Tenant Participation Program Review

Summary report and recommendations

Queensland
Government

Tenant Participation Program Review

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Contents

1. Executive summary

In July 2010, the Queensland Department of Communities commenced a review of its Tenant Participation program. This review provided the department with an opportunity to consider the fundamental delivery of Tenant Participation for social housing tenants in Queensland.

Since its inception in 1990, a Tenant Participation network has been developed and delivered by a number of committed volunteers throughout Queensland. The Tenant Participation program has become a successful volunteer initiative enabling tenants to improve their circumstances and contribute positively to their communities. A redesign of the program will be underpinned by the strengths and achievements of the existing program, with a contemporary focus on linking tenants to opportunities to improve economic independence and social engagement.

An aim of a renewed program is for the inclusion of all social housing providers in Queensland, offering opportunities for tenants regardless of whether their home is managed by the department or a registered housing provider. This reflects the goals of one social housing system with providers who are registered under the *Housing Act 2003* implementing a range of departmental policies and housing eligible people from the department's Housing Register.

For the program to be responsive to changing needs and goals into the future, it is important the department works in partnership with tenants and organisations in line with the principles of the Queensland Compact. The department and its funded organisations delivering social housing in Queensland need to ensure the program is widely promoted, accessible to a range of people and provides opportunities for tenants to engage in a range of activities.

The renewed Tenant Participation program will strengthen the tenant/landlord relationship and create a program based on collaboration, interaction and helping tenants achieve economic independence and social inclusion where appropriate. This will be achieved through contemporary and innovative delivery methods. Tenants will have a choice about which activities and opportunities they engage in. The program will offer flexible delivery arrangements to ensure tenants can become involved to a degree that best suits their availability.

The department is committed to the Queensland Government's *Positively Ageless — Queensland Seniors' Strategy 2010–2020*. A focus of a renewed Tenant Participation program will be on seniors in social housing and the contribution they make through leadership in their communities. While a renewed program will not target seniors exclusively, the Seniors' Strategy will underpin the program ensuring the activities, goals and objectives are inclusive and mindful of seniors residing in social housing in Queensland.

Participation in the delivery and management of housing services can benefit both tenants and providers of social housing. For tenants, being involved in the program can foster a sense of ownership and personal investment in their housing and neighbourhoods. The program can foster better communication between tenant and landlord, allowing tenants to have a say in matters that affect their tenancies. Through participation in the program, tenants can become informed, knowledgeable and develop the skills and confidence to influence decisions.

For providers of social housing, Tenant Participation provides an opportunity to engage and respond to the needs of tenants. This can lead to better service delivery, quality housing services and job satisfaction for staff. Through delivery of the program, housing organisations and their tenants can become more aware of each other's perspectives and organisational and financial implications. The program can help address misunderstandings, remove any mistrust and build mutual respect and understanding. Activities delivered through the program can build relationships in housing complexes and neighbourhoods and reduce incidents of neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour.

Statement of Intent

The Tenant Participation program in Queensland will focus on:

- **providing opportunities to increase the economic independence and self development of tenants through capacity building activities**
- **encouraging engagement, volunteering and social inclusion to help tenants play a greater role in their tenancies and communities and reduce isolation**
- **providing opportunities for social housing tenants to be involved in policy, planning and program development activities.**

The first objective will enable social housing tenants of working age who are not in paid employment to access the skills and support they need to become job-ready, employed and socially engaged.

The second objective targets all tenants, but with a particular focus on seniors and those unable to participate in the workforce. This intent is to encourage and support tenants to work together and with the broader community. Tenants will be assisted to access a range of opportunities to be active, volunteer and play a greater role in their communities and the decisions that affect their tenancies.

The Tenant Participation program in Queensland will become a key enabler of social housing tenants, the department and housing providers in achieving shared goals. The renewed program will help tenants build skills, reduce isolation and provide opportunities to enhance pathways to independence. This will be achieved through the development of flexible program activities, engaging with a broad range of people, and encouraging tenants to become involved in activities. Identifying resources and linking tenants to a range of training, employment

and volunteering services will be key to empowering tenants to improve their circumstances.

In delivering a renewed Tenant Participation program for Queensland, the department is committed to the principles outlined in the Queensland Compact. The vision of the Compact is for the Queensland Government and Community Services Sector to work together for a better quality of life and fair community for all Queenslanders. In working with tenants and tenant groups to deliver the Tenant Participation program, the department is committed to the goals and principles of the compact to:

• build strong working relationships

• improve engagement in planning and policy

• improve sector capacity and sustainability

• continue to improve service quality and innovation.

More information on the Queensland Compact is available at: http://www. communityservices.qld.gov.au/department/about/corporate-plans/queensland-compact/about.html.

Desired outcomes

Six desired outcomes have been identified to guide the Tenant Participation program in Queensland:

1. Tenant Participation strengthens the capacity of social housing tenants to be active and engaged members of their community, promotes social inclusion and enhances employment opportunities where appropriate.

2. Tenant Participation is embedded in core program and service delivery requirements for all social housing providers, and program delivery is consistent across Queensland.

3. Tenant Participation is recognised, valued and acknowledged as a key enabler for the delivery of a varied range of departmental services.

4. The Tenant Participation program recognises the varying capacity, willingness and desire of tenants to be involved and provides opportunities for diverse groups to get involved, including seniors, as identified in the *Positively Ageless — Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010–2020*.

5. The Tenant Participation program is delivered through a range of channels and mechanisms to allow for broad participation and flexible delivery options.

6. Tenants are provided with the opportunity to have meaningful input to decision-making about matters that affect their tenancies.

Actions identified to deliver on each of these outcomes are presented in this report at Attachment 6. Implementation of actions will commence in the 2011/12 financial year and continue over a three-year period.

2. Introduction

On 2 June 2010, the Honourable Karen Struthers, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women approved a review of the Tenant Participation program and strategy to align the program with *Positively Ageless — Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010–2020* and become a linkage point with other departmental programs. This report outlines the department's processes and findings in reviewing the program and developing recommendations for a renewed program in Queensland.

A number of factors have impacted on the social housing system in Queensland. This presented an opportunity to review and redesign the Tenant Participation program to better meet the needs of social housing tenants. Influencing factors include:

- In 2006, the Queensland Government reformed the social housing system by connecting public rental housing, Indigenous rental housing and community housing to operate as one system. The one social housing system provides eligible people with a more efficient and fairer way to access housing services and products.

- The Australian Government is committed to reducing homelessness in Australia. Through the *Social Housing National Partnership Agreement and Nation Building — Economic Stimulus Plan: Social Housing Initiative*, over 4,000 new social housing dwellings will be built in Queensland by June 2012.

- *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* outlines the Queensland Government's strategy for supporting safe and fair communities. Volunteering plays an important role in helping build stronger and more connected communities. The government aims to increase the number of people who volunteer in their local communities by 50% by 2020.

A strategic focus of the department is facilitating pathways to independence and greater economic participation of clients. This links to the *Toward Q2* target to halve the proportion of Queensland children living in households without a working parent and the National Affordable Housing Agreement commitment to increase economic participation and social inclusion of social housing tenants.

The Tenant Participation program, along with other products and services, can strengthen opportunities for tenants who are capable of participating in the workforce. The program will also become a successful platform to support the department's strategic focus of capacity building and helping tenants achieve independence.

2.1 A history of Tenant Participation in Queensland, and why a review of the program was required

Since its inception in 1990, the Tenant Participation program has been a feature of public housing in Queensland. During that time, a Tenant Participation state-wide network has been developed and delivered by a number of committed volunteers.

With tenants in Queensland taking the lead, the Tenant Participation program has become a successful volunteer initiative enabling many tenants to improve their circumstances and contribute positively to their communities. For the department, the program has afforded direct access to a valuable source of advice on housing policy, planning and delivery. The success of the program was formally acknowledged in 2001 with a Premier's Award for Excellence awarded in the category of Community Engagement and Contribution.

At present, 11 regional tenant groups and 24 local groups work together by engaging with community housing providers and the department in the management of their homes and participating in local community events and activities. The program is administered by Social Housing Programs, Housing and Homelessness Services. The Tenant Participation Unit provides strategic direction, policy and procedural advice and grants administration.

The program is delivered in the regions through the Housing Service Centre network (Regional Service Delivery Operations). Housing Service Centre staff actively involve tenants in decisions that impact on their lives. This includes:

- consulting tenants in the upgrade/refurbishment of their homes
- linking tenants to broader community initiatives
- providing an additional communication channel between tenants and the department — through newsletters and tenant group meetings
- a mechanism for tenant representatives to advocate on tenant issues at both a regional level (with Housing Service Centres) and at a state level (through the Tenants' Union)
- an opportunity for tenants to participate in service delivery initiatives.

The principle of client engagement is embedded into the day-to-day practice of the Housing Service Centre network. A recent Practice Review process saw 1,200 tenants/applicants in Brisbane given the opportunity to complete a survey on the department's performance. This was part of a successful trial of the proposed Service Review Framework that will be implemented state-wide.

Clients were asked to answer several questions such as:

- How would they rate the service provided by the Housing Service Centre?
- Were they advised on their rights and responsibilities?
- Were they advised on how to make a complaint or provide feedback to the Housing Service Centre?
- Was their privacy respected?
- Were they advised about a range of products/services that may be suitable to them?

The results of the trial and components used are being evaluated, however gaining tenant/applicant feedback would be considered integral to the review process.

Twenty years after its inception, the program continues to connect and assist tenants through structured activities which help participants to develop skills, confidence and become involved in their local community. Housing Service Centre staff play a key role in supporting tenants and tenant groups through the development of Local Action Agreements with tenant groups and connecting people with a range of activities including, but not limited to:

- Local and Regional Tenant Group meetings
- Garden Awards
- communal vegetable gardens
- Neighbour Day
- involvement in arts & cultural festivals.

While the current Tenant Participation program in Queensland is operational and benefiting tenants, in recent years the program has experienced both a reduction in the number of tenants actively engaged and a reduction in tenant groups at the local and regional level. It is anticipated the renewed Tenant Participation program will rejuvenate the enthusiasm of existing participants, while at the same time attracting tenants to the program who are not currently involved. To meet this objective, consideration and commitment is required on the part of the service delivery network to new ways of delivering the program outside of existing formats, protocols and agreements.

