



Health  
Southern NSW  
Local Health District

# STRATEGY 2026

## LEADING RURAL HEALTHCARE







**Strategy 2026 outlines the direction of Southern New South Wales Local Health District for the years ahead. Southern NSW Local Health District aims ‘to be a recognised leader in rural healthcare.’ Our Purpose is to improve the wellbeing of the community we serve.**

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Artist: Alison Simpson

In the true spirit of Reconciliation and through embracing the values of collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment, Southern NSW Local Health District acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land; the Gundungurra, Ngambri, Ngarigo, Ngunnawal and Yuin peoples.

We share and celebrate the rich history of the Aboriginal culture and recognise the diverse and proud Aboriginal nations across our District.

Southern NSW Local Health District acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, community members and staff for their ongoing contribution to society and their commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Message from our Chief Executive and Chairman

We are proud to introduce Strategy 2026. Our plan provides a clear direction for Southern NSW Local Health District for the next five years. It will guide our journey of renewal as we strive to become ‘a recognised leader in rural healthcare’.

Strategy 2026 outlines the four strategic priorities, to deliver a sustainable health service that meets the needs of our community. The plan also highlights that services must be accountable, responsive and data driven. Elevate will be the cultural framework and foundation that helps us to consistently excel in everything we do. To do that, we seek to incorporate our CORE values of Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Empowerment with our patients and consumers, and with each other.

Our strategic priorities and enablers are based on NSW Health’s 10-year Future Health strategic framework. Both Future Health and Strategy 2026 recognise the importance of maintaining the highest quality healthcare in an environment of increasing demand and complexity.

Strong collaboration with our consumers, neighbouring health services, community providers and government will be integral to our provision of person-centred and integrated care. These partnerships will result in better outcomes for our consumers by supporting people to keep healthy and out of hospital. The dedication of our staff and their pursuit of excellence is critical to the success of this Strategic Plan.

On behalf of the Southern NSW Local Health District Board and Executive team, we would like to thank our staff, consumers, and healthcare partners for their contribution to Strategy 2026. We are committed to working ‘together as one’ to realise our strategic objectives by 2026.

“Strong collaboration with our consumers, neighbouring health services, community providers and government will be integral in our provision of person-centred and integrated care.”



Margaret Bennett  
MARGARET BENNETT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Dr. Allan Hawke AC  
DR ALLAN HAWKE AC  
CHAIR

# Get to know Southern NSW Local Health District

## Our Story



Our people are at the heart of what we do. We are committed to building a strong, vibrant culture that demonstrates our values in action. Our values underpin how we care for our patients, staff and the community every day.



## Elevate – Together as One

Elevate describes the way we work together at Southern NSW Local Health District. It signifies our passion and responsibility to ensure that we focus on lifting our people and performance to provide the high level of support and care that our staff, patients and community deserve.

The Elevate logo colours remind us of the geographical diversity within our region as we provide services in our communities reaching from the mountains to the sea. From sunny beaches and picturesque tablelands to Mt Kosciuszko's snowy mountain peaks, our network of facilities and services joined together to ensure we are delivering high quality, consumer-centred services.

We have a long history of providing excellent, safe care for our people and have worked tirelessly to overcome tragedy and disruption in our region. As we continue to engage our people, support recovery and improve outcomes the, arrow in the Elevate logo reminds us to also focus on the future with clarity, purpose and direction.



'Together as one' is our mantra to be united in providing high quality, safe care to support our communities to lead healthy lives. We depend on the engagement of our nearly 4,000 staff, doctors and volunteers as we strive towards greater alignment of goals, consistency of values in action, together with systems and processes that elevate our performance and outcomes. We are diverse, geographically spread and provide a vast array of services across many sites, however, we join together as Southern NSW Local Health District with a shared passion that enables us to provide services that meet the needs of those we support.

