



Australian Government
Australian Digital Health Agency



Your health. Your say.

Shaping the future of health and care together

A consultation with the Australian community to
co-produce the National Digital Health Strategy

Discussion Paper

November 2016



Together let's shape the future of health and care

There's nothing more important than our health and the health of those we care about.

Many people want to be more informed and involved with their own care and learn how to prevent illness and improve their own wellbeing. Clinicians and carers want to be able to securely share information so they can provide safe, high quality services that are better co-ordinated around a person's needs.

Technology has changed almost every part of our lives - from the way we eat to the way we get around. It is already transforming our ability to predict, diagnose, and treat disease. There is much more we can do to realise its full potential for the health of every Australian.

The Australian Digital Health Agency is here to support digital innovation - to offer people more control of their health and care when they wish, to empower and support the care professionals who serve them, and to build on this country's distinguished leadership in the discovery of new medicines and treatments.

To achieve this, we need to work with all areas of the community to co-produce a national digital health strategy. This is the process we are now launching: an invitation to collaborate on the design of future services that are shaped around the needs, wants and aspirations of modern Australia.

Together we can shape the future of health and care.

Yours sincerely

Jim Birch
Chair
Australian Digital Health Agency

Tim Kelsey
CEO
Australian Digital Health Agency



Your health. Your say.

We all interact with the health system in some way, which means we all have ideas to make it better. Whatever your perspective – as a consumer, carer, family member, healthcare provider, developer, researcher, scientist, academic, or representative from a peak body or advocacy group – we want to hear from you.

This is an important time for Australia's health system. We are facing significant challenges, and need to find innovative ways to deliver high quality health services and continue to improve health outcomes for all Australians.

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of illness, disability and death in Australia, accounting for **90%** of all deaths

1 in 4
Australian children are overweight or obese

One million
Australians have been diagnosed with diabetes

Nearly **40%** of Australians aged 45 and over have two or more chronic diseases

73%
of Australians want to access health services online

Over 4.2 million
Australians are registered for a My Health Record

Commonwealth expenditure on health is projected to increase from about **\$65 billion in 2013-14 to \$123 billion by 2023-24**

The foundations for success

Digital health is a broad term that reflects adoption of technology in healthcare, it is inclusive of concepts such as eHealth, Health IT, clinical and corporate information systems, consumer health, telehealth, ICT infrastructure, and the use of mobile devices and applications, the way these are used and the integrity and security of information that they capture, store, share, communicate and display.

Over the last decade, Australian governments and the private and not for profit sectors, including the primary and secondary healthcare sectors, have worked together with the aim of delivering a coordinated digital health ecosystem, including building the My Health Record system, the Healthcare Identifiers service and national specifications and standards to support the implementation of digital health solutions.

State and Territory governments have made considerable progress in the implementation of information and communications technology infrastructure, as well as clinical and corporate information systems across their health services. This includes electronic medical record systems, diagnostic imaging and pathology systems,



community health systems, adoption of telehealth solutions, and workforce management systems.

The primary healthcare sector is well advanced in the use of technology to deliver health services, and has made significant investments that enable practices to collect, record and store comprehensive patient data to help them to improve health outcomes and support quality care in Australia.

With the introduction of the My Health Record system in 2012, Australians have for the first time a secure way of sharing their health information online. With a My Health Record, both a patient and their healthcare professional could gain immediate access to important health information on-line. Access to information is crucial for delivering safe and high quality care.

A solid foundation has been created from which innovation in digital health can now flourish. We have an opportunity to learn from past experiences and place the nation clearly at the centre of global digital healthcare excellence and innovation.

With a focus on helping people to live healthier, happier, and more productive lives, it is time to make a real difference to people's health by empowering them to have greater control and better access to information.

Co-producing a national strategy for digital health

Tasked with improving health outcomes for Australians through the delivery of digital healthcare systems and the national digital health strategy for Australia, the Australian Digital Health Agency exists to support digital innovation across Australia to give people more access and control of their health and care – when they wish it, to support the care professionals who serve them, and to build on Australia's distinguished leadership in the discovery of new medicines and treatments.

Early consultation with key health, government, and technology industry stakeholders has guided the Agency towards facilitating a comprehensive and inclusive community engagement process in the development of the National Digital Health Strategy for Australia.

