



2023-24 Annual Report

1300 402 585

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Marathon Health pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land we stand upon.

This seal represents our commitment to working with our communities for a better future for all.

Acknowledgement of Country

“We would like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia’s First People and Traditional Custodians.

We value their cultures, identities, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and are committed to making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by providing services that are welcoming, safe, culturally appropriate and inclusive.”

Marathon Health

Marathon Health is a not-for-profit, registered charity with a vision of enabling country communities to thrive through improved health and wellbeing. We're passionate advocates for equal access to quality health services for people wherever they choose to live.

Each year we support thousands of people living in country Australia to access the healthcare they need, closer to home.

From our hubs in Albury, Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange, Queanbeyan and Wagga, we provide services that are person-centered, culturally safe and inclusive. This means the people we work with have choice and control over the decisions that affect them – ensuring their voice is heard and respected.

Directors



Annette Crothers

MEd&Wk, GAICD, Dip. App Sc (OT),
Grad Cert Mgt Practice,
Cert IV Workplace Assessment



Amanda Croft

B Bus (Ag Com), Grad Prosci,
GAICD, Adv Dip. Fin Services,
Dip. Community Services



Troy Pietsch

Dip. National Indigenous Legal
Advocacy, Dip. Agriculture



Jeffery Whitton

FAICD, Dip. Corporations and
Company Law



Garry Burton

FIPA, AFPA, GAICD, JP
(to October 2023)



Megan Callinan

MBA, GAICD
(from October 2023)



Chair report

As a long-term resident of rural NSW, I see first-hand the increasing needs and complexity of health issues for people in rural and remote communities. As people continue to struggle disproportionately to access health and wellbeing services in rural Australia, Marathon Health remains committed to providing high quality health services as close as possible to their home through collaborative and innovative approaches. There is still much to do.

This year our Board, management and staff have undertaken widespread consultation to develop a new five-year Strategic Plan to guide and support our ambition into the future. To support the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan the Board reviewed the skills and experience of current Directors; ensuring that we are well-positioned with the capability, insights and expertise to lead and implement the new plan. We look forward to welcoming new voices and expertise onto the Board to broaden our vision and our connections, and to help steer this innovative and dynamic organisation.

Marathon Health has set a tone that fosters an inclusive, learning, and safe culture. We actively listen to the diverse voices and cultures we engage with, support and stand alongside; the Board has committed to the development and organisational-wide embedding of our own cultural safety framework and a safeguarding culture, ongoing workforce and leadership training, and clinical support mechanisms.

Over the last year, we prioritised digital health as key to improving our service delivery and, ultimately, health outcomes. The organisation has invested in:

- A cyber security strategy and roadmap to improving and strengthening Marathon Health's online environment.
- A data strategy, underpinned by a data governance framework and data management policy.
- A review of our clinical systems for future proofing and suitability with the impending health interoperability standards.
- Continual cloud migration of systems and applications, reducing the risk of service interruptions.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all our staff for their dedication, agility, and unwavering commitment to Marathon Health. Your willingness to provide quality, innovative, caring, and respectful support for clients and our communities is contributing to positive health and wellbeing outcomes for our people. The Board values the opportunity to visit our many office sites, hearing first-hand about the work our talented 300+ staff and volunteers provide in our communities.

To Megan Callinan, CEO, Justine Summers, COO, Ron Chalton, CFO, the wider management team and the broader organisation – thank you for your incredible dedication and passion to support Marathon Health’s purpose and mission. A personal thank you to Megan, for her continued focus on our staff wellbeing and the ICARE values, and her untiring commitment to improving the health of rural communities. It is this commitment which has positioned the organisation to be a sustainable, well-recognised service provider in rural and regional areas, and a finalist in two categories of the NSW Business awards this year.

I would like to acknowledge the continued passion, support, leadership, and commitment to the Marathon Health purpose and the ICARE values held by the Members and Board Directors; Amanda Croft, Jeffery Whitton, and Troy Pietsch. They generously give their time and share their experience and wisdom to drive Marathon Health forward.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the tragic death late last year of one of our founding Directors, Garry Burton. Garry was a Board Director on the two organisations which pre-dated Marathon Health; the Dubbo Plains Division of General Practice and the Western NSW Medicare Local. His strong leadership, entrepreneurial intelligence and stewardship over many years has been invaluable to Marathon Health and his generosity of time and knowledge has left an incredible legacy. He will be remembered through a Garry Burton ICARE award.

Looking ahead, we remain absolutely committed to our mission of developing and delivering quality health and wellbeing services together with the communities in which we work.

Annette Crothers
Chair, on behalf of the Board



CEO report

This year – the last year of our current strategic plan – we continued to improve community health through an enabling workforce, our rural and regional knowledge, innovative programs and strategic partnerships.

