QRMC | RISK, SAFETY AND BUSINESS ADVISORY CONSULTANCY

insight

QRMC NEWSLETTER

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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.

Integrating Work Health and Safety into Enterprise Risk Management

Boards and executive leaders routinely oversee a broad spectrum of organisational risks, from financial performance and cybersecurity to environmental, legal and reputational exposures. Often however, Work Health and Safety (WHS) risks are managed through separate compliance systems rather than as an integral component of enterprise risk management. Given that a serious injury (or worse) to a worker can have a significant impact to an organisation in addition to the individual worker's health, this distinction is increasingly difficult to justify, both from a governance perspective and under Australia's Model WHS Act.

The Model WHS Act places a primary duty of care on persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers and others. It also imposes a personal duty on officers to exercise Due Diligence to ensure that the PCBU complies with its legislative obligations. These duties elevate WHS from an operational issue to a matter of strategic governance.

Unlike many enterprise risks, WHS risks cannot simply be accepted because they fall within an organisation's stated risk appetite. The Act requires organisations to eliminate risks where reasonably practicable or, when this is not possible, to minimise risks through appropriate control measures. This creates a fundamentally different decision-making framework. The question is not whether a risk is acceptable to the organisation, but whether the organisation has done everything that is reasonably practicable to manage it.

Despite this distinction, the principles of effective risk management remain remarkably consistent. Leading organisations identify hazards, assess the likelihood and consequences of adverse events, implement controls based on the hierarchy of control, monitor the effectiveness of those controls and continually review their risk profile. These are the same principles that underpin sound enterprise risk management and informed governance for all types of risks.

Integrating WHS into enterprise risk management enables boards to consider critical safety risks alongside strategic, operational and financial risks, providing greater visibility of the interdependencies between them. A serious workplace incident can disrupt operations, damage organisational reputation, reduce shareholder confidence, attract regulatory scrutiny, and expose officers to personal liability. These outcomes are no less significant than those arising from cybersecurity breaches or financial misconduct.

The most mature organisations recognise that effective WHS governance is not achieved through compliance alone. It requires safety risks to be evaluated, monitored and reported using the same rigour applied to every other material business risk. By embedding WHS within enterprise risk management, organisations strengthen governance, support officer Due Diligence and improve organisational resilience. More importantly, they fulfil the fundamental purpose of the Model WHS Act: to protect the health and safety of workers and others while enabling organisations to operate responsibly and sustainably.

Please [contact QRMC] for more information.

ISO 9001:2026 Is Coming – Is Your Quality Management System Ready?

ISO 9001:2026 *Quality management systems — Requirements* is expected to be published internationally in September 2026, with adoption in Australia soon after. A three-year transition period is likely, allowing organisations sufficient time to review and update their quality management systems before transitioning from ISO 9001:2015.

Based on the current Final Draft International Standard (FDIS), the revision is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. The familiar structure of ISO 9001 remains intact, with the most significant changes focused on strengthening leadership, organisational culture, sustainability considerations, risk-based thinking and the effective use of data for decision-making. A new Annex A has also been introduced to provide additional guidance on interpretation and implementation of the revised requirements.

What's changing?

3. Terms and Definitions – Expanded quality management terminology is incorporated directly into the standard (reducing external references).

4. Context of the Organisation – Greater emphasis on climate change, sustainability and other external factors that may influence organisational performance and the effectiveness of the quality management system.

5. Leadership – Increased accountability for leaders to promote a positive quality culture, ethical behaviour, organisational integrity and continual improvement.

6. Planning – Clearer distinction between risks and opportunities, with additional focus on resilience, adaptability and structured planning for change.

7. Support – Expanded expectations relating to competence, awareness, communication and training, including consideration of organisational values, quality culture and digital capability.

8. Operation – Limited changes, primarily focused on terminology and alignment with revised concepts. Greater recognition of supply chain oversight and externally provided processes.

9. Performance Evaluation – Continued focus on monitoring, measurement and evaluation, with

greater emphasis on using data, trends and performance information to support decision-making.

10. Improvement – Stronger focus on continual improvement and ensuring the quality management system remains effective, relevant and aligned with organisational objectives.

Annex A (New) – Additional guidance to assist organisations in understanding and applying the revised requirements.

Emerging themes across the Standard

Although many of the individual changes are relatively minor, they collectively reinforce several important themes that are expected to shape quality management practices over the coming decade:

- Climate change and sustainability
- Leadership and quality culture
- Ethics and organisational integrity
- Risk, resilience and opportunity management
- Digitalisation and data-driven decision making
- Organisational learning and knowledge management

These themes reflect the growing expectation that quality management systems support organisational performance, strategic planning and governance, rather than simply demonstrating compliance.

What does this mean for organisations?

For most organisations already certified to ISO 9001:2015, the revision is unlikely to require a complete redesign of the existing quality management system. Instead, the transition should focus on reviewing current processes, ensuring leadership engagement is evident, strengthening consideration of sustainability and emerging risks, and enhancing the use of performance data to drive continual improvement.

The publication of ISO 9001:2026 should therefore be viewed as more than a standards update. It provides an opportunity to assess whether the quality management system continues to support organisational objectives, customer expectations and business resilience in an increasingly complex operating environment.

Organisations that begin reviewing their systems now or as soon as the new Standard is released are likely to be well positioned for a smooth transition to the updated requirements.

Please contact QRMC for more information.

Electrical Safety Regulation 2026 commences tomorrow

The Electrical Safety Regulation 2026, replacing the Electrical Safety Regulation 2013, will commence tomorrow on 1 September 2026.

Key changes include:

- changed section and part numbers
- reordering of provisions for clarity and alignment with the Electrical Safety Act 2002
- revisions for clarity and conciseness
- amendments to various technical, procedural and administrative requirements (noting that there are no new requirements)
- duplicative or redundant provisions removed.

More information is available on the WorkSafe Qld website about the changes.