

Provider	No of Properties	No of Clients
Able Australia	9	21
Anglicare -Shaw Possibilities	3	8
Catholic Care	1	3
Disability ACT	2	3
Focus Inc	14	27
Hartley Life Care	3	10
House with No Steps	2	7
Koomarri	3	7
TOTAL	37	84

CCH's core philosophies:

1. Housing provision for people with disabilities should be separated from personal support and not administered by a single provider to remove the inherent conflict of interest that can arise between the two roles and enhance the integrity of the distinct roles of support provider and landlord.
2. The separation of the housing and tenancy management and support, allows for a greater degree of privacy, a wider choice of services and greater security. In essence no one organisation has a level of influence in a person with a disability's life to the detriment of their rights.
3. Establishing a home, having the opportunity to hold a lease in your own right, exercising control over key aspects of your life and having the capacity to maintain a tenancy is a valued social role for any person and is a fundamental right..
4. Any shared housing arrangement will require compromise and negotiation through discussion and debate.
5. Shared Goals are most likely to be achieved when there is a mutual commitment to communication, collaboration and cooperation.
6. Recognition that people with disability have the right to make their own choices about where and with whom they live and they should be afforded maximum opportunity to be included in the decision making process. People living in a shared housing arrangement will be consulted with regard to the possible introduction of new house hold members
7. Participation of families and friends will maximise the opportunities for a long term sustainable tenancy and is therefore both promoted and encouraged.
8. "Person-centered service delivery"; which means the person receiving services:
 - plays a key role in how their needs and priorities are defined;
 - influences the way in which they will be supported;
 - plays a significant role in designing and amending their service arrangements;
 - has their families playing a valued role;
 - has their families less subjected to bureaucracy;
 - have more choices reflective of lifestyle preferences;
 - does not have to fit into prearranged modules;

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- has their life and lifestyle (including friends and family) playing a more central role in shaping services.

1. CCH would like to see the concept of separation of housing and tenancy management and personal support to be a foundation stone of the NDIS.

CCH believes that all clients should have a lease or occupancy agreement in their name, signed by themselves or their guardian. However in many cases the client does not have an agreement in place and the arrangement is often about the support provision and not so much about the housing provision.

The risk occurs when the support provider is also the landlord/owner of the property. If the tenant determines they no longer want to receive support from the support provider then they would most likely be asked to look for alternative accommodation. It is unlikely that a support provider would be happy to allow another support provider to provide support services in house they own/manage. Alternatively if the support provider decides to withdraw services to a client for whichever reason- WH&S concerns, non-compliance with requests to provide a safe work place, the client's decision to decline services from the provider, the Client may be asked to leave their home as they are no longer eligible for that particular supported housing option.

In the past when there was no separation of support and tenancy this gave the support provider a control over their client's lives and future well-being. There was no one to challenge the service provider's decision and to ensure that the client's tenancy rights were being respected. Now if there is a falling out between support provider and the person with a disability, the person with a disability is not required to move, they can change service providers without putting the security of their housing at risk. CCH regular stands up for our client's tenancy rights, educating support providers on tenancy rights and legal obligations.

The community housing sector is regulated, in most States and Territories, with a National Regulatory scheme to be introduced soon. This regulation has been introduced to (in part) ensure good tenant outcomes and compliance with Residential Tenancy Legislation. Not all support providers are able to provide a similar high level of tenancy support and management. The client may be disadvantaged as a result.

If a fundamental principle of the NDIS is to enable People with Disability to exercise choice with regard to support provision this will be impossible to implement if there is no separation of the two roles. **How do you change support provider if they are the Owner/ Head Lessee of the property.**

2. Tenancy management services and support need to be funded not paid for by the individual.

This submission is written with regard to the impact of the NDIS on supported accommodation in particular. However the services CCH offer are utilized by all our tenants regardless of which housing program they are part of.

In order to achieve this separation the role of housing and tenancy manager needs to be funded somehow. The cost of this service can often be slightly higher than the cost of other community housing service provision, mainly due to the fact that whilst Capital Community Housing's role is to provide specific services to people with disabilities CCH also provides indirect services to the parents, families and friends of people with disabilities; as an information and referral service. In addition to this CCH does not speak to ojust one person with regard to an issue, there are often a range of interested parties that need to be kept informed of decisions, occurrences etc.; the person themselves, guardians, trustees, family members and nominated others all need to be consulted and informed.

CCH currently receive base funding from the ACT Government through Disability ACT – part of the Community Services Directorate and a smaller amount from Housing ACT also part of the Community Services Directorate. In addition to that CCH set rents that reflect our client's entitlement to access

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Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). The funding and the CRA cover the running costs of our organisation. As a specialist provider of a “Friendly Landlord” Housing model we are interested in determining if our type of organisation will continue to receive block funding or if there is some thought that we may have to revert to a user pays arrangement – in which case I would hold grave concerns for the future of our organisation.

CCH considers that the role CCH play in our client’s lives is valued (and their feedback supports this), we are a resource for our clients;

- to support them to exercise their tenancy and occupancy rights, and the consequent social role valorisation that comes as a result of this
- to connect into community resources,
- to assist them to find alternative accommodation when their current housing no longer meets their needs due to a change in their support or housing needs related to their disability
- to assist shared housing models to operate successfully
- to assist in resolving conflicts between tenants in shared housing
- to assist Clients to sustain their tenancy (this is a very broad role)
- to facilitate communications with all stakeholders involved in a client’s life

However CCH is unsure of how many clients would be prepared to pay for this service out of their own funds – it is a labour intensive and time consuming role that is quite different from the services provided by Public Housing Authorities and/or mainstream real estate agencies. It is a person centred model that is flexible and responsive to the needs of the individual.

