

Northeast Health Wangaratta

Workforce Plan

2025-2028



Exceptional care starts with exceptional people





Acknowledgement of Country

Northeast Health Wangaratta acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land we work on, the Bpangerang and Yorta Yorta peoples.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging as well as all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who work in and access our health service.





Northeast Health Wangaratta Workforce Plan 2025-2028

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Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information in this document at the time of publication, it is the responsibility of users to check the currency of key documents referenced within.

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Executive Summary

Northeast Health Wangaratta is a major healthcare provider, situated centrally within the Hume Region. We proudly provide healthcare to over 90,000 residents across Wangaratta and the central Hume catchment. With a workforce of more than 1,600 dedicated professionals, we are not just a healthcare provider – we are one of the region's largest employers and a vital contributor to the local economy.

Our Vision

Exceptional healthcare for North East Communities

Workforce Pillars



Engagement

Fostering a connected workplace where staff feel valued, informed, and involved.



Development

Equipping staff with skills, pathways and opportunities for growth.



Leadership

Building capable leaders who inspire performance and live NHW's values.



Inclusion

Ensuring a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all.



Welcome

I am proud to present Northeast Health Wangaratta's Workforce Plan 2025-2028, our roadmap for building and sustaining a workforce that can meet the evolving healthcare needs of our region.

More than 1,600 remarkable individuals come to work each day with a shared purpose: to make a real difference in the lives of our patients and their families. Our people are at the heart of everything we do. Their dedication, compassion and expertise are the foundation of exceptional healthcare in Northeast Victoria.

This Workforce Plan sets out how we will attract, develop and retain a strong workforce over the next three years. It is built on the insights of our staff and our partners in healthcare and it reflects our commitment to being a workplace where people feel valued, supported and able to do their best work.

This Workforce Plan puts the Strategic Plan 2025–2028 into action - re-establishing our grow-your-own pathways, investing in leadership and learning for every role, and embedding a purposeful listening culture so staff voices shape decisions. Together, these priorities help us attract, develop and retain the people we need to deliver exceptional care for Northeast Victoria.

Libby Fifis
Chief Executive Officer



Introducing Our Plan

At Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW), we recognise that our people are at the heart of delivering exceptional healthcare to our community. As a major healthcare provider, we serve a diverse and growing population with varied health priorities and care experiences. This Workforce Plan (2025–2028) sets out our strategy to ensure we can continue providing high-quality, compassionate, and responsive care - now and into the future.

Our region, like many across Australia, faces significant challenges in workforce attraction, retention, and sustainability. Factors such as an ageing population, increased demand for healthcare services, advancements in medical technology, and evolving community health needs require a strategic and proactive approach to workforce planning.

The NHW Workforce Plan outlines clear priorities, informed by comprehensive consultation with our employees, stakeholders, and executives. It provides a robust framework to address current workforce pressures, leverage opportunities for growth, and create a supportive, inclusive, and dynamic workplace environment.

Through this plan, we aim to build on our strengths, address critical gaps, and set a clear path forward. It reaffirms our commitment to investing in our greatest asset - our people - to ensure they feel valued, supported, and equipped to deliver excellent care. Together, we will foster a workforce that thrives on collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement, ultimately enhancing the health and wellbeing of everyone in our community.

This plan details the priorities, actions, and measures that will guide our work in the years ahead. We welcome you to be part of our shared commitment to better health for Northeast Health Wangaratta.

Scope

The Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW) Workforce Plan identifies strategies to develop and sustain the NHW workforce over a three-year period from 2025 to 2028. The scope of this plan encompasses all paid employees across all employment categories, roles and departments.

The plan aligns closely with the strategic priorities of NHW, providing high-level guidance and direction on workforce attraction, retention, capability building and wellbeing. It will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure ongoing alignment with organisational needs and evolving community healthcare demands.



Community Profile

NHW serves a vibrant and diverse population of over 90,000 residents across Wangaratta and surrounding regional communities, including rural and remote areas. Our community profile includes:



19.60%

increase in the number of people who used a language other than English at home between 2016-2025



39.20%

of the population reported one or more health conditions, a higher rate than in Regional VIC (37.2%)



45 years

is the median age in Wangaratta, above Victoria's median of 38



~28,000

Residents in Wangaratta, and ~90,000 across the Central Hume catchment



1.9–2.2%

of the population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, slightly above the state average



988

Socio-Economic index of disadvantage, slightly higher than the regional Victorian average of 985

Our Workforce

At the heart of Northeast Health Wangaratta is a dedicated, skilled, and diverse workforce that delivers exceptional care every day. Our people bring a strong sense of purpose and pride to their roles, working together to meet the needs of our community across a wide range of services, settings, and specialisations.

