



HL7 AUSTRALIA Co-Chair Guide

Version 1.0

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This informative handbook is adapted from the HL7 International Co-Chair Handbook and is localised for the Australian context. It is intended as a practical guide to support HL7 Australia Work Group Co-Chairs in their role and should be read alongside the *HL7 Australia Governance and Operations Manual (AU-GOM)*¹, the *HL7 Australia Code of Ethics and Conduct*², the *HL7 Australia By-laws*³, and the *HL7 Australia Constitution*⁴, which provide the formal rules governing HL7 Australia and its activities.

This handbook has the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** — provides an overview of the handbook and the HL7 Australia organisational context
 - **Chapter 2: Your Role as Co-Chair** — outlines key responsibilities, election processes, and expectations
 - **Chapter 3: Meetings** — provides guidance on teleconferences, in-person meetings and decision-making
 - **Chapter 4: Work Group Planning & Maintenance** — covers work group health, mission & charter, and project management
 - **Chapter 5: Balloting** — describes the HL7 AU ballot process, reconciliation, and block votes
 - **Chapter 6: Key Resources** — centralises links to tools, templates, and reference material
 - **Changelog** — version history and summary of changes
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¹ <https://hl7.com.au/#gom>

² <https://hl7.com.au/#cec>

³ <https://hl7.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/20240701-By-laws-v2.20b-Final.pdf>

⁴ <https://hl7.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HL7-Australia-Constitution-2022.pdf>

Chapter 1: Introduction

Foreword

There are numerous responsibilities that you assume as a Co-Chair of an HL7 Australia Work Group. The content of this guide is provided to assist you with those responsibilities within the Australian context.

HL7 Australia is the official HL7 International Affiliate for Australia. While we operate within the broader HL7 International framework, HL7 Australia has its own governance structure, standards development processes, and operational procedures defined in the AU-GOM.

In addition to this guide, all Co-Chairs should be familiar with:

- The **HL7 Australia Governance and Operations Manual (AU-GOM)** — the primary governance document for HL7 Australia operations
- The **HL7 Australia Constitution and By-laws**
- The **HL7 Australia Intellectual Property Policy**
- The **HL7 Australia Code of Ethics and Conduct** — the code establishing principles and minimum standards of behaviour expected of all persons participating in HL7 Australia activities, including Co-Chairs

More information on the way that the Co-Chair function operates within the global HL7 International context as available in:

- The **HL7 International Code of Ethics**
- The **HL7 International About HL7** web page
- The **HL7 International Co-Chair Handbook** — for additional general guidance on Co-Chair leadership

If you have suggestions for improvements or corrections to this guide, please raise them with the HL7 Australia Board or AU-TSC.

HL7 Australia Organisational Overview

HL7 Australia's governance structure includes:

- **The Board** — responsible for overall governance, conducting Co-Chair and AU-TSC elections, maintaining official lists of Co-Chairs, maintaining official lists of AU-TSC members, maintaining the AU-GOM, entering into agreements with external parties on collaborative work including Australian Accelerator initiatives, and considering appeals against AU-TSC decisions.
- **The HL7 Australia Technical Steering Committee (AU-TSC)** — responsible for creating, modifying or terminating Work Groups; facilitating coordination and activities of the AU Work Group Collective (AU-WGC); removal of Co-Chairs;

approving work group projects, and maintaining the default Decision Making Practices (DMP) document. (AU-GOM §05)

- **The HL7 Australia Work Group Collective (AU-WGC)** — the collective body of all HL7 Australia Work Groups responsible for open, consensus-based development and balloting of Protocol Specifications. (AU-GOM §07)
- **Community Process Coordination Committees** — committees (e.g. the Australian FHIR Coordination Committee) established by the Board for community processes outside of formal Work Group structures (e.g. the Australian FHIR Community Process). (AU-GOM §06)
- **Australian Accelerators** — programs of work (e.g. HL7 Australia Accelerators or Community-aligned Accelerators) with projects including open technical specifications. (AU-GOM §12.02)

