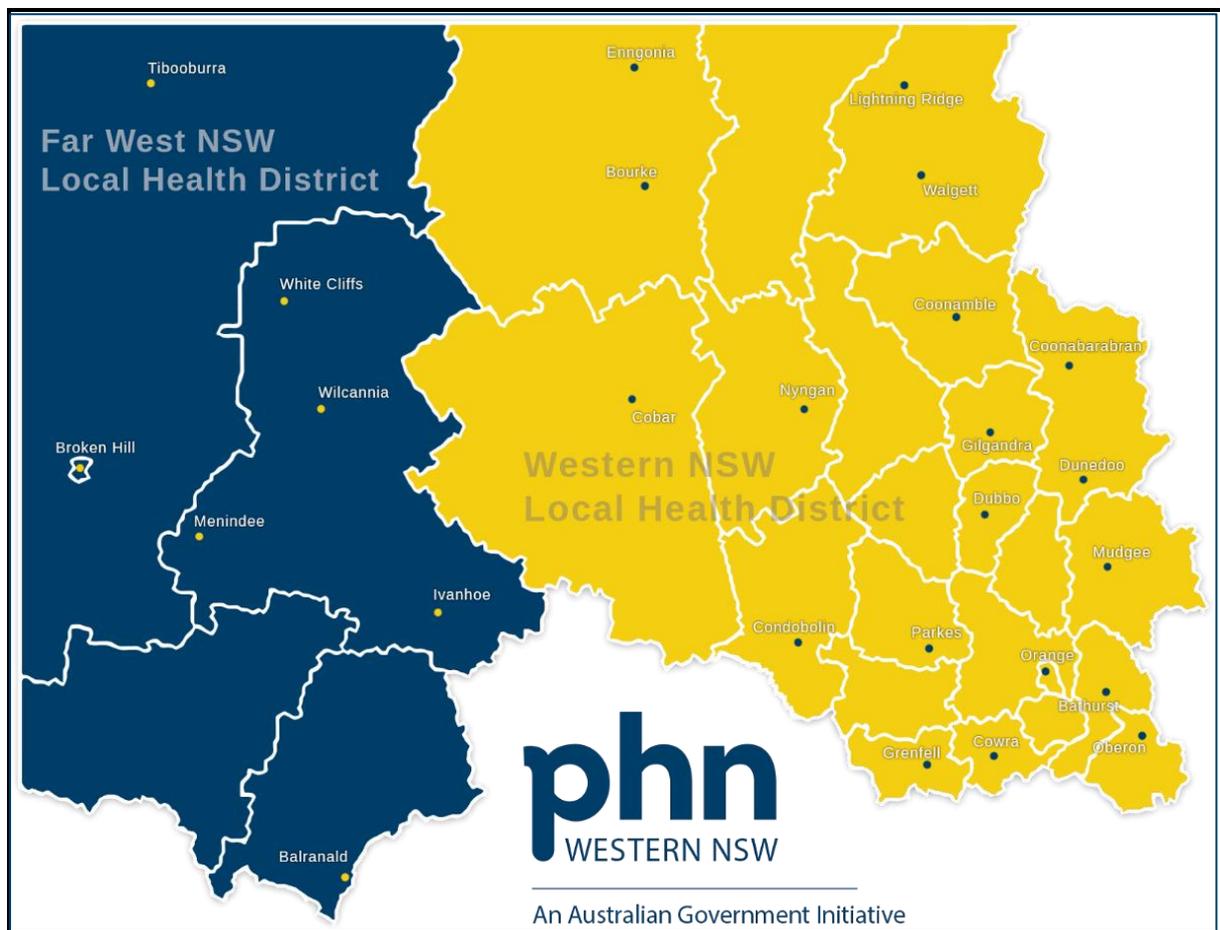


# Request for Proposal

## COVID-19 In Reach Services for Older Australians



Date of Issue: Wednesday, 17 March 2021

# 1. Background

## Primary Health Networks

On 1 July 2015, the Australian Government established 31 PHNs as part of its commitment to delivering an efficient and effective primary health care system. Evidence indicates that health systems with strong integrated primary health care at their core are both effective in improving people's outcomes and experiences and efficient at delivering appropriate services where they are needed most. As such, the key objectives of the PHNs are to:

- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of health services, particularly for those at risk of poor health outcomes; and
- Improve the coordination of services to ensure people receive the right care in the right place and at the right time.