In 1998, the department undertook a desktop review of the program and released a document titled *'Tenant Participation Strategic Directions — Working Together.'* The review concluded that although it is sometimes difficult to quantify the benefits of the program, Tenant Participation activities contribute to good housing management and increased tenant satisfaction. Tenants involved in the program, especially those who take on

local and regional leadership roles, contribute significantly by offering their time, energy, commitment and sometimes making financial contributions. In turn, the department dedicates resources to Tenant Participation, including grants, staffing and administration.

Given that Tenant Participation in Queensland is now approximately 20 years old, it is timely to review the program and build on the successes and contributions to date. In addition, policy, strategy and operational changes have given rise to a number of challenges for the delivery of housing services in Queensland. The same policy, strategy and operational changes also afford opportunities for innovation within the program.

2.2 Changes to social housing

There are some significant challenges impacting on the delivery of Tenant Participation in the future. The on-going demand for social housing, changes in the demographic make up of social housing tenants and the enhanced delivery of housing and services through the funded housing providers all have a significant impact on the delivery of a program led by tenants.

One social housing system

In 2006, the former Department of Housing introduced a new strategic direction called the 'one social housing system' to focus on creating a cohesive and integrated system for providing government-subsidised housing to people in need. The new direction was needed due to the increasing demand for housing assistance and the continued pressure on the department's capacity to meet this demand.

The major features of the system are:

• one combined wait list — known as the Housing Register, which means that clients only need to register their housing need once

• a common application form for housing assistance available across all government and non-government housing providers

• one common set of eligibility criteria for all long-term housing assistance

• single entry points providing access to all housing assistance products

• needs-based assessment underpinning a client intake and assessment process

• targeting higher-cost housing assistance, such as social housing, to those who are in greatest need

• creating pathways around, through and from social housing into the private rental and home ownership markets

• new lower-cost housing assistance products for those who have a lower housing need

• a variety of changes to eligibility, including the introduction of an assets test and ongoing eligibility rules.

These reforms continue to be embedded across the social housing sector. At the same time, work continues at a national level to respond to the growing demand for additional affordable housing options for all Australians. Policy development on a national basis is occurring on issues such as housing supply, affordability, homelessness service integration and Indigenous home ownership.

The introduction of the needs-based assessment and allocation processes has resulted in an ongoing change to the demographic profile of tenants. Almost 90% of all allocations of social housing are now being made to people with very high and high need for housing assistance. This means that tenant participation will need to develop inclusive methods for working on issues that impact on all tenants.

Of particular significance to the Tenant Participation program is the policy work on the growth of the not-for-profit housing sector and potential for community housing providers to grow their social housing portfolio and increase provision for people with a housing need. The reform of housing services in Queensland and growth of the not-for-profit housing sector directly affects tenants.

Ongoing reform to key policy settings within one social housing system, which may include rent setting mechanisms, refined duration of need, ongoing eligibility criteria and tenure types, further reinforces a move towards greater independence for clients in receipt of housing assistance, and begins to change the expectations of those who may seek assistance in the future.

A national regulatory system

A national regulatory system for social housing is being developed by the states and territories in collaboration with the Australian Government. At present, each jurisdiction has its own regulatory framework. In Queensland, registered community housing providers must comply with prescribed requirements set out in the *Housing Regulation 2003*.

When the National Regulatory System is implemented by 2013, Queensland's housing legislation will refer to the National Regulatory Code as specified by the legislation. The Regulatory Code will establish the minimum requirements for providers to be registered under the national system.

The national regulatory system aims to reduce the barriers to operating across jurisdictional boundaries, reduce the cost and administrative burden of regulation by having a consistent national system, and to ensure the not-for-profit housing system maintains high standards of service delivery.

National Community Housing Standards

The National Community Housing Standards (2010) establishes standards of good practice in service delivery in the community housing sector throughout Australia. The department encourages all registered providers to use the standards as a tool to achieve continuous quality improvement and improve service delivery.

A key standard of the National Community Housing Standards is Tenant Participation, in which *'tenants are encouraged to provide feedback and become involved in decision-making on issues which affect them or their tenancy'* (2010:80). Many community housing organisations in Queensland voluntarily use the Standard as a service improvement tool, however there are no reporting and regulatory mechanisms in Queensland to ensure community housing providers deliver on specific Tenant Participation outcomes.

Peak organisations

The former Department of Housing funded a number of not-for-profit organisations and peak bodies to provide advice about a number of groups. This included the Queensland Public Tenants' Association who represented tenants and provided advice to the department on relevant issues. In 2007, the department updated funding arrangements for peak organisations which saw the Tenants' Union of Queensland and Queensland Shelter become the state's funded peaks providing advice on policy and tenancy issues.

As part of this shift, the department increased funding to the Tenants' Union of Queensland to represent the interests of social housing tenants and provide advice on tenancy management related issues. An opportunity for the future is working with the Tenants' Union of Queensland to formalise arrangements to ensure tenant groups are recognised and consulted through agreed and formal channels.

2.3 Funding

An issue identified during the review is the level of funding for Tenant Participation in Queensland. While the department allocates a number of resources to the program including grant funding, it is difficult to quantify the exact level of expenditure. Some resources and services which target tenants with information, support or services are not formally recognised as Tenant Participation program activities.

The department has existing financial commitments for the period 2011–2012 totalling approximately $650,000 for the following core services and products which support and engage with tenants:

• $350,000 in grants for local and regional tenant groups to undertake a range of activities

- three full-time staff to administer the program at a cost of approximately $240,000 per annum[1]
- bi-annual newsletter for tenants (Tenant News) at a cost of $60,000 per annum

In addition to the funding listed above, a number of other departmental resources are used for the support and engagement of social housing tenants:

- the resources of staff within the Housing Service Centre network who deliver Tenant Participation
- grant funding to the Tenants' Union of Queensland for the provision of services to tenants including advising social housing tenants of their rights, supporting advocacy for tenants regarding tenancy issues and seeking input from tenants on tenancy matters.

A learning from the review is the need for the department to identify alternative funding sources which may be available to support Tenant Participation activities. For example tenant groups currently receive some grant funding from other areas of the department and external organisations, while registered community housing providers also utilise funds from rent collected to deliver Tenant Participation activities.

Additionally, a costing exercise at the regional level for both state-managed and community-managed arrangements is required to identify where core funding could be allocated to achieve the best results for tenants, providers and the department.

Comparisons between Queensland and other jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand are also difficult to make as each state uses a different model of delivery for its Tenant Participation program (Attachment 1). The context of Tenant Participation in other jurisdictions differs to Queensland in portfolio size (number of households), activities and program scope.

2.4   Opportunities

The Tenant Participation program needs to be aligned with the future strategic directions of the department. A focus on building the capacity of social housing tenants to gain skills, undertake training and become job ready is a core theme of a renewed Tenant Participation program.

With a shift towards assisting tenants for the duration of their need, changing tenants' expectations and helping tenants achieve greater independence, the Tenant Participation program has the potential to be a linkage mechanism for education and employment opportunities. These opportunities could include facilitating access to job readiness programs delivered by other agencies such as the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, enhancing tenant group capacity

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[1] 1 x AO6 Program Manager; 1 x AO4 Support Officer (TP Unit); and 1 x AO3 in Sector Funding and Performance Support.

and tenant advocacy (see Attachment 2). There are a number of options for training and skills development which can be delivered and/or funded by the department through the program. For example, the use of social clauses in departmental contracts is a highly effective mechanism to generate training and employment opportunities for social housing tenants.

With the enhanced collaboration between the department and community housing providers, opportunities exist for tenants through the Tenant Participation program to actively be engaged in improving and developing the delivery of housing assistance. Opportunities may take the form of:

• assisting in the development and promotion of new tenant groups, particularly for tenants whose tenancies are managed by the community housing sector

• providing feedback and ideas to providers as they work towards growth

• providing feedback to the peak bodies for housing policy on issues papers to ensure that tenants' views are incorporated.

The department will undertake a project to identify how the principles and practices of the existing public housing Supportive Tenancy Management framework could be best extended across all social housing programs through a single program specification.

The proposed Supported Tenancy Management Policy Framework would set out the minimum requirements for tenancy management practices to ensure they are in line with the core principles, including mechanisms for tenant participation, to deliver better tenant outcomes. Tenant Participation is a key component of a supported tenancy management approach. Delivery of Tenant Participation activities will be a requirement so providers can factor it into their operational processes, including budgeting and reporting.

The Australian Government is establishing a new national broadband network. The network aims to connect 90% of all Australian homes, schools and workplaces with broadband services. This investment in information communication technology signifies a nationwide shift in communication culture. The opportunities to better utilise this technology to support Tenant Participation delivery in the future include communication between providers and tenants, linking tenants with Tenant Groups and each other and resources for tenants to access training and employment.

An opportunity exists to better engage with the changing demographic of social housing tenants in Queensland to identify and target program delivery for:

• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households

• people with a disability

• different age groups

• culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

The structure of the Department of Communities provides for quality client outcomes and streamlined service delivery. Underpinned by the No Wrong Door philosophy, there is an opportunity for the program to become a key enabler for tenants to access services and support from across the department.

The delivery of a renewed Tenant Participation program can contribute to the Queensland Government's Toward Q2 aim of *'Fair — Supporting safe and caring communities'* by:

• connecting people with each other and facilitating volunteering
• supporting unemployed families and helping to create pathways to employment easier
• helping tenants to be good neighbours and getting to know those living around them and their communities.

The Tenant Participation program also links to the goals of the Queensland Compact, a guide for the relationship between government and the not-for-profit sector, which articulates a vision and the goals underpinning the relationship. Specifically:

• Goal 2, to improve engagement in planning and policy
• Goal 4, to improve service quality.

2.5 Tenant Participation in other jurisdictions

A review of the delivery of Tenant Participation in four jurisdictions, from Australia and overseas, offers good practice approaches to inform development of the program in Queensland. While some jurisdictions differ from Queensland in terms of social housing provision and policy, all offer innovative approaches to delivering Tenant Participation which may be transferable to Queensland.

Providers in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, New South Wales and Victoria were selected based on their comparability to Queensland, unique characteristics and proven excellence in delivering a Tenant Participation program. An overview of the models delivered in the four jurisdictions with examples of good practice is at Attachment 3.

2.5.1 Key themes from other jurisdictions

Based on the academic research on Tenant Participation and innovative practice in other jurisdictions, the following principles are considered integral to the successful delivery of Tenant Participation:

1. Involving tenants is critical to providing good value, quality services that are future focused.

2. Participation is highly beneficial to both tenants and the housing organisation. Tenant Participation can help build social capacity, reduce isolation and enhance skills.

