



South Western Sydney
Local Health District

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SOUTH WESTERN
SYDNEY
An Australian Government Initiative

South Western Sydney **Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan** to 2030



A Joint Plan between South Western Sydney Primary Health Network and
South Western Sydney Local Health District

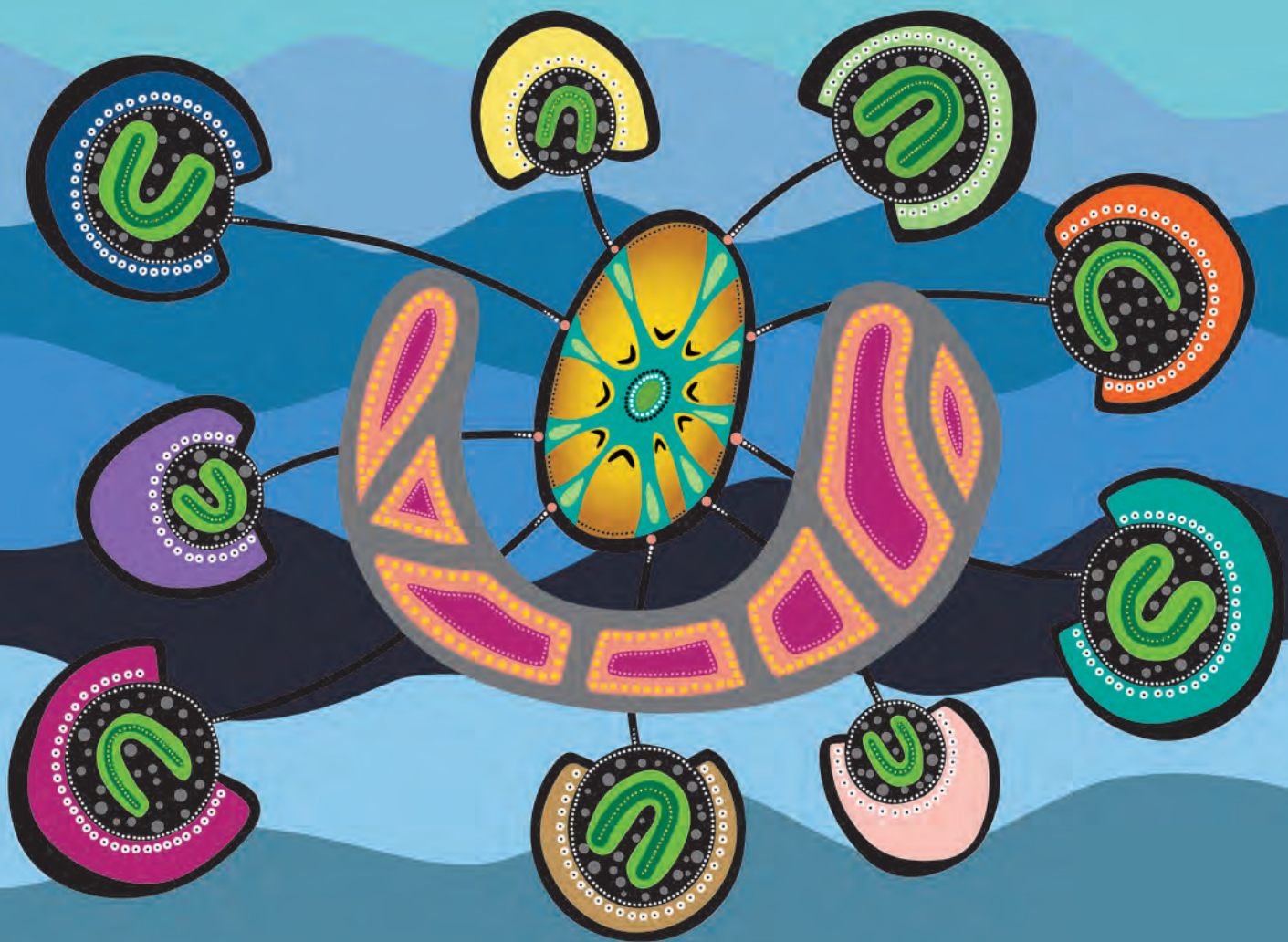
Acknowledgement of Country

South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN) and South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) acknowledge the Dharug, Gandangara and Dharawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands across our region that we gather and work upon. We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and future and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our nation. We celebrate their continuing culture and acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.



Healing Together by Rhonda Sampson Artwork Storyline

The **Healing Together** artwork is a visual representation of the holistic collaboration of South Western Sydney Local Health District working with key community partners, agencies and local Aboriginal organisations to improve health outcomes for the local Aboriginal Community. Each element within the artwork has significant meaning, blending to form the overall artwork story. It represents the regions SWSLHD provides care, local Aboriginal men and women and the importance of reaching out for help, taking the first step in accessing services. Healing Together represents the region's local Aboriginal services, hospitals and communities working together through a network of care to heal together.



Local artist, Danielle Mate, was commissioned to create an artwork that represented the role of South Western Sydney PHN.

The centre oval represents South Western Sydney GPs, practice nurses and other primary care providers. The large u-shape that wraps around the central oval represents the support that PHNs provide to local primary care providers. The seven segments within this U shape represents the seven local government areas that SWSPHN supports.

The lines that lead from the centre oval to the community symbolise the role of these primary care providers to 'feed' information to their clients and the wider community. The connected shapes are people, represented differently, to symbolise their individual needs. The outer u-shaped layer around the people shows the information building that strengthens them, allowing them to make well-informed choices. Seven background layers represent the national health priorities.¹

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Foreword



Mental health is central to the well-being of individuals, families, and communities across our region. As South Western Sydney continues to grow and diversify, we are presented with both opportunities and challenges in ensuring every person can access safe, effective, and compassionate mental health and suicide prevention services.

The Second Regional Mental Health Plan is about coming together to create a future where everyone can find the right support, at the right time, in the right place.

Our latest Needs Assessment tells us that mental health needs in South Western Sydney are growing, with many people experiencing distress without knowing where to turn. Access to care is still uneven – with cost, language, and waiting times acting as barriers. Suicide continues to touch too many families, and our workforce is under immense pressure. These findings remind us that while progress has been made, there is still much to do.

At the same time, we know that South Western Sydney is a place of strength. Our diversity, our cultures, our young people, and our community spirit are powerful assets. People with lived experience are stepping forward to share their stories and shape services. Local organisations are finding new ways to work together. This Plan builds on those strengths, recognising that solutions must come from the community as well as the health system.

Over the coming years, we are committed to:

- Coordinating and supporting integration of health, suicide prevention and psychosocial sectors.
- Keeping the community and consumer-centredness at the heart of the Plan.
- Supporting and developing the local workforce to foster its sustainability.
- Embracing innovation and evidence-base in the design of resources and initiatives in the implementation of the Plan.
- Maintaining a focus on suicide prevention as a vital component of the Plan.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this Plan, those who shared their personal stories, service providers and community members. Your voices will contribute to an improved mental health system for all.

Together, we reaffirm our commitment to achieving better mental health outcomes for all people in South Western Sydney.


Sonia Marshall PSM

Chief Executive
South Western Sydney Local Health District

Amy Prince

Acting Chief Executive Officer
South Western Sydney Primary Health Network

The Lived Experience Perspective



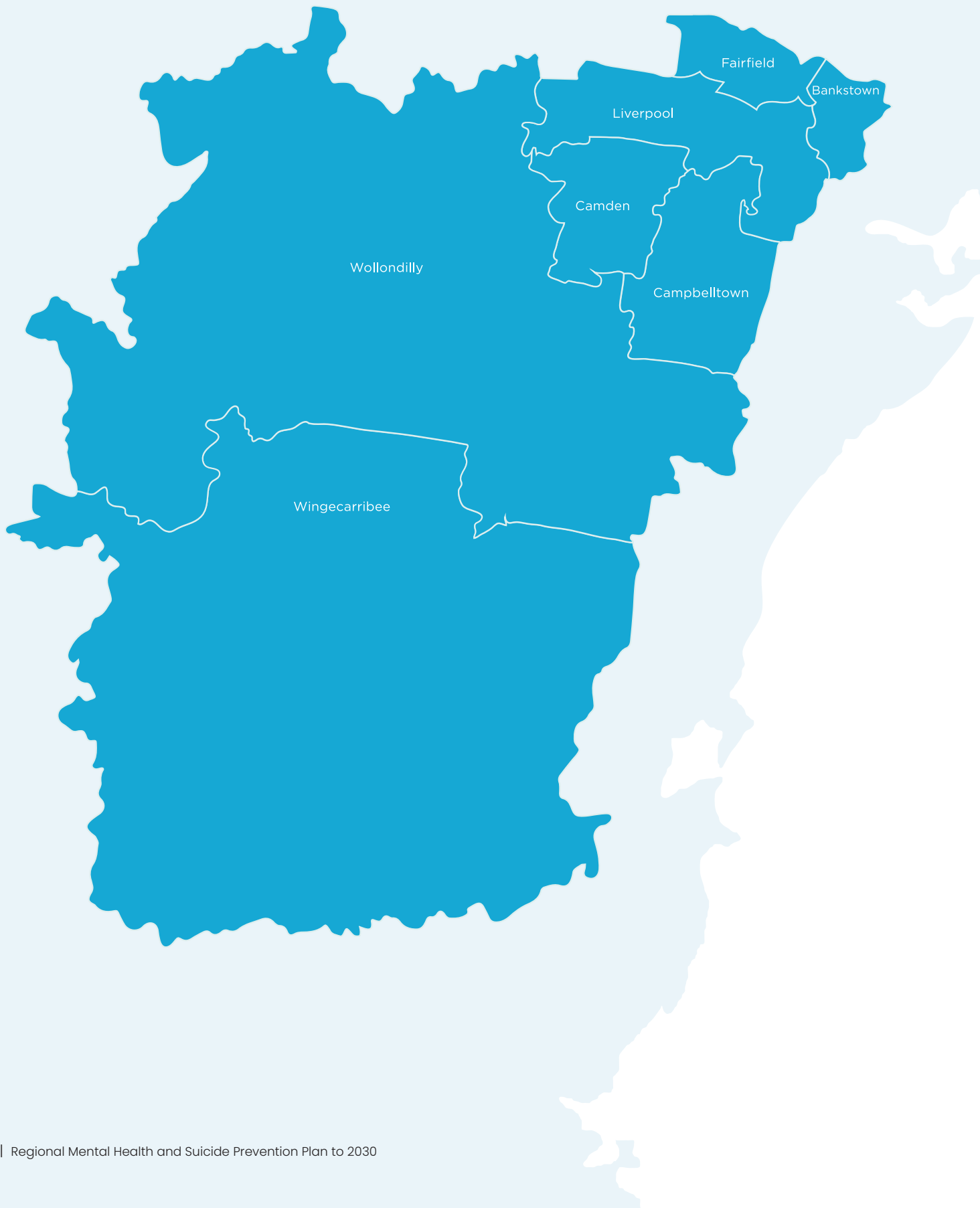
Debbie has lived with depression and anxiety for most of her adult life. In her 20s, she was a young mother in the Macarthur region trying to balance full-time work, family life, and caring for her eldest daughter, who had a chronic illness. At the same time, Debbie was facing the breakdown of her marriage and the impacts of domestic violence, later becoming a single mother to two young children. Managing her daughter's health while working as a nurse took a heavy toll, and Debbie often felt isolated and overwhelmed.

When her daughter later passed away from complications of her illness, Debbie experienced depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. With the support of her GP, counselling, and community organisations, she slowly found ways to cope and rebuild. Debbie has a close relationship with her GP and, when needed, has had a Mental Health Care Plan in place. Even so, she says that services were often inaccessible to her as a full-time worker — appointments were hard to get, waiting lists were long, and many options were not available outside business hours. At times, she was unsure where to turn.

For many years, Debbie has worked in the region with young people experiencing drug and alcohol issues, mental health challenges, and family breakdown. She has also supported family members facing anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. She has witnessed how difficult it can be for young people and their families to get timely, affordable support, and how stigma can prevent them from reaching out. Alongside this, Debbie now works closely with many business owners who face the pressures of running small enterprises while managing their own well-being. She has seen how stress, burnout, and financial strain can contribute to poor mental health, and how important it is that services also recognise and support the needs of business communities.

