

QUEENSLAND DISABILITY HOUSING COALITION

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NEWSLETTER – JULY-AUGUST 2006

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of QDHC Inc

*Winter.....a time for reflection, change
and trying to keep warm!*

(Editorial by *Mike Duffan*)

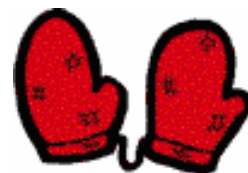


I hope we all are surviving the cold weather as well as the water restrictions, and the drought! There seems to be lots of natural elements at play making life hard at the moment. Are we open to hearing what the earth is saying? If we don't change our ways, it may be too late!

Alongside these environmental changes, there are major changes happening in social policy which will have an effect on many people, including people with disability. The most potent of these changes are changes to Centrelink payments for people with disability and single parents. QDHC's main concern is that people's housing may become at risk if their source of income security is threatened. QDHC is going to find out more about the reforms to Centrelink by attending the "Welfare to Work" conference in July (run by the University of Queensland) and will report on these changes in the next newsletter.

Another change in social policy is the brand spanking new (sic) Disability Services Act. At this stage it is not so clear what changes this will mean for people with disability in relation to the services they receive. This Act is predominantly concerned with 10 Disability Service Standards and how services need to be compliant with them. Our very part-time worker, Ann Tierney, has done some work in updating the relevant sections of our kit "A Home of My Own: Right, Rhetoric or Reality?" to reflect these new changes. Welcome back, Ann!

Speaking of change, not all change is bad. Recently QDHC has made some long-awaited changes to our office space to make it more user-friendly and functional. Our Coordinator's desk has been turned around so that Karin is now facing the entrance to our office and is able to greet people as they arrive. This change has also put Karin's and our Admin worker Maia's work stations side-by-side and gives them the feeling of working together in collaboration. Karin, Maia and Katrina are all enjoying working together in this new space.



In this edition of the newsletter we welcome Willie Prince, our new committee member. Willie is a strong advocate for people with disability, especially those from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

In this edition our new (not-so-new anymore) Admin worker, Maia introduces herself in her own section of the newsletter, titled 'Maia's Moment'. Maia has been with us since March and replaces Kaja who left us to further her studies in opera. I'd like to take this opportunity to formally thank Kaja for her time at QDHC and wish her well for her future.

We also welcome Mary Kenny, who has been contracted to facilitate our Hot Topics project. You'll read more from Mary later in the newsletter.

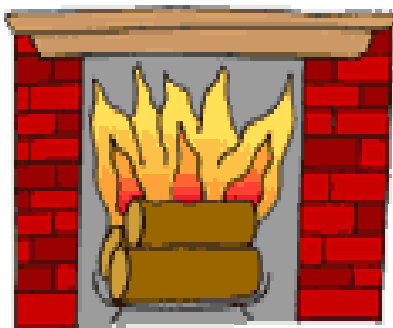
Also in this edition we report on two major policy responses we have made in the last seven months, 'Paving the way: one social housing system' and the Residential Tenancies Act. Both of these policies will impact on all tenants in Queensland, particularly those reliant on social housing.

Our AGM is just around the corner (in October, date yet to be finalised) and this is the time of year we encourage you to renew your membership and perhaps assess your involvement in our organisation. You may think about coming onto our committee, or you may wish to be involved in the publication and production of our newsletter. We encourage anyone wanting to become more involved in QDHC to phone the office on 3391 3433 and speak to Karin or Maia or email us at qdhc@qdhc.org.au

Although there are issues around us at the moment that may sap our hope, I feel it is very important that we hang on to hope and nurture it. It is only by doing this that we can ever attempt to turn around the situation and experience positivity. Until next time...

