



Media release

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## Good things happening to support digital health literacy

A digital health literacy initiative funded by the Australian Digital Health Agency last year is reaping significant rewards and helping bridge the digital divide that precludes many Australians accessing improved health services.

Last year, 71 community organisations across Australia were selected by Good Things Foundation Australia to teach digital health literacy skills through the Health My Way program and [improve digital inclusion](#).

Good Things Foundation is a social change charity that supports people to improve their lives through the use of technology and builds understanding and skills to allow Australians to realise the benefits of the evolving digital health system.

The Foundation trained and resourced 232 digital health mentors from the funded community organisations to deliver the project. Eighty per cent of participants in the pilot said their digital health literacy skills and confidence had increased.

During the project, at least 3,000 people have been directly supported by the mentors to improve their skills. Another 3,000 have been reached through community events and provision of resources on accessing reliable information online about COVID-19.

Australian Digital Health Agency CEO Amanda Cattermole said that by supporting Good Things Foundation and its national network of community organisations, the Agency was benefitting from their local relationships and existing roles supporting communities.


Good Things Foundation has a network of 3,500 community organisations providing digital skills and online tools to support their communities. The organisations selected to receive funding included those supporting seniors, culturally and linguistically diverse people and people with disabilities.

Staff and volunteers of the selected community organisations attended Good Things Foundation's train-the-trainer sessions so they could teach people in their local area how to understand and use digital health literacy tools such as My Health Record or fitness and wellbeing apps, and find reliable health information online.

One organisation participating in the program is Burdekin Community Association in Queensland. They have been running the digital health literacy program throughout the pandemic. Their Service Coordinator Rita Quagliata said: "We kept the centre open under COVID-safe conditions and were able to continue to provide advice both in person and over the phone when our community needed it most.

"This program is very beneficial and easy for learners to follow. It can be paced to suit each individual's needs and offers a tailored approach to improve their digital skills."

Burdekin Community Association supported community member Val to learn new digital health skills. Val said: "The program and courses have really improved my confidence and last week I sent my first email which I was thrilled about. I want to learn anything that I possibly can. I want to continue being independent and continue having full control of my life and my health."



National Director of Good Things Foundation Jess Wilson said that Good Things Foundation welcomed the opportunity to work with the Australian Digital Health Agency to promote digital health literacy skills in Australia.

“Digital skills are essential for all Australians so they can benefit from the range of online tools available to improve their health and wellbeing,” she said. “Our network of organisations has supported people to learn these valuable skills in their community for free.”

Ms Cattermole said there was so much potential for people to use technology to improve their health.

“Good Things Foundation has been assisting people around the country to find out what is available and how they can use it,” she said.

“Together with our work with the Australian Library and Information Association who help people access their My Health Records, we are supporting Australians to make the most of the fantastic health tech innovations in this country – to help them lead happier, healthier lives.”

Ms Wilson said the Foundation had developed and released [brand new online learning modules](#) to support the work undertaken in the community to improve digital health literacy. Released for the first time late last year, these can be accessed by anyone, anytime.

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#### **About the Australian Digital Health Agency**

When it comes to improving the health of all Australians, the role of digital innovation and connection is a vital part of a modern, accessible healthcare system. Against the backdrop of COVID-19, digital health has seen exponential growth in relevance and importance, making it more pertinent than ever for all Australians and healthcare providers.

Better patient healthcare and health outcomes are possible when you have a health infrastructure that can be safely accessed, easily used and responsibly shared.

To achieve this, the [National Digital Health Strategy](#) is establishing the foundations for a sustainable health system that constantly improves. It underpins and coordinates work that is already happening between governments, healthcare providers, consumers, innovators and the technology industry. For further information: [www.digitalhealth.gov.au](http://www.digitalhealth.gov.au).

*The Australian Digital Health Agency is a statutory authority in the form of a corporate Commonwealth entity.*