

# Engaging Communities, Elevating Care



Far West Local Health District  
2022-2023 Year in Review





## OUR VISION

Excellence in rural and remote health.

## OUR MISSION

Enabling health in our communities.

## OUR VALUES

Collaboration / Openness / Respect / Empowerment



Artist credit: Corey Payne, a Paakintji / Wilyakali Aboriginal Artist born and raised in the Far West of NSW, Broken Hill

## Acknowledgement of Country

Far West Local Health District acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands within its boundaries, the Barkandji, Muthi Muthi, Wilyakali, Ngiyampaa, Wadigali, Malyangaba and the Wangkumara peoples. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Elders past and present and their ancient wisdoms. We acknowledge the communities of today and the Aboriginal community members who are part of our communities.

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## COVER IMAGE

Location: Buronga HealthOne  
Image: Yarning Circle  
Photographer: Alexander Mayes

Meaning: “The inclusion of a yarning circle provides a dedicated area for respite, ceremony, and cultural gatherings. Indigenous medicinal plants are thoughtfully integrated into the landscaping, further strengthening the connection to the land and indigenous traditions. User groups were vocal on design concepts that connected with the regional context and reflected the connection with the river.”

# Chair & Chief Executive Report

The focus of the Far West Local Health District this year has moved beyond the intense response to the heights of the COVID pandemic to re-establishing many of our core services. Amidst the ongoing vigilance for further COVID outbreaks, there is also the challenge of addressing other emerging issues.

One key concern we've encountered involves providing assistance to the communities within our boundaries dealing with the influx of flooding and the associated health challenges. During this period, we have intensified our vigilance in monitoring cases of Japanese Encephalitis, which is linked to the inundation of water in our communities.

It has been a busy year for the staff and community planning our exciting new health facilities. Nonetheless, the resilience of both clinical and support staff working under pressure to deliver quality healthcare to the community has not waived during this time.



**In January 2023 we also celebrated the official opening of Buronga Health One.**

The event was attended by The Hon. Paul Toole, Deputy Premier of NSW, as well as numerous community members. The opening celebrated the strong collaboration between the Local Health District, Health Infrastructure, and the local Aboriginal Land Council.

Throughout the year, we have diligently conducted numerous planning meetings in anticipation of the construction projects for essential facilities within our organisation. These projects include the development of new facilities in the Broken Hill Emergency Department, the Broken Hill Mental Health Inpatient Unit, as well as Wentworth Hospital. Moreover, we are committed to addressing the accommodation needs of our staff in Balranald and Broken Hill by providing much-needed facilities. These initiatives reflect our unwavering dedication to enhancing the quality of care and services for both our patients and staff members. As we move forward, we look forward to the successful completion of these vital projects, which will contribute significantly to the growth and advancement of our Local Health District.

In February, our organisation was acknowledged at the State Allied Health Awards. Two of our staff members, Rebecca Smith and Stephanie Wylie, achieved remarkable recognition during the event.

“It has been a busy year for the staff and community planning our exciting new health facilities. Nonetheless, the resilience of both clinical and support staff working under pressure to deliver quality healthcare to the community has not waived during this time.”

Rebecca Smith's outstanding contributions and leadership qualities were rewarded as she was honoured with the prestigious title of "Allied Health Leader of the Year". This recognition is a testament to her dedication, expertise, and commitment to delivering outstanding healthcare services.

Additionally, we are immensely proud of Stephanie Wylie, whose remarkable achievements earned her the distinction of being a finalist in the "Early Career Allied Health Professional of the Year" category. Stephanie's dedication to her profession and her commitment to improving the lives of our patients have truly set her apart.

In February this year, we also celebrated the graduation of our first Aboriginal Violence Abuse and Neglect Service (VANS) trainee, Kyeesha Jones. Kyeesha is a proud Barkandji woman who completed her four-year training program and is a highly valued member of our VANS team.

The Far West Local Health District has also been continuing to develop a strong strategic partnership with Sydney Local Health District. This partnership has seen the successful introduction of the virtual Intensive Care Unit concept (vICU) which has celebrated its first anniversary of operation. The vICU has enabled patients in the Far West to have access to world-class critical care delivered through the partnership with Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital in Sydney.

The partnership has provided staff from Far West with valuable opportunities to visit RPA and exchange experiences in their ICU. In return, several RPA staff



have visited Broken Hill to gain firsthand insights into our ICU facilities and practices. This collaboration has enriched the knowledge and expertise of both healthcare teams, further strengthening our commitment to delivering exceptional patient care. The strength of this partnership is now being extended into other areas of care across the hospital.

In delivering healthcare services to our communities, we recognise that the LHD cannot do it alone. Collaborating with our esteemed partners, such as the Aboriginal Medical Services of Maari Ma and Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC), as well as our strong alliance with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, empowers the Far West communities to access a comprehensive array of health services. These valuable partnerships fortify our commitment to ensuring the wellbeing and betterment of the regions we serve. Together, we can make a significant and positive impact on the health outcomes of our communities.

“Our dedication to collaborating with the community remains steadfast as we actively engage members in shaping the services we provide.”

Our dedication to collaborating with the community remains steadfast as we actively engage members in shaping the services we provide. Strengthening this commitment, we are proud to have vibrant and involved Health Councils associated with all our facilities. Building on this progress, we have taken significant steps in the past year by establishing the Carer Advisory Committee and the Youth Health Advisory Committee. These two new community advisory groups will play pivotal roles in influencing the direction of our services in the future. By working closely with these advisory committees, we ensure that our healthcare offerings align with the evolving needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

**Andrew Refshauge**  
*Chair - Far West Local Health District*

**Brad Astill**  
*Chief Executive - Far West Local Health District*



**Andrew Refshauge**  
*Chair - Far West Local Health District*  
*Photo credit: Barrier Truth*



**Brad Astill**  
*Chief Executive - Far West Local Health District*



# About Far West Local Health District

**Far West Local Health District (FWLHD) is one of 15 Local Health Districts (LHDs) in the New South Wales health system and the most remote.**

We are responsible for the management of public hospitals and healthcare clinics and facilities throughout the State's vast far west.

In 2022-23 our staff attended to 23,271 presentations in our emergency departments, 8,448 inpatient admissions, and 135,716 hospital non-admitted patient services, performed 1,777 surgeries and delivered 184 babies during the past financial year.

Our network of hospitals and community services provide for the residents and tourists that populate 194,949 square kilometres. Bordering, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland, we are located in one of the most sparsely populated regions of NSW, characterised by breathtaking panoramas, historic towns, and a rich Indigenous culture.

FWLHD encompasses the four local government areas (LGAs) of Broken Hill, Central Darling, Wentworth and Balranald and incorporates the traditional lands of seven Aboriginal nations of the Barkandji, Muthi Muthi, Wilyakali, Ngiyampaa, Wadigali, Malyangaba and Wangkumara peoples.

Our population fluctuates throughout the year with thousands of tourists attracted to local events, the unique remote arid terrain, an array of native species, 30,000-year-old Indigenous rock carvings, underground opal mines, and an eclectic collection of galleries featuring the works of internationally renowned local artists. The landscape has long been a location of choice for global filmmakers. Iconic local events including St Pat's Race meeting, the Mundi Mundi Bash music festival, Broken Heel Festival and AgFair attract more than 13,000 people a year. The residential population of FWLHD is 27,994 with 11.5 percent, or 3230, people identifying as Aboriginal. The number of people living in the area is projected to decrease to 24,326 by 2033.

The proportion of people aged 70 years and over is projected to grow to 23 percent by 2033, having a significant impact on the demand for healthcare services.





# Far West Local Health District at a Glance 2022 - 2023



**3,527**

Ambulance presentations



**1,777**

Surgeries



**23,271**

Emergency Department  
presentations



**184**

Births in  
Hospital



**8,448**

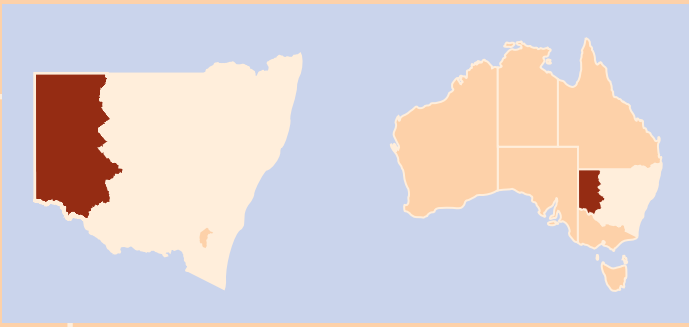
Total  
Admissions



**135,716**

Hospital non-admitted patient  
services (occasions of service)

Sources: Health Information Exchange (HIE), Enterprise Data Warehouse for Analysis Reporting and Decisions (EDWARD),  
NSW Health Bed Reporting System Ipm - WNSW/FWLHD Domain report ADM001 eMR Discern Analytics 2.0.  
Health System Performance Report Far West LHD June 2023



QLD



**1. TIBOOBURRA**

- Tibooburra Health Service

**2. WHITE CLIFFS**

- White Cliffs Health Service

**3. WILCANNIA**

- Wilcannia Multipurpose Service

**4. BROKEN HILL**

- Broken Hill Health Service
- Broken Hill Community Health Centre – Wilyakali Palii-mala Kirra
- Safe Haven Café
- Broken Hill Community Health Dental Clinic – Wilyakali Palii-mala Kirra

**5. MENINDEE**

- Menindee Health Service

**6. IVANHOE**

- Ivanhoe Health Service

**7. DARETON**

- Dareton Primary Care and Community Health Service
- Dareton Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Service

**8. BURONGA**

- Buronga HealthOne

**9. WENTWORTH**

- Wentworth Health Service

**10. BALRANALD**

- Balranald Multipurpose Service

SA

NSW

ACT

VIC

Sydney







## Our major health issues are:

- Aboriginal health and wellbeing
- Chronic disease, including diabetes, cardiovascular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cancer
- Smoking during pregnancy
- Suicide; and
- Childhood vulnerability.

While having the lowest hospitalisations compared to other LHDs in NSW, the rate of self-harm was five times higher than in the rest of the state.

Of our hospitalisations, 53 percent were same-day admissions with the majority for hemodialysis.

People aged 65 years and older make up 48 percent of all admissions.

The majority of emergency department presentations are for single-site injuries followed by digestive system illnesses.



# Our Performance

Quality healthcare is care that is safe, effective, patient-centred, timely, efficient and equitable.

A safe and high-quality health system provides the most appropriate and best value care while keeping patients safe from preventable harm. Far West LHD is dedicated to preventing and minimising harm within our hospitals through patient engagement. Collaborative efforts play a crucial role in diminishing complications and enhancing patient care while optimising health care facility operations and efficiencies.

FWLHD achieved most of the key safety and quality targets set by NSW Health.

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## We exceeded performance targets in the following key areas:

- Hospital-acquired pressure injuries
- Hospital-acquired venous thromboembolism
- Hospital-acquired renal failure
- Hospital-acquired gastrointestinal bleeding
- Hospital-acquired medication complications
- Hospital-acquired delirium
- Hospital-acquired incontinence
- 3rd and 4th-degree perineal lacerations during delivery
- Hospital-acquired neonatal birth trauma
- Falls-related injuries in hospital (resulting in fracture or intracranial injury)

**Get Healthy** is a free telephone-based coaching service that supports people aged 16 years and older to make lifestyle changes with a focus on healthy eating, physical activity, and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. In 2022-23, there were 19 referrals to the Get Healthy service and 13 referrals to the Get Healthy in Pregnancy service.

**The Get Healthy in Pregnancy** phone service supports women to make healthy lifestyle changes during pregnancy. Pregnant women are referred to the program by health professionals.

Through the promotion of physical activity, healthy eating and reduced small screen time, two state-wide programs delivered through our Heath District give children the best start to life.

**Munch & Move** supports the healthy development of children from birth to five years of age in NSW early childhood education and care (ECEC) and family day care services. Of the 17 Munch & Move trained ECECs in Far West Local Health District, 53% implemented 80% of program strategies in 2022-23. Face-to-face training was held in June 2023 at Broken Hill, further supporting 15 educators from 8 far west services.

**Live Life Well @ School** supports primary schools to build a supportive environment that encourages students to make positive healthy eating choices and enables more students, to be more active, more often. The program also works to provide opportunities for primary school-aged children to develop and master the important fundamental movement skills that can keep them active into adulthood. In 2022-23, 72% of trained primary schools participating in Live Life Well @ School implemented 70% of program strategies in their school.







## Patient-centred Culture and Prevention

Measures of a positive patient-centred culture include the patient experience index for which patients provide a rating out of 10 for their overall care, staff performance, organised care, and if they would speak highly of the care they received to family and friends.

In 2022-23 we scored **8.21** for admitted patients.

Similarly, the patient engagement index scores patient perception of information provision, involvement in decisions on care and discharge, and continuity of care.

FWLHD scored **8.18** for admitted patients and **7.54** for emergency department patients.



Dr George Chimpanda and Dr Cameron Spenceley in the Intensive Care Unit

## OVERALL PATIENT EXPERIENCE INDEX

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENTS

NSW Health Target

**8.6 out of 10**

FWLHD

**8.21**

## PATIENT ENGAGEMENT INDEX

ADMITTED PATIENTS

NSW Health Target

**8.5 out of 10**

FWLHD

**8.18**

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENTS

NSW Health Target

**8.5 out of 10**

FWLHD

**7.54**

Get Healthy referral target

**19**

Get Healthy in Pregnancy referrals

**13**

All data as of 30 June 2023.

# Our Staff

Far West LHD is a major employer with **738 full-time equivalent staff**, many of whom are local to the communities they serve, with nurses and midwives making up nearly 44 percent of our full-time workforce.

Our healthcare facilities are delivered from **12 sites** including two hospitals and two Multipurpose services. FWLHD partners with major Adelaide, Sydney, and Melbourne hospitals for those who require high-level specialist care.

