

# Health Expert Working Group (HEWG)— terms of reference

## Introduction

The Australian Broadband Advisory Council (ABAC) is advising the Australian Government about ways in which digital and broadband communications infrastructure can be used to lift the health sector's economic output and the welfare of Australians more generally, particularly in regional areas. To assist with its deep dive into health, ABAC is setting up a Health Expert Working Group (HEWG).

The response of the Australian health system to the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated its resilience and agility to simultaneously protect the health of the community and the health system while also seizing the opportunity to accelerate access to care through digital and virtual channels.

As Australia begins to emerge from the critical response phase of the pandemic ahead of much of the world, it has the opportunity to further build on the shifts to enhance the health system response and to improve health outcomes by connecting health consumers and providers to better information, care and support through virtual and digital channels.

## Priority areas of focus

The ABAC HEWG will explore priority initiatives and opportunities to support the following system priorities for health.

1. Empowering and activating health consumers through smart technologies.
2. Scaling virtual and digitally enabled health care models to improve health outcomes and access to care, particularly for:
  - a. rural and remote communities
  - b. First Nations people
  - c. the management of chronic disease.
3. Supporting the clinical workforce through virtually enabled supervision, training and education models that supports quality care, particularly in terms of:
  - a. primary care and access to specialist care
  - b. providers in rural and remote communities.
4. Driving value in the system through the right incentives (consumer and provider), including:
  - a. collaborative and placed based commissioning
  - b. paying for better care – Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) payments.
5. Driving the development of strategies to support technology and data vendor eco-system to deliver the future health system.

## Co-conveners

The HEWG will work in collaboration with the Department of Health and liaise with relevant parties and agencies including the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the Australian Digital Health Agency and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

The co-conveners for the HEWG are:

- Associate Professor Christine Giles, who is an executive leader in health with organisational and health policy experience at the Commonwealth and State level and across the public and private sectors. She is a Sydney Local Health District Board member.
- Luke Baxby is Deloitte's Partner for Health and Human Services, and is a leading Australian healthcare expert having spent 20+ years in healthcare including on healthcare pathways enabled by digital technology.

## Approach

The table below provides an outline of HEWG actions and indicative timeframes.

Activities	Timeframes
<b>Establish HEWG Working Group</b>	
ABAC's first report released recommended the establishment of a HEWG to provide a planned approach and next steps in improving the health sector's use of digital infrastructure for improved models of care	24 November 2020
Third ABAC meeting confirmed the Terms of Reference and high-level work program for the HEWG	3 December 2020
<b>Wave 1—priority initiatives</b>	
Virtual Meeting of the HEWG	January 2021
Identify the priority initiatives (Wave 1) to progress immediate opportunities for the HEWG lines of enquiry	January 2021
Complete high-level costings or resourcing required for Wave 1 priority initiatives, as required	February 2021
<b>Wave 2—priority initiatives</b>	
Identification of Wave 2 initiatives and the work program	March–April 2021

For more information about the HEWG, please email [ABAC@communications.gov.au](mailto:ABAC@communications.gov.au).