TECH SAVVY SENIORS

2021/22 PROGRAM - SUMMARY REPORT

Digital inclusion means being able to access, afford or have the digital capability to connect and use online technologies effectively. Participation in the online world facilitates access to social networks, information and services that improve personal wellbeing and give people greater control over their lives. Reducing the gaps between digitally included and excluded communities ensures the social, cultural and economic benefits of the digital economy are shared more equitably.

Telstra's purpose is to build a connected future so that everyone can thrive. From a digital inclusion perspective, this involves ensuring all Australians - particularly those most at risk of digital exclusion – have access to digital infrastructure, services and products; and the confidence and ability to maximise their use and value. The Tech Savvy Seniors program assists seniors to develop the skills and confidence to use technology for socialising, accessing online services or conducting personal business. This contributes to improved personal wellbeing, enhanced social participation and improved access to important information and services that support active ageing. It is delivered through a partnership between Telstra and the NSW Government, and is a key initiative of the NSW Government's Ageing Strategy.

Using Culture Counts, Telstra implemented a digital evaluation approach to understand whether participation in the Tech Savvy Seniors program is achieving desired digital and social inclusion outcomes within ageing communities. The approach enables consistent, online measurement of the experiences and outcomes of the courses for participants nationally; facilitating ongoing dialogue with older Australians and digital access to a big data set of results.

The online survey methodology helps to reinforce course learnings, while capturing immediate course outcomes such as confidence and knowledge in using digital technologies; short-term outcomes including increased use of digital technologies; and longer-term outcomes including wellbeing, social participation and active ageing. Trainers also record important program statistics, generating a large database of evidence on the impact and value of the program.
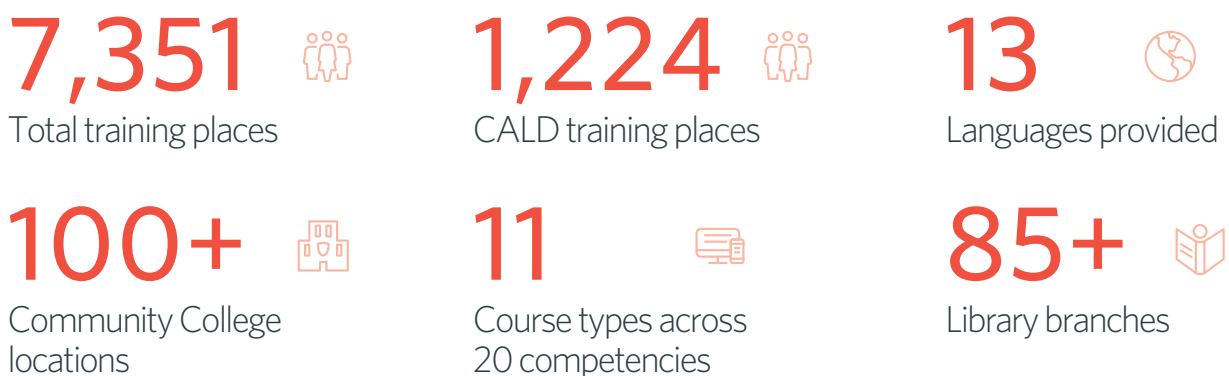

Tech Savvy Seniors at the Bombala Branch of the Snowy Monaro Regional Library

TECH SAVVY SENIORS PROGRAM LOGIC

IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
Increased confidence to use digital technologies	Increased use of digital technologies to mediate relationships with close social networks	**Wellbeing** Strengthened or maintained family relationships; Access to emotional support; Positive self-esteem; Maintained physical and mental health; Pursuit of an engagement in personal interests.
	Increased use of digital technologies to support involvement in community life	**Social Participation** Engaged in physical and creative activities through community groups; Contribution to community through volunteering in community organisations; Maintained and/or broadened social networks; Reduced risk of social isolation.
Increased knowledge of how to use digital technologies	Increased use of digital technologies to access information online	**Active Ageing**
	Increased use of digital technologies to utilise government and business online services	Ability to access information online for decision-making; Ability to contribute to local decision-making; Ability to engage in online economy; Engagement in life-long learning, with support from organisations such as local libraries

THE 2021/2022 NSW PROGRAM
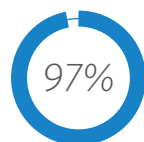
7,351
Total training places

1,224
CALD training places

13
Languages provided

100+
Community College locations

11
Course types across 20 competencies

85+
Library branches

EVALUATION

2,946
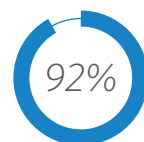Participant survey responses

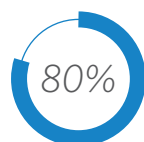**893**
Trainer survey responses

COURSE PERFORMANCE

97% *Agreed that the trainer and training resources were helpful and informative*
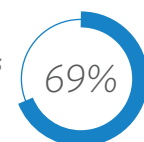
92% *Agreed that the training was run at the right pace for them*

