

In response to Question 6 from the Committee's questions on notice of 24 May 2017:

6) Would you be able to provide any updates of the status of Australia and international whistleblower standards?

Over the last 12 months, Standards Australia's technical committee QR-017 *Organizational governance* has been formed to mirror the International Standards Organisation (ISO) Technical Committee 309 *Governance of organizations*. Emily Dawson of Standards Australia (who I've copied on this email) has provided the attached latest listing of the membership of this Standards Australia committee, and has also provided me with this update on its work:

Standards Australia Technical Committee QR-017 *Organizational Governance* mirrors ISO TC 309 *Governance of Organizations*. ISO TC 309 works in a number of areas relating to governance, and one of their new fields of work is in Whistleblowing. The relevant ISO adhoc group is currently developing a proposal, in conjunction with the British Standards Institute for a standard on whistleblowing programs, which will include minimum requirements for a comprehensive whistleblowing program applicable across sectors and applicable regardless of organisational size. The Standard will be written specifically to contain requirements that can be superseded by any country's legislation or regulation, as per Standards writing practice followed by ISO and Standards Australia.

Australia is a Participating member on ISO TC 309 and currently has two delegates on the Whistleblowing working group. To date they have led a number of discussions and initiatives within the international working group, representing the Australian view on key issues. In developing the Australian view, QR-017 has used a number of Australian documents that they consider best practice in this field, including the findings of the Whistling While They Work projects, AS 8004-2003, and other documents that Dr AJ Brown can provide references for.

Locally, QR-017 have assumed responsibility for the AS 8000 series of Standards, which includes AS 8004-2003 *Corporate governance – Whistleblower protection programs for entities*. It is likely that this document (currently withdrawn) will be superseded by the ISO standard. However the standard ISO project timeline is approx. 3 years from proposal stage, however there is a view at ISO level that the standard maybe capable of being fast tracked. Therefore, QR-017 have proposed developing an interim document due to domestic demand for guidance in this space. This is still being considered internally by Standards Australia and we are not yet able to advise if this will proceed or what form it will take.

It is my own understanding that the view of the ISO TC 309 adhoc group so far, after discussion at the second ISO TC 309 plenary meeting in Quebec City on 23-25 May 2017, is that the international standard should be an international management system standard for whistleblowing programs (the first of its kind). However as indicated above, work on the

Standard is currently at the pre-proposal stage. I'm advised the ISO committee hopes to have a proposal for the standard finalised at the end of 2017. This is why there is strong support on the Standards Australia committee QR-017 for Standards Australia to take interim steps to provide Australian businesses and other organisations with up-to-date guidance on the key principles, processes and content that should be reflected in their whistleblowing policies and programs, in a form that can then also be updated once an international standard is developed and formally adapted/adopted in Australia. However, as indicated, it is still being assessed what kind of interim document (if any) could be published while the ISO standard is under development.

If you need any more information, I am sure Emily and Standards Australia would be happy to provide it.

kind regards

AJ

Nominating Organisation	Role Title
Australian Bankers Association	Participating Member
Australian Industry Group	Participating Member
Australian Information Industry Association	Participating Member
Australian Institute of Company Directors	Participating Member
Australian Institute of Professional Investigators	Participating Member
Australian Local Government Association	Participating Member
Australian National University	Participating Member
Australian Organisation for Quality	Participating Member
Consumers Federation of Australia	Participating Member
GRC Institute	Participating Member
Griffith University	Participating Member
Institute of Management Consultants	Participating Member
Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand	Participating Member
Law Society of New South Wales	Participating Member
NSW Ombudsman	Participating Member
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Awaiting Assignment
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	Awaiting Assignment
Australian Federal Police	Awaiting Assignment
Australian Prudential Regulation Authority	Awaiting Assignment
Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia	Awaiting Assignment
Governance Institute of Australia	Awaiting Assignment
Law Council of Australia	Awaiting Assignment
National Insurance Brokers Association	Awaiting Assignment
National Retail Association	Awaiting Assignment