

Name: Christian Coelho

Location: Canberra

Work role: Director – Vantage Risk Advisory

Professional role: I enjoy providing outsourced internal audit and risk advisory services to Australian Government entities within the regulatory and law enforcement sector. I am a professional member of the IIA–Australia and a Chartered Accountant.



How did you get a start in internal audit?

I switched from tax advisory to internal audit in 2011. Over the years I began to appreciate the breadth of coverage internal audit provided and realised how internal audits helped improve government services. I have never looked back since.

What's the coronavirus drama effect on you?

It has provided me the opportunity to embrace flexible working arrangements and spend considerably more time with my family. I have also enjoyed cooking lunch instead of buying it on some days and weaning myself off the two double-shot flat whites I required when working at multiple client sites across a day.

Working from office or home?

I have been working mainly from home and attending client sites as required.

How has coronavirus changed the way you work?

I found clients required real-time advice which enabled them to manage emerging risks. In this respect, non-critical assurance activity had to be de-prioritised and the pace at which advice was provided increased significantly. I also believe more stakeholders began to value assurance and risk management functions due to the critical role they played in these uncertain times. This is a real positive for our profession because hitherto COVID–19 we were used to being perceived as those who ‘catch people out’, but stakeholders now understand we are here to support the ‘windscreen’ view as much as the ‘rear view’.

What risks would you say are heightened by coronavirus?

Some key risks regardless of operational context I believe have been brought on by COVID–19 are:

- People – staff wellbeing, especially staff mental health and the impact this has on our workplaces and productivity.
- Financial resources – financial sustainability and viability in the short-term to medium-term.
- Infrastructure – long-term suitability of hard and soft infrastructure and how organisations will adapt these as they transition into the post-COVID–19 paradigm.

What is the biggest challenge facing internal auditors?

In light of COVID–19, I feel a key challenge for internal auditors is agility – as a profession, how do we re-calibrate our overall approach in real-time to assure and advise on risks and controls. While we are familiar with agile audit approaches, COVID–19 required us to shift our mindset to one where we were constantly anticipating the impact of multiple threats and opportunities on our clients’ operations, and how to be agile in our responses to these.

What has the IIA-Australia been doing lately?

Supporting members navigate the unprecedented level of uncertainty brought on by COVID–19 and organising the annual Public Sector Assurance Forum 2020.

What are you working on at present?

I am working on a range of internal audits – operationalising risk management within a regulatory agency; management of privacy controls; business continuity for a law enforcement agency.

What are you reading at present?

‘Chase the Lion’ by Mark Batterson.

What is on your desk right now?

A warm cup of spiced Indian tea to get me through a Canberra winter’s evening and of course a range of legislation I need to review.

Concert or event you would most like to attend?

A soccer world cup final that features Brazil.