

**Submission  
No 47**

**INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND FUTURE PROVISION OF  
HEALTH SERVICES IN THE SOUTH-WEST SYDNEY  
GROWTH REGION**

**Organisation:** Western Parkland Councils

**Date Received:** 29 May 2020

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# Western Parkland Councils

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28 May 2020

The Director - Portfolio Committee 2  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

## Western Parkland Councils Submission

### **Inquiry into the current and future provision of health services in the South-West Sydney Growth Region by the NSW Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee 2**

The Western Parkland Councils welcome the opportunity to provide this submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry into the current and future provision of health services in the South-West Sydney growth region.

#### **Introduction**

The Western Parkland Councils represent the eight councils who have partnered with the Australian and NSW Governments to deliver the Western Sydney City Deal. This includes five councils in the South-West Sydney growth region: Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool and Wollondilly. The Councils are committed to working collaboratively to achieve long-term outcomes for this growing region.

Under the Western Sydney City Deal, the Councils have joined with the Local Health Districts, Primary Health Networks and non-government sector to form the Western Sydney Health Alliance. The Alliance was established to improve coordination and effectiveness of health services in the region, and supporting healthier neighbourhoods.

The Western Parkland Councils are providing a local government response to this inquiry, whilst acknowledging the individual submissions that have been made by Councils.

This submission is advocating for the Committee to consider and address:

- existing deficits in funding and access to health services and future-proofing the region for growth,
- fair and equitable health service funding allocations and provisions ,
- evidence based resource allocations, and
- locally based health services and facilities that are adaptable to the growing population.



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## Western Parkland Councils' Responses to the Terms of Reference of the Review

### 1) An analysis of the planning systems and projections used by NSW Health in making provision for health services to meet the needs of population growth and new suburbs in the South-West Sydney Growth Region;

South West Sydney is one of the fastest growing regions in the State, driven mostly by greenfield developments and urban intensification. Over the next 20 years, the population is projected to grow substantially, driven by the urban development in the Priority Growth Areas: South West Sydney, Western Sydney Aerotropolis, Greater Macarthur, Wilton and North Wilton as a result of the increase in housing development and release of land in the South West Sydney Growth Area.

The 2019 DPIE population projections, and Common Planning Assumptions, predict unprecedented significant growth in the South West Sydney Region over the 20 years between 2016 and 2036. Particularly high growth is expected in the following areas with the population projections for 2036 at:

- Camden LGA – 236,255 (an additional 155,991 people)
- Campbelltown – 227,946 (an additional 66,380 people)
- Liverpool LGA – 389,085 (an additional 168,108 people)
- Wollondilly LGA – 73,477 (an additional 23,623 people)

Unprecedented population growth is occurring and planned for in areas of the Western Parkland City District and this population growth will place additional demand on the current health services in the area, many of which are already struggling to cope with existing demand.

The demographic profile of the growing population must also be considered in health service planning, acknowledging the ageing population, changes in lifestyle, socio-economic disadvantage, the Aboriginal population, the diversity of cultural backgrounds and the rates of chronic illness associated with these cohorts.

It is noted that South West Sydney is home to people who are refugee or humanitarian arrivals and who face a range of barriers to accessing health care, including language and cultural barriers, limited understanding of the Australian healthcare system, poor health literacy, misconceptions that their health issues could affect their immigration status and financial costs for transport, medicines, specialist services and allied health professionals.

The Western Parkland Councils support a robust analysis of the planning systems and projections, and recommends that the population projections and demographic data being used by NSW Health in making provision for health services be the same source data used by Councils within the South West Sydney Growth Region. This will ensure that the anticipated needs of future communities are being reviewed regularly and considered consistently at a local, regional and state level.

### 2) An analysis of capital and health services expenditure in the South-West Sydney Growth Region in comparison to population growth since 2011;

An analysis undertaken of the South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Budget Data from Service Agreements and Financial Statements and Health Stats NSW indicates that SWSLHD is **inequitably** funded in comparison to other Greater Sydney LHDs. SWSLHD has one of the lowest total annualised expense budgets per resident by LHD in Greater Sydney.



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Considering the projected population growth rates over the next 20 years, there is potential for this disparity and inequity in funding to further exacerbate the inequitable provision of health services, and the health and wellbeing of the communities across the South West Sydney Growth Region.

