

Australian Foyer Foundation Accreditation Framework

(AFFAF) 2021



Australian Foyer Foundation Accreditation Framework

Contents	Page #
The Foyer Foundation	1
Why Foyer Foundation Accreditation?	1
Accreditation Process	2
Multiple Accreditations	2
Re-accreditation	2
Accredited Foyer™ Status	2
Australian Foyer Foundation Accreditation Scheme Eight Quality Standards	3
Assessing the Eight Quality Standards	10
Assessment, Decision Making and Appeals	12

Acknowledgement

Thanks to Colin Falconer and the Accreditation Committee for their work on this framework in 2019/20.



The Foyer Foundation acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

The Foyer Foundation

Youth Foyers are integrated learning and accommodation settings for young people, typically aged between 16 and 24 years, who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Foyers provide a point in time service that enables young people to experience stable housing while developing and exploring educational and employment pathways.



Why Foyer Foundation Accreditation?

There are many excellent models of service delivery in the housing and support sector across Australia, all achieving terrific outcomes for the young people they work with. One of these models, known as the Foyer, originated in France and was further shaped by young people and service delivery providers in the UK and now Australia. The Foyer name is synonymous with some distinctive approaches and therefore varies from other forms of youth housing and support. The Foyer Foundation has been working with young people in Australia and our Foyer pioneers to contextualise a uniquely Australian approach to what constitutes a Foyer and to create transparency for government, funders and residents. Foyers are synonymous with a holistic, empowered, positive multi-sectoral approach to addressing youth homelessness through accommodation, support and education transitioning to independent living. The accreditation framework outlines the quality standards that are achieved by service providers known as Foyers.

The Foyer Foundation was established for two reasons. Firstly, to advance the national campaign for the development of more Youth Foyers across Australia. Secondly, to ensure the integrity and capacity of new and existing Foyers to deliver the best possible outcomes for young people. One way this is achieved is through the accreditation of service providers. The Foyer Foundation is the accrediting authority for Youth Foyers in Australia.

The Foyer name in Australia is trusted to deliver high-quality outcomes for young people and is a robust and successful model in which government and other funders have confidence investing.

This accreditation framework ensures that only service providers meeting the accreditation requirements can use the Accredited Foyer™ name. The Australian Foyer Foundation Accreditation Framework (AFFAF) requires service providers seeking to use the Accredited Foyer™ name to meet eight defined quality standards. The Foyer Foundation is the accrediting authority providing nationally consistent quality standards and an assessment process for service providers.

The AFFAF supports quality data collection related to Foyer impact and is a resource to drive reflective practice to provide government, funders and the wider community with the confidence that each Accredited Foyer™ is delivering on its commitment to young people.

Consistent with the UK Foyer Federation Accreditation Scheme, the AFFAF aims to:

- + Maintain the integrity of the 'Foyer' brand and ethos which residents and funders can trust
- + Ensure young people are clear about what they can expect from a Foyer and the quality of service
- + Support the ongoing development of Foyers and their ability to continuously raise standards
- + Support the professional development of Foyer staff
- + Provide a mechanism to demonstrate accountability, particularly to providers of funding
- + Produce an evidence base that can promote the impact of Foyer services

These aims provide a strong rationale for Youth Foyer services and developers in Australia to invest in Foyer accreditation.

Accreditation Process

Service providers seeking accreditation are required to evaluate themselves against eight quality standard areas and 4 thematic expectations for quality, completing a self-assessment report outlining how they demonstrate each of these.

Evidence to demonstrate how the organisation addresses quality standards and expectations are supplied separately through the published Guidelines for Services Seeking Accreditation, which is provided once an application for accreditation is accepted. The Foyer Foundation appoints a validator assessor to consider a service's assessment documentation and undertake a validation visit of the service provider. Following consideration of documentation and validation visit, the validator assessor drafts a report with findings against the quality standards and expectations along with a recommendation for accreditation or improvement. The Foyer Foundation composes a panel to consider the report and forward a recommendation for accreditation status to the Foyer Foundation Board. If all the quality standards and expectations of the scheme are met, the Foyer Foundation will offer Accredited Foyer™ status for four years.

