

# Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Together, we deliver  
**excellent care now**, for a  
healthier community tomorrow

### Acknowledgement of country

Northern NSW Local Health District acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work. We pay our respects to the Ancestors and Elders past and present and extend this respect to all Aboriginal people.



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# Foreword

Our region is a place of natural beauty, vibrant culture, and home to diverse communities.

Over the past six years the Northern Rivers region has faced many challenges including bushfires, devastating floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of these challenges, our communities have shown their capacity for great kindness, collaboration and resilience, and our dedicated staff have continued to deliver and support exceptional care.

As a Local Health District, we have also had many highlights, achieved in collaboration with our service partners and communities. New facilities have opened; new services have been established including telestroke, specialist palliative care and outreach services; the Aboriginal Health Action Plan was launched; community engagement has been strengthened; high patient experience ratings have been maintained; and a continued focus on high-quality care has delivered improved patient outcomes.

As we look to the years ahead, we will see shifts in our population demographics, with an ageing population and more complex health issues that will drive greater health service demand. The way in which care is delivered, including through the expansion of virtual services and services delivered in settings other than a hospital, advancements through the safe adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), and working closely with our partners, will continue to adapt and strengthen to meet this need.

This need for agility and continuous improvement to best meet the needs of our communities is reflected in our vision - 'Together, we deliver excellent care now, for a healthier community tomorrow'.

It acknowledges the importance of thinking to the future and working with partners to make sure we can collectively serve our communities as best we can within the resources available.

Through consultation, we have identified several key drivers to achieve this vision that reflect NSW Health priorities as well as the unique needs of our region. Our workforce, patients, carers, volunteers and communities will be central in everything we do as we work to deliver these priorities. Embedded within each priority is an ongoing commitment to Closing the Gap and improving equitable access, experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal people, communities and staff within our services.

The Northern NSW Local Health District Executive and Board are proud to present our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan and we look forward to working collectively to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Northern NSW communities.



**Tracey Maisey,**  
Chief Executive



**Peter Carter,**  
Board Chair

# Our vision and values

The vision for this Strategic Plan is

*‘Together,  
we deliver excellent care now,  
for a healthier  
community tomorrow’.*

This vision recognises that everyone has a part to play in improving health and wellbeing in our communities, and that the quality of an individual's health is a culmination of a range of factors, not only the services provided by Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD).

Our vision and the work that we do every day is underpinned by the NSW Health CORE Values:

- Collaboration
- Openness
- Respect
- Empowerment

# Strategic Priorities



## **Workforce**

A supported, inclusive and engaged workforce



## **Partnerships**

Integrated services and health outcomes are enhanced through strategic and targeted partnerships



## **Service delivery**

Accessible, high quality and culturally safe care is sustainably delivered



## **Efficiency and sustainability**

Our corporate processes are transparent, efficient, accountable and future-focused



## **Patient experience**

Patients, carers and communities have positive experiences and outcomes that matter to them



## **Assets and technologies**

Fit-for-purpose physical and digital assets and technologies

# Alignment to NSW Health's Future Health Strategy

|                                                                                                           |                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>Workforce</b></p> |  | <p><b>Our staff are engaged and well supported:</b> Staff are supported to deliver safe, reliable personcentred care driving the best outcomes and experiences.</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                  |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>Service delivery</b></p> |   | <p><b>Safe care is delivered across all settings:</b> Safe, high quality reliable care is delivered by us and our partners in a sustainable and personalised way, within our hospitals, in communities, at home and virtually.</p> |
|                                                                                                                  |   | <p><b>People are healthy and well:</b> Investment is made in keeping people healthy to prevent ill health and tackle health inequality in our communities.</p>                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                  |  | <p><b>Research and innovation, and digital advances inform service delivery:</b> Clinical service delivery continues to transform through health and medical research, digital technologies, and data analytics.</p>               |

|                                                                                                                      |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>Patient experience</b></p> |  | <p><b>Patients and carers have positive experiences and outcomes that matter:</b> 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.</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>Partnerships</b></p> |  | <p><b>Patients and carers have positive experiences and outcomes that matter:</b> 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.</p> |
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|                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>Efficiency and sustainability</b></p> |  | <p><b>The health system is managed sustainably:</b> The health system is managed with an outcomes-focused lens to deliver a financially and environmentally sustainable future.</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                             |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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|  <p><b>Assets and technologies</b></p> |  | <p><b>Safe care is delivered across all settings:</b> Safe, high quality reliable care is delivered by us and our partners in a sustainable and personalised way, within our hospitals, in communities, at home and virtually.</p> |
|                                                                                                                             |  | <p><b>Research and innovation, and digital advances inform service delivery:</b> Clinical service delivery continues to transform through health and medical research, digital technologies, and data analytics.</p>               |



