

Increasing affordable housing in Queensland

Gold Coast Housing Company (GCHC) has submitted bids to three separate Government initiatives, all aimed at boosting the supply of social and affordable housing for disadvantaged Australians.

National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)

The National Rental Affordability Scheme is an Australian Government initiative to stimulate the supply of up to 50 000 new affordable rental dwellings. Under the Scheme successful applicants will be eligible to receive a National Rental Incentive for each approved dwelling, on the condition that they are rented to eligible low and moderate income households at 20 per cent below market rates.

Successful bids in round one will result in 663 new affordable rental homes being built in Queensland for low and middle income families under the National Rental Affordability Scheme

Gold Coast Housing Company (GCHC) has been awarded funding for 215 properties in the first round of NRAS. An application for 700+ properties has been submitted to Round 2 of the scheme.

Six 1 bedroom units in Southport were tenanted just before Christmas and six

more units in Helensvale and Southport will be available within the next month. An article on one of our first NRAS tenants is included in this newsletter. A further eighty eight units are due for completion in the Southport area by October 2009, with other projects rolling out gradually over the next twelve to eighteen months.



The first GCHC NRAS property

Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan Social Housing Initiative

The Commonwealth Government has committed \$42 billion through the Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan which targets critical community infrastructure in education, social housing, transport and the environment. This investment will see the construction of 20,000 new dwellings and the refurbishment of 45,000 existing dwellings.

Queensland will receive almost \$1.3 billion under this Social Housing Initiative, to be spent on repairs and maintenance to existing social

housing, and the construction of approximately 4,000 new properties between 2009 and 2012.

GCHC has submitted a Social Housing Initiative proposal for funding to the Queensland Government to develop 11 properties around the Gold Coast in stage one, and is preparing a further large submission for stage two.

Housing Affordability Fund (HAF)

The Housing Affordability Fund is a Rudd Government initiative that invests \$512 million over five years to target the planning and infrastructure costs that are incurred when building new housing developments.

Tens of thousands of new home buyers are set to directly benefit from the Fund, with savings coming from grants of up to \$10 000 per home, reduced holding costs, and contributions from other levels of government.

In conjunction with Gold Coast City Council, GCHC has submitted an application to the Government which has been accepted. This will result in a mix of 16 affordable rental, shared equity and discounted market sale properties being built.



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New Initiative

Gold Coast Housing Company has recently taken tenancy and property management responsibility for six two bedroom units in the Southport area.



These units are provided as part of Queensland Government Disability Services Tran-

sitional Recovery Program (TRP), an initiative to increase access for support services and accommodation in the community for people with a mental illness.

These time limited residential recovery support places provide ongoing assessment, treatment and psychosocial rehabilitation with the goal of assisting people to live successfully in the community.

Family Support Group Australia provide support to the tenants of this accommodation, and assess suitability, referring clients to Gold Coast Housing Services (formerly Department of Housing). Clients with the highest needs are then referred to Gold Coast Housing Company when vacancies arise.

Development Update

Work is progressing well on the four development projects advised in our last issue:

Waterford

This self funded project by Gold Coast Housing Company will result in three two bedroom units. After lengthy delays the necessary approvals from Council have been received and work on site has now commenced.

Ashmore

This site is being developed with the construction of seven, two bed units and one, one bed unit and is being funded by Gold Coast City Council.

All documentation has been lodged and GCHC is awaiting a decision on

the Development Application from Council.

Palm Beach

Design documentation on this Department of Housing funded project is nearing completion and an application will soon be lodged with Council.

On completion this project will provide twenty two, single bedroom units and one studio unit over three stories. The development will also include a lift.

Southport

All necessary approvals have been received on this three storey, nine unit development consisting of six, two bedroom units and three, one

bedroom units. Work is scheduled to commence on site late May 2009.

We will keep you informed of progress in further issues of our newsletter and will soon be providing updates via our website at www.gchousingco.com.au



Gold Coast Housing Association Inc. (Disability Housing) amalgamation

GCHC were supported and funded by the Department of Housing to identify opportunities for amalgamation/consolidation with existing smaller organizations in our region.

The objective of the strategy is to reduce the overall number of providers in the community housing sector and improve the responsiveness of Community Housing organizations

in urban centres throughout Queensland.

GCHC has been working closely with Gold Coast Housing Association Inc. (Disability Housing) with the ultimate aim to achieve such an amalgamation/consolidation and are pleased to announce that Gold Coast Housing Association Inc. has entered into an agreement to trans-

fer the titles of their 14 properties to Gold Coast Housing Company Ltd.

Tenants of Gold Coast Housing Association have been advised of the decision to transfer the titles and how they will be affected and have been formally notified in writing that we will be the managing agents and that new tenancy agreements will be entered into.

GCHC Tenancy Changes Procedures

There are different instances when a tenant may need to be re-housed. Some of the more common reasons for tenancy changes are listed below.

GCHC will endeavour to meet and support the changing needs of its tenants, and will be flexible in its tenancy management to allow for policies to deal with changes in tenancies.

