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1 INTRODUCTION

The Queensland Government appointed the Advisory Taskforce on Residential Transition for Ageing Queenslanders to explore emerging issues in meeting the housing and related needs of older people.

The primary focus of the Taskforce was to make recommendations to address gaps in housing supply and related support needs of older people. In addressing the gaps, the key principles were to:

- improve choice
- reduce complexity
- improve affordability
- ensure equity and fairness
- foster independence

The purpose of the Taskforce was to advise the Government on affordable and simpler housing models and other initiatives to support older Queenslanders to retain their independence as they age and control how and where they live.

The Taskforce delivered 21 key recommendations, in the *Residential Transition for Older Queenslanders, August 2016 - Final report of the Advisory Taskforce on Residential Transition for Ageing Queenslanders* which focussed on four key themes:

- Individual resilience (Recommendations 3 to 7)
- Home resilience (Recommendations 8 to 10)
- Suitable housing options (Recommendations 11 to 16)
- Suitable local community services (Recommendation 17 to 21)

The recommendations cover a range of issues from changes achievable in the short term, to substantial long-term partnerships and complex reform.

2 RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The Queensland Government's vision and commitment is for an age-friendly Queensland. An age-friendly community is one which enables people of all ages to actively participate in community life.

The Queensland: an age friendly community action plan was launched on 22 June 2016. Consistent with Recommendation 2, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services is working with state agencies and key stakeholders to implement and progress the actions in the action plan including those contained in the housing domain such as to develop a Queensland Housing Strategy. The aim of the Queensland Housing Strategy is to provide safe, secure and affordable housing options for all Queenslanders, including older people.

Work is already under way which supports the Taskforce vision for success for each theme outlined in the Final Report. The Queensland Government is addressing the Taskforce recommendations by undertaking further exploration and investigation with regard to the existing and planned range of products, services, plans and strategies listed below. Government will then be well placed to determine

the best support for older Queenslanders to access, transition to, and maintain an appropriate living situation, as well as to stimulate the supply of appropriate housing and community services.

The Taskforce recommendations have been considered in accordance with the vision and aims of the new *Queensland Housing Strategy* and where appropriate will be operationalised through the Strategy.

The Queensland Government Response to the Report's recommendations is provided below.

Overarching recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the Queensland Government consults and works in partnership with relevant stakeholders to implement the Taskforce's recommendations.

Government response

Supported

The Office for Seniors, Carers and Volunteering in the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) will work with relevant lead agencies to facilitate the implementation of the Taskforce's recommendations.

Recommendation 2

That the Queensland Government continues to implement and build on *Queensland: an age friendly community* action plan, in particular actions relevant to the housing domain.

Government response

Supported

The Government's vision and commitment is for an age-friendly Queensland. An age-friendly community is one that enables people of all ages to actively participate in community life.

The *Queensland: an age friendly community* action plan was launched on 22 June 2016. DCCSDS is working with state agencies and key stakeholders to implement and progress the actions in the action plan including those contained in the housing domain. DCCSDS will promote research and innovation in housing design for older people through the *Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community grants program* as one of the grants domains to be rolled out over the coming years.

The Taskforce findings and recommendations have been considered in accordance with the vision and aims of the new *Queensland Housing Strategy*.

The Housing Strategy aims to shape housing assistance and homelessness services, increase supply and improve housing affordability and choice over the next decade, including for seniors.

The Queensland Government is promoting innovation in Housing for older people by making available \$1 million in funding in 2017-18 through the *Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community grants program* for innovative products and services pertaining to housing, transport, outdoor spaces and/or buildings for seniors. This state-wide grants program seed funds community projects that seek partnerships with local government and other organisations to co-develop, implement and promote innovative age-friendly projects.

Key theme: Individual resilience

Recommendation 3

That the Queensland Government assist vulnerable older people to access and maintain appropriate housing by:

- exploring options for reducing the barriers, including financial, structural and social, that discourage or prevent older people from moving or 'right-sizing' (for example, consideration could be given to older people in exceptional circumstances receiving assistance such as stamp duty concessions)
- making representation to the Australian Government for a national seniors housing policy, which addresses the Commonwealth barriers to right-sizing
- reviewing all current and potential concessions and their accessibility, to ensure they meet the needs of older people who are most in need of assistance. Concessions need to be available regardless of housing choice
- the availability of concessions needs to be communicated effectively.

