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# Operations and performance

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## Priority 1

# Patients and carers have positive experiences and outcomes that matter

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.

### 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

- Patient and carer feedback on non-emergency patient transport shows an overall satisfaction rating of nine out of 10.
- Consumer experience of Community Managed Organisations saw 92% of survey respondents rating it excellent or very good.
- Launched the Integrated Trauma Informed Care Framework – *My story, my health my future* - to ensure that children, young people, their families and carers, as well as staff within NSW Health, experience trauma-informed, integrated care.

- The Agency for Clinical Innovation published guidance for clinicians and their community partners on *Delivering healthcare to refugee communities in regional NSW*, supporting the establishment of trauma-informed and culturally safe health services for refugee communities.
- On behalf of the NSW Government, NSW Health has led the development of Children First 2022-31, a multi-agency public health framework for the prevention and response to problematic and harmful sexual behaviours by children and young people.
- Cancer Institute NSW supported access to high-quality, evidence-based cancer information through web-based resources, with 22,093 users accessing online patient information more than 24,913 sessions.

### Understanding the patient experience

#### Elevating the Human Experience

Delivering on initiatives in Elevating the Human Experience – Our Guide to Action continues to be a priority for NSW Health. Establishing collaborative partnerships has been identified as a priority area and in 2022, over 200 consumers, staff and representatives from peak agencies were involved in the co-design of All of Us – A guide to engaging consumers, carers, and communities. Published in May 2023, All of Us is a set of core principles for respectful engagement.

#### Bureau of Health Information

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) continued to provide the most reliable and comprehensive statewide picture of patient experience in NSW public hospitals. Regular reporting provides transparency for patients about healthcare performance, while delivering analyses and insights to support accountability and improvement.

In 2022-23, BHI enhanced the timeliness of its reporting, supported health staff to make more effective use of survey results, focused on high-priority issues, such as virtual care and experiences of elective surgery, and deployed more advanced analytics in new short-form reports in the Insights Series.

## Experiences of service

The Your Experience of Service (YES) survey and Mental Health Carer Experience (CES) Survey continue to be routinely collected to inform improvement initiatives.

In 2022-23, more than 22,400 YES, 2,900 CES and 1,400 Your Experience of Service- Community Managed Organisations (YES-CMO) surveys were completed. Services receive regular reports to assist them in identifying what they are doing well and areas for improvement.

In 2022-23, 75% of consumers reported an excellent or very good experience, an increase from the previous year, and 67% of carers reported an excellent or very good experience. Positive consumer experience of CMO services continued to be rated highly, with 92% of respondents rating it excellent or very good.

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs also conducted a small pilot of an Alcohol and Other Drugs Your Experience of Service Survey to measure patient experience in local health district and non-government organisation services.

## Patient Transport Service

HealthShare NSW launched the dedicated patient and carer feedback survey in September 2022. The survey captures feedback on NSW Health Patient Transport Service crews and partner providers, and measures overall satisfaction, timeliness and in-vehicle experience. For carers, the survey also measures the extent to which they feel supported in the provision of care for the patient. Results in 2022-23 show an overall satisfaction rating of nine out of 10.

## Driving improvements in patient-centred cancer care

Cancer Institute NSW drove improvements in patient-centred care through its patient-reported measures program, which collects feedback about cancer patients' experiences and outcomes. In 2022-23, the program reached 14,500 electronic patient information surveys. Results were available to clinicians in real time, supporting discussions with patients and the provision of tailored information and support.

The Institute funded implementation of in-language surveys at existing sites in eight community languages and supported cancer services to employ multicultural support staff to establish links to local services and referral pathways. In 2022-23, the program expanded to an additional three local health districts, with the system implemented and in use in 24 cancer centres across 10 local health districts.

As part of this program, the Cancer Institute NSW funded South Western Sydney Local Health District to embed the patient-reported measures program for Arabic and Vietnamese speaking people accessing cancer services.

There is also a tailored, evidence-based supportive care needs assessment tool for Aboriginal people, which accommodates the language, customs and culture-specific needs of Aboriginal people with cancer.

## Patient-reported measures

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) is committed to ensuring that patient-reported measures are culturally safe, and give Aboriginal people the opportunity to provide direct, timely feedback about their experiences and outcomes of care.

This year, ACI partnered with the Kowa Collaboration and local health districts for the implementation, collection and use of patient-reported measures for the Aunty Jean program. It is a community orientated program to support Aboriginal people with or at risk of chronic illness. This included the development of a data sovereignty framework.

Patient-reported measures are captured using the Health Outcomes and Patient Experience platform for 25 different patient cohorts. In 2022-23, new patient surveys were integrated into the platform to help capture the impact of Long COVID on patients.

## Recipes for success

HealthShare NSW provides around 25 million quality and nutritious meals each year for patients. In 2022-23, the Food Services Reform program focused on expanding meals and menus to meet the needs of every patient.

As part of the program, HealthShare NSW has engaged mental health consumers in the development and design of a new menu; commenced the staged implementation of KidsCHEF for paediatric patients; rolled out new texture modified foods to improve the experience of patients and residents on a pureed diet; and introduced a new, award-winning meal service model for the Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice at Manly, giving patients and families the opportunity to experience nourishing, home-style food.

## Safety Fundamentals

Safety Fundamentals for patient-centred care were developed in recognition of the importance of teamwork to achieve a culture of safety and a shared goal of delivering safe, reliable, patient-centred care.

These practical tools were formed by clinician and consumer consultation and cumulative evidence and have the potential to bring quick and measurable gains. Health workers can use these tools as part of day-to-day practice to strengthen the focus on partnering with patients, their families and carers and support improved patient and staff experience.

## Designing our spaces well

Health Infrastructure collaborated with the Government Architect NSW to develop and release the *Design Guide for Health: Spaces, Places and Precincts*. It sets principles and design criteria to support government and industry to deliver functional, welcoming and inclusive health facilities.

The Guide, together with capital project objectives and sustainability principles, supports Health Infrastructure's decision making, and enables a whole-of-lifecycle approach to ensure facilities are sustainable, efficient and affordable to operate, while providing a legacy for future generations.

## Informed cancer decisions

### Evidence-based cancer information

Cancer Institute NSW supported people to access high-quality, evidence-based cancer information online. Resources supported people diagnosed with cancer to make informed decisions and self-manage. A total of 22,093 users accessed online patient information during 2022-23.

### Supporting multicultural communities

In 2022, more than 14,200 users accessed online in-language patient information, including resources on diagnosis and treatment in eight community languages to support improved cancer literacy in multicultural communities.

A total of 42 new online and print-on-demand resources in 24 languages were developed to support patients and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to make informed decisions. In total, the Cancer Institute now has at least one resource in 38 community languages. All of the Cancer Institute NSW public awareness campaigns have been translated into community languages.

## Culturally safe and trauma-informed care

### Aboriginal cancer care

Cancer Institute NSW appointed Aboriginal Care Coordinators in four local health district cancer services to provide culturally appropriate and safe care.

BreastScreen NSW commenced the Putuwa project, which aims to increase breast screening participation of Aboriginal women aged 40 years and over. To encourage more Aboriginal women to feel welcome at screening and assessment services, BreastScreen NSW engaged an Aboriginal artist to create artwork used for modesty shawls and promotional material, including a mobile screening site on the NSW north coast.

### Providing care to sexually and gender diverse people with cancer

Cancer Institute NSW enhanced cancer service workers' knowledge, confidence and skills in providing care to sexually and gender diverse people with cancer. In partnership with ACON, the Institute developed eLearning modules about the unique health and wellbeing issues and health disparities faced by LGBTIQ+ people.

Since publication in January 2023, more than 200 people have enrolled in the training. An internal staff training course has also been completed by more than 220 Cancer Institute NSW and BreastScreen NSW staff.

### Safe environments for rehabilitation

The Agency for Clinical Innovation supported the adoption of *Gadjigadji – my rehab, my journey*, a digital resource to support clinicians to create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal people in their rehabilitation service.

The resource encourages clinical yarning, videos, stories, templates, quizzes, a self-assessment tool and artwork. *Gadjigadji* is being used in 35 locations across NSW, representing half the state's rehabilitation sites. Clinicians have reported improved relationships with Aboriginal patients, improved engagement with rehabilitation services, and improved health outcomes.

### Integrated Trauma Informed Care Framework

In February 2023, the *Integrated Trauma Informed Care Framework – My story, my health, my future* was launched to address the need for trauma-informed, integrated care for children, young people, their families and carers. The Framework has been published on the NSW Health website along with a range of resources to support implementation.

## Delivering healthcare to refugee communities in regional NSW

The Agency for Clinical Innovation published guidance for clinicians and their community partners on *Delivering healthcare to refugee communities in regional NSW*. The guidance supports the establishment of trauma-informed and culturally safe health services for refugee communities. Health professionals and regional local health districts use this resource to effectively engage with vulnerable people with refugee backgrounds and improve experiences of healthcare.

## Making Visible: Preventing and responding to violence, abuse and neglect

In 2022-23, the Agency for Clinical Innovation launched its first ever podcast series, *Making Visible: Preventing and responding to violence, abuse and neglect*. Each episode shared practitioner perspectives and advice to support social workers, psychologists and health professionals deliver trauma-informed, best practice therapeutic care. The series proved successful with more than 1,000 downloads within a month of launch.

## Alcohol and other drugs

The NSW Ministry of Health Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs funded two sites to establish a Safe Assessment Unit. The units provide integrated care, and respond to the needs of people presenting with, or at risk of, behavioural disturbances associated with substance use, mental health and/or social crisis. The Centre also incorporated principles of trauma-informed care into Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug Ice initiatives, prioritising populations with specific needs.

## Making informed decisions about surgery

The Surgical Services team published online patient resources to provide public information about elective surgery access in NSW public hospitals and answer frequently asked questions from the community. From their release in September 2022 until 30 June 2023, the resources have had more than 16,000 page views with more than 10,000 visits to the [How to join an elective surgery waitlist at an NSW public hospital](#) webpage.

In 2022-23, the Surgery Access Line responded to 934 calls from patients, carers and general practitioners and provided information on access to surgery. This was an increase of 236 more calls from the previous year.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation published shared decision-making resources for older people living with frailty considering surgery. These resources aim to help older people living with frailty, their families and health staff make informed decisions about surgery.

## Communicating effectively with families and carers

The Agency for Clinical Innovation published a new digital guide to support effective communication in neonatal services and improve experience and outcomes for patients, families and health staff. The guide was created in consultation with consumers and staff, and includes advice, tools and resources to help clinicians communicate effectively with families and carers, in person and through using virtual care.

### Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare Award

## South Western Sydney Local Health District

### Aboriginal GOT IT!

The Aboriginal Getting On Track In Time (GOT IT!) program is a cultural adaption program designed and led by local Aboriginal people from the South West Sydney area, aimed to improve the capacity of caregivers and schools to identify and respond to the social and emotional needs of children between three and nine years in a culturally responsive way.

The cultural adaptations reflected the localised need and showed that the program had significant positive impacts on the emotional regulation of children, parenting practices, and responses of school staff to emotion-based behaviours.



Jemma Milloy, proud representative from the Aboriginal Getting On Track In Time Pilot Program team, winners of the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards 2022 Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare category.



## Enhancing our pathology services

NSW Health Pathology progressed work on the Fusion program which will standardise technologies, processes and workflows and deliver a new statewide laboratory information management system, an integral part of the ambitious Single Digital Patient Record program.

Its laboratories provided specialist testing for outbreaks and emerging notifiable diseases, including Japanese encephalitis, Mpox.

NSW Health Pathology undertook a review of collection services to better understand consumer and referrer needs, the physical environment of collection centres and the needs of collectors.

Forensic Medicine Newcastle collaborated with local Aboriginal community members and used handmade quilts to cover the deceased for family viewings. Leaves painted by Aboriginal artists were offered to Aboriginal families to place with loved ones.

## Working to keep people safe from harm

### Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

NSW Health has now delivered on all its public commitments under the NSW Government's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission). The 2022 *NSW Annual Report on Progress* is the final report and covers NSW Health's activities over 2022.

NSW Health will continue the work to keep children and young people in NSW safe from harm.

### Children First 2022-2031, Talking About It and Safety in Action 2022-2024

On behalf of the NSW Government, NSW Health has led the development of *Children First 2022-2031*, a multiagency public health framework for the prevention and response to problematic and harmful sexual behaviours by children and young people.

Children First is a world-first whole of government and community public health framework. It is supported by *Talking About It*, the NSW prevention action strategy, which outlines the evidence for preventing problematic and harmful sexual behaviours in children and young people.

Together, these documents set the vision and priorities for how NSW government agencies and the community, can and will work together to support children and young people who have displayed, or been affected by, problematic and harmful sexual behaviours.

Safety in Action 2022-2024 is our NSW multiagency first action plan for the prevention and responding to problematic and harmful sexual behaviours by children and young people. Safety in Action outlines our collective actions in the first implementation phase of Children First and Talking About It.

*Children First 2022-2031*, *Talking About It* and *Safety in Action 2022-2024* are the culmination of a significant and complex program of work across government that responds to the findings and recommendations of the 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. More than 2,500 workforce and community stakeholders across NSW contributed to the work, including children and families with lived experiences and representatives from our priority populations.

## Working in partnership

During 2022-23, Education Centre Against Violence established a statewide, multiagency workforce development committee that has, together with the time-limited co-design advisory committee, guided implementation activities. This included the development and delivery of evidence-based, best practice training in partnership with People with Disability Australia and the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability in 2022; and the development of accessible information resources anticipated to be released in late 2023.

## National Redress Scheme

NSW Health participates in the National Redress Scheme for Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. Through the Redress Scheme, successful applicants are eligible for a monetary payment, counselling, and a Direct Personal Response, which is a formal apology delivered to survivors by the institution found responsible for the abuse they have suffered. The purpose of these formal apologies is to contribute to healing and justice, and to provide an opportunity for survivors' personal experiences to be heard and acknowledged.

## Regional connections

A comprehensive review was undertaken of local health councils and advisory committees across NSW. In February 2022, a report was published, outlining the development of new guiding principles to support the reinvigoration of local health committees across NSW. Extensive stakeholder consultation was integral to the development of the report.

Implementation and monitoring of the guiding principles is ongoing across all regional local health districts to strengthen local health committees.

The Regional Health Division continued to support local health districts to strengthen their committees by building connections, sharing insights and partnering for capability development across the system.

## Communicating on priority health issues

Health Protection NSW worked closely with the NSW Ministry of Health's Strategic Communications and Engagement team on opportunities to share key messages to the NSW public.

A Behavioural Science and Communications Advisory Group was convened to bring together experts to discuss relevant public health topics. Improving influenza vaccination coverage in children under five years was the first topic. Actions from the meeting included updating the NSW Immunisation Schedule, liaising with Aboriginal Medical Services and contributing to Yarn Up, a question and answer session with, and for, Aboriginal communities with experts hosted on the NSW Health Facebook.

In partnership with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council, the Agency for Clinical Innovation hosted an Aboriginal Chronic Conditions Conference on 14 June 2023. More than half of the 450 attendees identified as an Aboriginal peoples. Attendees heard from 28 speakers and expert panel members showcasing key learnings on the theme Aboriginal Workforce and Chronic Care Models.

The Winter Respiratory public health communications campaign launched on 9 May and ran until 31 August 2023.

The campaign targeted parents and carers of children six months to under five years (including culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal communities), pregnant women, and all Aboriginal people from six months. These audience groups were entitled to the Commonwealth-funded influenza vaccine. The general population between 16 and 39 years were also targeted with hygiene and 'stay at home if unwell' messaging.

The campaign used the results of focus testing (with pregnant women and parents, including culturally and linguistically diverse communities and Aboriginal people) to inform the creative.

By mid-August, the campaign had generated 20 million impressions. The campaign was also supported by organic social media and stakeholder engagement.

A clinician working group was created to identify new strategies to support clinicians in sharing public health messaging. A range of materials and resources were developed with the working group including:

- influenza vaccination safety data resources
- the NSW weekly respiratory report for COVID-19 and influenza
- hard copy promotional material for pharmacies and GPs to promote influenza vaccination.

## Transforming Patient Experience Award

### The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network

#### The Last Days of Life: Paediatric and Neonatal Toolkit

The death of a child is tragic and challenging. The Last Days of Life: Paediatric and Neonatal Toolkit is a best practice guide for healthcare professionals to ensure the patient and family remain the central focus leading up to a death of a child.

The toolkit empowers clinicians to adopt a proactive approach and equips them with the tools to work in partnership with families to transform the experience of a child dying.



