

CASE STUDY

Security for our critical infrastructure

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Chris Allen,
Sydney Opera House

Key Benefits

- ~ Improved identification of risks
 - ~ Public safety
 - ~ Protecting public property
 - ~ Improved corporate governance
 - ~ Better planning and allocation of resources
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The Australian/New Zealand Standard® for Risk Management (AS/NZS 4360) provides a guide to managing risk and may be applied to a wide range of activities, decisions or operations of public, private or community enterprises.

It is aimed at improved decision making and planning, better identification of opportunities and threats, better allocation of resources, pro-active management, improved compliance with legislative obligations and better corporate governance.

Chris Allen is Head of Security at one of Australia's most precious icons, the Sydney Opera House. Chris took on this role in 2003, not long after protesters climbed the sails of the Opera House, painted “NO WAR” and made international headlines. He is also a representative on the panel of the National Centre for Security Standards.

The “NO WAR” incident, which followed “9/11” and a number of reviews by ASIO and the NSW Government, was an important catalyst for a security upgrade at the Opera House.

Here Chris talks about the role AS 4360 played in bringing about important change:

“My first task was to prioritise the core vulnerabilities of the Opera House and determine a strategy for change,” he said.

“At the core of being able to sell the changes to Government was being able to say we had taken a legitimate approach and used a logical Standards based decision-making process. The primary document for me back then was AS 4360. Further support of this came from ASIO's review, which rigidly adhered to the AS 4360 principles.

“The work was ground breaking but not without difficulties. Being able to draw on AS 4360 and follow the main elements of the risk management process was extremely beneficial. By consulting, establishing the context, identifying and analysing the risks, we were able to identify the training for personnel necessary to protect a national icon and the public.

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“While recognising the importance of technology, good personnel are at the core of any successful initiative.

“You can put all sorts of fantastic technology and exorbitant amounts of money into any site you like, but if the human operating the job is not up to it, it’s just going to be ineffective.

“Equally important is the need for senior decision makers to be qualified and adhere to Standards that are set nationally.

“At the end of the day, if we have a major incident in this country anywhere, the people in charge have to be able to put their hands on their hearts at a Coronial Inquest and say they provided advice in accordance with nationally recognised Standards and that the people who provided that advice are qualified to nationally recognised accredited training.

“If we can’t do that then we’re not going to be providing the right types of strategies to protect the public, it’s as simple as that,” Chris said.