

# Healthy Ageing online network Evaluation



HAnet  
Healthy Ageing online network

## Introduction

Launched in October 2012, the Healthy Ageing online network (HAnet) is an online, interactive network for health professionals and service providers to work together, share information and resources, and discuss best practice strategies to support Victorians as they get older: [hanet.health.vic.gov.au](http://hanet.health.vic.gov.au). This report outlines the evaluation of the first year of HAnet undertaken by the Ageing & Aged Care branch in December 2013.

## Background

The concept for HAnet grew out of the falls prevention network that had been managed by the Ageing & Aged Care branch since 1999. This network and its bulletin provided an avenue for organisations to raise awareness of activities to prevent falls and injuries. It was a vehicle for disseminating the latest research, falls related information and opportunities for skill development.

The branch decided to broaden the scope of this network to have a focus on healthy ageing and to create an online community, so HAnet was developed in 2012. This virtual network is open to anyone working to improve the health and wellbeing of older people in Victoria.

HAnet was established with the following objectives:

- Strengthening peer networking and sharing in relation to healthy ageing;
- Raising awareness and knowledge of research, information, events, changes in policy, program initiatives and funding opportunities;
- Creating an online community by encouraging participants to visit and participate on a regular basis.

The benefits for people who sign up for HAnet membership include:

- access to forums, discussions, event information and current research
- subscription option for topics of interest and new events
- monthly email of highlights (HAnet Highlights)
- locked subforums for particular networks and discussions – for example, HACC ASM Industry Consultants, healthy ageing projects
- a place to ask questions, inform others about events and initiatives, share information and articles, read current research, and network online.

With member participation, HANet can be a central point of access to the latest information about healthy ageing. All members are encouraged to share relevant resources, events and hold discussions on the network.

HANet has six categories:

- Events (promoting upcoming events)
- Healthy and active living (maximising health and wellbeing)
- Healthy environments (creating physical, social, built, economic, legal, and policy environments for healthy ageing)
- Participation (information relating to older people's participation in paid work, volunteering, education and training, and social, cultural and recreational activities)
- General Healthy Ageing (an area to talk about discussion threads not based in the above categories)
- Help (where members can contact the Administrator or Moderator by posting a question or topic they require help with. All 'Help' posts are moderated, only made public to members when content is relevant to all users)

In addition, the HANet site includes a detailed FAQ section, a search function and members can report posts they consider inappropriate.

The Ageing & Aged Care branch provides administration and support for the site, moderates posted events, regularly posts content and distributes a HANet Highlights email to members every month. Members can also choose to get automated alerts when new topics are posted on a subject they have indicated interest in.

## Evaluation

### Method

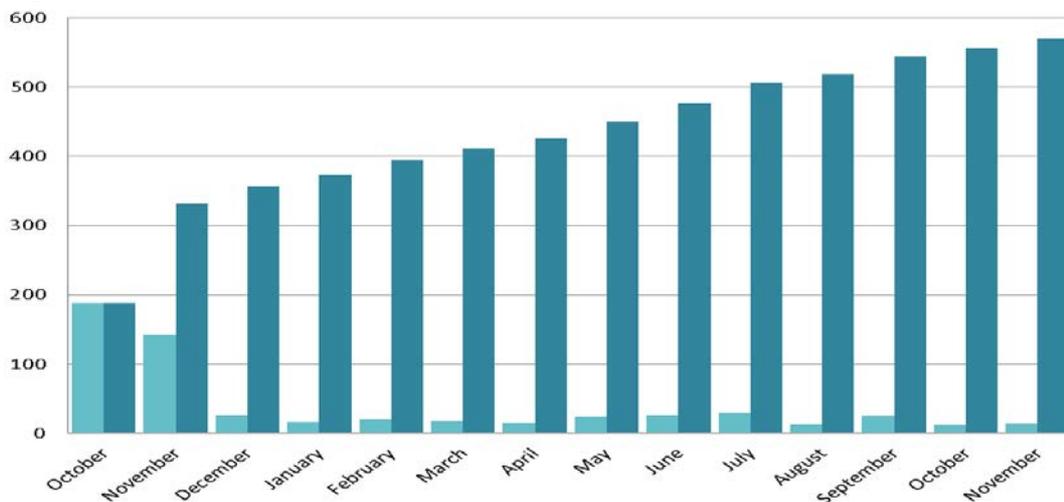
To evaluate the first year of HANet, an online survey was developed and distributed to HANet members in late November 2013 (Attachment 1). The survey was open for two weeks and received 84 responses (out of 570 members), a response rate of 15%. Other data was collected through the inbuilt site statistics feature and Google Analytics.

