

Accreditation Status Report

The Report

This report provides an overview of Allamanda Autistic Adult Accommodation Association Inc's (Allamanda) performance in relation to the National Community Housing Standards.

The report consists of two main parts:

- Accreditation Status Report
- Accreditation Evaluation Report

Accreditation Status Report includes:

- Recommended / Current accreditation status
- Background information about the organisation's work and history
- An overview of the Evaluation team's assessment of the organisation's performance, identifying major achievements as well as major areas for improvement.
- Evaluation Team
- Methodology

It is important to note that the Accreditation Status Report, for accredited organisations only, will be made publicly available on the CHSAU Website – <http://www.chsau.qld.gov.au>

The Evaluation Team has assessed the organisation's performance by rating each Standard against a five-point scale, as outlined below:

Surpassed	Performance meets expectations in all of the three categories of evidence (documentation, processes, measuring outcomes), and at least one category has exceeded expectations
Met	Performance meets expectations in all of the three categories of evidence (documentation, processes, measuring outcomes)
Partially Met	Where there are no categories of evidence (documentation, processes, measuring outcomes) not met, and any of the three categories is partially met.
Not Met	Where there is a not met rating in any of the three categories of evidence (documentation, processes, measuring outcomes)
Not Applicable	The standard cannot be met by the organisation because external legislation, organisation definition or funding policy guidelines prevents them from doing so.

Accreditation Status

Allamanda Autistic Adult Accommodation Association has met the required Standards and has been awarded three year accreditation from 3 February 2009 to 2 February 2012.

Summary of Feedback from Tenants and Other Stakeholders

It was not possible for the evaluation team to gain feedback directly from Allamanda's tenants due to the severity of the tenants' disabilities. In recognition of the importance of having regular feedback from its stakeholders Allamanda has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a formal feedback process between Allamanda, its tenants and their supporters including professional support staff, families and friends.

Allamanda used an external consultant to formally review the operation of the MOU and has used the feedback from the formal review as part of its continuous quality improvement. The consultant sought feedback from Allamanda's tenants, their family and support workers as well as the support agencies and received a return rate to the survey of over 80%.

As part of the continuous quality improvement process Allamanda requests tenant's family and support staff to complete a quarterly proforma which asks questions about the tenancy, changing needs of tenants, responsive maintenance and asset management.

Allamanda provided the evaluation team with a copy of the consultant's review of the MOU and the collated results from the last 12 months of quarterly data collection.

Feedback from tenants, their family and friends

Family members reported that they felt their sons and daughters to be in a safe and secure tenancy with a sense of the property being their home.

Many of the family members commented on the very positive behavioural changes in their sons and daughters compared with the living environment prior to being housed by Allamanda. Family responses indicated that the most significant factor to this positive response in family members was the house design where each tenant has their own bedroom, ensuite and private courtyard area.

Family members also reported that Allamanda fulfilled their responsibility as a landlord to their tenants to a very high standard. There was a positive response to the regular mail out of information to tenants and their families with comments indicating that the information was clear, concise, straightforward and easy to understand.

Feedback from other stakeholders

As part of the accreditation evaluation process the evaluation team had contact with the local TAAS(Q) service and other organisations nominated by Allamanda.

Staff from other organisations agencies provided very positive feedback and indicated that they had a good knowledge of Allamanda including the location of the service, office hours and eligibility criteria for Allamanda's housing.

Staff from other organisations also reported that Allamanda always responded appropriately to requests for repairs and maintenance and they endorsed family comments that the design of Allamanda's properties contributed to the positive change in tenants' behaviour.

Overall Summary of Major Achievements

Areas of Excellence

Allamanda has designed and built housing to meet the specific needs of its client group who are people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and similar challenging behaviours. The design of Allamanda's housing maximises the opportunity for tenancies to be sustained.

Allamanda has consulted with applicants, tenants, service providers, families of people with autism and professionals with expertise in Autism Spectrum Disorder to develop a set of key design elements which form the design brief for its houses. Allamanda has continuously improved its design brief by having open days at new properties and by seeking post occupancy feedback from tenants and their supporters.