CCH’s purpose is to ensure that people living with disabilities have access to safe, supportive, long term secure accommodation. CCH’s primary value is to ensure that this housing is provided in a way that enhances the tenant’s quality of life. In doing this we recognise the right of the individual to make choices about things that affect their life.

CCH’s ability to house people depends on being able to access the ‘right’ property for them and to be assured that the supports in their lives, both informal and professional, are sufficient to make independent living possible and to meet the changing circumstances of clients.

CCH is there as a ‘friendly landlord’; to assist clients who may experience difficulties which may impact on their ability to maintain a successful tenancy.

CCH focus on a service delivery model that is person centred. All Clients determine the extent and nature of any support they receive from Capital Community Housing that extends beyond normal tenancy management functions. There is no set model for the type and level of support offered, however there are boundaries that we do specifically not cross including; taking any action that impacts on client’s independence or that cannot be related to housing and tenancy management.

3. Recognition that some shared housing arrangements are beneficial and add value to the lives of the household members.

The issue of separation of tenancy and support becomes even more interesting in a shared housing arrangement. There are benefits in sharing houses; companionship, community connection, shared cost of living expenses (and this is a huge issue with gas and electricity costs rising all the time), and shared maintenance expenses (gardening and cleaning).

Shared housing works best when the house is purpose built, oversized bedrooms (accommodate a double bed and sitting area) with ensuite, individual access to outdoor areas / courtyards.

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Some shared housing is in block funded houses with 24/7 support, some shared housing is supported for some of the time throughout the day and others supported through individualised HACC arrangements. The different support arrangements impact on the houses viability, sustainability and compatibility of clients.

The big issue in shared housing is compatibility of the occupants, vacancies may be easy to fill based on demand but no so easy to fill if compatibility is considered a priority. Compatibility encourages tenant participation in the selection of a new housemate, the same as would happen in any other shared housing arrangement; current members of the household interview potential new house mates and make a selection usually based on compatibility. Where there is 24/7 support involved the selection process becomes more complex as the issue of funding comes into consideration. Funding pressures may lead to organisations not putting a priority on compatibility in favour of ensuring financial viability.

If funding becomes the key selection criteria, the independence and the right of the client to make decisions is significantly compromised.

4. The needs of ageing parents in relation to supported accommodation for their adult child with a disability.

The proposed scheme could make some parents/guardians feel very uncertain with regard to the stability of the living and support arrangements in place for their family member. As it stands now, as a general rule, the family secures housing and enters into a support arrangement with one provider of their choice, or they move into shared housing with support provided by the in-situ provider. It is generally accepted that this arrangement will be on-going barring any unforeseeable event. If the client falls out with the in-situ provider, the client will normally have to seek alternate support and accommodation.

However under the proposed scheme it is unclear how changes to the support provider will occur and under what circumstances. This lack of certainty will be upsetting and distressing for many parents. The issue constantly needing to monitor and manage their adult child's housing and support is not necessarily a desirable thing. Some parents are keen to revert to the role of parent and not remain in the role of principal carer. For many parents, when their adult child moves out of home into supported accommodation they see this as the start of a new era for both parent and adult child. Please keep in mind that to be eligible for supported accommodation the disability of the person needs to be quite significant. CCH believes that the needs of this parent group is quite distinct from that of parents of adult children with different disabilities who may be far more physically or intellectually independent.

Many parents would prefer to remain with a Government Service provider than move to a not for profit or for profit service provider that may become financially unviable if there is an exodus of service users. Parents want and need certainty around service provision.

Choice is good and desirable but confidence in knowing that the accommodation and support arrangements are on-going and viable is very important.

Background

CCH has been in existence for over 30 years, originally established in 1980 under the name of D.A.R.E. (Disabled Adult Residential Establishments). After 15 years and as a result of broadening its core business the organisation became known as Transitional Accommodation Services, then TAS Housing and more recently Capital Community Housing. As the organisation has matured so have its services. The organisation has undertaken significant change and growth since it was originally conceived as a transitional accommodation service. CCH is now best described a specialist provider of disability housing and tenancy management services.

CCH has grown rapidly since 2008, at which time it managed 25 properties and was considering a range of restructure options as well as the real possibility of closure. In five years CCH has more than doubled the

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number of properties it manages, and has completed the accreditation process and registered as a Community Housing Provider in the ACT.

CCH has managed this growth while retaining a strong commitment to high quality housing services.

As part of the growth strategy CCH has established partnerships with other community sector organisations to clearly distinguish between property management and tenancy support roles. CCH's role is responsible for maintenance, repairs and negotiating with clients, and often guardians or trustees, to make sure property management processes are right for clients. This partnership provides systems and relationships so that tenancy management is provided by the best skilled organisation. As well as providing quality services to clients, and allowing both organisations to focus on their strengths, these partnerships have provided opportunities and funds for growth, making it possible for CCH to employ a specialized property manager. These partnerships work because the two organisations' roles are complementary, and there is genuine synergy in work and mission.

CCH has worked on developing a Memorandum of Understanding that clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of each of the parties to the MOU; CCH, the support provider and the client, their guardian and/or family.

The Board and staff of CCH would be more than happy to provide more information with regard to any of these points and would be happy to be able to present to any interested party on the role and experiences of CCH in providing housing and tenancy support for people with disability.

Sincerely,

Faye Minty
Chief Executive Officer
Capital Community Housing

25 January 2013

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