



Information Item	Protecting the health and wealth of New Zealand
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International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) isn't a widely known governmental organisation, but one that is nonetheless crucial to ensuring our country's health and wealth.

"People tend to hear about us when something has gone wrong," Geoff Hallam says, IANZ's Technical Development and Regulatory Affairs Manager.

"When we take away someone's accreditation, then it makes headlines." The rest of the time IANZ works away in the background ensuring things run smoothly and safely.

An autonomous Crown entity established in 1972, IANZ is the operational arm of the Accreditation Council.

IANZ is a full signatory member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation and the regional body, Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation, demonstrating that they are operating in accordance with international standards and that IANZ accreditation is recognised worldwide.

Put simply, Geoff says, IANZ checks the checkers.

IANZ is New Zealand's premier accreditation body – an organisation that holds IANZ accreditation has independent confirmation of its technical competence and can thereby confidently provide assurance to its customers and clients.

"Imagine you've had blood taken at your GP to have tested in a medical laboratory – you don't know if the lab is any good or if you can trust the results they get.

"So, that's where accreditation becomes the ultimate solution. Not only does it audit the system to make sure that they're complying with what they say they're doing, it also checks that what they're doing is appropriate, and that their results are the same as other laboratories – so, it's an in-depth technical assessment of competence.

"So, accreditation ensures that all the right checks and balances are in place to make sure that error rates are very low. We're protecting the health and wealth of New Zealand. That's our function."

Dealing with a vast range of technical fields, IANZ accreditation provides independent recognition of competence; practical management of risk; and financial benefits (including reduced legal challenges and reduced costs for rework) to testing and inspection organisations and their clients.

So how does IANZ fit into the crane industry?

Cranes are essential tools in construction, manufacturing and logistics to name but a few.

They are also potentially dangerous. Cranes can drop heavy loads and they can fail in catastrophic ways.

Recognising these dangers, regulations require cranes to be inspected periodically to ensure their safety features work and that they're being maintained properly.

"Crane owners have a choice of independent commercial organisations, called inspection bodies, to do that work, they periodically inspect each crane and if it's safe they give it a certificate.

"If an inspector finds a crane to be in an unsafe condition repairs or maintenance may be required before a certificate can be issued.

"Accreditation is there to ensure those inspection bodies are competent and are doing their job properly, just like medical laboratories, it's important that inspection bodies are reliable.

"Crane owners and operators should ensure their cranes have a current certificate from an accredited inspection body, so they know IANZ have checked the checkers.

"We're making sure that people who set up businesses to provide crane inspection services actually understand cranes, and that they've got proper systems in place to ensure that they've got inspectors with appropriate knowledge and experience, and that they have effective systems to ensure that good records are kept.

"This is not a bureaucratic paper exercise, inspectors have to practically demonstrate their knowledge, skills and judgement to a technical expert, on-site, by inspecting different types of cranes."

It's a comprehensive and regular process but a necessary one. If an organisation cannot demonstrate competence of people and systems, they won't be accredited.

Accreditation is not a one-off process either, reassessments occur on a regular basis to ensure that they're still doing what they've proven they know how to do.

Geoff says, "it is the nature of things", that IANZ does find some non-compliances when visiting any company undertaking any sort of work.

"If not regularly checked or monitored, all organisations or systems tend to slip.

If IANZ find that there is non-compliance, formal communication is sent outlining a timescale within which to put that right.

"They have a maximum of three months to put right any non-compliances found, but it's a sliding scale according to the severity of what we find.

"If we find that they're doing something which could result in catastrophic failures – for instance – we have the power to suspend accreditation on the day, stopping them working.

"Fortunately, we need to do that very rarely. Normally, if we find non-compliance, we tell them what it is, we give them time to put it right and monitor it to see if they've taken appropriate action within the time scale.

"If they haven't, and they persist in non-compliance, then we remove accreditation."

Thanks to their cooperative relationships with businesses, IANZ identifies where companies might have slipped a bit and works with them to put it right.

“We’re here as part of the structure to ensure cranes are maintained safely by giving confidence in accredited inspection services.”

So, does every crane you own or operate have a current certificate of inspection from an IANZ accredited inspection body?

Geoff Hallam
IANZ Technical Development and Regulatory Affairs Manager

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