The AU-TSC Composition

The AU-TSC is comprised of (AU-GOM §05):

- A Chair
- A Deputy Chair (Chair Elect or Immediate Past Chair)
- The Chair of each community process coordination committee
- A Co-Chair from each Work Group to represent the AU-WGC
- Two individuals representing the HL7 Australia technical community
- *Ad hoc* members as appropriate
- The Board Chair and Working Group Liaison Officer (WGLO) as *ex officio* members with vote

Important: Preponderance of influence within the AU-TSC is a recognised risk; until formal governance mechanisms are established through an update to the AU-GOM, the committee should adopt interim internal measures to mitigate the risk.

Available Resources

- **HL7 Australia Confluence Space** — the central hub for HL7 Australia governance, processes, project registries, and Work Group pages.
- **HL7 Essentials** — HL7 International’s quick-reference space for key information on participating in HL7.
- **Zulip (chat.fhir.org)** — the open-source chat platform used by the HL7 community. Monitor the [#Australia stream](#) for HL7 Australia announcements and discussion.
- **Jira** — the HL7 International platform used to record issues related to HL7 specifications, track ballot comments, and manage specification feedback. HL7 Australia leverages this platform for its FHIR Implementation Guide specifications and related ballots.

- **GitHub** — the version control system used to support the development of HL7 Australia specifications and artifacts.
 - **HL7 Australia Decision Making Practices** — the AU-localised DMP that governs AU-TSC and Work Group decision-making.
 - **Robert's Rules of Order** — the parliamentary authority for situations not addressed in the DMP (AU-GOM §07.04).
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Chapter 2: Your Role as Co-Chair

This section outlines many of the key requirements and responsibilities you have taken on as a work group Co-Chair. At its core, the Co-Chair role entails providing the leadership, the stewardship, and the oversight of the Work Group in which you are serving, to help that community achieve its mission.

There are several competing priorities for which you and your fellow Co-Chairs are responsible, including:

- **Managing the overall group** consistent with the policies of HL7 Australia, the AU-GOM, and the HL7 Australia Code of Ethics and Conduct
- **Maintaining the integrity and trust of the community**, ensuring that contributors can effectively participate, that all voices are heard, and that decisions are made consistent with the Work Group's decision-making practices
- **Providing thought leadership** to help divergent participants, organisations, and perspectives come together, seeking consensus whenever possible on effective work products that advance the Work Group's mission
- **Supporting administrative activities** to support the needs of HL7 Australia, the community, and external stakeholders
- **Communicating workgroup outcomes** to ensure the community is aware of workgroup activities.

Co-Chair Responsibilities

Work Group Co-Chairs are responsible for (AU-GOM §07.03.01):

- The conduct of the Work Group in the development of Protocol Specifications in the designated domain
- Collecting and publishing the minutes of all Work Group meetings including teleconferences and in-person meetings
- Encouraging the submission of minutes or notes from all meetings of any sub-groups, task forces, or project teams related to the Work Group
- Ensuring that the portion of the Protocol Specifications for which they are responsible is properly balloted; for resolving negative normative ballot comments appropriately
- Reporting compliance with established procedures to the AU-TSC
- Receiving/addressing informal ethics and conduct concerns

Division of Labour

Each Work Group will typically be led by two or more Co-Chairs. The division of responsibilities should be approached with the Work Group's unique projects and needs in mind. For example:

- Designate Co-Chairs by area of focus (e.g. a specification content Co-Chair and an administrative Co-Chair)
- Where there are more Co-Chairs, pair experienced and newer Co-Chairs to ensure knowledge transfer
- Distribute administrative duties (meeting minutes, agenda preparation, ballot management) across the Co-Chair team

Co-Chair Nomination and Election

Eligibility (AU-GOM §11.02.03)

Nominees for Work Group Co-Chair must be:

- Current individual members; **or**
- Individuals who represent a current organisational member (although not necessarily the designated voting representative)

Nominations are open to members of the Work Group's primary email distribution list one week prior to the start of the nomination period. Self-nominations are accepted.

