



Quality Assurance and Improvement

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Providing good quality service, support, or other outcomes to our various stakeholders should be at the heart of any organisation's priorities.

Quality Assurance is all about making sure your organisation meets the most basic of minimum standards acceptable in what you do. What is the 'bottom line' you need to make sure happens, in order to give your stakeholders what they need from you?

For larger, more formalised organisations, there is often a set of standards prescribed, against which they are measured (usually via an audit), and with which they have to comply, to prove they are providing people with the basic level of quality required. While for smaller organisations quality assurance may be much simpler – for example, just a case of regular self-monitoring and review to check that everything is as it should be.

Quality Improvement is about taking your standard of quality to the next level. It's about always being on the lookout for the way you can do things better, smarter, more efficiently or more effectively – always striving for best practice in everything you do. It means that we don't just settle for minimum standards, or be satisfied that the way we have always done things is necessarily being the best way. Rather we recognise that there is always room for improvement. Quality improvement is a continual and ongoing process, thus you will often hear the term Continuous Improvement used.

If your organisation operates in a competitive environment, a commitment to continuous improvement can often be what makes you stand out from the crowd and become the organisation people choose to get involved with. Think about how you would choose a group to join or a service provider to use – you'd probably go to the one that had the best reputation. And that reputation would likely have developed because they do good quality work.

Quality assurance and improvement are increasingly being expected by business, government, and community alike so in our community groups we need to think about what it means for us too.