

# A. Entity responses

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As mandated in Section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, the Queensland Audit Office gave a copy of this report with a request for comments to the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts; and the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy.

This appendix contains the detailed responses we received.

The head of each entity is responsible for the accuracy, fairness and balance of their comments.



# Comments received from Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts



Minister for Communities and Housing  
Minister for Digital Economy  
Minister for the Arts

Our reference: MN06586-2022

6 July 2022

Mr Brendan Worrall  
Auditor-General  
Queensland Audit Office  
Level 14, 53 Albert Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000  
qao@qao.qld.gov.au

1 William Street  
Brisbane Queensland  
GPO Box 806 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
T: +617 3719 7170  
E: communitiesandhousing@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Worrall

Thank you for your email of the 16 June 2022 regarding the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) proposed report entitled "Delivering Social Housing Services".

The Queensland Government is continuing to deliver the \$1.9 billion investment in social and affordable housing under the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-25 announced in 2021. This whole of government four-year plan to deliver the next stage of the Queensland's Housing Strategy 2017-27 is driven by the largest concentrated investment in Queensland's history. The Action Plan is supported by the \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, a long-term fund with returns to drive new supply and support current and future social and affordable housing needs across Queensland.

I note the Report makes eight recommendations aimed at improving the management of the Social Housing Register and that the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy has accepted these recommendations.

I would like to acknowledge the progress made by the Department over the past 12 months that deliver on the Report's recommendations, most significantly the review of the Social Housing Register.

I am advised by the Director-General, that with the lifting of COVID 19 restrictions, the Department has reviewed 98 per cent of the Social Housing Register to ensure it is contemporary and fit-for-purpose. As a result of this process, I am advised approximately 21 per cent of applicants on the register were either not contactable, were being assisted by other forms of housing support or were no longer in need of social housing.

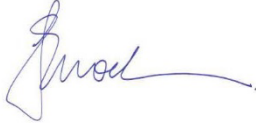
It is my expectation, and the expectation of all Queenslanders, that the allocation of social housing in Queensland is supported by a rigorous and consistent system that is both fair and equitable in ensuring the allocation of social housing to Queenslanders of priority needs.

I am confident that the current work the Department combined with delivery of the Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and the full implementation of the Report's recommendations, will ensure an effective response to managing the housing needs of vulnerable Queenslanders into the future.

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If you require any further information or assistance with this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED]

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leeanne Enoch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Leeanne Enoch MP  
Minister for Communities and Housing  
Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts



# Comments received from Director-General, Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy



Office of the  
**Director-General**

Department of  
**Communities, Housing  
and Digital Economy**

Your reference: PRJ02968

Mr Brendan Worrall  
Auditor-General  
Queensland Audit Office  
PO Box 15396  
CITY EAST QLD 4002  
By Email: qao@qao.qld.gov.au

Dear ~~Mr Worrall~~ *Brendan*

Thank you for your email dated 16 June 2022 advising of the nearing completion of the audit on *Delivering social housing services* and seeking a formal response to the proposed report.

I welcome the proposed report and note that, through the audit findings and recommendations, the Queensland Audit Office seeks to enhance public accountability and improve government services.

The department accepts all eight recommendations in full, noting that these also support delivery of the *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027* and current departmental actions. The department's response to the recommendations is outlined in Attachment A.

As you are aware, the department has been actively working on a number of matters to better position and improve the way it administers housing services to Queenslanders.

For example, since 2020-21, the department has contacted 98 per cent of households on the housing register to review their applications, and check on their wellbeing and housing needs. Under the *Housing Act 2003*, people are required to notify the department of a change in their circumstances. People who notified the department of a change in circumstances that meant they were no longer eligible or no longer required social housing have been removed from the register.

The department has undertaken and continues to work on improvements to ensure robust data collection and record-keeping that supports accountability and transparency of decisions. The department will continue to review and improve its approach to better inform planning, investment and service delivery.

I look forward to the finalisation of the report and the department will provide updates on the implementation of the actions.

Yours sincerely

C O'Connor  
**Director-General**

1 William Street  
Brisbane Queensland 4000  
GPO Box 806 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia

- 6 JUL 2022

## Responses to recommendations



### Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

#### *Delivering social housing services*

Response to recommendations provided by the Director-General, Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy on 6 July 2022

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<b>Applying for social housing</b>			
<p>We recommend that the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly communicates the needs assessment process it applies. This should include a proactive campaign to key stakeholders and consistent and complete information on the department's website</li> </ol>	Accept	Q1 2022/2023	<p>The department will develop a communication strategy to ensure consistent information is available for applicants, the public and key stakeholders about how the needs assessment process is applied.</p> <p>The department's website and associated material will be updated.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>periodically confirms the ongoing eligibility of all social housing applicants and updates the register as needed. Applicants who the department determines are uncontactable, or have inactive applications, should not appear on the register</li> </ol>	Accept	Q4 2022/2023	<p>Since 2020/2021, the department has contacted 98 per cent of households on the housing register to review their applications, and check on their wellbeing and housing needs.</p> <p>Application reviews are ongoing and conducted on an annual basis or if the applicant notifies of a change in circumstances.</p> <p>Under the Housing Act 2003 people are required to notify the department within 28 days of any change to their circumstances.</p> <p>The department will review its housing register management policy to define and manage inactive applications.</p> <p>Many people on the social housing register are also supported with other forms of housing assistance.</p>



Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<b>Applying for social housing</b>			
3. consistently completes and reviews all new housing applications	Accept	Q4 2022/2023	<p>The department will implement enhanced processes to ensure consistent review of housing applications.</p> <p>The department is improving the process to record second officer checks to confirm eligibility and need for social housing.</p>
4. models future demand for social housing at the state and regional levels, incorporating historical and predictive analysis that includes social, economic, and environmental factors to inform its planning, investment, and service delivery.	Accept	Q2 2023/2024	<p>The department will work with experts and key agencies to develop a model to predict future demand for social housing at the state and regional levels.</p> <p>This will incorporate historical and predictive analysis that includes social, economic, and environmental factors to inform planning, investment, and service delivery.</p>
<b>Social housing allocations</b>			
We recommend that the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy	Accept	Q4 2022/2023	<p>The department's policy requires pre-allocation checks to be conducted.</p>
5. consistently performs pre-allocation checks through a systems-based process			<p>The department is improving the process to ensure that more systematic, consistent pre-allocation checks occur.</p> <p>The department is improving the process to record second officer checks prior to an offer of social housing.</p>
6. implements a consistent process to identify, approve, record, and monitor applicants on the register for priority allocations across the state	Accept	Completed	<p>In March 2022, the department implemented a consistent state-wide process to identify, approve and record priority allocations. This included an improved process to record and capture delegate approval.</p>

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<b>Applying for social housing</b>			
7. reviews its approach to tenancy management to better respond to the changing needs of tenants in social housing	Accept	Q2 2023/2024	<p>The department currently uses structured pathway planning conversations with tenants when the department is notified of any change in circumstances.</p> <p>The department will review the approach to tenant ongoing eligibility to ensure the dwelling is appropriate to their current need.</p>
8. uses structured conversations to identify and support tenants who can transition away from social housing.	Accept	Q2 2023/2024	<p>The department currently uses structured pathway planning conversations with tenants when the department is notified of any change in circumstances.</p> <p>The department will review its approach to support tenants who can transition away from social housing, including for example, into the private market or aged care.</p>