This section provides a snapshot of who we are - highlighting the size, structure, and strengths of our workforce. By understanding these insights, we can better plan for the future, support our teams, and continue building a workplace where every person feels valued and supported to thrive.



Gender

Females make up 76% of NHW's total workforce



Age

The median employee age is estimated at 43 years old



Length of Service

The average tenure at NHW is approximately 7.2 years



Headcount

Northeast Health Wangaratta employs more than 1,600 staff in total that supports 24/7 service delivery and diverse work-life needs.



Workforce Mix

Our workforce comprises of 65% part-time staff, 20% full-time staff and the balance being casual staff – reflecting a flexible mix.

Workforce Composition and Full-time Equivalent Breakdown

Category	FTE	Number of Individuals
Nursing	546.07	823
Administration and Clerical	156.33	206
Medical Support	81.08	116
Medical	2.00	2
Hotel and Allied Support	154.23	211
Hospital Medical Officers	94.08	100
Allied Health	95.85	153
Sessional Clinicians	19.56	50
Visiting Medical Officers		44
TOTAL	1,149.20	1,705



Workforce Planning Process

The plan was conducted across 3 phases which begins by exploring the Current State and Future State of the NHW workforce. Together, these two phases provide the critical insights required to develop a strategic and forward-thinking workforce plan.

Current State

This phase explores NHW's existing workforce environment, identifying challenges, strengths, and barriers.



- Consultation
- Staff Survey & Workshops
- Data Analysis
- Maturity Assessment

Future State

This phase projects NHW's future workforce needs by defining the emerging pressures and strategic shifts NHW must prepare for.



- Demographic Forecasting
- Workforce Modelling
- Benchmarking

Design Workforce Plan

This phase presents a set of strategic goals and focus areas, informed by the insights from Phases 1 and 2.



- Co-Designed Goals & Actions with Executive Leadership Team
- Workforce Goals
- Priority Actions



Workforce Plan Alignment

The Northeast Health Wangaratta Workforce Plan 2025–2028 has been developed to ensure strong alignment with the planning framework of the Hume Region Local Health Service Network (LHSN). This alignment ensures the plan supports not only NHW’s internal objectives, but also contributes to broader regional and state health system goals.



- 1 Increase supply of priority roles**
 Bring in new workforce supply. Recruit and train new workers to support growth and a fit-for-purpose workforce
- 2 Strengthen rural and regional workforces**
 Improve capacity and distribution in rural and regional locations for equity in access to healthcare
- 3 Improve employee experience**
 Build a world-leading experience to retain the skilled workers we have and attract new people into healthcare
- 4 Build future roles and capabilities**
 Develop the workforce, roles, skills and models of care we need in future proofing the organisation
- 5 Leverage digital, data and technology**
 Augment workforce capacity, patient experience and continued innovation through digital solutions

Hume Local Health Service Network	
• Albury Wodonga Health	• Mansfield District Hospital
• Alpine Health	• NCN Health
• Beechworth Health Service	• Northeast Health Wangaratta
• Benalla Health	• Tallangatta Health Service
• Corryong Health	• Yarrowonga Health Service
• Goulburn Valley Health	
• Kyabram District Health Service	

Within the recently formed Hume Region LHSN, there is a shared focus to achieve improved network workforce outcomes, strengthened collaboration and improved data collation and sharing to enable system workforce planning. NHW’s plan supports this through:

- Coordinated attraction and recruitment strategies to address regional skill shortages.
- Development pathways that leverage shared training and education resources.
- Leadership programs that enhance cross-service collaboration and governance.
- Consistent safety, wellbeing, and inclusion practices that support a unified regional workforce culture.

By aligning with both the Department of Health’s – Health Services Plan and the LHSN’s regional priorities, this plan ensures NHW’s workforce strategies are part of a broader, integrated approach - strengthening service delivery, workforce sustainability, and health outcomes across Northeast Victoria.

Engaging Our Workforce

Engagement with our workforce was a key element of this project. Alongside one-on-one consultations, staff were also invited to attend open workshops accessible to all employees, providing multiple opportunities to contribute their ideas and perspective.

