

Annual Report
Business Highlights
2017 - 2018



When Annabelle's* partner experienced what she thought must be a nervous breakdown, she called healthdirect.

* Name and some details have been changed for privacy reasons

“ — “The nurse calmed us both by taking control of the situation and asking a series of questions,” says Annabelle.

“She suggested we go to hospital and when we got there it was as though the triage nurse, doctor and mental health specialists were all on the same page, asking the same series of questions as the healthdirect nurse to understand my partner's state of mind.

“healthdirect gave me clarity in one of the most stressful times of my life.”



Contents

Chair's statement	6
CEO's introduction	7
Business overview	8
Enhancing our service portfolio	10
Growing strategic partnerships	30
Delivering value	34
Harnessing organisational capability	40
Leadership and governance	46

Our year at a glance



Our services are now used by more than **3.5 million** people each month.

Read our CEO's introduction on **page 7**

Our health service finder was the **fastest growing** feature on the healthdirect website this year, **tripling in usage** in the past 12 months.

Read about how we are using more channels to reach consumers on **page 12**



Our information partner network encompasses more than **180 leading health organisations**

Read about our two-way engagement with information partners on **page 32**



The My Aged Care contact centre workforce has increased from 30 staff at one site, to **380 staff** across three sites

Read about the growth of the My Aged Care service on **page 26**



The Pregnancy, Birth and Baby website received an average of **760,000 visits** each month, which is a **78% increase** year on year.

Read about the breadth of content available via our Pregnancy, Birth and Baby service on **page 18**



The second international telehealth benchmarking meeting shared knowledge among **6 participating countries**

Read about our leadership role in health on **page 35**

Information on the National Health Services Directory is used more than **20 times per second**.

Read about the work we are doing to enhance the directory on **page 22**



Working together, our staff **make a daily difference** in the lives of Australians

Read about the challenging work and opportunities we provide for our people on **page 41**



Chair's statement

During the 2017-18 financial year, we reconfirmed our organisation's vision and purpose which remain focused on working with governments to empower people to manage their own health. Our new strategic plan for 2017-2020 outlines how we will achieve this vision.

Health organisations need to embrace digital disruption if we are to build a sustainable, connected health system with consumer needs at its core. To do this requires new thinking and new ways of doing things. We have made innovation a key priority in our new strategy to ensure we continue to build a culture that encourages new ways of thinking.

The foundation of our strategic plan is value for shareholders and consumers.



The company has operated within budget this financial year but has generated an operating deficit. This operating deficit reflects a situation in which some services and projects have used excess funds from grants provided in prior years to fund this year's operational costs. These excess funds are not recognised as revenue in the current year, however the operational costs for these services and projects are recognised, in accordance with Australian accounting standards, resulting in an operating deficit.

On a personal note, I'd like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of our outgoing Board directors. I would like to thank Patricia McKenzie who has ably led the Board as Chair for the past five years, Professor Anthony Lawler, Chair of our Clinical Governance Advisory Group (CGAG), and Dr Julie Thompson, member of CGAG. Their contributions have been integral in shaping Healthdirect Australia into the organisation it is today.

I welcome and look forward to working with the new directors, Professor David Ashbridge, Peta Jurd and Dr Martin Laverty. I also acknowledge and thank our staff, led by Colin Seery, for their efforts and commitment in supporting our collective vision.

Wayne Cahill, Chair

“ — *At the heart of everything we do is a commitment to deliver sustainable and high-quality services that meet the needs of Australian governments and the broader health sector, and that achieve the best outcomes for the Australian population, collectively and individually.*

The 2018 financial year saw a rigorous mid-term review of our organisation, commissioned by our shareholders. A substantial amount of work was involved in participating in the review, including analysing our capabilities, efficiencies, governance and value proposition in the marketplace, and in developing a plan to address the relevant recommendations.

The review made several recommendations which focus on growing and strengthening the relationship between shareholders and the Board, and to clarify roles and responsibilities to assist in the delivery of the shareholders' investment vision. We look forward to working on these over the coming year.

As a result of this review, we are pleased that the shareholders have recommitted to the company for the next four years. This means we will continue to make a real impact on enhancing the health of Australians and play an integral role in supporting the maturing of the digital health landscape so as to bring more high-quality, cost-efficient services to each corner of the country.

CEO's introduction

The story for our organisation this year has been one of enhancement; not just in terms of the number of people we reach each day through our range of services, but also through our use of new technologies to expand the channels we use to deliver health information and advice.

Our phone and digital services were used more than 35 million times this financial year, an increase of almost 50 per cent year on year. This is evidence of how we are making a real difference to people's lives by ensuring they have access to reliable advice that can assist them to make better health decisions.

We are now firmly established as the go-to source for health information. This year www.healthdirect.gov.au became the most popular Australian health information website and, since 2007, the healthdirect helpline has received 7.9 million calls.

This year, the National Health Services Directory was enhanced significantly to ensure it remains an integral piece of digital health infrastructure, both now and into the future. Its operating system was upgraded to support the emerging Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resource (FHIR) standard, which is set to become the common language used globally to exchange healthcare data. This, along with other enhancements, will improve its use for consumers and health professionals, and supports the Australian Digital Health Agency's national strategy for better digital health integration in the health system.

“ — *We recognise that we need to provide people with access to our services when and where they want them – through the channels and on the devices they prefer to use – while ensuring the information is safe and consistent.*

This year, we have trialled new prototypes for the delivery of health information, including webchat, a healthdirect chatbot and voice-activated apps. Evaluations from these prototypes will inform how we can develop our services further and reach new audiences into the future.



Looking ahead, a significant project for the year is moving our organisation to new premises. The move, planned for late 2018, will result in all staff being on one floor and will enable us to develop a space that is flexible, suits agile working and enhances collaboration and productivity.

I would like to acknowledge here the valuable contribution of Maureen Robinson who retired in April 2018 after six years on the Executive Team as General Manager, Clinical Governance. Under Maureen's leadership we have embedded a robust clinical governance framework into every aspect of our health services, ensuring they are safe and trusted by all Australians. Building on this work, we welcome Dr Marie-Louise Stokes to our organisation as Chief Medical Officer.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of our Directors and in particular thank Patricia McKenzie, Professor Anthony Lawler and Dr Julie Thompson for their efforts over the past six years. I also thank our valued shareholder representatives, vendors, suppliers, information partners, research peers, and other industry colleagues for their collaboration and contribution to the services that we are proud to deliver.

Finally, our success is reliant upon the energy, skills and commitment of our employees. I thank the Healthdirect Australia team for their outstanding work and shared passion for making a daily difference in the lives of others.

Colin Seery, CEO

Business overview

About Healthdirect Australia

Healthdirect Australia is a national, government-owned, not-for-profit organisation. We deliver a range of innovative services to provide every Australian with access to trusted health information and advice, when and where they need it.

Our history and shareholders

We were established in August 2006 under a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement to improve access to evidence-based health information, triage and advice. In the past decade we have evolved from procuring and managing a single telephone helpline to become an Australian leader in delivering digital and telehealth services.

Healthdirect Australia is a public company limited by shares. We are jointly funded by the Australian Government and the governments of the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.

Our vision: Advice. Information. Connection

We believe that all Australians should be empowered to manage their own health and wellbeing. It is this vision that underpins everything we do. We work with our government partners to ensure that people have access to safe advice, information and services.

Our purpose is to provide valued and trusted health information and services through multiple channels. Innovation is at the heart of what we do at Healthdirect Australia and we constantly embrace new technologies to deliver what consumers want and expect from health services.

Our company values drive us to achieve our vision and unite our staff with a common passion – caring about health consumers and working to transform the ways Australians access health services and information now, and into the future.

We have a Reconciliation Action Plan which outlines our commitment to enhance our services so they better support the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to provide an inclusive workplace environment.

Our work

Our portfolio covers a wide range of integrated services and tools that support governments in meeting the different health needs of the Australian population. We deliver core digital health infrastructure along with specialised services in the areas of health and wellbeing, pregnancy and maternal health, carers and aged care. Our rigorous clinical governance processes ensure our services are safe, reliable and consistent with national standards.

We have strong industry expertise. We understand complex health and social challenges, design tailored solutions, and deliver and continuously improve services to achieve the best health outcomes for all Australians.

Our strategic priorities

Our new strategic plan provides a concrete vision and direction for the future of our organisation and helps us understand how we are going to deliver our vision.

Like many industries, health is facing the challenges that come with unprecedented technological change and digital disruption. Through this plan, we are embracing innovation, new technologies and changing consumer expectations to ensure we meet the challenges of the future.

Our strategy is underpinned by a commitment to continually improve, to ensure we deliver high value to consumers, the health industry and our shareholders, and achieve the best outcomes for the Australian population.



Vision

Our direction

Partnering with government, we empower consumers to manage their own health.

Advice. Information. Connection.



Purpose

Why we exist

To provide valued and trusted health information and services through multiple channels.

Our strategic priorities



Our values



We care about health consumers



We provide real value



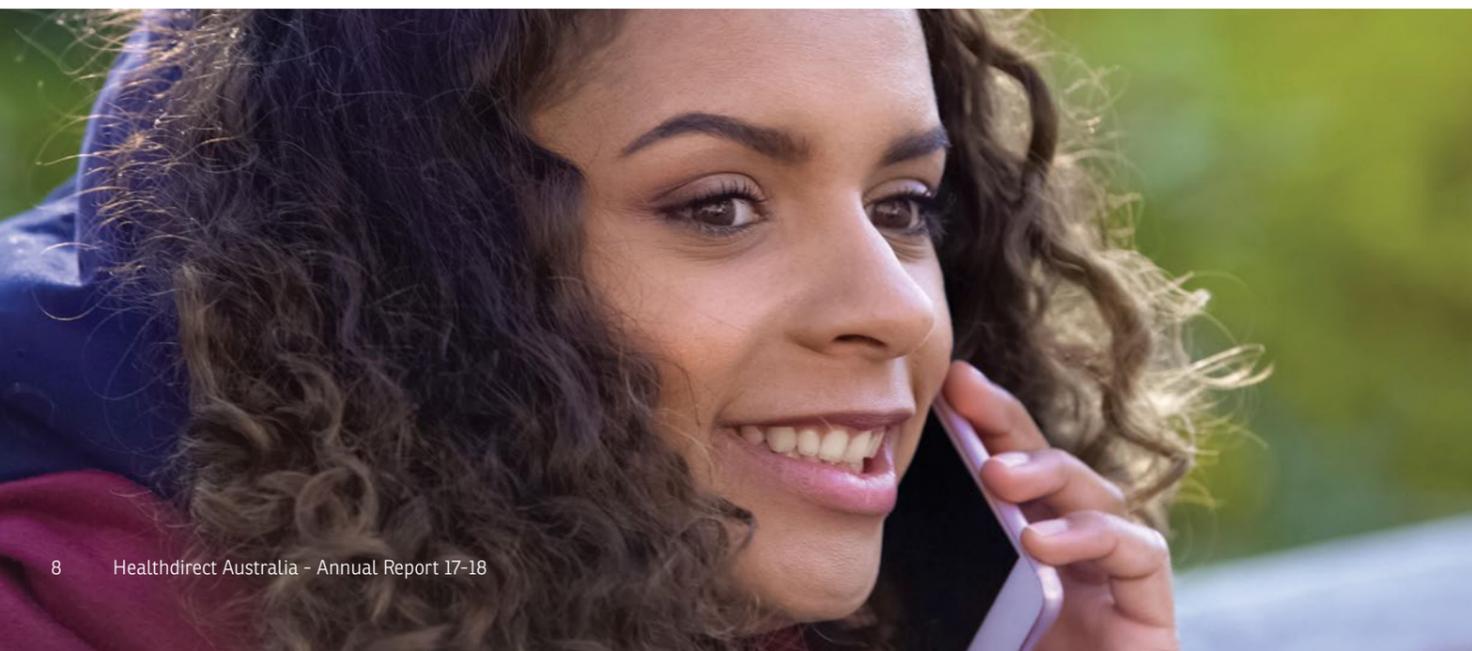
We share knowledge



We like a challenge



We are proud to work here



Enhancing our service portfolio

Healthdirect Australia has more than a decade of experience in designing and delivering innovative services that provide every Australian with access to the trusted advice and information they need to manage their own health and wellbeing.