Government response

Supported

- Housing affordability and diversity for the broader Queensland community, including older people, have been incorporated in the *Queensland Housing Strategy*. As the Australian Government identified in its 2017-18 Budget, reducing financial, structural and social barriers require multiple levels of government and stakeholders to work together over time so the timeframe for this recommendation is long-term.
- The Queensland Government will make further representation to the Australian Government regarding options for addressing Commonwealth barriers to right-sizing, noting that there was an initiative on this matter in its 2017-18 Budget.
- The Queensland Government provides a range of concessions to assist eligible pensioners, seniors and veterans with cost of living expenses including discounts on council rates, water, gas and electricity bills and vehicle registration fees. An appropriate mix of communication channels and messages will be used to inform Queenslanders of the availability of concessions.
- The Government is continuing to work with stakeholders to build consumer understanding of energy matters and improve energy outcomes for vulnerable households. This includes delivering a consumer engagement and education campaign in south east Queensland to promote consumer confidence in regularly choosing an electricity plan that suits their household needs. Further education initiatives are being rolled out with the support of community organisations across south east Queensland including Council of the Ageing (COTA) Queensland to ensure targeted information is accessible for these customers. The Government will continue to work with stakeholders such as COTA Qld to ensure seniors, including pensioners and retirees can access relevant information to better understand energy related matters and how to participate.
- The Government is aware of the diverse needs of older Queenslanders in accessing information on available Government assistance including concessions and ensuring that information is available through various communication channels and formats including via phone and online.

Recommendation 4

That the Queensland Government explore mechanisms to support greater security of tenure for older people in private rental housing, which may include:

- working in partnership with other levels of government to strengthen assistance to people in private rental housing who are at risk of homelessness
- providing incentives for private rental landlords to have their housing modified in line with universal housing design principles
- partnering with relevant bodies, such as the REIQ, to advocate to landlords the benefits of letting to older tenants
- promoting greater security of tenure through mechanisms such as 'just cause eviction' and withdrawal of 'without grounds terminations'
- reviewing tenancy law and addressing any impacts that may cause disadvantage.

Government response

Supported

- This recommendation was considered in accordance with the vision and aims of the new *Queensland Housing Strategy*.
- The Queensland Government works in partnership with other government and non-government agencies to provide a range of products and services that assist people, including seniors, to access and sustain social and private rental housing. These include:
 - RentConnect products to assist people to find, secure and sustain a home to rent in the private market
 - Home Assist Secure which assists seniors and people with a disability to remain in their own home through the provision of information, referrals and subsidised assistance relating to home maintenance, repairs and minor modifications
 - Queensland Statewide Tenants' Advice and Referral Service which provides free tenancy information, advice and assistance
 - HomeStay Support to support people with a tenancy who are experiencing a crisis.
- The Queensland Government will explore further consideration of this recommendation.
- The Queensland Government supports the voluntary take-up of universal design and promotes awareness of universal design by aligning design standards for social housing with Liveable Housing Australia's (LHA's) Liveable Housing Design Guidelines, referencing Gold and Platinum Levels. The Government will explore the use of incentives.
- The Department of Housing and Public Works already partners with REIQ and other peak and representative organisations to ensure the rights and protections of all tenants are upheld, including those of older people.
- The Queensland Government will consult on proposals to amend the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* to create a more contemporary legislative framework that balances the rights of tenants and landlords.
- The RTA already provides targeted community education information and support to the aged rental sector, general rental sector, and engaging with relevant providers and stakeholder groups such as the Real Estate Institute of Queensland (REIQ), Property Owners Association of Queensland (POAQ), Caravanning Queensland, Tenants Queensland (TQ), Australian Resident Accommodation Managers Association (ARAMA) and Aged Care Queensland.

Recommendation 5

That the Queensland Government takes a leadership role in supporting individuals to plan for their housing future including:

- developing a long term engagement and communication strategy about options and opportunities to facilitate early planning for housing choices and financial security, including encouraging older home owners to renovate their homes (in line with universal housing design guidelines) to accommodate future needs
- exploring options to improve financial literacy efforts, particularly for Queensland's older people, consistent with the *Inquiry into the adequacy of existing financial protections of Queensland's seniors* recommendations
- considering opportunities for engaging with young people on topics such as financial literacy, money management, superannuation, compound interest and the advantages of saving in order to begin financial education at an early age.

