

# Standards Australia

## Review of Technical Governance

### Issues Paper

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# 1. Introduction

Standards Australia's standards development process is built on principles of openness, transparency and consensus. These principles underpin our brand, reputation and broad organisational sustainability.

These principles are supported by:

- membership of international standards organisations;
- recognition by the Commonwealth Government as Australia's peak standards development body;
- relationships with stakeholders;
- our ability to prioritise work based on net benefit to the Australian community over any other criteria;
- our financial sustainability; and
- the creation and maintenance of quality products developed under robust and sustainable processes supported by appropriate rules and governance, to deliver net benefit to the Australian community.

Standards Australia was the subject of a review by the Productivity Commission in 2006 as part of a broader review of Australia's standards and laboratory accreditation systems. Since that time Standards Australia has reviewed its technical governance on an incremental basis.

More recently, Standards Australia recognised that rapidly changing technology, social media and digital publishing landscape may impact its technical governance, policies and procedures.

The impetus for further review was reinforced in the annual open forums, hosted by Standards Australia, with key nominating organisation stakeholders.

Consistent areas for potential improvement across the forums in 2016 and 2017 relating to technical governance included:

- committee membership and the role and responsibilities of a committee Chairperson;
- access to the standards development process by young leaders, the next generation of contributors and new contributors joining established technical groups;
- ensuring that people with relevant skills, knowledge and expertise can contribute;
- succession planning within current committees;
- balance of representation within committees and what this means in different sectors;
- access to documents and drafts;
- access to information at a nominating organisation level; and
- the proposal and standards development processes.

It was further recognised that technology must support the simpler, faster and better delivery of standards to the Australian community.

## 2. Scope and structure of this paper

At its November 2016 meeting, Standards Australia's Standards Development and Accreditation Committee (SDAC), a Committee of the Board, endorsed and recommended a review of Standards Australia's technical governance, in alignment with Standards Australia's Strategic Plan.

Standards Australia is committed to undertaking the review of technical governance in a staged, open and transparent way.

This paper specifically asks questions related to the technical governance components of the current Standards Australia standards development process. The future of Standards Australia's publishing and distribution arrangements and broader company governance are explicitly excluded from the scope of this paper. Also out of scope for this paper, are the Governance roles of the SDAC and Standards Australia Production Management Group (PMG). These will be considered separately.

Whilst not part of the scope of work, this paper does contemplate a future where Standards Australia may again have a direct and multi-channel distribution model. If it does, it is essential that Standards Australia appropriately manages any perception that being a direct distributor would interfere with or influence its standards development process. Standards Australia believes the current Net Benefit assessment is a necessary measure to ensure that the focus remains developing standards and other documents that add a net benefit to the Australian community. For this reason, project assessment within the Net Benefit framework is not part of this review.

This issues paper follows the standards development cycle, presented below:



Stakeholder feedback together with Standards Australia's own understanding of the elements of our process that connect to our technical governance have been used to develop this paper.

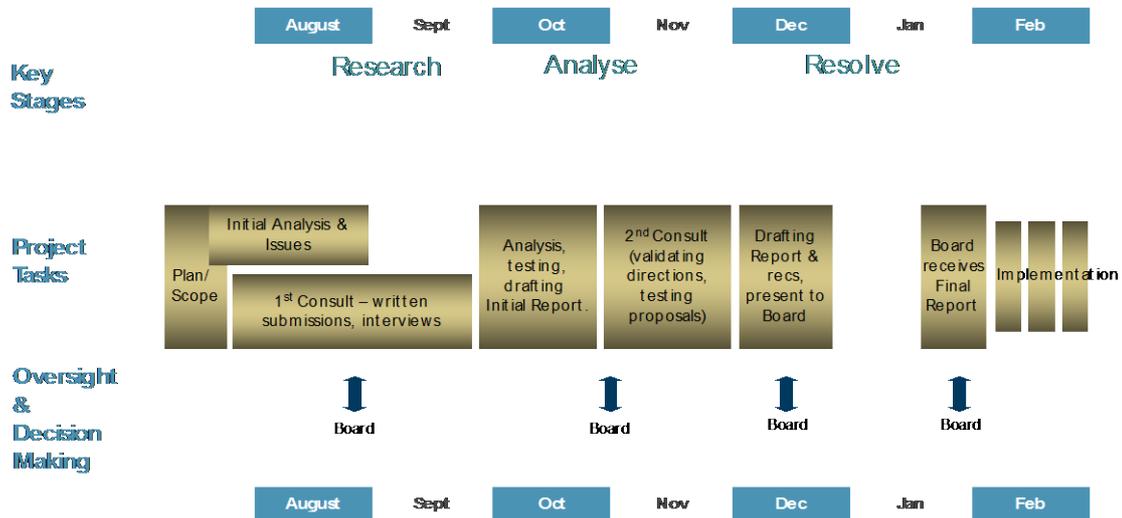
### 2.1. Independent consultation process