CONFIDENCE WITH TECHNOLOGY

Directly after the course:

80% *Feel confident using some digital technologies (such as computers, tablets or smart phones)*

69% *Are able to explain how to use some digital technologies (such as computers, tablets or smart phones) to a friend or family*

INTENDED TECHNOLOGY USE

Directly after the course:

70% Intend to access information online (such as news, personal interest, travel, health, local business)

58% Intend to use the internet to access services (such as banking, shopping or government services)

69% Intend to use the internet to look for information about events or activites in my community

66% Intend to use digital technologies (such as email or social media) to communicate with family or friends
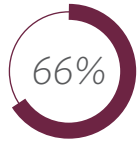
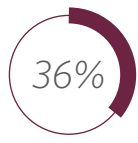## LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

6 weeks after the course:

Wellbeing Outcomes
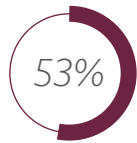
83% Are more knowledgeable about topics of interest to them

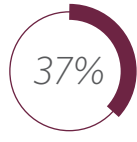**66%** Feel more connected to friends and family

36% Have greater peace of mind about health or other personal issues
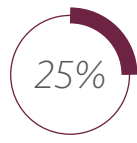
Social Outcomes

53% Are more engaged with what's going on in the world (current events and issues)

37% Are more involved in community activities and events

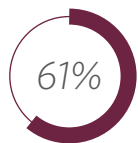**25%** Have formed social networks with people outside their community
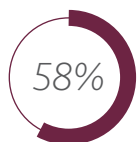
Active Ageing
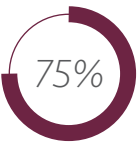
75% Have gained new skills to use in everyday life

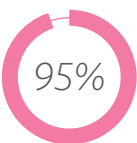**61%** Have access to a greater choice of goods and services

58% Have greater confidence in making informed decisions

17

Net Promoter Score

95% Likely to participate in another Tech Savvy Seniors Training Course

ONLINE COURSES

772
Seniors trained online

21
Locations

95%

Agreed that the trainer and training resources were helpful and informative

Almost 800 seniors accessed Tech Savvy Seniors courses online in 2021-22, up from 590 in 2020-21 when Covid lockdowns prompted providers to consider alternative ways to meet the demand for digital skills training. A large proportion of online sessions were delivered by Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community College, appealing particularly to those seniors who had participated in Tech Savvy Seniors training courses previously and therefore had a few basic digital skills. 90% of online participants via Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community College felt confident using digital technologies after their course, and over 90% indicated that they would use digital technologies more often for accessing information and services online, looking for activities in the community, and communicating with friends and family.

Online participants via the College also recorded an extremely high Net Promoter Score of 57, up from 52 in 2020-21, indicating that the online courses have continued to develop and improve their offering since inception.

Tech Savvy course trainers also provided valuable information about how the courses could be improved and confirmed the overall effectiveness of the program in building the confidence and knowledge of seniors.

"Participants love the prospect of learning new skills from the course and felt so empowered to use their own emails/internet and stay safe online. They requested that more courses be provided so they do not get left out of the technology loop."
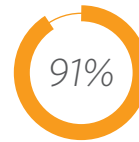
"This online course gives us the opportunity to learn something that is very useful and practical for our daily life. It was delivered in a clear, thorough and very informative way."

Tech Savvy Seniors Mandarin session at the Riverwood Library and Knowledge Centre

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD)

1,224
CALD Seniors trained

34
Locations

91% Felt confident using some digital technologies (such as computers, tablets or smart phones)

Of the 1,224 CALD seniors trained, almost 400 completed a survey about their experience. The results show very strong positive outcomes for this group, with 91% agreeing that they feel confident with some digital technologies following the course, and 83% agreeing that they could explain how to use some digital technologies to a friend or family following the course. Intended technology use following the course was also significantly greater for this group than non-CALD participants, particularly relating to accessing information online (such as news, personal interest, travel, health, local business). This demonstrates the importance of digital capabilities in helping non-English speakers connect with information in their own language, which may otherwise not be readily available and accessible in Australia.

The net promoter score was a very high 46 (up from 42 in 2020-21), indicating that CALD participants would be highly likely to recommend Telstra to friends or family.

Comments from the group consistently praised the patience, kindness and skill of the multilingual trainers in ensuring that participants felt comfortable and confident in learning.

"This program is a success as it delivers in one's own language in a culturally appropriate and safe environment. During the snap lockdowns, CALD seniors experienced isolation and uncertainty and this program helped alleviate the social disconnectedness."

- Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW

"As a retired senior who doesn't understand English, it is very difficult to get involved in society. Losing contacts with friends and relatives in China, we are a group of people who got left out. The pandemic added extra loneliness and difficulty to contact other people.