Peace

Mike Duggan



FROM THE NEWSLETTER SUB-COMMITTEE

It's been a bit of a challenge but we are determined to get newsletter production back on schedule! Catherine has joined us but we would be very happy to add to our numbers – more hands make light work! So if you can see your way clear to join the Newsletter Sub-committee, we'd love to hear from you. Just ring the office and let Karin know that you're keen and she'll take it from there!

To get each edition out the sub-committee meets three times. The meeting dates for the next edition will be: **2nd August, 23rd August and 31st August.**

If you can't manage the commitment to planning meetings, maybe you can help to write up some articles or share a story. Once it's ready to go, we need lots of people to help fold the newsletter and stuff the envelopes. And we even supply lunch! Please let us know if you can help in any way!

Goodbyes!

Sadly for us but happily for her, Kaja Holzheimer has taken up an opportunity to further her operatic career. Though you may have continued to hear her voice on our answering machine (we just found it hard to cut the last ties!), she has in fact been gone for a couple of months. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Kaja for the great contribution she made to QDHC through her very efficient and supportive approach to her work. We look forward to hearing great things from her in the future! (In case you didn't realise, it also means an untimely demise for the "Kaja's Korner" section of our newsletter!)

We have also lost the insight and input of long-standing committee member, Joanne Merrigan. Joanne has given many, many hours of voluntary time to QDHC over the years, not only as a committee member and a 'hands-on volunteer' but also as an active member of the newsletter sub-committee (I can assure you we've really missed her!) So thank you Joanne. And if you ever find you have any spare time on your hands.....

Welcome!!

We welcome Maia Stegman who has moved into our Admin Worker position. Maia has spent a couple of months 'learning the ropes' at QDHC and bringing her own style to the role. You'll learn more about her in our new "Maia's Moment" section!

We are also happy to welcome a new Committee member, Willie Prince. Willie brings lots of experience and a unique perspective to our Committee. You'll find out more about Willie in the "Committee Profile" section later in the newsletter.

And even though she's not a new face at QDHC, we also want to welcome Catherine Smith to the newsletter sub-committee. Her energy and enthusiasm is infectious!

Mary, Catherine & Karin

*Don't forget those meeting dates if you can join us!
2nd August, 23rd August and 31st August
We'll see if we can find a time that suits everyone.*

Queensland Disability
Housing Coalition Inc
September 2005

A resource
for people with disabilities
and their families



A Home of My Own Right, Rhetoric or Reality?

**Considerations for housing and a
sustainable future for people with disabilities**

STOP PRESS!

Queensland Disability Housing Coalition is thrilled to announce the release of our latest kit "A Home of my Own: Right, Rhetoric or Reality?" This is a resource for people with disabilities and their families which ponders aspects of housing and a sustainable future for people with disabilities.

It is the aim of this kit to inform and empower people with disabilities and their families to identify and pursue housing and support options that have the capacity to support a rich and sustainable life in the community.



QDHC has had much positive feedback about the kit since we started distributing it earlier in 2006. Members of the community, QDHC members, other housing organizations, disability organizations, government workers, Ministers and even the Premier have all commented positively on the kit's usefulness. Many people and organizations have rung asking for more copies. If you would like a copy please phone the office on 3391 3433 or email us at qdhc@qdhc.org.au.

Karin's Kapers...

just what has QDHC's Coordinator been up to?

I've been really busy at QDHC since our last newsletter. The work of QDHC is not just one person's effort. Whilst I carry the responsibilities of Co-ordinator, I've had the benefit of collaborating with QDHC committee members and staff as well as people from other housing peaks, disability advocacy organisations and networks. Here is a thumbnail sketch of what we've been involved in.

