

South Gippsland Coast Partnership

Sub-Regional Environmental Sustainability Framework





Photo: Dollar Hills, Strzelecki Ranges.
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
(Janine Clark).

Many of the photos in this publication were supplied by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority works from the mountains to the sea caring for over 40,000km of designated waterways across the region. All these waterways flow to the Victorian coast, discharging through the Gippsland Lakes, or directly into Bass Strait and the Southern Ocean and provide environmental and health benefits for us all.

An aerial photograph of a coastal wetland area, likely Corner Inlet, showing a mix of green vegetation and reddish-brown soil. A large, semi-transparent brown circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

Acknowledgement of Country

The South Gippsland Coast Partnership acknowledges the Bunurong and the Gunaikurnai as the traditional custodians of the South Gippsland Coast land and waters, for their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We acknowledge that we live and work on the lands of the world's oldest and most sustainable culture. We acknowledge the deep connection to earth of First Nations peoples and their invaluable contributions to our understanding of climate change and the environment.

Photo: Corner Inlet.
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
(David Stork)

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*Photo: Koala.
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
(Janine Clark)*

CEO Foreword

The adverse impact of climate change has seen extreme heat, bushfires, drought, winds and floods impact our communities. These events have highlighted the need to prioritise the delivery of a sustainable healthcare system.

Nationally, the healthcare sector contributes 7% of all of Australia’s emissions. We recognise that the health sector plays an important role in achieving the Victorian Government’s target of Net Zero by 2045 while maintaining our focus on delivering high quality patient centred care to our communities.

To create an environmentally sustainable healthcare system, the South Gippsland Coast Partnership (SGCP) Sub-Region must develop ways to respond and adapt to our changing environment. We recognise that each health service operates uniquely and is at different stages of readiness to achieve sustainability goals. The SGCP Environmental Sustainability Framework (The Framework) outlines our commitment to aspire to be healthy and resilient health services.

The Framework shows how we will achieve our vision through agreed focus areas, which will guide the health services across the SGCP Sub-Region to take fundamental steps in creating better health outcomes for everyone. The principles are adopted from the National Health and Climate Strategy (2023) and our ambitious targets of Net Zero by 2045 are in line with the Victorian State Government. The Framework will allow each health service to achieve outcomes through suggested actions that are relevant to their own service while at the same time pledging an equal commitment to address our changing climate.

The Framework consists of 4 Key Focus Areas: Sustainable Infrastructure and Procurement, Waste and Recovery, Sustainable Governance and People and Places. They are all supported by The Pillars: Leadership and Innovation, Messaging and Awareness and Monitoring and Evaluation.

Photo: Kilcunda Trestle Bridge over Bourne Creek.
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

The challenges facing the healthcare system as a result of climate change are complex and will impact generations. This creates an enormous opportunity for collective action and accountability as we share this journey together.

We take on this great work with pride and respect as a positive call to action, acknowledging that instrumental and inspiring work has already begun. The SGCP Sub-Regional health services stand together and walk boldly into the future, creating resilient health services and communities.

Jan Child	Louise Sparkes	Noni Bourke	Paul Greenhalgh
CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO
Bass Coast Health	Gippsland Southern Health Service	Kooweerup Regional Health Service	South Gippsland Hospital



About the South Gippsland Coast Partnership

The SGCP includes Bass Coast Health, Gippsland Southern Health Service, South Gippsland Hospital and Kooweerup Regional Health Service. The SGCP is a mechanism for collaboration in the sub-region and seeks to improve access to services and health outcomes. The work undertaken by the SGCP includes local priorities important to the communities of the partnership health services.



The Effects of Climate Change on Healthcare



More severe fire weather days



More frequent heatwaves and hot days over 35°C



More time spent in drought



Sea level rise and increase in coastal flooding



More coastal erosion and changes to shorelines



Food and water security



Fewer but more intense tropical cyclones



Increase in heavy rainfall and flood risk



More likely than not increase in hailstorms



Fewer extratropical storms but with heavier rainfall



Increase in ocean temperatures and acidity

Source: Australian Climate Service, adapted from IPCC AR6 and other sources

Why Sustainable Healthcare?

