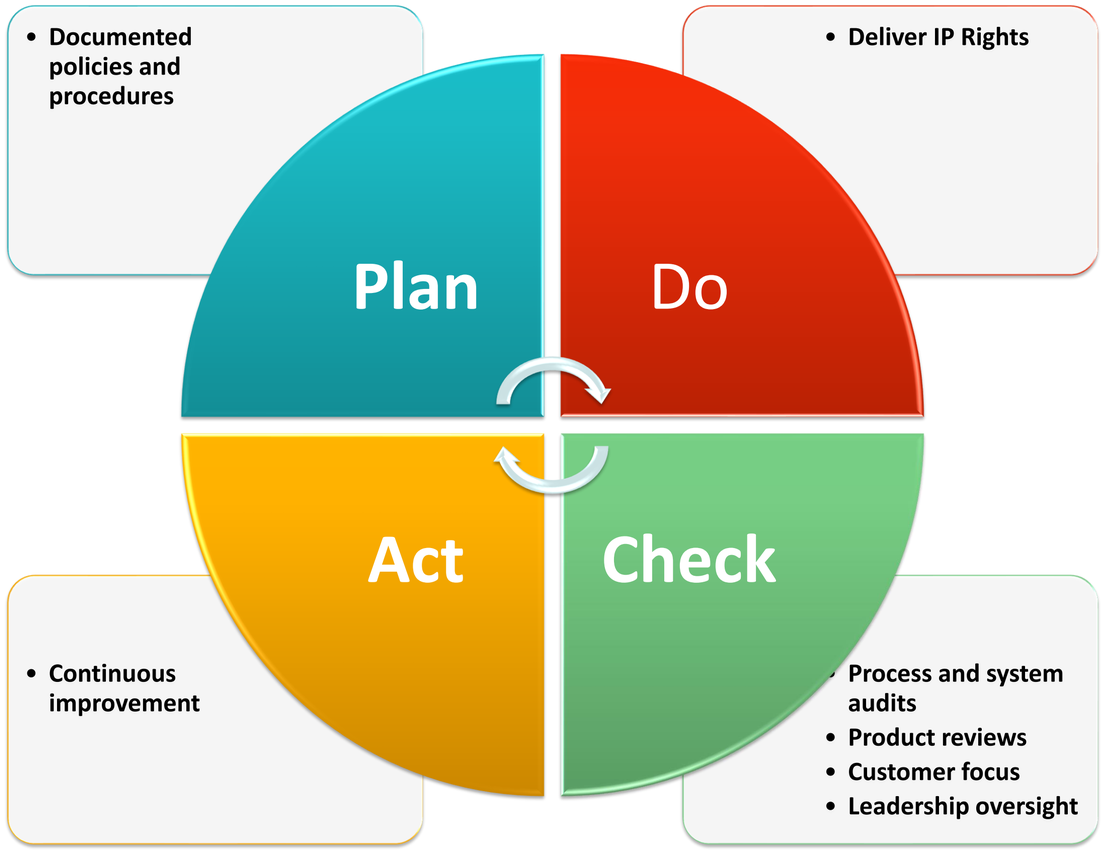
Australian Government
IP Australia

October 2025

IP Australia Quality Management System: An Overview

Scope and Operation of the QMS

The QMS operates on a **Plan-Do-Check-Act** cycle



IP Australia maintains a Quality Management System (QMS) to support the delivery of high-quality IP rights, maintain customer confidence in the value of IP, and as part of its Patents Cooperation Treaty obligations.

The scope of the QMS covers:

- Administration and examination of Patents (national and international/PCT), Trade Marks, Designs.
- Conduct of hearings and issue of decisions relating to Patents, Trade Marks and Designs.

