STANDARDS NEW ZEALAND
TE MANA TAUTIKANGA O AOTEAROA

Business Strategy

Kia whakahaumaru, kia whakapūawai tātou mai i tā mātou paerewa

Prosperity and protection through trusted standards

2026 – 2029

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
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Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)
Hīkina Whakatutuki – Lifting to make successful

MBIE develops and delivers policy, services, advice and regulation to support economic growth and the prosperity and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

MORE INFORMATION

Information, examples and answers to your questions about the topics covered here can be found on our website: **www.standards.govt.nz** or by calling us free on: **0800 782 632.**

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Our vision

Prosperity and protection through trusted standards.

Our role

As New Zealand's national standards body, we represent New Zealand's interests in the global standardisation community, bring leading industry and government experts together to develop and adopt high-quality standards, and make standards accessible to New Zealand users.

Our principles

Standards NZ follows the widely recognised underlying principles of good standardisation. These ensure our standards are high quality, evidence-based and trusted.

Standards NZ develops standards with **integrity, independence and transparency**, ensuring decisions are evidence-based, impartial and free from undue influence. Our work is grounded in real-world value, supporting national priorities and addressing genuine economic, social, and environmental challenges. We follow internationally recognised good practices to maintain trust, credibility, quality and confidence in the standards we deliver.

We promote the development, adoption and use of **international standards as a first preference**, supporting global connectivity, compatibility, consistency and market access. We aim to align New Zealand standards with international frameworks to reduce barriers to trade and enable participation in global markets.

We encourage **wide and balanced participation** in standardisation, ensuring that relevant stakeholders and their needs are considered, so everyone can contribute meaningfully. Through transparent and inclusive processes, we seek a broad range of perspectives so that standards reflect the needs and interests of those affected.

Our **consensus-based processes** bring together industry, government, and other stakeholders. By working towards shared agreement, we support stronger buy-in, longevity and adoption of standards across the system.

We work in **partnership** with commissioning organisations, industry, government agencies, regulators, consumer groups and other standards bodies to develop and deliver standards and related services. Collaboration enables shared ownership, coordinated delivery, and standards that are fit for purpose.

Our values

Māia – Bold & brave

Mahi tahi – Better together

Pae kahurangi – Build our future

Pono me te tika – Own it

Our priorities

For 2026 – 2029, Standards NZ will focus on three strategic priorities:

Business fundamentals: Our core functions are to develop and adopt standards, provide access to standards and participate in the international standards system. We will get the basics right, embrace modernisation and business efficiency, support our commissioning agencies and better enable our volunteer committee members. We will continue to support MBIE policy work on New Zealand's standards system.

International alignment: For a small trading nation, the market access, foreign investment, innovation and efficiency opportunities from the use of international standards are significant. We will continue to engage with other national, regional and international standards bodies and will prioritise our role in facilitating New Zealand experts onto international standards development committees. Increased New Zealand participation will result in international standards that better reflect New Zealand's interests and needs and encourage their use by New Zealand businesses and regulators.

Trans-Tasman partnership: A trans-Tasman standards system is critical to New Zealand. It reduces complexity for users, improves market access and economic integration and makes the best use of system resources. Building on the four-decade-old partnership, we will continue to work closely with Standards Australia to deliver a more harmonised, efficient and internationally aligned standards system for both countries.

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National Manager's foreword

Standards New Zealand is operating in a challenging economic environment and a fiscally constrained sector, while also watching an uncertain international landscape. Long-established rules-based multilateral systems, trade settings, and political and economic settings are being disrupted and recast globally. Now more than ever, global standardisation and New Zealand's participation and influence in that system are important. At the same time, sustained domestic economic pressures have had a noticeable impact on the ability of both industry and public sector organisations to support and participate in New Zealand's standards system.

In response, our 2026 Business Strategy is deliberately focused on operating as lean and efficient a business as possible. We are consolidating our activities and priorities around our core statutory functions while we navigate the current economic and sector conditions. Our focus is on quality over quantity – delivering high-quality services and concentrating our effort in areas where we can provide the greatest value for money and the most effective contribution to growing New Zealand's economy and helping protect our society and citizens.

