

Accreditation Status Report

This report provides an overview of **Mareeba Community Housing Association Inc.'s** performance in relation to the National Community Housing Standards.

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

Mareeba Community Housing Association Inc. has met the required standards and has been awarded three year accreditation.

Overall Summary of Major Achievements including Areas of Excellence

The Mareeba Community Housing Association Inc (Mareeba CHA) operates from a centrally located office that provides a good working environment for clients, management committee members and paid staff.

Staff reported to the evaluation team as being happy with their employment conditions including the level of support from the management committee. The employment conditions of staff are reviewed annually by the management committee. There is a grievance process accessible to staff and a Disputes Committee to assist with staff concerns if they cannot be easily resolved.

The management committee and staff are very active in the local and regional networks and have developed a good working relationship with other service providers in the area. The service is represented at Regional Community Housing Council Meetings and national housing conferences.

Interviews with other community agencies indicated that the Mareeba CHA has a good working relationship with the agencies and referrals are made appropriately with good outcomes for clients.

Tenants interviewed during the accreditation evaluation visit were very positive about the service and were impressed with the professionalism of the Housing Manager and commented on the wide range of information and assistance that they were provided during the sign-up process.

Overall Summary of Strategic Recommendations

Tenancy Management

Further develop policy and procedures related to changing needs of tenants.

Develop a process for identifying if a tenancy is no longer sustainable and apply consistently across tenancies.

Asset Management

Review responsive maintenance and repairs policies to ensure that tradespeople have appropriate insurance to minimise risk to the service.

Review the Contractors Information Sheet to include a definition of terms to reduce the opportunity of misunderstanding about the standard of client service expected by Mareeba CHA from tradespeople.

Tenant Participation

Further develop strategies to encourage tenant participation in relevant activities of the organisation and identify and address barriers that limit tenant participation.

Financial Systems

An annual or bi-annual financial review focusing on its financial systems to ensure the checks and balances that are in place continue to be the most appropriate and recommended that the service consider an external or independent review of the financial systems every three to five years.

Working with the Community

Formalise arrangements where appropriate with external agencies supporting tenants. Agreements should include referral protocols, responsibilities of all parties, confidentiality/information exchange arrangements, disputes and grievance procedures and a review process.

Governance and Organisational Management

Strengthen planning and development processes to more clearly articulate and operationalise the organisation's planned activities and direction.

Document all delegations of staff and committee (including sub-committees).

Develop a process, for example a Quality Plan, for implementing improvements identified in the annual review.

Human Resource Management

Develop a formal process that enables regular opportunities for staff to participate in performance review and development.

Background information about the organisation

History, location and community served

Mareeba CHA was formed in April 1997. The Department of Housing (department) provided funding for Mareeba CHA in July 1997 for 20 properties under the Community Rent Scheme (CRS) program.

Mareeba CHA's office is located at Shop 2, 149 Walsh Street and the postal address is Post Office Box 2017, Mareeba.

Mareeba Shire has a population of approximately 8000 and has a diverse mix of cultures with large Italian and Croatian communities. In response to the aging of the population, Mareeba Shire Council has established a large stock of 100 units of aged housing.

Employment in the Mareeba Shire is predominately agriculturally based and relies heavily on casual unskilled labour with a large number of farms recently diversifying from growing tobacco into mangoes, bananas and sugar cane.

There has been a large increase in population in the Mareeba area over the last five years with building approvals showing no signs of slowing within the next 12 months. The cost of housing is beyond the reach of many low income earners as a result of demand generated by an increase in the number of people moving into the Mareeba Shire from southern areas in search of affordable properties.

Services provided by the Organisation

Mareeba CHA provides affordable short-to-medium term accommodation to public housing applicants in severe and immediate housing need.

Mareeba CHA provides clients with information about housing options and refers clients to other appropriate service providers.

Mareeba CHA actively engages in lobbying for more low cost housing and networking at local, regional and state levels.

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

Mareeba CHA operates its service 9.00 am to 5.00 pm on Tuesday to Friday with a part-time worker employed in the joint roles of Housing Manager and Administrative Worker.

Property Portfolio

Mareeba CHA has a property portfolio of 23 CRS properties consisting of:

- 5 two bedroom units
- 1 three bedroom unit
- 3 two bedroom houses
- 12 three bedroom houses
- 2 four bedroom houses.

All properties are located in Mareeba with 22 properties head-leased from the private rental sector and one property is owned by the department.

Target groups

Mareeba CHA list their target groups as:

- people with disabilities
- women and children escaping domestic violence
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- young people under 25 years
- single people.

Income sources

Mareeba CHA receives funding from the department and rental income from its property portfolio.

Management/Governance structure

The Committee of Management supervises the operations of the service and consists of:

- the Chairperson
- the Secretary
- the Treasurer
- up to four Mareeba CHA ordinary members.

Mareeba CHA has an allocations sub-committee to assist with the allocation of its vacant properties.

Key issues over the past 12 months

There were two key issues noted by Mareeba CHA.

The alcohol restrictions in the Indigenous Cape York Communities have resulted in extended family members staying for longer than usual periods with their relatives in the Mareeba area. There is increased risk of overcrowding, homelessness and family violence within these indigenous families.

The supply of affordable housing has been reduced by the relocation of the families of prisoners housed at the Lotus Glen Prison into the Mareeba area.

Major goals over the next 12 months

There were two major goals identified by Mareeba CHA.

Mareeba CHA intends to lobby for funding to increase the supply of crisis housing in Mareeba and to work towards increasing the supply of affordable housing options for clients of the service.

The Evaluation Team

Coordinating Evaluator: Carmel Sakrzewski

Trainee Lead Evaluator: Mike Munsie (SAU)

Peer Evaluator: Tracey Jones (Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre)