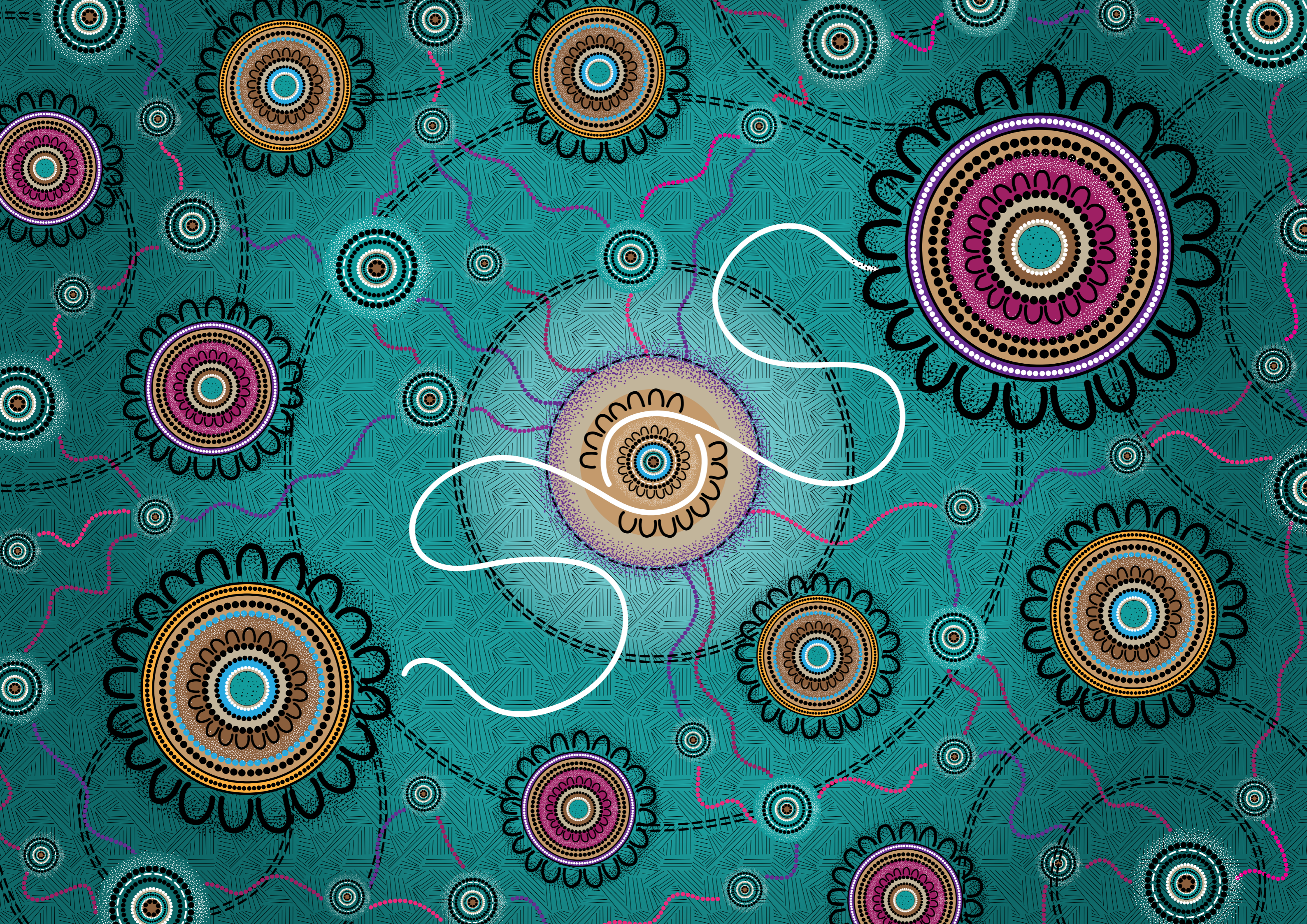




Strategic Plan 2024-2027





Acknowledgement of Country

The Clinical Excellence Commission acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands across New South Wales on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge their tremendous stewardship of the land for more than 60,000 years.

We recognise the entire NSW landscape, including the lands, waters, plant and animal species and seas, has spiritual and cultural significance to all Aboriginal people of NSW.

By this understanding there is no separation of nature, wellbeing, and Culture. The health of the natural environment and the health of people and Culture are intimately connected.

We acknowledge the importance of working in partnership with Aboriginal people to achieve positive health outcomes.