Endorsement Requirements

- **Incumbent Co-Chairs** seeking re-election must include a statement reaffirming the ability to fulfil their duties.
- **All other nominees** must submit a statement from an existing Work Group Co-Chair **and** another member of the Work Group supporting their nomination and stipulating that they are an active member of the Work Group and have the capacity to fulfil the Co-Chair duties.

Active Work Group members participate in consensus-building discussions, contribute to resolution of issues, and are recognised by their peers within the Work Group.

Election Process (AU-GOM §11.02)

- The annual election of HL7 Australia Technical Leadership Positions including Co-Chairs is held in the fourth quarter of each calendar year with the results to be available no later than 15 December each year.
- Newly elected Co-Chairs assume their duties on **1 January** of the following year
- The ballot is electronic with no proxy voting allowed
- There shall be no campaigning conducted using any HL7 Australia, HL7 International, or other HL7-related managed electronic communications

Term of Office (AU-GOM §07.03.02)

- Co-Chairs serve **two-year terms without term limits**

- Terms are staggered to ensure continuity of leadership — half the Co-Chairs are elected in even-numbered years and half in odd-numbered years
- Upon establishment of a new Work Group, an appropriate number of Co-Chairs are elected to an initial one-year term to establish staggered terms

Co-Chair Vacancy

Voluntary Vacancy (AU-GOM §07.03.05)

Should you voluntarily vacate your position, the other Work Group Co-Chairs shall notify the Board and request a subsequent election. The Work Group may designate an interim Co-Chair using their decision-making practices.

Vacancy Due to Change in Membership Status (AU-GOM §07.03.04)

Should your membership status change (loss of individual membership or loss of membership by your organisation), you have **30 days** from notification to reinstate membership. Failure to do so requires immediately stepping down.

Removal from Office (AU-GOM §07.03.03)

A Work Group may make a motion to the AU-TSC for removal of a Co-Chair. Criteria for removal include:

- Failure to participate in at least 60% of Work Group teleconferences in the preceding calendar year
- Undesirable or disruptive behaviour that deviates from the HL7 Australia Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Failure to fulfil responsibilities set forth in AU-GOM §05.03.01

Temporary Work Group Co-Chairs (AU-GOM §12.02.03)

As part of an active HL7 Australia Accelerator, the Accelerator's decision-making committee may nominate up to three individuals for consideration as Temporary Work Group Co-Chairs. These Co-Chairs:

- Have terms restricted to the duration of the HL7 Australia Accelerator
- Carry out Co-Chair responsibilities only for standards development associated with the HL7 Australia Accelerator
- Must still meet the criteria to become a Work Group Co-Chair

Intellectual Property Responsibilities

HL7 Australia retains intellectual property rights over HL7 Australia material. As a Co-Chair, you have specific responsibilities regarding IP:

- **Familiarise yourself with the [HL7 Australia Intellectual Property Policy](#)** — the IP Policy governs the acquisition, use and distribution of HL7 Australia copyright material and trademarks (AU-GOM §03).
- **Ensure proper attribution** — all Work Group outputs must correctly attribute source material and comply with the IP Policy.
- **Manage contributed content** — be aware that contributions to HL7 Australia specifications are subject to the IP Policy. Ensure that participants understand this before contributing material.
- **Do not restrict access unnecessarily** — consistent with HL7 International practice, draft specifications and pre-ballot materials should not be restricted to “members only” unless specifically required by the IP Policy.
- **Protect HL7 trademarks** — Working Standards must never use logos or trademarks from Standards Australia or any organisation accredited by Standards Australia to develop Australian Standard® brand standards (AU-GOM §07.02.05).

If you are uncertain about IP matters, seek guidance from the Board or contact secretary@hl7.au .

Who Can Speak on Behalf of HL7 Australia

Co-Chairs cannot speak on behalf of HL7 Australia or HL7 International except where specifically allowed by organisational policy. The Board manages all relationships with outside organisations.