### Findings

#### Membership

Promotion of HANet membership in the first year has been through existing Ageing & Aged Care branch contacts and through HANet members promoting to their own networks. Figure 1 shows the steady increase in members over the first year - by November 2013 HANet had 570 members.

**Figure 1: new members vs cumulative total**



The target audiences of HANet include:

- people working in the field with an interest in healthy ageing
- health professionals (for example, general practitioners, nurses, allied health)
- health promotion workers
- community care workers
- residential care staff
- local government ageing and health promotion staff
- students, researchers and staff from tertiary institutions
- non-government organisations and peak bodies
- fitness industry staff
- state and federal government department staff.

When evaluation data was collected, the HANet membership included people from the range of organisation types mentioned above, mostly health, aged care and local and state government. Interestingly, membership has not only grown in Victoria, with 14 members from interstate.

## Using the site

When asked to rate comments about HANet usability, respondents were generally happy with how the site works: finding it easy to use and find what they needed; easy to learn how to use; and respondents were confident with using the site.

*'I like the virtual networking, developing a 'community of interest' among people, making new connections in work and among people with common interests, and the fact it's not compulsory to post (or do anything else) to be a member of HANet. It's sort of laid back, you can use it basically when/how it suits at the time.'*

When asked about how they currently use HANet, the majority of respondents (86%) said they use HANet to read information; over half (52%) feel that HANet enhances their work in healthy ageing; and just under half (43%) use HANet to look for events. Only a small number of respondents are using HANet for posting or communicating with others (5%).

Interestingly, when asked how they would like to use HANet in the future, respondents were clear that they would like to continue to use HANet for reading information, finding events and enhancing working in healthy ageing but around 30% would like to use HANet to post and network with others (in contrast to 5% of respondents currently doing this).

The HANet site gets regular visits from members, with 89% of survey respondents saying they visit the site at least once a week. However, prompts to visit the site help, with half of the respondents indicating they visit HANet only when they read HANet Highlights received via a direct email.

*'The email triggers me to visit the site as I find I am so busy I don't always take the luxury to surf the web.'*

## HANet Highlights

*"Thanks for the time that people put in to put these highlights up and send them through the email list."*

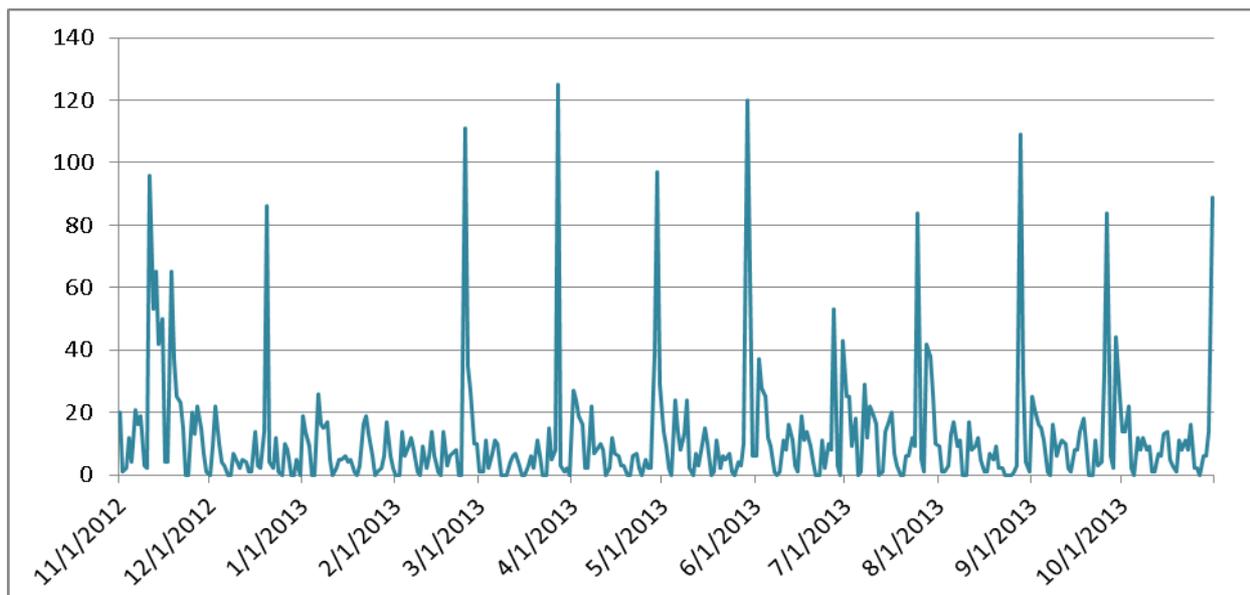
The evaluation showed that HANet Highlights is quite valuable for the network, with 99% of respondents finding the monthly email worth reading.

