

Health Needs Assessment

Shaping how we serve the community

Our Primary Health Network

Western NSW Primary Health Network 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.

We work to improve the quality and access to primary health care in our community. Our organisation does this by funding health services and working closely with general practice, Aboriginal health services and other health care providers to improve the quality of care.



Programs we fund

- Aboriginal Health
- After Hours
- Aged Care
- Bushfire Funding
- Cancer Screening (Bowel Screening)
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
- Collaborative Commissioning Chronic Disease
- Cultural Safety Training
- Digital Health
- Drug and Alcohol
- Early Intervention for children
- Eye Health
- General Practice Support and Improvement
- Immunisation Workshops
- Mental Health
- Movement Disorder Nurse Specialist
- Palliative Care
- Pandemic Planning (COVID) Workforce Infection Control and Surge Capacity Funding
- Pharmacy in General Practice
- Primary Health -
- Practice Support
- Workforce Support
- Workforce Education
- Psychosocial Support
- RACFs On-line Learning Modules
- Regional Electronic Health Record
- Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Our Region's Health Priorities



Mental Health



Access to Services



Health Workforce



Health system coordination improvement



First 2000 days of life



Health of Aboriginal People



Chronic Disease



Digital Health



Alcohol & drug abuse



Older Persons Care

A profile of our region

Area profile



We cover **433,379 km²** – the largest area of any PHN in NSW



26 Local Government Areas



2 Local Health Districts



399 GPs



110 General Practices
(including Aboriginal Medical Services)

Demographics



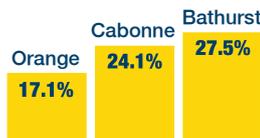
309,900

people live in our region

6%
predicted increase

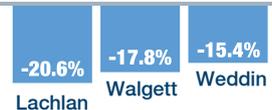
329,470

by 2036



The Biggest growth

The Largest decline



Compared to the NSW population **we have MORE people**

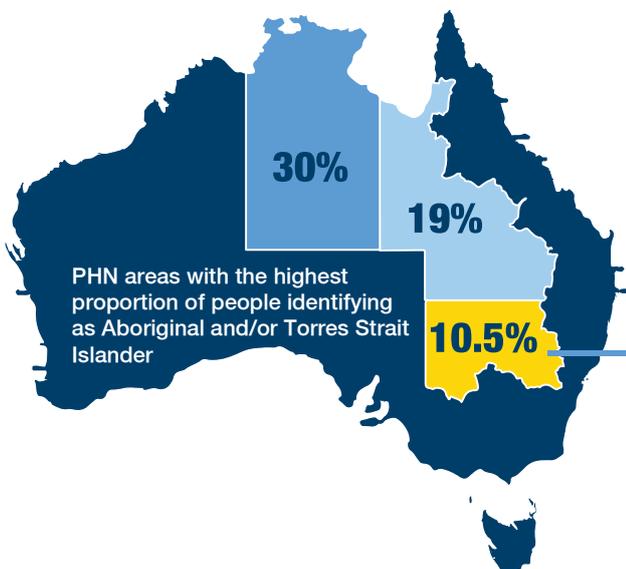


under **20** years



65 years or older

Aboriginal population



Our PHN has the

3rd highest proportion of the total population identifying as Aboriginal behind Northern Territory and Western Queensland PHNs



10.5% or just over **1 in 10** people in our region identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Compared to **2.8%** Nationally

How healthy are we?

Health risk factors



22.9%
of people over 16 years
smoke
Compared to
15% for NSW



26.5%
of people over 16 years are
obese
Compared to
21.4% for NSW



32%
of people over 16 years consume
alcohol
at levels posing long term risk
Compared to
29.8% for NSW

Health status



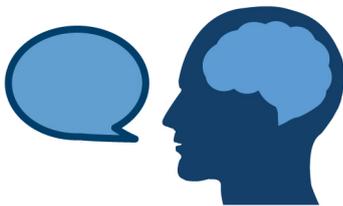
85.9% of Adults reported
excellent, very good or good health
1.3% Lower than the Australian average **87%**

Drug & alcohol



10% higher
rate of overnight hospitalisations for
drug and alcohol use
than national average in 2015-16

Mental health



22,825
patients had a
mental health treatment plan
created by a GP in 2017-18



17% GP attendees diagnosed with at least one mental health condition
of those: **72%** diagnosed with depression
42% diagnosed with anxiety
5% diagnosed with bipolar disorder
4% diagnosed with schizophrenia



53% higher intentional self-harm hospitalisations
for males 15-24 years, than in NSW (2014-2018)



204.4% higher rate of self-harm hospitalisations
for females 15-24 years, than males (2014-2018)

26% higher 5-year average suicide rate
than in NSW (2014-2018)

Chronic disease



52.9%
of Adults reported having a
long term health condition
5.4% higher than the Australian average of **50.2%** in 2015-16

23,690
patients received a GP
Health assessment
for a **Chronic disease**
in 2015-16

1,021
patients received GP
Chronic disease treatment plans
in 2015-16

20,000+
people are registered with the
National Diabetes Service Scheme

11% MORE
people reported having a
disease of the circulatory system
than the national average

What is a health Needs Assessment?