Chapter 3: Meetings

HL7 Australia Work Groups generally meet via teleconference and, where appropriate, at in-person meetings. Unlike HL7 International, HL7 Australia does not hold the three annual Working Group Meetings (WGMs) that form the backbone of the HL7 International meeting cycle. Instead, HL7 Australia Work Groups rely more heavily on regular teleconferences, with periodic in-person meetings as warranted. In future, HL7 Australia may introduce Work Group Collective Meeting (WGCM) events like the HL7 International WGMs.

Teleconferences

Scheduling and Visibility

All Work Group meetings must be visible and open to attendees outside the project to ensure transparency in standards development. Work Group Co-Chairs will schedule online meetings on a regular basis to conduct the work of the Work Group.

Meeting information, including agendas and dial-in details, should be:

- Posted on the Work Group's **Confluence page calendar**
- Communicated via the Work Group's **email distribution list**
- Announced on the **#Australia stream on Zulip** where applicable

Teleconferencing Tools

HL7 Australia Work Groups typically use Zoom or Microsoft Teams for teleconferences with screen sharing capability. Co-Chairs are responsible for ensuring agendas are prepared with links to them distributed to participants in advance.

Meeting Minutes

Whether for teleconferences or in-person meetings, minutes must be taken and published. Minutes should include:

1. **A list of attendees**
2. **Precisely worded motions** that were made, along with indication of how successful they were (passed unanimously, passed without objection, or the actual number of votes for, against, and abstentions)
3. **Descriptions of any associated work products** (specifications, presentations, etc.)
4. **The agenda for the next meeting**

If your Work Group did not achieve quorum, note it in the minutes. Discussion may occur in a non-quorate meeting, but no official votes may be taken.

Minutes should be published on the Work Group's **Confluence space** within a reasonable timeframe. Each Work Group should maintain a dedicated minutes page within its Confluence space (e.g. a "Meeting Agenda and Minutes" page).

Ensuring Quorum

Quorum requirements are defined in the Work Group's Decision-Making Practices (DMP). Ensure you are familiar with your Work Group's DMP and any modifications that have been approved via the [DMP Modification Template](#).

In-Person Meetings

HL7 Australia may hold in-person meetings of Work Groups, often in conjunction with events such as Connectathons or the HL7 Australia Annual General Meeting. When organising in-person meetings:

- Provide sufficient advance notice via the Work Group email list and Zulip
- Post a detailed agenda on the Work Group's Confluence page
- Ensure remote participation is available where possible to maximise inclusion
- Record attendance and take minutes as for any other Work Group meeting

Electronic Voting (eVoting)

Work Groups may conduct votes electronically outside of scheduled meetings in accordance with their DMP. The process for submitting and resolving motions electronically (AU-GOM §09.04):

1. The motion is posted to the group platform seeking a second
2. The second is recorded, initiating a discussion period (typically 5 days, but not less than 3 days)
3. Comments and responses during the discussion period are recorded
4. The chair may move to "call the question" at their discretion
5. Voting commences at the close of the discussion period (typically 3 days)
6. Votes are recorded with the final tally including abstentions

Each Work Group should maintain a dedicated eVoting page within its Confluence space to record motions and outcomes.

Chapter 4: Work Group Planning & Maintenance

Mission & Charter

Every Work Group operates under a documented Mission & Charter (M&C) that describes the group's purpose, scope, and goals. Co-Chairs are responsible for ensuring the M&C:

- Aligns with HL7 Australia's strategic direction as defined by the Board (AU-GOM §07.01.03)
- Is reviewed and updated as needed
- Is submitted to the AU-TSC for review and approval when changes are made

Changes to Name or Mission & Charter (AU-GOM §07.02.01)

To change the Work Group's name or M&C:

1. Obtain approval through the Work Group's documented decision-making practices
 2. Complete and submit a *Work Group Change Request* to the AU-TSC
 3. The AU-TSC distributes the request to all other Work Group Co-Chairs
 4. The AU-TSC votes on the request using its documented decision-making practices
- AU-TSC decisions may be appealed to the Board within 30 days.

