

National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee

Terms of Reference

v2.0

Approved for external use

1 Background

Reliable, secure provider-to-provider communication is a key component of digitally enabled, integrated, and coordinated care across the Australian health sector. Secure messaging is a core foundational capability required to enable safe, seamless, secure, and confidential information sharing across all healthcare providers.

While there are significant pockets of secure messaging in use, Australia is yet to achieve a fully connected National Secure Messaging Network (NSMN) where any healthcare provider can connect to any other healthcare provider.

To date, core network nodes operated by several private-sector participants have established the foundations of a national network. However, gaps in conformance around payloads, directories and workflows have impacted usability and uptake.

The 2018 proof of concepts and the 2019 Secure Messaging Industry Offer have helped validate the proposed secure messaging approach, establish key standards that will underpin the messaging network, and upgrade many industry information systems in preparation for the establishment of a NSMN.

To see this to fruition and achieve industry-wide interoperable secure messaging, will require the development of a NSMN "Conformance Assessment Scheme" that will provide clarity to all industry participants on how they can participate in the NSMN. To ensure ongoing governance and oversight of the Conformance Assessment Scheme, a **National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee** will also need to be established.

2 Purpose

The purpose of the National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee (Governance Committee) is to establish and execute ongoing formal governance of the NSMN Conformance Assessment Scheme to achieve industry-wide interoperable secure messaging. In addition, the Governance Committee will also promote the adoption and use of the NSMN.

3 Objectives

The National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee's objectives are to:

1. Provide ongoing governance over the Conformance Assessment Scheme

The principal responsibility of the Governance Committee is to maintain the Conformance Assessment Scheme. In doing so, the Conformance Assessment Scheme will serve as a "vehicle for agreement" on the requirements, architecture, solution constraints, and conformance demonstration methods that underpin the NSMN. This will also require the resolution of outstanding issues/gaps and the establishment of a baseline Conformance Assessment Scheme.

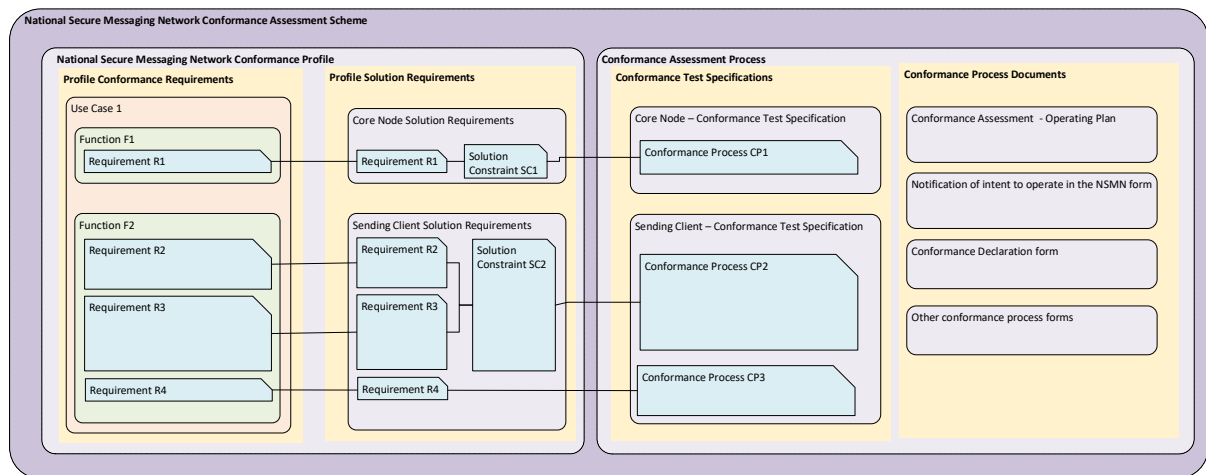


Figure 1 - NSMN Conformance Assessment Scheme

2. Conformance Evaluation Body

The Australian Digital Health Agency (Agency) will act as a standing Conformance Evaluation Body that will receive submissions from parties that have undertaken the conformance processes detailed in the NSMN Conformance Assessment Scheme (e.g. a conformance declaration, technical tests, etc), evaluate the submission, and make determinations regarding the product's conformance. The Agency will also maintain a register (e.g. a web page) of its conformance assessment determinations. The Governance Committee will operate in conjunction with the Agency in carrying out these activities.

3. Promote the adoption of the NSMN

The Governance Committee will take an active role in promoting the adoption of the NSMN, and specifically in the identification and resolution of all "barriers to adoption".

4 Standing membership and vote allocations

The following key principles shall apply to members of the National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee.

- All members of the Governance Committee act with the full formal authority of their organisation. While consultation (technical, commercial, etc) with other members of their organisation is certainly desired and expected, Governance Committee members must have the formal authority to speak and cast formal votes on behalf of their organisation.
- Where Governance Committee members are taken to represent other groups, the views expressed, and votes cast by the Governance Committee members are taken to have occurred after appropriate consultation and agreement with the group(s) they represent. The forum and mechanics of that consultation process will be the responsibility of the Governance Committee member and will not be a matter for the Governance Committee.
- A vote in favour of a matter being considered by the Governance Committee (e.g. adoption of a particular HL7 message specification) is an endorsement of the Governance Committee's proposal. It does not, however, represent a binding commitment that the voting member's organisation will modify their information systems in line with the accepted resolution. This is a commercial decision outside the scope of the Governance Committee's decision-making authority.

