

Western New South Wales Local Health District

The Western New South Wales Local Health District geographically covers around 250,000 square kilometres, spans across 24 Local Government Areas (LGAs) with 8 LGA's considered remote. The District incorporates 63 Community Health Centres, 38 inpatient facilities and 3 major rural referral hospitals with more than 6000 staff.

The District serves a population of 270,775 (ERP 2011 census). Overall 30,026 people identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Islander descent which represents 11.1% of the total population.

The Western New South Wales Local Health District faces several challenges in the delivery of health services. These include a trajectory of lower socioeconomic status, poorer health and an increased incidence of behaviours that contribute to poor health as you move from the east to the north west of the health district. The large proportion of Aboriginal people and their poorer health status make 'closing the Aboriginal health gap' a priority for the Local Health District.

The sparse distribution and long travel distances provide significant barriers to providing timely and accessible care. Information and communications technology including the sharing of clinical information across practitioners, providers and sites and limitations to the utilisation of telehealth as a result of bandwidth further challenges access to care and the integration of care

Common to many rural areas the Local Health District has an ageing workforce, a maldistribution of the workforce ('inverse care law') resulting in recruitment and retention difficulties in rural and remote areas and a reliance on locum and 'fly in fly out' services.

RESULTS



Employee engagement
increased by 3% to 68% (mid 2013)

31% decrease in complaints in 2014



Emergency Services

35% decrease in patients staying >24 in an ED



6.6% increase in Non-Admitted Patient Occasions of Service

6.4% decrease in Avoidable Admissions



Surgical Services

61% decrease in hospital caused cancellations



Moved from significant financial deficit in 2012/13 to a breakeven position for 2013/14



What We Did

In 2013 Western New South Wales Local Health District commenced its partnership with Studer Group and launched its “Living Well Together” strategy. In planning its future direction the District had two fundamental imperatives – ensuring services are safe and of high quality, and reducing costs to live within funding. Living Well Together focuses on teamwork – what we achieve, we achieve together, regardless of what role we play. Living Well Together is designed to help deliver the best possible experience and outcomes for our patients. Not just sometimes, not just once in a while, but every time.

The changes that have been implemented through the Living Well Together haven't been easy, however the aligned goals, accountability, actions and innovation across the district have allowed Western New South Wales Local Health District to move from the highest level of performance watch with New South Wales Ministry of Health in early 2012 to a zero level of watch, with achievement of results across all domains (pillars). The Ministry has commented that this is the fastest turnaround of an organisation that 18 months ago was really struggling.

This success, commitment and engagement of staff has been recognised with numerous awards being received by the district including the Health Secretary's Whole of State Baxter Quality Award, the Aboriginal Health Award, the Minister for Health's Baxter Quality award NSW Health Minister Award for Innovation. These awards recognise Western New South Wales Local Health District as being a leader in quality and safety which is reflected in our strategy of Living Well Together.



Scott McLachlan
Chief Executive Officer
Western New South Wales LHD

“We are honored to be named the Studer Group Australian Healthcare Organisation of Distinction as this award reflects our team's commitment, dedication and passion to ensuring we provide a world class health service for our patients, staff and our community”.

Scott McLachlan
Chief Executive Officer