



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**

# Improving Safety and Quality in Health Care

A strategic plan for action in WA

2023–2026

## Acknowledgement of Country and People

WA Health acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia. It acknowledges the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present and pays respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

**Artists: Wendy Waye, Rita Minga, Julia Lawford, Jean Tighe and Elsie Dickens.**

The painting has been created by five women Elders from the Walmajarri language group of the Fitzroy River Valley. The painting is made up of five individual parts that tell a similar story relating to the hospital journey – one that revolves around collecting and eating bush foods, bush medicines, talking with doctors and working with Maparn (traditional healers).



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# Consumer foreword

# Director General of Health foreword

# Defining safe, high-quality care

## What does safe and high-quality health care mean to you?

We asked this question of over 700 people who either use or provide services in the WA health system and they said:



## Defining safe, high-quality care

We asked people who use our services as well as those working within them, how they defined what it meant to receive safe, high-quality care. What we heard was that safe, high-quality care is:

- centred around the person
- delivered in a timely fashion
- equitable and accessible to all
- if possible, delivered close to where people live.

We heard that systems and healthcare workers must have the right environment to support delivery of the best care. Accordingly, the service that delivers this care should:

- provide care that is evidence-based and high value
- be designed to prevent harm
- regularly reflect on what it does, learn and continuously improve
- be effectively regulated and monitored
- be appropriately resourced.

On this basis, we can define high-quality, safe care for WA as follows:

**An innovative, learning health system that delivers safe, patient-centred clinical care that is effectively regulated, monitored and resourced; and ensures that Western Australians have equity of access to services, delivered in a timely fashion, preferably close to where they live.**

# Purpose of this strategic plan

## What is the purpose of this strategic plan?

With the intention of striving towards better, safer, person-centred care, the purpose of this strategic plan is to draw focus and commitment to action against the top safety and quality priorities in the WA health system for the next 3 years, by setting clear strategic goals.

This strategic plan is agile; it is predicted that the priority areas in this version may adapt and evolve as new systems needs emerge. This strategic plan is intended to be the first of many future plans for safety and quality for the WA health system.

## How will this Strategic Plan be delivered?

This strategic plan is part of a larger suite of documents including an operational plan which provides further detail on specific programs of work to be delivered, measurables and timelines.

The strategic plan will be delivered as a collaborative effort between the Department of Health and Health Service Providers, with oversight of progress from the Health Executive Committee – Safety and Quality.



# Alignment with other strategies



# Our methods

## How do we know we got it right?

We don't. However, to ensure the WA safety and quality strategic plan was robust, informed and relevant, we needed to know the gap between the current state and the ideal future state of safety and quality across our health care system. This was done in 2 parts:

### 1. How do we know what safety and quality currently looks like?

An assessment comprised of 5 elements (scanning international, national and state policies/frameworks; benchmarking WA Health performance against national indicators; review of WA based safety and quality data; review of consumer and workforce surveys; and review of quality improvement activities across WA Health) was undertaken to identify WA Health's current safety and quality strengths, areas for improvement and resultant priorities.