After attending the Tech Savvy Seniors sessions for only four sessions, I have learned how to connect with people online, look for information, play games. Learning kept me thinking, enriched my life and broadened my knowledge. Now it's much easier to communicate with my granddaughter, she is very happy when I ask her to teach me some English. I really hope there are more Tech Savvy Seniors sessions and more opportunities to learn more from you. Thank you!"

Tech Savvy Seniors at the Eastgardens Branch of the Bayside Library

HELPING SENIORS AT ALL STAGES

The Tech Savvy Seniors program has grown and evolved since inception, with new courses, materials and processes added to keep pace with changing technologies and meet the needs of diverse communities. Survey responses show that many seniors begin the courses completely lacking the knowledge and confidence to engage with any digital devices, yet quickly begin to feel empowered as they learn and practice basic digital functions. Trainers are adept at working with seniors of differing abilities, giving them the physical and mental tools needed to overcome certain barriers to inclusion. Through partaking in a series of sessions, they build understanding, skills and confidence that open many doors to safe and successful digital participation.

In 2021-22, 56% of respondents in NSW were repeat participants, while 95% said they would participate in another Tech Savvy Seniors course.

Building on the fundamentals of phone, computer, tablet and internet use, delivery partners are given the flexibility to respond to specific areas of interest in their communities to help participants develop their confidence online. Options include courses on managing digital assets, cyber safety, social media, online shopping, sharing photos online, how to video call, how to use apps such as My Telstra and transport apps as well as how to access NSW Government services including NSW Seniors Card. Repeat participants reporting much greater self-reliance and more meaningful participation in the modern world.

To whom it may concern.

I am an 81-year-old who has been totally ignorant of everything that is computerised, except for a small tablet on which I can play spider solitaire. I was given a phone by Telstra three years ago and had never used it either as a phone or for email.

I always wanted to learn computering but as I am severely deaf I have trouble learning anything except from print.

My wife (a computer whiz) took me to Tech Savvy and held my hand during each lesson.

I could read on the screen and my wife would prod me when necessary, and I have enjoyed every session.

And now, though I am certainly not an expert, I can use my phone for calling and text and I am confident on my recently acquired iPad, and I can now send and receive messages, do online shopping, take and store photos (find them again), solve all my garden problems, and I am in love with Siri.

I have gone from total ignorance to a reasonably confident computerer, and all due to Tech Savvy and the work of Jamie and co at Cooma library. I cannot put into words the gratitude I feel because of them. If they have more courses I will certainly be there, and I would highly recommend the teachers and Tech Savvy to all seniors.

I will send this to you now without touching a pencil or typewriter, something I deemed impossible two years ago.

Thank you, Tech Savvy and Jamie.
Cheers and thank you from
Peter
(Participant at Snowy Monaro Regional Library Tech Savvy Seniors program)

The Tech Savvy Seniors NSW Program trained more than 7,300 seniors in the 2021/22 financial year, with 11 course types provided around 200 locations. 40% of all participants provided feedback about their experience, representing a strongly significant sample for accurate insights into overall participant behaviour and outcomes.

While enrolments have declined since 2019/20 due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and substantial flooding across the State, survey responses as a percentage of enrolments increased. The scores for course performance reached an all-time high, and there was a significant increase in confidence (+10%) and knowledge (+12%) with technology following the course. Participants also recorded an increase in the wellbeing outcome of feeling more knowledgeable about topics of interest to them.

Across the Tech Savvy Seniors NSW 2021/22 program, over 90% of seniors agreed that the courses were helpful, informative and run at the right pace for them. 80% felt confident with using digital devices following the course, and more than two thirds felt they could teach others what they had learnt. The majority of seniors said they would now use digital technologies more frequently for accessing information and services online, looking for information about community activities and communicating with friends and family.

Active ageing, social participation and wellbeing outcomes were generated for many seniors, with course participants gaining new skills and feeling more knowledgeable six weeks after their Tech Savvy Seniors course. The results show that large numbers of seniors in New South Wales are gaining a broad mix of positive outcomes from their program participation, contributing to greater digital inclusion overall.

"Participating in Tech Savvy Seniors sessions helped me greatly to use my smartphone. It made my life much more convenient to keep in touch with my family, especially during the COVID. I wish there are more learning opportunities to enhance my knowledge, because my memory isn't as good as before. Thank you!"

"You don't realise how quickly time flies when you're having fun searching for songs, watching TV programs, and listening to the news on YouTube with your smartphone. The more you know, the more convenient and fun your life gets. It's also fun to be able to talk with my grandchildren and family via video calling using my smartphone."

"It is better to learn once from the teacher than to try to figure it out on my own one hundred times."

"It is very useful for seniors to learn how to use the internet safely and efficiently and do internet shopping."

"Before attending the tech savvy program, I had no confidence in my technology skills. When I asked my kids, felt like they spoke different language and it was so embarrassing to ask them to repeat. The teacher was very attentive, caring and taught us in a slow pace so we can understand and can follow."

Read more about the lifechanging experience of Tech Savvy Seniors here.