



Tenants Queensland

Annual Report 2020 – 2021

tenants queensland inc
**tenants
working
together**

Working with tenants to
make renting a secure
and respectful
housing tenancy

FREE
STATEWIDE ADVICE
SERVICE FOR TENANTS
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Vision

A society where renting is a secure and respected housing tenure.

Values

We empower tenants

We show respect for all stakeholders

We act with integrity

We commit to furthering tenants' rights

We promote a culture of continuous improvement

We are accountable for our work

Purpose

To unequivocally advocate for and empower tenants to protect and improve their rights through access to information, advice and representation.

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Chair Report

This is the inaugural Chair’s report of Tenants Queensland (TQ) as a Company Limited by Guarantee, on behalf of the board of directors. The report exemplifies the changes embedded during the year. TQ’s registration as a Company Limited by Guarantee was confirmed by ASIC in March this year. This decision to change our entity’s status followed a significant review and update to our constitution, all of which was supported by our members in an October 2020 general meeting. I would like to acknowledge the significant pro bono assistance provided by Minter Ellison, who over eighteen months, lead TQ through this change with great dedication.

2020-21 has been a year focussed on law reform – both on temporary COVID protections and a return to the (long delayed) on-going reform of Queensland’s tenancy laws. During the period, we’ve seen the COVID evictions moratorium end and the stalled 2018 reform process re-ignited. As such, stage one of the Queensland Government’s review of residential tenancies legislation has been hard fought, supported by the Make Renting Fair in Queensland Alliance and the many committed supporters. These stage one changes passed in parliament in October 2021, after the reporting period for this report.

In May this year TQ was reaccredited by Community Legal Services Australia under its National Accreditation Scheme ensuring TQ meets the appropriate quality standards in its service delivery and management. Congratulations to TQ staff for ensuring TQ’s ongoing accountability to these independent standards.

TQ lost a long-standing committee and board member this year with the retirement of Maria Leebeek. Apart from a short break Maria served on the TQ committee for two decades reflecting her commitment to TQ and her passion for ensuring renters receive fair and just treatment through access to legal advice.

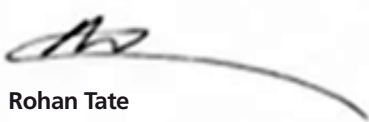
Our specialist member of the Finance and Risk Committee also retired this year, Georgia Voutsis. Georgia committed several years to TQ. Her experience and insight was highly valued. I welcome another specialist to the Committee, Pat Morgan. Pat is very familiar with the business of TQ, having been a previous Business Manager.

In the transition to a company limited by guarantee, we also transitioned away from a staff representative being on the steering committee, a position that existed the duration of the TQ constitution until its update and transition to a company this year. I would like to thank Marg Barnes, who held the position until the transition, and, the very many staff representatives on the steering committee over the years for their commitment and dedication to TQ.

I would like to thank my fellow Committee and Board members who have continued to support TQ in a volunteer capacity throughout a reasonably demanding year.

It’s been a challenging year for renters and for staff, with COVID impacts still being felt by many. I’d like to thank staff for their continued loyalty to TQ.

While this past year has been dominated by the transition to a company, the Board looks forward to the coming year where it can consolidate its new status and focus on TQ’s vision of a society where renting is a secure and respected housing tenure.


Rohan Tate

CEO Report

It would be fair to say that the continuing COVID-19 situation and tenancy law reform has dominated the year.

The need for tenant advisory services for COVID impacted renters did not abate. The COVID tenancy regulations took effect just before the beginning of this reporting year but work to support our clients continued throughout. As the year progressed, plummeting vacancy rates caused more grief for renters, leaving many in desperate situations. It is only by virtue of the committed efforts from the TQ staff that we continued to deliver quality advice and expert support to these and other client groups. The work of TQ's staff is the source of great pride and I would sincerely like to thank them for their ongoing professional and client-focussed approach, despite the many hurdles thrown at them throughout the year.

Notably, we updated and expanded new COVID-related resources on our website, with very positive feedback from the broader community of renters confirming their importance

Given the situation as the end of the evictions moratorium approached, we campaigned for an extension, unfortunately, to no avail. The government also brought to an end other COVID regulations progressively throughout the year. Fortunately the protections for those experiencing domestic and family violence were an exception, and have prevailed.

With life beginning to return to 'normal' the government recommenced the process for permanent tenancy law reform, stalled due to COVID. The Make Renting Fair campaign was reignited, with TQ playing a key role. The government finally tabled their proposed changes in parliament in June 2021. By the time of writing, the changes had been passed into law and the DFV protections (now incorporated into the regular Queensland tenancy laws) have commenced.

Change comes slowly. Through the great efforts of Make Renting Fair we won improvements for Queensland renters, but not all that we hoped for. The most important reform - requiring a reasonable ground to end a tenancy - was not realised, despite being previously recommended by government. I acknowledge and sincerely thank all the individuals and organisations who contributed to the campaign.

The government is planning a second stage of tenancy law reforms in 2022. You can be sure that TQ will be advocating for changes to

make renting fair for the growing number of renting households in our state.

The year did provide opportunity to expand our range of services. The legal services team has been temporarily enhanced with the inclusion of a DFV solicitor with a key focus on supporting clients with issues pertaining to domestic and family violence. We successfully secured a five-year (re-funding) contract from the Community Legal Service Program, a cornerstone of our service delivery. The employment of TQ's first Communications Worker provided new opportunities to engage with renters and keep staff connected with each other. In addition, as the reporting year ended, our new three-year, financial counselling program is about to commence, an important adjunct to our current services as we emerge from COVID.

Our change to a Company Limited by Guarantee, saw us focus on governance processes and further developing the leadership team and Board to meet the new requirements.

Thanks to our pro bono partners who have again supported TQ's business in a number of areas. Our Chair has already thanked MinterEllison for their invaluable assistance with our constitution and change to structure. Allens Lawyers have provided important support to us in developing knowledge systems and evaluation frameworks, for which I sincerely thank them. Clayton Utz have also provided much appreciated pro bono legal support in employment matters and commercial contracts.

I would like to personally thank Mark Mackay, Clayton Utz partner. Mark will officially retire at the end of this year. He has provided significant support to our organisation for many years, and his work has contributed greatly to TQ's success.

Thank you to our members who have supported us during the year, and our transition to a company limited by guarantee. Your support continues to be invaluable, and a constant reminder of why we exist.

On a final note, I have continued participating on the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council after re-appointment this year. The opportunity to contribute to this important work is an absolute privilege.


Penny Carr





! Goal 1

A connected & influential voice for tenants

Throughout the year TQ has continued to raise awareness of the issues being faced by tenants, and advocated on their behalf with government, the media and the wider community.

Stakeholder Engagement

TQ continues to actively engage with a broad cross-spectrum of community, industry and government stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan was approved by the Board in November 2020. This document has since been revised following employment of the Communications Worker, and is being implemented to ensure our engagement practices are as effective as possible. Over the year, TQ participated in a range of forums and events, including:

- COVID-19 Project Advisory Group (UQ, Department, TQ)
- TQ has also engaged with various forums around energy efficiency, including the national Healthy Affordable Homes Coalition.

Consultative meetings (one-off)

- Queensland Cancer Council – tenancies and smoking survey

Consultative forums /meetings (ongoing)

- Ministerial Housing Subcommittee – Housing Security Sub-Committee
- CEO re-appointed to the DFV Prevention Council for a second year in early 2021.
- RTA Stakeholders Forum and RTA Stakeholder Working Group
- QShelter Housing and Homelessness Peaks meeting
- QCOSS Community Services CEO Network
- QCOSS Essential Services Consultative Group
- DHPW Residential Services Reference Group
- TQ continues to play a secretariat role for NATO (National Association of Tenant Organisations)

Staff engagement

- Regional Roadshow to all offices
- Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)
- Consultation on the culture statement
- Staff survey
- When DFV Comes To Work training delivered by Basic Rights as part of their DFV Work Aware project, increasing workplace knowledge and awareness of DFV, and as part of a broader DFV prevention strategy to foster best practice workplace responses
- Lunchbox session on superannuation



Penny and Minister Enoch at the launch of ATSIHQ

Advocacy

Make Renting Fair in Queensland (MRFQ)

With the Make Renting Fair (MRFQ) campaign having launched in 2018, the MRFQ Alliance had been expecting a draft Bill early 2020 when COVID-19 struck. While the focus on broader tenancy law reform took a back seat during this period, there was still a lot to be done.

Emergency protections were introduced by the government to provide a freeze on evictions due to rent arrears, rental grants for those experiencing financial hardship, and allowing those experiencing domestic and family violence to end tenancies quickly and change locks without seeking approval.

These protections were welcomed, but some were shortlived. Tenants Queensland, along with other MRFQ Alliance members, actively lobbied the government when they announced that the evictions moratorium would end on 30 September 2020. With all other states announcing extensions on their similar eviction moratoriums, the TQ position was that the ban on evictions should have remained in place until the end of 2020.

We were ultimately unsuccessful. With government maintaining the 30 September date, a number of renters faced almost immediate eviction. Encouragingly though, the government did extend the DFV provisions and COVID rules

about entry and privacy.

A return by government to the process of tenancy law reform later in the year, did result in TQ CEO Penny Carr attending meetings with the Minister and her advisors to put forward our position. In June, the Minister announced proposed legislation that did contain provisions to make it easier for tenants to keep pets and also kept the provisions around DFV, but critically, did not address the issue of unfair evictions.