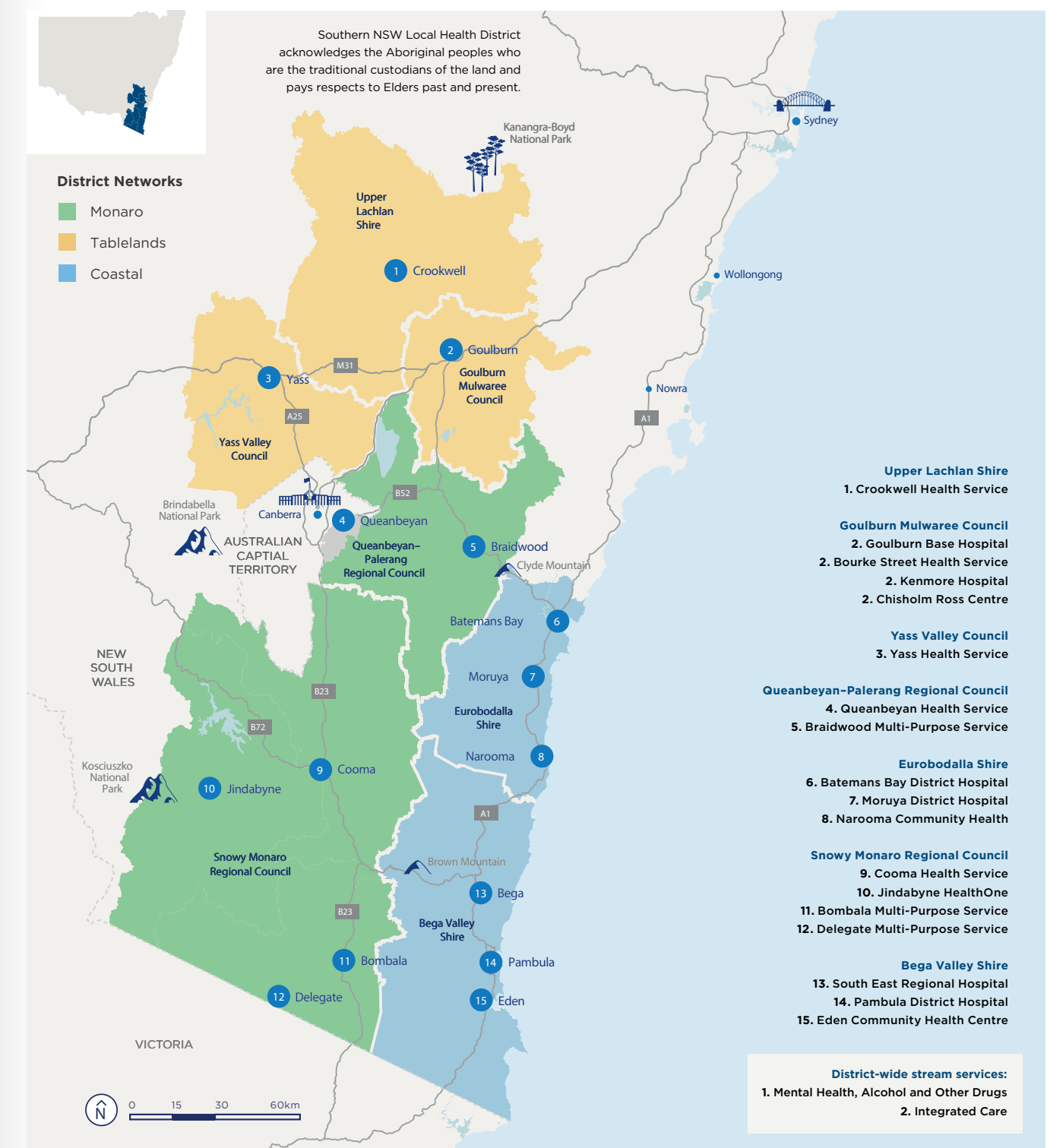
'Together as one' we are building an organisation where our patients, consumers, our people and community can see and feel the difference in how we provide care and support.

## Who are we?

Southern NSW Local Health District provides public health care services across regional south-east NSW. The District spans 44,534 square kilometres over seven local government areas (LGAs): Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Snowy Monaro, Upper Lachlan and Yass Valley.

The District operates 15 health service sites including eight acute hospitals, three Multi Purpose Services, three community health centres and two acute mental health inpatient facilities.

Southern NSW Local Health District partners with ACT Health, tertiary partners and major Sydney hospitals to support local patients who require high-level specialist care.







## Our People

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### Volunteers

Our volunteers are highly valued as key members of our organisation. We recognise and value the role our volunteers play in supporting us to provide quality health care and improve the health outcomes for our communities. Currently the District has many volunteer programs across its health sites and community based services, supported by the participation of hundreds of volunteers. We are working to enhance and enrich our current program, build our volunteer workforce, then look at future opportunities and partnership with NGOs, community based groups and corporate organisations.