PHNs achieve these objectives by researching local mental and physical health needs and risk factors, consulting with community members and stakeholders, working with general practitioners, local health districts and other primary health care providers. They also utilise this knowledge and partnerships to ensure the best possible translation of national policies, frameworks, and funding streams into the diverse range of service systems and communities across their catchment.

## WNSW PHN

The Western Health Alliance Ltd trades as Western New South Wales Primary Health Network. The PHN covers a region of more than 430,000 km<sup>2</sup> or around 53% of the state. The total population is estimated to be nearly 310,000 and approximately 11% identify as Aboriginal. The main centres of population and health services are Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst and Broken Hill. These are separated by vast distances and each serves numerous smaller communities that are themselves widely dispersed.

The PHN's vision is "Supporting, strengthening and shaping a world class person-centred primary health care system in Western NSW." The organisation has identified the following priorities:

- Aboriginal Health
- Chronic and Complex Care
- Older Person Care
- Maternal and Child Health
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Risk Factors/Prevention
- Workforce
- Access to Services
- Coordination, Integration, Collaboration

## 2. Description of Goods and/or Services Required

The WNSW PHN is seeking Requests for Proposals from eligible and suitably experienced Service Providers to deliver innovative models of service delivery to older people across the Western and Far Western regions of NSW that may be impacted by COVID-19.

This Initiative is part of the Australian Government's mental health response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is informed by the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan (the Plan) released in May 2020. The Plan identified older Australians as one of the groups particularly vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19. The Plan highlighted that older people are disproportionately impacted by physical and social distancing measures, and the loss of support from family, friends, and services this may entail. The closure of, or reduced access to, many aged care facilities to visitors, given the risk of spreading the virus, also reduces access to normal support systems from family members and friends which can heighten anxiety and confusion among residents. Older people are less likely to use online social connections or services to which other community members may be turning to for support and may experience social isolation and/or significant loneliness as a result. Older people with pre-existing mental illness and/or physical conditions may also find it challenging or distressing to use telehealth services, and with limited options for face-to-face services, may have experienced significant disruption to previously used services.

## 3. Scope of Works

Your proposal will outline a model for how your organisation will deliver the following outcomes for older people who are at risk of, or have, mental health issues, experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness, as well as older carers:

1. Connecting older people to appropriate services and support;
2. Reconnecting older people with social networks;
3. Restoring access to services that may have been disrupted by the pandemic;
4. Enabling early intervention and, where appropriate, providing psychological evidence-based therapies to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the older person. Psychological therapies should only be provided where the older person does not receive, or have access to, other appropriate psychological services; and
5. Provide information to friends, family and carers on the wellbeing of the older person (there is no age-based restriction for this outcome).

Your proposal will target people over 65 (or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 55) living either in the community or in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) who are experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness as a result of the pandemic and who are at risk of, or have, mental health issues. This includes carers over 65, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers over 55, of people with mental or physical health issues, who are likely to have lost access to normal social networks and supports in their caring role due to the pandemic. Older people experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness may have a range of needs:

- Some may be experiencing varying levels of loneliness and require assistance reconnecting with social networks and early intervention to assist in the management of low levels of situational distress.
- Others may have more intense needs, associated with ongoing mental ill-health, which may require psychological therapies and/or referral to more specialised support.
- Many older people are likely to have physical health needs which interact with and exacerbate mental health issues and require tailored management and support.

