

EURACHEM 5th WORKSHOP

Proficiency Testing in Analytical Chemistry,
Microbiology and Laboratory Medicine

Accreditation of PT Providers - is it worth the money?

A J Russell

NATA, Australia

TOPICS

- Value for Money - Perspective of an Accreditation Body
- Scope of Current PT Accreditation in Australia
- Who are the Stakeholders in PT Accreditation?
- Motivation for Offering Accreditation of PT Providers
- Value for Money - the Providers' View
- Harmonisation of Accreditation Criteria - an ILAC Update

NATA's INTEREST IN PT

- NATA's Main Activity for 58 Years - Laboratory Accreditation
- Includes (in 2005)
 - 156 Biological Laboratories
 - 477 Chemical Laboratories
 - 562 Medical Laboratories
- NATA conducted own PT Programs since 1982
- Approximately 30 NATA Programs per Year (1,500 laboratories)

NATA's INTEREST IN PT (continued)

- Provides the Secretariat and Chair of the Proficiency Testing Committee of the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC)
- Past Convenors of ISO/CASCO WG for Guide 43 and Development of ILAC G13
- Interim Chair of new ILAC PT Consultative Group
- Now Accredits PT Providers

SCOPE OF CURRENT PT ACCREDITATION IN AUSTRALIA

15 Accredited PT Providers (ILAC G13)

1 Applicant Provider

Major Scopes of PT Activity

Medical/Clinical/Veterinary

- Microbiology
- Bacteriology
- Parasitology
- Virology
- Mycology
- Cytopathology
- Haematology
- Molecular genetics
- Immunohaematology
- Serology of infection
- General Chemistry

MAJOR SCOPES (continued)

Residues

- Environmental
- Waters
- Foods
- Soils
- Agricultural materials
- Sediments
- Animal tissues and fluids