Allamanda's design brief ensures that its houses provide equality to all of the tenants of each property and that each property is appropriate for the tenant's specific needs at the different stages of their lifecycle, particularly in areas of increased independence and living skills. The design of Allamanda's housing minimises the disruption to other tenants and damage to property caused during periods of tenant stress and maximises the opportunity for tenancies to be sustained.

Allamanda has demonstrated an extremely strong commitment to sustaining tenancies and its development and use of the MOU to assist with the establishment and maintaining of tenancies is over and above what would normally be expected from a community housing provider.

Allamanda's management committee and staff have also demonstrated an extremely strong and ongoing commitment to promoting appropriate housing to adults with autism spectrum disorder by their involvement in public education activities in the state and national arenas.

Summary of Major Achievements

New members of Allamanda's Board of Management are formally inducted into their role and part of the induction includes a very comprehensive induction kit that includes a copy of the constitution, operations manual, information package for families and supporters of tenants, meeting papers from the previous meeting, annual report, business plan, incorporated associations guide, Residential Tenancies Authorities booklet and Allamanda's newsletter. An additional kit containing information on managing challenging behaviours and a DVD about autism is also available for loan to Board members.

Allamanda's office, currently located in residential premises, was purpose built to allow for appropriate office equipment including desks, computers, filing cabinet, telephones, storage shelving and secure storage. The office allows ease of access to Board members, staff and clients and has a private space for interviews and Board meetings.

Tenants, their families and support workers receive a comprehensive information package at the commencement of their tenancy and Allamanda demonstrates an ongoing commitment to informing tenants by conducting quarterly mail-outs that include a newsletter, changes to the social housing sector and details of any changes that may affect their tenancy.

Allamanda recognises that because of their disabilities tenants have a limited ability to participate and contribute to decision making so Allamanda conducts formal and informal meetings with stakeholders and uses the feedback from regular reviews of the MOU as a way of insuring that it receives maximum input from tenants, their families and support workers.

2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report

Allamanda was first accredited in 2002 and was re-accredited in 2005.

Allamanda developed a quality improvement plan after its re-accreditation in 2005 to implement the suggestions contained in the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report.

Allamanda has implemented the recommendations and suggestions contained in the 2005 Accreditation Evaluation Report.

Overall Summary of Strategic Recommendations

It is suggested that Allamanda consider revising its policy and procedures to include the comprehensive support given to tenants and prospective tenants and their families during the consultation and negotiation that forms part of the allocation process for second and subsequent tenants

Allamanda's staff provides a tenancy management and support service to tenants over and above the standard detailed in the policy and procedures manual. It is suggested that Allamanda consider the benefits of revising the policies and procedures to include the excellent practices used by the organisation to sustainable tenancies.

It is suggested that Allamanda consider the benefits of exploring alternative out-of-hours maintenance reporting systems so that the administrator is not required to be on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

It is suggested that Allamanda consider the benefits to its long term cyclical maintenance and upgrade program of developing more comprehensive individual asset management plan for each property that it owns.

It is suggested that Allamanda review its current practice of including management committee members as part of its annual property inspections and consider if there is any impact on tenant's privacy when groups of people are part of the property inspection visit.

It is suggested that Allamanda amend its policy and procedures manual to include the current practice of covering up or removing tenant contact information that is displayed on the office wall.

It is suggested that Allamanda consider the benefits of reviewing its policies and procedures to include an independent person on recruitment and selection panels.

It is suggested that Allamanda review its policies and procedures to ensure that they provide for the formal reviewing and monitoring of occupational health and safety systems and that the outcomes of the reviews are documented for quality improvement purposes.

Background information about the organisation

History, location and community served

Allamanda was established in 1992 by parents, siblings and friends of intellectually impaired adults with autism and similar challenging behaviours, to create appropriate housing options as there was a lack of specialised housing that met the needs of this group of people.

Allamanda became incorporated in May 1994 and was accredited in 2002 under the National Community Housing Standards and was re-accredited in 2005. Allamanda was short listed in the 1999 National Awards for Excellence in Service to Tenants and Communities.

Allamanda has received funding to construct houses through the Queensland Government's Community Housing Partnership and Long Term Community Housing Programs and also head-leases three Department of Housing properties.

Services provided by the Organisation

Allamanda provides housing for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other challenging behaviours to enable its tenants have the opportunity to live in the community in

appropriate and secure accommodation that is not available in either the private rental or public housing environments.

