

ACT

Health Workforce Strategy

2023–2032



ACT
Government

ACT Health

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Acknowledgment of Country

ACT Health Directorate acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. The Directorate respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. It also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.

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A Word from the Minister

Working together with our health workforce and key partners to build an ACT Health Workforce Strategy has been an important step in ensuring the ACT Government is supporting Canberra's talented and dedicated health workers to deliver vital services every day. Health workers provide essential care to the community and the ACT Health Workforce Strategy takes a comprehensive approach to recognising the areas that will need to be strengthened over the coming years and identifying early actions to continue building a sustainable health workforce across the Territory.

The ACT Government is committed to supporting our health workers now and into the future. In recent years we have grown the workforce across public health services and engaged in detailed planning that will be the foundation of our health system over the next decade. We've had a focus on wellbeing and put structures in place to make workplaces safer and enable more opportunities for professional development. This investment and planning is central to the ACT Government's commitment to building an integrated, sustainable, learning health system that can deliver nation- and world-leading services.

The last few years have been incredibly difficult for the ACT community and that has been the case particularly for the health workforce. Across all sectors, health workers have been caring for people in times of high stress, while they themselves were managing the impacts of bushfires, the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing demand on the health system.

The aim of the ACT Health Workforce Strategy is to recruit and retain health workers, support them to realise their ambitions and ensure their wellbeing is always front of mind. We aim for

workplaces that demonstrably value the health workforce and where health workers' voices are heard. We aim for a health system that continues to grow and learn to ensure it remains nation-leading. This Strategy sets out how we will achieve these ambitions. It identifies priorities and workforce considerations today and into the future which will form the basis for medium and long-term workforce planning and will enable a culture of learning and development, leadership, innovation and inclusion.

Health care is changing, with rapid growth in technology, the emergence of more sophisticated and effective interventions and models of care, and a focus on preventive and primary care interventions. The ACT Government continues to invest in health infrastructure and this Strategy will ensure we are well placed to attract staff for these new facilities and retain the skilled and experienced staff that are working in Canberra now.

The Strategy was designed with significant input from public and private healthcare providers, education providers, unions, primary care, non-government organisations, consumers and across government. An action plan will follow this Strategy, which will be driven by the same commitment to consultation and engagement.

To be a system where health workers want to come, and are motivated to stay, learn and provide high-quality patient-centered outcomes, everyone needs to work together across all the health system. I thank all those who have helped us get to this point and look forward to delivering the action plan in partnership with you.



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Health
May 2023



A Message from the ACT Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board

The ACT Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board [23](#), established in 2018, brings together local leaders and decision makers in the health, tertiary education and research sectors to agree on shared priorities to improve the health and wellbeing of the Canberra community. Key stakeholders include the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD), Canberra Health Services (CHS), Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, Capital Health Network (the ACT Primary Health Network), the Australian National University (ANU), the University of Canberra and the ACT Healthcare Consumers' Association.

We support the prioritisation and integration of efforts across the health education, research and service delivery systems in the ACT. We actively strive for our health system to be consumer-centred, high performing and integrated, with a culture of continuous learning and improvement. By representing different parts of the health system we seek to resolve barriers at the whole-of-system level and implement complementary actions within our organisations to progress change.

Workforce optimisation is one of our priority areas. We are committed to the recruitment, retention and development of a highly competent mobile and responsive health workforce that meets the needs of communities, employers and employees. We are also committed to increasing the size of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce in order to ensure a culturally safe and responsive health care environment.

The ACT is in a unique position in Australia in terms of what we can offer our health workforce. The workforce is distributed across the public, private and non-government sectors within a relatively small geographic location. This provides opportunities for the health workforce to partner together to achieve outcomes that benefit the whole community, for example through the delivery of new models of care, strong transition to practice programs for health professionals and research that addresses local and global health challenges

During the consultations to develop this strategy we heard that the workforce wants to work to their full scope of practice, have better career pathways and opportunities, for service design decisions to be data driven and for technology to be embraced. They want to be valued and respected and to have a rewarding career. Our collective ambition is to be the most capable health workforce in Australia. Current staff will be retained because of the positive learning culture within our health system, and new staff will be attracted to our health service because of the opportunities available and the workplace culture.

The ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023-2032 will support a safe and innovative work environment where every worker feels valued and has opportunity to grow and work to their full potential.

Our Vision

A highly skilled and valued health workforce supported by a learning health system delivering quality health outcomes for the community

The ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023-2032 (the Strategy) is a 10-year strategy, for building and retaining a sustainable health workforce for the ACT and surrounding regions. The Strategy will be accompanied by Action Plans to support its implementation.

A Territory-wide strategic approach to building a sustainable health workforce will support Canberra and the surrounding region to predict and respond to medium and long-term workforce challenges. It will inform operational workforce strategies and plans which can flexibly implement actions to align with organisational and community needs. It will also inform education partners about the types of

professionals and the academic and practical preparation needed for the workforce.

The Strategy will support and complement existing work across the ACT health system to recruit, retain and support our staff to achieve successful careers within the ACT. This includes building on the ACT Government's work to bring in an additional 400 health professionals following local benchmarking and workforce planning in line with community needs. This will ensure the ACT has the capacity and capability to deliver high quality patient outcomes to our community and surrounding regions into the future.





Principles

Our principles inform this Strategy, and its priorities and actions.



A valued workforce

A highly skilled and supported health workforce enables safe, high-quality person-centred care.



Respectful, diverse and inclusive

Diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces promote excellence and accessibility. Culturally responsive and safe for diverse staff and consumers.



Evidence informed and planned

High quality data, evidence and consultation drives optimal service and workforce planning.



Learning

Continuous improvement through learning drives better care and opportunities to support exciting careers.



Collaborative

One health system built on expertise, working together to deliver best practice care.



Sustainable

Supporting sustainable healthcare delivery, prevention and early intervention models to improve people's health and respond to system pressures.



Future focused

Embracing innovation, effective models of care and technology empowers our workforce and anticipates the future needs of our community.



