NIIN National Industry Innovation Network

Health x Digital Transformation Report

2025-2026

Beyond Trends and Towards Impact

November 2025

CISCO

Health <Transformation> Lab

Foreword

Across the Asia-Pacific, healthcare stands at a defining crossroads - where demographic change, technological acceleration and systemic strain converge. In this environment, collaboration and innovation are no longer optional - they are essential.

Initiated in Australia, the National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN) was created to meet these very challenges.

Anchored by Cisco and driven by universities, government, and industry, the NIIN has become one of the nation's most powerful engines for digital innovation and public impact. Within it, the NIIN Health Alliance has emerged as Australia's premier multi-university innovation platform for digital health transformation - connecting research excellence, clinical insight, and technological capability to deliver results that matter for patients, clinicians, and systems alike.

Now, with strong foundations across 24 sites nationwide, the NIIN Health Alliance lifts its sights to the next horizon: contributing to a new wave of health innovation across the broader Asia-Pacific. The region's shared challenges call for a shared response - from ageing populations to digital inequity and the demand for resilient health systems.

The NIIN's proven, collaborative model provides the foundation for that response: a connected ecosystem capable of co-designing, testing, and scaling digital health solutions responsibly and at speed.

This work is already in motion. Across Australia, the NIIN Health Alliance is demonstrating what happens when ambition is matched with collaboration and intent - when ideas move swiftly from lab to clinic, and innovation delivers measurable impact.

This *Health x Digital Transformation Report 2025-2026,* while telling the story of this success and impact, serves an even more important role: it is an invitation to join the effort. This report is an invitation to collaborate, contribute, and help shape a health future that is connected, human-centred, and digitally empowered.

Please join us - we look forward to transforming the future of health, together.

Adam Powick
NIIN Council Member
Former CEO, Deloitte Australia

Reg Johnson
Director, Education & Strategic Industries
Cisco Australia and New Zealand

NIIN

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Executive Summary

Australia's health system is under unprecedented pressure. Rising demand, workforce shortages, funding constraints, and outdated infrastructure make change urgent. Yet, transformation is hard. It requires new technologies, yes, but more importantly, new ways of working across government, industry, academia, and healthcare providers.

The NIIN Health Alliance: powerfully driving impact

24+	NIIN key sites across Australia
20+	Digital innovation industry-partnered pilots and proofs of concept
50+	Organisations and Strategic Partners connected to NIIN Health Alliance
$11M+	Attracted in funding - government and co-investment

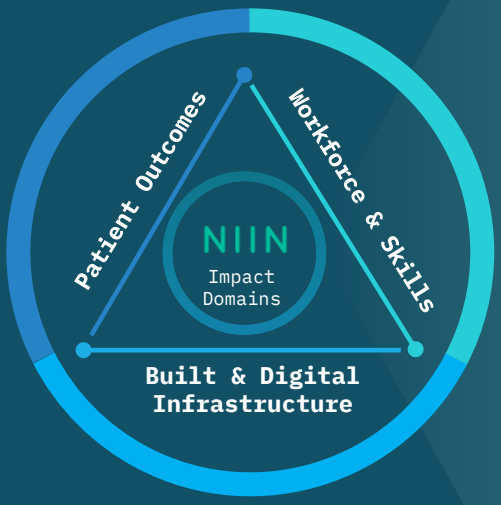
The NIIN Health Alliance exists to meet this challenge. Anchored by Cisco, the NIIN Health Alliance is Australia's most active national platform for responsible, scalable innovation in health.

With more than 24 sites nationwide, the NIIN Health Alliance is turning ambition into action, with a portfolio of initiatives across three impact domains:

- **Patient Outcomes:** from virtual emergency departments and AI-powered clinical tools to connected ambulances and safe care models.
- **Workforce & Skills:** rapid digital upskilling programs, AI-enabled workforce redesign, and training pathways that accelerate capacity building.
- **Built & Digital Infrastructure:** zero-trust cybersecurity frameworks, next-generation connectivity, and sandboxes for safe adoption.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate the true value of the NIIN Health Alliance as Australia's foremost platform for translating innovation into system-wide impact.

NIIN Health Alliance Initiatives



Patient Outcomes

1. AI Agent 'Jeanie' - AI-powered Contact Center Automation
2. AI-Optimised mRNA Therapies to Combat Childhood Dementia
3. AI-Powered Clinical Note-Taking
4. Detecting Loneliness in Call Centre Interactions
5. Medi-Kit Scaling Health Monitoring to Rural & Regional Australia
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7. Smart Glasses for VVED and Virtual Ward Rounds
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Workforce & Skills

9. Developing Digital Expertise in the Nursing Profession
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Built & Digital Infrastructure

11. Cyber Security of Critical Healthcare Infrastructure - ICUs
12. RMIT-Cisco Sandbox
13. SA Ambulance Service's Digital Ambulance
14. Zero Trust Cybersecurity in Healthcare

A learning system

The NIIN Health Alliance is a learning system: turning action into insight and insight into impact.

As the Alliance reviews its experience and outcomes over the past year, clear national patterns emerge: where progress is being made, and where shared barriers still persist.

The Alliance's approach to learning prioritises engagement over observation - advancing understanding through collaboration, co-design, and prototyping. When universities, health services, and industry partners work together, innovation accelerates. Yet progress also depends on trust and validation on ensuring new technologies are rigorously tested and confidently adopted.

Persistent challenges remain: legacy systems, uneven workforce readiness, and fragile funding models continue to constrain scale. Overcoming these will require coordinated investment, shared commitment, and bold leadership.

The result: re-imagined care delivery, empowered workforces, and infrastructure that supports a more connected, intelligent, and equitable health system.

Looking forward: the next frontiers

Having proven the ability to create meaningful impact in the Australian health ecosystem over the last 12 months, the next year holds great promise for the NIIN Health Alliance as it strengthens its connections and work into the broader Asia Pacific region.

Priority directions for the upcoming year include:

- **Embracing AI and the Rise of Intelligent Agents:** Focus on deploying human-in-the-loop AI systems that improve patient outcomes and health system efficiency with transparency, trust, and validation built in.
- **Advancing Connected Care:** Design inclusive, digitally enabled care models that expand access, enable remote monitoring, and integrate seamlessly into existing clinical workflows.
- **Strengthening Digital Infrastructure & Resilience:** Reinforce infrastructure to support the secure and scalable integration of digital tools across the health system.
- **Building Workforce Capacity & Dynamism:** Invest in upskilling and reskilling initiatives that prepare the health workforce to confidently adopt and adapt to emerging technologies.

A call to collective action

The Health Alliance is already hard at work in respect of these directions above, and this report sets out the many projects already in flight across the network that actors across the system can connect to, collaborate with and amplify for impact.

The time to shape Australia's digital health future is now. The NIIN Health Alliance urges leaders across government, industry, academia, and healthcare to:

Partner with NIIN's innovation centres and labs to design and scale transformative solutions.

Join pilot programs to test and validate technologies in real-world settings.

Connect to and invest in scalable innovation platforms and workforce capability solutions that strengthen system-wide resilience.

Transforming at scale demands aligned investment, shared accountability, bold leadership, and a focus on accelerating innovation for real-world impact. That is what the NIIN is and will constantly strive to be.

This report - its showcase, its lessons, its future directions - is an invitation to play a part in the remaking of our health systems and their impact.

Join us!

Through partnership and collaboration, we can together shape a health system transformation that is resilient, equitable, and digitally empowered.

Introduction

Beyond trends and towards impact

Australia's healthcare system stands at a crossroads. Pressures from rising demand, workforce strain, and fragmented infrastructure are colliding with unprecedented advances in digital technology.

The question is no longer *whether* transformation is necessary, but *how* it can be achieved - responsibly, sustainably, and at scale.

The *Health x Digital Transformation report* series was created to chart this journey. Last year's inaugural report mapped the critical trends and dimensions that health leaders needed to watch. This year, the focus shifts: from trends to tangible outcomes, from possibility to practice, from what could be to what is happening now.

And the NIIN Health Alliance is at the heart of this story.

As Australia's most active cross-sectoral innovation network – spanning industry, academia, health providers, and government – the NIIN Health Alliance is demonstrating how collaboration can accelerate impact. Across more than 24 sites nationwide, the Alliance has moved rapidly from concept to coordination to impact: piloting solutions, building digital workforce capacity, and shaping the infrastructure needed for a new era of care.

This report highlights case studies where new models are already delivering results, distils insights from the HealthTech Pulse Survey on where adoption is advancing and where barriers remain, and outlines strategic enablers and collaboration pathways to guide system-wide transformation.

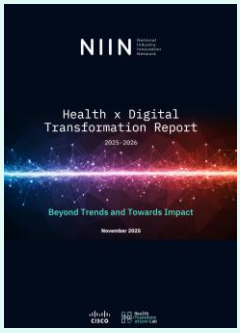
Most importantly, it is an invitation. The NIIN Health Alliance offers not just analysis, but a platform for action. By joining with us - in pilot programs, innovation centres, workforce initiatives, and shared infrastructure projects - partners can help shape a health system that is more resilient, equitable, and digitally empowered.

The Evolution of the NIIN Health x Digital Transformation Report

Year 1

A practical guide for action on the trends that matter

The 2024-25 report mapped five critical Transformation Dimensions for healthcare - urgent priorities to unlock change in policy, care, and patient outcomes. Through data, case studies, and clear recommendations, it set the stage for system-wide transformation.



Year 2

Beyond trends and towards impact

The 2025-26 report shows how real-world collaborations, pilots, and partnerships are reshaping health. Highlighting the NIIN's impact powering role, it explores Australia's health tech landscape and crafts opportunities for participation in shaping sustainable transformation.

The National Industry Innovation Network

A powerful platform for the creation of public impact and value

An ecosystem of insight and action

The National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN), led by Cisco Systems, is a dynamic network that brings together industry, university, and government partners to drive digital technology advancements in economy and society.

The **NIIN's seven innovation centres**, **seven Research Chairs**, **five health-focused labs**, and **specialised technology labs** serve as a collaborative ecosystem for industry, health agencies, hospital operators, researchers, and students tackling critical healthcare challenges.

The NIIN comprises of multiple elements:

- **Research Chairs:** Bridge between academic research, curriculum, and industry needs to ensure innovation moves from theory into real-world application.
- **Innovation Centrals:** Network of centres focused on driving partnership value and project execution to develop innovative business solutions that create opportunities and disrupt industries.
- **Specialised Health Labs:** Subject-focused centres where researchers and industry co-design and pursue industry or technology specific goals.
- **Industry Alumni Program:** Harness the wealth of expertise amongst industry and business leaders to enhance university-led initiatives through technical direction, mentorship, and innovation.

