

Fit for the future
*Have your say about
future directions for health in NSW*



2025

Planning for health

- *What do we as a society want in relation to our future health and wellbeing?*
- *What will we expect from our health system over the next 20 years?*
- *What sort of choices might be needed?*
- *How can we ensure that the system stays on track as we head towards 2025?*



2010



2015



2020

2025



2010

2015

2020

2025

These are some of the questions currently being explored in a major planning exercise being undertaken in NSW. **The aim of this exercise is to set long-term directions for the NSW public health system** – directions that will ensure we have continuing access to high quality, affordable health services which are comparable with the best in the world.

Looking back over the last 20 years, there have been many improvements in our health and health care in NSW as elsewhere in Australia. People are now living longer and enjoying healthier lives than ever before thanks to our improved standard of living, a greater awareness of health risks, and major advances in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness, disease and injury. Survey results also indicate that most people using the NSW public health system are satisfied with the health care they receive, although there is no room for complacency in ongoing efforts to improve performance.

Now it is time to think about the next 20 years. The vision of the NSW public health system is “Healthy people – Now and in the future”. The system’s four overarching goals are:

- To keep people healthy
- To provide the health care that people need
- To deliver high quality services
- To manage health services well.

The focus of the health system must be on working with health consumers and carers to meet their needs by providing the right services at the right time and place. Core values include: respect for individuals and communities; access and equity; participation and shared responsibility; quality, effectiveness and safety; and stewardship.

This provides the broad framework for planning for the future. Within this framework, more specific directions must be identified to help in making the right choices and setting priorities in the face of escalating demand for health

services, rising costs and increasing competition for available funds. These same issues are also driving nation-wide health reforms being pursued by the Council of Australian Governments.

This summary document provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities ahead. It also outlines a set of draft future directions for our NSW health system which will ensure that it stays on track. The directions identify priority areas for action and will guide the changes that must be made as we head towards 2025. The future directions will also shape the contents of a State Health Plan which will provide more detail about priorities for developing the NSW public health system over the next 5 years.

A longer version of this consultation document is available on the NSW Health Futures Planning website (www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/) for people wanting more information.

Please have your say

Finding out what NSW residents think about priorities for the future development of their public health system is an important step in this planning process.

At the back of this document is more information about the consultation process and how you can have your say. Some questions are also included to prompt discussion and help you contribute your ideas. Your responses to those questions will be highly valued.

NSW HEALTH



A profile of health services in NSW

The health system in NSW is large and diverse, encompassing public, private and not-for-profit services and involving different levels of government. All these services work to protect and promote our physical and mental health, prevent illness and disability, and diagnose and treat our health conditions, diseases and injuries.

Consider the size and scale of the health system for the 6.9 million people living in NSW.

What you can expect in a typical year (2004/05) in NSW:

\$11+ billion	Amount spent by NSW Government on the public health system
58.6 million	PBS prescriptions filled in NSW (subsidised through Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme)
35.5 million	Visits to GPs (subsidised through Medicare)
24.9 million	Diagnostic services provided – pathology and medical imaging (Medicare)
24.5 million	Community health services provided
8 million	Visits to medical specialists (Medicare)
2 million	Visits to public hospital emergency departments
1.4 million	Public hospital admissions
947,000	Responses by ambulances
785,500	Private hospital admissions
239,150	Breast screens provided through the Breastscreen NSW program
92,900	Staff in public health system Nursing 37,561 Allied health 13,738 Medical 6,841 Ambulance 3,117 Other 31,645
5,500	General Practitioners
572	Community health centres
207	Public hospitals
85	Private hospitals
8	Area Health Services



On a typical day in the NSW health system:

- > **97,200** GP consultations occur
- > **67,200** community health services are provided
- > **21,800** consultations are undertaken by medical specialists
- > **17,000** people spend the day being treated in a public hospital bed and **3,900** people are admitted for inpatient care
- > **5,500** people are seen in emergency departments
- > **2,600** responses by ambulances take place



