



SWAN HILL DISTRICT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2029



**Swan Hill
District Health**
Connected Care. Best Experience.



Artwork by: Sandra Kropinyeri as part of the wall mural at SHDH's Kapel Telkuna

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Swan Hill District Health would like to acknowledge First Nations communities of Wamba Wamba, Wadi Wadi, Barapa Barapa, Latji Latji and the Tatti Tatti people on whose land we work and live. We pay respect to all Elders past and present and honour their connection to land and water

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Our Story

Our service has evolved considerably since September 22, 1860, when the first patient was admitted to our hospital, a 35- year-old shepherd, James Brennan. The hospital was founded by a group of concerned squatters of the district and pre-dates many of the larger hospitals in our state.

In 2008 we changed our name from Swan Hill District Hospital to Swan Hill District Health (SHDH) to better describe the range of services we now offer.

Today, Swan Hill District Health is a 143 bed (including Aged Care) fully integrated rural public health service located on the Murray River in rural Victoria 344 km north west of Melbourne. We employ around 720 staff in our unique service which now includes Emergency, Acute, Community and Aged Care elements connected with our own Medical Centre providing GP services.

As a health service we seek to make the most of the opportunities for collaboration and partnerships, to deliver care as close as possible to home, reflecting contemporary models of care.

Our new One Team Culture gives us common language and tools to work well together across our whole service. It will impact us all positively in the life of this Strategic Plan, enabling us to deliver our Strategic Plan collectively with our many partners across the breadth of services and skills that we have.

With effect 1 July 2025, we are a member of the Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network (LMLHSN). This provides many new opportunities for collaboration and enables us to contribute meaningfully to system-level outcomes as a trusted collaborator.



Photo credit: Rochelle P

Our Community

Our community includes more than 34, 000 people living in Swan Hill and surrounds who access SHDH directly or through other public health services within our region. Many of these people rely on SHDH to provide the higher level and specialist care only a larger service can. Our community includes people in the district who are also serviced by local health services in Kerang, Sea Lake and Robinvale as our valued partners.

Beyond these, there are many additional people who form part of our community, including those who live across the border in New South Wales for whom we provide a wide range of services for and now represent nearly 12% of our total activity. We also recognise as part of our community the increasing number of people who access SHDH services as a visitor to our region, noting the increasing popularity of our river towns as destinations for both short and long-term visitors.

In total the catchment area extends to approximately 100 kilometre radius, with First Nations peoples being 5% of our community. This includes people from the Wamba Wamba, Wadi Wadi, Barapa Barapa, Latji Latji and the Tatti Tatti communities.

Currently our community has a median age of 35 years, with a large and increasing element from non-English speaking backgrounds. We also have a large group of people aged over 70 years who live alone, and in many cases on isolated properties.

About 8% of our community are receiving disability support pension (compared with 4.2% average for Victoria) and nearly 1 in three of our adult population are obese ($BMI \geq 30$) about 50% higher than the State average.

Our community is a generous and supportive one. Although SHDH is mostly state funded with additional commonwealth funding received for specified programs such as aged care, we benefit from the donations and in-kind support of our community, and value this highly. Most recently this has been the \$2.6m raised to provide our community with an MRI machine.



Photo credit: Chloe K

Our 2026-2029 Strategic Plan

The core of our Strategic Plan is our Purpose, which is unchanged from our previous Strategic Plan: **Connected care. Best experience.**

The core also includes our Values and Priorities and our One Team Culture, working through and with the Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network.

We depict this graphically as below:

Our One Team Culture: Watch this space..