Standards Australia has appointed an external firm, cameron. ralph. khoury ("CRK"), to assist with this review. CRK has previously worked with Standards Australia and with many other stakeholder organisations in large scale consultative governance reviews.

This Issues Paper is a prompt only and should not be considered to limit relevant feedback, nor should interested people feel they need to provide lengthy commentary on every issue. The reviewers also welcome brief and informal input.

The process is intended to follow the timeline below, although this may be further developed as the project progresses.

### SA – Technical Governance Review process



CRK will also be conducting group and individual interviews over the coming months to supplement their understanding of the issues and to enable them to make recommendations to the Standards Australia Board for improvements to technical governance. The interview schedule is still under development. They are expected to provide a completed report in late January 2018.

Submissions will close on 22 September 2017. Submissions may be published in whole or in part, unless you indicate you would like your submission to be kept confidential.

Submissions should be sent to [standards\\_tgr@crkhoury.com](mailto:standards_tgr@crkhoury.com). Any enquiries can be also be directed to that email address or to the firm principal, Phil Khoury on +61 3 9421 3111.

## 3. Project Initiation Process

The proposal process should be open and accessible, and enable stakeholders to identify a problem, demonstrate why a standard solution is appropriate, and state how the problem should be addressed. This includes clear demonstration of net benefit and stakeholder support against transparent criteria.

### 3.1. Project Initiation Process

#### Background

Currently, any proposal to develop, revise or amend an Australian Standard must be made using the relevant Standards Australia proposal form. The proposal is required to be assessed through Standards Australia's project prioritisation and selection process.

The challenge is to provide rigour, transparency and fairness around prioritisation of resources – while making the SA processes as accessible to the community as reasonably possible. To achieve this there must be consultation with the affected communities of interest on the need for a new project and their support in addition to the demonstrated net benefit of the project.

#### Issues

Feedback on the project initiation process includes:

- It may be too onerous (whilst an equally strong views exist to the effect that it is set appropriately or needs strengthening);
- That a less rigorous process should apply in certain cases;
- That there should be different project initiation paths for an Australian Standard – such as the current alternative process for streamlined adoption of International Standards that have already been through an appropriate standards development process;
- That the approval of projects to revise or amend existing standards that have already been through a formal committee review process should use the streamlined approval path.

*Question 1: How can the project initiation process be improved?*

- *Is the right balance being struck between accessibility and openness - and rigour of the process?*
- *Could more paths be opened to different types of standards development approval without losing quality, or requiring too much subjective judgement by SA staff?*

## 3.2. Frequency of review of proposals

### Background

Proposals are received and assessed on a six monthly basis, with scope for out of cycle approval of critical projects by the SDAC. This six monthly project submission cycle has been in place since 2010, and has provided a stable system for proponents and for Standards Australia.

Standards Australia believes that the current prioritisation process should continue because it meets the community need for an open and transparent process to assess both the resourcing requirements and which projects Standards Australia should undertake.

### Issues

Stakeholder feedback on how often the proposal review process should be undertaken is diverse. Many stakeholders are comfortable with the current process. Others have suggested it should be undertaken more frequently. Administratively, Standards Australia would be able to initiate projects through the assessment process more frequently.