The standing membership for the Governance committee includes the following members and participants. The number of votes allocated to each member is designed to preserve "a proportional voting principal", where the voting power of each Group is equal. There are a total of 1680 votes. Voting motions will be carried where a majority of votes is achieved (841 votes or more), and the quorum rules are satisfied (see section 6).

In addition to their nominated voting representative, groups are free to bring observers to Governance Committee meetings. Observers may not take part in Governance Committee discussions unless invited by the Chairperson to do so.

Group	Proposed membership	Votes
Clinical Peak body representatives	1 representative from each of the following organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCPA (member) • RANZCR (member) • RACGP (member) • RACP (member) • AHPA (member) 	Each representative to have: 84 votes
Jurisdictional representatives	1 representative from each participating jurisdiction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA • ACT • SA • TAS • NSW • QLD • VIC 	Each representative to have: 60 votes
Secure messaging vendors	1 representative from each of the following organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthlink (member) • Medical Objects (member) • Telstra Health (member) • Global Health (member) 	Each representative to have: 105 votes
Clinical Information System Vendors	1 representative from each of the following organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Director • Best Practice • Zedmed • Coreplus • Cerner 	Each representative to have: 84 votes
Australian Institute of Digital Health	1 representative (participant, non-voting)	0 votes
Department of Health	1 representative (participant, non-voting)	0 votes

Australian Digital Health Agency	1 representative (participant, non-voting)	0 votes
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The chairperson may, from time to time, invite other individuals or groups to attend meetings. Guests do not have authority to make determinations in respect of Governance Committee deliberations. Only members have voting rights.

5 Member responsibilities

5.1 Chairperson

The Governance Committee will nominate a Chairperson at the inaugural meeting, with the chairperson periodically rotated as agreed by members.

The chairperson is responsible for:

- advising the secretariat on agenda items for each meeting;
- overseeing the orderly performance of business based on the agenda; and
- the dissemination of outbound [Type name of committee or group] outcomes, via the secretariat.

5.2 Secretariat

The Governance Committee will nominate a secretariat at the inaugural meeting, with the secretariat rotated on an ongoing basis.

The secretariat is responsible for:

- booking each meeting, based on advice from the chairperson;
- preparing and distributing the meeting agenda and meeting pack;
- recording and distributing minutes of each meeting; and
- disseminating outcomes, as required by the chairperson.

6 Quorum

A National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee quorum includes the chairperson and at least 50% of the standing members from each of the four groups represented on the committee-clinical peak bodies, jurisdictions, clinical information system vendors and secure messaging vendors.

7 Meetings

7.1 Frequency and location

The National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee will meet monthly unless otherwise agreed.

7.2 Meeting pack

National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee members are supplied with a “meeting pack” at least five working days before each meeting to provide members time to review the content.

The meeting pack includes:

- meeting agenda;
- previous meeting minutes, including actions and decisions, as a draft for approval; and
- supporting information, as necessary for agenda items.

7.3 Agenda

The chairperson sets the agenda.

Included in every agenda will be:

- apologies and absences;
- approval of previous meeting minutes;
- Review of previous actions;
- Updates from Sub-committee(s)
- Tabling of design questions;
- other business;
- summary of outcomes and actions; and
- confirmation of the next meeting date and location.

Meeting actions are documented in the meeting minutes and progress tracked. The Governance Committee action list is reviewed at every meeting.

7.4 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting will record all decisions made and assigned actions to group members, along with the target due date for reporting back to the group. Meeting minutes will be circulated to members within five working days after the meeting.

7.5 Out-of-session papers

Urgent matters that cannot be deferred until the next National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee meeting can be managed as an out-of-session paper. The out-of-session paper and cover sheet will be sent to members via email with a requested response date.

For a resolution to be approved, the majority of members must acknowledge approval of the resolution by email by the response due date.

If approved, the resolution will be entered into the minutes of the next meeting.

8 Confidentiality and transparency

Deliberations, decisions, and activities of the National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee are not confidential unless expressly stated by the Chair.

9 Performance and review

On a regular basis, or as determined by the Chair, the National Secure Messaging Network Governance Committee will conduct a self-assessment with Group members and key stakeholders to review its performance and opportunities for improvements.

Version history

Version	Date approved	Comments
0.1-0.4		Initial draft
0.5		Distributed for public comment
0.6		Updated proposed membership in section 4 Updated proposal for "vote-weighting" in section 4 Update quorum rules in section 6
0.7		Governance Committee now to govern Conformance Assessment Scheme rather than Conformance Profile
1.0		Document ratified for use at inaugural meeting of NSMN Governance Committee, 13/07/2021. Approved with the following changes: observers allowed to attend (section 4)
2.0		Membership updated to include Coreplus and Cerner (Clinical Information System vendors)