



**ExMC/173/Inf  
2003 09**

**INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION**

**IEC SCHEME FOR CERTIFICATION TO STANDARDS FOR SAFETY  
OF ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT FOR EXPLOSIVE ATMOSPHERES  
(IECEx SCHEME)**

**Title: Letter of concern from the Australian National Member Body**

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**Introduction**

Attached is a letter received from the Australian IECEx Scheme National Member Body. The AU Member Body requests that the matters included be discussed during the coming IECEx Scheme Meetings to be held in Budapest in October 2003.

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3 September 2003

Mr Chris Agius  
Secretary of IECEx

We wish to draw to your attention two concerns that Australia has with the current operation and direction of the IECEx Scheme and to alert you to the potential impact in Australia for acceptance of IECEx Certificates.

Our first concern is the apparent abandonment of any market to market reciprocity within the Scheme. When Australia entered the Scheme it modified its acceptance requirements for certificates in the full expectation that once the Scheme went to full operation it would be on the basis of reciprocity in acceptance of certificates. Since then the rules have changed from 1 July 2003 and any ExCB can now issue a certificate. However, based on our current requirements Australia and New Zealand appear to be the only countries in the Scheme prepared to accept IEC Ex Certificates direct to market. At meetings of the Scheme in October 2002, our concern was expressed but no changes were agreed to that would address the reciprocity issue at this time.

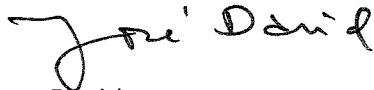
We regard the constraints on the acceptance and use of the Scheme's certificates as undermining the role IEC Ex can play in liberalising global trade while assuring at the same time a high level of confidence in traded goods. We believe that the Scheme is capable of engendering a very high level of trust and assurance that should support reciprocity of market access between members. If pre-existing regulatory arrangements are not able to recognise the solid technical underpinning of the Scheme then we believe that the Scheme and individual participating nations should be lobbying for recognition of the Scheme as the core conformity assessment requirement for Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).

Secondly, the Australian ExCBs under the IECEx Scheme have identified major shortcomings in the ATRs being submitted to Australia under current arrangements. It is clear that a major proportion of equipment currently being looked at when ATRs are produced do not comply with the relevant Standards, or the ATRs are so poorly produced that it is not possible to verify compliance. We are happy to provide you with evidence of the above. There was an expectation when the acceptance of IECEx Certificates was written into our requirements that the Standard of ATRs would be much better and that there would be a longer period to ensure our confidence with the ATRs. We believe that at least for a period of time, there will be many items equipment being sold into Australia that do not comply with the relevant Standards.

This prospect has raised some alarm amongst regulatory authorities in Australia and will inevitably bring with it a much more cautious approach towards acceptance of IEC

Ex Certificates. However, we believe that the quality of ExTRs can be addressed within the Scheme and that this should assume a very high priority. Australia has been one of the most active countries in the development of the Scheme and we wish to see the Scheme succeed globally. We would of course be are willing to commit ourselves to helping the Scheme resolve the issues with ExTRs.

You may find it appropriate to convey our concerns to the participating member countries and ExCBs of the Scheme.



Jose David

For the

Australian National Member Body –  
Standards Australia International ( SAI )