

2026-2029 **STRATEGIC PLAN**





Acknowledgement of Country

Murray PHN acknowledges its catchment crosses over many unceded First Nations Countries following the Dhelkunya Yaluk.

We pay our respects and give thanks to the Ancestors, Elders and Young People for their nurturing, protection and caregiving of these sacred lands and waterways, acknowledging their continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices.

We are grateful for the sharing of Country and the renewal that Country gives us. We acknowledge and express our sorrow that this sharing has come at a personal, spiritual and cultural cost to the wellbeing of First Nations Peoples.

We commit to addressing the injustices of colonisation across our catchment, and to listening to the wisdom of First Nations communities who hold the knowledge to enable healing.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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From the Board Chair and CEO

Murray PHN is pleased to present our 2026-2029 Strategic Plan. This plan defines our direction for the next three years. It reflects how we are adapting our work to a changing policy and funding environment, keeping the health of our communities as our focus, while we support the primary healthcare providers and the broader primary care system in their shared objectives to do the same.

Since PHNs were established in 2015, the PHN program has remained largely unchanged despite significant shifts in primary care. Following last year's review of the PHN business model, PHNs are now focused on translating national initiatives and policy direction into measurable local improvements.

While we continue to centre our work on community need, we are strengthening organisational capability, enhancing governance, refining our decision-making processes and aligning our systems and capability with government priorities. Our strategy will be achieved through focused effort across our core functions of commissioning, capacity building and coordination, guided by three key strategies: service system capability, community and organisational performance.

We will undertake population health planning to understand local need and to reflect an ageing and growing population, a rising burden of preventable disease and the unique demographic profile of our region.

Our relational commissioning approach focuses on delivering accessible services built on strong partnerships, genuine engagement and shared values. We will deepen the way we work with providers to translate policy into practice, ensuring national direction is aligned with local priorities and community need.

A key focus is strengthening our role as a strategic system partner, using our resources and capability to make an effective contribution to improve quality of care, people's experiences of health services and efficient use of resources.

Supported by the ongoing analysis of evolving health trends across our region, we will commission services that deliver national policy and initiatives, through the provision of regional designed models of care, targeted at need, tailored to regional context, built on collaboration that generates sustainable system and service improvements.

We remain committed to improving health outcomes across our region by leveraging our commissioning, planning and evaluation capabilities, and by working with service providers to strengthen primary care and support targeted service provision.

This Strategic Plan positions Murray PHN to commission services and work with providers to enable a more connected primary healthcare system that keeps people well and healthier in their communities and reduces their need for hospital services through the provision of an accessible, responsive and high quality primary care system.



Bob Cameron -
Board Chair



Matt Jones -
CEO

Our operating environment

Australia's primary healthcare system is complex. Population needs are shifting and demand for care is rising. Services span multiple providers, funding streams and jurisdictions.

In rural and regional communities, this complexity is often felt most directly. Accessing healthcare can be difficult. People move between multiple providers, programs and services, sometimes travelling significant distances to receive care. Ensuring the system is connected, accessible and responsive to local communities remains a constant challenge. Murray PHN has worked to address this reality since 2015.

We increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary healthcare at the community level, aligning services to the needs of the people we serve. Working with local providers and partners, we connect health services to community need through regional planning, commissioning and engagement.

Our goal is clear: to ensure people in our region can access the right care, in the right place, at the right time, delivering equitable health outcomes for all. Operating between communities, providers and government, Murray PHN brings together policy, services and people to improve how healthcare is delivered across our region.



Murray PHN brings together policy, services and people to improve how healthcare is delivered across our region.

Strengthening our contribution

Responding to a changing environment

The expectations of Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are evolving. National reforms are strengthening the role PHNs play in delivering Commonwealth Government priorities and clarifying their accountability to the Commonwealth within the national health system.

This reflects the vital position PHNs hold within the health system. Working across government policy and local service delivery, PHNs translate national direction into practical local outcomes.

Maintaining this balance is critical. Murray PHN must remain closely aligned with government priorities while maintaining the trust and connection that allows us to understand and respond to community need.

Murray PHN is uniquely placed to play a key role at the centre of the system – ready to plan ahead, respond with agility and deliver with clarity and confidence for the communities we serve.

What this means for Murray PHN

In planning for our future, Murray PHN must evolve. The change we seek is grounded in people: better access, greater equity and stronger patient and provider experiences.

Change will depend on a continued focus on community and place, supported by responsive population health planning that understands local needs and delivers accessible, culturally responsive services.

It also means continuing to strengthen how we operate, build organisational capability, sharpen governance and decision-making and align our systems to government priorities, while maintaining strong connections with communities.

At the same time, the system across the region must work more effectively together. Murray PHN brings together fragmented parts of the system through commissioning, coordination and capacity building. This aligns government direction with community need – translating policy into practice.

These are demanding conditions. But Murray PHN is uniquely placed to play a key role at the centre of the system – ready to plan ahead, respond with agility and deliver with clarity and confidence for the communities we serve.



