

Accreditation Council

AUTHORITY

The Council is a user-funded autonomous Crown entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004. It was established as the national body for laboratory accreditation under the Testing Laboratory Registration Act, 1972. The Act was subsequently amended in 1988 and 2006. In 2015 the Act was again revised and reissued as the Standards and Accreditation Act.

The Council reports annually to Parliament through the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. It receives no Crown funding for its operations.

The Council's activities contribute to the safeguarding of the health and well-being of New Zealanders, and helping to ensure that New Zealand products and services meet domestic and overseas regulatory and customer requirements.

FUNCTIONS

The functions of the Accreditation Council are:

- a) to promote the development and maintenance of good practice in conformity assessment; and
- b) to establish and maintain accreditation schemes for conformity assessment bodies engaged in testing and inspection activities; and
- c) to develop and maintain international recognition and acceptance of the Council's accreditation scheme; and
- d) to maintain appropriate international relationships consistent with the Council's functions under this section; and
- e) to act as New Zealand's good laboratory practice compliance monitoring authority; and
- f) if the Council chooses, to provide certification services; and
- g) to perform any other functions that the Minister directs the Council to perform in accordance with section 112 of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

SERVICES

The Council's accreditation programmes – functions (a) to (e) above - operate as **International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ)**.

The Council provides certification services – function (f) above - through a subsidiary, **Telarc Limited**, wholly owned by the Council.

Training courses are provided by the New Zealand Quality College which is managed by IANZ.

COUNCIL

Members

The Council consists of up to seven members. The Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs appoints all of these, including the Chair. The appointments must ensure broad industry coverage and the appropriate expertise necessary for the Council's activities.

Current members of the Council are:

Mr Paul Connell, Chair	Consultant, Auckland
Mr Graeme Benny	General Manager, Porirua
Mr John Boshier	Company Director, Wellington
Mr Richard Collin	Consultant, Nelson

Ms Carolyn Harkness Consultant, North Canterbury

Mr Peter Steel Company Director, Wellington

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive of IANZ appointed by the Council is responsible for day-to-day management of the Council's activities, including the operation of International Accreditation New Zealand.

The Chief Executive is Dr W Llewellyn Richards.

Telarc Limited Board

The Board of Directors comprises three members appointed by the Council. This Board appoints the Chief Executive of Telarc Limited.

Current members of the Telarc Limited Board are:

Mr David Bone Company Director, Auckland

Ms Vikki Brannagan Company Director, Auckland

Mr Paul Connell Consultant, Auckland

The Chief Executive is Mr Philip Cryer.

COMPETENCIES

The Council is part of New Zealand's technical conformity assessment infrastructure. Its conformity, accreditation and certification procedures are in line with best international practice and are subject to regular peer review. Staff participate in international working groups reviewing procedures and also monitor overseas conformity assessment requirements that may impact on New Zealand.

HISTORY

In the late 1960s, the New Zealand authorities became concerned at the lack of any check on the competence of testing and calibration laboratories in New Zealand. The Australian laboratory community had established a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) to accredit laboratories on the basis of technical competence to undertake specific tests or measurements. The NATA programme, begun in 1947, was broad spectrum, covering all fields of testing and was at that time the only one of its kind in the world.

Following a visit by New Zealand officials to the NATA programme, the New Zealand government decided to establish a government agency to provide similar assurance of the quality of testing in New Zealand. The Testing Laboratory Registration Act was passed by Parliament in 1972 and the Council was formally established on 1 January 1973.

The Council adopted Telarc New Zealand as its operational name. Telarc New Zealand became the second such body in the world and was closely modelled on NATA. Telarc's initial task was to establish a programme for registering (accrediting) laboratories as competent to undertake specific tests or measurements. The first Telarc Registered Laboratory accreditations were granted to New Zealand Aluminium Smelters and SGS Qualitest Division on 27 February 1975.

Economic base broadened

Over the next decade, New Zealand's economic focus changed. After many years as a traditional producer of agricultural commodities, largely for the British market, New Zealand found itself having to broaden its economic base into processing and manufacturing and to explore new markets in places such as the United States and Japan. The government recognised that, if New Zealand was to compete on the world market, action was needed to improve the quality of our goods and services.

Around this time, the British developed a standard for the management of business processes to ensure that products and services were consistent and fit for purpose. Businesses could be independently audited against this quality management system standard to ensure that their systems were maintained and improved. Similar standards were also developed in Canada and Australia.

Additional responsibilities

In 1983, the Testing Laboratory Registration Act was amended to give the Council responsibility for introducing quality management systems into New Zealand and establishing a programme to register (certify) companies that complied with the quality management systems standards. The Telarc Registered Supplier programme commenced in 1984, initially using the British, Canadian and Australian standards until 1987, when the international quality management systems standards, the ISO 9000 series, were published. New Zealand's first ISO 9000 certificate was presented to UEB Packaging Limited on 20 March 1987.

In the early 1990's the Council developed new accreditation programmes for inspection bodies and radiology services.

