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STANDARDISATION GUIDE 003:

STANDARDS & OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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Contents

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1   PURPOSE

This Guide describes the documents that are the results of the standardisation process conducted by Standards Australia (SA). Its purpose is to assist the readers of Standards and other publications in the use and understanding of these documents.

Australian Standards are also developed by accredited Standards Development Organisations (SDO) and the Standards produced by these organisations broadly conform to the characteristics of publications listed in this Guide.

NOTE   Australian SDOs are accredited by Standards Australia's Standards Development and Accreditation Committee (SDAC), an independent board reporting to the Council of Standards Australia. For more information on accreditation and the SDOs refer to https://www.standards.org.au/standards-development/accreditation

2   INTRODUCTON

The process by which Australian Standards are developed by Standards Australia is set out in other Standardisation Guides in this series, with the core elements of the process explained in SG 001 Preparing Standards. SDOs have similar processes.

The public transparency and consensus building processes used in developing Standards are necessary because Australian Standards (AS) or joint Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS) have a unique role and status, recognised by industry and users as authoritative documents. Standards may be relied upon to protect human health and safety, as an element in contracts, as a point of reference under statute law, as a benchmark of currently acceptable practice and for a range of other applications with significant ramifications. Standards have wide legislative acceptance in the States, Territories and Commonwealth.

This Guide also describes alternatives to Australian Standards, where a technical document is required and the traditional standardisation process may not deliver the optimal solution.

Standards Australia is not alone in recognising this need for a range of deliverables. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) have developed a similar range of deliverables with levels of consensus different from those associated with an International Standard (see Clause 6 International Equivalents).

3   STANDARDS

3.1   What is a Standard?

ISO/IEC Guide 2 defines a Standard as a:

> *'document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.*
>
> *Standards should be based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience, and aimed at the promotion of optimum community benefits.'*
>
> ISO/IEC Guide 2, Standardization and related activities — General vocabulary

Standards set out specifications and procedures designed to ensure that products, services and systems are safe, reliable and consistently perform the way they were intended. They establish a common language that defines quality and safety criteria. Standards are practical and set achievable goals. They are based on sound industrial, scientific and consumer experience and are regularly reviewed to ensure that they keep pace with advances in technology.

Developing national consensus Standards is a structured and formal process. Committee Members, Nominating Organisations and stakeholders are involved during the Standard development process, exploring the potential

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consequences of the Standard for themselves and the broader community, and providing reasoning on aspects of the content that does not meet their needs and expectations. There is often considerable negotiation between stakeholders, including consideration of all Public Comments received, to achieve a balance between competing factors and establish the requirements that go into an Australian Standard.

3.2   Purpose of Standards

Standards are developed for a number of purposes, including:

1. ***Voluntary or mandatory applications***—Standards that specify requirements to achieve at least the minimum objectives of safety, quality or performance of a product or service.

2. ***Regulatory compliance***—Standards that are used to specify minimum least-cost solutions to technical requirements expressing characteristics, performance and design criteria compatible with the function of legislation.

3. ***Contractual purpose***—Standards that serve as purchasing specifications or technical conditions of contract between two parties.

4. ***Guidance***—Standards that may be intended for educational purposes and which include recommendations, or administrative or project management procedures. In general, these Standards will not be adopted in either legislation or contract specifications.

On their own, Standards have no legal status and no requirement for compliance by manufacturers, consumers or the public, hence the term 'voluntary Standard'. However, a Standard may be 'called up' (cited) in legislation, or written into a commercial contract, and in those contexts, the Standard might become mandatory (see Clause 3.12 Standards in legislation).

3.3   Types of Standards

There are three categories of Standards that are generally recognised by the Standards community—these are International, Regional and National.

3.3.1   International Standards

International Standards are publicly available Standards that have been developed and approved by an international SDO. ISO and IEC are the two main international standardising bodies. Other international bodies include the ITU (International Telecommunications Union) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (set up by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop food Standards, guidelines and related texts such as codes of practice).

International Standards are used directly or adopted by regional or national Standards bodies. ISO and IEC encourage national adoption of International Standards. There are also 'de facto' international Standards that, although they have not been developed by an international Standards organisation, have widespread acceptance. These may also be adopted by international, regional or national Standards bodies.

3.3.2   Regional Standards

Regional Standards are publicly available Standards that have been developed and/or adopted by a regional SDO. A well-known example is in the European Union (EU), with Standards developed by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC). Regional Standards may then be adopted as national Standards by EU member countries and are sometimes adopted as national Standards in Australia (and New Zealand).

NOTE   A regional SDO is one whose membership is open to the relevant national body from each country within one geographical, political or economic area only.

3.3.3   National Standards

National Standards are publicly available Standards that have been developed, approved and/or adopted by a national Standards body or other accredited organisation.

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3.4 Identification of Australian Standards

Australian Standards have two identifying trademarks used by both SA and accredited SDOs:

The Logo-

is used on the front cover of the Standard, along with the corporate brand of the organisation developing the Standard (e.g. Standards Australia). The presence of the AS logo shows the equivalency of all Australian Standards irrespective of the organisation preparing them.

The Wordmark- **Australian Standard®** - is used on the title page or in text about Standards.

Joint Australia/New Zealand Standards have the trademark: **Australian/New Zealand Standard™** as well as the Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand company logos on the cover. (Accredited SDOs do not produce joint Standards.)

3.5 Functions of Standards

Standards may fulfil many functions including:

Product Standards—These specify characteristics (for example, dimensions), design, construction or composition of a product to ensure acceptable performance, reliability, durability, finish, or other characteristics necessary to ensure the product's suitability for the purpose envisaged by purchasers or users ('fitness for purpose'). A Product Standard can be either complete, or not, according to whether it specifies all or only a part of the necessary requirements for the product.

Some examples of Product Standards include those for:

- Consumer products such as toys, motorcycle helmets, electrical appliances and bottled water - these Standards often only cover the safety aspects of the products.