Today, Debbie uses her lived and community experience to advocate for suicide prevention and better access to mental health services in South Western Sydney. She believes recovery is possible when people are treated with dignity, have clear pathways to care, and are supported to find hope and purpose — and that services must be both affordable and accessible, with a strong focus on suicide prevention.

Map of South Western Sydney



Introduction



There is a shared commitment amongst national, state, and local governments to place mental health and suicide prevention at the forefront of health priorities.

At the national level, the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (National Agreement)² sets out a collective vision for a unified and integrated mental health and suicide prevention system to:

- a. Improve the mental health and well-being of the Australian population, with a focus on improving outcomes for priority populations.
- b. Reduce suicide, suicidal distress and self-harm through a whole-of-government approach to coordinated prevention, early intervention, treatment, aftercare and postvention supports.
- c. Provide a balanced and integrated mental health and suicide prevention system for all communities and groups.
- d. Improve physical health and life expectancy for people living with mental health conditions and for those experiencing suicidal distress.
- e. Improve quality, safety and capacity in the Australian mental health and suicide prevention system.

The Bilateral Schedule on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention for NSW (Bilateral Agreement)³, which operationalises the National Agreement, aims to support improved mental health and suicide prevention outcomes for all people in NSW. This will be achieved through collaborative efforts to address challenges in the mental health and suicide prevention system, and the agreement of funding arrangements for specified services

The development of the previous Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to 2025, provided the foundation for reform aligned to the Bilateral Agreement by driving collaborative action across health, community, and social service sectors.

Over this period, significant progress was achieved in integrating service delivery, strengthening suicide prevention, expanding youth and adult mental health services, and embedding lived experience perspectives into planning and delivery.

South Western Sydney Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to 2025 Achievements



Through joint leadership of the SWSPHN and SWSLHD, alongside contributions from commissioned service providers, community managed organisations (CMOs), general practitioners (GPs), and people with lived experience, the region delivered tangible improvements in access, coordination, and innovation, aligned to the existing Bilateral Agreement. The following achievements highlight the power of a shared vision and coordinated effort.

While many of these initiatives exist independently, the achievements can still be viewed in alignment with the previous regional plan. The overall intent of the 2020 plan and the associated working groups was to strengthen collaboration, focus collective efforts, and ensure that programs and initiatives are directed towards improving health outcomes for people experiencing mental ill-health. In this way, the previous plan does not claim ownership of every standalone initiative, but rather provides a shared framework that connects these activities to broader system goals and demonstrates how collective progress contributes to the intended outcomes.

South Western Sydney Regional Plan to 2025 Achievements	Link to Bilateral Agreement objectives or specific initiatives
<p>Liverpool and Campbelltown Safe Havens</p> <p>A non-clinical, walk-in alternative to ED for people experiencing suicidal distress, was specifically designed to reduce Emergency Department (ED) presentations for suicidal ideation and is peer-led.</p>	<p>Universal Aftercare</p>
<p>Medicare Mental Health Centres (previously Head to Health)</p> <p>Commissioned in Liverpool. Provide free access to trained professionals for short- to medium-term support for people in moderate-to-high distress.</p>	<p>Adult Mental Health Centre and Satellite Network</p>
<p>Pop-up Head to Health Centres</p> <p>Temporary hub in Bankstown during COVID-19 to address urgent community needs.</p>	<p>Adult Mental Health Centre and Satellite Network</p>
<p>Headstart South Western Sydney</p> <p>An online mental health and alcohol and other drugs (AOD) resource replacing Recovery Point. Provides a searchable directory of trusted, low-cost or free services for conditions like anxiety, depression, eating disorders, personality disorders, substance use, gambling, grief/loss, and family/domestic violence.</p>	<p>Improve mental health outcomes</p>

South Western Sydney Regional Plan to 2025 Achievements

Link to Bilateral Agreement objectives or specific initiatives

Aboriginal GOT IT!

Adapted from the "Getting On Track In Time" program, it helps young children, families, and educators build skills in talking about and managing emotions. Positive impacts were seen on classroom behaviour, with 93% of families taking part.

Child Mental Health & Social/Emotional Well-being

Changing Life, Keep Your Balance

A bilingual community education program focused on mental health and well-being. Initially piloted in Assyrian, Arabic and Vietnamese communities; now expanded to 11 multicultural communities across South Western Sydney.

Address gaps in the mental health and suicide prevention system

Multicultural Mental Health Engagement

Targeted consultation and research engagement, including culturally responsive care training (e.g., Teach Back workshop), and collaborations with multicultural organisations.

Address gaps in the mental health and suicide prevention system

Digital Health Literacy and Refugee Project

Equipped 340 community members from 10 language groups, with skills to navigate health systems and critically assess media/social media for health information, including mental health messaging.

Address gaps in the mental health and suicide prevention system

PACER (Police, Ambulance Clinical Early Response) Dual Pathway

Mental health clinicians respond alongside police and paramedics to provide immediate assessment in the community. This initiative reduces ED presentations and links people early to community mental health services.

Deliver a mental health and suicide prevention system that is comprehensive, coordinated, consumer-focused and compassionate

Screening Mental Health Inpatients for Hepatitis B & C

Although primarily infectious-disease focused, this initiative reflected integration of physical and mental health care.

Co-design in Emergency Departments

Mental health staff, security, clinicians, and consumers collaborated to reduce violence incidents, promote trauma-informed care, and improve ED experiences.

Aboriginal Mental Health Transfer of Care Team

Established as part of culturally responsive service redesign to provide culturally responsive support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients with mental health needs, helping them transition from hospital to community care to prevent unplanned readmissions and improve health outcomes.

Improve mental health outcomes

Specialist Mental Health Service for Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care

Joint initiative with the Department of Communities and Justice to address complex psychosocial needs.

Child Mental Health & Social/Emotional Well-being

South Western Sydney Regional Plan to 2025 Achievements	Link to Bilateral Agreement objectives or specific initiatives
<p>Mental Health Service Navigator</p> <p>A dedicated navigation service to guide people to appropriate mental health support, helping overcome fragmentation and access barriers.</p>	<p>Address gaps in the mental health and suicide prevention system</p>
<p>Health Resource Directory (HRD)</p> <p>Includes mental health factsheets and resources co-designed with GPs, clinicians, and consumers. Updated annually with new factsheets.</p>	<p>Improve mental health outcomes</p>
<p>headspace Centres</p> <p>Ongoing support for young people aged 12 to 25 years with mental health, physical health, alcohol & drugs, and vocational support. Expanded across the region with additional funding.</p>	<p>Youth Mental Health Services</p>
<p>Youth Severe Mental Health Services</p> <p>Specialised early intervention for young people with complex and severe presentations.</p>	<p>Youth Mental Health Services</p>
<p>Peace of Mind Project (POMp)</p> <p>Focused on dementia and palliative care, but also includes mental health support for carers and patients experiencing distress.</p>	<p>Improve mental health outcomes</p>
<p>No Wrong Door</p> <p>A framework ensuring people presenting anywhere in the health system are directed to appropriate mental health care.</p>	<p>Deliver a mental health and suicide prevention system that is comprehensive, coordinated, consumer-focused and compassionate</p>
<p>Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST)</p> <p>Used by GPs and providers to match clients with the right level of care, particularly for mental health.</p>	<p>Initial Assessment & Referral Tool</p>
<p>Mental Health CPD Training & IAR-DST Upskilling</p> <p>Training for GPs, nurses, and frontline staff to identify, assess, and refer mental health cases appropriately.</p>	<p>Initial Assessment & Referral Tool</p>
<p>Mental Health Literacy Initiatives</p> <p>Education and awareness campaigns to improve recognition of mental health needs in the community.</p>	<p>Address gaps in the mental health and suicide prevention system</p>
<p>Supporting Recovery from Family, Domestic & Sexual Violence Program</p> <p>Provided trauma-informed mental health support to people impacted by violence.</p>	<p>Improve mental health outcomes</p>

South Western Sydney Regional Plan to 2025 Achievements	Link to Bilateral Agreement objectives or specific initiatives
<p>Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for GPs and Families Known as the “Best You by Benestar” service offering counselling and well-being resources for general practice staff.</p>	Workforce
<p>Workforce Capacity Building Programs Incorporated training in trauma-informed care, suicide prevention, and culturally appropriate mental health support.</p>	Workforce
<p>Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Roundtables Platforms to bring together clinicians, community, and consumers to shape future services.</p>	Regional Planning & Governance
<p>‘Our Experience Matters’ consumer and carer advisory committee Established to provide lived experience input into programs such as Head to Health and Headstart.</p>	Regional Planning & Governance
<p>You in Mind Provided psychological therapies and non-clinical peer support for people with, or at risk of, a diagnosed mental illness and are part of an eligible population group⁴ within South Western Sydney.</p>	Address gaps in the mental health and suicide prevention system
<p>The Way Back Support Service (TWBSS) A non-clinical aftercare program that provides practical, one-on-one support, typically up to three months, after a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis, including safety planning and linkage to community and clinical services. <i>(This service is transitioning to Universal Aftercare Program).</i></p>	Universal Aftercare
<p>WSYD Moving’s Social Prescribing Project Underway in Liverpool and aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness by enabling older people to become more physically active in their own communities.</p>	Improve mental health outcomes
<p>Star4Kids Provides free psychological therapies to children aged 3 to 12 years with, or at risk of, developing a mild-to-moderate mental illness, including depression, anxiety or stress disorders.</p>	Deliver a mental health and suicide prevention system that is comprehensive, coordinated, consumer-focused and compassionate

Table 1:
Achievements aligned to the previous Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to 2025.

Sources: SWSLHD, 2021⁵; SWSLHD, 2022⁶; SWSLHD, 2023⁷; SWSLHD, 2024⁸; SWSPHN, 2021⁹; SWSPHN, 2022¹⁰; SWSPHN, 2023¹¹; SWSPHN, 2024¹²; SWSPHN, 2025¹³.

Note the above list is not exhaustive of all the services provided by SWSLHD and/or commissioned by SWSPHN. Refer to Section 4 for the current services and programs delivered across South Western Sydney as at September 2025.

Significant progress has been made for the South Western Sydney region through these initiatives and the strong collaboration across SWSPHN, SWSLHD, service providers, GPs, and people with lived experience. These partnerships have delivered new, innovative, and culturally responsive services that are improving access, integration, and outcomes for people experiencing mental health challenges.

From Safe Havens and Medicare Mental Health Centres, to programs supporting Aboriginal, multicultural, refugee, and youth communities, the region has demonstrated its capacity and capability to innovate, co-design, and scale effective solutions. Workforce training, navigation supports, early intervention for young people, and stronger links across primary, community, and acute care have created a foundation for sustainable change. This momentum provides the springboard for the new Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, setting the course to 2030.

Strategic and Planning Context

The current strategic and policy context provides a strong foundation for shaping the South Western Sydney Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to 2030. National frameworks, and state-level strategies establish shared priorities, including early intervention, integration of services, lived experience participation, and a stronger focus on suicide prevention. These emphasise regional commissioning, cross-sector collaboration, and accountability for outcomes, requiring local plans to align with broader commitments.

Almost half of all Australians will experience a mental health disorder during their lifetime, and one in five people aged 16 years and over are affected each year.¹⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges, leading to increased psychological distress, greater social isolation, disruptions in access to care, and widening health inequities across South Western Sydney. As a result, the mental health and well-being of the population remain a national, state and local priority, demanding coordinated and sustained action within communities.

Bilateral Agreement

Several governing instruments set out Australia's commitment to mental health and suicide prevention, including The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement¹⁵, which outlines the shared agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories, to build a better mental health system for all Australians.

The new Plan demonstrates clear alignment with the existing Bilateral Agreement by reinforcing shared priorities and defining new actions to progress with improving mental health outcomes for people and communities. While the Bilateral Agreement is planned to expire in June 2026, this Plan deliberately incorporated its objectives and principles, ensuring continuity of purpose and accountability. At the same time, the strategy extends beyond the Bilateral Agreement's scope, positioning this Plan as a forward-looking framework that anticipates emerging challenges and secures sustainable outcomes. This future-proofed approach ensures the Plan not only honours past commitments but also sets a stronger, more resilient direction for the years ahead.

Other Aligning Strategies

At the national level, the *Vision 2030 for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in Australia*¹⁶ developed by the National Mental Health Commission provides a long-term strategic blueprint, to guide Australia's long-term direction for mental health and well-being transformation into one that is equitable, future focused and person-centred. Supporting this is the *National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025 to 2035*¹⁷ which builds on the Agreement and sets out coordinated national action to reduce suicide.

