

## Introduction

Proficiency Testing Australia (PTA) conducted a survey of companies involved in the Paint proficiency testing program. The survey was an adaptation from a previous PTA survey conducted in 2007.

The survey was conducted in March 2009 by PTA's Quality – Business Development Manager, Frances Ward. Input and assistance was also received from and Mark Bunt, PTA Statistician.

Graphical summaries for each of the questions in the survey are presented below. Where a question was unanswered by a respondent, the response for that question was recorded as "Unknown". This differs from the response "Not sure", which was an option for some of the questions in the survey. The response "N/A" is an abbreviation for "Not Applicable"

## Methods

The survey consisted of 23 questions, arranged around five sections (Organisation, Statistical Analysis, Technical Validity, Laboratory Performance & Follow Up and General). The majority of the response categories were a ranking from Excellent to Poor.

A copy of the survey sheet is given in Appendix 1.

Participant results were transcribed into Excel. Count data was converted to percentages.

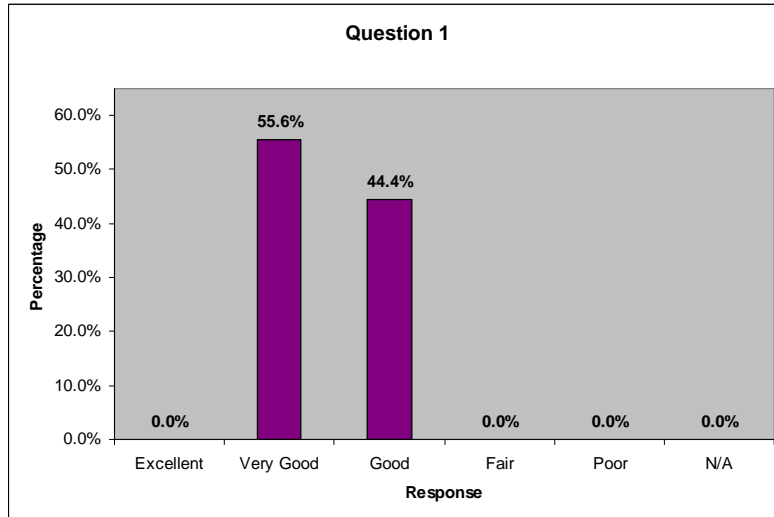
## Results

Surveys were sent to a total of 23 laboratories. Of these, 9 were returned. This represents a 39% response rate.

## PART 1 - ORGANISATION

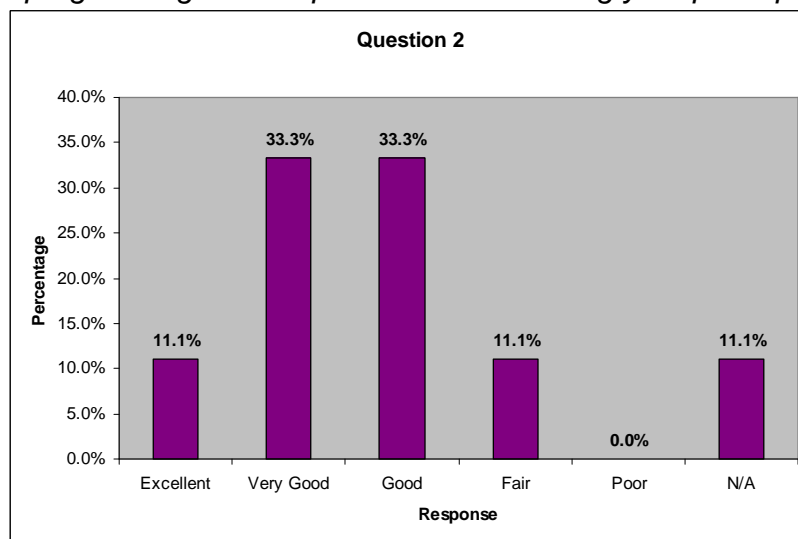
### Question 1

*Based on your past participation, how do you rate the overall quality of these programs?*



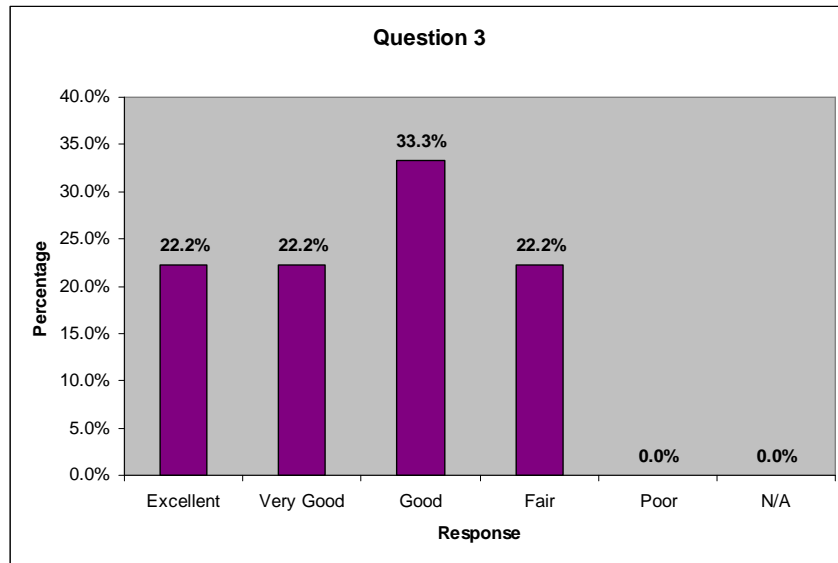
### Question 2

*How useful is the program registration process in nominating your participation?*



