

Specialist Digital Health Workforce
Census
1 May - 31 May 2026



Participant Information Sheet

Title	Specialist Digital Health Workforce Census Professor Kerryyn Butler-Henderson
Principal Investigators	Professor Kathleen Gray Dr Salma Arabi

What does my participation involve?

1 Introduction

This Participant Information Sheet tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about. Before deciding whether to take part, you might want to talk about it with a relative or friend.

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to.

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be asked to acknowledge your consent at the start of the census. By consenting, you are telling us that you:

- Understand what you have read
- Consent to take part in the research project

You should keep a copy of this Participant Information Sheet to keep.

2 Background information to the project

The questions in the Census were developed using a Delphi study design throughout 2017. Experts from several different stakeholder organisations in Australia and New Zealand provided input into the data elements and questions that should be included in the Census. This was to ensure that the Census would answer the stakeholder group's questions, and that the questions would not change over time. The Census was then pilot tested by the experts and the executive committees of the partner organisations. The first Census was conducted in Australia and New Zealand in 2018. We have since published the 2018 Census report on our website. In 2020-21 we validated the data items and piloted the revised census in 2021. This July 2023 we launched the Specialist Digital Health Workforce Census. Further information about the development of the Census can be found on the Census website.

3 What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of the Census project is to quantify and qualify the Specialist Digital Health Workforce, specifically to delineate and count the workforce, consider the future

configuration of workforce, identify workforce shortfalls, and identify current training and career pathways. Your participation is much appreciated. With your input, we will be able to achieve our aim, informing employers, government, industry, and academia of the importance of this workforce.

4 Who should complete the Census?

Anyone who self-identifies as being a part of the Specialist Digital Health Workforce. You are part of the workforce if any part of your role (including volunteer or actively seeking) includes a function (listed below) related to health data, information, or knowledge. You may undertake a role that has both a Specialist Digital Health component and another component (for example, clinical or management). For this Census, only consider the Specialist Digital Health component. Functions could include analysing, designing, developing, implementing, maintaining, managing, operating, evaluating, or governing the data, technology, systems, and services for the health sector. You might not identify as part of the Specialist Digital Health workforce if the primary function of your role is limited to using health data, information, or knowledge but none of the other functions listed above.

5 How do I access the Census?

On the Census website is a link to the Census. The Census will be open for completion from the 1st May until the 31st May 2026. You can then complete the Census on a computer or mobile device, using any browser. If you would like to complete a paper copy, please contact one of the project contacts below. The Census consists of a number of select answer and short answer questions relating to your demographic information, educational background, current health information work experience, and future professional intentions.

The Census will be conducted during the month of May 2026.

6 How long does it take to complete the Census?

This will vary depending on the number of questions you chose to answer, your educational background, and your current employment status. However, during our pilot study and the 2018 and 2021 Census, most participants completed the Census in less than 20 minutes, with the average time being 14 minutes. If you only answer the cohort version of the Census, it should only take ~5 minutes to complete. You can save your responses and return to complete the Census later in the month. This function will only work if you use the same browser and do not clear your cookies in your browser.

7 Do I have to take part in this research project?

Participation in any research project is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the researchers or with Charles Sturt University.

8 What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There may be no direct benefit to you from your participation in this research. The information captured by the Census will inform workforce and training planning and forecasting.

9 What are the risks and disadvantages of taking part?

We do not anticipate any risks or disadvantages of taking part in this research.

10 What if I withdraw from this research project?

If you do consent to participate, you may withdraw at any time by closing the survey. You do not need to notify a member of the research team if you decide to withdraw. As we do not collect your name, we are unable to remove any data you have entered into the Census.

11 What happens when the research project ends?

The data will be analysed and aggregated summary findings will be presented in a report, made available on the Census website and shared with the collaborating organisations. No identifying information about you or organisations you work with will be collected by this Census. Anonymity will be maintained when reporting the data. For example, when reporting the Census findings, should a particular field reveal five or less participants, a symbol will be substituted, indicating that the exact number will not be reported. The project team will also undertake analysis on the Census data for publication in journals and at conference and industry presentations, and the data will be reported in such a way as to not identify any individual or organisation. Please see the 2018 report or any of the other publications on the Census website as examples.

12 What will happen to information about me?

By consenting to participate, you consent to the research team collecting and using information from you for the research project. Any information obtained in connection with this research project that can identify you will remain confidential.

The Census is conducted through a survey system, Qualtrics. Following the Census, the data will be downloaded from Qualtrics into a password protected MS Excel spreadsheet, which will be maintained on a secure Charles Sturt University server in Victoria, Australia that can only be accessed by the project contacts listed below. This data will then be uploaded into a password protected project database for analysis, again only accessible by the project contacts listed below. For further information, please see the Data Management and Access Policy on the Census website.

This project has an open data approach. This means organisations and individuals will be able to request access to the de-identified Census data for non-commercial purposes. The above principles of data anonymity will be maintained and further information is available in the Data Management and Access Policy on the Census website. Currently it is planned to keep the data indefinitely to enable data comparisons over time. Should this change, information will be provided on the Census website. Further information about data access can be found on the Census website.

13 Who has reviewed the research project?

All research in Australia involving humans is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). This research project has previously been approved by the University of Tasmania REC and the RMIT University HREC.

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2023). This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

14 Further information and who to contact

If you want any further information concerning this project, you can contact the researcher or any of the following people:

Research contact person

Name	Professor Kerrynd Butler-Henderson
Position	Principal investigator
Telephone	02 63384480
Email	kbutler-henderson@csu.edu.au

Name	Professor Kathleen Gray
Position	Principal investigator
Telephone	03 8344 8936
Email	kgray@unimelb.edu.au

Name	Dr Salma Arabi
Position	Principal investigator
Email	sarabi@csu.edu.au

15 Complaints

Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Research Integrity Unit via the following contact details:

The Presiding Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Research Integrity Unit
Locked Bag 588
Wagga Wagga NSW 2678
Phone: (02) 6933 4213
Email: ethics@csu.edu.au

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly, and you will be informed of the outcome.