



2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

phn
NORTHERN SYDNEY
An Australian Government Initiative



SYDNEY NORTH
Health Network



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Sydney North Health Network wishes to acknowledge Australia's Aboriginal people - the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and work. We pay our respect and recognise their connection to land, water and community and honour their Ancestors, Elders past, present and emerging.

CONTENTS

About Us	4	Community Activation	16
Chair & CEO Report	5	Commissioning	18
Board	6	System Transformation	22
Executives	7	An Exceptional Organisation	26
Strengthening Primary Health Care	8	Financial Report	30
Member & Provider Support	14		

THANK YOU TO
OUR AGM 2021
GOLD SPONSORS

AstraZeneca

Genea
ELEMENTS IVF

LOCATION

The SNHN region spans **899.9 square kilometres**, aligns with the Northern Sydney Local Health District and encompasses **9 Local Government Areas (LGAs)**.

HORNSBY

TOTAL
POPULATION:
954,923

Between
2021-2041, the
total population
will increase by
18.7% to
1,166,399

NORTHERN
BEACHES

0.4% (4,080)
of the SNHN
population identify
as Aboriginal
& Torres Strait
Islander compared
to **NSW: 3.4%**

KU-RING-GAI

RYDE

WILLOUGHBY

HUNTERS
HILL

LANE
COVE

NORTH
SYDNEY

MOSMAN

SNHN has a higher
proportion of
people who are
culturally and
linguistically diverse
(25.7%)
compared to
NSW (21%).
Chinese and Indian
are the largest
CALD groups.

OUR REGION'S POPULATION ORIGIN

The majority of the SNHN population (**58%**) were born in Australia, although a smaller proportion compared to NSW (65.5%) and Australia (66.7%).

The SNHN region has a larger proportion of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (**25.7%**) compared to NSW (21%), increasing from 22.1% in the 2011 Census. Within SNHN, Ryde LGA has the highest proportion of people from CALD backgrounds (**41.9%**).

ABOUT US

The Sydney North Health Network (SNHN) operates the Northern Sydney PHN (NSPHN), one of 31 Commonwealth funded Primary Health Networks (PHNs) across Australia.

SNHN commenced operating the Northern Sydney Primary Health Network (NSPHN) in July 2015, establishing a strong and vibrant organisation within the local primary health care environment. We have built partnerships across the health and social sector, commissioning services that reach over 20,000 people in our community. SNHN is working closely with over **1,600** general practitioners (GPs) and over **2,000** allied health providers in our region to improve health services for our community as well as improving the provider experience through education, quality improvement activities and fostering better connectivity between our region's health services systems.

SNHN is governed by a Board comprising 10 Directors, with strong governance processes, supported by two Councils – a 14-member Clinical Council and a 16-member Community Council. The organisation has demonstrated success and impact through its programs with strong engagement and support from local providers. This is backed by strong organisational governance, operating in a quality environment through the organisation's leadership, performance, evaluation and improvement processes. This culture is present in all our programs and relationships, working with the community, community providers, and clinical services with a shared focus of achieving improved health outcomes through locally co-designed and co-delivered solutions.

Our five-year SNHN Strategic Plan 2018 - 2023 including the direction of our investment, the value we bring to our communities, our focus, goals and roles, and specific strategies can be found on our website under "About Us" here: <https://sydneynorthhealthnetwork.org.au/about-us/our-purpose>

OUR STRATEGIC VISION, VALUES & GOALS

Our Vision:

Achieving together - *better health, better care*

Our Values:



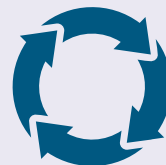
INNOVATION



COLLABORATION



ACCOUNTABILITY



RESPECT



EXCELLENCE

Our Goals are focused on achieving:



COMMUNITY
ACTIVATION



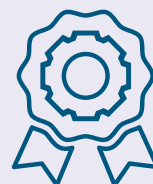
SYSTEMS
TRANSFORMATION



COMMISSIONING



MEMBER &
PROVIDER SUPPORT



AN EXCEPTIONAL
ORGANISATION



CHAIR & CEO REPORT

Welcome

**“Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass...
It's learning how to dance in the rain.”**

Vivian Greene

The primary health care landscape has remained in a constant state of flux, with waves of COVID-19 in the community, rapid ramping-up of vaccinations and support, along with managing the massive impact of 18 months of anxiety, isolation and instability in the community that has affected all our health and wellbeing. The role of Sydney North Health Network (SNHN) has remained central to facilitating the continual adaption required of clinicians and community service providers, while increasing access, information, and support for our community. This involved working with partners to strengthen, connect and integrate services, and consequently:

Achieving together - *better health, better care*

This past year, we shifted our focus as an organisation and Board, looking for the central pivot of our work, that will help us proactively plan and prioritise our current activity while innovating to create the vision of the future. To help this work, the Board and Executive have been exploring the future role of SNHN to effectively build and enable a strong enhanced primary health care system, examining both global and local learnings to enable the continuation of our approaches to person centred care, and structure our work around this. Our leadership imperative is moving from a largely 'program' mindset, to one of '**communities**', leveraging engagement within and outside our communities to

transform the health system. This includes leading work through communities:

- Communities as practitioners (community activation and enabling compassionate communities);
- Practitioner communities (building capacity and connections, communities of practice); and
- Shared value partnerships and targeted commissioning towards system transformation (HealthPathways, Collaborative Commissioning, Climate and Health).

As you read our Annual Report, you will see the continued excellence of our skilled, agile, small team has made a big impact throughout the challenging times of 2020-2021. We have maintained a culture of success and high engagement of our staff, members, and commissioned services. Through the commitment, energy, and teamwork of SNHN staff, Board and Councils we have remained focused on improving the health and wellbeing of the people of our Northern Sydney region.

We are very proud of the collective achievements made this year. While the '*storm*' goes on, our continued focus on enhancing primary health care through communities helps us build on innovation and partnerships, letting us '*dance in the rain*'.

