

## **NON-DESTRUCTIVE TESTING ACCREDITATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **45<sup>th</sup> MEETING SUMMARY**

The 45<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Non-destructive Testing Accreditation Advisory Committee was held at NATA's Melbourne Office on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

As in previous meetings, an extensive range of topics was discussed. The principal NDT issues are summarised below.

#### **Site visits during technical assessments**

The Committee confirmed that the range of work site visits undertaken during initial assessments or reassessments is intended to cover the majority of testing disciplines for which the facility is accredited, as detailed in the visit intention letter sent prior to such assessments. Follow-up assessment activity, at the facility's expense, was confirmed as an appropriate course of action where inadequate provision for work site test witnessing, or other types of production tests, had been made by the facility.

#### **Qualification to release results**

The Committee considered the question of certification/qualification for personnel signing NDT test reports and it was acknowledged that circumstances might arise where the report might be signed separately from the process of authorising the technical content of a report. Nonetheless, it was considered that the laboratory records system has to be clear which individual was responsible for authorising the technical content of a given test report and that appropriate qualifications were held to exercise such authority.

#### **Quality assurance activities**

The Committee considered the application of ISO/IEC 17025 clause 5.9.1 specifically in relation to the scheduling of external facility competency assessments (the equivalent of proficiency testing in NDT) and to what extent such activities must be completed prior to gaining accreditation for a given method. The Committee resolved that external facility competency assessment must at least be planned, with specimens specified in accordance with the facility's testing activities and technical requirements. Also, compliance with the whole of clause 5.9.1 must still be demonstrated in terms of the company's overall approach to quality assurance activities.

#### **Calibration certificates**

The committee considered the need for calibration of NDT equipment items by ISO/IEC 17025 accredited calibration facilities where such services may not be readily available. The Committee noted that the provisions of NATA Policy Circular #11 apply, regardless of the circumstances. However, Policy Circular #11 does not specify any requirement for ISO/IEC 17025 calibration certificates for equipment items which are deemed as not being critical to the test result.

#### **Availability of laboratory records**

The committee considered the circumstance of historical laboratory records not being readily available during an assessment, with records potentially archived in another building or even at a remote site. The Committee confirmed that the assessment

team should be able to access records covering the prescribed retention period, as detailed within the ISO/IEC 17025 Standard Application Document published by NATA, and that the time allocated for the assessment visit should not be unduly compromised in accessing these records. Where these expectations cannot be met, follow-up assessment activity, at the facility's expense, would at least need to be considered.

### **NDT Level 3 technical oversight**

The Committee considered the issue regarding adequacy of Level 3 input in respect to the technical control functions described in the NDT Application Document. In particular, the Committee noted the potential for the Level 3 to become disconnected from the technical control audit processes. The Committee proposed that the NDT 'field technical control' audit requirements be clarified to note that such activity be conducted by the Level 3 or other person designated as competent by the Level 3 to perform such audits.

### **Implementation of measurement uncertainty**

The Committee considered the matter of consistency between, and within, laboratory operations in regard to applying measurement uncertainty principles. It was agreed to establish an interim Working Group under the auspices of the NDT AAC to provide advice and to facilitate consistency of implementation in this area.

### **Continuation of class 6.94 within NDT**

The Committee considered the continuation of accreditation for testing using arc spark and x-ray fluorescence equipment in the field, in view of the perceived lack of utility of reporting 'comparative' results, as reflected in the limitations associated with class 6.94. The Committee noted the intended adoption by NATA of a uniform (tabular) scope and, in the interim, recommended the continuation of class 6.94.