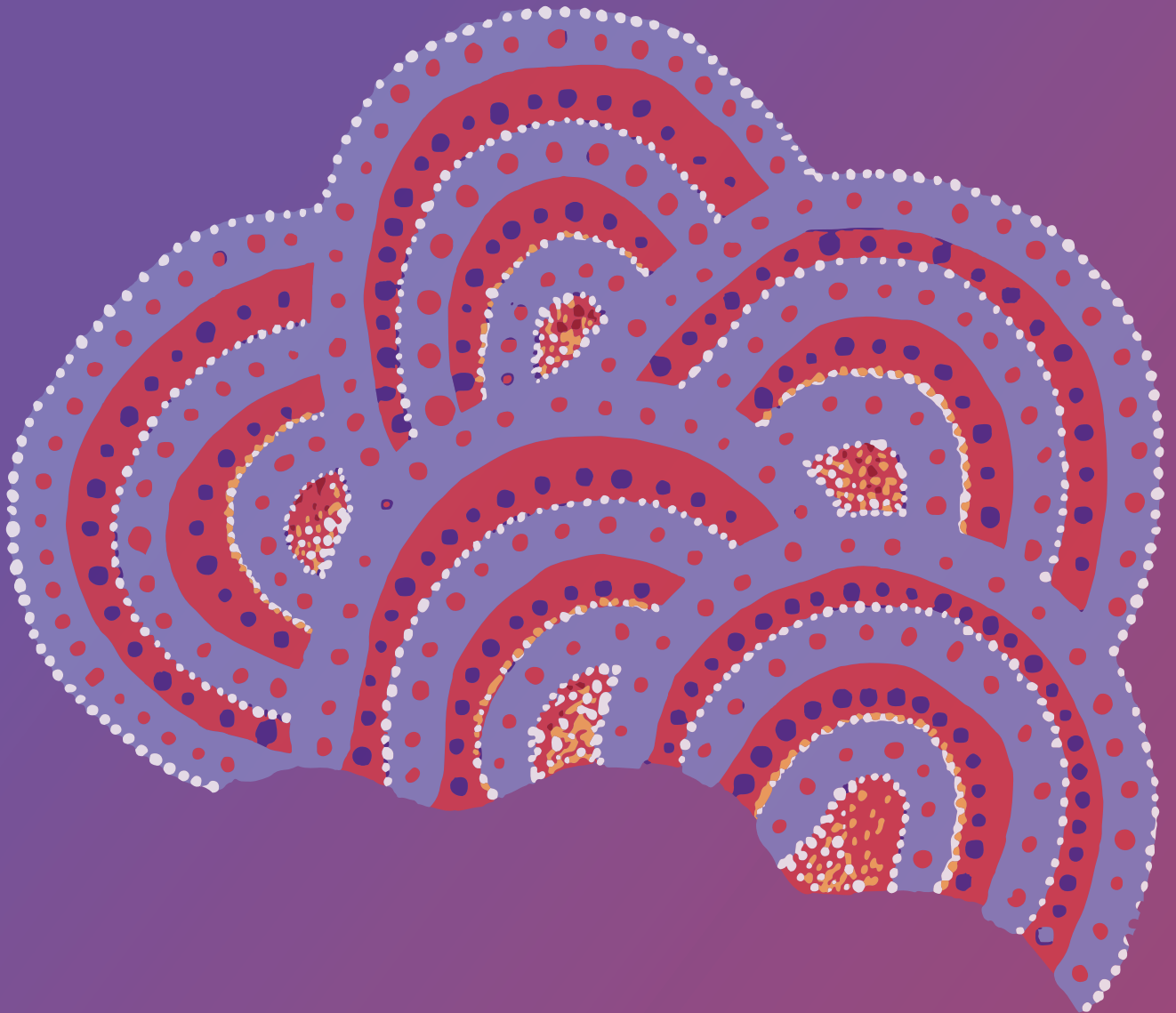




WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

2022-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Western Sydney University acknowledges the peoples of the Darug, Tharawal, Eora and Wiradjuri Nations. We acknowledge that the teaching, learning and research undertaken across our campuses continues the teaching, learning and research that has occurred on these lands for tens of thousands of years.