Climate change has been identified as both the “defining health issue” and the “greatest global health threat” of the 21st century.

Two-thirds of Victoria’s emissions from the waste sector result from the decomposition of organic material.

It is estimated that heatwaves exacerbated by climate change will kill an additional 6214 people per year in Victoria if no adaptation measures are taken.

In Australia \$320m is spent each year on avoidable hospital admissions for chronic conditions.

Globally, the healthcare sector is estimated to be the 5th largest carbon emitter.

Due to the increasing frequency, intensity and duration of extreme weather events, climate change is leading to more deaths, disease and injury, as well as adversely impacting mental health and wellbeing.

Health services have a responsibility to go beyond safeguarding its own sustainability and should contribute to the sustainability of wider society.

Reducing health system emissions aligns with the health profession’s responsibility to ‘first do no harm’.

Approximately 7% of Australia’s carbon footprint comes from the healthcare sector.



“Navigating climate change can feel like the wilderness with the vast amount of work to be done.

The future is bright. Together, we can make a positive change.”

Dave – Registered Nurse

“Climate change in healthcare is a worthwhile creative challenge that presents an incredible opportunity for innovation and connection.”

Jenneke - Mother and Carpenter

“Reducing landfill is everyone’s responsibility. It is such a small thing to do but the impact is huge. Imagine what we could achieve if we work together?”

Sarah - Midwife

Our Staff-led Achievements



Kooweerup Regional Health Service

Killara Hostel and Westernport Unit at KRHS recycled bread tags to turn into mandala art.



South Gippsland Hospital

Blister pack recycling project. A staff led initiative to recycle blister packs across the organisation. Over 2kgs of blister packs have been recycled since late 2023.



Kooweerup Regional Health Service

Plastic free July campaign.



Bass Coast Health

The Acute ward collected IV Antibiotic lids and turned them into art.



Gippsland Southern Health Service

Staff from the Maternity and Acute wards have been collecting plastic bottles to save them from going to landfill. They are also proud to have replaced plastic medication cups with recyclable paper ones.



Bass Coast Health

Pilot study to recycle PVC Baxter IV bags with the Vinyl Council Australia's recycling in hospitals program.

Organisational Achievements



Bass Coast Health



South Gippsland Hospital



Kooweerup Regional Health Service

We have taken steps to implement sustainability into their organisations by incorporating energy efficient buildings, solar power, green spaces, community engagement and planetary health.



Gippsland Southern Health Service

Our Achievements – Collaboration with the wider community

Kooweerup Regional Health Service is a rare example of a health service with a community garden on site.

The Community Garden supports community engagement and is a great place to learn about gardening and share local and traditional knowledge. Community gardens also preserve and improve precious green spaces in urban environments.

The garden fosters a sense of synergy, bringing together the community including the men's shed, patients and staff, community members and creatures.


Kooweerup Regional Health Service created an innovative partnership with the Cardinia Shire Council to plant more native vegetation in their community gardens for the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot. These achievements highlight the value of partnerships across sectors and within the community.

“We have a really long history of community engagement. A socio-ecological frame is used to understand the relationship between human health and the environment in which we live, learn, work and play. It’s a holistic view to understand and address the health needs of our community. Health practitioners have an important role to play in applying this approach to health and actively promote sustainability.”

Aileen Thoms

Photo: Ricardo Simao





As health services we can learn from First Nations' knowledge and leadership as well as their connection to land and culture to improve health outcomes.

Climate change presents an opportunity for redress and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to lead climate action planning based on their intimate traditional and historical knowledge of Country.

Over generations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been the caretakers of Country, enhancing biodiversity, maintaining habitat, and supporting ecosystem resilience. In return, Country has nourished Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people physically, mentally, spiritually, and culturally.