Since the 1990's, international conformity assessment systems have evolved as a hierarchy. Laboratories and Inspection Bodies, as well as Certification Bodies are now accredited to give formal recognition of competence. Accreditation bodies are usually owned or endorsed by government and operate on a not-for-profit basis. The Council's accreditation of laboratories and inspection bodies lie in this category. It is also at this level that the Council negotiates Mutual Recognition Arrangements for testing and inspection with counterpart bodies overseas in support of New Zealand exports.

Certification is another level of conformity assessment, and organisations that certify management systems operate in the commercial sector. By 1990, several other organisations were offering management system certification in New Zealand.

Separation of accreditation and certification

The Council's historical position as both the national authority for the accreditation of testing and inspection facilities and a certification body for management systems became anomalous in terms of international trends. A number of regulators in New Zealand also wanted to see the two activities separated to avoid any possible conflict of interest in the accreditation of technical competence activities for regulatory purposes.

On 1 July 1997, the two functions were separated. The Council's operating unit was renamed International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ). All accreditation activities previously undertaken in the name of Telarc New Zealand are now carried out by IANZ. This includes all Mutual Recognition Arrangements with counterpart accreditation bodies in economies where New Zealand trades. The Council's training division, the New Zealand Quality College, now operates as a division of IANZ.

The Council established a subsidiary company, Telarc Limited, to provide all certification activities previously undertaken in the name of Telarc New Zealand. A Board of Directors reporting to Council was established.

CONTACT DETAILS

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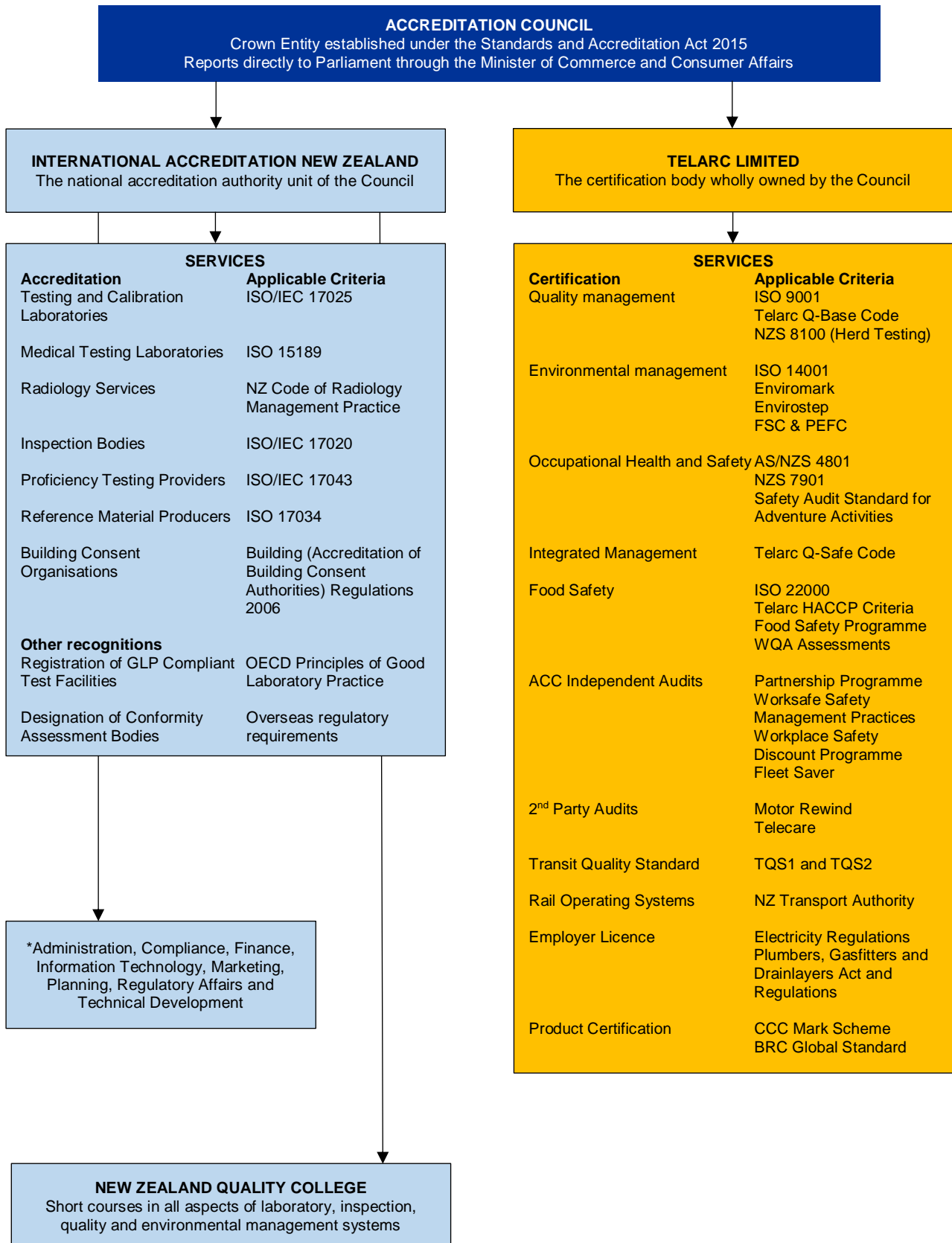
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STRUCTURE AND SERVICES



* Telarc Limited receives corporate services from IANZ on a formal contractual basis