*'I like to read the articles and the links are easy to follow.'*

HANet Highlights is also a valuable way of promoting HANet, with 23% of respondents regularly sharing the email with others and 78% having forwarded the email to colleagues and others at some point. Administrators have noticed a correlation between HANet Highlights distribution and new member sign up.

Figure 5 shows the number of site visits to HANet across the year. The monthly peaks in visits correspond with the distribution of HANet Highlights.

**Figure 5: HAnet site visits**



### HAnet categories and content

Respondents to the survey find that all HAnet topic categories are interesting and of use:

- Healthy and Active Living – 98% of respondents find this topic useful/interesting
- Healthy Environments – 92% of respondents find this topic useful/interesting
- Participation – 95% of respondents find this topic useful/interesting
- General Healthy Ageing – 96% of respondents find this topic useful/interesting
- Events – 92 % of respondents find this topic useful/interesting.

A wide variety of topics and information has been posted on HAnet in the first year. Looking at topic content, over the first year the top 5 topics (and their category) by number of views were:

1. [HACC Assessment Gippsland: waiting list management](#) (General Healthy Ageing)
2. [Goal Directed Care Planning Toolkit](#) (General Healthy Ageing)
3. [Stepping on Falls Prevention Training Workshop](#) (Healthy and Active Living)
4. [A Beginner's Kitchen](#) (Healthy and Active Living)
5. [Agestrong: Strength & Balance Program](#) (Healthy and Active Living)

The following table shows the top three topics per HAnet category:

HAnet category	Most read topic
Healthy and active living	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Stepping on Falls Prevention Training Workshop</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">A Beginner's Kitchen</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Agestrong: Strength &amp; Balance Program</a></li> </ol>
Healthy environments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Dementia Friendly Environments in residential aged care services</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Understanding housing &amp; location choices of retiring Australians in the 'baby boom' generation</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">How to change what people do - from unhealthy to healthy</a></li> </ol>
Participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">A framework for Planned Activity Groups</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Older Australians and the take up of new technologies</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Top twenty data sources for describing community wellbeing in Victoria</a></li> </ol>

General Healthy Ageing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">HACC Assessment Gippsland – Waiting list management</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Goal Directed Care Planning Toolkit</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Fact or fiction? Stereotypes of older Australians research report 2013</a></li> </ol>
Events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">No Falls Exercise Program Leader Training</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Falls Prevention program</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Your brain matters</a></li> </ol>