3. Tenants should be given equal opportunities to be involved in the program. Extra steps may be required to engage with under represented and/or vulnerable groups to remove barriers to participation.

4. Acquiring knowledge about the people living in a social housing portfolio and acquiring market intelligence is important to ensure the program remains relevant and responsive.

5. Delivery of Tenant Participation needs to be flexible with good practice built into the program. A process of continual learning and regularly reviewing practice elsewhere ensures the program is current, sustainable and functions to assist both tenants and the tenancy manager.

6. Tenants are knowledgeable about the places where they live and can be a useful source of information about the services being delivered and opportunities for improvement.

7. Tenants need to be enabled to get involved. Appropriate resources, capacity building and training opportunities may be required to equip tenants with the necessarily skills to offer valuable input and improve their circumstances.

8. Varied and flexible methods of involvement are required to ensure people can be involved on their terms.

3. The Tenant Participation review

The Tenant Participation review was launched on 26 July 2010 and responses to the review closed on 24 December 2010. A consultation paper formed the basis of a discussion process with tenants, peak organisations, community housing providers and Housing Service Centre staff.

The consultation paper presented ideas that build on the achievements of the program, addressed identified challenges and outlined five areas for respondents to provide feedback:

1. Establishing new goals.
2. Redefining the roles of tenant groups, service providers and the department in delivering the program.
3. Establishing a new theme to guide program activities.
4. Enhancing or expanding program activities.
5. Delivering the new program.

3.1 Methodology

Participants were invited to have their say via a number of channels. The Tenant Participation survey included both quantitative and qualitative questions based on the above five areas for feedback. Respondents were invited to complete the survey either online, by email or post to the department. Written submissions from organisations, tenant groups and individuals were also invited as part of the consultation process.

The review was well promoted among tenants with a number of different communication tools used to encourage feedback:

- Promotional post-cards were sent to all 55,000 directly-managed tenants, and a further 8,000 postcards and 4,500 flyers to community housing organisations for wider distribution among their tenants.

- A dedicated telephone number, maintained by Smart Services Queensland, was established along with a dedicated webpage on the government's 'Get Involved' website which included information about the program and review, with a link to the online survey.

- The Tenants' Union of Queensland contracted '99 Consulting' to engage with social housing tenants across the state, targeting areas where there are no tenant groups operating. The information from these meetings helped to inform the Tenants' Union of Queensland's overall response to the review.

- A letter from the Hon Karen Struthers, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women was sent to all registered community housing organisations, local and regional tenant groups, stakeholder organisations and Members of Parliament in Queensland.

A reference group was established to advise the department on the consultation process, promote the review, maximise responses and ensure tenants' views were fully considered throughout the review. The group was chaired by the Tenants' Union of Queensland and included four tenants engaged in the program, a large community housing provider, Queensland Community Housing Coalition, Queensland Disability Housing Coalition and an Aboriginal Council.

Responses were analysed to determine key issues, opportunities and recommendations. Quantitative data from the surveys was analysed and descriptive statistics drawn from the results.

The reference group convened four times during the consultation and played an important role in assisting the department to develop the consultation, review findings and provide guidance for the development of recommendations.

3.2 Results — tenants' survey

A total of 430 respondents completed the Tenant Participation survey, both online and by post. A copy of the survey is attached. A report providing statistics and analysis on the tenant survey is at Attachment 4.

Key feedback from the quantitative data in the survey includes:

- Respondents do not want the program name 'Tenant Participation' to be changed with 86% of respondents reported that they were "happy with the existing name." Comments made in surveys suggested that the current name 'Tenant Participation' was a recognised brand and reflects the ambitions of tenants and intent of the program.

- "Good neighbours" was the most popular new theme for the program selected by respondents, with 97% considering it "important or very important." This reflects a widely held sentiment from tenants to build and maintain positive relationships with each other and promote a respectful and fair tenancy environment.

- The most supported new goal for the program was "*Tenants maintaining a successful tenancy*" with 96% of respondents who "strongly agreed" or "agreed." The least supported goal was *"increasing the number of tenants who volunteer in their community by 50% by 2020"* with 21% of respondents who 'strongly disagreed' or 'disagreed.' This reflects a concern which was later raised in the qualitative section of the survey

that there may be too much pressure placed on tenants, particularly seniors to be involved.

Qualitative data was also collected in the tenants' survey where respondents were asked to expand upon questions and offer suggestions. Some key issues emerging from the qualitative data were:

- When asked about redefining roles in the program, respondents commented:

  - tenants have a role to play in providing feedback and input to service providers and the department regarding property renovations, maintenance and design of new residences

  - tenants must be aware of their rights and responsibilities, particularly in regards to respect for fellow tenants and respect for their housing environment.

- The department and community housing providers funded by the department have a responsibility to:

  - consult and seek feedback from all tenants on housing and tenancy matters

  - educate and provide tenants with clear guidelines on their rights and responsibilities

  - treat tenants with respect, understanding and compassion, and in particular, manage tenant complaints with understanding and empathy

  - ensure clear and accessible avenues of communication between providers and tenants including those tenants who may have difficulty reading and writing and those where English is not spoken as a first language.

While respondents believed tenants had a role to play in participating in their tenancy, there was a sentiment that the program must encourage and facilitate greater participation by seniors and other groups who may need assistance to get involved. However, many respondents to the survey thought that the department and other housing providers delivering the program should acknowledge that levels of participation will differ according to each individual's capacity and willingness to be involved.

3.3   Results — written submissions

Written submissions were received from 23 stakeholders including Queensland Shelter, Tenants' Union of Queensland, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland and a number of local and regional tenants' groups. The issues raised by participants in the review were grouped into six distinct categories:

1. Funding

Issues related to funding levels and funding methodology for delivery of the program:

- Current funding levels were perceived to be lower in Queensland than other jurisdictions within Australia.

- Challenge of delivering the program to more tenants, particularly those with high needs as the social housing portfolio in Queensland grows through initiatives such as the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan: Social Housing Initiative. There was a broad view that funding needed to be reflective of the goals and objectives of the program.

2. Tenant representation

Issues related to the ability of tenants to have meaningful input to departmental policy and decision-making:

- Tenants do not currently have adequate opportunity to have a say in decisions which affect them and their housing.

- Tenant's sphere of influence has become limited to programmatic rather than strategic/systemic issues with no state-wide perspective.

- The current cohort of active tenants is ageing, leading to decreasing levels of cross-generational participation.

3. Barriers to participation

Issues related to the promotion of the program and obstacles some people may encounter in accessing the program:

- The program is not adequately promoted by the department.

- The program does not target or support participation by marginalised groups such as clients with a disability or culturally and linguistically diverse clients.

- Some respondents indicated the program was intrusive with tenant groups described as "interfering." Some respondents thought there is too much pressure placed on tenants and felt obligated to become involved or remain involved.

4. Program delivery

Issues related to the resources required and successful delivery of the program:

- Program delivery is not formalised across the social housing sector. There was concern from some respondents that there is a lack of appropriate governance to support tenants in getting involved in the program.

- Delivery of the program may be better if delivered within the not-for-profit sector with the department owning and funding the program, but not delivering program activities.

5. Service delivery

Issues related to the quality of services delivered to tenants:

• The quality of management services was frequently perceived as poor with service delivery being an issue tenants would most like to influence through the program.

• Respondents advocated for tenant satisfaction with services provided to tenants to be frequently measured with the opportunity for tenants to provide feedback on service quality.

6. Program activities

Issues related to the activities of tenant groups, governance and organisation of meetings and program-associated initiatives:

• There is a need for better recruitment, training and engagement with participants in the program to ensure groups are run by skilled people and the Tenant Participation experience is consistent across regions.

• Program activities valued by respondents included social activities, skills and knowledge transfer through training, and activities which enhance tenants' ability to "have a say" about their tenancy.

3.4 Participant recommendations

Feedback received from the consultation with tenants and organisations was reviewed by both the department and the Tenant Participation review Reference Group. Key themes and trends were identified and aligned with the recommendations from participants about changes to the program. A table showing all recommendations made by participants, and where they have been adopted in a renewed Tenant Participation program, is at Attachment 5.

Broadly, the recommendations reflect the need for Tenant Participation in Queensland to:

• meet the needs of a wide range of tenants with differing capacity to become involved

• continue to be supported and resourced by the department

• encourage the input of tenants to departmental and provider decision-making.

There was a broad recommendation that the program name 'Tenant Participation' be retained as it is a brand name used throughout the world for the type of program. The name is also reflective of the program's goals and objectives to facilitate collaborative approaches to decision-making, information exchange, consultation, negotiation and partnerships between tenant and service provider.

A number of submissions recommended that the department explore models of service delivery with a view to delivering the program through a third-party such as a peak organisation. The alternative models of program delivery included the establishment of resource centres in the seven Department of Communities regions to serve as a hub for tenants to access information, support, training and referrals.

A number of recommendations from tenant groups focused on the governance arrangements of the program with opportunities identified to link the program to broader plans and strategies within the department. This could include the identification of performance measures and establishment of Key Performance Indicators for delivery by both the department and registered providers. Likewise, program documentation such as a Tenant Participation Charter and/or practice guide for delivering the program would help formalise delivery.

A recommendation received consistently from both tenants and tenant groups was the perceived poor quality of services provided by the service delivery network and ways in which individuals and the program can provide input and feedback from an end-user perspective.

A common theme within the recommendations is opportunities available to invigorate the program through promotion and attraction of tenants from different age groups and backgrounds. Some tenants responding to the review recommended that the program should "bring tenants together." The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland recommended that the program include "a peer leadership strategy to recruit, engage, train and support culturally and linguistically diverse tenants."

The notion of a program that is reflective of the differing interests and capacities of tenants and ways to engage with tenants was broadly recommended by respondents of the review. For example, the exploration of information communication technologies to increase communication opportunities, exchange information and connect tenants, was recommended by tenant groups.

4. Into the future: desired outcomes and actions

Analysis of households in social housing and on the housing register indicates that some tenants have the potential to increase their economic and social participation. Improving tenants' access to training and employment activities creates opportunities for financial independence and a shift from reliance on government assistance to greater resilience and autonomy.

Social housing tenants and household members who are able to increase their financial independence through employment have the potential to extend their housing options to include affordable private rental housing or home ownership. A renewed Tenant Participation program can help reduce reliance on long-term social housing by some tenants who only require short-term and/or targeted assistance.