KATE LOXTON
Chair of the Board

LYNELLE HALES
Chief Executive Officer

BOARD



KATE LOXTON
Chair



PROF. SIMON WILLCOCK
Deputy Chair



DR MAGDALEN CAMPBELL



DR STEPHEN GINSBORG



BRYNNIE GOODWILL



GRANT CAMERON



DR CONNY HARRIS



SAMANTHA CHALLINOR



ROS KNIGHT



JANE FLEMMING
OAM OLY

EXECUTIVES



LYNELLE HALES
Chief Executive Officer



CYNTHIA STANTON
General Manager, Emergency Operations
& System Integration



JIM KEECH
General Manager, Commissioning & Partnerships



RAMON DEL CARMEN
Chief Financial Officer



DEB PALLAVICINI
General Manager, Primary Care
Advancement

STRENGTHENING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Future of primary health care

PERSON CENTRED PRIMARY HEALTH CARE:



ROLE OF SNHN:

FACILITATION / CAPACITY BUILDING:

- Education and training
- Continuous Quality Improvement tools and ongoing support
- Digital health enablers and tools
- Emergency response support
- Opportunities to trial new models of care
- Sustainability support – climate and health and business viability
- Person centred proactive care management of practice populations



CONNECTIONS:

- Identify health needs and commissioning services where there are gaps – mental health, hospital avoidance
- Establish fast track referral management when required – e.g. mental health, specialists
- Care navigator – linking to services across the system
- Care management – support for complex patients in health and social care services, and remote monitoring
- Self-management support – health literacy and health behaviour change support
- Community Connectors and community development and support



TRANSFORMATION OF THE SYSTEM:

- Person centred – whole person approach
- Establishment of compassionate communities' approach to partnerships for care
- Data science organisation – using planning for transformation
- Digital health and Artificial Intelligence / Tools for service transformation





HOW SNHN IS FACILITATING AND SUPPORTING THE INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND PRIMARY CARE, TO BUILD A STRONG ENHANCED PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.



FACILITATION / CAPACITY BUILDING

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- ...> Personal Protective Equipment Training (PPE) training for minimising COVID-19 infection in general practice
- ...> 930 education sessions delivered in 20/21
- ...> CPR-Premium member services
- ...> Launch of Project Echo - palliative care in general practice and the community
- ...> After hours urgent support
- ...> Shared antenatal care
- ...> Primary Care Nurse Transition Program

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TOOLS AND ONGOING SUPPORT

- ...> Data visualisation software
- ...> Quality improvement activities
- ...> Dementia friendly practices
- ...> Supporting quality improvement programs (e.g. PIP-QI)
- ...> Development of frailty screening tool for GPs
- ...> Allied Health Engagement Strategy

EMERGENCY RESPONSE SUPPORT

- ...> Development and implementation of the Emergency Response Plan
- ...> Caring for patients with COVID-19 in the community
- ...> GP Respiratory Clinic support for three regional clinics: Dee Why, Ryde and Roseville
- ...> Ordering, storing and distribution of emergency PPE for primary health care practitioners in clinic settings
- ...> Support for GPs and RACFs during COVID-19 vaccination rollout
- ...> Working collaboratively with NSLHD to vaccinate our primary care workforce
- ...> Vaccination coordination for: Residential Aged Care Facilities, vulnerable groups inclusive of social housing residents, people experiencing homelessness, Aboriginal people, people with limited mobility and disability, and independent living homes
- ...> Response and support for climate and health impacts - e.g. local emergency weather based events impacting health and wellbeing
- ...> Recruitment of emergency GP and Practice Nurse workforce 'pool' to support the Australian Government for our local GP respiratory clinics and vaccination centres

DIGITAL HEALTH ENABLERS AND TOOLS

- ...> Telehealth
- ...> Secure messaging replacing facsimile
- ...> My Health Record
- ...> eScript enablement in general practice and community pharmacies - 212 pharmacies (92% of the region's pharmacies) now eScript enabled
- ...> Development of Digital Health Strategy

OPPORTUNITIES TO TRIAL NEW MODELS OF CARE

- ...> Residential Aged Care Facility Test Bed pilot - enabling use of My Health Record in aged care facilities
- ...> Secure messaging for Specialists
- ...> Specialist geriatric outreach support for GPs
- ...> Health Navigators

SUSTAINABILITY SUPPORT - CLIMATE AND HEALTH AND BUSINESS VIABILITY

- ...> Launch of Climate and Health Strategy
- ...> Initiation of Business Development sub-committee for the development of alternative business income streams
- ...> Launch of Business Development Prospectus to attract alternative funding

PERSON CENTRED - PROACTIVE CARE MANAGEMENT OF PRACTICE POPULATIONS

- ...> Person Centre Medical Home general practice education
- ...> Training and implementation
- ...> Data driven quality improvement programs
- ...> Lumos



CONNECTIONS

IDENTIFY HEALTH NEEDS AND COMMISSIONING SERVICES WHERE THERE ARE GAPS

- GP Social Work Service - referrals for socially and economically vulnerable patients
- Hospital Avoidance Service - to avoid readmission after discharge
- Emotional Wellbeing of Older Persons Program - mental health support in residential aged care facilities
- Collaborative commissioning in partnership with Northern Sydney Local Health District
- Headspace youth mental health
- Launch of joint SNHN & NSLHD Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan
- Regional Needs Assessment - utilising a range of data sources to identify changing needs and emerging priority areas in the region
- Low intensity mental health service evaluation and plan for implementation

ESTABLISH FAST TRACK REFERRAL MANAGEMENT WHEN REQUIRED

- Mental health stepped care plan through the mental health triage service
- The first in NSW to use secure messaging of Specialist letters to patients' GPs from public hospitals
- Smart forms
- eReferrals

CARE NAVIGATOR - LINKING TO SERVICES ACROSS THE SYSTEM

- Launch of Health Navigators - free call service for health professionals to help GPs navigate care for elderly, frail, and vulnerable clients for timely care

CARE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR COMPLEX PATIENTS

- Person Centred Medical Home Program
- Care coordination and case management for people with severe and complex mental health needs

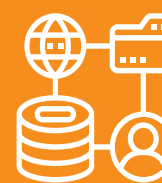
- GP Social work support service
- GP Psychosocial support
- Launched the Way Back Support Service - suicide postvention service

SELF-MANAGEMENT SUPPORT - HEALTH LITERACY AND HEALTH BEHAVIOUR CHANGE SUPPORT

- GPs developed and presented 24 community oriented COVID-19 vaccination seminars to help improve vaccination knowledge
- Production of three vaccine hesitancy videos in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin
- 59 GPs in Schools Workshops - presented to over 8000 year 11 students
- 51 Healthy Living Workshops delivered to 1300 people
- Live Life Get Active health and wellness online sessions during COVID-19 restrictions

COMMUNITY CONNECTORS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

- Healthy Living Workshops for community health self-care
- 42 GPs in Schools sessions delivered to over 8000 Year 11 students on the cusp of adulthood
- Three GP videos produced for the community to counteract COVID-19 vaccination misinformation
- Helped with vaccination of 'hard to reach' community members and groups by commissioning in-home vaccination
- Vaccination supply support for: local 'Street Side Medics', social housing communities, people with limited mobility and disability, and children in out of home care
- PeopleBank
- Aboriginal Eye and Hearing Testing Programs for schools
- Aboriginal women's and men's groups - Connected Mobs



TRANSFORMATION OF THE SYSTEM

PERSON CENTRED - WHOLE PERSON APPROACH

- Person Centred Medical Home program and practice support
- Medical Neighbourhood - Local Coordinated Networks (LCNs)
- Collaborative Commissioning: co-design and consultation with over 300 community members to develop rapid care for frail and elderly patient pathway

ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES' APPROACH TO PARTNERSHIPS FOR CARE

- Support of dementia friendly practices and communities through the Northern Beaches Dementia Alliance
- Dying to Know Day
- Grant to establish village hubs in Hornsby
- Dementia friendly communities
- Last Days Care Pilot Program

DATA SCIENCE ORGANISATION - USING PLANNING FOR TRANSFORMATION

- Data Science Steering Committee established - objective is to provide strategic direction to enable SNHN to grow as a data science organisation

DIGITAL HEALTH - ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE/ TOOLS FOR SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

- Lumos - GP and NSW Health de-identified data exchange
- Secure Messaging
- Data visualisation software
- Participation in the national PHN Data and Technical Community of Practice
- SNHN data migration to, and implementation of, the Primary Health Insights (PHI) platform for secure data storage and analytics



MEMBER & PROVIDER SUPPORT

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, SNHN has been actively supporting General Practices, Aged Care providers, Pharmacies, the Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD), and the community through numerous initiatives.



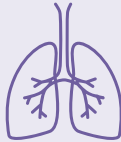
General Practice Support:

- Provision of PPE has been ongoing since the start of the pandemic and continues as needed
- Support to proactively identify patients who have a chronic illness and are reluctant to attend their practice due to social distancing and lockdown conditions
- Support to utilise telehealth platforms and maintain continuity of care
- Ongoing support with education (online) regarding COVID-19, infection control, vaccination and overall vaccine rollout readiness, and PPE training
- Support and set-up of 'home flu vax squad' for those unable to leave home
- Health Pathways



Overall support to General Practice in preparation for the vaccine rollout included:

- Coordination of EOIs via the Department of Health (DoH) to general practice to administer the Astra Zeneca and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines
- Incentives to support vaccine rollout through Quality Improvement activities
- Dissemination of correspondence to general practice from DoH regularly as required
- Support of vaccine rollout readiness to all eligible practices as they were onboarded during the stepped process, including reassurance to practice staff and GP's
- Support provided for primary care providers as part of DoH rollout plan to be vaccinated at regional HUB's



Support to set up General Practice Respiratory Clinics funded by Department of Health:

- Identified 3 sites
- Liaised with DoH and other partners in the set-up process
- Helped source an on-call group of general practice staff to supply adequate personnel for the General Practice Respiratory Clinics
- Ongoing promotion of these sites
- Supply of personal protective equipment (PPE)



Aged Care Support:

- Outbreak response planning and approach developed a GP engagement framework and readiness tools to support GPs with patients in RACF
- Support for surge workforce providers at commencement of vaccination to residents in all Residential Aged Care Facilities in the region
- Continued support to follow up on the second dose in partnership with the surge workforce providers
- Finding providers to support vaccination for the aged care workforce which consisted of approximately 13,100 workers across the region – in-reach and outreach clinics
- Support for NSLHD "Strikeforce" response during the northern beaches COVID-19 outbreak



Pharmacy Support:

- Identified support needs via a survey to all community pharmacies in the region
- Education event to support readiness for vaccine participation
- Support with PPE provision
- ePrescribing support



Community Support:

- Provided COVID-19 resource to every home in the SNHN region during the first outbreak
- Facilitated information transfer at numerous community events
- Education in multiple languages to support increased vaccination uptake
- Facilitation to reach homeless populations to become vaccinated
- Support for vulnerable and disabled people to access a vaccination due to inability to leave their homes



Nurse Support:

SNHN offered a scholarship to nurses in the region to become Authorised Nurse Immunisers. The scholarships were open to nurses in General Practice, Aged Care, and Pharmacy. We had an overwhelming number of nurses apply:

- **General Practice nurses: 78**
- **Aged Care nurses: 105**

The emergency response throughout 2020-2021 from the SNHN team has been enormous. There are **224 general practices administering the Astra Zeneca vaccine, and 201 general practices either delivering or ready to deliver Pfizer vaccinations in the region.**

The assistance provided to the primary health care sector has increased engagement, building stronger relationships within our region. The team is seen as a reliable source of information due to regular, swift communication to healthcare providers inclusive of weekly COVID-19 updates, a dedicated webpage with up-to-date links to National and State COVID-19 information, access to Health Pathways, and online ordering for emergency PPE supply. Our commitment to the Northern Sydney community is to help get through this pandemic as safely as possible.



NURSE TRANSITION PROGRAM

General Practice nurses play a critical role in delivering better health outcomes for our community.

SNHN's General Practice Nurse Transition Program is designed to provide knowledge, skills, support, and guidance to new graduate nurses starting a healthcare career in local general practice. The new graduates work within SNHN supported general practices, becoming part of a multidisciplinary team in primary care.

In 2020-21 SNHN recruited 8 new graduate nurses, matching them with participating general practices, along with supplying training resources, online educational materials, networking opportunities, and face-to-face education days. This program is enabled nurses to build their capacity in the primary care setting while fostering better community healthcare.

The Cottage Surgery has participated in the nurse transition program with the SNHN for the past 2 years. These nurses are supported by our senior nurses with training provided by SNHN. It has been a very positive experience and we plan to take part again in the next year. The practice benefits by having an enthusiastic new nurse keen to experience working in general practice. We have trained the graduate nurses in the way we do things at the practice such as care planning, health assessments, and immunisations. Prior to COVID-19, one nurse ran a patient advisory group for the practice which gleaned feedback from patients on the running of the practice. In 2021, our new graduate nurse has been very involved in the COVID vaccination program. They have been a great addition to the practice team.

Dr Kiril Goring-Siebert, The Cottage Surgery



COMMUNITY ACTIVATION

GPs IN SCHOOLS

From 2015-2021 a total of **42 high schools (45.6%)** in the Northern Sydney region have participated in the GPs in Schools Program.

In 2020-21:

- **59 workshops** were delivered to over **8,000 students**
- **15 new GP facilitators** were trained and joined the program
- **45 GP facilitators** attended the update education event
- **8 GP facilitators** trialed a virtual event

“Our students were very engaged and spoke very highly about the program - many commented that they wished they had more time with the GPs. Extremely valuable information!”

Georgina Willma - North Sydney Boys High

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Vaccine information sessions were developed in response to a multicultural health request. These sessions commenced with two webinars aimed at multicultural workers and religious and community leaders. **GPs delivered 26 individual information sessions in English, Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean in 2020-21.**

22,298 students **104 GP facilitators**



FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ENGAGED IN THE GPs IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM BY FY

“The Cantonese speaking doctor answered and explained all concerns clearly about COVID-19 vaccination.”

