
Operations and performance

3

Performance summary

NSW Health aims to help people stay healthy and to provide access to timely, high-quality, patient centred healthcare. Achieving these goals requires clear priorities, supportive leadership, and staff working together, underpinned by our CORE values.

Performance across the NSW Health System is assessed and monitored against a range of measures including the *NSW Health Performance Framework*, service agreements, and key corporate strategies such as *Future Health: Guiding the next decade of health care in NSW 2022–2032*.

The 2023–24 highlights and achievements for the NSW Health System are presented within the Operations and Performance section of this report. See pages X.

Service agreements

The NSW Ministry of Health is the system manager for the NSW Health System. Agreements are developed annually between the NSW Ministry of Health and each health entity to clearly set out the service delivery and performance expectations for funding and other support provided to them. Local health districts, specialty health networks, and NSW Ambulance sign service agreements; pillar organisations sign performance agreements; and support services sign statements of service.

Individual service agreements, performance agreements or statements of service can be found on local Health websites.

NSW Health Performance Framework

The *NSW Health Performance Framework* documents how the NSW Ministry of Health, as the system manager, monitors and assesses the performance of public sector health services to achieve expected service levels, financial performance, governance, and other requirements. All deputy secretaries and Ministry divisions work closely to ensure a coordinated approach is taken under the *NSW Health Performance Framework*.

The Framework clearly outlines the process of assessing the level of performance of each health service. It allows the NSW Ministry of Health to identify and acknowledge sustained high performance with the aim of sharing lessons across NSW Health.

Where underperformance is identified, the Framework sets out the process to escalate concerns and ensure support is available to remediate performance.

Where issues are identified, the NSW Ministry of Health will support health entities to remediate performance. Ministry branches, pillars, and support organisations that deliver policies or programs to achieve agreed key performance indicators, work collaboratively with organisations that have performed below targets for a sustained period in order to undertake performance recovery actions.

More information about the *NSW Health Performance Framework* is available on the NSW Health website.

Measuring Future Health

Future Health: guiding the next decade of care in NSW 2022–2032, is NSW Health's roadmap for how we deliver our services over the coming decade. Future Health is being delivered over three horizons. NSW Health completed the second year of Horizon One in June 2024, and planning is underway for Horizon Two.

The foundation for the delivery of Future Health is formed by six strategic outcomes. Ten-year roadmaps for each strategic outcome define success and guide the implementation of Future Health across all three horizons. The revised governance framework of Future Health was established in April 2023 to enable implementation, provide strategic oversight, and support decision making.

Quarterly progress reporting is conducted by the Enterprise Program Management Office on Future Health strategic outcomes. The reporting provides transparency on the implementation progress of Future Health and is also subject to quality assurance processes. Future Health actions are incorporated into the service agreements of statewide health services, shared services, and pillar organisations.

Strategic outcome 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.

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

Delivering key insights on patients' experiences with healthcare services

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) continued to deliver a reliable and comprehensive statewide picture of patients' experiences in NSW public hospitals – providing transparency for the public, while supporting accountability and improvements in NSW Health. In 2023–24, BHI delivered survey results faster, helped NSW Health staff make more effective use of results, and delivered insights into high-priority areas. These areas included virtual care and the experiences of rural, Aboriginal, linguistically diverse, and other priority patient populations. BHI also promoted the availability of key evidence-based patient experience measures relevant to priority Future Health topics, including discharge planning, patient safety, and health literacy.

Patient-reported measures to support personalised cancer care

The Cancer Institute NSW elevated the patient voice to further personalise cancer care through its patient-reported measures program. Patients provided insight into their outcomes and experiences, supporting timely discussions and the provision of tailored care at more than 20,000 health consultations. There are nine in-language surveys and two tailored, evidence-based tools available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The program is in place at 13 local health districts and 33 cancer services.

Breaking down barriers to access cancer clinical trials for the LGBTQ+ community

Through a grant from the NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Funding Pool, the Cancer Institute NSW is partnering with community organisation, ACON, to explore barriers to cancer clinical trial participation for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) population. LGBTQ+ people may find it more difficult to access cancer clinical trials for a variety of reasons. The project focuses on underlying issues for researchers, clinicians, and patients in collecting data and disclosing sexual identity, with the aim of improving access and increasing opportunities for participation in cancer clinical trials.

Implementation of Connecting, listening and responding: A Blueprint for Action – Maternity Care in NSW

Published in March 2023, *Connecting, listening and responding: A Blueprint for Action – Maternity Care in NSW* (the Blueprint) was developed through a public and targeted consultation process. The Blueprint aims to ensure that all women in NSW receive respectful, evidence-based, and equitable maternity care that improves experiences and health and wellbeing outcomes. NSW Health held a Blueprint implementation planning workshop with key stakeholders in October 2023.

To support implementation, the NSW Health Maternity Consumer Reference Group (MCRG) and Maternity Expert Advisory Group (MEAG) were established in November and December 2023. Initial implementation priorities have been identified by these groups. The MCRG and MEAG include midwifery and obstetric co-leaders, consumers with lived experience, and senior leaders from the NSW Ministry of Health, and pillars.

Hyperemesis Gravidarum Initiative

NSW Health in collaboration with key stakeholders implemented the Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) Initiative, a \$17 million commitment delivered over four years. The Initiative delivered projects focusing on evidence-based clinical care, education, research, and service integration between hospital, community, and primary care. Activities delivered in the four years included:

- publishing the first NSW Health clinical guideline for nausea and vomiting in pregnancy (NVP) and HG
- establishing and augmenting models of care in local health districts
- community packages for women with HG
- updates to HealthPathways which provide clinicians with locally agreed processes and referral information
- educating clinicians including emergency department staff, nurses, midwives, medical officers, general practitioners, rural generalists and pharmacists
- enhancing NVP/HG telephone service and dedicated website, consumer resources and campaigns to promote awareness and access to resources
- delivering innovation grants for local health districts
- awarded a research grant to determine the prevalence, impact, pathways of healthcare and costs of HG.

Engaging with consumers

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs established a new Consumer Engagement Coordinator role. This role, filled in February 2024, supports the value based healthcare program of work. The role is identified for a person with lived experience of alcohol and other drug treatment.

The Alcohol and Other Drugs Your Experience of Service (YES) survey pilot has been extended until June 2025. The survey measures patient experiences in local health districts and non-government organisation services. The survey pilot is being run at 20 sites across local health districts, hospital networks and non-government organisations in NSW. Initial results suggest that the Alcohol and Other Drug YES survey is feasible and acceptable to service providers.

Consumer and public engagement – bridging western and traditional Aboriginal ways

The Agency for Clinical Innovation advanced the Finding Your Way shared decision-making model, co-designed with Aboriginal communities. It resulted in 10 key capabilities being identified, and a learning map reflecting Aboriginal 8 Ways of Learning being developed. The model, fostering culturally appropriate care, empowers Aboriginal people to make informed healthcare decisions.

Training was delivered across several health services, including the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Broken Hill, Ngunya Aboriginal Health Service in Gosford, and Royal Rehab in Sydney. The learning map was published in the *International Journal of Indigenous Health*.

Multicultural and refugee health

In 2023–24 NSW Health continued to ensure the NSW Health System is accessible and responsive to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people. The *NSW Health Plan for Healthy Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities 2019–2023* and *NSW Refugee Health Plan 2022–27* are statewide policies for meeting the health needs of multicultural and refugee consumers in NSW.

In 2023–24 the Health and Social Policy Branch concluded the first NSW Refugee Health Flexible Fund which provided approximately \$5 million across a three-year period for 15 initiatives. Initiatives focused on creating and improving culturally appropriate models of care; improving access to in-language health resources and information; training for NSW Health staff; and empowering refugee patients, their families and carers to be involved in their care.

The NSW Ministry of Health conducted a review of the fund which found that it had successfully addressed goals and priorities in the *NSW Refugee Health Plan*, and it resulted in numerous benefits for people from refugee backgrounds and for NSW Health services and staff.

Supporting people from refugee backgrounds

Into 2023–24, the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service produced the *Developing health resources for people from refugee backgrounds: Best practice guide for NSW Health staff*. The Guide was published in June 2023.

By supporting NSW Health staff to develop resources that are in-language, relevant, appropriate, and culturally responsive to refugee communities, the Guide seeks to improve health outcomes for refugee communities.

This resource was a key deliverable of the Translated Health Resources for Refugee Communities Project funded by the NSW Ministry of Health to support priorities set out in the *NSW Refugee Health Plan 2022–2027*.

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

Elevating the patient and staff experience in emergency departments

The emergency department (ED) Patient Experience Officer is a non-clinical role that works in the ED waiting area to proactively communicate with patients and carers to keep them comfortable and informed of ED processes. Permanent funding for 86 full time equivalent roles across the state has been secured.

An independent evaluation of these roles by Charles Sturt University demonstrated that the officers:

- contribute to improved patient and staff experiences
- identify potential risks and prevent escalation of possible aggressive or violent situations
- when on shift, patients appear calmer and better able to engage with clinicians.

Your Experience of Service and Carer Experience Survey

The Your Experience of Service (YES) and Carer Experience Survey (CES) measure experience in NSW mental health services, in order to support service improvement activities. Annual reports for 2022–23 were released on the NSW Health website in November 2023. These showed that 75 per cent of consumers rated their overall experience as excellent or very good, an increase from 73 per cent in 2021–22. This increase was mainly due to improved experience in community mental health services. Sixty-seven per cent of carers reported an excellent or very good overall experience, with more positive experience reported in community settings (73 per cent) than in hospital settings (62 per cent).

New versions of the YES and CES surveys were released to include additional, more inclusive questions about gender and sexuality, and to ask about the amount of care received by telehealth. This will provide a better understanding of experience across diverse groups and further explore how the proportion of care provided by telehealth impacts experience. A YES/CES workshop was held in June 2024 to support local health districts and specialty health networks to share ideas and initiatives. Translated versions of the Community Managed Organisations version of YES were made available online in 35 community languages.

Understanding the experiences of linguistically diverse patients

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) helped inform improvements to culturally safe care by publishing *The Insights Series – Hospital care experiences for people who mainly speak a language other than English* report. This is the first in-depth analysis of linguistically diverse patients' experiences in NSW, drawing on feedback provided by more than 22,000 patients in BHI's Adult Admitted Patient Survey and Emergency Department Patient Survey from 2017 to 2022. The analysis includes trends in linguistically diverse patients' experiences over time, comparisons with those who mainly speak English, variations across local health districts, and drivers of positive experiences.

Cultivating kindness across NSW Health

Delivering personalised, high-quality care with kindness and compassion is a priority for NSW Health. World Kindness Day is used to continue an annual conversation about kindness and compassion in healthcare, with a focused week of events to build system capability in this area. Consumer and staff feedback showed that 93 per cent of participants felt more confident to champion kind and compassionate leadership, and identified strategies for all staff to bring kindness and compassion into the delivery of personalised and culturally safe care.

Supporting staff wellbeing

The Health Education and Training Institute developed and designed a new central resource hub to equip and support leaders and managers in all phases of their management journey, to embed positive, constructive, and inclusive collaborative work practices and provide opportunities for continuous learning.

The hub houses a dedicated wellbeing section that includes resources available to help staff stay resilient, cope with adversity, and manage stress. The hub will launch in mid-to-late 2024.

Strengthening system capability

A statewide learning network comprising of 19 NSW Government departments began a three-year partnership to strengthen safety and quality capability across the NSW Health System. This includes embedding the Safety and Quality Essentials Pathway learning program. The partnership includes testing and sharing flexible and innovative approaches to make learning accessible and meaningful to diverse clinical and non-clinical roles. In 2023–24, more than 15,600 NSW Health staff completed foundational-level learning; 1,925 completed an introduction to improvement science; 1,531 completed training to lead safety and quality; and more than 100 staff graduated from the 12-month Applied Safety and Quality Program.

1.3 Drive greater health literacy and access to information

Framing our approach to accessible communications

NSW Health is committed to driving greater health literacy and access to information for everyone. To build staff capability and ensure an inclusive and consistent approach to developing accessible communications across NSW Health, an accessible communications framework was established. The framework includes the *Accessible Communications Policy*, which outlines the principal steps and key considerations for producing accessible communication materials. An online resource hub that features a suite of resources to support staff in developing these materials was developed. A working group of subject matter experts from across the NSW Health System and two consumer representatives, as well as extensive engagement with key stakeholders and NSW Health consumers, helped to further inform the policy and online resource hub.

Improving cancer health literacy

The Cancer Institute NSW supported people diagnosed with cancer to access high-quality, evidence-based, and easy to understand cancer information to make informed decisions about their care. In 2023–24, more than 119,700 users accessed online patient information in 135,000 sessions.

More than 65,151 users accessed translated print, web, and audio-visual patient information across 46 community languages.

Cancer prevention campaigns for the whole community

The Cancer Institute NSW translated public education cancer prevention campaigns into priority languages to assist in driving behaviour change across multicultural communities, including:

- BreastScreen NSW campaign – translated into Mandarin and Cantonese and includes a video of Dr Tao Geng, a Mandarin-speaking GP
- Beat the Cravings and 16 Cancers anti-tobacco campaigns – translated into Arabic, Mandarin and Vietnamese
- bowel cancer screening social media campaign – translated into Arabic, Cantonese and Mandarin. Included videos of Dr Tao Geng, a Mandarin-speaking GP, and Dr Dominic Pak, a Cantonese-speaking GP
- Every Vape is a Hit to Your Health campaign – translated into simplified and traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Hindi and Arabic. The campaign involved influencers from Korean and Samoan backgrounds.

Support implementation of the Grants Administration Guide

NSW Health launched the Grants Administration Hub to support implementation of the *NSW Grants Administration Guide*. The Hub centrally locates policy and guideline documents and other resources to support grant managers comply with the Guide requirements.

The NSW Health Grants Administration Working Group is currently supporting the *Administration of NSW Health grant Funding for Non-Government Organisations* policy in line with the requirements of the updated Guide and other relevant policies.

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

Building healthcare staff capability

The Agency for Clinical Innovation's Partner Ring initiative increased staff capabilities in consumer engagement partnership. Since its launch in 2022, more than 50 sessions open to 112 staff members have been led. An evaluation of the initiative in 2023 reported participants increased essential skills for consumer partnership, adopted new mindsets, and benefitted from a supportive culture. The consumer-led approach bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and practice to foster evidence-based and safe engagement practices.

All About Me – gathering cultural patient information

The Providing Enhanced Access to Health Services project focused on using Electronic Medical Records (eMR) data to develop solutions to improve IT systems, processes, and practices for identifying, prioritising, and improving care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

This led to the development of the 'All About Me' eMR tile, co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families. The 'All About Me' tile is a feature in the notification menu on the eMR that gathers culturally important patient information, ensuring clinicians can deliver patient-centred and culturally appropriate health care. Aboriginal Health workers enter patient details in the tile, allowing consistent communication and care delivery.

Strategic outcome 2

Safe care is delivered across all settings

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.

2.1 Deliver safe, high quality reliable care for patients in hospital and other settings

Establishment of an Emergency Department Taskforce

In December 2023, the Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health announced the establishment of a taskforce to address emergency department (ED) wait times, access to care, and to explore innovative solutions to divert pressure from our hospitals.

The time-limited Taskforce first met in February 2024 and continues to meet monthly. The Taskforce brings together representatives from metropolitan, rural, and regional NSW, across a range of expert clinical representatives including nursing, medical, allied health, Aboriginal health, hospital executive, and NSW Ambulance.

The Taskforce provides an opportunity to make important changes that positively transform patient care in our EDs. The priority of the Taskforce is to enhance statewide collaboration, provide cohesive leadership, and to identify improvements for EDs in NSW.

A whole of health response to winter demand

The Whole of Health Program facilitated a coordinated approach to effective winter planning across NSW Health for the predicted increased activity across health facilities.

Local health districts and networks were supported to plan, develop, and submit strategies for their winter planning, with 38 per cent of strategies focused on patient flow improvement initiatives, and 29 per cent on out of hospital care and hospital avoidance.

The NSW Ministry of Health delivered a series of winter planning knowledge sharing and capability sessions including an International Winter Forum. The Forum was held in partnership with the Agency for Clinical Innovation, and more than 240 NSW Health clinical and operational staff attended the event.

The 2023–24 approach to winter planning was further refined with the evaluation of strategies and streamlined reporting. This has assisted learnings and successes to then be shared across the system.

More patients are receiving their planned surgery on time

There has been a reduction of more than 79 per cent in the number of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for planned surgery at the end of 2023–24, decreasing from 9,107 at 30 June 2023 to 1,859 at 30 June 2024.

NSW Health public hospitals have achieved this by:

- implementing models of care to improve surgery planning and patient flow
- establishing the Surgical Care Governance Taskforce which provided statewide leadership for surgical services in NSW
- increasing the capacity for surgery by extending theatre hours, increasing patient throughput, facilitating internal transfers and partnering with private hospitals
- formalising the process of transferring patients for their surgery between local health districts and specialty health networks
- pooling of surgical lists where same day surgery was implemented when clinically safe to do so
- providing patients with information and advice through the freecall NSW Surgery Access Line.

Urgent Care Services are helping reduce pressure on emergency departments

In partnership with primary health networks across the state, NSW Health is implementing 25 Urgent Care Services across NSW which saw more than 80,000 patients in 2023–24. These services deliver an alternative to going to an emergency department for people with urgent but not life-threatening illnesses and injuries.

Urgent Care Services are staffed by experienced healthcare professionals such as general practitioners, specialist doctors, physiotherapists and nurses. The services treat people with a wide range of illnesses and injuries in the community, so that in many cases, they avoid going to an emergency department altogether.

