STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

Submission to Productivity Commission

Review of Standards and Accreditation

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Australian Standards® Matter

Over the past 18 months I have had a chance to discover the real significance of what a statement like 'Standards Australia has more than six and a half thousand Australian Standards®' really means. The diversity, depth, application and multi-dimensional aspects of Australian Standards® and the many challenges the organisation faces are now not surprisingly a lot clearer to me and I am now acutely aware of how Australian Standards® underpin so much of what we do in every aspect of our lives.

Everything from the thickness of glass to the fittings in the bathroom; wiring in the walls to electronic funds transfer and credit cards; biometrics to determine identity; intermodal requirements for secure shipping of goods; to other more surprising areas such as the tuning system used by the modern symphony orchestra.

John Tucker, Chief Executive Officer, Standards Australia 2005
Extract from *Up (the official magazine of Standards Australia), Vol 1, Summer 2006*

Executive Summary

Australia is going through an exciting period of change and growth.

It is critical that the national standards and conformance system reflects, and even anticipates, these changes. That it continues to facilitate Australia's progress and access to world markets is essential.

Standards Australia recognises that just as the standards themselves must change in line with new demands and new realities so too must the system for their development.

The traditional premise that there is surplus industry and government expertise available to provide an unending supply of time and expertise to Standards Australia for voluntary standards development is becoming increasingly unsustainable.

That is not to say that there is a lack of demand or resources for standards development. It is just that to tap into this need there has to be a change of attitude and philosophy on the part of Standards Australia, its stakeholders, contributors and end-users.

The reliance upon Standards Australia and its limited resources to meet the bulk of Australia's voluntary and consensus standards needs is nearing an end.

We see the future for the development of standards in Australia as evolving to a system based more on a direct partnership between Standards Australia and those industries or agencies seeking standards development.

This new model offers a broader product range, developed in a more flexible, timely and professional manner and better matched to market needs.

The details of our new model are described at a conceptual level on our website: **www.standards.org.au**

We will separately offer the Productivity Commission a status report on our implementation planning and provide access to our detailed modelling and project reports.

In this submission we:

- Demonstrate how Standards Australia operates efficiently and effectively to facilitate the development of national standards that enhance the economic performance of Australian industries and deliver a safe and sustainable future for all Australians;
- Support the need for the economic benefits of standardisation to be clearly demonstrated, which has lead to Standards Australia commissioning leading economic analysts, CIE, to conduct an economic study due to be completed in mid-June 2006;
- Explain that Standards Australia sees its role in a broad national context with a focus on providing support to best practice consensus standardization in Australia, whether it be undertaken within Standards Australia or by any other standards development organisation;
- Reinforce the importance of the current Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth and Standards Australia which recognises

Standards Australia as the nation's peak non-government standards development body and the Australian member of key international standards organisations, notably the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC);

- Discuss the extent to which Standards Australia personnel play a major role in key international standards organisations insuring the interests of Australian business, government and other stakeholders are reflected in the development of international standards;
- Show the success of voluntary consensus standardization undertaken at arms length from government, whilst reliant upon technical and expert contributions by government participants and reliant upon Commonwealth financial support to ensure Australian leadership, influence and participation at the conception and development stage of international standards;
- Emphasise that the Government's long-standing interest in promoting Australia's participation in international standardization, including its support to Australia's treaty obligations, is working well and make a case for the present funding arrangement for international standardization to be maintained or enhanced;
- Identify the challenges faced by Standards Australia, now and into the future and propose that Standards Australia must reposition its role and funding priorities to acknowledge that the full range of stakeholder requirements cannot be achieved under the current model and funding arrangements;
- Provide some insight into a new model that will allow the major beneficiaries of specific standards to take a greater role in resourcing those activities with associated benefits in terms of speed of delivery and call on stakeholder time (including local, state, and federal governments on a case by case basis);
- Emphasise the commitment of Standards Australia to resourcing and maintaining priority public interest standards development activities where accreditation, partnering and other new resourcing mechanisms are not available or appropriate;
- Note the sale of Standards Australia's commercial businesses and float of its former subsidiary, SAI Global Limited, in December 2003; and
- Highlight Standards Australia's role as the national and international promoter and supporter of Australian design and innovation through the Australian Design Awards programme and other related activities.

This review provides a timely and early opportunity for the Productivity Commission to review Standards Australia's proposed future operating and governance structures in detail.

It is a rare opportunity to engage with the wide range of stakeholders active in and influenced by standards development processes across Australia.

It is an important opportunity to determine what is working and what improvements can be made.

1. Introduction

Standards Australia appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission to the Review.

Our chief objectives in making this submission are:

- To support the review and provide relevant background information to assist it in deliberations
- To provide information in response to matters raised in the Issues Paper
- To advise details of our progress in implementing past recommendations for improvements to standards development procedures
- To advise on actions to promote sustained improvements in the effectiveness, relevance and economic efficiency of Australia's system of standardization
- To advise on improvements in standardization activities in Australia following previous reviews.

Standards Australia – A brief overview

1. From its origins as the Australian Commonwealth Engineering Standards Association in 1922, Standards Australia has become the pre-eminent standards development organisation in Australia and a major contributor to the development of standards and conformance infrastructure – not only in Australia but also in the region and globally through contributions to the work and reform of international standardization. In the late 1980's Standards Australia (along with many other standards organisations around the world) supported demand for improved quality systems and developed capabilities in management system certification that became highly successful in addressing the needs of the local market.
2. Since the devolution of these certification and other business activities in 2003, Standards Australia has been primarily focused on standards development and the promotion and support of Australian design and innovation through the Australian Design Awards (ADA). It is recognised by the Commonwealth through an MoU with the Department of Industry Tourism and Resources (DITR) as the peak National Standards Body (NSB) and receives funding ($2.1M this year) to support Australian membership of, and participation in, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) representing Australian interests.
3. Through an autonomous Standards Accreditation Board (SAB), there is the ability for other Australian organisations to be accredited as Standards Development Organisations (SDOs) and a small number of organisations have availed themselves of this opportunity.
4. Some standards development projects (e.g. health informatics, integrated security standards review) are co-funded with Commonwealth and State/Territory governments and in partnership with contributors (e.g. ASIC, Master Plumbers and Mechanical Services Association of Australia, etc.).

Box 1 - Who is Standards Australia?

Standards Australia is Australia's national standards body and standards development organisation responsible for the development of Australian Standards® that are of national interest and public benefit. It is a non-government, not for profit organisation that supports excellence in design and innovation through the Australian Design Awards.

Australian Standards® set out the specifications and design procedures to ensure goods and services consistently perform in the way they are intended. They also make a sustained contribution to generating national wealth, improving our quality of life, increasing employment, improving safety and health and using our national resources more efficiently. Standards Australia provides a meeting ground for business, industry, consumers, academics, professional and community bodies and government to discuss and debate issues with the aim of developing solutions in the form of Australian Standards®, Handbooks and other guidance materials.

Australian Standards® and other guidance materials are developed by industry for industry and cover:

- a range of fundamental engineering standards, which underpin the modern construction industry and add to the safety, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of engineering in Australia;
- contemporary business standards such as risk and quality management to assist businesses perform more effectively in highly competitive markets;
- community, materials and IT standards for a wide range of sectors including occupational health and safety, technical engineering, materials science, transport, consumer products, environmental issues, textiles, food, health, health informatics, communications, IT and e-commerce.

