Aged Care Data and Digital Strategy

Driving better care and leading a sustainable and productive care and support economy

2024 – 2029

Acknowledgements

The Department of Health and Aged Care gratefully acknowledges the advice, input and support of the many organisations and individuals who contributed to developing this document through user research, engagement and consultation processes.

The Department of Health and Aged Care recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this nation. The Commonwealth recognises the ongoing traditional and modern cultural practices and connection to Country held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Commonwealth acknowledges Elders past, present and emerging as the Traditional Custodians and Lore Keepers of the world's oldest living culture.

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Ministerial foreword

The Hon Anika Wells MP
Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Sport

I am pleased to introduce the new Aged Care Data and Digital Strategy (the Strategy). It's a response to the increasing use and potential of data and digital technology to enhance the care and wellbeing of older people. The Strategy explains how the government plans to promote innovation and harness the power of data and digital technology. The goal is to deliver the Government's aged care reforms and implement the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The Strategy focuses on the needs of older people, empowering them and their support networks to make decisions and find the support they need. People will still have the option to choose between digital and non-digital methods. Technology will be used to improve in-person services, making them more user-friendly, efficient, and effective. This will allow older people to get information in the way they prefer.

The Strategy is also for aged care workers and service providers, in whose hands rests the delivery of high-quality care. Improved and better use of aged care data will help manage current and future service demand and help reduce administrative burden. This means workers will have more time to spend on direct, person-centred care for older people.

The Strategy aims to keep improving the sector by setting up critical data and digital foundations for the future, such as innovation frameworks and digital guidelines.

The guiding principles identified within the Strategy recognise the diverse needs of individuals, workers and the broader sector and the need to protect and secure privacy.

This Strategy looks to strengthen care between sectors and provide a more seamless experience for older people, including when they move between health and aged care. It has been carefully aligned with the Digital Health Blueprint 2023-2033 and National Digital Health Strategy 2023-2028. The Strategy also seeks to align to the broader National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy, with both aiming to use data and digital to enable quality care, create good jobs and increase productivity.

We will also work with state and territory health departments and other agencies to create an innovative and well-connected aged care sector that uses the power of data and digital to improve care.

Understanding data and digital in Australia's aged care sector

The Intergenerational Report[1] forecasts that by 2062, the number of people aged over 65 is expected to more than double. The number of people over the age of 85 will more than triple. The aged care sector workforce is already under strain and will need to increase to meet this demand.

Enduring data and digital transformation of the aged care sector is needed to respond to a number of challenges. These include:

- an ageing population
- increasing demand for aged care services, particularly in the home
- slowing population growth
- a persistent national skills shortage.

Up to one-third of time spent on administrative tasks can be saved by embedding digital technology, increasing the digital capability of the aged care workforce and introducing new policies on data sharing. Based on departmental work projections, digital enablement also has the potential to reduce the estimated shortfall in the aged care workforce.

The increasing use of digital technologies across many aspects of our lives means older people should feel comfortable to engage digitally if they choose to do so. Everyone should be able to understand and make full use of digital technologies and the benefits they bring. They should be able to understand and feel supported to make full use of digital technologies and the benefits they bring.

> **" The technology is possible and there is lots of innovation, but the path is not clear. "**
>
> *– Technology vendor*

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1 '2023 Intergenerational Report', The Commonwealth of Australia (The Treasury), Aug. 24, 2023. Accessed Sep. 07, 2023. [Online]. Available: **https://treasury.gov.au/publication/2023-intergenerational-report**

Digital inclusion, or the ability to afford, access, and use digital technology, is improving nationwide. However, people aged over 65 are still below the national average, creating a digital divide. This gap is largely due to the digital literacy of older people, meaning their ability to use digital technology. Certain groups are also more likely to be digitally excluded[2], including:

- First Nations people
- people living in regional and remote areas
- people with disability
- people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety[3,4] identified gaps in digital literacy and aged care data and digital technologies that hinder high-quality care, including:

- Information on aged care services often being complex and hard to find, making accessing services difficult.
- Varying levels of digital maturity across the aged care sector, with disconnected, and at times paper-based care management systems.
- Many services used by older people are not connected and do not 'speak' with each other. This makes it difficult to have a complete view of the pathways and outcomes they have across service providers, interactions with Government, and within the broader health system.
- Fragmented and incomplete data, with notable gaps in areas such as workforce, finance, regular assessment of care needs, quality of life, quality, and safety of care.
- A lack of consistent data standards to support software development and the reuse of data[3].

The Department of Health and Aged Care (the department) plays a key role in improving the digital inclusion of older people, building and sustaining the aged care sector's digital maturity, and resolving these system-wide issues. This Strategy outlines our approach to encouraging innovation and harnessing the power of data and digital to improve care and wellbeing for older people.

2 'Aged Care Workforce Modelling and Digital Enablement', Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Health and Aged Care), 2023 [unpublished]

3 'Final Report – Care, Dignity and Respect, Volume 2', Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Feb. 26, 2021. Accessed 7 Sep, 2023. [Online]. Available: **https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-03/final-report-volume-2_0.pdf**

4 'A Summary of the Final Report: Changing demographics', Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Feb. 26, 2021. Accessed 7 Sep, 2023. [Online]. Available: **https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-03/final-report-executive-summary.pdf**

Strategy on a page

VISION

To deliver the highest quality person-centred care for older people while driving a sustainable and productive care and support economy through data and digital innovation.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Person-centred **Tell us once** **Diverse** **Integrated** **Care-focused** **Trusted**

OUTCOMES

OUTCOME 1
Older people and their support networks can navigate and actively participate in their care and wellbeing.

OUTCOME 2
Aged care workers, service providers and health professionals are digitally empowered to provide higher quality and better-connected care.

OUTCOME 3
Data is shared and reused securely to deliver a sustainable and continually improving aged care system.

OUTCOME 4
Modern data and digital foundations underpin a collaborative, standards-based care system.

PRIORITIES

Promote healthy ageing, independence and choice

Create simplified, user-friendly experiences

Maximise time for direct care

Strengthen care connections

Improve security and access control

Optimise data collection and utilisation

Build and embed data and digital maturity

Encourage innovation and provide stewardship

Despite the Strategy's digital focus, older people can still get aged care information and services in person or by phone if they prefer.