An Engine for Health Innovation

The NIIN Health Alliance: a system networked for impact

The first industry vertical focus for the NIIN is the critical domain of health. The NIIN's Health Alliance acts as a national engine uniting industry, academia, and government. Its health-focused labs, research chairs, and innovation centrals come together as a network to accelerate meaningful impact on critical healthcare challenges.

1 Discovery and Insight

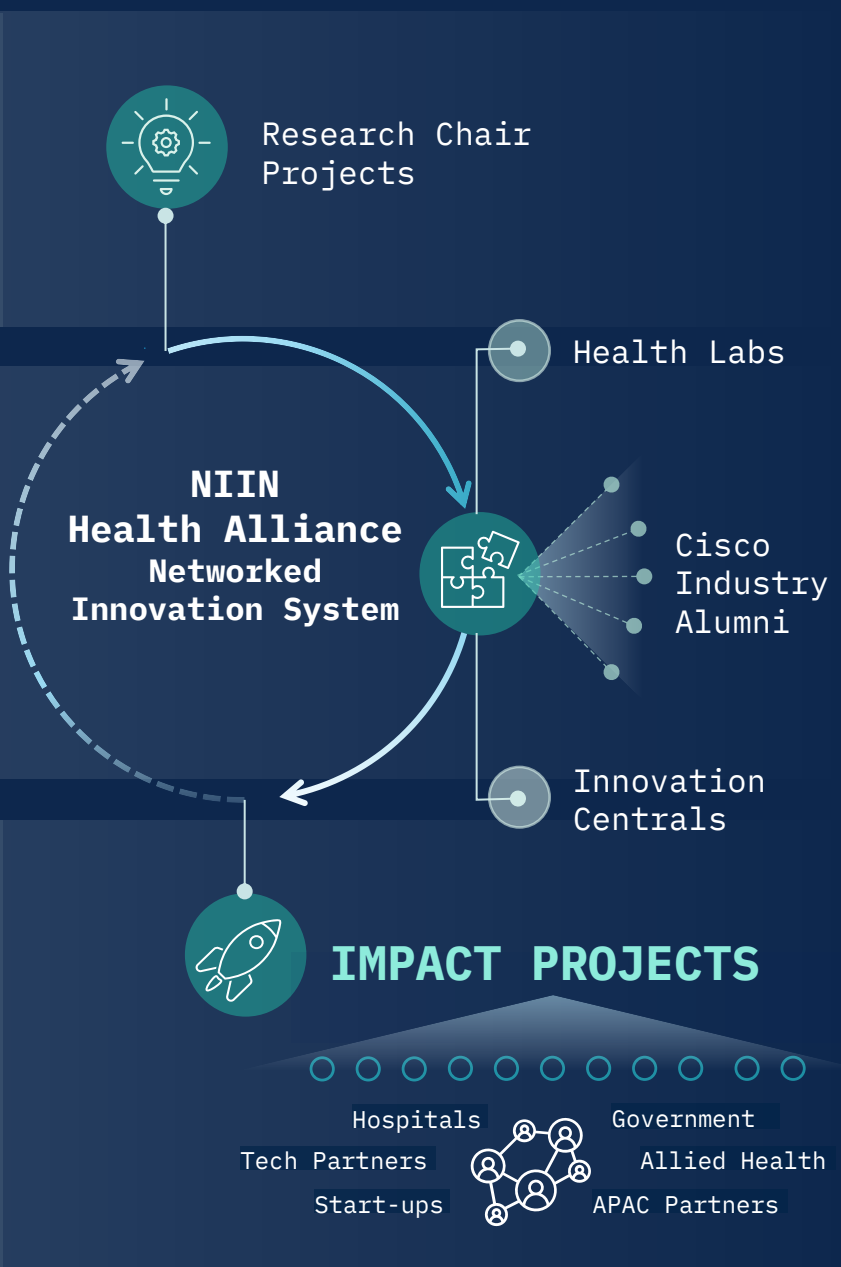
Ideas emerge through **Research Chair** projects, where partners identify challenges, explore technologies, and generate insights: early concepts that spark innovation.

2 Development and Co-Design

Promising concepts are developed in **Innovation Centrals and Health Labs**, where multidisciplinary teams - strengthened through collaboration with **Cisco Alumni -** co-design, prototype, and refine solutions with industry and health partners.

3 Application and Impact

Validated solutions are applied in real-world health settings, becoming collaborative **Impact Projects** that improve care delivery, strengthen digital capability, and create measurable system benefits.



An Integrated Network of Health Labs

A deep dive into the Alliance's powerful - linked - innovation environments

The NIIN Health Alliance brings together a unique network of university-industry laboratories that operate as one integrated system. Much more than research centres, these labs are living environments where ideas are tested, technologies are translated, and innovations are scaled into practice. Together, they bridge discovery and delivery, linking research, industry, and clinical partners to accelerate change across the health ecosystem.

By combining complementary strengths, the integrated Health Lab network delivers something truly distinctive: a coordinated, capability-rich ecosystem that spans the entire journey from concept to clinic.

This is NIIN's differentiator: a connected national infrastructure designed to accelerate translation, strengthen resilience, and ensure that every innovation can be tested, refined, and scaled for real-world impact - in Australia and across the Asia-Pacific.

UniSC-Cisco Digital Health Productivity Lab
Sunshine Coast

A user-centred design and evaluation environment where older adults, clinicians, and students co-create and trial digital-health solutions that enhance usability, accessibility, and productivity.

`Aged care | Workforce productivity & transformation`

Flinders-Cisco Digital Health Design Lab
Adelaide

A national exemplar in translational digital hospital research, specialising in wireless, zero-trust cybersecurity, digital infrastructure readiness, alignment of patient and clinician experience.

`Infrastructure maturity | Information experience | Safe wireless | Cybersecurity`

RMIT-Cisco Health Transformation Lab
Melbourne

Australia's coordinating hub for the NIIN Health Alliance, driving prototyping, workforce skilling, and policy-linked research that bridges technology and care delivery.

`User-centred design | Workforce transformation | Public policy interface`

Action Lab Malaysia, Monash University
Kuala Lumpur

A network of multidisciplinary researchers dedicated to community-driven health-focused digital innovation, inclusive health care access and data governance

`Digital in health | Action research | Inclusive research infrastructure`

Innovation Central Singapore, Curtin University
Singapore

A world-class collaboration hub where clinicians, technologists, and researchers co-develop and trial next generation health solutions through translational research and prototype-ready innovation linking universities, industry and government.

`Health research | Cyber | Computing | Engineering`

Driving momentum: evolving from vision to impact

The NIIN Health Alliance is gathering speed. What began as a shared vision, uniting academic excellence, technological capability, and health system insight, has rapidly matured into a coordinated national platform for innovation.

Across universities, industry, government, and health providers, partners are not just aligning - they are acting. Pilots and prototypes have become coordinated programs, and research projects have evolved into impact initiatives embedded in real health settings. From fall detection in aged care to hazard monitoring and robotic assistance in clinical environments, ideas are being tested, adapted, and scaled.

This momentum is underpinned by strong governance, anchored by the Health Alliance Advisory Committee and the NIIN Council. Together they have built the infrastructure, trust, and capability that allow collaboration to accelerate with purpose.

Now the Alliance is entering its most important phase: demonstrable, system-wide impact. Evidence is translating into outcomes. Projects are scaling responsibly. Transformation is moving from the margins to the mainstream.

24+ **NIIN key sites** across Australia, including 7 Innovation Centres, 7 Research Chairs, 5 Health-focused Labs and a growing number of Specialised Technology Centres

20+ Digital innovation **industry-partnered pilots and proofs of concept**

50+ **Organisations and Strategic Partners** connected to NIIN Health Alliance

$11M+ **Attracted in funding** – government and co-investment

The result is clear: NIIN Health Alliance has become Australia's most active national platform for multi-university, industry-enabled digital health innovation: moving with intent, building momentum, and delivering real change for patients, providers, and the system.

NIIN partners and members at Cisco Live Melbourne 2024

The next frontier: expanding the circle of collaboration to the Asia Pacific and beyond

Australia's health challenges mirror those faced across the Asia-Pacific: ageing populations, fragmented systems, and inequitable access to care. The NIIN Health Alliance has shown that when collaboration is guided by clear governance and shared purpose, it can unlock powerful new ways of working.

Now, the opportunity is to extend that success beyond Australia - creating a regional ecosystem of learning, innovation, and shared capability. Through deeper partnerships across Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and beyond, the NIIN Health Alliance is building the foundations of a connected network where ideas, tools, and care models flow seamlessly between systems.

This momentum is already underway: Curtin University and Cisco have established an Innovation Central in Singapore, a NIIN Health Alliance presence has been built in Malaysia through Monash Malaysia, RMIT Vietnam is forging links across ASEAN networks in digital health adoption and transformation.

By expanding the Alliance's collaborative frameworks (research chairs, innovation nodes, shared workforce programs, and regional sandboxes), we can enable real-world experimentation at scale. Proven innovations from Australia, such as digital triage models, connected care pilots, and cybersecurity frameworks, can be adapted across diverse contexts - while lessons from the region feed back into Australia's health transformation.

Together, these partnerships represent the next frontier for the NIIN Health Alliance: a cross-border engine for digital health innovation, advancing connected, equitable, and resilient care across the Asia-Pacific.

The NIIN Health Alliance in Action

Demonstrating targeted impact through collaboration

The NIIN Health Alliance is driven by an impact framework that drives its focus and its prioritisation.

Patient Outcomes: The Health Alliance is accelerating the development and adoption of solutions that directly improve lives.

Workforce & Skills: The Health Alliance is building the capacity and capabilities needed to deliver tomorrow's healthcare.

Built & Digital Infrastructure: Behind every innovation lies infrastructure that must be secure, scalable, and sustainable.

As this report demonstrates, the Health Alliance is not just *setting* priorities, it is also bringing them to life through projects that deliver measurable outcomes. Across Australia, partners are working together on initiatives that improve patient care, strengthen the workforce, and build the digital infrastructure our health system needs for the future.

In this section, we showcase a selection of some of the pathbreaking work and impact being driven by the NIIN Health Alliance in these areas of focus.

Together, these projects show the Alliance in action: a national platform where ideas are tested, partnerships are activated, and innovations are translated into impact for patients, providers, and the system.

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1. AI Agent 'Jeanie' - AI-powered Contact Centre Automation

Cisco

The Challenge

Uniting NSW.ACT, like many other healthcare providers, were faced with an array of challenges when managing their services, and the need for an immediate, scalable solution was evident.

