

# ANNUAL REPORT **2023-24**

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# Acknowledgement of Country

Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the nations and countries on which we work, and commit to building relationships, respect and opportunities with all Aboriginal Peoples in our region.

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

We respectfully acknowledge the following Aboriginal nations: Wiradjuri, Gamilaraay / Gamilaroi / Kamilaroi, Wailwun, Wongaibon, Ngemba / Nyemba / Ngiyampaa, Murrawarri, Barkindji, Barindji, Barundji, Nyirra, Karenggapa, Wadigali, Wilyakali / Wiljali, Wandjiwalgu, Danggali, Muthi-Muthi, Kureinji, Gunu, Barranbinya, Bandjigali, Malyangaba and Dadi Dadi.

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

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

## Artwork:

*Maradhal-Yandhul-Giriya*

by Nathan Peckham (Tubba-gah Wiradjuri artist)



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# Message from **the Chair**

I am pleased to introduce this 2023-24 Annual Report for the Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN).

The organisation has undergone some significant changes in the last year and I welcome our new Chief Executive Brad Porter to lead the team and continue the work of commissioning services to health providers in our region.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank our staff, health care providers and 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. I also acknowledge that we couldn't do this without my fellow Directors for their skill, professionalism and commitment in providing governance for WNSW PHN.

We recognise the importance of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to health service delivery in our region, as we endeavour to improve our engagement with these organisations.

We live in challenging times, and the chronic issue of clinical workforce shortages in our region remains the single biggest issue we face. We are not alone in this and value our partnerships with other key organisations, and in particular with the Western NSW and Far West Local Health Districts and Rural Doctors Network as well as allied health representatives.



Without clinicians, we cannot implement programs to deliver improved health outcomes, and this will remain a focus for our efforts in the coming years, so that we can try and ensure equity of access to healthcare for our community.

**Dr Robin Williams**

Chair, Western Health Alliance Ltd.

# Message from **the CEO**

I am proud to present our 2023-2024 Annual Report for the Western NSW Primary Health Network. We are passionate about delivering outcomes for the community and this report outlines some of our key achievements over the last year.

After 17 years of work in the Western NSW region in acute emergency care settings, I commenced as CEO of the WNSW PHN in May 2024. My key focus has been on engaging with staff and stakeholders, honouring their remarkable commitment and reaffirming our strategic priorities.

Our people are our greatest asset, and we are lucky to have such a dedicated, passionate team.

Every aspect of our work is driven by our purpose, outlined in the Quintuple Aims:

- Better health outcomes
- Improved customer service
- Improved provider satisfaction
- Sustainable costs
- Equity

This guides us to face our challenges – addressing primary care workforce shortages, increasing digital health literacy in our region and centering equity of access to care in a region covering 53.5% of NSW.



I thank our dedicated primary care workforce and service providers who are an important part of the communities they serve and care for. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you over the year ahead.

**Brad Porter**

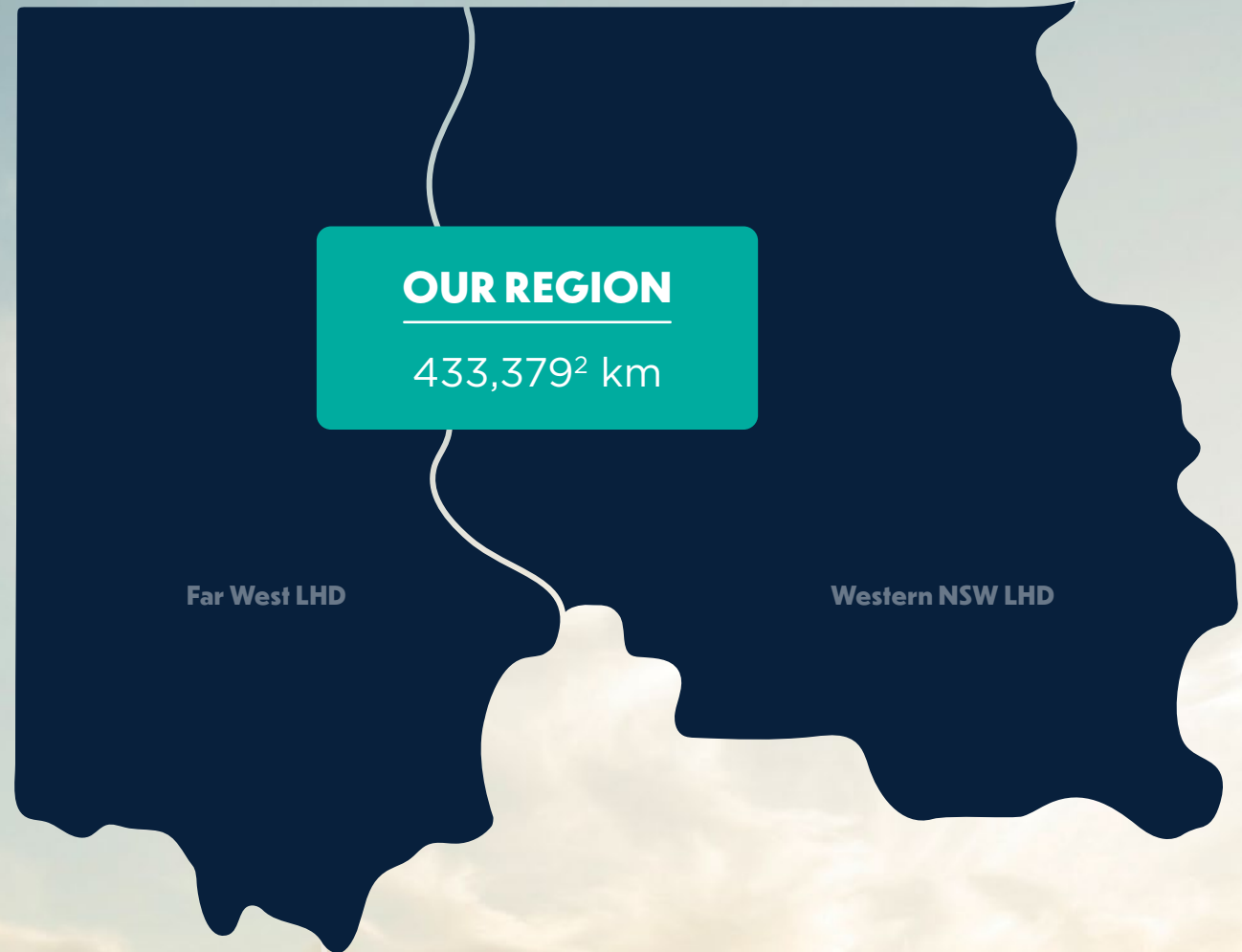
CEO, Western NSW Primary Health Network

# 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 across Australia, established to support frontline health services and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care.

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

Our focus is patients who are at risk of poor health outcomes and improving 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 and partners 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 vision is to lead, support and strengthen person-centred primary health care in Western NSW.



The total population of our region is estimated to be over **312,286** people, with 20% over the age of 65 years (ABS, 2021).



Approximately **11%** of people in our region identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.



We support **437** general practitioners that operate from **113** practices in our region.

