

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the country on which we work and live and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and future and to their cultures.



‘The Northern Territory is a region of opportunity, with unique resources and circumstances that inspire creativity and innovation.’

Northern Territory Government

‘We are committed to serving Aboriginal people to support them in living meaningful and productive lives on their own terms, enriched by culture and wellbeing.’

Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT)

‘We work to increase efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care to ensure Territorians receive the right care in the right place at the right time.’

Northern Territory Primary Health Network





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Message from the Partners

Northern Territory Department of Health (NT Health), Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) and Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NT PHN) have come together with shared purpose to strengthen our health system using digital health technologies and new ways of working.

The **Strengthening Our Health System Strategy 2020 - 2025** (the strategy) sets out our vision and strategic goals over the next five years to improve the delivery of healthcare for all Territorians, through the increased use of digital health technologies to enable new ways of working.

This first-ever strategy will collectively harness and leverage each of our organisation's skills and knowledge, as well as our stakeholders. It will help us overcome the challenges of healthcare delivery in a jurisdiction with a small population dispersed over a vast and remote land mass.

Our population has the lowest health outcomes in Australia, with high levels of social disadvantage and a high burden of chronic disease. Many Territorians facing these challenges are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Working collaboratively will provide us with unique opportunities to evolve our current fragmented systems and processes to create a single integrated person-centred health system that ultimately meets the needs of our people.

Our efforts will be focused on improving the experience for both the people who use the health system, and the healthcare providers who work

within the system. We will explore how we can improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and how we can be more innovative in delivering our health services.

The strategy has been developed in collaboration between our three organisations and has been informed by key themes and directions of our own strategic plans, the NT Government Digital Territory Strategy and Australia's National Digital Health Strategy.

Delivering the strategy will require commitment, collaboration and effort from us all, as well as many other stakeholders including private sector healthcare providers, technology partners and innovators.

A joint governance structure will oversee the delivery of the strategy, which will be updated biennially to ensure it remains contemporary in a fast-changing digital health landscape.

Achievement of the strategy's goals will significantly change the way health services are delivered in the Northern Territory and we look forward to working together to strengthen and improve our health system for the benefit of all Territorians.



Professor Catherine Stoddart
Chief Executive, NT Health



John Paterson
Chief Executive Officer, AMSANT



Gill Yearsley
Chief Executive Officer, NT PHN



Introduction

Our goal is to strengthen the Northern Territory (NT) health system by connecting and integrating the way we deliver healthcare to all Territorians, no matter where they live.

The *Strengthening Our Health System Strategy 2020 - 2025* (the strategy) sets out our vision and strategic goals over the next five years to improve the delivery of healthcare for all Territorians.

NT Health, AMSANT and NT PHN have formed a collaborative partnership to drive and coordinate the opportunities emerging through digital health technologies and new ways of working across the health system.

Working in partnership will provide us with unique opportunities to transform currently fragmented systems and processes across the health system. In addition, it will provide us with a platform to work together 'as one workforce' to address systemic problems in our healthcare system that are not easily achieved by working alone.

We will focus our collective efforts on the priorities and investments that will most benefit the people of the Northern Territory. These include supporting efforts to Close the Gap by improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and achieving equality in health and life expectancy. We will also stand together to address current challenges in our health system that impact our ability to target the high-risk health factors of our population.

We recognise that working in partnership can be challenging and requires effort. Relationships are built on trust and this takes time to nurture, especially with inter-agency and multi-disciplinary collaboration.

This strategy sets out our intent and commitment to strengthening our health system by pursuing opportunities to better connect our communities, workforce, systems, and approaches enabled by digital health capabilities and technologies. It has been developed in collaboration between our three organisations and has been informed by key themes and directions of our own strategic plans.

Our collaborative efforts will be focused on four strategic goals:

- **Building healthier communities** by empowering our people and communities to actively engage in their healthcare journey.
- **Enabling our workforce** to improve current healthcare delivery approaches and embrace new ways of working.
- **Connecting our health system** to ensure effective digital connections between systems, people and processes.
- **Harnessing innovation** to pursue technological advancements and innovation that will benefit our health system.

Our Shared Vision

Working together to improve health service delivery for all Territorians, no matter where they live.

