South Western Sydney
Local Health District

NSW GOVERNMENT

Communications Strategy to 2030

Building trust and pride, promoting healthier communities

Introduction

Strategic and planned communications play a critical role in how our staff, patients, carers, community and stakeholders experience our District. Each and every touchpoint and interaction sends a message and these cumulative messages maintain our reputation, enhance understanding and influence trust, pride and engagement.

This strategy focuses on enabling our workforce in their roles and diverse communities in their healthcare.

The way we communicate is ever evolving. New digital platforms, social media, diverse communities and cultural backgrounds, changes in community expectations, the 24-hour news cycle and a diminished local media landscape are all changing the way organisations, staff and community members interact.

Communities increasingly expect and deserve two-way communication and engagement which offer opportunities to collect and provide feedback, and respond in real time whether online or face-to-face.

We must make greater use of our own channels, particularly digital channels, to connect with and enable the community. Carefully designed and curated user-centred engagement, communication and content development supports health literacy and access to information, improves the patient experience and provides opportunities to build connections.

However, as new digital channels emerge (e.g. social media and content platforms), audiences and messages become increasingly fragmented. Each channel requires its own governance, audience strategy, channel-specific content and, for two-way channels, monitoring and community management. And, as most are opt-in channels, we are more often than not speaking to those already engaged with our District. We must find ways to reach beyond our existing audiences.

To deepen our reach we must continue to engage directly with communities and partner with stakeholders. With careful listening, we can quickly respond, build engagement, drive improvements and enable communities in their health care.

Acknowledgment of Country

South Western Sydney Local Health District would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land that falls within the boundaries of South Western Sydney Local Health District - the peoples of the Darug, Dharawal and Gundungurra Nations.

We also acknowledge that all of the health facilities across the District are built on their Traditional Lands. We pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal peoples.

Our Communication Principles

Transform experiences through person-centred communications

Relying on mass communication to disseminate information limits deep reach and engagement. Our focus is on user-centred, accessible communications channels and content to engage and enable communities and prompt action. As one of the most diverse regions in the state, SWSLHD must consider the unique patient, carer and community lens in how we provide care, make decisions and communicate.

We must include vulnerable and priority populations in consultation, communications plans, and consider accessibility, representation and cultural responsiveness. Two-way and face-to-face engagement opportunities help build and foster enduring relationships and trust.

Enable workforce and community

The strategic use of communications will increasingly play a role in enabling workforce and community though a focus on information management, accessibility and user-centred design.

Transparent, timely, accurate information

The accuracy of health information, sensitivity of personal and private information and upholding the community's expectation of transparency must be carefully managed and considered at all times.

Prioritise and plan proactive opportunities

Our District has finite communications capacity and resources, and we must focus our efforts on those areas that make the greatest impact on our workforce and our community. While reactive issues and opportunities will always be managed and considered as they arise, we must plan and prioritise known proactive communications activity to allow the time necessary to do it well.

Streamline and maximise 'owned' channels

The digital landscape and diminishing media landscape has significantly increased our reliance on channels we 'own' and fragmented audiences across multiple platforms, all of which require their own expertise, content strategy and governance. Many of the channels available to us as a business/government service provider are also freely available for personal users. This provides a false sense of security when using them for work purposes. However, when using these channels to represent NSW Government, we have particular responsibilities to ensure accuracy, accessibility and suitability of data and information shared, appropriate management and escalation of community responses, and compliance with platform, NSW Government and NSW Health policies to protect our workforce, District and health system.

We take a careful `watch, wait and plan' approach to channel adoption to ensure future effort and resources are appropriately directed. At the same time, we must assess current channels, as those with diminishing returns should be retired.

Digital-first, multi-use, channel-optimised content

Content and information must be designed and organised in a way that suits the audience and is appropriate for the communications channel. Different channels require different tones, content types, visuals, information organisation and 'calls to action'. Our communication landscape is primarily digital (online, social media, email) yet content is prepared 'analogue first', in the form of newsletters, posters and brochures. We must adjust our approach to be digital first, and be repurposed and optimised for each channel.

Build reputation

Upholding our good reputation is key to fostering community trust in public healthcare. As well as finding ways to promote our good work, it is how we respond to issues and feedback that ultimately safeguards our reputation.

Let's celebrate the achievements of our workforce, community and health services to engage staff and service users, and demonstrate progress in the south west.

Plan on a page

This Strategy is informed by the NSW Future Health Priorities and supports the South Western Sydney Local Health District Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Framework and Transforming Your Experience.