These sessions gave staff the chance to share their views on how NHW operates, clarify their team's role and discuss what's working well and where improvements could be made. What we learned help shaped our workforce plan pillars, goals and actions.



The groups engaged in the consultation process include:



Nursing



Allied Health



Medical



Administration &
Clerical



Medical Support



Hotel/ Allied (Support
Services)

Workforce Challenges

As NHW looks to the future, it is important to acknowledge the workforce challenges that impact our ability to attract, support and retain staff. By identifying these challenges, we create the foundation for focused action - ensuring our systems, processes and culture evolve to meet the needs of a modern, dynamic workforce.

Challenges	Opportunities
 <p>Recruitment: Unclear roles and responsibilities between People & Culture and Hiring Managers are causing confusion, inconsistent practices, and delays in progressing vacancies.</p>	 <p>Culture: Strengthen recognition and shared moments to build a cohesive, values-driven culture.</p>
 <p>Training & Development: Role-relevant training is not always delivered in a consistent or structured manner. Training is not always visible across teams and shifts.</p>	 <p>Succession Planning: Broaden access to structured, role-relevant development to prepare staff for future roles.</p>
 <p>Onboarding: Significant delay between verbal offers and issuing employee contracts</p>	 <p>Employee Wellbeing: Expand visible, consistent wellbeing supports to reduce burnout.</p>
 <p>Communication: Internal communication is siloed across teams and locations</p>	 <p>Leadership: Clarify expectations and invest in development to lift leadership capability and team cohesion.</p>
 <p>Systems: Technology systems are often fragmented and outdated creating inefficiencies.</p>	 <p>Cross-Department Collaboration: Increase collaboration to align priorities and improve efficiency.</p>
 <p>Processes: reliance on paper based processes limit workforce planning and decision making</p>	 <p>Attraction: Sharpen the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and showcase career pathways to attract a diverse, skilled workforce.</p>

Plan Framework aims to achieve

Our Workforce Plan is structured around four key pillars: Engagement, Leadership, Development, and Safety and Inclusion. Each pillar includes a set of clear goals that outline what NHW aim to achieve. Under each goal, specific actions have been identified to help bring this vision to life - ensuring our efforts are targeted, measurable, and aligned with our long-term direction. Together, these pillars provide a roadmap for building a strong, supported and future-ready workforce at NHW.

Pillar

Goals



Engagement

Fostering a connected workplace where staff feel valued, informed, and involved.

- Enhanced communication
- Advance staff recognition efforts
- Strengthen feedback opportunities
- Recruit and welcome values-aligned talent



Development

Equipping staff with skills, pathways, and opportunities for growth.

- Expand access to learning and growth
- Create clear career and progression pathways
- Support and mentor early-career staff
- Build capability for future workforce needs
- Enhance recruitment experiences



Leadership

Building capable leaders who inspire performance and live NHW's values.

- Set and champion leadership expectations
- Grow leadership skills through tailored programs
- Encourage open, consistent leadership communication
- Develop our future leaders



Safety and Inclusion

Ensuring a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all.

- Promote wellbeing for all staff
- Create a welcoming start for every new team member
- Champion equity, diversity, and cultural safety
- Nurture a respectful and supportive workplace



1. Engagement

Engagement is the foundation of a connected, motivated, and high-performing workforce. It strengthens team culture, builds trust and ensures staff feel valued in their roles. For NHW, engagement presents a significant opportunity to create more consistent, inclusive and visible communication practices across the organisation. By prioritising engagement, NHW is investing in a workplace culture where people feel informed, involved and proud to be part of the team.

Engagement Goals

1.1 Enhanced Communication

Strengthening timely communication channels to ensure information flows easily, openly, and consistently across all areas and locations, keeping teams informed and engaged.

1.2 Advancing Staff Recognition

Creating regular opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate staff contributions, reinforcing a culture where success is shared and valued.

1.3 Strengthened Feedback

Providing clear avenues for feedback and encouraging open dialogue to enable idea sharing and collaborative progress towards shared goals.

1.4 Attraction & Values

Attracting, selecting, and retaining people who reflect organisational values and commitment to excellence. Embedding organisational values into daily practice, making them visible in leadership, communication, and the experiences of staff and the community.