Safe and secure

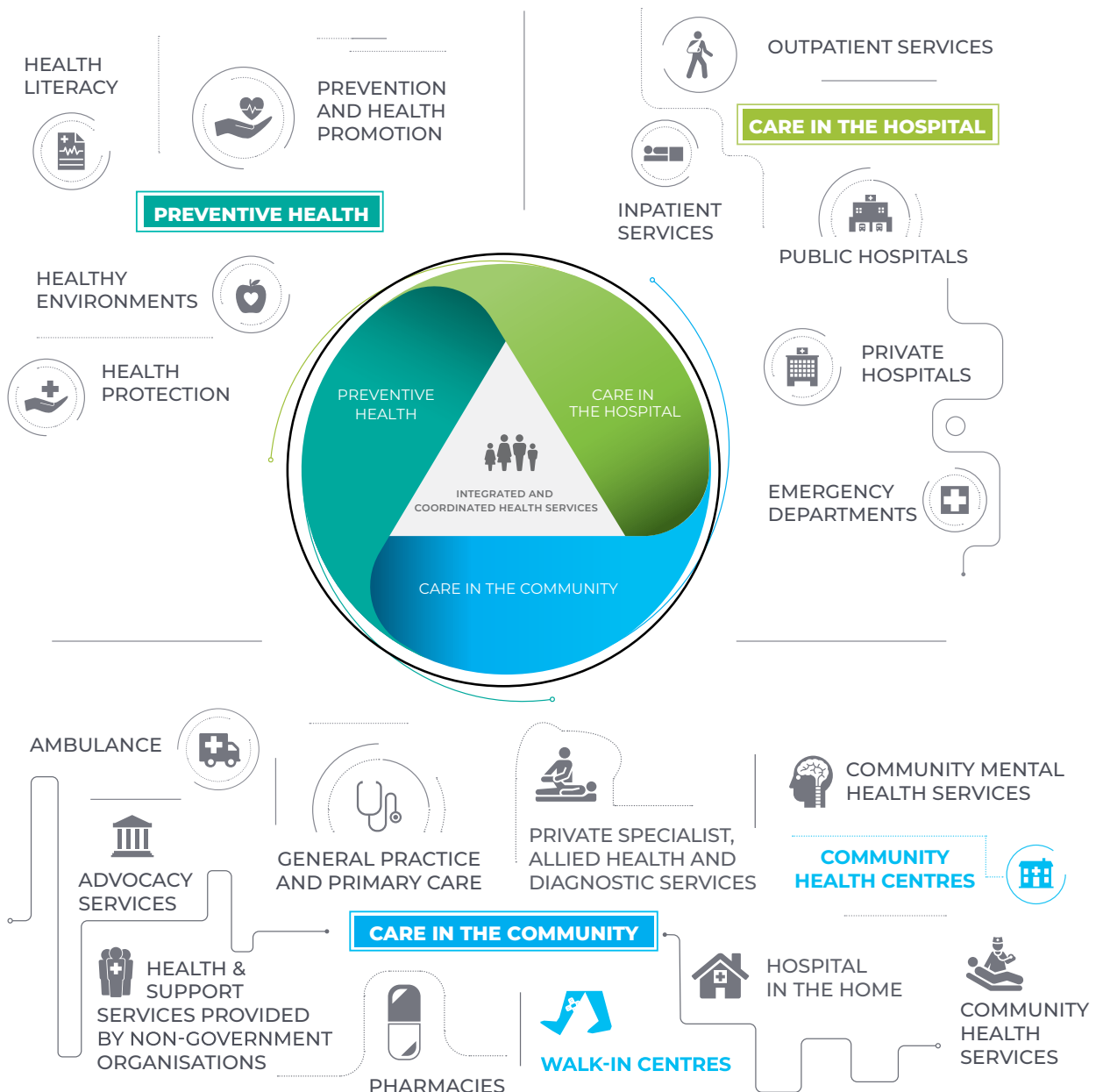
Supporting physical, psychological and cultural safety in our workforce with opportunities for secure employment.



Scope

The ACT provides health services with transitions of care across public and private sectors, both within the ACT and to surrounding New South Wales (NSW) regions. It relies on the interrelationship between health workers, care providers, support workers and consumers to provide quality outcomes and a safe and effective care journey across all sectors.

All the staff who come together to deliver effective, compassionate, coordinated and person-centered care play a vital role and are the focus of this strategy. Our health workforce includes a range of multidisciplinary health professionals including those registered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra), self-regulated and unregulated, technical and non-clinical staff, students and care workers.



The Health Workforce

The ACT has a highly skilled health workforce that delivers high quality and safe care every day to people across the Territory.



ACT Population
(2021 Census)

454,000

↑ 14.4%

increase since 2016²



The ACT provides **services and support** to consumers within the surrounding NSW region.



ACT Population
predicted to be

542,000

by 2032³



Population aged over 70 grew
from 32,685 to

43,690

persons between 2016-2021
(twice the rate of population growth²)



expected to grow to
62,500 by 2032³

Our workforce is diverse

We have a range of registered, unregistered, technical and non-clinical staff that support high-quality health care delivery.



Nurses



Doctors



Allied
Health



Midwives



Carers



Technical



Assistants



Support
services



Administration



Peer
Workers

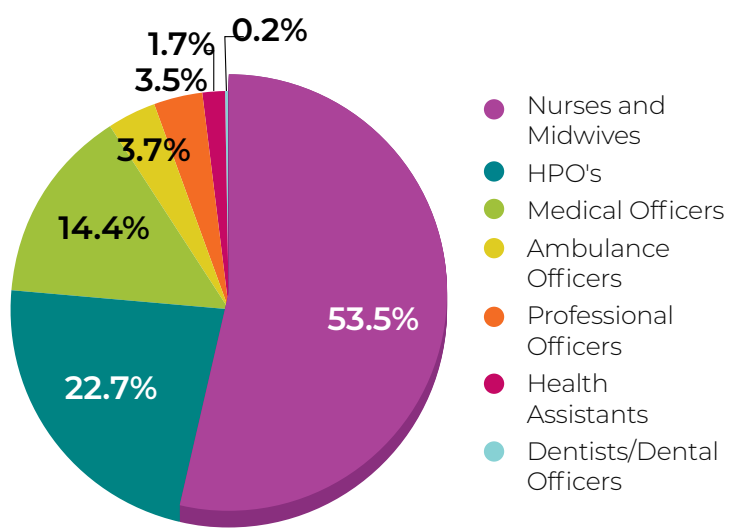


12,225
registered health
professionals in the ACT.

