, enabling secure, anytime access to key resident health information for safer care coordination. We also supported registration and connection.

Amid new regulations, workforce shortages, and growing digital demands, these visits offered rare opportunities for collaboration, trust-building, and meaningful learning. Emails and webinars can't replace the value of face-to-face support. Every aged care home is unique. These visits helped us understand what matters most—whether it's navigating new systems, building digital confidence, or supporting staged implementation. One staff member shared:

"I am now more comfortable discussing My Health Record with our residents."

This reflects the impact of in-person education to enable meaningful conversations and improve resident care.



## Strengthening dementia care with virtual reality

In April and May 2025, WNSW PHN partnered with Dementia Australia to fund and deliver an innovative program aimed at transforming dementia care across the region. This partnership delivered eight immersive dementia training workshops in Dubbo, Orange and Bathurst.

97 Residential Aged Care Home (RACH) staff took part, representing around 40 RACHs and community-based organisations. Participants were able to choose from two cutting-edge workshops—Dementia De-escalation (D-Esc VR) and Dine with TED—or attend both as part of a broader learning experience.

The D-Esc VR workshop placed participants inside a realistic, controlled virtual environment to practise responding to behavioural emergencies. Through virtual reality headsets, staff could identify early signs of escalation, recognise the impact of stress on a person living with dementia, and apply calm, person-centred strategies to support safety and wellbeing. The training also emphasised communication, de-escalation, and reflective practice to better understand behavioural triggers.

In the Dine with TED workshop, staff experienced mealtimes from two perspectives: the care worker and the person living with dementia. The session highlighted how environmental factors, food presentation and supportive interactions can profoundly shape the dining experience. Participants learned practical approaches to improve mealtime engagement, support changing behaviours, and enhance daily care.

Collectively, these immersive VR experiences allowed aged care staff to see the world through the eyes of a person living

with dementia, promoting greater empathy, practical skills and confidence. Workshop participants gained a deeper understanding of behaviours and needs, strengthening their ability to deliver compassionate, person-centred care.



## Mapping training pathways in our region

In October 2024, the WNSW PHN Workforce Planning and Prioritisation (WPP) team successfully mapped all the training pathways in the region, establishing relationships with medical schools and hospitals, whilst identifying various region-specific training pipelines.

This work allows the WNSW PHN to understand its regional capacity to train in-house GPs and accommodate the inflow of medical students into our region.

This process also allowed us to develop a strong understanding of GP exposure through training, noting specific opportunities for increased exposure and immersion in General Practice training settings.

## Supporting workforce planning in NSW

In June 2025, the WNSW PHN WPP team contributed to a statewide workforce planning and prioritisation activity that helps the medical training sector make important allocation decisions across NSW.

The WPP Report 4 outlines regional workforce characteristics and profiles priority 1 catchments.

Report data provides important considerations for training colleges and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DoHDA) when managing GP Registrar distribution measures.

Priority placements for GP Registrars were identified with the DoHDA quantitative data -which was validated and adjusted where appropriate - with a variety of clinical and community stakeholders.

We're proud to have had the guidance of six WPP GPs advisors, from Bathurst to Broken Hill.

# Financial Reports



Orange, NSW

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

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	Consolidated 2024 \$
Revenue	2	60,146,465	48,584,884
Service supplier expenses		[49,051,615]	[37,689,939]
Employee expenses		[7,316,189]	[7,352,462]
Interest expense	3	[40,790]	[25,606]
Information technology and communication		[799,903]	[1,007,678]
Travel expenses		[293,167]	[339,432]
Property expenses		[169,680]	[83,644]
Council payments		[45,691]	[53,434]
Program delivery expenses		[882,931]	[618,947]
Motor vehicle expenses		[112,432]	[183,983]
Depreciation expense	3	[464,012]	[378,224]
Other expenses	3	[704,266]	[296,484]
Loss in subsidiary entity	15	-	[2,152,403]
<b>Surplus / (loss) for the year</b>		<b>\$265,789</b>	<b>\$(1,597,352)</b>

WESTERN HEALTH ALLIANCE LIMITED  
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ABN 59 605 922 156

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	Consolidated 2024 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	48,108,900	38,870,900
Trade and other receivables	5	1,678,777	4,265,800
Other assets	6	68,399	91,915
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>50,506,066</b>	<b>43,334,684</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	7	-	-
Right of use assets	8	1,041,377	10,566
Investment in subsidiaries	15	-	-
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>1,041,377</b>	<b>10,566</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>51,547,443</b>	<b>43,334,249</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	9	6,059,311	8,881,070
Lease liabilities	10	4,785,33	10,344,3
Provisions	11	7,210	15,238,3
Contract liabilities	12	41,491,28	33,843,43
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>49,530,222</b>	<b>42,878,9</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Lease liabilities	10	6,025,33	12,485
Provisions	11	4,058	13,304
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>7,811</b>	<b>12,289</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>50,313,333</b>	<b>42,814,628</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>\$1,234,100</b>	<b>\$1,120,61</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained earnings		1,234,100	112,612
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>\$1,234,100</b>	<b>\$1,120,61</b>

WESTERN HEALTH ALLIANCE LIMITED  
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STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2023	2,618,973	2,618,973
Loss for the year	(1,597,352)	(1,597,352)
Balance at 30 June 2024	1,021,621	1,021,621
Surplus for the year	265,789	265,789
Balance at 30 June 2025	\$1,287,410	\$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 2025

	2025 \$	Consolidated 2024 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Grant moneys received	74,781,044	55,052,134
Receipts from customers	27,055	46,498
Interest received	1,987,110	1,849,588
Payments to suppliers and employees	(67,055,532)	(57,547,782)
<b>Net cash flows provided by operating activities (Note 14.2)</b>	<b>9,739,677</b>	<b>(599,562)</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Repayment of right of use asset leases	(505,696)	(413,530)
<b>Net cash flows used in investing activities</b>	<b>(505,696)</b>	<b>(413,530)</b>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	9,233,981	[1,013,092]
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	38,873,909	39,887,001
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR (Note 14.1)</b>	<b>\$48,107,890</b>	<b>\$38,873,909</b>



**WESTERN NSW PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK**

1300 699 167

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WESTERN NSW

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