

Developing Australian Standards



What is an Australian Standard[®]?

Australian Standards are published documents setting out specifications and procedures designed to ensure products, services and systems are safe, reliable and consistently perform the way they are intended to. They establish a minimum set of requirements which define quality and safety criteria.

Australian Standards are voluntary documents that are developed by consensus. Many Australian Standards, because of their rigour, are adopted into legislation to become mandatory or referenced in contracts.

About Standards Australia

Standards Australia develops internationally aligned Australian Standards in the national interest.

As Australia's peak standards body, we facilitate and manage the development and maintenance of Australian Standards and other related solutions including handbooks, guides, technical specifications and technical reports.

We do this by providing a neutral meeting ground and rigorous framework in which government, industry, consumer, academic, professional, community and employee bodies can discuss and debate issues with the aim of developing standards which meet the needs of the Australian community. Our processes are based on balance of interests, transparency, openness and consensus.

Standards Australia is also responsible for ensuring Australia's viewpoint is heard and considered in the development of international standards, and their subsequent adoption as Australian Standards. We are Australia's representative at both the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

How are Australian Standards developed?

Our standards development process is based on the key principles of transparency, consensus and balanced expert committee representation. This process is regarded as one of the most rigorous in the world.

Before a project to develop a new Australian Standard or revise an existing Australian Standard commences, there needs to be demonstrable evidence that the standard will deliver a net benefit to the Australian community. Stakeholders also need to demonstrate there is sufficient industry and stakeholder support for the development of the standard.

Our policy is to base the development of Australian Standards on current international standards, avoiding unnecessary duplication, and allowing us to meet the requirements of the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

DEVELOPING STANDARDS

Project Proposal

Project Kick Off

Working Draft

Committee Draft

Committee Review

Public Commenting Draft

Public Commenting

Committee Ballot

Balloting

Publication

Publishing

Australian Standards and Public Policy

Australian Standards have the capacity to solve public policy dilemmas. They are one policy tool in a regulatory spectrum that may be applied by governments to provide a solution to a problem.

Standards are voluntary documents which are developed by consensus. While Australian Standards are not legal documents, many are adopted into Commonwealth, state or territory legislation and become mandatory. Standards are also often incorporated into legal contracts.

Depending on the issue, the optimal solution to a public policy problem may be 'no action', or a non-regulatory solution like a publicity campaign. Other options include self-regulation by means of a voluntary industry code or standard; quasi-regulation such as a standard endorsed by government; or co-regulation such as a standard referenced in regulation or legislation.

New Australian Standards can be developed to respond to changing economic, consumer, and social behaviours.

POLICY CHALLENGE?

Policy Options:

No action

**Non-regulatory solutions
e.g. information program**

**Self-regulation, including
Australian Standards,
industry codes**

**Quasi-regulation, including
Australian Standards
endorsed by government**

**Co-regulation, including
Australian Standards called
up in regulation**

Law (government legislation)

**Australian Standards
ensure goods and
services are safe, reliable
and will do the job they
are intended for.**

Business case for Australian Standards

- ✓ Offers an alternative to laws and regulations.
- ✓ Makes Australian businesses and industry more competitive.
- ✓ Complements Australian regulation and helps markets work better and more efficiently.
- ✓ Boosts Australian innovation and productivity.
- ✓ Saves businesses time and money.
- ✓ Drives economies of scale, efficiencies, interoperability, and fosters new technologies.
- ✓ Fosters innovation and provides a platform on which to build new products and services.
- ✓ Ensures products manufactured in one country can be sold and used in another.



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