Ways to increase the economic participation and social inclusion of social housing tenants and household members include:

• assisting tenants who are not employed to make their best efforts to become job ready

• helping tenants access the skills and support they need to improve their chances of securing employment or increasing their community participation

• linking tenants to opportunities which help achieve greater economic participation and independence

• encouraging active citizenship, volunteering and community engagement, including seniors, to help play a greater role in their communities and decisions which affect their lives.

Based on the feedback received as part of the review, and a new focus of the program on increased economic participation and social engagement, six desired outcomes have been developed for the future delivery of the program. The desired outcomes are reflective of the need for Tenant Participation in Queensland to be delivered beyond the department's Public Housing program, for all social housing providers and for a consistent approach in delivery across a range of providers.

Alongside each desired outcome, a number of associated actions are identified to deliver on the outcome. These actions are the foundation for the future Tenant Participation program in Queensland which is responsive to the needs of social housing tenants and the regions they live in. It is anticipated that some actions may need to be revisited as the department works in close partnership with key stakeholders during the implementation. The department will continue to work with tenants, tenant groups and other key stakeholders throughout the implementation.

The six desired outcomes and their corresponding actions are presented in full at Attachment 6.

Outcome 1:
Tenant Participation builds the capacity of social housing tenants to be active and engaged members of their community, promotes social inclusion and enhances employment opportunities.

The intent of this desired outcome is to increase tenant opportunities for learning, earning and volunteering in order to promote social inclusion. Drivers of this outcome include the department's strategic focus on developing products and services to encourage and facilitate pathways to independence. Key actions under this goal will see the development of channels to link tenants to a range of information and services which focus on training, employment and personal growth.

This outcome will deliver opportunities to develop self-paced training for tenants and increased understanding of social housing delivery. This will build tenants' capacity to engage with service providers and the department on a policy level. Examples of training topics include:

• communicating with government

• how the social housing system works in Queensland

• understanding housing provider management and board business issues

• writing submissions and giving feedback to service providers

• responding to neighbourhood concerns about social housing.

In their review submission, Queensland Shelter identified a number of programs aimed at connecting unemployed people to skills and training opportunities. These include:

• Futures in Focus — assisting unemployed single parents and social housing tenants to engage with community events, social activities, forums, and personal development while establishing linkages with community services, health, counselling, education, work, and employment readiness programs

• Participate in Prosperity Program — assisting disadvantaged Queenslanders to overcome personal obstacles and ultimately enter the workforce

• Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures Indigenous Employment Strategy

• First Start Traineeships for people aged under 24.

Outcome 1 — Good practice example

Public Tenant Employment Program (PTEP) — The Victorian Department of Human services (DHS) runs this successful program which focuses on building the capacity of tenants through skills development. The PTEP provides funding for public housing tenants to access a variety of training courses from English as a second or other language to trade apprenticeships and hospitality-focused courses. The program team provides support to tenants during the course of their study and assists tenants to seek and secure employment (Department of

Human Services, State Government Victoria, 2011). The DHS has applied a social clause in some contracts with suppliers to generate training and employment opportunities for public housing tenants. A particularly successful project has been the contracting out of concierge services at several Melbourne housing estates to an organisation (Brotherhood of St Laurence) that employs public housing tenants. In one estate alone, 20 jobs a year are generated through the project (Burkett 2010).

Outcome 2:
Tenant Participation is embedded in core program and service delivery requirements for all social housing providers and program delivery is consistent across Queensland.

The Tenant Participation program needs to deliver consistent opportunities for all social housing tenants regardless of whether they are tenants of the department or a community housing provider. A key inclusion is the development of action plans for the seven Department of Communities regions to guide program delivery through the Housing Service Centre network. Furthermore, the department intends to work with other registered providers of social housing to develop organisational action plans for delivery of the program.

Identifying appropriate measures and establishing Key Performance Indicators is also an action to ensure measured, accountable and consistent program delivery. Other actions to improve the consistency of program delivery include developing a training plan to up-skill new and existing staff and updating existing program documentation, including good practice communications guidelines for providers.

The department is committed to continuous improvement in programs and services using evidence from robust and rigorous research, evaluation and review activity. Review activities enable reflection on the implementation, impacts and cost-effectiveness of a program to support decision-making and reporting on outcomes as well as delivering on government accountability requirements. Incorporating a plan for future program reviews is important in enabling good practice and relates to desired outcome two.

Outcome 2 — Good practice example

Resident Involvement Strategy (Elmbridge Housing Trust 2011) — In the United Kingdom, the Elmbridge Housing Trust has an overarching Resident Involvement Strategy which articulates their commitment to involving tenants to help improve service delivery and asset management. The aim of the strategy is to drive resident involvement forward, help the organisation achieve their business plans and recognise that tenants are important to the pursuit of excellence.

Outcome 3:
Tenant Participation is recognised, valued and acknowledged as a key enabler for the delivery of a varied range of departmental services

In delivering this outcome, the department will align Tenant Participation with other departmental programs and services where there is a natural and appropriate link. This will be underpinned by the No Wrong Door philosophy and will include linkages to the Office for Seniors, Multicultural Affairs Queensland, and community partnerships such as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) round table.

Actions to deliver on this outcome include identifying and implementing opportunities to promote the program to tenants, across the department and to other agencies which may advocate, support and engage with social housing tenants.

Initiatives across the Department of Communities where this may be possible include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services:
    - 'Closing the Gap' in life outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders
    - the 'Deadly Stories' campaign celebrating the many achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities across Queensland.

- Child Safety Services:
    - Child Protection Week, which promotes the belief that it is everyone's responsibility to make their community child friendly.

- Community Services (Office for Volunteers, Office for Women and Office for Seniors):
    - Women in Hard Hats — a women's employment program in non-traditional areas
    - 'Act as One Against Domestic and Family Violence' and 'Elder Abuse' campaigns
    - Celebrating Seniors Week.

- Disability and Community care:
    - Disability Action Week.

Outcome 3 — Good practice example

Community Cultural Days, Housing New South Wales (NSW) — Community Cultural Days provide an excellent opportunity for promoting the department's programs and for tenants to connect with agencies who work in their neighbourhoods. Housing NSW attend an annual Aboriginal community event 'Croc Festival' to build stronger relationships with Indigenous people and promote services available to the community. Information on health and employment issues from other departmental areas is also made available at the festival (Housing NSW 2010).

Outcome 4:
The Tenant Participation program recognises the varying capacity, willingness and desire of tenants to be involved and provides opportunities for diverse groups to get involved including seniors, as identified in the *Positively Ageless — Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010–2020*.

This outcome reflects the department's commitment to the Queensland Government's Strategy *Positively Ageless — Queensland Seniors' Strategy 2010–2020*. The outcome also addresses concern from some stakeholders that the program should acknowledge differing levels of participation according to individual capacity and willingness to be involved.

Actions to deliver this outcome include the development of a range of activities and resources, such as a menu of involvement, to engage with new and existing clients and increase program participation levels.

Outcome 4 — Good practice example

Menu of Involvement (Elmbridge Housing Trust U.K.) — in the United Kingdom, the Elmbridge Housing Trust has developed a 'Menu of Involvement' for which they received an industry award in 2010. The menu details program activities and expected level of time commitment for tenants who want to become involved. Activities range from membership on a Service User Panel with a time commitment of up to two hours bi-monthly, to participation in one-off events like Community Action days. Incentives such as refreshments, assistance with travel and childcare costs are provided to tenants who freely give their time (Elmbridge Housing Trust 2011).

Outcome 5:
The Tenant Participation program is delivered through a range of channels and mechanisms to allow for broad participation and flexible delivery options.

This desired outcome reflects an intention to adopt flexible delivery arrangements at the regional level to better respond to tenants' needs.

The ability for information technologies to empower people, facilitate social inclusion and drive change is evident. In establishing alternative ways to deliver Tenant Participation and facilitating involvement, the department will explore the use of social media as a communication tool for tenants to interact with the department and each other, receive information and provide input and feedback. The use of social media is a good way to promote the program and its activities while allowing tenants to express interest in the program without the need to exchange personal information.

Outcome 5 — Good practice example

Wired projects (Victoria) — 'Infoxchange,' in collaboration with the Digital Inclusion Initiative, has implemented a project across several public housing estates using new technologies including social media tools to promote social and economic inclusion for residents. The project has seen over 1,800 residents trained in information communication technology and 1,500 computers installed.

The use of online information for education, employment, informational and leisure purposes has helped tenants to be better equipped to stay informed and involved in their community. A community intranet operates in the each of the estates with links to other social media tools like Facebook and Twitter. The intranet site is regularly updated by project staff, local community services and residents themselves with information of interest to their tenancy (Infoxchange Australia 2011).

Outcome 6:
Tenants are provided the opportunity to have meaningful input to decision-making about matters that affect their tenancies.

The final desired outcome for a renewed Tenant Participation program is the exploration and enhancement of opportunities for tenants to engage with their landlords and have meaningful input to decision-making.

A key action under this outcome is for the department to review the role of existing funded peak bodies in representing social housing tenant groups in Queensland. This may include ways to use information communication technology to establish a policy feedback website to allow tenants to have a say.

A key theme from consultation with tenants was a desire to have more input into matters that affect their tenancies. In particular, social housing design was cited

as an area in which tenants would like more consultation. Actions under Outcome 6 will afford tenants opportunities to be represented in forums and consultative bodies, while guidelines will be developed for tenant consultation on departmental projects.

Outcome 6 — Good practice example

Reading Panel, (Elmbridge Housing Trust U.K.) — the Reading Panel reviews draft housing association communication materials, including proposed policies to ensure they are suitable and understandable for a wider tenant audience. The panel consist of tenants who have received training on reviewing documents and providing feedback. Feedback is submitted via short questionnaires.

Online Panel, (Elmbridge Housing Trust U.K.): Tenants have the opportunity to provide meaningful input to decision-making about tenancy issues through the participation in surveys online. The surveys focus on different service issues such as grounds maintenance or complaints management (Elmbridge Housing Trust 2011).

5. Recommendations

The desired outcomes and actions outlined in this document provide a basis for the design and implementation of a renewed Tenant Participation program for social housing tenants in Queensland. To implement the actions identified in this report, Social Housing Programs, Housing and Homelessness Services will develop an implementation plan in consultation with key stakeholders. The plan will identify roles, responsibilities and resources and further consider appropriate timelines for the rollout of a renewed Tenant Participation program.

