

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital project

## Project overview

### What is the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital project?

The Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital project is one of the largest regional health projects currently underway in NSW and Victoria, delivering improved health services for the border communities.

How much is being invested in the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital project?

The project is a joint initiative of the NSW and Victorian governments, with NSW and Victoria each committing \$225 million to the project. This was in addition to the \$108 million already committed by the NSW and Australian governments, bringing the total project investment to \$558 million.

### What is being delivered as part of the project?

The project will deliver a new, 7-storey clinical services building and upgrades to existing facilities at the Albury campus.

The new clinical services building will bring acute services together at one location to improve patient safety, reduce the duplication of services and travel between the Albury and Wodonga hospital campuses, and increase the capability and responsiveness of the health service to meet the future health care needs of the community.

### What is within the scope of the \$558 million?

The project scope has been informed by the Albury Wodonga Health Clinical Services Plan, which outlines what services and future capacity will be needed to support health care delivery in the future.

Health Infrastructure, Albury Wodonga Health, NSW Health and the Victorian Department of Health determine the infrastructure requirements to meet the needs of the border communities and what can be provided within the budget.

The project will deliver a mix of new and refurbished facilities and is expected to include:

- More than 80 additional new beds for medical and surgical inpatients across 3 new inpatient units with 60 per cent single rooms and remainder in double rooms.
- New and enhanced Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
- Enhanced Maternity and birthing services, including a special care nursery
- 32 bed Mental Health inpatient unit to replace and expand the existing Nolan House current 24-bed service
- New Surgical and operating theatres, including a hybrid theatre plus procedure rooms
- New Cardiac Catheter Lab
- New central sterile supply department adjacent to theatres
- Expanded ambulatory care, cardiac diagnostics and allied health therapies

- New hospital main entrance and public drop-off zone from Keene Street, Aboriginal Family Lounge, Multi-faith Centre and retail opportunities
- Additional car parking

Numbers will be finalised as planning and design progresses.

The project scope prioritises clinical services, a better-connected health care environment and will deliver more beds at the Albury Hospital campus. This investment will deliver a hospital that can accommodate the community's immediate needs while providing considered locations for future growth for decades to come.

### **Who is delivering the project?**

The project is a joint funding commitment between the NSW, Victorian and Australian governments. Health Infrastructure is delivering the project in partnership with the Victorian Department of Health; Victorian Health Building Authority and Albury Wodonga Health.

Health Infrastructure appointed a project team in early 2023 to deliver the project.

## **The design**

### **What is a concept design?**

The concept design shows the size and scale of the new hospital, as well as the relationships between the clinical functions, services, buildings and other facilities to be delivered as part of the project.

### **What are the key features of the concept design?**

The concept design for the new Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital project has been released and provides a first look at the state-of-the-art health facilities.

Key features include:

- a new 7-storey Clinical Services Building
- a new Northeast Building for relocations and future expansion
- additional car parking to increase capacity on site and improve access for staff, patients and visitors
- an adult acute mental health inpatient unit to replace and expand on Nolan House
- new hospital main entrance and public drop-off zone from Keene Street
- targeted refurbishment of existing buildings
- improved landscaping reflecting Country, pedestrian links, wayfinding and enhanced connectivity throughout the campus.

### **What services will move into the Clinical Services Building?**

- Ambulatory Care and Allied Health Services
- Operating theatres
- Intensive Care Unit
- Cardiac Catheter Lab
- Day procedure suite
- Maternity and birthing services
- Special care nursery

- Paediatrics
- New Inpatient Units (IPUs)
- Integrated Mental Health IPU
- Education training and research; and
- Administration and front of house facilities, including food and retail amenity.

The Albury campus will consolidate complex care on one site, which will improve safety for patients and reduce the need for urgent travel between the Wodonga and Albury campuses.

### **Why is the mental health unit located on the top floor?**

It is not uncommon for mental health inpatient units to be located in multistorey clinical services buildings as part of hospital developments. The sixth floor will be a dedicated inpatient mental health floor. It will provide a safe and private unit which will allow for discreet, non-public transfers of consumers and also provide rapid response to other clinical areas in emergencies. An upper floor allows access to a private and risk-assessed outdoor area unlike a ground floor unit which can be overlooked by adjacent buildings. There will be courtyards looking outward in multiple directions, offering views of the district.

### **Will bed numbers increase?**

Yes. The new regional hospital will deliver an increase of beds to provide a significant expansion and enhancement of clinical and non-clinical services.

