



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr A Tantari MP—Chair
Mr SA Bennett MP
Mr MC Berkman MP
Ms CL Lui MP
Dr MA Robinson MP
Mr RCJ Skelton MP

Staff present:

Ms L Pretty—Committee Secretary
Dr A Lilley—Assistant Committee Secretary

PUBLIC BRIEFING—INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION AND REGULATION OF SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION IN QUEENSLAND

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Monday, 29 April 2024

Brisbane

MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2024

The committee met at 11.29 am.

CHAIR: I declare open this public briefing for the committee's inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland. My name is Adrian Tantari. I am the member for Hervey Bay and chair of the committee. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay our respects to elders past and present. We are very fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose lands, winds and waters we all share.

With me today are Mr Stephen Bennett, the member for Burnett and the deputy chair of the committee; Mr Michael Berkman, the member for Maiwar; Ms Cynthia Lui, the member for Cook; Dr Mark Robinson, the member for Oodgeroo; and Mr Rob Skelton, the member for Nicklin. This briefing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. Only the committee and invited witnesses may participate in the proceedings. Witnesses are not required to give evidence under oath or affirmation but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. I also remind members of the public that they may be excluded from the briefing at the discretion of the committee.

These proceedings are being recorded and broadcast live on the parliament's website. Media may be present and are subject to the committee's media rules and the chair's direction at all times. You may be filmed or photographed during the proceedings and images may also appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. I ask everybody to please turn your mobile phones off or to silent mode if you have not already done so.

CREARIE, Ms Mary, Executive Director, Housing and Homelessness Services, Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

FRANK, Mr Karl, Executive Director, Regulatory Services, Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

GREEN, Mr Terry, Acting Director, Regulatory Services, Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

HARVIE, Ms Kirstine, General Manager, Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

McALLISTER, Ms Danielle, Deputy Director-General; Policy, Performance and First Nations; Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

TOOMBES, Ms Ngaio, Director, Strategic Analysis, Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

CHAIR: I now welcome representatives from the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works. Ms McAllister, as Deputy Director-General, would you like to make an opening statement before we start our questions?

Ms McAllister: I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Turrbal and Yagara people, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. The department welcomes the opportunity to provide a further briefing to the 27 November 2023 briefing that was at the time provided by the former department of housing. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their support in clarifying and correcting data provided by the Residential Tenancies Authority that was referred to in the 27 November 2023 briefing and to thank the committee for enabling an extension of time for the provision of the department's response to submissions to the inquiry so that we could effectively consider the over 90 submissions. I also want to update the committee that, as at 31 March 2024, there are 254 registered services with a maximum capacity of 7,487.

Public Briefing—Inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland

I particularly want to recognise and call out the great value of the submissions provided by the sector and, critically, the residents of supported accommodation. We thank Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion and the Queenslanders with Disability Network for their invaluable work supporting those residents. The dedicated work of QAI and QDN to support residents is directly attributable to 96 per cent of the published submissions by current and former residents. The department has carefully reviewed all the publicly available submissions to the inquiry and has considered all of those views in its response. We recognise that the views of residents aligned closely with the issues identified in the Public Advocate's report, *Safe, secure and affordable? The need for an inquiry into supported accommodation in Queensland*, and in some instances brought to light matters of concern from a regulatory perspective. I want to assure the committee that the department recognises the seriousness of many of the themes identified within the submissions and is taking appropriate compliance action to address those matters.

The depth of insight that the submissions from residents have provided will also be critical to informing ongoing regulatory compliance activity as well as the Queensland government response to this inquiry and the subsequent review of the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002. We also recognise that the issues identified by residents in their submissions showed a diverse range of attitudes towards their residencies or tenancies and, in some instances, showed constraints in terms of alternative options.

