

Standards Australia submission to the Australia Telework Advisory Committee (ATAC) consultation process

1 About us

Standards Australia (SA) is an independent, non-government organization that is recognised as the peak standards writing body in Australia through a memorandum of understanding with the Commonwealth Government.

2 Development of telework standards

2.1 Telework

There are no current national standards specifically for telework in Australia or internationally. The conduct of this consultation provides the basis for a common set of definitions, and a measure of the demand for the development of technological, occupational health and safety and management standards for telework.

The Australian Government Information Management Office *Better Practice Checklist 21 - ICT Support of Telework* (available at:

http://www.agimo.gov.au/practice/delivery/checklists/ict_support_for_telework) could provide an initial basis for development of Australian Standards in this area.

2.2 Telehealth

Telehealth is a specialised form of telework utilised in the Health sector, specifically through the transmission of images, voice and data between two or more health units via telecommunications channels to provide clinical advice, consultation, education and training services. Telehealth is a specialised and valuable form of telework and Standards Australia established a telehealth working group in 2004, reporting to IT-014, the Health Informatics committee.

IT-014-06-07 Telehealth is currently investigating the issues surrounding telehealth. It is anticipated that standards or guidelines in this specific area may be produced during 2006.

3 Telework at Standards Australia

Organizationally, Standards Australia is supportive of telework practices and strives to implement practices that provide both flexibility and efficiencies for its staff and committees.

3.1 Employees

Standards Australia has introduced telework to its workplace. Project Managers, Group Managers and General Managers are provided with email accounts, a laptop computer and Virtual Private Network access to complement teleworking.

Project Managers can arrange committee meetings that are often held away from the workplace and therefore Telework structures need to assist Projects Managers in preparing for and facilitating committee work.

Standards Australia has telework policies in place that currently, under special arrangements, allow a maximum of two working days per week to be performed in a telework capacity. One of the keys to expanded telework is the tangible measurable benefit of telework.

Standards Australia values the positive impact that telework has on the environment through reduced travel requirements. Standards Australia teleworking is aimed at putting an emphasis on effective performance rather than attendance. However, it is acknowledged that new performance measurement techniques are required to fully utilize the potential of teleworking.

We further acknowledge that there is still a very low level of formal enterprise agreements for telework. There is also a lack of systematic analysis of industrial relations, labour processes and regulatory frameworks for teleworking.

3.2 Committees

Standards Australia is currently exploring new avenues for holding committee meetings, via videoconferencing and web services that allow members to work on Standards whilst not having to attend face to face meetings that may be costly in time and money. It is hoped that this form of committee telework will facilitate a more timely production of industry specific Standards.

4 Standards Australia's capacity to contribute to telework in Australia

Standards Australia welcomes suggestions for development of future standards in areas where particular needs are identified, and are willing to engage in new work, including the development of standards or guidelines to support teleworking practices across the Australian economy.

Any proposal would be assessed against our usual set of criteria for acceptance of standardization projects, in consultation with industry, community and government.

Please see Appendix A for a background statement on Standards Australia's capacity to develop standards.

Standards Australia is most interested to further contribute to ATAC's telework initiatives. Please do not hesitate to contact us to further discuss our interest.

5 Standards Australia Contact

Alistair Tegar
Group Manager,
Communications, Information Technology & eCommerce

APPENDIX A

Standards Australia statement of capacity

Standards Australia (SA) is an independent, non-government organization that is recognised as the peak standards writing body in Australia through a memorandum of understanding with the Commonwealth Government.

SA facilitates and documents processes that significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our customers' operations in government, business and the community in general, anywhere, anytime.

We strive to excel in facilitating consensus that leads to the development, and dissemination of relevant, contemporary, technically competent Australian and International standards and related services that improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness and which form the basis for a sustainable environment.

Standards Australia has a rich history of providing documents to the market based on an inclusive, transparent and consensus based methodology. Standards and handbooks are written by volunteers participating in committees; and reflect the needs of industry, producing relevant, workable documents. We work and consult with a wide spectrum of interests from the community to publish consensus-based standards that are practical and contemporary in nature. The committee structure has provided Standards Australia with an abundance of knowledge and ties to professional organisations, industry associations and government agencies that has spanned decades.

SA is at the forefront of development of communications, information technology and e-commerce standards and is the Australian member of the committees of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and their Joint Technical Committee 1 (JTC1) for Information Technology Standards.