



Australian Library and
Information Association

**Submission in response to the Inquiry into access to Australian Standards
adopted in delegated legislation by the Joint Standing Committee on
Delegated Legislation, Legislative Council of Western Australia**

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1. About us

The Australian Library and Information Association [ALIA] is the professional organisation for the Australian library and information services sector. On behalf of our 5,000 personal and institutional members, we provide the national voice of the profession in the development, promotion and delivery of quality library and information services to the nation, through leadership, advocacy and mutual support.

2. Introduction

ALIA promotes the free flow of information and ideas through open access to recorded knowledge, information and creative works. This is a core value of the Association.

We support freedom of access to information and resources for all Australians, and where information has been produced using taxpayer funding, we believe there is a strong case for it to be made available to citizens free of charge through libraries.

3. Australian Standards in libraries

Australian Standards are of special relevance to teachers and students, especially those in the vocational education and training (VET) sector, to businesses (large and small), to sole traders and, from time-to-time, to members of the general public.

With increasing cost pressures, TAFE, corporate, State/Territory and public libraries struggle to afford subscriptions to Australian Standards. Having made the commitment, even though the cost of a licence runs into thousands of dollars, these libraries can only provide their users with restricted access – on site, rather than electronic; limitations on printing, and so on. This runs contrary to the overriding trend towards digital access and a library service that delivers to all Australians, 24/7.

4. Our position

While recognising the commercial reality of the outsourced model (through Standards Australia and SAI Global), we would like to see a better deal for libraries, with more affordable terms and remote access for library users outside the main urban centres.

We would like Australian Standards to be freely available through libraries to the citizens who have effectively funded their development, and we hope this Inquiry will be able to identify measures that will indeed improve public access.