Sandy Coombs, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Palliative Care Quality and Project Officer, one of people behind The Last Days of Life: Paediatric and Neonatal Toolkit at the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network. Winners of the Transforming Patient Experience Award in the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards 2022.





## Priority 2

# Safe care is delivered across all settings

Safe, high-quality, reliable care is delivered by NSW Health and our partners in a sustainable and personalised way, within 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

- In August 2022, the Urgent Care Services program commenced in partnership with Local Health Districts, Primary Health Networks, Healthdirect and multiple divisions across the NSW Ministry of Health. The program works to reduce pressure on emergency departments and increase the capacity to provide urgent care services to the community.
- In December 2022, the NSW Telestroke Service program rollout was completed and scaled to 23 rural and regional hospitals across NSW.

- The Community Single Front Door service has been functional over the last 12 months, and has helped connect over 321,218 callers with clinical advice and alternate service providers. More than 39,000 people were referred to Virtual GP and Virtual KIDS consultations, and approximately 65% of people who were intending to present to an emergency department were assessed and triaged to appropriate non-emergency department care.
- In 2022, approximately nine out of 10 patients rated their virtual outpatient care as very good or good.
- Canrefer, the Cancer Institute's online directory of cancer specialists, multidisciplinary cancer care teams and treatment centres, was accessed by 155,439 users seeking referrals.
- The Virtual Clinical Care Centre supported more than 46,000 secondary triage incidents to help manage high Triple Zero (000) call volumes. More than 20% of these were successfully referred to other healthcare services, helping to reduce the burden on NSW Ambulance and improve patient safety and operational performance.
- The launch of the Forensic Medicine Information System provided an integrated single-source-of-truth for coronial and non-coronial referrals, giving Forensic Medicine teams and the Coroner secure, timely access to information.
- Cancer Institute NSW expanded eviQ, an online resource providing evidence-based, peer-reviewed cancer treatment protocols and information. In 2022-23, uptake increased by 36% to more than 1.2 million users.
- In 2022-23, the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Scheme helped 32,700 patients - which is an additional 9,500 patients compared to the previous financial year.

## Virtual care

### Progressing the NSW Virtual Care Strategy

The *NSW Virtual Care Strategy 2021-2026* supports timely access to care by increasing capacity and expanding virtual care, such as telehealth, video conferencing and remote patient monitoring. This will deliver service benefits that increase effective and efficient care delivery, reduce potentially preventable hospitalisations, reduce length of hospital stays and improve system integration between primary care and acute care.

The NSW Ministry of Health worked with partners across the system to embed sustainable, safe, effective and efficient models of care to further support the delivery of the NSW Virtual Care Strategy.

A Virtual Care Services Implementation Guide was developed to provide consistent statewide guidance about best practice principles and enable a coordinated, consistent and integrated approach to implementing virtual care services.

A six-month pilot was commenced to expand the existing Virtual Rural Generalist Service into selected sites across Southern New South Wales Local Health District. The highly successful model provides specialist advice and 24/7 rural medical support.

The virtualKIDS Urgent Care Service was launched to help prevent children having to attend an emergency department and to support providing care closer to home. The service provides care through videoconferencing and a 24/7 hotline, connecting families with a clinical nurse to provide an assessment before they get to hospital and to determine the best care pathway and care provider based on each child's needs. The service is accessed by calling HealthDirect.

### Sharing the message

NSW Health continues to raise awareness, address misconceptions, and promote the benefits of virtual care amongst patients, carers, families and communities across NSW, as well as the staff and clinicians working in or with NSW Health.

To build on the consistent messaging and resources developed in previous years, the NSW Ministry of Health collaborated with partners across the system and externally to develop targeted communications for priority populations, including culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Ministry continues to work closely with local health districts and specialty health networks to address their communication needs and have developed materials for local adaptation.

More than 19,000 people visited the NSW Health virtual care website in 2022-23, with more than 42,000 visiting the site since it launched in January 2021. The website includes information about virtual care, such as how it works and the benefits, plus more than 25 patient, carer and clinician stories about their experiences of virtual care.

Projects to build support for virtual care with local health districts and clinicians have focused on streamlined and consistent communications and engagement. To support this, a virtual care newsletter was developed and sent to more than 500 partners across NSW Health.

### Understanding the virtual experience

The Bureau of Health Information continued to survey patients about their experiences of virtual care, resulting in datasets and insights that are unique in Australia. This provided clinicians and health system managers with the second year of Virtual Care Survey results, as well as new modules in other surveys covering adult admitted patients and outpatient cancer clinics.

The resulting insights, for example, that approximately 9 out of 10 patients rated their virtual outpatient care in 2022 as very good or good, have played a key role in communicating the value of new care models among both patients and clinicians, as well as informing the evaluation of the *NSW Virtual Care Strategy 2021-2026*.

### Referring patients to care

Initially established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Virtual Clinical Care Centre has continued to evolve to meet community needs, particularly for non-emergency responses. There were more than 46,000 secondary triage incidents in 2022-23 with more than 20% successfully referred. This equates to freeing up 917 paramedic crews over their 12-hour shift to respond to emergency incidents, ultimately improving patient safety and operational performance.

### Telestroke

The NSW Telestroke Service provided specialist stroke care to patients in rural and regional NSW, connecting local emergency physicians with 24/7 access to expert stroke clinicians using virtual care.

The program rollout was completed in December 2022 and was scaled to 23 rural and regional hospitals in NSW. The service supported communication across hospital and local health district boundaries, and its screen-sharing and collaboration functions enable remote viewing of electronic medical records, real time scanning review of images and live patient assessment.

The service has improved health outcomes and provided lifesaving consultations for more than 4,000 stroke patients in regional and rural NSW. The NSW Telestroke Service won two 2022 NSW Health Awards, in the Patient Safety First category, and won the Secretary's Award for Integrated Value Based Care, along with key partners: the Agency for Clinical Innovation, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, eHealth NSW and the NSW Ministry of Health.

### **Community Single Front Door helps patients**

NSW Health has partnered with Healthdirect to launch the Community Single Front Door initiative, a program that aims to healthcare services more accessible and easier to navigate, by providing a single, dedicated, 24/7 point of contact for non-life-threatening healthcare needs. For cases requiring immediate attention, the nurse triage team connects patients to statewide virtual care services, including Virtual GP and Virtual KIDS. The service has been functional over the last 12 months, and has helped connect over 321,218 callers with clinical advice and alternate service providers. More than 39,000 people were referred to Virtual GP and Virtual KIDS consultations, and approximately 65% of people who were intending to present to an emergency department were assessed and triaged to appropriate non-emergency department care. It has led to an 8% decrease in Healthdirect callers being referred to emergency departments, amounting to approximately between 80-120 patients a day across NSW. The Service was also a critical support initiative for healthcare access during the NSW flood crises.

### **myVirtualCare**

The myVirtualCare videoconferencing platform provided patients in NSW with a seamless and convenient way to access their clinical and social care providers using one web link on any internet-enabled device. myVirtualCare supported patients to access a variety of services from anywhere in the state, including cancer care, palliative care, nutrition and dietetics, pain, mental health, chronic and complex care, and speech and rehabilitation services.

At the end of the 2022-23 financial year, more than 121,100 clinicians had been trained to use myVirtualCare and more than 30,700 clinicians provided care using the platform. This resulted in more than 395,000 virtual consultations occurring across 129 established virtual consultation rooms.

A survey of more than 25,000 consumers who have experienced virtual care and the myVirtualCare platform showed very positive responses.

This included 96% of respondents saying the virtual care they received was very good or good, and 79% saying their virtual care experience was better or the same as an in-person appointment.

## **Strengthening access for rural, regional and remote NSW**

### **NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022-2032**

The Regional Health Division developed the *NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022-2032*, a blueprint for the future provision of health services that understands and celebrates, the diverse and unique nature of regional communities.

The plan, published in February 2023, aligns closely with Future Health. Extensive consultation was undertaken at every stage of the plan's development and included face-to-face and virtual workshops, a survey, written submissions and responses from the NSW Government's Have Your Say platform.

### **Response to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry**

The Regional Health Division coordinated the government response to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote NSW. The response was tabled in parliament on 1 September 2022.

NSW Health branches, pillars and agencies are responsible for delivering on the actions to implement each recommendation.

The Regional Health Division coordinates the monitoring and reporting on the actions against the Inquiry recommendations and an Independent Review to assess progress.

### **Reducing the financial burden**

The Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme, known as IPTAAS, can help to reduce the financial burden on people who need to travel long distances to access specialist healthcare.

On 1 August 2022, enhancements were made to the scheme, including the expansion of the eligibility criteria to include high-risk foot services, non-commercial clinical trials, ophthalmologists and publicly funded oral health clinics. In 2022-23, IPTAAS helped 32,700 patients, which is an additional 9,500 patients compared to the previous financial year.

Subsidy rates for private vehicle travel also increased from 22 to 40 cents per kilometre and reimbursement for accommodation has almost doubled.

NSW Health is continuing to promote the scheme and streamline the IPTAAS application process to make it easier for patients to lodge claims.

### Support nursing practice in rural and regional areas

NSW Health published *Rural Nurse Practitioners*, a framework for service and training. The framework provides guidance for the delivery of accessible, person-centred care that addresses the needs of rural communities.

In 2022-23, 45 nurse practitioner positions, including 20 rural generalist nurse practitioner positions, were funded across rural local health districts.

*Rural Nursing Pathways in Practice* is a statewide framework launched in 2022 to support rural nursing practice. The pathway is a collection of customised professional development opportunities and has been implemented in six rural local health districts. In 2022-23, nurses completed more than 14,000 rural nursing e-learning modules.

### Remote Hepatitis C Prescribing Program

The Centre for Population Health partnered with the Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine to deliver the Remote Hepatitis C Prescribing Program. The Program links Hepatitis C prescribers in rural, remote, and regional areas and other settings where access to treatment may be limited. Medications that can be supplied by registered nurses in publicly funded sexual health services were expanded in February 2023 to include post and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PEP/PrEP) HIV medications and syphilis treatments.

### Albury Wodonga Health Intergovernmental Agreement 2022-2035

NSW Health signed a new Intergovernmental Agreement with the Victorian Department of Health regarding the operation of Albury Wodonga Health. While the unique cross-border service is operated by Victoria, under the new agreement, both states now have strategic oversight to ensure representation on behalf of all local residents.

The agreement ensures financial arrangements are fit for purpose and initiates work to improve performance reporting and monitoring and supporting data systems. The agreement also enables NSW to drive infrastructure improvements at Albury Base Hospital.

## Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Services Award

### Hunter New England Local Health District

#### Mental Health Virtual Clinical Pharmacy Project

Mental Health Pharmacists face many challenges and are tasked with a multitude of duties to ensure safe and best practices in medication management.

The Mental Health Virtual Clinical Pharmacy Project was developed to provide three mental health units in Tamworth, Manning and Maitland hospitals, without onsite mental health clinical pharmacists, access to virtual clinical pharmacy services.

The project provides beneficial healthcare interventions for mental health patients and acknowledges the crucial role of pharmacists in patient care.



Cecilia Bjorksten, Rory Curtis, Leana Wong and Rosa Baleato representing the Mental Health Virtual Clinical Pharmacy Project team. Award winners at the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards 2022.

## Pharmacy

### Supporting pharmacies to improve patient access in the primary care setting

In November 2022, the NSW Government announced pharmacy reforms to increase the community's access to primary care services, including an increase to the vaccines available at local pharmacies from 6 to 12.



Following an expression of interest process in early 2023, a University of Newcastle-led research consortium was awarded a \$3 million grant to design, implement and evaluate a clinical trial to assess the effectiveness of pharmacy management of uncomplicated urinary tract infections.

In February 2023, the NSW Government announced an expansion of the clinical trial to include the provision of oral contraception and the management of mild skin conditions. An additional grant for \$3 million was awarded to the University of Newcastle to incorporate these components into the existing trial framework.

In May 2023, a small feasibility study commenced with 94 randomly selected pharmacies to test the processes and systems in place for pharmacy management of uncomplicated urinary tract infections, prior to the full rollout to more than 1,000 pharmacies across NSW in July 2023. The NSW Government also announced patients would not need to pay to see a pharmacist participating in the trial and \$20 would be paid per consultation to participating pharmacies to support administration associated with the trial. The feasibility study demonstrated significant community interest in the trial, with nearly 939 consultations in nine weeks.

The NSW Government also partnered with the ACT Government to allow up to five pharmacies located in the ACT to participate in the NSW clinical trial, to provide convenience and consistency for residents of NSW located in areas close to the ACT border.

## Keeping medication safe

SafeScript NSW continued to provide NSW Health prescribers and pharmacists with access to real-time information about a patient's prescribing and dispensing history for certain high-risk medicines, from anywhere in the state. This information helps prescribers and pharmacists to make safer clinical decisions and reduces the incidence of harm, including death, from the unsafe use of monitored medicines.

Delivered by eHealth NSW in partnership with the NSW Ministry of Health, SafeScript NSW's uptake was strong and health practitioners reported finding it to be a helpful clinical tool. More than 22,000 health practitioners registered for the system in the 2022-23 financial year.

## Reducing hospitalisations

### Urgent Care Services

The Urgent Care Services Program commenced in August 2022 to reduce pressure on emergency departments and to increase capacity to provide urgent care services to the community.

An Urgent Care Service is a health service that provides short-term, one-off episodes of care for urgent but non-life-threatening health care needs and is not an emergency department.

In partnership with local health districts, primary health networks, Healthdirect and multiple divisions across the NSW Ministry of Health, the NSW Government is continuing the investment to deliver 25 Urgent Care Services by 2025.

### Out of Hospital Care Program

This strategy is also effective for freeing up acute and sub-acute beds to assist with patient flow. The program delivers packages of case management and home supports including ComPacks (non clinical packages of case management and home care services for patients being discharged from a NSW public hospital), Safe and Supported at Home, and End of Life packages. These can provide eligible patients with immediate access to care when being discharged from NSW public hospitals or when a person is identified at risk of an avoidable admission.

In the 2022-23 financial year the program used the more than \$50 million budget to deliver 25,005 packages, including:

- 14,317 ComPacks
- 5,733 Safe and Supported at Home packages
- 4,955 End of Life packages

### Reducing the risk of hospitalisation

The risk of hospitalisation algorithm helps to predict whether a person is likely to have an unplanned admission to hospital in the next 12 months. This is then used to identify people who would benefit from care coordination through Planned Care for Better Health to help prevent hospitalisation.

Planned Care for Better Health provides care coordination to people with chronic conditions who are at risk of further hospitalisation. In the 2022-23 financial year, 10,255 people were enrolled in a Planned Care for Better Health service across all local health districts and speciality health networks in NSW.

### Emergency Department to Community Initiative

The Emergency Department to Community Initiative provides tailored intensive case management and multidisciplinary case review to support patients under the age of 70 who have been identified as frequent presenters to emergency departments.



The initiative has been implemented across the NSW Health System and more than 741 people received care from the Emergency Department to Community team in 2022-23.

## Statewide Referral Criteria

The Statewide Referral Criteria are clinical decision-support tools that give health professionals the criteria they need to refer their patients to public specialist outpatient services across NSW. The first series of criteria were developed in 2022-23 for selected ophthalmology and gastroenterology conditions.

## Improving patient flow

### Onboarding more paramedics

In 2022-23, NSW Ambulance successfully onboarded more than 500 additional paramedics, in line with the State-wide Infrastructure Team recruitment targets. This has led to a permanent enhancement to the rosters for 30 stations and improved ambulance response times, staff wellbeing and created a positive change to the critical care landscape.

The onboarding of more paramedics and construction of new ambulance stations will further improve these outcomes.

### Getting real time information

Patient Transport Service real time dashboards are currently being used by service operational teams to enhance real time decision capabilities and address patient flow priorities across the system. The dashboard provides a real-time depiction of capacity and vehicles remaining on scene to enable better resource utilisation, improved transparency, timely escalation and mitigation of risk to reduce strain on NSW Ambulance and local health districts.

### Working together

Established in 2022-23, the Patient Flow Portal working group provides oversight, strategic direction and advice around all matters relating to the Patient Flow Portal and the Patient Flow Systems Framework. The working group ensures NSW Health has the best enterprise solutions to manage care coordination and patient flow across the system.

### Establishment of statewide system flow function

In June 2023, NSW Ministry of Health System Flow Officers were permanently recruited to monitor ambulance arrivals at hospitals and assist with the coordination of whole-of-system patient flow. These

roles are supported by the NSW Health executive to ensure 24/7 support is available for the health system, providing a liaison point between the NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Ambulance, local health districts and networks. The system flow function monitors and escalates transfer of care delays and capacity of neonatal intensive care units across NSW, and actions ambulance adjustment requests in periods of peak demand.