# About us

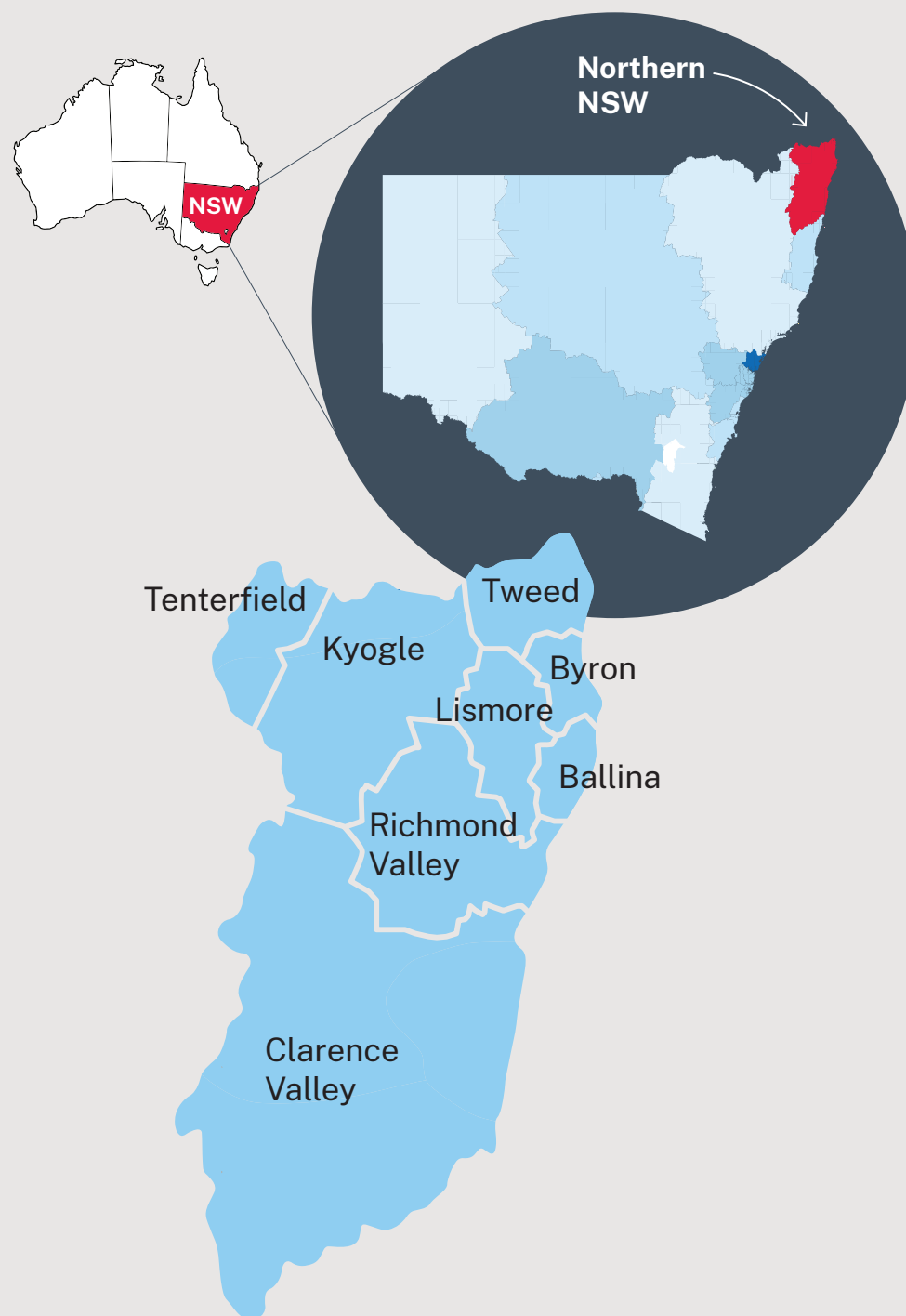
## Our geography and service map

NNSWLHD is a regional local health district covering an area of 20,732 square kilometres. It extends to the Queensland border in the north, Mid North Coast Local Health District in the south and Hunter New England Local Health District in the west.