Formal policy responses:

- Paving the Way: One social housing system (Department of Housing)
- Rent Policy (informal response only) (Brisbane Housing Company)
- State Planning Policy (Department of Housing)
- Residential Tenancies Act (Residential Tenancies Authority)
- Responding to people labelled as having challenging behaviour "Bill Carter Review" (Disability Services Queensland)
- Sustainable Development Incentives Policy DRAFT (Brisbane City Council)
- Disability Service Plan – Draft policy statement & Draft aspiration statement (informal response only) (Department of Housing)

Advice at forums/consultations/workshops:

- State Planning Policy workshop
- Home Access Evaluation
- Launch of CityShape – Calamvale Workshop
- QCOSS Strengthening the Community Sector forum
- Statewide Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service Queensland training
- 2006/2007 Department of Housing Budget Briefing
- Senior Officers and Director General Peaks Meeting – Department of Housing
- Responding to Homelessness Reference Group
- Homeless Persons Information Queensland Reference Group
- Residential Services Stakeholders Advisory Committee
- QCOSS Peaks Meeting
- Universal Design Working Group Qld
- BCC Peaks and Partners Meeting
- BCC CityShape Reference Group
- Community Resource Unit Workshop re: safeguarding individualised services
- Home Access Consultation (DoH)
- Meetings with the Office of the Public Advocate
- BCC Sustainable Development Incentives Policy Information session

Attendance at workshops/conferences:

- Industrial Relations and Non-profit Organisations Workshop (QUT)
- Community Resource Unit Workshop Shared Living: Beyond Group Homes
- QCOSS Safeguarding NGO's Workshop
- Playback Theatre Workshop
- Welfare to Work Conference

If you would like further information on any of these areas of work, please call me at the office on **(07) 3391 3433**.

COMMITTEE PROFILE

Introducing.....Willie Prince

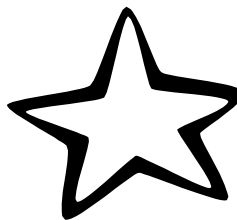
Hello my name is Willie Prince. I am the new committee member of QDHC. A little bit about myself. I was born in Cherbourg at a time the government of the day had control over the lives of indigenous people of Australia. To cut a very, very long story short I was transferred to Brisbane at a very early age and spent most of my childhood in an institution.

I have experienced many forms of housing: from living in boarding houses through to shared accommodation to finally obtaining accommodation with Aboriginal Housing. I left Aboriginal Housing after 2 years for personal and family reasons to live with my sister while waiting for word on my application to live in public housing.

Anyway I believe that the knowledge that I have gained and experienced along the way would greatly assist QDHC in making housing issues accessible and affordable for all.

By the way, I have a place that I can finally call home.

Maia's Moment



Hi Everyone, I'd like to introduce myself as the new admin worker at QDHC. I've been working here since March this year, and am loving it. I've particularly enjoyed speaking to our members on the phone over the past few months, and am looking forward to meeting more of you as time goes on. It's been both interesting and challenging trying to find satisfactory answers to your questions about housing issues. Mondays and Thursdays are generally my days in the office, so if you ring on those days it's likely I'll be the one you talk to!

When I'm not at QDHC I spend most of my time being entertained by my two mischievous sons. In previous incarnations I've studied sociology and community development, and painted a few pictures too. My partner and I are members of a housing co-operative in the inner city, but we enjoy nothing more than taking off camping when we get the chance.

Since starting here I've been busy sending out 'A Home of My Own: Right, Rhetoric or Reality?', QDHC's new resource kit, which is currently available on request. We've also recently produced a Braille copy of the kit, and have a run of CD versions in progress. We welcome any feedback on the kit, so if you have any comments or suggestions we'd be very happy to hear them. Cheers and best wishes to all,

Maia

The Rental Tenancy Authority has provided funding for QDHC and Queenslanders with Disability Network Inc (QDN) to hold a number of discussions about housing issues.

I am facilitating a series of Hot Topics discussion groups called “A Chat about Housing” for people with disability in the Gold Coast, Gympie and Toowoomba areas. I have been involved in journeying with a Brisbane Hot Topics group since October 2004, and QDHC and QDN have combined to bring this idea to regional Queensland.

