

Western NSW Foundational Mental Health Regional Plan

2019-2024

The Western New South Wales (WNSW) Joint Regional Plan expired in 2022, but due to a number of State and National changes that are in play, WNSW PHN is extending our plan to March 2024. Our current mental health, drug and alcohol, and suicide prevention activity will continue in line with state and federal policy directives.

This is our 'foundational plan' with the requirement to jointly develop a Service Plan in the next phase of regional planning (2024-28). National Cabinet has provided endorsement of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (the National Agreement), which is expected to strengthen collaborative planning and commissioning at the regional level.

Indicative timeline of our approach to the development of the regional mental health, drug and alcohol and suicide prevention plan 2024-2028:

<u>Jun 2023</u>	Working Party Established across WNSW PHN, LHDs & community members
<u>Jun 2023 - Jan 2024</u>	Research and Development of Plan
<u>Feb 2024</u>	First release of paper for consultation and review
<u>Late Feb - Apr 2024</u>	Amendments and changes to the plan as required
<u>Apr 2024</u>	Publication of the WNSW Regional Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol and Suicide prevention plan

In 2021, the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare, 2022 (AIHW) published the suicide rate of people in Western NSW which was 18.5 per 100,000 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2022). This statistic is more than double the rate of suicide for people in Central and Eastern Sydney which is 8.4 per 100,000 people (AIHW, 2022). Aboriginal men are more than twice as likely to take their own life as non-Aboriginal men. Nationally, one third of deaths in Australia of people aged 15-24 were due to suicide in 2021 (AIHW, 2022), illustrating the need for services which are accessible, collaborative, inclusive and trauma informed.

The WNSW PHN will work towards a roll out of performance and outcome measures across the region for all service providers to ensure transparency, and illustrate the effectiveness of services within the Western NSW region. There will also be a strong focus on placed based, sustainable primary care so our community can access the right care, at the right time.

The implementation of the new plan will also include the following initiatives across 2024-2028:

- Adult Mental Health Centre and Satellite Network (Head to Health)
- Investing in Child Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- Enhancement and Integration of Youth Mental Health Services
- Perinatal mental health screening
- Universal Aftercare Services
- Aftercare services - expanded referral pathways trial
- Distress Intervention Trial Program
- Postvention Support
- National Phone/Digital Intake Service
- Initial Assessment and Referral
- Regional Planning and Commissioning
- Sustaining the Mental Health Workforce.

Services provided by the WNSWLHD and FWLHD across the region

While the Western NSW Local Health District occupies half of NSW geographically (which is more populated than the geographical spread covered by Far West Local Health District), they have similar service models and supports. These include:

- Emergency and crisis care services (Triage and Emergency Care, including telehealth capacity via Mental Health Emergency Care (MHEC) which provides 24/7 telephone support, psychiatric assessment service and provides clinics as needed).
- Specialised mental health, drug and alcohol services, in acute and sub-acute settings.
- Community mental health, drug and alcohol services delivered via a hub-and-spoke model, with hubs (and smaller centres) in Bathurst (Mudgee, Cowra), Orange (Parkes, Forbes, Condoblin), Dubbo (Wellington, Bourke, Lightning Ridge) and Broken Hill (Wilcannia, Menindee) outreaches to Dareton/Euston/Balralnald/Wentworth. The RFDS provide drug and alcohol services in Tibooburra, White Cliffs, Ivanhoe and Menindee. This includes services for adults, older persons, children and adolescents, acute and continuing care, flexible and assertive community treatment, drug and alcohol and crisis/emergency services.
- Residential rehabilitation services.
- The Rural Adversity Mental Health Program and drought-support counsellors – supporting the mental health and wellbeing of farmers, their families and drought-affected communities.
- Programs to support specialised needs such as perinatal depression, eating disorders, school-based support, and specialty drug and alcohol programs.
- The LHDs also commission NGOs to provide services to support the accommodation and psychosocial needs of those who live with severe mental illness (e.g. via the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) Program).
- Safehaven and Suicide Prevention Outreach programmes available through the Towards Zero Suicides state-wide program.
- Drought peer workers and Aboriginal Navigators/Aboriginal Wellbeing Peer Workers.
- Head to Health phone line established in our region to talk to Mental Health professionals and be connected with the supports that best meet your needs: 1800 595 212
- Clean Slate Clinic established to improve the health and wellness of individuals struggling with alcohol and other drug dependence offering home withdrawal and detox.