It is critical that the workforce for this initiative is appropriately qualified health professionals with mental health competencies. The preference is for Mental Health Nurses, but other qualified mental health professionals capable of delivering the outcomes described above may be utilised.

Service delivery models will balance the need for physical distancing with the importance of equitable access to services and support and must work within restrictions imposed by law to offer a COVID-Safe environment for both service providers and recipients. This may result in implementing digital means of service delivery where appropriate, whilst also ensuring appropriate safe practices in any face-to-face service delivery.

Your model will clearly outline the methodology for how it will meet the expected outcomes as outlined above which collectively will reduce the impact of isolation on the mental health of older people.

## 4. Contact Details

If you have any questions regarding the RFP, please respond via the forum link in Tenderlink.

## 5. Indicative funding

The Indicative Funding for this project is: **\$473,814.00**

*NB: WHAL reserves the right to award one (1) or more contracts for various proposal applications which equate to the indicative funding.*

## 6. Submission Details

All applications must be submitted in full using the Request for Proposal Response Application Document along with the required mandatory information. Please note that all fields must be completed (including inserting N/A if not relevant to your proposal).

**Submissions to be via Tenderlink by 2:00pm on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021.**

Applications received after the RFP closing time shall not be accepted, except where the Supplier can clearly demonstrate events outside of their control were responsible for the application being received late. It is at WNSW PHN CEO's sole discretion whether a late application will be accepted.

## 7. Evaluation of this RFP will be based on the Evaluation Criteria Below

After the deadline for the receipt of the RFP Application, a Panel will assess the responses based on evidence provided within the Tender Response Document.

**Evaluation Criteria One:**

Demonstrated Capability

Weighting: 30%

**Evaluation Criteria Two:**

Demonstrated Experience

Weighting: 30%

**Evaluation Criteria Three:**

Methodology

Weighting: 30%

**Evaluation Criteria Four:**

Local Purchasing

Weighting: 10%

## 8. Mandatory Information

**Financial** - Please provide copies of the most recently audited financial statements for the lead agency for the last 2 financial years. If your organisation does not have an audit undertaken, please provide copies of the most recent unaudited financial statements (or equivalent) for the last 3 financial years.

## 9. Additional Information

Responses should be contained within the RFP Application Form and should address all of the questions posed within the attached template.

Please note:

- Responding to this Request for Proposal does not constitute an agreement to a binding contract.
- Any amendments to this RFP will be provided as an addendum and will be made available to all potential suppliers via Tenderlink. Applications must acknowledge that they are aware of each addendum in their submission.

## 10. Proposed Timeline

The proposed procurement activities include a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Shortlisted RFP respondents may be invited for interviews. The table below outlines the key activities and estimated timeline.

Activity	Time / Date
Request for Proposal Released	17 March 2021
Last day for questions from providers	31 March 2021
Last day for WNSW PHN to respond to enquiries	2 April 2021
Last day for submissions via Tenderlink by providers	7 April 2021

Submissions assessed against criteria	8 April - 23 April 2021
Contracts Awarded	26 April 2021
Program commencement	1 May 2021

## 11. Conditions of this Request for Proposal

### General

Respondents should familiarise themselves with this Request for Proposal document and the separate RFP Application Form and ensure that their proposals comply with the requirements set out in these documents. Respondents are deemed to have examined statutory requirements and satisfied themselves that they are not participating in any anti-competitive, collusive, deceptive, or misleading practices in structuring and submitting the proposal.

### Acceptance

Non-complying submissions will be rejected. WNSW PHN may not accept the lowest priced proposal and may not accept any proposal.

### Explanations

Verbal explanations or instructions given prior to acceptance of a proposal shall not be binding.

### Assessment

WNSW PHN reserves the right to engage a third party to carry out assessments of a Respondent's financial, technical, planning and other resource capability.

