



Working together for a healthier country WA

Quality Integrity
Community
Compassion Justice

Revitalising WA Country Health Service 2009-2012

Working together for a healthier country WA



Introduction

The WA Country Health Service is the largest country health system in Australia and one of the biggest in the world. It covers an area of some 2.5 million square kilometres, servicing a regional population of 454,000 people.

WA Country Health Service hospitals handle as many emergency presentations as those in the metropolitan area and as many births as the state's major maternity hospital, King Edward Memorial Hospital.

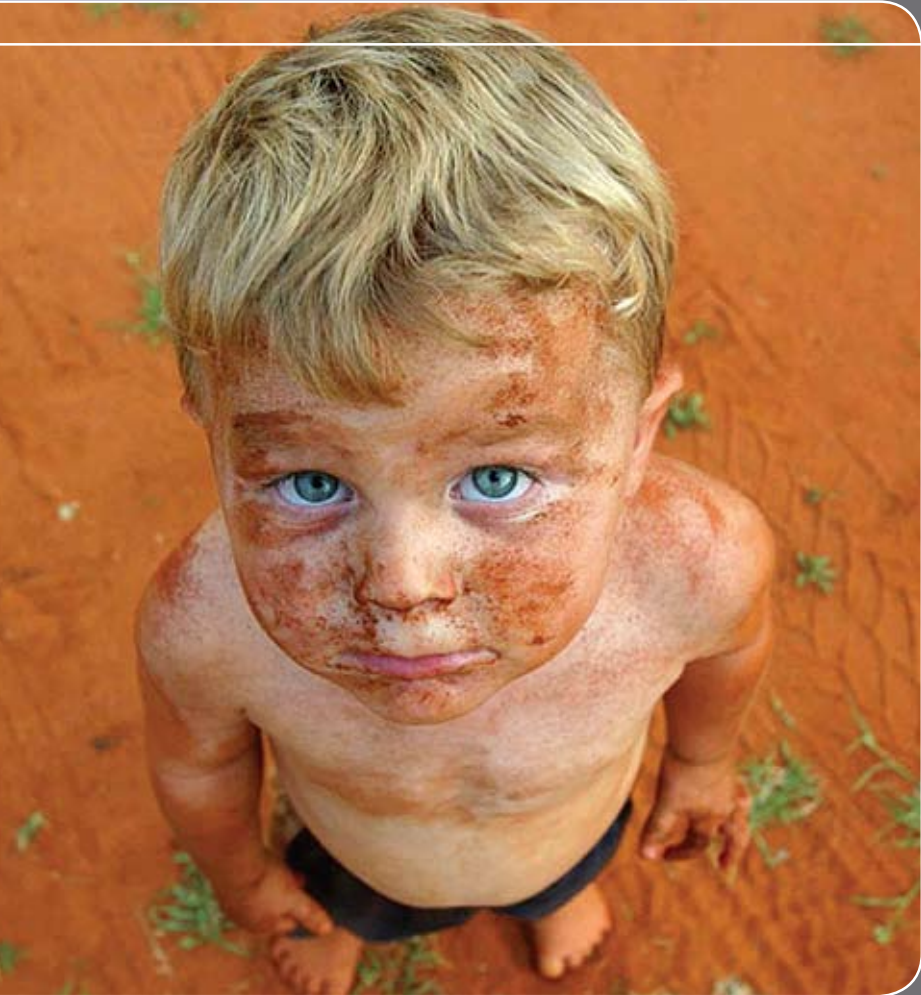
Revitalising WA Country Health Service 2009–2012 outlines the way forward for health service delivery in regional WA. It follows on from the WA Country Health Service Strategic Plan 2007–2010 titled *Foundations for Country Health Services*.

The purpose, values and actions contained in this document have evolved through consultation with WA Country Health Service staff and community members throughout regional WA. I would like to extend my thanks to all those who generously contributed their time and knowledge to this project and to the many dedicated people who deliver health services in country communities every day.

Kim Snowball
Chief Executive Officer
WA Country Health Service



What we stand for



- ▶ **A fair share for country health**
Securing a fair share of resources and being accountable for their use
- ▶ **Service delivery according to need**
Improving service access based on need and improving health outcomes
- ▶ **Closing the gap to improve Aboriginal health**
Improving the health of Aboriginal people
- ▶ **Workforce stability and excellence**
Building a skilled workforce and a supportive workplace

Our values

WA Country Health Service staff demonstrate these values at all times:



Community

Country hospitality, where there is openness, generosity and cooperation. Building healthy and empowered communities and teams, being inclusive, working together, valuing each other and the difference we can all make. A 'can-do' attitude.