Patient experiences were being impacted by lengthy wait times, as contact centre agents - though dedicated - were strained to operate efficiently due to high call volumes at peak hours. The majority of agents' time was consumed by routine inquiries, leaving insufficient time for more complex and demanding cases.

The Partnership

A collaboration between Webex by Cisco, Uniting NSW.ACT and Optus, saw the launch of 'Jeanie' - a custom built, advanced AI Agent, powered by Webex Contact Centre a demonstrated commitment by Uniting NSW.ACT to continue providing accessible support to the communities they serve across New South Wales and the ACT.

The Solution

By leveraging advanced AI and natural language processing, Jeanie acts as the first point of contact to address patient queries, responding to a plethora of questions. Jeanie is able to provide a round-the-clock service, freeing up human agents to focus on more complex commitments, whilst simultaneously ensuring the information provided to patients is accurate, but quick. Services include handling routine enquiries, updating patient details, offering data on service eligibility, and directing patients to engage with human agents, as required. By engaging with Jeanie initially, this provides the human agent with the necessary pre-filled patient data, which allows swift escalation, so the human agent can concentrate on the patient's pressing needs.

Project Highlights and Impact

- Patients received swifter access to critical services, as Beta tests demonstrate a 35% reduction in average wait times.
- Over 60% of routine enquiries were resolved by Jeanie on the initial interaction.
- Over 40% of all incoming calls were operated by Jeanie in full, without any need for escalation to a human agent.
- Pre-qualification and information gathering by Jeanie led to a 20% decrease in average handling time for human agents.
- Human agents reported lowered feeling of 'burnout' and an increase in job satisfaction, due to a reduction of routine, repetitive, time intensive tasks. This also freed up time for meaningful patient interactions, which translated to a 15% increase in agent productivity.
- Patients who interacted with Jeanie noted an 8% increase in satisfaction scores (CSAT), emphasising a positive impact for patient outcomes.
- The introduction of Jeanie gave 24/7 access for patients to receive support and information whenever they require it.

Contact Details

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Patient Outcomes

2. AI-Optimised mRNA Therapies to Combat Childhood Dementia

La Trobe University

The Challenge

5 million Australians are directly affected by neurological and psychiatric conditions. The targeted rare neurodegenerative disorder (Niemann-Pick type C1, colloquially, "Childhood Alzheimer's") affects about 1 in 100,000 live births globally. Next-generation mRNA gene therapies are emerging as an effective prevention and treatment method for childhood dementia.

However, the complexity of biological data coupled with the difficulty of translating in-silico predictions into reliable in-vitro or in-vivo outcomes remain central obstacles to progress in mRNA therapies.

The Partnership

The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health (The Florey) is collaborating with Cisco Research Chair of AI and IoT Professor Wei Xiang and the Australian Centre for AI in Medical Innovation (ACAMI) on using AI to optimise mRNA sequences for childhood dementia therapies.

This collaboration not only leverages ACAMI's expertise in advanced AI architectures and data-driven modelling but also The Florey's strong capabilities in cellular experimentation.

The Solution

The project is seeing the development of an advanced AI model based on biologically-informed neural networks and transformers (the technology behind ChatGPT and other large language models).

Building on recent breakthroughs in natural language processing and biological sequence modelling, the project is progressively refining training strategies to capture the subtle relationships between nucleotide composition, structural stability, and translational efficiency.

Project Highlights and Impact

- $10^{100\sim1000}$ mRNAs are a vast combinatorial space and exhaustive testing is impossible. Advanced AI models will eliminate the need to go through every possible candidate.
- Strong results demonstrate promising capabilities in predicting mRNAs' half-lives, a major biophysical quantity related to in-cell mRNA stability.
- By integrating computational prediction with in vitro validation, the project creates a powerful feedback loop that accelerates discovery, refines model accuracy, and drives meaningful advances in mRNA-based gene therapy for childhood dementia.

Contact Details

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- Jeff Jones, *Director*, Innovation Central Melbourne
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3. AI-Powered Clinical Note-Taking

La Trobe University

The Challenge

Clinicians, especially doctors and nurses, spend a considerable amount of time on administrative tasks like typing patient notes, writing referral letters, updating electronic health records (EHRs). This clerical work detracts from direct patient care, contributes to high rates of professional burnout, and can compromise the accuracy and detail of documentation when notes are rushed. The traditional methods of note-taking often fail to capture the detail and nuance of a clinical conversation, and the time spent typing can create a barrier between the clinician and the patient.

The Partnership

This project involves a collaborative effort between researchers and healthcare professionals in a simulated clinical setting. The core of the project is the partnership with the users - the doctors and nurses who will test the software. The project also implicitly involves a partnership with the software developers - Lyrebird, Heidi, and I-scribe - as their products are the subject of the study.

The Solution

The project looks at the adoption of AI-powered virtual scribe technology to support clinical note-taking.

These tools use "ambient listening" to capture and transcribe clinical conversation in real-time that leverages AI and machine learning to distinguish between relevant clinical information, background chatter and automatically generates a structured clinical note, summary or referral letter. This eliminates manual typing, allowing clinicians to maintain eye contact and focus on the patient.

Three AI scribes being studied are particularly relevant as they are all Australian-based and/or compliant with Australian Privacy Principles, providing a localised solution to the documentation challenge.

Project Highlights

- Comparative Analysis: This project provides direct, side-by-side comparison of three specific AI tools that will offer practical, actionable data.
- Mixed-Methods Approach: The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide insights into not just the technical performance, but also the human experience of using the software.
- Workflow Integration: A key focus of the study is to understand how these tools fit into or disrupt existing clinical workflows.

Recognition & Impact

- By providing a clear, evidence-based roadmap, the project's recommendations can inform policy and best practices for the selection and implementation of AI transcription technology.
- The project findings can help clinicians feel more confident in adopting these new technologies and can help reduce administrative burden, potentially mitigating burnout.
- More detailed and accurate notes, generated in real-time, can also lead to better communication improve quality of care and the patient experience.
- The project's recommendations on implementation and optimisation will enable organisations to make informed decisions that can lead to substantial time and cost savings without sacrificing quality or patient privacy.

Contact Details

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4. Detecting Loneliness in Call Centre Interactions

Queensland University of Technology

The Challenge

From community care and social services to aged care and mental health referrals, contact centres often provide frontline support in emotionally complex situations where callers are frequently vulnerable, and the quality of interaction can directly affect their wellbeing. Key challenges in contact centres include:

- Clients whose conversations are not typically designed to recognise or respond to distress, anxiety, or psychosocial signals.
- Frontline agents who lack the experience to meaningfully respond when clients disclose sensitive data. This can lead to moral fatigue, performance issues, and high turnover.
- Service providers who engage in repeated contact, miss opportunities for early intervention of at-risk clients, or suffer from reduced service quality.

The Partnership

The partnership involves close collaboration to detect signs of loneliness both qualitatively and quantitatively through large-scale data analysis, observations, and coding of past calls. Researchers work directly with call centre staff and management to design operational changes. Through co-development workshops, they establish frontline protocols analogous to domestic violence response procedures.

The Solution

There is a growing opportunity to deploy AI and digital tools to better support both staff and clients - especially in detecting subtle psychosocial cues and prompting more human-centred, responsive interactions at scale. This approach demonstrates how digitalisation, while often reducing face-to-face contact, can lead to more meaningful conversations precisely where they matter most. It provides organisations with a blueprint for how to digitalise responsibly in healthcare and beyond.

Project Highlights

Launch of loneliness-detection whitepaper report to showcase first results.

Ongoing collaboration to:

- Develop a psychosocial signal detection model, using real-world call data to identify subtle indicators of distress, anxiety, or other unmet social and emotional needs.
- Co-design interventions with psychologists that empower call centre agents engage with clients - including suggested prompts, phrasing, contextual cues and tone adjustments.
    - Examine trust boundaries by testing which types of AI-augmented interactions are perceived by clients as helpful versus intrusive. The project will explore how perceptions shift depending on context, delivery, and the degree of benefit to the client.
    - Evaluate impact on service outcomes (e.g. call resolution, repeat contact, agent confidence), operational metrics (e.g., handling times), and broader wellbeing metrics for both clients and staff.

Contact Details

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5. Medi-Kit Scaling Health Monitoring to Rural & Regional Australia

Curtin University

The Challenge

Curtin University led a pilot that brought the Healthy Connections mobile Medi-Kit digital health solution into rural and remote health contexts.

Leveraging ruggedised networking, sensors and cloud-based dashboards, the pilot enabled clinicians to diagnose and monitor chronic conditions in remote communities, without requiring patients to travel hundreds of kilometres to regional centres. The co-designed project led to early outcomes showing good engagement from many remote communities.

Supported by Cisco's secure networking technologies, these projects highlight how digital health can reduce inequities across Australia's dispersed geographies, while also building scalable models for other Asia-Pacific countries facing similar rural healthcare challenges.

The Partnership

The project is supported by many partners including Cisco and Optus for technology support, Hancock Iron Ore for providing a 4WD, Roche Diagnostics for point-of-care devices, community and health support from Aboriginal Medical Services and community partner Ngurra Kujungka.

The Solution

The Medi-Kit is a portable, weather resistant, battery and solar-powered solution - ideal for travel On-Country. With AI decision support, edge computing, and hybrid satellite connectivity, the Medi-Kit ensures clinicians can make informed decisions anywhere, anytime - even without internet access.

Data is stored securely, respecting Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles and community control. Cultural safety through co-design incorporates local language and Aboriginal motifs, and suitable health education material into the tablet-based clinical workflow. The Medi-Kit links directly to electronic medical systems, improving information flow and continuity-of-care across a fragmented regional health landscape.

Project Highlights

- Completion of a new mobile clinic fit-out of a 4WD.
- Completion of the Kawu Palya mobile app, a patient companion app to the Medi-Kit.
- Several trips to the Pilbara region to engage, co-design, and test the Medi-Kit and Kawu Palya app with community members.

Recognition & Impact

- Winner of the 2025 WAITTA INCITE Award in the Social Impact category (second year in a row).
- Finalist in the 2025 national AIIA iAwards in the Not-for-Profit & Community category (second year in a row).

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Expansion Opportunities

- Aboriginal health worker telehealth training hub - a distributed learning network using Medi-Kits as training simulators.
- Sovereign health data exchange - a federated, privacy-preserving health data network across remote Australia.
- Mining & remote workforce health platform - adapt the Medi-Kit for occupational health in remote mining, agriculture, and infrastructure projects.

6. Regionally Integrated Systems Enhancement for Skin Cancer

La Trobe University

The Challenge

Health system expenditure for the diagnosis, treatment and pathology of skin cancers is the highest reported cancer-related expenditure in the Australian health system. For rural Australians, skin cancer rates are 29% higher, health outcomes are worse (31% higher mortality) and there are more delays in diagnosis than for people living in metropolitan areas.