Allamanda's main activities are:

- the provision of tenancy and property management services to its 35 tenants living in the 15 properties it manages
- liaising with individual families and organisations for information sharing and advice
- formal presentations at forums and conferences.

Allamanda ensures that the tenancy and property management of its housing is separate from the support and other services provided by third party organisations.

Number of staff employed listing job titles and identifying the hours allocated to these positions

- Administrator: part time position working 30 hours per week
- Admin Assistant: part time position working 6 hours per week.

Property Portfolio

Allamanda manages the following properties that it has title to:

- 2 two-bedroom houses at Coopers Plains
- 2 three-bedroom houses at Coopers Plains
- 3 three-bedroom houses at Oxley
- 1 three-bedroom house at Kuraby
- 2 three-bedroom houses at Wellington Point
- 1 three-bedroom house at Drewvale
- 1 three-bedroom house at Springfield Lakes.

Allamanda also manages the following leasehold properties owned by the Department of Housing:

- 1 three-bedroom house at Mudgeeraba
- 1 three-bedroom house at Calamvale
- 1 one-bedroom duplex at Coopers Plains.

In all of the properties owned or managed by Allamanda, each tenant has their own bedroom and private area and they share common areas such as kitchens and lounge rooms. Each of the properties also features a separate area for the use of the support staff.

Target group

Allamanda's identified target group is adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and similar challenging behaviours and who have funding for support according to their needs.

Allamanda's tenants receive their support funding from Disability Services Queensland who have an agreement with registered accommodation support service providers to enable tenants to live in the properties managed by Allamanda.

Number of tenancies managed

Allamanda manages 35 tenancies.

Income sources

Allamanda receives its capital works funding from the Department of Housing and receives income from tenants' rental payments.

Management/Governance structure

Allamanda has a Board of Management with four executive members who represent the organisation in a professional manner and share in the overall responsibility for the

management of the organisation. The executive Board members are elected annually by Allamanda's members.

The Board of Management consists of:

- a President who chairs the Board meetings and is the spokesperson for the Board
- a Vice-President who assists the President in carrying out their duties and fills in for the President if they are unavailable
- a Treasurer who has the primary responsibility for the financial management of the organisation
- a Secretary who is responsible for keeping the non-financial records of the organisation and for dealing with the correspondence
- Ordinary Members of the organisation.

Key issues for Allamanda over the past 12 months

Allamanda has been involved in the design and construction of three new properties.

Allamanda has continued with the planned maintenance and upgrade of its properties and has continued with the implementation of the CODA Database.

Allamanda has implemented the requirements of the department's One Social Housing System and has conducted a major review of its policies and procedures manual and its tenancy agreements. Allamanda has resigned all of its tenants with the new tenancy agreements.

Allamanda has also reviewed its Memorandum of Understanding and provided training to tenants and their support staff. Allamanda has further developed the information package provided to families and supporters of tenants and maintained regular communications between the organisation and its tenants, their families and support agencies.

The preparation for re-Accreditation preparation has been a major piece of work for Allamanda.

Major goals for Allamanda over the next 12 months

Allamanda's major goals over the next 12 months include the:

- further development of the CODA database and the provision of additional training to Board and staff members
- recruitment and development of additional Board members
- implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan following re-accreditation and the continual review of the organisation's operations
- maintaining of the waitlist to ensure full occupancy at each of the properties
- continuous monitoring and review of the Memorandum of Understanding
- on-going maintenance and up-grade of the housing stock.

The Evaluation Team

Coordinator: Mike Munsie (Standards and Accreditation Unit)

Peer Evaluator: Elvene Whitbread (Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre)

Trainee Peer Evaluator: Yvonne Mappas (BRIC Housing Company)

Methodology

Prior to the evaluation the service had evaluated its own performance by the use of a Self-study Report. The Evaluation team then visited the organisation. The process of external evaluation involved an intensive process of information gathering. Information gathered may have included:

- reviewing the pre-evaluation questionnaire and other documentation of various kinds
- conducting a range of interviews with management members and staff
- inspection of office facilities and equipment
- assessing policies and procedures
- reviewing the tenancy and property record audit reports
- review of reports of tenant and other organisation questionnaires undertaken by organisation
- interviews with key referral organisations and the funding body.