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History

The history of Scientific Services Laboratory

The first Government materials laboratory was established in 1945 at Essendon, Victoria. At that time its primary purpose was to act as a project site testing facility for the Essendon Aerodrome development.

Initial investigations were concerned with soils investigation and concrete bituminous products used in airfield construction. In 1950 the central laboratory was relocated to its present site in Port Melbourne.

Activities were expanded to cover aspects of water, sewerage, corrosion, coatings, electrical equipment and structural components. In 1957 the Victorian regional laboratory and the central laboratory amalgamated to become the Central Testing and Research Laboratory (CTRL).



The Victorian Regional Laboratory was re-established in 1975 and the central laboratory became the Central Investigation and Research Laboratory (CIRL).

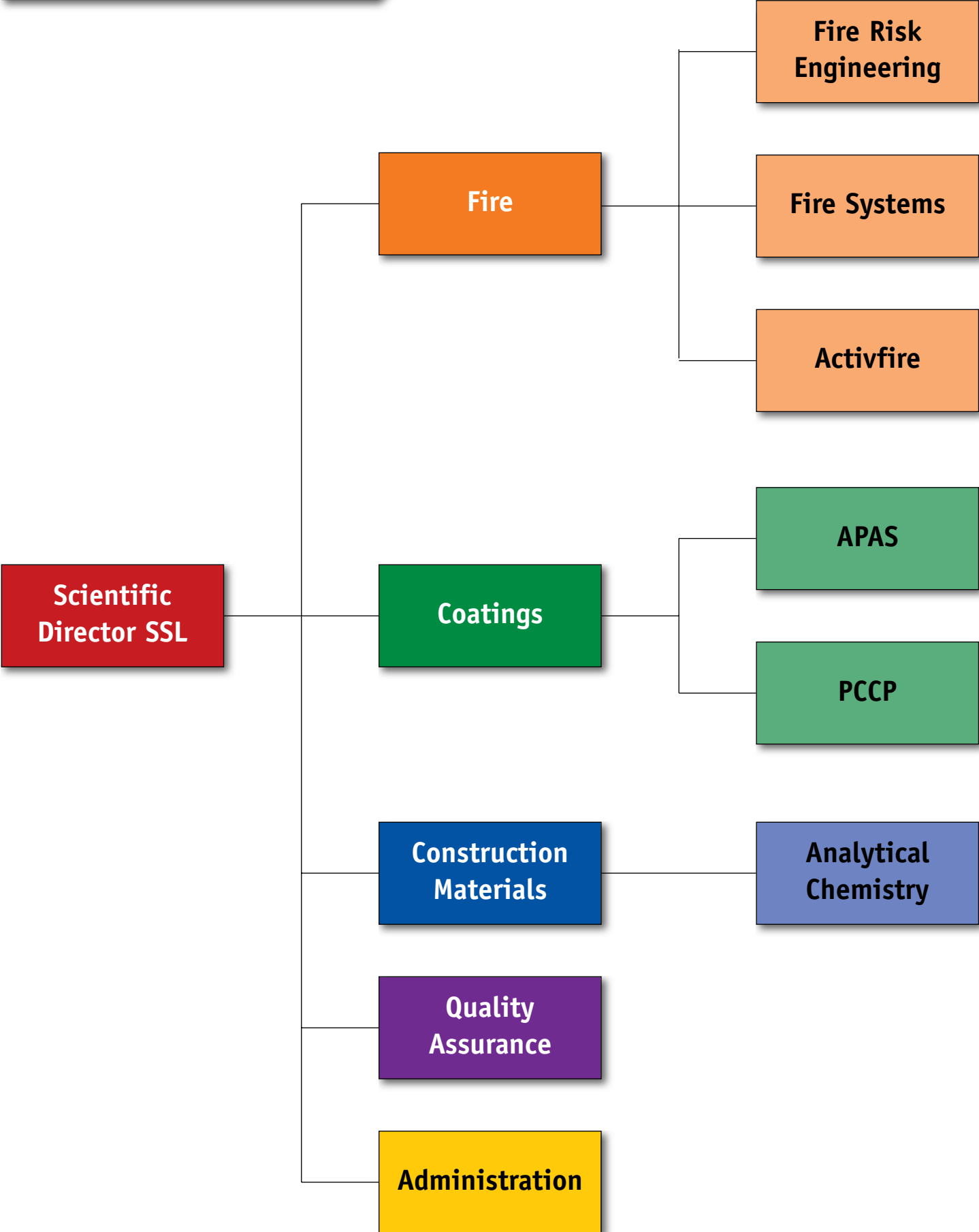
The laboratory provided advice from highly qualified professionals on a wide range of materials, products and processes required by Commonwealth architects and engineers.