Vision	Leading safe, sustainable care for healthier communities
Mission	Our mission is to deliver safe, consistent, timely and high-quality health services of value to all in our communities. Our partnerships with communities promote, protect and maintain health and wellbeing. Our service delivery is culturally responsive and shaped by innovative, continuous improvement, sustainability and translational research.
The lens through which we plan, make decisions and provide care	Transforming Your Experience
Goal State	Our community and workforce are informed and connected to SWSLHD and have trust and pride in the health services we provide. Our leaders are confident, effective communicators, our workforce is engaged and enabled in their roles and communities in their health and wellbeing.
Communication Principles	• Transform experiences through accessible person-centred communications • Enable workforce and community • Transparent, timely, accurate information • Prioritise and plan proactive opportunities • Streamline and maximise 'owned' channels • Digital-first, multi-use, channel-optimised content • Build and maintain reputation
Our tone of voice	Friendly, professional and open.

SWSLHD Strategic Directions	**Communications Focus Areas**
Deliver safe quality care and positive experiences	Transform care and experiences through compelling, person-centred communications that build trust, drive behaviour and enable access to timely and relevant information.
Strengthen and promote healthier communities	Promote health and wellbeing, and build trust in and connection to our services.
Support and develop our people	Engage, recognise and empower current and future workforce.
Lead research and innovation	Be recognised for our thriving research culture, future-focused health experts and innovations.
Build a sustainable future	Promote healthcare and environmental sustainability.

How we will get there

Strategic direction

Deliver safe quality care and positive experiences

Communication focus

Transform care and experiences through compelling, person-centred communications that build trust, drive behaviour and enable access to timely and relevant information.

Why this focus?

Each and every touchpoint we have with the community has the potential to impact health outcomes and experiences.

Accessible, patient-centred and accurate information ensures patients understand their treatment and care, and can easily navigate our services.

Moving away from traditional printed materials and towards digital communications platforms enables the community and ensures access to the very latest information.

Showcasing the expertise of our health professionals builds credibility in our services.

Providing opportunities for patients, consumers and stakeholders to engage with us, give feedback and hear updates on our progress builds trust and helps us design better services.

Transform care and experiences			
Outcome	Horizon 1 to 2025 Review and refine	Horizon 2 to 2027 Transform	Horizon 3 to 2030 Master and maximise
Expand reach	Optimise existing external communication channels to maximise reach.	Explore new or enhanced communication channels.	Implement enhanced channels and approaches.
	Review internal communications channels and identify strategies to improve content and channel performance .	Explore new or enhanced communication channels, e.g: • Investigate an enterprise Social media platform (e.g. Microsoft Engage/Yammer) • Intranet uplift • Other opportunities.	Implement enhanced channels and approaches.
Optimise channels and content	Uplift the District web presence: • Home page, recruitment hub, hospital landing pages • Page templates • Centralised news hub.	OneCx website uplift (TBC with Ministry).	Optimise inhouse digital content capability.
	Create a digital-first, multi-use, channel-specific content approach that considers all internal and external channels.	Support and refine internal partners' internal and external communication.	Uplift capability in content development.
		Increase posting frequency on external channels.	
	Enhance reputation by highlighting our high-quality care, expertise, and community partnerships through case studies and storytelling.		
	Review content production and approval processes.	Create a District-wide approach to the production and approval of content and collateral ensuring it complies will relevant standards and policies, is user-tested and meets accessibility, branding and health literacy principles and requirements.	
Clear branding and visual identity	Transition to the NSW Government Brand Framework for facilities and key services.	Develop visual identities, in line with the NSW Government Brand Framework.	Complete the brand transition.
Strong governance	Review and update all relevant policies and guidelines including social media, events, image/ audio/story consents, crisis communications, media engagement, advertising and branding.	Consider new or emerging internal and external channels, ensuring appropriate governance of new channels (e.g. PEX, digital notice boards and screens).	Optimise in-house digital content capability.
		Audit channels to ensure policy compliance.	
Inspire staff and community	Support embedding of TYE through showcasing continuous improvement and innovation in action.		
	Showcase the outcomes of consumer involvement in improvements in care, positive experiences and health literacy.		
Output measures: 1. Expand reach of digital communication channels, measured by followers/engagement/clicks as relevant to each channel/account/campaign. 2. Improve the user experience and accessibility of digital communication channels, measured by usage, user feedback and compliance with relevant standards (e.g. WCAG). 3. Increase content quality and quantity across all owned channels.			

Strategic direction

Strengthen and promote healthier communities

Communication focus

Promote health and wellbeing by enabling access to timely and relevant information and seeking community input to build trust and drive behaviour.

