

Government backs \$200 million Digital Health R&D initiative

**A \$200+ million opportunity to transform health delivery:
improving health outcomes; reducing waste in the health system; building businesses and jobs.**

Embargo: 10 am, **Friday, 13 April 2018**

Launch with Senator Zed Seselja at 10 am, 'Fountain Courtyard', Sydney Hospital, Macquarie Street, Sydney.

The new Digital Health CRC (Cooperative Research Centre) will invest over \$200 million to develop and test digital health solutions that work for real patients in real hospitals and health services, while equipping Australians to better manage their own health and wellness.

Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja, Liberal Senator for the ACT, Assistant Minister for Science, Jobs and Innovation announced today that the Government will invest \$55 million through its CRC program to further develop Australia's growing Digital Health technology and services industry. The Centre was one of only four CRC's funded in this round.

The Digital Health CRC will have at least \$111 million in cash funding, and \$118 million in-kind funding to invest over its seven-year life. The Centre will operate through collaborative R&D programs involving 40 commercial and government organisations operating across the health, aged care and disability sectors, 24 established and start-up technology, advisory and investment companies, and 16 Australian universities. The Centre has the support of both the Australian Digital Health Agency and the Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals industry growth centre (MTP Connect).

Senator Seselja said the Digital Health CRC will improve the health and healthcare of all Australians.

"The CRC brings together industry and research partners across Australia's health and wellness landscape in a collaborative approach to advancing health and medical technologies and pharmaceutical industries."

"CRCs have a proven track record in delivering tangible benefits for industry. By linking industry expertise with our world-class research capability, CRCs generate new knowledge, solve problems and offer opportunities to commercialise new ideas," Assistant Minister Seselja said.

The Digital Health market is expected to grow internationally at over 25.9% p.a. to reach \$379 billion by 2024 (Hendersen et al -2016). "Timing is everything" says CEO-designate, David Jonas. "Australia has pioneered many health advances. If we act now, the Australian health industry can be pioneers in digital health transformation and leaders in digital health technology. If we wait a few years, the term 'Digital Health' will be synonymous with health, and Australian industry will have missed the boat. Recognising the international nature of health and technology, we are particularly pleased to have US-based HMS Inc as a major industry partner."

"Our CRC's founding premise is that digital health solutions have the potential to improve people's health and wellbeing, reduce waste in the health system and build businesses and jobs in the rapidly growing digital health sector" says the consortium's chair, Professor Christine Bennett AO. "One of our exemplar project relates to improving medication safety. Adverse drug reactions result in 400,000 GP visits a year



and are responsible for 30% of emergency hospital admissions in the elderly. This costs the system \$1.2 billion per annum, of which 50% is avoidable, according to our program lead, Professor Libby Roughead.”

Jonas explains that the CRC’s R&D program is industry driven and academically powered. “Industry is looking for digital solutions to be developed and validated through provision of access to ‘test-beds’ and for pathways to market. We will meet these objectives by working with our university and industry partners and by supporting and expanding the already nascent eco-system. We are confident that through our existing and planned international partnerships we will take Australian innovation into a global marketplace.”

Professor Bennett notes that the Digital Health CRC will spawn new companies and products, foster a new digital health workforce and forge new national and international partnerships. “We forecast that at least 1,000 new jobs will be created by this CRC, and that the Government and our partners investments will be returned 5 times over”, says Bennett, “and most importantly we will have actively contributed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians”.

Australia’s CRC program has had great success over the years generating billions of dollars in export earnings. These include the creation and/or development and commercialisation of the Cochlear hearing implants, key parts of the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner aeroplane wings, vision and oral health products, and the SMARTS financial surveillance software used across the world to detect illegal trading behaviours.

For more information contact Elizabeth Foley, Digital Health CRC Bid Manager, on efoley@digitalhealthcrc.com or 0402 893 829, or Niall Byrne, niall@scienceinpublic.com.au, 0417 131 977. Or check our website <http://www.digitalhealthcrc.com>

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