The draft legislation introduced more grounds to end tenancies, but did not remove the ability to end tenancies without grounds – now through the application of ‘end of a lease period’ as a reason to end a tenancy. The MRFQ Alliance sprang into action, re-launching the campaign with great media coverage, and commencing a significant communication agenda (using social media, mainstream media, email communication to supporters etc) tasked with applying pressure on the government to overturn their decision.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the government has ultimately passed the legislation, and the focus of the Alliance now turns to the government’s second stage of the rental reform process, which will include looking at the allowance of minor modifications to rental homes.



Make Renting Fair QLD Rally at Speakers' Corner

QSTARS Case Studies

Blind tenant gets good result in a bond claim

Julie* had rented her home for 8 years, and had a good relationship with her landlord, and agent. Julie is legally blind, and had lost her father suddenly - this affected Julie's ability to maintain the premises. The landlord advised the agent to terminate the tenancy, after a routine inspection showed the house was not being kept to a 'satisfactory' condition, and provided 2 months' notice for the end of the tenancy.

An application was lodged to QCAT by the agent for an amount just under \$10,000. The landlord was claiming: full repainting of property, replacement of carpet throughout, cleaning after painting had been completed, new kitchen appliances, new blinds, new downpipes, and garden improvements. Julie is on a disability pension and exceptionally concerned how she would be able to pay this amount. Julie acknowledged that there were damages to the property which exceeded fair wear and tear, despite her 8 years living there.

TQ assisted Julie to go through the agent's claims, noting any that were not consistent with fair wear and tear, or were existing issues on the entry report. TQ completed the counter application with the amounts Julie agreed were owed to the landlord, and the reasons why she disputed the remaining claims, with Julie agreeing to approximately \$2000. The agent amended the claim to \$5500 above the bond already received, and provided amended claims to the tribunal at time of hearing. TQ attended the QCAT hearing with Julie.

The tribunal ruled many items were fair wear and tear, however ruled on a few items that Julie had disputed she was liable for, and ordered Julie to pay \$3129. Julie was relieved with the outcome, and while the amount was still a considerable amount for her to pay, this was a much lower amount than originally claimed by the agent. Julie was able to enter into a manageable payment arrangement with the agent, and no tenancy data base listing was made.

*The names have been changed to protect our clients' privacy.

Incorrect Tenancy Agreement

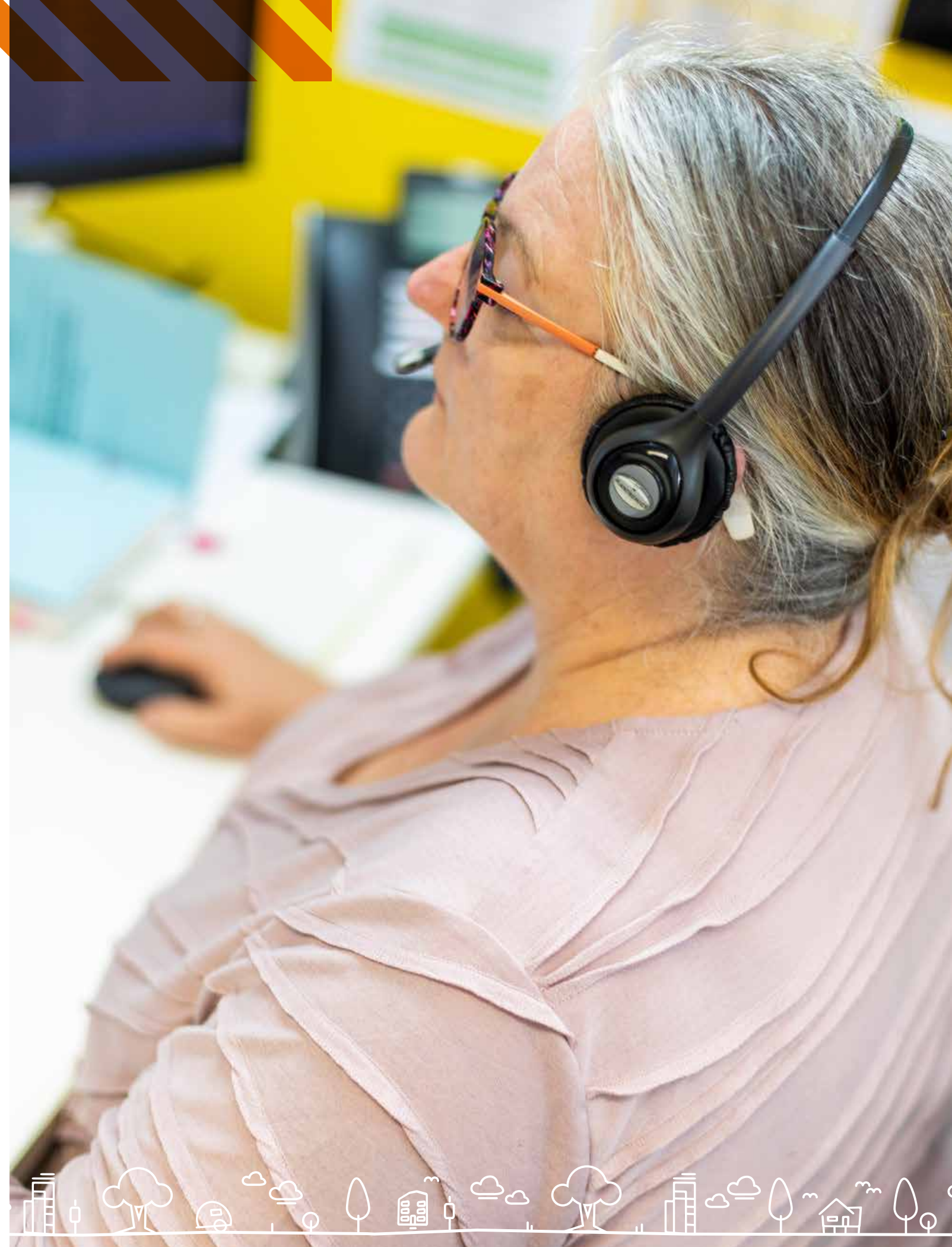
Derrick* had been looking for a rental property in private market places online. Due to COVID-19 restrictions he could only complete a virtual inspection, sighting the photos provided by landlord. Derrick agreed to rent a property, and completed the required application to rent the premises.

The Landlord approved Derrick's application and sent a tenancy agreement via email. Derrick was concerned with some of the terms and conditions in the tenancy agreement, and sought advice prior to signing.

TQ checked the tenancy agreement only to find it had not been completed on the approved RTA form, appeared to be a computer generated form, and was possibly from an international website given it referred to Residential Tenancies Act 2010 Of Queensland Australia Construction. On further inspection, many terms and conditions contradicted the RTRA Act.

TQ advised Derrick that if he wished to rent the premises from the landlord, that he should request the landlord complete the appropriate tenancy agreement on the approved RTA form. He was also advised that given the landlord's terms and conditions reference to an Act that does not appear to exist, this may indicate a potentially difficult tenancy. TQ advised Derrick that if he wished to proceed with the tenancy, not to pay any monies to the landlord until a correct tenancy agreement was provided, and to lodge any required bond directly to RTA.

The Landlord responded to Derrick's request advising Derrick that the tenancy agreement was the correct agreement. As a result Derrick decided not to proceed with the tenancy and lodged an RTA investigation. The RTA investigator advised Derrick that the landlord was not associated with the property and that the agreement would appear to be fraudulent, and to advise police. Derrick took the agreement and advice received from the RTA investigator to his local police station. The outcome of the police investigation is unknown.





Goal 2

Delivery of quality services to Queenslanders

Tenants Queensland provides high quality, free, independent tenant advisory services to assist tenants to understand their rights and responsibilities and empower tenants to manage their own tenancy issues and provide additional support where necessary.

TQ delivers a range of tenant advisory services through the Community Services Legal Program (CLSP) and the Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS). Ultimately, TQ works to assist tenants to sustain, as far as possible, safe and secure tenancies.





Community Legal Services Program

Through our legal team we provide case work in relation to complex tenancy law matters, often representing clients who face high levels of disadvantage. It also takes on strategic litigation where the outcome has the potential to advance tenants' rights or clarify the interpretation of tenancy laws.

