



The Hon. Brad Hazzard MP
Minister for Health and Medical Research

Mr David Blunt
Clerk of the Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Our ref: INQ20/4

Dear Mr Blunt

The Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health inquired into the 'Current and Future Provision of Health Services in the South-West Sydney growth region' and tabled a final report on 30 November 2020.

The NSW Government's response to the final report is enclosed for tabling.

Your assistance in facilitating the tabling of the response is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BRAD'.

Brad Hazzard MP
Minister for Health and Medical Research

Encl.

28 MAY 2021

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NSW GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Inquiry into the current and future provision of health services in the
South West Sydney Growth Region

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Response to Recommendations.....	3
Recommendation 1.....	3
Recommendation 2.....	3
Recommendation 3.....	3
Recommendation 4.....	4
Recommendation 5.....	4
Recommendation 6.....	4
Recommendation 7.....	5
Recommendation 8.....	5
Recommendation 9.....	5
Recommendation 10.....	6
Recommendation 11.....	6
Recommendation 12.....	7
Recommendation 13.....	7
Recommendation 14.....	8
Recommendation 15.....	8
Recommendation 16.....	8
Recommendation 17.....	9

INTRODUCTION

The NSW healthcare system aims to deliver safe and high quality care to communities. NSW Health recognises that holistic healthcare planning is essential to respond to the challenges of a changing healthcare environment. The delivery of care has become increasingly complex as a result of high rates of chronic disease, an ageing population, socio-economic disadvantage, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, rising health costs, and rapid technological change.

A key focus for NSW Health is meeting these challenges and providing quality healthcare services in the South West Sydney region now and into the future. South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) is one of the largest and most diverse local health districts in NSW, with substantial growth projected to occur over the next twenty years. In response to forecasted demand for a range of health services, the NSW Government has committed significant health infrastructure funding to South West Sydney. This investment and associated redevelopments provide opportunities to improve the quality of health services, methods of service delivery, and models of care. With almost \$3 billion committed to hospital redevelopments, research, and innovative healthcare strategies, SWSLHD is well-positioned to serve the healthcare needs of the growing community.

In November 2020, the Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 2 - Health released the Final Report 55 into the current and future provision of health services in the South West Sydney Growth Region. The Report contains one finding and 17 recommendations.

The NSW Government has reviewed the recommendations in the Committee's Final Report and thanks the Committee for its detailed examination of healthcare provision in South West Sydney. The specific recommendations of the Committee are addressed in the following section.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Noted

That the New South Wales Government address without delay the historical under-funding of health and hospital services in South West Sydney.

SWSLHD's 2020-21 budget is over \$2 billion, an increase of more than \$55 million on the previous financial year's budget. Since 2011-12, the SWSLHD expenses budget has increased by over \$827 million, more than 66 per cent, which is the highest growth rate in funding out of all local health districts.

The funding allocation was negotiated between SWSLHD and NSW Health to ensure patient care standards are met. The NSW Health funding model has self-correction mechanisms which operate to ensure that SWSLHD's budget increases in order to address the changing needs of South West Sydney. See recommendation 2 for further detail.

Recommendation 2

Noted

That NSW Health immediately review its funding methodology for Local Health Districts to ensure fairer allocation of resources to growth areas like South West Sydney. The funding methodology should ensure health funding keeps pace with population growth and accounts for higher health risk profiles.

Significant investment has been made to ensure an equitable distribution of funds across NSW Health. In line with requirements of the National Health Reform Agreement, NSW Health uses an activity based funding methodology.

Activity based funding is a transparent model that is based on understanding costs at the individual patient level. Funding is applied on an activity basis, as well as incorporating block funding where activity based funding is not appropriate. NSW Health's funding model not only considers population and ageing factors on demand, but also demographic and socioeconomic factors. The model includes equity adjustors, which account for these demographic differences and relative healthcare utilisation between populations. This is reflective of a model that is mature and recognises that not all local health districts are equal in population size for the delivery of services.

Recommendation 3

Supported

That NSW Health develop and implement a real time system of health data reporting across Local Health Districts that is transparent and includes, but is not limited to: capacity reporting, occupancy rates for acute inpatient beds, staff numbers and wait times for patients needing to access outpatient care.

