Why Standards?

An introduction to the benefits of Standards
Economic benefits of Standards

In 2011 the Standards Council and BRANZ commissioned an economic study conducted by Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL). The study provides compelling evidence of how sustained investment in developing and maintaining Standards could lift New Zealand’s gross domestic product by up to 1%. It found, as have a number of international studies, that Standards are powerful economic levers – they encourage innovation; improve market efficiency and prevent market failures; improve information to purchasers; and reduce transaction costs.

Standards solutions
finding the right solution for your organisation…

Standards are documents that provide agreed specifications for products, processes, services, or performance.

Every day, Standards and standardisation make a difference in the lives of New Zealanders. Standards solutions help to keep our homes, public buildings, playgrounds, electrical appliances, and health services safe. They can also be used to protect people and our environment and to increase productivity and drive innovation.

We can help you define the issue

Standards solutions are most effective when there is a clearly defined issue to be addressed. Government, industry, and consumers work with Standards New Zealand to develop and publish ‘best practice’ on topics ranging from the installation of insulation to managing risk. Standards New Zealand can help through scoping exercises and working with clients to determine the best solution to meet their needs.

0800 782 632 | enquiries@standards.co.nz | www.standards.co.nz
Meeting the code

Timber-framed buildings NZS 3604:2011 provides the building sector with the most cost-effective, efficient way for designing, building, and inspecting a house, to meet the performance requirements of the New Zealand Building Code (NZBC). It does this by providing Acceptable Solutions in the Compliance Documents of the NZBC. This means that designs and plans that are developed in accordance with NZS 3604 are deemed to comply with the NZBC and must be accepted by building consent authorities without the need for specific engineering design (a professional engineer is not required).
The benefits of Standards

In New Zealand, Standards solutions are used to:

• keep people safe and prevent accidents and injuries
• increase productivity and boost economic growth and trade opportunities by connecting New Zealand to international markets
• minimise unnecessary duplication, confusion, and inconsistencies in processes
• encourage best practice within sectors and support quality regulation.

In your organisation and sector, Standards solutions could be used to:

• save time and money
• foster innovation
• offer effective alternatives to making legislation
• build support for best practice through a consensus-based process.

“The question is not what you gain from standardisation, it’s what you lose without it.”
Standards solutions

Standards New Zealand brings together stakeholders to tailor Standards solutions. Standards solutions are developed by expert committees using an independent, consensus-based, and transparent process that includes public input.

These tailored solutions include:

- **Standards or publicly available specifications** that set a benchmark for best practice and can be cited in Acts, regulations, or other legislative instruments (for example, rules)

- **Interim Standards** that are urgently needed in a particular sector, but the necessary research required in some area has not yet been completed (Interim Standards are published with an expiry date, and must be reviewed and re-issued as final Standards within a certain time period)

- **handbooks, guidelines, and codes of practice** that provide sector guidance including how to implement established Standards

- **auditing tools** that assist in measuring performance against established Standards or other specifications

- **other documents** (for example, industry guidelines) that use a Standards development process to address specific issues and can become a full Standard when, and if, required.

New Zealand Standards are used by a diverse range of organisations to enhance their products and services, improve safety and quality, meet industry best practice, and support trade into existing and new markets.

Standards are generally voluntary, but can be mandatory when cited in Acts, regulations, or other legislative instruments. Standards may also be referenced in regulations as one means of compliance or as an acceptable solution under those regulations, without being mandatory. Standards are a successful way to bridge government regulation and industry self-regulation.
Finding the right solution

While all Standards solutions are focused on outcomes there are different approaches.

**Performance-based Standards solutions** establish expected outcomes, but allow the user to determine their own technique for achieving the outcome.

**Prescription-based Standards solutions** provide specifications for attaining an outcome. This solution can exist in either a positive or negative form. For example, it might compel certain industries to use certain production methods or materials, or it might prohibit the use of certain production methods or materials. The solutions may be appropriate when there are situations requiring a high level of certainty.

**Verification methods** are developed so that expected outcomes from Standards or parts of Standards can be measured. The most common type of verification Standard is a test method. In this case users determine how they intend to meet performance criteria. The verification method then provides the user with a means of verifying that their approach does meet performance requirements. This Standards solution encourages innovation.

