Family and community are intrinsic to our culture. It is a support network that enables our ongoing survival through which we maintain knowledge and traditions. The health of our community is determined by the strength of our networks and how we connect with others. The artwork depicts our community (the centre) with tracks leading to other connections of bush food, healing circles, meeting places and other services we access to maintain our culture. These elements ensure we have a strong, healthy and resilient community with strong connections.

Jasmine Sarin is a proud Kamilaroi and Jerrinja woman from NSW. Jasmine grew up predominantly on the South Coast in Nowra (Jerinja and Yuin country) and Wollongong (Dharawal country) but has country influences from Coonabarabran in Central West NSW (Kamilaroi country). Jasmine is a self taught visual artist and graphic designer whose artwork tells the story of her experiences growing up and her ongoing journey in this world. This allows Jasmine to bring contemporary methods and concepts to the oldest culture on earth.

"I pay my respects to my elders both past and present and acknowledge that the land on which I work and play on was, is and always will be Aboriginal Land." Jasmin Sarin

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Content within this publication was accurate at the time of publication September 2017
FOREWORD

On behalf of the Board and our staff, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across our region and that we live and work on Aboriginal lands. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our nation. It is with great pride that we present Western NSW Local Health District’s first Reconciliation Action Plan. This Plan demonstrates our commitment to building respect and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is an important foundation to achieve meaningful gains in Aboriginal health.

In 2017, we reflect on two significant anniversaries in Australia’s reconciliation journey – 50 years since the 1967 referendum, and 25 years since the historic Mabo decision. As we commemorate these significant milestones, Reconciliation Australia asks all Australians to be a part of the next steps in our nation’s reconciliation journey.

As an organisation, we have made some significant steps to celebrate and build respectful relationships with Aboriginal communities. Our reconciliation journey will allow us to build on these relationships, to improve our workplaces for staff, and our services for patients, their families and communities.

The development of our Reconciliation Action Plan has provided a significant opportunity for all of us to reflect on how the work we do as health care professionals’ impacts on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and communities.

This region has Aboriginal history that we need to appreciate to enable us to move forward in our journey. We want to create environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel welcome and safe.

Our organisation, with 38 hospitals, 60 community health services and over 7000 staff, has a real opportunity to help the healing process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our region. We want our facilities to become a haven where all people who are scared, sick or injured feel safe.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan is one component in ensuring that environment of care and protection is trusted and embraced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As we take the next steps in our reconciliation journey we need to be persistent and courageous so together we can make the changes needed to create that haven for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and their communities.

Mr Scott Griffiths PSM
Chair
WNSWLHD Board

Mr Scott Mclachlan
Chief Executive
WNSWLHD
To provide holistic, world-class and culturally safe healthcare that is delivered by a skilled and diverse workforce and enjoyed equally by all members of our communities.

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our organisation is deeply committed to achieving meaningful gains in Aboriginal Health. Meaningful gains need to be supported by the development of sustainable solutions to improve the delivery of culturally respectful services. Our vision for reconciliation is to build a strong, safe health district that recognises, respects and incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history throughout our organisation.
Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) aims to provide the best possible experience for people using public health services by making sure these services are of high quality, appropriate, safe, available when and where needed, and coordinated to meet each individual’s needs. Our health services include facilities in more than 40 geographical locations across central-western NSW. These facilities offer an extensive range of services including medical, mental health, dental, allied health, surgical public health, acute services and primary health services with a focus on Aboriginal and multicultural health services.

Our organisation has a strong commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which is demonstrated through the implementation of key strategies that contribute to ‘Closing the Aboriginal Health Gap’. This commitment is reflected in Western NSW Local Health District’s Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020 and is supported by four focus areas:

1. Improved health and wellbeing of rural people.
3. World-class rural health care.
4. One health service across many places.

While we have identified a specific focus area to ensure we achieve meaningful gains in Aboriginal health and have embedded Aboriginal health across all focus areas with targeted programs identified and reported against. The development of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) also reflects our CORE values, described in Living Well Together of: collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment.

