

CWS/ATR/PI/2017/AU

Annual Technical Report on Patent Information Activities in 2017 submitted by IP Australia

I. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PATENT INFORMATION ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

Outline of main policies and plans aimed at development of patent information activities and expected time frames for their realization

IP Australia and the European Patent Office (EPO) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2015 on bilateral cooperation following which, a biennial work plan was drawn in March 2016 detailing a range of cooperative activities between the two offices. The specific activities under this work plan include exchange of information on the ISO9001-2015 quality certification, exchange of patent legal status data in structured format. Another initiative under this plan is agreement between the two offices to cooperate on capacity building in the ASEAN region through exchange of information on training programs as well as participation in joint workshops. These activities are targeted at strengthening the global IP system to better support patent applicants and to encourage innovation.

IP Australia continues to work with the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) assisting them with becoming operational as an international searching and examining authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

IP Australia has been working with the EPO to begin loading historic Patents backfile into DocDB in order that Australian Patent applications are fully searchable on EPO provided systems such as Espacenet and Epoque.

Regional Patent Examiner Training (RPET) and Mentoring Programs – 2018 will see the graduation of the final intake of the successful RPET program. The program (launched in 2013) has had over 50 participants across four intakes from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Kenya and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) complete the program and graduate, and has been well supported by the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA Economic Cooperation Work Program (AANZFTA ECWP), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) as well as IP Australia and the participating offices.

Feedback from the participants and their offices has been positive, with many of the offices starting to use parts of the RPET program content and structure as a basis for their own training programs. The success of the RPET program has led to the creation of the RPET Mentoring Program, which is again supported by AANZFTA ECWP. The goal of the REPT Mentoring Program is to assist the offices to become self-sufficient in delivering patent training to their own examiner cohorts with support from a mentor from IP Australia assigned to each participating RPET Office in the ASEAN region and ARIPO. This piece of work began in 2017 and is expected to run through to December 2019 with the ASEAN offices. The program has made a strong start over the past 12 months and feedback has been promising, with offices developing and implementing their own patent examination training frameworks and content whilst using the experience and expertise of the mentors from IP Australia.

New projects launched or resumed this year in the context of the policies and plans mentioned above, short description: aims, partners, tasks

In May 2017 IP Australia migrated all national Patents data dating from 1904 to 2002 from various legacy systems and repositories into PAMS (Patent Application Management System). This sees all national Patents located in the one system. AusPat now sources all its data from PAMS. Legacy systems and repositories will be progressively decommissioned.

Main areas of patent information activities and related information and communication technology (ICT) practices which were in the focus of attention last year

The RIO (Rights in One) programme is a body of work currently being undertaken by IP Australia in an effort to build a system to manage workflow and IP right cases based on user centred design methodology. The RIO programme will see IP Australia harmonise its IP Rights through process re-engineering, simplification of technology and processes and legislative requirements.

Statistics: changes in terms of application filings and grants with respect to previous year; trends or areas experiencing rapid changes

2016:

Patent applications filed = 28,394 (including NPE and direct applications)

Patents granted = 23,744

PCT designations = N/A*

2017:

Patent applications filed = 28,906 (including NPE and direct applications)

Patents granted = 22,742

PCT designations = N/A*

*(note all states were automatically designated for PCT filings from 1 January 2004)

Trends or areas experiencing rapid changes with respect to the previous year:

Patents application filing in 2017 is comparable to the previous year, with National Phase Entry filing and direct filing levels maintained.

[Other matters and useful links \(URLs\): annual report of the Office, news page, statistics, etc.](#)

Latest news

Latest news is featured on the home page of IP Australia's website:

<http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/>

Statistics

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/data-and-research>

Annual Report

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/data-and-research/australian-ip-report>

Patent Search System

<http://pericles.ipaustralia.gov.au/ols/auspat/quickSearch.do>

II. SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PATENT INFORMATION CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

Information and support provided by the Office to applicants regarding filing on paper and/or e-filing (instructions, seminars, etc.) - URLs

Planning, administration, automation, security, buildings

IP Australia's third party Contact Centre provides a central contact for customers to obtain information about a wide range of Intellectual Property issues. Customers contact the Centre via telephone, and online enquiry form with around 95% of matters of a general nature solved at the first point of contact.

Increasingly, IP Australia is using its website as a means of providing an alternative means of public access to these services. Patents can be searched by external clients via AusPat.

Launched in early 2016, IP Australia's Virtual Assistant 'Alex' is available 24/7 across a number of electronic platforms (primarily our corporate website) to answer general customer queries concerning IP Rights. Virtual Assistants play an integral role in the provision of general information in response to customer queries concerning the products and services of the agency.

URLs of web pages of the Office's website for electronic filing of patent applications

<http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/get-the-right-ip/eservices/>

URLs of web pages of the Office's website that provide information on business procedures such as: filing, publication, examination and grant procedures related to patents; opposition and appeal procedures related to patents; etc.