Allied Health COVID-19 workforce innovations reports

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NSW Health provided funding to support temporary allied health positions, which facilitated the development of new Allied Health-led Workforce Models. These innovations strengthened clinical care and addressed health system pressures. The models were evaluated, and two reports and a video have been delivered. The reports and video are available on the NSW Health website.

Many of the workforce models remain in place today as a result of their demonstrated value in delivering positive outcomes including improved patient flow, reduced hospital admissions, and positive patient experience.

Safety and quality indicators

The Patient Safety First Unit is liaising with specialty health networks and statewide services in their development of fit-for-purpose safety and quality indicators. Key highlights of this work included:

- drafting a suite of clinical quality metrics for 2024–25 with NSW Ambulance
- developing paediatric-sensitive measures with the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare
- progressing indicators reflective of the custodial setting with the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network.

Collaborating on patient safety

The Patient Safety First Unit has commenced quarterly briefings to NSW Health's peak safety and quality committee, the Clinical Risk Action Group, on high-level trends and results from the *Healthcare Complaints Commissions (HCCC) Quarterly Performance Report* and *Quarterly Complaints Snapshot Reports*. This increased monitoring and oversight enhances the way we can learn from HCCC matters and complaints trends.

The Lumos program

The Lumos program links de-identified patient records extracted from participating general practices to other patient records held by NSW Health. As of 1 July 2024, 750 general practices were participating in Lumos, representing 30.9 per cent of practices in NSW.

New insights about patient healthcare journeys and service delivery have been produced from Lumos data, which are published on the NSW Health website, and shared extensively with general practices, primary healthcare networks, and NSW Health stakeholders. The program's data has been a key information source for significant strategic initiatives in NSW Health such as Urgent Care Services.

Lumos is recognised as a national leader in primary and acute care data linkage and is a model for designing a similar national asset.

Safescript NSW: supporting clinical decision making and safety

SafeScript NSW continues to support more than 30,000 health practitioners by providing real-time information about a patient's prescriptions. Delivered in partnership with the NSW Ministry of Health, SafeScript NSW was made available statewide in May 2022. Now more than 70 per cent of applications are being submitted online via the platform. An approval management functionality was introduced in November 2023, allowing prescribers to:

- easily submit approval applications online
- track progress of the approval applications
- reduce overall turnaround time, where approvals may be granted immediately in some cases
- exit or cancel existing approvals.

This enhances patient care and reduces administration burden for clinicians.

Supporting clinicians to deliver the best outcomes

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs released a new *Psychosocial Interventions Practice Guide*. The Practice Guide summarises the guiding principles, professional practice, psychological processes, and psychosocial interventions used within alcohol and other drug treatment settings. It provides updated evidence on psychosocial interventions, guidance on responding to people with co-occurring concerns, and resources for education on alcohol and other drug service provision.

Piloting community access to opioid dependence treatment

A successful pilot of pharmacist administration of depot buprenorphine in community pharmacy settings during 2022–23 has increased access points for people receiving opioid dependence treatment. NSW Health partnered with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia to provide accredited training for depot buprenorphine administration for all NSW Community Pharmacists released in August 2023. As of 30 June 2024, there were 482 enrolments and 149 completions.

Expansion of the medical and forensic workforce responding to violence, abuse, and neglect

In September 2023, the NSW Government committed almost \$53 million over four years for *Medical and Forensic Workforce Plan* enhancement funding. This new funding will establish 48 full-time equivalent roles across the state.

This will expand and provide capacity-building to the sexual assault nurse examiners and the broader violence, abuse, and neglect medical and forensic workforce. These positions will enable comprehensive service coverage across NSW, including providing 24-hour integrated psychosocial, medical, and forensic crisis responses, and follow up medical and forensic care for victims of sexual assault, child physical abuse and neglect, and domestic and family violence.

NSW Health Child Safe Action Plan 2023–2027

NSW Health launched the *NSW Health Child Safe Action Plan* in 2023. This Plan outlines the actions we will take to implement the Child Safe Standards and support the safety of children in NSW Health services.

NSW Health has commenced implementation of the Plan. This includes delivering awareness raising and capability building activities, including five Community of Practice NSW Health Forums, online training to 188 staff, and a new Child Safe Hub of key resources. Local health districts are forming local governance mechanisms to support implementation of the Child Safe Standards and have seen strong engagement from Clinical Governance Units.

NSW Health Hospital Guardianship Program

The Whole of Health Program supports the NSW Hospital Guardianship Program, a joint NSW Government initiative between the Department of Communities, NSW Trustee and Guardian and Justice, and NSW Health. The program reduces the length of time patients spend in NSW hospitals waiting for guardianship matters to be heard.

The length of stay for patients waiting for guardianship matters reduced significantly during the period of 2019–20 to 2023–24, releasing 19,300 bed days each year over the period.

In addition to bed day savings, Health Education and Training Institute guardianship training modules were attended by NSW Health staff. Training has boosted staff capability and assisted them in improving local guardianship application processes.

Supporting the Mental Health Living Longer Project

The Mental Health Living Longer Project published findings examining mental health consumers' access to surgery, cervical and breast cancer screening; and an improved method for identifying self-harm presentations to emergency departments. Cancer screening rates for mental health service users are now included in routine cancer reporting. The project provides reports and site visits to support local health districts in planning and service improvement. Data showing lower vaccination rates and more vaccine-preventable hospitalisation is being used to increase access to free vaccination for mental health consumers in the 2024 flu season. The project won the 2023 ANZ Equally Well Research Impact Award.

Mental Health Patient Flow Knowledge Sharing Program

The Whole of Health Program delivered a structured program to support hospitals to improve patient flow and access to care for people presenting with mental health problems.

A mental health patient flow self-assessment was completed by local health districts and specialty health networks with adult acute mental health inpatient units. All districts and networks received a report detailing local priorities for improvement and a statewide summary enabling them to benchmark against their peers.

Sites were supported to design and implement local solutions through the Mental Health Patient Flow Knowledge Sharing Program. The virtual program delivered eight sessions across four weeks, highlighting available resources, showcasing local innovation, and facilitating local solution design. A total of 61 patient flow improvement strategies were implemented across 21 facilities. A virtual showcase held in December highlighted the work completed by the local health districts. Successful strategies were included in the Whole of Health Program resource library.

Breaking down barriers to cervical screening

Cancer Institute NSW promoted the self-collection cervical screening test through healthcare training and public education, to break down barriers to screening and boost participation rates.

More than 70 per cent of cervical cancers occur in women and people with a cervix who have never been screened, or are not up to date with their screening. NSW data shows that 22.39 per cent of all screening tests are now self-collected, with more than half being people who are overdue.

Value based cancer care

The Cancer Institute NSW improved access to colonoscopies for people with positive bowel screening results through direct access colonoscopy services in public hospitals. There are now 19 services in NSW, with another about to take referrals shortly, giving almost 90 per cent of NSW access to this service.

The Institute also 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. The 2023 *Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes Program Radiation Therapy report* highlights that 96 per cent of external beam radiation therapy courses delivered in NSW public facilities for early-stage breast cancer were hypofractionated.

Cancer treatments protocols

eviQ, a program of the Cancer Institute NSW, provides free evidence-based, consensus driven cancer treatment protocols to ensure everyone with cancer receives safe, quality cancer care. In 2023–24, the program:

- had more than four million web sessions
- produced 60 new cancer treatment protocols and clinical resources
- reviewed 256 existing protocols, clinical resources and patient information resources.

eviQ's *Anticancer Drug Dosing in Kidney Dysfunction* guideline recommendations on kidney function assessment and dosing recommendations were incorporated into more than 700 eviQ drug treatment protocols, across 59 anticancer drugs. This ensures there is a standardised approach to assessing kidney function in cancer patients.

Education for oncology professionals

eviQ Education, part of the Cancer Institute NSW eviQ program, provides healthcare professionals with online learning resources which aim to standardise and promote evidence-based best practice when caring for people with cancer. The website had more than 169,880 users in 2023–24. The eviQ Education team updated eLearning resources on central venous access devices, anti-cancer drug administration, and radiotherapy in childhood cancer.

The new Paediatric Anti-cancer Drug Administration Course received endorsement from the Australian and New Zealand Children's Haematology Oncology Group, and the Pharmacy Anti-cancer Drug Course was endorsed by the International Society of Oncology Pharmacy Practitioners. eviQ Education also produced a new resource to support health professionals to provide fertility preservation care to people with cancer.

Electronic Record for Intensive Care in Neonatal and Paediatric Intensive Care wards

The rollout of the Electronic Record for Intensive Care (eRIC) in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) wards was completed in May 2024. The program successfully deployed the solution to 342 beds across seven NICUs and three PICUs. The program delivered overall benefits through the digitisation of paper records, and also delivered measured qualitative improvements, such as:

- improved rate of documentation of patient goals and targets (up three per cent)
- reduction in adverse events due to reduction in medication prescription and administration errors (down 17 per cent and down 38 per cent respectively)
- improved utilisation of the discharge checklist (up 23 per cent).

Engage Outpatients – outpatient referral management

The Engage Outpatients program has deployed the digital referral management solution at 262 outpatient clinics spanning 14 hospitals and 6 local health districts (Sydney, Western Sydney, South Eastern Sydney, Illawarra Shoalhaven, Central Coast and Far West). The program has delivered 27 condition-specific eReferral forms, enabling general practitioners and primary care referrers to easily refer into selected NSW outpatient clinics. There have been 40,000 referrals processed through the electronic Referral Management System (eRMS), and 4 local health districts integrated the eRMS with their electronic medical record system.

Online applications for EnableNSW equipment programs

EnableNSW provides assistive technology and related services to people in NSW with specific, short term, or ongoing health needs to assist them to live safely at home. Enable Online went live in late 2023. It is a new, safe and secure self-service platform that allows NSW Health clinicians to browse more than 20,000 products in the equipment catalogue, submit equipment requests, and check the status of requests at any time.

The system has had a positive uptake, with a quarter of eligible clinicians now submitting applications online. Enable Online replaces previous paper-based and associated administrative processes, and supports more modern and flexible interactions with the EnableNSW support team.

Paediatric Service Capability Guideline released

In 2023–24 NSW Health released the new *Paediatric Service Capability (Paediatric Medicine and Surgery for Children) Guideline*. It describes the activity and complexity of clinical care that a paediatric service can safely provide in collaboration with supporting services. The new guideline assists NSW local health districts and specialty health networks to plan, design, and deliver safe, high-quality health services for children and young people across the state. All districts and networks are required to report on service capability of facilities that provide services to children and young people.

Delivered standardised nurse-initiated emergency care protocols

The Agency for Clinical Innovation launched the Emergency Care Assessment and Treatment (ECAT) program, which introduces standardised nurse-initiated emergency care across NSW. Up to June 2024, 130 emergency departments have implemented ECAT protocols, with others following shortly. The initiative included comprehensive education modules, a policy directive, and quality monitoring guides to ensure consistent best practice care. Monthly community of practice sessions supported staff to share experiences and lessons learned. The integration of ECAT protocols into electronic medical records facilitated efficient care delivery. The program has enhanced emergency care by improving patient and health staff experiences.

Voluntary assisted dying

Voluntary assisted dying became a lawful end-of-life option for eligible people in NSW on 28 November 2023. The NSW Ministry of Health worked closely with a broad range of stakeholders, including local health districts, to ensure that voluntary assisted dying is safe, accessible, compassionate, and aligns with legislation.

Patients and practitioners are supported by culturally responsive, accessible resources co-designed during implementation.

Voluntary assisted dying is accessible throughout NSW. Wherever possible, it has been embedded in usual care pathways, building on existing systems and processes to support sustainability.

2.2 Deliver more services in the home, community and virtual settings

Virtual care data framework

NSW Health recognises the importance of having a robust data framework to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of virtual services. The *Virtual Care Data Framework* will enable us to track key performance indicators, assess patient outcomes, and identify areas for improvement. By focusing on data-driven decision-making, we can ensure that our virtual services are meeting the needs of our communities and continually enhancing the quality of care provided. This approach will also help us demonstrate the impact of our initiatives, securing ongoing support and funding for further expansion and innovation in virtual healthcare delivery.

The Single Front Door initiative

The Single Front Door is a collaboration between NSW Health and healthdirect Australia. It connects NSW consumers with an unplanned, urgent health need to clinically appropriate, timely care through a 24/7 phone assessment, triage and referral service. The use of alternative referral pathways enables consumers with non-life-threatening needs to access care and safely avoid unnecessary emergency department (ED) presentations.

More than 478,000 calls were received from NSW consumers through the Single Front Door in 2023–24. More than 346,000 callers were assessed, triaged and referred to care, or provided advice to self-care at home, and less than one third of callers were referred to the emergency department or Triple Zero (000).

In 2024, as part of the ED relief package, we will expand and enhance the NSW Single Front Door as an enabler to support the single point of advice, assessment, triage and connection to care for people in NSW with unplanned non-life-threatening healthcare needs, safely diverting avoidable ED demand.

Additional care pathways available through the Single Front Door will include:

- virtualADULTS: statewide service providing ED replacement care, from 8am to 10pm 365 days
- virtualSPECIALIST: specialist medical support for clinicians (GP, UCS, RACF) to reduce ED transfers
- Mental Health Single Front Door: streamline statewide mental health assessment and triage via one entry point that integrates with existing virtual and local mental health service.

In 2023–24, the virtualKIDS and virtualGP Urgent Care Services were implemented statewide, and the NSW Urgent Care Service GP-led clinics commenced.

Expansion of virtualKIDS

In December 2023, the virtualKIDS Urgent Care Services program expanded statewide under the NSW Urgent Care Service. This initiative now serves families across NSW, and is designed to help keep children out of emergency departments, and provide care closer to home through remote access to audio-visual assessment by experienced paediatric nurses and medical staff.

virtualKIDS also offers specialist paediatric advice to clinicians in rural and regional hospitals. The service continues to grow, and supports the increased demand on health services seen during winter.

myVirtualCare

The myVirtualCare videoconferencing platform supported more than 150,000 virtual consultations conducted during the 2023–24 financial year. The platform provides patients in NSW with an easy and convenient way to access their clinical and social care providers by using one web link on any internet-enabled device.

There were 74 new clinical rooms established in the financial year, taking the total number of clinical rooms delivering care to 1,012.

The Patient Reported Experience Measure Survey analysed 16,959 responses and showed 96 per cent of patients rated virtual care as 'very good' or 'good'.

Providing new information about virtual care

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) reported new insights into virtual care in NSW. *Healthcare in Focus – Virtual care in NSW: Use and patients' experiences* illustrated patterns of virtual care use in recent years, including comparisons with other states and territories using Medicare Benefits Schedule data. It also explored around 20,000 patients' experiences of virtual care services with NSW public hospital outpatient clinics and general practitioners, including after discharge from hospital.

Most NSW patients had positive experiences with virtual care, and that it's helpful in key areas such as the coordination of their care. The report also shows that the more patients used virtual care, the more likely they were to rate their overall virtual care highly.

BHI will continue to survey patients through the statewide Virtual Care Survey and special questionnaire modules in other surveys, with results continuing to inform the evaluation of the *NSW Virtual Care Strategy 2021–2026*.

Establishing the virtual care exchange community

The Agency for Clinical Innovation Virtual Care Network established the Virtual Care Exchange Community of Practice in 2018 to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration among healthcare professionals, and continue their commitment to the *NSW Virtual Care Strategy*. This initiative supports virtual care adoption through tools, training, and resources. In 2023–24, the Virtual Care Central site received more than 150,000 visits, and 20 local initiatives were highlighted in the Spotlight on Virtual Care series. More than 3,000 members participated in the Virtual Care Network. The quarterly Virtual Care Exchange Forums, attended by 1,280 people, provided a platform for discussing innovative virtual care integration, with recordings accessible for ongoing learning and system-wide transferability.

Virtual clinical care for patients

The NSW Ambulance Virtual Clinical Care Centre (VCCC) is a secondary triage model of care. It has continued to expand and evolve, with recruitment and on-boarding activity continuing throughout 2023–24.

The VCCC conducted more than 68,000 secondary triage assessments to help manage high Triple Zero (000) call volumes. More than 18,500 of these patients were successfully referred to other healthcare services or provided advice to safely manage their condition at home. This helped reduce demand for ambulances and emergency department treatment, and improve patient safety and operational performance.

Supporting virtual care in Aboriginal communities

In a dedicated effort to enhance virtual care for Aboriginal communities, the NSW Health Virtual Care Unit partnered with the Centre for Aboriginal Health. Between October and November 2023, they visited six local health districts to connect with local stakeholders and understand the specific challenges and opportunities for virtual care in these communities.

The findings are documented in the report *Supporting Uptake of Virtual Care in Aboriginal Communities* which outlines next steps for embedding solutions tailored to support cultural safety and uptake of virtual care modalities for Aboriginal communities.

Evaluation of virtual care services

In 2023–24, the NSW Ministry of Health completed evaluations of statewide virtual care initiatives, including:

- economic evaluation of the NSW Telestroke service which showed a benefit in terms of significantly enhanced patient outcomes supported by effective and efficient use of resources
- impact assessment of the Virtual Care Accelerator (VCA), which established solid foundations for the ongoing uptake of virtual care across NSW Health, enhancing the system's capability and capacity to deliver virtual care. Patients generally had positive experiences using the VCA, particularly those in rural and remote areas who benefitted from time savings from not having to travel to appointments
- the early impact stocktake, and analysis of Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) found generally favourable views of RPM with opportunities to improve standardisation, integration, and identification of patients. The final report has been distributed to the Virtual Care Steering Committee for key findings to be actioned where appropriate.