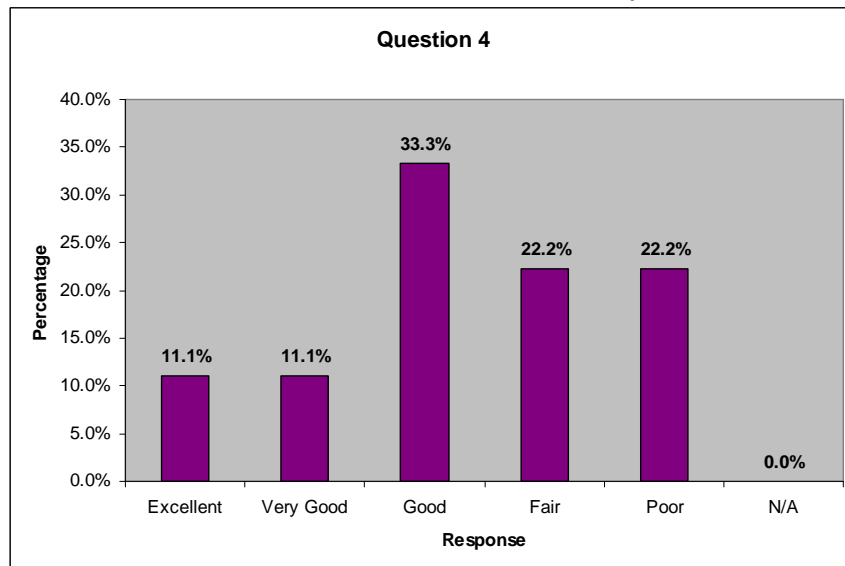
**Question 3**

*How would you rate your sample receipt based on the advised program schedule?*



**Question 4**

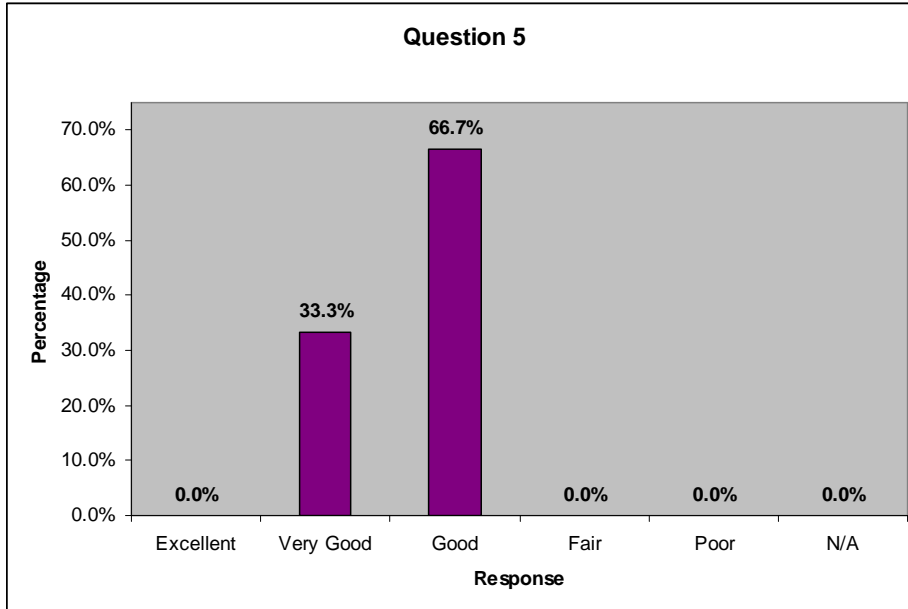
*How would you rate the timeliness of the issue of the final reports?*



## PART 2 - STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

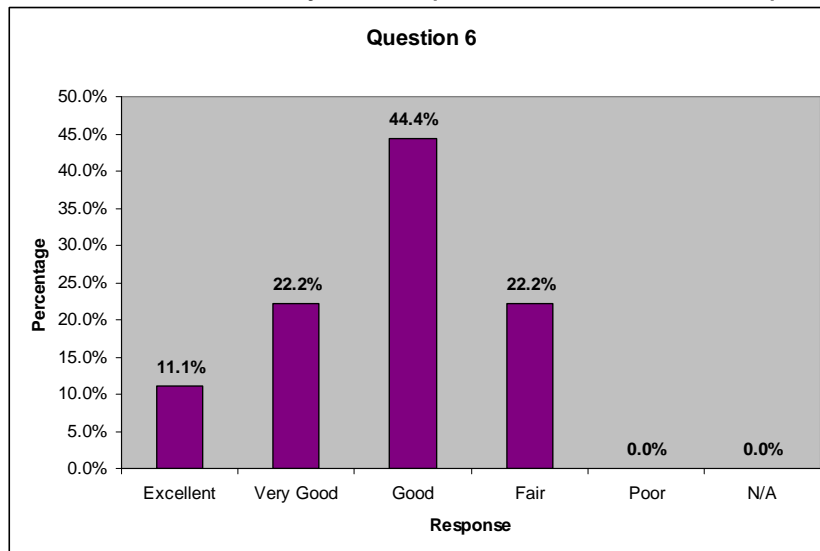
### Question 5

*How would you rate the content of the reports in providing your laboratory with an evaluation of your testing performance?*