### Keeping patients safe

NSW Ambulance delivers initiatives to aid the delivery of safe, high quality and reliable care for patients in the home, community and virtual settings, including a virtual secondary triage model and streamlined and integrated referral pathways.

Mechanical CPR devices were rolled out to all NSW Ambulance frontline units to improve clinical outcomes for out-of-hospital cardiac arrests.

The Clinical Device and Notification Platform pilot was implemented in partnership with eHealth NSW, NSW Ambulance, the Agency for Clinical Innovation and the NSW Ministry of Health at Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. The program replaces existing transmitting monitor/defibrillators and the notification platform that sends electrocardiograms (ECGs) from ambulances and smaller hospitals to specialists. This will improve patient care at the point of treatment and provide better outcomes and access to specialist advice for regional patients.

NSW Health Pathology continued to improve and promote its Akuna Electronic Specimen Tracking System which provides real-time tracking of specimens between NSW Health Pathology laboratory locations across NSW to help keep every precious sample safe. Akuna shows users where all specimens are at any time, provides alerts for overdue items and uses other extensive reporting capabilities to troubleshoot and manage workload and resourcing.

## Patient data

### Integrated Care Outcomes Database

To support the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of integrated care initiatives, the Integrated Care Outcomes Database is linked to hospital, emergency, ambulance, perinatal and births, deaths and marriages data.

In early 2023, the definition of the enrolled cohort linked in the database was expanded to capture a range of value-based healthcare initiatives in addition to the NSW Integrated Care Strategy. This has reduced the data collection and linkage burden and maximised the utility of the linked data.

This information is used to support continuous quality improvement to improve the engagement of patients who require integrated care services. To support local services and the NSW Ministry of Health monitor the performance of the Planned Care for Better Health Initiative, an operational dashboard in the Patient Flow Portal was launched. It includes information about enrolments and performance trends, and is being rolled out across all local health districts and speciality health networks.

## Clinical Health Information Exchange

The Clinical Health Information Exchange is a patient centric clinical repository that provides clinicians with access to aggregated information about their patient's health history. In 2022-23, the exchange continued to be successfully implemented across the state's local health districts.

It was viewed 326,287 times by NSW Health staff throughout the 2022-23 financial year and is one of the key enablers for the upcoming healthcare transformation program, the Single Digital Patient Record.

## MedSync

eHealth NSW developed the MedSync platform to help clinicians securely share clinical information, upload images and collaborate easily on the go. The platform was made available to more than 110,000 clinical staff, supporting the delivery of virtual clinical collaboration across multiple settings statewide.

## Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes

Through the *Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes* program, Cancer Institute NSW provided actionable data insights to the NSW Health system to support service planning, design and care delivery.

The program focused on reducing variation of clinical care, improving patient experience, better responding to emerging issues, and reducing inequalities in access and outcomes for priority populations.

In the 2022-23 financial year, 86 reports were delivered, including the inaugural patient-reported measures for people affected by cancer and lung optimal care pathway reports, and the second Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes for Aboriginal People report.

## Using data to support patients with severe trauma

The Agency for Clinical Innovation partnered with eHealth NSW to co-design a prototype for a single state level electronic Clinical Quality Registry for trauma, connected to existing electronic medical records.

This will assist in the identification of areas of trauma care that could be improved for future patients. The partnership saw the development of a prototype with conceptual wireframes and modules to enable automated data extraction, intended to minimise the burden of manual data entry on clinicians and teams.

## Electronic Record for Intensive Care

The Electronic Record for Intensive Care is a state-of-the-art clinical information system which improves the safety and quality of care offered to critically ill patients in intensive care units. It replaces almost all paper charts and forms for adult, neonatal and paediatric intensive care units across NSW. More than 65,000 patients have benefitted from better quality and safer care.

In 2022-23, the Electronic Record for Intensive Care Neonatal Intensive Care Unit implementation was completed by eHealth NSW at the Nepean Hospital pilot site. The system was also implemented at an additional four sites: Royal North Shore Hospital, Royal Hospital for Women, Liverpool Hospital and John Hunter Hospital. The electronic record integrates patient data every minute from multiple systems and devices, supporting better clinical decision-making.

## Statewide Initiative for Diabetes Management

Diabetes represents a significant and complex public health challenge in NSW and Australia. The condition is associated with a range of health complications, affecting approximately 1 in 11 individuals aged over 16 years in NSW. Moreover, the prevalence of diabetes is increasing, necessitating a concerted effort to address this issue through an integrated and coordinated approach.

In response, NSW Health partnered with NSW Primary Health Networks to develop the *Statewide Initiative for Diabetes Management*. Throughout 2022-23, local health districts worked together with their respective primary health networks and other partners to adopt a one health system approach. This led to identifying priority areas and population groups within each region and collaboratively developing, implementing and monitoring locally relevant strategies to address these priorities which will continue into future years.

In addition to local efforts, a statewide governance structure was established to oversee four workstreams that will develop, implement and scale systemwide enablers and solutions to address key areas of the initiative. It has brought together healthcare professionals from various sectors, alongside individuals with lived experience of diabetes.

By aligning efforts at both the local and statewide levels, NSW Health strives to address the diabetes challenge, improve patient outcomes and experience, and deliver better value care.

## Preparing for future care needs

### Effective and sustainable solutions

A Guide for Early Options Development and Analysis in Service Planning was approved and released to NSW Health organisations as part of the 2023 capital investment planning process. The guide aims to improve the rigour, approach, consistency and documentation of options analysis by local health districts and specialty health networks earlier in the planning process. This will ensure the most effective and sustainable solutions are proposed for funding consideration. In 2023, districts and networks were required to demonstrate that they have investigated, consulted on and analysed a range of options before recommending their preferred option.

To uplift system capability to perform early options analysis, health economics experts were engaged to co-design a training workshop for health service planners across NSW Health. The training was delivered in April 2023 to participants from across 20 health organisations and received positive feedback.

The revised capital investment proposal template was issued in March 2023. The updated template aimed to assist health entities to develop proposals and included revised sections on service planning and recurrent cost impacts to improve the quality of submissions.

### Enhancing our capital works program

Health Infrastructure established a new Program Performance and Assurance function to centralise and enhance its capital works program assurance, governance, support and reporting. Project governance for the capital program has been updated for implementation in 2023-24.

Implementation of a new project data analytics platform is providing improved real-time reporting on capital program performance to drive more informed and data-driven decision making across the program. The reporting, together with continued development of Project Toolkit guidance and documentation, is working to facilitate more strategic, efficient and consistent delivery of the capital program and embed NSW Health's Facility Planning Process.

## Secretary's Award – Integrated Value Based Care

### South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

#### NSW Statewide Telestroke Service

The NSW Telestroke Service is a Statewide 24/7 hyper-acute stroke service aimed at saving lives and reducing disability from stroke by providing time critical care to patients of regional and remote NSW.

The implementation was a collaboration between the NSW Ministry of Health, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, the Agency for Clinical Innovation, and eHealth, and connects 23 regional and remote hospitals with a stroke Specialist Neurologist via video conferencing.

The service keeps patients closer to home while ensuring they can access best practice stroke care.



Winners of the Secretary's Award for Integrated Value Based Care at the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards.

## Sharing our learnings across the system

The System Management Branch collaborates with a range of stakeholders, including the Clinical Excellence Commission, NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Coroner's Office, Health Care Complaints Commission and local health districts and specialty health networks to ensure emerging risks are identified and mitigated.



In collaboration with the Ministry's Legal Branch and the Clinical Excellence Commission, the System Management Branch coordinated NSW Health's response to the NSW Attorney General for Coronial Recommendations directed to NSW Health organisations and considered potential statewide learnings from Coronial findings for the NSW Health System.

## Keeping cancer care safe

### Value-based cancer care

Cancer Institute NSW supported improved access to colonoscopy for people with positive bowel screening results by expanding localised direct access colonoscopy services in public hospitals. There are now 19 services in NSW, an increase of six over the previous year.

The Institute worked alongside key stakeholders to support increased access to hypofractionated radiotherapy for women with early-stage breast cancer. This supports patients' improved quality of life and health outcomes by reducing side effects for patients. More than 90% of radiation therapy courses delivered in NSW public facilities are hypofractionated.

### Supporting access to cancer multidisciplinary teams

Cancer Institute NSW supported people to access high-quality cancer care services through Canrefer, an online directory of cancer specialists, multidisciplinary cancer care teams and treatment centres. This year, Canrefer was accessed by 155,439 users seeking referrals to specialists working in multidisciplinary cancer care teams.

### Building skills and capabilities of cancer care professionals

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. In 2022-23, eviQ users increased by 36% to more than 1.2 million users.

In October 2022, the eviQ program published the *International Consensus Guideline for Anticancer Drug Dosing in Kidney Dysfunction*, a supportive decision-making tool for clinicians.

The guideline provides a transparent and standardised global approach to manage dosing in a complex patient population. eviQ also developed several complementary clinical resources to assist users in adopting the guideline recommendations, including calculators and eLearning, and is updating related information and treatment protocols to reflect the guideline recommendations.

eviQ Education supports the rapid uptake of emerging evidence into clinical practice and provides online education for oncology professionals. In the 2022-23 financial year, the platform had more than 143,000 users, an increase of 14% from 2021-22.

## Supporting communities affected by cancer

In 2022-23, Cancer Institute NSW grants supported 2,500 community members from 29 different language and cultural groups to receive education about cervical, breast and bowel cancer screening and healthy modifiable behaviours to prevent cancers. More than 125 community education sessions were delivered over this time.

Cancer Institute NSW also provided training to 37 bilingual community educators and cultural support workers to deliver ongoing training sessions. These aimed to increase multicultural communities' awareness and uptake of the three national screening programs, and healthy lifestyle habits to help prevent cancer.

Fifteen new multicultural community education grants were awarded to government and non-government agencies to deliver future community education sessions.

Cancer Institute NSW also undertook the Refugee Cancer Screening Project, which aims to improve cancer screening awareness in refugee communities from the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa through capacity-building, research and community engagement. This year, 17 community consultations were held involving more than 160 people who provided feedback on barriers, including systemic and cultural issues, impacting community participation in cancer screening.

Ongoing funding was provided by Cancer Institute NSW to cover pathology costs of cervical screening tests undertaken by women's health nurses, who generally work in publicly funded clinics in rural and regional areas. These nurses use innovative outreach models to help to engage women experiencing barriers to cervical screening.

## Supporting sexuality and gender diverse communities at risk of and affected by cancer

Cancer Institute NSW and ACON have a multi-year partnership to improve cancer screening participation, and reduce cancer risk for sexuality and gender diverse (LGBTIQ+) people in NSW through community engagement, targeted health promotion and inclusive practice training for the cancer sector.

In 2022-23, this collaboration delivered targeted cervical screening and smoking cessation campaigns and tailored eLearning on inclusive practice for BreastScreen NSW, Quitline, Cancer Institute NSW staff and cancer service workers.

## Supporting people impacted by Violence, Abuse and Neglect

### Standardising our approach to early evidence collection

NSW Health provides 24/7 integrated psychosocial, medical and forensic crisis responses to adult and child victims of sexual assault through a network of specialist Sexual Assault Services, delivered in more than 60 locations in metropolitan, regional and rural sites. In 2022-23, NSW Health finalised and implemented a statewide standardised approach to Early Evidence Collection, which is the process of self-collecting forensic or toxicology samples when a comprehensive medical and forensic examination is delayed or not appropriate. The new Early Evidence Kits, guidelines and accompanying training program are now operational in all 15 local health districts.

### Pathways to providing trauma-informed care

Development of a suite of Violence, Abuse and Neglect Health Pathways to support general practitioners to provide trauma-informed, integrated responses and referral to people experiencing sexual assault, domestic and family violence, and child abuse and neglect. The NSW Ministry of Health and South West Sydney Primary Health Network have partnered to deliver the project. All 10 NSW primary health network regions will be able to upload or adapt these HealthPathways for their local contexts. Three Pathways are now live, including domestic and family violence, perpetrators of domestic violence and physical assault and injury recording.

## NSW Health Pathology

NSW Health Pathology began work on a 10-year statewide service blueprint, Pathology 2035, which examines long-term sustainable approaches to delivering public pathology services.

It partnered with five regional local health districts to begin adding a new point of care testing device, the PixCell Hemoscreen, to 30 hospitals without on-site pathology labs. It expanded point of care testing to support hospital in the home, emergency department in the home and geriatric flying squads.

It also supported health screening programs including the Hunter New England Local Health District medibus clinic-on-wheels that brings diabetes care to vulnerable communities and the Pasifika Preventing Diabetes Program.

NSW Health Pathology assembled a team to design its new statewide laboratory information management system. It also launched the Pathworks mobile app for clinicians at Northern Sydney and Port Macquarie. The app lets clinicians reliably, securely and conveniently access patient test results when they are on the move.

Telematics were installed in pathology courier vehicles to monitor vehicle location, driver behaviour, engine diagnostics and activity, and route efficiency was enhanced and driver safety improved with the use of personal duress alarms.

## Agency for Clinical Innovation

### Standardising care for people with Long COVID

The Agency for Clinical Innovation published the *Long COVID Model of Care* outlining a standardised approach to caring for people with Long COVID across care settings. The model was developed in consultation with the Long COVID Clinical Expert Reference Taskforce and describes the different stages of care and the different settings where care can be delivered, depending on a person's needs.

### Improving paediatric rehabilitation in NSW

The Agency for Clinical Innovation published the *Paediatric Rehabilitation: Minimum Standards and Toolkit* to improve the coordination of paediatric rehabilitation, in response to recommendation 50 of the review of health services for children, young people and families within the NSW Health system. The toolkit has been developed for use by clinicians in paediatric rehabilitation services and local health districts, as well as families who access these services.

### Standardising nurse-initiated emergency care

Emergency Care Assessment and Treatment is a statewide, co-designed project that aims to standardise nurse-initiated emergency care. The Agency for Clinical Innovation collaborated with system leaders and clinicians to develop 73 clinical protocols, an education pathway to enable nurses with the relevant knowledge and skills to transition to using the protocols, and an implementation toolkit to support local health districts and specialty health networks implement the protocols.



## Priority 3

# People are healthy and well

Investment is made to keep people healthy, prevent ill health and tackle health inequality in our communities

### 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

3.8 Invest in wellness, prevention and early detection, which includes reducing the harmful use of drugs and alcohol, supporting healthy behaviours, and increasing our focus on prevention and early detection.

### Key achievements

- The Building on Aboriginal Community Resilience initiative expanded the Towards Zero Suicide program to 25 sites across NSW, with 12 new grant recipients commencing in 2023.
- The Mother and Baby Unit at the Westmead Health Precinct was completed, providing new mothers experiencing mental illness access to specialist care alongside their babies.
- In 2022-23, a total of 3,733 or 89% of centre-based early childhood services participated in the Munch & Move program.
- Traditional paper-based parental vaccination consent moved online in January 2023 and within six months 85% of consent for school vaccinations was provided online.
- Connecting, listening and responding: A Blueprint for Action – Maternity Care in NSW was published in March 2023 and aims to ensure all women in NSW receive respectful, evidence-based and equitable maternity care that improves experiences and health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Implemented a statewide Adult Survivors Program to improve outcomes for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse Mental health and towards zero suicides

### Closing the Gap – Aboriginal health

In 2022-23 the Centre for Aboriginal Health continued to lead NSW Health planning responses on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms.

NSW Health continued to make strong progress examining how to enable improved access by the Aboriginal community to better data to inform decision-making and improve transparency on service performance. This included two dedicated 'Data Connector' staff in the Closing the Gap Data and Information Team reviewing all community data requests received by NSW Health and considering how it can respond more efficiently.

## Health planning

During 2022-23, the Centre for Aboriginal Health worked in collaboration with the Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW, to review the *NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023* ahead of a new Aboriginal Health Plan being prepared for 2024.

## Stolen Generations

In May 2023, NSW Health brought together representatives from Stolen Generations Organisations, along with Survivors and key stakeholders from NSW Health to identify and prioritise Survivor health needs and key areas for action planning.

## Improving cancer outcomes for Aboriginal people

Cancer Institute NSW prioritised improving cancer outcomes for Aboriginal people and supporting culturally safe and tailored care in 2022-23 by:

- Recruiting Aboriginal Care Coordinators into cancer services to support Aboriginal patients as they receive care
- Funding local community cancer control initiatives, such as grants to support education sessions and pop-up clinics for Aboriginal women
- Pre-testing public education campaigns to ensure cultural appropriateness
- Delivering the Aboriginal Quitline service
- Co-designing a guide for Aboriginal health workers to assist them to plan local activities to increase cervical screening in Aboriginal communities and training Aboriginal health workers to promote cervical screening to Aboriginal women
- Partnering with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council to deliver an Aboriginal Cancer Primary Care Pathway Program and working with Aboriginal providers to develop a model of care and health promotion strategy to improve uptake of annual comprehensive health assessments
- Working in partnership with stakeholders on programs and resources.

## Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs

As part of NSW Health's commitment to Close the gap for Aboriginal people, in 2022-23 the NSW Ministry of Health Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs established collaborative arrangements with key Aboriginal stakeholders to assist in the design of new alcohol and other drugs services, including post-custodial support, multidisciplinary hubs and initiatives to enhance and expand the Aboriginal alcohol and other drugs workforce.



Stella Forbes and baby.  
Mid North Coast Local Health District.

In addition, the centre has quarantined grant funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver post-custodial support services and new multidisciplinary hub services, prioritising rural and regional areas.

The centre has also partnered with the Department of Communities and Justice to deliver diversion programs. Sites for the statewide expansion of the Magistrate's Early Referral into Treatment and the expansion of the Drug Court Program into Dubbo this year were prioritised based on rural and regional locations and high Aboriginal populations. As part of the Dubbo Drug Court expansion, NSW Health joined the Cultural Safety Framework committee and participated in a community education and question and answer session hosted by the Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service.

The centre continued to work with the broader alcohol and other drug sector to establish outcome measures across their services which will incorporate these measures for Aboriginal people.

Throughout 2022-23, the centre also collaborated with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council on priorities to reduce the incidence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. In particular, it worked to support the Council in growing confidence within the workforce around conversations with Aboriginal women about alcohol use in pregnancy and raising awareness of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder within the Aboriginal community.

The YourRoom website has been updated to include fact sheets, videos, podcasts and other resources about fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

## Dashboards and Insights

The annual NSW Aboriginal Health Dashboard aims to report on and drive improvements across Aboriginal health outcomes. In 2023 separate regional and metropolitan area reporting was introduced.

## Cultural safety

The Agency for Clinical Innovation continued to scale the *Finding Your Way - Shared Decision Making Model*, a holistic two-way process that helps guide shared decision making between Aboriginal people and their healthcare providers, so Aboriginal people can feel safe and trusted to make informed decisions based on their values and beliefs. The agency identified ten capabilities required to use the shared decision-making resources for Aboriginal people in Australia and developed a learning map to reflect the Aboriginal eight Ways of Learning.

## Aboriginal Family Wellbeing and Violence Prevention Program

The Aboriginal Family Wellbeing and Violence Prevention Program seeks to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and neglect through a range of prevention, early intervention, tertiary and recovery services. Through the National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2021-23, additional funding was provided to program workers to organise men's and women's camps to raise awareness of family and sexual violence and to contribute to healing, develop local resources for men's and women's groups and to implement community development activities. This has supported and built further capacity for Aboriginal communities to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and neglect.

## Towards Zero Suicides

As part of the Zero Suicides in Care initiative, the Agency for Clinical Innovation published a guide for developing a local suicide care pathway to support local health districts and specialty health networks to review current approaches and align to best practice. The Agency for Clinical Innovation partnered with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District to develop and implement a local adult suicide care pathway.

## Mental Health and suicide prevention

NSW Ambulance is committed to actively contributing towards the zero suicides goal. The service is collaborating with the NSW Ministry of Health Mental Health Branch and local health districts to formalise a referral pathway to the Mental Health Line and pilot innovative service delivery models. An example of one of those models is the Mental Health First Responder, a collaboration with Hunter New England Local Health District, to deliver patient-centred care to patients experiencing a mental health crisis who call Triple Zero (000).

NSW Ambulance also undertook a comprehensive review of protocols and clinical practice guidelines relating to mental health management, including strengthening suicide risk assessment tools.

## Safeguards

Safeguard Teams provide a mental health rapid response service for children and young people in crisis, and their families. New Safeguards Teams have been established across NSW, with the Agency for Clinical Innovation providing redesign and change capability to support successful implementation of Safeguard models of care in local health districts.

## Aboriginal Community Resilience

The Aboriginal Mental Health Models of Care initiative provided 12 grants to local health districts and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services. The grant recipients represent rural, remote and metropolitan based services in NSW. Proposals included projects with shared employment models, workforce development, clinical service delivery and care navigation. Evaluation of the program began in July 2023, with the preference for an Aboriginal-led evaluator or organisation to undertake the work.

The Building on Aboriginal Community Resilience initiative has expanded the Towards Zero Suicide program to 25 sites across NSW, with 12 new grant recipients commencing in 2023. The new sites provide suicide prevention programs, workshops and workforce initiatives to local Aboriginal communities

The *NSW Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25* implementation continues, with local health district and specialty health networks completing implementation plans and submitting annual reports in 2023. The endorsement of the monitoring and reporting framework was completed in 2022 with the establishment of the NSW Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Committee. Yulang Indigenous Evaluation is undertaking the evaluation of the Strategy with a mid-term report completed in 2023.

## Mother and Baby Unit

Health Infrastructure continued to progress the \$669.8 million Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program to support delivery of mental healthcare reform across NSW.

In 2022-23, the Mother and Baby Unit at the Westmead Health Precinct was completed. Facilities were co-designed with women with lived experiences of mental illness, their families and clinicians, and are designed to keep families together while women receive the care they need.



## Co-design and consulting

Extensive consultation was also undertaken with staff, consumers and their families to help create clinical spaces that feel safe, inviting and home-like, as part of co-designing the new Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit at Broken Hill, the Tamworth Mental Health Unit, and a Child and Adolescent Unit at Nepean Hospital.

## NSW Suicide Monitoring System

The NSW Suicide Monitoring System has commenced a suite of regular reporting and system engagement activities for local health districts and partner organisations to support monitoring trends and timely identification of possible at-risk groups or regions.

In 2022, the system reported 965 suicide deaths in NSW<sup>1</sup>. This is more suicide deaths than any of the preceding three years. The system identified that possible at-risk groups in 2022 were people residing in the Greater Sydney region and males aged 35-44 and 55-74 across NSW.

Screening reports are now shared monthly with local health districts and their local partner agencies to provide information on localised suicide data based on age group, gender and locality with the aim to support targeted suicide prevention and planning activities across NSW.

NSW Health continues to work collaboratively with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and NSW Police to expand the foundations of the system to better support communities, local organisations and government agencies in developing and implementing targeted strategies and responses.

## Care pathways

In June 2022, the Agency for Clinical Innovation delivered the *NSW Health Suicide Care Pathway: A Framework for Clinicians*, which provides guidance on the provision of comprehensive identification, assessment, intervention and transition of care for all individuals who enter NSW Health facilities with suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviours.

Postvention services are now available to all people in NSW impacted or bereaved by suicide, including family and friends, witnesses, service providers and first responders. The Post Suicide Support initiative provides a range of services, including bereavement counselling, peer support and support dealing with police and coroners, and is jointly funded by the Australian and NSW Governments.

## Keeping People Healthy Award (COVID-19 category)

### NSW Ministry of Health

#### State ODS Program and COVID-19 care in the Community

The massive surge in COVID-19 cases in December 2021 meant pathology testing centres, hospitals, emergency departments and Ambulance services were overwhelmed.

To support the mandatory reporting of RAT results, the State Operational Data Store Program and COVID-19 Care in the Community Teams collaborated with Service NSW to deliver a digital solution using the Patient Flow Portal and Service NSW's website.

The program was implemented in a record time of two weeks. It allowed people to self-register positive tests, screen themselves at home and easily be linked to appropriate care providers. It also immediately relieved pressure on the system.



Winners of the Keeping People Healthy Award (COVID-19) at the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards 2022. Pictured is the State ODS Program and COVID-19 Care in the Community teams together.

LivingWorks Australia is delivering training in suicide intervention skills to up to 25,000 people, who work with and support young people primarily within the NSW education sector, including high school, parents and carers, and targeted community suicide first responders. The training equips key community touchpoints with the skills to develop safe conversations around suicide, identify the early signs of distress and suicidal crisis and enable people in the community to support those in distress to connect with appropriate supports or services.

The Zero Suicides in Care initiative aims to reduce suicides among people in inpatient and community-based local health district mental health services through promoting service leadership that embeds a just and restorative culture. This involves changes to NSW Health policies and models of care and enhanced suicide prevention training for staff in the mental health system. Zero Suicides in Care is being implemented across all local health districts in NSW and is a collaboration between the Mental Health Branch, the Agency for Clinical Innovation, the Health Education and Training Institute and the Clinical Excellence Commission.

As part of the Zero Suicides in Care initiative, the Health Education and Training Institute has developed the Older Persons Suicide Prevention Workshop to support NSW Health staff who work with older people to be better prepared to identify warning signs, provide initial support and guide individuals towards appropriate resources and services.

Anglicare is delivering the Suicide Prevention for Seniors Program to up to 2,800 NSW aged care, allied health and mental health staff who work with older people. The program provides key frontline workers suicide prevention training skills specific to older people and aims to ensure early identification and warm referrals to support.

## ACON

NSW Health provided funding of \$1.3 million over three years to ACON, who established a Trans Mental Health and Wellbeing support service model accessible across NSW. Two counsellors work with four peer workers to provide care coordination, including up to 12 counselling sessions and up to 12 peer support sessions.

The Mental Health Branch provided funding for BEING Mental Health Consumer Group and Mental Health Carers NSW to co-design and develop online and physical information resources. The resources were designed to assist consumers and carers in understanding and navigating the *NSW Mental Health Act 2007* and the *NSW Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020*. These resources have been distributed to local health districts and specialty networks and put on the NSW Health website.

## Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative

The Mental Health Branch published longitudinal evaluations for the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI), Community Living Supports and HASI Plus programs which provide community based psychosocial support to over 1,800 people in NSW. The evaluation findings demonstrated that the programs are making a real difference to people's lives including significant reductions in hospital admissions and length of stay.

## Skill building

The Whole Family Team clinical service received comprehensive training throughout 2022-23 to build skills and capacity to integrate considerations of family domestic violence, child protection, mental health and alcohol and other drug issues. Invitations to the training have been extended to Child Protection Counselling Services to support networking and provide an opportunity for a shared understanding between the two programs.

## Sydney Children's Hospitals Network

A suite of resources addressing the impact of climate change on mental health has been launched by the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network in partnership with NSW Health. Developed by a team of clinicians, who noticed the effect climate change was having on patients they were treating for mental health conditions, the resources address coping strategies, emotional and trauma support, understanding anxiety and climate change, and supporting children's wellbeing. They feature content tailored specifically for health professionals, children and young people, parents, carers and teachers. The resources also bring awareness to the complex underlying causes contributing to declining mental health.

## Preventing, preparing, responding to threats to population health

### COVID-19 monitoring

The 2022-23 annual period experienced fewer pronounced COVID-19 epidemic waves than 2021-22. Health Protection NSW continued to regularly gather, analyse, interpret and report on the surveillance of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections. The System Information and Analytics branch continued to partner with experts from the University of New South Wales to provide fortnightly projections on the general ward and intensive care unit bed demand to monitor the situation and assess the need for interventions to manage excess demands if required.



## Emergency response

NSW Ambulance is working on the development of the Emergency Management Strategy and advancement of the dedicated Emergency Management Unit to address and mitigate the impact of future pandemics and other health threats.

## The State Health Emergency Operations Centre (SHEOC)

The System Management Branch is responsible for 'Whole of Health' state-level preparedness and response to major incidents and emergencies arising from a range of hazards. The State Preparedness and Response Unit within the System Management Branch maintains equipment and technology to rapidly activate the State Health Emergency Operations Centre when required. The State Health Emergency Operations Centre was operational from September through November 2022 to support the response to severe weather events and major flooding across the state.

## Support a coordinated state-led approach for NSW Health's response to major events

During 2022-23 the NSW Health System Management Branch and NSW Ambulance continued to support whole of government event planning for major events and mass gatherings, such as: City2Surf (August 2022), Sydney World Pride (February-March 2023), HOKA Runaway Sydney Half Marathon (May 2023), VIVID (May-June 2023). For City2Surf, local health districts provided over 50 NSW Health medical, nursing assistance staff to provide medical care to event participants in Bondi.

## Referral pathways

In 2022-23, NSW Ambulance continued to invest in wellness, prevention and early detection through the advancement of the *Alternate referral pathways: Improving patient experience and system efficiency* program, using co-commissioning as a guiding principle. This has streamlined clinician access to integrated referral pathways, allowing them to refer patients to appropriate established local health district and specialty health network services avoiding transports to emergency departments.

Ongoing investment in the Extended Care Paramedic workforce has improved access to appropriate care, increasing the clinical role of a small group of selected paramedics in patient assessment, recognition and management of minor illness and minor injury presentations; the provision of definitive care; and referral to community-based health services for a range of presentations.

Extended Care Paramedics have additional training and qualifications that enable them to play an enhanced clinical role in medical and clinical examination; the recognition and management of chronic and complex care; and injury presentations. They play an important role in treating people in a non-hospital setting and help improve patient care.

## Pathogens

The Clinical Excellence Commission developed infection prevention and control policies, guidelines and implementation resources to prevent and respond to existing and emerging pathogens. The Clinical Excellence Commission continued to refine the response and escalation framework for COVID-19 and other respiratory infections in NSW.

## Healthy ageing

The Clinical Excellence Commission collaborated with Neuroscience Research Australia, NSW Fall Prevention and Healthy Ageing Network to deliver four workshops on Exercise to Prevent Falls Training, three videos for residential aged care on safe exercise and the Annual Network Forum for hospital, community and residential aged care settings.

The Clinical Excellence Commission collaborated with NSW Health agencies to develop evidence-based fall prevention exercise and multidisciplinary interventions in community settings and is progressing a draft falls white paper. For the Older Persons' Patient Safety Program's Comprehensive Care – Minimising Harm model, the commission continued working with local health district and specialty health networks to support quality improvement initiatives.

The Centre for Oral Health also produced oral health resources for older people available in hard copies or via the Centre for Oral Health Strategy website. These resources are designed to help to prevent unnecessary hospital visits resulting from deteriorating oral health.

## Surveillance and investigation

NSW Health Pathology's Forensic and Analytical Science Service's Clinical and Environmental Toxicology Laboratory tested e-cigarettes (or vapes) to determine their contents and assist the NSW Ministry of Health with its surveillance and public health investigation activities. Most of the devices tested were found to contain nicotine, although many made no reference to this on their labels.

The service also analysed seized drugs to alert the NSW Ministry of Health and provide vital information to clinicians treating patients in critical care units.

Development of the new SIGNAL disease notification program was further progressed by Health Protection NSW and eHealth NSW to eventually replace the Notifiable Conditions Information Management System to capture statewide reporting of notifiable medical conditions.

Five public drug warnings were published to alert the community to drugs in circulation in NSW with the potential to cause serious harm.

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs worked with other government agencies to promote the Australian Alcohol Guidelines highlighting the importance of reducing access by minors and the health impacts associated with alcohol. An eight-month awareness campaign also ran across NSW Health channels.

## Public health information

### Health campaigns

Teams across the system including Health Protection NSW, the Centre for Population Health, and the Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs worked on a variety of statewide campaigns across channels to share public health information and promote behaviour change across a range of topics. Campaigns included messaging about mosquito-borne diseases (e.g. Japanese Encephalitis Virus), mpox, hand hygiene, and respiratory viruses.

The winter respiratory campaign targeted people at higher risk of severe illness particularly: children under five years of age; pregnant women; Aboriginal people; and culturally and linguistically diverse groups. Messaging aimed to increase the public's awareness of the risks of respiratory illness such as COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus, and promoted vaccination and safe behaviours including hand hygiene and staying at home if unwell.

NSW Health content had a reach of over 336 million on social media during the 12 months to June 2023, achieving over 3.6 million engagements.

### Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI) Strategy

The *NSW Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI) Strategy 2022-2026* was released in September 2022 and aims to reduce the prevalence and impacts of STIs, with a new focus on equity and access to testing and treatment to safeguard the sexual health and wellbeing of everyone living in NSW.

NSW Health has introduced ambitious targets to track progress towards the vision set by the strategy, which include a 5% reduction in notification rates of infectious syphilis by 2026, and a 5% increase each year in comprehensive STI testing in priority populations, including men who have sex with men, sex workers, trans and gender diverse people, and Aboriginal people.

### HIV and Hepatitis

Dried Blood Spot (DBS) testing is an innovative finger stick test for HIV and hepatitis C accessible for eligible people either by registering for a test online or in receiving one approved settings. Both DBS and point of care testing increased in 2022-23 so that 7,186 DBS and 8,863 RNA point of care hepatitis C tests were completed in key settings such as the Needle and Syringe Program, alcohol and other drug services and prisons.

