

## THE CHALLENGE

HNECC PHN was tasked to support mental health in-reach services to older Australians during the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Smarter Safer Homes (SSH) Pilot was funded between 2021-2022 to help people with dementia, who have or are at risk of mental ill-health, on the Central Coast of NSW to live safely in the home for longer and reduce preventable hospital admission.

The pilot program seeks to support independent living at home. The technology used monitors wellbeing and functional abilities in the home, provide a clear picture of a person's daily routine and changes that might mean a person's health and wellbeing status is affected. Following a decision in January 2022 with two key providers, The Dementia Centre and HSC Technology Group (Talius), the pilot was decommissioned due to:

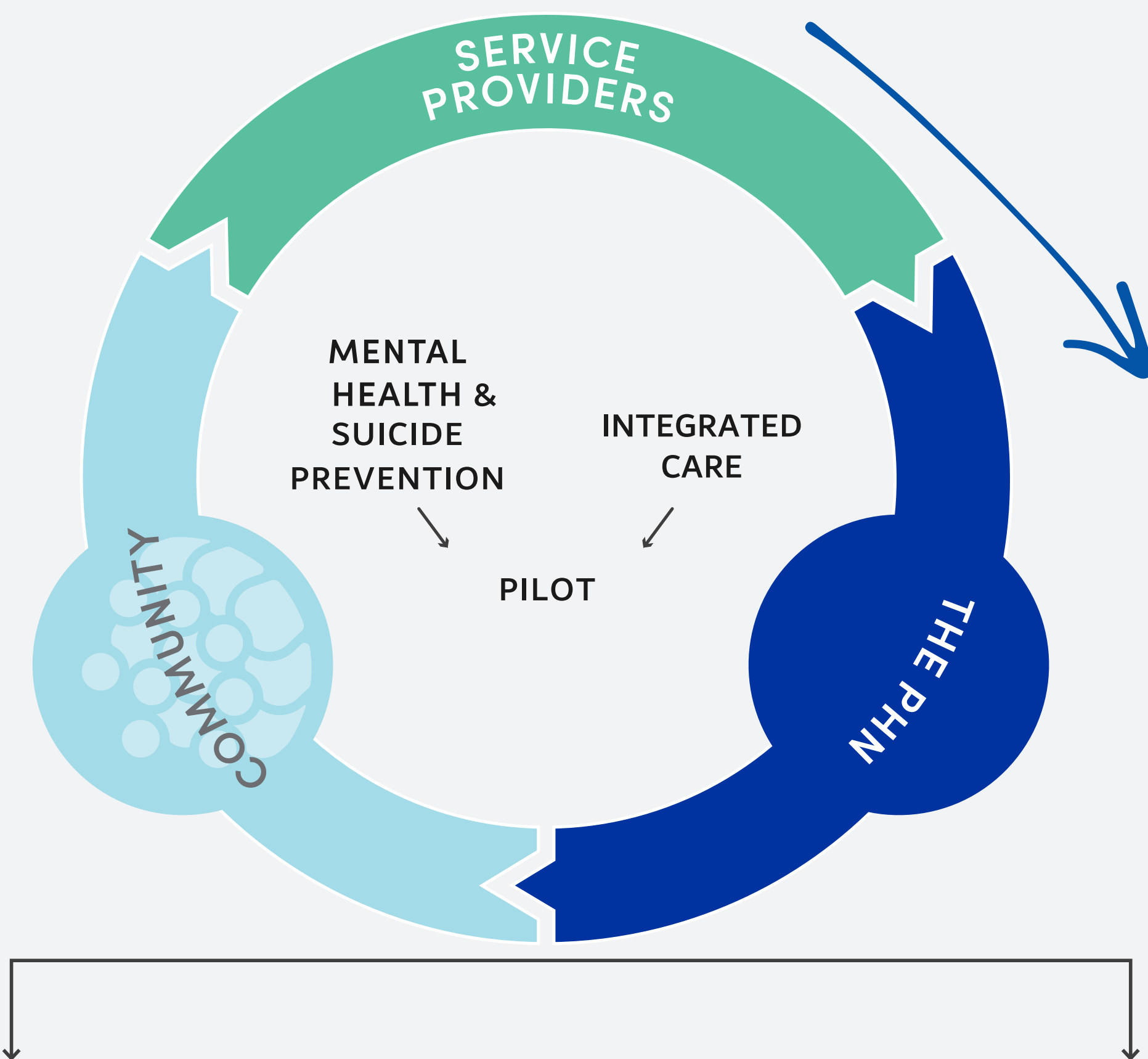
- Delays to the Smarter Safer Homes platform improvements
- Potential clinical risk



