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NAS Report



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- Badly fragmented forensic science system needs overhaul
- Certification and accreditation should be mandatory
- Evidence base often sparse, varies among disciplines
- Court testimony should be grounded in science, acknowledge uncertainties
- Strong independent leadership needed



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- ❑ **National Institute of Forensic Science**
- ❑ **Quality Management**
 - **Provider**
 - **Practitioner**
 - **Process**
- ❑ **National Standards**



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Improvements in forensic science will:

- ❑ **Assist law enforcement officers in the course of their investigations;**
- ❑ **Reduce the occurrence of wrongful convictions; and**
- ❑ **Enhance the ability to address the needs of homeland security**



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Seminal Recommendation

“Congress should establish...an independent entity, the National Institute of Forensic Science”

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National Focus for Forensic Science

It was announced today that the Australasian Police Ministers' Council has established a National Institute of Forensic Science. Mooted since 1974, the Institute will be responsible for...

'A Newspaper' November 1991



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CRITERIA for NIFS USA

- ❑ A culture strongly rooted in science, with strong ties to the national research and teaching communities;
- ❑ Strong ties to state and local forensic entities and professional organizations;
- ❑ No commitment to the existing system but informed by its experiences
- ❑ Not being part of a law enforcement agency; and
- ❑ Having sufficient funding, independence and prominence to raise the profile of the forensic science disciplines and push effectively for improvements

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FUNCTIONS OF NIFS AUSTRALIA

- ❑ Sponsor and support research in forensic science;
- ❑ Assistance with the development and co-ordination of forensic science services between jurisdictions;
- ❑ Facilitation and information exchange between relevant parties;
- ❑ Support, co-ordinate and conduct training programs in forensic science; and
- ❑ **Co-ordination of the delivery of relevant forensic science quality assurance programs**



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“...any approach to overhaul the existing system needs to address and help minimise the community’s current fragmentation and inconsistent practices”

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“There is no uniformity in the certification of forensic practitioners, or in the accreditation of crime laboratories”

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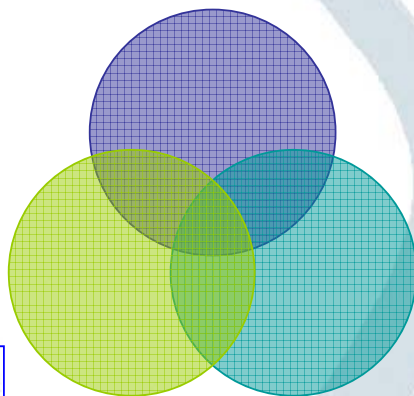
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ACCREDITATION

PROVIDER

PROCESS

PRACTITIONER



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Quality Management :

“One-stop-shop”? – Forensic Science Regulator

- **Provider**
 - NATA accreditation: ISO/IEC 17025
- **Practitioner**
 - AFFSAB: crime scene, fingerprints, firearms

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Quality Management : Process

“The self correcting nature of science”

- ❑ Validation and verification – electronic evidence
- ❑ Quality control (known samples, peer review, proficiency testing etc.)

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Standards and Common Methodology:

- ❑ Role of SMANZFL and SAGs
- ❑ Interoperability – e.g. DNA and Bali bombings
- ❑ Project with Standards Australia
 - Evidence recovery
 - Minimisation of contamination

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Thank you