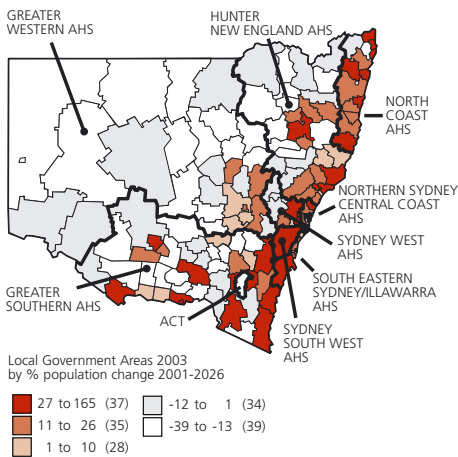
Current trends and future challenges for the NSW health system

The following trends and challenges must be carefully considered as part of thinking about the future of the health system in NSW.

The population is growing

The population is growing, with most of the expansion expected to occur along the coast rather than inland. In 2026 the NSW population is projected to reach 8.0 million, up from 6.9 million in 2006.

Where the population is expected to grow in NSW, 2001-2026 (red represents high growth areas)



The population is ageing

People aged 65 years and older will represent an increasing proportion of the population, rising from 13.6% in 2006 to around 20% in 2026.

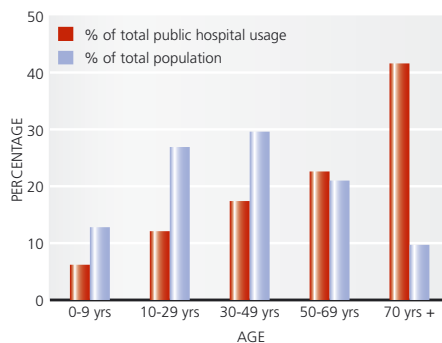
By 2026 there will be many more people aged 65 years and over in NSW (as shown by the light red in the diagram)



Demand for health services is increasing

Demand for health services (as well as other human services and informal care) is increasing partly because older people tend to use more health and community services, even the many who remain healthy well into their older years.

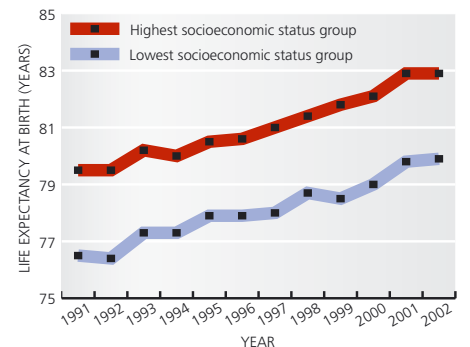
People aged 70 years and over represent 9.7% of the population but account for 41.6% of all public hospital usage in NSW (2004/05)



Health gains are being shared unequally

There have been steady improvements over a number of decades in the overall health status of NSW residents. However there is also a persistent health gap between the most and least disadvantaged members of our society despite ongoing efforts to address this. The life expectancy of Aboriginal people is still on average 20 years less than for non-Aboriginal people, and rural residents have a shorter average life expectancy than people living in urban NSW.

While benefiting from overall health improvements, the most disadvantaged groups in NSW still have shorter lives (on average) than the rest of the population



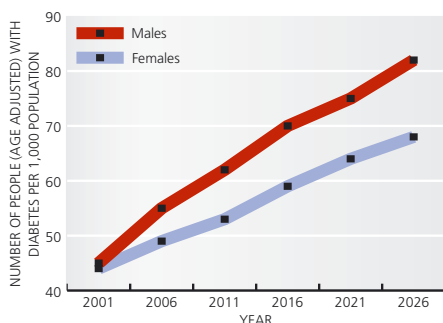
Medical advances will keep expectations high

People's expectations of the health system are continually boosted as new medical and technological advances expand the range of options for preventing, diagnosing and treating illness and disability. Media coverage of these advances and information readily available through the internet further reinforce our expectations.