Hot Topics provides an opportunity for a small group of people to gather together to chat about the things that matter in their lives. Usually the group meets in a friendly space, has a cuppa and chats about hot topics. We think that HOUSING is a hot topic at the moment – and we want to hear from anyone who is interested in this idea.

Things we will talk about include basic information and education about:

- Repairs
- Breach of contract
- Keeping pets
- Disputes with neighbours
- Safety and security in public housing
- Issues around Residential Tenancy Act
- Issues around Boarding Houses

I am organising a series of meetings for the groups which will form a base for contact and organisation in these areas – Gold Coast, Gympie and Toowoomba. We will hold a number of small group meetings and then host a larger event that will spread the word about Housing and bring people in contact with resources and organisations in their local areas.

Contact Mary on 3350 1682 or by email on marykenny@optusnet.com.au

Mental Health Week is 8th – 14th October this year, with World Mental Health Day on 10th October. It is an initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health and co-sponsored by the World Health Organisation.

More information about this will be in the next newsletter.

If anyone has information or a story they would like to share about housing relating to mental health issues, please contact us, as this is such a little covered area.

Policy Responses

QDHC prepares many responses to government policies on a range of issues. Here are just two of them:

1. ***'PAVING THE WAY: HOUSING PEOPLE IN NEED AND THE SMART STATE'***

Introduction

The Queensland Disability Housing Coalition (QDHC) is pleased to present this response regarding the proposed reforms to social housing as outlined by the Department of Housing in 'Paving the Way: Housing People in Need and the Smart State'.

As outlined in the above-mentioned paper, the Department of Housing plans to move to one social housing system, combining the current public housing and community housing systems.

QDHC has had been involved in the following ways to attempt to bring a consumer voice to the discussion:

- Co-authoring a response paper with other housing peak organisations
- Delivering the co-authored paper and having a presence at two of the statewide consultation processes organised by the Department of Housing (Toowoomba & Gold Coast).
- Developing this response.

QDHC acknowledges the Department of Housing for their assistance with travel to the Gold Coast and Toowoomba and the opportunity to present a tenant perspective at these consultations.

QDHC recognises that the planned community consultation process was not to discuss whether or not to have the one housing system but rather to attempt to engage the community on how the new directions can be best implemented and to attempt to reach agreement on finer aspects of the detail.

QDHC was pleased to present our views at the consultations, however we are not confident that the timeline will allow much debate of the issues and analysis of the feedback as the deadline for feedback is just before the Christmas break and the new system will commence 2 January, 2006.

QDHC feels this timing is unfortunate and tends to indicate a token consultation process.

QDHC will focus the rest of our response on the main points of the discussion paper.

Making the changes work.

QDHC believes that a key ingredient to make the proposed one social housing system work is to ensure that workers within the various programs are making decisions and are carrying out their duties in accordance with Department of Housing policy.

These policies need to provide all stakeholders with clear and concise direction regarding decision making. At a time when more than one system is coming together, consistency of response to individuals is the key to making it work.

In the past QDHC has been aware of instances, particularly at an area office level, where decisions have been inconsistent across different local areas, and advice given out based on opinion rather than departmental policy.

Simple entry points.

QDHC acknowledges that simplifying the entry system to social housing could have many benefits for prospective tenants. The most obvious of these will be that tenants only have to fill out one form, or enter the system at one place to be eligible for an entire spectrum of assistance across the social housing system, thus making it simpler for the tenant.

QDHC believes that the challenge will be for the Department of Housing to ensure that all these levels of service are provided in a consistent manner. QDHC also believes it will be a challenge for the government and community sectors to keep track of individuals and be responsive to their changing needs within this system.

QDHC believes that it is important for staff to be well trained, consistent and to have up-to-date information.

QDHC believes the internet and telephone are useful mediums for people who can access them, but reminds the department that this technology is not easily accessible to all. QDHC encourages the department to make links with organisations such as Australian Communication Exchange to work on how to be more accessible to people.

One register of need.

