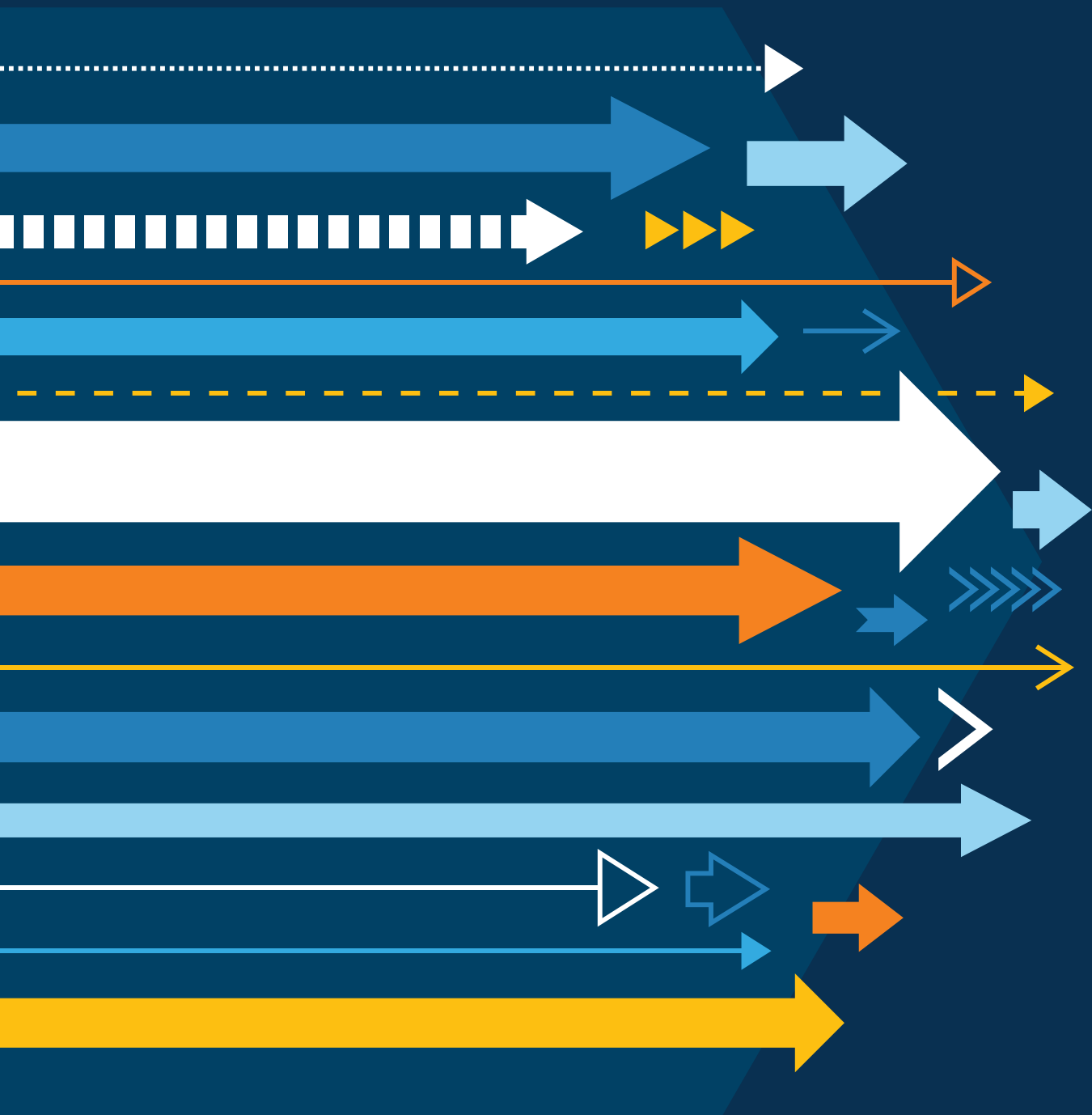


Distribution and Licensing Policy Framework

November 2019

STANDARDS
Australia



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Trademark notice

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Objective of the policy framework

Standards Australia has been working to make Australian communities safer, help our economy grow and connect our nation to the world for almost 100 years.

In December 2018, Standards Australia was successful in regaining its right to license others to distribute its content. The exclusive distribution rights granted to SAI Global since 2003 ended with an independent arbitration determining that any extended distribution agreement with SAI Global would be non-exclusive.

This gave Standards Australia the opportunity to expand its distribution arrangements.

As a first step in 2019 Standards Australia appointed Techstreet, a Clarivate Analytics business, as Standards Australia's additional distributor. Techstreet operates as an aggregator, distributing all of Standards Australia's publications in a similar way to SAI Global.

Standards Australia then commenced a process of open consultation to design a new distribution model that aims to ensure better access to its content. The consultation provided valuable insights that helped shape this policy framework.

At the core of the framework is a desire to:

- increase the reach and relevance of Standards Australia's content in the Australian community;
- provide criteria to assist Standards Australia in making partner selection decisions;
- ensure Standards Australia's operations are supported by revenue sufficient to allow it to continue to operate independently as Australia's national standards body and Australia's largest standards development organisation; and
- ensure Standards Australia can carry out the functions necessary in its role as a publisher.