Decision Making Practices (DMP)

All Work Groups shall follow a documented set of decision-making practices (AU-GOM §07.04). HL7 Australia uses AU-localised Decision Making Practices by default and these will be provided by the AU-TSC.

If a situation arises that is not addressed in the DMP, **Robert's Rules of Order** shall govern.

Work Group Viability

Metrics for Viability (AU-GOM §07.01.03)

For a Work Group to be considered viable, the AU-TSC requires:

- The Work Group's M&C to align with HL7 Australia's strategic direction
- At least **1 active sponsored or co-sponsored project** consistent with the Work Group's M&C
- At least **two meetings every Work Group cycle** (four months)

Lack of Viability (AU-GOM §07.01.04)

Should viability criteria not be met for two Work Group cycles:

1. The AU-TSC will attempt communications with the Work Group to resolve the issues

2. If no active participants can be reached, the AU-TSC issues a call for a special meeting
3. If issues are not resolved within three months, the AU-TSC informs the Work Group's email distribution list of intent to dissolve in **90 days** (per AU-GOM §07.02.03)

Project Management

Work Groups are expected to manage their projects through established HL7 Australia processes. Note some of these processes will be temporary until the AU-TSC becomes fully operational.

Establishing Projects

New projects are established through the [Process: Establishing Committees and Projects](#) workflow. This includes:

- Submitting a Project Proposal through the [HL7 Australia Project Registry](#)
- Developing and seeking approval for a Project Scope Statement (PSS) via the [HL7 AU Project Proposal / PSS Process](#)

Developing Specifications

Content development follows the [Process: Developing Specifications](#) workflow. Work Group decision-making is applied per the AU DMP. Key practices include:

- Documents and Implementation Guides are authored collaboratively
- Continuous integration publication is desirable to elicit feedback
- Feedback on current content can be provided via Jira ticketing or other Work Group-approved processes

Product Family-Specific Requirements

Depending on the product family of the specification being developed, additional requirements may apply. Co-Chairs should check the [HL7 Australia Confluence Space](#) for current product family processes. For example, FHIR-based specifications are currently subject to:

- **AU FHIR Maturity Model Assessment** — all FHIR artefacts must have the assessment completed/approved or scheduled before publication
- **AU FHIR IG Variance Requirements** — all FHIR Implementation Guides must meet variance requirements

As new product families are adopted by HL7 Australia Work Groups, additional requirements may be established. Co-Chairs should confirm the current requirements with the AU-TSC or the relevant governance Work Group (currently the FHIR Work Group).

Engaging with the AU-TSC

Co-Chairs are expected to engage with the AU-TSC. As a Work Group Co-Chair, you or one of your fellow Co-Chairs will serve as the Work Group's representative on the AU-TSC. This representative is the conduit of communication between the AU-TSC and the Work Group Co-Chairs.

Work Group Dissolution (AU-GOM §07.02.03)

Should dissolution become necessary (whether by request or AU-TSC initiation), Co-Chairs should:

1. Complete and submit a *Work Group Change Request* to the AU-TSC Chair and WGLO
 2. Seek to identify those Work Groups that might assume the work of the dissolving Work Group
 3. Seek approval of the appropriate Work Group(s) to assume responsibility for work products
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Chapter 5: Balloting

Co-Chairs are responsible for ensuring that any material their Work Group wishes to ballot is completed as required and in a manner consistent with HL7 Australia’s balloting processes.

Overview of HL7 AU Ballot Types

HL7 Australia conducts the following types of ballots for the progression of Protocol Specifications to become normative standards (AU-GOM §08 – §10):

Ballot Type	Purpose	AU-GOM Reference
Informative Document	Explains or supports the structure of Protocol Specifications, or provides detailed information regarding interpretation or implementation	§09.01
Working Standard (equivalent to HL7 International STU)	Validates and releases content for trial use prior to normative ballot	§09.02
Comment-only	Gathers input from members on documents in progress	§09.04
Normative	Approves normative standards (rules to be included in future AU-GOM versions)	§10

All HL7 Australia ballots are conducted electronically by the Board (AU-GOM §08).