We focussed efforts on deepening our collaboration with others across the sector, to explore opportunities and to progress social reform to support the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people. By leveraging our membership with key national peak bodies, we continued our advocacy to influence policy and input our experience at the state and federal level.

We built on our work within the philanthropic sector to foster new and significant relationships with other values-aligned organisations, and developed our first fundraising strategy that will provide a basis for further development in future years.

Building on foundational work over previous years, our position as a leader of rural allied health workforce development was further cemented. We continued to host students to develop their skills and promote a rural healthcare career, with 61 students spending time with us over the course of the year.

Significant progress was made against our ambitious digital transformation timeline, as we continued to invest in systems to meet our diverse needs and measures to strengthen our cyber security posture. In late 2023, we launched our new intranet – boosting internal communication and staff engagement, supporting ‘one Marathon Health’ and giving greater visibility to change in policy setting across the organisation.

Our Cultural Safety Framework came alive through our Cultural Safety Governance Committee, with key accountabilities being delivered across the organisation. This work helped to facilitate the progress of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), due for launch next financial year.

A significant milestone for us this year was acquiring new premises in Dubbo. Once renovations are complete, the move will bring nearly 100 staff from our Marathon Health office and headspace centre together under one roof and lead to enhanced service delivery.

Operationally, we had a very strong year with performance recognised in the awarding of extensions and enhancements across a number of our programs. We were also successful in receiving funding to support workforce development initiatives – including our Aboriginal Wellness Worker program and our CoreConnect intern program which was piloted in 2022 and has now been recognised and supported by the Australian Government to continue over the next three years.

Next year we will work to embed our new five-year strategic plan into our operations, in consultation with staff, stakeholders and our Board. Our focus will be on four core strategies:

- **Consumers** – Elevating consumer voices and improving access
- **Services** – Looking at new and innovative models of care to meet future need
- **Workforce** – Supporting our staff to meet the challenges ahead and building the rural health workforce
- **Organisation** – Building a sustainable organisation for the future

To our Board, I would like to extend my personal thanks for your continued support and unwavering commitment to our vision and values.

To our staff, thank you for your passion, innovation and resilience as you deliver better quality health and wellbeing services to people in rural and regional communities – I am continually in awe of the genuine commitment to the work you do and the positive outcomes you're achieving.

Megan Callinan
CEO, Marathon Health



Mental health

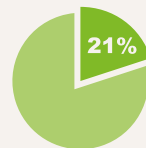
Our passionate and experienced staff provide person-centred, culturally safe and inclusive tailored mental health support to country Australians.

We know that the mental health of people living in regional and rural NSW is significantly poorer than that of our metro counterparts, and we are committed to changing this. Our programs focus on removing barriers to timely mental health support such as distance, cost, time and stigma – and we use our knowledge of country life to work with people to understand, detect and manage diagnosed and emerging mental health concerns.

The **Commonwealth Psychosocial Support (CPS)** program provided non-clinical coaching, supporting people living with severe mental illness to identify and reach their goals. With a community and strengths-based approach to support, our recovery coaches developed personalised recovery plans spanning areas such as social connection, resilience, education, housing, substance abuse and NDIS eligibility testing. The program ultimately empowers people to learn strategies and understand community and health support options, to live the life they choose.



2,615
**YOUNG PEOPLE
ACCESSED A
SERVICE AT
HEADSPACE**

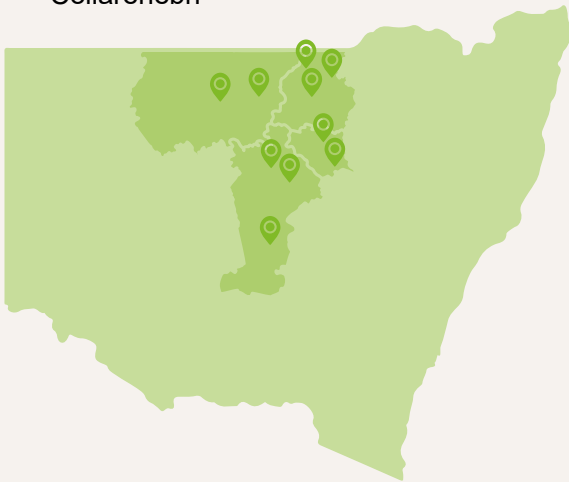


**IDENTIFY AS
FIRST NATIONS
(NATIONAL AVERAGE 11%)**

Our **headspace** centres in Bathurst, Cowra, Dubbo, Lithgow, Orange and Queanbeyan continued to support young people, their families, friends and carers to get back on track, while strengthening their ability to manage their wellbeing into the future. Our headspace teams work to ensure young people can access the help they need, whether it be for mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drug services, as well as work and study.

