



Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District

Rural Clinician Accommodation Strategy

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Dr Ramsey Awad

Executive Director Infrastructure, Planning &
Sustainability

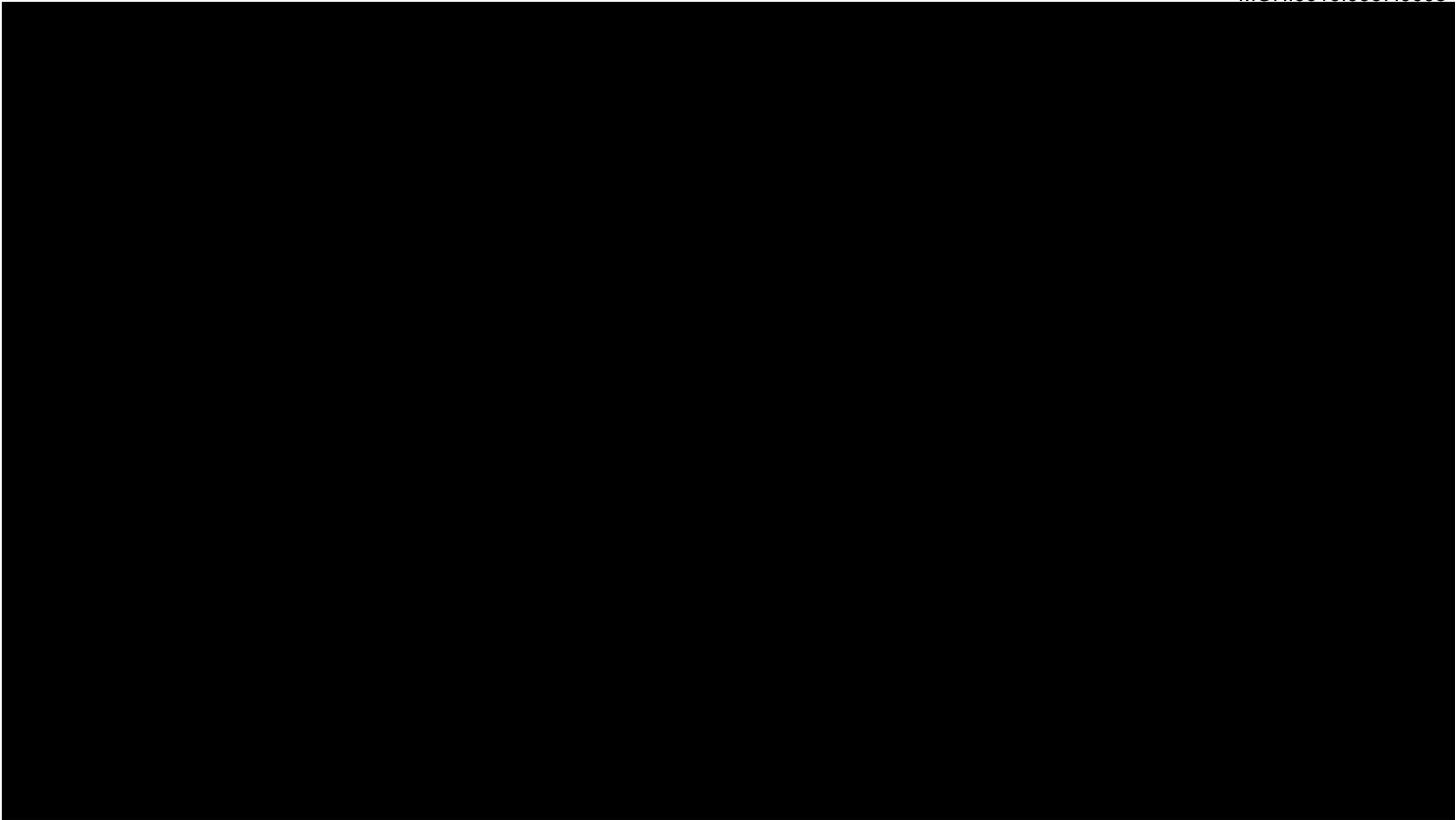
September 2024



Acknowledgement

Our Team would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Land, Rivers and Sea.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders; past, present & emerging of all Nations.



Agenda



The Issue



Our Strategy



The Results



The Evaluation

The Issue



The lack of Clinicians to service rural towns is well documented requiring longer-term strategies as identified in the R&R Enquiry



