



**Health**  
South Western Sydney  
Local Health District

**SWSLHD**

**Drug Health Services**

A Facility of South Western Sydney Local  
Health District

**Operational Plan  
2023/24 – 2025/26**

***Leading safe, sustainable care  
for healthier communities***

*transforming your  
experience*

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## Introduction

The Drug Health Services Operational Plan 2023-2025 identifies the actions that Drug Health Services will take over the next two years in support of South Western Sydney Local Health District's Strategic Plan 2022-2027 strategic directions.

Drug Health Services aims to improve the health of the community, reduce drug and alcohol related harm for people who use substances, and to increase access to treatment for those requiring specialist drug and alcohol services. Drug Health delivers a range of drug and alcohol prevention, treatment and intervention services across inpatient, outpatient, outreach and integrated healthcare settings.

Substance use poses significant challenges to individuals, families and communities. The harms and adverse health impacts associated with problematic substance use place burdens on quality of life, relationships and community function. They are also commonly associated with major medical, psychological and social issues and premature death.

Substance use occurs in all communities however those experiencing greater poverty, isolation, marginalisation and disadvantage experience a disproportionate level of harm. Stigma, criminalisation and discrimination experienced by people who use substances create barriers to service access and uptake and contribute to poor health outcomes.

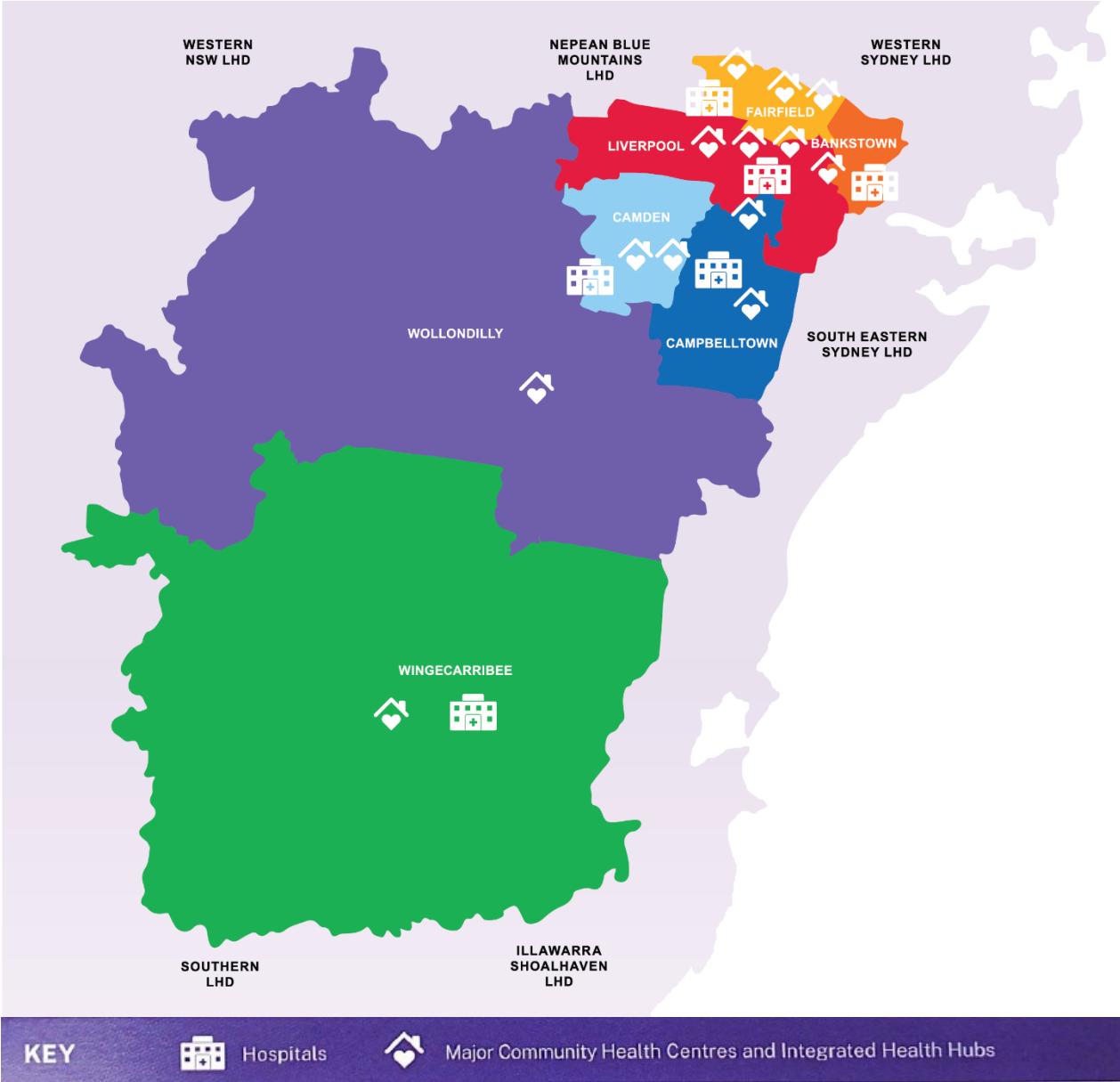
People experiencing substance dependence and related health issues are seen across the health system. More than a third of all hospital presentations are estimated to be related to substance use, however, the majority are not identified. Only a quarter of those that require intensive intervention are seen by drug and alcohol clinicians. Those experiencing high acuity substance related withdrawal, especially where it is not the presenting problem or is not identified, pose additional challenges to hospital staff. People may also require multiple and ongoing engagement and many experience other health issues including mental health, cognitive impairment, hepatitis C and physical health problems.