We worked with 10 Western NSW communities to co-design the **headspace Outreach Program** (formerly the Youth Outreach Project). The program will provide place-based, youth friendly and culturally informed support to young people aged 12-25 years to help improve mental health literacy, increase help seeking behaviours and provide referrals to appropriate services. With a strong focus on physical, economic, social and emotional wellbeing, the service will commence in late 2024 across four clusters:

- Cluster 1: Nyngan, Warren and Condobolin
- Cluster 2: Coonamble and Gulargambone
- Cluster 3: Brewarrina and Bourke.
- Cluster 4: Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Collarenebri



Youth Plus is a brief intervention service available in the Lithgow area that offers young people aged 12-25, who are in crisis, a set of specific individual appointments. With a person-centred approach, clinicians work in a timely manner to help young people manage immediate risk and needs. Like adding extra tools in a tool belt, Youth Plus provides strategies to help prevent and better manage future crises.

1,497
PEOPLE AGED
9-92 YEARS

64 WNSW 
COMMUNITIES

RECEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY SERVICES THROUGH STRONG MINDS WESTERN

Strong Minds WNSW provides personalised care for people with a mild-moderate mental health concern, across a range of high priority groups. It is designed to support people through recovery to wellness, providing up to 12 free sessions with an experienced mental health clinician.

The aim of the **Psychosocial Physical Health and Wellbeing Pilot** is to improve physical health care outcomes for people with a severe mental health illness accessing primary care, mental health, and psychosocial support services across the Murrumbidgee region.

We trained 116 people from 24 organisations in the **Mental Health Coordinating Council’s Connecting Physical Health and Mental Health program**. After the initial training, each organisation sent at least one program participant to an associated Train the Trainer course, which attracted 48 participants.

“Recognising my implicit bias about mental health consumers has been the biggest game changer – resulting in improved rapport and engagement with consumers. I think a barrier has been broken down and this has helped in all areas of my work.”

Training participant

Before the training, 31% of participants said they lacked the confidence to support people across both their mental and physical health needs. After the training, 100% said they had at least some confidence to offer this support.

NDIS and early childhood intervention

The NDIS provides funding to eligible people with disability to gain more time with family and friends, greater independence, access to new skills, jobs, or volunteering in their community, and an improved quality of life. Our team work to ensure that NDIS participants living across rural NSW can access high quality, evidence-based allied health services to support them to achieve their goals.

We supported **NDIS** participants with a range of allied health services, including occupational therapy, speech pathology, social work, dietetics, counselling, and allied health therapy assistance. Our clinicians travelled right across regional NSW – from Albury in the south to Lightning Ridge in the north – delivering much needed support to adults and children living with a disability, learning difficulty or other complexity.

A partnership with Variety – the Children’s Charity enabled our NDIS allied health team to deliver much needed outreach services to children and young people in remote Western NSW communities. Funding of chartered flights allowed our clinicians to regularly deliver face-to-face services in Bourke, Brewarrina, Lightning Ridge and Walgett. In FY24, 148 hours of evidence-based therapy was delivered, thanks to the **Variety Outreach Program**.



Our growing team of **Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)** practitioners aim to improve the quality of life of participants and their families by helping to prevent challenging or negative behaviour, through teaching new skills and making changes in their environment. The team has now turned some of its energy to capacity building – growing the skills of parents, teachers and group home managers in remote and hard-to-reach communities.



7,688
HOURS OF POSITIVE
BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT
216
PEOPLE SUPPORTED



WARATAH for Kids is a free service for children aged 0-7 years who have a developmental delay or behaviour concern. It provides allied health assessments and reports to support the collaborative development of individual care plans by the child's GP. Referral pathways include linkage to early intervention services and supports, referral to a paediatrician, or linkage to the Early Childhood Early Intervention funding through the NDIS.

“Intake to WARATAH for Kids was seamless, incredibly helpful and kind – I was able to access the clinics and get an appointment for an assessment promptly. When we came in to see the speech therapist, they were so lovely, knowledgeable, and helpful.”

Parent feedback

Our team of speech pathologists and occupational therapists supported 91 children in partnership with General Practice and Aboriginal Medical Services in Deniliquin, Gundagai, Hay, Leeton and Wagga.

Our national **After Hours Crisis Referral Service (AHCERS)** continued to support NDIS participants (aged 18 and over) who are experiencing a crisis related to a breakdown of their critical disability related supports.

“Without the AHCERS and the access to information this would have no doubt extended the patient's unnecessary stay in an acute hospital bed.”