Engagement Actions & Implementation Timeline

Short Term (12 Months)



- Develop and implement a transparent action plan in response to People Matter Survey results
- Leverage our Employee Value Proposition to introduce innovative recruitment approaches that further strengthen and modernize our current practices
- Introduce the NHW Listening Strategy, bringing together staff to provide input and feedback into workforce initiatives and test key messages
- Strengthen our “Grow your own” strategy to attract local talent, building pathways for students, early-career professionals, and career-changers
- Strengthen the international and local recruitment pipeline through strategic partnerships
- Participation in the Hume LHSN Workforce Plan.

Medium Term (1-2 Years)



- Report Progress on the People Matter Survey action plan and celebrate all successful changes
- Incorporate refreshed Employee Value Proposition into recruitment campaigns and job advertisements -targeting high need roles
- Strengthen recruitment pipelines through strategic partnerships
- Monitor candidate onboarding experience, and time-to-hire for workforce metric development.

Long Term (2+ Years)



- Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of internal communication protocol
- Evaluate effectiveness of the refreshed Employee Value Proposition in role-specific recruitment campaigns
- Adjust partnership terms and agency engagement if necessary.





2. Development

NHW is committed to building a workplace where every team member has the opportunity to grow, thrive, and realise their potential. Staff have expressed a strong appetite for learning, career progression, and support to build role-specific skills. By prioritising development, NHW aims to foster a culture of continuous learning, support early-career growth, and build a confident, capable workforce equipped to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Development Goals

2.1 Professional Development Opportunity

Ensure all staff have access to high-quality, role-relevant development opportunities that support personal growth, confidence, and the delivery of exceptional care.

2.2 Professional Pathways

Create transparent and accessible progression pathways across all workforce streams, supporting long-term career planning and helping staff realise their full potential in accordance to the workforce needs of NHW.

2.3 Support

Providing strong guidance, mentorship, and support from our leaders to help our staff build confidence and establish rewarding careers.

2.4 Planning

Equipping the organisation with the skills, tools, and foresight needed to meet future challenges and deliver exceptional care.

2.5 Recruitment

Enhance systems, training, and processes across Human Resources and hiring teams to ensure recruitment is efficient, values-driven, and aligned with NHW's vision for a high-quality, community-focused workforce.



Development Actions & Implementation Timeline

Short Term (12 Months)



- Promote and implement individual professional development (PD) plans
- Map internal career pathways across key roles and streams
- Strengthen recruitment capability within the HR team through targeted training
- Standardise and strengthen recruitment processes and communicate across NHW
- Introduce a digital reference-checking system to streamline recruitment and onboarding
- Strengthen People & Culture function through HR Business Partner Models.

Medium Term (1-2 Years)



- Review uptake and equity of professional development and training
- Launch tailored internal career pathway resources and embed in performance review processes
- Share updated recruitment responsibilities with managers and HR
- Procure and implement digital reference checking system with onboarding process
- Enhance digital HR systems across recruitment activities to reduce turnaround times and improve process efficiency.

Long Term (2+ Years)



- Investing additional training across key roles.
- Evaluate success of modified recruitment responsibilities and adjust where necessary
- Monitor effectiveness of digital reference checking system and other digitized HR systems.





3. Leadership

Strong, visible leadership is essential to building a positive and connected workforce culture. This pillar recognises the opportunity to strengthen leadership capability at all levels, ensure consistency across sites and teams, and embed a culture of accountability, trust, and inclusive decision-making. Guided by NHW's Leadership Capability Framework, leaders will have a clear foundation for behaviours and expectations, supporting a consistent and connected approach to leadership. Through this framework and a stronger leadership focus, NHW can continue to empower staff, support wellbeing and deliver high-quality care across the region.

Leadership Goals

3.1 Expectations

Establish and promote clear, organisation-wide expectations for leaders at all levels to ensure a consistent, inspiring approach to guiding teams and achieving results.

3.2 Development

Provide targeted leadership development programs that strengthen strategic thinking, decision-making, and people management, fostering a culture of confident and capable leadership.

3.3 Communication

Embed regular and transparent communication between leaders and staff to build trust, strengthen connections, and ensure a shared understanding of priorities and progress.

3.4 Succession Planning

Identify, supporting and prepare emerging leaders with the skills, knowledge, and experiences needed to lead NHW into a strong and sustainable future.