There will be a growing number of people with chronic conditions

Lifestyle changes, together with significant improvements in survival rates from heart attacks, strokes and cancers, are contributing to a rising demand for services to treat the growing number of people with chronic conditions (complex, long lasting conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, schizophrenia and osteoarthritis which result from an interplay of behavioural, genetic and other factors). In 2026, the number of people in NSW with diabetes could be as many as 838,000, up from 303,000 in 2001.

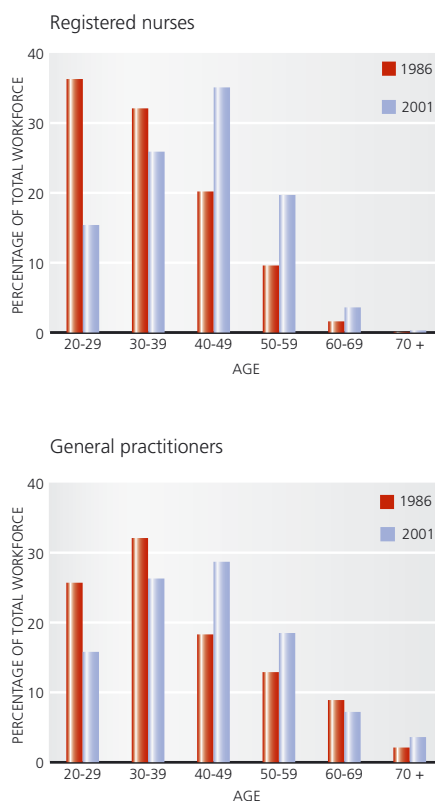
The proportion of the NSW population with diabetes is expected to increase markedly over the next 20 years



Shortfall in the number of health professionals

The growing shortfall in the supply of doctors, dentists, nurses and allied health professionals will place increasing pressure on existing staff and services, particularly in outer metropolitan, rural and remote areas. This may affect access to care.

Across Australia, the health workforce is ageing, with an increasing proportion of practitioners heading towards retirement



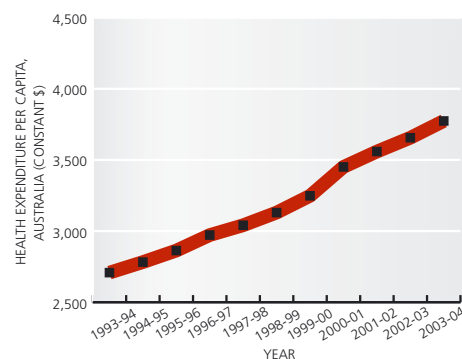
Technology could improve access

New information and communication technologies offer the potential to improve consumers' access to health information and services, as well as boosting operating efficiency, but will require timely investment.

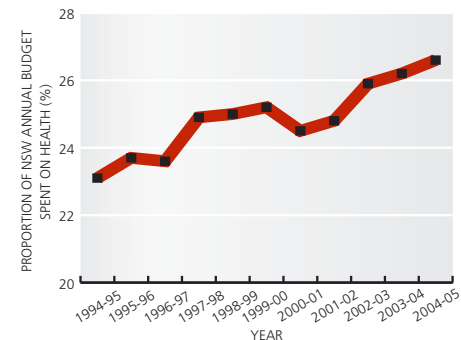
Health costs are increasing

Many of the above factors will continue to drive up health costs at a faster rate than general economic growth. Unless these costs can be contained, they threaten to draw funds away from other important government services (such as education, housing, transport) and place greater financial demands on individual consumers. There is a risk that future health care in NSW might become unaffordable for the government and the community.

Even after adjusting for inflation, the average amount spent on each Australian resident's health care is increasing annually



Health spending is increasing as a proportion of the total NSW State budget



Future directions pointing to key areas for action

Knowing the challenges facing the health system is one thing – deciding how they should be addressed over the long-term to achieve the health system's vision and goals is another. Given that it's not possible to anticipate everything that lies ahead, the best approach is to establish some general directions to keep people focused on the important issues and to guide future decisions.

Seven future directions have been identified through earlier consultations involving a diverse group of health professionals, managers and community representatives. These directions, and the key areas for action they describe, are regarded as crucial to the future of the NSW health system.