### Community Engagement

Partnerships with patients, families, carers and community guide our future direction. Across Southern NSW Local Health District there are many Community Consultation Committees that provide advice, input and link communities with their local health services. Consumer representatives work closely with our teams to provide a lived experience perspective on the way we care for and deliver services across

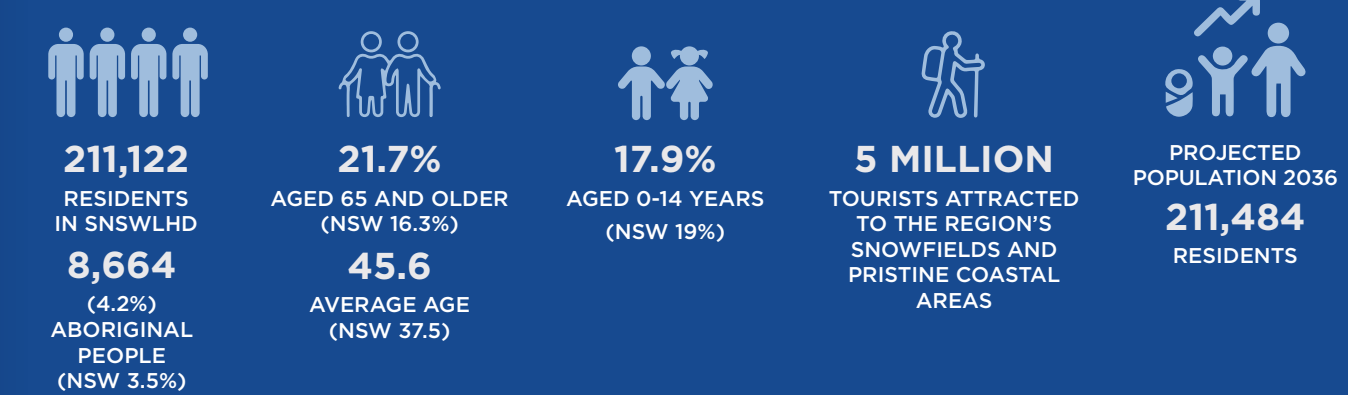


the community. Engagement with each community occurs in various ways including focus groups, open days and information sessions. We are committed to expanding our opportunities for engagement digitally, informally and in partnerships with other organisations. Our aim is for all people to be involved in the direction of health services now and into the future.

