



A Better Future for Indigenous Australians – Establishing Quality Health Standards

As part of the Federal Budget 2007/08, funding was made available over four years under the 'A Better Future for Indigenous Australians – Establishing Quality Health Standards' measure (EQHS) to support clinical and organisational accreditation of eligible OATSIH-funded organisations providing health care services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The EQHS Budget measure provides a number of support mechanisms to assist organisations to achieve accreditation by June 2011 including:

- One-on-one expert assistance provided by a specialist accreditation facilitator accessed from a panel of **OATSIH Quality Improvement and Accreditation Facilitators**;
- **Accreditation Support Grants** to help organisations to address barriers to accreditation;
- **Local Support** at the national and jurisdictional level provided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled peak bodies;
- Access to various training options through the **Training and Development Scheme**, either short-term courses to support accreditation or longer-term non-clinical training; and
- Access to various activities provided through the **OATSIH National Quality Network**.

Eligibility for EQHS Accreditation Support

Eligibility is determined on a case by case basis, but generally eligible organisations are those that receive the majority of their recurrent funding for health service delivery, as their core business, from OATSIH including:

- Primary health care service providers;
- Substance use service providers; and
- Social and Emotional Well-Being (SEWB) service providers, including Link-up services and Bringing Them Home (BTH) counselling services.

OATSIH-funded advocacy organisations are also eligible.

To find out if your organisation is eligible, please contact the OATSIH Accreditation Information Line on 1800 723 676.

Quality Improvement and Accreditation Facilitators

OATSIH has established a national panel of Quality Improvement and Accreditation Facilitators (Facilitators) to provide one-on-one assistance to eligible organisations to assess their current position in relation to accreditation standards, identify any barriers to accreditation, and to help organisations develop and implement an Accreditation Workplan, where required. These Workplans help organisations to develop strategies to address specific barriers to accreditation. This could include implementing specific systems and processes, and/or the purchase of new equipment or minor capital works, for which funding may be available under an Accreditation Support Grant.

Accreditation Support Grants

Accreditation Support Grants are intended to directly and practically assist Indigenous health organisations to overcome barriers to clinical and organisational accreditation.

Once an organisation has identified barriers to accreditation (either with the assistance of a Facilitator or an equivalent expert in this area) they can apply for funding to overcome these barriers by preparing an application for an Accreditation Support Grant. Accreditation Support Grant funding can also be used to pay accreditation assessing agency fees.

Local Support through Peak Bodies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled peak bodies – the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and its affiliated state and territory peak bodies – have been funded to work with Indigenous health organisations and Facilitators to progress accreditation within the sector. This function includes promotion and awareness-raising of accreditation processes.

Training and Development Scheme

The Training and Development Scheme became available from July 2009, and aims to enhance the capacity of organisations, and to help develop a culture of continuous quality improvement, through support for staff to undertake training and development courses. There are two streams of training available under the Scheme, short term courses to support an organisation to achieve accreditation, and long-term courses aimed at non-clinical development of staff.

OATSIH National Quality Network

National Quality Network activities are currently coordinated by OATSIH to facilitate relationships between, and deliver professional development to personnel delivering accreditation support to the Indigenous health sector.

Facilitators, NACCHO and affiliate accreditation staff, assessing agencies, framework owners and other relevant stakeholders participate in network activities which include workshops, regular professional development, and training in quality improvement and accreditation.

Current Network activities include:

- **Interpretive Guides** – development of guides that interpret the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Quality Improvement Council (QIC) standards in the Indigenous health setting, in collaboration with the Indigenous health sector.
- **Accreditation Manual** – development of an accreditation manual, in consultation with the sector, that will provide comprehensive information about accreditation processes and options available to Indigenous health organisations.
- **EQHS Accreditation Newsletter** - a quarterly newsletter is distributed to OATSIH accreditation stakeholders. This newsletter outlines the accreditation support structures available under EQHS, and provides a useful medium through which to provide “good news stories” about quality improvement and accreditation successes.
- **Streamlining Accreditation** - work is currently progressing on formalising processes for a more streamlined approach to accreditation where assessment under more than one accreditation framework is being undertaken.

Accreditation General Enquiries

Email: OATSIHqualityenquiries@health.gov.au

Visit: www.health.gov.au/OATSIHaccreditation

OATSIH Accreditation Information Line: 1800 723 676