What we have achieved over the past 12 months:

Youth-focused services for mental health, drug and alcohol, grief and trauma (headspace, the mobile community outreach program Rural Youth Mental Health Service and Youth Trauma, Loss and Grief Initiative).

Psychological goal-focused coaching for people with mild conditions (**NewAccess**).

Community Grants for wellness & resilience to help those impacted by flooding & other adverse events that may have effected our community's mental health & wellbeing.

Supporting GPs in mental health care, through specialist psychiatric advice via the GP psychiatry support line and the introduction of the Initial assessment and referral tool.

The National Primary Health Network (PHN) Mental Health Lived Experience Engagement Network (MHLEEN).

Psychological services for people with mild to moderate mental illness, particularly underserved and hard to reach groups (Strong Minds).

Suicide prevention planning and delivery of local support services, workforce training and community awareness raising.

Partnering with **Roses in the Ocean** - this volunteer-based service will strengthen the existing network of suicide prevention services including aftercare and postvention, while addressing service and support gaps in community by providing 'light touch' peer support and connection in community.

What we plan to achieve over the next 18 months:

- **Head to Health**

As part of the Australian Government's National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, we are driving the establishment of a network of Head to Health services for Western NSW. The network will improve access to, and coordination of, mental health services delivered digitally, via telephone and face-to-face in the following locations:

- » Head to Health Center - Dubbo
 - » Head to Health Satellite - Bathurst
- Early Intervention across Primary Schools and High Schools within Flood effected areas within Western NSW, collaborating with the **Resilience Project** to roll out resilience training and support to schools.
 - Securing innovative services which will reduce the stigma related to mental illness within schools and workplaces.
 - Service re-design of the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program to ensure clinical support of those who suffer from severe and enduring mental illness.
 - Reaching vulnerable populations and groups such as LGBTQIA+, postnatal women, men at risk of suicide, children and Aboriginal communities.
 - Emergency Management and Disaster strategy will be embedded in WNSW PHN - this will include flood affected regions.
 - Child Psychology Services for 0-5, families and careers will be delivered to flood affected regions.
 - AOD Workforce support capacity building for training scholarships Cert IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs for 25 graduates with 70% of the scholarships being made available to people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
 - Complete roll out and education of the Initial Assessment and Referral tool (IAR) which aims to assist general practitioners and clinicians to recommend the most appropriate level of care for a person seeking mental health support in a universal way.
 - Collaborating with aboriginal mental health services to ensure we work towards the "Closing the gap" targets.
 - Placed based, **sustainable primary healthcare** across our district.



Continued ...

- Headspace Youth Outreach Project (HYOP) commenced 2022

Marathon Health are partnering with WNSW PHN and headspace National to codesign a culturally safe, mental health service which will provide access to much needed mental health support services for young people and their families.

The service will bring together community, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and other service providers with a focus on improving the health outcomes for young people living in Western NSW. The design and establishment of the Aboriginal Workforce Pipeline project is underway and a robust clinical governance is in place to ensure that the workforce development program and ongoing hYOP services are both safe and of a high standard. A dedicated project team will oversee the design and establishment of the hYOP service, before transitioning the service to headspace Dubbo for implementation and ongoing management in April 2023.



**Mental Health
support is
available 24/7**

- ☎ **Lifeline** 13 11 14
- ☎ **Suicide Callback Service** 1300 659 467
- ☎ **Mental Health Line** 1800 011 511
- ☎ **Roses in the Ocean** 1800 777 337
- ☎ **Head to Health Phonenumber** 1800 595 212