*Question 2: Would more frequent review of proposals for standards be an advantage?*

- *What issues are you encountering with the frequency of the process?*
- *Would moving to (say) a monthly or quarterly cycle provide worthwhile improvement? Why?*
- *Would staying with the six monthly cycle be better for most projects - with the addition of an 'expedited' process for projects with a case for urgency?*
- *What would be the risks or downsides to more frequent review of proposals?*

## 3.3. The proposal form

### Background

The current proposal process requires completion of a formal proposal form incorporating a range of detailed questions on the need for a project, the scope of a new document or changes to an existing document, a net benefit case and statements of stakeholder support. The form needs to be completed using the Microsoft Word template and submitted via email. Stakeholder Engagement Managers are assigned to work with proponents while they are completing proposals.

## Issues

Feedback on the proposal form includes:

- The ability for project proponents to access Standards Australia's assistance in developing proposals is dependent on a thorough understanding of the process and early engagement with Stakeholder Engagement Managers.
- The application process is made more complex by the use of a Microsoft Word template, which is difficult to complete as a group.
- Improved collaboration technologies could be used to enhance stakeholder review and engagement.

*Question 3: What issues are you experiencing with the current proposal form?*

- *How could the current form be improved?*
- *Are there other methods that could be considered for commencing project development work?*
- *Are there any risks or downsides to changing the method for proposals?*

## 3.4. Assessment of proposals

### Background

Currently, once proposals are received by Standards Australia as part of a prioritisation round, they are assessed by Standards Australia against criteria including net benefit, stakeholder support, alignment with public policy and committee capacity. These criteria are also applied to externally funded projects received outside of prioritisation rounds.

The formal assessment process consists of all proposals being individually assessed against defined criteria.

The projected resource requirements are assessed and used to assist in determining resource allocation across the project portfolio. All project assessments and resource requirements are reviewed before prioritising the complete portfolio of projects.

SDAC is the approving body for the program of standards development approved under the Project Prioritisation Processes. These approvals are informed by Standards Australia's assessment team and the recommendations of PMG.

The SDAC approval covers a defined program of work for a defined time period, the allocation of resources to projects across the available funding pathways, and also which projects will not be resourced.

## Issues

Feedback on the assessment of proposals includes the significant staff and board committee effort that is applied to the assessment to ensure that proposals are evaluated and treated equitably across sectors. It has been suggested that this effort could be better directed.

*Question 4: In your view, is the assessment process striking an effective balance of rigour, speed and efficiency?*

- *How transparent is the assessment process for proponents who are new to Standards Australia?*
- *What suggestions do you have for improving the effectiveness of the assessment process?*

## 3.5. Scope assessment prior to submission of proposals

### Background

To establish a consensus based standard requires a clear agreement on scope and directions before the project commences. This includes broad-based representative stakeholder support. Proponents are required to identify and liaise with stakeholders as part of the consultation process, including seeking direct feedback on the proposal itself.

### Issues

Feedback on the assessment is that although proponents are required to identify stakeholders they have consulted, it is difficult to assess whether any or all issues raised have been satisfactorily addressed at this pre-submission stage. When this is missed it can delay the assessment or create problems later in the project.

*Question 5: Is the current level of pre-submission consultation raising and dealing with the stakeholder issues prior to submission?*

- *Is it striking the right balance of thoroughness and efficiency?*
- *How could the process be improved?*

## 4. Technical Committees

Technical committees should provide a balance of stakeholder interests, including the best available technical input. Members' time and effort should be used efficiently. Operations should be transparent with Committees supported through effective leadership, clear policies, workable structures and the best available technology.

Committees are tasked with agreeing a final scope, roles, responsibilities and a development timeline as part of project definition. Once these elements are agreed, Standards Australia staff are responsible for facilitating, monitoring and managing the project through to completion, and applying the rules outlined in the Standardisation Guides. The standardisation guides are publicly available and are supported by comprehensive internal quality procedures to guide staff. Standardisation Guides and procedures are subject to review and improvement on a continuous basis, and changes are documented appropriately.

Committees correspond electronically via email and meet face to face as necessary to support project deadlines. In some cases, committees operate entirely electronically. Most standards organisations operate in similar ways, although there may be different formats for face to face meetings. This practical organisation of committee activity is determined by committee consensus and Standards Australia's support for different working structures.