Lowitja Institute

Photo: Darby River, Wilsons Promontory.
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

Our Framework

Vision

To create resilient and sustainable health services within the South Gippsland Coast Sub-Region through partnership, leadership and innovation.

Principles

(Adopted from the National Health and Climate Strategy, 2023)

- **Health equity and the right to health**
 - **First Nations' leadership**
 - **Population health and prevention**
 - **Evidence-informed policy making**

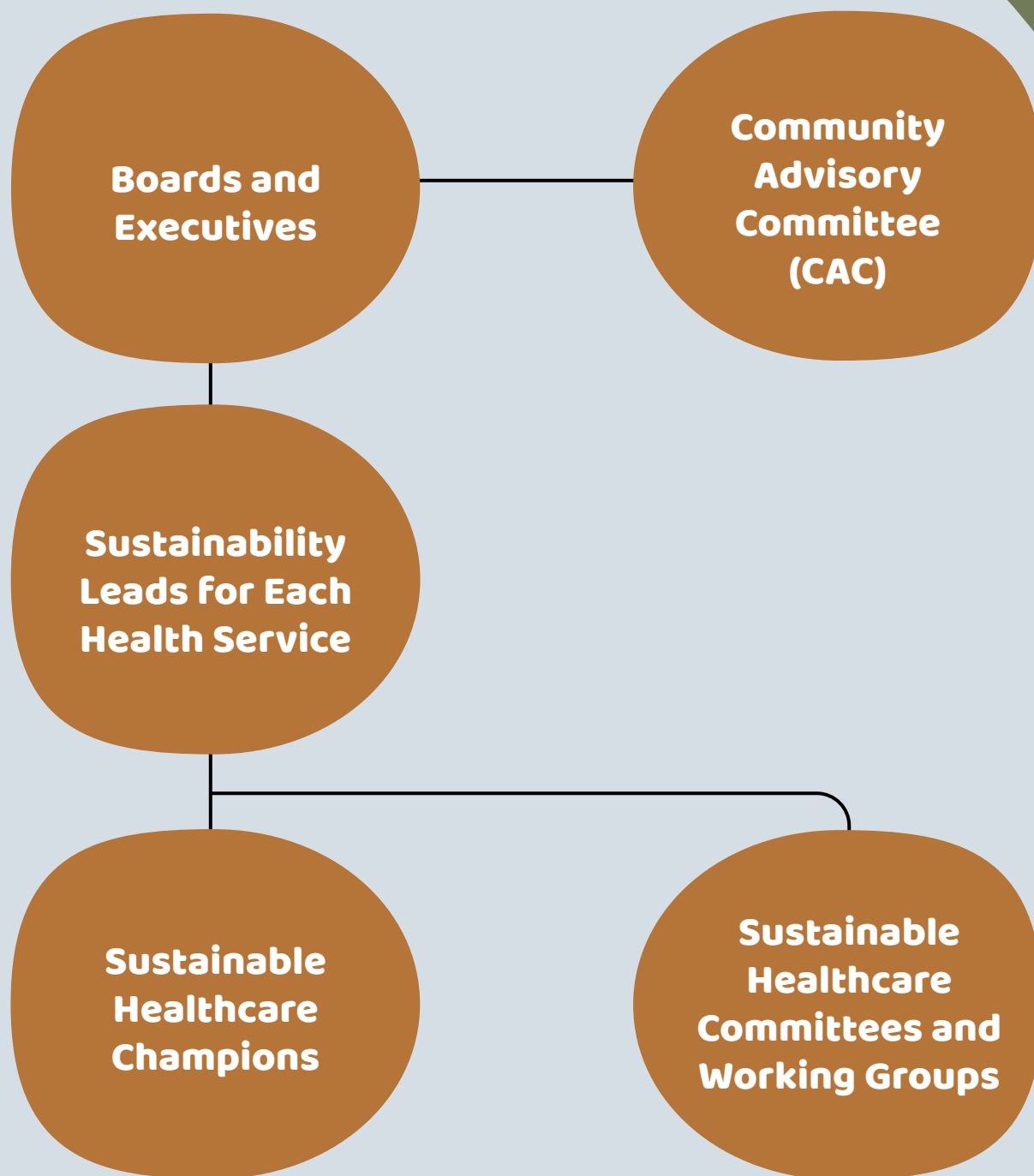
Targets

We commit to 45-50% below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2045 in line with the Victorian Government targets.

*Photo: Corner Inlet,
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority*



Governance and Structure



The governance for the individual health service involves its development being overseen by the health service Boards and Chief Executives in collaboration with the Community Advisory Committees.

The framework requires sustainable healthcare be embedded into organisational structure and sufficiently resourced to achieve the targets that have been identified by the Victorian Government.



The Three Pillars

Themes Supporting Each Focus Area

Leadership and Innovation

We will strive to be leaders in Sustainability in Healthcare across Gippsland and Victoria. We will draw from and utilise best practice and evidence-based models and keep informed through the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) and Global Green and Healthy Hospitals (GGHH).