Multiple Accreditations

The Foyer Foundation acknowledges that in Australia, many youth housing and homelessness services are required to undertake multiple accreditation systems. In the AFFAF there is no intention to create unnecessary duplication or paperwork and requirements acknowledge reciprocal evidence. That is, the AFFAF allows service providers to use their accreditation status under other frameworks against the Foyer quality standards with similar requirements as evidence to support accreditation as a Youth Foyer.

Re-accreditation

The timeline for re-accreditation is condensed when compared to full initial accreditation. Re-accreditation is a streamlined form of accreditation reflecting on performance along with accompanying submission documents. Following consideration of the documents by the validator assessor, re-accreditation is based on a one-day review visit and shorter support timescale, final report and panel outcome. Costs are less accordingly.

Services which have not made efforts to advance their Quality Development Plan, or which have undergone significant staff changes or adaptations to their Foyer Delivery Model may find it advantageous to begin afresh and work towards a two-day validation visit through a 12-month timescale. Services should seek re-accreditation four years after their accreditation or re-accreditation was gained and will be granted a maximum of twelve months to complete the process before their status is considered for removal.

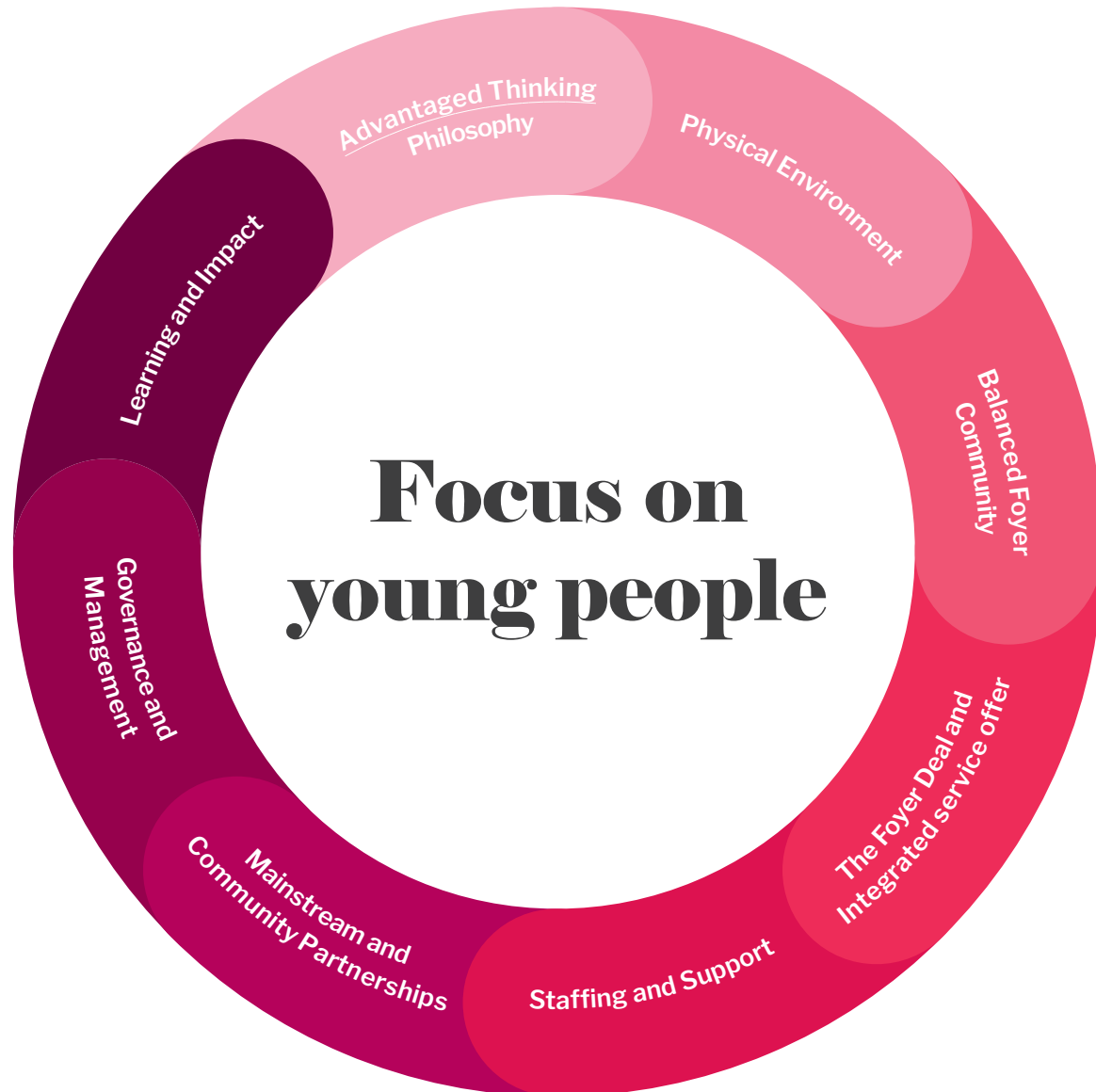
Accredited Foyer™ Status

Accreditation entitles service providers to use the Foyer Foundation accreditation logo in documentation, promotional material and on funding applications. 'Accredited Foyer™' is a certified term which Foyer Foundation licences for the services provided by a Foyer as having met the accreditation standards. This mark and the Foyer Foundation accreditation logo enable external personnel (for example, government bodies, funders or prospective residents) to identify this about a particular foyer and its services. The Foyer Foundation will advocate for all Accredited Foyers™ and residents or students. The Foyer Foundation will offer Accredited Foyer™ status for four years, with services expected to complete a shorter re-accreditation process.

Australian Foyer Foundation Accreditation Framework Eight Quality Standards

The Australian Foyer Foundation Accreditation Framework (AFFAF) covers eight thematic areas that form a distinctive set of quality standards.

