

FACT Sheet & Glossary of Terms: Your Health, Your Community, Your Say

What is the PHN?

The Primary Health Network (PHN) is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the Commonwealth government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the primary health care system. The PHN is not a direct provider of services, instead it manages a range of service agreements with organisations to deliver primary health care programs in areas of identified need.

For more information [About us - Primary Health Network \(thephn.com.au\)](http://thephn.com.au)

What we do?

The Primary Health Network (PHN) works with health care providers across the Hunter, New England and Central Coast to **fund the delivery** of a range of primary health care services that respond to the health and access needs of our communities.

To understand those needs we consult, collect data and undertake health planning. This planning then informs how we:

- Identify & address health needs in our communities.
- Support and develop improved health care delivery in the primary care sector.
- Develop and implement improved care pathways and models of care.
- Commission health services to communities to close service gaps - we are not a service provider.

Your health, Your community, Your Say consultation series

Why are we holding consultation sessions with communities?

At the PHN, we believe community input is crucial for understanding the varied health needs and service gaps across our region. Community consultations help us to gain insights into individual communities that help our planning and inform our decision-making processes. These sessions help provide a basis for developing targeted strategies and allocate resources effectively to address the most pressing health issues facing our communities.

Why is your feedback important in understanding your health needs?

Your feedback helps us understand of the health needs, challenges, and priorities in different communities. Your participation ensures that our initiatives are responsive to the unique needs and preferences of our diverse population.

What will we do with your feedback.

The feedback in the community and survey is carefully analysed and used to inform the PHN's Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment is the result of a systematic analysis of health data, community feedback, and input from healthcare providers to identify the most significant health needs and service gaps across the Hunter, New England and Central Coast. The feedback is then integrated into our needs assessment to ensure that our priorities and strategies align with the real-world experiences and needs our communities.

What are the LGA Population Health Snapshots?

The 23 Local Government Area (LGA) population health snapshots are a tool we use to provide an overview of what health data tells us about your community. It includes health status, demographics, healthcare resources; the snapshots help us to ask you about health and access to services in your community.

Glossary of terms

Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS): Healthcare organisations or clinics that provide culturally appropriate primary healthcare services to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population across the HNECC PHN footprint. These services aim to address the health experiences by First Nations communities and promote holistic well-being through culturally sensitive care.

Age-standardised rate: A method used to compare the prevalence or incidence of a health-related event across different populations while accounting for differences in age distribution. It allows for a more accurate comparison of health outcomes between populations with different age structures.

Arthritis: A group of disorders characterised by inflammation of the joints, causing pain, stiffness, and swelling. Arthritis can affect people of all ages and may lead to reduced mobility and impaired quality of life if left untreated.

Asthma: A chronic respiratory condition characterised by inflammation and narrowing of the airways, leading to symptoms such as wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath. Asthma can vary in severity and may be triggered by allergens, exercise, or environmental factors.

Breast cancer: A malignant tumour that develops in the breast tissue, typically starting in the milk ducts or lobules. Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting women worldwide and can also occur in men.

Cancer: A group of diseases characterised by the uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells, leading to the formation of tumours or abnormal cell masses. Cancer can affect various organs and tissues in the body and may have different causes, risk factors, and treatment options.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD): A group of progressive lung diseases, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema, characterised by airflow limitation and breathing difficulties. COPD is often caused by long-term exposure to respiratory irritants such as cigarette smoke and is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide.

Colorectal cancer: Cancer that develops in the colon or rectum, often starting as a growth called a polyp. Colorectal cancer is highly treatable if detected early through screening tests such as colonoscopies.

Diabetes: A chronic metabolic disorder characterised by high blood sugar levels resulting from insufficient insulin production or ineffective use of insulin by the body. Diabetes can lead to serious complications such as cardiovascular disease, kidney failure, and vision loss if not properly managed.

General medical practitioners (GPs): Medical doctors who provide primary healthcare services to individuals and families, including preventive care, diagnosis, treatment, and management of acute and chronic health conditions. GPs play a central role in coordinating patient care and referring patients to specialists or other healthcare services as needed.

