



APLMF, THE EARLY YEARS

John Birch AM. President APLMF 1994-2001

In November 1989 The Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation was established at a meeting in Canberra in November 1989. Originally comprising twelve Asia Pacific Economies, by 1998 the membership had expanded to 21.

APEC's goal was to promote free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific by 2010 for industrialized economies and 2020 for developing economies.

In 1994 the APEC Committee on Trade and Investment established a Sub Committee on Standards and Conformance to align each economies standards and conformance arrangements with international standards to assist APEC'S trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation agenda

The SCSC invited specialist standards and conformance regional bodies to participate in SCSC meetings as expert regional bodies responsible for the development of standards and conformance infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region. At that time theses bodies comprised The Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC) established in 1972, the Asia Pacific Metrology Program (APMP) established in 1977, and the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation (APLAC) established in 1992.

At the time there was no specialist regional body for legal Metrology, so in November 1994 the Australian National Standards Commission convened a meeting in Sydney of regional legal metrology authorities.

Delegates from Australia, Canada, Peoples' Republic of China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and

USA attended. In addition representatives of the BIML, APMP and APLAC attended and observers from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Western Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

The meeting was held from 27-30 November and opened by Senator the Honourable Chris Schacht, Minister for Small Business and Customs and Chaired by Professor Julian Goldsmid, Chairman of the National Standards Commission. Forty two delegates and observers attended the meeting

The meeting agreed that the principal objectives of the Forum should be

- To develop and maintain mutual confidence between legal metrology authorities in the Asia Pacific region
- To identify and promote the removal of technical barriers to trade in the field of legal metrology
- To promote mutual recognition arrangements between members and with other regional groups and individual nations
- To co-operate with the International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML) and promote the use and acceptance of OIML international recommendations and the OIML certification scheme.

The Forum elected John Birch AM, Executive Director of the National Standards Commission as Convenor of the Forum and Australia agreed to provide the Secretariat until 1998.

Arising from the meeting the following actions were taken

- The first edition of the Directory of Legal Metrology in the Asia Pacific was published in March 1995
- Working parties were established on training, harmonisation of legislation and pre-packaged goods
- Planning of regional intercomparisons on calibration of mass standards and pattern approval of non- automatic weighing instruments.

The Second Forum meeting was held in Beijing in October 1995 and was attended by eighty delegates and observers. Russia, Mongolia and Vietnam were invited to join the Forum and Dr Knut Birkeland, a former President of OIML was commissioned to conduct a survey on the legal metrology technical infrastructure needs in developing countries in the region. Arising from this survey working groups on rice moisture measurements and medical measurements were established.

Over the twenty five years since its formation the Forum has developed by the commitment of its members and particularly by those economies who have accepted leadership of the Forum

From 2002 Dr Akira Ooiwa and Japan led the organisation followed in 2007 by Pu Changcheng and China and since 2013 Stephen O' Brien and New Zealand.

Member economies have also supported the Forum by hosting the twenty five meetings and many individual members have made a substantial contribution by chairing working parties

Training has been an important component of the Forum program over the twenty five years and Marian Haire has made a substantial contribution to this work.

More recently the Forum's partnership with PTB through the MEDEA program has significantly expanded the scope of the Forum activities.