Ensuring our services are high quality, clinically safe and meet consumer needs is a top priority for our organisation. This year we have made significant enhancements to many of our services through a focus on innovation, new technologies and consumer research.

By 2020, we want our services to be the number one source of Australian health information and advice, and to have a multichannel service portfolio that meets the needs and expectations of consumers, the health industry and our shareholders.



"This year we have seen tremendous growth across our portfolio of health services. We are proud to say that the healthdirect brand is Australia's choice for quality, trusted, health information and advice."

Andrew Bryant
General Manager, Consumer Health Services



Our range of services

We deliver a range of telehealth and digital health services. These include large-scale national services and bespoke local solutions.

National services



- 1800 022 222
- healthdirect.gov.au
- healthdirect app
- [/HealthdirectAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/HealthdirectAustralia)



- 1800 882 436
- pregnancybirthandbaby.org.au
- Video Call
- [/pregnancybirthandbaby](https://www.facebook.com/pregnancybirthandbaby)



- 1800 022 222



- about.healthdirect.gov.au/nhsd



- about.healthdirect.gov.au/video-call



- 1800 422 737
- carergateway.gov.au
- [/carergateway](https://www.facebook.com/carergateway)



- 1800 200 422
- myagedcare.gov.au



Bespoke services

- Get Healthy**
NSW, Qld, SA
- NSW Palliative Care
After Hours Helpline
NSW
- Medicines Line
WA, NT, SA, NSW, ACT, Tas

- Non-occupational post
exposure prophylaxis helpline
WA, SA
- Residential aged care line
WA
- Ambulance Secondary Triage
WA, NSW

- Outpatients Direct
WA
- SA Parenting Helpline
SA
- The Parent Line
Tas
- NSW Quitline
NSW

healthdirect

healthdirect provides 24/7 access to health information and advice via a range of digital channels and a telephone helpline to help people make more informed health decisions.

A better health service finder

Our health service finder was the fastest growing feature on the healthdirect website this year, tripling in usage in the past 12 months. We embarked on an upgrade to improve the way in which information in the service finder is presented to users.

Previously, each health service was listed separately, but we know that in practice there can be multiple services in one location. For example, many primary health clinics have GP, pharmacy, radiology and physiotherapy services co-located. By grouping this information and improving the user experience for service finder, we expect usage to continue to grow.

Expanding our content to reach new audiences

We use a range of different publishing channels to ensure our content reaches a wide audience.

This year, we introduced a blog on our website and social media channels. Published weekly on topical health issues, this type of content suits people who prefer more conversational, news-style information.

We also introduced forums to our healthdirect Facebook page. These one-hour live chat sessions offer people the opportunity to ask expert speakers health-related questions in an open, online community. In one of these sessions, we invited Professor Bruce Neal, Senior Director at The George Institute for Global Health, to host a forum entitled 'Smart Eating – Tips and Advice' aimed at helping people to make better food choices.

We work in partnership with other organisations to develop and promote content. Read more about our content collaboration with NetSetGO on page 33.

Enhancing our digital tools

Using insights gained from our work with the healthdirect Chatbot (see page 15) we updated the healthdirect Symptom Checker tool to make the language more concise and conversational. The 'What to do next' page has been redesigned to make the instructions clearer so it is easier for people to find the resources they need, such as details of local health services.

“ — *“I am very impressed with the service and that it even exists! The questions were thorough, quick and simple. Plus, having the .gov.au makes me feel I can trust the answers. Thank you.”*

Feedback from a healthdirect Symptom Checker user

The healthdirect app has also been upgraded. We conducted user research to better understand consumer needs and behaviours when using health and medical apps and we used these insights to determine how our app could be further developed and improved.

Initial changes include an updated visual style; shareability of services information via email, SMS and social media; a favouriting capability so people can save articles, medicines information and service listings; and improved search results.

We have also continued to improve our medicines information service to provide consumers who are searching for medicines information online with trusted, digitally accessible information. See page 37 for more details.

healthdirect helpline

The healthdirect helpline has helped people manage their health concerns, day and night, for more than a decade (See Peter's story over page).

This year, we have worked with our service providers and ambulance services to improve information provided from the healthdirect helpline which is used to determine ambulance response required (read more on page 38).

Peter called the healthdirect helpline after he had an accident at home



Peter's story

Australians need health information and advice at all hours of the day and night. One evening, healthdirect helped Peter decide whether he needed immediate medical help or if he could wait until morning.

Seeking help after surgery

Peter had undergone surgery in Sydney to amputate two fingers on his right hand, and was relieved to be safely home again in Dorrigo, near Coffs Harbour, NSW. That evening, however, he noticed a red and painful swelling in his elbow where the intravenous tubes had been.

Knowing that he should deal with the problem before it got worse, 57-year-old Peter called the healthdirect helpline from the number on his fridge magnet.

The nurse asked him about his recent surgery and current symptoms, and quickly realised that Peter had developed a staph infection (staphylococcus aureus). Staph infections can be dangerous if the bacteria enter the bloodstream, joints, bones, lungs or heart.

Clear advice made his decision easier

Although still in pain and recovering from his surgery, Peter followed the nurse's advice to go to the local hospital emergency department to have the infection treated as soon as possible.

"The advice from the nurse was decisive, and it really made a difference," Peter says. "I needed to get on antibiotics straight away. If I had waited till the next morning or not followed the advice, I would have been very sick, and it would have set back my healing time."

“ — *“This service is so important. Initially, I was umming and ahing... Should I go to the emergency department, or will I just be clogging up the health system? It's helpful to be able to ask a doctor or nurse first.”*

"I'm a healthy guy so I've only used it twice, but both times I had a legitimate health concern and wasn't sure of the next step. healthdirect provided the information and advice that made the decision clear."

Using technology to improve access to healthdirect

People's preferences for how they access health information and advice are constantly changing and diversifying. In the past four years, we have seen growth in the number of Australians undertaking self-assessment of their symptoms via our digital channels. By introducing new ways for people to interact with the healthdirect service, we have increased the number of triages we offer each month from an average of 56,000 to almost 150,000.

“Consumer-facing organisations, whether public sector or private must prioritise the consumer's journey and recognise that the true value of an organisation is not embodied by the way it delivers services, but by the ease of use and outcomes experienced by consumers in accessing those services.

A multichannel approach does not simply mean changing out the channel mix for particular target groups; it fundamentally means putting the consumer and their needs and aspirations at the centre of service provision.”

The Multichannel Landscape for Healthcare, Healthdirect Australia, 2018

Digital health participation is on the rise

This chart shows an evolution of how consumers access triage services across healthdirect channels - the helpline and Symptom Checker tool on the website, app and chatbot - over a five year period. Notably, over the past financial year, usage of the healthdirect website Symptom Checker has doubled, increasing the number of triages provided through healthdirect channels by 51% in the same period. healthdirect Chatbot was introduced in September 2017 to reach new audiences, particularly younger health consumers.

Number of triages provided through the healthdirect service, by channel, FY14-18



- healthdirect helpline
- healthdirect Symptom Checker – website
- healthdirect Symptom Checker – app
- healthdirect Symptom Checker – chatbot

healthdirect explores multichannel

This year, we have introduced several new prototypes to the healthdirect service to further expand our delivery of digital health services and to demonstrate the value that innovation can bring in reaching new audiences.

healthdirect Chatbot

A chatbot is a software program connecting people and computer systems through a conversational interface. Our research into consumer behaviours indicated many people prefer text-based messaging services over websites or telephony. This project repurposed the healthdirect Symptom Checker as a chatbot in Facebook's Instant Messenger platform. Starting with five symptoms – fever; urinary problems; colds and flu; bites and stings; and rashes and skin problems – we will continue to add information until the full Symptom Checker is available via Facebook.

Webchat

In 2017, we trialled a text-based chat service with healthdirect helpline nurses. With questions answered by the same nurses, the information and advice provided was comparable to that given on the phone. Our evaluation showed webchat's age profile is younger than that for those making voice calls. This insight, together with research showing a preference for text-based communication in some population cohorts – including hearing-impaired consumers, non-English speakers, Indigenous Australians and regional residents – shows that webchat is a channel with great potential for growth.

Voice-activated technology

Voice-activated technologies are growing, with Google estimating that 50 per cent of mobile searches will be conducted by voice in the next 3–5 years. We became the first Australian organisation to develop a voice-activated app for health when we launched the Summer Health App on Google Home. The app draws information from the healthdirect website to answer questions on topics such as sunstroke, sunburn, sunscreen and bites and stings.

The prototype helped us gather important insights which we then used to develop healthdirect Flu Advice for Google Home. This was also published on Amazon Alexa, providing advice related to colds, flu and vaccinations as well as real-time data about the flu risk levels in each state and territory.

We have gained valuable insight from how users behave in this channel which will inform our ongoing content strategy and how we develop the healthdirect service for digital health consumers in the future.

after hours GP helpline

The after hours GP helpline is an extension of the healthdirect helpline, providing access to medical advice and support from a GP at night, on weekends and during public holidays. The focus for this year has been embedding and measuring the impact of enhancements made to the service in 2017.

Improved continuity of care

We introduced the option for callers to have a summary of their call sent securely to their GP's practice. This helps facilitate their next healthcare step by ensuring that the correct information is passed along to their usual GP. It also means that the caller doesn't have the responsibility of remembering and communicating the information and advice given. In the past 12 months, the number of care summaries sent to GPs tripled to 20,000, 5 per cent of which were sent via secure messaging.

Improved clinical safety

One third (32%) of callers now opt to receive an SMS or email summary of the care advice they receive from the healthdirect GP. Having this information to refer to has clinical safety benefits, as callers may not remember the advice given. It also makes it easier for them to follow any instructions (for example, to monitor their temperature to ensure it stays within a certain range).

Links to My Health Record

In support of the National Digital Health Strategy, callers can have a summary of their call with the healthdirect GP uploaded to their My Health Record. While only a small number have taken this option we expect usage to increase next year.



Hope and her son Timmy used the after hours GP helpline



Hope's story

Hope lives in a small town in Western Australia with three GPs to care for 6,500 people. When Hope's son was ill and the GPs were all booked out, the healthdirect after hours GP helpline provided much-needed advice.

What to do when the GPs aren't available

It was a Friday evening and Hope's three-year-old son Timmy, who has autism, was ill and becoming increasingly distressed. Timmy had diarrhoea and wasn't keeping fluids down, but at first Hope wasn't overly concerned since he regularly picked up mild illnesses from other children at his day care. However, she could see the situation was getting worse and wanted to take him to the doctor.

Hope had already checked online and could see all the GPs in her town were booked out over the weekend and throughout the following week.

"I have another son who also has autism, so we try to limit unnecessary outings as they can be difficult to manage," Hope says. "Timmy didn't seem ill enough to need to go to the emergency department and going into an unfamiliar environment like that could have made him scared. I still thought he should see a doctor, but I really wasn't sure where to turn for help."

Finding the right help

To get some advice, Hope called the healthdirect helpline.

"The nurse was so understanding of my situation. After answering all her questions about Timmy's symptoms, I was a bit surprised when she said a GP from the after hours GP helpline would call me back.

"Timmy has non-verbal autism, so I can't ask him how he feels. I could tell he was getting more and more distressed, but he must have been worse than I thought."

The GP called her back and, after reviewing the summary of Hope's phone consultation with the nurse, confirmed that Timmy didn't need to go to the emergency department. The GP recommended that Hope keep giving him fluids and try again to get an appointment with his GP.

Sound advice when it's needed

Following the telephone GP's advice, Hope called her usual GP first thing in the morning, persisting until she got an appointment.

“The after hours GP helpline helped me through a tough night. Having that solid advice gave me the confidence I needed to make the right decision for my son's health.”