Keeping children safe

In 2009, Auckland City Council adopted Safety barriers and fences around swimming pools, spas and hot tubs NZS 8500:2006 as its policy for lockable spa pool covers so that spa pool owners have the option of not fencing off their spa pools as long as they meet all the conditions contained in section 3.10 of NZS 8500:2006.

Adoption of the Standard is seen as a cost-effective way for spa pools owners to keep their spa pools safe and comply with the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987.
Why the Standards development process works

Standards solutions are developed by expert committees through a robust, transparent process. This consensus-based approach ensures Standards solutions are practical, relevant, and widely recognised and supported.

Our experts

Standards New Zealand has some of the best and brightest people within their fields serving on Standards development committees. The time, expertise, and knowledge contributed by our 2000-plus committee members and their nominating organisations are crucial to delivering Standards solutions that are relevant and practical.

Making electrical appliances safer

A Joint Australian/New Zealand committee on electrical safety of household appliances manages a large number of Standards vital to consumer safety and satisfaction, ranging from toasters to ovens, to washing machines, to hand-held power tools. The committee reviews and manages 50 to 60 projects per year. Beyond its joint Standards work, the committee also provides valuable input into international Standards development.
Our regional and international standing

Standards New Zealand is New Zealand’s national Standards body. We offer solutions based on international, regional (trans-Tasman and Pacific), and national Standards, and other guidance documents.

We represent New Zealand as members of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), and the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC). Through our membership we are able to share our expertise and knowledge in a number of areas, as well as ensure that New Zealand interests are considered.

The majority of New Zealand Standards are developed in partnership with Standards Australia. Given the importance of an integrated trans-Tasman economy this close relationship between Standards New Zealand and Standards Australia ensures increased knowledge, wider networks, and competitive advantages.

We know that timing can be critical

Our Standards development process has been streamlined so that the average New Zealand Standard takes only 13 months to develop, including a prescribed 2-month period for public comment and consultation. Times for revising Standards, amendments, and developing other solutions can be significantly shorter – as little as 3 months depending on what is required.

This means that Standards can be developed and published relatively quickly compared to the time frames required to change Acts and regulations.
Foundation for good practice in pharmacies

The Health and disability services Standards – Pharmacy services Standard NZS 8134.7:2010 serves as the foundation for describing good practice and fostering continuous improvement in the quality of pharmacy services. The Standard is also used by Ministry of Health medicines control auditors for conducting pharmacy audits against legislative and district health board contractual requirements.

The Standards solution is based on a sector-identified need to ensure pharmacy providers supply good and safe services for consumers.

Process for developing a New Zealand Standard*

1. Balanced committee formed
2. Draft Standard developed
3. Draft circulated for targeted comment and advertised public comment for 2 months
4. Comments reviewed and draft Standard updated
5. Final draft circulated, at least 80% committee consensus required for publication
6. Standard approved by Standards Council
7. Standard published as NZS

* The process for developing other Standards solutions is adapted depending on what is required.
Standards in New Zealand

New Zealand has five Crown standards and conformance bodies. This national structure includes all of New Zealand’s standards conformance activity, from setting a specification through to judging whether a particular product, process, or service meets that specification.

One of the Crown bodies is the Standards Council which has Standards New Zealand as its operating arm. This autonomous Crown entity is charged under the Standards Act 1988 with developing, promoting, and facilitating the use of Standards and standardisation to help deliver social and economic benefits, including increased productivity, enhanced market access for producers, promoting innovation, and improved consumer safety.

As the operating arm of the Standards Council, Standards New Zealand is the country’s national Standards body and has a leadership role in Standards development and solutions in both New Zealand and internationally.

Government policy settings determine that Standards New Zealand must be a self-funded, independent body that is cost neutral. Standards New Zealand supports its work by securing service funding, often through industry sponsorship, for the development and maintenance of Standards, and through the sales of developed Standards.

Risk on the international stage

Because of our rigorous development process, our Standards sometimes serve as the basis for international Standards. An example of this is the Risk management – Principles and guidelines ISO 31000. As one review of the international Standard stated at the time of its release in 2009, ‘one of the many positive aspects of the international Standard is that it was built on the solid footing of the groundbreaking 1995 Australian/New Zealand Standard for risk management’.
