
Performance



Priority 1

Patients and carers have positive experiences and outcomes that matter

Our future

NSW Health strives to ensure that people have more control over their own health, enabling them to make decisions about their care that will achieve the outcomes that matter most to them.

Our key objectives

1.1 Partner with patients and communities to make decisions about their own care

1.2 Bring kindness and compassion into the delivery of personalised and culturally safe care

1.3 Drive greater health literacy and access to information

1.4 Partner with consumers in co-design and implementation of models of care

Key achievements

- Awarded The Beryl Institute's Organizational Innovation Award – international recognition for our efforts to put more humanity back into healthcare with the first statewide strategy, Elevating the Human Experience – Our Guide to Action.
- NSW Ambulance staff volunteered their time to the Community Defib Project which installed its 50th defibrillator in the community which significantly reduced the time to treatment for patients.
- Our Pathways to Community Living Initiative continues to improve health outcomes for long-stay mental health inpatients.
- To reach and support culturally and linguistically diverse communities with current COVID-19 information, regular multicultural press conferences were held and thousands of information resources were translated in 53 languages.
- Developed cancer resources in 35 community languages, including emerging languages such as Lao, Swahili, Urdu and Dinka, improving cancer literacy in multicultural communities.

Putting the care back into healthcare

Patient experience is more than just receiving good-quality clinical care. This year, as part of our commitment to the Future Health priorities, we actively partnered with patients, families and caregivers to better understand what outcomes matter to them when interacting with our health system.

We built on the work of Elevating the Human Experience – Our Guide to Action and, through our conversations with patients, families, and caregivers, we identified 23 evidenced-based, scalable and sustainable projects for implementation. These will directly contribute to providing patients, carers, and staff with more positive experiences of our health system.

Supporting the Elevating the Human Experience initiative, the Clinical Excellence Commission partnered with the NSW Ministry of Health and the Health Education and Training Institute in the design and implementation of the Good to Great – Elevating the Human Experience in the Emergency Department program which focused on leadership capability, building positive workplace culture and nurturing collaborative partnerships as a means of meeting the Premier's Priority of 'Improving service levels in hospitals'.

Social media metrics from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Followers	311,824 54% increase	91,297 90% increase	167,000 98.5% increase (336,000 total followers)
Engagement	25 million 1,230% increase	967,000 5,841% increase	561,000 950% increase
Impressions	1.6 billion 927% increase	110 million 1,627% increase	

The right information at the right time

The presence of NSW Health on Facebook and other social media platforms grew significantly during the pandemic as it provided a channel for timely information. Millions of people watched the daily press conferences online and used the NSW social media pages for the latest COVID-19 updates.

During the pandemic, supporting culturally and linguistically diverse communities was critical in our response. To reach and support culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, regular multicultural press conferences were held and more than 2,000 information resources were translated in more than 60 languages.

Community care benefits for mental health patients

Our Pathways to Community Living Initiative was created six years ago to support mental health patients to transition back into the community. It focuses on long-stay patients: those who have been in inpatient care for 12 months or longer. The initiative has improved outcomes for long-stay mental health inpatients.

An independent evaluation conducted by The University of Wollongong covering 674 patients¹ showed the following results from moving patients into the community with Pathways to Community Living Initiative support:

- Mental health admissions were of shorter duration.
- Emergency department presentations were uncommon, suggesting that community management works for many of these patients.
- Cost-of-care modelling for 156 people who also had significant ageing issues showed that moving older patients with mental health issues out of hospital and into community care could lead to a total saving of \$32.8 million.

Reducing emergency department presentations

The Emergency Department to Community initiative identifies patients who frequently present to the emergency department so that they can be supported in the community with coordinated multidisciplinary care.

A resource pack was created to guide local health districts in creating local models for planning and implementing more effective support services. Early modelling showed patients who were enrolled in the Emergency Department to Community program had on average 10 emergency department presentations compared to 22 in those who were not enrolled. Early modelling also indicated that if every local health district implemented this approach, the potential activity benefit would be \$17.7 million.

Defibs save lives in the community

NSW Ambulance paramedics volunteered their time and expertise to the Community Defib Project – a registered not-for-profit organisation that installs automated external defibrillators in easy-to-reach locations like pubs, shopping centres and community halls in regional communities. This has significantly reduced the time to treatment for patients in these areas, with the project installing its 50th defibrillator this year.

1. The findings of the Centre for Health Service Development evaluation were published by the Mental Health Branch of NSW Health. NSW Health (2022), [Pathways to Community Living Final Evaluation Report](#).

Transforming Patient Experience Award

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network

The Quiet Pathway

The Quiet Pathway for Special Kids is a successful peri-operative program for children with anxiety, autism, and other behavioural and intellectual disabilities. This individualised stewardship program makes the peri-operative journey safe and stress-free for these special kids.

Treatment goals are shared, and plans tailored to suit the individual circumstances of each child, making it a winning patient experience. The program has radically transformed peri-operative care for this vulnerable group of children and their carers.



The Quiet Pathway team makes the peri-operative journey safe and stress-free for vulnerable kids and their parents and carers.

Cancer Institute NSW

In 2021–22, the Cancer Institute NSW undertook a wide range of activities to respond to the evolving pandemic and improve access to care for cancer patients.

Pandemic response

A multidisciplinary community of practice convened to support the cancer care system to respond to the pandemic. Members shared information and strategies to deliver care safely while reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19. They adapted models of care based on emerging evidence, such as the increased use of virtual care in cancer services.

Better access to services

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program is the Australian Government initiative that invites eligible Australians to participate in bowel screening. This year the 'Do the Test' campaign encouraged people to complete and return the test, and we saw an increased demand for colonoscopy services.

The Colonoscopy Access in NSW project informs funding decisions to ensure NSW public hospitals can meet the increased demand for colonoscopy services over the coming years. Access to colonoscopies for people who have received positive bowel cancer screening results has improved. There are now 13 localised direct access colonoscopy services in public hospitals, with 3 services opening in 2021–22.

Working alongside key stakeholders, the Cancer Institute NSW also increased access to hypofractionated radiotherapy for women with early-stage breast cancer. Hypofractionated radiation therapy is given over a shorter period of time (fewer days or weeks) than standard radiation therapy. This can improve patients' quality of life and health outcomes. Uptake of this type of therapy increased in 2021–22, accounting for more than 90% of treatment courses delivered in NSW public facilities.

Cancer data analysis

The Cancer Institute NSW's analysis and reporting of cancer data was redesigned to better respond to emerging issues and improve service planning, design and delivery. The Cancer Institute NSW provided actionable data insights to the cancer care system through the Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes program to:

- reduce variation of clinical care
- improve patient experiences
- reduce inequalities in access and outcomes for priority populations.

The program delivered 16 Impacts of COVID-19 in Cancer Services reports, which supported the pandemic response and recovery.

Patient feedback

Patient-centred care improved through the patient-reported measures program, which collects feedback about patients' experiences and outcomes. In 2021–22, the program reached 8,000 electronic patient information surveys. Results were available to clinicians in real time to support their discussions on patient care and enable them to provide tailored information and support.

Multicultural support

The Cancer Institute NSW funded in-language surveys at existing cancer services sites and the employment of multicultural support staff members to establish links to local services and referral pathways.

Cancer resources in 35 community languages were developed, including emerging languages to improve cancer literacy in multicultural communities.

Online resources for carers

The Cancer Institute NSW supported best-practice cancer care through the expansion of eviQ, an online resource providing evidence-based, peer-reviewed cancer treatment protocols and information. eviQ had more than 727,000 users during 2021–22, which was a 12% increase from 2020–21.

eviQ published information on the safe administration of chemotherapy, including resources supporting pharmacists with oral chemotherapy delivery. It now has more than 1,000 treatment protocols, each with information resources for patients. The Cancer Institute NSW led the development of eviQ's International Consensus Guideline for Anticancer Drug Dosing in Kidney Dysfunction, with public consultation in May 2022.

eviQ Education supports the rapid uptake of emerging evidence into clinical practice and provides online education for oncology professionals. It had more than 122,000 users in 2021–22, which is an increase of 13% from 2020–21. Innovations included resources to support the delivery of culturally appropriate services and a course on personal protective equipment.

Patient Safety First Award

Southern NSW Local Health District

Keeping pregnant women safe and close to home

Improving women's safety and reducing unnecessary preterm transfers to tertiary maternity facilities was the key aim of Southern NSW Local Health District when they implemented quantitative fetal fibronectin (fFN) testing.

The world-class technology helps to predict the likelihood of a preterm birth occurring within seven days of testing. With this care, women can safely stay in their rural communities with family, have healthy pregnancies, and grow their babies longer closer to home.



Staff from Southern NSW Local Health District are surprised by their NSW Health Award win.

Priority 2

Safe care is delivered across all settings

Our future

NSW Health is committed to safe, high quality, reliable healthcare that is delivered in a sustainable and personalised way, within our hospitals, in communities, at home and virtually.

Key objectives

- 2.1 Deliver safe, high quality reliable care for patients in hospital and other settings
- 2.2 Deliver more services in the home, community and virtual settings
- 2.3 Connect with partners to deliver integrated care services
- 2.4 Strengthen equitable outcomes and access for rural, regional and priority populations
- 2.5 Align infrastructure and service planning around the future care needs

Key achievements

- Integrated virtual care as a safe, effective, and accessible option for healthcare delivery in NSW with 152,500 virtual consultations hosted via the myVirtualCare platform was used by 25,000 clinicians.
- Delivered care to 16,124 COVID-positive children in the community through virtualKIDS. Numbers peaked at 2,517 in one day, on 20 September 2021.
- Provided free dental care to 139,359 NSW primary school students through the NSW Health Primary School Mobile Dental Program.
- Delivered 24,231 Out of Hospital Care Program packages across NSW.
- The Lumos program, which links de-identified data from general practices and other sources, exceeded the target of 500 enrolments with a total of 600 GPs enrolled.

Delivering safe care in all settings

Putting patient safety first

The Patient Safety First Unit monitors, identifies, assesses and escalates emerging risks to deliver safe, high-quality, reliable care for patients in hospitals and other settings throughout the state. This includes overseeing reportable incident notifications.

The team worked with a broad range of stakeholders in 2021–22 to identify and mitigate emerging risks. They also reviewed the NSW Health Safety and Quality Framework, which outlines key principles for how NSW Health staff members can provide safe, high-quality care. The team also coordinated NSW Health's responses to the NSW Attorney General for all coronial findings, recommending potential statewide learnings for the state's health system.

A COVID-19 Patient Carousel was established to load-balance the distribution of NSW ambulances with COVID-19 patients across hospitals in the Greater Sydney area. This ensured patients were transported to the right hospital the first time, reducing secondary patient transfers.

To coordinate system capacity and patient flow across the state, the System Flow Control Centre was established. The centre's establishment aligns with the Future Health Framework: to prepare for, respond to, and recover from threats to population health such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reducing fall injuries

The Clinical Excellence Commission's Comprehensive Care safety model aims to minimise harm by ensuring safe, reliable, high-value care for older people. To scale up the model and reduce fall-related injuries in hospital, the Clinical Excellence Commission developed the Quality Improvement Data System (QIDS) Comprehensive Care Minimising Harm dashboards for local health districts. The dashboards facilitate data-informed decisions on quality improvement initiatives and practice changes. They are supported by the Clinical Excellence Commission and are in use across three districts.

Mental health patient safety

The Clinical Excellence Commission partnered with NSW Ministry of Health branches, local health districts and specialty health networks on a number of projects to implement mental health patient safety priorities across NSW Health. The priorities are to reduce the suicide rate and to reduce seclusion.

Other partnership achievements throughout the year include:

- publishing a Seclusion Reduction quality improvement toolkit, designed to support NSW Health staff to reduce harm associated with seclusion
- having graduates participate in the Mental Health Improvement Coach Program Graduation eForum demonstrating support provided to clinical teams for safety and quality work, including seclusion reduction
- supporting and training the Sydney Local Health District Restrictive Practices steering committee and working groups in improvement science to increase capability for clinical teams to reduce harm associated with seclusion
- developing a dashboard on seclusion reduction that is in use in selected local health districts to enable clinical teams to understand improvement over time and which change ideas are beneficial and which need refinement to reach the intended outcome.

Maternal and neonatal care

The Clinical Excellence Commission Maternal and Neonatal Safety Program supports the continued improvement of the safety and quality of perinatal care for mothers and babies across NSW. Statewide learnings are incorporated into safety programs, including the Perinatal Safety Education program. The Clinical Excellence Commission has continued to support the four research sites for the Safer Baby Bundle program including the development of statewide resources and the facilitation of learning sets.

The NSW Maternity and Neonatal Service Capability Framework was first published in 2016 to describe the planned activities and clinical complexity that a maternity or neonatal facility is capable of safely providing. In 2020–21 the guideline was reviewed with the help of an expert advisory group and extensive consultation with key stakeholders. The revised guideline strengthens governance, accountability and reporting processes for the delivery of maternity and neonatal services.

Equitable emergency care

A collaboration between the Agency for Clinical Innovation, senior nurses and other stakeholders has seen the development of new emergency protocols to improve the experiences of patients and health staff during initial emergency care. The emergency protocols initiating care – or EPIC – enables nurses to take a standardised approach to initiate care where appropriate across NSW emergency departments.

Programs to elevate care and provide targeted services

The Good to Great program was piloted in 11 emergency departments in metropolitan, rural and remote sites as a key initiative to achieve the Premier's Priority of improving service levels in hospitals. A collaboration between the Health Education and Training Institute, the Clinical Excellence Commission and the NSW Ministry of Health, the program focused on building leadership capability, a positive workplace culture and collaborative partnerships in our emergency departments. Building on the NSW Ministry of Health's Elevating the Human Experience – Our Guide to Action principles, emergency department teams were empowered to consider performance from multiple perspectives: leadership; staff and patient experience; organisational culture; and thriving within complex systems.

