

11 - 12 March, 2026 | ICC, Sydney



ADVISORY BOARD INSIGHTS

Highlights from the Healthcare 2040 Expo Advisory Board Lunch

In August, we convened an extraordinary group of health leaders, innovators, and change makers for the inaugural Healthcare 2040 Expo Advisory Board Lunch, an energising step toward shaping one of Australia's most future-focused healthcare gatherings.

Bringing together executive voices from health services, government, startups, consumer advocacy, and digital health, the session provided a space to share bold ideas, challenge assumptions, and align on a shared vision for Healthcare 2040 Expo, launching 11–12 March 2026, co-located with Australian Healthcare Week.

Why Healthcare 2040 Expo?

Our health system is at a turning point. With rapid advances in technology, changing consumer expectations, and rising economic pressures, the need to come together has never been greater.

Healthcare 2040 Expo was created as a platform to explore the complex questions shaping the future of health:

- How can we use AI and automation to solve our workforce crisis?
- What will a truly connected and person-centred health system look like?
- How do we ensure innovation is both responsible and equitable?
- And how can we prepare now for the care models of the next 15 years?

As Andrew Wilson, CCO of NexusMD and a Foundation Sponsor of the Expo, advocated:

“I encourage the industry to attend Healthcare 2040 Expo because it isn't afraid to ask the tough questions and seek the real answers that we need to be a technology leader in healthcare.”

Meeting the Moment: Shaping a Future-Focused Health System

Healthcare is no longer just about treating illness, it's about promoting health and wellbeing. Mitch Burger, Chief Insights Officer at Healthdirect, reflected this shift;

“My vision for the future of health is a health system that is re-oriented toward production of health and wellbeing, rather than the treatment of illness, and we are taking advantage of modern technology to vastly improve productivity and sustainability.”

But technology alone won't solve everything. Mitch emphasised the urgent need to tackle complex challenges:

“To move the industry forward, we must tackle key challenges including the labour force and economic disruption that will arise from AI; environmental sustainability and emissions; operationalising responsible AI governance.”

Balancing Innovation and Compassion

As digital health rapidly evolves, the challenge is to balance innovation with regulation and ensure solutions are tailored without causing fragmentation. Rob Marshall, Chief Strategy Officer at St Vincent's Health Australia, shared a compelling vision for care:

“My vision for the future of health is care meets you where you are and whenever you need it - digitally connected, deeply compassionate, and tailored to your life. We're building that future now at St Vincent's, bringing hospital-grade care into homes and communities across Australia.”

He also acknowledged the delicate balancing act the industry must manage:

“We must address the balancing act of digital health; between innovation and regulation; between build and buy; between tailoring to unique settings and fragmentation.”

Rob also referenced the unique role Healthcare 2040 Expo plays in bringing together a diverse community, saying:

“I encourage the industry to attend Healthcare 2040 Expo because it's the biggest and most diverse gathering of like-minded people in Australia. If the people at Healthcare 2040 can't bring about the future of health in Australia, I don't know who can.”

The Power of Collaboration

No organisation can transform healthcare alone. This was a key theme underscored by Puja Pankhania, Managing Director of Healthcare 2040 Expo:

“Transformation doesn't happen in silos. It happens when we bring together bold thinkers across the sector to ask the hard questions, and start building the answers together. That's the mission behind Healthcare 2040 Expo. It's a platform for real collaboration, with the urgency and imagination the future demands.”

Who Was in the Room?

The inaugural lunch featured an impressive and diverse group of contributors, including:

- Rob Marshall, Chief Strategy Officer, St Vincent's Health Australia
- Paul Middleton, Chief Medical Information Officer, South Western Sydney Local Health District
- Paul Creech, Chief Program Officer, Australian Digital Health Agency
- Mitch Burger, Chief Insights Officer, Healthdirect
- Daniel Pettman, Chief Information Officer, BaptistCare
- Densarn Seo, CEO & Co-Founder Gravida Health and RACMA Governance Committee
- Harry Nguyen, Director, APAC, Heidi Health (Foundation Sponsor)
- Andrew Wilson, Chief Commercial Officer, NexusMD (Foundation Sponsor)
- Harry Iles-Mann, Consumer Representative
- Puja Pankhania, Managing Director, Healthcare 2040 Expo
- Moderated by, Robyn Chanter, Show Director, Healthcare 2040 Expo

Supported by a National Advisory Board

In addition to those who attended in person, Healthcare 2040 Expo is proudly supported by a wider national Advisory Board, made up of visionary leaders from across Australia and beyond:

- Michelle Rennie, Chief Digital Officer, The Royal Children's Hospital
- Amith Shetty, Clinical Director, NSW Health
- Kendra Hagedorn, Chief Nursing Information Officer, Ramsay Health
- Tom Lawry, Best-Selling Author & Global AI Expert
- Maree Ruge, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Information Officer, Metro North Health
- Sandip Kumar, Chief Digital & Innovation Officer, Kings College Hospital London
- Nirvana Luckraj, Chief Medical Officer, Healthdirect
- Emily Mailes, Chief eHealth Strategy Officer, Victorian Department of Health
- Dr John F. Lambert, Chief Clinical Information Officer, Department of Health Tasmania
- Michael Bakker, Chief Pharmacist Information Officer, SA Health
- Jason S., Chief Digital Officer, West Moreton Health
- Antonela Manovski (Vogranic), Chief Nursing Information Officer, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
- Nathaniel Alexander, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Information Officer, South Western Sydney LHD

- Andrew Dome, Chief Digital Information Officer, Uniting NSW.ACT
- Kath Feely, Chief Allied Health Information Officer, Parkville Precinct

Community Partners

We're proud to collaborate with a growing group of Official Community Partners, whose support helps us build a truly representative and inclusive platform:

- Hunter New England Local Health District
- Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
- Australian Healthcare & Hospitals Association (AHHA)
- Australian College of Nursing (ACN)
- Australasian Institute of Digital Health (AIDH)
- Victorian Healthcare Association
- RACMA
- NSW Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network
- Health Information Management Association of Australia Limited (HIMAA)
- eHealth NSW
- CSIRO

What's Next?

This lunch marks the beginning of a larger national movement. Over the coming months, our Advisory Board and community will help shape a program that's rich with insight, packed with innovation, and grounded in real-world change. If you're working at the intersection of healthcare, technology, systems, and people - we invite you to join us.

9 Takeaways Shaping Australia's Digital Health Future

Australian healthcare is entering a decisive moment. Digital health and artificial intelligence are no longer “on the horizon” — they’re here, creating tangible improvements in documentation, translation, triage, and patient communications. Yet the reality is clear: the sector is still stuck in pilot mode. The true challenge is not whether AI and digital tools can work, but whether we can scale them into platforms that deliver measurable value across entire systems. That was the strong message from our Healthcare 2040 advisory board calls last week, which brought together leaders from across public, private and community care.

1. **AI is here, but scale is not.** The productivity wins are real: ambient listening is reducing admin load, multilingual tools are opening new channels for access, and smart agents are making call centres more efficient. But pilots, no matter how clever, won’t shift the dial. Without enterprise-wide platforms, change management, and clear ROI frameworks, healthcare risks becoming a graveyard of one-off experiments. The real opportunity is building the scaffolding that makes AI safe, repeatable, and value-generating across entire networks.
2. **Incentives are misaligned.** We know virtual care and preventative models improve outcomes, yet providers often take a financial hit when hospital visits are avoided. That misalignment discourages innovation. If we want health systems to adopt models that genuinely keep people healthier for longer, we need reimbursement and funding structures that reward outcomes, not just throughput.
3. **Interoperability is not optional.** Closed ecosystems within electronic medical records and clinical systems are slowing innovation. Services are seeking safe, standards-based ways to plug in AI and analytics without being locked into one vendor’s roadmap. True interoperability isn’t just a technical feature — it’s a strategic decision about whether the sector will be able to evolve at pace.
4. **Patients are ahead of the system.** Consumers are already using GPTs to interpret care notes, upload radiology reports, and ask second-opinion style questions. They expect their health services to work with the same ease as ordering a meal or tracking a delivery. Multiple patient portals that don’t connect frustrate those expectations. Patient-driven disruption isn’t a future risk — it’s already happening.
5. **Technology is only half the story.** The best dashboards and AI alerts still require human accountability and service design. Without clear workflows and teams empowered to act, data simply accumulates without impact. Building digital literacy and redesigning clinical and operational roles is essential to turn technology into outcomes.
6. **Workforce productivity must be channelled.** Automation is freeing up valuable time, but unless we intentionally redesign scope of practice, the gains risk being swallowed by more paperwork. The real dividend comes when clinicians spend more time at the bedside, not behind the screen. That requires brave decisions on workforce models, training, and redistribution of responsibilities.
7. **Sustainability can’t be an afterthought.** AI is compute-intensive, and the environmental footprint of digital health is rising. Healthcare is already one of the largest contributors to emissions. Leaders are increasingly weighing carbon impact alongside cost and clinical safety, recognising that a net-zero strategy must run in parallel with digital transformation.
8. **Governance needs courage, not just process.** Leaders need to balance safety and oversight with the courage to take calculated risks. The risk of not acting is now greater than the risk of trying and failing.
9. **Resilience must match reliance.** As we digitise, the system must also plan for black-swan events. Continuity planning, realistic vendor SLAs, and even paper fallbacks for critical workflows are part of building resilience. Without them, reliance becomes fragility.