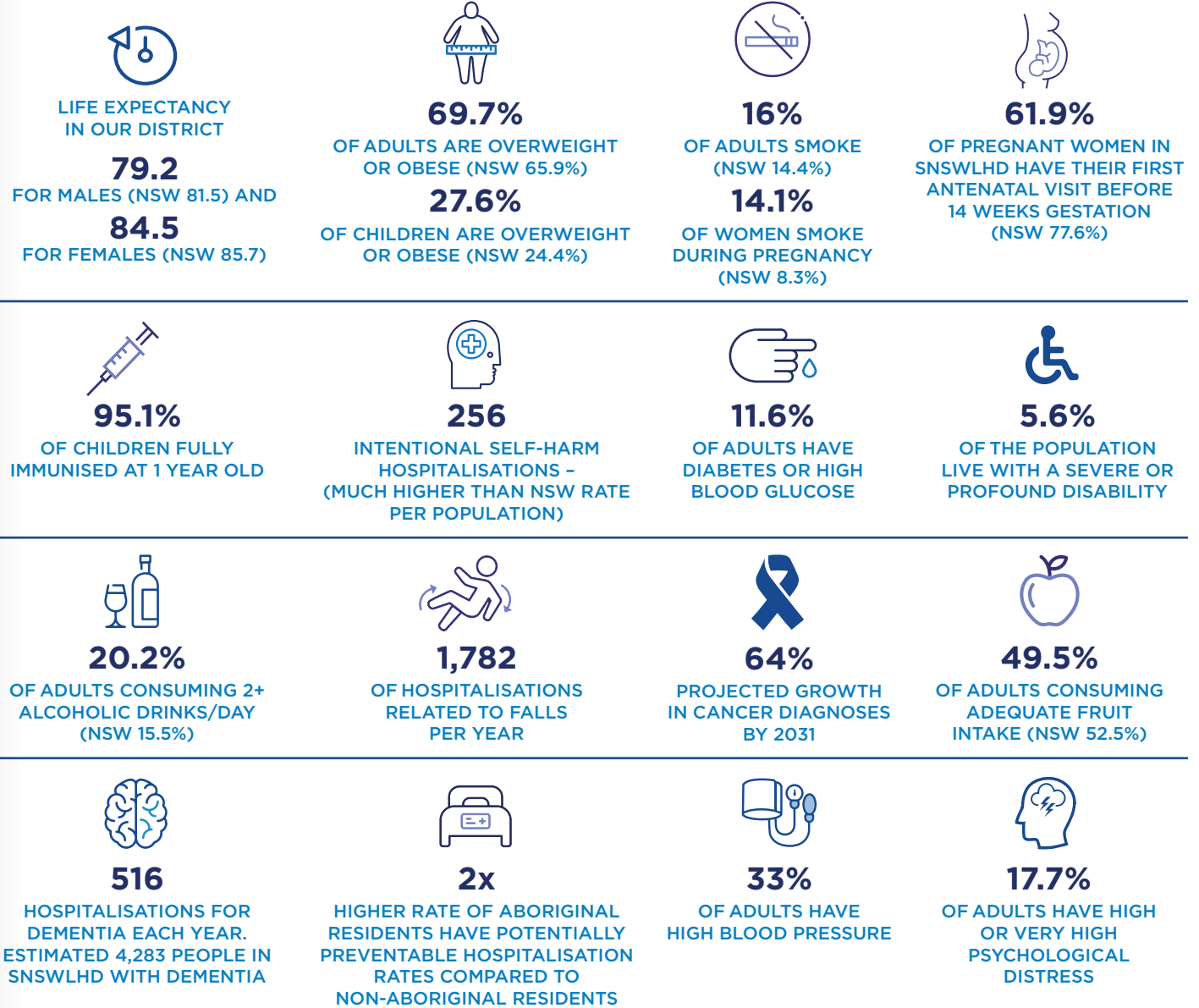
## Our Community

Our community is experiencing growing social, economic and health pressures. The way our community changes helps shape our growth, and drives changes in our future models of care.