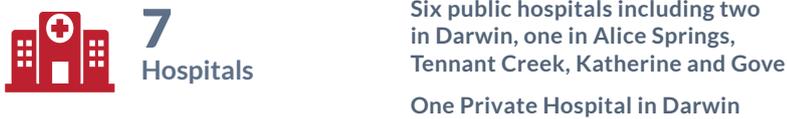
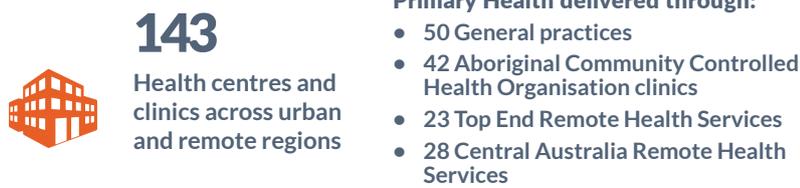
Over the next five years, we will work with many partners including the Australian Digital Health Agency, NT Government, Australian Government, private sector healthcare partners and technology partners and innovators.

Our single purpose will be to improve the delivery of healthcare to all Territorians no matter where they live.



Our imperatives

There are many compelling factors driving us to embrace digital health technologies and explore new ways of working across our health system.

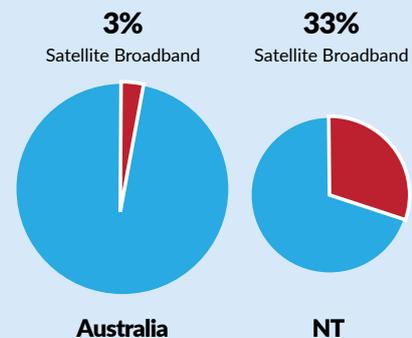


Ageing infrastructure and systems that do not connect or support electronic real-time sharing of an individual's health information with their healthcare providers.

We face increasing competition to attract and retain a skilled workforce across multiple disciplines, especially in diverse and remote locations like the Territory.

The Territory has the highest premature death rates in Australia, and significant geographical and cultural barriers. It is a constant challenge to provide equity of access to health services to Territorians with many living regionally and remotely.

Providing health care to those who live in remote locations is often costly and challenging to resource.



Principles

Our partnership approach will be underpinned by collaborative leadership with shared and coordinated implementation. We will respect each partner organisation's respective mandates and responsibilities whilst supporting information sharing to raise awareness of the opportunities for synergies between the partners.

The following key principles reflect our commitment to work together to strengthen our health system for the benefit of all Territorians.

Driven by outcomes

Our actions, decisions and behaviours will be driven by the desire for better health and wellbeing outcomes for all Territorians.

Collaboration and communication

We will foster opportunities to share information and work collaboratively, supported by early engagement and timely communication and consultation.

Respect, trust and integrity

We will model partnerships and working relationships on principles of respect, trust and integrity in all our interactions.

Transparent and robust governance

We will create accountable and transparent governance to oversee priorities and manage investment.

Leverage and embrace existing effort

Priorities will be developed and/or progressed by leveraging existing assets and capabilities and will avoid duplication.

Best practice information, data standards and data security

We will adopt best practice health information and data standards aligned to national and local legislative frameworks and Indigenous data sovereignty requirements.

Co-design and co-production approach

We will take an agile and flexible approach to co-design and co-production of our agreed priorities.

Digital literacy and inclusion

We are committed to building greater digital literacy and digital inclusion for our health workforce and the population we support.

Integrated and pragmatic priorities

We will take a pragmatic approach to digital technologies and innovation to ensure our solutions are fit-for-purpose and deliver value within the context of the Northern Territory.

Respectful of individual partner objectives

We will be open to each partner's individual objectives and priorities.



Strategic Goals

The strategic goals represent four areas of focus that, when pursued together, will strengthen our health system to deliver better care for all Territorians which is at the heart of all we do.



1 Building healthier communities

Empower our people and communities to actively engage in their healthcare journey.

2 Enabling our workforce

Support our workforce to improve current healthcare delivery approaches and embrace new ways of working.

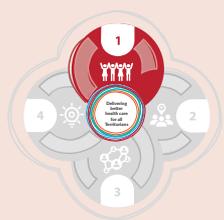
3 Connecting our health system

Connect our health system to ensure effective digital connections between systems, people and processes.

