

## Departmental Response – “Raising Our Voice” report

NO.	PAGE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE – Agree/Disagree	COMMENTS	STAKEHOLDERS
1	Pg 7	It is recommended that the ACT Public Tenant Association (PTA) be recognised as a major representative tenant participation entity for public housing tenants in the ACT and that the ACT Public Tenant Association Council be recognised as a major public housing tenant participation structure in the ACT.	Agree in-principle	<p>DHCS is willing to fund a united public housing tenant organisation that endorses the principles of the original ACTPTA formed during the project and the Tenant's Council established at the Tenant's Summit. As there are now two competing tenants groups from this original group who are currently unable to resolve their difficulties, the department will not fund a major tenant participation entity during 2005-06.</p> <p>Instead the DHCS will provide both the ACTPTA and APT a grant of \$5,000 each for operational expenses during the 2005-06 financial year. Additionally, the department will fund the involvement of tenants in a tenants participation program as recommended by the Joint Champions Group. DHCS will reconsider funding for and recognition of a 'major representative tenant participation entity', including ongoing funding for the ACTPA and APT, prior to the end of the 2005-6 financial year</p>	<p>DHCS</p> <p>Tenant organisations</p>
2	Pg 7	It is recommended that other government initiatives identify public housing tenant participation as a major community development strategy and incorporate this into policy, planning and resourcing.	Agree	DHCS will seek to ensure that public housing tenant participation is included in all relevant future cross-government and stand alone government plans and frameworks.	<p>DHCS</p> <p>All ACT Government departments</p>
3	Pg 7	It is recommended that there is a cross-government approach to infrastructure resourcing that enables resourcing of tenant facilities and community events, particularly for multiunit complexes.	Agree	DHCS will take a lead role in any cross-government approaches and initiatives that address resourcing of tenant facilities and community events for tenants.	DHCS

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4	Pg 7	<p>It is recommended that an ongoing Tenant Participation Development program be resourced. This should consist of three components:</p> <p>a. Tenant resourcing for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office accommodation with establishment costs</li> <li>• Secretariat staffing eg to facilitate communication and coordination</li> <li>• Networks, regular meetings and forums and facilitation of TP in the community</li> <li>• Education and training for tenants to enable effective participation</li> <li>• Reimbursement and remuneration for formal representation by tenants that includes conference travel with ancillary allowances</li> </ul> <p>b. Department resourcing for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A internal process to enable incorporation of tenant participation as core business</li> <li>• Staff allocation of time for tenant participation engagement eg Joint Champions Group, Regional Resolution Forums, Regional Public Housing Collaboration Forums and other formal engagement activities with tenants</li> <li>• Other strategies to facilitate understanding and incorporation of tenant participation across government to assist in the determining of costs for relevant programs</li> </ul>	Agree	<p>a. Up to \$90,000 has been allocated by DHCS to fund a tenant participation program for 2005-6. As outlined in the response to Recommendation 1, DHCS will provide \$5,000 to both the ACTPTA and APT for operational expenses until 30 June 2006. Up to \$80,000 for 2005-06 will fund tenant involvement in agreed consultative activities through small grants of under \$5,000 to individuals, and larger grants to community organisation(s) allocated through an appropriate expression of interest (EOI) process. These decisions will be made in line with the agreed tenant participation program as determined by the Joint Champions Group. The ACTPA and APT will be able to apply for additional funding under these arrangements, or partner with other community organisations such as the Community Linkage program service providers. In addition, \$125,000 has been recurrently set aside in the Community Linkages program for tenant initiated activities.</p> <p>b. DHCS will continue to support the involvement of departmental staff in the Joint Champions Group and other tenant participation activities and will identify learning and development needs of staff in relation to tenant participation.</p> <p>c. DHCS will continue to resource the Joint Champions Group, comprising tenants and Housing ACT staff. Nominations will be called for a reconstituted Joint Champions Group to signify the next phase of tenant participation in ACT public housing. Existing members will be encouraged to nominate. The selection process for tenant representatives will involve representation from community organisations and the Department.</p>	<p>DHCS</p> <p>Joint Champions Group</p> <p>Tenant organisations</p> <p>Community organisations</p>

