

Sustainable and Accessible Standards

Statement of Agreement

Australian Building and Construction Industry

18th November 2022



Statement of Agreement

A Construction Industry alliance of over 20 organisations was convened at a forum in October 2022 in Sydney to discuss matters of serious concern confronting businesses, consumers, staff, and students in relation to fair and equitable access to Australian Standards, and Standards Australia's lack of formal response to Industry concerns.

All signatories of this statement support the work of Standards Australia and the concept of ensuring Industry and the general public are protected by robust and adaptable standards enforced by appropriate regulation.

These signatories agree that -

- Standards Australia currently holds a monopoly over the development and price setting standards for Australian industry, granted by the Parliaments of the Commonwealth.
- Standards Australia as a Not-for-Profit registered charity currently retains over \$365 Million in assets.
- Standards Australia needs to have a stable and reliable revenue stream that allows it to continue its charter as the pinnacle standards organisation in Australia.
- Standards Australia currently creates and maintain standards via a system of pro-bono expertise and Intellectual Property of industry bodies, government regulators, Companies, and private experts, including signatories to this document.
- The 2018 report of the Senate Committee Inquiry into Non-Conforming Building Products recommended that Standards should be freely available.
- Standards Australia current pricing / retailing strategy will significantly increase the cost of Standards and decrease their accessibility and affordability.
- Standards Australia current pricing / retail strategy will drastically drive up the cost of accessing standards for Universities, TAFE's, RTO's, Students, and public libraries.
- Standards Australia have not demonstrated a genuine willingness to formally consult with industry on the proposed changes, and their impacts on various sectors.
- Standards Australia needs to consult with industry to explore alternative cost recovery options.
- One model that should be considered is the Occupational Licensing Levy scheme that has operated successfully in New Zealand for 20 years and Standards Australia is already a party to.

In November a delegation of representatives from Master Electricians Australia, the Electrical Trades Union of Australia, and the Australian Council of Trade Unions met with the office of the Federal Industry Minister The Hon Ed Husic, to clearly appraise his office of the concerns of Industry.

Considering the outcome of the October forum and the frank Ministerial discussions, these signatories call on the Federal Government to undertake the following steps -

Action 1 –

Convene an urgent summit of the Building Ministers Forum before the end of 2022, to hear the concerns of this representative industry grouping, and other groups of stakeholders who have also expressed concern.

Action 2 –

Commit to a National Review of the operations of the system of Australian Standards including governance, return on investment, accessibility, affordability, development, and enforcement in the Commonwealth, to report before 30 June 2023.

Action 3 –

Immediately call on Standards Australia to pause its current pricing and access strategy and guarantee all existing industry and educational institution subscription services for a period of 12 months, and to cooperate fully with any reviews undertaken.



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