Recognising the need to grow and create a well-rounded and responsive mental health system, that is supported by an appropriately skilled and contemporary workforce, the *National Mental Health Workforce*

*Strategy 2022-2032*¹⁸ provides a high-level vision and roadmap. The strategy informs work that builds a sustainable workforce that is skilled, well-distributed and supported to deliver mental health treatment, care and support that meets the current and future population needs.

Complementing this Plan, is the *Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration Framework and Implementation Plan*¹⁹, which describes the commitment to ensuring First Nations people enjoy the highest possible standard of social and emotional well-being, including access to culturally safe and holistic mental health care.

At the state level, the NSW Government is advancing the development of a comprehensive, state-wide *Mental Health and Well-being Strategy*²⁰, building on the strong foundations of various national and state strategies and plans. This new state-wide mental health and well-being strategy is to be released in 2025, and recognises the critical role of PHNs and LHDs in shaping services to local needs and driving coordinated care.

Already existing within NSW are the following strategies:

- *Living Well (2014-2024)*²¹ which aims to strengthen community recovery and well-being, strategically invest in community well-being and mental health and ensure the right workforce for the future.
- *Aboriginal Mental Health and Well-being Strategy (2020-2025)*²², which provides a culturally grounded framework for strengthening the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal communities.
- *NSW Plan for Healthy Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (2019-2023)*²³ providing guidance about ongoing work to ensure people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds can access safe, high-quality and person-centred healthcare.
- *Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention (2022-2027)*²⁴, which builds on the significant achievements of the 2018-2023 Framework, particularly the Towards Zero Suicides initiatives, and acknowledges the extensive investments by Commonwealth, State Governments, and regions, while setting out a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to reducing suicide and its impacts across NSW.

Both national and state strategies set clear directions for mental health and suicide prevention, with many actions requiring coordination and delivery at the regional level. This Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to 2030 has been designed to align with these broader frameworks and incorporates their key priorities.

At the regional level, the SWSLHD and the SWSPHN have already developed several significant strategies and operational plans that provide a strong foundation for this Regional Plan. These include:

- *SWSLHD Strategic Plan 2022-2027*²⁵
- *SWSLHD Mental Health Strategic Plan 2015-2024*²⁶
- *SWSLHD Mental Health Operational Plan 2018-2020*²⁷
- *SWSPHN Strategic Plan 2021-2026*²⁸
- *SWSPHN Needs Assessment 2025-2028*²⁹

Looking forward, this Plan will strengthen coordination across the region, ensuring mental health services are integrated with broader initiatives beyond the mental health sector. This includes alignment with AOD services, carer supports, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), as well as programs in employment, education, child safety, youth justice, and domestic and family violence. It will also serve as a clear roadmap for how South Western Sydney will improve access, delivery and outcomes through partnership and leadership of SWSPHN and SWSLHD with local public and private service providers across the region.

Implementation will be supported by a rigorous reporting and accountability framework, providing for regular monitoring of progress, measurement against defined performance indicators, and continuous improvement throughout the life of the Plan.

Developing this Plan

The South Western Sydney Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to 2030 has been developed through a highly collaborative process between SWSPHN and SWSLHD, forming a dedicated Steering Committee, and supported by insights from service providers and consumers. The consultation approach for developing the Plan brought together a range of stakeholders, including people with lived experience, carers, community members, healthcare providers, and leaders from the PHN, LHD and community-managed organisations. Other consultation pertaining to mental health services planning and delivery for the South Western Sydney region was also considered into this Plan's development.^{30, 31, 32, 33, 34}

The previous plan was comprehensively reviewed within a collaborative framework to assess progress, determine priority areas for extension and set the vision, principles and objectives for this Plan. The Plan was valued for its collaborative, inclusive, and community-centred approach. Improvements are needed in governance, data systems, accountability, and broader representation. Future directions should focus on sustainable funding, clearer governance, integrated service delivery, and ongoing co-design with strong consumer and carer voices. The summary of the current state revealed:

- Strong partnership between SWSPHN and SWSLHD, sharing responsibility.
- Ongoing inclusion and engagement of CMOs, service providers, people with lived experience and community voices.
- Co-design focus and approaches to developing and commissioning services.
- Consideration of priority and vulnerable communities in planning and delivery of services.
- Emphasis on suicide prevention, aftercare and psychosocial supports.
- Structured approach to monitoring activities aligned to previous plan actions and their implementation.
- Clarification of governance and monitoring processes for regional planning.
- Minimisation of duplication where possible to maximise implementation efforts.
- Focus on health promotion and preventative care to better enhance the outcomes of people who experience mental health illness and/or suicide ideation.

Structured consultation formed the foundation of this Plan, ensuring the voices of those with lived experience were central to shaping priorities, objectives and actions. Engagement activities included regular workshops, forums, focus groups and interviews, with broad participation from across the region. The following key findings emerged to inform the development of this Plan:

- Having a focus on preventive measures, education, reducing stigma, and promoting overall mental health literacy to improve health outcomes and community resilience.
- Prioritising streamlined service delivery with effective coordination and integration, ensuring clear referral pathways and reducing inefficiencies.
- Ensuring robust governance frameworks, adequate and sustainable funding, clear accountability, iterative processes, responsive strategies, and clear lines of communication between funders and providers.
- Leveraging technology, particularly artificial intelligence, to enhance service effectiveness and innovation in mental health planning and service provision.
- Committing to professional education, sector awareness, engagement with primary care providers including GPs, and addressing social determinants of health, ensuring services remain contemporary and effective.

This collaborative approach has ensured this Plan reflects a set of broadly agreed actions to guide mental health service delivery in South Western Sydney over the next five years. This Plan embodies a strategic partnership between the SWSPHN and SWSLHD. Through purposeful engagement with the right partners, at the right time, on the right objectives, the partnership will drive coordinated actions for the achievement of the shared vision and objectives articulated within the Plan.

Values

This Plan has been developed on an understanding of shared and enduring values of SWSPHN and SWSLHD. We share a strong alignment in organisational values, placing people and communities at the centre of all work, and committing to delivering services with integrity, respect, equity, and collaboration.

The table below is an amalgamation of values. It demonstrates how each organisation's guiding principles closely align and complement one another. By bringing these together, the table reinforces the collective commitment to improving mental health and well-being outcomes for the communities of South Western Sydney.

Our Values	
Fostering Healthy Communities	We prioritise and invest in early intervention to develop healthy communities, enabling people to thrive where they live, learn, work and connect across South Western Sydney.
Empathy	We treat all people with empathy, dignity and compassion, recognising the importance of listening to and respecting diverse experiences and perspectives.
Collaboration	We work together across sectors, services, and communities, recognising lasting change is only possible when we act collectively and in partnership.
Trust	We act with integrity, accountability and transparency to build and maintain trust with the communities we serve, as well as with our partners and stakeholders.
Person-centred	People are at the heart of everything we do, to deliver tailored and meaningful care to our communities.
Strength	We build on the strengths of people, families, carers, communities, and services. By empowering individuals and fostering resilience, we create a foundation for sustainable improvements in mental health and well-being.

Table 2:
SWSPHN and SWSLHD Values.

Sources: SWSPHN, 2025³⁵; NSW Ministry of Health, 2025³⁶.

Key Strategic Partners

A partnership approach across the whole of the community is required to address the needs of the South Western Sydney community. SWSPHN and SWSLHD will continue to provide a leadership and coordination role, working together in a partnership network with partners internal and external to the mental health system, to implement actions within this Plan. This will be enabled through shared decision-making, fostering alignment across services and partners, and supporting the optimal use of resources to deliver meaningful and measurable improvements for the community. This Plan aims to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones to improve mental health and well-being of consumers, carers, families and the community.

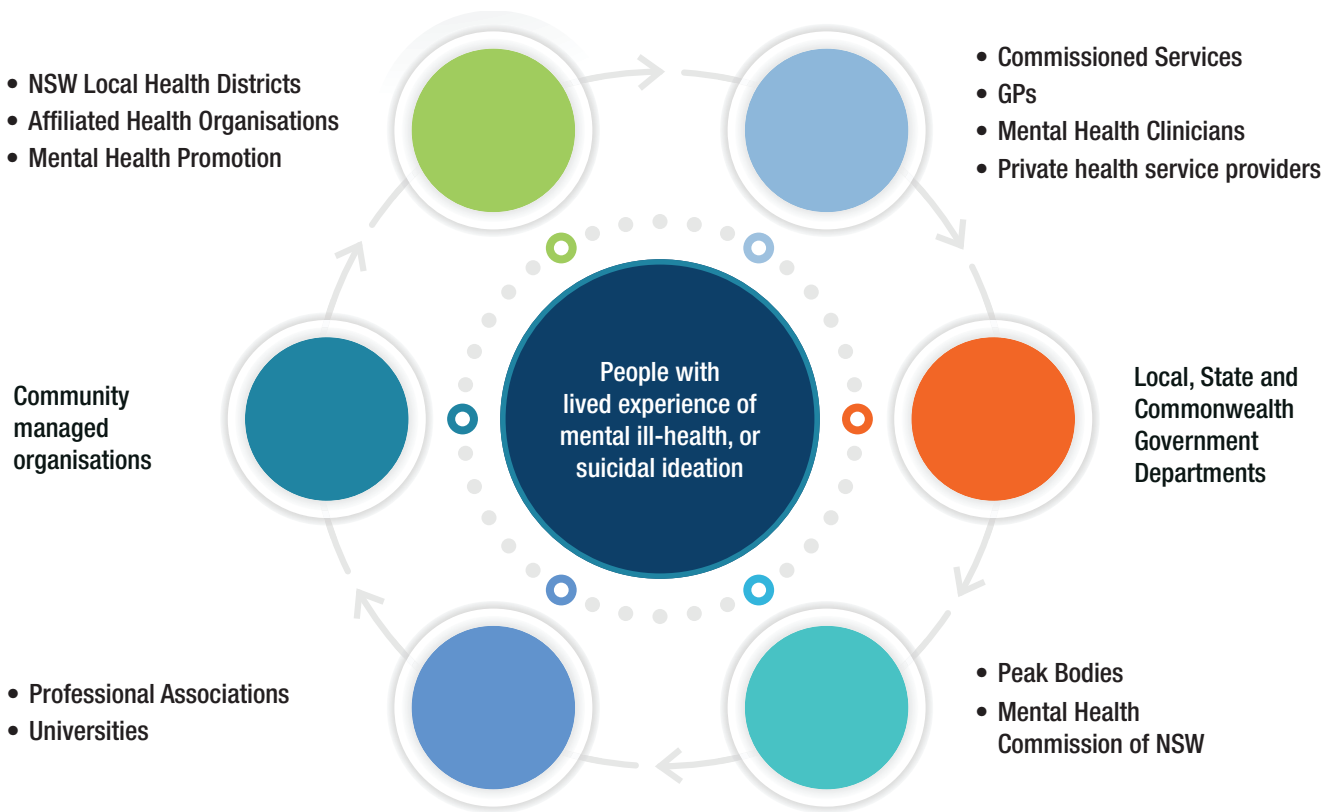


Figure 1:
Key Strategic Partnerships

A Stepped Care Approach to Service Delivery

This Plan is grounded in the principles of stepped care. Stepped care is an evidence-based model of mental healthcare that matches the level of support to the severity and complexity of individual needs. It enables people to access the most appropriate service, delivered at the right time and in the right place.³⁷

The stepped care model offers flexibility, recognising that people's needs change over time. Individuals may step up to more intensive supports when required or step down to lower-intensity options as their circumstances improve.

Central to stepped care is the principle of person-centredness. The model places the individual at the heart of all decision-making, emphasising the importance of the least intensive and least intrusive intervention capable of achieving the best outcomes. This reduces unnecessary treatment burden, empowers individuals in their recovery journey, and promotes dignity, autonomy, and choice in how care is received.

A comprehensive stepped care approach spans a continuum of evidence-based responses, from whole-of-community promotion and prevention initiatives, through to low-intensity early interventions, moderate-intensity psychological interventions, multidisciplinary services for people with high-intensity requirements and specialist assessment and interventions for those people requiring acute or intensive care needs.

Crucially, a stepped care approach does not operate in isolation from the broader determinants of health. It acknowledges the powerful influence of housing, employment, education, cultural identity, family, and social connection on mental health and well-being. By integrating psychosocial and holistic supports, stepped care provides a more complete and sustainable response to individual and community needs. In practice, stepped care represents a flexible and adaptive system, one that evolves with the individual, their circumstances, and their community context.