Referrer into AHCERS service

Our early-intervention **Western Speech Pathology program** was delivered across 12 under-served rural communities across Western NSW. Travelling across the state by plane, car or via telehealth, our team of nine highly skilled and dedicated speech pathologists visited preschools and schools providing support to children who experience difficulties with swallowing food and drinks safely, speech, language or communication.



Designed for primary school-aged children, the **Mirror on Reading** literacy program aimed to build the students' literacy skills and increase the capacity of teachers and parents to support and encourage reading. Our speech pathologist team delivered the program to the infant students at Gulargambone Public School. Students received one book per session to encourage parents/carers to read to their children at home and further support improving their child's literacy skills.





Preventative health and chronic disease

We know that country Australians are not only more likely to be living with a diagnosed chronic disease than those living in metro areas, but they're also more likely to develop one. Our highly skilled team are focussed on providing preventative health services, chronic disease education and early-intervention – while connecting people of all ages with the care they need.

Our team of diabetes educators and dietitians worked directly in five General Practices and in three Aboriginal Medical Services, extending from Oberon to Coonamble. They provided support to people living with chronic disease, or those who are at risk of developing a chronic disease in Western NSW.

The success of the **Keeping Healthy Puura Manti Program** relies on a collaborative approach, with the client at the centre of each care plan. Our best outcomes were achieved by bringing together allied and specialist health providers to support the role of the GP in addressing the client's overall health and wellbeing.



538
PEOPLE SUPPORTED
4,782
OCCASIONS OF SERVICE
KEEPING HEALTHY
PUURA MANTI
PROGRAM



1,968
OCCASIONS OF SERVICE
DELIVERED TO
CHILDREN
AND YOUNG
PEOPLE BY HEBHBL
62%
IDENTIFY AS
FIRST NATIONS

The **Healthy Ears, Better Hearing, Better Listening** (HEBHBL) program aims to improve access to the diagnosis, treatment and management of ear and hearing conditions. Delivered through preschools and schools, staff provided hearing screening to children and young people across 11 Western NSW communities.




22
SPECIALISTS
PROVIDED
7,703
OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

7 **WNSW** 
COMMUNITIES
RURAL HEALTH
OUTREACH FUNDS
PROGRAM

The **Rural Health Outreach Funds** program worked hard to connect country Australians to timely health services, supporting specialists and allied health professionals to deliver outreach services to people living in regional, rural or remote communities.

The **Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program** spans from Bathurst to Lightning Ridge. It supports medical specialists and allied health providers to deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in regional areas, including Aboriginal health workers, mental health clinicians, diabetes educators, dietetics, endocrinology, podiatry, exercise physiologists and case workers.



4,702
SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER
MEDICAL OUTREACH
INDIGENOUS CHRONIC
DISEASE PROGRAM

The **Integrated Team Care** (ITC) program in the Murrumbidgee aims to remove barriers to healthcare for First Nations people. The team supported people living with complex healthcare needs to effectively navigate the health system, and access support, information and linkages to other services. We've been delivering integrated care programs in the Murrumbidgee since July 2014.



100%
CLIENTS HAD
GPMP OR TCA
(GP MANAGEMENT PLAN)
(TEAM CARE ARRANGEMENT)
IN PLACE BEFORE
EXITING ITC
PROGRAM

Working in partnership with the client's GP, our team in **Integrated Care Coordination** (ICC) strive to improve health outcomes for people living with chronic disease and complex healthcare needs – improving wellbeing and access to supports.



241
CLIENTS ACROSS



58
COMMUNITIES



80%
IMPROVEMENT
PARTNERS IN
HEALTH SCALE
ICC PROGRAM

Designed to provide additional support to ICC clients, staff in our **Health Care Navigator** program utilise a social prescribing approach to link people with programs, services and community-based activities to help them get the most out of health-based care coordination.

Our Health Care Navigators supported people to achieve their goals by:

- Facilitating linkages to aged care supports
- Navigating a pathway to financial sustainability
- Gaining funded care such as the NDIS
- Facilitating linkages to NDIS information and support
- Linking people to social and community-based supports

“Everything I have required assistance with, Marathon Health staff have provided information and helped link me to services.”

Health Care Navigator client

The **Indigenous Chronic Disease Clinic** (ICD) services range from diabetes education, dietetics, podiatry and endocrinology. This free service is available in Bathurst and is designed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with one or more chronic illnesses.

“My health has improved greatly. I am very grateful for the caring kind service I receive.”

ICD client

Our eye care coordinator supports clients at all optometry and ophthalmology appointments, and on surgery days. Available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the **Bathurst Indigenous Eye Care Pathway** strives for a holistic and inclusive approach to care with the aim to help support clients to access eye health services and reduce preventable eye conditions.

