



Welcome to the latest edition of The Argus. In this issue, we look at measures to stop counterfeit test reports, improving the scrutiny of building products coming into the country, new food safety accreditation and we introduce our chief financial officer.

1. Technology to thwart counterfeit test reports

Using blockchain technology to thwart counterfeit test certificates was one of the topics discussed at the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) General Assembly in Kyoto in June.

IANZ chief executive Dr Llew Richards, who sits on the APLAC Board, said the issue of fake reports was a major concern for many countries and the meeting discussed ways to implement higher levels of checking.

“A lot of countries have problems with counterfeit materials so we are looking at options for greater traceability of lab reports. This could include coding and linking back to the lab itself to using blockchain technology to enable goods such as building products to be traced right through their journey, from manufacturer to buyer,” says Dr Richards.



“We’ve seen issues here in New Zealand with sub-standard steel, for example, that came with test certificates that didn’t relate to the product supplier.”

Dr Richards said the discussions at the General Assembly were very constructive and would be ongoing.

The meeting was the 24th and last General Assembly of APLAC as, from 1 January 2019, it will merge with the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) to create a new regional entity called APAC – the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation.

“Last year, APLAC and PAC made the decision to combine into one new united entity and this will take effect at the start of the new year,” says Dr Richards.

“This single regional body for accreditation in the Asia Pacific region will bring synergy and foster closer interaction and collaboration among member bodies in the region.”

2. IANZ and MBIE tightening up standards for building products

IANZ is working with MBIE and the building industry to ensure building products supplied to the New Zealand market are what they say they are in terms of quality and fitness for purpose.

That means they should comply with the relevant Standard and the supplier or manufacturer has done appropriate due diligence to make sure the product does actually meet the right specifications.

IANZ chief executive Dr Llew Richards chaired an industry meeting at IANZ’s offices in Auckland, one of a series of meetings and workshops MBIE has held with targeted stakeholders to gather evidence, understand the issues and discuss a range of levers available to the Government to address the problems.



It is part of the Ministry’s review of the building product regulatory and assurance system and could lead to more information being required about products’ performance, greater assurance for high-risk products and new investigative powers for product failure, remediation and recalls.

A Ministry spokesperson says the objective is to ensure the way building products are regulated and how assurance is provided is fit for purpose and, when used appropriately, they contribute to the construction of safe and durable buildings.

The review is expected to take about a year.

Dr Richards says: “Building products need to meet the appropriate Standard and be fit for purpose. As an example, a lot of people are installing brass plumbing fittings these days but, if the zinc and copper have not been properly alloyed, the zinc can leach out. That leaves the unstable copper behind which can decay and collapse.

“If you’ve installed a new bathroom or kitchen, you don’t want the fittings behind the walls to fail after five years. While it’s not a life or death situation, it’s still a quality and

expense issue. If your brass fittings are starting to develop a pinkish tinge, it means the copper is starting to show.”

3. New CFO attracted to IANZ’s mission to keep Kiwis safe

Fiona Paulin joined IANZ earlier this year as Chief Financial Officer and is finding the wide range of IANZ touch points fascinating.

“Like a lot of New Zealanders I used to pay very little attention to things such as the level of our water quality (other than when travelling overseas and having to drink bottled water!), whether the radiology services I used were up to standard, whether the meat and dairy products I consumed were safe and whether the bridges I crossed were secure to drive or walk on.

“Now I do pay attention and I am thankful an organisation such as IANZ exists to keep myself, my family and every other New Zealander safe.”

Fiona has extensive experience in finance and operations. Originally from Wellington, she began her career with Union Shipping Group and, over the past 20 years, has held a number of senior roles across a diverse range of industries including financial services, building, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, electrical and, most recently, education.

She joined IANZ after more than four years as deputy CFO and commercial manager at the Manukau Institute of Technology.

Fiona says she was drawn to the CFO role for a number of reasons, including the fact IANZ is an autonomous Crown-owned entity which does not rely on any form of Government funding and it has a supportive governing Council. She also relished the opportunity to work with Dr Llew Richards given he is an experienced and long-standing CEO who is well respected within the public sector.

“I also felt I could add value by drawing on my experiences from the various sectors I had previously worked in and in particular my experience within the SME (Small to Medium Enterprise) and public sectors.”

Now that she’s a few months into the job, Fiona says she particularly enjoys working with a team of highly intelligent, professional staff who are supportive of each other and work at IANZ in order to improve the well-being and living standards of New Zealanders

Asked where IANZ will be in five years’ time, Fiona answers: “I see IANZ growing as regulation increases across various sectors and becoming more heavily involved in the building sector, particularly around the standards associated with imported building product arriving into New Zealand.”

Fiona graduated from the Auckland University of Technology with a National Diploma in Accountancy, and became a member of the NZ Institute of Chartered Accountants



in 1994. At IANZ, she replaced Marc Ferguson who has moved to the South Island with his family.

4. Making sure the food we eat is safe

IANZ has been working with the Ministry of Primary Industries on the food safety regime and is now accrediting council inspection activities.

Recently, it has accredited Auckland Council for its food safety inspection programme, in accordance with MPI criteria. Other local authorities will soon follow suit.

This means when customers see an A grade or other certificate in a restaurant, café or other food premises, they can be assured the inspection activity has been done competently and they can rely on the validity of that certificate.



IANZ's general manager of accreditation services Phil Barnes says: "You can still get a certificate without the accreditation, of course, but if a place is not IANZ-accredited, you can't be sure the certificate they're showing has any validity or meaning with regard to quality and safety."