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4 con	Pg 7	<p>c. Tenant/Housing Engagement resourcing for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The formal engagement events such as the Joint Champions Group, Policy Development Group, forums and an annual conference. This would include costs for venues and printing and distribution of information</li> </ul>			
5	Pg 7	<p>It is recommended that four participation workers (one for each housing region) be employed to facilitate participation in the community and with the department. Their roles would include the coordination of the formal engagement events with responsibilities for documentation and facilitation.</p>	Agree in principle	<p>In addition to up to \$90,000 allocated by DHCS for tenant participation program in 2005-6, DHCS will resource the participation of departmental staff in tenant participation activities.</p> <p>\$125,000 has also been recurrently set aside in from the Community Linkages program for tenant initiated activities, which gives individual tenants and groups the ability to seek additional funds.</p>	<p>DHCS</p> <p>Relevant community organisations</p>
6	Pg 7	<p>It is recommended that specific resourcing is made available to facilitate meetings for residents at a local community level that facilitation (by tenant participation workers) is provided to support the formation of local level resident groups; and encouragement is given to involvement in regional or territory structures, processes and events.</p>	Agree in principle	<p>These suggested activities will be referred to the Joint Champions Group for consideration within the up to \$90,000 tenants participation program for 2005-6.</p>	<p>DHCS</p> <p>Joint Champions Group</p>

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7	Pg 8	It is recommended that there be a structure and process for internal review of Departmental tenant participation mechanisms with evaluation, review and action plan.	Agree	<p>DHCS will promote the enhancement of tenant participation within our operations during the upcoming development of the DHCS Strategic Plan 2006-2008 and the Housing and Community Services business plan.</p> <p>DHCS will employ the following methods of evaluating the effectiveness of participation mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• incorporating a section on tenant participation in the bi-annual ACT Housing Survey to tenants</li> <li>• reporting on tenant participation in the department's Annual Report.</li> </ul>	DHCS
8	Pg 8	It is recommended that the Department allocate appropriate resources to facilitate acceptance and action on tenant participation development within the department i.e. through staff development, training and organisational review and change.	Agree	DHCS will identify learning and development needs of staff in relation to tenant participation and recognises the importance of ongoing dialogue between departmental staff and tenants through mechanisms such as the Joint Champions Group.	DHCS
9	Pg 8	It is recommended that a communication and training strategy be developed to inform, involve and train community development workers of other agencies, as well as departmental staff in Tenant Participation.	Agree	DHCS will encourage relevant community organisations to undertake training on tenant participation skills for community development workers engaged with public housing tenants.	DHCS Community organisations

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10	Pg 8	It is recommended that a protocol for standards of engagement by Departmental Staff with tenants is developed and incorporated into “Best Practice” and staff training.	Agree	DHCS, including the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, are currently developing a Customer Service Charter. This will outline standards of service expected of all departmental staff when dealing with clients. A Good Business Practices Framework is commencing within the department that supports all staff with professional development and support in the workplace. Principals and practices of tenant participation will be incorporated into the planning of this work.	DHCS
11	Pg 8	It is recommended that there be a review of current services and how they are provided that targets and sets standards to achieve “Best Practice” in service provision; that there is a process for monitoring of progress; and that there is a process for service evaluation incorporating monitoring of tenant participation.	Disagree	DHCS already undertakes a number of evaluative processes of its services. Service provision, targets and standards are outlined in the department’s Annual Report. Monthly Management Reports are also utilised to closely monitor the work of Housing ACT. Tenant Participation activities will be added to these reporting mechanisms.	DHCS
12	Pg 8	It is recommended that there is participation by tenants in Departmental/HACT reviews and other policy development. This should have provision for consultation with individual tenants with priority given to a consultation process with the ACT Public Tenants Association and other tenant participation structures.	Agree	DHCS is committed to enhancing strategies to involve tenants in the policy development process within the department. The department will utilise tenants associations and other participation infrastructure to consult tenants on key policy initiatives and report to the Joint Champions Group on the outcomes of consultative activities.	DHCS Joint Champions Group