It is recommended that:

1. the desired outcomes detailed in Attachment 6 are adopted to guide the Tenant Participation program for the period 2011–2014

2. an implementation strategy will be developed to include activities, timelines and responsibilities in consultation with a reference group and working group

3. implementation of changes will commence in the 2011–2012 financial year and continue over a three-year period.

State	NSW	VIC	SA	TAS	ACT	New Zealand Housing Corp.
Portfolio size	146,270 properties – as at 30 June 2010.[1]	78,646 properties – as at 30 June 2009.	49,566 properties – as at 30 June 2009.[2]	11,500 properties – 2010-2011.	Not known.	66,000 properties – 2011.[3]
Tenant Participation program in operation	YES 'Tenant Participation Resource Services'.[4]	YES	NO Customer participation has been integral to the business since the early 1980s. A 'Customer Engagement Strategy' is currently being developed specifically for housing.[5]	NO A tenant consultation business case is currently being developed. Some tenant participation groups operate informally.	NO No formal Tenant Participation program.[6]	NO No formal Tenant Participation program
Service/ program of delivery	TPRS regionally delivered by NGO sector (across 9 regions). Delivered to all social housing households.	Centrally administered with Tenant Participation coordinators in each of the 8 regions. Delivered to public housing tenants only.	N/A	N/A	Tenant grants administered centrally & with community based organisations. 'Joint Champions group' administered centrally.	N/A
Budget (if known)	$1,744,000 annum (2009) Annual report. Funding distributed to TPRS providers & central program administration.[7]	Not known. Funding provided goes to tenant groups, Victoria Public Tenants Association (VPTA) and regional service providers.	N/A	N/A	Total not known. Tenant grants of up to $5000 per group are distributed/annum (See footnote 4).	N/A

State	NSW	VIC	SA	TAS	ACT	New Zealand Housing Corp.
Activities	Community Greening. Tenant Representative Groups. Housing Communities projects.[8]		Until 2007, tenants were represented on departmental decision-making: Regional Advisory Boards, whose members met monthly for the Operational Policy Advisory Committee.[9] Tenant repre-sentatives will be invited to participate in a new engagement strategy.	Coffee mornings and barbecues. Opportunities for tenants and tenancy officers to meet and discuss issues in a social setting. Sometimes attended by housing managers or local politicians.	Tenants grants go to tenant run projects: Art programs, community gardens, cooking group, music tutoring – forming a band. African drum and dance workshop	Some tenant community activities organised by New Zealand Housing Corp, including; garden awards and community neighbourhood days.

* NT does not have a Tenant Participation program, though they do run tenant garden awards. It is unknown if WA Housing Authority has a program due to information being difficult to obtain.

[1] Housing NSW 2007: p 5

[2] Department for Families and Communities (SA) 2009: p 18

[3] Housing New Zealand Corporation 2011

[4] Housing New South Wales 2008

[5] Department for Families and Communities (SA) 2011

[6] Housing and Community Services ACT 2010 and personal communication dated 6 July 2011

[7] NSW Land and Housing Corporation 2010: p 346

[8] Housing New South Wales 2008

[9] Department for Families and Communities (Sth Australia) Personal communication dated 27 July 2011

Attachment 2 — Training and skills development through Tenant Participation

The Tenant Participation program has the potential to link tenants and household members to training and employment opportunities and deliver, with appropriate resourcing, a variety of personal development, job-ready and skills-based training. This training helps build the capacity of social housing tenants, encourages them to be active and engaged members of their community, promotes social inclusion and enhances their employment opportunities.

- **Training and skills development to improve job readiness.** This type of training links to formal training packages which include qualifications and/or accreditation. Examples of training topics include:
  - computer and Internet skills
  - how to write a résumé and job applications
  - life skills education such as parenting, cooking and healthy lifestyles.

- **Enhancing Tenant Group capacity and operations.** This type of training builds skills and confidence and enables tenants to help deliver Tenant Participation activities. Examples of training topics include:
  - running meetings and minute-taking
  - incorporated association accountability
  - managing group finances
  - written communications and newsletter writing
  - event planning, management and promotion
  - applying for grants
  - leadership skills training
  - mediation and conflict resolution skills
  - group dynamics.

- **Engaging with other tenants.** This training assists tenants to be able to engage with other tenants, particularly those in the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD) communities, tenants with a disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants. This training focuses on Tenant Groups developing skills to promote the program and encouraging others to participate. Examples include:
  - networking and community development
  - consultation and engagement: how to promote participation
  - using technology and the Internet to promote networking and participation
  - social research (doing surveys, running focus groups, doing interviews)
  - cross-cultural communication skills, including diverse groups and cultures.

- **Tenant Advocacy and Understanding social housing.** The purpose of this training is to build knowledge and confidence to be able to participate fully in decision-making, enhance communication between tenants and the department/housing providers, and empower tenants to represent themselves on matters concerning their tenancy. Examples of training topics include:

    - communicating with government

    - how the social housing system works in Queensland

    - writing submissions and giving feedback to service providers.

Attachment 3 — Tenant Participation in other jurisdictions

United Kingdom

Delivery and funding of social housing in the United Kingdom is by local council or housing trusts. Local authority tenants have a statutory right to establish tenant groups, while for housing association tenants it is a regulatory requirement. While there are no set models for delivery of Tenant Participation, compacts are made between landlords and tenants which detail how they may work together to involve tenants in decision-making about their homes. These compacts include core standards set out by the National Framework for Tenant Participation (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005).

The Paragon Community Housing Group in the United Kingdom is an umbrella organisation consisting of two subsidiary providers: Elmbridge Housing Trust (5,000 properties) and Richmond-upon-Thames Churches Housing Trust (3,500 properties). Paragon was recognised by the 2010 Housing Award (UK) for their outstanding work in empowering tenants to be involved in the management of their housing (Paragon UK, 2010).

Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Housing Authority is a large provider of public housing with approximately 710,000 properties and a funding model which allows for HK$100 per dwelling for tenant participation. In 2004, the budget exceeded $80 million to deliver a range of innovative community development activities across environmental, health, safety and cultural awareness. A unique program goal of the Hong Kong Housing Authority is to foster and strengthen a sense of belonging and collective responsibility of the community. This is reflective of the portfolio make-up, consisting of only large blocks of apartments forming a social housing complex.

In Hong Kong, the Housing Authority has introduced an Estate Management Advisory Committee to nearly all public rental housing estates. The aim is to further devolve the participation in estate management to the local level and enhance communication with tenants on estate management matters. It also aims to increase tenants' participation and understanding of estate management matters, strengthen their sense of belonging and collective responsibility for the well-being of the immediate community (Hong Kong Housing Authority, 2010).

New South Wales

Housing New South Wales has a portfolio of approximately 126,000 directly-managed properties. The Tenant Participation Resource Services in New South Wales represents a unique model of Tenant Participation program delivery in

Australia as the program delivery is decentralised and delivered to all social housing tenants (total dwellings 145,000), not only those in public housing (Housing NSW, 2011).

Under this model, service delivery is provided by non-government organisations across nine regions of the state with one Tenant Participation Resource Services Officer per region. Responsibilities include monitoring the program at a divisional level, administering funds, quality assurance and reporting.

The program focuses on a number of activities and services for tenants including direct engagement, liaison and advice, referral and advocacy, community building and establishing networks. While funded separately, the provision of tenant advice and advocacy services are closely linked to the Tenant Participation Resource Service (Housing NSW, 2008).

Victoria

In Victoria, tenant participation is managed and funded centrally by the state's Department of Human Services. The Office of Housing, Department of Human Services in Victoria delivers its Tenant Participation program to public housing tenants across approximately 62,500 public housing dwellings.

A Tenant Participation Coordinator is employed in each of the eight Department of Human Services regions and funding is also provided for the Victorian Public Tenants Association to represent tenants and a Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program to support tenants and facilitate involvement.

A key feature of the Victorian program is the provision of opportunities to directly engage with tenants, including issues-based state-wide forums, regional tenant forums and local housing office meetings (Department of Human Services Victoria, 2010).

Examples of good practice

Closely aligned with the Victorian Tenant Participation program is the successful Public Tenant Employment Program (PTEP) that focuses on skills development through education and training. The PTEP provides funding for public housing tenants to access training courses to build a variety of skills. The program team provides support to tenants during the course of their study and assists tenants to seek and secure employment (Department of Housing Services Victoria, 2011).

All four Tenant Participation programs in other jurisdictions recognise that people access the program in different ways and to different levels of intensity. There is common understanding that tenants have a choice about the program activities in which they engage and to a degree best suiting their needs, interests and capacity. While some tenants are happy to remain on the periphery, receiving a newsletter or undertaking a survey when asked, others may take up committee roles and/or be interested in leadership development. While there are layers to how people will

engage, opportunities to be involved in Tenant Participation must be supported by the service provider.

Models of Tenant Participation in other jurisdictions tell us that tenant involvement in program activities largely fall into three distinct categories. These are outlined in the following table.

Levels of Involvement

Level of involvement	Activity examples
1. Information Tenants receive relevant and appropriate information.	All four housing providers in this case study offer information to tenants as standard practice in the form of written material specifically aimed at the tenant demographic. Provision of information is the most basic form of involvement with tenants and usually focuses on mass communication such as news periodicals.
2. Consultation and feedback Tenants are actively consulted and invited to provide feedback on housing and tenancy-related issues.	The Paragon Community Housing Group in the UK provides a number of opportunities for tenants take part in consultations and offer feedback. Examples of innovative practice include: • Housing Surgeries: informal drop-in sessions with tenancy management staff. • Reading Panel: tenants on the reading panel provide critical feedback on draft communication materials and policies to ensure they are suitable and understandable for a wider tenant audience. • Mystery Shopper: tenants are invited to become 'mystery shoppers' and provide feedback on the organisations frontline services and performance. • Contract Monitors: tenants are invited to monitor and provide feedback on the performance of contractors undertaking grounds and property maintenance.

Level of involvement	Activity examples
3. Active Participation Tenants are empowered to participate in program activities	The providers in other jurisdictions offer a broad range of activities to accommodate the active participation of tenants who want to engage with their tenancy manager and play a role in service planning and decision-making. These include: • Membership/leadership of a tenant: offers tenants the opportunity participate in decision-making processes. • Training Activities: includes training and personal development courses, attendance at conferences and workshops. Training often focuses on housing management, leadership and skills required to be involved in groups and committees. • Outreach Activities: predominately focuses on social inclusion and community building. Examples include: Pre-school breakfast club (NSW), Community Action Days (UK), Sorry Day (NSW) and Youth Panel (UK). • Action Seeding/Green Estates: a focus of tenant participation specific to Hong Kong is raising awareness of environmental issues and encouraging sustainable lifestyles through recycling, seed planting and energy efficiency.