Health services can provide a point for the early identification, management and coordination of responses and have a history of delivering targeted and innovative services to people with complex health and social problems. Drug and alcohol services support other health services in managing changes to service demand and provide significant cost savings to hospitals. Early identification, engagement, treatment and intervention by hospital-based drug and alcohol teams provide costs savings from reduced admissions, incidents, post-operative morbidity and re-presentations. Prevention and harm minimisation services reduce transmission risks and related harms.

A coordinated response across health, justice, social and community sectors is required to establish an integrated network of drug and alcohol services. The engagement and collaboration with consumers, communities, services and stakeholders are crucial to the development of an integrated network of drug and alcohol services. The inclusion of people with lived experience of drug and alcohol strengthens service responses.

Research and evaluation, organisational structures, specialist staff, consumer systems and peer worker capacity, new service models and targeted programs are required to deliver services for the future. Partnerships with primary health, Aboriginal and non-government services, supported by sustained investment in population level community education including awareness raising campaigns, are critical to the response.

# Map of South Western Sydney Local Health District



# Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027 Framework

South Western Sydney  
Local Health District



- NSW Premier's Priorities
- NSW Health *Future Health: Guiding the next decade of care in NSW 2022 - 2032*
- SWSLHD Clinical Services Planning

## Core

- Collaboration
- Openness
- Respect
- Empowerment

## 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 innovation, continuous improvement, sustainability and translational research.

*transforming your  
experience*

### Deliver safe quality care and positive experiences



- Show kindness and compassion, delivering personalised and culturally responsive care.
- Deliver safe, consistent, timely, high-quality care through seamless networks.
- Strengthen integrated care across all care settings.
- Build our culture of continuous improvement.
- Engage with consumers, communities and our partners.

### Strengthen and promote healthier communities



- Close the gap for Aboriginal people and communities to improve equity of outcomes.
- Improve equity of outcomes for all priority populations including our culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Build capability in our communities and partner to create social and physical environments that promote health and wellbeing.
- Engage our communities in prevention, screening and early intervention programs.
- Enhance mental health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.
- Support people of all ages to live a meaningful and functional life, ensuring the best start in life and promoting healthy ageing.

### Support and develop our people



- Plan for and deliver a workforce that meets the future needs and reflects the diversity of our communities.
- Be the employer of choice for staff who value high-quality care.
- Embed positive workplace culture valuing the wellbeing and engagement of our people.
- Equip our people with the skills and capabilities to be an agile, responsive workforce.

