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## NSW and ACT PHNs Welcome the Australian National Audit Office Report

NSW and ACT Primary Health Networks (PHNs) welcome the [Australian National Audit Office's \(ANAO\) report](#) into the effectiveness of the Department of Health and Aged Care's (the Department) performance management of PHNs.

The report, released 27 February, had eight recommendations, seven of which the Department agreed to, and one partially agreed. All the report's recommendations relate specifically to the improvement of the Department's performance measurement, evaluation and data management of the PHN program.

Speaking on behalf of NSW and ACT PHNs, Ms Lizz Reay, CEO Chair of the NSW/ACT PHN CEO Forum, said that for many years PHNs had been calling for a performance framework that focuses on outcome reporting, to adequately highlight the positive impacts they make.

"As regional commissioners, we are strongly supportive of performance reporting that demonstrates value against the significant investment that the Commonwealth has made in our local communities via the PHN network," she said.

"As PHNs have matured, we have taken on more responsibility for the delivery of national programs, particularly during the pandemic, our role and scope has widened. However, while we have been agile and adaptable, the governance and reporting mechanisms for PHNs have remained largely unchanged. This includes the prescribed performance reporting and framework that has been in place since PHNs were established in 2015."

"It is worth noting that some of the systemic issues impacting PHNs ability to deliver and report on outcomes were not in the scope of the ANAO review and were therefore not addressed in the report. Several of these were highlighted in the National Health Reform Agreement October 2023 mid-term review," Ms Reay added.

NSW and ACT PHNs believe that as regional organisations, they have a deep understanding of their local community's primary healthcare needs and drive reform, integration and equitable access across the health and social care system. As commissioners of health care services, they also address unmet needs by working with their local stakeholders to develop innovative models of care tailored to their unique regional needs.

"We are passionate about working to improve our community's health outcomes in our respective regions. As a result, we look forward to a full evaluation of the PHN program, as recommended in the report. This is an opportunity for us to highlight more of the quality of work we do and the value we add to the national health system," said Ms Reay.

"We look forward to working with the Department as they assess and implement the recommendations from this report," she said.