As a regional health service, our strengths and challenges are different to those of our metropolitan counterparts.

- The health outcomes of our regional communities are poorer compared to metropolitan areas.
- Regional areas face different workforce challenges and shortages, often relying more extensively on locum and agency staff.
- Fewer specialist services and primary care after hours options are available in smaller towns, putting pressure on emergency services.
- Health services in regional centres are expanding and offer opportunities for increasing specialisation.
- Opportunities for using new health and communication technologies in patient care have increased.

**NNSWLHD encompasses seven Local Government Areas (LGAs) as well as the Urbenville part of the Tenterfield LGA.**



## Our health

### Many factors influence our health and wellbeing.

Compared to the rest of NSW, people in NNSWLHD have:

- lower levels of educational attainment
- lower median income, lower rates of full time employment, and high levels of unemployment
- high levels of rental and housing stress
- poor internet access and telephone service

### People in NNSWLHD experience poorer health outcomes and have higher rates of health risks, compared to NSW.



Higher rates of adults smoking, overweight and obesity in adults and children, and adults exceeding the Australian alcohol guidelines.



Higher rates of mental health conditions, potentially preventable hospitalisations and presentations to emergency departments.



**Better than the NSW average** for adults eating the recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables and physical activity in children.

## Our community



NNSWLHD's population is estimated at **314,905 people in 2025**.



**6.4%** of our population identify as **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander** (NSW 4.2%).\* *\*6.4% excludes the Urbenville part of the Tenterfield LGA as data is unavailable.*



**12.9%** of residents were **born overseas** (NSW 29.3%).

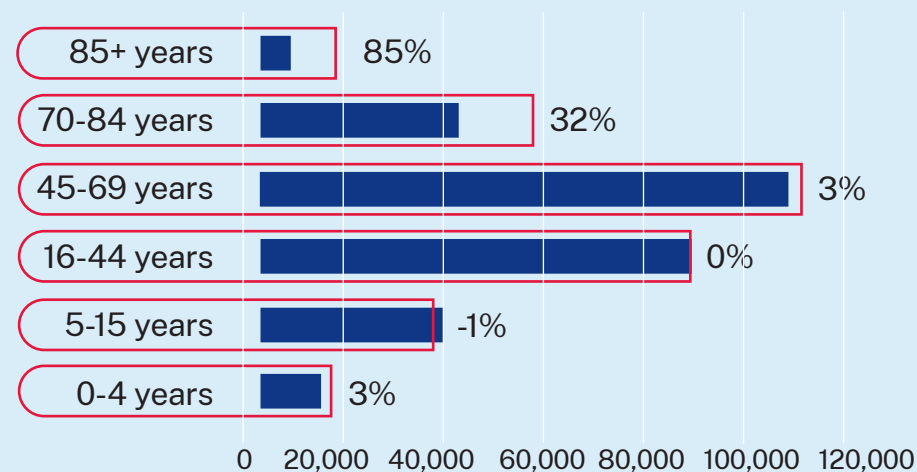
## Population growth



**Our population is growing and ageing.** By 2041, the population will increase by a projected 8% and NNSWLHD will be home to more than 336,000 people.

- The northern coastal LGAs of Ballina, Byron and Tweed will see the most growth, at around 12%.
- There will be significant growth in the older age groups. By 2041, around 1 in 4 people in NNSWLHD will be aged 70+.
- Current estimates suggest there will be little to no growth in the younger population.

### NNSWLHD projected population by age group and percent change, 2022 – 2041



## Our health services need to meet the needs of our diverse population.

The Northern NSW population has many communities and sub-populations within it. Some have higher health care needs, including older people, Aboriginal people, and those experiencing mental health concerns.

The ways in which services are delivered will continue to adapt to meet population need and growing demand, while maintaining a person-centred focus.

Keeping people healthy and well will remain vital, as will ensuring that people can receive the care they need in the most appropriate setting. This includes in the community, in the home, or through virtual models.

To support this, we will work with service partners and continue to engage with communities, patients and carers to inform accessible, culturally safe and high quality services.



## Our services

Our services are provided across a mixture of hospitals, multi-purpose services (including residential aged care), community health centres and HealthOne services.



Our local communities are passionate about their health services. In 2023/24, 49 volunteers dedicated 4,462 hours to serving patients, carers and families. More than 80 consumer representatives regularly participate in health projects and committees.



## Our people



In June 2024, NNSWLHD had **5,775** full time equivalent staff.