In May 1986 CIRL was re-named Scientific Services Branch and finally became Scientific Services Laboratory (SSL).

With over 50 years of collective knowledge and experience upon which to draw, SSL is a leader in the field of fire safety engineering, appraisal and listing of active fire protection equipment and paint and coating technology.

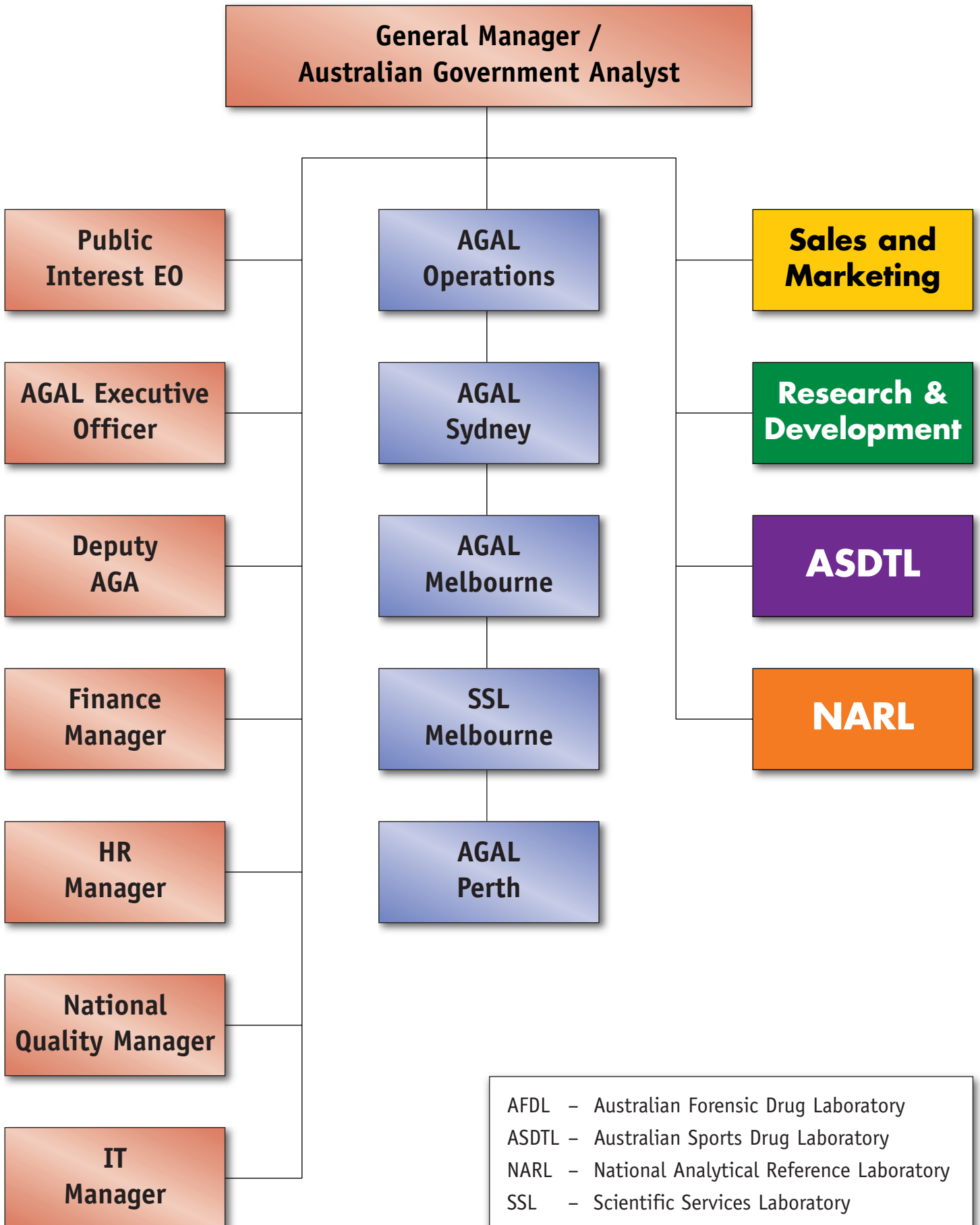
SSL

Organisational Structure



AGAL

Management Structure



AFDL - Australian Forensic Drug Laboratory
 ASDTL - Australian Sports Drug Laboratory
 NARL - National Analytical Reference Laboratory
 SSL - Scientific Services Laboratory

building with science



Scientific: producing knowledge of a person, book or institution, etc.;;
occupied in or concerned with science.