"Just knowing that the doctor on the after hours GP helpline had recommended getting him in to see a doctor gave me an extra push and understanding that he really needed help, sooner rather than later. It turns out that Timmy had a bacterial infection and he was prescribed antibiotics.

"Living in a rural area, away from a major city, with two children on the autism spectrum is difficult at the best of times but when they are sick, that extra network of support is essential," says Hope.

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby is a national service that provides support and information for parents, families and carers on the journey from pregnancy to pre-school.

A holistic service

Recognising that families have diverse needs and like to consume information in different ways, Pregnancy, Birth and Baby provides multiple ways for people to access information and support. This includes a phone helpline, video call service, a website and social media channels.

There is a consistent service no matter which channel people use; for example, our helpline nurses also host live chat sessions on our Facebook page and answer calls via secure video. By analysing which topics people call the helpline about, we provide complementary website content and repurpose popular website content on social media.

Healthcare professional engagement

Health professionals see many parents facing the challenges of raising children. We interviewed GPs and practice nurses to explore their attitudes and behaviour when referring patients to online and phone support services and to learn how we could best support them.

As a result of this engagement, we developed a webinar program addressing common topics that health professionals get asked about, including pregnancy planning and options; dealing with toddler behaviour; and mental and emotional health for parents. We also developed a range of new patient information brochures. More than 700 health professionals have registered to attend webinar sessions and almost 12,000 brochures have been distributed.

Content that meets consumer needs

This year, we hosted seven Pregnancy, Birth and Baby forums on Facebook. These one-hour live chat sessions enable discussion of parenting-related topics with our maternal child health nurses in an open online community. This series included our first joint Facebook forum with Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA) on the topic of perinatal anxiety and depression – a condition that affects around 100,000 families each year. This session was complemented by new mental health-related content on our website.

The volume of website content continues to grow. Among the 80 new pages published this year, one of the more popular topics has been practical information for parents about access to health care and financial benefits, such as Medicare, newborn payments, child care payments and parental leave pay.

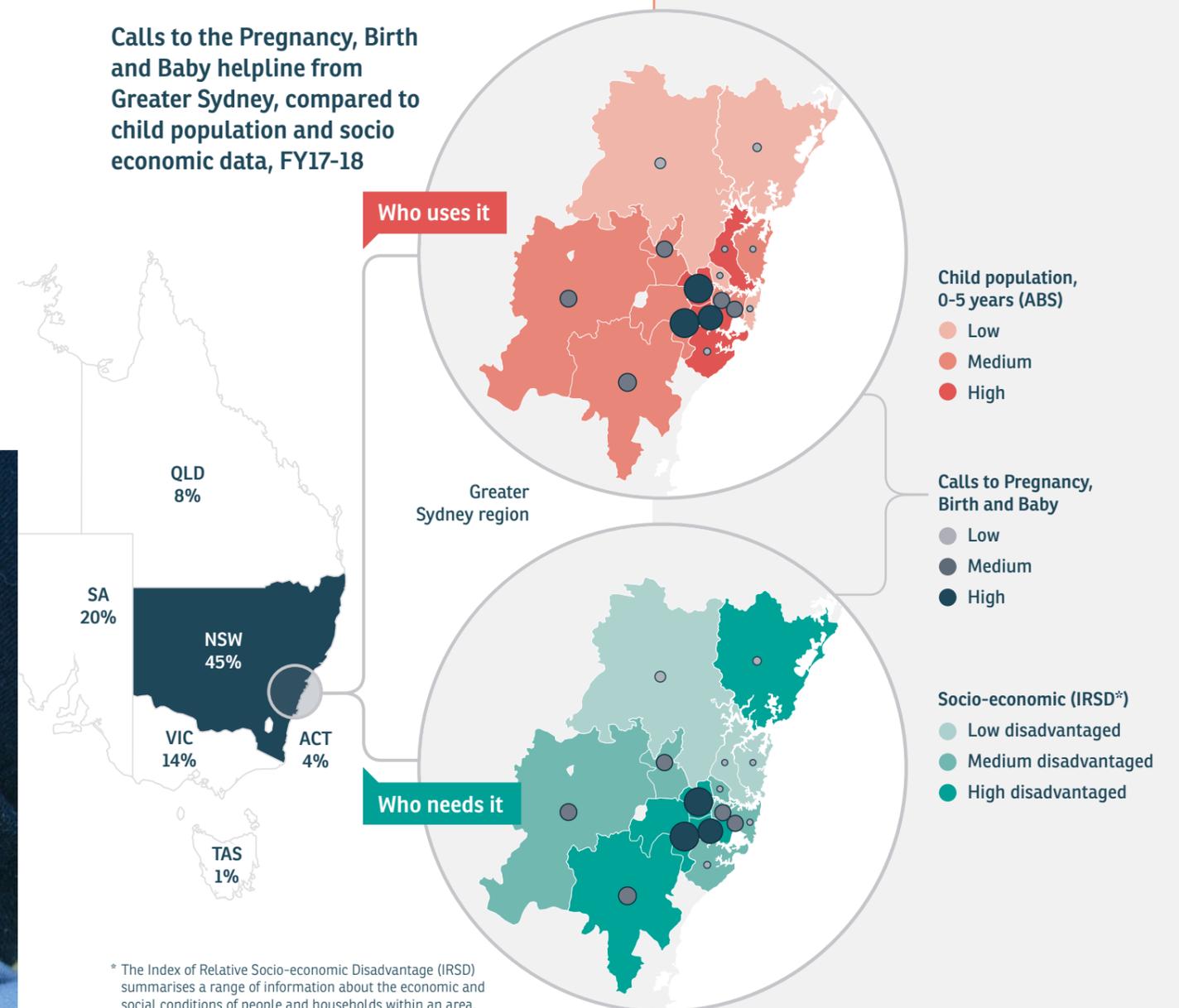
The Pregnancy, Birth and Baby received an average of 760,000 visits each month, a growth of 78 per cent to 9.1 million visits this financial year.

Who uses the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline?

An analysis of calls to the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline shows the service is supporting those most in need. Callers are also more likely to live in areas where there is socio-economic disadvantage. Our analysis also showed that the helpline is used right across Australia including in Far North Queensland, in remote central Australia, and across all urban areas where birth rates are high.

In the financial year 2017-18, most callers to the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline were located in Greater Sydney. The graphic below compares calls for this region with population and socio-economic data. It shows the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline is used by parents and carers in areas where there are higher numbers of young children and where access to some health and parenting services may be limited.

Calls to the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline from Greater Sydney, compared to child population and socio economic data, FY17-18



Dr Trina Gregory's story

Few things make people happier than welcoming a happy, healthy baby into the family, but sometimes bringing a child into the world can be a daunting experience. Dr Trina Gregory, a treating GP and Clinical Director of The Junction Youth Health Service, ACT, considers access to trusted information from Pregnancy, Birth and Baby vitally important.

Healthcare where it's needed most

Dr Gregory sees many young, expectant mothers experiencing extreme hardships, such as homelessness and drug addiction, in her line of work. She says that letting them know about clinically safe Australian health advice on pregnancy and parenting provides an important additional layer of care.

"I see a lot of patients with high-risk pregnancies who require assistance outside the usual scope of antenatal care," she says.

“ — *"I refer my patients to the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby service a couple of times a week which I believe helps to increase their chance of being healthy and having a healthy baby."*

"All new mums have tons of questions during pregnancy and particularly after their first antenatal consultation, where they receive a lot of information. Many of the women I see come from difficult situations, so it's not always easy for them to attend regular pregnancy check-ups or follow the medical guidelines.

"Whatever their personal situation, most of my patients have mobile phones, so in-between consultations I know they can get online or call up a qualified nurse to discuss their questions or concerns. As their GP, that gives me some peace of mind and I know it helps them as well."

A useful service for GPs too

Dr Gregory uses Pregnancy, Birth and Baby during her consultations to find out about the latest over-the-counter medication guidelines and health supplement advice.

"Recently a patient asked me about taking iodine supplements, so I called the helpline and they quoted me the current guidelines there and then. The nurses and midwives also have the latest information about clinical trials and literature reviews, so it makes things very efficient for me," she says.



Dr Trina Gregory uses the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline with her patients

Bespoke health services

In addition to our national services, we work with our state and territory government partners to deliver bespoke services that meet specific population health needs. These include two telephone coaching services, NSW Quitline and the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service®, which support people when making lifestyle changes to improve their health, and the NSW Palliative Care After Hours Helpline.

Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service®

Get Healthy is a free information and coaching service, available in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, that supports adults in becoming physically active, learning healthier eating habits, and achieving or maintaining a healthy weight range.

This year we transitioned to a new service provider which was evaluated through a tender process. The new provider offers a high-quality, cost-effective service with the capability to deliver future enhancements such as multichannel communication.

Coached by nurses, dietitians and exercise physiologists, at any one time there have been 3,000 – 3,500 participants registered with the program, each receiving 10 – 13 calls during their six-month support period.

Get Healthy has engaged an Aboriginal Liaison Officer to strengthen the service's capacity to meet the needs and preferences of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. The role focuses on providing a cultural bridge to help them feel comfortable and safe accessing the service and to increase their likelihood of completing the program.

NSW Palliative Care After Hours Helpline

The NSW Palliative Care After Hours Helpline provides after hours support to patients receiving palliative care and assists families, carers and health professionals to manage the final stages of life. The service is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health.

Callers to the helpline speak with a registered nurse trained in palliative care and are transferred to specialist nurses when needed. The helpline provides psychological support, pain and symptom management advice, and referrals to other service providers.

Calls to the helpline have increased by 57 per cent over the past 12 months.

NSW Quitline

NSW Quitline is a free and confidential telephone service which helps people prepare to quit smoking, avoid setbacks, and staying committed to quitting.

This year we sent the first motivational SMS to smokers opting into the mobile support program. Encouraging smokers to stay focused and persevere, this research-based intervention sends regular motivational reminders between support calls.

After two years under Healthdirect Australia's management, the NSW Quitline service has evolved to provide a robust and professional service to consumers. Management of NSW Quitline returned to the Cancer Institute of NSW from 1 July 2018.

National Health Services Directory

The National Health Services Directory (NHSD) is a comprehensive, reliable and accurate online directory of Australian health and health-related services. It is used both by health professionals and the public to locate and connect with appropriate service providers.

Integrated into the health system

The NHSD's search capability powers more than 70 Australian health websites. This is achieved via an embeddable NHSD online search tool (widget) and integrating with the NHSD application programming interfaces (API).

This year we have seen significant growth in the number of people using the NHSD (over 100%), driven primarily by consumers using the search capability. NHSD information is used by consumers across Australia more than 20 times per second.

The NHSD APIs make it possible for organisations, such as enterprise health software providers, state health jurisdiction systems, mapping and analytics services, research organisations and secure messaging software vendors to integrate the NHSD services information into their own workflows and various products, including mobile apps.

The NHSD supports state, territory and national health initiatives. For example, searches can be filtered to find services that are already participating in the use of My Health Record.

Healthdirect Australia's consumer health services are examples of how a comprehensive directory is critical to health service delivery, ensuring consumers have access to a relevant and accurate list of the services near them, no matter where they are.

A scalable national information asset

We began the transition to automated data management, ingesting verified data from multiple sources across the health sector on a daily basis. The combination of data analytics, policy-driven quality scoring and automated data auditing has allowed us to rapidly improve the quality of information most used by the health sector.



"The NHSD supports a number of public and private health service providers across the country. Helping them to maintain a trusted list of services and health professionals across their systems makes it easier to connect people with the services they need."

Tony Abbenante, Manager, Health Sector Standards and Advisory, Digital Health, Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria

Data quality management

During 2018, the introduction of formalised data governance, with oversight from participating health jurisdictions and the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA), has seen our management of data mature. This project focused on the definition, measurement and monthly improvements to data quality. The work will benefit those needing healthcare services and those referring healthcare services. Knowing that the information is always correct gives consumers greater confidence in our healthcare system.