NSW Health already has a range of real-time (and close to real-time) monitoring and reporting systems in place. This includes systems such as the *Patient Flow Portal*, *Emergency Access View* and the *Electronic Medical Record*, which capture and report on a range of measures relating to hospital activity, occupancy rates, and timeliness of care. Corporate human capital management systems monitor and report on available workforce to support the delivery of clinical services.

Work is underway on a number of initiatives to further enable timely reporting on wait times for certain services across the Health system. This includes but is not limited to outpatient management and simplified appointments, eReferrals, and eRFA-electronic request for admission programs undertaken at eHealth. The *Community Health Information Reporting Project* is expanding non-admitted patient data systems to include outpatient/non-admitted clinic intervention activity. This and the *eReferral* program (Outpatient Service Framework GL2019_011) will centrally manage client referrals and enable waiting times to be calculated from referral to the client receiving an intervention activity. The *eReferral Management System* is undergoing development with plans to pilot the system in 2021.

These real-time (and close to real-time) monitoring and reporting systems will benefit people in South West Sydney as well as more broadly across the state.

Recommendation 4 **Supported**

That the New South Wales Government work with the South Western Sydney Primary Health Network and the Commonwealth Government to reinstate a 24 hour GP clinic in order to reduce pressures on the emergency department and local general practitioner clinics.

The Commonwealth is solely responsible for the South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN), and operates general practitioner (GP) clinics as part of the Commonwealth's responsibilities. The need for improved access to GPs, including after-hours access, is a Commonwealth Government responsibility.

NSW Health via SWSLHD is working with the Commonwealth's SWSPHN through an integrated healthcare strategy with oversight of the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of activities.

People in the South West Sydney region have access to 24/7 GP care via approved medical deputising services, commissioned by the Commonwealth's PHN. These services provide urgent, after hours primary healthcare to patients at home, on behalf of their regular GP. Telehealth supports may also be available.

Previously, co-located after-hours GP clinics have been administered by SWSPHN and private providers. However, it is preferable that any 24/7 GP services are located away from any SWSLHD hospital campuses. Such a service should ideally be located with access to bulk-billed radiology and pathology services at a minimum, to decrease the requirement for secondary referral to the local emergency department.

Recommendation 5 **Supported**

That NSW Health review the relationship between primary and secondary/tertiary health care with a view to improving integration and supporting the role of primary health care providers to reduce pressure on the local hospital network.

Integrated care is a strong focus of NSW Health. An integrated care road map has been developed and is being implemented in SWSLHD. Many of these strategies focus on supporting Commonwealth funded GPs in providing care for vulnerable groups.

SWSLHD is also prioritising a *Planned Care for Better Health* initiative. This program aims to identify patients at risk of hospitalisation early, strengthening the care provided to them, improving their experience and keeping these patients healthier over a longer term.

A new collaborative agreement between SWSLHD and SWSPHN was signed in 2020. The agreement focuses on strategic priorities in jointly addressing key issues that impact the South Western Sydney community. These include information sharing and IT solutions, communication, mental health and suicide prevention, and workforce planning and development. SWSLHD and SWSPHN are also working together to address key community priorities within integrated care such as diabetes and substance use. Patients with chronic disease are supported through *My Care Partners*, a program that improves coordination among health care providers.

Recommendation 6 **Supported**

That NSW Health develop and adequately resource a more proactive and holistic community care model for higher risk patients in South West Sydney, including an improved follow up model of health care.

The *South Western Sydney Integrated Care Roadmap* was approved in 2020 and articulates the strategy for addressing the health needs of vulnerable community members.

SWSLHD has a range of local strategies and plans to support holistic care for higher risk patients, linking to NSW Health frameworks. This includes the *First 2000 Days Framework*, *Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018-2023*, *Integrated Prevention and Response to Violence, Abuse and Neglect Framework*, *NSW Diabetes Prevention Framework*, *NSW Plan for*

Healthy Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities 2019-2023 and the NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-23.

The *NSW End of Life and Palliative Care Framework* also reinforces the importance of person-centred care in the setting of the patient and carer's choice, including at home. SWSLHD has received various palliative care funding enhancements including care packages, workforce, education, training, service improvement and enhanced palliative care for patients in the community. SWSLHD is undertaking a planning process for care in the community to create a detailed strategic direction for the ongoing proactive and holistic care of South Western Sydney community members.

