

PROPOSAL TO THE MEMBERS OF ACHI AND HISA

Formation of a new peak organisation for health informatics and digital health

RELEASED FOR MEMBER AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

30 April to 25 June 2019

A shared vision for a new organisation

Message from the Council of ACHI and the Board of HISA

ACHI and HISA have worked together since ACHI was formed nearly 20 years ago and today the relationship is stronger, more collaborative and strategic than ever.

The ACHI Council and the HISA Board believe now is the time to come together to create a new organisation to serve the requirements of the health informatics and digital health community, and healthcare more broadly.

We believe a new structure will provide significant benefits to members both as individuals and organisationally that will flow onto many thousands of stakeholders.

The proposal in this document outlines how we can achieve more together by attracting the resources and capacity to build momentum and make a real difference to healthcare in the digital world.

The ACHI Council and HISA Board are keen to hear your views on this proposal before any decision is made to move forward. This is your opportunity to consider the proposal and provide your feedback during this consultation period.

Thank you for taking the time to give this your careful consideration.



Angela Ryan
President
ACHI



Dr David Hansen
Chair
HISA

A NEW PEAK ORGANISATION FOR HEALTH INFORMATICS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

1. You have the opportunity to be a founder member of a larger and stronger health informatics and digital health peak body for Australasia led by the most qualified and experienced health informatics and digital health leaders and practitioners.
2. Membership will be diverse – whether scientists, clinicians, technologists, students, researchers, entrepreneurs, educators, executives or policy-makers - enabling more collaborations, more partnerships and more connections.
3. You will have more opportunities to be engaged in consultation, as part of a new and united single voice on health informatics and digital health.
4. The focus of the new body will be Australasia but will seek to engage on global issues where relevant. The new body will develop new relationships according to need, with particular regard to Health Informatics New Zealand (HINZ). The body will develop formal engagement processes to achieve this.
5. As an individual member, there would be end-to-end membership services, with offerings to suit every stage of your training and career in digital health.
6. The new organisation will seek to provide development pathways for all our members.
7. Our membership will be increasingly diverse internationally, working with health informatics organisations both in and out of the country. We will seek to build international linkages through our Fellowship, education and credentialing programs. Outside of Australia, the new body will look to partner with existing health informatics and digital health organisations.
8. The new organisation will work with other peak bodies to emphasise health informatics and digital health expertise through collaboration with clinical and health service organisations.
9. As an organisational member, you will have access to the most advanced professional development programs and networks to build your business and workforce capability.
10. A new peak health informatics and digital health organisation will be better placed to attract additional revenue streams to strengthen our work and increase the impact on the Australian and international health sector.

WHY A NEW ORGANISATION NOW? THREE REASONS WHY THE TIME IS RIGHT

1. HISA and ACHI have been working closely with an overlapping membership and many shared goals and objectives. In 2019, with shared strategies for workforce capacity building and the recognition of health informatics as a profession, we can achieve more by joining forces.
2. The health workforce is now rapidly embracing digital health. The demand for education, training, professional pathways, certification and leadership development is growing. HISA and ACHI can meet more of this demand by coming together to create a new organisation.
3. There has already been significant investment in digital health in our hospitals and across our health services. With the recent expansion of the national My Health Record Program, and the transition to opt-out, never has digital health been more widely debated and discussed by the broader community. The time is right for a single unified voice from health informatics and digital health leaders and experts at a time when members of the general public and public policy makers are looking for informed opinion, advice and guidance.

SHARED GOALS AND A SHARED VISION

As healthcare is evolving in the digital age, we have to ask ourselves how can we evolve to better support individuals and organisations.

Where could a new single organisation create more value for its members?

The following goals for a new organisation have been identified for discussion:

- To promote collaboration, collegiality, co-operation and communication to further the discipline of health informatics and its principles of good practice in the digital health community Australasia;
- To improve the provision of care through the promotion of evidence-based use of transformative information and communication tools and practices;
- To educate and enable the health workforces to deliver person-centred healthcare in the digital age;
- To promote digital health leadership, diversity of membership and interdisciplinary collaboration in the interests of advancing health system performance;
- To advance and support developments, innovation and entrepreneurship across the digital health ecosystem;
- To advance the professional growth, structured knowledge and skills of the membership and provide thought leadership on digital health within and beyond the constituency; and
- To foster a collective community of practice of health informatics and digital health professionals.

ACHI AND HISA IN 2019

ACHI and HISA have a close relationship. We have an executed Memorandum of Understanding, and work together on initiatives such as CHIA, the ACHI Fellowship by Training program and HIC. HISA also provides administrative support to ACHI's membership committee.