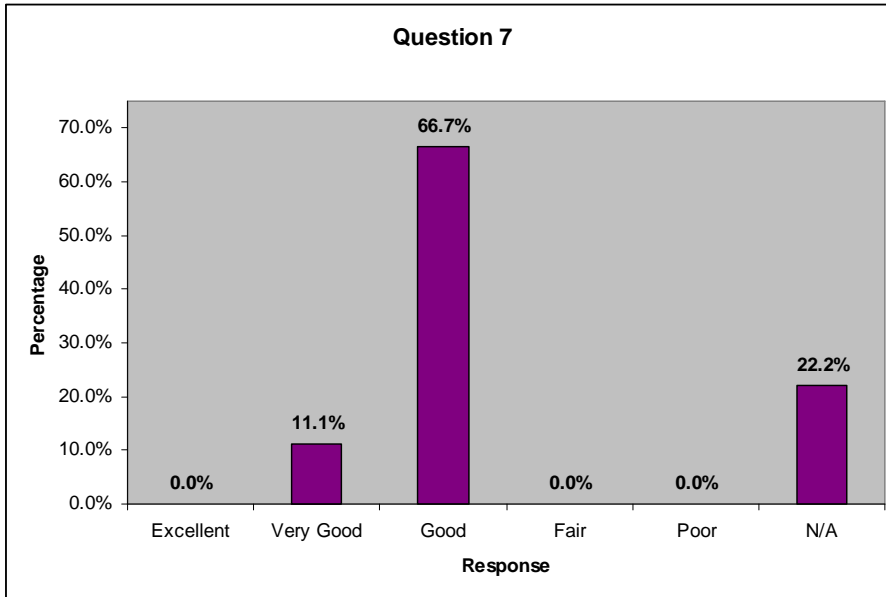
### Question 6

*How useful are the individual summary sheets provided with the final reports?*



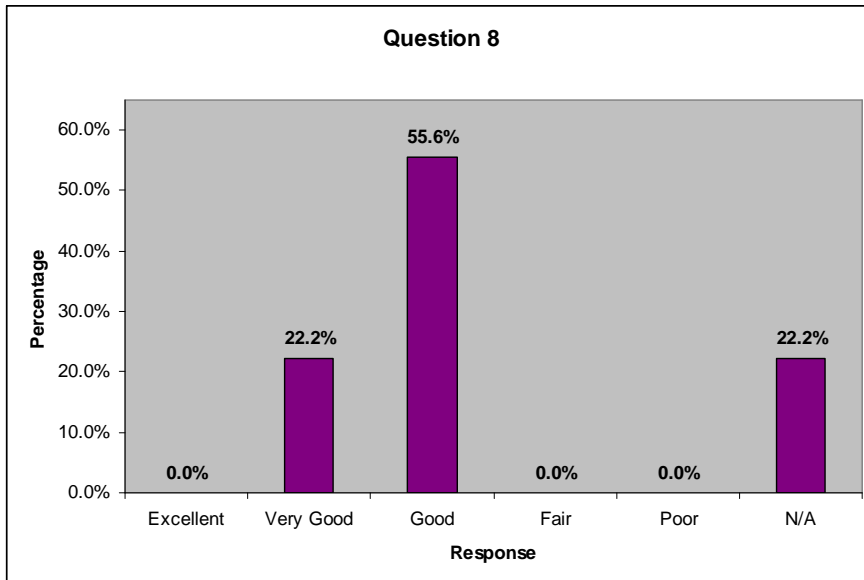
**Question 7**

*How useful do you find the graphical displays of data such as Youden diagrams and z-score bar charts?*



**Question 8**

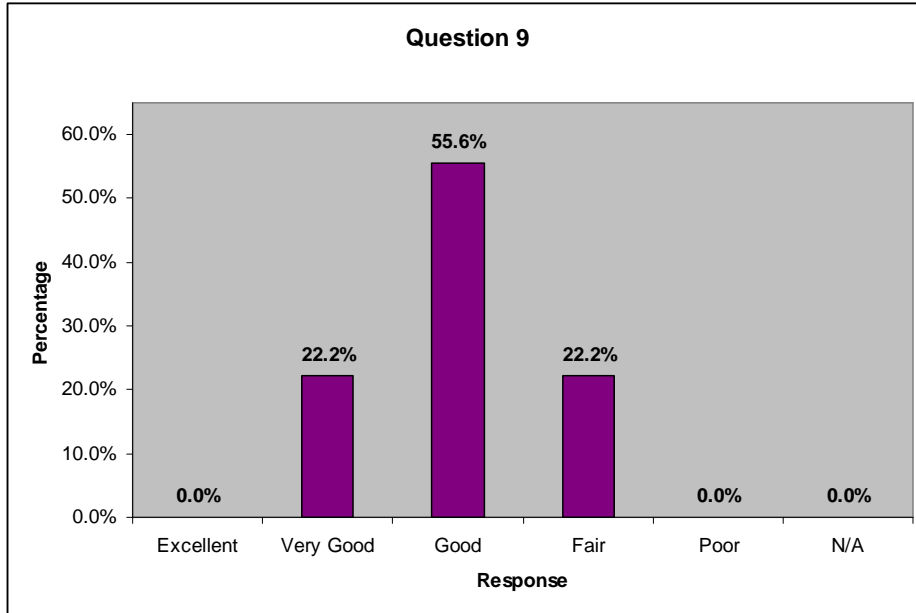
*How useful do you find the reference document "Guide to Proficiency Testing Australia" to interpret the final reports?*



### PART 3 - TECHNICAL VALIDITY

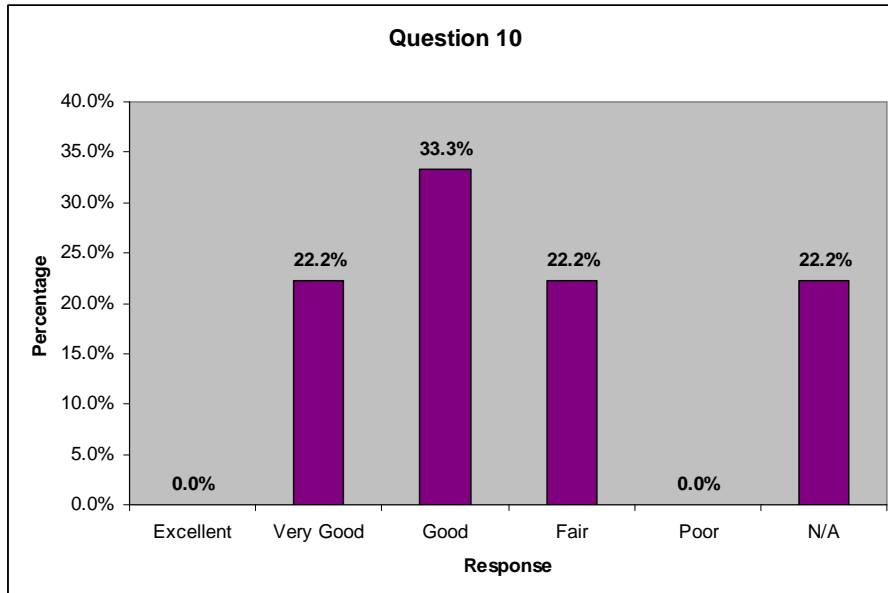
#### Question 9

*How do you rate the selection of determinations in meeting the needs of your laboratory?*



