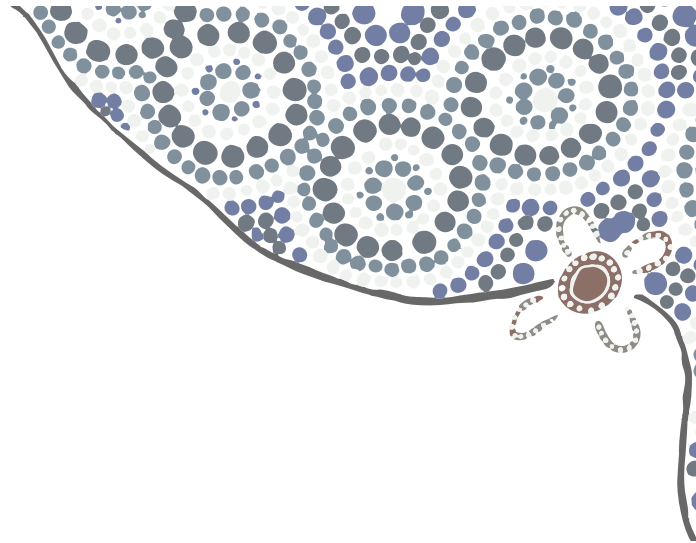


Research Framework 2022-2027

locally led research
adding value to
care and community



Health
Murrumbidgee
Local Health District



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ARTWORK

Artist Kheely Turner is a Wiradjuri/Ngiyampaa woman from West Wyalong. Kheely's artwork "Marrambidya" (Wiradjuri word for Murrumbidgee) exhibits the spiritual connection that Aboriginal people have to the cleansing and healing nature of the river. It's a river that connects us all and brings health and vigour to people, animals and plants. We take nourishment, both physically and mentally, from this source. It's a common element that brings us together with a sense of place and connection to country, culture and spirituality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

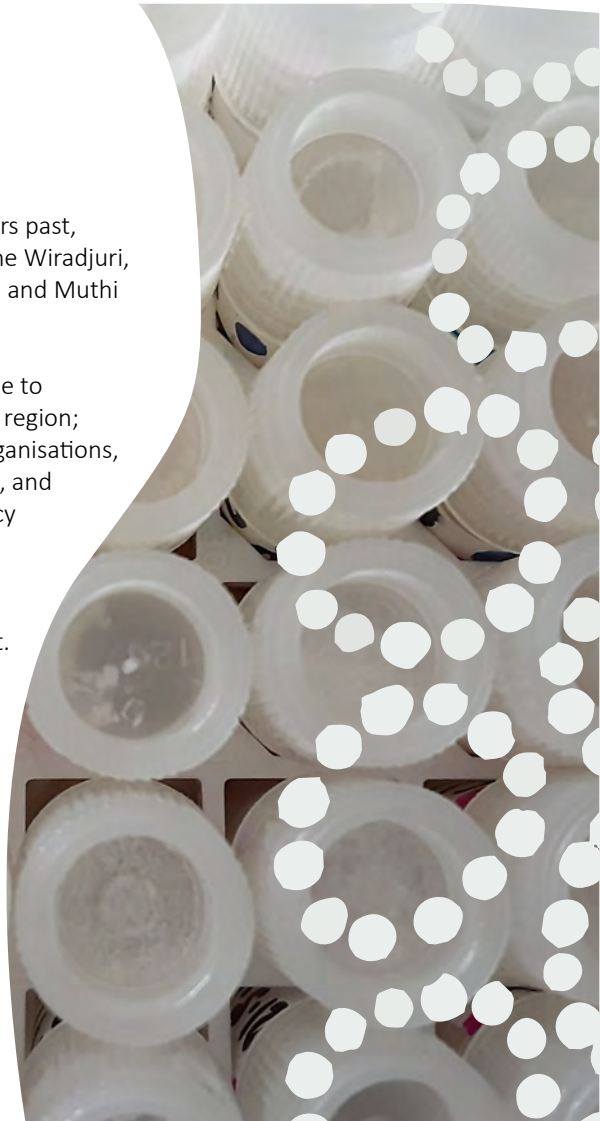
The Murrumbidgee Local Health District acknowledges Country and Elders past, present and future. The MLHD footprint covers the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri, Wamba Wamba/Wemba Wemba, Perrepa Perrepa, Yorta Yorta, Nari Nari and Muthi Muthi nations.

