

PATENTS CONSULTATION GROUP MEETING
27 March 2014
MEETING SUMMARY

Members of the Patents Consultation Group (PCG) met on Thursday 27 March 2014. This paper is a summary of the minutes of this meeting provided for public release

The Defence Export Control Office gave the group some background and context on the Export Control system (for regulating the export of defence and dual-use goods as part of Australia's system of export controls). The group was advised that amendments to the Defence Trade Controls Act 2012 are currently in consultation phase and will be implemented by May 2015.

The group discussed various options proposed by IP Australia to modernise the execution of amendments to patent specifications. In addition to this, the group discussed the appropriate way to handle and address confidential correspondence to IP Australia.

The group was updated on the progress of the [IP Laws Amendment Bill 2014](#), and the legislative changes that are being developed as part of IP Australia's Case Management program.

The group was also updated on the progress of IP Australia's future channel mix. In particular, they were informed of the important changes to the customer transaction and enquiry channels, essentially being the decommissioning of the assist email, corporate fax, Australia Post lodgement posts, and resulting emergency alternate electronic means of communication.

IPTA voiced their concerns regarding the timeframes to file an extension of time for submitting evidence in opposition proceedings under the new provisions, and particularly the realities around gathering quality evidence for oppositions. The group progressed to discuss possible initiatives to address this.

IP Australia has reviewed its CSC and commitment levels and have requested feedback from PCG representatives by end of April. The current review amendments include:

- updated privacy information,
- improved charter consistency across Australian Government departments,
- additional information included for the achievement of Patent and Designs commitments for the period 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2014,
- additional commitment for expedited Patent examination,
- amending the minimum performance undertaking to 85% for the commitment of advising job applicants of the outcome of selection processes, and
- improved processes for the reporting of the Plant Breeders Right correspondence commitment.

Finally, the group were advised of the current patent examination workload, particularly relating to the backlog of the pre-IP Reform examination requests.