### 4.1. Committee balance

#### Background

Currently, committee constitution (composition) is determined by Standards Australia and is aimed at reflecting a balance of all stakeholder interests affected by the standards produced by a committee. The composition is regularly reviewed to ensure an appropriate balance of participants throughout the lifecycle of a project.

#### Issues

Feedback on committee balance includes that the maintenance and perception of a balanced composition of committees is an area where improvement could be made. While a well-structured, balanced committee constitution can be designed at the project approval stage, continued balance throughout a project requires on-going effort by Standards Australia staff and nominating organisations to ensure vacant positions are filled, empty positions are deleted and the overall balance is managed.

Stakeholder interest categories exist that describe the types of stakeholders that participate on committees. They are used to formally constitute balanced committees by associating nominating organisations with a single stakeholder category. While they are a useful concept for drawing up a constitution on paper, the categories are not necessarily clear to the organisations themselves or to the members that they nominate. Organisations often represent the interests of their direct members, not the interests of non-members in similar fields.

In some fields, particularly new areas, the committee constitution process affects the ability to engage technical experts who are not members of recognised nominating organisations, and as a result limit participation from key companies in an area who may not be members of associations.

*Question 6: How well do Standards Australia committee constitutions ensure that stakeholder interests are represented and balanced appropriately?*

- *Is the right balance being struck of openness of access and efficiency?*
- *What suggestions do you have for handling committee balance?*

## 4.2. Optimising participation of experts

### Background

Committees may be supported by sub-committees, responsible for different projects or portfolios of projects, and/or working groups, responsible for targeted tasks associated with development of individual projects. In general, working groups should be limited in time, and flexible in membership to allow participation of a greater number of interests and experts.

In some cases, sub-committees are designed to introduce specific representation and input to ensure that technical expertise is best sourced and used on particular standards projects. In these cases, the approving technical committee is not the same group as the developers, and may include quite different stakeholders that may be peripheral to the topic area. However, this model does allow for more flexible inclusion of interests, without the project delay of constituting a new technical committee. Sub-committee ballots may be used to provide an additional level of quality check and advice to the main committee.

### Issues

Feedback has been received that sub-committee members feel their significant efforts in the development of standards are not recognised appropriately, particularly when they are not able to vote as part of the main committees.

Feedback has also been received that the working groups and sub-committee structure is too rigid to encourage and open access to experts.

Standards developers across the world have different models to deal with these issues including more recently communities of interest forming around technical areas and more open drafting processes.

*Question 7: Do the current sub-committees/working group structures effectively support participation of experts?*

- *Is expert advice obtained when it should be?*
- *Is expert advice applied and carried through?*
- *Should we consider different models for expert collaboration?*
- *Are sub-committees recognised within the development process appropriately?*

### 4.3. Reducing barriers to committee participation

#### Background

Standards Australia committee members are essential for standards development work in Australia. Succession planning is a critical issue for maintaining commitment as these members move to different roles, retire or become unable to continue to participate in standards development. It is essential that new members are easily able to transition into committee work, and that it is an attractive proposition to them to contribute. Some new members will be well established in their careers, while others may be younger professionals.

#### Issues

There has been some feedback that the current committee structure is not flexible enough to allow short term contributions to projects, that the learning curve for participation is too steep and there is not enough introductory training available for new members. These barriers are disincentives to the engagement of new committee members, whether they are early or later in their career.

Younger professionals may have greater difficulty in engaging employer support for travel and time for face to face meetings, and would benefit from increased use of electronic working and shorter time commitments.

*Question 8: Are technical committee processes flexible enough to encourage participation from new members?*

- *How well do current processes support new contributors?*
- *Do you support greater electronic working and shorter time commitments?*
- *What are the risks with moving in this direction?*
- *What other suggestions do you have for improvement?*

### 4.4. Working better with the diversity of nominating organisations

#### Background

Currently, the main criteria for membership of a technical committee is the endorsement of a nominating organisation. A nominating organisation is an organisation recognised by Standards Australia as having influence and importance in a field or fields of interest, a representative constituency and a national nature. The organisational form is of less importance than these criteria, as nominating organisations can be government agencies, for profit or not-for-profit associations, universities, trade unions, and in limited cases, companies.

