

A tribute to Jack Garside

Jack H. Garside. Director of Telarc - September 1979 to December 1996



Jack Garside, second Director of Telarc, died at his home in Nelson on Thursday 16 February 2006 aged 72.

When Jack joined Telarc in 1979 it had six staff members, one office, received substantial Government funding and was financially precarious. When he left in December 1996 it had 73 staff, six offices, was fully self-funded and had healthy reserves. In those seventeen years the number of accreditation clients (mostly laboratories) grew from 134 to 440. Jack and Telarc played a significant part in the dramatic changes to the nature and importance of accreditation and certification, nationally and internationally, that occurred during that period.

Those years saw rapid growth in the range of services offered by Telarc (now split into the separately-operated International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) and Telarc Ltd). Significant change also took place in the philosophy, practice and procedures of accreditation and in its relationship with the international accreditation community. It is fair to say that Jack built a very sound and important part of New Zealand's scientific and technical infrastructure on the foundations left by John Gilmour, the first Director.

In 1979 there were only three accreditation bodies offering coverage of a wide scope of testing and calibration activities. They were NATA (the first - in 1947), the Danish national scheme, STP and Telarc (1973). Because John Gilmour went on to run NATA, he and Jack were always destined to make a major contribution to the procedures for the operation and recognition of accreditation bodies worldwide. That proved to be the case once national accreditation body numbers started to grow in the 1980s. Telarc and NATA were founder members of the International Laboratory Accreditation Conference (ILAC) and Jack attended his first meeting soon after he joined in 1979 (the third meeting of ILAC which took place in Sydney). He ran a very successful 10th ILAC meeting in Auckland in 1988.

NATA and Telarc carried out the first mutual evaluations, culminating in the first mutual recognition agreement in 1981. The procedures used were to be the genesis of the Mutual Recognition Arrangement system that now covers 46 countries.

A less well understood area of change and development was in the area of definition of terms. John and Jack helped to formulate some of the key definitions of auditing and recognition of conformity assessment bodies. Terms such as accreditation, certification, inspection, and related terms did not exist in their current sense, or were not well defined, up to this time. Jack and John Gilmour played a major part in the negotiation of the European Union mutual recognition agreement on conformity assessment with both Australia and New Zealand. The language and definitions surrounding those agreements helped to solidify understanding of the everyday terms now used in conformity assessment.

Within Telarc, Jack's tenure saw the extension of accreditation to medical laboratories (a world first), gas cylinder test stations, radiology practices, inspection bodies, development of proficiency testing and training services. The latter eventually led to the formation of the New Zealand Quality College, now a division of IANZ. A number of specific criteria documents had been developed for the basic testing fields during the late 1970s and these were supplemented with technical guides and technical notes during the 1980s. When Telarc was set up in 1972, its criteria for assessment of laboratories were those inherited from NATA (Guide 25 did not exist until 1978). From 1988 Telarc used the New Zealand Code of Laboratory Management Practice as its general criteria, which later became the basis of ISO/IEC 17025.

In 1984 the registered supplier (quality assurance) programme was launched - the basis of Telarc Limited's business today. The first certification, UEB Technical Centre, occurred in 1987. By the end of 1996 Telarc had more than 1200 certified clients, with certification comprising more than two thirds of its income.

Perhaps his most constructive partnership during those years was with Malcolm Bell, the Deputy Director. Malcolm's undoubted entrepreneurial and communication talents did not always sit well with Jack's more measured approach to development. With hindsight it is easy to see that the two were complementary in their contributions to the organisation, although that may not have been obvious to either party at the time! Together they produced the most productive and expansive phase in Telarc's development to date.

Jack was born and educated in the United Kingdom where he gained a PhD in chemistry. His early career was in teaching and, after coming to New Zealand with his Kiwi wife, Margaret, he taught at the Central Institute of Technology in Lower Hutt before becoming involved in the cement and concrete industry. He directed both the Portland Cement Association and the Concrete Research Association before moving to

Telarc. In his early days with the organisation he projected a gruff image and operated a very strict office regime (Jack will be remembered by many past female staff members for his failed attempt to prevent them from wearing trousers!) which was probably a hangover from his days as a British school teacher. Over his years at Telarc this approach was moderated by his staff, and he came to enjoy the less formal New Zealand attitude to life. However, the organisation also benefited from that formality when it was reflected in the professional and business-like image he expected both his staff and their office environment to project.

At a time when the organisation was growing very fast, firm leadership and financial control were needed. Jack provided both. He was also fair and rewarded those staff who were loyal to the organisation, were competent and worked hard in its interests. IANZ was well represented at his funeral in Nelson reflecting the respect of staff who had worked for him.

Jack was also very community minded and served at high levels in Rotary, JCI and the Stroke Foundation. He retired to a small farm at Appleby near Nelson, which he had wanted to do for some time, and spent nearly nine happy years there. Both of his daughters eventually moved to the Nelson area.

Jack is survived by his wife Margaret, his two daughters, Sue and Kathy and their respective families.