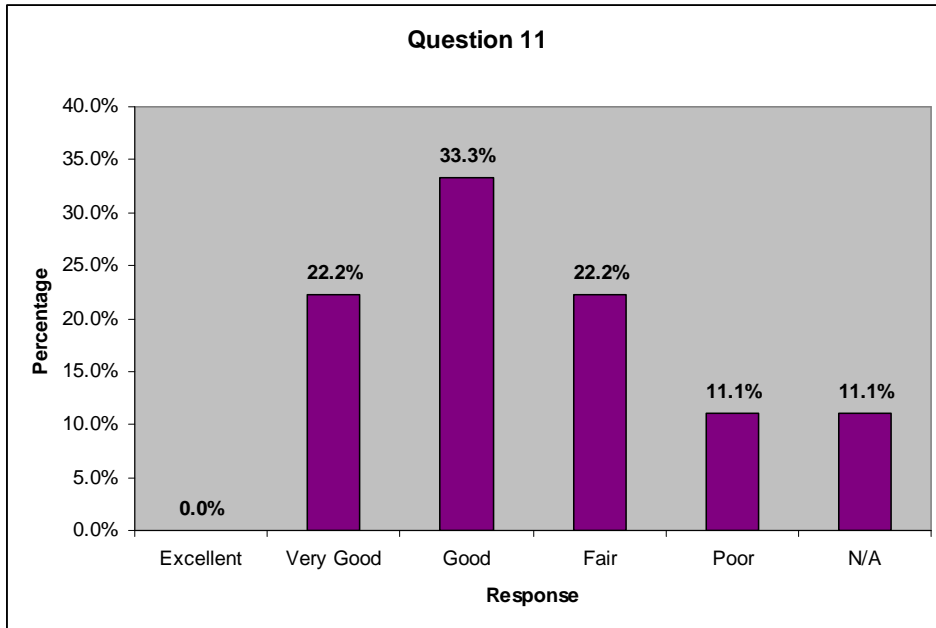
#### Question 10

*How do you rate the concentration levels in meeting the needs of your laboratory?*



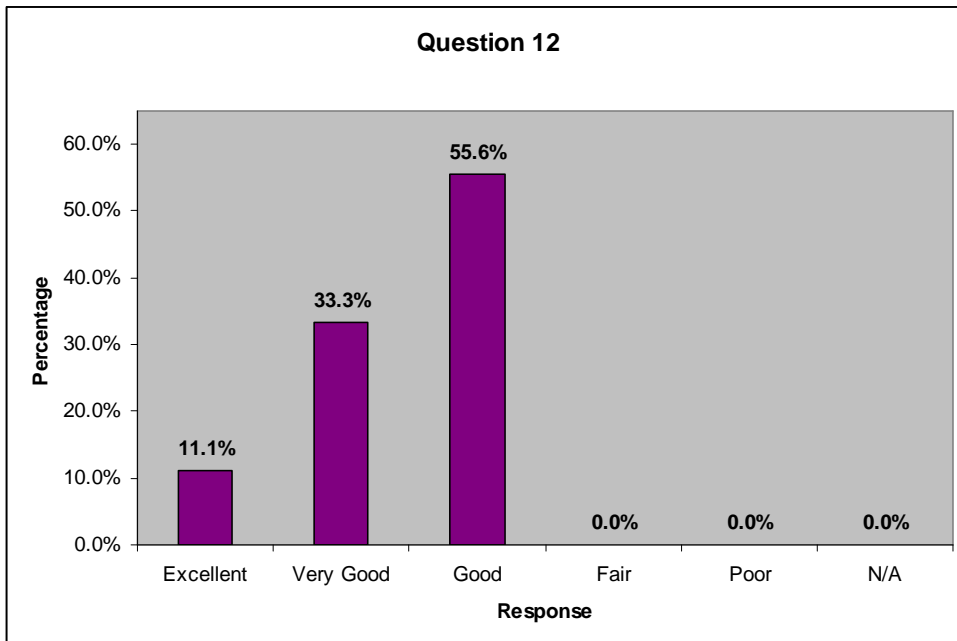
**Question 11**

*How do you rate the types of samples chosen to meet the needs of your laboratory?*