### Lead research and innovation



- Build capacity in research aligned with clinical service planning.
- Enable evidence-based and innovative models to improve healthcare and service delivery.
- Advance and translate research and innovation with institutions, industry partners, consumers and our communities.
- Drive improvements through timely, integrated and accessible health data, information and analytics.
- Foster and facilitate an innovation culture across the organisation.

### Build a sustainable future



- Build clinical service sustainability and value-based healthcare approaches.
- Plan for and deliver future-focused, fit-for-purpose infrastructure.
- Drive digitally-enabled and innovative patient care solutions and service delivery.
- Pursue environmental sustainability across the organisation.
- Strengthen financial sustainability now and plan for the future.

## Facility & Service Profile

Drug Health Services delivers specialist drug and alcohol prevention, treatment and support services in inpatient, outpatient, and outreach and integrated healthcare settings.

### **Drug & Alcohol Intake, Assessment & Referral Service**

District-wide drug and alcohol telephone information and referral service and a specialist assessment and support service.

### **Hospital Drug & Alcohol Consultation & Liaison Services**

Consultation and liaison services support hospital treatment teams in the identification, assessment and management of people with drug and alcohol issues. Substance Use in Pregnancy & Parenting, Dual Diagnosis & Youth HCL and Involuntary Drug & Alcohol Treatment Program Assessment sub-specialties and after-hour specialist medical drug and alcohol on-call service.

### **Withdrawal Management Services**

Inpatient withdrawal management service for people with moderate acuity drug and alcohol withdrawal and complex psycho-social needs, located in Fairfield Hospital. Outpatient withdrawal management services. Hospital Consultation & Liaison Services support Hospital treatment teams.

### **General Drug & Alcohol Clinics**

Medical and Nurse Practitioner outpatient clinics for people with complex drug and alcohol issues who do not access mainstream services.

### **Opioid Treatment Services**

Outpatient opioid agonist treatment and case management service for people who are dependent on prescribed or illicit opioids. FECT supports GP prescribers and Community Pharmacies in the Fairfield LGA.

### **Drug & Alcohol & Mental Health Care Navigation Team**

District-wide, multi-disciplinary service delivers consultation, assessment, intensive care navigation and assertive follow up for people with complex comorbid drug and alcohol and mental health conditions in inpatient, outpatient and community settings.

### **Substance Use in Pregnancy & Parenting Service**

Multi-disciplinary, inpatient and outpatient service for the care of women who use drug and alcohol use and their infants through pregnancy, birth and for up to two years post-natal.

### **Opioid Treatment Services**

Outpatient opioid agonist treatment and case management service for people who are dependent on prescribed or illicit opioids. Works in collaboration with GP prescribers and Community Pharmacies.

### **Aboriginal Health Drug & Alcohol Team**

District-wide, multi-disciplinary Aboriginal Health Team delivers evidence-based, person-centred health interventions to Aboriginal people and families in inpatient, outpatient and community settings.

### **Counselling & Psychological Interventions**

Community based counselling and relapse prevention service for people with drug and alcohol use issues and their families. The Assertive Community Management Program provides an intensive community-based care coordination service for people with complex drug and alcohol issues.

**Drug & Alcohol Youth Service**

Multi-disciplinary outpatient and community-based specialist youth service supporting the care of young people severe drug and alcohol use issues and their families.

**Drug Court Program**

Community based drug and alcohol counselling, treatment and case management service supporting the NSW Drug Court's supervision of adult offenders with illicit drug and alcohol use issues.

**Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment (MERIT)**

Community based drug and alcohol counselling, treatment and case management service supporting the Magistrates Early Release into Treatment Program for defendants with drug and alcohol use issues.

**Smoking Cessation Services**

Community based Smoking Cessation services inclusive of the Quit For New Life service for women having an Aboriginal baby, and their partners and household members.

**Harm Reduction Program (Needle & Syringe Program)**

Prevention service reducing transmission of blood borne viruses through distribution of sterile injecting equipment and information, harm reduction and safe disposal services for people who inject drugs.

**Research Program**

Partnerships with research institutes to increase understanding of local drug and alcohol use issues and service barriers and to inform the development of innovative models of care and interventions.