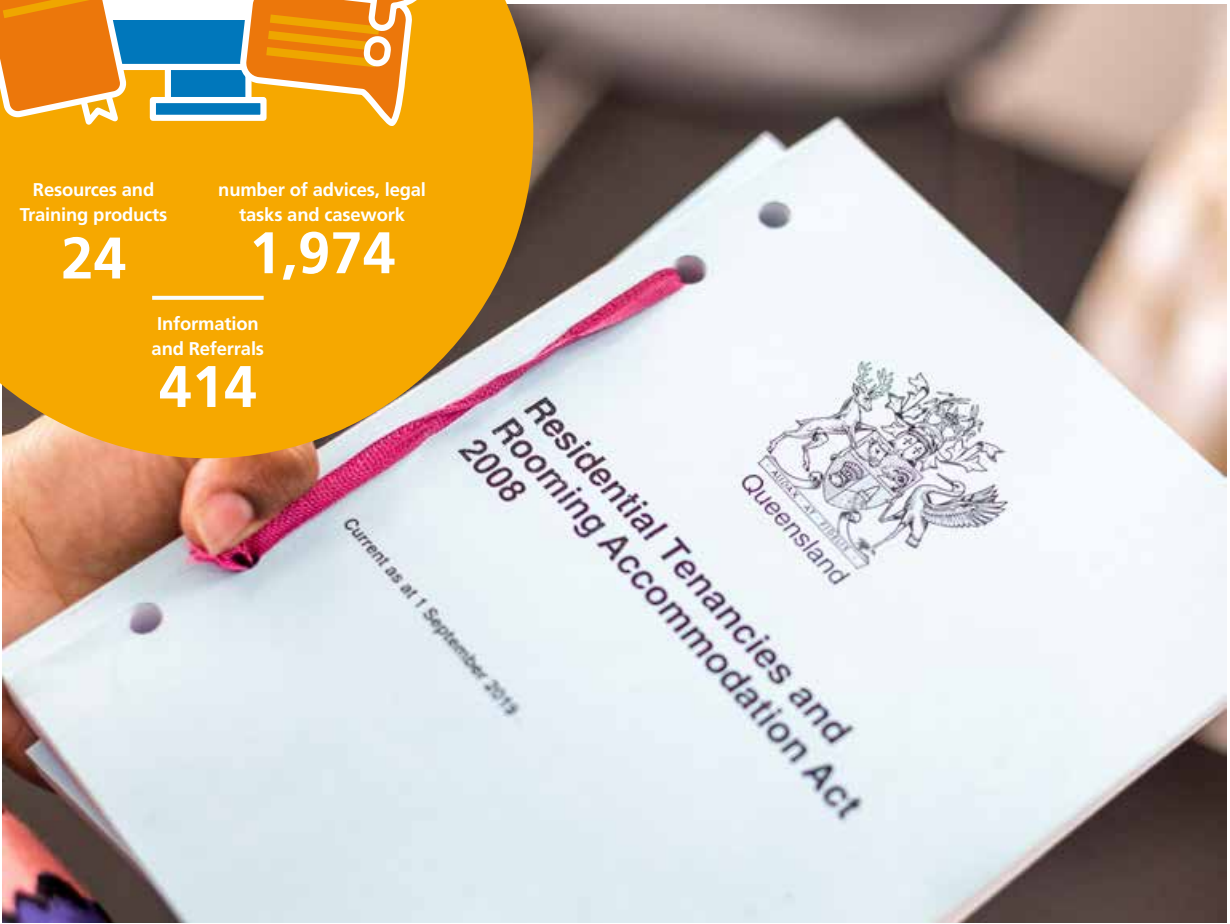
Human Rights matters have been a focus during 2020 however the impacts of legislative changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic had caused resources to be diverted to training, resources, and publications. In April 2021 Tenants Queensland formed a Legal Service Team comprising of the Principal Solicitor, Solicitor (DFV), Legal Officer, Legal Service Support Worker and the DFV Project Worker. A temporary but important focus on DFV has been made possible through increased resources from the Commonwealth.

Legal support and quality assurance

The legal service team provides specialist legal support for TQ services and ensures the accuracy and consistency of advice provided by paralegals; community legal education products and publications; and TQ training materials. Throughout the year, significant additional work was required to produce information on the changes in legislation due to the pandemic, for both workers and tenants.

Tenancy Law Clinic

The legal service team operates a Law Student Advice Clinic. The clinic runs in conjunction with the University of Queensland (UQ) Pro-Bono Centre. As an elective subject the clinic provides a rare opportunity for students to work directly with clients vulnerable to legal problems related to their tenancies. Students work under TQ supervision. They learn the practical application of social justice principles and tenancy law with a diverse range of clients.



Tenancy law assistance through CLSP services

Law students assist elderly tenant to end tenancy early

Due to deteriorating health and reduced mobility a 70 year old tenant could no longer manage the two flights of stairs to access her unit. She found an accessible ground floor unit and wanted to move straight away, however she still had 8 weeks to go on her current lease. The tenant approached her agent to end her tenancy early and provided a copy of a letter of support from her GP - however the agent rejected her request.

The agent refused to end her tenancy early without penalty and said if the elderly woman moved out she would have to continue paying rent for the remainder of her lease. The tenant was distressed, a pensioner and could not afford to pay double rent if she moved out before the end of the lease.

The elderly woman contacted Tenants Queensland for advice. She had already self-advocated her concerns to the real estate agent to no avail. The TQ Law Clinic students spoke to the woman to confirm details of her matter and discuss a course of action.

Following discussion the students prepared a mutual termination request letter and draft termination agreement the tenant could give to the agent.

In case the agent still refused to allow the tenant to end her tenancy early, the law students also prepared a QCAT application and supporting documents so the tenant could apply to QCAT to seek a termination order due to her Excessive Hardship.

Faced with a potential QCAT hearing the agent agreed to the mutual termination to release her from the lease. The elderly lady was overjoyed she was able to relocate into her new ground floor unit.

Tenant wins case against lessor claiming unjustified monies owing

Tenants renting on the Gold Coast phoned Tenants Queensland seeking assistance with a QCAT hearing that was scheduled for the following morning. Their private lessor had applied to QCAT seeking a termination order and warrant of possession. The lessor was claiming the tenants owed money for rent and unpaid water bills.

The tenants were terrified they would be made homeless. The low income couple and their 11 year old daughter had rented the

duplex for almost 4 years. During COVID lockdowns they had lost their jobs and got into rent arrears but since then had managed to repay all the rent owed. After COVID the family were getting back on their feet; they had both secured new jobs and their rent was back on track.

When their fixed term lease ended the lessor demanded they pay a \$1,200 quarterly water bill. This was more than four times their usual water bill. They were in a duplex and believed the lessor was charging them for the entire property and for additional costs they were not liable for. The tenants disputed the bill as excessive and tried to negotiate a reasonable amount. The lessor then issued the tenants with a Notice to Leave.

Under threat of eviction the tenants agreed to pay half the disputed water bill. In return the private lessor agreed to renew their lease for another 6 months. However, after receiving the water payment, the lessor refused to sign the new lease and applied to QCAT for a termination order.

After speaking with the tenants, it was immediately apparent there were serious deficiencies with the lessor's application. There were grounds for immediate dismissal as the lessor had applied to the tribunal outside the required statutory time limit. In addition, the substance of the claim was factually incorrect. The tenants had evidence to show all rent was paid up to date.

TQ immediately assisted the tenants over the phone to help them understand the QCAT paper work they had received, along with the hearing process.

Despite the tenants having a strong case there were concerns the tenants may have limited capacity to advocate their matter. To assist the tenants, TQ drafted a detailed submission to identify the key legal issues, highlight tenant evidence to refute the lessor's claims, and support the tenant's argument that the lessor's application be dismissed.

The clients called back after their hearing to advise that the lessor's termination application was dismissed. In addition, the tribunal ordered that the tenancy be extended for a further 6 months.

Now the problem is solved the family can stay in their rental home and have the peace of mind of having stable accommodation. This process also helped the family feel more confident about their ability to take action to stand up for their rights and participate in legal procedures to resolve disputes.

At-risk tenant assisted to urgently leave her home

Tenants Queensland assisted a female tenant experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV) to end her tenancy quickly under the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020.

There was an urgency to this situation as the tenant needed to leave the property before the person using violence was released from custody. He had previously tracked the tenant to two other tenancies so it was vital she was moved before he was released.

TQ provided legal assistance and advocacy when the real estate agency disputed the tenant's right to leave the tenancy with seven days notice, despite the tenant submitting the appropriate notice ending tenancy and supporting evidence of the DFV she had experienced, in accordance with the COVID-19 Regulation. TQ also successfully disputed the real estate agent's claim that the tenant was responsible for damage caused to the property by the DFV.

TQ further advocated on her behalf to obtain a refund of overpaid rent, to claim her full bond and to negotiate with the agent in relation to their claims that the bond clean was inadequate.

The legal assistance provided addressed the tenant's imminent risk of harm due to domestic and family violence,

risk of homelessness and financial disadvantage as well as the associated complexities with delivering front-line advice and casework during a COVID-19 lockdown. The tenant was supported to end her tenancy within seven days, enter into crisis accommodation and obtain Flexible Assistance Package funding for removalists, storage and bond cleaners. Without the support to end her tenancy quickly and have her belongings removed and stored safely, the tenant would have been required to either "break lease", enter into a mutual termination agreement as was proposed by the real estate agent, or abandon the property and her belongings.

Extract of email from tenant, with names removed. –
"Thank you so so so much for everything. I wouldn't be where I am or looking forward to moving into my new place if it wasn't for you, [TQ worker]. I appreciate everything that you have done for me – from dealing with [the agent], organising the movers, cleaners, storage, listening to me vent, working until super late even though you're so sick, finding me accommodation when I had nowhere else to go and wanted to just sleep in my car...I am so thankful and grateful that you came into my life when you did because for the first time in over two years, I feel like I will finally get away from [person using violence]. I feel like I can finally breathe again."



TQ Law students Lauren, Geena and Victor, with Mandy Shircore from UQ Pro Bono Centre

Projects

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Sector Capacity Building Project

The DFV project aims to build the capacity of workers who support people experiencing violence to deal with tenancy issues. The approach includes strategies to contribute to increased safety and reduce barriers to access or sustain stable housing. It also provides information to support people experiencing DFV to start, stay or leave a tenancy.

- The project provides
- Training on tenancy related DFV issues
 - Resources, including the online Toolkit, fact sheets and guides
 - Helpdesk – to assist workers with advice on tenancy issues

The Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020 has been in force since April 2020; allowing people experiencing DFV a right to leave a tenancy, change the locks, reclaim their bond and are not held responsible for damages caused by DFV. The Regulations

were extended several times during the year and DFV Project has kept the sector informed with regular email newsletters.