Read about service desk improvements by the NHSD Operations team on page 44.

Secure messaging

In the 2017–18 financial year, we delivered a new Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resource (FHIR) API for the National Health Services Directory in collaboration with the ADHA Technical Working Group to enable health professionals who use secure messaging to integrate easily with the directory. Better interoperability between existing messaging platforms and the NHSD, as a central source of contact information, will facilitate and streamline communication between practitioners, making more effective use of the NHSD as a national asset.

Next steps for the NHSD

In collaboration with Primary Health Networks (PHNs), Local Hospital Networks (LHNs) and consumers, we have researched and designed an improved consumer search experience, including an improved search widget. Delivery is anticipated before December 2018.

New features, such as the ability to search for practitioners, services and organisations with easy to use filters, and an improved mobile user experience will benefit all Primary Health Networks, hospitals, referral pathway software and jurisdiction websites that embed the NHSD search application.

Behind the scenes, the automated supply, integration and publishing of significant health sector data from sources such as the Australia Government's Department of Social Services, Department of Health and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, will assist with validation and publication of information within the NHSD.

Data supply agreements with national, state-based and commercial service provider systems will enable us to automatically validate and update data to ensure the best quality information is available to all users, regardless of how they interact with the directory.

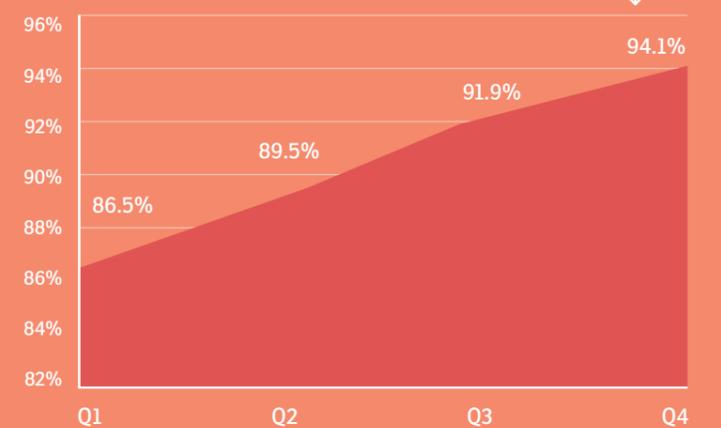
Data quality

By leveraging organisational data analysis, forecasting and reporting capabilities across our services, we can see data changes over time. This helps the data management team to obtain missing information and maintain the quality of data for service providers who use data from the National Health Services Directory (NHSD) thousands of times per day. They conduct data quality checks for completeness and accuracy every six months.

Number of services listed in the NHSD, FY13-18



NHSD data quality scores, FY17-18



The NHSD now provides information on more than 400,000 services, organisations and health professionals (only services shown in graph). Over the past year a focus has been on improving the quality of the data in the directory and subsequently data quality scores have continued to improve, with a lift to 94.1%.

healthdirect Video Call

healthdirect Video Call is a secure and scalable telehealth capability designed to help Australians access online face-to-face healthcare services from their home, work or wherever is most convenient. healthdirect Video Call enables equity of care across rural, regional and metropolitan areas, making healthcare simple and accessible.

Models of care

Funded by the Commonwealth and participating state governments (New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia), healthdirect Video Call provides two models of care: scheduled services where healthcare organisations, such as hospitals, provide online clinics attended by patients at pre-arranged times, and on-demand services for helpline contact centres where users initiate contact on an ad-hoc basis. In both cases, all aspects of the service from the system architecture through to the workflow have been designed specifically for clinical service delivery.

Mimicking the real-world experience, patients attend appointments via a clinic's website and wait in their own private, virtual 'waiting room'. No account, special software or dial-in details are needed. The clinician can identify waiting patients and, when ready, connect them into a virtual consultation. healthdirect Video Call's design ensures no digital footprint remains in the system after the consultation, ensuring the patient's privacy is maintained.

Improving the experience for our customers

A new management console for healthcare administrators was introduced this year, greatly enhancing the user experience with simpler navigation, faster loading time and a mobile-friendly interface. We also added a new resource centre: an online suite of documentation, tools and resources that supports the adoption and effective use of video consultations. To ensure we could capture and act on our customers' feedback, we added an online feedback feature to the new management and resource consoles.

We launched regular webinars for administrators and clinicians on topics such as how to use and navigate healthdirect Video Call. These educational sessions aim to increase awareness, resolve barriers to adoption and ensure the service delivers maximum benefit to providers and consumers.

Technical enhancements

New integrated tools help with proactive and real-time monitoring of the quality of service, via an online dashboard that shows when providers or consumers are experiencing issues, such as low bandwidth, drop-outs or disconnects. This visibility greatly enhances the level of communication and troubleshooting for a quick and timely resolution.

Another enhancement allows consumers and healthcare professionals to switch the camera on their devices, from front to back, during the video call which increases visual accessibility during the call and improves quality of the consultation.

Growing the service



715
operational online clinics
covering
170
health services

healthdirect Video Call has grown to support many services including, mental health, drug and alcohol, child and maternal health, pain management, cancer services and paediatric care, enabling the growth of telehealth in Australia.



Kevin uses healthdirect Video Call to reduce his travel time to specialist appointments

Photo provided by Susan Jury



Kevin's story

Video consultations have become a vital part of modern healthcare, benefiting both health professionals and their patients. For cancer patient Kevin, healthdirect Video Call closes the vast distance between rural and metro Australia.

Extending the reach of healthcare

A retired sheep farmer who lives in rural Victoria, Kevin is a three-hour drive away from Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (Peter Mac) and his cancer specialist in Melbourne. Over the past nine years, he has made the trip many times for regular check-ups.

"This year, Peter Mac introduced video consultations, which has saved me a huge amount of time and money," Kevin says.

— "So instead of a long day travelling there and back, I can see my doctor in 10 minutes via video at home or even when I'm out in the paddocks."

"All I need to do is park the ute and sit my smart tablet on top of a toilet roll behind the steering wheel. Just one click and it's set up. The convenience of it is just amazing and it saves me a very long round trip.

"It's been amazing for me to communicate with my doctor in that way when I am such a long way away," says Kevin.

My Aged Care

My Aged Care is a gateway service designed to assist older Australians, their carers and support networks in accessing government-subsidised aged care services.

Improved service standards

We have worked in close partnership with the Australian Government's Department of Health to deliver My Aged Care since 2013. We manage the operation of the website and telephone contact centres which connect people with information, assessment and service providers. In that time, the contact centre workforce has increased from 30 staff at one site, to 380 staff across three sites.

Over the year, the service has delivered consistently high and improved service standards. On average, calls are answered within 18 seconds and aged care referrals are processed to assessment within 24 hours of being received.

A commitment to quality improvement

Our Quality and Continuous Improvement Framework, which commenced rollout in June 2017, is beginning to deliver results. We have supported our contact centre workforce with a range of tools and training which help them meet – and strive to exceed – the clearly defined and measurable quality standards within the Framework.

Importantly, we are building a culture of continuous improvement. Monthly forums assess improvement ideas which, in conjunction with the Department of Health, are added to our delivery roadmap. One such improvement initiative is diversity training for contact centre staff. These training modules aim to increase staff understanding when assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

Service enhancements

In April 2018, the My Aged Care website homepage was redeveloped following a year-long collaborative design process that involved stakeholders from the Department of Health, service providers, assessors and consumers.

We conducted user research to understand the challenges that consumers face while on their aged care journey, and how the website could help them resolve their questions. The new homepage presents the aged care journey in three steps, allowing people to quickly access the information they need, based on where they sit on their journey.



Viktoria finds My Aged Care helps her maintain independence

Viktoria's story

Viktoria has always been a doer, and although she finds it difficult to ask for help for herself, she's always helping people around her. Her journey with My Aged Care has been no different.

The road to My Aged Care

Viktoria found out about aged care assistance in 2007 when she realised she needed help looking after her husband Louis after he became ill. Sadly, her husband passed away, while Viktoria has since had spinal fusion surgery. This – together with having lost most of her toes to frostbite over 25 years ago – has affected her mobility. These days she finds it harder to get everything around the house done by herself and, since her surgery, she has received My Aged Care home assistance through its service providers.

Receiving the right care

This year, a My Aged Care assessor visited Viktoria at home to ensure she was receiving the right level of home care.

"I was surprised at how much the assessor noticed," Viktoria says. "I want to remain independent and not be reliant on others, but he could see that I live alone without much help and that I struggle with a lot of pain."

"I'm thankful now that he could see those things and that I need more help to be able to stay at home. He put me on a higher level of home care so I have a carer who comes in two days a week now to help with transport, shopping, cleaning and lifting. She provides me with much needed support but she also teaches me how to do things for myself."

"Knowing that the carers have the right training makes such a difference to my wellbeing and peace of mind."

Helping those around her

A social person, Viktoria is very involved in her local community and is on the board of a local nursing home.

"Nursing homes are necessary in many situations, but I really want to stay in my own home as long as possible," she says.

“ — “I try to tell as many people as I can about the help I receive and help them understand the options available to them – like handrails throughout the house.”

"Some people are afraid of being uprooted so might avoid asking questions, but I say: 'If you don't ask, you don't know what help is there'."

Carer Gateway

Carer Gateway provides practical information, support and services to assist people who care for someone with a disability, chronic illness, dementia, mental illness, an alcohol or drug related problem, or frailty due to age.

Service improvements

This year we streamlined Carer Gateway operations by combining the contact centre with the My Aged Care contact centre. Carer Gateway is now more efficient and has maintained its high level of service. Minor upgrades were applied to the website to enhance the user experience.

Carer stories

Over the past 12 months, we were privileged to be invited into the homes of some of Australia's 2.7 million carers to learn more about how they cope and deal with challenges – as well as embrace the many rewarding moments they face as carers. We spent time with them and their families and developed videos which have been published on the Carer Gateway website. By sharing their stories, we hope to help other carers in similar situations. (Read Anne's story on the next page.)

Looking ahead – new services to support carers

In March 2018 the introduction of The Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS) was announced. This is stage three of the Australian Government's 2015 commitment to develop an integrated plan to support carers. It began with the establishment of Carer Gateway, followed by a two-year process of working with carers and the carer sector to design a service delivery model for carer support services.

Healthdirect Australia has now commenced work on a range of new digital services which will be introduced on the Carer Gateway website later this year, including online education, resources, coaching, peer support, and online and in-person counselling.



Anne (left) is a carer for Edie (right) who has Alzheimer's disease

Anne's story

Not everyone who cares for a disabled friend or relative realises they are in a caring role, because they can fall into the role instinctively. When we visited carers' homes this year to better understand their stories, we discovered that for Anne, caring for her partner, Edie – who has Alzheimer's disease – was a very conscious decision.

A loving relationship

Anne and Edie were friends for 10 years before they formed a partnership and have now been together for more than three decades. Anne says their relationship has always been full of love and a lot of trust, even more so since Edie's disability became evident.

"The main feature of Alzheimer's is memory loss," Anne says. "The very first symptom that I noticed was that Edie was forgetting to give me messages. We'd arrange to meet and she wouldn't turn up, which was odd because Edie had an exceptional memory. It was really difficult until we got the diagnosis and could understand what was going on."

The hard aspects of caring

Anne's everyday tasks have increased as Edie's care needs have changed. Friends and family play an important role in Anne's life.

"Being a carer is incredibly difficult – it's very lonely," she says.

“ — “My entire day now is pretty much centred around Edie. You don't have a lot of time to yourself.”

"But what happens over time is that you gradually do more and more. It's very demanding. Friends of mine, the ones that I see regularly, are essential to my wellbeing because I can say anything to them."

Seeking help and taking time out

Anne acknowledges that trying to be a good carer on your own can be self-defeating and says it's important to link up with services available in your local area. Carer Gateway helps connect carers with appropriate services that match their situation and caring needs.

“ — “From time to time, Edie goes into respite care. I just really need some time out, and rest for myself. You can't go on being available to somebody else 24/7.”