A Health Needs Assessment is a detailed research project that helps us understand where there are service gaps and unmet need in the community, so we can direct services to these areas.

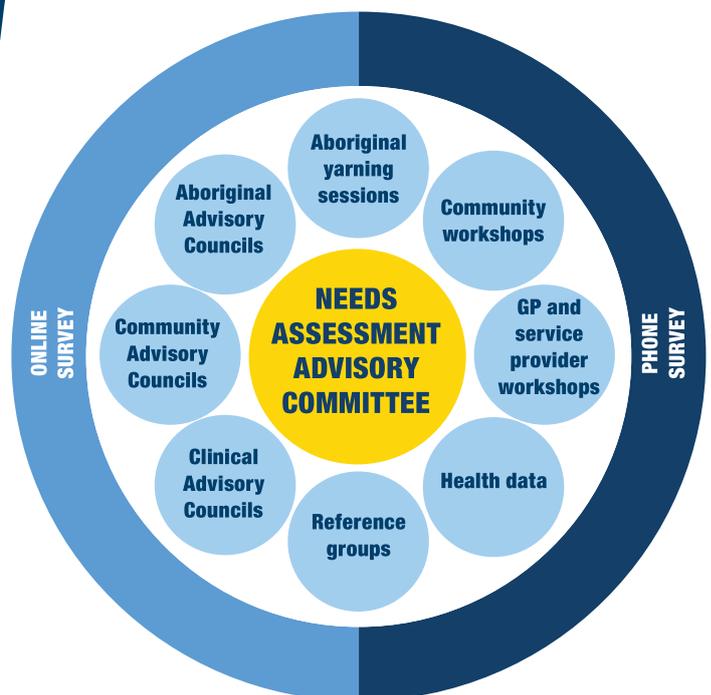
Our needs assessment is a collaboration with the Western and Far West NSW Local Health Districts, Health Intelligence Unit and other stakeholders that aims to improve the whole health system in our community.

This needs assessment helps us plan where to direct future funding how to improve our services to meet community needs as well as connect existing service to improve access.

How we did it

More than 3,300 people participated in our needs assessment. The project was guided by our Advisory Committee. Data was collected through:

- Analysis of population and health data plus consultation
- Telephone and online surveys
- Aboriginal yarning workshops
- Community consultation workshops
- Health professional workshops



77

People attended
Aboriginal yarning workshops



66

People attended
Community workshops



61

People attended
Provider workshops



3010

Households completed
Phone surveys



171

People completed
Online surveys

The priorities for our region

During the consultation these were the issues you told us needed to be addressed.



Mental health

- High or very high psychological distress in Western NSW
- Mental health hospital bed days 26% higher than national average
- Mental illness is often a barrier to accessing other services
- Mental illness hospitalisations are 87% higher in Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal



Access to services

- Limited access to specialists
- Low availability of after-hours GP services
- Travel distance and transport availability to visit services
- Cultural safety of services important to ensure access for all



Health workforce

- Unequal distribution of GPs across the region
- Health professional recruitment and retention, high turnover leads to dissatisfaction with GP services
- Shortage of allied health professionals
- Lack of mental health professionals



Health system coordination and improvement

- A lack of change management when health services and programs cease
- Poor coordination between healthcare providers
- Records not being shared
- Current referral pathways not adequate



First 2000 days of life

- 30% higher rate of mortality for 0 - 4 compared to NSW average
- 45% higher rate of mortality in Aboriginal children in WNSW PHN compared to non-Aboriginal children
- Highest rate of low birth weights of any NSW PHN
- Highest rate of smoking in pregnancy of any NSW PHN



Health of Aboriginal people

- PHN hospitalisations in Aboriginal people is around twice that in non-Aboriginal people
- Lack of culturally safe services
- Need more transport to services and appointments and coordination of care
- High levels of chronic disease risk factors, yet little focus on prevention



Chronic disease management

- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of deaths in the PHN
- Cancer is the second leading cause of deaths in PHN residents
- Respiratory disease is one of the leading cause of deaths and hospitalisations
- Low health literacy impacts on ability to self-manage complex conditions



Digital health

- Secure messaging still not widely interoperable for health professionals
- Telehealth not being fully utilised to access services in rural and remote communities
- Telehealth not considered appropriate for all mental health patients, but can be beneficial for some
- Poor internet connectivity a barrier to using telehealth in remote communities



Alcohol and drugs

- Highest rate of alcohol attributed deaths of any NSW PHN
- Alcohol attributable hospitalisation rates for Aboriginal people was more than double that for non-Aboriginal people
- Increase in rate of illicit substance related ED presentations
- Need more alcohol and drug detox and rehab services



Aged care and older people

- Social isolation – older people feel forgotten, poor health literacy and computer literacy
- Aboriginal Elders felt that young people lack respect for older people
- Barriers to assessment and access to MyAgedCare packages for clients and GPs
- Exclusion of NDIS access for those aged 65 years and older

What are the solutions

This is what you told us we should include in services

Mental health

- "Better coordination between the different mental health services in our region is needed."
- "Services have to take into account gender and age and be culturally safe."
- "The focus should be on the recruitment and retainment of professionals, especially mental health nurses."