Services: be of service to; provide with a service.

Laboratory: a room or building set aside and equipped for scientific
experiments or research.

Practical or decorative, the diverse elements used in building are put together
to create a whole. However, elements do not always work together in building.
Water, fire, steel, timber and design can combine to destroy harmony.

It is only when we see failure, damage or destruction that we realise the importance
of better understanding how we build.

At Scientific Services Laboratory (SSL), understanding the forces, materials, technology
and concepts at work in a building are fundamental parts of laboratory practice.
With more than four decades experience in materials evaluation, scientific analysis
and safety engineering, the laboratory is a highly skilled, independent, technical
resource serving the Australasian region.

SSL can provide advice, testing and consultation for designers and builders, to ensure
the buildings we construct are engineered to perform and safely serve the community.

SSL is one of the Australian Government Analytical Laboratories which operate
around Australia.

Fire: the active principal operative in combustion, manifested as a hot, bright, shifting body of gas or as incandescence.

Safety: the state of being protected from or guarded against hurt or injury.

Engineering: the action of working artfully to bring something about.

The Fire Safety Engineering Group has extensive expertise in fire safety analysis. The group's comprehensive, professional consultancy service covers a wide range of fire engineering aspects for buildings and industrial plant.

The group is equipped to help clients with the relevant regulations. By taking a broad approach to client needs, the section works with the client to achieve occupant and asset protection criteria. This practical approach is supported by the latest fire modelling and hazard assessment techniques, with an emphasis on prompt, competitive and cost-effective solutions. Fire safety engineering assessments are provided by SSL's team of fire safety engineering specialists. Key players are skilled in field inspections of safety systems and back this expertise with access to comprehensive laboratory test facilities. As fire safety engineering specialists, the section is aware of the latest fire safety products, systems and technologies.

Scientific Services Laboratory is a respected industry leader in this field. Fire safety engineers within the group sit on Standards Australia and ISO committees, lecture at universities and actively participate in international forums.





Active: a state of action; in actual progress or motion.

Fire: the active principal operative in combustion, manifested as a hot, bright, shifting body of gas or as incandescence.

System: an assemblage or combination of things or parts forming an complex or unitary whole.

The Fire Systems Group is made up of professional and technical staff with expertise in testing a wide range of active fire detection and suppression equipment. The group is involved in quality assurance testing for the fire protection and fire safety engineering industry. This includes audit sample testing of listed heat and smoke detectors, and sampling and testing sprinkler heads from installations.

The bulk of the group's work involves type-testing and quality assurance testing of fire detection products and alarm systems for the fire protection industry. Clients include fire protection companies, consultants, government departments or agencies, and private companies. The group will investigate and oversee the commissioning of fire systems and equipment, and carry out 'hot smoke tests' for fire safety engineered buildings. Through its involvement with commissioning systems, the group has developed extensive industry knowledge and practical experience.

With the removal of halon systems from the market, there has been a growing demand for alternative gas flooding systems. As Australian Standards evolve to cover these new systems, the group is working with Australian and international companies to develop alternatives. The group can also perform enclosure integrity testing for the commissioning of gas flooding fire suppression systems. The laboratory has the equipment and expertise to examine this essential requirement for gaseous system protected enclosures.

Building: anything built or constructed.

Materials: a substance or substances of which a thing is made or composed.

The Coatings Group has a consultancy service for selecting and specifying coatings for a wide variety of purposes. This includes protection of wharves, telecommunication facilities, tanks, bridges and buried pipes.

It also operates testing services for paints and related surface coatings, and anodised and electroplated finishes.

The group can solve corrosion problems associated with the deterioration of mechanical equipment, water and sewage plants, other infrastructure and defence facilities. Undertaking corrosion studies, evaluating metal cladding and fastener problems, developing and designing alternative solutions are specialities of the group.

Advice on silane/siloxane treatments, glass, specialty finishes and pre-finished metal cladding systems is available.

The group can investigate problems involving deficiencies in design, specification, product application and quality assurance. It can also provide an expert witness service, when and where required. Advice on paints for substantial new and historical restoration painting projects, and the resolution of painting disputes is available.

The Building Materials Group provides a range of testing and consultancy services to test and evaluate materials used for a variety of building works. The group has been helping develop Australia's infrastructure since the laboratory's inception in 1946 and is backed by technical specialists who can provide solutions to problems in the built environment.



Appraisal: the act of assessing the worth, quality or condition of anything.