Standards Australia is responsible for ensuring the Australian viewpoint is considered in the formulation of International Standards and that the latest international experience is incorporated in Australian Standards®. This role is vital in assisting local industry to compete in international markets. Standards Australia represents Australia at both the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

Standards Australia's Key Statistics for 2005-2006

- Full time employees 119
- Technical Committees 1576
- Committee Members 8193
- Standards Published 535 (in total there are 6856)
- Other Publications 22 (in total there are 538)
- Drafts issued 601
- ISO & IEC Secretariats held 19

Meeting stakeholder needs

Standards Australia aims to meet the expectations of our Australian community, professions, commerce and industry and government by:

- working closely with members of the standards and conformance technical infrastructure;
- respecting the contribution of our committee members, who are the heart of standards development activities;
- embracing the issues facing our stakeholders by hosting open forums to discuss topics of current interest;
- reviewing processes to ensure the right mechanisms are in place to embrace subjects that go beyond the purely technical;
- providing guidance to any groups interested in standards development, whether they are industry or other types of standards outside the national standards framework;
- forming new partnerships with industry bodies, niche standards developers and other groups that want to develop standards - to ensure a strong, well coordinated and well-informed standards framework and community of interest for our nation;
- actively pursuing the accreditation of other standards development bodies to widen the options for developing Australian Standards®; and
- being more strategic in building alliances, sharing public innovation and opening the door for Australian exports.

We will address some of the questions raised in the Issues Paper and outline our vision for the future of standards development in the Australian context. Our comments are focussed on matters involving Standards Australia, without specific consideration of the activities of NATA.

2. The efficiency and effectiveness of standards setting in Australia

Public benefit and national interest

Standards Australia has a proud commitment to its support for public benefit and national interest (see Box 2).

5. In our assessment, public benefit relates to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of individual Australians, including aspects that may not automatically flow from economic growth. For example, Australian Standards® for disabled access to buildings and standards that address potential safety hazards to children are primarily directed towards public benefit. Of course, this is not to say that Australian Standards® which promote economic efficiency do not have a public benefit, but it is worth emphasising that some Australian Standards® are needed primarily to deliver societal benefits that may be difficult to quantify in financial terms.

Box 2: Australian Standards® – public benefit ... national interest

Australian Standards® protect Australians

Australians at home, at play and at work are made safer by Australian Standards®. Traffic lights, footpaths, power points, seatbelts and child restraints, air quality, smoke and fire alarms are all underpinned by Australian Standards®. Australian Standards® give businesses and consumers confidence that the goods and services they are developing or using are safe, reliable and will do the job they were intended for.

Australian Standards® support Australian innovation

Australian Standards® provide a platform on which to build new and exciting ideas. As our world changes, new Australian Standards® are introduced to reflect the latest technologies, innovations and community needs – redundant standards are discarded. New closed circuit television standards, infrastructure protection standards and luggage safety advice will protect all Australians and are a direct response to community concerns around security issues.

New risk management standards have improved business practice while information and communications technology standards have helped spread 'cutting edge' practices across emerging industries.

Australian Standards® boost Australian production and productivity

Australian manufacturing, materials handling, mechanical systems and components standards save businesses time and money. Standards cut production costs. They drive economies of scale, the use of common parts and specifications, help cut energy bills and foster new technologies. The Federal Government uses Australian and international record-keeping standards to handle and move information around its vast networks. Small businesses become more efficient and grow by using standards, guidelines and handbooks developed by industry experts.

Australian Standards® make Australian businesses more competitive

Products that comply with Australian Standards® have a competitive edge over products that don't - consumers know the difference. Businesses know products made to Australian Standards® have more credibility - whether it's a bike helmet, baby capsule or complaints handling system. Australian exporters using International Standards have a head start when they move into overseas markets. International aerospace, food and medical equipment markets all have strict standards that can dictate success or failure.

Australian Standards® link Australia to the world

Standards ensure products manufactured in one country can be sold and used in another. A nut made in Melbourne fits a bolt made in London, 35 mm film made in Australia will fit 35 mm cameras made in Japan. Standards reduce technical barriers to international trade, increase the size of potential markets and position Australian firms to compete in the world economy. Around 70 per cent of all new Australian Standards® are based on international equivalents. Containers, electrical equipment, mineral sampling, data packaging, PIN management – just a few of the Australian Standards® that link local businesses directly with international markets.

Australian Standards® complement Australian regulation and make markets work better

Around a third of all Australian Standards form some part of Territory, State or Federal law. They are at the heart of the Building Code of Australia and the Trade Practices Act. They help governments craft laws to protect the community and defend against terrorism. Standards help make laws and regulations consistent across Australia. By using a Standard, a South Australian consumer law becomes consistent with a NSW fair trading regulation. Standards offer an alternative to regulation, with less red tape and business costs, while still providing security for families and small business consumers.

Working on Australian Standards® rewards participants

Being a part of an Australian Standards development team has its own rewards - increased knowledge, stronger business networks and competitive advantages. There is no better professional development than working with peers and colleagues drawing up an Australian Standard. There is no better personal satisfaction than knowing an Australian Standard has made the world a safer place.

Standards Australia publication, 'The Seven Benefits of Australian Standards®' 2006

6. All of the standards development work of Standards Australia is undertaken strictly in the national interest; and this is clearly spelled out in the Standardization Guides that govern the practice of national standards development. Every Australian Standard® represents a consensus of the views of all parties that are materially affected by the relevant Australian Standard® and standards will only be developed where they serve the national good (see Box 3). Self-serving proposals from companies or individuals simply seeking recognition for their products and proposals whose implementation costs would outweigh their benefit to the nation are not acceptable for an Australian Standard®.

7. Australian Standards® exist to fulfil a need identified by a sector of the Australian community and each Australian Standard® contains an objective statement that encapsulates the purpose behind its development, be it to provide a benchmark of safety, to promote economic efficiency through uniformity, permit interconnectivity or some other valid purpose.

Box 3: Assessing New Projects

When assessing new projects (for standards development) the following criteria are used to determine whether or not to proceed:

a) National benefits - Does the project have potential for making a sustained contribution to:

- the generation of national wealth;
- the quality of life;
- employment;

- safety;
- health or
- a more efficient use of national resources.

b) Appropriateness for Standards Australia - Is the project consistent with Standards Australia's role and functions as the peak standardization body in Australia? Does the work overlap the standardizing activities of any other organisation, and if so is it more appropriate for that organisation to undertake the work?

c) Practical considerations - Are there political, social or commercial considerations attached to the project, or are there special interests that support the development of such a national Standard?

d) Is it likely that the published Standard will be referenced in legislation?

e) Is the Standard likely to be useful in either harmonizing trade under the terms of the Close Economic Relations (CER) agreement between Australia and New Zealand or supporting the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements?

f) Internal considerations - Can a representative committee be formed to handle the project work? Can appropriate Standards Australia technical staff capacity be made available within a reasonable time? Is there a need for additional staff to be recruited, and are the total resources required for effective completion of the work commensurable with the likely community benefits? What priority does this project necessitate (routine, high, critical or accelerated)?

In addition, the implementation of policy decisions resulting from Standards Sector Boards' Strategic Plans may be taken into account.