The evidence-based **Community Chronic Pain Management Program** (CCPMP) is for people with persisting (or chronic) pain. This self-help program offers support and education to improve the participant’s ability to manage pain independently and improve their daily function.

“When exercising, positive changes in the body, brain and nervous system occurs. This can improve the physical and psychological wellbeing of a person experiencing pain.”

Laura, Clinical Team Lead

For when it’s urgent but not an emergency, the **After Hours GP Clinic** in Bathurst and Dubbo continued to provide essential care to residents in the after hours periods – freeing up emergency departments. The After Hours GP telephone service ensures clients, who may not be able to access a GP face-to-face, could speak to a GP from the comfort and safety of their home.



**2,746
PEOPLE VISITED
BATHURST
OR DUBBO
AFTER HOURS
GP CLINIC**

The **Wellness and Resilience Achieved Through Allied Health** (WARATAH) program aims to increase access to allied health services and improve the overall health and wellbeing of those at risk or vulnerable within the Murrumbidgee region. The program is designed to support people with a low socio-economic status, First Nations people, mothers, babies and children, young people, older people and refugees.



**2,463
PEOPLE ACCESSED
6,802
ALLIED HEALTH
SERVICES THROUGH
WARATAH
PROGRAM**






Place-based, person-centred

We deliver person-centred services that create spaces to build social connection and ties to community – helping country Australians to thrive. These services span across regional and rural NSW and put the people and community at the heart of everything they do.

The **Intergenerational Program** aims to support older adults in Lithgow to live at home for longer by improving their social and physical wellbeing through activities that encourage meaningful engagement between the generations. It was funded as a pilot by Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network and delivered in partnership with the Lithgow Information and Neighbourhood Centre (LINC) and Gowrie Early Education and Care Lithgow.



10
PEOPLE AGED
65-87 JOINED
10
PRE-SCHOOLERS
FOR ACTIVITIES,
STORYTELLING AND
CONVERSATIONS

Crossways was designed to support and mentor boys in Condobolin to transition into adulthood with a strong sense of social and emotional wellbeing, as part of community-led efforts to achieve better health, social, educational, and employment outcomes.

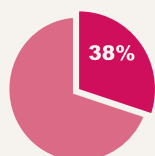


15
FIRST NATIONS
YOUNG MEN
SUPPORTED
IN CROSSWAYS
PROGRAM

Operating as part of headspace Dubbo, the **Individual Placement and Support (IPS)** program supported young people aged 12-25 to reach their educational and employment goals while supporting their mental health and wellbeing.



58
YOUNG PEOPLE
SUPPORTED BY
IPS TO GAIN
EMPLOYMENT
OR RE-ENGAGE
WITH EDUCATION



IDENTIFY AS
FIRST NATIONS

Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN) is an evidence-based program designed to support families with children aged from 6-17. This intensive family preservation and restoration program works to keep families together. It focuses on empowering the family by using identified strengths to address their needs. It aims to prevent neglect and abuse, reduce mental health difficulties experienced by adults and children, and develop and build upon family and community support networks. This year, we were trusted as the only site globally to deliver the downward age extension pilot of MST-CAN – allowing children under six to be referred into the program.

“MST-CAN... is the best service for DCJ I ever seen in my life. If they used MST-CAN at the start with us we probably would have been far better off from the get-go... our therapist was quite amazing, he made sure everything was put in place, we had plans on top of plans.”

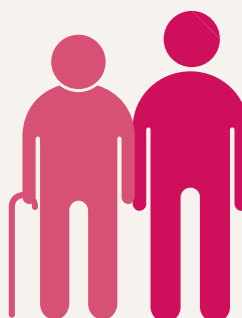
MST-CAN Father

Delivered in partnership with Argyle Housing, **Together Home** helps with the social and emotional wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness in the Murrumbidgee region. The team support people that have experienced street or rough sleeping, help them into secure housing and work with them to achieve their goals.

“I feel safe in my home, I have a warm shower and a bed when I am not feeling well.”

Together Home client

The **care finder** program is a crucial service designed to support vulnerable older people who don't have a family member, friend, or person they trust, to help and would significantly struggle to access or arrange services without intensive support.



305
OLDER PEOPLE
SUPPORTED BY
CARE FINDER
TO ACCESS
AGED CARE
SUPPORTS

This year, we commenced delivery of the **Pulmonary and Chronic Cardiac Rehabilitation Program** in partnership with Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network and General Practice.



