

5 January 2024

Q Shelter statement to local government candidates 2024

Housing and Homelessness: Better Together 2024-25

Q Shelter is Queensland's peak organisation with a vision that every Queenslander has a home. We lead on solutions to unmet housing needs and homelessness. Q Shelter works to strengthen system capacity and to influence policy and investment to support effective solutions. We are engaged at all levels of Government, with the private sector, community services sector, and wider community to progress real solutions through to implementation.

Queensland's housing challenges are well-documented, and can briefly be expressed as follows:

- Increased homelessness and visible rough sleeping in many urban areas and regional cities
- Residential building rates are behind target due to a range of factors.
- A rental market that sits well below 1.0% vacancy in most locations and is very fragile.
- Impacts from recent weather events including emergency housing needs.
- Queensland's population is set to boom in the coming decades, growing from 5.4 million to between 6.4 and 8.27 million by 2046.

This letter acknowledges the important work that Local Councils already have underway, as well as presenting the key solutions that local governments could consider in 2024 and beyond. In particular, we know that some Councils have completed a housing strategy and others are working hard to develop a housing and / or homelessness strategy right now.

It should be noted that Q Shelter recognises the important separation of responsibilities between the three tiers of Government while also appreciating that each tier of Government plays a vital and interconnected role in the facilitation of housing supply, diversity, affordability, and future planning.

As such, we have listed the priorities into three critical areas of focus at the local government level, including: responding to homelessness, planning levers, innovation and partnership.

1. Responding to homelessness

Local Governments are often engaged with people experiencing homelessness through front line roles in the management of public spaces, at council facilities, delivery of services such as libraries and in partnerships with the not-for-profit sector linked to coordinated local responses. Local governments play a key role in engagement with the broader community often fielding local concerns about visible homelessness, the welfare of people experiencing homelessness, potential impacts on local businesses and community safety.

In playing such an important role, Q Shelter proposes the following:

- Consolidation and expansion of Public Space Liaison Officer (PSLO) roles across the local government sector connected to housing, homelessness, health, and other human services.
- Development of an integrated 'Housing and Homelessness' strategy to align the work across local government and industry in a place-based framework.

- Develop and advance a policy on homelessness including social inclusion measures, interfacing with services such as libraries, community education and engagement and alternatives to ‘move-on’ practices through joined-up place-based strategies.
- Community education and awareness campaigns around the causes of homelessness, current and projected needs, and the role that the community can play in practical solutions.
- Workforce development and training opportunities for Council staff to understand the causes of homelessness and evidence-based responses and solutions. This includes routine trauma-informed practice training and an induction to housing and homelessness responses. A number of these education modules, Q Shelter is well placed to assist with.

2. Planning levers

Local Government planning schemes and planning measures are critical to the success of housing supply strategies. The interpretation of population targets into land supply and planning schemes is vital to the success of housing strategies for Queensland. Some Councils have adopted progressive planning system reforms and other measures to support housing supply including diverse and affordable housing options. In this context, the following levers will help achieve supply where it is needed, as quickly as possible:

- Fast-tracked approval processes for social and affordable housing projects.
- Ensure land supply and housing targets are aligned with population projections for the region.
- Monitor and report on the number of secondary dwellings, purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), and short-term rental accommodation (STRA), being delivered at the local government level, on a quarterly / annual basis.
- Consider further regulating short-term rental accommodation to incentivise the retention of housing in the private rental market.
- Encourage more community and people centred design in projects around infill development and urban precincts, including strategies to reduce the urban heat island effect.
- Facilitate housing density and diversity in high amenity areas to improve overall affordability and reduce post-housing costs.

3. Innovation and partnership

There is substantial evidence of leadership, innovation and partnerships involving local governments in Queensland. This includes partnerships with community housing providers (CHPs) whose role in Queensland is expanding due to increased funding opportunities from the State and Federal Governments. Their partnership with Councils is an essential element of success. Some policy imperatives to continue this momentum across local governments include:

- Consider discounts on development application fees, infrastructure charges and rates for social and affordable housing projects.
- Identify land/sites for social and affordable housing projects now, and in future.
- Adopt social and affordable housing targets based on current and projected needs, linked to Regional Plans.
- Partner with the community housing industry to develop targeted sites for social and affordable housing via title transfer or long-term leasehold of land or buildings.
- Local Governments with legacy housing assets to considering stock transfers to CHPs.
- Encourage developers to work with CHPs to be eligible for greater density bonuses and other incentives.
- Play an active role in multi-sectoral, place-based leadership groups, to work on solutions to housing needs and homelessness in the LGA and regional context.

Q Shelter's policy and investment submission 'Better Together'

In addition to these priority areas, Q Shelter recently launched its [full policy framework for 2024-25, titled 'Better Together'](#).

Further contact

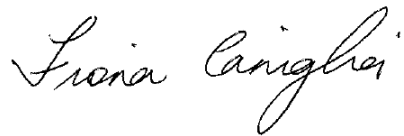
We acknowledge the many examples of innovation and efforts to progress housing strategies by local governments around the State. We offer these suggestions as high priorities for Queensland through the critical role of local government in helping to address the current shortfall of housing and the increase in homelessness.

We are available to meet with you to discuss these ideas further and we are reaching out to all local government areas to engage with candidates to present our framework of solutions.

To arrange a briefing, either in person or online, please contact Jackson Hills (Manager of Policy and Strategic Engagement) at Jackson.Hills@qshelter.asn.au or you can reach us on (07) 3831 5900.

Thank you for considering our views and I reiterate our offer of active engagement and dialogue towards our vision of a home for every Queenslanders.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Caniglia
Executive Director
Q Shelter