General information

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/patents>

Publications and forms

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/tools-resources/patents-forms>

and

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/tools-resources/patent-journals>

<http://pericles.ipaustralia.gov.au/ols/epublish/content/olsAvailablePatentPDFs.jsp>

Examiners Manual

http://manuals.ipaustralia.gov.au/patents/Patent_Examiners_Manual.htm

URLs of web pages of the Office's website that provide a description of information products and services offered by the Office (e.g., patent search service(s) and patent databases), as well as information on how to access and utilise them

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/patents/understanding-patents/patent-basics>

Availability of the application dossier in electronic form

Patent application dossier is available through eDossier. This is accessible via IP Australia's front facing search system AusPat.

<http://pericles.ipaustralia.gov.au/ols/auspat/quickSearch.do>

Bibliographic data is captured and held in an oracle database with Java Interface. Updates occur nightly i.e. on a 24 hourly basis.

Classification¹, preclassification² (if applicable), reclassification³ activities; classification systems used (e.g., International Patent Classification (IPC)); matters concerning indexing of patent information

Patent applications are classified into the latest edition of the International Patent Classification. As of 1 January 2006, IP Australia implemented the use of IPC 8 (reformed).

IP Australia no longer reclassifies Australian designated PCT applications at the open for public inspection stage.

Abstracting, reviewing, and translation of the information contained in patent documents

Examiners redraft applicant prepared abstracts of non-PCT national applications when they are found to be deficient to an extent that they are unable to fulfil their function. The abstracts of PCT national phase applications are not reviewed as these have been thoroughly evaluated in the international phase.

Other activities

No comment is made here.

III. SOURCES OF PATENT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE

Main types of publications of the Office (patent applications, full text, first pages, abstracts, bibliographic data, granted patents, etc.), medium (on paper, on CDs, online - URLs)

The number of patent documents published in 2017 in the Australian Official Journal of Patents (AOJP) was:

* patent applications open to public inspection (AU-A) = 8,683

* patent applications advertised accepted (AU-B) = 21,684

Note:

The AU-A figure includes standard patent, and innovation patents made open to public inspection (OPI) either pre-grant or at grant. [Does not include National Phase Entries.]

The AU-B figure includes standard patent acceptances and innovation patent certifications.

Official Gazettes: main types of announcements, frequency of publication, medium (on paper, on CDs, online - URL), etc.

Official notices and changes to office procedures are published in the AOJP.

These Official notices, and many other patent related notices (including the manual of practice and procedure), are also put directly on the IP Australia website under the Patent notices section.

The supplement to the Australian Official Journal of Patents may be found at:

<http://pericles.ipaustralia.gov.au/ols/epublish/content/olsAvailablePatentPDFs.jsp>

Information on IP Australia's Bulk Data Products can be found at:

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/doing-business-us/bulk-data-products>

[Information products and patent document collections \(coverage, medium, etc.\) available to examiners, including external collections and databases](#)

IP Australia uses commercial search tools EPOQUE, STN and GenomeQuest to search databases such as EPODOC, WPI, full text patent databases and many non-patent literature databases. Additionally, many free patent and non-patent literature databases available on the internet are also searched.

[Information products and patent document collections \(coverage, medium, etc.\) available to external users, conditions of access \(e.g., free of charge, subscription, etc.\)](#)

Australian patent specifications are made available through Bulk Patent Specification e-data.

The Office continues to receive foreign patent specifications on CD-ROM and DVD. The following databases and information are available through the IP Australia website:

AusPat (free of charge):

This search system contains bibliographic and status information about patent applications filed in Australia from January 1979. In some cases, details of patents filed before January 1979 are also available. AusPat also contains International Patent Classification information for the majority applications from 1920; IPC version 8 has been applied to applications filed from 1970.

Subscription-based mailing lists:

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/news-and-community/stay-informed>

[Legal status information \(kind of information, coverage, medium, etc.\)](#)

IP Australia now provides the Patent Supplemental Journal in XML format. This includes Legal Status Data. We have not yet packaged purely Legal Status Data elements in any particular format as this will be done in line with decisions of the CWS and Legal Status Data Task Force.

Note: Interested parties may also download the Patent Supplemental Journal in xml format from our secure ftp server in line with the weekly Journal publication dates.

[Other sources](#)

No comment is made here.

IV. ICT SUPPORT TO SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PATENT INFORMATION CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

[Specific software tools supporting business procedures within the Office: general description, characteristics, advantages, possible improvements](#)

Word Processing and Office Automation

Current standard desktop software includes Microsoft Windows 7 with Microsoft Office 2010 Professional Plus.

Infiniti a document generation tool has been deployed to semi-automate report generation using templates

(New) techniques used for the generation of patent information (printing, recording, photocomposing, Optical Character Recognition (OCR), etc.)

