



**REDLANDS HOUSING STRATEGY 2011-2031  
RESPONSE**

**Prepared by  
COTA QUEENSLAND**

**31 JANUARY 2012**



## COTA Australia

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Draft Redlands Housing Strategy 2011-2031

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To whom it concerns

COTA Queensland is a statewide lead agency which aims to influence decision makers and enrich the lives of people as they age. The organisation has been in existence for over 50 years and has a wealth of experience and knowledge pertaining to issues on ageing and society.

COTA Queensland provides information and referral services, delivers community education programs across Queensland and partners with a range of stakeholders to progress community development projects.

Our research, policy and advocacy is aligned to the World Health Organisation Active Ageing Policy Framework which identifies three key pillars - Health, Security and Participation - as the determinants of active ageing. The organisation works collaboratively with a range of communities and organisations to advance our overlapping research, policy and advocacy interests. In the area of housing we have a strong relationship with Queensland Action for Universal Housing Design (QAUHD) in particular. Community engagement with diverse stakeholders including consumers and service providers further underpins our work.

COTA Queensland congratulates the Redland City Council and your partners in developing the Redlands Housing Strategy 2011-2031 and we welcome the opportunity to respond to it. The document is forward looking and comprehensive. COTA Queensland has a particular interest in advocating to meet the housing needs of people as they age to ensure housing is accessible, affordable, appropriate, secure and integrated into the broader housing system. Many housing needs of people as they age overlap with the housing needs of people with disability.

COTA Queensland commends Council and your partners on the extensive stakeholder engagement that was used to feed into the Strategy. **We recommend that future housing stakeholder engagement also includes people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including**

**those from refugee background communities, and women as a particular group.** Both demographics have unique housing experiences and comprise significant groups within the Redlands. While older people in general are experiencing housing stress and homelessness in increasingly large numbers, it is single older women in particular who are increasingly in these situations. The demand for public and private rental by the over 65s is expected to rise by 120 per cent from 2008 to 2020. This occurs at a time when government investment in public housing has declined. Many refugee background families experience discrimination in the private rental market in particular. Both these groups are strongly dependent on a private rental market that does not meet their needs.

COTA is aware that on 15 November 2011 Gary Photinos, Group Manager, City Planning and Environment, Redland City Council, wrote to QAUHD supporting Brisbane City Council's endorsement of QAUHD's efforts to change building regulations to increase the supply of accessible housing. In his letter, Mr Photinos also referred to Redland City Council's recent Housing Needs Assessment which identified a possible action of increasing the provision of adaptable and universal housing and which forms part of the commissioned input to the Housing Strategy. COTA commends Council on this support and **recommends that the Housing Strategy includes a commitment to support efforts to ensure that the Commonwealth Government's Building Code of Australia and the Queensland Government's *Building Act 1975* are reformed to ensure the provision of adaptable and universal housing design.**

COTA notes with approval the commitment to an additional 21,000 dwellings between 2006 and 2031, of which 18,000 will be adaptable. While we acknowledge the value of Australian Standard for Adaptable Housing AS 4299, 1995, **COTA recommends that Council considers the guidelines provided by both the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA) and the Livable Housing Design initiative, both Silver and Gold level access features.** Both these sets of guidelines provide more recent accessibility considerations than AS 4299, 1995.

With the increased numbers of older Australians turning to the private rental sector, accessible housing design difficulties are experienced that may not be as evident in private home ownership or public housing. There are few incentives for landlords to enhance the livability of their rental properties for tenants as they age. **COTA Queensland recommends**

**that Council raise the issues within local government forums, with tenant organisations and with the Queensland State Government to improve accessibility standards in private rental housing in particular in the short term.**

While Australians over 65 are experiencing, and will increasingly experience housing stress many older people continue to live in houses that are too large for their needs. Some are finding it increasingly difficult to remain in their homes because of affordability issues. There are a range of responses to this scenario – ethical homeshare is one minor response that could be supported by local government in collaboration with local housing networks. Shared living is not for everyone and COTA is clear that this response is a minor response to the issues. However, it does have the potential to improve people’s health and wellbeing and create connectedness. Such a scheme would need to ensure it had a robust set of safeguards in place. **COTA Queensland recommends that Council collaborate with local community housing organisations to research homeshare models with a view to supporting a Redlands homeshare scheme.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me or our Policy Officer Anna McCormack for clarification.

COTA Queensland looks forward to seeing the results of the feedback on the draft Redlands Housing Strategy 2011-2031 and to watching the implementation of the strategy.

Yours sincerely

Mark Tucker-Evans  
Chief Executive

## **Summary of COTA Queensland Recommendations**

- 1. COTA Queensland recommends that future housing stakeholder engagement includes people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including those from refugee background communities, and women as a particular group.**
- 2. COTA Queensland recommends that the Housing Strategy includes a commitment to support efforts to ensure that the Commonwealth Government's Building Code of Australia and the Queensland Government's *Building Act 1975* are reformed to ensure the provision of adaptable and universal housing design.**
- 3. COTA recommends that, in supporting livable housing design, Council considers the guidelines provided by both the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA) and the Livable Housing Design initiative, both Silver and Gold level access features.**
- 4. COTA Queensland recommends that Council raise the issues of private rental accessibility within local government forums, with tenant organisations and with the Queensland State Government to improve accessibility standards in private rental housing in particular in the short term.**
- 5. COTA Queensland recommends that Council collaborate with local community housing organisations to research homeshare models with a view to considering a Redlands homeshare scheme.**

## References

1. Council to Homeless Persons, Response to Inquiry into the Opportunities for Participation of Victorian Seniors. Melbourne, August 2011.
2. DPS Guide to Aged Care. Sharing is Caring. DPS News, 10 January 2012.
3. McFerran, Ludo. It Could be You: Female, Single, Older and Homeless. Sydney, Dept of Premier and Cabinet (NSW) and St Vincent de Paul Society (NSW), August 2010.
4. National Dialogue on Universal Housing Design. Livable housing design guidelines. 22 July 2010.
5. Productivity Commission, Caring for Older Australians: Productivity Commission Inquiry Report. Canberra, AGPS, 2011.
6. Urban Land Development Authority, Accessible Housing: ULDA Guideline, No 2, November 2011