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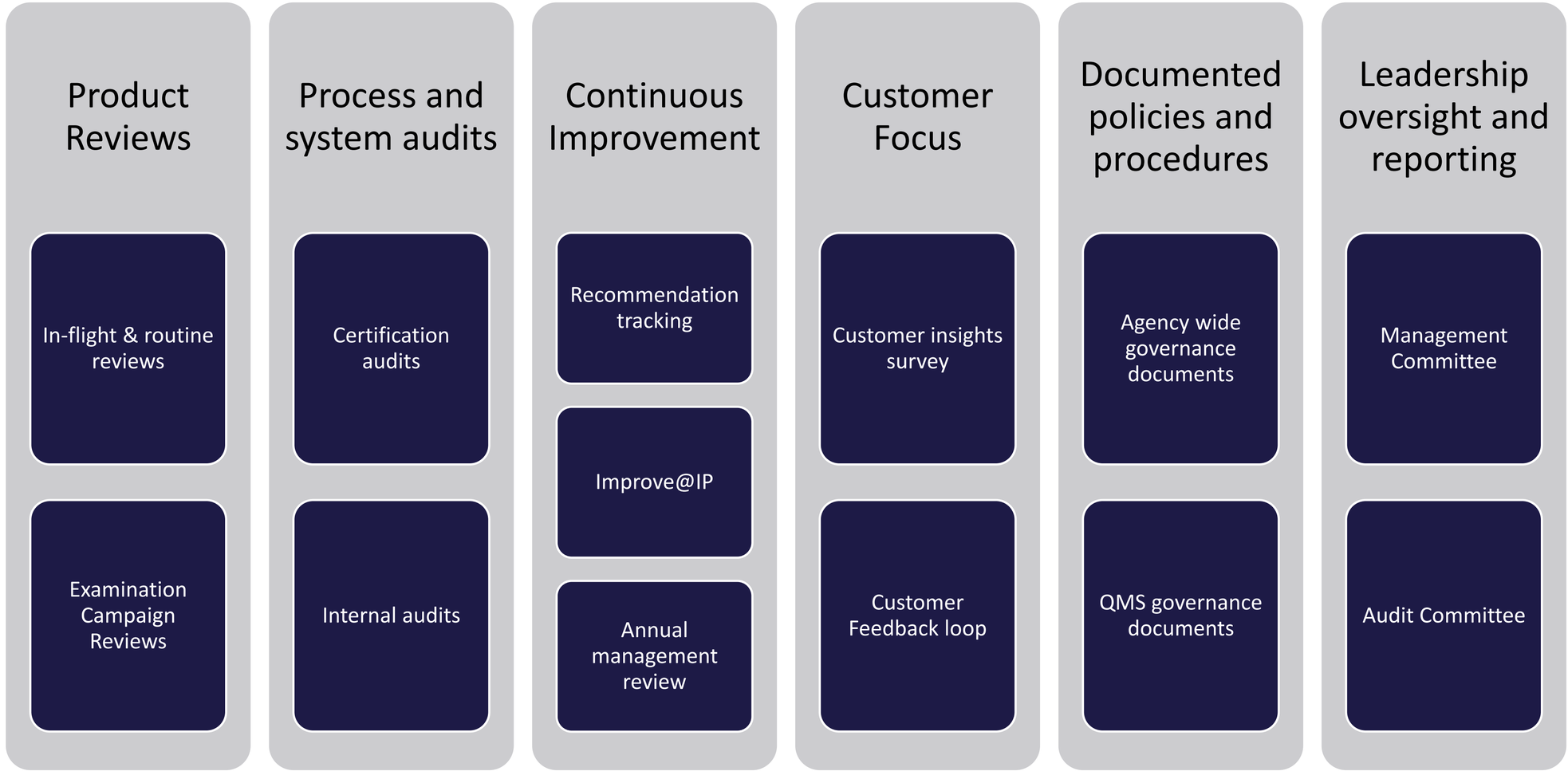
IP Australia's QMS