- Building materials and components such as cement, windows, doors, glass, pipes and plumbing products.

- Equipment such as electrical plugs and sockets, nuts and bolts.

Design Standards—Design Standards are a basic element of most engineering and building projects. Design Standards are largely concerned with safety and are normally written in mandatory language, for reference in regulations.

Examples are Standards for steel structures, timber framed buildings, concrete structures, or boilers and other pressure vessels.

Code of Practice—also called 'Service Standards'. These Standards specify the practices or procedures for the design, manufacture, installation, maintenance or use of equipment, structures or products.

Examples include laying floor coverings, use of chainsaws, laundry practice, and information security.

Safety Standards—provide guidance on safety in health, life and property matters.

Examples include safety in the design, construction and/or operation of plant and equipment (e.g. milling machinery, wood processing machinery), workplace health and safety (WH&S), and personal safety and health (e.g. swimming pool fencing and hand operated electric tools).

Test Methods—set out the steps to be followed to determine the properties of a product or component. Test Methods are used to establish conformity with a specification which may be found in a Product or Design Standard and are critical in Performance Based Standards.

Examples include testing of physical properties (e.g. resistance to forces or linear dimensions when considering safety) where acceptable test results are used in meeting requirements in other Standards, purchasing specifications, or in government regulations (e.g. bicycle helmets, pool fencing).

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Management System Standards—also called 'Process Standards'; these specify requirements to be fulfilled by management systems or other processes.

Examples include ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems) and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems) as well as other systems in the WH&S, food safety and climate change areas.

There are additional types of Standards including Interoperability Standards (IT), Terminology Standards, and Standards on data to be provided.

3.6   Performance Based and Prescriptive Standards

Standards can be broadly classified as 'Performance Based' or 'Prescriptive'.

Performance Based Standards—have their requirements expressed in terms of performance, i.e. outcomes to be achieved. This approach leaves freedom for the development of innovative technical methods to meet the requirements of the Standard.

Performance Based Standards include the criteria, testing or other approved form of verification required to assess performance and to ensure consistency across the solutions developed to meet requirements.

For example, a requirement for a hypothetical wall plug suitable for hanging a mirror might state 'The wall fixing shall support a weight of 40kg when tested in accordance with the test method in Appendix A.' This leaves the manufacturer(s) the option of how they design the wall plug – nylon, brass, chemical and so on, so long as it supports the weight.

Prescriptive Standards—express requirements in precise, often quantitative, terms. This leaves little opportunity to depart from the specifications in the Standard.

Using the hypothetical wall plug example again, a Prescriptive Standard might state 'The 40kg wall fixing shall consist of a 2cm expansion case in accordance with Figure 1, together with a 1/4in. Whitworth mild steel zinc plated nut and matching 3cm threaded hook in accordance with Figure 2'.

While Performance Based Standards allow a flexible approach, many users of the Standard have neither the time nor resources to develop their own solution to the performance requirements. Therefore, many Performance Based Standards are accompanied by a Prescriptive Standard (or part or section). This Standard is referred to as a 'deemed to satisfy' solution and users that meet the requirements of the Prescriptive Standard also meet the requirements of the Performance Based Standard.

For example, the Australian Standard for boilers and pressure vessels is a statement of required safety outcomes together with references to a US ASME Standard, a European Standard, and a prescriptive AS/NZS Standard as 'deemed to satisfy' solutions.

3.7   Components of Standards

NOTE   Refer to [SG 006 Rules for the structure and drafting of Australian Standards](#) for more detail about components of Standards.

3.7.1   Structure

A Standard usually consists of three divisions – preliminary, body and supplementary elements.

1. **Preliminary elements**—including Title, History Block, Preface and Contents.

2. **Body elements**—including:

    (a) **Introduction** (where present)—provides the background to and context of the Standard. It may include the principles behind the Standard and the reasons prompting its preparation.

    (b) **Scope**—defines the subject of the document and the extent and limitations of the matter covered.

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(c) **Application** (where present)—describes how the document is intended to be used or applied; for example, intended users, parts or sections that are to be used in different circumstances, or limitations in the use of the Standard.

(d) **Normative references** (where present)—see Clause 3.7.8 Referenced documents.

(e) **Terms and definitions** (where present)—explains the meaning of terms that apply specifically to that Standard (these may be different to, or a restriction of, the commonly accepted meaning of the term).

(f) **Requirements**—the main text of the Standard. The use of numbered clauses and lists (like the list used here) allows the unambiguous reference to a particular requirement, clause or item. For large or complex Standards the requirements may be divided into Sections, each Section dealing with a specific aspect of the subject.

3. **Supplementary elements**—including Appendices and Bibliography (where present).

3.7.2 Numbering (Designation)

Each Standard (International, Regional, or National) is uniquely identified by a letter/number combination termed the 'designation'. The designation of an Australian Standard broadly follows the following rules:

- **Prefix**—letters identifying the primary publisher, publication type and additional publisher information.

  o See Appendix A for common publisher prefixes encountered in Australia.

  o See Table 1 'Product Type' for publication type identifiers.

- **Main number**—uniquely designates the Standard. It is usually sequential but in some cases the number may be specially assigned, particularly for Standards that are seen as significant or for those that are part of a related series. Most adoptions of International Standards (IS) carry the number of the IS.

- **Part numbers**—sequential, identifies the document as part of a series of related Standards with a common main number.

- **Interim**—Interim Standards will display "(Int)" in the designation directly after the Main/Part number.

- **Year**—year of publication of the Standard.

- **Suffix**—usually an amendment (Amd) or supplement (Sup) to the parent document, but can also indicate that a publication has been reconfirmed (Rec) or that a ruling (Rul) has been issued in relation to a particular Standard. The suffix also includes the year of publication of the amendment, supplement, reconfirmation notice or ruling.