Before you read through them, you might want to have a quick look at the questions at the end.

1. Make prevention everybody's business

The familiar saying "Prevention is better than cure" is backed by evidence. Our health and wellbeing is influenced by a complex interplay of environmental, socioeconomic, behavioural and biological factors, and the best outcomes are achieved when such factors are actively managed at an early age or stage. But putting prevention into practice is not easy.

To reduce the level and impact of preventable health conditions, the focus must be on both reducing risk factors (such as stressful living circumstances, smoking and obesity) and increasing protective factors (such as supportive relationships, good nutrition and healthy environments).

This will require action by individuals, families, health practitioners, communities and governments, with a particular effort being made to help those in greatest need. Each of us will have to think about taking more responsibility for our own health, with appropriate support. Ensuring that children get a good start in life will be more important than ever. Other things which have an impact on our health and wellbeing, such as income security, education and community services, will also need to be looked at more closely.

2. Create better experiences for people using the health system

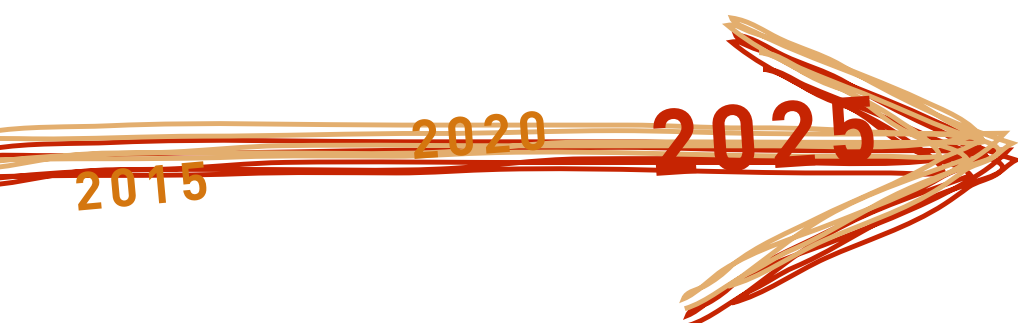
The public health system must deliver services that meet people's needs. This includes the needs of people who are hard to reach and people who have, or are at risk of having, ongoing poorer health. One way of ensuring this will be to encourage and support individuals, carers, families and communities to be more involved in planning local health services, and in making decisions with health practitioners about their own health care. To help with the latter, practitioners should provide clear information about treatment options and likely outcomes.

The health system will also have to make a greater effort to create smooth patient journeys through the system and to seek feedback from consumers, carers and health staff so that services can be improved.

Achieving a better match between services and needs will also require the health system to shift its focus more towards promoting health, preventing illness and injury, intervening early, providing continuing care, and delivering a greater proportion of services outside hospitals in the community.

3. Strengthen primary health and continuing care in the community

Primary and community health services are typically people's first point of contact with the health system and are the part of the system they use most. These services include general practice, community health nursing services, community pharmacies, allied health services, Aboriginal health and multicultural services, and non-government



organisation services. If these services are working well, people's health problems can be addressed early and effectively.

Primary and community health services working in collaboration with more specialised services can also support people with chronic and complex conditions and their carers to maintain their quality of life and independence in the community. A strong network of primary and community health services which are well-integrated with other parts of the health system can lead to a healthier population, reduced health inequalities, and less need for more intensive and expensive treatments including hospital inpatient care.

4. Build regional partnerships for health

The involvement of different levels of government and many different agencies in providing human services can lead to undesirable gaps and overlaps at a local level. This can in turn affect the community's access to required health care.

The best way to promote a community's health and wellbeing is for all the different individuals and agencies (government, non-government and private) providing services in a region or local area to work with the community on joint planning to meet local needs. This will focus attention on improving the connections among local health services including community health services, GPs and hospitals. It should also result in better links between health services and other local services (eg schools, home help, respite care and community transport). Local collaboration may provide opportunities for sharing resources among agencies, including staff, funding and infrastructure.