We acknowledge our local community members who volunteer their time to contribute to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people and communities in the region; the contributions of our communities, and our community controlled organisations, including our Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Aboriginal Medical Services, and Aboriginal Legal Services, and our national and state-based peak advocacy bodies.

We respect, protect, preserve and maintain our people's culture, and to conduct our business in accordance with cultural protocol and respect.

We are committed to culturally informed and evidence-based evaluation research and practice. Research and evaluation about Aboriginal Health must be driven by the priorities set by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We want the experience and knowledge of local Aboriginal people to be embedded in research, evaluation and translation.

We are committed to closing the gap in health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across our District.



INTRODUCTION

The Murrumbidgee Local Health District Research Framework 2022-2027 aligns with the Murrumbidgee Local Health District Strategic Plan 2021-2026 (1) with its four strategic directions of holistic health and wellbeing; lifting health outcomes; locally led reform; and workforce at its best.



The Framework maintains and further develops the strategic vision of the Research, Innovation and Change Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (2), underpinned by streamlined governance processes recently introduced by the NSW Health Office for Health and Medical Research; an increase in staff research awareness and skills; and adoption of a research culture in the organisation.

Consistent with NSW Ministry of Health policy (3), we retain an emphasis on translational health research, the research that applies discoveries made during laboratory research and in preclinical studies to the development of trials and studies in humans. It aims to cultivate best practice prevention and treatment in our community so that we can provide exceptional rural healthcare.

HOLISTIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING

beneficence, autonomy, justice through good governance

Best practice in research governance incorporates the principles of beneficence, respect for autonomy, and justice. It draws on international (4) and national (5) frameworks and guidelines. It respects and applies Commonwealth and NSW statute, regulation and policy. It facilitates and supports high quality research activities that translate into health, wellness, and evidence-based care in our community. The practice of routinely incorporating research activity and inquiry into the provision of healthcare will contribute to holistic health and wellbeing.

Increased research activity will result in an increase in ethical approval and governance process requirements and activity. Research governance in MLHD will be timely and efficient, meeting or exceeding Ministry of Health metric requirements as are set from time to time. We will be able to provide evidence of research activity in MLHD in terms of the number of approvals processed, the number of active studies, and the time taken for decisions and approval to proceed.

MLHD will implement a communication strategy for research outcomes and support implementation of translational research outcomes in order to increase community awareness and knowledge of health gains achieved and achievable.





LIFTING HEALTH OUTCOMES

develop locally relevant research themes

Health care workers go to work with the intention to help improve people's health and wellbeing. In MLHD we will focus on research with potential benefits for priority populations for research including children; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; culturally and linguistically diverse communities ; older persons including the frail and aged; and those with a lived experience of mental health problems.

We will continue to demonstrate our agility and flexibility in dealing with new and emerging diseases and conditions, whenever and wherever they arise. MLHD contributes to several national data registries, the data from which may be examined in detail with findings informing evidence-based practice in our community.

Clinical trials improve the overall quality of healthcare delivery, enable better patient outcomes, and reduce costs to health services. We will work to establish and manage the operationalisation of clinical trials in MLHD.

MLHD will be able to deliver evidence of increased community engagement in MLHD research activities; translation of relevant research findings into health care; and improved health outcomes in priority populations.

LOCALLY LED REFORM

build external relationships

At MLHD we will continue to reach out to researchers and the community beyond walls and borders for mutual benefit, both virtually and in reality, in order to strengthen research networks and collaborations in our region.

Our valued research partners include universities and other educational organizations, the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network, Aboriginal Health Service providers, and health networks spread across the southern half of New South Wales. Further afield we have strong links to other Local Health Districts and Health Services which we will maintain. We aim to establish new networks and maintain enduring relationships with research colleagues.

With the goal of encouraging innovative research that focusses on health issues relevant to our communities, we will seek increased community engagement in MLHD research activities through advice and participation in planning locally relevant research. We aim to achieve research outcomes that inform and link closely with operational transformation planning.

