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RURAL*northwest***HEALTH**

centred on you

Strategic plan 2020-2025

Better health for all

Executive Summary

Our Strategic plan, Better health for all, articulates our aspirations for and commitment to strong, healthy, vibrant rural communities and maps out how we will deliver this.

Over the next five years, we will build on our strengths as a sustainable organisation, maintain the highest quality of care, and strengthen our collaboration both within and beyond the health sector.

OUR VISION

Strong, healthy, vibrant rural communities.

OUR MISSION

To promote wellness, enhance health, and support healthy ageing.

WHAT DEFINES US



We are committed to excellence



We listen and collaborate



We are caring and connected



We are friendly and enjoy our work



We are lifelong learners



We are here for our communities to achieve better health and wellbeing for all

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Better health for all

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About Us

Rural Northwest Health is a public health service located in the Wimmera Mallee Region of Victoria. We were established in 1999 under the Health Services Act 1994 and are responsible to the Victorian Minister for Health.

Rural Northwest Health is funded by the Victorian State and Commonwealth Governments, and supported by members of our local communities.

Rural Northwest Health provides responsive quality healthcare and community services by empowering a skilled and committed team. We were created as a result of the amalgamation of Warracknabeal District Hospital, Hopetoun Bush Nursing Hospital and Beulah Pioneers Bush Nursing Hospital. We work across our three campuses of Warracknabeal, Beulah and Hopetoun, and in our communities.

The key focus of Rural Northwest Health is caring and supporting people to be healthy and living a full life. This is reflected by our logo whereby the carer reaches out to embrace our communities over the broad horizon.

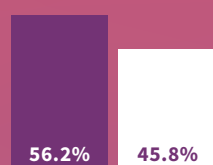
Rural Northwest Health works in partnership with regional and subregional service providers to support community members to access high quality and safe care as close to home as possible. Key partners include local neighbouring health services, Grampians Regional Partnership, Western Victoria Primary Health Network, Ballarat Health Services, Woodbine, Yarriambiack Shire, Ambulance Victoria, local general practitioners, Royal Flying Doctors Service, the Department of Health and the Commonwealth Government.

Key Population Data

Yarriambiack – Total population 6542

Yarriambiack Victoria

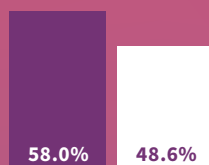
Population	Yarriambiack Shire (2016)	Victoria (2016)	Yarriambiack Projected 2025	Victoria Projected 2025
0 – 14 years	16.9%	18.2%	14.9%	18.5%
15 – 24 years	9.6%	13.2%	8.7%	12.6%
25 – 44 years	17.6%	29.5%	17.7%	30.4%
45 – 64 years	28.8%	23.6%	26.9%	22.2%
65+ years	27.7%	15.4%	31.8%	16.3%



Percentage of individuals with income less than \$400 per week



Percentage of adults who comply with the fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines



Percentage of persons overweight or obese



Percentage of persons reporting asthma



Resilience (Range 0-8)

Rural Northwest Health is committed to innovation and research. We partner with La Trobe, Swinburne, and Deakin Universities, and we will seek to broaden our range of partnerships in the future. Our research aims to address the impact on rural health and the disparity in health outcomes compared to urban populations.



Rural Northwest Health acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Japagulk people. We also welcome all people to work, volunteer and access services from us, regardless of their age, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ability or religion.

Our Strategic Planning Process

We have developed this strategic plan through wide ranging engagement with our communities, team, executive, board, partners, and funders. Engagement with over 80 internal and external stakeholders has taken place through workshops, meetings, focus groups, and one-on-one discussions. We would like to thank everyone who participated in developing and shaping our strategy. Our strategy has also been guided and informed by key Department of Health strategies, policies and other documentation, including but not limited to Health 2040: Advancing health, access and care, Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2019-2023, and the recently introduced capability frameworks.

Our Strategic Context

Our strategy considers the context we operate in today and in the future. We will be flexible so that we can adapt to our communities' changing needs, remaining responsive to opportunities to improve the health of our communities. Our strategic context builds on our evolution as an organisation, responds to the evolving needs of our communities, and prepares us for disruptions impacting our health sector.

Our Communities

We exist to serve, support, and empower our communities to enable better health for all. As such, it is vitally important that we understand the major trends impacting them when it comes to their health and healthcare. We have identified barriers to accessing healthcare, an ageing population, and co-morbidities as key strategic considerations for our communities now and into the future.



Barriers to access healthcare

Access barriers can prevent our communities from reaching us and other healthcare providers when they are in need. These barriers come in a range of forms such as: limited knowledge of what health and other services are available at Rural Northwest Health and further afield; limited transport options such as public transport, taxis and volunteer services; the cost of healthcare services; and limited access to specialists.