Artwork on previous page

Health Custodian by Jasmine Sarin

This outstanding and vibrant digital artwork was commissioned for the Clinical Excellence Commission in 2018. Titled *Health Custodian* it was created by Jasmine Sarin, an Aboriginal artist working with the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative. Jasmine is a proud Kamilaroi and Jerrinja woman from NSW who grew up on the South Coast in Nowra (Jerrinja and Yuin country) and Wollongong (Dharawal country). The artwork incorporates motifs of community – the circles with the outside shapes represent people and agencies coming together with services and patient care. The lines of dots represent the connection between groups. The CEC integrates this artwork as part of its Acknowledgment of Country.



Foreword NSW Health Minister

NSW has one of the safest health systems in the world and NSW Health is a pioneer in the field of patient, clinical and system safety. Since being established in 2004, the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) has led NSW on an improvement journey delivering programs and initiatives that are internationally regarded while also maintaining a collaborative partnership with health care professionals, patients, their families and carers.

It is my honour as Health Minister to endorse this nine-year strategy and the CEC *Strategic Plan 2024–2027* which builds on NSW's commitment to take the next steps in developing a health system that positively impacts patients, staff and the broader community.

There are unique and critical opportunities in care continuity as we move towards a health system that is digitally enabled through resources such as the single, digital patient record. Innovations such as this will allow patient information to be accessed and shared around the system and present new ways of working and opportunities to improve.

The health system is well practised at embracing new ways of working and often responds with innovative models of care that help further embed safety into our culture.

Health systems across the globe are constantly challenged to meet the needs of our patients, community and workforce. Instrumental to the success of NSW Health and the CEC will be the ways we can support the health workforce to collaborate and innovate to improve health outcomes and to continue delivering high quality care. The CEC, and the strategies within this three-year plan, will be crucial to safety and effectiveness within our hospitals as we approach 2032, the final year of the *Future Health Strategic Plan*.

Continually striving to improve safety in our health system is an enormous challenge and this strategy provides a blueprint for how care may be delivered safely across more than 220 health facilities and the 800,000 square kilometres which make up the NSW Health system.

Embarking on this evolution and maturing of the safety concept, from a patient to system focus, places NSW at the global forefront of effectively caring for and positively impacting staff, patients and the broader community.

Hon Ryan Park
Minister for Health
Minister for Regional Health
Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast

Foreword Clinical Excellence Commission Board Chair and Chief Executive

This three-year strategic plan lays a firm foundation for the direction of the Clinical Excellence Commission over the next nine years, as we move toward a *NSW Future Health* system that has a clear goal of an embedded safety system that cares for patients, staff and the broader community.

These goals are made at a time where healthcare is changing and faces many challenges, and we will need robust safety systems to respond to current and emerging issues.

Among those challenges is an ageing population which will experience more health challenges for longer, resulting in a complex interplay between our acute services and services provided in the wider community.

We are also faced with moving toward a health system where technology and artificial intelligence has an ever-increasing reach into how we care for patients, how we work with colleagues, and how we interact with the broader community.

This three-year plan, 2024–2027, underpins our nine-year strategy, and is a chance to forward plan and consider how we work with NSW Future Health 2022–2032.

This foundational plan is a starting point with a clear goal to work with health services as we embed safety strategically across all areas of our health system.

The nine-year strategy envisages that subsequent plans will build on this early work and strive not only to reduce patient harm but also to drive continuous safety improvements through collaboration and expertise.

Importantly, healthcare will change, and we are an agency able to respond quickly to the changing health context while also maintaining a firm focus on our foundational responsibilities.

Safety is a crucial component of the broader health quality dimensions and at the CEC safety is our core business. We remain committed to fostering mature safety cultures because we know that safety needs to be embedded across multiple levels and is relevant for patients, staff and the broader health system.

This vital work would not be possible without the dedicated experts at the CEC who lead us on this journey and we must express our thanks to them for their ongoing diligence and tireless pursuit of a health system where safety is for all.

The CEC Board members commend this strategic plan and nine-year strategy to the NSW Health system, having actively contributed to its development. This document is a key instrument for the CEC Board who will be pleased to engage in supporting and monitoring its implementation.

Professor Andrew Wilson AO
Clinical Excellence Commission Board Chair

Adjunct Professor Michael Nicholl
Clinical Excellence Commission Chief Executive

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Suggested citation

Clinical Excellence Commission, 2024, Clinical Excellence Commission Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Clinical Excellence Commission, Sydney, Australia.

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Document endorsed by the CEC Board: June 2024

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Acknowledgements

We thank our staff, Board members, consumer subcommittee and people partners, and senior NSW Ministry of Health representatives for their collaboration and support in developing this strategic plan. Additionally, we acknowledge the valuable contribution of our Expert Advisory Group members:

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Clinical Excellence Commission

Overview

The core of the NSW public health system is providing safe, high-quality, accessible, person-centred care. At the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC), we seek to make a positive difference to patients, staff, and their communities by equipping healthcare workers with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to create a culture that ensures patients receive safe, high-quality care. We are specialists in safety and partners in improvement, building capability in NSW Health entities to build positive safety cultures locally.