Training delivery and networking

The DFV project provided a total of 44 training events to workers in the community sector. And the worker, Rose Brown, participated in 12 network meetings and events to inform the sector about the project.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the DFV project delivered most training sessions online and from September started going to organisations and meeting workers face to face which was a real privilege. 76% of participants in training reported increased knowledge and skills, and 63% reported increased capacity to support their clients with tenancy issues arising from domestic and family violence.

	Online	Face-to-face	Total
Training sessions delivered	32	12	44
Number of training participants	356	98	454
Networking events	3	9	12
Participants in network events	63	390	453



Rose and Nali at the Noonga Reconciliation Group Kalinga Park Sorry Day Ceremony 2021



DFV Prevention Month

Helpdesk

Helpdesk is designed to provide workers with advice on tenancy issues for their clients. DFV workers are often best placed to assist their clients and where they need additional information around tenancy law. The DFV Helpdesk provided advice to 93 organisations on 168 separate matters. Situations can be complicated and Helpdesk provides workers with options and ways of dealing with the tenancy issue being faced.

Finding out about tenancy database listing

A Women’s Shelter worker contacted Helpdesk on behalf of a woman with 5 children living in the Shelter. There was property damage caused by the perpetrator and the woman was unable to return and clean the premises when she moved out. The woman was listed on a tenancy database but she didn’t have any information about the listing. She wanted to move out of the Shelter but was extremely worried about finding a place to rent.

Helpdesk provided advice about disputing a tenancy database listing and obtaining a copy of the listing. A referral to a local homeless service to access a copy of the tenancy database listing was quickly facilitated.

This process uncovered that the client was not listed on a tenancy database; she now has peace of mind, is applying for rental properties and can move out of the Shelter.

DFV Prevention Month

DFV Prevention Month in May meant that TQ’s DFV Project Worker was out and about networking with many organisations to provide information and answer questions about tenancy issues.

In early May, Rose Brown visited Toowoomba for a Local Level Alliance Meeting – a network of many services supporting women, young people and families. She delivered small and tailored training at the local QSTARS partner office and women’s shelter.

On 7 May, Women’s Health Queensland, Brisbane City Council (Community Development Team) and local DFV services organised the Understanding Pathways to Safety Domestic and Family Violence Forum. Information about Housing and Tenancy Rights was provided by the project.

Rose was also invited by Moreton Regional Council to be a guest speaker at three forums held in Redcliffe, Caboolture and Pine Rivers.

Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS)



Focus of QSTARS program

The QSTARS program is focussed on achieving two overarching outcomes:

1. Queenslanders are aware of their rights and responsibilities and support services available to assist them to resolve tenancy and residency issues.
2. Queenslanders can exercise their rights to resolve tenancy/residency issues, particularly in relation to security of tenure, safe and appropriate accommodation and contractual matters.

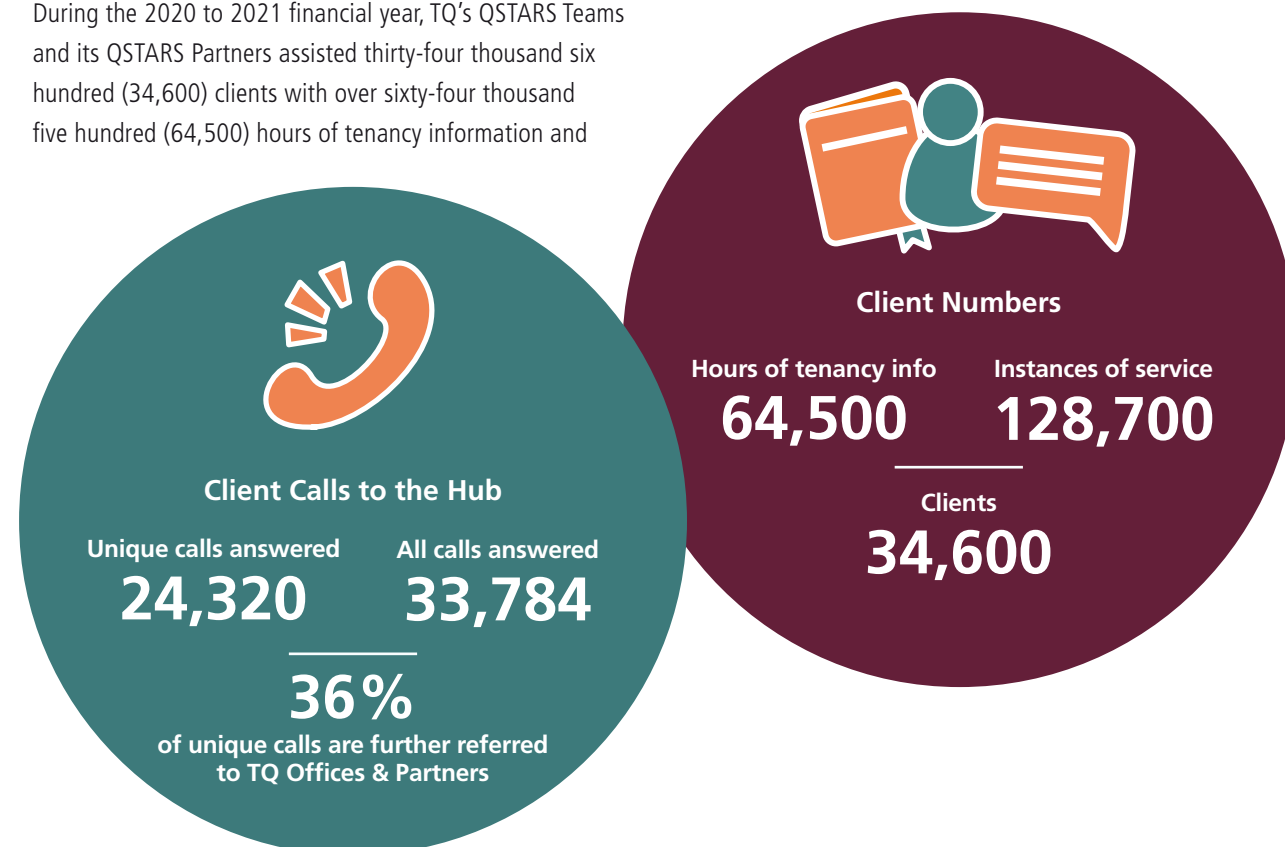
2020 to 2021 client demand

During the 2020 to 2021 financial year, TQ's QSTARS Teams and its QSTARS Partners assisted thirty-four thousand six hundred (34,600) clients with over sixty-four thousand five hundred (64,500) hours of tenancy information and

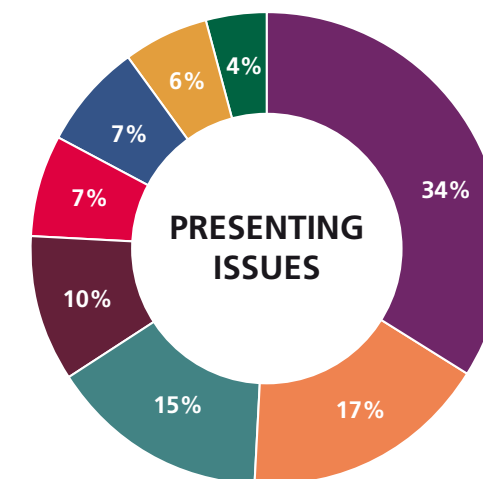
advice and one hundred and twenty-eight thousand seven hundred (128,700) instances of service.

QSTARS service delivery

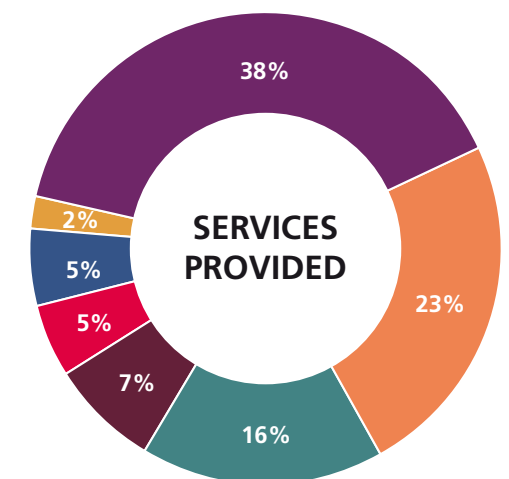
- TQ operates QSTARS offices in Spring Hill (Brisbane), Logan, Southport and Palm Beach, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns, and also in Mt Isa.
- TQ QSTARS Partner organisations include, Community Plus, Enhance Care, Suncoast Community Legal Centre, Ipswich Regional Advocacy Service, Toowoomba Community Legal Centre, Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre and Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre



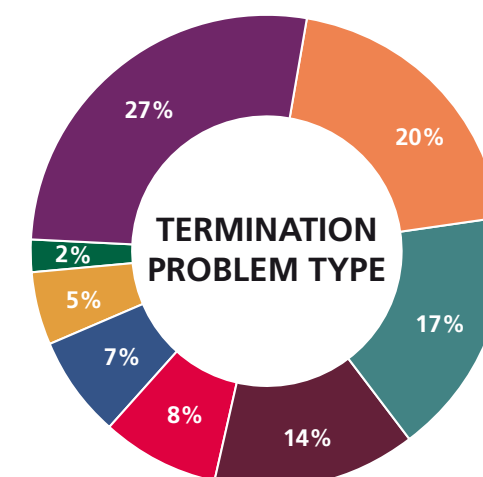
QSTARS Statistics



- Termination
- Rental bonds, refunds, payments, claims
- Repairs/maintenance
- Rent, increases, receipts, payments, arrears
- Tenancy Agreements
- QCAT/Court
- Entry/privacy
- Tenancy databases



- Advice on resolving issues
- Info related to current advice work
- Info and/or referral only
- Assistance to identify strengths and resources to solve issues
- Supporting client to communicate with estate agent/lessor
- Advice to the client to prepare for formal or informal dispute resolution process
- Assisted client to complete forms themselves



- Terminating with grounds
- Break lease
- Termination without grounds
- Excessive hardship
- End of lease
- Warrant of Possession
- Mutual Agreement
- Retaliatory Eviction



- TQ SQ
- TQ BNth
- TQ CQ
- TQ NQ
- IRASI
- TASC
- Enhance
- Suncoast
- HBNC
- Mackay
- Com Plus

Learning and Development

TQ continued to build a strong competency focus within its QSTARS team of outstanding service providers.