The Office's publication system provides the following functions:

- Production of the AOJP Supplement as a PDF file and XML format available for download. The Supplement covers applications from 2002. The journal is published on IP Australia's website;
- Production of patent certificates and original register entries; and
- Production of notices for patent applicants or their agents.

The other part of the Office's publication system is mainframe based (set to be decommissioned mid-2018) and produces:

- PDF file of the Australian Official Journal of Patents. This covers applications/patents up to 2002;
- Patent certificates and original register entries; and
- Notices for patent applicants or their agents.

Hardware used to supporting business processes of the Office

IP Australia's Head Office has an Ethernet-based LAN providing high speed bandwidth for each user desktop connection. A DMZ-based, ASD approved firewall using IAN ports (Internet IEFT Assigned Numbers) provides the secure means to allow access from internal systems/users to external entities such as the Internet or public/private organisations.

IP Australia's Home Based Workers and Outposted Workers supplied with IPA hardware connect using Windows machines with Citrix Receiver – they have access to a Virtual Desktop that is supplied using Citrix XenDesktop. They also have the option to use published applications provided by Citrix XenApp. All of the Citrix infrastructure runs on VMWare vSphere sitting on Dell x86 Hardware. Users connecting using their own hardware may use a variety of devices, however, they still have access to a Virtual Desktop that is supplied using Citrix XenDesktop and have the option to use published applications provided by Citrix XenApp.

The current SOE includes Windows 7 with Office 2010 Professional Plus, IE 11, Microsoft Outlook and Chrome.

In-house systems (online/offline)

IP Australia has on-line filing facilities for patent applications which allow all new patent applications, as well as all other patent related requests, to be filed electronically. These on-line filings interface directly to IP Australia's electronic case file management system, PAMS, which allows these applications to be processed electronically. The AusPat search system provides public access to a range of the bibliographic data and text of full specifications held in PAMS.

External databases

IP Australia uses commercial search tools EPOQUE, STN and GenomeQuest to search databases such as EPODOC, WPI, full text patent databases and many non-patent literature databases. Additionally, many free patent and non-patent literature databases available on the internet are also searched.

Internal databases: coverage, updates, interlinks with external sources

The primary business system is the Unix / Java application PAMS which runs in an environment which includes Sun Solaris, Oracle RDBMS, J2EE, BEA Weblogic, and Objective EDMS.

Full specifications of all non-PCT designated AU-A and AU-B patent specifications are available on the website AusPat.

AusPat is IP Australia's customer facing search system that contains bibliographic and status information about patent applications filed in Australia from January 1979. In some cases, details of patents filed before January 1979 are also available. AusPat also contains International Patent Classification information for the majority applications from 1920; IPC version 8 has been applied to applications filed from 1970.

Updates

Updates to the website information about all non-PCT designated AU-A and AU-B patent specifications occur on a weekly basis.

Updates to the website information about patents bibliographic data occurs nightly.

Storage

Australian patent specifications are made available through Bulk Patent Specification e-data.

Australian bibliographic data is made available in XML format through the Bulk Data product.

The Office continues to receive foreign patent specifications on CD-ROM and DVD.

[Establishment and maintenance of electronic search file: file building, updating, storage, documents from other offices included in the search file](#)

No comment is made here.

[Administrative management electronic systems \(register, legal status, statistics, and administrative support\)](#)

See "In-house Systems" and "Information products and patent document collections"

Other matters

No comment is made here.

V. PROMOTION ACTIVITIES AIMED TO SUPPORT USERS IN ACCESS AND EFFICIENT USE OF PATENT INFORMATION

Patent library: equipment, collection management, network of patent libraries in the country, cooperation with foreign patent libraries

All Australian Patents records/documents are handled in accordance with Office procedures set down under Australian Law and archiving practices.

Australian Patents data is searchable on the EPOs Espacenet:

<https://worldwide.espacenet.com/>

Australian Patents data is searchable on WIPOs Patentscope: <https://patentscope.wipo.int/search/en/search.jsf>

Information services are available on the IP Australia website:

<http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/>

Publications related to different business procedures and patent information sources available to users, for example, books, brochures, Internet publications, etc.

IP Australia provides useful links and topics on a wide range of information related to intellectual property via IP Australia's website. <http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/>

In 2017 we continued to develop our commercialisation content and enhanced our enforcement content to include IP mediation. IP Australia established an intellectual property (IP) [Mediation Referral Service](#) for IP right holders to access mediation providers as a low cost and effective alternative to resolve IP related disputes.

Office's initiatives on providing foreign patent information in the local language(s) (e.g., machine translation tools, translation of abstracts)

Use of external software including:

- Google Language Tools
- Free Translation

Additionally IP Australia has several multi-lingual examiners acting in the additional capacity of providing document and abstract translation.