The results of these evaluations have informed policy decisions on future directions of the initiatives and contributed to shaping the continued implementation of the *NSW Virtual Care Strategy*.

Uplift of Hospital in the Home services

Across the state there is an expansion of Hospital in the Home (HiTH) services which aims to enhance hospital avoidance strategies, and improve the performance of these services through the use of virtual enablers, such as video conferencing and remote patient monitoring.

Embedding virtual care into HiTH models brings significant opportunities. Developing hybrid HiTH models, where the option for virtual care is provided when it is safe and clinically appropriate, can further expand HiTH's traditional remit.

The initiative addresses system-wide challenges in transitioning existing HiTH services to virtual modalities, including the need for IT equipment, change management support, and model development, and has demonstrated capability to expand current HiTH services.

Alcohol and other drug diversion programs

The Early Drug Diversion Initiative (EDDI) provides on-the-spot fines instead of going to court for low-level drug offences, commenced on 29 February 2024 and is available statewide. Recipients of the fine can elect to complete an alcohol and other drug intervention by phone as a means of resolving their fine. NSW Health fund St Vincent's Health Network to provide the statewide EDDI health intervention service and is part of the interagency monitoring group overseeing implementation.

The Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment (a voluntary, pre-plea program for adults in the Local Court who have issues related to their alcohol and other drug use) has been expanded to 11 additional courts, and 10 existing courts are now accepting alcohol as the principal drug of concern (as well as other drugs). Further site expansion and enhancements are in progress.

The Sydney Drug Court Program has expanded its sitting days commencing in February 2024. The Drug Court Program provides an alternative to prison for eligible participants with drug dependencies that have committed certain crimes.

Early intervention through alcohol and other drug programs

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs has awarded nine grants to new youth-specific alcohol and other drug services. These include counselling and day rehabilitation in regional and rural NSW, and one residential and withdrawal management service in Newcastle under the Noffs Foundation.

New, integrated, wrap-around services to support people with harmful substance use have been funded and are being operationalised, including 12 new Alcohol and Other Drug Hubs, 5 new post-custodial support services, 3 new Safe Assessment Units, and a new child and adolescent inpatient unit.

The National Drug Alcohol Research Centre has been contracted to develop an Alcohol and Other Drug Primary Prevention and Early Intervention Framework. Adult and youth consultations are underway in regional and rural NSW on the PreVenture program and supporting adaptation from substance use. PreVenture is an evidence-based prevention program that uses brief, personality-focused workshops to promote mental health and delay substance use among youth.

Patient referral pathways

The NSW Ambulance Integrated Care Program in partnership with the NSW Ministry of Health have continued to identify priority referral pathways for development. A referral pathway supports NSW Ambulance clinicians to refer patients to a specific health service within the community or local health district, that is appropriate to the clinical need of the patient. In 2023–24, an additional 32 referral pathways went live doubling the number of formalised referral pathways to 64. An additional 21 pathways are in development.

Supporting access to cancer multidisciplinary teams

The Cancer Institute NSW supported people diagnosed with cancer to navigate the health system and find cancer care services through its online directory, Canrefer. This year, Canrefer helped more than 227,000 users find the right cancer specialist, multidisciplinary cancer care team, and treatment centres.

Increase in funding to Women's Health Centres

The NSW Government has provided extra funding of \$34.3 million over four years to boost services at 19 Women's Health Centres in NSW. This is in addition to the existing budget of \$45.6 million over four years. These centres support more than 50,000 women across NSW each year with person-centred healthcare. Women in vulnerable situations are supported with their physical and mental health, and sexual and reproductive health. Centres also offer preventative health classes, events and support groups.

The increased funding enables centres to:

- offer healthcare and counselling services to more women
- reduce waitlists for counselling appointments
- adapt services to emerging demographic trends and population growth
- increase staff numbers.

Streamlining care for children with behavioural issues and/or ADHD in regional NSW

In 2023–24, Hunter New England Local Health District and Western NSW Local Health District implemented an enhanced model of care for children with behavioural issues and/or ADHD. A multidisciplinary team that provides assessment and diagnosis is being trialled. Paediatricians focus on providing care where it adds most value, optimising skills of other clinicians and enabling co-management with general practitioners. The service aims to improve timeliness of assessments and treatment for children, and the capacity to see more children. The independent evaluation of these pilot sites is due in December 2024.

Enhanced employment outcomes for brain injury patients

The Vocational Intervention Program (VIP) helps people with brain injuries return to work through partnerships between community brain injury rehabilitation services and local vocational rehabilitation providers. In 2024, the Agency for Clinical Innovation released four new toolkits for clinicians, vocational providers, people with brain injuries, and employers. These toolkits support all stakeholders to make a successful return to work. VIP supports early intervention, collaboration, and tailored support, leading to improved employment and wellbeing for clients. A new community of practice brought together clinicians, vocational providers, and funders to ensure sustainable vocational rehabilitation practices across NSW.

Out of Hospital Care program

The Out of Hospital Care program is a key patient flow strategy to support NSW public hospitals. 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.

Eligible patients were provided with immediate access to care when discharged from NSW public hospitals, or when a person is identified at risk of an avoidable admission.

In the 2023–24 financial year the program delivered 25,065 packages across NSW. This included:

- 14,523 ComPacks
- 5,277 Safe and Supported at Home (SASH) packages
- 5,265 End of Life packages.

2.3 Connect with partners to deliver integrated care services

NewGen Matrix project

A 2022 review of the NSW Ambulance Patient Safety Distribution Unit identified opportunities to further enhance a system-wide approach to patient flow in an environment of increasing demand. Three of the nine review recommendations were linked to the upgrade of the NSW Health Patient Allocation Matrix.

NSW Health has begun working with stakeholders to co-design and implement a new, upgraded Statewide NSW Health Patient Allocation Matrix (called "NewGen Matrix"). It will integrate real-time data and advanced decision support. This will help empower paramedics to make even more informed choices about patient destinations; supports timely and appropriate care delivery; and improved outcomes for patients and the statewide approach to patient distribution.

NSW Primary Health Networks – NSW Health Joint Statement

NSW Health, NSW Primary Health Networks (PHN), and the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care continued to partner on the implementation of the NSW PHN-NSW Health Joint Statement. The Statement is a commitment to work together as one health system to deliver equitable and person-centred healthcare.

In 2023–24, the partners implemented their first priority action – implementing a joint governance mechanism for each NSW local health district and PHN partner. This will support joint planning and joint local governance; and enhance collaboration, coordination, and integration of care services.

The Specialist Trans and Gender Diverse Health Service

NSW Health provided \$4.9 million for the delivery of an evidence-based, coordinated, statewide Specialist Trans and Gender Diverse Health Service (TGD Health Service). The TGD Health Service delivers any single or combination of social, psychological, behavioural, or medical interventions designed to explore, support, and affirm an individual's gender identity.

The TGD Health Service is delivered through two specialist hubs. The Rural and Regional Hub was opened in 2021 at Maple Leaf House by the Hunter New England Local Health District. The Sydney Metropolitan Hub operates at two sites, including The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network for young people under 16 years, and the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's new community-based site, True Colours, for young people from 16 years (scheduled to open in mid-2024).

To support implementation, NSW Health has published the *Framework for the Specialist Trans and Gender Diverse Health Service for People Under 25 Years*.

2.4 Strengthen equitable outcomes and access for rural, regional and priority populations

Delivering on the NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan

The *NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan Progress Snapshot 2022–23*, published in February 2024, provided an update on work undertaken to improve health outcomes and access to healthcare for people living in rural, regional, and remote NSW.

Achievements included more healthcare staff in regional areas – including an increase in nurse practitioners; an increase of new patients accessing the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme; and a growing up-take of rural and regional health career scholarships.

The Plan will be evaluated at 3, 5 and 10 years. The first evaluation is planned for late 2025.

Response to Rural Health Inquiry recommendations

NSW Health has been monitoring the implementation of all 44 recommendations of the Rural Health Inquiry through ongoing engagement with branches, pillars, health organisations, and local health districts.

An independent review was commissioned to report on progress and developments of the implementation of recommendations in 2023. This review was provided to the NSW Parliament's Portfolio Committee No.2 – Health in July 2023.

Of the recommendations, 25 have been completed, with significant work underway to implement the remaining 19 recommendations. Many of the remaining recommendations are on track for completion in 2024.

Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme Baseline Report

The *Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS) Baseline Monitoring and Evaluation Report* is the baseline analysis of multiple data sources to report on the scheme's effectiveness.

The Report includes data analyses for six key evaluation questions that measure if IPTAAS is improving access to healthcare for NSW residents. The Report makes 11 recommendations for improvements to IPTAAS – many of which have been completed. These recommendations include simplifying the application process, expanding eligible services to include specialised allied health clinics, and further promotion of the scheme to targeted audiences.

Evaluation activities included: a client survey; a community awareness survey; an EnableNSW online survey.

Newly funded medical positions in regional and rural NSW

New NSW Health funding for regional and rural NSW resulted in 15 new intern positions and 7 post-graduate fellows employed across 8 regional and rural local health districts from February 2024. Fourteen intern, 3 post-graduate fellow, and 2 post-graduate second year doctor positions have already been filled. Further funding will provide an additional 30 new interns and 45 post-graduate second year 2 doctors working in regional NSW, commencing from 2025, 2026 and 2027.

These positions cover a range of specialties and enhance the services and workforce available in these districts, as recommended by the Rural Health Inquiry.

Understanding the experiences of rural patients

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) informed efforts to improve the healthcare experiences of rural and regional patients by publishing the report, *Survey results – Patients' experiences of emergency care in small rural hospitals in 2023*. More than 5,000 patients provided feedback about their care in one of 81 small rural public hospitals between January and March 2023. The results showed that 73 per cent of patients said, overall, the emergency care they received from small rural hospitals was 'very good', and 21 per cent said it was 'good'. Detailed results were published in supplementary data tables and on the BHI Data Portal.

Staff deployments

The NSW Health Central Resource Unit provides nurses, midwives, and allied health staff opportunities to travel and work at hospitals and health services that have a short-term need for their skills and experience. Deployments are between 2 and 13 weeks. The Unit was established in May 2023 to deliver a centrally coordinated strategy to assist with the COVID-19 workforce recovery program, and 154 deployments took place in the reporting year.

The Unit will continue to grow and support a pipeline of deployable health professionals across the system.

Realising significant efficiencies and better outcomes for rural, regional and priority populations.

Primary School Mobile Dental Services delivers more care to priority populations

The Primary School Mobile Dental Services is now delivered by 11 local health districts. This now includes an additional four rural, regional, and remote districts, supporting service to children disadvantaged by geographic distance from a fixed clinic.

In 2023–24, the program was offered to 90,263 students across 335 schools of which 85 per cent were schools with a high rate of disadvantage. Of the 31,217 patients treated, 3,213 were Aboriginal and 3,560 spoke a language other than English.

This program is committed to providing increased access to dental services to disadvantaged children by prioritising schools with the highest level of disadvantage. More than 55 per cent of children seen had irregular dental visiting patterns, which includes 18 per cent of children who had never seen a dentist.

Improving refugee and asylum seeker access to oral health care

The Refugee and Asylum Seekers (RAS) program is delivered by the Centre for Oral Health Strategy in collaboration with oral health services, multicultural health, and NSW refugee health services in six local health districts.

In 2023–24, the program offered 9,975 appointments to 1,496 RAS patients with 7,933 appointments attended; and 4,464 treatments and 1,478 oral health kits were provided. Four of these appointments were with interpreter services. Trauma informed care training sessions were accessed by 250 oral health staff.

This program enabled local health districts to provide appropriate support to RAS patients, considering local contexts, needs, and capacity. This resulted in better patient experience, with effective culturally appropriate dental care, increased attendance and completion rates.

Improving cancer screening awareness in refugee communities

The Cancer Institute NSW continued the Refugee Cancer Screening Project, which aims to improve cancer screening awareness in refugee communities from the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. This year:

- five men and seven women trained as ‘champions’
- 20 interventions improving cancer literacy and participation were implemented, reaching more than 2,000 people
- project learnings were shared at conferences.

The Cancer Institute NSW is also supporting BreastScreen NSW Greater Southern Murrumbidgee to improve breast screening participation in Bhutanese and Congolese women. Community members have been trained as cultural navigators and 30 women have participated in breast screening since the project started.

Cancer education in multicultural communities

In 2023–24, the Cancer Institute NSW educated community members spanning 22 culturally and linguistically diverse groups about cervical, breast and bowel cancer screening; and healthy modifiable behaviours to prevent cancers. The also supported 15 multicultural community education grants to government and non-government agencies, which delivered more than 92 community education sessions.

The Cancer Institute NSW also provided cancer screening and prevention refresher training to 25 bilingual community educators and cultural support workers already delivering programs.

Improving access to cervical cancer screening for priority populations

Cancer Institute NSW continued to cover pathology costs of cervical screening tests performed by women’s health nurses, who often engage women experiencing barriers to cervical screening from priority populations.

The Cancer Institute NSW, through Family Planning Australia, provided training to 202 midwives and 87 Aboriginal health workforce members to promote cervical screening to pregnant women and Aboriginal people with a cervix.

They also hosted screenings of the World Health Organisation’s Conquering Cancer film, showing that cervical cancer is preventable. Nine events were held with 220 attendees, including health workers, and women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

2.5 Align infrastructure and service planning around the future care needs

Effective and sustainable capital planning

The NSW Ministry of Health continues to work on strengthening service and capital planning processes focused on the future care needs of NSW communities. In 2023–24, a range of guidelines and processes were updated to improve the guidance on supporting service planning that informs capital investment proposals. These included updating guides for both early options development and analyses in service planning. The capital investment proposal template was updated with sections on service planning and recurrent cost impact to help improve the quality of submissions.

Strategic outcome 3

People are healthy and well

Investment is made in keeping people healthy to prevent ill health and tackle health inequality in our communities.

3.1 Prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from pandemic and other threats to population health

Partnering to make immunisation everyone's business

The *NSW Immunisation Strategy 2024–2028* was released in March 2024. The Strategy provides a framework for NSW Health and its partners to improve vaccine access and uptake, and reduce the impact of vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs) on individuals and communities in NSW. It identifies six key priority areas for action to sustain or improve immunisation rates among children, young people and adults, and emphasises the need for immunisation against VPDs through all stages of life. The Strategy highlights the need to address inequities in knowledge, access, and uptake across the population to maximise the benefits of immunisation for all.

Statewide policy development to ensure NSW Health preparedness for emergency response

The *NSW Health Services Functional Area Supporting Plan* (NSW HEALTHPLAN) was reviewed and updated to support the *NSW State Emergency Management Plan*. The Plan describes the whole of health emergency management arrangements to ensure that health resources in NSW are effectively and efficiently coordinated to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

The NSW HEALTHPLAN was endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee in June 2024 following extensive consultation with the health system and key partner agencies.

Emergency management strategy

NSW Ambulance established an Emergency Management Unit to ensure a coordinated capability exists in the preparation for, response to, and recovery from emergencies across the state. The Unit has incorporated a lessons management framework that seeks to build a culture of continuous improvement in emergency management across the organisation.

Public health emergency response preparedness

A public health preparedness unit and statewide public health emergency management operations network was established to support the NSW Health protection network in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from major public health incidents and emergencies. To support this, the *Public Health Emergency Response Preparedness* policy directive was published in February 2024.

An interagency avian influenza preparedness and response exercise was held in June 2024 to test coordination functions. The results helped to inform further work underway to scope emergency management capabilities and training needs for the public health network.

Critical Intelligence Unit

In September 2023, the COVID-19 Critical Intelligence Unit (CIU) transitioned to a permanent structure which provides rapid, evidence-based insights about clinical innovation. Since then, more than 50 high-level evidence-synthesis products and more than 300 evidence-based responses were produced. These products supported evidence-informed decision-making, policy and strategy development, clinical practice guidance, and responses to key parliamentary and special inquiries.

CIU maintains three living evidence tables online, focused on artificial intelligence, reducing surgical waitlists, and long COVID. The CIU weekly summary provides updates to more than 2,000 subscribers on clinical innovations that have the potential to change clinical practice and how we deliver care.

Infection Prevention and Control Response and Escalation Framework

The Clinical Excellence Commission developed the *NSW Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Response and Escalation Framework* to guide NSW Health facilities in mitigating COVID-19 transmission risk.

The evidence-based framework, built on pandemic and emergency response models to inform endemic controls, has been embedded to form ongoing IPAC risk management controls for communicable diseases.

The IPAC Framework adopts a foundational level approach to ensure the application of robust IPAC practices as a baseline, with the ability to escalate and enhance IPAC strategies informed by local epidemiology, experience, and risk factors. An evaluation found 97 per cent of the system uses the framework to apply local IPAC risk levels.

3.2 Get the best start in life from conception through to age five

NSW Health First 2000 Days Framework and the whole of NSW Government Brighter Beginnings initiative

In 2023–24 NSW Health continued to implement the *NSW Health First 2000 Days Framework* and the whole of NSW Government Brighter Beginnings initiative. This will improve health and development outcomes for all children, giving them the start that they need to thrive now and in the future.

NSW Health established eight additional sites of the evidence-based Sustaining NSW Families Nurse Home Visiting program; and commenced implementation of the Pregnancy Family Conferencing program in nine rural and regional local health districts. NSW Health worked with the Department of Education to provide more than 3,000 health and development checks for four-year-olds in preschool settings across NSW.

Expansion of the Newborn Bloodspot Screening Program

NSW Health currently screens 33 of the 34 target conditions agreed for screening nationally.