## Getting the best start in life

### From conception

In 2022-23, a total of 11,313 women were referred to the Get Healthy in Pregnancy coaching service which supports 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.

### First statewide guideline on Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy and Hyperemesis Gravidarum

The Hyperemesis Gravidarum Initiative is a \$17 million investment over four years (2020-2024) to provide education and research into this condition and offer women and their families more practical support.

The first NSW Health statewide Guideline for Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy and Hyperemesis Gravidarum was released in July 2022. It was developed in response to consultation with clinicians, consumers, key associations and organisations. It provides evidence-based guidance to support consistency of practice, decision-making, and care coordination for the diagnosis and management of the condition.

NSW Health also raised awareness about the impact of hyperemesis gravidarum and promoted the care, support and treatment options available through resources for consumers and clinicians, education activities for NSW Health staff, community pharmacists and general practitioners and a communication strategy for consumers and clinicians.

## Maternity care

*Connecting, listening and responding: A Blueprint for Action – Maternity Care in NSW* (the Blueprint) was published in March 2023. The Blueprint reflects the extensive consultation undertaken to inform the revision of the NSW Health Policy Directive Towards Normal Birth.

It followed face-to-face consultations with 1,000 stakeholders spanning health professionals and consumers, two online consumer surveys for women and partners with more than 18,000 responses, and 513 submissions from the public.

The Blueprint aims to ensure all women in NSW receive respectful, evidence-based and equitable maternity care that improves experiences and health and wellbeing outcomes.

## Maternal Transfers Redesign

The Maternal Transfers Redesign ensures that pregnant women and their babies receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time. While the majority of transfers of pregnant women and their babies for higher-level care occur efficiently and effectively, NSW Health, in collaboration with midwifery redesign leads, obstetric leads and tiered perinatal networks, identified opportunities to improve the pathways when higher-level care is required.

The initiative resulted in a reduction of clinical variation and improved decision making with more women being cared for closer to home, enhancing the experience for women and clinicians without compromising safety.

## Brighter Beginnings and First 2000 Days Summit

Some 845 delegates across NSW government and the non-Government sector registered for the Brighter Beginnings Summit. The Brighter Beginnings initiative aims to drive transformational change in early childhood development in the first 2,000 days of a child's life which is an important time for their development. The Summit included renowned national and international speakers and panel discussions with NSW Government Ministers and senior executives supporting the initiative. Focus areas included progress to date, disseminated learnings and driving momentum within NSW Health and across government.

## Keeping People Healthy Award

### Hunter New England Local Health District

#### PACE (Physically Active Children in Education)

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading cause of death worldwide. By ensuring children are physically active, it could prevent 8,000 deaths each year in Australia.

The Physically Active Children in Education (PACE) was rigorously tested and shown to be an effective model of service to support schools to deliver 150 minutes of weekly physical activity, as mandated by the NSW Department of Education.

PACE helps children develop healthy habits early in life and is helping leading to better children's health outcomes.



Winners of the Keeping People Healthy Award in the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards 2022 – Hunter New England PACE Program team

## Brighter Beginnings: the first 2000 days of life accelerator initiatives

NSW Health has implemented several initiatives to improve support to families in the first 2000 days (pregnancy to age five) of their children's lives.

NSW Health and the Department of Education co-designed a program to provide health and development checks to four-year-old children in NSW preschool settings, to begin in the 2023-24 financial year.

Demand modelling and a targeted expression of interest process identified eight new Sustaining NSW Families sustained health home visiting sites in local government areas in Nepean Blue Mountains, Hunter New England, Northern Sydney, Western NSW, Murrumbidgee, Mid North Coast and Southern NSW Local Health Districts. These sites will start delivering services in the 2023-24 financial year.

The Digital Baby Book is currently in development, led by eHealth NSW in collaboration with the NSW Ministry of Health and other NSW Government partners.

NSW Health and the Department of Communities and Justice progressed expansion of Pregnancy Family Conferencing to make it available to more parents across NSW.

The Building Brains and Bodies video series for parents promotes the importance of early interactions to support child development. The resources can be found on the NSW Health website, Child Health and Development page, and have been translated into Arabic, Bangla, Mandarin and Vietnamese, with more to come.

## First 2000 Days HETI module on My Health Learning

The learning module provides an overview of the research and evidence behind a child's first 2000 days - from conception to age five, as well as strategies to work collaboratively and identify pathways for additional support.

## Newborns

In 2022-23, the Agency for Clinical Innovation published a clinical practice guide on recognition, monitoring and early management of newborns with hypoxic ischaemic encephalopathy who may benefit from therapeutic hypothermia (cooling) and a supplementary patient information sheet.

## Effects of smoking and vaping

A new Policy Directive, Reducing the effects of smoking and vaping on pregnancy and newborn outcomes, was released in October 2022. The Directive establishes minimum requirements for NSW Health staff to provide evidence-based smoking and vaping cessation support to women before, during and after pregnancy. The Centre for Population Health coordinated implementation with local health districts and speciality health networks.

## Syphilis screening

Over the past five years, there has been an increase in infectious syphilis and confirmed and probable congenital syphilis notifications in NSW.

A second universal syphilis screen was introduced at 28 weeks pregnancy to improve detection and treatment rates, reducing adverse outcomes for mothers and babies. Syphilis is a nationally notifiable sexually transmissible infection that can be safely treated with antibiotics.

## Healthy behaviours

In partnership with local health districts, the Centre for Population Health delivers the Munch & Move program. This supports the healthy development of children from birth to five years by modelling and promoting healthy eating and physical activity. In 2022-23, a total of 3,733 or 89% of centre-based early childhood services participated in the program.

NSW Health, led by the Centre for Population Health partnered 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. Over 95% of government primary and secondary schools with a canteen are meeting the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy.

NSW Health continued to offer the Go4Fun program for children above a healthy weight, and their families, to support them to adopt healthier lifestyles. The program is available online, face-to-face and as a culturally adapted program for Aboriginal families.

## Improving treatment access

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs opened Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Access Expansion Grants in April 2023. Two new funding packages were made available to non-government organisations specifically to promote access to residential and community-based alcohol and other drugs treatment for women and families with dependent children.



It also expanded the Substance Use in Pregnancy and Parenting Service across eight local health districts and established the service in a local health district where it was not previously available.

## Pathology improvements

### Collections

NSW Health Pathology introduced a standard procedure for risk assessments to help improve home collections and aged care testing. It published a statewide positive patient identification procedure that clarified how to meet identification requirements in all settings, including complex environments such as aged care facilities, thereby minimising risk to patients.

### Paediatric pathology

NSW Health Pathology partnered with the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network to explore best practice in providing pathology services for paediatric patients across NSW. In late 2022, more than 400 health practitioners, stakeholders and families across NSW participated in consultation sessions providing more than 1,700 individual comments. Over 110 health practitioners helped to prioritise short, medium and longer-term priorities in key areas including access, collections, research, technology, testing and workforce.

## Prevention and wellness

### Preventable cancer risk factors

Cancer is a major cause of illness and threat to population health, with a substantial social and economic impact on individuals, families and the community. Nearly half of the cancer deaths worldwide are attributable to preventable risk factors, such as tobacco use, sun exposure, alcohol consumption, diet and physical activity.

In 2022-23, Cancer Institute NSW delivered public education campaigns to drive change in public behaviour across NSW and prevent cancers.

This Could Be the One, a tobacco control campaign, was developed in consultation with ACON and targeted LGBTIQ+ people aged 18 and older who smoke or have recently quit.

NSW Health delivered phase two of the Do You Know What You're Vaping? campaign, targeting young people and aiming to debunk common myths about vaping. Parent and carer resources have been translated into 10 languages, promoted through engagement with multicultural communities and supported by a tailored communication strategy. NSW Health has provided licencing for the campaign and a resource toolkit to five other jurisdictions.

The If You Could See UV skin cancer prevention campaign encouraged 18-24-year-olds to protect their skin from harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation, with the objective of reducing their lifetime risk of developing skin cancer.

The Change Your Routine, skin cancer prevention campaign aimed to increase sun protection behaviours among outdoor workers to reduce their lifetime risk of developing skin cancer.

### Smoking cessation

In 2022-23 there were more than 4,900 inbound calls to Quitline and 9,000 outbound calls. During the same period about 364,010 people accessed the iCanQuit website for smoking cessation advice.

A Quitting Smoking in Pregnancy campaign aimed to provide support for pregnant women aged 18-34 in NSW who smoke, helping them to quit by using available support services. The campaign included a specific focus on Aboriginal women, given the higher proportion of smokers among this group during pregnancy.

### Compliance

In 2022-23, NSW Health continued its comprehensive compliance and enforcement program for illegal tobacco and e-cigarettes containing nicotine. NSW Health undertook seven successful prosecutions against retailers for the sale of e-cigarettes containing nicotine; and seized more than 310,000 e-cigarette products containing nicotine or labelled as containing nicotine. Inspectors also conducted more than 240 seizures of illegal tobacco and seized and destroyed more than 2,500,000 cigarettes and 1,000 kilograms of other tobacco.

### Sun safety

Cancer Institute NSW provided advice to local councils about how to increase the quality and quantity of shade through public policy and planning provisions. Quality shade can provide 75% protection from UV radiation from the sun, which causes over half of all skin cancer cases. As a result, over 20 councils updated their shade policy provisions.

### Consultation on strategy development

Development of a statewide Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy has commenced. NSW Health has participated in consultation to inform the Strategy development and participated in the Cross Agency Advisory Group.

NSW Health has engaged the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre to develop a Whole of Community Prevention Framework for Alcohol and Other Drugs.

## Healthy lifestyles

The *Healthy Eating & Active Living Strategy 2022-2032* launched in September 2022 and outlines an approach to addressing overweight and obesity by enabling healthy eating and active living across the community with a particular focus on priority populations. The strategy provides the foundation for collaboration between NSW Health, partner organisations and other government agencies to support keeping people healthy and well. An Implementation Plan for the first years of the strategy has been established to support the delivery of key outcomes.

The Get Healthy Service provides coaching support for people over the age of 16 to make healthy lifestyle improvements with the support of university qualified health coaches. In 2022-23, there were 15,497 referrals made to the service with 6,643 enrolments.

## Opportunistic immunisation

Children with chronic illnesses or frequent hospital attendances are at increased risk of severe illness and have substantially lower immunisation coverage rates compared to their peers without chronic illness.

Opportunistic immunisation services were established in the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and HNEKids Health in the Hunter New England Local Health District.

From January to June 2023, 300 children, parents and siblings were vaccinated for influenza and National Immunisation Program vaccines by HNEKids Health; and a further 1,187 via the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network.

## Mpox

eHealth NSW developed the mpox virus vaccination administration management platform in 40 days to support 22 clinics. There were 10,593 mpox vaccine doses administered from the platform launch in October 2022 up until its closure in April 2023.

## Mosquito-borne diseases

NSW Health continued measures to reduce the risk of severe mosquito-borne diseases in 2022-23, with key activities spanning:

- The development of state and national guidance on mosquito population control
- Expansion of the NSW Arbovirus and Mosquito Monitoring Program
- Distribution of mosquito repellent to high-risk areas
- Provision of financial support and training to local councils to implement signage and vector control measures
- The launch of a public awareness campaign.

Japanese Encephalitis vaccines costing over \$20 million were purchased. Legislative changes allowing pharmacists and nurse immunisers supported the roll out.

## Immunisation - online consent

NSW Health launched an online Consent and Records Management for Immunisation system for parents in February 2023. This digital solution was delivered by eHealth NSW in partnership with Health Protection NSW and enables online consent, clinic management and operational reporting for the NSW School Vaccination Program. The system enables real-time recording of vaccination details, resulting in a faster upload to the Australian Immunisation Register.

For parents, it makes it quick and easy for them to provide consent to help keep NSW children healthy and well. Parents also receive SMS notifications when vaccinations are given. This program supports better data quality and security and improved access to vaccination records. Up to 30 June 2023, there were 106,503 online parent/carer consent forms completed.

## Domestic Violence Routine Screening

The NSW Health Domestic Violence Routine Screening Policy Directive was released in April 2023. It establishes a new streamlined process for services outside the four mandated screening settings to opt into routine screening, including services such as women's health, emergency departments, dental services and refugee health services. The Policy Directive also provides a new screening flowchart and intranet support page to support screening delivery, and mandates that all staff who conduct routine screening must receive targeted training.

## From pilot to rollout

Adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse often have multiple and complex health and wellbeing needs and can experience many barriers to accessing trauma-informed and culturally safe health services.

In 2022-23, NSW Health implemented a statewide Adult Survivors Program to improve outcomes for this highly vulnerable population group following a successful pilot project delivered in 2019-2022.

## Clinical innovation and intelligence

The Critical Intelligence Unit provided rapid, evidenced-based insights that informed decisions on the pandemic response, producing over 1,800 evidence-based products. The unit engaged with around 2,000 direct subscribers to *Daily Digest* and more than 300,000 visits to webpages.

The Critical Intelligence Unit has been recognised as having value beyond COVID-19, offering systems intelligence, clinical intelligence and evidence integration. This led to the launch of the new *Evidence Digest* covering innovations that have the potential to change clinical practice and care delivery.

## Oral Health

In February 2023, the Centre for Oral Health Strategy published the *NSW Oral Health Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032* which guides coordinated action for the future of oral health care. The plan outlines NSW Health's commitment to reducing dental disease and providing equitable access to oral health care for our patients, while focusing on providing care for priority populations.

Early Childhood Oral Health online training is available for internal and external organisations and agencies to access to help improve oral health outcomes for young people.

The Primary School Mobile Dental Program and Mobile Dental Outreach Program are designed to target children in the most need and improve equity of access to care through a child's developmental years.

Oral Health content is now included in the TAFE NSW Children's Services Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care to spread awareness of children's oral health through various childcare settings.

In addition, the NSW Health Centre for Oral Health has collaborated with multiple agencies to include and disseminate oral health information on the NSW Health Parent Portal.

## Priority 4

# Our staff are engaged and well supported

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

- NSW Health provided more than 8.4 million student placement hours to 31,442 students across 31 disciplines.
- In 2022-23, more than 640 nurses and midwives took up postgraduate scholarships offered by NSW Health.
- NSW Health supported 128 Aboriginal nursing and midwifery cadets, with more than half located in rural and regional areas.
- In 2022, 20 rural postgraduate midwifery student scholarships were provided to small rural maternity units.
- Staff experience leads were appointed in 21 health organisations for six months to improve the wellbeing of our workforce.
- Workforce modelling maps for 21 Allied Health specialities were completed, to ensure the workforce has the capacity and capability to meet health service demand now and in the future.

## Supporting the professional development of nurses and midwives

### Strengthening the midwifery workforce

In NSW Health registered nurses train to be midwives through the MidStart program. There were 201 MidStart training positions recruited across NSW Health in the 2022-23 financial year.

In 2022, 20 rural postgraduate midwifery student scholarships were provided to small rural maternity units. The initiative promotes a sustainable midwifery workforce in rural NSW through the 'grow your own' approach, funding local registered nurses to train as midwives.

### Postgraduate scholarships

More than 640 nurses and midwives took up postgraduate scholarships offered by NSW Health in 2022-23. In addition, NSW Health increased the monetary value of postgraduate scholarships with the maximum scholarship now at \$10,000.



## Clinical placements

More than 450 clinical placement grants were awarded to nursing and midwifery students to support diverse clinical experiences across rural and metropolitan areas.

## Developing effective nursing and midwifery leaders

NSW Health provides programs and workshops to nursing and midwifery leaders at all levels to promote leadership development and provide support. A customised foundational leadership program, Take the Lead, was commenced by 47 nursing and midwifery unit managers in 2022. The program is designed to equip and empower participants to lead change and foster cultures that underpin safe, quality care.

A leadership development series for 30 facility Directors of Nursing and Midwifery commenced in April 2023.

## Mentoring in Midwifery program

The Mentoring in Midwifery program supports the attraction and retention of current and future midwives. Over 500 midwives have joined the program and are currently mentoring midwifery students, new to practice midwives and other midwives across NSW.

## Aboriginal midwifery and nursing

NSW Health is committed to increasing the Aboriginal nursing and midwifery workforce by improving career development opportunities for Aboriginal people.

In 2023 NSW Health supported 128 Aboriginal nursing and midwifery cadets, with more than half located in rural and regional areas. In addition, 55 undergraduate, 17 postgraduate and 20 enrolled nurse to registered nurse scholarships were awarded to support nursing and midwifery studies for Aboriginal people in 2023.

