

Australia

Overview

Australia is a signatory to the GATT/WTO Standards Code. It is common in Australia to use quality standards, such as the ISO 9000 series. Standards Australia, the national standards body, has a Quality Assessment division and can provide a list of companies adhering to the ISO 9000 series.

Australia still has in place various standards that can affect product entry, and while these may require product modifications, they are not insurmountable obstacles to U.S. companies.

Standards Organizations

Standards Australia is Australia's leading standards development organization. While not a government agency, Standards Australia is recognized as the leading standards development body in Australia. In partnership with SAI Global Ltd., an information services company, it delivers standards and related products to industry.

Standards Australia has more than 70 members, representing groups with an interest in the development and application of standards. It is Australia's representative on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), and the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC).

Standards Australia develops and maintains more than 7,000 Australian Standards, and provides input into the development of approximately 18,000 International Standards by ISO and IEC.

Standards Australia has a policy of adopting International Standards wherever possible. This policy is in line with Australia's obligations under the World Trade Organization's Code of Practice, which requires the elimination of technical Standards as barriers to international trade. As a result approximately 33% of current Australian Standards are fully or substantially aligned with International Standards. Areas of industry where no significant International Standards exist include building, construction, and occupational health and safety. Around one third of Australian Standards have no international equivalent.

Imported consumer products, such as food products, must comply with state government packaging regulations. Australian states agree that any non-farm product, including imports, meeting the legal requirements of one state, may be sold in all other states and territories. State agricultural quarantines prohibit interstate trade of some items.

American exporters of food products to Australia will find their product falling under the Australia Food Standards Code (<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>). Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) developed the code's standards. This is a bi-national independent statutory authority that develops food standards for composition, labeling and contaminants, including microbiological limits, that apply to all foods produced or imported for sale in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, FSANZ develops standards to cover the entire supply chain for food, from primary producers through manufacturing and processing to delivery and point of sale. Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), <http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis>, is responsible for enforcing the Standards Code for imported foods.

Both Standards Australia (<http://www.standards.org.au/>) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), (<http://www.nist.gov/>) have current information on Australian standards. Other standards organizations of interest to U.S. exporters are: The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), the Australian Environmental Protection Agency, and the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), mandates technical standards relating to items of customer equipment, customer cabling, and other devices. These standards include the Electromagnetic Compatibility Arrangements (EMC) and Electromagnetic Radiation Arrangements (EMR). Before a product covered by the EMC regulatory arrangements can be sold in Australia it must be tested to applicable standards and labeled. The label consists of a mark called "C-Tick" and a unique supplier identification. The C-Tick mark is intended for use on products that comply with EMC standards.

The Australian Environmental Protection Agency, also known as the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, develops and implements national policy, programs and legislation to protect and conserve Australia's environment and heritage. Safety-related automotive parts and accessories on a vehicle for environmental compliance (EPA compliant) must adhere to Australian Design Rules and Australian automotive standards as well as environmental compliance from the Australian Environmental Protection Agency. The supply of OE (Original Equipment) automotive parts must adhere to Quality System QS9000, the system adopted in the U.S. by Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration is in charge of issuing approvals for all medical devices and health-related products.

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

Conformity Assessment

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Product Certification

SAI Global provides organizations around the world with information services and solution for managing risk, achieving compliance and driving business improvement.

Accreditation

The Standards Accreditation Board's role is to review and accredit standards development organizations that wish to develop and publish Australian Standards.

The accreditation process determines the competency of an organization to develop Australian standards. More information about the process by which the SAB grants accreditation can be found on the Board's website: <http://www.absdo.org.au/>

Publication of Technical Regulations

In an agreement with Standards Australia, SAI Global Ltd. is the lead publisher of Australian Standards as well as other standards such as ISO, DIN (German Institute for Standardization), IEC, and Japan Standards Association.

Labeling and Marking

A number of voluntary and mandatory labels and marks indicating standards conformance are in use in Australia, including international standards such as ISO and IEC. Information about the required labels can be found by contacting the relevant standards organization.

Some electrical products are required to carry an approved energy label. These products include: refrigerators and freezers, clothes washers, dryers, dishwashers, and air conditioners. A larger list is regulated on the basis of minimum energy efficiency levels and includes the preceding list as well as electrical motors and transformers. The National Appliance and Equipment Energy Efficiency Committee, consisting of officials from the Commonwealth, state, and territory government agencies and representatives from New Zealand, is responsible for managing the Australian end-use energy efficiency program.

Trade Agreements

The U.S.- Australia Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA)

On January 1, 2005, Australia entered into the Free Trade Agreement with the United States (AUSFTA), providing major benefits for both countries immediately through removal of tariffs, and the phased opening of markets. More information can be found at:

http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/negotiations/us_fta/final-text/index.html (full text) and

http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Australia_FTA/Section_Index.html

U.S. companies interested in exporting to Australia can access the document Customs Tariff Schedule 5 U.S. Originating Goods at: <http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page5663.asp#tariff684>

Other Agreements

The Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (ANZCERTA, or CER) is the main instrument that governs economic relations between Australia and New Zealand. It is a comprehensive agreement, prescribing that all bilateral trade and services originating in the two countries is free of tariffs, quantitative restrictions, anti-dumping measures, production subsidies and like measures.

Australia has free trade agreements with:

- New Zealand
- United States of America
- Chile
- Singapore
- Thailand

Australia is negotiating free trade agreements with:

- China
- Gulf Cooperative Council
- Japan
- Malaysia
- Korea
- Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
- Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus

It is considering free trade agreements with:

- India
- Indonesia

Australia is an active participant in the WTO, making regular submissions to trade negotiation rounds. Australia is a key member of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, and plays a leading role in promoting trade liberalization among the member economies. Australia exports approximately 70% of its goods and services to APEC economies. Australia is also a leading member of the Cairns Group of 17 agricultural exporting countries.

Web Resources

AUSFTA – full text: http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/negotiations/us_fta/final-text/index.html

<http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page5663.asp#tariff684>

Australia Food Standards Code: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>

Australian Customs: <http://www.customs.gov.au>

Australian Customs Tariff Schedule 5 U.S. Originating Goods: Australian Dangerous Goods Code: <http://www.emplan.com.au/dangerous-goods/dangerous-goods.htm>

Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA): <http://www.apvma.gov.au>

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS): <http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis>

AQIS - biological products checklists: <http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/import/biological/checklist>

AQIS - ICON: http://www.aqis.gov.au/icon32/asp/ex_querycontent.asp.

AQIS – machinery/vehicles: <http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/import/vehicles-machinery/regulations>

AQIS – packaging:

http://www.aqis.gov.au/icon32/asp/ex_casecontent.asp?intNodeId=8880434&intCommodityId=17670

Australian Tax Office: <http://www.ato.gov.au>

Australian Treaties Library: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/>

Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia:

<http://www.cbfa.com.au/MembersDirectory.aspx>

Defence Export Control Office (DECO): <http://www.defence.gov.au/strategy/deco/>

FAIRS reports: <http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Lists/Advanced%20Search/AllItems.aspx>

FSANZ: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodstandards/foodstandardscode/>

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST): <http://www.nist.gov/>

NICNAS: http://www.nicnas.gov.au/Industry/Compliance/Compliance_Simple_Guide_PDF.pdf

NIST Notification Service: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

Prohibited and Restricted Imports: <http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page4369.asp>

Standards Accreditation Board: <http://www.absdo.org.au/>

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