- The [Australasian College of Health Informatics](#) was formed in 2001 with 20 Foundation Fellows, and held its first meeting at HIC 2002 in Melbourne. Membership is by application and assessment based on credentials and experience. There are currently 107+ Fellows, in Australia and overseas, and 28+ Members of ACHI. ACHI is supported entirely by a group of committed volunteers. [READ ABOUT ACHI'S HISTORY.](#)
- The credentialed Fellows and Members of ACHI are national thought leaders, experts and trusted advisers in health informatics and digital health.
- ACHI sets standards for professional practice and education in health informatics, provides evidence-based guidance to jurisdictions, supports initiatives, facilitates inter-disciplinary collaboration and mentors the community.
- In 2017 ACHI established the Australasian Health Informatics Fellowship Program (AHIFP) as a training pathway to ACHI Fellowship – the first program of its kind in Australasia designed to prepare PhD students for leadership roles in the health informatics and digital health workforce and to address the current demands for experienced and qualified health informatics specialists from various disciplines. This Fellowship program has the potential for expansion internationally, with enquiries already received from many health informatics scholars outside Australia.
- [HISA](#) was formed in 1993 to educate and inform the Australian health sector about health informatics and to provide recognition and support for health informaticians. Some 25 years later HISA now has a broad membership (1,500 individuals and organisations) and large stakeholder network (~13,000 people) across the health sector. HISA is Australia's digital health community, with members including health informaticians, clinicians, researchers, healthcare managers and executives, data analysts, designers, project managers, business analysts, technologists and innovators. Anyone with a professional interest in or a passion for digital health is invited to join.
- HISA's strategic goal is to build the digital health workforce Australia needs to deliver healthcare in the digital age. Digital health interest areas are supported through communities of practice in topics such as cybersecurity, clinical informatics, nursing informatics, health UX and precision medicine. Local connections for the community are the purview of State branches hosting regular events and meetings with educational speakers and networking. HISA publishes thought leadership papers and also organises a major annual scientific and industry conference and several smaller national conferences.
- In addition to paid memberships, HISA has a digital health community across Australia, strong government relationships and industry connections. HISA has undergone much growth in recent years and its work is supported by a staff of ~16 people and hundreds of volunteers. [READ ABOUT HISA HISTORY.](#)

COLLABORATION TO ACHIEVE MORE

The synergy between HISA and ACHI creates the potential to join forces on shared areas of interest and member focus. More progress would be made more rapidly by combining resources on:

- Education and training
- Accreditation and certification
- Support for students and young leaders
- Communities of Practice
- Executive leadership networks
- Advocacy for digital health

There are also activities and priorities set by each organisation that may, or may not be, shared. One of the principles of the process to create a new organisation will be that every activity is assessed in terms of overarching goals and the expectations of members. Managing this carefully is important to ensure valuable projects and programs are not overlooked.

LOGISTICAL BENEFITS OF FORMING A NEW ORGANISATION

- Concentrates expertise in the new organisation.
- Less duplication of work: Member management would be streamlined
- Cost savings in running two organisations: Enabling more action to be achieved with less
- One head office: Cost savings with shared resources in administration, finance, marketing
- One Board, not two: No risk of duplicated goal setting and competition for resources
- Growing the membership: No competition over attracting new members
- Single membership platform and interface for communities of practice, special interest groups and more.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER: GOVERNANCE & TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

- a) Subject to a vote by members, the Health Informatics Society of Australia (HISA) and the Australasian College of Health Informatics (ACHI) will come together to create a *single peak professional body* for health informatics and digital health in Australasia.
- b) This follows discussions during 2018 between the HISA Board and the ACHI Council on the potential for collaboration. If supported by members of both organisations when put to the vote during 2019, a new combined professional body for health informatics and digital health would be formed early in 2020.
- c) The HISA Board and the ACHI Council would be replaced by an interim Board, with members initially drawn from current office-holders and in subsequent years through election by members.
- d) Members of HISA and Members and Fellows of ACHI would be automatically transitioned into the new organisation with the same entitlements they currently hold.
- e) Programs and projects of each organisation will continue under the auspices of the new organisation, with overlapping activities identified, prioritised and streamlined.
- f) There would be a new name and brand to reflect the combined new organisation while retaining the history, growth and purpose of both current organisations.
- g) HISA resources will be combined with ACHI resources, including finances, staffing, volunteers, online presence and office accommodation.
- h) A consultation period has been scheduled to enable members of both organisations to provide suggestions and input on all aspects of the new organisation.
- i) Following this, a new constitution and formal documentation will be provided for consideration in time for a vote by members.
- j) Members will be asked to vote on the proposal at a special general meeting.

CONSULTATION PRINCIPLES

1. All members of HISA and ACHI will have equal opportunity and access to consider the proposal for the creation of a single new organisation
2. The proposal will be considered in the interests of all members and stakeholders
3. Where there are areas currently *not* of shared interest, time will be taken to work through how these would be handled
4. Members can provide their opinions in confidence
5. Non-members may also complete the survey; the consultation tool will identify members of either organisation plus non-members.

WHAT NEXT? HOW TO PROVIDE YOUR OPINION ON THIS PROPOSAL

Feedback is invited from members and non-members:

- You are invited to complete the [Online Survey](#).
- Join in one of the webinars or in-person events listed on the [Event Calendar](#).
- HISA Members can discuss the proposal in the HISA Member portal [SocialLink](#) - Consultation Room.
- If you would like to personally discuss the proposal with a representative of the consultation committee representing ACHI and HISA, please contact us on (03) 9326 3311 and we will arrange a phone appointment.

More details at:

www.hisa.org.au/neworganisation

www.achi.org.au/neworganisation

Ready to provide your feedback now?

Go to survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ACHI-HISA>