Western Sydney University's (WSU) School of Medicine was formed in 2007 from the aspirations of a community of almost two million people. These people live in the most multicultural, complex, and often under-privileged, urban area in Australia where medical services and resources lag behind the rest of Sydney. This disparity has been recognised by both Federal and State Governments who understand the need to produce more medical practitioners in Australia, but more specifically for the under-served population of Western Sydney.

PREAMBLE





Multicultural

The communities we serve live in the most multicultural, complex, and often under-privileged urban area in Australia.



Indigenous

We continue to work towards reducing health disparities, with a particular focus on the health needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.



Western Sydney

Focus on improving the health outcomes for the under-served population of Western Sydney.



Rural Health

A joint program with the School of Rural Medicine, Charles Sturt University.



PREAMBLE

CONTINUED

Our School, a relatively new Australian medical school, has expanded to include a joint program in medicine with the School of Rural Medicine, Charles Sturt University (CSU). Together, we operate in regions undergoing rapid growth in medical education and strive to achieve recognition as comprehensive research-intensive medical schools with a strong focus on social disadvantage particularly as it pertains to Western Sydney, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and rural health needs.

At the School of Medicine, our people – both staff and students – embody Western Sydney University's values of boldness, fairness, integrity and excellence. These values, along with the University's guiding principles of sustainability, equity, transformation and connectedness form the foundation of our academic focus. We boldly aim to be contemporary, interdisciplinary, research-intensive and community-engaging whilst striving to improve health equity for all.

As a research leader we demonstrate excellence in general practice, neurosciences, health services and outcomes, pharmacology, molecular and associated techniques, cardiovascular physiology, population and the health impacts of climate change, as well as in clinical sciences including maternal health, internal medicine, immunology, surgery and cancer surgery and mental health. Partnering with the Rural Institute of Health Research (Orange and Bathurst), our research aims to advance knowledge and produce innovative solutions to improve and transform the wellbeing of our communities and similar communities, nationally and internationally.

We aspire to be a first-preference medical school, attracting the highest quality applicants for Medicine, especially from our local metropolitan and rural areas. To achieve this, we create enhanced learning experiences by training students in areas where local and future needs are significant and growing rapidly, as well as by embedding community engagement within all student learning and research. This focus on connectedness with the community, and the embracing of its diversity, ensures graduates emerge with skills and mindset to participate actively and responsibly in a diverse and ever-changing world. At the same time, it ensures that translational research outcomes are of benefit and relevance to the community.

Our well-respected and credible workforce are provided with continuous development ensuring the highest quality teaching whilst allowing the School of Medicine at WSU to make significant contributions to national and international debates in medicine, health and biomedical research and education.

The initiatives and improvements developed as part of this Strategic Plan highlight the School's investment in education, research, staff and the communities we serve, whilst demonstrating our commitment to building organisational and financial strength through sustainable academic programs and operations.

Our School's mission and objectives have been shaped and driven by our commitment to our students, staff and the communities we serve as well as by the University's desire for a research-engaged School of Medicine. In addition, our partnership with CSU ensures we continue to work towards reducing health disparities, with a particular focus on the health needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The mission of the Western Sydney University School of Medicine is to:

- develop graduates who are highly skilled, adaptable and conscious of the contributions they can make to the communities of western Sydney, rural Australia and globally through their endeavours as doctors, clinicians or researchers.
- demonstrate our advocacy for, and contribution to research and medical and health services that address the complex and unmet needs of the communities in which we are based.
- achieve a local, national and international profile built on our commitment to opportunity, responsibility and excellence through the endeavours of our staff, graduates and students.

