



# Care Governance Framework

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# 1. Acknowledgement

The Western Queensland PHN (WQPHN) deeply honours and recognises the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Custodians. We celebrate their rich stories, enduring traditions, vibrant living cultures, and their unbroken connection to the land and waters. With profound respect, we pay homage to Elders past and present, whose wisdom guides our journey.

WQPHN is dedicated to forging meaningful, respectful, and inclusive partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our aim is to collaboratively enhance health outcomes across our rural, remote and very remote regions, nurturing a healthcare environment where every individual is valued and cared for.

This Framework is a cornerstone in our mission to address and rectify health inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as other vulnerable groups within our geographical reach. It is a testament to our resolve to ensure equitable access to healthcare for all.

In developing this Framework, WQPHN has drawn upon a wealth of clinical governance expertise and insights. This includes contributions from esteemed entities such as the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC), internal and external stakeholders of WQPHN, Safer Care Victoria, and other PHNs. This collaborative approach reflects our commitment to a healthcare system that is safe, equitable, and responsive to the needs of every community member.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Commitment

WQPHN is committed to ensuring that consumers who engage with the PHN's commissioned service providers and other funded programs and activities, experience safe, effective, person-centred care and consideration.

### 2.2. Purpose

Primary Health Networks (PHNs), under their foundational agreements with the Australian Government Department of Health & Aged Care (AGDoHAC), are tasked with enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of patient services, especially for those at risk of poor health outcomes. A key goal is to improve care coordination, ensuring patients receive timely and appropriate care. WQPHN fulfills this mandate primarily through service commissioning, tailored to the health needs of its communities.

The Care Governance Framework (CGF) outlines the safety and quality concepts, principles and expectations that influence and are embedded in WQPHN systems, plans and practices, that cumulatively support WQPHN to meet its strategic priority to facilitate safe, quality outcomes for patients and families. The Framework highlights WQPHN's commitment to delivering and influencing outstanding care across all services, activities, and programs under the organisation's control and influence.

## 2.3. Care Governance

Clinical Governance in WQPHN is seen as an interconnected system encompassing various processes, relationships, and behaviours. This system ensures continual improvement in clinical service quality and upholds high standards of person-centred care, contributing to the safe and effective delivery of healthcare services. Clinical governance is a critical part of overall governance in healthcare.

As a primary commissioner of both clinical and non-clinical services, WQPHN sometimes directly provides primary healthcare support and might act as a direct service provider, particularly due to its unique geographic and health service market context. Thus, WQPHN expands the traditional concept of clinical governance to 'Care Governance.' This broader scope includes safety and quality in both clinical and related non-clinical activities, whether commissioned, facilitated, delivered, or overseen by WQPHN.

The WQPHN Care Governance Framework focuses on key aspects relevant to its context, recognising that there are numerous other components and perspectives in clinical and care governance. This Framework integrates with broader organisational and health system governance, as outlined in sections 3, 4, and 5.

## 3. Related Concepts & Documents

### 3.1. Safety & Quality

In this Framework, concepts such as care governance, safety, quality, effectiveness, and person-centred care are all used to resonate with a diverse audience, encompassing varying backgrounds and understandings of healthcare.

At the core of WQPHN's mission is the facilitation of services that embody these qualities. Care governance serves as the overarching framework that ensures all services and activities are characterised as safe, effective, and person-centred (and therefore meeting the accepted definition of quality). For clarity within this Framework:

- **Safe:** We strive to eliminate avoidable harm in the delivery of care and support services.
- **Effective:** Our goal is to facilitate appropriate, integrated care, ensuring it is delivered correctly, timely, and leads to the best outcomes for each consumer.
- **Person-centred:** We prioritise the unique values, beliefs, contexts and situations of individuals in our care delivery and organisational planning.

### 3.2. WQPHN Strategic Plan

**WQPHN's Vision:** Healthier Western Queensland Communities

**WQPHN's Mission:** Paving our way towards improved health outcomes for all Western Queenslanders through a comprehensive, integrated primary health care system in collaboration with our stakeholders,

partners and communities.

**Strategic Priorities:**

- Empowered communities leading the way
- Supported workforce built for the bush
- Equitable access closer to home
- Affordable services for everyone
- Quality outcomes for patients and families

### 3.3. WQPHN's Commissioning Framework

WQPHN's Commissioning for Better Health: A Bushman's Guide to Commissioning in Western Queensland, outlines the organisational strategies, goals, and methods WQPHN employs for commissioning healthcare services and activities.