In 2023, NSW Health received \$8.24 million in funding over four years from the Australian Government to expand the Newborn Bloodspot Screening (NBS) Program. NSW Health is working closely with the Commonwealth, states and territories on achieving a national agreed list of conditions consistently screened by NBS programs and to include new conditions recommended for implementation by Australia's Health Ministers in the NSW program.

Reducing the impact of syphilis in pregnancy

NSW Health strengthened its syphilis response through strategic initiatives and increased sector engagement. This included collaboration with NSW Sexual Health InfoLink, public health units, and clinics to enhance case detection, partner notification, and treatment.

The new *Syphilis in Pregnancy and Newborns Policy Directive* was released in October 2023. It reaffirmed the elimination of congenital syphilis as a priority for NSW Health. The policy directive introduces a new universal antenatal syphilis screen at 26 to 28 weeks of pregnancy and other guidance for managing and treating syphilis in pregnancy. Additionally, the Centre for Population Health funded ASHM to create online training modules for midwives and clinicians, launched in September 2023.

Supporting domestic violence routine screening practices

Implementation of the *Domestic Violence Routine Screening (DVRS) Policy Directive* is well underway. Activities to promote new policy guidance and requirements, enhance the safety and efficacy of screening, and support workforce confidence have commenced.

The NSW Ministry of Health participated in the revision of the statewide DVRS training package; developed a mandatory targeting pro forma and workforce advice to implement a new statewide DVRS mandatory training flag; and provided consultation and implementation guidance to local health districts and services. The NSW Ministry of Health also engaged with and approved multiple services' opting in to deliver DVRS for the first time, including sexual health, brain injury, and dental health services.

Access to alcohol and other drug treatment and care for women, children and families in need

The Substance Use in Pregnancy and Parenting Services has been expanded in nine local health districts, and one new service was established in Northern NSW Local Health District. The service aims to improve outcomes for women and their children affected by drug or alcohol use.

Three new alcohol and other drug (AOD) day rehabilitation services for parents with dependent children commenced at The Buttery in Northern NSW; Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services on the Central Coast; and Karralika Programs in Southern NSW.

The NSW Ministry of Health released a competitive grant opportunity for not-for-profit, non-government organisations to deliver AOD treatment services to improve the health, social, and emotional wellbeing of priority populations. Access to residential treatment services for women and families has expanded with grants to Waminda to establish a new residential rehabilitation and withdrawal service for Aboriginal women and children on the NSW South Coast; and Odyssey House to deliver AOD residential services for parents with children at the Family Recovery Centre.

Reducing smoking and vaping

NSW Health continues to support a range of anti-smoking and vaping initiatives across the state, including:

- implementing the policy directive – *Reducing the effects of smoking and vaping on pregnancy and newborn outcomes*
- delivering the No Smoking means No Vaping resources to raise public awareness of smoke-free areas, including releasing Aboriginal-specific collateral and posters
- finalising and promoting the *Guide to Support Young People to Quit E-Cigarettes* in response to increasing concerns about the harms of e-cigarette use among young people
- delivering the NSW Health vaping toolkit, providing evidence-based resources to support parents, teachers and health professionals. The toolkit included animations and factsheets that were co-designed with, and for, Aboriginal young people.

3.3 Make progress towards zero suicides recognising the devastating impact on society

Delivery of Towards Zero Suicides Bilateral Agreement initiatives

The NSW Ministry of Health and the Agency for Clinical Innovation have continued to work closely with local health districts and specialty health networks to implement local suicide care pathways. This includes supporting access to Safe Havens, suicide prevention outreach teams, and aftercare services for people experiencing suicidal distress.

Using data for Towards Zero Suicides

The NSW Suicide Monitoring System (SuMS) produces data and supports partnerships aimed at reducing deaths by suicide in NSW. Actions in 2023–24 included:

- completion of an independent evaluation of SuMS to ensure that its analysis, reporting, and engagement processes met the needs of stakeholders
- development and implementation of improved reporting to districts, networks and their partner organisations involved in suicide prevention
- established the SuMS report user group to provide technical and lived experience expertise in the development of NSW suicide analysis, reporting, and communications
- held a forum in April 2024 for local health districts, specialty health networks, and partner organisations to network, share resources, and support efforts in using SuMS data for suicide prevention.

Zero Suicide in Care training

The Health Education and Training Institute completed the design and development of Zero Suicide in Care training and educational materials for NSW Health employees. The materials include tailor-built resources, eModules, and workshops developed for delivery within local health districts and specialty health networks. The training materials have been tailored to multiple stakeholder groups within NSW Health, including clinicians inside and outside of the mental health space, and non-clinical NSW Health staff, leaders, and managers.

Adult Survivors Program statewide implementation

Phase one of the statewide implementation of the Adult Survivors Program has progressed. All local health districts and the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network were provided funding for key program positions. To inform the development of a statewide program model and its local implementation, eight local health districts are trialling a variety of workforce options.

To support the statewide implementation, a community of practice has been established; a workforce forum delivered; and individualised support was provided to districts in partnership with the Education Centre Against Violence.

NSW Ambulance health and wellbeing strategy

NSW Ambulance continued the rollout of the five-year strategy. The 2023–24 highlights included:

- rollout of psychological first aid training modules
- launch of the Stable Ground pilot (a portal developed with The University of Sydney to support staff with substance abuse)
- upskilling peer support officers and chaplains, including refining role accountabilities
- upskilling domestic violence referral officers.

3.4 Support healthy ageing ensuring people can live more years in full health and independently at home

Mid-term evaluation of NSW Older People's Mental Health (OPMH) Service Plan 2017–2027

NSW Health completed an independent mid-term evaluation of the *NSW Older People's Mental Health (OPMH) Service Plan 2017–2027*. The evaluation found that OPMH community and inpatient services have been successful in delivering relative equity of access to services, and high levels of consumer and carer satisfaction with OPMH services, including from culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal consumers.

Key areas of progress include:

- the expansion of mental health-residential aged care partnership services
- improved access to NSW Health community living support programs
- targeted older people's suicide prevention initiatives
- and service response improvements for people with extreme behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia.

3.5 Close the gap by prioritising care and programs for Aboriginal people

NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2024–34

The *NSW Aboriginal Health Plan* was developed in collaboration with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW. Its implementation will enable Aboriginal people in NSW to achieve the highest possible levels of health and wellbeing. The vision of the Plan is sharing power in system reform to achieve growth, transformation and sustainability. The Plan was informed by a representative Advisory Committee to support its focus on equity. The Priority Reform areas of Closing the Gap are included as enablers of its five Strategic Directions. The Plan was launched on 26 August 2024.

Central West NSW Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Program

In 2023–24 the Central West NSW Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Program received approval for funding, specifically to increase client access to local, social and emotional wellbeing supports and clinical mental health services. The funding is also to strengthen partnerships, referral pathways, and coordinated care between Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and the Western NSW Local Health District. The program is delivered through a partnership of four local ACCHOs and governed by a working group consisting of representation from participating ACCHOs, Aboriginal Peak organisations, the Western NSW Local Health District Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Unit, the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Unit, and NSW Ministry of Health.

Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Model of Care grants program

The Aboriginal Mental Health Models of Care initiative provided grants to nine Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and two grants to local health districts. The grant recipients represent rural, remote, and metropolitan-based services in NSW. Projects currently underway include shared employment models, workforce development, clinical service delivery, and care navigation. Evaluation of the program is expected to begin in late 2024.

Preventing fetal alcohol spectrum disorder

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs developed resources for health professionals supporting Aboriginal pregnant women to have conversations around alcohol and pregnancy. This included a resource toolkit, delivery of a webinar with a panel of experts, and a podcast developed with the Royal Australasian College of General Practitioners completed in 2023–24.

3.6 Support mental health and wellbeing for our whole community

Co-design of the Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program

The \$691.8 million Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program is supporting mental health care reform in NSW. In 2023–24 construction commenced on new Mental Health Inpatient Units at Broken Hill, Concord and Tamworth, and a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit at Nepean. The Freshwater Mental Health Intensive Care Unit was completed, and construction is nearing completion at Blacktown Mental Health Recovery Centre and Charlestown Residential Eating Disorder Unit – the first facility of its kind in NSW. The facilities were co-designed with consumers, their families, staff, and clinicians to meet consumer needs and create clinical spaces that feel safe, welcoming, and home-like.

These improvements will increase service capacity across NSW, and enhance the provision of therapeutic and recovery-focused services through redesigned contemporary consumer and carer-focused care.

Newly funded psychiatry positions for junior medical staff

New funding provided to support psychiatry in NSW delivered 15 new post graduate year two positions in psychiatry from February 2024. The 15 new positions provided exposure to an additional 75 prevocational doctors each year in expanded settings, including community, inpatient, and child and adolescent psychiatry across the state. These positions will enhance the services and workforce available in these districts, and support the delivery of care in mental health services in NSW. The positions will also provide increased exposure for prevocational doctors in psychiatry, with the aim to increase entry in psychiatry training.

3.7 Partner to address the social determinants of ill health in our communities

Hepatitis C testing

The Centre for Population Health partnered with NSW Health Pathology to validate Dried Blood Spot (DBS) testing for Hepatitis C and collected 1,300 samples. This data will be submitted to the Therapeutic Goods Administration in 2024.

The Centre for Population Health partnered with the Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs to produce the *Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Services Guidance Document* that provides a standardised approach for routine delivery of care in AOD settings. The *NSW HCV Testing Framework*, launched in December 2023, informs local health districts about the suite of HCV testing methods available in NSW. This includes venepuncture, DBS and point-of-care tests.

HIV prevention and testing

The Centre for Population Health delivered a campaign to raise awareness of HIV testing among overseas-born, Mandarin-speaking, non-gay identifying men who have sex with men. The campaign generated more than 16,000 visitors to an in-language webpage for HIV testing information.

In May 2024, the Centre for Population Health launched MyTest – a HIV self-testing pilot project. The project aims to increase access to community-based self-testing within greater western Sydney and regional NSW. MyTest dispenses free HIV self-test kits to those who self-identify as at-risk of HIV via vending machines, with more than 110 tests dispensed since launching.

Sexually Transmitted Infections Strategy

In collaboration with Family Planning NSW and the Sexual Health in Schools Advisory Committee, NSW Health developed a range of high-level guidance and policy documents on how to effectively deliver sexuality, and sexual health education in NSW schools.

The NSW Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Programs Unit implemented two social marketing campaigns: Play Safe, and Take Blaktion. The campaigns aimed to reduce the incidence of STIs among young people aged from 16 to 29 years and reached more than four million people.

MyCheck, a telehealth blood borne virus (BBV) and STI testing service, was scaled up in five sexual health clinics. The program enables asymptomatic clients to navigate BBV and STI testing directly with a pathology collection service close to where they live or work.

Supporting children and young people to develop respectful relationships

NSW Health invested more than \$1.5 million in programs to increase awareness of respectful relationships, sexual consent and safety, and to prevent child sexual abuse and domestic, family and sexual violence. These programs are aimed at building the capability and confidence of children and young people to develop and engage in respectful relationships and to negotiate consent.

As of April 2024, approximately 250 participants participated in the Full Stop Australia and National Association for Prevention Child Abuse and Neglect training. Participants spanned: NSW Health; NSW Department of Education; NSW Department of Communities and Justice; Youth Justice NSW; Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations/Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations; and early childhood and non-government sectors.

Stewardship of health, housing and homelessness interface

The Mental Health Branch leads stewardship of the NSW Health housing and homelessness portfolio through improving partnerships, integration, and best practice at the health, housing and homelessness interface.

NSW Health continues to report against the No Exits from Government Services Into Homelessness Framework and implement the Housing and Mental Health Agreement 2022 (HMHA 22), of which NSW Health is a co-signatory.

In 2023–24, NSW Health finalised the HMHA 22 Service Delivery, Governance, and Monitoring and Reporting Frameworks and commenced statewide implementation of HMHA 22 at both district and local levels.

NSW Health collaborated with Homes NSW to develop the *NSW Homelessness Strategy 2024–2034*, aimed at making homelessness brief, rare, and non-recurring. In 2023–24 Independent Community Living Association was funded \$500,000 to continue Project Embark 2 to support people with psychosocial disability experiencing or at risk of homelessness to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and build the capacity of homelessness services in relation to the NDIS. Street Side Medics were funded \$200,000 to support the primary health needs of people experiencing homelessness by continuing to provide mobile clinic outreach services.

The NSW Ministry of Health continues to host the NSW Health Housing and Homelessness Community of Practice.

Charities and local community groups in health

NSW Health recognises the valuable contribution of charities and local community groups in supporting the health and wellbeing of regional, rural and remote communities. The Rural Health Inquiry called on NSW Health to actively engage with charities and local community groups to understand services they provide.

Following extensive research and consultation undertaken in 2023–24, a position paper was developed to build an understanding of charities and local community groups in regional NSW and their approaches to collaboration. The position paper, published in June 2024, shares key findings and opportunities for enhanced collaboration between charities and local community groups and NSW Health.

Vaping and young people

NSW Health developed the Guide to Support Young People to Quit E-Cigarettes. This was in response to increasing concerns about the harms of e-cigarette use among young people, and the need to support them to manage their e-cigarette dependence.

New resources for young people have been developed and include a focus on nicotine dependence, understanding signs of withdrawal, coping strategies and practical tips to quit vaping. Animations and factsheets co-designed with and for Aboriginal young people are also part of the toolkit.

Tobacco and e-cigarette compliance and enforcement

In 2023–24 NSW Health continued its comprehensive compliance and enforcement program for illegal tobacco and e-cigarettes containing nicotine. NSW Health inspectors conducted more than 2,300 retail inspections which resulted in the seizure and destruction of more than 425,000 nicotine e-cigarettes and e-liquids; 8,300,000 cigarettes; and 2,600 kilograms of other illegal tobacco.

3.8 Invest in wellness, prevention and early detection

Enhanced Get Healthy Service

The Get Healthy Service (Get Healthy) is a free, online information and health coaching service that achieves consistent and sustained reductions in weight and waist circumference, and improves healthy eating and physical activity behaviours.

NSW Health successfully re-launched Get Healthy with a new provider, Diabetes Australia, in July 2023. More than 2,500 patients continued to receive high-quality, evidence-based health coaching support. The Get Healthy relaunch now offers patients more virtual engagement options and increased flexibility. Participants can access information or resources, and receive personalised phone and online support from their own qualified health coach.

As part of the relaunch, the Aboriginal workforce was expanded and direct phone lines for in-language coaching were introduced. For clinicians, the referral process has been simplified, including integration into systems to enable easy referral and support for pregnant women attending NSW Health maternity services.

Supporting families to live active and healthy lives

The Centre for Population Health expanded and relaunched The Knockout Health Challenge, a community-led program for Aboriginal communities. The challenge now includes a whole of family approach and broader health and wellbeing outcomes. Almost 30 teams with members aged from 5 to 89 years participated in the program, self-reporting improvements across weight and mood, reduced blood pressure, and reduced sugar and alcohol intake. The social connection and sense of community that the challenge supported was universal across teams.

The Healthy Eating and Active Living campaign ran across the 2023–24 summer, promoting achievable, low-cost ways to be healthier during the holidays. The successful campaign was grounded in consumer insights, included easy recipes, ways to stay active, and tips to support wellbeing for the whole family.

Could it be sepsis?

A sepsis awareness campaign was launched in April 2024 to increase public awareness of sepsis, its symptoms, and the need to seek medical help fast. The call to action was for the public to feel comfortable asking health practitioners, “could it be sepsis?”. The campaign messaging linked with the Clinician Excellence Commission’s statewide sepsis program. A communication strategy was developed using social media and other digital platforms. The target audience was people aged 65 and older, parents and carers of children under 10 years, and young people aged 15 to 25 years, including Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Invest in prevention to reduce alcohol and other drug harms

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs has engaged Monash University and partners to redevelop the 2004 Principles for Drug Education in Schools. This project is a joint initiative with the NSW Department of Education. Drug education aims to promote resilience and build on knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to enable children and young people to make responsible, healthy and safe choices. The new Principles for School Drug Education is due to be completed in 2025.

Addressing preventable cancer risk factors

In 2023–24, the Cancer Institute NSW delivered several public education campaigns to change behaviour and prevent cancers:

- Beat the Cravings and 16 Cancers – anti-tobacco campaigns to encourage people aged 18 years and older who smoke to quit
- Quitting Smoking in Pregnancy – provides quitting support for pregnant women aged 18 to 34 in NSW who smoke
- Every Vape is a Hit to Your Health – anti-vaping campaign targeting people aged 14 to 24
- If You Could See UV – to encourage 18 to 24-year-olds to protect their skin from ultraviolet radiation
- Breast Cancer Doesn’t Wait – encourages women aged 50 to 74 (and Aboriginal women aged 40 to 74) to prioritise their health and book a breast screen.

Smoking and vaping cessation support

The Cancer Institute NSW enhanced its smoking and vaping cessation support for the people of NSW through its continued operation of Quitline and the iCanQuit digital platform.

In 2023–24, approximately 175,000 people accessed the iCanQuit website for smoking and vaping cessation advice.

Smoking and vaping cessation advice is accessible for everyone in the community with Aboriginal and bilingual counsellors, and access to interpreters through the Translating and Interpreter Service.

Strategic outcome 4

Our staff are engaged and well supported

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

4.1 Build positive work environments that bring out the best in everyone

Creating a NSW Health Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework

In 2023 NSW Health launched the *NSW Health Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework*, which sets out an evidence-based approach to creating psychologically safe workplaces. The NSW Health Framework is founded on three key principles:

- **Protect/Prevent:** Ensure our workplaces are free from harm and hazards that impact health, safety and wellbeing
- **Promote:** Enhance the positive aspects of work and leverage the strength of individuals, teams and organisation
- **Respond:** Identify and respond early to distress or ill health regardless of cause.

