



DELIVERING  
CONFIDENCE FOR  
**75** YEARS

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NATA Melbourne office opened 2015



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# CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

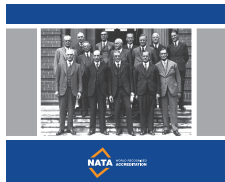
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2022 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) Australia.

To celebrate, we share the story on how NATA, starting from modest origins, has come to be recognised as the national authority in accrediting testing laboratories in Australia and one of the leading accreditation bodies in the world. And how, by extension, Australia has contributed to the safety of consumers globally and facilitated global trade.



# NATA ACROSS THE YEARS



## HOW DID IT BEGIN?

"Testing the testers" and many years ahead of the rest of the world, NATA saw the inherent value of formalising this process.



## THE FOUNDATIONS

### The first NATA Constitution

"To organise a national service which will provide testing facilities to meet the needs of Government, industry and commerce and thus assist in maintaining the products of industry at a high standard."

**1947**



### NATA'S FIRST MEETING

The first meeting of the NATA Council was held in February 1947. The world's first national laboratory accreditation system had commenced its operations.

**1950s**



### NATIONAL GROWTH

**1951**

Melbourne and Sydney offices open & NATA publishes its first Register of Laboratories.

**1952**

First Technical Assessor (TA) appointed.

**1960s**



### SPREADING THE WORD

**1962**

NATA issues its first promotional brochure 'Testing in industry and commerce.'

**1969**

NATA grows accreditation areas into mining, chemical, motor, food and pollution control.

**1970s**



### A GROWING RECOGNITION

**1970**

NATA has more than 890 accredited organisations across the nation.

**1977**

NATA becomes a founding member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).



## INTERNATIONAL GROWTH



**1977**

### NATA LEADS THE WAY

Other countries follow NATA's lead in establishing their own accreditation systems. This global interest resulted in the convening of an international forum in 1977.

**1980s**

### EXTENDING REACH

The world-first establishment of the NATA/RCPA medical testing program.



NATA opens branch offices:

• Perth 1984 • Brisbane 1986 • Adelaide 1989

**1986**

1000<sup>th</sup> Technical Assessor (TA) appointed.

**1988**

NATA signs its first Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) with the Australian Government.

### EDUCATION

NATA training programs are delivered nationally and across Asia, Europe and US. They are considered among the best in the world.



**1990s**

### ASIA GROWTH AND A WORLD FIRST

**1990**

2000<sup>th</sup> organisation accredited.

**1992**

The Asia-Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) - now APAC - is established with NATA as founding member.



**1992**

A world-first, NATA establishes its forensic science accreditation program that includes Crime Scene Investigation (CSI).



**1992**

Inspection accreditation services launched.

**1995**

3000<sup>th</sup> Technical Assessor appointed.

**2000s**



### THE NEW MILLENNIUM

**2000**

ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) signed by NATA.

**2008**

3000<sup>th</sup> organisation accredited.

**2008**

NATA named as approved accreditor for the Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation Scheme (DIAS).

**2010s**

**2012**

The Sleep Disorders Services (SDS) accreditation program launched.

**2020**

NATA plays an integral role in accrediting laboratory testing for SARS CoV-2 and other laboratories supporting the response to the COVID pandemic.



**2021**

First accreditation of a biobanking organisation in Australia.



## 2022 and beyond

**2022**

NATA proudly celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

NATA looks to the future to extend and diversify its accreditation services and provide greater support to its stakeholders.

# INTRODUCING NATA

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- N**ATA has its origin dated back to 1947 and is:
- the national authority for the accreditation of testing and calibration laboratories and reference materials producers;
  - a peak body for the accreditation of inspection bodies and proficiency scheme providers; and
  - the national authority responsible for monitoring compliance with the OECD Principles of Good Laboratory Practice.

In short, NATA's principal role is to 'test the testers.'

For instance, many products sold in Australia are tested against Australian standards by laboratories. On passing those tests, they can be sold to the Australian public and overseas markets with the assurance of their safety and quality.

Who makes sure the laboratory is testing for the right thing? Well, this is where NATA comes in. Our accreditation teams, comprised of NATA staff and volunteer Technical Assessors, assess the laboratories, the qualifications of their staff and their procedures to make sure they are carrying out those tests competently.

## Surrounded by tested products

Accreditation gives us confidence that the products we use and consume day-to-day are safe. The work of NATA touches on every facet of life.

We assess the competence of laboratories that test all manner of products – food, water, air, noise levels, blood, medical instruments, diagnostic imaging, building materials, road construction materials – to name a few.

# What gives us confidence in the quality of the products we use?

Australia has a quality framework in place to safeguard consumers and support business. The framework is supported by four pillars:

1. Measurement Accuracy. Effective testing requires accurate measurement. Measurement is accurately monitored by Australia's National Measurement Institute.
2. Written standards for manufacturers, producers and service providers to follow. Standards Australia is responsible for those standards.
3. Certification against standards. The Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand

accredits the professionals who audit organisations, products and people and certify adherence to standards.

4. The accreditation of laboratories to ensure those laboratories undertake their testing accurately and competently. This pillar is upheld by NATA.

These four pillars work together to provide the community with confidence in the products and services we use every day, and contribute to the productivity, growth and international competitiveness of Australian industries.

## WORKING IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Through accrediting laboratories, NATA works in the national interest. It safeguards and improves the quality of our everyday life. NATA accreditation brings:

- Competitive advantages to the economy
- Tighter security
- Safer food and better water quality
- Safety of our health and infrastructure.

# How does NATA assess laboratories?

## The process

An application for an accreditation assessment is received from a laboratory. NATA will assign the application to an assessment team that comprises NATA staff and one or more voluntary Technical Assessors to undertake the assessment.

Our volunteers donate their time, experience, and professional knowledge to undertake peer review.

The applicant laboratory is assessed according to the relevant Australian or international standards. This assessment looks at the laboratory's quality management system, the quality and appropriateness of instrumentation and laboratory set up and the competence of staff responsible for carrying out the tests which are the subject of the assessment.

When the assessment is completed, the applicant is sent a report on whether their laboratory meets the accreditation standards for their industry. Where the accreditation is successful, the laboratory is granted the status as an accredited laboratory and is eligible to use the NATA logo and added to NATA's 'Find a Lab' directory.

## Keeping up-to-date with best practice

NATA's staff (Lead Assessors) and Technical Assessors are guided in their assessments by their respective Accreditation Advisory Committee (AAC). The principal role of this Committee, comprised of voluntary technical experts from various industry fields, is to prescribe the criteria for accreditation in their field, in line with national and international standards, and to keep the Assessors informed of field developments.

NATA has one of the largest number of accreditation fields in the world. There is an Accreditation Advisory Committee for each field. As shown in the table on the following page, each field falls into one of five industry groupings.



SECTOR	CURRENT PROGRAM/FIELD	INDUSTRY GROUPINGS
Calibration	Calibration Information and Communication Technology Testing (ICTT) Proficiency Testing Scheme Providers (PTSP) Reference Materials Producers (RMP)	Calibration
Legal and Clinical Services	Forensic Services Medical Imaging (including Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation Scheme) Medical Testing Sleep Disorders Services	Legal Human Pathology Medical Imaging Sleep Disorders Services Non-clinical Human Testing
Infrastructure	Construction Materials Testing Mechanical Testing Non-destructive Testing Performance and Approval Testing	Materials Manufactured Goods Infrastructure & Asset Integrity
Inspection	Inspection	Environment
Life Sciences	Biological Testing Chemical Testing Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) Veterinary Testing	Agribusiness Food & Beverage Animal Health



Mr Alastair Ross

The immediate past Chair of NATA, Alastair Ross, describes these Committees as a valuable collaboration of scientific minds and practitioners within particular fields: "The committees meet throughout the year to discuss testing issues within their field. Then the Chairs come together annually to discuss the broader issues of testing laboratories such as international standards and ways of adding value to customer testing."

