



In our last issue of IANZ Argus for 2017, we report on counterfeit test reports that have popped up here in New Zealand, the ongoing work to expand the international benefits of accreditation, updated ISO lab standards, and the range of courses on offer at the NZQC. We'd also like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2018. Enjoy the holiday break.

1. Counterfeit test reports

IANZ has recently discovered a major operation in New Zealand surrounding counterfeit test reports. Concerning New Zealand's manuka honey, these reports purportedly come from accredited labs and are endorsed with the IANZ logo but have been fraudulently altered to suggest they come from another honey supplier.

"For many, many years, IANZ has pushed a key point to the public - to always look for a product's accredited test report so you can rely on that product to do what it says it does," says IANZ CEO Dr Llew Richards.



“We’re incredibly concerned about this case, and as a matter of urgency, IANZ has referred it to the Commerce Commission for prosecution. We will be taking every legal step possible to make sure this is stamped out.”

The subject of counterfeit test reports was a hot topic at a recent International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) meeting in Frankfurt. The organisation is currently working with Interpol and both are trying to raise awareness of counterfeit test reports with the security agencies around the world.

“Trade in counterfeit goods around the world sits somewhere between \$6-10 Trillion US Dollars a year,” says Dr Richards.

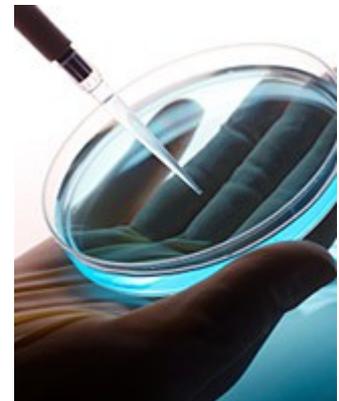
“And we’re not just talking Rolex watches or Louis Vuitton handbags. We’re talking fake cancer medications and substituted implants for surgery, such as using mild steel instead of titanium. With this happening all over the world, we accreditation bodies are part of the assurance chain, and we want to make sure that chain is as rigorous and robust as it can be. That’s why vigilance around fraudulent test reports is extremely high.”

Dr Richards recently attended a meeting in China to further discuss these issues and how IANZ and the authorities in China can work better together to combat this.

2. Accreditation by overseas accreditation bodies in other countries

Another big issue discussed at the recent ILAC meeting was accreditation by overseas accreditation bodies in other countries.

“In some areas this is quite frowned upon,” says Dr Richards. “In Europe, for example, the accreditation bodies see accreditation as the ultimate guarantor of competence on behalf of governments. There are very strict legal rules around accreditation; there’s definitely no competition between them, and each country has its own separate accreditation body.



“In the United States, things are very different, with full competition between accreditation bodies – this means the two systems don’t mix very easily. What ILAC is trying to do is develop a more stringent regime to make sure when overseas accreditation bodies are operating in another country, they are familiar with the technical standards, the regulations and the legal requirements of that country. ILAC is in the process of putting some rules in place around this.”

As accreditation is ultimately designed for the consumer to be able to rely on test results, if there are laboratories seeking accreditation from different accreditation bodies, there is a perception in the industry this will lower accreditation to the lowest common denominator. It could also mean some laboratories are looking for an easier deal from accreditation bodies.

“What IANZ believes is there should *not* be an easier deal at all – the level should be consistent with whatever accreditation body you go to,” says Dr Richards.

3. Christchurch test lab first to be accredited under new FCC rules

Thanks to support from IANZ and other agencies, Tait Communications' mobile radio test facility in Christchurch has gained Federal Communications Commission (FCC) accreditation, allowing the technology exporter to continue serving its customers in the United States.

The USA is an important export market for Tait and FCC certification is required there to sell its mobile radio communications network equipment, software and applications.



Several years ago the FCC let it be known it intended to tighten requirements for such test laboratories and set a 2017 deadline for compliance.

Tait Communications says it received excellent support from IANZ as the New Zealand accreditation body, and also from personnel at a variety of government agencies and Ministries, to ensure this deadline would not impact on its exports to the United States.

As a result of this collective support, IANZ earlier this year signed a Mutual Recognition Agreement which gave it formal United States recognition as a body which could accredit test labs. The Tait Communications test facility in Christchurch was the first to be evaluated by IANZ and was successful in gaining accreditation.

4. Core standard for laboratories being reissued and adopted as a New Zealand standard

The general requirements for the competence of testing and calibration labs has undergone some changes. The core standard that New Zealand laboratories must meet when they are accredited by IANZ is the ISO/IEC 17025 standard, last published in 2005. This has now been reissued, with some major amendments around the structure of the standard.

“What IANZ is currently in the process of doing is having the ISO standard adopted as a New Zealand standard,” says IANZ CEO Dr Llew Richards.



“We’re aiming to have it as a New Zealand standard by April 2018, and are working through a process with Standards New Zealand to make sure laboratories will have it free of charge. ISO standards usually go for about \$200 each.”

The transition time for the updated standard is up to three years which means laboratories will have plenty of time to bring their systems up to the new requirements.

5. Reminder about NZQC training courses

As 2017 comes to a close, we'd like to remind our readers about the many courses run by the New Zealand Quality College (NZQC). It offers training on all aspects of laboratory accreditation and management, including a course on understanding the new requirements in regard to the ISO/IEC 17025 standard mentioned above, including what has and hasn't changed.

NZQC also runs courses on specific types of testing, for example, microbiology and PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction).

To find out more about the range of courses NZQC offers, click here: www.nzqc.co.nz

