



www.austlii.edu.au

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Contributing to AustLII - A good investment

AustLII asks its users and supporters to contribute towards the maintenance and development of the services it provides. The multiple reasons for doing so should be considered by those supporting AustLII.

Four main reasons why AustLII should be supported

1. AustLII delivers high quality and cost-efficient services

The legal profession and many commercial and government sectors have a strong vested interest in funding AustLII so as to secure free access to the legal information that they, or those they represent, need to conduct their business. From an operational perspective, contributing to AustLII is a sound investment. It is also a cost-effective investment, because AustLII delivers access at a cost of less than 1¢ per page accessed.

2. AustLII stimulates a competitive market

AustLII provides a free-access product into the same legal information marketplace within which commercial and government legal information providers compete. Its quality has made it the most-used online provider in Australia.* The 'AustLII alternative' impacts on the price settings of commercial providers, stimulating them to keep their prices reasonable, and to increase the value-adding of their products. AustLII also cooperates with some commercial publishers to assist them to improve the coverage of their products.

3. AustLII provides public benefits to the whole community – essential legal information

AustLII provides free access to public legal information to everyone, irrespective of their means. This supports the effective functioning of the rule of law, and provides essential legal information that benefits both community support organisations and individuals. All contributions to AustLII therefore have this community service or charitable benefit (recognised with DGR status), a reason in itself to support AustLII.

4. AustLII supports good public policies on legal information

AustLII supports free-access policies and opposes monopolistic practices in relation to legal information. Free access to legal information is necessary for the rule of law and democracy to function effectively. These interests need an advocate, because public and commercial bodies do not always support, or even recognise, free access and other public interests in legal information. AustLII works to expand the scope and quality of legal information available for free access, and defends it against poor public policies.

** In 2013 the AustLII website received over 214 million hits (588,633 per day) and 14.92 terabytes of data were downloaded. AustLII maintained its number one market position in the online legal category throughout 2013 and increased its market share from about 25% to over 30% (figures provided by Hitwise). This category includes websites from legal information providers in government, publishers, courts and tribunals, law societies, legal firms and the bar. Identifiable 2013 usage came, in order of largest use, from the commercial sector, government educational and community sectors.*

What AustLII provides

AustLII offers unrivaled breadth to its coverage of current Australasian legal information, and increasingly comprehensive historical depth as well. Its content and services include the following:

- Over 570 legal databases, with at least 25 new databases added each year, one every two weeks.
- All Acts and Regulations enacted in every jurisdiction in Australia, enriched by an expanding coverage of Bills, Explanatory Memoranda, Gazettes etc.
- The decisions and case law of all significant courts, tribunals and regulatory authorities in Australia, plus the historical decisions of superseded bodies. New sets of decisions are added on request.
- A Treaties Library of all international treaties that Australia has entered into since Federation, and related documents, the largest national collection on the Internet.
- Legal History Libraries which provide near-comprehensive annual Acts since 1788, plus extensive historical series of law reports from most Australian jurisdictions.
- A Legal Scholarship Library of over 80,000 academic and judicial papers, theses and monographs.
- The Sino search engine, which combines simplicity of use with sophisticated features when needed, and (most of all) very fast search results.
- Interconnection of more than 2 million documents by over 50 million hypertext links.
- The LawCite citator, which automatically integrates citation data from cases and articles both on AustLII and on cooperating Legal Information Institutes from around the world. It also links or refers to other external databases. LawCite currently indexes over 4.5 million cases and articles.

How AustLII works

AustLII has two operational arms. AustLII Foundation Limited is a public company limited by guarantee with charitable Deductible Gift Recipient tax status. It is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the infrastructure and services that delivers AustLII's online library of Australian legal information to the community. The Foundation requires at least one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per year to do so. Expansion of AustLII's databases and infrastructure, and innovative research, is funded by competitive research grants obtained within the University sector by the AustLII Research Centre, which is the other half of AustLII's operations.

AustLII does not and cannot seek user access subscriptions or advertising because they are inconsistent with its free access policies and its charitable status. Instead, AustLII asks all its users, those who publish via its services, and those who otherwise benefit from its operations, to make an annual contribution that reflects the value of AustLII to them and to the Australian community.

AustLII aims to achieve a broad and balanced diversity of contributions and other sources of funding. It avoids tying its funding to any one provider or type of provider - such as a grant body, government fund, or levy on the legal profession. The diversity of AustLII's contributors needs to reflect the diversity of its stakeholders, so as to maintain AustLII's independence and ability to serve all its stakeholders, and to provide a robust long-term funding model.

The legal profession, business and industry, courts and tribunals, government agencies, educational institutions and the general community all make contributions to support AustLII. AustLII Foundation's stakeholder-driven donation funding model has proven to be an efficient and cost-effective vehicle to maintain AustLII's services - but this requires ongoing support from all AustLII's stakeholders, particularly its users.

For all these reasons, please consider contributing generously to AustLII.