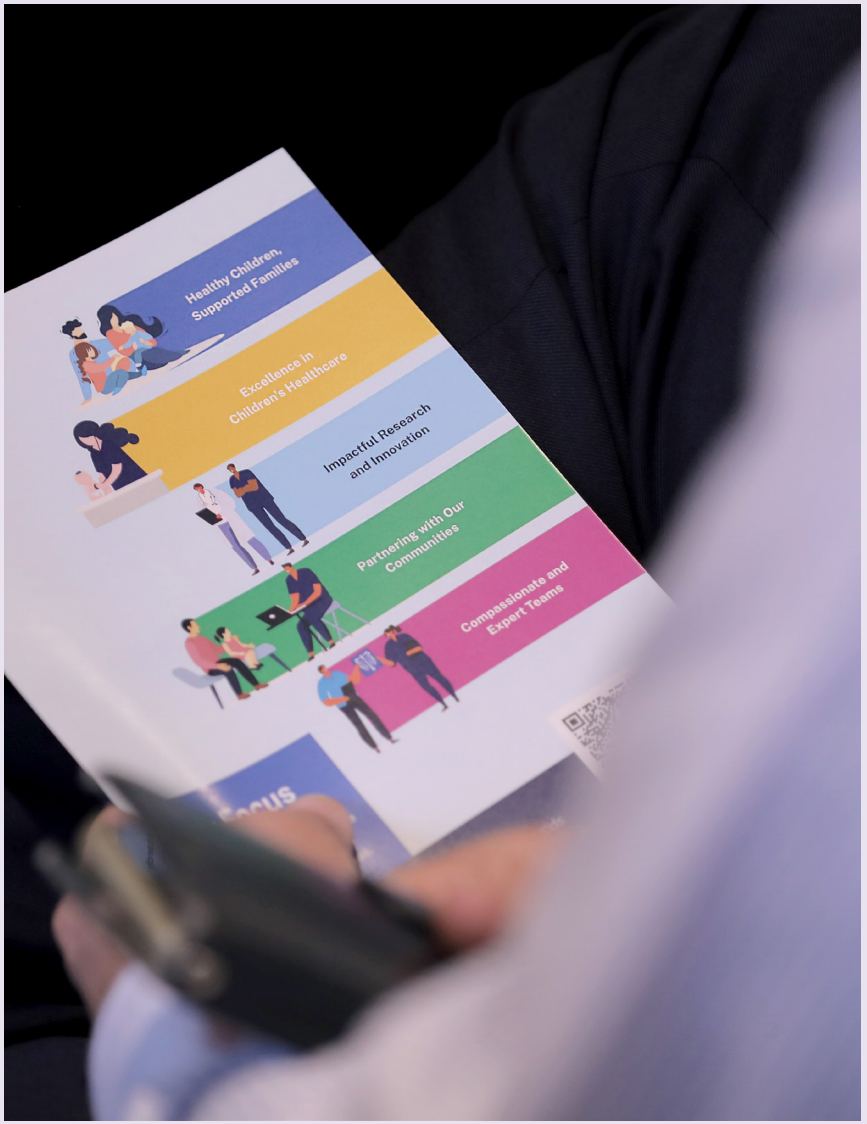
Why this focus?

Ensuring understanding of health services and information helps people make informed, healthy choices and navigate the health system.

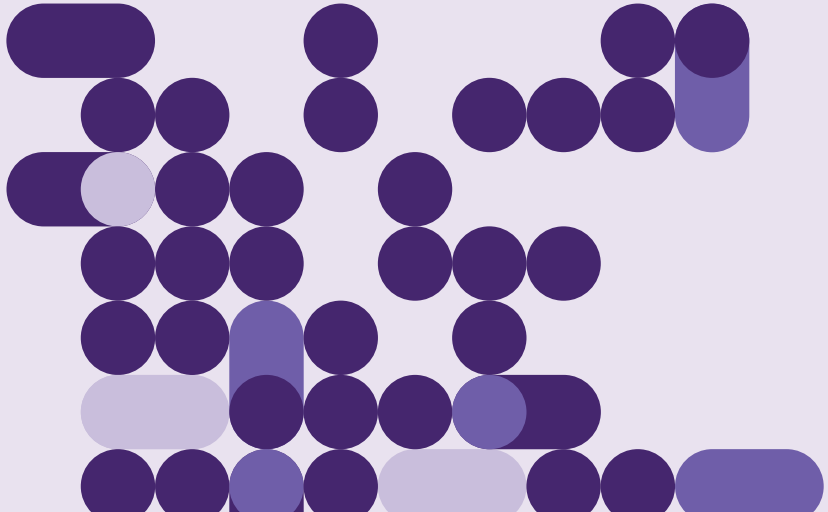
Communication is foundational to establishing and building strong local partnerships . By highlighting our shared values and collaboration, we amplify our voices for greater reach.

Building opportunities for two-way communication, engagement and feedback helps us understand perspectives and produce targeted communications that work.

Access to timely, relevant and up-to-date information enables our communities and fosters connections that will continue to grow.



