



Rural Support Service Strategic Plan 2022–26



Statement of acknowledgment

We acknowledge the First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout South Australia. We acknowledge and respect their ongoing and deep spiritual connection and relationship to land, air, sea, waters, community and Country. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



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Cover photos (clockwise from top left): Allied health professionals Sarah Toome, Bernard Pienaar, Abbie Solomon, Tessa Rusden and Eveline Linker at Port Lincoln Hospital and Health Service, Eyre and Far North LHN; Sharon Perkins, Director of Aboriginal Health, Riverland Mallee Coorong LHN, with Simone Hurley and Skye Hayes from the Rural Health Workforce Strategy Project Team at the launch of the SA Rural Aboriginal Health Workforce Plan in Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park in December 2021; a consumer using telehealth services provided by the RSS through the SA Digital Telehealth Network.

Left: Aunty Julie O'Toole from Coober Pedy, who has travelled down to Port Augusta to access medical specialist services that are not available locally, obtained support through the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATs), which is managed by the RSS on behalf of the regional LHNs.

Message from the RSS Governance Committee Chair

I am extremely pleased to present the RSS Strategic Plan 2022–26. This plan outlines the strategic goals that will guide the RSS over the next five years towards achieving our vision to be a leader and partner with the six regional local health networks (LHNs) in the delivery of exceptional health care to South Australian regional communities.

The plan responds to the current challenges we face in the regional health care environment and identifies opportunities and innovative solutions to overcome these and improve regional health care delivery for the future.

It has been developed through an extensive engagement process involving our staff, regional LHNs and a range of other stakeholders. It is informed by and aligns with the strategic plans of regional LHNs to support our partnership approach to delivering high-quality health and wellbeing services.

The plan firmly positions the RSS as a trusted leader and partner in the delivery of health and wellbeing services to regional communities. It also highlights the potential that exists to expand our existing regional opportunities, showcase our capability and share our expertise to strengthen service delivery in metropolitan areas.

I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to the development of this plan. The deep engagement demonstrated through this process reflects a genuine commitment to supporting the RSS to continue to thrive and achieve great success into the future.



Rosey Batt
Chair, RSS Governance Committee



What is the RSS?

The Rural Support Service (RSS) was established on 1 July 2019 as part of the SA Health governance reforms, which created ten LHNs responsible for the delivery of publicly funded health services in South Australia.

The RSS was established to deliver shared support services to the six LHNs located in regional areas – the Barossa Hills Fleurieu LHN, Eyre and Far North LHN, Flinders and Upper North LHN, Limestone Coast LHN, Riverland Mallee Coorong LHN and Yorke and Northern LHN – through the provision of expertise, high-level skills and capability across a range of specialised clinical and corporate functions.

The RSS operates as a partner to each regional LHN, providing them with flexible, responsive and innovative services that support them to grow and deliver the best health outcomes for their communities.

The RSS is overseen by the RSS Governance Committee, a committee of the Barossa Hills Fleurieu LHN Governing Board, which provides strategic direction and governance of the RSS and ensures the RSS is meeting the needs of regional LHNs.

Our services

We support the provision of high-quality services to regional communities, which encompasses:

- health, wellbeing, aged and disability services
- finance, workforce and governance services
- statewide services for, and with, all ten LHNs.

Review of the strategic plan

This strategic plan will be monitored and reviewed by the RSS Governance Committee on an annual basis to track progress and ensure it remains current and adapts to any changes in our internal and external operating environment.

Our vision

To be a leader and partner with regional LHNs in the delivery of exceptional health care to South Australian regional communities.

Our purpose

The RSS aims to improve the delivery of health care in regional South Australian communities through adaptive and innovative solutions. We will do this by:

- supporting regional LHNs in the delivery of effective, safe, quality health and wellbeing services
- delivering statewide support services meeting the needs of regional and metropolitan LHNs.

Our values



Service

We proudly serve the community and the South Australian government



Professionalism

We strive for excellence



Trust

We have confidence in the ability of others



Respect

We value every individual



Collaboration and engagement

We create solutions together



Honesty and integrity

We act truthfully, consistently and fairly



Courage and tenacity

We never give up



Sustainability

We work to get the best results for current and future generations of South Australians



Challenges and opportunities

The following challenges and opportunities provide important strategic context and shape and influence the work of the RSS in partnering with LHNs to support and improve regional health care delivery.

Key strategic challenges

Workforce shortages

Regional health services face challenges attracting and retaining an appropriately skilled health workforce with the right mix of skills required to address the community's health care needs.