Recommendation 7 **Supported**

That NSW Health urgently review the outpatient services currently provided and planned for South West Sydney, to ensure services meet the needs of this rapidly growing community with a higher risk profile.

A key goal for SWSLHD is to conduct a census of all outpatient services currently offered and identify clinical areas with the greatest community demand.

SWSLHD has appointed an Outpatient Project Manager to support implementation of the *NSW Health Outpatient Services Framework*.

More funding is being allocated to non-inpatient services to support community needs on an annual basis.

Recommendation 8 **Supported**

That NSW Health increase the number of paramedics working in the South Western Sydney Local Health District to improve response times and to keep up with the rapidly increasing population in new growth areas.

NSW Ambulance has made several paramedic and infrastructure enhancements in South West Sydney since 2018. This includes an additional 41 full time equivalent (FTE) paramedic enhancements across Liverpool, Campbelltown and Macquarie Fields stations. Further paramedic enhancements are planned for 2021-22.

Since 2018, NSW Ambulance has built new Paramedic Response Points (PRPs) at Cecil Hills, Condell Park, Leppington and Roselands, refurbished Fairfield PRP, and commenced infrastructure works for Macquarie Fields Station.

On 15 May 2020, the NSW Government announced a \$17 million increase in funding for 89 additional frontline ambulance vehicles. Between June and October 2020, South West Sydney received 12 new ambulances and five new specialised intensive care vehicles in exchange for four of its existing fleet.

NSW Ambulance quarterly Priority 1 emergency incident median response time performance for South West Sydney has remained consistent between 1 July 2017 to 30 December 2020.

Recommendation 9 **Supported in principle**

That NSW Health review current staffing levels and recruitment programs and take steps to ensure that South West Sydney has adequate medical specialists, nurses and other health workers to accommodate its population growth and the higher health risk profile.

Workforce planning is embedded within SWSLHD to identify current and future staffing needs. It is aligned with infrastructure redevelopments, service planning, emerging technologies and models of care in response to current and expected community health needs.

The workforce growth since 2012 for SWSLHD is 28.2 per cent. This is compared to 20.3 per cent for NSW Health.

Recommendation 10 **Supported**

That NSW Health address the following issues at Liverpool Hospital:

- enhance radiology and ultrasound services after hours;
- enhance resources for emergency surgery; and
- immediately fill vacant positions and increase the number of junior doctors at the hospital.

The NSW Government has committed \$740 million to redevelop Liverpool Hospital into a world-class health, research, and academic precinct to meet the healthcare needs of the growing community into the future. The Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct will include an expansion of the emergency department, critical care, maternity and paediatric services, state-of-the-art operating theatres, enhanced medical imaging services and a comprehensive and integrated cancer centre.

- The enhancement of radiology and ultrasound services is a priority for SWSLHD. Enhancement of ultrasound services out of hours and on weekends at Liverpool Hospital is in the final stages of approval, and recruitment to the positions required will occur imminently.
- While the current operating theatres run near capacity daily, the Liverpool Hospital Redevelopment includes three additional theatres. SWSLHD will review facility models for emergency surgery provision across the LHD according to the SWSLHD's *Surgical and Procedural Services Plan to 2031*.
- The hospital's nursing vacancy rate has improved from five per cent in November 2020 to two per cent in April 2021 and it has also increased its medical staff coverage. Liverpool Hospital participates in the NSW Health state-wide annual recruitment campaign for Junior Medical Officers (JMOs), through which all vacancies in NSW are advertised. The NSW JMO recruitment campaign has been held during the same time period each year for over a decade. This certainty of timing assists applicants and panel members in planning ahead to be available for the application, assessment and interview periods. In the annual campaign for the 2021 clinical year, 5653 (FTE) JMO positions were advertised statewide, of which over 80 per cent were filled. Of the 173 (FTE) positions advertised at Liverpool Hospital during the 2021 JMO recruitment campaign, 90 per cent were filled.

