

Changes proposed to AP Scheme principles

The ACMA is proposing three changes to the principles that govern the Accredited Persons Scheme and is seeking public comment on these changes.

The proposed amendments to the *Radiocommunications (Accreditation – Prescribed Certificates) Principles 2003* follow a review of the scheme. They would provide for:

- > Recognition of New Zealand engineering qualifications as equivalent for Australian accreditation.
- > Removal of the Deed of Indemnity for *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act) bodies (Commonwealth Government Departments). The requirement for a Deed of Indemnity for individuals and organisations not governed by the FMA Act would continue.
- > Withdrawal of accreditation if a person has been inactive for at least two years, in order to ensure that the skills of Accredited Persons (APs) remain current. In such cases, APs would be given the opportunity to prove why they should not have the accreditation withdrawn.

The ACMA's review confirmed that the scheme is providing a successful market-based solution for frequency coordination and emission-level management. Improving quality control and removing barriers to becoming an AP are two of the main outcomes of the review that will help to ensure the scheme's continued success.

APs undertake over 90 per cent of all certification work for apparatus and spectrum licensing. This figure has been steadily increasing—recently, APs processed the majority of applications associated with the spectrum release in the 3.6 GHz band (for wireless access services) and all applications in the 2 GHz band (for public telecommunications services).

New Zealand already recognises Australian engineering qualifications as an equivalent qualification for accreditation. The proposed change provides reciprocity and may also help relieve a general shortage of engineering skills in Australia.

Under the proposed changes, an AP who has been inactive for two years or more will have their accreditation withdrawn, unless they can demonstrate why this should not occur. This would help to ensure that the skills and knowledge of APs is current, generally translating into a better quality of work.

Several recommendations to improve the ACMA's administration of the scheme are now being implemented. These aim to support APs as they efficiently deliver frequency assignment and interference management of a high standard. The ACMA will now take steps to review and improve frequency assignment documentation.

The focus will be on improving the availability and accessibility of relevant documentation online. A new audit system for Interference Impact Certificates is also being developed, with a similar approach to that used for Frequency Assignment Certificates.

Submissions

Comments are invited from all interested parties and close on **Monday 28 February 2011**. ☞

More information about the current consultation phase and submission details are available on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to About ACMA: News & media centre > Issues for comment > IFC 44/2010).