Our vision for data and digital in aged care

Our vision is to deliver the highest quality person-centred care for older people while driving a sustainable and productive care and support economy through data and digital innovation.

We recognise that data and digital are enablers to improving care and wellbeing. This is a key goal of the National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy.

The Strategy is not about forcing older people and their support networks to adopt digital technology or replacing face-to-face contact with digital channels. Instead, it provides more ways for older people to access information and services they need, while also freeing up time for workers to deliver high-quality care.

This Strategy highlights the fundamental role of the workforce and service providers: delivering high-quality care. It aims to improve the data and digital maturity of the aged care sector so they can be more efficient and successful in delivering care. The Strategy ensures that investments and efforts in data and digital solutions remain targeted at improving aged care services for older people.

Older people, if they chose to, should be enabled to remain as active and independent for as long as possible. They should also be supported to make decisions about their care.

What we heard: an evidence-based approach

This Strategy is underpinned by consultation and research with older people, their carers and stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in their care. The diagram below highlights the major themes from our consultation. Our Consultation Summary offers more insights into what we heard from older people and the aged care sector.

Choice between digital and non-digital channels

It is vital that older people and their support networks are able to choose between digital and non-digital channels.

High level of willingness to use new technologies

We found a high level of willingness to use new technologies, but not the 'know how', especially for older people and their carers.

Accessibility and affordability

A key driver of digital inclusion for older people and their support networks, workers and service providers is accessibility and affordability.

Guidance and clarity across the sector

The Strategy should provide a clear direction. This will provide a common understanding for the future of data and digital.

Targeted education and training

Appropriate, targeted education and training is required. This will help build and sustain digital literacy for older people and workers.

Targeted and appropriate funding

Specific, targeted and appropriate funding will improve the adoption of digital technologies.

Digital systems and data collections have expanded

Digital solutions should be user-friendly, simple and fit for purpose. Current developments have created fragmentation and complexity, and service provider maturity has fallen behind.

Emerging technologies should make care simpler and easier

Digital technologies should not add complexity and administrative burden. Automation and streamlining of non-care tasks are key to generating efficiencies.

Greater consistency and unification

Improved interoperability within the sector and between health and other care sectors is required. Common data standards and digital foundations will reduce complexity, enable continuity of care and insights from secondary data users such as researchers.
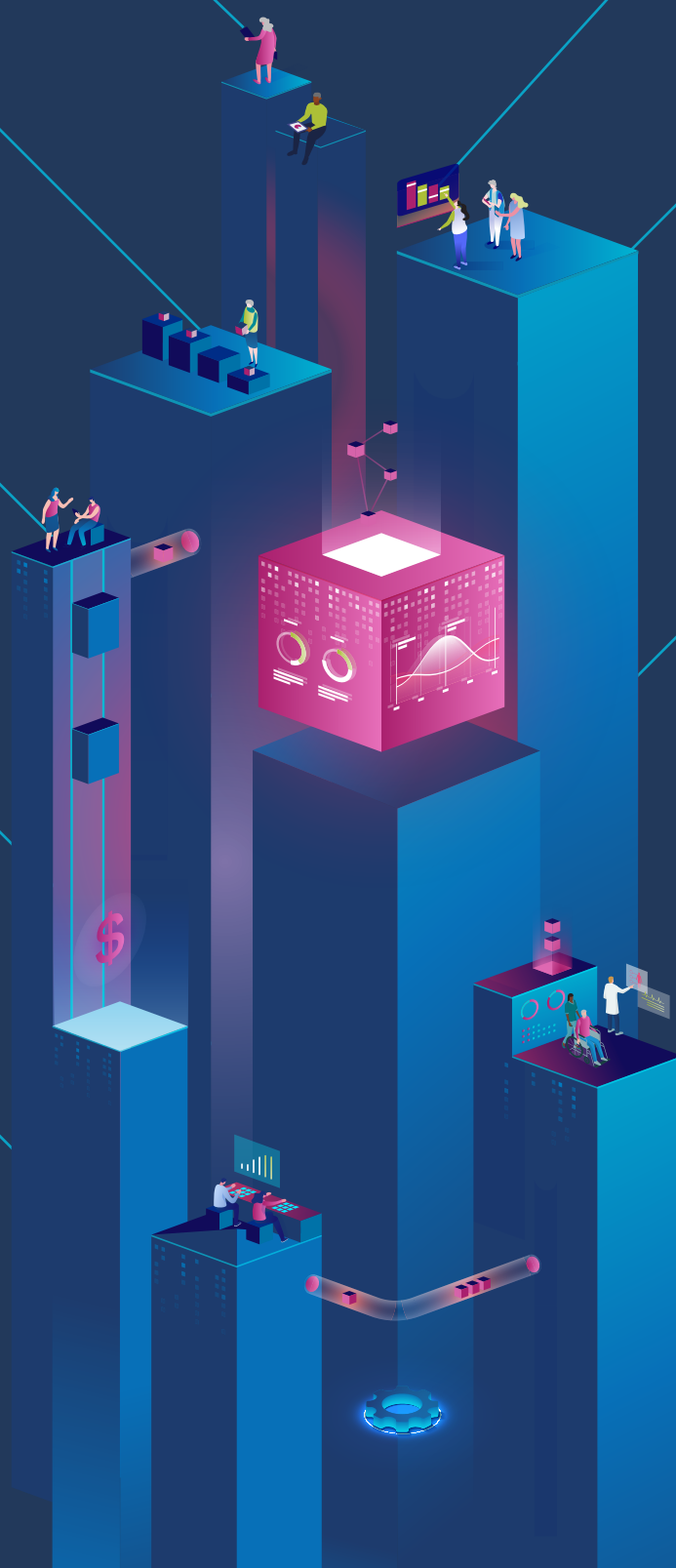
A principles-led approach

A principles-led approach has guided Strategy development. These principles reflect what we have heard from older people and the sector. This approach underpins decision-making and ensures that the Strategy is delivered in a way that remains true to its vision for data and digital initiatives to improve care and wellbeing for older people.