An ageing population

Our ageing population is driving increased demand for a broader range of aged care services. Of note, this strategy was written and finalised during the COVID-19 pandemic which poses greater health risks to older people than their younger counterparts. Aged care will continue to be a priority healthcare need in our communities as we find new ways to support independent living, residential care, and transitional options in between.



Co-morbidities and mental health

An increasing prevalence of co-morbidities - such as diabetes and heart disease - demands that we are able to understand and respond to a more complex combination of health needs in our communities. This also has a significant impact on mental wellbeing, which needs to be integrated with and across healthcare at large, and one that demands improved investment.

Our Organisation

It is essential that we are a strong organisation, if we are to support better health for, and with, our communities. To continue to be an effective rural healthcare service, it is important that we account for the role we play in our communities, build on our existing strengths in line with government policies, and prepare our people and our infrastructure for the future.



Our Role

Rural Northwest Health plays a central role in the fabric of our communities. Beyond providing access to healthcare both in our own facilities and in the community, we recognise our role and responsibility for supporting the local economy and community wellbeing. An example of this is the employment we provide for our local communities. We also recognise our role as a rural health service within the Victorian health system and the importance of aligning with Department of Health policy and guidelines, including the Department's strategic direction and capability frameworks.



Our Strengths

We are proud of our strong history and track record in aged care and have seen the positive impact of our ABLE model of care in particular. The ABLE model (which stands for Abilities, Background, Leadership, and Environment) is an innovative person-centred model of care that we developed based on the Montessori principles. Programs like the ABLE model were made possible through our culture of innovation and community connection. Innovation and strong community relationships are two core factors that will help us to deliver quality care that responds to the unique and changing needs of our communities.



People and infrastructure

We are conscious that demographic, economic, and social changes – including an ageing population, as mentioned above - pose opportunities and challenges to retain, develop and build an excellent team. This requires us to think differently about how we attract and retain talent and what shape our workforce will take in the long term. Of note, the housing market in our region is a strategic barrier to recruiting and retaining team members, so it will be critical that we invest in local housing solutions, including maintaining and adapting our campus facilities and equipment. In addition, we will explore different and innovative models of care to support the needs of our community.

Our Health System

As a rural healthcare provider, we recognise that we operate within a much broader health system that is changing all the time. For example, during our strategic planning process, the Victorian Government released capability frameworks which clarify the requirements for safe, quality healthcare. We are committed to understanding and complying with these frameworks and other policies to ensure the ongoing delivery of safe, high quality services. We have identified collaboration, new technology, and organisational resilience as three strategic considerations that will help us remain relevant and impactful as the world around us changes.



Collaboration

With around 80 independent public health organisations in Victoria, partnerships and collaboration have a vital role to play in the future of rural healthcare. Partnerships across the healthcare and community sectors are increasingly being recognised as a way to make quality healthcare available to those who need it, without duplicating effort. We are committed to collaborating locally, regionally and further afield across sectors to increase access to high quality, safe healthcare for all.



Organisational Resilience

Recent times have placed unprecedented pressure on the healthcare sector. From bushfires to pandemics, our facilities, our people and our communities have demonstrated resolve and resilience. On top of this, Royal Commissions are placing aged care and mental healthcare in the spotlight. These changes will make safety, quality, collaboration, transparency, and business continuity planning even more important. To ensure the ongoing resilience of our organisation and our sector amongst these changes, it will be critical that we continue to change, adapt and improve.



New Technology

Advances in digital technology present an opportunity for healthcare organisations to think differently about the way services are delivered, for example, through assistive technologies. It also presents an opportunity to re-think the way that healthcare organisations operate, for example, by digitally transforming back office functions across sectors and society, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated use and uptake of technology, and driven increasing digital capacity and capability. Adopting new technology presents risks, so it is critical that cybersecurity and privacy are maintained, and continuity plans are robust to avoid system failures and limit service risk.

Our Strategy

Our strategy includes our vision for the future and the mission we have tasked ourselves with. It defines our identity as an organisation, our focus for the upcoming five years, and the foundations that will shape our decision making.



OUR VISION

Strong, healthy, vibrant rural communities.



OUR MISSION

To promote wellness, enhance health, and support healthy ageing.



WHAT DEFINES US

Our identity at Rural Northwest Health is shaped by our team and their attitudes and behaviours. The key elements that define us are summarised below.



We are committed to excellence

Everyone at Rural Northwest Health makes a valuable contribution. Quality is at the heart of everything we do. We don't rest on our laurels. Instead, we seek to be the best possible. Always.



We listen and collaborate

We value the voice of our team members, community, and partners. We openly and willingly share our own knowledge, experiences, and views within and outside Rural Northwest Health. We commit to being open and transparent.



