



Look after your mates

think
MENTAL HEALTH

Strategic Plan 2024-2029

Creating a healthier
Western Australia together





Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation as the Traditional Owners of this land on which our head office is based. We show our respect to Elders throughout Western Australia both past and present for their cultural contributions to the life of our community now and into the future.

Ngalyag gaadidj Whadjag galyagab Nyoongar boodja nhidjala ngalya Head Office ag nyina. Ngalyag ngargal wirn boola birrdiya alyang boodjarra ngali goorraa ga yayee ga gwab boodja waniny ga dworrag al ngalya moord yayee ga dharbiny meelyaa.

*Left
Reconciliation WA's Walk for Reconciliation.
Image by Todd Russell.*

*Front cover image
Think Mental Health WA School Surfing Titles State Final,
Junior Girls Bodyboard Final, image by Salt Diaries, courtesy Surfing WA.*

Foreword from the Minister for Health; Mental Health



It gives me great pleasure to launch Healthway's Strategic Plan 2024-2029 outlining its priorities for the next five years.

Since its establishment in 1990 and with its own legislation from 2016, Healthway has a proud history of supporting health promotion programs and campaigns delivered by grassroots and not for profit organisations and providing funding for health promotion research in Western Australia (WA).

Through its partnerships with arts, sports, racing and community organisations, Healthway has been instrumental in helping to increase access to healthy environments across our state, including smoke-free areas, settings that support positive mental health and wellbeing, and venues that offer more healthy food and drink choices. By dedicating funding for scholarships and research grants, Healthway has helped to build WA's capacity and reputation for excellence in health promotion.

According to the World Health Organization, health promotion is 'the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health'. It became clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, that self-determination and control over one's health is highly valued. Post pandemic, we have a renewed window of opportunity for the benefits of health promotion to be felt across our community, and Healthway's purpose 'to inspire and empower all Western Australians to live healthy lives' is more important than ever.

With chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and low mental wellbeing causing increasing burden in the WA community, organised efforts in health promotion remain vital to preventing and reducing their impacts. This is echoed in the Western Australian Government's Sustainable

Health Review, which recommends a shift in focus of the health system towards prevention and early intervention, with attention drawn to action on obesity, harmful alcohol use, mental health and wellbeing, providing children with the best start to life, and addressing unfair disparities in health. Therefore, I am very pleased to see Healthway's focus on all of these issues in its Strategic Plan 2024-2029.

I look forward to continued successes delivered by Healthway through its partnerships with arts, sports, racing and community organisations, academia, and government.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amber-Jade Sanderson".

**Hon. Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA
Minister for Health; Mental Health**

Who we are

Good health and wellbeing are our most valuable assets as they enable us to live happy, fulfilling lives, and to reach our full potential.

They also play a crucial role in fostering a strong society, allowing us to fully engage in family life, establish social connections, work productively, and actively contribute to our communities.



OUR VISION

A healthier Western Australia.

OUR PURPOSE

To inspire and empower all Western Australians to live healthy lives.



Operating under the *Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation Act 2016* (the Act), Healthway is the only State Government agency dedicated to health promotion efforts in WA.

We partner with arts, sports, racing and community organisations, to fund programs that encourage good health now and into the future.

We also fund health promotion research to influence policy and practice and positively impact health and wellbeing in WA.

We do this alongside our partners in government and the not for profit sector, to achieve common goals aligning with the object of the Act, which is *'to promote and facilitate in Western Australia good health and activities which encourage healthy lifestyles'*.

Healthway was first established under section 15 of the Tobacco Control Act 1990 and in 2018, Healthway was brought together with Lotterywest. Whilst still operating as separate entities, together we work on opportunities to support positive community impact across WA.

"Indigenous Australians refer to a holistic concept of **Social and Emotional Wellbeing** to describe physical and mental health. This encompasses community, family, culture, spirituality, language, country, emotions, and the physical."
Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia

We work across systems to help create healthy environments, motivate behaviour change, and influence policy to reduce and eliminate barriers to good health and wellbeing.

