

MEDIA RELEASE



Australian Government

IP Australia

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Fast-track patent applications in the US with the Pilot Patent Prosecution Highway

IP Australia and the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) today announced that they will launch a new trial cooperation initiative called the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) on 14 April 2008. For patent applicants with interests and applications in the US and Australia this program will result in faster patent examination times.

Under the PPH, an applicant receiving a report from either the USPTO or IP Australia with at least one patentable claim in an application may request that the other office accelerate the examination of the corresponding application. The applicant benefits from the patent offices using the work previously conducted by the other office, by obtaining corresponding patents faster and more efficiently.

"IP Australia is pleased to be taking part in the pilot program of the Patent Prosecution Highway with the USPTO," said IP Australia's Director General Philip Noonan. "We strongly support the aim of this initiative with its benefits of increasing quality and efficiency of examination while reducing pendency time. This service is a valuable addition to the patent examination services offered by IP Australia and provides Australian applicants with a process for fast-tracking the examination of their applications in a key market."

"We welcome this opportunity to work cooperatively with IP Australia. This pilot represents a significant step in reaching worksharing on a global scale and extends the growing Patent Prosecution Highway network which will streamline the global patent system," said Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the USPTO Jon Dudas, "By leveraging each other office's work, this pilot allows each patent office to attain efficiency gains and higher patent quality."

Full requirements for participation in the trial program can be found at www.uspto.gov/web/patents/pph/pph_ipau.html and www.ipaustralia.gov.au/patents/international/pph_uspto.shtml

The trial program will allow the USPTO and IP Australia to determine the interest of patent applicants in such a program. It will also provide feedback on whether the aims of the program for an increase in quality and efficiency are met. The trial period is set for one year, but may be extended for up to one year.

For further information contact IP Australia's customer service centre on 1300 651 010 (within Australia) or +61 2 6283 2999 (outside Australia). Alternatively, please email assist@ipaustalia.gov.au.

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