After a thorough consultation with our community, staff and stakeholders, and consideration of the many opportunities and needs we face, our 2026 – 2029 Strategic Plan identifies 17 Key Actions across our four equally important Priorities, those being:

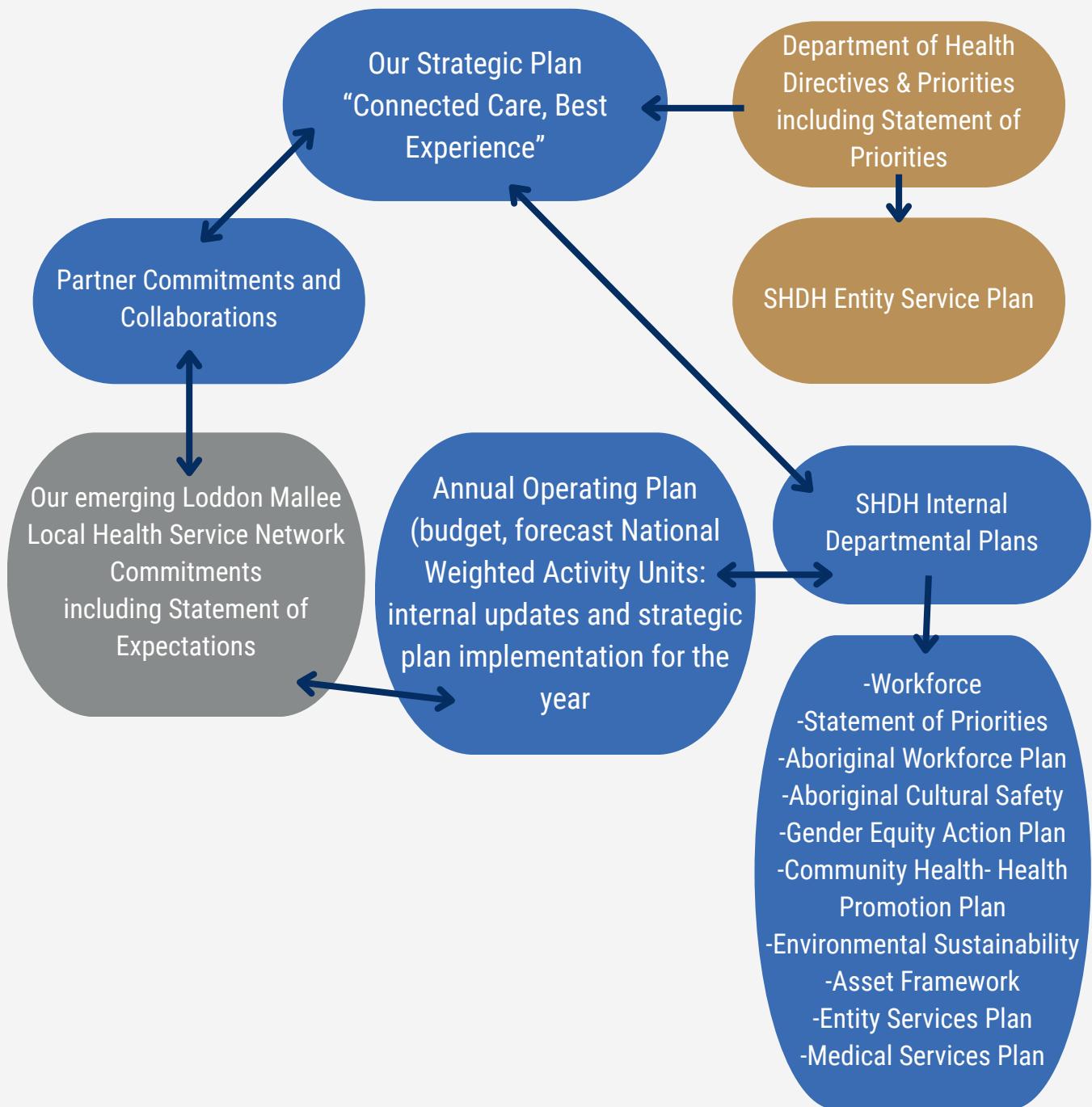
- Delivering safe services that make a positive difference.
- Building a leading culture.
- Working together for improved performance.
- Creating environments for individuals to thrive.

