

19 August 2022

Dominic Byrne

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Australian Communications and Media Authority

Email: Dominic.Byrne@acma.gov.au

Dear Dominic,

RE: Proposal to include QR codes in the ACMA Telecommunications Labelling Notice and repeal 3 telecommunications standards

Communications Alliance welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission in response to the ACMA consultation on the proposal to include QR codes in the Telecommunications Labelling Notice (the TLN) and the repealing of three telecommunications standards.

1. QR codes and supplier code numbers

Communications Alliance recognises the benefits of aligning the telecommunications labelling arrangements with those of radiocommunications labelling arrangements, by allowing suppliers the option to use a QR code (or 'a similar thing') as a form of label on a device which is linked to the Regulatory Compliance Mark (RCM) for that device on the supplier's website, instead of the RCM being applied on that device.

Our understanding is that the QR code is not intended in the ACMA TLN to be mandatory, but could be used as an alternative to applying the RCM on the device. Communications Alliance acknowledges that this brings consistency across the two labelling arrangements and provides flexibility for suppliers when labelling products for the Australian market.

With the use of a QR code, Communications Alliance suggests that the ACMA take into account the following, to avoid any unintended consequences:

1. Although the public is generally familiar with the operation of QR codes, there needs to be a public educational element as to the use of a QR code, in the context of identifying a compliant device under Australian telecommunications regulations. There is a concern that by using a QR code, there will be no explicit indication of compliance under Australian regulations on the actual device.
2. Web-based information can be a content-rich information source for a device, which can be useful to provide supporting compliance information. Conversely, however, this information could be 'lost' through having too much information (potentially commercial or advertising in nature) being provided on the webpage.
3. To take into consideration the continued use of the RCM as a single trademark as a recognition of compliance under the Electrical Equipment Safety System (EESS), the regulatory framework aimed at increasing consumer safety in household electrical equipment in participating jurisdictions in Australia and in New Zealand.
4. To take into consideration that in overseas national regulatory regimes, compliance marks are still mandatory, including for example, the CCC Mark (China), CE Mark (EC), FCC Mark (USA), IMDA label (Singapore) and the PSE Mark (Japan).

With regards to the proposed minor amendments to the *Telecommunications Labelling Notice*, the removal of references to supplier code numbers, the updated definition of national database and the removal of references to national database manager, Communications Alliance has no comment.

Communications Alliance agrees with the ACMA's assessment that grey imports can be adequately addressed under consumer protection, trademark and other relevant law, and hence, there is no need for supplier code numbers.

2. Removal ISDN and surge protection device Standards

Telecommunications Technical Standard (Surge Protective Devices for Telecommunication Applications – AS/NZS 4117) 2015

Communications Alliance notes that AS/NZS 4117-1999 *Surge protective devices for telecommunication applications* was withdrawn by Standards Australia in 2017. It was managed by Committee TE-020 and there has been no replacement Standard to date.

Surge protection is still required for customer cabling connected to Australian telecommunications networks. AS/NZS 4117-1999 is called up under AS/CA S009 *Installation requirements for customer cabling (Wiring Rules)*. Clause 10.3 *Surge suppression device* mandates that where surge suppression is used on twisted pair cable, AS/NZS 4117-1999 is to be followed.

It is noted that AS/NZS 4117-1999 is also referenced in the scope of AS/CA S008:2020 Clause 2.4, as an exclusion that the Standard is not applicable to surge suppression devices. Additionally a note to Clause 2.4, references the ACMA *Telecommunications (Labelling Notice for Customer Equipment and Customer Cabling) Amendment Instrument 2018*¹.

Communications Alliance notes that AS/NZS 4117-1999 is still available from distributors of Australia Standards. The Standard Australia website² states that:

'The withdrawn status does not impact the document's availability, or public's ability to use the document. Withdrawn standards can still be purchased from our distributors. The withdrawn status indicates that the standard is no longer relevant. Standards Australia will not undertake further work to maintain or update a withdrawn standard. It is still possible for a withdrawn standard to be used within an industry or reference by a government if they choose to do so. One reason for this may be because there are no replacement technical documents readily available.'

Communications Alliance concurs that one of the overarching goals for technical regulation is for simpler regulations without introducing unnecessary risks. We observe that having mandatory requirements for surge suppression in AS/CA Standards, specifically AS/CA S009, mandated under ACMA technical regulation, meets the needs of industry. We have not identified any adverse consequences in the removal of the ACMA Surge Protective Devices Standard from the Telecommunications Labelling Notice.

¹ This note will be considered to be amended in the next scheduled review of AS/CA S008, in addition to updating a number of international referenced Standards that relate to surge protection.

² Standards Australia Aged Standards Review - What happens when a standard is withdrawn?
<https://www.standards.org.au/standards-development/aged-standards>, cited 12 Aug 2022.

Telecommunications Technical Standard (Requirements for ISDN Basic Access Interface – AS/ACIF S031) 2015

Telecommunications Technical Standard (Requirements for ISDN Primary Rate Access Interface – AS/ACIF S038) 2015

Communications Alliance is aware that Carriers have either stopped or are exiting from supplying ISDN services in Australia, but that there are still some legacy ISDN networks supplying emergency services.

In discussion with our Carrier members, we have not identified any need for these two regulatory instruments to be retained under the Telecommunications Labelling Notice for the connection of ISDN services to the telecommunications networks.

On the other hand, Communications Alliance has recently become aware that some enterprises and businesses are still using these types of networks. ISDN gateways are being supplied by CSPs and retailers, typically to business customers/users, to support legacy ISDN services being used in customer networks. The two Communications Alliance Standards AS/ACIF S031:2001 *Requirements for ISDN Basic Access Interface* and AS/ACIF S038:2001 *Requirements for ISDN Primary Rate Access Interface* are still the relevant Standards for the ISDN ports on these gateways.

If the ACMA proceeds to repeal the two ISDN Standards, then Communications Alliance would need to consider withdrawing the two AS/ACIF Standards, noting that they can still be made available by Communications Alliance on request for purposes other than for those purposes under ACMA technical regulations.

If you have any questions with respect to this submission, please contact Mike Johns on (02) 9959 9125.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Stanton', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Stanton
Chief Executive Officer