You will see three key priorities in this strategy. These priorities are aligned to the Government's economic growth objectives which we believe will remain important and enduring. In a constrained economic environment, clarity of purpose and a strong focus on impact and value matter more than ever.

We remain clear about the importance of our trans-Tasman standards partnership with Australia. This is a vital economic relationship that supports industries and markets on both sides of the Tasman, including through the interoperability of our products, services and labour markets. An aligned trans-Tasman standards system underpins and supports our single economic market objectives with Australia and important agreements such as the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement (TTMRA) and Closer Economic Relations (CER) free trade agreement. Trans-Tasman standards are also widely used in the Pacific Islands and, in doing so, support our Pacific Island nation neighbours' economic growth. By drawing on the complementary expertise and capability in both Australia and New Zealand, and by working closely together, Standards Australia, Standards New Zealand, and our respective economies are stronger.

A further priority for us is increasing the adoption and use of international standards in New Zealand. We see a significant and largely still untapped opportunity for businesses and government agencies to better recognise the value that international standards offer, whether they export goods and undertake international trade, regulate sectors, or operate solely in New Zealand. Greater use of international standards helps make New Zealand more globally connected, more competitive, more innovative, safer, and ultimately more prosperous. This strategy reflects our commitment to delivering that value in practical, targeted and enduring ways.

Malcolm MacMillan
National Manager, Standards New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

Who we are

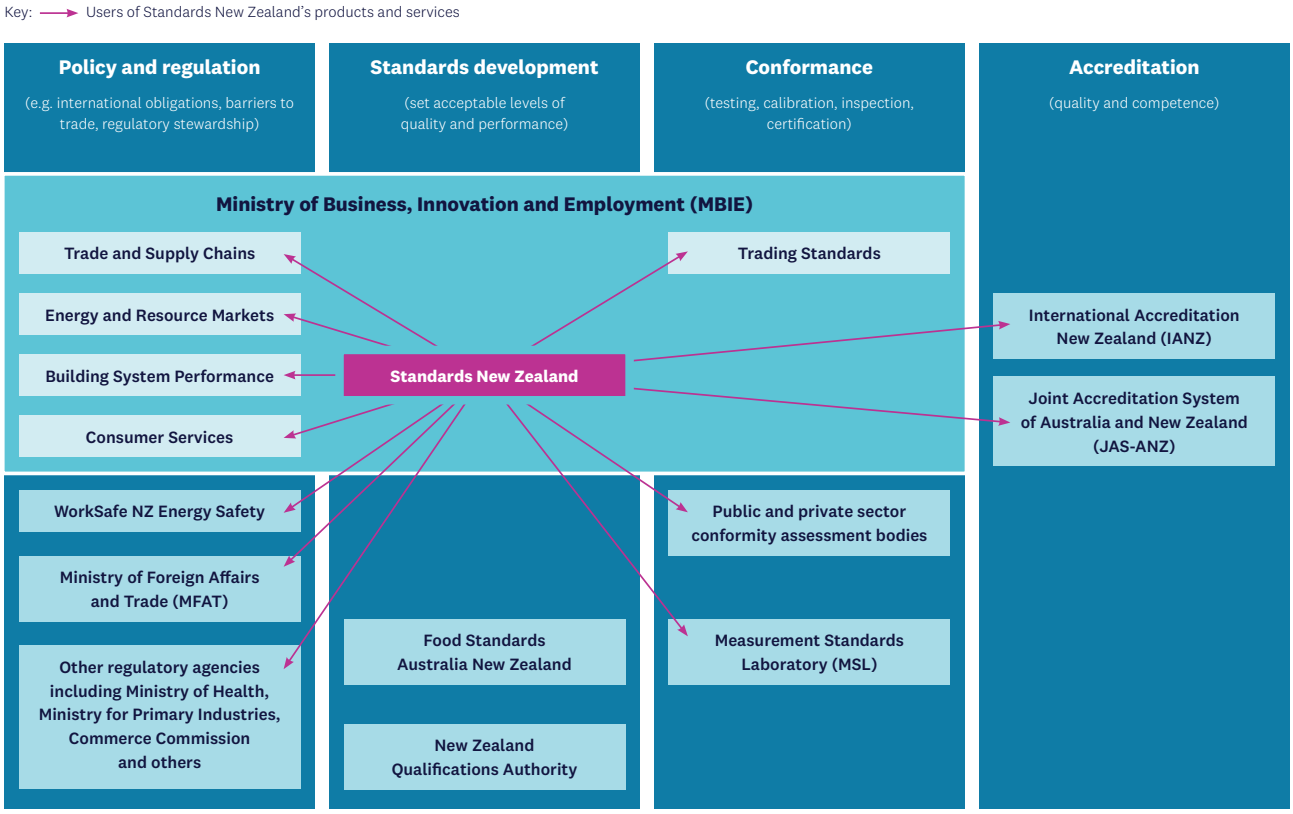
Standards NZ is a business unit within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). We are Aotearoa New Zealand's internationally recognised national standards body. We manage the development and publication of standards. We identically adopt and modify for adoption international standards for the New Zealand market. We also publish and sell New Zealand (national), joint Australian/New Zealand (trans-Tasman) and international standards.