Compassion

Commitment to caring for others with consideration, appreciation, understanding, empathy, kindness and respect. Listening and being heard.



Quality

Always striving to provide the best possible care and service through questioning and review, high standards, innovation, creativity, learning and improving. All of us being part of the solution.



Integrity

Building trust based on openness, honesty, accountability and valuing and respecting others opinions and points of view. Demonstrating the values. Respectful communication and relationship building. Being mindful of the legacy we hand on to future staff and communities.



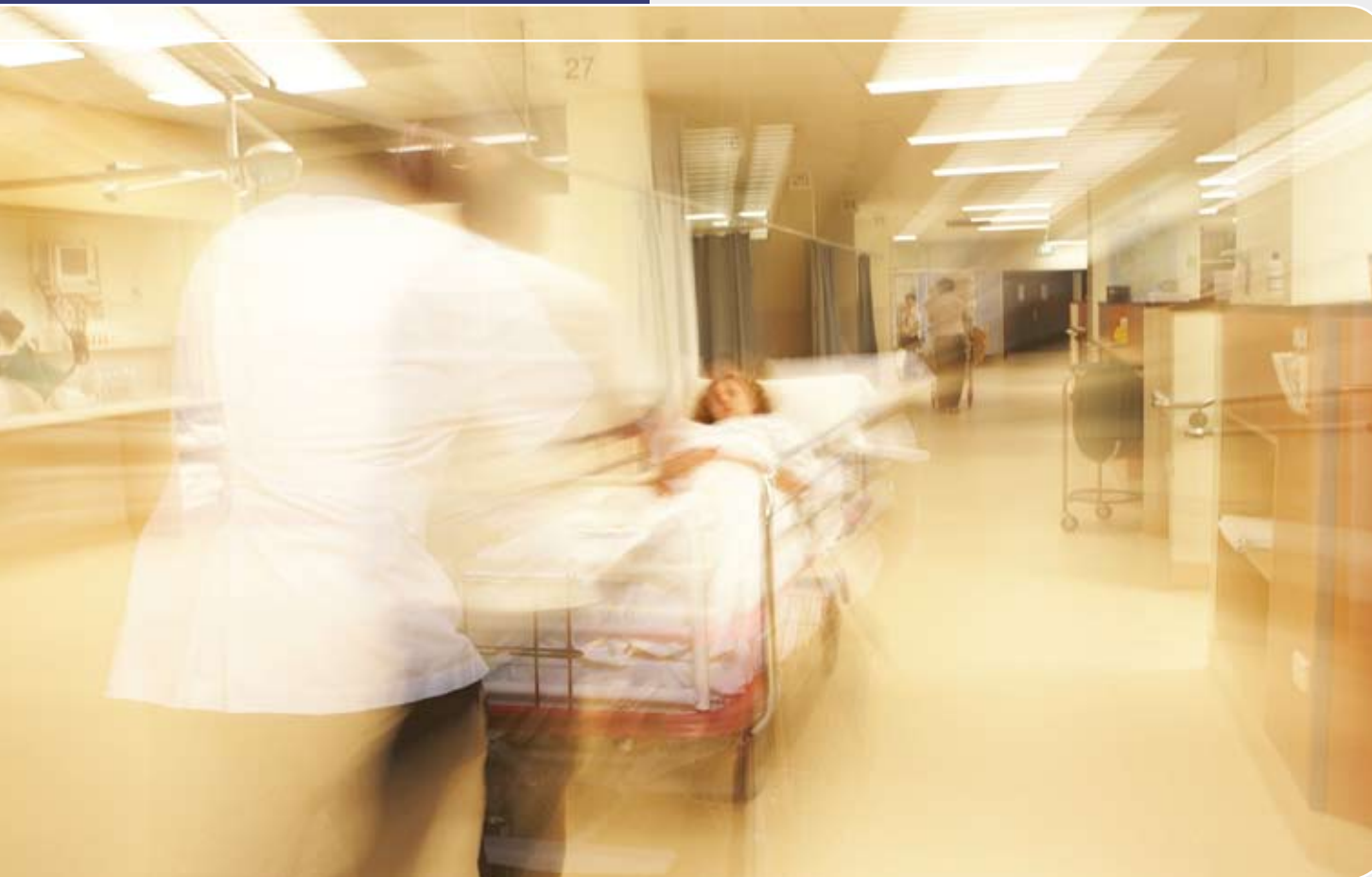
Justice

Achieving equity and fairness, showing cultural respect, valuing and embracing diversity and respecting confidentiality. Treating everyone equally. Speaking up when there is injustice. Transparency.