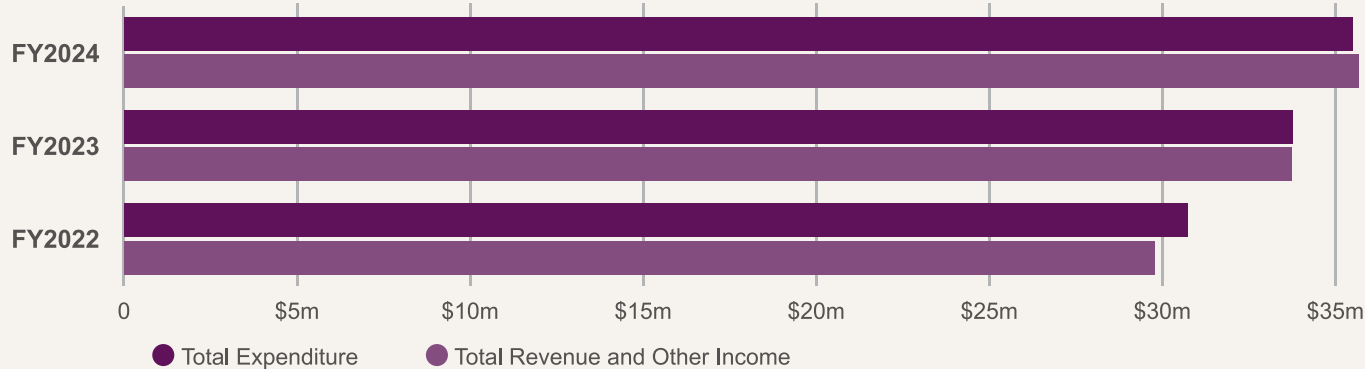
57%
CLIENTS SHOWED
IMPROVEMENT
IN 6 MINUTE
WALK TEST
PULMONARY AND
CHRONIC CARDIAC
REHABILITATION
PROGRAM



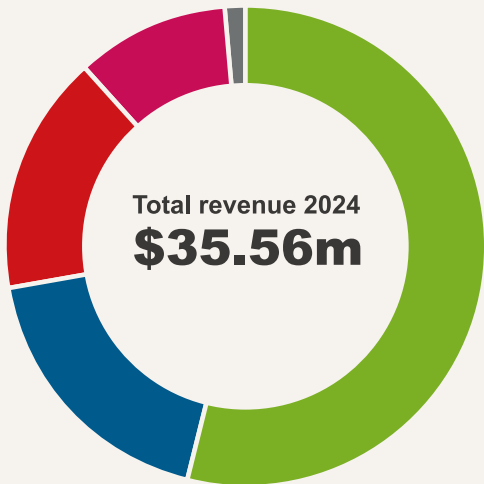
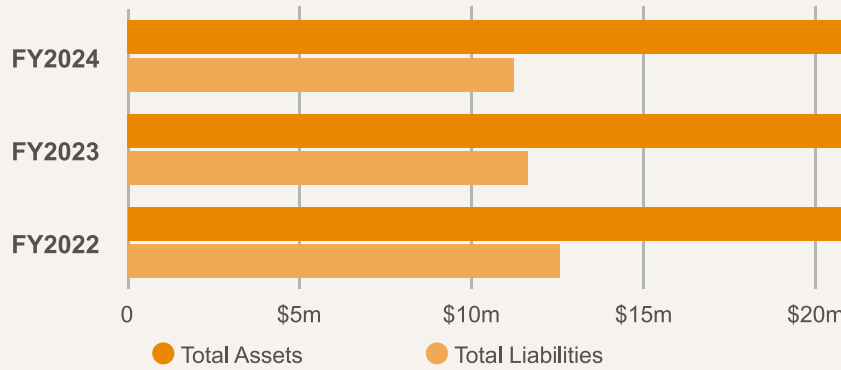
Financial

Marathon Health performed steadily in FY24 achieving a strong result with a net surplus of \$0.17m. Through continued commitment to operational and financial diligence, we increased our retained earnings to \$9.6m at the end of 2023-24. Additionally, we had a revenue position of \$35.5m and a strong cash position of \$4m.

Income and Expenditure



Assets and Liabilities



- 54% Mental health**
- 18% NDIS and early childhood interventions**
- 16% Preventative health and chronic disease**
- 11% Place-based person centred**
- 1% Other**

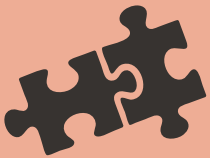


ICARE Values



Integrity and trust

We live and work in the communities in which we operate, so we are better able to understand their needs and advocate for their futures. Through our integrity and passion, we strive to earn the trust of our clients, our stakeholders and our funders.



Collaboration and innovation

We advocate for and collaborate with communities, to grow investment in health and wellbeing services. Through collaboration and innovation, we seek real connections and leverage our shared resources.



Achievement and excellence

We are proud advocates for equal access to quality health services for people wherever they choose to live. Our staff strive for excellence – supported by professional development and career progression opportunities – to ensure we are moving towards a positive future.



