



Shaping the future of digital health: **Policy priorities for parliament**



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At a glance

Integrating digital technology more deeply into everyday healthcare could save Australia over \$5 billion each year, while also relieving the immense pressure on our healthcare system, shows The Productivity Commission’s 2024 research paper, *Leveraging Digital Technology in Healthcare*.¹

Amanda Cattermole, CEO of the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA), puts it

powerfully: “digital health is a strategic driver of Australia’s healthcare system. An enabler, yes, but more than that, a strategic, national reform catalyst in and of itself.”

Continuity of support and political consensus on ongoing national strategies and projects² is critical to ensure the digital transformation of the health system continues at pace for the benefit of all Australians.

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians and the Australasian Institute of Digital Health have identified three priorities to support digital transformation of healthcare in Australia, and their related solutions and benefits.

Priorities	Upskill the entire health workforce in digital health	Fund mechanisms for healthcare professionals using digital health	Regulate responsible use of AI in healthcare
Solution	Fund and implement the actions outlined in the National Digital Health Capability Action Plan and mandate minimum digital capabilities for all health professions.	Adopt funding mechanisms that value and incentivise the use of digital health to drive health and patient outcomes.	Implement the AI in Healthcare National Policy Roadmap issued by the Australian Alliance for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare.
Benefit	More efficient and accurate delivery of care		

1

UPSKILL the entire health workforce in digital health

PROBLEM:

The digital transformation of healthcare in Australia is dependent on the capacity and capability of the workforce to drive this transformation. The healthcare sector is Australia's largest workforce but despite its scale, shortages and underdeveloped digital capabilities persist; a huge challenge in healthcare resides in the unevenness of the digital health readiness and capability of the workforce.

This hinders the digital transformation at a systemic level and slows down adoption of technology safely and effectively in clinical practice.

The issue is twofold: lack of solid foundational training in digital health; and lack of ongoing digital skills development for healthcare providers, administrators, and all workers engaged in healthcare practice.

SOLUTION:

Fund and implement the actions outlined in the National Digital Health Capability Action Plan.

AND

Mandate minimum digital capabilities for all health professions.

- New graduates should join the workforce with at least formative levels across all capabilities of the Australian Digital Health Capability Framework and be supported to acquire intermediate levels rapidly.
- Education and training must evolve to integrate digital health skills effectively into everyday healthcare practice.

BENEFITS:

A digitally skilled health workforce improves care delivery by enabling effective use of tools like electronic health records, telehealth, decision support, and data analytics. This reduces administrative burden, improves care coordination, supports timely, evidence-based decisions, and strengthens adaptability to evolving technologies. Digital proficiency helps mitigate risks associated with technology misuse or underuse in clinical environments.

Professionalising the digital health workforce through structured learning programs not only benefits participants but strengthens industry-wide recognition of their expertise.

2

FUND mechanisms for healthcare professionals using digital health

PROBLEM:

The Medical Technology Association of Australia's 2023 report '*DIGITAL HEALTH: Breaking Barriers to Deliver Better Patient Outcomes*'³ found that over half of healthcare organisations rated digital health funding as poor, and none thought it was good. Nearly all said the main barrier was the lack of dedicated funding or reimbursement schemes.

There are two key problems:

- Healthcare professionals often aren't paid for using digital tools.
- When they are paid, it usually doesn't cover training, upkeep, or patient monitoring – all of which take time and effort.

As a result, doctors can't fully use digital tools to improve diagnosis, patient care, or communication – limiting patient outcomes.

SOLUTION:

Adopt funding mechanisms that value and incentivise the use of digital health to drive health and patient outcomes.

First and foremost, this involves a review of:

- funding models to ensure they are fit for purpose to promote digital health uptake, and
- funding model incentives to invest in innovation including digital health and implementing models that encourage uptake for patient and system benefits.

Other practical solutions include:

Implement usage-based bonuses:

- Introduce performance-based bonuses for healthcare professionals who actively use designated digital health tools.
- Expand Practice Incentives Program eHealth Incentive (ePIP) to specialist practice.

Target specific tools:

- Focus on crucial tools for improving efficiency, patient care, or data sharing as defined by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Ensure fairness and equity:

- Establish clear criteria for determining bonuses. Ensure that all healthcare professionals have equal opportunities to earn them.

BENEFITS:

Incentivising and renumerating healthcare professionals to use digital tools will drive active engagement, improving their evaluation and upkeep, and enabling safer, more effective care.

3. Medical Technology Association of Australia. 2023. [Digital health: Breaking Barriers to Deliver Better Patient Outcomes](#).

3

REGULATE responsible use of AI in healthcare

PROBLEM:

The 2023 Dye & Durham Australian Pulse Report found that 45 per cent of respondents were uncomfortable with the use of AI in healthcare⁴.

Strong governance is critical to maintaining public trust and confidence in the safe and ethical use of AI and health consumer data. This is fundamental to Australia's transformation to a digitally enabled health system.

SOLUTION:

We strongly urge you to implement the AI in Healthcare National Policy Roadmap issued by the Australian Alliance for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare.

This Roadmap provides a comprehensive and balanced national policy agenda for AI in healthcare, offering clear guidance on:

- workforce capability and training
- industry development and innovation
- implementation and regulation
- AI safety and ethical considerations.

BENEFITS:

When fully implemented, the Roadmap will ensure AI is translated into effective and safe healthcare services, delivering tangible benefits for the Australian people, healthcare providers and the healthcare system.

4. Dye and Durham. 2023. [Majority of Australians sceptical of AI in professional settings, survey reveals](#)



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