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SAPA Calls on QLD State Government & Federal Government For Urgent Support For Disability Sector Amid Covid Crisis.

In March 2020, [SAPA](#), a collective of unfunded disability accommodation providers, reached out to several departments in the QLD Government across multiple sectors, including the Department Of Housing, Department of Disability and the Department of Health, to raise the alarm around the sectors limited resources and facilities to effectively isolate COVID positive residents in situ.

SAPA then worked with the QLD State Government to develop a Rapid Response Plan (RRP) to deal with outbreaks, should they occur. We are now in crisis and need to implement the approved RRP, only find our sector and those we care for abandoned by the QLD State Government, relevant departments, Ministers and the federally run Public Health Units.

We are calling on **Minister Enoch, as the QLD Governments Minister of Communities and Housing**, to step in and urgently address the needs of the unfunded Disability Housing sector, so we can keep our residents safe during this crisis. We urge **Premier Palaszczuk** and her cabinet Ministers to escalate and prioritise the needs of our most vulnerable to ensure they are safe.

Increased pressure on the medical system due to the current COVID outbreak means hospitals are no longer an option for COVID positive residents in assisted living.

The QLD State Governments failing to action to RRP means COVID positive residents remain in their current environment, creating a contagion risk for other vulnerable residents. SAPA members are at crisis point, concerned for the health and wellbeing of their residents and growing increasingly frustrated at the lack of response and support from the responsible QLD Government Ministers and their departments.

SAPA members do not receive any government funding to provide these services and require urgent assistance to help manage outbreaks, including:

- Financial and physical support to isolate COVID positive residents offsite, in certain circumstances
- Where offsite accommodation cannot be facilitated, additional support to isolate residents in situ
- Central coordination point within the QLD Health and or Public Health Units (**PHU**) who can direct resources accordingly
- Reliable and free access to Rapid Antigen Test kits to track and limit outbreaks
- Reliable and free access full PPE including N95 masks
- Accelerated access to in reach vaccination booster shots for residents

Our residents have physical and mental health issues; many have multiple comorbidities and require a high level of round the clock care and supervision. A high percentage possess limited capacity to understand the requirements around isolation and infection control procedures.

Without facilities like ours, the most vulnerable in our society are often lost in the cycle between QLD health, crisis accommodation, government-provided housing and homelessness.

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Through no fault of their own, they are left circling an inadequate system that provides unsustainable or inadequate accommodation and support that fails to address their long-term needs.

Providers like ours are set up to break this cycle by providing a housing solution with the appropriate supports needed to keep our residents' safe, stable and cared for. Many residents move in because they no longer have family, with the accommodation service providers and housemates often becoming their family.

The COVID 19 crisis has also highlighted the need to streamline our sector and the sectors regulating government departments. At present, the unfunded disability housing sector falls under several QLD Government Departments, being Housing, Health and Disability. This lack of clarity results in a lack of planning, management, and accountability from those departments regarding the management, support and effectiveness of the sector.

What is Level 3 Supported Accommodation?

- Providing accommodation services for vulnerable people at risk of homelessness.
- A high percentage of L 3 residents have psychosocial disabilities (PSD), physical disabilities and mental health issues.
- Low uptake within L 3 residents in the NDIS due to PSD clients not meeting eligibility requirements for NDIS support due to the cyclical nature of the disability, which makes it hard for the NDIS to assess and fund appropriately.
 - Limited pathways for PSD clients as this often onsets later in life.
 - NZ or other foreign citizens are ineligible.
 - Those older than sixty-five are ineligible, but they may not yet reach the requirements for aged assistance.
- L 3 accommodation providers receive no funding from state or federal governments.
- L 3 accommodation providers fill the accommodation and care gap between NDIS (disability) and Health (hospitals).
- Residents include the 11,000 people with PSD who are not on the NDIS in QLD

Why Is Level 3 Supported Accommodation Crucial?

- It breaks the cycle of homelessness for people who are out of options.
- Economic and social sustainability.
- L 3 services take the pressure off emergency services, hospitals, and the justice system by giving residents short- and long-term alternatives to all of the aforementioned pathways.
- Saving the QLD State Government tens of millions of dollars each year, diverting residents away from the alternative overloaded services.

For further information and media requests please contact:

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