4.9%
increase since 2016 –
9,788
registered

- 10,864** Clinical
- 713** Administration
- 241** Educator/Teacher
- 95** Researcher
- 293** Other

FTE per classification in the ACTPS



FTE of GP's
99.3
per 100,000 (2021)
National average
120.7



Nurses registered
in the ACT (2021)

- 22** Aboriginal Health Service
- 412** Primary Care and Private Practice
- 3702** Hospital
- 102** Educational facilities
- 862** Community and outpatient services
- 60** Correctional Facility or Service
- 523** Residential health care and hospice
- 112** Defence Force
- 137** Government Agency
- 463** Other or not stated



Diversity employment targets within ACTPS



Aboriginal and
Torres Strait
Islander persons
within ACTPS of
3% by 2026



People with
a disability
within ACTPS of
5% by 2026

Education Pipelines



Four education providers within the ACT deliver vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate pathways to healthcare careers within the ACT. Many other education providers across Australia use ACT health services for clinical placements, pathways to employment or ongoing training opportunities.



Australian
Catholic University



Australian National
University



Canberra Institute
of Technology



University of
Canberra





The Environment

The health and care workforce is the fastest growing segment of Australia's labour market. ^{7,8} Australia's health system is ranked as one of the most equitable and efficient in the world,⁹ however increasing healthcare demand and workforce shortages are forecast to place stress on our systems and our workforce.⁸

To plan for, and support, a health workforce that meets the needs of the community, we need to better understand workforce and consumer expectations, changing demographics and economic factors.



Changing consumer expectations

Consumers expect faster, personalised quality care when and where it is needed, including delivery of services closer to home.¹⁰



Changing workforce dynamics

Within the ACT, there are high separation rates and staff leaving the health workforce compared to other sectors,⁵ changed ways of working, models of care and use of roles. Trends towards part-time work and flexible working arrangements¹¹ need to be considered, as well as equitable and innovative career pathways to achieve individual career goals.



Impacts of the changing population demographics

With increasing population age and size, there is increasing incidence of mental health concerns, chronic diseases and health care usage. To be sustainable, the system will need to focus on delivering effective preventative and primary healthcare, care at and close to home, multidisciplinary teams and paediatric and aged care services.



Economic

While the ACT has the highest average weekly earnings in Australia, the high cost-of living has a large impact on the community, particularly in low income households.¹² Increased living costs change the way health services are accessed. Career choices may also be impacted by cost of living and housing affordability. Costs of delivering care, attracting and retaining staff and budgets will change the way we deliver services.



Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has highlighted strengths of the health system; as well as vulnerabilities including pressures and fatigue on the workforce, carers, consumers and the system. It also demonstrated the health system's ability to learn from experiences, change care delivery and introduce innovation. While the impacts for the community and workforce may not be fully understood, the changes will be long-term and must be considered as the nation recovers from the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³



Expanding health services

New public and private healthcare facilities are being developed across the ACT and surrounding regions, including a new northside hospital, the Canberra Hospital Expansion and Master Plan for the Canberra Hospital campus, the University of Canberra Health Neighbourhood, a Deakin Private Hospital and the redevelopment of Goulburn Hospital and Health Service. These offer opportunities for new and expanded service delivery and a growing workforce.



New technologies

The ACT Government has made significant investments in health technology, with the implementation of the Digital Health Record and the Digital Health Strategy 2019-2029.¹⁴ Data digitalisation, access to better information for providers and consumers, predictive and precise healthcare, robotics, artificial intelligence and advanced genomics-driven interventions offer opportunities across the health system that may require changes in workforce configuration and skills.^{10, 11}



Culture

Culture represents the values and behaviours of an organisation. Having positive workplace cultures is recognised as a crucial factor in delivering quality services, creating happy places to work, supporting improved staff wellbeing and attraction and retention of staff.



Racism and Cultural Safety

Racism has a significant impact on those working within the health system as well as those who use the system. Racism can be seen through bias' of health professionals, funding inequities and cultural barriers to use of services. Systemic changes across the health system are required to eliminate racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This will require large improvement to cultural safety.¹⁵



Competitive market

Workforce shortages across health care are reported nationally and internationally, with significant global shortages expected by 2030. ¹⁶ For the ACT to be a location of choice in competitive labour markets, we will need to offer rewarding and interesting career opportunities.



New models of care

Models of care are emerging to provide better, more effective, efficient and equitable healthcare. This includes growing workforce professions, increasing the use of multidisciplinary teams and assistant workforce, use of technology and leveraging extended scope of practice. Investing in our health workforce to transition to new models will encourage the delivery of innovative health services.¹⁰



Overview of Strategic Priorities

The Strategy identifies eight strategic priorities which combined will deliver on the vision.

Three Action Plans will be developed throughout the lifespan of this Strategy. Each individual Action Plan will identify objectives and actions within each of the Strategic Priorities based on the workforce, service and community needs at the time. The early actions identified in this Strategy will support continued progression during the development of the first Action Plan.

Strategic Priority		Early Actions
1	A focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and a culturally safe environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish an employment program with mentoring and support to successfully develop a network across Health with the creation of at least five identified positions across the ACTHD. 2. Meet with key community and service provider representatives to identify specific priority actions that will be implemented under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2023-2031.
2	Investing in workforce planning and intelligence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Partner with Australian National University College of Health and Medicine's, National Centre for Workforce Studies, and the Capital Health Network to improve the understanding of and modelling of the health workforce across the Territory. 4. Identify, collect, and analyse reliable, recent and applicable baseline workforce planning data. 5. Explore ways to better understand the workforce of self-regulated and unregulated health professions across different sectors and contexts in the ACT. 6. Commit to improving publicly available health workforce data.
3	Promoting a collaborative health system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Identify barriers and opportunities to improve partnerships across Canberra and the surrounds through the leaders of health systems across the ACT and surrounding regions.



