

Australian Service Excellence Standards

World Accreditation Day



Government
of South Australia

Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion

This case study booklet was created by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) to recognise the work of organisations accredited in service excellence for World Accreditation Day in 2014.

Australian Service Excellence Standards

DCSI's Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) is internationally accredited in the International Society for Quality in Health and Social Care.

Organisations that are accredited can demonstrate that they:

- are customer focused
- have clear direction with accountability
- can foster continuous learning and innovation
- value people, diversity and collaborative work practices
- take part in evidenced based decision making
- have a clear understanding of their social, environmental and ethical responsibility



ASES recently asked our accredited organisations to provide case studies about their experience and to discuss the benefits of being accredited. This case study booklet summarises their response.

Contributors

The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion's Service Excellence Team would like to thank the following organisations for their contribution:

- ac.care
- West Coast Youth and Community Support Incorporated
- Avail Incorporated
- Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of South Australia Incorporated
- UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide
- North East Community House Incorporated



We acknowledge and congratulate all organisations who have achieved accreditation.

Case Study 1: ac.care

Contemplating travelling with ASES? Trip advisor comments from ac.care:

ac.care's service excellence journey started in 2004 at the Service Excellence Framework Essential Minimum level, accelerated in 2007 to Foundation and Award levels, and travelled through the Service Excellence Program Award in 2010 to arrive at ASES Certificate and Award levels late last year.

When we started this journey, the Service Excellence travel agency gave us maps (in the form of handbooks) to navigate and now it's all on the GPS (or rather USB).

It is now harder to ignore the voice telling you to 'do a U-turn now'! While the milestones and destination names have changed, our travelling companions have been there with us all along. We found the external assessors from Community Business Bureau to be excellent co-pilots – genuine partners sharing our journey.

Rather than tossing obstacles at us, they gently and expertly suggested alternative routes. They have shown incredible commitment to our organisation, our communities and our clients.

Each part of the trip took us several months. We don't quarantine our staff to come for a service excellence drive, they hop on and off while on their daily commute.

We now consider continuous improvement business trips to be a way of life.

What a great opportunity to take a helicopter view of your whole organisation, to share new experiences and vistas and to learn more about yourself, your new fellow travellers and your organisation. As with any travel, the best part of course are the people you meet along the way: assessors, board members, clients and colleagues. And then at the end of the trip, the pride and acknowledgment of all being part of such a great adventure! One staff member even got a job as a tour leader after her first service excellence trip.

It is amazing what this team effort generates in terms of new travel plans for our organisation! We no longer take anything for granted, it is now a constant search for new boundaries. The bar is set higher each time.

Service excellence is everything but a holiday. Once you get to your service excellence destination, you are probably going to be exhausted. Then suddenly the travel bug hits you and you do it all over again. Meanwhile, our clients wouldn't notice that we've been on a journey behind the scenes. And that's the way we like it. After all, if they noticed a big difference on our return we would have been heading in the wrong direction in the first place.

To quote Mark Twain: *"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime"*.

Your hopelessly addicted world traveller
Ute Herrmann-Bullock

"What a great opportunity to take a helicopter view of your whole organisation, to share new experiences and vistas and to learn more about yourself, your new fellow travelers and your organisation"

Ute Hermann- Bullock, ac.care

Case Study 2: West Coast Youth and Community Support Incorporated

We here at West Coast Youth and Community Support have recently undergone ASES accreditation at Certificate level. We found the process extremely rewarding and a major benefit to our whole organisation. The process from start to finish took approximately 6 months, as we were renewing previously gained accreditation under the Service Excellence II model.

As the Executive Officer of the organisation, it has been a pleasure to work closely with the staff and board of directors to ensure that we are a professional, quality assured, customer focussed service, delivering a high standard of care and support to our clients while maintaining an excellent working environment for staff.

As a rapidly growing organisation, with a priority focus to stay true to our ideals of being a local regional service for a local regional/remote community the whole process of ASES supported these ideals.

Our consumers, particularly the young people we worked with are very excited about the feedback opportunities all the way through engagement and planning of programs.

The process of accreditation under the ASES framework has supported the embedding of best practise in all areas of our work here, including engagement and service delivery to our consumers and feedback received from them reflects this good work.