4 Harnessing innovation

Pursue technological advancements and innovation that will benefit our health system.





Strategic Goal 1

Building healthier communities

Empower our people and communities to actively engage in their healthcare journey

We are focused on improving health service delivery in our communities by harnessing digital health technologies to redesign services and models of care to be closer to home. We want to reduce duplication, maximise the use of technology and strengthen the power of partnerships to ultimately build healthier communities.

Our aim is to develop services in communities that assist in hospital avoidance and unnecessary long-distance travel. We are also keen to enable care in the community through changing models of care, supported by local staff linked to specialist advice, using digital health technologies.

Leveraging and expanding digital health technologies, will support our quest in preventing illness, reducing the burden of chronic disease management, promoting wellbeing and enabling our communities to live a healthy and productive life across their whole lifetime.

We are committed to working together and will focus our efforts on strengthening our partnerships to leverage capacity and capability to deliver streamlined services across our communities. We recognise that many communities consist of Aboriginal people and we will seek to adopt technologies to build innovative models of care for the delivery of integrated and coordinated health services to those communities, in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and other health service providers.

As part of this strategy, we will create a model for building Communities of Excellence, in partnership with the Australian Digital Health Agency, that will maximise opportunities to harness technology to deliver better and more connected health care to the community. We will create learnings from a fully connected community, that can be replicated in other regions and communities across the Territory.

- 1.1 Develop services that assist in hospital avoidance and enable care in the community through changing models of care, supported by local staff linked to specialist advice, using digital health technologies.
- 1.2 Establish a 'Communities of Excellence' model in the Territory to create learnings from a fully connected region, that could be replicated across other regions. Expand on Telehealth, the My Health Record system and Secure Messaging.
- 1.3 Build a digital health literacy and inclusion campaign to support active engagement and adoption of digital health initiatives for Territorians and their communities.

Benefits:

- Wellbeing promotion and illness prevention will be driven by communities.
- Burden of chronic disease management will be reduced through digitised systems and streamlined services within communities.
- Unnecessary travel and avoidable hospitalisations will be reduced.
- Experience of people and healthcare providers will improve through a more connected and secure digitised health system.
- People's continuity of care will improve between primary, community, acute and aged care sectors through increased access to their comprehensive health information.





Strategic Goal 2

Enabling our workforce

Support our workforce to improve current healthcare delivery approaches and embrace new ways of working

We understand the importance of continuously investing in our workforce. As the adoption of digital technologies increases, we need to ensure our workforce is skilled and supported to embrace new ways of working.

Much of our healthcare workforce has a high turnover with many staff staying for a year or two before seeking opportunities outside of the Territory. This means that attraction and retention of staff is a significant ongoing burden on the health system, which directly impacts continuity of care and cultural safety and awareness for our people.

Furthermore, the Territory faces cyclones, floods and fires along with other global challenges such as epidemics and pandemics. As such, workforce planning for such major events is particularly important when faced with staffing and resource shortages, combined with the challenge of remoteness.

To meet these challenges, we recognise the need to work together and connect our workforce efforts through sharing of knowledge, capability and capacity.

We are committed to supporting a mobile workforce that requires access to clinical information and clinical services when and where it is needed to support healthcare delivery.

In recent times, we have extended and expanded our reach in supporting remote working arrangements for our workforce and will continue to do so into the future.

Collectively, we want to build a reputation for our workplace and environment as a place where people want to work, live and continue to learn.

- 2.1 Engage with education providers to develop comprehensive education and training services for our collective workforce that incorporates and offers the use of online and assisted learning and flexible technology.
- 2.2 Develop a Territory-wide Workforce Plan to upskill and support our workforce in participating in education and training to embrace digital health technologies and new ways of working.
- 2.3 Build digital ready health workforce programs and digital learning opportunities that encourage and support our workforce to improve their digital skills.

Benefits:

- A positive and progressive Territory-wide culture in embracing new digital health technologies and discovering better ways of working.
- Increased consistency and quality in the provision of healthcare across our health system, no matter where you go.
- Experience of people communicating with our health system will improve.
- Attraction and retention rates of our workforce will increase across our organisations.