Our organisation employs approximately 5824 people of which 277 identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, equating to 4.76% across our Local Health District. There are nine Aboriginal nations and many language groups that exist within the District’s boundaries.

Note: This map indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people, which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects, or individual languages in a group. The boundaries are not intended to be exact. This map is not suitable for use in native title or other land claims.
OUR RAP

We are committed to improving the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Despite our significant investment in developing programs targeted at improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples, they still suffer a greater burden of poor health compared to any other population group.

The development of a RAP will assist us demonstrate our on-going commitment to developing practical relationships with our stakeholder, communities and staff to build strong effective cultural governance in our district. We aim to do this by encouraging employees to engage in their own personal reconciliation journeys and by increasing reconciliation initiatives, centered on the reconciliation themes relationships, respect and opportunities which will contribute to meaningful gains in Aboriginal health. This will assist us in improving the delivery of culturally appropriate health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families and communities.

This is our first RAP and it is championed by our Chief Executive in recognition of his strong personal commitment to building relationships that will contribute to meaningful gains in Aboriginal health.

Our district has established a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RWG) that consists of employees from across our organisation.

The RWG is an operational working group that supported the development and launch of our RAP. The RWG will be responsible for monitoring and leading the implementation of the RAP. The RWG has representatives from the following directorates:

- **THE RWG MEMBERSHIP HAS SEVEN ABORIGINAL REPRESENTATIVES AND HAS REPRESENTATION FROM THE FOLLOWING DIRECTORATES:**
  - Chief Executive
  - Executive Leadership Team
  - Clinical Governance
  - Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing
  - Corporate Services
  - Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Services
  - Allied Health
  - Nursing and Midwifery
  - Population Health
  - Medical Services
  - Clinical Operations
  - Workforce and Culture
  - Communication and Engagement

Our district also extended an invitation to the following stakeholder groups to provide comment:

- Bila Muuji
- Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly
- Primary Health Care Network
- Three Rivers Regional Authority
- Maari Ma Aboriginal Health Cooperation
- Health Councils

This document is not intended to be exhaustive. This initial RAP document is intended to contain key, measurable targets that can be built upon in future years. We recognise that reconciliation is a journey that may take some time, but the key strategies outlined in our RAP will bring about lasting and genuine change.
OUR PARTNERSHIPS & CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Our organisation is committed to establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes. Two initiatives that support this commitment are outlined below.

**Western NSW Local Health District Aboriginal Partnership Agreement 2015-2020**

The Aboriginal Health Partnership Agreement provides a framework for Bila Muuji Aboriginal Health Services Incorporated and our organisation to work together, in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western NSW.

The Aboriginal Health Partnership Agreement will provide leadership and ongoing advice on general health policies, strategic planning, service issues and equity in the allocation of resources where appropriate.

This Agreement supports the formalisation of local Partnership Action Plans between Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and our organisation, providing services to the same communities, to promote and pursue specific local initiatives and enhance communication and collaboration at the local level. This framework also provides a foundation for formalising our partnership with the Primary Health Network to ensure we are working together to deliver the best health outcomes for people living in our LHD.

**Western NSW Local Health District Aboriginal Signage Project**

Our organisation has agreed to incorporate Aboriginal signage and artwork throughout all new facility projects and all existing facilities across our district. This project focuses on establishing suitable culturally sensitive signage at the front of health facilities, within the main entry of facilities and incorporating Aboriginal language into signage, as a way to develop partnerships and provide a welcoming and culturally sensitive health environment for all our community members.
1. RAP Working Group (RWG) actively monitors RAP development and implementation

**TARGET:** Form a RWG that is operational to support the development of our RAP, comprising of Aboriginal people and decision-making staff from across our organisation.
**TIMELINE:** July 2017
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Chair, RWG

