

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

National e-Health Transition Authority (NeHTA)

Budget Estimates 2011-12, Supplementary Estimates

Question: 12

OUTCOME 10.2: e-Health

Topic: Tiger Teams

Senator Boyce asked:

The proposal by NEHTA to have tiger teams to develop key standards in less than a month and bypass the normal Standards Australia process could have enormous and negative consequences . As one industry expert said, "If you depart from the standards framework, you introduce a cascading series of costs and barriers." "If the specs are changed for one project, the vendor has to do a specialty implementation, but then you need a special conformance process and adjust the interoperability framework as well. "In the end everybody has to change their software, and the costs spread like a ripple on a pond." How won't this process cost the software industry a lot more money to stay in the game and what guarantees can NEHTA give that this sort of decision won't cause inefficiency and confusion?

Answer:

NEHTA is not bypassing the normal Standards Australia process and has never indicated this would be the case.

The PCEHR is being built on existing international and Australian standards. A number of new industry standards, Australian technical specifications and Australian Standards are required to meet the unique characteristics of the PCEHR.

NEHTA engaged in extensive research and conducted an independent study to examine existing standards and advise on the appropriate architecture standards for the PCEHR.

This process is articulated in the recently released PCEHR Specifications & Standards Plan.

NEHTA's Tiger Teams are groups of subject matter experts brought together to work on a particular problem or issue related to the eHealth Program. This would include aspects of clinical use, consumer advocacy, government policy advice and technical use and speciality. NEHTA uses Tiger Teams to support the development of NEHTA Managed Specifications (which are not Standard, but may be derived from Standards wherever appropriate) as clearly described in the PCEHR Specifications and Standards Plan.

NEHTA is committed to supporting the co-ordination of PCEHR and eHealth Specifications to reduce the impacts that may be faced by software vendors.