Recommendation 11 **Supported**

That NSW Health address the following issues at Campbelltown Hospital:

- immediately fill the vacant positions within the Emergency Department;
- immediately fill the vacant position that exists for a full-time psychologist for the adolescent mental health unit;
- immediately fill the vacant midwife positions; and
- examine the proposal of establishing paediatric surgery and other paediatric subspecialties at the hospital.

The governance structure of NSW Health means that vacancies are managed by the LHD and its governing board. Recruitment is an ongoing process, and SWSLHD is committed to actively advertising and filling all vacant positions.

- Campbelltown Hospital emergency department has successfully recruited an additional five permanent nursing FTE positions to cover vacancies as they arise. These positions are in addition to the emergency department staffing profile. There is ongoing advertisement and recruitment of staff under temporary contracts and casual positions to cover planned and unplanned leave. Campbelltown Hospital advertises both in Australia and overseas, including a yearly recruitment drive for overseas trained doctors, and actively advertises all vacancies including staff specialists and Visiting Medical Officers.
- There are no clinical psychology vacancies at the adolescent mental health unit nor at the youth mental health unit at Campbelltown Hospital.

- Camden and Campbelltown Hospitals have fulfilled the requirements of *Birthrate+*. This is a midwifery workforce planning methodology that provides a framework to assess the midwifery hours of care required at a service based on a minimum standard of one-to-one midwifery care throughout labour and birth. Recruitment for midwifery services is managed by investing in the future workforce and offering vacancies to suitable students, new graduate recruitment through *GradStart*, and ongoing campaigns. Campbelltown Hospital also provides opportunities to regrade current positions and has reviewed the model of care.
- Campbelltown Hospital currently conducts paediatric surgery. SWSLHD's *Enhanced Paediatric Capacity Plan to 2031* supports the ongoing development of services for the growing population of children, including by providing quality care close to home and reducing reliance on the Sydney Children's Hospital Network. SWSLHD's *Surgical and Procedural Services Plan to 2031* proposes to enhance paediatric surgery at Campbelltown as a crucial part of developing a hub of these services. There is a specific focus on the enhancement of elective surgery for ear nose and throat, urology and ophthalmology.

Recommendation 12	Supported
<p>That NSW Health address the following issues at Fairfield Hospital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediately examine the need for additional operating theatres; • immediately audit the theatre equipment at the hospital and establish a plan for the replacement of aged equipment; and • enhance the kidney dialysis treatment available at the hospital to ensure all patients receive the recommended number of treatments. 	

Processes are in place to ensure appropriate planning and development of surgical and renal dialysis services at Fairfield Hospital.

- Hospitals in SWSLHD operate as a network, offering surgical and procedural services according to each hospital's role under SWSLHD's *Surgical and Procedural Services Plan to 2031*. The plan identifies the future models of care, service directions and priorities required to meet projected demand for all forms of surgery and procedural work across SWSLHD facilities. Each hospital's operating theatre needs are related to the requirements of the *Surgical and Procedural Services Plan to 2031*.
- SWSLHD Biomedical Engineering completed an audit of all medical equipment within the operating theatres at Fairfield Hospital in 2020, including the current lifecycle of each piece of equipment, as part of the annual *Medical Equipment Management Program*. Assets requiring replacement are included on the Hospital's *Asset Replacement Plan* and prioritised by age and risk to service delivery.
- Budget was received in 2020-21 to enhance renal dialysis services in SWSLHD. All patients have received their recommended number of dialysis treatments since July 2020. Four new dialysis chairs have been commissioned since July 2020, with an additional eight dialysis chairs to be installed by June 2021. The provision of home-based dialysis has also been enhanced with suitable renal patients safely managing their dialysis at home.

Recommendation 13	Noted
<p>That NSW Health fast-track the site selection for the new Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital.</p>	

Funding has been allocated in the 2020-21 budget to fast-track the site selection process for the \$1.3 billion Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital and Community Health Services Redevelopment.

The site selection process is underway. A request for information was undertaken during July and August 2020, inviting landowners who own potential suitable sites for the new hospital to nominate their land for consideration. NSW Health is assessing the landowner proposals as part of the site selection process.

Recommendation 14 **Supported**

That NSW Health immediately review the availability of maternity and paediatric services across South West Sydney with the aim to expand and increase the availability of these services to keep up with the number of families living in the region.