Incident management

The Clinical Excellence Commission's new incident management system, ims+, continued in its development in partnership with eHealth NSW and vendors. An evaluation process is now embedded in formal committee structures that will enable the ongoing realisation of benefits and the ability to respond to stakeholder feedback on how to improve the system's functionality.

Our response to the Henry Review

Work on the Henry Review Implementation Plan has been completed as well as details of NSW Health's response to the findings and recommendations of the review of health services for children, young people and families in the NSW health system.

Keeping People Healthy Award

Agency for Clinical Innovation

ACE-ing it!

Approximately 50% of people seeking alcohol and drug treatment are affected by impaired brain function (or cognitive impairment), which can impact the success of treatment.

The Alcohol and Drug Cognitive Enhancement (ACE) program has been co-designed by the Agency for Clinical Innovation's Alcohol and Drug Network with clinicians and consumers, with impressive results.

It provides clinicians with simple tools to screen for, assess and respond to cognitive impairment. This can help clinicians improve a client's brain function and target treatment to match a client's capacity, helping to ensure people engage with and stay in treatment.



Agency for Clinical Innovation staff and stakeholders at the NSW Health Awards, where the Alcohol and Drug Cognitive Enhancement (ACE) program won the Keeping People Healthy Award.

A monitoring and reporting approach provides regular progress updates against the recommendations. Progress will be overseen by the Children, Young People and Families Executive Steering Committee, and updates will be published on the NSW Health website.

COVID-19 response

The Clinical Excellence Commission's hotel quarantine and airport support work concluded, with an external audit of the hotel quarantine program. A total of 981 audit reports were generated by the Clinical Excellence Commission Infection Prevention and Control team, with 543 recommendations for improvement all actioned. Hotel infection and prevention control compliance rates were between 86% and 100%. A total of 83 formal education sessions were provided across agencies.

Connecting patients virtually

Advances in virtual care

NSW Health is committed to providing world-class care that is safe, reliable and personalised. Virtual care helps us to do this. Virtual care safely connects patients with health professionals to deliver care when and where it is needed, through various channels such as telephone, video conferencing and remote monitoring. NSW Health launched the next stage of our NSW Virtual Care Strategy 2021-2026 to integrate virtual care as a safe, effective, and accessible option for healthcare delivery in NSW. In the last year, 152,500 virtual consultations via the myVirtualCare platform were hosted, and was used by 25,000 clinicians.

To raise awareness of virtual care options, and to address the misconceptions and promote the benefits of virtual care, a range of communication was developed. This included an animation to explain virtual care and its benefits, and 20 published stories from patients, carers and clinicians about their experiences of virtual care. More than 23,000 people visited the website.

One example of NSW Health's push towards virtual care is the NSW Telestroke service. It is available at 23 regional and rural hospitals across NSW. Over the reporting period there were 2,106 calls made to the Telestroke 1300 service.

Digital solutions

eHealth supported NSW Ambulance to manage surging triple zero calls by fast-tracking the establishment of the Virtual Clinical Care Centre at Gladesville. eHealth NSW continued to support the Leading Better Value Care program by developing and enhancing digital solutions within NSW Health's Electronic Medical Record system. These solutions targeted patients with renal disease, chronic osteoarthritis and the risk of osteoporotic refracture. Statewide pilots are underway.

The Radiology Information System and the Picture Archiving and Communication System expanded to 10 health organisations, providing clinicians with easy access to medical images to make timely decisions regarding patient care.

This is also aligned with the Future Health priority: to have research, innovation and digital advances inform service delivery.

Out of Hospital Care

An Australian first in paediatric care

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network established virtualKIDS as Australia's first paediatric-specific virtual care service. The 24/7 nursing-led service supports patients receiving care closer to home in collaboration with local care teams. It does this by offering remote monitoring, a patient and family hotline, and collaborative virtual ward rounds. It also coordinates the provision of specialist advice.

As part of the network's COVID-19 response, virtualKIDS delivered care to 16,124 COVID-positive children in the community. Numbers peaked at 2,517 in one day, on 20 September 2021.

Out of Hospital Care Program

NSW Health implemented the Out of Hospital Care Program across NSW on 1 July 2021. The community packages (ComPacks) and safe and supported at home (SASH) strategies were extended to include end-of-life home support packages. Overall, 24,231 packages were delivered across NSW. Non-clinical packages, including case management and home care services, support hospital discharges and prevent avoidable admissions.

The Out of Hospital Care initiatives support people living in regional and rural NSW, with 42% of all packages supporting people in those areas. The ability of Out of Hospital Care service providers to subcontract smaller agencies to carry out their work has allowed priority populations, such as the Aboriginal population, to access local, culturally appropriate services.

Wellbeing nurses for vulnerable communities

The Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program supports the health and wellbeing needs of school students and their families living in vulnerable communities. It facilitates the coordination of appropriate early interventions, assessments, and referrals to health and social services.

The NSW Government has committed \$46.8 million over four years to 2023–24 for an additional 100 wellbeing nurses to work in schools in rural and metropolitan NSW.

These positions are in addition to six wellbeing nurse positions funded as part of the Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program.

As of 30 June 2022, NSW Health has recruited 78 of the 106 wellbeing nurse positions, including the pilot sites. In 2021–22, local health districts reported wellbeing nurses delivered services to more than 3,400 individual students as part of the program. Wellbeing nurses were found to positively impact on the health, wellbeing and educational outcomes of students in the pilot site evaluation.

In 2021–22, NSW Health continued to implement the program in schools in priority locations, based on high community need. Selection of locations was influenced by data on child and family vulnerability; health and mental health risk factors; socioeconomic disadvantage; the effects of bushfires and drought on communities; and regional, rural or remote location.

Dedicated care for the LGBTIQ+ community

In 2021–22, the NSW Government provided \$3 million towards the establishment of ACON's LGBTIQ+ Health Centre. Set to open in Sydney's inner west, the centre will provide primary care, mental and sexual health and cancer screening services to people of diverse sexualities and genders and intersex people.

Strengthening outpatient referrals

NSW Health began developing statewide criteria for referrals to ophthalmology and gastroenterology specialist clinics, to improve the quality and appropriateness of outpatient referrals. The criteria will help to accurately and consistently prioritise patients to optimise equity of access to outpatient care.

Linking GPs statewide

The Lumos program, which links de-identified data from general practices and other sources to build a clearer picture of the patient journey through the NSW health system continued to grow in its second year. GP enrolments increased from 450 to 600, exceeding the three-year target of 500 enrolments.

New user-friendly business intelligence dashboards have made it easier to access information from the Lumos platform. In 2021–22, analyses of data explored GP activity and hospital outcomes to continue to support value-based healthcare initiatives. Negotiations began on including Medicare Benefits Schedule data in the mix of data analysed through the Lumos program. Lumos has been nationally recognised in Australia's Primary Healthcare 10 Year Plan 2022–2032 as the 'standard of effective use of data which the Government would like all regions around Australia to reach'.

Integrating care for better patient management

As part of integrated care, a process for managing long COVID through the Planned Care for Better Health initiative was implemented. In late 2021, the Agency for Clinical Innovation's Rehabilitation and Respiratory Networks collaborated to develop the Clinical Assessment Guide for Assessment and Management of Post-acute Sequelae of COVID-19, with the input of a broad range of subject matter experts. This was used to update the original post-COVID-19 conditions HealthPathway, ensuring consistent guidance for primary care in managing patients with COVID-19.

Preventing and responding to violence, abuse and neglect

Support for survivors of abuse

The Integrated Prevention and Response to Violence, Abuse and Neglect Framework is being implemented from 2019 to 2025 to strengthen NSW Health's response to violence, abuse and neglect including domestic and family violence, sexual assault, all forms of child abuse and neglect, and problematic or harmful sexual behaviours. NSW Health has begun Phase 2 of the implementation, focusing on integrating violence, abuse and neglect services into the broader health system and interagency partners. To achieve this, violence, abuse and neglect services established a strategic relationship with NSW Health Social Work in 2021–22.

Integrated trauma-informed care

In 2021–22, NSW Health continued to develop its Integrated Trauma-Informed Care Framework for vulnerable children and young people, and their families and carers. The framework includes practical tips for clinicians and other patient-facing staff based on feedback from community consultations, as well as guiding policy makers, administrators, managers and executives. Feedback on the framework from community and professional groups has been incorporated, and a draft implementation and communications plan has been developed.

NSW Health continued implementing a pilot project on domestic violence routine screening (DVRS) and response in six emergency departments across three local health districts. The service model for the pilot DVRS in emergency departments was to integrate screening, response and clinical documentation into existing emergency department processes and the Electronic Medical Record system. A number of pilot sites will continue to provide DVRS in emergency departments and NSW Health is developing an interim suite of information and resources to support the future.

Boosting oral healthcare

In 2021–22 NSW public dental services provided more than 575,000 appointments to more than 260,000 people. The NSW Health Primary School Mobile Dental Program offered free dental care to 139,359 NSW primary school students. Established in 2019, the program builds on existing free dental health services for Medicare-eligible children aged under 18. It aims to offer check-ups to at least 136,000 children each year, maximising access to comprehensive oral health services for primary school children in areas of greatest need, including those in priority populations such as low-income and rural households.

Following COVID-19 restrictions, more than \$6.6 million was allocated to local health districts for COVID-19 waiting list catch up. Of those who were waiting assessment, 79% of children and 63% of adults were seen within recommended benchmark waiting times.

Supporting regional and rural health expertise

Medical recruitment and support

The Health and Education Training Institute facilitated the recruitment of 31 Rural Generalist Advanced Skills trainees as part of the NSW Rural Generalist Medical Training Program. The trainees began the 2022 clinical year in various rural locations.

The institute plays a key role within NSW Health in accrediting medical intern facilities to accept and train medical interns in their first two post-graduate years. It adopted various means to maintain the accreditation process during COVID-19 restrictions. For the 2022 clinical year, the institute filled 1,048 medical intern positions (including two job-share positions) from 1,050 applicants to ensure high standards of ongoing clinical care.

The institute introduced regular meetings to support directors of prevocational education in NSW and ensure that ongoing training such as the Surgical Sciences Intensive Course could be delivered virtually during COVID-19 restrictions. It also supported medical specialist training networks.

Commissioning services for vulnerable people

Collaborative Commissioning established an additional three regionally based co-commissioning partnerships between local health districts, primary health networks and other health organisations, focusing on services for vulnerable people. There are now a total of six partnerships providing cardiology services, value-based urgent care services, rapid care for frail and older people, and support for people with type 2 diabetes. They will also improve outcomes for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and congestive heart failure.

Far West P25 Radio Network project

The Far West P25 Radio Network project won the prestigious International Critical Communications Award for the Best Use of Critical Communications in Public Safety. The award acknowledges the success of products, organisations and individuals that have pushed boundaries and capabilities within the field. NSW Ambulance partnered with Vertel Telecommunications to design, construct and implement the digital radio network in the Far West (Broken Hill) area. This innovative project has resolved radio communication issues experienced by paramedics in a large section of remote regional NSW.

Aligning infrastructure with future needs

Targeted capital investment

In 2021–22, the NSW Ministry of Health consolidated its new approach to capital investment planning to align future capital investments with the long-term, statewide directions in NSW Health's 20-Year Health Infrastructure Strategy. Capital proposals submitted by NSW Health organisations were reviewed against strategic alignment tests contained in the NSW Health Statewide Investment and Prioritisation Framework, and assessed as having either met requirements for inclusion in the NSW Health 10-year forward plan or requiring further development. The forward plan was refreshed to reflect the outcome of the assessment process, and submitted to NSW Treasury in accordance with the annual state budget process.

New ambulance fleet and services

In January 2022, NSW Ambulance launched a fleet of five new Beechcraft King Air 350C fixed-wing aircraft, commencing a partnership with aircraft operator Pel-Air. The new aircraft are faster and quieter, and come with state-of-the-art electronic systems. They also have an improved medical fit-out to treat patients in the aircraft.

The new planes are capable of carrying two stretcher patients and three sitting patients, and are fitted with an updated loading arm that removes the need to manually lift patients in and out of the aircraft.

NSW Ambulance rolled out the first of 80 new four-wheel drive retrieval vehicles featuring an optimised layout for use on challenging terrain during patient transfers and rescues.

End-of-life care

Funding for end-of-life and palliative care has been used to enhance the workforce and services by:

- moving 14 specialist palliative care services online with myVirtualCare.
- creating new palliative care nurse positions across NSW.
- funding more than 30 new palliative care refurbishment projects.

A total of \$37 million has been allocated over four years to enhance community care for people with late-stage degenerative and chronic conditions and disability.

Following engagement and planning, the funding will be used to increase the number of clinical staff in community services that support people with late-stage chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic heart failure, dementia and neurodegenerative diseases.

Working together to deliver person-centred care

The Joint Statement

The NSW Primary Health Network – NSW Health Joint Statement² (the Joint Statement) is an agreement between NSW Health, the NSW primary health networks and the Primary Care Division of the Australian Government Department of Health.

The Joint Statement was released in August 2021. It encourages a one health system mindset which supports us to think and act beyond our current healthcare structures and boundaries. It aims to drive integrated reform across the healthcare system and break down silos in healthcare. The Joint Statement sets out how NSW Health, the NSW Primary Healthcare Networks and the Commonwealth will work together to address three priority areas:

- Focusing on care in the community.
- Establishing regional planning processes and governance.
- Data and outcomes.

2. [The NSW Primary Health Network – NSW Health Joint Statement, August 2020](#)

Priority 3

People are healthy and well

Our future

Investing in keeping people healthy to prevent ill health and tackle health inequality is a key priority for the future of health in NSW.

