

PHNs and General Practice

7,816

Number of General Practices in Australia

88%

General Practices engaged with PHNs in 2018

What are PHNs?



PHNs are local independent organisations set up to improve patient care in their PHN regions and make primary healthcare more efficient and effective.



PHNs are funded by the Australian Government and advised by GPs, other health professionals and consumers.

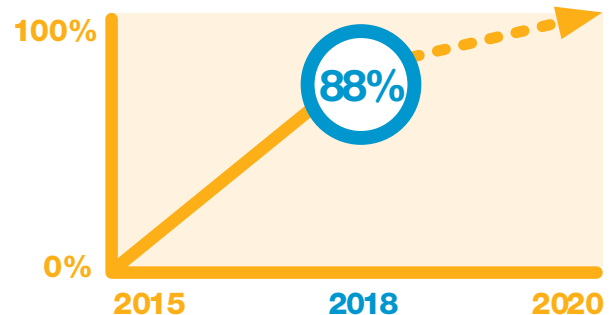


There are 31 PHNs covering all of Australia.



There are 59 PHN Clinical Councils that assist PHNs to develop local strategies, all chaired by local GPs.

General Practice engagement with PHNs has grown rapidly



PHN key functions

We use our knowledge and understanding of local health and healthcare needs to:

1

Support
GENERAL PRACTICE*

2

Commission
or purchase
locally-needed
services

3

Integrate local
services and
systems

How we support General Practice

The 31 PHNs in Australia strongly support General Practices as the cornerstone of primary healthcare in their communities.

Our expert and experienced staff work closely with GPs, specialists, pharmacies and other health services to build capacity to deliver high quality patient-centred care and improve health outcomes.

*General Practices include Aboriginal Medical Services

Why we support General Practice

GPs are the frontline of healthcare in Australia. Investing in strong GP-led primary healthcare helps people to lead healthier lives—and if they become unwell, to receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

The case for change in primary healthcare

Evidence from both Australia and overseas suggests that general practice will have a stronger role in healthcare to prevent and manage chronic disease.

Better knowledge, better treatments and less exposure to health risks means we are now living longer than ever before.

But as our population ages we are living with more chronic diseases such as diabetes, kidney disease, cancer and cardiovascular disease.

These diseases and related conditions are best managed within a primary care setting incorporating multidisciplinary teams, with appropriate support from hospitals.

International evidence suggests that integrated and coordinated primary healthcare systems focused on the needs of the individual are what work best.

PHNs were created to work with regional partners in making these changes, tailored to local needs. Community needs assessments are an integral part of this work.

What primary healthcare will look like in the future

| Today | Future | Reason |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Treating sickness episodes | Managing the health of populations | Health is managed before during and after sickness, leading to fewer hospital admissions and a more efficient system overall |
| Clinician-directed | Patient-clinician partnership(s) | Patient input to care brings better results |
| Specialty-based | Primary care driven | Joined-up services needed to deliver holistic care for chronic diseases, with patients at the centre |
| Fragmented care | Coordinated care | |
| Individual patient files | Integrated electronic records | |
| Managing accepted health treatments | Evidence-based medicine | Some treatments are not supported by evidence |
| Paying for inputs | Blended payments | Payment for outcomes rather than inputs |
| Competitive provider relations | Cooperative payer-provider relations | Healthcare should be affordable for individuals and Australia as a whole |
| Numerous funding sources | Joint commissioning within PHN regions | More efficient use of resources within each PHN region |

General Practice— how PHNs assist

- We have on-the-ground expertise and experienced staff who work directly with general practices.
- We know General Practice, and know every business is different—so we are flexible in our approach.
- We aim to deliver the right support at the right time that matches professional needs and interests.
- A suite of programs and services can be tailored to individual requirements.

PHN activities – some examples

Care coordination (joined-up services)



We set up networks that improve care coordination across general practices, hospitals, pharmacies, specialists and allied health services.