Listing: an entry in a list as a catalogue.

Managing and administering four appraisal and listing schemes are important roles for Scientific Services Laboratory (SSL). Technical expertise, independence, the probity of government and NATA accreditation all contribute to its success. The current schemes, the Australian Paint Approval Scheme, Painting Contractor Certification Scheme, ACTIVFIRE and CERTIFIRE, are recognised by government and industry as community protection initiatives.

SSL anticipates that other, similar, schemes will become part of its community service obligations in the future.

Australian Paint Approval Scheme

SSL manages two coatings-related schemes. The largest and most widely recognised is the Australian Paint Approval Scheme (APAS).

As part of APAS' administration, SSL certifies paints and coatings to ensure they meet stringent specifications. The APAS List of Approved Products contains more than 4000 products and is a comprehensive guide for specifiers.

APAS is active in environmental and occupational health and safety. In 1997, APAS was responsible for setting limits for volatile organic compounds in paints and coatings. Over the years, it has withdrawn approval for products containing lead, chromates and other toxic ingredients.



Painting Contractors Certification Program



The other coatings-related scheme SSL manages is the Painting Contractors Certification Program (PCCP).

PCCP is a joint government-industry initiative established in 1994. It sets acceptable quality practices for surface preparation and the application of protective coatings. The scheme provides an independent, authoritative body capable of providing certification for contractors who have the technical and quality requirements needed to meet PCCP standards. The scheme is industry specific and tailored to the needs of the protective coatings industry. It addresses quality management issues, defines requirements for quantifying expertise and audits facilities used in high-quality work.

PCCP aims to reduce coatings failures and help contractors provide the community with long-lasting coating systems.



ACTIVE FIRE PROTECTION - EQUIPMENT LISTING SCHEME

ACTIVFIRE

SSL maintains and administers the ACTIVFIRE scheme and register for active fire protection equipment. The register is a quick and easy reference to identify fire protection products specifically designed to recognised Australian and International Standards. As part of the scheme, suppliers and manufacturers of listed products are subject to regular follow-up inspections. Many products, such as fire detectors, have on-going sampling and physical testing to guarantee compliance with the ACTIVFIRE guidelines. The scheme, and associated register, is supported by technical expertise, product testing and analysis in the laboratory. This rigid system of quality control ensures the continued compliance and quality of listed products.

CERTIFIRE

CERTIFIRE is an independent, authoritative body providing a certification scheme for passive fire protection systems and installation contractors. The scheme is a partnership between Scientific Services Laboratory and Warrington Fire Research, Australia. Passive fire protection systems play a crucial role in achieving acceptable levels of fire safety and property protection in modern buildings. They do this by limiting the spread of fire and smoke and maintaining a structure's stability.

The scheme provides users of passive fire protection products with certification that the products meet required schedules, if used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. CERTIFIRE produces a compendium of all approved products, which is supplied to a subscriber base of specifiers, architects, consulting engineers, property managers and government instrumentalities. The compendium is more than a list of approved products; it is a valuable tool when developing performance-based designs.

A CERTIFIRE technical advisory committee and advisory panel meet twice a year to ensure the scheme remains focused on issues related to the passive fire protection industry.





For further information contact:

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A Business Unit of the Australian Government Analytical Laboratories (AGAL)
Industry Science and Resources

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SSL is a registered agency
(No.0283) approved under
the Industry Research and
Development Board, which
enables clients to gain
concessions for approved
research projects.

SSL - THE MARK OF EXCELLENCE



In late June, Dr. Sandra Hart (above left), General Manager AGAL paid a visit to the laboratory in order to officially launch SSL's image for the future.

The Australian building and construction industry is a dynamic part of Australia's economy.

Historically, laboratories and research institutions have played an important role in assisting in the development of new products and building systems for the Australian marketplace.

Today, changes to building codes, commercial and environmental pressures all shape the way in which products, building systems and designs are evaluated. Testing, evaluating and appraising products helps to ensure that high standards are maintained and improved.

The building industry is constantly evolving and any laboratory involved in

testing or research must be focused on the practical requirements of the building sector. By doing so, it can offer a service that is relevant and responsive.

The modern SSL is vastly different to the government laboratory founded more than 50 years ago. New scientific disciplines such as fire safety engineering, advances in coatings manufacturer and developments in technology-based fire detection and monitoring mean that SSL now works at the forefront of building materials science.

Increasingly, the laboratory plays an important role as conduit between the Commonwealth Government, industry at large, manufacturers, regulatory bodies, and national and international standards associations.

