



Strategic Plan

2025-2028

HEALTHY RURAL COMMUNITIES
WITH ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY
HEALTHCARE





Rural Health West acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups across Western Australia and their connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am delighted to present Rural Health West's Strategic Plan 2025-2028.

The Strategic Plan outlines our organisation's commitment to reducing the disparity in health status between Western Australians who live in rural and remote regions, and those who live in metropolitan locations; and between Aboriginal* and non-Aboriginal people across the breadth of our State.

The Strategic Plan outlines four strategic priorities. They provide guidance and a constant reminder of our core purpose – ensuring all rural communities in Western Australia have ready access to qualified and experienced health professionals.

The four strategic priorities are:

- 1 Advocating for health equity
- 2 Partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- 3 Extending our reach and impact
- 4 Enhancing our core services


The Strategic Plan has been developed with input from the Rural Health West Board of Directors and staff, and responds to current and emerging changes in Australia's health system and rural populations.

Thank you for your support.

Hon Terry 'Tuck' Waldron
Board Chair



* The word Aboriginal has been used throughout this document. When referring to Aboriginal we are referring to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



In the next three-year planning period, we will continue our strong commitment to Western Australia's rural and remote communities.

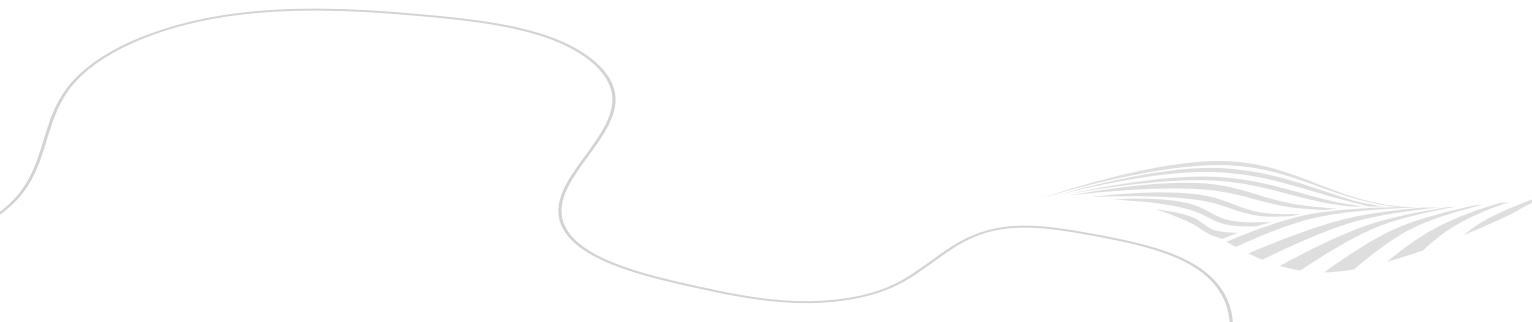
THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Rural and remote communities across Western Australia continue to experience significant health inequity. There are many reasons for this, but ongoing health workforce shortages are the most important. For many years, our passionate team has been at the forefront of addressing these shortages. We are experts in rural health workforce, with extensive knowledge and well established relationships across the health industry. Over the next three years, we will continue our strong commitment to rural and remote communities through improvements to the range of programs and activities which support rural health professionals.

Unfortunately, for many people across all parts of our State, workforce shortages mean inconsistent access to primary healthcare. Policy makers are turning their attention to this challenge and are seeking to extend the workforce support services traditionally provided to rural communities to other areas of workforce need. At Rural Health West, we recognise that as the stress on the health system grows, we must make an effort to extend the services we currently provide to rural and remote communities to larger population centres which are experiencing health workforce shortages.

Rural Health West acknowledges the Aboriginal people who have lived on this land for hundreds of generations, and the strength of their health, social and emotional wellbeing models. This Strategic Plan outlines our commitment to strengthen Aboriginal people's health and wellbeing. This means continuing effort is required from Rural Health West and all involved in healthcare advocacy, planning, funding and delivery. For us, partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and supporting them to advance self-determination and reduce the disparity in health status between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is of the highest priority.

It is essential for the health of rural and remote Western Australians that policy which governs and guides the health system is targeted and effective. Rural Health West is committed to being at the forefront of health workforce policy development and as such we will be dedicating time and resources to an active advocacy strategy. We know that as policy advocates, we can drive positive change for rural communities and health professionals.



