

Information Bulletin

Standards for the Future

Standards Australia has signalled that the role of the organisation has changed from that of standards writing to standards facilitation.

The implications of this for the plumbing products industry could include

- increased individual cost to have a standard published,
- a proliferation of Standards Development Organisations (SDOs)
- breakdown of the integrity of standards; and
- a undermining of the regulatory processes in Australia which are based on the 'old' standards framework.

PPI Group is endeavouring to develop a clear picture of how the industry could and should move forward. We are having discussions with a broad range of organisations: some are SDOs; others are outside the current standards framework; regulators and other industry associations.

PPI Group understands that regulators will have an interest in AS3500 and AS6400, but the product standards will be of a lesser interest.

In the new standards framework, SDOs, before being accredited, have to come to an agreement with SAA that they will develop Australian Standards and pass the documents back to Standards Australia so that SAI Global can publish them, and SAI Global will hold both IP and copyright on the document.

In simple terms, Executive supports the continuation of the current standards framework with a number of provisos:

1. WaterMark must be supported by the regulators and complaints handled publicly so Industry is aware of actions taken
2. The regulators must audit CABs and ensure the integrity of the WaterMark

Given this, how is it to be achieved? There are a number of constraints to PPI Group becoming an SDO:

- Cost
- Staffing
- Recognition for the SDO as other than "manufacturers" writing standards to suit themselves

PPI Group are endeavouring to find a solution that works and would appreciate any comment members would care to put on any of the following questions:

1. What Structure could work?
2. Who should be partners in an SDO
3. Should PPI Group stand to one side and let events unroll without the industry seeking to put in place a structure and/or process which meets members' needs.
4. Which Standards are important to maintain?
5. Do the documents need to exist as Australian Standards?
6. Who are the standards important to? Community? Regulators? Industry?