Leadership Actions & Implementation Timeline

Short Term (12 Months)



- Review leadership communication model
- Review our emerging leaders program for key departments and roles - train internal resources through external Subject Matter Experts (SME) in the field via Train-the-Trainer model
- Formalize leadership succession plans for all leadership roles across NHW

Medium Term (1-2 Years)



- Use our Leadership Capability Framework to train and upskill potential leaders
- Integrate leadership communication model and monitor early implementation to identify any breakdowns
- Review emerging leaders program, catered to key departments and role types to ensure future leaders are equipped with the necessary skills to perform at higher levels
- Match high-potential staff to succession plans and provide development opportunities.

Long Term (2+ Years)



- Review uptake and effectiveness of our leadership capability framework and professional development programs through staff feedback
- Evaluate early implementation of emerging leaders programs across departments and share knowledge across the organisation to enhance outcomes
- Evaluate effectiveness of succession planning
- Integrate new leadership programs into standard practice and scale





4. Safety & Inclusion

At NHW, safety goes beyond clinical care- it includes creating a workplace where every individual feels respected, supported, and able to thrive. Building on NHW's strong foundations in physical and clinical safety, this pillar focuses on extending that culture into all aspects of staff wellbeing, psychological safety, and inclusion. By fostering a safe, welcoming environment for every team member, NHW aims to build a workforce that reflects and embraces the diverse community it serves.

Safety & Inclusion Goals

4.1 Wellbeing

Embed proactive and accessible wellbeing supports that are tailored to the unique needs of each team, role, and department - ensuring staff feel safe, supported, and cared for in their day-to-day work.

4.2 Onboarding

Create a consistent and welcoming onboarding experience that builds early connection, cultural understanding, and a strong sense of belonging from day one.

4.3 Equity

Promote equity, diversity, and cultural safety across all levels of the organisation by developing inclusive practices, celebrating difference, and ensuring fair access to opportunity and support.

4.4 Culture

Foster a workplace culture where respectful communication is the norm, and where every staff member feels safe to speak up, contribute ideas, and raise concerns without fear.



Safety & Inclusion Actions & Implementation Timeline

Short Term (12 Months)



- Implement proactive manager check-ins and workload monitoring
- Review and strengthen onboarding framework across all departments
- Ensure equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives are successfully implemented across NHW in line with our Gender Equity and Diversity & Inclusion plans.

Medium Term (1-2 Years)



- Launch the wellbeing support framework with supporting communications and training
- Implement new onboarding framework across all departments and provide training to managers to ensure consistency of application.

Long Term (2+ Years)



- Evaluate uptake and impact of wellbeing initiatives and refresh the framework based on feedback
- Embed manager check-ins as part of regular performance reviews.





Employee Value Proposition

Our Employee Value Proposition

At Northeast Health Wangaratta, you'll experience the clinical complexity and career opportunities of a major service, within a warm, friendly environment where people genuinely know and support one another. You'll grow through varied clinical work, a highly skilled multidisciplinary team, and leaders who are visible and invested in your development. Here, your work makes a real impact – and your voice helps shape the care we deliver.

Our leadership is visible and invested in your growth, with structured pathways and mentoring from day one. Your work has real impact on patients, families and the community and you're encouraged to speak up and shape the care we deliver.

NHW Employee Value Proposition Components



Challenging & Connected

At NHW, you'll experience the variety of a larger health service, with the support, visibility and development opportunities of a smaller team.



Purpose in Community

At NHW your work directly impacts patients, families and the broader community.



Guided Leadership

At NHW, leadership is approachable, supportive and actively focused on helping you grow.



Lifestyle & Career

Live and work in Victoria's High Country, where you can grow your career while enjoying a lifestyle that offers affordability, outdoor adventure and the space to balance work and life.



Next Steps

This Workforce Plan will guide NHW's efforts over the coming years to build a skilled, connected and future-ready workforce. The first stage will focus on priority actions that strengthen staff support, develop skills and enhance leadership. Progress will be reviewed regularly, with ongoing input from staff to ensure our plan supports the growing workforce. The plan supports the recruitment, retention and professional development of our exceptional people and our aim to deliver exceptional care.

Acknowledgements

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- Our Staff – for their time, perspectives, and ongoing commitment to delivering exceptional care.
- Leadership and Management Teams – for their guidance, support, and strategic input throughout the planning process.
- The Hume Region Local Health Service Network – for their collaboration and regional perspective in shaping workforce priorities.
- Department of Health – for providing clear statewide priorities that have informed and guided this plan.
- Community and Education Partners – for their role in building workforce capability and fostering future talent pathways.
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