Cooperation with universities, research centers, technology and innovation support centers, etc.

Exporters

To support the relationship with the Export Council of Australia, IP Australia developed a range of international fact sheets available online to assist Australian businesses when approaching a global market.

The suite includes China, Canada, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, European Union and the USA. The fact sheets were reviewed and graphically refreshed in 2017 to ensure their ongoing value.

Our partnership with the Export Council of Australia continues in 2017 and our body of work involves collaborating on a range of content including web and various publications and communication activities, cross-promotion through digital channels (in particular social media channels) and support of events, programs and speaking opportunities, to assist Australian businesses when exporting.

Accountants:

IP Australia has continued to team up with CPA Australia, an accounting body with more than 150 000 members, to deliver tailored information campaign to help accountants understand the benefits of identifying and protecting IP assets.

A focus for 2017 was to encourage accountants to have conversations with their clients around registered business names and trade marks.

Indigenous:

Work that supports engagement with the indigenous business community is continuing. IP Australia is continuing to support the production of a documentary titled 'Clever Country'. The documentary will feature indigenous innovation throughout history and is expected to air in Australia and selected overseas countries in 2019. This initiative is expected to encourage both indigenous and non-indigenous people to better understand the important role intellectual property play in innovation.

SMEs:

Partnerships with four incubation hubs continued in 2017/18. The partnerships focused on collaborating on a range of content including web and various publications and communication activities, cross-promotion through digital channels (in particular social media channels) and support of events, programs and speaking opportunities, to assist Australian start-up businesses. The 2017/18 incubation hub partnership is currently being evaluated and we are reviewing how to maximise these partnerships in the future.

In mid-2017 a formal webinar program was established. Throughout the five month period from August to December 2017, IP Australia held 10 webinars aimed at educating start-ups and SMEs about IP. 251 people attended the webinars and we received very positive feedback. Webinars were held on IP basics, as well as three IP rights: patents, trade marks and designs. Each webinar was delivered on a rotational basis in partnership with patent, trade mark and designs examiners within IP Australia. In addition to the IP rights webinars, a guest webinar was hosted by IP Australia's IP Counsellor to China, David Bennett in November.

IP Australia continues to have an active presence at large scale start-up events across Australia, including:

- Tech23 is a long-standing event showcasing world-class starts ups from around Australia. It is an excellent opportunity for IP Australia to educate and promote the value of IP to a large number of people within the Australian business community.
- StartCon, a two-day start-up conference, which brings together entrepreneurs, growth hackers, marketers, and investors. We received feedback from the Australian business community that we should engage in more face-to-face activities and StartCon 2017 was a great opportunity to achieve this.
- Pause fest, one of Australia's premier creative, tech and business events in 2017. It was here that our new [Australian Trade Mark Search](#) system was launched.

Universities

As part of IP Australia's University Research and Commercialisation Plan, a number of initiatives have been identified to increase IP education and awareness within the higher education sector.

In 2017 IP Australia co-hosted *Protect, publish, engage: stories about collaboration and commercialisation*, with the Australian National University (ANU). There were 74 attendees at the event from the academic, business, start-up and IP community. The speaker line-up included two esteemed local researchers, a commercialisation expert, and IP Australia's own patent specialist.

Representatives from IP Australia also participated in smaller workshops with a number of universities, for both students and research staff.

Secondary Students

IP Australia has partnered with Questacon, National Youth Science Forum and the CSIRO to deliver intellectual property workshops to talented and emerging young entrepreneurs.

The Questacon and IP Australia partnership provides an opportunity through the National Questacon Invention Convention (NQIC) to engage with high school students aged 14 to 18 who have demonstrated an interest in inventorship, innovation and entrepreneurship. These students are likely to pursue tertiary STEM qualifications and are encouraged to forge a career within the STEM fields.

IP Australia partnered with the National Youth Science Forum (NYSF) in 2017. The partnership provided an opportunity to engage with Year 12 students who had demonstrated their passion and talent for STEM and to help share their experiences back to their local communities. These young Australians were introduced to intellectual property concepts, with selected groups invited to further explore the role of patent examiner within the intellectual property system.

The BHP Billiton Science & Engineering Awards, organised by CSIRO, are Australia's most prestigious school science awards. This opportunity allows IP Australia to engage with 26 STEM orientated national student finalists. IP Australia was approached by CSIRO to participate in this event in 2016 and 2017 and voluntarily contributed our expertise to the program without providing funding through a formal partnership arrangement.

Education and training: training courses, e-learning modules (URLs), seminars, exhibitions, etc.

IP Stakeholders Forum (IPSF)

The IP Stakeholders Forum is the principal forum for consultation, discussion and information exchange on IP matters that relate to IP stakeholders. A key role of the forum is to validate IP Australia's self-assessments under the Regulatory Performance framework. During 2017 two IP Stakeholders Forums were held in Sydney.

