

Media Release

The future of healthcare in Australia: designed for consumers, enabled by digital, and accessible for all

2 MARCH 2022: 70% of Australians are willing to use virtual healthcare services, and 80% are ready to share their health data in a digitally enabled health system. These are some of the findings of a survey of nearly 2000 Australians, one of the largest consumer surveys on digital health since the pandemic. The white paper, [Australia's Health Reimagined](#), is the result of a partnership between Deloitte, Curtin University and the Consumers Health Forum of Australia through a Digital Health CRC project.

The white paper calls for a reimagined health system to address growing health inequity, and improve system sustainability through a purpose driven, digitally enabled health system. It also found that while there is strong support for virtual health, support is lowest from groups with the most to gain, with education background a standout separator of individuals' use of digital health.

Other key findings:

People have had positive experiences with telehealth

- 69% experienced telehealth in the past 12 months
- 72% of these agreed the outcome was the same as it would have been face-to-face
- 83% of these agreed the doctor or other health provider was equally as knowledgeable as other doctors or health providers they had seen in person

People are willing to use technology for health and try a digital format to access care

- 74% were at least somewhat willing to access an online health coach
- 65% would consider using more advanced home-based technologies to help identify and diagnose health conditions

People want to be proactive about their health and be in control of their health data

- 83% were interested in being able to access their own health records, share their health information, send messages to their healthcare team and edit their care plans using a personal device

People understand it's important for health providers to have access to their entire medical records

- 71% agreed that giving healthcare providers shared access to their health information would improve communication between them and their providers.

According to the report:

- **Consumer experience is poor** Because of the system's inherent complexity, consumers commonly report challenges with accessing and navigating health services and receiving coordinated care
- **The health workforce will be overwhelmed** Significant shifts in the workforce's age profile and declining participation rates will present a real challenge to meet the health needs of an ageing population
- **The system is unsustainable** Australia will be unable to afford the health system in its current form as our growing and ageing population continues to drive demand to unsustainable levels
- **The system does not serve all Australians equally** Patient outcomes and illness severity differ significantly across demographics such as cultural and ethnic background, geography and socio-economic status.

It also outlines the transformation the health system requires to meet the need of individuals over the next ten years. These are broken into three horizons:

- **Horizon 1: The Connected Consumer** - People experience fragmented, one-size-fits-all care. The system is focused on treating illness and there is minimal data sharing and analogue record keeping, resulting in a large administrative burden for health workers and a poor experience for consumers

- **Horizon 2: The Empowered Consumer** - People are empowered to access care and services are easier to navigate and access. Moderate data sharing and workflows ease workers' administrative workload
- **Horizon 3: The Confident Consumer** - People take an active role in their health and wellbeing and have strong relationships with healthcare providers. The system benefits from robust data interoperability, digital tools and ecosystem connections to deliver personalised care.

Deloitte Australia national health leader, Luke Baxby, said: "Australia's health system is world-class, and has generally served the community well, including during this unprecedented global COVID pandemic. However, it doesn't serve everyone equally, and faces serious sustainability challenges with an ageing population whose health needs are growing.

"From an infrastructure perspective for example, Deloitte modelling of public and private hospital bed requirements to 2035 suggests Australia will need to build a 375 acute bed hospital every month for the next 15 years to keep pace with demand and replace ageing stock.

"Our vision proposes a reset. Carried out effectively, this vision will lead to improved and more equitable access to healthcare, provide choice and support for consumers to access services on their terms, better prevention of ill health and the delivery of safe, and high-quality services that focus on holistic care and the social determinants of physical and mental health."

Consumer Health Forum Chief Executive Officer, Leanne Wells, said: "We are talking about a reimagined, sustainable, health system that is driven by, and responds to, consumer demands.

"One challenge certainly lies in ensuring that we use technology to improve equity of access to health, and not creating a digital barrier. Just digitising everything won't be a solution on its own. In fact, it will leave the most vulnerable behind, as people with the poorest health outcomes and access to services are the least connected, least willing to use virtual health, and most distrusting when it comes to sharing health data. We must ensure none are left behind."

Curtin University's Professor Suzanne Robinson, said: "Right now is the time to seize what is a real opportunity, and challenge a health system that has traditionally resisted change. We have developed a roadmap to achieving this future state of health. Collective action and accountability will be imperative to achieving these ambitions.

"Australia needs to capitalise on momentum and investments already made, and governments and regulators will have to set virtual care standards, ensure data security, procure technological infrastructure, and ensure value-based funding streams incentivise integrated virtual care models."

Deloitte

Simon Rushton
Senior Manager, Communications, Media & Corporate Affairs
M: 0450 530 748
E: srushton@deloitte.com.au

Digital Health CRC

Abbey Bell
Head of Communications & Marketing
M: 0401 082 124
E: abbey.bell@dhcrc.com

Consumers Health Forum of Australia

Jenna Gray,
Communications Manager
M: 0406 216 566
E: j.gray@chf.org.au

Curtin University

Yasmine Phillips
Media Relations Manager
M: 0401 103 877
E: yasmine.phillips@curtin.edu.au

The Digital Health CRC is funded under the Commonwealth's Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program.