"But it's not all just hard luck and difficulties and problems. Edie will often say to me, 'I really appreciate everything you do'. She comes and puts her arms around me and thanks me, and it means so much when she does that."

Growing strategic partnerships

At Healthdirect Australia, we work in partnership with national, state and territory governments, and other private and public organisations, to support a health system that better serves the needs of all Australians.

Ensuring we operate as a collaborative, proactive and engaged strategic partner that connects governments, industry and consumers in order to improve health outcomes is one of our key priorities. This year we have continued to grow our partnerships to increase collaboration, share knowledge and improve our service provision.



"Healthdirect Australia has strong relationships across the health, social and ageing sectors. We work with our partners to deliver integrated services which make a real difference to people's health and wellbeing, meet the needs of consumers and industry, and make the most efficient use of government funding."

Dr Michael Costello
General Manager, Innovation and Gateway Services



Growing strategic partnerships

Working with government

Healthdirect Australia was established in 2006 under a Council of Australian Governments agreement to improve access to consistent health information, triage and advice. We procure, design and deliver a range of digital and telehealth services on behalf of our government shareholders.

Through our work, we facilitate inter-jurisdictional collaboration and enable sharing of national infrastructure and innovative ideas in order to deliver efficient and effective solutions that meet consumer needs and help our shareholders achieve their policy objectives.

The shareable assets we deliver and maintain for government include health content, the Australian health thesaurus, medicines database, the National Health Service Directory and associated application programming interfaces (APIs) and website widgets for the use of health and government services. By making these services available universally, Healthdirect Australia helps reduce duplication in the health sector and contain costs.

We coordinate with Primary Health Networks to support the delivery of national health initiatives in primary care. At the state and territory level, we work with health departments, ambulance services and Local Health Networks to assist with emergency demand management and winter planning (read about our Flu Fighters toolkit on page 33). At the national level, a productive partnership with the Australian Government's Department of Health underpins our delivery of the healthdirect, My Aged Care and Pregnancy, Birth and Baby services.



A proactive and strategic partner

We have worked in partnership with the Department of Health to deliver the My Aged Care service since 2013. Together, we have improved consumer experience and access to services for older Australians.

"The Department of Health and Healthdirect Australia have worked in partnership over the past five years to design, implement and operate the website and call centre for the My Aged Care system, the national entry point to Australia's aged care system.

As the My Aged Care system has grown, so too has our relationship with Healthdirect Australia. Together, we have undertaken major consumer research to understand the needs of senior Australians and their families accessing care. We have used the evidence to rapidly adapt and deliver new and improved service solutions to improve access. We have also worked on early stage, innovative proofs of concept to challenge our thinking on how access may evolve through different channels in the future.

Healthdirect has played an integral role in ensuring the capability and capacity of My Aged Care has expanded to meet increased levels of demand for its services. These improvements have resulted in better consumer experiences and more people accessing aged care services."

Fiona Buffinton
First Assistant Secretary
In-Home Aged Care Division
Department of Health

Sector partnerships

We work with a diverse range of stakeholders to help us achieve our vision and support better health outcomes for all Australians.

Through partnerships and collaboration, we can improve access to trustworthy information and services – both ours and our partners’ – innovate to stay at the forefront of emerging technologies, and share our national infrastructure and service network with others to improve efficiencies in the delivery of health services.

Information partnership

Our information partner network encompasses more than 180 leading health organisations, peak bodies, government agencies, research institutes, education institutes and not-for-profit entities, allowing us to connect Australians with expert health advice and support.

Our partners provide us with specialist content which we make available through our range of online services.

We also collaborate and share expertise with our partners, such as providing health literacy guidance on their content and insights into consumer behaviour across digital channels. Working together, we improve the quality and content of health information and advice for Australian consumers, beyond the services we deliver.

Information Partner Forum 2018

Each year, we invite our information partners to join us at a forum to learn, collaborate and connect. This year’s event was held in Melbourne with the theme ‘New world, new ways: using multichannel in health’.

Guest speakers Dr Monica Trujillo [formerly] of the Australian Digital Health Agency; Simon Elisha from Amazon Web Services; and Ian Vaile, Multichannel Lead at Healthdirect Australia provided expert accounts of the digital landscape, how technology is changing the way businesses operate and how to meet the needs and demands of consumers using digital channels in a health context.

We also heard from two of our information partners. Jude Czerenkowski from the Stroke Foundation and John Friedsam from CanTeen described how their organisations are improving communication with consumers by creating multiple touchpoints for health information and support.

This year’s forum attracted the event’s largest attendance yet, with more than 80 people from 60 partner organisations. Now in its fourth year, this well-regarded forum continues to strengthen partnerships and provide value to our partner organisations through the sharing of knowledge, cultivating ideas and enabling networking opportunities.

Amazon Web Services Advisory Board

For the second year in a row, Healthdirect Australia was invited to join Amazon Web Services’ Customer Advisory Board, hosted in the United States.

Sitting alongside some of the world’s leading organisations, such as Apple, Johnson & Johnson, Goldman Sachs, Atlassian, and Netflix, we were one of 42 advisors speaking to Amazon about the services and technology we require to meet the needs of our consumers.



“As the only public-sector organisation outside of the United States represented on Amazon’s Customer Advisory Board, we are recognised as an innovative, forward-thinking company that explores new technologies and delivers them to Australian health consumers.”

Bruce Haefele, General Manager, Technology, Healthdirect Australia

By attending the Customer Advisory Board, we receive direct access to product managers and future product development, enabling us to test and adopt new technologies ahead of the market. We also strengthen our strategic partnership with Amazon while networking with global leaders.

NetSetGO – a content collaboration

We were asked by the Department of Health to work with Netball Australia’s junior sports program, NetSetGO, to share information for children and their parents about living a healthy lifestyle.

We leveraged content on the healthdirect website to create a ‘Healthy and active children’ section, featuring practical and clinically safe information on 10 relevant topics including hygiene, hydration, healthy eating, active lifestyle and safety while playing sports. The content informed a printed activity book which was distributed to the 200,000 children enrolled in NetSetGO. Parents and coaches can also download factsheets on each topic.

Through this partnership we developed safe and practical content for Australian families and reached a large audience. Using healthdirect’s established resources also ensured government funding was used efficiently. We are liaising with other junior sporting codes to see if this information can be utilised further.

Flu Fighters

Off the back of a record flu season in 2017, we proactively sought to help the Australian health sector prepare for the 2018 season by sharing a range of tools and resources.

The Flu Fighter toolkit included healthdirect data on flu trends and risk, key messages for healthcare professionals and consumers, links to resources on the healthdirect website – such as an infographic explaining the difference between flu and colds – and social media posts.

This information was shared with all health jurisdictions, our shareholders, Primary Health Networks, peak industry bodies and media. It was designed to complement the advice health professionals and state health departments promote during winter and to explain how Healthdirect Australia’s services can be used as the first point of contact for consumers who have cold or flu symptoms, with the aim of reducing the impact on primary care and hospital resources.



Dr Monica Trujillo, formerly of the Australian Digital Health Agency, speaking at the Healthdirect Australia Partner Forum

Delivering value

At Healthdirect Australia, all our strategic initiatives are underpinned by a commitment to continually improve our services to ensure we are delivering high value to consumers, the health industry and shareholders while achieving the best outcomes for all Australians.

We work hard to provide sustainable and cost-efficient services and to ensure that people can have confidence in the quality, safety and efficacy of all services we deliver.

This year we increased access to our range of services to better meet the needs of different population groups, worked to improve the efficiency of our services so they deliver the best value for money and led quality improvement initiatives, both across Australia and internationally.

“

“The value of ‘peace of mind’ cannot be underestimated, and Healthdirect Australia is providing this on a daily basis. Peace of mind for the people using our services, that they are trusted and reliable. Peace of mind for our shareholders and other stakeholders, that a reputable, reliable and credible organisation is delivering and managing services on their behalf.”

Colin Seery
Chief Executive Officer

Delivering value

Health leadership

Technology-enabled healthcare advice is developing rapidly. While there are many benefits to digital and telehealth services – such as reduced unnecessary visits to primary care and hospital-based services, as well as the promotion of more timely care for those who really need it – little information is available about the performance and effectiveness of existing health advice services.

We have taken the lead on several initiatives that aim to improve the quality, safety and efficacy of health services in Australia.

International Health Advice Roundtable

The International Health Advice Roundtable (iHART) was founded by Healthdirect Australia in 2015. iHART is an international entity for benchmarking telehealth and digital health services.

The second iHART meeting was held in Calgary, Canada, in April 2018 and was attended by representatives from Australia, New Zealand, England, Wales, Scotland, Canada and the United States. Participants shared their experiences in several areas, such as the channels that consumers expect to access for health advice, the different service models used in each country, what health advice services will look like in the future, workforce issues and benchmarking data.

Collaborating with our iHART colleagues helps us identify opportunities to improve our services. Following the meeting, we determined several initiatives for the coming year, including tracking the patient journey across healthdirect's service access points, increasing awareness of telehealth nursing as a specialty, and incorporating natural language processing to enhance our healthdirect Symptom Checker.

Australian Standard for Health Contact Centres

This year we worked with Standards Australia on developing Health Contact Centre Standard AS5205.

We chaired a Drafting Group Committee comprised of representatives from service providers, government, peak bodies and consumer groups. The standard was drafted with input from all representatives and guidance from Standards Australia. It was then released for public comment and feedback before a final editorial review.

When complete, this project will provide the first ever industry-agreed standard that all health contact centres can be assessed against to ensure they provide a high-quality service. It is expected that the standard will be published in late 2018.

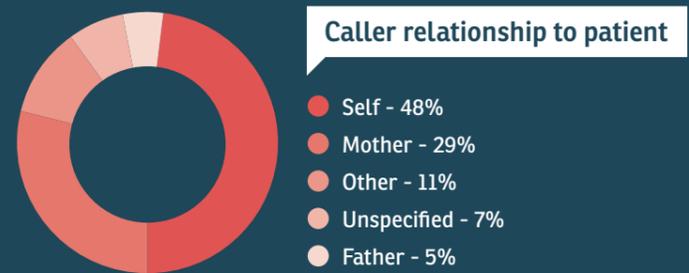
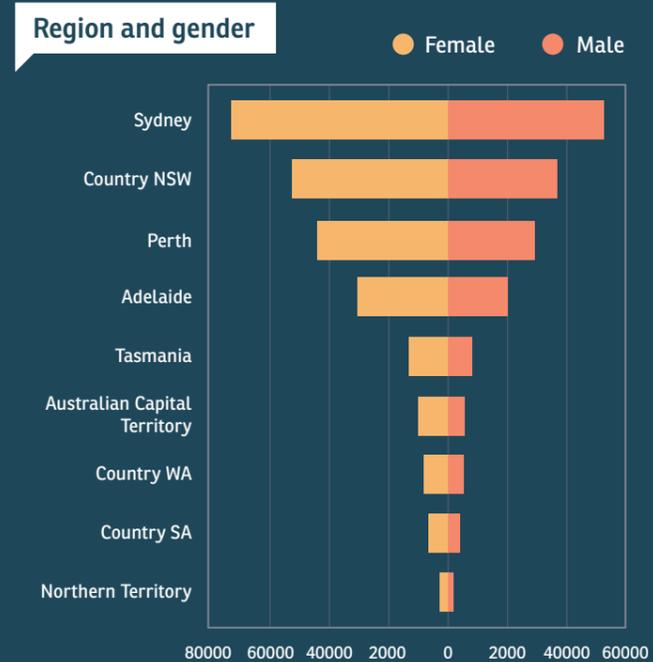
Accreditation

Healthdirect Australia is fully accredited with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) EQuIP5 Corporate Health Services Standards, recognising our commitment to providing high-quality health services.

We are now in stage four of the accreditation cycle (Periodic Review) and preparing for this review, which will include an onsite visit by two ACHS assessors. We will be assessed against the EQuIP6 Healthcare Support Service Standards mandatory criteria. Accreditation is not simply a 'tick the box' exercise; it's about continually improving so as to ensure our services remain reliable, safe and improve health outcomes.