3.7.3 Parts

While most Standards dealing with a specific topic are published as a single document, there are circumstances where it may be published as a series of documents. This may be appropriate for many reasons, including:

- Requirements for different aspects of the same subject;

- Test methods that are part of a series of methods or are attached to a main Standard; and/or

- Changing technical developments which have to be addressed after the Standard was first published.

An example of how the latter applies is as follows:

AS 2118.1 Automatic fire sprinkler systems, Part 1: General requirements.

AS 2118.2 Automatic fire sprinkler systems, Part 2: Wall wetting sprinklers (Drenchers).

AS 2118.3 Automatic fire sprinkler systems, Part 3: Deluge.

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AS 2118.4 Automatic fire sprinkler systems, Part 4: Residential.

AS 2118.5 Automatic fire sprinkler systems, Part 5: Home fire sprinkler systems.

AS 2118.6 Automatic fire sprinkler systems, Part 6: Combined sprinkler and hydrant systems in multistorey buildings.

Users wishing to conform with sprinkler requirements would need to use Part 1, the general requirements relating to all sprinkler systems, and then select the specific part(s) that apply to their situation.

3.7.4   Normative and informative

Two terms that are consistently used with Standards are 'normative' and 'informative'.

Normative is used to describe an element that is necessary for conformance with the Standard.

Informative is used to describe an element of a Standard that gives additional information, recommendations and/or guidelines. Where a Standard contains both normative and informative elements, the informative material is usually aimed at explaining the normative requirements and helping the user to understand the Standard.

3.7.5   Normative elements

Normative is most commonly used in the context of a Normative Appendix. Such appendices are an integral part of the Standard and conformance with such an Appendix is required for conformance with the whole Standard. Normative Appendices are clearly marked as 'Normative' and are referenced from a normative clause (e.g. 'the product shall conform with the test method specified in Appendix A').

3.7.6   Informative elements

The most common informative element in a Standard is the Note which has been integrated into the text. These notes are usually set out in a different format from the main text, for example:

NOTE 1: *A note is indented and in a smaller font.*

NOTE 2: *There may be several notes listed together, in which case each note is separately numbered.*

Notes are always informative, used for giving additional information to assist the understanding or use of the document. Footnotes are rarely used in Standards, and when they are, it is usually to provide an informative reference to another publication.

Informative appendices may also be included to provide commentary or additional guidance on the use of the Standard. Informative appendices can only be referenced to the informative content of the Standard such as an advisory note.

3.7.7   Tables and figures

Nearly all Standards make use of tables and figures. These can be normative or informative.

Tables and figures can be referenced in a normative clause, inferring that the table and figure are also normative requirements e.g. 'The dimensions of the sub-assembly shall be in accordance with Table 1 and the layout of the slots shall be in accordance with Figure 4.'

Informative tables and figures are often used to help provide context, for example, in design relationships and concepts.

3.7.8   Referenced documents

Referenced documents are documents that have been referenced in the main body of the Standard and in Appendices. Referenced documents are often other Standards.

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A referenced document can either be normative or informative. When a *normative reference* is made, it is used in a normative clause (e.g. 'the paint used shall conform with the requirements of AS 1234'). *Informative references* (e.g. 'further information on the methods of measuring slew can be found in AS 3456') may be referenced from any element.

When referencing other Standards, committees ensure that the references are valid and relevant to the Standard being prepared. Specific clauses are not referenced since they may change in later editions of referenced documents.

References to other Standards can be dated or undated. Undated references are recommended, particularly when it is accepted that all future changes in the referenced document will be useable. Dated references may be used in exceptional circumstances, where reference to a specific element or clause is required.

The term 'Related Documents' is also sometimes used. These documents are not referenced in the Standard but have been listed to help users gain a better understanding of the subject matter. Related documents are often placed in an informative Appendix titled 'Bibliography'.

3.8 Drafting of Standards

3.8.1 General

The responsibility for the technical content of a Standard resides with the Technical Committee (TC). It is the final version of the Standard that is voted on by the TC. No changes are made to the technical content of a document after this stage, without further agreement of the TC and consideration given to the impact of making technical changes at this stage, e.g. delaying the agreed publication date, having to repeat the public comment or committee ballot processes.

When drafting Standards, Committee Members ensure that the content is up-to-date, relevant and reflects community expectations and a Net Benefit to the community. For example, if there are several acceptable technical solutions, but one does not meet the Standard, it could have significant legal and financial implications for those using that solution. Alternatively, if the balance between factors, such as cost and safety, is biased, the community may be disadvantaged, with solutions that either offer inadequate safety for the cost, or that provide unnecessary features at a high cost.

Transparency and consensus building are, therefore, essential in the national standardisation process.

NOTE Drafting of Standards is undertaken in accordance with SG 006 Rules for the structure and drafting of Australian Standards and SG 001 Preparing Standards.

3.8.2 Requirements and recommendations

Apart from Guidance Standards (see Clause 3.2 Purpose of Standards), Standards contain requirements. A requirement can be defined as 'an expression in a document conveying criteria to be fulfilled if conformance with the document is to be claimed and from which no deviation is permitted'. Requirements are normative and are expressed in unambiguous terms and use special language (see Clause 3.8.3 The use of shall, must and should).

Many Standards, including Guidance Standards, include recommendations. A recommendation can be defined as 'an expression in a document conveying that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required, or that (in the negative form) a certain possibility or course of action is deprecated but not prohibited.

NOTE Refer to ISO/IEC Guide 2, Standardization and related activities — General vocabulary.

3.8.3 The use of shall, must and should

In accordance with SG 006 Rules for the structure and drafting of Australian Standards, the word 'shall' is used to state that a requirement is strictly to be followed in order to conform to a Standard. There can be no deviation from that requirement, other than where there is a specified tolerance.