### Legal entity

WNSW PHN will only enter into a contract with an organisation or individual with established legal status (e.g. under Corporations Law, Health Services Act, Trustee Act), or a natural person at least 18 years of age with mental capacity to understand the agreement.

### ABN/Taxation requirements

WNSW PHN will only deal with Respondents who have an Australian Business Number (ABN).

### Costs

Each Respondent will meet its own costs associated with the preparation and presentation of its proposal and any negotiations.

### Additional information

If additional information to that requested in this document is required by WNSW PHN when proposals are being considered, written information and/or interviews may be requested to obtain such information at no cost to WNSW PHN. WNSW PHN may also provide additional information or clarification.

### Process

WNSW PHN reserves the right to withdraw from or alter the RFP process described in the RFP document for whatever reason, prior to the signing of any agreement/contract with any party for the delivery of the Services described in this document.

**Negotiation**

WNSW PHN reserves the right to negotiate with short-listed Respondents after the RFP closing time and allow any Respondent to alter its submission.

**Part applications**

WNSW PHN reserves the right to accept applications in relation to some and not all of the scope of activity described, or contract with one, more than one or no Respondent on the basis of the proposals received.

**Conflicts of interest**

Respondents must declare to WNSW PHN any matter or issue which is or may be perceived to be or may lead to a conflict of interest regarding their submission or participation in the supply of the Services described.

**Ownership**

All applications and any accompanying documents become the property of WNSW PHN. Ownership rights of all information, reports or data remain unchanged. The Respondent shall not, without the written approval of WNSW PHN, use WNSW PHN's information other than in the development of the proposal or the delivery of the Services. Such information, in whatever form provided by WNSW PHN or converted by the Respondent, must be destroyed in a secure fashion following advice of the outcome of the RFP process or at completion of the provision of the Services.

**Notification of Probity Breach**

Should any Respondent consider that the RFP process has failed to accord it fair right to be considered as a successful Respondent or that it has been prejudiced by any breach of these terms and conditions or other relevant principle affecting tender submissions or their evaluation, the Respondent must provide to WNSW PHN immediate notice including details of the alleged failure or breach to the WNSW PHN contact person.

**Lobbying**

Any attempt by any Respondent to exert influence on the outcome of the assessment process by lobbying WNSW PHN staff, directly or indirectly, will be grounds for disqualification of the proposal from further consideration.

**Insurances**

WNSW PHN will only enter into a Contract / Agreement with a Respondent who has all types and amounts of insurance necessary to cover the Respondent's obligations in relation to the Activity, including, but not limited to the following policies:

- Public liability insurance for an amount not less than \$20 Million; and,
- Professional indemnity insurance for an amount not less than \$20 Million, in respect of any claim, and for the run-off period of 7 years.

The insurance must cover the Respondent and WNSW PHN against any liability arising out of or in connection with the performance of Respondent's obligations under the Contract / Agreement and any Authority.

The Respondent must deliver annually to WNSW PHN evidence of insurance satisfactory to WNSW PHN that the Respondent has a particular insurance policy and that policy is current.

In addition, the Respondent must deliver evidence of insurance within 7 days of a written request by WNSW PHN to do so.

The Respondent must comply with and observe the terms of all insurance policies referred to in the Contract / Agreement and must not do anything which could result in any policy being rendered void or voidable.

**Administration Budget**

WHAL will only enter into a Contract / Agreement with a Respondent who can demonstrate that the Respondent's attribution of the total administrative operational overheads and/or expenses to the Activity is reasonable and does not exceed 10% of total contract value (excl. GST).

**Proposals Submitted by Joint Ventures or Consortia**

Where a Respondent is comprised of more than one entity the RFP Response must include all details relevant to each entity and the structure of the joint venture or consortium submitting the Proposal, and the RFP response must be executed by each such entity; WNSW PHN may require a copy of any joint venture agreement or other contractual arrangement relating to the Respondent's composition to be provided before considering any such Proposal.