

Media statement

23 December 2015

Fairer, more supportive social housing policy

The State's new social housing policy around unacceptable behaviour acknowledges that people experiencing complex needs require support and assistance to meet their tenancy obligations.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck today said the *Fair expectations of behaviour* policy was an important shift in a system that provides essential support to society's most vulnerable people.

"Social housing plays a vital role in providing safe and affordable homes for people experiencing mental illness, mental health difficulties or substance use problems.

"Access to social housing supports a person's recovery, reduces demand on hospital and health services and helps reduce homelessness," Dr van Schoubroeck said.

"We congratulate the State Government for this shift in social housing policy. It is a significant step in a longer term process to make the system fairer for tenants with complex needs."

Dr van Schoubroeck said the State Government had accepted or supported all the recommendations of the Commission's *Social housing: Systemic issues for tenants with complex needs* report and is working with the Commission and others to implement them.

"The new *Fair expectations of behaviour* policy is one step in adopting the recommendations and will replace the three strikes Anti-Social Behaviour Policy which had unintended consequences for people with complex needs.

"The simplified approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour will reduce confusion and make tenants' rights and responsibilities clearer.

"We are continuing to work on longer-term recommendations, including better integrated mental health, social services and social housing services to support tenants' needs.

"Work is also progressing on better planning for future housing needs of tenants with complex needs, alternative housing solutions, and specialised training."

Dr van Schoubroeck said it was important to get these elements right, as they are fundamental to helping people with complex needs maintain their social housing tenancies.

"A home is fundamental to everyone's wellbeing," she said.

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