**General Practice Drug & Alcohol Advice & Support Service**

Community based specialist advice and support service for General and Nurse Practitioners to the care of people with drug and alcohol use and associated health issues. Partnership with SWS Primary Health Network.



## Operational Plan Actions

SD	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LOCAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY	LHD LEAD	FACILITY / SERVICE LEAD	TIMEFRAME	
<b>Deliver safe quality care and positive experiences</b>							
1.1	Show kindness and compassion, delivering personalised and culturally responsive care	1.1.1	Implement and embed the TYE 'Safety Essentials' across the organisation	Continue to implement local TYE Plan/initiatives to improve 'Safety Essentials' across DHS.	Director TYE	GM	June 2026
		1.1.3	Build our models of care and service delivery from a basis of culturally responsive care.	Continue to work in partnership with SWSLHD Aboriginal Health and Aboriginal organisations to develop culturally responsive models of care and services.  Continue to work in partnership with SWSLHD Multicultural Health and CALD organisations to develop culturally responsive models of care and services.	Director, Aboriginal Health  Director, Multicultural Services	MD, DON, DAH	June 2026
1.2	Deliver safe, consistent, timely, high-quality care through seamless networks	1.2.1	Improve access and flow performance against SLA targets across the District	Continue to deliver Hospital Consultation Drug & Alcohol Consultation Liaison services at or above previous period.	Sustainable Access Manager	DON	June 2026
1.3	Strengthen integrated care across all care settings	1.3.2	Develop and implement integrated community-based service models.	Continue to work in collaboration with SWSLHD, other LHD and NSW agencies and community, primary health, Aboriginal organisations and NGO to deliver community-based service models.	Manager, Planning	MD, DON, DAH	June 2026
1.4		1.4.3	Continuously improve patient experiences measures.	Implement systems to capture patient reported outcomes in relation to physical & psycho-social needs to inform clinical decision making.	Patient Experience Manager	QPSM	June 2026



SD	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS		LOCAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY	LHD LEAD	FACILITY / SERVICE LEAD	TIMEFRAME
	Build our culture of continuous improvement	1.4.5	Achieve compliance with the Child Safe Standards and integrate into quality improvement processes	Ongoing implementation of the Child Protection In Your Hands project within DHS.	Director, Child Protection	DON, DAH, QPSM	June 2026
1.5		1.5.1	Continue to implement the Consumer and Community Participation Framework 2019 - 2024	Continue to develop and implement the DHS Consumer and Peer Worker Framework. Support implementation of the SWSLHD Community Participation Framework 2019 – 2024 initiatives.	Manager, Consumer and Community Participation	Manager Consumer Engagement & Participation	June 2026

SD	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LOCAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY	LHD LEAD	FACILITY / SERVICE LEAD	TIMEFRAME	
<b>Strengthen and promote healthier communities</b>							
2.1	Close the gap for Aboriginal people and communities to improve equity of outcomes	2.1.1	Implement the SWSLHD Aboriginal Health Plan to 2028	Continue to work in partnership with SWSLHD Aboriginal Health and Aboriginal organisations to implement the SWSLHD Aboriginal Health Plan to 2028.  Implement the DHS Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Team.	Director, Aboriginal Health	Aboriginal Program Coordinator	June 2026
2.2	Improve equity of outcomes for all priority populations including our culturally and linguistically diverse communities	2.2.1	Continue to implement the SWSLHD Multicultural Services Implementation Plan 2021 - 2024	Continue to work in partnership with SWSLHD Multicultural Health and CALD organisations to implement the SWSLHD Multicultural Services Implementation Plan 2021 - 2024.	Director, Multicultural Services	MS&SD	June 2024
		2.2.2	Progress the Disability and Carers Strategy Action Plan.	Implement relevant actions in the SWSLHD Disability and Carers Strategy Action Plan.	Executive Director, Allied Health and Community Services	MD, DON, DAH	June 2026
		2.2.3	Continue to implement the Integrated Prevention and Response to Violence, Abuse and Neglect (iPARVAN) Framework (Phase 2)	Continue to support SWSLHD response to the NSW Health iPARVAN framework.	General Manager, Primary and Community Health	DAH	June 2026
		2.2.4	Undertake actions as relevant from NSW LGBTQIA+ Health Strategy 2022 - 2027	Implement relevant actions in the NSW LGBTQIA+ Health Strategy 2022 - 2027 Implementation Plan.	Executive Director, Allied Health and	DAH	June 2026

