



One of a Kind: The Victoria Human Services Directory (HSD)

The Victoria Human Services Directory (HSD) is believed to be the only Health and Human Services Directory in the world, which has now evolved into the Australian National Health Services Directory (NHSD). We caught up with [Laurie Hawkins](#), project manager of the [Victoria Human Services Directory](#) to get updates on the HSD and learn how the Asia Pacific region can make use of such a tool.



Can you update us on the project?

The HSD is a repository of Health and Human Services in Victoria, and also incorporates the components of Providers Directories. Both the Victorian and [National Health Services Directory](#) (from the same database) is accessible via websites, mobile apps and APIs, integrated into an increasing range of software products across the health and human services eco-system

It has replaced 160 local Provider Directories in Victoria alone, and hundreds more across Australia.

You can now find health services—such as GPs, pharmacists, dentists, emergency departments, and more—on your mobile phone anywhere across Victoria, anytime anywhere, and across Australia with the national version (Apple App Store or Google Play).



What are the challenges surrounding the project and solutions to overcome them?

We try to take care of the essentials:

(1) Ease of Use for both Content Providers and Users

Having a simple easy-to-use interface enables content providers to provide and maintain the data and at the same time, create ease of access for consumers.

For example, only two pieces of information are required in order to harness it's usefulness: **What do you want to find**, and **Where you want to find it**. For example, the [Find a Service](#) on the Better Health Channel website uses this feature.

(2) Accuracy and Currency of Data

It is important that content management processes are put in place to check the data at least every six months

(3) Support of Leaders, all Government levels, professional bodies and other stakeholders

It helps to demonstrate to all stakeholders the advantages of having A "Single Source of Truth" that is "Accurate and Current"

(4) Big Data - National Database of Health and Human Services across a Nation

It allows the introduction of national information management (data) standards and provides a basis for a whole range of stakeholders including national programs such as General Practitioners after Hours

How can SEA countries emulate this project to create their own services directory?

The 3 key ingredients that has made the Victorian project so successful include:

- ▶ **Getting all stakeholders (Public/Private and Government)** to collaborate by having effective leaders with vision sponsoring such an initiative
- ▶ **Collaborating to eliminate the wastage of time, effort and resources** on maintenance of “Islands of Information” (aka data silos)
- ▶ **Ensuring that Security and Privacy mechanisms are in place** to give all content providers confidence in providing the information will only be used for health purposes

It will help to pay attention to these factors while creating similar directories.

What are the benefits of a tool such as the HSD?

The NHSD led to the creation of a [Health Planning Tool](#) (National) to combine with Census, Services, Education, Transport, and others to build sustainable communities. The tool can be used at all levels of government, Federal, State and Local.

By having a “national single source of truth” for e-health it removes the many issues of having multiple directories, all of which do NOT provide the necessary functionality that the HSD has proven to be.

It also allows multiple identifiers to be stored:

- ▶ **National Health Identifiers - Individuals**
- ▶ **National Health Identifiers - Organisations**
- ▶ **Profession Body Identifiers**
- ▶ **Electronic / Secure Messaging Identifiers**

It is highly usable and interoperable, operates from the “Cloud” and need just one API's (one for all sectors of health and human services to access from General Practitioners, Hospitals, Pathology, Allied Health, Aged Care and Health Consumers.

In a nutshell...