## NATA's volunteer model – part of Australia's volunteerism value



Dr Barry Inglis

Our volunteer model is uniquely Australian and has gained recognition and respect internationally from many nations with whom NATA has collaborated.

The NATA accreditation assessment is grounded in collegial value and collaboration among technical experts, professional peers and experienced practitioners. The assessment process involves an enormous amount of professional dialogue between the assessors and assessed.

According to former Chair, Dr Barry Inglis, this open conversation amongst laboratory scientists and practitioners advances competence and skills within the industry and scientific community and everyone stands to benefit: "The voluntary scheme is not a one-way street. Every assessment I've been on I've learned something."

The volunteer model has thrived on the Australian volunteerism value and made a major contribution to expertise across industry sectors for the past 75 years.

## NATA's additional services

Additional services are offered to our members through our wholly owned subsidiary, Proficiency Testing Australia (PTA).



### Proficiency testing

PTA assesses the ability of laboratories to competently perform specific tests and measurements.

Proficiency in testing involves distributing sub-samples of a material for testing by participating laboratories. The results are analysed statistically with each laboratory receiving a report detailing its testing performance.

Proficiency in measurement involves the circulation of a measurement artefact (or set of artefacts) among a group of laboratories undertaking those particular measurements. The performance of the laboratories is evaluated by comparing their results to a reference value.

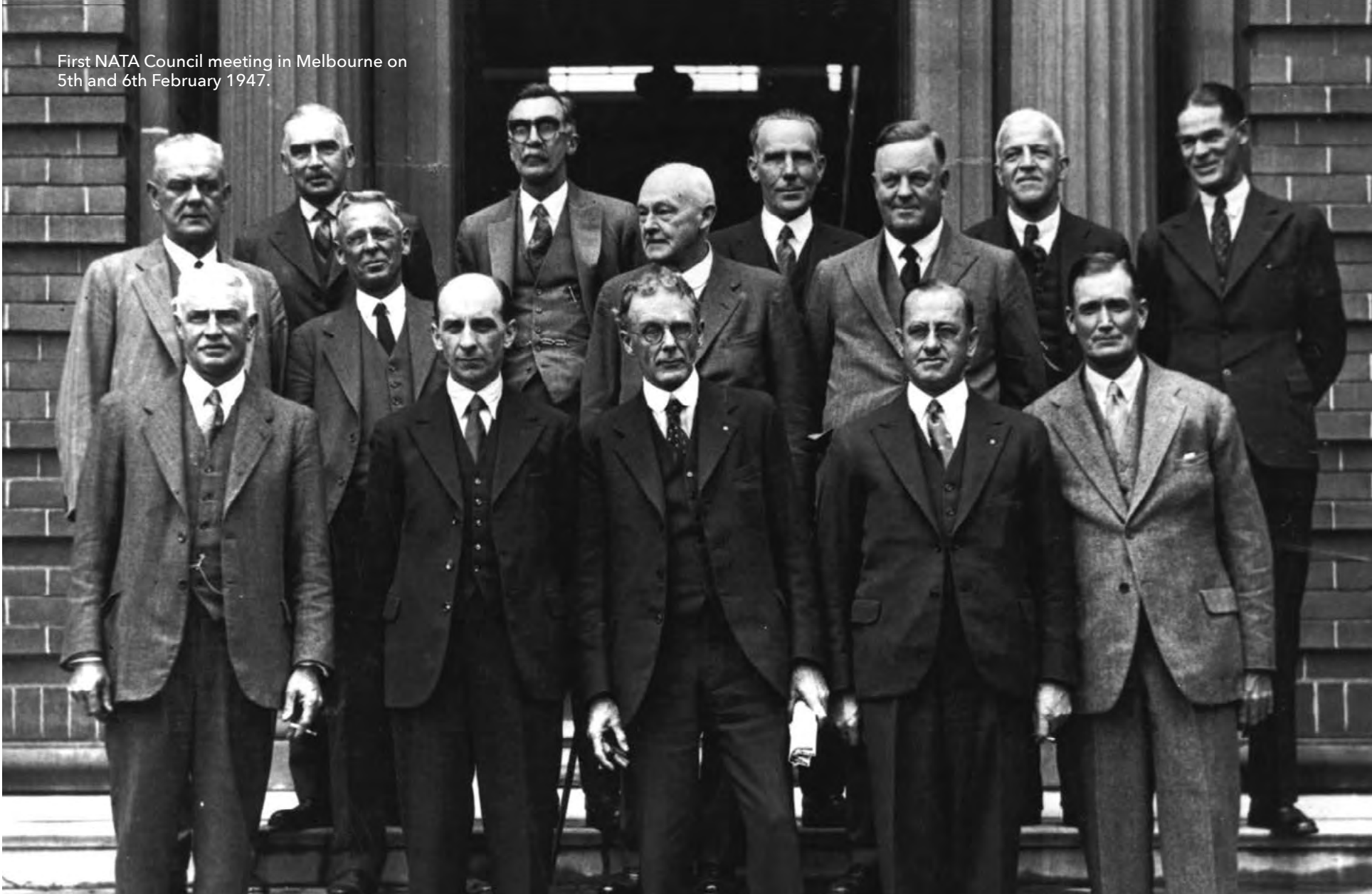


## Training on best practice

In order to assist NATA's members in their professional development, NATA also offers a range of training courses focussed on meeting members' needs and facilitate continuous process improvements. The ultimate goal is to help our members in enhancing the technical competence and effective operations of their laboratories.



First NATA Council meeting in Melbourne on  
5th and 6th February 1947.



**DELIVERING  
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# OUR MILESTONES OF THE PAST 75 YEARS

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## Beginnings - a wartime innovation

**T**he idea of 'testing the testers' is an Australian one. It was born out of necessity in the Second World War when Australia was cut off from any means of ensuring the munitions it was manufacturing as part of the war effort were of a sufficiently high standard. While the munitions were being manufactured to specific standards and subsequently tested, there were reported incidents that raised concerns about the competence of the facility that conducted the test.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, practically all equipment and supplies for Australia's Navy, Army and Air Force were produced overseas or in factories operated by the Commonwealth Government. Testing of the specifications of equipment and supplies were largely performed by the Melbourne based Munitions Supply Laboratories (MSL), within the Department of Defence.

After the outbreak of war in September 1939, the enormous increase in demand for defence equipment and supplies overwhelmed the MSL. The Commonwealth Government's factories could not cope and a substantial proportion of Australia's manufacturing capacities were converted to the war economy and resources diverted to help produce defence equipment and supplies.

For example, the Melbourne City Council Electric Supply Department was delegated the responsibility to manufacture and test a range of electrical equipment for the defence services. While the equipment was assembled in its workshops and tested in its laboratories, it also sub-contracted work to many Melbourne manufacturers. In a typical example, the armatures for generators were wound in a factory which manufactured jewellery in peacetime.

At the same time, MSL was called on to undertake urgent research and investigational work into the production of specialised equipment such as anti-gas respirators. This production of new equipment involved more time-consuming specification testing.

# Milestones 1947 - 2022

## MILESTONE 1: 1947-69

- 1947** - First meeting of NATA Council led to the formation of NATA.
- 1947** - Eight fields of testing confirmed at second Council meeting.
- 1951** - Melbourne & Sydney office opened.
- 1952** - First Technical Assessor appointed.
- 1957** - Incorporated as a company by guarantee in Victoria.
- 1960** - First corporate brochure issued.
- 1969** - Application for accreditation reached 1,000.