A significant milestone was to rapidly create training modules and support resources that addressed the COVID-19 tenancy issues. A large roll-out was then undertaken to train the QSTARS teams with new COVID-19 legislation and regulation requirements to ensure immediate support was provided to clients impacted by the virus.

COVID-19 training, new advice workers to the program and other learning opportunities including professional development saw nearly fourteen hundred (1,400) training hours being delivered to a gross total of seven hundred (700) training participants (includes staff attending multiple training events) during the 2020 to 2021 financial year.

TQ also finalised the development of a centralised learning framework within TQ's client information and management system to record, store and retrieve learning data e.g. competencies required and then achieved, training needs analyses, and hours of training delivery and attendance.

Community Access Points

Tenants Queensland with its QSTARS Partners have developed a network of Community Access Points, particularly in regional areas of Queensland, to provide localised points of access to QSTARS services in specific communities. CAPs are points or locations at which Eligible Persons can access the service via an IT portal or other remote means such as:

- By phone.
- Face to face at another location – eg an outreach location, the office of another agency
- By other electronic means eg Skype
- Where documents can be sent to service providers through another agency
- Obtaining access to community education materials and information and forms about the QSTARS service

Approximately three hundred and forty new Community Access Points (CAPs) were added to the previous 1,230 CAPs established since the commencement of the QSTARS program.



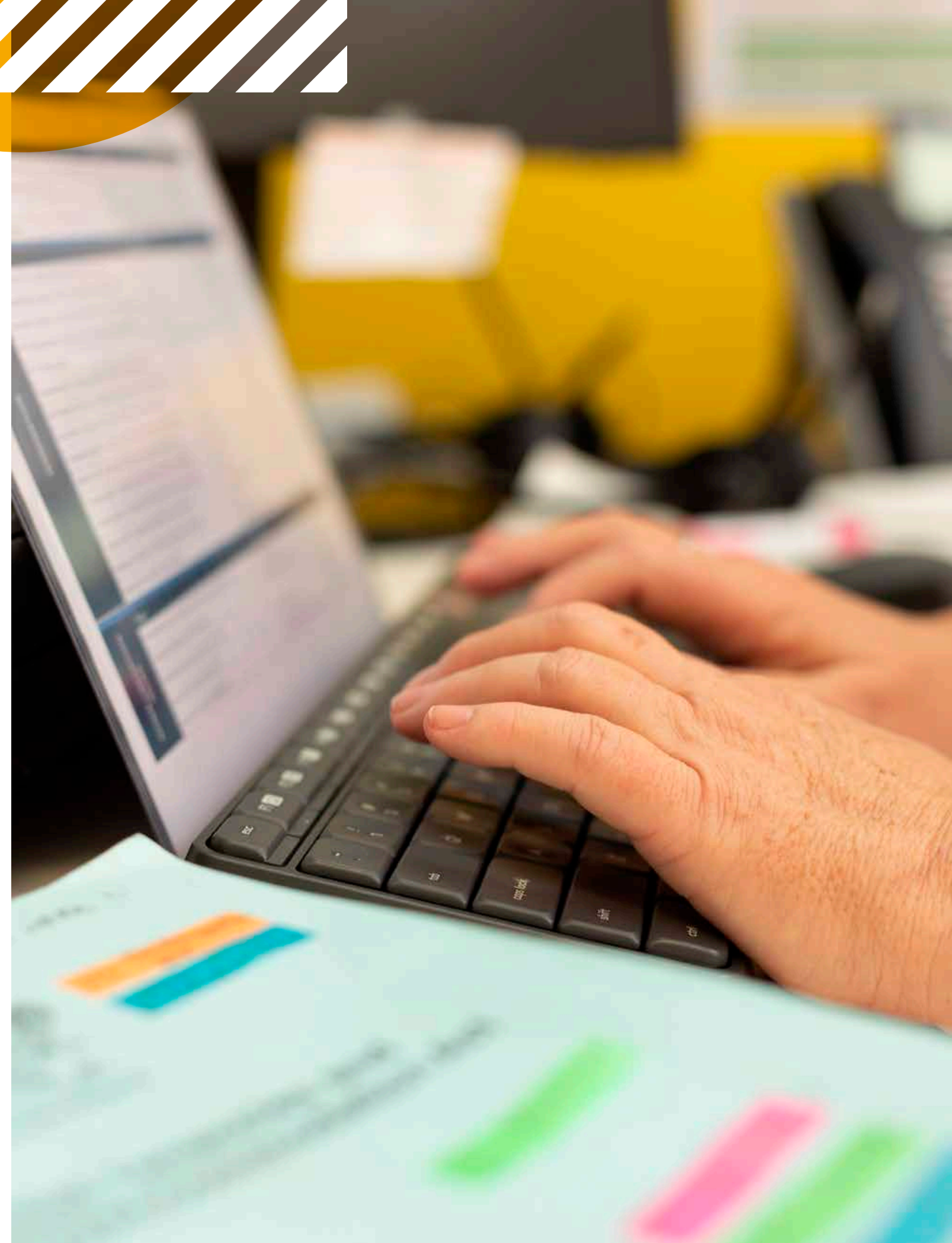
COVID-19 Training

Training hours

1,400

Training participants

700





O Week at Australian Catholic University

Community Education

TQ's Community Education workers provide information and education to services and community members across Queensland through the delivery of workshops and presentations and through participation in community events. Community education activities aim to increase individual and organisational understanding of tenancy issues; knowledge of tenancy rights and responsibilities and awareness of tenancy advice services with the ultimate goal of enhancing housing sustainability and preventing homelessness.

Due to the success last year of having the Community Education team focused on engagement with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities through the TAFE Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP), further opportunities for engagement with TAFE and their students

across the state were explored. TAFE QLD Regional Directors were engaged to develop a program of education across a number of disciplines. The development of an engagement proposal by Community Education workers increased the opportunity for tenancy education sessions for students within the Community Services, Health and Nursing faculties of TAFE QLD.

Community Education events attended included: Student Orientation Weeks, Homeless Connect, International Women's Week, Harmony Day, the National Aboriginal & Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC), International Tenants Day, Anti-Poverty Week, National Youth Week, Mental Health Week and National Close the Gap Day.

2020-21 Community Education sessions and events

	North Qld	Central Qld	Brisbane North	Southern Qld	HUB	TOTAL
Community Education delivery	59	15	64	61	36	235
Stalls and promotions	19	10	28	24	5	86

International Tenants Day 2020

Planning for ITD events was very difficult this year due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19, which meant only a couple of events were held, in Central Qld and North Qld. These were still very successful.

International Tenants Day (ITD) is celebrated on the first Monday of October each year, with the day themed by the International Union of Tenants - the focus is for a range of community events held locally and across many countries.

Our annual ITD competition had a great response, with our winner Emma and her poem about her renting experience and her journey during COVID, capturing the judges. Emma

says, "Renting matters to me because I now have beautiful energy and friends in my life".



Cairns ITD 2020 Award Winners

QSTARS Case Studies

Sharon* had moved out of her tenancy and was finding her lessor's agent very difficult to deal with, particularly in regards to monetary claims being made against her.

Sharon had been in the property for 2 years and at expiry of her current tenancy agreement had issued a F13 Notice of Intention to Leave (NOITL) to the agent giving the required 2 weeks' notice. The agent sent Sharon an invoice for \$1300 stating this was the cost of cleaning the property after she vacated and minor repairs conducted (cracked tile in bathroom replaced, worn fly screen replaced and driveway pavement tiles replaced).

Sharon disputed the owing money, insisting she had left the property clean with no further cleaning necessary and that the tile, pavement and fly screen damages had been pre-existing to her tenancy and that her Entry Condition Report reflected this.

Sharon was assisted to lodge a Form 4 Refund of Rental Bond with the RTA - the tenant's bond was \$1480.

The agent disputed Sharon's claim on the bond, claiming a total of \$1300 – citing the costs as per the invoice previously issued to Sharon. Sharon was advised to argue her position on the basis that she had left the property in better condition and cleaner than she found it upon moving in. Thus more than satisfying her obligations under s188 of the Act and the damages were pre-existing her tenancy and she held no liability for them.

TQ supported Sharon to correspond in writing with the agent in relation to these matters and to participate in dispute resolution through the RTA. While Sharon was very anxious and distressed at first, as she was assisted to take steps to progress her matter, her confidence in her capacity to effectively self-advocate increased substantially.

There was no agreement reached at the RTA conciliation, a Notice of Unresolved Dispute (NURD) was issued to the agent who then lodged a s137 application to QCAT for the money claimed from Sharon's bond. Sharon was then served with this QCAT application which caused her considerable stress.