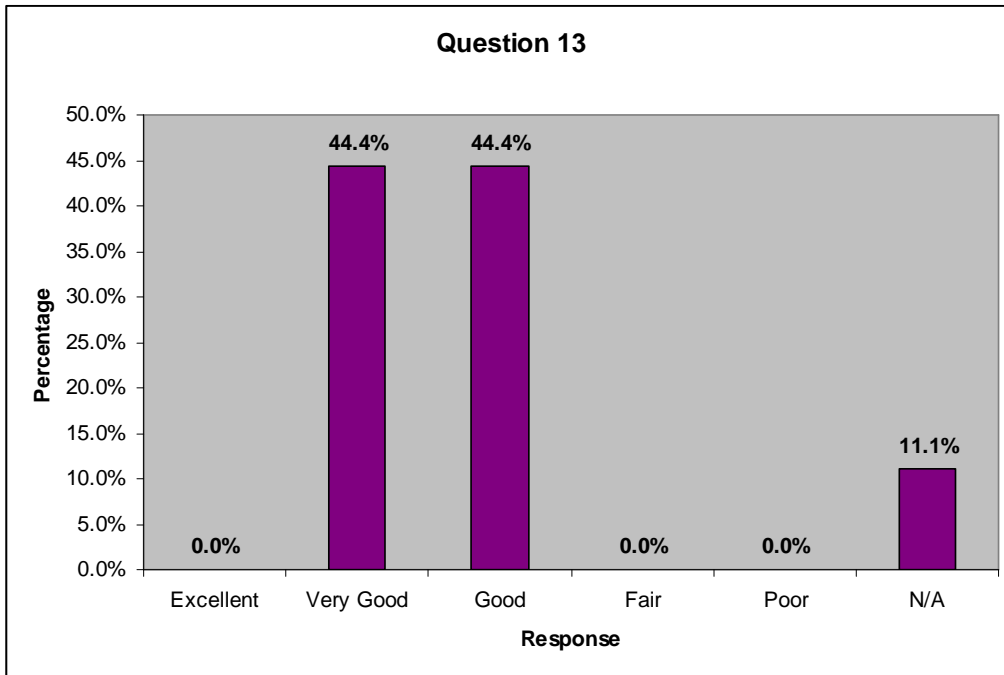
**Question 12**

*How useful and easy to follow are the program instructions and results sheets?*



**Question 13**

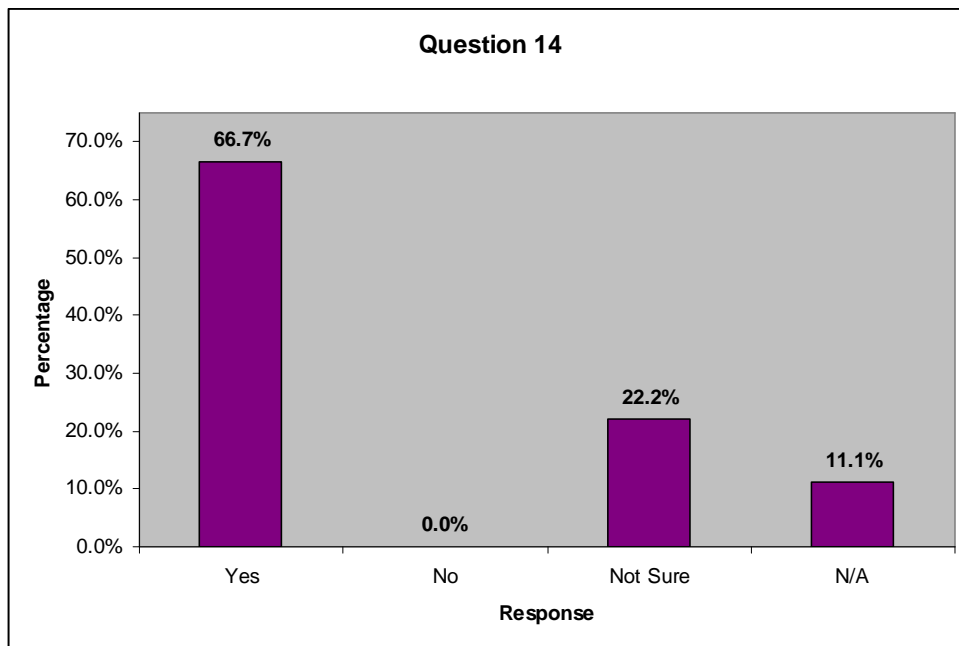
*How do you rate the technical commentaries included in the final report?*



**PART 4 - LABORATORY PERFORMANCE AND FOLLOW UP**

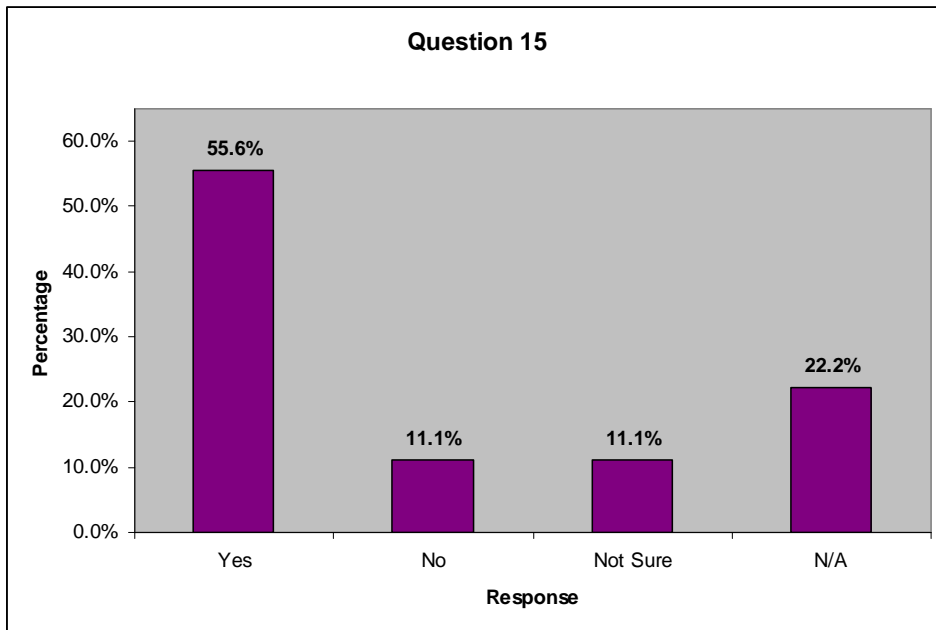
**Question 14**

*Would you be able to explain the range of results reported in a typical program to interested bodies?*



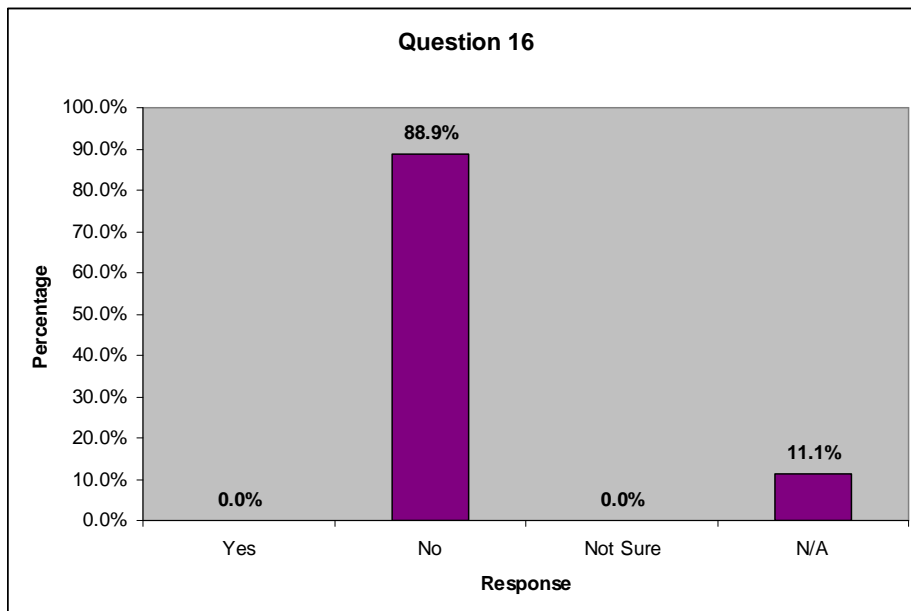
**Question 15**

*Would you have sufficient documentation to support your explanation (for question 14)?*