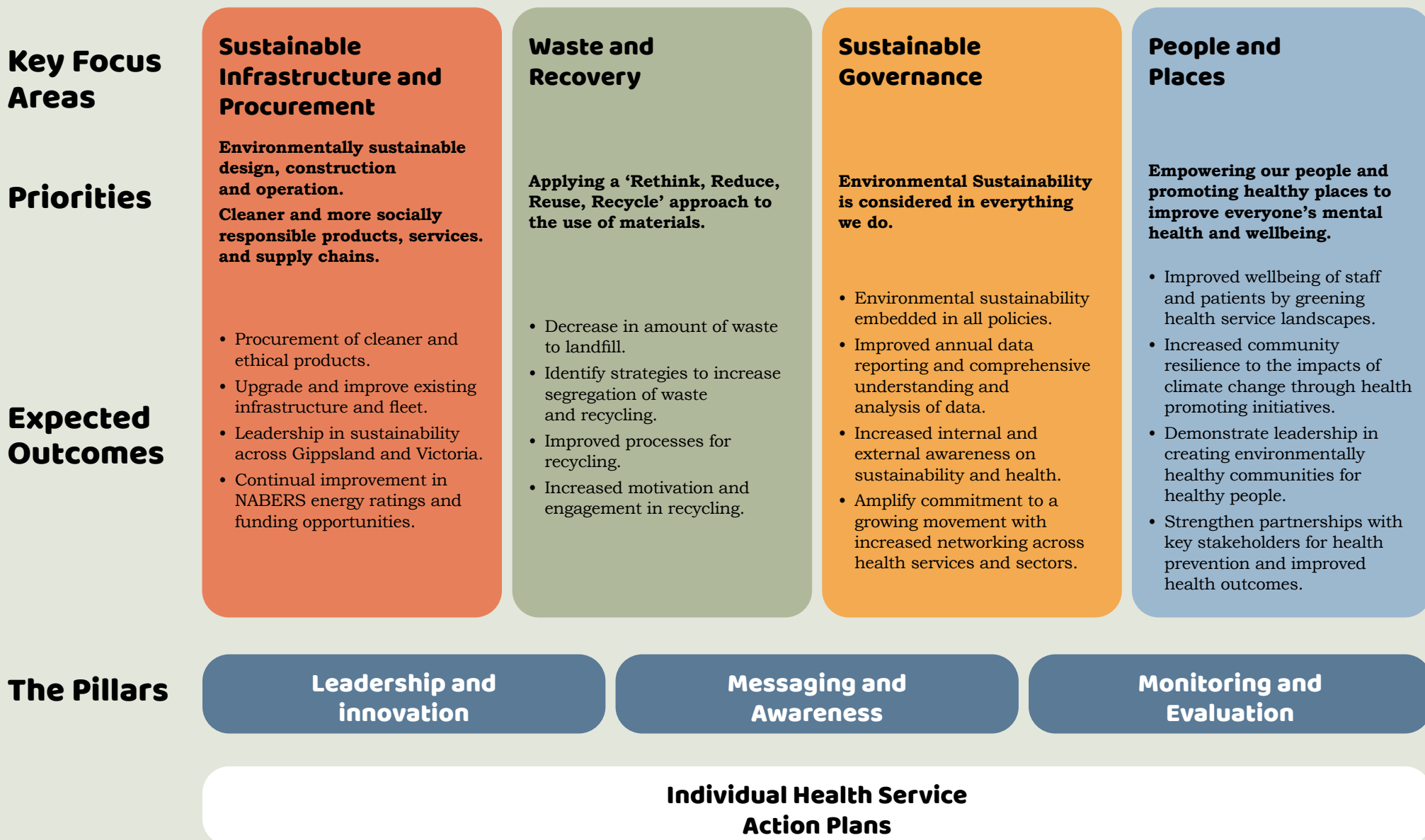
Messaging and Awareness

We will play a key role in providing education on climate change and sustainability in healthcare to its staff, patients, stakeholders and the wider community. We aim to promote healthy living and preventative health. We will be role models within the community and celebrate our achievements.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will conduct thorough annual reporting and auditing to ensure our targets are being met. The reporting of our data will be consistent and informed. We will use the data to continue to improve on our practices and identify opportunities to focus on as well as celebrate our achievements.

The Environmental Sustainability Framework on a Page



Key Focus Area 1

Sustainable Infrastructure and Procurement

Priority: Environmentally sustainable design, construction and operation. Cleaner and more socially responsible products, services and supply chains.

We aim to provide health services in healthy environments that are energy efficient, climate resilient, have a connection to nature and promote sustainable forms of transport. We are committed to transitioning our buildings and precincts to net zero carbon emissions.

Expected Outcomes

- Procurement of clean and ethical products
- Upgrade and improve existing infrastructure and fleet
- Demonstrated leadership in sustainability across Gippsland and Victoria
- Continual improvement in NABERS energy rating

Suggested Actions

1. Centralised procurement and product review including roadmap to upgrade existing facilities with procurement checklist.
2. Create business case for grants and funding opportunities.
3. Utilise NABERS energy, water and waste audits to develop plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.





Key Focus Area 2

Waste and Recovery

Priority: Applying a 'Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' approach to the use of materials.