- **Organisational strategies and goals:** The guide details how WQPHN plans and prioritises its healthcare commissioning activities, including the objectives to achieve through these activities.
- **Commissioning approach:** The guide follows a national commissioning model tailored to suit the unique needs, circumstances, distinct challenges and requirements of healthcare delivery in rural and remote areas of Western Queensland.
- **Care Governance assurance lens:** The guide emphasises the application of a 'care governance assurance lens' during various stages of the commissioning cycle. This means that care governance principles (ensuring safe, effective, and person-centred care) are integral to each phase of commissioning, from planning and contracting to delivery and evaluation. This approach ensures commissioned services meet the high standards of care governance expected by WQPHN.

### 3.4. Quintuple Aim

WQPHN's commissioning is guided by the Quintuple Aim, integrating its principles — improving population health, enhancing patient experience, increasing efficiency, optimising provider experience, and advancing health equity — into its operations. This approach is not only a commissioning management tool but also a contractual expectation for service providers to use the Quintuple Aim to guide all aspects of commissioned service delivery.

#### 3.4.1. Value-Based Health Care

Healthcare efficiency and sustainability are grounded in the concept of value, defined as patient-centred health outcomes relative to costs. WQPHN's Care Governance Framework, aligned with the Quintuple Aim, balances consumer experiences with service deliverer needs, embodying 'person-centred care.' In Australia, healthcare costs are shared by individuals and public funding, making it crucial to consider both personal and societal value. WQPHN adopts a place-based approach to healthcare value in Western Queensland, acknowledging the rural, remote and very remote unique challenges in public health funding distribution and integrating this understanding into its Care Governance Framework implementation.

### 3.5. WQPHN's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

The RAP commits WQPHN to practical steps for enhancing understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in its rural, remote and very remote regions. It sets actionable guidelines for the organisation's engagement, cultural awareness, and competency development, both internally and among commissioned service providers. This commitment to cultural responsiveness and competency is a fundamental aspect of WQPHN's Care Governance Framework.

### 3.6. WQPHN's Performance Outcomes Management Framework

The WQPHN Performance Outcomes Management Framework guides WQPHN and its service providers towards excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement by setting clear objectives, measurable indicators, and robust monitoring. It aims to enhance health outcomes and ensure sustainable, equitable services across Western Queensland. The multi-tiered framework tracks key performance metrics, using data to manage risk, inform planning, drive improvements, and identify innovative opportunities, including in care governance.

### 3.7. WQPHN's Management Systems

WQPHN utilises a number of management systems, including but not limited to the following, to integrate leadership roles, resource management, monitoring, evaluation, and risk management across all operational areas.

- **Safety:** inclusive of both care governance and workplace health and safety
- **Quality:** the organisation operates under the ISO 9001 Quality Management standard
- **Information Security:** WQPHN is progressing towards ISO 27001 Information Security certification
- **Financial:** the resourcing available to commission and manage safe and high quality care

Regular meetings at various organisational levels ensure management system goals are met, with care governance elements and metrics regularly monitored and reported as relevant.

### 3.8. Other Frameworks and Plans

Other WQPHN Frameworks and Plans, identified for initiation, established, being implemented or during their review cycle, including but not limited to those listed below, also embed and drive safety and quality through their particular lens or risk management focus.

- Nukal Murra Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework
- Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Regional Plan
- Human resource, people performance and competency frameworks
- Healthy Outback Communities model of care
- Stakeholder engagement framework

## 4. Guiding Principles of WQPHN’s Care Governance

The scope of WQPHN’s Clinical Governance Framework is founded on an adaption of the clinical governance components (labelled “principles” for the WQPHN CGF context) identified in the ACSQHC National Model Clinical Governance Framework (2017) and National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards (2021) and adapted by many other organisations. The use of the guiding principles as filters through which to view WQPHN activity enables optimal care governance practices.