Elmbridge Housing Trust (a subsidiary of Paragon Community Housing Group, UK) has developed a 'Menu of Involvement' for which they received an industry award in 2010. The menu details program activities, expected level of time commitment and incentives for tenants freely giving their time by committing to the activities offered to them.

The Trust has an overarching 'Resident Involvement Strategy' which articulates their commitment to involving tenants to help improve service delivery and asset management. The aim of the strategy is to drive resident involvement forward to help the organisation achieve their business plans and ensure that tenants are integral to the pursuit of excellence (Elmbridge Housing Trust, 2010).

Attachment 4 — Tenant Participation survey results

Descriptive statistics from the Tenant Participation Survey are provided to inform reference group members in their discussions. The quantitative survey data is only one element of the Tenant Participation review complementing other information such as open ended questions and written submissions.

The Tenant Participation Survey was an online survey with a total of 430 respondents. Not all questions in each survey were answered, therefore the "total respondents" columns in the tables below do not always add to 430.

The survey canvassed respondent's views on a range of actions to improve the Tenant Participation program. The results indicate a positive view by over 76% of respondents for each of the actions presented. In regards to the name of the program 86% of respondents reported that they were "happy with the existing name."

Over two thirds (66%) of respondents were female with over 90% of respondents residing in social housing.

Action 1: Establishing new goals for the program	Strongly Agree or Agree		Disagree or Strongly Disagree		Total Responses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Service providers seek the advice of tenants on property and tenancy management	385	91%	40	9%	425	100%
Tenants maintain a successful tenancy	399	96%	16	4%	415	100%
Tenants have contact with their neighbours	351	86%	58	14%	409	100%
The number of tenants who participate in the program increases each year	323	84%	63	16%	386	100%
The program caters for a diverse range of tenants from varying cultural backgrounds and age groups	192	86%	32	14%	224	100%
The number of tenants who volunteer in their community increases by 50 per cent by 2020	308	79%	84	21%	392	100%

"Tenants maintaining a successful tenancy" was the most popular goal for the program (96%). The least popular goal was "increasing the number of tenants who volunteer in their community by 50 percent by 2020" (21% strongly disagreed/disagreed).

Action 2: Redefining roles within the program — the role of tenants	Strongly Agree or Agree		Disagree or Strongly Disagree		Total Responses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Tenant groups should actively develop strategies to engage young people, people from diverse cultural backgrounds, people with a disability and Indigenous tenants	331	88%	45	12%	376	100%
It's a good idea to invite new tenants to get involved in tenant activities and groups	365	95%	20	5%	385	100%
Surveys and discussion groups are a good way to encourage tenants to come together	338	89%	41	11%	379	100%
Tenant groups should organise forums or undertake projects to address specific issues affecting all tenants (such as safety, isolation or reducing energy bills)	352	93%	28	7%	380	100%
More established tenants could mentor new tenants to build their skills and confidence	304	81%	72	19%	376	100%
Tenant groups should establish links with government agencies, local community services and businesses to meet tenant needs	349	93%	26	7%	375	100%
Tenant groups should recognise and reward the achievements of social housing tenants	331	89%	41	11%	372	100%
Accountable and transparent processes should be in place to elect tenant leaders and guide decision-making of tenant groups	341	92%	29	8%	370	100%

A total of 95% of respondents would like to see "involvement of tenants in activities and groups" as a defining role of tenants. "More established tenants as mentors" was the least supported defining role of tenants (19% strongly disagreed/ disagreed).

Action 2: Redefining roles within the program — the role of service providers	Strongly Agree or Agree		Disagree or Strongly Disagree		Total Responses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Develop action plans on how they will achieve Tenant Participation goals	338	93%	27	7%	365	100%
Meet regularly with tenant groups and assist tenants to establish and maintain contact with tenant groups	348	93%	25	7%	373	100%
Engage tenant groups on critical issues such as implementing new policies or programs, undertaking major upgrades and maintenance works	342	93%	27	7%	369	100%
Identify innovative strategies to expand the program to include young people, people from diverse cultural backgrounds, people with a disability and Indigenous tenants	323	88%	46	12%	369	100%
Develop welcome packs for new tenants that promote the program and include easy-to-understand information about local activities	347	93%	25	7%	372	100%
Recognise the achievements of people involved in the program within their organisation	335	92%	30	8%	365	100%
Provide feedback to the department on that program	353	96%	14	4%	367	100%
Develop a tenant profile so the program can target those who are at risk of social isolation or struggling to maintain their tenancy	323	88%	44	12%	367	100%

"Providing feedback on the program" was seen as the defining role of service providers by 96% of respondents. The least supported roles were "identifying innovative strategies to expand the program to include young people, people from diverse cultural backgrounds, people with a disability and Indigenous tenants" and "developing tenant profiles to target those at risk of isolation and/or struggling to maintain their tenancy" (12% strongly disagreed/disagreed).

Action 2: Redefining roles within the program — the role of the department	Strongly Agree or Agree		Disagree or Strongly Disagree		Total Responses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Develop guidelines and monitor performance of the program against required results	327	91%	31	9%	358	100%
Report to the Minister on the results achieved by the program	329	92%	28	8%	357	100%
Recognise the state-wide achievements of participants in the program	331	93%	25	7%	356	100%
Provide tools and resources to housing providers and regional departmental staff so they can support local initiatives	345	96%	15	4%	360	100%
Contribute funds to tenant groups and housing providers to conduct approved activities (such as publishing newsletters, conducting forums or undertaking study)	336	92%	31	8%	367	100%
Promote innovation by sharing examples of the program's best practice with tenant groups and service providers	330	92%	27	8%	357	100%
Establish strategic alliances with the corporate sector and Volunteering Queensland, as well as other areas of the department and government, to identify opportunities that promote economic and social participation of social housing tenants	319	90%	36	10%	355	100%
Coordinate training activities	320	90%	35	10%	355	100%
Provide expert advice to service providers, regional departmental staff and tenant groups on the operation of the program and ideas to assist in developing local initiatives	333	94%	22	6%	355	100%

The "provision of tools and resources to housing providers and regional departmental staff so they can support local initiatives" was seen as the primary role for the department by 96% of respondents. The "establishment of strategic alliances with the corporate sector of Volunteering Queensland" and the "coordination of training activities" as a departmental role was least supported (10% strongly disagreed/disagreed).

Action 2: Redefining roles within the program — the role Housing Service Centres	Strongly Agree or Agree		Disagree or Strongly Disagree		Total Responses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Link program activities with other government, corporate and community initiatives	325	91%	33	9%	358	100%
Provide assistance to housing providers to establish a Tenant Participation program	333	92%	30	8%	363	100%
Arrange local training and capacity-building activities	324	91%	34	9%	358	100%
Provide feedback on the effectiveness of the Tenant Participation program in their region and generating ideas for improvement	334	93%	26	7%	360	100%
Act as a coordination point for activities in their area	327	90%	36	10%	363	100%

"Providing feedback on the effectiveness of the Tenant Participation program" was seen as a primary role for the Housing Service Centres by 93% of respondents. The least supported role for the Housing Service Centres was to "act as the coordination point for activities in their area" (10% strongly disagreed/disagreed)

Action 3: Establishing a new theme to guide program activities	Very Important or Important		Not so Important or Not Important at all		Total Responses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Bringing the community together	331	89%	41	11%	372	100%
Environmental awareness	349	94%	23	6%	372	100%
Good neighbours	360	97%	13	3%	373	100%
Healthy tenants	341	92%	31	8%	372	100%

The "Good neighbours" theme was supported as very important/important by 97% of respondents." Bringing the community together" was least supported (11% regarding this as not important/ not at all important).

Action 4: Delivering the new program	Agree		Disagree		Total Responses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Local and regional tenant groups work together to plan and deliver Tenant Participation activities	308	91%	32	9%	340	100%
Ad-hoc local groups of tenants come together for a specific purpose	275	85%	47	15%	322	100%
Local networks of tenants connect informally with others to reduce isolation	293	88%	39	12%	332	100%
Access social networking sites to connect to other tenants	242	77%	71	23%	313	100%
Experienced tenants act as mentors to new tenants	251	79%	67	21%	318	100%
Tenant groups link to broader community services and activities on behalf of individuals and groups	281	88%	37	12%	318	100%
Working groups comprising tenants and service provider representatives are established	299	90%	33	10%	332	100%

The most supported method for delivering the new program was "local and regional tenant groups should work together to plan and deliver Tenant participation activities" (91% of respondents agreed). The least supported method for delivering the new program was "access social networking sites to connect to other tenants" (23% disagreed).

Reference Group

Respondent	Included	Partially included	Not supported	Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments
1. Program name should be retained: 'Tenant Participation'.	●			Program name will remain
2. The Objective/Purpose of Queensland's TP program is: 'Tenants to have their say in decisions that affect their housing/ tenancy'.	●			**Outcome 6** includes a number actions which focus on identifying opportunities for tenants to have input to decision-making about matters that affect their tenancies.
3. Ongoing consultation with tenants and tenant groups throughout the development of a new TP program. Consultation is the nature of the program.	●			The report discusses the development of a focus group comprising of tenant representatives to guide implementation planning.
4. Clear communication strategy between housing providers (HSCs and CHOs) and tenants be developed, including communication tools to promote the program	●			**Action 2.4** — the department will develop a communications strategy with good practice guidelines to promote the program.
5. Training for tenants and tenant groups in two areas be developed and implemented; capacity building for tenants groups to operate more sustainably and; general skills development for wider tenant population.	●			**Action 1.2** — the department will develop a resource kit and self-paced training for tenants.

Reference Group				
Respondent	Included	Partially included	Not supported	Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments
6. A set of clear KPIs for TP program and service delivery be developed for all providers (HSC and Community Housing) in order to ensure accountability.	●			**Action 2.2** — Community Housing provides will develop organisational level Tenant Participation Action Plans linked to KPIs. **Action 2.3** — the department will identify appropriate performance measures and KPIs.
7. Tenant participation training be delivered to new staff in housing provider organisations (HSCs and Community housing providers)	●			**Action 2.5** — the department will develop a training strategy to up-skill new and existing staff to effectively deliver tenant participation.
8. New models for TP program delivery be investigated. This may include those which fit in with existing mechanisms but also to explore delivery of service by NGOs.	●			**Action 5.1** — the department will explore alternative was of delivering aspects of the program, including through the NGO sector
9. The department acknowledges tenant groups as key stakeholders and implements ways to consult those groups on issues regarding their tenancy	●			**Outcome 6** includes a number actions which focus on identifying opportunities for tenants to have input to decision-making about matters that affect their tenancies.
10. Operational policies of the program be reviewed and updated.	●			**Action 2.7** — the department will review and update existing program documentation
11. A Tenant Charter be developed which specifies the Department's commitment to tenant relations (this would be linked to other government policies such as compact, code of conduct, client services charter etc)	●			The report discusses the development of a Tenant Charter as part of the program documentation to formalise delivery.