TQ provided support to Sharon to prepare a response to the lessor's application and by the hearing date Sharon was confident enough to represent herself at QCAT.

The Tribunal dismissed the agent's applications based on the response Sharon provided, and her own submissions on the day of the hearing. The bond in full was released to Sharon.

*The names have been changed to protect our clients' privacy.



➔ Goal 3

Building resilience and readiness for the future

As a new focus in 2020-2021 TQ has implemented strategies to enhance the capacity of our people and systems to respond productively to the future. Some of this has been driven by COVID-19 and some by TQ's drive for continuous improvement.



Resourcing our front-line

During the year, work began on the update of our precedent register. This work is being generously supported by Allens Lawyers through their pro bono assistance program. This register along with our other worker resources such as the Tenancy Advice Bulletins, template letters, and draft submissions are being shaped into the Tenants Queensland “Book of Knowledge”. This resource will assist workers with the delivery of advice and casework services and provide consistency of advice to our clients.

Development and opportunities

TQ has continued to deliver a range of training programs further enhancing the skills of our team members’, expertise and resilience to ensure a productive and supported workforce. Examples of training directed to different workgroups include:

- Layers of learning and advice worker training
- Enterprise Agreement training
- The way we work training
- “When DFV comes to work” training offered to all staff
- Leadership skills and attributes training to managers
- Lunchbox sessions on superannuation and portable long service leave

Cultural awareness training

All members of the TQ team undertook online Cultural Awareness training during this financial year. The interactive and valuable training, provided by Munya Andrews and Carla Rogers of Evolve Communities, provided staff with the core skills needed to build strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Communicating with our people

Regional Roadshow

The CEO and Service Delivery Manager undertook a tour of all TQ teams and partner offices during March and April 2021 as we emerged from COVID related isolation. Overall, 17 meetings were held. The Regional Service Coordinators, and in some instances board members of partner agencies, joined in the meetings. The visits provided an opportunity to connect face-to-face with TQ staff teams, and partners to discuss key initiatives and current challenges as well as gain an understanding of the key issues facing tenants across the state.



Karen from the Central Qld office, attended the QCOS roadshow event in Rockhampton, along with many community service providers.



Focus on culture

People and Culture Committee of the Board

This year the Board established a People and Culture Committee to focus on enhancing our people and the organisational culture. TQ understands that our people are our most valuable asset and we seek to provide a well-supported organisational environment where our people can flourish and take pride in their work.

This will form a focus for our work next year.

One of our first actions to support a focus on culture has been the development of a “Culture Statement” through consultation with staff. The statement will complement TQ’s existing vision, purpose and values statement.

Survey

TQ conducted an inaugural staff well-being survey during the year. The survey was developed by the QUT School of Management and focussed on the two broad areas of organisational climate and culture. The results were benchmarked against other like organisations. In particular, the areas for improvement will be considered in the annual workplan.

Joint Consultative Committee

In accordance with TQ’s Enterprise agreement the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) was established and met for the first time in July 2020. The membership of the JCC comprises of two management appointed members – Penny Carr (CEO) and Anne-Maree Elliott (Business Manager), a staff-elected member, Alby Bunting-Alexander (Senior Advice Worker, Cairns) and a union-appointed member, Wendy Herman (Legal Services Officer and Support Worker). The JCC met a total of four times across the financial year.

Building our reporting and data analysis capability

TQ has continued to work to improve our recording, reporting and data analysis capability. Options such as data warehousing, integration and data storage, as well as simplified reporting dashboards are being investigated. Digital technology alternatives to enhance our service delivery access into the future are also being explored. Other projects commenced this year are the delivery of an integrated online intake form for clients and an automated client data file transfer system.

A sustainable organisation

TQ continues to build a strong and resilient organisation able to support the delivery of high quality services and tenants interests through advocacy and representation.

The organisation has continued to respond to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic in an effective manner, with the ability to alter advice and work practices very quickly.

The TQ constitution review was completed, and successfully implemented.

Governance

In February 2021 Tenants Queensland Inc transitioned to a Company Limited by Guarantee. The TQ Steering Committee transitioned into the TQ Board of Directors.

At the 2020 AGM TQ farewelled two Steering Committee members – Bryony Walters and Troy Spence, with Maria Leebeek retiring in March 2021. Independent representative, Georgia Voutis, stood down from the Finance and Risk Committee in January 2021. Marg Barnes retired from the Steering Committee as Staff Representative in March 2021 following TQ’s transition to a company. TQ gives many thanks to those departing for their valuable contributions – in particular, the significant contribution made by Maria, whose almost 20 years of service to the Steering Committee, on and off, is especially noteworthy.

2020/2021 Board and Committee members

Rohan Tate	Chair
Damian Eckersley	Company Secretary
Penny Gillespie	Director
Seleneah More	Director
Scott Pardey	Director
Maria Leebeek	Retired

Rohan Patrick Tate
(Director and Chair)

Rohan joined the Board in 2014. He holds a Bachelor of Laws, a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Politics and History as well as an Honours in Politics.

Rohan is also an Accredited Specialist in Workplace Relations.

Rohan has 11 year’s experience as an Employment and Industrial Lawyer and is currently employed by Maurice Blackburn Lawyers.

Scott Pardey
(Director)

Scott joined the Board of TQ in 2019. Scott is a chartered accountant with experience in international aid & development as well as the Not-for-Profit sector in Australia.

He is a Bachelor of Business graduate from Queensland University of Technology, and enjoyed a 12 year career with advisory firm Grant Thornton in Australia, the UK and South East Asia.

Scott co-founded the community-led West End Film Festival. More recently he has worked within Indigenous affairs, through consulting projects and as the Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary of a national Aboriginal Not-for-Profit.

With an interest in data analysis and impact measurement, Scott is keen to support Tenants Queensland to continue its exceptional client-focussed work for years to come, through sustainable and innovative approaches to governance and relevant emerging issues.

Damian Eckersley
(Director and Company Secretary)

Damian joined the Tenants Queensland Board (then Steering Committee) in 2002 to be involved in an organisation which furthers the rights of people who rent their home.

He held the position of Convenor from 2003 to 2013 during a period of great growth in both the private rental market and in the services that Tenants Queensland provides.

Damian is an architect working in the private sector with a commitment to human rights. Damian has a Bachelor of Architecture and is a Registered Architect.

Penny Gillespie
(Director)

Penny joined the Board in 2019. She is a member of the Australian and New Zealand School of Government Executive Fellows and holds a Technical and Further Education Teachers Instructional Skills Certificate and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Three Dimensional Design from the University of Sussex, United Kingdom.

Penny has held Senior leadership roles in not for profit and government, and as a Director of sole trader consulting

business and has extensive professional experience in project and program management, review and evaluation; stakeholder engagement, organisational and service model design (community services and housing services), submission, report and tender development and writing and strategy development.

Penny has held previous Board directorships. Her field of expertise is in community services and housing and homelessness.

Seleneah More
(Director)

Seleneah joined the TQ Board in 2018. She holds a Bachelor of Social Science with the Queensland University of Technology and a Graduate Diploma in Urban and Regional Planning with the University of Queensland Lakes Station.

The foundation of Seleneah’s work is her belief in the expertise of local people and their resources to improve their communities. Seleneah has endeavoured to deliver improvements to the Urban environment as an Urban

planner for ten years and community development practitioner for 20 years.

Maria Leebeek
(Director)

Maria Leebeek has a long-standing commitment to working in the not-for-profit sector on social justice issues. Maria has been employed in range of positions from direct practice, with a focus on housing and homelessness, through to organisational management. This grounded experience has enabled Maria to undertake a range of project and policy work and to share this knowledge and advocate in a range of community and public settings.

Maria is passionate about the role of not for profit organisations and is currently enrolled in a Research Master of Business at QUT exploring collaboration in the NFP sector. Maria has a Bachelor of Social Work (Queensland University) and a Graduate Diploma in Business (Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies QUT).

Steering Committee member/Director participation 2020-2021

Bryony Walters		Damian Eckersley		Maria Leebeek		Seleneah More			
2 (of 6)		9 (of10)		4 (of 8)		10 (of 10)			
Marg Barnes		Rohan Tate		Penny Gillespie		Scott Pardey		Troy Spence	
9 (of 9)		8 (of 10)		6 (of 10)		9 (of 10)		4 (of 5)	

The Finance and Risk Committee

The Finance and Risk Committee comprises of Scott Pardey as Chair and welcomed Pat Morgan Independent representative. The Committee met on three occasions during 2020/2021.

Compliance and Audit

Internal auditing is the responsibility of the Board and supported by TQ management. A rolling compliance schedule is maintained at the Board meetings. An external audit of all TQ’s books of account occurs annually.

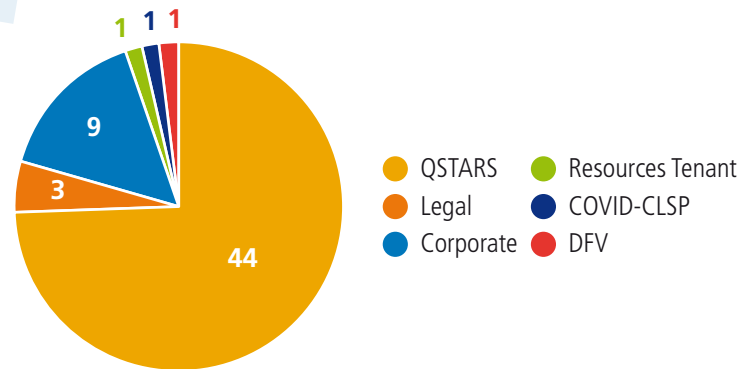
TQ Leadership and Management Teams

TQ’s leadership team met fortnightly during 2020/2021. The focus of this forum is driven by the strategic plan and organisational KPIs operationalised through the leadership plan. The Joint Management Team meets on a quarterly basis and in alignment with the QSTARS quarterly performance review meetings held in conjunction with the (now) Department of Communities, Housing and the Digital Economy (DCHDE).