This policy framework has been developed to encourage third parties to work with Standards Australia to deliver access to Standards Australia's content alongside Standards Australia's own distribution channels as they emerge.

Standards Australia recognises that there is no 'one-size fits-all' way of distributing its content. It also recognises that the single channel model of the last 15 years has not met the expectations of users.

By developing this Policy Framework, Standards Australia aspires to achieving better access through third parties to its content by:

- increasing the reach and relevance of Standards Australia's content;
- increasing awareness and use of standards in industry, government and by the broader Australian community;
- ensuring the long term financial independence and sustainability of Standards Australia; and
- empowering Standards Australia to operate as a modern and efficient public purpose organisation that aims to meet the growing needs and expectations of industry and the wider community.

Policy framework at a glance

To achieve these objectives Standards Australia will strive to:

- Operate a multi-channel, multi-segment model, where a number of different distributors are licensed to distribute Standards Australia's content in existing formats;
- Encourage innovative partners to develop new products to serve different market needs using Standards Australia content in their products;
- Maximise the availability of library reading room access such that Australian Standards® can be accessed by the general public in physical public library reading rooms for personal, domestic and household use;
- Provide targeted discounts for online access to standards for specific early career users;
- Develop improved ways for educational courses to incorporate standards in teaching materials; and
- In areas of high public interest and benefit, establish partnerships that will provide for the development of Plain English guides to support community understanding of what is often highly technical and specialist content.

In managing the Policy Framework, Standards Australia will:

- Assess potential partners against criteria aligned to Standards Australia's objectives;
- Seek to minimise the administrative burden of managing an open model by creating a number of commercial distribution options for consideration by potential partners; and
- Implement ethical walls designed to guard against the possibility of inappropriate influence in the development of standards for Australia.

Partnering to distribute current products

Standards Australia's current products are primarily hard copy and PDF copies of standards and other documents and subscriptions to PDF documents.

Standards Australia believes that a strong and capable network of distribution partners will help it meet its objectives. Our partner selection criteria will assess distributor proposals against a range of dimensions to ensure not only suitability to carry out the role but also alignment with Standards Australia's vision and strategy.

Having multiple distributors facilitates customer choice and competition between suppliers is likely to result in enhanced service levels and efficient pricing, serving different segments and markets.

Standards Australia's firmly held view is that exclusive arrangements or a limited number of distributors would not encourage customer service, innovation or reach.

Standards Australia is equally conscious of the administrative and resource burden that flows from this type of operating model. Standards Australia needs to manage distribution channels so that they remain efficient.

Partners will be assessed against key qualification criteria that include:

- Ability to deliver enhanced reach for the Standards Australia content the partner wishes to distribute;
- Good standing and reputation with customers and stakeholders;
- Operational capability in customer service, content delivery and sales and marketing;
- A capability and willingness to share customer data for the benefit of Standards Australia as a standards developer;
- Adequate systems for the security and protection of intellectual property and customer data;
- An appropriate ability to comply with quality assurance requirements supporting the end user experience including with respect to the delivery of content; and
- Financial robustness that is sufficient to deliver a quality service to Standards Australia and end customers.

Additional criteria may apply to partner selection depending on how the partner wishes to distribute content and other factors relevant to the proposal being considered.

To support the scalability of the existing product distribution channel, Standards Australia will develop standard form documents to support the legal framework necessary to establish the commercial arrangement.

Sponsored access and bulk distribution

Standards Australia recognises that certain companies, industries and governments may wish to provide access to a broad set of Australian Standards® or sets of Australian Standards to categories of users. This type of access could be for all professionals in a particular profession, all participants in a particular supply chain or all customers of a particular company.

In order to meet this need, Standards Australia proposes to enter into arrangements whereby Australian Standards are made available at no direct cost to users, where revenue to facilitate this access is recovered from a sponsor. This model is similar to models used by standards bodies internationally.

Additional opportunities exist to be able to negotiate arrangements where an entire category of user is provided with access to an Australian Standard or sets of Australian Standards. This category of access may relate to an occupation where the use of Australian Standards is critical to the undertaking of an occupation.

Where a distribution partner is able to provide access to all participants in a trade or occupation, Standards Australia will be able to negotiate a licensing arrangement where the cost of access is relative to the number of users that form part of the arrangement. It is anticipated that these types of bulk distribution arrangements would be of interest to governments and in particular regulators, trade associations and professional bodies.

Addressing potential conflicts

With Standards Australia reassuming its role as a publisher, consideration has been given to ensuring the proper functioning of Standards Australia as a public purposed organisation. Standards Australia will strive to ensure the upmost level of integrity in the execution of its publication and distribution activities in order to avoid or appropriately manage real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Customer and usage data may be useful in the development of innovative products to understand who is currently using standards and for what purpose to ensure new product formats are correctly targeted. This data must be managed appropriately to ensure that Standards Australia's standards development focus remains based on public interest criteria.