Health of Aboriginal people

- "There should be an acknowledgment of Aboriginal Elders as cultural advisors to provide traditional insight when developing programs."
- "More healthy lifestyle programs across all life stages."
- "We need co-designed services which are community-led and centred."

Access to services

- "There aren't enough locally available allied health services."
- "More GPs are needed to provide people with access to a doctor in their town."
- "Long specialist waiting lists, affordability and travel distance is a barrier for many people."

Chronic disease management

- "More general practice-based services including chronic disease practice nurses, Aboriginal health workers and visiting allied health workers."
- "There is a need for chronic disease prevention programs across all life stages, that are culturally safe, co-designed, evidence-based and community led."

Health workforce

- "More training and support are needed for medical staff."
- "The cultural competence of healthcare providers needs to be improved."
- "Stop high turnover of GPs in rural and remote areas."

Digital health

- "Need more GP telehealth and specialist services in Residential Aged Care Facilities."
- "Improve telehealth education for staff at remote sites."
- "There is a lack of Medicare Benefit Scheme rebates for many telehealth consultations."

Health systems coordination and improvement

- "Better promotion and awareness of the services which are available is needed."
- "Better connection and coordination of services is essential."
- "Referral pathways must be improved, often we don't know who to refer to."

Alcohol and other drugs

- "More detox and rehabilitation services close to home are needed, particularly for those exiting prison."
- "Gender-specific services are crucial and more programs for men to address drug and alcohol issues."
- "Culturally safe school and after-school programs addressing drug and alcohol use are needed."

First 2000 days of life

- "Fathers should be included and involved in support services."
- "There needs to be more awareness... about foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, especially in remote communities."
- "More education and support for parents on how to give their kids a healthy lifestyle."

Aged Care and older people

- "Culturally safe in-home care support services for Aboriginal people are needed."
- "Transport to health appointments needed."
- "There needs to be greater investment in falls prevention programs."

Our achievements



Demand Management and Enhancement funding received to address wait times in **Dubbo & Orange** headspace Centres.



headspace Cowra satellite centre to open in **2021**.



Alcohol & Other Drug capacity building providing **specialist support** to commissioned service providers across the region.



External evaluation of **Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program** commissioned services.



In 2019/20 we allocated more than **\$31M** to meet the **primary health care needs** of our communities.



In support of My Health Record, **275 Healthcare Organisations** are now registered in the WNSW PHN area:



96% of General Practices and Aboriginal Medical Services



and **87%** of Community Pharmacies



More than **\$1.54M** given to **79** drought-hit communities through the **Empowering Our Communities** grants program.



Strengthened consumer engagement as one of the first PHN's to complete the **Collaborative Pairs program** in partnership with the Consumer Health Forum of Australia.



Working with NSW Rural Doctors Network and Local Health Districts to address workforce shortages and create a **workforce strategy**.



Delivered more than **133** Continuing Professional Development education sessions to more than **2700** health professionals in the last **18** months.



Led the development of the Regional Mental Health Plan and coordinating services across the region with Local Health Districts.



Our region leads the country in the rate of children aged 5 who are fully immunized at **96.7%**

Our achievements continued...



Establishment of **COVID-19 HealthPathways** and **8 Primary Health Respiratory Clinics** to support Primary Health response to **COVID-19** pandemic.



Aboriginal Community Wellbeing Grants have assisted **10 communities** with more than **\$122,000** in funding, with **Round 4** now under evaluation.



Expansion of **MBS item numbers** for **telehealth consultations** in response to **COVID-19** has seen an **increase of service providers** registered and using the **Healthdirect** videoconferencing platform by **600%**.



Support to **GPs, Registrars, Allied Health Professionals, Mental Health Nurses and Practice Nurses** with **Mental Health Support** upgrades.



49% of **General Practices** and **Aboriginal Medical Services** supported by **WNSW PHN** to use **Healthdirect** videoconferencing.



Six Red Cross Communications in Disasters Workshops for **Front-Line Workers**.



Mental Health accounted for **21%** of all consultations conducted on **Healthdirect**.



Subsidies to **55 GPs** for **Online Psychological Strategies** training with **RACGP**.



Access to **Electronic Prescriptions** to be widely available to the community by the end of **2020**.



Trusted Advocates “Wellbeing & You” training for **six Coonabarabran advocates** in **workplace support and media**. Training in **Weathering Well App** to come.



Educating and subsidising **two LHD Drought Peer Workers**, plus **one RAMHP Coordinator** as **Train the Trainer** in the **Weathering Well App**.



Sponsoring **15 Cert IV Graduates** in **Community Services** and **13** entering **Diploma of Community Services** in the **Workforce Capacity Building Project**.



Expansion of the **Telehealth in Residential Aged Care (TRAC)** program for regional and remote areas to **15 General Practices** and **20 Residential Aged Care Facilities**.

More information

Find out more at: www.wnswphn.org.au

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