Nominating organisation participation in the standards development process is subject to the acceptance and adherence to the Standards Australia Nominating Organisation Code of Conduct, and the behaviour of the members under the Committee Code of Conduct.

## Issues

There are a variety of different organisations that Standards Australia works with. Some are major national institutions, while others are affiliations of collaborators cooperating as part of the standards process. There is no formal requirement for demonstration of the role and representative nature of an organisation, other than simple reviews of public information.

In some cases, the ability of committee members to use their organisation to consult with other members to produce firm organisational positions is less than Standards Australia might expect. To an extent, this has been alleviated with changed rules on the sharing of committee drafts, but there may be other options to consider.

*Question 9: Is the system for recognising nominating organisations working effectively?*

- Is the role of a nominating organisation needed? Are there better ways for Standards Australia to engage experts and constitute committees whilst maintaining constituent-based representation?*
- Is it striking the right balance of open access and the rigour needed for standards development?*
- Are there better ways for Standards Australia to consult and engage with nominating organisations?*

## 4.5. The relationship between committee members and their nominating organisation

### Background

Ideally, representatives of nominating organisations should be informed on technical positions, representative of the views of those who they represent. This is particularly the case where there may be conflicting views within an organisation. Many committee members also have an expectation of support in their role from their nominating organisation. The precise nature of the relationship between organisations and committee members is not dictated by Standards Australia, but the principles governing these relationships are made clear in the Codes of Conduct and in SG-004 *Roles and Responsibilities in Standardisation*.

It is generally accepted that there should be regular contact between members and organisations to ensure these obligations are met. Members are also subject to the terms of their committee member agreement with Standards Australia.

### Issues

Some committees, organisations and members are very technically focused, while others are less so. While both have their place in representing stakeholder views, at times this can lead to conflict between members with different orientations and viewpoints.

*Question 10: Do nominating processes effectively ensuring that members are able to fully contribute to committee work?*

- *Should a skills matrix or selection criteria be put in place for committee members?*
- *Should there be a 'qualifying' process before a nomination is accepted onto a committee?*
- *Are there other ways to improve this?*

## 4.6. Access for new organisations and new committee members

### Background

There is a perception amongst some stakeholders that long-standing committee members derive value from their individual positions on committees in terms of networking, access to information, and industry recognition. It has also been observed that there is little incentive for committee members standing down to allow succession. Others say tenure is important for committee cohesion and productivity.

### Issues

Feedback has been received to the effect that the current model may limit the participation of new organisations and new members or sources of expertise.

*Question 11: Are the current rules and processes effectively encouraging new organisations and members to participate?*

- *Are the current processes striking the right balance of encouraging continuing tenure (experience) and refreshment (new perspectives)?*
- *What obstacles or barriers exist to providing new organisations and individuals with open access to committee positions?*

## 4.7. Committee chairs

### Background

While Standards Australia relies on nomination of committee members from organisations, committee chairs are appointed by Standards Australia. This key role of the Chair is the primary liaison between the committee and Standards Australia staff. As the leader of committee business many are also key technical contributors, although there is no necessity that this is the case.

In some cases, the most effective chairs are entirely independent, or from non-technical organisations. In addition to selection of committee chairs, Standards Australia has discretion to approve additional members to be added to committees. The length of service of committee chairs is normally for one, or two, three year terms (3-6 years), but this may be extended by approval of the PMG.

Standards Australia may terminate the term of a chair where necessary. Additionally, many chairs have been in place for terms over the six year limit.

### Issues

There has been feedback that, at times, the reliance on committee chairs as the conduit of information between committees and Standards Australia has been to the detriment of outcomes. Feedback has also been received that a chair who is also a technical contributor may be left in a difficult situation with competing interests. Other feedback has been that the skills required to chair a committee are different to those which are needed to be an effective technical contributor.

