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NATA Council Members

Duties and Responsibilities Statement



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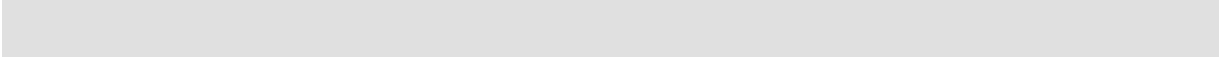
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NATA COUNCIL MEMBERS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS NATA?

The National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) provides a foundation for confidence in Australia’s calibration, testing, and inspection activities. NATA technical assessment also underpins the certification of a range of products and services. NATA adds value to thousands of such services in business, industry and government, both in Australia and internationally.

NATA is recognised by the Australian Government as being the national authority for the accreditation of laboratories, calibration services and producers of certified reference materials and a peak authority for the accreditation of inspection bodies and proficiency testing scheme providers throughout Australia. It is also Australia's compliance monitoring authority for the OECD Principles of GLP.

NATA is a not-for-profit company operating as an association owned and governed by its members who include accredited facilities and representatives from industry, government and professional bodies. NATA draws on its members for expertise to support its many technical and accreditation activities. NATA is largely self-funded and has memoranda of understanding with the Australian Government and various State and Territory governments that recognise its key role in Australia’s technical infrastructure. The Australian Government uses NATA-accredited facilities wherever possible and encourages State and Territory governments and other instrumentalities to do likewise.

NATA’s work increases community confidence and trust in a facility’s services, mitigates risk, improves tendering success and facilitates trade. Established in 1947, NATA is the world’s first comprehensive laboratory accreditation body, and is still one of the largest. More than 3000 facilities in Australia and around 50 other economies are NATA members.

NATA's competence as an accreditation provider is regularly evaluated by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) for continued inclusion in Mutual Recognition Arrangements. Evaluation teams comprise individuals from accreditation bodies in Europe, North America and the Asia-Pacific region. This ensures NATA's operations remain consistent with international practices. (NATA similarly participates in evaluations of its mutual recognition partners).

NATA employs approximately 180 staff in Sydney (head office), Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. NATA's staff is complemented by approximately 3000 technical experts who volunteer their time evaluating the technical competence of facilities and as members of NATA's many technical committees.

NATA is the sole shareholder of two subsidiary companies - NCS International (NCSI) and Proficiency Testing Australia (PTA). NCSI is a certification body also offering training and consultancy services. PTA is a proficiency testing scheme provider. Both companies have Boards, Constitutions, management and logos that are independent and separate to those of NATA.

NATA also undertakes advisory work and capacity building in Australia and overseas.

NATA provides information and support services for member laboratories, and promotes its members to domestic and foreign consumers. It maintains a public data base of accredited facilities, and publishes a range of technical and information documents covering laboratory practice and evaluation. NATA is a participant in national and international standards writing committees, and advises legislators, regulators and specifiers on ways in which accreditation can be used to provide technical assurance and mitigate risk.

NATA GOVERNANCE

The NATA Rules (Constitution, Regulations and Schedules) define and underpin NATA's structure and all activities NATA undertakes.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NATA is directed by the Board in accordance with Australian Company Law. The Board is drawn from NATA Council. The Board has overall responsibility for NATA's technical and business activities.

THE COUNCIL

The Council consists of representatives of the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments, stakeholder representatives from industry and professional bodies, elected members representing the accredited facilities in each of the States and Territories, and co-opted members. Annex 1 lists Council representation.

ACCREDITATION ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND OTHER TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

Each field of accreditation is supported by an Accreditation Advisory Committee (AAC) that meets approximately every 12-24 months. The committee members are volunteers drawn from NATA's membership and stakeholder organisations. The chairs of Accreditation Advisory Committees provide reports for NATA's Council meetings.

From time to time other technical committees are convened by NATA to work on specific projects.

ROLE OF NATA COUNCIL MEMBERS

NATA's Constitution describes NATA Council as both a representative body for NATA members and a consultative body to the NATA Board. (See NATA Constitution clause 27.1.) All NATA Board members are also NATA Council Members. The Chair of NATA's Board is also the Chair of NATA Council. The NATA Board is drawn from NATA Council. NATA's Constitution makes provision for the Board to give NATA Council other powers and responsibilities if required.

COUNCIL AS A REPRESENTATIVE BODY

Council members may be approached by anyone, but usually NATA members, to request that an issue of importance is brought to the Board's attention. Council members at their discretion can take these matters to either NATA Executive Officers, or Board members or both.

Items coming to the attention of Council members should be assessed by the Council member. Dependent on the nature of the item serious matters may either be referred to the Chief Executive with a copy to the Board and, if appropriate, relevant senior staff, or referred to the Board with a copy to the NATA Chief Executive. Successful communication is paramount to NATA's overall success as an association of members.

COUNCIL AS A CONSULTATIVE BODY

The NATA Board is responsible for NATA's activities. One of NATA Council's prime functions is to advise and support the Board, and therefore should communicate with the Board in the first instance about any item believed to be important to the Board. At any time, the Chair of Council may call a meeting of Council. At the (written) request of not less than 8 Council members, the Chief Executive must call a meeting of Council.

The Board is required by clause 37 in the Constitution to deal with matters referred to it by the Council and to deal with any matters which concern Council that should not in the opinion of the Board be postponed until a meeting of the Council.