Key Differences from HL7 International

HL7 Australia’s ballot process is a [modified version](#) of HL7 International’s ballot process with the following key differences:

- **2 regular ballot periods per year** (nominally Q1/February and Q3/August) instead of HL7 International’s three per year
- **Simplified Notice of Intent to Ballot (NIB) deadline** — 7 days before ballot enrolment opens
- **Simplified approved content deadline** — 1 week before ballot opens for voting
- **Governance Work Groups** (currently the FHIR Work Group and HL7 V2 Work Group) operate in place of a TSC for governance approval of ballots; this structure may evolve as new Work Groups are established

The HL7 AU Ballot Process — Co-Chair Responsibilities

The [HL7 AU Balloting Process](#) defines 20 steps, many of which require Co-Chair action. The key Co-Chair responsibilities across the ballot lifecycle are:

Before the Ballot

1. Have an Approved Project

- Ensure your project has been approved through the [HL7 AU project approval process](#)
- Artefacts are defined; repositories are provisioned; version/package ID allocated

2. Develop Content

- Apply the Work Group's decision-making practices
- Author documents and Implementation Guides
- Use continuous integration publication to elicit feedback
- Capture feedback via Jira ticketing or other approved processes

3. Develop the Notice of Intent to Ballot (NIB)

- Draft the NIB using the [NIB Template](#)
- Define the intention to place artefacts into an HL7 AU membership ballot process
- Define the scope of the ballot to be undertaken

4. Approve and submit the NIB

- Obtain approval to submit the NIB from the Work Group per your DMP
- After an NIB has been approved by the WG and reviewed, it must be submitted by a Co-Chair
- Schedule the required governance Work Group review with the relevant Co-Chairs (currently the FHIR Work Group or V2 Work Group, as applicable)
- Submit the NIB to the Ballot Manager at projects@hl7.com.au
- **Deadline:** NIB must be submitted at least **7 days before** the opening of ballot enrolment (approximately 1 month and 2 weeks before ballot opens for voting)

5. Submit a Publication Request

- Finalise the scope and content of the ballot release
- The FHIR IG Facilitator prepares the release using the [HL7 AU Publishing Process](#)
- Submit the Publication Request to the Publication Manager and Ballot Manager at projects@hl7.com.au
- **Deadline:** Must be complete at least **1 week before** voting opens

During the Ballot

6. Monitor the Ballot

- The Ballot Manager handles opening/closing enrolment, managing voter lists, and opening/closing voting via HL7 International's Jira infrastructure
- Co-Chairs should monitor ballot responses as they are submitted
- Be aware of the [HL7 AU Ballot Sign-up](#) page for voter registration information

After the Ballot

7. Perform Ballot Reconciliation

- Reconcile all ballot comments and negative votes
- Define update actions needed for content
- Apply changes as agreed to the standards content
- Track reconciliation progress on the centralised [HL7 AU Ballot Reconciliation](#) page

8. Request Withdrawals

- Request ballot withdrawal notifications from the Ballot Manager at projects@hl7.com.au
- All balloters are contacted via email to consider withdrawing ballot votes for issues they consider resolved
- The withdrawal period runs for **1 month** (or as defined by Co-Chairs)
- Withdrawn votes may change the overall status of a voter and thus affect the final ballot tally

9. Cycle Complete

- When satisfactory final ballot participation is complete (as determined by Co-Chairs), the ballot cycle is considered complete
- Commence the [HL7 AU Publishing Process](#) to release the publication at the discretion of the responsible committee

Ballot Reconciliation

Ballot reconciliation is managed through Confluence. Each specification should have its own reconciliation page under the relevant Work Group's ballot reconciliation area. The [HL7 AU Ballot Reconciliation](#) hub provides a central index of active reconciliation pages.

Having reconciliation pages together allows committees to see each other's activity readily and manage any shared issues for resolution. When establishing a new specification for ballot, Co-Chairs should create a corresponding reconciliation page linked from the central hub.

