



Ms Bridget Smith  
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Dear Ms Smith,

**RE: REVIEW OF THE TELEMARKETING AND RESEARCH INDUSTRY STANDARD 2007**

Thank you for giving the Research Industry Council of Australia (RICA) the opportunity to provide comment on the remake of the *Telemarketing and Research Industry Standard 2007*.

RICA represents both business and professional bodies in the market and social research industry. Our constituent bodies are the Association of Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO), representing businesses, and the Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS), representing individual research professionals. The market and social research industry turns over \$800 million annually and employs over 12,000 people and over 4,100 of these are full-time professionals.

Market and social research is an important service that benefits all Australians. From studies on public health or the income and labour dynamics in Australia, from political polls to television ratings, to surveys of customer satisfaction for developing better products and services, market and social research provides valuable information about the society in which we live. This information helps government, businesses and not-for-profit organisations make informed decisions based upon the interests and needs of their constituents, clients and the general public.

Market and social research is not “telemarketing” and RICA is pleased to note that the distinction between the two disciplines (as revised in 2011) remains clear and unchanged in the Standard. Researchers do not contact people to sell them anything, but rather to gather information on a particular topic in order to help agencies and organisations make strategic policy or planning decisions. Market and social research involves the collection of information from individuals or organisations, which is collated and aggregated to give a picture of a population or part of a population. There is no component of selling or marketing involved, and the process guarantees anonymity to respondents unless they expressly waive this right.

Furthermore, market and social research conducted by members of the AMSRO and AMSRS operate under strict industry co-regulated codes and practices including;

- The Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code;
- The AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour;



- International Standard for Market, Opinion, and Social Research (ISO 20252);
- International Standard for Access Panels in Market Opinion and Social Research (ISO 26362); and
- The Qualified Practising Market Researcher scheme (QPMR).

The market and social research industry recognises that the long-term success of the industry depends upon the willing cooperation of the public and business community. Therefore, the industry has developed these industry-wide practices that aim both to minimise intrusion and to ensure that research is carried out honestly and objectively, using processes that protect the identities and rights of individuals. This is necessary to encourage informed and willing participation in market and social research activities.

**Specific comments relating to the remake of the Standard follow.**

RICA is pleased to note there are no substantive changes proposed to the Standard. Furthermore, that some of the changes formalise existing industry best practice under the AMSRS [Code of Professional Behaviour](#).

These include:

- Expressed consent must be provided when calling outside of the permitted calling times (3.1);
- That the name of the employer of the individual making the call (that is the ‘calling company’) be provided as soon as the call starts, rather than be provided immediately on request as currently stipulated (3.1).

RICA also supports the exception (3.4) for researchers to withhold the identity of the ‘person making the call’ (aka ‘company conducting research for itself’) should it affect the results of an interview.

Added subsection (10.4)	Add subsection: <b>If providing the information at paragraphs (2)(b) or (c) would reveal the name of the person that caused the call to be made, the information need not be given at the start of the call provided that the caller gives, or causes to give, those details to the call recipient: (a) immediately, if the call recipient asks for those details; and (b) in any case, prior to the end of the call, unless the call recipient terminates the call before that information can be provided.</b>	Exception to address the issue that, in some instances, providing the name of the entity that caused the research call to be made upfront would compromise the research being undertaken. For example, where a company is conducting its own market research.
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As noted above, in some instances, providing the name of the person or entity that caused the research call to be made upfront compromises the research being undertaken. An example follows...



*In a study of public awareness of a particular health condition (for a not for profit organisation that is named after the condition) aimed at developing communication to inform people who are unaware of the condition or its associated risks, it would be counter-productive to introduce the name of the client at the beginning of the study since this would artificially raise awareness. If this same study was established as a longitudinal study to assess whether the same individuals' awareness and understanding of the condition was changing over time, it would obviously be necessary to withhold the name of the client until each individual research participant had become aware of the condition for the same reason.*

*OR*

*When asking voting intentions on behalf of a local candidate, the response from a research participant may change if they are aware of the client.*

In closing, RICA members are generally satisfied with the Standard's application and remain supportive of the proposed changes.

We thank you for seeking industry feedback and should the ACMA require further information regarding the market and research industry in Australia we would be happy to assist.

Yours sincerely,

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