Access to health services

It is not always possible for regional communities to access a broad range of health services close to where they live. Difficulties accessing health services can also delay care, which can have consequences on an individual's health.

Health status

The health status of regional, rural and remote Australians is generally poorer than that of urban Australians, which tends to make the care needs of regional communities more complex.

Infrastructure and resources

Outdated infrastructure and limited resources across regional locations limit the capacity of health services to scale their services and broaden community access to care.

Key strategic opportunities

Digital health technologies

Harnessing emerging technologies to help re-imagine rural and remote health care, plan for the future and help overcome barriers to accessing care.

Care closer to home

Facilitating a shift in the way care is delivered to provide regional patients with access to high-quality, safe and timely care in local and more convenient community settings.

Workforce planning

Designing workforce solutions that align with future ways of working, including building new capabilities required for the future and embracing new technologies that complement human resources.

Building collaborative partnerships

Maximising the power of partnerships and collaborative working relationships between LHNs and their communities, and public and private organisations within regions, to deliver high-quality, patient-centred health care.

Principles

Our strategic priorities will be underpinned by the following principles:

Client focus

We will apply a client-focused approach to develop a deep understanding of the needs of regional LHNs and how we can best support them to provide high-quality health care to regional communities.

Co-design approach

We will bring together stakeholders to work with us in authentic and equal partnerships to explore and co-design local solutions to local challenges for regional communities.

Outcome driven

Our actions, decisions and behaviours will be driven by a desire to continuously strengthen the delivery of high-quality health and wellbeing services for regional communities.

Innovative models of care

We will seek out opportunities to introduce innovative models of care and approaches to the planning and delivery of health and wellbeing services.

Partnerships and engagement

We will seek out opportunities to share information, create connections and synergies, and work collaboratively across regional LHNs, supported by effective partnerships, engagement and communication.

Value creation

We will ensure that everything we do adds value to the work of regional LHNs, with a focus on uplifting capability, addressing gaps, promoting and facilitating excellence, and enhancing integration across regions.



Our strategic goals



Harness innovation and new ways of working

We pursue digital and technological advancements and innovation that will help drive improvements in the delivery of health care and meet the needs of regional communities.



Build collaborative partnerships

We bring together regional LHNs, consumers and other key stakeholders to work as partners, share information and benefit from the strengths of working together.



Enable regional workforce

We support the workforce to improve current health care delivery approaches and embrace new ways of working.



Optimise regional health and wellbeing services

We plan, deliver and support the provision of high-quality health and wellbeing services for regional communities.



Deliver efficient business services

We deliver high-quality, client-centred business services to support the optimal functioning of regional LHNs.



Harness innovation and new ways of working

We pursue digital and technological advancements and innovation that will help drive improvements in the delivery of health care and meet the needs of regional communities.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage a culture that values and promotes innovation and new ways of working• Provide a platform to showcase the successful adoption of innovation and excellence within regional LHNs and support collaboration and sharing of ideas across regions• Facilitate the expansion of virtual clinical care and other digital innovations to support regional accessibility of high-quality health services in a timely manner, as close to home as possible• Support the extension of statewide capability for clinical and health care service delivery through the SA Digital Telehealth Network, and the consistent embedding of telehealth opportunities within existing and evolving models of care across regional South Australia• Facilitate building digital health capability across regional LHNs and to regional communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of innovation projects and working examples shared across regional LHNs• Increased number of patients using digital health tools to manage their health• Regional LHNs have capacity to provide more patients with access to virtual clinical care delivered in the home or other suitable environment• Regional LHNs incorporate the use of emerging innovations within their health care plans and models of care• Regional LHNs can deliver an expanded range of services to patients utilising telehealth• Regional LHNs have the knowledge and skills required to use digital health technologies to deliver health care



Build collaborative partnerships

We bring together regional LHNs, consumers and other key stakeholders to work as partners, share information and benefit from the strengths of working together.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish effective stakeholder engagement approaches to support collaboration with regional LHN decision-makers, consumers and other key stakeholders including Aboriginal leaders and community organisations in driving regional priorities• Lead and facilitate forums with regional LHNs, consumers and other key stakeholders to share information, learnings and insights regarding regional health care and service delivery• Advocate for South Australian regional health priorities and investments at the statewide and national level• Coordinate partnerships within and across regions to support research, education and service opportunities• Identify new funding opportunities and initiatives for the RSS and regional LHNs to improve health outcomes for regional communities• Broker partnerships with public, private and NGO service providers to extend health service coverage in identified areas across regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased stakeholder participation in planning and decision-making about regional health priorities, including consumers and Aboriginal leaders and community organisations• Increased knowledge transfer between stakeholders regarding regional health care issues, challenges and opportunities• Formal and informal partnerships are established across regions in priority areas• Regional health care challenges and priorities are communicated and represented in relevant forums• Number of new funded initiatives and/or new partnerships that deliver improved health service provision and outcomes for regional communities