# Advisory Councils

WNSW PHN has established five Advisory Councils that report to the WHAL Board. The Councils assist the organisation in setting the strategic direction, evaluating outcomes of services, and supporting 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 that 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: 18

## Initiatives:

- Joint meetings with Far West and Western Advisory Councils
- Aged Care – Care finder Program
- Reconciliation Action Plan Renewal
- Continued discussion/support for the establishment of the Far West Detox and Rehab Centre in Broken Hill
- Head to Health Centres (Medicare Mental Health Clinics)

## Consultation with Councils:

- NSW Cancer Institute Presentation
- Health Pathways Discussions
- Digital Health Maturity Consultation
- Case Conferencing - CP-D Consultation
- Workforce Planning and Prioritisation Program discussion and advice
- Health Needs Assessment Consultation
- PRMs-HOPE Presentation
- Regional Mental Health Plan

# A snapshot of our **achievements**

**96.43%**

immunisation coverage rate for All Children at 5 years of age, which makes us the leading PHN in this category

**\$37 million**

of services commissioned to address health needs of our region's communities

**81**

services commissioned, with 32 provided by Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS)

**\$920,219**

grant activities were funded across 69 grants to support a broad range of primary care providers, community groups and organisations

**66**

HealthPathways went live in 2023-24

**5,318**

site sessions on the Western NSW HealthPathways

**173**

attendees at our 2023 Suicide Prevention Forum

**70,658**

original views of My Health Record, a 15% increase on last year

**23.5%**

increase in cross views of My Health Record (documents that were uploaded by one healthcare organisation and viewed by another) compared to last year

**1,414**

health professionals participated in 95 WNSW PHN education events

**18**

educational partnerships



# Reconciliation

## Our Innovate RAP

This past year we have taken some exciting steps in our Reconciliation journey. In 2021, WNSW PHN launched its Reflect RAP. This is a pledge to continue to build and nurture relationships, show respect for and increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations, and communities.

WNSW PHN is strategically focused on improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living and connected to our region and plays a leadership role in transitioning the primary health care system through the development of culturally safe and aware models of care, ensuring access to quality health care and commissioned services.

Embedding Aboriginal health is a guiding principle for the work we do, and reconciliation is an important part of making meaningful gains in Aboriginal health and wellbeing in our region.

In 2024, WNSW PHN engaged Dixie Crawford, Founder of Nganya, to support the next step in our Reconciliation journey, developing our Innovate RAP. We look forward to sharing this with our stakeholders, and continuing to work with our communities, service providers and partner organisations to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in our region.



## WNSW PHN's "You Can't Ask That"

In the spirit of reconciliation and strengthening our relationship with the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work, WNSW PHN facilitated an open forum between an Aboriginal panel and our staff during our July 2023 All Staff Conference.

Inspired by the Australian TV series created by ABC Television, *You Can't Ask That*, the forum provided a safe and respectful Q&A session where staff could ask the panel questions about Aboriginal culture, language, country, protocols and traditions.



Five Aboriginal people from across our region were on the panel, some living on country, others off country. The diversity in representation from nations across the state provided insight into the rich capacity and diversity of Aboriginal culture.

This cultural learning helped break down stereotypes and knowledge barriers for our staff but also helped staff better understand how to work with and engage First Nations people in our region.



# Our strategic goals

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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.*

### Suicide Prevention Forum

In October 2023, WNSW PHN successfully hosted a Suicide Prevention Forum that brought together healthcare professionals and community members to learn, collaborate, and work towards addressing the critical issues surrounding suicide prevention in our region. The event featured a keynote address by Dr Norman Swan, who discussed the importance of psychological wellbeing as a fundamental component of both personal and community health. Presentations from the Western NSW Local Health District, Orange Aboriginal Medical Service, and Orange Police highlighted the value of lived experience in shaping suicide prevention strategies. Panel discussions focused on where we are now with suicide prevention activities in Western NSW, the challenges we face, and where we need to be. Attendees also explored what it looks like to get suicide prevention right, with valuable insights shared on how the community can work together to reach these goals. This forum was critical to the development of the Joint Regional Mental Health Plan, further strengthening our collective efforts to reducing suicide rates in our region and promoting mental wellbeing.

## Continuing Professional Development

### Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Virtual Education & Networking Series

A collaborative partnership has been developed with the WNSWLHD Public Health Unit to upskill Aboriginal health professionals through yarning and peer to peer connection. This series comprises six public health focused virtual education sessions on key topics such as immunisation, vaping, arboviruses and skin health. Key messages are clearly communicated and summarised on a 'Resource Page' for Aboriginal health professionals to take back and share with their peers and local communities.

Series attendee feedback:

- "Very good information to have to promote and educate our clients and family members on the importance of being vaccinated."
- "Fabulous - very well organised with good presenters from LHD Health Promotion Unit & Quitline."
- "Great job to all involved. This information is relevant and important to continue to advocate and educate our communities."
- "A great session with great information. The yarning was great. I always look forward to these education sessions."

## Black Dog Institute Partnership

Over the last year we were proud to support the following sessions in partnership with the Black Dog Institute, funding a total of 144 participants:

- ABC of CBT Broken Hill
- Perinatal in Practice – Bathurst, Dubbo
- Dealing with Depression – Orange, Cowra
- Navigating Burnout (Online)
- Talking about Suicide in General Practice (Online)
- Integrating Digital Resources into Mental Health Care (Online)

## Immunisation activities

During 2023-24 financial year, WNSW PHN funded the following training initiatives:

**Immunisation Clinical Pathway** – this was designed for clinicians who are required to administer vaccinations under the direct order of a medical officer as part of their scope of practice. Eleven nurses have completed it, with more currently completing their study.

**Immunisation Endorsement Pathway** – this was designed for registered nurses who want the ability to immunise independent of a medical officer. Four nurses have recently completed this training pathway.



**Annual Immunisation Update Conferences** – this year’s conferences in Orange and Dubbo attracted 290 participants. Content presented on a local and global scale kept things interesting and relevant to a range of work contexts. Participants expressed that the conferences are a good way to get immunisation information with a local flavour and to catch-up with colleagues from around the region.

- “Really informative. This conference allowed me to speak with other nurses regarding our different areas of work. Made me feel connected, particularly as I work in a small practice.”
- “This was one of the best Immunisation Conferences that I have attended. Really well organised, all the speakers were knowledgeable and engaging and the content was interesting.”

**Pharmacist Immunisation Course** – WNSW PHN provided funding for eight pharmacists to complete this immunisation course. PSA’s course blends interactive online learning with practical face-to-face workshops.

### Benchmark workshops

The following full day workshops targeted at nurses working in primary care were run in the 2023-24 financial year period:

- Venous Blood Collection, Dubbo
- Chronic Disease Care Planning, Bathurst, Dubbo,
- Chronic Conditions of the Foot, Dubbo

## Digital Health

### Understanding digital health maturity – organisational survey

In 2023 the Digital Health Team invited Residential Aged Care Homes (RACH) to participate in a Digital Health Outlook Survey. 98% of RACHs completed the survey, which provided comprehensive insight into each RACH's relative digital health capabilities, maturity and needs.