Respondent	Included	Partially included	Not supported	Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments
12. Operations of department funded peak bodies (such TUQ and QShelter) in QLD be reviewed in relation to their involvement with the Tenant Participation program.	●			**Action 5.1** — the department will explore alternative ways of delivering aspects of the program, including through the NGO sector. **Action 6.1** — the department will work with funded housing peak bodies to ensure key tenant issues are elevated and represented as the state level.
13. A way for regional tenant groups and stakeholders across Queensland to meet on a regular basis be developed.		●		A regular state-wide representation of tenants may be achieved through peak bodies in Queensland and through the use of social media among tenants and other social housing stakeholders. **Action 5.2** — the department will pilot the use of social media as a communication, consultation and engagement tool among social housing tenants. **Action 6.1** — the department will work with funded housing peak bodies to ensure key tenant issues are elevated and represented as the state level.
14. Examine ways to improve the engagement of community housing providers to deliver tenant participation.	●			**Action 2.2** — community housing providers will develop organisational level Tenant Participation Action Plans linked to KPIs.

Reference Group				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
15. Participation in the program must be made more accessible to diverse and disadvantaged tenant groups such as those who are culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and those with disability or mental health issues.	●			**Outcome 4** includes a number of actions which focus on the varying capacity, willingness and desire of tenants to be involved and opportunities for diverse groups to be involved.
16. The Tenant Participation program must offer differing levels and opportunities for participation so that all tenants can be engaged.	●			**Action 4.1** — the department will develop a 'Menu of Involvement'.
17. Steps be taken to sustain tenant networks over time (eg. through capacity building)	●			**Outcome 1** includes a number of actions which focus on building the capacity of social housing tenants. **Action 5.2** — the department will pilot the use of social media as a communication, consultation and engagement tool among social housing tenants.
18. Explore ways to address barriers to participation created by privacy laws.			●	Better promotion of the program in collaboration with tenants and creation of a central program database of tenants will help resolve barriers to promotion. **Action 4.2** — the department will work with tenant groups to develop products and methods to promote the program and increase opportunities for participation.

Reference Group

Respondent	Included	Partially included	Not supported	Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments
19. The department includes tenants in high level/strategic policy forums.	●			**Action 6.2** — the department will actively seek opportunities to include tenant representatives in forums and consultative bodies. **Action 6.3** — guidelines will be developed for tenant consultation on department projects.

QShelter

Respondent	Included	Partially included	Not supported	Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments
1. Explore enhanced resourcing arrangements that will allow Qld Shelter and the Tenants' Union to improve tenants input into policy development and program delivery		●		**Actions 5.1 and 6.1** — aim to explore different ways of delivering aspects of the Tenant Participation program through the NGO sector. This may include enhanced resourcing in the future.
2. Establish tenant resource centres in each of the seven regions - provision of information, advocacy, referrals, linkages to employment and social participation			●	This recommendation is not supported. However: • A regional action plan through Housing Service Centres will be developed to guide program delivery **(Action 2.1)**. • The provision of information, advocacy, referrals and linkages to employment and social participation opportunities for tenants will be achieved through several mechanisms **(Actions 1.1 and 3.2)**. • The department will explore alternative ways of delivering aspects of the program, including through the NGO sector **(Action 5.1)**.

QShelter				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
3. Increase funding to pre–2007 levels with additional funds for tenant group outreach work			●	This recommendation is not supported. However, funding requirements will be determined as a renewed program is implemented. **Action 2.1** aims to ensure that appropriate tenant group support is provided in each region. **Action 5.1** — allows for the exploration of alternative ways of delivering some aspects of the program, including through the NGO sector.
4. Implementation of local action plans, tenant satisfaction surveys and stewardship of Tenant Participation programs by all social housing providers	●			**Action 2.1** — aims to ensure that appropriate tenant group support is provided in each region. **Action 2.2** — Community housing providers will develop organisational level Tenant Participation Action Plans linked to KPIs. **Action 2.3** — the department will identify appropriate performance measures and KPIs.
5. Requirement that all social housing providers improve tenant participation through support, advocacy, referral, and information	●			**Outcome 2** focuses on embedding Tenant Participation in core program and service delivery activities.
6. Retain existing name and focus	●			The program name will remain.

Tenants Union Queensland				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
1. Policy intent of a future Tenant Participation program be social inclusion through a focus on the shared tenant interest in influencing social housing policy and delivery	●			**Outcome 6** includes a number actions which focus on identifying opportunities for tenants to have input to decision-making about matters that affect their tenancies.
2. Goal 1 — tenants have influence and an active role in decision-making on social housing and tenancy management which affect their lives; Goal 2 — Safe and connected neighbourhoods	●			**Outcome 6** focuses on opportunities for tenants to have input to decision-making about matters that affect their tenancies.
3. Tenant participation to become a more significant focus within the governance and program structure of the department	●			**Outcome 2** includes a number of actions which focus on embedding tenant participation in core program and service delivery activities.
4. Amend the *Housing Act and Regulations* to legislate the requirement for tenant participation by all providers			●	This recommendation is not supported. While the *Housing Act and Regulations* will not be amended, new changes to National Community Housing standards and a proposed review of Community Housing Program Specifications within the department **(Action 2.7)** will embed the Tenant Participation program in delivery of services.

Tenants Union Queensland				
Respondent	Included	Partially included	Not supported	Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments
5. Independent body undertake roles of scrutiny and evaluation of tenant participation performance by providers — new Social Housing Ombudsman, Community Housing Standards and Accreditation Council or corporation contracted to evaluate and report on performance			●	This recommendation is not supported, however: Key performance indicators and measures including a tenant satisfaction will be established to monitor and evaluate the program **(Actions 2.2 and 2.3)**.
6. Introduce tenant participation performance measures with senior executive role responsible for monitoring and reporting	●			**Action 2.2** — Community housing providers will develop organisational level Tenant Participation Action Plans linked to KPIs. **Action 2.3** — the department will identify appropriate performance measures and KPIs.
7. Develop more formal connection between the Tenant Participation program and social housing work undertaken by the TUQ		●		**Action 5.1** — allows for the exploration of alternative ways of delivering some aspects of the program, including through the NGO sector. **Action 6.1** — These actions explore new ways of both representation for tenants and alternative program delivery mechanisms by housing peak bodies.

Tenants Union Queensland				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
8. Development of groups, support, capacity building and establishing groups — functions carried out by dedicated staff member within housing service centre or independent organisations who are not housing providers			●	While a dedicated 'tenant worker' is not included as a recommendation, provision of support, capacity building and guidance for tenant groups will be developed through specific action plans in each region, and alternative methods of delivery by NGO sector will be explored. **Action 2.1** — the department will develop Regional Tenant Participation Action Plans to guide program delivery. **Action 5.1** — allows for the exploration of alternative ways of delivering some aspects of the program, including through the NGO sector.
9. Two new structures implemented to deliver tenant participation with an evaluation of both after 3 years			●	This recommendation is not supported. However: • The structure and direction of a renewed program will retain a similar structure to the current program. • A plan for future program reviews will be incorporated in the implementation planning (discussed in report). Measures for tenant satisfaction will form the basis of future reviews **(Action 2.3)**.

Tenants Union Queensland

Respondent	Included	Partially included	Not supported	Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments
10. All stakeholders have opportunity to meet every 2 years to build program coherence and promote best practice.		●		A regular state-wide representation of tenants may be achieved through peak bodies in Queensland and through the use of social media among tenants and other social housing stakeholders. **Action 6.1** — these actions explore new ways of both representation for tenants and alternative program delivery mechanisms by housing peak bodies. **Action 5.2** — the department will pilot the use of social media as a communication, consultation and engagement tool among social housing tenants.
11. Program name to remain as is unless name suggested as part of consultation which better expresses the function of the program	●			The program name will remain.

Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland

Respondent	Included	Partially included	Not supported	Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments
1. Deliver genuine opportunities for tenants to influence policies, programs and service	●			**Outcome 6** includes a number actions which focus on identifying opportunities for tenants to have input to decision-making about matters that affect their tenancies.
2. Tenants acquire skills and knowledge through comprehensive training opportunities including training for tenants to respond to local opposition to social housing	●			**Action 1.1** — the department will establish connections to improve tenants' information access to education, training and workforce participation. **Action 1.2** — the department will develop a resource kit and self-paced training for tenants.

Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
3. The department develops a peer leader strategy to recruit, engage, train and support CALD tenants		●		The new program will both provide opportunities for diverse clients to become involved and promote the program in partnership with tenants to increase opportunities for participation. To improve outcomes for priority groups like CALD tenants, tenant groups will be linked in to other service areas. **Action 3.1** — the department will actively link tenant groups into strategies being developed and implemented by other service areas to improve outcomes for priority groups. **Action 4.2** — the department will work with tenant groups to develop products and methods to promote the program and increase opportunities for participation.
4. Theme — Making a difference — role of Tenant Participation in enhancing the quality and responsiveness of policies, programs and service provision	●			**Outcome 3** includes a number of actions which focus on Tenant Participation as a key enabler for the delivery of a varied range of departmental services.
5. Program name remains "Tenant Participation"	●			The program name will remain.
6. That the Tenant Participation program formally acknowledges the different layers and levels of participation by tenants	●			**Outcome 4** includes a number of actions which focus on the varying capacity, willingness and desire of tenants to be involved and opportunities for diverse groups to be involved.

Local and regional tenant groups

Respondent	Included	Partially included	Not supported	Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments
1. New program to align with broader philosophies of inclusion, consultation, participation and collaboration	●			Reflected in the report
2. Tenant Participation should be embedded into the core business of the department with a statement of commitment	●			**Outcome 2** — aims for the embedding of tenant participation in core program service delivery requirements for all social housing providers. The report discusses the development of a Tenant Charter as part of the program documentation to formalise delivery.
3. Evaluation of Tenant Participation program be conducted including tenant satisfaction survey	●			A plan for future program reviews will be incorporated in the implementation planning. Measures for tenant satisfaction will form the basis of future reviews. **Action 2.3** — the department will identify appropriate performance measures and KPIs including a measure for tenant satisfaction.
4. Regular forum for tenants groups to connect with the department , including Housing Service Centres	●			**Action 6.2** — the department will actively seek opportunities to include tenant representatives in forums and consultative bodies.