Our extensive experience, established working relationships, and adherence to internationally recognised principles of standardisation mean our products and services are trusted, authoritative, accurate and credible.

We manage New Zealand's participation in international standards development committees and represent New Zealand's interests in the international standards system and its institutions and the activities of those institutions. This helps ensure New Zealand remains a trusted contributor and influential partner in shaping the global standards system.

As part of MBIE, Standards NZ's vision of *Prosperity and protection through standards* directly aligns with both government priorities and the Ministry's vision 'To Grow New Zealand For All'. This alignment provides opportunities for standards to support the objectives of both the private and public sectors.

Figure 1 – New Zealand's quality infrastructure system



Context

Standards help achieve both private and public good outcomes, including supporting the Government's economic growth objectives. While the New Zealand standards system faces several intersecting pressures, the global standards system is undergoing significant disruption, driven by rapid advancements in digital technologies.

The value of standards

Standards are agreed specifications for products, processes, services, systems, and performance. Standards sit behind almost everything from our built environment to the products and services we buy and consume. They support New Zealand to grow, enable government priorities and reform initiatives, protect consumers, ensure quality and support regulatory compliance. They guide consistency, set performance and quality expectations, and define the right way to do things. They can support innovation, competition, market access and trade opportunities by defining the level of performance, safety, quality and reliability for new and alternative products and services. They are a valued component of a range of sectors and have underpinned New Zealand's regulatory systems for more than nine decades.

Operating environment

The New Zealand standards system must balance strong stewardship and technical integrity with greater agility, cross-sector collaboration and responsiveness to emerging risks and sector needs, while maintaining confidence among industry, government and the public. It is characterised by several intersecting pressures.

- **Growing demand and pace of change:** Standards are needed more quickly to keep pace with emerging technologies (e.g. AI, digital systems), sustainability transitions, and evolving market practices. There is pressure to modernise how standards are developed, accessed, and used, including use of AI, digital platforms, collaborative authoring tools, data standards, and more user-friendly formats.
- **International alignment and influence:** There is increasing value in aligning with international standards to support trade, market access, foreign investment, interoperability of products, services and workforces, and global competitiveness, while also ensuring local relevance.
- **Trust, credibility and inclusion:** As issues cut across sectors (e.g. climate, infrastructure, digital trust, health), standards development increasingly requires coordination across multiple stakeholder groups. The system must maintain technical rigour and independence, while ensuring broad participation, including government regulators, industry, academia, international bodies, iwi, consumers and under-represented stakeholders.
- **Capacity and affordability constraints:** The New Zealand market is small, and business professionals are time poor and financially constrained. Limited technical capacity and affordability constraints among both private and public sectors (including Standards NZ) limit New Zealand's ability to fully leverage the joint Australian–New Zealand standards development partnership and limit participation and influence in international standards development and adoption.
- **Compliance focused and reactive:** In New Zealand, standards are predominantly viewed as a regulatory compliance tool and are utilised by a relatively small number of government agencies and sectors. Not using them strategically as an economic enabler to drive innovation, business productivity, competition and quality is seen as a missed opportunity for a small, export-dependent economy that relies on access to global markets, international supply chains and foreign investment.
- **Ability to generate sufficient third-party funding:** Costs are a barrier to standards development and adoption as well as maintenance and access to existing standards. This limits their uptake and use across industry. The system relies on third parties being willing and able to invest in standards development and access.

