Shelter Tas
Workforce Development Program 2018-23
Evaluation Report

Tasmania's Residential Tenancy Act: What's new, what's coming, and everything you need to know

December 2018

Background

Workforce Development Program 2018-23

Shelter Tas has a 5-year funding agreement with the Department of Communities Tasmania (Housing Tasmania) for the Workforce Development Program (WDP) 2018-2023. The purpose of the WDP is to *facilitate specialist professional development and training activities that: continue to build workforce capacity of the housing and homelessness sector; respond to new and emerging sector issues and support Tasmanians who are experiencing, or who are at risk of homelessness.*

Shelter Tas is developing, promoting and evaluating a schedule of specialist quality training in line with the following priorities:

- Priority 1 - Increasing the skills and competencies of the SHS workforce
- Priority 2 - Increasing the accessibility of training and professional development to the whole of the sector.

Consultation

Consultation with the housing and homelessness sector (through the WDP Reference Group) is integral to the success of the WDP, and is a continuous process throughout the 5 years. During consultation, understanding Tasmania's Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) was identified as an area of need, particularly with regard to changes in the Act since the previous delivery of RTA training in April 2016, delivered by Meredith Barton of the Tenants' Union of Tasmania.

Due to the success of the previous training session, Meredith was approached to deliver a 2.5-hour training session as part of Shelter Tasmania's 2018 State-wide SHS forum.

Evaluation

Training session:	***Tasmania's Residential Tenancy Act: What's new, what's coming, and everything you need to know.***
Facilitator:	Meredith Barton Principal Solicitor - Tenants' Union of Tasmania Vice Chair - Shelter Tasmania

Date:	Tuesday 11th December 2018
Region:	State-wide forum, Launceston
Overview:	Topics covered - • Recent changes to the RTA, including: ▪ Minimum standards ▪ Family violence provisions ▪ Incremental bonds • Updating knowledge on the RTA: ▪ Breaking a lease ▪ Transitional housing ▪ Impacts on services • Exemptions to the RTA for homeless and DV services • Questions submitted prior on a range of legal issues impacting on housing provision and tenants • Open Q & A discussion
Resources:	TUT fact sheets, Don't Panic booklet
Participants:	29
Evaluations completed:	27
Overall rating:	93% rated this training good/excellent 100% would recommend this training to others 100% felt ready to apply what they learned to their work

Priority 1 - Increasing the skills and competencies of the SHS workforce

- Over 81% of participants reported improvement in their knowledge of Tasmania's RTA
- 100% would recommend this training to others
- 100% felt ready to apply what they learned to their work.

Priority 2 - Increasing the accessibility of training and professional development to the whole of the sector

Participants:	29
Organisations:	12
Regions:	North, North West, South
Type:	Specialist Homelessness Services

Participants from across Tasmania were able to attend, coming from a diverse range of member services and organisations.

Anglicare	Jireh House	Salvation Army
CatholicCare	Karinya	Warrawee
Colony 47	Magnolia Place	YFCC
Common Ground	Oakleigh House	Youth Futures

Comments

"Meredith is excellent. Very knowledgeable & clear, & easy to approach with questions"

"Meredith was very easy to listen to & was comforted by how passionate she was & also resourceful"

"Good overview of RTA, well delivered & easy to listen to"

Comments from participants were positive overall, with high praise for both the trainer and topic. There were a diverse range of workers in attendance, ranging from those new to the sector who appreciated going over the basic legal requirements of the RTA, to more experienced practitioners who gained knowledge of the new amendments to the Act.

As an experienced solicitor who specialises in the RTA, participants found Meredith highly knowledgeable and easy to understand, with clear messaging. Participants commented that they really enjoyed the time for interactive questions and answers at the end of the session. Factsheets from the Tenants' Union and the *Don't Panic* booklet were distributed, and attendees reported that these were useful resources, as they could take them back to their workplace to share with others.

When asked *"what further resources, support or training would assist you to apply what you have learned today?", r*esults from the evaluations showed a need for ongoing training on the basics of the RTA for new workers in the future. In addition to the current RTA booklet and factsheets provided, targeted resources to address the specific needs of services (ranging from crisis accommodation to long term housing) were requested. It was noted that the current factsheets are available on the Tenants' Union website, so that workers could access them independently.

Recommendations

Topic

RTA training has been identified as an ongoing area of importance. As the RTA continues to change, demand for this topic is expected to continue, therefore we recommend running future sessions as needed throughout the program.

Provider

Feedback for Meredith and the Tenants' Union was overwhelmingly positive, and we will continue to work with skilled staff from the organisation in the future.

Delivery and Future Training

The need for future training in the basics of the RTA was identified, to ensure a good working knowledge of the Act and to enable workers to undertake their duties with confidence when dealing with legal and tenant issues.

A range of background supplementary material tailored to specific service types, along with the up-to-date factsheets and RTA booklet will be requested for future training sessions.

Administration

This session was free for participants due to training occurring as part of a pre-existing State-wide SHS forum. All future training sessions under the program will need to collect a co-contribution from participants, as agreed by the WDP Reference Group.