Attorney Roundtable

In July 2017 IP Australia hosted a roundtable discussion with selected Sydney based attorneys. The roundtable was an opportunity to discuss the latest policy and program initiatives at IP Australia, and for attorneys to ask questions and provide feedback.

Other forums

IPBC

IP Australia partnered with the Intellectual Property Business Congress (IPBC) to deliver their Australasian conference in November 2017. The event was attended by over a hundred IP decision makers from across Australia, to discuss how IP owners can strategically use IP as a business asset.

IPTA / AIPPI

IP Australia was involved in leading attorney events and conferences, including IPTA and AIPPI, where our Director General participated as a speaker and panellist.

IP Summit

To commence in 2018, the IP Summit will be an annual event which draws together attendees from industry, academia, the IP profession and government to discuss and share information on IP issues of strategic importance.

Other activities

IP Australia's website

The IP Australia website (www.ipaustralia.gov.au) has 3.8 million unique visits per annum and is the front door to IP Australia's digital information and service transactions. It plays a critical role in educating and supporting our customers and facilitating transactions with the agency.

IP Toolkit

After a public consultation period the IP Toolkit was updated in 2017. The updated IP Toolkit is more interactive, user-friendly and accessible. The content has been streamlined, with a stronger focus on IP matters, and a new section dealing with IP Management Scenarios provides more detailed information on how the contract and term sheet templates can assist in collaboration projects.

The toolkit includes:

- a collaboration checklist covering the key issues that need to be considered
- contract, confidentiality agreement and term sheet templates
- guidance and information to help collaborating parties manage their IP.

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS) and IP Australia jointly developed the IP Toolkit.

Social Media

Social media allows IP Australia to enhance our corporate reputation and interact with our key stakeholders and react to situations in a timely and transparent manner.

As part of our continued efforts to improve and increase IP Australia's presence on social media channels, consistent with the IP Australia External Communication Strategy 2015-2018, we are undertaking a series of online promotional campaigns to help educate the public on awareness of IP rights.

Our agency has added value to customer communication with its active social media presence. With five social media accounts and over 17,400 followers collectively to date, our agency continues to see an increase in online engagement and building more meaningful relationships with customers, influencers and other relevant stakeholders.

Online Services (eServices) and B2B

IP Australia's eServices and B2B channels are the agency's customer electronic lodgement platforms:

- Online Services (eServices) is IP Australia's web-based self-service portal that is widely used by private applicants, small – medium businesses and attorney firms. This portal caters for every service request type available across Trade Marks, Designs, Patents and Plant Breeder's Rights.

There are currently over 175,000 registered eServices users.

- B2B (business-to-business) is an MFT file transfer product IP Australia supports for high-volume customers; enabling the direct transmission of large numbers of service requests directly into IP Australia's internal systems. B2B caters for the majority of service request types available across Trade Marks, Designs, Patents and Plant Breeder's Rights.

There are currently 16 customers that have integrated the B2B software into their case management network.

Since the release of these platforms in 2013, IP Australia's customer base has significantly changed its lodgement behaviour. There is currently a 99.6% uptake of the digital platforms.

Electronic Correspondence Redesign and Behavioural Economics (BE) Enhancements

The release of electronic correspondence represented a first for the agency and assisted us to further streamline our processes and reduce our reliance on physical resources such as paper. 92% of correspondence (including IP Right certificates) is delivered to customers by way of either the Online Services (eServices) or B2B account.

In November 2016, IP Australia redesigned its Patents correspondence incorporating behavioural insights strategies. Some of the improvements to our electronic correspondence included;

- use of colours to highlight urgency to improve response rates and receive payments on time;
- improved layout and fonts to attract attention and inform users of the letter's purpose, such as clearer due dates and fees;
- implementation of timelines to help readers plan their response and understand the IP rights process as well as application status; and
- simplified the content to allow readers to clearly understand the action required

The electronic correspondence redesign has contributed to a reduction in call centre queries in key areas such as application fee and status for Patents.

Further, the correspondence redesign has seen an increase in customer's satisfaction of approximately 7% in 2018 in questions relating to the quality of IP Australia correspondence.

Portfolio View and IP Folio

IP Australia has developed and released a beta (test) of *Portfolio View* for patents and trade marks within our Online Services (eServices) platform.

Portfolio View is an initiative designed to assist self-filers and small to medium-sized enterprises by displaying all intellectual property (IP) rights associated with the user in one simple and easy-to-use location. The new capability strengthens our digital offering for customers and can be accessed from a customers' Online Services (eServices) in one click.

The beta environment uses authentic/active data and provides customers with a list of their trade marks and patents (*where the correct ownership details have been provided by the customer).