- **4.1%** of the workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- **75%** female
- **44%** part time, **40%** full time and **16%** casual or agency
- **29%** are over the age of 55



### Like the population, our workforce is ageing.

There is also a trend toward part-time work and lower employment hours per person.

## Our activity in 2023/24:



**61,600**  
medical admissions



**2,702**  
births



**31,775**  
operations



**229,587**  
emergency attendances



**563,094**  
non-admitted patient service events



### Clinical staff:

Allied health 10%

Medical 10%

Nursing and Midwifery 50%

Oral health 1%

Other professionals,  
paraprofessionals and support 3%

Scientific and technical clinical  
support 2%



### Corporate staff:

Clinical support 13%

Corporate services 4%

Hotel services 6%

Maintenance and trades 1%





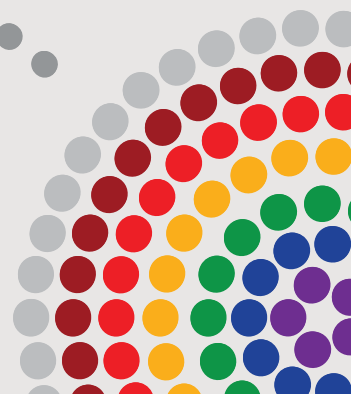
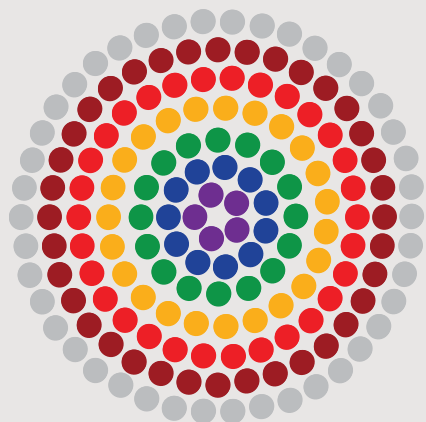
# Our commitment to Aboriginal health

Aboriginal people have a deep connection to the life, culture and country of this region and we hold the greatest respect for the Ancestors and Elders past and present, and for all Aboriginal people.

We are committed to closing the gap and improving health outcomes and experiences for Aboriginal people and communities in our region.

This commitment is embedded across the strategic priorities and objectives in this Strategic Plan, and achieving equity will require dedicated efforts from our entire organisation and in partnership with community and service partners.

The [NNSWLHD Aboriginal Health Action Plan](#) outlines the actions that NNSWLHD will take as we work toward this goal.



## Development of this plan

This plan was informed through consultation and engagement with staff, community members, and the LHD's Executive Leadership Team and Board. This included workshops, surveys and focus groups. Key service partners were also engaged including Healthy North Coast, Aboriginal Medical Services, and education providers. Consultation processes included reflection on key state-wide strategies and priorities, including Future Health 2022-2032 and the NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022-2032, which have heavily shaped local priorities in NNSWLHD.

## Implementation of this plan

Annual district-wide and local operational plans will outline actions being taken to deliver on the strategic priorities and objectives in this plan. Progress and achievements will be reported annually.

As we look to the years ahead, we also reflect on the period of our last Strategic Plan 2019-2024. Despite challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters, our staff and communities showed resilience and a commitment to improving health and health care across the region.

## 2019-2024 achievements

- 1 Opened the \$723.3 million Tweed Valley Hospital, expanding the range of health services available to Northern NSW communities. The move from the former Tweed Hospital was the largest whole-of-hospital move to date in NSW.
- 2 Implemented a comprehensive COVID-19 response including testing, vaccination clinics, and a Virtual COVID Care Service.
- 3 Entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Healthy North Coast Primary Health Network and Mid North Coast Local Health District to further develop and embed a 'one health system' mindset and approach to improving health outcomes for communities across the mid and north NSW coast.
- 4 Expanded our workforce and launched new programs that support and empower staff, including the Leadership Academy for Nursing and Midwifery Managers (the first of its kind in NSW).
- 5 Established new services that have improved patient access and outcomes including a Patient Flow Unit, telestroke service, and a knee and hip arthritis service which won the NSW Secretary's Award for Value Based Healthcare.

6

Launched a range of plans and strategies that will guide and support our work in the years to come, including the Health Care Services Plan, Community Engagement Framework, Disability Inclusion Action Plan and our first Multicultural and Refugee Health Strategic Plan.

7

Provided an emergency and public health response to multiple natural disasters including floods and bushfires.

