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Dear members and stakeholders

COVID-19 and National Cabinet Statement

Q Shelter has continued to advocate to Government the importance of the status of our sector as essential workers. On 13 January **National Cabinet endorsed** a broadening of the Essential Worker Definition to a number of sectors, including the welfare sector, defined to include "Housing/homelessness support".

A key feature of the changes will be the ability for staff, who have been close contacts of Covid cases, to return to work early, provided they have not themselves tested positive and are asymptomatic.

Key points mentioned in recent briefings:

- The changes only apply to roles identified as Critical Essential Roles (essentially frontline roles).
- Employers are to prepare and provide a list of Critical Essential Roles, applying the listed criteria.
- The lists will be subject to Government Review, but employers can apply the process to the identified roles, until a role's inclusion has been queried by Government.
- There may be increased PPE requirements for these staff to return to work.
- Employers must maintain a list of employees who fill these roles.
- Employees must meet certain criteria, including being fully vaccinated.

The proposed change is subject to formal direction by Queensland Health. This direction is anticipated shortly, but at the time of writing, is still pending. Providers are encouraged to regularly monitor **Chief Health Officer Public Health Directions** for formal commencement of the changes.

Key points to know about Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs):

- Free Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) will be available to people who hold a Commonwealth Concession Card.
- Queensland Government is working to secure more RATs for Government.
- The Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy expects to know their allocation on Friday 21 January.
- Distribution of the Department's RAT allocation is expected to take 3-4 weeks.

Special Q Shelter Learning Exchange on COVID-19 and outreach to the sector

As these latest changes are implemented by organisations, Q Shelter has added a

Learning Exchange on Tuesday 25 January at 3.30pm. We will share the results of interviews being conducted by Q Shelter staff with housing and homelessness organisations to understand what emerging issues and solutions you need to be supported in. The Exchange will include plenty of time for discussion and knowledge sharing among participants. This event will be attended by representatives from the Queensland Government. [You can register here.](#)

Special Q Shelter Learning Exchange January 2022 - COVID and the NHHA

Tue, 25 Jan 2022 3:30 PM AEST

Free



Progress on the implementation of housing growth initiatives

We have been working closely with Queensland Government, CHIA Qld and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland to provide input on the implementation of the Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative (QHIGI) and the emergence of the policy framework for community housing, including the new Master Agreement. We know so many housing providers are working very hard right now on proposals and we acknowledge the ongoing challenges of delivering housing supply in the current market. Q Shelter is keen to see the Queensland Community Housing Steering Committee consistently advocate for an optimal role for CHPs and Q Shelter is preparing to submit its latest Queensland Budget Submission with the next wave of suggestions to further support growth. Stay in contact with Q Shelter with issues, challenges and opportunities. [You can register here.](#)

A challenging start to the year

We want to acknowledge how challenging a start you have all had to this year. While the positive impacts of high rates of vaccination are to be celebrated, we know that service delivery models are continuously evolving in the context of higher rates of diagnosis and transmission of COVID-19. We know this means many of you have missed out on restful holidays. It remains important to support each other and share what we know and have as we work together to understand our immediate and longer term future in such a challenging environment.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Boylson



Michael Boylson

Acting Executive Director



UPCOMING EVENTS

Housing Older Women Bi-Monthly Meeting

Wed, 2 Feb 2022 1:30 PM AEST

Free



Housing Round Table Workshop

Tue, 8 Feb 2022 2:00 PM AEST

Free



Feeling the Pulse on Housing Investment and Growth February 2022

Wed, 9 Feb 2022 2:00 PM AEST

Free



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