Who calls the healthdirect helpline?

Calls to the healthdirect helpline by demographic, FY17-18



In the financial year 2017-18, use of the healthdirect service by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continued to grow. Our contact centre call data shows that 4.7% of callers identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, higher than their 3% representation in the Australian population (Australia's welfare 2017, AIHW).

Access to health services

Australia has one of the best health systems in the world, but it is not always easy for people to find the information and get the care they need when they need it.

At Healthdirect Australia, we are committed to ensuring that everyone has equal access to the most appropriate health information and advice.

Reaching more people than ever before

We connect more people to appropriate health services through access to trusted, local information, triage and advice – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This year, all our services have grown and we're reaching more people who are most in need of health services, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through our healthdirect service (see graphic to the left).

Expansion of services to Norfolk Island

This year we expanded our network of services to cover Norfolk Island – a tiny island in the Pacific Ocean about 1,400 kilometres east of Northern NSW and one of Australia's most remote locations.

We worked closely with Norfolk Telecom and a mainland phone carrier to enable access to our 1800 numbers, and the Norfolk Island police and ambulance department on processes for transferring calls appropriately between our services and local emergency response services.

On 6 October 2017, the 1,300 Norfolk Island residents were given access to the healthdirect helpline, the after hours GP helpline and Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline, in addition to being able to access health services provided through Medicare. We also added a range of local health and related services to the National Health Services Directory.

Our medicines story

This year, we have led the charge to provide Australian consumers with access to more consumer-friendly information about medicines.

We launched a medicines information service on the healthdirect website in 2016 with the aim of reducing confusion and the misuse of medicines. This service brings together data from publicly available sources, such as the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG), the Australian Medicines Terminology (AMT) and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

We have continued to improve our service so as to provide consumers who are searching for medicines information online with trusted and digitally-accessible resources.

Supporting quality use of medicines

As we developed our medicines information, we found that it was difficult to integrate and display data from the Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) leaflets on our website since the information lacked a consistent structure.

We met with Medicines Australia's Regulatory Affairs Working Group (RAWG) – whose aim is to provide timely access to innovative prescription medicines for all Australian patients – to share what we had done and to explain these concerns.

As a result, the working group is proposing to create a template that the medicines industry can use to provide more structured CMI content in a format that can be rapidly updated and distributed. This should enable consumers to have access to the most current medicines information.

Working together with industry

Sanofi's Dr Helen Critchley, Global Regulatory Affairs – Country Head, Australia and New Zealand, and a member of the RAWG, explains how work to improve Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) leaflets will support better quality use of medicines.

"In an increasingly digital healthcare environment, enabling patients and healthcare professionals to easily locate, navigate and identify specific information within the CMI, such as information relating to side effects, is vitally important," Dr Critchley says.

"Ensuring medicines are used correctly is critical for patients to achieve the best health outcomes from treatment. The information in the CMI is designed to ensure patients understand how to take the medicine, how to recognise any potential side effects that they would need to discuss with their healthcare professionals and how to appropriately store the medicine.



"Healthdirect has significant expertise in understanding the medicines information that Australian consumers are searching for on the internet. Through their search intelligence they identified one of the barriers to more effective utilisation of medicines information is the lack of consistency in the format in which data is provided in the Consumer Medicines Information leaflets."

"These changes proposed will enable the CMI content to be available with the most up-to-date information on relevant digital platforms. This will provide the option for healthcare professionals and patients to more quickly find the information they need to use medicines appropriately, when they need it.

"The future potential to connect medicines information directly from an e-health record will also enable individuals to better utilise information to suit their individual needs."

Supporting a connected health system

Demands on the health system are rising. Growing numbers of emergency department presentations; increased chronic and complex illness; long waiting lists; and complicated systems that make it hard for people to access the services they need, all put pressure on available health resources.

Through our established network of services, we improve health outcomes by ensuring people receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time. We help to relieve pressure on frontline health services by saving resources, time and lives.

Improving understanding of health services

We worked with Canterbury Hospital, Central and Eastern Primary Health Network (PHN) and the University of New South Wales (UNSW) to produce two animated videos that aim to educate people from non-English speaking backgrounds about how to access appropriate healthcare services.

'The role of your GP' explains how to choose a GP, the services they provide, information about cost, and which services to contact if a GP is not available, such as healthdirect. 'What care do I need?' provides an overview of which health service – for example, GP services, pharmacies, hospitals or healthdirect – is appropriate for different situations. The videos will include voiceovers in Mandarin, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Arabic and Bengali.

By supporting development of health literacy in culturally and linguistically diverse populations – including their understanding of how Australia's healthcare systems and services can meet their needs – the videos aim to reduce unnecessary emergency department visits. They will be available on the healthdirect website and we will work with hospitals, community groups and PHNs for further distribution.

Ambulance response project reduces 'lights and sirens'

Working with our service providers and ambulance services, we have improved the information provided from the healthdirect helpline used to determine ambulance response times.

Previously, when a healthdirect nurse determined a caller needed an ambulance, most frequently an emergency response was dispatched by ambulance services. Audit evidence, however, showed that this was not appropriate for many clinical presentations.

We formed a clinical panel and developed three new clinically-appropriate timeframes for calls referred from healthdirect to triple zero (000):

- **Emergency response** – a 'lights and sirens' response for calls where the patient is compromised or likely to deteriorate
- **Immediate response** – a response within 20–30 minutes for patients where the condition requires urgent intervention
- **Time-sensitive response** – within an hour, usually for patients who will require an ambulance for transport for clinical, mobility or social reasons

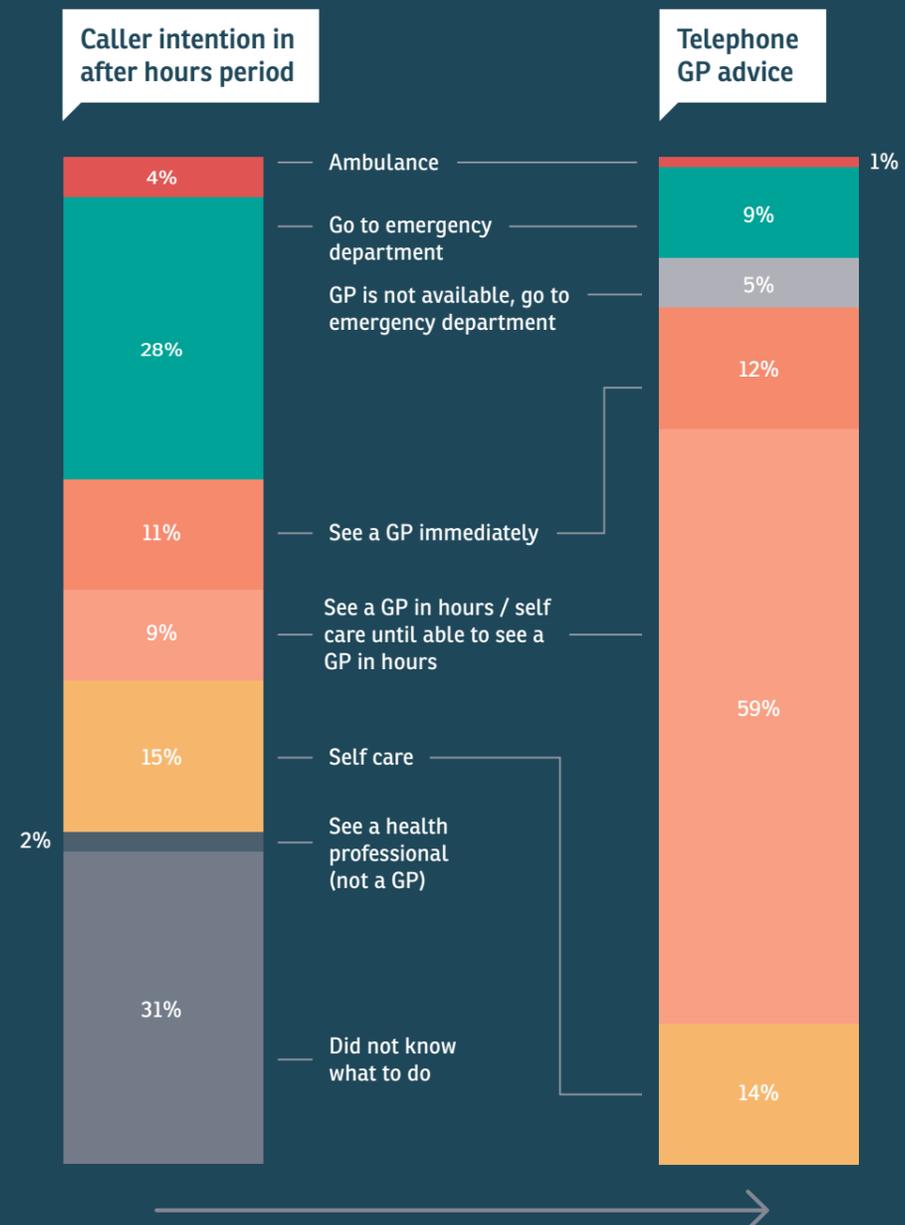
This project assists ambulance services in prioritising patients according to their clinical need. Since implementation, half (49.1%) of calls referred to triple zero have been determined as requiring a time-sensitive response.

Matching people with the right care for their situation

An analysis of survey data from the after hours GP helpline compared how callers intended to manage their condition prior to calling with the advice given by the GP.

Providing access to appropriate and timely advice about what to do next for their health condition helps redirect people to more appropriate care and prevents avoidable ambulance trips or visits to the emergency department. According to our survey data, 81 per cent of callers to the after hours GP helpline either fully or partly complied with the advice they received.

An analysis of calls to the after hours GP helpline, showing caller intention and advice given by the GP, FY17-18



The graph on the left shows the range of ways callers intended to resolve their health concern prior to calling the after hours GP helpline.

On the right, the advice given by the telephone GP highlights the important role this service plays in the health system – helping those seeking medical assistance out of hours find the right care for their situation and reducing the impact on emergency services.

Harnessing organisational capability

At Healthdirect Australia, we place a strong emphasis on ensuring we have the right people, technology and facilities to deliver on our strategy in the most productive way possible.

This year we have been working to make the most of our recent investment in a new internal document collaboration and management platform. We have also updated our business continuity processes and built capability in our staff to develop Agile and Lean work practices.



"We have brilliant people working at Healthdirect Australia and to help them achieve their goals we need to make sure they are properly equipped. Looking ahead, we will be moving to new premises which will facilitate enhanced productivity and collaboration."

Matthew Day
Chief Operating Officer



Harnessing organisational capability

Our people

Our employees are passionate about achieving Healthdirect Australia's vision of empowering consumers to manage their own health. To achieve this, they are motivated to take on challenging work, access learning opportunities and lead the way in digital health service delivery.

Healthdirect Australia provides employees with a collaborative and flexible work environment where people can work with purpose, keep learning and achieve a positive work/life balance.

Challenging work

We offer employees the challenge of working with emerging technologies in an environment that welcomes creativity and has a focus on quality. The shift from single channel to multichannel services has occurred through internal innovation and a desire to take a consumer-centric approach to the design and delivery of existing services. Initiatives like the healthdirect Hackathon and National Health Services Directory service desk upgrade (see page 44) are evidence of employees taking up the challenge and collaborating to do things differently.

Formal and informal learning

Ongoing learning is encouraged both through informal and formal learning opportunities to build technical competencies and overall organisational capability. This year, more than 120 individuals took part in formal learning to grow their skills through various workshops, certifications and online programs. On-the-job learning is provided regularly, with more skilled employees taking the time to share their knowledge with less experienced colleagues.

Finding balance

At Healthdirect Australia, there is a strong focus on wellbeing and enabling people to bring their 'best self' to work by being able to manage their professional, family and community commitments. Employees work in a family-friendly environment where they can salary sacrifice for additional leave and access flexible work arrangements.