Our catchment

Murray PHN's population of 654,539 is projected to grow by six per cent by the year 2030.

Communities range from rural agricultural to rapidly growing regional centres, with the highest population increases expected in peri-urban Mitchell and Macedon Ranges regions and the regional cities of Bendigo and Albury/Wodonga.

Not only do health outcomes lag behind city and suburban areas of our state and country, but the region is highly sensitive to severe weather events linked to climate change, including floods and bushfires.

An older than average population means demand for complex care and coordination are higher and will continue to surge.

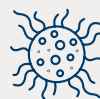
Chronic conditions and potentially preventable hospitalisations already exceed state rates, driven by factors such as limited general

practitioner availability, socioeconomic disadvantage and barriers to accessing primary healthcare, including transport costs and rurality.

Several population groups experience health inequities, including First Nations, LGBTIQ+, refugee and migrant communities, socially isolated older people and people living with a disability.

Health workforce maldistribution and shortages that increase with remoteness are significant obstacles that impact on the ability to provide appropriate, timely prevention, early intervention and continuous management of chronic and mental health conditions that can result in longer waiting lists for patients to access primary healthcare services like general practice.

Health priorities



CHRONIC DISEASE



POPULATION HEALTH



MENTAL HEALTH



GENERAL PRACTICE



AGED CARE



DIGITAL HEALTH



CHILD HEALTH



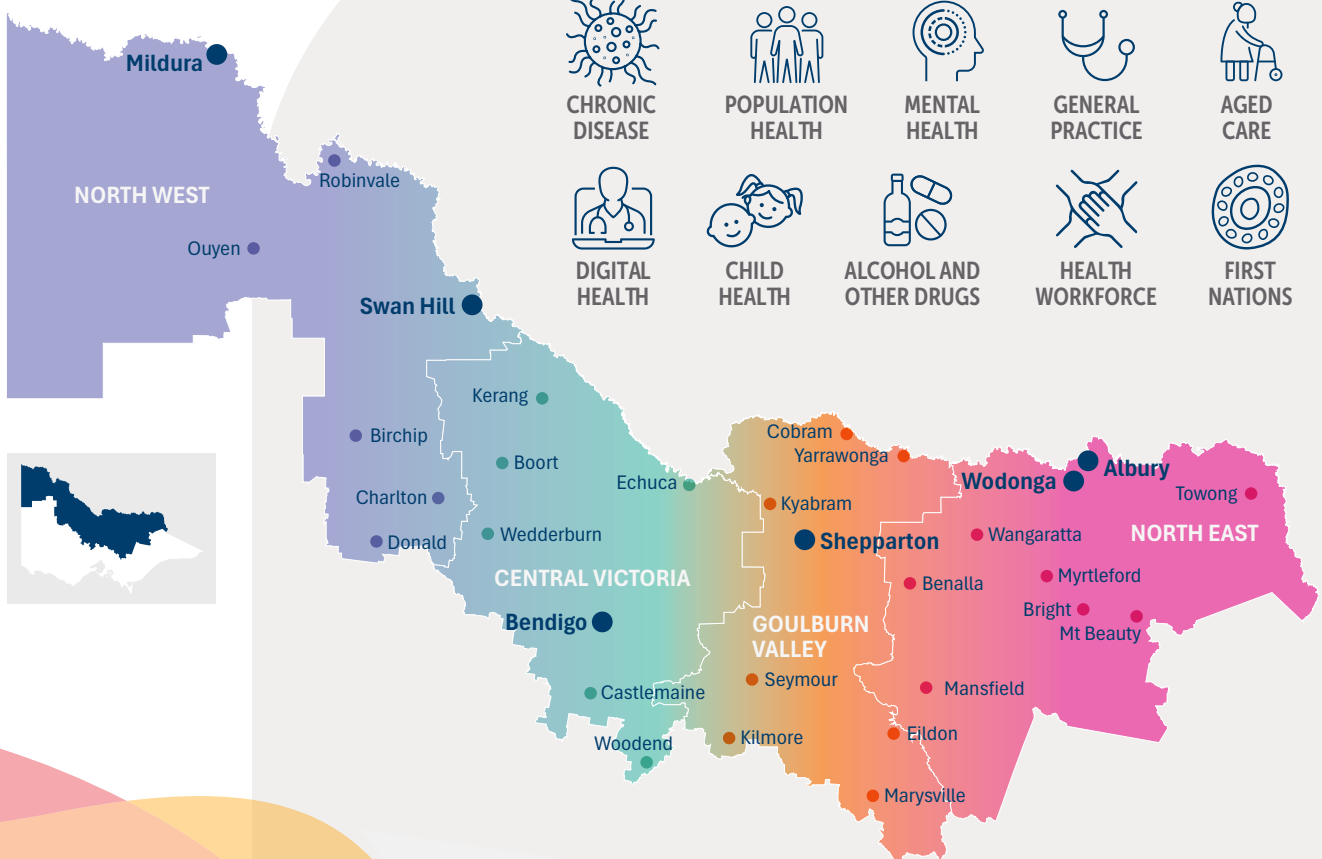
ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS



HEALTH WORKFORCE



FIRST NATIONS



Our core principles

Our purpose

Through our functions of commissioning, capacity building and coordination, we work to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary care services, particularly for people at risk of poor health outcomes, and to improve the coordination of healthcare, so that people can get the care they need, where and when they need it.