### 2. How do we know what safety and quality needs to look like by 2026 and what is needed to get us there?

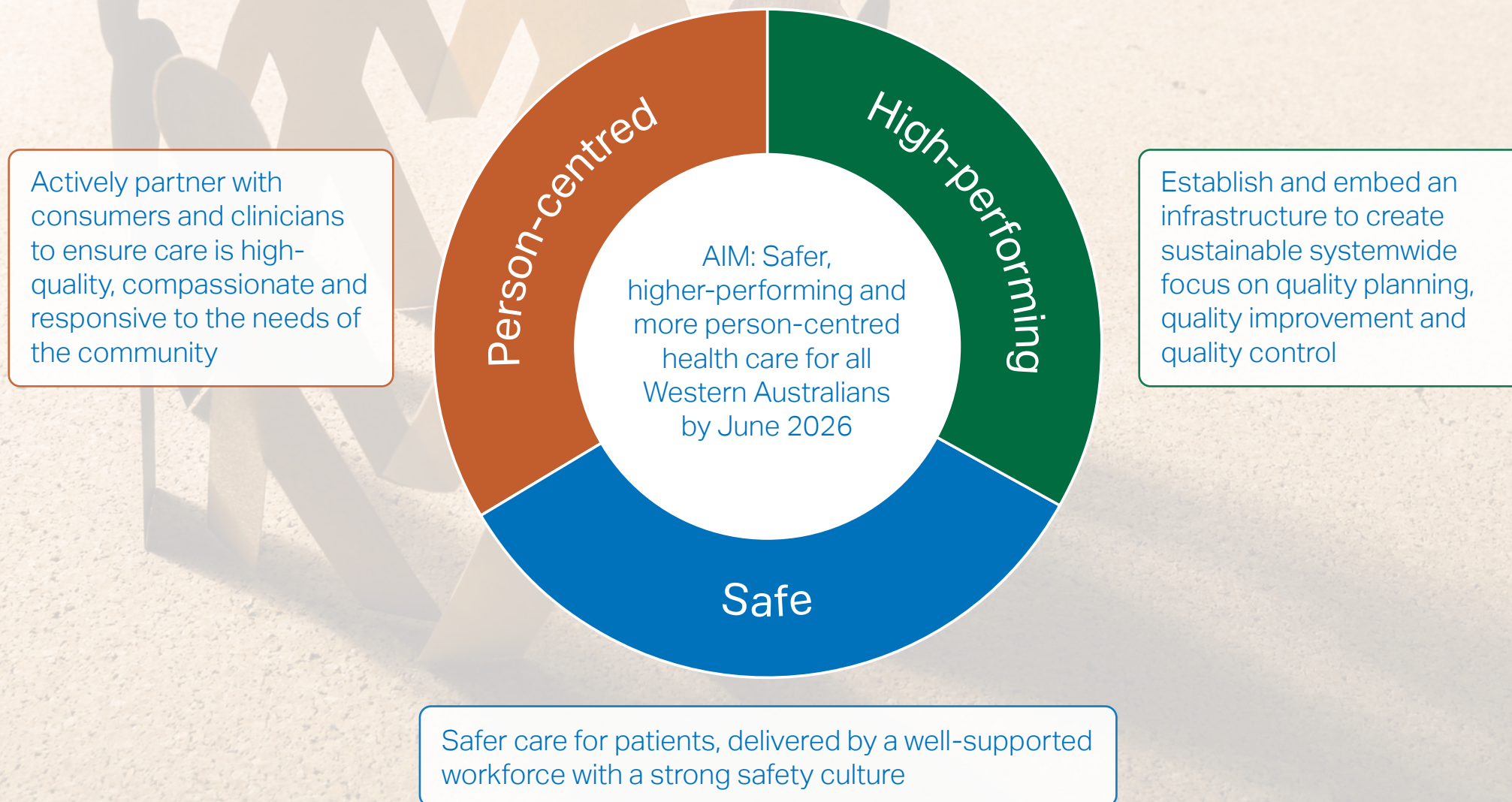
Extensive engagement with approximately 148 consumers, carers and/or family members, 390 healthcare staff, 90 Department of Health staff and 78 health executives and board members told us what the safety and quality priorities for WA Health in the next 3 years should be and how their accomplishment can be supported.

The final draft of the WA safety and quality strategic plan was also reviewed by a range of people to ensure it was clear and the direction and priorities for safety and quality in WA Health were ambitious but achievable.



# Strategic domains

The strategic plan is supported by 3 strategic domains. Each strategic domain includes 3 goals for prioritisation.



# Strategic domain 1 (SD1): Safe

**SD1:** Safer care for patients, supported by a compassionate workforce with a strong safety culture.

**SD1.1:** Reduce unwarranted clinical variation, using a defined QI methodology, in agreed key priority areas.

**SD1.2:** Implement a method for sharing learnings, celebrating successes and highlighting excellence across the WA health system.

**SD1.3:** Measure and strengthen safety culture across the WA health system.

Strategic goals





**What we envisage for our people:**

Aaliyah visits a regional hospital and Hugo visits a metropolitan hospital, each presenting with early signs of sepsis. They both receive hydration and antibiotics within 60 minutes, tailored to their medical history and allergies and they both experience appropriate referrals/escalation of care, in line with a standardised clinical pathway.

**Feedback from our partners:**

“Acknowledge, share and celebrate our successes. Utilise a health-wide quality improvement tool that enables easy collaboration across health services.”

**Staff Member, Great Southern, WACHS**

# Strategic domain 2 (SD2): High-performing



**SD2:** Establish and embed an infrastructure to create a sustainable systemwide focus on quality planning, quality improvement and quality control.

**SD2.1:** Form a dedicated centre charged with supporting the WA health system to deliver evidence-based, high-quality health care.

**SD2.2:** Design and deliver a safety and quality capability framework for WA Health staff and consumer leaders (SHR recommendation 23).