Enable regional workforce

We support the workforce to improve current health care delivery approaches and embrace new ways of working.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver organisational development support for RSS and regional LHN leaders and staff and create a culture that allows the regional workforce to thrive, innovate and provide excellence in care • Collaborate with regional LHNs to identify regional workforce trends and challenges and co-design strategic regional workforce plans • Partner with key stakeholders to lead development of the South Australian Rural Health Workforce Strategy to grow and strengthen the regional, rural and remote health workforce • Ensure culturally respectful workforce planning encompassing the unique skills, knowledge and expertise of the culturally diverse workforce, including the Aboriginal workforce, in regional South Australia • Maintain high standards of safety among the regional LHN health professional workforce through the delivery of a credentialling system • Partner with regional LHNs to promote and support country clinical training opportunities and pathways that attract and retain clinicians working in regional areas • Partner with regional LHNs to create high-quality regional student clinical placements that provide positive experiences for the future health workforce • Lead initiatives to strengthen regional workforce health, wellbeing, safety and resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased levels of engagement and achievement within the RSS and regional LHNs in areas including leadership, culture and innovation • Expanded skills training, career pathways, support and opportunities for health trainees and workers in regional, rural and remote areas • Increased number of health students and trainees undertaking placements and training in regional LHNs who subsequently seek employment with an LHN • Regional LHNs and the RSS attract and retain a high-quality and culturally diverse workforce, including the Aboriginal workforce • Regional LHNs and the RSS report increased levels of satisfaction and wellbeing among their staff



Optimise regional health and wellbeing services

We plan, deliver and support the provision of high-quality health and wellbeing services for regional communities.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver expert clinical leadership, advice and support to regional LHNs to set clinical strategic direction and reduce clinical risk • Co-design clinical governance requirements with regional LHNs to drive best practice and accountability for the delivery of quality services across regions • Establish clinical networks to guide quality improvement reform and support clinical policy development, emphasising evidence-based practice in optimising high-quality, patient-focused health care across regional South Australia • Advise regional LHNs on key trends and advances in rural and remote service planning and delivery in the health care sector, and partner with LHNs to undertake service planning • Co-design contemporary models of care with regional LHNs and support their transition to LHNs for delivery, with a focus on delivering high-quality care as close to home as possible • Build clinical excellence among regional LHN staff through the design and delivery of innovative, effective and accessible clinical education programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinicians and consumers are provided with regular opportunities to engage and partner in decision-making about service planning, implementation and clinical practice improvement • RSS and regional LHN staff have awareness of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring clinical quality and safety • Regional LHNs have access to agreed regional standards and models of care they can apply to deliver consistent, coordinated and high-quality health and wellbeing services • Regional LHNs are provided with more opportunities and options to safely treat and care for patients in settings outside the hospital • Regional LHN staff acquire new knowledge, skills and expertise to assist with delivering improved practice and patient outcomes



Deliver efficient business services

We deliver high-quality, client-centred business services to support the optimal functioning of regional LHNs.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the capacity of regional LHNs to operate effective health services through the delivery of essential business support services, specialist knowledge and advisory services • Embed a client-focused service culture across the RSS to maximise the service experience and value delivered to regional LHNs and foster strong and meaningful partnerships and collaborative approaches • Deliver high value, innovative and cost-effective support and initiatives to regional LHNs to enable efficiencies and economies of scale to be achieved across core business functions • Strengthen the capability and capacity of regional LHNs and promote their self-sufficiency while supporting regional LHNs as a collective group • Partner with regional LHNs to identify opportunities for continuous business improvement and develop and implement performance improvement and sustainability strategies • Co-design adaptive solutions to support regional LHNs in risk and issue management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional LHNs provide cost-effective, safe and high-quality health and wellbeing services to their communities • Increased levels of satisfaction are experienced by regional LHNs with the quality, consistency and value of services provided by the RSS • Increase in the range of services offered to communities by their regional LHNs where the RSS has provided coordination and support • Regional LHN staff acquire new business management skills and capabilities • All regional LHNs apply a consistent approach to managing their businesses through accessing RSS centralised specialist knowledge and support • Regional LHNs are well supported in the management of risks and issues

*Tobias Ogle and Teena Wilson
demonstrating My Health PoCiTT*





For more information

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