AS 5551—2013

E-health XML secured payload profiles

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Australian Standard®

E-health XML secured payload profiles

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PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Technical Committee IT-014, Health Informatics, to supersede ATS 5821—2010, *E-health XML secured payload profiles*.

This Standard is designed to be compatible with implementations of ATS 5821—2010. The XML namespaces are unchanged and there have only been minor corrections and clarifications to the conformance points and the XML Schemas. The changes are not expected to impact communications between implementations of ATS 5821—2010 and this Standard.

The objective of this Standard is to define a common set of interoperable mechanisms for representing secured XML fragments for e-health. Security here refers to the use of digital signatures, cryptographic encryption, or a combination of these. This includes multiple levels of signing and multiple levels of encryption, if necessary.

Mechanisms for representing secured XML have been defined by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) with XML Signature and XML Encryption. However, those specifications cover a broad range of situations, so they contain optional and implementation defined features.

This Standard defines four XML elements for representing secured XML fragments. One or more of these XML elements can be used whenever there are XML fragments to be secured and represented as XML. For example, these XML elements can be used to define the contents of SOAP Web services messages or static XML documents that contain secured XML fragments.

The XML elements are based on XML Signature and XML Encryption, clarifying the optional and implementation defined features defined therein. Two of the XML elements are strict profiles (i.e. subsets) of those specifications. The other two XML elements are new elements, which extend as well as incorporate a profile of those specifications.

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1.1 SCOPE AND INTENDED AUDIENCE

1.1.1 Scope

This Standard defines mechanisms for representing signed XML fragments and encrypted XML fragments.

This Standard does not specify when these mechanisms are to be used—that is the responsibility of the organizations that use this Standard. Signing and encrypting are mechanisms for obtaining different security properties: authentication, integrity, confidentiality and non-repudiation. It is outside the scope of this Standard to determine the levels of security an application requires and whether these mechanisms are suitable for that application. Security also depends on a number of external factors, such as key management and policies, which are also outside the scope of this Standard.

This Standard contains conformance points that define the format of XML Secured Payloads. The format directly implies certain obligations for programs that create XML Secured Payloads or consume XML Secured Payloads, but explicitly defining those obligations is outside the scope of this Standard.

The mechanisms in this Standard are designed for data represented as XML fragments. If data is not an XML fragment, it will need to be converted to an XML fragment before it can be used with these profiles.

The mechanisms only cover situations where both the signature and the XML fragment being signed, or the encryption keys and ciphertext, are represented together in the same XML document. Situations where they are represented separately are outside the scope of this Standard.

1.1.2 Intended audience

This Standard is intended for the following:

(a) Specification authors who create service interface specifications or software specifications. They will be able to use this Standard by referencing these mechanisms in their specifications and specifying conformance points for producing and consuming conformant and non-conformant artefacts.

(b) Software developers who create implementations of those specifications. The profiles chosen will depend on the interface or software specification being implemented. Software that produces the artefacts will usually implement code to create conformant profile artefacts; software that consumes the artefacts will usually implement code to process conformant profile artefacts and detect non-conformant profile artefacts. But there could be implementations that could exist to create non-conformant profile artefacts and to process them. They will be able to use this Standard for the definition of conformant artefacts, and the interface or software specification for the behaviour to be implemented.

NOTE: Developers will usually use existing toolkits or libraries for performing XML Encryption and XML Signature operations. They will not normally implement them from scratch.