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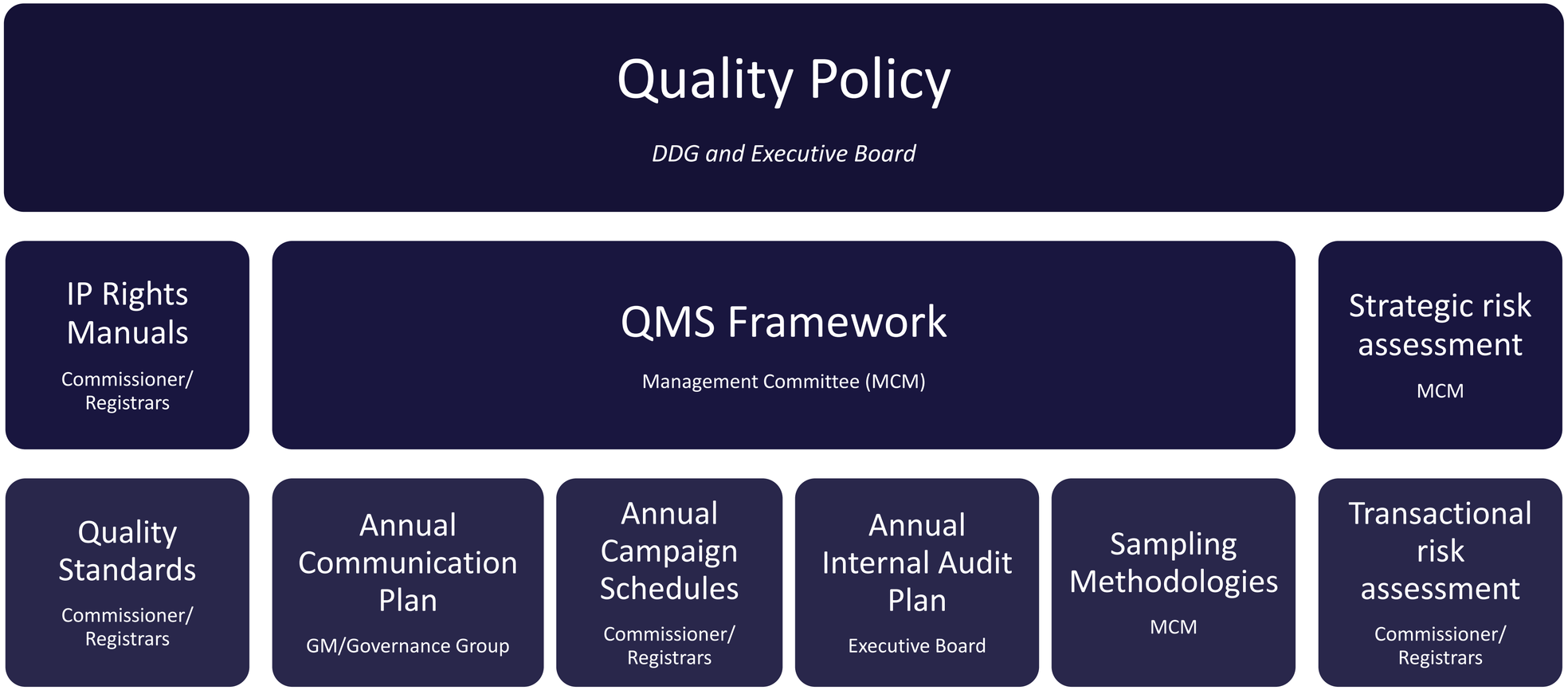
Governance Structure



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*Note: MCM refers to **Management Committee**, membership comprised of Director General, IP Australia and Deputy Director General*

Review of QMS

- Current system from 2020 after a comprehensive review of the QMS
- Significant changes and the system remains risk-based and evidence-based
- Current system designed to be flexible such that the system can respond to changes in risks easily

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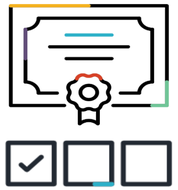
Patents Quality



In-flight Reviews

- Work products are randomly sampled based on product type.
- Products are evaluated against the Quality Standards.
- Ongoing monitoring and provides the Quality Indicator %
- The system can be adjusted to respond to environmental factors.

Campaign Reviews

- Products are often sampled based on specific criteria instead of product type.
- Detailed and targeted analysis of specific work batches to identify trends that may impact quality.
- Products are evaluated against the Quality Standards, as well as a targeted set of questions.