SSL is an independent and unbiased laboratory operating in the field of building materials science. It is synonymous with high standards, scientific expertise, probity and quality.

AGAL

A business unit of the
Australian Government
Analytical Laboratories (AGAL).
E-mail info@agal.gov.au



BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

'Global Building Model in the Next Millennium' was an international conference hosted by the Victorian Building Control Commission (BCC) in April.

The conference was an opportunity for building officials to consider and discuss regulatory issues and their impact on the building industry.

With focus increasingly on global building control development, the conference aimed to foster discussion about international building standards.

At the conference, a large number of papers were presented about topics such as global building law and liability, on-going research programs, performance verses prescriptive codes, and advancements in fire safety.

Dr Caird Ramsay, SSL Scientific Director, presented a paper called, 'The role of research in achieving the goals of fire safety engineering for performance-based building codes'.

The laboratory's participation in conferences, seminars and fire-related research is undertaken through the AGAL public interest (PI) program.

On-going commitment to PI projects is part of SSL's charter to undertake activities of direct benefit to the broader community.

For more information about SSL's fire safety engineering group and AGAL's PI program, contact Dr Caird Ramsay on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail caird.ramsay@agal.gov.au

FIRE SAFETY IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES



It is essential that health care facilities are audited to assess possible fire risks.

Hospitals are complex structures that must cater for the needs of patients, staff and visitors as well as satisfying the relevant building codes.

Fire safety in a health care facility is analysed in the SSL paper, 'Fire and smoke management and people movement in hospitals - use of fire

safety engineering', produced by members of the Fire Safety Engineering Group.

A health care building (Class 9a) is differentiated from other occupancies by the type of people it caters for.

A hospital is usually full of sick, injured and incapacitated people. A significant proportion of patients would be unable to leave the building without help.

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SSL - The mark of excellence

The Scientific Services Laboratory (SSL) logo is a symbol of its high standards and expertise in the field of building materials science.

Recognising the need to further strengthen the laboratory's position and profile led AGAL/SSL management to update the SSL logo.

The new logo conveys SSL's strength and focus on the future. Designed to be reproduced equally well in colour or black and white, the logo is the symbol of a dynamic and forward-thinking business.

It will progressively appear on letterheads, brochures and other corporate identification material.

SSL clients using the existing logo on approved products and packaging can continue to do so until printed stocks are exhausted.

At that time, SSL can supply electronic versions (via e-mail or CD-ROM) of the logo for use on new artwork, both as two-colour or mono (black and white). A selection of bromide-quality artwork is also available on request.

As part of SSL's program of updating logos and corporate image, the Appraisal and Listing Scheme for active fire protection equipment is to become the ACTIVFIRE scheme. The Spring edition of SSL News will feature a full profile on the scheme and its operation.

For more information about the new SSL logo and artwork, contact John Hardcastle, SSL Communication Consultant, on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail john.hardcastle@agal.gov.au

If there is an emergency such as a fire, they require significant resources and time to evacuate.

Hospital management, staff and the broader community need to address the issue of what might or should occur if there is a fire. Equally, architects, designers, engineers, fire services, construction companies and product manufacturers must play a role in the construction and maintenance of safe health care facilities.

The Building Code of Australia's (BCA) performance requirements state that, "... a patient care area of a Class 9a building must be protected from the spread of fire and smoke to allow for the orderly evacuation of the occupants."



Performance-based codes offer alternative fire safety engineering solutions in Class 9a buildings.

Expertise in fire safety engineering principles and experience with performance-based codes makes SSL ideally placed to undertake consultant work in the health care field.

SSL's Fire Safety Engineering Group has a two-fold involvement in health care facilities:

1. SSL fire safety engineers audit existing facilities to assess part or all their performance in the event of a fire. These audits are usually commissioned by government departments or building services managers acting on behalf of government.
2. SSL works as a consultant when a new hospital facility is at the design stage. This involves fire modelling, fire safety assessments and using performance-based design principles.

SSL's fire safety engineers are increasingly being asked for expert advice at a project's planning stage.

Construction firms involved in new hospital projects are recognising the need to identify performance-based issues and possible problems at an early stage. By doing so, construction firms build better hospitals and realise greater savings during the project.

Ultimately, the real benefit is the construction of safer and better hospital facilities that suit the needs of staff and patient alike.

SSL's involvement with health care facilities is an important contribution to industry; it helps ensure the safety of patients and staff at hospitals throughout the country.

For more information about SSL's consultant services to the health care industry, contact Dr Caird Ramsay, SSL Scientific Director, on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail ssl@agal.gov.au



Evacuation is a primary concern during an audit.