Our work focuses on children and young people to help build lifelong healthy habits, and priority groups such as Aboriginal people and people living in regional areas, to enable fairer access to activities and services that support good health and social and emotional wellbeing.

Our aspirations

Across all our activities we aspire to be leaders in health promotion by being:



Collaborative

Working respectfully with our partners, stakeholders and the community.



Culturally informed

Embedding cultural competence and culturally safe practices into our work.



Ecologically aware

Advocating for action to mitigate the effects of climate change on health and other ecological determinants of health.



Ethical

Abiding by a code of conduct and operating openly and transparently.



Evidence based

Using the best available research to inform what we do and build a body of evidence for health promotion practice.



Impactful

Measuring and evaluating outcomes to support continuous improvement, sustained effort, and maximum impact.



Influential

Advocating for positive change in collaboration with the community, our partners, and Government.



Innovative

Encouraging creativity, challenging the status quo, testing and upscaling what works.



Responsive

Understanding and being informed by the needs of the community and other stakeholders.



Sustainable

Planning for the future, applying environmental, social, and economic sustainability principles.



Shark Bay School benefiting from Stephen Michael Foundation's Strong and Active Communities Program. Image supplied by Stephen Michael Foundation.

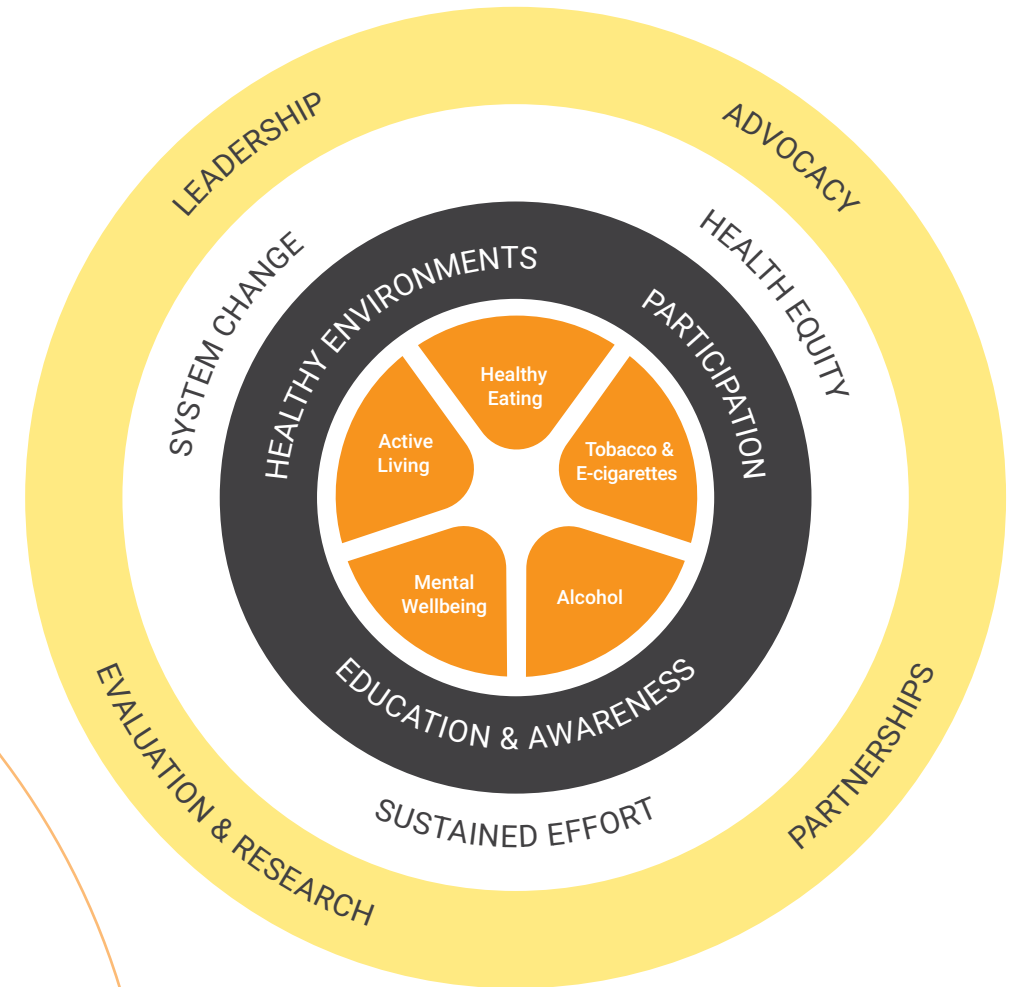
Using the term Aboriginal

Within WA, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of WA. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander may be referred to in the national context and Indigenous may be referred to in the international context. No disrespect is intended to Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.¹

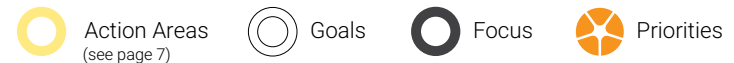
Our framework for action

Figure 1 - Healthway's Strategic Plan 2024 -2029 - at a glance

To achieve our vision of a healthier WA, Healthway's Strategic Plan (Figure 1) is underpinned by action in **Leadership, Advocacy, Partnerships, and Research and Evaluation**, to drive **system change, health equity, and sustained effort**. To achieve this, Healthway will focus on the domains of **healthy environments, education and awareness raising, and increasing participation**, to facilitate improvements in five **priority health areas**.



As a State entity, Healthway works across government for a comprehensive approach to achieve common goals in health promotion. We aim to complement the objectives of other key plans and strategies, such as [the Western Australian Health Promotion Strategic Framework 2022-2026](#), [Western Australian Sustainable Health Review \(2019\)](#), and [the State Public Health Plan for Western Australia](#) and others. For a full list of the state and national plans and strategies that complement our work, please refer to the Appendix.



