



# **Models of Supported Accommodation for People with a Disability**

**A Discussion Paper inviting feedback**

**Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care  
December 2004**

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (DADHC) is responsible for funding and directly providing a range of services for people with disabilities in New South Wales. In doing this, the Department makes a significant investment in supported accommodation services. This funds primarily three major models of supported accommodation. These are:

- Group homes
- Large residential centres
- In home support (mainly through the Attendant Care Program funded through the disability program and the High Needs Pool funded through the Home and Community Care program).

For more than a decade these models have been the major options available to most people with disabilities regardless of their specific support needs. For many people these models have largely met their support needs, however for others these models have not been sufficiently flexible.

DADHC now has a combination of pressures it is trying to address. These are:

- Greater demand for supported accommodation in the community due to the ageing of carers, devolution of large residential centres and increasing numbers of people with disabilities seeking this type of support.
- The need for increased flexibility in the range of accommodation supports available for people and the capacity of these to change over time and as an individual's needs change.
- Identifying models that are capable of achieving community participation for the people who live in them.

A balanced response is required that broadens the options available to people seeking accommodation support, enables choice and greater flexibility while still delivering on the objects of the Disability Services Act.

The other significant issues that DADHC and families of people of disabilities are facing is determining the most effective accommodation support models for people who have spent many years living in large residential settings and who have specialized needs. This is particularly important for people who have complex health care needs and require nursing care. DADHC is in the process of drafting a policy for this group that recognizes their requirement for high quality care that addresses their complex health needs in a community setting. This identifies the role general and specialist health services play in ensuring optimum health and safety for this vulnerable group. DADHC, like other agencies, faces difficulty in ensuring sufficient nurses are available in devolved community

settings to provide adequate specialist staffing. This in combination with providing specialist allied health services may require some clustering of houses to ensure necessary services are readily available to support the presence and participation of this client group in the community.

The other group who have specialized needs are people with severe challenging behaviours who may put themselves and others at risk of harm. Their needs are best responded to by well-trained staff, readily available clinical support and carefully designed environments. Our challenge is how we structure this within the community.

People with disabilities are living longer and many are now entering their sixties, seventies and eighties. Their needs are changing and we require a system of accommodation support that gives the ability to alter the level or type of support that is available across a person's life stages. Similar flexibility is also required for younger people whose needs change overtime.

As DADHC confronts this changing future it wants to seek input from the full range of stakeholders on:

- What are the appropriate models of accommodation support for the future.
- What models may be emerging and should be considered as possible future options.
- How best can we support people with a range of disabilities to live within their communities in ways that as far as possible offer choices that reflect the lifestyle of other people in the community?

This paper describes a sample of models of accommodation support that are being used today for a variety of people. Some of these may be suitable models for DADHC to develop for the future or provide the basis on which further models may be developed. Some of the models are being used with very different groups of people such as the Guthrie House example however its main feature, transitional supported living with living skills development may be adaptable for a range of people with disabilities such as:

- people with a disability exiting the criminal justice system who do not require the more intensive supports of a group home but require more than drop in support
- older people with disabilities who have lived at home with ageing parents and who may be suitable for drop in support if they had an opportunity to enhance their independent living skills

Your participation in this process of considering future accommodation models is important. Some questions are provided as a guide however any additional comments are welcomed.

Written comments are invited and should be directed to:

Accommodation Support Models  
C/- Director Accommodation and Respite  
Level 5, 83 Clarence St  
Sydney 2000

For record purposes we request the following details be included in responses: the name of the organisation and person responding, or if an individual response then the interest of the respondent e.g. parent, advocate. Details of individual submissions will be kept confidential.

Comments should be received by 29 April 2005

## **QUESTIONS**

These questions are provided as a guide to consider in commenting on the models described in this paper. If an alternative model is suggested then outlining how it would provide benefits and why it was suitable using the items in the questions would be helpful.

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each model of supported accommodation?
2. Would it be suitable for a wider group of people with disabilities?
3. How does the group home model need to change to reflect changing community expectations?
4. Which of these models would enable people with disabilities to achieve positive outcomes in the community? If some models would not have this outcome why would that be? Could they be modified to achieve positive outcomes?
5. As medium density housing becomes common in the community how should supported accommodation models change to reflect this changing norm in the wider community?
6. Would any of these models assist the participation of people in the life of the local community?
7. What models would be effective for people with complex health care needs?
8. What models would be effective for people with severe challenging behaviour?
9. Are there any other accommodation models that should be considered? How would these provide positive outcomes for people, reflect what is generally available in the community and assist in community participation?

