

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

**Environmental management systems—  
General guidelines on principles,  
systems and support techniques**



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*Paearea Aotearoa*



#### **AS/NZS ISO 14004:2004**

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The following are represented on Committee QR-011:

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Australian Environment Business Network  
Australian and New Zealand Clinical Waste Management Industry Group  
Business New Zealand  
Certification Interests (Australia)  
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## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee QR-011, Environmental Management Systems and supersedes AS/NZS ISO 14004:1996.

The objective of this Standard is to provide guidance on the establishment, implementation, maintenance and improvement of an environmental management system (EMS) and its coordination with other management systems.

It is identical with, and has been reproduced from, ISO 14004:2004, *Environmental management systems—General guidelines on principles, systems and support techniques*.

This edition of the Standard includes more explanation of ‘aspects’ and ‘impacts’ and their significance. Clauses have been expanded to more clearly explain them, as they were not understood previously. There is more explanation also of legal compliance.

The term ‘informative’ is used to define the application of the annex to which it applies. An informative annex is only for information and guidance.

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## INTRODUCTION

As concern grows for continually improving the quality of the environment, organizations of all types and sizes are increasingly turning their attention to the environmental impacts of their activities, products and services. The environmental performance of an organization is of importance to internal and external interested parties. Achieving sound environmental performance requires organizational commitment to a systematic approach and to continual improvement of an environmental management system (EMS).

The general purpose of this International Standard is to provide assistance to organizations that wish to implement or improve an environmental management system and thereby improve their environmental performance. This International Standard is consistent with the concept of sustainable development and compatible with diverse cultural, social and organizational frameworks and systems of management.

This International Standard can be used by organizations of all types, sizes and levels of maturity, and in all sectors and geographic locations. The special needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are incorporated, and this International Standard accommodates their needs and promotes their use of an environmental management system.

This International Standard is part of the series of environmental management standards established by ISO/TC 207. In this series, only ISO 14001 contains requirements that may be objectively audited for certification/registration purposes or for self-declaration purposes. This International Standard includes examples, descriptions and options that aid both in the implementation of an environmental management system and in strengthening its relation to the overall management of an organization. While the guidelines in this International Standard are consistent with the ISO 14001 environmental management system model, they are not intended to provide interpretations of the requirements of ISO 14001. For ease of use, the subclauses of Clause 4 of ISO 14001 have the same numbering as in ISO 14004. However, the latter has extra subclauses (e.g. 4.3.1.1 or 4.3.3.3), where detailed or additional guidance for an effective environmental management system implementation is considered useful. Apart from this International Standard and ISO 14001, there are numerous other environmental management standards in the series of International Standards established by ISO/TC 207. A reference to and description of these International Standards can be found in the ISO publication *The ISO 14000 Family of International Standards*.

This International Standard describes the elements of an environmental management system and provides organizations with guidance on how to establish, implement, maintain or improve an environmental management system. Such a system can substantially enhance an organization's ability to anticipate, identify and manage its interactions with the environment, meet its environmental objectives and ensure ongoing compliance with applicable legal requirements and with other requirements to which the organization subscribes.

Examples and approaches are presented throughout this International Standard for illustrative purposes. They are not intended to represent the only possibilities, nor are they necessarily suitable for every organization. In designing and implementing or improving an environmental management system, organizations should select approaches that are appropriate to their own circumstances. Environmental management is an integral part of an organization's overall management system. The design of an environmental management system is an ongoing and interactive process. The structure, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for implementing environmental policies, objectives and targets can be coordinated with existing efforts in other areas (e.g. operations, finance, quality, occupational health and safety).

For ease of reading and understanding this International Standard, practical help and general guidance have been separated out and are shown as boxed text.