Our action areas

Our work will be led by action in the following:



Leadership

- Influence sustainable change through evidence based policy, legislation and regulations.
- Lead and support coalitions across sectors to coordinate health promoting action in high priority areas.
- Work strategically to leverage investments and coordinate effort.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing and building communities of practice for health promotion.
- Be proactive in monitoring and responding to emerging public health issues.



Advocacy

- Advocate across government to prioritise health promotion and prevention to reduce the escalating impacts of chronic disease.
- Encourage system changes to address the social determinants of health that lead to poor health outcomes and health inequity.
- Promote regulatory and other action to effectively reduce the negative impacts of harmful industries and the commercial determinants of health, particularly on children and young people.
- Advocate for the diverse needs of priority groups, recognise and engage their leadership, cultural heritage, beliefs and values.



Partnerships

- Collaborate across sectors to achieve common goals for health promotion.
- Facilitate community-based initiatives in partnership with key stakeholders to maximise their reach and impact.
- Apply co-design and collaborative approaches with our partners.
- Facilitate the upskilling of our community organisation partners to embed sustainable health promotion action into their activities.



Evaluation and Research

- Apply appropriate best practice to monitor, evaluate and report the impact of Healthway's funded initiatives.
- Provide funding that encourages excellence and capacity building in health promotion research and its translation to policy and practice.
- Build on and expand successful activities to sustain effort and maximise impact.

Our goals

Health Equity

The social conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work, play, and age have profound and long-lasting effects on our health and wellbeing. Disadvantage arising from the unequal distribution of resources, power, or opportunity, can create avoidable and unjust inequities in health and wellbeing among population groups. Cultural determinants of health, such as language and kinship, are particularly important for Aboriginal people to achieve health equity.² While Healthway supports whole-of-population approaches to prevention, we also advocate for and prioritise **targeted initiatives** that seek to reach those at greater risk of health inequities.

“Health equity is achieved when everyone can attain their full potential for health and well-being.

