

# HUME TELEHEALTH STRATEGY

CONNECTED CARE  
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**HUME TELEHEALTH**



Department  
of Health



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# OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

## *Vision*

We will connect our consumers to the care they need by providing telehealth that is safe, timely and easily accessible.

Telehealth will be an option for every consumer and we will grow our capability to provide virtual care to our communities now and into the future.

## *Purpose*

To create care options, using technology, that are accessible, safe, sustainable and partnership focused.

To respond to the increasingly mobile world in ways that enhance care.

To provide the opportunity for anyone who can choose telehealth as a safe healthcare option, to do so with confidence and trust.

To exceed the expectations of the Hume regional community through committed care, leadership and embracing the innovation opportunities new technology offers.

*Connecting you to the care you need*



# INTRODUCTION

Telehealth is the ability to connect consumers with a healthcare provider by the use of technology. Telehealth can be by the telephone, a video call, wearable device such as a monitor, pace maker, smart watch or by providing updates such as videos and pictures to your healthcare provider. Telehealth is not discipline specific and is open to all healthcare providers to consider virtual care in partnership with consumers and care givers. This is done for the benefit of consumers, their care plan and health outcomes. Telehealth is not a separate service but a modality of care that is delivered in a manner that should be both safe and accessible to the consumer and clinician.

## HUME REGION - PRINCIPLES OF TELEHEALTH

### Core principles



#### Safe

Telehealth will be safe and timely and will meet community expectations.



#### Accessible

Telehealth will be easy to use and available to anyone in the community who wants to participate.



#### Diverse

Telehealth will recognise and support the needs of our diverse communities.



#### Patient centered

Telehealth will enable co-created models of care that are mutually beneficial and contribute to meeting consumer expectations and care outcomes.



# CURRENT CONTEXT

## Government policy

### Current strategy

Victoria currently has a decentralised approach to Telehealth Strategy development. This enables each region and the health services within to address their specific clinical priorities and focus on their individual needs.

## Hume regional information and ABS data

### Regional focus and partnerships

The Hume region is unique, covering a large catchment area from outer Metropolitan Melbourne, all the way through the Alpine region, up to the NSW border and west to Greater Shepparton. The area is populated by many townships and cities with Shepparton, Wangaratta and Albury-Wodonga being the most populous in the region.

Partnerships are important to enable the delivery of virtual care across our region and various partnerships in sectors such as healthcare, volunteer groups and community organisations are already in place. Local Councils, Murray Primary Health Network and the Ovens and Murray Digital Futures Group are all key partners who can assist in improving access to virtual care in specialist and outpatient services. The future successes of these partnerships is ongoing, emerging and evolving.

### Demographics

People - 301, 818  
Male - 49.4%  
Female - 50.6%  
Over 65 years - 20.14%  
By 2026 - 332,139

### Internet access

80.23% of households have internet access via home internet or mobile data

### Digital disadvantage

Research has found that those most at risk of digital disadvantage include those living in semi-remote locations, aged 65+ and who only have mobile internet or no internet access.

### Average household size

2.5 people

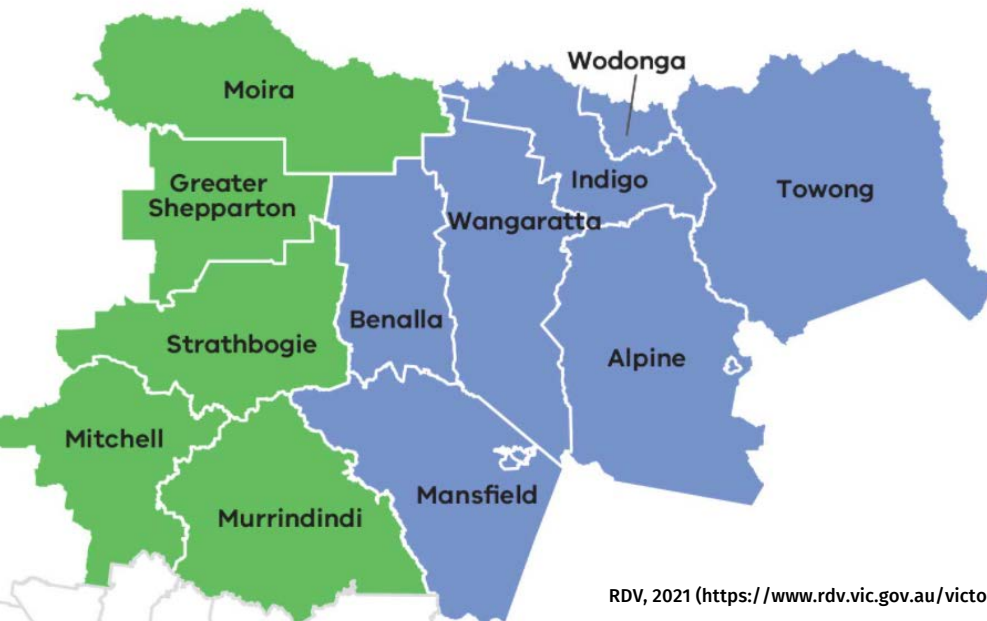
### People born overseas

People 12.08%  
Not Proficient in English 1.34%

### Health and wellbeing

People who have need for assistance with core activities 6.29%

Cardiovascular, cancer and mental health services are the region's most common chronic diseases with incidence continuing to grow.





