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## Official Notice

# International Patent Classification (IPC) Reform at IP Australia

## Background

IP Australia will be implementing IPC Reform at the advanced level on 1 January 2006. Previous journal notices (18 March 2004, 9 December 2004 and 15 June 2005) have outlined the implications associated with the introduction of IPC8 and have progressively detailed the approach IP Australia has taken to facilitate the implementation.

On 3 December 2005, IP Australia implemented a range of changes to the patent related business processes and IT systems. The purpose of this document is to describe the essential features of the implementation of IPC Reform at IP Australia.

## General Information about IPC Reform

IPC Reform seeks to implement a more dynamic and robust patent classification index that is able to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world.

General information on IPC Reform can be found at:

[www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/en/reform/ipc\\_reform.html](http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/en/reform/ipc_reform.html)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about IPC and IPC Reform are also available at:

[www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/en/faq/ipcfaq-ver01.htm](http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc/en/faq/ipcfaq-ver01.htm)

## What do you need to know about IPC Reform at IP Australia?

*IP Australia will be implementing IPC8 at the Advanced level.*

There are two levels of classification – Advanced and Core. IP Australia, like all International Searching Authorities (ISA), will be classifying to the Advanced level.

***Not all IP Australia data holdings will be reclassified.***

In 1970, AU PCT minimum documentation was forwarded to EPO to be consolidated in the INPADOC a database. This data is now available in the Master Classification Database (MCD) which has been established by the European Patent Office (EPO) to support IPC Reform. As a result, this is the only AU data that is subject to the initial and ongoing reclassification activity.

Pre-1970 data will not be reclassified but will still be searchable in the same way it is currently searchable, but will not be searchable using the eighth edition of the IPC.

***You will need to continue to search using IPC 1 to 7 until February / March 2006.***

Central to the concept of IPC Reform is the reclassification of existing patent documentation. This is a mammoth task that has not yet been completed. Until the reclassified data is received, the IPC symbols will still be IPC1-7 marks but they will be formatted in accordance with the standard required for IPC8. Once the reclassified data has been received and loaded into the IP Australia systems, you will be able to search post-1970 AU PCT minimum documentation using just IPC8. You will be able to do this via the IP Australia search tools. IP Australia will advise you when the reclassified data has been loaded.

***The version indicator for IPC 1 to 7 will be shown in the IPC Reform format (ie: yyyy.mm) until the reclassified data is made available.***

Until the reclassified data is made available, the version indicator for IPC versions 1 to 7 will be shown in the year and month format (ie: (yyyy.mm) ). This is different to the way it is currently displayed but is consistent with the format required for the eighth edition of the IPC. Once the reclassified data is made available, the IPC symbols will be displayed using (2006.01) as the version indicator. As the IPC is updated, the version indicator will change.

Until the reclassified data is made available, the date indicators for the various versions of the IPC are as follows:

- IPC Version 1 – (1968.09)
- IPC Version 2 – (1974.07)
- IPC Version 3 – (1980.01)
- IPC Version 4 – (1985.01)
- IPC Version 5 – (1990.01)
- IPC Version 6 – (1995.01)
- IPC Version 7 – (2000.01)

If an old version of the IPC has an equivalent IPC8 symbol, the date shown will be (2006.01).

***The IPC marks applied to applications at the time of publication will not be modified on scanned documents as the IPC is updated.***

Once an application has been published, the IPC mark assigned to it will remain on the scanned images of the document but the symbol may be reclassified over time as the PCT minimum documentation is modified. The impact of this is that the scanned documents will need to be accessed on the AU-A, AU-B and APA Compact Discs and the APPS website using the application number rather than the IPC mark.

***IPC Reform symbols will be published from 15 December 2006 but IPC7 symbols may still be seen through to 19 January 2006 on newly scanned images.***

IP Australia will be implementing IPC Reform on 3 December 2005. This will mean that IPC8 marks will first be published on 15 December 2005. Due to a variety of reasons associated with the processing of publications, there will be a period of time where IPC marks will be published using the IPC Reform version indicator (ie: yyyy.mm) but scanned patent documents will contain version indicators that represent pre-reform formats.

This will continue through to 19 January 2006. It is unlikely that the marks themselves will be different – only the format.

***Every time the IPC is updated, IP Australia will republish the APA Master Index CD.***

When the IPC is updated the data on the MCD will be reclassified to reflect the updated IPC. This means that the APA Master Index CD may contain information that is no longer valid. As a result, IP Australia will republish the APA Master Index CD each time the MCD is reclassified. The full CD set (currently over 50 CDs) will not be republished each time the data is reclassified. The documentation on the CDs will still be valid and remains accessible using the application number from the APA Master Index CD.

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