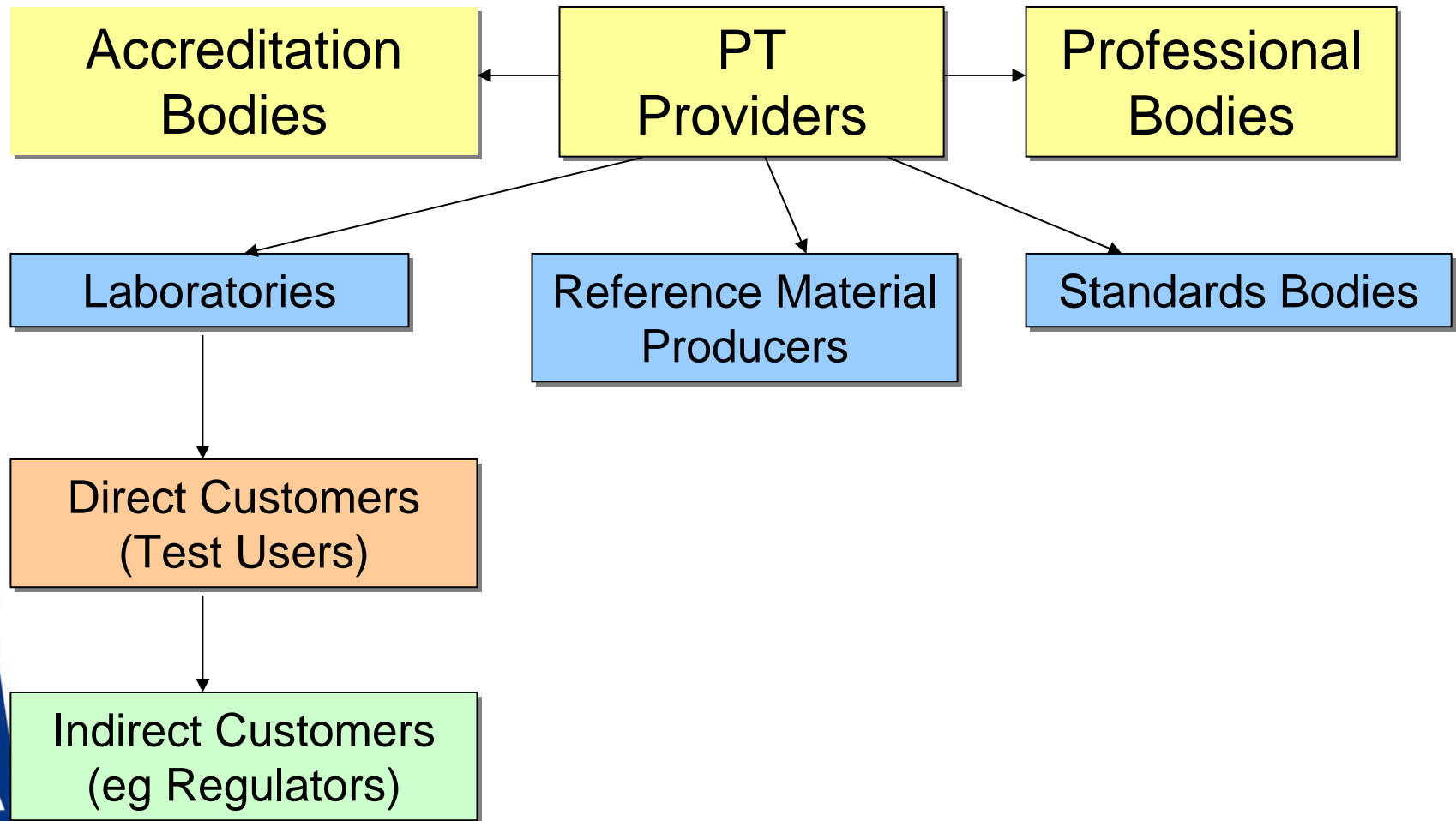
Forensic Science

- Controlled substances

Electrical

- Appliances and accessories

WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS IN PT ?



MOTIVATION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PT

- Growing demands for independent recognition of competence of PT Providers
- Need for Access to credible PT data to support Laboratory Accreditation
- Regional and Global Nature of PT - Confidence needed across countries

VALUE OF PT ACCREDITATION - PROVIDERS' VIEW

From a telephone survey of 11 NATA Accredited PT Providers

Values

- Increased confidence for their own clients (participating laboratories)
- Improvements in the technical aspects of their PT operation (such as in homogeneity and stability testing)
- Opportunities to benefit from interaction with technical experts (their professional peers)
- Opportunities (in some cases) to have their own staff participate in assessments of other PT providers

VALUE OF PT ACCREDITATION - PROVIDERS' VIEW (continued)

Values (continued)

- Opportunities to establish networking with other PT providers through the awareness created by a growing number of accredited providers
- Opportunities to market their programs domestically and internationally
- *Peace of mind* of senior management that independent experts had judged their PT scheme's competent and compliant with international codes of practice (ILAC G13:2000, ISO/IEC Guide 43 etc)
- Provision of additional credibility for certified values for reference materials based on use of accredited PT providers (and use of competent laboratories identified through such PT)

NEED FOR HARMONISATION OF ACCREDITATION CRITERIA AN ILAC UPDATE

Three relevant Resolutions from 2005 ILAC
General Assembly - 20 September 2005

ILAC Resolution GA 9.12

Taking into account the current wide use of ILAC G13, and the need for a future Standard to be a suitable common base for accreditation of PT providers in all sectors by ILAC Members, the General Assembly endorses ILAC requesting an urgent revision of ISO/IEC Guide 43 Part 1 & 2 by ISO/CASCO and its conversion into a Standard

AN ILAC UPDATE (continued)

ILAC Resolution GA 9.13

While awaiting the availability of a replacement Standard for ISO/IEC Guide 43, and noting the global use of many PT programs, the General Assembly recognises the need for its Members to use harmonised requirements for the accreditation of PT Providers and endorses the use of ILAC G13 and ISO/IEC Guide 43 as the base criteria for such accreditations

ILAC Resolution GA 9.14

The General Assembly endorses a review of the text of ILAC G13, while ISO/IEC Guide 43 is being revised/replaced

CONCLUSION

From both the perspectives of Australia's Laboratory Accreditation Body and its Accredited Proficiency Testing Providers, Accreditation is of value - and particularly for providing **confidence** to the full spectrum of stakeholders depending on **competent** performance of PT Providers