

# Research, Audit and Evaluation working group

11 March 2021

## Role of this group

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The role of this group is to support the wider New Zealand Telehealth Forum (NZTF) with the uptake and sustainability of telehealth in the health sector to address the challenges facing New Zealand, including equitable access to healthcare. Specifically, this working group seeks to support quality research, audit and evaluation of telehealth services. Telehealth had been a significant tool for ensuring people received adequate access to healthcare across New Zealand during the COVID-19 lockdown period in 2020. As a result, there have been significant gains in the adoption of telehealth for the delivery of healthcare across New Zealand. However, telehealth usage has dropped, and there are still issues and barriers to widespread telehealth adoption. It is imperative that we work, with pace, to understand the drivers, enablers, issues and barriers to telehealth adoption in New Zealand and to find equitable solutions.

The role of the working group is to:

- Advocate for research into telehealth and evaluation and comparison of telehealth implementations against best practice
- Advise on evidence-based requirements and priorities for telehealth to support the healthcare sector, for example, barriers to uptake, technical considerations, protocols and guidelines, and standards
- Support the design, and where appropriate, partner with other organisations and groups, for research, audit and evaluation project/s identified as important by the working group, as resources permit
- Assist working group members to contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the working group
- Align the work of the working group with the New Zealand Telehealth Leadership Group (NZTLG) and NZTF
- Work within the resources of volunteer members
- Partner with other working groups when relevant

## Purpose

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Broadly, our intention is to support the establishment of telehealth as a viable, sustainable, equitable method of healthcare delivery within New Zealand.

We aim to:

- Operate as a clearinghouse for telehealth research, audits and evaluations – to collate, and curate existing and future research, audits and evaluations
- Advocate for transparent sharing of grey literature, health sector organisation and industry partner reports to make their findings known to the rest of the health sector
- Provide advice about gaps in evidence-based research in telehealth
- Advocate that telehealth decisions to be evidence-based and equity focussed
- Advocate evaluation of all telehealth projects
- Develop innovative sector partnerships using the strength of NZTF membership

## Established

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This working group was established during 2020 as part of the NZTF response to COVID-19 and is one of a series of NZTF working groups across the spectrum of telehealth.

## Responsibilities of the group

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The working group will comprise a chair, appointed by the NZTLG executive and members. These members will be appointed by the working group chair and the NZTLG.

Collectively the working group should have a strong academic focus, or strong understanding of the research sector. Some of the following expertise and attributes should be included in the membership:

- Knowledge and experience in the theory and practice of telehealth
- Knowledge of the enabling technologies
- Knowledge of New Zealand's current health services delivery in public and private settings
- An ability to think in terms of innovative solutions which will transform the traditional service delivery models
- Experience in having a governance role in similar organisations
- The passion and commitment to ensure the working group, wider telehealth forum and leadership group succeeds in its objectives.

## Membership

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The composition of the working group will be at the discretion of the working group chair, NZTF and should recognise both the skills of certain roles and the presence of stakeholder organisations. There should be no more than 20 members in the working group, not including co-opted time limited members. Sub-groups may be formed. It is expected that participants will bring the required skills to support and deliver on the purposes of the group.

## Term

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Members of the working group will be appointed for a period of two years in the first instance. After two years, appointments will be reconfirmed or altered. This same process will occur if a member is unable to complete their two-year appointment.

## Co-opting members

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At any stage, as relevant to the work of the working group, a person may be co-opted to the committee for a temporary period.

## Communications

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The only spokesperson for the working group, NZTLG and NZTF, is the residing NZTLG chairperson, unless permission has been granted and duties delegated by the NZTLG chairperson.

Regular updates from the working group will be provided by the working group chair and/or programme manager to the NZTLG executive.

All new projects/proposals should be brought to the attention of the NZTLG executive, as they are being designed/developed.

## Meetings

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The working group will determine a schedule of meetings as required. All meeting arrangements will be made by the support people, working group chair or delegate/s (video conference, in-person) as required.

- All members will be expected to attend one meeting per month (video conference, in-person)
- Where a member is away for a period of time their replacement may be agreed as a substitute by the chair
- Attendance of four members will constitute a quorum
- Some business may be conducted out of session where required.

## Support

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Administrative and programme management support for the working group will be provided (as it is available) by the NZTLG. The administrator will support the chair in meeting minutes, formal meetings and distribution of any hard copy materials.

The programme management support will facilitate the function of activities and ensure all the necessary approvals are logged and signed off by the NZTLG chairperson and executive.

## Confidentiality

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Working group members shall not disclose any confidential information obtained during the course of their activities without the prior approval of the working group chair. Working group file sharing and storage will be available on Microsoft Teams. This is a platform where all NZTLG business can be reviewed and is visible by all invited NZTF members. Documents stored on Microsoft Teams will be clearly identified as confidential or available for public dissemination.

## Decision making

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Where decisions are required, it is important to try to gain a unanimous outcome between all members present however, where there is division, a majority decision is appropriate to move forward.

## Conflict of interest

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Working group members will not, during the currency of their membership, make any commitments which conflict the member's obligations under the Terms of Reference (ToR). Members will register all interests in the working group register and any real or perceived conflict arising will require a conflict management plan. This plan will be developed by the programme manager, working group chair and NZTLG executive.

## Reimbursement

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The NZTLG and NZTF are volunteer organisations. There is no remuneration for meeting preparation, attendance at in-person meetings or participation in videoconferences.

## Review provisions

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The working group Terms of Reference (ToR) and membership will be reviewed every two years. The next review date is March 2023.

## Research, Audit and Evaluation working group members 2021

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Name
Inga Hunter (Chair)
Denise Irvine (Deputy Chair)
Charis Frethey
Robyn Whittaker
Tania Moerenhout
Lyn Clarke
Caroline Lockhart
Claire Hardie
Greig Russell