This unacceptable inequity in skin cancer mortality, morbidity, and cost for rural communities calls for a new care model that builds primary care capacity and improves access to care in a financially viable, cost-effective manner, narrowing the gap between rural and metropolitan Australians.

The Partnership

The RISE4SkinCancer consortium led by La Trobe University, is a multidisciplinary, collaborative regional consortium in the Loddon Mallee region in Victoria. It comprises of consumers, cancer services, primary care, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Primary Health Network, Department of Health, General Practitioners, community health and researchers.

The Solution

RISE4SkinCancer is implementing and evaluating a series of consumer co-design initiatives and system-level reform strategies, which include embedding technological solutions to support timely assessment and management of skin cancers.

Cisco Research Chair of AI and IoT Professor Wei Xiang is leading the technological solutions, which will explore the integration of AI into the locally derived clinical pathways.

Project Highlights and Impact

- 5-year program granted $2.8 million in Australian Government funding through the Medical Research Future Fund.
- RISE4SkinCancer is an opportunity to combine clinical, consumer and research expertise across all stages of the health system, including community ownership, to improve quality of life and reduce morbidity and mortality for rural people with skin cancer.
- The Loddon Mallee region has the highest percentage in Victoria of low-income families and First Nations people the melanoma rate is 48% above the state average. This program will narrow that gap and set an example for scaling up in other regions.
- Publications describing how this approach can be used for other health issues in similar settings will underpin evidence-informed rural health policy and funding models.

Contact Details

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- Jeff Jones, *Director*, Innovation Central Melbourne
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7. Smart Glasses for VVED and Virtual Ward Rounds

La Trobe University

The Challenge

The pilot project aims to assess the feasibility and acceptability of integrating smart glasses into the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) telehealth service. The core of the project involves providing one pair of smart glasses to four rural Urgent Care Centres (UCCs). These glasses, which do not store patient data, offer a hands-free solution for clinicians, enabling a real-time, first-person view for VVED clinicians during co-teleconsultations. The study is evaluating the technology's effectiveness in improving communication, reducing errors, and ensuring timely care, ultimately contributing to a better telehealth experience for both staff and patients.

The Partnership

The smart glasses pilot project is a collaborative effort between Northern Health and La Trobe University. The project is also being conducted in conjunction with four specific rural Urgent Care Centres (UCCs) located in Kyabram, Nathalia, Cobram, and Numurkah. This partnership is a key component of the study's design, as it allows for the implementation and evaluation of the new technology in a real-world clinical setting.

The Solution

The proposed solution is the integration of augmented virtual reality "smart glasses," specifically one pair of RealWear Navigator 520 smart glasses, at each of the four rural UCCs. These glasses are designed to improve the VVED consultation process by providing clinicians with enhanced capabilities, such as a camera, microphone, and speakers, which offer a first-person view. This technology is intended to provide a hands-free solution for clinicians, allowing them to continue treating the patient while simultaneously participating in a three-way call with the VVED clinician and the patient. The glasses are also compatible with secure existing apps like MS Teams.

Project Highlights

- Structured Evaluation: The study will use the Bowen's Framework of Feasibility to evaluate key outcomes, including demand, acceptability, implementation, practicality, integration, and limited efficacy.
- Data Collection: Data will be collected through pre- and post-implementation surveys and interviews with both UCC and VVED clinicians, as well as telephone interviews with patients.
- Training Protocol: A two-phase training program will be implemented for staff, including a "train the trainer" style session and an on-site demonstration to troubleshoot any issues.

Recognition & Impact

- The study addresses a gap in current research by focusing on the feasibility and acceptability of using smart glasses in Australian pre-hospital settings, particularly within rural UCCs, thereby providing valuable insights that could lead to the expansion of smart glasses use in other health services.
- It will benefit the target population by improving co-teleconsultations between remote clinicians and emergency healthcare workers in major hospitals, leading to more timely and high-quality patient care in rural areas.

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NIIN

8. Victorian Virtual ED (VVED) Evaluation

La Trobe University

The Challenge

Victorian emergency departments (EDs) have faced sustained pressure from rising demand, ambulance ramping, access block, and workforce strain. Patients in regional and rural areas, First Nations communities, and those experiencing homelessness have faced additional barriers to timely, culturally safe care. The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified demand, highlighting the need for new models of care that maintain safety, improve equity, and protect ED capacity for the sickest patients.

The Partnership

The Victorian Department of Health and Northern Health partnered with researchers from La Trobe University to evaluate the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED). This collaboration combined state-wide linked datasets, economic modelling, patient and provider surveys, and co-designed research to provide an independent, comprehensive evaluation of the VVED model.

The Solution

The VVED is a 24/7, statewide, nurse- and doctor-led telehealth service that delivers rapid, patient-centred emergency care. Innovations include:

Digitally Enabled Triage & Diversion: allowing eligible patients to be safely managed virtually rather than attending ED in person.

Equity Pathways: including a First Nations Outreach Nurse model (FNON), Paediatric and Geriatric Emergency Department Initiatives (GEDI), and a dedicated People Experiencing Homelessness (PEH) pathway.

Integration with Ambulance Victoria: ED to Virtual (EDV) diversions supported by nurse navigators to release ambulances sooner.

System-Wide Data Integration: near-real-time data feeds to track diversion rates, outcomes, and safety events.

Project Highlights

- Robust Data & Analytics: >315,000 presentations analysed using data.
- Clear Evidence of Safety: >90% of patients managed virtually avoided ED presentation within 48 hours no signal of excess mortality.
- System Impact: ~10,000 fewer physical ED presentations per month (2024), releasing thousands of cubicle hours and averting ramping events.
- Positive Experience: 89% of patients rated care as good/very good 90% of providers supported ongoing use of VVED.
- Equity-Focused Innovations: FNON and PEH models improved cultural safety and engagement for priority groups.
- Economic Value: early estimates show efficiency gains through released bed hours and reduced ambulance offload delays.

Recognition and Impact

- The VVED model has been recognised nationally and internationally as a leading example of virtual emergency care innovation.
- Its pioneering approach has contributed to multiple peer-reviewed academic publications on virtual care safety, patient experience, and system impact, positioning Victoria at the forefront of evidence-based digital health research.
- The model has also informed statewide policy development, including virtual care frameworks, emergency care reform strategies, and guidelines for integrating virtual triage and diversion pathways into mainstream health services.
- Internationally, VVED has been highlighted in global digital health forums and conferences as a reference model for scalable virtual emergency services, influencing the design of similar initiatives in other health systems.

Recognition and Impact (cont.)

Additionally, the insights gained from VVED have shaped broader digital health initiatives, including targeted interventions for culturally and linguistically diverse populations, equity-focused virtual pathways, and innovative service integration strategies that strengthen the capacity and resilience of healthcare systems.

The evaluation demonstrates that the VVED is:

- Safe, Effective, and Sustainable: reducing avoidable ED presentations without compromising patient outcomes.
- Equity-Enhancing: supporting vulnerable populations and improving cultural safety.
- System-Strengthening: freeing critical ED and ambulance resources and reducing access block.
- Future-Focused: providing a scalable, data-driven framework for integrated virtual care across Victoria.

Expansion Opportunities

- Evaluation and development of remote monitoring devices/services to support virtual and integrated models of care.

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9. Developing Digital Expertise in the Nursing Profession

University of the Sunshine Coast

The Challenge

Rapid development in digital health technologies, including tools driven by artificial intelligence, requires nurses, the largest professional group in the healthcare workforce, to have digital literacy, self-efficacy, and a fundamental understanding of related terminology.

Nurses play a critical role in adopting and implementing digital technologies that enhance patient care, such as wearable devices, robotics, smart sensors and artificial intelligence. However, significant gaps persist in understanding their readiness to engage with such tools.

The Partnership

A team of researchers in digital health Led by Dr Gordana Dermody from UniSC, in partnership with the UCL Institute of Health Informatics, London formed to examine this issue. ComLink have come on board to trial intergenerational co-learning between university students and older adults.

The Solution

A need for shared responsibility for developing digital expertise in the nursing profession is required. Early exposure and preparation can assist the future nursing workforce in becoming familiar with emerging technologies and enhance their confidence, enabling them to move beyond using technology effectively to focusing on learning to identify how data can inform and enhance nursing care. Additionally, the Health Productivity Lab at UniSC are developing an intergenerational co-learning of digital health skills between university students in health and older adults.

Project Highlights

- Developing digital literacy curriculum for upskilling undergraduate nurses.
- Stakeholder consultation and collaboration with clinical staff as change champions is optimising the integration of digital health technologies in nursing curricula.
- Collaboration developing with ComLink for intergenerational co-learning.

Recognition and Impact

- Dermody G, El Haddad M, Wadsworth D, Prichard R, Craswell A. (2025) Need for a shared responsibility for developing digital Expertise in the Nursing Profession. Studies in health technology and informatics. 319. In Press.
- Dermody, G., Wadsworth, D., El Haddad, M., Prichard, R., Benson, A., Benson, T., & Craswell, A. (2025). Bridging the Digital Divide: A Multi-Method Evaluation of Nursing Readiness for Digital Health Technology. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 10.1111/jan.70105. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.70105

Expansion Opportunities

- Codesigning dashboards for remote monitoring of older adults that support knowledge development and nursing workflow.

Contact Details

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10. Digital Skills for Health - Rapid Upskilling Pilot

RMIT University

The Challenge

It is a time of huge digital transformation in the health sector, where technology is being adopted and advanced at an unprecedented rate, and workforces are examining how to rapidly upskill employees' digital capabilities. Artificial Intelligence, extended reality, digital twins, 3D-printing, autonomous robots, and more are all finally moving to the point where their long-promised potential can be realised. But this potential hinges on underlying digital infrastructure, secure data collection, and critically, having the right skills available.

Bridging this skills gap requires a nuanced approach that considers the unique needs of a range of worker roles.

The Partnership

RMIT's Health Transformation Lab and College of Vocational Education, in partnership with Grampians Health and the Cisco Networking Academy, together with stimulus from the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR), piloted a program to rapidly upskill health sector workers, addressing the digital skills gap. The pilot leveraged existing Cisco Networking Academy curriculum and findings of the annual Health x Digital Transformation report, delivered in collaboration with the National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN) Health Alliance.

The Solution

The program piloted 5 micro-credential courses, delivered to 365 learners, over 3 rolling intakes. Courses ranged from 11-32 hours of self-paced learning, and incorporated in-person touch points, through weekly drop-in sessions with subject matter experts, and on-site masterclasses.