Source; SG-001 Preparing Standards
https://committees.standards.org.au/POLICY/SG-001/STANDARDIZATIONGUIDE-SG-001.HTM

8. The Report of the Taskforce on Reducing Regulatory Burdens on Business, commissioned by the Prime Minister and Treasurer in October 2005 and released on 7 April 2006 with the Australian Government's initial response, expressed concern that:

> *"…business noted that few quality controls are in place to ensure that [Standards Australia's] standards are developed and drafted in ways that are consistent with their use as quasi-regulation…The Taskforce notes that government agencies need to ensure that, before a new or updated standard is referenced, it is subject to a regulatory impact assessment that takes into account, among other things, the compliance costs to business."* (p.175)

9. Standards Australia in fact acknowledged similar issues and the responsibility incumbent upon regulators to conduct regulatory impact assessments before calling up voluntary Australian Standards® into law in its submission to the Regulation Taskforce of 22 November 2005:

> *"Before any regulation is imposed on industry a regulatory impact statement is carried out. A similar process is undertaken by Standards Australia to determine the benefits, or otherwise, and potential costs of new standards on industry. However Standards Australia is limited in the amount of economic modelling it can reasonably do when the requirements in the Standard have yet to be determined and the extent of its voluntary application is uncertain.*
>
> *It should also be remembered that the decision on whether or not to commence development of an Australian Standard for voluntary application is a different question to whether the Government should intervene into the market with regulated requirements. It would be inappropriate for a private body like Standards Australia to undertake a RIS; however, the organisation can assist the RIS process by providing technical information about changes to Standards and new Standards that will provide some of the inputs to the RIS basis.*
>
> *Recommendations*
>
> 1) *The RIS process needs to be at a high level and focused on whether there are other options than regulation to remedy a problem associated with a given product or practice.*
> 2) *Standards Australia wishes to work cooperatively with regulatory agencies developing RIS based on Australian Standards and identify any additional information that Standards Australia might be able to provide to facilitate this process."*

10. Standards Australia has since entered into dialogue with:
    - business calling for nomination of standards for review or withdrawal where it is of concern that the imposts outweigh the benefits or that the benefits can no longer be justified;
    - the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) to pilot improved RIS initiatives, tools and interactions that could be rolled out across all Australian Standards® that might be referenced in regulation (see Box 4);
    - the Office of Regulation Review in relation to RIS and corresponding Standards Impact Statements (SIS) initiatives; and
    - the Office of Small Business and its "business cost calculator" to ensure a consistent and improved approach to costing and cost benefit analysis associated with standards development proposals from their outset.

Box 4: Meshing voluntary standards development with regulation

The Building Code of Australia is a uniform code for regulating the construction of residential and commercial buildings across Australia. It is written in performance terms and cites over 100 Australian Standards® as practical solutions that are deemed to comply with the Code. This arrangement works well; however, there is a question whether changes to Australian Standards® could be made even though they may not meet the tests of community benefit that are required of regulatory instruments under the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) process. Ideally, the direction of any changes should be agreed at the commencement of a revision project, rather than after the Australian Standard® is published, so that those that meet the test of community benefit would be included and those that don't are excluded from the revision.

This sounds like a simple proposition; however, the cost of undertaking a RIS would be more than the cost of developing the Australian Standard®, and in any event it wouldn't be appropriate for a non-government body like Standards Australia to supplant the role of government by proposing regulation.

Standards Australia and the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) are finalising the arrangements for the implementation of a preliminary impact assessment at the project initiation stage and justification of revision or amendment of standards referenced in the Building Code of Australia.

This tool has been developed jointly by Standards Australia and the ABCB to quantitatively assess the impacts of the proposed changes. It is anticipated that once fully developed this tool could be used across all Australian Standards® that might be referenced in regulation.

11. Of course, in a competitive market, there can sometimes be suggestions that a given Standard favours one's competitors. Constructive criticism of the content of Australian Standards® is a normal and healthy part of the consensus process and Standards Australia welcomes such feedback. All Standards are dynamic and they need to be regularly revised to take account of changes in technology and changes in markets.

12. At various times there has been criticism of National Standards Bodies failing to act in the national interest, for example by giving priority to the development of Australian Standards® that could be used in third-party certification programs as a means of promoting business opportunities for their own certification arms. This proposition was examined in detail in the 1995 Kean Report[1] and it was found to be unsupportable in the case of Standards Australia. Nonetheless, the perception that there was a potential for a conflict of interest was something that could not be ignored. Standards Australia implemented the recommendations of the Kean Report in terms of establishing a proper separation of standards development and certification activities within the one group of companies.

[1] *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Australia's Standards and Conformance Infrastructure, Kean B, et al 1995*

13. In 2003, Standards Australia took this separation much further by selling its certification businesses to its subsidiary SAI Global Ltd, a company now listed on the Australian Stock Exchange. Standards Australia has since reduced its shareholding in SAI Global as part of its balanced portfolio of investments, finally selling its remaining 9 per cent to hold nil shares on 6 April 2006.

14. At the same time in 2003, the publishing and distribution business, Standards Australia Publishing, was also sold to SAI Global Ltd, including an exclusive licence to distribute Australian Standards® (until 2018). This was a commercial decision reflecting the fact that the distribution of national standards from all countries now required sophisticated software and was becoming dominated by major multi-national publishing companies like IHS Inc that could make the necessary investment in this technology. Links between the two organisations are now governed by contractual agreements.

A national perspective

15. The Issues Paper rightly indicates that the work of Standards Australia needs to be considered in a broader national context. Standards Australia does not pretend to be the only non-government standards developer in this country, nor does it have the resources or the aspiration to develop all of the standards required in Australia. It is our view that the role of the National Standards Body should embrace coordinating, fostering and providing support to best practices in consensus standardization, regardless of which organisation is delivering the required standards. There needs to be a range of options for standards development and the best solution will differ from subject to subject and industry to industry. The fact that there is already a diversity of providers reflects the reality that the market wants a degree of choice in standards providers.

16. In this diverse environment, there is an even stronger case for the National Standards Body to coordinate standards development organisations to ensure that there are no conflicting national standards developed for the same topic, to ensure that all national standards are backed by a similar level of stakeholder consensus and transparency and to maximise harmonisation with international standards. There is also a case for a central appeals mechanism that sits apart from day to day standards development functions, as a final arbiter in cases where questions are raised about the processes followed in specific instances.

17. In 1999, Standards Australia created the Standards Accreditation Board (SAB) following a recommendation of the Kean Report. The SAB operates at arms-length from Standards Australia and follows open criteria to enable other organisations to be accredited as independent Standards Development Organisations (SDOs), if they use standards development processes that are commensurate with the level of stakeholder consensus and transparency required of all Australian Standards®. Importantly, these criteria are outcome focused and the processes used need not be the same as that traditionally used by Standards Australia. To date, the SAB has accredited four Standards Development Organisations (SDOs), although one SDO has since decided to hand over its standardization activities to Standards Australia. The most recent organisation accredited was Seafood Services Australia (SSA) in March 2006 to

develop an Australian Standard® on fish names. The standards accreditation process has enabled these SDOs to tap into generic knowledge within Standards Australia about the principles of best practice in standardization while retaining the detailed understanding of the specialised needs of the industries they serve.

18. We intend to strengthen the level playing field for standards developers in Australia and have determined an enhanced role for the SAB in the imminent future, one that will see the standards development activities undertaken by Standards Australia also being subject to scrutiny by the SAB. The SAB is an autonomous body, independent of the Board and management of Standards Australia, elected by, and directly accountable to, the Council of Standards Australia. The SAB has no involvement in the business operations of Standards Australia as an SDO and is funded through its own fee-for-service operations with certain non-billable costs being covered through a special allocation in the Commonwealth's Grant in Aid.

19. At the international level, most countries have a National Standards Body to coordinate technical input to international standardization and generally manage participation. That role is primarily one of collating and forwarding on communications between the international standards community and the national stakeholders in accordance with defined protocols and directives. In some cases, this involves forming and managing national mirror groups composed of government, industry and other representatives to develop national positions on international standards. Alternatively, where there are appropriate bodies that can act as the national mirror committee, the National Standards Body may simply act as a respected point of liaison for the relevant international work. Some greater detail is provided in Section 3.