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In legislation and specifications, it is common to use the word 'must' to express a requirement; however, the use of 'must' is avoided in Standards. Where Standards are adopted in legislation, the word 'shall' in the Standard is considered equivalent to 'must' in the legislation.

The words 'should' or 'may' (and 'should not' or 'may not') introduces a suggestion or recommendation that is not a requirement. Such suggestions or recommendations do not need to be followed to conform with the Standard.

3.9 Product Status

The following is a list of the terms used to indicate the status of Australian Standards (AS), or joint Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS) and their supporting documents.

Current—indicates that the product is up-to-date and available.

Available Superseded—indicates that the product continues to be available for a period, although it has been formally superseded by another document. Its availability is maintained where it forms the basis for certification, is called up in legislation/regulations (notably the Building Code of Australia) or in other products, and its use should be restricted to where it is referenced. Standards Australia takes no responsibility for the ongoing technical validity of a superseded document.

In the case of being used as the basis for certification, the Available Superseded publication must be available until the relevant certification of all organisations has lapsed.

Once the need for maintaining an Available Superseded product has passed, the product status should be changed to Superseded.

NOTE   Available Superseded publications cannot be reconfirmed.

Obsolescent—indicates that the product is not recommended for new equipment or as a current practice, but is retained to provide for servicing of existing equipment or requirements.

Redesignated—indicates that a product has been given a new Standard reference number, e.g. AS 1234:2013 is redesignated AS ISO 9876:2014.

Superseded—indicates that the product has been withdrawn and replaced by another product. This may be a newer edition of the product with the same designation, or a different product (such as an adopted International Standard), or a new product that covers the same technical field.

Withdrawn—indicates that the product is no longer relevant and has not been replaced (however, withdrawn publications can still be purchased if required).

A product may be withdrawn if it:

- Is not up-to-date technically;

- Does not reflect current practice;

- Is not suitable for new and existing applications (products, systems, or processes); and

- Is not compatible with current views and expectations regarding quality, safety and the environment.

3.10 Patents

A Standard does not confer a monopoly on one section of industry to the detriment of another that can provide an equally satisfactory article. Nonetheless, on exceptional occasions, technical reasons may justify inclusion of patented items in the Standard. There is no objection in principle to this, provided that certain rules are followed.

The rules governing patented items in Standards are adopted from ISO and IEC. The most important rule is that, before patented material is included as a requirement in a Standard, the patent owner has provided a formal statement of agreement to make licences available to all who apply, on reasonable and non-discriminatory terms.

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3.11 International Adoption

Standards Australia has a policy to adopt International Standards prepared by ISO and IEC, as Australian Standards (AS) or joint Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS), wherever possible. This policy has been implemented to reflect Government policy on compliance with the World Trade Organisation Technical Barriers to Trade (WTOTBT) Agreement.

When a new International Standard is produced, it is considered for adoption as a national Standard by the relevant committee. If the committee decides not to adopt the International Standard, it will provide documented reasons for the unsuitability of the International Standard for use in Australia and, where appropriate, New Zealand. If the International Standard is adopted but national variations are incorporated, the committee is required to provide documented reasons for these variations.

Other international publications, e.g. Technical Specifications and Technical Reports, can also be adopted. In some cases, an international publication may be adopted as a national publication of a different type e.g. an international technical specification may be adopted as an Australian Standard.

Refer to SG 007 Adoption of International Standards. See also Clause 6 International Equivalents.

3.12 Standards in Legislation

Australian Standards (AS) or joint Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS) are often called up in State and Commonwealth legislation. When this happens, these Standards become mandatory and can be subject to scrutiny in Court. Therefore, every attempt is made to ensure Standards are written in a clear and concise manner, avoiding ambiguity, and making clear what is required to conform with the Standard (and therefore to comply with the regulation or contract that calls up the Standard).

In some cases, Standards are drafted specifically for legislative adoption. To accommodate the various purposes of a Standard, the contents are often arranged so that the requirements intended to be adopted in legislation are clearly separate from those which are not relevant for this purpose e.g. in separate sections or parts of the Standard.

Refer to SG 009 Preparation of Standards for Legislative Adoption.

4   DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING STANDARDS

4.1 Amendments

After a Standard has been published, new information may be presented to the committee or errors found in the published document. When this occurs, an Amendment to the Standard is usually issued.

Normally, Amendments should not alter more than 10 % of the original document and should not have more than two amendments issued for the one edition of document. If this is exceeded, a full revision of the document is recommended, and a new edition is typically developed. Amendments are usually only issued in the first two years after the Standard's publication; any changes after this should be incorporated into a new edition.

Amendments have the designation 'Standard Number:Year Amendment Number: Year' (e.g. AS 1234:2013 Amd 1:2014), and are numbered consecutively and dated.

There are two types of amendments: correction and revised text.

Correction amendments correct misprints or typographical mistakes in text or equations, incorrect figures in tables, wrong clause numbers or clauses lost in the editing/publication process. Correction amendments do not add new material or affect the application of the publication. Correction amendments do not need to go to Public Comment but do need endorsement from the committee.

Revised text amendments make minor changes to an existing publication, which have not previously been approved by the committee. This may include changes to text to clarify the meaning, addition of new requirements and making changes to procedures defined in the Standard. Revised text amendments affect the application of

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the Standard. Technical changes to a publication will generally require a revised text amendment to be issued, or a full revision (i.e. new edition) if the changes are substantial.

Revised text amendments are developed by the same TC responsible for the parent Standard, in accordance with the Standards development process described in SG 001 Preparing Standards, and require Public Comment and Ballot.

NOTE 1 Users of Standards should ensure that they check for any published amendments. Most amendments to Australian Standards can be downloaded at no cost from our distributors.

NOTE 2 Publication of amendments involves the agreed changes being cut-in to the publication and referenced on the cover, Preface and control sheet of the publication, and being published as a stand-alone document.

4.2 Supplements

These are additional, separate documents that support and assist in the implementation of a Standard. There are two basic types of supplements: normative and informative.