Grace

I'm happy to go get vaccinated now - after someone explained the issues I've heard about in the media.

Beth

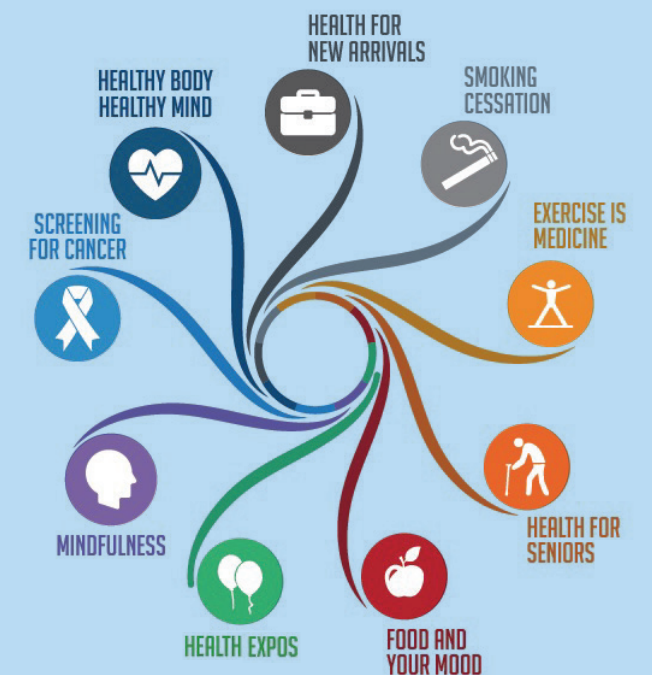
LIVE LIFE GET ACTIVE

SNHN commissioned an online exercise and wellbeing program through Live Life Get Active. The program included pre-recorded and live exercise sessions, tailored nutrition plans, and wellbeing support, that were designed and delivered to groups of all ages.

SNAPO+ HEALTHY LIVING WORKSHOPS

51 SNAPO+ Healthy Living Workshops were delivered to **1300 people** in **6 languages** during 2020-2021 - targeting the most vulnerable groups across the region. Workshops were delivered across Hornsby, Lane Cove, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Ryde, Mosman, and Willoughby LGAs.

The number of people attending the workshops was lower in 2020-21 due to COVID-19 restrictions, however, the number of workshops delivered has increased each year: with **20** in 2017-18, **39** in 2018-19, **37** in 2019-20, and **51** in 2020-21.



SNAPO+ PROGRAMS & VULNERABLE AUDIENCES

- Aboriginal
- Chinese
- Chinese seniors
- Indian
- Italian
- Italian seniors
- Japanese
- Korean
- Mental Health
- Mixed cultures
- Seniors
- Social Housing
- Taiwanese
- Teachers
- Youth



ABORIGINAL CONNECTEDNESS

The Aboriginal socio-cultural connectedness programs through SNHN focus on cultural connection and emotional wellness, enhanced by the provision of nutritious food and physical activity opportunities. This initiative expanded at the end of 2019 into six programs, however, due to the pandemic, the groups were postponed for most of 2020. **85 people** have accessed the connectedness programs throughout 2021.

ABORIGINAL EYE & EAR CLINIC

IN MAY 2021:

- **29** Aboriginal students had their vision tested - 12 (38%) required spectacle prescription
- **30** Aboriginal students were auditory tested - 7 (23%) had middle ear concerns - 12 (40%) had difficulty focusing on a task - 2 (7%) showed auditory processing difficulties

Thank you to our Aboriginal Eye & Ear Clinic delivery partners - Rural Doctors Network, Macquarie University Audiology Department, Brien Holden Vision, Caber-ra Nanga (Relationships Australia), and all participating schools.

COMMISSIONING

Over the past year, SNHN has worked in partnership with 30 commissioned service providers to ensure the delivery of high-quality safe services. This includes the development and implementation of strategies to ensure continued service delivery and address challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

MENTAL HEALTH IN-REACH SERVICES FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS

The Australian Government released the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan, highlighting that older people are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Health recognised that PHNs are well placed to reach out to older people who are at risk of, or have mental health issues and are experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness in the community and in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs), to support their mental health, and support coordinated connections to local supports, networks, and services.

In January 2021, SNHN commissioned Anglicare to deliver the **Emotional Wellbeing for Older Persons In-Reach** (EWOP) program. The purpose of the program

is to reduce the disproportionate impact of physical distancing measures associated with COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of older people residing in our community.

The service was rapidly implemented by Anglicare who leveraged off their existing service footprint in the SNHN region, including Anglicare retirement villages, home services for older people living in their homes, and the existing Emotional Wellbeing for Older Persons (EWOP) program commissioned by SNHN which provides psychological treatment services to people living in RACFs.

The service has had good uptake since service commencement addressing a gap in mental health service delivery for older people living in the community, with clients reporting positive experiences and improved mental health and wellbeing.

EWOP client Kateki Dongre & Jessica Santosa - Program Manager, Anglicare



EVALUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SYDNEY NORTH HEALTH NETWORK

Monitoring and evaluation are critical to the Primary Health Network (PHN) Program, and as demonstrated below, are key components of the Sydney North Health Networks (SNHN) commissioning approach.

As PHNs move away from focusing on activity-based commissioning approaches towards incorporating outcomes, they need to increasingly monitor and evaluate progress towards the achievement of those outcomes. This requires ongoing monitoring, as well as in year and longer-term evaluations that seek to understand performance over multiple years.

FIGURE 1: SNHN INTEGRATED COMMISSIONING APPROACH



“I went through a stroke and just lost myself. I didn’t know what to do. This program was very helpful to me to reinvent myself. I now find myself helpful and useful again.”