20. In summary, the concept of a National Standards Body acting as a focal point for international standardization can comfortably work with a range of independent SDOs developing national positions in different sectors. This is reflected in practice in a number of standardisation models around the world.

International competitiveness

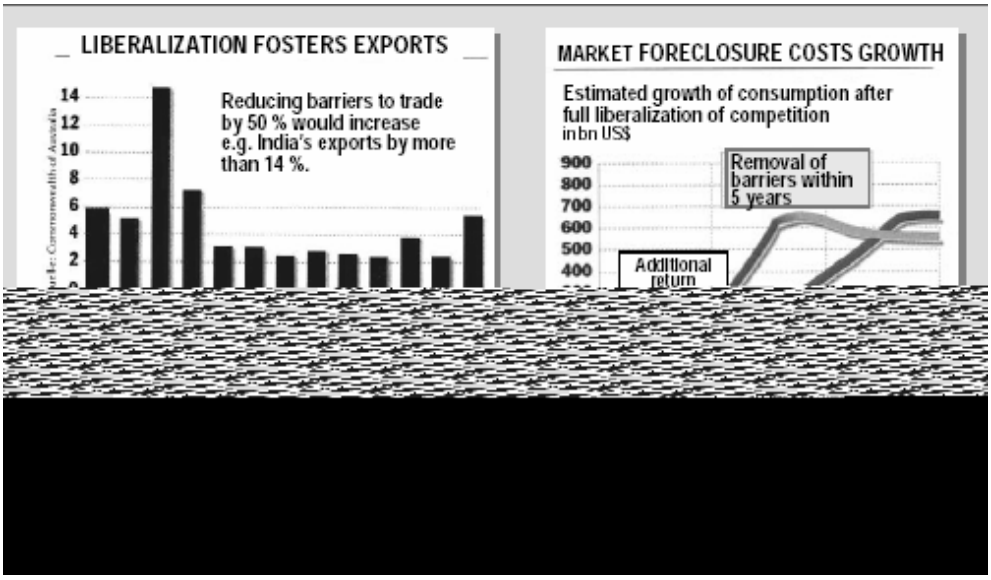
21. A key aspect of national interest is the extent to which the national standards system promotes Australian competitiveness in international markets. Standards Australia has commissioned CIE to conduct an economic study on the effect of Standards and this will be available by mid-June 2006. The terms of reference for the study are at Appendix B. However, it is useful to look at some of the impact of standards and conformance on trade from a qualitative perspective.

22. At the OECD Workshop and Policy Dialogue on Standards and Conformity in Trade, held in Berlin in November 2005, Dr Guenther Beer, a senior executive of the Siemens Corporation, reported that "*(with the lowering of tariff barriers) diverging standards and especially diverging conformity attestation procedures gradually become the reason for barriers to trade. A reduction of such barriers*

by 50 percent would raise the export rate by a minimum of 2 percent in 15 years." He then quoted figures for various countries showing that, in the case of Australia, the increased export rate would be closer to 4 percent (see Table 1 below).

Table 1

OECD Workshop and Policy Dialogue, Berlin



23. An element of reducing barriers to trade is, of course, the alignment of national standards with International Standards. At the same OECD workshop, Mr Margers Kramm (Chair of the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee) noted that since 1995, some 130 distinct specific trade concerns have been raised with the committee, noting that within the TBT committee *"the issue of international standards often arises: was the measure based on an international standard (if not, why not)?"*

24. In Australia, a relatively high percentage of Australian Standards® are either identical adoptions of equivalent International Standards or include some minor modifications (see Table 2). Such modifications are limited to those absolutely necessary to meet Australian expectations of human health or safety, or more commonly, to take account of local climatic or geographic factors, as permitted under the WTO TBT Agreement.

25. One could ask what benefits does adoption as an Australian Standard® bring, given that the International Standard already exists? The principal reason is that Australian Standards® (regardless of their level of international alignment) are only developed where there is a demonstrated need in this country to address some issue. There are significantly more International Standards than Australian Standards® and following them all would be a considerable burden on Australian industry. Once an Australian need has been demonstrated, and it's found that there is a suitable International Standard available, it is subjected to the full national consensus process. Australian stakeholders determine whether the International Standard meets Australian needs and is suitable for Australian conditions, including whether any local modifications will

be required, for example to meet local legal requirements. Some International Standards are simply unsuitable either because they are out of date, represent a lowest common denominator solution or are not actually widely implemented around the world.

26. A subsidiary benefit is that the Australian adoption can be priced below the level the international organisations would charge. For example, ISO 9001 is priced at CHF102 (AUD109.65) in electronic form from the ISO Web shop and the identical AS/NZS 9001 is AUD69.30 from Standards Australia's publishing partner.

Table 2
International Alignment of Australian Standards® at June 2005

Total number of ISO and IEC Standards	20,590
Total number of Australian Standards®	6,582
Instances where alignment is possible*	2,743
Total adopted	2,666
Including: Identical adoption	*2,328*
Modified adoption	*338*

** An International Standard covers the same subject as an Australian Standard®*

27. One might ask why the percentage isn't even higher? In simple terms, International Standards tend to be developed in areas that directly affect trade, such as raw materials, certain manufactured goods, test methods, information technology and communications. There are fewer International Standards (relative to national standards) in fields like methods of construction, occupational health and safety practices and consumer protection, which are seen by the international community as being national or regional issues.

28. It is fair to say that Europe has a disproportionately large involvement in, and influence over, International Standardization, a fact noted by the APEC Business Advisory Council in 2005 when it made a comparison with similar sized countries in this region (The Lazenby Report).

29. APEC member economies contribute about 60 per cent of the world gross domestic product; however, their involvement in ISO and IEC is only 30 per cent of all member bodies in terms of committee secretariats and participating membership of committees. If Australia is going to be in a position to adopt International Standards, it needs to have a say in the content of those standards to ensure that they reflect not just the climatic conditions of this country but also the business needs, technical capacity and regulatory environment in Australia. A country can always submit comments, but the real decisions are made at the international meetings.

30. By way of example, in 2004/05, some 135 Australian delegates drawn from a diverse range of businesses and agencies attended meetings of ISO and IEC technical committees, with financial assistance through the Commonwealth Grant in Aid, to argue the case for positions developed by the equivalent Australian stakeholder committees.[2] This travel is in addition to delegates funded through other specialist assistance programs funded by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) and the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA). Some other delegates were fully funded by themselves or by their employers for participation in International Standards meetings.

31. Furthermore, 14 meetings of ISO and IEC technical committees and subcommittees were hosted in Australia that year, along with numerous working group meetings – providing opportunity for greater Australian involvement. It is only this deep involvement of Australian business, government and other stakeholders in shaping the development of International Standards that has allowed those standards to be adopted as Australian Standards® at present levels.