Strategic Goal 3

Connecting our health system

Connect our health system to ensure effective digital connections between systems, people and processes

Across the Territory, we use several systems to support health services in hospitals, primary health care centres and community health services. There are many benefits in connecting our systems to bring together health information to be electronically shared between people and their healthcare teams.

The exchange and use of health information requires us to have sound digital foundations that are robust, secure and responsive. Much work has been done in this space but there is much more to do.

A reliable and modern digital health environment that delivers a trusted and interoperable health record for every person engaging with the NT health system will help to enable the delivery of safe and high-quality person-centred care. This will also facilitate greater engagement and empowerment of the person receiving care.

A modern and connected technology system would ensure that national and cross-jurisdictional initiatives such as the NT Government funded Core Clinical Systems Renewal Program (CCSRP) and the nationally funded My Health Record system can be integrated with, and be available to healthcare providers in conjunction with real-time data. Our digital health environment must be able to operate effectively as part of this broader network that delivers care to Territorians no matter where they go.

Robust infrastructure will be pivotal to ensure ongoing seamless and secure access to clinical information and systems in a more economically sustainable manner. Connecting our health system to ensure effective digital links between systems, people and processes will ultimately provide a holistic person-centred view that is accessible by that person and their healthcare team.

- 3.1 Conduct a current state digital maturity and capability assessment across the Territory to establish an accurate and holistic view of the strengths and gaps in digital health technology, systems, people, process, capacity and capability that will inform future prioritisation and investment.
- 3.2 Leverage existing investment to build a Territory-wide digital health environment with modern and robust infrastructure and technology that will support current and future digital health solutions.
- 3.3 Adopt a Territory-wide approach to legal and ethical frameworks for assuring patient safety, data security, confidentiality, privacy and Indigenous data sovereignty requirements.
- 3.4 Make purposeful connections between systems, processes and people to establish integrated models of care to enable information sharing in a timely manner.

Benefits:

- Prioritisation and investment decisions about digital health solutions and technologies will be made from a shared and informed position.
- Sharing clinical information and data across the health system will be underpinned by robust legal and ethical frameworks to ensure data security, privacy and confidentiality.
- Individuals and their healthcare providers will have improved access to a person's health information, enabling more informed decision-making.
- Better continuity of care can be achieved as important healthcare information can follow people across their healthcare journey.





Strategic Goal 4

Harnessing innovation

Pursue technological advancements and innovation that will benefit our health system

Health innovation is about developing new or improved health systems, products, technologies, and services and delivery methods that will improve the health of populations, especially those that are most vulnerable.

Strengthening our health system will require innovation that translates into improved development and delivery of health services and technologies. Pursuing needs-based innovation will be fundamental to our collective efforts and keep us focused on making a difference in the right areas.

As we face unprecedented challenges to improve health system quality, reduce harm, improve access, increase efficiency, reduce duplication, and lower costs, innovation will be a major focus of this strategy.

We recognise the benefit of taking a holistic approach to innovation through the establishment of critical partnerships that will include technology providers and innovators. We also acknowledge that innovation will be highly dependent on an ability to find and scale up practical and financially sustainable solutions.

We are confident that our challenges of remoteness, climate and cultural diversity will create opportunities for innovation that can be scaled across the Territory, Australia and our near neighbours.

- 4.1 Bring together NT's public and private health sectors to explore how market innovations in digital health can be applied most usefully to the NT context.
- 4.2 Plan a program of needs-based health innovation for our health system, supported by a rapid iterative approach to design and delivery.
- 4.3 Promote needs-based innovation by bringing together scientific evidence, experiences of people using our health system, diagnostics and health economics to plan and make decisions about improving our healthcare system.
- 4.4 Collaborate with academic institutions to conduct health system research and ensure research translation in the Territory.

Benefits

- Innovation is applied to help us become more efficient and effective in the way we deliver healthcare services, especially in our remote communities (i.e. reduce long distance patient travel by making telehealth the norm where appropriate and possible).
- Digital health technologies and innovation will be leveraged (including Internet of Things, advanced data analytics, artificial intelligence and wearables) to make healthcare in the Territory smarter, safer and sustainable.
- New medical discoveries become part of the clinical practice of GPs, specialists and hospitals (i.e. moving research ideas from labs to clinics).