The Western Parkland Councils support the analysis of capital and health services expenditure in the South West Sydney Growth Region emphasising the current low levels of annualised budget per resident for the SWSLHD, the chronic rates of illness experienced by communities in this region and the potential for this to increase with projected population growth.

This inequity in funding in comparison to other Greater Sydney LHDs should be addressed as a priority in order to sufficiently prepare for the unprecedented growth expected over the next 20 years.

### **3) The need for and feasibility of a future hospital located in the South-West Sydney Growth Region to service the growing population as part of the Aerotropolis land use plan;**

Existing acute facilities in the region are in the A1 Principal Referral (Liverpool and Nepean Hospitals) or B1 Major (Campbelltown Hospital) hospital peer groups, each providing a range of emergency and acute healthcare services.

The Western Parkland Councils propose any feasibility study into the development of a future hospital in the South West Sydney Growth Region considers the projected population growth, the anticipated healthcare needs of the southwest Sydney demographic, and issues around equitable access to quality healthcare services and facilities for all communities across the South-West Sydney Growth Region.

Future planning should not take priority however, over the need to address the current deficit in established hospitals and healthcare services or the cost and service benefits of upgrading these. The anticipated timeframes for population growth outside of the Aerotropolis should also be considered as an essential step in anticipating the growth and distribution of future demand for emergency and acute healthcare services across the South West Sydney Growth Region.

### **4) An investigation into the availability and shortfall of mental, community and allied health services in the South-West Sydney Growth Region;**

There are significant variations in the servicing ratios across all health services in the South-West Sydney Growth Region indicating disparity in mental, community and allied health services. As an example, in 2018 there were 422 medical practices in South West Sydney with 1025 GPs, at a ratio of 1 GP for every 917 people. The GP-to-population ratio varied between South West Sydney LGAs, ranging from 1 GP for 669 people in Camden, up to 1 GP for 1846 people in Wollondilly.

With strong partnerships between the Local Health District, Primary Health Network and local Councils, local strategies have been identified and implemented for the health and wellness of the communities of South West Sydney in the creation of Integrated Health Neighbourhoods (IHN). However planning for Integrated Health Neighbourhoods needs to also include dedicating land in key transport nodes and investing in community hubs, including the upgrade of existing Community Health Centres. These community hubs should operate as an integrated system to deliver a new range of clinical services and, where possible, outreach care models that traditionally have been delivered from hospitals.

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The Western Parkland Councils are committed to supporting greater integration to improve experiences and outcomes of care for the broader health system and supports an investigation into the availability and shortfall of mental, community and allied health services in the South-West Sydney Growth Region which considers the variations in the servicing ratios across all health services in the South-West Sydney Growth Region and the potential benefits of addressing this disparity by creating Integrated Health Neighbourhoods by dedicating land in key transport nodes and investing in community hubs, including the upgrade of existing Community Health Centres.

The current deficits in funding and the impact on the population should these deficits in availability and funding not be addressed as the region's population grows should also form part of the investigation. Consideration should be given to expanding Aboriginal health services in the investigation in order to increase Aboriginal community controlled health services in areas with a large and growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

## **5) A comparison of the per capita operational expenditure allocated for the health services and hospitals between the South-West Sydney Growth Region and other local health districts across metropolitan Sydney since 2011;**

The analysis done of the LHD Budget Data from Service Agreements and Financial Statements and Health Stats NSW indicates that SWSLHD is inequitably funded in comparison to other Greater Sydney LHDs. SWSLHD has one of the lowest total annualised expense budgets per resident by LHD in Greater Sydney. Funding is further compromised as SWSLHD has the lowest rates of private health insurance at 38.1%, well below the NSW average of 51.5% and higher levels of vulnerable communities residing in the South West Sydney Growth Region.

The Western Parkland Councils support a comparison of the per capita operational expenditure allocated for the health services and hospitals between the South-West Sydney Growth Region and other local health districts across metropolitan Sydney since 2011 and welcomes recommendations from this review that results in a more equitable distribution of resources to reflect population size, demographic and projected population growth of the South West Sydney Growth Region.

The relationship between the per capita operational expenditure variances for health services between health districts since 2011 and the rates of private health insurance and level of vulnerability to poor standards of health experienced today should also be clearly identified as a result of the review.