Global trends and the future standards landscape

The rapid advances in digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, are accelerating a shift away from the traditional 'publishing model' where standards are sold as static documents, towards a 'knowledge model', where standards content is delivered as dynamic, accessible and integrated information. Globally, users increasingly expect standards to be available in faster, more accessible, more affordable and digitally enabled formats, including through AI tools. Traditional approaches where users read standards from cover to cover are becoming less relevant. Instead, time-constrained users are seeking targeted answers to specific questions, with those answers drawn directly from the underlying standards content.

In response, standards bodies are being required to adapt their:

- **Service delivery models,** moving towards digital and on-demand access
- **Commercial frameworks,** shifting from product-based sales to service-oriented offerings
- **Value propositions,** focusing on the usability and integration of standards content

Both international and national standards organisations are facing increasing pressure to protect, value and commercialise their intellectual property while simultaneously meeting market expectations for content that is:

- **Fast to access**
- **Digitally integrated**
- **Interoperable across systems**
- **Easy to use and understand**

This transition is comparable to disruptions historically seen in other industries, for example, the evolution from physical video rental to online streaming, or from cheque books and bank tellers to mobile and digital banking apps. In each case, digital innovation has driven fundamental changes in business models, customer expectations and service delivery. A similar transformation is now underway in standardisation.

There is also a growing international policy trend towards free public access to standards, particularly where they are incorporated into regulatory frameworks. This reflects the principle that individuals and businesses should be able to read and understand rules they are required to comply with. Removing the cost barrier reduces obstacles to compliance, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, improves safety outcomes, supports business productivity and participation and ensures equitable access to the technical rules that underpin legislation.

These global and domestic developments point to a transition in the standards ecosystem, characterised by:

- **Increased digitisation and use of AI-enabled delivery models**
- **Evolving commercial models for standards organisations**
- **Strengthened expectations for free access to standards that have regulatory effect**

Taken together, these trends will shape the future role of standards as both economic infrastructure and regulatory instruments, with implications for how they are developed, accessed, funded and governed.

Strategic priorities

Business fundamentals

Standards NZ must ensure service delivery under the Standards and Accreditation Act 2015, the Public Finance Act 1989, the Public Service Act 2020 and government directives. Within this context, Standards NZ recognises that expectations may change as fiscal constraints tighten, requiring careful prioritisation and management of core functions and available resources.

Standards New Zealand recognises that the Māori-Crown partnership and Treaty obligations are fundamental to how we operate as part of the New Zealand public service. Through delivery of MBIE's Te Ara Amiorangi and the Standards NZ Māori Strategy, we work with iwi, Māori organisations and other partners to support Māori economic, social, cultural and environmental aspirations while ensuring Māori perspectives help shape standards development. This includes building the capability of our people to understand and uphold Crown-iwi partnership obligations, increasing Māori representation and participation in standards committees and strengthening relationships with organisations that represent and champion Māori interests. Together, these efforts support more inclusive standards development, stronger partnerships and better outcomes for Māori.

Standards NZ will maintain a focus on delivering its statutory responsibilities and key outcomes as effectively, efficiently and affordably as possible. This will involve adopting more efficient ways of working where able, prioritising high-impact, high-value activities, reducing some activities and service offerings, and seeking opportunities to improve productivity and resilience.

Standards NZ must secure sufficient revenue and employ efficient business practices to perform its core statutory functions of developing, adopting and providing access to standards and participating internationally in the global standardisation system. As well as maintaining relevant internal resources, processes and systems, we must effectively service and support the large volunteer industry workforce engaged in standards development committees who play a critical role in the standards system.