## MILESTONE 3: 1981-88

- 1981** - NATA's Proficiency Testing scheme launched.
- 1983** - Medical Testing became NATA's tenth field of testing.
- 1984** - Perth office opened.
- 1985** - Established training program for Technical Assessors.
- 1986** - 1000th Technical Assessor appointed.
- 1986** - Brisbane office opened.
- 1988** - NATA signed Memorandum of Understanding with Commonwealth Government of Australia.

## MILESTONE 5: 1992-95

- 1992** - Head Office in Sydney relocated from Chatswood to Rhodes.
- 1992** - Inspection Services and Forensic Sciences Accreditation Programs launched.
- 1992** - Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) established. NATA was a founding member.
- 1995** - 3000th Technical Assessor appointed.

## MILESTONE 2: 1970-77

- 1970** - One third of all chemical and mechanical laboratories in Australia accredited.
- 1976** - 1000th laboratory accredited on 30 September.
- 1977** - NATA was one of the founding members of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC). First ILAC conference held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

## MILESTONE 4: 1989-90

- 1989** - Adelaide office opened.
- 1990** - 2000th facility accredited and 2000th Technical Assessor appointed.
- 1990** - Offered certification to quality management standards.

#### **MILESTONE 6: 1997-00**

**1997** - Reference Materials Producers accreditation program launched.

**1997** - NATA separated its certification activities to subsidiary NCS International Pty Ltd.

**1998** - Commonwealth Government of Australia reaffirmed support for single national accreditation system.

**1999** - Proficiency Testing Scheme Providers accreditation program launched.

**2000** - ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement signed in Washington DC by 37 accreditation bodies representing 28 economies.

#### **MILESTONE 7: 2006-08**

**2006** - NATA separated its delivery of proficiency testing activities into a subsidiary, Proficiency Testing Australia.

**2008** - New surveillance visit model introduced. 3000th facility accredited.

**2008** - NATA named as an approved accreditor for Stage 1 of the Department of Health's Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation Scheme.

#### **MILESTONE 8: 2011-2014**

**2011** - Integrated Accreditation structure introduced.

**2012** - Sleep Disorders Services accreditation program launched - NATA's 19th program.

**2013** - Divestment of NCS International (NCSI) to British Standards Institution.

**2014** - Board approved new Accreditation Information Management System (AIMS) to improve operational efficiency and member services.

#### **MILESTONE 9: 2015**

**2015** - Acquired Melbourne office in Camberwell.

#### **MILESTONE 11: 2017-2022**

**2020** - NATA plays a key role in accrediting laboratories for testing for COVID-19 and other laboratories supporting the response to the COVID-19 pandemic

**2021** - NATA provides the first accreditation of a Biobank in Australia.

#### **MILESTONE 10: 2016-17**

**2016** - Number of Technical Assessors reached 3359.

**2017** - Tabular Scope of Accreditation introduced.



## The Approved Test House Scheme – a precursor to NATA

It became clear that all of the specification testing could not be carried out at MSL. Much of this work had to be delegated to other laboratories yet there were concerns about the competence of those laboratories. An answer was found in the concept of the 'Approved Test House Scheme'.

Under the scheme, manufacturers assisting with the war effort could become an approved test house for the manufactured equipment.

On 9 July 1940 representatives of the MSL, the National Standards Laboratory and the Australian Chemical Institute, agreed that the test houses would be assessed and supervised by the MSL (Chemical Analysis and Measurement of Gauges) and National Standards Laboratory (Mechanical Testing).

Management of the scheme was entrusted to a senior MSL chemist, Mr Edward Allan Goode, the Manager of the Approved War-Time Test House Scheme, who subsequently was a major contributor to development of the technical criteria and assessment procedures for NATA's laboratory accreditation system.

At its peak, the 'Approved Test House Scheme' (Scheme) had 160 approved test houses.

One or more officers from MSL and National Standards Laboratories (NSL) visited test houses to assess their facilities and procedures. In most instances these assessments concentrated on:

1. The qualifications and experience of staff;
2. The suitability of the equipment including, where relevant, its calibration status;
3. The system for checking and recording of test results; and
4. The test procedures, especially when the test results were dependent on the test procedure.

The Scheme resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of products supplied to the defence forces. With the reassurance that the test houses had been approved and supervised by an independent third party, the test reports were readily accepted.

Duplication of testing was avoided and considerable time was saved in the delivery of equipment and supplies to the defence services.

## The quality assurance continues post-war

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (renamed CSIRO in 1949) recognised the value of the Scheme and the possibility of its wider application. In April 1945 it established an Advisory Committee led by a core group of respected engineers including Mr Gerald Lightfoot, Sir John Madsen and Mr Rayner Hebblewhite to explore the co-ordination of testing.

On 27 November 1945 the committee hosted representatives from the Commonwealth and State governments at a conference on the coordination of testing services. Fifty-two delegates attended – 25 from the Commonwealth, 24 representing the States and Territories and three from the Standards Association of Australia.

At that conference, it was resolved that a body called the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) be formed.

### RESOLUTIONS

"That this Conference is of opinion that the desired objective could be obtained by formation on a purely voluntary basis of a Union of testing laboratories which desire to collaborate in the work. Such laboratories would retain their present autonomy, and would continue to perform their existing functions, but in addition would be licensed to endorse certificates of test, which would have Commonwealth-wide recognition indicating that such tests had been carried out in accordance with procedures agreed on by members of the Union."

That the authority referred to in resolution (2) above as a Union of Testing Laboratories are known as the National Association of Testing Authorities.

## Formation underway

In the following 14 months, the committee produced a draft constitution and sought Commonwealth Government support of the conference resolutions. The Federal cabinet approved the resolutions, committed to funding the new organisation, and appointed representatives to the new association. The then Prime Minister, Mr Ben Chifley, wrote to the various State and Territory governments to seek their appointment of representatives.

### THE REPRESENTATIVES APPOINTED TO COUNCIL OF THE NEW NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TESTING AUTHORITIES WERE:

Commonwealth	Mr Gerald Lightfoot from Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Mr Harold P Breen from the Department of Post-War Reconstruction Dr Cecil E Eddy from the Department of Health
New South Wales:	Mr P C Pecover
Queensland:	Professor Roger William Hawken
South Australia:	Professor Sir Kerr Grant
Victoria:	Mr W R (Bill) Jewell
Western Australia:	Professor Alexander David Ross
Associated Chambers of Manufactures:	Mr M T W (Marshall) Eady
Standards Association of Australia:	Mr W "Rayner" Hebblewhite State Committees (appointed by State Governments) Mr R A Holloway (NSW), H P Singleton (Qld), R M Wigg (SA), Professor Ernest Edgar Kurth (Tas), E Bate (Vic), D B Sugden (WA)
Co-opted	Professor Sir John Madsen Mr A E Dawkins, Chief Superintendent, MSL Mr A E (Ernest) Dawkins



Two of the principal players in the early history of the Association, Mr Frank Nicholls (left) and Mr Gerald Lightfoot (centre) meet with Mr Ian Clunies-Ross

## NATA's first meeting

The first meeting of the NATA Council was held on 5 and 6 February 1947 at the CSIR headquarter in East Melbourne, Victoria.

The Council appointed Mr Gerald Lightfoot as its Chairman and Sir John Madsen as its Vice-Chairman. It also appointed an Executive Committee comprised of Messrs Lightfoot, Madsen, Hebblewhite, Eady and Dawkins.

The new association was to provide a national testing service to Australia and would span all technical, industrial and geographical areas of the country. The world's first national laboratory accreditation system had commenced its operations.