The survey uncovered some interesting trends and themes;

- Cost and time are barriers to the adoption of digital technology,
- Insufficient infrastructure to support telehealth (virtual consultations),
- Issues with internet connectivity and equipment experienced by remote RACHs,
- Workforce turnover impacts negatively on digital health adoption,
- Digital health literacy of staff impacts negatively on digital health adoption, and

- Implementation and adoption of new technology requires support with education and training.

With the momentum of advancing digital health tools and evolution of remote monitoring technology, the traditional methods of healthcare delivery are changing. The evolution of telehealth to support delivery of care is advancing technologically and with more emphasis on patient-centric, data-driven and seamless integration of care. Conversely, expectations for rapid adoption and use of advanced digital health technologies across primary care sectors in our region is potentially a destination without a roadmap.

Understanding digital health capabilities of primary care sectors across our region is a foundational component of our WNSW PHN Digital Health Strategy & Roadmap 2022-2027. Our experience and data shows that health services with different digital health maturity levels have different digital health needs. We will continue to work towards providing health services in our region with the right type and right level of support for digital enablement to equitably deliver patient-centred care.

## ***Let's Get Literal About Digital Health:*** **a podcast for primary care providers in rural NSW**

In an era where digital health is revolutionising patient care, healthcare professionals, especially those in rural and remote areas, face significant challenges in adapting to the growing demands of digital and data literacy. To address this gap, we've launched a new podcast: *Let's Get Literal About Digital Health* which aims to improve the digital health literacy and data literacy of frontline healthcare workers.

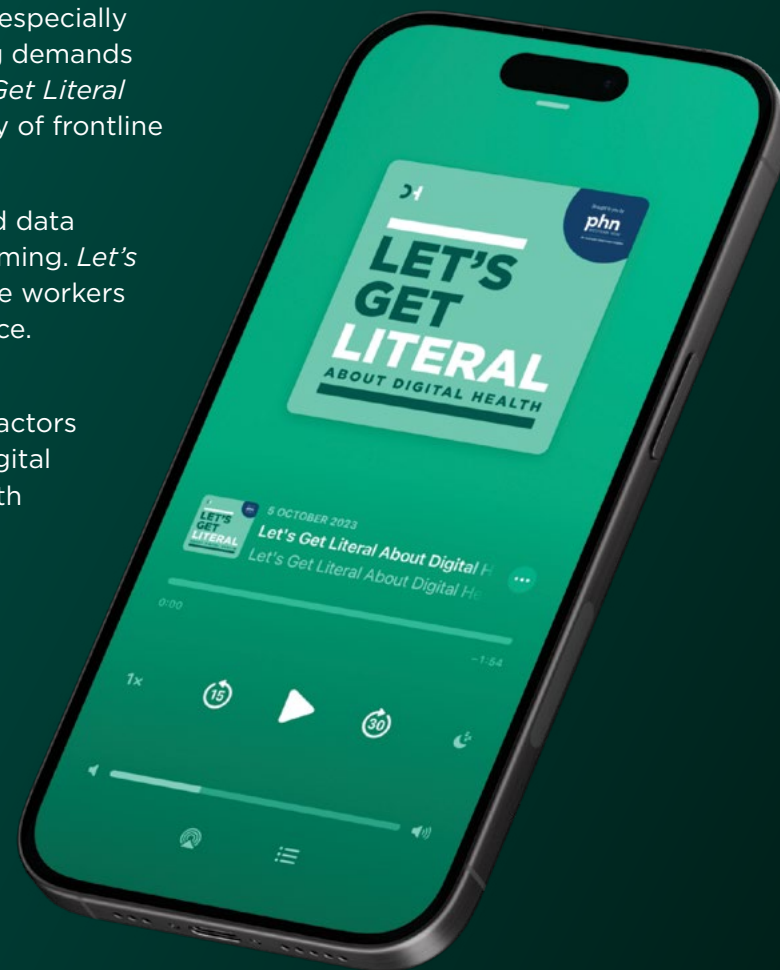
Frontline providers often deal with electronic medical records, telehealth systems, and data reporting tools, but without adequate training, these resources can become overwhelming. *Let's Get Literal About Digital Health* helps to simplify these topics, ensuring that healthcare workers have the knowledge they need to integrate digital solutions into their everyday practice.

The podcast supports healthcare workers in making data-driven decisions, which is increasingly crucial in rural areas where health challenges are often compounded by factors such as geographical isolation and limited access to specialists. By enhancing their digital skills, primary care providers can use data to improve patient outcomes, monitor health trends, and even prevent certain conditions from escalating.

### **About the podcast and presenter**

The *Let's Get Literal About Digital Health* podcast is hosted by Brenton Jones, WNSW PHN Senior Digital Health Officer, who brings both expertise and passion to the series. With over 10 episodes already released in its inaugural season, the podcast covers a range of relevant topics tailored to the unique challenges faced by healthcare workers in rural areas. As the show enters its second season, listeners can expect even more content, including interviews with industry experts and practical advice for integrating digital health solutions into their practices.

This podcast fosters a sense of connection and support among rural healthcare workers. With more episodes and expert insights planned, *Let's Get Literal About Digital Health* stands to be an essential asset for enhancing the capabilities of frontline workers in Western NSW.



## Workforce Engagement

WNSW PHN conducted a range of workforce engagement activities across the region over the year. We engaged multiple general practices, GPs and nurses in Broken Hill to determine the unique training capacity and strengths of each site and shared this information with RACGP. We attended the inaugural RACGP Rural Showcase, highlighting Broken Hill's training opportunities and provided information about training in our region to prospective metro registrars.

We undertook validation consultation with Far West and Western Community and Clinical Councils where priority areas for GP training were discussed and agreement or dissent was noted.

Working with the Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation, we connected a NSW GP registrar with the Murray PHN to mitigate professional isolation regarding education events.

We hosted a successful orientation of Bathurst GP registrars who took the challenge of ticking off the local's list of great things to do. Both registrars stayed for a second term.

We also partnered with the School of Rural Health to support local GP attendance of the Welcome Evening for GP registrars beginning their 2024.2 training term. This included speed networking where registrars, medicine students and interns met and discussed careers with multiple local GPs and active supervisors.



## Cancer Screening Community Education

Throughout the year, WNSW PHN delivered community cancer screening education sessions to local Aboriginal communities in collaboration with stakeholders including Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and Far West NSW LHD.

The sessions focused on bowel cancer screening as Aboriginal people are less likely to participate in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. Sessions were designed to enhance understanding and awareness of bowel cancer and the importance of timely screening to reduce the risk of bowel cancer developing. Sessions were delivered in Broken Hill, Menindee, Dareton, Buronga, Balranald and Broken Hill.

Multicultural community education sessions were delivered in collaboration with Orange City Council, Dubbo Connecting Community Services and Western NSW LHD. The education focused on Healthy Living for Cancer Prevention and included cancer screening information on breast, bowel and cervical cancer and screening eligibility under The National Cancer Screening Program. Sessions were held in Dubbo, Orange, Parkes and Condobolin with a 'pop-up' cervical screening clinic established in Dubbo, provided by a Women's Health Nurse.

## Practice Development

Over the last year, the Practice Development team has supported 113 general practices and other health care providers across the WNSW PHN region. The team works collaboratively internally within the WNSW PHN and with external organisations to improve health systems, efficiency and patient outcomes.

