

# Hawkesbury GP Consultation Snapshot



**A consultation process initiated and led by three local GPs and NBMPHN GP Advisory Committee (GPAC) members – Dr Trudie Rombola, Dr David Foley and Dr Rory Webb – has been conducted in the Hawkesbury identifying the area’s primary care and population health needs.**

During the consultation process from September 2016 to March 2017, all 25 Hawkesbury Practices were contacted, with 21 visited and half (41) of the area’s GPs directly consulted. The *Hawkesbury GP Consultation Feedback Report* presents the full findings, answers to GP queries and avenues for further support.

Visit: [www.nbmphn.com.au/HawkesburyConsultation2017](http://www.nbmphn.com.au/HawkesburyConsultation2017)

## Key results:

Eight key areas of need emerged from the consultations, including five outlined below:



### Building General Practice Services and Systems

More than **one quarter** of GPs raised issues relating to integration and application of technology within their Practices.



### Workforce needs of General Practice

More than **one third** mentioned recruitment, training and the retention of staff as significant issues.



### Acute care services including communication with the hospital

**50 per cent** raised issues such as their need for local hospital outpatient services, electronic discharge summaries and access to local specialists and services.



### Mental health

**50 per cent** felt that mental health access and support services were insufficient to meet the needs of patients within their Practices.



### Care and support for vulnerable patients

Almost **three quarters** recognised vulnerable groups within their region requiring better primary healthcare support including the elderly, the very young, those without transport and those in financial difficulties.

## Highlights from the GP interviews

### Networking opportunities for GPs and specialists

"I would love an annual Hawkesbury function to get to know local colleagues."

### Support provided by NBMPHN

"A PHN visitor came and explained about (low) bowel screening uptake (in the Hawkesbury region). This was helpful and a good motivator. Short, focussed visits like this are good."

"I need better support for my patients to get connected to the NDIS."

### Gaps in services for patients within the community setting

"There needs to be affordable dental healthcare for people on low incomes."

"There are lots of young mums with unplanned pregnancies – there's a role for the GP in school education."

"A late night pharmacy is needed."

## Other member ideas/feedback:

### Digital Health

GPs asked for support with:

- My Health Record including increasing capacity to upload radiology scans and pathology results
- Clinical software options and advice
- New technologies

### Workforce capacity

To help improve their work-life balance, GPs asked for support with:

- Hiring locums to enable time off for holidays
- Transition planning including Practice expansion or amalgamation

### Hospital Services and Communication

Needs expressed by GPs included:

- Electronic discharge summaries from Hawkesbury Hospital
- Local public paediatric services to cope with the demand, especially in the areas of speech pathology and audiometry
- Access to local infection diseases and immunology clinic/specialist
- Hawkesbury Hospital services including a fracture clinic, outpatient services, a public diabetic clinic and dialysis services



The PHN always welcomes input from the GPs in our region. You can do this online at: [www.nbmphn.com.au/GP-involvement](http://www.nbmphn.com.au/GP-involvement)

### Next steps

The valuable GP feedback has helped to:

- Provide ideas for improving the delivery of patient care through the health continuum of General Practice, hospital and community settings
- Identify gaps in services for patients
- Enhance the ability of GPAC's Hawkesbury members to effectively represent the local GP community, through learning more about GPs' opinions, issues and possible solutions

**Full report: [www.nbmphn.com.au/HawkesburyConsultation2017](http://www.nbmphn.com.au/HawkesburyConsultation2017)**