Data



We support General Practices to use their data to improve care for their patients.

GP-referred services



We strengthen local availability of services such as allied health and mental health through commissioning activities designed to meet local needs.

Clinical decision support



We consult with expert clinicians to produce GP clinical decision support pathways for your local region.

We smooth pathways to and from local hospitals while reducing avoidable admissions.

Digital health



We support General Practices with My Health Record set-up and implementation, as well as with other digital health innovations such as telehealth and e-referrals.

Practice accreditation



We support General Practices to meet practice accreditation requirements.

Quality improvement



We design quality improvement initiatives and support the adoption of best practice care across areas including chronic disease, mental health, diabetes, immunisation, Closing the Gap, and sexual health.

Grants and assistance



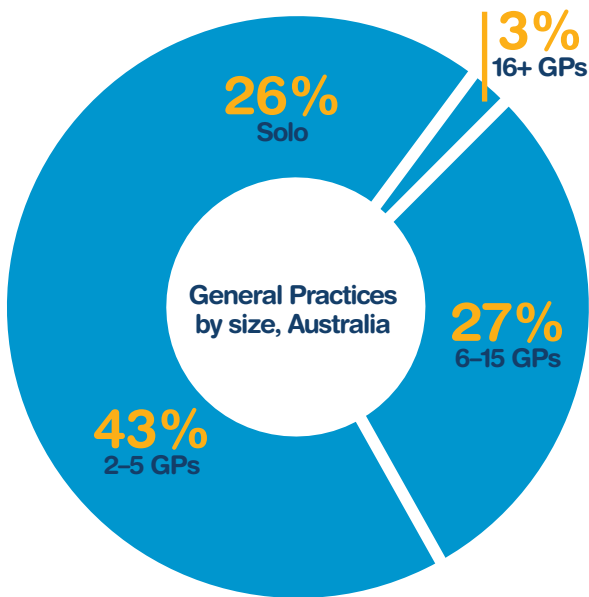
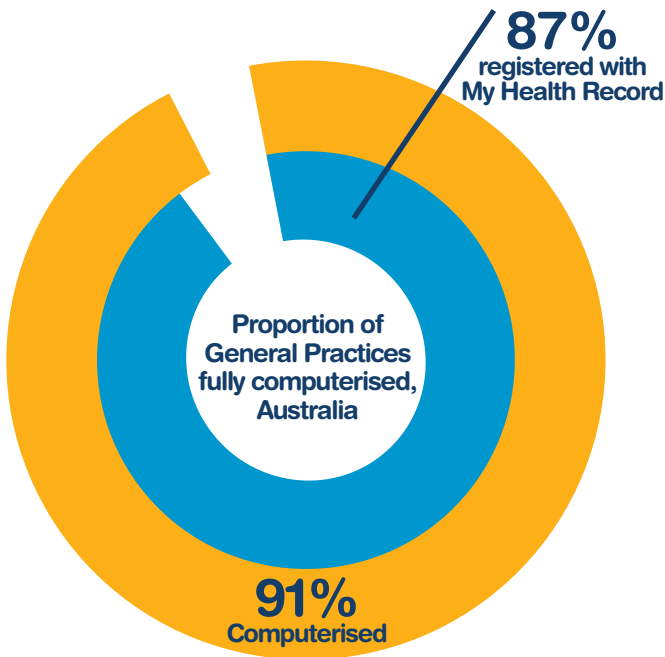
We provide information about government funding and assistance programs.

Training



We offer, and connect GPs and practice staff with, education, training and networking events.

Profile of General Practice in Australia



Measuring our progress

PHNs are focused on improving the health of all Australians through improved local primary healthcare services and coordination.

We add value to many different aspects of GP businesses.

To help in planning our activities and services, we combine our understanding of the local needs of the community with our understanding of general practice, including practice size, IT infrastructure and workforce capability. In partnership with general practice, we use this information to tailor a suite of services to support general practices to meet the ever changing and increasing demands placed upon them.