## Sydney Children's Hospitals network

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network has invested in comprehensive leadership development programs, including a bespoke development pathway for Nursing Unit Managers. It provides a structured development pathway, incorporating educational and training opportunities, as well as a support system of mentorship and coaching, promoting leadership and management capabilities.

A twice-yearly Development Pathway Masterclass also offers an opportunity for Nursing Unit Managers to share their experiences and knowledge, build peer networks, reflect and support each other.

## Student placements

NSW Health provided more than 8.4 million student placement hours to 31,442 students across 31 disciplines.

## Aboriginal Health Practitioners

### Growing the Aboriginal Health Practitioner workforce

NSW Health maintains its commitment to growing the Aboriginal Health Practitioner registered clinical workforce, through workforce targets in the annual service agreements with local health districts and specialty health networks. This workforce has a relative equivalence in clinical skills to an enrolled nurse and supports the Aboriginal patient journey in a culturally safe and supportive manner. The project to grow the Aboriginal Health Practitioner workforce also builds the knowledge and capability of clinical supervisors and clinical placement supervisors of the role scope. This enables the establishment of the positions in clinical multi-disciplinary teams and supports the appropriate alignment of the role within teams and services for Aboriginal people. The role scope can include virtual care models and has the potential for use in programs such as Hospital in the Home, men's and women's health, sexual health, diabetes and dialysis, rehabilitation and ambulatory and urgent care.

### Embedding training into clinical placements

To support Aboriginal Health Practitioners and Allied Health Assistants, NSW Health has embedded registered training organisations and training programs into Student Placement Agreements. This supports students to effectively complete their clinical placement hours and their course of study. Students are then ready to work and practice in their role and have the relevant Aboriginal Health Practitioner program registration.

### Healthy Deadly Feet

Aboriginal Health Practitioner roles support high risk foot disease services under the Healthy Deadly Feet model and as part of the overall effort to improve foot health and reduce the burden of lower limb amputations.

### Respecting the Difference training

Respecting the Difference aims to significantly improve the health status of Aboriginal people and reverse the impact of racism as there is an immediate and ongoing need for organisations to provide more respectful, responsive and culturally sensitive services.

The purpose of this training is to motivate NSW Health staff to build positive and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal people who may be clients, visitors or staff, and to improve their confidence in establishing appropriate and sustainable connections.

The Respecting the Difference Aboriginal cultural training eLearning and face-to-face mandatory training program was refreshed in July 2022. The program was relaunched and agencies remain committed to 90% completion targets.

## Junior Medical Officers

In May 2023, the Junior Medical Officer (JMO) Workforce Management Forum was held, with over 200 delegates attending in-person from across local health districts and specialty networks. The one-day forum was designed to enable JMO workforce managers and education support officers an opportunity to collaborate on emerging workforce issues, share best practice and network with their peers.

The event is consistent with the NSW Health Workforce plan 2021-2031, to build positive work environments and the Future Health Plan, to attract and retain skilled people who put patients first. Future annual forums are planned for medical workforce managers to provide ongoing opportunities to foster collaboration and ensure they are equipped to manage the changing needs and environment of the JMO Workforce.

## Our regional workforce

### Single Employer Model

NSW Health, with the support of the Federal Government, has expanded the Single Employer Model, which allows local health districts to employ rural generalist trainees to work in local hospitals and general practices while completing their training.

Rural generalists are general practitioners who provide primary care services, emergency medicine and have training in additional skills like obstetrics, anaesthetics or mental health services.

The innovative model, initially piloted in Murrumbidgee Local Health District, helps attract doctors to work in regional, rural and remote hospitals to improve access to primary care and essential medical services in regional communities.

### Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme

The Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme recruits and retains staff in eligible positions at health services across rural and regional NSW. In addition to standard employment entitlements, the scheme also offers packages of up to \$20,000. In 2022-23, the scheme recruited more than 800 staff with new recruits receiving more than \$4.3 million in incentive payments. More than 7,000 existing staff were also retained with incentives valued at over \$37 million.

## NSW Rural and Regional Health Allied Health Career Scholarships

The NSW Rural and Regional Health Career Scholarships program supports new entrants, as well as existing rural health staff into health careers and early career development. The program addresses priorities outlined in the NSW Health Workforce Plan that include the building of a pipeline of future job ready graduates, particularly in rural and remote areas.

The program, which has already awarded more than \$675,000 in scholarships, also strengthens diversity and equips our people with skills and capabilities as part of a future, locally-connected, agile workforce.

September 2022 saw new scholarships approved with a focus on workforce development and the retention of Allied Health professionals in areas of critical need, specifically rural and remote regions.

As part of the scholarships, eligible Allied Health assistants and Allied Health professionals received financial assistance to complete ongoing study while working and attaining further qualifications. Since its launch in February 2023, a total of 29 Allied Health Scholarships have been taken up across the Rural Allied Health Assistant Scholarship, the Allied Health Rural Generalist Program Scholarship and the Allied Health Rural Generalist Diploma Rural Practice Scholarship.

### Regional staff accommodation

Health staff accommodation is an important consideration in the recruitment and retention of health staff in regional areas.

The Regional Health Division commissioned a feasibility study to determine future strategies for the management and delivery of health staff accommodation in NSW.

The division is exploring opportunities to work collaboratively across the system, including alignment with the wider NSW Government key worker accommodation initiatives.

A number of health worker accommodation projects have been completed, and others are under construction or in the planning stages across regional NSW.

## Allied Health

### Governance

In February 2023, the NSW Principles of Allied Health Governance Report was delivered. The report provides a foundation to guide best practice strategic, operational, professional, and clinical Allied Health governance, which are essential for safe and high-quality service delivery. The report provides value to local health districts and specialty health networks by outlining the approach, drivers and opportunities to strengthen Allied Health governance that can be considered for local customisation and implementation. A toolkit to support district and network assessment and implementation in alignment with the principles is included as part of the report.

### Graduate Pipeline

An Allied Health Graduate Workforce Pipeline project was undertaken to explore barriers facing the recruitment of new graduate Allied Health professionals and identify the specific opportunities to improve the new graduate pipeline. Early findings highlight the need for more investment in student placement and early graduate experience to positively impact attraction and retention to NSW Health.

### Cadetships

In 2022-23, the Aboriginal Workforce team refreshed the program for the Aboriginal Allied Health Cadetship. The work expanded the supported pathways to now include all 23 Allied Health professions, including those requiring a post-graduate qualification. This new scope enables the organisational response to recruiting and retaining skilled, qualified and capable professionals in areas of critical need.

The program resources have been updated to support promotion of the cadetship in the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal university student sectors. A community of practice has been established statewide to provide support, with the goal of establishing minimum standard practices for positive cadetship outcomes and a peer network to enable a responsive program to meet the needs of NSW Health.

### People and Culture Award

## Mid North Coast Local Health District

### Words Matter

The Words Matter team identified the integral role of language in reducing stigma, creating a safe work environment and improving collaboration.

The team developed a patient-centred and trauma-informed approach for staff that improves patient experience by using non-judgemental words in discussions, notes and handovers. This improved staff awareness and understanding of the impact of words, especially when describing patients, and ensured respectful and dignified communication.



Winners of the People and Culture award at the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards. Making words matter is key for the team at Mid North Coast Local Health District.

## Innovation

An evaluation of Allied Health workforce innovations during the COVID-19 pandemic was undertaken. The evaluation highlighted opportunities for sustained innovations into the future, including new models of care.

## Future requirements

To ensure the NSW Health workforce has the capacity and capability to meet health service demand now and in the future, workforce modelling maps were created for 21 Allied Health specialities. This work informs the requirements for future training and recruitment to the system. The Allied Health Workforce Modelling project published 23 factsheets to the NSW Health Allied Health webpage.

This project marks a significant milestone as it delivers future forecasting of NSW Health growth demand scenarios for the Allied Health professions. The factsheets can be used to support state and local workforce planning, inform potential career seekers on job opportunities within NSW Health and support partnerships with universities to optimise course attraction and student to workforce pipelines.

The Allied Health team along with the Workforce Operational Strategic Unit implemented a strategy to provide the NSW Health system surge capacity through a centralised Exercise Physiologist pool. Six professionals were employed under the strategy in 2022-23.

A student pipeline dashboard proof of concept was also developed for podiatry. The dashboard will increase visibility of the higher education enrolment to employment pathway to improve workforce planning.

## NSW Allied Health Deans Forum

The NSW Allied Health Deans Forum has been re-established to align NSW Health and Higher Education strategic directions, as well as to provide a forum for information sharing, collaboration, partnership and solution design. An initial forum was held in May 2023, with future forums planned. These will explore opportunities to improve the attraction of students into Allied Health degrees and further strengthen the student to workforce pipeline.

## Improving the wellbeing of our workforce

In December 2021, the Workforce Planning and Talent Development branch established the Workforce Wellbeing Collaborative to address the impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of our workforce. The objective was to proactively design approaches to enhance workforce wellbeing that could be shared and promoted across the state.

Staff experience leads were appointed in 21 health organisations for six months. These positions were shared between health organisations and implemented a statewide project to reduce duplication, drive consistency and reduce gaps in workforce wellbeing approaches.

Working groups focused on initiatives in support of the eight workplace contributors to wellbeing that include purpose, health, happiness, clarity, connection, growth, achievement and security.

As of June 2023, the project had delivered a range of recommendations spanning a diversity and inclusion checklist, a statewide employee listening approach, a wellbeing index tool, a critical moments toolkit, an identifying psychosocial risks tool and mapping current programs.

## Award reform

The Ministry of Health and public health unions recognise the need for award reform. The Ministry has established an internal award reform team in the Workplace Relations Branch to progress reforming the NSW Health industrial awards. Award reform presents an opportunity for NSW Health and the public health unions to work collaboratively to modernise the industrial instruments that establish wages and conditions for the workforce to enhance workplace productivity and resolve current workforce challenges.

## NSW People Matter Employee Survey

In August and September 2022, more than 76,000 NSW Health staff participated in the NSW People Matter Employee Survey. Conducted by the NSW Public Service Commission in collaboration with public sector agencies, the survey provides an opportunity for staff to share feedback about their experiences of working.

NSW Health achieved an overall employee engagement score of 62 with small improvements achieved in areas including job purpose, feedback and performance management, decision making and accountability, and learning and development.



## Recruitment and onboarding

During 2022-23, there were more than 250 million recruitment transactions performed, more than 570,000 applications processed, and more than 63,000 job postings managed for NSW Health through the Recruitment and Onboarding system.

## Recognising excellence in our workforce

Across the health system are extraordinary people who go above and beyond. NSW Health has established and continues to run awards programs to engage, motivate and recognise staff and volunteers.

These awards are vital in acknowledging excellence, motivating staff, sharing best practices and challenging the status quo. Recognising these efforts allows NSW Health to continue to deliver great experiences of care and outcomes that matter most to patients and the community. More importantly, the awards also highlight the exceptional people behind the work. Some of these award programs include the NSW Health Awards, Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards, and Excellence in Allied Health Awards.

The 24th Annual NSW Health Awards recognised innovative and sustainable health programs that invest in the wellness of the NSW community and deliver outcomes that matter to patients. In 2022, more than 170 nominations from across the health system were received with 12 winners recognised across 11 categories.

NSW Health staff were also recognised in the NSW Premier's Awards for 2022, which celebrate outstanding achievements and recognise the world class public services delivered to the NSW community. NSW Health received an impressive 15 nominations across the nine categories. NSW Health was a winner in three categories and a partner in a fourth award.

## Collaborative Staff Member of the Year Award

### Hunter New England Local Health District

#### Julie Smith

As a proud Wiradjuri woman and Manager of Aboriginal Employment, Julie Smith supported the future of Aboriginal colleagues across the Hunter New England Local Health District, making it the district with the highest rate of Aboriginal employment in NSW Health.

Julie has channelled her passion for improving the futures of Aboriginal people and their families to increase the number of Aboriginal people employed in diverse roles.

Her ability to develop strong trusted relationships allowed her to advocate for Aboriginal people and support the growth of the Aboriginal workforce to address health disparities in the community.



Julie Smith, winner of the 24th Annual NSW Health Award 2022, Collaborative Staff Member of the Year.

## Priority 5

# Research and innovation, and digital advances inform service delivery

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

- In August 2022, NSW Health Pathology's Forensic and Analytical Science Service launched its Forensic Medicine Information System.
- The Centre for Health Record Linkage linked more than five billion records from health and human services data collections and supported more than 100 data linkage projects.
- Dr Sudarshini Ramanathan at the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network was awarded a Premier's Award for Science and Engineering for leading research into and changing treatment outcomes for patients with a rare autoimmune condition.
- Cancer Institute NSW launched an online cancer research education portal.
- There was significant investment in education and research, including 50 genomics scholarships for the University of NSW's Practical Medical Genomics short course and 15 Cancer Institute NSW fellowships awarded.
- The NSW Health Office for Health and Medical Research invested \$3.5 million to ensure domestic manufacture of phage therapy in NSW.
- eHealth NSW launched the clinical pilot for the Sepsis Risk Tool Dashboard at Westmead Hospital in September 2022.
- The Infrastructure Refresh Program saved 120,000 clinical productivity hours, achieved a 70% reduction in unplanned outages and a 50% reduction in maintenance windows.

## Health outcomes and performance

### Customer dashboards

HealthShare's introduction and rollout of operational, strategic and customer dashboards across Payroll, Patient Transport Service, Financial Shared Services, Linen Services and EnableNSW have enabled improved monitoring and management of key performance indicators across services and people metrics.

### GoodSAM platform

A NSW Ambulance pilot of the GoodSAM volunteer responder platform was launched to improve the clinical outcomes of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests, enabling community members to respond to someone in cardiac arrest, find a nearby defibrillator and commence CPR before handing over to paramedics.

### Health Outcomes and Patient Experience (HOPE)

The Patient Reported Measures, Health Outcomes and Patient Experience (HOPE) IT platform rollout continued in partnership with eHealth NSW and the Agency for Clinical Innovation.

There were 802 live sites, 525 active service users and 26,141 active patient users in the 2022-23 financial year. Functionality was enhanced with new surveys, survey and reporting improvements and user interface and usability enhancements. The HOPE portals were translated into nine community languages to support culturally safe and inclusive care for patients.

### Outcome measures

The Agency for Clinical Innovation developed decision support guides for all patient-reported outcome measures in the Health Outcomes and Patient Experience platform with clinicians and health staff. A *Patient Reported Measures Methods for Analysis and Reporting Framework* was also developed to support individual, service and system level analysis of patient reported outcome measure data.

## Advancing health research

### Sequencing

NSW Health Pathology continued to engage with partners and stakeholders to grow capability to deliver sequencing services for rare disorders, cancer and infectious diseases.

It progressed plans for its Genomics Cloud and Pathogen Genomics programs.

### Genomics

To support health care professionals who have emerging responsibilities in genomics, 50 scholarships for the University of NSW's Practical Medical Genomics short course have been funded.

To address the gap between genomics research and clinical practice and facilitate the translation of genomics technologies, a resource map identifying the available people, skills and infrastructure has been developed.

### Supporting cancer research

In 2022-23, Cancer Institute NSW awarded three key grants to support multidisciplinary approaches to cancer research and world-class infrastructure to accelerate cancer research.

To build cancer research capacity, Cancer Institute NSW provided 15 fellowships to support early and mid-career researchers and 44 travel grants. A research fellows' forum event was held to support collaboration, and the Institute sponsored an inaugural cancer research conference to showcase existing and emerging strengths in cancer research across NSW and beyond.

The Institute launched an online cancer research education portal to coordinate and share cancer research education resources and events. This platform enables cancer researchers, clinicians, research administrators and consumers involved in cancer research across the state to access information and resources.

### Developing new research

The NSW Health Drug and Alcohol Clinical Research and Improvement Network brings alcohol and other drug services together to improve clinical research and to build their capacity to undertake research and evaluation activities and translate findings into practice.

### Research applications

The NSW Health Pathology Research Office developed a new eAccess Request Form for all research service applications. This streamlined processes by requesting only necessary information from researchers, allowing research coordinators to make more accurate quotes tailored to customer needs.

## Investing in collaborative research

To inform future clinical care, the Office for Health and Medical Research provided funding of \$371,183 for a study to determine the effectiveness of bivalent vaccines against current and emergent COVID-19 variants within the NSW population.

Led by the Vaccine, Infection and Immunology Collaborative Research Group, a statewide vaccine research collaboration, this work also contributes to global efforts to understand tailored bivalent vaccines.