Strengthen and promote healthier communities			
Outcome	Horizon 1 to 2025 Review and refine	Horizon 2 to 2027 Transform	Horizon 3 to 2030 Master and maximise
Build engagement with community	Increase consumer and stakeholder engagement within project communications.	Explore new or enhanced communication channels.	Implement enhanced channels and approaches.
	Pilot an online engagement tool (with Consumer Engagement Unit).	Expand online community engagement.	
Better serve priority and vulnerable populations	Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility and health literacy, in consultation with Multicultural Services and Ministry of Health Accessible Communications Branch.	Align agreed health literacy principles across communication channels.	
	Engage with, understand and support the communication needs of our diverse communities including First Nations, multicultural, LGBTQIA+, low socioeconomic and low health literacy.	Develop a suite of clear key messages, information and resources to assist consumers in navigating health care.	
	Represent our diverse community in our content and communications.		
Harness community networks to share information	Together with internal stakeholders, design a cohesive approach to reaching our networked communities, including agreeing an annual calendar of health campaigns.	Implement and refine approach.	
	Provide accurate, timely information to media and stakeholders.		
Output measures: 1. All media enquiries acknowledged within 24 hours or (by deadline, where sooner). 2. Implement a digital engagement platform (with Consumer Engagement Unit). 3. Develop an annual campaign approach and calendar for key health messages.			



Strategic direction

Support and develop our people

Communication focus

Engage and enable our current and future workforce, reflecting our positive workplace culture, leadership, diversity, values and strengths.

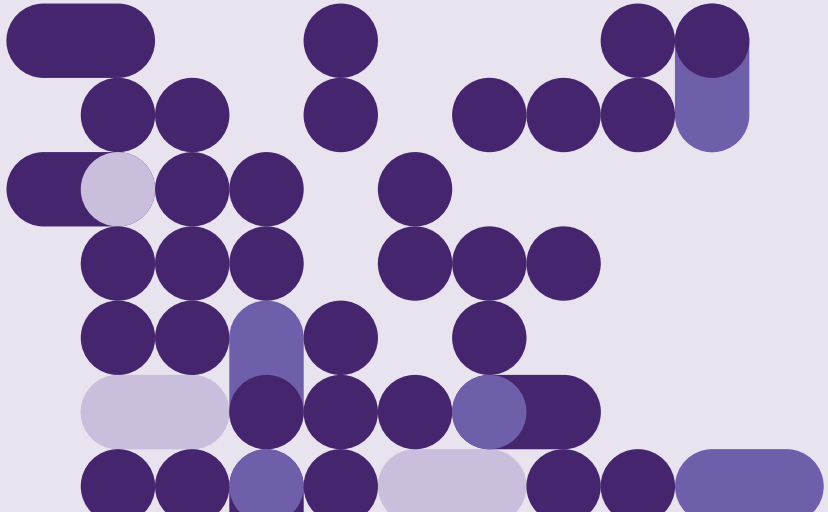
Why this focus?

Delivering safe, high-quality care and positive experiences requires an expert workforce coupled with a thriving workplace culture.

Our communications ecosystem must enable staff through streamlined access to information and resources, and build and reflect culture by highlighting behaviours and actions of value to our colleagues, patients and community.

Our District has so much to offer. How we represent ourselves and value our people and their achievements helps us attract and retain the very best talent.

Engage and enable our future and current workforce			
Outcome	Horizon 1 to 2025 Review and refine	Horizon 2 to 2027 Transform	Horizon 3 to 2030 Master and maximise
Build capability	Partner with leaders, directorates and services to build communication capability, identify proactive opportunity and manage risk.	Create connection and cohesion across the SWSLHD ecosystem (team, site and/or service, District, NSW Health, profession).	Enable staff by improving channels and access to self-serve information.
	Develop our leaders • Develop key media spokespeople • Develop public presentation capability.	Support leaders to develop their professional brand through thought-leadership, engagement opportunities and profile building.	
	Identify and support priorities and initiatives within District strategies and enabling plans aimed at supporting and developing our people.		
	Support People and Culture, particularly in the development of attraction, recruitment and retention initiatives and workforce initiatives.	Attract talent to SWSLHD through thought leadership and showcasing our District and EVP.	
Celebrate	Recognise our people and their achievements.		
Output measures: 1. Improved PMES metrics, as agreed depending on annual activity plans. 2. All ELT and nominated leaders media trained and briefed prior to media opportunities.			



Strategic direction

Lead research and innovation

Communication Focus

Be recognised for our thriving research culture, future-focused health experts and innovation.