Respect and empowerment

We celebrate diversity and are committed to ensuring our services are culturally appropriate. Our foundation is built on a culture of inclusion, respect and empowerment.



Empathy and understanding

We are openly compassionate; we listen to the needs of our communities and advocate for their interests. Through empathy and understanding, we strive towards our vision of thriving communities.

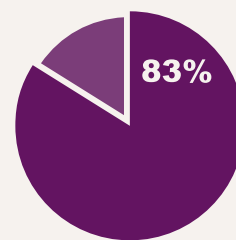
Staff spotlight

Staff survey 2024

Our annual industry standard Staff Satisfaction Survey was completed in May 2024, with 237 staff (81%) responding. BPA Analytics benchmarked our performance against our own previous staff surveys and others in the sector.

This year, results identified that we have a culture of *soaring* – organisational achievements are acknowledged, shared and celebrated and our leaders regularly self-critique to support continuous improvement. Staff highlighted that they are proud of their work as being purposeful and meaningful, and that they feel supported to succeed in their role and make a difference in their chosen field.

Workplace equality and fairness were also a key strength, with staff feeling that managers support gender equality and that our workplace is free from harassment or discrimination.



**STAFF BELIEVE
MARATHON
HEALTH
IS A TRULY GREAT
PLACE TO WORK**

ICARE Awards

Our annual ICARE Awards showcase staff who exemplify our five ICARE values and who have gone above and beyond over the last year.



Integrity and trust

Kylie Lawless – Portfolio Manager, Primary Health, Dubbo



Collaboration and innovation

Leigh Davison – Mental Health Clinician Strong Minds, Bathurst



Achievement and excellence

Lindsey Eames – Acting Team Lead Allied Health NDIS, Albury

Laura Morcom – Senior Business Partner Finance, Bathurst



Respect and empowerment

Kai O'Leary – Health Care Navigator Integrated Care, Wagga

Georgie Carr – Youth Peer Worker headspace, Bathurst



Empathy and understanding

Cheree Isbester – Corporate Services Manager, Dubbo



Corporate highlights

Business innovation

This year, we maintained our focus on deepening our collaboration across the sector, to support evidence-based service design, advocacy and influence policy to better outcomes for people living regional NSW. We continue to work with a range of partners to expand our reach including the following services during FY24:

- **Variety Outreach Program** – supporting the delivery of outreach allied health services to children and young people in Bourke, Brewarrina, Lightning Ridge and Walgett, and through funding by Variety – the Children’s Charity for charter flights to each community. In addition, we have been working with Variety and the communities of Lightning Ridge and Walgett to codesign and trial the Variety Flying Start Paediatric Clinics to create access to holistic paediatric assessments for children and young people in rural and remote communities.
- **Pulmonary and Chronic Cardiac Rehabilitation Program** – a free 8-week program designed to support an improved quality of life for people living with a chronic respiratory condition or Chronic Heart Failure (CHF) in the Murrumbidgee and reduce their likelihood of associated hospital admissions.
- **Psychosocial Physical Health and Wellbeing Initiative** – built the capacity of existing community mental health services and psychosocial support programs across the Murrumbidgee region to allow them to better understand the local barriers and enablers to supporting the physical health and wellbeing of people living with a severe mental illness.
- **Intergenerational Program** – funded by the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network and delivered in partnership with the Lithgow Information and Neighbourhood Centre and Gowrie Early Education and Care Lithgow, this program aims to improve older people’s social and physical wellbeing through activities that encourage meaningful engagement with pre-school aged children.

We also continued to showcase our programs, outcomes and successes to external stakeholders via our quarterly e-newsletter, **Community Connect**.

Marathon Health was awarded **Outstanding Community Organisation at the 2024 Western NSW Business Awards** – an important recognition for the significant role we play in regional healthcare. We were also named finalists in the inaugural **National Rural and Remote Health Awards Employer of the Year** category.



Scan to subscribe

Clinical Governance

This year we continued our strong focus on clinical governance across the organisation, specifically in the areas of risk, capacity building, accreditation, procedure and continuous improvement. Projects included:

- Embedding our Risk Framework into practice, including manager training in relation to risk identification and management.
- Developing and implementing our Incident Reporting Manual, providing a cohesive and integrated approach to supporting clinical and corporate incident management across the organisation.
- Ongoing training sessions for staff on policy and procedures, with a focus on building capability of key functions and supporting programs to develop program guidelines to guide practice.

Shaping our Cultural Future

This year we launched our Cultural Safety Framework across the organisation, with key accountables and deliverables being driven by the Cultural Safety Governance Committee.