### People

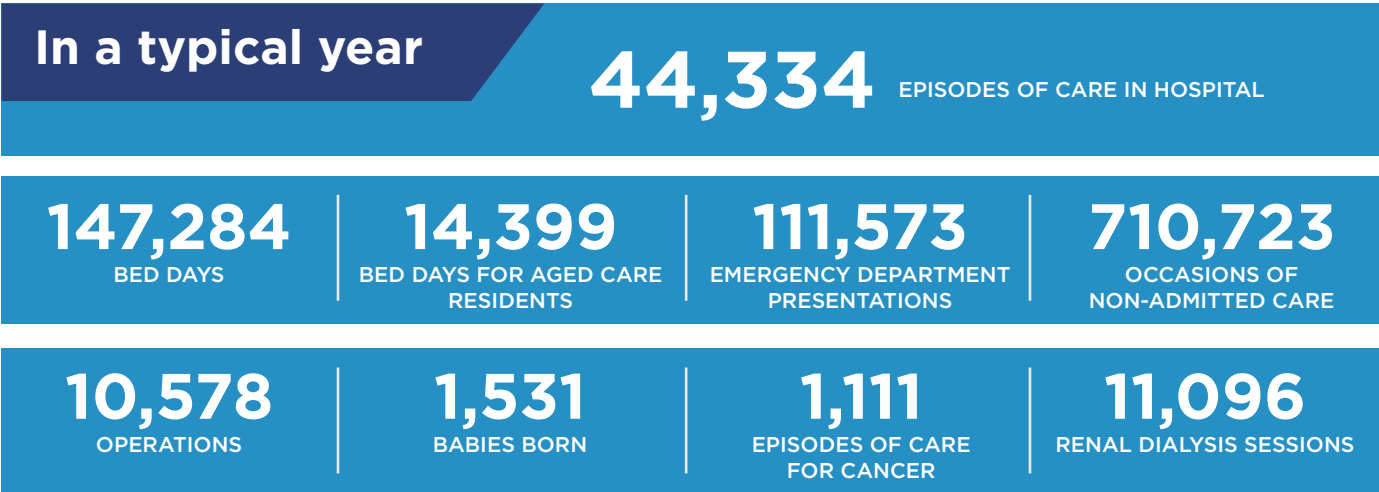
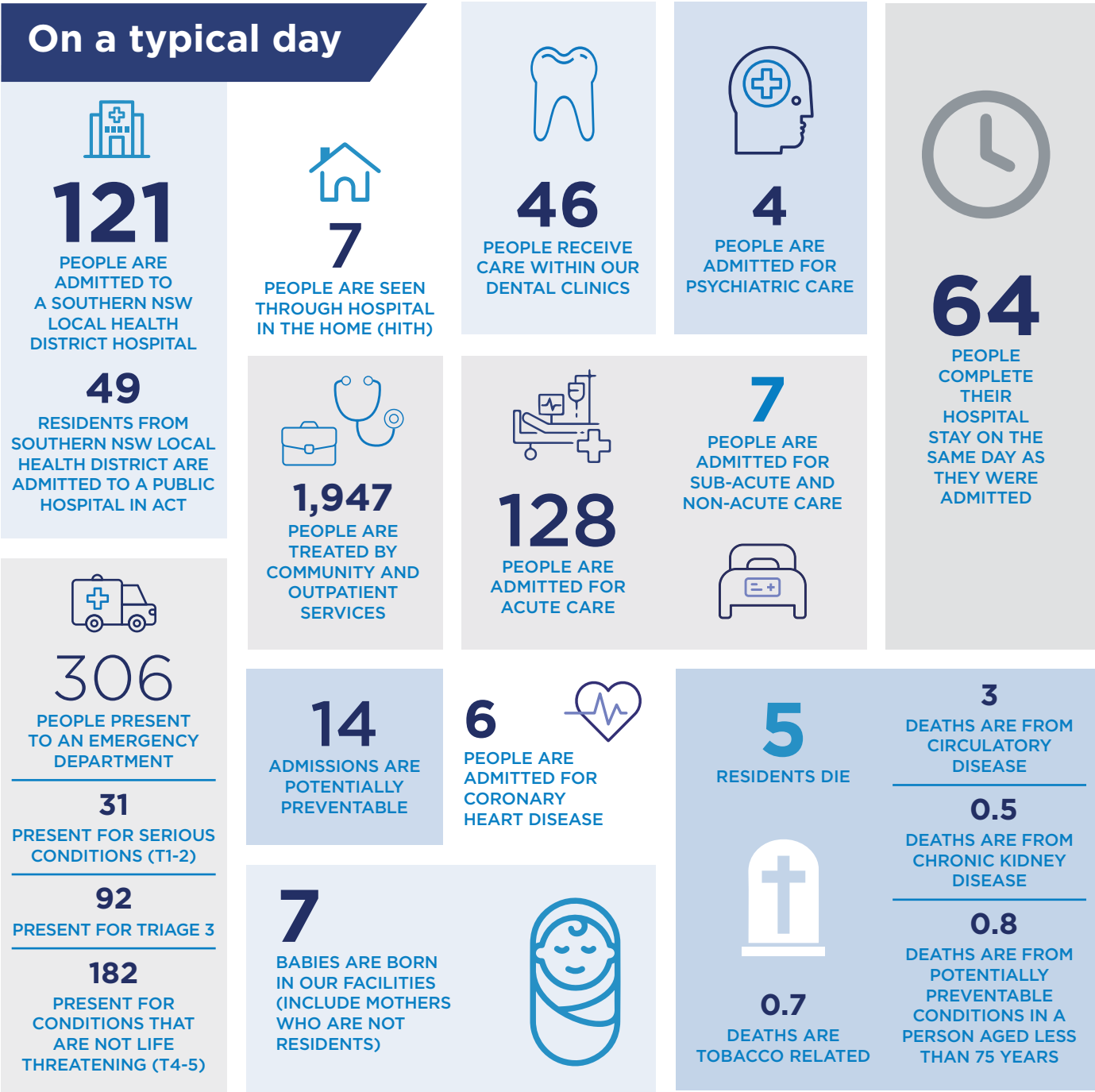


### Other Statistics



Data sources include District, State and National health care reports from 2020 and 2021

# A day at Southern NSW Local Health District



## Our Challenges and Opportunities

### Our Challenges

- Higher level care for Southern NSW Local Health District residents is provided by partners in ACT or Sydney Local Health Districts.
- The burden of potentially avoidable deaths and hospitalisations caused by chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cancer.
- High rates of developmental vulnerability among children.
- Financial and workforce limitations to respond to the service demands of the community.
- A population spread across a vast geographic area with uneven population patterns.
- Vulnerable communities who may sometimes need to travel to access health care but may not have the infrastructure, social or financial resources to easily do so.
- Ageing population with complex health needs.
- Projected future increased demand for health services.
- Aboriginal life expectancy gap and high rate of chronic conditions.
- Attracting and retaining an engaged and highly skilled workforce.