Governance and process of standards development

32. Following the sale of its commercial businesses and float of its former subsidiary, SAI Global Ltd, in December 2003 and the engagement of a new CEO in June 2004, the Board of Standards Australia commissioned reviews of the governance and procedures used to control standards development processes within the organisation. Led by the Board and CEO, Standards Australia has:

- Engaged in stakeholder consultation to determine current and future Australian standardization needs on a rolling 1 and 5 year forward basis;
- Commissioned an independent review of the standards development governance framework (Cameron Ralph Report 2005);
- Explored sustainable business models and concepts;
- Committed to an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategy to be implemented over the next 18-24 months to provide better and more flexible support of standards development activities (via the ISO Livelink system used by many other national standards bodies around the world);
- Shared conceptual thinking on future operating and governance structures through consultation with:
    - Stakeholders met during the October/November 2005 national road show;
    - Key stakeholders including representatives of Engineers Australia, several levels of Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR) officers on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, Australian Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers' Association

[2] *This list is not publicly available (for privacy reasons) but will be separately submitted in confidence to the Review.*

(AEEMA), Australian Industry Group (AIG), Building Products Innovation Council (BPIC) and senior management and directors of SAI Global;

- Standards Sector Boards (SSBs) and Standards Development Board (SDB) and Trade Union Standing Forum members during their October/November 2005 meetings;
- Council Members at the 18 November Annual Council Meeting;
- All Standards Australia staff in November 2005 and January 2006 – including obtaining their inputs to the 2006-2011 Strategy Plan;
- The Regulation Taskforce and the Productivity Commission in various submissions; and
- Publicly by posting the road show slides on Standards Australia's website and inviting feedback through surveys, emails and newsletters.

33. At the AGM and Council meeting on 18 November 2005, a number of enabling amendments to the Constitution and Membership Rules were approved by Members and Councillors, including:

- Abolishing the Standards Development Board (SDB) in favour of a Committee of the Standards Australia Board that would provide more direct accountability;
- Enabling non-directors to be on Standards Australia Board committees;
- Broadening the powers of the Standards Accreditation Board (SAB) to enable it to review Standards Australia as well as accrediting the operations of external SDOs; and
- Deleting the restriction on Standards Australia Company Directors being members of the SAB; enable one Company Director to be a member of the SAB (but not the Chair) and the CEO be entitled to attend meetings.

34. The relatively slow speed of developing some standards, which is usually due to the difficulties with the consensus process, has been the source of much criticism. Standards Australia has been considering options to address this matter. As noted in the Productivity Commission report 'Review of the Australia Consumer Product Safety System' (p. 291), at Standards Australia's AGM in November 2005, CEO John Tucker acknowledged that the *"traditional standards engine of face-to-face committees runs counter to modern evolving organisational structures of our stakeholders"* and that Standards Australia is looking at initiatives to improve participation on technical committees including ICT solutions that allow for "virtual committees" and improved consultation and access to documentation.

35. When combined with changes to the governance structure for standards development, we believe that Standards Australia will be able to approach its future challenges in a more open, sustainable and accountable manner.

3. The appropriate role for the Australian Government in relation to standard setting

36. The Issues Paper puts forward three options for the level of Government involvement in Standards and Conformance: less, more or about the current level. It is Standards Australia's view that the current level of Government involvement has evolved over a long period (from somewhat higher levels of Government support and intervention), has proven itself and works well, so we would argue for the third option – about the current level.

37. Government is, of course, involved in developing standards through various agencies that have the creation of regulatory standards as part of their role. This includes bodies like the Australian Safety and Compensation Council, Food Standards Australia/New Zealand and the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, to name a few. The question is to what extent should Government also have a role in the 'voluntary' standards sector?

38. Clearly, it is important that voluntary standards, and those with potential to be referenced in legislation, reflect national treaty obligations, such as those under the WTO. It is also important that the national standards body works seamlessly with the national government to present a uniform Australian position in international fora and to provide expert advice when required. On the other hand, industry needs to be able to use the national standards system to develop voluntary solutions as an alternative to government intervention in the market. In all of these respects we believe that the current system works well.

39. Standards Australia goes to considerable lengths to ensure that it accommodates the specialist requirements of government, including developing specialist standardization guides where standards are referenced under legislation and contributing to regulatory impact assessment processes (refer to Section 2 above in this regard).

40. The level of government involvement in standards development varies from country to country and a brief comparison is useful to highlight the argument for continuing the present Australian arrangement.

41. The national standards bodies of developing countries, and those with centrally planned economies, tend to be government agencies; and this is not always a comfortable arrangement for industry. In many developing economies, there is often a sense that standardization is an activity of government that is imposed on industry. This is perhaps a perception that is hard to avoid when industry associations are relatively weak and the economy needs persistent government intervention if market failure is to be avoided.

42. At the other end of the spectrum, the US National Standards Body, ANSI, is a private organisation with no government funding. ANSI was originally founded as the American Engineering Standards Committee (AESC) in 1918, to serve as the national coordinator for the diverse range of bodies undertaking standards development in that country. Today, ANSI accredits over 300 industry-based standards development organisations within the USA. ANSI also provides accreditation services for the competence of bodies

to carry out product or personnel certification. In partnership with the American Society for Quality (ASQ), ANSI provides an accreditation program for quality and environmental management systems certification companies via the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB).

43. In the United States, government involvement in the technical standards and conformance infrastructure is through the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) which provides laboratory accreditation and metrology services, but is not involved in standards development or accreditation of standards development activity. There are, of course, US government agencies that set regulatory standards, such as the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and the Consumer Products Safety Commission, but voluntary standards are seen as an activity that is the sole purview of the private sector.

44. In the middle ground, most national standards bodies in Western Europe are independent, not for profit, bodies that tend to work reasonably closely with their respective governments, through memoranda of understanding and by undertaking government contracts for specific tasks. While the European standards bodies have arrived at this arrangement through a range of different paths, it is significant that they have arrived at a broadly similar relationship with their respective national governments to that which currently exists in Australia.

45. There will from time to time, be instances where government and industry disagree on a point related to a standard. Because of the constitutional division of powers in Australia, this is more likely to involve State, rather than the Federal Government. The benefit that having an independent body, like Standards Australia, brings is in removing any perception of bias or heavy-handedness when acting as a facilitator to resolve such a debate. From the perspective of industry, this is a key element in developing confidence in the national standards system. The outcomes are owned equally by all participants, including government, industry and other stakeholders. If government is seen to be either too dominant or too distant, this process is weakened.

46. We feel that Australia has achieved just about the right balance of government oversight of standards development and this is demonstrated both by international comparison and by the results achieved.

47. Standards Australia interacts closely with its counterpart National Standards Bodies. For example, over the past 12 months, as research investigating most efficient and effective future operating and governance structures for Standards Australia, the Chief Executive Officer has studied the operations, structures and services offered by BSI (Britain), AFNOR (France), DIN (Germany), AENOR (Spain), SSC (Canada) and ANSI (US). Other senior staff interact regularly throughout South East Asia and the Pacific in capacity building exercises. Having regard to the specific term of reference in relation to international models, Standards Australia has a plethora of information, findings and reports that we would be happy to share with the Productivity Commission to assist this review.

4. The appropriate terms for Memoranda of Understanding between the Australian Government and its agencies and Standards Australia Limited

48. From Standards Australia's point of view, the most vital aspect of the current Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth and Standards Australia is the recognition of the organisation as the peak non-government standards development body in Australia and the Australian member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC).

49. This recognition and those memberships are integral to the operation of Standards Australia. A loss of that status would eliminate the organisation's ability to link national and international standardization, including the many benefits of international alignment of national standards, already mentioned in this submission. We seek the retention of the Memorandum, including those recognitions, as the cornerstone of Standards Australia's relationship with the Federal Government.