Key actions

Strengthen and improve access to emergency department services



By better coordinating clinical services and improving support to country clinicians, emergency services will be strengthened and improved across the State.

Emergency department services will be coded so the type and level of the service is apparent to individuals, communities and clinicians, informing them of where and how to access the right care.

“Looking after each other as we all have common purpose to make a difference to people’s lives – mateship!”

Work with communities so that health and hospital services match health needs

Over the years, the health needs and demographics of country communities have changed. Modern health care is not just about hospital services but also about preventing illness and disease and caring for people in their homes.

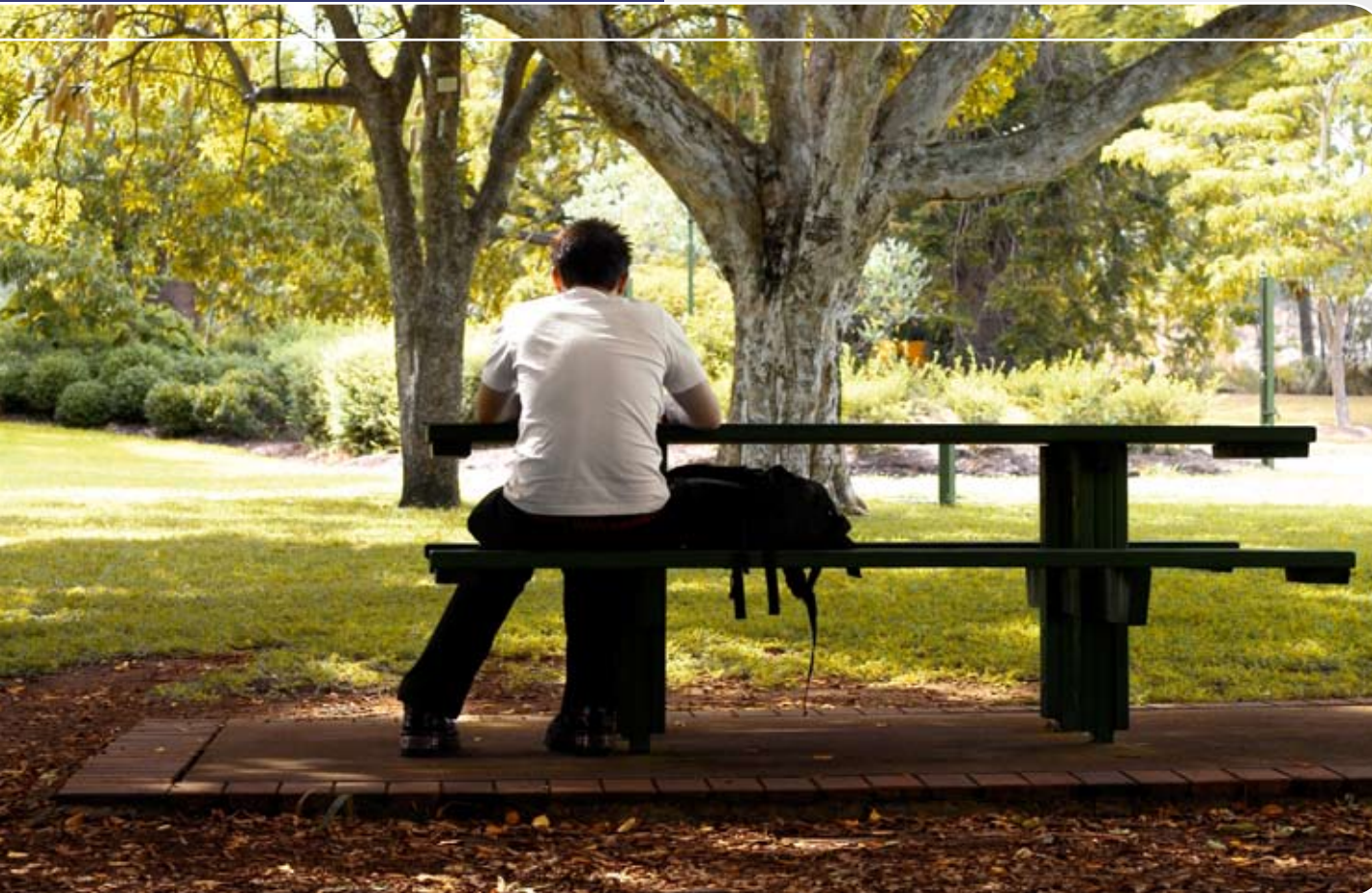
The WA Country Health Service will clearly delineate and describe the types of services to be provided by hospitals and local health services so that communities know what service is provided, where it is located and how it can be accessed.