# CURRENT CONTEXT

## Service description

The Hume Region covers a catchment of both regional and rural Health Services offering a range of services including: Emergency, Surgical, Medical, Cancer, Women's and Children, Community, Allied, Mental and Sub-Acute Health Services. The range and complexity of services is increasingly growing to meet the health needs of the community.

## COVID-19 impact

COVID-19 has played an important role in growing our region's telehealth capability and capacity. Since the pandemic was declared in February 2020 there has been a phenomenal increase in telehealth clinics, technology usage and virtual consultations. Health services have worked effectively to provide continued care, where safe, via the use of technology.

## Health Services within Hume

- Albury Wodonga Health
- Tallangatta Health Service
- Corryong Health
- Beechworth Health Service
- Walwa Bush Nursing Centre
- Alexandra District Health
- Yea & District Memorial Hospital
- Kilmore District Health
- Northeast Health Wangaratta
- Benalla Health
- Alpine Health
- Mansfield District Hospital
- Yarrawonga Health
- Goulburn Valley Health
- NCN Health Service
- Seymour Health
- Gateway Health

## STRENGTHS

### What makes our region strong

- We strive to consistently meet our client satisfaction and expectations.
- We aim to provide access to services that matter to our communities.
- Our employees are willing to adapt to new challenges and to try new things.
- We are open to change across our region.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### What we can and want to do better

- Create more opportunities for consumers to experience telehealth.
- Ensure the level of care and quality is maintained and grown.
- Implement this strategy well and be forward planning in our activities.
- Foster innovation and plan for a integrated tomorrow.
- Manage our resources to the best of our ability.
- Commit to the work we have to do, in order to realise our vision.

# BRINGING TELEHEALTH TO LIFE

## Strategy aims

The aim of the strategy is to provide clear direction, intent and purpose for telehealth over the coming 3-5 years. The strategy has been co-created with input from our communities, health services and consumers.

## Strategy project timeline

The Department of Health is supporting this strategy by funding a project through 2021 and the first half of 2022. A project team will form a crucial role to support our health services across the region.

## STRATEGY DELIVERABLES

### 2021

Strategy development and implementation with project team to fast track strategy goals.

### 2022

Partnerships and planning with an eye on sustainable practice and self resourcing.

### 2023 and beyond

An embedded strategy enabling greater support to health services to adopt new and innovative solutions to provide care via technology in a safe and sustainable way.

We asked you and listened. Based on surveys completed in 2021:

62% of  
clinicians  
surveyed  
agreed they  
have the right  
technology

92% of  
clinicians  
surveyed  
believed they  
are tech  
confident

63% of  
clients  
surveyed  
would use  
telehealth  
again



# STRATEGIC GOALS

Our goals incorporate our principles and define what we are going to achieve and how we will achieve it. We do this in full knowledge that this may be a small or large step for Health Services but one we do in unity and to support provision of consistent and quality care. This high level strategy will also be complemented by an overall implementation plan and by Health Service specific operational plans as required.

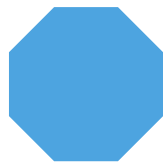
## GOALS



### Better technology

Strategic intent:

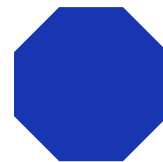
- Increase equipment capability and usability at each health service to enable telehealth as an option in the most optimal way possible.
- Explore new and tested technology that will create more opportunities for greater care outcomes and experiences for our clients.
- Encourage and foster innovation of technology through idea generation, project support and governance.
- Advocate for the continuous improvement of availability to digital network infrastructure across our region.



### Change to models of care

Strategic intent:

- Support health services in building co-created virtual models of care aligned to local, regional and state priorities.
- Use telehealth to provide greater access to specialist appointments across our region.
- Conduct evaluation and research activity in order to learn from our consumers and partners to inform best practice.
- Maintain our focus on safety and quality to staff and patients while transforming the way we provide care.