- A changing environment and disasters such as drought, floods and bushfire.
- Maintaining financial sustainability.

### Our Opportunities

- Recognising and enhancing the quality of our wonderful staff who care for our community.
- Using innovation in service delivery and adapting new models of care to meet the needs of our communities.
- Using virtual health care and technology to improve access to services, and deliver better patient outcomes.
- Renew our focus on and commitment to improving the health of Aboriginal people.
- Providing more out-of-hospital care and integrated care.
- Developing a regional approach to health and wellbeing in partnership with other healthcare organisations.
- Supporting high performing primary care by building stronger partnerships with the community, GPs, the Primary Health Network, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and other service providers.





# Strategic Plan Summary

Strategy 2026 has four strategic priorities supported by four enablers.

## Strategic Priorities

			
Elevating the human experience	Keeping people healthy and well	Delivering safe care in all settings	Supporting our people
How we will support our patients and community			
Improved access to healthcare Patient designed services Empowered to make change in your health services	Healthy start to life Culturally safe health services Health needs approach to services	Equity in access Improved outcomes for ageing residents Care that is safe, respectful and dignified	Positive experiences Kind and compassionate workforce
How we will support our people and organisation			
Collaborative work spaces Flexible working locations Active support and mentoring	Work that makes a difference Culturally competent and respectful staff Safe rosters	Connecting our regional partners Integrated service delivery	Skilled team of professionals Pride in our work Agreed behaviours Zero tolerance to bullying System of accountability

## Enablers

			
Education, training and research	Health data and analytics	Leadership and Governance	Value and Sustainability
How we will support our patients and community			
Safe and high quality health services Improved health outcomes for our community Evidence based practice	Timely and up-to date clinical information Choice of care modality	Coordinated and consistent care Integrated journey across health services	Securing healthcare for the future Services that meet our people's needs
How we will support our people and organisation			
Access to high quality research, education and training outcomes Enhanced skills and capabilities for our people	Real time performance and outcomes data	Collaborative teamwork across the District Role models for our values	Planning for our future Sustainable models of care





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## Strategy on a Page

Southern NSW Local Health District has identified four strategic priorities that respond to our direction over the next five years. These priorities will guide our delivery of high-quality services with outstanding health and wellbeing outcomes for our communities.





Strategic Priority 1




### Elevating the Human Experience

Empower our patients to make decisions about their healthcare, and provide personalised care to achieve the outcomes that matter most to them.

Our Objectives	How will we do it?	What will success look like?
1.1 Partner with patients and caregivers to make decisions about their care	Set clear goals for what healthcare we provide. Encourage the discussion about advance care plans with all patients. Periodically review the effectiveness of feedback systems. Understand what is important to the patient and family and what limits their access.	Choices offered where clinically appropriate. Increase in advance care plans in medical records.
1.2 Bring kindness and compassion into the delivery of personalised, high quality care	Define true kindness and compassion. Change to people centred services.	Increase in person centred models of care. All staff complete Small Acts of Kindness training.
1.3 Encourage greater health literacy and access to information	Listen to feedback from clients/ patients. Invest in health promotion programs. Improve use of tools to promote health literacy.	Communities understand their health condition and related information. Improved rates of health literacy.
1.4 Engage patients and caregivers in co-design and implementation of new models of care	Embed community member representation on redesign and infrastructure change projects. Re-launch of the REACH (Recognise, Engage, Act, Call, Help) program across the District.	Improvement in patient and caregiver reported outcomes and experience. Increased knowledge of REACH in patient surveys. Increased community and consumer representation and co-design. Increase in people-centred system design.
1.5 Strengthen equitable outcomes and access to care for priority populations	Invest in services that meet community needs.	Increased engagement with representative community organisations. Services delivered in line with community need.

Strategic Priority 2



### Keeping People Healthy and Well

By taking a wellness-focus, we aim to prevent the causes of ill health and establish equitable health outcomes in our community.

