

Inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland

Submission No: 11
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

The rooms and buildings - they get quite hot. Some of the rooms have aircon or there are plans to install aircon. The rooms don't get a lot of wind flow but otherwise most days it's pretty good. The facilities here have improved a lot over the years. About two years ago the buildings had a lot of damage but over time the residents have improved the place and done a lot of repairs. It's a real communal vibe here. Everyone pitches in to help get things done and make this place as positive as possible. Some residents have problems with privacy - we live in really close proximity and it takes a lot of getting used to but there are also benefits. Personally, I have opened up a lot since living here and have been able to feel more comfortable around people and less reclusive. I still get nervous when in busier community environments though, like when I'm at the shops. I loved Covid for this reason, as going to shops was quieter and there were less people about which made it easier with my anxiety. When I first arrived here it took me about four days to talk to anyone but now I feel much better. This is a huge improvement for though because I've come a long way in only three months (which is the period that I've worked here). Even my Support Worker has noticed I've improved a lot since getting here.

Food - We (residents) take turns cooking, which means quality can be better at times as some of us have varying experience with cooking. We cook for each other using communal cooking facilities but overall the food is good and the nutrition is good. Some of the favourite cooks make really good meals that we look forward to, like lime coconut prawns and chilli curries. Last week we had steaks, roast pork and a pasta bake and roast potato and pumpkins. One of the residents is vegetarian so we always try and make sure there is something available for her to eat each meal. We get deliveries from Ozharvest and there is a notice board with a shopping list that we can add requests to for the weekly shop. For the most part, residents only ever put their hands in their own pockets for food when they feel like it - the food is good enough that we never feel like we have to. In terms of food availability, there are three communal meals a day but we have access to pantries and fridges as we like. There are no meals served on Saturday and everyone sorts themselves out. I have spent almost none of my own money on food while I have been living here. We get good stuff like salmon steaks and prawns from Ozharvest and good cooking facilities here like Air Fryers and stuff.

Services and management - we have a complaints system: a form that residents can fill out anonymously or with their name. It asks what the problem is, who might be involved, and then a section where you can put the outcome you would like to see. The last section is office use, where they will put what they will do with the complaint. We have meetings usually once per week where we can raise issues and also seek help with certain things. Staff are very responsive in dealing with complaints and requests. We are a community and we sort things out positively. There is good access to upskilling opportunities, I'm doing CPT sessions at the moment. This has also helped me with coming out of my shell a lot. We have outings most Fridays - we do things like swimming at the beach, meals out, Mayors Christmas party. For these outings we travel by bus. Support Workers regularly attend depending on resident arrangements, but they are organised externally. The great thing about this place is there is a lot of access to services, such as counselling and self development, but also no pressure to engage in these services. If you want to do nothing you can do nothing. There's access to rehab services too. There is no limit to how long that you can stay here. The rehab program goes for 6 months and has steps that you work through. There are AA meetings on site which involves people coming in who aren't residents coming on site (but this doesn't bother us). The staff help you to get a new place when you are ready to move out, and will help you find work as well. Some residents recently moved out together into a place on the Gold Coast - the staff helped them sort out accommodation, jobs and furniture for the place. They

encourage us to be independent and build up our skills and give us what we need to be independent. For some residents this is even as simple as building personal and social skills, like self care and participation. Access and transport - there is not public transport available here. Several residents have cars and they are quite generous with driving others without cars around. I have my own car that I mostly use for getting around. There is also the bus that the operator owns [REDACTED] [REDACTED] -- you can fill out a request form if you need their help with transport to things like appointments. No one feels stuck here. Visitors are allowed pretty much when ever, but are only allowed in communal areas. It's an open environment and visitors are welcome to come in. Staff - management (in particular [REDACTED], the Manager) deal with people really well. Even really disruptive residents are dealt with appropriately. They can't stay because they are too disruptive with other residents, but even then they are not turfed out on the street or taken away by police. Instead [REDACTED] will evict them but drive them around to find other accommodation. Staff are really good at keeping drugs off site. Residents who come back that seem intoxicated are immediately breath and urine testing. If you are drunk or high you are evicted. This is done to protect other residents, so that we aren't around drugs and alcohol. You are allowed to go away for the night and drink but it is coming back intoxicated that is not tolerated. The neighbour drinks and staff and residents are really good at preventing him from coming on site. There is a very professional security guard on site, who has a look of experience and skill with shutting down violent conflict. His name is [REDACTED] and we really appreciate having him on site as he addresses conflict very professionally. This is a great set up - we get a lot of encouragement to develop and improve without judgment. This place does great work. Staff and volunteers here respect our boundaries too - they don't come into our rooms, for example. Anything that could be used as a weapon are also kept under lock but staff will give you access to those things when you need readily. Room for improvement: 1. More accommodation. We want to see more rooms added for more residents, because it's a great place and there is a huge waitlist to get in. A place only opens up once per month, and there is only room for about 24 people here at the moment. It took me 3 weeks to get in the first time, and then 3 days the next time but I got really lucky because there was space when I needed it. Having more room would make us feel less guilty about coming and staying here and taking up a spot someone else might need. Most things that residents identify are needed are able to be addressed to staff and they are generally provided, so other than more room there is not much unmet in terms of need or improvements.