8

Further committed to an environmentally sustainable future for our services, including investments in a roof-mounted solar power system at Byron Central Hospital and increasing our electric vehicle fleet.

9

Delivered cultural awareness training to 76% of NNSWLHD staff and furthered our commitment to Aboriginal employment opportunities through traineeships, cadetships and the Aboriginal Allied Health Academy.

10

Successfully trialled a Short Stay Unit in our Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Service to better meet the needs of clients.

11

Strengthened academic partnerships with the University Centre for Rural Health and with the newly formed Northern NSW Academic Health Alliance, supporting future workforce development, research and innovation.

## **\$723.3 million** Tweed Valley Hospital





# Strategic Priorities

## Strategy on a page

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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|  <p><b>Workforce</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  <p><b>Service delivery</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  <p><b>Patient experience</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  <p><b>Partnerships</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  <p><b>Efficiency and sustainability</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  <p><b>Assets and technologies</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>A supported, inclusive and engaged workforce</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>Accessible, high quality and culturally safe care is sustainably delivered</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>Patients, carers and communities have positive experiences and outcomes that matter to them</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><b>Integrated services and health outcomes are enhanced through strategic and targeted partnerships</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p><b>Our corporate processes are transparent, efficient, accountable and future-focused</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p><b>Fit-for-purpose physical and digital assets and technologies</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attraction and retention of a skilled and diverse workforce.</li> <li>2. Workforce wellbeing, satisfaction and experience is prioritised.</li> <li>3. Enablement of learning and development opportunities to maximise capabilities and promote a contemporary workforce.</li> <li>4. An empowered workforce achieving shared goals with openness and two-way communication.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality care delivered in our facilities, in the community and in the home.</li> <li>2. Expansion of home, community and virtual service models.</li> <li>3. Culturally safe and inclusive services that improve equitable access and outcomes for our communities.</li> <li>4. Value and outcome focused services and care processes.</li> <li>5. Targeted preventive services to reduce the burden of disease and promote health.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Patients and carers to be empowered decision makers throughout their care.</li> <li>2. Service development and improvement that is informed by the lived experience of patients, carers and communities.</li> <li>3. Enhanced health and service literacy that supports people to engage with and access appropriate services.</li> <li>4. A positive culture that works with kindness and compassion.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intentional collaboration across NSW Health and with other health service partners to add value and improve outcomes.</li> <li>2. Working with key service partners to promote and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.</li> <li>3. Partnering with academic and education institutions to drive research, innovation and continuous improvement.</li> <li>4. Partnering with education institutions to expand training opportunities and build the future workforce.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Optimised systems and processes to effectively and efficiently deliver, monitor and manage services.</li> <li>2. Efficient and transparent governance processes that empower decision making, ensure accountability, and enable regulatory compliance.</li> <li>3. Responsible resource and financial management that is reflective of service and community needs and enables service delivery within allocated funds.</li> <li>4. Commitment and action toward reducing our environmental footprint.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contemporary and reliable digital assets and systems that best deliver care and corporate outcomes.</li> <li>2. Physical assets and technologies that are planned, well utilised and align to future service needs.</li> <li>3. Technologies that build capacity and staff capabilities to support data-driven insights, informed decision-making and system improvements.</li> </ol> |

# Workforce:

*A supported,  
inclusive and  
engaged workforce*

**Executive reporting leads:**  
Operational Directors



## **Objectives:**

1. Attraction and retention of a skilled and diverse workforce
2. Workforce wellbeing, satisfaction and experience is prioritised
3. Enablement of learning and development opportunities to maximise capabilities and promote a contemporary workforce
4. An empowered workforce achieving shared goals with openness and two-way communication

## **What will success look like?**

- Improved People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) results
- Improved Aboriginal workforce participation and wellbeing
- Increase in the proportion of staff with performance and development plans in place
- Reduced vacancies, staff turnover and agency staff usage
- Increased graduate and training positions
- Increased peer workforce
- Increased workforce diversity
- Training and education opportunities that meet service needs
- Improved work, health and safety (WHS) key performance indicators
- Increased opportunities for health professionals to work at the top of their scope
- Decreased recruitment processing time

# Service Delivery:

*Accessible, high quality  
and culturally safe care  
is sustainably delivered*

## **Executive reporting leads:**

Operational Directors



## **Objectives:**

1. Quality care delivered in our facilities, in the community and in the home
2. Expansion of home, community and virtual service models
3. Culturally safe and inclusive services that improve equitable access and outcomes for our communities
4. Value and outcome focused services and care processes
5. Targeted preventive services and initiatives to reduce the burden of disease and promote health

