

Accreditation Status Report

The Report

This report provides an overview of Tableland Community Housing Association Inc's 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

Tableland Community Housing Association Inc has met the required standards and has been awarded full three year accreditation from 8 August 2008 to 7 August 2011.

Summary of Feedback from Tenants and Other Stakeholders

Feedback from tenants

The evaluation team met with Tableland Community Housing Association Inc's (TCHA) tenants at an external venue arranged by the Service.

Tenants were very positive about TCHA and commented on the courteous and professional way the office staff interacted with them. Tenants were very pleased with the way that their housing was allocated to them and the information that was provided when they signed their tenancy agreement.

Tenants regarded TCHA has very good tenancy managers and were very confident that any tenancy or other issues that may arise could be resolved by contacting the office in the first instance. Tenants were aware of the complaints and appeals process and expressed confidence in being able to access tenancy advocacy services or to contact the management committee if required.

Tenants reported they enjoyed the opportunity to meet with other tenants and staff at an event organised by TCHA at a local park and appreciated the regular TCHA newsletter. Tenants did not have a lot of information about the role of the Tenant Representative and indicated that they would welcome additional information about the role and contact information for the Tenant Representative.

Some tenants at the meeting could not remember receiving a tenant survey and they indicated strongly that they would like to receive the tenant survey and the opportunity to complete and return the survey to provide feedback to TCHA.

Feedback from other stakeholders

The local TAAS(Q) service and two other organisations nominated by TCHA were contacted as part of the accreditation evaluation process.

Staff from the agencies indicated they have a close working relationship with TCHA and a number of comments were made about the high regard for TCHA in the Tableland's community and the positive outcomes for clients who are referred to the Service.

Staff from the other community agencies also advised that clients referred to TCHA provided feedback about the professionalism and competency of the TCHA staff. The willingness of TCHA to ensure that tenants are supported by referring agencies and the ability to provide exit points for clients housed in crisis accommodation was highly valued by other services.

Staff from the community agencies interviewed indicated that they had a good knowledge of TCHA including the location of the service, hours of operation and public contact, eligibility criteria for social housing and the complaints and appeals process. Staff from the agencies also reported regular contact with TCHA management committee and staff at various local meetings.

Overall Summary of Major Achievements including Areas of Excellence

TCHA was formed in 1988 and developed from a small voluntary group to a professional housing service receiving funding under four programs.

TCHA management committee and staff are active members of the Tablelands' community and the Service is well represented at interagency and other networking opportunities in the

local and regional areas. The Service has a good working relationship with both government and non-government organisations.

TCHA has a centrally located and accessible office that provides a good working environment for staff and clients of the Service. Staff reported as being happy with their employment conditions including the level of support provided by the management committee.

Interviews with tenants and other organisations indicated that TCHA is very well regarded by its tenants and other organisations and provides opportunities for feedback about the Service. TCHA actively encourages tenants to participate in the management of the Service and produces a regular newsletter and arranges tenant social activities to allow tenants to be better informed about the organisation and to provide direct feedback to staff.

TCHA has demonstrated an extremely strong commitment to sustaining tenancies and its practice in this area of tenancy management and support exceeds what would normally be expected from the Service. Tenants are offered opportunities to remedy breaches and enter into agreements for repayment of rent arrears and the Service makes every attempt to support and sustain tenancies.

2004 Accreditation Evaluation Report

TCHA was first accredited in 2001 and was re-accredited in 2004.

TCHA developed a written quality improvement plan after its re-accreditation in 2004 to progressively implement the recommendations and suggestions contained in the 2004 Accreditation Evaluation Report.

TCHA has implemented the recommendations and suggestions contained in the 2004 Accreditation Evaluation Report.

Overall Summary of Strategic Suggestions

Tenant Management

It is suggested that TCHA:

- consider the benefits of revising the policies and procedures to detail the practices used by the Service to manage and sustain its tenancies

Tenant Rights and Participation

It is suggested that TCHA:

- consider the benefits of requiring all requests from external agencies for tenant information to be lodged in writing and stored on the tenants' files
- more widely promote the role and contact information of the tenant representative on the management committee so as to raise the general level of awareness of the role with tenants
- promote its annual tenant surveys more widely to increase tenant awareness and participation in the annual tenant surveys.