By embedding stepped care into regional planning, South Western Sydney can strengthen integration across services, reduce system fragmentation, and deliver more coordinated pathways of care. This approach will guide commissioning and service delivery across the region, with an emphasis on prevention, early intervention, recovery, and long-term well-being. Ultimately, it provides the foundation for a mental health system that is person-centred, equitable, and responsive to the diverse and changing needs of the South Western Sydney community.

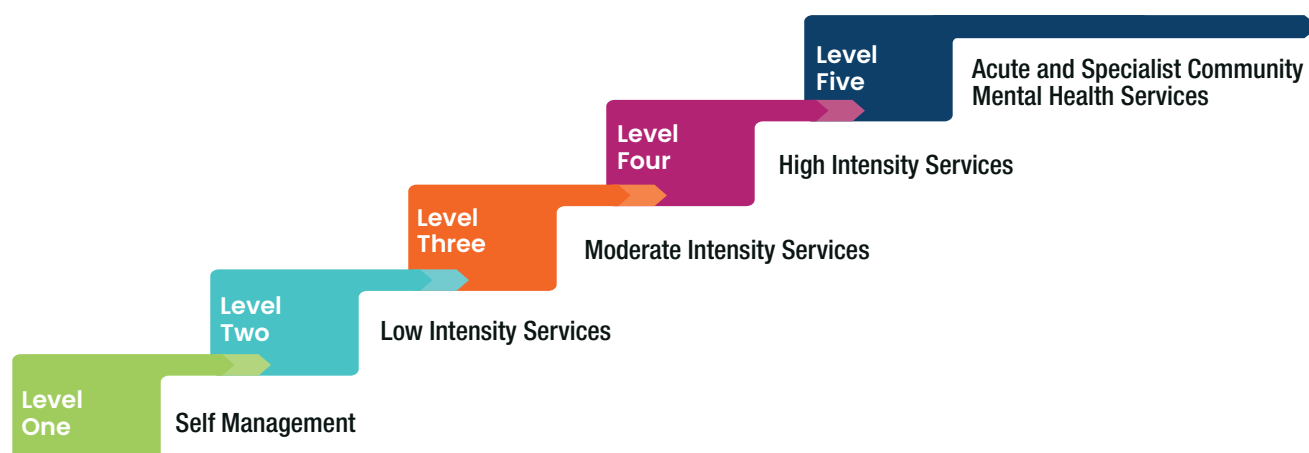


Figure 2: Visual representation of the stepped care approach to mental healthcare in South Western Sydney. Adapted from Australian Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, 2019³⁸.

Stepped Care and South Western Sydney

South Western Sydney is one of the fastest growing and most culturally diverse regions in New South Wales, with communities experiencing significant social, economic, and health inequities. The region faces higher levels of psychological distress, elevated suicide risk in certain groups, and increasing demand for mental health services that already operate under pressure. Many people also experience barriers to accessing care, including financial stress, language and cultural differences, and limited service availability in growth areas.

A stepped care approach is particularly important in this context because it provides a flexible and adaptive framework for delivering the right support at the right time, preventing people from falling through service gaps. By reducing unnecessary reliance on hospital-based or crisis services, stepped care strengthens community-based responses, enables earlier intervention, and supports long-term recovery and well-being.

The development of integrated health hubs and the Liverpool Hospital Integrated Services Building, a centrepiece of the Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct, exemplify this approach in practice. The Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct will bring together multidisciplinary care, community mental health supports, translational research and holistic services such as child and family health, refugee health, and allied health in one streamlined area of South Western Sydney. By embedding mental health within broader place-based integrated care centres, the region is and will continue to create accessible, culturally responsive, and person-centred service entry points. This ensures that individuals and families can step up to more intensive supports when needed or step down to lower-intensity options as they recover, while staying connected to their community.

Ultimately, stepped care is essential to building a more equitable, sustainable, and responsive mental health system for South Western Sydney, one that reflects the diversity of its communities and ensures services are available where and when they are needed most.



South Western Sydney's Population and Access to Services

Mental illness remains a leading contributor to the overall burden of disease in South Western Sydney. A diverse range of population groups experience psychological distress, with projections indicating a continued rise in prevalence across most severity levels.

Population of South Western Sydney

In line with NSW Planning's 2024 projections, the population of South Western Sydney is set to grow from 1,057,080 in 2021 to approximately 1,657,681 by 2041, representing a total growth of 37% over this period.³⁹

LGA	2021 Census Population	2041 DPE Population Projection	% Population Growth 2021 to 2041
Camden	107,908	197,735	83%
Campbelltown	174,662	229,301	31%
Canterbury-Bankstown	381,067	446,102	17%
Fairfield	210,804	247,803	18%
Liverpool	232,303	312,653	35%
Wingecarribee	52,320	70,969	36%
Wollondilly	54,039	90,356	67%
South Western Sydney	1,213,103	1,594,920	31%
New South Wales	8,166,757	9,872,934	21%

Table 3:
Projected Population Growth in South Western Sydney, 2021-2041.

Source: SWSPHN 2025-2028 Needs Assessment, p.10.

South Western Sydney is experiencing rapid growth and transformation, marked by increasing numbers of children and young people, alongside a projected near doubling of the population aged 65 and over by 2041. This brings both the need for stronger youth-focused early intervention and expanded age-appropriate supports for older adults.

The region is also among the most culturally diverse in Australia, with nearly half of residents born overseas and speaking a language other than English at home, and 2.5% identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Together, these shifts underscore the importance of a stepped care approach that ensures services are accessible, culturally safe, and responsive. They also guide the commissioning of new services and help set priorities to build a mental health system capable of meeting the needs of a dynamic and diverse community.

Key points aligned to the demography of South Western Sydney region include:



Projected population increases are greatest in Camden (83%), Wollondilly (67%), and Liverpool (35%) LGAs, underscoring the need for the Regional Plan



The number of children aged 0-14 years will increase from 255,201 in 2021 to 302,866 by 2041, indicating a 19% growth rate over this period⁴⁰



The number of people aged 15-24 years will increase from 160,400 in 2021 to 196,982 by 2041, demonstrating a 6% growth rate over this period



The number of people aged 65+ years will increase significantly from 172,297 in 2021 to 315,930 by 2041, representing a substantial 83% growth rate in this time



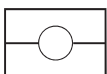
21% of the population are children under 14 years of age ^{41,42,43,44,45,46,47}



42% of the population were born overseas



51% of the population speak a language other than English at home



2.5% of the population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander⁴⁸



In 2021, an estimated 72,421 people in South Western Sydney, representing 5.93% of the population, self-reported having long-term mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression

Mental Health Status and Access across South Western Sydney

Mental health and suicide prevention remains a critical challenge across South Western Sydney, affecting every stage of the care continuum from early distress in the community to acute crisis responses and, tragically, to lives lost through suicide. The following data illustrates the breadth and depth of this burden, highlighting the importance of sustained and coordinated action.

As shown in Figure 3, a notable achievement of the Plan to 2025 has been the downward trend in the proportion of adults in South Western Sydney experiencing low or moderate psychological distress, particularly when compared with state averages. Nevertheless, as of 2024, 75.9% of the adult population continue to live with low or moderate levels of psychological distress, which remains undesirably high. This dataset suggests that while progress has been made, significant work is still required to strengthen prevention, early intervention, and access to mental health supports across the region.

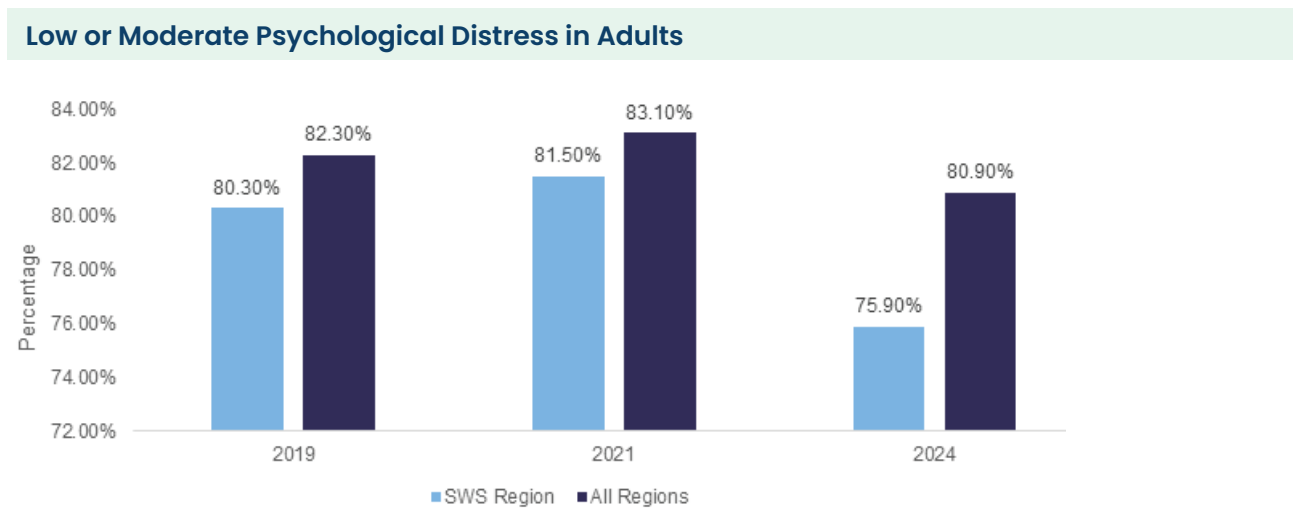


Figure 3: Low or Moderate Psychological Distress in Adults – SWS South Western Sydney v. NSW (all regions).
Source: HealthStats NSW, 2025⁴⁹



In 2024, 19% of adults in NSW reported experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress (Figure 4). In South Western Sydney, this proportion was higher, at 24%. This 5% increase highlights the disproportionate burden and growing impact of high or very high psychological distress for adults within our region and will be a priority in this Plan.

High or Very High Psychological Distress in Adults

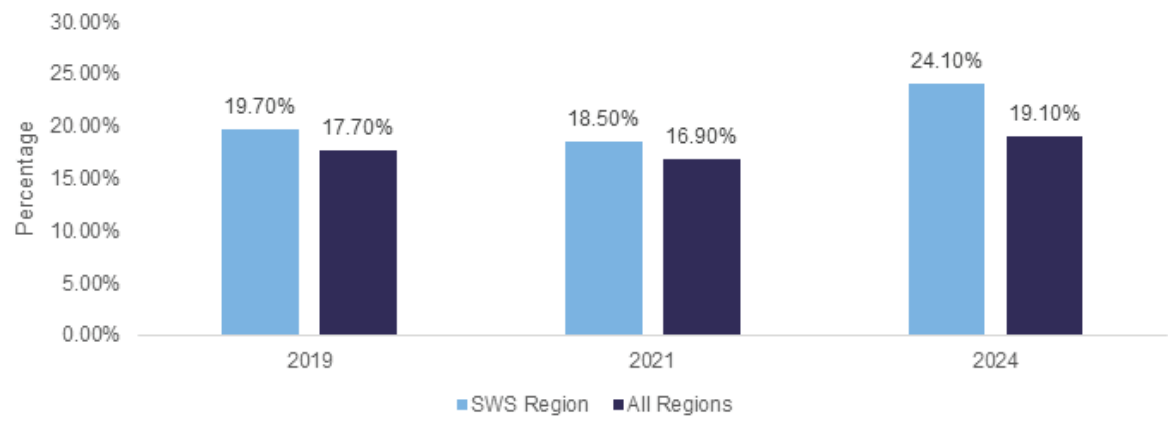


Figure 4: High or Very High Psychological Distress in Adults – South Western Sydney v. NSW (all regions). Source: HealthStats NSW, 2025⁵⁰

Over the past five years, there has been an increase of 26.9% in referrals to the SWSPHN Intake team (Figure 5). While this increase could be attributed to additional COVID-19 recovery funding⁵¹, it can also be linked to the work of SWSPHN to raise awareness among clinicians and community of available and accessible mental health services. This demonstrates regional efforts in mental health literacy, mental health promotion, and availability and accessibility to primary mental health services.

