

AS 2278 – ‘THE AEROSOL STANDARD’: A HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Since the Association’s establishment, ensuring the safety of aerosol products on the Australian market and hence of workers, consumers and the community, has been central to its mission.

In 1976 the PK/13 Technical Committee of Standards Australia was re-formed to develop a Standard for filled aerosols and the Association took a central role in providing its personnel and input into its work programme. Amongst its nominees to the Committee was Lindsay Showyin, who would go on to serve as its Chairperson (and Association President!) for many decades.

Three years later the fruits of their labours was published as Australian Standard AS 2278*.

*[*The predecessor to AS 2278, AS Z42 was essentially a specification for the container only.]*

The Standard would become an important tool to ensure the safety of aerosol products, providing guidance on the selection of the appropriate container, its flammability classification and labelling and it was updated in 1986, 2000, 2008, and 2022 (the current version).

“The Standard is an important tool to guide aerosol product safety and its inclusion within the Transport Code ensures its requirements are mandatory.”

Lindsay Showyin – Chair, PK/13 Standards Committee

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LOOKING OUTWARDS

Like many Australian Standards at the time, early versions of AS 2278 were based on the relevant British Standard but with a number of unique ‘Australianisms’. However, just as Britain itself was increasingly looking outwards to the European Community and its Directives, so as we entered the new millennium, the Association was increasingly mindful of the desirability of ensuring harmonisation of local regulatory requirements with those of our major trading partners.

With Europe the largest single aerosol-producing ‘bloc’ in the world and with the Association now active members of the European Aerosol Federation, it was natural to look to the European Aerosol Dispensers Directive as an example of best practice to harmonise with.

“The 2000 version of AS 2278 was a major milestone for the industry and ensuring that Australian requirements were in line with international requirements was an important step in the transition to an internationally competitive and export-focussed industry.”

Lindsay Showyin – Chair, PK/13 Standards Committee

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AS 2278:2000 marked a radical departure for the Standard, adopting the European Directive's approach to ensuring safe burst and distort requirements for containers.

At the Aerosol Industry Awards in 2001 the Association would present an Award to Standards Australia for its assistance in this important shift to harmonised requirements for local aerosols.

Plastic Aerosols?

In mid-1988 Standards Australia – at the request of the Association – commenced work on a new Standard for plastic aerosol dispensers, using the British Standard BS 5597:1978 as its basis. (The previous year in the UK both Reckitt & Colman and Johnson Wax had launched Supersoft Hairspray and 'Shout' pre-laundry spray respectively in a PET aerosol from Fibrenyle.)

Like the PET aerosol itself, the Committee was short-lived and - in the face of on-going technical challenges - plastic aerosols failed to 'take off'.

A subsequent attempt to develop a Standard for Plastic Aerosols in 2006 – 2008 also stalled after five meetings in the face of protracted delays in resolving the regulatory requirements for such aerosols in the EU Aerosol Dispensers Directive.

Accordingly, AS 2278 only covers metal aerosols, though its numbering designation is such that there is allowance for other materials of construction to be added.

Note that the Australian Dangerous Goods Code DOES include provision for plastic aerosol dispensers – see cl. 6.2.4.0.2. – which declares that

“Plastic aerosol dispensers can be used for aerosol formulations classified as Division 2.2 not exceeding 1000 ml capacity. The plastic aerosol dispensers must comply with British Standard BS 5597:1991 – “Specification for non-refillable plastics aerosol dispensers up to 1000ml capacity”. SOURCE: ADG 7.8

MORE INFORMATION

To purchase a copy of AS 2278:

[AS 2278.1:2022 Aerosol containers Metal aerosol dispensers of capacity \(intertekinform.com\)](https://www.intertekinform.com/AS-2278.1-2022-Aerosol-containers-Metal-aerosol-dispensers-of-capacity)

To read more about the linkages between AS 2278, the ADG Code and the European Aerosol Dispensers Directive (members only):

<http://createsend.com/t/r-B8522E2717456A132540EF23F30FEDED>

You can read more about the EU Aerosol Dispensers Directive at:

[DocsRoom - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom-external/index.cfm?docId=32422)