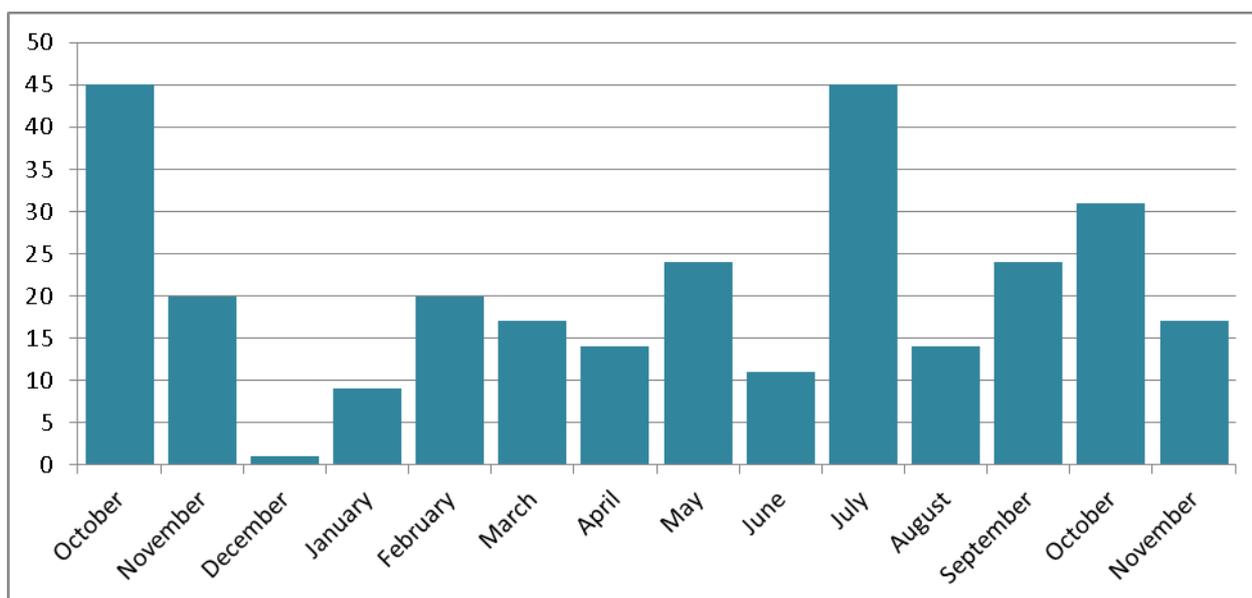
## Contributing to HAnet

Of the 14 respondents who have posted on HAnet, 10 found it easy to post information. The majority of current HAnet members have not posted information or comments on HAnet.

The survey asked about barriers to posting on HAnet: 38% of respondents do not post because they do not think they have anything to post; 26% of respondents do not think they have time to post; and only 18% of respondents do not post because they do not know how to.

Figure 4 shows the number of posts per month over the first year. Holiday periods show a quieter time for HAnet activity. Excluding postings to the Events section, posts have, to date, been mostly completed by administrators.

**Figure 4: number of topic posts per month**



## User feedback

*'It is a valuable resource, especially for me as a part time worker - I find I don't have time to chase up things I hear about but I usually find them in HAnet.'*

Overall, the survey of HAnet members returned very positive qualitative feedback. However, suggestions for enhancing HAnet included:

- education on how to post and use the website

*'[I would post on HAnet] If I had something that would be useful and knew how to do it.'*

- help with identifying what can be posted

*[Q: What would help you to post on HAnet?] 'More welcoming, easy to use interface, clear purpose of posting, knowing that others were reading and using HAnet.'*

- easier log in and site navigation

*'If you are receiving the link as a member, why do you need to log in to read anything. I find this frustrating.'*

*'Looking forward to any changes that make navigation easier. Otherwise keep up the good work.'*

- more eye-catching design

*'I think that a more eye catching front page with interesting topics that can be read quickly even at a glance.'*

## Next steps

The evaluation results provide useful information for continuing to grow HAnet and keep it useful for members.

### HAnet Administrators

Members have indicated they would like to use the site more interactively in the future. HAnet administrators can promote the ways people can be actively involved in HAnet. HAnet Highlights will be a useful way to inform members about help topics and HAnet website features, for example:

- Promote and educate in relation to posting and getting the most out of the website
- Educate about site navigation and icons
- Identify advantages of posting comments and questions
- Promote different ways of using the site: reading posts, returning later and using the search function, subscribing to topics, networking, looking for events. Not everyone will use the site in the same way.

Technically, the next steps involve exploring the following aspects of the HAnet site:

- Review of site navigation features and icons
- Investigate login issues and rationale
- Review of 'save password' function
- Allow more time for editing posted events

### HAnet Members

HAnet members are what make up the network. Over the first year, HAnet members have helped promote the site and expand membership. With the help of these HAnet Heroes, the site can become more interactive and members can find easier ways to get what they need out of HAnet.