Our principles reflect the **Statement of Principles** under the new Aged Care Act[5]. They are consistent with the **Statement of Rights** under this Act which sets out the rights of all people who use aged care. Our principles strongly support the following rights:

- informing choice about care
- protecting the privacy of personal information
- supporting an individual's identity, culture and diversity.

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5 'New Aged Care Act', The Commonwealth of Australia (The Department of Health and Aged Care), 8 Mar, 2024. Accessed 22 Dec, 2023. [Online]. Available: **https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-act**

Guiding Principles

Person-centred

Initiatives are selected, designed and implemented to benefit older people.

This means that older people and their support networks are engaged and understood. They can still choose to engage with aged care digitally or in person.

Trusted

Trust, privacy and security need to be safeguarded.

Consent, confidence and trust in how personal information is secured and used is fundamental. Initiatives involving the sharing of sensitive information are tightly controlled to uphold the privacy of individuals.

Tell us once

Information should be re-used and shared so that people only need to tell their story once.

Actions should consider how information can be securely shared with the right people at the right time. This takes the burden off the older person to repeat their story.

Diverse

Older people and the aged care sector are diverse with individualised needs.

Changes can impact individuals differently and must be understood. By doing this, we can help ensure an inclusive and culturally safe sector, where no change negatively impacts older people or aged care workers. This is important for those with limited accessibility or 'low' digital literacy.
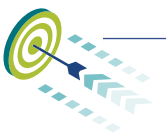
Integrated

Technical standards should be used to promote integration across the aged care and associated systems.

These standards should help create an integrated system by allowing secure information sharing.

Care-focused

Burden for frontline workers should be minimised so they can focus on providing high-quality care.

Implementation of actions ensures the important work of aged care workers is supported by tools and processes that allow them to focus on providing quality care to older people.

Alignment with data and digital across health and government

The Department of Health and Aged Care leads the way in using data and digital technology to improve aged care. However, we cannot do this alone.

The aged care system is a complex mix of individuals, organisations, priorities, responsibilities, and capabilities. To deliver the Strategy we need to keep working closely with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to leverage their expertise in aged care data, and the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) who lead many national digital health programs.

Our Strategy aligns with the **Data and Digital Government Strategy** and supporting the broader **National Strategy for Care and Support Economy**, including disability support and veterans' care. We are focused on First Nations people by supporting the **National Agreement on Closing the Gap** and the **First Nations Digital Inclusion Plan 2023-2026**.

This includes a commitment under the National Agreement to:

- partner with First Nations peoples at all stages of the data lifecycle to reflect their priorities about their communities
- embed co-design in the Government's data collection, use and governance activities.

We recognise that much of the same workforce provides health and aged care services, and that is why we have positioned our strategy as a companion strategy to the **Digital Health Blueprint 2023-2033** and the ADHA **National Digital Health Strategy 2023-2028**. These 3 strategies collectively shape the future of data and digital in aged care and health, with a shared goal of strengthening continuity of care. By aligning these efforts, we aim to bring aged care and health data and digital systems closer together, including adopting consistent data standards for easier information sharing.

The strategy doesn't sit in isolation. It builds on existing strategies, plans, and reform activities within the aged care and health sectors. It supports legislation including the New Aged Care Act, Health Identifiers Act and the Privacy Act. The Strategy supports the Australian Government's vision to deliver simple, secure and connected public services for all people and business, through world-class data and digital capabilities.

> 66 *When facilitating transfers, the inability of systems to talk to each other and lack of compatibility makes it incredibly difficult.* 99
>
> *– Consumer group representative*

Government strategic alignment

The Strategy aligns with other key national strategies, including a shared objective to harness data and digital to drive quality care services and improve productivity.

National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy

Data and Digital Government Strategy

The Strategy complements two companion strategies. Collectively, these aim to harness data and digital to improve health and aged care, including:

- strengthening care connections
- building digital literacy and provider capability
- encouraging innovation through technology
- strengthening interoperability.

Digital Health Blueprint 2023-2033

Aged Care Data and Digital Strategy 2024-2029

National Digital Health Strategy 2023-2028

The strategy intersects with health, data and digital strategies that shape the Government's targeted response in priority areas.

Department's ICT Strategy 2023-2026

Department's Data Strategy 2022-2025

National Preventative Health Strategy 2021-2030

Australia's Primary Health Care Plan 2022-2032

National Healthcare Interoperability Plan 2023-2028

Our commitments to older people and their support networks

Our vision is inclusive, ensuring that lack of digital access through circumstance or choice is not a barrier to quality care. The cultural safety of all individuals and services will be fostered, with particular attention paid to groups with known access issues or specific needs, including:

- First Nations people
- people in remote and rural locations
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups
- LGBTIQA+ people
- people in socio-economically disadvantaged circumstances
- those with limited access due to disability, age, skills or choice.

While the Strategy focuses on data and digital improvements, we are also strengthening in-person, non-digital ways to access information and aged care services. This includes several initiatives such as Aged Care Specialist Officers, the Elder Care Support program and the Care Finder program.

Aged Care Specialist Officers

Aged Care Specialist Officers offer face-to-face services. They can help older people and carers in a number of ways including:

- providing in-depth information on the different types of aged care services
- checking if someone is eligible for government-funded services and making a referral for an aged care assessment
- helping appoint a representative for an older person if they wish to do so
- providing financial information about aged care services
- connecting older people and carers to local support services.

The Elder Care Support program

The Elder Care Support program is recruiting and training a skilled workforce. The workforce will help older First Nations people, their families and carers to access aged care services across urban, regional and remote Australia to meet their physical and cultural needs. This includes:

- supporting older First Nations people to understand aged care services, navigate the assessment process and help with choosing a provider
- supporting families, friends and carers to understand how to access aged care services
- advocating for older First Nations people by working with assessors and providers to meet their needs
- supporting older First Nations people while they receive aged care services
- assisting with other types of health needs, such as disability supports.