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

Aboriginal Health support is offered to both Aboriginal Medical Services and General Practice to support and improve the health of our region's Aboriginal population. This includes promoting the Integrated Team Care program and providing resources and literature to promote Aboriginal Health.



# 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.*

## Digital Health

### Supporting Digital Health Technology adoption

Insights from a digital health survey informed the delivery of a PHN telehealth training program in July 2024, designed to support telehealth training for residential aged care staff and clinicians.

WNSW PHN joined a consortium of 15 Primary Health Networks (led by Western Victoria Primary Health Network) to commission the development of a residential aged care-focused telehealth training program. The free online training in telehealth is available to anyone working in or with residential aged care homes in Western and Far West NSW.

The Residential Aged Care Telehealth Training Program provides comprehensive and targeted training and comes with resources to help aged care providers and clinicians plan and implement telehealth and manage associated organisational change. The training program has been endorsed for continuing professional development points by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and the Australian College of Nursing.

Increasing digital health awareness and digital health literacy of health care professionals is a continual process of learning and development. We remain committed to supporting the awareness, adoption and use of digital health technologies by aged care workers and health care professionals in line with the national Aged Care Data and Digital Health Strategy.



## Virtual Care Grants enhancing healthcare access and delivery

In 2023, the WNSW PHN received a virtual care grant from the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC). As a change enabler, the virtual grant funding allowed Residential Aged Care Homes (RACHs) to implement fit-for-purpose telehealth solutions that will enhance virtual consultations between residents and their health care teams. Each participating RACH received \$10,000 to implement this technology. Using virtual care to support residents with equitable access to health care professionals and choice is one of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care and Quality.

76% of RACHs in our region applied for and received virtual care grants. Fit-for-purpose solutions ranged from improving infrastructure and Wi-Fi connectivity to enhancing telehealth consultations using Visionflex Telehealth carts +/- remote diagnostic monitoring devices through to mixed reality technology such as the HoloLens 2.0 untethered holographic device. RACH staff feedback was positive:

“Our residents now have access to a wider range of health appointments with specialists and allied health.”

“This technology has streamlined the process of connecting residents with medical experts remotely via telehealth regardless of physical distance. This improvement has revolutionised our approach to healthcare delivery, offering residents prompt access to specialised care, medical advice, and monitoring from the comfort of their own environment.”

RFBI Dubbo Masonic Village was a recipient of WNSW PHN's Telehealth Support Grant, which supported their investment in the Visionflex telehealth cart. Distance from specialists, transportation complications and waiting times are three regional health challenges that will be addressed with the launch of the Visionflex telehealth carts to improve access to high-quality care for residents.

“Connecting a resident with a health professional, GPs and specialists meant staff had to leave their busy practices or on-site staff had to transport residents out of the Village. We can now do a comprehensive consultation virtually, which benefits Village residents, the health professionals who care for them and the wider Dubbo community,” said Delwyn Gates, General Manager of RFBI Dubbo Masonic Village.

## HealthPathways

HealthPathways is an online resource supporting clinicians and their patients through the complex local health system. HealthPathways helps with assessing and managing patients, providing clear referral pathways for ongoing care. There are now 93 pathways live in Western NSW HealthPathways, developed and administered by a team of clinical editors and a HealthPathways coordinator.

### Priority areas progressed:

- 5 Diabetes pathways live
- 9 Aged Care pathways live
- 5 Aged Care pathways ready to go live
- 2 Parkinsons Disease pathways ready to go live
- 5 live Palliative Care pages
- 25 Palliative Care pages in review and approval stage
- 12 Mental Health Support pages
- Mental Health Stepped Care resource page

We have worked with the Local Health Districts on a range of projects:

- Developed a resource page for the Co-located GP clinics project in the Far West LHD
- Supporting the implementation of the referral processes to the Menopause Hubs for Western and Far West LHDs.
- ADHD co-management project
- Statewide Referral Criteria (SRC) implementation into Gastroenterology, Ophthalmology, ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) and Orthopaedics HealthPathways.

### Engagement

Engagement activities are part of our core business, including GP practice visits, newsletter articles, flyers distributed to GPs, and events and presentations by our passionate and dedicated team of clinical editors. We have engaged with GPs to facilitate the early uptake of personalised logins to HealthPathways. This enhances the user experience, while improving access for clinicians travelling across health districts, engages clinicians in continuing professional development, and enhances data security.

## Initial Assessment Referral & Decision Support Tool

The Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST) provides an evidence-supported tool for conducting initial assessment and referral of individuals presenting with mental health conditions in primary health care settings in Australia.

In our region, more than 150 professionals have participated in WNSW PHN IAR training, including 80 GPs and registrars, and over 30 service provider staff.

The IAR-DST training involves a two-hour workshop, including background theory to stepped care and the development and objectives of the decision support tool. This is followed by an interactive activity, working through a case study, using the tool to apply the eight holistic assessment domains to generate 1 of 5 Levels of Care. The training has been approved as an RACGP and ACRRM activity, attracting CPD hours for 'Educational Activity' and 'Reviewing Performance'.

Overall, the tool and the training sessions received positive feedback, with many participants appreciating the practical benefits in their professional roles.

One local GP said, "Since the workshop, I have used the Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool [daily]."

Further work planned for next year on digital integration and service mapping will enhance and support uptake of the tool and embedding it into daily practice for practitioners working across all WNSW PHN mental health services.

## Aged Care

### The Yellow Envelope

The WNSW PHN has launched the second edition of the Yellow Envelope, an initiative designed to ensure seamless and safe transfer for aged care residents moving in and out of hospitals in Orange and Mudgee.

The Yellow Envelope helps facilitate this transfer of care for aged care residents by ensuring the necessary information is included in the clinical handover, providing residents with safe and continuous quality care communicated via the envelope. The tool has proven invaluable in maintaining consistency in the transfer process, particularly given the mix of nurses and agency staff.

Since its initial release in 2021, the Yellow Envelope has been distributed by WNSW PHN and used by Residential Aged Care Homes (RACHs) in Western and Far West NSW. In preparation for the updated envelope, feedback was sought from local RACHs and Local Health Districts to ensure the Yellow Envelope continues to be a useful tool in these facilities. Maree Nott, Health Information Manager from Mudgee Health Service, was among those consulted for feedback and explained how this process was beneficial to ensure communication is clear between services.

Maree said, "The opportunity to have input into projects like the co-design of the Yellow Envelope helps to improve efficiency and efficacy of communication between the health service and aged care facilities, which contributes to building better relationships between health care providers and enhancing the experience and outcomes for patients/residents."



## Practice Development

The Practice Development team supports general practices with quality improvement, accreditation, chronic disease management, appointments, business and digital support. In addition, the team provides a needs-based education and training service supporting reception, administrative staff, GPs, practice nurses and new registrars. Common training topics include medico legal, privacy and confidentiality, triage and care planning, managing difficult patients, business efficiencies and business support.

The team supports practices with workforce management, succession planning, and recruitment which involves working with practices to encourage award compliance, ensure roles and responsibilities match position descriptions and ensure contracts are up to date.