Governance

We will create accountable and transparent governance to lead and manage priorities based on sound investment and resource allocation by our partners.

Governance of the strategy is a responsibility that must be equally understood, shared and supported by the partner organisations. Effective governance will establish accountability and responsibilities for driving and coordinating opportunities, priorities and investments that will strengthen our health system by targeting systemic problems that are not easily achieved working alone.

The partnership collaborative governance model will comprise of an overarching Program Board to oversee the strategy. The Program Board will be comprised of the Chief Executive NT Health, Chief Executive Officer, AMSANT and the Chief Executive Officer, NT PHN.

The primary role of the Program Board will be to provide shared leadership for this strategy and approve the shared priorities, investments and resources including monitoring the performance of the partnership collaborative against the strategy.

An Executive Steering Committee will be established to manage the delivery of the strategy including the delivery of approved investment priorities determined by the Program Board. From time to time, the Executive Steering Committee may establish Project Advisory Groups to advise on delivery of specific projects (noting that existing groups will be leveraged where possible). The Executive Steering Committee will report to the Program Board and its members will be appointed by the Program Board.

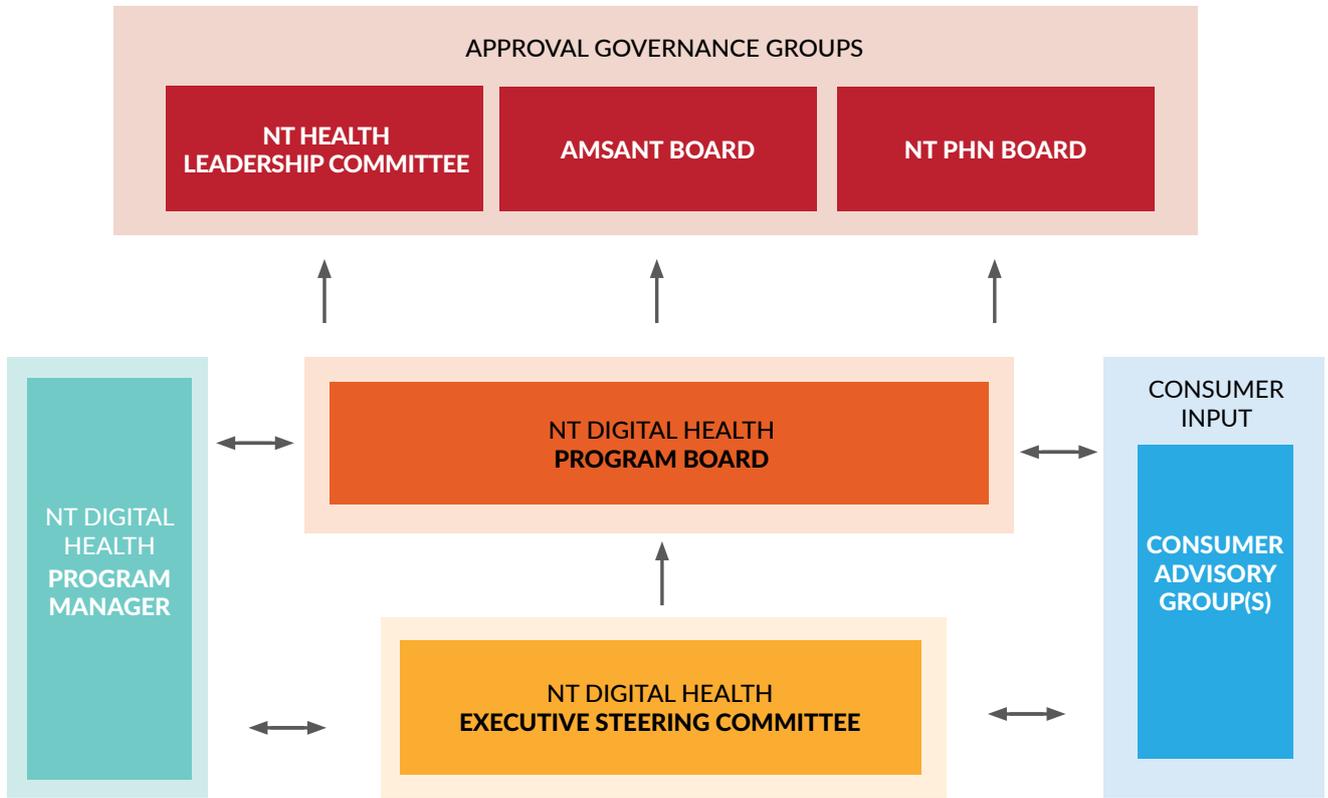
The Program Board and Executive Steering Committee will be supported by a dedicated Program Manager who will have day to day responsibility for driving the delivery of the strategy.

