

13 July 2023

Sean Doyle
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Dear Mr Doyle

Request for information

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 5 May 2023, in which you request:

'In the past, has any forensic service provided by the New Zealand Police been accredited to an international standard? For example, has the Document Examination Section previously been accredited to ISO/IEC 17025?

If any service has been accredited in the past, then when was that accreditation gained, when did it cease and what was the standard?

Why are New Zealand Police Forensic Services not accredited to an international standard?'

In response to your request, I can advise that New Zealand Police do not currently use international accreditation as a method of quality assurance in relation to any of our forensic services.

Rather, our forensic service units operate to Australasian standards and have comprehensive and robust internal quality assurance programmes.

The New Zealand Police Document Examination Section (NZPDES) is the only Police forensic service to have previously been accredited internationally. The NZPDES was accredited in the discipline of questioned documents by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB) on 28 June 1996.

The ASCLD/LAB accreditation program gradually transitioned to the ASCLD/LAB-International program comprising ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and ASCLD/LAB-International Supplemental Requirements for Testing Laboratories:2011. The NZPDES was accredited in this program in the field of Forensic Science Testing: Questioned Documents on 17 September 2012.

The NZPDES ceased involvement in this program in 2020. The decision not to renew this accreditation took into account factors including weighing the benefits gained against the costs to maintain accreditation.

The NZPDES continues to operate under the same comprehensive quality assurance programme, including participation in formal international questioned document and handwriting proficiency tests.

New Zealand Police forensic services staff are frequently required to give expert evidence in Court and have been accepted as experts in the District and High Courts, and in the Court of Appeal.

I trust this information and material adequately addresses your request.

Yours sincerely



Warren Olsson
Detective Inspector
National Criminal Investigations Group
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