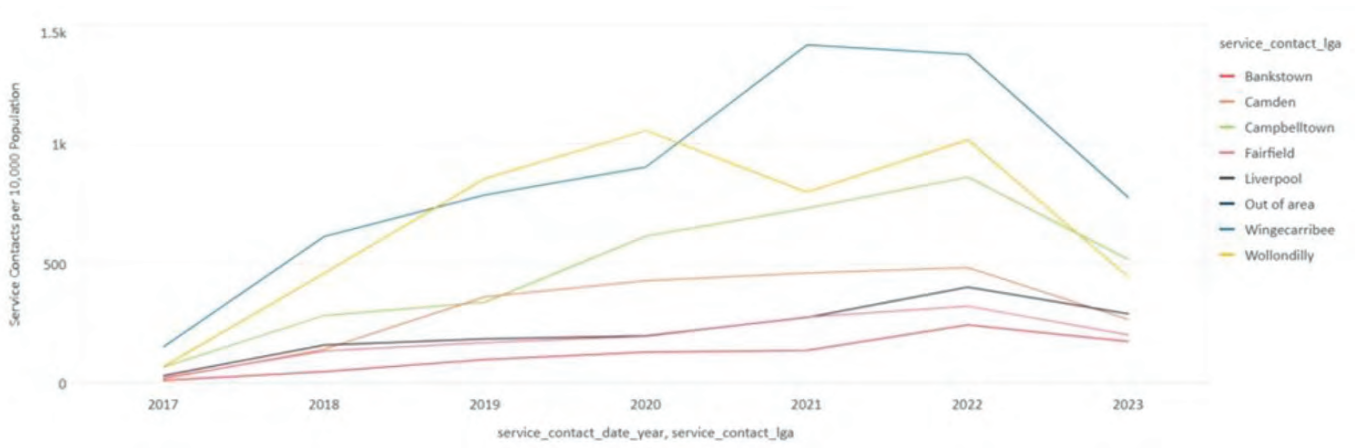


Figure 5: South Western Sydney Primary Health Network Service Contacts per 10,000 population, 2017/18 to 2022/23. Source: SWSPHN, 2023⁵²

As illustrated in Figure 6, mental health-related ED presentations have increased from 11,477.7 in 2021/22 to 13,864.5 in 2023/24 and are projected to rise further in line with significant population growth projections for South Western Sydney.

South Western Sydney Mental Health ED Visits

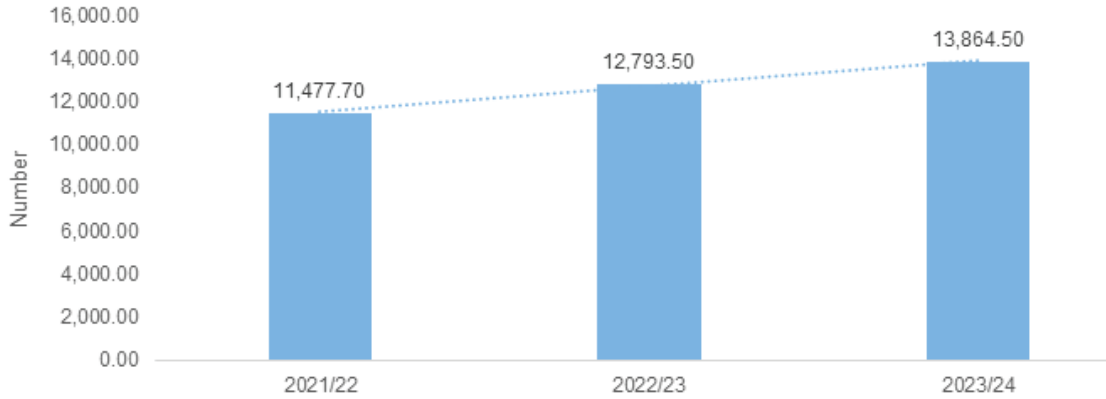


Figure 6:
South Western Sydney Mental Health Related Emergency Department Visits
South Western Sydney v. NSW (all regions). Source: HealthStats NSW, 2025⁵³

Figure 7 demonstrates that between 2011 and 2022, 934 lives were lost to suicide across the South Western Sydney region. In 2022, this equated to an age-adjusted suicide rate of 8 per 100,000 population, marginally lower than the broader NSW rate of 11 per 100,000. Consistent with state and national trends, suicide rates were significantly higher among men (17 per 100,000) compared with women (4.8 per 100,000). These findings emphasise the ongoing need for targeted, gender-responsive suicide prevention initiatives across the region to address areas of greatest risk and vulnerability.

Suicide Rates – South Western Sydney v. NSW

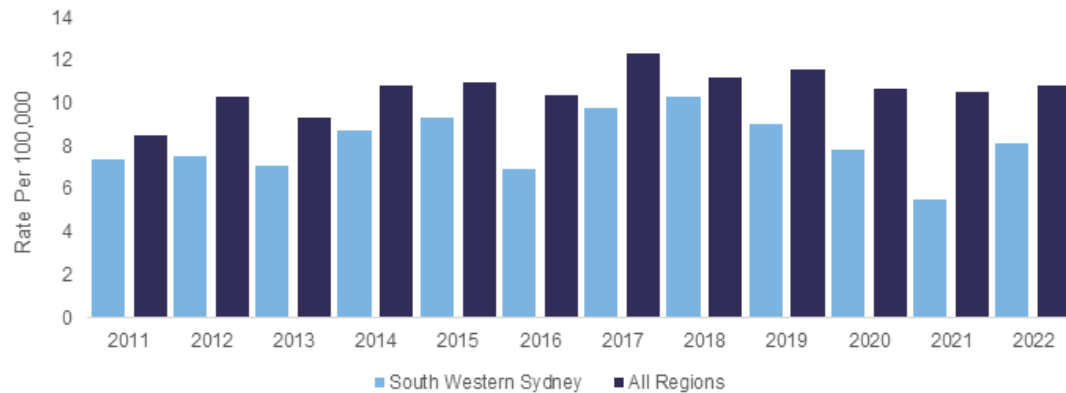


Figure 7:
Suicide Rates Per 100,000 – South Western Sydney v. NSW.
 Source: HealthStats NSW, 2025⁵⁴

Mental Health Services in South Western Sydney

South Western Sydney PHN

Central to coordinating mental health services and suicide prevention initiatives across the region, SWSPHN commissions evidence-based programs that strengthen early intervention, improve access to psychological support, and reduce service fragmentation. It prioritises vulnerable populations, including young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and those experiencing social disadvantage, recognising the heightened risk of suicide in these groups. It actively promotes integrated care between general practice, allied health, and specialist services, while driving community awareness and digital health innovations that enhance access to timely and culturally appropriate mental health support. The figure below represents the current commissioned mental health services that SWSPHN has contracted health service providers to deliver. Appendix A provides further information related to the description and coverage across the South Western Sydney LGAs.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Self Management	Low Intensity Services	Moderate Intensity Services	High Intensity Services	Acute & Specialist Community Mental Health Services
Headstart App	Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (LiCBT) Coaching Services	Psychological Therapies for People with Mental Illness Living in Residential Aged Care Facilities and in Community (C2bMe)	Credentialed Mental Health Nurse Service	Nil Identified
		Supporting Recovery Pilot Program (Family, domestic and sexual violence)	Consultant Psychiatry Service	
		Psychological Services for Underserved Populations (You in Mind Program)	Holistic Youth Program	
		Youth Mental Health Services in the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee LGA's (ReFrame)	Eating Disorders Service	
		Psychological Services for Children (STAR4Kids Program)	Peer Support Program	
		Social and Emotional Well-being Program	Clinical Suicide Prevention Service	
		headspace Bankstown	Universal Aftercare	
		headspace Narellan (Oran Park)	AOD services	
		headspace Edmondson Park		
		headspace Liverpool		
		headspace Campbelltown		
		Universal Aftercare		
		Drug and Alcohol Integrated Healthcare		
		Suicide prevention activities (aftercare and postvention, mean restriction & training)		
		Medicare Mental Health Centre Liverpool		
		Medicare Mental Health Centre Campbelltown		
		Drug and Alcohol Services (Bilingual Counselling Service)		
		Connector Hub		
		Community Based Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services		

Figure 8: Commissioned mental health services aligned to the Stepped Care Approach.

Source: SWSPHN, 2025.

Note this is not an exhaustive list of services delivering mental health care.

South Western Sydney LHD

Delivering a wide spectrum of hospital and community services, SWSLHD provides specialist mental health care, suicide prevention, and community recovery. Its mental health programs span inpatient and community settings, ensuring a continuum of care for people at risk of suicide or experiencing severe mental illness. SWSLHD partners with SWSPHN, universities, and CMOs to embed prevention and early intervention approaches, with particular attention to culturally diverse communities. By integrating clinical expertise with community outreach, the LHD plays a pivotal role in reducing suicide rates. Across the SWSLHD, mental health is provided across the inpatient and community setting, aligned to the care continuum and stage of the patient’s journey. The figure below aims to align existing SWSLHD services to the stepped care continuum, recognising that most services are focused on tertiary-level care provision, working with the primary health sector to care for people in the community. Appendix B provides an overview of the tertiary-level services available to the South Western Sydney region.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Self Management	Low Intensity Services	Moderate Intensity Services	High Intensity Services	Acute & Specialist Community Mental Health Services
Nil Identified	Nil Identified	Nil Identified	Housing and Support Initiative (HASI) and Community Living Supports (Youth and Adult)	Acute Adult Mental Health Units
			I AM Program	Adolescent Mental Health Unit
			Karitane	Youth Acute Mental Health Unit
				Extended Recovery Mental Health Unit
				Sub-acute Adult Mental Health Unit
				Older People’s Mental Health Unit
				High Dependency Unit
				Statewide Civil Secure Rehabilitation Unit
				Intensive Care Mental Health Unit
				Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre (PECC)
				Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Services
				Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
				Assertive Outreach Teams
				Community Mental Health Emergency Teams
				Adult Community Mental Health Team
				Aboriginal Mental Health Service
				Early Psychosis, Early Intervention, Youth Suicide Prevention Outreach Teams
				Safe Havens
				PACER
				Older People’s Mental Health
				Mental Well-being Team
				Community Links – Kaleidoscope Program
				STARTTS

Figure 9:
SWSLHD Mental Health Services and Karitane services aligned to the Stepped Care Approach.

Source: SWSLHD, 2025.

Note this is not an exhaustive list of services delivering mental health care.

General Practitioners

General practitioners (GPs) play a central role in supporting people living with mental health challenges and are often the first point of contact for those seeking help, whether for mental health concerns or other health issues. In 2023/24, 96.2% of people with a mental health condition saw a GP at least once annually, underscoring the critical role of general practice in mental healthcare and highlighting the strong engagement of people with mental health challenges and primary care.⁵⁵

Across South Western Sydney, a diverse range of GP services further reflects the importance of primary care in supporting community mental health. The SWSPHN and SWSLHD work together to strengthen integration, streamline referral pathways, and reduce fragmentation, ensuring timely and coordinated access to care. Tools such as HealthPathways enhance communication across the region, supporting consistent and high-quality care. In addition, SWSPHN assists local GPs to navigate care pathways and connect with both commissioned and non-commissioned mental health services. Through initiatives such as the SWSPHN Practice Support teams, SWSPHN also provides tailored training, guidance, and resources, building the capacity of general practice, improving systems, and enhancing patient outcomes.

Our GPs are essential in addressing mental health challenges, and their pivotal role is firmly embedded in the South Western Sydney Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to 2030, which seeks to strengthen primary care as a cornerstone of an integrated regional system.

Community Managed Organisations

Vital in supporting people living with mental health conditions and those at risk of suicide through person-centred and recovery-oriented services, CMOs provide flexible and holistic programs, ranging from peer support, psychosocial rehabilitation, crisis response, and community connection activities. CMOs are particularly effective in reaching marginalised populations, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, young people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, offering culturally safe care and lived experience perspectives. Their grassroots presence allows them to identify risk early and deliver tailored interventions that strengthen resilience, reduce stigma, and provide pathways out of crisis for vulnerable individuals.