“There are some amazing people that work in our District, and lots of opportunity to learn and grow as a professional.”

**Barbara Turner - Deputy General Manager  
Remote Health Services**

“We train our staff to be competent and autonomous, we support ongoing professional development for our staff and ensure supervision is readily available. If our staff stay with us for a few years and gain a range of experience there are often opportunities to work in senior roles.”

**Melissa Welsh - Director of Allied Health and  
Integrated Community Services**

# Staff Snapshot



Allied Health

**59**



Hotel Services

**67**



Corporate Services & Hospital Support

**168**



Oral Health Practitioners & Support Workers

**5.3**



Nursing

**321**



Medical

**25**



Scientific & Technical Clinical Support Staff

**9.1**



Maintenance & Trades

**16**



Other Professional & Support Staff

**59**



Other Staff

**9**



Total Number of Full-Time Employees

**738**



Total Number of Staff including FTE, PTE & Casual

**822**

# Financial Sustainability

Far West Local Health District aims to provide equitable, safe, high-quality, human-centered healthcare services. Financial sustainability instils resilience, productivity, growth and innovation which is fundamental to providing excellence in rural and remote healthcare to the people of Far West NSW. FWLHD has policies and controls in place to effectively manage its assets and finances.

## Financial Results

- Total expenditure for 2022-2023 was \$148.7M
- Total revenue for 2022-2023 was \$151.5M
- The net result for the year was a \$2.8M surplus

## Highlights

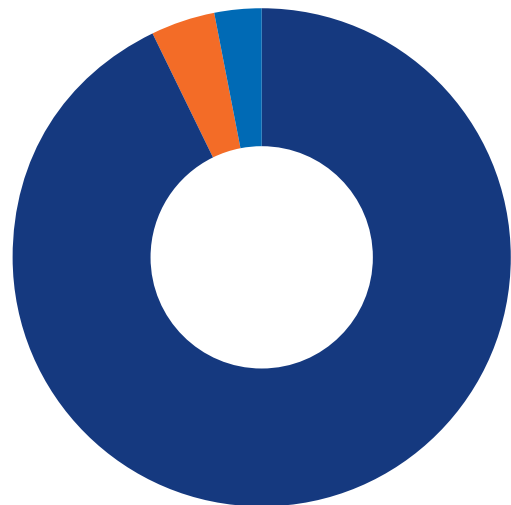
There were numerous significant capital projects that were in progress during the 2022/23 financial year including:

- Wentworth Health Service Redevelopment (\$30M)
- Broken Hill Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit (MHIU) (\$15M)
- Broken Hill Emergency Department (\$10M)
- Key Worker Accommodation (\$15.3M)

## COVID-19 Pandemic

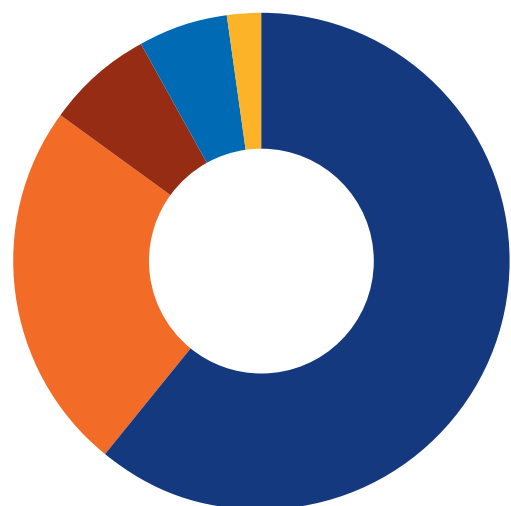
The Ministry of Health provided \$2.0M in funding for incremental expenditure incurred due to COVID-19. Major services reimbursed included:

- Salaries and Wages
- Pathology testing PCR's
- Drugs Pharmacy Dispenses (COVID-19 Antivirals)
- Medical and Surgical Supplies
- Vaccination drugs administered



## Revenue

- 93% Government Contributions
- 4% Other Revenue
- 3% Patient Fees



## Expenditure

- 61% Salary & Wages
- 24% Other Operating Expenses
- 7% VMOs
- 6% Depreciation & Amortisation
- 2% Grants and Affiliated Health Organisations



# Chief Executive Unit

The Chief Executive works closely with the Board and the Executive Leadership Team to ensure our Local Health District delivers consistently high patient care, supported by enhanced local input from clinicians and the community. Local decision-making is at the forefront of how the Far West LHD functions, led by a professional Board and LHD Executive Team.

Our core values of Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Empowerment ensure that we are living well together and working collaboratively to improve the health and wellbeing of rural people whilst making meaningful gains in Aboriginal health and delivering world class rural health care.

## Rural Senior Executive Forum

The Rural Senior Executive Forum was hosted by the Far West LHD (Broken Hill) in November 2022. The Forum brings together Chief Executives from across the health system with the Senior Executives of the Ministry of Health, to consider health issues of system-wide interest, including the NSW Health budget, development and implementation of health policy, and monitoring of health system performance.

The Executives enjoyed a tour of Silverton and gained valuable insight into rural Local Health Districts and our functioning in comparison to metropolitan Health Facilities.

*Chief Executives enjoying a tour of Silverton*

## 2023 Health Management Internship Program

In partnership with the Australasian College of Health Service Management (ACHSM), the Health Management Internship program offers the Far West LHD the chance to enhance the professional growth of its personnel, enabling them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for managerial roles that are challenging to fill within the organisation.

This program concentrates on the upskilling of Far West LHD's current employees to a succession plan for future management positions within the Health District. Over a period of 2 years, interns will complete rotations with various members of the executive leadership team.



*Olivia Sice - Far West LHD Inaugural 2023 Health Management Intern*

“Over the two-year program, I hope to gain as much knowledge as possible to be an effective and passionate leader, promote awareness and advocate for our communities, effect positive change, and strongly promote healthcare and patient equality. I want to lead by example, with empathy and compassion, and stay true to my ‘girl from the bush’ roots with a strong focus on collaboration.”



# Clinical Operations

The Clinical Operations Directorate is responsible for operations across the Far West Local Health District.

This Directorate covers a wide range of health service delivery settings and corporate functions. Its goal is to provide excellent, high quality health services that are consumer and family centric, aligned with NSW Health's strategic directions and FWLHD's operational plans, to enhance health outcomes for our community.

## COVID Reflection

In January 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, ushering in subsequent years of unprecedented challenges for health systems worldwide.

Throughout this period, the Far West Local Health District remained committed to providing acute inpatient and community-based services across the LHD, working collaboratively with our stakeholders. Our distinctive geographical hurdles served as a catalyst for innovation, ensuring that our communities felt well-supported and retained uninterrupted access to essential healthcare services.

Over the past three years, our staff has consistently exceeded expectations. The COVID-19 pandemic has left its mark on us individually and as an organisation. Throughout this challenging period, our workforce has exhibited unwavering dedication and resilience to serve our communities. The Executive and Board are proud and humbled by the tremendous efforts of our workforce. We requested additional effort, and our team delivered. This dedication to our communities and to one another is what truly makes a positive impact on the lives of others.

The Far West LHD sees the pandemic as a chance to look back on our achievements and use the lessons and innovations to improve healthcare services for our communities, in partnership with our collaborators.



*Flooding around Wentworth District Hospital  
Photograph by Glenn Milne from Red Cliffs, Victoria*

## Facing the Floods

The floods in 2022/23 had a significant impact on most of our communities along the Darling River. The LHD joined forces with the Central Darling, Balranald, and Wentworth Shire Local Emergency Management Committees at the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), ensuring the safety of our communities, facilities, and workforce. Our staff were dispatched to aid local health services in upholding the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals throughout the immediate response and the subsequent recovery phase.

In March 2023, the township of Menindee and downstream properties along the Darling-Barka River faced additional adversity when an unforeseen blackwater event resulted in the sudden death of millions of fish along the river. The distress and emotional impact were evident within the local community traumatised by the vision and stench of so many dead fish. The declaration of an emergency and the initiation of an Emergency Operations Centre by the Local Emergency Management Committees prompted the Local Health District to collaborate once more with various agencies and hold community meetings to effectively handle the situation.



# Clinical Operations

## Telestroke

The implementation of Telestroke has provided our local medical officers with specialist support when treating a patient with stroke-like symptoms in the Health District.

The goal of this service is to improve health outcomes, diagnosis, and treatment in Far West NSW for individuals with stroke symptoms. It achieves this by connecting specialist stroke physicians via the NSW Telestroke Service to Broken Hill Hospital, utilising telehealth technology to ensure the timely delivery of critical stroke care. As we know, stroke is a medical emergency and timely access to specialist clinical diagnostics and management is crucial.

Approximately 80% of strokes are caused by a blood clot that blocks a blood vessel in the brain and the management and treatment of these strokes is time critical.

Access to stroke treatments is more limited for individuals residing in rural and remote regions compared to those in metropolitan areas. The NSW Telestroke Service facilitates the delivery of world class hyperacute stroke care to Broken Hill. This is achieved by virtually linking specialist stroke physicians with local medical officers in our Hospital Emergency Department and Patient wards, ensuring rapid and efficient service availability 24/7. The sooner a patient is consulted and diagnosed by a stroke specialist, the better the chances of a successful outcome.

“ Broken Hill Hospital is among the 23 sites across NSW that have adopted this crucial service to provide timely therapies to patients within their local area, thereby minimising the necessity of transferring them to larger facilities. ”

Since the start of this service, significant key outcomes have emerged, including:

- Recent data indicating that prior to the implementation of Telestroke, Broken Hill Hospital averaged around 40 minutes from door to CAT scan time for FAST+ patients\*. Following the introduction of the Telestroke service in June 2022, the average time has decreased to 25 minutes for FAST+ patients\*, falling below the state average.
- The introduction of a new online stroke assessment tool has streamlined the stroke assessment process. Medical officers can now conduct a comprehensive assessment within approximately 8 minutes, leading to time savings.
- Notable reduction in unnecessary inter-hospital transfers for stroke patients.
- The service empowering patients and their families by enabling video consultations at the bedside with specialists, putting them at the core of decision-making.
- Access to world-class specialist stroke physicians who provide continuous support to medical officers throughout the entire process.

\* Face, Arms, Speech, and Time positive are symptoms of an acute stroke.

Telestroke implementation team



# People & Culture

The provision of excellence in rural and remote health care fundamentally rests on the skills, capability, and commitment of our people.

Throughout 2022-23, the People & Culture Directorate has consistently focused on the ongoing development, training, and empowerment of people and people managers overseeing our workforce. During the year significant work was undertaken to determine what the needs of our people were and how this could be supported by the Directorate.

Several roles have been created. These include:

- The appointment of a **Talent Acquisition Lead** who is responsible for the recruitment teams, their recruitment activities, and focussing on developing sustainable recruitment avenues. The objective of this approach is to pinpoint people, both from within and external to the Health District, who are prepared to contribute their expertise, skills, and enthusiasm to the district.
- The establishment of the **Learning and Development Lead**. This position was created to address the recognised learning and development gap in our Far West LHD workforce. This role will focus on capability building within the organisation that will support the achievement of the Far West LHD priorities outlined within the Strategic Plan 2021-2026 and Workforce Plan 2020-2025. The position will work closely with managers and staff to build their capabilities and support them with their professional development.

## Recruitment

Recruitment is a key activity for supporting our people to ensure that we have the staff to provide excellence in rural health care whilst guaranteeing that our people can take annual leave and have work/life balance.

**During 2022/23 our recruitment team:**

**Engaged 132 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) agency nurses across the district.**

This represents a 240% increase on the previous year and the availability of agency nurses increased post-Covid.

**Processed 947 recruitment requisitions through advertising and re-advertising.**

This resulted in 417 permanent Letters of Offer and 132 agency Letters of Offer.



Corporate Induction continues to be held bi-monthly with presentations by the Executive Leadership Team and Senior Managers

## Employee Recognition

Brilliance Nominations have been an active form of positive feedback among Far West employees since 2020. The Brilliance Nomination process was introduced in response to staff feedback in the People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) to improve recognition processes within our organisation. The recognition process continues to be a popular form of communication for staff to share positive feedback and recognition with their peers. An average of 52 brilliance nominations are received monthly with a total of 628 nominations for this financial year. Brilliance Awards are shared directly with the recipient and their line manager as a part of the employee recognition strategy. Each month a list of recipient names is posted in the Far West In Focus newsletter. Additionally, the most outstanding brilliance recipient and team for the year are recognised in the Far West Annual Health Awards.





# Executive Nursing, Midwifery & Clinical Governance

In line with our commitment to enhancing the nursing and midwifery workforce, the Far West Local Health District has taken significant strides in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the Nursing & Midwifery Career Pathways Guideline. This initiative, a key component of the Nursing & Midwifery Workforce Plan 2023-2026, has been designed to address the needs and aspirations of our valued clinicians while ensuring the retention of their expertise within our district.

The Career Pathways Guideline encompasses a comprehensive framework of tertiary qualifications, incorporating contextualised pathways linked to the NSW Health Workforce Plan 2022-2032, as well as other crucial workforce plans and priorities. To achieve this, we have engaged closely with key stakeholders, most notably the Nursing & Midwifery Office, in a collaborative effort to ensure the success of these pathways.

A notable feature of this innovative approach is our focus not only on recruitment but also on the holistic support of our nursing and midwifery professionals. By recognising and nurturing their career aspirations and requirements, we aim to empower them to achieve their professional goals effectively. To kickstart this initiative, a dedicated professional careers education day was organised for our new graduates, aimed at informing them about the various benefits and opportunities offered within our Local Health District.

## Strengthening Partnerships and Collaborations

Over the past year, we have made substantial strides in fostering partnerships with other Local Health Districts, including the Sydney Local Health District, Murrumbidgee Local Health District, Western New South Wales Local Health District, and South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. These collaborations have proven instrumental in implementing a range of quality improvement projects and services.