Our Objectives	How will we do it?	What will success look like?
2.1 Focus on healthy beginnings to ensure everyone gets the best start in life	Implement the First 2000 Days Framework together with GPs and maternal and child health units and services in all areas of our District. Investment in health services for children and young people.	Children in our community have improved developmental, physical and psychological wellbeing. Increase in perinatal support programs Reduction in maternal smoking rates. Increase the percentage receiving early antenatal care. Reduce the percentage of low birth weight babies. Increase screening rates and timely access to early intervention services. Decrease rate, severity and complications of obesity in childhood. Maintain or improve immunisation rates. Reduce the percentage of children classified as developmentally vulnerable.
2.2 Make progress toward zero suicides recognising their devastating impacts on society	Expand mental health services targeted towards self harm and suicide.	Drastic reduction of self-harm and suicide within our communities. Facilitating access to timely intervention services.
2.3 Facilitate mentally healthy living for our whole community	Better understand the needs of our mental health clients by hearing about and sharing lived experiences. Partner with all community groups to optimise their well-being in the community. Improving access to support services for people with mental health issues.	Increase in information about mental health wellbeing. Reduction in self-reported rates of psychological distress. Reduction in mental health presentations and admissions.
2.4 Close the gap by focusing on Aboriginal health and wellness	Have clear targets created in consultation with all relevant groups to ensure action.	More Aboriginal people access healthcare services when and where they need it. Lowered mortality rate. Decrease in potentially preventable hospital services.
2.5 Connect with partners to identify the social determinants of health within our communities	Ensure that Closing the Gap action plan is alive and thriving in our District. Benchmark services against similar populations. Focus on the drivers or determinants of health	Increase in health promotion programs. Increase in life expectancy. Reduction in rates of adults and children who are overweight and obese. Reduction in smoking rates. Increase in enrolments to Get Healthy Service. Reduction in burden of disease. Equity in services across our District.



Strategic Priority 3



Delivering Safe Care in all Settings

We will think beyond the Hospital to provide safe, quality care in settings that can deliver better outcomes and experiences for patients.

Our Objectives	How will we do it?	What will success look like?
3.1 Embed a closer to home philosophy delivering more services in the community	Invest in care options across the health journey. Education for communities on services provided.	Care coordinators manage patient journeys. Choice of service providers and method. Improved self-management of health conditions. Increase in Hospital in the Home, ambulatory care and non-admitted activity. Increase in virtual health care delivery activity.
3.2 Support healthy ageing ensuring people can live independently at home for longer	Optimise community-based care. Better collaboration and meaningful communication with GPs. Ensure we live the philosophy that we value and actively respect the elderly in our community.	People receive care that is safe, respectful and dignified. Care coordinators manage patient journeys. Community accessing care in the home. Reduction in preventable hospitalisations. Timely access to coordinated care and smooth transitions across services.
3.3 Connect with partners to deliver integrated care services	Co-locate community health services with regional partners. Embed/monitor partnership agreements and processes.	Multidisciplinary approach to all services. Community health delivered in community hubs. Borderless health services. Increase provision of timely discharge summaries. Reduction in presentations related to local commissioned programs. Formalised agreements in place for cross-border and networked services. Patient journeys are connected across the health system.
3.4 Deliver world class hospital care for all patients	Invest in our staff to maintain and acquire skills. Invest in technology to enable access.	Increased access to specialist care. Reduced cost per separation. Improved elective surgery access. Improved emergency treatment performance and time.
3.5 Align infrastructure and service planning around the future care needs	Infrastructure plan developed. Partner with population health, planning and delivery providers.	Local services based on community needs. Networks in place for services. Planning incorporates emerging trends for models of care. Planning addresses key demand for services. Amenities that support patient and caregiver emotional and physical wellbeing.

Strategic Priority 4



Supporting our People

We will support a flexible, adaptable workforce to meet changing health needs and expectations, and deliver the best outcomes and experiences for our community.