There will be:

- More than 80 additional new beds for medical and surgical inpatients across 3 new inpatient units with 60 per cent single rooms and remainder in double rooms.
- New and enhanced Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
- Enhanced Maternity and birthing services, including a special care nursery
- 32-bed Mental Health inpatient unit to replace and expand the existing Nolan House current 24-bed service
- New Surgical and operating theatres, including a hybrid theatre plus procedure room
- New Cardiac Catheter Lab
- New central sterile supply department adjacent to theatres
- Expanded ambulatory care, cardiac diagnostics and allied health therapies
- New hospital main entrance and public drop-off zone from Keene Street, Aboriginal Family Lounge, Multi-faith Centre and retail opportunities
- Increased in carparking on site

The refurbishment of the current ICU space and existing theatres will provide additional points of care for the Emergency Department, a new six-bed Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Unit, and new and upgraded pharmacy and pathology facilities. The final scope, including numbers will be finalised through the planning and design process.

Contemporary models of care and health service design enables flexible use of beds in all clinical areas, as demand requires. This means that wards can be reconfigured if a department needs more beds at any given time. Bed numbers as a primary measure of a health service capacity does not reflect the full scope of a hospital's capabilities and services. Emphasis has shifted to patient outcomes, efficiency and the quality of care which is driven by advancements in technology and the rise of outpatient services, for example palliative and post-partum care in the home. Treatment spaces are built to be scalable depending on the need of the community at that time and hospitals are now evaluated by their ability to provide patient-centred care in or out of the physical building.

### **Will the project provide additional car parking at the Albury Hospital campus?**

Yes, the project includes additional carparking on site. The new car parks and redesigned spaces will increase the number of available parking spots on site and improve access for staff, patients and visitors.

The final number of parking spaces will be determined during the design phase to meet the projected needs of the hospital community.

### **How does the project address health services for the Border communities?**

This project will consolidate a range of acute clinical services and expertise within the Albury Hospital campus. This will deliver safer and more efficient care, resulting in less people needing to travel between the two sites. Wodonga will become a non-emergency care hub for the community.

These major improvements and upgrades will support Albury, Wodonga and Border communities now and into the future. Together the hospital campuses will help strengthen Albury Wodonga's footing as a health hub for the entire region.

### **Will there be a helipad as part of the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital project?**

The hospital campus is being planned to enable provision for a helipad to be delivered in potential future stages, and suitable locations have been considered as part of planning for the project.

## **Albury and Wodonga campuses and health services**

### **Why was the Albury campus chosen for the regional hospital project?**

The Albury campus was chosen due to its existing infrastructure, location, sustainability, and cost-efficiency. It leverages significant past investments, ensuring effective and sustainable regional healthcare and avoids using budget for additional land purchase costs.

The campus has already seen significant investments, including the Regional Cancer Centre, UNSW Rural School of Clinical Medicine, Hilltop Accommodation, and a Negative Pressure Room and the new Emergency Department. Using these investments and the existing infrastructure enhances the hospital's role as a regional health hub, ensuring it can meet the region's growing healthcare needs effectively and sustainably.

As identified in the Master Plan, the eight-hectare site has significant capacity for expansion to meet the needs of the health service and the broader community in the future. Future stages of expansion have been tested through the planning phases of the design to ensure the project scope enables further investment and growth in site infrastructure.

### **How will the new hospital and facilities be staffed?**

A workforce plan will be developed to support Albury Wodonga Health's existing efforts to attract and retain staff. The NSW Government also has several initiatives in place to support workforce development in regional and rural areas.

## **Wodonga Hospital**

The following FAQs are related to the future of Wodonga Hospital which is managed by Albury Wodonga Health and the Victorian Department of Health.

## **What is the expected timeline for completion for the Wodonga campus?**

Wodonga will continue to deliver its current services to the border community until construction on the Albury site is completed.

Services would then transfer, paving the way for construction to start at the Wodonga site.

## **Will you publicly release the Wodonga Entity Services Plan?**

The Wodonga Entity Services Plan is an internal planning document, and the first of many steps in this long-term project.

Further planning will occur in the coming years, with services not transitioning until after the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital project is complete.

There will be opportunities for consultation to occur throughout the coming years as part of the standard planning and infrastructure project process.

## **Will you do consultation with the community and local councils on the Wodonga ESP?**

There will be opportunities for consultation to occur throughout the coming years as part of the standard planning and infrastructure project process.