As a result of *Portfolio View*'s success and strong customer feedback for the capability to engage with IP Australia through mobile channels, IP Australia have developed and released our first mobile app, IP Folio, in December 2017.

IP Folio is a digital wallet for IP rights within Australia. It further optimises IP Australia's rapidly evolving customer experience in interacting and transacting by providing an accessible, convenient and responsive means to access IP right information via a mobile app. This new mobile application is consistent with the Digital Transformation Agency's Digital Service Standard principles.

IP Folio displays key information and notifications keeping you updated on the progress of your applications. We'll tell you when your application has been accepted, examined or requires renewal. You can also use IP Folio to search for pending or registered rights in Australia and 'watch' them within the app to receive notifications (alerts) for status changes.

The first release to the Apple App Store allowed customers to view and track any trade mark. An update was released in May 2018 that increased its features. It is now available to Android users from Google Play and customers can now view and track patent.

Ask Alex: IP Australia's Virtual Assistant

Launched in early 2016, IP Australia's multi-award winning Virtual Assistant 'Alex' is available 24/7 across a number of electronic platforms (primarily our corporate website) to answer general customer queries concerning IP Rights. Virtual Assistants play an integral role in the provision of general information in response to customer queries concerning the products and services of the agency.

Following successful results in her pilot trade mark phase, Alex's knowledgebase was enhanced enabling her to assist customers with their patents, PBRs and designs queries. Using the latest Virtual Assistant technology available to us, Alex will continue to learn and expand her knowledgebase. The more customers continue to interact and ask her questions, the more Alex will learn and develop.

We are continually improving Alex to ensure she remains a valuable customer service tool. Here is an overview of some of her Key achievements and enhancements:

- Over 95,000 customer interactions with the Virtual Assistant.
- **Livechat** – Alex can offer customers the option of being transferred to a live agent to continue their conversation for more complex queries (during the agency's hours of operation).
- **Alex Coach** – If an irregular or highly complex query cannot be resolved by Alex in the first instance, the query is automatically sent (during the agency's hours of operation only) to a 'hidden' agent for a response. Using machine learning software, the system will search through existing content on IP Australia's website to aid the 'hidden agent' by providing suggested responses which can be sent back to the customer in a timely manner.

Alex can be found on the agency's corporate website and also on IP Australia's Facebook page and the abovementioned *Portfolio View* beta site.

VI. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF PATENT INFORMATION

[International exchange and sharing of patent information in machine-readable form, e.g., priority documents, bibliographic data, abstracts, search reports, full text information](#)

IP Australia is working on structured specifications. Presently information supplied to WIPO-CASE is machine readable. Bibliographic Patents material is in XML format.

Full specifications of all non-PCT designated AU-A and AU-B patent specifications are available on IP Australia's website, and are updated on a weekly basis.

Australian patent specifications are made available through Bulk Patent Specification e-data.

Australian bibliographic data is made available in xml format through the Bulk Data product.

Medium used for exchange of priority documents

Certified copies of Australian patent applications for use as priority documents in foreign applications are provided in paper form. Priority documents on which Australian applications are based are required in paper form. Priority documents can also be provided in electronic form using the WIPO DAS service.

Medium allowed for filing applications

IP Australia has on-line filing facilities for patent applications which allow all new standard patent applications and innovation patent applications to be filed electronically. IP Australia also accepts applications filed in paper form.

[Participation in international or regional activities and projects related to patent information](#)

IP Australia presented at the following seminars and workshops in 2017

- IP Australia attended the third and fourth workshops hosted by the EPO on the Creation of a Network of ASEAN Trainers for Patent Examiners (March and November 2017)
- IP Australia undertook an assessment of the Philippines international search and examination capabilities

Vancouver Group

The Vancouver Group was established in 2008 and is made up of the IP Offices of Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom to share information and experiences on common issues and areas relevant to the management of a mid-sized IP Office and, through this collaboration, contribute to a more effective multilateral approach to work sharing.

Between November 2014 and July 2016, the VG Offices conducted an Inter-Office Quality Audit (VG IOQA) program which was reviewed in 2017. The recommendations in the Report of the Review were endorsed by the Heads of Office at their teleconference in June 2017. A Work Plan for Future Collaboration addressing the recommendations was developed by the VG Working Group and endorsed by the Heads of Office at the WIPO General Assemblies in October 2017.

According to the Work Plan (Recommendation 2), the Offices agreed to prioritise collaboration between the search specialist teams of each VG Office. The Searching working Group (SWG) was formed in March 2018 and is currently collaborating on searching along three themes:

- Search tools, databases and search practices
 - Search tools and databases – Comparison of the search tools and databases used by the Offices with the benefits and reasons for their use.
 - Search Collaboration Workshops – A regular benchmarking exercise where the Offices will search applications and compare and contrast search strategies and results. Each workshop will be focussed on a specific technology.
 - Comparison of Search Manuals of VG Offices.
- The quality of search – Comparison of the Quality Review Systems with a focus on searching.
- The training provided in regard to searching – Sharing information on search training of the Offices.