Focusing on promoting positive health behaviours across the population, delivering early risk-based interventions that support people to manage chronic conditions and take responsibility for their own health across their lifespan, will help strengthen the opportunity for people to benefit from wellness no matter their age and relieve some of the pressure on the system.

Key objectives

- 3.1 Prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from pandemic and other threats to population health
- 3.2 Get the best start in life from conception through to age five
- 3.3 Make progress towards zero suicides recognising the devastating impact on society
- 3.4 Support healthy ageing ensuring people can live more years in full health and independently at home
- 3.5 Close the gap by prioritising care and programs for Aboriginal people
- 3.6 Support mental health and wellbeing for our whole community
- 3.7 Partner to address the social determinants of ill health in our communities

Key achievements

- Increased the number of Safe Havens² – a drop-in service for people needing mental health support – to 17; suicide prevention outreach teams to 19; and trained more than 1,700 NSW Government staff working outside mental health services in suicide prevention.
- Provided \$9.7 million in funding to support Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to deliver tailored, culturally safe oral health care for Aboriginal people.
- More than 13,300 women were referred to the Get Healthy in Pregnancy program to encourage women to eat healthily, be active, abstain from drinking alcohol and achieve healthy weight gain during pregnancy.
- NSW Health aged care assessment teams delivered 100,285 high-quality and timely aged care assessments to NSW residents so they could access assistance to remain living safely at home.
- Provided 11,000 mental health service sessions to NSW residents to access privately practising psychologists, psychiatrists and other mental health professionals.

Building the resilience of our community and health systems

\$130 million for COVID-19 responses

The NSW Government announced \$130 million in funding for mental health services to assist NSW residents in their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It earmarked \$35 million over two years to boost the surge capacity of the state's mental health clinical workforce, in partnership with primary health networks. The funding enables NSW residents to access privately practising psychologists, psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. As of June 2022, more than 11,000 sessions had been provided.

The funding included \$20 million over 18 months to provide up to 55,000 additional services to young people through local Headspace centres. These services are enabled by offering masters and doctorate psychology students (clinical and general registration), and social work and occupational therapy students (pre-registration and masters) placements at Headspace centres. As of June 2022, 42 students had been placed across the state. Clinical educators are also being recruited to supervise students conducting comprehensive mental health assessments. The funding also enabled increases in GP and psychiatrist sessions at Headspace centres.

3. People experiencing suicidal thoughts or in distress can visit a Safe Haven to seek refuge and support from people with lived experience. The spaces are welcoming and have a range of activities to help people divert their suicidal thinking. No referral is required to access a Safe Haven.

The government has dedicated \$14 million over two years to train more than 275,000 people across NSW in suicide prevention. The training is being offered to high school teachers and support staff, as well as parents, youth influencers (such as sports coaches and sports club managers), community group members and peer leaders at high schools. By the end of June, more than 1,100 people had been trained.

Responding to natural disasters

The NSW Government is investing \$25 million over three years from 2021–22 for people in flood-affected communities. This includes:

- \$7 million to enable the North Coast Primary Health Network to engage clinical and non-clinical staff, including for Safe Havens that provide local psychological and clinical support.
- \$3.5 million to enable the North Coast Primary Health Network to recruit 10 local recovery coordinators.
- \$5 million to establish a grants scheme for non-government organisations to fund trauma-based programs, focusing on supporting young people, older residents and Aboriginal communities.
- \$1 million to set up four pop-up Safe Havens in the areas hardest hit by floods.
- \$5 million for statewide needs-based resourcing and support for the Northern Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains and Hunter New England Primary Health Networks, focusing on wellbeing and resilience grants for community-based organisations.
- \$3.5 million over three years for Headspace to work with affected communities.

State preparedness and response

NSW Health worked hard in February and March 2022 – alongside partner agencies such as Resilience NSW and primary health networks – to provide support to all flood-affected communities, particularly in the Northern Rivers and Hawkesbury regions. NSW Health staff continued to care for their patients, while also experiencing the devastation of floods that affected their own communities, families and homes.

On 1 March 2022, Ballina Hospital was evacuated. Northern NSW Local Health District and NSW Ambulance staff – working with NSW Police and the NSW State Emergency Service – safely moved patients amid concerns that rising water would put their lives at risk. All 55 patients were evacuated to a temporary emergency department established at the Xavier Catholic College.

Flooding in NSW affected healthcare services in the area, particularly as healthcare workers were personally impacted and unable to get to work. NSW Health sent staff to assist colleagues and communities, particularly in Northern NSW. This included paramedics, clinicians, registered nurses and mental health specialists.

NSW Health worked closely with other government agencies such as the Department of Communities and Justice to provide support to evacuation centres. Healthcare workers, including nurses, pharmacists, and mental health support and public health staff were also sent to help in evacuation centres that were set up across flood-affected communities.

In addition, we worked closely with the Australian Government on planning and preparing for evacuation of residential aged care facilities at risk from floodwaters.

NSW Health public health teams also advised public health and response agencies on health issues including infection risks during flood clean-up; mosquitos and other pests; animal bites, including snake bites; water supply and ‘boil water’ alerts.

Public health teams provided support and expertise to evacuation centres on the management of people presenting with or suspected of having COVID-19.

NSW Health’s mental health staff helped these communities process the consequences of these tragic events once the immediate danger passed and people were safe. The urgent focus of mental health staff was identifying and providing urgent mental health support to clients most in need. NSW Health staff continue to support recovery activities, providing ongoing mental health support to communities in flood-impacted areas.

Redeploying resources

NSW Ambulance used key strategies to respond to the increased demands of the pandemic. These included:

- activating a rolling State Incident Management Team
- appointing a dedicated State Operations Controller
- establishing the System Flow Centre with health partners
- enhancing capacity in its control centres.

Alongside HealthShare NSW, it also worked with stakeholders across NSW Health to rapidly roll out a Make Ready Service for emergency departments. This allowed faster redeployment of resources and reduced bed block within the health system, which leaves ambulances stuck with patients at emergency. The service included sanitisation of vehicles while paramedics transferred patients to the care of hospital staff.

State Health Emergency Operations Centre Workforce Operations Team also collaborated with other branches and teams to redeploy clinical and non-clinical staff to meet demand during COVID-19 surges and in the aftermath of the flood emergency in Northern NSW. These deployments included staff from the NSW Ministry of Health Workforce Planning and Talent Development Branch, the Rural Fire Service, NSW State Emergency Service, local health districts and specialty health networks.

Managing communicable diseases

Response to cronobacter contamination of infant formula

Health Protection NSW responded to two separate instances of cronobacter contamination of infant formula. Both formula products were for specialist infant brands only available under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for children with special nutritional needs. NSW Health worked closely with specialists in NSW, the NSW Food Authority and the infant-formula company to develop advice to parents and guardians. Active surveillance for illness associated with the imported product did not identify any infections in NSW or elsewhere in Australia. Information for parents and caregivers was made available on the [NSW Health website](#).

HIV

Health Protection NSW and partners made further progress towards the virtual elimination of HIV transmission. From January to December 2021 there was a 36% drop in new HIV diagnoses compared to the January to December 2016–2020 average.

This result is likely driven by the effects of COVID-19 restrictions, altered health-seeking behaviour, lower levels of casual sex and testing, as well as altered service provision and access.

The NSW HIV Strategy 2021–2025 aims to prevent transmission, normalise testing, reduce stigma and encourage anyone who does test positive to start and maintain treatment soon after diagnosis.

Hepatitis C

The NSW Hepatitis C Strategy 2022–2025 aims to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health concern by 2028. Between 2016 and March 2022, NSW Health treated 46% of the estimated 33,182 people living with hepatitis C and saved an estimated \$98,425,280 in avoided healthcare costs as a result.

We also worked with partners to increase access to testing and treatment for vulnerable populations. This was achieved through the NSW Dried Blood Spot testing pilot, which incentivised testing at Needle and Syringe Program sites and broad testing in emergency departments. We're also improving access to hepatitis C care in settings where alcohol and other drugs are used. This is being done in partnership with the Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs, local health districts and non-government organisations.

NSW Health partnered with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to provide hepatitis C education to GPs. The team also partnered with Hepatitis NSW and the NSW Users and AIDS Association to launch a comprehensive communications campaign – Hep Cured – aimed at encouraging people who inject drugs to access hepatitis C care.

Influenza

The influenza season started early in 2022, at the beginning of May, after two years in which the influenza virus was largely absent from the community. To raise awareness of the importance of the influenza vaccination, a campaign was rolled out to target people at high risk of severe flu. NSW Health also rolled out a free influenza program.

Monkeypox

The monkeypox pandemic escalated from May 2022 in NSW, with 10 cases reported to 3 June 2022. The cases were all male, with a median age of 38 (age range 26–55 years). Most lived in metropolitan Sydney and had travelled overseas recently.

NSW Health worked with clinicians, ACON and other community organisations to develop a targeted response. This included vaccination and prevention messages based on up-to-date health information. Doses of Imvanex (JYNNEOS), a third-generation smallpox vaccine used to protect against monkeypox infection were procured and distributed via sexual health GP clinics and community sites.

Japanese encephalitis

Thirteen acute infections of locally acquired Japanese encephalitis were identified between February and June 2022. These were the first locally acquired cases in the state and they were all acquired between mid January to mid February 2022.

Health Protection NSW and the NSW Department of Primary Industries acted on the outbreak to quickly implement controls, including increasing mosquito surveillance, and alerted the community through communications alerts and social media.

Health Protection NSW also commenced a blood sample survey to estimate prevalence of Japanese encephalitis in the NSW community to inform the vaccine strategy.

NSW Health purchased several thousand doses of JE vaccine from the private market, at the cost of \$1.4 million, to commence a targeted vaccination response to people exposed to infected animals in March 2022. This was later supplemented by vaccines provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health, for people who meet the vaccination priority group criteria announced by the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia.

Health Protection NSW and NSW Department of Primary Industries continue to collaborate on planning to protect the community in next year's mosquito season.

Supporting mental health and wellbeing

Bilateral agreement to tackle suicide

The NSW Government signed a \$383 million Bilateral Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Schedule with the Australian Government on 7 March 2022. The agreement will see an even greater increase in mental health and suicide prevention supports for the people of NSW over the next four years. The schedule includes seven co-funded initiatives spanning four years from 2022-23.

Initiatives include:

- \$121.3 million to create universal aftercare services in NSW to support individuals following a suicide attempt and/or suicidal crisis (\$60.65 million from NSW).
- \$106.1 million to substantially expand and enhance Headspace services, ensuring it can reach more young people across the state (\$46.48 million from NSW).
- \$84.5 million to establish 14 adult Head to Health treatment centres, including five new centres and nine satellite centres across the state (\$26.37 million from NSW).
- \$35.9 million to establish Head to Health Kids Hubs to improve access to multidisciplinary team care for children (\$17.94 million from NSW).
- \$15.7 million to improve perinatal mental health screening and enhance capture and reporting of nationally consistent perinatal mental health data (\$6.41 million from NSW).
- \$14.7 million to ensure all people in NSW who are bereaved or affected by suicide can access postvention support services (\$6.83 million from NSW).
- \$4.9 million to implement a Distress Intervention Trial Program to prevent and reduce suicidal behaviour (\$2.44 million from NSW).

NSW Government-funded initiatives include:

- \$35 million over two years to boost the surge capacity of the mental health clinical workforce.
- \$20 million over 18 months for young people to access additional Headspace support services. These will be provided by the following:
 - Masters and doctorate psychology students (clinical and general registration) and social work and occupational therapy students (pre-registration/masters) who will undertake placements at Headspace centres. As of 30 June 2022, 42 students had been

Excellence in the provision of mental health services award

Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

Space Camp launch

The Space Camp program was developed as a neuroscience evidence-informed early intervention program, supporting families and school staff to meet a child's broad developmental needs based on the child's unique diversities.

The program supports all presentations, including neurotypical, neurodivergent and trauma, across all age spans. It provides skills for both caregiver and child within a single framework.



The Space Camp early-intervention program in action.

- placed across the state. Clinical educators are also being recruited to supervise students conducting comprehensive mental health assessments.
- GPs and psychiatrists, through increased numbers of sessions.
 - \$14 million over two years to train more than 275,000 people across NSW in suicide prevention. The training is being offered to high school teachers and support staff across the state, as well as parents, youth influencers (for example, sports coaches and club managers), community groups and peer leaders at high schools. As of 30 June 2022, more than 1,100 people had been trained.
 - \$21 million over four years to employ 18 full-time equivalent Aboriginal care navigators and 18 full-time equivalent Aboriginal peer workers in all local health districts and networks. These roles link Aboriginal Australians to a range of culturally appropriate mental health and suicide prevention services.
 - \$16.5 million over four years for 18 eating disorders mental health clinicians across all local health districts and networks.
 - \$3 million over 12 months to assist NSW sporting bodies to deliver mental health and wellbeing initiatives.
 - \$3 million over 12 months to provide access to private beds for those aged 1 to 24 experiencing complex trauma and eating disorders.
 - \$2.6 million over two years to expand the Gidget Foundation's services and access to the online Gidget Perinatal Support Centre.
 - \$3.2 million over four years to establish the Transcultural Mental Health Line.
 - \$1.5 million for Stand Tall school events to reach around 12,000 students in person and livestream to 100,000 students.