“To provide an exceptional standard of care – service.”

Key actions

Link alcohol, drug and mental health services and strengthen prevention and mental health promotion



Alcohol, drug and mental health services will be better linked to improve services and health outcomes for those with dual diagnosis.

Working with communities and agencies, WA Country Health Service will seek to reduce alcohol and drug related harm and illness in local communities and support mental health promotion and suicide prevention across country WA.

Communities, District Health Advisory Councils and Regional Planning Forums will be regularly updated about the impact of alcohol and drugs on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. They will be invited to assist by increasing awareness about prevention approaches that reduce injury and illness and improve health.

Improve access of communities in rural and remote WA to primary health care services

Prevention, early detection and intervention are essential to improving health and quality of life for all. Too few general practitioners in regional and remote WA means we need to explore new and innovative ways of ensuring country communities continue to have access to primary or community based health services.

The WA Country Health Service will work together with Commonwealth, State and local governments, general practitioners, Aboriginal community controlled health organisations and other non-government organisations to make best use of all available resources.



Key actions

Stabilise and skill the workforce and provide a safe and supportive workplace



The country health workforce faces challenges unique to rural and remote areas. The WA Country Health Service will develop appropriate skills training and support programs tailored to meet these challenges and to attract, build and retain a strong, stable country health workforce.

Develop a supportive culture and leaders who promote the WA Country Health Service values.

“Working with people who are kind committed, knowledgeable, helpful, positive and hardworking.”

Improve services to Aboriginal communities and boost Aboriginal employment opportunities

The WA Country Health Service will work closely with Aboriginal communities to develop regional Aboriginal health plans to improve their health and ensure culturally appropriate health services.

Increase the number of Aboriginal people working in country health services by setting employment targets and provide training, access to purposeful work and the creation of a workplace culture and environment that attracts and retains Aboriginal people.



“Working with a wide variety of people on a wide variety of projects.”

Key actions

Establish the WA Centre for Country Health Service Research and Education

An inter-disciplinary health service research and education program will be introduced during 2009–2011.

The WA Centre for Country Health Service Research and Education will be established by 2012 to provide professional development and further education and research opportunities for staff and to benefit regional communities.

*“Assisting people –
seeing other people grow.”*



Develop the WA Country Health Service Permanent Employee Housing Accommodation Strategy

A business plan will be developed with Government Regional Officers Housing (GROH) to improve WA Country Health Service accommodation for permanent employees.

The WA Country Health Service will continue to manage and resource improvements to short term and transient employee accommodation facilities.

“Commitment to making a difference – change.”



Key actions

Develop secure electronic clinical information systems, telehealth & e-health



The WA Country Health Service will improve access to health services in rural and remote WA by promoting the electronic exchange of clinical information and strengthening links to regional and metropolitan hospital and private providers through the use of telehealth and other e-health services.

“To provide the safest, best possible services to country communities, in partnership with others.”

Revitalise community and stakeholder partnerships and communication

The WA Country Health Service will include communities, service partners and funding providers in planning and improving health care services, by encouraging their participation in a range of advisory and consultative groups and forums and ensuring a regular flow of information about health services.

Integral to this are the District Health Advisory Councils, the Country Health Forum and the Executive Aboriginal Reference Group as well as improved local communication.

“Having a vision for the patient’s journey.”



Key actions

Develop a financial resource model to improve funding of country health services



The unique challenges encountered in providing health services in rural and remote Western Australia attract an additional financial burden not faced in the metropolitan area. These include higher staffing, accommodation and communications costs, a higher cost of living, a greater cost for transferring patients between hospitals, as well as having to act as a provider of last resort with too few GPs and a lack of private health service providers in many areas.