Comment Dispositions

When reconciling ballot comments, the following dispositions are used (consistent with AU-GOM §09.01.03):

Disposition	Meaning
Persuasive	The Work Group agrees the comment is persuasive; recommended changes shall be incorporated
Not Persuasive	The Work Group agrees the comment deals with process or issues not under its control, or suggests alternatives with no advantage

Disposition	Meaning
Considered for Future Use	The comment has merit but will be considered in a future release
Not Related	The comment deals with issues beyond the scope of the ballot subject matter

A negative without comment shall be considered as “no response” and shall not be factored into the numerical requirements for approval (AU-GOM §07.01.03).

Approval Thresholds

- **Informative Documents:** No quorum required. Approved if 60% of combined affirmative and negative votes are affirmative (AU-GOM §07.01.04)
- **Working Standards:** Approved if 60% of combined affirmative and negative votes are affirmative. Minimum consensus group of ten individual members or individuals representing at least three organisational members (AU-GOM §07.02.04)
- **Normative:** Rules to be included in future versions of the AU-GOM (AU-GOM §08)

Substantive Change

A substantive change is one that directly and materially affects the use of a standard. Understanding what constitutes a substantive change is critical for Co-Chairs, particularly as HL7 Australia’s specifications mature towards normative status.

What Is a Substantive Change?

A substantive change modifies a specification by adding or removing capabilities, or by altering requirements in a way that would affect conformant implementations. The following are examples:

- Changing “shall” to “should” or “should” to “shall”
- Addition, deletion, or revision of requirements
- Addition of mandatory compliance with referenced standards
- Changes that damage the integrity of semantics or the validity of syntax
- For FHIR specifications: new resources, new data types, or cardinality changes

The following are generally **not** substantive changes:

- Correcting typographical errors
- Fixing broken links or changing styles
- Providing clarifications that do not change the meaning of the specification
- Corrections not expected to require changes to conformant applications
- Changes to examples
- Section renumbering

Why Substantive Change Matters

Substantive changes are primarily of concern for **normative ballots**. If substantive changes are introduced because of comments received during a normative ballot, the changed content must be subject to a subsequent normative ballot cycle. This ensures that all interested members have the opportunity to review and comment on material changes to the standard.

For **Working Standards** (trial use), the concept is less formally enforced but still good practice — Co-Chairs should track and clearly communicate all material changes between ballot cycles.

Co-Chair Responsibilities

When preparing a ballot package, Co-Chairs should:

1. Include a summary of all changes from the previous version of the specification
2. Clearly designate which changes are substantive and which are not
3. For successive ballot cycles, list changes from the prior ballot (not from the beginning of the balloting process)
4. If uncertain whether a change is substantive, seek guidance from the AU-TSC or the relevant governance Work Group

Note: As HL7 Australia moves towards normative standards, the AU-GOM may adopt more detailed rules for substantive change. Co-Chairs should monitor AU-GOM updates and AU-TSC guidance on this topic.

Block Votes

A **block vote** is a way of grouping a set of Jira issues for review and voting as a single decision. This is an efficient mechanism for reconciling large numbers of ballot comments.

Block Vote Process

1. **Identify the block** — tag the issues in Jira using a consistent label convention (e.g. <project>-block-vote-<number>)
2. **Create an announcement** to stakeholders that includes:
 - Description of the purpose of the block vote
 - List of included issues (summary, reporter, proposed resolution, Jira link)
 - Information on how and when to request removal of an issue from the block
 - Date and time of the call where the block vote will be reviewed
3. **Distribute** the information via the Work Group email list and optionally on Zulip **at least one week** in advance
4. **Handle removal requests** — remove Jira labels for disputed issues and arrange separate discussion

5. **Vote** — during the appointed meeting, resolve the block vote via the usual WG decision-making practices

Block Vote Sizing Guidance

Block Size	Minimum Review Time
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~50 issues	1 week
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~200 issues	At least 4 weeks
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Consensus Groups

For all ballot types, members are notified of the intent to form a consensus group at least **30 days** prior to the ballot period (AU-GOM §07.01.01, §07.02.01). Members enrol in the consensus group via the designated mechanisms.