Far West LHD New Graduate Nurses Cohort 2023

One significant outcome of these partnerships is the increased participation in our New Graduate Metro Rural Exchange Program. We have successfully placed recruits in Sydney Hospital and Menindee Health service, promoting an exchange of expertise and experiences between urban and rural healthcare settings. Additionally, an exchange program between the Sydney and Broken Hill Emergency Departments has further enriched the learning opportunities for our nursing and midwifery staff.

Expanding on our partnership initiatives, we have integrated Virtual Intensive Care, Virtual Nurse Assist, and Virtual Midwife Care. These cutting-edge virtual assistants enable seamless communication and collaboration between our nursing staff in Broken Hill and the other districts, facilitating the exchange of vital patient care information and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Furthermore, these virtual platforms serve as valuable educational resources, offering training and guidance for our staff when making critical patient care decisions.



Members of the FWLHD Nursing & Midwifery Education/Clinical Consultant Team with Jacqui Cross (Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officer), Wendy Gleeson (Executive Director of Nursing & Midwifery) and Sue Randall (University Department of Rural Health)



Clinical Nurse Consultant Kahlia Liston providing a demonstration of the vICU (virtual Intensive Care Unit) technology and how our collaboration between Far West LHD and Sydney LHD works

The commitment to staff development and education remains a priority, with our nursing professionals attending virtual education sessions provided by tertiary hospitals. These opportunities enable them to stay updated on the latest advancements in healthcare, further enhancing the quality of care provided to our patients.

Through these endeavours, the Far West Local Health District continues to build a resilient and thriving nursing and midwifery workforce. The dedication to nurturing talent, strengthening collaborations, and embracing technological innovations ensures that our clinicians are equipped to deliver the highest standard of care to the community we proudly serve.

## Clinical Governance

At the Far West Local Health District, we recognise the critical importance of clinical governance in ensuring the delivery of first-rate patient care. Understanding that safety and quality must remain constant priorities, our Clinical Governance Unit (CGU) has taken proactive steps to establish an inclusive platform that encourages active participation from all staff members.

A notable accomplishment is the launch of the Safety and Quality Newsletter by the CGU in January 2023. This represents a significant stride in our commitment to patient safety and quality care. The newsletter serves as a powerful tool in fostering continuous engagement and conversation among healthcare professionals, sparking meaningful discussions on these crucial aspects of healthcare.

Through this initiative, the CGU team has successfully ignited a culture of ongoing learning and improvement. By introducing a focused theme each month, the newsletter empowers our staff to maintain high standards of patient care. As staff members delve into these themes, they gain valuable insights and practical knowledge that support their commitment to providing exceptional healthcare services.

The CGU's Safety and Quality Newsletter demonstrates our commitment to promoting a safe, compassionate, and high-quality healthcare environment for the benefit of our community.





# Medical Services

In March 2023, the Medical Services Directorate secured the appointment of a new Executive Director of Medical Services (EDMS) - Dr Sarah Wenham. Dr Wenham brings to the role a wealth of local experience. She has lived and worked in the Far West LHD for over 11 years following her appointment as the District's first Specialist Palliative Care Physician in 2012. Dr Wenham will continue in a clinical role with the Palliative Care team, alongside her new position as the EDMS.

The Medical Services team continue to work in close collaboration with all Directorates and our partner organisations to provide high-quality best-practice clinical care to meet the need of the community of the Far West.

Key ongoing and new partnerships this year have included:



**Sydney Local Health District**

**Sydney Local Health District** -including the ongoing virtual Intensive Care Unit (vICU) Service, and development of a new virtual Emergency Department (rED) Service to be launched later in 2023.



**Royal Flying Doctor Service**

**Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS)** -providing medical cover to our remote healthcare facilities.



**My Emergency Doctor (MED)** -providing virtual medical consultation for GP-like presentations to the Broken Hill Emergency Department and Balranald Multipurpose Service.



**SportsMed Adelaide** -for outreach complex orthopaedic surgical procedures.



**The Sydney children's Hospitals Network**

**Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN) and Newborn & Paediatric Emergency Transport Service (NETS)** -for specialist advice and retrieval of critically unwell newborns, children and adolescents.

The Medical Services Directorate continues to promote medical training in the Far West. Interns and Residents continue to be recruited through the NSW Health Rural Preferential Recruitment Scheme, which allows junior doctors committed to rural healthcare to undertake most of their training in rural hospitals, with rotations to Sydney LHD metropolitan hospitals to ensure diversity in their training experience. Far West LHD also hosts specialist training in Surgery, Ophthalmology and Mental Health in partnership with Westmead Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital and Northern Sydney LHD.

Medical Services is working on several new and innovative initiatives to develop medical training pathways and create a stable rural and remote medical workforce for the Far West LHD. We look forward to reporting on the progress of these next year.



(L to R) Dr Vien Truong, Dr James Park and Dr Venod Somoo  
Dr Vien Truong & Dr James Park, interns on rotation from Concord Hospital, and Dr Venod Somoo, a Broken Hill RPR Intern who commenced his medical career in Broken Hill in February 2023



Artist impression of the front entrance of the hospital incorporating Aboriginal Artwork - front entrance represents the “Scar Tree”

# Finance & Corporate Services

## Wentworth Health Service Redevelopment

The NSW Government has committed \$30 million to provide comprehensive, accessible, culturally welcoming, and consumer-friendly health care services to support the needs of the Wentworth community.

October 2022 marked the unveiling of the concept design, which showcased the plans for the new hospital to be constructed on an elevated flood levy adjacent to the existing hospital. The operational transition to the new hospital will facilitate the demolition of the current hospital, creating space for a new ambulance drop-off bay and additional landscaped areas dedicated to the comfort of patients and their families.



Walk on Country with Local Aboriginal Elders at the proposed construction site

In February 2023, the schematic design was revealed, providing essential insights into the new hospital's appearance and internal functionalities for staff, clinicians, and other stakeholders.

Following that, the detailed design phase meticulously outlined the building's facade, room layouts, and the placement of furniture and fixtures in each space. Throughout this process, valuable feedback from key stakeholders, including Wentworth Health Service staff, Two Rivers Health Council, Wentworth Shire Council, the local Aboriginal community, and the Wentworth community, shaped the building's design.

The Wentworth Redevelopment Arts Working Group plays a vital role in incorporating artistic design elements into the redevelopment. Their enthusiastic contributions ensure the integration of arts and heritage items for wellbeing within the project.

This modern facility will incorporate an enhanced service model, featuring inpatient services including low-level acute care beds, restorative and rehabilitative care, a dedicated hospice room, GP consultation, primary health care service spaces, and the introduction of an Urgent Care Service.

As we progress, the redevelopment is set to enter the procurement phase in July 2023, and we remain on track to commence construction by the end of 2023.



# Finance & Corporate Services

## Broken Hill Health Service Redevelopment

In April 2022, the NSW Government announced the Broken Hill Health Service Redevelopment project. The hospital's Emergency Department will undergo a \$10 million upgrade, and a new Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit will be delivered as part of the NSW Government's Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program (SWMHIP).

We are pleased to announce that the master planning phase of the project has been successfully completed, and we have now entered the design phase.

In a significant milestone, the first design images for the Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit were unveiled in July 2023. The facility will be co-designed, carefully situated to the northwest of the current facility, alongside other community mental health services. Its purpose is to offer flexible care to a diverse range of mental health consumers, including the most vulnerable and those with high needs, with a total capacity of eight beds.



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION: SCHEMATIC DESIGN ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH INPATIENT UNIT: MAIN LOUNGE/DINING ROOM

To ensure the facility aligns with the requirements of both staff and the community, we are actively incorporating valuable feedback from stakeholders through a co-design approach. This collaborative process involves continuous consultation and engagement with local stakeholders, including hospital staff, consumers, carer representatives, Broken Hill Health Council, Broken Hill Shire Council, and the broader community, including the Aboriginal community. We initiated these engagements during the early planning stage, and they will persist as we progress further into the project's design.



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION: CONCEPT DESIGN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DROP-OFF AND NEW ENTRY





*Broken Hill Redevelopment - Coles pop-up  
(Left) Vanessa Delaney - Project Lead, Communications & Engagement, Rural & Regional, Health Infrastructure (Right) Annabelle Matthews - Health Service Planner, Far West Local Health District*

To add a touch of artistry and promote a healing environment, a local Arts Working Group was formed and convened for the first time in June 2023. The group's primary objective is to integrate arts into the project design, with a particular focus on the Emergency Department and the Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit. They will identify potential art opportunities and actively participate in the art selection process.

Looking ahead, we anticipate releasing the concept design for the Emergency Department in September 2023, seeking further valuable feedback through consultation. Construction remains on track to commence in mid-2024. Our commitment to collaboration and community involvement remains unwavering as we progress towards the realisation of this essential healthcare initiative.



*Broken Hill Redevelopment - Hospital pop-up  
(Left) Jeremy Oakes - Project Director, Acorn Project Advisory, (Middle) Annabelle Matthews - Health Service Planner, (Right) Gert Halbbebauer - Project Director, Rural & Regional, Health Infrastructure*

## Key Worker Accommodation

To help meet the challenge of providing affordable, accessible accommodation for new and visiting health workers, the Key Worker Accommodation (KWA) program is being delivered by Health Infrastructure across rural and regional NSW in partnership with individual Local Health Districts.

The program aims to deliver modern, adaptable, and environmentally conscious accommodation for health workers in both Broken Hill and Balranald. The project envisions constructing at least 14 single-bed units in Broken Hill and 2 new twin studios (3 in total) in Balranald.

As of July 2023, the tender process for the Balranald work is actively underway, reflecting our commitment to timely and efficient project management. Simultaneously, we have initiated early planning for the key worker accommodation in Broken Hill, with site investigations already in progress. In the spirit of collaboration and to ensure that the accommodations cater to the specific needs of our valued health workers, consultation with user groups is slated to commence in August 2023. We are excited about the positive impact this program will have on providing our dedicated health workers with comfortable and conducive living spaces.



# Allied Health & Integrated Community Services

## RPA Virtual Fracture Clinic

Collaboration between Sydney Local Health District (LHD) and Far West LHD resulted in the successful launch of a virtual fracture clinic for simple fractures on 26 April 2023. Patients who present with specific uncomplicated fractures at Broken Hill Emergency Department (ED) now have the opportunity to be referred to the RPA Virtual Fracture Clinic by their attending ED clinician for the necessary follow-up care.

“Patients can receive follow-up care for their injury at home, at work or school, without unnecessary traveling to hospital or waiting at the busy clinic. The partnership will ensure eligible patients can receive the same quality care irrespective of where they live.”

**Min Jiat Teng – RPA Virtual Physiotherapist**

Under this innovative model of care, the Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) virtual physiotherapist will reach out to the patient at their home, providing crucial support and creating a tailored management plan for their injury. The convenience of remote consultations allows most patients to avoid the need to physically return to the health service for follow-up appointments with local clinicians.

“You don’t have to travel to the hospital, and you can do your rehabilitation from home using your phone. I downloaded the app, clicked on the link, and was into it straight away. It’s a lot easier and I don’t need anyone to help take me to hospital.”

**Dylan Branch - Case Study 2023**

By implementing this virtual fracture clinic, the primary focus is on ensuring that patients receive the most suitable care in the most appropriate setting. This approach not only minimises the requirement for routine follow-ups at the Emergency Department but also ensures that patients, regardless of their geographical location, have access to high-quality care.

This collaboration marks a significant step forward in delivering efficient and patient-centric healthcare services for those with uncomplicated fractures, enhancing overall patient experiences and outcomes.

“RPA virtual clinic has been a game changer. It’s a fantastic service where we can help our patients receive specialist advice in a prompt fashion. My patients have been seen within days of the referral being made. They are then managed from the comfort of their own home. I’ve had very positive feedback from my patients.”

**Local GP**



## Healthy Steps Program

The Health Steps Program was honoured as the winner of the prestigious Far West Local Health District Innovation Awards in 2023. Developed through a collaborative effort between the Integrated Care Osteoarthritis Chronic Care Program (OACCP) and the Dietetics Department, the program’s primary goal was to educate and empower participants with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve significant improvements. These improvements included reducing overall body weight, enhancing diet quality, and incorporating regular physical activity -aligning with the gold standard treatment for osteoarthritis conditions.

Central to the program’s success was its emphasis on goal setting, health coaching, and behaviour change, all of which have demonstrated positive impacts in sustaining long-term outcomes for osteoarthritis populations. Throughout the program, participants

underwent comprehensive assessments and were referred to appropriate treatment interventions, ensuring a multi-disciplinary team approach to conservative care.

The program was run over eight weeks, to ensure adequate timing for physiological change and the establishment of healthy behaviours. Initially, 8 patients were engaged and attended an original assessment with the dietitian and exercise physiologist to gather the baseline measurements for the following:

- Endorsed patient-reported outcome measures.
- Current physical activity and dietary behaviours.
- Anthropometry data, personal goals and interventions.

After the first session, participants received weekly emails containing nutrition factsheets and engaging activities related to the discussed topics. A 20-minute midway phone call was conducted to assess progress toward the set goals and customise strategies based on individual needs. Additionally, participants were provided with a prescribed home exercise program and a logbook to track their activities. In the 9th week, a follow-up review with the dietitian and exercise physiologist took place to re-assess outcome measures, and the results and findings were explained to the participants.

The group showed significant improvements in PROMIS-29 domains, indicating an overall enhancement in health and wellbeing markers. These improvements were consistent across all participants, with an average increase of 1.5 points (knee) and 6.5 points (hip) in Oxford scores, demonstrating notable progress in condition-specific function.