Towards Zero Suicides

Towards Zero Suicides seeks to provide best practice crisis care and support, build on local community resilience, and improve systems and practices to reduce the suicide rate in NSW. Progress in 2021–22 included:

- increasing the number of Safe Havens to 17 and suicide prevention outreach teams to 19
- funding rural counsellors to continue to support rural communities across NSW
- supporting aftercare in nine locations and trialling Youth aftercare supports for young people
- fully operationalising post-suicide support services at NSW Government-funded sites
- delivering suicide prevention programs for local communities through 12 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations
- training 6,700 people in suicide awareness and response skills under the Community Gatekeeper initiative
- training more than 1,700 NSW Government staff working outside mental health services in suicide prevention
- ensuring 1,400 NSW Health staff completed the SafeSide Prevention program
- publishing the [NSW Health suicide care pathway: A framework for clinicians](#)
- activating the Transvitality Program to support the trans community
- supporting organisations engaging with priority groups by delivering five community response packages
- operationalising local suicide prevention networks and community collaboratives at 12 locations
- completing a review of the Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018–2023 by the Mental Health Commission of New South Wales.

Improving Aboriginal peoples' experience of mental health services

The NSW Ministry of Health Mental Health Branch is working to improve Aboriginal peoples' mental health outcomes and their experiences of mental health services. This includes implementing the NSW Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020–2025.

A key focus of its work has been to develop holistic models of care that provide referral pathways to and from acute services. Every year, NSW Health delivers the Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum. This year the forum was hosted by Southern NSW Local Health District in Narooma (Yuin Country) on 17 and 18 May.

This year's theme was 'From little things, big things grow'. Around 180 delegates from government, non-government and the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector attended. The forum provides professional development opportunities for delegates and allows them to hear from subject matter experts on mental health, community-based projects, co-design and lived experience. The forum assists and supports the retention of Aboriginal mental health workers and enables them to feel culturally supported, reduce burnout and network with peers. Feedback from delegates highlighted the event as an important measure for workforce retention, capacity building, networking and upskilling the Aboriginal workforce.

The forum is in partnership with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council and aligns to the strategic priorities of the NSW Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020–2025. The forum showcases and demonstrates how culture can be implemented into NSW Health successfully.

Other highlights included:

- the launch of the Central West Mental Health and Wellbeing Project, a collaborative and community led program addressing service gaps in trauma-informed wellbeing services for Aboriginal people in the region
- development of an Aboriginal-led mental health and wellbeing program created in collaboration with Centre of Aboriginal Health, Condobolin Aboriginal Health Service, Orange Aboriginal Medical Service, Weigelli Centre Aboriginal Corporation and Yoorana Gunya Family Healing Centre Aboriginal Corporation.

Perinatal care

A new Mother and Baby Unit opened at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in May 2022. Naamuru is a purpose-built unit with eight inpatient beds that are open 24/7. It is the first statewide facility in NSW designed to keep families together when a parent requires hospitalisation for a severe perinatal mental illness. Building works have commenced for a similar unit at Westmead Hospital.

The Acute Adult Mental Health Inpatient Service opened at Blacktown in March 2022. This state-of-the-art 30-bed unit is designed to support recovery-orientated contemporary models of care.

Supporting timely access to mental health services

Changes to the *Mental Health Act 2007* in June 2022 support mental health services and increase timely access to mental health care. The changes enable mental health assessments to be carried out using audio-visual link where appropriate. A guideline to assist in the implementation of this practice has been published and communicated to the health sector.

The Mental Health Branch has continued to oversee the establishment of 11 Safeguards Teams across the state. Five Safeguards Teams were operational at the end June 2022, and NSW Health was finalising recruitment for the remainder. Safeguards Teams are a new dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service designed to provide care to young people aged 0 to 17 years who are experiencing acute mental health distress. These community-based teams are designed to provide rapid, mobile, intensive and flexible support in the short term. They provide extended-hours mental health services, and partner with relevant health services to offer 24/7 support to young people and families in crisis.

Data's role in keeping people well and preventing ill health

NSW mothers and babies report

The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence published the NSW mothers and babies report, which provides information on the number of births across NSW in 2020, recent trends in the health of mothers and babies in NSW, maternity services provided by hospitals, and the health of Aboriginal mothers and babies.

The report examines stillbirths, and neonatal and maternal deaths, including causes, maternal characteristics, timing and investigations. Understanding these issues helps us work towards improving outcomes for mothers and the state's littlest Australians.

NSW Population Health Survey

The NSW Population Health Survey captures information on a range of health risk factors, behaviours and outcomes from a sample of the NSW population.

In 2021, the survey transitioned to a 100% mobile phone sampling frame, with more than 13,000 respondents. Data collected via the Survey helps NSW Health monitor key risk factors in the community such as smoking, alcohol consumption and overweight and obesity.

Data from the survey are made available via HealthStats NSW.

Closing the Gap initiatives – Aboriginal health

Access to dental care

In 2021–22, NSW Health provided \$9.7 million in funding to support Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to deliver tailored, culturally safe oral health care for Aboriginal people.

By delivering primary preventive care and increasing access to oral health services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations aim to reduce disparities between the oral health status of Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in NSW.

Dental services are now incorporated at three additional Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.

Improving cancer outcomes

The Cancer Institute NSW prioritised improving cancer outcomes for Aboriginal people in 2021–22 by:

- commencing a pilot Coordination of Care in Cancer Services model to support the Optimal Care Pathway for Aboriginal people

- working in partnership with stakeholders on programs and resources
- funding local community cancer control initiatives
- ensuring all public education campaigns were pre-tested to ensure cultural appropriateness
- completing a project to understand best practice anti-tobacco programs for Aboriginal people to prevent uptake and reduce smoking, as well as inform the NSW Aboriginal Tobacco Program
- delivering the Aboriginal Quitline service.

Introducing an Aboriginal health lens to policy and planning

Aboriginal Health Impact Statements are designed to improve Aboriginal health outcomes by systematically applying an Aboriginal health lens to the development of all policies, programs and strategies. During 2021–22, the Centre for Aboriginal Health held 65 events and presentations across NSW Health to support the completion of 91 Aboriginal Health Impact Statements.

To improve Aboriginal health outcomes, the Centre of Aboriginal Health also promoted the inclusion of Aboriginal-specific key performance indicators in service agreements with all districts. It also undertook regular monitoring through the improved Aboriginal Health Dashboard, and participated in quarterly meetings between NSW Health and each district to improve performance.

The Centre for Aboriginal Health led the coordination and development of input for the next iteration of the Closing the Gap implementation plan, in partnership with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW.

Delivery plans were also developed to implement Closing the Gap activities across NSW. Key focus areas included:

- providing culturally safe models of mental health care
- building on Aboriginal community resilience to reduce suicide
- ensuring better access and support services for misuse of alcohol and other drugs
- improving cancer care pathways for Aboriginal people.

In late 2021–22, the NSW Government announced significant funding for these measures, including:

- \$10.1 million over four years to develop culturally safe models of mental health care
- \$9.8 million over three years to expand the Building on Aboriginal Communities' Resilience initiative
- \$9.7 million over four years to improve cancer treatment for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal peoples' experience of hospital care

The Bureau of Health Information released the [Aboriginal People's Experiences of Hospital Care](#) report in 2021–22. Part of the Insights Series, the report reflects the experiences of more than 8,000 Aboriginal people who were admitted to, or gave birth in, a NSW public hospital.

It includes information on the gap between the experiences of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, differences in Aboriginal patients' experiences in rural and urban hospitals, and the importance of contact with Aboriginal health workers. The report also provided government, system managers and healthcare professionals with actionable insights to support programs to improve care for Aboriginal patients.

Improving cultural safety across NSW Health

During 2021–22, the Centre for Aboriginal Health developed an updated Aboriginal Cultural Engagement Self-Assessment Audit Tool for all districts. It is designed to help districts to better assess and improve their level of culturally safe service delivery for Aboriginal patients.

Expanding the sexual assault services' Aboriginal workforce

We have increased the accessibility of sexual assault services for Aboriginal clients and services for children and young people with problematic and harmful sexual behaviours. This is in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

NSW Health also expanded its dedicated services for children and young people with problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, as outlined below:

- New Street services have been established across the state. New Street provides high-quality therapeutic services for children over the age of criminal responsibility (10 years in NSW) who exhibit harmful sexual behaviours. Expansion of the New Street network has significantly increased the number of service users in the past year. The network accepted 111 new clients.
- A new Safe Wayz program for children under the age of criminal responsibility with problematic or harmful sexual behaviours is being rolled out across the state. Local health districts are implementing the program with the help of a statewide communications package.

Our Sexual Assault Services' Aboriginal workforce has been expanded by more than 23 full-time equivalent roles across the state. We have also finalised and released the NSW Sexual Assault Services Cultural Safety Roadmap and Cultural Safety Toolkit on our website. The roadmap and toolkit have been endorsed by all local health district chief executives.

To support implementation of the roadmap, toolkit and locally developed Sexual Assault Services Aboriginal Action Plans, the NSW Ministry of Health engaged ABSTARR Consultancy to undertake targeted training and forums in 2022.

Healthy for life

Mothers, babies and children

The Centre for Population Health's work supports the Future Health strategy, which aims to get children off to a good start. One strategy under this program is Get Healthy in Pregnancy. In 2021–22, more than 13,300 women were referred to the program. It aims to encourage women to eat healthily, be active, abstain from drinking alcohol and achieve healthy weight gain during pregnancy, in line with the Institute of Medicine guidelines. The program is available in 13 local health districts and also refers smokers to Quitline.

In partnership with local health districts, the Centre for Population Health also delivers Munch & Move. This program supports the healthy development of children from birth to five years by promoting healthy eating and physical activity. In 2021–22, a majority of 3,679 (87%) centre-based early childhood services participated in the program.

Virtual residential parenting service

The Virtual Residential Parenting Service was opened in July 2021 by affiliated health organisations Karitane and Tresillian. This is a five-day, four-night, 24-hour online support service for NSW parents and carers of children aged 0–3 years. It provides intensive support for issues with sleeping and settling, feeding, and child development and behaviour, to improve parent and carer mental health and wellbeing.

Enrolled families are connected virtually to a team of healthcare providers, such as a child and family nurse, GP, psychologist and social worker.

Alcohol and other drug treatment services for parents and carers

NSW Health supports pregnant women with substance use issues for up to two years after birth. These services aim to improve health and social outcomes for women, children and their families.

This is achieved through partnerships between maternity, child and family health, alcohol and other drugs treatment services, and other health and welfare providers. In 2020–21, more than 550 women were supported by substance use in pregnancy and parenting services across NSW.

Through the Stay Strong Facebook page, we reached more than 233,000 people. The page provides health messages to raise the awareness of Aboriginal pregnant women, their partners and families about the risks of consuming alcohol and other drugs during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Staying healthy through school

The Centre for Population Health led a NSW Health partnership with the NSW Department of Education to strengthen student mental and physical health and wellbeing through the Supporting Student Wellbeing Memorandum of Understanding and annual workplan. It attracted strong support. Highlights included:

- 82% of NSW primary schools participating in the school-based health program Live Life Well @ School, which supports healthy eating and physical activity
- more than 94% of government schools meeting the Healthy School Canteen Strategy.

NSW Health also offered a community-based program, Go4Fun, which helped children and their families to adopt healthier lifestyles. Children aged 7 to 13 who were above a healthy weight could use the program to achieve statistically significant reductions in weight and improvements in eating habits and fitness.

Go4Fun is available face to face, and as a culturally adapted program for Aboriginal families. It is also available online. Go4Fun online provided children and families with the opportunity to participate when face-to-face activities weren't available during lockdown.

Educating NSW youth

In partnership with the NSW Department of Education, NSW Health launched the 'Do you know what you're vaping?' information campaign and resources to raise awareness of the health risks of young people vaping. The campaign was targeted at young people aged 14 to 17 years, parents, teachers, and health professionals, and is accompanied by a resource toolkit.

In 2021–22 NSW Health continued its comprehensive compliance and enforcement program for illegal tobacco and e-cigarettes containing nicotine. NSW Health undertook 9 successful prosecutions against retailers for the sale of e-cigarettes containing nicotine, seized more than 75,000 e-cigarette products containing nicotine or labelled as containing nicotine, conducted 46 seizures of illegal tobacco, and seized and destroyed more than 284,000 cigarettes and 260 kilograms of other tobacco.

Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare Award Winner

St Vincent's Hospital

Stay'n Deadly and Stay'n in (SDSI)

The SDSI project is a collaboration between the St Vincent's Hospital emergency department and Aboriginal Health Unit, aimed to improve the quality of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

The introduction of a flexi-clinic model saw a significant reduction in the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients who "Did not wait" (DNW) for treatment or "Left at their own risk" (LAOR). The average rate falling from 19.5% to 5.2% of presentations over 12 months.



Staff at St Vincent's Hospital and the Aboriginal Health Unit are improving the quality of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients who attend hospital.

Staying healthy as we age

Helping people to live more years in full health is a key objective of the Centre for Population Health. Programs include Stepping On, a falls prevention program, and Staying Active, an initiative that increases the availability of exercise classes suitable for those aged over 50.

During 2021–22, some local health districts offered Virtual Stepping On as an alternative to face-to-face delivery, particularly during periods of lockdown.

Staying Active programs were also delivered virtually when face-to-face classes were not feasible.

In 2021–22, NSW Health continued to expand the Healthy and Active for Life Online pilot program, which saw a 39% increase in registrations during the 2021 lockdown period.

Helping older people stay in their homes for longer

NSW Health aged care assessment teams delivered 100,285 high-quality and timely aged care assessments to NSW residents so they could access assistance to remain living safely at home. The assessment teams adapted service delivery and incorporated COVID-19 practices to ensure that older people were assessed in a safe manner.

Preventative health

Support to quit smoking

The Cancer Institute NSW delivered the mass media tobacco control campaign, Beat the Cravings, from September 2021 to June 2022. As a result, one in four people who smoke attempted to quit or sought help for their smoking.

