

[Received by email]

Good afternoon,

In respect of the review into the role of Standards Australia, we make the following points for consideration :

1. There are scores of AS required to design or construct an ordinary residence, let alone a large project. These cover items such as footings, timber, concrete, glass, electrical, plumbing, steelwork, masonry, roofing, etc. etc.

2. Then there are contracts, BCA, specifications, etc.

3. The cost of procuring these standards is exorbitant - let the following example suffice : three weeks ago I subscribed to AS 4906 - Minor works contract - principal administered.

* In MS Word format this costs \$ 573.54 for the "product".

* Then there is a license fee for each time it is reproduced.

* If the contract is issued to five tenderers and a copy each to the owner and builder, that is another $7 \times \$ 34.65 = \$ 242.55$, totaling \$ 816.09 - and a contract hasn't even been let yet !

* In accordance with my contract with SA, copies of the contract issued to tenderers, even though only one will win the contract and therefore be utilised (only if it remains unchanged), I still pay for all copies issued.

* This is for a contract that might be worth \$ 50,000.

* If I use the product for another project, it is another set of licence fees again.

* Furthermore, the license to use this product is for 1 year only ! If the standard doesn't change - I still pay again.

* If I want to use the same product next year, I have pay all these fees again !!

* Again, should I need an alternative contract for a project that is administered by a Superintendent, then an alternative form of contract applies (correctly) but I need to pay similar fees all over again !

4. Standards are an integral part of the planning and building process. Unlike state and local government regulations, they are not available for perusal or download from the net, and must be purchased before one is sure that the items one wants addressed are actually covered in the standard - trial and error at my cost.

5. When speaking with sales personnel at SA, they know the general description of a standard, but not the detail. At best it is little better than my reading of the general descriptions one can find on the web.

6. Standards are a very important method of ensuring minimum levels of quality in our society. In my field of expertise (and more than 35 years experience) the use of out of date standards is commonplace. When the issue arises as to the use of superseded standards, the answer most commonly heard is that to maintain a current set of standards is cost prohibitive.

7. Also, I see quite often an "scattergun" approach being made by some towards standards by inclusion of generic notes to contractors saying "All work to Australian Standards" This does not promote knowledge within the industry and tries to make all other parties responsible for issues that may clearly be of a design nature rather than construction nature.

8. The construction industry is generally made up of small businesses with some medium sized and a few large sized corporations. The cost to small business of maintaining a suite of standards that may not be used on a daily basis, but still frequently enough to consider purchase.

9. Of note also : Those who contribute to and facilitate the making of standards don't get paid, yet we who use them seem to pay a premium for compliance with them.

In short :

Standards should be available straight from the internet, in the same way as state and local government regulations.

The adoption of this procedure will enhance the use of and compliance with the Standards - which is the specific purpose for which they are designed.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Regards

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