Care Finder program

The Care Finder program is funding a workforce of care finders to provide face-to-face support to help people navigate and access aged care. They provide support for vulnerable older people who require intensive support to access aged care services and other relevant supports in the community.
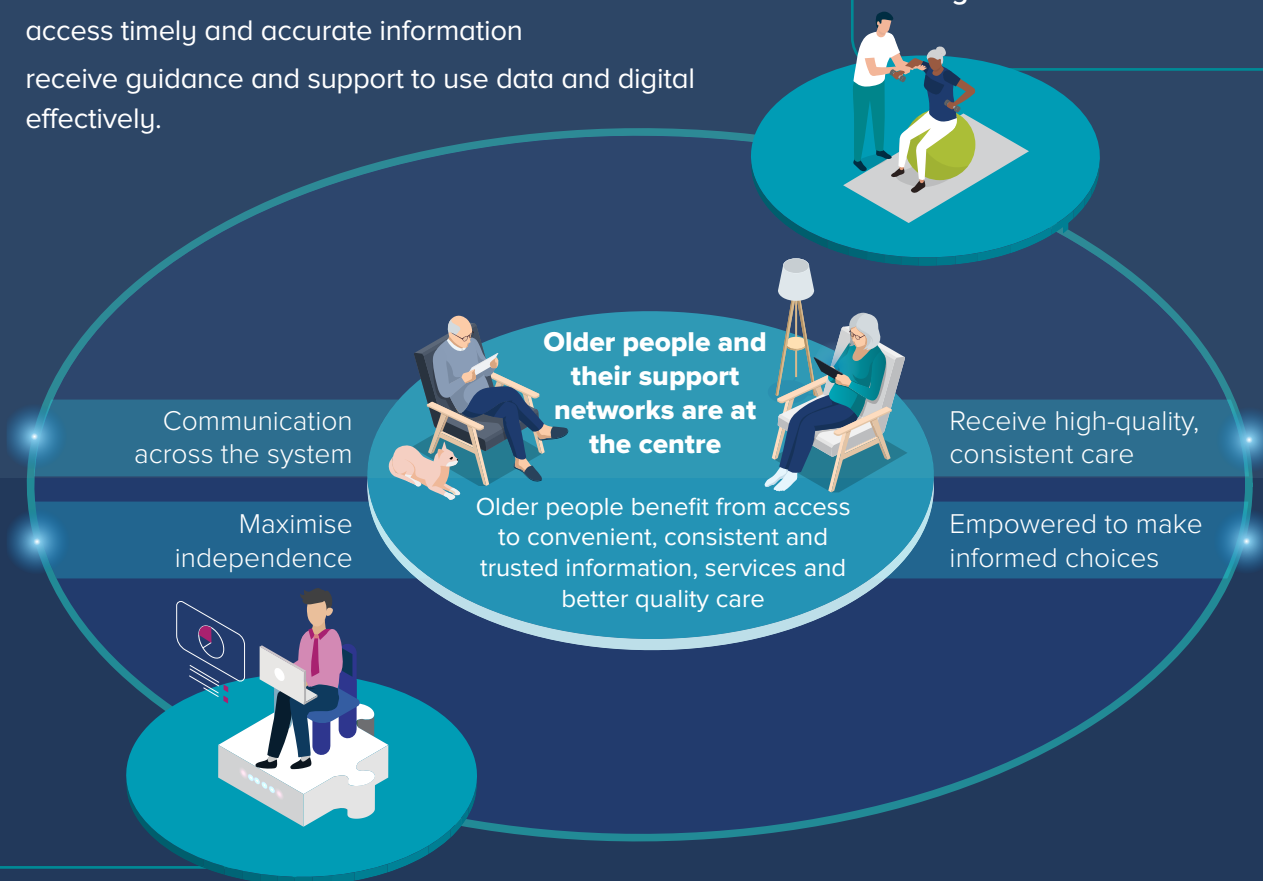
Our commitments to the sector

We want Australia to have the world's best aged care system. Innovation and stronger adoption of data and digital is essential to achieve this. We must understand who we are doing this for.

Helping service providers make connections with healthcare

Providers benefit from streamlined systems, tools and support to uplift their digital maturity and spend more time on high-quality care. This means providers will be able to:

- deliver personalised care
- minimise administrative and reporting burden
- access timely and accurate information
- receive guidance and support to use data and digital effectively.

✓ **Service providers**

✓ **Broader healthcare workforce**

✓ **Aged care assessors**

✓ **Aged care workforce**

Communication across the system

Maximise independence

Older people and their support networks are at the centre

Older people benefit from access to convenient, consistent and trusted information, services and better quality care

Receive high-quality, consistent care

Empowered to make informed choices

✓ **Technology vendors**

✓ **Researchers**

✓ **Sector groups**

✓ **Peak bodies**

Supporting research and innovation

Researchers have better data to help them provide valuable insights. Technology vendors benefit from innovation and can confidently invest due to clear strategic direction and priorities. Industry benefits from aged care research, access to information and better software that supports higher-quality care. This means:

- clear system standards
- promotion of ongoing digital innovation
- clear evidence to inform investment.

A more personalised and connected aged care experience

The Strategy depicts the journeys of 3 core personas and their interactions with 5 supporting personas.

The 3 personas are:
- Jenny, who represents older people
- Anita as an aged care worker
- White Hills Aged Care for service providers.

The 5 supporting personas are:
- informal carer
- health professional
- assessor
- technology vendor
- researcher.

The personas are generic. Everyone's aged care journey will be different and unique but these personas are designed to reflect a bit of everyone, and to highlight some of the ways that the Strategy's initiatives will improve everyone's aged care experiences.

Meet our personas

Jenny
Older person

Age: 70
Gender: Female
Location: Shepparton, VIC

Jenny lives at home with her partner, Peter, who has early-stage dementia. Jenny helps Peter take his medication and do his regular memory activities. She also tries to manage the grocery shopping and house cleaning by herself. Jenny has arthritis, currently managed through medication and exercises from her GP. Jenny is beginning to find it difficult to keep up with all her responsibilities and wants to begin planning her future with Peter, to help them stay in their home for as long as possible.
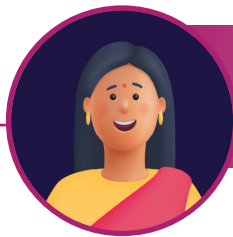
Anita
Aged care worker

Age: 45
Gender: Female
Location: Shepparton, VIC

Anita moved to Australia with her family 8 years ago from India after her husband found work in the region as a specialist mechanical engineer. Anita and her family are now permanent residents of Australia.