As a group, participants also demonstrated improved dietary quality, with everyone increasing their consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while reducing the intake of discretionary foods and sugary drinks. These dietary changes are associated with sustainable weight loss, improved symptomology, and enhanced quality of life in osteoarthritis populations.

During the program, six participants experienced weight loss, ranging from 0.4kg to 3.8kg. Those with higher weight loss achieved a remarkable reduction



*Megan Johnstone, Dietitian & Kara Leonard, Project Manager Patient Reported Measures*

of 3-4% of their total body weight. Notably, the weight loss achieved in this program was comparable to results seen in other Local Health District programs that required significantly more one-to-one clinician time.

As we analysed individual aspects, we observed consistent trends that emphasised the importance of optimal care for osteoarthritis. The participants who experienced the most remarkable improvements in function and wellbeing were those who achieved significant reductions in body weight and actively participated in regular physical activity.

**“In the Healthy Steps program, participants experienced improved overall outcomes and dietary quality.”**

Additionally, when asked to evaluate the program, 100% of patients expressed extreme motivation to make behavioural changes after completing the program.

The Healthy Steps Program's unique combination of dietetic and exercise interventions shows promising potential for expansion to various other population groups within the Health Service. Evidence-based guidelines support nutrition and exercise interventions for managing chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer, chronic pain, and mental health conditions.



# Allied Health & Integrated Community Services

## Planned Care for Better Health Animation

The Planned Care for Better Health (PCBH) Animation project was a collaborative effort involving Far West Local Health District, Limelight Creative Media, and the NSW Ministry of Health. Its purpose is to promote self-management of health conditions and support consumers in achieving this goal through education about their conditions, assistance in coordinating healthcare, and guidance in navigating the local healthcare system.

The PCBH team works in coordination with a wide range of external and internal services and care providers, including allied health services, mental health drug & alcohol, Centrelink, social work, and cardiopulmonary services, among others. Their focus is on the individual, ensuring that each person receives the necessary social and medical support they require.



The animation serves as an alternative medium for health promotion, benefiting both clients and healthcare professionals. It caters to visual and auditory learners and individuals who may face challenges with general literacy or interacting with traditional hard-copy materials. Through this animated approach, the project aims to engage and empower a broader audience in managing their health effectively.

The animation is currently being adapted for all Integrated Care Teams across the Local Health Districts within NSW Health. In Far West, it has been utilised as an orientation tool for both patients and clinical staff, receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback for its clarity and ease of understanding.

This animation was accepted as a poster presentation at the National Allied Health Conference in Perth in August 2023, providing a platform to showcase

the LHD's innovative work. Furthermore, the video is now embedded in the Far West LHD website for Integrated Care, and it is also accessible for viewing on YouTube.

## Rad Flag Project

When patients undergo x-rays or scans at the hospital, the team often needs to wait for a radiologist to review and provide comments on the images. This delay can postpone the commencement of treatment, causing frustration for patients. The Special Commission of Inquiry: Acute Care in NSW Public Hospitals (the Garling Report), identified poor communication among healthcare professionals, including the communication of test results, as a major contributor to medical errors. Verbal communication alone can be lost in a busy hospital setting, making it essential to document patient findings for transparency and accuracy.

To address these challenges, the Radiographer Comment and Flag model was developed. This model enables radiographers to promptly communicate detected abnormalities and significant x-ray appearances to Emergency Department referrers in real-time. It classifies comments into critical, urgent, and clinically significant findings, indicating the level of referrer response required. Five NSW hospitals, including Broken Hill, piloted this model for up to twelve months, performing regular audits to assess its effectiveness.

During the pilot, 1,102 radiographer comments were collected from the five sites, with over 96% of them proving to be true positives. Broken Hill, where general x-ray images are often not reported by a radiologist after hours or on weekends, found the study to be especially beneficial. The model significantly improved diagnostic outcomes and expedited Emergency Department patient flow, as doctors could finalise treatment plans on the same day and start transferring care to specialist centres or local general practitioners.

The project's success received entirely positive feedback from Emergency staff, prompting continued use of "Rad Flag" findings. Ingrid Klobassa, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow at Monash University, has compiled the formal results of the project, and publication in Radiology and Medical journals is anticipated in late 2023.

# Aboriginal Health & Community Relations

## Aboriginal Health

The Director of Aboriginal Health and Community Relations works in collaboration with the Far West LHD directorates, Aboriginal community-controlled health services, and the Aboriginal Communities by advocating, guiding, and representing the needs of the community to respectfully deliver culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal people and their families.

The Far West Local Health District is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our Aboriginal people. At the heart of our mission is the incorporation of Aboriginal health into every facet of our operations, striving for a holistic approach that encompasses social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and cultural wellbeing of the entire community.

Nestled on the lands of the traditional owners of seven distinct Aboriginal nations, the Far West Local Health District stands as a testament to the cultural richness and diversity of the region. With a population of 13 percent identifying as Aboriginal residents, we acknowledge and celebrate the strengthening of our connections between our organisation and the local first nations communities.

At the core of our efforts lies a profound sense of collaboration and respect. We work hand in hand with the Director of Aboriginal Health and Community Relations, who guides us on our journey

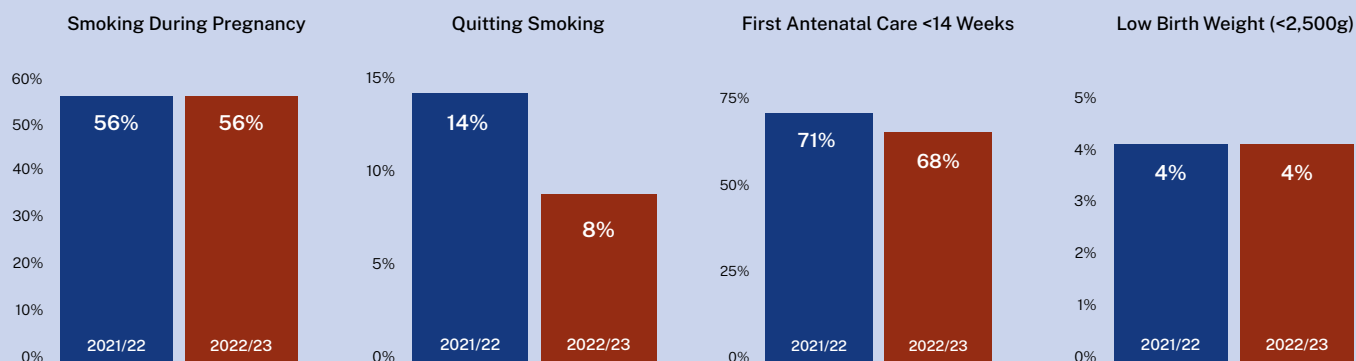
to provide culturally appropriate services. In addition, we actively partner with Aboriginal community-controlled health services, ensuring that our initiatives align with the unique needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal people and their families.

We recognise that cultural sensitivity is key to our success in delivering healthcare services. Embracing a framework of trust, understanding and appreciation, we endeavour to treat every individual with the utmost respect for their cultural history. By nurturing an environment of trust and openness, we lay the foundation for a healthier and more inclusive community.

Our approach to Aboriginal health transcends the traditional boundaries of healthcare. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of various aspects of wellbeing - social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and cultural - we foster a holistic perspective that celebrates the diverse facets of life. This comprehensive understanding guides our decision-making process and ensures that our services cater to the unique needs of each individual. The Far West Local Health District remains committed to maintaining stronger bonds with Aboriginal communities, fostering cultural understanding, and delivering services that reflect the spirit of unity and collaboration.

## Aboriginal Health Data Diagram 2022 - 23

### Closing the Gap Indicators



Note: Closing the Gap indicators present data for current year to date and previous year to date. eMaternity data is only available from 01/01/2018.



# Aboriginal Health & Community Relations



Kyeesha Jones, Safewayz Clinician

## Aboriginal Health Achievements

Kyeesha Jones successfully completed the Violence, Abuse and Neglect Services (VANS) Traineeship program, becoming the first Aboriginal VANS Clinician within NSW. This significant accomplishment reflects the collaborative effort with the Education Centre Against Violence to create an employment pathway into VANS specifically designed for Aboriginal Women.

We proudly recognise Craig Colling, who received the Far West Local Health District Aboriginal Health Award. This prestigious recognition acknowledges his exceptional contributions and dedication to Aboriginal health within our community.

We also commend Corina Kemp, Director of Aboriginal Health and Community Relations, for her successful completion of the NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Leadership Academy Program. This program has equipped her with advanced leadership and management skills, fostering her professional development.

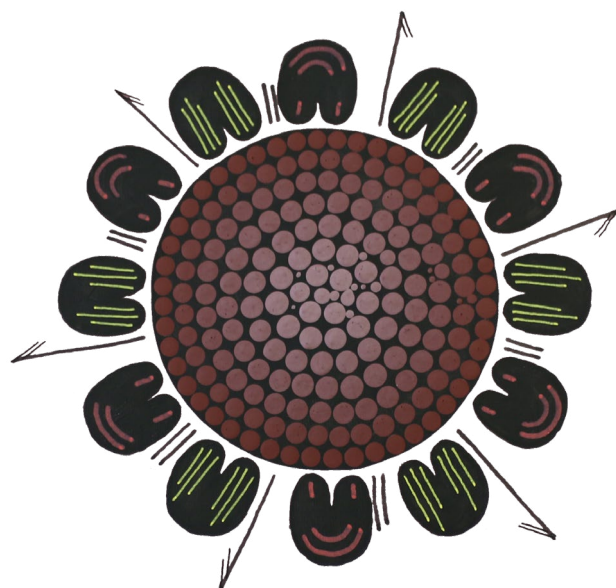


Craig Colling, Aboriginal Health Practitioner

“These achievements exemplify our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and continuous growth within the Far West Local Health District.”



Corina Kemp, Director Aboriginal Health & Community Relations



## Community Relations

Community Relations enables consumers, carers, and members of the community to connect and partner with the FWLHD to enable improved health pathways and outcomes across the district.

### FWLHD Youth Health Advisory Group

The Far West Local Health District established a Youth Health Advisory Committee in 2022. The purpose of the Youth Health Advisory Group is to increase the representation of young people living in rural and remote areas and to provide information and local perspectives on improving young people's health through empowerment, purposeful engagement, and inclusiveness.

This will enable young people to advocate, share their lived experience, contribute to the planning and evaluating of youth health projects, develop and inform policy and make recommendations to enhance the service for young people.

The Far West Local Health District is dedicated to empowering the Youth Health Advisory Committee to steer the progress of Far West LHD's healthcare provisions, specifically tailored for young people residing in rural and remote areas. By engaging with our local young people, Far West LHD can disseminate targeted health information effectively through various channels, including social media, local newspapers, radio, schools, and workplaces, ensuring that the message reaches the young population.

Over the past year, the Youth Health Advisory Committee actively participated in significant events like Youth Health Week at Sturt Park and NAIDOC week celebrations held at the Broken Hill Health Service.

“Going forward, the Committee will continue to expand its reach and provide unwavering support to the advancement of services, delivery, and advocacy to improve the health and wellbeing of young people.”

### FWLHD Carer Advisory Committee

The Far West Local Health District has successfully established the Far West Local Health District Carer Advisory Committee. This committee offers carers a platform to voice their opinions and act as advocates by sharing their real-life experiences from across the Far West of NSW. They actively contribute to various projects, planning, and evaluations within the health district.



The Carer Advisory Committee aims to genuinely engage carers, providing them with a safe space to openly share their caregiving experiences and offer insights on how the health service can best support them through their lived experiences. It also fosters collaboration between staff, stakeholders, and carers, leveraging their invaluable knowledge, perspectives, and experiences in the following ways:

- Using the co-design model to enhance service delivery within the health system.
- Involving carers in resource development to ensure the availability of relevant support materials.
- Seeking input and advice from carers in the development and review of policies.
- Inclusion of carers in health service improvement projects, reviews, and evaluations.

#### Moving forward, the Carer Advisory Committee plans to:

- Expand the Carer Advisory Committee membership.
- Provide carers with access to relevant education and training opportunities such as mandatory My Health Learning.
- Co-design projects alongside the Carer Support Program such as the Broken Hill Mental Health Inpatient Unit, Broken Hill Emergency Department and Wentworth Redevelopments. Carers engaged through these consultation processes will have the opportunity to be a part of the project user group committees.
- Take part in the Basic Sign Language Project.
- Undertake a review of the carer's needs in the community and which will lead to establishing clear project-based responses.



# Aboriginal Mental Health Wellbeing Workforce Forum

The Far West Local Health District proudly hosted the 2023 Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Forum on May 17th and 18th.

During this event, the Far West LHD Aboriginal Mental Health Drug & Alcohol Services team effectively highlighted the core values of the Health District and our commitment to partnerships and connectivity through the theme 'Tune In, To Country'.

'Tune In, To Country' was an acknowledgment of the achievements that have taken place on country. The Forum offered insights into what we all bring to country and how country takes care of us. Being on country is a part of our identity. It helps us heal, learn, and teach.

The Forum united professionals in Aboriginal Mental Health & Social and Emotional Wellbeing from Public Health sectors, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Non-Government Organisations, and individuals supporting mental health and emotional wellbeing, including service providers and researchers.

With participation from around 200 attendees, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, the forum drew individuals from across NSW and interstate, all engaged in diverse sectors of Aboriginal Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services.

“The forum enabled the Far West LHD to demonstrate the positive working relationships and the importance of developing a strong partnership with the Aboriginal Medical Services and other agencies to ensure culturally safe and sensitive services are delivered to Aboriginal People.”

**Corina Kemp, Committee Member and Director Aboriginal Health and Community Relations**

*Wilcannia Barkandji Cultural Dancers  
Photo credit: K. Smith Photography*







*A Walk on Country*  
Photo credit: K. Smith Photography

The Forum was supported by local Aboriginal artists and local and national service providers who hosted stalls to share information and resources, cultural artifacts, local art, and cultural insights through storytelling.

