Australian Government

Australian Digital Health Agency

Media release   **01 August 2024**

Foundation year of Council for Connected Care a catalyst for change in digital health

The Australian Digital Health Agency (the Agency) today welcomed the inaugural annual report of the Council for Connected Care (the Council), a multi-stakeholder advisory group that provides strategic guidance and direction on how to improve health outcomes for Australians through a more interoperable digital health system.

Agency CEO Amanda Cattermole PSM said the Council has been instrumental in fostering a culture of collaboration in the digital healthcare sector in driving the interoperability agenda.

"The Council for Connected Care has been a catalyst for change and a champion for healthcare interoperability. It has brought together an outstanding group of leaders who share a common vision of a more connected and integrated healthcare system," Ms Cattermole said.

"All Australians expect a healthcare system where information is shared safely, securely and seamlessly with the right people at the right time to deliver the best clinical outcomes."

Council Chairperson Conjoint Professor Anne Duggan said having a more connected healthcare system was an important pillar of consumer safety and puts Australians firmly at the centre of their care.

"Nationally consistent standards and practices, underpinned by interoperable technical solutions will strengthen multidisciplinary collaboration for a person's continuity of care and reduce the risk of harm. The Council has enabled us to leverage the wide-ranging experiences of key partners to co-design practical and achievable solutions that address the needs and expectations of Australians and healthcare providers," Conjoint Professor Duggan said.

"It has been a privilege to work with senior leaders across the healthcare system, united by the common purpose of realising fully optimised and interoperable digital health records, which remain foundational to safe and high-quality care."

The Council for Connected Care Annual Review shows significant progress has been made in advancing the interoperability agenda, with collaboration and knowledge building resources shared centrally on the Agency's website, including:

- National Healthcare Identifiers Roadmap 2023-2028 to increase the adoption and use of healthcare identifiers in health and care settings

- Digital Health Standards Catalogue, a comprehensive resource that provides a single point of access for relevant standards in digital health

- Conformance framework to ensure digital health products and systems are operated in a manner that aligns with safety, security and interoperability standards

- Draft procurement guidelines to provide guidance to healthcare organisations seeking to purchase digital health solutions and harmonise interoperability requirements in ICT procurement

- Drafting national Health Information Exchange architecture in consultation with jurisdictions and key stakeholders

- Supporting the adoption and implementation of national interoperability standards, such as FHIR and SNOMED CT, through education, training and testing resources

The Council was established in June 2023 as part of the *Connecting Australian Healthcare – National Healthcare Interoperability Plan 2023-2028,* which was auspiced by all governments to significantly reduce fragmentation and increase information sharing across the healthcare system.

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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.

The Australian Digital Health Agency is jointly funded by the Australian Government and all state and territory governments.