			Implementation Plan (Phase 1)		Community Services		
		2.2.6	Progress actions and initiatives supporting the NSW No Exits from Government Services into Homelessness Framework	Implement relevant actions in the NSW No Exits from Government Services into Homelessness Framework.	Executive Director, Allied Health and Community Services	DAH	June 2026
		2.2.7	Undertake implementation actions for the NSW Men's Health Framework	Implement relevant actions in the NSW Men's Health Framework.	Executive Director, Allied Health and Community Services	DAH	June 2026
2.3	Build capability in our communities and partner to create social and physical environments that promote health and wellbeing.	2.3.1	Make equity and diversity central (Prevention Strategy Change Priority)	Implement relevant actions in the SWSLHD Keeping People Healthy Plan.	Director, Population Health	MD, DON, DAH	June 2026
2.4	Engage our communities in prevention, screening and early intervention programs	2.4.1	Embed prevention in clinical services (Prevention Strategy Change Priority)	Implement relevant actions in the SWSLHD Keeping People Healthy Plan.	Director, Population Health	MD, DON, DAH	June 2026
2.6	Support people of all ages to live a meaningful and	2.6.1	Progress the SWSLHD First 2000 Days Implementation Plan	Continue to participate in SWSLHD First 2000 Days Implementation Plan. Deliver services to reduce the impacts of smoking and drug and alcohol use amongst pregnant women.	Executive Director, Allied Health and	DON, DAH	June 2026

	functional life, ensuring the best start in life and promoting healthy ageing				Community Services		
		2.6.5	Enhance end of life care increasing equity of access across the District, choice for patients and families and options for care in the community.	Implement relevant actions in the SWSLHD Planning for the End of Life and Palliative Care Implementation Plan.	Executive Director, Allied Health and Community Services	MD	June 2026

SD	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LOCAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY	LHD LEAD	FACILITY / SERVICE LEAD	TIMEFRAME	
<b>Support and develop our people</b>							
3.1	Plan for and deliver a workforce that meets the future needs and reflects the diversity of our communities	3.1.1	Plan for a future workforce	Documented crisis workforce plans to manage sudden surges in workforce demand.  Alignment of workforce plans, modelling and service delivery data to predict future skill gaps and train or attract those skills.	Executive Director, People and Culture	GM	2024  2025
		3.1.2	Workforce diversity	5% increase in diversity topic questions (PMES) over two years.	Executive Director, People and Culture	GM	Annual
		3.1.3	Talent acquisition	Monitor recruitment timelines to ensure compliance with NSW Health policy.  Promote exit survey completion and action identified trends.  Implement succession planning across Allied Health and Senior Management roles.	Executive Director, People and Culture	GM	Annual  Annual  Dec 2024
3.2	Be the employer of choice for staff who value high-quality care	3.2.3	Workforce retention	≥ 5% increase in measures of flexible working (PMES) over two years.  Transition to retirement process embedded in flexible working arrangements.	Director, Education and Organisational Development	GM	Annual  2024
3.3	Embed positive workplace culture valuing the wellbeing	3.3.1	Positive workplace culture	3% increase in culture index (PMES). 5% reduction in PMES measures relevant to bullying and harassment over two years.	Director, Education and Organisational Development	GM	Annual
							Annual