A gala dinner drew more than 140 delegates, featuring the lively and energetic entertainment of Wilcannia band Black Shadows and Leroy Johnson's band. This event offered delegates a valuable chance to network and establish connections.

Mutawintji tour guides Mark Sutton, Keanu Bates and Alfred Fazledeen shared the enrichments of the sacred sites that included a visit to the Cultural Centre.

They shared the history of the Aboriginal engravings, sacred sites, bush tucker, and artworks that were left behind by the Ancestors that walked the sacred lands before us. The day ended with a cultural smoking ceremony as part of the Aboriginal Culture-a cleansing and healing ceremony.

“A Walk on Country was held at Mutawintji National Park as part of the forum, where Owen Whyman and the Wilcannia Cultural Dancers greeted all delegates with a Welcome and cultural dancing. This highlighted the distinctiveness and importance of a welcome to the lands of the traditional owners, the Malyankapa and Pandjikali people.”

**Desley McKellar, Aboriginal Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Clinical Leader**





# Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol

In the 2022-23 period, our primary focus was on strengthening relationships and partnerships, which enabled us to expand and enhance services within the Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol Directorate, ensuring improved equity in access for all. Notably, the Health District embarked on the construction project for the Mental Health Inpatient Unit, a project co-designed with our community, carers, and consumers. This new unit will provide a purpose-built facility with increased capacity and flexibility, catering to the specific needs of our community.

The Local Health District is expanding access to alcohol and other drug (AOD) services across the district, with a focus on creating Lived Experience positions, Aboriginal-identified positions, and the expansion of current AOD teams, particularly in youth services, offering better support. The LHD in partnership with the Royal Flying Doctors Service has funded additional drug and alcohol clinicians to support some of our most remote communities. Teams across the LHD have been provided with training in preparation for the upcoming year.

We continue to foster a culture of continuous learning and expanded networks. A significant milestone was the successful hosting of the 2023 Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Forum - 'Tune In, To Country'. The forum attracted attendees from various regions in New South Wales. The event not only showcased the accomplishments and challenges of the Local Health District but also highlighted our strong bonds with communities and partners.

Day one featured an array of insightful speakers, covering diverse subjects. On day two, participants had the unique opportunity to connect with the region through a walk on country, enabling them to truly 'Tune In, To Country'. You can read more about the Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Forum in the previous chapter of this review.

## Mildura Base Public Hospital Mental Health Cross-Border Protocol

The Far West Local Health District and Mildura Base Public Hospital have a longstanding agreement to provide streamlined mental health care in Wentworth and Balranald Shires. Residents from areas such as Pooncarie, Wentworth, Dareton, Buronga, Gol Gol, Euston, and Balranald can now access mental health services at Mildura Base Hospital, eliminating the need for journeys up to 450 km to Broken Hill. This arrangement keeps patients closer to home, enhancing their involvement in care and discharge planning, and simplifying visits from family members and caregivers.

An essential feature of the cross-border protocol is the mutual recognition of documentation, reducing the need for repetitive processes. The collaborative care model significantly streamlines assessments, triage, and risk evaluations for both inpatient and community mental health care, ultimately benefiting patients and optimising resources.

During admissions to the Mildura Mental Health Inpatient Unit, the Buronga HealthOne MHDA team offers support. Regular visits and engagement with Mildura inpatient staff aid in discharge planning. The cross-border protocol enables efficient information exchange, ensuring a seamless experience for mental health patients. Collaborative care planning in the Emergency Department ensures patient-centred treatment guided by community mental health providers, extending even beyond regular hours. Following mental health admissions, discharge planning includes a face-to-face follow-up with the Mildura Base psychiatric team a week after discharge. Discharge summaries and psychiatric reviews are communicated with the Buronga team. Continued community psychiatric follow-up takes place through telehealth sessions by the Far West LHD psychiatry team. The success of this partnership-driven care model lies in its trauma-informed, patient-centred, timely, and coordinated approach.



2023 Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Forum Committee Members L to R: Brendan Flynn, Tshintina Reynolds, Desley Mckellar, Kristen Ella, Dhinawan, Corina Kemp, Kerry Smith, Mathew Trindall.

Photo credit: K. Smith Photography

## Men's Mental Health Weekend Drought Support Program - Far West Butchering Days

Farmers in New South Wales experience significant stress from the effects of drought which impacts individuals, families and entire communities. Statistics show that men living in rural and remote areas of Australia have a higher rate of suicide in comparison to those living in urban areas. Rural and remote areas experience increased difficulty in accessing health care due to their geographical location, making it harder for them to maintain good mental health. Alongside the issue of isolation, farmers must also overcome the perceived stigma associated with seeking support for their mental health and wellbeing.

“It was great to connect with the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program, Royal Flying Doctor Service, and the Salvos. I look forward to connecting with them again in the community. Plenty of laughs and smiles all round.”

The aim of Men's Mental Health Weekend Drought Support Program is to raise awareness of, and help address, the short and long-term mental health needs of farming men in rural and remote communities of Tibooburra, White Cliffs, Pooncarie, Tilpa, Wilcannia, and Menindee resulting from drought, recovery from drought, rural adversity and climate change.

During the most recent period of drought, there were notable gaps identified in the services that support men's mental health. This is where the idea for the **Butchering Days** came about. A place for men (as well as women and kids) to come along and learn a new skill, while also capacity building and enjoying social interaction.



Good Wood Station Butchering Day 2022



Volo Station Butchering Day 2022

These events were held in partnership with the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP), Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern Section (RFDSSE), and the We've Got Your Back Program. The Butchering Days were held at Packsaddle, Pooncarie, White Cliffs (Goodwood Station), Menindee (Big Amp Station), Tilpa, and Wilcannia (Volo Station). There are still several communities that have since shown their interest in hosting a Butchering Day to build social connections and mental health awareness following adverse events.

A total of 143 individuals participated in the butchering days held throughout the region. These events drew a diverse demographic, spanning various age groups, although the 45-54 bracket constituted the largest portion. Among the participants, 10% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. These sessions effectively connected with rural men, who historically have been a difficult demographic to engage with in the past and when it comes to mental health.

“Because it was small scale, it was very easy to socially interact. I don't do well with larger crowds, but I found this day fulfilling to be able to connect with local services and community members.”

### Overall Experience

- 100% had come away with increased knowledge.
- 98.4% felt more connected to community members.
- 95.1% said attending enabled them to learn and refine their butchering skills.
- 91.8% said that attending the butchering workshops enhanced their awareness of what mental health services were available locally.
- 96.7% of participants felt confident to contact RAMHP or RFDS to seek support after attending the event.





2022 Broken Heel Festival

## LGBTQI+ Partnership

With the introduction of the NSW Health NSW LGBTQI+ health strategy, there's now an emphasis on enhancing health outcomes for individuals with diverse sexualities, genders, and intersex identities, while also prioritising inclusive care within the scope of NSW Health. Through the implementation of this dedicated strategic plan, the distinct health requirements of the LGBTQI+ community can be optimally addressed.

The Far West Local Health District has an abiding belief that every person in our communities deserves respect, dignity, safety, kindness and to be themselves. To this end, the FWLHD has committed to providing our LGBTQI+ community quality, inclusive healthcare that delivers positive outcomes.

Within the NSW LGBTQI+ health strategy, there are strategic priorities that the FWLHD is working with our community to meet.

The staff within the Health District are dedicated to enhancing awareness and knowledge among all team members regarding the unique health concerns and requirements of LGBTQI+ community members, as well as the needs of their families, caregivers, and social circles. This commitment also extends to recognising the influence of intersectionality on individual health outcomes.

The FWLHD has committed to responding to the health needs of transgender and gender-diverse people who live in our community. Hunter New England Local Health District operates Maple Leaf House, a specialised service for gender-diverse health, catering to children, adolescents, and young people up to 24 years of age, as well as their families, residing within the FWLHD area.

Clinic 9, situated at the Community Health Centre, aims to engage the LGBTQI+ community through

targeted healthcare initiatives aimed at addressing the specific needs of this community. These initiatives include gender-affirming care delivered in collaboration with the Gender Centre, as well as partnerships with ACON to advance the goal of eradicating HIV transmission in New South Wales.

The clinic's involvement in community outreach events, such as the Broken Heel Festival, plays a pivotal role in establishing connections with the LGBTQI+ community within the Health District. These efforts not only ensure that community members are connected but also instil confidence in the services offered by Clinic 9 and the broader FWLHD.

A Youth Advisory Council has been formed to actively involve young individuals in shaping the Health District's future direction. While this council represents a diverse range of perspectives, there's a recognised necessity to include and provide support for LGBTQI+ young people to participate in the advisory group. This inclusion is aimed at guaranteeing the comprehensive planning and implementation of strategies to address the specific needs of LGBTQI+ youth.

FWLHD staff set a positive example through their daily actions, embedding inclusive healthcare practices as a core principle of their work. They serve as allies to members of the LGBTQI+ community, striving to establish health facilities within the FWLHD that are welcoming, and free from stigma, ensuring a safe haven for every member of our communities.

Engaging with the LGBTQI+ community is essential to fulfilling our strategic goals at both the state and local levels. Central to our services for the LGBTQI+ community is the recognition of their lived experiences and the commitment to addressing inequalities, thereby enhancing health outcomes.

# Broken Hill Health Service



Broken Hill Health Service

The Directorate of Nursing and Midwifery establishes workforce planning and effective people management strategies to attract, recruit, develop and retain quality nursing and midwifery staff to provide outstanding patient care to the community served by the District.

## My Emergency Doctor

My Emergency Doctor implemented virtual medical services in locations including the Broken Hill Emergency Department, Balranald Emergency Department, and Broken Hill community-based services like integrated care and community nursing. The Virtual Medical Service was tailored for patients with non-urgent needs (triage categories 4 and 5). Those who visited the Broken Hill Emergency Department gave their experience high ratings, with 98.89% indicating a good to very good experience. Additionally, the Broken Hill Emergency Department observed an enhancement in compliance with triage wait times after implementation, demonstrated by a 22% increase in compliance for triage category 4 within 8 weeks of implementation.

A collaboration between Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the Broken Hill Health Service led to the implementation of the virtual Intensive Care Unit (vICU). Operating since April 2022, the vICU has facilitated 125 consultations involving 74 patients spanning all urgency categories. Operating 24/7, the service provides Critical Care Services staff at the Broken Hill Health Service with direct specialist support and advice from the ICU team at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Currently averaging three weekly calls across both ICU and the Emergency Department, this service has been a game changer. Staff feedback highlights that the vICU service serves as both a supportive and collaborative platform.

## Elective Surgical Services at Broken Hill Health Service

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the provision of many elective health services, including elective surgery, was temporarily suspended to redirect the clinical workforce and resources to focus on ensuring a timely and safe pandemic response. Emergency and urgent elective surgery were prioritised and maintained, whilst non-essential elective surgery was postponed.

During the last 12 months, there has been a focused effort across the NSW to catch up on postponed surgery and reduce elective surgery waitlist times. The aim now is to build capacity, efficiency, and resilient surgical services to enable patients to have faster access to safe, high-quality surgical care.

Broken Hill Health Service is dedicated to providing timely and safe local surgery for patients, as well as arranging timely external referrals for procedures that cannot be done safely in Broken Hill. To achieve this, the Health Service has established a Surgical Review Panel consisting of senior medical staff, theatre and specialist clinic personnel, and surgical waitlist administrators. This panel oversees the planning and scheduling of all surgical procedures, ensuring that patients receive required surgery based on evidence-based clinical guidelines and treating patients in order of need. This approach helps us closely monitor and reduce surgical waitlists, create new surgical services, and enhance patient outcomes and experiences in surgical care.

## Sydney Local Health District Partnership

FWLHD was fortunate to welcome the skilled communication and content team from Sydney Local Health District to Broken Hill for a videography project. This endeavour aimed to spotlight the collaboration with Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Emergency Department nurses and to capture footage of the virtual Intensive Care Unit, featuring clinicians in online connection with Sydney Local Health District. The objective was to showcase the town's distinctive attributes and provide insight into the local way of life, emphasising our strong sense of community, engagement with specialised cases, and the advantages of working within a smaller team.



Broken Hill Health Service Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Clinicians (from left) Jazmin Tindale (Clinical Nurse Educator), Ashleigh Mortimer (Agency Nurse), Ashlee Caskie (Agency Nurse), Dr Cameron Spenceley (Clinical Director - Emergency Medicine) Dr George Chimpana (Senior Medical Officer)



# Cancer & Palliative Care

## Specialist Palliative Care

We are proud to report that our Specialist Palliative Care Service (SPC) continues to uphold a standard of excellence with 98% of patients selecting SPC as their preferred place to die.

“My family and I appreciate the professional care my father received in his final days. The level of consideration and care given to my father and the family was top-notch.”

In line with our commitment to enhancing patient experiences, we have invested in Palliative Care funded refurbishments at Wilcannia and Balranald Multipurpose Services.

The refurbishments aimed to create a warm and homelike environment for palliative care patients and their families, ensuring they receive the comfort and support they deserve during challenging times. These renovations reflect our ongoing dedication to providing the highest standard of care for all those we serve.

The remarkable efforts of our SPC team were recognised and celebrated with these members of the team receiving the following awards:



**Broken Hill City Council Services Awarded for Excellence:**

Palliative Care, Dementia and Delirium Volunteer Services



**FWLHD Nurse of the Year:**

Sharon DeFranceschi



**2023 FWLHD Staff Recognition – Extraordinary Staff Member in Directorate:**

Hayley Mayne



Award Winners: Broken Hill Palliative Care, Dementia & Delirium Volunteers

## Advance Care Planning

In the past year, we have successfully conducted 19 education and training sessions at various health facilities across the Far West LHD, with a remarkable participation of 108 health professionals. The feedback received from these sessions has been overwhelmingly positive, as the participants expressed increased knowledge and confidence in engaging in Advance Care Planning (ACP) and end-of-life discussions.