*Question 12: Are the current processes for appointing, supporting and reviewing the effectiveness of Committee Chairs optimum?*

- *Should Chairs necessarily be the main conduit of information between committees and Standards Australia?*
- *How should we monitor performance and tenure of Chairs?*

## 4.8. Expansion of committee membership

### Background

Feedback has been received that the pool of contributors is diminishing and that the current model in some sectors may be unsustainable in the short or mid-term. While the current nominating organisation model has been in place for many years, there are alternative models in place in other standards bodies around the world, and elements of these could be considered for inclusion in the Standards Australia model. These include direct nomination by companies, self-nomination by individuals, and the extension of committee membership to hundreds of members, including multiple representatives from organisations or companies.

### Issues

Management of much larger committee structures would require alternative operating models to be considered, such as the appointment of heads of delegation currently used in international technical committees.

Past succession planning has relied on organisations taking responsibility for ensuring committee vacancies are filled promptly on resignation of existing members, rather than by a proactive approach that seeks to broaden participation, share knowledge and ensure that new views are sought and represented.

*Question 13: Should the committee membership model be revisited to include a wider possible range of configurations?*

- *Should succession planning be more proactive and thorough-going with a clear aim to broaden participation and ensure fresh perspectives?*

- *What are the risks and downsides of moving from the current SA model for committee structures?*

## 4.9. Management of stakeholder interests

### Background

All participants in the standards development process have an interest in it, otherwise they would not participate. Be representatives from industry, government or consumer and community groups, they engage in the standards development process to manage and achieve a particular set of outcomes. The current committee member model provides a framework for managing interests.

### Issues

Some stakeholders have suggested the management of competing interests could be improved. It is accepted that committee members almost always have a number of interests that see them in the process, whether they are policy or regulatory driven, commercial, professional or otherwise. The declaration of interests is governed by the Committee Member Code of Conduct and managed using the declaration of interests register. The code of conduct relies on all participants advising on their interests, and management of perceived conflicts. It also relies on members and staff being willing to challenge others on their drivers for behaviour, which can be difficult for all concerned.

Standards Australia currently manages interests through nominating organisations who are required to nominate a representative to represent a particular interest group. Alternative models used elsewhere in the world include having direct and open representation to standards committees.

*Question 14: Are current processes effectively managing stakeholder interests in standards development?*

- *Do current processes (the Code of Conduct, staff oversight, effective chairing, etc) effectively support committee 'self-regulation' (eg. identifying and dealing with potential conflicts of interest)?*
- *Would other international approaches strengthen the integrity of the development process in Australia?*
- *Is the current framework striking the right balance of encouraging participation and integrity?*

## 5. Public consultation

Public comment is designed to allow open and transparent scrutiny from a broad base of stakeholders, promoting awareness and access to content in development, and the ability to provide feedback on standards in development.

The standards development process provides for public input to projects at two points – at the proposal stage discussed above, and at the public comment stage, during the mandatory nine week public comment window. Participation in the public comment process relies on knowledge that the project is occurring, and knowledge of when the window for public comment is open. As committee membership is limited to nominating organisations, lack of this information acts as a barrier to others providing formal input to the standard.

### 5.1. Effective public consultation and feedback

#### Background

Increased use of technology including social media to promote new projects and committee activities will provide information about opportunities to contribute and participate in standards development, as well as providing a much-needed source of information for users of standards.

The current public comment requirements demand specific commentary in a particular format based on a close reading of the text of draft standards, during the public comment window. Greater public input to standards development and feedback could occur by allowing comments at any time, with a requirement for committees to address them in a timely manner, potentially with a response. The growth of social media has increased the expectation that organisations will provide appropriate feedback in short time frames.

#### Issues

End consumers of standards expect that they should be able to provide direct feedback on standards at the time it is important to them, as they can with many other products and services. They also expect to be able to provide feedback in a form that suits them, and have a timely response to problems or suggestions. Provision of a formal public comment mechanism provides one way communication via a formal mechanism at a time that suits the standards developers, not necessarily the community at large.