Staffing

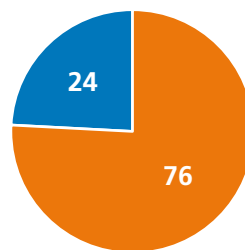
Structures

TQ's staff establishment plan is reviewed by the Board annually and TQ employs staff in accordance with approved budgets. As at 30 June 2021 TQ employed 45.10 FTE's across 59 positions in 8 offices.



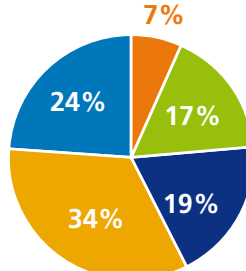
Staff Profile

Staff Gender



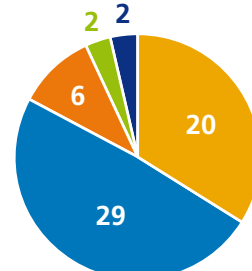
● Male ● Female

Staff Age Range



● 21-30 ● 31-40 ● 41-50 ● 51-60 ● 61-70

Years of Service



● 0-2 ● 3-5 ● 6-8 ● 9-22 ● 23 and above



Planning

Planning, Quality and Risk

TQ is committed to high standards of corporate governance, quality and risk management. The Finance and Risk Committee supports the Board and Leadership by ensuring that our risk management processes are reviewed regularly. The Board and Leadership team regularly review TQ's progress against our Strategic Plan 2020-2023. TQ continues its mandate to enhance the service with a focus on continuous improvement.

NAS Accreditation

TQ is accredited under the Community Legal Centres Australia National Accreditation Scheme (NAS). Under the NAS, TQ must ensure it meets industry standards to provide high quality, accessible and culturally appropriate services to clients and communities. As a community legal centre, TQ was awarded re-accreditation in June this year for a further three years. Over the next three years, TQ will work through its Improvement Plan to ensure ongoing improvements and compliance with the NAS standards and requirements.



Special General Meeting in October



COVID-19 continues to impact renters

Queensland renters continued to suffer the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and threats to their housing security during the year. Although calls to the QSTARS 1300 number peaked back in April 2020, significant numbers of renters continued to seek advice on COVID-19 related renting problems into the second half of that year and demand for service remained elevated. TQ continued to meet the challenge of supporting renters, particularly those impacted by COVID, monitored arising issues, and lobbied the Government for adequate legislative protections throughout this period of uncertainty.

The moratorium on evictions introduced by the Queensland Government in April 2020 through the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020 (Regulation) whilst more limited than we hoped, provided welcome relief to renters suffering financial hardship because of the pandemic. However, the relief was short-lived, when the government announced that the moratorium would end in late September. During this time increasing numbers of Queensland renters contacted TQ expressing anxiety about the debt they had accrued, and fearful of eviction when the moratorium ended. TQ actively campaigned for the moratorium to be extended until the end of 2020 and for a tapering of protections thereafter, to provide support to renters still impacted by COVID-19. However, despite TQ's best efforts and the support of other Housing Security Subcommittee members (QCOSS and Q Shelter), the moratorium on evictions ended on 29 September 2020.

TQ was disappointed that the Queensland government decided to go it alone in not extending the evictions moratorium. At the time, Western Australia, South

Australia and Victoria had all extended their moratoriums to March 2021, and Tasmania had extended theirs to December 2020. With no end in sight to the pandemic, it seemed premature of the Government to end the evictions moratorium with unemployment still high, incomes reduced and the accompanying reduction in Australian government income support measures. Many renters had been unable to negotiate a genuine rent reduction, and with the moratorium over there was nothing to stop agents from issuing Notices to Remedy Breach and Notices to Leave.

Rent debt, eviction and risk of homelessness became major issues for renters after the moratorium ended. Our advice service reported a lot of movement in the market and with a sharp increase in the issuing of Notices to Leave after 29 September and landlords making applications to the tribunal for termination orders. Terminations orders were made even in cases where renters were in the process of paying back rent arrears. Many renters we spoke to had been unaware of the option to apply to the tribunal for a rent reduction prior to the end of the moratorium, and were now left burdened with significant debt and limited options.

At the same time as the moratorium on evictions ended, many areas of Queensland were moving towards record low vacancy rates. TQ saw an increase in landlords issuing Notices to Leave Without Grounds, as they sought to capitalise on competitive market conditions. Renters have reported to us that in many instances their properties were then re-advertised at a significantly higher rent. Although an increase in the issuing of Notices to Leave Without Grounds impacted all renters, it created a perfect storm for renters in financial hardship because of COVID-19. The

Regulation provided protection for renters against listing on a tenancy database, however rent records showing historical arrears and poor verbal references from agents (often for affected renters using the protections) made it very difficult for COVID-impacted renters to compete for properties in such a tight market. An extended evictions moratorium with a transitional period would have provided much needed additional protection for these renters.

There was also good news. The Regulation introduced by the Government consisted of a raft of protections, including provisions allowing people experiencing domestic and family violence to end a tenancy quickly. TQ welcomed these provisions when they were introduced in April 2020 and we are aware that they have been frequently used appropriately by renters experiencing domestic and family violence. The provisions were essentially duplicated in the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill (2021) and commenced on 20 October 2021 in a permanent form after the Bill was passed. These protections are much needed. As at October 2021, a limited number of other provisions remain in place under the Regulation, (eg protections for tenants against being listed in a tenancy database for rent arrears caused by COVID-19, and limits on re-letting costs for eligible tenants who end their fixed term tenancies early) and apply until 30 April 2022.

The impacts of COVID-19 on renters and the private rental market are ongoing, contrary to all expectations, with increasing rents and record low vacancy rates persisting across many parts of Queensland. This phenomena has occurred across the country and in many other OECD member countries. Although the number of renters seeking advice on COVID-related tenancy issues has decreased, TQ is continuing to hear from renters experiencing impacts from the pandemic. Many of the challenges that Queensland renters now face, such as lack of affordability, and insecurity, existed prior to the pandemic and reflect long-term structural problems in Australia's private rental sector. At TQ we believe that it is the fundamental right of every Queenslander to have a safe and secure place to live, and we will continue advocating for fair tenancy laws so that renters are not left behind in the economic recovery.

COVID-19 Tenant/Resident Support and Analysis Project

In September 2020, TQ received funding from the Queensland Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy to deliver the COVID-19 Tenant/Resident Support and Analysis Project. The aim of the project was to assist vulnerable renters, particularly those at risk of homelessness because of COVID-19 tenancy issues, and to monitor and report on arising trends for service users and the broader community of renters impacted by COVID-19.

The project ran from September 2020 to March 2021, with Amy Tidbold stepping out of the HUB to take on the role of Advice Worker/Team Leader and Tracey Lewis temporarily leaving the Brisbane North team to step into the Outreach Worker role. Michele Ferguson also joined the COVID project team at the end of September as the Research Officer, recruited with the help of the University of Queensland School of Social Science.

The design of the project was unique involving outreach, advice and research components. Over the seven months that the project was operational, the COVID project team supported 60 renters in need of specialist COVID-19 tenancy advice and engaged with 355 homelessness and early intervention services. Research was also conducted into the impact of COVID-19 on TQ service users and the broader community of Queensland renters, through the analysis of QSTARS administrative data. Surveys and semi-structured interviews were also conducted with renters and TQ workers. A Project Advisory Group was established to guide the research process, including members from the COVID Project team; Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy; and the University of Queensland School of Social Science.

The final report was submitted to the Department in April 2021.

The COVID project team would like to express gratitude to all the renters and workers who participated in surveys and interviews, and who gave so generously of their time. TQ would also like to acknowledge the team at the University of Queensland who provided support through all phases of the project: Professor Lynda Cheshire, Professor Greg Marston, and Dr Zoe Staines.

Feedback from clients and others about TQ’s staff and services

I'd like to sing Amy's praises after my interaction with her this afternoon. It was a stressful day due to disputes during a lease exit. Amy helped me understand where I stood and what to do and this has been immensely helpful in giving me the confidence to tackle this situation. Amy was patient, kind, knowledgeable as we spoke, but also humble and helpful when we got to areas outside of the scope of her ability to provide guidance. A 20 min call with Amy took me from dire straits through to a clear, confident path forward.

I think Amy is a credit to the Tenants QLD team.

Thank you :)
Tom

I just wanted to firstly thank yourself, Christoff and Bill (who was the Tenants Queensland rep present at my hearing on the day) and Tenants Queensland for all the help provided to me on my matters with QCAT. Your support has been invaluable and I really believe your organisation are doing amazing things for the community and so many vulnerable tenants who are not equipped with the knowledge to defend themselves against the often dishonest and bullying behaviour of Owners or Property Managers.

Victoria

I thought the Tenants Queensland submission to the CSSC inquiry into the tenancy law reform Bills was excellent. My congratulations to you and the team who put it together - cogent, well-argued and very readable. Well done!