Communities and consumers who are knowledgeable about, and engaged in research will help to inform better local clinical practice and outcomes.





WORKFORCE AT ITS BEST

strengthen research capacity and capability

We look forward to further development of an active research culture amongst the MLHD workforce.

Existing and new research networks and collaborations will continue to grow and strengthen workforce capability and capacity to undertake effective research. We anticipate developing career pathways that combine conjoint academic and clinical appointments.

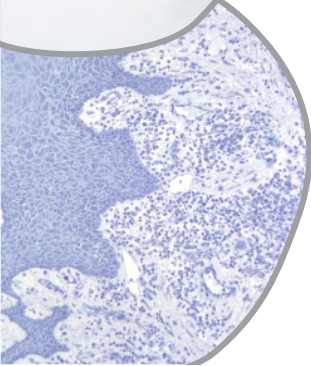

We will strengthen research capacity and capability through education, encouragement and communication to empower our workforce to achieve through continuous learning.

MLHD intranet and internet research webpages will provide clear and timely information. Research governance staff will assist with ethics and site approvals, study design, and protocols. Staff and students will be encouraged and appropriately supported with scholarship and grant applications.

We will develop and deliver online research resources and training modules for staff.

Regular webinars on governance processes, getting started in research, and preparation of grant applications will be introduced to overcome the challenges of distance and scheduling across this vast district.

Achievement will be recognized through research promotion and dissemination of information through various media channels to build awareness of research achievement and its practical application.



MURRUMBIDGEE POPULATION OUR COMMUNITY • OUR RESEARCH • OUR CARE

245,196 people



5.8% from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background

6.1% speak a language other than English at home

13% of the population live in areas of high socioeconomic disadvantage

20% of the population are children aged <15 years

20% of the population are 65yrs and over

6% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is aged 65 and over

2026
In 2026, it is projected that 11% of the population will be over 75 years.

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH



*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people data.
Life expectancy at birth estimates the average number of years that a newborn baby could expect to live, assuming current age-specific death rates are experienced through their lifetime.

LOCAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Mental Health
- Suicide
- Smoking
- Above healthy weight
- Alcohol consumption
- Injury from motor vehicle crashes and falls
- Chronic kidney disease
- Ageing population

HEALTH RELATED LIFESTYLE STATISTICS*

- 17%** of adults smoke (16% in NSW)
- 15%** of Non-Aboriginal women smoke during pregnancy (7% in NSW)
- 52%** of Aboriginal women smoke during pregnancy (43% in NSW)
- 25%** adults reporting psychological distress (17.7% in NSW)

- 42%** of adults consuming alcohol at harmful levels (33% in NSW)
- 69%** of adults are above healthy weight (53% in NSW)
- 35%** of adults are obese (22% in NSW, significantly higher)
- 57%** of adults don't get enough exercise (62% in NSW)
- 48%** of children report inactive behaviours (47% in NSW)

* Data sourced from MLHD Strategic Plan 2021-2026



The communities we support are diverse, with approximately

245,196

people in communities large and small across our region



125,243
square kilometres

People with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background make up



5.8% of the MLHD population



47 MLHD has **Public health facilities**

Including:
a rural referral hospital,
a base hospital,
district hospitals,
multipurpose services,
residential aged care facilities,
community health services and posts,
mental health inpatient and recovery service and
a brain injury rehabilitation service

Approx. 145,000

people present to our emergency departments each year.