Kateki Dongre - EWOP client

Evaluation Framework

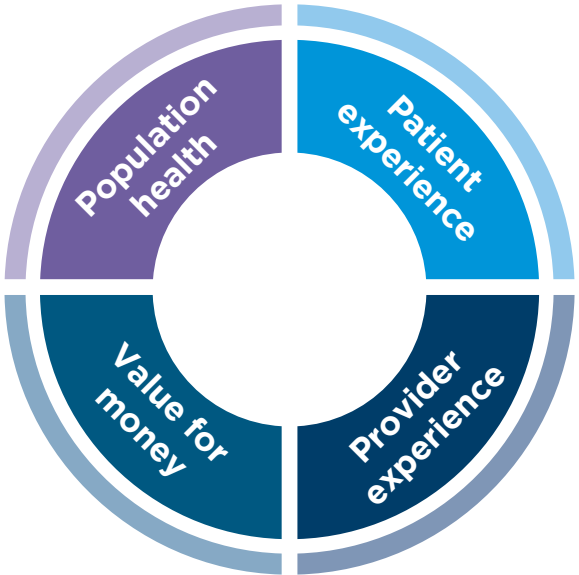
SNHN has chosen the Quadruple Aim as a foundation of the Evaluation Framework, with a focus on:

- **Population Health:** improving the health of our local population, through a range of factors including improved treatment outcomes, access to and uptake of services as well as improvement in social determinants of health - e.g. smoking
- **Patient Experience:** enhancing patient experience through patient-centric care, measured using Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs)
- **Provider Experience:** improving healthcare provider experience, as a means to reduce burnout and ensure the ongoing delivery of quality care
- **Value for Money:** through reducing the cost to deliver care, and eliminating perverse incentives, whilst driving continuous improvement

This Evaluation Framework enables SNHN and service providers to build a culture of continuous improvement and supports evidence-driven decision-making around future commissioning decisions.

It enables SNHN to demonstrate to their Board, Councils, members, and wider stakeholders the impact of their investment and activities on their region's population health outcomes.

SNHN EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



SNHN Evaluation Context

SNHN is increasingly supporting better health outcomes using commissioning approaches to drive innovation, service integration, greater access to care, and ultimately, improved consumer outcomes.

In 2021 SNHN developed the **Evaluation Toolkit** to uplift evaluation capability across the organisation and embed consistency. The Toolkit provides practical guidance to support staff to utilise the Evaluation

Framework across the commissioning cycle. It considers the commissioning stages and provides guidance and tools to support consistent design and implementation of evaluation activities.

The focus on evaluations and development of a fit-for-purpose Evaluation Framework and Toolkit aligns with the organisational vision: *Achieve Together: better health, better care*. It is also a key element of the SNHN Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023 that articulates the importance of evaluation in driving ongoing service improvements.

THE NORTHERN SYDNEY MENTAL HEALTH, SUICIDE PREVENTION & ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS REGIONAL PLAN

The Northern Sydney Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Alcohol and Other Drugs Regional Plan (the Regional Plan) is a joint initiative between SNHN and the Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) and will guide high-quality decision making, ensuring that resources are targeted to best respond to local mental health, suicide prevention and alcohol and other drug needs.

The Regional Plan has a five-year focus (2021 – 2026) and is informed by local stakeholders, clinicians, people with lived experience, carers, and community members to explore local issues and determine actions for inclusion within the Plan. Throughout 2019 and 2020, more than 400 local stakeholders contributed to the development of the Regional Plan.

The Regional Plan reflects the priorities, gaps and opportunities identified through the extensive consultation process and is a foundational document that aims to strengthen regional partnership and integration to support a more effective, human-centred service system, and help ensure resources are targeted to best respond to local mental health, suicide prevention, and alcohol and other drug needs.

The Regional Plan is underpinned by six priority areas:

- 1

Addressing fragmentation of service delivery, through regional planning processes that support systems approaches, co-design and partnership.
- 2

Building community capacity to prevent and respond to suicide attempts and deaths.
- 3

Improving the physical health and nutrition of people living with mental health and alcohol and other drug issues.
- 4

Improving health literacy through establishing and implementing opportunities to increase community awareness of services and improving access.
- 5

Improving mental health and alcohol and other drug outcomes of population priority groups.
- 6

Enhancing coordination and service access for people with alcohol and other drug issues.

SUICIDE PREVENTION AFTERCARE: THE WAY BACK SUPPORT SERVICE

People who have attempted suicide or experienced a suicidal crisis often experience severe distress in the days and weeks immediately afterward, and they are at high risk of attempting again. The Way Back Support Service (The Way Back) provides high-quality aftercare support to at-risk individuals, builds the capacity of individuals to self-manage distress and improve mental wellbeing, improves links with clinical and community-based services, and increases social connectedness and links to supportive networks. The service is delivered by Care Coordinators with relevant qualifications and expertise in supporting vulnerable people and at-risk cohorts in accordance with the Beyond Blue Service Model.

SNHN received funding from the Commonwealth and NSW Health through a bilateral agreement to commission The Way Back for the Northern Sydney region. In December 2020, following targeted consultation with key stakeholders across the region, SNHN commissioned the existing suicide postvention provider, Community Care Northern Beaches (CCNB), to provide The Way Back. Throughout the establishment phase of the service, SNHN has worked collaboratively with CCNB, Northern Sydney Local Health District and Beyond Blue to ensure fidelity of the service model and support the seamless transition of service delivery from 'Seasons', the previous suicide postvention service delivered by CCNB, to The Way Back.

CCNB continues to develop referral pathways and supports coordination with local suicide prevention, health and social support programs and initiatives in the Northern Sydney region. Services are provided primarily in person where possible and practical, and via telehealth based on the preferences and needs of individual clients.

This service has given me hope to want to live.
- client receiving support from The Way Back



SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION



Health
Northern Sydney
Local Health District



PROJECT ECHO - PALLIATIVE CARE IN GENERAL PRACTICE SERIES

This year SNHN was successful in becoming an ECHO replica partner in partnership with Northern Sydney Local Health District and HammondCare.

The first Project **ECHO Palliative Care in General Practice Series** launched in early 2021 and included sessions on:

- Palliative care for people with dementia
- Palliative care at the end of life in an aged care setting
- De-prescribing at the end of life
- Pain management at the end of life
- Advance care planning

The Benefits of ECHO to Healthcare Providers

- ✓ Interactive learning environment and co-management of cases
- ✓ Decreased professional isolation
- ✓ Interconnected network of providers including specialists
- ✓ Use real-life patient case presentations for discussion, feedback and recommendations
- ✓ Improved outcomes for GPs and their patients, families, and the community
- ✓ Collaborate and interact with like-minded colleagues and experts/specialist

WHAT IS PROJECT ECHO?

A short YouTube video explaining Project Echo can be viewed at the URL: <https://youtu.be/Faz3O1cIDMU>

As a result of an ageing population and limited specialist workforce capacity to meet the needs of all patients at the end of life, there has been an increasing demand for General Practitioners to provide general palliative care services in the community. Palliative care is often not the main work of General Practitioners however many will provide some aspect of end of life care to their palliative patients and their families. This includes managing side effects of treatments and referring to secondary services that provide specialist palliative care and advice where needed. It has been argued that GPs have the appropriate knowledge and skillset to provide optimal care at the end of life, often considered to be a “natural extension” of primary care.

The Project ECHO education model offers palliative care knowledge sharing enabling:

- Improved palliative care service provision with enhanced confidence to the people at the front lines of primary and community care.

- Learning from specialists and each primary care team member, helping broaden understanding and support networks.