Strategic Priority		Early Actions
4	Embracing diversity and a culture of respect to deliver a safe and welcoming workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Implement the Health Workforce Wellbeing and Recovery Fund. 9. Embed a positive workplace culture as business as usual. 10. Work with education and training partners to embed a trauma-informed, domestic, family and sexual violence-informed, and disability confident approach into education and training pathways. 11. Support the ACT Disability Strategy to improve career pathways in health for people with disability.
5	Delivering excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Explore models and partnerships to grow and sustain a learning health system within the ACT. 13. Work with health practitioners to identify barriers to professions working to their top of scope, prioritising key areas of service demand and reform as identified by the ACT Health Services Plan. 14. Work in partnership with the Better together: A strategic plan for research in the ACT health system 2022–2030 implementation teams.
6	Rewarding careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Link in with the existing committees focused on career pathways and the transition of students into the workforce. 16. Work with Education Providers and local health services to map ACT career pathways to understand where our health workforce comes from, how long they stay, why they leave and where they go. 17. Develop a discussion paper on barriers and opportunities to increase flexibility and mobility across the health system. 18. Map migration pathways for international recruitment. 19. Convene a student round table/forum in 2023. 20. Partner with local education providers to identify areas for professional development, credentialing and qualification pathways.
7	Stepping into the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Identify innovation in technology, models of care and service delivery occurring locally, nationally, and internationally for consideration in the ACT.
8	Advocating for reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Support Health Ministers to advocate for health workforce supply and models that will be effective for the ACT. 23. Support work to explore optimal and sustainable primary and community care models for the ACT.



Strategic Priorities



1. A focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and a culturally safe environment

A commitment to working in partnership to develop long-term, sustainable actions based on trust, awareness and an understanding of experiences of ACT and region Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities.

We are committed to building a health workforce that has the skills and understanding to provide culturally safe and responsive health care in partnership with First Nations communities. We must eliminate experiences of racism, bias and discrimination faced by First Nations peoples when engaging with our health services, or when working within the health system; and encourage processes to support those who experience it.



To deliver on this commitment we will work with key community and service provider representatives to understand the intersectionality of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce and to deliver actions to reduce barriers, proactively promote equity in education and employment opportunities within the health system and support involvement in leadership, decision making and shaping strategic directions.

Education and training opportunities will also be central to the effective development of a culturally responsive health workforce. This will include opportunities for the workforce to further their individual cultural journeys.

The ACT Government has existing commitments to the territory-wide implementation of national frameworks such as Closing the Gap and the implementation of local frameworks such as the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028.²¹ Implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031¹⁵ is central to achieving meaningful change for and with the First Nations health workforce. Our Action Plans will include actions to support implementing this framework.



Early actions

Action	Expected Impact
 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish an employment program with mentoring and support to successfully develop a network across Health with the creation of at least five identified positions across the ACTHD. 	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers to be supported, culturally safe and have input across the ACT health system.</p>
 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Meet with key community and service provider representatives to identify specific health workforce challenges that could be implemented under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031. 	<p>Implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021–2031.</p>

Case Study

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Allied Health Pathway – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy in the ACT

The Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) led model has been implemented in conjunction with Canberra Institute of Technology, University of Canberra, and the ACT Government. The allied health pathway provides an opportunity for year 10, 11 and 12 students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to obtain a Certificate III qualification in Allied Health Assistance. The pathway is designed to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school student engagement, retention, and successful completion of year 12 with an additional qualification

that promotes careers within the mainstream health sector. The first student intake graduated in December 2022. Overall, this will contribute strongly to the national health reform priority of 'empowering people through health literacy,' through increased transparency and engagement with the community. Data consumers will also be supported in accessing and using data in line with the ACT Language Services Policy²¹ to ensure that linguistically diverse people can access effective government services and participate fully in our community.



2. Investing in workforce planning and intelligence

Knowing our workforce: supply, demand and improved forecasting.

Reliable data and information about the workforce is critical for effective workforce planning. Current health workforce data in the ACT is inconsistent and insufficient for health planners to have a clear understanding of the current workforce, support anecdotal reports of service gaps, or deliver holistic, robust workforce plans. Better quality data and intelligence capability will also assist with ongoing evaluation of the ACT's health workforce policy and program settings across the other strategic priority areas.

To allow for robust analysis and planning of future workforce requirements and service delivery needs we must build data and analytics capability within the ACT to understand the dynamics of the territory-wide health workforce. This will include improvements to the data collected, methods of data collection and models to analyse and use the data. To optimise the effectiveness of this function,





ACT wide data governance structures will need to be well-developed and supported across organisations, provider groups and health services, as well as advocating for improved data across the nation.

Qualitative data through staff surveys, focus groups, forums, consumer input and data available through the Digital Health Record and other systems will complement quantitative data sets to offer valuable insight into strategies to support our workforce and deliver safe care.

It is essential that the links between health service delivery, infrastructure and workforce planning are clear and interlinking to ensure the whole health system meets the needs of the community. This will require collaboration between various areas of the health system tasked with these responsibilities and support health care providers in delivering services across the community.



Early actions

Action	Expected Impact
 <p>3. Partner with Australian National University, College of Health and Medicine's, National Centre for Workforce Studies and the Capital Health Network to improve the understanding of and modelling of the health workforce across the Territory.</p>	<p>Accurate understanding and modelling of the ACT health workforce.</p>
 <p>4. Identify, collect and analyse reliable, recent and applicable baseline workforce planning data.</p>	<p>Accurate understanding and modelling of the ACT health workforce.</p>
 <p>5. Explore ways to better understand the workforce of self-regulated and unregulated health professions across different sectors and contexts in the ACT.</p>	<p>Access to data for self-regulated and unregulated health workers.</p>
 <p>6. Commit to improving publicly available health workforce data.</p>	<p>Transparent health workforce data within the ACT.</p>





3. Promoting a collaborative health system

Strengthening formal and informal collaboration arrangements across the Territory and its surrounds.