QDHC is concerned about this approach. QDHC is aware of the history of Disability Services Queensland and how the development of a similar register has led to even fewer people receiving services, even people in the highest priority ranking of 1.

Consequently the level of unmet need in this State is so high that some people may never receive Adult Lifestyle Support. The problem with having one register is that an already stretched system ends up catering only to people at the highest level of crisis. Meanwhile those people at lower levels of need move up to the higher levels whilst waiting for a response.

This means that more people will end up in a crisis situation at some point, and indeed, almost need to be at a level of crisis before their needs are met. Hence this system becomes reactive instead of proactive.

QDHC is also concerned that with the proposed tiered system, public housing will become housing of last resort rather than housing of choice. Depending on allocations, there may be people in certain segments who will never be housed. People who may only be on low incomes, but without complex needs, may never access the new system unless it is in areas of low demand.

QDHC also acknowledges that for many people housing is only one piece of the pie. Many people require formal support systems to be in place for their tenancies to be successful. QDHC encourages Housing Queensland to have an all-of-Government approach (DSQ, Queensland Health, Communities, Local City Councils) to solving this dilemma.

QDHC is concerned that under the proposed system, if only people with complex needs are housed as a priority, then public housing will lack a true diversity of people and culture, and that ghettos which stigmatize people who may already be deemed devalued will be created.

Access to information held about individuals is another huge area of concern.

QDHC asks the following questions about information:

- How will information be kept?
- Who has access to that information?
- How will decisions be made?
- Is that information available to the individual?

A common assessment process

QDHC believes this is possibly the most complex area of the proposed One Housing System. QDHC believes it is important that whatever assessment process is used, staff make consistent decisions based on departmental policy.

With such a huge system, with various products and eligibility criteria, there may be room for confusion, inconsistency and individual interpretation. This will need to be monitored across the board.

Long term social housing for clients with the highest need

QDHC believes that unless there are major systemic changes to the current housing system, both private and public, there will always be some people that need assistance from a social housing system.

Many people, even if they overcome obstacles such as low income, will still need some form of social housing because they are simply not catered for in the private market due to access requirements. The adoption across the board of universal housing design is one way to remedy this.

People with disabilities or complex needs very rarely just have a need for housing. They also have a need for support. In many cases if this need for support is not adequately met, their housing can be jeopardised.

Therefore it becomes much more than just providing bricks and mortar. It is about what makes a community for an individual so that their social, emotional and physical needs are also met. For most people with disability these things are often met via a combination of informal and formal supports.

QDHC believes that it is the role of Queensland Housing to provide the bricks and mortar. However it may also be Housing's role to connect or to provide connections with other agencies within government and the community (ie DSQ, Queensland Health, a person's family) to ensure that these higher needs are met.

QDHC strongly opposes the creation of ghettos and points to a wide range of studies that demonstrate social mix and choice in housing leads to healthy communities.

QDHC believes that housing and support should be totally separate arrangements. This is a major safeguard especially when a person has complex needs. If a person is refused service, they still have somewhere to live. If they are evicted, their service will support them to find another home. If they want to move, their support goes with them.

This separate arrangement also sets tenancy rights — this is their home, not their service provider's, nor is it the office of their paid workers. Such an arrangement is crucial for services to operate in right relationship with the person with a disability and their family and friends.

Consistent eligibility criteria

QDHC believes that, as well as the standard income and assets tests that are applied in other systems, a main criteria for eligibility should be potential to gain appropriate housing that suits one's needs in the private sector.

Housing assistance provided for duration of need

This section of the discussion paper is concerned with tenants for whom the need for social housing has reduced or ended or they are no longer eligible.

As stated previously, QDHC believes that some people may never run out of need for some form of social housing assistance, even those who may break certain income barriers. This is due to

the need for many people to have accessible housing. QDHC believes that leases need to reflect this level of need, and is concerned about the current proposal of fixed-term tenancies.