Shaping Healthcare 2040 These themes are not theoretical.

They are shaping the Healthcare 2040 expo programs in March 2026 at ICC Sydney:

- Digital Now Stage: practical case studies of AI and automation with measurable ROI.
- Futures Stage: big-picture strategies for interoperability, equity and sustainability.

- Executive Huddles: closed-door discussions by role (CIOs, CMIOs, CNIOs, finance and operations) to tackle governance and funding.
- Resilience Labs: stress-testing continuity plans for a digital-first system.

Australia has a chance to move from pilots to platforms — but it will require bold leadership, patient partnership, and alignment across funding, governance and workforce. Healthcare 2040 is the place where those conversations turn into commitments.

Join us at the Healthcare 2040 Expo, co-located with Australian Healthcare Week, 11–12 March 2026 at ICC Sydney. Free visitor registration is now open. [Click here to secure your free ticket.](#)

People, Place and Policy: What Will Define Healthcare's Next Decade

Healthcare is entering one of the most complex and dynamic decades in recent memory. Workforce shortages, shifting patient expectations, climate sustainability, and the rapid advance of digital health are converging to reshape how care is designed and delivered. At the heart of this transformation are three pillars that will determine success: **people, place and policy**.

These themes emerged strongly in our advisory board discussions — and they are not abstract. They are the daily realities facing clinicians, executives, policymakers, and patients alike.

People: Workforce, Leadership and Trust

The workforce remains the system's greatest disruptor and its greatest opportunity. Shortages and flow bottlenecks are stretching services and fuelling burnout. Automation and augmentation of processes — from admissions to discharge planning — are seen as essential, but they must be designed to genuinely ease pressure, not simply shift administrative burden onto clinicians.

Leadership capability is another critical factor. Transformation requires leaders who not only understand digital tools but are equipped to implement them safely, ethically and at scale. Globally, health systems are investing heavily in executive education on AI, data and digital health. Australia must do the same if it wants to lead rather than lag.

Trust is also reshaping the workforce dynamic. Patients increasingly arrive with AI-generated information or expectations of digital tools in the consult room. This is challenging clinicians but also opening new opportunities for partnership. Safe adoption of these tools, combined with stronger communication and health literacy, can turn potential friction into collaboration.

Place: Environment, Experience and Sustainability

The physical and virtual settings where care occurs are changing rapidly. Hybrid models of hospital, home and community care are becoming more common, and patients increasingly expect choice and flexibility in where their care is delivered.

The design of environments matters for more than logistics. Natural light, privacy, and recovery-friendly spaces can have a measurable impact on wellbeing. At the same time, sustainability is a growing imperative. Healthcare is one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions, and decisions around procurement, infrastructure, and digital operations must now consider climate impact as seriously as cost or clinical outcomes.

Accessibility must be built in from the ground up. Whether it's mobility-friendly spaces, inclusive communication formats, or digital tools that work for all populations, health systems are being challenged to design for diversity by default.

Policy: Data, Safety and Incentives

Policy and regulation are the levers that can accelerate or stall transformation. Data is front and centre: predictive models for flow and access depend on reliable, connected datasets. Without interoperable standards, services risk fragmentation.

Responsible AI adoption is equally dependent on governance. Guardrails around consent, ethics, transparency and safety validation must be clear. Without them, adoption will slow, and public trust will be at risk.

Incentives also play a decisive role. Current funding models reward throughput more than outcomes. Aligning reimbursement with prevention, virtual care, and patient-centred results will be crucial to unlocking innovation at scale.

Equity and Experience as Cross-Cutting Themes

Equity emerged as a theme that must cut across every decision. Whether for rural, Indigenous, migrant or underserved populations, digital and system reforms must reduce, not widen, existing gaps. Equally, the experience

of both patients and staff is increasingly recognised as a determinant of success. Human-centred design in both care delivery and professional environments can lead to better outcomes, stronger trust and greater resilience.

Looking ahead The healthcare system of the next decade will be shaped not by any single technology or reform, but by how we manage the interplay of people, place and policy. Workforce capability, sustainable environments, clear governance and equitable design are no longer optional extras — they are the foundations for a system that can meet the needs of a changing population.

Healthcare leaders, clinicians and policymakers now face a choice: address these pillars with urgency and ambition, or risk falling behind in a period of unprecedented change.

👉 Be part of the 15th Annual Australian Healthcare Week, 10–12 March 2026 at ICC Sydney. Free visitor registration is now open. [Click here to secure your free ticket.](#)