Global statistics show high rates of preventable harm in healthcare, including Australia, where complications cost our public hospitals billions annually, so our role as stewards of clinical governance leadership is crucial. We strive to reduce patient harm and drive continuous safety improvements through collaboration and expertise.

Our nine-year strategy and iterative three-year strategic plans, commencing with 2024–2027, are the results of meaningful collaboration with our stakeholders. They reflect our collective commitment to excellence and outline how we will work within the NSW Health system to embed and mature a safety culture under the NSW Health Safety System Model.

This *Strategic Plan 2024–2027* will be operationalised by means of annual strategy implementation plans. The first implementation plan for 2024–2025 will be developed July–October 2024 and will contain detail of our actions to support implementation of the 2024–2027 strategic objectives outlined in **Table 2**.

Evolving healthcare landscape

In the dynamic and ever-evolving healthcare landscape, equipping and enabling the NSW healthcare workforce to tackle emerging challenges and seize opportunities for continuous patient safety improvements is vital. By building strong partnerships with healthcare workers and consumers and promoting a safety culture, we prepare for future shifts in the NSW Health system, including technological advancements and sustainability.

Our *Strategic Plan 2024–2027* aligns with a nine-year strategy or direction, guided by *NSW Future Health* and the *NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan*, to ensure our adaptability and leadership in enhancing patient and staff experiences within the **NSW Health Safety System Model**.

NSW Health vision

The CEC has adopted the NSW Health vision of a sustainable health system that delivers outcomes that matter most to patients and the community, is personalised, invests in wellness and is digitally enabled. We adhere to the NSW Health CORE values of Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Empowerment in all our interactions internally and across the state.

About the CEC

Established in 2004, the CEC is the primary entity in NSW Health for system-wide clinical governance leadership and safety assurance. It is a pillar agency that simultaneously sits alongside and is integrated with the Ministry of Health and local health districts. This position enables the agency to take a broader view of safety and quality issues, learn from the variation across the NSW Health system, provide independent guidance and advice and respond rapidly when system-wide issues arise.

Our focus includes policy development, workforce capability, and fostering safety cultures to improve clinical care across NSW. We prioritise understanding human factors and clinical risks to prevent harm while equipping stakeholders with essential safety knowledge and resources. As safety experts, we lead continuous improvement efforts in alignment with NSW Health system needs, tailoring programs, tools, and training to empower local health districts (Districts) and specialty health networks (Networks) to build sustainable safety cultures under the NSW Health Safety System Model.



Foundations

To successfully execute the strategic directions and the accompanying three-year strategic plans, the CEC focuses on three critical aspects: the people responsible for implementing strategic focus areas, the collaborations that facilitate our work, and being knowledge-driven in our approach.

People

Our strategic delivery revolves around three key groups: CEC staff, healthcare workers and healthcare consumers.

Recognition of lived experience

We recognise and value consumers, patients, carers, loved ones and staff as partners in healthcare.

The voices of people with lived experience are powerful. Their contribution is vital to the work of continuously improving safety and quality in our health system.

CEC staff

By embracing a generative approach to safety, we will redefine everyday work practices and relationships within the NSW Health system. This approach fosters positive attitudes towards change, enhances wellbeing, and prioritises psychological safety. By viewing change as an adaptive challenge, we will drive innovation and focus change activities towards promoting human system elements that drive safety innovation. We will work on strategic alignment and collaboration as core to our approach in working across the organisation to achieve the aims of our nine-year strategy and three-year strategic plans.

Healthcare workers

We aim to promote and support a safety culture that protects patients and supports the wellbeing of NSW healthcare workers. This entails cultivating psychologically safe workplaces where healthcare workers feel empowered to voice safety concerns and actively engage in improvement efforts. Through capability initiatives, we equip healthcare workers with knowledge, tools and resources to enhance safety practices and drive continuous improvement across the healthcare system.

Health consumers

Healthcare consumers are beneficiaries and active partners in our efforts to embed and mature a safety culture. People who engage with the healthcare system are at risk of poor health outcomes for different reasons, in addition to those who face inequitable access to healthcare as a result of their vulnerability. This vulnerability may be determined or influenced by intersecting characteristics or factors, including acute illness or a chronic condition, age, race, gender, language spoken, ability or disability, physical or mental health status and social determinants of health. The CEC is committed to amplifying the voices of consumers with firsthand experience of the NSW Health system, building strong partnerships, and embracing co-design principles to gain valuable insights to drive meaningful change and improve patient safety outcomes.