Table 1: WQPHN’s Care Governance Guiding Principles

Guiding Principle	What this means to WQPHN
<b>Leadership and culture enabled</b>	Integrated leadership and management practices are established and used to influence optimal safety and quality culture that permeates through all service and activity delivery.
<b>Person centred</b>	<p>Services and activities are designed and used to support patients, carers, families, consumers, communities and service providers to be partners in achieving shared identified outcomes.</p> <p>Services and activities are delivered in accordance with physical, psychosocial, cultural and equity considerations.</p>
<b>Workforce available and appropriate</b>	<p>The workforce is available and has the right qualifications, skills, and supervision.</p> <p>The workforce understands and subscribes to person centredness within a rural and remote context.</p>
<b>Performance, risk &amp; effectiveness assessed</b>	<p>Connected multi-disciplinary service delivery is aligned with rural and remote needs.</p> <p>Safety and quality care risks are identified and managed throughout the service and activity cycle.</p> <p>The impact of service and activity delivery is measured via the Quintuple Aim and value-based healthcare considerations.</p>
<b>Improvement orientated</b>	<p>Evidenced-based practices, appropriate reporting, evaluation, learning, and the application of continuous improvements are embedded processes in service and activity delivery.</p> <p>Continuous improvement is supported by leadership and management.</p>

As a commissioning and coordinating organisation, WQPHN embeds these principles of care governance via available and appropriate levers; for example through contracts, relationships and partnerships. Given the diversity of services and activities which WQPHN has variable direction and control over, care governance is enacted through interlinked frameworks, structures, systems, processes and practices that are designed to deal with that diversity.

## 5. Care Governance Systems & Practices

- **Legislation and standards:** WQPHN and its service providers adhere to relevant legislation and standards to guide care governance processes.
- **Reporting systems:** WQPHN enforces reporting obligations for performance, risk, and assurance monitoring, both internally and for its service providers, including but not limited to:
  - **Service and activity delivery:** ensures data capture and reporting on service access, to measure equity indicators for rural and remote areas
  - **Risk management:** service provider assurances for implemented risk processes to ensure optimal safety and quality of care
  - **Incidents:** recording, responding and reporting clinical or care incidents for review and evaluative purposes
  - **Feedback – complaints and compliments:** monitored for learning and quality improvement
  - **Patient reported measures:** PREOMs facilitating improved service provider understanding of consumer experience and views on their health outcomes
- **Evaluation and learning systems:** WQPHN and its service providers commit to evaluation and continuous improvement, with trend analysis, risk management, and feedback informing cyclic planning.
- **Workforce enablement:** WQPHN and its service providers focus on engaging and retaining an "appropriate" workforce, considering various factors like qualification, training, and ethical practice, and addressing challenges in workforce availability and retention in rural areas.
- **Roles, responsibilities & behaviours:** WQPHN collaborates with stakeholders to ensure the adoption of care governance principles, by outlining specific expectations for funders, board, committees, staff, and service providers within appropriate documentary instruments and artifacts (eg policy, employment agreements, commissioning contracts, position descriptions, terms of reference, partnership agreements).
- **Assurance and monitoring:** WQPHN's Care Governance Committee monitors the implementation and outcomes of the Care Governance Framework, assisting the Board in ensuring safe, effective, and person-centred service delivery.
- **Research and innovation:** WQPHN invests in research and innovation when opportunities and resourcing are appropriate, including in care governance concepts like the application of PREOMs in rural and remote locations and the innovative implementation of equitable placed-based models of care like the Healthy Outback Communities (HOC) model.
- **Connected services and seamless pathways:** WQPHN facilitates the creation and communication of navigation and referral pathways that inform and connect consumers and service providers.



## 6. Acronyms & Definitions

ACSQHC	Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
AGDoHAC	Australian Government Department of Health & Aged Care
CGF	Care Governance Framework
Care Governance	Clinical Governance that is also applicable to non-clinical services. A system of interrelated systems, processes, relationships and behaviours, through which organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of person-centred care.
HOC	Healthy Outback Communities - a model of health and social care to improve health access, equity and outcomes for people living in remote Western Queensland
PHN	Primary Health Network
PREOMs	Patient Reported Experience & Outcomes Measures
Quintuple Aim	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maximising population health outcomes</li> <li>2. Enhancing people's experience</li> <li>3. Improving efficiency and sustainability</li> <li>4. Optimising service provider experience</li> <li>5. Advancing health equity</li> </ol>
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
Values Based Health Care	The health outcomes that matter to patients relative to the resources or costs required
WQPHN	Western Queensland Primary Health Network

## 7. Document Control

Date/Version	Author	Modification
<b>October 2022</b>	Operations Manager	First version drafted and provided to all stakeholders for feedback Not formally approved
<b>November 2023</b>	Senior Manager, Primary Care & Chronic Disease	Second version taking a different approach based on feedback on first version Not formally approved
<b>29-02-2024</b>	WQPHN Care Governance Committee Chair, Senior Quality & Compliance Advisor, Care Governance Committee members	Third approach moderating the style of the first two versions WQPHN Board endorsed