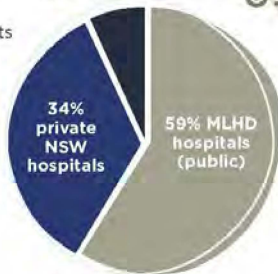
7% other NSW hospitals



Over 64,000

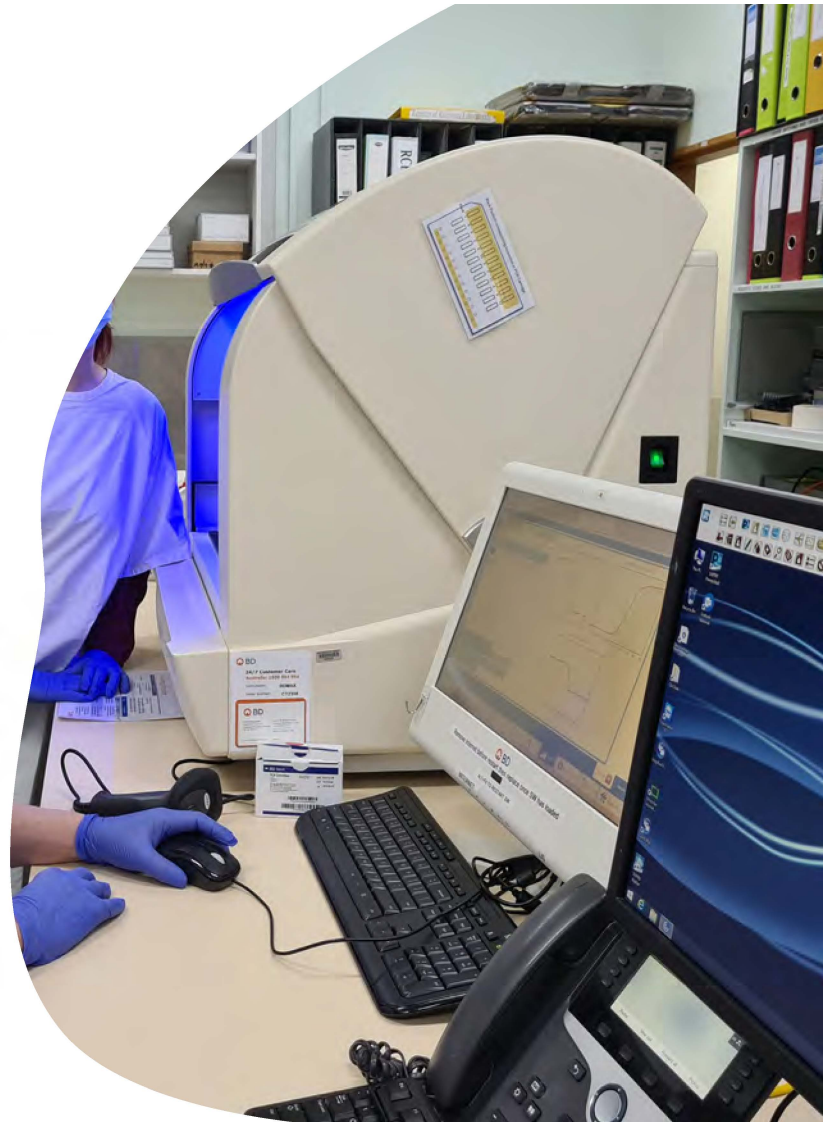
people are admitted into our facilities.

Where MLHD residents go for inpatient hospital care



354

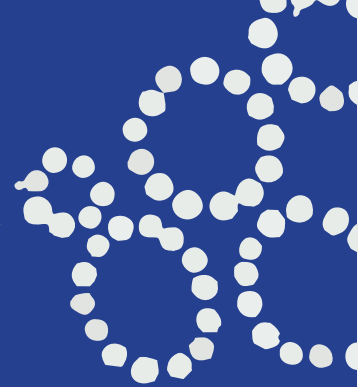
aged care residents call our facilities home each day.



REFERENCES

1. Murrumbidgee Local Health District. *Exceptional rural healthcare. Strategic Plan 2021-2026*. State of New South Wales (AU): Murrumbidgee Local Health District, 2021. 18p.
2. Murrumbidgee Local Health District. *Research, Innovation and Change Strategic Plan 2017-2021*. State of New South Wales (AU): Murrumbidgee Local Health District, 2021. 8p.
3. NSW Health & Medical Research. *Our Mission & Strategy [Internet]*. State of New South Wales (AU): NSW Ministry of Health c2020. [cited 2021 Nov 10]. Available from: <https://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/mission-strategy/>.
4. World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki: ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. *JAMA*. 2013 Nov 27;310(20):2191-4. doi: 10.1001/jama. 2013.281053.
5. *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018)*. The National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. Canberra (AU): Commonwealth of Australia. 110p. Available from: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018#toc__2102





CONTACT

Level 1, 193 -195 Morgan Street
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

MLHD-Research@health.nsw.gov.au
mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au



Health
Murrumbidgee
Local Health District