



Australasian **Housing** Institute

Linking social housing workers in Australia and New Zealand

Common Housing Registers: Improving Access to Social Housing

Presented by Rhonda Phillips
October 2006

Introductions

Presenter – Rhonda Phillips

- **20 years experience in social housing service delivery, policy program management in Qld and Vic**
- **Now a housing researcher with AHURI**
- **Post graduate research on access to multi-provider system in Brisbane (2005)**
- **Overseas AHURI field work on CHRs in Canada, England and Scotland (2005)**

Purpose of Seminar

This seminar provides an opportunity to:

- **learn more about common housing registers and**
- **to consider their relevance and implications for Queensland**

What we'll cover

- **The purpose and role of CHRs**
- **Different overseas approaches to Common Housing Registers (CHR)**
- **Queensland research into social housing access in a multi-provider system;**
- **The applicability of CHRs in the Australian context;**
- **Key policy issues and choices**

Overseas Research- Nov/Dec 2006

- **Three Countries: England, Scotland and Canada**
- **Nine Sites: London, Bath, Manchester, Bolton, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Toronto and Vancouver**
- **Forty-four interviews: policy makers, managers and frontline staff in government, housing providers, community services and common housing registers**

Qld Research: Access in a multi-provider system

Research Aim: To examine access processes in a multi-provider social housing service system.

- How rationing (application and allocation) processes work
- How well the system operates
- Potential for greater service integration

Research Methodology

Inner Brisbane (5-7 Km from CBD)

2 public housing area offices and 6 community housing orgs, inc BHC

23 Interviews: client&policy advocates, policy makers, service managers and front-line workers

Documents: market and social housing data; policy documents, org survey and documents

Overseas policy context

- **Increasing social housing demand**
- **Reducing or modest increase in net social housing supply**
- **Reducing turnover of social housing**
- **Decreasing affordability in private market**
- **Increased targeting**
- **Provider diversification**

Stock and Providers

	main	other	total	providers
Bath	10,370	2,500	12,870	25
Manchester			73,210	19
Edinburgh	24,259	13,868	8,127	24
Royston	n/a	1,067	1,059	3
Perth	8,307	2,914	11,222	15
Toronto	52,429	14,259	68,224	185
BC	7,800	35,500	43,300	650

Applications and allocations

	App	Alloc	Priority	%
Camden	15,822	1,637	608	38
Bath	4,700	500	375	75
Edinburgh	23,022	3,500		
Royston	695			
Toronto	47,620	4,700	2,020	43
British Columbia	65,000			

Brisbane: Changing shape

Dwell at 30/6/06	New 2000-05	
Public Housing	87%	50%
SOMIH	1%	2%
Community Housing	10%	10%
Brisbane Housing		
Company	2%	38%

Applications and Allocations

	App 30/6/06	Alloc 2004/05
Public Housing	5457	465 (46.6%)
SOMIH	265	4 (0.4%)
Community Housing	1571	383 (38.5%)
Brisbane Housing		
Company	506	143 (14.5%)

Overseas CHRs: Core Features

- **Common client information**
- **A Common Application Form**
- **A Common Database of applicants**
- **Central administration**
- **Networked computer access**
- **‘Long term’ social housing**
- **Relationships and Governance**

Overseas CHRs: differences

- **Compulsory/voluntary participation**
- **Number of providers**
- **Geographic coverage**
- **Regulatory arrangements**
- **Monitoring and reporting capacity**

Operation and Administration

- **Information**
- **Application Forms**
- **Waiting list management**
- **Needs assessments**
- **Governance**
- **System Administration**
- **Information technology**

Policy Issues

- **Eligibility**
- **Priority access**
- **Transfers**
- **Exclusions**
- **Matching and provider discretion**
- **Client Choice**

Balancing diversity / uniformity

Implementation Issues

- **Leadership, participation and collaboration**
- **Timeframes**
- **Resourcing and training**
- **Merging waiting lists**
- **Monitoring and review**
- **Continuous Improvement**

Emerging Trends and Policy Issues

- **Information and advice: Edinburgh Housing Information and Advice Strategy**
- **Client choice: choice based lettings**
- **Policy and practice convergence**
- **Links with the private sector**
- **Information Technology**

Qld Research Findings

- **Benefits of diversification**
- **Concern about uncoordinated access**
- **Openness to change**
- **Policy de-stabilisation and roles confusion**
- **Fragmented relationships**
- **Lack of 'system-wide' networking or governance infrastructure**

Client Issues

- **Information and accessibility**
- **Privacy**
- **Appeals**
- **Exclusions**
- **Choice**

Provider Issues

- **Efficiency: technology, processes, data accuracy, systems duplication**
- **Client outcomes**
- **Identity and Autonomy**
- **Managing risk**
- **System flexibility and reporting capacity**

Government Issues

- **Transparency**
- **Equity**
- **Choice**
- **Accessibility**
- **Efficiency**
- **Improved planning**
- **Policy compliance**

Applicability of CHRs to Australia

- **Scale:** size of social housing sector
- **Geography:** statewide / local focus
- **Structure of sector:** dominance of public housing; size of CH providers
- **Technology:** existing infrastructure
- **Expertise:** in-house and consultancies
- **Resources:** cost/benefits and economy of scale

Applicability of CHRs to Australia

- **Local networks and relationships**
- **Governance and decision making structures**
- **Information**
 - For clients
 - About services
 - About properties

Critical Choices

- **Information and advice on housing options**
- **Application forms and processes**
- **Processing forms and verifying eligibility**
- **Priority needs assessments**
- **Disability assessments**
- **Selection and matching**
- **Post-application contact with consumers**
- **Information Technology systems**

Implications for practice

- **Work roles and processes**
- **Relationships with consumers**
- **Relationships with other services**
- **A 'systems' view – working across organisational boundaries**

Key Messages

- CHRs do not have to mean uniformity
- Coordination does not mean centralisation
- Diversity in entry points and service models is important
- CHRs do have costs and risks
- Relationships are critical
- Technology needs to be harnessed

Final message

Integration is supported by stakeholders where there are:

- ***clear consumer benefits***
- ***diversity is maintained***
- ***there is effective leadership***
- ***open and inclusive policy and implementation processes***
- ***Efficient processes and systems***

‘Tenant benefits, Trust and Technology’

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