50. The current Memorandum is, however, now out of date in several respects:

- The name of the organisation has changed to remove the word 'International'.
- It predates the separation of SAI Global, the associated business purchase agreements and mentions aspects such as *"operating the Australian Business Excellence Awards"* which are no longer applicable (Article 4.5)
- The reference to SAI Global being a subsidiary should be deleted (Article 5.17)
- ISO/IEC Guide 21 has been revised into two parts, only one of which continues to be relevant (Article 5.6)

51. At a more fundamental level, some aspects of the direction of the Memorandum should be reviewed to reflect Standards Australia's new business model and a shift of emphasis towards the national coordination role as Australia's non-government, not for profit National Standards Body, as introduced above. Under such a model, it would be appropriate to require Standards Australia to ensure that all standards development organisations in Australia strive to meet similar objectives to those set out in Article 5. This might also include a reference to the role of the Standards Accreditation Board (Article 4.3) and the fact that it will be broader in future following the changes made in 2005.

52. Standards Australia's support for design and innovation through the Australian Design Awards program should also be made more prominent in the Memorandum, considering the important contribution it makes to Australian industry and the fact that the program was once dependent on government financial support, but is now an integral part of Standards Australia's self-funded activities (see Box 5).

Box 5: Standards Australia's support for Australian design and innovation

In 1991, the Federal Government withdrew funding for the Australian Design Council – ADC (formerly the Industrial Design Council of Australia) and the activities of the organisation were transferred to Standards Australia. At the time of the handover, the ADC was subject to financial pressure to remain viable and received widespread criticism due to lack of support from the wider design industry, largely due to the absence of a credible and sustainable design awards program.

Since inheriting the ADC in 1991, Standards Australia has established the Australian Design Awards (ADA) as one of the most prominent design awards programmes in the world. The ADA has gained wide industry support and successfully continues to promote examples of design excellence in Australia and overseas through its membership of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID). Standards Australia represents the Australian design industry internationally as the promotional member of ICSID through the ADA.

Standards Australia recognises the importance of promoting Australian design and innovation as a key to economic growth. Once quality systems have been established, based on appropriate standards, design becomes the most important factor to differentiate products and services. Through the activities of the ADA as a design promotion body, Standards Australia promotes this message and encourages growth in export of Australian-designed products and services. The ADA showcases Australian ingenuity in new product development by attracting products at the forefront of innovation and technology in Australia.

Design is now widely recognised across the globe as a bona fide formula for business success and path to prosperity. Professional design helps reduce the commercial risk associated with new product development. It taps into the needs and demands of customers and more closely reflects consumer behaviour. Covering everything from design strategy to product design, production to packaging, market positioning to design communication - professional design translates ideas into products that are more appropriate, useful, affordable, are highly functional and more appealing than their predecessors.

Australia has many commercial success stories and most have come about through investment in professional design. Through Standards Australia's Australian Design Awards, these stories are being highlighted. The ADA exposes Australian business success where the power of innovation coupled with professional design is leading the charge. Through design promotion, Standards Australia encourages more and more businesses to invest in professional design and in doing so, serve their obligation to consumers and encourage them to be more internationally competitive through design investment. The role of design promotion is taken very seriously in countries including the UK, USA, Germany, Italy, France, Japan, China, Korea and Scandinavia and design promotion bodies in these countries receive generous funding from their governments.

The ADA is now firmly placed within Standards Australia and has cemented its role as the national design promotion body for the Australian design industry and does so through a sustainable business model. For more information, visit: **www.designawards.com.au**

Brandon Gien, Director, Australian Design Awards, 2006

5. The appropriate means of funding activities of Standards Australia Limited which are deemed to be in the national interest

53. A key issue for the Review is the funding currently provided by the Commonwealth to Standards Australia and the Issues Paper raises a number of questions that we will answer, albeit in a slightly different order.

54. The total funding required to sustain Australia's Australian Standards® development infrastructure is estimated to be in the order of $100M p.a., with Standards Australia contributing in the order of 10 plus per cent of that from its corpus funds, and the Commonwealth 2-3 per cent and the vast majority being "in kind" contribution to committee participation. This Productivity Commission Review provides a timely opportunity for the funding of the national standards development process to be considered by the Commission and by the major stakeholders.

55. In order to meet stakeholder requirements for more effective standardization processes (including advanced drafts, alternatives to face-to-face engagement and faster production times supported by stronger project management), Australia requires additional standards development capabilities supported by alternative funding models. Under its proposed future role, Standards Australia will reposition its role and funding priorities to acknowledge that the full range of stakeholder requirements cannot be achieved under the current model; and in many industries, there is scope for the major beneficiaries of a standard to take a greater role in supporting national standards development.

56. As has been mentioned, some government agencies have already entered into agreements whereby they provide support for projects they deem to be high priority and warrant the application of additional resources. To date, this has been very much based on the agency approaching Standards Australia with a proposal, rather than such a service being publicly offered. It is also believed that a similar capacity exists within industry bodies to support certain high priority national standardization projects, much as some already do for international standardization in cases where Standards Australia holds the relevant international secretariat.

57. While this option may not be appealing to, or practicable for, every situation, there appears to be a market demand for this type of enhanced project offering, in addition to the current level of standards development service.

Funding of international activities

58. Government has had a long-standing interest in promoting Australia's participation in international standardization for a number of reasons, including the support it provides to Australia's treaty obligations and the

implications for maintaining international competitiveness and promoting trade. It is therefore not surprising that the current Grant in Aid is almost exclusively directed towards a range of closely defined measures and targets associated with International Standardization. We have suggested that the current arrangement is working well; and if the Review agrees with this proposition, we believe the present funding arrangement should be maintained or enhanced for international activities.

59. The funding is applied to membership fees for ISO and IEC, offsetting travel costs for industry and other representatives attending ISO and IEC meetings, staff time in developing consensus Australian positions on the many hundreds of draft standards and other technical documents issued by international standards bodies each year and participation by elected members from Australia sitting on governance boards. These costs (such as membership dues and requests by government to assist in specific tasks) are, by and large, dictated by factors beyond the control of Standards Australia. If the funding is to continue we would therefore argue that there is little room to achieve economies and the quantum is, in broad terms, at about the right level to support international activities. That said, if government requires Standards Australia to take on additional international and regional tasks, for example in support of APEC 2007, there would need to be some adjustments. Similarly, if government is sympathetic to stakeholder arguments for stronger expert participation in international standards setting to increase Australian influence and leadership, funding supporting that stream of activity will require enhancement.

60. We have also considered the proposition that the funding be opened up to tender. It must be remembered that much of the funded activity is tied back to membership of ISO and IEC. According to the statutes of ISO, the ISO Council invites the organisation that most broadly represents standardization in a particular country to join as the representative of that country. Membership is strictly on a one member body per country basis. IEC has similar provisions. So, while an open tender may appear to be a fair approach, it could present practical difficulties if ISO and IEC did not accept the winning tenderer as meeting their criteria. As well, changing from one organisation to another over time is likely to prove disruptive, because of loss of personal connections and corporate knowledge of the international system, which enable Australians to achieve positions of considerable influence in governing these bodies. There is also the inherent cost involved with any tendering process and the cost of implementing any subsequent change.

61. The amount that Standards Australia expends on international activities significantly exceeds the level of government funding. For example in 2005/06, the Commonwealth has allocated $195,000 in the Grant in Aid for travel to key international and regional standards meetings, involving a mix of staff and stakeholders. On top of this, Standards Australia will expend a further $336,000 from its own revenue sources on travel to standards meetings not covered by the Grant in Aid.

62. **This commitment is partly because of the altruistic objectives of a not-foing a mix**
ers. On top of this, Standards Australia will expend a
n its own revenue sources on travel to standards
by the Grant in Aid.

range of pathways, including the option of partnering with Standards Australia.