In 2021–22, there were more than 5,600 inbound calls to Quitline, which made 9,500 outbound calls. Compared to 2020–21, this is a decrease of 3.6% in inbound calls, and an increase of 3.9% in outbound calls. In 2021–22, about 4,200 people accessed the iCanQuit website.

The Cancer Institute NSW introduced new data fields in medical records systems to enable clinicians to record patients' smoking status. It also improved clinicians' ability to assist patients to stop smoking by integrating functionality for Quitline e-referrals. This was part of the implementation of the Smoking Cessation Framework for NSW Health Services.

Benchmarking sun-safe playgrounds

In partnership with two Queensland universities, the Cancer Institute NSW undertook a project to benchmark levels of shade in NSW playgrounds, with the ultimate aim of establishing future standards. More than 2,590 community playgrounds in 91 local government areas in NSW were mapped to assess the quality and quantity of shade.

The Cancer Institute NSW developed an action tool outlining 20 steps to be considered when planning playgrounds, selecting materials and engaging with stakeholders. Insights from the project to advise councils on the health benefits of creating shade, which will help protect the state's children from cancer-causing ultraviolet radiation.

Other public health awareness campaigns

The Centre for Population Health delivered social marketing campaigns and communications to address key health risk factors, such as from tobacco and other drug and alcohol use. Campaigns also promoted healthy weight and immunisation.

There was a particular focus on NSW Needle and Syringe Program transmission, with campaigns aimed at culturally diverse and heterosexual men who may not have received messaging directed to them in the past. Hepatitis C testing and treatment was also targeted, with campaigns to reduce barriers to prevention, testing and treatment. Specifically, it focused on the stigma associated with hepatitis C and injecting drug use.

Opioid treatment

The opioid treatment program continues to assist opioid-dependent people to reduce or stop opioid use, improve their quality of life, and prevent harms linked to drug use.

On a snapshot day in July 2021 in NSW, more than 24,000 patients were on opioid treatment in public and private healthcare settings. In public opioid treatment settings (including in custody), around 32% of patients were treated with depot buprenorphine.

NSW Health further increased access to take-home naloxone in 2021–22. The program provides free naloxone to people at risk of experiencing or witnessing an opioid overdose; education about preventing overdose; and training to recognise a suspected overdose and respond by administering naloxone.

Online options for treating drug dependency in regional areas

In 2021–22, the Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs funded two virtual care hubs: one provided by the Hunter New England Local Health District and the other through the St Vincent's Hospital Network.

Both are designed to increase access to specialist support in rural and regional areas, including the Mid North Coast, Hunter New England, Western NSW, Far West, Murrumbidgee and Southern NSW Local Health Districts. The hubs provide access to specialist treatment alcohol and other drug clinicians via online platforms. They collaborate with local clinicians to deliver expert, person-centred care and support to people requiring treatment for alcohol and other drugs.

The hubs also facilitate workforce capability development, with addiction medicine specialists delivering education, training and support to local clinicians. This improves confidence in the ongoing delivery of best practice treatment for alcohol and other drugs.

Reducing stigma

In 2021–22, the Stigma and Discrimination project was undertaken as a partnership between the Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs, the Agency for Clinical Innovation, Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs and the NSW Users and AIDS Association.

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs has commissioned three reports that together address:

- health professionals' attitudes and behaviours towards people with lived experience of alcohol and other drug use
- consumer experiences of stigma and discrimination
- existing efforts in Australia to reduce stigma and discrimination.

Priority 4

Our staff are engaged and well supported

Our future

Staff are supported to deliver safe, reliable person-centred care driving the best outcomes and experiences.

Key objectives

- 4.1 Build positive work environments that bring out the best in everyone
- 4.2 Strengthen diversity in our workforce and decision-making
- 4.3 Empower staff to work to their full potential around the future care needs
- 4.4 Equip our people with the skills and capabilities to be an agile, responsive workforce
- 4.5 Attract and retain skilled people who put patients first
- 4.6 Unlock the ingenuity of our staff to build work practices for the future

Key achievements

- More than 800 postgraduate scholarships were awarded to support NSW Health nurses and midwives in their professional development, with more than 25% of them located in rural and regional areas.
- More than 70 undergraduate and 22 postgraduate Aboriginal scholarships were awarded to support nursing and midwifery studies.
- Supported NSW Health staff development with Health Education and Training Institute managing \$8.3 million in grants and scholarships on behalf of the NSW Ministry of Health in 2021–22.
- For the first time in its history, NSW Ambulance had more women than men employed in two generational brackets: Gen Y (1980–1994) and Gen Z (1995–2010).

Our people

Growing our people, talent and leadership

NSW Health is committed to attracting, retaining and developing a skilled workforce who put our patients first. Part of this strategy is to develop current and future health professionals, managers and leaders.

The NSW Health Workforce Plan 2022–2032 outlines our approach to support the state's health workforce to deliver safe, reliable and person-centred care, driving the best outcomes and experiences. It provides a whole-of-system commitment to growing talent, encouraging greater internal talent mobility and attracting exceptional external talent.

Leader success profiles have demonstrated what qualities are required to succeed in roles and build a talent pipeline for succession planning. They can be used to inform decision-making across the NSW employee life cycle, including recruitment, selection and on-boarding, leadership development and career mobility.

Public Service Commission Leadership Academy is a joint initiative between the NSW Public Service Commission and NSW Government clusters, including NSW Health. It aims to foster leadership excellence in the NSW public sector. Leadership academy programs are designed to create a pipeline of future leaders for the sector at each key level of leadership.

Collaborative Staff Member of the Year Award

Western NSW Local Health District

Dr Shannon Nott

Rural Director of Medical Services, Dr Shannon Nott, has become a leading authority on rural healthcare, not just in NSW, but nationally.

He is a natural collaborator who listens and seeks advice from communities, clinicians, representative groups, and parliamentary representatives across government jurisdictions to deliver solutions.

As Clinical Director of the NSW Virtual Care Accelerator, Shannon drove the scaling and translation of virtual solutions and knowledge, critical for transforming the NSW Health response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Dr Shannon Nott is the winner of the NSW Health Collaborative Staff Member of the Year Award.

A fit-for-purpose workforce

NSW Health is committed to unlocking the ingenuity of our staff to achieve its Future Health workforce by ensuring our people are equipped with the skills and capabilities to be agile and responsive. The NSW Health workforce is being provided with the necessary capabilities to manage future disruptions that will transform the future of work by creating a culture of innovation.

The Focus on the Future Workforce Signature Project aims to support the health system to ensure a resilient and digitally enabled workforce prepared for the future of work.

Key initiatives that have been developed:

- Leading for Innovation program and masterclasses aimed at developing and embedding leadership capabilities in innovation in NSW Health.
- Future of Work Thought Leadership Package: a series of papers that explore how technology will impact the future of work across key NSW Health workforces.
- Future Health podcast and On the Horizon newsletter.

NSW Health has also partnered with high school education providers to create a digital health workforce pilot. The aim is to strengthen STEM capability (particularly for a female cohort) and workforce relevance within school student's curriculum to encourage future educational and workforce choices in health.

Visibility of the pipeline of students undertaking health qualifications will be supported by the development of a student pipeline dashboard. This will enable improved workforce planning and forecasts and deepen partnerships with major feeder education providers.

Improving staff experience

Long before the pandemic and the natural disasters that have caused devastation in NSW in the past two years, we recognised that supporting our workforce was core to our efforts to transform patient experiences. We listened carefully to our staff members to curate a program of events and activities offered online, such as monthly Conversations in Human Experience, the Gathering of Kindness, Patient Experience Week and Mini Compassion Labs. These provide safe spaces for reflection, contemplation and learning. More than 5,000 staff members from all parts of the state have participated and the feedback has been extraordinarily positive.

In collaboration with local health districts, we are exploring more opportunities to implement programs that will improve staff experiences including:

- expanding the Allyship Program, a communication program that explores the art and science of effective communication
- procuring 20 additional licences for Schwartz Rounds, a safe multidisciplinary forum where healthcare workers can discuss the social and emotional aspects of working in healthcare.

Working through a pandemic

Surge workforce strategies

NSW Health developed surge workforce solutions to support the health system due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Health workforce demonstrated its ability to work flexibly and responded in agile and innovative ways. Novel workforce solutions were developed to increase system capacity by enabling clinical staff to work to their full scope of practice. These solutions included:

- Care Assistant COVID-19 Workforce Surge Response – the care assistant role is purpose-designed for the COVID-19 surge workforce role and is supported by an industrial agreement. It was piloted across local health districts and specialty health networks and demonstrated value through connecting patients with their communities while also giving patients individual support through augmented care teams.
- COVID-19 vaccination strategies – NSW Health worked closely with the Australian Government to plan and implement a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccination program in NSW. To ensure NSW Health could continue to meet its vaccination targets, a two-pronged strategy was developed by the NSW Ministry of Health to ensure adequate workforce supply, focusing on additional workforce models, as well as sourcing and recruitment support.
- Central recruitment – a centralised recruitment process with statewide talent pools and large-scale screening of candidates was established to rapidly recruit additional staffing to support NSW Health's COVID-19 workforce. This provided NSW Health with a consistent statewide approach to workforce sourcing, marketing, recruitment and onboarding.
- Assistant in Medicine – this role was developed by the NSW Ministry of Health in early 2020 as part of the medical workforce response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Assistant in Medicine role is filled by final year medical students of NSW and ACT universities. Between August 2021 and June 2022, 724 final year medical students (494.11 full-time equivalent) worked as assistants in medicine in NSW public health organisations.

In addition, the NSW Health Allied Health Dashboard released in mid-2022 provides local health districts with information and data about the allied health workforces and supports tactical and operational workforce planning. It can be used to monitor local allied health workforce to ensure appropriate distribution of experience and skills across the organisation according to service need.

Allied health support and delivery

Evaluation of COVID-related allied health workforce models

COVID-19 has led to a rapid uptake of new and innovative models of care (telehealth and virtual care, increased presence of allied health in emergency departments and intensive care units). An evaluation exploring how allied health workforces have been used across NSW Health during the pandemic and lessons learned have been canvassed. The most effective multidisciplinary workforce models that evolved have been documented, with a strengths and challenges workshop with almost 50 service delivery leaders from districts and networks looking at impactful and scalable allied health-led models.

Principles of Allied Health Governance report

Variations in allied health governance in NSW Health was identified as a key opportunity for strengthening the allied health workforce and services. The project brought together multidisciplinary lines of evidence including current governance practice findings, literature and consultation insights regarding best-practice governance to provide a view of principles of governance for the allied health workforce in NSW.

Excellence in Allied Health Awards

The NSW Health Excellence in Allied Health awards formally recognises the important value and contribution that allied health professionals have in delivering patient-centred care. The 2021 inaugural NSW Health Excellence in Allied Health Awards were held in April 2022 at Darling Harbour. The NSW Allied Health Awards allowed NSW Health to show its appreciation to allied health professionals for their diligence, persistence and flexibility in proficiently responding to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Workforce projects

Allied Health Workforce Modelling to 2040

The Allied Health Workforce Modelling to 2040 project is the third stage of the NSW Ministry of Health's Workforce Planning Methodology. It is the first time NSW Health Allied Health workforces have been modelled with key outputs including, establishing indicative allied health workforce requirements to 2040; and delivering data to assist the NSW Ministry of Health, local health districts and specialty health networks and other partner agencies, to identify risk factors associated with the allied health workforces and make informed decisions regarding future workforce planning.

Genetic counsellors and allied health assistants workforce planning

Workforce Planning and Talent Development completed workforce planning projects for genetic counsellors and allied health assistants in 2021–22. These projects explored challenges experienced across NSW and opportunities to grow and support these allied health workforces in a discipline-specific context. The [NSW Genetic Counsellor Workforce – Horizon scanning and scenario generation report](#) is available online and the Allied Health Assistant – Horizon scanning and scenario generation report is due for publication in September 2022.

Allied Health Workforce Macrotrends Report

The landmark [NSW Health Allied Health Macro Trends Report](#) was released and published in June 2022. This report was a culmination of 18 allied health workforces horizon scanning and scenario generation projects previously undertaken by the Workforce Planning and Talent Development Branch. The NSW Health Allied Health Macro Trends Report brings together the findings of these workforce projects, identifies commonalities among the different allied health workforces and provides guidance for future allied health workforce priorities and initiatives at both the local and state level. These include promoting the value of the allied health workforce, leadership and governance, training and career progression, workforce planning and data, service delivery, and access and equity.

Aboriginal workforce projects

To enhance the capacity and capability of culturally and clinically safe service provision, including the expansion of Aboriginal Health Practitioner Implementation Project and the establishment of specific targets for establishing Aboriginal health practitioner roles in local health districts and specialty health networks.

The Aboriginal Workforce Unit has been engaged with the following teams. The Medical Workforce Unit to:

- support the identification of challenges impacting Aboriginal medical students as they progress through the training pipeline
- identify opportunities to engage changes in the pipeline which enable greater success and further the opportunities of Aboriginal people moving into medical roles and specialties.

The Health Education and Training Institute to:

- engage Aboriginal medical students in the Aboriginal Trainee Doctor's Forum
- facilitate a culturally safe and supportive space for peer engagement, professional development, and networking.

The Allied Health Workforce Unit and Health Education and Training Institute to:

- engage Aboriginal Allied Health professionals and cadets in the Aboriginal Allied Health Network Forum
- facilitate a culturally safe and supportive space for peer engagement, professional development and networking
- review and refresh the Aboriginal Allied Health Cadetship Program and governance mechanisms
- support the expanded target of 20 cadets per year since 2019 (up from the previous target of 10).

Strengthening diversity

Boosting the numbers of Aboriginal people working in public health

We're committed to increasing the Aboriginal nursing and midwifery workforce by improving career development opportunities for Aboriginal employees working in the public health system.