This model is consistent with the SafeWork NSW *Psychological Health and Safety Strategy 2024-2026*. There are numerous statewide strategies and initiatives in place to achieve these outcomes and these are supplemented by local actions.

Embedding a priority staff wellbeing program

Schwartz Rounds is an evidence-based staff wellbeing program, focusing on human connection; the social and emotional aspects of working in healthcare; and helps support a kind and compassionate culture. The Experience team, in partnership with local health districts, expanded the program to six additional hospitals. The program is now available at 16 hospitals within 9 local health districts, and 1 specialty health network.

Aboriginal Trainee Doctors Forum

In partnership with the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association, and the Health Education and Training Institute, the Aboriginal Trainee Doctors Forum was redesigned to extend participation for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors in training. The forum, held in May 2024, brings together trainee doctors from across NSW Health to discuss wellbeing, training, and to provide culturally safe networking opportunities with peers.

Supporting junior medical officers

NSW Health has made significant changes to practice to support junior medical officers claiming and being paid for the hours that they are required to work. This has included orientation, communication, workshops on best practice rostering for medical officers, system enhancement and reporting.

Healthcare Safety Culture Framework

The Clinical Excellence Commission established the *Healthcare Safety Culture Framework* to support NSW Health agencies, teams and individuals in understanding their roles in enabling a system where people are, and feel, psychologically safe. The Framework takes a whole-of-system approach to supporting and connecting the work we do across NSW Health to promote a psychologically safe work environment for staff, and improved patient outcomes and experiences. The Framework comprises seven interdependent elements, promotes a shared model of the interconnected components of healthcare safety culture, and highlights the importance of compassionate leadership as an enabler.

Continue the security audit program

Staff and patient safety is a priority and NSW Health is committed to continuously improving security practices in our facilities.

A centralised auditing function was established by NSW Health to address recommendations from the *Review Improvements to Security in Hospitals (Anderson Review)*. The NSW Ministry of Health continues to undertake security audits of specific facilities across NSW Health, with a view to identifying issues to drive development of further strategies and resources. Recommendations from the audits are incorporated into local audit plans to ensure action is taken to address any areas of non-compliance.

A significant amount of work has been done across NSW Health to address the recommendations from Mr Anderson's report, with almost all (97 per cent) of the recommendations implemented.

Key Health Worker Accommodation

The availability of modern, sustainable and secure accommodation is a key factor in the recruitment and retention of healthcare workers in regional areas. NSW Health is working collaboratively with local health districts, NSW Ambulance, Homes NSW and other key stakeholders to address health worker accommodation requirements.

A number of health worker accommodation projects have been completed across regional NSW including in Balranald, Walgett and Mudgee, with more underway across regional NSW as part of an existing \$45.3 million investment as delivered by Health Infrastructure NSW. In June 2024, the NSW Government announced an additional \$200.1 million to increase key health worker accommodation across rural and regional areas as part of the 2024–25 NSW Budget.

4.2 Strengthen diversity in our workforce and decision-making

Aboriginal cultural audit

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs conducted an Aboriginal cultural audit of the Centre to understand and improve cultural safety, Aboriginal inclusion, and recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff. The report and findings are currently being reviewed for implementation.

The Centre has established and filled a new senior Aboriginal-identified position to support the Centre's engagement with the Aboriginal community. The initial focus is on finalising an Aboriginal engagement strategy for the Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs in partnership with the Aboriginal Strategic Collaboration Group.

Aboriginal Allied Health Cadetship

In 2023–24, the Workforce Planning and Talent Development Branch expanded the Aboriginal Allied Health Cadetship program to recruit for all 23 allied health professions including those requiring a post-graduate qualification, such as clinical psychologists.

The program is supported by an intake management portal, which enables and supports actions including candidate screening, document management, and standard referral of eligible candidates to potential host sites in NSW Health agencies.

In 2023–24, the program supported 20 cadetships across 10 NSW Health agencies.

4.3 Empower staff to work to their full potential around the future care needs

NSW Health System Advisory Council

The NSW Health System Advisory Council was established in July 2023. It provides expertise and advice to help inform and shape the delivery of frontline healthcare under the authority of the Secretary, NSW Health.

The Council provides independent and impartial strategic clinical advice on key priorities and functions of the health system, as well as guides the planning and implementation of measures to drive positive change.

The Council comprises of a multidisciplinary group of clinicians that reflects the breadth and diversity of healthcare professionals across NSW Health, as well as NSW Ministry of Health executive and health system executive manager representation.

Assistants in Medicine Program

NSW Health continued to support the employment of Assistants in Medicine (AiMs) into the NSW Health workforce. AiMs are final year medical students who provide workforce support to local health districts and gain valuable practical experience that improves their preparedness for internship. In 2023–24, 405 final year medical students worked as AiMs across 13 local health districts and specialty health networks.

4.4 Equip our people with the skills and capabilities to be an agile, responsive workforce

Improving our scholarship systems and processes

The Higher Education team introduced a new, simplified scholarship process spanning the application to the awarding stage. Supporting an upgrade of the Student Management System, this has also significantly improved reporting on scholarship use and student outcomes.

Scholarships empower student engagement with the postgraduate mental health courses offered as a Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency accredited higher education institution.

Tertiary Health Study Subsidy Program

The Tertiary Health Study Subsidy Program was launched in January 2024. More than \$120 million is being invested to encourage and subsidise students studying towards a health qualification. The program aims to attract and retain talent in the NSW public health system, grow the health workforce in areas of need, and assist students wishing to enter health careers. The subsidies target tertiary students and, in 2024, were available to 19 health workforce groups.

Annually, financial subsidies are awarded to:

- 2,000 students commencing study, \$12,000 paid over three years
- 2,000 students graduating from study and commencing employment with NSW Health, \$8,000 paid once-off.

International Medical Graduate Clinical Readiness Program

The International Medical Graduate (IMG) Clinical Readiness Program was established to provide IMGs living in Australia with an orientation and basic clinical experience in a NSW public hospital on a voluntary basis. Working within multidisciplinary teams, they gain an understanding of communications and system processes to enable them to become work ready.

Participation in the pilot included eight local health districts, including five regional and rural local health districts. Of the 55 participants of the program, 37 (67 per cent) have been employed or are set to be employed in a medical role.

Nursing and Midwifery scholarships and grants

Postgraduate scholarships support the professional development of NSW Health nurses and midwives, including transition to speciality practice. This includes individual scholarships of up to \$10,000 for a range of practice areas, and fully-funded contracted education courses for graduate certificates in targeted clinical specialities. In 2023–24:

- more than 800 nurses and midwives took up individual scholarships offered by NSW Health
- more than 490 nurses and midwives took up an education scholarship offered by NSW Health
- more than 460 clinical placement grants of up to \$1,000 were awarded to nursing and midwifery students to support diverse clinical experiences across rural and metropolitan areas.

Continuing professional development for medical practitioners

The Medical Board of Australia sets minimum requirements for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for medical practitioners. In December 2023, the Health Education and Training Institute gained accreditation as a CPD Home. CPD Homes are the accredited organisations that make sure doctors registered in their home meet their minimum CPD requirements. Accredited CPD Homes also audit and report CPD compliance to the Medical Board. The Australian Medical Council is the accreditation authority for CPD Homes. The Health Education and Training Institute is continuing to maintain its accreditation for the 2024–25 financial year.

Alcohol and other drug workforce training

NSW Health funded a range of new workforce training to build the skills of the alcohol and other drug workforce in local health districts and non-government services. This includes:

- 19 scholarships awarded for the Graduate Certificate in Criminology and Criminal Justice for people who work with Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment (MERIT) and Drug Court
- 60 places funded on the TAFE alcohol and other drug skillset training
- 20 new Lyn Gardner scholarships for nurses and midwives to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Drug and Alcohol Nursing (priority was given to regional and rural applicants).

The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW delivered the first eight units of the Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs in rural and remote communities. Four workshops were delivered and at least 50 Aboriginal workers attended.

4.5 Attract and retain skilled people who put patients first

NSW Health Employee Value Proposition

The Workforce Planning and Talent Development branch launched an Employee Value Proposition (EVP). Designed following staff consultation, the EVP sets out the benefits and attraction of choosing to work and remain working at NSW Health. It will assist with attracting both domestic and international staff, and support employee engagement and retention.

The NSW Health EVP is ‘the team enriching Health in millions of ways every day’ with the core statement being ‘in millions of ways’ that will be used across promotional and recruitment activities, and be embedded in communications for our existing staff.

Allied Health Graduate Workforce Pipeline Project

The 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. A final project report has been delivered and is published to the NSW Health website, which highlights the importance of a positive student and early graduate employment experience to positively impact attraction and retention to NSW Health.

Medical workforce modelling

Medical workforce modelling (including both public and private health systems) has been completed up to 2040. Findings indicate a need to increase the NSW medical workforce to meet projected 2040 requirements.

The workforce modelling outcomes for another 35 medical speciality workforces that were modelled up to 2035 were published in July 2023. The modelling considers both the public and private sectors future workforce requirements. The outcomes are available on the NSW Health website.

The NSW alcohol and other drugs workforce

In consultation with the alcohol and other drugs sector in NSW, the Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs developed the *NSW Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce Strategy*, outlining activities to attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce that reflects the communities it supports. The Strategy was published in August 2024.

Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme

The Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme was introduced in July 2022. It enables participating NSW Health organisations to offer incentives and benefits that are above award entitlements to attract, recruit, and retain health workers in positions with hard-to-fill and critical vacancies at regional, rural, and remote locations. The incentive scheme offers up to \$20,000 in incentive packages, including accommodation assistance, relocation benefits, a rural and regional health allowance, additional leave, and contributions to professional development.

As at 26 June 2024, the scheme had delivered incentives worth \$75.4 million, including the recruitment of 2,382 full-time equivalents and the retention of 8,044 full-time equivalent positions.

Rural doctors

The Rural Doctors’ Employment Arrangement Working Group is exploring a range of contract arrangements for Rural Doctors’ Settlement Package (RDSP) sites to assist with attraction and retention of doctors in regional, rural and remote areas. The aim is to provide local health districts with flexibility to engage doctors under a range of contracts most suited to their needs and preferences.

Short term objectives identified by the working group have been completed. This resulted in including three additional item numbers to the Rural Doctors Settlement Package, which were approved by the NSW Ministry of Health and came into effect on 1 February 2023.

A new item number to compensate general practitioner visiting medical officers (VMO) for supervision at RDSP sites was added to the RDSP Hospitals Indexation of Fees for VMOs on 21 June 2023.

Expanded and incremented sessional rates at RDSP sites became available from June 2024.

Recruitment of rural nurse practitioner positions

NSW Health continues to support the delivery of healthcare within our rural local health districts.

In 2023–24, recruitment of 20 rural generalist nurse practitioner positions were finalised, supporting access to care in our rural, regional and remote communities. A further 25 nurse practitioner positions were funded for rural local health districts, to be utilised in either generalist or specialty areas, based on service needs.

Enhancing the nursing and midwifery workforce across NSW

NSW Health began implementing new minimum staffing levels for nursing and midwifery.

Liverpool Hospital and Royal North Shore Hospital emergency departments were the first to commence recruiting additional staff, with the implementation of Safe Staffing Levels to occur across other hospitals and clinical areas progressively through to June 2027.

Strengthening the midwifery workforce

In NSW Health, registered nurses train to be midwives through the MidStart program. There were 231 MidStart training positions recruited across NSW Health in the 2023–24 financial year.

In 2023–24, 15 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.

Mentoring in Midwifery program

The Mentoring in Midwifery (MiM) program supports the attraction and retention of current and future midwives by building connection and support in the workplace between midwives and midwifery students. The MiM program is now in all 15 local health districts. More than 1,800 midwives and midwifery students have joined the program, with midwives mentoring new to practice midwives, midwifery students, and other midwives across NSW.

Graduate nurses and midwives

NSW Health continues to employ graduate nurses and midwives to ensure a sustainable workforce into the future. NSW Health coordinates the statewide graduate nurse and midwife recruitment with more than 3,500 graduates employed across the health system in 2023. More than 40 per cent of these graduates commenced in rural and regional locations.

All NSW Health Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Cadetship and Scholarship recipients who were interviewed were offered graduate positions.

Aboriginal nursing and midwifery cadetships and scholarships

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

In 2023–24, NSW Health supported 123 Aboriginal nursing and midwifery cadets. In addition, 89 undergraduate scholarships and 28 postgraduate scholarships were awarded to support nursing and midwifery studies for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal health practitioner commencement rate of pay

On 15 December 2024, the NSW Ministry of Health issued a Determination to support the progression of suitably qualified Aboriginal Health Workers to Aboriginal Health Practitioner positions. The Determination recognises the relevance of the skills and experience of an Aboriginal Health Worker to the Aboriginal Health Practitioner role. The Determination supports NSW Health's commitment to retaining and growing the Aboriginal health worker workforce as part of advancing and promoting cultural safety in the NSW Health System and to improving clinical outcomes for Aboriginal patients.

Celebrating and recognising our staff

To support our Future Health objective of attracting and retaining talent within the health system, NSW Health facilitates a range of award programs that recognise and celebrate staff and volunteers from across local health districts, pillars, networks and health organisations. This includes participating in NSW Government awards, like the NSW Premier's Awards, to running a robust awards program with the system-wide NSW Health Awards, Excellence in Allied Health Awards, and Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards. In 2023–24, NSW Health had:

- 3 winners and 15 finalists in the NSW Premier's Awards
- 14 winners and 37 finalists in the NSW Health Awards
- 7 winners and 25 finalists in the Excellence in Allied Health Awards
- 9 winners and 29 finalists in the Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards.

4.6 Unlock the ingenuity of our staff to build work practices for the future

Rural Generalist Single Employer Pathway

The Rural Generalist Single Employer Pathway was successfully implemented in 2024, with 21 doctors working in emergency departments and general practices across rural and regional NSW. A new cohort of trainees will commence in the 2025 clinical year, who are committed to continuing their careers in regional medicine.

The program provides a coordinated pathway that makes it easier and more attractive for junior doctors to train as rural generalists. Rural generalists are general practitioners who provide primary care services, emergency medicine, and have training in additional skills such as obstetrics, anaesthetics or mental health services.

This single employer model provides secure employment over the training period and ensures rural generalist trainees are being paid the same amount as their hospital-trained counterparts.

Strategic outcome 5

Research and innovation, and digital advances inform service delivery

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

5.1 Advance and translate research and innovation with institutions, industry partners and patients.

National Clinical Trials Governance Framework

The *National Clinical Trials Governance Framework* embeds clinical trials into routine health service provision. The Office for Health and Medical Research completed evidence banks for all local health districts, which involved compiling evidence of the district's clinical trial policies, procedures and governance documents. This evidence was used as part of the districts' clinical trial assessments. The Office supported five NSW Health public sites in successfully completing an assessment and becoming accredited to run clinical trials.

Clinical trial policy and process

As part of its accreditation assessment, the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network completed the first evaluation of its clinical trial service within the *National Clinical Trials Governance Framework* (NCTGF). The NCTGF aims to embed research into clinical care, ensuring safe, high-quality clinical trials for better health outcomes. The Network's clinical trial service was evaluated against two key standards: a clinical governance standard and a partnering with consumers standard, and achieved accreditation. A clinical trial sponsorship committee and sponsorship policy were established, outlining the review and approval process for investigator-initiated clinical trials seeking Network sponsorship. This process ensures appropriate oversight of all Network-sponsored clinical trials and includes a risk assessment process to ensure proper mitigation strategies for all trial activities.

Develop and maintain a record of clinical trials staff in NSW Health

The Clinical Trials Register of Staff (CiTRoS) has been developed by NSW Health to capture informative data about the clinical trials workforce across the state. Limited information exists about employment structures and formal clinical trial training for the clinical trial workforce within government, academic, and private institutions. The Office for Health and Medical Research completed a pilot at two local health districts, one specialty health network and one interstate local health network. The pilot showed successful data collection by users, which is the first stage of CiTRoS.

Establish Clinical Trial Support Units across NSW

Seeking to increase access to clinical trials across the state, the Office for Health and Medical Research supported the establishment of three clinical trial support units through the Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Program in Northern, Western, and Southern NSW. These units will develop clinical trial infrastructure and support clinical trial delivery across rural and regional NSW. This was achieved in partnership with ACT Health and Canberra Health Services, and through funding from the Australian Government Medical Research Future Fund. Following a merit-based grant application and independent review process, funding was allocated to establish the three clinical trial support units which became officially operational in April 2024. The Office continues to collaborate closely with the units as they work to achieve key priorities to ensure their sustainability.

Quality Recognition Scheme for early phase clinical trial sites

The Quality Recognition Scheme is part of the *Early Phase Clinical Trials Framework* and is designed to measure clinical trial units against best practice standards of clinical and research care. Across NSW, five pilot site visits have been completed at academic, private, public, regional, and paediatric locations. Clinical Trial NSW staff are completing training to become lead auditors for the next tranche of site visits.

Establish a Rural, Regional and Remote Community of Practice

Access to a dedicated Community of Practice for rural and regional clinical trial staff is limited in some areas of NSW. The Office for Health and Medical Research's Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Program established a working group of regional staff, institutions, and industry partners to develop a model for a Community of Practice. An embedded mentorship program for resource recruitment will be implemented in early 2025.

Supporting the use of data in research

In March 2024, the Office for Health and Medical Research committed \$4 million for big-data-driven health research projects that aim to improve the use of data linkage for accelerating research activities; and translating that research into health outcomes. The two projects that were prioritised to maximise the use of NSW Health's data in developing and delivering precision medicine include, securing social licence for the use of patient information, and optimising use of the statewide data lake to enable research.