Private Health Sector

The private health sector contributes significantly to mental health service provision in South Western Sydney, particularly through private psychiatric hospitals, specialist clinicians, and allied health providers. These services complement the public system by expanding access to therapy, psychiatry, and inpatient care, thereby alleviating pressure on overstretched public mental health facilities. Private providers also play a growing role in suicide prevention through collaborative care models with GPs, psychologists, and public services. By integrating clinical treatment with preventative mental health programs, the sector ensures that individuals have greater choice and timely access to life-saving interventions when experiencing psychological distress.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supports individuals with psychosocial disability, ensuring access to tailored services that improve daily functioning and participation in community life. In South Western Sydney, the NDIS plays an increasingly important role in addressing the needs of people living with severe and persistent mental illness. Coordinating effectively with mainstream health and crisis services is essential to prevent service gaps, particularly for participants at risk of suicide. The scheme's emphasis on individual choice and control empowers people to access supports that enhance well-being, resilience and recovery, while also strengthening links to mental health systems.

Other Service Providers

Beyond the health system, other service providers, such as housing, employment, education, aged care and local councils, play an indirect but critical role in mental health and suicide prevention. These services address the social determinants of health that often underpin psychological distress, such as housing instability, unemployment, and social isolation. Faith-based groups, charities, and community organisations also provide crisis assistance, social connection, and postvention support following suicide. By working collaboratively with PHNs, LHDs, and CMOs, these providers extend the safety net, helping to reduce suicide risk factors and promote protective environments for individuals and communities across the region.

Initiatives focusing on Suicide Prevention

Suicide prevention is a shared priority across all service systems in South Western Sydney. Current efforts focus on building a coordinated approach that integrates prevention, early intervention, crisis response, and postvention support. Targeted strategies address the needs of high-risk groups, such as young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and those experiencing economic or social disadvantage. Education campaigns aim to reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking, while partnerships between health, education, community, and emergency services enhance rapid response to crises. By strengthening protective factors and embedding a whole-of-community approach, these initiatives seek to reduce suicide and its devastating impacts.



Diversity in South Western Sydney

South Western Sydney is a rapidly growing and highly diverse region, home to communities with varied cultural, social and economic backgrounds. Within this context, some population groups experience greater challenges to their mental health and well-being. Mental health is shaped not only by individual factors but also by the interaction of social, economic and physical environments across the lifespan. People from different life stages, cultural backgrounds and lived experiences engage with services in different ways and hold different expectations of care.

Recognising this diversity, the Regional Plan is committed to identifying the distinct needs of priority groups and tailoring service responses to improve equity, strengthen access, and enhance the mental health and well-being of all communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

South Western Sydney is home to a growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, representing almost two percent of the region's residents. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, mental health and well-being is understood through the holistic concept of social and emotional well-being (SEWB). This context recognises the interconnectedness of mental, physical, cultural and spiritual health, as well as the importance of connection to country, kinship, family, and community. These strengths are protective factors that sustain resilience and cultural identity.

However, the mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continues to be impacted, shaped by the enduring impacts of colonisation, intergenerational trauma, systemic disadvantage, and experiences of racism and discrimination. These factors contribute to disproportionate levels of psychological distress, suicide, and barriers to accessing culturally safe care.

Improving outcomes requires services that are culturally safe, community-led and strengths-based, guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of health and well-being. It also requires recognition of the leadership role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) in providing trusted and culturally appropriate care.

For South Western Sydney, this means strengthening partnerships with ACCHOs and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, embedding their voices and lived experience in planning and governance, and ensuring that all commissioned and delivered services demonstrate cultural safety. It also means investing in the Aboriginal mental health workforce and supporting initiatives that promote healing, cultural connection, and self-determination.

Through this approach, the Regional Plan commits to advancing the mental health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, while honouring their cultural strengths and leadership.

People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

South Western Sydney is one of Australia's most culturally and linguistically diverse regions. It is estimated that 42% of the population were born overseas and approximately 51% of the population speak a language other than English at home.

This diversity enriches the region but also creates unique challenges for mental health and well-being. People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds may experience additional stressors, including migration journeys, trauma, intergenerational challenges, language barriers, and experiences of discrimination. These factors can influence both the risk of developing mental health conditions and the way individuals interact with or seek help from the health system.

For many in South Western Sydney, English is not the main language spoken at home, and health literacy levels vary widely. This can affect their interaction with healthcare services, the accessibility of services, and the effectiveness of care. It underscores the importance of providing mental health supports that are culturally safe, trauma-informed, available in multiple languages, and responsive to the diverse expectations of different communities.

This Regional Plan commits to ensuring that services in South Western Sydney are designed and delivered in ways that recognise and respond to this diversity. This includes investing in culturally appropriate service models, strengthening interpreter and translation services, engaging CALD communities in co-design, and building a culturally competent workforce to accommodate the needs of our diverse communities.

People from Refugee Backgrounds

The region has become one of the state's most significant settlement areas for refugee and humanitarian entrants to Australia. Many individuals and families have resettled after experiencing profound adversity, including conflict, forced displacement, trauma, separation from loved ones, and the disruption of social and community structures. These experiences leave lasting effects on both mental and physical well-being.

Evidence shows that refugee populations report consistently higher levels of psychological distress than the broader community. Research from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare highlights that self-reported mental health conditions among humanitarian entrants increase with age and time spent in Australia, particularly among women aged 60–69 years and those who have lived in the country for more than a decade.

In response, there has been investment made in specialist services to address the complex needs of refugees and asylum seekers. These include the NSW Refugee Health Service (RHS), the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), and the Mental Health Community Living Supports for Refugees (MH-CLSR) program. Together, these services provide integrated clinical, psychosocial and community-based care.

Locally, initiatives such as the Digital Health Literacy Project and the Health Navigation Support Service (HNSS) are improving access to care by strengthening digital engagement, building health literacy in multiple languages, and supporting refugees and CALD communities to navigate health and community services effectively.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual Community

Research shows that the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQ+) community experience higher levels of mental health challenges and suicide risk compared to their peers. This is often linked to the stigma, discrimination, and abuse that many in the LGBTIQ+ community continue to face. Research shows that LGBTIQ+ people are almost six times more likely to experience depression than the general population⁵⁸. They are also more likely to experience high or very high psychological distress and experience further challenges such as homelessness, unemployment, social isolation, lack of family support, discrimination and stigma⁵⁷.

As such, it is essential that mental health and suicide prevention services across South Western Sydney are developed in collaboration with LGBTIQ+ communities to ensure they are safe, inclusive, and responsive to community needs. Initiatives such as One Door have been developed to serve and support our LGBTIQ+ community by offering safe, inclusive, and affirming mental health care tailored to their unique needs and experiences.

People Living in Regional Communities

People living in smaller towns and rural communities frequently experience isolation, fewer job opportunities, financial strain, and the effects of natural disasters. In South Western Sydney, about 10% of the population live in the Wingecarribee and Wollondilly LGAs, where these challenges are often present.

Mental health care in these areas is less accessible than in metropolitan centres. Services are often limited to community health centres, hospitals in larger towns, or a small number of GPs. As a result, residents frequently rely on visiting clinicians or must travel long distances for specialist care, reducing the likelihood of accessing treatment when it is needed.

The absence of easily accessible services makes the role of non-health agencies and community supports vital in preventing relapse and maintaining recovery. To address these barriers, the Plan will prioritise the implementation of innovative, technology-driven solutions, such as telehealth and novel digital models of care, to ensure continuity of care, reduce the impact of distance, and improve service equity for people living in our regional communities.

People from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds

Our communities reflect significant socioeconomic diversity, with marked differences between the most and least disadvantaged groups. Socioeconomic disadvantage is closely linked to poorer mental health outcomes and contributes to rising demand for mental health services. Homelessness, often driven by financial hardship and housing insecurity, represents one of the most severe expressions of this disadvantage and further compounds risks to mental health and well-being. It has been identified that 90.9% of service providers indicated mental health as the prominent health concern among those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness within South Western Sydney. And, that youth mental health was emphasised as a key concern⁵⁸.

As such, the Plan will continue to target health inequities and ensure that all people in South Western Sydney have fair and equal access to timely, appropriate, and effective mental health care. This commitment recognises that equity is not only about providing the same services to all, but about tailoring approaches to meet the diverse socioeconomic needs of our communities.

Older people

Older people in South Western Sydney face unique challenges that can affect their mental health and well-being. Experiences such as bereavement, retirement, financial strain, reduced mobility, and ageism can increase vulnerability to poor mental health outcomes. Social isolation and loneliness are particularly significant, with older adults more likely to live alone, have smaller support networks, or experience the loss of meaningful roles and connections. Evidence shows that these factors contribute to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and, in some cases, suicide among older people⁵⁹.

In residential and community aged care settings, a high proportion of older adults experience depressive symptoms, highlighting the importance of early intervention and access to appropriate supports. The Plan will continue to prioritise strategies that reduce social isolation, strengthen community connections, and ensure older people have equitable access to mental health services across South Western Sydney.

People with Alcohol and Other Drugs Challenges

The harmful use of alcohol and other drugs can contribute to the development of mental health conditions or worsen existing ones. Similarly, people living with mental illness may be at greater risk of developing substance use concerns. This high level of co-occurrence, often referred to as dual diagnosis, is particularly evident among people with substance use disorders and those experiencing severe mental illness. In South Western Sydney, alcohol and drug-related hospitalisations peaked at around 8,000 occasions in 2020/21, likely reflecting the impacts of COVID-19. Promisingly, this number has since declined to approximately 6,600 in both 2021/22 and 2022/23. Building on the Regional Plan to 2025, this Plan seeks to continue prioritising our communities with alcohol and substance use disorders.

People with Disability

Disability can arise from a wide range of conditions, including intellectual, physical, cognitive, sensory, or neurological impairments, and may lead to or arise from the effects of mental illness. People living with disability are among the most disadvantaged groups in the community, often experiencing poorer health outcomes and facing barriers within a health system that does not consistently meet their needs. According to the Department of Health and Aged Care, approximately 6.8% of the South Western Sydney population live with a profound or severe disability and require assistance with core activities due to a disability⁶⁰.

This group of people often face difficulties with day-to-day living, feelings of isolation, and a greater likelihood of experiencing mental illness. These overlapping challenges show how disability, chronic health conditions, and mental health are closely connected, reinforcing the need for future services to take a holistic and integrated approach to care.

Carers

A carer is someone who provides regular, unpaid support to a person who needs assistance due to disability, long-term or terminal illness, mental health conditions, or age-related frailty. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census Data, 11.1% of the South Western Sydney population provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, health condition or due to old age⁶¹. The support carers provide can take many forms, including help with household tasks, managing finances, offering social and emotional support, assisting with personal care, or attending to medical needs.

In New South Wales, the Carer Recognition Act 2010 formally acknowledges the vital role carers play, both in the lives of the people they support and within the wider community. The Act introduces the Carers Charter, which guides the way public service agencies engage with carers, while also raising awareness of the significant and ongoing contributions carers make.

It is well-recognised that the role of caring can place significant strain on carers' mental health and well-being. The Carers NSW 2022 National Carer Survey highlights that many carers struggle to prioritise their own needs, as the demands of supporting others often take precedence⁶². In South Western Sydney, carers are supported through a range of programs and organisations, including Carer Gateway, Carers NSW, One Door Mental Health Carer Services, Carers Australia, and Little Dreamers.

This Plan seeks to build on these foundations by strengthening existing services, fostering greater coordination, and expanding supports that promote the resilience, well-being, and inclusion of carers. Ensuring that carers have access to timely, tailored, and responsive mental health support will not only safeguard their well-being but also improve outcomes for the people they care for.

People Living with Social Isolation and Loneliness

Research shows that approximately one in three Australians experience loneliness, and the 2022 Community Well-being Survey conducted by the Mental Health Commission of NSW found that nearly 40% of people in New South Wales reported feeling lonely to some extent⁶³. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, men aged 25–54 are more likely to experience social isolation, while women in the same age group report higher levels of loneliness⁶⁴.

Social isolation and loneliness are significant public health issues, strongly associated with mental illness, emotional distress, suicide risk, and harmful health behaviours⁶⁵. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach, with government and non-government organisations partnering with communities to foster stronger social ties, meaningful relationships, and inclusive opportunities for connection.

Looking ahead to 2030, this Plan will prioritise initiatives that reduce social isolation and loneliness across South Western Sydney. By strengthening partnerships, supporting innovative community-led programs, and embedding social connection into mental health service design, the Plan seeks to create environments where people feel valued, supported, and connected.

The Strategic Framework

The intent of this Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to 2030 is to build a stronger, more coordinated system that places community needs at its core. By addressing fragmentation, strengthening workforce capacity, and improving data and governance, the act seeks to create accessible, culturally safe, and person-centred care across the region. As expressed consistently through consultation, it will enable services to work collaboratively, reduce duplication, and respond more flexibly to emerging challenges. Ultimately, empowering communities to thrive, improve outcomes for people with complex mental health and social needs, and deliver sustainable, integrated care pathways that drive meaningful and measurable change.