OUR VISION

Healthy rural communities with access to high quality healthcare

OUR PURPOSE

Ensure all rural communities in Western Australia have ready access to qualified and experienced health professionals



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2025-2028

Strategic priorities	ADVOCATING FOR HEALTH EQUITY	PARTNERING WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS	EXTENDING OUR REACH AND IMPACT	ENHANCING OUR CORE SERVICES
Why it is important	Rural and remote communities experience inequitable access to health professionals, which leads to poorer health outcomes.	Aboriginal people are best positioned to exercise self determination in achieving positive health outcomes.	There are serious health workforce shortages across Western Australia, including in all country regions and some metropolitan locations.	Health professionals require ongoing skills development, training and support to deliver high-quality care to the communities they serve.
What we will do	We will lead an active advocacy strategy to inform health workforce policy development, so that it is effective in improving access to primary healthcare for rural and remote communities, and Aboriginal people.	We will work with, and learn from, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and the broader health system to ensure Aboriginal people have access to locally delivered, culturally appropriate health services.	We will continue to extend our expertise in delivering health workforce support programs to broader areas of workforce shortage.	We will develop and implement new and innovative approaches to the delivery of support services for health professionals.



We will lead an active advocacy strategy to inform health workforce policy development, so that it is more effective in improving access to primary healthcare for rural and remote communities.

Why it is important

Rural and remote communities experience inequitable access to health professionals, which leads to poorer health outcomes.

What we will do

- Work with health professionals, and rural and remote communities to understand the impact of policy on rural primary healthcare.
- Lead and conduct engagements with rural and culturally diverse stakeholders to identify systemic challenges and design solutions, drawing on data, analysis and research.
- Develop evidence-based policy positions that advocate for community and health workforce needs.
- Actively engage with, and advocate to, policy and decision makers to propose and inform impactful policy.





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2 PARTNERING WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS

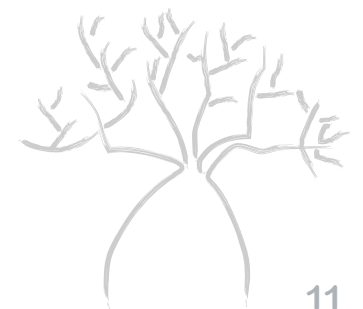
We will work with, and learn from, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and the broader health system to ensure Aboriginal people have access to locally delivered, culturally appropriate health services.

Why it is important

Aboriginal people are best positioned to exercise self determination in achieving positive health outcomes.

What we will do

- Invest in strengthening the cultural capability and diversity of Rural Health West.
- In collaboration with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and the Australian Government, explore strategies for increasing Aboriginal governance of health programs targeting Aboriginal people.
- Support the health workforce in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
- Continue to strengthen our commitment to reducing the disparity in health outcomes for Aboriginal people.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY **3** EXTENDING OUR REACH AND IMPACT

We will extend our expertise in delivering health workforce support programs to all areas of workforce shortage.

Why it is important

There are serious health workforce shortages across Western Australia, including in all country regions and some metropolitan locations.

What we will do

- Proactively identify and respond to workforce challenges across Western Australia using real time data and information.
- Strengthen partnerships to develop collaborative and culturally inclusive regional health workforce approaches at the local level, including with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
- Broaden our program reach to support health workforce in all priority areas of workforce shortage.
- Expand our health workforce programs across the full diversity of primary healthcare professions.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY **4** ENHANCING OUR CORE SERVICES

We will develop and implement new and innovative approaches to the delivery of support services for health professionals.

Why it is important

Health professionals require ongoing skills development, training and support to deliver high-quality care to the communities they serve.

What we will do

- Enhance programs to support evolving service delivery models in areas of health workforce shortage.
- Continue to build professional development opportunities aligned to rural health needs which are culturally appropriate and responsive.
- Modernise and expand online educational platforms to improve access to high-quality education, training and development.
- Continue to prioritise and implement strategies to attract the future health workforce to rural Western Australia.



OUR PARTNERS

Thank you to our partners. We look forward to continuing to work with you over the next three years and beyond.

- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia
- Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
- Australian Government
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- Australian Medical Association Western Australia
- Community-based health practices
- Country Local Governments
- Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council
- Metropolitan health service providers
- National Rural Health Commissioner
- Pilbara Aboriginal Health Alliance
- Regional Development Commissions
- Royal Flying Doctor Service Western Australia
- Rural Doctors Association of Western Australia Inc
- Rural workforce agencies
- St John of God Bunbury Hospital
- St John WA
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia
- University Departments of Rural Health
- WA Country Health Service
- WA Primary Health Alliance
- Western Australian Department of Health
- Western Australian Government
- Western Australian Local Government Association
- Western Australian universities



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Government of **Western Australia**
WA Country Health Service

Rural Health West is proudly funded by WA Country Health Service and the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