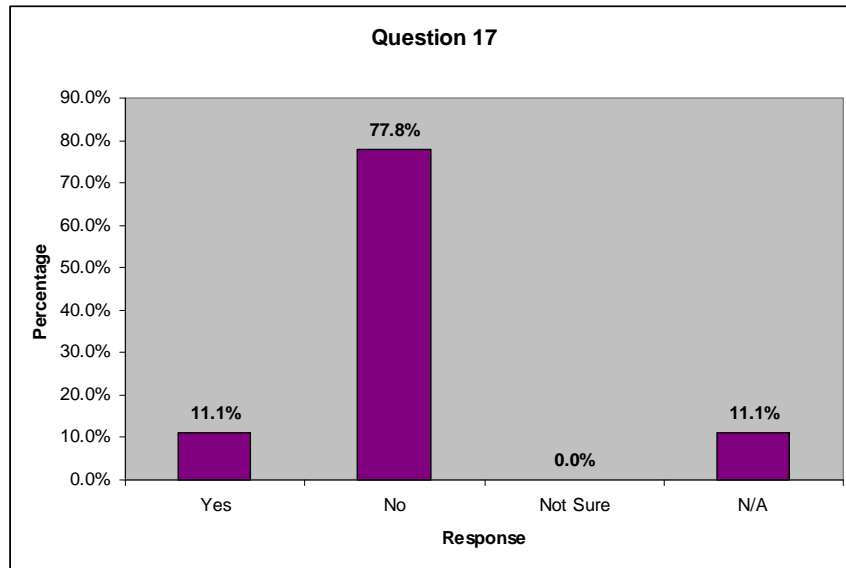
**Question 16**

*Would you be interested in purchasing additional or reference samples for corrective action purposes?*



**Question 17**

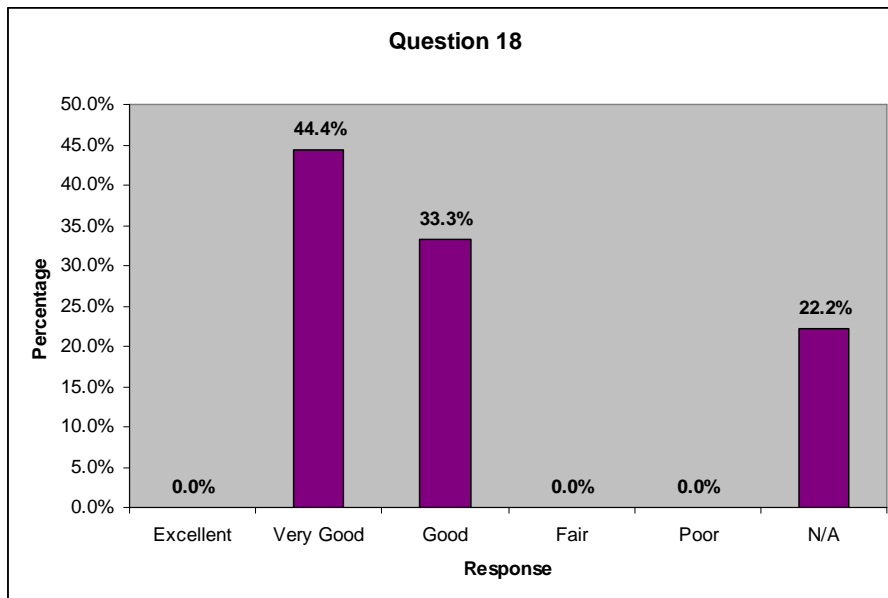
*Would you be interested in having corrective action results analysed?*



**PART 5 GENERAL**

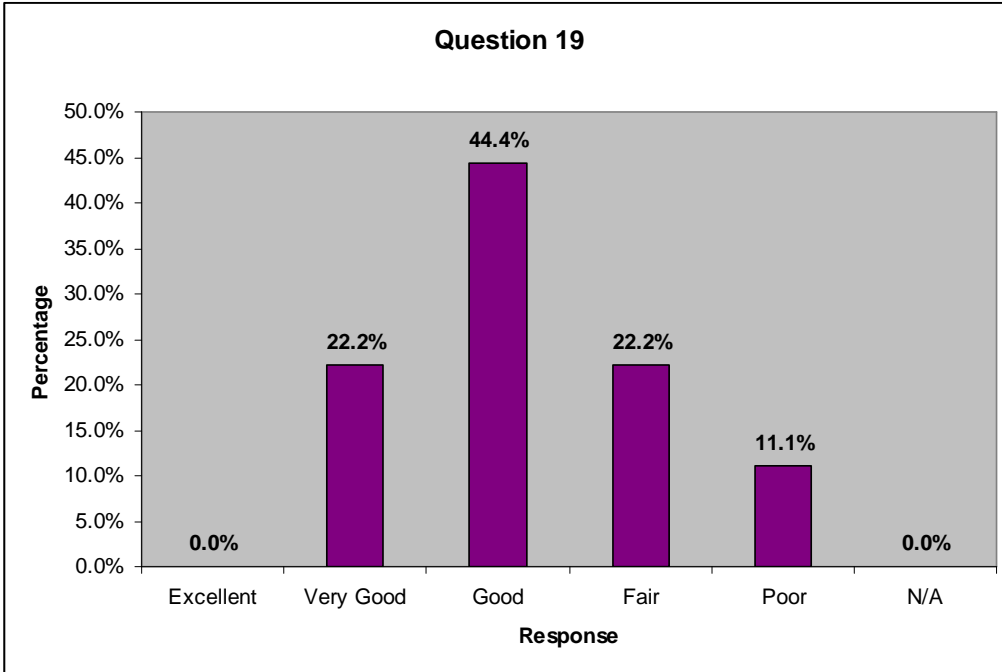
**Question 18**

*How useful have you found the programs in demonstrating your testing performance to other bodies?*



