

HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025-2028

Methods

Governance of our needs assessment

Healthy North Coast's 2025-2028 Health Needs Assessment (HNA) project was supported by a range of skilled contributors involved in 2 governance groups. The internal working group of Healthy North Coast staff provided practical support throughout the project. The external reference group provided expert advice and guidance, and included representatives from:

- Healthy North Coast Clinical Advisory Council
- Healthy North Coast Community Advisory Council
- Mid North Coast Local Health District
- Northern NSW Local Health District
- regional community health service providers
- people with expertise in health economic and survey design methods
- the Healthy North Coast executive leadership team.

Mixed methods approach

The HNA used a comprehensive, mixed methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative data from various primary and secondary sources.

Community engagement was instrumental in the assessment of health needs. The Better Health Community Survey (the 'survey') and community consultations provided qualitative data that supported and strengthened the findings from the quantitative data. Community engagement commenced with the survey and continued with a series of community consultation events with community members, service providers and subject matter experts.

The community survey, created in collaboration with Rooftop Social, was open for three 3 weeks in April 2024 and received 3,281 valid responses, surpassing the initial target of 2,200. Social media, radio, and printed materials were used to promote the survey, along with active outreach to Aboriginal Medical Services in the region to encourage and facilitate participation.

The community consultations were conducted in August 2024 to gather deeper insights from people in the North Coast about their needs and experiences with health services. They used two 2 approaches: focusing on communities of interest and engaging the general population. These consultations built upon the Survey results to gather in-depth qualitative data.

- Communities of interest included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, older adults, young

people, LGBTQ+ communities, and those affected by mental health and alcohol and other drug issues. Subject matter experts provided valuable information on the specific health challenges for these communities.

General population consultations were held through Community Conversations events in Kyogle, Grafton and Macksville as well as a virtual event region wide. These consultations used a combination of focus groups and one-on-one interviews, providing a rich source of qualitative data to inform the project.

The quantitative data was obtained from sources such as:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
- NSW Government Planning
- HealthStats NSW
- Local health districts
- General practices
- Services commissioned by HNC
- Better Health Community Survey.