Having cared for her elderly relatives before they passed, she is passionate about caring for older people and helping others at this stage of their life. Prior to moving to Australia, Anita was a teacher in India. She used the move to change her professional focus and move into the care sector.

White Hills
Service provider

15 years in business
Location: Bendigo and surrounds, VIC

White Hills Aged Care is a not-for-profit provider that has been delivering home and residential aged care to the older people of Bendigo and the surrounding region for 15 years. They operate a large aged care home in Bendigo and smaller facilities in Shepparton, Echuca and Kyabram. Five years ago, White Hills commenced delivering home support services due to increased demand across the same locations. White Hills is a medium-sized enterprise with around 250 employees and 50 contractors.

Sondra
Informal carer

Sondra is Jenny and Peter's daughter. She is an informal carer and authorised representative, supporting them with day-to-day tasks and helping manage their care.

Clara
Health professional

Clara is a general practitioner working in Shepparton. She has been seeing Jenny and Peter for over 10 years and is helping to support them with ageing healthily.

Janice
Aged care assessor

Janice is an aged care assessor, working in Bendigo and surrounds. Her background is in nursing and she transitioned into assessment 15 years ago.

Transform Inc.
Technology vendor

Transform Inc. is a large Australian-based technology vendor that has been developing digital solutions for the aged care sector for over 25 years.

Adam
Reseacher

Adam is a professor at a major Australian university, specialising in geriatrics and health administration. He has spent his 20-year research career using data and evidence to understand and improve aged care.
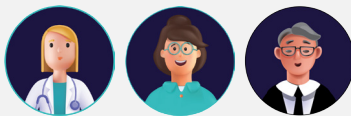
ENHANCING JENNY'S AGED CARE JOURNEY
by harnessing the power of data and digital

1. PLANNING AHEAD

Other members of the ecosystem involved during the journey

Jenny goes through a range of steps in her aged care journey

During a regular check-up, Jenny's GP advises her that there are ways to remain independent at home.

The Strategy positively impacts Jenny and assists her to age well

Before entering the aged care system, Jenny and her support network have access to free digital and health literacy resources, and research-informed digital tools that support her to age well. Jenny and Peter have the right information to make important decisions about their future.
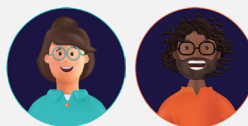
3. ASSESSMENT
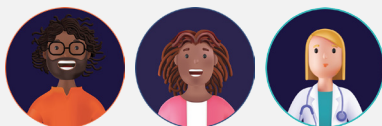
Jenny is ready for an aged care assessment to identify the level of care she requires.

Jenny is assessed quickly and fairly through the Integrated Assessment Tool application. She feels well-informed and confident that her assessed level aligns with her needs. If her care requirements substantially change, she has the ability to arrange reassessments on her own.

2. GETTING MORE HELP

Jenny decides that she does need the extra hand in the home. She applies for an assessment.

Jenny easily registers for an assessment thanks to the help of the My Aged Care website. Her My Aged Care profile securely links to her health records, so all her information is on hand for a simple and streamlined process. She easily books an assessment using the My Aged Care website.

4. FIND A PROVIDER
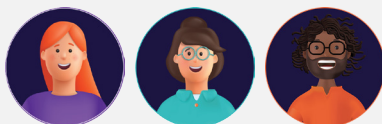
Jenny wants to find a provider that can meet her care needs.

Jenny uses the My Aged Care website to compare providers in her area and discovers that White Hills can provide her with the services she is after. She feels empowered to choose White Hills with clear and relevant information about the quality of their care being available to her.

5. RECEIVE QUALITY CARE
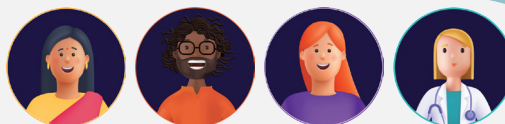
A care plan is developed for Jenny and she begins receiving care from Anita at White Hills.

Jenny receives high quality care from Anita and her colleagues, with access to modern Assistive Technology that she chooses to use. Jenny is impressed that every worker at White Hills knows her story, and are able to adapt to her individual needs quickly.

6. TRANSITION
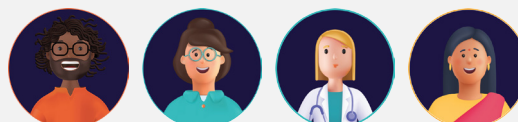
Jenny's care needs change from time to time, leading her to move between different care settings.

When Jenny transitions to hospital, respite or residential care, she finds the process easy. She only needs to share her story once, and the systems across health and aged care securely share her real-time data.

GROWING ANITA'S AGED CARE CAREER
by leveraging the power of data and digital

1. STUDY AND QUALIFY

Other members of the ecosystem are involved during the journey

Anita goes through a range of steps during her aged care career

Anita pursues her Certificate III in Aged Care.

The Strategy positively impacts Anita and her work in aged care

Anita enjoyed her studies and had additional support through the free online hub with resources on digital and health literacy. Now she feels confident in navigating the digital systems she will use when working. Anita finishes her course feeling suitably qualified to provide great care.

3. SCREENING
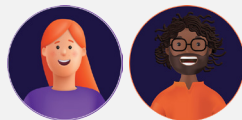
Before starting at White Hills, Anita needs to undertake screening processes.

Anita finds the screening process smooth and seamless. Strong systems integration makes the process efficient for her and White Hills. Her information is re-used throughout the process, keeping the data entry and manual administration for Anita minimal.
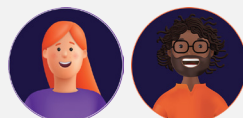
2. SEEK EMPLOYMENT
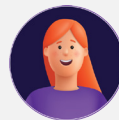
Anita begins her job search now she has appropriate qualifications.

Anita feels confident during her job search. She found White Hills not only has capacity to take her on, but real-time and accurate information indicates it is a great place to work with a good culture and alignment to her career aspirations.
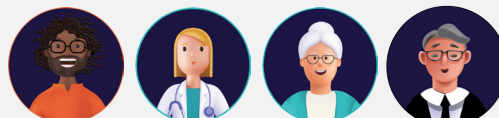
4. INDUCTION

Anita goes through an induction at White Hills

Anita finds that White Hills takes her recent studies into consideration when designing her induction program. This fast-tracks the process since she is able to quickly pick up the specific systems and technology that White Hills uses.