# **Consultation**

Designing and building a hospital is a complex process that involves extensive consultation with staff, health care professionals, patients, key stakeholders and the community to ensure the right clinical needs are met.

## **What consultation has informed the concept plan?**

Consultation with health service staff and clinicians is essential to the planning and design of the hospital and this will continue throughout the project delivery process. The project team is committed to ensuring health service staff, stakeholders and the community have accurate and timely project information.

Extensive consultation was undertaken with health service staff, patients, local Aboriginal stakeholders, local councils, government agencies, stakeholder and advocacy groups, and the community throughout 2023 and 2024.

Feedback from consultation activities during early planning, master planning and concept design workshops has helped inform the final concept designs.

## **How can I provide feedback on the project?**

Feedback from the community health staff and stakeholders has helped inform the development of the schematic and other detailed planning and design activities.

We encourage you to view the latest designs on the [project website](#).

The project website will be updated regularly, and information will also be shared via project newsletters, direct correspondence and consultation activities at key project milestones.

## **How are staff and clinicians involved in the planning and design process?**

Over 100 staff are continuing to inform the design of the new and refurbished facilities and future operating models.

## **How are stakeholders and the community involved in the project?**

The project team is committed to ensuring proactive, collaborative and transparent communications and consultation activities with health service staff, stakeholders and the community. Ongoing consultation

with a broad range of stakeholders and the community is essential to the hospital planning, design and delivery process and will continue throughout project delivery.

In September 2023, the Project Community Advisory Group was formed following an extensive Expression of Interest and selection panel process and includes local patient and community representatives who have a passion for improving access to health services and facilities for the border community.

With varied backgrounds, skillsets and lived experiences, the group's members represent the diverse urban, regional and rural communities of the Albury Wodonga Health catchment area.

Working closely with the project team, the group provide input and advice on a range of matters relating to the new hospital's design including indoor and outdoor spaces, accessibility, wayfinding and signage, food and retail, arts and culture, and patient, carer and family spaces.

The PCAG is one of the many ways we're engaging and working with the community and stakeholders to progress planning and design for the hospital project.

## Construction impacts

### **What will be done to reduce the impact on patients and staff during construction?**

Albury Hospital will remain open and continue to provide services during construction. A well-planned and staged construction approach will minimise any interruptions and impacts to hospital services. There will be changes to access arrangements at the site. Any changes will be communicated with staff, patients, visitors and the community well in advance. Patient, visitor, staff and emergency access will always be maintained.

The building contractor is required to minimise the effects of dust, noise and disruption to existing services. This includes taking reasonable preventative measures to impacts on adjoining properties.

### **What is the anticipated timeframe for construction?**

Works for the Northeast building are expected start in 2025 to support the relocation of services and facilitate major construction. Main works construction of the Clinical Services Building will commence following planning approval and will be carried out in stages. The project is expected to be completed by late 2028.

### **Will parking be available on the Albury campus during construction?**

A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be prepared to manage parking and traffic control during construction works. Any changes will be communicated in advance.

## Construction and next steps

### **When does construction start?**

Works are expected to start in 2025. There will be a detailed plan in place for construction to ensure patients, visitors and staff can access the hospital and its services during the construction period.

### **What are early works?**

Early works prepare the site for main works construction including relocating departments, demolition, and in-ground services such as services investigations, water, electrical and cabling works.

To facilitate construction of a new Clinical Services Building in the south-west corner of the Albury Campus, some services and staff in the Allied Health Building will be relocated to a contemporary new facility called the Northeast Building. The new facility will be located adjacent to East Street and completed as part of early works.



More information about the Northeast Building can be found at the end of these FAQs

### **When will the project be complete?**

Early construction works are expected to start on the Northeast Building in 2025, and the building will be completed in 2026. Works will then start on the Clinical Services Building and are expected to be completed in 2028.

### **What are the next steps in the project?**

Following the release of the concept design and consultation activities, planning for the schematic and detailed designs will progress. These steps will lead to the preparation and submission of statutory planning application which will go on public exhibition. The project team is committed to sharing updates as the project progresses.

This is an exciting time for the border communities, and we look forward to keeping the community informed as the project progresses.

## **The Northeast Building**

### **What will be in the Northeast Building?**

To facilitate the construction of the Clinical Services Building, a new facility will be built adjacent to East Street, called the Northeast Building.