General Practices: Healthcare facilities, such as medical clinics or health centres, where general medical practitioners (GPs) provide primary healthcare services to patients. General practices offer a range of services, including consultations, vaccinations, health screenings, and minor procedures, to meet the healthcare needs of the community.

Heart, stroke and vascular disease: A group of cardiovascular conditions, including heart disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease, characterised by abnormalities in the heart and blood vessels. These conditions share common risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, and obesity.

High or Very High Psychological Distress: A measure of the level of psychological distress experienced by individuals, indicating significant mental health concerns that may require intervention or treatment. High

psychological distress can impact various aspects of daily life and may be associated with increased risk of mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety.

Leukaemia: Cancer of the blood-forming tissues, including the bone marrow and lymphatic system, leading to the overproduction of abnormal white blood cells. Leukaemia can affect people of all ages and may cause symptoms such as fatigue, weakness, frequent infections, and easy bruising or bleeding.

Lung cancer: Cancer that develops in the lungs, usually starting in the cells lining the air passages. Lung cancer is strongly associated with smoking but can also occur in non-smokers due to exposure to environmental carcinogens such as radon gas and asbestos.

Lymphoma: Cancer that develops in the lymphatic system, which is part of the body's immune system responsible for fighting infections and diseases. Lymphoma can affect lymph nodes, bone marrow, spleen, and other lymphatic tissues and may present with symptoms such as swollen lymph nodes, fever, weight loss, and night sweats.

Mental and Behavioural problems: A broad term encompassing various mental health disorders and behavioural conditions that affect thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, leading to distress and impairment in functioning. Mental and behavioural problems may include mood disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, substance use disorders, and eating disorders.

Melanoma of the skin: A type of skin cancer that develops in the cells that produce melanin, the pigment responsible for skin colour. Melanoma is often characterised by changes in moles or the appearance of new skin lesions and can spread to other parts of the body if not detected and treated early.

Non-Urgent Emergency Department Presentations: Emergency department visits for medical conditions that are not considered urgent or life-threatening and could be managed in a primary care setting. Examples include minor ailments, routine healthcare needs, and non-urgent referrals from other healthcare providers.

Osteoporosis: A bone disorder characterised by decreased bone density and increased susceptibility to fractures, resulting from loss of bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue. Osteoporosis is more common in older adults, particularly postmenopausal women, and may lead to fractures of the spine, hip, or wrist.

Pancreatic cancer: Cancer that develops in the pancreas, an organ responsible for producing enzymes that aid in digestion and hormones that regulate blood sugar levels. Pancreatic cancer is often diagnosed at an advanced stage and has a poor prognosis due to its aggressive nature and limited treatment options.

Population Decrease: The reduction in the number of people residing in a specific geographic area over a defined period, usually due to factors such as aging populations, declining birth rates, outmigration, or other demographic trends.

Population Increase: The growth in the number of people residing in a specific geographic area over a defined period, usually due to natural population growth (births exceeding deaths) and/or net migration (more people moving into the area than leaving).

Population prediction: The estimation of future population size and demographic composition based on current demographic trends, birth rates, death rates, migration patterns, and other relevant factors. Population predictions help inform planning and resource allocation in various sectors, including healthcare, housing, and education.

Potentially Preventable Hospitalisations: Hospital admissions for certain acute and chronic conditions that could potentially have been prevented through appropriate primary care, preventive measures, and disease management. Monitoring potentially preventable hospitalisations helps assess the effectiveness of primary care services and identify opportunities for improving healthcare delivery.

Prostate Cancer: Cancer that develops in the prostate gland, a small organ located below the bladder and in front of the rectum in men. Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers in men and may cause symptoms such as difficulty urinating, blood in the urine, or erectile dysfunction.

SEIFA- Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage Score: A composite index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) that ranks areas across Australia according to relative socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage. It combines various socio-economic indicators such as income, education, employment, and housing to provide an overall measure of disadvantage within a specific area.

Semi- Urgent Emergency Department Presentations: Emergency department visits for medical conditions that require prompt medical attention but are not immediately life-threatening. Examples include severe pain, acute infections, and minor injuries that require timely evaluation and treatment but do not require immediate resuscitation.