5. DELIVER QUALITY CARE

Anita provides in home and residential care to the clients of White Hills.

Anita enjoys using all the digital tools at her disposal. They help reduce the time spent on administrative tasks and allow her to provide better care to Jenny. Anita finds that she communicates effectively with broader health networks as quality information on Jenny and her other clients is shared securely in real time.

7. TRANSITION
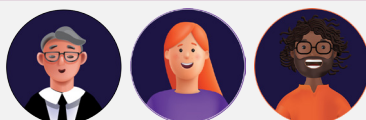
Anita wishes to find opportunities to advance her career

Anita feels in control of her aged care career. Her system skills mean that she can easily transition into other parts of the organisation. She is able to develop innovative new ways to use technology in the provision of care, informed by the latest research.

6. ONGOING TRAINING
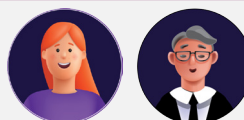
Anita seeks opportunities for continuous learning to stay current with best practice.

Anita feels on top of the ever-changing digital landscape. White Hills intentionally provides Anita with time to enhance her data and digital skills. She finds the courses are tailored to her already strong capability to push her knowledge even further.
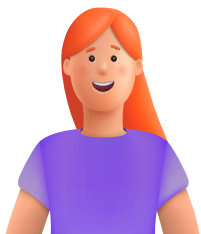
STRENGTHENING WHITE HILLS SERVICES
by enabling the power of data and digital

1. ATTRACT/RETAIN WORKFORCE

Other members of the ecosystem are involved during the journey
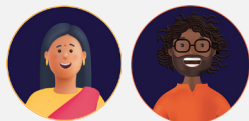
White Hills goes through a range of steps as an aged care service provider

White Hills seeks appropriate employees, such as Anita.

The Strategy positively impacts White Hills to provide higher-quality care

White Hills finds it easier to attract and retain employees as they have effective systems that make their employees' jobs easier, and more focused on relationships and providing care.

3. MANAGE OPERATIONS

White Hills does a lot to manage its operations; from rostering staff to receiving clients.

White Hills spends less time on data entry and administration, as data is integrated from the point of capture, and manual tasks are automated. This increases the availability of Anita and their other staff members, resulting in more time for quality care.
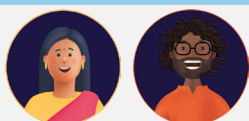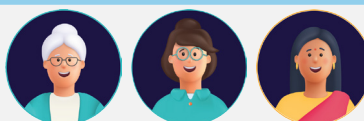
2. EDUCATION/TRAINING

White Hills facilitates data and digital training for Anita and its other employees.

White Hills provides ongoing digital and data training to Anita and other employees. This training is aligned to the capability of each individual staff member. White Hills also supports Jenny and their other clients to become more digitally literate if they so choose.

4. DELIVER QUALITY CARE

White Hills provides in home services to Jenny and others, while also managing a residential aged care facility.

White Hills find their workforce are well integrated with the broader healthcare workforce. This means Jenny and their other clients receive seamless care, regardless of whether it is provided by an employee of White Hills, or someone else. White Hills are supported by innovative technology that enhances the care provided to Jenny and other clients.

5. MONITOR/IMPROVE CARE
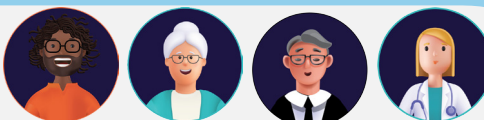
White Hills monitors the care needed and received by Jenny and their other clients.

White Hills is enabled through digital supports to monitor and improve the care provided. They are also able to get information and data from other care settings and insights from researchers, which they can use to provide better, tailored care.

7. REPORTING
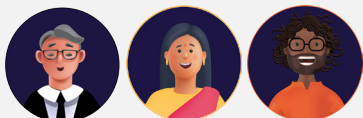
White Hills can streamline reporting and data can inform system improvements.

White Hills has up-to-date systems that produce reports and submit data to the government automatically. The reports use high-quality, real-time data so White Hills can focus on value-adding activities, and reserachers can generate evidence based insights to improve aged care.

6. FACILITATE NETWORKS
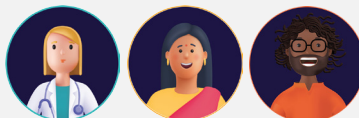
White Hills frequently rely on their health networks to support Anita and employees in their care delivery.

Information is shared across the health and aged care systems effectively. White Hills finds that their employees can facilitate flourishing networks across care systems, with minimal time spent on chasing down additional information or finding contacts.

Focused outcomes will make our vision real

To realise the vision and achieve the intended benefits, the Strategy will focus on 4 specific outcomes and underlying priorities. These will be used to direct efforts and evaluate the Strategy's success.

To ensure alignment across health and broader government, these outcomes are aligned closely with the outcomes of the Digital Health Blueprint 2023-2033.

The first outcome is for older people and their support networks. The second outcome focuses on uplifting service provider digital maturity, and equipping the sector including aged care workers. The final 2 outcomes target data utilisation and sharing, and the data and digital foundations underpinning aged care.

The Strategy's separate action plan will include monitoring activities and key performance indicators for each outcome. This will be published regularly to track progress and guide the ongoing development and implementation of the Strategy.

OUTCOMES

OUTCOME 1
Older people and their support networks can navigate and actively participate in their care and wellbeing.

OUTCOME 2
Aged care workers, service providers and health professionals are digitally empowered to provide higher quality and better-connected care.

OUTCOME 3
Data is shared and reused securely to deliver a sustainable and continually improving aged care system.

OUTCOME 4
Modern data and digital foundations underpin a collaborative, standards-based care system.

PRIORITIES

8 PRIORITY AREAS OUTLINE OUR PATH TO ACHIEVING OUTCOMES

Priority areas outline our path to achieving outcomes

The priorities outline the specific initiatives and actions to be completed to achieve the Strategy's overall vision. Each outcome is associated with 2 priorities.

