

Supplementary questions

Mr Scott McLachlan, Chief Executive, Western NSW Local Health District

Dr Shannon Nott, Rural Health Director of Medical Services, Western NSW Local Health District

QUESTION 1

In addition to what is contained in your submission and evidence provided at the public hearing, do you have any further comments regarding the current provision of palliative medicine, nursing and care in rural, regional and remote New South Wales?

QUESTION 2

In addition to what is contained in your submission and evidence provided at the public hearing, do you have any further comments regarding ways to improve both the access and availability of palliative medicine, nursing and care in rural, regional and remote New South Wales?

Q 1 and 2 ANSWERS

End of life and palliative care is an integral part of the work of WNSWLHD.

WNSWLHD has invested heavily in growing the workforce to support the delivery of palliative care. There are 25.2 full time equivalent (FTE) employees in the specialist palliative care service, including:

- clinical nurse specialists
- clinical nurse consultants
- palliative care registered nurses
- a palliative care medical officer
- social workers supporting bereavement and psychosocial support
- occupational therapists
- a dietitian
- an Aboriginal health worker.

The NSW Ministry of Health has funded six new specialist nursing positions, with two already commencing their roles. A further 2.0 FTE will be recruited from 1 July 2021 and another two the following year.

WNSWLHD continues to train generalist staff, supported by the specialist palliative care service, to ensure patients receive care close to home. In 2017, the NSW Government announced funding for palliative care enhancements. WNSWLHD used this funding to support:

- scholarships for 120 nurses to undertake palliative care nursing short courses
- an additional 2.0 FTE for allied health positions, increasing access to a multidisciplinary specialist palliative care team.

WNSWLHD continues to invest in virtual models of care to reduce unnecessary travel for patients and their families. WNSWLHD is working with the Agency for Clinical Innovation on a clinical redesign project to increase timely and equitable access to specialist palliative care services for patients in rural hospitals and Multi-Purpose Services.



Health

Ongoing investment in improved physical spaces and environments for the provision of end of life and palliative care continues, with refurbishment projects recently completed in Bathurst and Orange. All other facilities have a number of single rooms that provide a more private environment for people requiring end of life care. NSW Government funding has also allowed for refurbishments scheduled in Parkes, Trundle, Brewarrina, Wellington and Canowindra. There are also five palliative care beds in Lourdes Hospital, Dubbo.