## Provide communication and education on the updated Intellectual Property arising from Research Policy

The Office for Health and Medical Research updated and published the Intellectual Property arising from Health Research policy directive in February 2023. The Office has presented on the policy directive to key stakeholders in a range of forums, including the Health Precincts Community of Practice, the Strategic and Commercial Partnerships Steering Committee, and the NSW Health and CSIRO Strategic Cooperation Meeting. The Office has also provided communication and education to individual local health districts, specialty networks, pillars and shared services on specific queries covered by the policy directive.

## Supporting business planning for high potential research programs

The Office for Health and Medical Research delivered business planning support to Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, Sydney Children's Hospitals Network, St Vincent's Hospital Network and Western Sydney Local Health District from 2022 to 2023. The pilot program provided each district and network with structured commercialisation business development support for early-stage research projects with commercial potential.

## Health Protection NSW

Health Protection NSW has collaborated with researchers and helped provide policy-driven analysis, including modelling of respiratory viruses to prepare for increased disease transmission, COVID-19 variant characterisation evaluation of COVID-19 antiviral access, application of wastewater surveillance to monitor for incursions and case burden, and genomic characterisation for key pathogens.

## Support the targeting of early career researcher funding towards areas of strength and system priorities

Six promising researchers were awarded \$3 million by the Office for Health and Medical Research to build health and medical research talent in NSW. The NSW Health Early-Mid Career Researcher Grant program supports outstanding researchers in the early stages of their careers to further strengthen their research and development.

This year's grants were funded in the fast-growing field of microbiomics, which involves the investigation of a group of microorganisms together, such as in the mouth or gut, and how changes to them impact health. This focus on microbiomics builds on existing NSW leadership in genomics and proteomics.

## Education and employment

### Training and education

NSW Health Pathology established a clinical scientist training program with 11 people in funded training, and another six undertaking the Royal College of Pathologists Australasia FSc Fellowship.

### Deliver an education framework for clinical triallists and researchers

The Australian Clinical Trials Education Centre (A-CTEC) system, a national education framework, was rolled out across NSW on 1 March 2023, with 404 individual training modules completed during the year. The Office for Health and Medical Research has membership in the education sub-committee and plays a key role in reviewing content submitted by contributors, for future training courses.

### Boosting the number of Aboriginal people working in public health

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 2022-23, five trainees were recruited and three people graduated with a Master of Public Health.

The Centre for Oral Health Strategy has continued collaboration with the University of Sydney to encourage Aboriginal people to pursue an oral health career. This is through the Dental Assisting Traineeship Program and the development of new pathways to progress from this program to clinical degrees.



## Utilising data

### Statistics and insights on the health of the NSW population

The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence supports HealthStats NSW, a public open data platform providing statistics and insights on the health of the NSW population. Users can explore a range of health topics, including for population sub-groups and locations, to inform and enhance local health monitoring, planning and policy activities. In 2022-23, HealthStats NSW attracted approximately 2,200 users per month.

### NSW Mothers and Babies report

The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence published the NSW Mothers and Babies 2021 report, which provides information on the number of births across NSW in 2021, 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 also examines stillbirth, and neonatal and maternal deaths, including causes, maternal characteristics, timing and investigations. Understanding these issues helps to improve outcomes for mothers and babies.

### NSW Population Health Survey

In 2022, 13,000 people participated in the NSW Population Health Survey. Data collected via the survey are used to monitor key health risk factors in the community. The data are made available to the community via HealthStats NSW.

### Cancer data

In March 2023, Cancer Institute NSW published CancerStats NSW, an interactive dashboard providing public access to data on cancer incidence, mortality and survival, treatment and screening participation.

The Institute undertook a project to streamline reporting indicators, storage and management of cancer data. Indicator data pipelines were developed for incidence and mortality, surgical treatments and clinical trials indicators. All data related to cancer data projects was collected and stored centrally, to ensure strategic oversight of projects and to maximise collaboration opportunities and the effective use by the system. This framework is sustainable and can be scaled to other health domains.

Data quality statements were developed for high-value data assets, which provide in-depth information about using cancer data effectively for research.

## Preparing for the next pandemic – developing statistics and data skills

The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence coordinates workplace-based training programs to build public health and biostatistical capacity within NSW Health. In 2022-23, 57 public health and biostatistics trainees were supported to achieve workplace competencies; 17 new trainees were recruited and 11 people completed their training, including six trainee biostatisticians who graduated with a Master of Biostatistics.

### Data linkages

In 2022-23, the Centre for Health Record Linkage (CHeReL) linked more than five billion records from health and human services data collections and supported more than 100 data linkage projects across NSW Health, other state government agencies and the research sector. Data released by the CHeReL this financial year enabled a wide range of projects aligned with NSW Government strategic priorities. Data linked by the CHeReL supported the evaluation of NSW Health programs, such as Towards Zero Suicide, which will improve the design and delivery of suicide prevention initiatives

The CHeReL also:

- supported the annual refresh of the NSW government's Human Services Dataset
- enabled the completion of NSW Health evaluations by providing linked data to projects such as Leading Better Value Care
- enhanced the scale-up of primary care linkage
- continued to enable biospecimen data linkage.

The CHeReL also applied to the Office of the National Data Commissioner to become an Accredited Data Service Provider under the Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022.

## Medical devices reform

The Clinical Excellence Commission led the oversight and coordination of the Therapeutic Goods Administration medical devices reform, including establishing the Medical Device Governance Program Steering Committee to provide strategic direction, strengthen the governance and operational structures of medical devices, monitor emerging medical device technologies and provide oversight of the Medical Device Governance Program workplan.

## Activity Based Management

The Activity Based Management team lead the development and implementation of Activity Based Management activities in NSW Health. ABM is an evidence-based management approach that focuses on patient level data to inform strategic decision making. The team continues to update the ABM Portal and Clinical Variation App with cost data to allow clinicians and managers to review their activity and clinical costing data, and in 2023 the Quarterly Costing App was launched.

## Innovation

### Health Prototyping Centre

eHealth NSW, HealthShare NSW, Health Infrastructure and NSW Health Pathology partnered to form the Health Prototyping Centre, which opened in August 2022. The centre is NSW Health's first dedicated facility for the rapid testing of ideas, designs and concepts to support healthcare innovation, services and solution improvements. The centre provides a warehouse space that is highly configurable to a range of clinical scenarios. It is a built-for-purpose, dedicated facility of over 1,000 square meters to support rapid prototyping and simulation-based testing.

### Rural Innovation

The Agency for Clinical Innovation Rural Health Network held its annual Rural Innovations Changing Healthcare Forum in June 2023, to bring together rural, regional and remote practitioners from across NSW.

### Lumos program recognition

The Lumos program links de-identified general practice data to NSW Health data, helping to improve patient care by bridging the information gap between primary and acute health care settings. The Lumos program continues to attract strong GP enrolment, with nearly 700 GPs participating in the program.

The inaugural Lumos Symposium was held in 2022, with over 150 delegates sharing ideas, innovations and exploring the impact of connected data to support system change. The symposium brought together general practitioners, system enablers, consumer representatives, program managers and other health professionals and supported collaborative opportunities to deliver improved health services. The Lumos program was a joint winner of the Health Research and Innovation Award at the 2022 NSW Health Awards.

## Cutting edge therapy

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) worked with clinicians and key partners to implement immune effector cell treatments for people with certain blood diseases such as cancer. The cutting-edge therapy uses an individual's own immune effector cells to target and treat their disease. ACI supported centres to become accredited and ensure they have the appropriate technology, procedures and skills in place to implement immune effector cell therapies into clinical practice. The standard frontline therapies available for children and adults with B cell haematological cancers are generally successful, resulting in a 5-year relative survival rate of up to 90%, particularly in Australians up to 39 years of age.

### CAR T-cell

NSW Immune Effector Cell Therapy services continue to deliver commercial CAR T-cell therapies for certain blood cancers. In 2022-23 over 60 people with very late-stage cancer were able to access this innovative therapy.

A state-wide evaluation of the experience of adult and paediatric patients and carers who have received CAR T-cell therapy in NSW has informed service delivery enhancements. NSW continues to be a global leader in the gene-based treatment of spinal muscular atrophy and nationally in the provision of gene therapy for blinding eye disease.

## Collaboration and partnerships

### Internationally connected

The Office for Health and Medical Research continued to collaborate with Investment NSW to showcase, promote and attract international investment in the state's leading health and medical research sector. The Office has also led international delegations and showcased our outstanding health system and medical research achievements.

In February 2023, NSW Ministry of Health and Sheba Medical Centre, Israel, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen collaboration in the fields of health and medical research, development, translation and commercialisation.

In June 2023, the Office for Health and Medical Research was part of a delegation led by Investment NSW at the BIO International Convention in Boston USA. Delegates at the convention comprised of international senior government representatives, key opinion leaders and life sciences

companies. It was an opportunity to showcase the strengths and opportunities in NSW, including the state's dynamic health and medical research ecosystem and a focus on the state's leadership in bio-preparedness, including diagnostic, therapeutic and vaccine pipelines.

### Cross-agency collaboration

The Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence represents NSW Health in cross-agency collaborations such as the Stronger Communities Data Partnership and NSW Better Outcomes Lab. The Centre helps to ensure that health and human services data is being used safely and effectively to enhance service delivery, guide investment and drive policy reform across NSW.

### Clinical guidance

In 2022-23, the Agency for Clinical Innovation coordinated a tri-state group involving New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria to explore ways to streamline the production and maintenance of state and territory repositories of clinical guidance. The group meets bi-monthly under the designation of the Interstate Collaboration on Clinical Guidance.

### Project ESTIE

The NSW Ministry of Health and the University of Melbourne successfully completed the *Evidence to Support Safe & Together Implementation and Evaluation Project*. The project involved multidisciplinary staff from four local health districts and examined collaborative and holistic services for children and families living with domestic and family violence, where parental issues of mental health or alcohol and other drug use co-occur.

### Clinical trials

#### Improved mapping and reporting on clinical trial activity through the Clinical Trial Management System

To support clinical trials management, the Office for Health and Medical Research has introduced a Clinical Trial Management System for use in all NSW public hospitals and health services, which streamlines clinical trial operations and finance and enables detailed reporting. Over the previous year the system has been rolled out progressively and is now live in all districts.

## Health Research and Innovation Award

### Hunter New England Local Health District

#### SWAP-IT

Everyday across the Hunter New England Local Health District, 95,718 children consume on average 3.5 serves of unhealthy food in their school lunchbox.

Aimed at supporting parents and caregivers to make simple swaps to improve the nutritional value of lunchboxes for their children, the innovative digital school-lunchbox program has significantly improved student dietary intake.

SWAP-IT has been co-designed, piloted, evaluated via gold standard research trials and shown to be effective at improving the nutritional value of the food consumed both at school and outside of school, improve child weight status, in a cost-effective and scalable model.



Joint winner of the Health Research and Innovation Award. The SWAP-It Health Lunchbox Program team with NSW Health Secretary, Susan Pearce AM, at the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards 2022.

## National Clinical Trials Governance Framework Working Group

The National Clinical Trials Governance Framework Working Group has completed preparatory activities for the first round of accreditation, which commenced 30 May 2023. All local health districts and specialty networks in collaboration with the Office for Health and Medical Research have developed complete evidence banks for national and statewide policies. Districts and networks are reviewing internal procedures to compile local evidence banks.

## Investing in new technologies

The Office for Health and Medical Research contributed to establishing the adeno-associated viral vector serological service within the Children's Hospital at Westmead and is investing \$524,420 over three years.

The service helps specialists identify patients who may benefit from gene therapy trials.

## Supporting local manufacturing of precision medicines

NSW is a world leader in the development of phage therapy for patients suffering from hard-to-treat bacterial infections, providing access to limb and life saving therapy. The Office for Health and Medical Research provided funding of \$3,597,960 to ensure domestic manufacture of phage therapy in NSW, helping build local capacity to overcome the global manufacturing bottleneck.

## Establishing Dynamic Simulation Modelling

In 2022-23, Dynamic Simulation Modelling (DSM) capability was established in NSW Health. This was used to test the impact of new models of care and inform the case for change, optimise the placement of new services, measure the potential system impacts and inform contract and funding negotiations. This has supported an evidence-based approach to joint primary health network and local health district planning and service delivery.

## Patient flow

### Patient management

In 2022-23, System Performance Support commenced the statewide rollout of the Patient Flow Portal Incoming Patient Allocations module. The module is used to manage patients incoming from other hospitals, admitted from the emergency department or from planned surgical and medical waitlists. The team also enhanced predictive modelling of hospital bed demand and supply to better manage patient flow throughout a hospital.

The team also implemented discharge bed cleaning management functions to allow faster bed turnaround times and developed the Planned Care for Better Health Operational Dashboard for consistent integrated care for all patients.

## Modern, safe and innovative IT

### Cyber security

The Essential Eight Maturity Uplift Program remained on track with eHealth NSW to develop important capabilities around the eight essential controls, as recommended by the Australian Cyber Security Centre.

New mandatory Cyber Security Awareness training for NSW Health Staff was rolled out by eHealth NSW and the NSW Ministry of Health in March 2023. The module helps staff learn more about how they can protect personal, health or other sensitive information from cyber-attacks.

### In the cloud

The Infrastructure Refresh Program continued to transition IT infrastructure from on-premises to the cloud. As of 30 June 2023, 35% of critical eHealth NSW ICT services were hosted on NSW Health's public cloud platform. As a result, the program saved 120,000 clinical productivity hours, achieved a 70% reduction in unplanned outages and a 50% reduction in maintenance windows.

eHealth NSW's Statewide Data Centre Reform Program continued to work with NSW Health organisations to migrate locally managed in-scope applications and related on-premise infrastructure to the NSW Health cloud platform. As of 30 June 2023, 72% of applications and 62% of supporting infrastructure were migrated to the cloud. The 15 NSW Health organisations can now maximise the benefits of public cloud with local ICT teams upskilled to leverage the latest cloud services.

### Removing legacy ICT

eHealth NSW remained on track with the decommissioning of ICT legacy systems. The criteria, targets and roadmap were defined and an ICT decommissioning strategy was drafted.



## Progressing our digital innovation

### Single Digital Patient Record Program

eHealth NSW completed the statewide rollout of the electronic Medical Record connect program, to support a digitally enabled health system. The new Single Digital Patient Record Program will evolve electronic medical records further in the coming years and provide a single platform where clinicians can access patient records from across the state, regardless of location.

### MotherSafe

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District launched a new cloud-based contact centre for their MotherSafe telephone service, with support from eHealth NSW. This enables MotherSafe clinicians and counsellors to answer calls from any workplace location and provide additional support such as public announcement messages and call backs, making it easier for consumers to access this counselling service.

### myVirtualCare

The myVirtualCare video conferencing platform provided patients in NSW with a seamless and convenient way to access their clinical and social care providers using any internet-enabled device. myVirtualCare supported patients to access a variety of services including cancer care, palliative care, nutrition and dietetics, pain, mental health, chronic and complex care and speech and rehabilitation services. There have been 300,000+ virtual consultations conducted to 30 June 2023.

eHealth NSW and the Cancer Institute NSW worked together on the development of an Oncology Information Systems Strategy in partnership with local health districts, speciality health networks and NSW Health pillar organisations. The strategy's key objective is to provide a consistent, standardised and more holistic cancer patient view. This will improve the effectiveness, efficiency and safety of cancer care.

### Identifying Sepsis risk

eHealth NSW launched the clinical pilot for the Sepsis Risk Tool Dashboard at Westmead Hospital in September 2022. The tool was developed in collaboration with the Clinical Excellence Commission, Western Sydney Local Health District, Sydney Health Partners, the University of Sydney and NSW Health Pathology. It will be used in emergency departments to identify a patient's risk of sepsis, a life threatening condition.

## Health Research and Innovation Award

# NSW Ministry of Health Awards

## Lumos: Connected data, healthier NSW

The Lumos program delivers new opportunities for data-driven evidence to positively inform health decisions and increase collaboration between researchers, policy makers, service users, health managers, and clinicians.

Lumos helps address important health system research questions by providing data from NSW general practices linked to data held by NSW Health. Lumos has nearly 700 general practices in all 10 Primary Health Networks and provides highly valued data and analytics to support patient care services across the health system.



Joint winner of the Health Research and Innovation Award – The Lumos team

## **Communications and Technology**

NSW Ambulance has progressed an organisation-wide Information Communication and Technology Strategy which focuses on using digital advancements to enhance service delivery.

### **Performance data**

The Bureau of Health Information continued to make healthcare performance information accessible to the public and health system, and ensure information is used to inform improvements to services. As part of the Bureau of Health Information's digital-first focus, further data was migrated to its Data Portal as part of the staged implementation with 20,211 visits to the portal in 2022-23, up almost 30% on 2021-22.