The mutual learning through the SWG will allow the VG Offices to enhance their search quality.

WIPO-CASE

The Vancouver Group and WIPO developed the Centralized Access to Search and Examination (WIPO-CASE) System that enables patent offices to securely share search and examination documentation related to patent applications in order to facilitate work sharing programs. WIPO CASE has been linked with the JPO's One Portal Dossier (OPD) system giving participants access to a greater range of data.

Other improvements include scalable security, more shareable document types and better notification services.

Australia's dossier content was added to the WIPO CASE Public Access Portal in 2016 via PatentScope as given by the new terms and conditions for WIPO CASE.

Standardisation projects

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) standards in the field of industrial property information and documentation are an essential enabler for international cooperation. Standardization efforts have resulted in 51 WIPO Standards, Recommendations and Guidelines related to patents, trade marks and industrial designs.

These WIPO Standards facilitate the harmonization of practices by IP offices regarding electronic data processing in respect of the procedures for filing, examination, publication, granting and registration of industrial property titles.

WIPO Standards also facilitate the international transmission, exchange, sharing and dissemination of industrial property information (text and images), as well as the access to and retrieval of this information.

The International ICT Cooperation Team is actively participating in the development and maintenance of a number of these standards through their involvement in the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) and its Task Forces, including:

- ST.96 (XML4IP): This standard recommends the XML (eXtensible Markup Language) resources to be used for filing, publication, processing, and exchange of information for all types of industrial property (IP), i.e., patents, trademarks and industrial designs. This new standard will eventually replace the existing separate XML standards for the three IP rights (ST.36, ST.66 and ST.86);

- ST.14: This standard sets out the recommendations for references cited in patent documents. As part of the ST.14 Task Force, the team is currently focused on revising the recommendations provided in paragraph 14 of the Standard ST.14 with regard to citation category codes, as well as to consider the convenience of bringing WIPO Standard ST.14 in line with the recent version of International Standard ISO 690:2010;
- ST.10C: This standard sets out the recommendations for presentation of bibliographic data components of IP documents. Recent work of the ST.10C Task Force has focused on collecting and publishing information regarding application and priority application numbering systems currently and historically used by IP offices;
- ST.26: Is a standard for the disclosure of sequence listings using XML and IP Australia is presently working on its implementation planning
- ST.37 – Authority File Task Force
- Part 7 (Survey) Task Force
- Design Representation Task Force - IP Australia is the co-leader
- ST.68 – Electronic management of sound marks
- Task force for standardizing patent legal status – IP Australia is working toward high level events solution design and implementation potentially via API; and
- PCT Minimum Documentation Task Force.

Group B+ 'Worksharing via ICT' Work Stream

IP Australia is leading the Group B+ work stream towards achieving work sharing, specifically mutual-exploitation, within Group B+ through the use of Information Technology (IT).

Regional Patent Examiner Training (RPET) and Mentoring Programs

RPET is a modern, comprehensive and intensive competency based online training program which is based on IP Australia's existing training framework, with a focus on search and examination according to the PCT standards. A Virtual Learning Environment provides access to online RPET resources, enables remote and real-time delivery of training (via virtual classrooms) as well as collaboration among participants located in different countries and across different time zones. The RPET program commenced in 2013 and successfully completed in June 2018 with its fourth and final intake (2016 intake).

The objectives of RPET were to:

- Build the patent examination capabilities of participating offices by improving examiner competence *via* a comprehensive, integrated and remotely delivered training program that results in competency comparable to reaching IP Australia's Acceptance Delegation for examining to PCT standards;
- Provide on-going mentoring and support throughout the program using a combination of face-to-face training, supervision from local and Australian examiners and online learning technology; and
- Enhance patent examination standards of participating offices, which will lead to the granting of higher quality and consistent patent rights and increased business confidence throughout the ASEAN region.

RPET has seen over 50 participants from four intakes from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Kenya and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) successfully complete the program and graduate.

A virtual graduation will be held for the 14 successful graduates and their local supervisors from the final 2016 RPET intake in August 2018 with several executives across the IP Australia to attend. The graduates are encouraged to continue to engage in the RPET Community of Practice and embed their learning and share their knowledge in their respective offices to build their own training capacity and improve quality standards.

The RPET program has also been successful in promoting further quality and improvements in these countries with several countries trialing multi-person search teams and investigating the IP Australia Quality system with a view to implementing a quality review system of their own. Many of the countries have also started to use the RPET training as a basis for their own in-house patent examiner training. This work has been supported by ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA Economic Cooperation Work Program (AANZFTA ECWP) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) as well as the participating offices involved.