### Sustainable practice

Strategic intent:

- Provide sound digital leadership and support within our health services and the region.
- Grow digital literacy and competency across our region by providing more training opportunities and support.
- Recognise and nurture communities of practice and innovators within our region.
- Identify funding approaches to support sustainability and resource management.





# BETTER TECHNOLOGY

## Strategic intent

- Increase equipment capability and usability at each health service to enable telehealth as an option in the most optimal way possible.
- Explore new and tested technology that will create more opportunities for greater care outcomes and experiences for our clients.
- Encourage and foster innovation of technology through idea generation, project support and governance.
- Advocate for the continuous improvement of availability to digital network infrastructure across our region.

## Intended outcomes

- All health services have access to the platforms and technology available for virtual consulting and use them effectively in our care delivery.
- Increased digital capability and literacy across our health services.
- Identified clinical consulting rooms are enhanced to support specialist appointment experiences.
- Trained health providers and clinic administrators are able to provide support via peer to peer collaboration and on the ground support.
- Technology is simple, easy and intuitive to use. Technology is standardised and new innovative approaches are established

## Priority actions

- Equipment uplifts in identified core, specialist and priority areas.
- Support staff with appropriate frameworks and guidance for innovation of new technology and agile implementation.
- Establish innovation program and allocate funding for minor technology opportunities to leverage varied applications of virtual care models.

## How will we know?

- We see an increase in virtual care usage for consults and peer to peer working.
- Emerging need for other telehealth modalities such wearable devices, App opportunities and new partnerships.
- Specialist appointment increase to meet demand requirements.
- Self regulation and innovation groups start to emerge.
- There is an increase in ideas for innovation and improvement, and funding is sought for enhancing telehealth.



# CHANGE TO MODELS OF CARE

## Strategic intent

- Support health services in building co-created virtual models of care aligned to local, regional and state priorities.
- Use telehealth to provide greater access to specialist appointments across our region.
- Conduct evaluation and research activity in order to learn from our consumers and partners to inform best practice.
- Maintain our focus on safety and quality to staff and patients while transforming the way we provide care.

## Intended outcomes

- Telehealth is seen as a standard offering in delivery of care.
- The telehealth strategy is well understood by health service staff, our clients and our peers.
- Appropriate governance structures and capabilities are in place to report our achievements and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Patient outcomes for quality and experience are measured and reported.

## Priority actions

- Identify, develop and provide the fundamental resources and templates to enable changes and virtual models of care.
- Develop and implement a robust and considered communication plan.
- Complete a research project to examining consumer experience in order to further understand barriers to telehealth.

## How will we know?

- We see an increase in community acceptance and uptake via more telehealth appointments.
- Barriers to telehealth begin to dissipate and telehealth is adopted as the new normal.
- Research project specific to telehealth is completed and published.
- Virtual care models are able to be implemented quickly and with good consumer feedback.



# SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE

## Strategic intent

- Provide sound digital leadership and support within our health services and the region.
- Grow digital literacy and competency across our region by providing more training opportunities and support.
- Recognise and nurture communities of practice and innovators within our region.
- Identify funding approaches to support sustainability and resource management.

## Intended outcomes

- There is strong leadership and support for telehealth across the region enhanced via partnership channels and forums.
- Telehealth has an increased community profile and a positive perception with clinicians and consumers.
- Financial models for supporting continued telehealth are developed and embedded.
- Reporting and measurement is established with the development of clear targets.

## Priority actions

- Develop and design a clinician training and education package that meets the system, technology and communication skill needs required for telehealth.
- Establish a Hume telehealth Community of Practice.
- Grow the pool of available equipment through health services recognising the need for on-going financial allocations and sustainability.
- Establish reporting with regional hospitals and data sharing arrangements.
- Build and implement consumer awareness initiative.

## How will we know?

- Staff are trained and confident in using telehealth.
- Community of practice has active participation and membership of at least 100 or more clinicians.
- Reporting is available to leaders and is easily understood, tracked and provided.
- Financial forecasting of resources to support telehealth is completed and submitted for funding consideration.
- Consumer awareness of telehealth as a care option increases.

# REVIEW PROCESS

## The strategy will be supported by the Project:

- Robust project management and leadership
  - Project planning, implementation and outcomes
  - Financial support and resources
- 

## The strategy will be supported by Hume Health Services:

- Operational Plans (annual)
  - Financial Plan (with annual business plan)
  - Capital Plan (annual review)
- 

## Roadmap

A roadmap of activities will be built, endorsed and commenced implementation by June 2022. Any further updates to this document will then be republished and shared.

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## Who can you contact for questions?

Please contact the Regional Telehealth Strategic Lead via [RTS@awh.org.au](mailto:RTS@awh.org.au) for any questions on this strategy and telehealth.





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