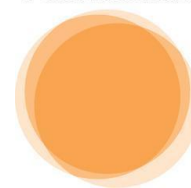


Inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland

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Safe and secure housing that promotes individual choice and control

The Summer Foundation submission to the Queensland Community Support and Services Committee

2 February 2024

People with disability living in supported accommodation¹ are highly vulnerable to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. These risks increase when they are isolated and deprived of choice and control over the services they receive, and have limited capacity to raise concerns about the design, delivery, quality and safety of essential services and supports.^{2,3,4}

There is a lack of safety and adequate supports for people in supported accommodation. Additional oversight and improved regulation is needed. Greater engagement with people living in these settings is critical to support their exercise of choice and control.

Making more safe and secure housing and living options available to people with disability is critical to the Queensland Government delivering on its promise of greater inclusion and participation in society for Queenslanders with disability.⁵ Social connection and access to the community are critical safeguards against violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

What is still needed?

The Summer Foundation is calling on the Queensland Government to improve its provision and regulation of supported accommodation to ensure people with disability living in these settings feel safe and secure at home. The key elements to achieve this are explored below.

Innovation in the built design

The built environment in and around the home must be designed to improve the quality of life for tenants. This includes a tenant-centric architectural design in which the tenant can easily move between personal and shared spaces, and make the house a home.⁶

The Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review have called for greater innovation in housing but there is little detail on how innovation will happen. More home and living demand data from the NDIA and increased investment in university based research alone are not going to result in the scale of transformation needed in the disability housing sector.

¹ For the purposes of this paper, 'supported accommodation' encompasses disability group homes, boarding houses and other models of supported residential services where the service provider provides housing and personal care to residents.

² Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (2023) [Executive Summary: Our vision for an inclusive Australia and Recommendations](#)

³ NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (2023) [Inquiry Report: Own Motion Inquiry into Aspects of Supported Accommodation](#)

⁴ The Public Advocate (2023) ['Safe, secure and affordable'? The need for an inquiry into supported accommodation in Queensland](#)

⁵ Queensland Government [Queensland's Disability Action Plan 2022-27](#)

⁶ Rathbone, A., Dwyer, H., Winkler, D., Mulherin, P. (2023). [Reimagining shared housing and living: Workshop findings and recommendations](#). Housing Hub.

Complete separation of housing and support service provision

Both the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review recommended a complete separation of housing and support service provision. Keeping housing and supports distinct from one another facilitates genuine choice for tenants, and the ability to exercise their rights in a shared living environment. Coordination of supports works well when 1:1 and shared supports are provided by separate providers and managed by the tenant.⁷

New models of governance that increase the agency of residents

More must be done to develop tenant-centric governance systems and practices. Tenants must have a say in the selection of support workers and be able to provide feedback on the performance and attitude of support workers, particularly with respect to how supports are provided. Support workers should build the capacity of the person to live independently rather than taking charge and 'doing for' people with disability.⁸

Measuring of tenant outcomes

The development of any contemporary housing and living model must utilise a tenant outcomes framework⁹ to ensure it can effectively meet the specific needs of people with disability. Ongoing input from tenants is critical to ensure the supports provided in shared models of housing improve and change over time to meet the changing needs of tenants.

Equal rights and protections under law

The *Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002* (Qld) inadequately recognises and protects the occupancy rights of people with disability who live in supported accommodation. Alignment with [NDIS legislation, rules and policies](#) is needed to ensure everyone has the same tenancy rights and protections regardless of their living arrangement. Legislation must also be expanded to include quality and safeguarding best practice on the governance and culture of co-located tenancies.

Access to independent advocacy and support

The Queensland Government should develop a program to connect people with disability living in supported accommodation with independent advocacy and support services. Self-advocacy skills and access to independent information and support are integral to safe, quality service provision and day-to-day choice and control.

The Queensland Government should also work with the NDIA to ensure NDIS participants living in supported accommodation have at least 40 hours of level 3 specialist support coordination funding included in their NDIS plans so they can access specialist independent support to build their capacity and secure housing and living supports that align with their needs and preferences.

⁷ Winkler, D., Finis, C., D'Cruz, K., Mulherin, P., de Costa, M., Rathbone, A., Condi, A., Douglas, J. (2022). [Support in Specialist Disability Accommodation \(SDA\) apartments](#). Summer Foundation.

⁸ Rathbone, A., Dwyer, H., Winkler, D., Mulherin, P. (2023). [Reimagining shared housing and living: Workshop findings and recommendations](#). Housing Hub.

⁹ Jacinta Douglas, Dianne Winkler, Stacey Oliver, Stephanie Liddicoat & Kate D'Cruz (2023) Moving into new housing designed for people with disability: preliminary evaluation of outcomes, *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 45:8, 1370-1378, DOI: [10.1080/09638288.2022.2060343](#)

Summer Foundation commitment

The Summer Foundation is committed to working with and for people with disability and Federal, state and territory governments to deliver innovative solutions that improve housing and living outcomes and support the implementation of the recommendations made by the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review.

Diverse and innovative range of inclusive housing and living supports:

- We will co-design and build a [new, contemporary typology of disability housing](#) to meet the needs of people who are missing out in the current SDA market.
- We will co-design a framework and principles to guide contemporary models of support that are bespoke to the needs and preferences of specific groups of co-located NDIS participants.
- With support from the [Care Together program](#), we will explore and co-design new models of governance that increase the agency of people living in disability housing.

Building an evidence base to support the development of best practice:

- We are partnering with La Trobe University to deliver a [longitudinal study](#) that is systematically investigating the experience, outcomes and economic impact of people with disability moving into a range of disability housing models.
- We will evaluate and scale an evidence based intervention ([M-ComConnect](#)) that supports people with disability to build social connection and increase their participation in the community.

Attract, retain and train a tenant-led workforce that delivers quality supports:

- We will scale and continue to evaluate a co-designed intervention ([Participant Led Videos](#)) to improve the quality of support provided to people with disability.
- We will co-design and evaluate a range of new evidence based resources to enable people with disability to recruit, select and train and manage the performance of disability support workers.

Independent, skilled support for people with disability:

- Through the Housing Hub, we will continue to provide people with disability with the information, resources and services they need (including the [Home and Living Specialist service](#)) to understand their rights, explore their housing and support options and exercise real choice about where, how and with whom they live.
- We will pilot a Home and Living peer support service that enables people with disability to access the wisdom and insights of peers.

Contact:

Julie-Anne Pho, Policy Manager