Homes for Queenslanders was released in February 2024 and commits to building more homes faster through a funding uplift of an initial \$3.1 billion and sets a target of one million new homes by 2046, including 53,500 social homes. This is a long-term plan with responses for the entire housing system. There are over 50 initiatives within that plan, but some specific commitments relevant to the committee's inquiry include the investigation of a supportive housing development at Ivory Street, more supported accommodation in the regions, nine supported accommodation sites for families, 20 supported accommodation sites for individuals, 10 new or replacement shelters for people experiencing domestic and family violence, and eight supported accommodation sites for young people.

These commitments are in addition to many of the Queensland government's supportive housing initiatives and projects that have emerged through innovation, including Brisbane Common Ground, established in July 2012, and Supportive Housing for Families Project, which is a dispersed site model of 20 properties head leased from the private market in two central Brisbane locations that combines multidisciplinary support and property and tenancy management for families with at least one child under five years of age who are at risk of homelessness and in contact with the child protection system. The department is also currently progressing works to develop an 18-unit purpose-built facility in South Brisbane into which this service will be expanded. This capital project is currently out to tender and works on site will commence this calendar year.

The supported and sustainable housing project initiated in December 2020 is trialling an integrated supportive accommodation model on the Gold Coast with onsite supports to 19 units of accommodation at a department owned property in Labrador. As part of the first stage of the Southport Priority Development Area housing precinct, the supportive housing development called the West Tower will include up to 150 homes with access to wraparound services that could include onsite health as well as employment support to transition from social assisted living to independent living.

We recognise the views put forward by residential service providers in their submissions highlighting their role in providing supportive accommodation to vulnerable people who have often been referred to the service by Queensland government agencies. We note the challenges they have identified with maintaining and enhancing service viability and acknowledge concerns regarding capacity to adapt to additional regulatory obligations. We also recognise the desire of some providers to further evolve their service model to more closely align with contemporary supportive housing approaches.

Another commitment under Homes for Queenslanders is the development of a new supportive housing policy and framework to be developed in consultation with services on the front line, which will guide our investment into the future. This work will consider the outcomes of this inquiry as well as the broader context of the independent review of homelessness response in Queensland that commenced on 21 March 2024.

Finally, I recognise submissions from the wider sector and their calls for a contemporary person-centred supported accommodation framework that variously aligns with the Human Rights Act 2019, the Human Services Quality Framework, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities and the broader context of the recommendations of the disability royal Brisbane

commission and the NDIS review. These views will be important in framing the review of the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002. Additional to this review, Homes for Queenslanders continues a commitment to modernising the broader housing legislative framework. This includes the continued delivery of reforms to strengthen renters' rights and help stabilise the private rental market. It is currently at the committee stage before the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee.

I look forward to reviewing the committee's report and note that the Queensland government's response is required to be tabled before 6 September 2024. I trust that information has answered some of the queries from the committee but, together with my colleagues here, I welcome any further questions from the committee.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms McAllister.

Mr BENNETT: Thank you for that comprehensive opening statement, which probably developed more questions for me than I started with. Most of our investigations have been around the residential service providers, apart from Common Ground. The list of properties that you read out in your statement will be in *Hansard* but can that be provided to the committee or is it still in commercial-in-confidence?

Ms McAllister: Many of those are committed in Homes for Queenslanders and otherwise are public commitments.

Mr BENNETT: So they are constructed by the department of housing or go out to tender in some machination of that and then it is for the private sector to run or will they be run within a government framework?

Ms McAllister: I think it would vary, but Mary might want to add to that.

Ms Crearie: Some of them will be run by a community housing organisation, for example, in partnership with a support provider. It will depend on the particular model and cohort that is determined once those projects have been fully developed.

Mr BENNETT: So we are going to build a building and then look at what is the best outcome for service delivery; we are not doing that at the front end?

Ms Crearie: We do. The process that we tend to use is led by our housing delivery colleagues, but they do very much look to trying to procure a partner to work with in the first instance so they can have a co-design process so that the accommodation is suitable.

Mr BENNETT: I understood there were 42 level 3 services run by not-for-profits in Queensland; is that right? In your opening statement you mentioned 252 service providers that the department works with. Did I misquote that?