As part of our commitment to promoting culturally sensitive practices, Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC) and Maari Ma Broken Hill and Wilcannia were provided with 8 dedicated ACP training sessions, Yarning sessions, and informal meetings. These events witnessed the active participation of 22 health professionals, community members, and respected Elders. Furthermore, we are delighted to share that several GP practices in Broken Hill have shown significant interest and involvement in ACP training, signifying a growing awareness of the importance of these discussions.

Recognising the significance of community engagement, a total of 10 community events were thoughtfully organised across the district. These events brought together a total of 137 attendees, representing various esteemed organisations such as the Aboriginal Land Council, NSW Rural Fire Service, Senior Citizens, Country Women's Association, Lions Club, and Rotary.

“Being proactive in the Advance Care Planning space saves a lot of heartache and your education sessions definitely motivated us to get things in place!”

In May, during National Palliative Care Week, we organised 3 impactful Advance Care Planning community forums in Broken Hill. These forums provided a platform for open and constructive discussions, allowing us to reach a wider audience and promote a more informed and compassionate approach to palliative care.

These initiatives highlight our dedication to fostering knowledge, understanding, and empathy within the community and among health professionals, as we continue to champion Advance Care Planning and prioritise end-of-life discussions.

## Oncology & Cancer Services

The oncology and cancer services team continue to deliver vital support to cancer patients who are undergoing chemotherapy and immunotherapy locally. With radiotherapy services being offered in Adelaide. Our commitment to patient-centred care is reflected by a blend of face-to-face visiting consultations as well as telehealth. This ensures that patients can access treatment conveniently and in a way that suits their needs.



Ruben Hillier, Prostate Cancer Nurse Specialist

A key aspect of our service is the pivotal role played by our Cancer Care Coordinator and Prostate Cancer Nurse Specialist, who excel in care navigation. They diligently guide patients and their families through the intricacies of their care and referral pathways, ensuring a well-coordinated experience throughout their journey. Our dedication to empowering patients and providing them with comprehensive support is at the core of our oncology and cancer services.



# Remote Health Services

The Remote Health Services team remains dedicated to reviewing and implementing service delivery improvements to cater to the health needs of our communities. We strive to enhance access to care by focusing on redevelopments and refurbishments of existing and new health facilities. We are introducing flexible service models to better accommodate the diverse requirements of our patients. To ensure comprehensive and sustainable care, we actively collaborate with communities, stakeholders, and other Local Health Districts and organisations, working towards the establishment of virtual care models that complement our local services. Through these efforts, we aim to provide quality healthcare as close to home as possible, fostering healthier and thriving communities.

Remote Health Services offer a diverse range of services across (9) facilities, catering to the needs of communities and community members residing outside of Broken Hill within the Local Health District footprint. Our services include emergency care, acute care, subacute and palliative care, restorative care, community-based primary healthcare, and residential aged care services.

Within our comprehensive network, we operate (3) inpatient facilities, (8) primary healthcare services, and (6) 24/7 Emergency Departments. Remarkably, (5) of our facilities also serve as Triple Zero Response centers, providing crucial assistance to their respective townships and surrounding communities on behalf of NSW Ambulance, further reinforcing our commitment to care across the entire LHD. The Remote Health Services team aims to provide culturally safe and high-quality care as close to home as possible and opportunities to grow our workforce across our remote communities.



Leroy Johnson-Chair Barkandji Native Title Group with The Hon. Paul Toole-Deputy Premier NSW

## Redevelopments and Refurbishments

### Buronga HealthOne

Far West Local Health District and Health Infrastructure successfully reached a Land Lease Agreement with the Barkandji Nation, securing the site for the construction of the Buronga HealthOne facility. This agreement was part of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement, fostering collaboration between the LHD and the Barkandji Nation for a duration of a 40-year lease.



Cultural Dancers, Pam Handy-Chair Aboriginal Community Working Party & CEO Aboriginal Lands Council, Leroy Johnson and Barkandji Native Title Representatives, Brad Astill Chief Executive FWLHD, Wincen Cuy - FWLHD Board Member, Health Infrastructure representatives, The Hon. Paul Toole-Deputy Premier NSW, Denise McCallum - FWLHD General Manager Remote Health Services.

Both parties developed a robust Cultural Engagement Strategy to ensure meaningful cultural engagement throughout the project. The Barkandji Nation representatives played a pivotal role in shaping various aspects of the facility, including the design of yarning circles and meeting areas, language and wayfinding signage, and the integration of indigenous landscaping with the use of medicinal plants. The partnership also encompassed the creation of interior and exterior artworks and the planting of a relationship tree.

The collaboration extends to providing employment opportunities for local Aboriginal community members and Aboriginal organisations, further reinforcing our commitment to mutual respect. This unique partnership honours and embraces the cultural heritage of the Barkandji Nation, enriching the development of the Buronga HealthOne facility and creating a legacy for generations to come.

The refurbishments of Buronga HealthOne were successfully completed in July 2022, and the service became operational in mid-July 2022. Prior to the official launch, a Community Open Day was organised, attracting over 110 community members who eagerly participated in guided tours of the upgraded facility.

“Buronga HealthOne was officially opened in January 2023, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to providing exceptional healthcare services to the community.”

### Dareton Spoke Refurbishment

The Dareton Spoke building is undergoing refurbishment to create a modern and purposeful space, providing the community in Dareton Township with convenient access to a range of clinical services. These services include Child & Family Health, Primary Health, Palliative Care, and Mental Health Drug & Alcohol Services.

We are pleased to share that the refurbishment progress is on track, and the project is expected to be completed by July 2023. Once operational, Dareton Spoke will be staffed by clinicians from Buronga HealthOne, further enhancing the coordinated and comprehensive healthcare offerings available to the community.



Virtual Nurse Assist in action

### Virtual Nurse Assist

Virtual Nurse Assist is an innovative telehealth project collaboratively launched this year by Far West Local Health District and Sydney Local Health District. With this system, nurses at any remote facility in the Far West can now seek assistance simply by calling a central number. Whether they need advice, find themselves in an emergency situation, or for an inpatient, the RPA Virtual Centre's nurse can step in to handle notetaking and documentation of medications administered.

“This seamless coordination ensures a safer environment for patients receiving care in remote facilities.”

By using cameras and speakers in the emergency room and mobile virtual devices, the Virtual Nurse gains a comprehensive view of the patient's condition, allowing them to observe everything that unfolds in the Emergency Department and interact with the nursing staff and inpatients at their bedside.

The feedback from both staff and patients regarding the activated service has been incredibly positive. This positivity has emerged specifically in situations where the service is utilised for the following purposes:

- Providing assistance to newly graduated registered nurses who lack experience, particularly in the Emergency Department. This assistance encompasses guidance in the process of triaging patients and offering clinical supervision during their interactions with patients.
- Furnishing support within the inpatient facility to less-experienced registered nurses. This support involves aiding them in managing their responsibilities and offering clinical supervision when caring for inpatients.





# Celebrating Staff

## Kyeesha Jones - Safe Wayz Clinician, Violence, Abuse and Neglect Services



"I am deeply honoured to have graduated as NSW's first Aboriginal Violence, Abuse and Neglect (VANS) Services trainee within the Far West Local Health District.

“As a proud Barkandji woman, it has always been my dream to contribute to the health sector and facilitate access to essential services for my community.”

The term 'violence, abuse, and neglect' encompasses three significant forms of interpersonal violence prevalent across the Australian community: domestic and family violence, sexual assault, and all forms of child abuse and neglect. Following my four-year VAN Service Aboriginal Traineeship, I am committed to remaining with the service in the District, embracing the role of a Safe Wayz Clinician.

"Safe Wayz, a NSW Health program, employs a child-centred model of care designed to support children under the age of 10 who exhibit problematic or harmful sexual behaviours. The Far West LHD Safe Wayz program provides children and their families with access to evidence-based prevention, early assessment, and support, along with specialised therapeutic care.

"I vividly recall the day I received my name badge and was informed during my interview that I would be the first Indigenous member of the team. This role has allowed me to flourish within the team, fostering connections in Broken Hill and the surrounding communities. My aim has been to create an environment where my people feel at ease seeking our services, sharing their experiences, and healing together.

"Throughout this traineeship, I've had the privilege of working directly with my communities, advocating for my culture, acting as a teacher, and becoming a voice for my people. Born and raised in Broken Hill, this town is intricately woven into the fabric of my life. My aspiration to work within the Local Health District stems from my upbringing, with my Nan serving as the surgical ward clerk, immersing me in the healthcare environment. This career path has allowed me to forge enduring connections over the years, continuously meeting new individuals and nurturing relationships.

"Contributing to the wellbeing of my communities through the LHD has been incredibly fulfilling. Engaging in interventions, outreach initiatives, and community development endeavours, I've found a deep sense of purpose. Living here, in a tightly knit community, has enabled both personal and professional growth, propelling my rural career advancement. The vibrant tapestry of activities in Broken Hill keeps me engaged and connected.

"My interactions with colleagues, managers, and directors have not only enriched my professional life but also fostered meaningful cultural relationships. The LHD has played a pivotal role in my career and professional development, offering opportunities for training, participation in conferences, and invaluable guidance and mentoring from senior staff members. As we navigate the challenges of healthcare delivery together, I remain committed to upholding our dedication to the communities we serve."

## Merrawyn Townsend - Health Worker at Tibooburra Health Service



“As a Health Worker and Volunteer NSW Ambulance Officer at the Tibooburra Health Service, I was incredibly surprised, humbled and proud to receive the NSW Ambulance Commissioner’s Commendation for Courage. This was presented to me for my actions following a fire at the Tibooburra Hotel in 2021.

“The commendation bears witness to the events that unfolded on February 10, 2021, when the extreme heat from the fire that had started at the rear of the Hotel caused the gas bottles to explode, resulting in four injured individuals. At this point in time, amidst the chaos, I was the sole Ambulance Community First Responder along with Tibooburra Health Service Manager, Vivienne Fazulla.

“Together, Vivienne and I attended the scene, orchestrating the safe evacuation of the injured patients from the scene to Tibooburra Health Service. Our responsibilities extended from the clinical management of these patients, the supervision of the town’s folk who assisted us throughout the event, and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). Our RFDS obligations included the “Roo Run”, which entails checking for kangaroos on the airstrip before the RFDS plane lands, the transportation of the RFDS medical team to the Health Service, and the return of patients and the RFDS team to the airstrip for retrieval flight.

“The magnitude of this emergency response stretched across several gruelling hours and continued supporting the whole community on their journey over the next few weeks.

“The prestigious commendation, presented to me by NSW Ambulance Deputy Commissioner David Dutton on behalf of NSW Ambulance Commissioner Dr Dominic Morgan, took place during the Clinical Volunteers Annual Conference in Sydney on November 26, 2022.

“I know that sometimes the work we do as health workers requires bravery and sacrifice, but in those moments you are just a human helping another human and relying on all of your health and emergency training.”

## Chelsea Anderson - Clinical Midwife Consultant



“I love living in the Far West due to the strong sense of community, the bonds with friends and family, and the striking contrast between the red earth and the blue sky. Working within our LHD is a dynamic experience that allows me to explore various facets of being a midwife. Being a part of midwifery networks in NSW Health and engaging in diverse midwifery projects is both fulfilling and challenging. To those considering joining our LHD and relocating to the Far West, I’d advise embracing an open mind, a willingness to embrace change, and a passion for meaningful connections with people.

“One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is building long-lasting connections with staff, women and families.”

“Providing care to women during vulnerable moments and witnessing fellow midwives’ growth and passion is incredibly fulfilling. Sharing our triumphs and positive stories with colleagues throughout NSW Health further amplifies our sense of accomplishment.

“The LHD has been instrumental in nurturing my professional development. It has offered opportunities to take on different roles, encouraged my pursuit of post-graduate studies, and supports me to represent our LHD in statewide midwifery matters. Participation in leadership and workforce development education has also enriched my skill set. The Far West is a great place to live and work, and I enjoy being a part of its community.”



# Celebrating Staff

**Melissa Welsh - Director of Allied Health and Integrated Community Services**



“After working as an Occupational Therapist for 10 years in South Australia, my journey within the FWLHD has been diverse and fulfilling. Beginning as the Manager of Occupational Therapy in 2007, I have since taken on roles such as Clinical Redesign and Innovation Manager and even served as a Change Manager for a substantial \$30M redevelopment project in Broken Hill. Over the years, I’ve had the chance to gain post-graduate qualifications and participate in valuable leadership development programs, constantly enriching my skill set.

“Choosing to live and work in the Far West aligns seamlessly with my priorities. As someone who values family time, the region’s proximity to home allows me to enjoy mornings exercising, having breakfast, and doing school drop-offs with ease. The climate here supports my gardening hobby, while the evenings provide a serene atmosphere to unwind. The local community, natural beauty, and creative spirit of the area constantly inspire me in my mosaic design. Opting to work for Far West LHD empowers me to make a tangible impact on health outcomes, and the organisation’s flexibility and support enable creative approaches to deliver effective services. Our commitment to nurturing and developing the careers of Allied Health professionals not only benefits them but also enhances our workforce’s capabilities. This, combined with the dynamic nature of our work, makes the Far West LHD an exceptional environment for both professional growth and a balanced lifestyle.”

**Buddhika Lokuarachchi - Data Analyst & Chandima Gammanpilage - Management Accountant**



“Far West LHD is a great place to work and enhance your career. As a finance professional, it offers insight into health operations, and its size ensures a deep grasp of finance. The work-life balance here is unmatched. Life in Broken Hill is relaxed, with everything conveniently located within a 10-minute drive, allowing you more time to enjoy life. I also really like working with a small and friendly team who help each other to achieve goals.

