



## A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH

# NSW RURAL HEALTH PLAN – TOWARDS 2021

NSW Health aims to provide world class care as close to home as possible for people in rural communities.

The NSW Rural Health Plan will continue to build on the significant achievements we have made over the past few years and aims to further develop capacity and opportunities in our rural health services.

The NSW Rural Health Plan aligns with the policy directions of the NSW health system as outlined in the *NSW State Health Plan: Towards 2021*. Our overarching vision for the delivery of health services in NSW is to nurture a system that is:

- patient centred
- respectful and compassionate
- integrated and connected
- providing the right care in the right place at the right time
- based on local decision making
- providing a whole-of-society approach to health promotion and prevention
- characterised by strong partnerships
- innovative
- financially sustainable
- fostering a learning organisation.

A full copy of the NSW Rural Health Plan and further information is available at: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/rural/Pages/rhp.aspx>

## THE NEXT STEPS

The NSW Government wants to ensure this plan delivers real improvement in the health status of people living in rural NSW.

To realise this vision, the commitment and engagement of NSW Health services, together with communities and partners is crucial.

It will be vital to acknowledge the unique role health services play in rural communities, as well as to recognise the diversity and contribution of rural residents. The delivery of the NSW Rural Health Plan will be primarily undertaken through locally led and delivered initiatives.

A monitoring and evaluation framework is currently being developed to track progress in achieving the plan's goals. The framework will help manage implementation across the health system, and identify policy adjustments that may be required to ensure improvement.

This framework will be linked with the monitoring and evaluation of the *NSW State Health Plan: Towards 2021*. It will assign lead organisations with responsibility for each initiative. These responsibilities will be managed through the NSW Health Performance Framework and existing governance forums.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee for Rural Health will provide advice on the implementation of the plan. The Committee will meet bi-annually to provide input about how to improve the delivery of healthcare and the general health of rural, regional and remote NSW communities, as well as receive updates on progress against the plan.

# NSW RURAL HEALTH PLAN

TOWARDS 2021



Rural health is a priority for the NSW Government. We want to make sure people in rural areas can access the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

This plan builds on the improvements that have already been made, expands the approaches which have proven to be effective, and describes how they will be implemented more widely across rural NSW. It aligns with and builds on the *NSW State Health Plan: Towards 2021*, which provides the strategic framework for NSW Health.

We know that truly integrated rural health services are going to be better placed to improve the health of people living in rural communities. This includes integration and coordination across the health system, including with private hospitals and other private providers.

An important part of improving rural health services is making sure patients and their families are involved in decisions about the care and support they receive. I want to make sure that patients are put first at all times.

This plan also flags the need to invest in infrastructure, new models of care, research, and eHealth technology. Ensuring the rural health workforce is sustainable and is meeting the needs of communities is fundamental.

I would like to thank the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Rural Health, which I established in February 2013 to give rural clinicians and communities a voice, for helping to drive the development of this plan. Based on extensive consultation, this plan provides a blueprint for the future which will improve the rural patient experience and deliver better health outcomes for rural communities.

Hon Jillian Skinner MP  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Medical Research



# DIRECTIONS

## DIRECTION ONE: Healthy rural communities

- Improve rural Aboriginal health
- Address the social determinants of health
- Promote prevention and early intervention health initiatives
- Improve the health of rural children, young people and families
- Improve rural oral health
- Improve rural mental health

## DIRECTION TWO: Access to high quality care for rural populations

- Strengthen rural health services
- Support the rural patient journey
- Improve access to health transport

## DIRECTION THREE: Integrated rural health services

- Integrate rural health services
- Improve continuity of care
- Better engage with rural communities



# STRATEGIES

## STRATEGY ONE: Enhance the rural health workforce

- Support the Aboriginal health workforce
- Target recruitment
- Promote development and training

## STRATEGY TWO: Strengthen rural health infrastructure, research and innovation

- Strengthen rural health capital infrastructure
- Strengthen models of care in rural NSW
- Improve knowledge sharing, collaboration and research

## STRATEGY THREE: Improve rural eHealth

- Strengthen eHealth operational and strategic governance
- Provide secure, reliable and available information and communication infrastructure
- Implement a single view of a patient record
- Provide clinical workflow tools to support the patient journey
- Support patient access and self-management
- Support reporting and decision making