Establishing program logics and standardised outcome reporting metrics

Program logic models describe how a program intends to deliver its aims by visually linking activities with outputs and short, medium and longer-term outcomes. Program logics are now in place across all grant programs run by the Office for Health and Medical Research to guide evaluation.

In February 2024, the Office for Health and Medical Research used a program logics model and standard outcome reporting metrics to evaluate the COVID-19 Research Grant program. The evaluation provided key insights into the health, social, and economic benefits of the program for NSW; and advanced knowledge relating to the COVID-19 response and recovery, policy and programs, clinical care, and community health outcomes.

This financial year the Office has also undertaken an evaluation of the Early-Mid Career Grant program and commenced evaluation of the Cardiovascular Research Capacity program.

Building system capability through healthcare redesign

The Agency for Clinical Innovation's Centre for Healthcare Redesign offered a statewide graduate certificate program aimed at supporting health staff tackle strategic healthcare challenges and foster innovation. During the past year, the program experienced high demand, admitting 116 new students who initiated 38 local projects focused on enhancing access to surgical services. The achievements of 86 students were celebrated at 3 graduation ceremonies. In partnership with the University of Tasmania, a symposium highlighted successful redesign outcomes, underscoring the program's role in advancing sustainable healthcare futures and enhancing system capability and service innovation across NSW Health.

Innovation Exchange showcases local healthcare innovations

The Agency for Clinical Innovation's Innovation Exchange highlights solutions that can be adapted to suit other local healthcare challenges without needing to duplicate work that has already been completed. During the past year, more than 60 new projects were added to the platform, offering adaptable solutions for local healthcare challenges. Themed collections to promote collaboration and knowledge sharing among health professionals were introduced. The first collection, launched in June 2024, focuses on projects that highlight care at home and in the community.

Building research capacity in NSW

To build cancer research capacity, the Cancer Institute NSW supported 42 early and mid-career researchers through fellowships. A research Fellows' Forum event was held to support collaboration, and the Institute sponsored the NSW Cancer Research conference to showcase existing and emerging strengths in cancer research across NSW and beyond. The Cancer Institute NSW also provided \$5 million annually to the sector through its support to clinical trial units across NSW. The Institute also supported 63 of the state's clinical trial workforce to attend training and education events, including representation and participation of staff from regional and rural areas.

Support early career researcher funding

Applications for round six of the Early-Mid Career Grant program opened in September 2023 and closed in December 2023. The funding focused on advanced therapeutics and prioritised researchers ready to take their career to the next stage by developing and leading a multidisciplinary team that brings clinicians and basic scientists together. In 2023–24, applications were assessed and five early to mid-career researchers were awarded \$500,000 in funding for their research in personalised and precision medicine for cancer, RNA nanomedicines, and therapeutic targeting.

Research equipment grants

In 2024, Cancer Institute NSW awarded two research equipment grants (\$1.4 million) to support multidisciplinary approaches to cancer research and world-class infrastructure to accelerate cancer research:

- Professor Georgina Long AO (Melanoma Institute Australia) was awarded funding for an imaging system that will allow researchers to spatially identify immune and tumour cells populations and their interactions across various cancer types.
- Professor Paul Timpson (Garvan Institute of Medical Research) was awarded funding for an Akoya-PhenoCycler Fusion 2.0, capable of concurrently detecting and visualising multiple biomarkers in whole patient tissue sections.

Genomics Workforce Planning Program pilot

In collaboration with the Workforce Planning and Talent Development branch, the Health Education and Training Institute successfully coordinated and delivered a Genomics Workforce Planning Program pilot in March to April 2024. The Program aimed to build workforce planning capabilities within the currently small but critical NSW Health Genomics workforce. The evaluation of the program highlighted its effectiveness in delivering valuable learning experiences and fostering skill development among the pilot cohort.

5.2 Ensure health data and information is high quality, integrated, accessible and utilised

NSW Population Health Survey

In 2023, 13,302 people participated in the NSW Population Health Survey. The survey is used to monitor key health risk factors in the community including smoking rates, alcohol use, physical activity participation, and fruit and vegetable intake. This information helps support health service planning and delivery, as well as monitoring progress on key strategic initiatives. The data are made available to the community via HealthStats NSW.

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 2023–24, HealthStats NSW attracted approximately 2,900 users per month, an increase from 2,200 users per month in 2022–23.

Data linkages

In 2023–24, the Centre for Health Record Linkage (CHeReL) linked and released more than six 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 Health and broader NSW Government strategic priorities. Data linked by the CHeReL supported the evaluation of NSW Health programs, such as Towards Zero Suicides, which will improve the design and delivery of suicide prevention initiatives.

Making data accessible to researchers

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) continued work to maximise the value and use of data through data linkage and sharing. BHI has pioneered safe data sharing by enabling appropriately skilled experts to access anonymous unit record data via a secure access environment. A number of research projects have been approved to use the NSW Patient Survey Program dataset to generate high-value insights designed to inform improvements in patients' experiences and outcomes. BHI is also creating linked data assets, bringing together concurrent admission episode information with survey responses, with a view to making them available for research.

Data to improve care

BHI undertook additional data analyses to produce new insights into average lengths of stay for patients admitted to NSW public hospitals, and the adoption and use of Hospital in the Home across local health districts. These insights were produced as part of special reporting in BHI's Healthcare Quarterly report series, which offers additional analyses of the context and main drivers for key activity and performance measures in the report, helping to identify opportunities to improve care.

Improving digital access to healthcare performance information

BHI made healthcare performance information easier to navigate by launching a new and improved website. The website organises information in a more user-friendly way and delivers custom data tools that allow exploration of detailed data, including trends and the ability to compare performance between hospitals and districts. The new website is based on extensive user research to ensure it responds to key stakeholders' needs and is part of BHI's ongoing digital-first approach to reporting.

Timely cancer statistics

The Cancer Institute NSW released an updated version of its digital dashboard, Cancer Statistics NSW. It provides access to timely cancer data and insights to enable impactful decision making and improve cancer control in NSW. Data across 29 cancer types, clinical trials, BreastScreen NSW participation, and the most common cancers among Aboriginal people in NSW is available in a user-friendly format. Specific cancer data can also be broken down by local health district and local government area levels. The Multicultural Demographics Data Explorer was also launched, providing easy access to comprehensive data on the state's multicultural community to support health planning.

Enduring Cancer Data Linkage program

Data from two new data assets are now available for researchers, on request or as part of the Enduring Cancer Data Linkage (CanDLe) program. CanDLe enables approved researchers to access data that has already been linked and can be used for ethically approved research. CanDLe now contains data from 16 NSW and ACT data collections. The new data assets include NSW data from the Prostate Cancer Outcomes Registry NSW, and data on radiotherapy treatment for notifiable cancers treated in radiation oncology centres and hospitals (All Radiotherapies Data Collection).

Improvements in financial data connectivity

Enterprise Data Management Cloud System, and Oracle Enterprise Management data application work has continued as the financial planning, reporting, forecasting, budgeting, and general ledger finance applications have transitioned to the cloud. This will enhance the financial data quality and reporting capabilities across the system. The transition has been supported by the *NSW Health Financial Data Governance* and *Master Data Management* frameworks that were released in early 2023–24.

Radiology requests in Patient Flow Portal

In 2023–24, the State Operational Data Store Program enhanced the electronic journey boards to display radiology orders and their status in the Patient Flow Portal. This assists teams across NSW Health facilities plan clinical care by including diagnostic procedures, and streamlines communication between ward and radiology department staff. The team also delivered the automatic 'Waiting for What' portal for radiology procedures that exceed an agreed timeframe threshold. This assists in identifying procedures that require action and timely management.

Single Digital Patient Record

In October 2023, eHealth NSW reached a key milestone for the Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR) and appointed a technology provider following a rigorous procurement process. Readiness assessments took place in late 2023 in partnership with local health districts and specialty health networks which confirmed the implementation plan for the SDPR. In early 2024, the core program team was established. In May 2024, the Single Digital Patient Record Implementation Authority (SDPRIA) was established to oversee the implementation of the SDPR.

Infrastructure Refresh Program

The Infrastructure Refresh Program continued to transition IT infrastructure from on-premises to the cloud. As of 31 May 2024, 60 per cent of critical eHealth NSW business applications were hosted on eHealth NSW's public cloud platform. As a result, the program saved 318,000 clinical productivity hours, achieved a 70 per cent reduction in unplanned outages and a 50 per cent reduction in maintenance windows.

Education and engagement in activity based management

The Activity Based Management (ABM) team's education strategy provides easily accessible information and training sessions at a state, local health district, and service level. This includes operational training for the ABM portal and clinical variation applications. The number of sessions in the ABM portal has increased from 13,198 in 2023 to 16,986 in 2024.

The Activity Based Management Branch continues to engage with the Independent Hospital and Aged Care Pricing Authority and National Health Funding Body, highlight the impact on National Health Reform Agreement funding on classification changes; and is working to mitigate potential funding risks.

Student clinical placement reporting

The Health Education and Training Institute facilitated more than 8.3 million placement hours for almost 47,000 students across NSW Health. The majority of placement hours covered the following disciplines in NSW Health:

- nursing placements (3.8 million hours and almost 25,000 students)
- medicine (2.3 million hours and almost 10,000 students)
- various disciplines of allied health (1.4 million hours and almost 6,500 students)
- midwifery (194,000 hours and almost 1,100 students)
- diagnostic radiography (196,000 hours and almost 1,000 students)
- dentistry and oral health (406,000 hours and almost 1,200 students).

The Health Education and Training Institute work closely with the NSW Ministry of Health and other NSW Health stakeholders and education providers as required on policies and practices regarding student workforce and how these can be supported and monitored.

Travel reporting dashboard supports sustainable spend

The Travel Reform Program was successfully launched in March 2024, consolidating 22 individual booking platforms into a unified “OneHealth” online booking dashboard. HealthShare NSW manages the new travel dashboard for directors of finance and select personnel to manage and monitor travel expenditure. The user friendly dashboard allows greater visibility and easy monitoring of travel activity against key performance indicators, allowing NSW Health to manage its travel budgets in a more efficient manner. It aims to improve policy compliance, encourage savings, facilitate staff bookings across multiple entities, and offer comprehensive insights into NSW Health's travel through consolidated reporting.

The dashboard is one of a number of user-friendly dashboards developed by HealthShare NSW to provide Health entities with a greater understanding of operational activity, expenditure and opportunities for further efficiencies.

5.3 Enable targeted evidence-based healthcare through precision medicine

NSW Health genomics

NSW Health is midway through implementation of the *NSW Health Genomics Strategy*. The Strategy aims to incorporate the benefits of genomics into the NSW Health System effectively and efficiently, and enable appropriate availability of precision medicine. In September 2023, a paper was published in the *Australian Health Review* outlining implementation of the *NSW Genomics Strategy*, embedding genomics as a mainstream component of clinical care. To support healthcare professionals with emerging responsibilities in genomics, 50 scholarships for the University of New South Wales Practical Medical Genomics short course were funded. A training package was also delivered to strengthen capabilities in workforce planning for leaders and those who support genomics services.

Therapy delivery via the Immune Effector Cell Service

Since 2020, the Agency for Clinical Innovation and NSW Ministry of Health have supported the delivery of CAR T-cell treatments in selected NSW hospitals, benefiting more than 200 patients with resistant blood cancers (80 patients were treated in the last year). The Immune Effector Cell Service ensures regulatory compliance, patient support, and treatment efficacy. The focus for 2023–24 was the expansion of treatment activity, the finalisation of state referral pathways, patient resources, and service planning. The *2023–2028 Immune Effector Cell Service Plan* supports system preparedness for safe, equitable access to cell therapies. The service aims to treat 1,000 patients over the next 5 years, adapting to emerging therapies.

Viral Vector Manufacturing Facility

A registered, independent commercial entity funded by NSW Government – the Viral Vector Manufacturing Facility Pty Ltd – was established in February 2024. The Office for Health and Medical Research supported the establishment of the new company, using existing connections to bring together key stakeholders, and seeking advice from key opinion leaders and experts. A smaller scale manufacturing suite is operational in gene therapy research and the first clinical trial to use vectors from the facility is anticipated to commence in 2025. Construction of a larger scale manufacturing suite is progressing.

Non-Animal Technologies Network

Funding of \$4.5 million for a targeted competitive grant program to reduce and replace animals in medical research was allocated to NSW Health, to the Office for Health and Medical Research in December 2023. The Office developed a plan to establish the Non-Animal Technologies Network (NATNet) and identified eight founding partner organisations, following two independent expert reviews of the Non-Animal Technologies Network proposal. The Office entered into a funding agreement with an administration organisation, University of New South Wales, to administer the funding for NATNet in June 2024. The Office supported the establishment of Australia's first Non-Animal Technologies Regulation Working Group to inform regulatory approaches for non-animal models by liaising with key stakeholders to gather advice on appropriate parties to be involved and prioritised. Terms of Reference have been co-designed with relevant regulatory agencies and research organisations including CSIRO, and were effective from March 2024. The first meeting is scheduled for August 2024.

5.4 Accelerate digital investments in systems, infrastructure, security and intelligence

Digital solutions for activity based management

The Activity Based Management (ABM) team leads the development, testing, implementation, education and training for activity based management tools. These tools provide digital solutions for NSW Health staff to access cost and activity information to provide insights into service delivery, cost and funding to support evidence-based decision making. ABM has modernised the server environment from an on-premise to cloud based solution to provide a robust platform for data processing. The team has focused on data integrity as part of NSW Health's transition from the Health Information Exchange to Enterprise Data Warehouse.

Real time dashboards

In 2023–24, the NSW Ministry of Health continued to develop and implement dashboards for administrative staff and for people managers that bring together a centralised point of access from different systems. The dashboards provide continuous monitoring of several metrics and have resulted in enhanced reallocation of software licences, more efficient onboarding and offboarding of staff and contractors, enhanced management of network access, and improved access to other employee metrics.

Statewide Data Centre Reform Program

The 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. The program was responsible for migrating 87 per cent of the target applications and 83 per cent of the target supporting infrastructure to the cloud. The residual migrations were handed over to the respective health organisations for completion.

ICU Discharge Performance Dashboard

In 2023–24, the State Operational Data Store Program implemented the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Discharge Performance Dashboard in the Patient Flow Portal. The Dashboard provides visibility of ICU discharge performance, promoting a whole of hospital approach to streamline effective patient flow through the ICU.

Expanded Patient Reported Measures Program and Health Outcome Patient Experience platform

There was significant growth of the Patient Reported Measures Program. The Health Outcomes and Patient Experience (HOPE) IT platform expanded significantly. Enhancements included new surveys, improved reporting, and integration with the electronic medical record. HOPE is now used within 817 services. More than 46,000 patients and carers were engaged, and more than 119,000 surveys collected from patients about their care outcomes and experiences in the last year. The phase two launch of HOPE reinforced NSW Health's commitment to value based care, digital health enablement, and collaboration across the healthcare system.

Enhancing virtual care in NSW for clinicians and patients

In 2024, the Agency for Clinical Innovation continued to advance virtual care through education, technology integration, and consumer-focused strategies, ensuring equitable healthcare delivery statewide. The Agency for Clinical Innovation updated the *Virtual Care in Practice Guide* to a digital format providing more comprehensive support for healthcare professionals in implementing virtual care. In addition, the new Virtual Care in Palliative Care Toolkit integrates practical resources into end-of-life care practices, complementing existing clinical principles for palliative care. These initiatives enhance accessibility and quality of virtual care across NSW, supported by a consolidated resource list for clinicians, patients, and families.

Digitised remote patient monitoring guidance

Guidance on integrating Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) for heart failure, type 2 diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease was published by the Agency for Clinical Innovation. The comprehensive resources include patient pathways and operational models, offering clinicians and health services detailed guidance for setting up and delivering RPM services in NSW. The guide supports the integration of RPM into clinical practice, facilitating remote collection, transmission, and analysis of health data to manage patient conditions effectively. This initiative enhances virtual care delivery by providing best practices and sample care pathways tailored to specific health conditions.

Forensic Medicine Information System

NSW Health Pathology's Forensic and Analytical Science Service completed the Forensic Medicine Information System. The digital solution combined case information into single-source case records; enabled e-referral to the coroner; and supported secure transfer of information between Forensic Medicine and courts, helping to improve the experience of bereaved families.

FASS DNA Robotics

NSW Health Pathology's Forensic and Analytical Science Service (FASS) installed and began validation of a \$4 million state-of-the-art Forensic DNA robotics system. A part of the FASS Criminalistics Service, it will enable faster DNA testing for intelligence-led policing and crime disruption strategies and is due to be operational in 2025. The service is the busiest forensic DNA lab in Australasia, processing up to 100,000 DNA crime samples each year.

Strategic outcome 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.

6.1 Drive value based healthcare that prioritises outcomes and collaboration

Driving strategic alignment

In 2023–24, the NSW Ministry of Health leveraged its Strategic Investment Committee to guide consideration and prioritisation of new policy proposals ahead of the 2024–25 NSW State Budget. Policy proposals were developed in collaboration with Health entities, with input from policy, finance and economic leads within the NSW Ministry of Health, and in compliance with NSW Treasury requirements. The 2024–25 submission set a new benchmark with an increased level of supporting evidence and rigour accompanying NSW Health policy proposals.

Value based healthcare for the alcohol and other drugs sector

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs conducted 16 NSW Clinical Care Standards alcohol and other drug treatment workshops forums in 8 regions across NSW. Sessions brought together local health districts, non-government organisation treatment providers, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to consider the role of the standards in ensuring all people seeking alcohol and other drug treatment receive high standards of person-centred, trauma-informed care.