“My journey as a skilled migrant led me to Broken Hill for a fulfilling career at Far West LHD. Joining as a Management Accountant, my wife also became a Data Analyst here. The city’s relaxed pace and welcoming community swiftly won us over. For those seeking a tranquil life, a rewarding career, and community spirit, Far West offers an inviting haven.

“The welcoming community in Broken Hill has made us want to stay here. There are opportunities for new migrants in the Far West if you are looking for a relaxed life and a great job with career progression but without the hassle of traffic in big cities.”

“For those seeking a tranquil life, rewarding career, and community spirit, Far West offers an inviting haven.”

# Award Winners

## Far West LHD Recognised as a Finalist in the Premier's Awards

Far West Local Health District was selected as a finalist in the prestigious 2022 NSW Premier's Awards. The recognition came in the Recovery and Resilience category, honouring our exceptional efforts in supporting the community of Wilcannia during the 2021 COVID-19 outbreak.

In collaboration with various NSW Government agencies, local government councils, and community organisations, the Far West LHD worked tirelessly to extend support to the people of Wilcannia. Our response was bolstered by a dedicated COVID-19 community response team, a local emergency management centre, and community-supported accommodation.

Given the high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, our response was built upon close collaboration with local leaders and Elders. This approach ensured a safe, sustainable, and culturally appropriate response that prioritised both the clinical and non-clinical needs of those impacted by COVID-19.

*Finalists in the Premier's Awards: The COVID-19 Community Response Team and Hospital In The Home Team*

*Back (from left): Vicki Brandy, Pam Illingworth, Leonie Garvey, Stephanie Sutherland, Mandy Cutmore, Elizabeth Kepreotes, Sherree Ferrall, Jenny Cooper and Megan Burnet.*

*Front (from left): Louise, Christa Smith and Ashley Flannery.*

Our collective response included crucial partnerships with esteemed organisations such as the Royal Flying Doctors Service, Maari Ma Health, Department of Education, NSW Police, Local Aboriginal Lands Council, Central Darling Shire Council, Fire and Rescue NSW, Australian Defence Force, Resilience NSW, State Emergency Service, Wilcannia Safe House, State Health Emergency Operations Centre, as well as esteemed community members, Elders, and key contacts.

The Recovery and Resilience category of the Awards acknowledges programs, initiatives, innovations, and improvements that address the urgent needs of citizens and support communities across the State in the aftermath of devastating natural disasters and a global pandemic.

Among the nominees in this category, we share this recognition with the esteemed COVID-19 and Discharge Shuttle Service (the winner), Patient Transport Service, and HealthShare NSW.

We take immense pride in being a finalist, as it reflects the dedication and commitment of our entire team to provide the highest level of care and support to our community in challenging times. This recognition also highlights the power of collaboration and the significant impact we can achieve when we come together as a united front.





# Award Winners



Staff Recognition Award winners 2023

## Staff Recognition and Health Innovation Awards

Far West Local Health District (LHD) staff members were the recipients of well-deserved accolades at the 13th annual Staff Recognition and Health Innovation Awards held on 28 June 2023. This event served as a platform to commend the staff's outstanding efforts in both innovative projects and exceptional service.

The 'Healthy Steps Program' was named the winning project. Spearheaded by Stephanie Wylie, James Wells, Megan Johnstone, and Kara Leonard from the Osteoarthritis Chronic Care Program (OACCP) Team and the Dietetics Department, this collaborative initiative marked a significant achievement. The program achieved resounding success with its participants, who reported positive outcomes including weight loss and improvements in their existing osteoarthritis conditions. This accomplishment equipped individuals with the tools to engage in regular physical activity, reducing body weight and enhancing diet quality.

The accolades didn't stop there. The 'Rapid Response Dashboard Project' received the Rural Innovations

Project Award from the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI). This accolade acknowledged the project's innovation and its significant impact.

Beyond these highlighted projects, the Staff Recognition Awards were also given to individuals who showed excellence in service and made significant contributions to the care and wellbeing of patients and clients. The event celebrated the dedication and accomplishments of the staff, reaffirming their commitment to healthcare innovation and exceptional service.

The event also acknowledged the finalists of the Innovation Awards, including initiatives like the AMBER Care Bundle, NSW Telestroke Service, Broken Hill Adult Oral Health Patient Waitlist Project, Educators Residential School, and the Planned Care for Better Health – Animation Short Film. These projects stood as testaments to the ongoing efforts to improve healthcare practices and patient outcomes.

The Awards concluded with a presentation ceremony of Employee Recognition Awards for years of dedicated service, including two staff who have served 40 and 50 years respectively.



# The 2023 Staff Recognition Award recipients in each category were:



## Aboriginal Staff Excellence:

Craig Colling (Aboriginal Health Practitioner, Buronga HealthOne)

## Consumer Nominated - Staff Member:

Leighton King (Sonographer in Radiology Unit, Broken Hill Health Service)

## Consumer Nominated - Team:

Paediatrics Ward

## Extraordinary Staff Member - Allied Health & Integrated Community Services:

Elise Callaghan (Paediatric Community Dietitian, Broken Hill Health Service)

## Extraordinary Staff Member - Medical:

Dr Cameron Spenceley (Clinical Director, Broken Hill Health Service Emergency Department)

## Extraordinary Staff Member - Mental Health Drug and Alcohol, Violence, Abuse & Neglect:

Sherree Ferrall (Manager Violence Abuse & Neglect Services)

## Extraordinary Staff Member - Nursing & Midwifery:

Corey Sclater (Nurse Manager, Nursing & Midwifery Leadership and Workforce Development)

## Extraordinary Staff Member - People & Culture:

Jacinta Barraclough (Learning and Development Lead)

## Extraordinary Staff Member - Finance & Corporate Services:

Eureka Van Der Merwe (Clinical Document Specialist)

## Extraordinary Staff Member - District Remote Health Services:

Merrawyn Townsend (Health Assistant, Tibooburra Health Service)

## Extraordinary Staff Member - Clinical Governance Unit:

Grace Matthews (Clinical Quality Systems Manager)

## Extraordinary Staff Member - Cancer & Palliative Care Services:

Hayley Mayne (Executive Assistant)

## Inspiring Team:

Clinical Governance Unit

## Volunteer Superstar:

Hospital and Day Centre volunteers at Balranald Multipurpose Service

## Brilliance Staff Member:

Brooke Napier (Clinical Support Officer)

## Brilliance Team:

Intensive Care Unit

**Congratulations again to all the winners and finalists for 2023!**



# Long Service Awards were presented in the following groups:



## Long Service Awards for 10 years of service:

Ellen Elstone, Eureka Van Der Merwe, Jessica Collins, Karlie Jeffery, Kirby Purcell, Kylie Jolliffe, Leonie Kennedy, Lyn-Maree Walker, Peter Duthy, Rachel Barbetta, Rebecca Howse, Romualdo De Guzman, Sandra Ferry, Sarah Wenham, Sherrylee Davis and Sue Betcke.



## Long Service Awards for 20 years of service:

Carolyn Foulis, Carolyn Williams, Christy McManus, Danika Bartley, Fiona Weir, Jeffrey King, Joyce Casson, Kate Manning, Merrawyn Townsend, Olumuyiwa Komolafe, Peter McDonald, Rodney Honson, Timothy O'Neill and Trudy Rennie.



## Long Service Awards for 30 years of service:

Karen Chrisakis, Kerriane Pearson, Liam Warhurst, Theresa Pippin and Tracy Herlihy.



## Long Service Award for 40 years of service:

Peter Ball



## Long Service Award for 50 years of service:

Angelika Wyness



# Award Winners

## NSW Health Excellence in Allied Health Awards

In recognition of her exceptional achievements and contributions, Rebecca Smith, the Manager of Integrated Care for the District based in Broken Hill, was honored with the prestigious Allied Health Leader of the Year award at the 2022 NSW Health Excellence in Allied Health Awards. The esteemed ceremony took place on Thursday 23 February 2023, at Luna Park Sydney.

With a remarkable career spanning 17 years as an Occupational Therapist, Rebecca has served in various clinical and management roles across rural and remote areas in South Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales. Her experience has allowed her to gain valuable insights into the diverse healthcare needs of different communities.

“Growing up locally in the Far West it is a privilege to give back to the community and be acknowledged as an allied health professional by NSW Health through these Awards.”

Throughout the past year, Rebecca has demonstrated her dedication to improving healthcare services in the region. She has been actively involved in pivotal areas such as the COVID-19 Community Response Team, Chronic Disease Management, and Hospital Avoidance Services. Her passion for clinical redesign has been instrumental in ensuring better access and service delivery for the people of the Far West and NSW.

The Excellence in Allied Health Awards celebrates the passion, dedication, and invaluable contributions of allied health professionals and their support staff throughout NSW. It also underscores NSW Health’s unwavering commitment to recognising and valuing the pivotal role that allied health plays in delivering patient-centred care.

Rebecca’s achievement exemplifies the caliber of talent and commitment present within our organisation, and we are proud to have individuals like her driving positive change and making a difference in the lives of the communities we serve.



“I’m completely overwhelmed winning this award. I work with such a great team of professionals within the Far West Local Health District. This recognition is for them as well - for the outstanding and innovative work that is happening in our region.”

## International Nurses Day Awards

Every year, the FWLHD celebrates International Nurses Day on 12 May, honouring the exceptional and varied contributions nurses make daily across diverse settings and specialties throughout the District.

In 2023, FWLHD continues its tradition of acknowledging outstanding achievements within its nursing and midwifery workforce by presenting six individual awards and one team award.

“Recognising our nurses on this special day shines a spotlight on the very important role they play in all stages of a person’s life. I’m very proud of our nurses who are highly skilled, committed, and continually working to improve health outcomes and health care experiences for everyone in the Far West Local Health District.”

**Wendy Gleeson - Executive Director of Nursing & Midwifery and Director of Clinical Governance**

*International Nurses Day Award Winners (from left) Elaine Fotheringham and Glenys Dayman (representing SARU), Sharon DeFranceschi and Elizabeth Mackie. Absent: Babette Cruickshank, Chloe Deighton, Roberta McPherson*

# The International Nurses Day FWLHD Award recipients for 2023 were:



### **Nurse of the Year:**

Sharon DeFranceschi

### **Midwife of the Year:**

Chelsea Anderson

### **Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Nurse of the Year:**

Babette Cruickshank

### **New to Practice Nurse/Midwife of the Year:**

Chloe Deighton

### **Team of the Year Award (Nursing and/or Midwifery Team)**

Sub Acute Rehabilitation Team (SARU)

### **Judith Meppem Lifetime Achievement Award:**

Roberta McPherson

### **Leadership Award:**

Elizabeth Mackie





# Volunteers



*Kiosk staff all in pink to raise awareness of Breast Cancer*

We have over 80 volunteers who give their time in a variety of different roles within the Far West Local Health District.

Approximately 50 volunteers within the Broken Hill Kiosk, work tirelessly to provide home-cooked food for staff and the community. They have donated more than 1800 hours of their time to run the kiosk, just amazing!

Our kiosk volunteers received a nomination for an FWLHD award, and both two individual volunteers and the entire team were nominated for the NSW Volunteers of the Year Awards.

The kiosk staff has donated approximately \$160,000 towards purchasing equipment for the Broken Hill Health Service.

The Multipurpose Health Service and Day Centre in Balranald have over 25 volunteers in a variety of roles, from auxiliary to bus drivers and day centre activities support.

Within the premises of the Multipurpose Health Service and Day Centre in Balranald, a dynamic team of over 25 dedicated volunteers plays an integral role in fostering community wellbeing. These volunteers fulfill a diverse array of responsibilities, spanning various roles that include auxiliary tasks, bus drivers, and offering invaluable support for the smooth execution of day centre activities. Their commitment to enhancing the quality of life for individuals in the region showcases the remarkable impact that volunteers can have within a multifaceted healthcare and social support setting.

Our volunteers at the Balranald Health Service were also recognised receiving an award at the FWLHD Health Awards, recognising their exceptional dedication in offering vital support and compassionate care to both the staff and elderly patients at the service. These volunteers play a pivotal role in alleviating some of the workload, allowing the staff to focus on their core responsibilities. Their presence empowers patients to engage in enriching outings and activities that would otherwise be inaccessible. Their commitment to service has also earned them a nomination for the prestigious NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards, further underscoring their profound impact on the community.



*Award accepted on behalf of the volunteers by (from left to right) Naomie Scott, Geoffrey Harper and Leanne Giansiracusa*



*Balranald staff, and volunteers on an outing*





Balranald Health Council members, February 2023

## Community Engagement

FWLHD Health Councils foster collaboration, ensuring community insights shape the healthcare experience. The eight FWLHD Health Councils play a crucial role, made up of community representatives, Health Service Managers, and FWLHD Board members. This mix of voices helps ensure that the services and programs we provide match community needs.

### The Health Councils include:

- Broken Hill Health Council
- Two Rivers Health Council
- Wilcannia Health Council
- White Cliffs Health Council
- Menindee Health Council
- Balranald Health Council
- Ivanhoe Health Council
- Tibooburra Health Council

Each Health Council has 5-10 members, including a Chair and a Secretary, and works closely with local Health Services. Their two-year action plans focus on:



**Promoting programs and community education sessions**



**Sharing community suggestions for services like in-home care or extra allied health support**



**Addressing transport challenges, like advocating for better bus services**



**Supporting telehealth services and alternative care approaches**

Community representatives on the Health Councils influence planning, development, evaluation, and ongoing healthcare in their communities. Their roles involve gathering local perspectives and feedback, advocating for community members, boosting program visibility and providing input on service gaps and community needs.