Over the last year, the team worked closely with eHealth NSW to roll out two digital health initiatives to general practices in Far West NSW. The first was eReferrals, where practices refer to the Far West Local Health District Specialist Clinic using Healthlink Smart Forms, improving referral efficiency and communication between the practice, specialists and patients. The second eHealth initiative enabled GPs better access to the electronic medical records (EMRs) of consenting FWLHD patients, through logins via the GP's PRODA account. Both initiatives have been well received by GPs and their practices.



## 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 (LHD), Far West LHD, WNSW PHN and the Rural Doctor's Network (RDN).

Throughout the 2023-24 year, CP-D activity focused on planning and implementation to respond to the region's developing needs and dynamic environment. This resulted in a renewed commitment to collaboration, redesigned and rationalised services, and extended seed-funding.

### CP-D Program Highlights

- Fifty health professionals in the region received 21 scholarships, 35 bursaries and eight study leave grants. This includes support for 18 local health practitioners who are, or have, undertaken a Graduate Certificate in Diabetes

Education. Four are now working as Credentialed Diabetes Educators (CDEs) in their communities and the remainder are on track to increase the region's CDE workforce by 75%.

- A range of events were provided for the region's workforce:
  - » Three face-to-face training sessions were held in Broken Hill, Dubbo and Orange for close to 100 non-clinical health professionals who provide an important care and navigation function for people living with type 2 diabetes.
  - » A diabetes education session for 25 clinicians, including CDEs-in-training and Aboriginal health practitioners, was delivered in Dubbo in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council.
  - » The WNSW PHN Education team lead the delivery of a third series of Project ECHO virtual education sessions, supporting peer-learning through case discussions. This series included 7 sessions and an expert panel consisting of Dr Martin Watson (GP), Dr Manik Mayadunne (Endocrinologist), Dr Alex Hoyle (GP), Alison Amor (Diabetes Educator) and Tim Morris (Podiatrist). Across the 7 sessions, we saw 211 participants and covered topics including the role of diabetes educators in general practice, heart disease and type 2 diabetes, medication rationalisation, diet and glycaemic index principles, and escalation of type 2 diabetes management. 100% of evaluation respondents indicated that they 'highly rated' the overall ECHO experience, and 100% of respondents found the overall relevance of the series to be 'extremely relevant'.



- The Western (LHD) Diabetes Hub was established and provided care by diabetes educators and an Aboriginal wellbeing coordinator for patients with complex type 2 diabetes needs or limited alternative care pathways. Close to 100 clients had received care through the Hub by June 2024 which resulted in significant improvements in their diabetes management and overall wellbeing. The Hub provides diabetes-specific assessments and education to assess clinical needs and provide sub-acute or short-term

clinical care and support the establishment of longer-term community connections. The Hub will expand to provide mentoring and advice for clinicians and carers as part of CPD's workforce development strategy.

- The Far West Diabetes Services commenced by expanding the Far West LHD's Planned Care for Better Health service and now offers diabetes education, Aboriginal health practitioner and multidisciplinary care. A total of 147 patients had enrolled in the service by June 2024 and early patient reported measure (PRM) data indicates patients experienced an 18% increase in physical function and social participation, 8% decrease in anxiety, 7% decrease in pain intensity, and 6% decrease in fatigue amongst other benefits. The service also provides regular community engagement services including early identification, point-of-care testing (close to 400 provided by June) and education in many remote communities across the Far West region.
- Type 2 Diabetes Case Conferencing services commenced in Western NSW with the aim of increasing access to specialist advice by reducing wait times, travel and cost barriers. The service supports telehealth endocrinologist participation in a patient-centred multidisciplinary case conference that is organised by a local GP and involves other members of the care team.
- The Western NSW HealthPathways portal was launched including type 2 diabetes pages that have been edited by local GPs to provide the region's health practitioners with clinical guidelines, resources, and referral information for local services and specialists.



# 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.*

### headspace Outreach Program

#### Local trainee provides mental health support to Warren's youth on Country

Proud Wiradjuri woman and Warren local, Shaana Daley, is providing much-needed culturally safe and informed mental health support to her community's youth thanks to a trainee program aimed at improving access to Aboriginal mental health support in Western NSW.

In early 2024, Ms Daley graduated with a Certificate IV Mental Health, supported by funding from WNSW PHN's headspace Outreach Program and the NSW Government's Regional Aboriginal Partnerships Program, Marathon Health's Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative. The Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative removes barriers to education and employment and assists students with accommodation, travel costs, meal allowances and support during their studies.

Ms Daley is now providing culturally safe outreach support to Warren's youth through the Warren Youth Centre and Community Hub. She is one of 13 students from Nyngan, Warren, Condobolin, Coonamble, Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge to graduate with this qualification under the program.

Alongside their studies, the trainees have been helping young people aged 12-25 years in their communities improve their mental

health literacy, increase help-seeking behaviours, and receive basic health assessments and referrals to appropriate services.

Ms Daley says that they provide support to the youth at the “drop-in centre every day for after school, and we run lots of programs.”

She added, “In the middle of last year, we ran a mental health sports program where we played different sports with the kids every week. And at the end, we had a yarn about different mental health issues and how to get help and who to talk to.”

Ms Daley says she can already see the benefits of the support being available through the Centre.

Grateful for the trainee program, Ms Daley says services like this will help break down barriers and provide Aboriginal communities greater access to mental health support on Country.

“We are now qualified with a Certificate IV Mental Health and it’s only going to benefit the youth and all our little towns in the long run,” she says. “If I can help one kid, that’s enough for me.”

As part of the Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative, a further seven students graduated in mid-2024 with a Certificate III in Primary Health and nine students are currently undertaking their Certificate III Community Services.





## Aboriginal Health & Wellbeing

### **Show Me The Way: Orange students showcasing local heroes through film**

Show Me The Way is a First Nations organisation supporting high school students to reach their potential, develop their skills and celebrate culture. The program uses film to inspire and engage young Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, and those from refugee backgrounds. Students attend custom designed film workshops and create short documentary films uncovering the stories of local heroes.

On 18 March 2024, Show Me The Way hit Orange, NSW to kick off a series of programs for local youth. Under the expert guidance of Show Me The Way film workshop facilitators, students from Canobolas Rural Technology High School embarked on making films of local First Nations heroes from Orange.

Participating students are equipped with the skills they need to shoot, direct and produce a film. This approach allows practical experience in how to operate the cameras, formulate questions and conduct interviews. Students are mentored throughout the process and empowered in the development of new skills, building self-esteem and confidence.

The participating Canobolas Rural Technology High School students will showcase their films during NAIDOC Week for the Orange community. This program stands as a testament to the transformative power of education, culture, and collaborative storytelling. The students leave an enduring legacy with each film, a moment in time that will never be again.

This program was made possible by funding from WNSW PHN, which is committed to improving the health outcomes of communities, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



### NSW Koori Knockout Health Challenge

In 2023, five teams across Western NSW were recipients of the WNSW PHN's Community Wellbeing Aboriginal Grants Knockout Challenge totaling an investment of \$50,000 in community health. Participating teams were from Dubbo, Narromine, Condobolin and Orange.

The NSW Koori Knockout Health Challenge is a free program for mob to come together and encourage healthy eating and active living. Dubbo's Knockout Health Challenge team came together on Monday afternoons for yarning sessions, Wednesday afternoons for group fitness classes, and Sunday mornings for a river walk and nutritious breakfast together.