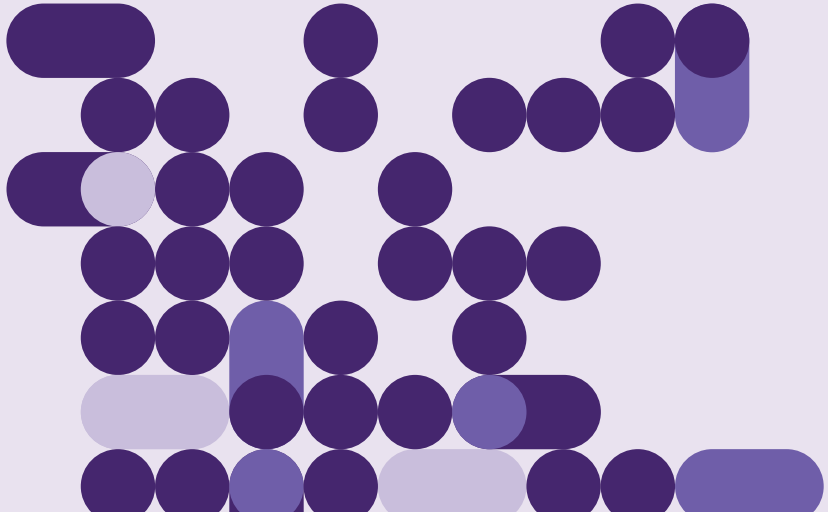
Why this focus?

Over the past decade the south west region has seen population growth and investment in communities including the significant redevelopment of NSW Health facilities.

Together with a strong research legacy, academic connections, partnerships with institutes, universities and industry, and the digital revolution within healthcare, our District is firmly focused on driving innovation and the future of health.

Showcasing our leadership in this space recognises our people and attracts new talent, partners and funding.

Be recognised for our thriving research culture, future-focused health experts and innovation			
Outcome	Horizon 1 to 2025 Review and refine	Horizon 2 to 2027 Transform	Horizon 3 to 2030 Master and maximise
Demonstrate sound investment	Highlight the investment in health for south west, including benefits for staff and community.	Showcase how infrastructure investment has improved patient care and experiences.	
Build capability	Support researchers as thought leaders, creating opportunities to promote their contributions to the workforce, community and global impact.		
Inspire staff and community	Promote opportunities to be involved in research and clinical trials.		
	Showcase research, innovation and care advances.		
	Support innovation initiatives in line with the Innovation Framework, highlighting opportunities and innovation in action.		
Output measures: 1. A research and innovation communications strategy developed to support the promotion of researchers, publications, translation into practice, partnerships. 2. Increase the number of innovation and research stories in owned and earned channels.			



Strategic direction

Build a sustainable future

Communication Focus

Promote healthcare and environmental sustainability.

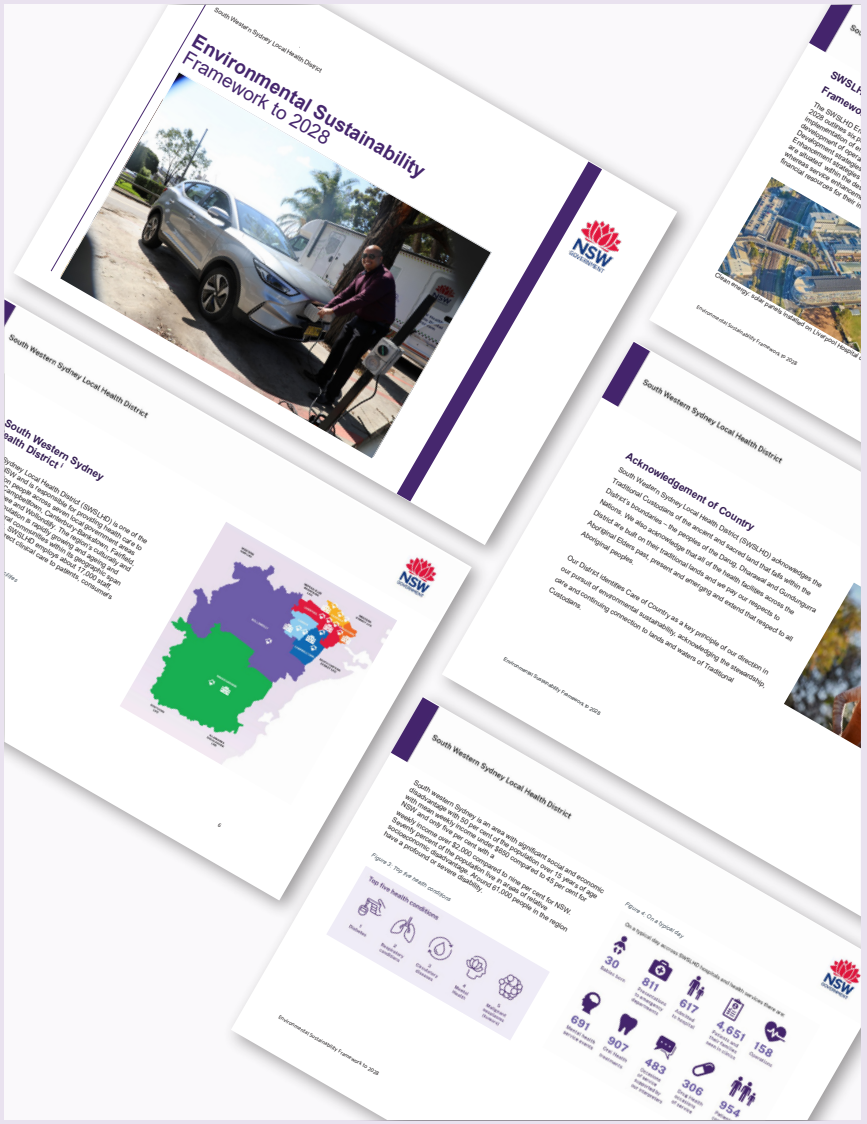
Why this focus?

