

**Francesca Seith  
Project Manager  
Accommodation Legislation  
Housing Policy and Planning  
Level 9 Riverside Building  
North Tce  
Adelaide 5001**

**August 16<sup>th</sup> 2006**

**Dear Francesca**

**Re: Proposed New Legislation to replace the Supported Residential Facilities Act 1992.**

Housing Spectrum Inc Houses people with disabilities in over 300 homes across the southern metropolitan and southern coastal rural areas. Most of our tenancies are occupied by single people or single family groups. We do, however, manage several units of accommodation where more than one unrelated person with a disability live in the same dwelling.

We are writing to express some concerns re the above proposed new legislation which could impact on our housing provision to people with disabilities.

- All our tenants have a tenancy agreement with us which is legislated by the Residential Tenancies Act
- All our tenants pay rent to Housing Spectrum calculated on 25% of their income
- Housing Spectrum provides property management and maintenance services **only**
- Housing Spectrum is a social **landlord**
- We are regulated under the South Australian Co-operative and Community Housing Act 1991
- **We do not provide any form of disability support services**

Most of our tenants have some form of support provided via non government disability support providers. This support can range from psycho social support of a few hours per week to full 24 hour per day services.

Those tenants who are provided with intensive support generally live in group accommodation.

- **Intensive support costs a lot of money. Due to a lack of resources from government for disability support, funded agencies often distribute support between clients in one household, or on one site, so they can maximise support opportunities for individuals with disabilities**

Housing Spectrum has positive working relationships with the disability support providers who care for our tenants. These workers interact with us in relation to landlord/tenant issues on behalf of their client (e.g. maintenance, rent issues etc)

However;

- We are not involved in any care arrangements
- We do not know what contracts/agreement/care plans are in place between our tenant and their care provider
- We do not know the exact nature of the support services supplied to our tenants
- The relationship between the support provider and the tenant has nothing to do with our provision of housing. It is a private arrangement

It has been put to us, that considering we house unrelated adults with disabilities in group households, we could be regulated under Level 1 of the proposed new legislation.

On reading the proposed standards for level 1, my interpretation is that these standards are appropriate for group households where the support provider and the housing provider are one and the same.

Housing Spectrum has always been very clear that we offer our tenants a home. Their home is not a workplace. For some of our tenants, workers independent of Housing Spectrum, visit and provide contracted services to the tenant in their home. The workers visit a home to see their client.

I would ask that in considering this new legislation, Housing Associations, who provide homes to their tenants (regardless of their individual support requirements/arrangements), should be consulted re these proposed legislation changes.

As a landlord we have no right to enter people's homes and monitor service standards provided by an outside agency which has a contract with our tenant, a private individual. The Residential Tenancy Agreement we have with our tenant does not allow this level of intrusion.

Certainly no Housing Association that I know of would have the resources to even consider participating in this monitoring or regulation enforcement role. Our funding agreement provides for housing/landlord services only. We are regulated by the Office for Community Housing under the South Australian Co-operative and Community Housing Act. This includes a range of auditing and monitoring requirements, including the regulation of residential standards.

If Housing Spectrum were to be compelled to fit under the proposed new requirements, we would have to seriously consider dissolving our group homes or ensure that they were under occupied (some have four bedrooms) and only had one tenant living in the property. (The latter could seriously compromise care provision due to funding stressors and render our tenants ineligible for disability support)

Some of our group homes have been purpose built for compatible individuals, or to maximise resources in the face of severe funding shortages for people with disabilities. Some of our group homes are leased to us through Housing SA. (We provide the landlord service) Would these purpose built homes also come under the proposed new legislation?

I would ask that there be an exemption in the legislation for groups such as us and other Housing Associations who provide social landlord services and do not have a disability support role.

I would appreciate some timely feedback in relation to these issues.

Thanking you in anticipation

Sally Langton  
Executive Director

*Housing Spectrum Inc*

*Cc Minister Jay Weatherill  
Trevor Fleet Senior Consultant Office for Community Housing  
Jan Sundberg Manager CHO services Office for Community Housing*