Project ECHO supports GPs in their work through case-based learning, allowing GPs to bring de-identified cases for advice and support.

Outcomes included:

- Improved care goals and discussions for patients
- Recognising the role of the interdisciplinary team
- Discussions of complex cases stimulating new ideas and questions
- Sharing ideas dealing with family and social issues
- GPs learning new skills allowing them to treat patients they may have otherwise referred out
- Online access to subject specialists who guide and encourage evidence-based practice
- Additional education for GPs and specialists/subject matter experts

Project ECHO includes co-management of patient cases in an interactive environment, providing access to an interdisciplinary team of palliative consults/specialists who guide case discussion as well as presenting the latest updates.

DIGITAL HEALTH

Digital Health Testbeds Projects

SNHN was awarded two Digital Health Test Beds projects funded by the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA).

These projects were:

- **Accelerating Digital Maturity in the Private Sector**
- **Closing Aged Care Integration Gaps with My Health Record**

These projects commenced in June 2018 and were completed in June 2021.

Residential Aged Care Facility Testbed

The aim of the Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) Testbed was to understand how RACFs engage with and use digital health technologies, and test and measure the benefits of embedding My Health Record (MHR) and Secure Messaging Delivery (SMD) into daily practice.

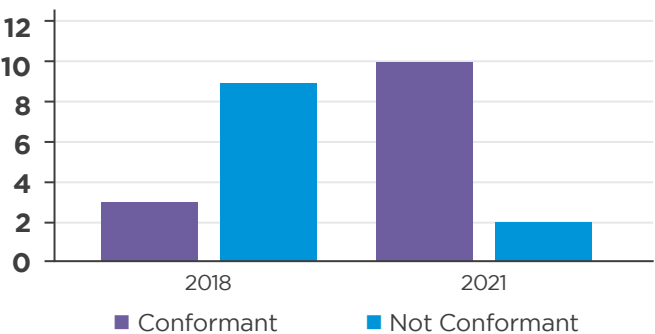
12 Residential Aged Care Facilities were recruited to the project.

Early findings from the assessment were:

- Many facilities did not use software that was conformant with My Health Record (MHR)
- Some facilities had difficulty in registering for MHR due to organisation structure, and identifying a digital champion within a facility proved difficult

During the projects many barriers were broken down by the SNHN Digital Health Team, resulting in a 300+% increase in conformant software implementation.

CONFORMANT SOFTWARE SUCCESS 2018 - 2021

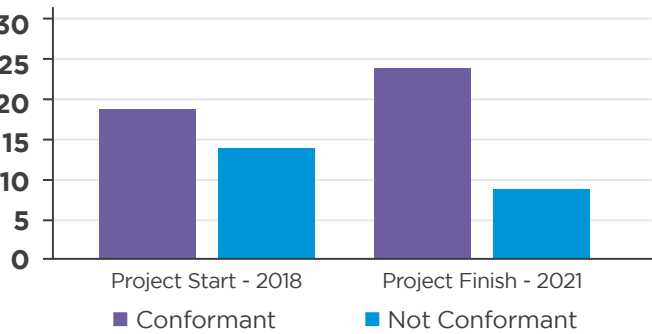


Private Specialists Doctors Testbed

The Private Specialists Doctors Testbed aimed to understand how private specialists engage with and use digital health technologies, and test and measure the benefits of embedding My Health Record (MHR).

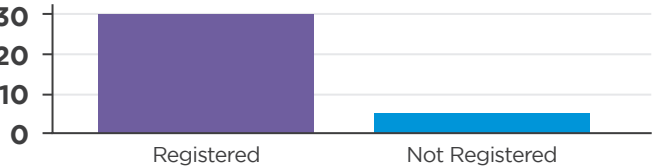
34 specialist practices were recruited to the project via an expression of interest. Practices were assessed for digital maturity across several digital platforms. The key to this project was to assess the use of secure messaging utilisation and provide support if it was determined these platforms were not being used. Secure messaging is a platform in which patient information is transferred securely between healthcare providers and is an efficient alternative to regular postal mail or facsimiles.

PARTICIPANTS WITH CONFORMANT SOFTWARE



At the commencement of the project, there were no private specialist organisations with current registration to My Health Record. Towards the end of the project, the team had successfully registered 30 organisations.

MY HEALTH RECORD REGISTRATION



Sending information via secure messaging is fast, point to point, encrypted, and provides a delivery trail. This eliminates the printing, faxing, and shredding process, the privacy and security issues with email and fax receipt, and the risk of data being misplaced during the transmission process. Financial benefit can be found via the reduction of postal costs. Over the last three years of delivering these projects, the SNHN Digital Health Team has built strong relationships with various organisations and specialist doctors. This success now paves the way to develop future relationships in the health sector to ensure the safe, efficient, integrated, and effective delivery of digital health solutions across all providers.



The nine Health Pathways' team members meeting to discuss their next clinical pathway edit during the COVID-19 pandemic and Sydney's mandated mask wearing inside buildings

HEALTHPATHWAYS

HealthPathways is an online local health information portal designed to support GPs, practice nurses, and hospital and primary care clinicians in the community with:

- Service navigation
- Referral to other services
- Condition management
- Reference materials and patient resources

The aim is to improve patient access to the right care, in the right place, at the right time, and to better integrate primary and specialist systems of care.

Local Snapshot

5 years of Sydney North HealthPathways: **10,603 cumulative new users** since launch in May 2017.

430

Pathways
live

36

Pathways in
progress

Average
pageviews
per month

7,263

Average
sessions per
month

2,092

Accumulative
new users

10,603

HealthPathways completed

Over the last year, Sydney North Health Network has developed new pathways for alcohol and other drugs, allied health services, aged care, respiratory health, women's health, and reviewed and updated existing pathways. New referral pathways were also developed for Hornsby Hospital.

COVID -19

HealthPathways, supported by RACGP NSW & ACT and the Australian Medical Association (AMA) NSW, has developed COVID-19 Clinical Pathways.

Localised access to resources, including COVID-19 testing clinics, is updated frequently. The Sydney North HealthPathways team has completed a rapid localisation of the entire suite of COVID-19 pathways and resources.

COVID-19 Pathways Developed

- COVID-19 Practice Management
- COVID-19 Assessment and Management Pathways
- COVID-19 Vaccination
- Post-COVID-19 Conditions

“What a year! Thank you for all the incredible work you and team have done. We really value everything the Network has achieved.”

Trent Zimmerman, MP

“Your Education Program continues to support general practice and primary care providers to build capacity in developing a high performing, person centred workforce. It has been great to work with you and we appreciate all the effort and support you have put into delivering these events.”

Rebecca Phin, National Asthma Council Australia

“The My Health Record is proving particularly helpful in ascertaining precisely what medications have been dispensed to patients. Information from specialists, outside laboratories and radiology companies is massive but crucial to the assessment of each individual patient.”