Collaborations

We partner with healthcare consumers, Districts and Networks, the Ministry of Health and other NSW Government agencies to deliver safer experiences for patients and staff. We will continue to collaborate with stakeholders to deliver system-wide safety, culturally appropriate care and legislative and policy responsibilities by:

- Strengthening the culture within healthcare, nurturing psychological safety for patients, carers and staff
- Enhancing communication and interactions between patients, their families and carers and healthcare workers
- Empowering patients and their carers to share in decision-making about their care
- Providing reliable information for patients.

The CEC collaborates with Districts/Networks and health consumers to ensure culturally appropriate care and enhance health outcomes across the NSW Health system. Recognising the interconnectedness of staff wellbeing and patient safety, we address both aspects simultaneously.

We partner with various divisions and branches of the Ministry of Health to promote patient, clinical, and system safety. Additionally, we collaborate with NSW Health pillars, academic institutions, and other stakeholders to effectively address complex challenges and opportunities. Through strategic partnerships, we nurture safe healthcare environments and minimise avoidable harm.

Knowledge-driven and learning organisation

As a knowledge-driven and learning organisation, the CEC leverages safety intelligence, diverse data and staff expertise to foster a culture of safety improvement across the NSW Health system. We will lead the development of evidence-based safety improvements in collaboration with Districts and Networks, focusing on predictive and proactive safety measures.

Our approach draws on data and insights to monitor incident trends and clinical outcomes, enabling proactive safety measures through real-time insights and connected technologies. We promote frontline access to relevant, timely data and provide support for interpretation to drive safety improvements. We aim to identify new data sources and increase clinician expertise in data exploration, analysis and synthesis.

Our priorities are guided by incident data triangulated with patient outcome and experience data and healthcare worker-related data. We employ staff expertise to respond to system needs, including critical incident management and guidance on statewide initiatives such as infection prevention and control. Further, we provide tailored support to teams following serious adverse events, ensuring comprehensive expertise is available to support response and mitigation.

Our scope

Lead enhanced patient, clinical and system safety to deliver a tangible and positive impact on patients, staff and the broader NSW community.

This means leading, actively monitoring and driving for the NSW Health system:

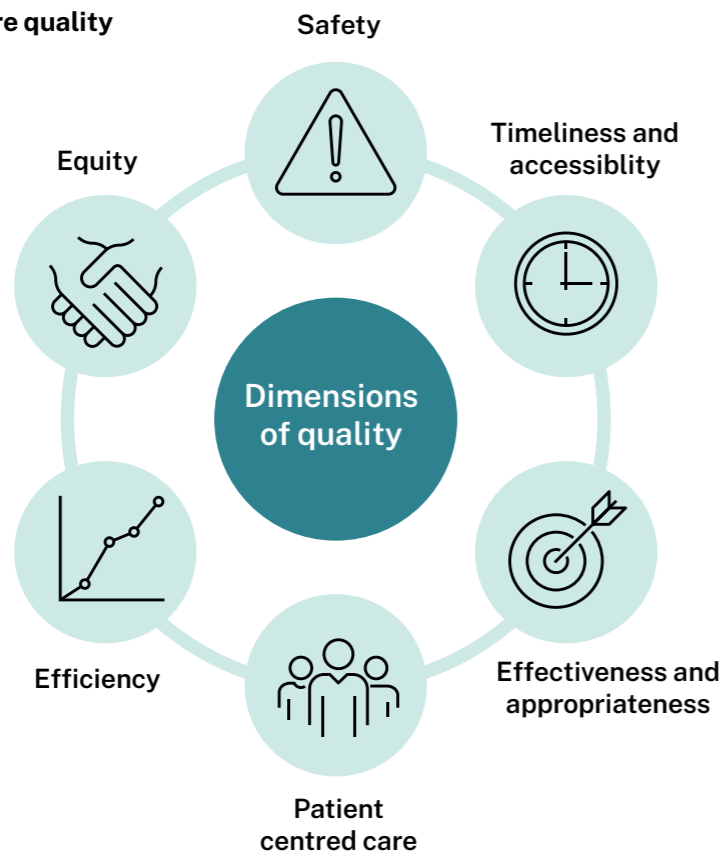
- Patient, clinical and system safety
- Effective clinical governance
- Continuous improvement.

Dimensions of healthcare quality

The CEC has long been synonymous with supporting healthcare workers in strengthening safety and quality across the NSW Health system in alignment with its Determination of Functions. Safety is one of the dimensions of healthcare quality, as can be seen in Figure 1 and forms the foundation on which a high quality system is built. We acknowledge that all dimensions are essential to delivering high-quality patient care to the people of NSW, however the CEC's primary focus is the safety dimension. Our nine-year strategy and three-year strategic plans integrate safety with the five other quality dimensions, ensuring that our approach to driving safety improvements is holistic while enabling the organisation to identify additional improvement opportunities by applying a safety lens to the different quality dimensions.

