

Improved opportunities for Accredited Persons

Following a review of the operation and effectiveness of the Accredited Persons (AP) scheme, the ACMA has increased the opportunity for suitably qualified individuals and Commonwealth agencies to participate.

The major changes to the AP scheme are:

- > recognising New Zealand engineering qualifications as equivalent for Australian accreditation
- > removing the requirement for some Commonwealth agencies to provide a Deed of Indemnity to the ACMA
- > establishing a mechanism for the withdrawal of accreditation if an AP has been inactive for at least two years.

To implement these changes, the ACMA amended the *Radiocommunications (Accreditation – Prescribed Certificates) Principles 2003*, the legislative instrument that governs how the AP scheme operates. The amendments have been in effect since 1 July 2011.

The review of the AP scheme confirmed that it was providing a successful market-based solution for frequency coordination and emission-level management. The review also found that improving quality control and removing barriers to becoming an AP will help to ensure the scheme's continued success.

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

The changes to the indemnity requirements for bodies subject to the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act) open the way for Defence Department personnel, and any other Commonwealth Agency staff governed by this Act, to become involved in the AP scheme. The requirement for a Deed of Indemnity for individuals and organisations not governed by the FMA Act continues.

The changes also establish a mechanism for the withdrawal of accreditation when an AP has been inactive for two years or more. This will help to ensure that the skills and knowledge of APs is current, generally translating into a better quality of work.

A new audit system for Interference Impact Certificates will also be developed, with a similar approach to that used for Frequency Assignment Certificates.

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). ☎

Further information on the AP Scheme is available at www.acma.gov.au/accreditation.

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Several recommendations to improve the ACMA's administration of the AP scheme are also being implemented. These aim to support APs as they efficiently deliver frequency assignment and interference management of a high standard. The ACMA is now taking steps to review and improve frequency assignment documentation. The focus is on improving the availability and accessibility of relevant documentation online.