The next steps for current members include:

- Continue to post events and other items related to healthy ageing
- Keep on sharing the HAnet Highlights
- For those who haven't tried – have a go at posting on HAnet. A post doesn't have to be an article or event, it could be a question or a response to information already posted.
- Explore different ways to use the HAnet site – for example, subscribing to topics; commenting on other people's posts; using the site as part of a team professional development session.
- Keep HAnet in mind for sharing information and program initiatives related to healthy ageing
- Continue to provide feedback to HAnet administrators.

Thank you to all evaluation survey respondents – your feedback has been very helpful. We look forward to continuing to develop HAnet together with all members.

*'A website I really enjoy. One place with lots of relevant information and research that helps my work.'*

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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

# Attachment 1

Online survey 2013

## HAnet Evaluation

Thank you for agreeing to complete the HAnet evaluation survey.

HAnet is an online, interactive network for health professionals and service providers to work together, share information and resources, and discuss best practice strategies to support Victorians as they get older. It was launched in October 2012 and we are now seeking your help to continue to improve the online network.

This survey is open to all HAnet members and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Questions marked with an asterisk must be completed.

The closing date for this survey is Friday 13th December.

Should you have any problems with access or any further questions regarding this survey, please email [hanet@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:hanet@health.vic.gov.au)

All your responses will remain anonymous and confidential, accessed only by the internal evaluation team.

## HAnet Evaluation

**\* 1. On average, how often do you visit hanet.health.vic.gov.au?**

- 1-5 times per week
- 1-5 times per month
- 1-5 times per year
- Only when I receive the HAnet highlights email

Other (please specify)

**\* 2. I currently use HAnet to:**

*(Click as many as apply)*

- post information and resources
- post events
- post questions and get advice from other members
- communicate with other HAnet members online
- read articles
- look for events
- enhance my work in healthy ageing

Other (please specify)

## HAnet Evaluation

### \*3. In future I would like to use HAnet to:

*(Click as many as apply)*

- post information and articles
- post events
- post questions and get advice from other members
- communicate with other members online
- read articles
- look for events
- enhance my work in healthy ageing

Other (please specify)

## HAnet Evaluation

### \* 4. Please rate these comments about using the HAnet website:

	1 strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 strongly agree
I can easily find what I need on HAnet	<input type="radio"/>				
I find using HAnet to be complicated	<input type="radio"/>				
I think HAnet is easy to use	<input type="radio"/>				
I need help to use HAnet	<input type="radio"/>				
I find moving between pages on HAnet difficult	<input type="radio"/>				
I learned quickly how to use HAnet	<input type="radio"/>				
I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with HAnet	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel very confident using HAnet	<input type="radio"/>				

## HAnet Evaluation

**\* 5. Please describe your interest in HAnet topic headings:**

*(Please click as many as apply)*

	irrelevant	not of interest	useful	interesting
Healthy and active living	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy environments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General - healthy ageing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**\*6. Have you ever posted on HAnet?**

yes

no

## HAnet Evaluation

### \*7. Where did you post on HAnet?

*(Click as many as apply)*

- Healthy and active living
- Healthy environments
- Participation
- General - Healthy ageing
- Events
- Not sure

### \*8. How easy did you find posting on HAnet?

*(please select the best answer for you)*

- Very easy, no problems
- Easy with help from the FAQs on HAnet
- It took me a while to figure out what to do
- I had another HAnet user assist me
- I found it confusing and had to ask for help via email or phone from a HAnet advisor
- Difficult, I had problems

### 9. How could posting on HAnet be improved?

**\* 10. Is there anything stopping you from posting on HAnet?**

- I don't have anything to post
- I don't know how to post
- I don't have the time
- I don't want to post, I am happy reading what others have posted

Other (please specify)

**11. What would help you to post on HAnet?**

## HAnet Evaluation

**\* 12. I find the monthly HAnet highlights:**

- Valuable - a great resource
- OK - I read it when I have time
- OK - sometimes it's interesting
- Not of interest

**\* 13. I read the monthly HAnet highlights email:**

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

**\* 14. I click on a link to read an article**

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

**\* 15. I forward the HAnet highlights to colleagues and other people I know**

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

**16. What could be improved about the monthly HAnet highlights?**

**17. Any other comments about HAnet overall (the website, posting, highlights)**

## HAnet Evaluation

Thank you for participating in this survey.  
We appreciate your time and comments  
We will be sharing the results of this evaluation with members in 2014