



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health**

**Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie
Minister for Rural Health**

**The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Member for Farrer**

16 March 2018

First My Health Record connected town in Australia

The community of Berrigan in NSW is the first town in Australia where all key healthcare providers are connected and using My Health Record.



Sussan Ley MP, Agency CEO Tim Kelsey, Agency Chief Medical Adviser Meredith Makeham, MPHN Director Clinical Services Julie Redway, MPHN staff, and local community members

The Hon Sussan Ley MP, Member for Farrer, representing Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, and the Minister for Rural Health, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, said people in rural and remote areas of Australia need to be able to have their important health information when they receive care.

“My Health Record allows Australians and their health professionals to securely access their health information to improve their care, whether at home or in a metropolitan hospital.”

“I’m so proud that the community of Berrigan have shown Australia how it’s done, by embracing digital health to bring world class health care to the bush,” Ms Ley said.

The Australian Digital Health Agency and the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN) identified Berrigan, a town in the Riverina region of New South Wales, as the first town in Australia where the local general practice, pharmacy, aged care centres, and the local hospital are all connected to the system. Additionally, over 50% of the town’s population, and every resident in the aged care facility has an active My Health Record.

MPHN Acting CEO Melissa Neal said she is not surprised a rural community of around 950 people is leading the way with My Health Record.

“In my experience, small rural communities have an inspiring sense of community spirit and connectedness. This achievement for Berrigan demonstrates the town’s community strength, the foresight of the local health professionals and the town’s willingness to uptake digital health technology,” Ms Neal said.

Berrigan local Damien Taylor can already see the benefits of My Health Record for his young daughter Maggie, who, at seven months old, underwent open-heart surgery for a congenital heart defect.

“While my wife and I were going through this traumatic time with Maggie, her important health information like medicines, conditions and hospital stay information were being captured in her My Health Record. We are so pleased it has. The long term benefits of having this record mean we won’t need to keep hard copy records and try and remember everything at each medical appointment in the future,” Mr Taylor said.

Joining the community celebration along with the state Member for Murray, Mr Austin Evans, Agency CEO Tim Kelsey congratulated the Berrigan community on its commitment to digital health innovation.

“This is digital health innovation at its very best and it demonstrates that it doesn’t matter where in Australia you live, as a consumer and a provider, you should have your health records in the palm of your hand.”

“The Australian Medical Association has said that the My Health Record is the future of modern medicine in Australia. The fact that a small rural town is the first to be fully connected instantly demonstrates the fundamental human value that digital health provides in terms of improving health care access and equity to all Australians no matter where they live,” Mr Kelsey said.

“We are well aware of the issues that patients face in rural communities: access to services is often difficult and digital health innovation can make a huge difference to the care of all, particularly those with complex and chronic needs,” Mr Kelsey said.

Shared Health Summaries, Prescription and Dispense uploads are well above average in Berrigan and the Practice Nurses in General Practice has a particular interest in Advance Care plans and in assisting in uploading them to a patient’s My Health Record.

Background

Currently, over 5.5 million Australians have a My Health Record. Minister Hunt welcomed the news of Australia’s first digitally health connected town. As a result of the Turnbull Government’s investment of \$374.2 million over the next two years to continue and expand the system, every Australian will have a My Health Record created for them by December 2018, unless they choose not to have one during the three month opt out period.

To learn more about the benefits of the system visit: www.myhealthrecord.gov.au.

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Australian Digital Health Agency

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About the Australian Digital Health Agency

The Agency is tasked with improving health outcomes for all Australians through the delivery of digital healthcare systems, and implementing [Australia's National Digital Health Strategy](#) – Safe, Seamless, and Secure in collaboration with partners across the community. The Agency is the System Operator of the [My Health Record](#), and provides leadership, coordination, and delivery of a collaborative and innovative approach to utilising technology to support and enhance a clinically safe and connected national health system. These improvements will give individuals more control of their health and their health information, and support healthcare professionals to provide informed healthcare through access to current clinical and treatment information. Further information: www.digitalhealth.gov.au.