CAB & Auditor Newsletter

Issue #1, Qtr. 3, 2025

The Australian Community Industry Alliance (ACIA) is pleased to launch this dedicated quarterly update for Certified Auditing Bodies and Auditors.

As a key partner in upholding quality and safety across community care services, your role is essential to the integrity and impact of the ACIS certification system. Through this newsletter, we aim to keep you informed of important updates, policy changes, best practice insights, and shared learnings that support consistent, high-quality auditing across the sector.

Together, we ensure that providers continue to meet the rigorous standards expected under ACIS, delivering trusted care to individuals supported by personal injury schemes and beyond. We appreciate your ongoing collaboration and commitment to excellence.

Clarifying Surveillance Audit Requirements under ACIS 5.0

To support consistency and uphold the integrity of the ACIS 5.0 Scheme, ACIA is providing clarification on the expectations for Surveillance Audits, following recent variations in how audit scope and applicable standards have been interpreted and applied.

As outlined in Section 7.9 of the ACIS 5.0 Scheme, Certification Bodies are reminded of the following key requirements:

- **Timing**: Surveillance Audits must occur within 18 months of the most recent Certification Audit (Clause 7.9.1).
- **Audit Team Composition**: A single audit team leader may conduct the audit, provided they are an AHPRA-registered nurse (with no restrictions on practice) and appropriately skilled for the service's size and complexity (Clause 7.9.2).
- **Scope of the Audit** (Clause 7.9.3): Every Surveillance Audit must include assessment of:
    - Corporate Governance and Clinical Governance standards
    - Any standards previously identified as non-conformant
    - Additional standards based on risk, proportionality, and past findings

Audits must not be scoped too narrowly, omitting these minimum elements, nor should they be unnecessarily broad, imposing additional costs or burden on providers. The scope should reflect a risk-based, proportionate approach, with clear rationale for any inclusion beyond the minimum requirements.

While formal consultation is not being initiated at this time, ACIA welcomes individual discussions with Certification Bodies seeking further clarification or wishing to review their current approach.

Surveillance Audits and Scope Changes under ACIS 5.0

ACIA wishes to advise all Certified Auditing Bodies and Auditors of an important update regarding surveillance audits conducted under the ACIS framework effective immediately:

Surveillance Audits – Use of ACIS 5.0 Standards
All surveillance audits must continue to be conducted using the ACIS 5.0 standards, regardless of whether the provider is certified under ACIS 4.0.

- This approach ensures consistency across audits and reflects the streamlined and clarified structure of ACIS 5.0.
- In these cases, no changes to the provider's existing ACIS 4.0 certificate are required.

Addition to Scope – Certification Update Required
Where a provider requests an addition to scope as part of a surveillance audit:

- The provider must be assessed and certified against ACIS 5.0 for the full scope.
- A new certificate must be issued, clearly stating certification to ACIS 5.0.
- The provider's original certification dates will remain unchanged.
- Auditors must review and assess any major changes between ACIS 4.0 and ACIS 5.0 to ensure compliance across the expanded scope.

To support this process, a mapping document is attached outlining key differences between ACIS 4.0 and ACIS 5.0, with relevant Quality Indicators highlighted for your attention. Please note that some of the changes are fully equivalent to the NDIS Practice Standards. Where such equivalence applies, no additional work may be required if the ACIS and NDIS audits are conducted concurrently.

Please ensure all relevant audit personnel are informed and these requirements are reflected in your processes. While formal consultation is not being initiated at this time, ACIA welcomes individual discussions with Certification Bodies seeking further clarification or wishing to review their current approach.

[Mapping - ACIS 4.0 to ACIS 5.0]

[Equivalence Policy]

Audit Reporting Timeframes

ACIA recently sought input from Certified Auditing Bodies (CABs) regarding audit reporting timeframes under the ACIS Scheme. Thank you to those who responded — we received one detailed submission and are now providing a summary of the feedback received to give all CABs a final opportunity to contribute before changes are considered.

Current Framework:
The ACIS Scheme currently requires:

- Audit reports (including corrective actions) must be provided to the Service Provider within 15 business days of the audit.
- Certification decisions — including the Certificate, Certification Report, and Self-Assessment — must be provided to ACIA within 10 business days of the decision.

While these are maximum timeframes, they do not define standard or recommended processing times, or indicate how long it should take between providing the audit report to the provider and a certification decision.

Feedback Summary:
The CAB who responded noted that:

- Turnaround times vary, depending on auditor schedules and internal compliance resource availability. It may take 2–3 weeks or more before audit reports reach the compliance team.
- Internal review processes (compliance and certification review) can add 1–2 additional weeks, particularly when staff have competing responsibilities.
- Delays may occur when service providers are slow to submit Corrective Action Plans (CAP) or when updates to certificate templates are required (e.g., after standard upgrades).
- A proposed standard was suggested:
    - CAP returned by provider within 1 week
    - Draft report issued within 10 business days of CAP
    - Internal compliance and certification processes complete within another 2–3 weeks
    - Certification sent to ACIA within 35 business days of the audit
- The CAB also expressed interest in joining a Teams discussion to explore solutions collaboratively.

We Want to Hear From You
Before finalising any updates to audit reporting expectations, we invite all CABs to:

- Share whether you agree with the proposed timeframes
- Suggest alternative benchmarks or highlight additional barriers
- Confirm your interest in joining a short-term working group (via Microsoft Teams)

Please send your feedback by Friday, 26 July 2025. We aim to convene the discussion group in early August. Your input is critical to supporting consistency, fairness, and quality across the ACIS certification process. Thank you for your continued partnership.

Clarifying Audit Scope and ACIS Relevant Clients

ACIA recently received feedback from a CAB highlighting some challenges in interpreting the scope of ACIS certification audits, especially in cases where

providers support clients funded by schemes that do not mandate ACIS certification.

The CAB noted confusion among auditors and providers around how to determine which clients and funding sources are relevant for inclusion in the ACIS audit scope. Specifically, questions were raised about the inclusion of non-mandatory funders such as TAC and Comcare, and whether they should be listed as ACIS-relevant clients.

We encourage all CAB's to refer to the existing policy document, ACIA External 025 – ACIS Relevant Clients (ACIS 5.0), which:

- Defines the term *ACIS Relevant Clients* and its purpose across audit processes
- Lists recognised scheme funders: icare (NSW), MAIB (Tas), LSA (SA), TAC (Vic), and Comcare (Commonwealth)
- Includes privately funded clients
- Clarifies that other client groups may be included at a provider's discretion, if aligned with audit objectives
- Emphasises that clients and sites outside the defined scope should only be included if allowed under equivalence provisions

This document is designed to assist CAB's in pre-audit planning, client sampling, and scope determination.

We appreciate the feedback received and encourage CAB's to ensure audit teams are familiar with this policy. ACIA is committed to maintaining the integrity of the Scheme and ensuring clarity in how ACIS audits are conducted.

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ACIS Relevant Clients - ACIS 5.0

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Access to ACIA's Reviewed Practice Guidelines

ACIA's recently updated Practice Guidelines are now available through the ACIA's Member Portal. These Practice Guidelines reflect our commitment to supporting consistent, evidence-informed, and high-quality service delivery across the community care sector.

They are designed to assist providers in aligning with best practice in areas such as medication management, clinical governance, complex care guidance and more.

To access the Practice Guidelines, become a member today. Individual and organisational memberships are available

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ACIA's Practice Guidelines

Become an ACIA Member

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