5. Make smart choices about the costs and benefits of health services

Public spending on health care is increasing at a faster rate than general economic growth. We all agree that health services are important, but so too are public education, police services, public transport and other government services.

Hard decisions about funding will be required, and the community's views about health service priorities must be heard, given that it will never be possible to meet all demands. Making the health dollar go as far as possible will continue to be important. One of the ways this can be achieved is by reducing the need for high-cost hospital care through investment in preventive, primary health and continuing care services in the community. Ensuring appropriate infrastructure will be vital, and new information and communication technologies offer significant potential.

6. Redesign and reinvigorate the health workforce

The NSW health system depends on doctors, dentists, nurses and allied health professionals (as well as a wide range of technical, administrative and other staff) to deliver high quality health services across the state.

Services in some areas are experiencing increasing difficulties in recruiting sufficient numbers of clinical staff to provide the required care. As the population grows and the number of older people increases, this staff

shortage could become even more serious unless steps are taken now to start addressing it.

Improving the supply, distribution, flexibility and responsiveness of the health workforce will require ongoing attention to working conditions, professional development and career opportunities.

We will also need to rethink health practitioner roles, educational requirements, and how staff are organised to deliver care. Staff will need new knowledge and different skills for their work in the future.

7. Be ready for new risks and opportunities

The state's health system must be responsive to emerging population needs, new research findings, technological advances and changes in the wider environment. Regional, national and global events (such as a natural disaster or a flu pandemic) can all have significant implications for NSW residents and the health system must be ready for them.

The system will need to strengthen its capacity to plan strategically, to evaluate and manage risks, contribute to international research and innovation, adopt evidence-informed policies and practices, and critically assess the potential value of new technologies and other possible investments. A sustained effort will be required to further develop a culture of continuous learning and improvement, underpinned by active and well-supported education and research programs.

Fit for the future

Have your say

6 easy ways to have your say

The NSW Government is inviting people across the state to have their say about the future public health system.

Your views are important as they will help shape the decisions that need to be made now to achieve the health system we want in the future.

There are a number of ways you can have your say.

1 By fax Futures Planning Project on (02) 9391 9994

To return a completed questionnaire (starting on the next page), or to provide comments or a submission

2 By post

To return a completed questionnaire (starting on the next page), or to provide comments or a submission

Post to Futures Planning Project, Locked Mail Bag 961, North Sydney NSW 2059

3 Online www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/

Complete the questionnaire online by visiting our website and following the instructions on the screen

4 By email futures@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

For formal submissions or to provide responses or comments

5 By telephone as a recorded message ph 1300 139 250

You can leave a recorded message in response to the questions, or to request information or other assistance

6 In person by attending a meeting

To attend a meeting organised by your Area Health Service, look for advertisements in your local press or contact your local Area Health Service for details. The phone numbers are listed under 'NSW Health' in the White Pages or can be obtained by phoning (02) 9391 9000.

The deadline for all responses, comments and submissions is 7 July 2006

DEADLINE FOR
RESPONSES IS
7 JULY 2006

How your input will be used

It would be appreciated if responses and submissions could be provided in English. A summary of the feedback received will be posted on the Futures Planning website by the end of July 2006.

This feedback will assist in completing the task of developing future directions for the NSW public health system, looking towards 2025. These long-range future directions will then be used to identify shorter-term priorities for action across the health system and within each Area. A 5-year State Health Plan and individual Area Health Service Plans are due for completion by August 2006.

Privacy and personal information

To acknowledge your valued contribution, your name or your organisation's name will be placed on the NSW Health Futures Planning website and may be included in subsequent published material. However if you would prefer to remain anonymous, please indicate that in your response.

Further information is available from:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/
Email: futures@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

(b) This document outlines seven future directions to guide decisions about the organisation, funding and delivery of public health services in NSW. Which of the seven future directions does your important issue (identified above) come under – or do we need an additional direction? (Please tick (✓) the box or boxes relating to the relevant future direction/s, or insert another direction in the space provided.)