SSL Appraisal and Listing Schemes - Protecting the Community



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SSL STRENGTHENS LINKS WITH CHINESE RESEARCH INSTITUTES

Earlier this year, Dr Yaping He, Senior Professional Officer in SSL's Fire Safety Engineering Group, travelled to China to visit two fire research institutes and undertake collaborative research at the University of Science and Technology of China.

During his visit, Dr He took part in two research projects.

The first involved verifying a combined field zone network (FZN) model used to predict fire growth and smoke spread.

The second studied the fire suppression of water mist using a cone calorimeter.

Cone calorimeters are used in fire science to study the combustion behaviour of fuel materials under controlled conditions. Injecting water mist into a cone's test section disturbs the inlet gas composition. This is not calculated in the standard data analysing program.

During his stay, Dr He and the Chinese researchers carried out a theoretical analysis to derive a corrective term to eliminate errors in the equation for calculating the heat release rate from the measured data.

The visit also allowed Dr He to establish a dialogue between SSL and

the Shanghai and Tianjin Fire Research Institutes.

As a result, SSL is better placed to understand research, testing and appraisal, and listing activities in Chinese fire engineering.

As was the situation in Australia five years ago, the Chinese building industry is pushing to reform the existing building code. It is envisaged that a performance-based code will eventually be introduced. This process will require developing new engineering tools for risk assessment and design.

The Chinese researchers Dr He met during his trip showed great interest in the Australian fire code reform project. This was due in no small part to SSL's involvement as one of the major participants.

To strengthen the contacts Dr He made, SSL and the Chinese institutes are assessing the possibility of developing further collaborative training and teaching programs.

The proposed activities would be supported by further information exchanges between the laboratories.

For more information about Dr He's visit to China and his research, contact him on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail yaping.he@agal.gov.au

STAFF PROFILE



Russell Cooper is the manager of SSL's Fire Systems Group.

During more than 30 years at the laboratory, Russell has worked mainly in the fire protection and electronics field.

He supervises a group responsible for the type testing of electronic fire systems and the quality assurance of heat and smoke detectors. It also provides consultancy services and specialised testing services to government and industry.

The group is involved in testing and developing test methods for fire detectors, bells, manual call points, fire alarm panels, and emergency warning and inter-communication panels. It also tests vehicle security systems or car alarms.

Russell is an active member of Standards Australia Committee FP/2, which is responsible for the Standards for fire alarm systems and their components.

He is a NATA assessor in the fire detection field, and accredited by the Fire Protection Registration Board (halon) to commission and test gas suppression systems.

For more information about the work done by Russell and his group, contact him on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail russell.cooper@agal.gov.au

STOP PRESS

SSL has recently printed an eight page brochure which details all of the services offered by the laboratory.

To receive a copy contact the laboratory on
Tel: 03 9248 4900 Fax: 03 9646 5165
Email: ssl@agal.gov.au



SSL
Scientific Services
Laboratory

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES LABORATORY

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SSL is a registered agency
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FIRE CODE REFORM



SSL is undertaking a full revision and technical update of the industry 'bible', 'Fire Engineering Guidelines' for the Fire Code Reform Centre (FCRC).

Known as Project 5, this exercise will see the next edition of the guidelines become a Code of Practice made up of three parts:

1. Process description.
2. Methodologies.
3. Data relating to fire engineering practice.

At present, SSL is concentrating on part one of the review (the process document). Parts two and three will be produced in draft forms, then developed as the FCRC gathers more information.

FCRC's schedule aims to have a revised part one available by the end of June 2000.

Before publishing this information, the document will be reviewed by a technical working group, followed by national and international public reviews.

The revision will draw on practical experience gained since the introduction of the first 'Fire Engineering Guidelines'. This includes information from the British, US and ISO documents relating to fire safety engineering practice.

The deliberations of the International Fire Safety Engineering Institute, which met in September 1998, will be incorporated in the final document.

Given that fire safety engineering is an international discipline, the review also aims to produce a document that can be used within South-East Asia.

The original 'Fire Engineering Guidelines' was published in 1996. It is widely considered the 'bible' of those working in, or associated with, building fire safety.

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ACTIVFIRE - LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



ActivFire manager, David Whittaker (right) believes the scheme plays a vital role in protecting community safety.

Protecting the community by maintaining and administering a suite of appraisal and listing schemes is one of SSL's most important roles.

At present, the four SSL schemes cover active and passive fire protection equipment, paint approval and painting contractor certification.

SSL recently launched a name that better represents the activities of its

appraisal and listing scheme for active fire protection equipment - ActivFire.