*Question 15: Are the current comment processes striking the right balance between open accessibility and efficiency for the standards developers?*

- *Are the feedback channels effective at obtaining and enabling community input?*
- *Are they sufficiently visible to the community?*
- *Are they easily accessed and operated?*
- *Are they listened to?*
- *Is feedback sufficiently acknowledged?*

## 6. Approval process

Standards are approved for publication if there is support from a broad base of stakeholders. Sometimes getting through the approval process means that concerns and conflicts need to be managed through the formal balloting process.

### 6.1. Consensus

#### Background

The final approval of the content of a standard prior to its publication requires consensus from the committee members by way of a formal consensus vote. Consensus is defined as general agreement characterised by lack of sustained opposition. In the absence of unanimity, Standards Australia applies three major conditions to determine if consensus is met:

- A minimum of 67% of those eligible to vote have voted affirmatively;
- A minimum of 80% of votes received are affirmative, and
- No major interest involved with the subject of the Standard maintained a negative vote.

These rules are applied to all standards development projects as part of the approval criteria for publication.

In the absence of consensus, particularly where there is an ongoing objection by major interests, the SDAC is tasked with arbitrating a solution. Projects may be published as alternative document types, sent back to committees for further work, terminated, or published with appropriate caveats.

#### Issues

In the majority of cases, the current consensus rules work well and lead to publication of documents although the consensus rules have been criticised for their opacity, despite their simple appearance. The same measures have been applied consistently for many years, yet feedback has been received that the rule is open to interpretation and 'gaming'. It can allow groups to self-define and promote themselves as major interests, effectively blocking publication, sometimes for years, against the overwhelming majority of participating organisations.

*Question 16: How could the process and rules for establishing consensus be made more effective?*

- *Is the right balance being struck between the interests of the majority and in protecting significant but minority interests?*

## 7. Portfolio maintenance

The catalogue of standards should be managed, reviewed and maintained on an ongoing and transparent basis. Opportunities for feedback should exist which are used through the further development of standards in an area.

### 7.1. Systematic review

#### Background

Published standards are subject to maintenance after five years. This is an administrative process initiated by Standards Australia. The process includes formal review by the responsible committee (which may or may not be the original publishing committee) to decide on whether the document should be reconfirmed without change, withdrawn or revised. If a revision is identified as required, a project proposal needs to be developed and submitted for approval.

#### Issues

Sometimes the review of published standards exceeds the five-year review cycle. It has been suggested that this process needs to be simpler and more automatic, like the ISO/IEC JTC1 systematic review process.

*Question 17: How important is it to establish a more systematic process of review?*

- *What risks or downsides might there be with an automated process?*

### 7.2. User feedback and its role in proposals

#### Background

A facility to capture user feedback on the standard at any time during the cycle for use as part of the formal review. A public facility could also be used to promote further input to reviews beyond existing committee members.

#### Issues

Feedback suggests that at times, there can be a disconnect between the outcome of committee maintenance reviews and the proposal process.

It has also been suggested that minor or routine changes to a published document are processed in a disproportionate way given the nature of the changes proposed.

It has also been suggested that there needs to be a simpler way to initiate projects for revision or amendment following formal committee reviews.

*Question 18: How can maintenance review outputs/recommendations be handled more efficiently?*

- *How can a new process retain a reasonable balance between new and maintenance proposals?*

## 8. International Participation

### Background

Standards Australia encourages participation of Australian stakeholders in International Standards Development and is an active member of ISO and IEC. The Commonwealth government supports international participation through the Support for Industry Service Organisations program. International participation and alignment is recognised in Standards Australia's MoU with the Commonwealth government.

Participation in International standards development follow similar rules and processes for the development of national standards, with some exceptions and arguably with less stringency than is applied to national standards.

### Issues

Many Technical Committees elect to participate in international standards development, but often have interest in only a limited part of the scope of work of the international Technical Committee. As a result, engagement from Australian stakeholders can be less than optimal. In other cases, Australian committees participate in the development of international standards which are never adopted in Australia.

*Question 19: How can the consideration of participation (or lack of participation) in international standards development be better managed?*

- *Are there better ways to improve participation?*
- *Should Standards Australia apply its consensus rules to responses to International Ballots and votes?*
- *What risks or downsides might there be in maintaining the existing approach?*