

Vision

We believe that thriving and inclusive communities benefit everyone.

Purpose

This policy outlines how Pacific Link Housing Limited (PLH) plans and implements community engagement initiatives, gathers feedback for input to decision-making, develops capacity-building programs for residents and builds stakeholder relationships and partnerships to advocate for and grow the community housing sector.

Resident Community Engagement

PLH develops and maintains a Client Outcomes and Community Engagement Strategy that aims to support our tenants by providing opportunities and events which:

- ensure tenants' knowledge, views and needs are effectively captured in the ongoing development of PLH's service delivery.
- provide tenants with opportunities for social inclusion and participation that are accessible and appealing, building our community's social capital.
- provide targeted, sustainable programs that assist tenants in building their skills, confidence and capacity to take advantage of opportunities to better their lives.
- challenge and change the traditional perception of community housing as a permanent solution and take a leading role in highlighting the potential for tenants to transition through, and exit from, social housing given focussed and appropriate support services.

PLH makes appropriate allocation of staff and resources to support community engagement and resident program initiatives.

Input to Decision-making

PLH encourages and facilitates involvement of tenants in decision making about the planning and delivery of housing services policies and activities through a variety of methods:

- Tenant Events Program – the aim is to provide an opportunity for tenants to meet, have questions answered face to face by PLH staff, provide feedback and to receive up-to-date information on matters that affect their tenancy and wellbeing.. Events are held at varying locations to ensure access for all tenants.
- Place Activation Program - aims to ensure that the needs of tenants using PLH community spaces are met, building good neighbourhoods, reducing problems with loneliness or anti-social behaviour. The program targets the complexes where the larger cohorts of tenants reside and supports tenant group meetings as required to foster community engagement, often around community gardening activities.
- Annual Survey – aims to gather feedback on matters including customer service, awareness of programs, program suggestions, preferred communication methods, demographics, wellbeing and is conducted independently of PLH. In accordance with our commitment to transparency, results of the annual Tenant Survey are published in PLH's Annual Report.
- Communication channels – including tenant handbook, factsheets, SMS messages, smartphone app, quarterly tenant newsletters, annual report, brochures, website and social media platforms.
- Supporting Innovation - tenants may request support to bring approved engagement activities or program ideas from concept to fruition. PLH can assist with applications for grant funding, work experience, study support to assist tenants where time and resources permit.
- Maintenance and Development – input, where feasible, to design of maintenance upgrades or new residential development.

Capacity Building Programs

The Client Outcomes and Community Engagement Strategy is formulated around the four key themes of:

1. Education
2. Employment
3. Opportunity
4. Community Engagement

Analysis of PLH's tenant and resident profile, feedback from tenant surveys and levels of program participation is conducted to understand and inform the development of targeted programs to address areas of need and cultivate maximum participation.

A range of structured programs self-funded from PLH surpluses includes:

- Transitional Tenancies Program - partnerships with support agencies to deliver living skills and support for sustainment of tenancy for participants nominated by the agencies.
- Support Referral Program - provides access to multiple local support services through referral arrangements. Refer CP59 Resident Services and Support Policy.
- Education Support - children and adult tenants who are studying can apply for assistance to help with the cost of education and access to courses is provided through partnerships with local educational providers.
- Education Scholarship – provides extended support to tertiary students towards education costs.
- Learner Driver Program – provide free lessons to residents who are learning to drive in partnership with local providers
- Health and Wellbeing program – financial support for the costs of health and wellbeing activities for tenants and their families.
- Tech Connect Loans - offer tenants affordable solutions to access technology, through interest-free loans.
- Activities and events - encourage participation events, including annual garden competition and social gatherings and outings. The outings program is designed to be accessible and appealing for all tenants and consideration is given to location and demographics. To ensure events and outings are safe and enjoyable for all, PLH may ask attendees to sign a Code of Conduct.

A range of other programs will be provided where collaboration with partners can provide appropriate resources to deliver services and information for residents.

Programs are developed to provide accessibility and address barriers to participation. Assistance with transport and child care may be provided, where appropriate. Gift vouchers may be offered to encourage participation. Planning of events will consider access for people with mobility issues. Factsheets are published to explain eligibility for programs for residents.

Programs are promoted through PLH's communication channels. Program participants may be asked to assist with promotion of the programs and contribute to PLH communications. Consent will be obtained where participant photos are used in communications material.

PLH will review programs for effectiveness and value for money, as appropriate. .

Partnerships

Partnerships with community and corporate organisations are core to PLH's ethos for supporting tenants and improving social capital. Partnership arrangements may be formalised through agreements with support agencies. Regular reviews of partnership arrangements will

be conducted to ensure ongoing effectiveness in meeting objectives. Regular one-on-one meetings with partners will be held to obtain feedback.

PLH may also seek to develop partnerships for developing and constructing new social and affordable housing supply. These arrangements are formulated to meet strategic objectives and mitigate risk in collaborations with other agencies, government and local councils. Refer Policy CP52 Business Planning, Review and Development.

Local Community Engagement

PLH aims to grow the public awareness and positive recognition of not only PLH's own outcomes, but also that of the community housing sector generally. To achieve this, PLH engages in active communications and advocacy that includes the following activities:

- communication of positive outcomes from our programs in the local media, via social media channels, our website, our annual report and tenant newsletters.
- proactive advocacy to ensure regular ongoing contact with community representatives to influence affordable housing policy development in our region.
- planning for reputational risks that may arise.
- participation with state and local governments, local agencies and business networks that have objectives relevant to our strategic plan and tenant needs.
- provision of information to local real estate agents and landlords on our services.
- promotion, through the Key2 Realty website, of property management services for private landlords.
- building relationships with local property developers, councils and landowners to identify opportunities for growth of affordable housing stock.
- being involved in local and regional planning matters by discussion with councils regarding affordable housing and planning strategies.

Donations & Sponsorships

PLH supports our local community and projects that align to our mission, purpose and values. We will consider requests for support from groups and organisations in community development, facilities and services for the disadvantaged, youth, aged and people with disabilities within Australia. Donations or sponsorships require approval of the CEO or Board. Requests for donation should include a brief statement of the organisation's purpose, governance and achievements. The organisation's ABN and/or charitable fundraising number must be provided.

Community Housing Sector Participation

PLH participates within the community housing sector and keeps itself informed of new initiatives and best practice by:

- Membership to various peak industry groups and other relevant organisations.
- Maintaining regular contact and building strong relationships with relevant statutory funding bodies to discuss our strategic plan, policy interpretation, funding agreements and programs and housing stock allocations.
- Regular contact with community housing policymakers and representatives of local, state and federal government.
- Regular contact with other community housing providers through CEO forums and manager networks.
- Subscriptions to newsletters and bulletins.
- Attending relevant conferences, forums and meetings, seminars and training workshops.
- Participating in and lodging submissions to relevant bodies and agencies to increase funding and support for community housing.

Research Initiatives

To progress advocacy for social and affordable housing outcomes in our region, from time to time PLH will commission academic research into relevant matters, including demographic analysis of our operational locations, measurement of place-building initiatives and measuring outcomes from new programs.

Related Documents

Residents Services and Support Policy
Complaints and Appeals Policy

Policy Owner	Executive Manager, Operations
Approval Authority	Board
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