



Council to Homeless Persons Queensland

This document is to inform political parties and candidates participating in the 2020 Queensland State Election about the needs, concerns, and interests of the large and growing number of homeless people in QLD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council to Homeless Persons Queensland is a collaboration of homelessness services operating in Queensland. We are an Incorporated Association with a broad membership base and an active and committed Management Committee. We aim to represent the diversity of service providers in the homelessness sector and to use our combined voice to advocate for service users and their rights.

We believe that responses to homelessness must respect the dignity of the person and the diversity of service users' experiences. This includes an empowering approach where people feel able to make their own choices with dignity and support and with an emphasis on achieving lasting positive outcomes.

We see this election as an ideal opportunity for us to maintain the focus on homelessness and social housing, and in the midst of coronavirus and a housing crisis, the stakes are extremely high for the most vulnerable in our community – those people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The political landscape in which we work to address homelessness even during a global pandemic has continued to offer us opportunities to influence the government and for CHPQ to play a key role in supporting change that addresses homelessness. The coronavirus crisis showed it is possible to get people off the streets if there is political will.

The Council to Homeless Persons Queensland has continued to advocate for the creation of safe and affordable housing, and a strong mandate on improving the experience of homelessness in QLD.

Without access to adequate social and affordable housing to meet the current and projected future demand, coupled with a lack of funding investment for the sector, Specialist Homelessness Services in QLD will struggle to reduce the incidence of homelessness through prevention measures, support those experiencing homelessness and alleviate homelessness.

Private developers and investors are dominating housing systems in an unprecedented fashion, often divorcing housing from its social function by treating it as a commodity. The right to housing must be upheld across QLD in a manner that changes the way housing is currently conceived, valued, produced, and regulated.

Increasingly, the private market is not able to meet the needs of people on lower incomes, with rising housing costs outstripping income growth.

The Specialist Homeless Sector and the housing and homeless sector at large, are committed to addressing the underlying causes of homelessness and reducing homelessness well into the future.

People in this country have the right to an adequate standard of living, and the right to non-discrimination. The "right to housing" refers to "the right to adequate housing" as guaranteed under international human rights law. Shelter and housing are fundamental human rights.

No Australian should be disadvantaged by the jurisdiction in which they live. The law must embody the honourable expectations of our society. Policy decisions can create, compound, or solve homelessness. We must engage in the political process if we want to end homelessness.



The increase in demand for housing, exacerbated by COVID-19, ballooning social housing waitlists, a lack of community housing and difficulty in securing private rentals, have seen some of our most vulnerable are having no choice but to use boarding houses. In some properties rather than affording tenants proper rental terms and conditions, tenants' experiences are typically signposted by excessive rent, poor living conditions, overcrowding, inadequate facilities, oppressive house rules, lack of repairs and sudden evictions without any appeal or proper appeal rights.

The Council identifies an urgent need for a review into this and for tenants to be awarded the same rights as people using any other accommodation.

Position Statement

1. All Queenslanders have access to adequate, appropriate housing that they can afford and that supports their wellbeing.
2. The Queensland Government triple the target of social housing to meet demand and provide immediate access to housing
3. The Queensland Government leads collaboration across the Government responsibilities including by adopting a whole-of-Government housing framework that is supported at all levels of Government and across all agencies.
4. An urgent increase in the supply of affordable rental housing and the reform of Rental Assistance.
5. Individuals and families should be provided access to adequate permanent housing so as not to be compelled to rely on emergency accommodation for extended periods.
6. Eligibility for housing adjusted, for people without residency or income and children seeking shelter.
7. Urgent progress on the planned reforms of tenancy legislation (limits on notice to leave without ground, right to pets, minimum property standards, maximum periods that tenants can be placed on a blacklist. ...)
8. Create a landlord and agent 'blacklist' that will be available to all tenants so they can identify landlords and agents who have previously breached their obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act.
9. A costed and funded plan to upgrade existing social housing to a decent standard
10. A focus on a better integration strategy of housing and support services for people with high or complex needs to guide stakeholders in the development of appropriate accommodation and support.

Alison Cole, President



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