Content was contextualised specifically for Grampians Health, delivering curriculum to IT staff as well as frontline clinical workers, covering foundations in digital health and emerging tech, to specialised courses in AI & cyber security. This was informed by a staff needs assessment survey of ~570 potential learners, from IT, clinical and administrative positions. This collaborative model draws on an iterative process of co-designed short-form training, with industry and government, to meet local workforce needs through practical, applied learning.

Project Highlights

- 93% of participants expressed the amount of study required for each of the courses was "just right".
- 86% of participants reported high levels of satisfaction with course's content, with *Introduction to Digital Health*, *Emerging Technologies in Healthcare*, and *AI and Data Management* courses achieving satisfaction levels of 90% or higher.

Project Highlights (cont.)

- 77% of all participants felt the course met their training needs.
- 76% of all participants indicated they could apply the learning directly to their roles.
- 91% of all participants felt that Grampians Health would benefit from them participating in their respective courses.
- Workforce productivity: GH reported 15-60min per week productivity uplift amongst staff.

Recognition and Impact

- DJSIR highlighted this pilot in many of their materials, including their case study citations and communication regarding the next round of SSP pilots.
- Nous Group featured the pilot as a case study for Austrade to promote Australia's skilling capabilities across Asia Pacific.
- Health Transformation Lab was invited to showcase the pilot as part of Cisco's "Skilling Australia" Press panel at *Cisco Live*, 2024
- Grampians Health presented the pilot at both the Digital Health Fest 2025 and Victorian Health CIO forum.
- Minister Colin Brooks and Juliana Addison MP, Member for Wendouree visited Grampians Health's Ballarat Base Hospital in April to learn about the pilot and collaboration.

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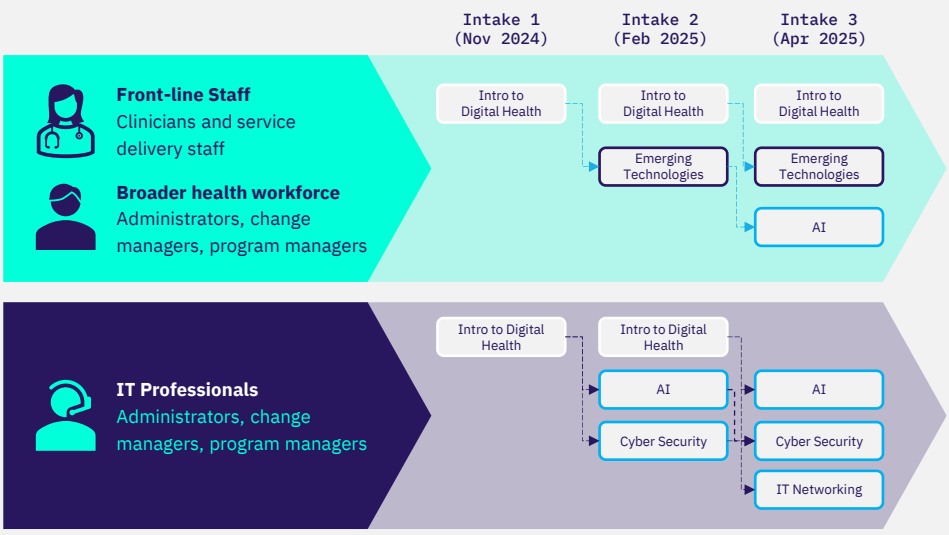
Delivery Model

Two streams of programs were designed with articulation pathways across the three learner cohorts, progressively designed, delivered and iterated across three intakes.



11. Cyber Security of Critical Healthcare Infrastructure-ICUs

Flinders University | University of Canberra

The Challenge

The healthcare industry is the most vulnerable sector to cyber attacks, but most attacks try to compromise the confidentiality and availability of data such as patient data. Although still prevalent, these types of attacks are now well understood and appropriate defences are being implemented.

This project responds directly to Australia's Security of Critical Infrastructure Act (SOCI), which designates Intensive Care Units (ICUs) as nationally critical infrastructure. With ICUs now designated as critical infrastructure, hospitals are also required to put in extra measures to protect the availability of not just data but also ICU systems. But practical cyber threat models tailored to ICU systems have been lacking, leaving hospitals without the evidence base needed to justify targeted investments.

The Partnership

The project is a joint initiative led by NIIN partners the University of Canberra and Flinders University, under the leadership of Cisco Research Chairs Professor Frank den Hartog and Professor Trish Williams, who found a shared interest in this topic. University of Canberra built the initial threat model and partners with Flinders University to conduct a risk analysis survey among practitioners.

The Solution

The next phase of the project will involve engaging cyber and healthcare IT experts through an online survey to assess the likelihood and consequences of these threats. The outcome will be the first practically applicable cyber threat model for ICUs in Australia. We will take this generic threat model to individual hospitals, tailor them to their unique circumstance (every hospital and ICU is different) and then discuss next steps given the outcomes.

Project Highlights

By applying internationally benchmarked methodologies such as MITRE ATT&CK and OWASP, the research team has identified 13 immediate threats to ICU systems, ranging from ransomware attacks and malware infections to insider threats and distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks.

- Early insights also reveal that ICUs are highly interconnected environments, reliant on a complex web of medical devices, information systems, networks, and cloud services, where vulnerabilities in one element can quickly cascade across the system, amplifying the impact of attacks.
- Traditionally, cyber defences have been focussed on preventing access to data and systems by malicious actors. When protecting the availability of systems becomes the main objective, more attention needs to be given to cyber resilience, i.e., minimizing the impact of successful attacks by means of fast incident response, redundancy, and fast switchover procedures.

Contact Details

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NIIN

12. RMIT-Cisco Sandbox

RMIT University

The Challenge

In an increasingly interconnected world, ways of harnessing networks of intellectual and innovation capital are critical to shifting the dial on transformative digitisation within the sector.

However, RMIT's Health Transformation Lab proposed that there is a need to take this a step further. To truly achieve this level of change, it is equally critical to disrupt the ways that collaboration and innovation happen and create new places and spaces that support networked models of collaborative innovation.

The Partnership

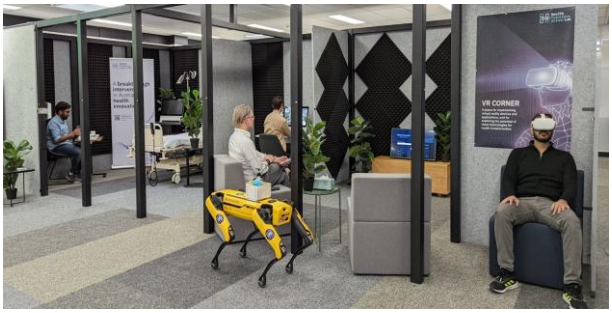
The Health Transformation Lab has partnered with Cisco to create the RMIT-Cisco Sandbox facility. As part of the National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN), The Sandbox fosters collaborations among leading universities and industry partners, to address pressing healthcare challenges through technology-driven innovation.

The Solution

The Sandbox is a digitally rich prototyping space powered by Cisco's Meraki network and supported by leading health partners. Transforming patient-doctor interactions, care delivery, and access to digital technology in health care spaces.

The Sandbox facilitates a seamless transition from conceptual ideas to practical implementations through:

- Advanced Prototyping Environment
- Integration of Autonomous Robotics
- Focus on Health Care Technology Innovation
- Collaborative Research and Development



Project Highlights

- In consultation with the aged care sector, developed thought leadership publications, pushing the boundaries of conceptualising how technology could play a central role in delivering systemic respect in Aged Care.
- Developed custom technology-based workflows and demonstrations of key use cases, drawing from collaboration tools, custom developed AI, machine learning, robotics, video and surface sensors.
- Provided a series of exploratory design workshops and applied technology prototyping for a leading hospital with over 8,000 staff members to inform long-term patient monitoring strategy.
- Collaborated with a variety of industry, research, and government partners.

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13. SA Ambulance Service's Digital Ambulance

Flinders University

The Challenge

The Digital Ambulance Project, a partnership between Cisco, the South Australia Ambulance Service (SAAS), and Flinders University, is pioneering the concept of a "connected vehicle" to transform frontline emergency care. The initiative encompasses both clinical and non-clinical streams, ranging from improving patient care through real-time access to clinical applications, to optimising ambulance fleet management, asset tracking, and operational efficiency.

Early field trials have already highlighted the project's critical value, particularly in rural and remote regions of South Australia, where Secure Corporate Wi-Fi delivered by Cisco technology enabled seamless connectivity even in areas without reliable cellular or radio coverage. By providing paramedics with continuous access to patient records, diagnostic tools, and communication systems, the project demonstrates how digital infrastructure can directly improve patient outcomes and workforce effectiveness.

The Partnership

The partnership between Cisco and SA Ambulance was fostered through the SA Cisco office. Flinders University Cisco Chair, Professor Trish Williams and Innovation Central Adelaide supported a student project to investigate the existing data for its potential usability.

The Solution

The Project aims to enhance emergency care coordination by integrating ambulance operations with hospital systems via digital technologies. The solution addresses the loss of in-field time for ambulances, resulting in lower capacity for emergency services. The lack of visibility of vehicle maintenance health in real-time leads to the need for off-road maintenance checks, whilst a lack of real-time and digitally assisted vehicle maintenance diagnostics leads to time loss in maintenance diagnostics. The innovation is in deploying sensor-equipped vehicles for real-time and recorded digital information, creating high-level data point capture for maintenance telemetry, and using contemporary solutions, such as Splunk for data interpretation.

Project Highlights

- The lessons to date underline the importance of resilient connectivity as a foundation for digital health innovation, and the next steps will focus on scaling the model, integrating additional applications, and exploring national adoption of the connected vehicle framework.
- The data analysis can provide improved knowledge on maintenance and operations of ambulance vehicles to reduce down-time of vehicles in maintenance, and track vehicle operational safety, both in-vehicle and in traffic.
- Completion of student project for initial data investigations.

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14. Zero Trust Cybersecurity in Healthcare

Flinders University

The Challenge

The Zero Trust Cybersecurity in Healthcare Project addresses one of the most pressing challenges facing modern health systems: how to secure increasingly complex, cloud-enabled, and distributed digital infrastructures without impeding the ability of healthcare professionals to deliver timely and effective care. As health organisations expand their digital footprints - moving workloads into cloud environments, supporting diverse devices, and enabling clinicians to work from multiple locations - the risks of cyber incidents that could compromise patient safety, privacy, or continuity of care are growing sharply.