**TARGET:** Oversee the development, endorsement and launch of the RAP.
**TIMELINE:** September 2017
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Chair, RWG

**TARGET:** Meet at least four times per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.
**TIMELINE:** December 2018
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Chair, RWG

**TARGET:** Appoint an internal RAP Champion/s from senior management.
**TIMELINE:** July 2017
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Chair, RWG

**TARGET:** Ensure there are Aboriginal peoples on the RWG.
**TIMELINE:** July 2017
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Chair, RWG

**TARGET:** Established Terms of Reference for the RWG.
**TIMELINE:** July 2017
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Chair, RWG
Reconciliation can only occur when strong and respectful relationships are formed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Our organisation will utilise our RAP as a platform to demonstrate our commitment to developing, strengthening and maintaining relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, community members and other stakeholders.

2. Celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) to strengthen and maintain relationships between all WNSWLHD staff

**TARGET:** Organise an internal NRW event at each of our base hospitals each year.  
**TIMELINE:** June 2018, 2019  
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Clinical Operations

**TARGET:** Encourage staff and senior leaders to participate in external events to recognise and celebrate NRW.  
**TIMELINE:** June 2018, 2019  
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Clinical Operations

**TARGET:** Support our health services to host NRW events that could include in kind support and/or partnering with community organisations.  
**TIMELINE:** June 2018, 2019  
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Clinical Operations

**TARGET:** Register our NRW events via Reconciliation Australia’s NRW website.  
**TIMELINE:** May 2018, 2019  
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Clinical Operations

**TARGET:** Ensure our Working Group participates in an external event to recognise and celebrate NRW  
**TIMELINE:** June 2018, 2019  
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Clinical Operations
3. Maintain and leverage mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support positive outcomes

TARGET: Meet with local Aboriginal organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.
TIMELINE: June 2018, 2019
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

4. Raise internal and external awareness of our RAP to promote reconciliation across our business and sector

TARGET: Implement and review an engagement plan to work with our Aboriginal stakeholders.
TIMELINE: June 2018, 2019
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

TARGET: Meet with local Aboriginal organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.
TIMELINE: June 2018, 2019
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

TARGET: Implement and review a strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders.
TIMELINE: July 2019
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Communications and Engagement

TARGET: Promote reconciliation through ongoing active engagement with all stakeholders.
TIMELINE: July 2019
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Communications and Engagement

TARGET: Ensure our senior leaders are engaged in the delivery of RAP outcomes.
TIMELINE: July 2019
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Communications and Engagement
THE BREWARRINA FISH TRAPS - (Brewarrina NSW)
The Brewarrina fish traps are estimated to be over 40,000 years old and one of the oldest man-made structures on earth. This elaborate network of rock weirs and pools stretches for around half a kilometre along the riverbed and was built by local Aboriginal people, to catch fish as they swam upstream.

Photo provided by Graham Bolton
5. Increase knowledge and understanding of culture, histories and achievements

**TARGET:**
Implement and review a cultural awareness training strategy for our staff which defines continuous cultural learning needs of employees in all areas of our business and considers various ways cultural learning can be provided (online, face to face workshops or cultural immersion).

**TIMELINE:**
June 2018

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
85% of staff, Board and the Executive Leadership Team to undertake online cultural learning activities.

**TIMELINE:**
July 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
85% of staff to undertake face to face cultural workshop learning activities.

**TIMELINE:**
September 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
100% of all RAP Working Group members to undertake cultural learning activities.

**TIMELINE:**
April 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
Promote the Reconciliation Australia’s Share Our Pride online tool to all staff.

**TIMELINE:**
March 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
100% of Board members and the Executive Leadership team undertake face to face cultural workshop learning activities.