The following departments, currently housed in the Allied Health Building and surrounding buildings will relocate to the new, purpose built two-storey Northeast Building when complete:

- Allied Health clinical spaces including the gym and consultation rooms
- Outpatients including: Specialist Outpatient Clinics, Cardiac Clinic, Pre-admission clinics
- Administration areas such as Allied Health, Support Services, Medical Workforce, IT, Progression of Care Hub, Clinical Nurse Educators
- Pharmacy
- Conference Rooms and Library
- Medical Staff Lounge.

### **How can I find out about the Northeast Building?**

The designs, project timeline, and detailed information about the building's features are available online at [hinfra.health.nsw.gov.au/awrh](https://hinfra.health.nsw.gov.au/awrh)

### **When will work start on the Northeast Building?**

Construction of the new Northeast Building is set to start this year, subject to planning approvals and appointment of a contractor.

### **Have you appointed a contractor for the Northeast Building?**

A contract tender for the Northeast Building has recently been released.

Following the completion of the tender process, a builder will be engaged, and the project scope and a construction timeline will be confirmed.

Health Infrastructure is committed to helping create new job opportunities for the community and supporting the recruitment of local trades throughout the redevelopment. More information will be made available as the project progresses

## **What will happen to the Northeast Building once the new multi-storey Clinical Services Building is complete?**

Once the new Clinical Services Building is completed, some services are planned to move into their permanent locations:

- Patient areas such as allied health and outpatients will move into the new Clinical Services Building
- Some administrative functions will remain in the Northeast Building
- Pharmacy relocates to refurbished facilities in the existing hospital building.

The new Northeast Building will provide opportunities for future service expansion.

## **Will car parking be impacted while the Northeast Building is being built?**

New on-grade parking will also be provided to the northwest of the site to offset the impact of the new Northeast Building on existing campus parking. These new spaces will be available for staff, patients, and visitors before any changes are made to existing parking areas. We understand that parking is an important aspect for staff and the community, particularly during the construction phase.

We will have more updates on parking as the project planning progresses.

## **How has consultation informed the design of the Northeast Building?**

Health professionals, staff, patients, Aboriginal community representatives and the Border community helped shape the design and planning of Northeast Building during the masterplanning and concept design stages. Community feedback has influenced various aspects of the facility including its connection to the existing hospital, opportunities for future expansion, construction impacts and design elements.

Importantly, the planning of the Northeast Building has been guided by Project User Groups (PUGs). These groups include Albury Wodonga Health executives, clinical leads, doctors, nurses, administrative staff, and other healthcare personnel who will ultimately work in the new spaces. As the project team engages with each department, they collaborate closely with the relevant PUG to refine and enhance the design at every stage.

To date 12 PUG sessions have been held for the Northeast Building, directly shaping both its functionality and overall design.

## **Where is the project up to?**

Planning and design for the Northeast Building is underway and a tender process is progressing. Construction of the Northeast Building is expected to start this year following planning approval and the appointment of a contractor.

Planning is progressing on the Clinical Service Building and to date, there have been over 40 PUGs for the Clinical Services Building and Refurbishment areas as it progresses from concept design to schematic design. The next phase of the project will build upon this engagement as user groups are consulted on the detailed design of each area.

## **How will I know where to go for my appointment?**

There are no changes to services while the Northeast Building is being built. Allied Health Services and Outpatient services will continue to be provided from their existing locations in the hospital.

Temporary changes to access routes may need to be in place during the construction stage of the Northeast Building. Every effort will be made to minimise disruption and the community will be informed of any planned changes to access routes.



### **Will there be any impacts to the Café?**

No. The Café will remain open and operational during the construction of the Northeast Building. A construction zone for the Northeast Building will be established to ensure the safety of staff, patients and visitors and to minimise construction impacts.

### **Will the Northeast Building construction impact the provision of health services?**

No. All current health services will continue to be delivered from Albury Hospital during the construction stage of the Northeast Building. Every effort will be made to minimise disruption and the community will be informed of any planned changes to access routes.

### **What are the future plans for the hydrotherapy pool?**

Albury Wodonga Health and the Victorian Department of Health have developed the Wodonga Entity Service Plan which will consider future access to therapeutic services for the community. There will be opportunities for consultation to occur throughout the coming years.

### **How will staff be supported during the move?**

A detailed change management process is underway, including consultation and engagement with staff and other key stakeholders. AWH will continue this process as the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital project progresses.

Additionally, a workforce plan is being developed to support Albury Wodonga Health's existing efforts to attract and retain staff. The NSW and Victorian Governments also have several initiatives in place to support workforce development in regional and rural areas.