Mr Frank: That is for all level 1, 2 and 3.

Mr BENNETT: So there are 250-odd?

Mr Frank: Yes.

Ms LUI: Thank you, panel, for this morning. I understand the department appoints inspectors under the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act. In November 2023 you advised that you have five inspectors to undertake inspections of level 1, 2 and 3 residential services across the state. Is that number still current?

Mr Frank: Yes, it is. That is right.

Ms LUI: Are inspectors conducting random inspections as well as investigating complaints?

Mr Frank: Yes, that is right.

Ms LUI: What is currently the average response time between receiving a complaint and visiting the residential service?

Mr Frank: That would depend on the type of complaint that came in. All complaints that come through generally come through our phone or our email contact channel. We have a team upfront that kind of triages them to have a look at the severity and the impacts of the complaint on residents. They are prioritised accordingly. With the more serious or higher risk issues that come in, we try to attend to them between three and five working days. Generally, that would mean a visit to the provider to actually have a look, talk to the provider, talk to the resident and really understand as much as we can about what the issue is.

Ms McAllister: To add to that, across the whole regulatory services unit there are 35 full-time equivalent positions. Under Karl's leadership, we have been looking at how we use those FTEs. It is across four key industry sectors: residential services, community housing, retirement villages and residential parks. We are looking at how we are utilising all of those resources.

CHAIR: That was 35 full-time equivalents?

Ms McAllister: Correct.

Dr ROBINSON: In terms of the department of housing register, I note there is currently only one accreditation of residential services that has restrictions recorded. Is that accurate and current? How do you account for that, if that is the case?

Mr Frank: I would have to check exactly what is on there. I have not looked today. My understanding is that that is current. Some of those do come on and off as we go, so it is not as if they are put on and they stay there for, say, three years, until the next renewal. It would depend on what the conditions were for the accreditation. For example, we recently had one where we put certain restrictions on for food service. They had to make sure that, over a period of two weeks, each day we were provided with photographs of the food being offered and they showed us the menus to ensure that we had a good variety of food over that period and we had the quality of food. Once they have brought their service standards up to a specific level, then we would remove the restrictions off their accreditation. My understanding is that right now we do have only the one.

Mr SKELTON: At a number of site visits the committee heard of external NDIS services provided that were substandard or bordering on fraudulent in terms of the difference between services promised and what is delivered. If the department receives a complaint about an NDIS service or is made aware of substandard service provision what happens?

Mr Frank: At an operational level there is a good working relationship between the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works. With respect to concerns about substandard NDIS services, if this is identified by officers from our department, we make direct contact with the officers in the quality and safeguards commission to give them a bit of a heads-up of what they need to look for. Both the NDIS and the department have access to legislative powers to obtain information from others as well. From an NDIS perspective, they have section 55A of the NDIS Act and we have section 57 and section 60 of the Fair Trading Inspectors Act, so we can acquire that information from others if we need to.

With respect to fees, if there was an issue around fees and what has been charged, that is not something we regulate or actually have access to. That is not something that would come in front of us. Conversely, if the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission found something that was within our jurisdiction, they would get on the phone and generally talk directly to our officers. Most of the issues that have been raised have been around unregistered services. They are reported to us and we will go out and investigate accordingly.

Mr BERKMAN: My question follows on from the end of that answer. If the accreditation of a residential service expires can they continue to operate? If so, for how long will that service be identified on the department's website as a service without that accreditation being renewed?

Mr Frank: They should not be operating if their accreditation has expired. Most of the time we are given a heads-up with respect to any potential residential services that are looking to cancel their registration or not continue it. That could be from the sale of the property or not wanting to run it any further. There is generally a 30-day period if that is the case. We would work closely with them and work with our partners in the housing service centre to find alternative accommodation for residents if we need to. They should not be operating if they are not accredited.

Mr BERKMAN: Further to that—and please correct me if I am wrong, Chair, or the secretariat might pull me up—I understood that one of the facilities we visited is identified on the website as currently having its accreditation expired and that happened some time ago. That is my understanding.