Standards support economic growth by driving innovation, competition, business productivity, regulatory compliance, consumer protection, market access and trade. Raising New Zealand market awareness of this value and securing government investment remains necessary. Together, these elements will enable Standards NZ to operate efficiently, support its people, and continue to meet the needs of stakeholders now and into the future.

Key activities

- Continue to support MBIE's policy work on the standards system.
- Prioritise close relations with existing customers/clients to maintain a pipeline of commissioned development, review, and standards adoption work.
- Provide access to standards and improve the self-help functionality of our e-commerce business for our customers on our website and web-shop.
- Adopt modernisation and business efficiency measures including increased use of the Ministry's shared services and wider capacity and capabilities, AI and digital automation, and progress towards a more digital standards future.
- Actively support the volunteer committee workforce through recruitment, training and recognition initiatives with a focus on growing depth and diversity within committees.
- Align business activities with available revenue and resourcing.

What this will look like in 3 years:

- Core standards development, adoption and access activities are prioritised and delivered efficiently and professionally, with clear and deliberate alignment to national needs and international obligations. Standards NZ consistently delivers priority projects on time and within agreed budgets.
- Commercial revenue streams are as stable and predictable as possible.
- Increased use of digital tools, automation, and shared services, where possible, results in business efficiencies, reduced administrative effort and improved quality and service delivery.
- Standards development committee members are supported, engaged, acknowledged and representative of New Zealand's diversity, with clear pathways and resources for recruitment, induction, development, and succession.
- The breadth and scope of products and services being offered are targeted to high-value, high-benefit outcomes.

International alignment

For a small and geographically distant trading nation, alignment with international standards delivers significant benefits. These include improved market access, increased foreign investment, greater innovation and competition, and gains in quality, productivity, and efficiency. Promoting the domestic and regional uptake of international standards also supports businesses and regulators to align with global good practice, reducing barriers to trade and maintaining competitiveness in both domestic and export markets.

Through the active involvement of New Zealand industry experts in international standards development committees, global standards better reflect New Zealand's needs and interests, encouraging their use by New Zealand businesses and regulators. Standards NZ must continue to engage with other national, regional and international standards bodies and prioritise our role in facilitating New Zealand experts onto international standards development committees.

Engagement in the international standards system enables Standards NZ to monitor global trends, learn from international peers, and identify emerging areas of standards development. This informs engagement with domestic stakeholders to assess national interest and value, while reinforcing New Zealand's reputation as a credible, rules-based economy and constructive global partner. It also supports New Zealand's position as a desirable trading partner, a leader within the Pacific region, and a connected, trusted participant in global standardisation.

Through our international connections, we pursue alignment with international good practice in standards development and the recognition and use of New Zealand standards internationally. We ensure New Zealand has a voice in the international standards community through membership in the:

- **International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC):** Standards NZ represents New Zealand at general assemblies and related forums and coordinates participation in international standards development committees where New Zealand industry experts help inform and shape international standards to reflect New Zealand's needs and interests.
- **Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC) and Pacific Islands Standards Committee (PISC):** Standards NZ works alongside partners such as Standards Australia, the British Standards Institute, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the PACER Plus initiative to promote Pacific interests on the global standards stage and support Pacific Island countries through providing access to standards and building capability in standardisation and conformance.

- **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC):** Standards NZ's participation in the APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC) provides an opportunity to shape regional priorities, align economies' standards with international ones, reduce technical barriers to trade, pursue regional cooperation and recognition and learn from regional innovations. It ensures that New Zealand's perspective as a smaller economy is reflected in discussions on emerging issues such as AI, digital trade, food safety, climate change, energy transition and regulatory harmonisation, helping maintain a standards system that remains relevant, credible, and internationally connected.