Recognising the complexity of the human condition, the various and diverse communities that make up our region, the geographic disparity from Bankstown to Wingecarribee, the interconnectedness of physical and mental health, as well as our numerous partners, colleagues, allies and supporters across the public and private health, social and life sectors and the broader systemic factors that frame our services delivery and allow for equity of access for our residents, the vision, principles and objectives of this Plan are outlined.

Vision ...>>> **The South Western Sydney community thrives and leads the way for better mental health and well-being.**

Principles	
The Principles describe the core values and guiding beliefs that underpin the regional approach to mental health and suicide prevention.	
Equitable Access and Inclusion	Timely, culturally appropriate, and geographically convenient access to care.
Lived Experience Leadership and Co-design	Consumers, families and carers are recognised as experts in their own lives with co-design involving partners, using clear, consistent language that builds mutual understanding.
Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention	Resources and effort are directed to enhance well-being, prevent illness and intervene early.
System Partnerships for Collective Impact	A mental health and well-being system that learns through collaboration across health, social, education and business sectors.
Workforce Capability and Well-being	Attract, develop and support a skilled, diverse workforce whose well-being is protected.
Cultural, Environmental and Clinical Safety	Deliver evidence-based care that is culturally safe, environmentally responsible and improves health and well-being outcomes.
Integrated Whole Person Care	Physical, mental, social and environmental factors are addressed together through seamless partnerships.

Objectives

The Plan's objectives articulate at a high-level the specific goals that direct regional priorities and shape the focus of planning and service delivery.

1. Strengthen community resilience and mental health outcomes through evidence-based initiatives that promote well-being across the lifespan and the diverse population of South Western Sydney.
2. Integrate prevention-oriented practice within services to enable early support and sustained well-being.
3. Deliver mental health services and initiatives and drive cross-sector collaboration and coordinated multi-agency partnership, to address the social determinants of mental health, lift mental-health literacy and reduce stigma.
4. Remove barriers to achieve equitable, timely and culturally safe mental health care.
5. Build and retain a capable mental health workforce by adopting a whole-of-well-being approach.
6. Harness innovative digital technologies for service planning, delivery and evaluation, using data with personal stories to strengthen approaches and communication.



Actions

Our actions set out the practical initiatives that will be implemented to achieve the objectives in line with the overarching vision and principles of the Plan.

1. Implement mental health literacy programs underpinned by evidence-based initiatives such as '5 Ways to Wellbeing' and 'Be You' initiatives.
2. Develop, enhance and maintain a suite of digital community resources, such as the 'Living Library', that are co-designed, translated and regularly updated.
3. Coordinate and deliver cost-effective mental health promotion activities in accessible community venues across South Western Sydney in partnership with local and relevant service providers.
4. Strengthen and embed integrated patient journeys between mental health services and programs including those delivered by LHD, CMOs, commissioned mental health service providers and general practice.
5. Establish and sustain regional multidisciplinary care networks across public and private mental health systems that bring together general practitioners, allied health, nursing, community mental health services, social service providers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and multicultural health service providers.
6. Design and implement referral pathways to housing, domestic violence, employment, disability care services, aged care services and youth services, integrating them into GP practice management systems and mental health service protocols.
7. Establish a joint health professional and consumer capacity building program that aims to deliver culturally safe training, community capacity building, service navigation and pathway awareness in an experience-based co-design approach.
8. Undertake a Needs Assessment that documents and maps the extent of mental health and well-being among diverse communities across South Western Sydney in a co-production approach with consumers and sector partners.
9. Enhance peer-led community engagement initiatives that support grassroots person and community development to build mental health resilience, mental health service awareness and access and service systems navigation across sectors, such as the 'You in Mind' Peer Support Program.
10. Establish cross-sector mental health advocacy programs that build engagement and advocate for needs across sectors, in collaboration with mental health service providers and the community.
11. Expand existing workforce well-being programs to provide support mechanisms for mental health providers across different service sectors.
12. Conduct a Needs Assessment that examines current and emerging technologies used in the delivery of mental health services to determine potential solutions and opportunities for investment.
13. Develop a digital continuum of care pathway that incorporates existing and available assessment tools including IAR-DST and other existing virtual tertiary mental health services and commissioned mental health services.
14. Embed Universal Aftercare as a standard part of the suicide prevention continuum, linking acute care, primary care and community supports into a coordinated, person-centred system of follow-up and recovery.

A mapping table that shows the objectives aligned to the actions for improving mental health outcomes in South Western Sydney has been developed. It highlights priorities such as strengthening community resilience, embedding prevention-oriented practices, and fostering cross-sector collaboration to address social determinants of mental health. The framework also emphasises removing barriers to equitable and culturally safe care, building a skilled and sustainable workforce, and harnessing digital technologies to enhance service planning and delivery. Overall, the actions aim to foster a coordinated, inclusive, and evidence-based system through realistic activities that promote well-being across the lifespan over the course of the Plan.

		Objectives						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Actions	Strengthen community resilience and mental health outcomes through evidence-based initiatives that promote well-being across the lifespan and the diverse population of South Western Sydney	Integrate prevention-oriented practice within services to enable early support and sustained well-being	Deliver mental health services and initiatives and drive cross-sector collaboration and coordinated multi-agency partnership, to address the social determinants of mental health, lift mental health literacy and reduce stigma	Remove barriers to achieve equitable, timely and culturally safe mental health care	Build and retain a capable mental health workforce by adopting a whole of well-being approach	Harness innovative digital technologies for service planning, delivery and evaluation, using data with personal stories to strengthen approaches and communication	Strategic Action Tiers: Enhance Current, Plan Ahead, Unlock Future Potential	
1	Implement mental health literacy programs underpinned by evidence-based initiatives such as '5 Ways to Wellbeing' and 'Be You' initiatives.	✓		✓	✓			Enhance
2	Develop, enhance and maintain a suite of digital community resources, such as the 'Living Library', that are co-designed, translated and regularly updated.	✓		✓			✓	Enhance
3	Coordinate and deliver cost-effective mental health promotion activities in accessible community venues across South Western Sydney in partnership with local and relevant service providers.	✓		✓				Enhance
4	Strengthen and embed integrated patient journeys between mental health services and programs including those delivered by LHD, CMOs, commissioned mental health service providers and general practice.		✓	✓	✓			Enhance
5	Establish and sustain regional multidisciplinary care networks across public and private mental health systems that bring together general practitioners, allied health, nursing, community mental health services, social service providers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and multicultural health service providers.		✓	✓	✓			Planned

		Objectives						Strategic Action Tiers: Enhance Current, Plan Ahead, Unlock Future Potential
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Actions		Strengthen community resilience and mental health outcomes through evidence-based initiatives that promote well-being across the lifespan and the diverse population of South Western Sydney	Integrate prevention-oriented practice within services to enable early support and sustained well-being	Deliver mental health services and initiatives and drive cross-sector collaboration and coordinated multi-agency partnership, to address the social determinants of mental health, lift mental health literacy and reduce stigma	Remove barriers to achieve equitable, timely and culturally safe mental health care	Build and retain a capable mental health workforce by adopting a whole of well-being approach	Harness innovative digital technologies for service planning, delivery and evaluation, using data with personal stories to strengthen approaches and communication	
6	Design and implement referral pathways to housing, domestic violence, employment, disability care services, aged care services and youth services, integrating them into GP practice management systems and mental health service protocols.		✓	✓	✓			Planned
7	Establish a joint health professional and consumer capacity building program that aims to deliver culturally safe training, community capacity building, service navigation and pathway awareness in an experience-based co-design approach.	✓	✓			✓		Opportunity
8	Undertake a Needs Assessment that documents and maps the extent of mental health and well-being among diverse communities across South Western Sydney in a co-production approach with consumers and sector partners.	✓		✓	✓			Opportunity
9	Enhance peer-led community engagement initiatives that support grassroots person and community development to build mental health resilience, mental health service awareness and access and service systems navigation across sectors, such as the 'You in Mind' Peer Support Program.	✓		✓		✓		Enhance

		Objectives						Strategic Action Tiers: Enhance Current, Plan Ahead, Unlock Future Potential
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Actions		Strengthen community resilience and mental health outcomes through evidence-based initiatives that promote well-being across the lifespan and the diverse population of South Western Sydney	Integrate prevention-oriented practice within services to enable early support and sustained well-being	Deliver mental health services and initiatives and drive cross-sector collaboration and coordinated multi-agency partnership, to address the social determinants of mental health, lift mental health literacy and reduce stigma	Remove barriers to achieve equitable, timely and culturally safe mental health care	Build and retain a capable mental health workforce by adopting a whole of well-being approach	Harness innovative digital technologies for service planning, delivery and evaluation, using data with personal stories to strengthen approaches and communication	
10	Establish cross-sector mental health advocacy programs that build engagement and advocate for the needs across sectors, in collaboration with mental health service providers and the community.			✓	✓			Opportunity
11	Expand existing workforce well-being programs to provide support mechanisms for mental health providers across different service sectors.					✓		Opportunity
12	Conduct a Needs Assessment that examines current and emerging technologies used in the delivery of mental health services to determine potential solutions and opportunities for investment.						✓	Opportunity
13	Develop a digital continuum of care pathway that incorporates existing and available assessment tools including IAR-DST and other existing virtual tertiary mental health services and commissioned mental health services.		✓				✓	Planned
14	Embed Universal Aftercare as a standard part of the suicide prevention continuum, linking acute care, primary care, and community supports into a coordinated, person-centred system of follow-up and recovery.		✓	✓	✓			Enhance

Table 4:
Mapping matrix of objectives and actions of the new Plan

Governance Implementation and Monitoring

Governance

Governance of this Plan will be provided through a Steering Committee responsible for strategic oversight, accountability and decision-making. The Steering Committee will be co-led by SWSPHN and SWSLHD and involve members representing service providers, CMOs and people with a lived experience. The scope-defined and time-limited working groups, each focused on progressing specific actions within defined timeframes, will be established. These groups will draw on subject matter expertise and community input to ensure targeted, co-designed and practical solutions are delivered. By maintaining clear lines of authority and responsibility, this governance model ensures that implementation is guided by a strong strategic framework while retaining flexibility to respond to emerging priorities and changes in the broader strategic and political contexts. The structure emphasises transparency, collaboration and accountability across this Plan's lifecycle.

Implementation

Implementation will be undertaken through the combined efforts of the Steering Committee and the working groups, with a strong emphasis on partnership. Success will rely on meaningful collaboration with service providers, general practice, community stakeholders and consumers to ensure initiatives are responsive to local needs. Resources will need to be carefully allocated, aligning with existing activities and maximising the use of available services. Financial constraints are recognised, requiring efficient investment and innovation to achieve agreed objectives. This approach ensures that delivery remains practical, community-centred and feasible, while maintaining alignment with the broader regional vision and outcomes framework.

Monitoring

Monitoring will be driven by a comprehensive outcomes framework that establishes clear objectives, measures and key performance indicators (KPIs). These indicators will assess progress, effectiveness and sustainability of actions, while providing a transparent basis for accountability. Regular reporting to the Steering Committee as well as to SWSPHN and SWSLHD Clinical Councils and Advisory Committees will enable proactive oversight and timely adjustments in response to challenges or emerging needs. Outcome measures will focus on both immediate outputs and long-term impacts, ensuring this Plan continues to deliver tangible benefits for communities. This approach embeds continuous improvement, accountability and sustainability, ensuring that monitoring actively supports achievement of the regional plan's long-term objectives.