- A **normative** supplement forms an integral part of a Standard (e.g. pre-calculated application tables, technical drawings, charts, coverage of new or unusual circumstances) and **does** require Public Comment and Ballot; or

- An **informative** supplement provides background information to the Standard (e.g. commentary providing background reference material to specific clauses in a Standard) and **does not** require Public Comment, but **does** require Ballot.

The Supplement is normally either issued with the Standard or within 12 months of its publication. However, if the need for the Supplement only becomes evident later in the life of the Standard, a Supplement may still be issued.

Supplements have the designation 'AS XXXX:Year Sup Supplement Number:Supplement Year', (e.g. AS 1234:2017 Sup 1:2017), are numbered consecutively and dated.

All Supplements are developed by the same TC responsible for the parent Standard, in accordance with the Standards development process described in SG 001 Preparing Standards.

A common type of informative supplement is a Commentary, which provides background reference material to specific clauses in the Standard. Commentaries may also indicate the origins of requirements and explain the application of certain clauses as well as providing some general assistance with the use of the Standard. They often have their paragraph numbers aligning with the clause numbers in the Standard (i.e. Commentary on Clause 2.1 is provided by Paragraph C2.1).

Commentaries may refer to the Standard, however the normative clauses in the Standard will not refer to a Commentary.

4.3 Rulings

Although individual committee members may reasonably express their own point of view on the background and intent of a Standard in which they have been involved, they do not have the authority to present an official Standards Australia interpretation of provisions in the Standard. Where users or stakeholders express uncertainty about the interpretation or application of a Standard or part thereof, Standards Australia may request the committee to provide a Ruling on a technical matter relating to a Standard. This can include a clarification of the meaning of a clause or the applicability of a Standard to a specific situation.

When a committee provides an interpretation on a matter relating to a particular Standard, the response must be agreed to by the committee before it is published as a Ruling. A Ruling is a publicly available document providing clarification on a technical matter relating to a Standard (including adopted ISO/IEC Standards), the official meaning of a Standard's requirements, or the applicability of a Standard to a specific practical situation. Rulings do not contain additional normative requirements since these are published as an amendment to the Standard. Amendments to Rulings are not permitted, instead a replacement Ruling is issued.

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Rulings must undergo a Committee Ballot. In certain circumstances, formal agreement on Rulings is also sought from the appropriate regulatory authority. Rulings may be country specific, i.e. separate rulings may be issued for Australia and New Zealand when the subject is a joint AS/NZS Standard.

4.4   Reconfirmation Notice

The Reconfirmation of a Standards Australia publication may occur as a result of the periodic review of the publication, or as is required. The designation and contents of the original publication remain unchanged.

A 'Reconfirmation Notice' is published as a stand-alone document. It confirms that a Standards Australia product has been formally reviewed by the relevant TC, and other stakeholders where appropriate, and remains technically correct and reflective of current practice.

A 'Reconfirmation Notice' is only issued where the Reconfirmation is supported by the TC in the same way as approval of a Standard. Refer to SG 001 Preparing Standards.

The 'Reconfirmation Notice' will state that the publication has been reconfirmed. It will carry the designation of the original publication plus the word "Rec" and the reconfirmation year, e.g. "AS 1234:2002 Rec 2012".

5   OTHER PUBLICATIONS

5.1   Background

Developing national consensus Standards, as set out in the traditional path specified in SG 001 Preparing Standards, is a structured and potentially time consuming process. There are instances where a normative or informative technical document is required, and traditional standardisation processes may not deliver the optimal solution. In addition to the alternative path for the development of an Australian Standard as specified in SG 001 Preparing Standards, there are several other publications available that may better meet the needs of stakeholders.

Standards Australia issues publications with varying levels of consensus and consultation. These publications vary in their level of authority, from the purely informative, to being precursors of Standards in new fields where the traditional path to standardisation has not previously been undertaken. For example, a document may be produced to assist readers in using and applying an Australian Standard without introducing additional measures, or simply for public disclosure of information. Alternative content may also be developed to quickly address an emerging need for guidelines; for example, where a new hazard to health and safety has been identified and steps to manage or reduce the risk are provided, or to provide guidance on implementing a new or emerging technology that would provide significant benefits in industrial efficiency.

A variety of products are available to meet the different needs of users when a national Standard is not the optimal solution.

Table 1 summarises the transparency and consensus levels for the different Standards Australia products and might assist in determining which is most appropriate for a project.

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Table 1—Transparency and consensus for Standards Australia products

PROCESS REQUIREMENTS (see Note 1)				
Product Type (product designation)	**Transparency**	**Consensus**	**SDAC Approval**	**Comments**
Australian Standard (AS)	High – Public Comment (PC) required	High – Ballot required	Yes	Nil.
Australian Interim Standard (AS (Int))	Medium – Stakeholder feedback after publication; PC not required	Low – committee endorsement required3 Publication may proceed even if there are objections from stakeholders.	Yes	See Clause 5.2 Interim Standard. See Note 3 about Endorsement.
Australian Technical Specification (SA TS)	Medium – Peer Review required; PC optional	Low – Peer review required	Info only	See Clause 5.3 Technical Specification.
Australian Technical Report (SA TR)	Low – PC not required	Low – committee endorsement3 required	Info only	See Clause 5.4 Technical Report. See Note 2 about Amendments.
Handbook (SA HB)	Medium – Peer Review required; PC not required4	Low – Peer review required	Info only	See Note 4 for SNZ HB PC requirements.
Miscellaneous Publication (SA MP)	Low – PC not required	Low – Peer review required	Info only	Nil.
Ruling (Rul)	Low – PC not required	High – Ballot required	Yes	See Clause 4.3 Rulings.
Reconfirmation Notice (Rec)	Low – committee review required; PC not required	Low – committee endorsement3 required	Info only	See Clause 4.4 Reconfirmation Notice. See Note 3 about Endorsement.
Supplement - Normative (Sup)	High – PC required	High – Ballot required	Yes	See Clause 4.2 Supplements.
Supplement - Informative (Sup) (Includes commentaries)	Low – PC not required	High – Ballot required	Yes	
Correction Amendment (Amd)2	Low – PC not required	Low – committee endorsement3 required	Info only	See Note 2 about Amendments. See Note 3 about Endorsement.
Revised Text Amendment (Amd)2	High – PC required	High – Ballot required	Yes	See Note 2 about Amendments.