Employees are encouraged to look after their health and wellbeing and are supported through initiatives such as The Get Healthy at Work program, wellness talks and free flu vaccinations.

A Hackathon to build ideas

Healthdirect Australia's first Hackathon event was an opportunity to explore and nurture innovative ideas among individuals and teams in a challenging and fun-filled 32 hours. It allowed space for teams to collaborate, design, rapidly prototype and showcase ideas that enhance the way our services are delivered.

With 12 ideas pitched, seven teams formed and worked together to flesh out and problem-solve limitations or obstacles towards a roadmap to delivery. For example, one of the ideas was a brand-new tool to improve the way information is harvested from our information partner websites and displayed on websites managed by Healthdirect Australia. The team is well underway with bringing this project to fruition in late 2018.

Tim Stokes, who led one of the Hackathon teams, gave some insight into why the Hackathon environment is so conducive to new idea generation.

"In our day-to-day work, we have constraints which are there because we need to maintain security, follow due process and meet objectives to deliver high-quality and safe services.



"A Hackathon allows the freedom to think outside the box, look at things from a completely different perspective and come up with brand new ideas."

"Then we can take these ideas and look at them within the constraints of our service delivery processes and see if they'll work and add value," says Tim.



Marisa is helping her colleagues undertake business improvements



Skilling staff in business efficiency

Marisa Corniola is a Black Belt-trained Lean Six Sigma expert and Business Improvement Lead in Healthdirect Australia's Portfolio Management Office. She believes streamlining business processes will help our staff be better prepared to achieve our goals.

The right staff with the right skills

Lean Six Sigma is a combination of two systems that work together to improve business efficiency and organisational capability. The 'Lean' component analyses where processes can be minimised or removed, saving time and money; Six Sigma is a methodology used to reduce variation from a business process.

According to Marisa, who is using her experience to mentor 10 Healthdirect Australia employees currently undertaking Lean Six Sigma Green Belt accreditation, it's not that we are currently inefficient, but there are always ways to improve.

Over the course of six months, under Marisa's guidance, staff from across the business will learn how to understand and optimise processes, identify and implement cost-saving measures and teach the principles of Lean Six Sigma to others.

“It's great that we are teaching these principles to our staff. Enhanced productivity is a key element in our strategic business plan and the Lean Six Sigma methodology provides a framework for improving and perfecting process performance.”

Applying the principles for better business outcomes

Marisa says each employee on the course must identify a project that involves fixing something.

“They might identify a process that involves too many people, or where there is duplication of effort, cost or time, and use their knowledge of Lean Six Sigma to re-engineer or simplify the process in a way that results in increased efficiency and cost savings,” Marisa says.

“With more people across the business understanding the Lean Six Sigma principles, we can optimise the way we deliver outcomes – we want to deliver the same results for a lot less and this comes down to business methodology.

“With our newly-accredited Green Belts, we can embed business efficiency as a mindset across all departments.”

Harnessing organisational capability

Improving collaboration and supporting productivity

To ensure our staff have the appropriate support to achieve their goals, Healthdirect Australia places a significant emphasis on providing the right tools and facilities.

Fit-for-purpose facilities

Over the past six years, our organisation has grown from a small team taking up one corner of a single office, to a workforce of 200 spread across three floors and two buildings. In late 2018 we will move to a new space which will consolidate our organisation's offices on one large floor in a single building.

The new premises will be designed for our own needs and provide greater support for collaboration, agile working and projects as they gear up and down. The need for a flexible working environment and improved communication are topics that have been raised regularly by staff in engagement surveys, and we are looking forward to seeing the benefits of our planned changes unfold over the coming years.

Supporting collaboration

In 2016, Healthdirect Australia invested in a document management system, Sharepoint Online, which allowed for collaboration and co-authorship of documents. The company-wide rollout brought information together in a central area, making it possible to share information within and across teams, while also increasing the security of our intellectual property and introducing records management.

A Productivity and Collaboration Initiative has been established to build on this initial investment. Its objective is to improve productivity by further simplifying document authoring, sharing and search, and introducing a collaboration experience that includes workplace chat, meetings and attachments, making it easy to form teams and collaborate on any topic. Another efficiency feature allows our employees to sign on to all essential business software from a single sign-in point at the start of each day.

This year, we enabled video conferencing to enhance meeting experiences and reduce travel required, particularly for Board members located outside New South Wales.

Ensuring business continuity

We are updating our existing business continuity capabilities to ensure they remain relevant and effective in the face of constant change, as well as intuitive and easy to use during a crisis.

With this proven and effective business continuity capability, Healthdirect Australia can ensure:

- the uninterrupted delivery of customer services that meet service level obligations
- relevant business systems and processes continue to meet all compliance requirements
- the ongoing protection of Healthdirect Australia's staff and assets
- our brand and reputation are not adversely impacted

As part of the upgrade process, we have tested several contemporary scenarios related to IT security and business risk with our Board; the first in a planned series of simulated critical disruptive incidents to ensure we are prepared at the highest levels. Regular assessment of our key vendors' business continuity plans and how they align with our own is also a key factor in bolstering our business resilience capabilities on all fronts.



Empowering staff for success: The NHSD Operations team's story

Healthdirect Australia employs specialists in many different fields who need different ways of working to achieve results. The National Health Services Directory (NHSD) Operations Team adopted an Agile working methodology to run a project to build their own service desk platform.

Dealing with a legacy system

The NHSD Operations Team was stuck using an old system that required a lot of manual data entry. They were great at their jobs, managing service requests in good time, but the volume of manual data entry involved with each request meant they never had the time to dedicate to improvements.

Decommissioning the old system and upgrading to a more sophisticated and secure tool was a daunting task for a non-technical service desk team. Because they service external customers, a new service desk platform would be too complex for an off-the-shelf solution and the cost of an outsourced solution was prohibitive. They were going to have to build it themselves.

Pulling together as a team

Knowing the requirements for the new system, the team invested in an outsourced (Atlassian) proof of concept which became the foundation for a six-month project developing a custom service desk platform.

To achieve their goal, the team needed to adopt a new way of thinking and working, develop new skills and split themselves across their existing service desk responsibilities and the new project. They started working like a tech team, adopting an agile methodology of working in 'sprints' to achieve each next step of the project.

“Our team already worked well together, but this project empowered them to reveal hidden skills, have a renewed respect for each other's ideas and work, take ownership of their priorities and choose how they want to approach tasks.

We took online courses, brainstormed, tried and failed sometimes – all this while maintaining service levels and learning how to work together in new ways.”

Damien Humphrey, member of the NHSD Operations Team

A more effective service desk

In April 2018, the team successfully launched the new service desk. It has more automation, has the potential to integrate with other systems, and greatly reduced the manual follow-up previously required. As the team embeds the new software, they continue to work according to an agile methodology to prioritise improvements and future upgrades.

“We are proud of what we've achieved together,” he says. “The working culture at Healthdirect Australia is one of challenging and empowering people. They know that you are the person who knows your job best and you have the freedom and flexibility to innovate and try new things to get it done. This project is proof of that,” says Damien.

Leadership and governance

At Healthdirect Australia, we have a strong leadership team that drives us to achieve our vision, backed by an engaged and supportive Board of Directors and shareholders.

This year, we made changes to our governance structure following a shareholder review of the organisation, refreshed our Board membership, and welcomed Dr Marie-Louise Stokes to our Executive Team as Chief Medical Officer.



We are fortunate to have a dynamic leadership team from diverse backgrounds who bring a broad range of health and digital industry thought-leadership to the company. We work closely with the Board of Directors to deliver the shareholders' investment vision."

Denise Alexander, General Manager, People and Communications



Healthdirect Australia CEO Colin Seery opening the Information Partner Forum

Leadership and governance

Corporate governance

Known originally as the National Health Call Centre Network Ltd, Healthdirect Australia was established in August 2006, following a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement to establish a public company, limited by shares, as a vehicle to procure, manage and deliver telehealth services on behalf of Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

The original purpose of the company was to run a national nurse-led telephone triage helpline, known as healthdirect. Prior to the COAG agreement, several states and territories ran their own helplines, and others had plans to establish similar services. It was recognised that a national approach was more desirable since this would achieve clinical consistency, economies of scale and avoid unnecessary duplication.

Today, Healthdirect Australia has evolved from procuring and managing a single telephone triage service to offering multiple digital and telehealth services that support governments in meeting the different health needs of the Australian population.

Linking operational strategy to health policy

Over the past 12 months, Healthdirect Australia's Board and shareholders have renewed our strategic priorities to ensure our company continues to provide trusted and valued services, now and into the future.

The Board and the Shareholder Committee have fostered a closer working relationship, meeting regularly to discuss how we can deliver on the shareholders' investment vision.

Through this working relationship, the Shareholder Committee can communicate emerging policy priority areas from each jurisdiction and work with the Board to identify strategies where Healthdirect Australia can add value.

Governance structure

Our external and internal governance processes and committees ensure we meet legal, compliance and financial obligations while developing high quality, clinically safe services.



Our executive team

Our leadership team brings a breadth of knowledge and experience to Healthdirect Australia, working together to ensure the day-to-day running of the business as well as looking to the future for opportunities to better deliver health services to Australians.



The Healthdirect Australia Executive team (L-R): Matthew Day, Michael Costello, Marie-Louise Stokes, Colin Seery, Bruce Haefele, Denise Alexander, Andrew Bryant.

Colin Seery
Chief Executive Officer
MBA, BAPSc, DipEd, GAICD

Colin leads Healthdirect Australia in achieving its vision through the delivery of our strategic plans. He is passionate about the potential for innovation in health to improve the lives of others while creating efficiencies within the health system.

Colin has held leadership positions in the Australian health sector for more than 20 years, spending much of his time in senior executive roles both in private and not-for-profit organisations, including the Hospital Benefits Association and Sano Consulting.

He joined Healthdirect Australia in 2011, after six years as Managing Director of the National Safety Council of Australia. Colin also spent seven years in management positions at the Sydney Swans Football Club, where he was appointed CEO in 2002.

Denise Alexander
General Manager, People and Communications
MBA (Mgmt), GAICD

Denise joined Healthdirect Australia in 2012 in the role of General Manager Corporate Services, moving to head a new People and Development division two years later as our company expanded its integrated digital services and grew in size. In 2017, she added Corporate Communications to her portfolio, working with the team to enhance our employee value proposition and market the capabilities of Healthdirect Australia.

Denise has an extensive background in corporate management and people leadership in the digital and media sectors, including seven years on the senior executive team that led the development of the first digital and online services at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (abc.net.au and ABC2).

Andrew Bryant
General Manager, Consumer Health Services
BSc (Phys) (Hons)

Andrew joined Healthdirect Australia in 2013 and was promoted to Online Services Manager in 2014. In that role Andrew led the online team successfully through the delivery of key milestone developments and periods of service growth, including the development of Carer Gateway, the healthdirect Symptom Checker, the healthdirect mobile app and the expansion of our unique information services capabilities.

As General Manager of Consumer Health Services, Andrew leads the development, growth and operations of our services, which include healthdirect; the after hours GP helpline; Pregnancy, Birth and Baby; the Get Healthy Information & Coaching Service®; the NSW Palliative Care After Hours Helpline; and healthdirect Video Call.

He also leads the Information Management, Content Production and Partner Management business units, and the Consumer Marketing team, supporting and building capability across the organisation.

Previously, Andrew was Director, Digital Business Applications for SingTel Optus, a role that followed a strong career spanning product, mobile apps, business development and marketing in the mobile/telecommunications sector (at Optus, Hutchison and 3 Mobile).

Dr Michael Costello
General Manager, Innovation and Gateway Services
PhD, BSc (Hons)

As General Manager of Innovation and Gateway Services, Michael works with our customers in government to lead and develop innovative solutions for consumers who need to find the right advice, services and support in health-related areas.

He leads the My Aged Care and Carer Gateway services and is also responsible for leveraging and growing our multichannel and product innovation capabilities across the organisation.