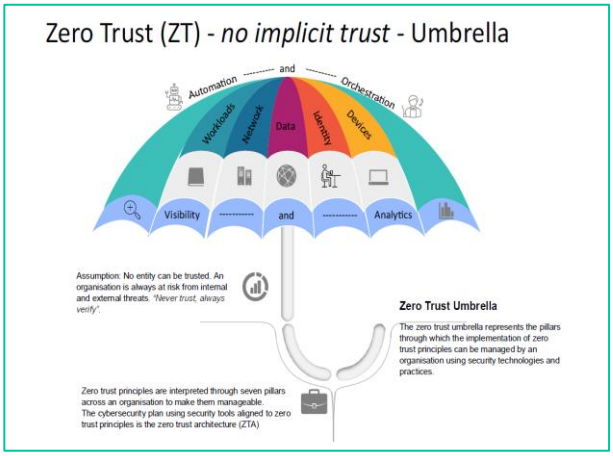
This project applies contemporary research into zero trust architecture, a holistic approach that shifts away from traditional perimeter-based security to one where every user, device, and connection must be continuously verified. By developing a tailored translational framework for healthcare organisations, the project aims to provide the sector with practical guidance on adopting resilient, comprehensive security architectures.

The Partnership

The project is a collaboration between NIIN Partners and Cisco, led by Flinders University Cisco Chair, Professor Trish Williams. The expertise of the University of Canberra Cisco Chair, Professor Frank den Hartog and Cisco's Strategic Cybersecurity Advisor, Helen Patton are integral to creating a practical outcome for healthcare organisations.

The Solution

With healthcare being a prime target for cyber-attacks, with incidents threatening patient safety, privacy, and the delivery of care, the project is developing a practical zero-trust cybersecurity blueprint tailored to healthcare. The blueprint will provide healthcare organisations practical guidance on how to strengthen system security and safeguard patient outcomes. The project has undertaken a systematic review of the current zero trust models



to identify the essential security elements for the complex healthcare environment.

The next steps will involve creating the blueprint for practical application and testing the framework with partner health services, refining implementation pathways, and influencing broader health policy and sector-wide cybersecurity standards.

Project Highlights

- Development of the Zero Trust Umbrella from evidence-based research.
- Approaching Zero Trust as an operational problem for the complex healthcare environment.
- The work highlights the critical link between cybersecurity and patient outcomes, recognising that protecting data and systems is as much about safeguarding lives as it is about digital resilience.
- The project is shaping cybersecurity practice in healthcare and mapping Cisco solutions to zero-trust implementation, ensuring benefits flow directly into real-world settings.

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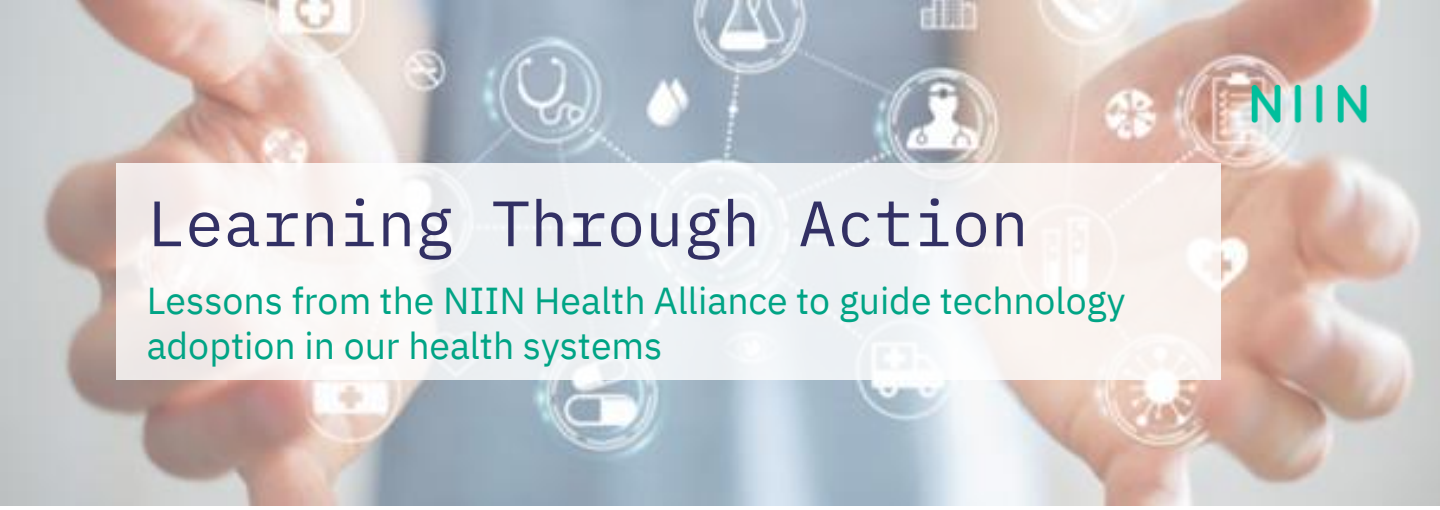


Learning Through Action

Lessons from the NIIN Health Alliance to guide technology adoption in our health systems

The NIIN Health Alliance is a learning system. As it reviews its experience in generating impact in the last year, national patterns emerge - offering a view of the current landscape and informing strategic direction for the future.

Between 2024 and 2025, global health technology research reached a tipping point: one year's output (9,448 articles), exceeded the total for the previous four years *combined*.

While the most prominent topics identified in the research mirror the areas in which the NIIN Health Alliance has been working – artificial intelligence, digital health, infrastructure & interoperability, workforce capacity building, and digital delivery platforms – the sheer volume of information demonstrates that near impossibility of learning by digesting this vast array of publications.

The NIIN takes a different approach to learning: one that prioritises *action* and *engagement.* The Alliance's work reveals how collaboration is a powerful driver of innovation across the health sector.

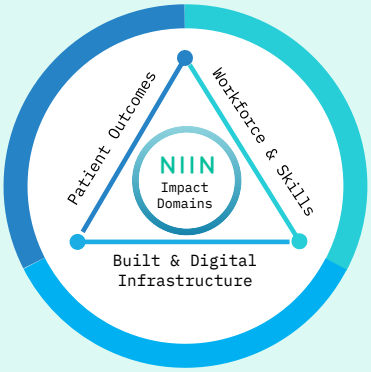
Case studies show that when universities, health services, and industry partners co-design and prototype solutions, technology development and adoption can accelerate. At the same time, engagement across the Alliance and its broader network highlight the importance of trust and validation in adoption of emerging technologies.

We see that meaningful progress in the health sector happens when technologies are thoughtfully prototyped and rigorously tested - building confidence and surfacing challenges early. Yet persistent barriers remain: legacy infrastructure, uneven workforce readiness, and fragile funding models consistently constrain progress.

These challenges are not isolated but shared across the system. Addressing them requires coordinated investment, collaborative effort and bold leadership.

Specifically, this is not just about deploying new technologies this is about reimagining how care is delivered, how workforce is empowered, and how infrastructure can support a more connected, intelligent, and equitable health system.

Insights to drive impact



What **we need to focus on**

- AI and emerging tech are enabled via trust and validation
- Adoption needs seamless integration with care models
- Workforce upskilling powers technology deployment
- Infrastructure and usability unlock progress

How **we need to pursue it**

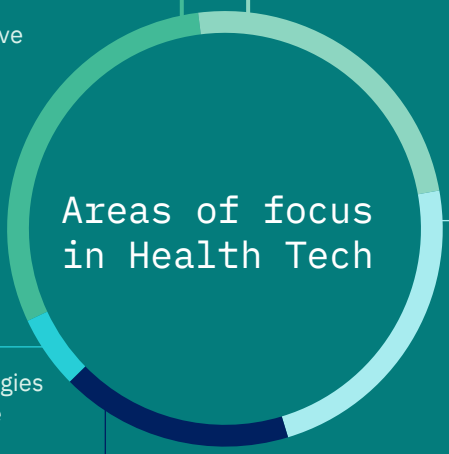
- Targeted investment enables sustainable growth
- Prototyping enables smarter deployment
- Partnerships with purpose scale innovation

NIIN Health Alliance 2025 HealthTech Pulse Survey

In 2025, the NIIN Health Alliance and its key partners were engaged through a new HealthTech Pulse Survey*, designed to understand areas of focus, trends, considerations and barriers faced in impactful innovation and technology deployment.

The survey results paint a valuable and broad picture of which technologies are gaining traction in the health system - and which ones are still on the wish list, waiting to be adopted. The survey also highlights systemic challenges across the health sector - shared challenges that are complex but solvable through collective effort.

Areas of focus in Health Tech



30% AI technologies

The sector is shifting towards hands-on adoption:

- 25% of respondents actively engaging in Generative AI
- 14% with predictive analytics
- 12% with clinical decision support

24% Remote Patient Monitoring

Remote care is steadily expanding and highlighting a move to more connected care models.

- 25% of respondents working with Telehealth
- 16% using both wearables and mobile health apps
- 15% working on remote monitoring of vital signs

23% Healthcare Adaptability

Building system resilience is a clear priority and reflect a drive towards scalability and smarter system responses.

- 19% of respondents focused on interoperability solutions
- 17% Cloud-based systems
- 16% real-time analytics

6% Other Technologies

A range of other technologies are also in focus, with the greatest adoption across:

- 19% Genomics
- 19% Precision medicine
- 11% Synthetic biology
- 11% Biotech data integrations

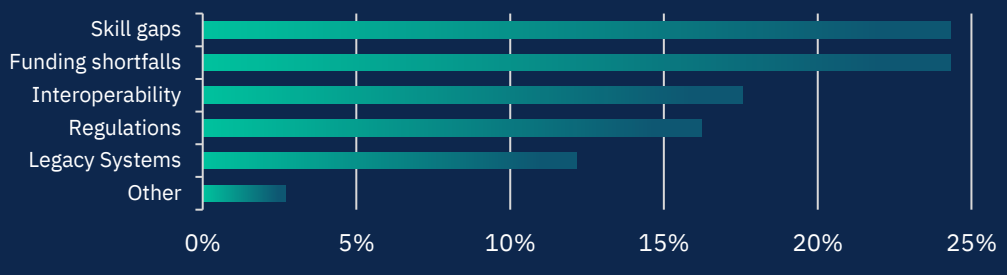
Other technologies captured in the HealthTech survey include data analytics, electronics health records, Quantum Computing, and Neuromodulation.

17% Simulation technologies

The use of Simulation tools is gaining momentum, characterised by the growing adoption of virtual testing in healthcare

- 18% of respondents exploring VR/AR
- 12% exploring digital twins
- 11% working on system-level modelling and 3D printing

Roadblocks faced by participants



*Respondents comprised of: Academics (33%), Operational professionals (25%), Clinical staff (20%), Technology specialists (19%), Other roles (3%). A variety of health system roles were represented, including Research (26%), Delivering patient care (22%), Developing technologies (20%), Consulting (16%), Other (16%).