The partnership collaborative governance model is depicted overleaf and shows how it connects with each organisation's respective approval governance groups, through the NT Health Leadership Committee, AMSANT Board and NT PHN Board.

It also acknowledges the critical role of engaging with the people who use our health system via a Consumer Advisory Group in the pursuit of connecting our health system to benefit all Territorians.



The partnership collaborative governance model



- PROGRAM BOARD:** Approves the NT Digital Health Strategy and associated initiatives and investment.
- EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE:** Oversee delivery of approved NT Digital Health Strategy including roadmap.
- PROGRAM MANAGER:** Manages the delivery of the NT Digital Health Strategy.

- APPROVAL GOVERNANCE GROUPS:** Endorses each organisation's initiatives including reporting of outcomes (NT Health, AMSANT and NT PHN).
- CONSUMER INPUT:** To be consulted for input and support of digital health initiatives.



Next steps

A work program will be developed based on the following high-level roadmap. This roadmap is based on three broad planning stages for the delivery of the strategy with key activities that will need to occur in each stage to set us up for success.



STAGE 1: First 6 months

Mobilise the *Strengthening our Health System Strategy 2020-2025*

- Seek approval from collaborative partners of the *Strengthening our Health System Strategy 2020-2025*.
- Establish an Operating Framework that underpins how the collaborative partnership will work.
- Establish shared governance groups including:
 - Reporting mechanisms to each partner organisation approval governance groups
 - Consumer Advisory group.
- Determine shared funding arrangements for Program Manager.
- Appoint Program Manager to guide operational delivery of the strategy.
- Establish a work program of investments to support delivery of Stage 2: Early priorities.
- Develop a Benefits Realisation Plan.
- Develop a Communications and Engagement Strategy.



STAGE 2: Years 1, 2 and 3

Early priorities

- Launch and build awareness and buy-in for the *Strengthening our Health System Strategy 2020-2025* across the health system.
- Commence delivery of approved early priorities under work program and start to build momentum for change.
- Report progress of Stage 2: Early priorities.
- Communicate progress of Stage 2: Early priorities.



STAGE 3: Years 3, 4 and 5

Building momentum

- Share and promote the outcomes and impacts of early investments made.
- Demonstrate the value of the partnership approach.
- Review work program of investments to support delivery of Stage 3: Building momentum.
- Launch and build awareness of Stage 3: Building momentum priorities.
- Create new opportunities for the health system to engage with and contribute to the delivery of the *Strengthening our Health System Strategy 2020-2025*.
- Commence review of the *Strengthening our Health System Strategy 2020-2025*.





Definitions

Artificial Intelligence – Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a collective term for computer systems that can sense their environment, think, learn, and take action in response to what they're sensing and their objectives

(PwC <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/analytics/assets/pwc-ai-analysis-sizing-the-prize-report.pdf>).

Australian Digital Health Agency (the Agency) – 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 commenced operations on 1 July 2016. The Agency is responsible for national digital health services and systems, with a focus on engagement, innovation and clinical quality and safety. Our focus is on putting data and technology safely to work for patients, consumers and the healthcare professionals who look after them. Established as a statutory authority in the form of a corporate Commonwealth entity, the Agency reports to State and Territory Health Ministers through the COAG Health Council. (Australian Digital Health Agency website).

Core Clinical Systems Renewal Program (CCSRP) – In May 2017, the Core Clinical Systems Renewal Program (CCSRP) was funded by the Northern Territory Government for \$259 million over five years. The CCSRP will create a single, secure, digitally enabled, Territory-wide electronic health record across NT Health services in hospitals, primary health care centres and community health services. InterSystems Corporation was the successful vendor selected with their TrakCare system. The program goal is to improve patient and client outcomes by providing essential clinical information at the point of care delivery, with an integrated, whole-of-life, client-centric electronic health record that supports the provision of public health (acute, primary and community) services to patients and clients across the Northern Territory.