## Why did Australia establish its system so many years in advance of other countries?

Former NATA employee and historian, Mr Keith Stanton, maintained the two key factors were:

1. The talents and energy of three distinguished Australian engineers - Messrs Lightfoot, Madsen and Hebblewhite - who over many years were determined to find the most appropriate arrangement for recognition of test documents throughout Australia.
2. The success of the Approved Test House Scheme, introduced in 1940, as it demonstrated that it was possible to operate a nationwide laboratory accreditation scheme in Australia.





A NATA assessment group at SCC Testing Laboratories includes Dr Paul Dean, Director of the NPL (UK), who visited NATA to observe all aspects of its operation prior to establishing the British Testing Laboratory Accreditation Scheme. Pictured (left to right) Dr Barry D Inglis (NML), A/Professor Greg J Johnson (UNSW), Mr Paddy T Brocken (NATA), Dr Paul Dean (NPL, UK) and Mr Ian J Monro (SCC).

## Why has it been so successful?

One of the great strengths of the Australian accreditation model, according to former NATA Chairman, Dr Barry Inglis, is that NATA came out of the Australian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the National Standards Laboratory. "We grew out of the same culture and this engenders a wonderful culture of trust and confidence. We work together with the strong belief in the contribution we are making to consumer safety, health and international trade."

### PIONEERS - THE FOUNDING FATHERS

NATA wishes to acknowledge the enthusiasm and hard work of a small group of people during the formation period 1947 to 1953.

- Mr Gerald Lightfoot - inaugural Chairman of NATA Council, nine-year involvement until his retirement
- Mr W R (Bill) Jewell - former Chairman of NATA Council, 14-year involvement
- Sir John Madsen - inaugural Vice-Chairman, four year involvement
- Mr A E (Ernest) Dawkins - former Chairman, 16-year involvement
- Mr M T W (Marshall) Easy - represented the private sector through the Associated Chambers of Manufactures of Australia (ACMA) until his passing in 1947
- Mr W R (Rayner) Hebblewhite OBE - eight-year involvement
- Professor Alexander David Ross CBE - 19-year involvement
- Mr F G (Frank) Nicholls - two-year involvement

## Foundations put in place: 1947-1948

Our founders had a clear vision and its framework continues to this day.

The NATA constitution of 1946 stated that NATA's prime objective was: "To organise a national service which will provide testing facilities to meet the needs of Government, industry and commerce and thus assist in maintaining the products of industry at a high standard".

At its second meeting on 17 June 1947, the NATA Council decided that:

**1.** The organisation's fields of testing would be -

- Chemical Analysis (extended by Council in 1948 to Chemical Testing)
- Mechanical Testing
- Metrology (referred to now as Calibration)
- Electrical Testing (referred to now as Inspection)
- Pyrometry (referred to now as Non-destructive Testing)
- Photometry
- Industrial Radiography (Non-destructive Testing)
- Testing of Biological Products (in 1953 renamed Biological Testing).

- 2.** A national Registration Advisory Committee (later called Accreditation Advisory Committees) be established for each field of testing to prescribe the criteria for accreditation and to investigate compliance of laboratories with the criteria.
- 3.** Each Registration Advisory Committee be authorised to appoint panels of assessors to investigate compliance of laboratories with the criteria.
- 4.** Invitations be issued to laboratories to apply for accreditation.
- 5.** A chief executive officer be appointed with the title of Registrar and that the association's head office be located in Sydney.

In October 1947, the Executive Committee appointed civil engineer, Mr RVF Eldridge as the first Registrar of NATA. Electrical engineer, Mr Keith Stanton, was appointed Secretary of the Victorian State Committee. The following year, NATA moved its head office from CSIR in East Melbourne to the National Standards Laboratory at the University of Sydney. The new Registration Advisory Committees held their first meetings in late 1947 and early 1948.

At those and subsequent meetings, the committees developed specific criteria for accreditation in their fields and prepared detailed lists of classes of test.

At its meeting in April 1948, the NATA Council decided that all test reports issued in the name of NATA should bear the following emblem and endorsement.



*This laboratory is registered by the National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia for the classes of test herein reported.*

By the end of 1948, NATA had its structure in place and had defined its general criteria for the accreditation of laboratories.

## The formative years

The initial years were busy and challenging with their fair share of stressful periods.

Mr Frank Monaghan was appointed Registrar in November 1950 to replace Mr Eldridge and his appointment marked the dawn of three decades of consistent administrative leadership.

Both Mr Monaghan and Mr Stanton continued as NATA's senior executives until Frank's retirement in 1979. Mr Stanton remained until 1985 and is highly respected as NATA's longest-serving staff member who participated in many of the critical milestones that marked NATA's growth.

In September 1951, NATA published its first Register of Laboratories (the forerunner of NATA's *Find a Lab Directory* of accredited laboratories). The Register listed 42 accredited laboratories.

By the end of 1953, the teething period of establishing a new association was over and from then on NATA experienced steady progress.

At this time there was little knowledge outside of Australia of the concept of laboratory accreditation and the pioneering work of NATA.

# Testing: in industry and commerce

A vital factor  
in assessing the quality of what you buy  
and what you sell

NATA

National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia

## 1960s: Promoting laboratory accreditation

Prior to the 1960s, promotion of NATA accreditation had been through word of mouth with honorary State representatives of the Council spreading the word.

Some were better at promoting the concept of accreditation than others. Consequently there was an imbalance in the type and location of laboratories accredited.

To correct the balance, in 1960 NATA issued its first promotional brochure 'Testing in industry and commerce'. The brochure was distributed to testing authorities and potential users of NATA endorsed reports.

Demand for accreditation from testing laboratories mirrored the post-war growth in the Australian economy. There was growth in applications for the accreditation of laboratories involved in:

- The mining industry, in particular exploration, mineral extraction and refinery
- Chemical industry with respect to the manufacture of plastics, synthetic fibres, rubber, chemicals, fertilisers, paints, adhesives and electrical products
- The motor vehicle industry
- Food quality including tests on dairy products to be exported to Japan
- Pollution control
- Testing requiring clean room and air balancing.



By the early 1970s, NATA's main fields of accreditation for testing laboratories involved chemical testing and mechanical testing and in June 1972, NATA listed 893 accredited laboratories, 75% of which were private sector laboratories.

Initially laboratories were reassessed every five years. This was reduced to every two years by the NATA Council in 1970 as visits were disclosing major changes in some accredited laboratories.

Many of the applications put forward by laboratories were not foreseen by NATA's founders such as the demand for testing mobile laboratories and temporary laboratories and the call for 'on the spot' interim test reports.

When oil and gas was discovered in Bass Strait in 1967, large diameter steel pipes were delivered to barges in Bass Strait, where the pipes were joined by circumferential welds and lowered onto the seabed. The authorities decided that NATA endorsed test reports should be provided for the radiographic examinations of the circumferential welds. This required the NATA

assessment team member to be on the barge and have the testing equipment in position, take the radiographs of the weld, process the film, view the film and issue the test report. NATA accepted this challenge and the circumferential welds on the seabed in Bass Strait are covered by NATA endorsed test reports.

NATA did not expect to be involved in medical testing. However, the Chief Pathologist of the Repatriation General Hospital, Heidelberg, Victoria and the proprietor of Chelmer Diagnostic Laboratories, Melbourne, Victoria had other ideas. They applied for accreditation of their laboratories in 1954 and 1959 respectively for a comprehensive range of pathology tests. NATA accommodated these tests within its fields of Chemical Testing and Biological Testing and secured the services of eminent practitioners as assessors. Both laboratories were granted accreditation.

This was 30 years before the majority of medical testing facilities in Australia were to become accredited.

## Late 1960s & 1970s: growing recognition and demand for state, national and international assistance

During 1970's communication with members improved with the publication of *NATA News*, the *Annual Directory* of accredited laboratories and the first *Technical Notes*. Australia-wide symposia and seminars on laboratory management grew in number and later morphed into training courses. Exposure was also gained through advertising NATA services in professional and technical journals.