We aim to source products that are sustainable and ethical while reducing our consumption and minimise the waste going to landfill.

Expected Outcomes

- Decrease in amount of waste to landfill
- Identify strategies to increase segregation of waste and recycling
- Improved processes for recycling
- Increased motivation and engagement in recycling processes by staff

Suggested Actions

1. Change to greener products where feasible utilising the product review checklist (where feasible).
2. Complete waste audits using the waste audit tool.
3. Utilise existing waste stream initiatives e.g., PVC recycling, composting and pharmaceuticals.
4. Create motivating and engaging processes for staff to engage with the benefits of recycling.

Key Focus Area 3

Sustainable Governance

Priority: Environmental Sustainability is considered in everything we do.

We aim to provide health services in healthy environments that are energy efficient, climate resilient, have a connection to nature and promote sustainable forms of transport. We are committed to transitioning our buildings and precincts to net zero carbon emissions.

Expected Outcomes

- Environmental sustainability embedded in all policies
- Improved annual data reporting and comprehensive understanding and analysis of data
- Amplify commitment to environmental sustainability by increasing networking opportunities across health services and sectors
- Increased internal and external awareness of sustainability and health

Suggested Actions

1. Add a climate and sustainability lens to all policies with 3 yearly review using checklists and templates.
2. Education and standardisation of data reporting by creating tools for development of annual reporting requirements.
3. Individual health services become a member of the Climate and Health Alliance and Global Green and Healthy Hospitals to provide access to resources.
4. Create a communication template to feature achievements to promote to all levels, including a sustainability tree, external media outlets and internal newsletter.