**SD2.3:** Establish systems, resources and processes that enable quality improvement.

Strategic goals



### What we envisage for our people:

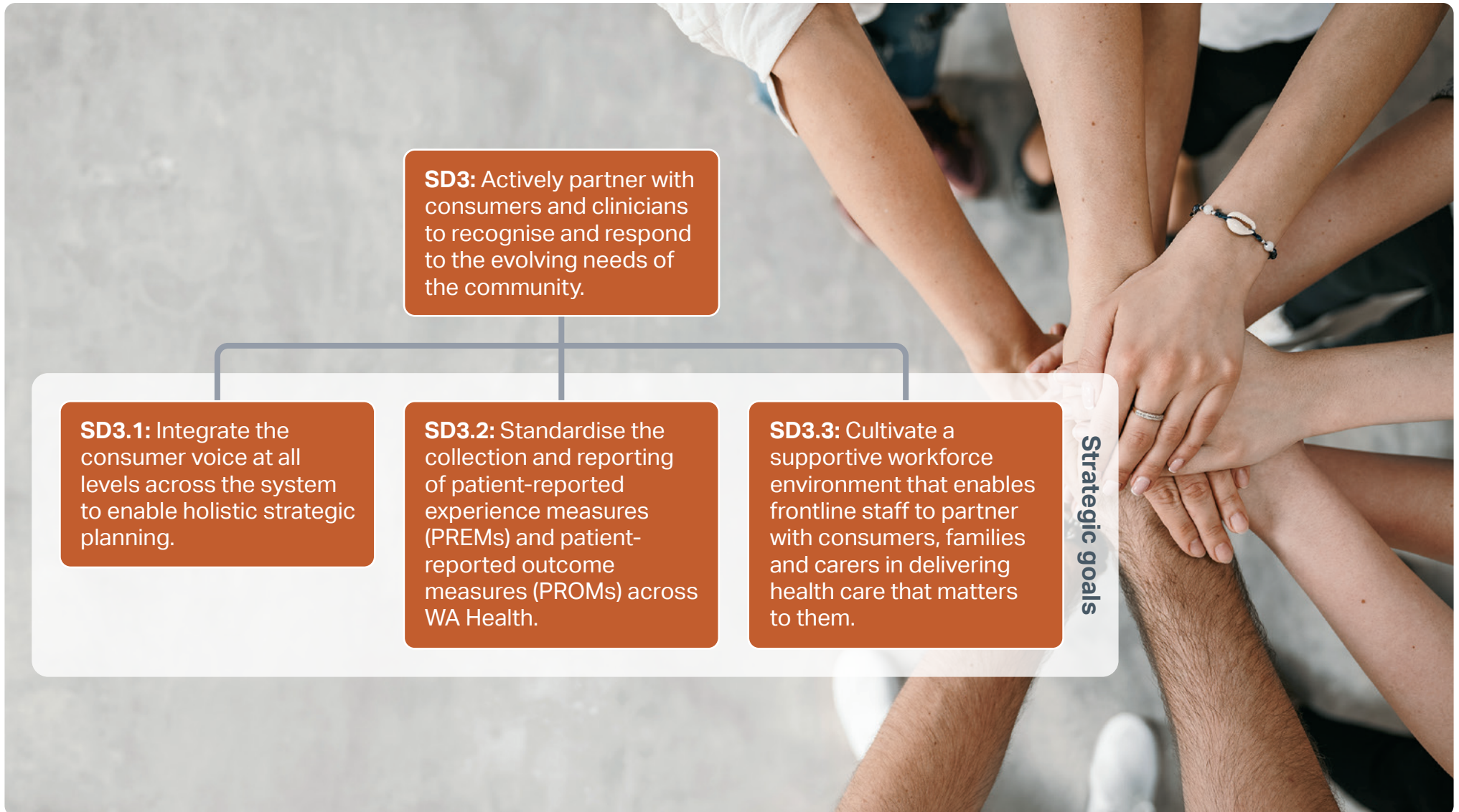
Nurse Connor has channelled his interest in improving the working environment by completing a contemporary leadership course during the protected time provided by his workplace. He has also successfully worked with his ward's Safety and Quality Coordinator, leading initiatives such as medication change lights to reduce error during changes in pharmacological therapy.

### Feedback from our partners:

"Departments need support with dedicated project management teams in [Health Service Providers] and project support workflows to have a systematic way of engaging with fellow staff and consumers to drive systems change projects... the system needs to provide dedicated, trained, experienced capability. Ideally a one-stop shop for accessing [project management], [communications], consumer engagement."

