

## **PRODUCT STANDARDS AND YOUR BUSINESS**

*WHO sets consumer product standards?*

*How do 'THEY' set the standards?*

*How do 'THEY' know that the standards can be applied in the real world?*

As a small importer or manufacturer, you don't always get a say in the decisions that impact your business. It feels like nobody is listening. But some opportunities do exist . . .

### ***There are three main ways you can have some influence***

#### **1. Helping to write Australian Standards**

Some Australian Standards are available for reference. Others form the basis of government regulations. Either way, you can participate in how they are written.

##### ***Become a committee member***

Australian Standards are written by stakeholder committees, which include supplier representatives such as manufacturers, importers and retailers.

Organisations such as industry associations nominate people to represent them on Standards Australia committees.

Suppliers bring an important perspective to standards writing. They are often the ones with the most practical understanding of the products and what's workable to reduce hazards.

Practical and balanced standards mean better compliance. This helps everyone involved in product regulation, including the end user – the consumer.

##### ***Submit a comment during drafting***

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Even if you're not on the committee, you can still get involved. Standards Australia publishes draft standards when they have reached an advanced stage and invites comments.

Find out more about committee participation and public comment drafts on the [Standards Australia](#) website.

## **2. Direct to Government**

The federal government consults with affected stakeholders when proposing new mandatory standards and conducting reviews of its product regulations.

Anyone can register with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission for alerts to the latest consultations. And anyone can submit comments once the consultation process is in train.

*It makes a lot of sense for every business that sells regulated products to subscribe to these alerts.*

Even if you don't make any submissions, by subscribing you will become more aware of current issues and potential changes that may impact your business.

### ***Help the ACCC to help you***

It's good to let the ACCC know how the proposed changes will affect your business. And a consultation process is definitely the best time to do it!

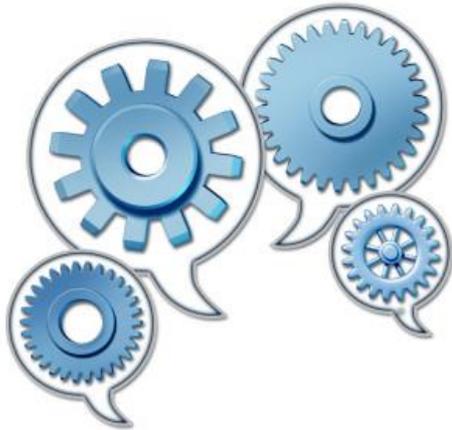
Impacts might be: extra cost, new restrictions on your product range, an unrecognised market impact, or other effects.

Consider what changes you would need to make and the potential costs.

*Is the regulation worded to best effect?*

*Is the scope well defined?*

*Can you think of products that are borderline, which maybe could be better described, or perhaps excluded from the regulation?*



*Is the proposed lead-time achievable?*

**Beware though** that because consultations occur before draft regulations are decided, you can't rely on a consultation draft for details of what will ultimately be in the regulation. Visit the [Product Safety Australia](#) website for details of current and past reviews and how to

subscribe to alerts.

### ***3. Industry and business associations***

Members of industry and business associations are able to bring influence through their organisation.

The ACCC often engages directly with associations for input and opinion when it is considering a new standard or conducting a review.

And associations sometimes develop their own standards and 'self-regulate'. The National Retailers Association, for instance, is developing a safety guideline for children's apparel.

Active participation in your association can bring rewards in product safety policy and compliance.

### ***NEXT STEPS...***

To influence standards, the easiest way is become a member of the BIA and work with us to achieve the best outcome for you and your customer.