The eight quality standards form a comprehensive framework that defines expectations of the Foyer approach while allowing individual Foyers flexibility to respond to their particular communities, residential mix and circumstances. The Foyer approach can be developed with reference to geographical, historical, organisational, resource and innovation differences between services.



The Eight Foyer Quality Standard Areas

*N.B. The concept of reciprocal evidence (for example, using previously gained certification or accreditation or other evidence) can be used in many of these standards.

I Advantaged Thinking Philosophy

Advantaged Thinking represents a paradigm shift in the way we think about and respond to young people experiencing disadvantage. It is a shift away from deficit, disadvantaged or problem-saturated thinking, towards positive thinking and acting. It is focused on identifying, developing and, most importantly, investing in the skills, capabilities and assets of these young people so that they can establish sustainable lives.

An Advantaged Thinking approach recognises that all young people have a vital contribution to make to the social and economic life of our communities and society and they should have access to the opportunities and networks that facilitate this social and economic participation. Rather than investing in these young people's problems, the community needs to re-direct investment into building their abilities or harnessing them for both personal and social good. By making a positive investment in young people, the approach focusses on developing their assets, and on co-creating solutions such as real jobs, real education and real community connections to enable them to achieve independent adulthood.

Fundamentally, the Advantaged Thinking approach challenges us to re-think:

- + the way we see young people
- + the activities and approaches to working with them
- + the way we develop those diverse groups of people who are or will be engaged in promoting and enabling young people to reach their potential
- + how we speak about young people and the use of positive language rather than the language of disadvantage

Advantaged Thinking is not just relevant to the service delivery area of an organisation; it relies on an integrated approach to the delivery of services encompassing staff skills and training, finance and information technology processes, research and policy, and marketing and fundraising. This is reflected in the Seven Tests of Advantaged Thinking. More information about the Seven Tests of Advantaged Thinking is available in the Guidelines for Service Providers Seeking Accreditation.