**TIMELINE:**
August 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
85% of staff to undertake face to face cultural workshop learning activities.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
100% of Board members and the Executive Leadership team undertake face to face cultural workshop learning activities.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
Promote the Reconciliation Australia’s Share Our Pride online tool to all staff.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
85% of Board members and the Executive Leadership team undertake face to face cultural workshop learning activities.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
100% of Board members and the Executive Leadership team undertake face to face cultural workshop learning activities.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
Promote the Reconciliation Australia’s Share Our Pride online tool to all staff.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
85% of Board members and the Executive Leadership team undertake face to face cultural workshop learning activities.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

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**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:**
Promote the Reconciliation Australia’s Share Our Pride online tool to all staff.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Workforce and Culture
Our organisation has a deep respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within our district, the footprints left, those being created and for visitors from other regions. We appreciate the history, heritage, spirituality and knowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples possess. The contributions made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has assisted in the development of our organisation today. We also acknowledge the importance of understanding the impact history has had and continues to have upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the need to work together and learn from each other in the healing process in order to improve the health and wellbeing of all our people.

6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal people and communities by embedding cultural protocols as part of the way our organisation functions

TARGET:
Implement and communicate a cultural protocol document for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.
TIMELINE:
July 2019
RESPONSIBILITY:
Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

TARGET:
Invite a local Traditional Owner to provide a Welcome to Country at five senior leadership meetings per annum.
TIMELINE:
July 2018
RESPONSIBILITY:
Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

TARGET:
Maintain and review a list of key contacts for organising a Welcome to Country.
TIMELINE:
July 2019
RESPONSIBILITY:
Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

TARGET:
All staff and Senior Leadership to provide an Acknowledgement of Country at all public events.
TIMELINE:
July 2019
RESPONSIBILITY:
Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing
ABORIGINAL ROCK ART AT MOUNT GRENFELL NATIONAL PARK - (Near Cobar NSW)
Mount Grenfell is located approximately 70km west of Cobar displays some the finest Aboriginal rock art in Australia. Three main rock shelters contain over 1,300 richly coloured images including those of humans, kangaroos, birds, other animal figures and also depict some Dreamtime stories. These artworks are painted using Ocre and are applied with fingertip or brush. The inextricable link between Aboriginal people and the land has been recognised and on the 17th July 2004, Mount Grenfell was handed back to traditional land owners the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people.

Photo taken by: Gordon Smith

TARGET: Include Acknowledgment of Country at the commencement of internal management meetings.
TIMELINE: July 2018
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

TARGET: Create and display an Acknowledgment of Country plaque in our office/on our office building.
TIMELINE: December 2018
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

TARGET: Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols within an organisational protocol.
TIMELINE: March 2019
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

TARGET: Develop and implement an Aboriginal Signage and Art Project across the LHD to be completed in 2020.
TIMELINE: July 2019
RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing
7. Celebrate NAIDOC Week and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage with culture and community during NAIDOC Week

TARGET: Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.  
TIMELINE: May 2018, 2019  
RESPONSIBILITY: Chief Executive

TARGET: Provide opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in local NAIDOC Week events.  
TIMELINE: July 2018, 2019  
RESPONSIBILITY: Chief Executive

TARGET: In consultation with our Aboriginal community and stakeholders, hold an internal or public NAIDOC Week event.  
TIMELINE: July 2018, 2019  
RESPONSIBILITY: Chief Executive

TARGET: Support all staff to participate in NAIDOC Week events in the local community.  
TIMELINE: July 2018, 2019  
RESPONSIBILITY: Chief Executive

TARGET: Recognise and promote dates of cultural significance.  
TIMELINE: July 2018, 2019  
RESPONSIBILITY: Chief Executive
FOCUS AREA: MEANINGFUL GAINS IN ABORIGINAL HEALTH AND ONE HEALTH SERVICE ACROSS MANY PLACES.

8. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and retention

**TARGET:** Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment to 9.4%

**TIMELINE:** September 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:** Implement, review and update Aboriginal Health Workforce Strategy, which includes recruitment, retention and professional development.

**TIMELINE:** July 2018, 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:** Advertise all job vacancies in Aboriginal media.