**Staff Member, WA Health**

# Strategic domain 3 (SD3): Person-centred





**Feedback from our partners:**

“We need a compassionate system that treats the person not the problem”

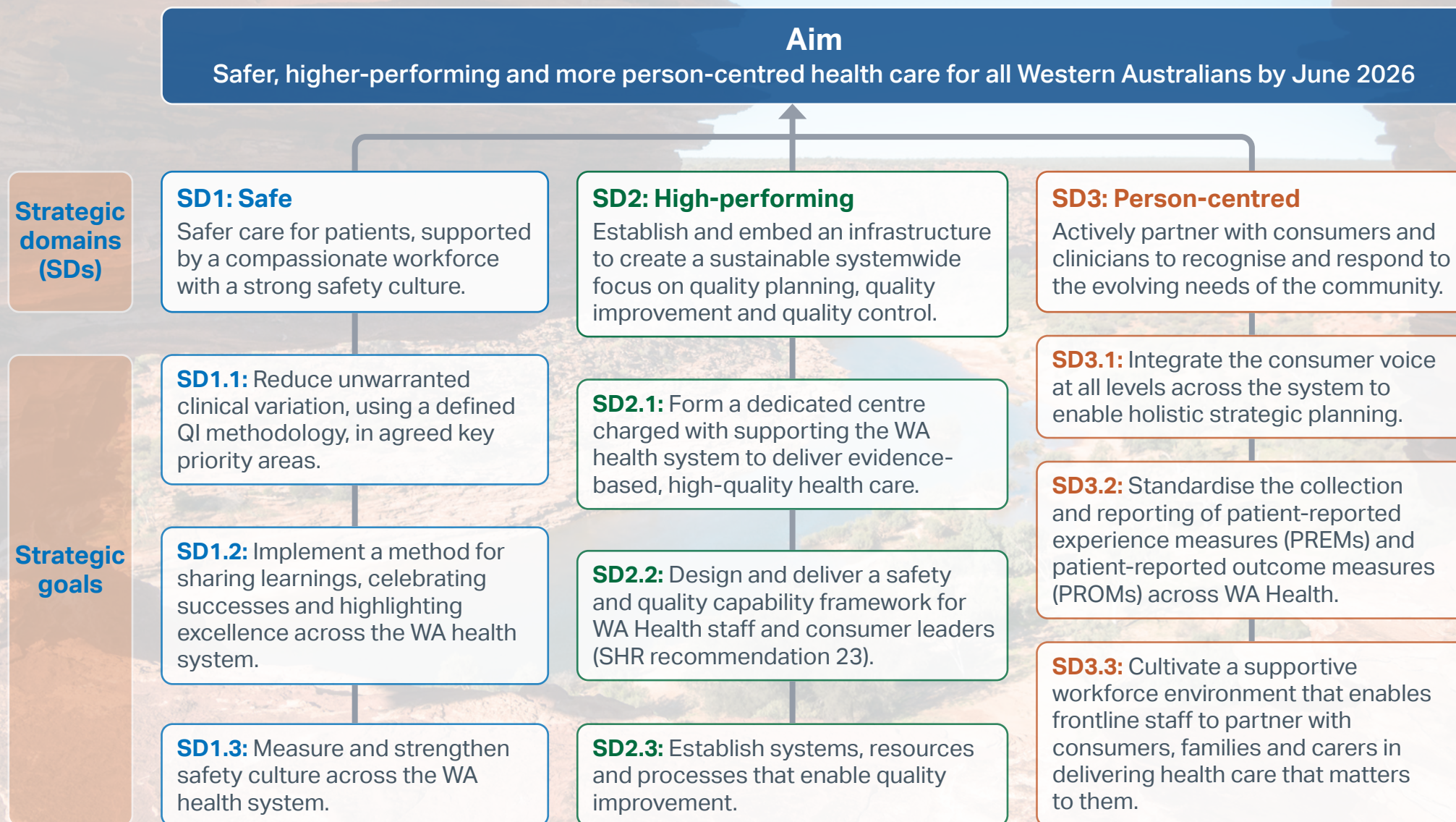
**Participant, Health Consumer Council Chronic Disease Focus Group**


**What we envisage for our people:**

Ahmed has experienced the transition of his health care from a paediatric service to an adult health service. Ahmed uses that experience to drive improvements for other consumers and their families through his involvement in a working group alongside health service staff. The working group has been able to effect real change leading to improvements in patient experiences and health outcomes.



# Strategic plan on a page





### Want to know more? Have a suggestion?

We acknowledge the importance of actively listening and engaging with the WA Health community. If you would like to learn more about how the strategic plan was developed, find out when the next one is due, have an idea about how you think safety and quality in WA Health could be improved, would like access to different formats of the strategic plan or if you have any other questions, please contact the strategic plan team at [PSCQ.CED@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:PSCQ.CED@health.wa.gov.au).





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