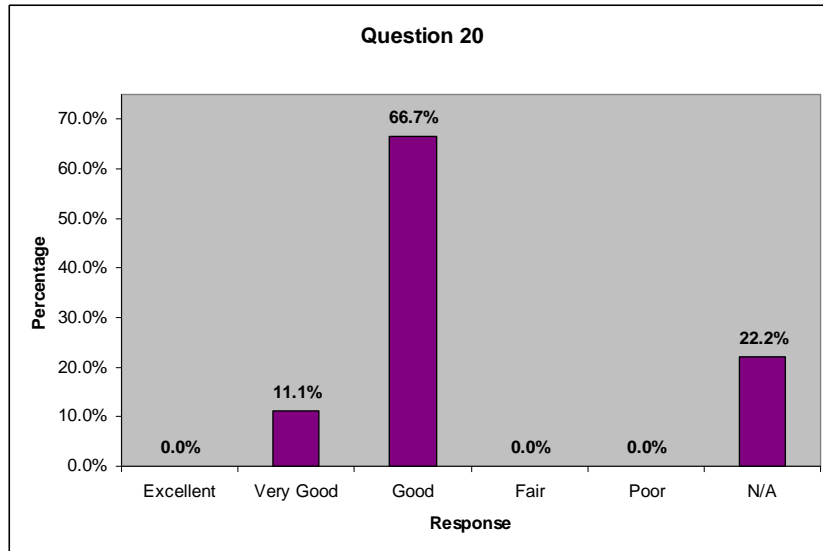
**Question 19**

*How do you rate the frequency of the programs to meet the needs of your laboratory?*