Mr BENNETT: In 2021.

Mr BERKMAN: Yes. Is there an explanation for that? If they are not supposed to be operating without accreditation or outside a 30-day window, that seems like a troubling reality.

Mr Frank: I am not aware of that one at present, but if there was more information—maybe after the hearing—I could get from you I would definitely check in with that and I would be happy to report back.

Mr BENNETT: Maybe offline. We do not want to embarrass—

CHAIR: After we complete the public hearing, we could go into a private hearing.

Mr Frank: I am happy to do that and provide information back to the committee.

Mr BERKMAN: You would be well aware of the federal inquiry that made some findings that are quite directly relevant to supported accommodation, although I think the term used in their report is the Victorian model. Can you offer the committee any reflections in terms of how the department views those recommendations, what are the direct implications for our supported accommodation model and what work the department is doing in response?

Ms McAllister: Just to clarify, are you talking about the royal commission?

Mr BERKMAN: Yes, sorry. It is not an inquiry. The royal commission is the one I mean. Thank you.

Ms McAllister: We certainly are considering the recommendations from the royal commission. Clearly, there is a whole range of recommendations that will expand right across government. The department of communities, seniors and disability services is the Queensland lead taking that whole-of-government approach. We are working very closely with them. Recommendation 7.38 speaks to the minimum service standards and monitoring and oversight of supportive residential services and their equivalents which we are certainly considering as part of that overall response. It is that period where there are a number of pieces coming together such as this inquiry, the development of Homes for Queenslanders and the focus in there on supportive accommodation and the whole system as well. We are pulling all of those pieces together to consider what the department's position will be in moving forward.

CHAIR: I have a question. Deputy Director-General, I was a part of the committee that visited the Brisbane Common Ground in South Brisbane and, to be quite honest, after visiting a number of supported accommodations across the state, this was very impressive. I was very impressed by it. Obviously there are some arguments about the cost-effectiveness of having a building such as that. Is the department planning on developing any more projects similar to that model?

Ms McAllister: As I spoke to in the opening statement, there are a range of models that are currently being considered to take forward, a number of commitments that the government has made under Homes for Queenslanders. As Mary spoke to before, we will be exploring what particular models for those particular locations for the particular cohorts we need to look into or develop there. The Supportive Housing Policy and framework will help to set that broader framework for consideration. In short, the answer to that is there are a number of models and options that we are looking to explore moving forward.

CHAIR: Given the model and its effectiveness of having public health, emergency and housing services all in the one area, there is an argument about its cost-effectiveness. What is your opinion in regards to that? Do you think it is a model that can be redeployed in other projects? You have just elaborated that there may be further projects similar to that. With the value being there of having all of those emergency and wraparound services provided in that one area, there must be a cost-effective option available to housing.

Ms McAllister: I will let Mary talk to the cost-effectiveness. I would say just in opening there is a continuum along the services and what those models and options could look like. Common Ground is one and there is a whole range of other options along that continuum and how we ensure there is that effective housing and support to ensure that people are receiving the services they need. I know Mary has some specific information on the cost-effectiveness.

Ms Crearie: Brisbane Common Ground, as Danielle said in the opening statement, has been running for over 12 years now. The cohort that they are focused on are people who have previously been homeless or rough sleeping—50 per cent are in that category and 50 per cent are not. It has proven to be an effective model because it helps people sustain their tenancies and stop that cycle of homelessness which is obviously costly.

Brisbane Common Ground themselves had an independent evaluation conducted by the Institute for Social Science Research through the University of Queensland in 2016. It came up with some data around that. That evaluation found that on average Common Ground did save government departments \$13,100 per person per year through reduced use of health services and reduced contact with the criminal justice system. That is obviously a bit dated because that was in 2016. I am not aware of a more current evaluation than that. It certainly would go to your point about the wraparound services, the success of that model and reducing costs to government.

CHAIR: You noted there is not the data available from 2016?