One participant of the team said, "I'm loving it. Coming to this class every week, going to back to Zumba, just having a laugh with everyone ... in the first class, I felt like I couldn't keep up, but now I can."

The yarning sessions were a perfect opportunity for participants to check in with each other, yarn about how they were feeling and learn about *Marang Dhali* (eating well). Kris Stevens, Aboriginal Development Officer at the NSW Office of Sport (Western Region), provided education to the group about general health, wellbeing and nutrition. Participants learned about the importance of a yearly 715 check, and what foods keep mob healthy.

## Allira Aged Care 2024 Elders Olympics Team

The Elders Olympic is an annual sporting event for older Aboriginal people across our land. These Olympics allow our Elders to participate in a three-day cultural, stress-free event where old and new connections are formed.

This event is organised each year by the previous winners and brings together our most frail and vulnerable Aboriginal people in the most appropriate cultural setting, engaging them in sporting activities that makes them feel young at heart.

This event caters to Aboriginal people over the age of 55 years and empowers them to think of healthy choices, by getting them moving and playing fun games. Games are tailored and inclusive so all participants can participate no matter what health conditions or disabilities they may have. There are many different organisations on hand to assist and support participants with any information they may be interested in gathering regarding their general health, social support or disability. This event overall promotes fun, relaxation, connections and engagement.

In 2024, the Allira Elders group received a WNSW PHN grant that allowed the group to form a team and participate in these events. The grant provided assistance with accommodation, transport, team uniforms and meals costs for the team participants.

This is the second year Allira Aged Care Elders received funding from WNSW PHN to participate in the Elders Olympics. A spokesperson from the team said, “We are truly grateful for the support given to us by WNSW PHN and Indigenous Health Project Officer, Trixie Watts.”

## Integrated Team Care

The Integrated Team Care (ITC) program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic health conditions. Priority is given to those who have complicated care needs and require support to manage their health conditions.

Eligible Aboriginal residents in Western and Far West NSW can attend their local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service to access care for chronic health conditions, with care coordination provided through the ITC Program for patients of the service. For eligible Aboriginal residents attending their local GP to access care for their chronic health condition they are referred to their regional ITC Program provider.

One local client provided the following testimonial about the ITC program:

“As a person living with diabetes, the ITC program supported me to access more informed care and appropriate referral pathways for foot care, eye care and other specialist services. As well as helping me to understand the benefits of a coordinated care approach, the education has supported my personal health journey. I am now empowered with the knowledge to better manage my own health and access to care, which also benefits my family and community.”

The ITC program supports patients with travel so they can access essential medical services. The following patient journey relates to a female patient who had a recurrence of cancer. The patient was considering refusing treatment as the local cancer accommodation had no availability. Travel and accommodation costs for alternative options would have required the patient to

travel three hours return to the hospital to receive her radiation treatment over a two-week period. The local ITC Care Coordinator made arrangements to cover her fuel and accommodation expenses. In addition, the ITC Care Coordinate visited the patient multiple times during her treatment, as she was often without family due to their work and family commitments. The patient's daughter has contacted the ITC program twice acknowledging that without the program funding and support, her mother would have refused treatment from the beginning or given up during treatment.

The ITC program regularly participates in promotion and service engagement activities. Visits to general practices, the Local Health Districts and ACCHSs have been undertaken across the region. Additional involvement has been undertaken for the following activities:

- Developing and distributing ITC Guidelines and Step-by-step Guide for GPs
- Community Interagency meetings
- Baaka event in Wentworth
- Koori Wellbeing Support Group
- Annual NAIDOC events
- Regional Aboriginal Women's Gathering
- NAIDOC Week Events



## Aged Care Needs Assessment

In 2023-24, the WNSW PHN Aged Care team completed dementia and palliative care service mapping to identify the needs of people facing life-limiting illnesses in the region. The exercise identified support services, resources and healthcare facilities in the region and helped to form the dementia and palliative care HealthPathways. The team is now mapping the palliative care education services at the local, state and national level. Having these resources mapped will assist healthcare providers, carers, and patients to locate and access palliative care educational resources. This will help build the capacity of the palliative care workforce to manage symptoms, make informed decisions, enhance skills, and improve the quality of care for patients and their families.

## Care finder program

The care finder program locates and supports older people that are unable to connect to aged care services or the community, providing support for a two-year period. WNSW PHN currently supports three care finder organisations: Kirinari Community Services, Social Futures and The Benevolent Society. Over the last year, an average of 35 eligible people have been located each month who want to receive support.

282 clients were accessing services during the year, with 822 client referrals made into a variety of services such as aged care, health, social or community services, mental health, housing and homelessness, and alcohol and other drugs.

## My Care Coordinator project

An in depth needs assessment was conducted in January 2024 by WNSW PHN which prioritised the need for improved uptake and support for advance care planning, in particular Advance Care Directives (ACD) and access to palliative care education.

Investigation of the health and aged care environment locally and from within the literature indicated that there are multiple barriers in the successful completion of ACDs. During the discovery phase of the project, it was identified that a project fuelled by volunteers was operating in South Australia. Co-design of the proposal was conducted with community aged care providers and the Local Health District.

A decision was made to duplicate this model of care and run a 12 month pilot program in the WNSW PHN region to collect data on the project's viability. Concurrently a project testing the feasibility of the model with Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander communities is planned. The project would also source and host education sessions for the community in palliative care, meeting the two key needs of the local community. The project will be tendered in 2025.



## Lifelong Strength & Wellness Program

The Lifelong Strength and Wellness Program, supported by WNSW PHN, was launched at the Walu-win Centre in April 2024 at the Orange Aboriginal Medical Service (OAMS) to promote healthy aging in the community. Walu-win means 'healthy' in Wiradjuri language.

The program uses evidence-based, progressive strength training and exercise research. It has been specifically tailored to enhance overall wellbeing and quality of life among its participants. Progressive strength training has been shown to have huge positive impacts for individuals as they age, which makes strength a cornerstone of the program.

Designed to be safe, accessible, enjoyable, and personalised, the Lifelong Strength and Wellness Program caters to individuals aged 65 and above, or 45 and above for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Beyond strength training, the program offers a holistic approach to health, including nutritional guidance from a dietitian and exercise components aimed at enhancing muscle strength and overall health.

## Covid-19 and the Flying Pharmacist

The 2023-24 period presented challenges administering Covid-19 vaccinations in some Residential Aged Care Home (RACH) locations. WNSW PHN contracted Life Pharmacy Group, who arranged a unique solution to get vaccinations administered in hard-to-reach locations.

Jack Buckle, a pharmacist and part owner of Life Pharmacy Forbes and Flannery's Pharmacy (Forbes), has been a pilot for 15 years and owns an aircraft. Buckle's passion for flying and creating a difference in regional health outcomes were put to good use when he and his team travelled by road and air to administer hundreds of Covid-19 vaccinations. RACHs in Cobar, Gulgong, Mudgee, Rylstone, and Yeoval were all on the Life Pharmacy team's list.

"I always had a dream that I'd be flying and creating a point of difference in people's lives from the air, and delivering services, I just didn't know what that looked like ... but I'm glad we could make it happen," Jack said when interviewed on Sunrise.