Example evidence to include in a submission:

- + Youth involvement practices with any practical examples
- + Communication messages, stories or campaigns demonstrating Advantaged Thinking
- + HR training plans and staff support practices that evidence Advantaged Thinking
- + Description of the support model/approach used with young people
- + Feedback gained from young people, staff or stakeholders
- + Data confirming Advantaged Thinking outcomes (which may refer to the data provided for Quality Standard Four)

2 Physical Environment

Foyers should offer inspiring living and working environments that encourage independence, community belonging and wellbeing. This means that services should have high standards of presentation and maintenance, engage young people in their presentation, and demonstrably counter institutional approaches to supported housing.

Foyers should also be culturally safe, welcoming and appropriate, particularly with reference to Aboriginal young people who should feel a strong sense of identity and belonging. This can range from the provision of Aboriginal art, acknowledgement plaques and flags, to designated areas for men's and women's business, yarning circles and smoking ceremonies, and appropriate arrangements for family to stay when visiting.

Example evidence to include in a submission:

*N.B. Consider reciprocal evidence

- + Any promotional images of the service environment
- + Any promotional or planning materials listing features in the service environment
- + Details of plans and budget for refurbishment and upkeep activity
- + Feedback gained from young people, staff or stakeholders

3 Balanced Community

The balanced community considers the mix between different types of need, background and identity. It is important that the Foyer has a measure of control over how the community is constituted. This will help them avoid becoming overstretched in terms of accommodating a large cohort of young people with higher needs and to ensure that the community can benefit from peer role models with young people at different stages of transition. A well-balanced community would evidence a good mix between age groups, culture, identities, support needs and goals. To achieve this, a Foyer should have an effective process for understanding and assessing young people during their entry to the service.

Example evidence to include in a submission:

*N.B. Consider reciprocal evidence

- + Statistics regarding balanced community and rationale
- + Material sent to referral agents that references the balanced community
- + Any procedures or processes used to review and safeguard the community balance
- + Feedback gained from young people, staff or stakeholders
- + Data confirming the make up of the Foyer community

4 Integrated Offer and Deal

An integrated offer refers to the holistic elements that make up a Foyer's investment in young people. At a minimum, the integrated offer covers provision that supports young people's goals for education, work, health, civic participation, financial literacy, independence, and housing.

A key part of the Foyer integrated offer is the provision of a Foyer Deal, which expresses a positive, person-centred form of conditionality. It is not a transactional relationship shaped around terms of punishment, but a dynamic contract that invests in an individual's growth and potential. For many Foyers, this deal may be associated with participation in training and education, to develop aspiration, and potential for sustainable independence.

The offer should integrate through a regular timetable of activities and through a 1-1 support and development plan that tracks young people's growth in key areas. The activities may be delivered on site at the Foyer and/or through other specialist providers in the local community.

It is important that services can also embrace the needs of Aboriginal young people and express the Foyer Deal in a culturally safe way while it's understood as an agreement involving community Elders.

Recommended features of the Foyer Deal include the following:

- + It should express an Advantaged Thinking investment in the whole person that is greater than the provision of temporary housing and support
- + Operation of the deal should be integrated across Foyer policies and procedures rather than limited to a tenancy agreement
- + The entry needs and assessment process should be used to develop the initial scope of the deal
- + The deal should be personalised to the needs, abilities and goals of each young person, allowing them sufficient time to make a positive transition
- + The deal should have clear and transparent terms
- + There should be a process to measure young people's commitment to the deal and development throughout their stay using a range of holistic indicators
- + Staff should be trained on how to develop the deal throughout the young person's stay
- + There should be a process linking positive incentives with a young person's commitment to the deal
- + The complaints policy should allow young people and stakeholders to raise issues about the deal

Examples of the Foyer Deal can be demonstrated by previously Accredited Foyers™ identified by the Foyer Foundation.

