

Inquiry into access to Australian Standards adopted in delegated legislation

(by the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation)

Submission from the
Public Libraries Western Australia Inc. (PLWA)



January 2015

Background

Public Libraries Western Australia Inc. (PLWA) is the peak body representing public libraries in Western Australia, working with state government and Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) on behalf of its membership, currently made up of 139 local authorities. PLWA plays a crucial role advocating for public libraries and their associated services in Western Australia.

PLWA also works closely with the State Library of Western Australia to promote the common mission of assisting the citizens of Western Australia to access important information.

Interest of PLWA in the Issue

It is a concern to public libraries, as a prime source of trusted information in communities, that the majority currently do not give effective access to Australian Standards. It is apparent that the cost structure and delivery method at this point is prohibitive for access/distribution to public libraries in WA.

Terms of Reference

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

Apart from public access via the State Library of WA, there are few local authority libraries that provide access to any Standards.

The subscriptions held by some local authorities to Standards Australia are restricted to use by its own officers, and not extended to members of the public, even though in many cases local authorities reference Standards in their own delegated legislation.

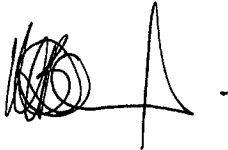
Since the State Library cancelled its duplicate print subscription in 2005, there has been no mechanism for public libraries to provide access to citizens locally via interlibrary loan. Citizens must physically visit the State Library in Perth. This is very inequitable, particularly for residents of regional areas.

Some libraries endeavour to hold standards of particular relevance or demand in their communities, for instance, when the building of houses within bushfire prone areas was amended with certain restrictions, a metropolitan library service purchased the Australian Standard Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas (AS 3959 – 2009), which could be consulted at each library within the local authority. However, such provision tends to be limited and ad hoc.

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

PLWA would like to see some mechanism for special access for public libraries to Australian Standards, in order to provide access to citizens seeking to understand legislation that references the Standards.

This could possibly be achieved via special licensing, and/or funds made available so that the State Library and public libraries can afford to give citizens effective and convenient access the Standards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke ending in a vertical line.

Michelle Brennand
President Public Libraries WA Inc (PLWA)