The School's objectives are to:

- produce excellent and adaptable medical practitioners with a strong ethic of lifelong learning, based on a sound platform that will equip them well for their further training and future roles as doctors.
- contribute to the medical workforce growth in NSW and retention of doctors in Western Sydney and rural under-served areas.
- enhance the quality and accessibility of healthcare across Western Sydney and rural areas through the provision of service where it is needed most, and by boosting the research effort in Sydney's South West and West in particular, and across NSW, Lismore and Bathurst more generally.

- develop high quality postgraduate courses which enhance health service training and service provision needs, locally and internationally.
- work closely with the local and broader medical community to meet these objectives.

Whilst the School ensures its graduates acquire the range of knowledge, skills and attitudinal attributes listed by the Australian Medical Council (AMC), the distinguishing features of Western Sydney University graduates (as appropriate to their qualification) will include:

- a passion for, and appreciation of, the importance of lifelong learning.
- a strong commitment to the professional attitudes and performance expected of medical practitioners, cardiac sonographers, postgraduate professionals and epidemiologists; including ethical behaviour, integrity, compassion, leadership, and freedom from discrimination.
- a well-developed understanding of, and the ability to implement, safe working practices, including a commitment to a clinical and workplace culture supporting equality and respect, free of bullying and harassment.
- the ability to work effectively and cooperatively in multi-disciplinary teams.
- a well-developed ability to involve patients with ongoing long-term illness in their care planning, across the continuum of community, primary and secondary care.
- a heightened awareness of the rewards of working in under-served areas.
- a strong sense of responsibility for health advocacy for their patients and communities.
- attributes and knowledge which allow them to transition successfully into new domains of knowledge and professional activity.

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

The School of Medicine's strategic initiatives and improvement actions are guided by our School's Mission and Objectives and underpinned by Western Sydney University's values of Boldness, Fairness, Integrity and Excellence. In delivering these initiatives and improvement actions, the School adheres to the University's four principles of Sustainability, Equity, Transformation and Connectedness.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS CONTINUED

THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE EMBODIES THE VALUES OF WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

BOLDNESS

Boldness in our thinking, teaching and research makes a difference in the lives of our students, staff and communities in which we are embedded.

FAIRNESS

Fairness for all in accessing the School's medical and research programs, and equity in employment opportunities and healthcare with a particular focus on improving the health outcomes for the under-served population of Western Sydney.

INTEGRITY

Integrity through academic freedom and discourse and the pursuit of knowledge through research and debate.

EXCELLENCE

Excellence in high quality teaching and research and personalised student experience that promotes lifelong learning.

THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ADHERES TO THE UNIVERSITY'S FOUR PRINCIPLES



SUSTAINABILITY

Committing to the most sustainable buildings and assisting health work towards sustainability in all its endeavours.



EQUITY

Committed to widening participation in medical training and closing the gap by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' admission to the medical program.



TRANSFORMATION

Transforming the health needs of the region through workforce development.



CONNECTEDNESS

The School leads connectedness with the health workforce initiatives of the University in partnership with the public and community health services in the region.

CREATE A SUPERIOR AND ENGAGED LEARNING EXPERIENCE



PHILOSOPHY, OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAM

- 1.1 We will continue to focus on clinically aligned medical education and training, emphasising work readiness and graduates who will:
 - think critically and use research to answer questions.
 - draw upon a strong grounding in the basic sciences.
 - work in interdisciplinary teams to provide integrated patient care.
 - have excellent communication skills.
 - operate at the highest professional standards.
 - appreciate the workings of the health system and their roles as advocates for the health of their patients and communities.



WORK INTEGRATED AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

- 1.2 Further embed engaged learning through community, industry and international experiences. This will be achieved by reviewing current practices and exploring new opportunities for local and global learning experiences through our contacts, including overseas study options for student research and electives.
- 1.3 We will continue to develop inter-professional and experiential learning opportunities for medical students to learn with, from and about, other health professionals by providing opportunities to work with our colleagues in health professional education as well as in health and community services, and by:
 - i. exploring further locations and opportunities through existing and new partnerships in Western Sydney and our rural locations for expanded multidisciplinary clinics, and
 - ii. embedding professional characteristics expected by all health professions, such as a commitment to excellence in teaching and research.