An aerial photograph of a garden area. In the top left, there is a small, dark, circular pond surrounded by a stone border. A winding path leads from the pond towards the bottom right. The garden features several long, rectangular raised beds filled with green plants. There are also some smaller, irregularly shaped garden beds and a central area with bare soil and some dry branches. The background shows some trees and a building with a corrugated metal roof.

Key Focus Area 4

People and Places

Priority: Empowering our people and promoting healthy places to improve everyone's mental health and wellbeing.

We aim to create healthy environments. We will collaborate with First Nations leadership and draw on their knowledge to take care of the planet. Healthy country and healthy people go hand in hand.

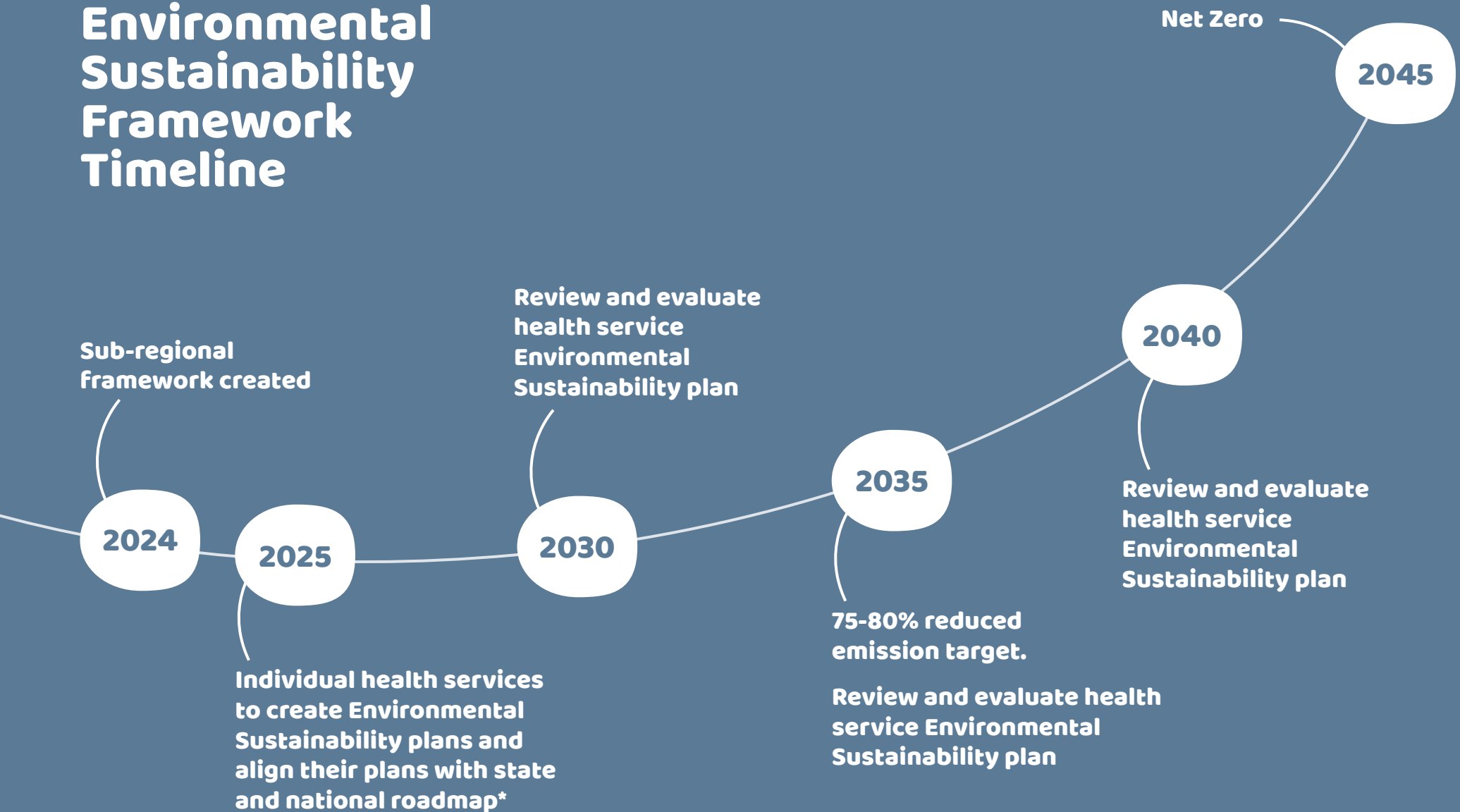
Expected Outcomes

- Improved wellbeing of staff and patients by greening health service landscapes
- Increased community resilience to the impacts of climate change through health promoting initiatives
- Demonstrate leadership in creating environmentally healthy communities for healthy people
- Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders for health promotion and improved health outcomes

Suggested Actions

1. Develop greening health service landscape checklist with policy review and implementation.
2. Promote healthy living, active travel and green spaces with our partners.
3. Promote and advocate for preventative health through messaging and awareness.

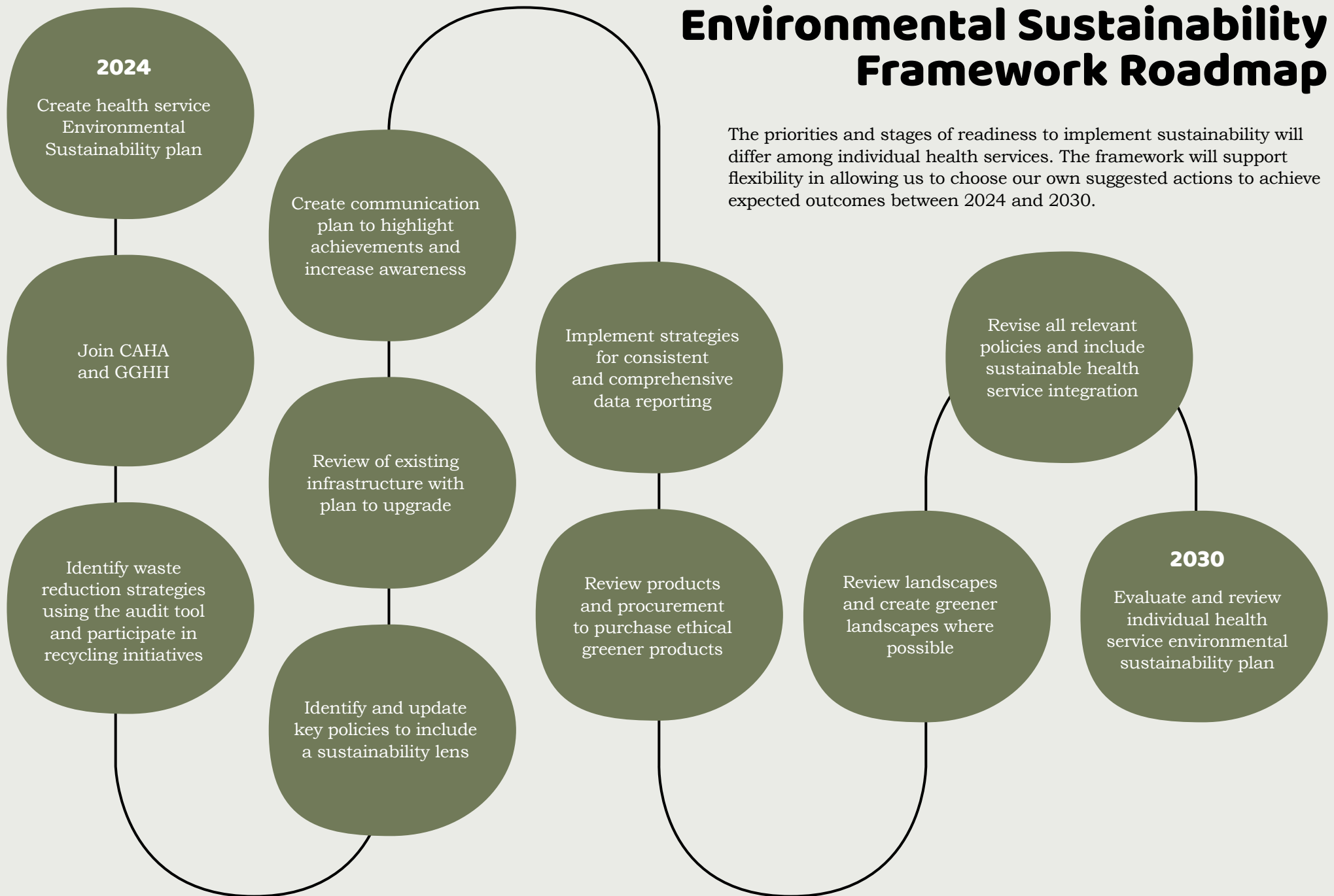
Environmental Sustainability Framework Timeline