Example evidence to include in a submission:

- + The Foyer offer, publicised through a timetable of activity and/or other materials
- + The 1-1 support plan template and process or guidance notes to show how support includes reflecting on involvement in the offer and deal
- + Communication of the deal through any policy or the tenancy agreement, house rules, charter, handbook, exit review, or adaption of the deal into a more culturally appropriate format
- + Procedures used for dealing with non-engagement
- + Feedback gained from young people, staff or stakeholders
- + Data confirming outcomes across the Foyer service offer

5 Staffing and Support

Staffing levels will vary from Foyer to Foyer, but should fit the requirement that young people, while enjoying an experience of independent living, can access appropriate support at times that fit their lifestyle. Support should be grounded through a comprehensive 1-1 support and development plan by which staff enable young people to set and reflect on goals that cover the integrated offer areas. In some cases, staff may use separate plans to support specialist areas such as health and wellbeing, education and employability, rental payments or behavioural issues. Support should enable staff to adopt a coaching approach that invests

in young people's personal growth. Specific staff teams in dedicated areas such as housing, security, 1-1 support, and training and involvement should share a common approach that expresses an Advantaged Thinking approach.

As noted in the quality standard expectations, a strong Foyer should aspire to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Island staff members to best meet the needs of young people from indigenous backgrounds. There are also additional expectations for all staff to receive cultural awareness training and have trauma informed expertise to respond to the specific needs and experiences of young people.

Example evidence to include in a submission:

*N.B. Consider reciprocal evidence

- + Organisational structure, with staff names, job descriptions and rota
- + Staff training offer/plans and supervision model (see evidence for Advantaged Thinking)
- + Staff meeting agenda and minutes from two recent meetings
- + Feedback gained from young people, staff or stakeholders
- + Good industrial practices regarding HR and industrial principles
- + Data confirming 1-1 caseload sizes and numbers of staff who left in the year

6 Mainstream and Community Partnerships

To provide young people with a sustainable offer, Foyers must build effective partnerships with both mainstream and community providers. These partnerships will reflect the different areas of the offer. Foyers that are outward-looking will continue to seek positive relationships with organisations that can contribute to young people's experience across the offer areas. While traditional partnerships in housing and education will

form the bedrock of the Foyer's relationships, these should be extended wherever possible to embrace other mainstream and community partnerships working in key areas such as health and employability. These partnerships should also recognise the importance of connecting with Aboriginal Community controlled organisations to ensure that Aboriginal young people have secure community contacts with Elders and the Aboriginal culture to support their future move.

Example evidence to include in a submission:

*N.B. Consider reciprocal evidence

- + List of current partners with evidence/advice of what the partnership does for the Foyer and their residents/students
- + List of historical partners where different to the above
- + Examples of and procedures for promoting and signposting to external partner opportunities
- + Feedback gained from young people, staff or stakeholders

Governance and Management

Arrangements for governance and management should ideally reflect the integrated offer at the heart of the Foyer with a board that can oversee the different areas of expertise required to deliver the offer. This will help ensure the Foyer is managed as a Youth Foyer, with a broad focus that understands the importance of its performance beyond traditional measures for supported housing.

Governance arrangements should also ensure adequate forms of representation from young people. This can be achieved through a variety of means including processes that ensure feedback from young people to more direct forms of representation. Governance and management arrangements of responsible fiscal management provide confidence in the sustainability of the Foyer and in the value of investing funding in Foyer arrangements.

Finally, governance should ensure that the Foyer's performance is monitored on a regular basis to pick up and respond to any concerns or opportunities. Where the Foyer sits inside a larger organisation's governance structure, there should still be appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the Foyer is being managed as a Foyer and not just generic housing provision.

For management to safeguard operations in an uncertain funding environment, it is important to ensure the sustainability of the Foyer approach through opportunities for external influence. Foyers that take on greater responsibility as sector leaders will actively engage with opportunities to campaign for more Advantaged Thinking youth provision. At the same time as being externally focused, Foyers should also seek to embed a strong internal service culture that can withstand future shocks, and develop a contingency plan to cope with identified funding risks.

A Quality Development Plan is a key element of management that defines how the organisation has identified and is progressing in the areas for improvement and risk management.