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH

- 1.4 Develop a comprehensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health education strategy. This will be achieved by:
 - i. mapping the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Graduate Attribute throughout our programs.
 - ii. identifying opportunities to develop and implement new course components on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health culture in the undergraduate curricula.
 - iii. continuing merit-based academic scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health students; and

- iv. supporting the appointment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academics of a high standard. The School of Medicine supports Closing the Gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health life expectancy through education, student retention and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (indigenous) organisations to deliver clinical services and promote medical research.



THE STUDENT LIFE CYCLE

Widening participation

- 1.5 Build pathways to attract the most talented domestic and international students from diverse backgrounds. This will be achieved by allocating scholarships for medicine to support students from Western Sydney.

Rural and Remote

- 1.6 We will continue to develop rural and remote medical training opportunities, with a focus on enhancing a rural and remote health workforce, as well as relevant medical research.

Student Support

- 1.7 We strive to provide academic and pastoral support of relevance to the developmental needs of future doctors and their professional identities. Support will be longitudinal and tailored to each stage of the course, from first year transition to university, mid-course transition to full-time experiential learning, to capstone experiences at the transition to graduate practice. The School will be responsive to the needs of individual students by ensuring the provision of advice and guidance that students view as safe and independent from assessment decisions, while ensuring that community expectations for patient safety and quality of care are upheld.

We will achieve this by:

- i. implementing opportunities for personal connections between staff and students at Year 1 Orientation.
 - ii. extending Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) program into core units in Years 1 and 2.
 - iii. developing further opportunities for senior students and alumni to mentor and teach students in earlier years.
 - iv. establishing a support role to provide advice and advocacy for individual students, and to support students to meet medical licencing requirements.
- 1.8 Enhance the first-year experience and support to optimise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health student retention and success. This will be achieved through transition to university training, mentorship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health students from the outset and enhanced preparatory tutoring in years 2 and 3.

CREATE A SUPERIOR AND ENGAGED LEARNING EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

Teacher Development

- 1.9 Develop staff capacity for high quality teaching. This will be achieved by:
- i. recruiting new staff for identified teaching needs.
 - ii. planning and establishing a mentoring scheme for new level A and B academic appointments.
 - iii. working with the university to strengthen promotion tracks for educational scholarship, particularly for clinical academics.
 - iv. recognising and promoting teaching excellence through School awards.
 - v. developing health professional education modules and resources to enhance current postgraduate offerings in university teaching.
 - vi. training for conjoint staff in both our current and expanding clinical placements.

Clinician researchers of the future

- 1.10 Ensure medical students gain practical research experience and grounding in the principles of research rigour. We will achieve this by:
- i. undertaking a distinct research project benchmarked to contemporary graduate outcomes in research.
 - ii. providing role models through teaching contributions from Research Centres and Research Groups.

These initiatives will thereby build the foundations for attracting a significant proportion of students into substantial research degrees, such as the BMedRes and PhD during, or after the medical course, and actively articulating the unique place of higher degree pathways in training medical and clinical researchers.

- 1.11 Further strengthen the research and teaching nexus, through increased interaction between our academics, conjoint academics and affiliated local hospitals and community practices, our Research Centres, Research Groups and other Western Sydney University Schools. This will be achieved through the contributions that Research Centres and Research Groups make to selected programs, particularly for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching; and the development of forums for training of supervisors of student and Higher Degree Research (HDR) research in Schools and Research units.

Quality and innovation in learning and teaching

- 1.12 Our learning and teaching will both inform, and be informed by, the evidence and research underpinning educational best practice and innovation.