Murray PHN works with providers to enable a more connected primary healthcare system that keeps people well and healthier in their communities and reduces their need for hospital services.

Our values



Leadership

We recognise our role as stewards and connectors in primary healthcare and the broader health system.



Respect

We treat all people fairly, valuing diverse perspectives, recognising the knowledge our communities hold about their health needs.



Accountability

We are transparent and informed in the delivery of our commitments to our funders, partners and communities.

Our strategy on a page

Our core functions of commissioning, capacity building and coordination will be guided by our strategic pillars and focus areas.

			
Strategic pillars	Service system capability	Community	Organisational performance
Strategic focus	 Partnerships  Workforce  Population health planning	 Regional equity  Commissioning  Culturally responsive	 Accountable  Organisation orientation  Organisational systems and capability
Outcomes we seek	• Priority health needs are addressed • Improved primary healthcare provider capability and capacity	• Improved access to primary care services • Improved health and wellbeing outcomes	• Sustainable organisation • Engaged and capable workforce • Smarter systems

Our strategy



Service system capability

We operate at the intersection between policy, providers and people, playing a strong role in supporting and delivering government priorities to benefit our local communities. We do this through the core PHN functions – commissioning, capacity building and coordination – initiating partnerships, applying our knowledge of population health across our communities and investing in workforce, to enable a higher performing primary healthcare system.

Strategic focus



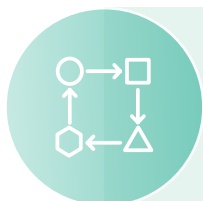
Partnerships

Work in partnership with general practice to address health need, access and continuity of care across the service system, while establishing broader relationships with local health service networks and service providers to better connect the primary care service system through integrated models of care



Workforce

Invest in activities that improve primary healthcare workforce capacity and capability, including support for greater adoption of digital technologies that strengthen the service system



Population health planning

Initiate integrated regional population health planning to support the implementation of primary healthcare reform policies, ensuring that initiatives are tailored to local health needs

Outcomes we seek

- A connected, strengthened primary care workforce
- Priority health needs of our catchment are addressed to help reduce avoidable hospitalisations
- Increase in primary healthcare providers participating in PHN-led multidisciplinary team care networks
- Increase in general practices participating in MyMedicare initiatives and quality improvement activities
- Our partners and providers report positive experiences of us

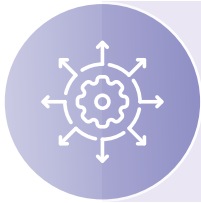




Community

We are committed to improving health outcomes of communities in our catchment. We seek an improved community and consumer experience of primary healthcare by commissioning national healthcare reforms and initiatives locally that promote equitable access to services.

Strategic focus



Regional equity

Use our broader system stewardship role with our partners to further the primary healthcare interests of rural and regional communities and underserved populations



Commissioning

We aim to increase services in communities that are underserved and for groups experiencing ongoing health inequities, leveraging our commissioning, planning and evaluation capabilities to strengthen primary care integration and deliver targeted innovation



Culturally responsive

Strengthen cultural safety of primary healthcare by investing in models of care that are culturally informed and grounded in self-determination principles

Outcomes we seek

- Our region experiences improved access to primary care services
- Cultural capability of primary care providers is strengthened
- Patients and clients have a positive experience of PHN commissioned services
- Commissioned services deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes





Organisational performance

Our influence on primary healthcare improvement for communities in the Murray PHN region is contingent on a commitment to organisational capability, sustainability and accountability. We will lead and act to strengthen the primary healthcare sector by adopting a values-based approach to our work, orientating our workforce skills and capability correctly, and building a sustainable future.

Strategic focus



Accountable organisation

We will operate efficiently within our funding budgets and apply robust, best practice governance, procurement, performance monitoring and stakeholder engagement standards



Organisation orientation

Our teams are adaptable, knowledgeable and have a one-team mindset to deliver on the core PHN functions and fulfill our funding agreements



Organisational systems and capability

Smarter organisational systems that enable efficient, agile and collaborative ways of working

Outcomes we seek

- Our workforce is sustainable and engaged
- Board established financial targets met to achieve financial sustainability
- Funder performance requirements are met
- Strengthened systems design and application



We aspire to be an anti-racist organisation, embedding cultural humility as a daily practice, to improve health outcomes and health equity in our communities. We recognise cultural humility as a life-long commitment to self-reflection, personal growth and redressing power imbalances in our society.



An Australian Government Initiative

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