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## **SAPA – A Statement Regarding The Impact Of The Current Housing Crisis On Supported Accommodation Services In QLD.**

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The current housing crisis gripping Queensland is placing unprecedented pressure on Supported Accommodation Services across the state. With the lack of available and affordable housing, we now see people with full-time employment facing homelessness, falling into an already overloaded and underfunded system. [SAPA](#) (Supported Accommodation Providers Association), the industry's peak body, is deeply concerned about the impact this will have on disadvantaged individuals, particularly those with mental health illnesses, intellectual disabilities, and age-related needs.

When people face the instability of not having a secure home, their mental and physical health becomes impacted and their need for a higher level of care increases.

[SAPA](#) welcomes the new Minister For Housing, Hon. Meaghan Scanlon and looks forward to collaborating with her and creating a more supported, streamlined system that services the needs of our most at-risk community members.

Currently, vulnerable members of society with high needs that sit outside those manageable by family or friends are left with support from the Disability Pension, QLD Health or the NDIS.

Participants have the right to choose who will deliver their NDIS services. These services are delivered by accredited NDIS providers or services through a participant's Plan Manager. Those residents without NDIS support rely on their disability/aged pension only to cover these costs.

Many residents are often given the run around between the NDIS and QLD Health while their level of disability is discussed to be deemed profound or otherwise, many having their need for support grossly underestimated and not receiving the required support as a result.

The recent government-commissioned interim report into the NDIS in Victoria produced by the Melbourne-based Mental Health Legal Centre (MHLC) has brought to light what SAPA members have been aware of for years; we welcome the federal government's announcement of funding for an extra 200 NDIS staff to stamp out unethical providers.

Our concern is that this uncovering of unethical providers will be a platform for the government to make generic sweeping funding changes to an increasingly strained sector.

NDIS and Housing service providers are regulated and funded as separate entities. In some cases, they may be related under the same company header, but separate in finance and law.

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 residential service, 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 advisor and guide to assist with the participant'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.

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The NDIS allocates the participant's total budget; the Support Coordinator will then break it down into each required service to address the participant's 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 agreed upon via a signed Service Agreement with the guidance of their Support Coordinator.

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 the NDIS service provider for specific services that are to be provided.

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

Supported Accommodation Services facilities break the cycle of homelessness for people who are out of options. They are both economically and socially sustainable and service the needs of some of the most vulnerable in our society, who are often lost in the cycle between QLD health, crisis accommodation, government-provided housing and homelessness.

Providers, like our [SAPA](#) 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.

### **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 participants 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 participants 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 the aforementioned pathways.
- Saving the QLD State Government tens of millions of dollars each year, diverting residents away from the alternative overloaded services.

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[SAPA](#), is a collective of unfunded disability accommodation providers.

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