Government response

Supported

- To support older people to make confident, informed decisions about their housing choices, information will be made available through an established information line, including information on housing choices and related financial options for older people, ranging from information on independent living arrangements to retirement villages and aged care.
- The Queensland Government through a public awareness campaign will encourage people to pro-actively plan for, and think about retirement and their financial and housing future early.
- The Queensland Government will collaborate with peak and representative organisations to promote early and active consideration of housing choices, including the likely financial implications they may have for older Queenslanders.
- The Queensland Government has developed a series of Seniors Living Videos including transcripts, to provide older people important information about common housing options in retirement; how retirement villages and residential parks operate; the fees involved at each stage of the process—entry, ongoing and exit; and the importance of seeking legal and financial advice and useful contacts for expert advice or to make a complaint.
- The Department of Housing and Public Works is undertaking a legislative review of *Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003*, *Retirement Village Act 1999* and *Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002*. As part of the Housing Strategy process, DHPW will consider entry, ongoing and exit fees for retirement villages and residential parks.
- The Queensland Government is committed to improving the financial inclusion and resilience of Queenslanders through the delivery of the Queensland Financial Inclusion Plan.
- DCCSDS in partnership with the private and non-government sectors is pursuing opportunities for vulnerable Queenslanders including older people to improve access to financial information and advice, and to provide tools and resources to help increase financial understanding and awareness.
- The Queensland Financial Resilience Program will include additional financial resilience workers and counsellors, continued emergency relief and the establishment of Good Money stores in Cairns and on the Gold Coast. These stores will offer safe, affordable and responsible financial services for people on low incomes.
- The Queensland Financial Inclusion Plan commits to improving financial inclusion and resilience for all Queenslanders.
- The Queensland Financial Inclusion Plan and the Queensland Youth Strategy have actions directed to increasing young people's financial literacy and money management.

- The Money Smart Teaching National Partnership Agreement between Queensland and the Australian Government provides professional learning to teachers, in the area of consumer and financial literacy.

Recommendation 6

That the Queensland Government advocate to the Australian Government for adequate places to be available for fully-subsidised seniors to enter residential aged care within reasonable wait times.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government will make representation to the Australian Government for adequate places to be available for fully-subsidised seniors to enter residential aged care within reasonable wait times.

Recommendation 7

That the Queensland Government, with relevant partners, develop innovative strategies to support older people with a disability, including dementia, who are living in social housing, private rental housing or are homeless, to remain in their own homes or transition to more supportive housing.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government will continue to collaborate on developing innovative solutions that enable older people with a disability, including dementia, who are living in social housing, private rental housing or are homeless, to remain in their own homes or transition to more supportive housing.

Examples of existing initiatives include:

- The Queensland Government funds the Community Care Smart Assistive Technology Collaborative Platform which provides an online collaborative space for over 1000 Community Care providers to develop a community of practice for training, information-sharing and collaboration.
- Queensland Health's Hospital In The Home (HITH) provides care in the patient's home, for acute conditions that would otherwise require treatment in a hospital

Generally, support for people over the age of 65 with disability, including dementia, is the responsibility of the Australian Government.

Key theme: Home resilience

Recommendation 8

That the Queensland Government convene innovation workshops with expert facilitators to co-create with diverse cohorts of vulnerable older people (including the general older population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) to:

- develop strategies that support older people to transition to alternative housing as, and when, needed
- develop appropriate communication and engagement mechanisms for those who need and/or want it
- facilitate the co-design of new housing models to ensure suitability and cultural appropriateness.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government will convene an annual summit which is intended to elicit practical outcomes from the community for housing solutions. The summits will focus on topics such as housing affordability, possible funding or new housing models, development of resources to support older people to access appropriate housing.

The summits will include diverse cohorts of older people including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as well as service providers and other organisations.

The Queensland Government will work to ensure that social housing is built to meet the future needs of tenants through diversity of stock, design standards, research and/or co-design with local communities.

Recommendation 9

That the Queensland Government retain and expand its investment in critical and cost-effective Home Assist Secure services, to support ageing in place.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation to retain its investment in the Home Assist Secure program to support ageing in place.

Recommendation 10

That the Queensland Government adopt a policy position to mandate that all new housing and retrofits be designed to universal housing design standards in order to facilitate an appropriate stock of accessible housing into the future, consistent with commitments made in the Council of Australian Governments' *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020*. This would include development of a strategic plan to achieve a mandated regime by 2020. The strategic plan could include steps to implementation including aspects such as innovation in design, changes to the planning regime and building codes and industry education. Innovative design options could be supported through a grants round similar to the *Advance Queensland Small Business Innovation Research* pilot or *Advance Queensland Strategy*.

