



## Benchmark for Global Certification & Testing

*Ujen Singh, Quality Systems & Certification Manager, TestSafe Australia*

It only stands to reason that Certification Bodies worldwide (and Australia is no exception) ought to be regularly subjected to rigorous external and internal auditing of their management systems, testing regimes and verification procedures. After all it is they that are issuing Certificates, Test Reports and Quality Assurance Reports, on the basis of which, equipment is used in a wide variety of hazardous workplace settings. It is of the utmost importance that these documents are beyond reproach, as failures of such equipment tend to cast a long shadow and sometimes back to the original testing methodology and adherence to equipment safety standards.

Recently TestSafe Australia has itself been subjected to the blowtorch of four major audits of its certification systems. Thankfully on each occasion it has come through with flying colours.



*Insert picture of Ian Claere, IEC Auditor, with TestSafe's Quality & Certification Manager, Ujen Singh, (middle), and Ajay Maira, Low Current Branch Manager (left)*

The first of these occurred in November 2004 when two well-respected international Auditors from the International ElectroTechnical Commission's (IEC Ex) Explosion Protection Scheme (Ian Claere, former Director of British Test House, BASEEFA, and Wolf Dill, (former Laboratory Manager at Germany's EXAM), conducted an exhaustive reassessment of TestSafe's accreditation to this scheme.

TestSafe has been a participating Test House for this Scheme since its inception and under the Scheme's rules is reassessed every 5 years in order to retain its ability to issue IEC Ex Certificates.

The Audit Report was issued in February 2005, and according to the IEC's Ex Scheme Executive Officer, Mr Chris Agius: -

"The two international auditors were greatly impressed with TestSafe's testing and certification procedures, sufficient to regard them as a benchmark for global certification and assessment".

A follow-up review by the IEC Ex Secretariat of Certificates issued by Testing Laboratories on 20 June 2005 has again re-endorsed the high quality of Certificates issued by TestSafe.

In order to provide a wide range of Certification, TestSafe is accredited by JAS-ANZ (the Joint Accreditation Scheme for Australia and New Zealand). This scheme focuses upon the veracity of TestSafe's management system, and conducts six monthly audits of the site. For the last two audits it has not found any non-conformity in its examination of our files, and has noted that this is an excellent result and typical of a robust management system.

Of great importance is the various functional audits conducted by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA), which covers all laboratories in Australia. NATA accredits both the site and its staff, as signatories, and its audits are recognised internationally through its membership of the International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operative. A laboratory cannot effectively operate in Australia without NATA accreditation. A thorough going audit of TestSafe's electrical equipment testing function was held in early March 2005, as well as evaluation of 7 staff for NATA signatory status. All staff achieved this status and the site satisfied the auditors. TestSafe now has 30 of its staff as NATA signatories, a sure measure of their expertise to conduct a wide range of complex tests for clients.

In a world where certification bodies are being increasingly relied upon by industry, governments, and workers alike to provide assurance that equipment is safe, TestSafe can be justifiably proud of the standards that it has achieved after 40 years of existence.