These six healthcare quality dimensions are the foundation of high-quality patient care in the NSW Health system.

Figure 1
Six dimensions of healthcare quality

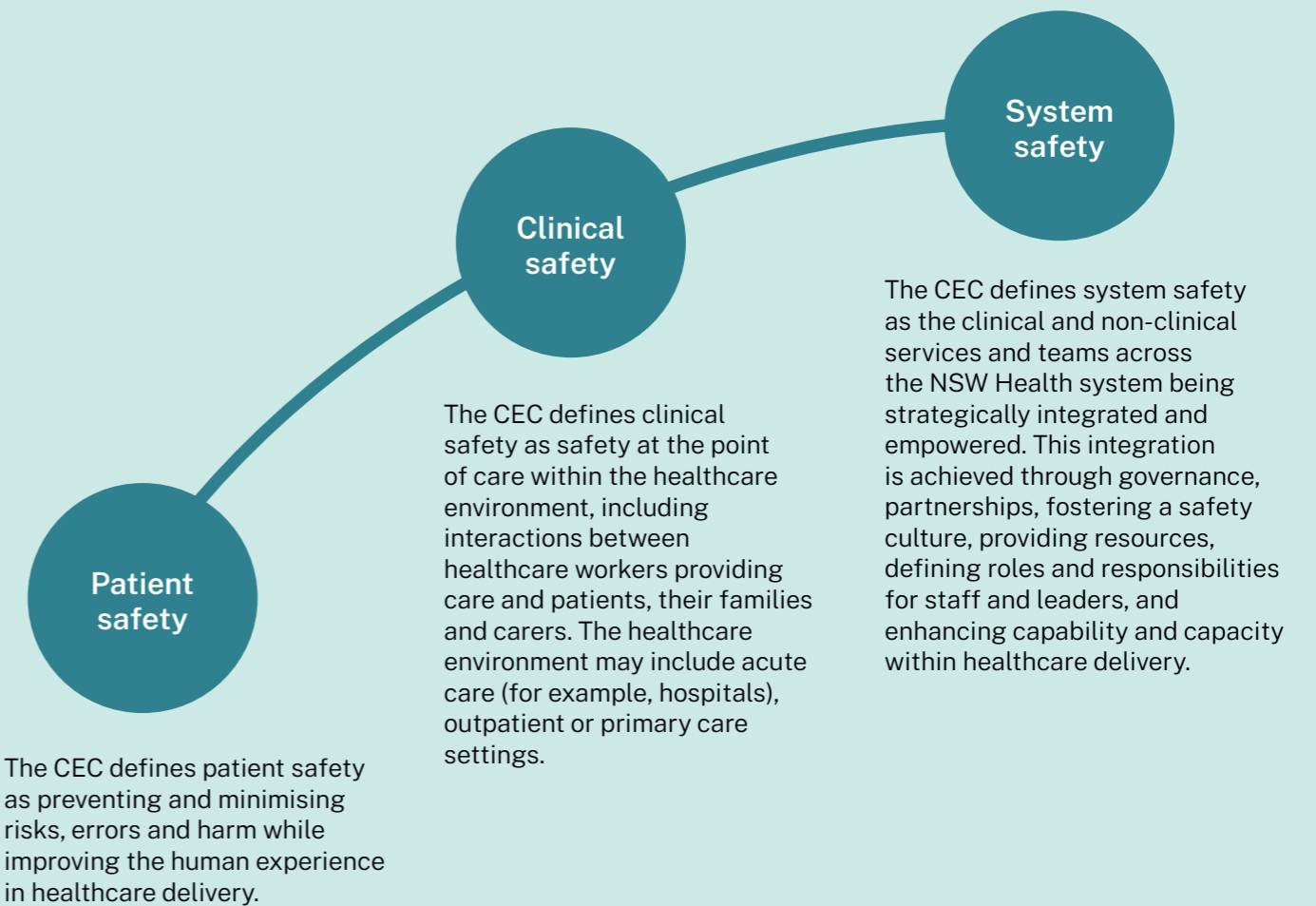


Safety

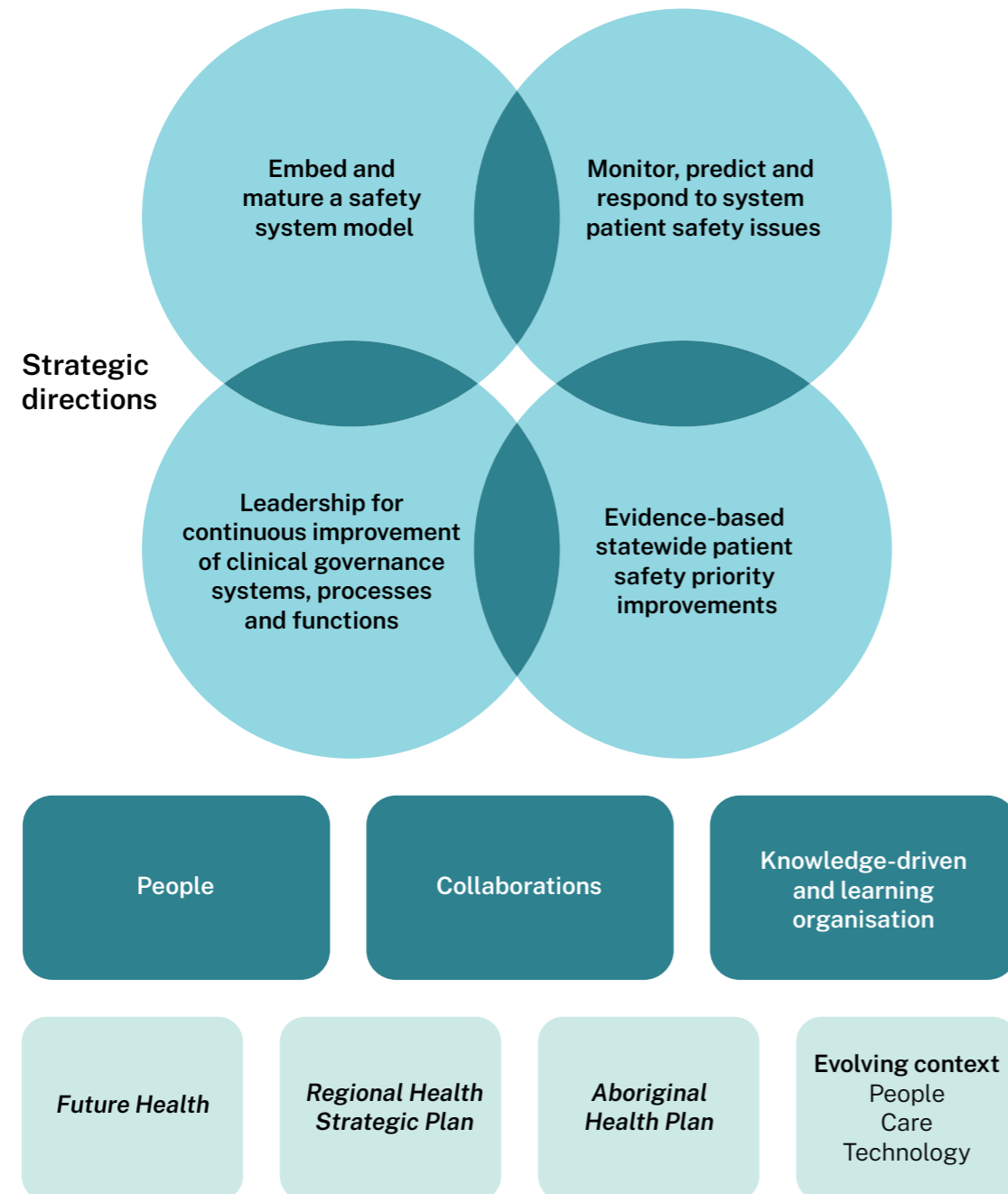
Definitions for the CEC's safety remit

Safety encompasses several key dimensions – personal, physical, cultural and psychological – each vital to clinical safety. This approach is reflected in the **NSW Health Safety System Model** that underpins the **Clinical Governance in NSW Policy Directive (PD2024_010)**.

The CEC focuses on three aspects of healthcare safety: patient, clinical and system safety. Throughout this document, 'safety' refers to these elements. Our role is to collaborate with the NSW Health system to address these aspects, fostering positive outcomes for the people of NSW.