From Insight to Amplification

Opportunities for 2026: human centred and digitally enabled

The Alliance has already shown what's possible when innovation is coordinated across Australia - bringing together diverse partners to solve complex health challenges.

Now, the opportunity is to take this impact further: building on the lessons of the last year and weaving together systems and people through a shared fabric that enables true transformation across the health ecosystem.

As we look ahead, the lessons drawn from our action and engagement offer not just data, but clear direction: a signal for where bold, collective effort must now be focused.

We see a shared vision for the immediate future of healthcare in Australia - one that is both human centred and digitally enabled.

In this section we outline opportunities that emerge from the NIIN Health Alliance's first year of action. These represent the avenues through which collective effort can manifest into system wide transformation:

- **Embracing AI and the Rise of Intelligent Agents**: Focus on deploying human-in-the-loop AI systems that improve patient outcomes and health system efficiency with transparency, trust, and validation built in.
- **Advancing Connected Care:** Design inclusive, digitally enabled care models that expand access, enable remote monitoring, and integrate seamlessly into existing clinical workflows.
- **Strengthening Digital Infrastructure & Resilience**: Reinforce infrastructure to support the secure and scalable integration of digital tools across the health system.
- **Building Workforce Capacity & Dynamism:** Invest in upskilling and reskilling initiatives that prepare the health workforce to confidently adopt and adapt to emerging technologies.

We invite you to join us on collaboration pathways that reimagine how innovation is delivered, shared, and scaled across Australia's health ecosystem.

Pictured left to right: Dr. Smita Jhajharia, *Program Coordinator - ICT* at RMIT University, Kanchan Aggarwal, *Program Manager* at RMIT University, Minister Colin Brooks, *Victorian Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing*, Juliana Addison MP, *State Member for Wendouree* trialling VR goggles whilst visiting the Ballarat Base Hospital April 2025

Embracing AI and the Rise of Intelligent Agents

Redesigning the future of health care: Powered by people, enhanced by AI

Artificial intelligence continues to redefine what is possible in healthcare - from early diagnosis to personalised care and operational efficiency. Across the health system, AI is already transforming how data becomes insight, and insight becomes action.

Yet the next frontier, agentic AI, represents a profound evolution in this journey. These intelligent systems move beyond reactive tools to become proactive collaborators capable of acting, reasoning, and adapting over time, while continuously learning within dynamic environments.

Imagine a system that can anticipate patient needs, adjust treatment plans, support clinicians with timely insights, and optimise hospital workflows in real time.

For the NIIN Health Alliance, AI and agentic AI are not distant concepts, they are practical enablers across all three domains of impact:

- **Improving Patient Outcomes** by enabling personalised diagnostics and tailored care, supporting predictive modelling, real-time monitoring, and earlier interventions.
- **Strengthening Workforce Capability** by enhancing clinical decision-making, surfacing insights, automating routine tasks, and reducing clinician burden to refocus on high-value care.
- **Enabling Scalable Digital Infrastructure** by driving investment in secure, interoperable systems and governance frameworks for sustainable innovation.

What makes Agentic AI transformative is its potential for partnership as an active collaborator in care delivery.

To realise that potential, integration must remain human-centred, explainable, and trustworthy. There is a shared responsibility for researchers, clinicians, policy-makers, and industry leaders to maintain a human-in-the-loop approach: inclusive, transparent, and critically evaluated.

To fully embrace the potential of AI and AI agents, we must:

- **Build resilient frameworks** for continuous oversight, evaluation and certification.
- **Embed safety, transparency, ethical guardrails** and clinician override mechanisms by design.
- **Develop adaptive regulatory models** that protect privacy while supporting innovation.
- **Provide access to a secure, GPU-enabled AI cloud platform**, designed to meet Australian privacy laws.
- **Establish a national open data policy** to ensure access to critical datasets.
- **Invest in scalable infrastructure** with flexible, extensible architectures.
- **Equip workforce through training and simulation** so clinicians can work confidently with AI collaborators.

AI and agentic AI enable us to re-imagine a healthcare system where technology enhances - *not replaces* - human expertise, intuition, and compassion. When thoughtfully designed and governed, AI can help deliver care that is more responsive, equitable, and deeply human.

How the NIIN Health Alliance is exploring AI futures in health - and how you can join the journey

Numerous projects applying agentic AI - and AI more broadly - are in flight across our Alliance. Connect and collaborate to accelerate AI impact in health.

Project & Impact	Collaboration Opportunity
RMIT-Cisco Health Transformation Lab's Agentic AI Trials Partnering with industry to prototype Agentic AI assistants for improving monitoring & detection, responsiveness, and quality of care.	*Collaborate to extend these pilots and evaluate outcomes across broader health networks.*
ArchiTech's Digital Front Door Pilot Program Using Agentic AI to simplify how patients connect to care, from virtual triage to follow-up.	*Collaborate to extend interoperability to health systems, test and scale use cases.*
La Trobe University's AI-powered Clinical Note-Taking Project Demonstrates how automation can return time to patient care while maintaining safety and accuracy through AI-driven transcription tools.	*Partners can help scale adoption across diverse clinical settings.*
La Trobe University's Incarta Project on AI-enhanced fetal ECG technology Using AI analytics to improve fetal ECG interpretation during labour, supporting earlier detection and better maternal outcomes.	*Engage to test and translate this innovation into maternity care systems.*
La Trobe University and ARCH Research Group - AI Workforce Redesign Project Trialled AI, sensors, and digital tools to redesign workforce practices and improve efficiency in care delivery.	*Collaborate to apply these insights to other workforce transformation initiatives.*
UniSC and Cisco - Workplace violence prevention using machine vision project Using machine vision and AI for identification of escalating anger and aggression in patients experiencing dementia and delirium.	*Collaborate to extend the use of this technology through wider clinical settings.*

To connect with any of these projects, please contact the NIIN Health Alliance Manager:
healthalliance@niin.com.au

Patient Outcomes

Built & Digital Infrastructure

Advancing Connected Care

Unlocking the power of real-time data, remote monitoring, and inclusive design

Hybrid models of care are rapidly advancing, making connectivity easier than ever before - blending virtual and in-person care to ensure care providers and patients stay engaged continuously throughout the care journey.

Widely used mobile apps and telehealth platforms, along with emerging technologies – such as immersive, virtual and extended reality – are enhancing remote care. These technologies provide clinicians holistic access to real-time clinical data, helping deliver care that's more personalised, timely, and responsive.

Advancements in the Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) and remote patient monitoring (RPM) technology such as smart wearables, nearables and implantables are being used to capture numerous physiological data and securely transmit them to care teams for continuous oversight and intervention.

These innovations are helping to deliver care when and where it's needed - bridging geographic and demographic gaps.

Scaling this digital transformation starts with building systems that connect the right data, tools, and embedding safeguards into everyday clinical practice.

To advance such an equitable, connected health care system, modernising connectivity must go hand in hand with the thoughtful co-design of care models:

- **Seamless integration of patient monitoring data** into existing electronic health records (EHRs) and clinical workflows is essential - without which valuable patient data remains siloed and underutilized.
- **Scaling interoperable systems and telehealth** platforms must include reliable network connectivity, secure device setup, local data storage, and centralised data aggregation.
- **Ensuring strong security measures and safeguards** is critical to protect patient data and maintain trust in remote care systems.
- **Co-designing with healthcare providers**, community leaders and members is fundamental to ensure solutions are inclusive, culturally relevant, and responsive to the needs of the people they serve.

Connected care has the potential to revolutionise how healthcare is delivered if we actively harness emerging technologies as catalysts for system-wide transformation - making healthcare more accessible, personalised, and sustainable.

Uncovering opportunities to join NIIN's remote care initiatives

Collaborate with the NIIN Health Alliance's in-flight initiatives and be part of the driving force advancing connected, equitable health delivery.

Project & Impact	Collaboration Opportunity
La Trobe University's Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) Demonstrates how telehealth at scale can reduce emergency presentations while expanding access to underserved regions.	*Partners can build on this model to extend virtual care and reduce system pressure nationwide.*
Curtin University's Connected Care Pilot Using rugged networking, sensors, and cloud dashboards, this project enables continuous monitoring of chronic conditions across regional Australia.	*Collaborate to scale this technology across more remote communities and care settings.*
RMIT-Cisco Health Transformation Lab's Integrated Patient Dashboard Exploring integration of electronic health records and wearables through a unified patient dashboard.	*Join the effort to standardise digital health data and unlock seamless, interoperable care delivery.*
La Trobe University's Smart Glasses Pilot Demonstrates how immersive telepresence brings metropolitan specialists to rural clinics in real time.	*Partners can help expand these virtual urgent-care capabilities across broader service networks.*
RMIT-Cisco Health Transformation Lab's Agentic AI Prototype Pioneering AI-driven telehealth to enhance access and responsiveness in remote regions.	*Collaborate to co-design, test, and evaluate scalable AI models that support equitable care.*
UniSC-Cisco Digital Health Productivity Lab's Intergenerational Co-Learning An intergenerational co-learning of digital health skills between university students in health and older adults.	*Collaborate to co-design, scale co-learning to older adults.*
UniSC-Cisco Digital Health Productivity Lab's Digital Tools for Aged Care Generating national insights into how frontline caregivers use digital tools in the clinical care of older adults, with a focus on real-world workflows.	*Collaborate to co-design and test practical digital tools across aged care.*

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healthalliance@niin.com.au

Built & Digital Infrastructure

Strengthening Digital Infrastructure & Resilience

Laying the digital foundations for tomorrow's healthcare

From hospitals and acute clinical care to aged care settings, the effective delivery of modern healthcare increasingly relies on a resilient, secure, and interoperable digital infrastructure.

As Australia advances its digital health transformation, the capacity to provide high-quality care will depend on the robustness and adaptability of this digital foundation.

The NIIN Health Alliance experience emphasises that strong built infrastructure is essential to support and scale digital capabilities.

Emerging technology and tools continue to require real-time data processing and decentralised decision-making. To enable their seamless integration, it is essential to invest in digital infrastructure that is both agile and resilient.

To realise the full potential of digital health transformation, infrastructure must not only support current clinical and operational needs but also anticipate future demands. This requires a shift from fragmented, legacy systems to solutions that can support new ways of delivering care.

