

#### Slide #1

**Joe:** Welcome to this one of two introductory webinars on the Australian Service Excellence Standards or ASES for New South Wales Specialist Homelessness Services.

These webinars and other resources are part of the Quality Standards Implementation Resource Kit developed by Assessments Quality Performance or AQP for the New South Wales Homelessness Industry Partnership.

#### Slide #5

**Tamara:** What kinds of standards are the ASES?

**Joe:** ASES is a set of service standards that is tailored specifically for community services.

**Tamara:** ASES helps non-government organisations to improve their business systems, management practices and service delivery. It is equally applicable to small and large organisations.

**Joe:** Embedded in continuous quality improvement.

**Tamara:** This means that quality is seen as a developmental and continuous process and as part of day to day business.

**Joe:** Implemented incrementally using a step by step approach and applied to the whole organisation.

**Tamara:** To date, over 250 community services organisations across the country have achieved ASES accreditation, a growing number of these are homelessness services.

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**Joe:** Foundations.

**Tamara:** There are three strategies that formed the foundation of the accreditation process.

Number one is planning and coordination. Identify a quality lead to coordinate the whole process.

Number two, allocating enough time and resources. If you need to, start early.

And number three, involving the whole of the organisation - through an effective stakeholder communication and engagement strategy.

#### Slide #10

**Tamara:** Steps to accreditation overview.

**Joe:** This is an example of an ASES project plan which outlines the steps to accreditation and how they are sequenced. It took 15 months to complete.

One: Develop an internal plan.

**Tamara:** Develop an internal plan for the whole process before you start your ASES implementation with time frames and responsibilities and allocate the resources needed.

**Joe:** Two. Undertake self-assessment and gather evidence.

**Tamara:** The self-assessment will highlight where you are doing well and which areas require further development. Throughout the self-assessment, gather the evidence that you will be submitting to your external assessor.

**Joe:** Three. Plan the external assessment and submit evidence.

**Tamara:** This involves planning the detail of your site visit with your chosen external assessor and providing them with your evidence.

**Joe:** Four. Participate in the site visit with an external assessor.

**Tamara:** The site visit will involve the participation of staff, board members, clients and external stakeholders. It usually takes two days. Although this can vary depending on the size and the complexity of the organisation.

**Joe:** Five. Receive the assessor's report and recommendations.

**Tamara:** After the site visit, the external assessor will provide you with a report identifying if there are areas where you have not met the requirements with clear recommendations about how to address these gaps.

**Joe:** Six. Develop and implement a quality action plan if needed.

**Tamara:** The assessor's recommendations become the basis of a quality action plan which your organisation has six months to complete.

**Joe:** Seven. Receive a certificate of accreditation.

**Tamara:** When you have completed your quality action plan, the external assessor and the ASSES team undertake a final check, and if all your requirements have been met, you will receive your certificate of accreditation. The certificate will be dated from the last day of your site visit for a period of three years.

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**Joe:** Documentation.

**Tamara:** The South Australian Department of Human Services has developed evidence guides for both levels of the ASSES. Evidence guides are available in the BNG portal reading room or by requests from the Homelessness Industry Partnership.

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**Tamara:** The Certificate Level Evidence Guide. This is a screenshot of a page of the Certificate Level Evidence Guide about strategic planning. The Standard and the outcomes are stated on the top of the page. In the left hand column is the requirement which in this case is that the role and the values of the organisations are clearly identified and communicated. The middle column which is called Evidence Guide explains the requirement and lists the kinds of evidence that could demonstrate compliance. The final column provides examples of the kinds of documentation that can form the organisations evidence base. It is not prescriptive but it gives you a starting point.

To become familiar with the standards, organisations need to go through the whole Evidence Guide.

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**Tamara:** Preparing for the self-assessment.

**Joe:** Once your organisation has become familiar with the Evidence Guide, you're ready to move on to undertaking a self-assessment. There are essentially two ways to do self-assessment. One is to undertake the assessment electronically on the Breaking New Ground (BNG) website on the Standards and Performance Pathways (SPP) portal. The other is to manually complete the ASSES Certificate Level workbook. Some organisations choose to do both, usually starting with a workbook and then going onto the SPP portal.