Measures that Standards Australia will put in place measures to manage any potential conflicts of interest such as:

- ensuring there is no inappropriate influence by distribution sales and customer data on the standards development process;
- developing appropriate protocols for the sharing of sales data with technical committees; and
- maintaining commercial confidentiality agreements for content distribution or third party product development.

Standards Australia will continue to deliver on its commitment to net benefit standards development for all sectors in the Australian economy, irrespective of commercial value.

The systematic consideration of standards to be updated by committees will also continue to use Net Benefit as the key criteria. Commercial returns will not be part of the standards development project selection process.

Encouraging innovation

Standards Australia acknowledges the significant opportunity to better serve the end user by encouraging innovation in how Standards Australia content is used and delivered.

Beyond Standards Australia's well established existing products, opportunities exist for the development of innovative products and sophisticated delivery mechanisms for standards content.

This new approach is intended to increase the use of standards in Australia and internationally and empower end users when working with standards content.

This could also allow flexibility in the way standards are purchased and used or allow for the development of tools, such as bundles or extracts of standards content, to help users in a profession complete a task or solve a problem.

To promote innovation, Standards Australia will continue to engage with potential innovators through its Innovation Incubator, as well as engaging with the technology community and other parties to generate enthusiasm for innovation.

Commercial innovation partners will be considered where new products aligned with Standards Australia's objectives can be developed.

The qualification criteria set out in the above section may be applied in the selection of innovative partners, depending on the nature of the intended use of content.

Consideration may also be given to the:

- technical feasibility of an idea or product;
- ability of Standards Australia and the potential partner to manage the end user offering;
- level of quality assurance required to assess the viability of a particular use case; and
- level of monitoring or maintenance required for the particular use case.

Depending on the ultimate scope of the innovative product, there may be additional quality assurance measures or costs before the product can go to market.

Commercial terms for the use of content in this way would be determined on a case-by-case basis having regard to what content is proposed to be used and how it is proposed to be used.

In some instances, Standards Australia will require that end users are provided with access to the full text of particular Australian Standards and other documents as part of a commercial agreement.

Facilitating economical access

In addition to the distribution and licensing arrangements set out above, Standards Australia is committed to broadening the opportunities to distribute and license content to facilitate economical access for different types of users.

In particular, two use cases for access to Australian Standards® content have been identified, namely by professional and trade users in training or the early stages of a career and by the general public for personal, domestic and household use.

Standards Australia also recognises the utility in appropriate content being developed and provided to consumers to help them make decisions in areas of consumer interest.



Access to Australian Standards for professional and trade user groups at an early stage of a career

For many trades and professions, standards form a core part of the knowledge transfer to new workers in a sector. For these users, many factors including access fees and remote locations may inhibit the use of standards.

It is estimated that today, a low proportion of junior tradespeople, apprentices or students have access to the standards they would benefit from.

Standards Australia proposes to provide targeted discounts for online access to particular standards for specific early career users. This includes the partnering with bodies who represent such users in order to facilitate and manage the distribution of such standards (such as Universities, TAFEs, RTOs and trade and professional associations).

Standards Australia will also look to licensing arrangements that aim to make it easier for education providers and curriculum setters to incorporate standards in their teaching materials.

For instance, providing scaled bulk licensing terms to such users will support Standards Australia's objectives of reach and relevance.



Access to Australian Standards for non-commercial use

Standards Australia acknowledges the interest in access to its content by Australians for non-commercial purposes. Non-commercial access has previously been facilitated by public libraries and is universally understood to be for personal, domestic or household use.

In addition to access through public libraries, Standards Australia recognises the benefit in providing access to Australian Standards® for personal, domestic or household use at no cost to end users and is committed to funding and providing this type of access to its content as soon as it can. At this stage, it is anticipated that this type of access will be provided online directly by Standards Australia.

In achieving this objective, Standards Australia must ensure it remains independent and financially sustainable. As a matter of priority, Standards Australia is working to assure itself that it can maintain its long-term financial sustainability with this type of access sitting alongside its direct and third-party commercial access channels.

Subject to this condition and to third party rights, Standards Australia will fund and make available this access to Australian Standards by no later than December 2023.



Providing useful information to consumers on Consumer Interest Standards

Members of the public may seek to access information regarding Consumer Interest Standards (e.g. information regarding the standards applicable to baby dummies, cots or other similar technical content).

The information consumers require regarding Consumer Interest Standards may be better presented as an easy-to-read explanatory guide, rather than in the presentation of technical details that is required for skilled professionals, manufacturers and other technical users of Australian Standards. This type of access is intended to be an additional resource for consumers to aide their understanding of standards from an end-consumer perspective.

Standards Australia will consider providing access to appropriate standards content to selected third parties to develop Plain English guides to Consumer Interest Standards on a case by case basis.

Such consumer guides would be limited to information useful for consumers, would not include any material which may be useful for a manufacturer or tradesperson and may be subject to quality assurance and ongoing monitoring.

Feedback on the policy

If you would like to provide feedback or start a conversation on this policy, please contact us via either:

Tel: (02) 9237 6000

Email: distribution@standards.org.au