# Appendices

## Appendix A - FWLHD Board



### Dr Andrew Refshauge - Board Chair

*MBBS, FAICD*

Chair of FWLHD since June 2017, Andrew has a special interest in remote and Aboriginal healthcare. He was the NSW Deputy Premier for more than 10 years under Premier Bob Carr and served as Treasurer, and Minister of numerous portfolios including Health, and Aboriginal Affairs. Andrew is Chair of CareFlight, and past Chair of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency. He worked for the Aboriginal Medical Service in Redfern during his formative medical career.



### Justin Files

*BHSc (Mental Health), AdvDip Bus Admin*

A Barkindji man from Far West NSW, Justin is an accomplished Healthcare Manager with 20 years of experience in local Aboriginal health. He specialises in the management of innovative complex community-based Aboriginal health models that are flexible and sustainable whole-of-community approaches to care. Justin joined the FWLHD Board in 2022.



### Mariette Curcuruto - Dunlevy

*LLB (Hon), LLM*

Mariette has a strong social justice ethic, dedicating her career to improving the lives of others. She is president of Silverlea Early Childhood Services which supports disability or developmental delay; and is on the board of Advocacy Law Alliance. Mariette was the Acting Chief Executive Officer of Far West Community Legal Centre and the Broken Hill Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service. She joined the FWLHD Board in 2016.



### Paul Kemp

Paul Kemp is General Manager at Murdi Paaki Regional Housing, a position he has held for 24 years, overseeing 300 Aboriginal-owned and managed properties throughout the Murdi Paaki region. He is the President of the Saints Rugby League Football Club and Vice President of the Broken Hill Musicians Club. Paul was appointed to the Board in 2018.



### A/Prof Michelle Dickson

*PhD (Medicine and Health), MEd, PGCert  
Dev, PGDip Ed (Adult), BA (Hons)*

A proud Darkinjung/Ngarigo woman, Michelle is Deputy Head of the University of Sydney's School of Public Health (SPH) and an Associate Professor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Public Health and Wellbeing. She co-chairs a collaboration between the University of Sydney's School of Public Health and the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health and has a strong commitment to health workforce development, equity and inclusion. Michelle joined the FWLHD Board in 2016.



### **Pam Tucker**

A resident of Broken Hill, Pamela is qualified in business management and has more than 45 years of experience in the local multi-resource industry. She is actively involved in the Broken Hill community and is a Board Member of Foundation Broken Hill which facilitates employment opportunities and encourages social development. Pamela was appointed to the FWLHD Board in 2022.



### **Sally Pearce**

*BCom, JD*

Sally's senior executive roles have spanned the public and private health sectors and tertiary education. She is focused on transformative change, increased efficiency and achieving strategic objectives through collaboration. Appointed to the FWLHD Board in 2019, Sally has more than 10 years of experience as a Chief Financial Officer and Finance Director across a range of health services.



### **A/Prof Lilon Bandler**

*MBBS, MHPol, FRACGP*

Lilon Bandler is a Principal Research Fellow for the Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education (LIME) Network and a member of the Macquarie University Humanities and Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. She is employed as Medical Director for Wayside Healthcare, at Wayside Chapel, providing community-based primary healthcare in inner-city Sydney. She joined the FWLHD Board in 2018.



### **Wincen Cuy**

A lifetime resident of the Broken Hill district, Wincen is a passionate community leader with a strong focus on promoting the region. He served as the city's Mayor from 2009-2016. He is the managing director of Silver City Tours and a managing partner of Helloworld Travel Broken Hill. Wincen joined the FWLHD Board in 2016.



### **Jason Masters**

*BEC, GACID*

Jason has a specific interest in healthcare. He chairs the Audit and Risk Committee of the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network and is a volunteer with the AIDS Council of NSW (ACON). He previously chaired the Audit and Risk Committee of the Health Care Complaints Commission and has served as a councillor with the Medical Council of NSW. Jason lectures in corporate governance and was appointed to the FWLHD Board in 2022.



## Appendix B - FWLHD Leadership Team



**Brad Astill** Chief Executive

*MHSM, B. App.Sc (Phy) GAICD*

Brad is a skilled and seasoned senior health manager with extensive expertise in overseeing a range of services, spanning from individual clinical departments to one of Australia's most expansive tertiary/quaternary health campuses. His proficiency lies in managing complex organisations, navigating activity-based funding systems, conducting operations analysis, and facilitating comprehensive reviews. Furthermore, Brad has considerable experience with clinical service benchmarking, performance evaluations, and comparative assessments.



**Jodie Miller** Executive Director Clinical Operations

*BSW, Grad Dip Health Management*

Jodie leads, directs and manages the clinical operations of the Far West Local Health District across a broad spectrum of health service delivery settings and corporate functions, to ensure the delivery of high-quality, safe health services for our communities. Jodie is also responsible for the development and oversight of strategic business plans, policy development, business and clinical services strategies, and collaborative relationship building with our stakeholders.



**Apsara Kahawita** Director Finance and Corporate Services

*B Sc. Bus Ad (Special), ACA, CPA*

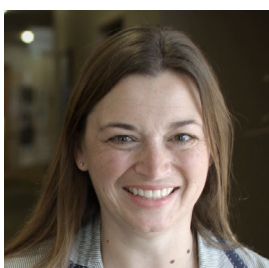
Apsara is an experienced finance professional with nearly 30 years of experience in both private and public sectors including 16 years at NSW Health. Apsara and the team she leads provide strategic and operational expertise across a range of functions to ensure responsible financial management of public funding. The Directorate is responsible for monitoring recurrent and capital expenditures against the annual budget allocation and reporting on FWLHD's financial performance to the Ministry of Health and the Board.



**David Green** Director People and Culture

*B.Com (Hons), MBA Griffith Uni*

David is responsible for all people and culture programs and practices including attraction and retention, learning and development, employee relations and benefits, workplace health, safety and wellness, and human resource policy and procedures. Starting in 2022, David's extensive senior and executive experience across various industries forms the foundation of his emphasis on transformation, culture, organizational development, industrial relations, and human capital management systems.



**Dr Sarah Wenham** Executive Director Medical Services

*MBChB, FRCP (UK), FRACP, FACHPM*

Sarah moved from the UK to live in Broken Hill 11 years ago to become the first Specialist Palliative Care Physician for the Far West LHD. In early 2023, she was appointed as the Executive Director of Medical Services. In this role, Sarah is responsible for developing and sustaining the effective provision of medical services across the Far West LHD, including medical workforce planning, recruitment, retention, development of medical training programs, and consultation with external medical providers. Sarah also contributes to the strategic planning, leadership, and delivery of evidence-based, high-quality and safe specialty services in the District, as well as maintaining a small clinical role with the Palliative Care Team.



**Wendy Gleeson** Executive Director Nursing & Midwifery and Director Clinical Governance

*BN, M (Emerg N), MN (Advanced Clinical Education)*

Wendy is responsible for nursing and midwifery workforce planning, professional practice standards and education, and ensuring effective strategies are in place to attract, recruit, develop, and retain quality nursing and midwifery staff to provide excellent patient care. As Director of clinical governance, she oversees the quality and safety of services and systems of care, including quality improvement, incident and complaints management, and compliance with National Standards. Wendy has an extensive background in critical care, emergency nursing and clinical education.



**Melissa Welsh** Director Allied Health and Integrated Community Services

*B App Sci (Occ Therapy), Grad Cert Clinical Redesign, Dip Project Management, Dip Mgt*

Melissa's focus is on leading services that provide holistic, collaborative and integrated care. Her key initiatives are geared towards helping people stay healthy and remain in their homes for as long as they can. She oversees the Allied Health and Integrated Community Services Directorate, a wide-ranging and diverse portfolio. This team is dedicated to finding and putting into action innovative solutions for delivering services, especially given the challenges posed by the post-pandemic situation.



**Corina Kemp** Director Aboriginal Health and Community Relations

*Bachelor Health Science (Mental Health), NSW Leadership Program 2024*

A proud Dieri, Barkandji, Mulyangaba woman, Corina's primary focus is to assist the LHD to address the healthcare needs of its Aboriginal communities through the delivery of services and prevention programs in a culturally appropriate environment. Corina's community relations role is critical in enabling consumers to assist in shaping services to best meet their needs.



**Julie Manoel** Director Nursing & Midwifery and General Manager Broken Hill Health Service

*BN, M. Nurs (Leadership & Management), Hyperbaric Nurse Certificate*

As manager of Broken Hill Health Service, Julie is responsible for the operational delivery of day-to-day patient care, as well as managing its nursing and midwifery workforce. Born and bred in Broken Hill, Julie's extensive nursing career spans across the globe. She is passionate about embracing technology and new models of practice to deliver high-quality patient care. She believes that the patient's individual needs are of utmost importance.



**Melissa Cumming** Director Cancer and Palliative Care Services

*RN, ONC, MPallC*

Melissa, a registered nurse, brings over 37 years of specialised palliative care experience to the Local Health District. Out of this, she has spent 34 years serving within FWLHD, focusing on rural and remote communities. She has strategic and operational oversight of cancer, oncology, and palliative care, providing patients and carers with high-quality services wherever they live. Melissa believes organisational culture, where staff feel supported and valued in their roles, is fundamental to positive health outcomes.



**Denise McCallum** General Manager Remote Health Services

Denise is responsible for the operational and strategic oversight of eight remote health service facilities and aged care services. She collaborates with communities, local stakeholders, partners, and Aboriginal community members to remodel healthcare services to meet their needs. As a registered nurse, she has spent more than 30 years in clinical, strategic, leadership, and operational roles.



**Sharon McIntyre** Interim Director Mental Health Drug and Alcohol and Violence and Neglect Services

*BN, M. Nurs, MH Nurs. (Hons), M. Public Health*

Sharon worked with Far West, seconded from Western LHD for 6 months commencing in October 2022. Sharon is a proud Wongaibon woman. Sharon has worked within MHDA in various areas for over 20 years. Her passion is to ensure the least restrictive and closest-to-home care for those with Mental Health Drug and Alcohol challenges, ensuring that the consumer is at the table in relation to their own care. Sharon provided strategic leadership and operational direction for Mental Health Drug and Alcohol (MHDA) and Integrated Violence Prevention and Response (IVPRS) services across Far West LHD.



# Appendix C - Location Directory

## Public Hospitals

### Broken Hill Health Service

Thomas St, Broken Hill NSW 2880  
Ph: (08) 8080 1300 Fax: (08) 8080 1182

### Wentworth Health Service

24 Hospital Road (PO Box 38), Wentworth NSW 2648  
Ph: (03) 5027 5700 Fax: (03) 5027 5740

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## Multipurpose Services

### Balranald Multi-Purpose Service

Market St (PO Box 10), Balranald NSW 2715  
Ph: (03) 5071 9800 Fax: (03) 5071 9864

### Wilcannia Multi-Purpose Service

1-4 Ross St (PO Box 123), Wilcannia NSW 2836  
Ph: (08) 8083 8700 Fax: (08) 8083 8780

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## Non-Inpatient Health Facilities

### Ivanhoe Health Service

11 Columbus St (PO Box 1), Ivanhoe NSW 2878  
Ph: (02) 6990 2800 Fax: (02) 6990 2880

### Menindee Health Service

21 Perry St (PO Box 25), Menindee NSW 2879  
Ph: (08) 8083 2700 Fax: (08) 8083 2780

### Tibooburra Health Service

5 Sturt St, Tibooburra NSW 2880  
Ph: (08) 8083 2900 Fax: (08) 8083 2920

### White Cliffs Health Service

46 Johnston St, White Cliffs NSW 2836  
Ph: (08) 8083 6200 Fax: (08) 8083 6280

## Community Health, Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol Services

### Broken Hill Community Health Centre - Wilyakali Palii-mala Kirra

2-4 Sulphide St, Broken Hill NSW 2880  
Ph: (08) 8080 1100 Fax: (08) 8080 1755

### Safe Haven Café

Old War Vets Dve, Broken Hill NSW 2880  
Ph: 0418 442 767

### Buronga HealthOne

3 Pitman Avenue (PO Box 632), Buronga NSW 2739  
Ph: (03) 5021 7200 Fax: (03) 5021 7281

### Dareton Primary Care and Community Health Service

55 Sturt Place, Dareton NSW 2717  
Ph: (03) 5021 7200 Fax: (03) 5021 7281

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## Oral Health Clinics

### Broken Hill Community Health Dental Clinic – Wilyakali Palii-mala Kirra

2-4 Sulphide St, Broken Hill NSW 2880  
Ph: (08) 8080 1100 Fax: (08) 8080 1755

**The Lower Western Sector Dental van regularly visits various school sites in the Lower Western Sector of the LHD**

### Buronga HealthOne

3 Pitman Avenue, Buronga NSW 2739  
Ph: 1300 552 626

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## FWLHD Administration

### Broken Hill Community Health Centre - Wilyakali Palii-mala Kirra

2-4 Sulphide St, Broken Hill NSW 2880  
Ph: (08) 8080 1469 Fax: (08) 8080 1755



## FAR WEST LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

**A:** 2-4 Sulphide St,  
Broken Hill NSW 2880

PO Box 457  
Broken Hill NSW 2880

**T:** (08) 8080 1300

**E:** [FWLHD-Feedback@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:FWLHD-Feedback@health.nsw.gov.au)

**W:** [www.nsw.gov.au/health/fwlhd](http://www.nsw.gov.au/health/fwlhd)



**Facebook**

[@Far West Local Health District](https://www.facebook.com/FarWestLocalHealthDistrict)



**Instagram**

[@farwestlhd](https://www.instagram.com/farwestlhd)



**Twitter**

[@Far West Local Health District -NSW Health](https://twitter.com/FarWestLocalHealthDistrict-NSWHealth)



**LinkedIn**

[Far West Local Health District](https://www.linkedin.com/company/far-west-local-health-district)



**YouTube**

[Far West Local Health District](https://www.youtube.com/FarWestLocalHealthDistrict)

# Far West Local Health District 2022-2023 Year in Review