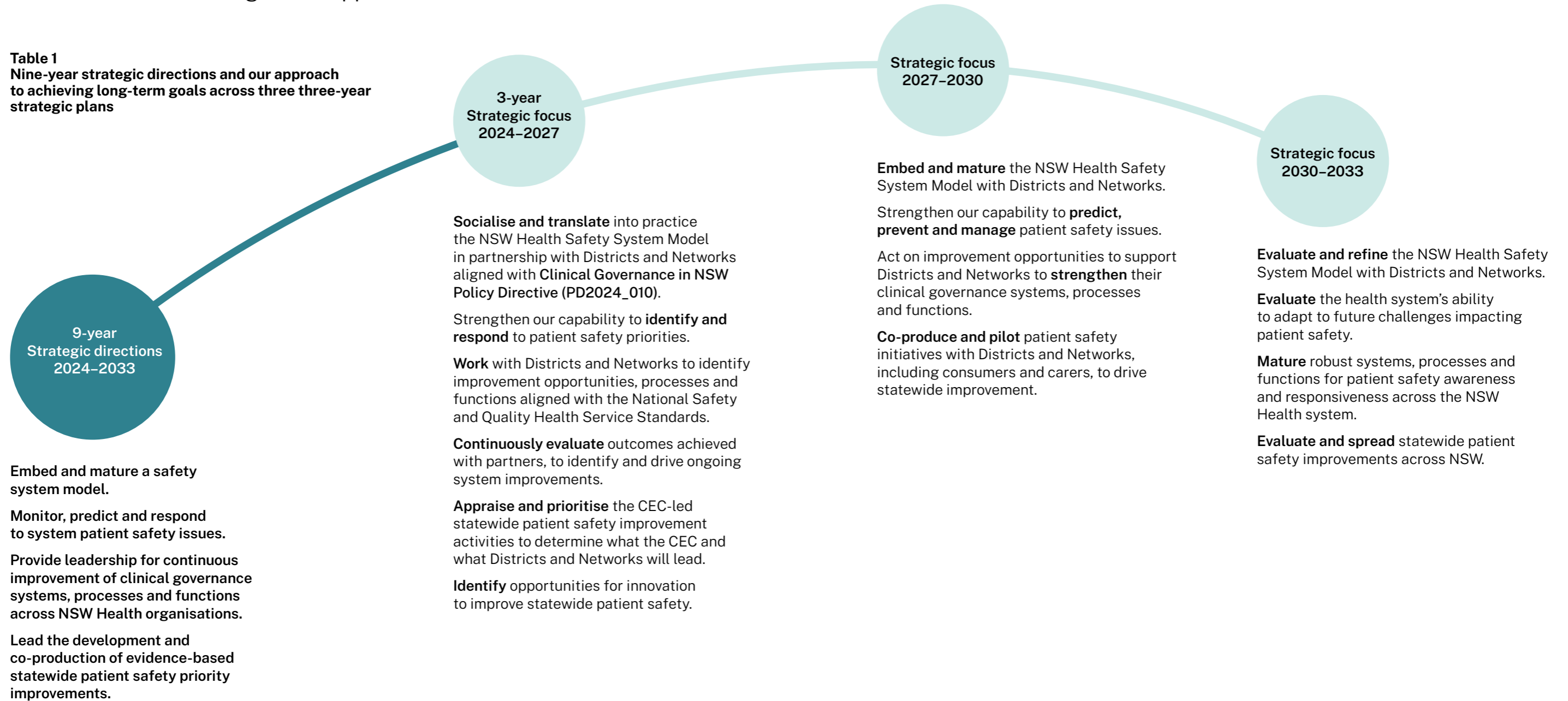
Nine-year strategy



Strategic direction and focus

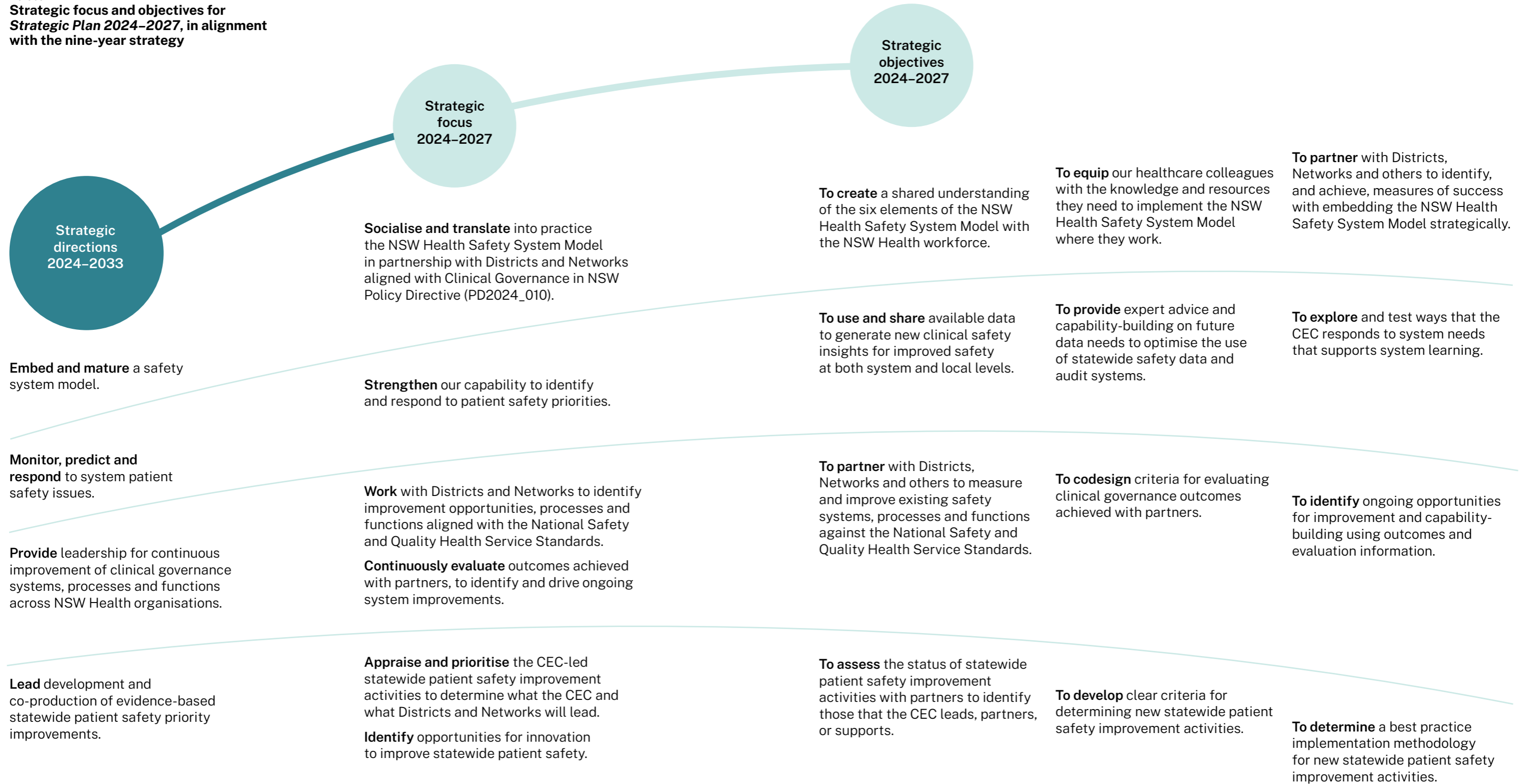
The CEC's nine-year strategy outlines our future direction. It is divided into three three-year strategic plans that outline our approach to achieving long-term goals while enabling the organisation to adapt to future health challenges and opportunities.