Local and regional tenant groups				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
5. Program design that encourages and facilitates the participation of tenants in decision-making and forward planning	●			**Outcome 6** includes a number actions which focus on identifying opportunities for tenants to have input to decision-making about matters that affect their tenancies. **Outcome 4** focuses on the varying capacity, willingness and desire of tenants to be involved and provides opportunities for diverse groups to be involved.
6. Increased funding and support for tenants and tenant groups to deliver a new program (dedicated/ trained officers or 3rd party delivery)		●		While tenant workers are not included as a recommendation, provision of support, capacity building and guidance for tenant groups will be developed through specific action plans in each region. Alternative methods of program delivery by NGO sector will be explored. **Action 2.1** — the department will develop Regional Tenant Participation Action Plans to guide program delivery. **Action 5.1** — allows for the exploration of alternative ways of delivering some aspects of the program, including through the NGO sector.
7. Explore the use of Information Technology including social networking for tenants	●			**Action 5.2** — the department will pilot the use of social media as a communication, consultation and engagement tool among social housing tenants.

Local and regional tenant groups				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
8. Development of actions plans and KPIs and benchmarks for tenant participation	●			**Action 2.2** — Community housing providers will develop organisational level Tenant Participation Action Plans linked to KPIs. **Action 2.3** — the department will identify appropriate performance measures and KPIs.
9. Program name remains "Tenant Participation"	●			The program name will remain.
10. Provision of practical assistance (transport etc) especially for tenants in rural communities	●			Current program grants allow for provision of funds to assist tenant groups with travel etc. In addition, training opportunities for tenants will assist in how to apply for grants. **Action 1.2** — the department will develop self-paced training for tenants including training on how to write grant applications.
11. The department support and resources housing providers to deliver tenant participation	●			**Action 2.5** — the department will develop a training strategy to up-skill new and existing staff to effectively deliver tenant participation. **Action 2.4** — the department will develop a communications strategy with good practice guidelines to assist social housing providers promote the program to tenants.

Local and regional tenant groups				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
12. Providers of social housing actively engage in tenant participation	●			**Action 2.2** — Community housing providers will develop organisational level Tenant Participation Action Plans linked to KPIs. **Action 2.3** — the department will identify appropriate performance measures and KPIs. **Action 2.4** — the department will develop a communications strategy with good practice guidelines to assist social housing providers promote the program to tenants.
13. Explore different communication methods to best engage with tenants to promote the Tenant Participation program and activities tenants can get involved in.	●			**Outcome 4** includes a number of actions which focus on the varying capacity, willingness and desire of tenants to be involved and opportunities for diverse groups to be involved. **Action 5.2** — the department will pilot the use of social media as a communication, consultation and engagement tool among social housing tenants.
14. Training is made available for tenant groups so they can participate in and contribute to the new program.	●			**Action 1.2** — the department will develop a resource kit and self-paced training for tenants.

Tenants recommendations in surveys (qualitative responses)				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
1. Activities — broad support for the Tenant Participation program to focus on bringing tenants together (shared experience/ address isolation) — many tenants indicated they value social events associated with the program such as BBQs, afternoon teas, outings etc	●			**Action 4.1** — the department will develop a 'Menu of Involvement'.
2. Resourcing — there was broad support for the department to better resource Tenant Participation including the provision of meeting space		●		While there is not a commitment to providing meeting spaces for groups, a referral mechanism will be implemented to improve tenant access to wider government services, including access to community spaces for conducting meetings. **Action 3.2** — the department will promote tenant participation across its areas of service delivery and into broader community networks.
3. Program delivery — tenants broadly recommended that trained or dedicated workers either from within the department or other organisation to lead meetings and activities		●		While a dedicated 'tenant worker' is not included as a recommendation, the provision of support, capacity building and guidance for tenant groups will be developed through specific action plans in each region and alternative methods of program delivery by NGO sector will be explored. **Action 5.1** — allows for the exploration of alternative ways of delivering some aspects of the program, including through the NGO sector.

Tenants recommendations in surveys (qualitative responses)				
Respondent	**Included**	**Partially included**	**Not supported**	**Reference to Outcome/ Action and Comments**
4. Communication between the department and tenants — there was broad recommendation by tenants for more frequent and targeted communication. For example, interpreters, better use of printed materials, annual tenants forum, contact with Area Managers	●			**Action 2.4** — the department will develop a communications strategy with good practice guidelines to promote the program. **Action 4.2** — the department will work with tenant groups to design a calendar of cultural events as a promotional tool for the program and to guide program activities.
5. Levels of involvement in the program — there was broad comment about the commitment required on the part of tenants to be involved in tenant participation. A common theme was the desire to be involved in some capacity, but not necessarily attend all meetings or take on a formal role such as Chair or Secretary	●			**Outcome 4** includes a number of actions which focus on the varying capacity, willingness and desire of tenants to be involved and opportunities for diverse groups to be involved.
6. Program theme or focus — a vast number of respondents referred to incidents of anti-social behaviour they had witnessed, neighbours with complex needs impacting on other tenants and specific neighbour disputes. Many respondents recommended themes for a new program which focus on building tenants' skills and awareness, dispute resolution or linking tenants to services and support.	●			**Outcome 1** includes a number of actions which focus on building the capacity of social housing tenants. **Outcome 3** includes a number of actions which focus on tenant participation as a key enabler for the delivery of a varied range of departmental services.

DESIRED OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	INDICATIVE TIME-LINES
1. Tenant Participation strengthens the capacity of social housing tenants to be active and engaged members of their community, promote social inclusion and enhance employment opportunities where appropriate	1. The department will establish connections with local education and training institutions, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) regional offices, local job network providers and other key agencies to improve tenants' knowledge about and access to education, training and workforce participation activities.	By June 2012
	2. The department will develop self -paced training for tenants in such activities as communicating with government, understanding social housing in Queensland and writing submissions. The purpose of these activities is to increase tenant capacity to engage with each other, service providers and the department on a policy level. Additionally, a resource kit of existing training products will be compiled to help build the capacity of tenant groups to operate more effectively.	By June 2012
	3. Opportunities will be explored through the Tenant Participation program for groups of tenants with a particular focus to discuss strategies to improve workforce participation. This may include single parent families, jobless families and the unemployed.	By June 2013
	4. The department will link the Tenant Participation program with broader departmental initiatives such as 'Getting Ahead and Getting Involved' a pilot aimed at increasing economic and social participation of social housing tenants and household members.	By June 2013
	5. The department will explore opportunities to promote social procurement aims by investigating the potential for contract management arrangements to include the employment of social housing tenants[1].	2013–2014
	6. Tenant groups will help to promote positive messages about social housing to the wider community with a particular focus on the contributions and achievements of tenants.	2012–2013

[1]Social procurement is the process of an organisation choosing to purchase a service which will also provide a social outcome (Burkett 2010)

DESIRED OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	INDICATIVE TIME-LINES
2. Tenant Participation is embedded in core program and service delivery requirements for all social housing providers and program delivery is consistent across Queensland	1. The Department will develop regional Tenant Participation Action Plans, in collaboration with tenants and community housing providers, to guide program delivery through the Housing Service Centre network across all social housing providers.	By June 2012
	2. The department will engage with registered community housing providers to develop organisation level Tenant Participation Action Plans. The plans will link with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be established by the department.	By June 2013
	3. The department will identify appropriate performance measures and establish KPIs to ensure accountability and consistency in program delivery. A measure for tenant satisfaction with property and tenancy management will be included as a KPI.	Establish by June 2012, commence 2012–2013 by June 2012
	4. The department will develop a communications strategy with good practice guidelines to assist social housing providers promote the program to tenants and provide opportunities for participation by social housing tenants.	By June 2013
	5. The department will develop a training strategy which links to training commitments under the Strengthening Social Housing Strategy to up-skill new and existing staff in the social housing sector on the effective delivery of tenant participation.	2012–2013
	6. The department will review existing program specifications for community housing providers to embed tenant participation activities in the delivery of housing assistance.	By June 2013
	7. The department will review and update existing program documentation to support the intent of a renewed program in Queensland.	By June 2012

DESIRED OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	INDICATIVE TIME-LINES
3. Tenant Participation is recognised, valued and acknowledged as a key enabler for the delivery of a varied range of departmental services	1. The department will link Tenant Participation with existing programs delivered by other service areas, including Office for Seniors, Office for Women, Disability Services Queensland and Multicultural Affairs Queensland. A key focus will be on promoting the program, engaging with common clients and improving outcomes for priority groups.	2012–2013
	2. The department will promote Tenant Participation across its areas of service delivery and into other broader community networks. A referral mechanism will be implemented to improve tenant access to services and support across the department and through the wider community. This may include jobs and training programs, youth network and other community based programs.	2012–2013
4. The Tenant Participation program recognises the varying capacity, willingness and desire of tenants to be involved and provide opportunities for diverse groups to get involved including seniors as identified in the *'Positively Ageless – Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010 – 2020'*	1. The department will develop a 'Menu of Involvement' for tenant groups outlining a variety of activities they may consider delivering to engage a broad range of tenants.	By June 2012
	2. The department will work with tenant groups to design and publish a calendar of cultural events. This will form a promotional tool for the program and guide group activities and engagements.	2012–2013
5. The Tenant Participation program is delivered through a range of channels and mechanisms to allow for broad participation and flexible delivery options	1. The department will explore alternative ways of delivering aspects of the program, including through the NGO sector.	2013–2014
	2. The department will pilot the use of social media as a communication, consultation and engagement tool among social housing tenants. Tenant groups will be key partners in the pilot and play a role in the implementation and evaluation activities.	2013–2014
6. Tenants are provided the opportunity to have meaningful input to decision-making about matters that affect their tenancies	1. The department will work with the funded housing peak bodies to ensure key tenant issues are elevated and represented at a state level.	By June 2013
	2. The department will actively seek opportunities to include tenant representatives in forums and consultative bodies. Opportunities will be sought for tenant input and consultation into social housing design projects.	By June 2012
	3. Guidelines will be developed for tenant consultation on department projects (where relevant).	2012–2013

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For more information

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