Ms Crearie: Not currently. The 2016 one was that comprehensive—

CHAIR: That was eight years ago?

Ms Crearie: Yes.

CHAIR: We have not had an update on the cost-effectiveness?

Ms Crearie: Not an updated one. They recently did an evaluation of tenancy sustainment, which was conducted also by the University of Queensland. That also was very positive in terms of the outcomes for the residents, but it did not point to the costings for government. That is the most up-to-date information I have on that at the moment.

CHAIR: The question is: are we intending to do an updated evaluation of that?

Ms Crearie: There is nothing that I am aware of at the moment. That is not to say that that is not something that should be programmed in the future. I am not aware of anything at the moment.

Mr BENNETT: It would be interesting to see the cost-benefit analysis for the private providers that we visited, Chair, when you do evaluations for one of those best models that you might come up with. I will say this on the public record about the NDIS. They have been less than cooperative with our committee; I will say it. I am aware there is a forum tomorrow. Has the department been invited to the NDIS forum tomorrow?

Mr Green: Yes, I am actually speaking at that forum tomorrow.

Mr BENNETT: Lovely. Mr Green, you have been at a lot of our deliberations over the last six months, so I guess there is a lot you can talk about from what you have heard in the NDIS space. I want to reiterate the observations of fraudulent activity and less than desirable activity—these are by the providers on the ground, not necessarily the organisation they represent. It was a huge concern to this committee over a long period. I hope in the federal process that the NDIS would recognise just how important this sector is to Queensland and this system and is working to represent them as well.

Mr Green: If I can add, I believe the forum tomorrow is a discussion around compliance and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission commencing a compliance program in Queensland. At this stage I foreshadow I do not have any additional information.

Mr BENNETT: Supported boarding house proprietors are the people invited to the forum tomorrow.

Mr Green: That is correct. The actual topic of conversation is around the commencement of a compliance program in Queensland, which is going to in part capture those providers and in part capture other providers as well. I am happy to provide more information to the committee after I find out more about that myself tomorrow.

Mr BENNETT: I think the committee is going to write to them asking about the terms of reference and the outcome; I think that is what we agreed this morning. Is it a public forum or is it closed?

Mr Frank: I believe it is a by invitation forum.

Mr SKELTON: I have a question and this goes across all the providers. We went to a number of level 3 residential service providers and they are getting referrals from health services for people across the border in Northern New South Wales seeking accommodation. Are you aware of this occurring and, if so, is there a growing trend in interstate referrals and how does that impact on our resources here?

Mr Green: There is probably not data that is available to us as the regulator. I suspect that data might be available from registered providers who are close to those border areas potentially seeing trends change over time about referrals coming in from across the border. I have not had reported to me any particular issues around servicing those clients and whether that is causing any particular backlog of access to services in Queensland. It is not something that has come up from a compliance perspective either, that it is raising more concerns in terms of their ability to comply with their Queensland obligations.

Mr BERKMAN: I want to preface this question by making clear that we saw an extraordinary diversity of services provided—some, I think, most of us would be content to have loved ones residing in and others that were—

Mr BENNETT: Horrible.

Mr BERKMAN: Yes, they were terrible. I do not want to gild the lily here: they were really completely unacceptable standards of accommodation. I am struggling a little bit to reconcile that with the fact that there is only one, as I think you said, Mr Frank, of these services that has accreditation with restrictions recorded at the moment. In the opening statement I think you said, Ms McAllister, that the department was taking appropriate compliance action in respect of the issues raised in submissions. Can you help me understand that—the current state of play, all of the concerns that have come to light, the quite horrific conditions in some of these accommodations and how it is that there is still only a single accredited provider with restrictions on that accreditation?

Mr Frank: We did have a look at the submissions from QDN and QAI and all the identified issues there and all issues that were identified during the visits have been investigated by Regulatory Services. Although I cannot comment on the specifics in this forum, I can say that we are already aware of most of the issues and the respective services, but they are subject to quality improvement plans. They are not necessarily put on the website, but we do go out and work with them and look at what improvements can be made and put a quality improvement plan to them that they need to adhere to. That is another mechanism for us to work with those service providers. I do not know the exact number at this present moment, but I think we probably have about 10 out there right now that we are working with where we have quality improvement plans in place.