It has been a pleasure to be involved in the process and is an amazing way to reflect the good work, we as community service organisations do in our communities and have recognition given for this.

The support received throughout the process was outstanding and enabled a smaller organisation such as ours to manage the process effectively and efficiently.



“Our consumers, particularly the young people we worked with are very excited about the feedback opportunities all the way through engagement and planning of programs.

It has been a pleasure to be involved in the process and is an amazing way to reflect the good work”

Joanne Clark, West Coast Youth and Community Support Incorporated

Case Study 3: Avail Incorporated

Avail Inc. has achieved accreditation through the ASES process twice. There was a noticed change in the requirements and objectives needing to be met in the current process. This highlighted to us how much the industry has changed in the past three years and how we needed to make necessary changes to continue as an approved provider.

There have been many benefits for our organization from completing the accreditation process because client care and satisfaction has always been our priority. Throughout the accreditation process, it highlighted that whilst we were delivering on this key objective, we were lacking in the structured framework and streamlined processes to support this delivery of care. By completing the objectives, we are now comfortable that we have the structure and supporting documents to continue to deliver quality care to our clients.

The accreditation process brought awareness of a whole new skill set for staff involved. There was knowledge demonstrated that had previously been unknown, and is now recognized and utilized. This has enabled Avail to redefine roles and responsibilities to maximize the strengths demonstrated during accreditation.

This has led to a greater satisfaction among staff as their skills are being used to their full potential.

Other benefits that have resulted from the accreditation process are:

- achieving a greater understanding of the requirements for running a not-for-profit organization in the disability sector
- greater communications with ASES and QAP co-ordinators who provided support and advice during the process of accreditation
- greater understanding of the need for correct policies and procedures with governing guidelines and acts of law
- greater opportunity and cooperation in working through the process by all staff and volunteers involved in the stages of the process
- greater awareness of the need to promote our service (see photos from the newly designed Avail brochure).

Avail clients have been happy with having greater input into the type of services provided to them. The introduction of online feedback surveys for staff performance reviews made the clients feel empowered and safe to provide honest feedback with the option remaining anonymous. This is one example of how clients have benefitted from the accreditation process.

The following photos depict support provided to Avail Inc. clients to help them develop greater independence in their home, lifestyle and community environment. For example assisting clients in mobility training and with large print, or braille materials.

“Client care and satisfaction has always been our priority. Throughout the accreditation process, it highlighted that whilst we were delivering on this key objective, we were lacking in the structured framework and streamlined processes to support this delivery of care. By completing the objectives, we are now comfortable that we have the structure and supporting documents to continue to deliver quality care to our clients”

Dallas Clark, Avail Incorporated



Case Study 4: Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of South Australia Incorporated

The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of South Australia (PQA) has had two assessments conducted for ASES Certification Level. The first assessment was in 2008 and the second in 2012. The process of preparation for the review in 2012 was initiated in May 2011 in readiness for the audit in November 2012. Regular meetings were held to check progress and to prepare action lists. Since August 2013, quality assurance meetings have been held once a month after our management meeting, which are held on a fortnightly basis.

The actual assessments were done over two days working with the external auditor. Although the initial assessment was stressful because it was a new experience and there was an element of the unknown, the second was a much more rewarding experience. Sharron Neeson, Manager of Support Services at PQA oversaw the project but with considerable input by the management team. The assessments in 2008 and 2012 were both conducted when James Kinghorn, the former CEO was with PQA. James retired in 2013.

Peter Stewart was appointed as CEO. It has been a valuable tool for the new CEO in relation to what has been achieved and also the minor improvements, which have needed to be made.

PQA was very proud to receive a very good report, which therefore supplied a boost in confidence and pride for the entire organisation. In 2012, the only recommendations for action were within the governance and people partnership and communication areas.

Under the people, partnership and communication area, improvement was suggested in clarifying the roles and the responsibilities of the board members. Subsequently governance training was held for the board and also senior managers to address these matters. This was not only a great team-bonding exercise, but it also generated subtle, but significant changes in the approach of board members to governance.

Another action suggested and which has been implemented was that the CEO has a performance review and appraisal conducted by the board of management. As appraisal result, a robust system of key performance indicators (KPI's) and appraisal have been established for the CEO. Under governance, the only recommendation was the updating of relevant policies under the Associations Incorporation Act 1985.