The new name will clearly define the scheme as the listing arm of SSL's broad involvement in the area of active fire protection equipment.

ActivFire's manager, David Whittaker, believes the new name as a positive initiative.

"SSL is an important player in the field of fire protection within this country," David says.

"Within SSL, the ActivFire scheme operates quite independently, but is backed by the expertise the laboratory has in the testing and evaluation of fire protection equipment.

"While ActivFire recognises the testing activities undertaken by SSL, it is within the scheme's policy to recognise testing undertaken by numerous agencies outside this laboratory.

"This includes any NATA-registered testing agency or a testing agency that has a Memorandum of Understanding with NATA. By doing so, the arrangement extends recognition outside of Australia."

ActivFire is also supported by a Memorandum of Understanding with the Fire Protection Association of Australia (FPAA). This national body represents the interests of all sectors of the fire protection community.

To further develop the scheme's relevance and transparency, SSL has



The ActivFire listing covers a broad range of fire protection equipment.

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Fire Code Reform

While not a design code, 'Fire Engineering Guidelines' outlines and defines procedures and methods for fire safety engineering design in buildings.

'Fire Engineering Guidelines' is used by fire safety engineers, but is also relevant to people or organisations involved in approval.

The publication's content is the result of work by fire engineers and scientists throughout Australia. This update is the first major revision of the technical information and publication style since the 1996 edition.

From a practical perspective, the revised document will be clearer, with less repetition. It will be user-friendly, featuring colour markers, breakout boxes and graphics to aid ease of use.

The revised part one will remain current for a number of years (similar to the existing publication). However, parts two and three will be subject to on-going review, updates and additions, as other information becomes available.

SSL has had a long involvement with the FCRC and the development of the guidelines.

During the review, SSL will subcontract work to people with expertise in the field of fire safety engineering.

SSL and the FCRC will have a clear objective - to ensure the information presented in the new edition is a consensus of current practice in the fire safety engineering industry.

SSL's revision of 'Fire Engineering Guidelines' will draw on the expertise

of its fire safety engineering group. Chaired by Dr Caird Ramsay, SSL's scientific director, the group will work closely with the FCRC technical director during this process.

Organisations or individuals wanting to comment on the Fire Engineering Guidelines should send written information to SSL.

SSL and FCRC have a genuine commitment to ensuring the revised Fire Engineering Guidelines remains a benchmark in the discipline of fire safety engineering.

For more information about Fire Engineering Guidelines - Project 5, contact Dr Caird Ramsay, SSL Scientific Director, on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail caird.ramsay@agal.gov.au



ActivFire recognises testing by all NATA-registered testing agencies.

established two committees - industry advisory and user advisory - to provide feedback to the management of SSL and ActivFire.

"The committees will be a significant part of the scheme's operation in the future," David says.

"However, we are also introducing a broader number of changes. This includes identifying the testing criteria applicable to all product categories published in the register.

"At present, we are preparing and developing the existing range of product listing data sheets for future publication on a proposed ActivFire web site. Hopefully, this will go on-line late this year or early in 2000."

Undertaking NATA-registered audits is another important role for ActivFire.

Basically, these audits cover compliance. ActivFire staff review and inspect products for continuing compliance, focusing on the original assessment criteria.

Generally, the audits are straightforward and a matter of routine checking and recording.

"Typically, these audits involve visiting a manufacturer or supplier, physically inspecting the product and recording engineering changes recorded against that product," David says.

"An ActivFire audit involves a review and appraisal of updated product design documentation.

"ActivFire audits are undertaken in Australia and New Zealand and cover 55-60 audit centres."

In the course of the audit, random samples are taken and returned to SSL for limited physical testing or appraisal. However, the ActivFire scheme does allow for the broadening of an audit's scope if problems with product compliance are identified.

According to David, ActivFire's great strength is that product listings are derived from independent laboratory testing of products to relevant standards and specifications.

"The ActivFire scheme is evidence of both SSL and AGAL's commitment to supporting the listing of products based on information contained in the relevant Australian Standards," David says.

"Such a commitment indicates the role that organisations like AGAL play in genuinely protecting the community through schemes such as ActivFire."

For more information about ActivFire, contact David Whittaker, Manager - ActivFire, on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail david.whittaker@agal.gov.au

For many years, the SSL appraisal and listing scheme for active fire protection equipment has been recognised as an important listing for this type of product.

Referenced in the Building Code of Australia, under Section 2.1 - Evidence of Suitability, the scheme offers a number of benefits to manufacturers, the construction industry and government.