## **Sample Models of Accommodation**

1. Group Homes – Supported community living
2. St Martin's Court – Unit Cluster of 13
3. Crisis Accommodation Program Innovative Initiative (CAPII) – Drop in support
4. Redevelopment of Kew Residential Services
5. Floating Care - Supported Accommodation Initiative for People with HIV/AIDS
6. Matavai Ageing in Place – 7 people on one floor of high rise ageing in place
7. Guthrie House– Bedrooms with ensuite for women and children & individual support
8. Tenant Managed Cooperatives - Individual purpose built units
9. Abbeyfield – Independent group living with housekeeper
10. Wintringham – Individual units with basic support

## **Accommodation Model 1:**

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### **Group Homes**

#### **Brief description**

Group Homes or Community Residential Units are used in a number of Australian States as a service model for the provision of accommodation support.

#### **Location**

Group Homes are located throughout NSW and are operated by both funded Non Government Services and DADHC direct services.

#### **Target group**

The group home model has been predominantly used for people with primarily an intellectual disability or multiple disabilities. These people may have varying support needs and usually the staff roster in the house reflects the support requirements of the residents and will vary from group to group. Recent changes in NSW have resulted in a regional vacancy management process where vacancies across government and non-government services are filled through a common process. This involves a panel drawn from DADHC, non-government providers and an independent representative who meet as a group to consider filling vacancies within the region (or sub regional district). Documentation is provided to the panel describing the nature of the group home vacancy and sufficient information to identify potential residents who might fit this vacancy. Most regions have a trial period where potential residents visit the house to ascertain if the vacancy would be suitable to their needs.

#### **Accommodation type**

The group home model varies significantly in house size (up to 6 bedrooms) and the type of house. Many are free standing dwellings in reasonably sized gardens others are duplexes or semi-detached cottages, garden size varies depending on locality. In rural areas some houses are on larger than average blocks of land. Many houses are owned by the provider and/or by DADHC, in other cases they are rented either on the commercial rental market, through the Department of Housing or a Community Housing Association. Price increases for land and established homes, decreasing block size and urban consolidation are changing the house stock available for group homes.

#### **Support Services**

Group homes operate with rostered staff that provide support and assistance. The period covered by the roster e.g. 16 hours or 24 hours will be related to the support required by the residents. For residents with high support needs a

number of staff may be working in the home over peak periods. The level of involvement of residents in the routines of the house will vary from house to house based on the skill of residents.

### **Administrative Arrangements**

The capital to purchase a group home may be provided by DADHC or the home may be an asset of a non-government service. If DADHC has provided the capital funding for a non-government group home the title will be held by the Minister. DADHC sources funds for capital purchases through the state budget process. The cost of modifications may be included in the initial capital outlay. However for modifications required post purchase a source of funds has to be identified for DADHC houses, however a non-government service may have internal resources for a modification (e.g. through fund raising or parental donations). For DADHC houses cyclical and urgent maintenance funding is provided. Generally in a group home the residents do not have a leaseholder relationship with their service provider. The provision of the housing and the support are often done by the same agency, this is the case for both DADHC and many non-government agencies. Where a house is being rented the lease is often with the service provider rather than the individual residents.

The recurrent costs of the group home are usually a combination of specific government funding programs, e.g. DADHC supported accommodation funding and resident contribution. The government funding typically covers the cost of staffing and some operational costs. The resident contribution pays for rent or its equivalent, food, utilities, common purchases, e.g. white goods replacement, and agreed house spending including some meals out, a pet, garden maintenance, house vehicle running costs.

## **Accommodation Model 2:**

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### **St Martin's Court Project**

#### **Brief description**

This is a community living model developed as an option to nursing home care. The model aims to provide choice and promotes independence for the residents. The site was purchased by Supported Housing Limited, (SHL) which is the largest Victorian non-profit provider of community housing for people with disabilities. SHL specialize in a range of property development services including property and tenancy management often in partnership with disability support organisations. At St Martin's Court the partner is Australian Home Care (AHC) a subsidiary of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

#### **Location**

The St Martin's Court project is located in Beaumaris, a suburb of Melbourne.

#### **Target group**

This model has been designed for people with Acquired Brain Injury and neurological disabilities. Referrals can be made in a variety of ways including self-referral. There is currently a waiting list for the service. AHC considers compatibility when selecting new people.

#### **Accommodation type**

St Martin's Court was an aged care residential centre operated by the Uniting Church. SHL purchased the site in 2002 and the existing units were refurbished to meet the needs of residents. There are 13 self-contained units and a community room. The units are configured around a communal garden and the majority of units also have their own individual courtyard garden.