Government response

Supported in principle

The benefits of universal housing design, also known as liveable housing design, are acknowledged. There are mixed views about adopting a policy position to mandate that all new housing and retrofits be designed to universal housing design standards could have adverse impacts on the housing supply market and may not always be practical (eg on steep slopes, or flood prone areas).

The Queensland Government is consulting with industry and consumers through the *Building Plan* discussion paper which seeks feedback on potential mandatory and voluntary strategies and ideas to increase the uptake of universal housing design standards and principles in dwellings across the state. In the meantime, the Queensland Government will continue to support the voluntary take-up of universal housing design standards and principles.

The Queensland Government supports and aligns its design standards for social housing with Liveable Housing Australia's (LHA's) Liveable Housing Design Guidelines, referencing Gold and Platinum Levels. Typically, up to 30per cent of social housing apartments in any new multi-unit project are designed to LHDG Platinum Level (with some additional requirements) with all remaining ground floor and lift serviced apartments designed to LHDG Gold Level (with some additional requirements). The minimum standard for detached houses is LHDG Gold Level, with LHDG Platinum Level applied in response to identified portfolio or client need.

Aligning design standards with LHA's Liveable Housing Design Guidelines has resulted in an increased number of dwellings that include universal design principles and has improved awareness of universal design, as designers and builders are required to apply the guidelines in the delivery of all new social housing projects.

The Queensland Government is promoting innovation in Housing design for older people by making available \$1 million in funding in 2017-18 through the *Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community grants program* for innovative products and services pertaining to housing, transport, outdoor spaces and/or buildings for seniors. This state-wide grants program seed funds community projects that seek partnerships with local government and other organisations to co-develop, implement and promote innovative age-friendly projects.

To encourage people to pro-actively plan for, and think about retirement and their financial and housing future early, the Queensland Government will implement a public awareness campaign. The benefits of planning early, making informed decisions, and considering choosing housing options that have been built to universal housing design principles so that 'Ageing in Place' can occur, are areas of focus.

The Queensland Government commits to 50% of all public housing will be built to LHDG gold/platinum level.

Key theme: Suitable housing options

Recommendation 11

That the Queensland Government develop a strategic plan to develop and enact suitable housing options for current and emerging older people. The plan could include:

- facilitating and enacting new housing typologies and planning regimes with particular emphasis on developing senior housing options embedded within established communities
- using its land holdings to deliver exemplar community developments that deliver diverse housing options
- exploring options for providing incentives to organisations for the provision of housing where an identified need for housing is established in a regional or remote community
- developing mechanisms for building links and partnerships between government, universities, industry and community to promote research and innovation in housing design for older people through the Advance Queensland Strategy or the Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community grants program
- engaging or partnering with private equity firms, superannuation and affinity organisations to encourage and facilitate their investment, including social impact investment, in affordable and accessible housing to older people
- evaluating the Ageing in Place Pilot project and considering options for broader implementation
- expanding the community housing head lease scheme to other seniors housing types, including manufactured homes and retirement villages (for vulnerable or disadvantaged older people)
- stimulating connections with community hubs to facilitate interconnections and engagement among and between children, young, middle-aged and older people and families through the *Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community grants program*.

Government response

Supported

The Taskforce recommendations have been considered in accordance with the vision and aims of the new *Queensland Housing Strategy* and where appropriate will be operationalised through the Strategy. In addition:

- The Queensland Government will develop an agenda for ensuring planning schemes consistently promote housing choice and innovation.
- Property Queensland, Department of State Development, identifies suitable land from the government property portfolio for Economic Development Queensland and the Department of Housing and Public Works to deliver exemplar projects that include diverse housing options.
- Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) within DILGP is already delivering diverse housing options in priority development areas.
- As a component of Queensland's *Advancing our cities and regions strategy*, the land holdings of the government will be assessed for possible use to provide affordable and appropriate housing options for all Queenslanders including older Queenslanders.
- DCCSDS will promote research and innovation in housing design for older people through the Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community grants program as one of the grants domains to be rolled out over the coming years.
- Private investment in affordable and accessible housing for vulnerable people (including older people) is being considered by the Australian Government Affordable Housing Working Group, which is developing a proof of concept for a bond aggregator model to stimulate investment. It will

be overseen by a new National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation within the Australian Government.