Our Objectives	How will we do it?	What will success look like?
4.1 Strengthen diversity in our workforce and decision-making	Embed and maintain staff profile to meet needs. Implement leadership principles to enable greater diversity and experience.	Increase number of women in leadership. Increase Aboriginal workforce as a proportion of the workforce. Increase workforce with lived experience of disability. Increase younger workforce. Increase mentorship opportunities for staff.
4.2 Empower staff to work to their full potential	Develop education /training strategy / key skills framework. Create an 'ideas fund' to generate ideas for improvements.	Formal mentoring, education and development plans for all leaders. Renewal implemented from the ground up.
4.3 Enhance workforce capability through targeted training and development	Enhance feedback loop from clients / patients. Define career pathways for all positions.	Succession plans in place for every position. Trauma informed care for all frontline staff. Increase the percentage of workforce who have completed cultural awareness training (face-to-face and online). Volunteers are onboarded and supported with training and resources.
4.4 Build positive work environments that bring out the best in everyone	Implement Elevate. Engage patients and clients in the assessment of health services. Empower staff as patient advocates. Support staff health and wellbeing programs.	Kind and compassionate staff. Improvement in patient reported outcomes and experience. Improved complaint resolution. Staff who are well and resilient. Improvement in staff engagement and culture measures.
4.5 Attract and retain quality staff who put patients first	Timely recruitment measures in place. Partner with patients and carers to create meaningful content for staff and volunteer orientation.	Reduced annual staff turnover. Continued networking opportunities. Shared employment strategies across the region/agencies. Decreased VMO and agency staff usage.

# Our Enablers for Change

			
Education, Training and Research	Health Data and Analytics	Leadership and Governance	Value and Sustainability
What we will do			
Safety and quality through innovative health and medical research.  Targeted health care through personalised and precision medicine.  Increase access to clinical trial programs.  Increase research projects.	Integrated and accessible health data and information to be shared with clinicians.  Invest in digital hardware and software.  Technology enabled health care services and delivery models.  Enable a digital literate workforce.	Performance measures aligned with outcomes.  Governance and leadership supporting the system and delivering outcomes.  Continue to identify and harness 'critical friends' to improve our effectiveness.	Value based healthcare that prioritises outcomes and collaboration.  Value based purchasing and procurement.  Environmentally sustainable footprint.
How we will do it			
Providing every consumer the opportunity to undertake Outcome and Experience measures.  Support staff to enter projects into Safety and Quality Awards.  Support staff to apply for research grants.	Invest in technologies to generate real time productivity data.  Invest in technologies to generate real time outcome data.  Implement a virtual care strategy.  Integrate digital literacy into staff learning outcomes.	Grow innovative models of care.  Flexibility to change quickly and nimbly.  Invest in clinical and non-clinical leadership development.  Staff are encouraged to share responsibility for renewal and improvement.	Sustainable & environmentally friendly product choices.  Planning for future investment not current savings.  Managing District FTE.  Activity, finance and efficiency data integrated together.  Access to accurate reporting for procurement.  Embed sustainable models of practice.

# Delivering our Strategies – a Roadmap

The Priorities outlined in our Strategic Plan are supported by a Delivery Roadmap. The Roadmap highlights the focus required to implement our strategic priorities so that we achieve our five year goals. While the District will be working toward achieving our goals over every year, the dark diamonds below show when we will focus our attention on these goals.

Detailed timelines, goals, responsibilities and measures for success are identified in our annual operational plans. The operational plan is monitored regularly to track our progress and further shape delivery of our strategy to achieve our expected outcomes.

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
Elevating the Human Experience					
Partner with patients and caregivers to make decisions about their care	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Bring kindness and compassion into the delivery of personalised, high quality care	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Encourage greater health literacy and access to information	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Engage patients and caregivers in co-design and implementation of new models of care	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Strengthen equitable outcomes and access to care for priority populations	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Keeping people healthy and well					
Focus on healthy beginnings to ensure everyone gets the best start in life	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Make progress toward zero suicides recognising the devastating impacts on society	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Facilitate mentally healthy living for our whole community	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Close the gap by tackling Aboriginal health and wellness	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Address the social determinants of ill health within our communities	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Delivering safe care in all settings					
Embed a closer to home philosophy delivering more services in the community	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Support healthy ageing ensuring people can live independently at home for longer	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Connect with partners to deliver integrated care services	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Deliver world class hospital care for all patients	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Align infrastructure and service planning around future care needs	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Supporting our people					
Strengthen diversity in our workforce and decision-making	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Empower staff to work to their full potential	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Enhance workforce capability through targeted training and development	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Build positive work environments that bring out the best in everyone	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Attract and retain quality workers who put patients first	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆



# STRATEGY 2026 LEADING RURAL HEALTHCARE

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**elevate**  
together as one