

1 July 2013

Dear Authorised Representatives and Assessors

Implementation and Assessment of Australian Standards within Forensic Science

Back in 2009 the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency National Institute of Forensic Science (ANZPAA NIFS) facilitated the formation of a Standards Australia Forensic Analysis Committee to address a gap in available resources specifically designed for the forensic setting.

As a result, the following standard with four parts has been produced and published:

- AS 5388.1 Forensic analysis Part 1: Recognition, recording, recovery, transport and storage of material
- AS 5388.2 Forensic analysis Part 2: Analysis and examination of material
- AS 5388.3 Forensic analysis Part 3: Interpretation
- AS 5388.4 Forensic analysis Part 4: Reporting

NATA has created a gap analysis comparing the requirements described in these documents against the current NATA accreditation criteria. This is now available on the NATA website (www.nata.com.au). It is noted that the Forensic Standards clearly outline the forensic processes, using language common to the forensic setting. A review against NATA criteria has identified that the majority of requirements described in these documents are currently expected to be undertaken to gain NATA accreditation.

NATA will be able to assess facilities against these requirements upon request. The assessment against these standards will not be mandated by NATA. At this stage, based on a review of the standards and the gap analysis, additional ongoing fee costs are not expected. However, this can not be ruled out if there is a significant time impost for the assessment team.

AS 5388.1 contains a large section on occupational health and safety. Whilst NATA emphasises the importance of safe work practices, the NATA assessment process does not include a formal safety audit. As such, NATA will not be assessing against Section 6 of AS 5388.1.

As the standards are technical documents it has been determined that the assessment against these criteria will require a technical assessor. This will occur as part of the routine reassessment at no additional cost at this stage. If a request is made by a facility to gain accreditation against these standards prior to the next scheduled technical visit, a chargeable variation visit utilising

a technical assessor to review the information will be required in line with NATA's current fee schedule.

Assessment reports compiled at the end of an assessment will include both the ISO 17025 clauses and subclauses and the appropriate AS 5388 reference, where relevant.

Once accreditation has been granted to these standards, the scopes of accreditation will be updated to reflect this.

NATA will be in a position to assess facilities against these standards from 1 September 2013. If you wish to include assessment against these standards at your next routine visit, or outside of the routine surveillance period, please discuss this with your Client Manager.

Any further questions on the implementation of the standards can be directed to myself at lisa.bartlett@nata.com.au or 03 9274 8200

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Bartlett'.

Lisa Bartlett
Deputy Sector Manager. Life Sciences