Value based commissioning in the Australian Health Review

In March 2024, a paper published in the *Australian Health Review* shared NSW Health's experiences in achieving value through a focus on outcomes in non-clinical and clinical support services. The article, *Taking a value based commissioning approach to non-clinical and clinical support services*, highlighted local examples from across the state. These included the Sydney Local Health District Virtual Wound Care Command Centre; the Southern NSW Local Health District Robotic Surgical Assistant; the Northern NSW Local Health District medical imaging services; and the HealthShare NSW Project CHEF (Co-Designing Healthy and Enjoyable Food) piloted at Bowral and District Hospital in Southern NSW.

Collaborative Commissioning regional partnership

Collaborative Commissioning is a partnership between local health districts and primary health networks. It addresses community health needs, helps reduce hospital visits, and promotes local autonomy and accountability for patient-centred care. The South Eastern NSW Collaborative Commissioning Partnership is between the South Eastern NSW Primary Health Network, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, and Southern NSW Local Health District. The partnership developed a local pathway, supported by local and international evidence, to care for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Implementation will begin in 2024–25.

Registry of Outcomes, Value and Experience

The Registry of Outcomes, Value and Experience (ROVE) is a virtual registry which links service and system level patient experience, outcomes, activity and clinical data. It is continually used to monitor and evaluate the impact of key NSW Health initiatives. In 2023–24, the NSW Ministry of Health enhanced ROVE by expanding it to further cohorts, including both menopause and virtual care initiatives. Options are also being scoped to upgrade the platform to improve usability and performance.

Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes

The Cancer Institute NSW leads the Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes program, which reports on performance and trends in cancer prevention, screening programs, treatment services, clinical trials and research. This financial year, 187 reports and resources were developed across 15 different areas of cancer control. The 2023 suite of reports included the third *Aboriginal People in NSW* report. It provides insights into cancer care for Aboriginal people compared to non-Aboriginal people, across the care continuum.

Understanding and measuring clinicians' experience of care

Co-designed with clinicians for clinicians, the NSW Ministry of Health and Macquarie University developed an innovative tool to better understand and measure clinicians' experience of care.

In 2023–24, the tool was used to inform evaluations of key NSW Health priorities including:

- the *NSW Virtual Care Strategy*
- Leading Better Value Care initiatives
- statewide diabetes initiative
- Virtual Rural Generalist Service.

Driving continuous quality improvement with collaboration

Throughout 2023–24, the Cancer Institute NSW harnessed the clinical expertise of more than 175 stakeholders across NSW and ACT, engaging in 13 cancer clinical advisory groups and consultations across 7 tumour streams. These experts assist in the effective reporting of health data through their understanding of the clinical context. The group includes a mix of clinicians, with a third representing regional or rural local health districts.

New agreement to co-fund innovative health trials

In May 2024, the NSW and the Commonwealth Governments signed a bilateral agreement to support and fund five innovative models of care being trialled between 2022 and 2025. The programs total more than \$100 million, with a Commonwealth contribution of more than \$40 million. This funding allows NSW Health to continue exploring new ways to deliver virtual and community health services to improve outcomes. During the agreement term, outcomes of the trials will be provided to Health Ministers, and the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority to inform both future innovative funding models and inclusion as part of the mainstream funded services.

Economic evaluation of Lymphoedema Early Intervention and Prevention Program

The Lymphoedema Early Intervention and Prevention Program is designed to prevent and better manage upper limb lymphoedema in patients who have undergone breast cancer surgery with lymph node removal. The NSW Ministry of Health undertook a NSW Health system-wide economic appraisal to assess the system benefits and costs arising from implementing the program. The analysis shows that the initiative was cost-effective and provided benefit to patients and the system. The findings of the economic appraisal has supported decisions on future investment to continue the program across NSW beyond funding period.

Enhancing planned surgery with comprehensive improvement resources and support

In collaboration with the NSW Ministry of Health and the Surgical Care Network, the Agency for Clinical Innovation delivered a comprehensive planned surgery improvement program. The program enhanced patient outcomes, optimised resource allocation, and improved staff experience through the development of audit indicators for value based procedures. It also enhanced recovery after surgery, prehabilitation, and same-day joint replacements. Online resources support local adaptation and implementation. Tailored clinical redesign approaches were implemented at several hospitals, guided by diagnostic assessments to address local challenges, and capitalise on opportunities to improve patient care.

Statewide expansion of DeliverEASE framework

DeliverEASE is an award-winning, custom designed framework transforming the NSW Health medical consumable supply chain by optimising processes from the point of receipt of goods at the hospital dock to ward storerooms. During the last financial year, *DeliverEASE* was expanded to an additional 14 hospitals, taking the total to 40. Program extension has been approved until December 2024, including the rollout of a more tailored program for smaller and more remote sites, *DeliverEASE-Lite*.

Supply chain traceability solution implementation

The SmartChain Program (part of NSW Health Procurement Reform) aims to connect and digitise procurement and supply chain processes by delivering a series of solutions across NSW Health. Following the successful trial and implementation of the SmartChain Supply Chain Traceability solution with the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, broader statewide implementation commenced. Traceability is a centralised, end-to-end solution that can track and assess item usage (including implantable devices and other products) across the supply chain at department, facility, local health district or statewide levels, improving visibility and stock management. The solution went live in 4 local health districts with high system usage of 93 per cent, and sites reporting benefits including reduction in free text orders and increases in no-touch purchase order processing.

Patient Transport Service delivers new reservations model

HealthShare NSW's Patient Transport Services trialled a new reservations model with the Hunter New England Local Health District in 2023. The model uses a 'reservations' approach to allocating trips, with greater certainty over transport times and less re-work to change and re-prioritise bookings. Results showed notable improvements across several areas including:

- Timeliness: 81 per cent of bookings made on time and major delays reduced from 22 per cent to less than 1 per cent
- Flexibility: 80 per cent of all bookings made within 4 hours of the preferred time
- Productivity: overtime hours reduced by 50 per cent
- Cancellations: dropped from 18 to 13 per cent.

A statewide expansion of the model is planned to start in late 2024.

Supporting best practice perioperative care

The Agency for Clinical Innovation launched a revised Perioperative Toolkit to support surgical services across NSW public hospitals to optimise patient care and outcomes. The toolkit offers information and resources for continuous quality improvement for perioperative structures, processes and outcomes. It also fosters knowledge-sharing and collaboration among the members of the multidisciplinary perioperative teams.

6.2 Commit to an environmentally sustainable footprint for future healthcare

NSW Health Net Zero Roadmap 2024–2030

The Climate Risk and Net Zero Unit is coordinating the development of NSW Health's first *Net Zero Roadmap 2024–2030*. The Roadmap outlines how our system is working towards the NSW Government's net zero targets of 50 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2050. Statewide consultation with the public and staff concluded on 31 May 2024 with more than 2,200 contributions. The Climate Risk and Net Zero Unit has reviewed existing carbon footprint outputs to develop resources demonstrating how the system will deliver against the net zero targets. The final Roadmap is expected to launch in 2025.

Sustainability key performance indicators

The NSW Ministry of Health introduced new key performance indicators for environmental sustainability in the 2023–24 Service Level Agreements with local health districts and specialty health networks. The indicators track progress in reducing nitrous oxide (emissions per admitted patient service event), and desflurane reduction (number of vials of desflurane purchased as a percentage of all volatile anaesthetic vials). NSW Health has already observed a marked reduction in desflurane utilisation since 2019, and will continue to monitor the number of vials purchased.

Climate change adaptation

The *NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy* requires each NSW Government agency to appoint a climate change risk officer. This role has been established in the NSW Ministry of Health to support agencies in addressing the directions and actions of the strategy, including embedding climate change risk and adaptation across NSW Health.

Staff input into net zero

The Health Education and Training Institute – Net Zero Project partnered with the Climate Risk and Net Zero unit to internally lead the co-design, training, resource development, and delivery of 37 virtual staff sessions gathering feedback on the draft *NSW Health Net Zero Roadmap 2024–2030*.

The Sustainable Futures Innovation Fund

The Sustainable Futures Innovation Fund provides up to \$25,000 to support staff-led innovation projects that improve patient care and reduce the environmental footprint of NSW Health. In 2023–24, staff across the NSW Health System completed 17 projects. Successful project case studies will be available on the Agency for Clinical Innovation's Innovation Exchange platform from mid-2024.

The Supplier Roundtable Report

The Climate Risk and Net Zero Unit held roundtable events with NSW Health's top 20 suppliers to understand how environmental sustainability is being considered across NSW Health's supply chain. A report outlining actionable recommendations to improve supply chain sustainability, deliver high-value care, and foster sustainable partnerships was provided by the Climate Risk and Net Zero Unit to relevant stakeholders in April 2024.

The NSW Health Net Zero Leads Program

The pilot Net Zero Leads Program brought together change agents from across the NSW Health System to lead a network of like-minded peers working in partnership to develop and implement scalable, low-carbon models of care for their respective clinical areas.

In May 2024, the Agency for Clinical Innovation and Climate Risk and Net Zero Unit developed and published project case studies on the Agency's Innovation Exchange platform showing savings from these small local projects, including:

- computerised tomography switch achieving savings of 5,500 kilograms of CO₂e
- The Gloves Off! project achieved savings of 2,566 kilograms of CO₂e, diverting 260 kilograms of waste from landfill.

NSW Health's Asset Management Energy Program

NSW Health continues to roll out solar panels across the network, with seven per cent of electricity needs now being solar generated. This reduces NSW Health's electricity bill by \$10 million per annum. In the 2023–24 financial year, NSW Health increased its total solar capacity by about 9 per cent, by installing 26 new solar panel systems at both large and small sites. This includes new large-scale systems at Sydney Children's Hospital, Wyong Hospital, and Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. NSW Health continues to investigate innovative solutions to address rising energy costs and reduce carbon emissions as part of the NSW Government's net zero targets. This includes trialling the National Australian Built Environment Rating System for NSW Health facilities' benchmarking requirements.

Growing our fleet of electric vehicles

In 2023–24, NSW Health's electric fleet grew to 65 vehicles, and charging infrastructure was installed at 14 local health districts and specialty health networks. Fleet electrification and hybrid innovations are being embedded as a business-as-usual practice to support sustainable asset management and NSW Health logistics and operational requirements across metropolitan, regional and rural locations. In addition, the Comprehensive Expenditure Review program has resulted in the reduction of 357 passenger fleet vehicles during 2023–24.

A sustainable future for our children and young people

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network has committed to net zero for scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2035, established its carbon footprint, and identified 12 emission hotspots. The Network is addressing their largest emissions source, electricity, by minimising fossil fuel use and maximising renewable integration. Two major redevelopments will be fully electrified to significantly reduce fossil fuels from building operations. A 3,200-square-metre solar installation generating 714 kilowatts of power has been installed on the new carpark at The Children's Hospital at Westmead. The installation powers 75 electric vehicle charging stations, and will support an all-electric fleet and utilise surplus energy for existing hospital infrastructure. The Network established a Sustainability Community of Practice and Net Zero Leads, to engage the clinical workforce and drive projects delivering low carbon, low waste models of care.

Sustainable water technology for hospital kitchens

HealthShare NSW is reducing reliance on chemicals for cleaning and sanitisation in its food services operations, with the implementation of a new sustainable water technology (eWater). eWater uses a continuous supply of biodegradable electrolysed water to replace synthetic chemical-based cleaning and sanitising products, providing a safer, more sustainable, and efficient cleaning alternative. In 2023–24, eWater was implemented across 120 food service sites and 2 food production units as part of a statewide rollout. Implementation of eWater across food service sites reduces chemical usage and handling, improving staff safety and reducing reliance on single-use plastics. Direct chemical savings for the sites that have the system installed are also being tracked.

Leasing efficiencies for corporate accommodation

NSW Health continues to support and participate in Property and Development NSW's initiatives to improve leasing efficiencies for corporate accommodation. NSW Health data has been evaluated by Property and Development NSW and modelling has been presented and validated to inform and assist with NSW Government projects, including office hubs, consolidated accommodation and improved utilisation. In 2023–24 NSW Health achieved a reduction of \$5 million in corporate annual leases.

6.3 Adapt performance measurement and funding models to targeted outcomes

NSW Health Purchasing Framework

The *NSW Health Purchasing Framework* describes the processes to define the mix of services and the level of activity to be purchased each year from local health districts and specialty health networks. It is underpinned by goals and principles, a clear description of the outcomes, the measures, and targets to be used, and the expected level of performance. In December 2023, the NSW Ministry of Health held a workshop as part of the evolution of the *NSW Health Purchasing Framework*, to better align how we fund our health services with the delivery of the outcomes of Future Health. Insights from the workshop fed into the revision and improvement of the *NSW Health Purchasing Framework*.

Continued embedding whole-of-life principles in goods and services procurement processes

Health Infrastructure NSW standardised procurement processes and contracts, in line with whole-of-government commitments, fostering collaborative and sustainable capital procurement. This includes tender schedules and assessment criteria, which leverage industry expertise and innovation to drive sustainable design and delivery outcomes that address whole-of-life impacts. Health Infrastructure NSW's Statement of Participation ensures procurement pipeline visibility and transparency of tendering processes, enabling industry planning and tendering. Early contractor involvement on projects including Eurobodalla Regional Hospital Development, is yielding design and commercial benefits including increased function of site layout, improved overall building envelope, and enhanced plant room integration. Collaboration with the NSW Ministry of Health, HealthShare NSW and eHealth NSW, focused on whole-of-life costings for better value, while partnerships with Infrastructure NSW and industry enabled successful participation in whole of government initiatives including the Women in Construction program.

Category strategies

NSW Health has developed category strategies across whole of health goods and services categories. These category initiatives identify saving opportunities to meet fiscal targets, create medium to long term strategic opportunities, and aim to mitigate price risk. NSW Health, through internal shared service entities, continues to build supplier relationships, sharing information and working together to reach collaborative solutions that achieve improved value based healthcare outcomes. Collaborative supplier relationships also facilitate innovation, and can identify potential savings opportunities, while creating robust and resilient supply chain dynamics to secure continuity of critical products and services.

Education and system collaboration

The Procurement Academy was launched in March 2023 to provide training for NSW Health procurement professionals and uplift procurement capability through best practice procurement knowledge sharing. The training content from the Procurement Academy has also been customised and delivered to non-procurement professionals, delivering broad procurement knowledge to the NSW Health System. The courses, presented by procurement professionals from NSW Health, continue to be offered through the Finance, Procurement and Asset Management Academy through the Health Education and Training Institute.

Asset data-driven strategy development and decision-making

NSW Health continued its asset data-driven approach to enhancing strategy development, performance outcomes, and asset management efficiencies. Activities included:

- streamlining and consolidating data sources
- development of a data repository to enable evidence-based decision-making
- appropriate resources, such as through leasing versus capital tools, risk and cost evaluation systems, and measurement guidelines.

NSW Health transitioned to a new methodology for the prioritisation and forecasting of asset-related minor works and equipment expenditure. The approach utilised data from various health entities' asset management plans to leverage statewide aggregated procurement opportunities.

Streamlining patient billing functions across NSW to improve efficiency

NSW Health began the process of replacing 10 patient billing systems with a single patient billing system operated via a single statewide shared service business model. The implementation of a single patient billing system includes digitising certain patient admission forms to improve the patient experience and reduce environmental impacts. This will help the health system be managed more sustainably by creating efficiencies from standardising processes and automation.

Costing Transformation Project

The Costing Transformation Project commenced in 2023. Led by the Activity Based Management Team, it aims to improve how the costing of services delivered by NSW Health is performed; provide more detailed information to better inform funding models; and reduce manual input by costing teams. A review and redesign of the cost allocation structure is underway as well as the implementation of a new costing system.

National Health Reform Agreement Addendum negotiations

The Government Relations Branch has coordinated the NSW response to the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA) negotiations following a direction by National Cabinet for Health Ministers to commence negotiations in December 2023. Parties to the agreement were tasked to consider the recommendations of the Mid Term Review of the current agreement, which has a strong focus on creating a more integrated and sustainable health system.

The Activity Based Management team has been working collaboratively with Commonwealth and State governments to assess future options within the National Health Reform Agreement and State funding models.

Supplier relationship management

The Strategic Procurement Branch participates in whole of government working groups and forums, such as the Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Modern Slavery Working Group and the Aboriginal Procurement Community of Practice. NSW Health has attended events to support the First Nations business sector, and brought stakeholders together to connect and share information, including Aboriginal suppliers and NSW Government buyers.

Ongoing collaboration with the private hospital sector

NSW Health established Statewide Purchasing Agreement contracts with private hospital operators in 2022, so that the NSW Health System had additional capacity for planned surgery to reduce the number of people who had waited longer than clinically recommended for their procedure. A review of these statewide contracts was conducted in 2023–24 and the contracts expired at the end of the financial year. Local relationships between public and private facilities will remain, enabling continued collaboration when required.

Improving timely access to emergency care

St Vincent's Health Network achieved significant and sustained improvement in timely emergency care for the community, with a focus on enhancing access to care for patients arriving by ambulance. This is demonstrated in sustained improved performance in transfer of care times, with results in the last six months consistently exceeding the state benchmark key performance indicator. As a result of this improvement, between November 2023 and March 2024, the network released more than 1,500 hours of ambulance time back into the system to improve responsiveness of paramedic care.

6.4 Align our governance and leaders to support the system and deliver the outcomes of Future Health

Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel

The first meeting of the new Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel was held in October 2023 and chaired by Dr Richard Colbran, Chief Executive Officer of the Rural Doctors Network. The 10-member panel was established to advise the Hon. Ryan Park MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health, and the NSW Health Secretary on opportunities and solutions to improve healthcare and health support services in regional NSW. The panel's priorities include responding to the recommendations of the NSW Parliamentary Rural Health Inquiry, strengthening the regional health workforce, and improving health outcomes and access to care for Aboriginal people.