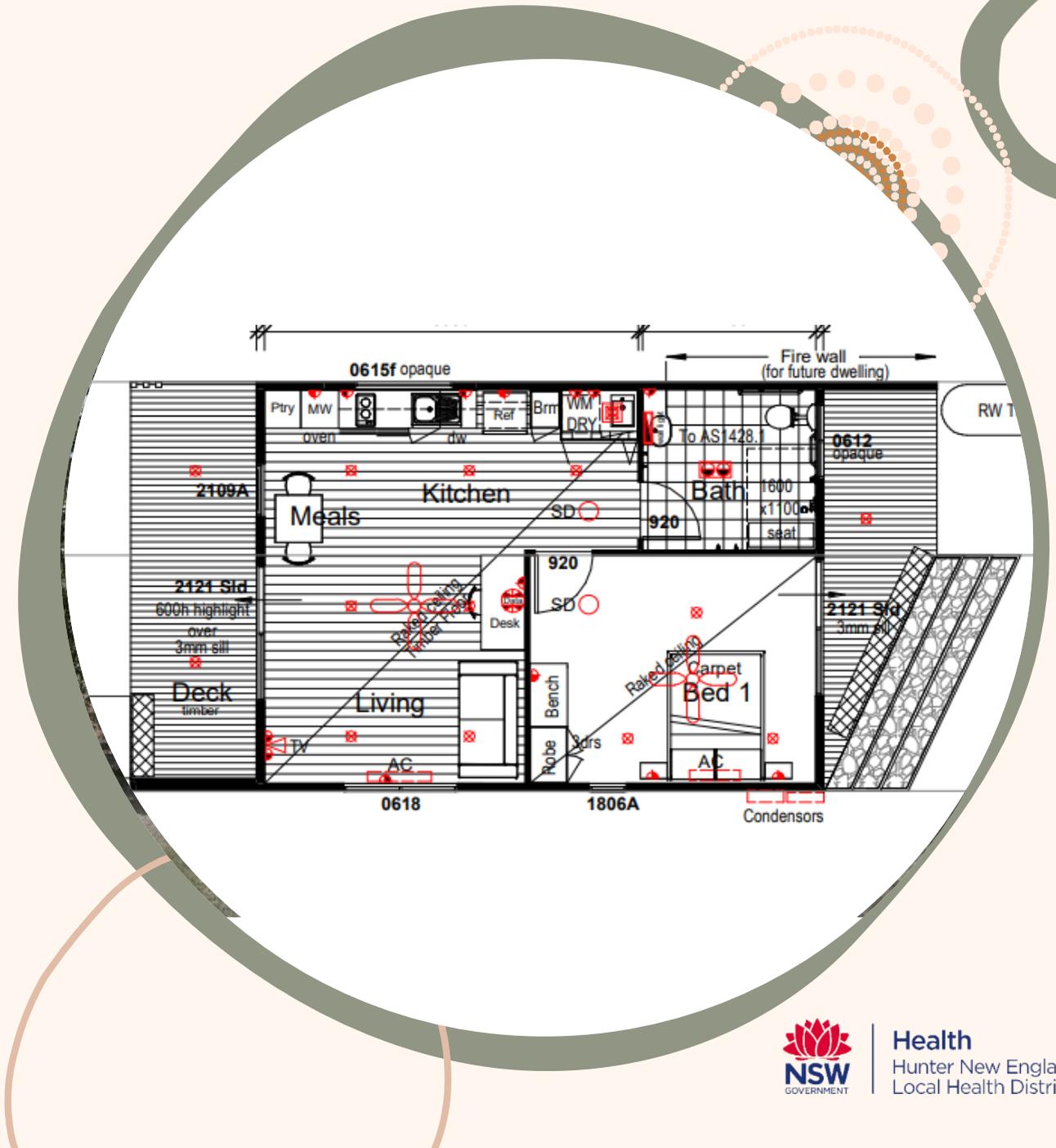
As a stop-gap strategy many remote, rural and regional sites are served by visiting Clinicians who complete short stays



Many of the rural towns and health service sites do not have suitable accommodation and this is impacting the ability of HNELHD to attract staff for these roles



Securing funding for accommodation is difficult and often accommodation that is constructed is costly and blocks future hospital development



The Strategy



HNELHD approached the modular housing market to design and install high quality sustainable relocatable residential accommodation



In addition HNELHD saw an opportunity to provide post Covid rural stimulus by having all site works completed by local rural contractors



HNELHD approached Department of Regional NSW with a proposal and secured \$20M to implement this strategy



HNELHD Managed the design, construction and commissioning, with PWA providing assurance

44 Pods On 12 sites In 18 Months



2022

Walcha (2)

Quirindi (2)

Scone (3)

Inverell (3)

Glenn Innes (4)

Gunnedah (3)

Armidale (4)

2023

Boggabri (2)

Singleton (2)

Muswellbrook (4)

Moree (6)

Tamworth (8)

The Results



Cost to construct and deliver a one bedroom/one bathroom unit ranged from \$250K to \$340K.



Site works ranged from \$200K to \$300K per site and was undertaken by local rural trades.



Each unit can be relocated to another hospital to meet any change in future demand.



Each unit is sustainably self sufficient

The Results



The **Evaluation** Clinical



Staff Attraction:

- In the first 6-months 350 staff accommodated
- Agency staff are electing to lengthen their stay
- Scone has 1 unit 100% of the time for Junior Medical Officers to attend on rotation from Tamworth

Increased clinical service provision:

- GP/VMO ED cover has reduced the use of Virtual Dr, met community expectations of a face-to-face consultation and improved retention of ED staff
- Improved on-call medical response times
- Midwife availability and GP Obstetrician cover has increased
- Acute and in Residential Aged Care staffing levels have increased
- Agency nurses have provided backfill for permanent staff to allow for leave coverage

The **Evaluation** Financial



Overall:

- Lower demand for offsite accommodation (motels, caravan parks, rental)
- Less associated expenses for travel to and from site (fleet car, hire car, taxi vouchers)
- Lower running costs due to the inclusion of energy saving design features

Armidale Case Study:

- 460 room nights have been utilised by 38 individual staff from February to August 2023.
- \$170 per night to accommodate staff offsite in a locally run motel
- \$78,200 of savings

The **Evaluation** Qualitative



Quotes

- The accommodation is awesome. It is enticing for staff to come here as they know that they've got somewhere safe, clean and really nice to stay in
- There is space for the family or partner to accompany me
- It is an attractive, modern and safe environment convenient, well equipped and very homely
- It feels like a second home
- The units are a private and restful space after a busy shift in ED
- Everything is here that I need, dishwasher, kitchen, all our laundry appliances, vacuum cleaner, even a hairdryer



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**Thank
you!**