Any of the new issues that were raised through the submissions we have actioned accordingly. I think there were probably a couple there that we were not aware of at the time, so it was great that they came up through the process and we have been working with them. Depending on the severity, it might factor into the reviewing of their next accreditation. Quality improvement plans are another way that we do work with service providers, and I know that there are a few out there right now especially relating to level 3s. When we did a proactive program at the end of 2023 there were 25 level 3 service providers that we did go out to—it was kind of a spot inspection—and of those there were about 12, from memory, that did have quality improvement plans put in place at the time. That is the other avenue and way that we do work with service providers to get them back up to where they need to be.

Mr BERKMAN: Okay, and so those quality improvement plans sit separately from restrictions on accreditation; it is a different avenue?

Mr Frank: Yes.

Mr Green: Yes, that is correct.

Mr Frank: Terry, do you have any more information?

Mr Green: Yes, that is correct. Placing conditions on accreditation is one of the tools available to us. It is a very public tool because it is published, whereas unfortunately with some of the other tools like the quality improvement plans we do not have authority to publish those under the legislation as it is currently drafted, so it is not something that is publicly available.

Mr BERKMAN: Do you think that that would be a valuable change to the regime? We are all here trying to very actively avoid naming and shaming specific facilities for better or worse in this process, but do you think that visibility of quality improvement requirements would be valuable?

Mr Green: I would suggest that visibility would be one of the topics that would need to be explored through the review of the legislation and how that might benefit residents from a risk perspective and how that might impact on industry from an operational perspective.

Mr BERKMAN: Okay. How does the department deal with the end point of those processes of quality improvements or restrictions on accreditation? I just do not know if some of these accommodations are retrievable. We are talking about conditions that were clearly incredibly unhygienic with a whole bunch of pests and rodents and some really bad stuff. If those are not facilities that can be brought up to standard, what flows from the cessation or the removal of accreditation, because these are incredibly vulnerable people who, I think, would probably tolerate just about any conditions, no matter how inhumane or unacceptable, because they do not have alternatives? How does the department deal with that? What is the end point for accreditation and how are those residents assisted at the end of that?

Mr Frank: That is a good question. Fundamentally, we try our best to work with the service providers to bring them up to scratch. We are cognisant that the alternate for these residents is potentially homelessness, so our first reaction is not to go straight to looking at how we close an establishment. The first thing that we want to do is work with the service provider, try and understand

why they are in the position they are in, what assistance they may need and see if we can put a plan in place that brings them up to speed. If that is not achievable, then we can go down the path of closing them down—that is one of the tools in our toolkit—and that has been done before and something that we will need to do in the future if it comes to that.

I wanted to preface that by saying that we are cognisant that the options for residents are not great if we cannot get them up to speed, so they do move into homelessness. If that is the case though—and we have done that in the past where we have had to close down a service—we work very closely with our housing service centres that are near there to find alternate accommodation. As I mentioned before, there is generally a 30-day period, whether it is instigated by us or by the service provider, and during that period we will work very closely to find alternate accommodation. With the examples that I know of in the past, we have been able to do that and find everybody other accommodation. It is part of our toolkit and something that, by the sounds of it, if there are things out there or instances like you are suggesting we need to consider.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you.

CHAIR: Can you give me a little bit of an outline of what compliance looks like? What do you do with your compliance officers to rotate through each of those service providers? How often do you actually go and visit? Is it a yearly event? Is it a six-monthly event? What is the normal scope of work when it comes to compliance in these services?

Mr Frank: There are currently 272 residential services properties across Queensland which are reaccredited at least every three years. This means that on average the team conducts audits on approximately 90 properties per year, so around seven to eight a month. As mentioned in the initial hearing, Regulatory Services takes a risk-based approach to the way we regulate the sector which means that we are continually reviewing incoming complaints and responding to the highest risks of the day.