In 2022, 106 Aboriginal nursing and midwifery cadets were supported. More than half of the cadets were located in rural and regional areas. There were also 71 undergraduate and 22 postgraduate Aboriginal scholarships awarded to support nursing and midwifery studies in 2022.

The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence offers three-year workplace-based traineeships aimed at increasing the number of Aboriginal people working in population health. In 2021–22, three trainees were recruited and two people graduated with a Master of Public Health.

The Health Education and Training Institute supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders studying in areas of allied health by providing paid cadetships each year, and the Agency for Clinical Innovation produced community engagement tools that draw on the 8 Ways learning methodology to assist staff working with Aboriginal communities directly.

Tackling gender equity

Six women from NSW Ambulance were recognised in the 2022 Council of Ambulance Authority's Women in Ambulance Awards. The awards recognise and promote the hard work of inspirational women who work in ambulance services across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. The campaign aims to empower and inspire women to progress into leadership and management roles. The NSW Ambulance recipients represent both operational and corporate sections of the organisation.

Preparing for the next pandemic – developing statistics and data skills

Our health system relies on increasingly large amounts of data to provide evidence-based public health responses. The pandemic highlighted the value of using data effectively in decision-making and being able to call on a surge workforce with biostatistics training to respond to large-scale public health crises.

We have developed education modules on the My Health Learning platform to support NSW Health staff and community health providers looking to upskill in this area.

The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence coordinates workplace-based training programs to build public health and biostatistical capacity within NSW Health.

In 2021–22:

- 35 public health and biostatistics trainees supported the NSW Health COVID-19 response
- 17 new trainees were recruited
- 16 people completed their training, including 8 trainee biostatisticians who graduated with a Master of Biostatistics

The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence has also expanded online resources on the Analytics Assist website to build data literacy capability across the NSW Health workforce.

People and Culture Award

John Hunter Hospital

Promoting safety and excellence

The People and Culture Award recognises teams who develop and support our people and culture, and ensure a safe and healthy environment for patients and staff. The physiotherapy team at John Hunter Hospital developed a departmental structure and culture reflecting patient-centred innovative care, which improved patient and staff outcomes.



Improving patient and staff outcomes is a winning formula for the physiotherapy team at John Hunter Hospital.

Training more midwives and nurses

- As part of the MidStart program, the Nursing and Midwifery Office recruited 207 registered nurses into midwifery training positions, of which 45% were located in rural and regional areas.
- More than 800 postgraduate scholarships were awarded to support NSW Health nurses and midwives in their professional development, with more than 25% of them located in rural and regional areas.
- More than 450 clinical placement grants were awarded to NSW nursing and midwifery students to support diversity of clinical experiences across rural and metropolitan areas.
- NSW Health funded 10 rural postgraduate midwifery student scholarship positions for small rural maternity services.
- The Nursing and Midwifery Office coordinated graduate nurse and midwife recruitment, with more than 3,000 graduates employed for 2022, of which 41% are located in rural and regional areas.

The 2021 Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards acknowledged the incredible contribution of nurses and midwives in keeping some of our most vulnerable people safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. The awards ceremony was streamed to all NSW Health staff.

Health Education and Training Institute

Managing scholarships and grants to support our people's development

The Health Education and Training Institute managed \$8.3 million in grants and scholarships on behalf of the NSW Ministry of Health to support NSW Health staff development in 2021–22. These included:

- nursing and midwifery scholarships
- allied health workplace learning grants
- the Emergency Medicine Training Program
- rural research capacity building
- Aboriginal allied health cadetships
- leadership development
- rural medical scholarships and other rural scholarships
- scholarships for Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education qualifications.

The new Graduate Diploma in Applied Mental Health Studies

Integrating professional development with higher education allows us to tap into new, more flexible study options for our people to improve mental health care. Micro credentials are an innovative approach to learning that lets people break degrees into smaller certifications in particular areas. These can be 'stacked' towards a variety of postgraduate qualifications. This structure supports the NSW Health workforce, and others, to choose their desired intensity and focus of development. The structure is also agile enough for rapid development of new units to meet emerging demands. This structural change has resulted in a 13% lift in student numbers for the Applied Mental Health Studies over the last six months.

Management and leadership training

The Health Education and Training Institute delivered the redesigned Financial Management Essentials Series, launched a second cohort of the Finance Executive Development Program, continued delivery of the Next Generation of Leaders and Managers in NSW Health, and commenced design and preparation for a General Managers Program for NSW Health. The Health Education and Training Institute also delivered a range of management programs, including support for the Public Health Response Branch and NSW Ambulance.

Additional online learning programs

Nursing and allied health staff can now access the Mental Health Pathways in Practice program modules available in the My Health Learning platform. As of 30 June 2022, more than 7,000 staff had enrolled in the program.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation delivered the Accelerating Implementation Methodology program, providing a practical set of principles and tools to manage the human elements critical to successfully implementing programs in clinical and non-clinical settings. There were 21 newly accredited practitioners in 2021–22, and 19 practitioners undertook reaccreditation.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation partnered with local health districts, specialty health networks, pillars, eHealth NSW and the NSW Ministry of Health to support the ongoing adoption and implementation of innovative virtual care services across NSW.

A ‘train the trainer’ module was released that supported local champions to train more than 10,000 users via My Health Learning. All users of myVirtual Care can now access an extensive digital user guide, and a virtual module has been made available to clinicians. The Agency for Clinical Innovation offered two training programs: ‘Engaging in the virtual frame’ and ‘Having difficult conversations virtually’.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation launched a roadmap to working with consumers, which provided guidance and tools covering foundations, recruiting and maintaining consumer partnerships.

eHealth NSW also implemented the Recruitment and Onboarding platform to recruit and onboard junior medical officers, and continued its successful NSW Digital Academy. Since going live in January 2020, almost 5,000 training offerings have been completed by staff.

Aboriginal Cultural Mentoring Framework and toolkit project

It has been demonstrated that retention rates are higher when allied health professionals from Aboriginal backgrounds are provided with cultural support and mentoring. Indigenous Allied Health Australia in partnership with the Health Education and Training Institute and the NSW Health Workforce Planning and Talent Development branch, are developing a cultural mentoring framework and toolkit specifically designed to support Aboriginal allied health professionals employed by NSW Health. The next phase of this project is for the framework and toolkit to be piloted for six months in early 2023 with a group of interested NSW Health Aboriginal allied health employees.

Building positive work environments

Health Infrastructure oversees the planning, design and construction of health capital works valued at more than \$10 million in NSW. Work health and safety is a priority for all construction works undertaken for NSW Health. For this reason, Health Infrastructure developed its Safety, Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2021–22 to drive:

- development of leadership and capability
- investment in technology and systems to enable data-driven decision making
- development of clear standards for risk management and assurance
- integration of the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Strategy considerations into our procurement and contract management processes.

Project 5 – A weekend for every worker

Project 5 – A weekend for every worker was a two-year study undertaken by Health Infrastructure with Roberts Co and the University of New South Wales that trialled a Monday to Friday work week on the \$341 million Concord Hospital redevelopment.

The five-day week had a big impact. Workers reported an increase in all areas of job satisfaction including work hours, pay, job security, and family and work relationships. The shorter work week also led to a decreasing trend in injury rates and no increase in variable costs. The project was delivered on budget and three months earlier than scheduled.

As a result, Health Infrastructure updated its tender assessment criteria, asking contractors to include initiatives that drive positive wellbeing outcomes.

The Clinical Excellence Commission was a top performer in the People Matter Employee Survey

The Clinical Excellence Commission’s People Matter Employee Survey results on ‘take action’ improved from 56% in 2019 to 77% in 2021. The Clinical Excellence Commission reviewed its results, developed a plan, and communicated achievements and interventions to all staff members. It also established a staff wellbeing baseline survey and responsive wellbeing initiatives as pandemic-related demands on the agency continued.

During some periods of the year, up to 40% of staff members were redeployed for the COVID-19 response. Following a dip in wellbeing mid-pandemic, the Clinical Excellence Commission continued its initiatives and staff wellbeing has rebounded.

Priority 5

Research and innovation, and digital advances inform service delivery

Our future

Clinical service delivery continues to be transformed through health and medical research, digital technologies, and data analytics.

Key objectives

- 5.1 Advance and translate research and innovation with institutions, industry partners and patients
- 5.2 Ensure health data and information is high quality, integrated, accessible and utilised
- 5.3 Enable targeted evidence-based healthcare through precision medicine
- 5.4 Accelerate digital investments in systems, infrastructure, security and intelligence

Key achievements

- Received funding totalling \$4.5 million for ten projects of the Translational Research Grants Scheme, which supports NSW Health employees to build research capability and accelerate the translation of evidence into the health system.
- Enabled more clinical trials to be conducted in rural, regional and remote areas of NSW and the ACT via a multimillion-dollar infrastructure project that kicked off in April 2022.
- Linked more than 4 billion records from health and human services to support 100 data linkage projects across NSW Health, the broader state government and the research sector.
- Introduced SafeScript NSW in May 2022, an online, real-time prescription monitoring system that has been adopted by 13,752 health practitioners and used to support clinical decision making regarding the monitored medication of 51,496 patients.
- Worked with Investment NSW to attract investment, collaborations and partnership by promoting NSW's advanced therapeutics and clinical trials ecosystem to a global audience.

Applying health and medical research where it's needed most

More clinical trials in regional areas

A multimillion-dollar infrastructure project that will enable more clinical trials to be conducted in rural, regional and remote areas of NSW and the ACT kicked off in April 2022. NSW Health was awarded \$30.6 million in funding for the project in 2020. In collaboration with 34 state and national partners across health, research, and the private and community sectors, a network of up to three regional, rural and remote clinical trial support units have been established.

In another boost for clinical trials in the state, NSW Health has licensed a Clinical Trial Management System for use within public hospitals and healthcare services. The system will support central oversight and efficient delivery. Implementation of the system will be rolled out to districts and networks over the next 12 months.

Priority projects for the COVID-19 response

In 2021–22, \$1.6 million was invested in COVID-19 emergency priority research projects as part of the NSW Health COVID-19 Research Program. Projects included investigating transmission in schools, paediatric surveillance, vaccine effectiveness, and modelling and epidemiological analysis.

The COVID-19 Research Program Impact Evaluation Report found that an initial round of research contributed to the COVID-19 response through the creation of knowledge and innovation. For example, a new methodology improved the sensitivity of genome sequencing from clinical samples with low viral loads, meaning more accurate viral sequences could be established. Another project enabled the rapid provision of information on the health and social impacts of the disease and related restrictions, from 61,000 NSW residents.

Program funding highlights

- Ten projects totalling \$4.5 million received funding in round six of the Translational Research Grants Scheme, which supports NSW Health employees to build research capability and accelerate the translation of evidence into the health system. Three of the projects focused on rural health, one on Aboriginal people, and another on both priority areas.
- Three research projects shared \$7.79 million in the ninth round of the Medical Devices Fund. These include the development of a 3D bioprinting system for intraoperative skin regeneration, a device to provide thermal protection for vital transplant organs, and a footprint medical isotope generator that will provide GMP1 clinical doses of a high-value radionuclide for targeted alpha cancer therapy.

Recruitment and training

NSW Health delivered the first cycle of its expanded Commercialisation Training Program. The program is open to researchers, scientists, clinicians, entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs and others in the health sector who are working on a novel medical device, diagnostic or therapeutic product, or digital health technology.

The first cycle of the expanded program trained more than 1,000 people, including more than 150 participants who undertook intensive training in developing intellectual property.

Encouraging global interest in NSW medical research

NSW Health worked with Investment NSW to promote the state's health and medical research sector to a global audience to attract investment, collaborations and partnerships.

In June 2022, NSW Health supported a delegation, led by the Hon Brad Hazzard, Minister for Health, to BIO International Convention 2022 in San Diego. The delegation comprised senior government representatives, key opinion leaders and life sciences companies.

A showcase event promoted NSW's advanced therapeutics and clinical trials ecosystem to international convention delegates. NSW Health continues to support local delegates to convert the opportunities from the convention into significant outcomes.

Improving research with KPIs

NSW Health has established key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of research grant programs run through the Office for Health and Medical Research. Through this work, we have standardised data collection across all grants to enhance data analysis and enable dynamic reporting. This will support monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the impacts of research.

NSW Health has revised the KPIs used to monitor research governance. The revised KPIs, which came into effect on 1 July 2022, provide a more accurate measure of study start-up times. This is done by measuring total days from application submission to ethics approval, rather than just the time spent in review by an ethics committee or the research governance office. These amendments are in step with the clinical trials industry, creating a culture of research as core business and shifting the focus to a whole-of-system responsibility for research.

The NSW Ministry of Health has worked to streamline governance processes for biobanking research projects with a data linkage component. Researchers can now submit a single ethics application for these projects. Previously, two separate ethics applications were required for the biobanking and data linkage components.

Fast-tracking new clinical therapies for children

The Paediatric Precision Medicine Program enabled 217 completed and current research projects by the end of 2021–22. Now in its third year, the four-year research program has focused on a range of conditions across cancer and rare diseases.

The program has facilitated multiple early-phase clinical trials and fast-tracked translation to clinical practice to support access to novel therapies for children. It is an initiative of the Luminesce Alliance, a non-profit cooperative joint venture established with NSW Government support to coordinate and integrate paediatric research.

Health Research and Innovation Award

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

Paving the way for system-wide change

Aimed at reducing patient deterioration, History, Identify Red flags, Assessment, Interventions, Diagnostics (HIRAID), is a validated emergency framework.

It was developed, tested, then implemented in Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District emergency departments with 302 nurses. The results: emergency department-related deterioration halved, as did treatment delays and failure to escalate when abnormal vital signs were identified.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation, National Health and Medical Record Council and the NSW and Commonwealth chief nurses have partnered to upscale HIRAID in another 32 emergency departments across Australia.