Dr Patrick Coleman, Specialist

“The expansion of digital health solutions, through SNHN, such as ePrescribing has been thoroughly welcomed by our pharmacy. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, ePrescribing has bridged the gap between general practice and the pharmacist to the benefit of the patient.”

Matthew Burton, Pharmacist

AN EXCEPTIONAL ORGANISATION

FINANCE

Sound stewardship has been a priority as COVID-19 for the SNHN finance team. Finance has partnered with SNHN leaders to safeguard our people and operations. Valuable lessons from last year have developed financial resilience allowing us to navigate safely through the demands of Sydney lockdowns and restrictions. Finance tailored business as usual from the centralised office to flexible working from home environments.

Finance continued to support the organisation in the huge logistic pandemic response, with a focus on:



Maintaining team wellbeing and connection especially in work from home situations.



Quality improvement, professionalism, and helping SNHN managers maintain fiscal control.



Working with an industry expert on a Business Continuity Plan and Emergency Exercise.



Developing a bespoke reporting system for managers to get the most from finance reports.



Comprehensive analysis and regular re-forecasts to realign to rapidly changing conditions.



Supporting service partners and suppliers with punctual settlements to assure stability.



Successful participation in Department of Health reviews of governance aspects of all PHNs.



Refining remote processes and exploring future artificial intelligence solutions: highlighting the dedication, professionalism, and innovation of the Finance team.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Matching technological challenges with sustainable solutions has been vital this year. Our Leadership Team understands the important role of information systems and technology in our successful operation. Information Technology has strived to mitigate the additional cyber threats, overcoming remote operating challenges, and assisting every employee in a year of transformation and consolidation by:



Supporting the entire organisation to maintain a high standard of "business as usual" with the seamless provision of systems infrastructure, equipment, service support, and security.



Delivering remote connectivity enabling all staff to work from home in lockdown as needed.



Engaging with a new service provider to deliver a new network and firewall, resulting in increased security.



Installing a new phone system, including a "softphone" option, to allow calls on office desk numbers while working remotely.



Enhancing cyber security coupled with team training to increase cyber safety awareness and literacy.



Improving data governance and compliance, liaising with external experts for best practice processes.



Implementing video conference support for internal and external training and meetings.

HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

Working in health during a pandemic has been both a privilege and a challenge. Looking after the physical and mental wellbeing of our employees has been crucial with mounting workloads, stakeholder scrutiny, and the potential for disconnection.

SNHN continues to commit to maintaining a healthy and supportive organisation by:



Recognising the important contribution of each employee throughout this difficult year.



Supporting our people with regular communications via CEO and Executive updates, staff and team meetings, the Employee Assistance Program, Covid-19 Response Plan, and Emergency Response Team.



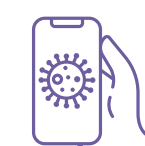
Introducing programs for employee well-being, empowering teams to do their best work, and enriching our culture and operations.



Upgrading the HR Information System to support performance management and launching a course library for staff to access training to successfully adapt to evolving demands.



Performing well in the 2021 PHN Benchmark Survey – our results highlighted a "Culture of Success" with a consistently high level of employee engagement: "A truly great place to work!"



Maintaining a COVID Safe office, upholding QR code protocols, implementing mask and social distancing requirements, checking office cleanliness, and providing sanitiser.



Processing large volumes of deliveries of PPE for distribution, packing, and daily dispatch to GPs, Pharmacies, and Allied Health Professionals.



INNOVATION



COLLABORATION



ACCOUNTABILITY



RESPECT



EXCELLENCE

GOVERNANCE & HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The SNHN Governance and the Health and Safety Committee have worked tirelessly to gather, interpret, and distribute regular updates to SNHN Leadership and staff.

Key work undertaken throughout this year included:



Promoting protection measures against the COVID risk to look after staff safety and to reinforce business continuity



Frequent WH&S committee meetings and regular updates to the Safety COVID-19 Response Plan.



Maintaining WH&S governance and protocols especially with regards to pandemic management, maintaining the registration of Chatswood office as COVID-19 Safe, and due diligence workplace checks.



Emphasis on drafting and communicating a current and appropriate safe return to office plan.



Governance working with teams to develop the SNHN suite of framework documents including Data Governance Framework and the processes for data sharing.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Social Media Growth

1ST JULY 2020 - 30 JUN 2021



Facebook
growth of 12%



Twitter
growth of 4.7%



LinkedIn
growth of 22.4%



Instagram
growth of 15%

(Compared to the same period 2019-2020)



Vaccine Hesitancy Videos

Since the beginning of phase 1b of the vaccination rollout, SNHN has focused on reaching those in our region who have concerns or doubts about receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. As a response, we produced 3 videos focused on addressing vaccine hesitancy. These videos feature A/Prof Dr Fiona Robinson, Dr Patty Yuen, and Dr Linda Wang, targeting English, Cantonese, and Mandarin-speaking communities respectively. The videos have been shared across our social media channels and WeChat (a Chinese instant messaging app). Dr Fiona Robinson's video generated a 3.1k reach.



Northern Sydney Vaccination Rollout

Sydney North Health Network has played a key role in providing health professionals and the community with COVID-19 and vaccination rollout information. Over the last 12 months, we have sent **53 email updates** and featured **51 COVID-19 related articles** in the monthly eNews.

Our COVID-19 and vaccination pages on the website have provided accurate and up-to-date information for health professionals, community members, and pharmacies. These web pages have had **9,905 visitors** from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.



Highlighting our Commissioned Services - “Help from Hospital to Home”

One of our feature stories this year was “Help from Hospital to Home”. The website, video, and social media campaign focused on the two hospital discharge services operated by **Just Better Care** and **Primary & Community Care Services (PCCS)**. These two services are proudly funded by the Sydney North Health Network to help people settle back into their home life after hospital surgery and reduce their risk of re-admission into the hospital.



Promotion of Live Life Get Active

In May 2020 Sydney North Health Network partnered with Live Life Get Active (LLGA), a registered health promotion charity that was created to address key health issues in Australian communities during the NSW COVID-19 stay at home periods. LLGA is helping to eliminate health conditions obesity, diabetes, depression as well as eradicating social disconnection by offering fitness, wellness, and nutrition programs to the local community for free. Since the partnership began, **565 people** from the Northern Sydney region have registered for the program and LLGA has delivered over **3459 online videos** and **more than 3516 live stream videos**.



