



BUSINESS EXCELLENCE CASE STUDY

DEPARTMENT FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES, QLD

THE ROLE OF THE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE
FRAMEWORK IN DES

March 2007

Executive Summary

The Department for Emergency Services Queensland (DES) recognises that the real purpose of applying the Business Excellence Framework is through living the principles, assessing themselves / undergoing guided self assessment and improving to sustain outcomes for stakeholders. Awards, while appreciated, are a secondary consequence that brings much goodwill and recognition in addition to vital feedback from the independent Evaluator teams. DES applies the Framework across the entire department as the basis for its drive towards business excellence through continuous quality improvement, and is possibly the largest organisation in Australia to do so.

Background of the Client

Prior to 1997, there was a modest range of improvement processes in place, being either ISO-oriented, or equipment / process-specific. In the mid-nineties the Queensland Government floated the possibility of a common approach to improving the quality of service delivery. Under the current banner of Smart State, Queensland public sector agencies are encouraged to engage in a range of processes, all aimed at improvement. In 1997, the Queensland Ambulance Service first adopted the Business Excellence Framework as the basis of its quality journey, and initial successes there were then emulated across the entire department over time. The need for best quality outcomes in the Emergency Services is somewhat axiomatic, aside from the vision of the senior executives of the time, and now.

Situation

Today, the DES continues to provide a wide range of emergency services from within a single agency. The focus remains on the delivery of core business, with many supporting processes including a flexible but common approach to the attainment of business excellence continuing to mature and enhance the long term success and sustainability of the DES. The Business Excellence Framework plays an important role in this.

Key Outcomes

There are many positive consequences of the use of the Framework across the performance measures. Starting with one of the five divisions (Ambulance), the use of the Framework has been progressively applied to the rest, and now, at whole of departmental level as well. Numerous improvements have been undertaken following organizational self assessments. The department's achievements in Australian Business Excellence Awards are shown below:

- Genesis 1997
- 1999 – QAS (Qld Ambulance Service) – recognised at Progress Towards Business Excellence level
- 2001 - QAS – recognised at Progress Towards Business Excellence level
- 2001 – QFRS (Qld. Fire and Rescue Service) - – recognised at Progress Towards Business Excellence level
- 2003 – CDRS (Counter Disaster and Rescue Service) - – recognised at Finalist Award level
- 2005 – BSS (Business Support Services) - no recognition
- 2005 – SP&ES (Strategic Policy and Executive Services) - no recognition
- 2005 – QAS – recognised at Bronze Award level
- 2005 – DES Guided Self Assessment (whole of Department)
- 2006 – QFRS – recognised at Finalist Award level
- 2006 – QFRS – winner of Strategy and Planning Category Award

SAI Global Solution

Staff have undergone a range of training courses offered by SAI Global and its predecessor in Business excellence to develop capacity. This has grown over the years to result in almost 20 organisational self assessments (OSA), and in 2005 for the first time, the conduct of a Guided Self Assessment (GSA) at whole of department level. Both the OSAs and the GSA have proven to be invaluable in identifying strengths and opportunities for improvement, as have the submission of evidence of improvement through the Australian Business Excellence Awards.

Acknowledgements

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