Proposed Future Role for Standards Australia

76. For the future, rather than expend the majority of available funds on standards development support through Technical Committees and associated Subcommittees and Working Groups, Standards Australia has sought to determine the best spend of its $10M+ annual corpus contribution that will:

- Enable robust relationships with the broadest range of Australian organisations and communities of interest, engaging with them in two-way communication, foresighting, forecasting and exchanging vital standards-related information;
- Determine, co-ordinate and contribute to Australia's national and international standardization priorities as the official National Standards Body (NSB);
- Continue to co-ordinate, participate, influence and lead international standards development as Australia's member of ISO and IEC and other relevant regional and international organisations;
- Continue to have a substantial role in direct standards development as a partner, facilitator and as a developer of significant public interest standards;
- Support stakeholders by offering a "partnered" approach to standards development where traditional standards can be co-funded/co-resourced and new standardization needs met through alternative funding and commercial arrangements;
- Transition to an even more open and contestable foundation for national standards development in Australia, including objective benchmarks for consensus, transparency, accreditation, process review and dispute resolution;
- Recognise the legitimacy of non-ISO/non-IEC standards developers and alternatives in Australia and in the global standards marketplace, maximising co-operation, information exchange and sharing of production services and support;
- Centrally co-ordinate, maintain and update the existing suite of Australian Standards and related deliverables; and
- Further develop the role of the Australian Design Awards as the national design promotion body for Australian design.

Box 8 – Recognising the contribution of the 9000 experts who contribute to Australian Standards®

Australian Standards® matter. They matter in Sydney as a mother buckles her child into a baby capsule, in Perth as a young couple discusses the designs for their new home, in Melbourne as teenage boys ride on a roller coaster at a fun park, in Adelaide as an engineer inspects car components in his factory.

All these people have one thing in common – they are relying on an objective, rigorous set of standards to ensure these products and systems are safe and reliable. Thanks to Standards Australia, Australian consumers can have that assurance. That's because 9,000 experts – all of them volunteers – create the safety and quality guidelines we take for granted every day.

They are ordinary mums and dads, industry professionals, government representatives, academics who come together in committee rooms across Australia to debate how a product or system should perform and how it should be made. There are more than 1,500 of these committees constantly reviewing or starting from scratch to develop new standards across almost everything we come in contact with. Standards for traditional activities, such as agriculture and construction, through to mechanical engineering, manufacturing and distribution, to transport, medical devices, the latest in information and communication technology and standards for services.

Countless hours of discussion, of examining products, of research, of linking with international organisations to develop a new standard or adopt and existing one. This can take months, sometimes it can take years. And when the work is done a new Australian Standard® is published.

It becomes available to manufactures, to professionals like designers and engineers, to food producers and farmers so they can assure their customers they are buying high quality, reliable and safe goods and services. Today, World Standards Day, is the day we acknowledge the brilliant job of these volunteers – men and women who receive little public recognition and no payment but whose work protects millions of Australian families every day.

They play a leading role in strengthening consumer protection, encouraging innovation and making our exporters more competitive. The work of Standards Australia dates all the way back to 1922 when the first Australian Standard® was developed to guide the way electricians wire our homes.

In the 83 years that followed, the volunteers of Standards Australia have produced 7,000 Australian Standards® that set the yardstick for everything from the manufacture of office chairs and telephones to risk management systems. In fact, 2,400 of those Australian Standards® have been incorporated into state and Federal legislation to ensure consumers and businesses alike have strong legal protection.

So every time you buy a product and it works safely and reliably, chances are that's because it has been made according to an Australian Standard®. Countless injuries and accidents have been avoided as a result. And Australian

consumers and businesses can get on with their lives without giving these issues a second thought.

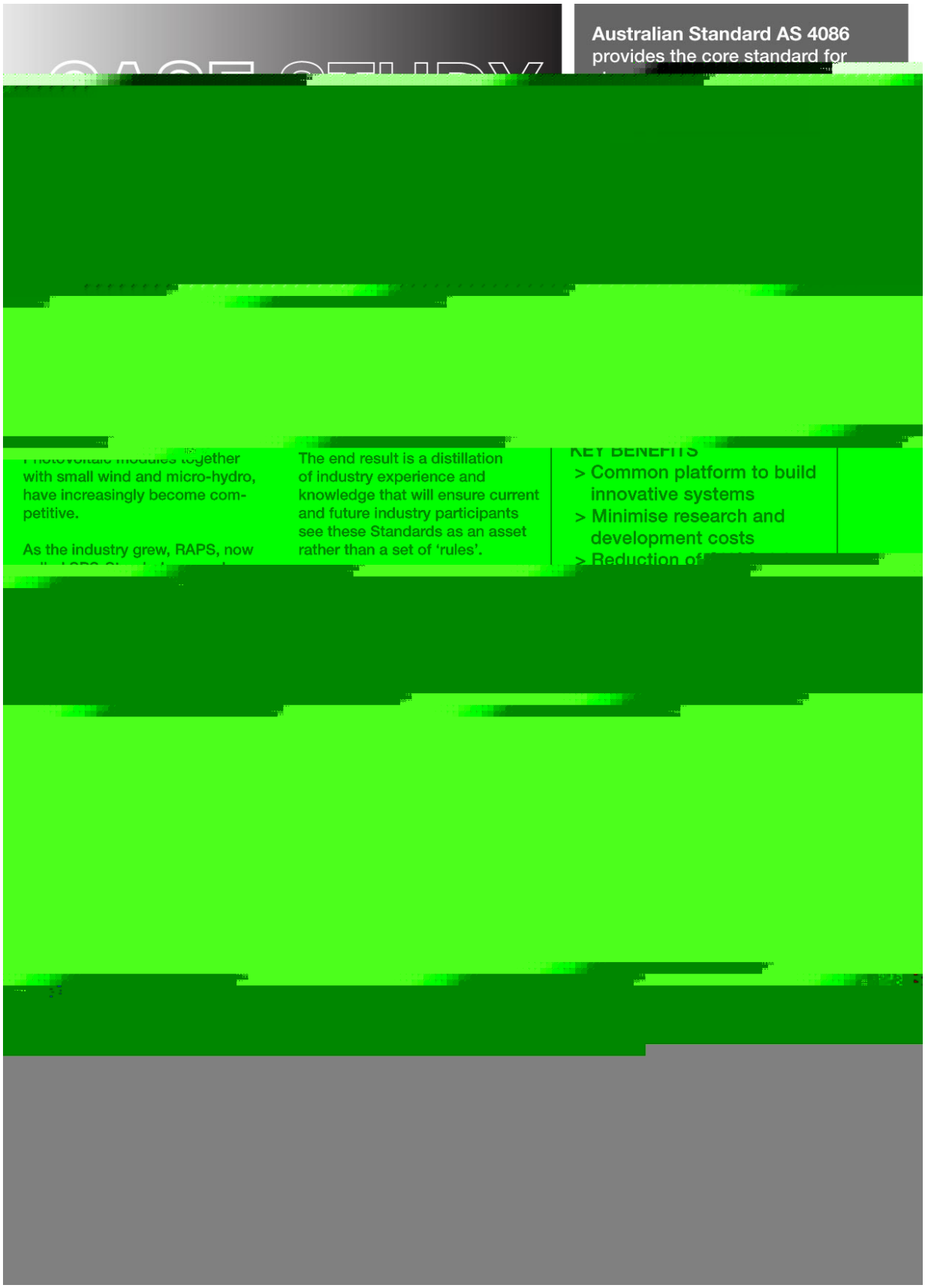
World Standards Day is an occasion to give that second thought.

