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MRA Review
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
Belconnen ACT 2616

National Standards Commission

12 Lyonpark Road
North Ryde NSW 2113
PO Box 282 North Ryde
NSW 1670 Australia
Telephone (61 2) 9856 0300
Facsimile (61 2) 9856 0399
www.nsc.gov.au
ABN 27 731 182 821

# 2003 Review of MRA and TTMRA

**Background:** The National Standards Commission is a Commonwealth statutory authority whose main responsibility is to coordinate the national measurement system under the National Measurement Act 1960. As part of this responsibility, the Commission undertakes extensive consultation with State and Territory trade measurement authorities and provides the regional and international linkages for Australian trade measurement. In particular, the Commission provides the Australian representative on the International Organisation on Legal Metrology (OIML). OIML writes international recommendations that are designed to become mandatory by being written into the laws of member countries. An obligation on OIML members is to harmonise their national trade measurement requirements with the relevant OIML recommendations.

The Commission also undertakes pattern approval of measuring instruments in use for trade. This is to ensure that the design of these instruments is of sufficiently high quality that they will retain their calibration for a suitable period of time. The Commission has a mutual recognition agreement with New Zealand on approval testing for some categories of measuring instrument. However New Zealand's approval testing capability is not as extensive as Australia's.

**Comment on TTMRA:** The Commission has two comments on the current operation of the TTMRA and its possible extension.

a) Currently the TTMRA applies to the sale of goods but not their usage. Thus it is possible to sell New Zealand approved trade measuring instruments in Australia (and vica versa) but they cannot be used for trade unless an approval is issued in Australia based on recognised or other testing.

   The Commission would not like to see the TTMRA extended to apply to the usage of goods as well as their sale. This would allow any New Zealand approved instrument to be sold and used in Australia and would weaken the current trade measurement infrastructure.

b) Recently New Zealand has amended its trade measurement legislation to allow the quantity statement to be marked on any position on a package. At the same time New Zealand is applying for full membership of OIML. OIML recommendation R79 requires that the quantity statement be marked on the main display panel (ie. the front of the package so that it can be easily viewed on a supermarket shelf).

   This action by New Zealand is of concern to the Commission and Australian trade measurement authorities as, under TTMRA, packages from New Zealand can be imported and displayed alongside Australian and imported packages from other countries that conform with the OIML recommendation. The Commission is of the view that the TTMRA should not allow either party to introduce changes that are in conflict with OIML recommendations.

Contact:

Dr Grahame Harvey
Deputy Director