Health and health equity are determined by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, play and age, as well as biological determinants.”

World Health Organization

System Change

Many of the systems underpinning functioning societies such as our economic, trade, social support, transport, and agriculture systems, create structural barriers to people leading healthy lives. For example, the way the food system works to grow, manufacture, promote, and transport food affects its price, availability, accessibility, and quality, which can present barriers to consuming a healthy diet. Similarly, the design and location of our cities and towns can be counterproductive to promoting physical activity, recreation, social inclusion, and health and wellbeing. Frequently, these structural barriers unfairly impact some people more than others, which leads to inequities in health.

Addressing the social, environmental, economic, commercial and other factors that lead to health inequity requires collaboration across sectors and governments to bring about system changes.³ Action on system change recognises that governments and the private sector have shared responsibilities in enabling all people to overcome barriers to live healthier lives. A shift is required from the current emphasis on individual responsibility to be balanced with meaningful system changes that empower and better enable individuals to make healthy choices. Through our grant-making, research funding, and strategic influence, we will focus on opportunities to advocate for and facilitate system changes, to enable all Western Australians to reach their full potential for health and wellbeing.

“Although commercial entities can contribute positively to health and society there is growing evidence that the products and practices of some commercial actors ... are responsible for escalating rates of avoidable ill health, planetary damage, and social and health inequity; these problems are increasingly referred to as the **commercial determinants of health**”

The Lancet, 2023⁴

Sustained Effort

The systems and determinants that affect our health and wellbeing are interrelated and can be deeply entrenched. Similarly, behaviour change at the individual level is not necessarily linear and is a process that occurs over time. Therefore, being able to realise the benefits of health promotion as measurable improvements in health outcomes and health equity in populations, requires coordinated and sustained effort over the long term.

To maximise impact, Healthway will continue to build on its most effective initiatives in a sustainable way and help strengthen communities to take action.

Priority health areas

The personal and societal costs of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and mental health conditions are escalating, and their impacts are not evenly distributed across society. Chronic diseases have lifelong impacts on health and wellbeing and usually take many years to develop before manifesting in mid-life. However, some chronic diseases, particularly mental health conditions such as anxiety and mood disorders, are increasingly prevalent among children, young people, and young adults.⁵

In WA, the leading risk factors for chronic disease are overweight and obesity, tobacco use, poor diet, and alcohol use.⁶ Two in five Western Australian adults are estimated to have experienced a diagnosable mental health condition during their lifetime, with one in five experiencing this in the previous 12 months.⁷

Much of the burden from chronic disease could be prevented by system changes to break down the barriers to making healthy choices and support behaviour change to reduce risk factors in the community.

To help achieve this, we will focus our action on **healthy environments, education and raising awareness, and increasing participation in five priority health areas.** We will also remain responsive to other emerging public health issues.

The **five priority health** areas focus on common modifiable risk factors for chronic disease, and on mental wellbeing.

This includes **preventing and reducing the use of alcohol** as well as **tobacco, e-cigarettes and other novel tobacco products.** **Promoting healthy eating and active living** are prioritised to help address the burden from overweight and obesity, which affects 75 per cent of Western Australian adults⁸ and is the leading risk factor contributing to chronic disease burden⁶ and health care costs in WA.⁹

All of these risk factors have connections with **mental wellbeing**, a critical part of overall health and wellbeing that enables individuals to maximise their life potential and strengthens social functioning for all.¹⁰

While Healthway's focus remains firmly on the prevention of overweight and obesity, and our five priority health areas, it is not intended to diminish other risk factors, chronic diseases, or injury.

We will continue to prioritise **children and young people**, particularly children in their **early years.** We will also target our efforts to help address health inequities in priority groups including **Aboriginal people and communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people living in regional areas, people experiencing disadvantage, and the LGBTQIA+ community.**



Healthy Food, Healthy Cultures nutrition education program at ISHAR Multicultural Women's Health Service.