## **What will success look like?**

- Increase in care delivered at home, in the community, virtually, and through multidisciplinary models
- Improved timeliness of care including in emergency departments and for planned surgery
- Reductions in hospital acquired complications, unplanned representations and readmissions
- Reduction in the number of patients medically ready for discharge but who have an extended hospital stay
- Reduction in patients discharging against medical advice and leaving the emergency department before receiving care, particularly for Aboriginal patients
- Increased rates of immunisation
- Increased proportion of staff completing Respecting the Difference Training
- Increased use of HealthPathways by health professionals to improve navigation of health services

# Patient Experience:

*Patients, carers and communities have positive experiences and outcomes that matter to them*

## **Executive reporting leads:**

Community Engagement Manager,  
Operational Directors



## **Objectives:**

1. Patients and carers to be empowered decision makers throughout their care
2. Service development and improvement that is informed by the lived experience of patients, carers and communities
3. Enhanced health and service literacy that supports people to engage with and access appropriate services
4. A positive culture that works with kindness and compassion

## **What will success look like?**

- Improved patient and consumer experience ratings
- Enhanced use of patient experience and outcome feedback to improve service delivery
- Further expand community engagement activities, with a focus on capturing currently under-represented sections of the community
- Increased number of consumer representatives involved in local committees, projects and planning activities
- Easy to understand health and service resources are available, including those targeted for priority population groups
- Improved health literacy environment that empowers people to engage with and access services

# Partnerships:

*Integrated services and health outcomes are enhanced through strategic and targeted partnerships*

## **Executive reporting lead:**

Director Planning, Partnerships and Allied Health



## **Objectives:**

1. Intentional collaboration across NSW Health and with other health service partners to add value and improve outcomes
2. Working with key service partners to promote and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities
3. Partnering with academic and education institutions to drive research, innovation and continuous improvement
4. Partnering with education institutions to expand training opportunities and build the future workforce

## **What will success look like?**

- Outcomes delivered through partnerships with Healthy North Coast, Mid North Coast LHD, Aboriginal Medical Services and academic and education institutions
- Improved shared care with primary care and Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF)
- Changes in population health measures including reducing smoking and use of e-cigarettes, reducing alcohol consumption and increasing physical activity rates
- Increased rates of screening including breast cancer and domestic violence screening
- Increased engagement in health promotion programs
- Increased research opportunities involving NNSWLHD
- Formalised emergency preparedness and response plans are in place with partners
- Delivery of actions under the Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs and Suicide Prevention Joint Regional Plan

# Efficiency and Sustainability:

*Our corporate processes  
are transparent, efficient,  
accountable and  
future-focused*

## **Executive reporting lead:**

Chief Financial Officer



## **Objectives:**

1. Optimised systems and processes to effectively and efficiently deliver, monitor and manage services
2. Efficient and transparent governance processes that empower decision making, ensure accountability, and enable regulatory compliance
3. Responsible resource and financial management that is reflective of service and community needs and enables service delivery within allocated funds
4. Commitment and action toward reducing our environmental footprint

## **What will success look like?**

- Budgets that are aligned to service delivery and expenditure that is aligned to budget
- Improved data capture and reporting of clinical activity
- Improved standardisation of equipment and clinical products
- Levels of financial delegation that empower decision-making in frontline services
- Climate risk assessments and action plans in place

# Assets and Technologies:

*Fit-for-purpose  
physical and  
digital assets  
and technologies*

## **Executive reporting lead:**

Director Corporate Services



## **Objectives:**

1. Contemporary and reliable digital assets and systems that best deliver care and corporate outcomes
2. Physical assets and technologies that are planned, well utilised and align to future service needs
3. Technologies that build capacity and staff capabilities to support data-driven insights, informed decision-making and system improvements

## **What will success look like?**

- Single Digital Patient Record rolled out as part of NSW Health program
- Delivery of the Grafton Base Hospital redevelopment
- Delivery of new key worker accommodation
- Improved data and analytics capability
- Asset Management and Service Plans in place to inform future service and infrastructure investment

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NNSWLHD Strategic Plan  
2025-2030

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through Northern NSW Local  
Health District, 2025.

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Information contained  
in this publication is  
based on knowledge and  
understanding at the time of  
writing, March 2025, and is  
subject to change.



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