



Government of **Western Australia**  
WA Country Health Service

2023

# PILBARA CHALLENGE

WA Country Health Service  
Position statement



# About our challenge

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) faces unique challenges providing comprehensive, timely health services across vast distances, smaller populations and diverse community needs. Telehealth and technology play an important role in ensuring the most vulnerable and remote communities across country Western Australia have equitable access to safe, high quality health services.

The Pilbara Challenge is an exciting opportunity for WACHS to utilise technology to advance integrated care and ensure equity of access for better health outcomes. We are keen to expand and evolve our virtual care services, realising the transformative potential of new and emerging technologies in healthcare to deliver more services closer to home.

We want to build on the face-to-face experience using virtual technology, ensuring patients see the right clinician at the right time across the continuum of care from emergency to inpatient and non-admitted care including access to specialist outpatient care. We want to break down silos and connect the health story of our patients, gathering and sharing all healthcare interactions to help inform decisions at the point of care.

# WACHS Virtual Care Services

WACHS has been developing innovative service solutions supported by technology over the last 20 years and is widely recognised as a global leader in virtual emergency and acute care provision. One of our investments is our WACHS Command Centre along with a wide range of health services available virtually. We want to enhance what we already deliver across our virtual care services.

## WACHS Command Centre

- A virtual emergency department (ED) hub that operates 24/7 to support clinicians on the front-line treating patients in country hospitals, providing them with instant access to a dedicated and expert team including emergency medicine specialists (FACEMS), psychiatrists, general practitioners (GPs), nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and mental health nurses.
- An inpatient clinical back-up service enabling patients to remain at their local site and providing country GPs with support that improves their work-life balance.
- A virtual education hub offers clinical education sessions, simulations and digital health training, enabling the remote workforce to maintain and develop emergency and mental health clinical skills.

## WACHS Command Centre



### Emergency Telehealth Service

Supports WA's country doctors and nurses caring for patients by providing 24/7 access to specialist emergency clinicians by videoconference.

**24,853**  
consultations in  
2021-22



### Inpatient Telehealth Service

Provides virtual ward rounds to patients admitted to our country hospitals when the local GP is unavailable and offers 24/7 access to expertise.

**365**  
patients accepted  
in 2021-22



### Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service

Provides country doctors and nurses with access to specialist mental health nurses and psychiatrists, to assist in caring for people at our facilities.

**5000** emergency  
consultations since  
2019



### Acute Specialist Telehealth Service

Provides country clinicians and their patients with access to a range of specialists using three-way videoconferencing facilities.

Expansion of acute  
specialist services  
in 2022



### Acute Patient Transport Coordination

A coordination centre that oversees safe, timely and efficient patient transfer to and from regional and metro hospitals for admitted country patients.

Expansion to  
include rotary wing  
transport in 2022



### Advanced Patient Monitoring System

A monitoring centre that uses advanced technologies and real time information to support clinicians in detecting and responding to unwell patients.

Development and  
integration of  
technologies

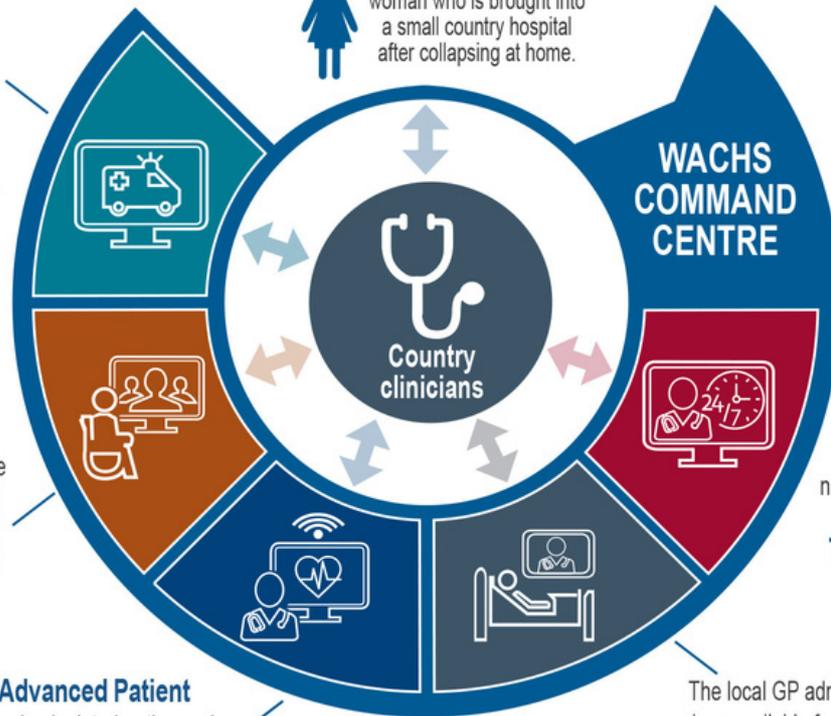
# Command Centre Patient Journey

## Georgina's patient journey



Georgina is a 57-year-old woman who is brought into a small country hospital after collapsing at home.

Patient transport is facilitated by the **Acute Patient Transfer Coordination** service and the progress of the patient transport request, acceptance and ETA is tracked by the nurse at the bedside.



A call is made to the **Acute Specialist Telehealth Service** and a cardiologist based in Perth is able to see the patient via videoconference and ask further questions, determining that Georgina needs to be transferred to Perth.

The nurse at the hospital and the **Advanced Patient Monitoring System** detects Georgina is deteriorating and within Medical Emergency Response criteria. The **ETS** team are available to dial in, see the patient and assist the nurse.

Georgina is seen by the local nurse and GP with assistance and advice from the **Emergency Telehealth Service (ETS)**.

The local GP admits Georgina for hydration but is unavailable for the next two days and hands over to **Inpatient Telehealth Service** for ongoing patient care through a daily ward round and ongoing advice.



# Delivering virtual care closer to home

Virtual care plays an important role in improving equitable health service access for people living across rural and remote communities. As an organisation we continue to invest in new and emerging technologies to support clinical decision making and patient choice in regional Western Australia.

In 2021-22, country patients attended:



More than **43,000**  
outpatient appointments



**306** Palliative care  
afterhours consults

At the core of our focus on innovation and technology is a commitment to better supporting our on-the-ground clinicians as well as providing care closer to home for our patients. Virtual care and other technologies substantially improve access reducing the need for patients to travel long distances for care.

Virtual care has enabled more specialist services to be provided locally such as TeleChemotherapy, TeleENT and Palliative Care Afterhours Telehealth Service (PaICATS), helping to maintain outpatient service continuity for regional and remote communities.

Embracing technology is also helping to reduce our environmental footprint. In 2021-22 telehealth by video saved WA patients travelling:

**46 million kilometres**  
for outpatient appointments



That's to the moon and back  
**60 times!**



Fuel savings  
**\$5 million**



**8452 tonnes**  
less CO<sup>2</sup> emissions



or equivalent to planting  
**126,000 trees**

**WA Country Health Service is excited to work with potential applicants on their proof of concepts to enhance and transform our current virtual care services**

**THANK  
YOU**

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**Website: [thechallenge.health.wa.gov.au/overview](https://thechallenge.health.wa.gov.au/overview)**

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