Projected future paediatric services have been addressed in the SWSLHD's *Enhanced Paediatric Capacity Plan to 2031*. Maternity and paediatric requirements are also being reviewed as part of the clinical service planning for Bankstown-Lidcombe, Liverpool, Campbelltown and Bowral Hospitals' redevelopments.

Recommendation 15 **Supported**

NSW Health immediately review the number of mental health beds and staffing levels across the region with the aim to expand bed capacity as well as improving connection between hospital and community based services for those experiencing mental health issues.

Inpatient mental health services will be significantly expanded as part of the \$632 million Stage 2 redevelopment of Campbelltown Hospital. New mental health facilities will replace existing services and provide additional system capacity. Funding of the new older persons and civil secure rehabilitation units is also being provided from the \$700 million *Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program*. The new facility at Campbelltown will increase the total number of mental health beds across SWSLHD to over 250 beds.

SWSLHD has established the *Police, Ambulance, Clinical Early Response (PACER)* program at Campbelltown, Bankstown and Liverpool, which commenced in 2020. Under this model, a mental health clinician accompanies police visiting people in the community, to connect individuals with community-based care and divert presentations to emergency departments where it is clinically safe to do so. As at 18 April 2021, the PACER Teams have received 507 referrals and successfully diverted 410 referrals from the emergency department.

SWSLHD has also received funding to implement three Towards Zero Suicides Initiatives: *Assertive Suicide Prevention Outreach Teams, Alternatives to Emergency Department Presentations* and *Zero Suicides in Care*.

Recommendation 16 **Supported**

That NSW Health develop and implement a more effective preventative health strategy to address the higher rate of chronic health diseases in South West Sydney as the population continues to increase.

Prevention and wellbeing are key priorities for long-term health reform in Australia. Prevention improves health, social and mental health population outcomes.

The health burden of four modifiable risk factors (overweight and obesity, tobacco use, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity) is significant and represents over a quarter of the preventable burden of disease. NSW Health has invested significantly in prevention strategies over many years, particularly in relation to healthy eating and active living, tobacco control, cancer screening, sexual health and public health. For example, in 2019-20, the NSW Ministry of Health allocated \$36.6 million towards reducing the prevalence of overweight and obesity.

NSW Health investment in prevention includes initiatives targeted to the needs of vulnerable groups and local communities within specific local health districts. Key population groups that require special consideration in SWSLHD include culturally and linguistically diverse communities (including refugee communities), Aboriginal people, and people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Effective prevention requires a collective and cohesive effort across sectors to better prevent disease, and to promote environments that support individuals to lead healthy lives. This includes collaboration across the health system (from community health to acute clinical care), as well as across government, academia, the private sector, industry, community groups, and directly with

individuals. *Growing Healthy Kids in South West Sydney* is a SWSLHD-led initiative that works with other sectors to support the prevention and management of childhood overweight and obesity.

NSW Health acknowledges the importance of a whole of government approach to preventative healthcare, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups, and welcomes ongoing cross-government collaboration in the development of its initiatives.

Recommendation 17

Supported

That the New South Wales Government secure land within the Aerotropolis precinct for a future health facility that could expand children's services to meet the needs of South West Sydney, including the projected population in and around this precinct.

NSW Health's potential requirements for future health services and facilities have informed the draft *Place-based Infrastructure Compact* (PIC) for the Western Parkland City and Aerotropolis. The released draft PIC seeks to align infrastructure delivery with population growth.

An integrated primary and community care model has been identified as a future direction for SWSLHD. A proposed feature of this model is the *Integrated Health Hub* (IHHub). IHHubs can deliver a comprehensive range of clinical services that can support 'stepped-up care' for local primary care providers and, where possible, outreach models of care for clinical services traditionally delivered from hospital sites. An IHHub may include community health services, renal dialysis, chemotherapy chairs and cancer services, oral health, drug health, mental health and specialist outreach. Paediatric services will also be included in line with the anticipated increase in younger demographics.

Several potential locations within South West Sydney are proposed for IHHubs. Based on current population projections, it is likely that any future *Aerotropolis Core IHHub* will not be required until after 2030.