#### **Support Services**

The support service is provided by AHC and includes 24-hour support with an onsite live in manager. The manager provides some direct care support and also is responsible for administration. The manager co-ordinates the other care workers and any specialist staff such as social workers. The care is funded recurrently as an individualized package. The funding comes from different sources e.g. Department of Human Services, Transport Accident Commission.

#### **Administrative Arrangements**

The funding for the St Martin's Court project came from a range of sources including, Office of Housing and trust funds. SHL act as developers and also link with other agencies. The tenants individually lease their units. The leases are

ongoing and have a standard 90-day notice period. Rental is an amount equal to 25% of a person's income plus the Commonwealth Rental Assistance, this amount covers both rent and property maintenance.

There is a formal protocol between the care provider AHC and SHL who manages and maintains the Court.

## **Accommodation Model 3:**

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### **Crisis Accommodation Program Innovation Initiative (CAPII)**

#### **Brief description**

CAPII assists clients who have been in the crisis accommodation system (the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program – SAAP) who require transitional support in order to make a successful move into long term housing in the community. Clients receive subsidized accommodation from a community housing provider and transitional support and living skills training at home through outreach SAAP services.

#### **Location**

Various locations across NSW.

#### **Target Group**

People who are homeless, escaping domestic violence or in other forms of crisis who need affordable, secure accommodation and transitional support services.

#### **Accommodation**

Privately or government owned rental accommodation leased by a non-profit community housing provider. The properties are selected to meet the clients' needs in terms of location, size and accessibility. The properties may be freestanding dwellings, units or villas.

#### **Support services**

Clients receive transitional assistance based on an individual support plan. This is generally required for a period of 6 to 9 months but can be varied if required. The support services are provided by non-government organizations.

#### **Administrative arrangements**

Funding for the housing component of the initiative is provided through the Office of Community Housing, a business unit of the NSW Department of Housing. The properties become part of a community housing providers portfolio. The client has a residential tenancies lease with the provider and pays either 25% of gross weekly household income or market rent for the property, whichever is the lesser. The community housing provider acts as landlord and carries out maintenance and other obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act. The client is responsible for electricity, gas and sometimes water rates. If they are a recipient of a Centrelink benefit, clients are also eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

The support services are provided by non-government organisations funded through SAAP, a program jointly funded by the Australian and State Governments and administered by the NSW Department of Community Services.

There is a formal partnership between the SAAP service and housing provider that covers the nomination of clients to the program and a commitment to the required level of support.

## **Accommodation Model 4:**

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### **Redevelopment of Kew Residential Services**

#### **Brief description**

Kew Residential Services is a large institution in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. At the time of the announced redevelopment in May 2001 there were 480 residents at the centre. The redevelopment will involve approximately 380 residents relocating across Melbourne and some rural localities with 100 residents remaining in the new housing development that will be built on the Kew site. The construction of new housing and development of the site will be undertaken by a developer. It is planned to have three areas within the redeveloped site where group homes will be situated.

#### **Location**

Kew a suburb of Melbourne.

#### **Target group**

This accommodation model is for the ex-residents of Kew Residential Services. These residents have an intellectual disability or multiple disabilities.

#### **Accommodation type**

Purpose built houses built by the developer as part of the overall redevelopment of the Kew site. Twenty houses are planned to accommodate 100 residents.

#### **Support services**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will directly provide support services and each house will have an individual care roster. All houses will be staffed by existing DHS staff.

#### **Administrative arrangements**

The funds derived from the redevelopment of the Kew site will be used to finance the new housing arrangements. The new houses will be owned by the government and operated and managed by the Department of Human Services. Residents will pay rent (currently \$67.50 per fortnight) and a housekeeping fee for that covers food and utilities. The housekeeping fee varies between houses.

## **Accommodation Model 5:**

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### **Floating Care - Supported Accommodation Initiative for People with HIV/AIDS**

#### **Brief description**

Supported Accommodation Initiative for People with HIV/AIDS assists clients experiencing difficulty managing their own tenancy. Clients rent independent accommodation head leased by housing associations from the private rental market. A non-government case manager co-ordinates a tailored package of care and support in the client's home funded by NSW Health and DADHC.

#### **Location**

This service is available across NSW.

#### **Target group**

People with HIV/AIDS experiencing difficulty managing their own tenancy.

#### **Accommodation type**

Private rental accommodation that suits the client.

#### **Support Services**

A non-government case manager co-ordinates a tailored package of care and support in the client's home funded by NSW Health and DADHC.

#### **Administrative Arrangements**

Clients rent independent accommodation head leased by housing associations from the private rental market.

