

Name: Stephen Linden

Location: Perth, Western Australia

Work role: Director – Assurance Advisory Group (AAG)

Professional role: Managing the business (AAG). Delivery of probity and internal audit services to a wide range of clients. Proud to be a Professional Fellow of the IIA-Australia; I'm also a CPA.

Community role: I've just joined the Finance Committee of my golf club Melville Glades in Perth. AAG sponsors North Fremantle Amateur Football Club where I was lucky enough to be a part of their first ever colts premierships team and later in the seniors premierships that got us back to A grade. They provide great leadership and direction for over 100 young men both on and off the field.



How did you get a start in internal audit?

I had been working at Fremantle Port Authority for 15 years when their internal audit team was established. I managed to be appointed to the Senior Internal Auditor role and 18 months later appointed Manager.

What's the coronavirus drama effect on you?

The social distancing has had a huge effect on the ability to catch up with family, friends and work colleagues. On the bright side, my fuel costs have plummeted, and innovation-by-necessity has resulted in some great virtual catch-ups with former IIA global committee colleagues and others.

Working from office or home?

I work mostly from home anyway.

Has coronavirus changed the way you work?

We have now all becoming experts in videoconferencing and have gotten used to the idea that we and our clients don't have to be in close physical proximity to deliver an effective service. Personally, I have been saving many hours of travelling time between meetings.

What risks would you say are heightened by coronavirus?

There are so many!!! Some of the more notable would be:

- The whole supply chain is impacted.
- Procurement fraud.
- The velocity of change challenges the controls of most processes.
- Working from home – mental health issues, security of information, productivity.
- Cyber-security.
- Business continuity planning and pandemic planning – hands up who didn't have one or had one that was inadequate!!!

What is the biggest challenge facing internal auditors?

Adding value and being seen to be adding value.

What has the IIA-Australia been doing lately?

Providing alternative ways of delivering professional development has been the most noticeable to me. IIA-Australia advice around the pandemic has been timely and very helpful.

What is your most memorable internal audit moment?

Difficult to select just one after being in the profession for 30 years. I love to travel and internal audit has given me the opportunity to do that. Client work has taken me to London (WA Agent General's Office), Manchester and Leeds (admittedly in and out of prisons and courthouses), Dubai (WA Trade Office), Apia the capital of Samoa (delivering an internal audit course I developed for their government), every mainland capital in Australia and all over regional WA. Through the IIA global committees I've been to London, Oslo, Johannesburg, Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur. And in the USA Orlando (10 times), New York, Anaheim, Atlanta and Houston. There aren't many professions that provide so much opportunity.

What are you working on at present?

Proposals, probity engagements, some internal audits and re-development of our web site.

What are you reading at present?

Apart from the monthly journals we receive from IIA, CPA and AICD, I've been reading guidance on how to improve my golf putting. I've been doing that for about 10 years now and will keep searching for that Holy Grail until I find it.

What is on your desk right now?

My desktop pro, three screens and a bottle of hand sanitiser.

Concert or event you would most like to attend?

A Fremantle Dockers grand final win, but not sure I'm going to live that long!!!

What would you change if you could?

Improve the IIA brand. The IIA does a lot of things very well but I don't think branding is one of them. My view is that there should be one, and only one, qualification – Certified Internal Auditor (CIA). Build the IIA brand around that qualification. We have too many minor qualifications that detract from the CIA. Maybe after 79 years as the IIA we could do something daring and change the name to the Chartered Institute of Certified Internal Auditors or something along those lines.