



Inquiry into access to Australian Standards
adopted in delegated legislation

(by the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation)

Submission from the
State Library of Western Australia

January 2015

Legislative Framework

The State Library of Western Australia is a Statutory Authority constituted under the *Library Board of Western Australia Act 1951*. The Accountable Authority (under the Financial Management Act) is the Library Board of Western Australia.

The Act **establishes the Library Board** to:

- manage the State Reference Library;
- develop a network of public libraries across WA, provide advice to the Minister on policy and funding in relation to public libraries, inspect libraries; and
- control and manage libraries and library services and provide training for librarians.

The *Legal Deposit Act 2012* provides for the deposit of WA publications with the State Library to ensure the ongoing collection and preservation of the State's cultural heritage for future generations. Most of the *Act* is in force requiring the deposit of published physical publications and digital publications on a physical carrier. Consultation has begun to develop regulations under Part 3 of the *Act* which will require the deposit of online publications.

Our collections today comprise published books and journals, archives (business, private and community), oral histories, photographs, moving pictures, realia and increasing numbers of digital publications of all formats. Our goal is to ensure the preservation of and access to the Western Australia's heritage collections for the very long term – 500 or more years.

Background

The mission of the State Library of Western Australia is:

For the benefit of all Western Australians, the State Library:

- ***treasures the stories of Western Australia;***
- ***champions literacy and learning;***
- ***cultivates creative ideas; and***
- ***leads the development of the Western Australian public library network***

Of particular relevance to this enquiry are its roles to champion literacy and learning and to lead the development of the Western Australian public library network.

The State Library has a strong history of supporting lifelong learning and providing access to resources for individuals who need to find information. In the past, when library materials were only available in printed form, and there was difficulty in obtaining access to major reference sources, the Library saw itself as a major support for industry and commerce in Western Australia, and in particular for smaller businesses. As a consequence it built up a strong collection of relevant standards focusing both on the standards from major trading and manufacturing countries (Australia, Great Britain, the United States of America, Germany and International

Standards), and for specific industries (engineering, vehicle design, construction, roads, shipping, materials testing and telecommunications).

Due to a number of factors, including the increasing cost of subscribing to these standards, decreasing budgets for library materials, the availability of standards online and a refocussing of the State Library's collecting strategy towards Western Australian publications, the Library cancelled most of these subscriptions except for an online subscription to the Australian Standards.

Access to the full range of printed standards was available only from the State Library Building, and they were not generally available on inter library loan. However, to ensure availability to Australian Standards for all Western Australians, a second subscription to the printed copies of Australian Standards was acquired from the public library materials budget so that they could be provided throughout the State on inter library loan through the public library network. In December 2005, the subscription to the second set of standards was cancelled due to cost pressures and low usage by public libraries.

Standards development is undertaken by government, industry, professional bodies etc. on a voluntary basis and at each contributor's cost. It is therefore important that there is public access to the output from that voluntary contribution for the betterment of society. For example, libraries and their professional bodies make a voluntary commitment to the work of Standards Australia through their participation on Committee IT-019 *Information and Documentation, Information Technology – Learning, Education, Training and Research*. The scope of work for this committee is input and review of standards relating to the standardisation of interoperable information and communications technology services in learning, education, training, research and preservation, in particular in the fields of:

- practices relating to libraries, documentation and information centres, museum documentation, indexing and abstracting services and information science;
- information technologies for learning, education, training to support individuals, groups or organisations, and to enable interoperability and reusability of resources and tools; and
- research data management and curation.

The State Library of Western Australia contributes through the auspices of National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA).

Terms of Reference

1. The level of free public access to adopted Australian Standards in metropolitan and regional Western Australia.

The State Library of Western Australia currently provides free public access to the database of Australian Standards from the State Library Building.

The current subscription to Australian Standards is through SAI Global's Standards Online Platform and is for the Public Library Edition. The State Library currently pays \$22,019 (inc. GST) annually for two concurrent users of the database, and with access to the standards from the State Library Building only.

The public library licence is quite restricted and allows:

- the reading of one standard at a time;
- a limited printing facility for patrons - one page at a time up to a maximum number of pages per standard, which varies as per the length of the standard;
- no printing or archiving of the full standard by the library;
- no inter library loans.

These restrictions make it a difficult database for clients to use.

For most online databases to which the State Library subscribes, access is available to members remotely i.e. from their home, work or educational institution. The State Library's collecting policy is to acquire electronic copies of resources rather than print and to make them available online so that everyone in Western Australia has access. However, SAI Global does not allow remote access through the public library licence and inter library loans are not allowed. This is a major disadvantage for people in rural and remote areas of Western Australia, or small businesses in the outer areas of Perth, who are unable to visit the State Library Building and could not afford to purchase a range of standards.

A Premium version of this database is available that has expanded printing options and the ability to download a whole standard for 48 hours access (similar to the loan of an e-book) but this version is no longer available to state libraries.

In 2014, there were 346 logins to the database and 516 searches to the Australian Standards database from the State Library Building.

Many of the State Library's electronic databases are purchased through a consortium of state and territory libraries and the National Library of Australia under the auspices of the National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) eResources Consortium. NSLA has enquired about a consortium arrangement for the purchase of Australian standards but this has up to now been refused. SAI Global prefer to negotiate with each library individually.

The State Library still has the printed versions of the standards it purchased prior to the change to the online subscription and these can be viewed in the Library, but they are becoming increasingly out of date as changes are made to the standards.

While individual printed standards could be purchased, a subscription to the complete printed version of the standards is no longer available to libraries.

There is no free access to Australian standards through the WA public library system and standards are not available for selection by public libraries through the supplier databases used to select public library materials.

In summary, the State Library of Western Australia provides free access to, and limited printing from, the database of Australian Standards from the State Library Building. However, this access is not available remotely from the State Library Building (and therefore outside the Perth metropolitan area) and inter library loans are not available through the public library system.

2. *Whether amendments to legislation are required to improve public access to adopted Australian Standards.*

An issue with improving access to Australian standards is that they are all protected under the Commonwealth *Copyright Act (1968)*. Although libraries have some exceptions under the Act e.g. inter library loan, as documents become increasingly electronic, they are supplied to libraries under licences/contracts which frequently contract away the exceptions under the *Copyright Act* which were applicable for printed publications such as inter library loan and fair dealing.

Changes to Western Australian laws would not override the federal Copyright Act or override licencing agreements offered by digital publishers.

If there was to be a legislative change proposed to allow access to Australian Standards, it would be necessary for state governments to negotiate with the Commonwealth Government to enact that change and enable access requirements to Australian Standards specified in legislation.

3. *Other measures to improve public access to adopted Australian Standards.*

A possible measure that may improve access to adopted Australian Standards would be pressure on Standards Australia (and its access partner SAI Global), to ensure that licences for public access to the online standards database from public institutions must allow remote access for all Australians. In this way, Australians from rural and regional areas could access the standards with the same access provisions as people in the metropolitan areas.

Standards Australia relies on the goodwill and voluntary work of many government employees to participate in the creation and review of standards. It is therefore important that the output from this work is made available to the public. This argument for open access is gathering momentum in regards to academic research, which is also undertaken and funded largely through government, but the output is largely locked away in journals that are only available to a limited audience at a considerable cost. Increasingly if the research is publically funded then the results must be made publically available on an open access website or institutional repository.

4. Measures to improve access to adopted Australian standards provided to the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation.

No further comment.