Those issues that the Board wishes to consult with Council about should be referred to members of the Council in writing together with an expected timeline for a reply and resolution.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. Council members are required to represent their Parent Organisation or State constituents to NATA and NATA to their Parent Organisation or State constituents.
2. Council members should maintain proper confidentiality at all times.
3. Council members should act at all times and under all circumstances with integrity and the best interests of NATA and NATA members.
4. Council members should not engage in any behaviour that could damage the reputation of NATA or its members.
5. Council members must declare any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest, and excuse themselves if necessary from discussions and voting on conflicting issues.
6. In their representative and consultative roles, Council members act as a two way conduit for information supporting NATA as an association of members. Therefore, Council members should communicate with each other, with members and parent organisations to ensure their representation is appropriate, and monitor outcomes of issues brought to their attention.
7. Council members should work with NATA to facilitate engagement forums with members within their sphere of influence.

The specific requirements of Council members are detailed in Annex 2.

ANNEX 1: REPRESENTATION ON NATA COUNCIL

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

- Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
- Defence
- Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
- Health
- Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia
- Australian Capital Territory
- Northern Territory

STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS

- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Royal Australian Chemical Institute
- Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Australian Institute of Physics
- CSIRO
- The Consumers' Federation of Australia
- Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand
- Standards Australia
- National Measurement Institute
- Engineers Australia
- The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists

MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES

NOTE: States/Territories with more than 30 NATA Accredited facilities elect two members to Council; those with less than 30 NATA Accredited facilities elect one member to Council

- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia
- Australian Capital Territory
- Northern Territory

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

As appointed from time to time.

ANNEX 2: COUNCIL MEMBERS: REQUIRED PROFILE

APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES TO COUNCIL

PROFILE

The representative must:

1. Have a current working knowledge of NATA's activities and role in Australian industry and government;
2. Have a sound general knowledge of the nominating organisation and its range of needs both at a State and national Level and internationally as applicable;
3. Have access to executive (decision making) levels within the nominating organisation in terms of information exchange; and
4. Have a clear understanding of his/her authority to represent the nominating organisation's points of view and when further consultation is required.

ROLE OF REPRESENTATIVE

1. Attend to all areas listed in the section entitled 'responsibilities of Council members'
2. Provide ongoing information and advice to NATA in the areas of:
 - Changes in Government/industry/ stakeholder focus, both domestically and internationally that could potentially impact on Laboratories and NATA's accreditation activities;
 - Concerns expressed by members of the nominating organisation;
 - The possible impacts of Government policy, including trade policy and trends on accreditation needs;
 - Developments in technology, manufacturing or other factors that would impact on the national testing and measuring systems;
 - Areas where NATA's accreditation activities do not provide the needed coverage to the testing industry;
 - Areas where NATA's accreditation activities are not providing the required level of confidence or acceptance by domestic or overseas clients;
 - New industry activities where accreditation might have a role in adding value or providing trade advantage.
3. Relay to NATA management any specific problems of which the nominating organisation becomes aware, relating to NATA accreditation activities or those of NATA's accredited facilities.

4. Keep the nominating organisation aware of NATA activities including:
 - In trade related areas including Government to Government MRAs or FTAs
 - New areas/disciplines/technical assessment that may be of relevance/interest
 - Issues relating to NATA's processes and plans
5. Provide a written report to NATA for the NATA Council meeting
6. Attend the annual NATA Council meetings and provide a written report to the nominating organisation. (Note that Clause 29 of the NATA Constitution allows appointment of another person to attend Council meetings as a proxy in the event a Council member cannot attend.)

MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED TO COUNCIL

PROFILE

The representative must:

1. Be the authorised representative of an accredited facility;
2. Have a current working knowledge of NATA's activities and role; and
3. Have a sound general knowledge of issues specific to services and NATA members in his/her State/Territory

ROLE OF REPRESENTATIVE

1. Attend to all areas listed in the section entitled 'responsibilities of Council members'
2. Provide ongoing information and advice to NATA in the areas of:
 - Changes in State/Territory Government/industry/ stakeholder focus, both domestically and internationally that members have brought to the Council member's attention that could potentially impact on facilities and NATA's accreditation activities;
 - Concerns expressed by members;
 - Developments in technology or testing and related services brought to the Council member's attention by members that could impact NATA's accreditation services;
 - Areas where NATA's accreditation activities do not provide the needed coverage ;
 - Areas where NATA's accreditation activities are not providing the required level of confidence or acceptance by State/Territory clients;

3. Relay to NATA management any specific problems of which State/Territory members have made the Council member aware, relating to NATA accreditation activities or those of NATA's accredited facilities.
4. Keep State/Territory members aware of NATA activities including:
 - News letters
 - Reports of State/Territory Representative members' meetings
 - New areas/disciplines/technical assessment that may be of relevance/interest
5. Provide a written report to NATA for the NATA Council meeting
6. Attend the annual NATA Council meetings and provide a written report to State members. (Note that Clause 29 of the NATA Constitution allows appointment of another person to attend Council meetings as a proxy in the event a Council member cannot attend.)
7. Act in an "ombudsman" role – an interface between members and NATA when members have problems they wish NATA to address but wish to protect their confidentiality;
8. Promote the concept to members of NATA's dual role: Accreditation and Association of Members.