In February 2024, we appointed a Cultural Capability Lead to support a collaborative approach to growing partnerships in the communities in which we work. The role is integral in providing First Nations voice, advice and expertise to the delivery and implementation of our Framework. Our work in this space paved the way for the next iteration of our RAP – Innovate.

We held our second annual First Nations staff day, 'Ngumbaaydyil', in early March. The workshop was facilitated by First Nations representatives from the Committee, and 29 First Nations staff from across our footprint attended – providing insight and feedback on how they felt the implementation of the Framework was tracking and what they would like to see moving forward.

Other cultural achievements included:

- Development and implementation of an environmental cultural safety checklist for offices/reception areas across the organisation.
- Rebranding of organisational business cards and email signature blocks to reflect the Country each of our staff are working from.
- Design and build of a Cultural Safety page on our organisational intranet, where staff can keep up to date with cultural initiatives and outcomes of the work we're achieving against our Framework.

The actions identified in our Framework will continue to be a focus of the organisation over the coming years.

Digital health capability project

This year we made significant progress against our digital health capability timeline, benefiting both the experience for our staff and clients along with enhanced cyber security measures in line with the Australian Government's Essential Eight.

We continued to invest in systems – such as an organisational intranet to support internal communication and promote connectivity across our offices, a comprehensive document library to host organisational policies, procedures, guidelines and forms, the redevelopment of our corporate website and more fit for purpose clinical systems – to meet the diverse needs of our organisation and business.

We focussed on improved data quality through a formalised Data Governance Framework and Strategy, improving our decision making, enhancing outcomes and ensuring appropriate accountability across the organisation. To ensure we can consistently share key insights and impact, we developed Eight Elements infographics that highlight top level organisational data.

As we look to the future, we will continue to focus on continuously improving our security, how we access and use our systems, data capture to be able to tell our story, and internal communications and staff engagement.

Capability Framework

We launched our Capability Framework in May 2023, developed to assist employees to understand expectations of them to carry out their roles effectively, and ways in which they can develop their capabilities in readiness for future opportunities. The capabilities will be imbedded across the organisation in various ways, including recruitment criteria, skills gap identification, career pathways, succession planning and performance reviews.

Employee benefits

Following the successful launch of our employee savings program (MesH) last financial year, we continued to identify tangible staff benefits and entitlements to help continue to make Marathon Health a truly great place to work.

This financial year, we explored opportunities to partner with organisations to be able to offer savings and benefits to staff, including health insurance, banking products and services and superannuation advice. As part of our continued commitment to support the wellbeing of our staff, we introduced a Wellbeing allowance that can be used to support activities or equipment such as gym memberships, massages or alternative health therapies.



**121
EMPLOYEES
PARTICIPATED IN
THE WELLBEING
ALLOWANCE**



Workforce development

This year, we cemented our position as a leader of rural allied health workforce development – building on foundational work in previous years to expand our impact in this area.

Under our **Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative**, two cohorts of 20 learners graduated following a 12-month traineeship pathway to increase the number of First Nations health and wellbeing workers in 10 target communities across Western NSW.

While placed at 11 host employers within these communities, learners completed a Certificate IV Mental Health (cohort one) and Certificate III Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (cohort two) and are now supported into further education or ongoing employment – either with Marathon Health or other organisations. A third cohort is currently studying Certificate III Community Services and are due to graduate in late 2024.

Across Marathon Health, 16 leaders were supported to complete our **Authentic Leadership Training**, becoming our fourth cohort to undertake the program.

Our **Graduate Program** was a strong focus across our southern and western NDIS footprint, with six new graduates (speech pathologists and occupational therapists) joining the allied health program. We employed and supported 13 provisional psychology interns across our organisation with 26 participants registered in our **CoreConnect** program – connecting interns from partnering organisations to a professional support network. The success of this provisional psychology internship program was recognised and has been supported by the Australian Government to continue over the next three years.

We continued to build and strengthen relationships with existing and new universities to promote rural placements – with 61 students across 14 institutions supported on placement with us, from ten discipline areas across various programs and locations.





Funder thanks

- Argyle Housing
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- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- Birrang Enterprise Development Company
- Department of Regional NSW
- headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation Ltd
- Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network (Wentworth Healthcare)
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Department of Regional NSW
- NSW Rural Doctors Network
- South Eastern NSW Primary Health Network (COORDINARE)
- Variety – the Children’s Charity (NSW/ACT)
- Western NSW Primary Health Network (Western Health Alliance Network)

We also thank the communities we operate in, where both organisations and individuals provided small grants, donations and in-kind support to help us develop and deliver quality health and wellbeing services.



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Marathon Health is a not-for-profit, registered charity delivering high quality health and wellbeing services to people wherever they choose to live.

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