Priority health areas | Continued



Promote healthy eating

- Create environments that promote and increase access to healthy food and drinks and reduce the provision of unhealthy food and drinks*.
- Reduce exposure to the marketing and promotion of unhealthy food and drink, particularly to children and young people.
- Increase knowledge and self-efficacy to motivate behaviour change and increase healthy eating patterns.
- Advocate to create health promoting, environmentally sustainable food systems that ensure quality, affordable food is available and accessible for all.

* Includes discretionary foods in the Australian Dietary Guidelines¹¹ and food and drinks in the Council of Australian Governments National Interim Guide to Reduce Children's Exposure to Unhealthy Food and Drink Promotion.¹²



Promote active living

- Advocate for healthy, liveable, sustainable communities that encourage and enable all members of society to be more physically active and reduce sedentary behaviours in their daily lives (active living).
- Increase awareness and motivate behaviour change to support active living.
- Facilitate initiatives that focus on inclusion and increasing participation in physical activity, particularly in priority groups.
- Support the development of fundamental movement skills and physical literacy from the early years, to sustain physical activity participation over the life course.

Healthy, liveable, and sustainable communities support our health and wellbeing by providing plenty of opportunities for safe walking and cycling, to 'live local' by using nearby facilities and services, for interaction with open spaces and the natural environment, and for community engagement and social inclusion. They are built in ways that encourage the use of sustainable public transport, reduce our reliance on cars, and help mitigate the effects of climate change.¹³



Promote mental wellbeing

- Create environments that encourage protective factors for high mental wellbeing and reduce the risk factors for low mental wellbeing.
- Increase knowledge, awareness, and positive attitudes on the importance of mental wellbeing.
- Enable all members of society to feel confident to protect and improve their own and others' mental wellbeing.
- Support initiatives that increase opportunities that provide mental health benefits through social inclusion and participation.

"Mental wellbeing reflects a person's psychological, emotional, physical and social states. It refers to the ability of an individual to maintain connections, contribute to their community, and cope with the normal stressors of life events or challenges," Mental Health Commission (WA).¹⁴

Priority health areas | Continued



Prevent and reduce use of tobacco, e-cigarettes and other novel tobacco products

- Create environments that are smoke and vape free.
- Reduce exposure to the marketing and promotion of e-cigarettes, particularly to children and young people.
- Motivate behaviour change and raise awareness of the harms of tobacco and e-cigarette use.
- Advocate to reduce supply, availability and accessibility of tobacco, e-cigarettes, and other novel tobacco products.



Prevent and reduce use of alcohol

- Create alcohol-free environments particularly where children and young people may be present.
- Reduce exposure to the marketing and promotion of alcohol, particularly to children and young people.
- Raise awareness of the harms associated with alcohol use.
- Advocate to reduce supply, availability, and accessibility of alcohol.
- Motivate behaviour change and promote awareness of ways to reduce harmful levels of alcohol use.



Jambo Africa. Image by Organisation of African Communities in WA.

Our grant programs

Through our grant programs (Figure 2), we fund eligible organisations to deliver community initiatives, programs, and research aligned with Healthway's goals and priority health areas.

Our Healthy Communities, Healthy Spaces, and Healthy Partnership grants are guided by the principles of partnerships, capacity building, and sustainability.

Our Health Promotion Research grants are a critical source of funding for high quality research that has the potential to influence health promotion policy and practice in WA, and to grow local research capacity through training scholarships and fellowships.

Working with eligible organisations, we strive for innovation, measurable impact, and transparency across all of our funded initiatives, to help achieve Healthway's vision of a healthier WA.

Each program has different levels of funding, separate guidelines and application processes. More information is available on www.healthway.wa.gov.au.

Figure 2 - Healthway's Grant Programs



Creating Healthy Spaces

Funding that focuses on creating healthy environments in sports and recreation settings.



Healthy Communities

Supporting health promotion projects in our community.



Healthy Partnerships

Working with sports, arts, and racing organisations to provide healthy environments and educate and promote good health.