The ACT is a unique jurisdiction due to our small size and close connections between health services within the Territory and the surrounding NSW region. This inter-relationship between our health and community services, education and training institutions and unions directly affects our health workforce. We have the potential to leverage this and develop supportive and sustainable collaborations across public, private, education, government and non-government sectors.

Collaboration across the ACT and surrounding region is essential to the successful development and implementation of health workforce planning and innovative workforce initiatives. Our health system should be viewed holistically as one complete health system, with the patient journey commencing at home as they travel through multiple service providers, with care being provided in preventative, community, primary care and acute


settings. Consideration of cross-border training and services will be required to ensure seamless transitions of care.

To support supply and workforce pathways, collaborating with education providers, specialist training colleges and healthcare providers across Australia will be essential.

Collaboration will also continue to occur in partnership with key stakeholders from across the ACT and surrounding region, representing priority and vulnerable populations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability, carers, and health care consumers to ensure our workforce planning represents a diverse workforce and the ACT community we care for.



Early actions

Action	Expected Impact
 <p>7. Identify barriers and opportunities to improve partnerships across Canberra and the surrounds through the leaders of health systems across the ACT and surrounding regions.</p>	<p>Create pathways for shared knowledge and a supportive health system.</p>

Case Study

GRACE (Geriatric Rapid Acute Care Evaluation)

The GRACE service provides clinical care to Canberrans in residential aged care facilities to better manage their chronic and acute conditions, preventing hospital visits. The service is a collaboration between Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, Canberra Health Services, Capital Health Network and the aged care sector. It involves specialist clinicians visiting residential aged care facilities to assess residents and collaboratively develop a care plan with residential aged care facility staff and emergency health services.

This new model of care has provided innovative workforce pathways for clinical specialists, education and training opportunities for the residential aged care health workforce, reduced pressure on the acute care health system, as well as significantly improved patient outcomes. The service pilot study between 2017-2019 resulted in a 24 per cent reduction in ED presentations and a 25 percent reduction in admissions from residential aged care facilities. The program's success has been celebrated nationally, receiving an Australian Council of Healthcare Standards Clinical Excellence and Patient Safety Award.



Case Study

Linkages with Local Education Providers

The ACT has four local education providers who provide health related courses to students based within Canberra and the surrounding regions; Australian National University (ANU), University of Canberra (UC), Australian Catholic University (ACU) and Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT). Strong partnerships with education providers will ideally help alleviate the challenges with recruiting health workers to the ACT and raise the quality of care and research delivered in the region. All education providers contribute significantly to the ongoing training of existing staff and supporting health services through service changes.

The ACT public health services have strong links with the two largest education providers, ANU's College

of Health and Medicine and UC, to support a locally trained workforce and the ongoing training opportunities for health workers. Existing linkages include:

- Co-located health service and clinical teaching facilities
- Collaborative opportunities for research, training and education
- Shared opportunities for teaching through joint and/or funded positions
- Programs to support clinical placements to train our future workforce
- Opportunities for ongoing staff development through scholarship and grant programs.





4. Embracing diversity and a culture of respect to deliver a safe and welcoming workplace

Our systems and processes must drive and create workplace environments where all staff are highly valued and supported to deliver compassionate, person-centred care to our diverse community.

The ACT is committed to valuing and encouraging the different backgrounds and experiences that our workforce and community bring. Ensuring diversity and inclusion is everyone's responsibility. The health workforce must actively participate in inclusive practices to ensure colleagues feel physically, psychologically and culturally safe at work; and patients are cared for in a way that respects their background and beliefs. To do this, we must have the leadership capacity and capability, education opportunities and processes to model and lead change.

Actions will encompass recruitment and attraction arrangements across the health system, achieve targets at a minimum and support career pathways and employment for vulnerable populations within leadership roles.





The ACT Government is delivering the Speaking up for Safety Program, Nurses and Midwives: Towards a Safer Culture project, Nurse/Midwife ratios project, awards programs to celebrate excellence in nursing and allied health and has committed to deliver the work through the culture and wellbeing reviews. The ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Training Strategy supports ACT public staff develop capability to understand and respond to our clients and colleagues experiencing domestic and family violence. Embedding training into education pathways will ensure the workforce across public and private sectors are well-equipped to deliver person-centred care.



The Capital of Equality Strategy 2019-2023¹⁷ acknowledges the diversity of our community and seeks to guide the development and initiatives to ensure we deliver equitable outcomes for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex & Queer (LGBTIQ+) people. The Capital of Equality Strategy 2019-2023 will aim to support ACT workplaces and education settings to be safe, supportive and inclusive.¹⁷

The ACT Disability Health Strategy will outline strategies to achieve better outcomes and equitable access for people with disability. Our health workforce can contribute by developing greater disability confidence and rectifying issues of poor attitude within clinical settings reported during the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.¹⁸

Early actions

Action	Expected Impact
 <p>8. Continue to implement the Health Workforce Wellbeing and Recovery Fund.</p>	Positive workplace culture and improved staff retention in the public sector.
 <p>9. Embed a positive workplace culture as business as usual.</p>	Positive workplace culture and improved staff retention.
 <p>10. Work with education and training partners to embed a trauma-informed, domestic, family and sexual violence-informed, and disability confident approach into education and training pathways.</p>	Health workers well equipped to deliver compassionate, culturally safe, person-centred care.
 <p>11. Support the ACT Disability Strategy to improve career pathways in health for people with disability.</p>	Increased diversity of the health workforce.



5. Delivering excellence

A learning health system is one committed to continuous learning, innovation and quality improvement to refine and deliver best practice. This approach encourages a health workforce to work at the top of their scope, supported by education, training and research.