## **6) A comparison of the staffing allocations at health services and hospitals between the South-West Sydney Growth Region and other local health districts across metropolitan Sydney since 2011;**

Local projected population growth in the number of people aged 65 years and older and increasing rates of chronic diseases will increase demand on providing health care services in the South West Sydney Growth Region. A shortage of health workforce may result in people delaying or not seeking treatment, increased avoidable hospital presentations, and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes.

Although the staffing allocations at SWSLHD have increased since 2011, the comparison of the staffing allocations should consider that the allocation of staffing required must not only meet current demand but also future anticipated demand.

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A deeper analysis on the impact that the variations in staffing allocations at health services and hospitals has on the quality of patient care and wait times should also be considered as part of the review in order to adequately plan to improve patient outcomes and reduce the likelihood of repeat visits.

## **7) An investigation into the health workforce planning needs of the South-West Sydney Growth Region to accommodate population growth to 2050;**

The investigations into the health workforce planning needs should consider the current deficit in primary health care providers across the region (GP, Allied Health and Nursing) and alternate funding and health delivery models that can increase access to primary care health professionals and services throughout the community to reduce reliance and demand on hospital based services.

A result of this review should be the establishment of clearly defined staff to patient ratios and regular reporting across all health districts to ensure that staffing levels grow in proportion to future population growth and that future deployment of clinical and non-clinical staff can be sufficiently planned for across the Greater Sydney region.

## **8) A review of preventative health strategies and their effectiveness in the South-West Sydney Growth Region since 2011 and the required increase in funding to deal with childhood obesity;**

Prevention plays a key role in keeping people healthy and out of hospital. Preventative health programs that support people to live healthier, lead more active lives and reduce the burden of chronic disease are critically important and require significant investment.

The residents of South West Sydney have on average, elevated rates of behaviours that have been linked to poorer health status and chronic disease prevalence. This includes diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, cancer, and other conditions that account for much of the burden of morbidity and mortality in later life.

More than a half (57%) of adults aged 18 and over, and more than one quarter (28%) of our children aged 5-17 in South-West Sydney are overweight or obese.

The incidence of obesity, diabetes, and other related conditions in South West Sydney is also impacted by factors outside of health, including fewer transport accessibility options, longer commutes, limited access to nutritional and healthy food, less recreational time and access to green open spaces.

The Western Parkland Councils have established strong collaborative partnerships with Local Health Districts, Primary Health Networks, Non-Government Organisations and local health services. These strong partnerships are demonstrated by multiple joint strategies in developing and implementing health initiatives with a focus on prevention and treatment. However as the population and the demand on health services and facilities grow, so does the need for further work and funding to support these strategies.

The Western Parkland Councils support a review of preventative health strategies and their effectiveness in the South West Sydney Growth Region since 2011, with consideration of current health behaviours and the potential for these to increase disproportionately compared to other areas



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of Greater Sydney if sufficient levels of funding to enable preventative health strategies are not provided.

Consideration of environments and places that include open green spaces, access to healthy and nutritious food, safe space to access increased physical activity and transport options should also be considered in planning processes.

## **9) A comparison of clinical outcomes for patients in the South-West Sydney Growth Region compared to other local health districts across metropolitan Sydney since 2011;**

The Western Parkland Councils support the comparison of clinical outcomes for patients in the South West Sydney Growth Region compared to other local health districts.

The Committee should consider the level of poor clinical outcomes for patients in South West Sydney, and the potential for this to worsen as the population grows, and demand on health services increases.

Issues such as inequality of funding, cultural and socio economic factors, staff to patient ratios and the availability of community and allied health services should also be considered in any analysis of clinical outcomes for patients in the South West Sydney Growth Region since 2011 in order to proactively prepare for future population growth.

The Western Parklands Councils recognises the importance of health services in the successful transformation of the South West Sydney Growth Region, as envisaged in the Western Sydney City Deal.

We thank you for your consideration, and welcome any further opportunity to work collaboratively with the NSW Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee 2.

Sincerely,

Sue Coleman  
Executive Officer,  
Western Parkland Councils

### **References:**

- Smart Cities Plan Implementation Western Sydney City Deal, 2018.
- South West Sydney: Our Health- an in depth study of the health of the population now and into the future
- South Western Sydney Primary Health Network Needs Assessment 2019-2022
- South Western Sydney Local Health District, Child and family health nursing services, May 2019
- NSW Department Planning and Environment, New South Wales State and Local Government Area Population Projections: 2019, Sydney: NSW Government
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