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**Joe:** Certificate Level workbook.

**Tamara:** This is what a Certificate Level workbook looks like if you're using the workbook. The screenshot is for the first standard of strategic planning. The workbook reflects the Evidence Guide and asks you to rate your organisation against each requirement. The ratings are Not In Place (NIP), Partially In Place (PIP), or Fully In Place (FIP). The final column is where you explain how you meet each requirement and you can list the evidence to support your rating. You need to go through the entire workbook and self-assess against all the requirements. Alternatively, you can do an equivalent process on the SPP platform.

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**Tamara:** External assessment readiness.

**Joe:** In addition to completing your self-assessment and addressing any gaps, other indicators that your organisation is assessment ready are:

The Board and staff at all levels of the organisation are aware of and engaged in the quality process. Partners, staff and representative sample of clients have been advised of the external assessment and a number of them have given consent to be interviewed.

The evidence required to demonstrate compliance with requirements has been identified and is ready for submission to the external assessor.

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**Joe:** The site visit.

**Tamara:** During the site visit your external assessor will conduct interviews with staff members, clients and stakeholders.

They will make observations on site. They will also review documentation and systems including IT systems and databases.

The site visit will end with a closing meeting where the external assessor will provide you with a summary of their findings.

#### Slide #24

**Joe:** Take a change management approach. Adopting change management principles will consolidate the concerted effort towards accreditation.

**Tamara:** Build on a culture of continuous quality improvement.

**Joe:** Make it real. Work out what ASES means for your organisation and integrate local issues into improvement activities.

**Tamara:** Start and lead from the top. Get the Board and senior management to champion the vision for ASES.

**Joe:** Involve every layer of the organisation, clients and stakeholders.

**Tamara:** Tackle, but do not judge resistance to change. Listen to concerns, address those concerns and give staff opportunities to take part in developing solutions.

#### Slide #25

**Joe:** Engage and communicate with stakeholders. Developing a communication and engagement strategy provides a roadmap for:

**Tamara:** Educating stakeholders about the process from the outset.

**Joe:** Identifying all stakeholder groups and developing suitable strategies for each group.

**Tamara:** Identify how clients, staff, management and the governing body can participate and contribute.

**Joe:** Communicate the process of accreditation tasks and milestones to stakeholders throughout the process.

**Tamara:** Celebrate small successes along the way.

#### Slide #26

**Joe:** Manage staff workload. Support staff to integrate accreditation activities into their workload by:

**Tamara:** Developing realistic implementation plans. Allow as much time as possible for ASES. This reduces the risk of losing organisational capacity by diverting too many resources to accreditation at any one time.

**Joe:** Sharing and allocating the workload.

**Tamara:** Making ASES work a regular and ongoing part of the week. Slow and steady is better than spurts of intense activity.

**Joe:** Explore using volunteers and students for some tasks where appropriate.

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**Tamara:** Most organisations find the first round of ASES accreditation to be rewarding but also time consuming.

**Joe:** It takes a committed effort and a dedicated team to put into place the systems, processes and documents to meet the standards and requirements.

**Tamara:** On average organisations take 12 months' work to reach assessment readiness

**Joe:** Once accredited, however, organisations report that the subsequent rounds are much easier and mainly involve minor adjustments and upgrades to the systems already in place

**Tamara:** More importantly, organisations report ongoing benefits from having undertaken ASES.

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**Joe:** Some of the benefits of ASES that organisations have reported are:

**Tamara:** Staff have a greater understanding about what they do and why.

**Joe:** Staff acquired vast skills during the process.

**Tamara:** ASES created a sound framework for business and governance.

**Joe:** Policies and procedures were developed for all processes and problems.

**Tamara:** The Board and volunteers gain greater awareness of their roles.

**Joe:** ASES provides a review mechanism to continuously improve and keep up to date.

**Tamara:** ASES provided a formal structure for quality improvement.

**Joe:** A direct correlation between having a quality improvement program and growth of the organisation.

**Tamara:** Participants gained a sense of achievement.

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**Tamara:** Thank you for watching the ASES Introductory.