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13	Pg 8	It is recommended that job requirements of senior staff include specific reference to responsibility for tenant participation.	Agree	A commitment to tenant participation will be reinforced in senior manager's job descriptions.	DHCS
14	Pg 8	It is recommended that digital technology be utilised to maximise tenant participation. This would include 'virtual reality' (i.e. digital presentation of design); a tenant managed website; and a tenant newsletter.	Agree in principle	Subject to budget availability and government budget processes, the department will work with the Green PC organisation to promote the distribution of computers to public housing tenants. This would be in conjunction with digital divide projects sponsored through the Chief Minister's Department and the Community Linkages Program.	Green PC DHCS
15	Pg 8	It is recommended that a communication infrastructure be provided throughout multiunit sites and in regional locations to maximise broad tenant participation. This would broadband digital networks and internet access available at 'community rooms' or centres.	Disagree	Due to the costs involved it is not possible to broadband older multi-unit sites, however DHCS will consider IT requirements with the building of new multi-unit sites. Access to electronic technology for all tenants, both in multi-unit complexes and in stand-alone properties, is a goal that is longer-term i.e. 5-10 years.	Green PC DHCS
16	Pg 8	It is recommended that there is a continuation of the engagement model known at the Joint Champions Group (meetings of the Department and tenants) and that the Joint Champions Group be formally resourced as a key structure for engagement between the Department and Tenants.	Agree	Resourcing of the Joint Champions Group by DHCS will continue. Nominations will be called for a reconstituted Joint Champions Group to signify the next phase of tenant participation in ACT public housing. Existing members will be encouraged to nominate. The selection process for tenant representatives will involve representation from community organisations and the Department.	DHCS Joint Champions Groups

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17	Pg 9	It is recommended that regular regional Tenant Forums be recognised as a key structure and mechanism for engagement between Tenants, Housing ACT and other stakeholders. Three types of forums are identified, Regional Resolution Forums (tenants and HACT); Regional Public Housing Collaboration Forums (tenants, HACT and other stakeholders); and special purpose forums (to address specific issues, the needs of specific groups eg older aged residents).	Agree	DHCS acknowledges that a full range of participation opportunities is a high priority to enable the broadest range of participation by public housing tenants in consultative arrangements. It is important that all participation activities are appropriately targeted to meet the diverse needs of tenants, have a clear focus, and are able to be supported within the identified resources. In this context the proposed forums will be discussed by the Joint Champions Group for consideration within the tenant participation program for 2005-6.	DHCS Joint Champions Group
18	Pg 9	It is recommended that an annual housing conference be convened in 2005 and that it addresses public housing tenant participation.	Agree with qualification on timing.	DHCS would support the convening of a conference on public housing tenant participation during the 2005-6 financial year and will seek advice from the Joint Champions Group on how this may be advanced within that timeframe.	DHCS Joint Champion Group
19	Pg 9	It is recommended that tenants are facilitated in initiatives to counter negative perceptions of public housing tenants. This could include facilitation of community video productions, photo exhibitions, life stories histories of place and other artistic and cultural performance events.	Agree	This will be advanced through relevant tenant participation activities.	DHCS Joint Champion Group Tenant organisations
20	Pg 9	It is recommended that a review be made of how best to utilise community development opportunities particularly those associated to the Community Linkages strategy.	Disagree	A Review of the Community Linkages Program was recently completed and formed the basis on which recent Community Linkages programs were funded.	DHCS

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21	Pg 9	It is recommended that a Tenant participation Compact be established as a matter of priority.	Agree in principle	This recommendation is supported in principle, pending outcomes of first year of operation of tenant participation projects. The development of a compact will be further considered by the Joint Champions Group.	DHCS Joint Champions Group
22	Pg 9	It is recommended that Multiunit site agreements be established.	Agree in principle	The department would consider the need for Multiunit site agreements on a case-by-case basis based on advice from tenants living at each multiunit site. The Department would support a pilot project, supported by the community development worker under the Community Linkages program, where tenants in one multi-unit site developed community rules.	DHCS Tenant organisations Community Linkages Programs
23	Pg 9	It is recommended that a Tenant Management Policy with Service Level Agreements be established.	Disagree	See Comments under Recommendation 11.	
24	Pg 9	It is recommended that tenant participation is regularly reviewed and that tenants are involved in the design of the process.	Agree	Review of tenant participation activities both within and external to the department will occur regularly. The methods by which this will occur will be designed in consultation with the Joint Champion Group.	DHCS Joint Champions Group