Implementing Future Health

Ongoing collaboration with key partners and a robust governance structure is required to achieve the key objectives for Future Health. In 2023–24 executives across NSW Health met quarterly to oversee progress across the Future Health action plans and drive work on key focus areas such as health literacy; compassionate leadership; service planning; equity; multidisciplinary workforce models; research and innovation; and outcome-focused performance measurement and funding.

Major capital works

Major works in progress, cost to date, dates of completion, significant cost overruns or delays/amendments

This section lists Health Infrastructure NSW capital works in progress or completed (to 30 June 2024), including the cost of those works to date and the estimated dates of completion.

Note: The cost to date is project expenditure until the end of the 2023–24 financial year. Dates listed are physical completion dates. Health Infrastructure NSW's website contains up-to-date project completion dates. To be confirmed (TBC) completion dates will be advised once a construction contract is awarded.

Project description	Location	Cost to date expenditure to 30 June 2024 (\$)	Construction completion date (actual, estimated or to be confirmed)	Status
Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital	Albury Wodonga Health	8,607,000 β	TBC	Planning
Cessnock Hospital Redevelopment	Hunter New England Local Health District	5,176,000	TBC	Planning
Glen Innes Hospital Upgrade	Hunter New England Local Health District	8,832,000	TBC	Planning
Manning Hospital Redevelopment Stage 2 ##	Hunter New England Local Health District	10,792,000	TBC	Planning
Moree Hospital Redevelopment	Hunter New England Local Health District	9,768,000	TBC	Planning
Muswellbrook Hospital Redevelopment Stage 3	Hunter New England Local Health District	4,479,000	TBC	Planning
Milton-Ulladulla Hospital Upgrades	Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District	4,000	TBC	Planning
Temora Hospital Redevelopment	Murrumbidgee Local Health District	4,453,000	TBC	Planning
Coffs Harbour Hospital Expansion	Northern NSW Local Health District	191,392,000 β	2023	Completed
Grafton Base Hospital Redevelopment	Northern NSW Local Health District	4,943,000	TBC	Planning
Ballina District Hospital Redevelopment Planning	Northern NSW Local Health District	528,000	TBC	Planning
Canterbury Hospital Redevelopment	Sydney Local Health District	346,000	TBC	Planning
Batemans Bay Community Health	Southern NSW Local Health District	1,652,000	TBC	Planning
Bankstown Hospital (New)	South Western Sydney Local Health District	14,254,000	TBC	Planning
Fairfield Hospital Redevelopment	South Western Sydney Local Health District	42,000	TBC	Planning
Bathurst Hospital Redevelopment	Western NSW Local Health District	8,605,000	TBC	Planning
Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals – Additional Beds	Western Sydney Local Health District	285,000	TBC	Planning
Wyong Hospital Redevelopment Stage 1	Central Coast Local Health District	184,137,000	2026	Construction

Project description	Location	Cost to date expenditure to 30 June 2024 (\$)	Construction completion date (actual, estimated or to be confirmed)	Status
Wyong Cancer Day Unit	Central Coast Local Health District	1,008,000	2026	Construction
Wentworth Health Service Redevelopment	Far West NSW Local Health District	8,378,000	2025	Construction
Broken Hill Hospital Emergency Department	Far West NSW Local Health District	1,683,000	2025	Construction
John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct (includes car park)	Hunter New England Local Health District	332,171,000	2026	Construction
Gunnedah Hospital Redevelopment	Hunter New England Local Health District	11,121,000	2025	Construction
New Shellharbour Hospital and Integrated Services (includes car park)	Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District	149,350,000	2027	Construction
Shoalhaven Hospital Redevelopment	Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District	149,758,000	2026	Construction
Griffith Hospital Redevelopment	Murrumbidgee Local Health District	174,812,000	2025	Construction
Nepean Hospital Redevelopment Stages 1 and 2	Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District	747,891,000	2026	Construction
Ryde Hospital Redevelopment	Northern Sydney Local Health District	31,697,000	2028	Construction
Tweed Hospital and Integrated Ambulatory Services Redevelopment	Northern NSW Local Health District	704,526,000	2023	Completed
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Redevelopment	Sydney Local Health District	185,121,000	2028	Construction
Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick – Stage 1 Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre	South Eastern Sydney, Sydney Children's Hospital Network	355,381,000	2025	Construction
Sutherland Hospital Operating Theatre Complex (including MRI)	South Eastern Sydney Local Health District	86,569,000	2023	Completed
The Children's Hospital at Westmead Redevelopment Stage 2 (includes car park)	Western Sydney, Sydney Children's Hospital Network	326,077,000	2025	Construction
Randwick Campus Reconfiguration and Expansion Stage 1 – remaining fit-out	South Eastern Sydney Local Health District	787,505,000	2025	Construction
St George Hospital – Ambulatory Care, Day Surgery, Sub-Acute Inpatient Building (includes car park)	South Eastern Sydney Local Health District	182,513,000	2026	Construction
Cooma Hospital Redevelopment***	Southern NSW Local Health District	22,710,000	2024	Construction
Eurobodalla Regional Hospital Development	Southern NSW Local Health District	67,843,000	2027	Construction
Goulburn Hospital Redevelopment	Southern NSW Local Health District	157,581,000β	2024	Construction
Bowral and District Hospital Redevelopment Stage 2	South Western Sydney Local Health District	30,289,000	2025	Construction
Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct	South Western Sydney Local Health District	409,922,000	2026	Construction

Project description	Location	Cost to date expenditure to 30 June 2024 (\$)	Construction completion date (actual, estimated or to be confirmed)	Status
Cowra Hospital Redevelopment	Western NSW Local Health District	23,429,000	2025	Construction
Viral Vector Manufacturing Facility	Western Sydney Local Health District	28,585,000	2025	Construction
Westmead Redevelopment Stages 1A and 1B	Western Sydney Local Health District	801,869,000	2025	Construction
Port Macquarie Hospital Helipad Relocation and Car Park	Mid North Coast Local Health District	27,249,000	2025	Construction
Concord Hospital Car Park	Sydney Local Health District	24,084,000	2024	Construction
Oran Park HealthOne	South Western Sydney Local Health District	#	2025	Construction
Key Health Worker Accommodation – Far Western Region	Far West NSW Local Health District	4,451,000	2025	Construction
Key Health Worker Accommodation – Murrumbidgee Region	Murrumbidgee Local Health District	1,865,000	2025	Construction
Key Health Worker Accommodation – Southern NSW Region	Southern NSW Local Health District	2,670,000	2024	Construction
Maitland Integrated Community and Community Mental Health Service	Hunter New England Local Health District	710,000	TBC	Planning
Integrated Mental Health Complex at Westmead	Western Sydney Local Health District	57,867,000	TBC	Planning
Broken Hill – Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit Upgrade	Far West NSW Local Health District	*	2025	Construction
Tamworth Mental Health Unit (Banksia), Tamworth Hospital	Hunter New England Local Health District	*	2025	Construction
John Hunter Hospital – Nexus Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit	Hunter New England Local Health District	*	2026	Construction
Nepean Hospital – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District	*	2025	Construction
Concord Forensic Mental Health Unit	Sydney Local Health District	*	2026	Construction
Blacktown Forensic Mental Health (Bunya Unit Relocation)	Western Sydney Local Health District	*	2024	Construction
Blayney Multipurpose Service	Western NSW Local Health District	**	TBC	Planning
Jindabyne Ambulance Station	Southern NSW	†	TBC	Planning
North Sydney Ambulance Station	Northern Sydney	^	TBC	Planning
Berowra Ambulance Station	Northern Sydney	^	TBC	Planning
South Windsor Ambulance Station	Nepean Blue Mountains	^	TBC	Planning
Oran Park Ambulance Station	South Western Sydney	^	TBC	Planning
Fairy Meadow Ambulance Station	Illawarra Shoalhaven	†	2024	Construction
Kingscliff Ambulance Station	Northern NSW	†	2024	Completed
NSW Ambulance Relocation – Fit-out	Sydney Olympic Park	41,617,000 β	2024	Construction

Project description	Location	Cost to date expenditure to 30 June 2024 (\$)	Construction completion date (actual, estimated or to be confirmed)	Status
NSW Ambulance Virtual Clinical Care Centre	Sydney Olympic Park	8,416,000	2024	Construction
Wyong Palliative Care Unit	Central Coast Local Health District	^^	TBC	Planning
Nepean Palliative Care Unit	Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District	^^	TBC	Planning
Orange Palliative Care Unit	Western NSW Local Health District	^^	TBC	Planning
Tamworth Palliative Care Unit	Hunter New England Local Health District	^^	TBC	Planning
Westmead Palliative Care Unit	Western Sydney Local Health District	^^	TBC	Planning
Campbelltown Hospital Redevelopment Stage 2	South Western Sydney Local Health District	627,053,000	2024	Completed
Central Sydney Superstation	Sydney	****	2023	Completed
Glen Innes Ambulance Station	Hunter New England	†	2023	Completed
Woy Woy Ambulance Station	Central Coast	†	2023	Completed
Old Bar Ambulance Station	Mid North Coast	†	2023	Completed
Ambulance Infrastructure Program	N/A	49,483,000 β	TBC	Planning
Extended House Childcare Centres	N/A	2,000,000	TBC	Planning
Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program (SWMHIP)	N/A	217,006,000 β	Various	Various

*Delivered as part of the Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program. **Delivered as part of the *Multipurpose Services Strategy*.

***Final works are being delivered by the LHD, which includes a refurbishment and expansion of existing medical imaging unit.

^ Delivered as part of the NSW Ambulance Infrastructure Program. † Delivered as part of the Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration program. # Delivered as part of the HealthOne Program. ## In the NSW State Budget 2024–25 (June 2024) the Lower Mid North Coast Health Service project merged the Manning Hospital Redevelopment Stage 2 project and the Forster Tuncurry public hospital project. ^^Delivered as part of the World Class End of Life Care Program. ****Delivered as part of the *Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy*. β Reported spend only relates to the Health Infrastructure NSW managed component of this project.

Major problems and issues which arose from major capital works in progress

In the 2023–24 financial year, inflation and cost escalation challenged project budgets across the construction industry impacting the NSW Health capital works program. This was an industry-wide challenge, navigated by collaboration across government and industry. Projects in the procurement phase were impacted and managed by prioritising areas of clinical need in facility designs.

Land disposal

NSW Health did not dispose of any land assets in 2023–24 as a result of the NSW Government Property Audit being undertaken.

Research and development

Medical Research Support Program and associated programs

Medical Research Support Program

The NSW Government established the Medical Research Support Program to provide infrastructure funding to health and medical research organisations. The following grants were paid in 2023–24:

Organisation	Amount (\$)
Black Dog Institute	591,979
Centenary Institute of Cancer Medicine and Cell Biology	1,880,506
Children's Cancer Institute Australia	942,726
Garvan Institute of Medical Research	5,983,412
Hunter Medical Research Institute	10,379,751
Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research	2,815,554
Neuroscience Research Australia	3,394,458
The George Institute for Global Health	7,375,313
The Westmead Institute for Medical Research	3,534,733
Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute Ltd	1,361,439

Schizophrenia research

Funding was provided to support researchers undertake schizophrenia research across basic science and pre-clinical research.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
University of New South Wales	746,872

Networks

Funding was provided to the following networks to support statewide research collaboration.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
Australian Cardiovascular Alliance Ltd	165,000
Garvan Institute of Medical Research	50,000

Motor neurone disease

Grant funding was provided to improve gaps in understanding of distribution rates of motor neurone disease in NSW regions and improve rates of early detection and referral.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
Macquarie University	997,808
University of Sydney	985,515

Medical devices and commercialisation

Medical Devices Fund

The Medical Devices Fund is a competitive technology development and commercialisation fund which helps encourage and support investment in the development of medical devices and related technologies in NSW.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
Medlogical Innovations Pty Ltd	2,500,000
SDIP Innovations Pty Ltd	4,065,000

Medical Research Commercialisation Fund

The Medical Research Commercialisation Fund was established in 2007 as an investment collaboration that supports early-stage development and commercialisation opportunities from medical research institutes and allied research hospitals in Australia. The Fund has been working with NSW institutes for the past five years to increase NSW's capacity to commercialise research discoveries. Through this funding, NSW Health gains access to expertise, training, and mentoring.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
MRCF Pty Ltd	475,000
Cicada Innovations Pty Ltd	750,000

Cardiovascular Research Capacity Building Program

The NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Building Program aims to attract and retain high-quality cardiovascular researchers in NSW to build a vibrant and highly skilled workforce, with the aim of making NSW the premier state for cardiovascular research in Australia.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
Australian Catholic University Ltd	449,826
National Heart Foundation of Australia	250,000
The Heart Research Institute Ltd	2,950,000
University of New South Wales	5,791,981
University of Sydney	2,833,881
University of Wollongong	449,262
National Heart Foundation of Australia (CVRN)	250,000

Early to mid-career fellowships

The Early to Mid-Career Fellowship program provides funding to promote the participation of early to mid-career researchers in high-quality research projects across a wide spectrum – from basic science through to health services and population health research.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
Children's Medical Research Institute	498,335
Garvan Institute of Medical Research	500,000
Hunter Medical Research Institute	500,000
University of Newcastle	478,000
University of New South Wales	499,231

Spinal cord injury research grants

Grant funding was provided to support NSW spinal cord injury researchers to drive cutting-edge, cure, and care related projects.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
University of New South Wales	1,285,787
University of Sydney	1,287,207
University of Technology, Sydney	390,690

Translational research grants

The Translational Research Grants Scheme takes an innovative approach to funding priority-driven research led by local health districts and specialty health networks in NSW.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
South Eastern Sydney Local Health District	179,880
Murrumbidgee Local Health District	174,021
Sydney Children's Hospitals Network	443,407
South Western Sydney Local Health District	173,627
Western NSW Local Health District	148,065
University of Sydney	999,542

Viral vector manufacturing facility

Operational funding was provided to support a globally competitive and commercial scale viral vector manufacturing facility in the Westmead Health and Innovation Precinct.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
Viral Vector Manufacturing Facility Pty Ltd	19,000,000

Non-animal technologies

A targeted competitive grant helped support research projects and activities run by the Non-Animal Technologies Network (NAT-Net).

Organisation	Amount (\$)
University of New South Wales	4,500,000

Ensuring sovereign manufacture of phage therapy

NSW is a world leader in the development of phage therapy and has treated patients on a compassionate basis. NSW experts are developing sovereign capabilities at the Westmead Health and Innovation Precinct. Funding is provided to scale manufacturing capabilities and ensure the sustainability of the service as phage therapy is established as a standard of care.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
University of Sydney	3,597,960

Rural Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Program

NSW Health and ACT Health, through the Office for Health and Medical Research was awarded \$30.6 million over five years from the Commonwealth Medical Research Future Fund for the Rural, Regional, and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Program (R3-CTEP). The aim of this program is increased and more equitable access to clinical trials for patients in rural, regional, and remote NSW and the ACT.

Organisation	Amount (\$)
Canberra Health Services	779,190
Western NSW Local Health District	774,378
Hunter New England Local Health District	873,613
Southern NSW Local Health District	174,720
Murrumbidgee Local Health District	315,404
Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District	143,783

Population health and health services research support

The Sax Institute helps policy makers find and use evidence to inform real-world decisions. In 2023–24, NSW Health provided \$2.25 million to the Sax Institute to manage several large-scale research assets and platforms; broker evidence reviews on health system priorities; and provide research and evaluation skills training and support. In 2023–24 the Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence delivered professional development workshops to more than 270 NSW Health staff on topics including: program evaluation, economic evaluation, program logic, critical appraisal of evidence, and using qualitative methods in evaluation.

The Prevention Research Support Program is a competitively funded grant scheme administered by the Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence in alignment with NSW Health priorities. Its purpose is to support research infrastructure and strategies that build research capacity and strengthen prevention and early intervention research that can be translated into policy and practice. The Program is well-established, having been implemented in four-year cycles since 2003. Round six of the Program commenced in July 2022. A total of nine organisations were funded to the value of \$12 million over four years.

Prevention Research and Support Program (year two of four)

Grants paid in 2023–24	Amount (\$)	Purpose
University of Sydney	\$271,250	Reproduction and Perinatal Centre
University of Newcastle	\$500,000	Priority Research Centre Health Behaviour
University of New South Wales	\$511,250	The Kirby Institute
University of New South Wales	\$525,000	National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
University of New South Wales	\$375,000	Centre for Primacy Health Care and Equity
University of Sydney	\$500,000	Prevention Research Collaboration
University of Sydney	\$156,250	Edith Collins Centre
University of Wollongong	\$356,250	Early Start
Western Sydney Local Health District	\$555,000	Centre for Infectious Diseases and Microbiology – Public Health
Total	\$3,750,000	

Implementation of price determination

The NSW Ministry of Health Activity Based Management Branch set the State Efficient Price using the latest available cost data. This year, most new initiatives were reflected in the Budget Schedule of the Service Agreement to advance certainty, timing, and management of funding for patient care.

The NSW State Price for 2023–24 was \$5,323 per national weighted activity unit 2023 (NWAU23).

The State Efficient Price for 2023–24 was \$5,207 per NWAU23. Local health districts and specialty health networks were funded for their activity at this price, with the exception for some specific contractual funding arrangements. Both the NSW State Price and the NSW State Efficient Price are not directly comparable year on year due to changes in national weighted activity unit versions and local health districts and specialty health networks costing results.

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