Regards
Peta

It is rare to find such quality, competence and willingness to help and give advice. Even more remarkable as it is a free service. I appreciate and applaud their overall attitude, commitment, efforts, and patience to allow me to understand. I extend my appreciation and gratitude to the rest of your organisation and staff as well for offering a useful and important service.

Sincerely,
Giovanni

I spoke to Cheryl who was patient and very knowledgeable regarding my problems. I cannot thank her enough for putting me on the right track. I felt that I was not alone, she 'had my back'. I was feeling very concerned about what to do and I am so pleased that, not only did she help me when I phoned, but I now know I have someone to call on if the need arises again.

When I came off the phone from her I had a glass of ginger wine (LOL) I was so relieved (I don't often drink) to have the support from someone who, not only 'knows her stuff', but is patient to the extreme.....THANK YOU CHERYL AND QSTARS for being there when I needed you

Jen

Helen has been helping us out since May with multiple matters and there just aren't enough words for me to express my gratitude to her. She has been an absolute gem who has been so professional and helpful. She has been exceptional in her help and communication.

The way she has empathised with us and gone above and beyond to help us and continue to help us is really appreciated.

Please pass my heartfelt gratitude to her. I have told her this many times but a service of that magnitude deserves a recognition.

Thanks,
Misha

I want to thank you for the exceptional support provided to me during an extremely challenging year. From my initial call and through every contact, your staff provided clear and concise information relevant to issues encountered with my agent.

I sincerely admire the empathy and professionalism demonstrated by your team. Special thanks to Phebe who engaged with my case and provided considered advice over several months as matters worsened.

I have narrowly avoided falling further in debt, with inaccurate outstanding arrears (over \$3k) and a possible negative rating on tenants database. I want to thank you again for the support QSTARS provided to me and the ongoing advocacy performed by Ms Carr on behalf of tenants.

You have all contributed to my resilience and ability to survive, improving both my health and wellbeing.

My enduring thanks,
Michael



Flowers and a note sent from a tenant, experiencing DFV, who was recently assisted by TQ.

Financial Report

Income and Expenditure Statement

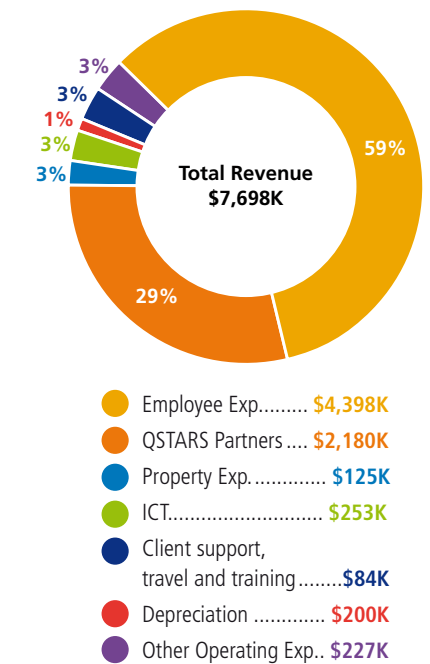
Revenue

TQ is funded by Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy (formerly known as Department of Housing and Public Works) to deliver Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS), together with its sub-contractors.

TQ also receives funding from Department of Justice and Attorney-General to deliver Community Legal Services Program (CLSP). The Department of Justice and Attorney General and the Department of Social Services with 'Keeping Women Safe in their Homes Initiative'. Funding for the Domestic and Family Violence Sector Capacity Building Project was continued for two years from July 2020 to June 2022. The Financial Counselling Foundation provides funding to deliver financial counselling services, to tenants in private rental accommodation at risk of financial hardship.

TQ also runs a student clinic with UQ Pro Bono Law Centre for Clinical Legal Education Program, in Tenancy Law, which makes a contribution to TQ Revenue.

FY 2020-2021 Expense Breakdown



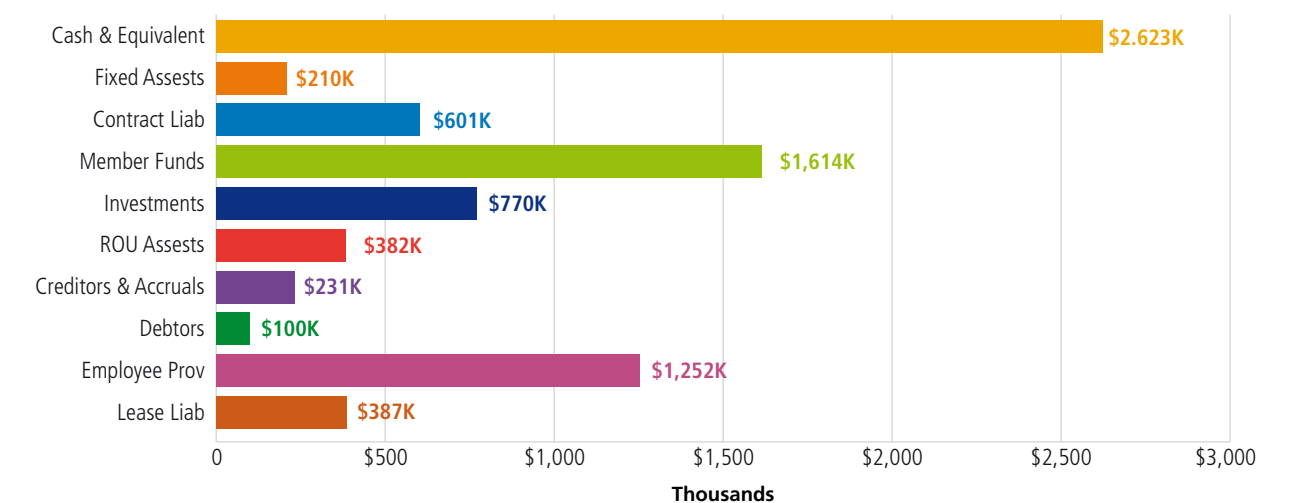
Expenditure

29% of Total Expenditure goes to TQ's business partners, and 59% is expended on Employee Expenses. Within TQ itself, salaries and entitlements constitute 83% of total expenditure which remains the most significant expense. ICT, which plays a big role in TQ's operations utilising telephone and online systems, constitute 5% of Total Expenditure. Depreciation consists of a significant amount of amortisation of Right of Use Assets (Lease). Other Operating Costs include supplies and external services.

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2021, TQ held \$601k of unspent program funds. These funds are shown as a Contract Liability at 30 June as these are considered a reciprocal transaction for which revenue is recognised as services are performed.

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2021



Acknowledgements

The Board would like to thank members & supporters, our funders and supporting pro bono agencies and our QSTARS partners for their support and contribution to TQ’s ongoing work. With the combined support of all agencies and individuals, TQ is better able to achieve its goals and ultimately better the lives of tenants across Queensland.

Our funders

Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy
Department of Justice and Attorney General
Department of Social Services
The Financial Counselling Foundation

Pro Bono Support

Tenants Queensland sincerely thanks the companies and skilled staff for the pro bono work undertaken with Tenants Queensland. It is very important for TQ to have the benefit of pro bono interest and legal expertise. Each contribution has enhanced TQ’s ability to continually improve our services to tenants in Queensland. In particular TQ would like to thank the following staff from the pro bono agencies.

Nicole Gordon and DJ Alexandra from Minter Ellison for their finalisation of TQ’s constitution review and transition to a company limited by guarantee.



Peter Brennan and Elysia Liekefelt from Allens Lawyers for their assistance in our submission to the parliamentary enquiry into the review of the residential tenancy legislation; program evaluation frameworks; and legal precedent register.

Clayton Utz for their IR advice (Matthew Cameron); property leases and contracts (Mack Mackay); and privacy policy review (Eleanor Dickens).

CLAYTON UTZ

Colin Stewart has volunteered at TQ, one day per week since the beginning of 2020, and has done an amazing job with managing the Make Renting Fair in Qld Alliance. His work is invaluable.

Our QSTARS Partners



Community Access Points

TQ would like to acknowledge the collaboration of many community based organisations across Queensland who have helped increase the geographical reach of the tenancy advice services, in particular those agencies in rural and remote regions.





Tenants Queensland

TQ and Partner Offices

BRISBANE HEAD OFFICE AND HUB

Level 1/87 Wickham Terrace, Spring Hill, 4000

BRISBANE NORTH COAST

BNC

Level 1/87 Wickham Terrace, Spring Hill 4000

Community Plus +

26 Devon St, Yeronga 4104

Enhance Care

Suite 2/77 King St, Caboolture 4510

Suncoast Community Legal Service

The TAFE Bldg., 170 Horton Parade, Maroochydore 4558

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

Rockhampton

240 Quay St, Rockhampton 4700

Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre

22 Charles St, Pialba 4655

Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre

Suite 9, The Dome, 134 Victoria St, Mackay 4740

SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

Helensvale

2D/9 Sir John Overall Dr, Helensvale 4212

Palm Beach

4/1051 Gold Coast Highway, Palm Beach 4221

Logan

9/90 Wembley Road, Logan Central 4114

Ipswich Regional Advocacy Services (IRASI)

Ground Level, IGIC Bldg., 40 South St, Ipswich 4305

TASC National

223 Hume St, Toowoomba 4350

NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

Cairns

208 McLeod St, Cairns 4870

Townsville

Tenancy 1, 181 Sturt St, Townsville 4810

Mt Isa

Suite 28, 119 Camooweal Street, Mount Isa 4825

For more information visit our website at www.tenantsqld.org.au

For tenancy advice call 1300 744 263



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