Grounded in the principle that older people are at the centre of aged care, the 8 priorities cover the breadth of an older person's journey. This starts with ageing well before care, being able to access and navigate the system easily when needed, being supported by high-quality connected care and a system underpinned by clear leadership and guidance.
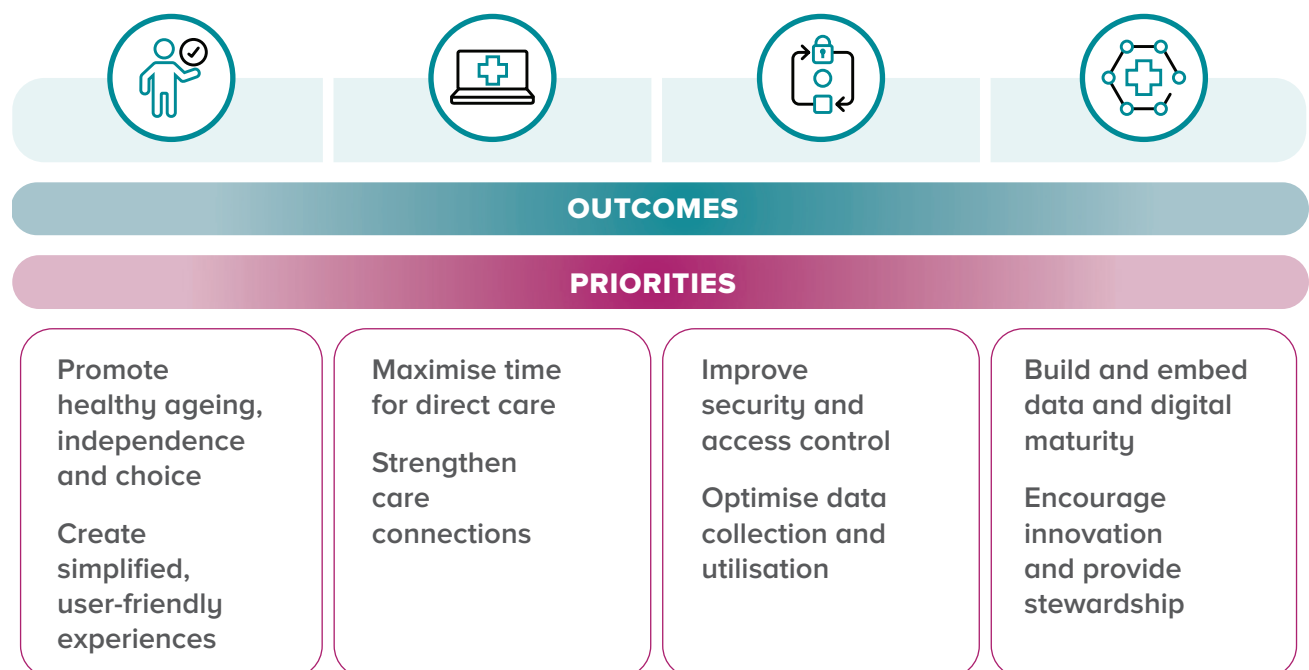
OUTCOMES

PRIORITIES

Promote healthy ageing, independence and choice	Maximise time for direct care	Improve security and access control	Build and embed data and digital maturity
Create simplified, user-friendly experiences	Strengthen care connections	Optimise data collection and utilisation	Encourage innovation and provide stewardship

Older people and their support networks can navigate and actively participate in their care and wellbeing.

Progress on this outcome means making data and digital technology more accessible and useful. This supports people to better understand and make informed choices about their care.

Building and sustaining digital literacy and using this to increase people's health literacy should enable people to take greater control of their own ageing and age well[6]. This outcome looks to improve digital inclusion for older people and their carers, including a focus on vulnerable groups such as: First Nations people, Cultural and Linguistically Diverse groups and regional and remote communities.

It also encompasses access to services, user-friendliness of digital channels and satisfaction with the quality, transparency and relevance of information.

The success of this outcome will be tracked by:

- Quantitative measures, including how often digital platforms are used, level of engagement with care, and digital and health literacy.
- Qualitative feedback, including consultation with older people and their support networks.

THE PRIORITY AREAS TO ACHIEVE THIS OUTCOME ARE:

1. Promote healthy ageing, independence and choice

This is about using digital tools and data to help older people, whether they are currently using aged care services or not, to:

- understand their own ageing
- know what help is available
- age healthily
- make decisions about their own care.

It seeks to foster an environment in which older people are:

- given choices about their care delivery
- empowered with culturally safe and appropriate tools and information to make those decisions
- shown ways they can easily transition into aged care when they need to.

2. Create simplified, user-friendly experiences

This priority centres on ensuring that all digital interactions are intuitive, accessible, and enriching for older people, support networks, aged care workers and service providers.

- It is beneficial, designing technology with users in mind, ensuring easy input, streamlined experiences, and relevance of information.

- It seeks to realise the potential of digital technology by making it more accessible, easy to navigate and understand, and driving increased confidence and adoption of technology.

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6 'National Health Reform Agreement – Addendum 2020-25'. Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Health and Aged Care), Jun. 01, 2023. Accessed: Jul. 24, 2023. [Online]. Available: **www.health.gov.au/our-work/2020-25-national-health-reform-agreement-nhra**

Aged care workers, service providers and health professionals are digitally empowered to provide higher quality and better-connected care.

This outcome focuses on increasing worker digital literacy and building and sustaining the digital maturity of service providers. It includes the establishment of data and digital solutions to connect care services, and improve the quality and delivery of person-centred care.

The Strategy aims to empower aged care workers, service providers and health professionals by increasing digital capabilities, streamlining workflows, promoting effective cross-disciplinary communication, reducing administration, and facilitating the use of new technologies.

The success of this outcome will be tracked by:

- Quantitative measures, including metrics related to information and data sharing, digital literacy and maturity, workforce productivity, and the adoption of specific digital technologies.
- Qualitative measures, including interviews with aged care workers, service providers and other health professionals.

THE PRIORITY AREAS TO ACHIEVE THIS OUTCOME ARE:

3. Maximise time for direct care

This priority is about using data and digital technology to optimise the use of time and resources, so more time can be dedicated to providing high-quality care for older people.

It aims to build organisational digital capabilities and digital skills of the workforce, so that less time is spent on non-care activities, including:

- duplicative data entry
- administration
- communication
- information collection.