Connecting clients to support services

QDHC believes that this area should involve a whole-of-government approach.

Other agencies linked with should be DSQ, Queensland Health, Department of Child Safety, Police, Dispute Resolution Service, Department of Justice, Office of the Adult Guardian, TAASQ Services, local advocacy services for people with disability ie Speaking Up For You (SUFY).

QDHC believes that all staff should receive training in responding appropriately to people with disability. This should include a section on values and diversity ie Social Role Valorisation.

Better links with the private sector

QDHC believes that this needs to involve a community and sector wide education campaign on Universal Design, led by the Department of Housing. The adoption of Universal Design by the private sector and access to financial assistance may be the only ways that many people with disability will be able to leave the social housing system.

QDHC believes private company models such as Brisbane Housing Company can be fraught with conflict as they try to assume two roles, landlord and support provider. They need assistance to best work out how to manage these conflicting roles.

QDHC is apprehensive about the reliance the Department of Housing appears to be placing on the private rental market because it assumes there are appropriate and affordable properties available that will offer security of tenure.

QDHC is also concerned that the Department of Housing is relying heavily on pathways out of social housing. Given that the register of need will target the most vulnerable and disadvantaged there needs to be a guarantee that housing will be appropriate and affordable to that group.

Conclusion

QDHC believes that the government has an obligation to meet the housing needs of vulnerable people in Queensland. QDHC is pleased to present our response to the Department of Housing and acknowledges the system is in its early stages of development. QDHC looks forward to further opportunity to input into the one housing system as it begins to roll out post January 2006.

2. RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

The Queensland Disability Housing Coalition (QDHC) is a community based organization with the objective of ensuring that people with a disability and their families have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing. QDHC believes that people with a disability have the same rights as other citizens and are entitled to live a lifestyle of their choosing in the community.

QDHC supports the decision of the Minister for Housing to review the Residential Tenancies Act 1994 and we appreciate the opportunity to make this submission.

Context of the Review:

In the past six to eight years there have been many changes in housing policy at both the State and Commonwealth level. These changes have had a critical impact on many individuals and families but particularly those who experience disability and those who have a limited or fixed income. It is therefore essential that the current review of the 1994 Residential Tenancies Act be carried out in this context. The review must lead to decisions relating to tenancy law that have the capacity to

respond to the barriers experienced by individuals and families as a result of broader government housing policy.

Current policy changes dictate that more emphasis is being placed on the private rental market to respond to housing need. Further review of the way that social housing is delivered will increase this direction. Individuals and families struggling to meet affordability and access issues must be guaranteed robust tenancy laws to assist them acquire sustainable housing.

The Role of Tenancy Law:

QDHC's experience in the drafting of the *Residential Services (Accommodation) Act 2002*, was one of frustration due to the perceived view that the Act was to be drafted in a way that would *balance the rights of residents and industry*. While we understood the difficult issue that the legislators faced in relation to the lack of alternative accommodation for this group of people QDHC would hope that the current view of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1994* is not carried out in the mistaken view that rights of tenants and lessors can in some way be balanced.

Tenancy law is about protection of tenants in their dealings with landlords or their agents. It is the mechanism that will provide protection for the growing number of tenants who will in all likelihood, due to current housing policy, remain long term tenants of private rental housing. Given that governments at all levels are increasingly dependent on the private rental market to respond to the growing need for affordable, appropriate housing, it is imperative that they provide robust tenancy rights to compliment this direction.