"There's definitely access issues to primary health in regional Australia and it's not hard to make it work with an aeroplane."

"I do consider myself quite lucky to be putting my passion for primary and preventative health care to use and getting out there and seeing the world from a couple of thousand feet, it's pretty special."



An illustration of a building facade. At the top, there are two horizontal teal bars. Below them is a dark blue rectangular sign with the text 'Urgent Care Services' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The building itself is light orange. On the left, there is a red double door with a white handle. To the left of the door is a green bush in a brown pot. To the right of the door is a large window with a grey frame and a white diagonal line across it. The bottom of the building is a dark red base.

# Urgent Care Services

## Orange Urgent Care Service

NSW Health has partnered with primary health networks to deliver Urgent Care Services right across the state, in an effort to ease pressure on busy hospital Emergency Departments (EDs) and ensure the people of NSW continue to receive care at the right time and place.

The Orange community have been able to access non-emergency healthcare in a more timely way, and avoid unnecessary trips to the emergency department thanks to the new Urgent Care Service which opened in March 2024. The Orange Urgent Care Service is being delivered in partnership with the Western NSW Primary Health Network.

Regional Health Minister Ryan Park said the Orange Urgent Care Service will mean the local community can receive care quickly for conditions which can be safely and appropriately treated outside the region's busy EDs.

"The Orange Urgent Care Service will be open 365 days a year, from 8am to 8pm, and will be staffed by general practitioners and nurses with important diagnostic services on-site including radiology and pathology," Mr Park said.

“The service is well-supported to treat a range of illnesses and injuries that are deemed urgent, but not life-threatening, such as minor wounds that need stitches, suspected broken bones and skin infections that need antibiotics.

Member for Orange Phil Donato welcomed the urgent care service which gives the Orange community a genuine alternative outside of a busy ED for urgent – but not life-threatening – illnesses and injuries.

“This is an incredibly important service for people living in Orange and the surrounding towns, which will improve access to care, whilst also easing pressure on the region’s busy emergency departments,” Mr Donato said.

To access the service, patients should call healthdirect on 1800 022 222.





## Support for Central West communities following the 2022 flooding

In the Spring of 2022, communities in central western NSW were devastated with record breaking floods which resulted in destructive and damaging ongoing impacts to people, property, harvests, and the general mental health and wellbeing of communities. Sudden and intense surges of water flowed through central west towns, causing destruction in its path.

Residents of these communities have shown incredible and inspiring resilience as they continuously work to rebuild and manage the lasting effects of such an event. WNSW PHN worked with these communities in 2023 to undertake a needs assessment post the flooding event and determine the greatest areas of need.

In response to the needs assessment, WNSW PHN executed three psychology services; two face-to-face and one virtual service.

- Virtual Psychology were commissioned with a ground-breaking move towards accessible and effective mental health care. Virtual Psychologist is a pioneering platform that offers text, video and audio based mental health services, connecting individuals with qualified mental health

practitioners through a discreet and convenient medium.

- Forbes Medicine and Mind were commissioned to deliver three days a week of face-to-face psychology services in a multidisciplinary team approach with a general practitioner.
- Veritas House were commissioned to deliver face-to-face psychology services two days a week with two qualified psychologists. These services also facilitated coverage of group sessions such as mother groups in impacted communities.

In addition to the three psychology services commissioned, WNSW PHN delivered a total of \$560,000 in grant funding (from Ministry of Health and the Department of Health and Aged Care) for community wellbeing initiatives to address the immediate needs of affected communities and contribute to building long-term capacity and resilience.

- Parkes Pharmacy were just one of the successful grant recipients of the Community Wellbeing Grant - Western NSW Flood Response funded by Ministry of Health, and were able to host a LIVIN WELL community event thanks to this grant. Fewer than 22% of regional residents believe



they have good access to mental health services, in comparison to their city counterparts. This inaugural program exposed Parkes teenagers, and members of the broader community, to conversations around breaking the mental health stigma, knowing how to identify when someone might need mental health support and education on available mental health services.

- Sunburnt Treasures were one of the successful recipients of the Community Wellbeing Grant - Community Recovering from Western NSW 2022 Flood Disaster funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care, who were able to bring mindful creative workshops to the community. One event attendee said that they were “not expecting to talk and share stories of my own personal journey with mental health [during the workshop]. Coming together in this group with Polly has been a very heartfelt day ... I felt totally comfortable to share with you and this has been very helpful for me to know that I am really not alone. I didn't know that today would give me so much more hope for my life moving forward.”

## Vaccination for Vulnerable Persons Grants

During the 2023-24 financial year period, WNSW PHN re-established a grants program that aimed to not only address immediate support needs for providers such as GPs, allied health and pharmacies, but also increase the vaccination rates for vulnerable populations.

The grants supported general practices and pharmacies to ensure continuity of COVID-19 and flu vaccinations for vulnerable groups and aimed to increase health literacy among vaccine hesitant patients.

A total of \$90,000 in funds was invested in our local practices to assist GPs in increasing the conversations around COVID-19 vaccinations with patients.

A 54-year-old patient with Crohns disease, renal failure and Alzheimer's attended their GP clinic, and following a conversation around vaccination with their trusted GP, agreed to have an influenza vaccination. A few weeks later, Influenza A & B went through the local community, and particularly hit the local school where the patient volunteered. This patient was able to avoid a severe episode of upper respiratory viral illness and avoid exacerbation of her chronic disease and possible hospitalisation.



## Goal 4

### Support high-quality sustainable primary health care

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

#### Keeping the doors open at Nachiappans Medical Practice, Broken Hill

The Nachiappans Medical Practice, a cornerstone of general practice care in Broken Hill for 32 years, was on the verge of closure in 2023. Thanks to the timely intervention and steadfast support of WNSW PHN, the practice has not only survived but continues to provide high-quality healthcare to the Far West community.

At the heart of this success is Natalie Camilleri, a dedicated member of the WNSW PHN Practice Development team, whose exceptional commitment and perseverance played a pivotal role in preventing the closure of the practice.

“Natalie has been a key figure in ensuring we kept our doors open,” said Mrs Sorna Nachiappan, Business Manager of the practice.

“She encouraged and motivated our team to continue operations and take part in our seventh accreditation cycle. Without her efforts, we were very close to closing in 2023. She gave us hope and the willpower to continue.”

The Nachiappans Medical Practice faced a series of significant challenges, including the financial strain of being a self-funded private entity and the operational difficulties exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite setting up a privately funded



vaccination hub during the pandemic and maintaining continuous accreditation, the pressures of running costs, staffing, and the lack of external financial support nearly forced the practice to close.

In an appreciation letter to WNSW PHN, Mrs Nachiappan highlighted the unique value of their independent, family-focused model of care. “We pride ourselves on offering continuity of care, treating patients from cradle to grave, and fostering strong clinician-patient relationships that ensure better health outcomes. Once independent practices like ours cease operations, the loss is deeply felt by the community. It translates to higher costs and poorer health outcomes.”

When the WNSW PHN Practice Development team stepped in, it provided vital support in GP recruitment, AGPAL accreditation, and staff management.

“Natalie’s dedication, humour, and passion has saved our independent general practice from closing so we can continue to serve our community,” Mrs Nachiappan added.

