

NEHTA Stakeholder Engagement

Our work program at NEHTA will trigger many changes in how health information is communicated in the future. Therefore, we communicate extensively with those involved with health communications, to inform them of work being undertaken, and to better understand the communication needs of the healthcare sector.

This communication occurs primarily with healthcare providers and consumers, vendors of health information systems and services, standards organisations and government health departments. We generally use four main methods of communicating with these audiences:

- ◆ *Publications*
- ◆ *Conferences and presentations*
- ◆ *Stakeholder engagement groups*
- ◆ *Direct engagement* – for example, meetings and site visits.

In addition, we seek to make valuable global connections with e-health leaders from the US, UK and Canada to provide valuable input into our work.

Publications

Through our website, we publish a wide range of written materials for a range of stakeholder audiences across our work program. These publications reflect the varying stages of our work – from documents which outline our intended approach to an issue (for example, *Towards a Secure Messaging Environment* or *NEHTA's Approach to Privacy* documents); through to documents which contain our recommendations (for example, *Medication Data Specification Release 1.0*). Many of these documents are released for public comment before the final version of the document is published. This provides all stakeholders with an opportunity to constructively contribute to our recommendations.

We also publish general information about the work that we are undertaking. This has taken the form of interviews and articles in magazines targeting healthcare consumers, clinicians and the Australian health IT industry; as well as developing a range of fact sheets to address all aspects of our work program.

Conferences and Presentations

Industry conferences provide a useful mechanism to inform a broad audience of interested stakeholders of our work and progress. Our CEO, General Managers and Project Leaders have addressed many conferences to date, on topics ranging from Australia's E-Health Reform Agenda, to specific aspects of our work.

We have convened our own conferences and seminars for the health IT, clinician and consumer communities, including events held in collaboration with the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Australian Information Industry Association, the Medical Software Industry Association and Standards Australia. At regular intervals we hold Industry Executive Seminars, which provide industry with an opportunity to engage directly with our CEO and General Managers on the program of work being undertaken.

Additionally we host technical workshops on specific areas of our work, such as the Medications Specification Technical Workshop.

These seminars are supplemented with focus sessions for the health IT standards community, to provide an update on the latest in our work in the standards arena.

Stakeholder Engagement Groups

At NEHTA we have established stakeholder engagement groups amongst government health departments, clinicians and healthcare consumers.

As the Chief Executives of all State, Territory and Federal health jurisdictions comprise NEHTA's Board, it is of particular importance that we establish mechanisms to engage with these jurisdictions on the technical and strategic aspects of our work. We have established the Jurisdiction Reference Group, comprising of senior jurisdictional staff nominated by their respective Chief Executives, to discuss the adoption of our work by health departments. This Jurisdiction Reference Group in turn has nominated appropriate jurisdictional staff to work with our project teams on various issue-specific working and liaison groups, covering all aspects of our work program and issues such as communications.

Consultation on the technical aspects of our work is ongoing with relevant experts at a project level. This consultation occurs through expert reference groups (comprising clinician and jurisdiction participants) as well as workshops on specific issues.

We have held a series of discussion forums with around 25 highly regarded clinicians (from a range of clinical backgrounds) and independently selected consumer participants, to examine the relationship between our work and healthcare safety, quality and efficiency goals. Other forums similar to this are established on a needs basis to discuss particular aspects of our work program and to enlist feedback from particular stakeholder groups.

Direct Engagement

Briefing peak industry organisations from across the clinical community on a regular basis is also key to the success of our engagement strategy. These briefings are held with individual organisations and allow us to inform these organisations of our progress and provide an opportunity to discuss industry issues in detail.

NEHTA staff has visited a variety of clinical settings in order to better understand the context in which health communications currently occur.

We also actively support Standards Australia's efforts in establishing e-health standards, by seconding a staff member to chair IT014, which oversees a number of standards committees relating to e-health matters. Additionally we attend IT014 meetings to promote open engagement with the health IT standards community.

To date we have held well over a hundred meetings with many health IT software and service vendors, to discuss aspects of our work in detail.

Global Connections

Understanding our work in a global context is also a significant process of consultation that we undertake. Over the past year we have sought out e-health experts from around the world to inform best practice methods for Australia. Additionally, we have commenced a program of consultation and collaboration with international government and industry leaders, to inform our program of work. As many other countries address similar issues, and have encountered similar complexities and challenges, it is important for us to learn from their experiences.

Our CEO has met with the President and CEO of Canada's Health Infoway, the US National Coordinator for Health IT, and the UK's Director General of IT to discuss common themes and goals. These discussions have been extremely valuable and a commitment to establish informal working groups on an ongoing basis has been made.