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NOTES

1. *The processes in Table 1 are the minimum levels required. Higher consensus and transparency levels may be used where warranted.*

2. *Amendments may be applied to a Standard, Interim Standard, Supplement, Technical Specification, Technical Report, Miscellaneous Publication and Handbook. Amendments should normally only be issued within 2 years of the initial publication of the product and should not have more than 2 amendments issued for the one document. Amendments to Rulings are not permitted, instead a replacement Ruling is issued.*

3. *Committee endorsement means that while a formal Committee Ballot process is not conducted, the endorsement of the Technical Committee is recorded, such as by a 'letter of no objection' or consensus minuted at a committee meeting or via email. The PM will determine the method of endorsement, with consideration for the product type and context.*

4. *New Zealand Handbooks (SNZ HB) require PC for 4 weeks and formal endorsement by more than half the committee.*

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5.2 Interim Standard

An Interim Standard can be either an Australian Standard (AS) or a joint Australian/New Zealand Standard (AS/NZS). It is a provisional and/or an emerging Standard. It is prepared by a formally constituted TC in a subject field where some requirements remain undetermined or where national consensus has yet to be realised. An Interim Standard provides both an indication of the direction of future standardisation in the field and a mechanism to collect public feedback on the subject. Because of this, Interim Standards are not subject to Public Comment or Ballot in the same way as a Standard developed using the traditional pathway.

Its designation follows the rules for Standards except that '(Int)' is included after the number.

Interim Standards may be used for several reasons, such as a new area of technology where there is not yet sufficient agreement on technical solutions.

The development of an Interim Standard can take about half the time of a Standard developed using the traditional pathway.

Stakeholders, including members of the public, are encouraged to submit comments once the Interim Standard is published. Iterations can be done at any stage. An Interim Standard can also be converted into an Australian Standard at any time. A committee ballot that meets the consensus criteria is required for its publication as an Australian Standard.

If no changes are made within 2 years of its publication, the responsible committee undertakes a Systematic Review of the Interim Standard, and decides whether to withdraw it, to confirm it as an Australian Standard, revise the text, or reconfirm it for a further 2 years.

5.3 Technical Specification

A Technical Specification (which is often referred to as an Australian Technical Specification, or ATS, to differentiate it from an International Technical Specification) is a normative document that has undergone a peer review process.

The designation for a Technical Specification is 'SA **TS nnnn:year**' where nnnn is a number that follows the rules for Standards (see Clause 3.7 Components of Standards).

A Technical Specification may be prepared in a field where the subject matter, or a related aspect such as the regulatory environment, is undergoing rapid change and where speed of delivery, rather than the traditional standardisation pathway, is of paramount importance. In such cases, it would be expected an Australian Standard would eventually be developed to supersede the Technical Specification.

A Technical Specification may also be developed if the required level of stakeholder consensus to support an Australian Standard cannot be reached. While Handbooks (see Clause 5.5 Handbook) might also meet this need, sometimes the national interest is better served by providing information which has achieved a degree of stakeholder agreement and support. A Technical Specification can fulfil this function; while it may include normative language, it does not purport to be a Standard.

The content of a Technical Specification is usually developed by a Working Group (WG) of selected experts and/or relevant parties, under the direction of a constituted TC with sufficient understanding of the subject matter to oversee the process. A new project to develop a Technical Specification requires the same project approval process as a Standard. A Technical Specification is usually subjected to a peer review process before publication. In some cases, a Technical Specification may be opened to Public Comment if it is justified by the TC. Comments are considered by the WG.

Finally, the TC is asked to endorse the Technical Specification and confirm that the appropriate process has been followed e.g. required consultations and peer review have occurred.

5.4 Technical Report

There will be cases where it is necessary to publish different sets of data. A Technical Report, (also referred to as an Australian Technical Report, or ATR), has always accompanied each Australian Standard Certified Reference Material (ASCRM) and contains information on the preparation of the reference material, including its

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chemical and physical properties. The Technical Report series has been expanded to include data lists on any subject. Such data may be the results of research, calculations, or empirical observations. Technical Reports do not contain requirements and do not generally contain explanatory details or information supplementary to a Standard.

The designation of a Technical Report is 'SA **TR nnnn:year**' where nnnn is a number referring to the ASCRM that is the subject of the report, or a sequential number that follows the rules for Standards (see Clause 3.7.2 Numbering (Designation)).

The content of a Technical Report is developed by a TC. Drafting may be performed by an individual or a small WG, without the need for peer review or Public Comment. At the end of the process, the TC is asked to endorse the final document. The time frame for developing a Technical Report varies since it is generally a by-product of the development of another deliverable.

5.5   Handbook

The designation of a Handbook is 'SA **HB nnnn:year**' where nnnn is a sequential number. A Handbook is an informative document that may be used to support a Standard or a group of Standards already in place. It may either aid implementation or provide additional information to users of the Standard(s). In some circumstances a Handbook may be produced where there is no Standard, and no TC, but the content is considered to be in the public interest. One possibility is to publish a Handbook to gauge reaction and seek comments in a new field; and depending on the feedback, determine whether consensus standardisation activities are warranted. It should be noted that Handbooks represent the views of the author(s) and there could be other, equally valid, points of view on the subject.