WNSW PHN CEO Brad Porter acknowledges the challenges faced

by private general practices in remote areas and reaffirmed the organisation’s commitment to supporting primary healthcare providers.

“Ensuring the continuity of services in rural and remote areas like Broken Hill is central to our mission.

“The Nachiappans Medical Practice has been an integral part of the community for over three decades, and we are proud to have supported their ongoing contribution to healthcare in the Far West,” Brad said.

This collaboration underscores the importance of strong partnerships in addressing the unique challenges of rural healthcare. WNSW PHN’s intervention has not only preserved access to general practice care for Broken Hill residents but also safeguarded the long-term health outcomes of the community.

As the Nachiappans Medical Practice continues its legacy of cradle-to-grave care, the community remains grateful for the support that made it possible for their trusted GP services to remain accessible.

## Workforce Planning and Prioritisation Program

The GP Workforce Planning and Prioritisation (WPP) activity is supporting college-led general practice training by providing independent, regionally based data and analysis to inform the distribution and placement of registrars training on the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program.

The WPP program team provides analysis on current and future community needs for general practice services, which will inform the AGPT distribution targets to be met by the training colleges.

### Consultation informs our approach

Prioritised Catchment Reports 2 and 3 were submitted in the 2023-24 financial year, with a training pathways report to be developed in the next year. Extensive consultation with GP registrars, GP supervisors, practice managers, community and clinical councils across the region provided local insights. Catchment reports provide rich information on communities and workforce needs, and general practice feedback are a key tool for the GP training colleges to inform future programs.

Evidence suggests that GP registrars that have a positive training experience tend to stay in that community, build impactful relationships, and influences the health outcomes in that region. The WPP Program will provide robust and non-bias advice focused on identifying the community health needs across the NSW/ACT region where GP registrars can help to address service gaps and hopefully establish a long-term career.

## Continuing Professional Development

The WNSW PHN Education Team deliver quality continuing professional development opportunities that are accredited with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

WNSW PHN planned a needs-driven program that reflects the learning needs identified in the annual Education Survey and feedback from education event evaluations, along with regional health needs and local issues.

We provide local education opportunities that are not already accessible and engage local expert presenters and/or panel members who understand the challenges faced by primary care clinicians in our footprint.

In the 2023-24 financial year period, our team facilitated a total of 95 events, providing continuing professional development opportunities to 1,414 participants.

The key topics covered over the past year included: Gender Affirming Health Care, Virtual Respiratory GP Forum, Voluntary Assisted Dying, Breast Cancer, Skin Cancer and Melanoma, Colorectal Cancer, Hyperemesis, Peripheral Artery Disease, Clinical Cases in Cardiology, Urology Updates, Osteoporosis Updates, Common eye conditions, Basics of skin surgery, Aged Care Workshops, and CPR.

## Annual Learning Needs Survey 2024

We received 424 responses for our Annual Learning Needs Survey, with responses from the following professions:

- Nurses working outside general practice/AMS/ACCHO
- Allied health professionals
- Aboriginal health professionals
- Nurses working in general practice/AMS/ACCHO
- GPs/GP registrars
- Admin/exec/non-clinical roles
- Pharmacists
- Nurses working in aged care
- Hospital RMO/VMOs
- Specialists

The overall rating of engagement experience in the WNSW PHN education program was 4.14 out of 5, up from 4.04 the previous year.



## Aged Care

### After Hours Plans for Residential Aged Care Homes

Residential Aged Care Home (RACH) after hours plans are vital to ensure that appropriate care and support for residents and staff is available outside of regular business hours. In 2024, WNSW PHN partnered with MediCoach to offer support in developing an after hours plan for RACHs in the region.

WNSW PHN engaged MediCoach to work with the RACH staff and support them to document and implement their local after hours options and plans. MediCoach provides training solutions tailored to enhance the performance of healthcare teams, enabling them to broaden their expertise and capabilities.

### Managing Dementia and Teamwork in RACH Training

In February 2024, face-to-face aged care education for general practice and RACHs was rolled out across the region. All 27 GPs and 93 clinicians including practice nurses, registered nurses and enrolled nurses in participating RACHs joined sessions in Broken Hill, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Forbes, Mudgee and Orange.

Facilitated by Kim Poyner, Registered Nurse and Executive Health Coach from Medicoach, the sessions were supported by a Geriatrician from Geriatric Care Australia, Aria Health and Medicoach. The training provided a dementia education component and a facilitated discussion around the challenges of teamwork in residential aged care. Training resources were provided by Dementia Australia and links to helpful resources including HealthPathways were provided.





# Financial Reports

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

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Notes	Consolidated 2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue	2	48,584,884	41,927,360
Service supplier expenses		[37,689,939]	[30,662,204]
Employee expenses		[7,352,462]	[7,090,716]
Interest expense	3	[25,606]	[35,729]
Information technology and communication		[1,007,678]	[571,307]
Travel expenses		[339,432]	[303,352]
Property expenses		[83,644]	[142,856]
Council payments		[53,434]	[39,408]
Program delivery expenses		[618,947]	[1,666,434]
Motor vehicle expenses		[183,983]	[166,647]
Depreciation expense	3	[378,224]	[348,171]
Other expenses	3	[296,484]	[457,112]
Loss in subsidiary entity	15	[2,152,403]	-
<b>(Loss) / surplus for the year</b>		<b>\$(1,597,352)</b>	<b>\$443,424</b>

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

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

	Notes	Consolidated 2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	38,873,909	39,887,001
Trade and other receivables	5	4,261,580	2,595,166
Other assets	6	199,195	201,343
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>43,334,684</b>	<b>42,683,510</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Investment in subsidiaries	15	-	-
Property, plant and equipment	7	-	-
Right of use assets	8	501,565	491,188
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>501,565</b>	<b>491,188</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>43,836,249</b>	<b>43,174,698</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	9	8,380,170	10,890,977
Lease liabilities	10	306,943	338,137
Provisions	11	752,383	718,329
Contract liabilities	12	33,048,343	28,274,483
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>42,487,839</b>	<b>40,221,926</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Lease liabilities	10	213,485	181,471
Provisions	11	113,304	152,328
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>326,789</b>	<b>333,799</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>42,814,628</b>	<b>40,555,725</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>\$1,021,621</b>	<b>\$2,618,973</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained earnings		1,021,621	2,618,973
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>\$1,021,621</b>	<b>\$2,618,973</b>

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

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Consolidated Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2022	2,175,549	2,175,549
Surplus for the year	443,424	443,424
Balance at 30 June 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

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

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Consolidated 2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Grant moneys received	55,052,134	57,722,046
Receipts from customers	46,498	57,709
Interest received	1,849,588	722,841
Payments to suppliers and employees	(57,547,782)	(46,280,513)
<b>Net cash flows provided by operating activities (Note 14.2)</b>	(599,562)	12,222,083
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>	-	-
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Repayment of right of use asset leases	(413,530)	(371,742)
<b>Net cash flows used in investing activities</b>	(413,530)	(371,742)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(1,013,092)	11,850,341
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	39,887,001	28,036,660
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR (Note 14.1)</b>	\$38,873,909	\$39,887,001



**WESTERN NSW PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK**

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