### **Streamlining payment processes**

NSW Health has continued modernising payment processes. Cheque payments have largely switched to digital payments with shorter average days to pay, while the number of cheques drawn per month reduced to less than 10% of previous volumes. NSW Health has streamlined and modernised its banking supporting improved reporting.



## Priority 6

# The health system is managed sustainably

The health system is managed with an outcomes-focused lens to deliver a financially and environmentally sustainable future.

### Key objectives

- 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

- NSW Health Pathology's Forensic and Analytical Science Service Drug Toxicology Unit reduced waste by 8.4 tonnes, equivalent to 9.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide
- The Sustainable Futures Innovation Fund funded 17 high-impact innovation staff projects that improve patient care while reducing emissions or waste
- The launch of the Payments Portal across NSW Health provides standardised, simplified, online payment functionality for patients and customers paying invoices.
- Eight rounds of the Stroke Rural and Regional Mentorship Program were completed to support rural-based stroke clinicians' skill development.
- The Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel was established in September 2022 to strengthen community engagement and foster genuine co-design principles in the development of healthcare in regional NSW.

### Environmental sustainability

#### Assessing carbon footprints

The Climate Risk & Net Zero Unit, in partnership with the Office of Energy and Climate Change, completed carbon footprint assessments to baseline carbon emissions at Nepean and Lismore Base Hospitals, across Northern Sydney and Central Coast Local Health Districts and the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network.

#### Sustainable Futures Innovation Fund

The NSW Ministry of Health launched the Sustainable Futures Innovation Fund providing funding to 17 high-impact innovation staff projects that improve patient care while reducing the environmental footprint.

#### Energy management

NSW Health is committed to environmental sustainability and energy management. The Ministry leads the NSW Health Resource Efficiency and Energy Management Forum, which brings together energy management and sustainability professionals across NSW Health organisations. The forum allows stakeholders to share information about renewable energy, energy efficiency and other sustainability initiatives that have been implemented and shares progress towards sustainability targets in line with government policy such as the Government Resources Efficiency Policy and the NSW Net Zero Plan 2023-2030.

The NSW Ministry of Health has established a governance structure, facilitated engagement and cooperation with local health districts and speciality health networks and enabled access to funding to facilitate the implementation of adaptive charging technologies.



## Sustainable asset management

NSW Health is focused on delivering an asset management program that provides safe, reliable and high-quality healthcare delivery and patient outcomes. In 2022-23, NSW Health achieved the following initiatives to support asset management optimisation, sustainability and maturity:

- commenced and continued to a centralised management model within the Ministry for key focus areas
- development of an Asset Management Benefits Framework to link the asset management outcomes and benefits to the NSW Future Health Strategy and enhance patient and community outcomes
- development of an Asset Information Strategy and Asset Data Standard for buildings and facilities to help ensure stakeholders have access to key enablers in data and information to achieve asset management objectives
- improving data consistency and enhancing the data available in the online asset register to provide greater visibility and inform proactive management of assets across the state via statewide initiatives to support local adoption
- completed annual maturity assessments to enable continual improvement and to prioritise initiatives under policy requirements.

## Supply Chain and UN Sustainability Goals

Of NSW Health's top 20 suppliers, 14 are now reporting against one or more of the UN Sustainability Goals, resulting in monitoring against climate action and carbon emission goals for medical equipment and pharmaceutical suppliers. Work with the remaining suppliers is ongoing to develop their reporting.

## NSW Health Pathology

In 2022-23, NSW Health Pathology developed its Climate Change Adaptation Plan including the Climate Change Risk Assessment. Amongst the subsequent achievements, the Forensic and Analytical Science Service Drug Toxicology Unit reduced waste by 8.4 tonnes, equivalent to 9.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide; solvent use fell by 76%; new test methods reduced single use plastics, cutting clinical waste by 40%; a new laboratory information management system reduced A4 paper use by 68%; and outdated instruments were sold rather than disposed.

## Five new performance indicators

To improve sustainability, NSW Health developed five new key performance indicators to be included in the annual Service Agreements between the NSW Ministry of Health, local health districts, specialty networks, NSW Ambulance and support organisations. The focus areas span two anaesthetic gases (nitrous oxide and desflurane), waste, energy and fleet.

Anaesthetic gases account for approximately 5% of a hospital's carbon footprint. Desflurane and nitrous oxide have a global warming impact 2,500 and 298 times greater than CO<sub>2</sub> respectively. Closer tracking of their use and raising awareness of this environmental issue help to reduce emissions whilst improving patient care.

## Using data to inform decision making

### Data-enabled

The Bureau of Health Information continued to maximise the value and use of data through data linkage and sharing. This included creating a linked dataset, bringing together admission information with previous survey responses. The bureau also continued to monitor and support the workspace in the Secure Unified Research Environment. This allows appropriately skilled experts to access unit record data to produce high-value insights on approved projects. It will also ultimately provide a safe platform for linked data access once available.

### Data informed decision making

NSW Health supports public health organisations in applying activity-based management. This evidence-based management approach focuses on patient data to inform strategic decision making. Ensuring that robust and reliable costing information is available in a timely manner is a key focus area to provide a better understanding of service delivery costs and inform local decision making.

## Food services transformation

At Royal North Shore Hospital, 95% of cleaning tasks and locations have transitioned into the Task Allocation System, with improved communications made available on hand-held devices. A strategic business case for food services transformation has been developed to inform a further 15 month food service program pilot, with a focus on patient-centred and sustainable models of care.

## Infrastructure for the future

### Health Infrastructure

Health Infrastructure progressed an \$11.9 billion capital pipeline, delivering critical new and upgraded health facilities and services on time and budget at a time when the construction sector is facing unprecedented global challenges. Forty projects were completed in 2022-23, including the first dedicated Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice in Australia, the Coffs Harbour Hospital Expansion, and Tumut Hospital Redevelopment.

### New pathology infrastructure

NSW Health Pathology collaborated with local health districts to review clinical service plans, service models and business cases to recommend pathology services and meet evolving hospital, patient and community needs. It also provided analytical support for medical equipment rollouts to inform improved laboratory throughput and workflow. Laboratories undergoing operational commissioning to open in the next 12 months include Nepean, Cooma, RPA Anatomical Pathology, Tweed Heads, Liverpool and Griffith.

### Capital works at Randwick and Westmead

Major capital works have continued at the Sydney Children's Hospital Network at Randwick and Westmead. Following the completion of the detailed design phase, involving extensive consultation with staff, patients, community groups and Aboriginal community members, contractors have now been procured for the principal works at both sites. The project team worked on several projects to improve the experience of patients and staff at the hospitals, including consultation on the single-patient bedroom model, ensuring the design accommodates patient needs while supporting safety and best medical practice.

### Safe, quality healthcare

To help align our governance and leaders to support the system and deliver the outcomes of Future Health, the Chief Executive of the Clinical Excellence Commission represented NSW at the quarterly Inter-Jurisdictional Committee. The committee is coordinated by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care which leads national safety and quality improvements in healthcare.

## Joint Replacement Pathways

The NSW Health Joint Replacement Pathways Framework was published in 2023 to help optimise local orthopaedic services.

The NSW Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Agency for Clinical Innovation, commenced a redesign program to provide onsite support to seven hospitals, including Prince of Wales, Sutherland, Nepean, Gosford, Fairfield, Coffs Harbour and Royal Prince Alfred. The hospitals implemented a same day or short stay joint replacement surgery, and the resources developed in the program are being shared to encourage statewide implementation.

## Regional Health

The Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel was established in September 2022 to strengthen community engagement and foster co-design principles in regional healthcare. The panel met five times in 2022-23.

A steering committee to oversee the development, implementation and evaluation of the Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022-2023 was formed in July 2022. The steering committee consists of consumers, local health district representatives, staff from the Aboriginal health sector and key health partners.

In December 2022, the NSW and Commonwealth governments recommenced the Bilateral Regional Health Forum, which provides an opportunity to discuss regional, rural and remote health issues and monitor progress on Commonwealth and NSW Governments' commitments, to ensure a collaborative approach to improving health outcomes.

## Progressing our strategy

### Implementation and evaluation

Following the release of the *Future Health Strategic Framework* in May 2022, NSW Health commenced implementation in 2022-23.

Future Health is an ambitious strategy that looks to position our health system to meet the needs of our patients, community and workforce over the coming years. To ensure its successful implementation, a set of roadmaps and action plans have been created to outline clear milestones to guide us over the next ten years. The Future Health Key Objectives have been embedded in service agreements, annual business plans and local strategic planning to ensure alignment across NSW Health.

Reporting processes to monitor and evaluate our progress were established, and a new governance structure that will support implementation across NSW Health was introduced. The governance approach features steering committees with members from across NSW Health agencies, pillars and local health districts.

### Driving strategic alignment

In 2022-23 the NSW Ministry of Health established an internal committee, the Strategic Investment Committee, to implement a framework to prioritise New Policy Proposals, competing priorities and NSW Treasury funding requirements. The Committee comprises senior Ministry Executive along with health policy and subject matter experts. It works toward ensuring strategic alignment of new policy measures with NSW Health Government priorities and NSW Health Future Health strategy.

### Value based healthcare

#### Collaborative Commissioning

Collaborative Commissioning is a statewide initiative that enables organisations to establish partnerships to deliver local, integrated, value-based health care. NSW Health has developed a structured approach to support the establishment of partnerships and care pathways and provided support including funding, subject matter expertise, information sharing, data collection and monitoring and evaluation of care pathways.

Across NSW, four partnerships between local health districts, primary health networks and the Rural Doctors Network are implementing care pathways for vulnerable populations. These partnerships focus on value-based urgent care including: cardiology in community; frail older persons; poorly managed diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; and congestive heart failure. Each pathway has a tailored monitoring and evaluation plan and each care pathway provides opportunities to assess the feasibility and scalability of a state-wide approach.

### Value based models

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) published the *3Ci Model of Care* that aims to improve outcomes and reduce unnecessary hospitalisations for people with chronic heart failure (CHF) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in NSW. The model builds upon the CHF and COPD clinical initiatives of the NSW Health Leading Better Value Care program and supports the management of people living with these conditions across the continuum of care in acute and community settings.

### Patient Safety First Award

Agency for Clinical Innovation, eHealth NSW, NSW Ministry of Health, South Eastern Local Health District, and Sydney Local Health District

### NSW Telestroke Service

Saving lives, keeping patients close to home and reducing disability for stroke patients in rural and regional NSW are the key aims for the NSW Telestroke Service.

The virtual service connects local Emergency Department clinicians to stroke specialists 24/7 via video consultations, providing access to ground-breaking time-critical treatments for patients.



The NSW Telestroke Service team at the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards 2022.

In partnership with the NSW Ministry of Health and the Surgical Services Taskforce, ACI has developed evidence-based guidance, tools and resources to support clinicians and health services to improve elective surgery in NSW. The guidance has a specific focus on value-based surgery, enhanced recovery after surgery, prehabilitation and same-day joint replacement surgery. ACI identified and shared local innovative models of care for improving elective surgery that represented high potential for scaling across NSW Health.

The ACI published a wound self-assessment tool to support health services across NSW to understand their current service capacity and capability around chronic wound management and take action towards meeting the NSW Health Leading Better Value Care standards for chronic wound management.

ACI completed eight rounds of the Stroke Rural and Regional Mentorship Program, which supported the skill development of rural-based stroke clinicians.

The program provided clinicians with rotations through high-volume metropolitan stroke centres and peer support from senior stroke clinicians. Evaluations indicate that the program contributed to an enhanced skill and knowledge base that will translate to improved service provision in rural settings.

ACI's Intensive Care NSW, in collaboration with Health Education and Training Institute, launched Intensive Care Unit Transition to Practice education modules. Intensive Care NSW engaged clinical groups to develop, review and test the content, and to create a new approach to address variation in practice and sustainability for clinicians and their work environment.

## Procurement

### Procurement workstreams

The Procurement Reform program aims to deliver a state-wide procurement system that maximises value for money and supports better value care. There are five workstreams, including Operating Model; Pharma – Medicines Formulary; DeliverEase; SmartChain; and IT Systems and Technology.

### SmartChain

The SmartChain program is a collaboration between eHealth NSW and HealthShare NSW to deliver a new statewide digital solution for NSW Health supply chain and procurement systems. The Traceability solution pilot at Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District was launched to track and assess product usage across the supply chain at department, facility, local health district or statewide level. Traceability provides improved catalogue and contract compliance, easier ordering, usage and product tracking, improved stock management and enhanced reporting capabilities, visibility of stock, usage and cost. It is integrated with electronic Medical Record, and Patient Administration System, statewide Catalogues and Contracts, Billing and Stafflink. The digitisation of procurement and supply chain processes is making it easier and more efficient for a range of users.

### DeliverEASE

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District was the first local health district in the state to complete its upgrade of medical consumables storerooms and treatment rooms in hospitals using the DeliverEASE stock inventory system. Together with HealthShare NSW, the system has expanded to more than 28 hospitals, providing improved stock-management practices, principles, tools and training for staff.

### Medicines Formulary

Instead of using paper forms, changes to the NSW Medicines Formulary are now able to be received and approved digitally. This improvement is part of the Pharmaceutical Procurement Reform initiative and was developed by eHealth NSW in partnership with the Clinical Excellence Commission.

### Driving continuous improvement

NSW Health is committed to whole of Government initiatives to drive continuous improvement in procurement, including participation in the NSW Treasury Procurement Professionals Community of Practice; the Aboriginal Procurement Community of Practice; and the Modern Slavery Working Group.

The Ministry also participates in whole of Government working groups driving improvement and savings on contingent labour and professional services.

Key procurement focus areas have included increasing the capability and capacity of the system and developing key performance indicator dashboards to enhance data transparency and best practice.

The Ministry has increased staff procurement knowledge and run education programs across the NSW Health System, including training more than 700 staff on the NSW Health (Goods and Services) Procurement Policy.

Through the NSW Ministry of Health's Procurement Reform Program, local health districts, HealthShare NSW and eHealth NSW have collaborated to develop and implement Procurement KPI Dashboards. These cover on and off-contract spend, contract price compliance and catalogue compliance for medical-related procurements.

Dashboards provide insights and data analytics to improve procurement management capability across the system including for medical consumables and prosthesis, medical equipment consumables and pathology procurement.



## Standardising procurement processes

In 2022-23, Health Infrastructure continued its focus on standardising procurement processes and contracts for capital delivery, as part of a whole-of-government commitment to more collaborative and sustainable capital procurement.

Tender schedules and assessment criteria have been updated and implemented in all construction tenders to leverage industry expertise and innovation, helping to drive sustainable design and delivery outcomes that address the whole-of-life impacts of capital investments.

Health Infrastructure's Statement of Participation process is providing visibility of the procurement pipeline and enhancing transparency of tendering processes, enabling industry to adequately plan and nominate preferences for work package tendering opportunities.

Early Contractor Involvement procurement processes on construction projects such as the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct, is yielding tangible design and commercial benefits for the capital program.

## Payment and revenue portals

### Payment Portal

A new NSW Health Payment Portal was delivered by eHealth NSW to manage sundry debtor invoices across 29 NSW Health entities. The portal provides a consistent, secure and user-friendly digital experience. The portal was part of the Cash Transformation Program which is a collaboration with eHealth NSW, NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Treasury, HealthShare NSW and local health districts to simplify banking structures, increase efficiency and improve user experiences.

During the year, NSW Health commenced consultation and research on a single patient billing system for use across all local health districts.

The development and implementation of the Payments Portal across NSW Health is focused on standardised, digital functionality for patients and customers paying invoices. The new central Health Payments Portal went live in November 2022 helping to standardise and simplify online payments for local health organisations.

A new Revenue Portal was rolled out and provides a statewide view of operational data to assist with capturing revenue from patient fees. The portal has streamlined administrative and billing management functions: improved patient and staff experience, and provides standardised statewide reporting on chargeable and compensable patients utilising NSW public hospitals to support the provision of health care in a more financially sustainable way.

## Volunteer of the Year Award

### Murrumbidgee Local Health District

#### Garth Hungerford

Garth Hungerford is a dedicated member of the Wagga Wagga community, offering his time and knowledge as a health advocate and advisor to the Local Health District, Primary Health Network and other NSW Health committees, particularly in support of rural, regional and remote communities.

In response to a spike in youth suicide, Garth led the design and development of wristbands with a QR Code to mental health help and wellbeing websites. Many of these wristbands have gone to local school children, and more than 13,000 wristbands have been distributed.



Garth Hungerford, winner of the Volunteer of the Year Award at the 24th Annual NSW Health Awards 2022.