### State and National

By the mid-1970's State and Federal Governments showed their support of NATA:

- Directly through encouraging or specifying on NATA-endorsed test reports for certain activities, and
- Indirectly through legislation in areas such as air quality, water resources, industrial noise and motor vehicle safety

### International

From the 1960s onwards, other countries started followed NATA's lead in establishing their own accreditation systems.

In the early 1960s, Dr Paul Dean from the National Physical Laboratory of the United Kingdom visited NATA to observe its operations prior to establishing the British equivalent, while the British Calibration Service - a government scheme set up to approve measurement services to industry and consumer - adopted NATA criteria.

In 1968, NATA Registrar Mr Frank Monaghan was invited by the New Zealand Government to explain the concept of laboratory accreditation and the operations of NATA. Four years later NZ established the Testing Laboratory Registration Council (Telarc) with NATA staff member, Mr John Gilmour appointed as its first director.

In 1973 Denmark established a national scheme that was similar to the NATA model and throughout the decade NATA received numerous inquiries and visitors from national measurement bodies in the USA and Europe.

## Beginnings of an international body

The global interest in the accreditation of laboratories resulted in the convening of an international forum in 1977.

The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) conference hosted in Copenhagen, Denmark on 25 to 28 October 1977 brought together laboratory accreditation bodies from around the world. They contributed their ideas on harmonising standards of laboratory accreditation throughout the world and removing technical barriers to trade. Mr Frank Monaghan was a founding contributor.

Two years later, NATA hosted the second ILAC conference in Australia at a critical time in the development of international cooperation. In the following decade, we became one of the world's leading contributors to the development of an international community of national accreditation organisations.

In 1996 through a formal charter, ILAC established a network of mutual recognition agreements among accreditation bodies. In 2000, its membership of 36 laboratory accreditation bodies from 28 economies worldwide, signed the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement in Washington DC, USA to promote the acceptance of technical test and calibration data for exported goods.

Former NATA Chairman, Dr Barry Inglis recalls that NATA was one of the driving forces behind the signing of the ILAC and later Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Conference Mutual Recognition Arrangements: "NATA saw this as a way of establishing one place of testing accepted by all so that, for example, a test report or certificate issued by a NATA accredited laboratory should be recognised by bodies around the world. This thinking has facilitated world trade."

This contribution in a global context was made possible by Commonwealth Government funding from the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.



ILAC meeting in 1982 in Tokyo, Japan

## 1980s: Domestic front

As the Australian economy expanded so too did NATA. A new Corporate Plan for the organisation realised:

- The opening of new branch offices in Perth (1984), Brisbane (1986), and Adelaide (1989).
- A proficiency testing scheme which later led to the establishment of the subsidiary, Proficiency Testing Australia.
- Formal training programs for Technical Assessors (1985), laboratory managers (1987) and quality practitioners (1989/90). These programs attracted international enrolments.

## Taking the lead - proficiency testing and international advisory services

### Proficiency testing

In 1981 NATA set up the field of proficiency testing. This later led to the development of an international standard *ISO17043 - Conformity assessment: General requirements for proficiency testing*.



NATA employee, Mr Anthony Russell, was the inaugural manager of proficiency testing - a scheme through which like groups of laboratories are

compared and the differences as to why one laboratory is more proficient than another can be identified. Proficiency testing gave testing laboratories additional assurance.

Proficiency testing played an important role in two major health areas during the 1980s:

- Pesticide residues in meat, organised in conjunction with the Australian Government Analytical Laboratories and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, and
- The estimation of airborne asbestos dust, in conjunction with Worksafe Australia.

These collaborations between NATA and Government authorities did much to strengthen our ties with the Commonwealth.

## International advisory and capacity building

With formal training programs in place, NATA was ready to take its knowledge and skills internationally.

Having set up the proficiency testing program, Mr Anthony Russell was then appointed to the role of inaugural international projects manager in 1983. The role involved developing NATA as an international advisory service provider available to help other countries establish laboratory accreditation schemes.

One of the first engagements was to collaborate with the Hong Kong Government to establish the Hong Kong accreditation scheme. Similar projects in Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Turkey and Brazil followed. In the past three decades, NATA has also collaborated with government agencies in Japan, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam to deepen accreditation as part of the technical infrastructure.

In addition, our training programs were delivered overseas in Asia, Europe and US and were hosted for international visitors and delegates at NATA's headquarters.

## Continued domestic expansion of testing programs

### Mining

Australia's mining boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a surge in the accreditation of laboratories in the mineral resources area. NATA increased its flexibility to cater for the remote regions of these laboratories.





Testing Equipment used in medical labs

## Medical

In 1982 the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) through the Department of Health called on NATA to examine the accreditation of pathology facilities throughout Australia.

A year later, NATA and RCPA established its joint medical testing program to accredit pathology facilities. The Commonwealth Government, as well as NSW and Victorian governments, then engaged NATA to undertake an Australia-wide program of accreditation of pathology laboratories.

Five years later the passage of the *Health Legislation Amendment Act 1987* set up a new legislative framework for the operation of pathology laboratories. In close collaboration with RCPA, NATA further built up its knowledge base of the requirements of a well functioning pathology laboratory, drafted those requirements and assembled a specialised team of Technical Assessors.

At the time there were no international standards. It was NATA's work in the field that later led to NATA playing an advisory role in the drafting of the international standard *ISO15189: Medical laboratories - Requirements for quality and competence*.

By 1990, more than 300 medical facilities were accredited by NATA. The current number of accredited medical facilities exceeds 700.

# Agriculture

The Australian Wool Surveillance Authority (AWSA) was established in 1988, following an approach by the Australian Wool Corporation for NATA to accept a leading role in the surveillance of wool display, sampling and testing facilities throughout Australia. The accreditation of wool facilities by NATA was aimed at enhancing international confidence in Australia's system of sampling, testing and showing greasy wool for export.

This mandatory program saw the processing and registration of more than 200 wool organisations during AWSA's first full year of operation. This remarkable achievement was a result of the high level of cooperation between NATA and the wool industry.

## 1980s: Era of international mutual recognition and national interest

### Mutual recognition arrangements



NATA Chairman Eric Bond signing the Agreement, watched by Professor R F Meyer, Dr Ian Shearer, John Gilmour, Mr R Hines and Dr Jack H Garside.

Arising from ILAC was the establishment of a series of mutual recognition arrangements with national accreditation bodies in Australia's overseas markets. Through these agreements, Australian test results of products were recognised overseas. This negated the need for re-testing of the product in the importing country. Respectively and in return, Australia accepted the test results of products of exporting countries.

Our first mutual recognition arrangement was with New Zealand's Testing Laboratory Registration Council (Telarc) in 1981. We now have agreements with more than 30 countries.



## Growth in Commonwealth Government interest

As the national interest relied on the competent testing by laboratories, Commonwealth Government interest in the quality of those tests led to a number of public inquiries.

The outcomes of the 1984 *Inquiry into Commonwealth Laboratories* were summarised in *The Ross Report*. It recommended that all Commonwealth government laboratories and non-government laboratories seeking to do business with the Commonwealth should have NATA accreditation.

A 1986 inquiry conducted by the Committee of Review of Standards, Accreditation and Quality Control and Assurance resulted in *The Foley Report*. The report recognised the significant contribution made by NATA to laboratory accreditation in Australia and wider impact of NATA's achievements in terms of the national good.

As recommended by *The Foley Report*, that same year, NATA was appointed by the Commonwealth Government as the national authority in Australia for monitoring compliance with OECD Principles of Good Laboratory Practice. NATA undertook its first accreditations in this area in 1991.