We will achieve this by:

- i. aligning units with course level learning outcomes, and thence to assessment, by developing and implementing a live curriculum map.
 - ii. designing learning to support and scaffold authentic, workplace-based learning, with a focus on quality assessments conducted by practitioners in the field and collected in a portfolio for learning into the graduate years.
 - iii. blueprinting, benchmarking and using defensible processes and procedures to conduct quality assessments.
 - iv. developing a coordinated approach to evaluation, using validated student and teacher feedback tools for continuous improvement of course components and overall course outcomes.
 - v. acknowledging and responding to student and teacher feedback, community concerns and expectations regarding graduate outcomes.
 - vi. using educational expertise within, and across the School and its teaching sites, to collaborate with local, national and international content experts and educational leaders to deliver and research innovations in learning and teaching, and thereby build the evidence base for educational best practice in medicine.
- 1.13 Refine IT enabled learning resources to allow for flexible and equitable delivery across all teaching sites and health professional disciplines. This will be achieved by:
- i. enhancing interactive and collaborative learning in virtual groups and communities, focussed on patient care and student experiences in the workplace.
 - ii. supporting individual student learning journeys through an online portfolio, and thus
 - iii. laying the groundwork for learning analytics evaluation and research.



DEVELOP TARGETED WORLD-CLASS MEDICAL AND HEALTH RESEARCH

- 2.1 Build the scope and breadth of research performance. This will be achieved by targeting use of the Western Sydney University Research Investment Fund and the Ainsworth Medical innovation Fund to build research opportunities and capacity across all School of Medicine disciplines and clinical areas, support postgraduate students who perform the majority of research work and target self-funded Research Fellows to relocate to Western Sydney University.
- 2.2 Build critical mass in areas of research strength. This will be achieved by supporting the Translational Health Research Institute (THRI) and the research programs of the individual clinical academics and conjoint academics, facilitating the emergence of new research groups, and in due course, contributing to the establishment of a new research facility at Macarthur, and in partnership with CSU at Orange. We will continue to develop our partnership research programs with the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research and other relevant institutes, support translational research in these and other strategic partnerships, and aim to contribute to health policy through our research.
- 2.3 Contribute to improved University performance in Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) rankings. This will be done by reviewing the outcomes of prior ERA rankings, analysing the determinants of success and developing a well-designed strategy for further improvement in future ERA submissions, including strategies to maximise the output of high-quality publications and citation counts from current research. Publications, citations and international authorship will also be reviewed.
- 2.4 Increase peer-reviewed grant income. This will be achieved by analysing the outcomes of the National Health Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) and Australian Research Council (ARC) funding rounds and implementing strategies to improve the quality of applications, including robust internal and external expert review of applications prior to submission and boosting grant track records through strategic collaborations.
- 2.5 Increase collaborative industry co-funding, grant and partnership income to allow for diversity of funding sources and to increase category 2 and 3 income. This will be achieved by building on existing and potential networks from academic staff and their collaborators.
- 2.6 Develop Early Career Researchers (ECRs). This will be achieved by establishing a formal mentorship program for ECRs, including conjoint academics. Mentors will guide development plans for ECRs to ensure core competencies and assist them to develop applications for fellowships and other personnel/personnel support schemes.
- 2.7 Increase the number of high-quality domestic and international research students. This will be achieved by promoting the School's areas of research and clinical strength, funding summer, PhD and Postdoctoral scholarships in strategic areas and pursuing opportunities for partner organisations (health and the health postgraduate training sector) to sponsor research student and industry-funded scholarships or fellowships. Track and support the new postgraduate courses as a way of attracting strong candidates.
- 2.8 Strengthen the research and teaching nexus. This will be achieved through the direct teaching activities of research academics, recruitment activities that attract candidates of excellence across both areas, expansion of Undergraduate Project/Advanced Science and Masters of Research programs and through increased interaction in both research and teaching between Schools, Institutes, Centres and Groups.
- 2.9 Provide a rich and stimulating environment for research students. This will be achieved by: (i) increasing the capacity of academics, Groups and collaborators for high-quality seminar programs, including presentations by distinguished visitors, and (ii) increasing the enrolments into the combined MD/PhD, and the Bachelor of Medical Research. We are developing postgraduate research and teaching programs. We have a collaborative teaching program for basic science established with the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) and seek to develop such opportunities as they arise for similar programs with the other learned colleges.
- 2.10 Support the research activities of conjoint academic staff and community partners. This will be achieved by facilitating their participation in initiatives to increase grant success and to mentor and develop ECRs, and through targeted seminars and workshops.
- 2.11 Build research partnerships with industry, government, the learned colleges, the health sector, other universities and government research organisations. This will be achieved by specifically targeting partnership grant schemes (e.g. NHMRC Partnership Projects and Partnership Centres, ARC Linkage grants) and by strategic involvement in commissioned research.

