

**11 August 2025**

## **Wentworth Healthcare Celebrates 10 Years of Providing the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network**

In July, Wentworth Healthcare was proud to mark 10 years of helping to build healthier communities across the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow and Penrith areas through providing the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network.

In 2015, the Federal Government established 31 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) nationally to help improve the healthcare system.

PHNs were set up as regional organisations, to have a strong local focus, serving three main functions in the broader health system. Firstly, they fund non-hospital services in the community that meet local needs. Secondly, they support general practitioners (GPs) and other primary healthcare providers to deliver high-quality care, and lastly, they help join up health services so patients don't get lost when they move from one part of the system to another.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay, said that she was proud of what the organisation had achieved over the last ten years and of the services and programs that have made a difference to the lives of people living in the community.

"Since becoming a PHN we have been able to bring at least 20 additional health services to the region. We now have four headspace Centres, two Medicare Mental Health Centres, one After Hours Clinic and three other after-hours services, two Urgent Care services and a drug and alcohol service in each local government area. We provide outreach services to schools and residential aged care homes and fund specialist clinics and telehealth services for priority populations such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those living with chronic conditions," she said.

"We've implemented a domestic family and sexual violence program to support victim-survivors, social connection initiatives to address social isolation and a care finder service for older people needing help finding aged care services and many more," she continued.

"During this time, we formalised our commitment to Reconciliation by developing and implementing Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) and are proud of the work we have done with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to help strengthen cultural safety in local health services," she added.

Ms Reay said that an important role of PHNs is advocating for funding where it is needed most, especially in areas where local priorities may not be visible at the state or national level.

"Some of these services would not have happened in our region without our strong advocacy efforts and knowledge of the needs of our local area," she said.

"We act as a key link between government national health policy and regional needs, bringing a local focus to national goals. For example, headspace services in Hawkesbury, Katoomba and Lithgow, The Street Uni services in Katoomba and Penrith, and the Medicare Mental Health Centre in the Hawkesbury were not initially planned for our region. Due to our advocacy and working



collaboratively with others, such as our local members of parliament, we were able to ensure these areas received the services they needed,” said Ms Reay.

Ms Reay added that the services they deliver were crucial in supporting the community throughout the region’s recent multiple disasters and the pandemic, and that during times of crisis their organisation had proven their value by helping to coordinate the local primary care response.

“During the drought, bushfires, floods and COVID-19 we acted as a linker between front-line primary care professionals (such as GPs), hospital services and government agencies making communication easier while our programs and services helped our community recover and build resilience,” she said.

“We delivered critical services such as GP volunteers for evacuation centres, COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics, provided important information and resources to health professionals, increased access to mental health services, provided grants to address community wellbeing and grants for health professionals to help prepare for future emergencies,” said Ms Reay.

In closing, Ms Reay said that over the last decade, the role of PHNs had expanded and evolved and she is optimistic for the future and the part they can play in meeting the changing health needs of the community.

“There is more work to be done. The face of healthcare is changing. Our significant local knowledge, together with the relationships we have built with our communities, service providers and others in the health sector, mean that we can bring people together to find innovative solutions to local needs,” she said.

“Now and moving forward, we remain committed to delivering on our vision of better health and wellbeing for the people living in our region,” said Ms Reay.