Our approach to sustainability is multi-faceted and designed to ensure the services we provide can continue well into the future.

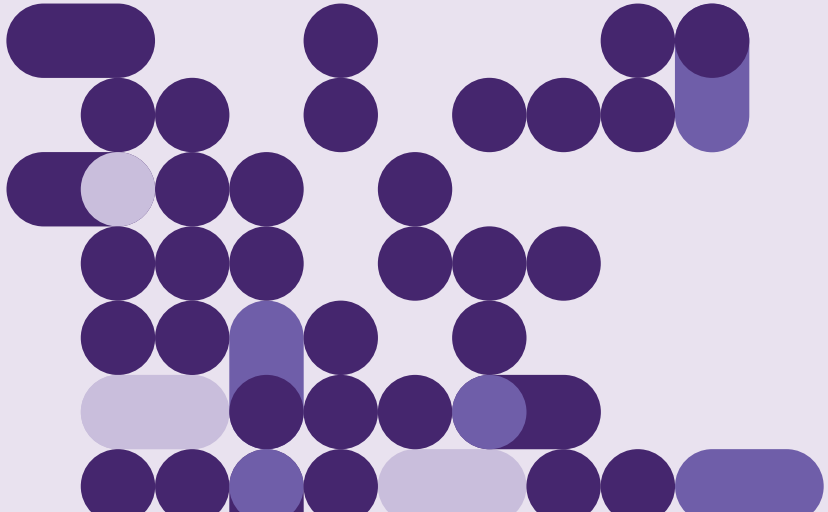
As a public health service, we are responsible for making the most of the resources available to us and providing the most appropriate mix of health services for the community.

This means focusing on value-based care, where each person gets the right care at the right time. Caring for the community also means caring for the environment.

Communications can inspire staff, leaders and the community to change the way they access or provide care, understand their impact on the environment and take action to make the best use of our resources to benefit us all.



Promote healthcare and environmental sustainability			
Outcome	Horizon 1 to 2025 Review and refine	Horizon 2 to 2027 Transform	Horizon 3 to 2030 Master and maximise
Build capability	Develop a plan to improve digital communications channels including intranet, website, community engagement tool.	Bring in expertise in digital communications.	Build organisational capability and a specialised digital team to manage our channels into the future.
Improved sustainability	Build SC&M capability and capacity, reducing reliance on external suppliers.		
	Digital-first approach to communications to reduce costs and environmental impact.		
Output measures: 1. Increase capability and skills mix within the SC&M team. 2. Reduce printed publications across the District.			



Designing the right content

Great communication needs great content. Our focus is on user-centred, accessible communication. Different messages and content approaches must be specifically designed for each audience and consider their preferences, channel and purpose of the communication.

When designing content, we must consider which approach is most suitable and what we are trying to achieve.

Promote – stories and content that reinforce reputation and expertise.

Inform – facts, figures and information to help people make decisions or understand options available to them.

Engage – conversational content fosters engagement, provides opportunities to demonstrate expertise or thought leadership and/or crowd-source ideas and input from stakeholders.

Entertain – when used appropriately, entertaining content creates an emotional attachment, which in turn creates connection.

Community – building a sense of community (geographic, professional, interest-based) creates connection and audiences that help amplify messages.

Activate – compelling content can drive behaviour and requires a clear 'call to action' for audiences.

Content Pillars

Our District's reputation is upheld and story is told through the culmination of every interaction the community has with us. Every piece of content, regardless of its intent, is an opportunity to demonstrate our strategic goals and connect with our workforce and community.

The pillar approach ensures consistency and coherence in our messaging, where each piece of content can both serve its purpose and amplify a key theme and form part of the big picture.