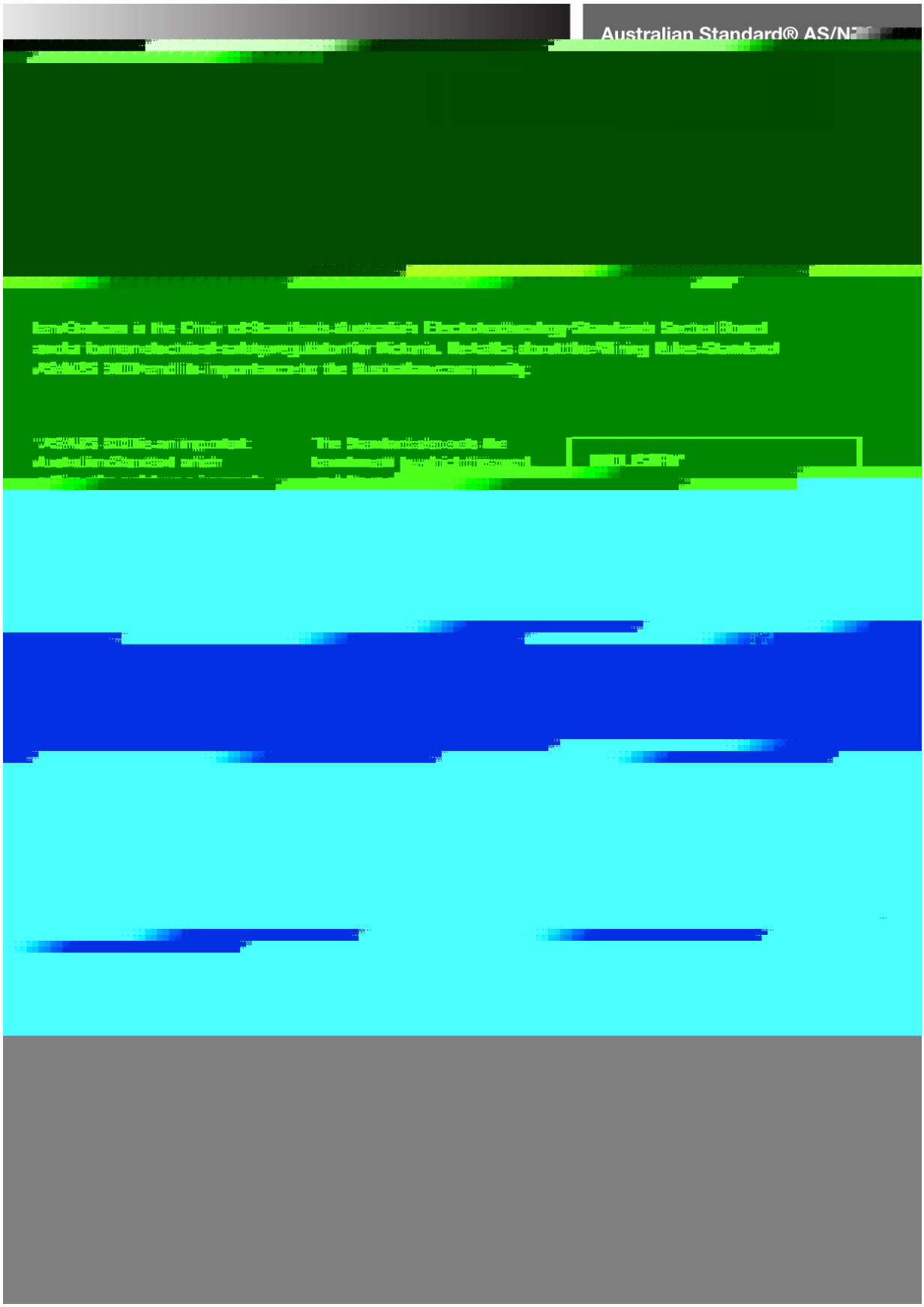
To say thank you to the 9,000 expert volunteers who give their time and experience to make our products and services safe. They are true unsung Aussie heroes who deserve Australia's gratitude.

John Tucker, Chief Executive Officer, Standards Australia. Article appearing in the Daily Telegraph for World Standards Day, October 14, 2005

77. We look forward to engaging with the Productivity Commission and the wide range of stakeholders active and influenced by standards development processes in Australia in this review. This review provides a timely and early opportunity for the Productivity Commission to consider Standards Australia's proposed future operating and governance structures in detail. Subsequently, informed by the Productivity Commission's final report, it provides another opportunity for the Commonwealth Government to respond by either endorsing our proposed future roles, recognition and funding requirements early in our exciting future transition or by entering into serious dialogue with Standards Australia to ensure Australia's domestic and international standards needs are best met through the nation's standards and conformance technical infrastructure.

Appendix A: Case Studies


Australian Standard AS 4086
provides the core standard for
with small wind and micro-hydro,
have increasingly become com-
petitive.
As the industry grew, RAPS, now
The end result is a distillation
of industry experience and
knowledge that will ensure current
and future industry participants
see these Standards as an asset
rather than a set of 'rules'.
KEY BENEFITS
> Common platform to build
innovative systems
> Minimise research and
development costs


Australian Standard® AS/N

Appendix B: Economic Analysis: Terms of Reference for economic consultancy commissioned by Standards Australia from the Centre for International Economics

Standards Australia wishes to contract for a consultancy to test propositions about the benefits of Australian Standards® to the Australian economy. The standards in question are those developed by committees administered by Standards Australia and international standards adopted in Australia through the auspices of Standards Australia. They do *not* include standards that are developed by other standard-setting bodies in Australia.

Subject matter

The consultancy is to assess and report on the impact of standards on:

- innovation in the production of goods and services, with particular reference to the role that standards play in the dissemination of technology, management practices and other knowledge;
- production and productivity, with particular reference to: the statistical contribution of standards to gross domestic product and gross domestic product per capita; comparisons with the contributions made by research and development and patents; the impact of standards on costs and value added at the individual firm level;
- the capacity of Australian businesses to compete with each other and with overseas businesses; and
- Australia's international trade.

The consultancy is to take account of:

- the terms of reference of the current Productivity Commission review of the Australian Government's relationship with Standards Australia;
- recent overseas studies, notably in Germany and the United Kingdom, on the economic impact of standards; and
- economic literature, so far as it is relevant to the terms of reference (although a 'literature review' chapter, as such, is not required in the report).

Process

Bids must:

- describe the methodology proposed, including the balance between case studies of the economic impact of particular standards and analysis of the economic impact of standards in general (note that Standards Australia is undertaking brief anecdotal case studies of the impact of standards);
- introduce the consultancy team proposed (qualifications, relevant previous work, publications) and indicate the proportion of time each member would contribute to the consultancy;
- give names and contact details for referees for recent projects undertaken by the consultancy team;

Bids must be sent electronically to the contact officer email address below (para. 10) **by close of business, Friday, 16 December 2005**. The successful bidder will be notified as soon as possible.

Standards Australia will negotiate the details of the final terms of reference with the successful bidder.

Standards Australia will require a progress report of preliminary findings **by 15 April 2006**, a draft final report **by 15 May 2006** and a final report **by 15 June 2006**.

The consultant will be expected to make a presentation on the final report to the Standards Australia Board.

The consultant will be expected to make regular contact with Standards Australia's nominated contact officer, Dr David Stephens, clamshred@ozemail.com.au, ph. 02 6251 5842 or 02 6251 0850, fax 02 6251 0850, mob. 0413 867 972.

www.standards.org.au