The community and stakeholder engagement process will provide the opportunity for all members of the public, including patients, their families and carers, healthcare providers, scientists and researchers, entrepreneurs and technology innovators, and state and territory health service providers and funders, to participate in co-producing the National Digital Health Strategy.

To deliver a Strategy that meets the needs and expectations of the community, the Agency is leading a national consultation that encourages all members of the public to have a role in co-producing the vision, objectives and areas of focus for the national digital health agenda. This is about having an open and authentic process whereby we design a new horizon for and with the community.

The Agency will use the insights to develop a Strategy which will set out the priorities for national coordination and investment in the digital health solutions that will shape the future of our health system.



Together, we can work to deliver a health system where:

- 1. Healthcare consumers, carers and families** have access to their health information and guidance to make the health choices that are right for them.
- 2. Clinicians and other healthcare workers, and healthcare providers** have secure access to all the data, information and knowledge they need to provide safe and high quality care to people who use healthcare services.
- 3. Researchers, scientists, academics and innovators** can transform the quality and experience of healthcare services, establishing Australia as world leaders in the digital health economy.

How you can have your say

Whether you are a consumer of health services, a health professional working on the frontlines or running a health service organisation, an entrepreneur creating new products and services, or a researcher developing new medicines and treatments – here's your opportunity to have your say on the future of health and care in Australia.

The Agency has launched a national conversation website. To have your say, go to **conversation.digitalhealth.gov.au**.

We will be collecting your feedback on the future of digital health via an online survey which will remain open until Tuesday 31 January 2017 at 5pm AEDST.

Feedback received through this consultation process will help identify new ways to deliver more effective and efficient healthcare and guide the development of the National Digital Health Strategy.

What we want to know

Healthcare consumers, carers, and families

How do individuals want to engage with digital services to have access to the information they need to improve their health and wellbeing?

A key priority for the Australian Government is to empower and inform healthcare consumers, and to improve health literacy through better access and control over health information.

Digital technologies will help facilitate the changes expected by people by introducing new ways in which more personalised care can be provided to consumers.

Some sample survey questions for healthcare consumers, carers, and families

How would you like to access both your personal and general health information?

How would you like to use digital devices to manage your health and wellbeing?



How have you had difficulty navigating the health system?
How have you had trouble accessing healthcare when you needed it?
What does 'being in control of your healthcare' mean to you?
What would you like the My Health Record to be able to do to make it useful for you?

Clinicians and other healthcare workers, and healthcare providers

How would healthcare workers like to use data and technology to support them to make better treatment decisions?

Healthcare professionals are committed to providing the highest quality healthcare. To support healthcare professionals to make best use of data and technology, we need to understand how they, as customers and end users, want technology designed. It must be designed and tested with the direct input of healthcare professionals. This also includes understanding our workforces' capacity to purchase, implement, and be trained in the range of technology available to support their needs.

Some sample survey questions for clinicians and other healthcare workers and healthcare providers

What gets in the way of health professionals being able to connect, communicate and coordinate with the right people?
What do health professionals need to be able to effectively connect, communicate and coordinate with the right people?
What should be the immediate priority initiative for the My Health Record to ensure it delivers real value for healthcare professionals?
How could data and technology be better used to improve health and wellbeing?

Researchers, scientists, academics and innovators

How can the science, research and teaching community better partner with industry to develop digital health solutions that support individuals and healthcare providers?

Digital health solutions have the power to transform the health sector. Digital services have already had a significant impact on most other industries. While some digital disruption is already occurring in healthcare, (e.g. the use of implantables, sensors, wearable fitness tracking devices, enhanced diagnostics, and remote monitoring capabilities), Australia's healthcare system is teetering on the cusp of digital transformation.

By building on existing and supporting new collaborations between healthcare providers, technology companies and patients, we can unlock the potential of data, technology and digital to create products for smarter, faster and better healthcare.

Some sample survey questions for researchers, scientists, academics and innovators

What are your organisation's priorities in respect to digital health or eHealth?



What should be the immediate priority initiative for the My Health Record to ensure it delivers real value for clinicians and the public?

What support do entrepreneurs need to encourage greater innovation in healthcare?

How would you describe the working relationship between the research and science community and the technology sector in respect to healthcare innovation?

What are the barriers or obstacles to innovation in health and care?

For more information

If you would like more information about the **Your health. Your say.** national conversation, please:-

- Go to conversation.digitalhealth.gov.au
- Email yoursay@digitalhealth.gov.au, or
- Call the Agency Help Centre on 1300 901 001