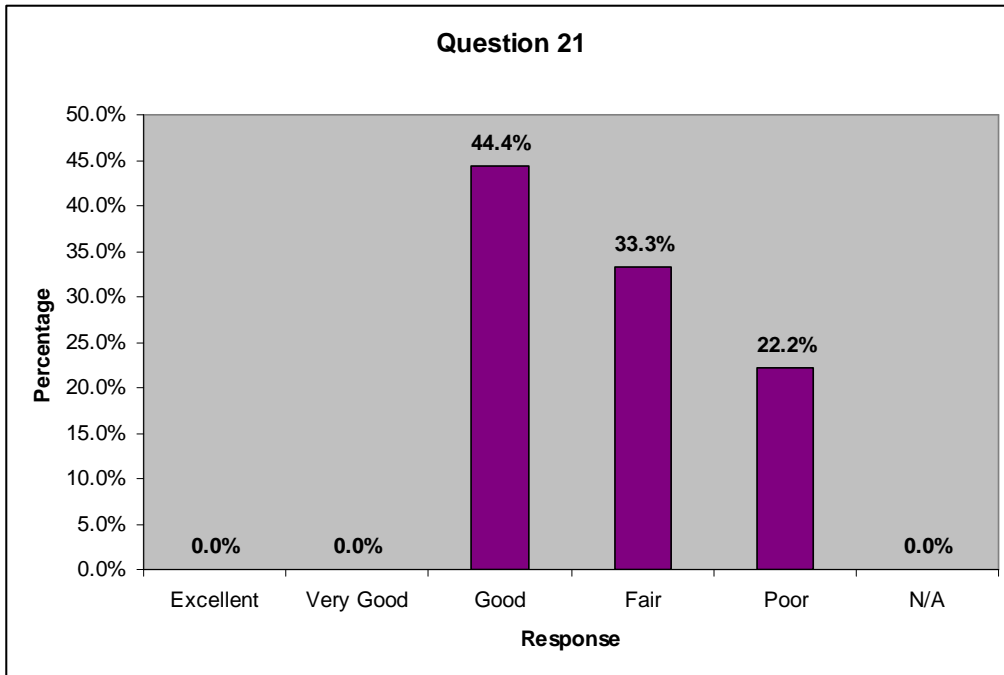
**Question 20**

*How do you rate the information on the PTA website?*



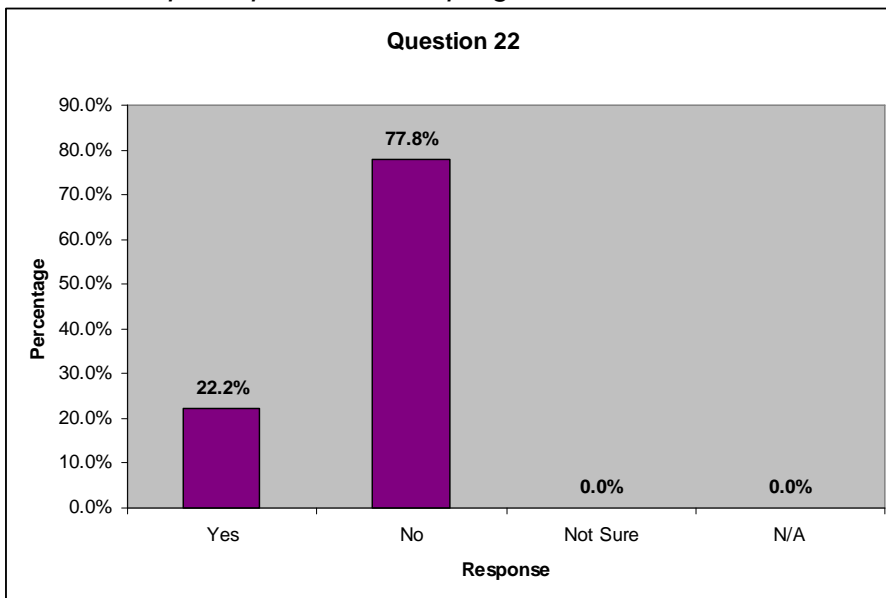
**Question 21**

*How do you rate these programs for value for money?*



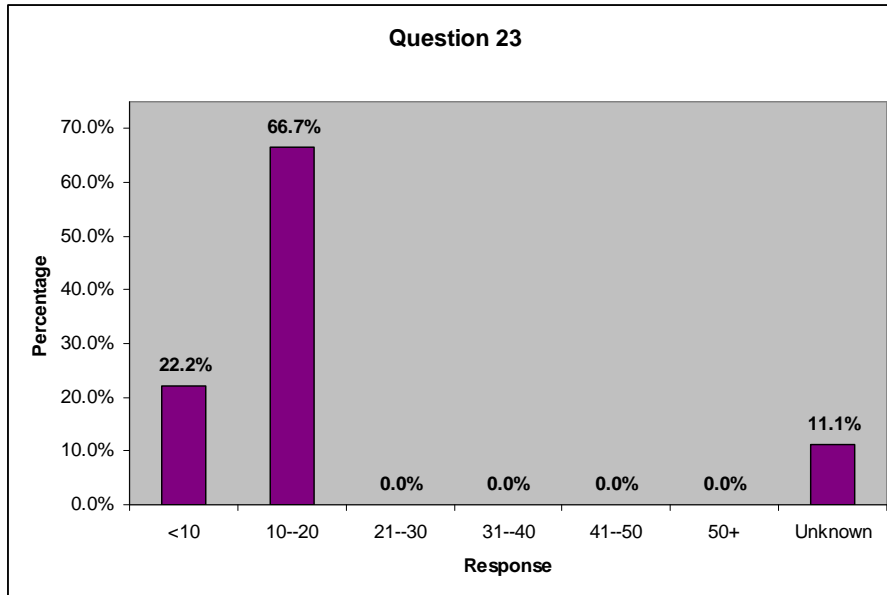
**Question 22**

*Have you recommended participation in PTA programs to other laboratories?*



### Question 23

In how many PTA programs has your laboratory participated?



### Customer comments

Customers were invited to give feedback comments. No customers provided further feedback comments.

### Identification of laboratories

There was an optional section at the end of the questionnaire where laboratories could identify themselves. A total of 6 of the 9 respondents (67%) chose to identify themselves. The remainder preferred to stay anonymous.

### Discussion

Customer satisfaction with the PTA Paint program appears to fall within the “good” to “very good” categories.

An area for improvement was noted in Question 4 (*How would you rate the timeliness of the issue of the final reports?*). Whilst the majority of participants indicated their response as “good,” a significant number indicated their response as “fair” (22.2%) or “poor” (22.2%). This area has been a targeted area of improvement for some time in PTA. PTA had altered its procedure to try to address this area, in the distribution of summary sheets to participants prior to the issue of the final report, allowing participants to obtain information on their performance.

An outcome worth noting from the Paint Survey was the response to Question 11 (*How do you rate the types of samples chosen to meet the needs of you laboratory?*). Whilst the majority of participants indicated their response as “good,” a number of responses were “fair” or “poor.” In planning this proficiency testing program, PTA, in consultation with technical experts, consider the most appropriate sample types in order to meet the needs of participants. The sample type from the most recent round (11) was gloss enamel paint. Previous Rounds 8, 9 and 10 consisted of water-based paint samples.

## **Action Plan**

An Action Plan has been draw up by PTA management to improve areas where substantial percentages of response was received in the “Fair” to “Poor” categories.

- Action 1 – Since this survey was conducted, PTA has changed its letter of registration to make the information provided more concise. With the implementation of a new PTA database over the next financial year, greater opportunities for on-line registration will be provided.
- Action 2 – PTA scheduled the Paint 11 program for October 2008. Potential participants were advised on 30 September 2009 that sample dispatch for Paint 11 was planned for 10 November 2008. The actual dispatch date was 12 November 2008. PTA will work towards more careful adherence to the advertised program schedule.
- Action 3 – Report turn-around-times will continue to be closely monitored by PTA management as a key performance objective. In-house systems have been put in place in response to this issue, and will continue to be developed.
- Action 4 – PTA will continue to liaise with technical experts in the planning of proficiency testing programs in order to identify the most appropriate sample types, concentrations and tests for its participants.
- Action 5 – Development of a PT workshop for PTA customers. The workshop will focus on explaining the analysis of PT results, interpretation of PTA reports, use of the Guide to PTA and how to explain PT results to other parties.
- Action 6 – PTA will review the frequency of the Paint program to potentially add an additional round over the next 12 month period. This will provide a greater level of coverage and frequency of determinations.

# **APPENDIX 1**



# PROFICIENCY TESTING AUSTRALIA

## PAINT PROFICIENCY TESTING QUESTIONNAIRE

Please return the questionnaire no later than **31 March 2009** to:

Frances Ward  
 Quality and Business Development Manager  
 Proficiency Testing Australia  
 PO Box 7507  
 SILVERWATER NSW 2138  
 Fax: (02) 9743 6664  
 Phone: (02) 9736 8397

<b>PART 1 ORGANISATION</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Question 1 Based on your past participation, how do you rate the overall quality of these programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 2 How useful is the program registration process in nominating your participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 3 How would you rate your sample receipt based on the advised program schedule?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 4 How would you rate the timeliness of the issue of the final reports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PART 2 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Question 5 How would you rate the content of the reports in providing your laboratory with an evaluation of your testing performance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 6 How useful are the individual summary sheets provided with the final reports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 7 How useful do you find the graphical displays of data such as Youden diagrams and z-score bar charts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 8 How useful do you find the reference document "Guide to Proficiency Testing Australia" to interpret the final reports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PART 3 TECHNICAL VALIDITY</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Question 9 How do rate the selection of determinations in meeting the needs of your laboratory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 10 How do you rate the concentration levels in meeting the needs of your laboratory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 11 How do you rate the types of samples chosen to meet the needs of your laboratory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Question 12 How useful and easy to follow are the program instructions and results sheets?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 13 How do you rate the technical commentaries included in the final report?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**PART 4 LABORATORY PERFORMANCE AND FOLLOW UP**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Question 14 Would you be able to explain the range of results reported in a typical program to interested bodies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 15 Would you have sufficient documentation to support your explanation (for question 14)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 16 Would you be interested in purchasing additional or reference samples for corrective action purposes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 17 Would you be interested in having corrective action results analysed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**PART 5 GENERAL**

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Question 18 How useful have you found the programs in demonstrating your testing performance to other bodies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 19 How do you rate the frequency of the programs to meet the needs of your laboratory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 20 How do you rate the information on the PTA website?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Question 21 How do you rate these programs for value for money?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Question 22 Have you recommended participation in PTA programs to other laboratories?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<b>&lt;10</b>	<b>10-20</b>	<b>21-30</b>	<b>31-40</b>	<b>41-50</b>	<b>50+</b>
Question 23 In how many PTA programs has your laboratory participated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**OTHER COMMENTS (Attach extra page if necessary)**

**OPTIONAL**

**Laboratory details:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_