The ACT Government has committed to delivering Better together: A strategic plan for research in the ACT health system 2022-2030.¹⁹ It provides opportunity across the health system for increased workforce satisfaction through being able to work at the top of their scope, and lead to improved retention, health outcomes and efficient high-quality service delivery. This Strategy will build on and support this work.




A culture of learning and training through leadership, collaborative partnerships, infrastructure and research empower staff to access ongoing learning opportunities at all levels. Staff working in the public health system will be provided opportunities for professional development and education and be supported to lead and contribute to

research. A range of scholarships for public health staff within nursing and allied health are provided to support advanced and extended practice and further study. Clinical supervision is used with ACT public health services in allied health, nursing and midwifery as a framework to support skills development, reflection, staff well-being and resilience.

The ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030¹ has identified a range of priority areas requiring workforce reform. Future actions under this strategy will look at how to respond to these current and mid-term workforce priorities, in addition to emerging priority areas with ongoing analysis of data. This will include drawing on national and international work to bring innovation into the health system.



Early actions

Action	Expected Impact
 <p>12. Explore models and partnerships to grow and sustain a learning health system within the ACT.</p>	<p>Opportunities to improve research, collaborations and foster a culture of ongoing learning within the ACT.</p>
 <p>13. Work with health practitioners to identify barriers to professions working to their top of scope, prioritising key areas of service demand and reform as identified by the ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030.</p>	<p>Improved service delivery and opportunities for professional growth.</p>
 <p>14. Work in partnership with the Better together: A strategic plan for research in the ACT health system 2022–2030 implementation teams.</p>	<p>Research opportunities driving workforce attraction, retention and recruitment.</p>

Case Study

Social Workers in General Practice

Research and a Capital Health Network Annual Needs Assessment²⁰ has demonstrated that social determinants of health, such as social isolation, housing and transportation are a significant barrier to navigating services in the ACT.

In 2022, a pilot program was commenced with 4 GP practices within the ACT to develop and embed social workers within General Practice settings to provide a link between the

primary care provider and community services. Social workers are assisting consumers, unpaid carers and GP's by facilitating and coordinating assistance, access additional support and avoid unnecessary hospitalisations.

The pilot program is expected to run until December 2023 when it will be independently evaluated.



6. Rewarding careers

Supporting education, training and career pathways will attract a high-quality and motivated workforce to train, study and work in the ACT.

Supporting health workers is as much about today as it is about tomorrow. Attracting people to work in health is highly competitive and the ACT will need to be a location of choice if we are to be successful within this tight labour market. Early employment years and student placements need to be well supported and respond to the aspirations of students and junior staff. Pathways to build skills and expertise are required, including support for professional development, education and retraining.

It is important to have easy-to-navigate education and training pathways and placements to match to current and future employment opportunities. These pathways should evolve to meet emerging demands, employee expectations and support learners to be well prepared for employment in the ACT.

A supported and valued workforce will have opportunities for progression, flexibility and mobility across the system. The workforce will be supported through







the stages of their working life cycle including when entering the workforce, working to their full potential, participating in education and training, access to flexible working arrangements throughout their career and transitioning to retirement.

Workforce requirements across all parts of the system need to be considered, including hospital, primary care, preventive health, community health services, aged and disability care and technical and support services. Territory-wide attraction and retention schemes must be targeted to reduce barriers to bringing health workforce into the ACT.

The ACT Government is currently supporting scholarship programs and the classification of Undergraduate Student of Nursing and Midwifery (USON/USOM). There may be opportunities to explore further classifications of students in other health professions including medical or allied health.



Early actions

Action		Expected Impact
	15. Link in with the existing committees focused on career pathways and the transition of students into the workforce.	Implementation of existing work to strengthen career pathways.
	16. Work with Education Providers and local health services to map ACT career pathways to understand where our health workforce comes from, how long they stay, why they leave and where they go.	Understand career pathways and opportunities for staff attraction and retention.
	17. Develop a discussion paper on barriers and opportunities to increase flexibility and mobility across the health system.	Opportunities to improve staff mobility across the health system.
	18. Map migration pathways for international recruitment.	Improved timeframes and processes for international recruitment to the health system.
	19. Convene a student round table/forum in 2023.	Understand the aspirations of health workers training in the ACT.
	20. Partner with local education providers to identify areas for professional development, credentialling and qualification pathways for staff.	Improve opportunities for ongoing education, development and career pathways within the ACT.



Case Study

GP New Fellows Support Program

The General Practitioner (GP) new fellows support program is a peer support group, which aims to provide a space where new GP fellows can talk and reflect about their caring journey at a deeper level, while receiving support from peers and mentors. It gives an opportunity to improve their mental wellbeing, feel renewed and connected to their peers through a discovery model of education.

The peer support group consists of a small group of GPs in the first ten years post fellowship, and a few senior GP mentors. The program aims to support the wellbeing of the junior GP workforce, as well as provide mentorship and leadership opportunities for experienced GP's. The program is delivered in a collaborative effort by Capital Health Network, ACT Health and Australian National University.





7. Stepping into the future

Embracing the use of technology and innovation to support working to the top of scope, delivering effective, contemporary care that reflects best practice.

As increasing pressure is placed on the health system, new and innovative ways of delivering care must be considered. This will include opportunities to change models of care, embracing a shift towards delivering care in the community and primary health care settings, an increase in paediatric and early intervention services to improve preventative measures, and changing models of care in mental health.

Innovative healthcare delivery and utilisation of existing emerging technology will ensure that we meet the growing needs of the community. This will include the use of technology and emerging workforce profiles and implementing models of care that enable interdisciplinary care where the workforce works to their full scope and, where appropriate, advanced and extended scope of practice.

Supporting the implementation of the Better together: A strategic plan for research in the ACT health system 2022-2030¹⁹ and the Digital Health Strategy 2019-2029¹⁴ will support the ACT to be a learning health system that delivers high-quality services through responsive and proactive initiatives, using technology, improve knowledge and innovative opportunities to improve flexible ways of working.