The main benefit to the association has been that ASES provides a clear and consistent framework for ensuring that we are on a path of continuous improvement. We have been able to formalise our quality activities, which in turn has been filtered down to all of our staff.

Our outstanding report highlighted areas that we can improve upon, but we believe that ASES accreditation does provide an advantage in an increasingly competitive market.

“Our outstanding report highlighted areas that we can improve upon, but we believe that ASES accreditation does provide an advantage in an increasingly competitive market.”

Peter Stewart and Heather Hales,
the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic
Association of South Australia

Case Study 5: UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide

UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide (UCWPA) is a diverse and complex organisation which undertakes a range of community and commercial activities. UCWPA, established in 1919, is a South Australian based community service agency of the Uniting Church. UCWPA seeks to work in partnership with clients and others in the community, to empower individuals, strengthen families and build communities.

Our main areas of work include:

- aged care
- employment and training
- housing services
- working with people with disabilities arising from a mental illness
- supporting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- vulnerable young people, adults and families.

“We have learnt that great ideas and a good heart are no substitute for documented evidence and sound delivery of strategies”

Judy Carpenter, UnitingCare
Port Adelaide

Being accredited with the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) has had a positive impact on UCWPA. We value continuous improvement in all our services and the ASES process guides us to evaluate our services, enhance our systems and implement new ideas.

The standards used in ASES help us to achieve ‘best practice’ outcomes for our clients and their feedback during ASES audits is always positive. We have learnt that we need robust systems in corporate governance, organisational management and risk management. We have learnt that great ideas and a good heart are no substitute for documented evidence and sound service delivery strategies.

Clients want results and outcomes that meet their individual needs. and ASES has helped us to maintain a sound quality assurance framework that always improves over time. Like many ‘not for profit’ services, we often need to apply for grants and write tenders to improve our funding of programs. Having accreditation in ASES helps us to provide evidence that we have an organisation wide quality assurance system. We also promote this on our website and Annual Report. Government agencies as well as sponsors have confidence that we have strong systems in place.

We will be using ASES again in 2015. The workbooks and examples of required evidence are particularly helpful. We use a team approach when completing the workbooks and ask key services to assist in the process e.g. the Finance team help in documenting financial information and even the Chairperson of our Board assists in completing the governance section.

Having someone on the end of the phone line from the Service Excellence Office is also great if we need extra information or are not sure on how to proceed with something. The ASES process means we have audits every 3 years, which gives us an opportunity to examine and review our achievements since the last ASES audit and highlight our changes and progress. We participate in many audit processes and ASES are the only standards that we can say apply to our entire organisation



Case Study 6: North East Community House Incorporated

The North East Community House (NECH) started to look at the accreditation process in 2007. However, with changing staff and board it was never followed up with any enthusiasm.

We achieved Certificate Level in 2012.

The board of management of the House became more aware of the obligations by our funding body and the benefits of gaining accreditation and set ASES as an agenda item to be reviewed at each board of management

Planning to reach a goal of obtaining Accreditation began in earnest late 2011. The NECH has only one paid worker who did not have sufficient time to dedicate to the process. One board of management member was delegated to drive the process with support from staff member.

NECH had many policies, procedures and supportive documents in place, but felt we lacked the expertise to meet the deadline the board of management had set.

A consultant who had experience in the sector was engaged to lead us through the process. This was the final step in our process of working towards accreditation.

The members of the board of management, staff and volunteers have benefitted from the process in as much as they have greater understanding of responsibilities, accountability and what the NECH is required to do to conform to government laws, statutes and acts.

Volunteers are more actively engaged and have a greater understanding of their roles and how it fits into the day to day management.

One volunteer has achieved a diploma and is now working towards an advanced diploma, they have access to all support documents to use as reference.

The board of management has become more diligent with reporting, recording and maintaining documentation.

North East Community House was initially struggling with the process and ultimate purpose for undergoing the accreditation process, however, now it is in operation we have experienced greater care and diligence in our daily management tasks. No noted difference reported by participants.

“The House initially was struggling with the process and ultimate purpose for undergoing the accreditation process; however, now it is in operation we have experienced greater care and diligence in our daily management of tasks.”

Diane Davies, North East
Community House Incorporated