

*Insight* aims to provide useful information, links and tips in the areas of Risk Management, Work Health and Safety, Business Continuity Management, and other areas relating to management systems and corporate governance.

## How Ready Are You for Your Next Management System Audit? Part 3

In our [previous issue of \*Insight\*](#), we published Part 2 of our series *How Ready Are You for Your Next Management System Audit?* Part 2 reinforced the need to review and update Management System documentation to ensure it contains the information required by the respective Management System Standard, to ensure policies and procedures reflect current organisational practices, and to ensure that workers are able to access these easily and quickly. We also talked about keeping things simple so that key information is more likely to be found and implemented by those who need it.

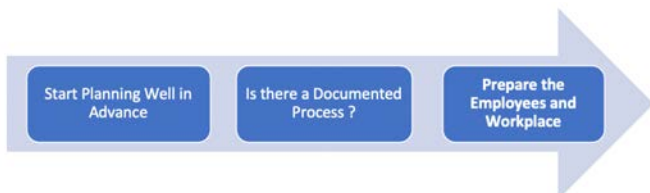
This article is the third and final in the series designed to provide some useful background information to assist your organisation for how to best prepare when audit time rolls around.



the hardest step. Consultation and communication needs to occur (particularly for WHS related processes), training in the new procedure needs to be rolled out, old documents need to be removed from the system and the new ones need to be available. The endgame here is to ensure that Managers and workers know, refer to and are using the updated procedures and supporting forms.

As stated in [Part 1](#) of this series, one of the key activities of the Auditor will be to conduct interviews and discussions with workers and management. In preparing for the Audit, the organisation should identify ahead of time the operational areas and roles within the Audit scope and the individual Managers and workers who will be participating. Book time in each Manager's calendar/diary to ensure availability at Audit time. During these interviews, Managers must be able to clearly articulate:

- Their role, their areas of accountability and their key objectives
- The main risks associated with their areas of accountability and how these are being managed (i.e. the main control measures in place to prevent or minimise the risk)
- Knowledge and understanding of organisational processes related to their accountability
- Current Safety, Quality and Environmental performance and how this is being monitored, including knowledge of any incidents that have occurred



Having completed an internal review to make sure the organisation's documentation is up to date and meeting the requirements of the Standard, the next step to ensuring a successful Management System Audit is to prepare the Managers and employees who are likely to participate in the Audit.

It is one thing to have your documentation in order, but during discussions with the Auditor, if the Managers and employees are not able to accurately reflect the requirements within your processes and procedures, then this will be a major barrier to a successful audit.

When policies, procedures and processes are updated, it seems an obvious next step for these to become seamlessly implemented within the organisation. However, this very often proves to be

- How obstacles to achieving the key objectives are being addressed

For discussions with workers, let workers know the Audit date and scope, and the preparation is essentially the same:

- Ensure workers know their role and what they are responsible for
- Workers should also be able to talk to the main risks associated with their work activities and the main control measures in place to prevent or minimise the risk
- Ensure they are familiar with the organisation's Management System and where to go to find required information pertaining to their role
- Employees should have a clear idea of the organisation's objectives, and how their role contributes to them
- Each employee should have appropriate and current training for the work activities they perform
- Most importantly, workers can validate in discussions with the Auditor that the current procedures and processes are correctly followed

In preparing workers to answer an Auditor's expected questions, the preparation should include a reminder that this is not a test – Auditors are not looking for an exact answer. Rather, they want to know how employees go about finding required information and answers. Do procedures provide the information needed? If not, where does the employee go next? Do they ask a supervisor? In exploring the workers' knowledge, Auditors will use a lot of "open" questions and statements such as "Tell me how this works" or "How do you go about this?". Workers should be helpful but with a focus on answering the question that was asked.

Lastly, the workplace itself must be prepared for Audit Day. Your worksite, office, or facility should be clean and tidy with all the basic safety requirements in place (test & tag up-to-date, emergency exits free from obstructions, bins not overflowing with rubbish, noticeboards updated with only current information etc.). You don't want to give the Auditor any reason to think you are anything other than a well-organised organisation.

In summary for Part 3, it is essential that your Managers and workers are prepared to participate

in interviews and discussions with the Auditor. They should know their role, how they interact with your organisation's Management System, and know their main risks and controls for their work activities.

Hopefully, this series of articles has provided some useful information and tips to prepare your organisation for its next Audit.

Please [contact QRMC](#) for more information.



## ISO 45001... where are we now?

The year 2018 heralded the formal introduction of ISO 45001: *Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems*, with the new standard officially superseding AS 4801. The Australian Standard was tagged as 'available superseded' on the Standards Australia website and organisations were warned that their existing certification would be phased out. The level of uptake within the private sector was strong with many organisations integrating the changes and looking to future-proof their management systems.

However, from a governmental perspective progress was, and still is, slow. Standards Australia advised that the reason AS 4801 had not been withdrawn and directly replaced by ISO 45001 was that several jurisdictions have AS 4801 cited in legislation, government guidance material or within tenders. This was a matter for the relevant government jurisdiction to address. Standards Australia stated that once this is done, they will be able to revoke AS 4801.

The original plan from JAS ANZ was that AS 4801 was to remain until the end of March 2021, then that was extended to September, and now the timeline for certified organisations to migrate from AS 4801 has been extended to July 2023. And while this

drags on we have a disconnect in play whereby some organisations are required to work to the old industry standard (AS 4801) that does not systemically align with the current WHS Legislation.

ISO 45001's structure, detail and approach is now aligned to the structure of other standards using the new Annex SL format and is much more aligned with the current (model) Work Health & Safety Legislation. This is particularly notable in relation to the following:

- ISO 45001 structures the responsibility for management of WHS with 'Top Management' – where it should be, if we consider the WHS legislative responsibilities and the promotion of Due Diligence (ISO 45001 has 13 responsibilities assigned to 'Top Management' that were previously allocated to a 'Management Representative' under AS 4801).
- 'Top Management' need to make a Policy commitment to "... *eliminate hazards and reduce OHS risks*" – as we know this is the central underpinning component of a PCBU's legislative requirement, and is also reflected in the Officer's Due Diligence requirements – but previously under AS 4801 approach there was no direct requirement.

- Risk Management within ISO 45001 goes beyond hazard management, and now also specifically includes psychosocial risks. As we know this is a growing focal point within the current legislative approach.
- ISO 45001 has a dedicated section for Procurement (8.1.4) outlining the specific requirements for considering and managing the health and safety risks arising from a subcontractor's operations, the impact on your organisation, & the subcontractor's impact on other interested parties.
- ISO 45001's 'Evaluation of compliance' is new, requiring the organisation to evaluate their compliance with legal and other requirements and retain documented information of the evaluation results. This process aligns with an Officer's Due Diligence requirements.

QRMC strongly advocates that all Work Health and Safety Management Systems should be updated to ISO 45001 (as the Industry Best Practice Standard) as it presents a better alignment with the current legislative requirements.

Please [contact QRMC](#) for more information.