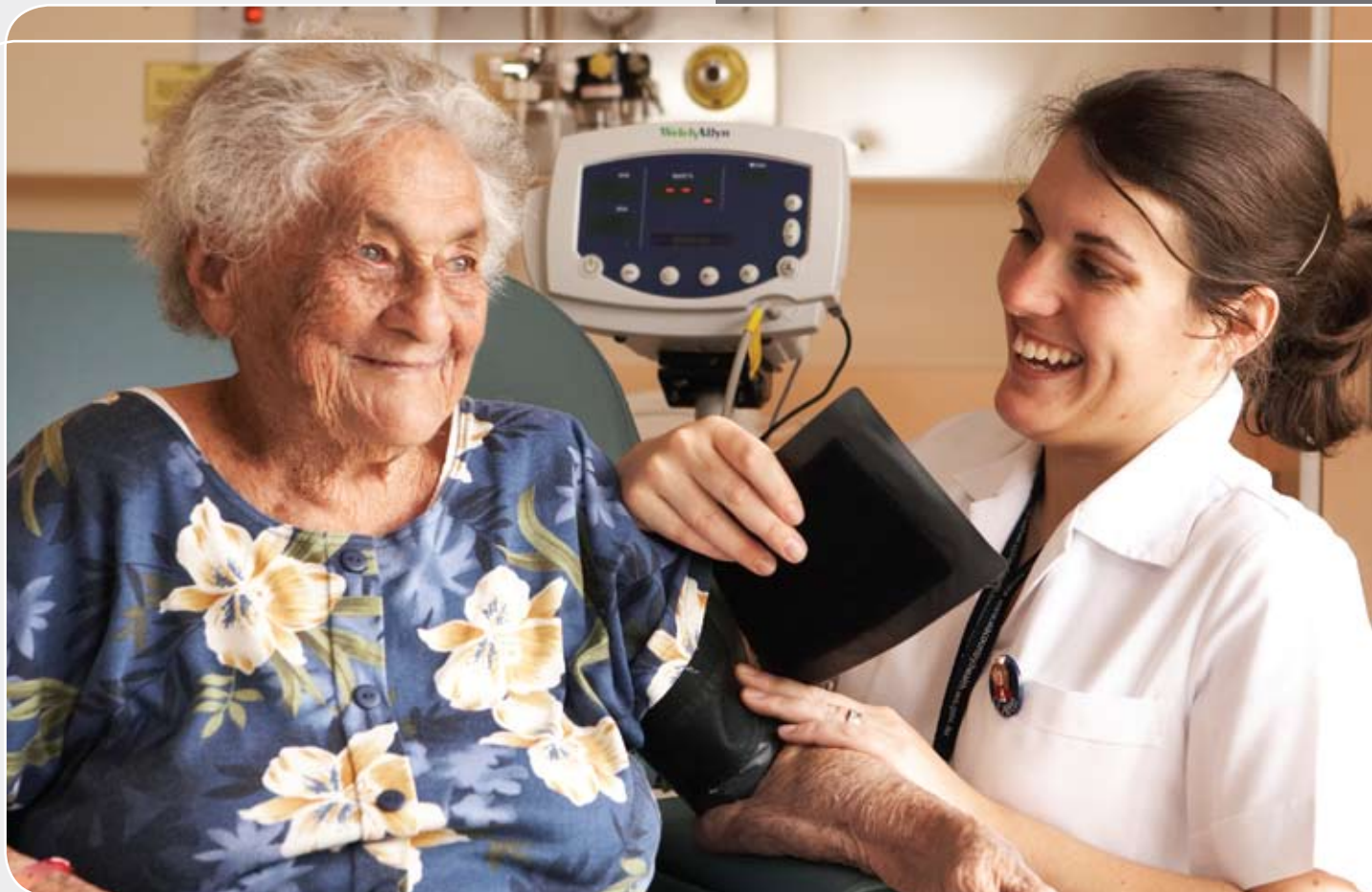
A Country Resource Allocation Model will be developed to ensure large country hospitals are funded appropriately to account for these additional costs and according to the level of demand for services.



Improve country aged care services

The changing demography and aged care needs of country communities requires focused attention to achieve access to the right mix of services in the right place.

The WA Country Health Service, in close partnership with the Commonwealth, private and non-government organisations, service funders and providers, will work to improve the quality and accessibility of aged care community and residential services through a range of initiatives. These include the expansion of multi-purpose services and the creation of nurse practitioner positions.



Key actions

Introduce new models of care that improve services and the health and well being of country people



Models of care are being introduced throughout the state to improve delivery of clinical and health care for a range of significant health conditions including maternal and child health, chronic kidney disease, palliative care and strokes.

In rural and remote areas, the mix of service providers, types of services offered and needs of the community differ from those in the metropolitan area.

The WA Country Health Service sees models of care informing the way services are provided, based on the latest evidence about how to deliver care. Country Health is working with clinicians and a range of government, non government and private service providers to implement these models in ways that are best suited to each region.



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Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**
WA Country Health Service

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