The HIRAID emergency framework was developed by Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District and implemented in their emergency department.

Cancer care

Less common cancers

In Australia, more than 52,000 people are diagnosed each year with a rare or less common cancer. Of these, 25,000 will die as few treatment options are available for their cancers. The Australian Genomic Cancer Medicine Program aims to change this. Now in the third year of a four-year funding grant, the program represents the first step in introducing advances from precision medical research into Australia's healthcare system.

The program is led by research work in NSW and delivered via a network of eight cancer centres, with one in every state and territory. It promises to not only enhance cancer patients' quality of life, but also reduce overall healthcare costs by finding ways to prevent cancers, detect them earlier, and deliver care more efficiently.

Strengthening cancer research and data collection

The Cancer Institute NSW worked to make NSW a global leader in cancer research through ongoing investment in early-phase clinical trials and translational research programs. These trials and programs support the rapid uptake of innovative therapies into clinical practice.

The Institute funded Advanced Health Research and Translational Centres to strengthen cancer research capacity in NSW and foster a collaborative culture of research to continually improve cancer care and outcomes.

The Enduring Cancer Data Linkage initiative which provides researchers with data to improve cancer care, was expanded in 2021–22. Five sub-study protocols received ethical approval.

Improving access to quality data

Data linkages

The Centre for Health Record Linkage (CHeReL) has compiled more than four billion linked records from health and human services and supported more than 100 data linkage projects across NSW Health, the broader state government and the research sector in 2021–22.

Data released by the Centre for Health Record Linkage this financial year enabled a wide range of projects aligned with NSW Government strategic priorities. The data:

- supported an evaluation of Towards Zero Suicide initiatives (in line with Future Health key objective 3.3) to gather evidence that will improve the design and delivery of suicide prevention initiatives
- accelerated the Human Services Dataset (HSDS) 2021 linkage and supported the annual refresh of the HSDS asset
- combined with other data from the Department of Communities and Justice to inform adult vulnerability projects, such as demand and supply modelling, and Future Directions and Pathways of Care initiatives
- enabled the completion of evaluation program linkages for the NSW Better Outcomes Lab
- enhanced the scale-up of primary care linkage to support Integrated Care and Collaborative Commissioning
- enhanced data linkage for projects arising from Biospecimen Collection Grants and formed part of NSW's contribution to the national Master Linkage Key pilot.

Ensure health data and information is high quality and accessible

HealthStats NSW has provided statistics and insights on the health of the NSW population to health services and the public since 2011. The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence launched a major enhancement to the platform to integrate end-to-end data analytics and text management processes with a new front-end interactive website – providing more data more efficiently to health services and the public. The platform enables users to interrogate, visualise and download data for their own use.

Cross-agency collaboration

The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence represents NSW Health in cross-agency collaborations such as the Stronger Communities Data Partnership, NSW Better Outcomes Lab, and the Social Policy Integrated Data and Analytics (SPIDA) group. The centre ensures that health and human services data is being used safely and effectively to enhance service delivery, guide investment and drive policy reform across NSW.

Working smarter with digital information systems and analytics

- NSW Health has selected an external clinical coding partner to create an application to facilitate computer-aided clinical coding (CAC).
- Work is underway to streamline and centralise the reporting of virtual care activities across the state's health system to encourage more widespread use. Information about the use of virtual care is currently collected in various systems within NSW Health. The aim is to ensure that information is easily accessible, reflects the use of virtual care in a variety of patient care settings, and is robust enough to add value in supporting good patient care and experiences.
- Enterprise Patient Repository and the Enterprise Data Warehouse for Analysis Reporting and Decision Support (EDWARD) are collaborating on a program to facilitate internal linkage of NSW Health clinical data sets. This work includes increasing data quality reporting of identifier data issues and collaborating with local health districts to address missing or incorrectly recorded data.
- The Child Illness and Resilience Program is facilitating work to develop and implement new data assets and data visualisation tools for violence, abuse and neglect, and child, youth and family services. The focus of this project in 2021–22 was the child, youth and family data set. Extensive stakeholder consultation via design focus groups led by eHealth NSW will inform the data set extension design and related updates to source systems.

Digital systems streamline payments and referrals

HealthShare NSW's Accounts Receivable team implemented innovative online collections software that replaces the time-consuming process of manually entering data from monthly reports into Excel spreadsheets.

The software also enables finance teams in local health districts to view real-time data on overdue debts and HealthShare NSW recovery activity.

eHealth NSW, in partnership with the NSW Ministry of Health and local health districts, refined a statewide electronic outpatient referral management system. A prototype was launched for selected services at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in April 2022.

Using data to improve cost management

NSW Health engaged with and supported NSW public health organisations in applying activity-based management. This evidence-based management approach focuses on patient-level data to inform strategic decision making.

Collecting and comparing accurate, high-quality costing data from a range of public health organisations provides a better understanding of service delivery costs and informs local decision making.

Digital strategies to enhance pathology research and services

In November 2021, NSW Health Pathology launched its Towards 2025 Research Strategy, which committed to supporting aspiring and ambitious researchers and partnering with customers and communities to deliver research outcomes that matter to them.

It outlined plans to deliver evidence-based value in its research and has delivered initiatives including:

- a NSW Health Pathology Research Forum
- increased research in strategic and focus areas
- a statewide education program providing continuous professional development for NSW Health Pathology researchers.

NSW Health Pathology and eHealth NSW circulated a request for proposal for NSW Health's Single Digital Patient Record system, including a statewide laboratory information management system. More than 150 NSW Health Pathology staff members participated in a tender evaluation process that was near completion at the end of 2021–22.

NSW Health Pathology undertook several strategic digital initiatives during the financial year, including:

- launching a Health Interoperability Toolkit that processes messages faster at lower cost, connecting laboratory instruments and processing test results
- creating an Internet of Things system connecting pathology devices in laboratories, hospitals and the community with data securely captured and sent via the cloud
- trialling the PathWorks app, which gives referring clinicians secure, convenient access to patient results no matter where they are
- enhancing COVID-19 testing services to include testing for flu and in some cases respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
- creating a business case to transition from physical to digital microscopy, including service design, technology platform architecture, validation and procurement of software and hardware (e.g. scanners and stainers).

NSW Health Pathology engaged an external vendor to conduct an information security management system readiness audit to provide a gap analysis that will assist with the ISO 27001 Information Security Management System certification process. The organisation reconvened its Information Security Working Group, which met monthly to progress the audit process and reporting to its Data Information Governance Committee.

Infrastructure investment and partnerships

During 2021–22, Health Infrastructure worked with partners and experts to define and clarify NSW Health's approach to precinct planning and development, consistent with whole-of-government directions.

The draft NSW Health Precincts Strategy defines the outcomes and actions for developing healthcare places and precincts over the next five years. The strategy informs, coordinates and aligns precinct activities to unlock new opportunities to improve health, economic and social outcomes, including by leveraging health assets, innovation and partnerships.

Health Infrastructure worked across health and the NSW Government to develop an industry prospectus that highlights NSW Health's key strengths and capabilities, as well as opportunities to drive industry partnership and investment.

To facilitate these opportunities within the health network, the Commercial and Partnerships Framework was developed to guide NSW Health entities involved in planning and delivering health-related partnerships that affect a health asset. The framework helps deliver commercial partnerships and transactions more effectively, efficiently and consistently.

Viral vector manufacturing

One of the first commercial partnerships is facilitating the creation of a viral vector manufacturing facility in the Westmead Health and Innovation District in Western Sydney. The facility will leverage world-class cell and gene therapy expertise to establish Australia's first commercial-scale facility. It will also seek industry co-investments of expertise and capital.

Health Infrastructure is working with government and industry partners to operate and expand the licensed, clinical-grade facility. The expansion will ensure Australians have faster access to next-generation medical treatments and will help address the global demand for gene and cell therapies.

Health Infrastructure also worked with partners to progress the Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) Pilot Manufacturing Facility. The facility will translate research strengths into a sustainable commercial pipeline of RNA therapeutics and products. Local production of RNA will attract global industry investment to Australia and secure domestic-market access to future therapeutics. In addition, funding for the NSW RNA Future Leaders Program supports the development of the next generation of innovators in ribonucleic acid medicine, building the pipeline of advanced therapeutics in NSW. Five early-to-mid career researcher grants and five PhD scholarships totalling \$2.9 million were funded under the program.

Integrated care through online systems

In May 2022, eHealth NSW went live with the NSW Health Enterprise Data Lake. This enables health organisations to perform data queries on statewide data, drawn from one or more frontline systems, to support reporting and research.

eHealth NSW also introduced SafeScript NSW, an online, real-time prescription monitoring system. Since implementation was completed in May 2022, SafeScript has been adopted by 13,752 health practitioners and used to support clinical decision making regarding the monitored medication of 51,496 patients.

Electronic records improve patient care and safety

NSW Health's investments in developing digital record keeping in 2021–22 enabled the following initiatives:

- More than 109,600 patients have benefitted from the Electronic Record for Intensive Care (eRIC) system, which was rolled out statewide for adult patients. eHealth NSW will now focus on extending eRIC to neonatal and paediatric intensive care units, with a pilot underway at Nepean hospital.
- eHealth NSW developed new clinical workflows within the Electronic Medical Record system to help create Comprehensive Care Plans for patients. Pilots are underway.
- The Single Digital Patient Record will consolidate key NSW Health systems for patient administration, electronic medical records, and laboratory information management. It will improve patient safety, quality and continuity of care, and provide a consistent experience for patients and clinicians. Procurement activities progressed throughout the year.
- NSW Health is delivering a new statewide digital referral management solution to improve the referral experience of patients, referrers and clinicians in outpatient services. A pilot is underway in the Sydney Local Health District and planning for statewide implementation has begun.
- eHealth NSW implemented the Health Outcomes and Patient Experience (HOPE) platform in 457 NSW Health sites to enable the collection of patient-reported measures.

Cloud-based systems

NSW Health systems continued to be transitioned to government data centres and the cloud throughout 2021–22. To date, eHealth NSW has transitioned around 400 systems and de-commissioned more than 1,000 servers. A further 12 critical systems were also transitioned to the cloud.

Global firsts included using cloud-native technology for iPatient Manager and the TrakGene clinical genetics database, and transitioning the Enterprise Imaging Repository to the cloud to streamline the use of X-rays, CT scans and other diagnostic imaging. Australian firsts included Enterprise Patient Record and Electronic Oral Health Records.

Cyber security

eHealth NSW continued to uplift the cyber security maturity of NSW Health's systems, in line with Australian Cyber Security Centre recommendations. The statewide cyber security incident response plan was endorsed by NSW Health's chief information officers and will undergo regular mock scenario testing, facilitated by Cyber Security NSW.

Working with NSW Health's Health Education and Training Institute, eHealth NSW developed cyber security training for NSW Health staff, with high completion rates.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Mid North Coast Local Health District

Helen Mears

Helen Mears has been a United Hospital Auxiliary (UHA) volunteer at Coffs Harbour Health Campus for approximately 40 years and the President of the local group, affectionately known as the Pink Ladies, for more than 30 years.

Helen tirelessly fundraises for medical equipment, staffs the hospital's cafe and gift shop and inspires countless volunteers.



Coffs Harbour Health Campus volunteer Helen Mears wins the NSW Health Volunteer of the Year Award for her unparalleled service.

Making information more accessible

The Bureau of Health Information's new data portal ensures healthcare performance information is high quality, integrated and accessible. In 2021-22, the Bureau of Health Information uploaded patient experience survey results for emergency departments, and adult-admitted and outpatient cancer clinic patients for the first time. These were added to the Healthcare Quarterly results, which were first released via the portal in mid-2021.

Its staged implementation is part of a transition to a digital-first way of reporting healthcare performance information and making results more accessible and user-friendly.

Advanced locational technology for NSW Ambulance

NSW Ambulance successfully implemented Advanced Mobile Location (AML) technology into its control centres. AML technology calculates a triple zero caller's location using a combination of GPS, wi-fi and mobile network information and other sensor inputs.

Around 78% of triple zero calls originate from a mobile telephone. AML has the potential to better assist a significant proportion of callers, particularly in rural and remote locations, by saving time in responders reaching patients in difficult-to-find locations. This technology can provide accurate location coordinates within a 5-metre radius outdoors and a 25-metre radius indoors.

Supporting knowledge about clinical innovation

The Agency for Clinical Innovation published a web-based toolkit and information about available treatments through the NSW Health Immune Effector Cell Service. The toolkit provides information for clinical staff, patients, carers and the general community. It includes an animation explaining the service, patient videos, and resources on treatments, eligibility criteria, potential complications, and locations where services are provided. It also offers information on how cells are collected and prepared for the treatment process.

Priority 6

The health system is managed sustainably

Our future

NSW Health is committed to achieving system-wide, long-term structural and cultural change and managing the business with an outcomes-focused lens to deliver a financially and environmentally sustainable future.

Our priorities

- 6.1 Drive value-based healthcare that prioritises outcomes and collaboration
- 6.2 Commit to an environmentally sustainable footprint for future healthcare
- 6.3 Adapt performance measurement and funding models to targeted outcomes
- 6.4 Align our governance and leaders to support the system and deliver the outcomes of Future Health

Key achievements

- Established a statewide governance framework for the evaluation and use of medicines in NSW public health facilities and services optimising clinical governance and supporting better value healthcare.
- Establishing a new Climate Risk and Net Zero Unit in the System Purchasing Branch to coordinate NSW Health's approach and scale up its climate-risk response.
- Launching the Registry of Outcomes, Value and Experience (ROVE) analytics application to support measurement of value-based healthcare initiatives.
- Completing 12 infrastructure projects across NSW in 2021–22, improving health services and creating employment opportunities in both metropolitan and regional areas.
- Implementing the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Patient Transport Service to deliver services across all metropolitan and local health districts, giving NSW Health greater flexibility to meet non-emergency patient transport demands in metropolitan areas.