To supplement the ActivFire Register of Fire Protection Equipment, the group has developed the ActivFire mark. This symbol means manufacturers can promote their products as registered on the ActivFire list.

Artwork and pre-printed ActivFire-approved stickers are available from SSL by contacting David Weeks on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail david.weeks@agal.gov.au



FIRE SAFETY ENGINEERING ACCREDITATION



Members of SSL's Fire Safety Engineering Group have been accredited to practise as fire safety engineers in NSW and Victoria.

Dr Peter Taylor (above right), Team Leader - Fire Safety Engineering, and Mahmut Horasan, Senior Fire Safety Engineer, join a small number of professionals to have been assessed and accredited to operate in NSW.

Through SSL, Peter and Mahmut applied to the Building Surveyors and Allied Professions (BSAP) for accreditation.

BSAP accreditation is needed to practice as a fire safety engineer in NSW. The approval process involves each fire safety engineer's credentials and experience being assessed by a BSAP committee.

Having gained accreditation, Peter and Mahmut can undertake fire safety engineering design on a project in NSW and certify the job.

Peter also has accreditation from the Building Practitioners Board for fire safety engineering work in Victoria.

There are only a limited number of accredited fire safety engineers practicing in both states.

The main advantage of accreditation is that a project can be signed-off without having to go through the traditional processes.

For information about the type of certification Peter and Mahmut can be undertake, contact SSL on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail ssl@agal.gov.au

COATINGS EXPERTS AT INDUSTRY FORUMS

Ken Lofhelm, Executive Officer of the Australian Paint Approval Scheme (APAS), and Gerry Eccleston, Manager of the Painting Contractors Certification Program (PCCP), recently took part in forums about the coatings industry.

At the one-day conference of the Australian Paint Manufacturers Federation (APMF), Ken participated in a discussion focusing on accreditation and standards.

The panel was made up of members from four distinct industry groups:

- a panelist from Quality Assurance Services (QAS), who discussed ISO certification;
- a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) representative looking at laboratory accreditation;
- Ken representing the APAS product certification scheme; and
- an industry representative.



Ken Lofhelm (left) and Gerry Eccleston regularly participate at industry forums and meetings.

Duplication of audit procedures was the main issue identified by the industry representative during the APMF forum.

There is growing concern within the coatings industry that the three main audit organisations (QAS, NATA and APAS) all require the same information or audit the same things.

Increasingly, the coatings industry is looking to rationalise the auditing procedures.

APAS has recognised this issue and taken action to minimise duplication. Since the beginning of 1999, APAS audits have not included many of the areas covered by ISO 9000 or NATA accreditation.

APAS is responding to the needs of member organisations and realises the importance of working with other audit organisations to better satisfy the industry's needs.

Gerry attended the Blast Cleaning Coating Association of Australia's (BCCAA) three-day conference.

The forum at this conference was called, 'Industry accreditation - which way forward?' The panel was made up of a contractor with ISO 9000 accreditation, Gerry representing the PCCP, a PCCP-accredited contractor, the BCCAA's chairman, the chairman of the Surface Protective Coatings Society from the US and a private consultant.

The forum agreed the PCCP is important to the coatings industry, particularly because it is industry-based and not a generic quality system.

Contractors also felt there was a real advantage in the way PCCP accreditation helps a company during a dispute. A PCCP contractor is able to draw on documentation listing batch numbers, conditions during application, etc, and can use this information to argue their case.

Ken and Gerry regularly attend conferences in Australia and overseas. They are members of Standards Australia committees and undertake research into issues relating to the coating industry.

For more information about the activities of SSL's approval schemes, contact the laboratory on (03) 9248 4900, fax (03) 9646 5165 or e-mail ssl@agal.gov.au

STAFF PROFILE



Leon Michailidis is a Technical Officer with more than 10 years' experience in SSL's Coatings Group.

He has broad experience in the testing and evaluation of paints and related surface coatings.

In the course of his work at SSL, Leon surveys steel structures to establish the extent and magnitude of corrosion and paint deterioration.

Leon is responsible for maintaining and developing the Australian Paint Approval Scheme's (APAS) field exposure stations and is a member of the APAS state technical working group. He is also performs APAS audit testing of manufacturers' products.

Within the day-to-day operations of the Coatings Group, Leon undertakes physical and chemical testing of paints and related materials for private and public sector clients.

Leon has been involved with specialised density analysis of insulative coatings for Esso; the evaluation and testing of specialised coatings on pump columns at Crown Casino, Melbourne; and the appraisal of exterior decorative products for 'Choice' magazine.

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