## **Accommodation Model 6:**

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### **Matavai Ageing in Place initiative**

#### **Brief Description**

Group living within a public housing high-rise apartment block for frail older people with complex needs. It was developed as an *ageing in place* response to the emerging needs of many long-term residents of this building. The model was adapted from one developed by the Royal Blind Society and offers extended community care to 7 clients.

#### **Location**

The Matavai building in Waterloo, Inner Sydney.

#### **Target Group**

Frail, older, low-income people who are at risk of requiring residential care. All are existing public housing clients who are residents within the public housing high-rise apartment block. Most are also existing Community Aged Care Package (CACP) clients of Mercy Arms who are no longer able to live independently. Therefore, clients must have an Aged Care Assessment as requiring low-level care. Mercy Arms nominates new clients to the service to fill vacancies.

#### **Accommodation Type**

One floor of the public housing high-rise building has been converted to “group” living in order to reduce social isolation amongst frail residents and to allow for the cost-effective delivery of support services. Each resident has a one bedroom, self-contained unit. An additional unit has been converted into a communal space that serves as a dining room, sitting room, kitchen and laundry. Residents have lift access.

#### **Support services**

Support services are provided by pooling each client’s CACP hours – which enables care to be provided for 12 hours a day, seven days a week with meals and social activities included. Clients also have access to an emergency response call system.

The package of services is determined through an individual assessment and comprehensive care management plan which is regularly reviewed. Services include personal care, home help, laundry, shopping, transport, social and emotional support and help with personal affairs. Clients pay an additional fee for meals.

**Administrative arrangements**

The clients are tenants of the NSW Department of Housing and pay up to 25% of their income or market rent for their accommodation, whichever is the lesser. The Department is the landlord and responsible for all aspects of tenancy and property management, for example, rates, maintenance and major capital works. The majority of clients pay their rent by direct deduction from their aged pension under a formal agreement between Centrelink and the Department of Housing.

The support services are provided by a non-profit organisation, the Mercy Arms Group, through the Community Aged Care Packages Program (CACPP) which is funded by the Australian Government as part of its community care initiatives.

## **Accommodation Model 7:**

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### **Guthrie House – Women affected by Criminal Justice System**

#### **Brief description**

Guthrie house is an inner city supported accommodation service for women who have been affected by the criminal justice system. The program is typically three months in length and provides residential accommodation for women with children, 24hr support and supervision, social work services including case management, drug and alcohol assessment and counseling, individual counseling and group work, living skills training, information and education sessions, recreational outings, court reports and reports for Department of Corrections case conferences and assistance with appropriate post-discharge accommodation.

#### **Location**

Inner-western Sydney – Enmore.

#### **Target Group**

The service is available to women who have been in contact with the criminal justice system and who require supported accommodation. This can include women with a disability and drug related issues. Referrals are made by workers in correctional services, parole officers, or staff from other Government departments. Self-referrals are also common.

#### **Accommodation**

Guthrie House is a large older style dwelling that has been divided into 8 individual units, each with an ensuite, a communal kitchen and recreational facilities. Accommodation is short-term, up to 3 months, but some exceptions are made according to individual circumstances. Children are welcome.

#### **Support Services**

Funding for support services is provided by the Departments of Health, Corrections and Community Services. There is 24-hour on site management. Support is varied and flexible. Clients receive individual case management, and staff will accompany clients to appointments.

#### **Administrative Arrangements**

The NSW Department of Housing (Office of Community Housing) and Guthrie house jointly own the property (51% owned by Guthrie House Cooperative). The Cooperative manages the service, including short-term property maintenance.

Longer-term property maintenance is shared between the Office of Community Housing and the Cooperative.

Clients are required to sign a “contract” with the Cooperative that states they understand and agree to the rules of Guthrie House. Clients pay fees (all inclusive of food, accommodation, support) of \$100 per week (an additional \$25/wk for children over 1 year).

## **Accommodation Model 8:**

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### **Tenant Managed Cooperatives**

#### **Brief description**

Tenant managed housing Cooperatives established and operated by people with a disability who are able to live independently with support.

#### **Location**

Includes South Western Sydney; Inner Western Sydney.

#### **Target group**

People with a disability (and in some cases, their carers) who choose to live in a self-managed environment. Some tenants have a physical disability (such as quadriplegia, paraplegia; cerebral palsy; severe arthritis) and some have multiple sclerosis. Two thirds of tenants must be eligible for public housing.

#### **Accommodation type**

Accommodation projects comprise 7 and 9 fully accessible villa units purpose built for the Cooperatives. They are a mix of one and two bedrooms. Cooperative members (tenants) have had input into the design.