Approach to High Risk Products

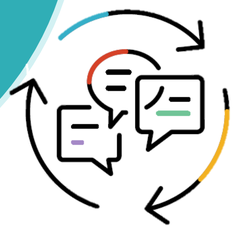
- 100% of these categories of work products are subjected to a Quality check.
- QA checks are completed by Supervising Examiners/ examiners' supervisors.

Stakeholder Feedback

- External stakeholders provide feedback via the Customer Feedback Loop.
- Customer feedback is also compiled and recorded in regular Customer Insights Reports.
- Customer feedback may inform campaign review and audit topics.

In-flight Quality Reviews

- *Ongoing and In-flight (before product is released)*
- Performed by Manager from the same section
- Corrective action can be implemented before an outcome is provided to the customer



Review finalised after product is checked by Manager

Product Sampled

Product reviewed by Manager

Feedback Conversation

Optional, i.e. if Product needs Improvement Action

Product released to the Customer

Tailored conversation with Learning and Development Focus

Quality Standards

Searching

S1. Searching is considered at each stage of prosecution and where necessary, performed to the required level.

S2. Effective search strategies are adopted.

S3. The most relevant prior art is identified.

Examination Reporting

E1. Necessary objections are raised.

E2. Clearly invalid objections are not raised.

E3. Basis of the objection(s)/report is clearly set out.

Examination based on foreign searches/actions

EF1. Foreign actions/searches are validated and used appropriately.

Quality Ratings

Meeting quality standards:

- Excellent (E): This is where the work exceeds quality standards and is a model for achieving our quality objectives.
- Good (G) – A sound approach is taken for legal assessment, complies with best practice and provides good customer service.
- Satisfactory with Observations (SO) – This means the legal assessment is sound, but observation(s) can be made, and improvement(s) may be recommended.

Not meeting quality standards:

- Unsatisfactory (US) – Legal assessment is not sound and/or the product does not meet legal requirements. With a search, this rating will result when a significant citation has been missed or where the strategy is clearly deficient in execution.

Sampling Methodology

IP Australia has developed a statistical based QMS sampling methodology, applied across all IP rights groups

- Product sampling is informed by TRA (where to focus our efforts)
- Flexible and able to respond to changes in risks

Methodology considers risk impact and existing controls for each product

Risk impact and controls are assessed via a Transactional Risk Assessment (TRA)

The TRA informs sampling methodology

TRA and sampling methodology are reviewed annually and endorsed by Commissioner for Patents

RISK

Campaign Quality Reviews

- To complement routine quality reviews and ensures consistency and reliability of data
- The number of campaign reviews to be conducted for Patents is determined by the QMWG at the start of each financial year.
- Patents campaign reviews are organised and facilitated by Quality Management Working Group in consultation with the Patents Examination Group leadership team.
- Sampled generally after the event and within a period of time.

Campaign Reviews can have different goals

Patents campaign reviews can have different purposes, including as a health check. Specific products or subsets of work products can be targeted and sampled depending on the goals of the review.

Investigative/Training Reviews
These reviews are designed to follow up on an event(s) which may be customer feedback, training, change of practice.

The main purpose will be to identify trends so that improvement actions may be required or beneficial.

Consistency Reviews
The purpose of these reviews will be to see the consistency of practice across the examination teams.

The purpose is often a health check. The focus may be about how we record the reviews, assign ratings in the quality review process, but also examination practice and determine whether action/ training is required.

Compliance Reviews
These reviews are conducted on processes performed outside the Quality Review System.

The main purpose is to ensure these processes are performed satisfactorily to meet our quality expectations and can remain outside the formal QRS.

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Summary

Comprehensive Quality Framework

A structured and comprehensive management framework to support ensures quality and compliance.

Strong Leadership and Governance

Effective leadership and governance are crucial for maintaining standards and driving continual improvement.

Customer Focus and Continual Improvement

Increased customer focus and flexibility within the system – adapt to changing requirements easily.

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Thank you

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