We are caring and connected

We are one team that supports one another and are closely connected with our communities. This means we genuinely care for and help our colleagues and our communities. Trust matters to us.



We are friendly and enjoy our work

We welcome, accept, and include all people and treat everyone with respect. We encourage diversity and inclusion within our organisation, in our communities, and through our partnerships. Our work is important and serious, and we approach it with mindfulness and engagement, alongside positivity and playfulness. This is why we come back to work every day.



We are lifelong learners

We are always considering how to improve what we do. We excel at responding as opportunities, challenges, and uncertainty arises. We are lifelong learners who aim to innovate, challenge our thinking, and try new things.

Our Focus

Our three focus areas define where we will direct our efforts in the next five years. Our care places safety, quality, and accessibility at the heart of our health services and at the forefront of every interaction with our communities. Our team ensures we have the systems, culture, and skills in place to be an effective and sustainable organisation and a valued employer. Our partnerships will see us collaborate within and beyond our sector for greater collective impact and to influence a better healthcare system.

Focus Area 1: Our care

Safe Healthcare

Safety is paramount, both for the people we care for and our team who care for them. Beyond maintaining accreditations and compliance, we will exceed safety standards through researching emerging opportunities to enhance safety in our unique rural health context.

We will implement the following strategies in the interest of delivering safe care:

- **Strategy 1:** Consistently meet and exceed all existing state and federal health standards, and explore innovative ways to align with the Department of Health's capability frameworks and strategic directions, including ensuring the consumer has a voice in guiding new and emerging strategic directions.
- **Strategy 2:** Continually identify and engage in emerging opportunities to enhance safe care in our unique rural health context.
- **Strategy 3:** Increase consumer participation in reviewing and strengthening our safety procedures and protocols for consumers, visitors, and our team.



Quality Healthcare

We will maintain the highest quality of care for our communities. For us, this means embedding quality frameworks across our organisation, continually building the capability of our team, and investing in the tools and facilities we need to deliver the best standard of care.

We will action the following strategies to continue to provide excellent, high quality healthcare and programs:

- **Strategy 1:** Implement continuous improvement processes and invest in fit-for-purpose technology and infrastructure that enables us to excel in providing quality healthcare.
- **Strategy 2:** Continue to incorporate quality into individual roles and support our team to deliver on their quality responsibilities.
- **Strategy 3:** Explore opportunities to increase and enhance the delivery of evidence-based health promotion and prevention programs.

Accessible Healthcare

Accessibility means that we put the physical, economic, cultural, and social measures in place to make our care inclusive across all of our communities. We will tailor our care to the diverse and unique accessibility requirements of our communities today and adapt and respond as they evolve in future.

We will implement the following strategies to increase access to healthcare for our communities:

- **Strategy 1:** Conduct research to deeply understand the service and accessibility requirements of our communities today and how these requirements are evolving over time.
- **Strategy 2:** Invest in face-to-face and digital services and programs that enable every member of our community to access Rural Northwest Health's care when they need, both at our campuses and in the community.
- **Strategy 3:** Continue to provide high quality residential and in-home aged care services, focusing on increasing access to safe, quality care for all members of our community. Innovative technology and partnering arrangements will play an important role here.

Focus area 2: Our team

Strong Culture

Our strong culture makes us a sought-after employer and an impactful organisation – particularly in times of crisis that demand us to be exceptionally resilient. We will use our strategic plan as a guide that unites us around our shared identity, purpose, and direction, and we will actively nurture the behaviours that drive the culture we seek.

We will action the following strategies to protect and enhance our exceptional culture:

- **Strategy 1:** Continue to build a strong, collaborative culture by encouraging our team to take our shared beliefs and behaviours to work with them every day.
- **Strategy 2:** Enhance our internal communications to unite our team and ensure that staff across Rural Northwest Health have the information they need for effective decision-making and action.
- **Strategy 3:** Provide new and ongoing opportunities for our team to connect with and inspire one another.

Skilled Team

When our team members have the skills they need to do their job, our organisation excels. For us, this firstly means deciding exactly what our skill requirements are. We will meet these skill requirements using processes and systems that enable us to effectively develop, recruit, and outsource an outstanding team.

We will implement the following strategies to support and enable skill development for existing and new team members:

- **Strategy 1:** Understand the capabilities we have, identify the skills and expertise we need, and explore how we can excel to deliver on our strategy. Utilise innovation, technology, and industry best practice to fill gaps and drive better outcomes.
- **Strategy 2:** Implement training, recruitment, and retention processes that enable us to effectively develop, recruit, retain, and outsource an outstanding team with the capabilities and expertise we need to excel.
- **Strategy 3:** Build the capabilities, knowledge, processes, and attitudes required to drive innovation in every area of our organisation.