Content pillar:	Healthy and well community	Working with people and communities	Healthcare of the future	A great place to work and make a difference
Key message:	**We deliver safe, consistent, timely, culturally responsive and high-quality services and information.**	**We work with our staff and the people of south western Sydney to deliver high-quality, culturally responsive and accessible services.**	**Our care is shaped by innovation, continuous improvement, sustainability and research.**	**We are an employer of choice for staff who value high-quality care. We equip our people with the skills and capabilities to succeed and celebrate their achievements.**
	Topics: • (TYE) Safe, high-quality care and experiences • Latest information on current health issues (including in-language, easy read resources etc.) • Multidisciplinary approach • Information on preventing, diagnosing and treating diseases • Making healthy choices • Creating healthy environments • Service information • Improving health literacy	**Topics:** • Partnering with patients/ patient-centred care • Working with our diverse communities • Strategic partnerships in action • Co-designed, targeted programs • TYE My Experience Matters • Community engagement opportunities and outcomes	**Topics:** • Innovation and technology • Sustainability • Research • Continuous improvement • Models of care • Precision medicine • TYE (Improvement science, feedback into action) • Service design and redesign • Hospital redevelopments	**Topics:** • EVP - progression, affordable living, close to home, in your community, challenge and opportunity, diversity • Thought leadership (Subject matter experts) • Celebrating our achievements • Recognising our people • Leadership in action • Proud legacy • Career opportunities • TYE (leadership and wellbeing)

How SC&M supports you

Strategic Communications & Media (SC&M) are advisors to the District's leaders and teams, building organisational communications capability, enhancing culture, identifying and managing internal and external content and channels, upholding our District's reputation, and planning communications to support organisational change and initiatives.

Strategic Communication

- Advise and support the Chair, Chief Executive and Executive on communications and media matters and opportunities.
- Monitor and enhance the reputation of our District and its workforce, network, facilities and services, identify and address reputational risk.
- Custodians of the NSW Government Brand Framework and its implementation in SWSLHD.
- Manage proactive media opportunities, develop public spokespeople.
- Respond to media queries transparently, timely and accurately.
- Highlight the achievements of our District and experts.
- Build community trust in, and knowledge of health services and information.
- Manage the District's approach to social and emerging media.
- Partner with leaders and teams, identifying communication priorities and building communications capability.
- Ensure all District communication and media activities adhere to the NSW Health Public Communications Procedures, NSW Government Advertising Protocols, NSW Government Brand Framework and NSW Government Social Media Guidelines by developing District policies, procedures, guidelines and templates to support local implementation.

Operational Support and Implementation

- Manage and/or support District communication channels (internal and external), ensuring accuracy and accessibility.
- Provide opportunities to engage community and stakeholder activities in the District.
- Manage District-wide events and dignitary events/visits.
- Manage public end-of-year reporting including Annual Public Meeting, NSW Health Annual Reporting and Safety and Quality Accounts.
- Support teams with the development of channel-appropriate communication approaches and content development.
- Oversee and report on paid content (advertising, including social media boosting), in line with the NSW Government Advertising Protocols and Ministry of Health processes.
- Oversee and advise on the use of communications suppliers including photography/videography, graphic design, advertising.
- Adapt state-wide campaigns, ensuring relevance to our diverse, local communities.

Consider our many audiences

Our communications must consider and be tailored for a large range of audiences.
To provide safe, quality health care and experiences, we must consider the unique needs of each audience and subgroups within these audiences to understand how best to engage with and reach them.

Community

- Patients, consumers and clients
- Families and carers
- Consumer and community representatives
- Multicultural and community organisations, groups and leaders
- Peak bodies
- Religious organisations and pastoral care
- Non-government organisations
- Local businesses

Supporters

- Foundation and charities
- Hospital and service volunteers
- Funders, donors and supporters
- Auxiliaries

Workforce

- Current and future workforce
- Executives and leaders
- Board
- Employee representatives
- Unions, professional and industry bodies

Government

- Local Members of Parliament (State and Federal)
- Health, Medical Research, Mental Health and Regional Health Minister/s
- NSW Health – Ministry of Health, local health districts, Health Infrastructure, agencies and pillars
- Other NSW Government clusters and agencies, e.g. Department of Communities & Justice, Emergency Services, Department of Education, Multicultural NSW
- Commonwealth Government (Health, Disability)
- Local Emergency Services (Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue)
- Local councils

Partners in healthcare delivery

- Affiliated Health Organisations
- Primary Health Network
- Aboriginal Medical Services
- Primary and community health providers

Key stakeholders and partners

- Media outlets
- Vendors/suppliers
- Industry and medical technology
- Building and construction
- Education and training institutions
- Research institutes
- Arts organisations

Activate range of channels

Channels must be carefully selected to reach the intended audience. The most effective channels provide two-way, real-time communications.

Where this is not possible, a carefully coordinated use of channels incorporating targeted messaging and content can inform, educate, excite, enable and/or activate your audience/s.

There are three ways to consider reaching external audiences, through owned, earned and paid channels. Each has various benefits and limitations in terms of reach, control of message and costs. Each also requires careful planning and content development to get the best out of them.