Standards NZ supports New Zealand's international alignment and Pacific engagement objectives through the delivery of a multi-year Pacific Islands capability-building programme, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The programme strengthens standardisation and quality infrastructure across Pacific Island nations by building the skills, systems and institutional capability required to develop, adopt and use standards and conformity assessment practices effectively. This work contributes to broader regional outcomes including increased trade and market access, more resilient infrastructure, improved consumer and public safety, stronger economic development and greater long-term prosperity across the Pacific.

Key activities

- Standards NZ attends and participates in ISO and IEC General Assemblies and other events in the international standards community.
- Continue to participate in and support the Pacific Islands quality infrastructure and its capability development.
- Maintain New Zealand membership in the PASC and PISC to support the development of standards that promote trade, health, and sustainable development across the Pacific.
- Encourage greater depth and diversity of New Zealand representation on international standards development committees, where New Zealand has interests in doing so.
- Encourage the proactive adoption and use of international standards, including implementing expedited adoption processes and working towards greater digital access.
- Continue to participate in and represent New Zealand's standardisation interests at APEC.

What this will look like in 3 years:

- Standards NZ is a visible and credible participant in the international standards system, with increased participation in activities that support New Zealand's international reputation and economic prosperity.
- The trend shows increasing numbers and proportions of New Zealand adoptions and market use of international standards.
- More New Zealand subject matter experts are engaged and participating in international standards committees, contributing effectively and influencing outcomes that matter to New Zealand's economy, regulatory environment, consumer interests, business needs and communities.
- International standards are easily accessible to the New Zealand market and are available in digital formats and through subscription services.

Trans-tasman partnership

New Zealand and Australia have committed to a seamless trans-Tasman economic environment through the Single Economic Market (SEM), making it as easy to do business across both countries as it is domestically. For approximately 40 years, Standards NZ and Standards Australia have collaborated to develop joint standards that underpin trade agreements, regulatory systems, market competition, innovation and the broader SEM objectives.

This trans-Tasman standards system reduces complexity for users while improving market access, trade and economic integration. It supports the interoperability of products, services and labour markets, and enables more efficient use of system and market resources. For Standards NZ, the partnership involves close collaboration with Standards Australia to deliver a more harmonised, efficient and internationally aligned standards framework.

The benefits of this joint approach are significant. Both countries gain enhanced safety and protection for their people, stronger economic growth and trade opportunities, and increased influence and connectivity on the international stage.

The partnership is focused on expanding the pipeline of joint standards and coordinated adoption of international standards, aligning on priority areas and improving shared processes to maximise resources, reduce duplication, and strengthen outcomes for governments, industry, and consumers across New Zealand, Australia, and the wider Pacific region. There is an opportunity for Standards NZ to increase New Zealand's influence in the identification, prioritisation and initiation of Trans-Tasman standards projects, to ensure joint work programmes reflect the interests of both countries.

Key activities

- Coordinate work-programme planning and prioritisation and agree priority areas for strategic trans-Tasman alignment.
- Encourage and facilitate greater New Zealand influence in scoping, developing and prioritising joint Australian/New Zealand standards projects.
- Maintain the established joint Australian/New Zealand standards pipeline and support new initiatives aligned with New Zealand interests including:
  - making more joint Australian/New Zealand standards where appropriate
  - appropriately resourcing the trans-Tasman standards programme of work each year
  - harmonising and expediting the adoption of international standards.
- Recruit more New Zealand members to participate in joint Australian/New Zealand committees.
- Identify and implement business and process efficiencies related to joint Australian/New Zealand standards development, with a specific focus on avoiding and reducing duplication of effort across the two national standards bodies.

What this will look like in 3 years:

- Standards NZ and Standards Australia continue to operate as trusted, effective and collaborative partners.
- Joint standards development and adoption processes are embedded and operating smoothly, with clear prioritisation and coordinated decision making that reflects the needs of both countries and avoids duplication of effort where appropriate and possible.
- Expedited international standards adoption processes are operational within a number of joint standards committees.
- There is greater trans-Tasman standards alignment through more joint Australian/New Zealand standards and joint adoptions of international standards.
- New Zealand participation on joint trans-Tasman standards development committees has increased in number, diversity and alignment with New Zealand priorities.

New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

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