**TIMELINE:** March 2018, 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:** Engage with existing Aboriginal Health workforce to consult on employment strategies, including professional development.

**TIMELINE:** September 2018, 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:** Develop an Aboriginal employment pathways strategy.

**TIMELINE:** November 2018

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Workforce and Culture

**TARGET:** Develop an Aboriginal leadership program.

**TIMELINE:** July 2018

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Workforce and Culture
Providing employment and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is important to our organisation. Our organisation benefits from this by having the ability to provide one health service across many places this allows our organisation to tap into the wealth of knowledge and connection to community that our Aboriginal Workforce brings. Employing and training Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people assists in addressing social determinants and builds capacity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity

**TARGET:**
Implement an Aboriginal procurement strategy that includes:
• Set procurement target for goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses;
• Reviewing state procurement contracts for Health to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses that are pre-qualified; and
• Ensure corporate services’ contracts encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation with set targets.

**TIMELINE:**
June 2018

**RESPONSIBILITY:**
Director, Corporate Services

**TARGET:**
Develop at least one ongoing commercial relationships with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business. **TIMELINE:**
June 2018 **RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Corporate Services

**TARGET:**
Set target for the number of commercial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. **TIMELINE:**
June 2018 **RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Corporate Services

**TARGET:**
Utilise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers to develop and implement an Aboriginal Signage and Art Project across the LHD. **TIMELINE:**
June 2018 **RESPONSIBILITY:** Director, Corporate Services
10. Increase Aboriginal Leadership at senior levels within our organisation

TARGET:
Ensure that there is Aboriginal representation on our Board.
TIMELINE:
July 2017
RESPONSIBILITY:
Chief Executive

TARGET:
Appoint an Aboriginal identified Executive Director.
TIMELINE:
July 2017
RESPONSIBILITY:
Chief Executive

TARGET:
Develop a strategy to increase the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people working in senior leadership roles.
TIMELINE:
June 2018
RESPONSIBILITY:
Chief Executive
YURANIGH’S GRAVE - MOlONG
NSW
Inscription: ‘To Native Courage Honesty and Fidelity. Yuranigh who accompanied the expedition of discovery into tropical Australia in 1846 lies buried here according to the rites of his countrymen and this spot was dedicated and enclosed by the Governor General’s authority in 1852’.
Yuranigh was an Aboriginal guide and stockman, from the Molong district. He accompanied Sir Thomas Mitchell as a guide on his 1845-46 expedition to central Queensland. Sir Mitchell wrote of his ‘guide, companion, counsellor and friend’ that ‘his intelligence and his judgment rendered him so necessary to me that he was ever at my elbow. He passed away in Molong where his burial site is marked by four caved trees, indicating that Yuranigh was a man of special honour. These trees are believed to be the highest remaining number of carved trees around a single grave. Yuranigh (d.1850)
Photo taken by: Kirsty Glanville
11. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia for inclusion in the RAP Impact Measurement Report

TARGET:
Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.
TIMELINE:
September 2018, 2019
RESPONSIBILITY:
Chair, RWG

TARGET:
Investigate participation in the RAP Barometer.
TIMELINE:
May 2018
RESPONSIBILITY:
Chair, RWG

TARGET:
Develop and implement systems and capability needs to track, measure and report on RAP activities.
TIMELINE:
March 2018
RESPONSIBILITY:
Chair, RWG
12. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally

TARGET:
Publically report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings.
TIMELINE:
December 2017, 2018, 2019
RESPONSIBILITY:
Chair, RWG

13. Review, refresh and update RAP

TARGET:
Liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new RAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.
TIMELINE:
December 2018
RESPONSIBILITY:
Chair, RWG

TARGET:
Send draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia for formal feedback and endorsement.
TIMELINE:
May 2019
RESPONSIBILITY:
Chair, RWG

CONTACT DETAILS:
For all enquiries please email WNSWLHD-RAP@health.nsw.gov.au