Reaching our workforce

To reach our internal audiences, there are a range of options available:

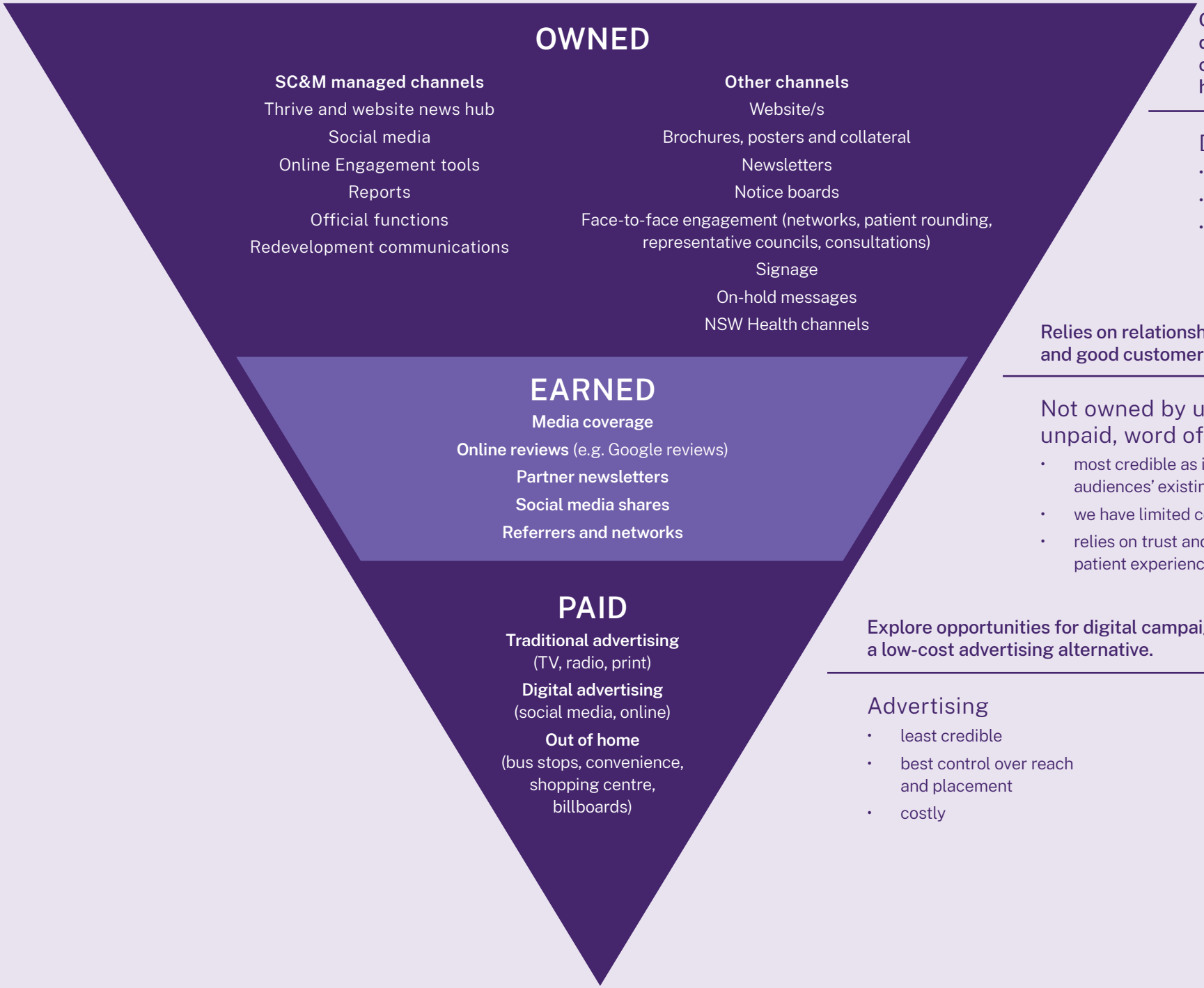
SC&M managed channels

- CE Chat
- CE Messages
- Updates from Board Chair
- SMS
- E-news platform
- Enterprise social network (future)
- South West Central

Other District channels

- Closed social media groups
- Posters and other collateral
- Newsletters
- Leadership messages
- Memos, emails
- Face-to-face engagement (meetings, rounding, consultations)
- Sway
- Surveys
- NSW Health channels (internal)
- SMS
- Intranet
- Microsoft Teams

Reaching community/stakeholders



Our priority channels - if we do well here, our earned channels will be easier as we have great, shareable content.

District/Health channels

- a source of truth
- in our full control
- audience must be connected to us to see the content

Relies on relationships and good customer service.

Not owned by us, third party, unpaid, word of mouth

- most credible as it's within the audiences' existing sphere
- we have limited control
- relies on trust and positive patient experiences

Explore opportunities for digital campaigns, a low-cost advertising alternative.

Advertising

- least credible
- best control over reach and placement
- costly

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