Head Lease Loss

Community Rent Scheme and Rent Start properties are head leased from private landlords. If the landlord decides to sell the property they are required to give GCHC two months notice. During this period GCHC will endeavour to find alternate accommodation of a similar type and location so that the tenant (if they are still eligible) can be re-housed under the same scheme. If this is not possible, GCHC will attempt to find suitable accommodation within another scheme that the tenant is eligible for. If no alternative accommodation is available the GCHC will notify the tenant that we are unable to re-house them, and will contact Housing Services (formerly Department of Housing) or support agencies and ask for assistance in re-housing the tenant. If no other accommodation is available, the coordinator will notify the tenant and assist them in moving out of the property should they require it. The bond paid by the tenant will be transferred if requested, or refunded if the tenant is unable to be re-housed.

Tenant Request

If your circumstances change during your tenancy and your accommodation is no longer suitable, GCHC will consider requests on a case by case basis, but transfers will not be granted if the tenant is in arrears or has caused damage to their existing property.

Tenants will be placed on a Tenancy Transfer Waiting List. This waiting list will be considered before notifying Housing Services of a vacancy. When a property becomes free, or a suitable transfer becomes available, the tenant with the highest ranking will be transferred into the property. Any moving costs will be paid for by the tenant, and the bond will be transferred. Any difference in bond

required for Affordable Housing Properties will be matched by, or refunded to the tenant.

Under/Over Occupancy

If the number of tenants occupying your property changes you are required to notify GCHC. If the tenant numbers do not match the property type in Table 1 below, tenants may be suitable for a 'swap' with other unsuitable households within the same program. These tenants will be placed on the Tenancy Transfer Waitlist.

Disability Modifications

Should a tenant become disabled or require a modification to the property to allow them to live comfortably, GCHC will consider any requested modifications on a case by case basis taking into account recommendations from an Occupational Therapist.

General Modifications to Property

No modifications or alterations should be made to your dwelling without prior approval from GCHC.

TYPE OF PROPERTY	MINIMUM OCCUPANTS	MAXIMUM OCCUPANTS (depending on property)
STUDIO	1	1
ONE BEDROOM	1	2 (couple or dependant child)
TWO BEDROOM	2	4 (couple with 2 children) 3 (couple with a dependant adult) 2 (unrelated co-tenants)
THREE BEDROOM	3	6 (couple with children) 5 (family including a dependant adult) 3 (unrelated co-tenants)
FOUR BEDROOM	4	8 (family, no more than 2 per room) 4 (unrelated co-tenants)

Steve's Corner

As we go to print we are currently in the process of conducting the Property Audit and Condition Reports for all of the properties owned by GCHC.

The purpose of these audits is to record :

1. The property construction characteristics
2. Maintenance items requiring immediate attention
3. Future upgrading requirements.

On conclusion, GCHC will be in a position to organise and implement the necessary work to be carried out on all properties and therefore achieve cost savings across the board.

If I haven't been to you yet, don't fret, you're on my list and I will call you soon.

Meanwhile, the sun is starting to set earlier which means the cooler months will bring great relief to all of you suffering from a bad infestation of ants.

Although, I must say, at home I haven't suffered badly this year at all. I believe this to be due to the fact that I use an off the shelf "all bug" spray called "Crawly Cruncher". I have found this product to be most effective in dealing with all sorts of nasties, available from most stores like Woolworths and IGA. Smells terrible at first for a few moments but the effects are worth the smell!

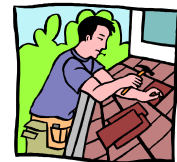
With the onset of the cooler months us "oldies" can look forward to wrapping up to keep the winter chills away.

Some tips – Now is the time to get out the old heater and give it a good going over to remove any dust or spider webs from around the elements or fins.

If you are not sure if your heater will go the distance this winter, then it is time to throw it out and purchase a new one. They will be on special soon, I bet.

For those with reverse cycle air conditioning, now is the time to dig out the Instruction Manual and read up on how to use warm setting. Its also a good time to clean the filters as it will help the heater's performance and save on the running costs.

Steve



Tenant Profile

As mentioned earlier, we were very excited to be able to offer six units through the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) just in time for our tenants to celebrate Christmas in their new homes.

The company's very first NRAS clients to be tenanted were 'Tim and Moana'.

This couple are both proud Australian Citizens having lived in their

adopted country for over 20 years. Originating from New Zealand, the couple have contributed to many aspects of the wider community over the years during times of employment, and as volunteers and have had the enjoyment of bringing up their family in Queensland. The couple were very excited to have been the first tenants to be housed through the new National Rent Affordability Scheme (NRAS) program

on the Gold Coast.

'Tim and Moana' "absolutely love the place" and are very appreciative of the opportunity to have been housed in their new unit which they take much pride in.

For more information on the National Rent Affordability Scheme (NRAS) please contact the office.

Please note: Tenant names changed.

Department of Housing Name Change

On 26 March 2009, Premier Anna Bligh announced a new State Cabinet. The Honourable Karen Struthers MP has been appointed as Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women. Complementing the new Ministry is a significant reform to the Queensland Public Service, with the Pre-

mier approving a reduction of the number of Queensland Government departments

The functions of a number of former departments, including the Department of Housing, will come together to form a new Department of Communities.

The former Department of Housing is now referred to as the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services). The Gold Coast Department of Housing Area office at Robina is now called Gold Coast Housing Services. The address and phone number remains unchanged.

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