Early actions

Action	Expected Impact
	<p>21. Identify innovation in technology, models of care and service delivery occurring locally, nationally and internationally for consideration in the ACT.</p> <p>Introduce technology and innovative services to improve service delivery and outcomes.</p>

Case Study

PACER (Police, Ambulance and Clinician Early Response)

The PACER team works together to respond, assess and help people experiencing mental health crisis in the community. The mobile multi-agency team will visit wherever consumers need in the community. It is available for all ages within the ACT, servicing people who have been referred through ACT policing or ACT ambulance service.

The team provides information and advice about mental health issues and support services available in the ACT, provides referrals to mental health services for mental health support, as well as ACT Policing or the ACT ambulance service if there are concerns about immediate safety, physical health or the safety of others.

Since 2019 this collaborative model of mental health community-based care has provided patient centred care by a specialist team 7 days a week. Traditionally police would be first responders to a mental health call out, however after initiating the PACER team a more holistic, patient centred approach to mental health has been made. This model of care enables the health workforce to provide clinical expertise in a community setting, assisting in the assessment of acute mental health presentations, reducing the presentations to the Emergency Department.

The collaboration also improves mental health training to ACT police officers and police recruits.



Case Study

Alcohol and Other Drug Sector

The ACT has been at the forefront of Australian alcohol and other drug (AOD) policy development, pivoting to a health-focused approach. This leadership has required reliable information about the alcohol and drug (AOD) sector's workforce. There are specific challenges to collecting timely and reliable AOD workforce data. For instance, the AOD sector spans both non-government and government organisations, and it relies on a mixture of professions, some of which are not Ahpra-accredited.

The ACT Government funds the peak body for the AOD sector, the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA), to collect information from AOD workers and executives about the AOD workforce in the ACT. In 2021, ATODA completed the sixth AOD Workforce Profile in cooperation with AOD services. The ACT Health combined this information with insights from the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) to inform the Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026. This has resulted in an enhanced, nation-leading emphasis on the value of the AOD peer workforce.





8. Advocating for reform

Working with other State and Territory governments and the Commonwealth to drive improved models of care for the Territory, taking advantage of national and international experiences to support service design.

Health workforce challenges are being faced in every state and territory across Australia and internationally.

Health Ministers have identified health workforce as a priority for national action and are committed to growing and supporting the workforce. This is driving work to improve workforce intelligence nationally and is shining a spotlight on national regulation and migration arrangements to ensure Australia has access to the health workforce it needs now and into the future.

Relevant pieces of work include:

- Strengthening Medicare Taskforce
- Review of the public health workforce
- The Independent review of health practitioner regulatory settings, announced on 30 September 2022, to deliver recommendations designed to ease skills shortages in key health



professions. These include nursing and midwifery, medicine, psychology, pharmacy, paramedicine and occupational therapy.

- A comprehensive review of Australia's migration system to ensure the migration system serves Australia's national interests and complements the skills and capabilities of Australian workers.

The ACT will be an active participant in the national conversation to represent the Territory's concerns, influence the national strategic direction and advocate for reforms where needed. We will implement national workforce strategies and plans (see Annex) where possible to ensure the ACT continues to align and support the national agenda.



Early actions

Action	Expected Impact
 <p>22. Support Health Ministers to advocate for health workforce supply and models that will be effective for the ACT.</p>	Represent the ACT's interest in national agendas.
 <p>23. Support work to explore optimal and sustainable primary and community care models for the ACT.</p>	Innovative service delivery that supports the workforce and improves access to services.

Case Study

Highly Trained Medical Workforce

The National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021–2031²² aims to build a sustainable highly trained medical workforce. The strategy aims to structure and support our workforce in a way that ensures we can meet the current and emerging health needs of Australians.

Figure 1: The overall vision, themes and priorities of the National Medical Workforce Strategy



Participating actively in this work will ensure it delivers positive change for the ACT Health Workforce.



Roadmap to Implementation

This Strategy aligns with existing national, organisational and profession-specific workforce plans and frameworks, seeking to enhance and support their actions and objectives (Figure). This Strategy is a key deliverable under Strategic Goal 2, Accountability, outlined in *Accessible, Accountable, Sustainable: A Framework for the ACT Public Health System 2020-2030*. It is informed by the ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030.

The Strategy has been developed in collaboration with Territory-wide stakeholders, to ensure it aligns with the needs of the entire health system within Canberra and surrounding regions.

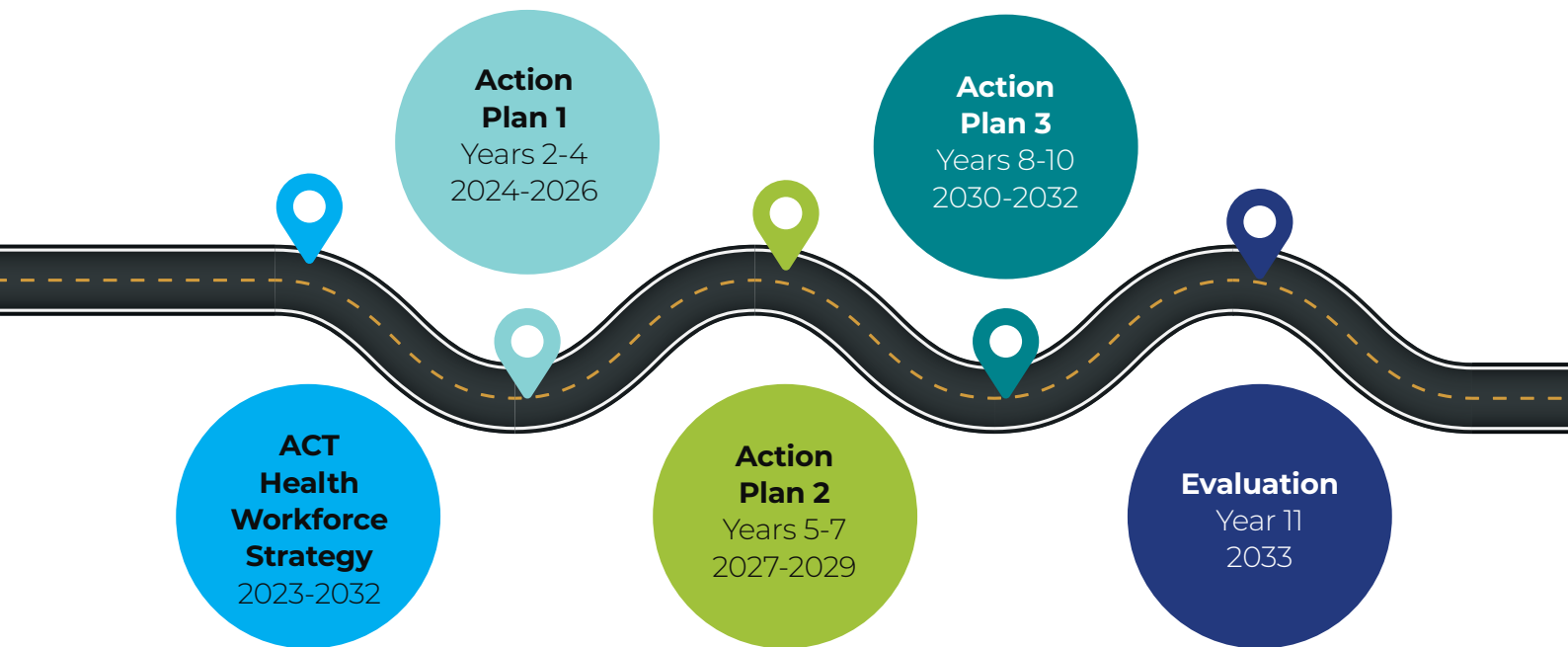
This Strategy will support and add value to national, organisational and profession-specific workforce plans and frameworks to build a public and private workforce that meets the needs of Canberra and the surrounding regions.





The ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030 identifies priority areas requiring workforce reform. These priority areas will drive the identification of actions and early work and priority population groups to proactively engage (outlined in Annex 1)

The Strategy Roadmap outlines a high-level overview of the initiatives that will be delivered over the life of this Strategy.



The Strategy will be implemented over the next 10 years. Action plans will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders including public and private health organisations/providers, education providers and non-government sectors and will detail the strategic objectives and actions to be delivered within the above time-horizons. The early actions identified within this Strategy will support forward progression during the development of the Action Plans.

Improved access to workforce data and modelling will provide further insight into priority areas, which will be updated as data becomes available. Actions will be co-developed with networks across each of the key areas.

A review and evaluation of each action plan will be completed in its final year of implementation with any findings implemented in the subsequent action plan. This will enable adjustments for changing demographics and health status of the community, innovation, new technology, as well as new and emerging models of care. As data and workforce modelling becomes available, this information will identify priority areas of need and inform health service planning and infrastructure development. It will also enable investment to be directed to the actions that are having the desired impact.



The Strategy Roadmap will be as follows:

	Jan – June	July - December
2023	<p>ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023-2032 finalised.</p> <p>Development of governance and accountability structure for the ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023-2032 and Action Plans.</p> <p>Establish ACTHD, ANU and CHN partnership agreement</p>	<p>Baseline workforce data available through partnership agreement.</p> <p>ACT Health Workforce Action Plan 2024-2026 developed and approved.</p>
2024 - 2026	<p>Implementation of Health Workforce Action Plan 2024-2026.</p> <p>Review of Health Workforce Action Plan 2024-2026 and evaluation of the impact of actions.</p>	
2027 - 2029	<p>Implementation of Health Workforce Action Plan 2027-2029.</p> <p>Review of Health Workforce Action Plan 2027-2029, and evaluation of the impact of actions.</p>	
2030 - 2032	<p>Implementation of Health Workforce Action Plan 2030-2032.</p> <p>Review of Health Workforce Action Plan 2030-2032, and evaluation of the impact of actions.</p>	
2033	<p>Evaluation of the ACT Health Workforce Strategy 2023-2032.</p> <p>Development of future Workforce Strategy.</p>	



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Annex

Priority Areas of Reform

Health System	Priority and Vulnerable Populations	Service Areas
Health Demand – Early intervention services and access to integrated primary care	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Emergency Care
Better value care	LGBTIQ+	Surgical and Procedural Services
Virtual care	People with disability	Children and Young People
Health protection and emergency services	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	Women and Children
		Older Persons care
		Medical Services
		Palliative Care
		Pain management
		Rehabilitation
		Mental Health
		Cancer Care

Table: Health Services Plan.¹



Existing Strategies

ACT-wide Strategies and Plans	National Level Strategies and Plans
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy	Aged Care Workforce Action Plan: 2022-2025
Accessible, Accountable, Sustainable: A Framework for the ACT Public Health System 2020-2030.	Australian Public Service Workforce strategy 2025
ACT Carers Strategy 2018-2028	Australia's future health workforce reports
ACT Disability Health Strategy	Increasing access to health and aged care: a strategic plan for the nurse practitioner workforce.
ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Training Strategy	The Allied Health Disability Workforce Strategy and Action Plan 2018
ACT Health Culture Review	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan 2021-2031.
ACT Health Quality strategy 2018-2028.	National Nursing Workforce Strategy
ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030	The National Mental Health Workforce Strategy
ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026	NDIS national workforce plan 2021-2025
ACT Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan	National Workforce Strategy 2022-2027
Age Friendly City Plan 2020-2024	National Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce Development Strategy
Better Together: ACT Health Research Strategy	National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021-2031
Capital of Equality - ACT Government LGBTIQ+ Strategy	National Digital Health Workforce and Education and Roadmap
Digital health strategy 2019-2029	Strengthening Medical Taskforce
Healthy Canberra. ACT preventive health plan 2020-2025.	



ACT-wide Strategies and Plans	National Level Strategies and Plans
Office of Industrial relations and workforce strategy	Stronger Rural Health Strategy
Infrastructure Plan, ACT Government	
Nurses and Midwives: Towards a Safer Culture Strategy	
Best Start for Canberra's Children: The First 1000 Days Strategy	
Maternity in Focus: The ACT Public Maternity System Plan 2022-2032	
ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026	