- 1 Make prevention everybody's business
- 2 Create better experiences for people using the health system
- 3 Strengthen primary health and continuing care in the community
- 4 Build regional partnerships for health
- 5 Make smart choices about the costs and benefits of health services
- 6 Redesign and reinvigorate the health workforce
- 7 Be ready for new risks and opportunities
- Another future direction (please describe):

(c) Do you have any other comments to make about the seven future directions?

QUESTION 3

In one or two sentences, what do you think is the MOST important thing that should be done by each of the following groups to ensure a healthy community and a sustainable health system in NSW in 2025?

(a) By government (national, state, local)?

(b) By individuals?

(c) By communities?



Fit for the future

Have your say

(d) By health professionals, including doctors, dentists, nurses, allied health providers?

(e) By non-government and not-for-profit organisations, voluntary associations and clubs?

(f) By the private health sector?

(g) By the business sector?

QUESTION 4

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about future directions for the NSW health system?

Please attach extra pages if you need more space to provide your comments.

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Have your say

Questions about you

To help NSW Health analyse the feedback it receives, it would be useful to know a bit about respondents. If you would prefer not to complete this section, your other responses will still be taken into account.

INDIVIDUAL

Name (optional)

Sex

Male Female

Age (Please tick one box)

18 years and under

19 to 34 years

35 to 49 years

50 to 64 years

65 to 79 years

80 years and over

Principal place of residence

(Please insert postcode)

Do you have any health professional qualifications?

Yes No

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

(For persons of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, tick both Yes boxes)

Yes, Aboriginal

Yes, Torres Strait Islander

No

At home do you speak English most of the time?

(Please tick one box)

Yes

No, another language

GROUP/ORGANISATION

Organisation's name (optional)

Organisation's focus/scope of interest

Organisation's coverage

(Please tick one box)

Local or regional

Statewide or national

**DEADLINE FOR
RESPONSES
7 JULY 2006**

**COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES
SHOULD BE SENT TO:**

Futures Planning Project
NSW Department of Health
Locked Bag 961
North Sydney NSW 2059
Fax: (02) 9391 9994

Fit for the future

Have your say about
future directions for health in NSW

This document is available in English and six other community languages – Chinese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Italian, Greek and Spanish. A copy of the document in any of these languages can be obtained from the website at www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/

Chinese

中文

身體健康，共迎未來

對新州衛生的未來發展方向發表自己的看法

本文件的中文版本請見網站 www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/translations/

Arabic

عربي

مستقبل صحي جيد

أعطوا رأيكم بشأن التوجهات الصحية المستقبلية في نيو ساوث ويلز

هذه الوثيقة متوافرة بالعربية على موقع الانترنت التالي www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/translations/

Greek

Ελληνικά

Υγιείς για το Μέλλον

Εκφράστε τη γνώμη σας για τις μελλοντικές κατευθύνσεις στο θέμα της υγείας στη ΝΝΟ.

Αυτό το έντυπο διατίθεται στα ελληνικά στο δικτυακό τόπο www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/translations/

Vietnamese

Việt ngữ

Để Được Mạnh Khỏe trong

Tương Lai

Hãy đóng góp ý kiến của quý vị về đường hướng tương lai cho ngành y tế ở NSW

Có thể xem tài liệu này bằng Việt Ngữ tại trang mạng www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/translations/

Italian

Italiano

Sanità nel futuro

Esprimete le vostre opinioni sulle direzioni future della sanità nel NSW

Questo documento è disponibile in italiano al sito web www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/translations/

Spanish

Castellano

Adecuado para el Futuro

Exponga sus ideas sobre futuras direcciones de la salud en NSW

Este documento puede obtenerse en castellano en el sitio web www.health.nsw.gov.au/futuresplanning/translations/

2010

2015

2020

2025



How you can have your say



**COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES
SHOULD BE SENT BY 7 JULY 2006 TO:**

Futures Planning Project

NSW Department of Health
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SHPN.(IGFS) 060062
ISBN. 0 7347 3935 4