Pharmaceutical Procurement and Clinical Governance Review

For two and half years NSW Health has led the Pharmaceutical Procurement and Clinical Governance Review project to support optimum clinical governance and better value healthcare. This has been done by developing a holistic framework governing the usage and procurement of pharmaceuticals.

The last 12 months has seen the project enter the establishment phase with the:

- creation of a statewide governance framework comprising the NSW Medicines Formulary Committee and NSW High-cost Medicines sub-committee, which evaluate and approve medicines for use across the public health system
- development of the NSW Medicines Formulary – a continually updated list of medicines approved for use in all NSW public hospitals, health services and by NSW Ambulance. The formulary will also include the approved indications, dose formulations and any prescribing restrictions.

Strategic financial views for local health districts, networks and the system

Outcomes budgeting

NSW Health maintains outcome-based budgeting and performance in line with the NSW Government framework as part of the cluster's budget cycle and performance framework.

The alignment of success measures to outcomes with a strategic financial lens informs the planning and delivery of healthcare as well as supports sustainable resource allocation across the NSW public hospital system.

Financial leadership

NSW Health continues to enhance reporting frameworks to improve the ability to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of an investment from both a service delivery and financial perspective.

NSW Health remains focused on providing financial leadership, including sustainable resource allocation across the NSW public hospital system. In 2021–22, the NSW Ministry of Health continued to work closely with NSW Treasury to assess key budget pressures to drive system improvement and performance to deliver outcomes for the state.

In addition, NSW Health develops the capability of finance staff from entry level to executive, to provide the necessary skills to create value, support decision making and enhance financial sustainability.

Financial leadership capability is enhanced through secondment programs and workplace rotations to provide staff with new professional experiences and a range of learning and development opportunities.

Embedding new accounting standards

Following the implementation of new accounting standards over the past three years, a key focus in 2021–22 was to embed these new requirements into operational processes and ensure ongoing compliance. Key achievements in 2021–22 included standardising grant register templates, enhancing guidance papers, upgrading systems, simplifying accounting policies and upskilling NSW Health entities with training and education courses through different channels.

Deliver a strategy to link financial data across the system

The NSW Ministry of Health continues to drive collaboration across functional areas to further enhance and drive best practice within data governance.

This has driven technology systems upgrades to enhance data analytics for decision making. NSW Health's five-year vision for corporate analytics includes financial data to facilitate alignment between functional areas to continue to create value and improve decision making through enhanced data insights.

Supporting our health system with new technology

Drive value in procurement

The NSW Ministry of Health is implementing a statewide procurement reform program, focused on improving ways of working and building partnerships across local health districts and shared service entities. This program of work is focused on delivering enhanced procurement and supply chains across the NSW health system to support value-based healthcare. This will deliver better health outcomes for patients, improve patient experience and streamline processes for clinical staff, as well as enhancements to procurement and supply chain practices.

Additionally, NSW Health is working with stakeholders to determine how best to use artificial intelligence and automation to streamline the procurement processes. In October 2021, the SmartChain business case for implementing intelligent automation was endorsed. This means SmartChain can now work with product managers and clinical teams to develop an end-to-end procurement solution that simplifies the procurement processes.

Piloting new ways of allocating cleaning and porter services at hospitals

HealthShare NSW has completed a pilot of the Task Allocation System at Royal North Shore Hospital. The Task Allocation System is a software system that helps facilities management staff to efficiently allocate tasks. It enables staff to track and submit cleaning and porter service tasks through a single online system, replacing verbal instructions and the use of handheld radio systems. During the pilot, The Task Allocation System provided complete oversight of staff workload and increased management's ability to provide surge capacity during peaks in demand. The system will be used to better plan resource requirements in advance and view overall service delivery and performance.

Shining a light on patients' progress through the health system

The Planned Care for Better Health program is designed to identify patients at risk of hospitalisation early, so that they can receive timely care to improve long-term health outcomes. Implementation of the Planned Care for Better Health program statewide will see the use of the Integrated Care Outcomes Database – in conjunction with qualitative information – to accurately measure patient outcomes.

Lumos links de-identified patient information from GPs together with other health services data. For instance, Lumos has shown that if a patient visits their GP following unplanned admissions to hospital, it reduces the likelihood of future readmissions within a 12-week period. Using this information will help system managers to plan for the future and better coordinate patient care more effectively across a range of settings.

Delivering the technology for NSW Health's Cash Transformation Program

During 2021–22, eHealth NSW supported the NSW Ministry of Health, HealthShare NSW and NSW Treasury to progress a three-year Cash Transformation Program which has digitised and automated the previously paper-based, manual revenue collection from non-patient billing.

Environmental sustainability

NSW Ambulance invests in renewables

NSW Ambulance is closer than ever to realising its ambition of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2040.

As of May 2022, the organisation installed solar panels at 62 ambulance stations, with more installations anticipated. Solar panels were also installed on 260 emergency ambulances and 16 emergency support vehicles as part of the new vehicle design specification. A retrofit program to install solar panels on the current fleet of 1,018 emergency ambulances has commenced and is scheduled for completion in 2022–23.

Sustainability solutions for personal protective equipment

Finding a solution to the supply and disposal of the increasing amounts of personal protective equipment (PPE) that healthcare professionals have used during the pandemic was required. HealthShare NSW provided guidance and support to two small businesses to successfully complete feasibility studies to commercialise sustainable solutions for PPE. Their research was enabled through their participation in the 2021–22 NSW Small Business Innovation and Research program. They were selected from among other participants to progress to the next stage of the program: creating a proof of concept for their solutions.

Working towards net zero across NSW Health

As part of the ongoing focus on delivering sustainable healthcare, NSW Health is refreshing its Resource Efficiency and Energy Strategy to align with the target for net zero CO₂ emissions for NSW by 2050. Increased solar, LED lighting, and other resource efficiency measures will reduce operating costs and improve environmental performance.

NSW Health has implemented a new performance target that will drive down energy use and reduce NSW Health's energy spend year on year. This coming year, NSW Health will continue to lead government in the energy efficiency space by requiring each asset-owning health organisation to deliver energy-efficiency projects equal to 1.5% of their total annual energy consumption. This target may be increased in subsequent years to ensure that NSW Health meets its net zero objectives. In 2021–22 there were 114 new resource efficiency and major energy-use upgrades implemented. All resource efficiency projects in the network saved \$15.7 million and abated 60,000 tonnes of CO₂e.

The NSW Health fleet will be transformed, with electric cars to represent half of all cars purchased by 2026. By 2030 NSW Health will only purchase electric passenger vehicles. This will convert more than 7,500 vehicles to more cost-effective, non-CO₂ emitting vehicles. Over the last two years the first electric vehicle charging stations were installed at NSW Health sites. Currently around 40% of passenger vehicle fleet are hybrid electric vehicles. This year further progress has been made with the first eight fully electric vehicles being delivered at Central Coast Local Health District and the NSW Ministry of Health.

To scale up its climate risk response, NSW Health established a new Climate Risk and Net Zero Unit in the System Purchasing Branch to coordinate our approach. The unit's activities are guided by a steering committee established in April 2022.

HealthShare NSW is responsible for a range of such support services. These include patient transport, food preparation, the provision of linen, procurement, and human resources functions. As part of its practical commitment to sustainability, HealthShare launched its first sustainability plan in March 2022 to make sustainability practices part of its everyday business.

In line with this, it was also involved in the 2021–22 NSW Small Business Innovation and Research program. As part of the program, HealthShare NSW supported three external companies to successfully complete feasibility studies aimed at removing microplastics

from linen services' wastewater and increasing water recycling in the state's hospitals. Proof-of-concept solutions will be developed in the next phase with these applicants selected for progression in the program.

Patient transport services

Patient transport services are staffed by trained patient transport officers and, where necessary, nurses. The South Eastern Sydney Local Health District patient transport services transition was successfully implemented in April 2022. It allows NSW Health greater flexibility to meet non-emergency patient transport demand across the metropolitan area, especially with patient transport services now delivering services across all metropolitan local health districts.

Value-based care

Strategic reform and planning

In NSW, value-based care means continually striving to deliver care that improves:

- health outcomes that matter to patients
- the experience of receiving care
- the experience of providing care
- the effectiveness and efficiency of care.

A major focus in 2021–22 was to improve alignment across statewide programs. Key initiatives were:

- Hosting value-based healthcare week for all NSW Health staff in May 2022, with the theme Embedding value-based healthcare across NSW. More than 580 people attended, which is more than for previous events, and 88% of survey respondents said they would attend again.
- Releasing the System priorities for value-based healthcare research report, a guide for researchers seeking partnership or involvement from NSW Health. We also integrated value-based healthcare into the assessment process for applications to the NSW Health Translational Research Grants Scheme.
- Launching the Registry of Outcomes, Value and Experience (ROVE) analytics application to support measurement of value-based healthcare initiatives. Based on data from the ROVE virtual registry, the app provides NSW Health staff with direct access to linked data on service and system use, patient experience and outcomes, and clinical benchmarking.
- Conducting economic appraisals for four clinical cohorts: wound management, renal supportive care, direct access colonoscopy, and hypofractionated radiotherapy for breast cancer. Despite the impacts of COVID-19⁴, early results indicated that health districts generated extra capacity compared to business as usual. The appraisals helped to inform future resourcing decisions and the provision of efficient health services.

- Developing a clinician experience survey, which collects information about quality of care, clinician engagement, interprofessional collaboration and psychological safety. This is being used to evaluate the impact of existing health services on clinicians' experiences, and to inform how health services are developed in the future.
- Finalising monitoring, evaluation and implementation plans for the Commissioning for Better Value Strategy 2021–24. Activities focused on promoting the strategy, developing capability and supporting partnerships including a [case study video](#) showcasing how Northern NSW Local Health District used this commissioning approach to design, implement and manage value-based medical imaging services.
- Publishing articles in Australian and international journals, including Collaborative Commissioning: regional funding models to support value-based care in New South Wales in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, authored by Elizabeth Koff, Susan Pearce and David P Peiris.
- Producing a wound self-assessment tool and related resources to support health services across NSW to understand their current service capacity and capability around chronic wound management, supported by the Agency for Clinical Innovation. This tool supports services to meet the NSW Health Leading Better Value Care Standards for chronic wound management.

Managing performance through analytics

NSW Health monitors, assesses, and responds to system performance indicators as outlined in the NSW Health Performance Framework. The framework details how performance expectations are set and supports the delivery of NSW Health strategies and priorities. To ensure the system was performing within the guidelines of the framework, regular performance review meetings with all local health districts and specialty health networks, and relevant pillar organisations were conducted.

It also identified pressures on local health districts and specialty health networks when it came to delivering against some access performance indicators. In response, measures and funding models were adapted to ensure they were in line with teams' ability to deliver a sustainable health system.

4. In 2021–22, Leading Better Value Care focused on working with local health districts to scale and embed eight Tranche 1 and five Tranche 2 initiatives. COVID-19 affected the capacity of staff to implement some of these or impacted the availability and use of relevant health services.

Building facilities fit for our future

Kids HQ at Westmead

As part of the redevelopment of The Children’s Hospital at Westmead, the first clinical area for stage 2 was delivered in December 2021 – a new virtual care centre named Kids HQ. The purpose-built space comprises Patient Flow, Integrated Care, Kids GPS, virtualKIDS and a Disaster Response room. The space also links the hospital with other critical care services, such as the Newborn and Paediatric Emergency Transport Service, otherwise known as NETS.

The designs for Kids HQ were finalised in March 2022 following 12 months of consultation. Feedback from hundreds of staff and consumers assisted in the establishment of the look and feel of spaces where kids receive best-level care. The fit-for-purpose spaces are designed to incorporate the latest technology to enhance their experiences in our health system.

Delivering \$11.9 billion in health infrastructure

Completed 12 projects across NSW in 2021–22, improving health services and creating employment opportunities in both metropolitan and regional areas. Major new regional construction included the final stage of the \$241.3 million Dubbo Hospital redevelopment, the \$35 million Dubbo Western Cancer Centre, and the \$470 million New Maitland Hospital. Two facilities combining health and aged care services in one facility were completed under the \$296.5 million Multipurpose Service Program – the Hay Health Service and Tocumwal Multipurpose Service. The completion of wards was fast tracked in the \$341 million Concord Hospital redevelopment to address the surge in COVID-19 patient numbers.

Under the \$700 million Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program, an acute mental health unit at Blacktown Hospital and the first specialist mother and baby mental health unit at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital were opened. To help address growing community needs in Western Sydney and South-West Sydney, stage 1 of the \$550 million Nepean Hospital redevelopment was completed, as well as a new clinical services building for Campbelltown Hospital.

Securing additional Commonwealth funding to manage COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect health system funding arrangements during 2021–22. Working collaboratively with all Australian governments, NSW Health was integral to securing an extension of Commonwealth financial assistance towards the COVID-19 response, in addition to ongoing National Health Reform Agreement funding. The additional funding supported hospital capacity in both the public and private sectors, a range of public health measures, and the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

Secretary’s Award for Integrated Value-Based Care

NSW Health Pathology

Fast-moving genomics service combats the spread of COVID-19

When COVID-19 was first detected in NSW in late 2020, the genomics service worked collaboratively to rapidly design a novel genomics assay for COVID-19. Within two weeks, the first genomes were generated. This breakthrough led to the ability to link importations from returning overseas travellers to known international hotspots.



The winning team at NSW Health Pathology.