Summary of the 3rd meeting of the Life Sciences Accreditation Advisory Committee

Changes to Committee

Since the 2019 meeting the following changes to the membership of the Committee have been made:

Mr Richard Wilkinson has been appointed to the Committee to provide expertise in the area of occupational hygiene.

Dr Mark Lewin has been appointed to the Committee to provide expertise in the area of biological and chemical metrology.

Reports from Members included the following points:

- COVID-19 has *not* resulted in a significant downturn in testing or participation in proficiency testing (PT) programs.
- NMI PFAS PT program continues to be strong, reflecting demand for testing.
- ISO 16140-3: *Protocol for the verification of reference and validated alternative methods implemented in a single laboratory* (in preparation for FDIS vote) will impact NATA accredited food microbiology laboratories. The EU has a 7 year implementation plan after which testing will only be accepted if laboratories are using methods verified using ISO 16140-3. This has implications for accreditation and international market access.
- Reporting of significant figures by accredited laboratories is still a concern. NATA to produce further guidance on this for laboratories and stakeholders.
- Loop Mediated Isothermal Amplification (LAMP) to extend molecular testing into field activities.
- There are opportunities for accreditation for COVID-19 testing on surfaces and in wastewater. Currently there is no accredited capacity in Australia. Transfer is noted to be possible from specific fomites for several days after contact.
- The AAC is concerned by laboratories' lack of compliance with relevant NATA Accreditation Criteria for training and assessment of staff competency. Complex tasks appear to be signed off with minimal oversight and review of evidence.
- Medicinal cannabis testing is a potential area for growth following more widespread acceptance in other economies.
- The AAC raised concerns with facilities continuing to report friability of asbestos. This is in part the result of AS 4964 and inconsistency in industry interpretation of guidelines.
- Automated counting software for asbestos is being developed. The quality of the slide is the pinch point and cannot be automated.
- 2020 is the international year of Plant Health.
- An updated version of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed was issued in 2020.

- Release of wastes, sediments and contaminated soils methods - AS 4439.2 Part 2 and AS 4430 Part 3 (TCLP methods) by Australian Standards. NATA need to ensure standards are being followed considering the changes.
- Leachate Environmental Assessment Framework (LEAF) - US EPA methods 1313-1316 are becoming popular in Australia since the adoption by US EPA. Technical Assessor experience is required to assess these practices.
- New Australian Standard - AS 3580.19:2020 *Methods for sampling and analysis of ambient air - Ambient air quality data validation and reporting*, has been published. This will bring standardisation in this area and also provide guidance around the reporting of air monitoring data.
- The Standards Australia Stationary Source Emission Testing Subcommittee (EV-007-01) will commence a new project to review *AS 4323.1-1995 Stationary source emissions - Method 1 - Selection of sampling positions* in June 2020. More particle matter sampling instrumentation that uses optical rather than gravimetric. Organisations are starting to use the standard more to demonstrate compliance.
- Parliament enquiry into allergies in Australia resulted in 27 recommendations and will have an impact on food industry and food analysis. Recommend food industry work towards adoption.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Q2 2021.