**Media release 24 August 2022**

**Australian Digital Health Agency signs agreement with HL7 Australia**

**to help connect Australia’s healthcare system**

The Australian Digital Health Agency has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Health Level Seven Australia Ltd (HL7) to support the robust development and implementation of digital health standards and specifications to help improve connectivity across the national healthcare system.

Agency CEO Amanda Cattermole PSM said the Agency’s partnership with HL7 affirms the importance of a thriving digital health standards ecosystem and would have a direct impact on consumers gaining better access to their health information through the Australian healthcare system.

“Digital health standards are critical to the safe, secure and seamless movement of consumer health information between different healthcare providers,” she said.

“Fostering and enabling interoperability in the health system is critically important and standards have a key role to play.

“The objective is to create a new era of digital health in Australia with strong governance. This means open and collaborative processes for the agreement, development, testing, publishing and maintenance of digital health standards.”

Ms Cattermole said the organisations will collaborate to support consistent adoption of digital health standards to strengthen connected health care across Australia. National priorities will be addressed systematically and the standards community will be supported to grow in size and expertise.

“We want to foster a vibrant Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) community in Australia as outlined in Connecting Australian Health Care – National Healthcare Interoperability Plan. Put simply, FHIR is the how-to-guide that enables health information movement from one place to another, a freely available and nationally endorsed interoperability standard.

“The Agency and HL7 recognise that different parts of the health system are at different points in their digital journey. The long established V2 and CDA standards are widely used. These will continue to be supported during the transition to FHIR.

“Together with HL7 we will deliver training, education and uplift activities to support the health workforce to use the new standards.”

HL7 Australia Chair, Isobel Frean, said the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding represented a significant moment for the promotion and adoption of interoperability standards in Australia.

“This agreement is testament to the world class standards development community we have in Australia,” she said.

“Equally it presents an opportunity for our community to help nurture new partnerships across health and social care in the interests of achieving a consensus approach to the development of the standards we use in Australia.

“One of our priorities through the partnership is to more clearly communicate requirements for standards for national acceptance across public and private health and social care.”

Australia has an ambitious plan to connect health care by 2027. The Agency and HL7 are working together to ensure the digital health standards required to enable the movement of consumer health information through a connected healthcare system are robustly developed, easily adopted, widely available, well maintained and effectively governed.

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**About the Australian Digital Health Agency**

When it comes to improving the health of all Australians, the role of digital innovation and connection is a vital part of a modern, accessible healthcare system. Against the backdrop of COVID-19, digital health has seen exponential growth in relevance and importance, making it more pertinent than ever for all Australians and healthcare providers.

Better patient healthcare and health outcomes are possible when you have a health infrastructure that can be safely accessed, easily used and responsibly shared.

To achieve this, the [National Digital Health Strategy](https://www.digitalhealth.gov.au/about-us/national-digital-health-strategy-and-framework-for-action) is establishing the foundations for a sustainable health system that constantly improves. It underpins and coordinates work that is already happening between governments, healthcare providers, consumers, innovators and the technology industry.

For further information: [www.digitalhealth.gov.au](http://www.digitalhealth.gov.au).

*The Australian Digital Health Agency is a statutory authority in the form of a corporate Commonwealth entity.*

**About HL7 Australia**

Health Level Seven International (HL7) is an international standards development organisation that provides a comprehensive framework and related standards for the exchange, integration, sharing and retrieval of electronic health information that supports clinical practice and the management, delivery and evaluation of health services globally. HL7 Australia is HL7 International’s affiliate.

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* Represent our members at HL7 International and within Australia on HL7 matters
* Participate in the HL7 International standards development processes
* Promote the relevance and fitness of the HL7 protocol specifications, HL7 educational material and other HL7 material within Australia
* Distribute, translate, and localise the HL7 protocol specifications as appropriate
* Administer and oversee HL7 electronic certification tests as appropriate
* Promote HL7 standards and educate, inform, and support current and potential users within Australia to promote consistent and widespread usage of the standards.

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The Australian Digital Health Agency is a proud Tier 1 Organisational Member of HL7 Australia

**CEO LinkedIn post**

Our partnership with HL7 affirms the importance of a thriving digital health standards ecosystem.

Digital health standards are critical to the safe, secure and seamless movement of consumer health information between different healthcare providers, so fostering and enabling interoperability in the health system is critically important and standards have a key role to play.