



## **Key Facts – SAPA May 2023**

### **How Do The NDIS and Housing Service Providers Differ?**

NDIS is a federally funded scheme accessed by individual participants who meet the NDIS access requirements. Participants have the right to choose who will provide NDIS supports to them.

Residential Service Providers are state regulated and do not receive government funding or assistance in Queensland to operate. A single provider may be accredited to provide services across both schemes however must be accredited by the respective regulatory body.

### **What is the difference between a boarding house and Supported Accommodation?**

In QLD there are three tiers of accreditation within Residential Services. A Residential Tenancy – Rooming Accommodation Agreement is signed between the landlord and tenant, which clearly states the level of accommodation provided.

- **Level 1 Services – Generally known as Boarding Houses**

Provide affordable living for four or more people who live in 1 or more furnished rooms and individually pay rent. They generally share facilities such as bathrooms, kitchens and living areas.

Typically, those residing within a boarding house are on a limited income, most often the New Start or Job Seeker Pensions.

- **Level 2 – Accommodation and Meal Services in a Residential Setting**

A Tenant rents a room within a house or residential facility where residents enjoy single or communal spaces and are provided with accommodation plus meal services.

Providers lease affordable living to independent persons who require some assistance in daily living.

It is common for providers to collaborate with external agencies to provide additional care for residents residing under a Level 2 agreement. Those receiving accommodation and meals are usually recipients of an aged or disability pension.

- **Level 3 – Supported Accommodation**

Supported Accommodation provides safe, stable, and affordable living to those who require additional support in their lives. Providers offer accommodation and support within a managed facility with communal facilities.

Many of those who reside in Supported Accommodations have varying disabilities and illnesses. This includes individuals living with various challenges in life, usually across the spectrum of lived experience of mental illness and/or other forms of disability.

Generally, those with a Level 3 agreements are on a limited income, most often the Disability Support Pension.

All accredited Residential Service providers (including levels 2 & 3) must also meet level 1 accreditation standards. A level 3 (personal care) service provider may elect not to be accredited for level 2 (food service).

### **What role do Boarding Houses and Supported Accommodation services play in the community?**

Level 1 (Boarding House) residents are often on limited incomes and need help with gaining rental or shared accommodation within an affordable category.



Residents with Level 3 agreements (Supported Accommodation) may live with physical and mental health illness; this may include multiple comorbidities and require a high level of round-the-clock support. A high percentage possess limited capacity to understand the requirements around isolation and infection control procedures.

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

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.

Supported Accommodation providers, like our members, are set up to break this cycle by providing a housing solution with the appropriate support needed to keep residents safe, stable and cared for. Many residents move in because they are often looking to join an understanding and supportive community in the absence of other support networks.

### **How are these facilities being impacted by the current housing crisis?**

The lack of affordable and accessible housing within Australia has added to an already overloaded and underfunded system. It is only getting worse, with the need for demand for spaces in these residencies far outweighing availability.

### **Why are these accommodation services crucial?**

These facilities break the cycle of homelessness for people out of options. They are both economically and socially sustainable.

Supported Accommodation services take the pressure off emergency services, hospitals, and the justice system by giving residents short- and long-term alternatives to all the aforementioned pathways, saving the QLD State Government tens of millions of dollars each year and diverting residents away from the alternative overloaded services.

### **NDIS and Residential Services:**

#### **There have been several issues in VIC Boarding Houses that have seen residents with disabilities being financially abused. Is this happening in QLD?**

We are not privy to individual establishment or providers' records or undertakings. There are bad operators across all sectors of the NDIS who may offer incentives to clients switching to their services. Both financial and situational. Offering financial discounts, incentives or relaxing essential safeguards that are put in place to protect vulnerable clients and members of the community. Level 1, 2 and 3 Providers are heavily regulated in Queensland. Part of this regulatory body accepts complaints via their complaint system.

#### **How does the law in QLD protect NDIS participants from this abuse?**

In QLD, Supported Accommodation is heavily regulated by the state government, yet not funded by the state government. The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission oversees the regulation of all NDIS service providers.

Residents who reside within a L3 supported residence, who also happen to have an NDIS package will typically have a funded Support Coordinator as part of their plan. The Support Coordinator's role is to act as an independent advocate for the client's choice and control. They play a crucial role in assisting participants with their NDIS plans and navigating the support services available to them to meet their needs.

The NDIS allocates the participant's total budget; the Support Coordinator will then break it down into each required service to address the participants needs.



Typically a Residential Service or a Service Provider will not be exposed to the whole allocated budget for a participant, and they can only access the funds that are allocated directly to them via that Support Coordinator and a service agreement is entered.

As a housing service provider, we do not get visibility of the participant's total plan or allocated budget. We are only privy to what the Support Coordinator allocates to their NDIS service provider for specific services that are to be provided.

Issues may arise when a Support Coordinator does not act in the benefit of their participant, limiting that participant's choice and control in the services that they are provided.

Under Residential Services, the Community Visitors Program (Under the Office of the Public Guardian) is in place to advocate for residents of facilities. Visits are usually bi-monthly and a report is documented and follow up required.

**How, then is it possible for NDIS participants' funds to be misappropriated by the residential facility?**

A Residential Facility is not the NDIS provider, only NDIS providers can provide services which means a Service Agreement would be entered into with the participant, based on recommendations made by the Participants Allied Health team, their Support Coordinator and other support networks. The NDIS provider must address Conflict of Interest as part of their audited compliance framework.

Providers should adhere to strict conflict of interest policies and procedures if they are acting as both support coordinators and service providers.

**Do you have set fees for residents? And exactly how that money is allocated?**

The rates for Supported Accommodation are made available by providers. They are typically linked to the rate of the Disability Support Pension and Rental Assistance.

All registered NDIS service providers' rates are capped by the NDIS and best practice has providers publicly provide their rates on their respective websites.

**For further information and media requests, please contact:**

**Stacey Piggott**

**P: +614 14 313 222 ||E: [stacey@daydreamnation.co](mailto:stacey@daydreamnation.co)**