Michael sits on several key Commonwealth eHealth boards and innovation advisory committees including the Commonwealth's Aged Care Board, the Secure Messaging Program Steering Group, and the Australian Digital Commerce Association Advisory Council and Innowell's Project Synergy.

Prior to joining Healthdirect Australia in July 2016, Michael was the Executive Director of Innovation, Strategy and Architecture for eHealth NSW where he delivered the eHealth strategy for NSW Health as well as a long-term funding plan. Michael has previously worked as a Director for PwC Australia where he consulted to governments and major corporates on IT strategy. He also spent several years in senior executive and security roles for Dimension Data.

Matthew Day
Chief Operating Officer
BSc (Hons), GAICD, CGMA

As Chief Operating Officer, Matthew supports the CEO, Board and Executive with business modelling and funding strategies. He has responsibility for much of our back office including Strategic Sourcing, Pricing and Finance, Corporate IT, Legal, Risk Analysis Registry and Portfolio Management.

Prior to joining Healthdirect Australia in 2014, Matthew gained 20 years' experience in senior sales, commercial and finance roles in the information technology sector. He spent two years as Regional President, Asia Pacific at Ventyx, a supplier of enterprise services, where he led the company's expansion into China. His career with CSC included five years as Australian CFO and five years managing customer relationships and sales. Matthew has a deep understanding of the Australian and global healthcare systems and launched CSC's Australian Healthcare practice in 2007.

Bruce Haefele
General Manager, Technology
BCom (BusMgt), DipComSysEng

Bruce joined Healthdirect Australia in 2012 as Chief Architect, before becoming General Manager of Technology in July 2016. Bruce leads and executes the vision and strategy for technology innovation, security and service design across Healthdirect Australia's services. He leads the growth and operations of the National Health Services Directory and is responsible for our technology platform, engineering practices and security. Bruce plays an important role in guiding the organisation towards a more agile operating model and along with his team, shapes government thinking on better approaches to delivering digital services.

Bruce is a recognised technology leader, currently serving on the Amazon Web Services customer advisory board, and is a pioneer of public cloud for the public sector in Australia.

With over 20 years' experience in health, government, manufacturing and financial services, he has a track record of successful delivery on large, complex and strategic technology change initiatives. A natural disruptor, Bruce is passionate about applying technology to make a difference by improving social outcomes, particularly for the complex health system.

Dr Marie-Louise Stokes
Chief Medical Officer, Clinical Governance
MBBS, BA, MPH, FAFPHM

Marie-Louise is responsible for strategic clinical leadership across the business to support the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of telehealth and digital services. As Chief Medical Officer, she also plays a key role in building advocacy and support for our organisation through influencing and leveraging networks within the medical sector, including engagement with peak bodies.

Prior to joining Healthdirect Australia in June 2018, Marie-Louise was Director of Education at the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (2011-2017) where she was responsible for curriculum development, training program management, supervisor support, assessment, accreditation and research and evaluation. Marie-Louise is a public health physician and has worked in public health, clinical policy, medical training and workforce roles within the NSW health system.

Our Board

Our Board guides the strategic direction of Healthdirect Australia. Three new Board members were appointed, effective 1 July 2018.

Directors as of 1 July 2018



Mr Wayne Cahill, Chair

BHA, LLB, MCom, FCHSM, FAICD

Wayne has been a partner with a major law firm for more than 25 years, specialising in commercial health and aged care work, and has previously held chief executive positions at health organisations. He is a Director of Navy Health and a member of their Audit and Compliance Committee and Remuneration and Nomination Committee. Wayne is also a Director and Chair of Co-Group. He has been a Director and Chairman/President of the Australasian College of Health Service Management and a Director of HealthQuest, Blake Dawson Partners Superannuation Fund, the Health Services Association of NSW, Institute for Magnetic Resonance Research, Macquarie Area Health Service and the Skin & Cancer Foundation Australia. Wayne has been acknowledged as a leading health and aged care lawyer in Australia by Best Lawyers 2008-2019, inclusive.

As of 1 July 2018, at Healthdirect Australia, Wayne is Chair of the Board, a member of the Finance, Risk Management and Audit Committee (FRMAC) and a member of the Project Review and Workplace Health and Safety Advisory Committee (PROWAC).

In the 17-18 financial year Wayne was Chair of the Finance, Risk Management and Audit Committee (FRMAC).



Professor David Ashbridge, Director

(appointed, effective 1 July 2018)

MBBS, DipChildHealth, DipTropMed, Master of Public Health, MRCGP, GAICD

David has held senior roles in health in both state and Commonwealth governments. Most recently, he was CEO of Barwon Health and prior to taking up this position, David worked for 22 years in the Northern Territory, where he practised initially as a remote area medical officer in Aboriginal communities. He moved into health administration and was CEO of the Northern Territory Department of Health from 2006 to 2010.

Professor Ashbridge is a graduate from the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He is also a Member of the Royal College of General Practitioners (MRCGP).

At Healthdirect Australia, David is a member of the Clinical Governance Advisory Group (CGAG).



Dr Michael Beckoff, Director

MBBS, FACRRM, FAICD

Michael is a procedural rural generalist with over 40 years' experience, currently working as a locum in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia. Michael holds several corporate roles in health. He is a Director and Vice President of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM); Chair of the Rural Doctors Workforce Agency (RDWA) Board in South Australia; Clinical Adviser for Country Health South Australia Local Health Network (CHSALHN); Chair of the Board of the Murray Mallee General Practice Network (MMGPN); and Chair of the South Australian Statewide Committee for Shared Care with General Practice. After graduating from the University of Adelaide and completing post-graduate training positions, Michael joined Bridge Clinic at Murray Bridge South Australia in 1977, where he was an equity partner for 33 years. Other previous roles include being an Inaugural Member of the South Australian Health Performance Council and Chair of General Practice South Australia.

As of 1 July 2018, at Healthdirect Australia, Michael is Chair of the Clinical Governance Advisory Group (CGAG).

In the 17-18 financial year Michael was a member of the Clinical Governance Advisory Group (CGAG).



Mr Peter G. Dowling AM, Director

BA (Acc), FCA, FAICD

Peter is an accountant and former Ernst & Young Partner. An experienced company director and independent audit and risk committee member, Peter's current board appointments include Metro South Hospital and Health Service and TAFE Queensland among others. Peter's independent audit and risk committee roles include Queensland local governments and state agencies. In 2007 Peter was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to accountancy and the community.

At Healthdirect Australia, Peter is a member of the Finance, Risk Management and Audit Committee (FRMAC).



Mrs Jane Muirsmith

BCom (Hons) FCA, GAICD

Jane is an accomplished digital and marketing strategist, having held several executive positions in Sydney, Melbourne, Singapore and New York. Jane is Managing Director of Lenox Hill, a digital strategy and advisory firm and is a Non-Executive Director of Cedar Woods Properties Ltd, Australian Finance Group (AFG) and the Telethon Kids Institute.



Ms Peta Jurd, Director
(appointed, effective 1 July 2018)

BComm, DipLaw, DipCorpMgmt, CPA, FAICD

Peta is currently Chief Commercial Officer and Company Secretary of digital health technology company Simavita Limited. Prior to this, she was Executive Director at Technology Enabling Healthcare and Head of Health Solutions at Hills Limited. Peta has also held senior management positions at Telstra, Veolia Environmental Services and Mayne Nickless Health Care.

She has more than 17 years' experience in healthcare and has substantial Board director experience in a variety of roles. She currently sits as a Board Director for the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

At Healthdirect Australia, Peta is a member of the Clinical Governance Advisory Group (CGAG) and a member of the Project Review and Workplace Health and Safety Advisory Committee (PROWAC).

She is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand, where she is Chair of the Western Australian Business Advisory Committee. She is a member of the Ambassadorial Council – UWA Business School and is a former president of the Women's Advisory Council to the Western Australian Government.



Dr Martin Laverty, Director
(appointed, effective 1 July 2018)

LLM, PhD

Martin is Chief Executive of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia. He is Chair of the General Aviation Advisory Board, Deputy Chair of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Advisory Board, Director of the National Disability Insurance Agency, and a member the NSW Public Service Commission Advisory Board.

Martin has formerly been a director of the National Heart Foundation, a member of the Australian Government Aged Care Sector Advisory Committee, and a member of the National Health Performance Authority's Private Hospital Committee. A lawyer by training, his doctoral thesis was on the contribution of board directors to organisational outcomes.

At Healthdirect Australia, Martin is a member of the Finance, Risk Management and Audit Committee (FRMAC).

As of 1 July 2018, at Healthdirect Australia, Jane is Chair of the Finance, Risk Management and Audit Committee (FRMAC) and a member of the Project Review and Workplace Health and Safety Advisory Committee (PROWAC).

In the 17-18 financial year Jane was a member of the Finance, Risk Management and Audit Committee (FRMAC).

Outgoing Directors as of 30 June 2018



Ms Patricia McKenzie, Chair
(resigned, effective 30 June 2018)

LLB, FAICD

Patricia is an experienced chair and director in the energy, government, health and not-for-profit sectors. Patricia is Chair of Essential Energy, which owns and operates Australia's largest electricity network, and a Non-Executive Director of the APA Group, the largest natural gas infrastructure company in Australia. She was also formerly a director of Transgrid, the Australian Energy Market Operator Limited and Macquarie Generation; CEO of Gas Market Company Limited; Chair of Sunnyfield Limited; and Chair of Diabetes Australia.

At Healthdirect Australia, Patricia was Chair of the Board, a member of the Finance, Risk Management and Audit Committee (FRMAC).



Professor Anthony Lawler, Director
(resigned, effective 30 June 2018)

BMedSci, MBBS, FACEM, GAICD, MBA (Health Mgmt)

Anthony is Chief Medical Officer in Tasmania, Immediate Past President of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, and Professor of Health Services at the University of Tasmania. Anthony is also a member of the Australian Medical Council's Specialist Education Accreditation Committee, sits on the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), and is a member of the Clinical Principal Committee of AHMAC. Anthony is a Director of the International Federation for Emergency Medicine, and of the Postgraduate Medical Education Council of Tasmania. He has a broad range of experience in medical representative roles, including as a member of the Federal Council and Federal Executive of the Australian Medical Association, and as President of the Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Medical Association.

At Healthdirect Australia, Anthony was Chair of the Clinical Governance Advisory Group (CGAG).



Dr Julie Thompson
(resigned, effective 30 June 2018)

MBBS, GradDipEd, FAICD

Julie is a procedural general practitioner in rural Victoria and an experienced director on a range of health-related Boards. Julie is currently a Director of South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network (SEMPHN) and Chair of the National Quality Management Committee of BreastScreen Australia. She has been a director of the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV), chair of the Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP), chair of General Practice Divisions Victoria (GPDV), and president of the West Gippsland Healthcare Group (WGHG). Julie has broad experience in health service development having served on a range of advisory groups including the Victorian Ministerial Advisory Committee on Mental Health (MACMH), the Victorian Ministerial Advisory Committee on Surgical Services (MACSS), the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) National Mental Health Working Group, the AHMAC Joint Action Group on Population Health, Cancer Australia's Advisory Council and the Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council (APAC).

At Healthdirect Australia, Julie was a member of the Clinical Governance Advisory Group (CGAG).



Meng Chen Curtis used the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby website for information about pregnancy, labour and parenting.

© Healthdirect Australia Ltd 2018

Healthdirect Australia Ltd owns all copyright in these materials, including (without limitation) text, graphics and information, or uses it under licence or applicable law.

Other than as permitted by the *Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)*, no part of these materials may be reproduced in any material form or transmitted to any other person without the prior written permission of Healthdirect Australia Ltd.

Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights for purposes other than those permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)*, should be submitted for the attention of Healthdirect Australia Ltd via email to communications@healthdirect.gov.au.

An online version of this report can be accessed at about.healthdirect.gov.au.



Level 4, 477 Pitt Street, Haymarket, NSW 2000

P (02) 9263 9000 **E** info@healthdirect.org.au

W about.healthdirect.gov.au

ABN 28 118 291 044