Through the Commonwealth's Committee of Inquiry into Australia's Standards and Conformance Infrastructure, the Australian Government conducted its most extensive review to date of Australia's standards and conformance infrastructure. The resulting Kean Report recognised NATA as Australia's national accreditor of laboratories and led to a revised MOU between the Commonwealth and NATA signed in 1998.



From Right: Bob Mitchell (Standards Australia), Senator Button, Kevin Cashman (Black & Decker), Mick Ryan (NATA)

## 1990s: Beginnings of an Asia Pacific forum

The idea of a forum for laboratory accreditation bodies in the Asia Pacific region was initiated in 1992. It was formalised through a MOU for the establishment of the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) in April 1995. Representatives from 16 economies in the Asia Pacific region signed the memorandum.



NATA contributed strategic support and resources to the establishment of this forum whose members include many of Australia's principal trading partners.

Its primary aim was to develop and expand mutual recognition arrangements among accreditation bodies in the region to facilitate trade.

Progress commenced with the inaugural signing of the 1997 Mutual Recognition Arrangement (APLAC MRA), with seven accreditation bodies signing the MRA for testing and calibration. Since then, the MRA has been re-signed to include other fields such as:

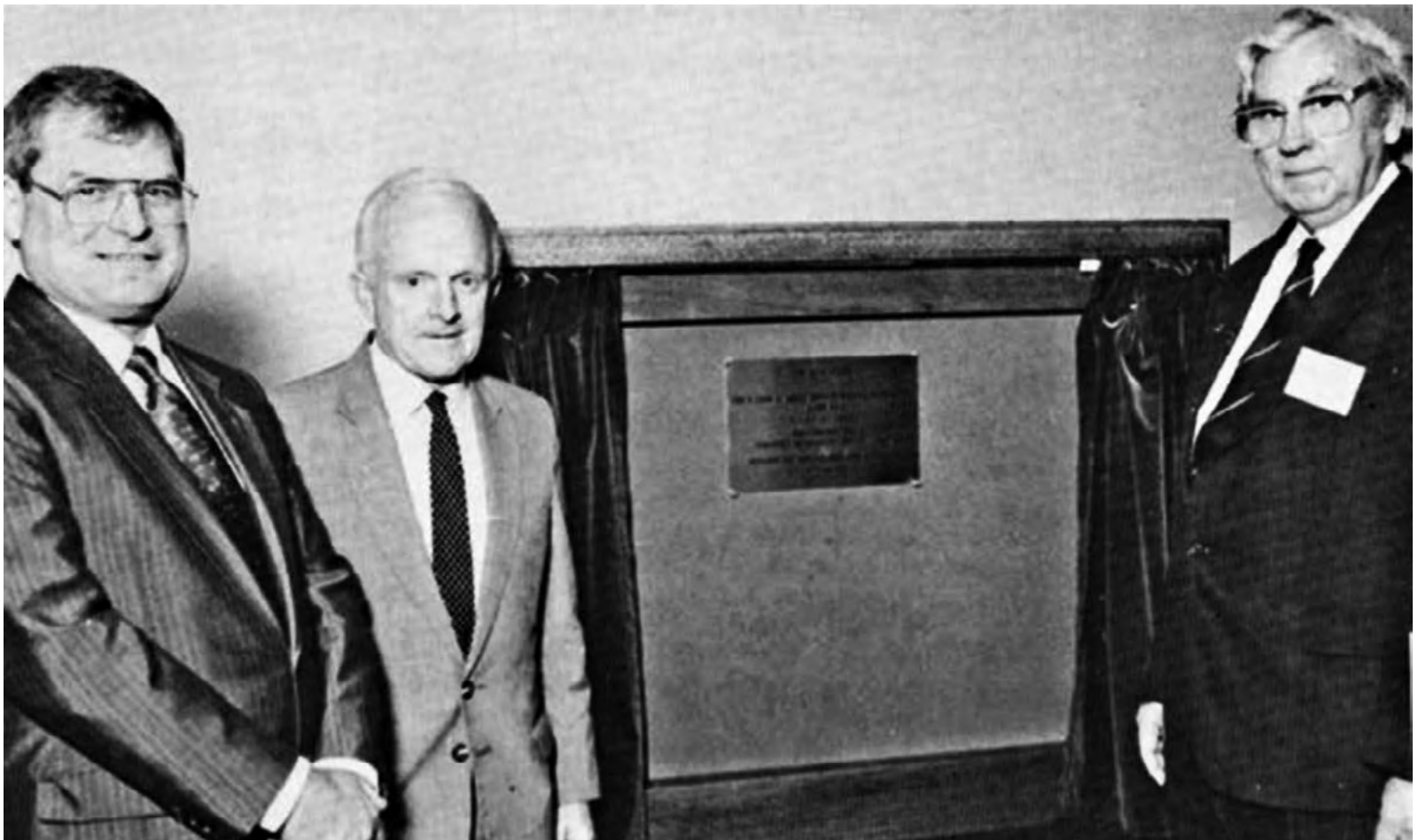
- Inspection in November 2003
- The new international standard for medical laboratories (ISO 15189) in April 2007
- Reference material producers in December 2007
- Proficiency testing providers in June 2014.

There are currently 37 signatories to the APLAC MRA. To maintain membership, the signatories evaluate one another every four years to ensure that as accreditation bodies all members are following best practice.

More recently, NATA staff have conducted evaluations on the accreditation bodies in Japan (2016), Russia (2016), USA (2016, 2017) and South Africa (2017). NATA passed its own evaluations conducted in 2011 and 2015.

APLAC is recognised by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) as one of five specialist regional bodies that support the work of the APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance.

Its work on mutual recognition arrangements and the removal of the need for re-testing was recognised by the governments that signed the Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement in 2016.



By 1990, NATA had accredited 2,000 laboratories across Australia. With its ongoing growth then Chairman Mr Cliff Baker and Vice-Chairman Dr Lew Davies embarked on a major turning point for the organisation - the purchase of NATA's head office in Rhodes, Sydney. The purchase gave NATA its first major investment in a physical asset since its establishment.

Unveiling the plaque: (L to R) Mr John Gilmour (NATA's Chief Executive), Senator John Button and Mr Cliff Baker (NATA Chairman)



## Expansion into certification

The quality movement of the mid to late 1980s brought numerous member approaches to expand NATA's accreditation activities to include quality systems certification.



In response, NATA commenced offering certification to national and international quality standards in 1990. The growth rate of this program was phenomenal. It led to the formation of the NATA subsidiary, NATA Certification Services International (NCSI) in 1997.

By 1998, 1,000 organisations had achieved certification and NATA's staff in this area had increased ten-fold in the same period.

## Continued expansion of accreditation fields

New international standards, Commonwealth legislation and government policies as well as changing industry demands saw NATA's traditional accreditation fields adapt accordingly.

The release of the *ISO/IEC Guide 25: General requirements for the competence of calibration and testing laboratories* (the forerunner of ISO/IEC 17025) in 1990, resulted in a review of NATA's own laboratory accreditation procedures and NATA's publication *the new General Requirements for Registration* in 1992.

The new NATA requirements harmonised the Australian system with international requirements.

The early 1990s saw an increase in accreditation of laboratories involved in environmental testing. This accreditation was for laboratories involved in activities such as soil and water testing, air monitoring and the analysis of stack gas emissions.

In 1991 the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Services engaged NATA to satisfy the requirements of the US Food and Drug Administration in assessing shellfish imported from Australia by the USA.

When the National Institute of Forensic Science was formed in 1992, one of its first agenda items was to establish an accreditation program for its laboratories.



A steering committee chaired by Mr Alastair Ross, inaugural director of the Institute and NATA Chair 2011 to 2016, was formed to develop a joint accreditation program for forensic science.