Services that have a strong operational culture, are externally connected, can show the relevance of its impact and have considered how to deal with changes are more likely to sustain their vision and ethos into the future.

Example evidence to include in a submission:

*N.B. Consider reciprocal evidence

- + Certification from other accreditation body with robust governance requirements, or
- + Copy or extract from most recent annual report confirming governance structure, audited financials etc
- + Report or specific information on the Foyer regularly provided to the governance body (board or committee)
- + Policy and or procedure for governance of the organisation or services are documented
- + Policy and or procedure governing the participation of young people in governance

Learning and impact

Inherent to the Foyer approach is a focus on outcomes, data collection and service delivery to improve outcomes for young people. Accredited Foyers™ will form part of a community of Foyers. There is a mutually beneficial expectation that some data will be shared with the Foyer Foundation to ensure national advocacy. Foyers evaluate their services and impact so they can continuously improve and innovate. Data collection and analysis practices will be informed by the context in which the Foyer operates and the community balance of residents.

Note that in Australia there is considerable research regarding housing support and community service impact analysis. Under this, standard participation in Australian impact framework models may be used for reciprocal evidence purposes.

Example evidence to include in a submission:

- + A data return that meets the requirements for Accreditation
- + A supporting statement that explains any performance trends
- + Participation in the National Community of Practice and continuing use of the Quality Development Plan
- + Stories of young people's impact through case studies or other material
- + Feedback gained from young people, staff or stakeholders
- + Any other sources of information referred to in the 'Expectations for Supporting Evidence'

Assessing the Eight Quality Standards

When the Validation Assessor undertakes validation visits, assesses the evidence and writes the validation report, there will be some core themes of focus. It's worth noting that while Advantaged Thinking is the first quality standard, it also underpins each of the other seven quality standards. This is specifically demonstrated through Foyers showcasing the experience of young people, through specific policies and procedures, and through use of the learning and outcomes in all aspects of operations.

Expectations Underpinning the Eight Quality Standards:

The Validation Assessor will evaluate evidence that the Foyer approach is embedded in the organisation's operations by focusing on four thematic areas of evidence referred to as quality 'expectations':

- 1 Through the experience of young people
- 2 Through specific policies and procedures
- 3 Through supporting evidence indicating strategies to evaluate and improve on impact
- 4 Through recognition of culture (for young people from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander backgrounds)

1 Young People

A focus on young people lies at the heart of the accreditation framework and is expected to be illustrated through each standard, which is designed into the overall assessment and validation process. Young people are fully involved in the validation visit, their feedback carries significant weight in the final report, and Foyers are encouraged to consult with young people throughout their assessment.

2 Policies and Procedures

A Foyer is one of many services run by an organisation but an assessment may refer to more general policies and procedures. The assessment must still evidence how the service is able to deliver a specific Foyer ethos by reflecting on the required Foyer approach and assessment criteria. If generic policies do not support a Foyer approach or Advantaged Thinking philosophy, a service must demonstrate how it adapts these in practice.

3 Supporting Evidence

Until such time that the Foyer Foundation publish future plans for a Foyer Impact framework, services will be asked to submit an Accreditation data return that meets the specific requirements for supporting evidence in each Quality Standard as published in the Guidelines for Services Seeking Accreditation. This evidence may be submitted in different ways depending on how the service collects and reports on the relevant data required.

4 Recognition of Culture (for young people from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander backgrounds)

The AFFAF is able to embrace special expectations for delivery which may form a service's main focus or part of its focus. The first of these is for young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, for which additional assessment is required alongside the three core evidence expectations (young people, policies and procedures, and supporting evidence). The Foyer Foundation's vision is for all Foyers to fully embrace and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. An expectation for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and communities has thus been embedded within each quality standard area as a compulsory requirement, recognising the importance of cultural appropriateness and self-determination across a Foyer's Advantaged Thinking approach.