Major Reform Issues:

To ensure that the private rental market can operate as an effective long-term, or indeed permanent tenure, for sections of the market there are some areas of tenancy law coverage that require strengthening. These areas are:

- **Affordability** (protection from unfair/unreasonable rent increases)
Currently the Act offers very little protection to tenants in relation to unfair or unreasonable rent increases. There is a need for limits to be placed on rent increases both in their frequency and the amount of the increase. If individuals and families are continually forced out of housing and particular locations the ongoing disruption and dislocation of their lives will impact greatly on their capacity to sustain their lifestyle. This then has further impact on demand for government services.
- **Security of tenure** (abolition of 'no cause' eviction)
This issue is critical to the protection of tenancy rights within a housing system increasingly reliant on the private rental market. The ability of lessors or their agents to terminate a tenancy without grounds undermines most other rights provided under the current Act. The low vacancy rates that are symptomatic of the current market result in many tenants being reluctant to enforce their rights for fear of eviction. This particularly relates to repairs and maintenance issues. Given the changing role of the private rental market, Review outcomes that enhance tenants' security of tenure are critical.
- **Access** (discrimination)
With fierce competition for rental properties, particularly at the low end of the market, tenants with limited income or a fixed income face added barriers. Lessors and their agents are often in a position where there are a number of prospective tenants competing for a property. Those with higher disposable incomes, acceptable appearance and/or communication skills will ultimately be preferred over those who require bond loans, those who have a disability, families with children and people of indigenous or ethnic background.

The actions of agents in deciding who the successful applicant will be is subject to little, if any, scrutiny. Discrimination is always difficult to redress. However if lessors or their agents were required to provide applicants with reasons for their unsuccessful application this would provide a level of accountability that is currently lacking.

- **Quality of stock** (Overall quality and ongoing repairs and maintenance)
The issue of quality relates to both the overall standard of rental properties as well as the obligation to have repairs and maintenance carried out. Again the current low vacancy rate and level of competition at the lower cost end of the market, works against tenants pursuing their rights in this area. Many tenants trade off the quality of their housing against their fear of eviction and regaining another tenancy in this climate.

While some Local Authorities are responsible for building and health inspections, tenants have no way of knowing when these inspections have taken place or what the results have been. There is a need for some mechanism for tenants to access information regarding the status of health and safety building inspections for a particular property.

Coverage of the Act:

QDHC believes that the *Residential Tenancies Act* should include coverage of Boarding Houses and Hostel accommodation. Many residents of these facilities are people who have a disability and the current *Residential Services (Accommodation) Act* does not provide appropriate coverage. People who have diminished access to appropriate housing should not also experience diminished rights in relation to their tenancy.

Attention also needs to be directed to facilities such as group homes that are provided by Queensland Disability Services and community based organisations where support is also provided to individuals. People need to know and to experience that their housing and their support are separate and they need to have their tenancy rights protected and independent from their support. Likewise rental retirement units which are self contained should be covered.

Whilst our view is that all premises covered under the 'Residential Services (Accommodation) Act 2002 should be covered under the Residential Tenancies Act, we wish to make special mention of particular parts.

Conclusion:

QDHC again would highlight the current and developing housing policies that further diminish individuals and family's access to social housing and the ongoing lack of affordable appropriate housing. The review of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1994* must acknowledge this reality and consider the relevance of the Act in this climate. It is imperative that liaison occur between the Review and the Department of Housing to ensure that there is adequate understanding of current and proposed policy and their implications.

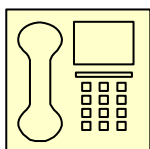
There will through the review process be pressure applied from industry to ensure that changes do not impact on lessors or their agents current practices. QDHC would encourage the Review to resist such pressure and to pursue the objectives of providing a fair and just framework for tenants, and particularly tenants who will be housed permanently in the private rental market. Lessors receive tax advantages through their investments and indirect subsidies through Commonwealth Rent Assistance and as recipients of these advantages they should face scrutiny in regard to the conduct of their business.

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the issues as understood by QDHC in relation to people with a disability and their families.

NETWORKING

It's really important in any organisation to put time and energy into networking – trying to communicate with members and encouraging them to communicate with each other helps build and strengthen an organisation.

Often the 'busyness' of just keeping up with the workload makes this difficult, but we're doing a couple of things over the next few months to try and strengthen our QDHC network.