CHAIR: So you triage those—sorry to cut you off—and if something really sticks out you will immediately go to that facility, for instance, if there is a real problem there?

Mr Frank: Yes.

CHAIR: But you do everything else on a rotational basis; you keep going through them on a regular basis?

Mr Frank: Yes, that is right. Again, on average, probably 90 per year based on three years and 272. I will give you some of the stats to give you a sense of it. In 2022-23 there were 98 renewal of accreditations during that year. There were two new registrations that came on board, and there is the work that goes into registering them and then accrediting them three months later as well. We received 278 inquiries which resulted in 203 investigations, so it is a fair amount through the year, as you can probably appreciate. In 2022-23 there were seven quality improvement plans issued and seven amended conditions on accreditation through that year.

Our capacity to deliver proactive compliance activities is impacted by the number of accreditations, registrations and complaints received. As I mentioned before, in late 2023 we had the opportunity and the ability to go out to most of the level 3 service providers to proactively engage with them at the time. To answer the question, we have that underlying work that is continuing. We have constant inquiries that do come in. Some of those are not necessarily our jurisdiction—as you can see, a lot of them were in 2022-23—and then we prioritise those within the mix of work that we have to make sure that we respond, especially to urgent issues and safety issues immediately. In a lot of cases, if I can get somebody out within the day I will do that.

CHAIR: I will give the last question to the deputy chair.

Mr BENNETT: With your indulgence, I have two little things I want to go through—not little things—if I may.

CHAIR: Yes, go for it.

Mr BENNETT: To park compliance for one minute, the committee has struggled with this Northern New South Wales closure, and I believe it is as a result of a viability issue that some of those services have closed down. I am not having a shot, Mr Green, but I ask the deputy director-general if your department could help us establish the situation. There was clear evidence given to us that there is a migration putting pressure on the level 3 service providers, particularly in the south-east rim. I guess I just want to alert you to that as a fact that has come to us. Compliance is compliance. I know where you sit, but this is probably more a vulnerability and a pressure on the system.

Public Briefing—Inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in
Queensland

My secondary part is that in April you provided data about the viability and the strain on the providers. We heard from nearly every provider issues about the long-term viability, and of course you have already indicated that there is a gradual decrease in provision and, statistically, I think we are down 300 or 400 beds or something. In terms of the department, with all the new build and all the glossy stuff that we have been talking about, is there something in place where we can provide some support to the existing providers to ensure their long-term viability and those centres are there for vulnerable Queenslanders going forward? There is a bit there and it may be a wish list that may be policy and you might not be able to answer it, but I have it on the record.

Ms McAllister: I can certainly take it as an action to consider how we might explore that Northern New South Wales migration.

Mr BENNETT: Maybe your department has some intelligence that you could share with the committee, because New South Wales have not answered and I understand that your officers are compliance based, not looking at closures in Northern New South Wales, but I think it is a real issue that may confront us more seriously as time goes on, that is all, and I think if we are on top of it we can be planning.

Ms McAllister: I am in touch with our interstate colleagues on a regular basis, so it is a question that I can ask of our New South Wales colleagues.

Mr BENNETT: Thank you. What about the long-term viability? We are talking about service providers and other things for the new builds. Is there anything in train that the department is considering for the not for profits that are out there already doing amazing work?

Ms McAllister: To clarify, they are for-profit providers.

Mr BENNETT: Okay. Thank you.

Ms McAllister: That is how they operate. There is nothing currently in place. We are going to be doing the review of the accreditation act. There are all of the different pieces, and obviously the report from the committee will be a critical piece.

Mr BENNETT: And I am asking you to comment publicly on future government policy, so I apologise for that, Chair. I wanted to get it out there; that is all. Thanks.

CHAIR: With that, thank you very much. That concludes this public briefing. I thank everyone for participating today. Thank you to our Hansard reporters. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare this public briefing closed.

The committee adjourned at 12.13 pm.