- The Ageing in Place strategy to build adaptable housing in regional communities, including one and two bedroom, low-set accessible housing enables seniors to remain in their communities will be evaluated with consideration of options for broader implementation.
- DHPW is currently undertaking a legislative review of the *Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003*, *Retirement Villages Act 1999*, and *Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002*. This review will result in a number of amendments directed at supporting a range of suitable housing options for seniors. While the legislative review will look at balancing the needs of the residents and owners, the Queensland Government will consider expanding this approach to private rentals once the review is finalised.
- The Department of State Development (Community Hubs and Partnerships) will work with DCCSDS and all levels of government to collaborate and plan infrastructure to support the integration and delivery of age-friendly community services that benefit Queenslanders.
- The Queensland Government will continue to seek opportunities to work with the Commonwealth and other state and territory governments to investigate opportunities to improve the supply of affordable housing within the parameters of the forthcoming National Housing and Homelessness Agreement which is due to commence in July 2018.

Recommendation 12

That the Queensland Government and local governments actively pursue innovative partnerships and use planning mechanisms to facilitate and deliver new models of affordable housing for vulnerable older people to:

- support a range of diverse housing options
- innovate in the use and availability of land
- minimise the timeframes and costs imposed through the planning approval process
- consider design innovations to encourage development of smaller, affordable and better-located housing
- use incentives and other strategies to significantly increase the delivery of affordable and accessible housing
- provide incentives for diverse age-friendly housing, for example:
 - seniors' clusters housing (involving a small number of dwellings built around a common green space)
 - co-housing (private homes supplemented by shared facilities)
 - 'apartments for life' (apartment complexes run by independent older people offering services as needed, including medical, daily care, recreational, educational and social, up to and including nursing home-type care)
 - development of 'naturally occurring retirement communities' (NORCs) and 'virtual retirement villages'.
- provide incentives or concessions and lower barriers for retrofitting or providing new housing for older people as part of an age-friendly approach.

Government response
Supported in principle

This recommendation was considered in accordance with the vision and aims of the new *Queensland Housing Strategy*.

The Department of Local Government and Planning and DHPW are working together to undertake activity on Queensland Planning Frameworks to support this recommendation, including the new Planning Act 2016, State Infrastructure Plan, State Planning Policy and the review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan.

This activity will provide guidance on using planning frameworks to help achieve housing outcomes (including potential dwelling type and affordability targets, by location) for infill and greenfield developments.

The Queensland Government recognises the importance of good design in the development of housing models for older people as a strong influence on the quality of people's lives.

Good design creates better and healthier places to live and is a critical process in developing housing models for older people. Good design considers; the needs of people, accessibility, connectedness, fitness for purposes, sustainability, running costs, quality of environment and delivering return on investment.

A number of actions are already in progress or planned:

- diverse housing options in priority development areas are already being delivered
- an agenda will be developed for ensuring planning schemes consistently promote housing choice and innovation and streamlined approval processes for diverse housing products

The Office of the Queensland Government Architect can assist in the delivery of enhanced built environments by providing leadership and advice on design, procurement and the built environment.

Recommendation 13

That the Queensland Government, as part of development of the new housing strategy, consider the current regulatory framework for seniors living, including retirement villages and manufactured homes, as a platform for development of new legislative models for housing options for the ageing population.

Government response
Supported

The Queensland Government is currently undertaking a legislative review of the *Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003*, *Retirement Villages Act 1999*, *Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002* and the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.

Legislative reform encompassing housing options for seniors will be undertaken as part of the new Queensland Housing Strategy.

Recommendation 14

Establish an ongoing roundtable of industry, financial institutions, universities, government, consumers and other stakeholders to develop financial models and products that:

- allow and encourage older people to right-size and/or age in place
- are well understood, allowing people to make informed and confident choices
- are regulated and safeguard to protect older people from negative outcomes.

Government response

Supported

The principle of exploring policy options that benefit older people and their housing outcomes is supported. Appropriate mechanisms for consultation will be considered.

The Department of Housing and Public Works will utilise peak bodies and its existing stakeholder groups such as the Ministerial Housing Committee to explore potential financial models and products for older people.

Recommendation 15

That the Queensland Government advocate to the Australian Government on:

- reinstating the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) or initiate a similar program as a means of providing affordable housing accessible to vulnerable or disadvantaged older people
- exploring options for innovation in full care accommodation and affordable housing for long term homeless older people, such as the 'Wintringham model'.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government will continue to advocate for effective approaches to improve the supply of affordable housing and options for accommodation for homeless older people including the negotiation of funding agreements which will form the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement from 2018.