Appendix A

SWSPHN Commissioned Mental Health Services

Description of services	Client Cohort	Key Service Model/Description	Region (LGA) ⁶⁶
Supporting Recovery Pilot Program (Family, domestic and sexual violence)	Victim Survivors of DSFV	Mental health support for Victim Survivors of Domestic, Sexual and Family Violence	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Credentialed Mental Health Nurse Service	People with severe and complex mental illness	Ongoing support for people with severe and complex mental illness via a mental health nurse including psychological therapies, assessments and care coordination	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (LiCBT) Coaching Services	People experiencing day-to-day stress, depression and anxiety	Short term low intensity coaching to manage day-to-day stress, depression and anxiety	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Youth Mental Health Services in the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee LGAs (ReFrame)	Young people 12-25	Holistic support to young people aged 12-25 years	Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Psychological Services for Children (STAR4Kids Program)	Children 3-12 years	Psychological therapies for children 3-12 years	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee

Description of services	Client Cohort	Key Service Model/Description	Region (LGA) ⁶⁶
Holistic Youth Program (HYP)	Young people 12-25 experiencing severe mental illness	Links young people living with severe mental illness with quality interventions and supports best suited to their individual needs. HYP serves as a 'step up' for young people who require multidisciplinary team care and care coordination or navigation support. Delivered as a consortium with Grand Pacific Health, Community Links, One Door and Flourish	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Consultant Psychiatry Service	People with severe mental illness	Primarily provides patient assessment as well as opinion and advice to the patients' GP via telehealth modalities	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
headspace	Young people 12-25	Holistic support to young people 12-25	Bankstown Campbelltown Liverpool Edmonson Park Oran Park with outreach to Narellan
Social and Emotional Well-being Program	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Social and Emotional Well-being program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Universal Aftercare	People who have attempted suicide or in crisis	Non-clinical support for people who have recently attempted suicide or are experiencing a suicidal crisis. Services people from SWSLHD Hospital and SWSLHD mental health services.	Liverpool Hospital, Campbelltown Hospital and LHD services
Medicare Mental Health Centre	Anyone	Short- to medium-term support (including peer support) for anyone. Centres are located in Liverpool and Campbelltown LGAs.	Campbelltown Liverpool

Description of services	Client Cohort	Key Service Model/Description	Region (LGA) ⁶⁶
Suicide Prevention Aftercare Program (Aftercare and Postvention, Means Restriction & Training)	People impacted by suicide (directly or bereaved)	Suicide Aftercare for people who have attempted suicide or have had suicidal ideation as well as postvention groups including bereavement support groups, means restriction and training	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Psychological Services for Underserved Populations (You in Mind Program)	Moderate-to-high mental health needs for defined underserved populations	Psychological therapies for underserved groups	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Peer Support Program	Clients of the You in Mind Program	Support from a peer worker for those accessing psychological therapies through You in Mind	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Connector Hub	People with psychosocial disability without an NDIS package	Psychosocial support for people without a NDIS package	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee
Psychological Therapies for People with Mental Illness Living in Residential Aged Care Homes (RACHs) and in Community (C2bMe)	Older people living in residential aged care facilities	One-on-one therapy and group support for older people in RACHs and in the community.	Bankstown Camden Campbelltown Fairfield Liverpool Wollondilly Wingecarribee

Appendix B

SWSLHD Mental Health Services

Service Name	Service Type	Key Service Model/Description	Region
Acute Adult Mental Health Units	Inpatient	Provide short-term, intensive inpatient care for adults in acute psychiatric crisis, focusing on stabilisation, safety, medication management, and recovery planning in a structured, multidisciplinary setting.	
Adolescent Mental Health Unit	Inpatient	Offers specialised inpatient care for young people aged 12–17 experiencing severe mental health issues, combining therapy, education, and family involvement to support recovery in a safe environment.	
Youth Acute Mental Health Unit	Inpatient	Delivers age-appropriate, short-term inpatient care for youth aged 16–25 with acute mental health needs, focusing on early intervention, crisis support, and transition back to community life.	
Extended Recovery Mental Health Unit	Inpatient	Supports adults with complex or enduring mental illness through longer-term inpatient care focused on rehabilitation, skill development, and gradual transition to supported community living.	All Inpatient beds are considered district wide resources and accessible by all parts of the district.
Sub-acute Adult Mental Health Unit	Inpatient	Provides step-down support for adults recovering from an acute episode, offering psychosocial rehabilitation, therapy, and care coordination to strengthen recovery before community reintegration.	
Older People's Mental Health Unit	Inpatient	Delivers specialised inpatient assessment and care for individuals aged 65+ with age-related psychiatric conditions, including dementia-related behaviours, depression, and psychosis, in a geriatric-sensitive setting.	
High Dependency Unit	Inpatient	Offers increased observation and support for patients with heightened risk or complex behaviours within acute mental health units, ensuring safety while supporting therapeutic engagement and recovery.	

Service Name	Service Type	Key Service Model/Description	Region
Statewide Civil Secure Rehabilitation Unit	Inpatient	A secure, recovery-oriented facility for individuals with serious mental illness and high-risk behaviours, providing long-term care and rehabilitation within a legally authorised, least-restrictive framework.	
Intensive Care Mental Health Unit	Inpatient	Provides the highest level of psychiatric inpatient care for individuals with severe, unmanageable symptoms or behaviours requiring constant observation and specialised interventions in a secure, therapeutic setting.	All Inpatient beds are considered district wide resources and accessible by all parts of the district
Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre (PECC)	Inpatient	The Psychiatric Emergency Care Centres (PECCs) in South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) offer short-term inpatient care for individuals experiencing acute mental health crises. Located near Emergency Departments these units provide comprehensive assessments, observation, and treatment for up to 48 hours.	
Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Services	Community-based	The Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS) in South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) offers free, specialist mental health support to women and primary caregivers who are pregnant (over 13 weeks) or have a child under two years old and are experiencing moderate-to-severe mental illness. Services include assessment, counselling, and parent-infant therapies, aiming to enhance parental well-being and strengthen the parent-infant bond.	
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	Community-based	The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) provides specialist mental health care for children and adolescents up to 18 years old and their families. CAMHS offers assessment and intervention for moderate-to-severe mental health disorders, aiming to improve emotional well-being and development.	District Wide

Service Name	Service Type	Key Service Model/Description	Region
Assertive Outreach Teams	Community-based	The Assertive Outreach Teams provide intensive, community-based mental health support for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. They offer recovery-oriented, strengths-focused interventions, aiming to reduce hospital admissions and promote sustained recovery. Services include clinical and psychosocial support, delivered through a Flexible Assertive Community Treatment model, ensuring care is accessible and tailored to individual needs.	Macarthur, Liverpool, Fairfield, Bankstown
Community Mental Health Emergency Teams	Community-based	The Community Mental Health Emergency Teams (CoMHET) provides rapid, community-based mental health crisis assessment and intervention. Operating extended hours, CoMHET collaborates with emergency services to support individuals experiencing acute mental health issues, aiming to reduce hospital admissions and promote recovery.	District Wide
Adult Community Mental Health Teams	Community-based	The Adult Community Mental Health Teams provide specialised, community-based care for adults experiencing moderate-to-severe mental health conditions. These multidisciplinary teams offer assessment, treatment, and ongoing support tailored to individual needs. Services include care coordination, psychological therapies, medication management, and collaboration with GPs and community organisations to promote recovery and social inclusion.	District Wide
Aboriginal Mental Health Services	Community-based	Aboriginal Mental Health Services provide culturally safe, holistic care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing mental health challenges. These services are delivered by Aboriginal Mental Health Workers (AMHWs) who offer culturally appropriate support, advocacy, and liaison between consumers, families, and clinical teams.	District Wide
Early Psychosis, Early Intervention, Youth Teams	Community-based	Comprehensive early intervention and youth mental health services, focusing on early psychosis care for individuals aged 14 to 25. For young people experiencing a first episode or recent onset of psychosis or other serious mental health conditions. Services include assessment, treatment, and ongoing management, delivered by multidisciplinary teams.	District Wide

Service Name	Service Type	Key Service Model/Description	Region
Suicide Prevention Outreach Teams	Community-based	The Suicide Prevention Outreach Teams (SPOT) are mobile mental health services designed to support individuals experiencing suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Operating during evenings and weekends, SPOT teams consist of a mental health clinician and a peer support worker with lived experience, providing compassionate, non-clinical care in community settings.	Liverpool, Fairfield and Campbelltown
Safe Haven	Community-based	Safe Haven is a free, walk-in mental health support service offering a compassionate alternative to hospital emergency departments for individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts or emotional distress. Staffed by trained peer support workers with lived experience, Safe Haven provides a welcoming, non-clinical environment where visitors can talk openly, relax, or engage in calming activities without judgement or the need for appointments.	Liverpool and Campbelltown
PACER	Community-based	The Police, Ambulance, and Clinical Early Response (PACER) program is a collaborative initiative designed to provide timely, on-site mental health support during emergencies. It pairs specialist mental health clinicians with NSW Police to respond directly to individuals experiencing acute mental health crises in the community.	Bankstown, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Bowral
Older People's Mental Health	Community-based	OPMH services cater to individuals aged 65 and over, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 and over, who are experiencing mental health issues. The services address conditions such as depression, anxiety, psychosis, and behavioural problems associated with dementia. Care is provided in both inpatient and community settings, aiming to promote recovery and support independent living. OPMH teams also offer consultation-liaison services in hospitals and work closely with residential aged care facilities.	District Wide
Health Promotion - Mental Well-being Team	Community-based	The Mental Well-being Team focuses on enhancing mental health and well-being across the region through community engagement, education, and preventive initiatives.	District Wide
Community Links - Kaleidoscope Program	Community-based	Kaleidoscope is a program offering support to children and young people 4-17 years who are living in a family impacted by mental health concerns or challenges.	Wollondilly and Wingecarribee

Service Name	Service Type	Key Service Model/Description	Region
I AM	Community-based	The I AM program, delivered by New Horizons in SWSLHD, provides culturally safe, peer-led mental health support for Aboriginal people. It empowers individuals through connection, storytelling, and shared experience, promoting healing, resilience, and social and emotional well-being within community.	Bankstown, Liverpool, Campbelltown
Housing and Support Initiative (HASI) and Community Living Supports (Youth and Adult)	Community-based	HASI (Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative) and CLS (Community Living Supports) are NSW state-wide programs that provide psychosocial support to individuals with severe mental illness to help them live and recover in the community.	District Wide
STARTTS	Community-based	STARTTS, the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors, provides culturally relevant psychological treatment and support to refugees and people from refugee-like backgrounds who have experienced torture and/or trauma.	District Wide
Karitane services (delivered by Karitane to the South Western Sydney residents and across NSW)	Community-based	Karitane in SWSLHD supports parents and families with young children through early parenting services. It provides expert guidance on sleep, feeding, and emotional well-being, helping parents build confidence and strengthen attachment. Services include residential programs, home visits, and virtual care tailored to diverse cultural and community needs.	District Wide

Appendix C

Alignment of this Plan's Objectives to the Bilateral Agreement Objectives and Outcomes

As per the Bilateral Agreement⁶⁷, it is agreed that the Federal and State Governments have a shared objective to work collaboratively to implement systemic reforms that address gaps in the mental health and suicide prevention system, improve mental health outcomes for all people in New South Wales, prevent and reduce suicidal behaviour, and deliver a mental health and suicide prevention system that is comprehensive, coordinated, consumer-focused and compassionate. This will be achieved by focusing efforts to:

- a. reduce system fragmentation through improved integration between Commonwealth and State-funded services;
- b. address gaps in the system by ensuring community-based mental health and suicide prevention services, and in particular ambulatory services, are effective, accessible and affordable; and
- c. prioritise further investment in prevention, early intervention and effective management of severe and enduring mental health conditions.

The below represents this Plan's objectives aligning to the Bilateral Agreement objectives and outcomes, acknowledging the importance of regional planning to identify the specific mental health and suicide prevention and support needs of local communities and continue developing, implementing and monitoring joint efforts among SWSPHN, SWSLHD, consumers, carers and service providers.

		Objectives					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Bilateral Agreement Objectives and Outcomes		Strengthen community resilience and mental health outcomes through evidence-based initiatives that promote well-being across the lifespan and the diverse population of South Western Sydney	Integrate prevention-oriented practice within services to enable early support and sustained well-being	Deliver mental health services and initiatives and drive cross-sector collaboration and coordinated multi-agency partnership, to address the social determinants of mental health, lift mental health literacy and reduce stigma	Remove barriers to achieve equitable, timely and culturally safe mental health care	Build and retain a capable mental health workforce by adopting a whole of well-being approach	Harness innovative digital technologies for service planning, delivery and evaluation, using data with personal stories to strengthen approaches and communication
	a	reduce system fragmentation through improved integration between Commonwealth and State-funded services	✓	✓			✓
	b	address gaps in the system by ensuring community-based mental health and suicide prevention services, and in particular ambulatory services, are effective, accessible and affordable; and	✓		✓	✓	
	c	prioritise further investment in prevention, early intervention and effective management of severe and enduring mental health conditions.	✓	✓			✓

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