Health Promotion Research

Funding for health promotion research that builds the evidence base and builds research capacity through fellowships and scholarships.

Measuring impact

Healthway is one of many organisations working to improve the health of our community. Positive change cannot be attributed to one agency and can only be achieved through the combined efforts of government, non-government organisations, and the community, over a sustained period of time.

Successful partnerships feature strongly in Healthway's way of working, and we are committed to working across government and with WA organisations to create a healthier WA together.

Aligned to our aspirations in adhering to, contributing to, and supporting a quality evidence base, we place an emphasis on monitoring and evaluation using the best methods possible.

As well as being a statutory requirement of our legislation, this enables us to collect evidence about the effectiveness of the health promotion initiatives we fund, and identify ways to improve practice, guide our investment, and demonstrate our impact.

Our Evaluation Framework uses an evidenced based program logic model to demonstrate how our activities contribute to creating a healthier WA through the achievement of outcomes over the short, medium and longer-term. We monitor and periodically report on the outcomes of individual grants or programs, as well as against Key Performance Indicators in our annual report.

The Western Australian Community Impact Hub ([The Impact Hub](#)) also provides a detailed look at projects supported by Healthway and Lotterywest and the positive impact on the WA community.

For further information and resources on health promotion research and evaluation, please visit: <https://www.healthway.wa.gov.au/our-evaluation-framework/>.

Beautiful Bumps art. Image by Kath and Co photography, courtesy WA Country Health Service.



Resources

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- ² Finlay SM, Canuto K, et al. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connection to culture: building stronger individual and collective wellbeing. Medical Journal of Australia 2021; 214 (8 Suppl): S12-S16.
- ³ World Health Organization. Contributing to social and economic development: sustainable action across sectors to improve health and health equity (follow-up of the 8th Global Conference on Health Promotion) 134th session. EB134.R8 Agenda item 8.7 (2014). Geneva: World Health Organization. Available from: https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/173013/B134_R8-en.pdf
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- ⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Australian Burden of Disease Study 2022 (2022). Catalogue number. BOD 37. Canberra: AIHW, Australian Government. Available from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/burden-of-disease/australian-burden-of-disease-study-2022/contents/summary#Diseases>
- ⁶ Epidemiology Directorate. The Burden of Disease in Western Australia 2018 (2023). Perth: Department of Health, Western Australia. Available from: <https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Reports-and-publications/The-Burden-of-Disease-in-Western-Australia-2018>
- ⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing 2020-2022 (2023). Canberra: ABS. Available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/mental-health/national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing/latest-release>
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- ⁹ Epidemiology Directorate. Estimated healthcare spending attributable to modifiable risk factors in Western Australia 2018–19 (2023). Perth: Department of Health, Western Australia. Available from: <https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Corp/Documents/Reports-and-publications/Burden-of-disease/Healthcare-expenditure-associated-with-diseases-by-health-region-in-Western-Australia-2018-19.pdf>
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- ¹¹ National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines (2013) – Discretionary food and drink choices. Canberra: Australian Government. Available from: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/discretionary-food-and-drink-choices>
- ¹² Council of Australian Governments Health Council. National interim guide to reduce children's exposure to unhealthy food and drink promotion (2018). Canberra: Australian Government. Available from: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-interim-guide-to-reduce-childrens-exposure-to-unhealthy-food-and-drink-promotion-2018?language=en>
- ¹³ Giles-Corti B, Capon A, et al. Physical determinants of health: healthy, liveable and sustainable communities. Medical Journal of Australia 2021; 214 (8 Suppl): S17-S21.
- ¹⁴ Mental Health Commission. Western Australian Mental Wellbeing Guide (2023). Perth: Mental Health Commission, Western Australia. Available from: <https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/about-us/major-projects/mental-wellbeing-guide/>



Appendix - State and National Strategies informing our work

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Neighbourhood Watch Chinese Group's Fresh Start Program.





MORE INFORMATION

For more information on Healthway's strategic plan or grant programs:

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