

Feedback form

Feedback form completed by:

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Please email your form to standards@med.govt.nz

Alternatively you can post your form to:

Standards and Conformance Infrastructure Review
Regulatory Cooperation and Standards
Labour and Commercial Environment
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
PO Box 3705
DX SR57340
Wellington 6011

Section 3: Unique value and distinctive functions of the NSB

1. Do you agree that the functions in section 3 are valuable and unique to the NSB?

Yes

2. What additional unique functions do you think the NSB has, and why are they unique to the NSB?

Consumer NZ does not consider the NSB to have any other unique functions in its current form.

3. What other functions (if any) do you think the NSB should be responsible for? Why?

The NSB should be given an extended monitoring role to oversee the way in which standards are used in New Zealand. As an example, there are a number of overseas standards which are mandated by the New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) as part of their road safety programme.

Child car restraints must meet one of three standards to comply with NZTA rules. Of those three, any child restraint which has approval to FMV SS 213 from the USA must also carry the NZS S mark to show that it has been produced in compliance with an approved standard. No such requirement applies to any child restraint which claims to meet ECE R44.04.

Consumer NZ believes seats which claim to meet ECE R44.04 should also be verified as being produced in compliance with an approved standard.

Motorcycle crash helmets may also be sold in NZ if they meet any one of seven standards, including NZS 5430. There is no verification required for any of the six overseas standards.

Consumer NZ believes a wider verification system similar to that which applies to restraints meeting FMVSS 213 could ensure that safety products do in fact meet the standards to which they claim to comply.

Section 4: Functions of the Standards board as part of the NSB

4. Do you agree with the proposal to enable other entities to develop NZS?

Yes, though we believe the potential for this is limited in the area of household appliances, which is the main scope of Consumer NZ's interaction with NZS.

Developing standards is a complicated, time consuming and at times difficult process. We are not sure that there are many sector groups or entities who would have the time and resources available to properly develop standards.

5. Do you agree with the other functions of the Standards board in Section 4?

Yes

6. What additional functions do you think the Standards board should have, any why?

As noted above, Consumer NZ believes there should be a monitoring role to ensure that products do in fact comply with overseas standards mandated for use in New Zealand.

This monitoring role should be funded as a Public Good activity.

7. Does having a statutorily independent Standards board achieve the necessary independence required for the NZS approval function?

Yes

8. How do you think access to the NZS catalogue could be improved?

Access would be improved if Standards were more affordable. Consumer NZ has long since ceased buying standards which are relevant to every product that is tested because of the expense.

Consumer NZ believes NZS should be funded by the State on a Public Good basis, at a level that enables Standards to become affordable again.

9. What do you think is the relative capacity and willingness to form SDOs in New Zealand?

In our relevant sectors, we believe there is very limited capacity in NZ because our manufacturing base has changed. Where we once had a number of home appliances makers in NZ, we now are predominantly appliance importers.

Where once Consumer NZ and particularly local makers were a significant part of the development of NZS and AS/NZS for appliances, nowadays, we do not contribute, and we understand few manufacturers do.

10. Would your organisation have a potential interest in becoming an SDO? What are the likely factors that would affect this interest?

No. Consumer NZ does not have the resources to consider becoming an SDO. The financial risk is not something we would consider acceptable.

Consumer NZ would consider future contributions to Standards development if Public Good funding were available to cover the costs that would be incurred.

Section 5, Part A: Criteria for approving SDOs

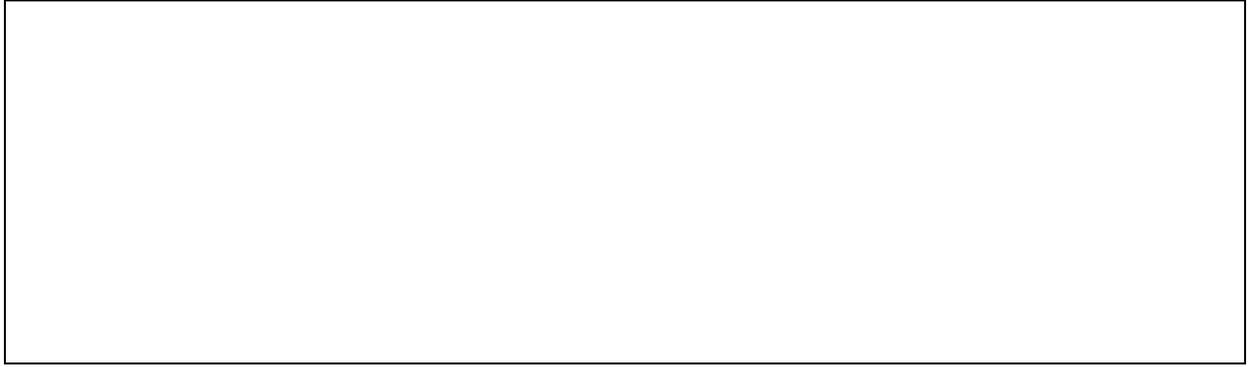
11. Do you agree with the criteria for approving SDOs in Part A of section 5?