Our Key Actions

<p>Delivering safe services that make a positive difference.</p>	<p>Building a leading culture.</p>
<p>a. Make tangible improvements in Aboriginal Health and ensure the access needed is provided.</p> <p>b. Embrace available health technology to reduce dependency on hospital beds and deliver care as close to home as possible.</p> <p>c. Further connect the care and activity of our Medical Clinic to the rest of our services to enable our people to be healthy and living in their own home.</p> <p>d. Safely and sustainably grow our services to prevent our people having to travel elsewhere.</p> <p>e. Establish our MRI and Short Stay services.</p> <p>f. Partner with the Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network to better enable mental health services as close to home as possible.</p>	<p>a. Finalise and implement our One Team Culture, acknowledging we are stronger when we work together in collaboration.</p> <p>b. Implement the priorities of our Workforce Development Plan and the People Matters Survey.</p> <p>c. Support all our staff to be able to work to the top of scope of practice as the key to optimal service delivery.</p> <p>d. Implement our Aboriginal Workforce Plan.</p>
<p>Working together for improved performance.</p>	<p>Creating environments for individuals to thrive.</p>
<p>a. Continue our innovative and collaborative approaches to workforce challenges, focused on growing our own where we can.</p> <p>b. Work with and across our communities to reduce the risks and impacts of hospital avoidable admissions.</p> <p>c. Provide the means to optimise our funding from donations and non-government funding.</p> <p>d. Develop and implement our five year environmental plan to achieve agreed sustainability goals in line with the Government investment.</p>	<p>a. Work with the Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network to enable its collective impact, maximising our contribution to and benefit from it.</p> <p>b. Continue to enhance the safety, quality and impact of the full range of aged care services including dementia care.</p> <p>c. Maximise the quality of our physical environments, in both the short and longer term.</p>

Understanding where our plan fits

Our Strategic Plan is a key element but not the only element in SHDH planning framework. As depicted below, our new plan informs and is informed by a range of other documents which together provide our 2026 Planning Framework.



Our Role

within the new Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network

1. From the outset of the Health Services Plan, we have been and will continue to be a leader in the local health services network process. We seek to use the LMLHSN to strengthen partnerships and be a major participant in it as a leader and change driver, ensuring we contribute meaningfully to system-level outcomes and are seen as a trusted collaborator.

2. In doing so, we continue to move to value-based care provision and maximization of local and networked capability through a systems approach.

This means:



Working through the key actions that best connect us to the LMLHSN and draw on the available expertise of the networks expertise.



We need to work on getting the best asset we can with support of the LMLHSN. Of all the health services our facility has the oldest infrastructure.

3. We need to ensure all the voices of the different services are heard at any Network table, noting the initial governance structures support this. This is how we can make the most of the opportunities for collaboration and partnerships, the evolving health reform landscape, and a very tight budget environment.

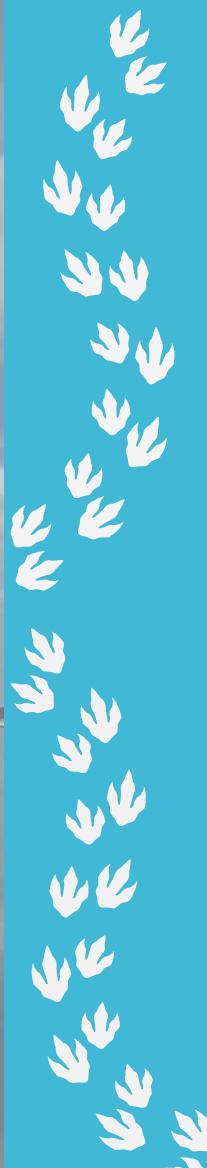
4. Opportunities for us as a service through the LMLHSN include:



Helping establish a high functioning system that enables better access and flow (noting the priority of the Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network Clinical Service Plan) and then for service growth, new services and efficiencies in how we do our work.



Supporting the LMLHSN as the driver and enabler of digital technology improvements for SHDH as part of our Network technology improvement plans, including a common Electronic Medical Record (EMR) for all members of the LMLHSN.



Our Infrastructure Priorities

The complete implementation of the new Strategic Plan is contingent on the following infrastructure improvements in the life of the Strategic Plan:



1. Progression of the balance of our approved Master Plan Stage 2 and beyond.



2. Improvements and repairs to our aging and no longer appropriate infrastructure within the hospital precinct.



3. Delivery of a High Dependency Unit.



4. Fit out for our new Radiology shell.



5. Infrastructure to deliver our plan including dementia support.





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