For older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, the Queensland Government will continue to:

- provide social housing for eligible seniors on low incomes
- assist seniors to enter the private rental market through the RentConnect program
- fund accommodation and support services to assist seniors to regain their independence.

Recommendation 16

That the Queensland Government consider the work of the Affordable Housing Working Group, established by the Australian Government, in identifying models to increase the supply of affordable housing for vulnerable or disadvantaged people.

Government response

Supported

The Australian Government announced in its 2017-18 Budget a range of initiatives designed to improve supply of affordable housing, including the National Housing Finance Corporation. As a consequence, the Queensland Government is taking an interest in the work of the Australian Government Affordable Housing Working Group in developing a bond aggregator model to boost the supply of affordable housing.

Key theme: Suitable community services options

Recommendation 17

That the Queensland Government continue to support seniors' engagement with digital, computing and internet technologies through user-friendly literacy programs and the promotion of these through:

- expansion of the use of technology hubs in public spaces
- training for seniors in the use of technology and the internet
- remote connections for Indigenous communities
- age-friendly telehealth and interactive preventative health services.

Government response

Supported

The Tech Savvy Seniors Queensland (TSSQ) Program is a partnership between the Queensland Government (led by the State Library of Queensland (SLQ)) and Telstra that aims to support older Queenslanders to get connected and to participate in the ever increasing online world, with the objective of increasing digital inclusion amongst the ageing, and helping reduce social isolation. Thirty-eight (38) Local Government library services and Indigenous Knowledge Centres delivered free Tech Savvy Seniors Queensland training sessions across the State in 2016. SLQ and Telstra have agreed to fund a second year of the TSSQ program in 2017-18. Thirty (30) local government library services, and Indigenous Knowledge Centres have applied for TSSQ grant funding to deliver the program.

Queensland public libraries are an important all age friendly community resource provided by local governments that offer a welcoming, safe environment where seniors can engage with digital technology through programs such as Tech Savvy Seniors Queensland.

The State Library of Queensland works with, and supports, a network of Indigenous Knowledge Centres that are important community hubs. Indigenous Knowledge Centres are provided by Aboriginal Shire Councils and the Torres Strait Island Regional Council to support intergenerational cohesion through activities and programs promoting digital literacy, social inclusion and lifelong learning. In May 2017, SLQ signed a partnership agreement with Telstra to deliver the Deadly Digital Communities Program. The Program will support the digital inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through Indigenous Knowledge Centres and public libraries.

The Queensland Government is working to ensure all telehealth technologies utilised to enable the delivery of clinical services are suitable to all age groups. This includes the Telehealth Portal which was launched in 2016 enabling one click web browser based videoconferencing. Patients can now easily connect with their clinicians from home without the need to install any software or sign in with usernames or passwords.

Recommendation 18

That the Queensland Government continue to provide information about housing and services in hard-copy format for older people who are not computer literate.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government provides information about housing and services in hardcopy format for people who may not use a computer. The Queensland Government will continue to produce hardcopy information where a need for it is identified.

Recommendation 19

That the Queensland Government, when designing programs in relation to housing for older people, convene innovation workshops with expert facilitators to co-create a range of community services that support community engagement and ageing in place.

Government response

Supported

Where appropriate, the Queensland Government will consult and co-create programs with the intended end user. The Queensland Government will explore options and mechanisms to achieve implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 20

That the Queensland Government explore the need and options for establishing services to support older people at risk of homelessness. Services should be co-designed with organisations with strong links to care, support and community services.

Government response

Supported

Queensland Government will continue to assist older people and other Queenslanders who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by:

- providing social housing for eligible seniors on low incomes
- assisting seniors to enter the private rental market through the RentConnect program
- funding providers to offer accommodation and support services to assist seniors and others to maintain or regain their independence.

A key action in the recently released Queensland Financial Inclusion Plan is the delivery of specialised financial wellbeing, support services and referrals to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including specialist support in budgeting and debt management through the Homelessness Program.

Recommendation 21

That the Queensland Government develop the capability of housing and homelessness service providers to meet the needs of older people, including the integration of service responses with due regard to the choice and privacy of the older person.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports a range of programs and services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Service providers are required to meet the needs of all clients, including those of older people, and work in collaboration with other providers to integrate service responses.