Table 1
Nine-year strategic directions and our approach to achieving long-term goals across three three-year strategic plans



Strategic direction, focus and objectives

Table 2
Strategic focus and objectives for Strategic Plan 2024–2027, in alignment with the nine-year strategy



Strategic considerations

The CEC's *Strategic Plan 2024–2027* and underpinning nine-year strategy will guide our work across the NSW Health system, adapting to and tackling the evolving challenges of our healthcare system. Our work is informed by a range of statewide plans and health-related inquiry recommendations. In this dynamic landscape, we seize opportunities for improvement, focusing on key priorities such as navigating healthcare changes, contributing to environmental sustainability, reducing disparities in Aboriginal health, and advancing *NSW Future Health* and *NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan*, as outlined below.

Environmental sustainability

Australia's healthcare system contributes seven per cent of the country's total carbon footprint, with public hospitals accounting for 34 per cent. *NSW Future Health* prioritises environmental sustainability to ensure a modern, low-carbon, low-waste health system, aligning with quality, value, innovation, and equity principles. This shift impacts healthcare delivery, including medical devices and infection control. The CEC ensures the safety of patients and healthcare workers remains paramount in these developments, enhancing clinical guidance to minimise environmental impact while maintaining safe care delivery. Clinical guidance authored by the CEC will seek to balance patient safety with reduced environmental impacts and share its clinical and safety expertise to inform NSW Health policy and research.

Aboriginal Health Plan

The Aboriginal Health Transformation agenda contributes to NSW Health's response to the Priority Reform Areas from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The CEC continues to progress actions agreed to under the Transformation agenda to support policy review, data and adverse event review. In addition, we are developing an Aboriginal Health Plan in collaboration with the Ministry of Health's Centre for Aboriginal Health to guide our partnerships with Aboriginal people and communities on future safety. The plan will form an important part of our overarching future direction, focused on connecting, listening and responding to Aboriginal people and communities and dedicated organisations and peak bodies addressing Aboriginal health and wellbeing.

NSW Future Health and NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022–2032

NSW Future Health is an ambitious overarching 10-year strategic plan that reflects how NSW Health patients, healthcare workers and care partners envisage the health system by 2032. It encompasses the *NSW Health Workforce Plan 2022-2032*, which guides workforce development to help ensure the NSW health system can continue delivering high-quality care. *NSW Future Health* is complemented by the *NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan*, which focuses on regional health.

NSW Future Health and the *Regional Health Strategic Plan* set the direction for the NSW health system. The CEC directly contributes to the *NSW Future Health* strategic outcomes to achieve our long-term vision, in particular strategic outcome 2, which focuses on ensuring that safe care is delivered across all settings. The CEC is accountable to the Ministry of Health through its annual Performance Agreement.