In late 2016, IP Australia introduced a new component to the RPET program called Train the Trainer. Train the Trainer was designed for RPET Trainees and local supervisors who have participated in the RPET program and were undertaking training roles within their offices. The Train the Trainer component better equips RPET participants transitioning to trainer roles with the capabilities to deliver competency based training within their office and share learning gained through RPET.

IP Australia has also been cooperating with the European Patent Office (EPO) under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the development of a network of ASEAN trainers. This work complements the RPET program and aids in the development of in-house training capability in the ASEAN member states. The development of in-house training capability will enable a broader reach for the RPET material to be delivered.

In June 2017, RPET extended to a new mentoring program entitled RPET Mentoring. An IP Australia mentor has been assigned to each participating RPET Office in the ASEAN region and ARIPO in building internal training capacity and improving quality standards with an aim of allowing the participating offices to become self-sufficient in delivering patent training to their own examiner cohort. This program aims to:

- Embed relevant aspects of the RPET program's learning and best practices in the development of competency-based training programs for new examiners;
- Find gaps within the participating office's training system if any and in collaboration with the office provide a training system tailored to their needs;
- Increase internal training capacity and self-sufficiency to provide their own training with a view to increasing cooperation between ASEAN Member States; and
- Improve their quality standards based on international standards and best practices.

The RPET Mentoring program is flexible and designed around the particular needs of each participating office. Early in the program the RPET mentors completed a gap analysis on the current training practices and ascertained the training priorities of each office. From the findings of the gap analysis, the mentors have been working with their respective participating office in developing and delivering specific aspects of training each office would benefit from IPA's guidance. Many of the objectives for each participating office are similar, which is consistent with our experience that these offices face similar issues concerning improvements to their current training activities.

The common objectives across the participating offices are:

- Providing one training program for all patent examiner trainees across their office
- Ability to tailor training content to fit their own practice/legislation
- Building examiner capability and quality of examination through consistency in training
- Strengthening their training framework

The IPA mentors have worked closely with each office to develop a competency based training program and assessment framework including a competency based training framework, units of competencies and a training curriculum. We have also been successful in contextualising existing training material and develop new training material based on each office's national legislation and practice. The Train the Trainer program was also delivered to current and future trainers in each of the participating office to further support the office's capability in delivering high quality training to new and current patent examiners.

The second stage of RPET Mentoring commenced in July 2018. During this stage, IPA will provide continued guidance in further progressing development of the office's training and address the remaining gaps in training development. The IPA mentors will also focus on providing support to the offices in delivering the new training in their office to ensure the results from the first year are achieved and sustained.

[Assistance to developing countries](#)

Through the WIPO Funds-in-Trust theme of developing the IP system, IP Australia has supported the following activities in 2017:

- Lao PDR : Development of a National IP Strategy
- Kiribati: Development of a National IP Strategy
- Niue: Development of a National IP Strategy
- Indonesia: National Workshop of PCT national Phase Entries, utilisation of examination work products from other national Offices

- Placements of eight research scientists from developing and least developed countries with Australian research institutions with a view to ensuring the transfer of technology and know-how in the area of research into neglected tropical diseases (identification of Australian and Indo-pacific institutions).
- Translation of Tool Box in national languages. This would include both standard contracts/protocols and presentations to be used by national institutions to facilitate appropriation of IP and knowledge transfer (Indonesia and Vietnam)
- National IP Marketing and Valuation (Indonesia, 10-13 July)
- Advanced National Successful Technology Licensing Workshop (Viet Nam, 25-29 September 2017)
- National IP Commercialization Program for Academic Institutions and National SMEs (Philippines, 19-21 September 2017)

Other activities

No comment is made here.

VII. OTHER RELATED MATTERS

URLs of web pages of the Office's website that:

Provide information on legislation related to patents

Patents Act:

<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A04014>

Patents Regulations

<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F1996B02697>

- Intellectual Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Act 2012
<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2012A00035>

Annual Report

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/data-and-research/australian-ip-report>

Provide Latest news:

Latest news is featured on the home page of IP Australia's website:

<http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/>

Subscription-based mailing lists:

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/news-and-community/stay-informed>

Other relevant matters

IP Australia's new website. Any links to the previous site will be redirected to the new home page. Please contact IP Australia if you need assistance.

1. Classification is allotting one or more classification symbols (e.g., IPC symbols) to a patent application, either before or during search and examination, which symbols are then published with the patent application.

2. Preclassification is allotting an initial broad classification symbol (e.g., IPC class or subclass, or administrative unit) to a patent application, using human or automated means for internal administrative purposes (e.g., routing an application to the appropriate examiner). Usually preclassification is applied by the administration of an office.

3. Reclassification is the reconsideration and usually the replacement of one or more previously allotted classification symbols to a patent document, following a revision and the entry into force of a new version of the Classification system (e.g., the IPC). The new symbols are available on patent databases.