

**EMBARGOED – 12.01am, 9 June 2021**

## **Admitted patient survey highlights quality care in rural hospitals**

Ninety-five per cent of patients across the 19 Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) hospitals have reported a positive experience of their care, according to the latest Bureau of Health Information survey.

The *2019-20 Rural Hospital Adult Admitted Patient Survey* showed patients reported their overall experience of care was 'very good' (76 per cent) or 'good' (19 per cent).

District Chief Executive Michael DiRienzo said the survey is reflective of the hard work and dedication displayed by rural staff in caring for their local communities.

"The latest survey results for our rural hospitals are really positive and I am very proud of how our sites have performed," Mr DiRienzo said.

"As one of the largest Local Health Districts, we are responsible for providing care to many regional and rural communities, and this is a responsibility we take very seriously."

The survey showed that 91 per cent of respondents were always treated with respect and dignity during their hospital stay and were always given enough privacy when examined or treated.

Staff communication was also rated positively, with 92 per cent of respondents reporting that health professionals always explained what would happen during their tests, operations or procedures in a way they could understand.

The survey also demonstrated positive feedback regarding access to services, with 92 per cent of respondents reporting the distance between the hospital and their home was 100km or less, while 94 per cent of respondents said they benefitted from telehealth services.

Multi Purpose Services (MPS) across the District received great results, with 98 per cent of respondents reporting that staff at Barraba MPS were always kind and caring towards them, while 92 per cent of respondents rated the Bingara MPS staff treating them as 'very good' (76 per cent) or 'good' (16 per cent). Walcha MPS also returned excellent results in the physical environment and comfort category, with 100 per cent of respondents reporting the areas they used while in hospital were 'very clean'.

At Gloucester Hospital, 95 per cent of respondents said the right amount of information was given to them about their condition or treatment, and at Guyra Hospital, 100 per cent of respondents said they felt well enough to leave hospital at their time of discharge.

The 2019–20 Budget for Hunter New England Local Health District was around \$2.4 billion, an increase of around \$72 million on the previous year. Between mid-2012 and mid-2020, Hunter New England Local Health District increased its workforce by an additional 1237 full time equivalent staff - an increase of 11.8% including 336 more doctors, 668 more nurses and midwives, and 146 more allied health staff.

The record 2020-21 \$29.3 billion NSW Health budget includes \$8.3 billion for Local Health Districts in rural and regional areas.

**ENDS**