

Pilot of the NSQHS Standards (third edition)

How health services can participate

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) will pilot the draft National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards (third edition) with approximately 140 accredited health services in the first half of 2027. This overview explains what the pilot involves, who can take part and how to express interest in participating.

Why is the Commission piloting the Standards?

The Commission is testing the draft Standards with health services before they are finalised. Through the pilot, the Commission is seeking to understand:

- whether the draft Standards are clear, usable and able to support care delivery in different settings
- the evidence and effort involved in demonstrating achievement to the Standards
- how the draft Standards apply across different service types, sizes, locations and models of care
- how assessment to the third edition should work, including the assessment process and rating scale.

Findings will inform the next draft of the Standards, the development of resources to support implementation, and the design of the assessment model for the third edition.

Who can take part?

Expressions of interest are open to health services that are accredited to the NSQHS Standards. The Commission is seeking a group of pilot settings that reflect the diversity of accredited settings, including:

- public hospitals and health services
- private hospitals
- day hospitals and day procedure services
- multi-purpose services
- ambulance services
- health services that conduct clinical research
- services across all states and territories
- services across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations.

Selection will consider service type, size, location, jurisdiction, scope of services and accreditation history. The timing of a service's next accreditation assessment will be considered, so that pilot participation does not overlap with an assessment.

Services with interim accreditation, undergoing mandatory re-assessment or whose accreditation expires in 2027 are not eligible to participate.

The pilot tests the draft Standards, not the performance of participating services

The pilot is not an accreditation assessment and will not affect any service's accreditation status.

The results of individual services will be kept confidential. They will not be shared beyond the Commission's project team, and the Commission will not compare or publish the performance of individual services. Findings will be aggregated and de-identified for reporting.

Three ways to take part

Health services can nominate their preferred level of participation in the expression of interest. The participation levels and what is involved are outlined in Table 1. The Commission meets the costs of the accrediting agency assessments in Level 3.

Table 1 Participation levels

Level	What is involved	Places
Level 1 - Self assessment and survey	Work through the draft Standards and the self-assessment tool for your own use and provide structured feedback through a survey on the clarity and applicability of the draft Standards, the evidence involved and where guidance is needed.	Approximately 98 services
Level 2 - Self-assessment	Complete the self-assessment against the draft Standards using the Commission's self-assessment tool. The Commission reviews the self-assessment and provides feedback, and services take part in feedback activities.	28
Level 3 - Desktop assessment	Complete a self-assessment against the draft Standards using the Commission's self-assessment tool, with supporting evidence. An accrediting agency engaged and funded by the Commission then conducts a desktop assessment and provides a report that rates each requirement (requirement met, met with recommendations, or not met) with reasons and areas for improvement. Participate in post-assessment feedback activities.	14

What do participating services gain?

Piloting offers early, structured insight into the third edition before it takes effect. Services in Levels 2 and 3 receive feedback on how they would perform against the new Standards. All participating services build early familiarity with the Standards and directly shape their final form and the resources that will support implementation.

The Commission will support participants with an orientation, regular check-ins and email updates during the pilot, and participating services will be exempt from short notice assessments for the duration of the pilot.

How will the pilot run?

The pilot will run in stages, from expressions of interest and selection in late 2026 to orientation, self-assessment, desktop assessment and feedback activities in the first half of 2027. Table 2 outlines each stage and its indicative timing.

Table 2 Indicative timing

Pilot stage	Indicative timing
Expressions of interest open	12 October 2026
Expressions of interest close	20 November 2026
Selection and notification of services	December 2026
Orientation	February 2027
Self-assessment (all Levels)	15 March - 14 May 2027
Desktop assessments (Level 3)	17 May - 18 June 2027
Post-assessment feedback activities	June - July 2027
Findings to inform the next draft of the Standards	July 2027

How to express interest?

Expressions of interest open on Monday 12 October 2026 and close at 11:59PM (AEST) on Friday 20 November 2026.

[Submit your expression of interest through the online form](#)

The form takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Submitting an expression of interest is not a commitment to participate and does not guarantee selection.

The Commission will contact all services that submit an expression of interest to advise the outcome.

For more information

Please visit the [Third Edition Engagement Hub](#) or email NSQHSSThirdEdition@safetyandquality.gov.au

You can also contact the Commission's Advice Centre on 1800 304 056.

To receive project updates, [sign up](#) to the NSQHS Standards (third edition) subscriber list on the Commission's website.

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