*National Health and Climate Strategy (2023) to release decarbonization road map in 2025.

The priorities and stages of readiness to implement sustainability will differ among individual health services. The framework will support flexibility in allowing us to choose our own suggested actions to achieve expected outcomes between 2024 and 2030.

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Glossary

Key Term	Definition	Key Term	Definition
Adaptation	The process of adjusting to actual or expected changes in climate to reduce or avoid climate impacts, or exploit beneficial opportunities.	Prevention	Approaches and activities aimed at reducing the likelihood that a disaster or disorder will affect an individual, interrupting or slowing the progress of the disorder or reducing disability.
Climate Change	Climate change refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity.	PVC	Polyvinyl chloride
Community	Includes individuals, indigenous people and Traditional Owners, community groups, businesses, industry and institutions such as government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGO's), who reside within the Gippsland South Coast.	Resilience	The capacity of communities, environments and economies to cope with a hazardous event or disturbance, while maintaining their essential functions and structure.
Governance	Governance includes policies, practices, rules and regulations that establish responsibilities and accountabilities for individuals and organisations.	Scope 1 emissions	Direct greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions that the South Gippsland Coast Sub-Regional Partnerships owns or controls directly (e.g., using anaesthetic gases, driving petrol vehicles).
IV	Intravenous.	Scope 2 emissions	Emission that South Gippsland Coast Sub-Regional Partnerships causes when the energy it purchases for use is produced. (e.g., electricity bought from energy companies).
Mitigation	The action we take to limit changes in global climate caused by human activities.	Scope 3 emissions	GHG emissions that are the result of activities undertaken upstream (e.g., staff commute, production of pharmaceuticals) and downstream (e.g., waste management) South Gippsland Coast Sub-Regional Partnerships' supply chain and value chain.
NABERS	National Australian Built Environment Rating System	Sustainability	Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Net Zero Emissions (or Carbon Neutral)	Net-Zero emissions is achieved when there is an overall balance of anthropic (human caused or influenced) greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) produced and GHG emissions taken out of the atmosphere over a specified period.	Sustainable Healthcare	A complex system of interacting approaches to the restoration, management and optimization of human health that has an ecological base, that is environmentally, economically and socially viable indefinitely, that functions harmoniously both with the human body and the non-human environment, and which does not result in unfair or disproportionate impacts on any significant contributory of the healthcare system.
Planetary Health	Planetary Health is a solutions-oriented, transdisciplinary field and social movement focused on analysing and addressing the impacts of human disruptions to Earth's natural systems on human health and all life on earth.		

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