Realising these objectives means focusing on the building blocks:

- **Cybersecurity is critical to digital health**, protecting patient data and ensuring systems remain safe and operational. We must support strong data standards, secure system design, and coordinated responses to cyber threats to maintain trust and service continuity.
- **Interoperability standards must be established** so hospitals, clinics, and digital platforms can seamlessly engage and coordinate care.
- **Agile regulation and lifecycle procurement are key** to managing rapid technological change and ensuring systems can evolve with innovation.
- **Extensible system design enables long-term adaptability**, allowing digital tools and devices to scale, integrate, and operate as part of a connected health ecosystem.

Strengthening digital infrastructure is more than just a technical upgrade - it involves embedding digital resilience from policy and procurement to design and delivery. By acting decisively on these building blocks, we can create a smarter, safer, and future-ready health system.

Fast-track digital infrastructure with NIIN - how you can fuel the momentum

Collaborate with the NIIN Health Alliance in building a future where innovation is not just sparked - but sustained. Build innovative and sustainable funding models that future-proof infrastructure with proven solutions.

Project & Impact	Collaboration Opportunity
Flinders University's Digital Ambulance Project Pioneering the concept of the 'connected' vehicle, this initiative equips ambulances with secure Wi-Fi for real-time access to patient records, even in low-coverage regions.	*Partners can help extend this model to other emergency and community-care fleets nationwide.*
Flinders University's Zero-Trust Cybersecurity Initiative Developing healthcare-specific cybersecurity frameworks to protect patients, services, and data as digital systems expand.	*Collaborate to embed Zero-Trust architecture across broader health networks and critical infrastructure.*
University of Canberra and Flinders University Cyber Threat Model for ICUs Creating Australia's first practically applicable cyber threat model for intensive-care environments.	*Engage to test, refine, and apply this model across hospital systems to strengthen resilience and patient safety.*
RMIT-Cisco Health Transformation Lab's 'next-tech' projects The Sandbox has created a digitally rich prototyping space for safely trialling emerging technologies - including robotics, AI, and connected health tools - before deployment in real-world care.	*Partners are invited to co-develop and evaluate next-generation digital health infrastructure here.*

To connect with any of these projects, please contact the NIIN Health Alliance Manager:
healthalliance@niin.com.au

Workforce & Skills

Building Workforce Capacity & Dynamism

Empowering the front line to lead digital health transformation

As system-wide transformation progresses, the success of new tools and systems depends not only on their technological reliability, but on the readiness of the workforce to use them effectively.

The NIIN Health Alliance recognizes the growing emphasis on building digital literacy and AI fluency to support continued health transformation. Targeted upskilling initiatives are foundational to the sustained adoption of emerging technologies in healthcare.

When healthcare providers have the knowledge and access to relevant data, they can spend more time with patients and improve quality of care.

Digital literacy in healthcare goes beyond technical competence. For clinicians, allied health professionals and administrators it involves interpreting AI-driven insights, exercising clinical judgment, using digital tools to personalise care, navigating digital workflows, embracing automation and ensuring data governance and security.

Clinical training must evolve so that the health workforce can respond effectively to the evolving needs of consumers.

Without deliberate investment in upskilling, health systems risk underutilisation, clinician burnout from poorly designed workflows and growing disparities in digital capability.

Moreover, digital upskilling empowers clinicians and staff to shape the technologies they use – by becoming active contributors in the design, testing, and continuous improvement of technology.

Building workforce capability requires structured, ongoing investment in key areas:

- **Role-specific and inclusive upskilling** for clinicians, administrators, and allied health professionals, with equitable access across urban, rural, and resource-limited settings.
- **Flexible, ongoing learning models** such as simulation-based and experiential learning that support safe, real-world application.
- **Embedding digital health**, AI fluency, data ethics, and human-machine collaboration into clinical education and professional development pathways.
- **Building leadership and collaborative capacity**, by equipping clinical leaders with change management skills to foster innovation.

Accelerating the digital competency and capability of Australia's workforce is at the heart of digital health transformation. By systematically integrating digital learning into clinical education and professional development, we enable a workforce that can confidently navigate complexity and lead health transformation from within.

Backing bold initiatives - how you can support the NIIN Health Alliance's skills agenda

Support the NIIN by equipping healthcare leaders with the skills and resources to drive change. With sustained funding and strategic workforce development, we can embed innovation into the core of our health system-making it resilient, responsive, and ready for the future.

Project & Impact	Collaboration Opportunity
RMIT-Grampians Health-Cisco Networking Academy pioneering AI and Digital Health Courses Co-designed training programs in AI and digital health have boosted the confidence and productivity of hundreds of healthcare staff.	*Partners can collaborate to scale this model nationally - embedding digital capability and innovation readiness across clinical teams.*
UniSC's Digital Literacy in Nursing Program Strengthening digital expertise within the nursing profession - the largest workforce group in healthcare.	*Collaborate to expand this initiative, advancing digital literacy and leadership across the broader health workforce.*
UniSC and Cisco - Co-design of digital solutions for low-value care Working with providers of in home and aged care co-designing implementation of technology to improve workflow and efficiency.	*Partner with other Australian providers of care for older adults to be part of the innovation conversation.*
UniSC and Cisco - Developing an Impact Tool for Technology Investments Using the Health Productivity Lab at UniSC to co-develop an impact tool that supports investment decisions, improves nurse experience and readiness for technology-enabled care.	*Collaborate to validate practical metrics for technology use and implementation that address national challenges in nursing, aged care, and technology-enabled care delivery.*

To connect with any of these projects, please contact the NIIN Health Alliance Manager:
healthalliance@niin.com.au

A Call to Collaborate

Join us in shaping the future of healthcare in Australia

The NIIN Health Alliance continues to demonstrate the transformative power of collaboration - linking ideas, bridging institutions, and connecting people to drive responsible, scalable innovation in health.

As Australia's most powerful multi-university platform for digital health innovation and transformation, the Alliance brings together universities, industry, government, and healthcare providers to turn ambition into impact.

The opportunities outlined in this report – from agentic AI and connected care to workforce capability and digital infrastructure – are already being realised across the NIIN network. They now need partners, champions, and contributors to help take them further. We hope you will be inspired by them and spurred to join the collaboration.

Now is the moment to act. Whether you are a healthcare provider, policymaker, academic, technologist, or industry leader, there are practical and impactful ways to engage:

Practical and impactful ways to engage

Partner with NIIN's innovation centres and labs to design and scale transformative solutions

Join pilot programs to test and validate technologies in real-world settings

Connect to and invest in scalable innovation platforms and workforce capability solutions that strengthen system-wide resilience

The NIIN Health Alliance is more than a network - it is a national connector and catalyst for change. Continued investment and cross-sector collaboration will be vital to realising Australia's digital health transformation.

To explore specific partnerships and connect with NIIN Health Alliance members, refer to the NIIN Health Alliance Directory in the following pages.

Together, we can build a health system that is resilient, equitable, and digitally empowered - for all Australians.

NIIN Directory

NIIN Directory can also be accessed via **healthlab.edu.au**

NIIN Health Alliance	Contact	Health Focus Areas
NIIN Health Alliance Manager	Email: healthalliance@niin.com.au Website: healthlab.edu.au	• User-centred design • Workforce transformation • Public policy interface

Health Labs	Contact	Health Focus Areas
RMIT-Cisco Health Transformation Lab Melbourne	Email: admin@healthlab.edu.au Website: healthlab.edu.au	• User-centred design • Workforce transformation • Public policy interface
Flinders-Cisco Digital Health Design Lab Adelaide	Email: digitalhealth@flinders.edu.au Website: flinders.edu.au	• Infrastructure maturity • Patient Experience • Safe Wireless & Cybersecurity
Action Lab Malaysia Kuala Lumpur	Email: wong.koksheik@monash.edu Website: monash.edu.my	• Digital in Health • Action Research • Inclusive Research Infrastructure
UniSC-Cisco Digital Health Productivity Lab Sunshine Coast	Email: acraswel@usc.edu.au	• Aging • Workforce productivity & transformation
Innovation Central Singapore Singapore	Email: alex.stojcevski@curtin.edu.au	• Health Research • Cyber, Computing • Engineering

Cisco Research Chair	Contact	Health Focus Areas
Digital Health Systems Trish Williams Flinders University	Email: trish.williams@flinders.edu.au Website: flinders.edu.au	• Infrastructure Maturity • Patient Experience • Safe Wireless & Cybersecurity
Digital Health & Aging Alison Craswell University of the Sunshine Coast	Email: acraswel@usc.edu.au Website: usc.edu.au	• Aging • Workforce Productivity & Transformation

NIIN Directory *(cont.)*

NIIN Directory can also be accessed via **healthlab.edu.au**

Cisco Research Chair *(cont.)*	Contact	Health Focus Areas
Critical Infrastructure Frank den Hartog University of Canberra	Email: frank.denhartog@canberra.edu.au Website: researchprofiles.canberra.edu.au	• Built & Digital Infrastructure • Safe Wireless & Cybersecurity
AI & IoT Wei Xiang La Trobe University	Email: w.xiang@latrobe.edu.au Website: scholars.latrobe.edu.au	• Patient Outcomes • Built & Digital Infrastructure
Trusted Retail Nadine Ostern QUT	Email: n.ostern@qut.edu.au Website: research.qut.edu.au	• Patient Outcomes • Workforce & Skills

Innovation Centre	Contact	Health Focus Areas
Innovation Central Adelaide	Email: innovationcentral@flinders.edu.au Website: icentralau.com.au/adelaide	• Built & Digital Infrastructure • Workforce & Skills
Innovation Central Brisbane	Email: innovationcentral@qut.edu.au Website: icentralau.com.au/brisbane	• Patient Outcomes • Workforce & Skills
Innovation Central Canberra	Email: innovationcentral@canberrra.edu.au Website: icentralau.com.au/canberra	• Built & Digital Infrastructure • Workforce & Skills
Innovation Central Melbourne	Email: innovationcentral@latrobe.edu.au Website: icentralau.com.au/melbourne	• Patient Outcomes • Workforce & Skills • Built & Digital Infrastructure
Innovation Central Perth	Email: innovationcentral@curtin.edu.au Website: icentralau.com.au/perth	• Patient Outcomes • Workforce & Skills • Built & Digital Infrastructure
Innovation Central Sydney	Email: innovationcentral@uts.edu.au Website: icentralau.com.au/sydney	• Workforce & Skills • Built & Digital Infrastructure

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Prof. Tom Bentley: Vice President, Strategy & Community Impact, RMIT University

Prof. Trish Williams: Digital Health Systems, College of Science and Engineering, Flinders University, Cisco Research Chair for Digital Health Systems

Adelaide University
UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA
Curtin University
Flinders University
QUT Queensland University of Technology
The University Of Queensland AUSTRALIA
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
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NIIN National Industry Innovation Network

Health <Transformation> Lab