Phone contact: Catherine is going to be contacting as many members as possible just to talk about what are the important issues for them and also what interests and experience they might be able to share with the rest of us. We've noticed, however, that many phone numbers are missing from our records or are out of date.

So could you help us out by ringing QDHC to give us your phone number so Catherine can reach you??? Thanks!

Website: Also, we are in the process of having our website upgraded to make it more interesting, more informative and more accessible. We really want to be able to use the website as a communication tool to strengthen the network as well.

So you can expect some changes soon – you might even find you can't get onto it for a little while the upgrade is happening. But *once it is up and running with some more interactive features, we will seeking your feedback and input on a whole range of topics as they come up.*

Papers across Karin's Desk...

From time to time interesting articles, papers or resources come across my desk which are too lengthy or not directly related to the newsletter's theme. I thought it would be a good idea to list them here and if you'd like further information or a copy just contact the office and let us know...

- Website on bathroom modifications: <http://www.reece.com.au/access.cgi?page=about>
- Paper on their experiences of universal design by BLUSKY Developments

Phone: 3391 3433

Email: qdhc@qdhc.org.au

DON'T FORGET!!

If you have any ideas about what you want to see in QDHC's newsletter or if you can help in any way with getting it out to members, give us a call. We'd love to hear from you!

New Queensland Disability Services Act

You may have seen some of the advertisements on television recently regarding the new *Queensland Disability Services Act 2006*. This Act replaces the previous 1992 Act.

This new Act came into being on the 1st July, is quite lengthy and covers 160 pages. The document can be accessed on the web at

www.disability.qld.gov.au/key_projects/disability_services_act/

The *Queensland Disability Services Act 2006* governs the requirements for service provision in Queensland.

The objectives of the Act are:

- (a) To acknowledge the rights of people with a disability including by promoting their inclusion in the life of the community generally; and
- (b) To ensure that disability services funded by the department are safe, accountable and respond to the needs of people with a disability.

These objectives are achieved by:

- a) Stating the human rights principle and supporting rights applying to people with a disability; and
- b) Stating the principles for service delivery to people with a disability to be promoted by service providers; and
- c) Regulating disability services funded by the department to ensure the quality, safety, responsiveness and accountability of the services; and
- d) Helping to protect people with a disability using services funded by the department from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Principles:

The Principles set out in the Act are separated into two parts – one relating to the **Human Rights Principles** and the other to **Service Delivery Principles**. These principles set the framework for service provision based on values that are seen to be important to support the imperative that people with a disability live safe lives.



We look forward to witnessing the impact of these changes in the lives of people with disabilities. Time will tell whether the more comprehensive act will deliver better outcomes for people. And the question remains about how it will be monitored and how well community and government agencies will work to ensure that people's rights, as they are spelt out in the Act, are respected and protected.

QLD DISABILITY HOUSING COALITION
ABN: 26 280 884 781
Membership Application/Renewal Form
Tax Invoice

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

.....POST CODE.....

TELEPHONE:.....EMAIL ADDRESS:

PREFERRED FORM OF COMMUNICATION

(Email, Post, TTY, Fax, Phone, Other)

1. I would like to obtain/renew membership of the Qld Disability Housing Coalition Incorporated and agree to abide by its Constitution and Rules. I understand the annual membership fees are:

MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION

ORGANISATIONS	\$22 (GST included)
INDIVIDUAL	\$16.50 (GST included)
INDIVIDUAL (Concession)	\$ 5.50 (GST included)

OR

2. I would like to make a donation to the Queensland Disability Housing Coalition Incorporated.

\$

I enclose a Cheque/Money order made payable to the Qld Disability Housing Coalition Incorporated for the amount of:

\$

I am joining/subscribing to the Coalition because:

.....

SIGNED:.....DATE.....

Please return to:

QLD DISABILITY HOUSING COALITION INC
PO BOX 440
STONES CORNER QLD 4120