The technical content of a Handbook is normally developed by a single author or by a selected group of experts, rather than by a constituted TC. In cases where consensus cannot be reached following the development of a draft Standard, the TC may elect to publish the document as a Handbook so that users gain the benefits of the committee's deliberations. In this case there are no requirements, and the information is advisory only. A Handbook can also be developed in conjunction with an industry association which would take responsibility for the bulk of the drafting work.

Whichever approach is taken, a Handbook is subject to a peer review process. Peer reviewers are normally taken from appropriate committee(s) but could also include external technical experts. A new project to develop a Handbook is managed in accordance with SG 001 Preparing Standards. In some cases, a simple commercial arrangement is used.

5.6   Miscellaneous Publication

The designation of a Miscellaneous Publication is 'SA **MP nnnn:year**' where nnnn is a sequential number. A Miscellaneous Publication is an informative document listing information of a different kind to that found in other Standards Australia's products. Some examples may include additional information collected in the process of developing a Standard or a list of products that have been approved for use under a certification scheme. In certain circumstances Miscellaneous Publications can report requirements used in certification schemes.

A Miscellaneous Publication is normally developed at the direction of a constituted TC. A new project to develop a Miscellaneous Publication requires the same approval process as a Standard (refer to SG 001 Preparing Standards). Once the decision has been made to develop the product, no further approval is required for the contents of the first or subsequent editions. Similarly, no Public Comment is required.

5.7   Standards Alert

A Standards Alert is an informative document issued by Standards Australia to provide clarification on a specific matter requiring urgent notification to an affected industry, or to the public in general. The Standards Alert sets out the specific matter and the advice of the committee to address the matter.

A Standards Alert is based on uncontested factual information and is used where speed of delivery is paramount. The Standards Alert will normally be withdrawn once the matter has been addressed in the relevant Standard(s).

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The matter and the proposed information to be released are forwarded electronically to the relevant committee for review. The information is then updated as necessary based on committee comment. Only the views of those who respond within the given time frame are considered, and the Standards Alert can be released so long as, amongst those responses, no major stakeholder interest collectively maintains an objection.

5.8   Certified Reference Material

While not a publication, an Australian Standard Certified Reference Material (ASCRM) is important in a number of industries, particularly coal and minerals. ASCRMs are samples with a known composition that can be used as a 'standard' for chemical analysis.

ASCRMs are always accompanied by a Technical Report providing details of their source, preparation and chemical composition.

5.9   Rules for the Designation of other Publications

To help distinguish between other publications, i.e. Handbooks (HB), Miscellaneous Publications (MP), Technical Reports (TR), Technical Specifications (TS) and Rulings (Rul), the following designation rules apply:

- "SA" will be displayed in front of the HB, MP, TR, TS and Rul in the designation for publications where it is an Australian only document; and

- "SA/SNZ" will be displayed in front of the HB, MP, TR, TS and Rul in the designation for publications where it is a joint Australian/New Zealand document.

6   INTERNATIONAL EQUIVALENTS

International standards development organisations produce similar types of deliverables to Standards Australia. However, for practical reasons, an exact alignment is not always possible.

Table 2 displays the general equivalence between Australian and international documents in terms of their purpose, development process and approval requirements. However, Australia does maintain the right to determine the content of Australian Standards and other deliverables, and if adopting publications other than Standards, may choose to use an SA publication type that may not be considered equivalent. For example, an International Technical Specification could be adopted as an Australian Standard if there is strong national support for its contents.

NOTE   The [WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO TBT) Agreement](#) only makes recommendations in relation to the national adoption of International Standards. Other ISO and IEC deliverables are not accorded any special status under the WTO TBT agreement or related trade agreements to which Australia is party.

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Table 2—Suggested equivalence of ISO/IEC and Standards Australia deliverables

ISO/IEC	Standards Australia	Comments
International Standard (ISO, IEC)	Australian Standard (AS)	These are essentially equivalent.
Technical Specification (ISO/TS, IEC/TS)	Technical Specification (SA TS) Handbook (SA HB)	These are essentially equivalent.
Publicly Available Specification (ISO/PAS, IEC/PAS)	Technical Specification (SA TS) Interim Standard (AS (Int))	An ISO/IEC PAS is used to respond to an urgent market need, representing either consensus in an organisation external to ISO or IEC, or consensus of the experts within a WG. They are published for immediate use and to obtain feedback for eventual transformation into an International Standard. By this definition, an equivalent SA publication could be, either or both, a Technical Specification or an Interim Standard. However, while the purpose of an Interim Standard is the same as a PAS, it should also be noted that the speed to publication is generally longer for an Interim Standard than an ISO or IEC PAS.
Technical Report (ISO/TR, IEC/TR)	Technical Report (SA TR) Handbook (SA HB)	These are essentially equivalent.

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ISO/IEC	Standards Australia	Comments
Guide (ISO Guide, IEC Guide)	Handbook (SA HB)	These are essentially equivalent. ISO and IEC Guides help readers understand more about the main areas Standards add value. They can include rules, orientation, advice or recommendations relating to international standardisation and conformity assessment.
Amendment (ISO/AMD, IEC/AMD)	Revised Text Amendment (AS Amd)	These are essentially equivalent.
Technical Corrigendum (ISO/COR, IEC/COR)	Correction Amendment (AS Amd)	These are essentially equivalent. A technical corrigendum is issued to correct a technical error or ambiguity in an International Standard, Technical Specification, PAS or Technical Report, inadvertently introduced in drafting or printing and which could lead to incorrect or unsafe application of the publication.
Interpretation Sheet (IEC/ISH)	Ruling (AS Rul)	These are essentially equivalent. An interpretation sheet provides a quick formal explanation to an urgent request by a user of a Standard. The request may come directly or via an IEC conformity assessment scheme.
No current equivalent international deliverable	Supplement (AS Sup)	Nil.
	Reconfirmation Notice (AS Rec)	While Reconfirmation Notices are not published by ISO or IEC, the dates of reconfirmation are recorded in a publication's metadata.
	Miscellaneous Publication (SA MP)	Nil.

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ISO/IEC	Standards Australia	Comments
	Standards Alert	Nil.
International Workshop Agreement (IWA)	Handbook (SA HB)	An ISO IWA is a document developed outside the normal ISO committee system to enable market players to negotiate in an "open workshop" environment. IWAs are typically administratively supported by a member body. The published agreement includes an indication of the participating organisations involved in its development.

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7 CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT

In many cases, it is important for organisations to demonstrate that their products, services or organisational activities conform with the requirements of a specific Standard. Demonstration of conformance can be for self-improvement, marketing reasons or as a legislative requirement. While not strictly an output of the standardisation process, assessing conformance to a Standard ('certification' or 'accreditation') is an important process aligned with standardisation.

There are two forms of certification, 'product certification' or 'system certification'. Product certification refers to confirming that a specific product (e.g. a bicycle helmet, a brand of cement, or a type of water pipe) conforms with the relevant Standard and is fit for purpose. System certification (sometimes called 'accreditation') confirms that specific management activities within an organisation (e.g. quality management, WH&S, environmental management) conform with the relevant Standard. System certification is also often used as an important tool to improve management and operational efficiency within an organisation.

Assessment of conformance is carried out by independent third parties known as conformity assessment bodies. Conformity assessment bodies (sometimes called 'certification bodies') must be accredited to carry out certification. To maintain their own accreditation, they go through rigorous auditing to ensure they have the competence, credibility, independence and integrity to effectively carry out their certification activities.

The accreditor for certification bodies is the Commonwealth Government appointed body JAS-ANZ (Joint Accreditation System – Australia New Zealand). More details on accreditation and certification can be found on the JAS-ANZ website https://www.jas-anz.org/.

Standards used for conformity assessment are couched in normative terms to ensure there is no ambiguity in requirements, and it is only these normative requirements that are assessed. If a Standard that will be used for certification is being developed, it is usual to have a representative of conformity assessment bodies on the TC drafting the Standard.

For more information and to refer to the Conformity Assessment policy, refer to SG 006 Rules for the structure and drafting of Australian Standards.

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APPENDIX A PUBLISHER PREFIXES

This list includes Publisher Prefixes likely to be encountered in Australia:

Prefix	Publisher or Description
AS	Australian Standard
AS IEC	Australian adoption of an IEC Standard (and similarly AS/NZS IEC)
AS ISO	Australian adoption of an ISO Standard (and similarly AS/NZS ISO)
AS ISO/IEC	Australian adoption of a joint ISO/IEC Standard (and similarly AS/NZS ISO/IEC)
AS/NZS	Joint Australian/New Zealand Standard
EN	European Union Standard
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISO/IEC	Joint ISO and IEC Standard
AFSL	Australian Forestry Standard Limited
CA	Communications Alliance
CISPR	International Special Committee on Radio Interference
PGA	Pharmacy Guild of Australia
RISSB	Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board
FRDC	Fisheries Research and Development Corporation

NOTE   *This list is not intended to be exhaustive but to indicate some of the Primary Publishers at the time this Guide was developed.*

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DOCUMENT HISTORY

The following details the history of this document:

Date	Author	Amendment Details
02/08/09		v1.0 - First release of Guide which is a consolidation of content from multiple Guides.
03/02/10	Policies and Procedures Officer	v1.1 - Clarify drafting responsibility and SDC approval steps and re-issued.
19/07/10	Policies and Procedures Officer	v1.2 - Added a link in section 7 to the Conformity Assessment policy in SG-006 and re-issued.
09/06/11	Policies and Procedures Officer	v1.3 - Fix broken hyperlinks, minor amendments and re-issued.
21/02/12	Process and Procedures Officer	v1.4 - Update all hyperlinks after new corporate website released and re-issued.
05/04/12	Process and Procedures Officer	v1.5 - Minor amendment to 3.5 re: the use of Shall, Must and Should to reflect current practice and re-issued.
16/01/13	Process and Procedures Coordinator	v1.6 - Reconfirmed/updated Document History and re-issued.
21/01/13	Process and Procedures Coordinator	v1.7 - Included 'Reconfirmation Notice' as a publication type, minor amendments and re-issued.
05/11/14	Process and Procedures Coordinator	v1.8 - Reconfirm/amend all product types, update designation references and minor amendments to clarify Accredited SDOs and ABSDO requirements.
29/01/16	Process and Procedures Coordinator	v1.9 - Update SDC references to SDAC and update ABSDO references.
22/03/19	Process and Procedures Coordinator	v1.10 - Clause 3.9 amended to clarify SA's definition of Available Superseded, Superseded and Withdrawn product statuses. Minor editorial changes throughout.
12/07/19	Process and Procedures Coordinator	v1.11 - Replaced references to "SAI Global" with "our distributors" and updated "deemed to comply" with "deemed to satisfy" in Clause 3.6.
25/08/22	Policy Writer	v1.12 - Change "comply" and "compliance" to "conform" and "conformance" in relation to Standards. Clause 3.7.1: Update terms to align with current practice. Clause 3.7.4 and throughout: remove "mandatory" and replace with "normative" where relevant. Clause 3.7.8 and Clause 3.7.3: change preferred referencing to undated references. Table1: clarification of transparency and consensus requirements for different products. Clause 6 and Table 2: Clarification on ISO and IEC equivalents of SA publications. Minor editorial changes throughout.
16/06/23	Policy Writer	V2.0 - Changed "'full' Standard" and "consensus-based standardisation" to refer to Standards developed using the "traditional path" of standardisation. Clause 5 and Clause 5.1: Changed "lower consensus" to "other" publications. Changes to 5.2 Interim Standards. Minor editorial changes throughout.
26/06/23	Policy Manager	V2.0.1 - Fixed links and upload of new version.