In conjunction with the Construction Materials Focus Group, in 1993 NATA introduced a construction materials testers accreditation program. Initially limited to the testing of concrete, the program expanded within five years to include fieldwork covering binders, aggregates and bitumen.

In 1999, NATA expanded its accreditation to laboratories in the fields of diagnostic imaging, research and development, and defence materials.

Mike Gleddon (left) NATA Chairman, signing the MoU with Mr Andrew Thomson (right), Federal Minister for Sport and Tourism

## The new millennium

The dawn of the new millennium was a period of considerable expansion of NATA's scope of new testing and complementary accreditation programs, including veterinary testing, information technology, and medical imaging.

Its international leadership was again recognised as it assisted ILAC with the development and operation of accreditation programs for Proficiency Testing Providers and Reference Materials Producers.

In the early 2000s, NATA also had the honour of accrediting Australia's peak measurement body, the then National Measurement Laboratory and now named National Measurement Institute (NMI).

In the aftermath of 9/11, bioterrorism scares became prevalent. The scares included the appearance of white powders in letters. At the time, the testing of these powders involved two laboratories – a clinical laboratory and then a forensics laboratory. To reduce handling risks and deliver a faster outcome, NATA streamlined the process by giving clinical laboratories an additional layer of accreditation for forensic testing.

On the medical front, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing commissioned review, *The Evaluation of Australian Pathology Laboratory Accreditation Arrangements 2002*, endorsed NATA's work in accrediting pathology laboratories and how the accreditation process contributes to safeguarding the wellbeing of Australians.

Further endorsement followed with the Productivity Commission's 2006 *Review of Standards and Laboratory Accreditation*. It confirmed NATA's role as the national laboratory accreditation body and recommended government recognition of NATA as a peak body for inspection body accreditation. The report recognised NATA's role in and contribution to ensuring the safety of the community.

## Trusted accreditor



Former Tasmanian Premier, Mr Jim Bacon MHA (centre) presenting the MOU to Mr Anthony Russell, NATA Chief Executive (right) along with Mr Stephen Dolliver, Tasmanian Representative on NATA Council (left)

As NATA gained further endorsement, government and industry demand for its laboratory testing services grew.

In 2008, the Australian Government renewed its MOU with NATA under which it recognises NATA as the national authority for the accreditation of laboratories conducting tests and measurements in all technical fields.

Throughout 2009, MOUs with the governments of Victoria, Tasmania and Australian Capital Territory as well as a number of government agencies across Australia were signed for the first time. Under these memoranda, NATA was called on to deliver its high level accreditation service to fulfill a number of specific national interest contracts.

The national interest contracts included:

- A deed of arrangement with the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service to do random checks of laboratories doing the pesticide checks on beef for export. (2006)

- A contract with Commonwealth Department of Health to provide guidance materials to support its Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation Scheme and pilot a new draft of the Radiation Oncology Standards to assess their functionality and safety in delivering better standards of service. (2010)
- A contract with the Australian Federal Police to provide accreditation for its laboratories conducting computer forensics and workplace drug testing (2010).
- An MOU signed with Australian Sleep Association to create a Sleep Disorders Services accreditation program. (2012).
- A renewed deed of agreement with the Department of Human Services to provide pathology laboratory assessments. (2012)
- A renewed deed of agreement with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to provide training of staff in laboratories testing export produce. And a new MOU for the accreditation of laboratories performing tests on imported seafood, imported agricultural and imported foods in general under the Imported Food Act 1992. (2012)
- A new MOU with Sydney Water for accreditation of laboratories and inspection bodies seeking to become listed providers of Field Testing Services (2014).
- A new MOU with the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads to accredit laboratories registered under the Department's Supplier Registration Scheme (2014).
- Approval from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare to provide assessments to the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards under the Australian Health Services Safety and Quality Accreditation Scheme. (2014)
- An extended MOU with Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to include laboratories conducting veterinary testing of animal products. (2014)
- Participation in the Australasian Procurement Construction Council's Construction Product Quality Working Group to release the guidance statement *Procurement of Construction Products - a guide to achieving compliance*. This addressed the ongoing issue of testing imported products for asbestos.
- Ongoing engagements with the Department of Industry, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Department of Immigration and Border Protection on the laboratory accreditation process in relation to Australian imports and exports.

## Strategic planning

In the mid-2000s, the organisation implemented more formal strategic planning with a focus on increasing value-added services to members. It commenced with the 2007 – 2012 Strategic Plan. This plan has been followed by two three-year plans.

Each plan has built on the work of its predecessor. The plans have introduced:

- The online Technical Assessors Development Program. Launched in 2010, this online training program supports assessors in maintaining their skills and technical knowledge levels.
- Integrated Accreditation where the customer has a single point of contact at NATA regardless of the range of accreditation activities or multiplicity of fields. Implemented in 2012, the appointment of Client coordinators for more than 3,000 NATA accredited laboratories and facilities was the most significant organisational change in its 65-year history.
- A stakeholder engagement program where a NATA team meets with its members and stakeholders to gain insights in their needs and expectations to allow NATA to better serve them in the future. This included the introduction of online customer satisfaction surveys.
- An electronic document and records system to increase administrative efficiency and provide an online interface to customers to allow online delivery of accreditation quotes and access to their accreditation files and reference material. This web-based customer portal, launched in 2012, removed the need for hard copy files.
- The development of the new Accreditation Information Management System (AIMS) to allow for better use of IT in internal business processes and a considerable upgrade to IT capability. The \$3M investment will deliver electronic scheduling of accreditation activities, improved client management, and more efficient back office administration.



## Subsidiary developments

NATA Certification Services International (NCSI), a wholly owned subsidiary set up in 1997 and oversighted by a separate NCSI Board, had been a success and growing steadily with the strategic goal to expand internationally. As part of the strategic review of its investment portfolio, the NATA Board decided its focus should remain on accreditation and divested NCSI to British Standards Institution (BSI) in 2013.

The proceeds from the NCSI sale allowed NATA to purchase a building in Camberwell, Melbourne. As then Chairman Alastair Ross explains, the Board's focus was on reducing the volatility of the returns from its major investment assets and future-proofing the financial foundations of NATA and the services it provides members.

As of 2017, NATA owns its office space in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, and leases its Adelaide and Perth office.

## Maintaining our own accreditation

To maintain APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement status, NATA is reviewed by its international peers for its continuing compliance with ISO/IEC 17011, the international standard for accreditation bodies.

In accrediting facilities, NATA is also reviewed by its peers for its compliance with:

- ISO/IEC 17025 - General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories
- ISO 15189 - Medical laboratories: Requirements for quality and competence
- ISO/IEC 17020 - Conformity assessment: Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection

- ISO 17034 - General requirements for the competence of reference material producers
- ISO/IEC 17043 - Conformity assessment: General requirements for proficiency testing.

These peer reviews take place every four years. In 2011 NATA underwent extensive international peer reviews against ISO/IEC 17011, ISO/IEC 17025, ISO/IEC 17020 and ISO 17034. Then in 2015, it was reviewed against ISO 15189 and ISO 17034. In both years, NATA successfully completed all the evaluations.

# International

Throughout the decade, our international consulting continued, as did our support in furthering international accreditation through ILAC and APLAC.

## International association support

On hosting the ILAC General Assembly in Sydney in 2007, we celebrated NATA's 60th anniversary and the 30th anniversary of ILAC. The two weeks of meetings involved 250 delegates from around the world.

Five years later, NATA hosted the APLAC General Assembly and its associated meetings in Sydney.



APLAC meeting 2012



## International advisory service

Through a major contract with the Gulf Standardisation Organisation in 2010, NATA assisted in establishing a regional accreditation body for the member States of the Gulf Co-operation Council.

Following this engagement, NATA was contracted by the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development to help establish their Quality and Conformity Council's Central Testing Laboratory and Metrology Centre.

