March 2018 saw the release of a new global standard of organizational health and safety (OH&S).

The **ISO 45001** is the first of its kind and will eventually replace the AS/NZS 4801:2001, over the course of the next three years.

What does this mean for your organisation?

Ahead of the Safety in Action Conference – 9-10 October, Sydney, we caught up with David Solomon of the Master Builders’ Association – or “Mr. ISO 45001” as he is commonly referred to – to get some insights.

**Why the need for ISO 45001 and what is the thinking behind it?**

ISO45001 has been designed and developed by an international committee made up of some 160 experts to address the issue of occupational injuries and promote a safer working environment.

ISO 45001 will allow organisations to better manage their OH&S risks and improve their OH&S performance.

The new standard is intended to be applicable to any organisation regardless of its size, type, and nature of work performed.

All of the requirements of the standard are intended to be integrated into an organization’s own management processes.

**What is different about the ISO 45001 in relation to its predecessor (AS/NZS 4801:2001)?**

ISO45001 follows the same High Level Structure (HLS) as numerous other international Management System Standards, such as 9001 Quality, 14001 Environment, 27001 Information Security Management. All of which have the same ten short clause numbers and headings. This makes it much easier to integrate two or more disciplines into one document.

The inclusion of Annex SL and the language used, more emphasis on leadership and management roles and new risk-based approach. The Annex SL framework will allow for easier integration with other ISO management systems standards.

Issues addressed in ISO45001 that are not included in AS/NZ4801:2001 include:

- Continual Improvement of the organisations OH&S performance
- Leadership and Commitment
- Actions to address risks and opportunities
- Safety In Design
- Outsourcing
- Procurement
- Contractors
- Evaluation of Compliance with legal requirements and other requirements

**What will employers need to be particularly mindful of as it comes into effect?**
Organisations will be required to address new issues like the current OH&S culture and the participation and consultation of workers in the implementation and maintenance of the OHSMS, at both a strategic and operational level.

The involvement of everyone connected with the OHSMS, including those operating at the most senior levels, will come under increased scrutiny. The draft standard puts emphasis on top management being accountable for OH&S management. Top management will need to demonstrate leadership. The development and operation of the OH&S management system. They will also need to support worker participation in the identification of hazards and risks, which are essential for success.

**What challenges do you anticipate as employers migrate over to ISO 45001?**

Recognising that safety has moved on. It needs to be seen through a contemporary context. We now see safety in everything we do. Procurement, outsourcing and design for example. Everyone is accountable and have to take responsibility for their own actions under current WHS legislation.

We are fortunate that ISO 45001:2018 is very much aligned with our laws in Australia. By that I mean we already do much of what the Standard requires of us.

The real challenge comes in the requirements the standard places on leadership and worker participation. The organisation must ensure that the requirements of ISO 45001 are integrated into business processes and that OH&S is not simply treated as a “stand alone” activity. Top management need to demonstrate commitment and ensure active worker participation in the management system.

There is a challenge for internal auditors, in as much as they may not have been accustomed to challenging senior managers’ commitment in areas that are not directly operational. How many would go to senior personnel in finance, procurement or HR and ask about how they contribute to occupational health and safety?

For external auditors, they are also challenged as they need to establish that there are adequate arrangements for worker involvement and that occupational health issues form a significant part of an organisation’s arrangements for managing OH&S.

**What will you be focusing on during your presentation at the Safety in Action Conference?**

I want to try and simplify the requirements of each clause of ISO 45001 and translate into plain English so that it is easier to understand.

Clauses 1 to 3 of the standard set out its scope of application, normative references and terms and definitions, while clauses 4 to 10 contain the requirements to be met during the implementation of the OHSMS and during its conformity assessment.

Clause 4 sets the context for the OHSMS itself and its constraints (internal and external issues and the requirements of interested parties) while clause 5 defines the leadership “engine” which drives the “plan, do, check, act” (PDCA) cycle embodied in the framework of the standard.
Clauses 6 to 10 follow the PDCA cycle. Plan in clause 6, do in clauses 7 and 8, check in clause 9 and act (for improvement) in clause 10.

In addition to the 10 main clauses, there is one annex that provides guidance which elaborates on the intent of the requirements of the standard; there is a bibliography, which makes reference to other related ISO standards and other documents, followed by the alphabetic index of terms.