Effective systems

Effective systems, processes, data, and analytics enable our people to work effectively and our organisation to be responsive, resilient, and sustainable. We will continually review our existing technology resources, information systems, and other processes, update them when needed, and create new solutions when we identify gaps.

We will action the following strategies to ensure we have effective systems, processes, and data:

- **Strategy 1:** Conduct regular audits that assess what data, systems, and processes we have today and what we need to stop, start and keep doing in order to excel. This will include leveraging the increased digital capacity and capability we have gained in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Strategy 2:** Implement processes that inform, empower, and assist our team to excel in every area of their role – from making decisions, to working efficiently, to delivering excellent care.
- **Strategy 3:** Invest in systems, processes, data, and other solutions that will support our organisation to be more financially and environmentally sustainable.

Focus area 3: Our partnerships

Broad collaboration

Collaborating within and beyond the healthcare sector broadens our reach and scales our collective impact. We will explore partnerships in areas such as education, community groups and services, local government, and disability services. We will shape partnerships that further our mission to promote wellness, enhance health outcomes, and support healthy ageing.

We will implement the following strategies to collaborate with and beyond the health sector:

- **Strategy 1:** Ensure our relationships with key partners in health have clearly defined priorities and are driving mutual benefit, including supporting healthy ageing and better mental health outcomes. This includes our partnerships with neighbouring health services, the Grampians Regional Partnership, Western Victoria Primary Health Network, Ballarat Health Services, Ambulance Victoria, local general practitioners, Royal Flying Doctors Service, and the Department of Health.

- **Strategy 2:** Strengthen existing and develop new forms of collaboration with mission-aligned organisations beyond the health sector, including local government, universities, schools and education, community services, disability services, and in the private sector.
- **Strategy 3:** Identify and explore partnership opportunities across new regions, metropolitan areas, interstate and internationally, with a focus on knowledge sharing, skill building, and ultimately improving health and wellbeing outcomes for rural communities.

Meaningful engagement

Meaningful engagement with our communities keeps us relevant and responsive. We will call on face-to-face, digital and other means to engage with community members, storing information, making decisions and communicating as a team. This is even more important in times of uncertainty.

We will action the following strategies to enhance meaningful engagement with our communities:

- **Strategy 1:** Review and enhance our community engagement by better supporting our community reference groups, and exploring other mechanisms to engage with our communities.
- **Strategy 2:** Deliver effective communications to ensure our communities are aware of the services available at Rural Northwest Health, in the region, and further afield.
- **Strategy 3:** Improve feedback mechanisms to collect real time responses from an array of consumers, visitors and community members. We will ensure this feedback is acted upon in a timely way and informs our decision making.

Targeted influence

Creating a better system means tactfully choosing who to influence and how. We will target partners who extend our sphere of influence. Our advocacy will be rooted in a sound evidence base and call for pragmatic steps to build a strong and resilient health system and ensure that regional communities are valued and supported.

We will implement the following strategies to advocate and influence with a clear and targeted direction:

- **Strategy 1:** Determine a clear set of advocacy priorities, drawing on a sound evidence base, and conduct pragmatic advocacy activities to build a strong and resilient health system and ensure that rural communities are valued and supported.
- **Strategy 2:** Partner with organisations that are aligned to our advocacy agenda so we collaborate for a stronger rural health system that effectively supports individuals and communities.
- **Strategy 3:** Share our knowledge and resources to advocate and demonstrate the value of our communities, our organisation, and the rural health sector.

For the duration of this strategy, we will track and assess our progress and performance through indicators that align to our three focus areas. To ensure our indicators and targets are relevant in a rapidly changing environment, we will determine them on an annual basis. The indicators, projects, and initiatives that sit underneath our focus areas will be included within our operational plans, which we will create and implement every year. We will update the public through our Annual Reports and Reference Group meetings.

Our Foundations

Our care, our organisation, and our partnerships will be underpinned by our foundations of sustainability, responsiveness, innovation, and responsibility.

We are responsive

Responsiveness means planning for the future we expect and embracing the challenges we never saw coming. In times of adversity, responsiveness is even more critical. We will balance forward planning with agility as we adapt to the evolving needs of our communities and the external changes in our wider world.

We are innovative

Our foundation of innovation is about more than chasing the newest trends. It is about considering and researching challenges and opportunities in new ways, challenging the status quo, and giving ourselves and others permission to be bold, brave, and different.

We are sustainable

Our foundation of sustainability means that we will continue to thrive in the long term. We will smartly invest our resources to maintain our financial viability as an organisation and our relevance to our communities.

We are responsible

As an organisation, we take our corporate responsibility to our communities seriously. Our communities rely on us to keep them safe and well, and we are responsible for delivering on this. We take responsibility for ensuring our communities receive outstanding clinical care and they maintain good wellbeing.



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