Other considerations

National Foyer Community of Practice – continued learning and improvement

Accredited Foyers™ are expected to participate in the National Foyer Community of Practice. They must share performance data to sustain accreditation, with a lighter touch four yearly re-accreditation process. The re-accreditation will allow the Foyer to reflect on achievements, challenges and undertake a review with the Foyer Foundation's Accreditation assessor to discuss the Foyer's progress. The four-yearly cycle offers services an opportunity to make effective use of their Quality Development Plan to support ongoing improvements. An outline format for this review is included in section two of the Accreditation Guide.

Peer Support

The Foyer Foundation will help signpost services to examples of good practice within its network to illustrate all areas of the quality standards and offer connections to Foyer managers who have been through Accreditation to offer peer guidance on the self-assessment process. The Community of Practice will also provide a forum for services to reflect on different areas of the accreditation scheme, using the quality standards as a curriculum for ongoing service development. Foyer accreditation guidance documents include information that details specific features from the quality standards for those services unfamiliar with some of the concepts behind the scheme, including suggested items that might be included in a service's evidence for submission.

Quality Development Plan

All organisations are expected to have a plan that identifies the priorities for development and improvement in the context of the mission and purpose as well as risk management.

Assessment, Decision Making and Appeals

Services, and the Validation Assessor will consider the Foyer approach, assessment criteria, and expectations for evidence, against five levels of assessment:

- 1 **Strongly Agree** (an area of strength – recognised externally or identified through feedback or visit – with a demonstrable track record)
- 2 **Agree** (a secure area – consistent practice that can be demonstrated is scored mostly equally, and the service is confident about)
- 3 **Partly Agree/Disagree** (there are mixed strengths and challenges – differences of opinion in feedback and between scores – not always consistent – still under development)
- 4 **Disagree** (there are missing elements for further or future development / practice not sustainable or present / evidence of low scores)
- 5 **Strongly Disagree** (an area that is a challenge or gap; something the service does not do or do well, or what is in place is inadequate)

Foyers will be endorsed for accreditation as either 'strong', 'secure', or 'developing' pending on the quality of assessment and validation visit. Where Foyers are not endorsed, they may be judged as 'pending specified actions to achieve accreditation' or 'not ready to be endorsed'. Services that are not endorsed may continue with the process to seek accreditation over a longer timescale.

The accreditation report will inform the Accreditation Panel how services have engaged in the accreditation process with an assessment of service quality against each quality standard area based on evidence from the service's submission and the validation visit. An overall recommendation for endorsement will also be made which the Accreditation Panel will decide upon based on a panel meeting held by the Foyer Foundation and which the assessor will present reports for consideration. The Accreditation Panel consists of a chair with representatives from the Foyer Foundation, Foyer network and external stakeholders. Details on membership of the panel can be accessed from the Foyer Foundation.

Decisions will be based on:

- 1 Scrutiny of Foyer approach, assessment criteria, the expectations for young people, policies and procedures, impact, and expectations for Aboriginal young people, based on the evidence provided along with feedback and insights generated through the validation visit and performance data
- 2 Consistency in and between assessment scores, evidence, and proposed Quality Development Plan actions
- 3 The depth, realism and ambition of the service's Quality Development Plan as a tool for ongoing service improvement
- 4 The engagement of the service in the Community of Practice and Accreditation process, including the quality of its submission

- 5 The geographical and resource context for each service, which may influence possible achievements
- 6 A re-accrediting service's experience since the last accreditation report, including reflections on achievements and challenges
- 7 The ability of a re-accrediting service to continue to uphold the quality standards, noting any increases or decreases in assessment
- 8 Emerging insights and trends generated through a re-accrediting service's data and supporting evidence.

Services will be given 14 days to appeal against the panel decision should they provide evidence that the panel report does not present an accurate view of the service due to clear and identifiable inaccuracies in the report findings, or misinterpretations or distortions of the available evidence. There are no other grounds for appeal. Appeals must be made in writing to the Foyer Foundation, with final decisions made by the chair of the accreditation panel within 21 days from receipt of the appeal.