## THE APPROACH

A desktop research, literature review and stakeholder network mapping were completed prior to implementation. A co-designed approach was facilitated during the initial pilot. An external consultant was also employed to conduct an evaluation.

The objective of the Dementia Centre was to maintain program oversight and recruit of a Case Manager. HSC Technology Group provided sensors, a platform that interprets sensor data, 24/7 emergency response system and a conduit to the SSH platform developed by CSIRO. The algorithm of the platform interprets the sensors and self-reported data into objective ADLs. The measures monitored are used to inform client's model of care and timely identify changes. The program adopted a two stage implementation process with pilot testing (Stage 1) before the launch (Stage 2). A working group was established to inform implementation and provide clinical governance.



The project was a collaboration between the Mental Health & Suicide Prevention and Integrated Care team at the PHN

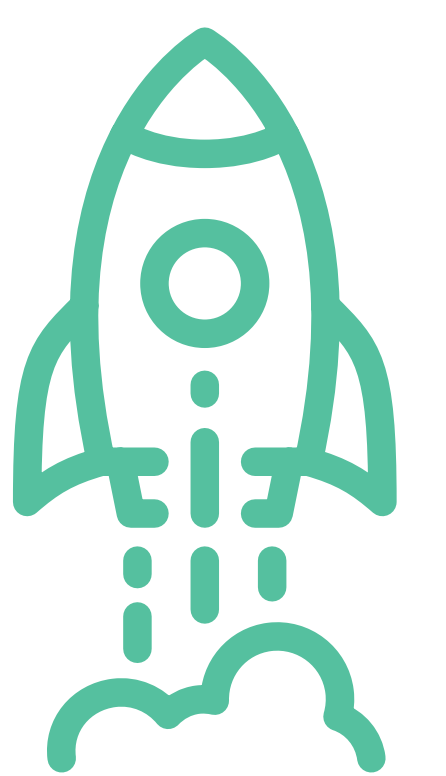
## THE LEARNINGS

- ✓ Direct access to the technology supplier as well as the organisation delivering the program enables program visibility throughout the project cycle.
- ✓ Organisations delivering care with assistive technology must consider all levels of stakeholder engagement including readily accessible technical support and subject matter experts during the pilot or trial.
- ✓ The appetite for digital assisted technology may increase overtime. Implementation of new technology should be subjected to rigorous assessment of clinical input to reduce potential risks to patients.
- ✓ Evidence-based practice supported by research in a controlled environment and tested may not always carry through to real-world behaviours or intended setting. In this case, the setting was in the patient's home. The benefit of a staged pilot allows feasibility testing prior to a large scale launch.



## THE IMPACT

**"I felt upset following some tensions with my daughters who had planned behind my back to move me interstate into care. Having this system meant they backed off a little, which as helped my relationship immensely"**  
- Deidentified patient



The anticipated number of patients in the program is 20-40 over 6 months. The pilot provided an opportunity for HNECC PHN to assess future investment and roll-out of remote monitoring dementia care. The pilot completed Stage 1 and did not proceed to Stage 2. Overall, the small cohort (n=9) engaged well with the technology and relationship with others were enhanced. The initial evidence suggests benefits to the patient, family and carers.