Yes

12. What additional criteria do you think should be included in Part A of section 5, and why?

The entity must agree to oversight from the NSB.

13. What considerations should the board take into account when applying the criteria in Part A of section 5?



Section 5, Part B: Criteria for approving Standards

14. Do you agree with the criteria for approving Standards in Part B of section 5?

Yes

15. What additional criteria do you think should be included in Part B of section 5, and why?

We have no additional suggestions.

16. How do you think any liability or risk relating to the relevance and accuracy of NZS should be managed?

There should be a monitoring system set in place by NZS, alongside an appropriate way of reviewing SDO operation and practice. This should be supported by a means of suspending or withdrawing the approval of an SDO until compliance with the criteria is assured.

Section 5, Part C: Maintenance of the NZS catalogue

17. Do you agree with the proposed settings for maintaining the NZS catalogue in Part C of section 5?

Yes

18. What additional settings do you think should be included in Part C of section 5, and why?

We have no suggestions.

19. Where should accountability sit for ensuring NZS are relevant and up-to-date?

Consumer believes that accountability ultimately should lie with the NSB, through NZS as the operational functionary.

Section 6: Other opportunities to improve the standards process

20. How good a fit do you think the NZS system is for your sector, and why?

The current NZS system is a good fit with the Consumer NZ appliance and consumer product testing programme, where AS, AS/NZS or NZS standards are relevant. Electrical safety, energy efficiency and performance standards are particularly relevant, provided they are kept up to date.

Safety standards for children's products are at times very relevant and useful.

21. What things (if any) could be done to make the NZS system a better fit for your sector? Please provide actual examples wherever possible.

Some products which have critical safety issues are poorly covered by NZS.

The safety standard for Trampolines NZS 5855:1997 is woefully out of date, and does not cover innovations such as safety nets. We tested to AS4989:2006 for impact attenuation because this test was more representative of a potential impact.

As above, we believe there are issues with child car restraints. Anyone with a computer could produce a laboratory certificate that shows "compliance" with ECE R44.04.

Consumer NZ also believes there should be a wider range of mandatory safety standards, particularly for childrens products

22. Do you think use could be made of a sector levy fund to develop and maintain some NZS? How might a levy work for funding NZS in your sector?

We consider levy funding to have possibilities, and are generally in favour. But we note:

In our sector we think a levy on electrical goods, which are almost entirely imported nowadays, could be seen to be a barrier to trade under Fair Trade agreements.

Levies on childrens products to assist in ensuring their safety may raise the selling price, which could disadvantage those families who have the greatest need for affordable, safe products. Care should be taken to ensure levies are kept to a minimum in this, and similar sectors that involve low income families.

Section 7: Opportunities and risks arising from institutional options

23. What opportunities and risks do you think the three institutional options (outlined in section 7) provide for delivering on the NSB's unique value and distinctive functions (as outlined in Section 3)?

We consider Option C offers the best match with the values outlined in section three. It is our view that NZS should be fully independent of other parties, and funded independently on a Public Good basis.

Option A is the least preferable choice as the operating arm could be compromised by functioning within a large Government department.

24. Are there any other Standards board and/or operating arm configurations that you think would work better than those outlined in section 7? Why?

No

25. What impact (if any) would the three institutional options have on you as an expert who contributes to NZS? Why?

We foresee minimal impact from any of the above options, provided that communication lines are kept clear and open, and that NZS becomes sufficiently funded to enable it to produce more standards at affordable cost, and to introduce effective monitoring processes.