and engagement of our people	3.3.2	Workforce wellbeing	<p>Implement the SWSLHD Workforce Wellbeing Framework within DHS, when developed.</p> <p>Decrease excessive annual leave by <math>\geq 10\%</math>.</p> <p>Monitor and manage excessive sick leave within DHS.</p> <p>Increase of <math>\geq 5\%</math> for wellbeing component of PMES over two years.</p> <p>Update and implement Drug Health Services Work Health and Safety, Wellbeing &amp; Injury Management Operational Plan.</p>	Senior Manager, Staff Health, Recovery and Wellbeing	DFC	<p>2023</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>2025</p>	
	3.3.3	Managing for effective performance	<p>Misconduct timeframes compliant with NSW Policy requirements.</p> <p>An alternative dispute resolution framework implemented <math>\geq 5\%</math> improvement in grievance handling topic questions (PMES) over two years.</p>	Director, Education and Organisational Development	GM	<p>Annual</p> <p>June 2026</p>	
	3.3.4	Workplace safety	WHS audit action plans monitored and actioned.	Senior Manager, Staff Health, Recovery and Wellbeing	DFC	Annual	
3.4	Equip our people with the skills and capabilities to be an	3.4.3	Organisational development	Implement SWSLHD Talent and Succession Planning Framework.	Director, Education and Organisational Development	GM	<p>2024</p> <p>2024</p>

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	agile, responsive workforce			Implement the SWSLHD Communication Framework.			
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SD	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LOCAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY	LHD LEAD	FACILITY/ SERVICE LEAD	TIMEFRAME	
<b>Lead research and innovation</b>							
4.1	Building capacity in research aligned with clinical service planning	4.1.1	Build capacity by further establishing a vibrant research culture	Implement the DHS Research Plan 2024 -2028.	Director, Research	Research Coordinator	June 2026
		4.1.2	Support research capacity through agile, responsive systems and infrastructure	Implement the DHS Research Plan 2024 -2028.	Director, Research	RC	June 2026
4.2	Enable evidence-based and innovative models to improve healthcare and service delivery	4.2.1	Drive development and implementation of the Model of Care Framework supporting service development planning.	Implement the SWSLHD Model of Care Framework.	Manager, Planning	QPSM	June 2026
		4.2.3	Collaborate with AHO and NGO partners to ensure innovative and consistent service models.	Continue to work in collaboration with community, primary health, Aboriginal organisations and NGO to develop new community-based service models.	Director, Strategy and Partnerships	RC	June 2026
4.3	Advance and translate research and innovation with institutions, industry partners, consumers and our communities	4.3.1	Deepen consumer and community partnerships raising the profile of local research in the community and increasing engagement across the research lifecycle.	Implement the DHS Research Plan 2024 -2028.	Director, Research	RC	June 2026
		4.3.2	Continue to build evidence, knowledge and translation of research across the District.	Implement the DHS Research Plan 2024 -2028.	Director, Research	RC	June 2026

		4.3.3	Strengthen strategic collaborations to integrate research across SWSLHD for state-wide, national and global reach and impact.	Implement the DHS Research Plan 2024 -2028.	Director, Research	RC	June 2026
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SD	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LOCAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY	LHD LEAD	FACILITY / SERVICE LEAD	TIMEFRAME	
<b>Build a sustainable future</b>							
5.1	Build clinical service sustainability and value-based healthcare approaches	5.1.1	Implement NSW Health value-based healthcare programs	Implement NSW Health value-based healthcare programs.	Director, Strategy and Partnerships	GM	June 2026
5.2	Plan for and deliver future-focused, fit-for-purpose infrastructure	5.2.1	Support delivery of major capital redevelopment projects across SWSLHD in collaboration with Health Infrastructure	Support redevelopment projects.	Redevelopment Directors	DFC	June 2026
		5.2.2	Develop plans for infrastructure requirements supporting innovative clinical service delivery and future service models.	Contribute to planning processes.	Manager, Planning	GM	June 2026
		5.2.3	Adopt and apply the NSW Health Asset Management Framework across the District	Contribute to SAMP/AMP processes.	Director, Capital Works and Infrastructure (Manager, Assets)	DFC	June 2026
5.4	Pursue environmental sustainability across the organisation	5.4.1	Implement the SWSLHD Environmental Sustainability Framework to 2028	Implement the Implementation Planning for the Environmental Sustainability Framework to 2028.	LHD Manager Procurement	DFC	June 2026
5.5		5.5.2	Manage annual leave and ADO liabilities	Improve the financial management of Employee Related entitlements.	Dep DFCS	DFC	June 2026

	Strengthen financial sustainability now and plan for the future	5.5.3	Undertake the Revenue Optimisation Project across the District	Contribute to the Revenue Optimisation Project, as required.	Dep DFCS	DFC	June 2026
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