CREATE A SUPERIOR AND ENGAGED LEARNING EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

- 2.12 Develop engaged research partnerships in Western Sydney and Western NSW, the northern Rivers of NSW and Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS) partners. This will be achieved by increasing the scope and impact of research in areas of regional priority and promoting the School's areas of research strength to industry, government, health sector and community organisations in Western Sydney and beyond. Support to the emerging South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Academic Units, where they substantially involve the School, will be provided. Emerging academic units in Western Sydney will also be explored. Matching funds for other LHD-based academic expansion will also be explored.
- 2.13 Promote research achievements to internal and external audiences. This will be achieved by working with the University Offices of Research, Development and Innovation (REDI) to publicise research achievements, strengthening and regularly updating Web content, research seminars and workshops, and support for School researchers to present their work at high-profile national and international meetings, and to develop media skills and profiles.
- 3.3 Create a commercially astute and profitable School, and Research Groups within the school, and encourage University partnership with conjointly funded research activities. This will be achieved by working with the Office of Research Services and REDI to secure partnerships and to develop consulting opportunities. We will also work with REDI to ensure protection of IP and to capitalise on any potential commercialisation opportunities. Other activities such as short courses, postgraduate courses, and on-line learning activities, will be pursued and we will continue developing the School's postgraduate coursework programs to deliver superior quality programs with alignment to market needs.
- 3.5 Build productive relationships with alumni and potential School sponsors.
- 3.6 Support internationalisation of the Medicine course through targeted enrolment of International (fee-paying) students, and through expanding recognition of our offered postgraduate courses in foreign jurisdictions.
- 3.7 Negotiate, through association with Medical Deans, for Government to appropriately reimburse Universities for the cost of medical training and to consider the financial and social impacts of deregulation on the medical workforce.



BUILD ORGANISATIONAL AND FINANCIAL STRENGTH

- 3.1 Attract, retain, recognise, reward and develop high quality staff. This will be achieved by appointing mentors for staff, paying salary loadings, making appointments by invitation, maintaining a workload policy that rewards achievement in research and teaching; and sustaining the reputation of our academics, conjoint academics, research institutes, and groups, which continue to attract applications from outstanding scholars to the School.
- 3.2 Ensure sustainability in the School's academic program and operations. This will be achieved by maintaining postgraduate courses that are financially viable or of strategic benefit; introducing further cost efficiencies in the delivery of programs; and ensuring that administrative processes articulate with those in the wider University, and are fine-tuned to support and promote academic work and achievement.
- 3.8 Engage with external funding opportunities, such as applications through the Health and Hospitals Fund and other relevant government agencies to enhance the funding and capital spending for medical teaching infrastructure in partnership with the NSW Ministry of Health.
- 3.9 Engage in meaningful communication with School staff and its academics on a regular basis through staff meetings, whole of School forums and regular School executive meetings, and by meeting regularly across available School sites.
- 3.10 Continue to look at opportunities in Western Sydney and the rural footprint for clinical training; to work with other universities in Australia and internationally to provide an extended clinical training network with benefits to curriculum revision and planning, and a wider scope of understanding global health.