HealthPathways

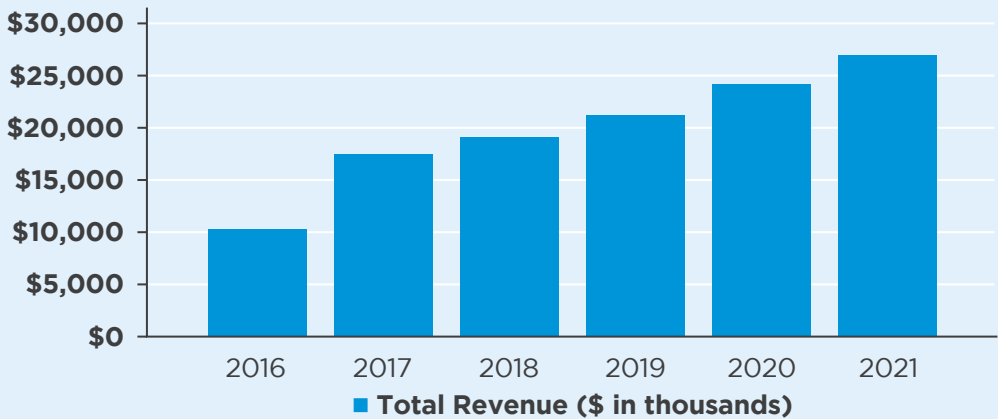
To foster the growth of our HealthPathways audience over 2020/21 SNHN produced updated HealthPathways factsheets and access guides, making them clearer and more engaging for health professionals, as well as two videos featuring local GPs and subject matter experts. The videos aimed to attract new users as well as encourage existing users to incorporate HealthPathways more regularly into their everyday practice. These can all be viewed at: sydneynorthhealthnetwork.org.au/healthpathways

As of June 2021, HealthPathways has over 10,000 users.

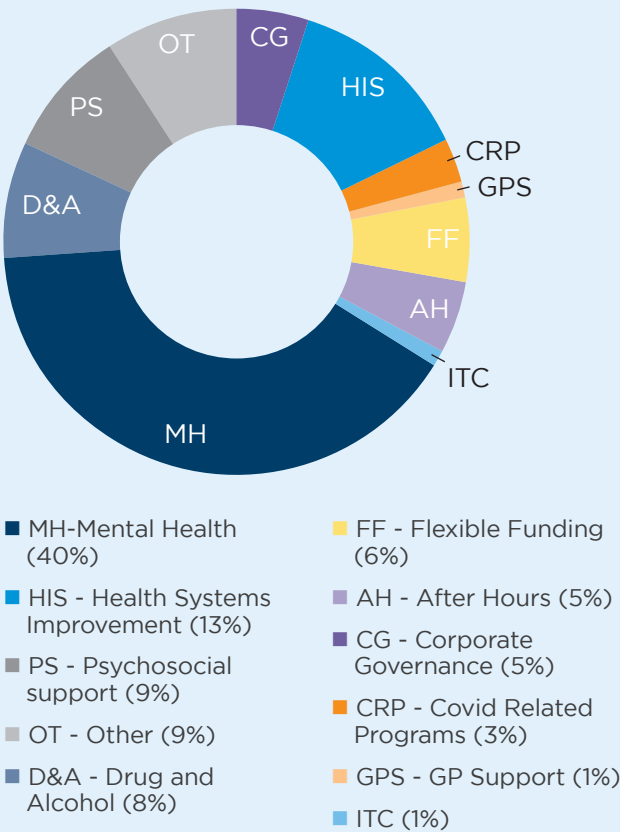
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2021

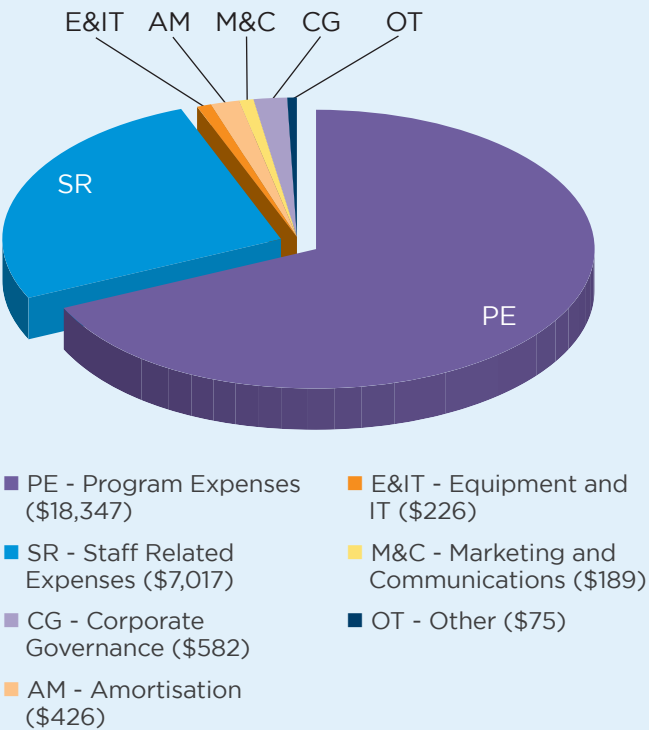
SNHN REVENUE 2016 - 2021



EXPENSE CLASSIFICATION



EXPENDITURE (\$ in thousands)



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2021

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents
Trade and other receivables
Prepayments

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS

NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Right-of-use assets

TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS

TOTAL ASSETS

	2021 \$	2020 \$
Cash and cash equivalents	9,589,403	5,937,785
Trade and other receivables	420,744	132,204
Prepayments	186,593	95,999
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	10,196,740	6,165,988
Right-of-use assets	1,437,570	1,666,645
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	1,437,570	1,666,645
TOTAL ASSETS	11,634,310	7,832,633

LIABILITIES

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Trade and other payables
Contract liabilities
Employee benefits
Lease liabilities

TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES

NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

Employee benefits
Provision for make good of premises
Lease liabilities

TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

TOTAL LIABILITIES

NET ASSETS

	2021 \$	2020 \$
Trade and other payables	2,675,610	701,441
Contract liabilities	5,406,977	3,597,855
Employee benefits	472,051	414,689
Lease liabilities	436,753	358,183
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	8,991,391	5,072,168
Employee benefits	323,409	263,583
Provision for make good of premises	319,462	294,193
Lease liabilities	1,099,908	1,384,454
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,742,779	1,942,230
TOTAL LIABILITIES	10,734,170	7,014,398
NET ASSETS	900,140	818,235

FUNDS

Accumulated surplus

TOTAL FUNDS

	2021 \$	2020 \$
Accumulated surplus	900,140	818,235
TOTAL FUNDS	900,140	818,235

Please note: The accompanying summary financial information reflects the organisation's effective financial stewardship of its valuable resources. Although only extracts are provided, the audited 2020-21 Financial Report can be provided on request.

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Australian Government



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as Sydney North Health Network