Through funding provided by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) in 2010, NATA advised on medical testing, laboratory management and certification to the Southeast Asian countries of Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

The UNIDO project results included the inauguration and accreditation of the Industrial Laboratory Centre, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Centre's ability to examine and analyse food and water products to world standards is a major step forward in increasing the trade capacity of the Mekong Delta region.

Having earlier assisted in setting up accreditation programs, a decade on, there was a series of MOU renewals with those countries. NATA renewed its MOUs with organisations such as the South Africa National Accreditation Scheme (2009), Standards Malaysia (2012), and the China National Accreditation Service (2012).





## International collaboration

In 2011, NATA commenced joint projects with the China National Accreditation Service to investigate the role of accreditation in the assurance of the quality of building products and electrical goods.

This collaboration yielded many valuable outcomes including a program of better communication with Chinese manufacturers and robust testing before the products left Chinese ports.

The long term benefit lies in more effective and efficient compliance with Australian standards by Chinese exporters.

Of course this works both ways, with NATA involved in reassuring overseas importers that Australia products meet their country's standards. For example in 2012, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry renewed its deed of arrangement with NATA to provide training of staff in laboratories testing export produce.



**DELIVERING  
CONFIDENCE FOR**  
**75 YEARS**




Sydney Head office



# ACKNOWLEDGING OUR CONTRIBUTORS ON CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

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 n celebrating 75 years NATA takes the opportunity to acknowledge the support of the Commonwealth Government, its volunteers and staff.

## Ongoing Commonwealth Government support

From 1947 to 1956, NATA operated on an annual Commonwealth grant.

In March 1956, the NATA Council introduced an annual membership fee for accredited laboratories. It considered a membership fee would reinforce the concept of an association of members and provide self funding to advance NATA's objectives.

Commonwealth Government Laboratories were exempt from the membership fee and State Governments were given the choice of paying annual membership fees or giving an annual grant.

An application fee to assist with the cost of initial assessment of applicant laboratories was introduced in 1964.

Since then NATA has become self-funding and derives over 95% of its total funding from membership fees, returns from investment, training services, and other income. The Commonwealth Government through the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science continues to provide valuable funding under the Support for Industry Service Organisations (SISO) Grant to support NATA's activities principally in representing Australia in the international accreditation community.

## Volunteers

Likened to the volunteerism of Australia's surf life-saving movement, NATA is a case study in altruism and generosity in the Australian community of scientists, technologists, engineers and their employers.

Around 3,000 Technical Assessors and Accreditation Advisory Committee members, and the NATA Board members voluntarily share their knowledge and experience to make possible the exceptional standard of accreditation delivered by NATA. They come from all sectors – private, government and academic.

Chief Executive Officer, Ms Jennifer Evans relates that our overseas counterparts are impressed by the success and effective operation of the NATA's volunteer model. "The current estimate of the economic value of the contributions by our volunteers is approximately \$15M per annum. Without this generous and significant contribution from our volunteers, the accreditation fees and cost recoveries from our members would have to increase considerably and may become too expensive for many of our members. NATA owes a great debt of gratitude to our volunteers."

With most volunteers being scientists, professionals, and practitioners working in laboratories, NATA firmly believes that the sharing of contemporary testing knowledge as they accredit other laboratories benefits scientific development in Australia overall.

## Staff

Our nearly 300 staff members are located in our offices in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne Adelaide and Perth. The average years of service of each employee is around 10 years.

We acknowledge the value of this corporate knowledge and the team's energy in not only contributing to the national interest but also to international developments.

## Looking to the future

Currently, NATA has more than 20 MOUs with government departments and agencies in Australia and around the world.

Laboratories operating in the health sector continue to be one of our largest areas of testing. The other large area of accreditation is laboratories testing construction materials.

As past NATA Chairman Dr Geoff Hogg points out, NATA will continue to move with the times and respond to new areas of accreditation. "We are doing so in our current work in establishing the reliability of point of care testing of patients in healthcare and the reliability of cyber security against attacks."

Dr Hogg also emphasised the need to remain flexible and be engaged with members and stakeholders' to make sure NATA is meeting their needs. "While NATA does not write standards we can apply our resources and insights in the development of standards to ensure they meet the needs of stakeholders' and the community's expectations."

When assessing laboratories against the standards, NATA will remain diligent in assessing the competence of laboratory staff and safeguard the valuable coaching element of the assessment process. In the words of Dr Barry Inglis, "Accreditation bodies are not owed a living for issuing accreditation certificates, they are paid for adding value to their customers' businesses".

NATA continues to look to the future to extend and diversify its accreditation services and provide greater support to its stakeholders.



Brisbane Office opened June 2006

Internationally, we will continue our work in reducing technical trade barriers by seeking to ensure that test certificates issued by ILAC members are accepted by their government regulators. As Dr Barry Inglis states: "It is one thing to get all accredited bodies to recognise each other's certificates, the other challenge is to get the users - the respective country's regulators - to accept it."

In the meantime, NATA will continue investing in its technology framework and work hard in continuing its role as a business enhancer and key risk mitigation strategy for its members and stakeholders.

We look forward to serving our members, stakeholders, the Australian community and the international accreditation community in the years to come.

## Honour Board

LISTING OF CHAIRMEN	
Mr Gerald Lightfoot	1947 - 1948
Sir John Madsen	1948 - 1950
Mr A E (Ernest) Dawkins	1950 - 1958
Mr W R (Bill) Jewell	1958 - 1961
Mr John Gower Ritchie	1961 - 1979
Mr Eric E Bond	1979 - 1982
Mr W G J (Mick) Ryan	1982 - 1989
Mr Cliff Baker	1989 - 1995
Mr Mike Gledde	1995 - 2003
Dr Barry Inglis	2003 - 2011
Mr Alastair Ross	2011 - 2016
Dr Geoff Hogg	2016 - 2020
Mr David Turner	2021 -

## HONORARY MEMBERS

### [Mentioned in Stanton's "Laboratory Accreditation in Australia from Concept to Reality"]

- Mr J G Ritchie OBE 28 year involvement including Chairmanship 1961 - 1979
- Mr H F (Frank) Monaghan MBE 30 years of service as Registrar
- Mr K N (Keith) Stanton 38 year involvement principally as Deputy Registrar 1951 - 1985
- Dr Wel (Lew) Davies 15 year involvement as Vice Chairman (1989 - 1993) and on various committees
- Mr Cliff Baker 40 year involvement principally as a NATA assessor (1956 - 1996) and Chairman 1989 - 1995
- Dr Barry Inglis 40 year association, 19 years on Board, eight years as Chairman
- Mr Alastair Ross 25 year association, 13 years on board, six years as Chairman
- Mr Anthony Russell 34 year association as an employee, seven years as CEO
- Mr John Gilmour AM 21 years as CEO to 2000

## HONOUR BOARD OF TECHNICAL ASSESSORS

2009	Professor Eva Raik, Mr Ian Monro, Mr Harold Milham, Mr John Hensler
2010	Dr John Hosking, Mr Gordon Varley
2011	Mr Richard Duncan, Mr Michael Liddy, Dr Richard Brittain
2012	Dr Steven Anderson OAM, Mr Ian G Nethercote, Mr George Davey AM
2013	Mr Peter Duncan, Dr Pieter Scheelings, Mr Robbie Geyer PSM
2014	Professor John Gibson AM, Dr Richard Lumb PSM, Professor Peter Charles Blumbergs AO
2015	Mr Paul Titterton, Mr Chris Murray
2016	Mr Barry Neville, Dr James Doery, Mr Peter Davis
2017	Mr John McKenna, Ms Agnes Tan, Mr Gavin Rose





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**ACCREDITATION**

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