



Directors

**Michael Neate**  
BSurv MIS(NSW)

**Robert Polson**  
BSurv GradDipPlan  
MIS(NSW)

**Kellie Hassab**  
BSurv GradDipEnvStud  
MIS(NSW)

Consultant

**Peter Ingold**  
BSurv MIS(NSW)

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The Executive Director  
Australian Law Reform Commission  
GPO Box 3708  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Via e-mail: [info@alrc.gov.au](mailto:info@alrc.gov.au)

Dear Sir

### **Copyright and the digital economy: submission in respect of Question 34**

Our firm is a professional services firm working in the area of land development including the creation of survey plans and other documents that are registered or deposited with government bodies.

Question 34 of the Issues Paper for the *Copyright and the digital economy* asks whether there should be a free exception to allow governments to make copyright material registered with them available outside the terms of the s.183 statutory licence. As creators of survey plans and other documents, that are registered or deposited with governments, we strongly oppose such an amendment. We support the current copyright regime in place in section 183 of the Act.

Survey plans are highly valued copyright works. Registered Land Surveyors have a high level of education and training and must keep abreast of a vast array of ever changing regulations. A survey plan then is the end result of the efforts of a well-skilled individual who brings to the creation of a survey plan a high level of technical expertise with a high level of professional judgement. Similar considerations apply to the creation of other documents, such as environmental plans; design plans and as constructed plans, that are registered or deposited with governments under statutory obligations.

The advent of the digital economy has brought with it increased commercialisation of survey plans and other documents. State governments now authorise information brokers to sell survey plans and other documents to the public. Both government and information brokers make a profit from these sales. It is only fair and equitable that the creator of the content – for example surveyors – should be entitled to a fair payment for this new type of use.

Any free exception, as set out in question 34 of the inquiry, would lead to information brokers and the government unfairly free-riding on the skill and effort of copyright creators and their clients.

Yours faithfully

**TREHY INGOLD NEATE**

DAVID SMITH  
Registered Land Surveyor

SURVEYING CIVIL DESIGN STRATA CERTIFICATION PLANNING

Tuggerah Business Park Unit 3, 8 Reliance Drive Tuggerah NSW 2259, PO Box 3205 Tuggerah NSW 2259

T 61 2 4351 2233 F 61 2 4352 1559 E [admin@tinsurvey.com.au](mailto:admin@tinsurvey.com.au) W [www.tinsurvey.com.au](http://www.tinsurvey.com.au)

TREHY INGOLD NEATE PTY LTD ABN 21 810 493 815