#### **Support Services**

A range of services are provided according to the needs of the tenant. Support services are organized by each tenant independently - separately to housing. These can include Home and Community Care funded services such as home care, or services from the Attendant Care Program (disability program funding).

#### **Administrative Arrangements**

The properties were funded by the NSW Department of Housing. The Department holds titles and leases the properties to the cooperative through a long-term head-lease agreement.

Residents pay 25% of their income or market rent to the cooperative, whichever is less. Residents have a lease with the cooperative for their individual unit and are eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

The Cooperative provides property and tenancy management services with tenants actively involved in decision-making. The Cooperative may pay a managing agent (a local community housing provider) to collect the rent, do the

administration and minor maintenance work. Major capital works are paid for by the Department of Housing (Office of Community Housing).

The Tenant Cooperatives receive training and support from an umbrella resourcing body, the Association to Resource Cooperative Housing (ARCH), which is funded by the Department of Housing.

## **Accommodation Model 9:**

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### **Abbeyfield Housing for Older People**

#### **Brief description**

Abbeyfield houses provide appropriate affordable group housing for 10 older people seeking companionship and support in a community in which they have links.

#### **Location**

There are 22 Abbeyfield houses across Australia.

#### **Target group**

People in their mid fifties or over who find they need some support to remain independent and who are not well off financially may be eligible to move into an Abbeyfield house. Residents range in age from 55 years to those in their 80s and 90s. However most residents are in their 70s. Single people of both sexes make up the bulk of residents but married couples often live comfortably in the houses.

#### **Accommodation type**

Each of Abbeyfield's 22 supportive group houses in Australia has been built or modified according to the Abbeyfield design specifications. Set in their own gardens, the houses blend in with the streetscape and are integrated into the neighbourhood. Ten residents and a housekeeper share the house and garden – making up a group small enough to provide companionship and security. Houses are planned, designed and furnished to provide an environment which is homelike and provides safety, privacy and physical and personal security.

Each resident has a self-furnished, private bedsitting room with its own bathroom. There are tea-making facilities in each room. The shared living areas, the kitchen, garden, laundry and guest room, provide all the space and services required for comfortable living.

#### **Support Services**

A housekeeper prepares the two main meals of the day, which are served in the dining room. The houses can accommodate wheelchairs, walking frames and seeing-eye dogs. Some residents rely on the help of Home and Community Care (HACC) services or on support from their families and friends if the need is there.

## **Administrative Arrangements**

Houses are established and operated by community-based non-profit, volunteer groups which are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the house and the well being of residents and staff.

Residents participate in management and decision-making. Abbeyfield Australia is a company limited by guarantee committed to the development of community based housing for older people who wish to retain their independence but who enjoy the company and security of others.

Abbeyfield Australia develops policies, guidelines and standards to support local groups who initiate, develop and manage group houses for older people with limited incomes and few assets. It provides management and support to existing houses; and expertise and guidance in the planning and development and funding of new societies and houses.

An Abbeyfield local society is an independently incorporated body affiliated with Abbeyfield Australia. The local societies are responsible for the development and day-to-day management of their house, in conjunction with Abbeyfield Australia. A local society is made up of volunteer local people.

More detailed information is available from the Abbeyfield website:  
<http://www.abbeyfield.org.au>

## **Accommodation Model 10:**

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### **Wintringham –Support for Homeless Older People**

#### **Brief description**

A non government service that provides a wide range of accommodation and support models to homeless older people in Melbourne. It provides a full spectrum of housing and care services including:

- Outreach support to people in insecure housing;
- Inner city apartments;
- Self-care units where residents are assisted to access health and other support services they may need; and
- Low and high level care in non-traditional aged care homes.

#### **Location**

Accommodation and services operate in various locations across Melbourne. Two projects are located in the Melbourne central business district. These are in Little Collins Street and Guildford Lane.

#### **Target group**

Older homeless people with support needs ranging from low to high-level care.

#### **Accommodation type**

Ebsworth House in the inner city provides 24 one-bedroom apartments over three stories above a food court. The project was designed to provide a secure and appropriate alternative to low cost city hotels for older homeless people. Other models include outreach support to people in insecure housing; and low and high level care in non-traditional aged care homes.

#### **Support Services**

Support provided includes assistance to access generic health and community services, outreach services, and in some cases, aged care services delivered on site.

#### **Administrative Arrangements**

This model is a partnership between the State Government and a non government organization. Wintringham has been appointed the manager for these housing services.

More detailed information is available from the Wintringham website:  
<http://www.wintringham.org.au/>