Non-members who wish to participate must register their intent with the Board via email to the WGLO and shall be assessed a fee established by the Board (AU-GOM §07.01.01).

Working Standard Lifecycle

Trial Use Period (AU-GOM §09.02.05)

Once a Working Standard is approved, it is released for trial use. Key points for Co-Chairs:

- The trial use period should be **one to two years**, followed by one year or less for the normative ballot process
- The Board may extend viability for up to five years beyond the close of the trial use period
- Co-Chairs may petition the AU-TSC to extend the trial use period (typically up to one year)

Important: The front cover of a Working Standard must include the prescribed statement (AU-GOM §07.02.05) and must **never** use logos or trademarks from Standards Australia or any organisation accredited by Standards Australia to develop Australian Standard® brand standards.

Lifetime Review (AU-GOM §09.02.07)

One year prior to the expiration date, the Board notifies the AU-TSC and the responsible Work Group. Co-Chairs must determine whether to:

- Move to Normative ballot
 - Update and re-ballot
 - Request an extension (up to 3 years by default, up to 5 years with AU-TSC approval)
 - Retire the Working Standard
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Chapter 6: Key Resources

Governance Documents

Resource	Link
HL7 Australia AU-GOM	AU-GOM
HL7 Australia Constitution	Constitution PDF
HL7 Australia By-laws	By-laws PDF
HL7 Australia IP Policy	IP Policy PDF
HL7 Australia Code of Ethics and Conduct	Code of Ethics and Conduct
HL7 International Code of Ethics	Code of Ethics
HL7 International Code of Conduct	Code of Conduct

Processes

Resource	Link
AU Decision Making Practices	DMP Process
HL7 AU Balloting Process	Ballot Process
HL7 AU Publishing Process	Publishing Process
Establishing Committees & Projects	Project Establishment
Developing Specifications	Specification Development
AU FHIR IG Variance Requirements	Variance Requirements
AU FHIR Maturity Model Assessment	AFMM Assessment
Project Proposal / PSS Process	PSS Process

Templates & Forms

Resource	Link
NIB Template & Process Documents	Resources: Process Documents
DMP Modification Template	DMP Modification Template
AU Decision Making Practices v0.1	AU DMP Document

Tools & Platforms

Resource	Link
HL7 Australia Confluence Space	HL7 Australia Home
HL7 AU Work Group Confluence Spaces	See HL7 Australia Home for links to individual Work Group spaces
HL7 AU Ballot Reconciliation Hub	Ballot Reconciliation
HL7 AU Ballot Sign-up	Ballot Sign-up

Resource	Link
Ballot Announcements	Ballot Announcements
Zulip Chat (#Australia stream)	chat.fhir.org
Jira (Specification Feedback)	jira.hl7.org
GitHub (HL7 AU)	github.com/hl7au
HL7 Essentials	HL7 Essentials
HL7 AU Published Specifications	Published Specifications
HL7 AU Project Registry	Project Registry

Key Contacts

Role	Contact
Ballot Manager / Projects	projects@hl7.com.au
HL7 Australia Secretary	secretary@hl7.com.au

Work Group-specific contact details (email lists, Co-Chair contacts) are maintained on each Work Group's Confluence space. See the [HL7 Australia Home](#) for a directory of active Work Groups.

Additional References

Resource	Link
HL7 International Co-Chair Handbook	Co-Chair Handbook
HL7 International GOM	HL7 GOM
Robert's Rules of Order	Robert's Rules (HL7)
Affiliate Balloting in Jira	Affiliate Balloting
HL7 AU Session Recordings	Session Recordings
HL7 AU Guidance Material	Guidance Material

Changelog

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	April 2026	Initial edition of the HL7 Australia Co-Chair Handbook, adapted from the HL7 International Co-Chair Handbook and localised for the Australian context.

This document is version 1.0 of the HL7 Australia Co-Chair Handbook. Future versions may expand on topics including normative ballot procedures, detailed project management workflows, and Co-Chair training materials. Feedback and suggestions for improvement should be submitted to the HL7 Australia Board.