

# *Brisbane City Council Involvement in Affordable Housing*

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# What was it that first got your Council involved in affordable housing issues?

- Community concern and active lobbying.
- General positive orientation towards social justice/social inclusion.
- Strong advocates for the issue on Council
- Presentation of practical solutions.
- A willingness by the State Government to be active partners.

# Was there resistance in Council to getting involved? On what was this based? How was it overcome?

- Yes, definitely some reluctance.
- Potential costs/financial commitment.
- “Letting the State off the hook”.

Overcome by

- A solid partnership with the State where they put up more \$ than us.
- A strategy which kept the implementation at arms length.
- An acceptance of our contribution to the problem.



# What are the main strategies your Council has adopted?

- Establishing the Brisbane Housing Company jointly with the State - the cornerstone of the strategy.
- Grant program to assist boarding house fire safety upgrades - in tandem with health regulation.
- Negotiating voluntary developer contributions in exchange for extra GFA.
- Incentives package.
- Programs around caravan parks.
- Surplus Council property used for crisis and transitional housing.
- Homelessness strategy.



# How has the issue of the need for affordable housing influenced other parts of Council business?

- Change in approach to planning - greater willingness to consider affordable housing issues in planning schemes.
- Implementation of health regulations in boarding houses and caravan parks aims at keeping them open.
- Change in asset management policy - sales, rentals now oriented around affordable housing.
- Increase in community development resources to this issue.
- Building in incentives.
- Open space management and homeless people.

# Main Partners

- State Government - formalised arrangement with Dept of Housing through Capital City Policy and high level taskforce.
- Brisbane Housing Company is our main provider organisation - jointly set up with State - formal shareholding, regular contact.
- Key peak bodies - more informal contact, some formal contractual/funding arrangements re projects.
- Local organisations - mainly informal.
- Tenants???



# Are there any “no-go” areas?

- Stepping into State role - we'll complement and support, but not take over.
- Direct affordable housing management - we'd rather support community-based organisations to manage.
- Trading off affordable housing against other planning outcomes.
- Some legislative restriction - planning, National Competition Policy.
- All the above subject to change without notice.



# What would be your assessment of the impact you have had on housing need in your community?

- Honest assessment - a modest impact.
- Loss through urban change probably greater than what we have provided - however, tenants housed are better off by far!.
- Set up structures which will endure and grow over time - especially BHC.
- Our current phase includes a stronger focus on policy change at C'wealth and State.

# Where do you see your Council going with this issue in the future?

- Will continue current strategies.
- Continue to build the partnership with the State. Develop a more formalised partnership with NGOs.
- Greater focus on change at national level - hence more cooperation with other LGs
- More engagement with the private sector - both through planning and facilitation.

If you had one piece of advice for Councils just starting to address housing need, what would it be?

Be patient and  
persistent!