(NT Department of Health <https://health.nt.gov.au/professionals/core-clinical-systems-renewal-program-ccsrp>).

Digital health – Digital health is considered to be 'the field of knowledge and practice associated with the development and use of digital technologies to improve health'. (WHO Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2024). Digital health involves the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for health care including treating patients, conducting research, educating the health workforce, tracking diseases and monitoring public health. (WA Health Digital Strategy 2020 – 2030).

Digital transformation – A way of working that transforms experiences for users. It keeps the whole service in mind while considering new approaches, tools and technology.

(Digital transformation agency - <https://www.dta.gov.au/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/digital-transformation-glossary>).

Digital Health Technologies – Today the term digital health often encompasses electronic health (health-related information, resources and services provided electronically) as well as developing areas such as advanced computing science (for example, big data – large volumes of data from different sources that can provide valuable insights into population health) and artificial intelligence (AI), wherein computer systems perform tasks that would normally require human capacities, such as decision-making. The technologies that digital health draws upon include telemedicine, mobile phones and applications, wearable devices, robotics, virtual reality, AI and genomics – a discipline that uses the genome sequencing data of an individual to diagnose diseases.

(WHO - <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Health-systems/pages/news/news/2019/2/what-you-need-to-know-about-digital-health-systems>).

Information and communications technology (ICT) – ICT is an extensional term for information technology (IT) that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, and audiovisual systems, that enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information. (Wikipedia)

Internet of Things (IoT) – IoT refers to the extension of the internet into everyday items and devices, including applications, equipment, appliances and buildings. These items that make up the IoT possess the intelligence and technology to connect, communicate and interoperate with other items via the internet. In the hospital setting these functions may be moderated by standards set by the healthcare provider (for example to increase security and privacy).

Interoperability – the ability to move information easily between people, organisations and systems. The concept of 'semantic' interoperability refers to the capability of two or more systems to communicate and exchange information, and for each system to be able to interpret the meaning of received information and to use it seamlessly with other data held by that system. (Australian Digital Health Agency, and Joint Initiative for Global



Standards Harmonization <https://conversation.digitalhealth.gov.au/interoperability-and-data-quality>.

Mobile Health – Mobile Health (mHealth) is a term used for the practice of medicine and public health supported by mobile devices.

My Health Record – My Health Record is a secure online summary of an individual's health information, and is available to all Australians. Healthcare providers authorised by their healthcare organisation can access My Health Record to view and add to their patients' health information. Information available through My Health Record can include, a patient's health summary, medication prescribing and dispensing history, pathology reports, diagnostic imaging reports and discharge summaries.

(Australian Digital Health Agency - <https://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/for-healthcare-professionals/what-is-my-health-record>).

Secure Messaging – Secure messaging is a core foundational capability required to enable interoperability and safe, seamless, secure, and confidential information sharing across all healthcare providers and consumers.

(Australian Digital Health Agency - <https://www.digitalhealth.gov.au/get-started-with-digital-health/what-is-digital-health/secure-messaging>).

Secure Message Delivery – Secure Message Delivery (SMD) are a set of specifications that were developed collaboratively by the digital health community including NEHTA (which transitioned to the Australian Digital Health Agency from 1

July 2016), Standards Australia, desktop software vendors and secure messaging service providers. This set of specifications defines an approach to digital health communication using widely supported IT industry standards. The SMD specifications support the secure delivery of messages containing clinical documents and/or other information between healthcare organisations, either directly or through one or more messaging service providers.

(Australian Digital Health Agency - <https://www.digitalhealth.gov.au/get-started-with-digital-health/what-is-digital-health/secure-messaging>).

Telehealth – Telehealth means the use of telecommunication techniques for the purpose of providing telemedicine, medical education, and health education over a distance. Telehealth is distinct from telemedicine, which is defined as the use of advance telecommunication technologies to exchange health information and provide healthcare services across geographic, time, social and cultural barriers. (*International Organisation for Standardisation*).



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