4. Strengthen care connections

This priority seeks to:
- improve care coordination
- enhance treatment outcomes
- provide a more holistic and person-centred approach to care, recognising the complex needs of each person.

It aims to facilitate the seamless flow of information across:
- health
- aged care
- allied health
- other care sectors.

Its purpose is to create an integrated and connected care ecosystem, ensuring that relevant data can be shared securely and efficiently where needed. The story and information of an older person should flow seamlessly between health and aged care professionals, utilising treatment plans and ensuring timely interventions.

Data is shared and reused securely to deliver a sustainable and continually improving aged care system.

Progress against this outcome involves optimising the collection and use of data, ensuring that only useful data is collected, that it is collected at the right place, and that it is used effectively to improve care[7].

In the aged care sector, data that is collected should be accessible to those who need it, like researchers. The data can provide valuable insights for continually improving the sector and avoid the unnecessary burden of capturing additional data that isn't needed. This approach supports the secondary use of data, which can lead to better outcomes in aged care.

The success of this approach will be evaluated quantitatively by:

- analysing metadata
- investigating the volume of data collected
- tracing the use of the data
- highlighting unnecessary data captures or under-utilised data sources.

THE PRIORITY AREAS TO ACHIEVE THIS OUTCOME ARE:

5. Improve security and access control

This priority aims to improve the provision and security of digital and data technology to ensure aged care information is secure and reliable. It seeks to provide access to data and systems only where there is a genuine and approved need, and never at the expense of the protection, privacy and security of data. By developing a culture utilising the improvement of security and access control, aged care data will be protected from emerging risks.

6. Enhance data collection and use

This priority focuses on using data and digital solutions to deliver high-quality, evidence-based care that is tailored to individuals and continuously improving. Improved access to relevant data allows aged care workers to make better-informed decisions, identify improvement areas, and use services for the best possible outcomes for older people.

The secondary use of data enables research, providing an evidence base for future decisions. Improving data access and usage in aged care transforms data into a powerful tool for continuous improvement and decision-making, ultimately leading to enhanced care and wellbeing for older people.

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7 'First Nations Digital Inclusion Plan – July 2023', Commonwealth of Australia, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Jul. 2023. Accessed Sep. 07, 2023. [Online]. Available: www.niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/firstnations-digital-inclusion-plan-2023-26

Modern data and digital foundations underpin a collaborative, standards-based care system that is safe and secure.
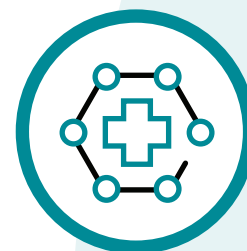
Progress against this outcome involves the establishment of key system-wide technical foundations to uplift the data and digital maturity and capability of the sector.

This includes:

- agreeing on standards the sector can collaborate digitally
- frameworks for innovation and the development of new technologies
- privacy and security controls to ensure the protection of the sensitive information being collected.

Success will be determined by setting up, agreeing on, and using key standards, frameworks, and guidelines in the sector. It will also be measured by security compliance and the level of consumer confidence in their data security.

THE PRIORITY AREAS TO ACHIEVE THIS OUTCOME ARE:

7. Build and embed data and digital maturity

This priority is about improving the data and digital skills of the aged care sector to effectively manage data and use digital technologies securely. It focuses on establishing foundational technologies, frameworks and capabilities upon which the sector can develop stronger digital tools.

The aim is to create a future where the aged care sector can manage data responsibly, harness technology effectively, and where older people benefit from more efficient care.

8. Encourage innovation and provide stewardship

This priority is about government leading the way, setting guidelines and standards to ensure uniformity in the aged care sector. It recognises the need for a single, clear target for the future that the sector can work towards together.

The aim is to develop standards and frameworks that facilitate effective and unified digital innovation and adoption, promoting:

- transparency
- accountability
- optimal use of digital technologies to strengthen decision making.

Our Action Plan

An Aged Care Data and Digital Strategy Action Plan (the Plan) will underpin this Strategy by providing a time-based view of the concrete actions under each priority. It will detail how data and digital improvement activities will strengthen aged care and improve wellbeing. It will also demonstrate how progress towards the four outcomes will be monitored and evaluated.

It will be a separate living document to the Strategy that is refreshed and published on a regular basis. This includes reports on previous action plans. To achieve this Strategy, we need concentrated effort, sector-wide coordination, and the provision of funds and resources for change. The Plan will be developed through stakeholder engagement and will be guided by deliverables committed by the Government and responses to the Royal Commission.

For each action area, the Plan will identify:

- estimated timeframes from completion
- engaged partners to assist implementation
- how the Department of Health and Aged Care will monitor and measure progress.

We want to work with you to hear how we can achieve the outcomes of this Strategy. We will keep listening to identify the action areas most important to you and which would benefit most from focused efforts.

> **" The [data and digital] Strategy is important, but it has 148 recommendations [from the Royal Commission] it needs to respond to. The Strategy needs to be doable. "**
>
> *– Peak body*

Terms and acronyms

Term/acronym	Description
ADHA	Australian Digital Health Agency
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Cybersecurity	How people, processes and technology protect information kept in digital formats from being taken, damaged, modified, or exploited.
Data	Information such as facts and numbers that is collected to analyse something or make decisions.
Digital	Is the interaction of people with processes and technology, for instance when older people seek information online about an aged care service.
Digital channels	Any method of communicating, sending information or accessing data that uses digital technology.
Digital inclusion	Digital inclusion is about ensuring that all people can access and use digital technologies effectively, including how older people can age well.
Digital literacy	The ability to access, manage, understand, and create information safely and appropriately through digital devices and platforms for participation in healthy ageing and aged care.
Digital maturity	The measure of an organisation's ability to create value, such as high-quality care, through digital.
Interoperability	The ability to transfer and use information in a uniform and efficient way across organisations and information technology systems.
My Aged Care	The starting point to access Australian Government-funded aged care services and information.
My Health Record (MHR)	An online summary of a patient's health information, available to them and their health provider.
Service provider	Any organisation providing government-funded aged care services.
Technology vendor	Any individual, group or organisation that is developing and selling software or hardware for use in aged care.