



NATIONAL MEASUREMENT POLICY STATEMENT

Australia needs a measurement policy statement

Measurement is integral to any well-functioning and productive economy. Measurement plays a critical role in domestic law and international treaties for trade, commerce and consumer protection. Metrology, the science of measurement, applies the disciplines of physics, chemistry, and biology to develop new capabilities and to support the adoption of new technologies. Metrology is the foundation for the analyses, tests, and measurements that underpin areas of science, technology and industrial production.

The Commonwealth's responsibility for weights and measures is explicitly stated at section 51 (xv) of the Constitution. The traditional role of ensuring the fairness of trade remains important to support competition and the efficient operation of the market. Over time, however, metrology has evolved into a highly scientific enterprise, developing new measurement capabilities across chemistry and biology as well as enabling more accurate measurement of physical quantities in terms of units such as the metre and kilogram. New 'weights and measures' now support many of the technologies and innovations underpinning the quality of life we take for granted.

While the importance of measurement in areas such as engineering, construction and manufacturing is well known, the important role it plays in the economy can be easily overlooked. Consequently, many of Australia's major trading partners have national measurement policies that define the role and objectives of their measurement systems.

By publishing a national measurement policy statement, the Australian Government recognises the importance of metrology and measurement, its role in the Australian economy, its impact on research and innovation, its role in the protection of citizens (including national security and crisis response), and the benefits that the national measurement system delivers by supporting policy outcomes across the whole-of-government. The national measurement policy statement provides guidance on ensuring measurement supports industry, trade, science and innovation into the future and does not impose barriers through restrictive requirements.

Policy statement objectives

The primary objective of the Australian Government's role in measurement is to provide a **strong and effective national measurement system that is trusted and accepted both domestically and internationally**.

The national measurement system is a coherent, formal, and internationally codified system that ensures that measurements can be made on a consistent basis throughout the country and engenders confidence in those measurements. International trust and acceptance allows for seamless interaction between Australia and nations that conform to the international measurement system.

The primary policy objective will be achieved by ensuring the national measurement system:

- Facilitates trade;
- Enhances business and consumer confidence;
- Supports industry and new technologies;
- Supports other Australian Government policy outcomes, including those related to agriculture and water, defence, the environment, health and sport, law enforcement, safety, and security;
- Provides a rapid response to crises and health contingencies such as food, water and environmental contamination; and
- Contributes to ongoing economic prosperity for Australia.

Policy statement principles

The objectives of this policy statement are underpinned by a set of principles that provide guidance to government decision making about measurement. Activities undertaken across the whole-of-government in support of the objectives of this policy will require decision making about strategic prioritisation, resources, capability development, regulation, and funding. Decisions will be made with regard to the following principles:

- The rationale for a role for government in any measurement activity should be clearly established.
- The role for government in the national measurement system should be focused on addressing the Australian Government's policy objectives, including this policy and other policies where measurement plays a role.
- Administration of the national measurement system should be based on risk management strategies that includes identification of the risks the system needs to manage, the likelihood and consequence of the risks identified, the government's tolerance and appetite for risk, and how the risks link to the strategic plans and priorities of the national measurement system.
- The priorities of the national measurement system should be based on consideration of both current and future needs of Australia with regards to measurement.
- Government activities in the national measurement system should focus on delivering measurement capabilities that are targeted towards areas of greatest benefit to the Australian economy or society, consistent with international best practice and world-class where required.
- The national measurement system should be administered to minimise the regulatory burden on business while ensuring that confidence in measurement is maintained. This includes the trade measurement compliance and enforcement regime and support to businesses that are subject to other national or international regulatory regimes based on measurement.
- The national measurement system should underpin international trade through facilitating recognition of and maintaining confidence in the system by Australia's trading partners.
- The functions of the national measurement system performed by the government should operate on a financially sustainable basis. A sustainable funding model should be based on an adequate level of appropriations, grants, and fee-for-service revenue.

Policy statement ownership

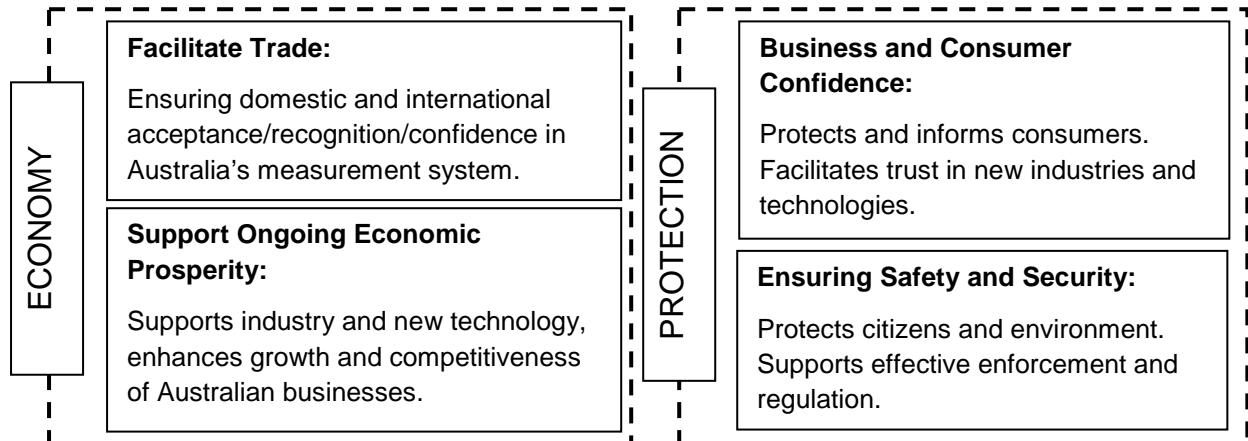
The national measurement policy statement will be maintained by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

While this policy applies to the whole-of-government, it will primarily be the responsibility of the National Measurement Institute (NMI), Australia's peak measurement body. NMI maintains capabilities that support the strategic objectives of a range of Australian Government entities and uses those capabilities to deliver services that underpin the integrity of the Australian economy.

NATIONAL MEASUREMENT POLICY

To provide a strong and effective national measurement system that is trusted and accepted both domestically and internationally.

Objectives



Principles