Management Systems

It is suggested that TCHA consider increasing the visibility of the signage in Mabel Street to assist potential clients in locating the Service.

Human Resource Management

It is suggested that TCHA:

- consider benefits to the Service, such as attracting a wider pool of applicants and consistency with good HR practice, if all vacancies were advertised both externally and internally replacing the current practice of advertising internally in the first instance
- review the policies, procedures and the staff instruction manual to ensure consistency across all documentation about the need for staff to produce medical certificates for sick leave in excess of three days.

Conclusion

The suggestions in this report are intended to assist TCHA to continue to develop as an organisation.

TCHA has demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of its client service and its ongoing viability.

TCHA is to be commended for its long term commitment spanning over 19 years to providing affordable housing and its contribution to broader housing issues in the Tableland's region.

Background information about the organisation

History, location and community served

TCHA is a not-for-profit, multi-program community housing association.

The organisation was formed in 1988 in the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and was incorporated in June 1989. The organisation has been providing housing for low income households in the Tableland region including Atherton, Malanda and Herberton for the past 19 years.

The organisation has grown from a voluntary 'action' group to an incorporated association with four programs, a current housing stock of 57 properties and four paid staff members including a tenancy advice worker. The management committee is comprised of dedicated community members who volunteer their time and skills to govern the organisation.

Services provided by the Organisation

- Housing services funded under the Community Rent Scheme and the Long Term Community Housing Programs
- Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service funded under the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service Queensland Program.

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

- Housing Manager: full time position working 67 hours per fortnight
- Administration Worker: part time position working 38 hours per fortnight
- Book Keeper: part time position working 40 hours per fortnight
- Tenancy Advice Worker: part time position working 52 hours per fortnight.

Property Portfolio

Community Rent Scheme:

There are 38 units of accommodation funded under the Community Rent Scheme Program comprising 36 properties head-leased from private owners, 1 property owned by the Department of Housing and 1 Cyclone Larry property.

In Atherton there are 25 duplexes and 9 detached houses.

In Malanda there are 3 detached houses.

In Herberton there is 1 detached house.

Long Term Community Housing Program:

TCHA has 19 units of accommodation funded under the Long Term Community Housing Program comprising 17 properties owned by TCHA and two properties owned by the Department of Housing.

In Atherton TCHA has 8 duplexes and 4 detached houses

In Herberton the organisation has 4 seniors units, two duplexes and one detached house.

Target group / s

Target groups housed by TCHA are: single people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with a disability, the aged, young people under 25 years, survivors of domestic violence, sole parent families and people from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds.

Cyclone Larry affected households are also a target group. Originally there were 6 households with the property leased for the one remaining household expiring on 24 April 2008.

Number of tenancies managed

TCHA manages a total of 56 tenancies under the Community Rent Scheme and Long Term Community Housing Programs.

Income sources

TCHA receives income from its rental properties and recurrent funding from the Department of Housing under the Community Rent Scheme and Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service (Queensland) Programs. TCHA has also received non-recurrent funding under the Long Term Community Housing Program.

Management/Governance structure

TCHA has a Management Committee of five voluntary Members who represent the organisation in a professional manner and share in the overall responsibility for the management of the organisation.

The Management Committee is elected annually by the members of TCHA and consists of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, a Treasurer, a Secretary and a Tenant Representative.

Key issues over the past 12 months

The one social housing system has introduced change in the allocation process for LTCH tenant selection and TCHA has reviewed its policies and procedures to reflect this and other one social housing system changes.

TCHA has reported a higher turnover of CRS properties with private rental prices having risen sharply due to a shortage of rental properties and a substantial increase in property prices. However the CRS rent subsidy has only increased by the CPI and private rental increases are not passed on to tenants as rent is income based plus rent assistance. There has not been an increase in rent assistance in line with market rents resulting in a larger gap between rental income with the CRS subsidy and the rapid increase of private sector rental property rents.

The Evaluation Team

Coordinator: Mike Munsie

Peer Evaluator: Elvene Whitebread

Trainee Peer Evaluator: Kai Dahl

Methodology

Prior to the evaluation the organisation 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 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
- interviewing tenants
- review of reports of tenant and other organisation questionnaires undertaken by organisation
- interviews with key referral organisations and the funding body.