

Submission to the Productivity Commission's Research Study into the Australian Government's Relationship with Standards Australia Limited and the National Association of Testing Authorities

Access and Affordability

We affirm the recommendation of the Productivity Commission for inexpensive access to the Building Code of Australia and its referenced Standards. As an architectural company practising in two locations, we require two copies of each relevant standard. We have found the on-line version to be cumbersome to navigate and have experienced access difficulties. We have purchased electronic (.pdf) versions of standards but have found the security mechanism problematic if upgrading computers and have been denied access to standards we have purchased. We have therefore found it necessary to print the electronic Standard ourselves at even higher cost, and this must be done within 7 days of purchase. All this, together with the administrative confusion, adds to the already significant cost of standards and has further impact on the running costs of our small to medium size practice.

Many of the representatives on Standards committees do so on a voluntary basis, contributing their time, professional experience and intellectual effort (for the public good). Currently the proceeds of that effort are redirected to a publicly listed company that is making larger profits each year and yet we are receiving poor quality publications and poor assistance when difficulties arise.

Compliance

The trend for standards to cite immeasurable targets, as is the case with acoustic separation between tenancies in multi-residential buildings, makes compliance impossible and leaves the architectural profession open to expensive litigation.

Quality

This year we purchased the updated Glass in Buildings Set for just over \$200 for one copy of the standard. Contained within this standard are diagrams with various hatching and shaded areas which are almost impossible to discern. The end product quality is simply unacceptable for the set price.

Conclusion

In order to achieve well designed and constructed buildings in Australia, which are compliant with

the Building Code of Australia and best recognised practice, Standards ought be affordable , reliable in quality and attainable in outcome.