NATSPEC'S USE OF STANDARDS

QUALITY AND STANDARDS

'. . . the level of quality that can be policed in the construction stage cannot be higher than that which is spelt out in the contract. If the building contract documents permit a sow's ear then all the quality control in the world cannot demand a silk purse . . . True quality control starts with the documentation for a project and in the project specification in particular . . .'

'. . . for many years an army of experts has been producing minimum quality standard specifications for reference in a variety of industries, including the building industry, and in regulations relevant to those industries.'

'Nothing could be more necessary, more logical, more timely or more useful in today's building industry or more responsive to the call for quality control than a specification system tied to relevant Australian standards. That is what NATSPEC sets out to be.'

NATSPEC AND AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS

'The NATSPEC method of using relevant published standards is to incorporate them by reference and not to quote, transcribe, repeat or paraphrase the text of the standards. To do so would not only interfere with copyrights but would also breed errors of transcription. It would also increase the physical size of NATSPEC and its derivative specifications, unnecessarily.'

'NATSPEC deliberately avoids blanket referencing of standards, the system by which specifiers expect contractors to allow for every conceivable and inconceivable standard in the world.'

'NATSPEC provides a checklist of possible relevant standards. It also provides a means of exercising options contained in standards. It also allows for manufacturer's recommendations to be referenced or 'called-up' in the same way as standards. NATSPEC recognizes the need for care in the specifying of standards.'

− Bryce Mortlock, RAIA Practice Division Report, August, 1989.

STANDARDS IN NATSPEC

NATSPEC continues to incorporate standards by reference to the standard's designation, number and year of publication. Where there are options in standards and decisions to be made, NATSPEC provides prompts and guidance. NATSPEC, with research and feedback from subscribers and industry, fills gaps that the consensus approach can leave out of standards.

NATSOURCE

The publication NATsource includes all NATSPEC cited standards, and their abstracts. It is provided to subscribers as part of their package, as well as being available for purchase.

STANDARDS TO OWN

The following should be considered:

- Design standards cited in the NCC and other regulations, with which you are legally bound to comply.
- Design standards that relate to your discipline and project type.
- Standards and handbooks that relate to construction.
- Lists of suggested standards for the offices of architects, landscape architects, structural, mechanical, hydraulic and electrical engineers provided in the paper *Specification writing* on the NATSPEC website, under suggested standards for offices.

Whether the owning of a standard should be regarded as essential is a matter of professional judgement. Standards relating only to product manufacture or type testing may be considered non-essential provided compliance can be demonstrated by other means, such as certificates of compliance and labelling schemes.

KEEPING STANDARDS CURRENT

- Every three months, NATSPEC lists the most important of these standards in SPECnotes, which is available on SPECbuilder.
- Every six months, in April and October, NATSPEC issues updated specification material to its subscribers via USB and SPECbuilder.

Some National and International standards cited by NATSPEC
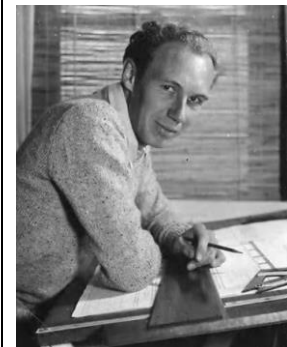

Australian Standards.
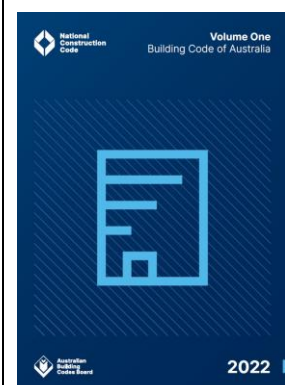

British Standards Institution.

American Society for Testing and Materials.

International Organization for Standardization.

Bryce Mortlock - Father of NATSPEC, RAIA Gold Medallist.

Relevant Websites

NCC
www.abcb.gov.au/

Acts and regulations
www.austlii.edu.au/

SAI GLOBAL
www.saiglobal.com/

Techstreet
techstreet.com